

Educate you by xsparxflyx Chapter 29

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Twenty Nine

"Um, I have to take this call, guys," Aeliana said as she stood up from the bench. "I'll be in the *restroom*, and nowhere else, okay?"

"Okay," Leah and Caleb nodded in agreement.

They weren't supposed to split, but since Aeliana promised to be in the restroom and only there, they felt somewhat satisfied and safe.

As Leah and Caleb were chatting about the upcoming exam at the end of the semester, Caleb didn't notice two boys approach them. Leah looked up at the two unfamiliar faces.

"Yo, Caleb!" One of the boys said, slapping Caleb's back.

"Brian! Ma bro!" Caleb cheered as he stood up. "What's going on!?"

"Just chilling, bro," Brian grinned. "Unlike you nerds, were having some fun in the parking lot,"

"Seriously!?" Caleb was excited upon hearing this.

"Yup! We've got some good stuff back there," Brian said. "Care to join?"

"Oops! Is this your date?" The other boy tilted her head to notice Leah, who was staring at her phone

"No no!" Caleb laughed. "She's just a friend,"

"We've wasted enough time now," Brian said hurriedly. "Let's go," he cheered, swinging an arm around Caleb's neck.

"Wait, bro. Let me go get Jace," Caleb said, halting. "He'd like to join as well,"

"Jace?" Brian chuckled. "He's already with us,"

"Oh, then I guess we can just go," Caleb smiled. "Leah," he said, turning towards her. "Get Aeliana from the restroom. I'll be back in half an hour,"

"Mm," Leah mumbled. "Alright," she stood up and watched Caleb walk towards the parking lot with the

guys.

Deciding to ignore the bad feeling that she was getting about all of this, Leah started off towards the building in which the dance was being held. As she proceeded into the enormous hall, she noticed Vanille and Luke dancing in each other's arms. Smiling to herself, Leah pressed the power button on her phone. No messages from Aeliana... she's probably still on that call...

Pushing the door open, Leah entered the restroom. The door closed, blocking away the loud music, making the air much more silent.

"Aeliana?"

Nothing...

Leah looked around. She wasn't by the washbasins or the mirrors. All the toilets were unoccupied. There's no one in here...

She must've gone out to find me... or maybe joined Bliss and Vanille to dance....

Hurriedly, Leah exited the restroom. As soon as she took a few steps forward, she bumped into another

"Bliss?" Leah was puzzled. "What are you doing here alone?"

"I saw you rushing here, so I decided to come as well," Bliss said. "Where's Aeliana?"

"She's not with you?" Leah widened her eyes,

"She was with you." Bliss frowned.

"She must've gone to the dance floor," Leah said, quickly, silently praying that they would find her there. "Let's go check there," she said, pulling Bliss by the hand and dragging her towards the hall,

As they approached the dance floor, they found absolutely no sign of Aeliana

Standing there, Bliss and Leah were staring at the people move and sway to the rhythm

Leah was now unsure of what she was supposed to say. It was Caleb and herself, who *were* with her. They were told not to split, but now they did and

"Leah?" Bliss muttered as her eyes widened,

"..... Yeah?" Leah answered, weakly.

"Did you... lose her?" Bliss turned towards her.

Leah gulped, feeling the lump forming in her throat She hadn't the slightest idea of what to say

"Hey, guys. What's going on?"

"Jace!?" Leah turned towards him, perplexed, "What the hell are you doing here?"

"What you mean?" Jace was confused. "I've been here the whole time."

"But, you're supposed to be where Caleb is," Leah said, breathing heavily. "Caleb thinks you're-;"

"Where is Caleb!?" Jace's eyes widened as his features displayed nothing but panic. "You lost him?"

"Aeliana too," Bliss said.

"What!?" Jace screamed.

"Look," Leah said, breathing deeply. "Aeliana, Caleb and I were chatting by the fountain. Aeliana got a call. She told me that she'd be in the restroom and nowhere else, and she just ran off," she explained as Bliss and Jace paid close attention. "Then, two guys I've never seen before started talking with Caleb and invited him to go to the parking lot with them. Caleb wanted to come get you, Jace, but they told him that you were already with them. And then he told me to get Aeliana and he ran off with the two guys,"

"Okay, Leah," Bliss held her by the shoulders. "Calm down,"

Grabbing out his phone, Jace dialed Caleb's number. After two minutes of ringing, Jace dialed the number once again. "He won't answer,"

"Oh wait!" Bliss said. "I texted Aeliana while we were in the restroom," she pulled her phone out. Clicking open a message, she said, "She says she's going to the science dep to get some files," Bliss furrowed her eyebrows. "And that she'll be back in five minutes,"

"When was that text sent?" Jace asked,

"Five minutes ago,"

"Call her,"

Bliss dialed Aeliana's number, eagerly hoping that she'd answer

Once twice nothing

"She won't pick up."

Jace scoffed, placing his hands on his hips. "This is just great!"

"Guys," Bliss said. "I don't think it's possible to go into a building, get files and return in heels; all in five minutes,"

"You're telling us that we should wait?" Jace asked as if Bliss just said something absurd.

"Why don't we go there?" Bliss suggested. "She's supposed to be in the science dep, we know that,"

"No," Jace said immediately. "We don't know what kind of s*** Nate is up to. We need to take someone responsible,"

After a few seconds of quick thinking, Bliss made a decision. "Hey, Jace," She looked straight at the brown haired boy. "Why don't you go with Leah and get Caleb?"

"What are you gonna do?" Jace asked.

"I will... go get Aeliana"

"All by yourself!?" Jace asked. He was clearly worried.

"No," Bliss said. "With someone... responsible,"

"Like who?"

"Jace, you really should get going!" Bliss said, pushing Jace towards the doors of the hall.

"Alright, fine!" Jace surrendered. "Call me when you find her,"

I should probably wait for few minutes... Bliss thought. But if she is in trouble, then there's absolutely no time to waste...

Ugh! I never thought I'd have to do this!!! But I have to... For Aeliana!

Slowly, Bliss approached the Professors' table. She set her eyes on the only Spaniard seated there. He was mid conversation with Professor Watson.

Muttering a prayer under her breath, she drew nearer to him.

Slowly leaning in, she said, "Mr. Decarlo,"

His slight smile faded as he turned around to look at the girl standing behind him.
"Hernandez? What is it?"

"I need to talk to you, sir," Bliss said, breathing heavily.

"Uh huh... Go on," Mr. Decarlo turned around in his chair.

"... in private,"

Glaring at the helpless girl for few seconds, Mr. Decarlo decided to stand up, sighing.

Walking closer to the wall, he said, "Make it quick,"

"Sir, 1." Bliss breathed heavily.

he raised an eyebrow. "You what?"

"I think Aeliana is in trouble,"

His bored expression dropped; eyes gleaming with confusion. Narrowing his eyes, he said, "What are you mumbling about?"

"She's..." Bliss gulped. "It's a long story, and we don't have time... she was supposed to return five minutes ago,"

"Five minutes?" Mr. Decarlo looked at Bliss as if she was panicking for nothing.

"It's not easy to explain, but I have a really bad feeling," Bliss confessed. "She texted me, telling me that she will be going to the science department. She's not answering my texts or calls and-,"

Before the girl could finish, Mr. Decarlo was already on his way towards the building.

Catching upto him, Bliss asked, "You're going to find her, aren't you?"

"Por supuesto," he muttered, not even bothering to look at her. "I can tell that you know more about this... spit it out, Hernandez,"

"Okay," Bliss said, trying her best to keep up with the man. "It is very likely that she's trapped somewhere,"

"By someone?" Mr. Decarlo turned to look at Bliss.

"Yes,"

"And it has been quite some time?"

"Yes, sir,"

They rushed out and walked towards their destination.

Mr. Decarlo looked up at the deserted building and stopped in his tracks.

"Did she mention which room?"

"No, sir," Bliss said, panting.

Gritting his teeth, Decarlo rubbed his temples. Biting the inside of his right cheek, he looked around the building. "You said that we're running out of time, yeah?"

"Yes,"

Suddenly, he paced towards the side of the building.

"Mr. Decarlo," Bliss called out. "Where are you going?"

Decarlo rushed to the back of the building, without a word. After all, he was never really one to explain the intentions behind his actions.

What the hell is he doing!? Bliss wondered.

Having reached the back of the building, he stopped in his tracks. He observed the building carefully from behind, examining the outdoor units of the air conditioners. Noticing that one of the units was running, he muttered, "Dean's office," and with that he turned around to run back into the building. "Thank god it's almost summer,"

As Bliss turned to follow him, her phone began to ring. It was Leah.

"Yeah?"

"Bliss, I just got a call from Aeliana,"

"From Aeliana?" Bliss stopped in her tracks, feeling a chill go down her spine

Upon hearing the name, Mr Decarlo halted and turned around, the curiosity evident in his features

"Look, she didn't talk to me," Leah explained. "All I could hear were two girls talking One of them was her The other was going on about Nale. So I bet it's Brittany."

"Thanks, Leah!" Bliss panted. "We're heading to the Dean's office I think we'll have to hurry up," she said, and hung up

Bliss and Mr Decarlo bolted towards the elevator and soon reached the second floor

"I think it's the blonde girl who constantly keeps harassing Acliana, Bias muttered to Mr Decarlo

Gritting his teeth, he said nothing He was agitated and distressed, hardly able to digest what was going on

Mr. Decarlo raced towards the Dean's office and pressed his ear onto the door Hearing voices and a crash inside, he wrapped his fingers around the door knob As he turned it, he realized that it was locked Giving up on that idea, he banged on the door

"Winslow!"

