My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 101

Raphael

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The Midland Trust team was early and that told me everything I needed to know. Banks only showed up early when they were bleeding.

I stepped in first. I gave no greetings beyond a short nod. My team followed behind me like a shadow, disciplined silent, in sync.

I took my seat at the head of the table, set my laptop down, and connected to the display. The Orion Vector interface lit up the main screen.

Across from me sat Midland's people. CFO. Head of Risk. Chief Compliance Officer. Two analysts who looked like they hadn't slept in days.

"Let's not waste time," I said, voice even. "You've already lost thirty million. The only question is how much more you're planning to lose before you fix it."

The CFO leaned forward slightly, "We're here to understand how your system prevents that."

I glanced to my right, "Daniel."

Daniel was my Lead Machine Learning Engineer, late thirties, sharp mind and built the base architecture of the model we were selling today.

He stood, clicking his remote, the screen shifted to graphs, movement patterns and risk curves.

"This is the current fraud detection timeline," he began, "Your system flags transactions after execution. That's reactive. By the time you see it, the money's gone," he clicked again, "Our model shifts that window forward."

The chart changed. Earlier spikes. Predictive markers.

"We don't wait for fraud to happen," Daniel continued, "We identify behavioral deviation before the transaction clears."

He spoke well but this part wasn't the sale. It was the setup. I leaned back slightly, eyes moving, not to Daniel, but to Gianna. She was standing near the screen now, hands lightly clasped in front of her. Daniel wrapped up the architecture overview and sat down.

The Head of Risk spoke next. "Prediction models always come with false positives. How are you controlling that?"

I tilted my head slightly towards Gianna. It was her cue.

She stepped forward, "The system doesn't use fixed thresholds. It adapts based on user behavior clusters. So instead of flagging every anomaly, it scores intent based on pattern deviation."

She didn't rush that part.

She pointed at the screen, fingers steady.

"Like this," she continued, "If someone logs in from a new location, that alone isn't enough. But if it happens with a new device, at an unusual time, and with spending behavior that doesn't match their profile"

She took a pause. A tiny, almost invisible but I saw it. Her fingers tightened slightly. Her eyes flicked toward the text on the screen then back.

+15 B

"–the system escalates the risk score before the transaction processes."

She recovered clean. Most people wouldn't notice the slip. I did. And it pissed me off.

The CFO leaned back. "And what's your threshold for escalation?"

Another beat and there it was again. A fraction too long, her chin lifted a little, posture correcting. She was thinking in the middle of the fucking meeting.

"Eighty-two percent for high-risk flagging," she said, "But the model recalibrates based on account history. So high-value clients don't get flagged for normal large transactions."

The Compliance Officer cut in. "What about regulatory alignment? False flags can trigger reporting obligations"

Gianna inhaled, "We built a dual-layer filter," she said. "The predictive model flags risk internally first. Only confirmed anomalies move to reporting. That reduces unnecessary filings."

I watched her closely. She wasn't struggling with the content, not even close. She was ahead of them. I could see in the way she skipped unnecessary explanations. The way she simplified complex systems without losing accuracy.

But every now and then... A word caught. A sentence tightened like her brain moved faster than her mouth.

Daniel jumped back in, supporting her point with technical validation.

She was good enough to hold them but not good enough to be flawless. And I didn't tolerate "good enough."

The CFO leaned forward again. "And implementation time?"

I answered this one.

"Four weeks for integration. Two for calibration. You'll start seeing early detection within the first ten days."

"Ten days?" one of their analysts said, skeptical.

I looked straight at him, "Or you can wait another year and lose another thirty million."

I shifted my gaze back to Gianna, She was quieter now, watching again, breathing more evenly.

The Head of Risk spoke again. "What's the failure rate?"

Gianna answered before Daniel could, "Lower than your current system."

This was where she was confident, the numbers, logic, and patterns. But the second she had to explain it, there it was again.

The meeting stretched another twenty minutes. But she fought for every clean sentence like it cost her something. And no one else in the room seemed to notice.

By the end, the CFO closed his folder slowly, "We'll proceed with Orion Vector," he said.

Of course you will, you fucking idiot.

He looked at me, "Send over the contract."

I nodded once, “Already prepared.

The meeting started to close. The CRO leaned back again, folding his hands, “But we’ll need a pilot before full deployment.”

I nodded once, “You’ll have it.”

The deal was almost done but not signed. We stood, hands were shaken, polite words exchanged. They left the room talking quietly among themselves.

The door closed behind them. I didn’t look at anyone else because no one else made mistakes like she did. Gianna was gathering her papers, shoulders tight again.

I stood slowly and walked toward her, stopped just close enough, “You missed three transitions,” I said calmly.

She froze.

“You replaced two terms mid-sentence,” I added, “And you hesitated every time you had to explain something instead of point at it.”

Her fingers tightened around the papers, “They didn’t notice,” she said.

“I did.”

And that should be enough for her, her jaw clenched.

I leaned slightly closer, “Don’t mistake a successful meeting for a good performance,” I said quietly.

Her eyes lifted to mine.

“Next time,” I continued, “you don’t get those margins. I have already given you more chance than anyone else in here. Fix it.”

I tilted my head slightly, studying her because she was a problem I hadn’t decided how to solve yet.

“This was your second chance,” I went on, “Strike two,” I said simply.

The words didn’t land all at once. They sank in slow. I could see it happen on her face. Confusion first and then realization. Then that same stubborn resistance rising right back up like it did.

I let out a quiet breath through my nose, “You’re off the paid program,” I added, “Effective immediately.”

Her head snapped up a fraction, “What?”

“You heard me,” I said, “You’re still in the building. You’re still on the team. But you don’t get paid to stand in my meetings and hesitate over basic sentences.”

Her eyes flashed now. There it was, that spark of pride she kept trying to hold onto.

“That wasn’t-” she started, then cut herself off, pressing her lips together.

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She was choosing her words.

I leaned in just enough to close the space again, not touching her, just reminding her how easily I could.

“Say it,” I murmured.

She swallowed, then forced it out, “That wasn’t a fair call.”

A small smile pulled at the corner of my mouth. I straightened slowly, dragging it out, letting her feel the shift in control, “Fair?” I repeated, almost amused, “You think this place runs on fair?”

Her chin lifted a little, “I did the work.”

“No,” I cut in smoothly, “You understood the work. That’s not the same thing.”

I stepped back now, giving her space like it was a privilege she hadn’t earned.

“In this company,” I continued, “you don’t get rewarded for what’s in your head. You get rewarded for what you can deliver without making the room doubt you.”

I tapped the folder in her hand once.

“You hesitated.”

A pause.

“You corrected yourself.”

Another step closer, slower this time.

“And you made them look at you instead of the model,” I lowered my voice, “That costs me leverage.”

Then she shook her head once, “So I lose my pay because I paused for a second?”

“No,” I said, “You lose it because I can’t trust you not to do it again when it matters more.”

Her eyes didn’t drop. Most people’s would have by now. That irritation flickered again under my skin. I didn’t like that look on her. I really wanted to crush her little pride.

“You want it back? Then earn it,” I finished. “Unpaid. You stay. You work. You prove you can stand in a room like that without folding in on yourself. Maybe,” I added, quieter now, “you’ll even learn something.”

That hit but instead of breaking, she pushed back. Her chin lifted again, eyes sharp now, burning straight into mine, “Fine, I don’t need your money. I never did.”

Something dark settled in my chest, I stepped back fully this time, adjusting my cuffs like the conversation was already over.

“We’ll see how long that lasts,” I said lightly.

I moved past her, brushing just close enough to make it intentional.

“Be in tomorrow at eight,” I added over my shoulder. “Unpaid doesn’t mean optional.”

I didn’t wait for her response. I stepped past her like the conversation was already over.

Because to me, it was.

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 103

Gianna

I didn’t remember walking back to my desk.

One second I was standing in front of him, holding that stupid folder like it meant something, and the next I was sitting in my chair, staring at my screen while the words blurred together.

I yanked my bag open harder than I needed to and started shoving things inside. Charger. Notebook. Pens. My fingers moved fast, messy, like if I stopped for even a second, something in my chest would crack open and spill everywhere.

God, I hated him.

I hated his voice. I hated the way he looked at me like I was something he could take apart piece by piece. I hated the way he stood too close like space belonged to him.

Arrogant, controlling, egoistic asshole.

Psychopath.

Sick, power-hungry freak.

My jaw clenched as I shoved my laptop into my bag.

Who the hell does he think he is?

You hesitate once and suddenly you don't deserve to get paid?

I let out a quiet, sharp breath through my nose, blinking fast. I zipped my bag shut, a little too loud.

"Wow."

The voice came from behind me.

Slowly, I turned. Three people stood near the aisle between desks. Two women and a guy. All dressed perfectly. All watching me like I was some kind of show.

The girl in the middle crossed her arms, tilting her head slightly, "That was... painful to watch."

My stomach dropped but I said nothing.

The guy let out a small laugh under his breath. "Honestly, I don't even get it."

