My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 251

“The way you’re trying to read this is a linear trap,” he said, “Your brain doesn’t move in lines, Gianna. It moves in spheres. You’re trying to force a 3D mind into a 2D space. It’s a sensory overload, not a lack of intelligence.”

He shifted his weight, and I felt the heat of him radiating through my palm. Having my hand pressed to his lap was grounding me far more than the pain of the table ever could.

It was a different kind of intensity... one that made my stomach feel like it was filled with liquid gold.

“I’m changing the font to a heavy-bottomed typeface and increasing the line spacing,” he muttered, clicking through the settings, “And we’re switching the background to a soft charcoal. The high contrast of the white is causing the washout effect.”

I watched as the screen transformed. Suddenly, the ants stopped crawling. The letters felt... a little clearer. At least, they weren’t jumping anymore.

“Now,” he said, his thumb beginning to rub slow, rhythmic circles over the back of my hand, right where it stayed pressed against his thigh. The friction was maddening, “Don’t look at the whole block. Look at this one function. Tell me the logic. Don’t worry about the spelling. Just tell me the path the data takes.”

I swallowed hard, my throat dry. Being this close to him, with my hand trapped between his palm and his leg, I felt like I was short-circuiting. But the “noise” in my head had gone quiet.

“It... it goes into the hidden layer,” I whispered, my voice trembling. “It calculates the weights, then it compares it to the target...”

“Good,” he rasped. He leaned in closer, his chest brushing my arm, his scent wrapping around me like a dark velvet blanket. He typed exactly what I said, turning my thoughts into perfect, clean code, “See? You’re just a high -performance engine trying to run on cheap fuel. You need a different interface, that’s all.”

He turned his head just an inch. His lips were so close to my temple I could feel the heat radiating off them. He wasn’t touching my face, but still I felt like I was drowning in him.

I looked down at our hands-mine still pinned to his lap under his much larger, stronger palm.

“I’ve never actually told anyone about... this,” I said, “The way my brain just quits.”

“Not even your friends?” he asked. His voice was lacking any of the pity I usually felt from people.

I shook my head, my eyes fixed on the dark ink on his knuckles, “My friends at Rose Garden know because they’ve seen me melt down. My mom knows, obviously. And my schools had it on file, but I hated that. It felt like a giant label stuck to my forehead. I never chose to tell anyone. You’re the first person I’ve ever just... said it to. On my own.”

I felt a sting behind my eyes. I thought about Daddy and the way he looked at things that weren’t perfect. He liked clean lines, high grades, and people who didn’t stutter or stumble. I had spent my whole life trying to be a polished mirror for him, thinking that if I could just fix my brain, he might see me as someone worthy.

Raphael let out a short, quiet breath that sounded almost like he was amused.

“Why is it a secret, Gianna?” he asked.

“Because it’s a flaw,” I whispered, keeping my eyes on the dark ink of his tattoos, “It makes me less than everyone else. It means I have to work twice as hard just to look half as good as a normal person.”

“That’s where you’re wrong,” he said. He leaned in, making me look at him. “Do you think guys like Steve Jobs

had ‘perfect’ brains? Or Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Picasso... they didn’t. Their heads didn’t work like the rest of the world’s, and that’s exactly why they were the ones who changed it.”

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 252

I stared at him, my brain trying to process what he was saying. He rattled off those names of visionaries, geniuses, people who literally changed the world acting as if my disability was a superpower.

“Wait,” I whispered, “How do you even know all that?”

I looked at him, searching his face. Raphael wasn’t exactly the type to spend his free time reading inspirational quotes or scrolling through fun facts on the internet. He was a man of data, of cold numbers and power moves.

His thumb traced a slow line across my knuckles. The moonlight caught the sharp edge of his jaw.

“Because I looked it up,” he said simply.

I blinked, my heart doing a strange little stutter. “You... what?”

“After you told me,” he said, “After you admitted why you were struggling with the paperwork. I went home and I researched it.”

He said it so matter-of-factly, like it was just another part of his job. He had gone home, and spent his time looking into the way my mind worked.

I felt a lump in my throat. I had spent so many years trying to hide this, trying to be the perfect daughter for a father who only valued normal, that I never imagined someone would actually take the time to learn the language of my mess.

“You did that?” I asked, my voice barely audible.

“I did it because I wanted to see the full picture of you, Gianna,” he murmured, “And the picture is a lot more impressive than you think it is.”

I looked down at his hand covering mine, then back up at him. I felt a weird flutter in my chest. “Impressive? Me?”

“Yeah,” he said, “I realized I’ve been keeping you on the wrong floor. You don’t belong where I put you. I need you somewhere else in my office...”

I raised an eyebrow, my voice dripping with sarcasm, “Somewhere else? Like where? As a permanent fixture on your dick?”

He froze for a split second, and then he did something that completely floored me. He threw his head back and let out a genuine, loud laugh. It was a rich, deep sound that vibrated in the night air.

I just stared. My brain completely stalled. In all the time I’d known him, through the threats and the tension and the cold stares, I had never heard him actually laugh. It changed his whole face, making the sharp lines of his jaw look almost soft.

“Well, yeah, that too, you little brat,” he said, the laugh still trailing off in his voice as he shook his head, “Dirty mind. But I was actually talking about the basement.”

I blinked, trying to get my thoughts back in order, “Your office has a basement?”

He nodded, his eyes were still dancing with that leftover amusement, “No. My basement has Orion Vector built on top of it to keep people from asking questions.”

I blinked, my brain trying to keep up with the sudden shift. “Wait, so the whole building is basically just a cover?”

He nodded, “Exactly.”

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“So, what’s actually down there?” I asked, my curiosity hitting its peak.

He lifted a shoulder in a slow, lazy shrug. His gaze dropped to my lips for a split second, “You’ll see.”

The air between us felt different now. I looked at him and realized he’d seen the parts of me I hated most and didn’t even blink.

For the first time in forever, I felt... okay. I felt happy.

I didn’t think about it. I didn’t let my brain get in the way. I just leaned forward, closing the tiny gap between us. pressed my lips to his cheek, right near the edge of his jaw. My skin felt electric against his, and I lingered there for a second, breathing in the scent of him.

“Thank you,” I whispered against his skin. “For the help. For... everything.”

But the second I pulled back, the warmth vanished. It was like someone had dumped a bucket of ice water over my

head.

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 253

I looked at Raphael, and he looked just as shaken as I felt. He went completely stiff, his jaw tightening until a muscle pulsed in his cheek. He wouldn’t look at me. He shifted in his seat, suddenly putting distance between our bodies, his movements jerky and uncomfortable.

“So,” he said, his voice distant, like he was talking to a stranger, “We’re even now.”

The giddy warmth in my chest turned to lead. I felt sick. My body was still buzzing from the contact my lips still tingling, but my brain was screaming at me. Why was I feeling this way? Why was I acting like he was someone could just... kiss outside of sex?

I forced a small, shaky smile and nodded, even though I felt like I was going to throw up. “Yeah. We’re even.”

I turned away fast, my hands trembling as I started grabbing my books and laptop. I didn't look back. I needed to get away from him, away from the garden, and away from the terrifying way he made me feel. Raphael stayed seated, staring at the roses with a look of pure stone, both of us trapped in a silence that felt like it was about to explode.

I practically stumbled back into the house, the cool air of the hallway doing nothing to stop the fire burning in my cheeks. My bare feet slapped against the marble floors as I sprinted up the stairs, my books clutched to my chest.

I burst into my room and leaned my back against the door, breathing hard. My heart was a frantic, messy drumbeat in my ears.

What is wrong with you? I shouted at myself in the silence of the room. He's a Capone. He's the man who owns your life for the next six months. You don't kiss men like him. You don't feel giddy when they look at you.

The warmth I had felt on the terrace now felt like a fever I needed to break. I felt like a traitor to my own skin. My body had reacted to him without my permission and not our of lust, and that scared me more than any threat.

I threw my laptop onto the bed and flipped it open, the bright light stinging my eyes. With shaking fingers, I opened a private tab and typed in the one name that used to mean safety, just like Raphael did a few moments ago when he shouldn't, Raphael shouldn't be anything to me.

Leone Caruso.

The screen loaded, and there he was. The man who was supposed to protect me from families like the Capones, not lose me to them. Seeing his face was like a punch to the gut. It hurt, but it was a familiar hurt... a clean pain compared to the confusing, electric mess Raphael was creating in my head.

I'm trying to find you in him. I'm trying to find Leone. I'm looking for Leone's kindness in Raphael's darkness, and it's making me crazy.

I knew I was about to do something stupid. I knew I was about to play with fire. But the silence in this house was too loud, and the memory of Raphael's jaw beneath my lips was too fresh.

I logged into a fake account I'd made weeks ago, no name, no photos. My mouse hovered over the message button on Leone's profile. My brain was screaming at me to stop, to shut the computer, to go to sleep and forget tonight ever happened.

But I couldn't. I was drowning, and Leone was the only shore I remembered.

I typed out two letters, the simplest thing I could manage while my hands were shaking this hard.

Hi.

I hit send.

The little checkmark appeared, and I immediately slammed the laptop shut.

Janedoewritings Author

Enjoy!

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 254

Gianna | Age 13 | Toricelli Estate, Chester County, PA

I was flat on my back, my arms pulled tight above my head and tied to the metal rails of the stretcher. The leather straps bit into my wrists, making my fingers feel numb. Every time I moved, the metal frame groaned under me

Doctor Vance stood over me. He looked angry today, because daddy yelled at him, called him a fake and threatened to kill if he didn't fix me.

"The words are jumping again, aren't they, Gianna?" he asked. His voice was flat. "Your father is paying a lot of money for results. If your brain won't listen to logic, it will listen to survival."

"Please," I sobbed, "I'm trying. I really am. I promise, I'll be better, I'll be good."

He picked up a thick white towel and laid it flat across my face. Suddenly, the world went dark. I could only see the weave of the fabric and the bright white light of the ceiling through the cloth. My heart was slamming against my ribs like it wanted to break out of my chest.

Then came the water.

It was freezing. It hit the towel and soaked through instantly. At first, it just felt wet, but then the air stopped. Every time I tried to take a breath, I sucked in cold, stinging water instead of oxygen. My brain screamed that I was drowning. I bucked my hips, my back arching off the stretcher, my tied arms straining against the straps until I thought my shoulders would pop out of their sockets.

He poured it slowly, a stream that filled my nose and mouth. I couldn't swallow. I couldn't breathe. I was thrashing, my feet kicking at the air, my muffled screams dying in the wet fabric.

Just when the black spots started to dance in my eyes, he pulled the towel away.

I coughed, spraying water into the air, gasping for breath so hard it hurt my lungs. I was shaking, my whole body vibrating with terror.

"Read," Vance said, pointing to the page.

I looked at the book. My vision was blurry from the water and the tears. The words were a mess. They were shaking worse than I was. "I... I can't... The... the quick..."

Slap!

The sound echoed in the room. My head snapped to the side, my cheek burning like fire. The force of it made my brain rattle.

"You aren't trying," he hissed. He looked at me with pure disgust, his face inches from mine. "You're being a lazy, spoiled child. If you won't focus, we'll stay here all night."

He didn't wait for me to stop crying. He threw the towel back over my face. I barely had time to scream before the water started again.

This time it felt like it went on forever. The water felt like needles being pushed into my skull. I was dying. I knew I was dying. My lungs were on fire, and my throat was closing up. I begged in my head, "Please, God, please stop, I'll be good, I'll be smart."

He tipped the pitcher again, and the weight of the water felt like a ton of bricks on my face. I was fighting the straps so hard the metal was cutting into my skin, but I couldn't get away.

He ripped the towel off again. I rolled my head to the side, vomiting up the water I'd swallowed I was sobbing, my chest heaving, my hair plastered to the cold metal.

"Read the paragraph, Gianna," he said, "Or we go for a third round."

I looked at the page. The fear was so intense, so sharp, that it felt like it cut through the fog in my head. My brain didn't have room to let the letters move anymore. All it could think about was the water. The letters suddenly stopped their dance. They froze in place, locked down by the terror.

"The... the industrial revolution began in the late seventeen-hundreds," I whispered, my voice thick with water and snot. I read the whole thing. Every word. My brain was working like a machine, forced into a straight line by the threat of drowning.

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 255

Vance stepped back, “See? I knew you had it in you. Fear is a wonderful teacher.”

He started to untie my arms, leaving me there shaking and broken on the stretcher. I had done it but as i lay there, cold and wet, I felt like the girl who couldn’t read had died under that towel, and someone else was taking her place.

“Do you have any idea what your father said to me today?” he barked. He grabbed the edge of the metal stretcher and shook it so hard my teeth rattled. “He told me if you don’t show ‘significant improvement’ by the end of the, week, I won’t leave this building alive. He put a gun on the table, Gianna. A gun!”

“I’m sorry,” I choked out, the salt from my tears stinging the raw skin on my cheeks, “I’m trying, I swear-”

“You’re trying?” he roared, leaning down until his spit hit my face. “Your ‘trying’ is going to get me killed! I am a man of science! I am a doctor! I am not dying because you’re too lazy!”

He grabbed the thick towel again. He didn’t lay it down gently this time, he shoved it over my mouth and nose with so much force I felt my lips bruise against my teeth.

He didn’t use the pitcher. He grabbed the large gallon jug of water and tipped it straight over my face.

It wasn’t a stream, it was a flood. The water slammed into the cloth, sealing it against my skin like a vacuum. It was instant. I couldn’t even get that one last gasp of air. My lungs hit a wall of liquid.

I went into a frenzy. My body didn’t feel like mine anyinore, it was just a ball of pure, terrified instinct. I thrashed so hard the heavy metal stretcher began to slide across the floor with a horrible screeching sound. The leather straps dug deep into my wrists, the skin tearing, but I didn’t care. I needed air. I needed to breathe.

He didn’t stop. He kept the jug tilted, the water pouring and pouring. The world started to turn grey. Then it started to turn black.

I’m dying. This is it. I’m finally going to be still.

My limbs stopped fighting. My head slumped to the side. I felt my heart skip a beat, then another, the rhythm fading away into the cold, wet dark. I was gone.

Suddenly, the towel was ripped away.

I didn’t breathe at first. I just lay there, blue-lipped and limp. Then, my body gave a violent, painful jerk. I coughed up a lungful of water, the sound a wet, hacking rattle. I sucked in air so fast and so hard that I started to choke.

Vance was leaning over me, and he looked like a monster. He grabbed my hair and forced my head up so I had to look at the book.

“Read,” he whispered, “Read it right now, or I swear to God, I will keep that towel down until your heart stops for good. I don’t care about your father anymore. If I’m going, you’re coming with me.”

I looked at the page. My brain felt like it had been scrubbed raw with sandpaper. There was no more “me.” There was only the need to survive. I could see every curve, every dot, every line with a crystal clarity.

I read. I read through the vomit and the blood and the shaking. I read three pages without missing a single comma.

My brain had finally learned the lesson: focus, or die.

Vance let go of my hair, his hands trembling, “Perfect,” he breathed. “See? You just needed a reason to care.”

Gianna | Age 14 Leone’s Private Estate, Chester County, PA

The house looked like something out of a movie. It was huge, made of white stone that seemed to glow under the sun. My eyes went wide as I looked at the tall windows and the long driveway.

“You actually got a mansion for your birthday?” I whispered, my voice full of wonder.

Leone stood beside me, looking proud. “It’s our home, Gianna. Yours and mine. As soon as we get married, we’re moving in. I’m getting Made next year, and after that, the ring goes on your finger. We’ll live here forever.”

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 256

A huge smile broke across my face. I was only fourteen, but in my world, this was the dream. “I love it! It’s perfect! ” I yelled.

I was so happy that I forgot myself. I jumped up in excitement, but the second my feet slammed back onto the ground, a white-hot scream of pain tore through my body.

I collapsed. My knees hit the floor, and my breath hitched in my throat as I gasped for air.

For one beautiful second, I had forgotten. I had forgotten how Doctor Vance had strapped me down just yesterday. I had forgotten the smell of burning skin as he ran the electric current through the soles of my feet, to teach my brain to focus, to stop the letters from moving. The skin was raw and sliced open, and I hadn’t been able to walk properly.

“Gianna!” Leone was on the ground with me in a heartbeat. His hands were on my shoulders, his face tight with worry. He didn’t have to ask what happened. He saw the way I was shaking. “Where is it? Where does it hurt?”

I bit my lip hard, trying not to cry. Tears were for weak girls, and I wanted so badly to be strong. I just pointed at my shoes.

Leone let out a heavy sigh, his eyes darkening with a scary kind of anger. He carefully reached down and slid the expensive heels off my feet. When he saw the red, angry marks and the bandages soaked with blood on my soles, he winced.

“When is this going to stop, Gianna?” he snapped, his voice shaking with rage. “When is your father going to have enough?”

“Soon, Leone, I promise,” I said quickly, reaching out to touch his cheek. I needed him to believe me. I needed to believe it myself. “The new treatment... it’s actually working. I stayed focused for ten minutes today. Ten whole minutes without the words jumping. My brain gets so scared of the pain that it just... stays still. If I can just make that window bigger, I can be everything Daddy wants. I’ll finally be smart. I’ll be a proper Donna. I won’t be the family embarrassment anymore.”

“You’re not going to be a Donna,” Leone said, as he gripped my ankles, his touch surprisingly gentle for how angry he was right now, “You’re going to be my wife. I don’t care if you’re not smart in the way your father wants. I don’t care about the letters or the books. If anything, I like you better when you aren’t thinking so much. Your father has Gio now. He has a son to carry the weight. He should leave you alone.”

I forced a smile through the throbbing pain in my feet. I knew he loved me. I knew it killed him to see me hurt." He has Gio, yeah, but I'm still his daughter. He wants us to run the Syndicate together. He says we're the future."

"I will not have my wife hanging out with criminals and killers," Leone growled. He started rubbing my feet softly, his thumbs tracing the edges of the bandages. "Once you belong to me, no one touches you. I won't let you go to any more sessions with Dr Vance. I won't let them hurt you just to make you read faster. You won't have to do anything but be mine."

I looked at him, feeling a strange tug in my chest. Part of me felt so loved, so protected. But another part of me felt a cold shiver. I didn't want to be just a housewife. I didn't know exactly what I wanted to be yet, but I knew I didn't want to spend my life behind the gates of this mansion, doing nothing.

I looked at him, my heart aching for his validation, "But... what if I want to be smart? What if I want to be the girl who knows the answers to everything?"

Leone paused. He looked up at me, and then he let out a short, dry laugh. It wasn't a mean laugh, but it felt like

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 257

"Smart?" he said, shaking his head like I'd said something funny, "Gianna, look at yourself. You have a perfect face and a body that makes me stop breathing. Why would you waste your time trying to be smart? You don't need a brain when you have an ass like that."

He leaned in, kissing the top of my foot before looking back into my eyes.

"Just stay quiet and look beautiful for me," he whispered, "That's all you'll ever have to do."

I stared at him, the sting in my feet feeling distant compared to the weird, hollow thud in my chest. He said it like it was a compliment, like he was saving me from a heavy burden.

“But I like when I understand things, Leone,” I whispered, “When the math actually clicks, or when I can follow a story without the pages turning into a blur... it makes me feel good.”

Leone moved closer, he tucked a stray hair behind my ear, his hand lingering on my cheek. At fourteen, his hands were already starting to get calloused because of the gym, he was already starting to look like his father.

“You are good,” he murmured, his voice dropping into that protective tone he always used. “But all that studying, all that stress? It makes you cry, Gianna. It makes your head ache. Why would I want that for you? I’m going to be the one making the moves. I’m going to be the one everyone fears. You’re just going to be the girl on my arm that everyone envies.”

He leaned in, his forehead resting against mine.

“Think about it,” he continued, “No more doctors. No more electric shocks. No more sitting in a room for six hours trying to read one chapter while your dad screams at you. Just peace. Just us, in this house, with everything you could ever want. I’ll buy you every dress in the world. I’ll make sure you never have to lift a finger.”

I looked at the massive house around us. It was a beautiful cage. I loved him, I loved him more than I loved myself, but the thought of just looking beautiful for the next sixty years felt like a different kind of suffocating.

“What if I get bored?” I asked, trying to keep my voice light, like I was joking.

Leone laughed again, and this time he leaned forward to kiss my forehead. “You won’t be bored. You’ll be busy being Mrs. Caruso. You’ll have our kids to look after. You’ll have parties to host. You’re going to be the queen of this city, Gianna.”

He picked me up then, his arms strong even for a teenager, and started carrying me toward the house so I wouldn’t have to walk on my ruined feet. I wrapped my arms around his neck, burying my face in his shoulder.

He felt like safety. He felt like a shield. But as he carried me through the front doors of our forever, I looked back at the driveway and felt a tiny, sharp spark of fear.

It was the same spark I felt when Doctor Vance turned on the machine, only this time, it wasn’t my feet that were going to be trapped. It was me.

“You’re so lucky,” he whispered into my hair as he stepped up the stairs, “You have the kind of beauty that means you never have to be anything else.”

I closed my eyes and tried to force myself to feel lucky. I was fourteen, I was in love, and I had a mansion. I told myself that was enough.

He carried me up the grand staircase and down a hallway. When we reached the master suite, he set me down on the edge of the massive bed.

