

Chapter 4

The club's restroom was a cavern of silence compared to the chaos outside. It was lined with black marble and gold fixtures, cold and imposing.

I leaned against the sink, gripping the porcelain until my knuckles turned white. I stared at my reflection. My lipstick was still perfect. My eyes were dry.

Inside, however, I was vibrating with a silent, volcanic rage.

The door opened.

Mia walked in.

She wasn't crying anymore. The tears had vanished as if a switch had been flipped. She looked smug. She sauntered over to the mirror next to me and began fixing her hair.

"Oops," she said, her voice dripping with false sweetness. "Sorry about that back there. Dante is just so... protective."

I turned slowly to face her. "Do you think this is a game?"

"I think I'm winning," she said, meeting my gaze in the glass. She leaned closer. "You have the name, Elena. But I have him. I have his heart. I have his nights. And," she tapped her chest where the ring hung hidden under her shirt, "I have the real diamond."

I looked at her, really looked at her. She was pathetic. She was fighting for scraps while I was negotiating empires.

"You are a passing amusement," I said, my voice calm and lethal. "I am the institution. When he gets bored of you—and he will—you will be nothing. You are a short-term lease, Mia. I am the deed."

Mia's face twisted. The mask slipped completely.

"He hates you," she hissed, venom replacing the sweetness. "He tells me you're like a fish in bed. Cold. Boring. He says he only marries you for the alliance."

"And he only fucks you because you're easy," I countered.

Mia screamed. It was a fake, high-pitched shriek that grated against the marble walls.

She threw herself on the floor, deliberately knocking over a trash can with a loud crash.

"Help!" she yelled. "Stop! Please don't hit me!"

The door burst open almost instantly.

Dante rushed in. He must have followed us to the corridor.

He saw Mia on the floor, sobbing. He saw me standing over her.

He didn't ask what happened. He didn't even look at me.

He rushed to Mia.

"Mia!" He knelt beside her, panic in his movements. "What happened?"

"She pushed me!" Mia sobbed into his chest, clinging to his lapels. "She said I was trash! She slapped me!"

It was a lie. A clumsy, obvious lie.

Dante looked up at me then. His eyes were blazing with fury.

"What is wrong with you?" he shouted.

I recoiled internally, though I kept my face impassive. He had never raised his voice at me before.

"She is lying, Dante," I said calmly.

"Look at her!" Dante yelled, gesturing to the woman putting on a performance in his arms. "She's terrified! You think because you're a Vitiello you can just bully people?"

"I didn't touch her."

"Save it," Dante snapped. He scooped Mia up into his arms, holding her like she was the most precious thing in the world.

"I'm taking her home," he said, his voice ice cold. "Get your own ride."

He walked out.

He left his fiancée in a club bathroom to carry his mistress out to his car.

I stood there for a long time, listening to the silence settle back over the room.

Eventually, I walked out of the club alone. The bouncers looked at me with pity. I hated them for it.

I didn't call a driver. I walked.

My heels clicked rhythmically against the pavement. It was raining lightly. The water mixed with the hairspray in my hair, plastering strands to my face.

My feet started to bleed after ten blocks. The red shoes were pinching my toes, cutting into the skin.

I welcomed the pain. It was sharp. It was real. It reminded me that I was still alive.

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 +120 Points at most

I walked all the way back to the penthouse.

I went upstairs and moved with mechanical precision. I packed a bag. Not a big one. Just the essentials. My passport. My laptop. The hard drive with my manuscripts.

I went to the safe. I took out the velvet box with the diamond earrings he gave me this morning. I flushed them down the toilet without a second glance.

I took off the engagement ring. The fake Graff Pink.

I left it on the kitchen counter. Next to it, I left a note.

It was one word.

Enjoy.

I went to the front door. I engaged the deadbolt. I changed the digital code so he would be locked out of his own life.

I sat on the couch in the dark.

I waited for the sun to rise. I waited for Enzo.

For you