"Get what?" the other girl added, "It's not that hard."

Their eyes moved over me, judging like I was already below them.

"Everyone else managed to present just fine," she continued. "But somehow you... struggle with basic sentences?"

My fingers tightened around the strap of my bag. I could feel it starting. That slow, creeping feeling under my skin.

"You're lucky," the guy said casually, leaning against a desk. "Most people would've been out after that first mess in his office."

The first girl smiled faintly, “But I guess it helps when you’re... connected.”

“I mean,” the other girl went on, shrugging lightly, “it’s obvious, right? He wouldn’t keep giving chances like that to anyone else. Must be nice.”

Something twisted hard in my chest.

“I’m not—” I started, but my voice came out wrong. I cleared my throat, forcing it again. “I’m not getting special treatment.”

They all looked at each other. That look. That silent understanding between them.

The guy raised his brows slightly, “Sure.”

Heat rushed up my neck, “I did the work,” I said, firmer now.

The second girl tilted her head, “Then why can’t you explain it properly?”

The words hit deeper than they should have. They were just too familiar. I opened my mouth but nothing came out.

Because suddenly I wasn’t here anymore. I was back in a different room.

With a different voice.

What is this?

How many times do I have to repeat it?

It’s simple.

Why is it so hard for you?

My fingers curled into my palm.

Useless.

Slow.

Good for nothing.

“Hello?” the girl in front of me waved a hand lightly. “You still with us?”

I blinked and the office snapped back into focus, “I-” My words tangled, “I just I think fast. Sometimes my words-”

The guy chuckled. “Yeah, we noticed.”

A quiet snort from the other girl, “Maybe this isn’t the right field for you,” she said gently, like she was doing me a favor, “Not everyone is built for this kind of pressure.”

My throat tightened.

I need to fix you.

God, what is wrong with you?

“I’m fine,” I said quickly, too quickly, too defensive.

The first girl smiled again, “Relax. No one’s attacking you.’

It felt like they were. Every word. Every look. Every small, fake smile.

“You just need to... try harder,” she added.

Try harder.

I had been trying my whole life.

Harder than anyone in this room.

Harder than any man who ever sat across from me and decided I wasn’t enough.

“I don’t need your advice,” I said quietly.

The guy straightened slightly, amused now, “That attitude’s probably why you’re unpaid now.”

Before I could say anything, another voice came “Aren’t you all supposed to be working?” Aileen stepped closer.

Everyone went still.

D

“I don’t remember scheduling a group discussion around Gianna’s performance,” she said flatly. Her gaze lingered on the guy for a second longer, “Or did you finish your deliverables early?”

He looked away immediately, “No.”

“Then go finish them.”

Then they all immediately dispersed. Aileen turned to me then. Her expression softened, just slightly.

“Don’t listen to them,” she said, “They talk when they feel threatened.”

I nodded once, not trusting my voice. She studied me for a second longer, like she wanted to say something else Then she didn’t.

“Finish what you can for tomorrow,” she said instead, “And go home early if you need to.”

I nodded again. She gave a small, approving tilt of her head, then turned and walked out. I stood there for a moment, my bag hanging from my shoulder, my fingers still tight around the strap.

The Uber ride felt longer than it should have. My stomach twisted again. I pressed my lips together and turned my head, focusing on the passing buildings instead of the loop in my head that wouldn’t shut up.

I swallowed and picked at the edge of my sleeve, forcing myself to breathe slow. The Rose Garden. I just needed to get there. Just needed something normal. Something that wasn’t him, wasn’t that office, something that didn’t make me feel that I wasn’t enough.

The car stopped and I pushed the door open before the driver could even say anything else, “Thank you,” I said quickly, already stepping out.

I walked in and the scent hit me first. Vanilla. Clean linen. A faint trace of perfume that always lingered in the air no matter how many windows Mama D opened.

I stepped further inside, my bag sliding a little off my shoulder as I adjusted it without thinking.

“Hey guys, so listen-fun update,” I started, forcing a light tone that didn’t match how I felt, “Fuckael Capone just dropped me to unpaid, so I need something that actually pays. Fast. I don’t care what it is. Stripping, whatever, just something that—”

My voice broke off mid-sentence the moment I turned the corner into the main sitting room and saw them.

Mama D sat on the couch, but she wasn't sitting the way she usually did. She leaned slightly to one side, one hand pressed against her ribs like it had been there for a while. Her face-

My breath caught.

Her skin was darkened along one side, purple fading into yellow at the edges. Her lip was split, the cut already scabbed over but still angry red.

For a second, my brain didn't catch up. It just... stared.

"Mama D?"

Her head lifted slowly. Her eyes landed on me, and something in her expression shifted, "Baby," she said softly.

Bonus

That's when I saw the others.

Bri sat in the armchair near the window, her leg stretched out stiff in front of her. There was a wrap around her knee, thick and white, and her face-God-her cheek was swollen, the skin pulled tight and bruised in deep shades that made my stomach turn.

Jasmine leaned against the wall beside her, arms crossed, but even that looked forced. Her knuckles were scraped raw, healing over in rough patches. There was a bruise curling around her jaw, half-hidden but not enough.

My bag slipped off my shoulder and hit the floor without me noticing.

"What... what happened?" I asked, "Who did this?"

Bri let out a short, dry laugh that didn't sound like her at all. "You should see the other guy."

Jas didn't smile. She just stared at the floor, her jaw tight like it was locked in place.

Mama D's eyes stayed on me, "Come here."

My feet moved before my brain could catch up. I crossed the room slowly, stopping just in front of her. Up close, it was worse. The bruises. The swelling. The way her fingers pressed too carefully into her side like even breathing hurt.

"I was just—" I started, my voice cracking a little. I swallowed and tried again. "I was gonna tell you about today, and-"

The words died in my mouth. They didn't matter, not compared to this, not compared to the way they all looked like they had been run over and left there.

My hands hovered awkwardly at my sides, like I didn't know where to put them, what to do, how to fix something like this.

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 105

I sank down slowly onto the edge of the couch beside her, careful, like I might hurt her just by being too close. My fingers twisted together in my lap again, tighter this time.

"It's Cole, isn't it?" I snapped suddenly, "He did this."

No one rushed to answer. Bri shifted in her seat with a quiet hiss, adjusting her leg like it hurt to even breathe" Who else you think?" she muttered, "You think we just fell down the stairs together?"

Jas let out a short breath through her nose, her arms tightening across her chest. "He came with his men," she said flatly.

Mama D's hand pressed harder into her side at that, her jaw tightening, but she didn't interrupt.

Morgan spoke next, "He gave us a choice," she said. "We either sign everything over... or we clear the whole debt."

Something cold crept down my spine.

"Clear it?" I echoed, my voice tightening. "All of it?"

Bri laughed again, but there was nothing funny about it, "Yeah," she said. "With money we don't have."

"He says we're already in too deep," Morgan added, "Says the debt keeps growing. Interest, penalties... all that shit he makes up as he goes."

"That's not a deal," I said, shaking my head. "That's-"

"Control," Tasha cut in.

Looked between them, my chest tightening with every second. “So what, if you don’t pay him back, he just- what? Takes the business?”

Bri’s eyes flicked up to mine, and something in her expression made my stomach twist, “Not just the business,” she said.

I felt it before she even finished. That cold, sinking feeling.

“He turns it into something else,” Morgan said quietly, “That’s what he wants.”

My fingers stilled in my lap, “What do you mean?” I asked, even though something in me already knew.

Bri leaned her head back against the chair, staring at the ceiling like she was too tired to even hold herself up anymore. “He doesn’t want escorts,” she said bluntly, “He wants full control.”

Jasmine’s jaw clenched, “No rules. No security. No saying no.”

“No,” I breathed.

Morgan’s eyes met mine, “Yeah,” she said. “A brothel. That’s what he said.”

“He said if we don’t clear the debt by next month,” Bri continued, her voice flat, “he takes everything. The house. The clients. Us.”

I looked at Mama D, my throat tight, my chest rising too fast. “You’re not actually considering that,” I said, shaking my head. “You can’t-”

“I’m not signing shit,” Mama D said sharply.

Doctor DS

“But he’s not asking,” Morgan said softly.

I felt the color drain from my face, my hands going cold in my lap. My thoughts scrambled, trying to find something, anything that made this less real.

“He can’t just do that,” I said, “There are laws, there are-”

“Gianna,” Bri cut in, looking at me like I was missing something obvious, “Men like him don’t follow laws.”

I stared at my hands, but I couldn’t really see them. My thoughts were moving too fast, crashing into each other, trying to find a way out of something that already felt sealed

shut. There had to be something. Someone. A way to stop this before it turned into something worse.

“He can’t just walk in here again,” I said, “You don’t have to let him. We can-

The words slipped. We can what? Call the police? Run? Hide? None of it sounded real. None of it sounded like it would actually stop a man like Cole.

“No,” I said, “There has to be a way. He’s not untouchable.”

The room went quiet again. Mama D’s hand stilled against her ribs. Morgan’s gaze flicked past me. My skin prickled.

