

His booty call By Ivy brown Chapter 46

I blink severally and open my eyes wide. I look around, my attacker is lying on the floor. He painfully groans, he is still alive.

“We have to go!” Andre says in a tone I find rude.

However am not leaving until get answers from my a**ailant. I slowly move to him. Andre shot him at his abdomen.

“Who sent you? The Nickels? The Coopers’, I mean my aunt and uncle? Who?” I scream at him. He has a scary face, it looks like it is sculpted with blunt object leaving uneven edges. His jaws are so prominent and pronounced. He is like one bucket of ugliness.

He opens his mouth revealing his bloody teeth and gives me an evil grin before shaking his head.

“Careful kid with who you trust.” He shuts his eyes in pain.

I shake my head, “What is that suppose to mean? All I need to know is who send you.”

“Neither of those people have anything to do with this. Just don’t trust blindly.” His hand goes to his wound.

Andre is getting impatient and he looks like he could kill. He’s wearing a wife beater, which is unlike him. I also note the Nike shoes and tights. It is like he is just out from a work out.

“Why should I trust you and you wanted to kill me?”

He coughs and I hear the sound of sirens.

“Am just a mess... Messenger...” Andre hits him and he falls back to the hard floor. He turns to me, grabbing my arm.

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“The police is here, so is the media.” Andre speaks. “let’s go, unless you want to be in the paper again.” He pulls me.

“What about him? What if he comes after me again?”

“He won’t.” He says as we take the stairs instead of the elevator. My mind is still reeling with what that killer said, ‘Careful with who you trust.’ How many enemies did my family collect? Why did he want to kill me, precisely? Why would anyone want me dead?

“Hurry!” He hisses. Some police are at the lobby. Andre pulls his wife beater to hide the gun. We silently slip out and the sun shines on us. I want to ask him about the gun and why he was here. I told him I was planning on coming here for my car earlier, I just want to know why.

His phone rings before I ask, he answers it. I don’t know how I could survive without Andre. He has always had my back.

His demeanour changes suddenly, he finishes his call and turns to me.

“I have to go, my mother has had one of her mental breakdowns. My father is at the hospital.” He says in a rush.

“I will come with you.” I say. His mother was my mom’s friend. I remember the days she would visit and the weird glances she would throw at me. She a**isted Andre in building a new profile for me and my brother and swore to secrecy.

“Not a good time. Tomorrow maybe.” He says.

I nod, I just don’t have the energy to push further. “Will you be okay driving?” He walks me to my Audi.

“I will be fine. Just keep me updated about your mother.”

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I spent the rest of the afternoon going through my father’s client list and trying to remember his acquaintances. Most of them I have already investigated.

Only four of them remain, Andre’s family, and two men and a woman. I rule them out. There’s nothing they could benefit from by killing my parents or me. Then I

remember, Ryan's mother confessed stealing my mother's boyfriend. Could that be a reason enough to create enmity and kill each other? Nothing makes sense.

I look at my phone and it is already six. I have one message from Oliver. I hope he doesn't know what happened. It took him long to get over his fear. I open it.

Dinner your place or mine? I will cook.

I text him back and remind him, am at Quinn's. He offers to come over which am glad. Andre is yet to tell me how his mother is doing.

An hour later Oliver shows up with take out. I expect Nimo to have tagged along but he's alone.

"Wow! You are living large siz" His eyes feast on the penthouse.

"This could be us, if mom and dad were alive." I say.

"If they were alive, we could be living in school dormitories. They always reminded us of humble beginnings." Oliver moves around.

"Yeah, they were low key misers." I agree.

"Where is Quinn?" He asks.

"He doesn't live here. Am all alone."

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"I thought he said he was going to protect you."

"This is his idea of protection."

"What is wrong with that guy? Who hurt him so bad? How can he put you in danger and just come throw you here all alone?" He is getting angry.

"Stop fussing, am happy he doesn't live here."

Finally Oliver sits beside me, he takes both my hands. He looks straight at me. I have been too oblivious, he is a grown man. His evening stubble say it all.

“It is not too late to let go. It is not too late to be happy. To wear your hair down, a nice dress and dance the night. To be free, to fall in love. You deserve all that, if only you let the universe and Karma payback on your behalf. It is not your job to avenge. They all caused harm to me too.” Oliver says softly.

