My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 91

Gianna

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“Where were you last night?”

My mom stood in the doorway. I didn’t turn around immediately. I just kept my back to her, slowly setting my hairdryer down on the dresser.

“What?” I asked, trying to keep my voice flat.

She stepped into the room, crossing her arms tight over her chest. As she moved, I noticed a slight, heavy hitchin her left leg, a tiny stumble she tried to hide by leaning against the doorframe. Her fingers twitched against her elbows.

“Where. Were. You,” she repeated.

She was using her “Mom voice,” the one that usually meant I was in deep trouble.

“I-I was here,” I lied.

“Don’t you dare lie to me!” she snapped, “You weren’t here. I checked this room every hour. I called you a hundred times, Gianna. I was ten seconds away from telling Salvatore. I almost begged him to send his sons out to find you, but I stopped myself because I knew you’d hate it. So, give me the respect of a real answer!”

I looked down at my lap, “I went to a party... with a friend. I just stayed the night because I was tired.”

“Which friend?”

“Mom, please-”

“Give me a name, Gianna!” she nearly yelled. Her body gave a sudden, violent shudder, and she had to grip the back of my desk chair to keep her balance. She looked pale, her skin tight over her cheekbones.

Was it her spine again?

“Just some people from college,” I added quickly, my heart racing, “You don’t know them.”

Mom glared at me, “Please tell me you weren’t with those... those women again. Those prostitutes.”

My own anger flared up, “They aren’t prostitutes, Mom! They’re escorts. There is a massive difference!”

“I don’t care what they call themselves!” she cried out. Her hand slipped off the chair for a second, her grip failing before she tightened it again, “What I care about is my daughter hanging around people like that. Gianna, I swear to God, do not give me a reason to let Salvatore and his sons handle you. Do not make me tell them to force their rules on you.”

“You can’t do that!” I stood up, my voice rising to match hers. “You can’t just hand me over to them!”

“Can’t I?” She took a step toward me, “No more staying over at friends’ houses. Not next weekend, not ever again. Do you understand me?”

Tears finally prickled my eyes, “You let Jules stay out! She goes to sleepovers all the time, and I’m older than her!

It’s not fair!”

“Because Jules isn’t...” She stopped, she looked like she wanted to say something, but the words seemed to get

stuck in her throat, “Gianna, don’t do this. You and I both know why I can’t let you stay anywhere else. You know why you have to be here.”

I shook my head, “But would it be so bad? He loves me. I never gave him a chance to-”

“NO!” she snapped, the word exploding out of her, “No! You don’t understand how this works. You don’t understand any of it.”

She went to take another step, but her gaze dropped. She froze, her eyes locking onto my bare feet. I tried to curl my toes under, to hide the bandages but it was too late.

“What happened to you?” she asked.

I opened and closed my mouth like a fish out of water, “Ballet practice. I just... I pushed it too hard.”

Her left eyebrow shot up, and she let out a dry, breathless laugh, “Ballet practice?”

I nodded fast, “Yeah. I was just practicing.”

“Really?” she said, “Because I called your instructor last night. She said she hasn’t seen you in weeks. Weeks, Gianna. And yet you leave this house three, four, five times a week telling me you’re going to the studio. If you haven’t been at ballet, where have you been?”

I felt the blood drain from my face, “I just... I’ve been doing it alone.”

Suddenly, the anger in her face vanished. It was replaced by a look of such deep, agonizing fear that it hurt to look at her. She didn’t stay standing. Her knees seemed to buckle, and she dropped to the floor in front of me. She reached out to grab my ankles, but her fingers were fumbling, her coordination slipping as she tried to touch the bandages.

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“Are you hurting yourself?” she whispered, her voice breaking into a sob, “Gianna, look at me. Are you doing this to yourself?”

I paled even more, my stomach twisting into a knot, “No! Mom, no, it’s not like that! It’s just ballet. I’ve been practicing by myself, I promise. I just got carried away.”

I watched her hands tremble as she held my feet. She looked so small on the floor, so fragile. I didn’t know why she was stumbling, or why her grip was weak, but the sight of her like that made the secrets I was keeping feella thousand times heavier.

A broken sob pulled from her chest, and then she did something that made my heart stop. She leaned down and pressed her lips to the top of my foot, her tears hot and wet against my skin.

“Please,” she choked out. She kissed the bandages again, “Please, Gianna. Just tell me the truth. Tell me you’re not doing this to yourself. Tell me you aren’t hurting your own body.”