A man’s voice followed, “Well, this is touching.”

I froze.

“I was starting to think you weren’t coming,” he went on, his tone almost bored, “And here I was, waiting so patiently.”

My pulse started to pound in my ears. Slowly, I turned my head toward the doorway. His gaze locked onto mine, and something in his smile twisted just enough to make my skin crawl.

“There she is,” he said, “Now tell me, what’s the right way to address you?”

A pause.

Then that smile again.

“Is it Princess Capone these days?”

Janedoewritings Author

Let me know what you think!

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 106

Gianna

“I’m nobody’s princess,” I said but my body locked in place the second his voice settled into the room like something rotten.

Cole leaned against the doorway like he owned it. His eyes dragged over me slowly, taking his time like I was something he had already decided the price of.

He walked closer. One step. Then another. Boots heavy against the floor. I forced my chin up.

“Stop right there.”

An ugly smile pulled at his mouth, “You don’t get to give orders here.”

His gaze flicked over my face, then down, then back up again. I held his stare. Inside, something twisted tight. Don’t show it. Don’t you dare show it.

“You’ve got nerve,” he went on, “Walking around with that last name tied to you now. Your mother moved fast,” he added. “One day she’s drowning, next day she’s sitting pretty under a rich man’s roof.”

My hands curled into fists at my sides, “Say another word about my mom, I dare you.”

He smiled wider. His eyes flicked past me for half a second, toward the couch, then came right back.

“I just find it interesting,” he continued, “how quickly people learn to survive when the right man shows up with the right kind of money.”

Something hot flared in my chest, “If you have something to say,” I said, “say it without dressing it up.”

“Alright. Your mother found herself a powerful man. Good for her. Smart move. Shame it didn’t teach you the same lesson.”

I let out a short breath through my nose, “Yeah?” I said. “And what lesson is that?”

His gaze sharpened, “That power isn’t something you fight,” he said, “It’s something you use. Let’s not pretend you don’t understand how this works,” he murmured. “You’re in a house now where money moves like water. Accounts open and close with a whisper.”

My stomach tightened.

“You have access,” he continued, watching my face carefully. “More than you had yesterday.”

There it was. I knew where this was going.

“You’re going to be my little inside girl. You’re going to steal from the Capones, and you bring me enough to clear this debt, and maybe I’ll stop using your friends as punching bags.”

I laughed, “If you think I’m going to steal for you then you’ve got the wrong girl.”

“Don’t be stupid,” he said quietly.

“Don’t be desperate,” I shot back.

His eyes hardened.

“You are stupid to even suggest that, Cole. The Capones are at the very top of the food chain in this entire state. They don’t negotiate with people like you, they delete them. If a single word reaches them that you even breathed in my direction, if they find out you touched my mother’s name with your filthy mouth, they won’t just come for your money. They will squish you under their shoe like a bug and won’t even stop to wipe off the mess.”

Cole’s jaw tightened, and for the first time, I saw the bravado crack. He looked at the bruised faces of my friends, then back at me, searching for a sign of a bluff. I didn’t give him one.

But as I said the words, something inside of me whispered... They wouldn’t do that for you. You’re nothing to them. You’re just a problem in their house.

Then slowly... he smiled again but this time it wasn’t amused. It was calculating.

“Interesting,” he murmured, “But here’s the thing, I don’t need you to like the idea. I just need you to understand the clock is ticking. You’ve got time, but not much. Just enough to decide how loyal you really are to your friends.”

Cole’s smile didn’t leave his face. It just... shifted. He turned his head slowly, dragging his gaze away from me and over the room. Over Bri. Over Jasmine. Over Mama D.

And then it landed on Morgan.

She went still.

I saw it happen. The exact second she realized. Cole walked to her like he had all the time in the world.

“Nineteen, right?” he said casually, tilting his head as he looked at Morgan like she was something on a menu,” Men pay a lot for that kind of... innocence.”

Morgan’s fingers curled tighter into the fabric of the couch.

“Don’t-” Mama D started, her voice sharp despite the pain.

Cole didn’t even look at her, “That’s valuable,” he went on, almost thoughtful, “Untouched stock always is.”

My stomach dropped so hard it felt like I couldn’t breathe.

P

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 107

“No,” I snapped, stepping forward before I even thought about it. “You don’t get to talk about her like that.”

His eyes flicked back to me, amused, “Relax,” he said lightly, “I’m just thinking out loud.”

He wasn’t. We all knew he wasn’t.

Morgan shook her head quickly, “I’m not going anywhere with you.”

Cole laughed, “See, that’s the problem,” he said, glancing back at his men. “You girls.still think you get a say.”

Bri pushed herself up from the chair despite the way her leg shook, “Get the hell out.”

Jasmine stepped forward too, her fists already clenched, “You heard her.”

Cole sighed like we were inconveniencing him. Then everything happened too fast. One second the room wa tense and the next second, his hand shot out and grabbed Morgan by the arm.

She screamed.

“No-!” I lunged forward, grabbing her other arm, trying to pull her back.

Cole didn’t even look at me. He just shoved me hard. I hit the floor, my shoulder slamming into the edge of the table. Pain shot down my arm.

“Gianna!” Mama D’s voice echoed.

Jasmine moved next. She swung at one of his men, her fist connecting with his jaw but then he hit back harder. Her head snapped to the side and she dropped.

Bri tried to grab a glass bottle from the table, but another man caught her wrist and twisted. She cried out.

“Stop!” I yelled, pushing myself up again, my head spinning.

Cole still had Morgan. She was struggling now, kicking, clawing, panic written all over her face. “Let me go! Let me go!”

“Enough,” Cole muttered, tightening his grip.

Something in me snapped. I didn’t think. I just moved. I grabbed the nearest thing I could find, a heavy metal lamp and swung it straight at him.

It connected with his shoulder. A dull, solid hit. He staggered half a step. His head turned slowly toward me.

He staggered, his grip on Morgan loosening just enough for her to rip herself away and scramble back toward Mama D. Cole turned his head slowly, his eyes burning with a dark, violent light. For a second, I thought he was going to kill me. I saw him pull back his fist, but then he hesitated.

The Capone name. It was the only thing keeping his hand back. The consequences. The fear of what would come if he crossed them.

“Stupid girl,” he muttered, “Clock’s ticking. You’ve got a month.’

His grip on Morgan loosened just enough to shove her back toward us. She stumbled, collapsing to the floor.

“After that,” he added, straightening his jacket, “I stop asking nicely.”

Then he turned his back on us, his men followed without a word. The door clicked shut behind them... but it

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echoed louder than anything he’d said.

“No,” I said, shaking my head, my voice rough, uneven, “No, we’re not doing this his way.”

They all looked at me. Bri still half-standing, Jasmine holding her jaw, Morgan curled into herself, Mama D watching with tired eyes that had seen too much.

“We’re getting that money,” I went on, “Every cent. But not from the Capones. I don’t care what it takes. We’ll work. We’ll grind. We’ll bleed for it if we have to. We’re not going to ask men for handouts.”

Bri let out a shaky breath, sinking back into the chair. “Gianna…” she muttered, rubbing her face, we already do that. This job? It’s still men. It’s always men.”

Jasmine nodded slowly, wincing as she moved. “They pay. We survive. That’s the deal.”

I stepped closer, my head shaking harder now. “No,” I said, “It’s not the same.”

They all looked at me again.

“It’s not the same,” I repeated. “Because you choose it. You show up. You set your price. You decide what you give and what you don’t. You walk away when you want to. That’s not someone owning you. That’s you making something out of a system that was already built to use you.”

Mama D’s eyes softened just a little.

“You’re not sitting in some rich man’s house waiting for him to throw money at you,” I said, “You’re not leeching. You’re working. You’re surviving on your terms.”

Bri let out a small, humorless laugh, “Surviving on our backs, you mean.

“Yeah,” I shot back instantly, “And?”

That shut her up.

“If the world is going to treat us like something to be used,” I went on, “then fine. We flip it. We charge for it. We take control of it. But we don’t let them think they own us because of it.”

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 108

Morgan slowly pushed herself up, “What if we don’t make it in time?” she whispered.

“Then we keep going,” I said.

Bri looked at me for a long second, “You’re stupidly insane sometimes, G…”

“Yeah,” Jasmine added under her breath, “a little.”.

I let out a small, tired breath. “Maybe.”

Then Bri stepped forward first, wrapping her arms around me tight. Jasmine joined next, wincing but not stopping. Morgan followed, her grip shaking but strong and then Tasha and Em. Mama D came last, her arms wrapping around all of us, pulling us in close.

We stood there like that, holding on like if we let go, everything would fall apart.

No words.

Just us women.

Raphael

The room was dark, the only light coming from the moon bleeding through the slats of the blinds. I had her pinned against the bed, my hands buried deep in her hair as I drove into her from behind.

It felt incredible, better than anything I'd ever felt. My cock felt thick and strained, buried to the hilt in a heat that seemed to melt around me, pulling me deeper with every shove.