Nothing

"Winslow!!"

Nothing at all

"Open this door!" He yelled, banging on it continuously

Bliss looked at him, astonished after noticing how Mr Decarlo looked like he could murder hundred men at that moment

Woah she thought Are my assumptions being proven right?

The door clicked open and there was a thud Mr Decarlo pushed the door open only to see Aeliana sprawled on the floor. He knelt down beside her. "Winslow?"

"My goodness, Aeliana!" Bliss knelt down, next to the girl

"Mr Decarlo." Aeliana muttered as she looked up at him

"Que? What is it?" He said quickly, concern written all over his face

"I feel light-headed,"

"Por supuesto," he muttered. "Hernandez, somewhere in here, there's a refrigerator Go find some ice,"

"Yes, sir," Bliss stood up and rushed into the room

Mr Decarlo seemed to have forgotten the fact that he should not have much physical contact with students, as he slid an arm under her neck.

Aeliana groaned and shook her head, opening her eyes with much effort to look up at the grey eyed man

“Sit up and put your weight on me,” he said. “Try to keep your head upright,”

Aeliana cooperated, and managed to sit up. She felt faint as her head hung low.

“Estúpida,” Decarlo muttered, resting the girl’s head gently on his chest. “Why would you come into an empty building at a time like this?”

He could tell that she was doing her best to fight the faintness. She was hard trying to keep her eyes open.

“Stop fighting it...” he said, looking down at her, and noticed the exhaustion evident in her features. “Close your eyes and relax... Estarás bien,”

Shutting her eyes, Aeliana fell unconscious, transferring her weight on to Mr. Decarlo.

As Bliss came running with the ice in her hand, he took off his necktie. “Put that in here,” he said, handing it over to her.

Running his fingers through Aeliana’s hair, he felt her scalp, searching for any bumps.

“I knew it,” he said, feeling the swollen area on top.

“Here,” Bliss said, handing the necktie full of ice, to him.

“Press that here,” he said, as he stood up with the unconscious girl in his arms. He lay her on a couch and muttered. “We have to get going,”

“Keep pressing that,” he said, and rushed out of the room and towards the elevator.

Wondering what he was upto, Bliss moved the strands of hair off Aeliana’s face. “You’ll be alright, hon,”

As Mr. Decarlo approached the elevator, the bell dinged and the doors opened to reveal Jace and Leah.

“Mr. Decarlo,” Jace was puzzled. “You’re the one Bliss wanted to bring.”

"Yes, now Carter, my boy," Decarlo said, slapping his back. Shoving his car keys in Jace's hand, he said, "Go get my car,"

"How do I know which one it is?"

"Come 'ere," Mr. Decarlo rushed over to the window, Jace following him closely behind.

Staring out the window, he pressed a button on the key, making the lights of the sleek black car flash. Looking back at Jace, Mr. Decarlo raised an eyebrow.

Jace held out his hand and accepted the key again.

"Don't you dare scratch my car," Mr. Decarlo eyed him menacingly.

"Roger that," he said, turning back and rushing back towards the elevator.

Next, he glared at Leah and muttered, "In the Dean's office, Seattle, right now,"

Leah bolted into the office and knelt down next to Bliss

"How's she doing?"

"Not good. She's out cold."

"Downstairs," Mr. Decarlo said. "We have to take her to a hospital,"

Agreeing, Bliss supported Aeliana and made her sit up. Sliding his arms under Aeliana's neck and legs Mr. Decarlo tried to lift her up, only to notice that her silk dress was torn

Letting her back down on the couch, he took off his coat and tied it around the girl's waist

Meanwhile, Leah searched the room and found her phone

"Su, take this too.' Leah said, extending the phone, it's screen shattered. It still works Might be useful."

*In my pocket,

"Huh?' Leah was puzzled.

Grabbing the phone from Leah, Bliss shoved it in Mr. Decarlo's pocket

Holding Aeliana in his arms, he said, "Go back. Don't cause a commotion. Don't ruin the night for the others,"

Bliss and Leah nodded, paying attention closely.

"We'll settle everything on Monday," he said, and turned around to leave.

As they walked out of the building, Jace was standing there, distracted by Decarlo's car.

"Open the door, kid,"

Jace rushed to open the door. Mr. Decarlo let Aeliana down gently on the passengers' seat

Shutting the door, he said, "Stop worrying, I'll get her to a hospital and contact someone responsible for her,"

Bliss, Leah and Jace were satisfied. They nodded in agreement.

"It'd be better if you don't speak to anyone about this," he said. "If someone asks you about her, do what you're best at Forge some lies,"

And with that he drove off and out of the University premises.

"Whoa!" Jace exclaimed. "That's a sweet ride,"

"Jace, where's Caleb?" Bliss questioned.

"That idiot's drunk," Leah rolled her eyes.

"He's sleeping in my car," Jace said. "That moron got wasted with those good for nothing."

"Woah, okay!" Bliss said. "If this is Brittany's doing, where's Nate?"

"Brian and the guys are Nate's friends too," Jace explained. "They were probably trying to distract Caleb and get to Aeliana,"

"That was a dumb plan," Leah said.

"Not if Brittany didn't get her first," Bliss pointed out.

"Well, yeah," Leah agreed "Hey guys,"

"Hmm? Jace and Bliss looked over at her.

"Isn't it weird... sending her off with a Spaniard we barely know?" Leah looked puzzled

"Now you say that?" Jace yelled.

"Hey hey!" Bliss said 'She'll be fine! I'm sure we can trust him. You would know, Jace,"

"Yeah, you're probably right," Jace agreed. "Except for the occasional douchebag thing, he's cool."

"COOL!? Bliss freaked out.

"Yeah," Jace said, smiling. "Why do you guys look so surprised?"

"But he's a total d***head!" Leah said.

"Leah, that's too much" Bliss laughed.

It was almost ten past ten as Antonio drove through the streets. They were mostly empty with just the occasional drunk driver and the cargo trucks.

Looking over at the unconscious girl next to her, he wondered if he should head towards the hospital or not. It's just a swelling, nothing much. But why's she still unconscious!?

Reaching his apartment building, Mr. Decarlo parked his car in his usual spot. Once more, he looked over at the girl, laying unresponsive.

Wake up, goddammit...

Five minutes...

Fifteen minutes....

Nothing...

Looking around the parking lot, he spotted the security personnel. He felt the need to get her out of there before they got suspicious.

Thanking his girlfriend for the whiskey bottle she forgot in his car two days before, he opened the lid. Pulling out his handkerchief, he put some of the gold brown liquid on the cloth and patted it on the girl's cheeks. 1

Freckles...

Having noticed that he had been gazing for a little too long, he shoved the handkerchief back in his pocket and placed the bottle under his seat.

Decarlo, being quite robust, managed to get the girl on his back, and her arms around his neck. Shutting the door of his car, he proceeded towards the elevator since the stairs weren't an option.

"Good evening, Mr. Decarlo!" one of the security guards greeted him.

"Evening, Wilson," he returned the gesture.

"Um?" He looked at the girl being carried by him, clearly puzzled and unable to figure out what was going o

"Cousin got drunk at a club," Decarlo said casually.

"Ah! Right!"

"Girls these days..." he sighed and stepped into the elevator. He reached the seventeenth floor and entered his penthouse apartment.

Laying Aeliana down on the couch, Mr. Decarlo pulled his phone out immediately. He dialed a number and walked into his room

As he unbuttoned his shirt, the call was answered.

"Antonio?"

"Oliver!" He said, peeling his shirt off. "You at home?"

"Yup, duty's over for today,"

"Need you over for a minute," Mr. Decarlo said, pulling on a plain black T-shirt.

"Sure," Oliver said. "Be right there,"

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Thirty

Mr. Decarlo was seated on his black leather sofa, flipping through the pages of the non-fiction novel that he was reading at the moment.

Shutting the book, he glanced at the unconscious body that lay on the couch that was on his left. Her hair was disheveled and her dress was torn.

Mr. Decarlo wasn't sure what she did to deserve this.

The bell to the penthouse rang, indicating the arrival of his 'friend'.

Decarlo opened the door, revealing the pale skinned man standing at the entrance; holding a notepad and a stethoscope swung around his neck.

"Evening, Antonio,"

"Evening," he greeted the man. "Come on in,"

When he stepped inside, his features portrayed mere confusion as he saw the girl on the couch. "Antonio?"

"Yeah, um," Mr. Decarlo rubbed his neck. "She might have banged her head on a wall, there's a bump. I used an ice pack and I really don't understand why she's not waking up."

Oliver walked up to the girl and knelt down beside her. He checked her pulse and examined her. "She is breathing properly. Her pulse is normal. Was there any blood loss?"

"None," Decarlo replied, crossing his arms over his chest. "Just a swelling,"

"Where?"

Decarlo walked up to the girl and ran his fingers through her soft brown hair. "It's gone down"

"It's probably just exhaustion," Oliver said. "Was she dancing?" He asked, noticing that she had been dressed in party attire.

"Probably,"

"How long has it been?"

"About half an hour,"

"I don't think you need to take her to a hospital for now," Oliver said. "But, if she doesn't wake up in about ten minutes' time, I strongly suggest that you take her,"

"Alright," Decarlo replied, letting everything sink in. "Hey, err..."

.

"Yeah?" Oliver said, turning to face him.

"You think you could... write a record on this?"