Leone kicked off his shoes and climbed onto the bed, leaning his back against the tufted velvet headboard. He reached out, pulling me toward him until I was tucked against his side. I let out a shaky breath, resting my head on his chest, listening to the strong thumping of his heart. It was the only sound in the room, and for a second, the pain in my feet felt dull and far away.

GE

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 258

Leone reached back for the laptop, his fingers tapping against the silver casing. His face was flushed, a dark red creeping up his neck that I'd never seen before.

"I found something," he whispered, "Something my cousin showed me. He said this is what... this is what it's supposed to look like. Between a man and his wife."

He clicked a file, and the screen filled with a video that made my breath stop in my lungs. My eyes went wide, and I felt a hot, confusing wave of embarrassment wash over me. I tried to look away, but curiosity kept my gaze

locked on the screen.

"Leone," I breathed, my face feeling like it was on fire, "What are they... why is she...?"

"It's okay," he murmured, his arm tightening around my waist, pulling me closer so I could see better. "We're going to be married, Gianna. We have to know. I don't want to hurt you when the time comes. I want to be good at it. For you."

He scrolled to a different part of the video, where the man was using his mouth on the woman. My jaw dropped." He's... down there? Is that allowed?"

Leone nodded, his eyes fixed on the screen, his chest rising and falling in fast, shallow movements, "My cousin said it's the best part. He said it makes a girl feel like she's floating." He turned his head, his nose brushing against mine. "I want to do that to you."

I let out a tiny, shaky gasp, "And... and what do I do?" I whispered, my voice barely a squeak, "Do I just stay still?"

"No," Leone said, now he scrolled some more, and pointed to the screen where the woman was returned the fayor, "You'd do that for me. You'd take me in your mouth, Gianna.

You'd be gentle, because I'm your first, and I'd be your only. You'd learn exactly how I like to be touched."

I buried my face in his neck, my skin stinging with the heat of a massive blush. "I don't know if I can... I've never even kissed anyone but you. I'll be bad at it."

Leone let out a soft, shaky laugh and tilted my chin up, forcing me to look at him, "I'll teach you. We'll learn together. That's why we have this house, remember? So we can practice until we get it right."

He moved, shifting his weight until he was over me. His hands were shaking as he tucked a strand of my hair back. I could see the sweat on his forehead. We were both terrified in this giant, empty mansion.

"Gianna," he rasped, "I don't want to wait until we're married. I don't want to wait until next year. I want to do it right now. I want to feel you. I want to show you exactly how much I love you."

"Right now?" I squeaked, my heart trying to jump out of my chest.

"Right now," he repeated.

"Does it hurt?" I asked, my voice barely a peep.

"Maybe a little at first," he murmured, "but I'll be so careful with you. I'd never hurt you on purpose. You're too precious."

I reached up, my fingers trembling as I touched the back of his neck. I didn't know if I was ready, but I knew I wanted to belong to him. I wanted to be the girl he never wanted to let go of.

"Okay," I whispered. "Show me. Teach me how to do it right."

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 259

Gianna

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You ever have that one pathetic moment where your brain just glitches?

Where you decide to hit the rewind button on your own life and only play the highlight reel?

You sit there in the dark and trick yourself into believing that when you walked away from your shitty ex, you actually lost something precious. You let the “good memories” flood in, the way he smelled, the way he’d hold your hand in the car and suddenly, you’re convinced you made a huge mistake.

You start thinking you need him back. You start thinking that maybe, just maybe, the toxicity wasn’t that bad compared to the loneliness.

But then the night ends, and the morning light hits you like a slap to the face. The clarity comes in waves, cold and hard. You realize you didn’t actually want him. You just wanted a place to hide.

You were running from what happened with your stepbrother. You were running from that moment on the terrace, the one that had absolutely nothing to do with sex and everything to do with something deeper.

It was that soft, terrifying intimacy.

The way he looked at you like he could see the brain the world rejected you for. And the way he didn’t blink wrong when he saw the mess. It was pure, it was quiet, and it was the most dangerous thing you’ve ever felt. It made you panic. It made you feel small and exposed in a way you weren’t ready for.

And because you didn’t know what to do with that feeling, your brain searched for a file it already knew. It found the “moments” you had with Leone, moments that felt exactly the same on the surface. So, you felt rejected by the way Raphael went stiff, the way he turned into stone after you kissed his cheek, and you did what every scared girl does: you ran toward “safe familiarity.”

You told yourself Leone was the safe option. You told yourself that at least with him, you knew the rules. You knew the mansion, you knew the jewelry, you knew the “just stay quiet and be pretty” routine. It was comfortable.

It was easy.

But as you stare at the “Sent” notification on your laptop, the real memories start to leak through the cracks. You remember Leone watching you cry and telling you it was because he couldn’t live without. You remember him laughing at the idea of you being smart.

Now, you’re staring at that “Hi” you sent into the void, and the sick feeling in your stomach is telling you the truth: You aren’t missing a soulmate. You’re just a girl who got so scared of a new spark that she tried to crawl back into an old fire.

And now, you have to pray the past doesn’t actually answer back.

I watched the numbers climb. Every floor I passed felt like another step away from the girl who had sent that message to Leone last night.

In the daylight, the “Hi” I had sent looked like a suicide note to my own freedom.

What if... what if he told daddy?

The doors slid open with a soft chime, and I stepped out. I walked toward the massive desk where Aileen sat.

I was so mad at myself that I wanted to scream. I wasn’t missing Leone; I was just terrified of the way Raphael made me feel.

Aileen looked up from her computer, “He’s been waiting,” she said, “Mr. Capone said to send you straight in the second you stepped off the elevator. No delays.”

“Did he... does he seem okay?” I asked, trying to keep my voice from shaking. I was fishing for a warning, any hint of the mood behind those doors.

Aileen just adjusted a stack of papers, her eyes flickering to the doors, before she shrugged, “I wouldn’t know. To be honest, I don’t think he’s smiled at me once since the day I started working here.”

ᑌ

I felt a cold shiver of reality hit me. Sometimes I forgot who I was dealing with. In the quiet of the garden, or when he was me with homework, it was easy to see a different side of him.

But moments like this were a blunt reminder of the truth. Outside the bubble of his family, Raphael was exactly what people said he was: rude, mean, and incredibly arrogant. He didn’t see people, he saw functions and obstacles.

The only reason I wasn’t just another invisible employee to him, the only reason he even bothered to show me his “soft” side was because I’d been forced into his inner circle.

I hadn’t earned his kindness; I had just become a part of his family. I was the exception to his coldness, but only because I was his responsibility.

I wasn’t special, I was just lucky enough to be on the right side of the door.

I walked towards his office, my thoughts kept swirling. I thought about the kiss on the cheek, the way he had frozen, the way his jaw had turned to steel. I had felt so happy for a second, so light, and then his reaction had made me feel like I'd committed a crime. That rejection was what pushed me to the laptop last night.

It was what made me look for Leone.

I reached for the handle, my fingers cold. I didn't know if he was going to yell at me for the kiss or if he was going to act like it never happened. I didn't know if I wanted him to forget it or if I wanted him to do it again.

I pushed the door open. Raphael was standing with his back to me, looking out at the skyline. He didn't turn around immediately, but I knew he heard me.

"You're late," he said.

I stood there, the door clicking shut behind me, my heart beating hard against my ribs. I realized then that no matter how many "Hi's" I sent to my past, I was stuck right here in the present.

And the present was looking more and more like a man I couldn't understand.

For a second, my mind flashed back to the garden, the smell of the rain-drenched roses, the rough stubble against my lips.

I took a deep breath and forced a small, playful smirk onto my face, "Late?" I repeated, stepping further into the office. "You're the one who signed up for a college student, Raphael. Calculus doesn't exactly let you out early just because the boss is waiting."

I watched his shoulders relax, just a tiny bit. He didn't laugh, but the hard line of his back seemed to soften.

"I remember telling you this was a full-time commitment," he said, finally turning around.

"It is," I countered, adjusting the strap of my bag, "But some of my professors like to hear themselves talk for an extra twenty minutes. I can't exactly tell them to shut up."

Raphael walked toward his desk, grabbing a small black keycard from his desk, "We're going down. Now."

My eyes widened, "Down?"

We walked out of his office and back toward the private elevator. As we stood in the small space, waiting for the doors to close, a cold chill settled in my chest. He was standing right next to me, but he felt miles away. He was staring at the floor, his hands shoved deep into his pockets. Usually, there was this heat between us, a pull that

+15 Bar

made me want to lean closer, but today he felt like a wall of ice.

I looked at him, my playful mood vanishing. I couldn't handle the mystery. I needed to know if I'd ruined everything with one impulsive move on a terrace.

"Raphael?" I whispered.

He didn't move an inch. He kept his eyes fixed on the glowing floor numbers, his hands shoved deep into his pockets, "Yes?"

"Did I do something wrong?" My voice sounded smaller than I wanted it to, "Last night... if I crossed a line, you can just tell me. We're both adults, you don't have to act like—"

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 261

The word 'like' had barely left my lips when the air in the elevator snapped.

Raphael moved so fast I didn't even see it coming. One second he was a statue, and the next, he was a storm. His hand shot out, his fingers wrapping firmly around the front of my neck. He shoved me backward, my spine hitting the elevator door with a thud that vibrated through my teeth.

Before I could even gasp, he leaned in, his body slamming against mine, pinning me to the cold steel. He didn say a word. He just crashed his lips onto mine.

My brain went completely blank, the logic of the office and my classes and my debt all vanishing in a puff of smoke.

I didn't pull away. I didn't even think about it. My hands flew up, my fingers tangling deep into the hair at the back of his neck, pulling him closer until there wasn't a single inch of space left between us. I kissed him back just as hard. The world was spinning, and the only thing that felt real was the heat of his skin and the way he was breathing into my mouth.

I felt his grip on my neck tighten slightly, his thumb grazing my jawline, and then....

Ding.

Raphael ripped himself away from me instantly. It was so sudden I almost fell forward, my legs feeling like they were made of water. He stepped back, his chest heaving, his face turning back into that terrifying mask of stone He didn't look at me.

The doors slid open, he straightened his suit jacket and walked out. I stood there, my hand went up to my neck, feeling the ghost of his touch.

I forced my legs to move, stumbling out of the elevator. I expected a dusty storage room or a cold parking garage, but as I rounded the corner, the darkness died.

A massive, subterranean cavern opened up before me, and for a second, I forgot to breathe.

It looked like something stolen from a high-budget spy movie. The walls were lined with glowing blue LED strips that cut through the dim, industrial lighting. In the center of the room, dozens of sleek, glass desks were arranged in a circle, and behind them sat nearly fifty people. The only sound was the rapid-fire clicking of mechanical keyboards and the low hum of cooling fans.

Huge holographic displays floated in the air, showing live feeds of the Chicago docks, heat maps of police patrols, and scrolling walls of green code that looked like the back end of a bank's server.

I saw the FBI seal on one screen, flicking rapidly as someone, a kid who looked barely older than me bypassed a firewall in real-time.

Raphael was already in the center of it all. He stood over a glowing table that projected a 3D map of the city. Red dots moved across the streets, delivery trucks, probably, carrying things that definitely weren't legal.

"I want the encryption on the port authority servers broken by midnight," Raphael's voice rang out, "If the government wants to track our shipments, I want them looking at a ghost fleet in the middle of the Atlantic."

The employees didn't even look up. They just worked faster. These weren't typical mobsters with scars and suits, these were the best hackers and analysts money could buy, all working in the darkness to keep the Chicago Outfit invisible.

They were scrubbing digital footprints, rerouting wire transfers, and intercepting federal communications before

way.

Split. Move Disappear. Reappear. Spread.

My fingers twitched at my side. I frowned, something... repeated. I leaned closer, squinting. A sequence

It showed up once... then again... then again.

“Wait,” I murmured, more to myself than to him.

I lifted my hand slowly, hesitating for a second before pointing at the screen.

“This one.”

Raphael didn’t look at what I was pointing at, he simply turned his head, his dark eyes boring into the side of my face, “Why?”

I opened my mouth but nothing came out. Words. I needed words. My throat tightened, “I— it’s just...”

I shook my head, frustrated, eyes snapping back to the numbers.

“It repeats wrong,” I said quickly, the words messy, “Like- like it’s trying to look random but it’s not. It’s too. even.”

I pointed again, more certain now.

“See this? And this... and this...” My finger moved along the chain, “Same gap. Same jump. Real ones don’t do that.

I held my breath, terrified he was going to laugh or tell me I was imagining things. I felt like the little girl in the doctor’s office again, waiting for the slap.

Then Raphael reached past me. His hand brushed mine for half a second. He zoomed in on the exact chain I pointed at. The screen shifted. More detail. More layers. He tapped something on the side and a new window opened.

Red lines appeared, warnings that were hidden before flashed on the screen.

My stomach dropped, oh my God, I did something wrong, didn’t I?

Janedoewritings Author

Swipe up!

+15 Borus

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 262

“Gianna,” he called out without looking up. He knew exactly where I was standing.

I swallowed and stepped forward, my shoes feeling too loud against the polished floor. No one looked at me. Not one person. It was like I didn't exist down here.

Raphael tapped once on the glass table in front of him.

The map vanished and the numbers replaced it. Columns. Endless columns. White and green, moving too fast for/ my eyes to catch at first. Lines connected to other lines. Small blinking dots. Wallet IDs. Time stamps. Transfers.

It looked like chaos.

It wasn't.

"Come here," he said.

I moved closer, stopping at his side. Close enough to feel the heat coming off him, even though he hadn't looked at me once since the elevator.

He pointed at the screen.

"These are live transactions," he said, "Crypto chains. Company transfers. Clean routes."

Clean.

Even I could tell that word meant something else down here. I stared at the numbers. It was too much, too fast, too layered. My brain tried to read it like a page.

Failed.

Beside me, I felt him shift. My breath caught when I felt his hand brushing my arm, "Relax," he murmured, right

near my ear.

My spine straightened on instinct. His other hand came to the edge of the table, caging me in without touching fully. He was behind me now. Close enough that I could feel the heat of his chest at my back, even without contact.

"You're thinking too much," he said quietly.

I swallowed.

"I'm not-"

"You are. Stop reading it," his fingers slid lightly along my forearm, down to my wrist, like he was guiding me without forcing me, "Just look."

Everything blurred, I blinked hard, then I stopped trying to read. And just... looked.

The noise quieted, not around me but in my head. The columns stopped being numbers. They turned into movement like lines flowing into each other, like streams joining, splitting, folding back.

Patterns.

My breathing slowed.

Raphael's voice came again, "Tell me what's wrong."

I leaned forward slightly, my eyes tracking one chain... then another.... then another. Most of them flowed the same

+15 Barius

way.

Split. Move. Disappear. Reappear. Spread.

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Red lines appeared, warnings that were hidden before flashed on the screen.

My stomach dropped, oh my God, I did something wrong, didn’t I?

Janedoewritings Author

Swipe up! →

+15 Barius

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 263

Gianna

Red lines appeared, warnings that were hidden before flashed on the screen.

My stomach dropped, oh my God, I did something wrong.

A wave of pure, shaking terror washed over me, the kind that makes your hands go numb and your vision blur.

I felt like I was back in that room, staring at a page I couldn’t read while the world screamed at me that I was a failure.

My legs felt like they were going to give out, and for a second, the room felt like it was closing in to swallow me whole.

My skin started to crawl, a frantic, itchy heat rising under my sleeves. The urge was so damn strong it was the only thing I could hear. I wanted to reach into my bag, to find the sharp edge of the blade, and let the pain on the outside finally match the screaming panic on the inside.

“I didn’t mean to -” I started to apologize, my stomach dropping. “I’m sorry if I broke something.”

Raphael straightened. Slowly, very slowly, he turned his head and looked at me. I turned my head to the side and looked up at him. I expected him to be disappointed but he seemed... manic. There was a dark gleam in his eyes that scared me.

“Do you know what that is?” he asked.

I shook my head, embarrassed, “No.”

“That,” he said quietly, “is a tracking thread. If that stayed in the system,” he continued, “every route connected to it would be exposed within forty-eight hours.”

My chest tightened and I looked back at the screen.

“You found it,” he added.

That made my head snap toward him again, brows furrowing, “What?”

His eyes flicked over my face, studying me in a way that made heat crawl up my spine. Then he turned back to the screen, “If I had asked my best analysts to find that, it would have taken them at least ten to twenty minutes of deep searching. You did it in forty-seven seconds.”

My breath caught and I looked around.

Fifty people. All smarter than me. All faster than me. All... normal.

I didn’t know what to do with that. I didn’t know what to say. So I said the only thing that felt true, “It just looked ... wrong.”

Raphael let out a quiet breath, “Yeah, that’s exactly what I noticed when I first interviewed you. Back then, I gave you an impossible bug to find. I didn’t want to hire you. I wanted to prove you weren’t as good as they said so I could send you away and forget about you.”

My eyes went wide, “Hey! That’s mean!”

+15 Benus

“It was,” he admitted, a dark smirk tugging at the corners of his mouth, “But you found it anyway. Just like you did right now. You see things at first glance no one else can see.”

He looked at me with so much pride and raw attraction that I felt like I was melting. For the first time in my life, being different didn’t feel like a curse. It didn’t feel like something I had to hide or something I had to be punished for until my feet bled.

It felt like power.

I started to smile, a real one that reached my eyes, but it died the second I saw the look on his face. He looked like a man who had just found something more valuable than all the money in his basement, and he wanted to devour

The air between us got so thick I could barely breathe. He leaned in just a fraction, his shadow completely covering me.

“My office,” he rasped. His voice made my skin tingle from my head to my toes, “Now.”

Raphael

I couldn’t reach out and grab her hand. Not here. I had fifty sets of eyes on me, and a reputation that kept this entire operation from folding.

I just gave her a sharp nod, gesturing for her to follow, and she fell into step behind me.

I felt the shift in the room immediately. Usually, my employees were like drones, heads down and focused. But as we walked, I saw heads turn. I saw jaws drop, then they snapped their eyes back to their monitors the second I glanced their way.

My chest felt tight with a mix of pride and something much darker, much more physical.

She is exactly the kind of individual I hired down here, not up there. She wasn’t just a girl, she was a human radar. She was a bug detector with a soul. The way her mind worked-skipping the useless letters and seeing the rhythm of the code-it was the fastest, most accurate thing I had ever seen. She had cleared a tracking thread in forty- seven seconds. My best analysts were officially obsolete.

P

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 264

We reached the doors at the end of the hall. I swiped my palm, and the doors hissed open to my private basement office.

This room was my sanctuary. It was a playground of blue light and chrome. Massive curved screens wrapped around the walls, glowing with live feeds from across the globe. In the corner, the skeletal frame of the robot had been building-my pet project-stood under a spotlight, its gears gleaning.

I walked deep into the room, until I leaned back against the edge of my glass desk, shoving one hand into my pocket. I watched her look around, the blue light reflecting in her wide eyes, her lips were slightly parted.

My blood was still buzzing from the kiss in the elevator, but the professional side of me was reeling from what she'd just done.

"That's it," I said, "No more filing papers. No more making coffee for me."

I looked her dead in the eye. I wanted her to understand exactly how much her life had just changed.

"That's your job now, Gianna," I told her, gesturing vaguely to the sea of data outside my door, "You're the filter. You're the eyes of the Outfit. You stay by my side, you look at what I tell you to look at, and you find the cracks before they break us. You're going to be a powerful weapon."

I leaned back against the desk, my eyes drifting away from the high-tech screens and landing on her. I let my gaze slow down, tracing the line of her white button-down shirt and the way her pencil skirt hugged her hips. She looked like a professional, a student, a girl who followed the rules but I knew better. I knew she was a storm.

But then, the memory hit me.

The garden.

I remembered the soft, feather-light pressure of her lips against my cheek. That kiss. It hadn't been sexual, and that was exactly why it felt so damn strange. It had caught me off guard, vibrating through my jaw and settling deep in my chest in a way that made no sense. Why had she done it? It felt like she was trying to bridge a gap that didn't exist, like she was trying to reach for something...

It was weird. It was entirely too domestic for a relationship we shared, stepsiblings with benefits. I didn't like it. I didn't know what to do with a gesture that wasn't a transaction.

If she got attached, it would ruin everything. It would make her weak, and it would make me careless. I couldn't have her wandering into my personal space with those soft, searching looks.

I'll keep it clean. I'll keep it strictly business.

From now on, we had two settings: we were working, or we were dealing with the heat I felt in the elevator. Those were the only two boxes she was allowed to live in.

Anything else any more cheek kisses, any more "intimate" moments-was a trap.

I had to keep the walls up. I had to keep her focused. If she started looking for a heart under my suit jacket, she was going to be disappointed, and I was going to be forced to destroy the very thing I was currently trying to protect.

I shifted my weight, trying to force the confusion out of my mind.

“Do you want it?” I asked, “The job. Being my eyes.”

Gianna didn’t even hesitate for a second or ask about the hours, “Yes,” she said, “I want it.”

15 B

I felt a smirk tug at the corner of my mouth. I liked that she didn’t play games, “Good. Because the pay is different down here. Every person you saw in that hall, they get paid double what the people upstairs make. Your salary just jumped. Significantly.”