I groaned, as I focused on the way her body arched under mine, the way her back curved perfectly into my chest. I reached around, my palms flat against her stomach, pulling her back against me so I could go even deeper.

The friction was perfect, a tight, wet slide that made my vision blur at the edges. I was going hard, pushing myself until I felt like I was going to break, and she was taking every bit of it, her soft whimpers filling the quiet air.

Suddenly, she twisted in my grip. She pushed back, forcing me onto the mattress. I hit the pillows with a heavy thud, my breath hitching as she scrambled over me. She moved in the shadows, until she was straddling my hips. She reached down, her small, soft hands guiding my cock toward her. When she sat down, sliding all the way onto me, the sensation was so intense I nearly lost it right then.

I reached up, my hands finding her waist, but as she leaned forward, the moonlight hit her face. My heart stopped. It wasn't some nameless girl from a club.

It was Gianna.

Her hair was a wild mess around her shoulders, her green eyes glazed with a hunger that matched my own. She looked at me, her lips parted, and a slow, wicked smile spread across her face.

"Help me..." she whispered,

The realization should have stopped me. It should have made me sick. Instead, it was like gasoline thrown on a fire. I gripped her hips so hard my fingers left marks, and I began to

thrust upward, meeting her every downward move with a violent force. I watched her tits bounce with every heavy hit, the sight of her skin flushing red making

my blood boil.

“Fuck,” I rasped, “You’re so hot. You’re so fucking hot.”

She leaned in, her body pressed flat against mine, and captured my mouth in a kiss that tasted like sin and desperation. Her tongue danced with mine, while she ground her pussy against me, her internal muscles clenching around my cock. I couldn’t breathe. I couldn’t think. I just drove into her one last time, my entire body locking up as a white-hot explosion of pleasure ripped through me. I called her name, the sound muffled against her lips as I came, the sensation so intense it felt like my heart had actually stopped beating.

Then, I hit the mattress.

My eyes snapped open, my chest heaving as I stared at the dark ceiling of my bedroom. The silence was deafening. There was no girl. There was no Gianna.

I was alone.

I reached down, my hand brushing against the cold, wet fabric of my boxers, and let out a long, frustrated breath.

“Fuck,” I muttered.

It was a dream.

A twisted, forbidden lie my brain had told me while I slept.

It wasn’t just a dream. No, it was a warning. I had just spent the night fucking my stepsister in my head, and my body was still reeling from the phantom touch of her skin.

“Goddammit,” I whispered into the dark, because my subconscious had already opened the door, and now there was no way to shut it.

The guilt hit me harder than desire ever could.

Janedoewritings Author

Before you swipe up for the next update, don’t forget to drop a comment and a like

P

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 109

Raphael

Claire's voice echoed across the room before I even looked up, "I'm serious," she said, shifting the small bundle in her arms, "we should do this every week."

The baby made a small sound, his fingers curling into her shirt. She smiled down at him, soft and gone for a second, then snapped right back to us with that same wild energy she always had.

"Family game night," she added, grinning. "Mandatory attendance. No excuses."

Adriano let out a low laugh from where he was already sprawled on the floor, one arm behind his head. "You just want legal permission to boss everyone around."

"I already do that," Claire shot back without missing a beat, "This just makes it official."

Madeleine shifted beside him, sitting cross-legged, hands folded in her lap holding baby Nero, "I like it," she said softly. "It feels... normal."

Vincenzo sat against the couch instead of on it, Aurelia between his legs as he carefully tilted a glass of orange juice toward her mouth. His hand brushed Claire's cheek when she leaned closer.

"Fine," he said simply. "It's a tradition now."

Dante groaned loudly from the floor, "Great, nothing says quality time like watching Luca pretend he doesn't hate

all of us."

"I don't pretend," Luca said flatly without looking up from his cards.

Silvio snorted, "He's right, you know. He hates us very openly."

Jewel laughed too loud for the joke, swinging her legs over the edge of the chair. "I'm going to win anyway. You're all old and slow."

"Watch it," Dante warned, pointing a finger at her. "I'll adopt you just so I can ground you for a month."

"You can't even take care of yourself," Luca muttered.

The room was filled with noise, voices overlapping, and laughter echoing. Insults that meant nothing and everything at the same time.

And then I felt something... someone. My head turned before anyone else reacted. Gianna stepped into the living room and froze, looking around at all of us.

The light caught the stray hairs around her face, the same hair I had wrapped around my fist in my sleep. My throat went bone-dry. Looking at her was like looking at a crime scene I had committed in the dark.

And for a terrifying second, I was sure the marks of that dream were written all over my face for everyone to see.

Hazel noticed her immediately, “Where were you?”

“I was out,” she said, a little too quickly. “With friends.”

Friends.

+15 agriss

My eyes moved over her slowly. There was glitter caught in her hair, not enough to be obvious, just enough to catch the light when she moved. Her clothes were slightly off too. She wasn’t just with friends, she was out clubbing.

I didn’t say anything.

Hazel watched her for a moment longer, “Alright,” she said, “Go rest. You look tired.”

Gianna nodded quickly, like she was grateful the questions stopped. She turned slightly, probably planning to disappear upstairs.

“Wait!” Claire’s voice cut through the room instantly.

Gianna paused. The image of her from the dream, the way she had arched her back and screamed my name slammed into the back of my skull.

“You’re just in time,” Claire said brightly, adjusting Killian in her arms, “We’re starting game night.”

Gianna blinked, “Oh-no, I’m fine, I’ll just go to my room.”

Madeleine leaned forward, smiling softly, “Come sit with us,” she said. “It’ll be fun.”

Gianna shook her head again, “I’m really tired, I-”

“You don’t want to do that. She’s actually really competitive,” Hazel cut in, a small, knowing smirk playing on her lips.

Gianna whirled toward her, her eyes widening. “Mom-”

“Oh, that’s all I needed to hear,” Dante said, sitting up instantly like someone had flipped a switch, “Get over here.”

“No, I don’t want to-”

“Nope,” he cut her off, already getting to his feet, “I love competitive people.”

Before she could react, he crossed the room, grabbed her lightly by the wrist, and dragged her toward the couch.

“Dante-”

“Relax,” he said easily, dropping her into a seat beside him, “You’re family now. You don’t get to escape the trauma of Capone game night. You play, you lose, you cry about it in the shower later. That’s the cycle.”

“I don’t cry,” she muttered, pulling her knees to her chest and tugging her skirt down.

“Good,” Dante shot back, dropping down beside her. “Then you’ll fit right in with the rest of these sociopaths.”

I watched her settle onto the floor. She was barely three feet away from me now. My gaze dropped without permission.

Her hair fell loose around her shoulders, still holding that faint shimmer under the light. Her neck was exposed, soft, unguarded.

hapter 110

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 110

My jaw tightened slightly. My eyes moved once more before I forced them back up.

Stepsister.

I repeated the word internally, a desperate mantra meant to act as a fire extinguisher for the gasoline pouring through my veins. It was supposed to fix the memory of her legs wrapped around my waist in that dream.

It didn’t work. It didn’t do a damn thing.

Dante leaned closer to her, already explaining the rules like he was recruiting her into something/serious, “It’s simple,” he said. “You lie. You accuse. You survive. Try not to be an idiot.”

“She’s not an idiot,” Jewel said quietly.

Dante grinned, “We’ll see.”

My focus stayed on her. Her lips looked slightly swollen, flushed and bruised-looking, as if she’d spent the evening being kissed hard.

The thought felt like a punch to the solar plexus. I cut it off. Don’t go there, Raphael...

Hazel leaned back slightly in her chair, watching her daughters with a smile, leaning into my Dad. Jules had already moved closer, practically vibrating with excitement, whispering something into Gianna’s ear that made her roll her eyes faintly.

“Alright,” Vincenzo said calmly, pulling the room back together, “Enough talking. Start.”

Cards shifted and the game finally began.

Gianna hesitated for half a second before picking up her role card, her fingers brushing the edge carefully, like she was making sure she didn’t miss anything.

Dante leaned closer immediately, trying to peek. “If you’re mafia, I swear to God-”

She shoved his face away lightly, “Stop.”

Vincenzo nodded once, “Night phase.”

Every head dropped. I closed my eyes, but it didn’t help. In the darkness behind my eyelids, I didn’t see the game. I saw the garage. I saw the bike. I felt the phantom weight of her grinding into my lap.

When the room came back to life, Gianna’s eyes were already moving.

“Someone’s dead,” Adriano announced, way too pleased with himself.

“Why do you sound happy?” Madeleine whispered, horrified.

“Because I’m alive,” he shot back, “That’s all that matters.”

“Who?” Claire asked, bouncing Killian lightly like this was some kind of bedtime story.

Adriano pointed across the circle, “Silvio.”

Silvio blinked, “Excuse me?”

“You’re dead,” Dante said helpfully. “Try not to take it personally.”

+15 Banys

“I always take things personally,” Silvio muttered, leaning back dramatically. “This is targeted.”

“Discussion,” Vincenzo said.

