## **Chapter Twenty One**



me, my body wrapped in a plush white towel although it still didn't help the cold air from freezing my skin.

Hayden wasn't in the room anymore, assuming he was outside or something-I began to wipe myself down and get changed into the clothes he layered out for me.

I had called Hayden over tonight just to prepare with him here. He always had a way of making me not back out of things. Knowing myself, I would have just cancelled my invitation and stayed at home watching a Disney movie.

But here I was, standing in front of my mirror dressed decently. The restaurant we were going to was pretty fancy, and rich. Therefore, I

was dressing up tonight. Hayden had chosen a satin fabricated dress. The colour was ruby-red, and it had a little dip in between my breasts. The silk fabric embraced my hips and then dropped down just above my ankles, and it was elegantly moulded around my waist. There was a slit on the side of my thigh too. The straps were thin and draped easily over my shoulders. đ I embraced my body in this dress. It showed me every curve and dip. My ass was nicely hugged at the back, it made me feel all giddy. "Pooh Bear? Are you done?" Hayden knocks on my bedroom door, I call him to come in as I'm busy strapping on my black heels. A loud, dramatic gasp comes from behind me and I turn in fright. "What?" I look around the room obliviously. " You" He comes forward, eyeing me as if I were some goddess. I sco, realising what he was going on about and turn over to my vanity. "I've never seen a more perfect woman." đ My face goes red and I swat at his head for making me all flushed. "You're being dramatic, but thanks Hades." I send him a small smile through the mirror and he shakes his head, sco ing and mumbling about how oblivious I was. I start putting on my makeup, going light as the feeling of too much makes me uncomfortable. "If that man doesn't fuck you over the dinner table, he's blind." a Choking on my own saliva, I briskly turn my head over my shoulder to look at him—still as calm as ever, I knew he wasn't joking. "Hayden, you need to stop." I deadpan. Going back to my winged eyeliner, I nail both sides quite perfectly. Mascara was next. I coated them twice, top and bottom. Thankfully I was blessed with naturally long lashes, both my parents had genes so perfect. My eyelashes stayed upright, curled and layered in black. a A er touching up everything else, I outlined my lips and coated them in a strawberry gloss and then set everything with a spray. "Pooh Bear, you're going to catch everyone's attention tonight and I'm living for it." He jumps o my bed and giddily smiles at me. I roll my eyes and nod to my purse, and he proceeds to get it for me, beginning to fill all of my belongings while I grab my black coat. "The confidence you have is what I aspire to maintain." I tell him honestly, adjusting my hair in the mirror. He comes up behind me, we lock eyes through the mirror and he smiles, placing his chin on the top of my head. "It's facts, baby." He pulls my hair over my shoulders, allowing it to flow behind my back, having my entire collar exposed—the tattoo outshining my flesh. "You're naturally beautiful, Serenity. Embrace it." He places a kiss on the top of my head, and I smile at him, my eyes shining. "If we're both not married by the time we're thirty-five, we get married. Sí?" I pull my hand open for him to shake it and without a second of hesitation, he grasps it. a "Deal." The next few minutes were fulfilled with many doubts and longing stares in the mirror before I actually went downstairs. Hayden had le, giving me a big hug and reminding me to send him updates throughout the dinner. I assured him if I could, For once both my parents were on-time. Usually, we're running late to these sorts of things because of how long they take to get their asses down the stairs. a But this time I met them right at the bottom of the stairs, my Mamma dressed stunningly as always and my father handsome himself too. Papà was on the phone just outside our open front doors, Mamma by his side, calmly conversing with our driver. Looks like Papà won't be driving. "I'm ready," I call from the staircase, trailing down the hall to reach them. Mamma turns around vividly, and her eyes widen once they land on me. "Oh, my," She gathers her hand around her mouth in shock. I could feel the blush rising to my cheeks at her immediate reaction. Surely I didn't look thatgood. "You're so beautiful, I might start crying." She pulls me in for a hug, tightly squeezing me and pecking my head a few times. "You look pretty too." I mu le into her shoulder as she pulls away to look into my eyes before gushing over me again. "Girls, you ready?" Papà's voice fills the void, I pull away from Mamma and see my father looking across from us. Nodding, Mamma pulls away from me and gestures for me to walk out first. I pass my father, noting the tiny smile on his face as he o ers me a subtle wink. Letting out a laugh, I walk outside with my parents trailing behind me. The car we entered was all black such as the rest of the cars we owned. I sat across from my parents, my hand toying with the ends of my hair whilst we took o onto the roads. While they were talking, my thoughts started to dri beyond the window. Thoughts of Silver came to mind. All week long I haven't been able to get rid of him from my head. It was a painfully long week, it felt as if the weekend couldn't come any faster. Oddly, I was really excited to see him tonight. I missed him. He gave me this sense of warmth and safe radiance that I couldn't experience from anybody