Gianna’s eyebrows shot up, and then she did it, she rolled her eyes. She actually looked annoyed. “Oh, stop it, Raphael,” she said, crossing her arms over her chest. “You don’t have to do that. You’re just saying that because you think I need it...I don’t want handouts. I’m here to work, not to be your charity case.”

I stood up straight, taking a step toward her until I was deep in her personal space. I didn’t sugarcoat things. I didn’t have the patience for it.

“Gianna,” I said, “Look at this room. Look at the people out there. Look at what’s happening out there. That is the difference between us living free and us rotting in a federal prison. It is a thousand times more important than filing taxes or answering phones in the lobby. I pay for results, not for smiles. You gave me a result that saved millions of dollars. You earned that pay before you even walked through my door.”

She bit her lip, her eyes searching mine for a lie. She didn’t find one.

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 265

Inside, I was already counting the reasons why I wanted her to have it. I thought about the phone she lost-the screen was cracked, the casing was worn, and it looked like it belonged in a museum.

I’d never heard her drop a single word about designer clothes, jewelry, or those mindless shopping trips Aunt Alessia and Claire were always obsessed with.

She didn’t own a single thing a Toricelli was supposed to have.

Looking at her, you’d never guess she grew up surrounded by a mountain of money, especially considering how easily she moved through her life now like she didn’t need any of it to know exactly who she was.

I didn't want to give her a gift because she'd just throw it back in my face, but a salary? She couldn't argue with a salary.

"I don't do handouts," I repeated, my gaze dropping back to her lips, "I do investments. And you, Gianna... I just made you a very important investment. Now, come here. Come closer."

She rolled her eyes again, that defiant little spark in her gaze making my blood boil in the best way possible. She just sighed and walked over to me.

The second she was within reach. I reached out and yanked her closer, my hand catching her waist and pulling her body flush against mine. The contact was electric, a sudden heat that made the cold, blue light of the office feel like a furnace.

"I've never brought a woman in here, Gianna. Not one," I rasped. My other hand came up, my thumb hooking under her chin to tilt her face up, forcing her to meet my gaze. "None of those men out there are even allowed past those doors."

She let out a small, shaky gasp, her eyes wide as she searched mine, "Is that why they were staring? I thought they were just looking at me weirdly."

"No," I said, my grip tightening just a fraction. "They were looking because you're the most beautiful girl in this entire building."

She didn't blush or look away. Instead, she raised an eyebrow, a playful, sharp spark returning to her eyes, "Oh, okay. So first, I was the most beautiful girl in the mansion, and now I'm the best-looking one in this whole office? This place is way bigger, it has way more people, and I definitely saw some very attractive women on the way in. So, that's a major upgrade on the compliment. I'll take it."

"Don't get ahead of yourself," I murmured, my thumb tracing the line of her lower lip, feeling the slight tremble she was trying so hard to hide. "I'm a man of facts, Mess. I don't give out upgrades unless they're earned. And trust me, looking at you in this light... It's the easiest fact I've had to process all day."

I didn't give her time to come up with another clever comeback. I spun her around in one smooth motion, her back pressing hard against my chest. I grabbed both of her wrists, pulling them behind her back and pinning them there with just one of my hands. She was trapped against me, facing the massive wall of glowing monitors. The blue and green light washed over her skin.

I leaned in, using my free hand to brush the thick wave of her hair over her shoulder, exposing the long, pale line of her neck. I pressed my lips to the sensitive skin just below her ear.

She let out a sharp gasp, her eyes fluttering shut as her head fell back against my shoulder. Then, a tiny, broken whimper escaped her throat, a sound so soft it was almost a hum.

God, I loved that sound.

$15 800

I'd heard women scream, and I'd heard them fake it, or lose their mind with pleasure but Gianna made the most beautiful sounds I'd ever heard. Every little moan that left her lips felt like a victory, like I was uncovering a secret part of her that no one else was allowed to touch.

I trailed my lips down frer neck, my grip on her wrists tightening just enough to let her know I wasn't letting go. I watched the screens in front of us, the millions of dollars moving, the tracking threads dying, the secret war of the Chicago Outfit, and then I looked at her.

"Having you here like this..." I rasped against her skin, "It's given me a very specific idea."

I felt her chest heave as she took a shaky breath. Even with her eyes closed, I could feel her focus shifting, her mind already racing to keep up with mine.

"You want to try something new, Mess?" I whispered.

Janedoewritings Author

I'm really sorry if you guys are still dealing with the comments glitch, I honestly don't know when or how it'll be fixed.

If you'd be interested, let me know if you want me to make a Facebook group where I can he

U

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 266

Raphael

"You want to try something new, Gianna?" I whispered.

I felt her body relax into mine, a tiny nod of her head showing her curiosity.

I kept one hand locked around her wrists behind her back. With my other hand, I reached into my pocket and pulled out my phone. I didn't even have to look at the screen. I swiped a specific command, and the monitors across the entire wall flickered.

The crypto chains vanished. The bank transfers disappeared.

The screens suddenly filled with the view from the high-definition security cameras mounted in the corners of the office. Gianna's eyes snapped open, and she let out a soft cry of shock. On every single screen, from the floor to the ceiling, she was staring at herself.

She saw herself pinned against me. She saw her own head tilted back, her hair falling over one shoulder. She saw my dark suit and my hand holding her small wrists.

It was like we were in a house of mirrors made of glowing blue glass.

"Look at yourself, Gianna," I rasped.

I dropped my phone against the desk and used my free hand to reach for the top button of her crisp, white shirt. I popped it open. Then the second. Then the third. I pulled the fabric to the sides, baring her shoulders and showing the soft, white lace of her bra.

I looked up at the monitors, watching the digital version of us. I could see the reflection of the blue light on her pale skin. I reached around and cupped her through the lace, and I squeezed.

Gianna let out a whimper, her knees buckling for a second before I pulled her tighter against my hips.

"The walls are thick, Stepsister," I whispered, my lips brushing the shell of her ear. "This office is completely soundproof. No one out there can hear a thing."

I squeezed again, harder this time, watching her chest heave on forty different screens at once. I wanted her to see how she looked when I touched her. I wanted her to see the way her body reacted to me.

"I want to hear you," I ordered, "I want you to make those beautiful sounds you make."

"Raphael," she breathed.

I didn't take my eyes off the screens. I wanted to see her reaction from every possible angle. The monitors were a mosaic of our bodies, some showed us from the ceiling, looking down at the top of her head, while others were zoomed in so close I could see the pulse jumping in her neck.

I hooked my fingers over the edge of her white bra. I pulled the fabric down, freeing her.

“Fuck,” I murmured, my voice thick with a dark kind of worship, “You are absolutely perfect, Gianna.”

On the center monitor, a cropped view showed my tanned, rough hand against her pale, soft skin. The contrast was beautiful. I started to trace her nipples with the tip of my finger. They were already tight, reacting to the cool air of the office and the heat of my touch. I watched her on the screens as I circled them, over and over, watching the way her skin puckered and changed.

15 Bu

“Look at the screen on the left,” I whispered, my breath hot against her skin, “See how you’re reacting?”

She looked, her eyes wide and glazed as she watched a close-up of my fingers teasing her. I could see her chest rising and falling on the monitors behind her, and the view from the side showed exactly how hard I was pressing her back against my chest.

I flicked my thumb over the very tip of her nipple, and she let out a cry that was louder than before.

“So beautiful,” I rasped, my eyes moving from one screen to the next. I saw the curve of her waist, the arch of her back, and the way her lips were stained red from where she’d been biting them.

I wanted her to see herself through my eyes-not as the girl who called herself an idiot every time she got frustrated, but as the absolute, breathtaking vixen she really was.

“Do you see it?” I asked, my hand closing firmly over her breast, squeezing just enough to make her gasp, “Do you see how much you want this?”

She couldn’t answer with words. She just let out another one of those high, broken moans that filled the soundproof room, her head thrashing softly against my shoulder as she watched the monitors capture every single second of her undoing.

I pulled her upright, her body stumbling slightly as I kept her wrists locked tight against the small of her back. I dragged her around the edge of the glass table until we reached my leather chair.

+15 Borut

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 267

1 sat down, and forced her to move with me. I pulled her onto my lap, making her straddle my legs. She was still facing the wall of monitors, her back pressed hard against my chest, her bare breasts glowing in the light of the

screens.

I looked at the monitors. The views were everywhere.

“You look so small,” I rasped, “Look at the screen, Gianna. You look like a doll compared to me.”

I reached into the top drawer of my desk and pulled out a long, black zip tie. I wrapped it around her wrists, pulling it tight until her hands were locked behind her back.

“There,” I whispered, “Now I have both of my hands back.”

I reached down, my hands sliding over the smooth fabric of her pencil skirt. I bunched the material up, sliding it higher and higher until it was gathered around her waist.

On the monitors, the image changed. Now, I could see the matching white lace of her underwear. I looked at another close-up screen on the right, it showed my tanned hands gripping on her pale thighs, just inches away from the lace.

The faint, faded marks on her inner thighs were healing, and there weren’t any fresh ones to take their place. Seeing her skin clear only made my mind go to darker places, wondering if she had found a new, hidden spot on her body to leave a mark.

I had gone still for a few moments, lost in my thoughts, and she jerked against me, her body seeking the contact I’d momentarily cut off. I let out a low, rough chuckle that vibrated through my chest.

“Look at the screens and tell me who’s in charge now,” I asked.

My hands drifted upward, palms sliding slowly over the curve of her stomach before settling on her breasts. I gave them a squeeze, watching her nipples harden instantly in response. The white fabric of her shirt hung open at her sides, framing the way her lace bra and the bunched-up fabric of her skirt clung to her waist.

She let out a high, shaky moan, her head falling back against my shoulder. She looked helpless and beautiful.

I watched her on the monitors. She was smaller than me, weaker than me, and trapped in a way she had never been before. And she wasn't fighting it.

I watched the way her eyes dilated, the way her breath hitched in her throat as she saw my hands slide down the front of my trousers.

My gaze stayed locked on the screens, tracking every flicker of her expression as I unbuckled my belt and slid the zipper down. I freed myself, my fingers closing around my hardening length. I was rock-hard and straining for release, that it pulsed.

I pressed my aching length against her hands, which were still locked tightly behind her back by the bite of the plastic tie.

"Take it," I ordered.

She let out a desperate breath, her body instinctively arching backward to seek the friction. She couldn't see what she was doing behind her own back-at least, not directly-but the wall of monitors acted as a perfect guide. I watched her eyes fixate on the screen, tracking the movement of her own bound hands as they finally made contact with me.

15 8grius

I guided her wrists, pressing her palms flat against the heat of me until she finally wrapped her fingers around my cock as best she could. Even with her hands trapped, her grip was firm.

I leaned back, my head hitting the headrest of the chair, and watched the monitors. The view was perfect. I could see my own cock disappearing into her bound hands. I could see the way her knuckles went white, the way her arms strained against the zip tie.

She began to move her hands up and down, a rhythmic, desperate motion that felt like heaven. She was stroking me with her eyes glued to the screens, watching herself, watching me, and watching the way her body was trapped in my grip.

"That's it," I groaned, my hands moving to her hips to guide the pace. "Look at yourself. Look at how you're taking me."

I slid my hand lower, my palm grazing the sensitive crease of her hip where her thigh met her body, making her jerk against me. I reached between her legs, my thumb finding the heat of her clit through the thin, white lace of her underwear and rubbing it with focus. I gave her a sharp slap right against the lace before cupping her fully, rubbing my palm against her pussy so hard and so fast that her eyes rolled back in her head.

Each time she pulled her hands upward, I thrust my hips back against her palms, my other hand gripping the heat between her legs even tighter. She was moaning my name, a broken, breathless sound that seemed to shatter against the soundproof walls.

P

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 268

She was clumsy because of the ties, her movements restricted and tight, but that only made it better. The way she struggled to get a better grip, the way she squeezed me with that desperate friction, the way she was forced to be completely present in every sensation, it was intoxicating. I watched the screens, mesmerized by the image of her I was drowning in the feel of her hands, and in the sound of her voice crying out for me.

I reached into my pocket and pulled out my wallet. My eyes never left her as I flipped it open and pulled out a small, square foil packet. I used my teeth to rip the edge of the foil.

I took out the condom and pressed the small, rubber ring into her bound hands. The plastic zip tie kept her wrists tight together, but I forced the condom into her palms.

“Put it on me, Gianna,” I ordered, “Use the screens. Watch what you’re doing.”

She let out a shaky, nervous breath. I watched the center monitor as she tried to focus. Her bound hands were shaking, and the first few times she tried to place the condom on the head of my cock, it slipped. It fell against he fingers, making her whimper with frustration. She was clumsy, and she had to keep her head tilted back to see the camera view on the wall.

“L... I can’t,” she whispered, her chest heaving as she struggled.

“You can,” I snapped, my hand tightening on her thigh.

She bit her lip and tried again. This time, she caught the edge. I watched on the screen as her fingers finally gripped the rubber. She centered it, and then, she rolled it down. She followed the length of me until I was completely covered, her hands smoothing the latex over my skin.

I reached down and hooked my fingers into the side of her white lace panties. I didn’t take them off, I simply yanked the fabric hard to the side, baring her completely. I grabbed my cock, now wrapped in the condom, and began to rub it all over her. I moved it up and down against her wet, soft skin, coating myself in her heat.

The moisture from her body made the latex shine. She was so wet that the sound of the friction was a wet, heavy slap that filled my ears.

I held myself straight up, the tip of my cock resting right at the entrance of her body.

“Now,” I whispered, “Lower yourself down,”

She looked at the screen, her eyes wide and glassy. She took a deep breath and began to sink down, her body stretching as she slowly invited me inside.

I tapped a command on the desk console, and the largest monitor in the center of the wall flickered. The camera zoomed in with perfect clarity, focusing entirely on the space where our bodies met.

The high-definition lens captured every detail, the wet, pink skin, and the way her body stretched to accommodate the thick, rubber-wrapped head of my cock as it began to disappear inside her.

“Look at that,” I said, my hand reaching around to grip her chin. I forced her head back until her eyes were locked on me, “I want you to watch how you’re taking me. See that?” I pointed to the screen focusing on the reality of what we were doing, “See how wide you’re opening for me?”

“Raphael... oh god,” she cried out, her voice cracking as I thrust my hips upward, meeting her with a force that made the chair creak.

“I’m going to get back at you for this,” she gasped, her eyes narrowed as she stared at the screen, even as another wave of pleasure made her body shake, “I will make you crawl, you psychopathic bastard.”

I let out a dark, incredulous laugh that shook my entire chest. I had been with women who played the tubarneve card, who whispered sweet things or begged for mercy, but I had never –never- had a woman who was this vicious while I was buried to the hilt inside her.

“Is that right, Mess?” I asked.

I gripped her hips so hard I knew I’d leave bruises by morning and drove into her with a harsh force. I wanted to hear her take more of me than she did last time, but she just grit her teeth and watched the screen, her eyes fixed on the point of impact.

“Say it again,” I mocked, “Tell me how you’re going to make me crawl while I’m fucking you this hard.”

“I’ll make you beg,” she gasped, her head whipping back against my shoulder as she watched us on the wall, “l make you suffer for every fucking second you’ve had me tied up here.”

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+15 Bgra

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 269

The way she was looking at the screen, the way she was cursing me out, the way she was writhing in my grip, it was more intoxicating than anything I had ever experienced.

I leaned back into the leather, my hands tightening on her waist to give her the leverage she needed, “Show me, Gianna,” I rasped, my eyes locked on the monitor that showed her from the side, “Show me that thing you do.

She didn’t need to be told twice. Even with her hands bound behind her back, she found her balance, her weight shifting as she began to move. She wasn’t just sinking down anymore, she started to roll her hips in a slow, grinding circle that made my vision blur.

It was a wicked movement, the kind that ensured my cock hit every sensitive wall of her body.

“That’s it,” I groaned, my head falling back for a split second before I forced myself to watch the screens again.

On the monitors, I could see the way her spine arched and the way her skin rippled with the effort. Every time she rolled forward, she ground her clit against the base of my cock, and every time she rolled back, she took me deeper, stretching herself to the limit.

“You’re a fucking natural at this,” I cursed, “Look at the way you’re working for it.”

She let out a high, broken sound, her eyes half-closed as she focused on the sensation. She was rolling her hips faster now. I made the camera zoom in closer, catching the way her muscles flexed in her thighs and the way the lace of her panties was soaked through.

“You like… this… don’t you?” she panted. She didn’t stop the rolling motion, her hips creating a friction that was driving me toward the edge.

“I like that you’re doing exactly what I want,” I shot back, my hands sliding down to her ass to pull her even harder against me.

I watched her undoing from every angle, the sweat on her brow, the way her lips were parted in a silent scream, and the relentless, hypnotic roll of her hips that was turning my brain to static.

“I’m gonna cum, Raph,” she gasped.

The words were simple but hearing my name like that, tripped a wire in my head. Everything stopped. The dark thoughts, the cameras, it all vanished. I felt a rush of something protective that I couldn’t explain.

“Gianna,” I whispered, my voice losing its hard edge.

I reached up and grabbed her face with both hands, ignoring the monitors. I forced her to look at me, not at the cameras, but at my actual eyes.

“Say it again,” I asked.

“Raph... please,” she sobbed, her eyes finally meeting mine, they were clear and filled with a desperate need, “I’m close. I’m so close. You feel so good.”

The way she looked at me, like I was the only person in the world who could help her made my heart hammer against my ribs. I felt a surge of heat that was different from before.

Suddenly, I just wanted to be the man who gave her what she needed. I moved my hands down to her hips, and started rubbing her clit.

“Go ahead,” I breathed, my forehead leaning against her cheek, “I’ve got you. I’m right here.”

Q+158gris

“Raph... oh God, I’m... I’m...” she gasped, her voice breaking on a sob of pure release.

Hearing her voice like that pushed me over the edge. I gripped her hips, pulling her down onto me with every ounce of strength I had, driving into her deep and hard. My own pleasure hit me like a violent crash that radiated from my chest down to my fingertips.

“Gianna,” I managed to say, my throat felt wrecked.

She let out a high-pitched moan as the ripples took her. She was shaking so hard she nearly tipped us over in the chair. At the same time, the intensity of her release pulled the final control from me. I slammed into her one last time, my teeth bared, my body locking as I emptied myself into her.

We were both gasping, as I held her tight as the waves of pleasure ebbed away. I buried my face in the crook of her neck, breathing in the scent of her skin as we both came down from the high.

“Congratulations, little sister. I think we just made our own little piece of cinema.”

Janedoewritings

Author

Let me know what you think about this Spicy scene before you swipe up for the next chapter

P

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 270

Raphael

“Delete it,” Gianna snapped, her voice sharp as she scrambled to pull her white shirt back over her shoulders. She was shaking, her fingers fumbling over the buttons, her eyes darting to the wall of monitors as if they were live grenades about to detonate, “Right now, Raphael. Wipe the drive. Everything.”

I stayed seated, leaning back into the chair with confidence. I took my time, methodically cleaning myself before tucking myself away and zipping my pants.

“No,” I said, as I met her eyes, amused.

“Are you insane?” She hissed, stepping toward me, her face pale. She shoved her skirt into place, her knuckles white. “You don’t get it. This isn’t a game. This is our lives. If there is a digital trail of this... of us... it’s going to burn everything down. You’re leaving evidence of a big fat secret.”

I smirked, “I’m the one who built this network, Gianna. I know every single packet of data that moves through these servers. I can handle any trail I want. Don’t threaten me with a good time.”

“What if someone sees it?” her voice went up an octave,. She was pacing now, her shadow stretching long across the floor, “What if the IT team does a sweep? What if someone from your family-Vincenzo or his people- decides to audit the office systems?”

I tilted my head, “Why would my family go digging through my private server space? They’re terrified of me, and they stay out of my business for a reason.”

“They’re not terrified enough if they find this!” She grabbed the edge of the desk, leaning over to get in my face. Her chest was heaving. “What are you even going to do with that? Seriously, Raphael!”

I stood up then, and she flinched, but I just walked slowly toward the wall of monitors. I looked at the frozen image of her on the screen, flushed, and breathless.

“I’m keeping it,” I said, “It’s my favorite souvenir. A little reminder of exactly how I fucked my little sister.”

Her face went from pale to a bright, furious red. She let out a choked, disgusted sound, her hand flying up to cover

her mouth.

“Don’t,” she gasped, “Don’t you ever say that. It’s disgusting.”

I only smiled, “Maybe. But you loved it, didn’t you? Every second of it.”

I leaned against the edge of the desk, crossing my arms over my chest. The fog that had clouded my brain moments ago was gone. That strange tightening in my chest back on the terrace, that weird flicker of something felt like a distant, embarrassing memory now.

And I realized then that strange flicker was just a byproduct of the hunt, a chemical trick my brain played because I was so damn turned on by the idea of ruining her. Now that the tension was spent, the logic returned.

“You’re spiraling, Gianna,” I said, my voice as flat and dry as a balance sheet, “It’s beneath you. Take a breath and fix your hair.”

She stopped pacing, “Are you even listening to me?”

“I am... but the crisis only exists in your head,” I replied, checking my watch. I felt completely unattached, as if

the person who had just been whispering her name was someone else entirely, “The encryption on these files is military-grade. No one is stumbling onto anything. And you enjoyed the view just as much as I did.”