I feel my eyes fill with tears. I want all that. If only it were easy.

“You should be angry.” I stand and drag him with me at the balcony. I point at the skyscraper with the name Cooper on it. “That is ours, they stole it from us. We have no name to ourselves. Why should I let go? Why should you?”

He retreats back. “Am happy. I have you and Nimo what more could I want?”

“Your birth right, our surname back. Justice for our parents.”

“I don’t want any of that. Being a Cooper is like a curse and I don’t desire to be wealthy.” I can’t miss the unnoticeable tears on his eyes. “And as for our parents, I think they deserved it.” He adds, and I sit before I fall.

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My jaw goes slack, am mortified. “Take that back!” I point at Oliver.

He sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose, “You aren’t remotely close to who Dad was, a ruthless beast to anyone who crossed him.”

“He was a business man, he ought to have been ruthless otherwise...” I say.

“He made me watch him beat a man that had betrayed him. I was only four and that was just the beginning of the horrific incidents he forced me to be part of. And you think I would want that life again?” He shakes his head.

My father was a gentle man, he would never hurt a fly. A man that read stories to me, he played house with me, he tucked me to bed with a kiss... No. “You are lying.” My voice comes out unsure.

He paces at one spot before looking down at me, “Of course it is understandable why you would think that. When Dad and I came back. He no blood spot on his white shirts, he smelled good and a diamond from Tiffany for his princess. While I

returned more broken than I left. He protected you, you were his gem, I was just an heir to him.”

I have never seen Oliver this broken. I knew he never wanted to be part of my revenge plan. I just never knew he felt this way.

“Even if that is the truth, they never deserved to be killed. They deserve justice.” My voice is strained.

“Am sorry for saying that. However, I can’t pretend I miss that life. I was forced to grow up fast. They deserve justice but not from me. Whatever you do, I hope it is worth it at the end.” He says and starts to walk back into the house. He picks up his jacket.

“I have a project I should finish. I will see you tomorrow. Should I pick you up?” He asks.

“What about Nimo?” I ask though my head is still reeling with the new information Oliver just dumped on me.

“That reminds me, her mother fell sick so she won’t be around Wednesday for your shopping spree.”

“It’s okay, we can carpool tomorrow.” I agree.

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Am in the bedroom making a shopping list for the kitchen when I hear footsteps walking towards the door. I stop what am doing and try to find a weapon.

The door opens, and I jump in action with my sharpest heel.

“What the f***!” Quinn’s flight or fight response activates as his hands forms fists ready defend himself.

“I thought it was someone else.” I say walking back to the bed. “What are you doing here?” I ask once seated.

“This is my apartment I don’t need a reason.” He relaxes but his gaze never leaves me.

“Where you don’t live.” I counter interject.

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He blows out a whiff of breath, “Am here to make sure you are okay. I saw on the news they found a dead man in your apartment.”

I try to maintain a straight face as I feign surprise and my eyes drift lazily over my list, “I haven’t watched the news so I am not aware.” I lie.

He removes his phone and puts it in front of my face. It is the man that attacked me, dead. His head looks like it was crashed by a bulldozer which is strange since Andre only managed to shoot him. “Do you know him?” Quinn asks.

I take a long pause and cross my leg over the other. “No.” I precisely shake my head.

“Strange, do you have enemies. People who would want to hurt you?” He pockets his phone.

I shrug, “The ones I have acquired are yours.” I briefly state.

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“I know the people who are after me, and that man is not one of them.” He says with a finality.

“Am just scared.” I try to save myself with hunt for sympathy.

When Quinn sighs, I know I have won. “My driver told me, he couldn’t find you after school.” He sits on the bed.

“My brother drove me here.” The lie easily comes out.

“I just saw him in the parking lot drinking.” Quinn says.

That gets my attention. Oliver never drinks. I am quick to stand. I should find him. How deep did our father wound him?

“He left. I picked a taxi for him. Did you two fight?”

“Just a disagreement but nothing serious.” I absently say.

“About what?” He picks up my list and starts to read it.

Is Quinn interested in my life?

“Our father.” I answer and that piques his interest as he puts the list away and stares at me with keen interest.

His silence tells me, he wants I continue. “He said things about him that I did not agree with.” I decide to be clinical.