else. Although at the same time, I was always nervous around him. He made me nervous, beyond that. Whether it was because of how cold he was or because of how pretty he was looking, my silly little heart couldn't take it and my palms would begin to get sweaty. That feeling, I liked. I couldn't tell myself why, but it was a good nervous, one where you would get butterflies and your heart would race because you were crushing He was my crush. Something my heart ached to desire. "Serenity?" My mother's voice pulls me away from my thoughts, I go to look at her in a daze, humming in response to her call. She rose her brows suspiciously and leaned her head onto my father's side. "I asked if you were feeling okay... "Oh," I laugh lightly and shi in my position. "Yes, I'm okay. Just thinking." I assure. She gives me a small nod in return, seeming a little conspicuous of my response but nevertheless letting it slide. The trip was slower than usual; we were headed to the city for dinner, and I had little doubt this ride would be any faster than expected. We would have made it within the twenty-minute time limit if my father had been driving. By the time my eyes were blinded by bright lights, I was confronted with a restricted pathway with a separate entry heading o into a restaurant. The outside of it appeared wealthy and expansive. The name was in some language but was ornamented in a sheer gold that gleamed white at the borders and appeared to be polished o every day. When we entered inside, the doors were greeted openly by two men dressed in a waiter uniform but with their heads down-much like our guards. I followed behind my parents, taking in the tinted black windows most of the glass was tinted so nobody could see in. Finally, in the main hall of the restaurant, I drag my gaze from the perfectly black tiled floors to the room full of tuxedos and gown ball dresses. a Jeesh, some of these people really dress up... Nobody in particular stood out as we walked past the fancy lounges and booths, everyone looked practically the same in their business uniforms or casually rich, date outfits. Yes, I was rich. But we never flaunted it or acted as if we were. Besides the cars and bodyguards... We entered another room. A less crowded, quieter one. Which was much more my style. Fewer people lingered about. A group of men at the far end chuckled, smoked cigars and seemed to be playing poker by the looks of it. In a corner to the right was a younger couple on a date, which seemed to be going well by the look on the red-headed woman's smile. a Then, in the middle le of the room, there was a large, oak table illuminated by the city lights shining through the dull windows as well as the gently sprinkled white light above. A family of five sat there. Sitting widely spread from each other yet still close, they struck out amongst everyone else. Especially him. "Oh, you made it!" Mrs Ceraso, Isabella, stands and greets us with a large smile. a Eyes burn the form of my body, I feel them everywhere and I heat up instantly knowing who has caught onto my presence. I take in Isabella's kind eyes, watching them light up at the sight of my parents and over to me. "And beautiful Serenity." She pulls me into a light hug, with my arms dangling over her shoulders. "Thank you for coming, lovely. I'm sure you'll be great company for Silver in the meantime, hm?" She gives me a subtle wink, making me blush at the comment and I shyly smile. Next was Mr Ceraso, who stands and greets my father first, shaking his hand and then formally greeting my mother with a handshake too. I stood in front of him, casting a glance over his cold, emotionless features, nodding at him once and shaking his hand. His rough hand greets mine and he firmly shakes it. "You're well, Serenity?" Mr Ceraso asks and I nod, giving him a small smile. "I am. And you?" He nods, not smiling but appreciating the question. "I am." Elijah was next. His usually charming smile was plastered on a er he moved on from my mother and faced me directly. "Good to see you again, gorgeous." Elijah took my palm and placed a kiss on it. Fortunately for him, I kept down the bile in my throat. "You as well." I nod slightly, not having it in me to form a smile. He makes me uncomfortable. đ As if sensing this, the tall body behind him immediately overshadows Elijah's figure. He seems to be still for a moment, seeing how my eyes have adjusted to the person behind him before turning and facing the body. Silver towers over him and me, his icy glare set on Elijah who obliged his silent demand and stood back. And now, it was only Silver and I. I studied his appearance attentively, admiring his silk, blood red shirt that draped loosely on his body, the ends tucked into classic black pants he wore. Hm, we're both wearing red. Must be fate. đ The first few buttons on his shirt were undone, ending in the middle of his chest. Flecks of his tattooed skin could be seen and I felt the tips of my fingers twitch at that sight. đ His sleeves were rolled up just past his wrists, exposing his tattooed hands and wrists, which were adorned with plain silver bracelets. a I take my gaze up to look at his face. Seeing his gaze already set on me. He lowers his head to look at me, while I raise mine to stare at him. Silver took a step closer, and I noticed the others taking seats behind us, not minding a glimpse at our intense interaction. "Serenity." He acknowledges me blankly. No trace of emotion behind his words. I tilt my head to the side, inspecting him as usual. "D'argento." I quipped. Silver then does what I expected him to as a result