000 Today couldn't have gone any quicker since, by the time our classic movie marathon finished, it was time to head home for dinner. It was around six in the evening now, and it was one hundred percent guaranteed that Silver wouldn't be there. And now look how damn wrong I was? A er Gerald had dropped me home, I stepped up onto my doorstep and instantly went to open my front door, only for it to open itself, following the sounds of multiple voices speaking. Right then they come into view—or hecomes into view. Silver Ceraso, the boy I desperately pledged to hide from. leather jacket on top reveals his inner bad boy.

Chapter Twelve

sevenity Agnello

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He wore straight, black washed-out jeans, with a leather belt low around his waist. Above was a black turtle neck, tucked into his jeans latest thoughts and dreams. The wetdreams.

and mostly covering all of his ivory skin. Lastly, the matching black I couldn't comprehend how deeply finehe looked, aware that his inky tresses fell down his head already wanting my hands through them and yet his jewellery that covered his ears, fingers, and the crucifix around his neck had all sorts of ideas flowing freely through my mind. Though my imagination took me elsewhere upon bringing up my Right behind Silver was Elijah. Shocking me to my core, he greets me with a half-smile with that same glint in his eyes when we first met. I release a breath of air and look away, going back to Silver. "Hi, darling, how was Hayden's?" Swallowing the lump in my throat, I shrug lightly and keep my focus on my mother only, "It was good." I mumble and cross my arms around my chest protectively. She smiles at me lightly before turning to the two men. "Boys, are you sure you don't want to stay for dinner?" My mother o ers and I freeze—my lungs aren't consuming air and I fear that I've become paralysed— or you've just died.

Elijah shakes his head no, smiling down at my mother about to decline for what seemed to be the second time—but the conception of Silver's gaze pouring into mine and when he cuts o Elijah, my heart scrambles. "No, we'll stay." His statement brings my mother to grin exactly like the Cheshire cat. Ignoring entirely that when he spoke he never once said a word without looking at me. mother as she asks him what he likes to eat.

Possibly could he have stayed for dinner because I was here? That possibility suddenly churns my heart and makes it beat that little bit Elijah seems to sigh as my mother ushers us all inside, but he decides to stay behind and walk beside me—Silver also being beside my "How have you been, Serenity? Haven't seen you in a while." He gives me a knowing smile and I just shrug, not that interested in the conversation. "That's because you haven't been around." I raise a brow up at him, sending him an inquisitive look. He chuckles awkwardly and makes no move to speak again. I bring my eyes back up, and my lips tilt just a tad as I see Silver talking to my mother. It didn't seem to be a lot but it was a few words to make her smile respectfully. Arriving inside my kitchen, I lazily take a seat on one of the stools in front of the counter and rest my head in my arms. Exhaustion blossoms through me and I now wish to just lie in my bed —though I'm far too tense to do so not with the man I've recently grown to like standing a few feet away from me. My eyes peer up at the ceiling, loving the starlight lights our home

inhabited. Both my parents had an infatuation with the stars, both saying it was a resemblance of their love. They had designed most of our lighting that way, having control panels to dim or enlighten the lights. Someone lands beside me, I could sense them—yet more specifically, sensing the addictive aroma of cinnamon I've become to know well. I turned my head to face him directly, and he leant on his forearms against the counter, staring comprehendingly over our marble stone kitchen. Just as if feeling my peering gaze, his eyes lazily switch to beside him, meeting mine. He doesn't blink a fleck while he stares down at me, but he slowly inclines his head to the side to meet my gazing position. A little smile forms on my lips at this, right before those obnoxious butterflies start to corrupt my stomach. Then, ever so so ly, the corners of his lips turned up too. The sound of someone clearing their throat came from my other side, utterly breaking our illusional trance. Closing my eyes, I sigh with discomfort at myself for allowing him to flow right into my mind again, especially when I spent the entire day alleviating him from my mind.

Elijah sits on my other side, glancing down at me with an overachieving smile. I simply look down, smiling back slightly only because I could feel my mother's eyes right at the back of my neck telling me not to be rude. "Feeling better, Fiore?" Silver narrows his eyes down at me, placing a gentle but discreet hand on the small of my back and lightly brushing his fingertips against my spine. The slow movements embarked gentle sparks with each brush, leaving little to no words to form on my tongue. Flashbacks of my dreams flood behind my eyes and I suddenly jerk a bit when I see his full lips enveloping my nipple. Mother of Christ. Clearing my throat of its dryness, I shi my body up straight and slide my booty o the stool making his hand drop from my clothed skin and allowing me to breathe finally once again. those strong hands all over my body, owning me.