“Don’t dismiss him, you have no idea what this fathers do to their kids in the name of preparing them for the future.”

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“Would you do that to your own kid?” I find myself asking.

“I can never do that to Theo.” He says and realises what he just revealed as silence engulfs us.

“Theo!” I slowly spell the name as the dots are connected. The resemblance, the compa**ion and patience he has for the kid and all of that leaves me shocked. Quinn is a father!

“Yeah, he’s my son. Mine and Misha.” He confirms.

This night keeps getting better.

“I... ” Am speechless.

“The only reason am telling you this, is because for once you have been open with me. However small it is, it is significant.” His stare is hard and intimidating.

I swallow and breath out. He thinks telling me why I was fighting with my brother I was open? I barely told him one percent of the reason why.

“Your secret is safe with me.” I a**ure him.

“It maybe a secret, whether you tell or not is your choice and it will only tell the kind of a person you are.” He states.

He is very hard to deal with, so I give up. We stay in silence before he stands up announcing he's leaving since am okay.

"Good night" I say.

"You too." He says and hesitates, "Tomorrow wear something nice. I will take you grocery and crockery shopping

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"That test was Greek, nothing close to what we are taught." A student banter as they walk towards me. Actually, I think it was a walk in the park. Derivatives and bonds are my stronghold so it goes without saying am going to ace it.

I pull a strand of my hair. Am having a bad hair day and Quinn is nowhere to be seen. I will not be surprised if he turned me down for his fiancée. After all, they were all over each other in cla**.

The group walks out; Courtney, Roxanna, Quinn and Ryan. This is going to be awkward. Courtney and Roxanna are looking at something in a tablet. Quinn is looking straight at me. Ryan facial expression tell it all. He is torn. He wants to be okay with me, but still wants to stay mad.

Courtney and Roxanna walk past me without a single glance. If Roxanna expects me to apologise, she better be prepared for the four season cause it will never happen.

My lips form a smile as Quinn approaches. He never returns it, he walks past me like we never made arrangements. My face falls until a shadow blocks the sun.

"Hi..." Ryan's voice trails off.

I clear my throat to hide my disappointment from Quinn, "Hi."

"What are you doing here alone?" He asks.

"I was waiting for a friend, we had plans but seems like he stood me up." I answer.

"What a jerk! His loss. Where were you planning to go? I can take you." Ryan says. I can't tell if he is still mad at me.

His words makes Quinn stop. He was just few steps away. He turns back at us.

“The mall.” I say and look down at my sundress, i dressed up for nothing.

“I couldn’t help but overhear. Courtney and I were planning to go to the mall. We can all go together.” He states and calls out Courtney’s name. He explains everything at her. She looks displeased but agrees.

“What about the public?” Roxanna asks eyeing me. “What will they say when they see you with the enemy?”

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“I will look like the bigger person, after all am the b**** with the carat on her finger not her. Am the one who will be walking down the aisle in six weeks.”

Six weeks! The date is already set, three weeks before our graduation. The fact that Quinn is constantly on my life makes me forget he belongs to someone else and I had a mission. That is quite a reality check.

“Ladies enough with your cat fight. Can we all be mature.” Quinn says. He turns to Courtney. “Babe, you will ride with me.”

Courtney smirks at me. I roll my eyes and follow Ryan. Roxanna decides to drive her own car.

“We are over.” I say to Ryan whose eyes are fixated on the road.

“Huh!” He uncharacteristically breaths.

“Quinn and I” I clarify. “We were never a item. It was a one time thing.” I keep digging myself deeper with little lies.

“I don’t blame you.” He stops at a red light. “Girls can’t help themselves around Quinn.”

I reach for a sealed magazine on his console. I unwrap it after Ryan gives me permission. The cover has Quinn and Courtney with their wedding announcement. I open the page and I freeze. The magazine is offering a load of money to anyone who has more information about me. I read further, their questions about who I am. What family do I come from cause they can’t find anything about me.

How deep will they dig? What will they find? Am I ready for the world as Cara Cooper?

I look up at Ryan, he c***s an eyebrow when he sees the worry on my face. Probably he has no idea what is printed on the magazine.

I drop it back, unable to read more and pick a business magazine. Again the Nickel family dominate the front page but not for good reasons. Different companies are suing the Nickel auditing firm for false information. The firm's shares are falling.

