



Forty Three

Ten minutes was not a reasonable amount of time for the preparation of a simple pumpkin caramel latte. Having considered the thought of fussing over this matter, he later decided to spare that human of his wrath. She was lucky the weather was nice. If it wasn't for the clear sky and pearl white clouds, he most definitely would've flipped.

In all seriousness, five minutes is perfectly adequate for such a task. How on earth am I supposed to regain the five extra minutes that were spent sitting on that ridiculously short couch? Despicable!

A delay of five minutes would most definitely destroy this perfectionist's plans for the day. The first stop was South Kington; the location that generated the second highest income. The old folk there loved him, which was something that came as a surprise to anyone who only barely knew Antonio. After all, his demeanor didn't really reflect how popular he was among the grandmas there. Although the property wasn't intended to be any sort of a retirement home, once few aged couples moved in, word spread fast.

The second destination, Willow Residences, was on top of the list. It was the bougiest out of the three properties he owned. The crowd there was decent, high end people; didn't cause a lot of issues apart from the occasional party. For that reason this monthly visit was the shortest one. No small talk, minimal complaints.

"One pumpkin caramel latte," Antonio's train of thoughts were interrupted by a familiar voice.

"You're not at home, studying," he muttered as he wrapped his fingers around the warm cup.





"I can't let Madelyn cover for me everyday," Aeliana said as she watched the man turn his cup around.

Seeing his name written on the back, Antonio sighed and bit the inside of his cheek. "I didn't ask for this,"

"It's store protocol," Aeliana smiled at the man.

"It's not,"

"Well then, it's my... pleasure,"

Having stared at her for a moment, Antonio scoffed gently, his lips slowly forming a little smile. "Stubborn as ever," he muttered to himself; although Aeliana did not fail to catch it.

She bit the inside of her bottom lip and looked at her feet as a smile forced itself onto her face. No matter how she looked at it, that remark felt pleasantly personal. She liked it; the familiarity associated with it.

"How much do I owe you?"

"That'd be \$6," she replied as she glanced at the monitor.

Antonio handed over his card to her, as he intently watched her work.

Wait.. what the hell am I doing? Mind your own business! He thought as he looked away awkwardly at the shelf of syrups behind her.

"Thank you, professor," Aeliana said, handing back his card while she avoided meeting his eyes.

'Professor' wasn't something his class called him on a regular basis. Was she trying to be cheeky with him again? But then again, that's all she's



been doing since he got there.

Antonio cleared his throat, as he gently picked the card from her fingers and shoved it in his black leather wallet. "Mm hmm," he mumbled under his breath, trying his best to curb the smile that was forcing itself into his face. Successfully maintaining a straight face, Antonio glanced at her one last time. After having met Aeliana's hopeful eyes, he decided not to add anything to the conversation, with the sole intention of maintaining his aura. He simply nodded and turned back to leave.

Aeliana watched the tall man make his way out of the place, slightly disappointed, as if she was expecting more from him. This new feeling was slightly uncomfortable, it took her peace away. She craved for more; it wasn't healthy, she knew that for sure. Especially since Decarlo wasn't one to break character very often.

"Yes, but are you sure?"

"I am," Aeliana rolled her eyes. "Why are you questioning me so much?"

"I don't know," Caleb replied as he rubbed his chin. "Something about your tone doesn't really help. I don't trust you,"

"I swear!"

"Are you guys fighting over moisturiser brands again?" Jace interrupted.

"Yes, and aeliana is straight up lying through her teeth," Caleb complained, a sly smile at the corners of his lips.

"Why would I lie to you?" Aeliana threw a hand in the air.



"I don't know, maybe because you got a shit one recently, and now you want me to suffer with you?" Caleb raised an eyebrow, obviously trying to ragebait his friend.

"Oh yeah, that's definitely what I want. Because I never have anything better to do, right Caleb?"

Caleb gawked at the girl for few seconds, after which he brought his hand up to pinch her cheek. "Such a cutie. You're so easy to rage-bait,"

"Shut up," she snapped, as she slapped his hand away.

Barely a second later, the door pushed open, revealing the tall Spaniard who'd have to deal with them for the next ninety minutes. He made his way inside, and then rested a thick book named 'Laws of Thermodynamics' on the table with a loud thud. This action was only partially necessary, since his presence alone, shut everyone in the room up.

"Everyone's favourite topic," Decarlo said as he leaned on the table and crossed his arms before his chest. "Thermodynamics,"

"D minus 11," Antonio mumbled, his words almost sounding like a subtle threat.

What the hell? Already? Aeliana mouthed as she turned to look at Leah.

"I don't have to state my expectations again, I'm sure," shutting the heavy book, Antonio stated. "Few students have requested for a couple of extra lessons before the end of semester exam. Those who are interested are very welcome to discuss this matter amongst themselves, request access to a suitable space for the required amount of time, and only after



that inform me about it,"

"Does he even want to do it?" Leah muttered under her breath.

"Does he ever wanna do anything for us?" Aeliana replied under her breath, as she entertained the thought of actually joining said sessions.

Physics wasn't exactly her strong point. She could really use these lessons to clear up some minor doubts, right? Or was that her genuine intention? Were they only aligned with her academic interests? Or was there something more to it? An emotional component perhaps? A desire that seeps out from within; a desire to see more of this man? His nonchalant manner and rude remarks? Could she really be craving more of it? Of his devilish demeanour?



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