"Yeah, sure," Oliver agreed as he grabbed the prescription pad. "Let me guess, you were supposed to take her to the hospital, but you didn't want to bother,"

"You know me,"

Oliver took a seat and started scribbling something. "Who is she? Another random girl who stalked you for five weeks, talked to you for two and finally found the courage to confess her endless love for you, and passed out when she got rejected?"

"She's not a random girl," he said, gazing at Aeliana.

"Your girlfriend?"

"

" Antonio just smirked and looked away. 2

"I'm gonna take that as a 'yes'," Oliver said, closing his pen.

"Mom's friend's daughter,"

"That's a lie,"

"Gimme the damned sheet, Oliver," Antonio chuckled as he grabbed the paper

Laughing at his friend's unusual behavior, Oliver stood up. "Well, I hope you succeed in whatever *sneaky* business you're involved in,"

"Tch!" Antonio chuckled. "Thanks,"

"Sure," Oliver smiled. "See you around then,"

And with that, he left the apartment, leaving Antonio and the girl by themselves once again

Shutting the door as Oliver left, Antonio approached Aeliana

After a prolonged glance, he decided to make some dinner for himself. Thanks to Aeliana's little drama, he missed dinner at the dance.

Having that done, he entered the TV room and plopped on the couch.

Meanwhile, Aeliana began to regain consciousness. Opening her eyes, she looked around Her body was stiff and she had to make an effort to move. Ignoring the soreness, she managed to sit up on the couch

That's when she noticed her surroundings.

Where the hell am I? she thought. Oh my god! What am I doing here!? This is for sure an apartment" Is it Nate's!? Oh my...

Wow... Aeliana let out a deep breath.

I've always wanted to live in an apartment like this... it's so spacious and beautiful. I won't even mention the maintenance... whoever is living here, is doing a great job keeping this place in order it's spotless! Everything's in order!

Turning, she looked to her left.

Oh wow... this is so breathtaking..

Despite her sore legs, she stood up and rushed towards the floor-to-ceiling window.

Wow... you can see the entire city from up here... the multicolored lights are quite a gorgeous sight such a breathtaking view...

I could stare at this forever...

But first, I have to find out where the hell I am...

Wait a minute...

She heard noises... noises from...

someone's watching TV...

She followed the noises, walking on her tiptoes; making sure that she disturbed no one.

Ah! Found it!

Slowly, she peeped in, only to see a man seated on the recliner sofa.

Having recognized the back of Antonio's head, Aeliana's jaw dropped. Instantly bringing her palm on to her lips, she let everything sink in slowly.

Antonio, who pretended not to notice the girl, yawned, stretching as he shot an arm in the air.

Taking a better look at the reflection of the girl on the glass window beside the television, he smiled to himself.

Realizing that standing there for too long wasn't the safest bet, Aeliana rushed back towards the couch she had been laying on few minutes before.

My lord... What am I doing in his apartment!? Why is he... Why am I....

Oh my god...

She thought as she stared at the ceiling.

Wait... Where's my phone!?

Aeliana sat up and looked around. It was nowhere to be seen.

Did he kidnap me? If he did, why am I not tied up?

In a few seconds, Aeliana noticed that the noises coming from the TV room had stopped... which also meant that he was probably going to come into the living room, where she was laying.

Going back into position, she shut her eyes tight, hoping that Mr. Decarlo would go back to where he came from.

He opened the refrigerator and grabbed a glass bottle of water. He opened the lid as he walked towards the sofa. Taking a seat opposite to the girl, he sipped on the water.

Feeling his presence somewhere close by, Aeliana's heart began to race. She started having palpitations

Why isn't he doing anything!? Why isn't he leaving!??

God dammit... I can't handle the tension anymore....

"Enough of the pretending, Winslow,"

Well, s***

"If you're planning to lay there forever, know that I didn't buy that leather couch for that,"

Aeliana's eyes fluttered open and she stared at the ceiling for few seconds. Sitting up, she gawked at the floor, embarrassed.

How did he notice!? Is he tricking me!? Maybe he didn't actually notice. Maybe he was just throwing it out

there.

"Mr. Decarlo," she muttered, not moving her eyes from the soft wool carpet underneath her bare feet. "What am I doing here?"

Taking another sip of the chilled liquid, he clicked his tongue. He stared at her blankly, "What do you think?" He asked, one leg crossed over the other in his authoritative position

"Mmm..." she mumbled. "I'm not sure..." for the first time, she looked up at him.

Noticing the stone hearted man dressed in a black T-shirt, she unconsciously gazed at the unusual sight Realizing that her stare had been a bit too long, she looked away, and out the enormous window

"In case if you were wondering," Aeliana chose to break the awkward silence, putting her pride at risk. "I don't feel dizzy anymore,"

After a few seconds of staring, Mr. Decarlo's lips curled into a smile. Looking away, he chuckled as if she was being ridiculous.

"What's so funny?" Aeliana asked, and gulped immediately after.

Mr. Decarlo just continued to chuckle as his hand covered his lips. "You're here for a lot of reasons. There is one main reason... which you will realize later,"

"Um..." Aeliana said, clueless about whatever he was saying.

"Stop gawking at me as if I'm going to sell you off,"

"That is, honestly, very likely,"

"I wouldn't get anything worth in return," he said, standing up from his seat.

"Hey!"

He walked towards the refrigerator, opened it and placed the bottle in. "Why the hell did you go into an isolated place at 9.30 in the night, all alone!?"

"I wasn't alone," she pointed out.

"Who did you go with? A 'friend'?" Mr. Decarlo scoffed. "Don't even get me started about your 'friends'! I already know how faithful they are," He said, taking a white tube and a roll of gauze from the pantry

"It was a girl from our class," she explained, ignoring the sarcastic comment.
"Serena,"

"Ah," Mr. Decarlo walked towards the sofa and back to where he was seated previously.

"She told me that she needed to get some files from Professor Watson's office. She asked me to go with her since I knew the place more,"

"How'd she get the key?" Mr. Decarlo said, throwing the tube and the roll of gauze onto the coffee table.

"She told me that Professor Watson gave it to her,"

"Put that on," Mr. Decarlo said, signaling towards the bandages.

"Huh?" Aeliana was puzzled. "Where?"

Mr. Decarlo exhaled as he looked at her. He glared at her as if she was a dimwit.
"Do you not feel your wrist?"

Instantly, Aeliana brought her right hand up to take a look at it.

"The other one, goddammit,"

"Oh my... woah..." she stared at the purple mark across her left wrist. Brittany whacked me pretty hard.

Grabbing the tube, she put on some of the white substance on her skin Rubbing it in, she felt the pain It was probably numb all this time

"Who was there inside?"

She looked up at him, who still stared at her with the straightest face. "Some girls,"

"You wouldn't be like this right now if it weren't,"

She looked up at him and back at the carpet, realizing what he had meant by that

"I need names," he said.

"Brittany, Eva.., that's all I know," she said, digging her toes into the carpet.

"Make sure you say all this on Monday at the discipline council."

"Oh." she looked up at him, as she rubbed more ointment on the bruise. "Again?"

Sighing, he said, "Again," sitting back in his sofa, he said, "You and your friends' managed to drag me back there after all."

Having no idea what to say, Aeliana kept her eyes fixed on her toes that were still fiddling with the wool on the large floor mat

"Did you not feel the least bit intimidated when you walked into a dark building late at night?"

"I wasn't planning to!" She reasoned, as she reached out for the gauze on the coffee table. "I told her that I'd stay downstairs, but she wanted me to go with her, since she was scared of ghosts or something," Aeliana explained, as she tried to wrap the gauze around her wrist. It wasn't an easy task to do with only one hand

Mr. Decarlo rolled his eyes. "And you're not?"

"No," she said, as the gauze slipped off her hand and fell onto the floor. "Ugh!" Aeliana scoffed as she bent over to pick it up

"So you followed her?"

"Yeah, I mean," she said, trying to wrap the cloth once more. "I couldn't just let her go all alone. She seemed really scared," she finished as the roll of gauze slipped off and rolled onto the ground once again.

Sighing heavily, Mr. Decarlo watched her.

Aeliana bent over and picked up the roll of gauze quickly.

"Come here,"

"Huh?" She looked at him, confused.

"I said 'come here'," he said, signaling her to go to him.

She approached him and stood beside the sofa.

"What are you doing? Sit down," he snapped

Having no other choice, she obeyed his orders

He snatched the gauze out of her hand. "Closer,"

Immediately taking action, Aeliana scooted over. She looked at him, unsure of what his next step was

going to be

Turning towards her on the couch beside her, he took the tube in one hand and opened it. Setting the roll of gauze aside, he extended his hand towards her.

Unsure of what to do, Aeliana looked up at him, terrified. His blank stare wasn't helping at all.

She looked into his eyes, searching for an answer. Her heart was racing and her throat was completely dry. She felt her stomach do a little flip.

Mr. Decarlo blinked as he nodded, reassuring the girl that the situation is what it looked like.

Gently, she placed her hand in his.

Placing his thumb on her slender fingers and enclosing his grip, he pulled her delicate hand closer.

The hairs on her neck stood at their ends upon the feeling of his skin touch hers. It was rough... and considerably large. He could've easily covered her entire balled fist.

Her breathing started to get heavier, as she got a really severe case of the butterflies.

Applying more of the ointment, he rubbed it in, focusing on her wrist.

She stared at him earnestly, and found herself admiring his perfectly sculpted, chiseled visage. He had a sharp nose and high cheek bones that made him look daring and mature. Strands of his chestnut hair fell over his eyes that were perfectly framed by his thick brows. The shiny tan skin on his cheeks were constantly covered by his consistently maintained stubble.