I stared down at the top of her head, my breath coming in short, panicked stabs that felt like they were ripping my chest open. I wanted to pull away, to hide the mess of my life from her, but I was frozen.

Everything my mother did for me, every sacrifice, every cent she poured into those expensive therapies flashed through my mind like a movie I couldn’t stop. She had spent years trying to fix my brain, trying to give me the tools to stand on my own two feet. And if she found out the truth? If she realized that I was still struggling just to keep my head above water? It would break her.

I wanted so badly to be the one taking care of her for once. I wanted to be the strong one, the person she and Jules could actually depend on. I wanted to tell her she didn’t have to worry anymore, that I had everything under control.

But my condition was a wall I couldn't climb. As long as I was "incapable" in her eyes, she would never truly trust me to look after the family. She would always look at me and see a girl who needed a hand to hold. She would always think we needed a man like Salvatore or his sons to keep us safe.

I felt like the very thing I feared most, someone who would always need a man to step in and save her because she

couldn't save herself.

"Mom, stop," I whispered, "It's not like that. I'm not... I'm not hurting myself."

She looked up at me, her face a mess of tears. She reached out to steady herself, but her hand missed my knee by an inch before she finally grabbed my leggings.

"Is it the schoolwork again?" she asked, "Is it the dyslexia, Gianna? Is it getting too hard? Are you getting

frustrated again and you're taking it out on yourself? Is that why you're skipping ballet? To hide and.... and do this?

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"No!" I shouted, the word exploding out of me. The sting of her bringing up the one thing that made me feel stupid was like a slap, "It's not the dyslexia, Mom! I'm fine! My brain is fine! I'm not failing, and I'm not cutting myself!"

I reached down to grab her under her arms, trying to pull her up from the floor. I didn't want her down there. I didn't want her crying over my feet like I was some kind of tragedy.

But as I wrapped my hands around her ribs to lift her, my stomach did a slow, sickening flip.

She felt like a bird, hollow and light, as if a strong wind could just blow her away.

She flinched, pulling her arms back and trying to wrap the cardigan tighter around herself. She stumbled back a step.

She looked at the floor, her breathing heavy and uneven. "Just... don't lie to me anymore. And stay away from those people. If I find out you're out again, I'm going to Salvatore. I mean it."

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Chapter 93

I sat at the long dining table with my back straight and my hands folded too tightly around my fork.

Everything in this house always felt too large, like it was built to remind people how small they really were.

I didn’t look at him right away.

I focused on the plate in front of me instead. Eggs. Toast. Fruit cut into perfect little cubes like someone had measured each one with a ruler.

But I could feel him there.

Right across from me.

I finally lifted my eyes.

Raphael sat opposite me like nothing had happened that morning like there hadn’t been a snake like there hadn’t been threats whispered inches from my face like I hadn’t just called him a pussy and walked out of his room.

He looked... normal.

His hair was combed back perfectly, not a single strand out of place. He wore a suit that fit his broad shoulders like it had been made directly on his body. A crisp white shirt sat smooth under the jacket.

No rings.

I noticed that first.

Last night, his fingers had been covered in heavy rings that caught the light when he moved. Now his hands were bare, resting calmly beside his plate.

The small silver earring I had seen in his ear the night before was gone too. And the glasses. Thin, dark frames rested on his nose. He looked like a different man entirely.

I picked up my fork and forced myself to take a bite of eggs. Every time I swallowed, I could feel the memory pressing at the back of my mind.

You called him a pussy.

The thought repeated over and over in my head like a broken record.

You called Raphael Capone a pussy.

My fingers tightened slightly around the fork.

And now I had to go to work.

Under him.

In his office.

A quiet wave of dread settled in my stomach.

Across the table, Adriano leaned back in his chair, balancing it on two legs, “You see the idiot we picked up last night?” he said, “Guy had ears so big I swear he could hear thoughts.”

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Dante snorted loudly beside him, “I thought those were satellite dishes,” Dante replied, “You sure he wasn’t trying to contact NASA?”

Claire burst into laughter at that, covering her mouth with her napkin. Madeleine shook her head, heaving a sigh.

Adriano slammed his chair legs back onto the floor with a loud thud, “I told him,” he continued, grinning, “if he ever tried to lie again, I’d staple those ears to the wall and use him as decoration.”

“Waste of wall space,” Luca cut in flatly, not even looking up from his plate, “You’d scare the furniture.”