But suddenly the missing feeling of his touch made my head spin the slightest. I found myself missinghis touch—or wanting it, wanting "Do you need any help?" Peeping at my father from behind, already noting that they had everything under control. "No," My father replies in a bored tone, e ortlessly slicing every inch of the tomato. "Why don't you take the boys outside or something?" My mother mumbles with a shrug, making me grimace in disgust at the request. "I'd rather not, Mamma." I whisper as quietly as possible and turn on my heel to leave this kitchen. I could those piercing blue eyes burning my skin as I walked out of the room, leaving me alone with my thoughts outside on the terrace. Plopping plush down onto the love seat and I peer out into the open. It was incredibly darker now, almost nightfall. The world was quieter, the wind wasn't as loud and you could hear the settling of chirping birds more clearly. Sighing a breath, I picked up the stash of cigarettes my father liked to keep out here for a 'cool o ' a er dealing with people. Slipping one

into my mouth, I search the table blindly for a lighter, only to come to realise once again that there was nothing. You've got to be kidding me. Just as I was about ready to scream my frustrated lungs out, my sight was obscured by a dark figure standing right in front of my body, and then suddenly, my frustration suppresses. A lighter fuelling alight had my eyes peering right into blue eyes, the golden flame above his fingertips reflecting into his treacherous stare. He crouches down to my level, his gaze never leaving mine as he brings the flame to my lips and holds my jaw with his hand. He lights the cigarette, possessing me to take a brief inhale of the tobacco. To clear the smoke from my lungs, I place the cigarette between my middle and index fingers and blow it out to the side, away from his face. "Thanks," I breathe, still peering into his beautifully electric eyes only with my heart racing on the side. He hums deeply, forcing my tongue to curl over my teeth in irritation.

Everything he seemed to do made my stomach twist the other way. His gaze shi s to my hand, and his own hand falls from my jaw to snatch the cigarette and place it between his two plump lips instead. When he takes my chin between his fingertips, my lips part unconsciously in surprise, and for some reason unknown, he took this as an opportunity to lean forward, brushing his lips against mine, allowing every fibre and heartbeat to become out of control. Our breathes mingle right as he releases the smoke into my mouth, the tobacco filling me and calming me again, and I turn my head to the side a little to release it into the air. Yearning desire comes in a form of a smirk across those dangerous lips of his, my eyes insignificantly zeroing in on what I could taste. "You're so incredibly beautiful, do you know that Serenity?" My hand visibly tightens on the chair handle, desperately trying to get a grip of myself before I could faint from his mind-bending, velvety whisper. His words, his gorgeous lips and his deep, Italian voice that would have me on my knees within seconds—I wanted to finally have his lips, to finally be able to feel them instead of leaving them to those dreams. "Tell me more," I urge, daringhim. Relaxing back, his expression was nonchalant, utterly indi erent but when he spoke, it was the utmost seductive sensation a woman could comprehend from a man.

"Your skin," He brushes his thumb along my cheekbone, peering at his own movements, "So as your forbidden heart, Serenity." Forbidden? "Your lips, so full and plump that it only leaves one's imagination to think of all the ways they could be perfected." He continues, delicately brushing his thumb along my bottom lip like it was his most prized possession. Ultimately, his humbling words rose a satisfying smile out of me. The way his lips continued to speak of my own without a flaw pronouncing from his lips, echoing each sentence into my brain similarly to a hypnotic state. Drawing his lips to the corner of my jaw, he partially grazes my skin with his cool breath before digging his hand to the back of my neck, controlling it to allow his lips to touch the crease of my neck. "And your voice, Fiore," He lets out a breathy laugh that somewhat resonated with a breath, "I find it hard to believe that you aren't aware of how alluring that mouth is." His words touch the back of my neck, heat crawls up my spine and my body tingles with devoir.