"Quinn's father had an heart attack last night but has been kept away from the media." Ryan says when he sees what am reading.

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Am sadist because I find myself felling kind of relieved. They deserve worst.

I decide not to give that monster my energy by asking more about him. By the time am done with him. He will experience triple the pain he put on my father. False testifying, that put my father in jail. As if that wasn't enough, he hired someone to slit his throat like an animal while still in prison.

"Are you okay?" Ryan enquires and I look down only to realise I have crumbled the paper and it is starting to tear.

I nod instead.

The students have created demand hence mushrooming of malls around the area. We barely spend thirty minutes before we stop at the first mall. Ryan parks beside Quinn's Lamborghini as Roxanna follows with her Maserati. I guess it's new. I have never seen it before.

"This place is too overpriced, i bet Courtney chose it." Ryan comments as we walk in.

I can't agree more. I doubt i will buy anything. This college drained my entire savings, trying to fit in.

We almost bump into each other as Roxanna and i try to avoid each other at the entrance. I call out her name. "This is childish." I say.

"To you maybe." She huffs.

"Don't you have secrets you keep?"

She swallows and blinks before she forcibly pushes past me.

I take long strides to keep up with Ryan. I note he still hasn't forgiven Quinn. No word is exchanged between them.

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Quinn leads us to a Noritake store.

"I thought we were shopping for clothes?" Courtney complains.

"We will, my mum needs a new set of dinnerware." Quinn says.

I am his mom? Our eyes lock and i avert mine.

"What about you Cara, what were your plans?" Ryan asks.

"My friend was to help me shop for crockeries."

"Lucky you, since we are already here." Ryan says and adds, "By the way, i saw what transpired at your apartment, where are you living now?"

I almost trip, i nervously look around as three pair of eyes stare back at me. Other than Quinn, none of the them know my brother so i decide not to lie i live with him. "I rented an apartment." I look away as i lie.

"And you never invited us for a house warming party?" Ryan c***s an eyebrow.

"Like i would want to go to a dumpster." Courtney rolls her eyes.

Her words get the better part of me, "Actually how about this weekend, Courtney you are invited too." I say just to prove a point.

A frown etches across Quinn's face and shakes his head disappointed.

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“I can’t believe you brought a bunch of posers to my apartment!” Oliver pours a drink to one the guest. She takes a sip and pours the rest on the floor.

“Disgusting!” The des***able guest spits and staggers away.

“Am being humiliated in my own house and on top of that I get to be the help of his des***able beings.” Oliver throws me a dirty look and looks down at his now stained carpet.

I had no other choice but to use Oliver’s apartment as mine and host a house warming party. I couldn’t use Quinn’s Penthouse, he made that very clear.

“I will make it up to you.” I promise.

Oliver grunts and walks away with a tray full of drinks.

“We are now patronizing with the low life helps.” Roxanna walks up to me.

I decide to ignore her snide remark about my brother. Only Quinn know him.

She doesn’t take the hint, she continues to talk, “He is cute though and a bit younger than you. I won’t mind to have a taste after you.”

I grit my teeth at her comment. Like I would let a vulture like her near Oliver, “Stay the hell away from him.” I shout over the loud music, only the people near us get to hear.

“Oh, so protective and territorial, he must be very special.” Roxanna sn*****s and can’t miss the mischief in her eyes.

I click and walk towards the group of friends. Ryan is the first to glance at my direction. “Cool place.” He speaks first.

“Thanks,” I say.

Courtney looks me over her gla**. Am surprised she actually came. “Nice place.” She comments and am taken back by it.

“Thanks?” I say.

“Though our servants live better.” She scoffs.

“You don’t get to be rude at your hostess.” Quinn comes to my defence. “It is a cozy place.” His arm is draped around her shoulders, his eyes barely glance at me.

Lee brushes my arm and I look up to meet his gaze. He nods I follow him. We both excuse ourselves as the rest eye us suspiciously.

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“I have a confession.” He starts. I raise my eyebrows with keen interest. “I told a reporter about you so expect your name to be all over tomorrow.”

“Why would you do that?”

“I needed the money.”

“Don’t lie, that isn’t the main reason, your family dominates the real estate market. Money isn’t the issue.”

“I had to.” He sighs. “Am sorry.” With that he walks back to the group.