“It’s him,” Dante said immediately, pointing at Luca, “He looks guilty.”

“I always look like this,” Luca replied flatly.

“Exactly,” Dante snapped. “Suspicious.”

“Your logic is broken,” Luca said.

“Your face is broken,” Dante shot back.

“Focus,” Vincenzo cut in, not raising his voice.

Gianna leaned forward slightly, her fingers tightening around her card. Her eyes moved from one person to to

another, quick, calculating. Then she pointed at me.

“Interesting,” I said slowly.

Her chin lifted a little, “You didn’t talk during night phase,” she said. “Everyone else moved. You didn’t.”

A few heads turned toward me. Adriano leaned back, impressed, “Oh shit.”

Dante looked between us like he had just found entertainment for the night, “She’s coming for you.”

I held her gaze, “Or,” I said calmly, “I didn’t move because I don’t need to.”

She didn’t look away, “Or,” she shot back, “you’re careful.”

Claire gasped softly like this was better than television, “This is getting good.”

“She’s wrong,” I said, my tone even, “If I were mafia, he’d be dead,” I pointed at Dante without looking at him.

Dante froze, “Why me?”

“Because you’re loud,” I said simply.

“That’s discrimination,” he snapped.

“It’s strategy,” Luca corrected.

Gianna huffed a quiet breath, shaking her head, “You’re deflecting.”

My mouth curved slightly, “And you’re reaching.”

We held eye contact a second too long.

Then Claire’s voice cut in, “Vote.”

“Raphael,” Dante said, pointing like he’d been waiting his whole life.

“Dante,” I returned immediately.

“Luca,” Adriano added just to be difficult.

“Dante,” Luca said without hesitation.

“Raphael,” Madeleine whispered apologetically.

Then, Gianna spoke, “Raphael.”

We locked eyes for a second too long. I could see the pulse jumping in her neck, and all I could think about was putting my mouth right there. I wondered if she was doing this because I’d cut her pay... if this was her petty way of getting back at me.

“Majority,” Vincenzo said calmly, “Raphael.”

A few people let out noises of victory like they had just accomplished something real.

I leaned back slightly, watching her, “Confident,” I said.

“You’re out,” she replied.

I tilted my head once, “We’ll see.”

Claire nodded, “Reveal.”

I flipped my card over.

Civilian.

The room exploded.

“OH SHIT-”

Dante shot up like he’d been electrocuted. “You got him wrong!”

Gianna’s eyes widened, a flash of genuine shock crossing her face before her lips pressed into a thin, tight line. She looked like she wanted to reach across the room and strangle me.

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 111

And just like that, my treacherous brain dragged me back into the dark. I wasn’t seeing her in the living room anymore. I was seeing her on my bike, those same lips parted as she let out a broken, needy moan.

I had to look away before the hunger in my eyes gave me away to my brothers.

Fuck.

“That was bad,” Adriano laughed. “You killed the wrong guy.”

“Relax,” Gianna said quickly, sitting up straighter. “That just means I’m closer to the real ones.”

Dante stared at her, “Yeah,” he said, dropping back down. “She’s crazy like us..”

The game moved on but it wasn’t the same anymore. Because now, she was locked in.

“Adriano’s lying,” she said a few minutes later, pointing a finger directly at his chest.

“I don’t lie,” he said, looking deeply offended. “It’s against my religion.”

“You just did,” she shot back, leaning into the light.

“Prove it, Profiler.”

“You smiled before you answered.”

Then Dante lost it. “She’s profiling you!”

“That’s illegal,” Adriano said.

“That’s accurate,” Luca corrected.

Gianna leaned forward more, fully in it, her mother wasn’t lying when she said she was competitive “And you, she added, turning to Dante, “you’re talking too much.”

“I always talk too much,” he said.

“Exactly.”

“You’re attacking my personality now?”

“Yes.”

“Rude.”

“Effective.”

I watched her the entire time, I didn’t want to but I did. And it annoyed me. The way she leaned in when she got something right. The way her eyes lit up just slightly when someone slipped.

By the time the next round ended, the room was louder. People leaning into each other, arguing, accusing, laughing.

Gianna sat in the middle of it, no longer out of place, no longer trying to leave.

She pointed again at Dante, “It’s him. I’m telling you.”

Dante turned to her slowly, a grin pulling at his mouth. “Or maybe,” he said, “it’s you.”

The rounds kept stacking on top of each other.

Accusations got louder, messier, less about logic and more about who could argue harder. At some point, people stopped sitting properly altogether. Adriano was flat on his back, arguing with the ceiling. Dante was half leaning over Gianna, still trying to catch her “slipping.” Claire had one hand rocking Killian while accusing Luca like it was a sport.

Time blurred.

At some point, someone brought drinks. At some point, Jewel started keeping score that made absolutely no sense. At some point, even Vincenzo’s mouth twitched like he was enjoying it, even if he’d never admit it out loud.

One by one, people started peeling away. Madeleine tugged Adriano with her. Claire disappeared down the hallway with Killian, still humming something soft under her breath. Silvio followed, dragging his feet like he had nowhere important to be.

Dante lingered the longest, throwing one last look at Gianna, “I’m watching you next time.”

She rolled her eyes. “Please don’t.”

Gianna pushed herself up slowly and turned toward the stairs.

I should fire her.

She did well in the meeting yesterday, better than I had expected. I spent the entire morning pushing her, leaning into her space and waiting for her to fold, to slip, to give me a single reason to discard her. But she didn’t. She held her ground with this stubborn, irritating grit, like she had everything to prove and nowhere else to go.

That was the problem.

Gianna wasn’t the type to quit, and I wasn’t the type to show mercy. It meant I’d have to be the one to cut the cord. I had to keep my distance and let this... whatever this dark, pulsing energy was between us, just die out.

It had to end before it turned into something I couldn’t control. Ever since the night of the hunt, my mind had started spinning fantasies about my own stepsister... the kind of thoughts that would get me a bullet in the head from my own brothers if they ever found out.

Watching the rest of the family, it was becoming clear that I was the only one still fighting this. My brothers were slowly opening the door, letting her and her mother into our world as if they belonged here. They were accepting the change, finding a way to coexist, while I was the only one left struggling. I was the only one who knew that the closer she got to our table, the more dangerous it became for me to keep breathing the same air.

Janedoewritings

Author

My wonderful editor fixed the comments glitch!

If you go back, you’ll see your comments have reappeared

So feel free to comment again today, and let me know what you think of the game night!...

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 112

Gianna

The floor was cold against my bare legs, but I didn't care. I was still wearing the scrap of lace and silk f'd performed in, the sequins stinging my skin every time I moved. My hair was a bird's nest of hairspray and glitter, and my feet ached from the six-inch heels I'd kicked off near the door.

In the center of our circle, the carpet was covered in a messy mountain of crumpled bills.

We sat there like kids playing a game, but the air in the Rose Garden was heavy and stale. Mama D leaned against the sofa, her hand still hovering near her bruised ribs, her face pale under the harsh overhead light. Bri and Jasmine were hunched over, their fingers moving fast as they smoothed out ones, fives, and twenties. The crinkle of paper was the only sound in the room.

"Twelve hundred from the stage tonight," Bri muttered, her voice raspy. She added a small stack to the pile. "Plus the private sets. Tasha got another three in tips. Em had a private set that brought in two."

"It's not enough," Jasmine whispered. She didn't look up. She just kept counting, "At this rate, we won't even cover the interest Cole added this morning."

I reached into the top of my corset, pulling out the wad of hundreds I'd tucked away from my last dance. I tossed them into the middle. The heavy paper fluttered down like dead leaves.

Mama D's eyes followed the money, then slowly lifted to mine. She didn't look happy. She looked tired, the kind of tired that goes all the way to the bone.

"Gianna," she said, "Pick it up."

I looked at her, "What?"

"Take your money and go back to your house," Mama D said, gesturing with a weak wave of her hand. "This debt... it's a black hole. It's ours. We lived it, we built it, and we'll bleed for it. But you? You have a chance to be clean. You don't have to put on these rags and shake for men just to throw your life into a fire that's already burning us down."

"She's right, G," Bri added, her hands never stopping their frantic counting. "You don't have to do this. You're the daughter of a fancy man, and the stepdaughter of a man who probably owns half this city. If Salvatore Capone found out you were back on the pole,

shaking your ass for low-lifes in a basement, he wouldn't just be mad. He'd lock you in a cage and throw away the key."

I looked at the bruises on Mama D's face. I looked at the wrap around Bri's knee and the way Jasmine's jaw was still swollen. My heart felt like it was being squeezed by a cold hand. I leaned forward, my hands flat on the floor, ignoring the way the sequins dug into my palms.

"I'm not a daughter of anyone," I said, "I'm a girl who was sleeping on a park bench until you opened your door. I'm the girl who was starving until you put a plate of food in front of me and didn't ask for a single thing in return. You didn't leave me when I was a mess. You didn't tell me I wasn't your responsibility when I had nowhere to go."

I grabbed a handful of the bills, squeezing them until they were crushed in my fist.