"Careful now, D'argentoyou might just boost my ego." I teased, and his lips meet mine back with a smirk. "I only state what's true, Serenity." "Well, I'm pretty sure friends don't compliment each other the way you just did." His smirk slowly turns into a small smile, a mischievous glint in his eyes. "Oh yeah?" He rasps above my lips, the more it lowers the more a ected I become. "Mhm," I hum, smiling back, "And as close as we are right now, friends don't do this." I poke my finger against his chest, o icialising what I meant. His smile falls slightly, still leaving his lips a little upturned to reveal the emotion behind his motives. In a second, his hand was against my cheek, cupping it and rubbing his thumb along the line of my cheekbone again. His heavy gaze falls lazy under my lips and suddenly his whisper was against them. "You're right, Amore. Friends don't do this either..." Slowly, my eyes fall close and our lips finally connect. I inhale his scent, his warm, so lips plush against mine, and I just knew I was right—his lips were even so er than I could have dreamed. His taste was mint, only mint and a hint of cinnamon. My fingers ran through his inky hair, touching every root and end. Our lips moved slowly together, savouring every taste and touch.

We move in unison, my back slowly leaning against the love seat whereas he stands to his feet and continues to move down and kiss Securing both his hands on the sides of my face, he kisses me deeper, and then his tongue determines to slip between my lips. The sudden electricity of his warm tongue and mine mingling induces me to moan, and he fights against me until I finally give in and let him overtake me. My hands had somehow made their way down his chest, his tightening muscular build tensing under the roots of my fingertips. I gasp desperately into his mouth when the abnormally large length constricted in his pants grazes my belly suddenly. But in a quick second, our moment ends and just before the fire could build, it slowly eases out.

me.

"Fuck," He breathes and pulls us away slowly, his forehead resting against my own as our heavy breaths combine into our mouths. "You taste as good as you sound," I feel him smirk, and a low, breathy laugh escapes me. Merely in disbelief of what had just happened. I was caught in a daydream. The feeling I hardly processed but it settled throughout my body like occurring shocks to my system. Never in my life have I been so incredibly desirable for someone's taste. "You okay?" He looks back at me, his gaze was as hazy as my own. I lazily give him a smile and lick my lips, tasting his sweet taste. "Yeah" I mumble, my voice shaky but I tried to make it steady as it could be. He nods slowly, deciding to twirl a strand of my hair that fell over my shoulder. "Dinners ready!" My Mamma calls from the kitchen, and I slightly wince at the loud tone. Blowing out a breath, I look down at the burning cigarette placed in the ashtray, recollecting that this happened all because of a damn cigarette. "Come on," He stood up, running a hand through his hair and placing his other in front of my body. Without sparing a glance, I take his hand and stand to my feet. We slowly trail back inside, our hands locked but I drop them as soon as we enter the kitchen—neither of us still hasn't said a word since the kiss. This was the part that always got to me. The a ermath of giving your most vulnerable self up and always expecting something a er. Like in the movies, a er your first kiss you'd expect a date or at least something to lead to that. But instead, all you get is silence. I can't expect anything of Silver for all I know he could just be another male ridiculously attracted to me—thinking only with his dick. But that never a ected my own feelings for him, I just wholeheartedly don't expect him to be as obsessed as I was given the time we've

spent together. I feel too much and that's the problem. Sitting down, we all were gathered around the table—though my father wasn't present. "Where's Papà?" I frown looking at my mother, mixing around my bowl of pasta. "He had to take a phone call, he'll be back soon." She smiles gently and takes a big bite of her spaghetti. I nod and start twirling my fork in the pasta, glancing across from me at Elijah and Silver. "When is your mother back, Silver?" Mamma asked, looking directly at the two men. "Tomorrow." He muttered, casually bringing his glass of water to his lips. I noticed how he became tense at the mention of his family, though his jaw clenched and he hadn't touched his food yet, he almost seemed uncomfortable. Before he could catch my lingering gaze, I quickly switched to Elijah beside him and scrunched my lips to the side as I watch him nearly sco down his bowl. "Like it?" My mother raises a brow up at him, clearly disturbed at most by his eating—which only echoed a laugh out of me and I coughed, concealing my mouth to cover it up. I glance at Silver, seeing the subtle amused glint in his eyes as he looked at me from across the table. No smile or smirk just a look that would give you butterflies galore. "Love it, Mrs Agnello. You and your husband are incredible cooks," He mumbles, gulping down his red wine right a er. Taking a small bite of my pasta, I keep quiet and look down at my swinging feet from under the table. "Oh, thank you, Elijah. Although, it's mostly my husband's doing." She smiles at him, scanning his face from chin to forehead.