Dante barked out a loud laugh, “That’s rich coming from you,” Dante shot back, “You look like you were born angry at gravity.”

Luca lifted his head slowly, glaring across the table, “And you look like someone stretched a gorilla into a suit, he replied calmly.

“God, I missed family breakfasts,” Aunt Alessia said warmly, shaking her head as she reached for her coffee, ” Nothing says good morning like my nephews threatening and insulting one another.”

Vincenzo sighed from the head of the table, “Eat your breakfast,” he said sharply. “Preferably without planning felonies before nine in the morning.”

Across the table, Raphael finally looked up. His gaze slid toward Dante first, “You still owe me fifty thousand,” he said calmly.

Dante frowned instantly, “For what?”

Raphael took a slow sip of coffee, “For betting that idiot with the crooked nose could outrun Adriano,” he replied flatly. “He lasted four seconds.”

Adriano grinned proudly, “That’s a personal best,” he said smugly.

Silvio chuckled again.

“Four seconds,” Luca muttered. “That’s longer than Dante lasts anywhere else.”

The table exploded into laughter.

“Go fuck yourself, Luca,” he snapped, glaring across the table.

“Language,” Vincenzo cut in without even raising his voice, he didn’t look up from his coffee, just lifted one brow slightly. “All of you. There is a child at the table.”

Dante leaned back in his chair like he’d just been personally attacked by the concept of manners.

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Chapter 94

“This right here,” he said, waving his fork in Jules’ direction like she was Exhibit A, “this is exactly why I refuse to have kids.”

“You won’t have kids,” Luca muttered dryly without even lifting his head from his plate, “because no woman trusts you alone long enough to finish dinner, let alone make a baby.”

A snort burst out of Adriano so loud he nearly choked on his drink.

“That is slander,” Dante shot back, pointing his fork at Luca like he was about to file a lawsuit. “Women trust me plenty. The amount of pussy that practically throws itself at-”

He froze mid-sentence.

Slowly. Very slowly.

His head turned toward Jules.

Jules blinked up at him with wide eyes, still chewing a piece of toast like none of this chaos had anything to do with her.

Dante cleared his throat loudly, straightening in his chair like he was suddenly a well-mannered priest.

-Pussycats," he corrected quickly, forcing a stiff smile that looked painful on his face, "I was talking about

cats."

Raphael let out a low, quiet chuckle into his coffee, "Yeah," Adriano muttered, dragging the word out, "Sure you were."

Dante ignored him completely, turning toward Madeleine like he had just remembered something extremely important.

"That reminds me," he said brightly, way too brightly. "Maddie, how's Flan?"

Madeleine looked up mid-bite, already suspicious, "He's fine," she said cautiously.

Dante nodded seriously, "You said he was sick last week," he continued, leaning forward slightly. "Is it cancer?"

Madeleine gasped like he had just set her hair on fire, "Oh my God, Dante!" she cried, "Flan is fine! It's not cancer!"

"Jesus Christ," Luca muttered under his breath, finally looking up, pinching the bridge of his nose like he was seconds away from developing a permanent migraine, "Who the fuck jumps straight to cancer about a cat with a hairball?"

Dante blinked, confused, like he genuinely didn't understand why everyone looked ready to murder him.

"What?" he demanded defensively. "People get cancer. Cats are people-adjacent."

"Cats are not people-adjacent," Maddie snapped, clutching her napkin dramatically to her chest like she needed emotional support.

"For your information," Raphael said calmly, "cats actually do get cancer fairly often. About one in five develops it, most commonly lymphoma. Indoor cats especially."

Madeleine slowly turned toward him, eyes wide. "Why... would you say that?" she whispered.

Dante slapped the table loudly, “See?!” he barked, pointing at Raphael, “I made a joke-he made it educational and terrifying!”

Raphael took a slow sip of his coffee, completely unfazed.

“But,” he added coolly, lowering the cup, “early detection gives them a strong survival rate. So unless Flan starts losing weight or acting strange, relax.”

Madeleine fixed both of them with an unimpressed stare, “I’m aware of that,” she said dryly, “I am the veterinarian in this family, in case either of you forgot. Flan had a mild respiratory irritation, nothing malignant And for future reference,” she added coolly, eyes narrowing at Dante first, then Raphael, “keep my cat out of your pathological conversations unless you’re prepared to discuss differential diagnoses properly.”

Dante shook his head once, “Fucking nerds.”

