Chapter Eighteen



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In reality, I never expected my dreams to come true. But here we were, sitting in a car with Silver, silently playing with the hand that had been inside of me only an hour before.

sleeve and inspecting each tattoo.

A er our little... momenţ Silver helped me clean up—well, basically did it all for me and I, still caught up in a daze embarrassingly watched. It wasn't awkward a er, our conversation was as normal as ever and I felt even happier

We sat watching the shore for a while, my mind dazed and he seemed to be as well. And then a er that, we packed up and took our dried canvases—although I hadn't shown him my painting of him yet, and neither have I seen his.

"How about we reveal our paintings at a certain time? Today next month?" I suggest, circling the lines on his large palm. Slowly pulling up to a red light, Silver faces me and raises a brow.

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"Can you tame your impatience?"

I scowl at him.

"Yes," I murmur, flipping his hand over and spreading his fingers against my thigh, tracing my finger in between them. "You're still coming for the tour right?" I look over his expressionless face, relieving a sigh when he nods.

"You le your whale drawing at my house that day," Strangely looking at him, my brows bunch in confusion.

Speeding down the road, I hold onto his hand tightly and face him with a racing heart, waiting for his response.

"The day we met...o icially, you had le the picture of the whale you were colouring."

Oh.

He remembered.

"I kept it, 'thought you'd want it back one day." With his free hand, he reached into his pocket and picked out a neatly folded piece of paper. His hand sticks out in front of me, and with a heavy heart, I take it. When I unfolded the unwrinkled paper, I was met with a colourful but

horribly coloured-in whale picture. The exact picture I was colouring inside his Italian home on the day we met.

"Oh, wow," I laugh, shaking my head at the drawing, "My skills back then were justsuitable for a seven-year-old."

Silver chuckles as well, running his hand up and down my thigh while driving down the empty roads.

"Yeah, I thought you were a little crazy to put so much e ort into your colouring, all those precise colours..." I playfully glared at him, and he smiles down at me genuinely, picking up the beats of my heart.

"You haven't changed," He adds and I frown slightly at the realisation —not that I haven't changed, but hehad. He was colder now, not as lively and happy. I wondered what had changed.

"But youhave," I whispered with a frown. His hand on my thigh rests still again. I inspect his emotionless face, his gaze not even blinking at me anymore only focused on the road—even though I knowhe could drive perfectly with his eyes closed.

"What happened?" I didn't wantto pry, but I was curious. So, so curious. He stays motionless as if my words didn't a ect him at all but I saw the way his eyes narrowed and darkened, his hand on my thigh fisting into a ball making my own hands still for a moment. "I grew up, Serenity. This lifechanges you in more ways than you'd think."

That was his answer, cold and lifeless. There was no emotion behind them, no guilt, nothing even close to sadness, it was just emptiness. There was more to it, but maybe one day he'd tell me, just like I'd tell him about everything. I knew how fucked up the Mafia life is, I was just lucky enough to have parents who accept what I want my fate to

be—what I'm happy with. "Okay," I smile sadly at my lap, placing my hand on the top of his clenched fist, tempting to allow him to relax, to get rid of the thoughts that brought his mind ill.

Slowly, his hand relaxes again and I lace our fingers through, a way of telling him I was there, I was here. Silver's eyes snapped down at me, and just for that second, I saw vulnerability.

But it was gone just as soon as it came, still, it was enough to prove that he wasn't as empty as he came across—his e ortless smiles proved that.

"If Butterscotch is still awake, you'll finally get to meet him." I grin up at him, my leg bouncing from excitement. This unexpected thrill fascinated me; it awoke some part of me tonight, and I finally felt at ease, comfortable. I wasn't sure if Silver was the one to do that, but being beside him was the main reason why I felt so happy.

As I turn away, my grin falls to my feet as three cars from opposite sides of the road speed right up to us.

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"Can't wait," He replies back so ly.

Silver swerved just as quickly around them, only for the third car to skid to the side, blocking our path. Silver calmly slams on the brakes, his arm protectively reaching out in front of my body, blocking my body from colliding with the dashboard.

body from colliding with the dashboard. af With my heart in my ass, I grip tightly onto his hand and watch the people jump out of their cars.