She looked like she wanted to slap me, but then she just rolled her eyes, a tired sort of amusement breaking through her frustration. “Arrogant prick,” she muttered, shaking her head.

I let out a low chuckle, “A fair assessment,” I murmured, leaning back and watching her with a shark’s grin, “But it’s funny how fast your standards drop when this arrogant prick is the one between your legs.”

“Don’t flatter yourself, Raphael,” she shot back over her shoulder, already retreating toward the back of the office with a sharp flick of her hair, “I was just bored, and you happened to be the most convenient way to kill ten minutes.”

I felt my jaw tighten, a prick of irritation hitting me right where she intended. My ego actually felt the sting of that “ten minutes” comment. It was a lie, and we both knew it,

but the fact that she had the balls to say it with such a straight face was what actually annoyed me.

“Ten minutes?” I repeated, “Is that how long you think that was, Mess? I should probably have the IT departmen check the timestamps on those recordings. I’m fairly certain the first scream alone lasted five.”

She didn’t stop messing with my stuff.

P

15 Berlus

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 271

“Maybe your internal clock is just as broken as your personality,” she called back.

“Or maybe,” I countered, “you were so busy losing your mind that you lost track of time altogether. It’s a common side effect of actually being satisfied for once. Don’t worry, I won’t charge you for the overtime.”

Her attention shifted suddenly. In the corner of the room, standing under a bright spotlight, was the prototype 1 had been building for months. It was a sleek, silver-and-black robot, shaped roughly like a human but with smooth, high-tech plating and glowing blue sensors. Gianna stopped in her tracks, her mouth falling open.

“Oh my god, Raphael,” she whispered, her eyes shining like stars. She stepped closer, reaching out a hand but stopping just before she touched the metallic surface, “Is this it? Is this the new AI model?”

“The X-9 variant,” I said distractedly. I had already turned back to my desk, my fingers flying across the keyboard, “It’s built for high-speed pursuit in urban environments.”

“It’s beautiful,” she breathed, leaning in to look at the intricate wiring visible through the clear chest plate, “How does it move? Does it use hydraulic pumps or a new type of motor? And the sensors, are they heat-seeking or movement-based?”

“Both,” I muttered, my eyes fixed on a second monitor. My mind had already moved on to the next task. I was setting up the next hunt. I was marking exit routes, camera blind spots, and timing.

“Raphael, the joint on the elbow,” she said, her voice filled with excitement. “How did you get the rotation so smooth?”

“Carbon-fiber ball bearings,” I answered, clicking through a series of encrypted files.

Gianna’s brow furrowed. She finally noticed that I wasn’t sharing her enthusiasm for the tech. She walked over to the desk, her eyes drifting from my face to the documents spread out across the workspace.

“What are you even doing?” she asked.

She leaned over, her gaze landing on a printed list sitting right next to my mouse. Her face went from curious to horrified in a second. The list was full of names, addresses, and grainy photos. At the top of the page, in bold red letters, was the category: Level 3 Sex Offenders – Active Cases.

She pointed a finger at a photo of a middle-aged man in a suit, “Who is this? Why do you have a list of child molesters on your desk, Raphael?”

I just dragged a file into the ‘Target’ folder and hit enter. “The next guest for the Void,” I said simply, “He thinks he’s getting away with it. I’m just making sure he doesn’t.”

Gianna went still, her hand dropping from the desk, “The Void?” she whispered, “Is that… is that the same place Ciro took me?”

I nodded once, my eyes still fixed on the screen as I pulled up the man’s home address, “Same place.”

She swallowed hard, her eyes wide as she tried to process what I was saying. “But the hunt I was in… that was different, right? There was no… no killing. Right, Raphael?”

I finally turned my head to look at her. I gave her a slow nod. I kept my mouth shut, hiding the fact that the mere thought of her being the prey again in one of my hunts again sent a fresh, dark jolt of excitement through my veins.

“Then what is this one about?” she asked, her voice barely a breath. “What happens to them?”

15 8nu

I leaned back in my chair, “The Void is where I put the trash that the world forgot to take out. My targets are simple, Gianna. I hunt the people who fucked over my family, the ones who think they can steal from the Capone or snitch on us. And I hunt the ones like him.” I tapped the photo of the man in the suit, “Rapists. Especially the ones who touch kids. The ones who deserve to feel exactly what it’s like to be the prey for once,” I turned back to the screen, “I make sure they never have the chance to hurt anyone ever again.”

Gianna stared at the screen, she looked at the man in the photo and then back at me. “And now you’re going to do the same to him? To all of them on this list?”

“Yes,” I said.

I didn’t offer an excuse. It was a simple fact of my life, like breathing or coding. I wasn’t going to let this turn into a debate about my morality.

She swallowed hard, her throat moving as she tried to find her voice. She didn’t look disgusted anymore, she looked overwhelmed as if she was a bit scared of me.

X

GET IT

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 272

I decided to break the tension. I closed the file and leaned back, looking up at her with a bored, casual expression.” Are you going to Claire’s new exhibition opening tomorrow night? It’s her biggest show of the year.”

Gianna blinked, surprised by the change in topic. She smoothed her skirt down, “Yes. I promised her I’d be there.”

“Good,” I said, spinning my pen between my fingers, “I’ll be there too. I’m bringing a date. A plus-one.”

Gianna froze. Her hand, which had been reaching for her bag, stopped mid-air. She didn’t say anything, but I saw the way her eyes clouded over. There was a tiny, split-second hesitation, a flicker of something that looked a lot like hurt or confusion.

“I won’t be having sex with her, obviously,” I added. I wanted to make sure she understood the rules, “But we’re open to dating otherwise.”

Gianna didn’t answer immediately. She looked at the floor, her lips pressed into a thin line and I picked up on it instantly. That hesitation shouldn’t have been there. We had just finished in the chair, and already she was acting like there was some kind of “us” that could be offended.

I realized right then that I needed to draw a hard line. If I didn’t, her mind would turn this into something it wasn’t. I needed to show her exactly where we stood. We weren’t a couple.

“You seem unsure, Gianna,” I said, my voice narrowing. “Is there a problem with me bringing a guest?”

She snapped her head up, and for a second, her mask slipped. But then, she forced a bright, tight smile onto her face. It was the kind of smile that didn't reach hér eyes, the kind people use at funerals to stay polite.

"Of course not!" she said, her voice a little too high, a little too fast, "That's a great idea."

"Right," I muttered, watching her carefully.

"Anyway," she said, grabbing her bag and backing toward the door, "I should go. I have.... I have a lot of college work to finish before tomorrow. And I need to get some sleep."

I checked the clock on the wall. It was barely three in the afternoon. The workday wasn't even close to being over, and we both knew it, but I didn't push her to stay.

"So, I start this job tomorrow, right?" she asked, her hand finally finding the cold metal of the door handle.

I gave her a single nod. "Yeah. Tomorrow."

"Great..." she breathed, and before the word had even finished leaving her lips, she was out the door.

She practically ran for the exit, the click of her heels echoing fast against the tile.

I watched the door swing shut behind her. I had seen her face when I mentioned the date. She was getting attached. She was starting to feel things that would only get her hurt.

I needed to be even colder. I needed to make sure that line was a wall. Because if she started to think this was a romance, I'd have to break her heart just to keep her safe.

I turned back to my monitors, but the data on the screen was no longer the priority. My mind was already moving to the next move on the board, the one that would cement the distance I had just created.

I reached into my pocket and dragged out my phone. I scrolled through my contacts until I found a name, Kylie Smith. She was the daughter of a shipping magnate, a classmate from my MBA days who had spent the last three years trying to catch my eye.

15 Boru

She was exactly what I needed, beautiful, shallow, and perfectly willing to be a prop in my theater.

I typed out a message.

Me: Need a plus-one for an event tomorrow night. Are you available?

I didn’t even have time to set the phone back down on the desk before it buzzed in my palm. The response was instantaneous, as if she had been sitting by the device waiting for me to breathe in her direction.

Kylie: What time are you picking me up?

Having her on my arm at the gallery would be the final nail in the coffin.

I really don’t want her to get hurt. I was merely following the rules she had set for this game. I hadn’t gone back on my word, and I had no intention of doing so. But if she was starting to catch feelings, I had to be the one to kill them.

It was for her own good.

Janedoewritings Author

Hey guys! Let me know what you think!

Also, before this turns into a full-on “hate Raphael” trend-sometimes just enjoy the story for what it is instead of acting like it’s the end of the world. Please remember the difference

P

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 273

Gianna

“Ugh, don’t look at me. I was a literal public health hazard before the kiddos made a mother out of me,” Claire groaned, her stylus stabbing at her iPad like she was trying to draw blood, “I used to throw parties that would make a rock star check into rehab. Pure, unadulterated carnage.”

Maddie sat perfectly still, holding her porcelain cup, “I like picnics. And tea parties. The kind of events where people use napkins and nobody ends up in a holding cell. Your parties honestly scared the life out of me, Claire I thought I was witnessing the fall of Rome.”

Claire let out a dramatic wail, rolling her eyes toward the ceiling, “I am boring now, Maddie! My parties are extremely tame. It’s mostly toddlers screaming into cupcakes and me hiding in the pantry with my husband. It’s basically a convent.”

Maddie grinned, “And they are so fun. I’ve never felt more safe.”

Suddenly, Claire snapped her head toward me, her eyes narrowed, “Gianna. Settle this. Tell me you aren’t a tea party girl. Please tell me you have a pulse, or Maddie is going to successfully convert me to her cult of Nicenism. I can feel my soul turning into a lace doily.”

My mind took a nose dive into the dark. I thought of the ragers Leone used to host, the kind where the air tasted like expensive vodka and bad intentions.

I thought of the college parties I’d attended, staying just long enough before retreating to my room to study. With my dyslexia, I couldn’t afford to lose a single brain cell to a hangover.

Then there were the other parties. The ones where I wasn’t an invitee, but the entertainment. I had seen the world with its clothes off, and it wasn’t a tea party, and none of it ever scared me.

I felt a slow smile pull at my lips, my eyes locking onto Claire’s, “Sorry, Maddie,” I murmured, “But I’m with the mother of carnage on this one. If there isn’t at least a fifty-percent chance of the police showing up, is it even a party?”

Claire let out a loud laugh, nearly dropping her iPad, “Yes! Thank you! I knew there was something delightfully wrong with you!”

“Picnics are fine on a sunday,” I continued, “But I sometimes want the music so loud it resets my heart rate.”

Claire was beaming now, looking at Maddie like she’d just won a war, “See? Gianna gets it. After my show, we aren’t doing tea, Maddie. We’re going to find the grimiest, loudest club in the city and remind everyone why the Capones are a legal liability.”

Maddie just sighed, taking a slow, calm sip of her tea while looking at us both, “I’ve clearly let the wrong people into my inner circle,” she whispered, though she reached over and patted my hand.

Suddenly, the room’s feminine calm was instantly shattered by a wave of cologne and masculine energy.

Dante was the first one through, he headed straight for the sofa and dropped down beside me. Before I could even blink, he threw a heavy, arm around my shoulders, pulling me into his side with a lopsided grin that told me he wanted something from me.

“What are we plotting, ladies?” he asked, “I heard Claire laughing from the hallway. Should I be worried about my bank account or my life?”

+15 Borus

Silvio followed him in, clutching a can of beer and doubled over in shaking laughter. He was pointing backward toward the doorway, where Raphael was trailing behind them.

Raphael wasn't looking at any of us. He was holding his phone at arm's length, his face tight with a mixture of pure agony. From the tiny speaker, a high-pitched, frantic voice was scolding him in rapid-fire Italian.

"Aunt Alessia, please," Raphael groaned, his voice sounding like he was fighting for his actual life, "I am working most of the time. I don't have time to look at photos of the Mayor's niece."

"Work is for men who don't have a beautiful wife to come home to!" Alessia's voice shrieked from the phone, loud enough for everyone to hear, "She is a doctor, Raphael! She has hair like silk and she comes from a very religious family! Why are you being so difficult? I'm pregnant, the stress is not good for the baby. Do you want ne to die without seeing you at the altar?"

Silvio lost it then, letting out a loud bark of a laugh, "Yeah, Rafe! Tell her how the robots are better company! Tell her you're waiting for a girl with a motherboard!"

Claire's iPad hit the table as she lunged forward, "Wait, is she actually guilt-tripping him with the fetus? Give me that phone!"

"Claire, don't you dare, stay back!" Raphael warned, dodging her. He looked completely wrecked, his hair was a messy nest where he'd been pulling at it, and his tie was yanked loose.

15 Borus

But Claire was faster. She snatched the phone right out of his hand and beamed at the screen, "Alessia, darling! Don't worry, our little robot has actually found a spark of humanity. He's bringing a date to my gallery opening, A girl named Kylie from his college."

The silence on the other end lasted for exactly one second before Alessia let out a gasp, "Really? A girl with a pulse? Tell me everything!"

"She's... not a date. She's just a plus-one," Raphael snapped.

He slumped onto the sofa directly opposite me and Dante.

I felt a sudden, sharp pinch in my chest that had nothing to do with the conversation. A date. Or a plus-one. It didn't matter what he called it. The thought of Raphael, his date and what he did to me in the office just this morning made my stomach turn into a cold knot.

Raphael's eyes dropping to where Dante's arm was draped heavily over my shoulders. His expression shifted instantly. The exhaustion from the phone call vanished, replaced by a stillness. He stared at the way Dante was grinning at me.

He didn't look at Claire or the phone anymore. He just sat there, staring at us like an idiot in front of his entire family.

"Is she religious? Does she want a large family? Raphael, answer me!" Alessia's voice was buzzing from the phone Claire was still waving around.

"Her name is Kylie Smith, and she probably wants a private island and a tax haven," Silvio chimed in, leaning back with a grin that was pure evil.

Maddie leaned forward, "You know, Raphael, it's not just women who have to worry about time. Men have biological clocks, too. You don't want to be the grandfather at your own son's football game, do you?"

"Exactly!" Claire added, pointing at him. "Right. In ten years, if you're still alone in that lab, you're just the weird uncle who talks to his toaster."

Raphael snatched his phone back from Claire with a movement so fast it made her blink, "Aunt Alessia, listen to me very carefully. You and Rino are literally bringing a new life into this world while you're in your forties. You are currently the poster children for 'plenty of time.' If you two can manage a nursery, I'm fairly certain my sperm isn't going to expire by next Tuesday."

Silvio let out a choked, wet sound as his drink went down the wrong pipe, and Maddie looked a little stunned by the bluntness.

"Raphael! Such language!" Alessia gasped through the speaker.

"I'll be fine," he finished, "I have a plus-one for the gallery. Can we please talk about literally anything else before I move to a country that doesn't have cellular service?"

He slumped back, looking utterly drained, but his eyes drifted back to me, and then he looked away.

Dante didn't seem to notice the tension radiating off his brother. He just smirked, tightening his grip on my shoulder. "Honestly, at this rate, I'm probably going to beat Raph to the altar anyway."

Claire rolled her eyes so hard it looked painful. “Please. You don’t even have a date for the opening.”

Dante scoffed, pulling me against his side, “What are you talking about? My date is sitting right here.”

Silvio leaned forward, tapping my knee with his can of beer, “Back off, Dante. G is my date.”

+15 Borus

Dante shot Silvio a cold look and a very clear, very middle finger. “Dream on. She’s mine for the night. And Gianna, “he turned to me, glaring, “you are going to be my date. And if you tell a single soul at that event that you’re my sister, I’ll literally kill you in your sleep. I’ll make it look like an accident.”

I tilted my head, “And why on earth would I do that, Dante? What’s in it for me besides a death threat?”

“Because,” Dante said, his eyes darkening with a wicked intent, “I need to make someone’s life miserable. I need to make her jealous.”

Raphael shifted, his knuckles whitening as he gripped the edge of his phone, “You’re going to use your own stepsister to make your ex-girlfriend jealous?” he asked, “That’s a new low, even for you.”

“She doesn’t know she’s my stepsister, does she?” Dante countered, leaning closer to me, ignoring the frost emanating from the opposite couch, “She just sees a gorgeous girl on my arm.”

Silvio shook his head, looking at me with a mix of pity and amusement, “You don’t want any part of this, G. His girlfriend is married. It’s a messy, trashy soap opera that ends in a public scandal.”

Dante waved a dismissive hand, “I’m not trying to win her back. I just want her to think I’m thriving without her. It’s about the optics, Silvio.”

I looked up at Dante, my eyes dancing with amusement. “Are you, though? thriving?”

P

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 275

Dante scoffed, his chest puffing out slightly, “Of course I am. She’s a social-climbing opportunist. I’m better off.”

“Gianna doesn’t want anything to do with your married-woman drama, Dante,” Silvio added, “She’s coming with me. Allegra is flying in from New York, and I want to show that tiny brat that I have a new sister-a better sister- and I don’t need her around. She can stay in her perfect little Upper East Side bubble forever.”

Maddie set her teacup down with a delicate clink, her eyes moving between Silvio and Dante like she was watching two dogs fight over a bone, “Has anyone actually stopped to ask Gianna if she already has a plus-one?” she asked, “Maybe she’s already got someone in mind.”

All eyes swung back to me. I felt the heat rise in my cheeks, but I managed a small, quick shake of my head. “No,” I said, “I don’t have a date. I was just planning on going to support Claire.”

Claire’s eyes widened, “You mean you’re available? Gianna, honey, why didn’t you say so?”

“Oh, this is perfect,” Maddie added, “We can’t have you walking in there alone or, heaven forbid, as a prop for one of these two idiots.” She gestured vaguely at Dante and Silvio.

Claire was already tapping away at her iPad with renewed vigor, “I know so many guys in the art world, Gianna. And I don’t mean the starving artist types. I’m talking about decent, cute, decent men. Architects, gallery owners, collectors. I have a list. I’m going to set you up.”

“No, really, Claire, it’s fine,” I said, laughing nervously. “I’m good. I have a lot of schoolwork, and-”

“Nonsense,” Claire interrupted, her eyes scanning her screen. “What about Marcus? He’s an architect, six-foot- two, has the most adorable golden retriever, and he actually knows how to hold a conversation without mentioning crime.”

“No, Claire, please-“I started again.

“Or Justin?” Maddie chimed in, leaning closer to me, “He’s a vet at my animal sanctuary, a bit older, very stable, and he’s been looking for someone to... love. He’s very sweet, Gianna. He’d treat you like a queen.”

“No! No dates,” I said, waving my hands. But they weren’t listening. It was like a dam had broken, and they were both drowning me in potential suitors.

“I’m sending you photos right now,” Claire teased, her thumb hovering over the screen, “You’re going to pick one, or I’m picking for you.”

“She doesn’t want to date anyone!”

Everyone froze.

And then every single set of eyes in the room snapped to Raphael. Dante’s arm went still on my shoulder. Claire blinked, her iPad held mid-air.

What the hell?!

I saw the muscle in his jaw twitch as he forced his expression to flatten into something more detached.

He cleared his throat, “She has enough on her plate,” he said, “I just spent this entire morning with her as we went over her new responsibilities in the office. Between her college courses, and the workload I’m handing her tomorrow, she doesn’t have the bandwidth for the distraction of some decent guy’ from an art gallery or an animal sanctuary.”

15 Baras

He adjusted his cufflink, picking up his phone as if the conversation was over.

Claire slammed her iPad onto the coffee table and glared at Raphael like he was a misbehaving child, “Excuse me? “Your staff”?” she snapped, “She is a human being, Raphael, not a piece of hardware you can just program to stay in a corner. Since when did you become the moral guardian of her social life? Get over yourself.”

Maddie nodded in agreement. She looked Raphael right in the eye, “She is right, Raphael. Mind your own business. Gianna is not just here to work herself into the ground for you. If she wants to meet someone, she should.”

Raphael didn’t look at them, his eyes were glued to me. I felt his stare at the side of my face, and for a moment I wanted to shrink back. But then I remembered the way he had talked about his “plus-one” so dismissively. I felt a surge of stubborn heat in my chest.

I turned to Claire with a bright smile.

“You know what?” I said, “I’ve decided. I’ll go with Dante and Silvio. They can fight over who gets to hold my coa.

Dante let out a triumphant “Ha!” and squeezed my shoulder, while Silvio raised his can in a victory toast toward

I kept my attention back at Claire and Maddie, “But you can definitely introduce me to anyone you want there. Actually, please do. I think I’m officially open to... dating.”

If he was going to rewrite the rules we had set in the dark, then I was going to make sure he watched me play the game, too.

Janedoewritings

Author

This chapter might not be the most exciting, I really had to push myself to get an update out today because I didn’t want to disappoint those of you who wait for it every day and genuinely love the story. You mean a lot to me

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 276

Gianna

1PT

I stood in front of the mirror in the bathroom of the venue, and I just... looked. The dress had already settled on my body like it belonged there, like it had been waiting for me.

Black smooth silk catching the light in soft flashes every time I shifted my weight. It didn’t cling, not desperately, not cheaply, it followed like it knew exactly where to stop and where to suggest.

I turned slightly, watching the fabric fall along my hips, the slit opening just enough to reveal my leg before slipping back into place when I stilled. My fingers brushed down the side of it.

Five years ago, this had been my world.

