

## Chapter 17 A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHT

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SOPHIA CHEWED ON her nails in nervousness as she sat in the college cafeteria waiting for her friends while she stared into space, oblivious to her surroundings, and the curious stares thrown her way, overthinking her decision.

It had been two weeks since she was allowed to attend college, and she had planned her escape together with Alessia, Maya, and Roman, Alessia's twin brother. She didn't know if it was the best thing to do but she knew it was going to take her away from Chase and the dangerous surrounding they lived in. It wasn't only Chase that bothered her. Lucas' issue was also bothering her terribly. He had completely shut her down and treated her worse than he used to do before.

"A penny for your thoughts?" A familiar cheerful voice came behind her, and Sophia let out a sigh before turning to the source of the voice.

"Alessia, Maya, hello," She then turned as they both settled down in the booth opposite her.

"What's wrong?" Maya asked. "You don't look completely okay to me,"

"I'm sure she's thinking about the whole escape plan," Alessia said with a small smile. "Tomorrow marks your freedom away from that territory and horrible man,"

Sophia sighed and buried her face in her palms. "I'm scared,"

"Why?" Alessia asked, leaning in.

"This-From what I've observed, Chase is someone that has connections everywhere. He-he said he rules the whole of Italy and beyond. He-what if he finds me?"



"That's why I'm here for you, Soph," Roman slid in the booth beside her. "We are leaving Italy tomorrow."

Sophia turned to him. "What do you mean? And you just said 'we'. We as in me and who?"

"Me, you and your Nana," He replied.

"Nana?" She frowned slightly.

"Do you plan on leaving your Nana for the hungry beast? If you leave her behind, he's going to use her to have you back."

"And you? Why then are you coming with us?" Sophia asked.

Red hue stained Roman's cheeks. Sophia was so innocent that she was even oblivious to his feelings for her. Everyone around them, including Maya and Alessia, could see how he felt about her except her. "I want to be there for you,"

"What do you mean you want to be there for me?" Sophia asked. "You've already helped with the plans and other stuffs. That's more than enough,"

Alessia whistled, and Maya grinned beside her.

Alessia then spoke up. "Can't you see that he has fee -"

"Alessia" Roman cut his sister off with the don't-you-dare look.

"Fine," Alessia huffed and turned her face away.

Sophia was just there, searching all their faces for answers, but no one gave her.

Roman nudged her shoulder gently. "Soph,"

Sophia then turned to him. "so, can you please explain the whole details of the plan for me? I-I'm somewhat confused,"

Roman took a deep breath. "Okay. Tomorrow is the program the college is organising, right? While everyone is busy and not looking, at exactly around two, I'll go and get your Nana to the airport while Maya and



Alessia escort you to the airport and then, the three of us can leave. That's all I guess. Chase and his minions won't even realise it until we're gone,"

"Why do you want to come with my Nana and I?" Sophia asked.

Maya and Alessia groaned.

"I want to do so," Roman replied.

Sophia nodded gently. "T-thanks a lot. I really appreciate,"

"I think you both forgot the dress code. You can't leave showing off your faces like that," Alessia said and faced Roman. "Not when you've made fake passports for the three of you,"

"I've taken care of that too. You and Maya will take Soph's clothes to her while I'll change and then take Nana's own to her when I'm going to pick her up. We're using masks,"

"That's a nice plan. I really hope nothing bad happens. I'm scared that Chase would find out about it," Sophia breathed out.

Roman gave her shoulder a gentle squeeze. "It's okay, Soph," His hand covered hers, which lay flatly against the table. "I'm always going to be there for you at every step of the way,"

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"Don,"

Not taking off his eyes from the file in his hand, Chase spoke up. "Parlare,"

{ "Speak" }

The man moved closer to Chase's desk. "I was able to gather information. She has three friends who are -"

Chase cut him off with a wave of his hands. "Alessia Costello. Maya Hugh. Roman Costello," He then dropped the file and looked up at the man who was visibly quivering and staring at his feet. "What information do you have?"