"Ghosts..." he said concentrating on what he was doing. "...are not what you should be scared of... Aeliana,"

Her heart skipped a beat at the mention of her first name.

Wrapping the gauze around her wrist, he looked into her eyes.

"People are," he finished.

His usually cold grey eyes, now took a shade of dirty grey green... they somehow looked.... warmer...

Gradually, his eyes moved from hers towards her wrist as he tied it up.

"Stop trusting people so easily," he said, tightening the gauze.

"Thank you," Aeliana mumbled as he let go of her hand.

"Are you not afraid?" He studied her intently.

"Afraid of what, Mr. Decarlo?"

"Obviously of being in a stranger's apartment," he said, as if it was something that goes without saying

"Well," she said, fidgeting. "I don't think you're... a stranger," she shrugged, locking eyes with him once more. "And I know that... you wouldn't hurt me,"

Embarrassed, she pressed her palms together.

What am I even saying to this hard-hearted man!? She wondered.

Having gazed at her for few seconds more, he stood up.

As he did, a familiar tone was heard from one of the rooms inside.

"Is that my phone?" she muttered, looking up at him who was towering above her.

Without a word, Mr Decarlo disappeared into his room and came back with the severely damaged phone in his hand

"Once you answer this call, you're not sitting in the living room of my penthouse, understood?"

Aeliana nodded, agreeing,

Handing it over to her, he took a seat opposite to her once more,

Widening her eyes at the sight of the shattered screen, Aeliana answered the call.
"Hello, Madelyn?"

"Aeliana, where are you?"

"Um... I'm..." she muttered, as her eyes moved instantly towards the tall Spaniard before her. "I'm... wait let me check,"

Holding the phone away from herself, she mouthed 'Where am I?' to Mr. Decarlo.

"Ten minutes away," he muttered, totally laid back and calm.

"Ten minutes!?" Aeliana whisper-screamed.

"Not even ten minutes," he said.

"Um, I'll be home in 5 minutes," she told Madelyn.

Mr. Decarlo nodded in approval.

"Yeah, yeah. I'm fine," she said, looking back at him.

"Pfft!" Smirking sarcastically, he looked away.

Furrowing her eyebrows, she frowned at him.

Seeing the ticked off expression on the girl's face, Mr. Decarlo chuckled, enjoying the moment.

"Okay, yeah. Yeah, bye," she hung up.

"Um, Mr. Decarlo,"

"Que?"

"How am I supposed to get there in five minutes?"

"You'll see," he said, standing up. "Are you ready to go home?"

Looking up at him, she blinked and nodded.

"Can we really get to Hyde Park Residences in five minutes?" Aeliana asked him as they entered the elevator.

"Mm hmm," he mumbled as a small smile spread across his visage.

"So, it's close by?"

"Mm hmm," he muttered.

"So"

"Stop asking questions," he snapped as he pressed the button that said 'G'.

"Sorry,"

They walked out of the building and Aeliana was confused as to why they weren't in the parking lot.

She followed Mr. Decarlo into the street. He stopped and looked at her, eager to see the expression that was about to take over her facial features.

Looking around, Aeliana recognized the eerily familiar surroundings. Taking a three sixty degree turn, she looked back at Mr. Decarlo, who was staring at her, his arms crossed over his chest.

"All this time..."

He smiled, seeing the bewilderment in her face.

"... you've been living in the neighboring building?"

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Thirty One

"... you've been living in the neighboring building?"

Letting out a small huff, he smiled and nodded gently. "This is the main reason I brought you here. Better than going to a hospital,"

Looking back at the building that she just walked out of, she moved her eyes onto the one next to it; the building in which her apartment was located.

How did we never cross paths?

"Mr. Decarlo," Aeliana muttered as she walked closer to him on her bare feet, her shoes dangling off her fingers.

Looking up at him, she stared into his eyes. "Thank you,"

Lost in there for a second, Mr. Decarlo looked away immediately. "Just don't screw up on Monday," he said, shoving his hands in his pockets.

Pursing her lips, Aeliana nodded.

"Run along now,"

"Good night, sir," she smiled as she turned around and sprinted towards the entrance.

Slowing down, she stopped and looked back over her shoulder.

Mr. Decarlo was already on his way inside, his hands still buried in his pockets.

Why was I expecting him to still be standing there?

Aeliana checked the time on her phone, as she approached the door to her apartment. It was 10.54 p.m. She massaged her sprained ankle that had started acting up once more, after her silly little attempt to walk in her heels.

She knocked on the wooden door and took few steps back, taking a deep breath.

The door opened, revealing a worried Madelyn behind it. "Come in! Adrian's gonna be here any second!"

"Holy shit!" Aeliana pushed the blonde girl inside and rushed in. Shutting the door behind her, she asked, "Did you tell him I was coming with a friend?"

"Yeah, yeah. I did," Madelyn said, placing her hands on her hips. Looking at Aeliana judgmentally, she asked, "Why do you have a jacket around your waist?"

"Huh?" Aeliana raised an eyebrow and looked down at herself. "What the.,"

"Whose jacket is that?" Madelyn narrowed her eyes, crossing her arms over her chest.

God! She reminds me of my mother... Aeliana thought.

"Madelyn, I swear I would tell you if I knew,"

"Come here," Maddie pulled her closer and untied the knot around her waist, taking the jacket in her hands. Turning it around she took a good look at it. "There are no name tags on this... but it's an expensive brand,"

Wait a minute...

Immediately, Aeliana grabbed the jacket and turned it towards herself. Pressing her nose *onto* the jet black fabric, she inhaled the scent.

"Mint..."

"What!?"

Oh no....

"I said, 'mint'. It smells like mint," I shrugged.

"So?" Maddie said. "I'm assuming that you know who it belongs to,"

"I don't,"

"Then why'd you smell it?" She took a step closer to me, in hopes of making me feel uncomfortable

"Well, there's no specific reason,"

"Aeliana," Madelyn glared at me. "Stop lying to me,"

Looking at her and seeing her menacing glare, Aeliana surrendered. Sighing, she stared at the floor "It's his..." 1

"His? Whose?" She raised an eyebrow.

Biting her lip, Aeliana looked up at Madelyn, guilt spread across her face,

After observing her for a few seconds, Madelyn's expression lightened and her eyes widened as realization hit her. "You don't mean-," she stared at Aeliana, her mouth agape

Refusing to meet her eyes, Aeliana stared at the floor.

"Dude!" Madelyn screamed. "Why the fuck did you have his jacket around your waist!?" She grinned from ear to ear.

"It's a long story, and it's not what you think!"

"Don't you dare..." Madelyn looked straight into her eyes. "... tell me that you're not pregnant with his baby,"

"Ugh!" Aeliana rolled her eyes. "I won't, just to make you happy,"

"Tell me what happened," Maddie exclaimed, grabbing her by the shoulders.

"I'll tell you everything," Aeliana replied. "As soon as I take wash,"

ler

soon

"No," Maddie said. "I want to hear everything right-,"

There was a knock on the door.

"It's Adrian!" Aeliana freaked out. "Tell him that I'm taking a wash," she said, grabbed her towel and rushed into the bathroom.

Madelyn opened the door, letting Adrian in.

"Hey!"

"Hi, Adrian," she smiled.

"Where's Aeliana?"

"She's taking a wash," Madelyn said. "She just got here ten minutes ago," she lied, smoothly

"Ah, right," he walked in. Spotting the black jacket thrown on the bed, he asked, "Whose jacket is that?"

"Oh! That's err... that's Eric's," Madelyn lied.

"Oh.."

"Yeah, we were on a date and he forgot his jacket with me," she shrugged.

"Oh.. I see you guys are kicking it off," Adrian smirked at the girl.

"I guess," Madelyn blushed, looking away.

"Aeliana's the third wheel now," Adrian muttered.

"Not for long," Madelyn muttered to herself

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"That's horrible," Maddie gasped. "How could someone do that!?"

"Don't even ask. I don't know," Aeliana muttered, fiddling with the hem of her T-shirt

"Now get to the juicy part,"

"Juicy part?"

"Yeah, you know. The part where he gets you pregnant," 1

"Uh huh," Aeliana narrowed her eyes, let out a small laugh. "So I passed out, and I woke up in his apartment,"

"What!? You were in his apartment!?" Madelyn leaned in, her eyes as wide as coconuts.

"Penthouse, to be precise," Aeliana corrected. "He did this for me too," she said, showing her wrist covered in gauze.

"Oh my god..." Madelyn breathed heavily. "I can't believe this,"

"Yeah, to be honest!" Aeliana exclaimed. "Me neither! 'Cause you know where his penthouse is!?" She asked, raising her voice.

Gulping, Madelyn looked at her. "Where?" She whispered, eyes wide as plates.

"In the damned west wing!"

"WHAT!?" Madelyn fell off the bed.

"Dude, he has been living there, for like ever!" Aeliana screamed. "And we had NO IDEA!"

"Oh my god, I feel so dumb," Maddie said, almost pulling her hair off her head, while on the floor.

"You're not the only one," Aeliana took a deep breath. "So that means... oh my god,"

"What?" Maddie said, sitting up on the floor.

"He lives in the same building as Adrian!"

"Okay, that's a problem," Madelyn rubbed her chin.

"Why?" Aeliana laughed.

"How are you gonna sneak in for sleepovers?" Madelyn continued to wonder.

"Maddie!" Aeliana yelled.

"Wait wait, I'm processing this right now," Maddie said. "So, you mean to tell me that this guy tended to your wounds?"

