

### 13. the devil's incarnate

#### Azrael Carmen

The horrendous scheme had worked. Although people were still a bit skeptical about Elliot the heartbreaker manwhore sudden interest in relationship and my ability to capture his attention, everything was working according to plan. I had the never ending investments and deals we got from last week to prove that theory.

And, a very shocked Barbara as another example. She had sprinted into my office the day after our fake date and slammed a stack of magazines on my desk right before she shoved her tablet in my face. I simply looked at them and read the headlines. Pictures of him kissing my cheek outside the restaurant and me glaring at his stupid grin. Us sharing a sickening romantic candlelit dinner. And, especially the one where he broke that piece of shit's jaw. I didn't bother look at the comments under the articles because I had a feeling I wouldn't be suddenly loved by the public at the moment. I might even have earned more hatred but I got something far much important than useless words about me.

Because despite petty women who wanted a chance with Elliot Salvatore, those hypocritical businessmen who claimed woman like me was too difficult to work with had grasped this opportunity and sucked onto this fake relationship like fucking pathetic leeches that they were. They knew they didn't have a chance attaching their company to him so they chose the next best thing, his girlfriend who happened to be me. As long as, I was somehow connected to the Salvatore's name they wanted in. It was humiliating to say the least but I was desperate. We were using each other anyways.

"You're dating Elliot Salvatore. Multi billionaire, CEO, computer genius, the devil's incarnate, most eligible bachelor in the country, the queen's brother in law and the second son of the most powerful family ever." my poor assistant had started blabbering away in horror when she realized I didn't deny the allegations.

I didn't reach over the table and strangled his goddamn neck for fuck's sake. Of course, he was my boyfriend. A fake one but she didn't need to know that.

"If you say that to his face, his ego will grow to the size of the fucking galaxy. And, I swear I will fire you for that." I remembered scowling.

Barbs stared at me for a long while. Her eyes shining between the pictures and my face. "You actually like him." she smirked as if she knew something I didn't.

It was my turn to stare at her then. My skin crawled uncomfortably and I felt my lips squirming into a deep frown. I loathed him. From the way he used his words down to his goddamn face. I hated everything Elliot Salvatore in general.

However, whatever the heck she was seeing I needed it to continue. Therefore for the rest of the week I didn't tell her to shut up once whenever she brought up his name while smiling secretly to herself. She was lucky no one tolerated me like she did.

I stared down at my gold watch as I stalked into Carmen Corp or otherwise known as the evil cult of cruelty and coldness like Elliot called it. I was assigned the evil witch leader by the way, five seconds before I threw my breakfast croissant in his face five days ago during our morning date.

A scowl made its way to my face and I muttered with mortification. "Uh. Since when do I think about that cocky bastard."

I walked faster, ignoring the shaky good mornings from my employee and listening to the sound of my heels clicking against the sleek stone floor. My phone stayed beeping rapidly inside my purse as I waited for my elevator to come down. Barbara was probably losing her mind because I had a whole board waiting and a client appointment an hour ago. Tardiness was the worst form of human's quality. I hated being late. I despised lateness but I had a good reason.

Like my snobby uneducated puppy cheerfully chewing on my Chanel wallet while I turned my back on him this morning to make a conference call with Elliot. I blamed it on my stupid fake boyfriend. He demanded an emergency virtual meeting because he had to fly out for his conference today even though we planned for me to present him my business plan this afternoon. The bastard had only smiled and said he just wanted to see my face before leaving and then proceeded to laugh when I screamed bloody murder at Oakley.

It was a bad morning which resulted me in this situation.

My assistant greeted with narrowed eyes and frigid shoulders right in front of the elevator. I raised a brow at her and took the folder she was handing me. I listened to my schedule for today as I flipped through the paperwork inside, briefly telling her that I finished my appointment with Elliot and I would be free this afternoon. She jotted on her note furiously before we both walked into the meeting room where everyone was waiting and the air tasted so bitter I almost smiled.

Jameson, my best friend forever of course was the one to start his tantrum and followed was the chaos that unfolded by everyone else. And, I barely sat down on my goddamn chair.