Elijah chuckles and straightens up in his seat. "Can you cook,

I glance up from my feet and frown a little, shaking my head.

loved nothing more to savour this silently

"Merely," I reply, shoving a forkful of spaghetti into my mouth. The cherry tomato's my father puts in this were my ultimate favourite, I

"Hm, you should learn," He nods to himself, agreeing with his own words, "It'd be a great hobby for you." He smiles fondly at me, his egotistical words clearly meaning nothing to him but even more so to

Serenity?"

me.

Passing him a glare, I reply looking back down at my food. "I'd rather I felt everyone's eyes on me, though no one said a thing—all until that stronzodecided to speak again. "Oh, I hope that wasn't o ensive to you—no, no, it was simply a suggestion because of how talented your parents are I'm sure you'd be as good as them too if you tried, gorgeous' From the corner of my eye, I could see my mother hide her face between her hands, shaking her head as if knowing I was going to snap any second now. I'm usually a collected person, but I'll admit, my hidden temper came from none other than Papà himself. No woman should have to cook in a kitchen if she didn't want to. Clenching my jaw, I looked directly into Elijah's eyes and gave him a stealthy glare. He gulps, his eyes widening and immediately looking back down to his almost finished food. "Um, so, what other foods do you like Elijah?" Mamma interrupts, clearly changing the subject and I could only sigh, rubbing my hands down my thighs to calm myself down. Elijah began rambling to my mother about all the delicious foods he's tasted around the world, I could tell she briefly listened—nodding when needed to. Both distracted, Silver and I connect eyes once again. This time neither of us look away. "You alright?" He mouths to me, tilting his head. Smiling a true smile, I nod my head once and glance away from his penetrating stare. Dinner flew by fast, my mother kept the conversations rumbling still with no sign of my father. Presently, I was now helping my mother place all the dishes into the dishwasher while sucking on the remnants of my ice block. Outside of the kitchen was Silver taking a phone call, both of us still

have not said a word to each other—although just heated stares that would remain our silent words. Meanwhile, Elijah was at my mother's

And I'm almost certain this was his way of apologising for what he

"Thank you for that Elijah," My mamma smiles and wipes her wet hands with a cloth, gradually resting her hip against the counter and

"No problem, Mrs Agnello." He winks at her and blinks his gaze

other side wiping down the dining table.

folding her arms over her chest.

toward me with a small grin.

said at the dinner.

"So I've heard you like to paint, Serenity?" I shrug and sit my butt on top of the counter, swinging my legs back and forth as he stands in front of me. 'I do," I reply subtly. He smirks and slowly walks in front of me, but remains a good distance away. Placing both hands in his pockets, Elijah stares down at me with an unknown glint. "Silver and you have that in common, I see. Both mysterious and yet express everything through the bristles of a paintbrush." I frown slightly at his assumption, wondering what in the world made him think he knew me. "I paint because it's a hobby that calms me, and I do express my feelings through a paintbrush but I'm not mysterious," He blinks and his smirk edges on, "I just don't like opening myself up to people I barely know." With that, I slide o the kitchen counter and stride myself out of the kitchen—limitedly done with the conversation. As I strode into the living room without sparing a glance at anything other than my toes, my body collided with a chest made of brick. Gasping, I take a step back and face the boy currently consuming my mind. I tilt my head up to face him, his body so tall and built it was intimidating my own statue. Tingles run up my spine when I catch his blue stare, feeling the way his chest briefly skims my breasts. "Your lips are red," He claims, bringing a hand to my cheek and lightly rubbing his thumb against my bottom lip. My eyes closed in submission and I was just about ready to have his lips on mine again.

He snaps his eyes down at me, instantly pulling me against him with both his hands. "Tempting me now, Amore?" I shake my head and place both my hands on his, pushing him away slightly—though he obliges and slowly glides his hands o of me. "If thisis to happen, I can't make any promises that feelings won't be involved." I state, knowing damn well that those emotional feelings have already been involved. Silver takes a step forward again, his cologne fans my nose and his overly large, tattooed hands reach for my own. "That's fine, Fiore. I'm more than happy to have you fall in love with me." He playfully says, no emotion traced on his features besides the glint in his eyes. Sco ing, I look down at his hands holding my own and frown, "I'm not kidding, Ceraso. I want nothing to do with you if you're to kiss me and leave me hanging like one of your side women." He inhales deeply through his nose, dropping one of my hands and bringing that hand under my chin, li ing it until our eyes are forced to A deep, reassuring glimpse in his eye has me rethinking his motives.