"Yeah," Aeliana nodded. "I was being a clumsy mess, and he told me to come sit next to him and he did it for me,"

"So if you pretend to have trouble with taking your clothes off, will he do that for you too?" Madelyn grinned. 3

"Madelyn, shut up about that!" Aeliana rolled her eyes. "It's not gonna be like that,"

"So, you actually sat next to him?"

"Yeah,"

"Did you manage to get an HD view?" Madelyn asked.

"Yes," she replied, chuckling. "Yes, I did,"

"Amazing," Maddie exhaled, as she climbed onto the bed. "So? What do you think?"

Aeliana looked at her best friend, wondering if she should be completely honest or just shove it off.

"Tell me!" Maddie leaned in. "Does he have nice lips?... wait, what am I saying? Of course he does,"

Aeliana smiled to herself, picturing his flawless visage.

"Girl," Maddie said. "Talk,"

"What color are his eyes?"

"Well... they're normally cold grey," Aeliana replied, recalling how his eyes had changed colors. "But for a moment, they looked green,"

"Oh wow," Madelyn said, dreamily. "I bet he has a killer jawline too,"

"Don't get me started on that," Aeliana mumbled, lying down on her bed. "He asked me if I was scared," she

said.

"Scared? Of what?"

"Of being in a stranger's apartment," Aeliana shrugged.

"Were you?"

Aeliana looked at Madelyn. Locking her eyes with her, they were having a telepathic conversation.

"So you told him that you weren't?"

"Yeah,"

"And then?"

Aeliana narrowed her eyes, frowning at the girl.

"What!?" Maddie raised an eyebrow.

"You called and ruined the moment, remember?" Aeliana yelled, sitting back up.

"Huh?" Madelyn widened her eyes, slowly realizing what actually happened. "So when you answered that call, you were with him?"

"Yeah,"

"Aarrghhh!" Madelyn screamed as she rubbed her temples. "Why didn't you tell me!? I could've held off Adrian for longer so that you could stay there,"

"And do what, Maddie?"

"I'm pretty sure you had a lot on your mind after seeing that killer jawline,"

"No," Aeliana snapped. "I'm not in love with him,"

"Ugh!" Madelyn groaned. "You're STILL in denial!?"

"It's the truth," Aeliana yelled and turned around, pulling the blanket over her shoulder,

"Stop lying to yourself," Madelyn snapped. "It's unhealthy."

"We've got a long shift today," Madelyn said as she arranged her duvet.

"What time?"

"12 to 6," Maddie sighed. "How's your..?" She asked, pointing at the top of her head.

"It's fine," Aeliana muttered. "My wrist hurts just a bit,"

"That b**** is going to get what she deserves," Madelyn raised an eyebrow, pissed off. "Don't worry,"

"Mm hmm," Aeliana said, as she pulled some books out of her bag.

"Hey," Madelyn approached her friend. "You think daddy's gonna show up today?" She wiggled her eyebrows.

Looking at Madelyn for few seconds, Aeliana started chuckling.

"What!?" Maddie laughed with her.

Aeliana just continued to laugh like a maniac, ignoring the girl beside her.

"Dude, you're scaring me now," Maddie said, grabbing Aeliana's shoulder.

"You really think so?"

"What?"

"You know... that he's a total daddy or something like that?" Aeliana said, placing the books on her desk. "I mean, I thought you were joking when you said that,"

Madelyn stared at her for few seconds. "Of course not," she said with a straight face. "I was dead serious,"

"Why do you think so?"

"Pfft!" Madelyn scoffed. "That's not something I can explain. I just feel it,"

"Don't you think that it's messed up that you think I'm in love with my... teacher?"

"No, you haven't been interested in a guy in ages," she shrugged. "Of course I'm going to full on support you when I get to know that you are now,"

"Maddie," Aeliana muttered, looking directly in her eyes. "I don't love him. I don't even know him. How can I love someone I don't even know?"

Smiling sarcastically, Madelyn looked away. "Aeliana, I know you... more than you do,"

Speechless, Aeliana looked away.

"I'm the one who sees the look on your face whenever you talk about him,"

"What's so different about the look on my face when;"

"You wouldn't understand!!!" Maddie yelled. "You're in a big confusion, I'll give you that. You don't even know what to think about all of this, do you? You're scared,"

"Scared of what?" Aeliana snapped, slightly offended.

"Others," Madelyn said. "You're scared of what the others will think. You're scared of what they will say. You're scared of- of all the consequences,"

Aeliana looked anywhere but at her best friend.

"Am I right... or am I wrong?" Madelyn questioned, glaring daggers at her best friend.

She said nothing. She gulped, thinking about the flawless confession that Madelyn had made. Staring at the floor, Aeliana didn't know what to say.

"Madelyn," Aeliana looked at her, after gathering a heap of courage. "Don't make me admit it,"

"You want to live in denial for the rest of your life!?" the blond haired girl gritted her teeth, unable to stand the fact that Aeliana wouldn't accept what was right in front of her.

"Can we not talk about this?" She whimpered.

Taking a prolonged look at her, Madelyn let out a deep sigh. "Fine!"

"We don't even have many customers today," Aeliana complained. "This is such a waste of time,"

"Need I remind you that we're getting paid for this," Madelyn eyed Aeliana.

"I could've studied for that dreadful exam if I stayed at home,"

"Mm hmm..." Madelyn murmured as she tapped on the counter.

Assuming that no one was going to arrive any time soon, Aeliana stood up and entered the room at the back. She grabbed her phone and plopped on a chair, unable put weight on her aching ankle anymore.

Meanwhile, Madelyn was standing at the counter in front. She tapped on the steel, humming to 'Bloom', which was her favorite song at the moment.

Few seconds later, the bell at the door rang, indicating the arrival of a customer.

Standing up straight, she turned towards the doors.

The tall man proceeded into the coffeehouse. Seeing Madelyn at the counter, his expression dimmed. Slowing down he looked around, searching for a different face.

Seeing him, Madelyn's jaw dropped "Sir," she gulped. "Please give me a minute," and with that she rushed into the room at the back.

"It's your turn now," she demanded, storming towards the girl seated few steps away.

"What!? It's only been like three minutes!"

"Yeah, the next three minutes are yours," she said, grabbing Aeliana's arms. "Now go,"

"Okay okay! I'll go!" she said, rolling her eyes and shoving her shattered phone in her pocket.

She pushed the door and exited the room, only to freeze after see the overly familiar face.

He was looking up at the menu on the screens. Without budging, he moved his eyes onto her. Slowly, he turned his head down to meet her eye level. "Do you keep all your customers waiting like this?"

"Um..." she walked closer. "I'm sorry, sir,"

Placing a paper on counter, Mr. Decarlo pushed it towards her.

Damn... the veins...

"Figured your clumsy self would forget this," he muttered.

It was the medical record.

"Oh," Aeliana took it in her hands, smiling nervously.

"You have to produce that at the discipline council tomorrow,"

"Oh,"

Sighing, Mr. Decarlo said, "You're lucky I had to go to the university,"

Realizing what he meant, Aeliana smiled, nodding.

"Mm hm," he said, looking up at the menu once more. "My usual, to go,"

"To go?"

Taking a second, he observed the seating area. He moved his gaze back on to the girl whose eyes showed a distinct glint of hope that he would stay. Sighing, he muttered, "To stay,"

Aeliana looked away immediately hiding the slight smile that spread across her face. She turned around and grabbed a cup, avoiding his gaze.

Successfully noticing Aeliana's reaction, Mr. Decarlo's lips tugged into a smile.

Failing to notice this, she continued to prepare the order.

"Winslow,"

"Yes?" She turned around immediately.

"Don't you dare..." he said, raising his eyebrows. "...write anything there,"

Having stared at the man for a few seconds, Aeliana burst out laughing.

"I'm dead serious," he said, pointing a finger at her, with a straight expression plastered on his face

Aeliana nodded in agreement, failing to stop her laughing. Placing the cup on the coffeemaker, she grabbed a felt pen and some tissues for him.

Mr. Decarlo looked around and noticed the empty table by the window. Deciding that he will be sitting there, he approached the area and placed his suitcase on the desk

Aeliana set his order on the table as he approached the counter "\$4.95, sir," 1

Pulling the money out of his pocket, he handed it to her

Aeliana watched him as he grabbed the cup wrapped in few tissues and left to take his seat. He placed the cup on the table and pulled his phone out of his pocket

Answering the call that he just received, he took a seat. Aeliana could only see the back of his head. She watched him speak, seated in his authoritative position. He's probably ordering *someone* to *do something* like he always does; his stern commands embellished with few cuss words and threats,

She waited patiently until Mr. Decarlo was done with his conversation. Disconnecting the call, he placed his phone on the desk. He took the cup in his hand, as he placed the tissues neatly on the desk with the other. Noticing something odd on the tissues, he let the cup back down on the desk. Frowning his eyebrows, he picked up the tissue on top and brought it up to his eye level.

Sighing, he mumbled, "Sneaky little midget," as he read the words written on the tissue in black; "Thank you, Mr. Decarlo :)"

With a mischievous smile spread across her face, Aeliana rushed back into the room, the sheet of paper in her hand.

"WHAT HAPPENED." Madelyn screamed.

"Nothing,"

"Tell me!" Madelyn ordered.

"I got this," Aeliana snapped, waving the paper in her face. "That's it,"

"What's that?" Madelyn raised an eyebrow at the girl.

"My medical record," she said, shoving it in her bag.

"He came all the way here to give you that?"