I chanted inside my head that I didn't need murder cases right now. Then, I tucked my ankle behind the other and squared my shoulders.

It was the longest two hours of my life. I had lasted for about four and a half minutes when I rose from my chair and started yelling at them to go burn in hell. They wanted me out as always no matter how much I sacrificed and busted my ass for this company. Hell, I even let my desperation ruled over and lost my fucking dignity. I deserved to be here. So, I told them I would die here and my corpse would be buried here and my soul would haunt this fucking place forever. I would never rest. Fuck them.

Barbs sighed pretty heavily beside me before she made a grab for me and tried to hold me back then told everyone to calm the fuck down if they didn't want to walk out of there with a black eye from me.

Unfortunately, nobody got hurt. Except my fucking head. I let her escorted me to my office as I professionally cursed at my board directors.

"I rescheduled your appointment this morning. He will be here in an hour." my assistant said as we reached my office. I nodded my head and went inside.

A huge bouquet of red roses sat on top of my desk, filling the room with heavenly scented air. I hugged the folders I was holding closer to my chest and walked toward it. Barbara's amused chuckle faded away as she closed the door. Placing my purse and the folders down, I rounded the desk and took my seat. I scooted my chair closer to inspect the flowers and pulled out the stupid paper poking between the petals.

My eyebrows twitched so bad I feared they might jump up my head. I settled my glare back on the damn bouquet. Three hundreds and eighty seven roses. For everyday since he fucked me, precisely. His handwritten note said as such. I crumbled up the paper in my hand, his elegant scrawls mocked me. I was going to chuck the thing in his ugly face the next time we see each other.

"Missed me already, Jane?" he picked up my call after one ring and the sound of his voice scratched my ear.

I scowled at nothing, pretending it was him. "I hate your roses."

My finger traced the so petals as I spoke, poking gently on the prickly thorns. I enjoyed these flowers.

"Lie to them, not me." he demanded firmly and quickly added. "How's your meeting?"

"Horrible. I'm going to murder them." I huffed, sinking back into my chair.

"Our test worked. I watch the economy chart you're climbing rather fast. What did they do now? I told you to fire them."

I messaged my temples. "First of all, don't tell me what to do." I wanted nothing more than firing those bastards but father had been grateful for their services to him. I didn't need Elliot to know that I didn't have the heart or gut to upset my father. "Second of all, stay there and don't ever come back so I don't have to see your face anymore."

He only laughed harder at my hostility. I swore he was always trying to get on my damn nerves.

"I miss you too, sunshine." he said and hung up the phone. My hand fell down and glared at the blank screen. The cocky bastard.

Time passed pretty quick when your sanity was being tested. I spent the next hours answering phone calls and emails. It was fascinating how everyone suddenly wanted in. I had checked the sales the arrow was now blue and pointing up. Blue was great. Even Carmen Gouture was selling out quick. The blazer dress I wore on the date was gone an hour after the headlines came out. I was biting my nails waiting for everything to crumble apart again any moment but for now I would enjoy the thrill of it all.

Barbara didn't bother me until my next appointment came in. He stalked inside like he owned the place. Navy blue suit and pretty boy smile. I tried to place his face with all the businessmen I knew but nothing came up. I didn't know this guy. Or maybe it was because they all practically looked the same, the sons who were next in line of course.

I stood up and politely held out my hand. "Azrael Carmen."

"I know who you are." he took my hand and gave it a firm shake. I raised an eyebrow, gesturing him to take a seat.

"Kayden Jacobs from Jacobs Inc." he finally introduced himself as he unbuttoned his suit jacket and sat down. I followed suit.

He smiled at my blushing assistant and took the folder from her hands, handing it to me. "I'm the COO. My father couldn't be here today. We really hope to work with you, Miss Carmen."

I wasn't sure if I shared the same interest because I had never heard of him and my father made sure I knew everyone in the industry. But, instead of speaking my mind I chose to be professional and not be a bitch. "Likewise." I nodded my head and started reading his file with pure curiosity.