of my little assessment...he smiles. đ Bringing his arm around my waist, I'm pulled into his muscular body. I bring my arms up and around his shoulders, standing on the tips of my toes to hug him. "I missed that." He admits into my ear, lightly caressing his breath along the back of my neck. I giggle and lean back as his arm slowly slithers away from my waist and my feet are back on the ground. "I missed you too," I say sarcastically, poking the end of my tongue at him. He chuckled smoothly and shakes his head at me with his eyes lingering on me with this shine Stepping aside, he holds the end chair open for me. The only reoccupying one was next to Elijah, unfortunately. I take the seat and tuck the chair closer to the table. Directly opposite me was Silver. Perfect. He catches my stare and remains emotionless, but the sides of his lips twitch slightly as he realises I'm watching him as well. The way he runs his gaze over my figure is what truly gets to me. He seemed to take in everything my body decorated, and the look in his eyes suggested he could see right through it. Blushing, I look away, glancing at the rest of the guests. "How was Italy?" Mamma asked Isabella and Alejandro, whom she also sat across from. "It was really good. When you go back you can see the di erence between here and Italy. It's so much...calmer?" She chuckles and Mamma laughs slightly as well, nodding her head in agreement. "Definitely. Whenever Roman and I go back, I can tell he loves it there more than here." She passes Papà a look beside her and he just rolls his eyes and seems to pull her closer to his side. Isabella laughs and agrees with a nod of her head. Mamma and her fall into another conversation I zoned out on, refocusing my gaze on Papà and Mr Ceraso as they too fall into a conversation—business, I assume. Silver's name was mentioned between them, having both Silver and I look over. "Your team from Italy are transferring over. We've discussed?" Papà says looking from Silver to Alejandro. "Sí. I'll organise a meeting with yours and ours. They can help train the recruits and set up for the meeting with the Japanese clan?" Silver replies, sipping the glass of water in his hand. Papà nods slowly, seeming to like the idea. Mr Ceraso begins speaking again and both men listen while Elijah, next to me, begins chattering me up. "Boring isn't it?" He lowers his head to talk to me, and I give a harmful shrug, turning slightly to face him. "I guess. I don't really have an interest in all of this," I wave my hand in front of the table, gesturing to all the Mafia talk. Elijah chuckles, earning a few eyes to glance over at us—including his "Then why are you here?" He questions while resting his head in his hand, staring at me mysteriously. I sigh and shi my body in my seat, the clinging dress making me slightly uncomfortable now. "I guess I was sick of staying at home. Just wanted to join my parents." I don't press onto my answer too much. Really, I was only answering him for the sake of my parents. If it were any other circumstance I would have ignored him. He hums in response, staring at me from his position. "What drinks can I start everyone o with?" My gaze goes to the male at the head of the table, standing directly between Silver and me. Drink orders from around the table began to spurt around. I told the waiter I'd just have water and surprisingly, Silver ordered the same. "So," Elijah begins beside me, I find it hard to keep in my eye roll when his voice reaches my ears again. Someone save me. "I heard you went on a date with my cousin." a Silver's gaze snaps to mine, all of a sudden hearing our conversation. I keep my gaze locked on his, the continuous chatter from around the room falling mu led. "Yeah, I did," I reply, and Silver challengingly raises his brows, breaking our eye contact to look at Elijah. "Didn't think it was any of your business." He looks down at him, his eyes hooded with annoyance. Elijah shrugs, still looking at me. "Wasn't asking you, Silver." The evident tic in Silver's jaw, as well as the way his eyes had darkened while he looked at Elijah, caused me to rise from my chair, drawing all attention to me. "I need to go to the bathroom?" I mention, gesturing someone from the table to point me in the direction. Silver specifically. "Silver, go show Serenity." Isabella waves her hand o at Silver and he stands gladly. He moves away from the table with a hardened expression and majestically sweeps through the aisles between tables, while I follow him blindly. I don't think he realised how fast he was walking until we were in a dark corridor away from the families, my panting breathing trailing behind us. Resting against the wall for a moment, I place a hand on my chest. He pauses his steps with his back to me, sensing my stop. "Silver— Suddenly, my back was up against the wall, caged between two muscular arms. I snap my head up, looking directly at Silver's smirking lips. đ "I missed you." He whispers against me, brushing his lips up against my own. With my heart increasingly racing, I smile against his lips and loosely wrap my arms around his neck. "Hm? Looks like someone is getting addicted..." I tease, watching the way his eyes turn darker. His arms slide further up the wall, making him lean closer to me. His lips were touching mine but making no move to put pressure against them. "Oh baby," He chuckles deeply, his deep voice running low, erupting a shiver up my spine from the way he looked at me. "You already know that I am." ď⁵ Those words drive me crazy, but the taste of his lips drives me crazier Smashing his lips against