Raphael smirked slightly, “Better a nerd than an idiot,” as he said it, his eyes flicked up just for a second locking straight onto mine before drifting away like it meant nothing at all

What the hell?

Silvio wiped his mouth calmly, glancing toward Jules, “Jules, you shouldn’t listen to half the nonsense that comes out of their mouths.”

“As I said, they’re idiots,” Raphael added bluntly.

“Language,” Vincenzo repeated sharply.

Raphael sighed heavily, and turned to Jules again, “They are… unintelligent individuals,” he corrected dryly.

Jules giggled at that, swinging her legs again.

I felt it before I saw it.

That awareness crawled up my spine, as if someone was watching too closely. I looked up without meaning to.

Raphael was already looking at me.

He lifted his coffee cup slowly, his gaze locked on mine over the rim and then the corner of his mouth lifted like he was planning something.

Pussy.

My stomach dropped hard.

Heat rushed up the back of my neck as I quickly looked back down at my plate, stabbing a piece of fruit that broke apart under my fork.

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 95

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Cold morning air brushed against my face as I stepped out onto the wide stone driveway. I pulled my phone out of my pocket and unlocked it.

The screen blurred slightly for a second as my eyes tried to focus. Too many icons. Too many letters. My thumb hovered before tapping the bright Uber icon, the small black logo standing out clearly enough for me to find without too much trouble.

I breathed slowly while the app loaded.

Pickup location confirmed.

Destination entered.

Orion Vector Technologies.

My thumb pressed the confirm button, double-checking the time before locking the screen again. A small message popped up:

Driver arriving in 4 minutes.

I slipped my phone back into my pocket and stepped closer to the edge of the driveway, shifting my weight carefully from one foot to the other. The bandages rubbed slightly inside my shoes, dull pain creeping up my ankles, but I ignored it.

Pain meant focus.

Pain meant control.

“You ordered a ride,” the voice came from beside me.

I stiffened slightly before turning my head. Vincenzo stood there like he had always been there, hands tucked neatly behind his back.

I straightened slightly, “Yes,” I said.

“You know,” he said slowly, “there are more than fifty cars sitting in that garage behind you.”

I glanced back automatically, “I know,” I replied quietly.

Vincenzo tilted his head slightly, “You could use one,” he added calmly, “Driver included.”

I shifted my weight slightly, pressing my hands together in front of me, “It’s okay. Uber works.”

“It won’t make you smaller,” he said quietly. “Using what’s already here.”

The words landed deeper than I expected.

I swallowed slowly, “I didn’t mean to be rude the other day,” I said slowly, “I wasn’t trying to insult you or disrespect you. You’re…” I hesitated briefly, searching for the right words that wouldn’t tangle in my head, “You run this family. I know that. I just… I’ve always done things myself. Pride gets in the way sometimes.”

“I’m not angry with you,” he said.

The words surprised me enough that my head lifted instantly. He watched me calmly, the corners of his mouth

+15 agus

shifting just slightly, not quite a smile but close.

“If anything,” he continued, “I respect it.”

That caught me off guard completely. My brows pulled together slightly.

“You had an easier path sitting right in front of you,” he said evenly, “Money. Comfort. No struggle and you turned it down.”

The morning air felt still around us.

“Not because you were foolish,” he continued. “Because you believed earning your way mattered/more. That takes spine and honor.”

The word honor made my chest feel strange.

“Too many people chase comfort,” he added calmly. “Very few chase respect. But you’ll learn… Taking help doesn’t make you weak. It just means you’re not alone anymore.”

I looked away quickly, staring toward the gates again as a car appeared in the distance. The Uber.

“Still taking that?” he asked calmly.

I hesitated then nodded once, “Yes.”

He gave a small nod of his own, “Alright.”

The Uber rolled closer, slowing near the driveway entrance.

Before I stepped forward, Vincenzo spoke again.

“Gianna.”

I paused and turned back.

“Taking help doesn’t make you weak,” he repeated, “Think about it.”

I smiled, “I will…”

The Uber stopped in front of the building. Orion Vector Technologies towered over the street like a slab of glass and steel shoved straight into the sky. People moved in and out of the front entrance.

I took a breath and went inside, I pressed the elevator button. I stepped in carefully and turned toward the panel of buttons.

Too many numbers. Too many labels.

My eyes scanned slowly until I found the one I needed. My finger hovered for half a second before pressing it. The doors slid shut. The elevator began to move.

Up.

Fast.

When the elevator dinged again, I stepped out quickly

I walked toward my desk slowly, feeling every small step in my feet. I lowered myself into the chair carefully.