"I highly doubt that," Aeliana said. "He's on his way back from the University,"

"University?" Madelyn was quite puzzled. "But it's Saturday,"

Shrugging, Aeliana said, "He's a professor. He probably has things to do that we're unaware of,"

"Good morning, ladies," Aeliana greeted her girls who were already busy chatting.

"Aeliana, my goodness!" Bliss screamed as she lunged forward. "Do you feel better now, dear?"

"Yes! Of course I do," she smiled sweetly.

"I'm so sorry I wasn't there for you, Li," Vanille said, guilt and regret written all over her face.

"That's totally fine, V!" Aeliana said, resting a hand on Vanille's shoulder. "I'm sure none of us wanted to bother you and Luke,"

"Speaking of Luke," Bliss snapped, crossing her arms over her chest. "Hope he didn't forget to give Caleb a piece of his mind"

"Oh my, guys, where is Caleb anyway?" Aeliana asked, worried about the boy.

"Probably hiding under a rock," Leah rolled her eyes. "He chose some random guys who had alcohol over you... in case you were having thoughts on dating him, I suggest you think more than twice about that,"

"Leah! Don't be so harsh!" Aeliana said, looking around for the grey eyed boy. "What happened to him anyway?"

"Got drunk. Passed out on a table after Jace and I found him," Leah said, clearly irritated.

"Enough about him," Bliss interrupted. "Did Antonio take you to a hospital?"

"Yeah," Aeliana lied. "Look, I even got a record," she said, pulling out the sheet of paper.

"Oh! So it was nothing serious, yeah?"

"Well, I'm alive, so I guess not," I shrugged.

"So, what's going to happen now?" Vanille asked, placing her hands on her hips.

"Well, probably--"

"Miss Winslow,"

Aeliana turned around after hearing the unfamiliar voice.

"The Dean has summoned you," it was Professor Watson's assistant, Mr. Perlman.

"That's my cue," Aeliana muttered as she flashed a smile. "I'll see you guys after all this is over,"

"Along with Miss Hernandez," Mr. Perlman added.

"I guess I'm the witness," Bliss realized.

"Be careful," Vanille cried, pressing her palms together.

"More like, kick Brittany's ass," Leah snapped.

"Guys, calm down! She can handle this," Bliss smiled, laying a hand on the girl's shoulder. "Let's go kill that wench,"

Taking a deep breath, Aeliana clenched her fists. "Wish me luck,"

"Good luck!" the girls chorused.

Aeliana entered through the large wooden doors, with Bliss by her side. She felt the frosty air hit her skin. This hall is always too cold...

Rays of sunlight poured in through the glassy curtains, dimly lighting up the hall. The high roof of the hall made it look even more void.

Sliding her hand in Aeliana's, Bliss gave it a squeeze. Aeliana looked at her, offering

eass

She looked ahead and noticed that the seating arrangements had been altered slightly from last time. Professors Watson, Griffin and Rodriguez were seated at the usual long desk. Facing it, were eight chairs; four each divided onto the left and right sides. The four chairs on the right were occupied by a familiar blonde, her 'side chicks' and another adult.

Only two seats on the left had already been occupied; the leftmost, by a shorter, slightly bald man; *Mr.*

Burke

Setting her eyes on the person seated next to him, Aeliana let out the breath that she had been holding unconsciously. She felt relieved; almost safe! The anxiety abandoned her, as reassurance took its place

"Good morning, Miss Winslow, Miss Hernandez," the Dean greeted the girls.

"Good morning, sir," Aeliana and Bliss smiled at the gentleman.

"Please take your seats, ladies," he gestured towards the chairs.

Bliss and Aeliana progressed towards Mr. Burke and Mr. Decarlo.

Without a second thought Aeliana took the seat next to the tall man in the long grey wool coat.

Clearing his throat, he looked over at her from the corner of his eye.

Confirming that Professor Watson was distracted, Aeliana looked at him and smiled timidly. Never looking at her directly, the corner of Mr. Decarlo's lips tugged to form a faint smile

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"Shall we get started then?" the Dean asked the professors beside him, They nodded in response,

"Alright," he sat up straight. "A very good morning to you, Mr. Burke, Dr. Decarlo, Mrs. Lee and students! Today, we're here to discuss regarding the incident that supposedly took place on the night of the dinner dance,"

Aeliana gulped, turning to look at Mr. Decarlo, who stared at the Dean with a straight expression plastered on his face. Well, he's prepared...

"Surprisingly, the incident took place in my own office and the surveillance footage of the interior of it has successfully been erased,"

Hearing this, Aeliana's eyes widened. She was baffled at how much they had planned this.

"In my possession, I have footage of Miss Jones and her friends entering my office and exiting in order to flee the building, and also Miss Winslow being escorted inside. Thank you, Dr. Decarlo, for this," he said, waving a DVD in the air.

That's where he went on Saturday...

"Now, Miss Winslow, I would very much like you to tell me why you were escorted there and what happened inside,"

"Details, please," Professor Griffin added.

Clearing her throat, Aeliana sat up straight. "Thank you, Professor Watson. Serena Waters, a girl from my class told me that she needed to get some files from your office, sir. She had the keys as well and claimed to have gotten them from you, so I was pretty convinced. I went into the building, gave her the directions and insisted that I wait downstairs for her, until she got the files. However, she still wanted me to go with her and while we were in the elevator, she handed me the keys as she received a call. After reaching the second floor, since she was still on the call, she signaled me to go ahead and open the door. I did, and pulled out the key and held onto it. Then, before I could do anything, I was pulled inside and the door closed behind me. They locked the door somehow,"

"Of course, that door can be opened and locked from inside with or without a key," Professor Watson said, narrowing his eyes. "Continue,"

After Aeliana described all that Brittany had said to her in there, Professor Watson interrupted her once more. "So, you mean to tell me that this has been happening for quite some time?"

"Yes," Aeliana agreed, as she stared at the floor.

"Mr. Burke, did you know about this?" The Dean looked at the short man.

"No, Professor," he said. "I did not,"

"Dr. Decarlo?" The Dean looked over to the crocodile.

"Yes," he said, without a second thought. "Couple of times, actually."

Panicking, Brittany looked over at the man, hoping that he would shut up.

"She never hesitated to walk right into our lecture room and cause a scene," he said, crossing his arms over his chest. "Multiple times,"

"During lectures?"

"During my class, but before I arrived," he replied.

"Okay," Professor Watson pursed his lips. "Miss Winslow, please continue,"

"Yes, sir," Aeliana muttered. "While Brittany was busy talking to me, I speed dialed a number while holding my phone behind myself. My friend, Leah Seattle, answered. Soon, Brittany realized that my phone was connected, so she grabbed it and smashed it on the floor," she explained as she pulled her phone out and turned the screen towards the Professors. "After that, I turned to leave, and someone stepped on the train of my dress. My dress was torn, I lost my balance, sprained my ankle and fell onto the ground, banging my head on the brick wall ahead of me, in the process. I still had the keys in my hand. I reached out to open the door, but Brittany prevented me from doing so, by whacking my wrist with a cane, and thus, the bruise," she said, extending her hand.

At this point, Mr. Decarlo turned to look at Aeliana, wondering how she took all of that and still managed to open the door properly.

"Someone called out my name from the other side of the door, and hearing that, Brittany escaped with her friends,"

"How exactly did she escape?" Professor Watson questioned the girl.

"Through the window,"

There were a few laughs in the room, but soon it died down.

"I'm serious," Aeliana shrugged. "They were prepared for it too. After that, I opened the door, and I passed out,"

"So, you have absolutely no idea of what happened afterwards?" Professor Griffin spoke.

"Well, I woke up in a hospital afterwards, and had my friend take me home," Aeliana lied.

"A friend?"

"Yes, I live with my friend,"

"So, you are entirely healthy at the moment?" Professor Griffin asked, lowering his spectacles.

"Besides the bruise and the sprained ankle, I am, sir," Aeliana said in response.

"Alright. Thank you, Miss Winslow," Professor Watson said, and turned to face Bliss. "Miss Hernandez, I would like you to tell us your side of the story."

Having explained the story in her perspective, Bliss breathed out heavily. Extending her fingers, she wrapped them around Aeliana's and gave her hand a squeeze. Aeliana looked over at the girl and smiled.

"Dr. Decarlo," Professor Watson called out. "Your turn,"

Aeliana looked up at him, and watched him clearing his throat as he prepared to answer.

"It is as Miss Hernandez explained," he spoke. "I took the girl to the hospital where my friend, Oliver works, so that we could get things done quickly. She wasn't in a critical condition, so there was no need to let her stay," he described.

"Right," Professor Watson adjusted his spectacles and took a sip of water.

Water? Damn... my throat's dry from all that talking... could really use some of that...

From the corner of her eye, she could see Mr. Decarlo chugging water as well.

Damn... don't do this to me.... Mr. Perlman should have told me to take a bottle of water! I didn't think I'd have to recite the entire chapter here!

Putting the lid back on the bottle, Mr. Decarlo placed it on the floor between Mr. Burke and himself.

Why!? Why would you do that, Mr. Decarlo!?

Aeliana cried internally. She bent over, and looked at the bottle beside Mr. Decarlo's neatly polished shoes.

Noticing this, Mr. Decarlo decided to tease her for a bit longer.

"So, Dr. Decarlo," Professor Watson addressed him once more. "You did not see any of the girls inside, once you entered the room?" "No, sir," He replied.

Sir!?

Wow... Professor Watson is one lucky guy, being addressed by this Diablo in that way... it's probably since the Professor is his mentor as well...

"It was just Winslow in the room when I entered," he said, crossing a leg over the other. "Whoever was inside before, had fled by then,"

Having said that, he picked up the bottle of water and took one more sip.