mine, I wither away against him. I slightly moan into his mouth from the so contact of his plush lips moving hastily against my own. My hands get tangled up in his so tresses, pressing my body up against his, I feel his hands glide over the silk fabric of my dress, grunting into my mouth as his hands fall over my wide hips and up my slimmer waist. "Fuck," He breathes between kisses before hitching my dress up with both of his hands, then wrapping both of his hands around my thighs and bringing them around his waist. I gasp when his body makes contact with mine. But this only pushed him further, into my mouth and devouring me like I was the sweetest candy to exist. Grinding my hips against his, my back against the hard wall that I knew would only leave bruises. Our passionate kiss continues as he pulls away from my lips, kissing me down my jaw to the slender slope of my neck. Each kiss burned my skin. He exactly finds a point from which I simply adored pleasure, where my reaction has him sucking there. Hands roam under my thighs, skimming the curve of my ass driving me fucking nuts. a I feel the tip of his tongue flicker with the single kiss under my jaw, my hands tugging at his ends earning a low groan in return. Looks like I found his weakness. a "You're perfect." He lazily slides his lips back across my own, both of us drunk on lust. I laugh so ly, my eyes hooded looking at his lusting lips. His features were dark from the hall, as I imagine mine are too. Although he looked mysteriously dark, an attractive dark. He was so hot "Far from it," I reply, smiling and tugging him closer by the grip I have on his hair, our lips connecting once again. This time we kissed slowly, his erected cock pressed between my inner thighs—just feeling the outline of it told me that he was big Really big. "You might want to fix that." I whisper between kisses. He hums in response, placing his lips to my ear, my body shivering from the contact. "Why don't you fix it for me?" ď Adrenaline ran through me. I was tempted to get on my knees, thrillingly sucking him o when our families were only outside the hall. I wanted to pleasure him, help him out. "We can't..." I protest, repositioning my hands to the sides of his face. He smirks down at me, shrugging and narrowing his eyes curiously. "Why not, beautiful?" Oh, lord. I become weak when he kisses the corner of my mouth, pressing plush against my cheek and then under my ear. His own hands come around to the sides of my neck, one digging into my hair behind my head and the other cupping my cheek gently. So ly, he angles my head up to meet his glazing eyes. "Our parents, Silver. They'll know..." I trail o with a sigh when he suddenly smiles against my lips, kissing me firmly. Melting into him again, he takes control of every part of my body without even meaning to. "I know." He admits and parts away from my lips. "At least allow me to have you now before I have to watch my cousin gawk at you for the rest of the night." I let out an amused snort and he raises a brow at me. "You're not jealous, are you?" Amused, I tilt my head back at him as he lets out an amused breath. Shaking his head, he smirks down at me. "I'm not jealous. Want to know why?" I hum and he continues, fisting a handful of my hair, demanding my lips to his. "Because he already knows you're all mine." đ With those final words, he kisses my cheek and drops me to the floor carefully. Once my jello-like legs were steady enough, he nods to the bathroom behind him and starts to walk away from me, out of the hall. But he stops at the end, leaning against it and...waiting for me? With an unsteady breath, I walk inside the women's restroom and tug at my hair. I didn't really need to pee. Maybe just for a breather? Or because I knew that Silver would follow me here either way. But now I was a mess. Looking at my reflection, my lip gloss was smothered and realised that my lips were sinfully swollen. My so curls were now a frenzied mess, the top of my hair out in all directions. My dress was gathered to my mid-thighs, halfway sloping down, and the drop between my breasts was virtually inviting a nip slip at any moment. Hu ing, I begin with my dress, adjusting it in various ways so that it sat on my body as it had previously. Next, I so ened my hair and ran my fingers through it to make it seem as natural as possible. Dabbing tissue paper at my lips, they were bare now—not that it mattered anyway. A er looking somewhat presentable, I finally looked into my own grey eyes and saw the spark in them. I was utterly high on desire. High on Silver. A giddy smile formed across my expression, I still felt his lingering lips over me. I felt his body against my own, his bulge against my stomach, his hair tickling my neck as he kisses my skin. Shaking my head, I exit the bathroom and immediately catch sight of Silver's dark shadow across the hall. My heels click against the tiles, grabbing his attention as his head snaps in my direction. He leans o the wall, tucking his phone away and as coming into the light, we face each other head-on. Scanning me momentarily, he remains emotionless until spotting something on my face. He smirks and brings his thumb to the very corner of my mouth, wiping o the glittery lipgloss I had missed. "I could kiss you all night." He says seductively, licking his own lips while staring at mine. đ I smack his hand away and he raises his brows, looking up into my eyes. "Behave." I grumble and strut past him. a

Seemingly, he took this as a challenge.

A challenge I have no interest in participating in. But it seems he chose otherwise.