Just sit.

Just breathe.

Just survive the day.

+15 Bre

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I reached for the mouse and tapped the screen awake. The monitor flickered to life, bright light washing across my face.

Then the sound came.

A door opening.

My stomach tightened instantly before I even looked up because Raphael stepped out of his office.

Everything around him seemed to shift the second he appeared. Conversations lowered. Movements sharpened People straightened in their chairs like invisible strings had pulled them upright.

Mr. Capone.

Boss.

Predator in a suit.

“Johnson,” he called calmly without stopping. “Where is the quarterly variance report?”

A man near the far desk stiffened instantly, “On your desk, sir.”

“Re-run the projections,” he said sharply. “Your last output had a margin error.”

“Yes, sir.”

He kept moving, “Patel,” he continued. “Update the risk dashboard before noon. I don’t want stale numbers in my meeting.”

A woman across the room nodded quickly, already typing faster.

Then his steps slowed, just slightly. His head turned and his eyes landed on me.

That same slow awareness from breakfast crawled up my spine again. The one that made my pulse speed up before anything even happened.

He stopped walking completely and then his mouth curved.

“Ms. Toricelli,” he said smoothly.

I straightened slightly in my chair without meaning to. My fingers tightened against the edge of the desk.

“Check your email,” he added calmly.

Simple words.

But the way he said them made my stomach drop straight to the floor.

My fingers froze on the mouse for half a second after he said it.

Something was wrong.

Very wrong.

I dragged the mouse across the desk, my hand moving too fast, bumping the edge of the keyboard. The cursor slid across the screen in jerky movements before landing on the email icon.

Click.

The inbox opened.

Too many lines. Too many names. Too many subject titles stacking one under another until my vision blurred slightly. Letters swam together, slipping out of place like they always did when panic hit.

Focus.

Just find his name.

Then I saw it.

From: R. Capone

Subject: Performance Review

One new message.

I clicked it.

The email opened instantly.

There was no text at first, just a small black video box sitting in the center of the screen.

Ten seconds.

That was all it showed.

A short clip.

I clicked on it and the video started. high definition footage flickered to life. Security camera view.

A garage.

And then-

Me.

It was me, sitting on the bike, no, not the bike but on him. My hands gripping his shoulders. My body pressed tight against him. Moving.

God.

Moving.

Humping.

I watched myself lean forward, pressing closer to him, my hips rolling against his lap in slow, desperate movements that made my stomach turn violently. My fingers tightened around the mouse so hard my knuckles burned.

Raphael sat still on the bike in the video, unmoving, letting me grind against him like I had no control left in my body.

The footage lasted only seconds but it felt endless.

Under the video, words appeared, written in bold black letters.

Bor

My eyes locked onto them instantly.

They didn’t blur, didn’t twist.

“Looking at this, the only pussy I see between the two of us, is the one that was begging for my touch.”

Heat rushed into my face so fast it burned. I lifted my head and Raphael was still standing across the room.

Watching me.

Waiting.

That same slow smile sat on his lips, just there enough to let me know he had seen my reaction. He knew exactly what I was looking at. Exactly what he had sent. My chest rose sharply as air rushed into my lungs. Humiliation burned through my veins like acid.

Anger followed right behind it.

Janedoewritings

Author

Let me know what you think!

XOXO

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 97

Gianna

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“Gianna,” Aileen’s voice made me jump.

My mouse skidding across the pad. I looked up, my heart already starting that frantic, thumping rhythm against. my ribs. Aileen was walking toward me, her heels clicking perfectly on the floor.

“Take this to Mr. Capone,” she said, dropping a stack of papers on my desk. “It’s the predictive fraud model for the Midland Trust meeting. He needs to approve the risk thresholds.”

Aileen reached over and set a steaming cup of black coffee on my desk, the dark liquid swirling near the rim.

“Black. No sugar,” she added, “And Gianna? Don’t mess this up. The client is waiting.”

I stood up, and picked up the coffee tray with one hand and the report with the other.

The video flashed in my mind again. It was like a movie playing on a loop behind my eyes. I could see the garage. I could see the way my body was arched, my hips moving against him while he just sat there on that bike.

I walked toward his office, every step feeling like I was heading toward a cliff. Why didn't he stop me? The thought kept screaming in my head. He had just watched me. He had let me humped him like an animal while he looked bored, like I was nothing more than a minor distraction. The shame was hot, burning in my throat and making it hard to swallow.