I stand there for a while rooted, imagining the kind of nightmare I will wake up to and after that how many more will pop up.

“You know you didn’t have to do any of this. You don’t have to prove anything.” Quinn states from my back. He takes few steps and stands in front of me.

“Am not trying to prove anything.” I say dismissively.

“Then why are you hosting a bunch of people you hate and the rest you don’t even know?” His tone is laced with humor. Today he is in a good mood.

“I know a handful of them and that is all I need.”

Silence falls between us. “So…” He hesitates. “Am spending the weekend with Theo, I was hoping you would join us.”

His request comes as a shock. It is not something I would ever imagine we will be doing.

“Huh!”

“Forget I asked... I just...”

I cut him mid sentence, “Sure, I would love to.” I smile.

” I will pick you up tomorrow, though we shall be leaving early. I have to see someone at the hospital.” He says.

Courtney, Lee, Jermaine and Quinn leave the party early. Roxanna and Ryan lurk behind.

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“My mom keeps on asking about you. You must have made an impression.” Ryan joins me.

“The girl that broke her son’s heart is quite the impression.”

“Trust me, despite all that she really likes you. She even asked me to invite you over.”

My last encounter with his mother wasn’t pleasant after her confession. I have pondered who that man was. The one she stole from my mother?

“Set a date and I will show up.”

“Great, I will tell her.”

It Is around Two when the door is banged severally. Oliver opens it and it is two policemen. The crowd goes silent as everyone gets ready to run. I take long strides to the door.

“Is the music too loud gentlemen?”

“Detective Morgan, my partner here is Detective Cook. Does Oliver Black live here?”

“What do you need from him?” Oliver asks.

“What is going on?” Ryan walks in.

“Oliver Black, you need to come with us to the station.”

“Oliver Black? As in Black? You are Cara Black.” Ryan asks absent-minded.

“What has he done?” I ignore Ryan.

“We need him to answer a few question about the murder of Robert Dunport and the Arson of his Mechanic shop.” The Detective says and I turn to meet Oliver’s surprise.

“I didn’t do anything, you have to believe me Cara.” He shakes his head vigorously.

“We aren’t here to arrest you but to get some few answers. Can you please follow us down the station.”

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Oliver nods to them and turns to me. ” Can you please come along?” He asks me.

Few minutes later Ryan, Roxanna and I we are driving to the police station as many questions race through my mind. My gut told me not to believe Oliver’s cooked up story about the fire at the Mechanic shop. I knew he lied. However, something am sure of is that he’s not capable of murder.

“I never knew you had a brother,” Ryan speaks.

“And you told me he was in Europe, which of course you lied. When are you ever honest?” Roxanna pipes in.

“What exactly are you doing here, I thought we were no longer friends, if we were ever to begin with.”

That gets to her and she shuts up. Ryan parks next to the Detectives. They get out followed by Oliver. I can see how scared he is.

We wait for him as they interrogate him which takes almost two hours. He walks out exhausted, his eyes bloodshot.

“Are you okay?” I ask full of worry.

He nods.

“Ryan you can take Roxanna home. My brother and I are going to pick a taxi.” I suggest.

Roxanna is almost falling off the chair. She has been trying to fight sleep but it won. I still don't know why she was left behind when her new bestie, Courtney, left or even why she is here.

Ryan, of course objects my suggestion but after presenting a good argument he finally agrees and they leave before we do.

“We left a bunch of people in my apartment I hope they left.” Oliver speaks, I know he is trying to divert the real issue.

“What am concerned with is the truth.” I say angrily.

“I promise to tell once we are back at the apartment.”

“You better.” I warn.

His booty call By Ivy brown Chapter 50

The next morning, Quinn picks me up. Theo is with him. The kid looks distraught. His focus is fully on his phone.

“I heard your brother was picked up by the cops for questioning. What happened?” He starts the engine of his Lamborghini.

My brother's confession from last night is still fresh in my head. He confessed that he was stealing money from the shop to finance Nimo's lifestyle and his new apartment. He also revealed he was fired a week before the fire incident when Robert found out. But swears he never burnt down the shop or kill him. Which I believe.

“The mechanic shop he was working at burnt down. So they needed him to clarify some of the things.” I say.

“If you need any help am here.” Quinn says. Courtney crosses my head but I push the thought away am not planning on doing anything with him. Am here because am fond of Theo.

