Chapter Thirty

Curse my weak immune system. The day went slowly, with me falling asleep and then waking up around two o'clock in the a ernoon to find many family members still hovering around the house and my entire beingsu ocated in multiple blankets. But now that I was awake, Mamma was at my aid giving me her honey and lemon tea she always prepares for me when I'm unwell or feeling like a pile of cow's shit on my period.

Oddly, it only tasted good when I was feeling sick, and if I wasn't sick, it naturally tasted like sour lemons and a touch of something sweet. Uncle Nico sat across from me, cursing at someone over the phone while also petting Butterscotch who made it his mission to stay away from me. He had always known when I was sick, and he alwaysstayed away. Which also meant that I had no comfort buddy to curl into. Uncle Nico hangs up rather angrily on the person, rolling his eyes and tossing his phone on the sofa beside him. His forearm drops over his eyes, dramatically groaning and throwing himself back against the

sofa. I sip my hot tea gingerly, eyeing him suspiciously. "Trouble in paradise?" I raise my brow, watching him glare at me from "Work, Serenity. Work" He sighs and moves both of his arms behind his head, bringing his tired gaze to me. "Is Bella's shitty tea helping you at least?" "What the fuck, Nicolo!"

she started throwing her pink flip-flops at him. "I'm sorry, Bells. I'm just saying the tr— And there go the shoes. enters the room.

Mamma angrily storms into the room, hands on her hips as she stares at her twin brother with much annoyance. I wouldn't be surprised if As the twins argue over the amount of lemon that should go in a lemon andhoney tea, my eyes are drawn toward the new figure that

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A tall, brooding, middle-aged man who hardly ever smiles unless he's with his family—or if he's munching on skittles—enters the room. My father's back goes to me, his black Henley shirt stretches across his body as he picks up his wife and throws her over his shoulder. I have to restrain my laugh as he throws her onto the couch and she becomes dead silent "Your dad is such a DILF." I jumped from the deep voice that was suddenly uttered from beside me. Hayden had been dead quiet for the last few minutes, silently observing my crazy family while eating mywhite-chocolate smartie cookies.

"It's strange," I say, "I get that a lot, yet, every time I hear it I find myself almost ready to cry and puke at the same time." Hayden makes a weird face and I laugh, shrugging and sipping my mostly lemon tea again. Papà and Mamma were in an intense staring competition, which could also be known as tension. But it ended as swi ly as it came because I coughed and sneezed at the same time, reminding them

that their only child was still in the room...along with two others. "How are you feeling?" Papà stands over me and crosses his arms over his chest, staring down at me with a stern look. "What does it look like?" I grumbled out, earning a harsh glare from the emotionless man in front of me. Before he could tell me to and I quote "watch my attitude,"I apologised almost immediately. "Sorry, Papà," I mumbled, setting my tea aside. "I feel gross. Nothing has healed within the last few hours." His hardened gaze so ens on me, and the golden rays of the sun sprinkling through the windows manage to hit him in its perfect golden hour state. I smile a little, and he returns it—sort of. "When you're better, we need to talk."

And just like that, my smile drops and my head begins to spin. I knew what he wanted to talk about, I didn't really want to talk about it at all but I knew this was to happen sooner or later. "Okay." I sigh, looking over my shoulder to Hayden who looked more "Later." I mouth to him and he nods with a slight frown, unsure of what I was going to tell him. "How's the new business going, Hayden?" My uncle rises, resting his elbows on his knees while solely placing his attention on Hades. I can tell Hayden felt intimidated.

The type of intimidation where you become flustered when an attractive human starts to speak to you and onlyyou. Which was me most of the time whenever Silver even breathes near me. Hayden begins to discuss his recent activities. He and his mother had recently bought an open bar just outside of town which the area was always packed with tourists, shi workers during the day and night, and just by-passers looking for a quick stop before heading into the big city. They decided this was where they'd start to launder more money. I start to zone out of the business conversation, thinking deeply once My phone remained silent beside me, an urge to contact Silver tingled at the tips of my fingertips. I wasn't obsessing over him, I refused to. Our night together was by far more than memorable. It was one

millionpercent the most incredible night I've ever experienced, he continued to amaze me with every moment we spent together. Silver brought something out of me, a wild side. I swore I'd never fall for a guy ever again, let them take control of my mind and soul. Unfortunately, I found myself stuck right where I had been thrown and tossed aside. Although it was dierent with Silver. I could sense that it was di erent. He is di erent. And so am I.