I reached his office door. My steps slowed without me meaning to. My hand hovered in the air, not knocking yet.

If I walk in, he'll look at me. If he looks at me, the video, that email, those words. My fingers curled slightly against the tray. The cup clinked softly again.

Just go in.

Just do your job.

I lifted my hand and knocked, two soft taps.

"Come in," his voice came from inside.

I pushed the door open slowly. He was standing near the window, one hand in his pocket, the other holding a file. His back was to me at first.

For one second, I thought maybe he wouldn't turn around right away and I could just leave the coffee and go.

But then he turned.

Fuck me.

Yeah, no, hard pass.

I stepped forward, forcing my feet to move. One step. Then another. My hands stayed steady somehow, even though my chest felt like it was caving in on itself.

"I-uh..." My voice caught. I swallowed quickly. "Your coffee."

I set the tray down on his desk carefully, the cup barely made a sound.

"And the report," I added, placing the papers beside it. The edges weren't straight again. I fixed them quickly, aligning them with the corner of his desk.

I could feel him watching me. My skin prickled under the weight of it.

He didn’t say thank you. He just sat down. He picked up the report and flipped through the pages, his eyes scanning the data with terrifying speed. Then, he tossed the folder onto the desk and leaned back, his gaze crawling up my body until it settled on my face.

“Midland Trust,” he said, “Don’t just stand there. Walk me through the model.”

He pointed to the small space right beside his chair. My heart hammered. I walked around the desk, my hip brushing against the edge of his table. I leaned over to look at the report, my hair falling forward. I could feel the heat radiating off him. I could smell the spice of his cologne. It was suffocating.

I had prepared for it, I won’t be making the same mistake again.

“The system... it tracks patterns,” I started, “It looks for behavior shifts. Like... location changes or weird logins. If it doesn’t match the user, it flags the risk.”

“Be specific,” he murmured.

He wasn’t looking at the report. I could feel his eyes on me. I glanced down and realized he wasn’t looking at the numbers at all. He was staring at the curve of my butt.

I straightened up immediately, my face flaming. “The threshold is eighty-two percent,” I corrected quickly, “For high-risk flagging.”

He reached for his coffee at the exact same moment I reached out to adjust the papers.

Our fingers didn’t just brush, my hand slammed into the edge of the cup. Everything went into slow motion. The dark, scalding liquid tipped over the rim, splashing directly onto his lap. It soaked into his expensive gray trousers, spreading fast across his thighs.

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“Shit–!” I gasped.

I grabbed a handful of tissues from his desk and leaned over him without thinking. I started dabbing at his lap, my hands moving fast and frantic. I was pressing the tissues against his thighs, trying to soak up the heat before it burned him, my mind screaming with panic.

“I’m so sorry! I didn’t mean to-I’m so sorry-”

I was leaning right between his legs, my face inches from his chest. My hands were moving over the soaked fabric, dabbing and pressing.

“Stop.”

I froze, my hand still pressed against the damp fabric of his inner thigh. I looked up, and my breath died in my lungs. We were so close I could see the gold flecks in his dark eyes. I could see the pulse jumping in his neck.

“I said stop,” he repeated.

I slowly pulled my hands back, the wet tissues crumbling in my grip. I stayed bent over him, my chest heaving, our faces so close I could feel his breath on my lips.

The image of the bike video flashed in my mind... me begging, him watching. And right now, in the silence of his office, it felt like the video was starting all over again.

Raphael didn’t pull away. Instead, he leaned back in his chair, his legs spread wide, looking down at the dark, wet stain on his expensive trousers like it was a work of art. He didn’t look angry. He looked like he was having the time of his life.

He reached out, his long fingers hovering over the intercom button on his desk. He pressed it down with a click.

“Aileen,” he said, his voice professional, though his eyes never left mine. “I’ve had a little... accident with my coffee. Bring a fresh suit from my closet to the office. And cancel the first ten minutes of the Midland Trust briefing.”

“Right away, Mr. Capone,” Aileen’s voice crackled back.

Raphael let go of the button and moved his hand. I immediately took a step away from him.

“So,” he murmured, “Did you have a chance to check your messages this morning?”

My face burned with a heat so intense I thought my skin might actually melt, “I... I saw it,” I whispered.

“Saw it?” Raphael let out a low, dry chuckle that vibrated in his chest, “That’s a very modest way to put it. Most people would call that a high-quality porno. You were really giving it your all, weren’t you? I have to say, your performance was much better than your filing skills.”