"Fuck my life," He grumbles and swings open his car door, picking up a gun from under his seat and angrily switching o the safety. Before he exits, he swi ly turns to me and grips my chin firmly.

"Don't move from the car. No matter what happens. Sí Fiore?" at I nod quickly, my eyes as big as saucers. My breath becomes stuck in my lungs as he nods firmly and exits, closing and locking the doors. "Holy shit," I mutter to myself as I pull out my phone, almost ready to call my father. But I don't because I'm too preoccupied with Silver,

They looked dangerous. All of them dressed in black—the women in tailored pants, tank tops, and chains and tattoos glittering all over their bodies. The lone male I recognised was at the Ceraso's party, and he stood in front of the two women with a scowl on his face, his

pressed black suit aimed for bloodshed.

who is confronted by two women and a man.

I couldn't understand what they were saying, but I could see the man yelling angrily in front of Silver. The two women looked at him as if he were a piece of candy, and I saw the one on the right bite down on

her lip, clearly aroused or something.

It took all that it was in me to not climb out and stand beside Silver, claiming my territory. But that would be incredibly stupid, and was also locked inside this car.

Silver stood calmly amongst the man shouting and the women standing by his side, guns poised and ready to fire. The tic in his jaw and the fire in his cold eyes demonstrate how angry he was, and he

gripped his gun like it was life support—I could tell he was about to shoot them down. Whatever the man said next had his gun pointing directly at one of

the women, right before the man had jumped in front of her telling him to back o , I assumed.

My heart raced more. Was he about to shoot her? Probably not, but it goddamned scared me. But then that woman pulled the trigger on her gun, the bullet flew by Silver, who luckily dodged it, and I screeched from inside the car.

I flew my hand over my mouth, looking between them all, but especially Silver, to make sure he was all right. The next bullet was his, and it was aimed at the girl's stomach, causing her to fall back onto the road.

Bullets flew from both sides, the next woman was down and then the man was only le standing. Silver walked closer to him, stepping over the bodies and facing him head-on. Due to his height, he towered over the man and he shuddered, fearful now and not as cocky.

The man shakily pushed his gun into Silver's stomach, saying fewer words but Silver still looked unfazed. I was near ready to call my father, tears brushing the corners of my eyes as I just hoped Silver knew was he was doing.

A silence occurred once and for all, the man falls on his back, his eyes wide open and empty. Suddenly, the phone in my hand falls from my tight grip as realisation occurred to me.

Silver knew damn well what he was doing.

I watched him take out his phone, pressing it against his ear as he viewed the bodies from his tall height. Those back muscles moved as he spoke angrily on the phone, his foot moving the man's head side to side, checking to see if was dead—oddly amusing.

The phone was thrown back into his pocket and he turned back around, eyes directly on me as he strode back to the car. I didn't know howhe could see me through the tinted glass but shivers ran

up my spine from the icy look he had on. Clearing my throat, I picked up my phone and placed it between my

thighs when his side of the door was jolted open and slammed closed.

"Are you okay?" Immediately I ask, turning my body to face him. Emotionless, he nods and runs both of his hands through his hair, staring at the ceiling intently.

"I'm sorry," He trailed o in a deep grunt, the sides of his face shadowed but his eyes glowed. I placed my hand on his bicep,

claiming his gaze to my own. "Don't apologise, it is what it is."

He says nothing, staring at me intensely.

"They wanted you. Claiming if they had the daughter of Roman Agnellothey'd be o the hook?" While I stare at him in shock, he laughs dryly and shakes his head, humourless. "Pussies, can't even pay up to whomever they owed a debt too."

I stare down at his lap, my lips curled up in disgust at the foreign idea of someone wanting to take me away. Mamma and Papà are going to freak.

Not if you don't tell them.

Cold fingers briskly tap under my chin, li ing my head. His blue eyes meet my grey ones, consuming me in a hypnotised state.

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"No one will hurt you, Serenity." He assures, closing his lips around my mouth and consuming me in a so , short kiss. Pulling back, our eyes connect. "I'll make sure of it."

I touch my lips, dazed, and feel his still lingering there. His touch had faded, his hands back on the wheel as he drove out of the quiet streets, just as more black cars approached. Figuring they were there to clean up the mess.

My lips pull back into a small smile as he places his free hand on my lap, and I cast a glance at him, seeing him focus solely on the road nothing more or less.