Cocktail dresses. Soft laughter over glasses of champagne. White walls lined with art that people pretended to understand while pretending even harder not to care.

I used to belong to nights like this. I exhaled slowly, my gaze flickering back to the mirror, but I wasn’t seeing myself anymore.

I was seeing that night.

The last gallery I ever walked into.

I had been on Leone's arm, the man I thought I would marry, the man I loved in a way that had felt permanent back then. I could still remember the weight of his hand at the small of my back, guiding me through a crowded room like I was something precious he refused to let out of his reach.

I remembered the way he leaned in to explain a painting I barely cared about, the way I nodded anyway, more focused on the warmth of him than the art in front of us. I remembered laughing softly at something he said, the kind of laugh that came easy back then with him.

I remembered thinking this is it. This is the life. This is where I belong.

My throat tightened.

I turned, slowly, letting my back face the mirror now. The dress dipped low, exposing my spine, the silk falling away just enough. My hair slipped over one shoulder, leaving my skin bare, vulnerable in a way that didn't feel weak, just real.

Five years ago, I had walked out of that world without looking back.

No more gallery openings. No more champagne. No more him.

And yet here I was.

I lifted my gaze again, meeting my own reflection. Pale skin against black silk, brown hair, green eyes that didn't look as soft as they used to be.

There was something different now.

I held my own stare for a moment longer, steadying myself in it, in the version of me standing here tonight.

I snapped the small gold clasp of my handbag shut, took one last breath, squared my shoulders, and walked out.

+15 8grius

I didn't even have time to look for the bar before Dante materialized out of nowhere. He looked frantic, his eyes darting around the room with a nervous energy that was completely at odds with his expensive suit.

"Where the hell were you?" he hissed, "I've been standing here looking like a loser for five minutes."

“Restroom, Dante. Relax,” I said, snagging a glass of champagne from a passing waiter’s tray.

“Well, stop relaxing. The enemy has entered the perimeter,” he muttered, grabbing my arm and pulling me closer to him, “Victoria is here. Three o’clock. Don’t look. Actually, look, but look like you’re too obsessed with me to notice she’s even breathing the same air.”

I choked on my drink, a small laugh bubbling up, “What?”

“I’m serious, G,” he said, “Here’s the plan, I’m going to act like a bored, mysterious guy. You’re going to act like you’re physically addicted to my presence. I want you to look at me like I’m the air in your lungs. Look at me like you’d crawl over broken glass just to hear me describe my morning coffee.”

I let out a loud, genuine laugh, shaking my head, “Are you actually serious right now? You want me to play the obsessed fan’ role?”

“Yes! Exactly like that!” Dante hissed, a wicked, frantic grin breaking across his face, “Laugh. Lean in. Make it look like I’m the funniest, most charming man on this planet. I want her to see your eyes sparkling and think, ‘ Damn, I really traded a Ferrari for a tricycle.””

I couldn’t help it. The sheer absurdity of his ego was so ridiculous that I started laughing for real. I leaned my head against his shoulder, my body shaking with amusement, “You are so stupid. You know that, right?”

He pulled me tighter against his side, his thumb stroking my bare shoulder in a way that looked intimate but felt like a business transaction, “I’m stupid and currently accompanied by the hottest girl in the room. Now, look at me again like I just invented fire. She’s moving this way.”

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 277

Raphael

I stood near the center of the room, my suit jacket perfectly buttoned, playing the part of the supportive brother.

Kylie stood beside me. She was talking about some tech merger, but my attention was focused on the walls. Claire’s work was everywhere. The canvases were bold and raw, filled with strokes of color that looked like they were bleeding into each other.

“Your sister-in-law is incredible, Raphael,” Kylie said, leaning in to see a piece better, “The detail is insane.”

“She’s a force of nature,” I murmured, and for a moment, I felt a genuine spark of pride. Claire had worked herself to the bone for this, “She sees the world in a way most people are too scared to. I’ve watched her stay up for forty-eight hours straight just to get one shade of red right. I’m proud of her. This is exactly what she deserves.

I took a slow sip of my champagne, the bubbles sharp on my tongue. I was about to suggest we move to the next room when the world suddenly went sideways.

Across the crowded floor, past a group of critics, a woman stood with her back to me.

Everything else in the room-the art, the people, the music-just stopped. My brain stalled, the gears grinding to

a halt.

She was wearing a black silk dress that didn’t just fit her, it lived on her. But it was the back that made the glass in my hand feel like it was about to shatter.

The fabric dipped in a deep curve, exposing every inch of her smooth spine. It went lower and lower, past the small of her back, until it reached the very top of her curves, just barely hinting at the start of her ass in a way that was so bold it felt like a blow to my chest.

I knew that skin.

I knew the way she carried her head.

Gianna.

My pulse didn’t just speed up, it became a riot. I felt the blood leave my head and rush south, leaving me dizzy and wanting to do something stupid. I usually saw her in oversized shirts, pants, and messy ponytails.

I knew she was beautiful, but this?

I stared at the way the light hit the dip of her back. My mouth went bone-dry. I forgot Kylie was standing right next to me. I forgot how to hold a conversation. I forgot my own name for a split second.

I watched her shift her weight, the silk sliding over her skin like a slow caress. My grip on the champagne flute tightened. I wanted to walk over there, take my jacket off, and wrap it around her until every inch of that bare skin was covered from the world.

“Raphael? You okay?” Kylie’s voice sounded like it was coming from underwater.

My brain went completely offline, replaced by a single, pulsing thought: She is far too naked for this many people to be in the room.

+15 agri

I took a large, desperate gulp of my drink, my eyes never leaving the curve of her spine.

I watched, paralyzed, as Dante leaned in close to her. His head was bowed toward hers, his lips inches from her ear, whispering something that made her entire body shake with bright laugh.

She leaned into him, her hand landing on his forearm to steady herself. Her head fell back, exposing the long, elegant line of her throat, and that black silk rippled over her skin.

What the fuck were they laughing at?

Dante said something else to her, his voice low and private, and Gianna let out another soft giggle/her eyes crinkling in that way they only did when she was truly happy.

The sound was like nails on a chalkboard to me.

I took another aggressive swallow of champagne, the bubbles burning my throat, but it did nothing to cool the fire starting to roar in my chest.

Gianna

1&1

“Dante...”

I felt Dante’s entire body go rigid for a split second before he forced himself into a pose of boredom. Victoria stood there, looking like she had stepped off a runway, her eyes darting between Dante and the way I was tucked firmly into the crook of his arm.

“Victoria,” Dante said. He didn’t even turn his head. He kept his eyes on me, his thumb tracing slow, lazy circles on my bare shoulder. He sounded like he was greeting a telemarketer he was about to hang up on.

This was my cue. I leaned in, pressing my shoulder against his chest, and looked up at him with a gaze so sweet it felt like I was pouring syrup over him.

x

15 Barus

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“Is this a friend of yours, baby?” I asked, as I didn’t look at Victoria.

Dante finally glanced at her, “Something like that. Gianna, this is Victoria, and Victoria, this is Gianna, my girlfriend.”

Victoria’s face tightened. She looked at my dress and her eyes flashed with a bitter, green heat, “I didn’t know you were seeing anyone, Dante. It’s been... what? Two weeks since we last spoke?”

“Has it?” Dante asked, raising an eyebrow. He turned back to me, “I haven’t really been keeping track of the days. I’ve been a little... occupied.”

I let out a soft giggle, “Occupied is an understatement,” I whispered, “You’ve barely let me out of bed long enough to get dressed for this opening, Dante. It’s actually exhausting obsessed you are with me.”

Dante’s eyes widened for a fraction of a second, I had clearly gone off-script but he recovered like a pro. He let out a low, dark chuckle and kissed the top of my head, “You weren’t exactly complaining, were you?”

“Never,”

“I breathed, finally turning my head just enough to give Victoria a small, pitying smile. “It’s so nice to meet you, Victoria. Dante has mentioned... well, actually, he hasn’t mentioned you at all.”

Victoria’s face went through three different shades of purple. She looked like she had just swallowed a whole lemon, rind and all. Her hand tightened on her designer clutch so hard I thought the leather might actually scream.

“I think my husband is looking for me,” she snapped. She didn’t wait for a reply. She turned on her heels and marched off, her back so stiff she looked like she was made of wood.

The second she was out of earshot, I felt Dante’s chest cave in as he let out a massive, shaky breath.

“Holy shit, Gianna,” he whispered, “That was cold. That was ‘bury-the-body-in-the-basement’ cold. I think I actually saw her soul leave her body when you mentioned the bed thing.”

I let out a real laugh this time, the adrenaline finally starting to cool down, “You told me to be all over you, Dante. I just followed the script.”

“Followed the script?” Dante scoffed, “You rewrote the whole play. Where did you learn to lie like that? I’m fucking terrified of you right now.”

I felt the smile on my face falter for just a second. Years of pretending to be someone you’re not makes you a good liar. When you spend every day acting like you aren’t broken, like you aren’t struggling or like your heart didn’t just die years ago, lying becomes as easy as breathing.

He shook his head, looking me up and down like he was seeing a completely different person, “Alright, I’m changing my favorite sister of the week,” he declared, “Last week it was Jules because she helped me hide that scratch on Vincenzo’s car. But this week, it’s definitely you.”

I laughed, the sound feeling a little hollow in my throat as my gaze drifted past the crowd and landed squarely on Raphael.

He was standing in front of one of Claire’s larger canvases. His date, Kylie, was leaning in close, her finger pointing at a specific detail in the brushwork. Raphael was bent toward her, his head inclined so he could get closer to her. He was murmuring something that made her nod in wide-eyed fascination.

But it wasn’t the conversation that made my stomach do a slow, sick flip.

It was his hand.

He had it rested firmly against the small of her back. His fingers were spread wide, one of his fingers slightly caressing her skin. It was the exact same spot where I could still feel the phantom heat of his touch from our private moments.

Seeing those long, capable fingers guiding another woman through a room felt... strange.

A sharp, cold twinge of unease sparked in my chest. It wasn’t just a bad feeling, it was a bitter, metallic taste in my mouth that made the champagne turn sour on my tongue.

This is why the rules mattered!

We had a deal. An arrangement that kept the world simple. But seeing him out here, in the bright light of the gallery, playing the part of the perfect gentleman for someone else, changed everything.

Doing what we were doing, sliding into each other’s beds while trying to live separate lives in the sun, was turning out to be harder than I thought it would.

I looked away quickly, my heart beating hard against my ribs.

Janedoewritings

Author

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 279

Gianna

+15 Barus

I slipped away from Dante’s circle of friends for a moment, and wandered toward a quiet corner of the gallery and that’s when I saw it.

I stopped dead.

The painting was massive. It wasn’t a portrait, it was a scream captured in oil. It showed a woman, or the ghost of one, trapped behind layers of thin lines that looked like iron bars.

Her face was blurred, but her eyes, they were two dark pits of exhaustion. Around her neck, hands made of muday shadows reached out, to keep her quiet.

I felt a cold shiver crawl up my spine, settling in the marrow of my bones. I felt like I knew this woman.

It reminded me of my father’s voice, that tone he used when he looked at my school reports.

“Is a single, basic sentence really beyond your capacity?”

“I’ve wasted years and a fortune trying to salvage what’s left of your mind, and I am finally finished.”

“You aren’t some puzzle to be solved, Gianna, you are fundamentally broken.”

“You were a mistake from the start, a worthless void that no amount of medicine or discipline can ever fill.”

I gripped my handbag until the gold chain bit into my skin. I could almost feel the cold metal of the instruments the doctors used during the treatments he paid for.

“You lack the basic competence to inherit this name, let alone lead anyone. Don’t delude yourself into thinking you have potential.”

“The only value you possess is the bargain Leone is willing to make for you. Without a man to carry your weight, you are–and always will be-absolutely nothing.”

I felt small. I felt like the black silk on my body was just a fancy way to wrap up a person who was worth nothing on her own.

A shadow moved beside me.

I didn’t hear him walk up. There were no footsteps, just a sudden change in the air. The space next to me grew heavy and warm.

Raphael stood there.

He didn’t say a word. He didn’t look at me, and he didn’t try to touch me. He just stood with his hands shoved deep into his trouser pockets, his shoulders square and solid. He looked at the painting, his jaw set in a hard line.

For a long minute, we just stood there in the silence of the corner. The noise of the event felt miles away.

I swallowed the lump in my throat and looked up at him then I looked past him, scanning the crowded room for the woman in the pretty dress who had been hanging onto his arm all night.

“Where is she?” I asked, “Where did your date go?”

Raphael kept his eyes fixed on the woman behind the iron bars in the painting.

“She is here... somewhere,” he said.

He sounded like he didn’t care if she was in the room or on another planet.

Raphael finally shifted his body, turning slightly toward me. The warmth coming off him was intense, but his face remained as cold as a winter morning.

“That dress,” he started, “It is certainly... effective.”

I raised an eyebrow, “Effective?”

“It does exactly what it was designed to do,” he said, his gaze tracing the deep ‘V’ of the back and the high slit at my thigh, “It ensures that every man in this room, from the waiters to the collectors, can’t keep their eyes off you. It’s a very loud way of telling the world you’re available.”

The way he spat the word “effective made it feel like a dirty insult. He looked at the way the fabric hugged my hips as if he wanted to tear it off, not out of passion, but out of a need to hide me away.

“You look like a completely different person, Gianna,” he added, “I almost didn’t recognize the girl who works in my office or sleeps in my home. I suppose that was the point of tonight, wasn’t it? To make sure no one misses you.”

If he wanted to believe I had dressed up just to hunt for a new pair of hands to hold, I was more than happy to let him choke on that thought.

“I mean, wasn’t it you who said we were open to dating other people?” I asked, as I turned my attention back to the painting, watching the woman behind the bars, “I was the one who said we should stay exclusive, you know, to avoid any messy overlapping or cheating. But... since you insisted on changing the rules, I thought, why not follow your lead?”

P

He let out a short breath that was almost a scoff. When I looked back, he gave me a smile that looked painful, like he was forcing his face to move against its will.

“I don’t remember insisting on anything,” he corrected, “I simply suggested it was an option.”

I nodded slowly, letting a cold smile touch my lips, “And I thought it was a wonderful suggestion, Raphael. It’s good for us. It keeps us both very aware of our reality.” I paused, then added, “Stepbrother.”

Raphael

She said the word “stepbrother,” it felt like she was twisting a knife in my gut. I wanted to grab her, to remind her exactly who I was to her, but the sound of clicking heels on the polished floor stopped me.

Kylie appeared from the crowd, her face bright with a curious smile. She looked from me to Gianna, her eyes lingering on the way Gianna’s dress seemed to defy the laws of gravity.

“There you are, Raphael,” Kylie said, stepping into our small, dark corner. She looked at Gianna with a friendly expression, “I turned around and you were gone. Who is this?”

I didn't move away from Gianna. In fact, I stepped half an inch closer, making sure our shoulders were almost touching. Because our backs were tucked deep into the corner of the gallery, the rest of the crowd was blocked out. No one could see what was happening in the small space behind us.

"Kylie, this is Gianna," I said, "Gianna, this is Kylie Smith. We went to college together."

As I spoke the words "this is my stepsister," I moved my hand. I reached out as if to give her a supportive, brotherly pat on the back. To Kylie, it looked like a simple, family gesture. But the moment my palm touched the bare skin of Gianna's spine, a tiny spark of electricity that shot straight up my arm.

I didn't just pat her. I let my hand slide down.

I slid my palm over the bare skin of Gianna's back. I watched her face from the side, my expression blank, as I moved my hand lower. I followed the deep 'V' of the dress, my fingers tracing the line of her spine until I reached the base of her back.

I didn't stop there.

I forced my hand lower, pushing into the fabric until my fingers dipped into the heat of her ass. I felt her breath hitch, her entire body going rigid against me. I let my hand go further, my palm cupping her, my fingers digging into the soft flesh of her butt. I gave a slow squeeze.

Gianna's eyes went wide, her pupils blowing out until this pretty green eyes were almost as black as her dress. She went stiff as a board, her hand clutching her champagne glass so hard I thought it might snap. But she forced a bright, shaky smile onto her face and looked at Kylie.

"It's so nice to meet you, Kylie," Gianna said, "You look absolutely beautiful. That color is stunning on you."

She was trying to play the part, trying to keep her cool while I claimed her right under the nose of my date.

I wasn't done. The anger at seeing her in this dress, it all pooled in my gut. I moved my hand lower, my fingers sliding between the tops of her thighs from behind. I found the thin, useless string of her lace underwear and

15 B

hooked my finger under it, tugging it slowly to the side.

I felt her tremble. A tiny, muffled gasp left her lips, but she covered it with a fake cough, blinking rapidly at Kylie.

I pushed my fingers further, reaching into the heat of her pussy. I began to rub her, my thumb pressing hard against the sensitive bud of her clit while my fingers worked into her wetness.

“Gianna works with me at the office,” I continued, “She’s very... hardworking. Isn’t that right, Gianna?”

I increased the pressure, my hand moving in a grind against her. I could feel her heart racing through her back She was trapped between me and the prying eyes of the gallery. She had to stand there, smiling and acting like a lady, while I had my hand buried in her.

“Yes,” she managed to choke out, her voice straining as she stared at Kylie, “I try my best to be... useful.”

Kylie just smiled, completely oblivious to the fact that I was finger-fucking my stepsister right in front of her, Well, it’s lovely to meet you, Gianna. Raphael has such a great family.”

P

+15 8grus

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

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“The best,” I murmured, my hand still buried, keeping her pinned to the spot as I felt her start to come apart under my touch.

I could feel Gianna’s body vibrating. My fingers were buried deep in her, hooked into that soaking wet, heat. She was getting wetter by the second, the slickness coating my finger, making every slide of my hand more intense in the small space between us.

“It’s... it’s challenging,” Gianna managed to say as Kylie asked some questions about work, “We’re currently... focusing on... predictive modeling.”

I pushed two fingers inside her, feeling her walls clench around me. I watched her face, the way her chest was heaving, the way she was biting the inside of her cheek so hard I thought she might bleed.

“Predictive modeling is fascinating,” Kylie said, “Are you guys looking at neural networks for the next quarter, or staying with the current framework?”

“We’re looking at... everything,” Gianna gasped.

She tried to take a sip of her champagne, but her hand was shaking so badly the liquid nearly slopped over the rim.

I could feel her pussy pulsing against my hand. I moved my fingers with a motion that I knew was making her see

stars.

“Raphael is very... demanding when it comes to results,” Gianna added, her eyes fluttering for a second before she forced them open to look at Kylie, “He expects... total focus. All the time.”

“I bet,” Kylie laughed, tucking a lock of hair behind her ear. “He was always a perfectionist in school. I can only imagine what he’s like as a boss.”

“He’s very... hands-on,” Gianna whispered.

I smirked, my fingers twitching inside her as I felt the first wave of her climax start to ripple through her muscles. She was so wet it was starting to soak into the lace of her underwear.

“I find that being hands-on is the only way to ensure things go exactly where I want them to,” I said to Kylie, ” Don’t you agree, Gianna?”

I could feel the tremors starting deep inside her. Gianna’s legs were slightly shaking now I thought she might collapse right there. Her pussy was clenching around my fingers, tight and desperate, pulsing with a heat that was nearly boiling. She was right there, one more hard rub, one more deep thrust, and she would have screamed my name in front of everyone.

I stopped.

I pulled my hand out of her dress quickly. The sudden loss of my heat made her eyes snap open, and for a split second, I saw pure rage in those green eyes. She looked like she wanted to wrap her hands around my throat. She was left hanging off a cliff, her body screaming for the release I had just snatched away.

I straightened my jacket, and didn’t even look at her as I turned my attention back to Kylie.

“Kylie,” I said, “That piece we were looking at earlier. You mentioned you were interested in adding it to your collection. Do you want to go take a final look and see about buying it?”

Kylie’s face lit up, “Oh, absolutely! I’ve been thinking about it all night. Do you think Claire would be open to a private sale?”

“I’m sure we can arrange something,” I said, giving her a small smile, “Lead the way.

“It was so nice to meet you, Gianna!” Kylie said, already turning to head back toward the main room.

Gianna couldn’t say a word. She just gave Kylie a forced smile.

Kylie started walking. I stepped out behind her, following a pace back. As we moved out of the shadow of the corner, I stopped for just a second.

I turned my head and looked back at Gianna.

She was glaring at me, her face flushed a deep, angry red. She looked at me with eyes that promised murder.

And I just raised my right hand. My fingers were slick and glistening, coated in her sweet wetness that caught the bright gallery lights. I stared her right in the eyes.

Slowly, I slid those two fingers into my mouth.

I sucked them clean, tasting her on my tongue. I kept my eyes locked on hers the entire time, watching her jaw drop and her hands curl into fists. I let out a wicked smirk before I pulled my fingers out and turned around.

“Coming, Raphael?” Kylie called out, looking back.

“Right behind you,” I answered. I walked away without looking back again, leaving Gianna standing in that dark corner, soaking wet, and unsatisfied.

Janedoewritings Author

Enjoy!

XOXOΣ

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 282

Gianna

+15 8gus

I stayed in that corner for a while, my fingers digging so hard into my palms wall that my nails felt like they might snap. My heart wasn’t just beating, it was thumping against my ribs like it was trapped and trying to kick its way

out.

