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It seemed like he was walking in a nightmare. ↻

Climbing down the staircase. .his heart heavy. .his soul wrenched up. .

The crowd chattered about loudly, boisterously. .

And he felt like. .

There was something wrong with the world.

It celebrated. . rejoiced while heburned.

He was surrounded by voices and yet he had never felt this degree of loneliness. The world around him flowed with laughter and food and he couldn't help but wonder how could the world shi so suddenly? Because of oneperson. .

How could the bright colors turn grey because of her?

Smiles were flashed his way but he didn't have the courage to fake it. To pretend. Maximus breathed in and out. .the a ershock of what happened getting to him.

A waiter passed by him and Maximus snatched a shot from the tray— his hand shaking slightly as he tried to drown the fire in his heart. He forgot , pain couldn't be drowned or fucked or forgotten.

The punch got to the back of his throat, making him wince.

"Whose that girl? Never seen her before."

A woman's curious voice made him look up. .and the burning inside his heart intensified! He felt a rage swirling in. . getting powerful like a tornado. Turning round and round until Maximus couldn't see anything but her. .

Diana had held her like a sister.

He had held her like his prized possession. .and yet. .

Her hands twisting, she was looking around. .a worried , almost desperate, look on her face as if she didn't have any hidden a air, his mind filled with acidic thoughts.

As if her soul was as pure as her eyes claimed to be, his mouth set up in a harsh line.

Her worried gaze sweeped over the crowd and then settled on him. .she sighed in relief.

She had to warn Maximus about Jake.

Maybe she wasn't brave enough to spill their history but. .

She needed time to confront her demons.

As she walked towards him, her heart jabbed at her. .her sixth sense going haywire as she saw the way he was staring back at her.

Standing tall and rigid, hands in the pants of his pockets. .eyes red rimmed he looked like he had gone to hell and back.

Emma frowned , her heart doing a double take but she didn't think much of it.

She had to talk to him!

And her feet halted when Maximus eye's flashed dangerously and he begin to march towards her.

His stance aggressive.

Hands clenched into fists.

People cast him a wary glance but seemed like he was in his own world.

Emma's stomach dropped seeing him getting near. .

What the . . .

Why did she suddenly wanted to step back? Hide?

Just when he nearly reached her—

A maid came between them, sounding breathless.

"Miss wants to see you. She said it's urgent." She rushed ,out of breath.

Maximus nodded tightly, his eyes glued to Emma.

She didn't like the way he was looking at her. Emma couldn't see the smile on his face, the glimmer of love in his eyes. .the flash of possessiveness. .no, she couldn't see anything. .

Before her eyes, he gave her his back and walked away with thundering steps.

Leaving her aching for some reason.

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He pushed his hand in his hair.

Standing in front of his sister's room—the person he could put his life on line for—he had to take a decision.

Either let Diana believe Jake was faithful or destroyher world.

He rubbed his face down, the ground beneath him seemed to be shaking but it were merely his hands that shook .

But he knew. .

Knew well which path he had to take.

He had to killhis sister's hope.

Placing his large hand on the door, he didn't had the courage to walk in. See the pure happiness on her face and then tell her straight away. .

Watch the happiness leave her eyes.

If you don't want to be with her why don't you leave her?!! Why play ?!! Why Jake?

His lips twisted bitterly .

If that maid hadn't come in between. .he didn't know what he would have done.

Kill her or kisser? Ask her whose kiss did she love the most?

His or Jake's?

His heart could shatter all it wanted and it wouldn't matter to him because what mattered was his sister.

Taking a deep breath in, he fixed himself and made up his mind as he turned around the bolt and entered in.

"—i can't believe this is happening to us! You know it! I always dreamed about having a—" Diana stopped as she saw him coming in.

"He's here. I can't wait to see his reaction! Love you too!" Grinning wide, she cut the call and dumped the phone on the bed.

Maximus could almost feel the happy vibes radiating o of her.

Breaking your loved one's heart had to be the most di icult thing in the world.

How was hegoing to break the news?

He opened this mouth and shut it again.

Not finding the right words.

Just when he opened his mouth again, Diana came in on him. Her arms going around his waist, her cheek pressed against his beating heart.

"I have news." She whispered.

"Yeah?" His voice was raspy.

"You won't believe it though."

"Try me." He replied for her sake.

Slowly, she pulled back. .her eyes literally glowing with pride.

Maximus looked away.

"Hey," she said so ly. . raising her hands and cupping his face to look at her.

He did.

"Did something happen?" She asked now sounding worried. Her eyebrows knotting at the sight of he brother.

He swallowed.

"Yes." His lips turned dry.

"What is it?"

He shook his head slightly.

"You said you have news for me?" Maximus reminded her not wanting to break her right now. .maybe five minutes later? Maybe he should give her this night. .

"Right. ." She answered looking distracted and then a small smile filtered on her beautiful face as she looked him in the eyes.

"I'm pregnant." ↻

Her voice was so and to Maximus , the world erupted in chaos. His heart drummed wildly in his body as he stared in sheer disbelief at the smiling face of his sister.

"You're. . what?"

"Not what, brother. Pregnant. Repeat a er me. Pregnant.'She gave him a spastic grin.

And Maximus couldn't help but crush her so ly against his chest, his chin tucked on top of her head . .his decision catching fire . .all that was le behind were ashes.

"I promise you, D. !'ll never let anyone ruin your world. I'll never allow anyone to harm so much as your hair. No one can succeed against you when I'm in this world. I'll be your shield, D. !'ll be your shield." ↻

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