"You are my family. You're the family I chose," I whispered, looking Mama D straight in the eyes. "You. And I am not leaving you. If Cole wants blood, he's going to have to take mine, too. Because as long as I can stand up, I am going to dance, and I am going to count, and I am going to fight until this debt is dead."

+15 8gnus

Mama D reached out, her fingers trembling as she touched my cheek, wiping away a smudge of glitter and a stray tear I didn't know had fallen. She didn't say anything else, but she didn't push the money away either.

I leaned back, my heels digging into the carpet as I looked at the mountain of crumpled ones and fives. It looked like a lot, but it wasn't. It was a mountain of paper, but it was still just a molehill compared to what Cole wanted.

P

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 113

"This isn't working," I said, "We're scraping the bottom of the barrel. We need to up the stakes. Tomorrow, we're not just dancing for whatever falls out of a drunk's pocket."

Mama D sighed, her hand moving from her ribs to her forehead. "Gianna, don't start."

"It's not enough," I said, "At this rate, we're just buying ourselves a few more days of breathing. We aren't winning."

Mama D sighed, her hand trembling as she smoothed out a crumpled five. "We're doing what we can, baby. We're working the stage, we're taking the shifts-"

“Then we change the stage,” I interrupted. I leaned forward, my elbows digging into my knees, the sequins of ray costume sparking. “We’re wasting our time in these basement clubs. We’re dancing for men who count their pennies. We need to go where the money doesn’t have a bottom.”

Mama D’s eyes narrowed, “What are you talking about, Gianna?”

“High society,” I said, the words f*eling cold on my tongue, “The private lounges. The nightclubs in the Diamond District where the entry f*e is more than a week’s worth of tips here. That’s where the real money is. That’s how we kill this debt before the month is up.”

“Gianna, no,” Mama D said, “Those places... they’re different. The security is tighter, but the men are more dangerous in a different way. They have power. They have lawyers. If one of them fixates on one of you girls, I won’t be able to hold them back. My word won’t mean a thing to them.”

I let out a long, frustrated groan, the sound vibrating in my chest. “Ugh, like anyone could anyway,” I muttered, shaking my head.

“And you?” She snapped, “You have too much on your plate already. You have your college classes. You have that fancy internship at your stepbrother’s office. You’re already running on empty, G. You can’t pull twelve-hour days at Orion Vector and then dance until four in the morning at a high-end club. You’ll tire yourself out until there’s nothing left of you,”

I looked at her, and for a second, I felt the weight of it all, the fraud models, the risk thresholds, the way Raphael looked at me like I was a bug under a microscope.

Then I looked at the purple bruise on her cheek. I looked at Morgan’s terrified eyes,

I felt something inside me lock into place. It was like a deadbolt sliding home. I wasn’t the scared girl on the park bench anymore. I was a woman.

“I won’t,” I said, “I’ll drink enough coffee to keep my heart racing. I’ll study in the back of the dressing rooms. I’ll do the filing at the office with a smile on my face while my muscles ache. I can pull all three, Mama D. I have to.”

“You’re one girl,” Bri whispered, “You aren’t a machine especially with your...”

“Watch me,” I shot back. I stood up, the lace of my outfit fluttering, “I’ll be the perfect student during the day. I’ll be the best intern in the afternoon. And at night, I’ll be the girl who brings home the money that keeps this house standing. I’m not asking for permission. I’m telling you to get the calls out. Find us the high-stakes gigs. I’m ready to work.”

I turned away, heading toward the bathroom to scrub the glitter off my skin, before I went back home. I didn't care about sleep. I didn't care about the exhaustion.

As long as my heart was beating, I was going to be the wall between Cole and my family.

The moonlight cut through the curtains of my bedroom. I sat on the edge of my bed, the silence of the Capone mansion pressing against my ears.

I got up and went to the closet. My hands were trembling as I reached under the clothes, my fingers brushing against the cold, smooth wood.

I pulled it out.

Reminder...

I looked down at my feet. A week ago, they had been a mess. But now, they looked almost perfect. Raphael had wrapped them with a strangely gentle hand, and the skin had healed beautifully.

+15 8gnus

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 114

It was a clean slate. A fresh canvas.

The pain was gone, so I needed to do it again. The urge hit me hard, a dark wave.

"Do it," the voice in my head whispered. "You need to be harder. You need to be stronger. If you're going to be the intern, the student, and the dancer, you can't be soft. You have to prove you can handle the pain, the stress, you have to be strong."

I raised the stick, my muscles tensing as I prepared to bring it down against the arch of my foot. I wanted to feel that sharp sting, the one thing I could actually control in a world that felt like it was spinning out of orbit.

But then, I saw her.

My mother. She wasn't her, but she was in my mind. I remembered the way her eyes had filled with tears when she saw what I had done to myself. I remembered the way she had knelt on the floor, her lips soft and warm as she kissed the tops of my feet, whispering that I was enough. That I didn't have to break myself to be loved.

The stick felt heavy in my hand, heavier than it ever had before.

I looked at my healed skin again. If I did this, I was breaking her heart all over again. I was spitting on the care she had given me.

“No,” I whispered into the dark.

I shoved the stick back under the clothes, pushing it as far back as I could reach. I didn’t want it. I didn’t need the pain to be perfect, to be strong. I can just… be.

I needed to move. I needed to breathe. I grabbed a thin sweater over my night trousers and t-shirt and slipped out of my room. My bare feet making no sound on the expensive rugs, until I reached the glass doors leading to the vast, sprawling gardens.

I walked until I reached the center of the stone terrace, a wide, flat circle surrounded by high hedges and white roses that glowed in the dark.

I took a breath, closing my eyes. I didn’t need music. I could hear the rhythm in the wind, the beat of my own heart.

I started slow. I rose onto the balls of my feet, my toes gripping the cold stone. Plie. My knees bent outward, my back straight, my arms curving in front of me as if I were holding something precious. Then, I pushed off.

I began a routine I had practiced a thousand times in the studios, but here, under the open sky, it felt different. I moved into a series of pirouettes, my body spinning in a blurred circle. One, two, three turns. The world became a smear of moonlight and greenery, and for a second, the weight on my shoulders simply vanished.

I transitioned into a grand jeté, leaping across the stone floor with my legs split wide in the air. I felt like I was flying, the wind catching my hair, pulling the scent of glitter and hairspray away and replacing it with the smell of the night. I landed softly, my knees absorbing the impact, and immediately went into a sequence of small, rapid steps, bourrée, moving across the terrace like water rippling over rocks.

My arms reached for the moon, my fingers stretching until they ached. I did an arabesque, one leg extended perfectly behind me, my chest open and proud. I felt powerful. I felt free. Every leap was a “fuck you” to Cole. Every spin was a “watch me” to Raphael.

I finished the routine with a deep, sweeping bow, my forehead almost touching the cold stone. I stayed there for a long time, my lungs burning, my heart thumping a happy, wild rhythm against my ribs. For the first time in weeks, I didn’t feel like a weakling. I felt like a storm.

C +15 Bonus

Slowly, I lifted my head, a small, breathless smile still tugging at my lips.

The smile died instantly.

I didn’t even hear him move. One second I was alone with the moon, and the next, a wall of black heat was standing right in front of me. I froze, my heart skipping a beat.

P

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 115

Raphael was standing less than an inch away.

He was dressed in all black, a skin-tight shirt that mapped out every hard muscle of his chest and shoulders, and heavy black cargo pants tucked into tactical boots. Leather holsters were strapped across his chest and thighs, the cold glint of a handgun and the serrated edge of a knife peeking out from the dark gear. He held a sleek black helmet in one hand.

The glasses were gone. His eyes were bare, dark, boring into mine with an intensity that made my skin feel like it was on fire. The silver rings were back on his fingers, and a single hoop glinted in his ear.

I couldn’t move. I couldn’t even breathe. The air between us was gone, and that made the hair on my arms stand up. I looked up at him, my fingers reflexively curling into the thin fabric of my sweater, pulling it tight over my chest as if I were standing there completely naked.

He wasn’t moving. He was just... staring. His gaze dropped from my eyes to my lips, lingering there until I felt them throb, then drifted down to the curve of my throat.

He looked like he wanted to kill me. The silence was screaming. I could smell him, leather, cold rain, and that expensive, spicy cologne that made my head spin.

“What-“My voice came out softer than I wanted. I swallowed and tried again. “What are you doing here?”

He didn’t answer right away. His eyes moved over me slowly once more, taking everything in.

The loose strands of my hair. The flush on my skin. The way my chest was still rising too fast from the routine.

I felt it everywhere.

That look.

It pressed against my skin like heat.

My grip tightened on the fabric of my sweater.

“Raphael-”

He leaned in just a fraction of an inch closer. His chest was so close I could feel the vibration of his breathing. My lips parted on a broken breath I couldn’t catch. Standing there in the dark, with his shadow swallowing me whole, he made me feel things that were wrong... It was a dark, pulsing heaviness between my legs, a deep, liquid ache 1 had no business feeling for my stepbrother.