Slowly, she moved forward till he pulled her on his lap, so her legs were on either sides of him, pressing her against his erection.

"Can you feel it?" Chase bucked his hips. "That's what you make me feel. Only you make me feel like that."

The moment Chase snuck his hand behind her to caress the nape of her neck and pull her in for a kiss, Sophia places her small palms flatly against his hard chest to stop him. "Tell me what you do for a living." That was the first thing that crossed her mind at that moment.

Chase froze for a moment before locking eyes with her. "Why?"

Seeing that he was falling for her trap, Sophia screamed internally with joy. She began to try and move away from his lap, but he held her still, his palm not leaving the nape of her neck. Maybe she shouldn't have been so quick to try and escape. "I-," She looked down on her hands on his chest and dropped them to her lap, fidgeting with them. "I wanted to know what you do that involves killing, kidnapping, and guns"

Chase dropped his hand from the nape of her neck, and the other one that was already undoing her button stopped there.

Sophia almost did a happy dance. Almost.

But her happiness was short-lived when he held both of her hands, uncurled her fists, and placed them on his chest. "Leave it there," He circled both her small wrists with one of his palms and continued unbuttoning the buttons on her jumpsuit.

"You didn't answer my question," She peeked at him through her lashes, and he tightened his grip on her wrists. "You're in the mafia,"

A low chuckle rumbled off Chase's chest. Another thing he had done since Sophia's presence back in his life. "If you already knew, then why did you ask?" He slid the sleeveless strap of her jumpsuit down her arms, and the upper part of the cloth fell around her waist.

Foolish Sophia. She slapped herself mentally. She wasn't meant to show him that she knew. "You murder people. You traffic drugs and people. They are all sins in the eyes of the Lord," If questioning wouldn't work for her, then maybe using the Lord against him would work.



"They-they're helping her escape tomorrow. There's a program in the college so, their using it as an advantage to flee. Roman is going to get her grandmother to the airport while Maya and Alessia are going to get her to the airport. They have fake passports and are disguising to the airport,"

With his stoic expression on his face, Chase twirled the pen between his fingers, staring into space with his lips pursed into a thin line. Absentmindedly, he hummed. "Hmmm,"

"I," the man brought out a white envelope from his bag. "I have evidence of their meeting,"

Chase stretched out his hand for it.

"Here, Don," With shaky hands, the man moved closer and dropped the envelope on Chase's opened palm.

Chase tore open the envelope to take out the photographs and went through all of them. The first one was of Sophia seated alone in a booth, staring into space and chewing her nails; Chase almost chuckled at her nervousness. There was another one of her talking to her best friends with her face buried in her palms. Then again, there was one of a Boy-Roman-seated next to her, glaring at the blonde-Alessia-while blushing; Chase knew that look very well. He almost snorted out at Roman. The fool was whipped by Sophia. And lastly, there was one of the boy with one of his hands on Sophia's shoulder and the other one on her hand that was on the table; that one made Chase drop the photographs on the table harshly and he curled his fists, jaw clenching.

Chase badly wanted to go to Roman's house and take his life there and then. But he resisted the urge. His plan would be destroyed. If he took his life then, what fun would there be in torturing Sophia and her accomplices?

He blinked, uncurled his fists, and looked back at the man. "What time is this program?" He was definitely going there. He wanted to see how good Sophia was at trying to escape. Too bad, she wouldn't be able to do that.

The man replied. "The other day, I overheard Sophia telling her friends the program was beginning around ten in the morning,"



Chase's jaw ticked. The fool hadn't realised that he just called Sophia by her name. He wasn't allowed to do that. "And when are they leaving as planned?"

"Two o'clock, Don,"

Chase nodded and reached out for his gun at his waistband. He wasn't letting the man live any longer for daring to utter Sophia's name.

Before the man could realise it, three bullets had been buried between his eyes, and he dropped dead on the floor in the pool of his own blood.

Poor investigator.

Chase stood up, returned his gun to its original place, and walked out of the office.

"Don," the guard by the door bowed his head.

"Prenditi cura del corpo," And with that, he walked away from there.

(Take care of the body)