They were real estate company looking forward to partnering with us to build properties and using our furnitures. Jacobs Inc started about the same time as my father did. How did I not know them was beyond me. Kayden and I, negotiated multiple possible deals for a foreseeable future but barely came to an agreement.

I could tell he was testing and taunting me. He didn't take me as serious. It was his amused chuckles and sly smile at my ginormous flower bouquet that was setting border between us. He kept looking back at it as if he couldn't help himself. His heavy cologne had replaced my rose scented air and I longed for it to come back as I dug my nails into my palms, keeping myself from chucking the folder in his boyish smile. Clients are clients no matter how unprofessional he was, indirectly teasing me and my new boyfriend.

"Pleasure meeting you, Miss Carmen. I'm looking forward to doing business with you." he finally stood up an hour later, ready to leave.

"That if I decide you're worth our time, Mr Jacobs. My assistant will walk you out."

He gaped at me while shaking my hand. I kept my face neutral and didn't slump back into my chair until he was gone. I looked over his folder a few more times and looked up Jacobs Inc until my phone rang loudly.

I picked up and furrowed my eyebrows at my father's contact name. He had never called me during work hours since he stepped down unless there was something important he needed to tell me. I quickly swiped to answer and pressed the phone to my phone. Defense built up my chest and I could feel the gears inside my head trying to work out what was happening.

"Can you come home, Rory?" he asked and I was already grabbing my car key.

I only had few weaknesses and one of them was Vaughn Carmen. It didn't matter what I was doing if he needed me I would be there.

"Be there in twenty, Dad."

Our mansion stood right outside of the city. A few streets away from the crowded neighborhood next to us. A brown stone with seven bedrooms and eight bathrooms and a garden bigger than a park. I drove up the opened gate and rounded the fountain in the middle of our driveway before parking right in front of the front door. I rushed out and ran inside, not bothered to look around the home I grew up in like I was still living here everyday. Except I hadn't been here since last year.

I stopped at the tall double doors and took off my heels. My father's fast grumbles and loud wail sliced through the air from the living room. I followed the noises in anticipation. All heads snapped at me the moment I walked into the room before they continued what they were doing.

Father was pacing and talking into his phone. My step sister sobbed from the couch while her mother, Olivia Cooper attempted to comfort her daughter. I always hated the sight of them in my home, acting as if it was also theirs. It was only mine and my father's.

When he first told me, he was going to marry his new girlfriend I had been livid but said nothing. She was unpleasant and I didn't get what he saw in her. We never even got along but as long as she made him happy it didn't matter. I reminded myself that everyday since the moment they moved in here and tormented my life.

At least, he didn't let her take his name. It was truly just us, as always. Me and my Dad.

"What happened, dad?" I didn't spare them another glance and headed straight toward my father.

"Why are you so ignorant? Your sister is clearly devastated. Can't you see that? For once, think about someone else besides yourself." Olivia screeched and I could feel her glare behind my back.

I turned my head back and looked between Mila and her. The side of my lips curled up as I crossed my arms over my chest. "Her misery is the highlight of my day."

"You little bitch," she snarled at me, rising from the couch and stomped her feet. If I didn't pay for the botox in her wrinkled face, I would think she was a childish brat instead of a forty years old.

"Her fiancé broke their engagement with a text and disappeared to god's nowhere. Be considerate and stop being a cold bitch." Olivia pointed her finger at my face.

My father stalked toward her and pushed her hand down before muttering something in her ear, looking more pissed off and annoyed than when I walked in.

I didn't reply because I was busy processing the new information and looking at Mila's tear streaked face. "Was she being considerate when she fucked him in my bed knowing he was with me?" I asked, cocking an amused eyebrow.

I didn't give them a chance to answer and turned to my father then, asking the more interesting topic. "I don't see how is this my problem, Dad. Why did you call me to come home?"

"Your sister's fiancé was found dead in his apartment and I don't think it's suicide."

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**A/N: i'm truly sorry for the very slow update in this book, but diversity is crazy and i'm hanging on a thread over here trying to do school and still write so please understand me, thank you. i love you<3**