Why!? Just why!? Aeliana gulped, feeling her dried up throat as she watched the man gulp down the water.

Fuming, she looked away and crossed her arms over her chest.

Undeniably, Antonio was enjoying this.

"And there was no sign of them even afterwards?"

"No," Mr. Decarlo replied, placing the bottle beside Aeliana this time. "I never saw these three girls on the night of the dance,"

Noticing that Mr. Decarlo had placed the bottle where she could reach, she looked up at him in hopes of getting permission.

"Thank you, Miss Winslow, Dr. Decarlo, Mr. Burke and Miss Hernandez," Professor Watson said, clicking his pen. "It's your tum now, ladies," he said, turning to Brittany and the others on that side.

Gaping at Mr. Decarlo, Aeliana tried to get his attention. His eyes were fixed on the Professors at the end of the room, purposefully ignoring her.

After three or four attempts, Aeliana gave up.

Right now I feel like it's better to die than speak...

Realizing that the girl had quit, Mr. Decarlo turned to look at her.

Feeling his gaze upon her, she turned. Pursing her lips, she signaled towards the bottle of water.

Mr. Decarlo shot her a questioning look, pretending to be confused.

Raising her eyebrows, she tried again.

Mr. Decarlo glared at her from the corner of his eyes.

One

TWO...

Three...

Four..

Stop glaring!!!

Shrugging, he looked away

I'll take that as a 'yes'!

Immediately, Aeliana did a dive to fetch the bottle.

"Miss Jones, first of all, I would like you to tell me how you got your hands on the keys to my office,"

Brittany didn't speak. Her mouth was zipped

"Miss Harrison?" Professor Watson called out to Eva "Will you speak?"

Gulping, Eva replied. "From the security office,"

"It was on Friday evening," the Dean pointed out. "The security room must have been locked by then,"

"We picked the lock," Eva confessed, gulping

"Correct answer," Professor Watson smiled. "Thank you for the truth, Miss Harrison. The security personnel already complained to me about this,"

Eva let out a breath, clearly relieved.

"Next, I would like to know what you did to hijack the surveillance cameras in my office,"

Brittany gulped, knowing that there was no escaping this

"Miss Harrison? Would you like to confess?" Professor Watson asked kindly.

"Brittany bought off few guys from the Tech Department," Eva said. "They did it for her,"

"Ah." Professor Watson nodded "Did you forget to tell them to disable the cameras outside the office?"

Eva exhaled, embarrassed and unsure of what to say

"Elaborate to me, your escape plan," the Dean said, crossing his arms over his chest as he sat back in his chair, "Miss Jones, would you like to speak?"

"There was a vehicle waiting for us downstairs," Brittany snapped, never looking forward. "We jumped through the window,"

"Okay," the Dean muttered, raising his eyebrows in bewilderment "Now, let's get to the important part why exactly, did you do this, Miss Jones?"

Brittany was silent once more. Silent as a mouse! Not even a huff

"Miss Harrison, I suppose you'll have to start talking once more,"

"Sir, all of this was actually built on baseless accusations,"

Hearing this, Aeliana looked over at the girl, bewildered.

She actually thinks so!? She doesn't believe Brittany either!?

"Brittany has been accusing Aeliana for supposedly making an attempt to seduce her boyfriend," Eva described the situation.

Professor Watson raised his eyebrows, taken aback.

"She never listened to us once, when we told her that Aeliana never tried to do anything of the sort," Eva said

Wow... I guess I've got better friends. Eva is just ratting her out...

"So you mean to tell me, that all of this assault, theft and destruction is because of this trivial drama?" Professor Watson raised an eyebrow, as he shot a judgmental look

Eva nodded, reluctantly.

Brittany was eyeing the girl as if she was about to drive a knife through her chest.

"I'm sorry, Brittany," Eva whispered. "This has gone far enough,"

"Actually, I'm very disappointed," the Dean said, after taking another sip of water. This is absolutely not what I am expecting from the students of this university. I'm thoroughly disappointed,"

Eva stared at the ground, embarrassed.

"We are not here to discuss or solve personal matters," he continued 'We are here to arrive at a conclusion as to what actually happened that night. And I think it doesn't need anymore discussing, since I'm sure that all of us here, are very well aware of what happened by now. Now all that is left, is to decide what kind of punishment the offenders may be receiving Miss Brittany Jones, you have

committed assault against one of your fellow students, which has a chance of imprisonment, if Miss Winslow places a complaint, that is," the Dean looked over at the terrified girl

Imprisonment!? That's awful!

I'd be ruining her life if I did that... I'd rather not...

I mean, of course she assaulted me and smashed my phone on the ground, that doesn't mean I have to ruin her entire life!

"Miss Winslow, it is upto you," he said. "Do you or do you not want to file a complaint against Miss Jones? I'm not urging you to make the decision right now, you have time to think this over and;"

"No,"

"Excuse me?"

All heads turned to look at the girl. Including, Mr. Decarlo.

"I'm not... filing a complaint," She said, after gathering a heap of courage

"Stop trying to be the good Samaritan!" Brittany yelled from across the room. "I know you want to throw me in jail, so go ahead, you wench!"

"Brittany!" Mrs. Lee yelled at her. "What a way to speak in front of the Dean!" The lady shot a death glare at the ignorant girl

Staring at her nonchalantly for few seconds, Aeliana looked down at her hands Pressing her palms together, she said, "Professor Watson, I do not intend to file a complaint,"

Brittany stared at her, mouth agape She found it quite hard to believe that the victim was willing to forgive her just like that

Mr Decarlo looked down at Aeliana, as if he thought that she was going mad. Feeling his deathly glare, Aeliana looked up at him.

Mr Decarlo raised an eyebrow, his facial expressions making it clear that her decision, in his eyes, was absurd He looked agitated, as if he wished that he was allowed to object

And that is your final decision? You wish to forgive Miss Jones?" The Dean asked, finding her statement quite difficult to believe

"Yes," Aeliana confirmed, confidently.

Bliss, who was utterly confused, leaned over and whispered, "Are you sure about this?"

"Mm hmm," Aeliana nodded, and pursed her lips. "But I do have few conditions," she spoke up.

"Name them," the Professor said, intertwining his fingers. "I would prefer if she could replace my phone," she said, holding it out. "I can't touch the screen without cutting myself,"

"Miss Jones?"

Brittany nodded immediately.

of course, her yelling was just to mend her injured pride... what she feared most was Aeliana's decision

"And this cannot happen again," Aeliana spoke up confidently. "I want her to understand that I've been accused falsely all this time,"

"Since we will be taking care of that, you don't need to worry, Miss Winslow," the Dean said. "If Miss Jones does ever commit a similar crime, we will be the ones to file complaints to the authorities,"

Aeliana nodded in agreement. "Thank you very much, Professor Watson,"

"Thank you, Miss Winslow, for your altruism," he smiled. "However, Miss Jones, you will be charged for theft and bribery. I need the names of everyone you used for this,"

Taking a second, Mr. Rodriguez whispered something to the Dean. Agreeing the Professor leaned forward

"Dr. Decarlo, the four of you may leave," he said. "Thank you very much, for your cooperation. I will see your conditions fulfilled, Miss Winslow,"

"Wow," Vanille exclaimed.

"I know," Bliss said. "If I was the one in her shoes, I would've filed a complaint with no second thoughts or regrets, so that Brittany gets thrown into jail, where she actually belongs,"

Aeliana chuckled, hearing their responses.

"Guys, Caleb has something to say," Luke announced,

"Dude!" Caleb whined, embarrassed

"Go on!" Luke slapped his back.

"Fine," he gave in and took a deep breath "Guys, I'm really sorry for... blowing our guard,"

"Aww, Caleb! Stop it!" Aeliana said, laying a hand on his shoulder "It's fine now,"

"No, it's not," Caleb said, refusing to meet her eyes. "It's all my fault. I'm really sorry, Aeliana,"

"Hey, Caleb!" She whined, "Stop this! You're making me feel uncomfortable," Aeliana giggled. In my head, it never really was Caleb's fault. I should've known better than to follow Serena into that building.

"Yeah," Jace agreed, "This is getting too mushy,"

"Shut up," Caleb chuckled and rolled his eyes,

"Hey, Aeliana," Jace said. "How'd the car feel?"

"The car?" Aeliana was puzzled. "I was out cold, I've got no idea,"

"You got to drive his car!?" Luke screamed.

"Hell yeah, I did!" Jace smirked. "That was one sweet ride,"

"Aeliana passed out and you were crushing on his car?" Vanille looked offended.

"Hey, any of you would've agreed," Jace scoffed. "His car's a total babe,"

"Damn," Luke smiled. "I'm jealous now,"

"Ugh!" Vanille facepalmed.

Madelyn:

Hey, girl! Eric and I will be doing our usual shift today. You can go home and study for that exam! Good luck!

PS: Say 'Hi!' to Daddy for me!

Just what I was waiting for!

"See you guys tomorrow!" Aeliana cheered, walking out of the gates as she swung her bag over her shoulder

Finally, some time off work! I can get a lot of things done since I'd be all alone.

Shoving the phone in her pocket, Aeliana proceeded into the lonely street that she walked through everyday after lectures. Looking around at the trees covered in bright green leaves, she tried to ignore the booming pain in her ankle.

Stopping in her tracks, she decided to take her sandals off. The pain that had faded that morning had come back to haunt her. Letting her sandals dangle off her fingers, she proceeded.

She thought about how exciting the summer vacation that was soon to come, would be... that is, of course, if Mr. Decarlo decides not to schedule his favorite torture sessions.