"I'm not using you, Serenity, if that's what you're saying," He plays

"It's probably from the cherry ice block I just ate," I mumbled unfazed almost as if stuck in a dream, driving him to hum in response. "I'm sure you taste like cherries now too, hm?" My eyes reopen slowly, and a configuration of my heavy heart and his blindly lustful stare emptied my mind of thoughts—all except for the concept of having him to myself. "Why don't you find out?" I raise a brow, challenging him. With a lazy smirk, he tilts his head and begins to lean in to kiss me but I was quick to step away before our lips could touch.

with the chain around my neck, "I wouldn't mind having you as more than a friend, taking you out..." He shrugs and tips up his luscious lips. My heart raced a heap load of times, exceeding and pounding through my ribcage and my obsession became obsessive. "You would?" I ask in disbelief, my voice merely nothing but a whisper. Tilting my head back, my frown slowly erases as I see his head nod once. My eyes skim his features for any hesitance, any lie, but I find nothing. Literally.

"So, you admit, you don't want me as your friend?" I slowly plaster a smile onto my cheeks, resolving for him to snap his amusement back into place. "I likeyou." He coldheartedly admits, making me freeze. My smile drops suddenly and I allow his hands to move back to my waist, pulling me closer to him. "But you barely know me," I shake my head in his arms, simply denying the fact of how easy this seemed to be. Things like this never came easily, and it never will—and so, how come it was so easy for him to feel the same as I do without an ounce of a lie? He chuckles darkly, vibrating from his chest to my own and I swear my nipples hardened from the contact. Upon that, he looks down at our touching skin and then quickly switches back to my gaze. "That's a lie," He says without a smile, smirk, or trace of emotion. Frowning further, he continues before I could say another word. "I know your favourite colour is Lilac," My frown disappears, and he traces circles around my waist, "And that your lucky number is seven..."

collide.

A giggle escapes my throat and I desperately plead with myself to not laugh and release the gorilla out of me. "I know that you love art, you're talented in it," he corrects, slowly bringing his lips down above my own, "And I know that you want to get a tattoo." Shaking my head, I smile unwillingly and bring my arms around his neck, looking behind him to make sure nobody was going to walk in. "Which, by the way, you're taking me to get." I raise my brows and he chuckles lowly, his brooding features shadowed by the dim lighting. "I will if you give me a kiss." He grumbles, holding me firmly and stopping the patterns on my hip. I roll my eyes at his demand and lean in until our lips graze. Physically, I see his eyes change a shade darker, expressing the oozing desire in his visions. "Just one kiss?" I frame my gaze on his full lips, slightly red and ready

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to be pressed up against mine. Humming, he traces his thumb against the pulse on my neck and waits for me to lean in. And I do. Pressing my lips onto his, I kiss him gently and slowly. He hardly moves his, allowing me to push our lips together further and my foot somewhat pops behind me—leaving me to smile against him like a Cheshire cat. His tongue swipes my bottom lip leisurely, the pulse between my thigh throbs at the sudden action and all I want at that moment was to have him in between my legs.

å a Pulling away, I kiss the corner of his mouth and glide my hands down "Tomorrow night? Pick me up from the cafe on campus?" I don't wait

 $\triangle \triangle \triangle$ **AUTHORS NOTE** Is this going too fast? Probably. Do I care? Nope.

from his broad shoulders to his heaving, built chest. for his response as I twirl around on my heel and slightly touch my bottom lip and squeal in my mind. Just before I head up the stairs, I hear his dark voice mumble words night if you wanted to read it

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that leave my stomach tingling all night. "Cazzo, le cose che mi fai, Fiore." Translation: "Fuck, the things you do to me, Flower." Sorry guys: (I can't do slow burn for my life, so bear with me. Btw to anyone who read 'Julius' I uploaded a bonus chapter last ALSO, I binged 'The Summer I Turned Pretty' and my goshhhh Conrad Fisher >>> Moving on, I hope you all enjoyed the chapter and thank you so much for reading! Truly wouldn't be where I am right now without you all so I'm showering you with all my appreciation forever <3 See you next Sunday!

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- lei <3