“It was the drug,” I snapped, trying to find a spark of that sass I’d had this morning. “I wasn’t in my right mind. You know that.”

“The drug helped,” he conceded, his thumb brushing over his lower lip in a way that made my breath hitch, “But the way you were begging? That was all you, Gianna. You were so loud. I’m thinking about making it the new startup sound for all the computers on this floor. What do you think? It might really boost office morale to hear you whimpering every time someone logs in.”

“You wouldn’t,” I gasped, horror flooding my system.

“Try me,” he whispered, his eyes dancing with a dark, hilarious malice.

There was something almost playful in the way he said it, like this was a game and I had just made a very stupid

move.

Before I could react, his fingers moved across the keyboard.

Then, a sound resounded.

A broken little whimper filled the office. My body locked up.

No.

No, no-

My heart slammed against my ribs so hard it hurt. My eyes snapped to the laptop screen, then back to him, then back again like I was trying to wake up from it.

That wasn’t-

It couldn’t-

But it was.

My voice.

There was no mistaking it.

Breathy and weak, stripped down to something I didn’t even recognize as mine anymore.

The video he sent me had been silent. This wasn’t. This had sound and it echoed through the quiet office.

“Turn it off,” I said quickly, stepping forward without thinking, “Turn it off-”

He didn’t.

Of course he didn’t.

He just leaned back in his chair, watching me instead of the screen, watching every flicker of panic cross my face like it was the most entertaining thing he’d seen all day.

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 99

“You’re very expressive,” he said lightly.

I reached for the laptop, but his hand came down over mine first, not hard, just enough to stop me. Enough to remind me whose space this was.

“Don’t,” he murmured.

The sound kept playing. My chest felt tight, like I couldn’t get enough air in.

“That’s not “I swallowed hard, “That’s not funny.”

“No?” his head tilted slightly, studying me like I was the confusing one, “I think it’s very educational.”

I yanked my hand back like I’d been burned.

“Stop it.”

He let the audio play for one more second. Then finally he tapped a key. Silence dropped back into the room but it didn’t feel quiet. It felt worse. Because now it was in my head.

Looping.

Stuck.

I couldn’t even look at him. My face burned. My hands shook. My stomach twisted so tight it made me feel sick.

And he just watched like he had just confirmed something, “Good,” he said after a moment, almost to himself.

I forced myself to look up, “Good?”

His gaze met mine, “Now you know what’s at stake if you decide to test me again.”

My throat tightened, “That’s blackmail.”

A small smile touched his mouth, “No,” he said quietly. “That’s motivation.”

A sharp knock made me flinch.

“Come in,” Raphael said.

The door opened and Aileen stepped in, composed as always, a fresh suit draped neatly over her arm. Her heels clicked softly against the floor as she walked in, her gaze flicking briefly between us.

If she noticed anything off, she didn’t show it.

“Your suit, Mr. Capone.”

“Thank you, Aileen.”

His tone shifted so easily it made my stomach twist, smooth and polite, like he wasn’t the same man who had just...

She nodded once, placed the suit carefully on the chair, and turned to leave.

“The meeting room is ready,” she added.

“I’ll be there in a few minutes.”

The door closed behind her with a soft click. Raphael exhaled once, slow, then looked at me.

“I’ll change,” he said simply, already reaching for his shirt. “Then we’ll go.”

I nodded, too quickly, “I’ll just-wait outside-”

“No.”

I froze.

His eyes didn’t leave mine as he started unbuttoning his shirt, one button at a time.

“You’re not going anywhere yet.”

My throat went dry.

“I need to know you won’t embarrass me in that room,” he continued, shrugging the fabric off his shoulders like this was just another normal part of his day.

My eyes dropped by accident, just for a second and that was enough.

His chest was bare now, the smooth skin broken by dark ink that spread across his ribs and up toward his shoulders. The lines moved when he did, stretching with every breath.

I snapped my gaze away immediately but it was too late. I had already seen it.

“Eyes up,” he said quietly.

Heat rushed to my face, “I wasn’t-”

“You were.”

My jaw tightened. He didn’t push it further. He stepped out of his trousers next, like I wasn’t standing three feet away, like I wasn’t hyper-aware of every movement, every shift of muscle, every second stretching too long. I turned my head slightly, focusing on the edge of his desk, on anything that wasn’t... him.

Fabric shifted, a belt unclasped and my stomach flipped.

God.

“Stay,” he said again, softer this time.