Damn! We really need to do well this time!

I don't want my summer vacation to be ruined! He hasn't even announced his little 'trial' to the class yet! When is he going to do it!?

Soon, a familiar black sedan pulled over beside her. A little too... familiar...

It stopped there after approaching at a great speed The shutter moved downwards, revealing atminiliar face that Aeliana was definitely beginning to get used to

Tilting her head, she smiled

But of course, the gesture was not returned

"Get in,"

Looking around and confirming that there wasn't a soul on the street, Aeliana walked around the car and opened the door to the passenger's seat

Oh no, I'm doing it again....

"Still don't hesitate to get into a stranger's car, do you?" Mr. Decarlo said, and stepped on the *accelerator*

"Where are you taking me?"

Eyes on the road, the man chuckled. "Aren't you supposed to ask that before you get in?"

Taking a prolonged look at him, Aeliana sat back in the black leather seat "You're not a stranger,"

From the corner of his eyes, Mr. Decarlo looked at the girl who staring out at the road

"Don't get used to this. You're here so that I can give you a piece of my mind," he snapped, *revving* the engine.

"Huh!? Why!?" Aeliana sat up straight. "What did I do this time!?"

"What is wrong with you!?"

"Huh!?" Aeliana looked at him. "I'm not sure what you're talking about,"

"You missed your chance,"

"Chance?" She asked, puzzled. "What chance?"

"Are you really going to tolerate all that crap for longer?" He looked at her, frustrated. "She assaulted you! It's only fit that she gets thrown in jail,"

"But that would ruin her life!" Aeliana argued. "I don't want to do that to a person,"

Mr. Decarlo scoffed, "You have got to be the most naive girl I have come across. And look where it got you,"

"I don't want revenge," Aeliana said, looking away. "I would be like her then. I don't want to fall to her level," she muttered

"Are you sure that she will not come at your throat again?"

Holy biscuits! Is he... right now... what... did he just-... seem like he actually cares!?

"I hope that she will not," Aeliana shrugged.

"Hope?" Mr. Decarlo scoffed. "What did I tell you before?"

Aeliana looked at the man, observing the disconcerted expression that spread across his features. "Stop trusting people so easily?"

"Exactly," he said. "I am not going to be there to save your helpless ass every single time you get locked up in a building!"

"Why not!?" Aeliana looked at him, her eyes wide.

Stopping the car in the traffic, Mr. Decarlo looked at the girl, noting the unsettled expression on her face.

Looking back at the road, he let out a deep breath. Rubbing his temples, he sat back in his seat. "Forget I said that,"

"That feels a lot better," Aeliana smiled.

"Really?" He raised his thick brows.

"Mm hmm," she nodded, smiling sweetly.

"Winslow," he said, eyes fixed on the road.

"Yes, Mr. Decarlo?"

"Tell me why I was assuming that I could talk some sense into that void brain of yours?" He muttered.

Aeliana chuckled, enjoying how annoyed he was at all of this. "I don't want to ruin another person's life for justice... especially when there's a chance to avoid it,"

As the traffic started to move, Mr. Decarlo revved the engine once again. "Pray that the world treats you the same way,"

"If it was you, would you have agreed to file a complaint?" She asked him.

"In the blink of an eye,"

"Wow," Aeliana said. "This is exactly why I don't expect you to understand,"

"Understand what!?"

"With all due respect, Mr. Decarlo, I'm not sure if you're exactly aware of what 'compassion' is,"

"Pfft!" He laughed out loud. "Where the heck will compassion ever get you!? Will you get a degree for that!? Will they pay you for compassion? Give you a job?"

He's got a point...

No! No!! Don't let him get to you!

"What about you, sir?" Aeliana spoke up. "You certainly seem like you care about what's going to happen to me,"

"You!? No!" He chuckled. "I don't care. I just don't want to be involved. You managed to drag me there twice and... that's enough, Winslow,"

"I'm sorry," Aeliana muttered, fiddling with her phone.

"You're sorry?" He asked sarcastically.

"Yes," she turned to look at him. "I'm genuinely sorry, I've been such a bother to you and-," she gulped, searching for something to say. "... I'm really sorry... it... it won't happen again,"

Mr. Decarlo entered the underground parking lot and drove his car further in. Stopping at his usual spot, he asked, "Can you even walk?"

"Yeah, I um... I can take the elevator," she said, embarrassed and sick of being such a drag.

Without a word, Mr. Decarlo stepped out of his car, and shut the door. Following him, Aeliana stepped

outside and put her sandals on. Please don't cause a scene...

Shutting the door, she walked up to him, as she swung her bag over her shoulder. She stood before him and met his eyes. "Thank you for this,"

"Mm hmm," he said, shoving his hands in his pockets.

"Um..." the girl muttered, unsure of what to say. "This won't happen again, sir. And again, I'm really sorry and-," she faltered

Furrowing his eyebrows, Mr. Decarlo wondered what she was looking at as if she had just seen Pennywise at the end of the floor

"Oh my god," she muttered, letting out a breath.

"What?"

"That's my brother," she said, her heart beginning to race. "He's coming this way,"

"Oh... So you do actually have a brother," he said, amused by the fact that Aeliana had actually told him the truth back then.

"Yes, and he can't see me here,"

"Why not?" He asked about to turn around.

"No! Don't turn around! He's gonna think that I skipped work to see someone!" The girl was starting to panic. "Come on! You don't want that either!" She cried, hoping for him to come up with something.

"So go hide," he shrugged.

"Where!?"

"Behind the damn car, where else!?" He said, towering above her.

"No! He's going to see! He's so close!" She was going into panic mode. "Mr. Decarlo, do something!" She whisper cried

The tall man eyed her for few seconds and sighed. Rolling his eyes, he slid his hand behind her hair, resting it on her back, just below her neck.

Before Adrian could see, he pressed his palm on her back, pulling her towards him. Losing her balance. she crashed onto him.

Swiftly, he slid his other arm around her small waist, preventing the fall.

"Mr. Decarlo," Aeliana whimpered.

"Winslow," he said, casually. "Shh..."

She nodded in response, burying her face in his coat.

Adrian stopped and turned, making his way towards a car.

That's when Mr. Decarlo realized that his car was parked facing Adrian's.

This is gonna take some time... he thought.

Pressing her face onto the soft grey fabric, Aeliana inhaled his intoxicating scent. The enchanting fragrance of mint leaves and bergamot...

"Stop standing like a scarecrow and make it seem natural!" Mr. Decarlo demanded, gently placing his hand on her head.

Awkwardly, Aeliana wrapped her arms around his waist. Her cheek reated on his chest as she listened to his heartbeat

Is that faster than normal? I can't really say... my heart certainly is in my throat... but he smells so good, I should probably calm down.... I'm blowing the cover...

"Why the hell isn't he leaving?" Mr. Decarlo muttered in Aeliana's ear.

Aeliana gulped, gripping the wool coat tighter as she felt his warm breath gush past her ear. She heard the sound of a door being slammed shut.

Inside, Adrian settled in his seat and began checking the messages on his phone,

Mr. Decarlo rolled his eyes in frustration. "Winslow,"

Okay... I'm making way too much physical contact with my professor right now... is this my fault? Yes, Yes, it is.

Will I have to deal with serious consequences if someone finds out? Yes. Yes, I will.

Do I care or regret?

Hell no.

"Winslow," Mr. Decarlo said. "I swear your brother is worse than you," he said, eyeing the boy who was sitting in his car, laughing at the screen of his phone.

Upon hearing no answer, Mr. Decarlo wondered if he had pressed her face too hard on his chest. "Winslow, are you dead?"

"Ahem," she managed to say. "Sorry to disappoint,"

Mr. Decarlo chuckled, hearing her witty answer. "You'd better be preparing for that test,"

"I am," she muttered, hoping that her voice will not crack in the process. "That's why I'm not at work today,

"Hm,"

At least say 'good'!

"Summer classes aren't that bad either," he said, smirking.

"What!?" Aeliana almost yelled. She screamed safely, as the sound was muffled by Mr. Decarlo's wool coat

Chuckling, he pulled her and turned her so that, her back was tured on his black sedan.

She pulled back, and stood up straight, avoiding his gaze as her hands still gripped his coat.

"Has he decided to go yet?"

“Um...” Aeliana peeped to take a look. “Oh! Finally!”

What the hell was he doing in there!?

I’m not exactly mad at him, though... this isn’t something you get to do everyday...

Mr. Decarlo groaned, rolling his eyes. “What the f*** took him so long!?”

As Adrian turned his car to move out of the parking lot, Mr. Decarlo noticed that there was a chance of him recognizing the girl while taking the turn. Seeing that Aeliana was too busy being relieved, he snaked his hand onto the back of her neck and brought her closer once again.

After letting out a breath, he inhaled, as he perceived that her hair smelled of wild berries and pomegranate. Inhaling deeply, he appreciated the gentle fragrance. 1

Making sure that Adrian had left the parking lot, Mr. Decarlo pulled away, taking a step back from Aeliana. He looked at the exit, and then back at her. “Happy now?”

Gulping, Aeliana stared at her feet. “Thank you,” she managed to mutter. “I’m so sorry about all this endless trouble,”

“Hmm,”

Smiling, Aeliana looked up at him. “This is the part where you tell me to forget that this ever happened,”

Gazing at her for a couple of seconds, nonchalantly, he muttered, “No,” 3

Aeliana’s smile faded, as she failed to process the situation.

“Go home and study, Winslow,” he muttered as he turned around and walked into the building.