My mind was screaming at me to move, to run, to remember the house we shared, but my body was locked in his orbit. Every inch of my skin was prickling with a desperate charge, wanting to bridge that tiny gap of air and press myself into the hard, cold gear strapped to his chest.

“I’ve seen you,” he rasped, the low edge of his voice vibrating straight through my chest and settling deep in my gut. My stomach twisted into a tight knot as the sound of him washed over me, “I know those eyes. I feel like I already know the way you move.”

He tilted his head, his gaze dropping to my mouth, lingering there until I had the urge to bite my lip. Then he

I looked back into my eyes.

“We’ve met, Gianna,” he whispered, the words brushing against my face like it was a threat, “Long before this house... long before you were anything to me...”

The way he said it, the way he looked at me like he was remembering the feel of me made my stomach flip.

He was looking for the girl from the club, the girl from the Gold Room, and for a terrifying second, I thought he could see the sequins and the glitter hiding right under my skin.

I couldn’t find my voice. I could only stare at the silver in his ear and the heat in his eyes, trapped in a moment that felt like it was about to catch fire.

Janedoewritings

Author

I hope you guys are enjoying the story so far!

Also, just a little reminder... lust love...

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 116

Gianna

“We’ve met, Gianna,” he whispered, the words brushing against my face like it was a threat, “Long before this house... long before you were anything to me...”

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I couldn’t find my voice. I could only stare at the silver in his ear and the heat in his eyes, trapped in a moment that felt like it was about to catch fire.

“You’re... you’re wrong,” I finally choked out, my voice sounding small and breathless in the quiet garden. I tried to pull back, my heart racing, “You’ve got the wrong person, Raphael. You’re mistaking me for someone else. We never met before my mom married your dad.”

I turned to leave, my legs we’re shaking, but I didn’t even get a step away.

His hand shot out, his fingers wrapping around my upper arm. He didn’t hurt me, but his grip was firm, and impossibly hot through the fabric of my sweater. He jerked me back toward him, pulling me so close that I could feel the hard planes of his tactical vest against my chest. The scent of him swirled around my head until I felt dizzy.

“Don’t lie to me,” he drawled, his face inches from mine. His eyes searched mine, “You have green eyes, Gianna. Do you know how rare that is? Less than two percent of the world. And I’m damn sure I’ve seen a pair exactly like yours... looking at me from almost this exact distance.”

He looked me up and down, his gaze slow and insulting, crawling over my body until I felt like I was burning alive. He leaned in, his lips hovering just a hair’s breadth from my ear, his voice turning into a cruel, sexy rasp that made my knees shake.

“So, what was it?” he asked, “Did we fuck in the past? Was it a one-night stand I was too bored to remember? Or did I just have you against a wall somewhere or maybe, I have you bent over somewhere before I knew your name?

My blood boiled, the heat from the insult rushing straight to my face until my cheeks stung. I looked at his hand on my arm, the way his tattooed fingers looked against my clothes, and then I looked him dead in the eyes.

“Is that how you do it, Raphael?” I breathed, and leaned in until the heat from his body felt like it was soaking into my skin, “You see a girl who looks familiar and your ego just fills in the blanks? You just assume you’ve been inside her?”

His grip on my arm didn’t loosen, it shifted, his fingers pressing into my skin like he was trying to leave a permanent mark. His eyes went dark, the black centers swallowing the color until they looked like two endless pits of shadow.

“Trust me,” I whispered, my lips hovering just a hair’s breadth away from his jaw. I could see the tiny, rough stubble on his skin and the way a muscle in his cheek ticked, “If I had ever let a man like you touch me, I’d remember it. I’d remember exactly how much it let me down.”

I looked down at his hand, then slowly dragged my eyes back up to his, making sure he saw the mock in my stare.

“Or maybe you did see me,” I murmured, “Maybe I was busy doing something important and you were just another face in the crowd. Just another guy looking at me that I didn’t even bother to notice.”

For a split second, he wasn’t looking at my eyes anymore, he was looking at my mouth and the way he looked at me, it was as if he was already tasting me, already ruining me without ever moving a muscle.

“Let go,” I snapped, “Go do whatever dark, lonely shit you do at night, Raphael. We’ve never met before, why don’t you just drop it already?”

His knuckles grazed the side of my breast as he pulled me a fraction of an inch closer. I could feel the cold metal of the buckles on his vest and the hard line of his body against mine.

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 117

He leaned down, his lips hovering so close to mine I could feel the heat of his breath. “Your mouth says one thing, but your pulse is screaming something else entirely.”

He tilted his head, his dark eyes raking over my face with a taunting, arrogant smirk that made my blood boil and my knees shake at the same time.

“I’m going to figure it out,” he murmured, “And trust me, it’ll be a lot easier for you if you just admit it now. If we did have a night together, no one else has to know. That can be our little secret. But if I have to go looking for the truth myself?”

He let the words hang in the air, his gaze dropping back to my lips that made my heart slam against my ribs.

“I won’t be nearly as quiet about what I find. So, what’s it going to be?”

“If you’re so sure, then go ahead,” I challenged, “Because we have never even been in the same room, Raphael. Let alone me letting someone like you touch me before my mother married into this mess.”

For a long, heart-stopping moment, he didn’t move. He just stared at me, his gaze dropping to my lips one last time with a look of pure hunger that made my stomach flip.

God, please, don’t let him put the pieces together. Don’t let him see through the mask. If Raphael ever realized that the girl he’d watched put on a striptease for him was the same girl now living under his roof, he would destroy me. He’d use it like a weapon to strip away the tiny bit of dignity I had left. He would ruin my life, and he’d probably enjoy every second of watching me fall apart.

Suddenly, he reached out and captured my face, his fingers firm against my jaw as he tilted my head back. He forced me to look at him, pinning me with a stare. He leaned down, his eyes dropping to my mouth, and like a traitor, my lips parted for him.

“Have it your way, Gianna,” he rasped, the words vibrating against my skin, “I always find what I’m hunting for.”

He leaned closer, moving with a slowness, as if he were giving me every chance to shove him away. But the struggle never came. Instead, pulled by some dark, magnetic force I couldn’t fight, I found myself leaning in.

Our noses brushed. We were so close that I could feel the ghost of his lips against mine, the static electricity of the “almost” making my skin prickle and burn. I was drowning in his shadow, my eyes fluttering shut as I waited for the final fraction of an inch to disappear.

“Ginny? What are you doing out here?”

The small, sleepy voice cut through the air. We both froze. Raphael didn’t pull away instantly, he let his thumb linger on my lip for one more agonizing second before slowly, calmly, releasing my face. I stepped back, my heart nearly leaping out of my chest as I turned toward the glass doors.

Jules was standing there, rubbing one eye with the back of her hand. She looked between me-flushed, breathless, and trembling—and Raphael, who stood there in his black tactical gear, looking like a god of death caught in the moonlight.

“Why are you guys standing so close?” she asked.

I pulled my sweater tight around me, my skin still burning where he had touched me.

“Jules,” I managed to say, my voice sounding way too high, “We were just... talking. Go back to bed, okay?”

Raphael didn’t look at her, he just kept his eyes on me, a knowing glint in his stare that said this was far from over.

Jules crossed her arms over her cartoon-character pajama top, her eyes narrowing as she looked at us.

For a ten-year-old, she had the investigative instincts of a bloodhound.

“Why is he holding your face?”

My heart did a painful somersault, “We were just... discussing my internship. Business stuff.”

“In the garden? In the dark?” Jules took a step forward, her bare feet padding softly on the stone. She looked at Raphael, completely unintimidated by him, “Are you guys...” she trailed off, “Because if you are, Mom is going to freak out.”

I felt my face turn a shade of red that probably glowed in the dark. I looked at Raphael, praying he’d say something to fix this.

Raphael didn’t even look embarrassed. He reached into one of the many pockets of his black cargo pants and pulled out a leather wallet.

“How much to forget you saw me tonight, Shorty?” he rasped.

Jules didn’t look at me for permission. She didn’t hesitate. She looked at the wallet, then back up at the man in

front of her.

“Five hundred bucks,” she said, “Cash. Right now. Or I’m going straight to Mom’s room and telling her you were trying to eat Ginny’s face.”

“Jules!” I gasped, my jaw dropping. “You can’t-Raphael, don’t—”

But it was too late. Raphael flipped open the wallet. His fingers flicked through a stack of crisp bills. He pulled out five hundred-dollar bills and held them out.

Jules snatched them so fast I thought I heard the air whistle. She did a quick count, her little eyes gleaming with a terrifying, capitalistic fire.

“Pleasure doing business with you, Raphael,” she chirped. She stuffed the money into her pajama pocket and turned on her heel. “Goodnight, Ginny. Try not to get caught making out with your brother.”

She skipped back into the house, the glass door clicking shut behind her.

“Jules! Get back here!” I hissed “Jules, you give that back! You don’t-”

I lunged forward, my feet slipping on the cold stone as I tried to chase after her. My mind was a blur of horror. If she told my mother, if she even joked about this at breakfast, my life was over. I had to grab her and make her swear on her life that she was joking.