“Want to play some game kiddo?” Quinn asks him through the rear view. I can’t believe he is a father and I must admit he is good at it.

Theo doesn’t bother to lift his he just shakes his head.

Something isn’t right and I make a mental note to ask Quinn later.

I remove a chocolate bar from my bag, “I have a surprise for you.” I flash it before his eyes.

He looks up at me bored with no slight interest, ” Am not a girl!” He lashes out as if I insulted his masculinity.

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“Who says so?” I ask.

“My father,”He says sweet things are for women because they are weak.” I assume the father he is talking about is Mr. Nickel. He has no idea Quinn is his real father.

Quinn turns to look at him momentarily, I expect him to tell him otherwise but he goes back to driving.

I steal a glance at the kid, he is playing a chase game. I want to try to explain to him how wrong he is. I look over at Quinn and realize that is how they have been trained. Though I know I shouldn’t interfere I make it my mission to educate and enlighten Theo from his misguided information about women.

The ride is otherwise uneventful, the only thing active is Quinn’s terrible Playlist. He turns to a lone path and I immediately know where we are heading to. I have been here countless times with my mother. It is a park.

It is a weekend and as expected, the place is filled up with young families. As we alight I realize probably that is also what we are portraying, a couple. The thought makes me uncomfortable.

Theo rushes towards an ice cream truck as soon as his feet touch the ground.

“Hypocrite.” I mutter at Quinn humorously.

“He’s just a kid. He will outgrow the chocolate thing. He was made with a sweet tooth just like his mother.” There is a way his face lights up and his eye open as he talks about Theo and Misha. Just like the law of cause and effect. I know unless I change my causes I will never experience that kind of love Quinn portrays. Sadly, until I get justice for my parents then I can wish for love.

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Quinn carries a large folder with him which steals all my attention. It has torn edges and papers that are slipping off. I grab one that is about to fall. I turn it. It has animated drawings with short narration. As I skim through I realize it is a draft for children’s book.

“You write?” My shock is evident in my high pitch tone.

He s*****es it back, “none of your business.” He barks.

I am still amused, “Who would have thought the h***** Quinn wrote children books.”

He rolls his eyes, “There’s nothing wrong in writing kid’s books. And if you must know I specifically wrote this for Theo before he was born.”

Who is this guy? He is a total opposite person when it comes to Theo. “Aww, so sweet.” I taunt him. He ignores me as Theo joins us with his ice cream.

We walk silently toward the less crowded part. We walk past a maze and merry go rounds which I ask Theo to go play with his kids. He politely declines, he lacks the normal enthusiasm a child his age possess.

He walks ahead of us, collecting stones.

“He has been failing at school. His teachers reported he is a slow reader and mostly can’t comprehend what he read. So am trying ways to train him to read and process what he reads.” Quinn says.

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Is he trying to make me fall for him? I never took him as a dedicated man. It is hard to ignore how my chest swells as I hear him talk about Theo.

“I once volunteered for a literacy program. We trained kids to attain reading and mathematics skill.” I say recalling it is the only good I have done in my journey for revenge. My objective was not to volunteer but get close to the main sponsor of the program. He was a business friend of my father. After my investigation, I ruled him out as a suspect to my parents murder.

“Really?” He searches my face for any jest. “I will think about it. I don’t like Theo getting attached to people.”

I nod in understanding. Theo sits on a bench and we join him. He sits between us. A couple of people, glance at us as they walk by.

To my surprise, Quinn open his folder. It different ma***cripts some with large x on the front. He removes the one with cartoons but with no narrations and hands one to Theo. Patiently he tells him to say whatever comes to his head when he sees the picture and what he can relate it to.

Later, he takes him to every corner of the park reading him stories relatable to the surrounding. Not once does Theo get distracted by the noises or the cheerful sounds of his mates playing. He listens tentatively like an adult.

They continue with their reading session that I find both sad and inspirational. A park is supposed to be a happy place for fun. I decide to log into my social media. I haven’t touched my phone since morning partly because am enjoying Theo’s and Quinn’s company and partly because I know Leo sold me out and I don’t know what the papers are saying about me.