Against my will, my gaze flicked back. He was standing there in nothing but his boxers, completely unbothered. As if this was his space, his rules, his air to breathe and I was just... in it.

My throat went dry, annoyance flared instantly after. I tore my gaze away again.

“Before we go,” he said, heading toward the private restroom, “I’m going to test you.

I frowned. “Test me?”

“I don’t walk into a meeting blind,” he replied, not even looking back. “And I don’t take dead weight with me,” the door to the restroom opened, “If you freeze in there, you won’t get a second chance.”

The door shut behind him. I let out a breath I didn’t realize I’d been holding. My hands were shaking again. This was insane. All of it.

I dragged a hand through my hair, trying to steady myself, trying to push everything down... him, the video, the way my chest still felt too tight.

My Stepbrother's Dirty Little Secret

Chapter 100

A few minutes later, the door opened again and I looked up before I could stop myself.

He stepped out, fresh, clean, a towel in his hand as he dried the last drops of water from his chest.

Sunlight from the window caught against his skin, tracing over the hard lines of his torso, the ink, the sharp cut of muscle that looked almost unreal under the light.

I looked away again but slower this time and I hated that. I hated the way my eyes wanted to go back.

He picked up his fresh shirt and started putting it on. Button by button, the professional version of him came back together right in front of me, like the other one had never existed.

“You’re distracted,” he said casually.

“I’m not.”

“You are.”

His cufflinks clicked into place, “You won’t survive that room like this.”

“I said I’m fine.”

He glanced at me then, adjusting his collar. A faint, unimpressed look, “You’re defensive,” he noted. “That’s worse.”

My fingers curled into my palms, “I can handle a meeting.”

“We’ll see.”

He stepped closer again, not as close as before but enough to feel it.

“Walk me through the model,” he said, nodding toward the report on the desk. “Again.”

The test.

I forced myself to focus, to pull the words together properly this time.

“The system tracks behavioral patterns,” I started, slower, more careful, “Spending, location, login habits. If something shifts outside the user’s normal range, it flags the activity-”

“Threshold?”

“Eighty-two percent for high-risk detection,” I answered quickly. “It prioritizes early identification before transaction confirmation-”

“No filler words,” he cut in.

I stopped.

Reset.

“It flags risk before the action completes.”

His gaze stayed on me, “Again,” he ordered.

I repeated it, cleaner this time and for a moment, I was proud of myself.

+15 agri

He picked up his jacket, sliding it on smoothly, “That’s better, but it’s still not good enough.”

I crossed my arms, “What now?”

“You rush the second half,” he said, tapping the page. “You lose control of your pacing. That’s where people stop listening.”

“I wasn’t rushing.”

“You were.”

I opened my mouth then closed it because arguing wasn’t going to win this.

“Fix it,” he added.

I took a breath and started again. This time, when I finished, the silence felt different. Raphael studied me for a

moment.

“You might survive the room,” he said.

I rolled my eyes. “How comforting.”

His mouth twitched slightly, like he almost smiled then it was gone.

“Don’t get used to it,” he added.

I grabbed the report, holding it tighter than necessary, “Are we done?”

He checked his watch, “Almost.”

My patience snapped a little, “What else?”

His gaze flicked over me once, “Fix your posture,” he said.

I blinked. “What?”

“You fold in on yourself when you’re unsure,” he said, “Shoulders. Chin. It gives you away.

A sharp irritation flared in my chest. I’d spent years training my body to hold itself right. Ballet drilled posture into your bones. Back straight. Chin up. Every movement controlled. Perfect. And still, my shoulders pulled back before I could stop them.

Instinct.

Annoying, automatic instinct.

His gaze followed the shift instantly, like he’d been waiting for it, “There,” he said quietly, “That’s what it should look like.”

God, I wanted to hit him.

“Anything else?” I asked tightly.

“Yes.”

Of course there was.

“If they question you,” he said, stepping past me to grab his laptop, “don’t defend. Don’t ramble. Answer once. Clearly.”

+15 Bas

He paused at the door then looked back at me.

“And don’t look at me for help.”

Something in his tone made my chest tighten again.

“I won’t,” I said.

He opened the door, holding it just long enough for me to walk through first. I hesitated for half a second then stepped out.

He followed behind me, close enough that I could feel it without turning around. And somehow walking into that meeting room felt easier than standing alone in a room with him.

Janedoewritings Author

I can only manage one chapter a day for now. Hope you enjoy today’s update!