

Chapter 39

"It had better not be gone," Nico snaps, his arms crossed as he glares down at the man, disgust all over his face. "That was not yours to take – why did you think you could fucking get away with this? Did you think we wouldn't find you!?"

The man just cries, shaking his head, not answering because he clearly doesn't have an answer to give.

Or at least, not the answer they want.

"Where did you stash it?" Christian asks now, his voice raising to demonstrate his rage. "This will go easier on you if you tell us, Lorenzo. You're still going to pay – but if we get the money back your children won't pay too."

The man cries harder at this.

"Come on, man," Frankie says, kneeling down by the man's side, putting a warm hand on his shoulder. "Just tell us, it will all be okay." I watch in fascination, shocked to see Frankie be kind even in these moments. He really is a good guy.

The man doesn't say anything though. Frankie looks up at Christian, who nods to him, and faster than I can see Frankie's arm darts down towards the man's hands tied behind his back. Frankie grips one of the man's fingers and gives it a sharp jerk to the side, snapping it instantly. The man screams, his head tilting back on his neck, and I gasp, my shoulders starting to shake even as I cling to the vent, fascinated and horrified by the scene before me.

Frankie, sweet, funny Frankie!? Snapping fingers!?



What the hell is going on in this world?

"We can go all night," Frankie whispers in the man's ear, grinning maniacally now as he stands up. "You've got ten fingers and ten toes, Lorenzo, and all sorts of other soft, useful bits I'm sure you'd want to preserve."

The man just sobs, shaking his head, clearly in agony. "The money's gone," he cries, desperate, his voice hitching, "it's spent – I'm so sorry – we were in so much debt – I needed it."

"And what are we, your fucking bank?" Nico shouts, livid. But Christian puts a hand out on Nico's chest, stopping him.

"We know you're lying, 'Enzo,'" Christian says, perfectly calm. My eyebrows go up to see the equanimity with which he handles himself, even in a situation like this. "I've got your bank records – you haven't paid off a dime of your mortgage, your insane credit card debt. That money – you've got it stashed somewhere. Planning to go back to Italy, hmm? Leave your American debt behind?"

The man cries harder now, sobbing really. My fingers start to ache, but I just hold on tighter, desperate to see.

"You've got choices now," Christian says, his voice even softer than it was before, more dangerous. "Because your debt is increasing with every minute that you waste my time. Time is money, after all, in this world. And," he casually holds a hand out towards Frankie, who reaches into his pocket and produces a switch blade, placing it in Christian's hand. Slowly, Christian opens it. "In addition to that, you're now going to incur a fee for my butchering services. For every. Single. Cut."

And before I can even process what's happening, Christian flashes the blade out, slashing it across Lorenzo's cheek in a long gash. Lorenzo



screams, blood spurting from his wound and splashing in a red stream across Christian's perfectly pressed suit, dripping all over the floor.

Another shriek sounds, and I'm already losing my balance on the dresser before I realize that it came from my mouth. Instantly, Christian's head flashes up, his eyes locking on the vent.

My eyes go wide.