As we drove I still couldn't help but be anxious. People were a er me? Most of the time they're running away, and now it was the opposite. I trace his tattoos around his hand, running my thumb across the small butterfly and ace of spades symbol. And then there was a bind around his wrist that crossed into a bow tie at the back. I smile as I

admire all of the designs.

Distracting myself with his inked skin, the car ride soon comes to an end. Parked outside of my home, Silver steps out and comes around to my side, running a hand through his black locks as he opens the door wide.

I step out, thanking him with a nod and took his hand into my own. Noticing the fewer cars in the driveway, Mamma and Papà wasn't home leaving me in a house alone with Silver.

Plus Butterscotch.

The guards open the doors wide for us both and I lead us inside silently.

Lights illuminate the house as we walk through, a sentimental feeling crawling through me when we walk up the stairs. I look at him from behind my shoulder, his blank gaze connects with mine.

Continuing to lead him up, we take a turn and I show him to my room.

"I just want to drop these o before I show you the gallery," I wiggle my brows and he chuckles lightly, giving my hip a little pat as I push open my door.

My lights flicker on automatically, the sensors picking up when I enter. Butterscotch laid out on my bed, almost immediately

stretching up and staring at us both.

"Baby boy, come here," I coo at him, grinning like a maniac as he walks over lazily. Picking him up, I lay him in my arms and turn on my heel, facing Ceraso.

"This, D'argentois Butterscotch." Silver stares down at Butterscotch, a little glint in his eyes as he places his ringed hand under his chin and pets him.

"Hm, Carmello, Sí?" He stares up at me, smirking a little when

Butterscotch comfortably leans into him and purrs.

Carmello is now betraying me—do. NOT. fold.

It's too bad I've already folded.

"He likes you, and he doesn't like many people," I mention, giving Butterscotch a little look that expressed my hurt for his betrayal. Though he didn't notice, mainly because he's a cat but also because he's too caught up in Silver rubbing him.

"Alright, you're spoilt enough, no more," I grumbled, placing Butterscotch back onto the carpet and he stares up at Silver as if waiting for him to pick him up and pat him.

Silver chuckles at this and looks around my room, taking it all in. Thank god I'm not messy, otherwise, that'd be majorly embarrassing. at

Tossing my bag onto my bed, I slip o my sneakers and go to my wrack of clothes, picking up Silver's jacket he'd lent to me.

"'Thought I'd give that back to its owner," I pass him the jacket and see his brows pinch slightly, "I washed it as well, so it's not dirty," I say, laughing slightly, watching his expression shi ing from a frown to emptiness.

He nods slowly, taking it into his hand. "Smells like you," he shrugged, tossing it over his shoulder and I blush, glancing down at

Butterscotch laid out between us. d "You ready?" I raise a brow up at him, starting to head out of my room. He hums, following behind me.

We head up another trail of stairs, we could've taken the elevator but I was too lazy to walk down the other end. Silver didn't seem to mind, he was as fit as anything.

"Which gym do you go to?" I asked him, now reaching the third level of my home. Treading lightly against the tiles, the room that held all of my sanity right down the other end of the hall.

"My own." He replies.

"Like in your home?"

He shakes his head, "No."

I stop walking, raising my brows up at him. "You own your own gym?"

His lips twitch at the sides, folding his arms across his chest and leaning up against the wall.

"I'll take you."

I sco, pulling my hand over the door handle, and looking at him from over my shoulder. "I'll probably have a mental breakdown before even stepping foot in there."

Sceptically, he raises a brow and I shrug.

"Fitness and I don't do too well."

His mouth curls into a smirk as he leans against the wall, towering over me once again. Before he could hurdle me into his shadows, I opened up the door and smiled broadly.

Moonlight si ed through the curtains, my footsteps activated the small twinkle lights, which brightened the room and set a fluoro, dim

light. a³ As I faced Silver, I walked backwards further into the room. His blue eyes darted around the room, taking in every creation, every story,

and every scrawled mural. "You're obviously humbled," Was the first thing he muttered, stepping in front of one of my first paintings—it was a cliche sunset, but the clouds I had painted in the sky had di erent faces and shapes in them, one of them being the face of a sunflower.