But I didn’t get more than two steps.

A hand shot out. Raphael’s fingers wrapped around my upper arm. He yanked me back, the force of it spinning me around until I slammed right into him.

“Let go!” I snapped, my hands bunching into fists against his chest, “Raphael, let me go! She’s going to say something! She’s a ten-year-old, she’s going to lose her mind and blab to everyone! There’s literally nothing happening between us, but she’s going to make it sound like we were doing something disgusting!”

I tried to twist away, but he was like a mountain. He didn’t even move. He just looked down at me, his thumb pressing into the soft skin of my arm.

“She won’t,” he rasped.

“How do you know?” I whispered, my voice shaking. I looked up at him, my lips parting as the heat from his body began to melt through my panic.

“Because she liked the power of having a secret, Gianna,” he murmured, “And she’s smarter than you give her credit for. She knows that five hundred is just the start. She’s not going to kill the golden goose on the first night.”

His words didn’t comfort me, they made my blood turn to ice. The idea of my ten-year-old sister holding a debt over a man like Raphael was just as terrifying as her blabbing.

“You don’t understand,” I choked out, the panic clawing at my throat. “She tells my mother everything. They don’t have secrets. I can’t-I can’t just leave this to chance!”

I didn’t wait for him to agree. I put every ounce of strength I had into my shoulder, wrenching my arm out of his grip with a desperate jerk. The sudden movement caught

him off guard just enough for me to stumble back, my skin tingling where his heat had been.

I didn't look at him. I turned and sprinted toward the glass doors. My mind was a mess of worst-case scenarios: my mother's face when Jules' lies to her that we were kissing in the dark.

I reached the door and grabbed the handle, but some magnetic pull made me stop. I looked back over my shoulder.

Raphael hadn't moved.

He was still standing in the exact same spot, a tall, dark silhouette against the moonlight. Even from across the garden, I could feel the weight of his gaze.

I shivered, finally feeling the cold night air hitting my skin, and ducked inside, sliding the door shut with a trembling hand.

Janedoewritings

Author

I'll update the next chapter in a few hours...

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 119

Raphael

The engine of my bike screamed between my thighs. I kicked it into sixth gear, the world blurring into a smear of gray and black as I tore down the coastal highway. The wind hit my chest, but it wasn't enough to cool the heat still burning under my skin.

I could still feel the delicate weight of her jaw in my hand.

Gianna.

My head was a mess of her scent, that soft, flowery perfume that didn't belong anywhere near a man like me. I shifted my weight, leaning the bike hard into a sharp curve until my knee puckered the asphalt.

My dick throbbed, straining against the heavy leather of my racing suit. I had been seconds away from ruining everything. Seconds away from tasting if those green eyes tasted as sweet as they looked.

I didn’t like her as a person. But fuck, I wanted to use her. I wanted to see if she’d make those same broken sounds under me that she made on my bike in the garage.

I took the exit for the industrial docks, the tires chirping as I skidded onto the cracked pavement.

This was the Pit-an illegal stretch of wasteland. I pulled up to the starting line, the LED headlights of my bike cutting through the thick haze of cigarette smoke and exhaust.

I pulled the leather gloves on, the carbon fiber knuckles clicking as I flexed my hands.

Around me, the Pit was screaming. This was Silvio’s masterpiece, my little brother had a talent for turning a stretch of broken concrete into a godless playground.

He organized these street races every three months, a dark, high-stakes circus for the families to wash their money and blow off steam.

I shifted my weight, the leather of my suit pulling tight against my thighs. My dick was still hard, a dull, annoying ache that reminded me of how close I’d been to actually doing it. I should have just taken her right there against the stone pillar. This wasn’t new. It was just inconvenient timing attached to the wrong girl.

I don’t get caught in things like this.

Everything has a place. A category. A purpose. I don’t blur lines, and I don’t lose control over something as simple as attraction. That’s for men who don’t understand themselves. I do. Which is why this… stayed exactly where it needed to stay.

Lust.

It wasn’t about her, not really. It was the situation. The label. The way the world would choke on it if it ever saw it for what it was. Forbidden things always carried more weight than they deserved. People confuse restriction with

value all the time.

She just happened to be standing on the wrong side of that line.

I’ve done it before.

Not with her.

But the principle doesn’t change.

1 rolled my shoulders once, grounding myself win, prohling, the thought bar bo phate whose whongsh don’t chase things that complicate the structure I’ve already boli, had don’t make decisions based on my

She was just poorly placed.

And if I ever decided to cross that line, it wouldn’t be because I lost control.

It would be because I chose to

And I won’t, I can’t.

I’m not throwing away my name for a temporary high. My family is the only thing that actudy mass, fore only thing that’s permanent, and I’m not about to burn the whole house down for a fuck I need to get her out of my sight and out of my life before the damage is done.

She’s not worth the risk.

The girl in the middle of the track raised the flag, Her skirt was so short it was barely there.

“Three,” she yelled over the roar.

I kicked the bike into gear, the chain rattling,

“Two,”

I leaned forward, my chest flat against the tank, my eyes locked on the narrow strip of road ahead. The pressure in my chest was building, a dark, violent need for speed to drown out the thoughts in my head.

The flag, snapped down.

I dumped the clutch, and the Ducati launched like a bullet from a barrel. The front wheel clawed at the air before slamming back down onto the pavement.

+15 Bgnus

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 120

The first turn was a death trap, a sharp left around a rusted shipping container. I didn’t brake. I leaned the bike so low I could feel the heat radiating off the asphalt, my knee

puck dragging and throwing sparks into the dark. One slip, one patch of oil, and I'd be a smear on the concrete.

I didn't care.

I wanted the danger. I wanted the adrenaline. I pushed the bike harder, the needle hitting the red line as I tore down the straightaway.

The tachometer needles danced in the red. Then came the vibration, not from my bike, but from the modified cruiser lunging into my peripheral.

He was the son from the Lucchesi crew, a man named Vane who had more ego than talent. He was riding dirty, his front tire intentionally clipping my rear swingarm to destabilize my line. He wanted to see me slide.

With my left hand, I reached into the holster. My fingers closed around the matte-black grip of the Scythe, it was a custom-made disruptor I'd spent three months perfecting in the basement. It wasn't designed for a clean kill, it was designed for a lesson.

Vane surged forward, his shoulder nearly brushing mine as he prepared to shove me into the concrete barrier of the next hairpin turn.

I didn't give him the chance.

I leveled the barrel at his thigh and squeezed the trigger. There was only a high-frequency hiss. The pressurized dart pierced his leather suit, delivering a concentrated pulse directly into his nervous system.

It was instantaneous.

Vane's body didn't just go limp, it locked. His muscles seized into a statue, his spine arching as the electricity fried his ability to breathe, let alone steer. His bike didn't slide, it simply stopped obeying him. The cruiser ghost- rode for three meters before sliding into some trash cans.

I kicked the Ducati into sixth and I crossed the finish line a full five seconds ahead of the pack, the engine screaming in triumph. I skidded to a halt, the back tire smoking as I spun the bike around.

One of the flag girls, a blonde in a scrap of denim and a top that was more string than fabric didn't waste a second. She walked through the mess of bikes until she was standing right in my space.

She was the perfect palate cleanser. A mindless, easy exit after the way Gianna had managed to crawl under my skin and wreck my focus especially after the mess Gianna had made of the last Sex Hunt.

I didn’t say a word. I just reached out, my gloved hand hooking behind her waist and pulling her hard against me. My fingers dug into the soft curve of her ass, squeezing.

I leaned down, my helmet still on, the dark visor reflecting her wide, excited eyes.

“You want to get the fuck out of here?”

A breathless smile broke across her face as she gripped my forearms, “Yes,” she whispered, her chest heaving against mine.

The sun was an unwelcome intrusion through the floor-to-ceiling glass of my bedroom, but the heat between my

+15 Banys

legs was what actually pulled me from the dark.

1 didn’t open my eyes.

The wet friction told me exactly where I was.

The blonde from the track was on her knees, her hair against my thighs. She was working with a desperate energy, her hands wrapped around the base of my shaft as she tried to swallow the length of me.

She was failing.

I watched through hooded eyes as she struggled, her jaw strained, the muscles in her neck corded with the effort. Every time she tried to take more, she choked, a needy sound vibrating against my skin.

“God,” she managed to gasp out, pulling back just enough to breathe, her lips slick and swollen. She looked up ar me, her eyes glazed as she snapped my cock against her cheeks, “You’re... you’re too much. I can’t fit it all in. I’ve never... I can’t get you all the way down. I’m so sorry, Raphael.”

I lay there, my hands behind my head, watching her come apart over the sheer scale of me. A dark, cold sense of satisfaction settled in my chest.

“Don’t apologize,” I rasped, as I reached down, my fingers tangling in her hair and tilting her head back until she had to look at me. “No one really can. You aren’t the first to find out, and you won’t be the last.”

X