I was shaking, not the good kind of shaking, not the sweet, soft drift after a climax. This was a electric tremor of pure, unboiled rage. Raphael had left me standing there, my body feeling like a wire pulled too tight, aching and soaking wet. I could still feel the ghost of his fingers, but the heat was gone, replaced by the cold air of the gallery that made my skin crawl.

I watched his broad shoulders disappear into the crowd. I watched him walk away with that woman, his head tilted toward her as if I hadn't just been coming apart under his touch seconds ago.

The way he had looked back at me, the way he had sucked his fingers while staring right into my soul, it was branded into the back of my head. It was stuck there forever. I knew that even if I married someone else, even when I'm old and wrinkled, I'll think back to this exact moment and my body will remember. I'll probably still orgasm just from the memory.

I wanted to smash my champagne glass against the back of his head.

Slowly, the noise of the gallery began to change. The loud, buzzing energy of the opening started to settle. People were saying goodbye, putting on their coats, and trickling out the tall front doors into the night. The waiters were moving faster now, clearing away empty glasses and folded napkins. The show was ending, but the fire in my gut was only getting hotter.

I tried to fix my hair, but my hands were trembling. I took a deep, shaky breath, trying to make my face look normal, even though my skin felt flushed and my pulse was still thundering in my ears.

"There you are!"

A pair of arms wrapped around my shoulders from behind, startling a small, sharp gasp out of me. I spun around, my heart leaping into my throat, only to see Claire's beaming face. She looked exhausted but triumphant, her eyes glowing with the success of the night.

"The doors are locked, the checks are signed, and I am officially a hit!" she squealed, pulling me into a quick, tight hug.

I gave a genuine wide smile, "You were amazing, Claire. The work... it was actually beautiful."

"Thank you!" she grinned, her eyes sparkling.

I looked back at the painting in the corner, the one with the woman behind the bars, “Especially that one,” I whispered, “It’s so real. It’s raw. I felt like it was actually talking to me.”

Claire’s smile faltered. She went quiet, her eyes searching mine. She looked at the painting, then back at me.

“It spoke to you?” she asked, her voice dropping into a soft, careful whisper.

I nodded, unable to look away from the canvas. “It’s beautiful.”

Claire blinked, “What part of it…” she started, her voice shaking just a little bit, “What part of it made you feel… Gianna?”

I looked back at the woman in the painting. The way the dark, muddy hands were painted around her throat, it wasn’t just paint.

“The silence,” I whispered, my voice sounding like it was coming from a long way off, “The way she’s just… taking it. She’s standing there in that cage, and she’s not even fighting anymore because she knows the bars are too strong. She’s just waiting for the next person to tell her what she is.”

Claire’s hand finally landed on my shoulder. It was light, almost like she was checking to see if I was still there.

“I didn’t paint that to be beautiful, Gianna,” she murmured, her thumb rubbing a small circle against my skin, But I just want you to know that I’m here. I’m always here. You don’t have to explain the ‘why’ to me. I’ll just listen.”

I looked at her, seeing the quiet understanding in her eyes. She knew. She didn’t know the specifics, but she knew the feeling of being hunted, of being used, and of being trapped.

“Thanks, Claire,” I breathed, feeling a tiny bit of the tension leak out of my shoulders.

“Don’t thank me,” she said, and tossed her hair back and pointed toward the stairs. “Now, let’s go. I think those Italian brothers are probably going to start a fight if I don’t get there in time.”

I nodded, adjusting the silk of my dress and followed her. She grabbed my hand and started pulling me toward the stairs, “I’m taking you upstairs for the private dinner. My family is finally all here, the whole group. You’re going to meet the inner circle. The ‘Cosa Nostra’ side of the guest list but it’s just my friends, men aren’t here.”

P

15 Banu

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Chapter 283

My stomach dropped.

The Costellos. My father had done a lot of business with the Costellos.

“And,” Claire whispered, a wicked little glint in her eye as we started climbing the steps, “I’ve invited a few very specific guests just for you. There are two art collectors from Milan, brothers. They are young, very cute, and they haven’t stopped asking who the girl in the black dress was all night.”

Claire led me through a door that opened onto the rooftop. The night air was cold, biting at my bare shoulders. The rooftop was beautiful, lit up with strings of small white lights that twinkled like fallen stars against the black sky.

“Come on,” Claire whispered, her hand still tight on mine.

We walked straight toward a circle of men. The conversation died instantly. They turned as one, their eyes sharp. Claire leaned right into Vincenzo’s arms, though she kept her other hand locked on mine.

“Alright, boys,” she said with a proud smile, “The show is over. Time to get to the table for dinner. I made everything myself with love to celebrate the night.”

She looked over at Silvio, who looked like he’d rather be anywhere else.

“Silvio, Allie was asking for you,” she added with a grin.

Silvio rolled his eyes toward the sky, “Why? Tell her I don’t need her fake ass anymore.”

Claire laughed, the sound bright against the cold wind, “Yeah, you tell her that

yourself.”

“What about the agent?” Raphael’s voice cut through the air. It was low, but it stopped everyone, “Is Vivianne Kane here as well?”

My eyes snapped to him and then back at Claire.

Viviane who?

Claire nodded quickly. “Yes, she’s Mrs. Costello now, not Kane. She’s already at the table with the others.”

Dante let out a mocking scoff, “Do you want her, Raph? You looking to start another war with the Cosa Nostra by trying to steal Alessandro’s woman?”

Raphael didn’t smile. He didn’t even look annoyed. He just stood there, looking completely relaxed, as if he were talking about the weather.

“No,” Raphael said, “She’s just the first and only woman who ever managed to make me... speechless. She’s smart. Really fucking smart. I could really use someone that smart on my team.”

A cold, hollow feeling opened up in the center of my chest. It wasn’t just jealousy, it was a biting insecurity that made me want to shrink away. Smart. He admired her because she was smart. Because she was “fucking smart” enough to make a man like him stand still and listen.

I looked down at my hands, my vision blurring for a second. I thought of my father’s voice calling me a worthless void because I couldn’t handle a simple sentence.

I wasn’t “fucking smart.” I was the girl who needed treatments to fix a broken brain. I was the girl who struggled to read a dinner menu while women like Vivianne Kane were out there making men like Raphael speechless with their brilliance.

+15 Be

It wasn’t his fault. I knew that. He had every right to admire a woman who was a genius. He didn’t owe me anything. But still, it didn’t stop me from feeling like an empty shell.

I was never going to make him speechless. No matter how hard I tried, I would never be that person.

I felt less than. I felt small. I felt like the woman in the painting, trapped behind bars, not just by my father, but by what was inside my own head that wouldn’t let me be the kind of woman everyone would truly respect.

“Gianna?” Claire nudged me, noticing I had gone quiet, “Come on, let me introduce you to Manuel.)

She pulled me toward the long dining table. The air was warm from the candles, and the smell of expensive wine and roasted meat was everywhere.

Standing by one of the velvet chairs was Manuel. He was tall, with skin the color of deep bronze and hair that was perfectly messy, like he had just run his fingers through it. He looked like he belonged on a boat in the middle of the ocean. He wore a crisp white shirt with the top three buttons open, showing off a glimpse of a gold chain against his chest. When he saw me, his entire face changed.

“So,” he said, “This is the woman who has been making the gallery feel so much brighter tonight.”

He didn’t just shake my hand. He took it in his, his palm warm and slightly rough, and bowed his head and kissed

“I’m Manuel,” he whispered. His thumb traced a slow, lazy circle over the back of my hand, sending a tiny spark of heat through my skin. “And I think I’ve just lost interest in every other piece of art in this building.”

P

+15 Bars

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I let out a soft, breathy laugh, “Nice to meet you, Manuel. I’m Gianna.”

He pulled out my chair, waiting for me to settle into the velvet seat before he sat down right next to me

As I got comfortable, I looked down the long, candlelit table. Further down the row, on the opposite side of the table, my eyes found Raphael.

He was already seated, his large hand wrapped around the stem of a glass filled with deep red wine/ His date-the girl Kylie-was nowhere to be seen. Instead, his focus was entirely on a gorgeous redhead sitting directly opposite him, in the same row as me.

My stomach twisted into a tight knot.

That had to be her. That had to be Vivianne.

“Gianna, these are the best friends any girl could ever ask for,” Claire voiced.

I looked down the table. First, Claire pointed to a beautiful woman, “That’s Evangeline,” she said. Evangeline gave me a soft, knowing smile. She was the wife of the Cosa Nostra’s Don, and you could see it in her eyes.

Then there was Allegra, “You know her from the wedding, right? Aunt Alessia’s daughter,” Claire explained.

Next were Delilah and Lilianna, who both looked at me with kind smile. Beside them was Bianca, who had a gentle face but sharp eyes.

Finally, my eyes landed on the redhead.

“And that’s Viviane,” Claire said.

Viviane sat directly across from Raphael. Unlike the cold, sharp look I expected, she gave me a beautiful, real smile that reached her eyes and for a second, the twist in my chest felt stupid.

“And everyone,” Claire announced, “This is Gianna. She’s my new little sister.”

I felt like a small boat in a very big ocean.

“It’s so good to have another sister,” Allegra called out, “We need more girls in the Capone Mansion to balance out all that testosterone.”

Silvio shifted in his seat, turning his hard gaze toward her. “Why do you care if there are more girls in the Capone mansion, Allie? It’s not like you’re actually there anymore.”

ı

He leaned back, his eyes narrowing as he watched her.

“You only come to Chicago to visit Aunt Alessia and your new daddy, Rino Lombardi. I just wanted to let you know that I’m not saying that because I need you back at the mansion. We’re doing just fine. I already have Gianna now, and we have Jules too. We’re doing great in the woman-of-the-house department.”

Allie dropped her fork against the china with a loud clink, her eyes snapping toward Silvio. “Oh, I’m sorry I don’t just sit around waiting for your call, Silvio! Some of us actually have a schedule. Unlike you, I have a kid to think about. Cristiano goes to school now. I can’t just hop on a private jet and come and go whenever I feel like it like 1 used to.”

Silvio didn’t even look up from his steak. He cut a piece of meat, “Right. Because the big, bad school schedule is just too much for you to handle. It sounds like a lot of excuses for someone who just forgot where her real home is.

“It’s called being a mom!” Allie snapped, “Maybe if you stepped foot outside of Chicago once in a while, you’d realize the world doesn’t revolve around the Capone mansion.”

Silvio finally looked at her, and shrugged one shoulder, looking completely bored, “Trust me, Allie, nobody is losing sleep over it. Like I said, the house is plenty full. I barely noticed your room was empty. It’s actually quiet for once. I like the peace.”

“You’re such a liar!” Allie huffed, crossing her arms over her chest. “You probably go into my room and cry into my pillows because you miss me telling you how stupid your haircuts are.”

“In your dreams,” Silvio shot back, “I actually turned your room into a gym. Your pillows are in the trash.”

“I hate you!”

“The feeling is mutual.”

He went back to his food, looking like he couldn’t care less, but he didn’t look at anyone else at the table while

Allie fumed beside him.

Across the table, the other women exchanged knowing looks. It was obvious to everyone that Silvio was full of it, he was counting the days until she came back, even if he’d rather die than admit he missed her.

Manuel leaned closer to me, his breath warm against my ear as he watched the show. “I’m feeling ignored, by the way,” he whispered, his voice vibrating in my ear.

I smiled and turned back to him, “I’m so sorry. I got a little distracted by the family drama.”

“I don’t blame you. It’s better than most movies,” Manuel said, “But I didn’t come all the way from Milan to watch people fight. I came to find out if the most beautiful woman in the room is as interesting as she looks.”

P

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Chapter 285

I felt my cheeks flush, “And what’s the verdict so far?”

Manuel leaned in even closer, his shoulder brushing mine. “Well,” he said, “You have a very good innocent face, Gianna. But I think there is a little bit of trouble hiding behind those eyes. Am I right?”

I let out a real laugh. It felt good to laugh, to feel like a normal girl being flirted with by a handsome man, Maybe...” I teased, tilting my head and catching his gaze, “I guess you’ll just have to keep watching to find out!”

“Oh, I plan on it,” Manuel whispered. He reached over and picked up a small, red strawberry from the fruit plate. He held it up, the fruit bright against his tanned skin, “I’m a very patient man when the prize is worth the wait”

Even though, Manuel was wonderful, I could only focus on hear his voice drifting down the table.

“I went back and rebuilt the whole damn thing after that night at the wedding,” Raphael said. He was leaning toward Vivianne, his usual cold wall completely gone. He looked... alive. He looked like he was a fan of hers, “I stayed up for seventy-two hours straight re-mapping the keystroke rhythm protocols. I couldn’t stop thinking about what you said, about the locksmith handing over the key.”

Vivianne laughed, a beautiful sound that made my stomach turn over, “And? Did you fix the leak, or are you still leaving the door unlocked for me, Raphael?”

“I plugged every hole you pointed out,” he admitted. He shook his head, a small, genuine smile tugging at the corner of his mouth, “I thought I was untouchable until you dismantled my entire life’s work over a glass of champagne. You’re the only person who’s ever made me feel like an amateur.”

I looked down at the table, my eyes blurring.

I looked at the place card in front of me. I knew it said my name, but the letters felt like they were vibrating, twisting into shapes I couldn’t catch.

“Gianna?” Manuel’s voice pulled me back, “You’ve gone very quiet. Is the wine too strong, or am I just not being charming enough?”

I snapped my head toward him, my chest heaving. I needed to drown out the sound of Raphael admiring a woman’s brain. I needed to feel like I wasn’t the worthless void my father always said I was.

“No,” I said, as I reached out and grabbed Manuel’s forearm, my fingers digging into his tanned skin. I didn’t care who was watching. I didn’t care if I looked desperate, I just needed my power back because it was drinking out of me at the moment, “You’re plenty charming, Manuel. Tell me more about that villa in Milan. The one with the private gallery.”

Manuel’s eyebrows shot up, a dark fire lighting up his eyes. He liked my touch. He leaned in so close our noses almost brushed, his hand moving from my shoulder to the small of my back, pulling me firmly against his side.

“It’s a beautiful place,” he whispered, his eyes dropping to my lips. “But it’s missing something. It needs someone who knows how to appreciate the finer things. Someone like you.”

I let out a laugh, loud, bright, and completely fake. I threw my head back, making sure the light caught the diamonds at my throat, making sure I looked like the most carefree woman in the world.

“That sounds perfect,” I said, leaning my head close to his, my hair brushing his cheek, “I think I’d look very good in a private gallery.”

I leaned my head toward Manuel, practically whispering in his ear so I wouldn’t have to hear Raphael talk about encryption and people-code with the woman who had made him speechless.

I hated her for being perfect, and I hated myself for being broken.

+15 Bgr

Down the table, Raphael’s eyes flicked to me for a split second, our eyes met, he saw how close I was to Manuel, but he didn’t stop talking to Vivianne. He just gripped his glass tighter and kept right on admiring her mind.

Janedoewritings

Author

I wrote this chapter in a bit of a rush, but I hope you enjoy it! It’s going to be a long night ahead for them.

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 286

Raphael

I kept my focus on Vivianne, or at least I tried to. Across the table, she was explaining how she’d pivot into a sub- network if the primary authentication failed. Normally, this was the kind of talk that made my blood/hum... pure, cold logic.

“The trick isn’t the lock, Raphael,” Vivianne said, swirling her wine. “It’s the guy who thinks he’s the only one with the key. You make him feel too safe, and he’ll leave it under the mat for you.”

“Yeah,” I muttered, leaning in, “Safety is a lie. I learned that the hard way after what you pulled with Alessandro. That dude is a ghost. The fact that you tracked him down and got into his head is fucking impressive.”

Vivianne let out a soft, dry laugh. She looked down at her wine, a small, private smile tugging at the corners of her mouth, “He is a ghost, alright,” she mumbled under her breath.

I tried to keep my eyes on her, but my gaze kept sliding to the right, down the long row of expensive plates and flickering candles. There she was. Gianna.

She was leaning so close to that... that tanned mannequin from Milan that I couldn’t tell where her dress ended and his suit began. I didn’t know his name, and I didn’t care to learn it. In my head, he was just The Bronze Bastard. He looked like he’d been dipped in cheap wood stain and polished with hair gel. He was sitting there with his white teeth glowing in the candlelight, looking like a professional smile-model for a dental magazine.

I watched him lean into her personal space, his shoulder pressing against hers. He said something, and Gianna let out a bright laugh that sounded like music. It hit me right in the center of my chest, and not in a good way.

“Raphael?” Viviane’s voice pulled me back, “Are you even listening, or are you too busy burning a hole in that art collector’s head?”

“I’m listening,” I snapped, my jaw tight. I took a swallow of my wine, but it tasted like vinegar, “You were saying? About the sub-networks?”

“I was saying that even the best walls fall if you distract the guard,” she said with a strange, knowing smirk on her lips.

I ignored her tone. I looked back down the table just in time to see Mr. Shiny Teeth reach out. He didn’t just touch her, he put his hand on her shoulder, his thumb sliding over the bare skin of her collarbone. My hand clamped around the stem of my glass so hard I expected the crystal to shatter and spray red wine all over the white tablecloth.

Who did this fucking guy think he was? He was touching her like that in front of all of us, whispering in her ear like they were the only two people in the room. We did not agree to this. There were rules. I had kept to them. I hadn’t even touched Kylie tonight unless it was to help her or be polite. I had made sure she knew, before we even stepped foot in the gallery, that we were attending this event as just friends. Nothing more.

But Gianna?

Who was the one fucking breaking the rules now?

Gianna actually leaned into his touch. She wasn’t supposed to do that. She gave him a smile that was way too big and way too bright. She was too busy being charmed by a guy who probably spent more time on his tan than on his

brain.

+15 Borus

“He’s a third-party risk,” I muttered under my breath.

“What was that?” Vivianne asked, leaning closer.

“Nothing,” I said, forcing my eyes back to her.

I tried to focus on the conversation, tried to talk about encryption and the way I’d rebuilt the Capone servers to be a fortress. But every time Gianna laughed, it felt like a glitch in my head. I could fix a leak in a server, I could plug a hole in a firewall. But I couldn’t figure out why watching that grease-monkey touch her made me want to flip

the entire table over.

“It’s about the human element, Raphael,” Viviane continued, “You can have the best tech in the world, but if you let your emotions drive the car, you’re going to crash.”

15 8gnus

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

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I didn’t answer. I just watched Gianna take a bite of a strawberry that Mr. Dental Model was practically feeding her. I felt a surge of heat go up my neck. My fingers were itching. My heart was thumping a rhythm that had nothing to do with logic and everything to do with the way she was looking at him.

I wasn’t jealous. I didn’t do jealousy. I just didn’t like seeing my “little sister” being handled by a guy who looked like he’d melt if he stood too close to a lightbulb.

“Tell me more, Viviane,” I said, “Tell me how you’d break into a system when the person holding the key is a complete idiot.”

I didn’t look at Viviane as I said it. I looked straight at Gianna. Finally, she looked back. For one second, our eyes locked through the candlelight. I didn’t smile. I didn’t move. I just let her see the cold, dark storm in my eyes, hoping she could feel the temperature in the room dropping.

She didn’t look away. She just tilted her head and went back to her conversation, leaving me sitting there.

“You know, Raphael,” Viviane whispered.

I didn’t turn my head, “What?”

She leaned in, her red hair falling over her shoulder as she lowered her voice so only I could hear.

She flicked her eyes down the table toward Gianna and then back to me, “If you’re so jealous of the guy talking to your little stepsister, maybe you should actually do something about it. Because from where I’m sitting, you look like a dog watching a bone through a window. Very un-Capone of you.”

I felt the heat rush to my face, a sudden, stinging burn. I wanted to snap back at her, to tell her she was dead wrong and that she didn’t know what she was talking about. But then I saw the knowing look in her eyes and realized the truth, I was being too fucking obvious.

I set my wine glass down on the table. I took a deep breath and forced the tension out of my shoulders, schooling my face back into a cold, hard stone. I wiped every trace of frustration from my eyes and looked at her like she was just another piece of data.

“I don’t know what you are talking about,” I said, my voice flat and empty of any emotion.

Vivianne just leaned back in her chair and let a slow smile spread across her face, “Of course you don’t,” she murmured.

Just then, the clink of a fork against crystal rang out. Claire stood up slowly, her face glowing in the soft light of the strings of bulbs overhead. She raised her glass high, the red wine catching the light.

The table went quiet. Even Silvio and Allegra stopped their bickering, and The Bronze Bastard finally took his hand off Gianna’s shoulder.

Claire looked down at Vincenzo, who was sitting right beside her. She reached out and ran her fingers through his hair. It was a gesture so simple and so full of real love that it felt like another language to me, one I would never be able to speak.

Watching them, or watching Adriano and Maddie, always felt a little fake. It was like looking at a movie that was too good to be true. Call me an asshole, but I didn’t think they would last. Love is just a feeling, and feelings are like the weather, they change, they fade, and eventually, they blow away.

In my world, anything that doesn’t last is a bad investment. It’s a risk you shouldn’t take. Why build a house on sand? Seeing them like that didn’t make me want what they had, it just made me want to double-check my locks.

And the fact that Aunt Alessia kept pushing me to find someone only added fuel to the fire.