"You're gi ed Serene. Not talented." When he turned to face me, I noticed the intensity in his eyes as he stared at me, speaking every truth, and for some reason, I believed him. What he said melted my heart, and his reaction to my paintings made me want him even more.

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"Thank you," I so ly say, my default shy demeanour coming out. He takes more slow steps toward me, the closer he got the more my head had to tilt up.

"Don't go all shy on me now, Serenity." He cups my cheek with his hand, and automatically my head tilts and leans into the warmth of his hand.

"You have a way with words, I can't help it," I felt the rise of a blush form, and his lips twitch up for a second.

"Which are you most proud of?" He gestures to my artwork, and for once, I don't have an answer.

"I'm proud of all of them. Even if I'm not happy with some, they all hold a special place in my heart."

Silver's eyes flicker up to mine, instantly I'm hypnotised. "Good."

"Come on, pick your favourite." I grin brightly, whisking his hand into my own and leading him around the room.

I begin to show him my very first painting, telling him the story of how I was casually sitting inside of a library late at night and had pictured it all coming alive.

My imagination gets a hold of me sometimes, that particular night gripped me tightly and my mind began a thought of its own.

The next painting I showed him was one in which I was particularly angry. Forming my rage physically into art. I was fi een years old, a day before my sixteenth birthday, and I had my first serious argument with my parents.

Normally, I would never argue with them. But they told me that night that I'd be walking around with bodyguards behind my back. I was so enraged by it that I primarily stayed quiet.

Giving them the silent treatment for an entire day mentally broke me. I was heartbroken in my own way over something so insignificant.

I had painted an ocean. A calm, sensitive ocean. It was a

representation of me.

And lastly, I showed him the third painting I was incredibly proud of. The day I had rescued my little Carmello.

The portrait depicted him as a tiny baby kitten, broken and sad, just like he was when he was first adopted. Butterscotch was born into an abusive home where his owners brutally tortured him and the other cats.

I didn't want to go into detail, otherwise, I'd have a crying fit. Despite this, the painting was completed the day a er we received him. He was sleeping peacefully next to me in his little bed, and I was painting him exactly how we met.

Sighing, finally, my voice rests for a moment, taking everything in. Suddenly Silver stops his tracks, making me stop as well. I frown, stepping next to him to see what he was looking at.

"And how about this one?" He lingers his eyes over the one painting I didn't want to talk about. Of course.

The fourth painting he seemed interested in was the exact same design as what was inked onto my skin. A heart, painted dark, blood red. Down the sides, blood bleeds—and most importantly, a crack forms at the start of the heart.

This version was larger, of course. Filled with colour and reveals the meaning as more mysterious.

My silence must have signalled my discomfort because he looked away from the canvas and directly at me. I keep my emotions hidden,

presenting a neutral face to the canvas. "It's my love," I whisper out, not willing to explain my words.

heart, staring up at Silver. It begins to race a little, just like every time I heard his name, pictured him, or simply just glanced at him. "Yes," I exhale, looking down at my socked feet, "my love."

It was silent again, the wind howling outside the only source of noise other than my deep breathing. I was lucky that he didn't push further, instead, he walked around me and continued looking around the room.

Closing my eyes, I tilt my head back and let out a deep breath, letting my shoulder slump back and relax.

Turning back around, my hand reaches into my pocket and picks out the paper of my half-coloured whale from when I was younger.

I smile down at it, looking up and gazing at Silver's back. He had picked up something, inspecting it as he moved it around in front of

him but I couldn't see what it was.

although it was a little high for me to reach. Perfect.

"Silver?" I call out, bouncing on my feet with my hands behind my back. I bet I looked like a kid on Christmas day.

"Hm?" He places whatever he was holding back down, swi ly turning around to see me grinning. He gives me a blank look and moves

forward. "Do me a favour?" I asked nicely and gripped the paper behind my

back. "Depends." He said blankly. I scowl at him and he lishis lips into a

small smirk. "Can you put this up for me?" I wave the paper in front of my body,

He looks from me to the paper, and then to the wall. Nodding, he gestures for me to step forward which had me confused but I complied anyway.

Silver's strong hands wrapped around my hips, li ing me without a single complaint. It was as if I were a feather to him, which I know for

surel wasn't as light as that. He must secretly be Superman.

gesturing to the wall beside us.

