

Chapter 17 No.17

Luca Rossi POV

The water was freezing. It soaked through my clothes, chilling me to the bone, but the cold was nothing compared to the burning shame in my chest.

We were lying in a puddle of crushed roses, the symbol of our love reduced to red sludge.

Campus security had finally arrived, dragging us off the plaza like common trespassers. And behind them, the flashing lights of a police cruiser.

Our fathers had called them. The Outfit couldn't have us making a scene in New York any longer. We were being taken in.

"We have to go back," Matteo whispered feverishly as the officers shoved us toward the cruiser. He was shivering violently, his teeth chattering. "She's marrying him, Luca. Did you see her face? If she marries him, it's over. Forever."

"It's already over," I said, the truth tasting like bile. "We lost her."

I looked up toward the library steps, hoping for one last glimpse of her.

Instead, I saw a grey van.

It was speeding down the street that ran parallel to the plaza. It wasn't slowing down for the intersection.

The engine roared, a mechanical scream that drowned out the sirens.

I squinted through the water dripping into my eyes.

Behind the windshield...

My heart stopped.

"It's already over," I said, the truth tasting like bile. "We lost her."

I looked up toward the library steps, hoping for one last glimpse of her.

Instead, I saw a grey van.

It was speeding down the street that ran parallel to the plaza. It wasn't slowing down for the intersection.

The engine roared, a mechanical scream that drowned out the sirens.

I squinted through the water dripping into my eyes.

Behind the windshield...

My heart stopped.

It was a face I had erased from my phone but burned into my nightmares.

Sofia.

But it wasn't the Sofia I knew. This face was a ruin of scar tissue, twisted into a mask of pure, insane hatred. Her eyes were wide, unblinking fixed not on the road, but on me.

She wasn't aiming for the plaza. She was aiming for the police car. She was aiming for us.

If I can't have you...

The unspoken threat she had whispered a lifetime ago echoed in my mind.

Elena's armored SUV was parked near the curb, idling. The driver must have seen the van coming. He reacted with military precision. He slammed on the gas and wrenched the wheel, jumping the curb to get Elena's car out of the line of fire.

The movement cleared the path.

It cleared the path straight to us.

"Matteo!" I screamed, grabbing his jacket.

But his bad leg was useless. He couldn't move fast enough.

I saw Sofia's mouth open in a scream I couldn't hear.

I saw the grille of the van looming larger, filling my vision.

I had just enough time to think She got her wish. She destroyed us.

Then came the sound.

It wasn't just a crash. It was the sound of a bomb detonating. The sickening screech of metal folding over metal. Glass shattering into a million diamond shards.

The van plowed into the side of the police cruiser at forty miles an hour.

The world went white. Then red. Then black.

Our ads aim to provide better support for authors.