Because I don’t want it. I don’t want what Claire and Vince have, and I definitely don’t want whatever it is Adriano feels for Maddie, the kind of feeling that makes a woman forget her own morals just to stay by a man’s side.

I won’t ever be stupid enough to get played by a woman like Vivianne Kane and land my whole family in a jail cell. And just like her, I would never be weak enough to give up the job I love just because I fell for the person I was supposed to destroy.

+15 Bar

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 288

To me, that’s not a fairy tale. It’s a mistake that costs people their lives, and I’m too smart to let a feeling, something that isn’t even permanent, be the thing that breaks me.

“None of this, none of the art, this night, or even the air I breathe would be possible without this man,” she said, looking straight into Vincenzo’s eyes. “He is my rock. He’s the one who stays up with me all night long when I’m losing my mind, and he’s the one who makes sure I never forget who I am.”

Vincenzo took her hand and kissed her palm, his dark eyes never leaving her face.

Claire looked around the long table, her gaze lingering on each person, “And all of you,” she continued, “Every single person sitting here has shown up for me. You’ve supported me through the mess and the madness. In this life, we don’t always get to choose who we can trust, but looking at this table, I know I’m the luckiest woman in the world because I have all of you. You aren’t just friends. You’re family.”

She turned her eyes toward Gianna and gave her a quick, supportive wink.

“Thank you, thank you so much,” Claire said, a mischievous grin starting to spread across her face, “But let’s be honest, we’ve been sitting still for far too long. The food is great, the wine is better, but I’m ready to actually have some fun.”

She set her glass down with a definitive thud.

“The cars are waiting downstairs,” she announced, “We’re moving this party to the club. The dinner is over, the business is done, and now the real party can finally begin! Let’s go!”

Gianna

The bass of the music throbbed through the soles of my shoes, vibrating all the way up into my chest. For the first time all night, the heavy weight in my chest was gone. I wasn't thinking about anything because tight now, it was just us.

I always had the best time when men weren't involved. I loved my girls back at the Rose Garden, and I loved Claire and Maddie whenever it was just the three of us alone.

Pure female friendship is truly the best thing in the entire world when you are lucky enough to find it. It felt like a safe harbor in a very stormy sea.

Claire had her hands in the air, her hair tossing wildly around her face as she laughed. Maddie was right beside her, a giant smile on her face that made her eyes crinkle at the corners. They pulled me into the middle of their little circle.

I let myself go. Because of all my years of ballet training, my body moved without me even having to think about it. I spun on the balls of my feet, light like water. When I bent my knees and lowered myself to the beat, my spine curved in a perfect arch, my arms trailing through the cool air like silk ribbons. I felt weightless. I felt free.

Maddie let out a loud cheer, clapping her hands as she watched me spin. "Go, Gianna!" she yelled over the loud thumping of the speakers, her face bright with genuine happiness.

Claire grabbed both of my hands, leaning back and spinning me around in a fast circle. We were both laughing so hard our ribs ached.

+15 Born

Barius

As the song faded into something slow, Claire leaned her head close to mine, her arm looping around my shoulders to keep us steady in the crowd. Maddie reached for a cup of water from a passing waiter, handing it to me with a sweet smile.

"So!" Claire shouted-whispered near my ear, her eyes sparkling with mischief. "How was Manuel? He looked like he was ready to pack you up in his suitcase and fly you straight to Spain."

I took a sip of the cold water, letting the cool liquid soothe my hot throat. I thought about the way he had held my hand, his bright smile, and the heavy perfume he wore.

I shook my head, a soft laugh escaping my lips. "He was nice," I shouted back, leaning closer to her. "He really was. But... I don't know if I'll see him again."

+15 Berus

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Chapter 289

“Why not?” Maddie asked, “He seemed totally crazy about you.”

“He’s just... a lot,” I explained, searching for the right words. I didn’t want to say that his attention felt like a bright spotlight I wasn’t ready to stand under, “He is too strong for a first meeting. It’s like he wants to go from zero to one hundred in five seconds. It made me feel a little bit like I couldn’t breathe.”

Claire nodded, and squeezed my shoulder gently, “I get it, sweetie. Sometimes those fast-talking charm boys are good for a dance, but they are way too much work for anything else. You don’t have to do anything you don’t want to do.”

“Exactly,” Maddie agreed, giving me a warm nudge. “Tonight is about us anyway. No boys allowed in our circle”

I smiled, a real, deep smile that warmed me from the inside out. I turned back into the music, my body bending and swaying with Claire and Maddie.

The cool air of five in the morning hit our faces as the black SUV pulled up to the estate. The sky was no longer black, it was a soft, sleepy grey, with tiny streaks of pink just starting to peek over the tops of the tall pine trees.

We stumbled out of the car, our high heels dangling from our fingers by their thin straps. We were quiet so we wouldn’t wake up the whole house, but every time one of us took a step, we let out muffled, giggling snorts.

In our other hands, we clutched three warm cardboard boxes of pizza we had ordered from a late-night spot down

the street.

“Shh!” Maddie whispered, though she was laughing so hard her shoulders were shaking. She held a pizza box flat against her stomach, “If we wake up the boys, they’re going to steal Claire’s pepperoni. Follow me.”

Instead of going to the main kitchen, Maddie led us down the hallway in the east wing, past the tall paintings of the nine generations of the Capone family. She stopped in front of a small, hidden spiral staircase. We climbed it slowly, our bare feet cold against the metal steps, until Maddie pushed open a heavy door at the very top.

We walked out onto the wide, flat roof of the estate.

“This is it,” Maddie murmured, her voice soft with a sweet, private smile, “This is where Adriano and I fell in love. It’s our spot.”

She led us to a cozy corner where there were a few thick, weather-proof outdoor cushions and a heavy wool blanket draped over a bench. We sat down close together, pulling the big blanket over all three of our laps to keep

out the chill.

Down below us, the massive back gardens of the estate looked like a magical forest. My eyes went to the Rose Garden Raphael and I fixed, and I felt a smile pulling at my lips despite everything that happened tonight.

We open the first pizza box. The steam rushed out, warming our cold faces.

“Oh my god,” Claire groaned, pulling a hot, cheesy slice free and taking a huge bite. “This is literally better than anything in the world.”

“Yes,” I agreed, my mouth full of warm dough. I felt so safe sitting here between them.

Maddie set her vegan slice down on the cardboard and turned her head to look at me.

“Gianna,” Maddie said quietly, “You don’t talk about yourself. What do you dream about when you’re alone? What

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are your hobbies, the things that make your heart feel happy?”

1 froze for a second, a piece of pizza halfway to my mouth. Nobody had asked me that in a very, very long time.

I looked down at the warm cardboard box of pizza, my fingers tracing the greasy edge.

“The truth is,” I whispered, my voice barely louder than the morning wind, “I don’t even think I know how to dream. I never really got the chance to try.”

Maddie shifted closer, pulling the heavy wool blanket tighter around both of our shoulders. Claire stopped mid- chew, her eyes locking onto my face.

“What do you mean, Gianna?” Claire asked softly.

“My dad,” I said, “When I was little, he chose everything for me. He decided I was going to be his heir, the one to take over everything. He built my whole life around that. But then... my younger half-brother was born.” I let out a dry, empty laugh, “Suddenly, I was completely useless to him. The heir had to be a son. I was just cast aside.”

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

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“That’s horrible,” Maddie murmured, “To just turn a child’s life upside down like that because of her gender.

“He still wanted me to be perfect, though,” I continued, staring out at the dew-covered gardens below. “Like, beyond perfect. He wanted me to learn how to code, to get deep into computers and networks because he needed those skills for his business. He wanted me to help my brother when he took over. It was never my dream but forced myself to make it my dream. I tried so hard to be the smart, useful girl he wanted.”

I squeezed my eyes shut for a second, feeling the old, familiar headache behind my temples.

“I like dancing. My mother was the one who got me into ballet when I was little, and when I was in that studio, felt alive. But with college, and trying to learn the business, and trying to survive... I couldn’t focus on all of it. So I gave up ballet, too.”

“You shouldn’t have had to give up the one thing that made you happy,” Claire said, she reached over and touched my arm, “What about other hobbies? Things you did just for fun that you can make time for?”

“I don’t have hobbies,” I said, looking at my hands, “As a child, there was no time for things like that. The only things my dad made sure I knew how to do were shooting and fighting. If I wasn’t studying, I was at the range or on the mats. And I haven’t done either of those things in such a long time.”

Maddie rested her chin on her hand, her expression thoughtful.

I looked up at Maddie, then at Claire, the orange sunlight catching the tears in my eyes, “I have never told this to anyone but I know I want to do something powerful. I want to help women who are helpless. Women who depend on dangerous men just to survive, who feel like they have nowhere to go and no way to fight back. I want to be someone who can stand up for them. I want to give them the tools to be strong. Women like my mother...”

Claire’s eyes lit up, a beautiful smile spreading across her face, “Gianna, that is a beautiful, powerful goal.”

“She’s right,” Maddie agreed, “If you want to build a place where women can learn to fight back, to find their own power, Claire and I will be the first ones standing right beside you to make it happen.”

I looked at the two of them through the blurry haze of my tears. In the soft, quiet light of the morning, and the gentle way they looked at me made a tiny crack open up in the high walls I had built around my chest.

For the first time in my life, I felt the terrifying, beautiful urge to just be honest.

“I’m scared,” I whispered, “I’m just so scared that no matter what I try to do, or where I go in life, I’m always going to end up being rejected.”

Claire’s brow furrowed, her eyes filling with a deep, protective worry. “What? Why would you think that, Gianna? You are beautiful, and you are so strong. Why on earth would anyone reject you?”

I swallowed past the lump in my throat, looking down at my hands. My fingers were shaking. It was one thing to want to help people, but it was another to admit how broken you felt inside.

“Because...” I started, a hot tear finally escaping and running down my cold cheek. I took a shaky breath, forcing myself to say the words out loud to someone else for the very first time, “Because there are things about me that are... broken. I have dyslexia and dysgraphia. I can’t read like normal people do, and I can’t write without everything getting jumbled up.”

The roof went completely silent, save for the quiet rustle of the leaves in the garden below. I kept my eyes glued to my lap, waiting for the laughter, or the pity, or the look of disappointment I was so used to imagining.

“I’ve spent my whole life hiding it, pretending to be someone else so everyone wouldn’t see how useless I was,” I

sobbed, “I’m a liar, I lie to my mother, I lie to people all the time because I feel like an idiot. I’m so afraid that when people finally see the real me, they’ll realize I will never be anything of substance. Ever.”

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The moment the final word left my mouth, a cold wave of panic crashed over me. The relief I had felt for a split second was instantly swallowed by a deep, terrifying shame.

I had said it.

I had actually told them.

I looked at their faces, but my eyes were too blurry from tears to read their expressions. In my head, a dark voice whispered that they were looking at me with pity. That they now saw me as the broken, stupid girl I had always been afraid of being. I felt so small sitting between them, like a child who didn't belong at the table with these perfect women.

"Gianna, oh, sweetie..." Claire started, reaching her hand out toward my cheek.

I couldn't take it. I couldn't sit there and watch them try to find the right, nice words to comfort the idiot stepsister.

I scrambled to my feet, throwing the heavy wool blanket off my lap. My bare feet hit the cold concrete of the roof, and I grabbed my high heels in one shaking hand.

"Gianna, wait!" Maddie called out, standing up quickly. The pizza box tilted, slide-moving an inch on the cushion. "Please, don't go. Talk to us."

"Gianna, stop," Claire pleaded, her voice full of worry as she reached for my arm.

"I have to go," I choked out, taking a big step backward, "I'm sorry. I just... I need space. Please. Just let me go."

They both stopped. Maddie had her hand raised, but she slowly let it drop. She looked at me with so much gentleness it made my heart ache. Claire nodded slowly, her eyes soft. "Okay," she whispered, "We're here, Gianna. We aren't going anywhere."

I didn't wait to hear anything else. I turned around, pushed the open, and ran.

I ran down the stairs, through the long, silent hallways of the east wing, and down the main corridor. The house was dead quiet.

By the time I reached my bedroom door, my face was wet with tears and my chest was burning. I pushed the wooden door open, stepped inside, and shut it quickly behind me.

But then, I heard a sound. A slow, heavy breath that didn't belong to me.

My eyes snapped to the corner of the room and sitting there in the large, plush armchair near the window was Raphael.

My heart did a violent flip in my chest. He was asleep. He was sitting up, his head tilted back against the dark fabric of the chair. He didn't have a shirt on. His dark hair was messy, falling over his forehead, and his jaw was relaxed, free of the hard, tight look he always wore when he was awake.

But it wasn’t just him.

Resting right beside the arm of his chair, leaning carefully against the wall, was the painting. The one I had been staring at for so long during Claire’s event.

I stood frozen against the door, my high heels still clutched in my hand, staring at the shirtless man asleep in my room and the beautiful, dark painting by his side.

My mind went completely blank...

Janedoewritings

Author

* 15 Barius

Hey, guys! If you want to read Raphael and Gianna’s story, amazing. If you don’t, that’s completely your choice too.

At the end of the day, I’m going to keep writing the story the way it’s meant to be written. I’

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 292

Gianna

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I stood by the door for a long time, the cold wood pressing into my back. The only sound in the deep silence was the slow rise and fall of Raphael’s bare chest.

Slowly, almost without realizing I was doing it, I let my shoes drop from my fingers. They hit the thick rug with two soft thuds. I took one step forward, then another, my bare feet sinking into the soft carpet. I walked toward him like I was approaching a sleeping predator, afraid that even the sound of my breathing might wake him.

But he didn’t move.

I stopped right in front of the armchair. I had never been this close to him when he wasn’t looking at me like he wanted to devour my soul. His long, dark eyelashes cast soft shadows against his cheekbones. The hard, angry line of his mouth had relaxed into something soft and almost peaceful. In the pale grey dawn, he didn’t look like the scary, powerful Capone who ruled from behind the screen.

He just looked real.

My knees felt weak, heavy with the exhaustion of the long night and the weight of the secret I had just given away on the roof.

I sank down slowly, lowering myself onto the small, plush footstool right in front of his knees. I kept my movements tiny, holding my breath as I settled into the fabric.

I didn't look at his face anymore. I couldn't. Instead, my eyes drifted to the large frame resting beside his chair.

1 reached out a trembling hand, my fingertips brushing the polished gold of the frame before sliding onto the rough canvas. I traced the dark, painted metal lines that cut across the girl's face, and then my fingers lingered on the black shadows that wrapped around her neck like choking hands.

He brought it here. He had taken it from the gallery, carried it into my room, and sat here in the dark waiting for me until his eyes got too heavy to stay open. He hadn't left it with a servant. He hadn't sent a message. He had brought it himself.

A sudden, sharp sob caught in the back of my throat. I squeezed my eyes shut, but the movement only forced more hot tears to spill over my eyelashes. They ran down my cheeks, warm and stinging.

I quickly raised the back of my hand, swiping the wetness away from my skin with a harsh, angry motion. I didn't want to be weak. I didn't want him to wake up and see me crying over a painting of a girl in a cage.

I drew my knees up to my chest on the footstool, burying my face in the silk of my dress, and let out a small, muffled sniffle, trying to stop the shaking of my shoulders while he slept.

I sat on the low footstool for a long time, my eyes moving from the dark, caged girl in the painting back to the quiet face of the man sleeping in the chair. The grey morning light was getting a little brighter now, tracing the clean line of his jaw and the rise and fall of his bare, muscular chest.

What was he doing here with me? Why would he buy that painting just because I had been looking at it?

I thought about the event last night. I thought about how he had spent the evening talking to that other woman, looking so interested, so engaged in whatever smart things she had to say. He had looked so far out of my reach. So why was he here now, sleeping in my room?

A heavy wave of exhaustion washed over me. My mind drifted back to Leone, to the warm, safe way he used to wrap his arms around me after those awful, cold sessions with the doctors. Leone would just hold me until the shaking stopped, asking for nothing in return. I craved that softness right now. I wanted to crawl onto Raphael's lap, to bury my face in the crook of his warm neck, and let him quiet the storm inside my head.

But Raphael wasn't Leone, and the thought of wanting his comfort, of needing him to make me feel safe scared me more than anything else.

My brain tried to stop me, but my body made the choice.

I was going to crawl into his arms anyway.

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The cold, empty space in my chest suddenly felt too big to carry alone. I didn't want to be alone in the dark anymore. I didn't want to think about Leone, or my father, or the jumbled words in my head. I just wanted to feel warm. I wanted to feel real.

Slowly, I pushed myself up from the footstool. My knees were shaking, but I didn't stop.

I took one tiny step forward until my shins brushed against him. He didn't wake up, but his breathing shifted, a low, heavy sigh escaping his lips. I held my breath, my heart hammering against my ribs.

Then, I climbed onto him.

I moved slowly, shifting my weight as I slid my legs around his waist. I rolled myself over his lap, settling my hips/ against his thighs, and let my whole body sink into him. I leaned forward, burying my face into the crook of his neck, my hands clutching at the warm, smooth skin of his bare shoulders.

He smelled like expensive cologne, clean skin, and the cold morning air.

The moment my weight fully landed on him, Raphael's body went completely rigid.

His eyes snapped open, dark and instantly alert. His chest expanded under me as he took a quick, deep breath. For a second, he didn't move his hands, his muscles locking tight beneath my skin as he realized what—and who— was sitting on him.

“Gianna?” his voice was rough, thick with sleep and heavy with confusion. He didn’t push me away. Instead, his large, warm hands came up, hovering for a split second before they locked onto my waist, holding me. He tilted his head back, trying to see my face in the dim light, “You’re back. What happened? Are you okay?”

I didn’t answer him. I couldn’t. If I spoke, the tears would start again, and the broken words would come out.

Instead, I reached up. I slid my palm against his cheek, my fingers digging into his messy, dark hair. His stubble was rough against my soft skin. I looked down into his dark eyes, and before he could ask another question, I leaned down and pressed my lips to his.

The kiss was messy from the very start. It wasn’t gentle, and it wasn’t perfect. It was a collision of teeth and heat and desperate breath. I pulled his head closer, my mouth sliding over his in a lazy but hungry way that had no rhythm. I wanted to lose myself in him, to drown out every bad thought I had ever had.

Raphael let out a low sound deep in his throat. The confusion in his body vanished in an instant. His large hands moved from my waist, one sliding up my back to grip the back of my neck, his fingers tangling in my hair to hold me still, while his other arm wrapped tightly around my lower back, pulling me so hard against his bare chest that I could feel the hard, fast thumping of his heart.

He kissed me back with a passion that made my head spin. His lips parted mine, his tongue tasting like the dark wine from dinner. Our breathing was loud and our mouths sliding together in an uncoordinated, desperate rush. It was hot, wet, and raw. My nose brushed against his, our cheeks sliding together, wet with the tears that were still leaking from my eyes, but neither of us cared.

I arched my back, pressing my chest flat against his bare skin, feeling the heat of him burning right through the thin silk of my dress. He shifted beneath me, lifting his hips slightly to bring me closer, his strong arm lifting my thighs so I was tucked completely into his lap.

He held me like I was a baby, so tight, so secure, like he was wrapping his entire body around mine to shield me from the rest of the world.

Every time I tried to pull back to catch my breath, he followed me, his lips chasing mine, his grip on my waist tightening until I could feel the individual pressure of his long fingers. I let my eyes close, completely consumed by the taste of him, the hard grip of his hands, and the burning heat that was finally, beautifully, putting the coldness in my chest to sleep.

Slowly, his lips slid down to my jaw, his hot breath panting against my ear. He pulled back just an inch, his dark eyes glittering, “You want tne?” he asked.

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 294

There was a crack in his tone, as if he fully expected me to push him away, to tell him this was a mistake, to never let him touch me again.

I shook my head, my fingers tangling in his messy hair, pulling his head back down toward mine. “No,” I whispered against his skin, my hips tilting up slightly, helplessly, into his hard thigh. “I just... I just want to kiss you.”

A small, soft smile touched his lips, a rare, beautiful sight that made my stomach do a dizzying flip.

In one fast motion, he stood up from the armchair. He didn’t make me get off him, he kept his arms locked around my thighs and back, lifting my weight effortlessly as if I were nothing. I wrapped my legs tighter around his waist,, my chest pressed flat against his bare skin, feeling the hard muscles of his back flex under my palms as he walked the few steps to my bed.

He leaned down, placing me on the mattress with agonizing slowness. His warm hand cupped the back of my head, cradling my skull gently, as if he were laying me down on a bed of rocks instead of the soft sheets.

The moment my back hit the mattress, he followed me down. He didn’t let even an inch of air separate us. His weight pressed half onto the bed and half directly over me, pinning my thighs beneath his and trapping me in his

heat.

I gasped at the delicious pressure of him, my hands immediately sliding up his broad chest to his neck, pulling his head down as I opened my mouth to drag him into another deep, burning kiss.

I slid my hands up from his neck, my fingers burying deep into his dark, messy hair, and gripped him tight. With a sudden pull, I used my leverage to roll us over, shifting my hips and driving him down into the mattress beneath

Raphael let out a surprised grunt, his hands instantly catching my hips to steady me as I settled fully on top of him. He lay flat on his back, his dark eyes wide and burning up at me, completely at my mercy.