I go straight to the tabloids. I gasp, the front page is a picture of me in a lacy pant and bare chest on a pole. My breast are covered with smiley emojis. The t**le reads, The mysterious side chick to the notorious Nickel heir, Quinn, revealed. The t**le may not appear inviting. However from my Twitter feed it is the number one on the trending. I go through the tweets, the trolling and all name calling. At some point I feel like smashing the phone from the insults people type. I scroll through the tweets until I come across a particular one. The user @selfmadechick, she types... O. M. G I

know that chick... I go to her home page to look at her profile picture and my heart stops to beat. Am screwed!

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I go back to check when she tweeted. Thirteen minutes ago. I decide to sent her a direct message.

When you make some confession at thirteen to a total stranger you never imagine at some point in the future that innocent confession will be the beginning of the end.

Petra, was her name. I meet her at the streets months after our house was burned down. I was angry and mourning. I just needed to let it all out. She was a meth addict, never sober. I told her everything, She nicknamed me sourhoney. I just needed someone to talk to and I was sure she would not remember the next day. And there's only one way to see if she remembers. I message her; Do you remember me?

The reply is instantly, of course, sourhoney.

Oh s***!

"We are almost done," Quinn says to me. I shake my absent mindedly focused on my phone.

I decide to play it cool to see how much she remembers, How are you?

Petra: Am clean now, and started my own rehab center. Are you still sour, honey?

It is a simple question but with a lot of weight? Am I happy?

Me: Still I am

Petra: Sad. Though I would guess you are more of honey than sour since you are dating Quinn Nickel.

Me: Can we met for coffee?

Petra: I will check my schedule and let you know.

Me: Okay. Can I ask you a favor?

Petra: Sure

Me: Can you please not tell anyone what you know about me. Especially the media.

Petra: Other than your face I hardly remember any details you might have told me. I was always high.

We say our goodbyes and she deletes her tweet. Theo and Quinn are done with their learning. I find both staring at me. He is like a mini Quinn only more tolerable.

“Where do you want to have your dinner?” Quinn asks both of us.

“At home.” Theo suggests.

“Other than home?” Quinn asks, Theo shrugs his shoulders for lack of another idea.

“How about Miriam’s fast foods?” Quinn asks me. I remember the café, he took me there the first time he brought me to his penthouse. I also remember nosey Miriam and her habit of patting her hair. The thought is tempting but am sure Miriam will start planting ideas on Theo which aren’t welcomed.

“How about I cook?” I ask. The idea appeals to both the boys.

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As we drive to the penthouse, I wonder how Quinn will react to the new information about me once he see it. And if he has, his calmness scares me.

I decide to make pizza, I may hate it but I know how to. Quinn immediately disappeared to his office as soon as we arrived. Theo is refreshing with a shower, apparently he has a bedroom here.

He walks in with soaking wet hair, the water keeps on drenching his fresh set of clothes.

“Are and Quinn going to get married?” He asks.

I almost trip, “No, where did you get such an idea? we are just...” What are we? Friends? NO.

His eyes watch me as he waits for a meaningful answer. “Schoolmates” I finish for him.

“Why are you not getting married?” He insists.

“Because he is marrying Courtney.”

“My father says a man can marry as many wives as he wants.”

“I don’t about that Theo.” I pick a new unused kitchen towel from the hook and start drying his hair, “A man should marry for love not because he can.” I explain.

“Does Quinn love you or Courtney?” His question carries so much innocence.

“He is marrying her, that should be a reason enough.” I badly what this conversation to end. I reach for a gla**, “What is your favorite juice?” I ask him.

“Apple.” He says excited.

“Apple it is.” I match his excitement as he follows me to the fridge. He carefully watches me as I pour to his gla**.

“When I grow up, I will marry you.” He takes his first sip.

“And I will be the luckiest woman.” I state.

“Who will be the luckiest woman?” Quinn walks in. He’s wearing a pair of blue shorts and a Grey t-shirt. He looks odd, unlike him.

“Cara, when I marry her.” Theo says proudly.

“Yeah, and you will be the luckiest man.” Our eyes lock and I blush when he says so.

An awkward moment passes between us before I walk to the oven to check on my pizza. Quinn takes some fruits and beetroot and blends them together while I serve the pizza. I can't help but note the silence between the father and son. It is comfortable between the two though I grew up in a house that we were constantly talking so I feel a dire need to start any conversation.

“What grade are you, Theo?” I ask it is the only thing I can think of and the easiest way to start a conversation.