Li ed up into the air, I was at the perfect height to stick the paper on

the wall and I did so without a struggle. Until it sat perfectly in-between some random frames I had stuck

there, swi ly I turned my head around and leant down to his cheek, giving it a quick peck.

"Thank you," I smile down at him and he puts me on the floor, trapping me against the wall with his arms. His eyes gleam at my sudden surprise and level his mouth to mine.

"Welcome, beautiful."

Before my legs could give out on me, he presses his lips against my own and steals a kiss from me. I absorb his taste, my tongue soaking into his mouth and exploring every inch of it.

Slowly, my hands found their way into his silky hair, playing with the strands. Silver caresses my lips, fighting his tongue against my own and dominating the kiss. His hands feel all over my body, slipping under the fabric of my shirt and sliding his fingers down the sides of my breasts.

The jolting sound of the front door slamming three floors below stops our kiss from going any further. Pulling away, I breathlessly breathe into his mouth to catch my breath, my focus on my breathing, his taste, and the ends of his hair grazing my forehead.

taste, and the ends of his hair grazing my forehead. a³ "Someone's home," I whisper against his lips, he nods, understanding my silent words and pulling away. I quickly glance up at him as I collect myself, watching the way he li ed the sleeves of his sweatshirt

It looked as if we had just had a quickie with his ru led black hair and my shi ed shirt and probably messy hair too.

and gazed at the ceiling while licking his lips

We soon exit the room, leading him back down the staircase and through the front door without any interruptions from anybody in the house.

I walked him to his car and stood in front of him while he leaned against the hood. E ortlessly, he looked stunning.

Tattoos crept up his forearms, ending at the elbows where his sleeves rolled up too. His midnight hair blended in with the shadows, but the partial strands that fell down his head were visible.

Ivory skin that was flawlessly glowing from the outdoor lights around the house. Full lips, swollen and cherry red from the kiss we'd just shared. Finally, gleaming light blue eyes could be seen from a long distance.

They stared at me as if I were the only person in the world. And I cravedthis. I craved all that he was giving me and I didn't even

know I wanted it until now. "Did you have fun?" He tilts his head to one side, mocking me. I tilt

mine back and step forward, standing in between his legs. "The most fun I've had in ageş" I exaggerate with a truthful smile, seeing him replicate the same look.

"Me too."

I bite down on my bottom lip nervously, looking between his irises. "I won't be in class for the rest of the week, I'll be out in the city doing work." He mentions emotionlessly, never once taking his gaze away from me.

Nodding slowly, I try to fight the disappointment that settles in my heart. And I just hoped it didn't appeal to my face. Apparently, it did, because now he was standing and his hand back

under my chin. "When I'm back, I'll take you out again. This time you can pick where

we go, whatever you want to do." A smile crept up onto my face, the heart-wrenching fact that he still

wanted to go out—which was silly since he admitted that he liked me, but still hearing it aloud made it all real and not some deception. "I'll have exams," I warn and he shrugs, travelling his hand away from

my chin and up to my cheek. "Then I'll take you out a er that." "Okay," I smile into his warmth, his eyes twinkling like sparkling stars.

"I'll call you?" His voice lowers now, his head sinking an inch lower to meet mine. I tilt my head up so our lips could brush.

Our lips connect for the one thousandth time tonight. His sweet taste, his mouth so so and addicting all I wanted to do was kiss his lips all day long. I revel in his warmth and deepen the kiss further by pressing my body into his and clenching my hands around his sweatshirt.

Silver's hands resting at the back of my neck, his fingers digging deep into my hair as he kisses me more passionately.

Before things got carried away, we pull away a er another long kiss.

"Thanks for the tour," He smirks against my mouth.

"Thanks for the date." I reply back, smiling against him. Pulling away, he steps back and opens the car door.

"Go inside first." He juts his head in the direction of my front door,

making me walk back towards it. "And remember, we can't look at the portraits, so no peeking!" I tell him, and he rolls his eyes at me.

Laughing away, I enter my home with the biggest, beaming smile ever

but not before waving goodbye once more at Silver.

Once I was inside my home, my back was up against the door and I stood there in silence, staring at my feet.

What. A. Night.

"Serenity?"

Snapping my head up, my lips parted with shock.

Oh-oh.

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