I leaned down slowly, letting my long hair fall forward around our faces, locking us into our own private world. I didn't rush. I wanted to feel every single detail.

I started by tracing his bottom lip with the very tip of my tongue, a slow, wet stroke that made him let out a broken breath. He tried to pull me down to crush his mouth against mine, but I held his head still, denying him. I nibbled gently on his lower lip, my teeth tugging the sensitive flesh just enough to make him groan, before soothing the tiny sting with another slow, sweeping lick.

When he finally groaned and parted his lips, I took what I wanted.

I slid my tongue into his mouth. I played with his tongue, swirling mine around his in a slow rhythm that felt like a dance we were improvising on the spot. I sucked on his tongue, pulling it into my mouth, and the sheer intimacy of the friction made a soft, breathless gasp slip from my throat.

Raphael's grip on my hips tightened until it was borderline bruising. His fingers dug into the silk of my dress, pulling my pelvis flush against his. I felt the hard, thick ridge of his length press violently against my pussy, and I couldn't help but tilt my hips down, grinding slowly against him.

I broke the kiss for a split second, both of us panting, our lips barely an inch apart. I dragged my mouth down to his jaw, my tongue wetly tracing the sharp line of his bone before sliding down to his throat. I sucked gently on the soft skin right over his pulsing vein, feeling the frantic, hard beat of his heart against my lips.

A harsh, choked sound escaped him as his hands slid up from my hips, mapping the curves of my waist and the

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sides of my ribs, his palms burning hot through my dress.

"Gianna," he groaned.

I didn't let him speak. I came back to his mouth, capturing his lips in another deep, wet kiss.

Janedoewritings Author

Swipe up!

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 295

Gianna

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“Gianna,” he groaned.

I didn’t let him speak. I came back to his mouth, capturing his lips in another deep, wet kiss

This time, it was lazy and uncoordinated again, our lips sliding together in a messy rush. I used my lips to soothe his, then used my teeth to bite his top lip, pulling it into my mouth and sucking on it until he was completely breathless beneath me.

I slid my hand down from his hair, my palm brushing over his cheek before my fingers found his mouth. I parted his lips with my thumb, and then, slowly, I forced my index finger past his teeth, pressing it onto his tongue.

I wanted more of him. I wanted to feel the heat of his breath and the wetness of his mouth on my skin in every way possible.

I added another finger and forced my index and middle fingers past his white teeth, sliding them deep into the hot, wet cave of his mouth.

Raphael let out a low, muffled groan. His tongue immediately wrapped around my fingers, his hot saliva slicking my skin as he began to suck on them, his jaw working that sent a thick jolt of heat straight down to my core. The feeling of his mouth holding my fingers captive was so intense, that I could barely keep myself steady on his lap.

While he sucked on my fingers, I leaned down, burying my face into the crook of his neck. The scent of him was overwhelming, filling my head until I couldn’t think straight. I pressed my lips to his warm skin, starting just under his ear, and began to trail wet, heavy kisses down the side of his neck.

I sucked on the soft skin, pulling it between my lips and using my teeth to graze him just enough to leave a mark. Raphael let out a muffled groan around my finger, his bare chest heaving up to meet me.

I moved my mouth to the center of his throat, right over his prominent Adam's apple. I licked the sharp ridge of it, feeling it bob against my tongue as he swallowed hard. I closed my lips around it, sucking gently on the tight skin, tasting the heat of his body.

A deep, vibrating shudder ran through his entire frame. His hips jerking up into mine, driving his hard length firmly against my pussy.

Slowly, I pulled my fingers from his mouth. They slid past his wet lips, slick and shining in the dim morning light. Raphael let out a dark, needy sound at the sudden loss, his head tilting up off the pillow to follow my hand.

"Gianna," he breathed, "You're going to drive me completely out of my mind."

I didn't let him wait.

Before he could even draw a full breath, I leaned down and drove my tongue straight into his mouth.

I sucked on his tongue, pulling it into my mouth, then let him do the same to me, the wet friction of our mouths making a soft, messy sound in the quiet of the bedroom.

Raphael's hands came up to grip my head, his fingers burying deep into my hair, holding me down so I couldn't escape the kiss even if I wanted to. He tilted his head to the side, deepening the angle, opening his mouth wider to take in every single bit of my tongue.

*15 8grius

I pulled away and gripped his face, my fingers and nails digging hard into his jawline and cheekbones, forcing him to look straight at me. Our faces were so close that our breaths tangled together.

I wanted him to see me. Really see me. I wanted him to look into my eyes and know exactly who was doing this to him, who was bending him to her will.

I wasn't one of those sinart, brainy women he usually liked to talk to. I wasn't the kind of woman who knew how to say the right things, or how to navigate his world with elegant grace. I was me.

Messy and broken.

Me!

Keeping my eyes locked directly onto his dark, blown-out pupils, I began to rock my hips.

I ground my pussy down against him, sliding slowly over the hard ridge of his length through the layers of our clothes. The friction was a sudden, blinding spike of heat. I let

out a sharp, trembling gasp, but I didn’t stop. I did it again, pushing down harder, dragging my body over his with a pressure that made his eyes flare with a hungry light.

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My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 296

Raphael’s hands gripped my waist so hard his knuckles turned white, his body arching up off the mattress to meet every slide of my hips.

“Raph,” I whispered, my fingers squeezing his jaw even tighter. I ground down against him again, harder this time, a faster, deeper stroke that made him let out a low, strangled groan. “How does it feel?”

He didn’t answer, his teeth clenching as he tried to hold back.

I rolled my hips in a circle, pressing myself flat against him, leaving no space between us. I stared right into his burning eyes, my voice dropping to a needy murmur, “Tell me. Are you close?”

I ground down against him again, putting my entire weight into the motion. I didn’t let him look away. I squeezed his face harder, my thumb pressing firm against his bottom lip, forcing his mouth slightly open.

“I didn’t ask you to stay quiet,” I whispered, as I rolled my hips in a hard circle, driving my pelvis right against the thickest part of his length, “I asked you a question, Raphael. Are you close?”

A harsh, broken groan ripped from his throat. His eyes were completely dark now, the pupils blown so wide they swallowed the color. The muscles in his neck stood out, tight and straining. His hips gave a sudden, involuntary jerk upward, his hands clawing into my thighs as his breathing turned into shallow gasps. He was right on the edge, his body trembling beneath mine as he reached the point of no return.

A dark, harsh sound tore from his throat, his teeth baring as he struggled to hold onto his control. His hips bucked up against mine, trying to force a faster, harder rhythm, but I kept my weight planted, controlling the pace. I rolled my pelvis against him.

“Gianna,” he choked out, his hands clawing at my waist, his fingers digging bruisingly into my skin as his eyes. grew completely wild, glazed over with a dark, helpless heat.

He was right on the edge, his breathing coming in desperate gasps, his entire body rigid and trembling beneath me as the tension wound up to the point of breaking.

I felt the sudden, hard twitch of his muscles, the unmistakable shift in his body that meant he was a single second away from completely coming.

And then, I stopped.

I slid my hands off his face, untangled my legs from his waist and rolled off him, leaving him completely empty.

The sudden loss of my heat made him let out a choked gasp of pure frustration. He reached out blindly, his hand clawing at the empty air where my waist had just been, his chest heaving as his body shivered on the verge of a release I had just violently taken away.

I didn't run. Instead, I lay down right beside him on the soft mattress, turning onto my side. I reached out and pulled his muscular arm toward me, resting my head gently on his bare, warm bicep. I stared up at the dark ceiling, my breathing slowly returning to normal, a tiny, cold smile finally touching my lips.

It was the perfect revenge. He had left me standing in the corner of that gallery. Now, as he lay there panting, aching and completely unsatisfied, he knew exactly what it felt like to be entirely at someone else's mercy.

I lay there on his hard bicep, my chest rising and falling.

He was going to be absolutely furious.

I knew Raphael. He didn't like to lose, and he definitely didn't like to be played with. The thought of his dark,

+15 Borus

handsome face twisting in anger, of his jaw clenching because I had walked away right at the very end, made a tiny bubble of laughter rise in my throat.

I couldn't help it.

To hide it, I slowly rolled away from him. I turned onto my other side, my back facing his warm, bare chest, and stared at the dark wallpaper of the bedroom wall. The moment my face was hidden in the shadows, a wide, bright smile broke across my lips. It felt good.

But my quiet victory didn't last long.

Behind me, I heard the rustle of the heavy sheets. He didn’t pull his arm back. Instead, he rolled with me.

+15 Borus

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 297

He turned onto his side, pressing his front directly against my back. His broad, bare chest was a solid wall of heat against my spine. Then, he lifted his other arm, bringing it over my waist and pulling me backward until there was absolutely no space left between us.

He tucked me in close. I was completely trapped in his arms, held fast against his massive, hard body/ But it wasn’t a scary kind of trapped. It was warm. It was cozily tight, like a heavy blanket protecting me from the cold morning air.

As I lay there, my heart thumping softly, I couldn’t help but think about how my body fit against his. I was skinny, built light and flexible from all the years of ballet, and he was so big, solid, and broad. Yet, as he held me from behind, every single curve of my back slid perfectly into the hollows of his chest and stomach. It was like two pieces of a puzzle clicking together in the dark. My head was tucked right under his chin, his slow, deep breaths moving the hair on the crown of my head.

We fit.

We fit so perfectly it made my throat feel tight.

I closed my eyes, letting myself sink into the comforting warmth of him, thinking that maybe we could just stay like this until the sun was high in the sky.

And then, his voice broke the quiet.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered.

My entire body went instantly stiff.

My breath caught in my throat, my eyes snapping open. The smile vanished from my face. I stopped moving, stopped breathing, my muscles locking tight as the simple words hung in the room.

I remained completely still, my back pressed against his chest, my heart beating fast.

Raphael let out a long, rough sigh. His breath was hot against the back of my neck, making my skin goosebump. His arm, wrapped tight around my waist, squeezed me just a little harder, pulling me back into his hard body.

“You win,” he murmured, and then let out a dry laugh, “You win, Gianna.”

He shifted, his stubble scraping softly against my shoulder as he buried his face in the crook of my neck. He took a deep, dragging breath, exhaling it slowly against my skin.

“I’m sorry,” he stated quietly, the sound deep, manly, “I’m sorry for suggesting we see other people. I thought we could keep things loose, but it only complicates what we do behind closed doors.”

He let out a dry, self-mocking sound, his hand sliding up my stomach, his long, heavy fingers splaying over my ribs over the thin silk.

“But I can’t do it,” he admitted, “Knowing you’re with someone else while we have this arrangement... it doesn’t work. It ruins the focus. I don’t want anyone else touching you while you’re in my bed, and I don’t want to share. We keep this thing between us. Just you and me. No one else.”

His mouth brushed against the sensitive skin just behind my ear, his lips warm. A wave of liquid heat pooled low in my belly.

I swallowed hard, my fingers reaching down to touch his hand where it rested over my ribs. I turned my head just a fraction, my cheek brushing his nose in the dark.

+15 8gnus

“And what do we have, Raphael?” I whispered, my voice trembling just a little, “What is this... thing?”

He didn’t answer right away. Instead, he rolled me slowly onto my back, his body hovering over mine once more. The light of the morning caught in his eyes, making them a shade lighter.

He leaned down, his lips brushing mine, “This,” he murmured against my mouth, “Whatever this is, Gianna. It’s our setup. And I’m not sharing it with anyone else.”

“Our setup,” I whispered, my voice sounding small and breathless against his lips. “Just ours.”

“Just ours,” he nodded.

Janedoewritings

Author

Swipe up again...

+15 Berius

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 298

Gianna

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“Our setup,” I whispered, my voice sounding small and breathless against his lips. “Just ours.”

“Just ours,” he nodded.

He was right. We didn’t need labels, and we didn’t need forever. We just needed the burning hunger that only we could give each other.

I didn’t give him time to talk anymore. I lifted my head and kissed him again, deep and hard, my tongue sliding

back into his mouth.

Raphael’s body went completely tight. His hands slid down my sides, his hot palms burning through the thin silk of my dress. He bunched the fabric of my skirt up in his fists, pulling it higher and higher until the cold air of the bedroom hit my bare thighs. He reached down, his fingers brushing the soft skin of my inner thigh, slowly moving upward toward the aching, wet heat between my legs. He wanted to touch me there. He wanted to slide his fingers into my slickness and feel how much I wanted him.

The moment his fingers brushed against my most sensitive spot, a sharp gasp cut through my throat. I wanted him. My body was screaming for him. But a small, playful spark of defiance flared up inside me. I was still tired from the long night, and I still wanted to keep him on his toes.

I caught his wrist with my shaking hand, stopping his fingers just before they could slide inside.

“No,”

,” I breathed against his mouth, my eyes fluttering shut as I forced myself to pull back an inch, “I’m sleepy, Raph.”

With a soft sigh, I untangled my legs from his waist. I rolled over onto my side, turning my back toward his chest once again, pulling the soft sheet up over my bare shoulders. I cuddled into the pillow, letting out a quiet yawn, I was already drifting off to sleep.

Raphael slid close to me again, his front pressing hard against my back. He didn't sound angry. Instead, his breath was hot and thick as he pressed his mouth right against my bare shoulder, his lips dragging slowly up to my ear.

He reached down and grabbed the hem of my silk dress, slowly dragging the fabric up, bunching it around my waist until my ass was pressed directly against the thick, hard front of his trousers.

"We don't have to fuck, Gianna," he whispered, "But I'm not sleeping next to you empty. I'm putting it inside you.

His hand slid around my front, his long fingers digging into my hip to hold me completely still. He nudged my underwear to the side, his bare, thick thumb rubbing over my swollen slit, slicking the wetness all over my skin.

"You're so fucking wet for me," he whispered against my ear, "I want to sleep with my cock buried deep inside your sweet little pussy. Just let me stay inside you all night while we sleep. Don't move."

Without waiting for me to answer, his hand gripped my hip tighter, pulling me backward. He tilted his pelvis, aligning the hot, blunt tip of his length with my entrance, and with one slow thrust, he slid himself inside me.

"Ah," I gasped, my eyes flying open as my head fell back against his shoulder. He was so thick, so incredibly stretched and full, filling every single inch of me until my chest heaved.

Raphael let out a deep, shaking groan, his forehead resting against the back of my neck. He didn't move, he didn't

+15 Boraus

thrust, he just stayed there, buried deep and tight inside me. His large arm wrapped securely around my waist, aligning our hips together so he wouldn't slip out.

"Fuck, Gianna," he muttered, "You feel so perfect. Just like this. Sleep."

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The pale, bright light of mid-morning was pouring through the gaps in the heavy curtains when my eyes finally fluttered open. The room was no longer grey, it was filled with a warm, golden glow that made the dust motes

dance in the air.

15 Bar

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 299

My mind was foggy, heavy with the deep sleep of a late night, but before I could even lift my head, a sudden, intense sensation rushed through my entire body.

He was still inside me.

I lay completely still, my cheek pressed against the hard muscles of his arm. Overnight, the wetness between my thighs had dried into a tight warmth. Every single time he took a deep breath, his massive chest expanded against my back, and his thick, hard length shifted slightly inside my sensitive flesh, sending a electric shiver straight down my spine.

He was still asleep. His breathing was slow, his heavy face buried in the crook of my neck, his hot breath puffing against my bare skin.

I tried to shift my leg, just a tiny fraction, to ease the tight, stretched feeling inside of me.

The movement was tiny, but the friction of my inner walls sliding against his bare skin was incredibly intense. I let out a soft, helpless whimper, my toes curling under the sheets.

Behind me, Raphael’s body immediately reacted. Even in his sleep, the sudden movement made his cock twitch violently inside me.

A low, dark rumble started in his chest, and his grip on my hip tightened instantly, his fingers digging into my skin to stop me from moving away.

“Don’t move,” he muttered, his voice was sleep-roughened and deep.

He didn’t open his eyes. He just pulled me backward, his hips shifting slightly to drive himself even deeper. The blunt, heavy stretch of him sliding further inside made me let out a soft, broken gasp, my fingers clawing at the bedsheets in front of me.

“Raphael,” I breathed, my voice trembling, “It’s morning.”

“I don’t care,” his lips brushing against my shoulder blade.

He began to move. It was lazy, slow, and incredibly heavy. He pulled back until he was almost entirely out of me, before pushing all the way back in with a long, agonizingly slow stroke that made my head tilt back against his chest.

“Ah... please,” I whimpered.

His hand left my hip, sliding up my side to grip my breast through the tangled silk of my dress, his thumb rubbing roughly over the tight peak. He kept grinding his hips. He was still half-asleep, acting on pure instinct.

“You feel so good in the morning,” he whispered.

The slow, heavy friction of him sliding inside me was torturous. He was so big, and the dry, sticky warmth from the night made each lazy thrust drag against my sensitive walls. I wanted it to slide easier.

My breathing turned shallow. Slowly, I slid my hand down my stomach, my fingers trembling as they slipped between my thighs.

I reached down, my fingertips finding the swollen, throbbing bud. I pressed two fingers against my clit and began to rub in slow circles. A soft, shaky moan escaping my parted lips. Almost instantly, my body responded, a fresh, hot wave of wetness pooling between my legs, slicking his thick cock as he pulled back.

But as I went to rub myself again, Raphael’s body went rigid behind me.

His hand abandoned my breast and swept down, wrapping around my wrist. He pulled my hand away from my legs, tugging it up toward my chest and pinning my arm flat against my body.

“No,” he drawled against my ear, his voice incredibly deep with sleep, “That’s my fucking job.”

He was still so sleepy, his eyelids heavy and half-closed, but his grip on my wrist was solid.

Without letting go of my arm, he shifted his hips. With the fresh, slick wetness I had just created, he drove himself back inside me. It was so much smoother now. He slid all the way in, burying his length to the hilt, a long, lazy groan rumbling deep in his chest.

“Fucking perfect,” he muttered, his forehead resting heavily against my shoulder blade.

We didn’t rush. He just kept thrusting, slow and deep, his body warm and relaxed as we both drifted in that quiet, hazy space between being awake and falling back asleep.

+15 8gnus

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 300

Every slow stroke felt like heaven, making my eyes grow heavy again as I rested my head on his bicep, my eyes closed, letting the lazy heat build up deep inside my belly.

It wasn’t a sharp, wild spark like last night. It was soft, quiet, and heavenly.

Slowly, the tension coiled tight and then gently broke. A soft gasp left my mouth as the sweet, warm waves of an orgasm rippled through me. My inner muscles clamped down tight around, pulsing in tiny, lazy squeezes. I let out a long, quiet whimper, my whole body melting into the mattress like water.

Raphael let out a deep grunt as he felt me squeeze him.

He gripped my hip hard, his fingers digging into my skin, and with one heavy sigh, he pulled himself completely out of me. The sudden loss of his heat made me shiver, the cool morning air hitting my wet thighs.

Before I could even open my eyes, his hands caught my shoulders. He rolled me onto my back, pushing me down into the soft sheets. My silk dress was still bunched up high around my waist, leaving my bare stomach and my swollen pussy completely open to the warm morning light.

Raphael pushed himself up on one knees, hovering over me. He was breathing heavily, his dark eyes half-closed and glazed over with sleepy pleasure.

And that’s when I noticed my mark all over his neck, and chin, under the ear and lips.

He reached down and wrapped his hand around his own cock.

Keeping his eyes locked onto mine, he began to stroke himself. I watched him lazily, my breath catching in my throat, completely frozen by how hot and powerful he looked sitting between my thighs.

“Gianna,” he choked out, his voice completely wrecked.

He gave his shaft three more hard, fast strokes, his body going completely rigid.

With a deep, guttural groan, he came.

The hot, thick white ropes shot out, splashing heavily across my bare stomach and dripping down onto my sensitive pussy. He let out a long, shaky breath as he continued to stroke, milking the last few drops onto my skin until my lower belly was covered.

His hand fell away, and he collapsed forward, resting his heavy forehead against my collarbone. He was panting, his chest rising and falling hard against mine.

The room was completely quiet again, the only sound the soft rustle of the sheets as Raphael shifted, lifting his head from my collarbone.

He pushed himself up onto his elbows. His eyes were still lazy, hooded with the afterglow of his release, and he gave me a lopsided smile.

Slowly, I lifted my hand.

I brought my fingers down to my belly. I dipped my index and middle fingers directly into his cum, the texture slick against my skin. I began to drag my fingertips through it, smearing it in slow, lazy circles across my soft skin, watching the way it glistened under the morning light.

I looked up, meeting his burning stare.

Slowly, I lifted my hand from my belly. My fingers were coated in the slickness of his come. I brought my hand up

+15 Beru

to my face, pausing just an inch from my lips.

Raphael didn’t move a single muscle. He was frozen, his chest locked as he stared at my mouth.

I parted my lips and slid my wet index finger past my teeth, burying it deep inside my mouth. I closed my lips tight around it, sucking slowly just like he did to me last night at the gallery. I swirled my tongue around my finger, tasting every bit of him, before slowly pulling my finger out with a soft, wet pop.

I braced myself, waiting for the dirty words I knew were coming. I expected him to call me a good girl, or to tell

me how much of a little slut I was for tasting him so easily. I leaned back into the pillow, ready for the dark grin that would followed.

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