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“Am in the 3rd grade.”

Wow! That means he's around eight years old. How old was Quinn when he conceived him? Additionally, Theo looks so young like six years old.

“Any girlfriend?” I and he blushes.

“No,” He shakes his head.

I watch him tiptoe to wash his glass. He carefully washes it, rinses it and dries it before handing it back to me.

“You are too young Theo to think of girls.” Quinn says.

“I am nine.” Theo interjects. “That is big.”

I carry the pizza to the dining table and the boys follow as the banter back and forth about Theo's age.

Quinn helps me set the table and we settle. There is disturbing comfort that I find as we sit the three of us eat, we are like... No!

“This is good.” Quinn says to me. I smile thankfully. “Theo do you like the pizza?”

Theo nods and smiles with his mouth full of pizza. He seems to sometimes relax and get comfortable other times he is tense and uncomfortable.

After we are done eating. I offer to prepare the bed for Theo as Quinn finds a story to read to him.

“Will you be here tomorrow?” Theo asks. His eyes hold so much hope.

I nod, “I promise I will be here when you wake up.”

“Don’t make promises which are impossible to keep.” Quinn walks in. His mood is sour compared to how he has been today. He can barely keep eye contact his jaw keeps on twitching like he is trying to contain his anger.

“Am not going anywhere.” I clarify to Theo.

“Just don’t... I should never have... I knew this was a bad idea bringing Theo here.” His voice is full of regret.

“Why?” I get confused. What did I do?

“Because you are so f***ing addictive at the same time a tonardo that crashes everything in your way.” His raised voice triggers fear in Theo. He moves closer to me. Quinn realizes that, and moves the opposite of the bed with his folder.

Quinn reads a story about a tortoise that hated it’s shell. It considered it as a sign of weakness that weighed it down. It wanted to be fast, so after year of trying to get rid of it. It finally succeeded. Finally, it was fast. It would move faster than the other animals. However, its joy was short-lived when it’s village was attacked. It had no shell to shield itself and it had lost its beauty.

Theo listens closely, his eyes heavy but his mind open.

“What happen to it?” Theo asks and yawns.

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“It couldn’t be saved because no one knew what it was, it had lost its ident**y.” Quinn eyes find mine in a cold stare. “And it had no shield to cover its body. So it was killed.” He adds. “In life the flaws you see as a weakness, they are your strength and beauty.”

Theo is already asleep. Quinn covers him and kisses him.

Am not yet sleepy. I need to talk to Andrea about everything that is happening. I have not being able to reach him.

Am already in the living room when Quinn slams a magazine on the table. I am on the cover. The stripper turned billionaire's side chick.

"Who are you?" Quinn is direct.

"That is just my past. I am Cara Black." I nervously answer.

"Who are you? It is a simple question and the only time am giving you a chance for honesty."

"Cara Black." I say.

"I hate lies." He slams photos of Oliver. He is at our parents and "our" graves. I wish the ground would open up to swallow me. Oliver and I made a pack never to go there. The photo was taken today.

"All this time, I was just your target. A mission." He says. For the first time I see Quinn hurt.

"I..." I am speechless. "I don't what you are trying to insinuate." I say. Oliver been there could anything it doesn't mean he knows.

"The first day I met you. I hired a private investigator. He found nothing. I dismissed the report because I thought we would never met again. Until we coincidentally met in the same university and even cla**. Now that I think of it, it was never a coincidence on your part." He shakes his head and chuckles. "The b***** was your idea just to get close to me."

"I don't know what you mean."

"You do, Cara Cooper." He runs a hand through his hair.

I am still still confused to know what to say or do.

"I want you gone, I don't care where you go to. Just leave before I loose my cool." He states.

I hesitate and stand rooted unsure how to react. All my sins have finally caught up with me. This is not how I assumed they will come out. I always thought I had the upper hand and when my identity would be known I would have already won.

“Just leave!” He states.

I get angry I don't look back as I walk out with only my phone on my hand.

It is eight pm. I text Oliver and tell him I am on my way. I am just on the pavement, on my phone trying to find a Uber, when I feel large hands grab me. The people that are walking around squirm in fear when a gunshot is fired in the air. I don't get to see my attacker when a piece of cloth is pressed to my nose.

End of Book one.