I'm not some young teenager, lovestruck and captivated by the quiet boy that got into fights, loved art and willingly only talked to me making me feel like I was special. Now, my eyes are wide open, aware that the world wasn't all sunshine and roses. I knew what to expect, I knew what notto expect. I had expectations, walls that I had built up and was willing to never bring them down for anyone. Buthim. Silver had begun to break down my walls, he found a way in without trying too hard. I could trust him and he could trust me, that was all I was concerned about. Alias had somewhat found his way back into my life, without me even sparing him a thought. He meant nothing to me anymore. Ever since

he took my family's money and never spoke a word to me again, he

Finding out that he wanted me now was something unforgivably unbarring. It hurt to know that the one who had previously broken my heart was slithering back into my life, only to break it all over

I was scared, but I wouldn't let it bother me any longer. Looking

had been out of my life.

the grass.

again and take me away from my life.

around the room, my family surrounded me. Hayden beside me, laughing away at Butterscotch who cuddled up beside him. My uncle rolled his eyes looking between my mother and then my father, reminding me just who I had to protect me. Hayden laughed at Butterscotch, who was cuddling up on his other side, away from me. My uncle across from us started throwing a pillow at my mother, just to stir her up again. A sudden laugh escapes me when my father threw it back with twice the force Nicolo used, protecting my mother. I sigh and let my head fall back to see the starry ceiling. No, I wasn't scared. I wouldn't let myself be. Today was a better day. The weather was clear. The warmth of the sun pours onto my barely covered body—a tank top and short booty shorts. Whatever sickness I have was slowly starting to leave my body,

thankfully. Butterscotch was beside me, stretching his body out on

I was going to do classes online today instead. Going in was too risky and I'd rather not have a coughing fit in the middle of a lecture, it was

enough embarrassment having to talk with a nasally nose.

I smile into the morning sun, loving the way it felt.

Hayden had le late last night a er I fell asleep for the sixth time in that one hour. Now I'm home alone. My parents were out doing a job and my uncle went home to take care of his own business. Sleep was barely giving me any attention, I struggled all last night tossing and turning. Not without the conversation with Papà warning me about being careful around college, suggesting that I study online for the next few months until they find Alias—blah, blah, bullshit. I simply told him I'd be fine with bodyguards and my taser. But of course, he disagreed and dismissed the conversation. Mamma wasn't a help either. She agreed to everything he said, if anything, she was more protective than he was. The conversation stuck with me all night and I decidedly was looking into what they were saying. A negative side factor was that I wouldn't be able to see Hayden as frequently, and concentrating would

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become harder with so many distractions around me. I stared at the sky in wonder. Wondering what Silver would think of all this, what his opinion was on it. Blinking, I looked to my side and glimpsed at my phone glimmering under the morning sun. I reached for it, unlocked it and slid over to the contact number I desperately urged to dial. I didn't want to come across as needy. We were closer now, much, much closer. Intimately closer both emotionally and physically. Calling him wouldn't be any harm. Yet, I still get nervous Right as my finger was going to tap onto Silver's name, his contact flashed in front of my eyes, my ringtone filling the background noise over the garden. Not only was it an incoming call from Silver, but it was also a damn FaceTime call.

Holy Trinity. I lurched up from my place on the grass, desperately flattening down my knotty bed hair and making sure there wasn't any toothpaste stuck around my mouth before answering the call. It took a few seconds to load, increasing the desperate inhale for air to enter my momentarily broken lungs. Air enters me in the form of a brief hitch of my breath when his stunningly, gorgeous face comes into view. His midnight black hair was wet, those longer strands at the front stick to his forehead or e ortlessly hang down in front of his bright blue eyes, which are fortunately enhanced on the camera. The e ortless beauty of Silver would always catch me o guard. "Morning, beautiful." Fuck. And his voice. More particularly, his morningvoice. A deeper octave with an edge of a rasp.

It was impossible for me not to blush at the not-so-casual name he'd been calling me for what seemed like an eternity. I briefly tuck my

hair over my shoulder and wave slightly into the camera.

He looked down at me from where he held the phone, which appeared to be hanging just below his waist. It gave me a perfect view of his inherently edged jaw, the black tee he was wearing stretched over his muscled body, and the chain around his neck

"Morning, Silver."

draped in my view animately. I smile up at him, and he returns the look with a slight twitch of his lip with no emotion behind his blue gaze, giving me the impression he wasn't exactly in a smirking—smiley mood. "What's wrong?" immediately ask, sensing that he was in a colder mood. He seems to be exiting his home, recognising the front door he slams closed behind him. I watch him glide into his car, starting up the engine and closing his door. Settling the phone in front of him, Silver settles back against the leather seat and rests his head against the back of it. Staying silent, he looks at me with lazy blue eyes and begins to drag his gaze all over the screen—as if he were studying me. I take this moment to admire him further. My bottom lip falls into my mouth as I smile, the same morning sun gleams through the windows

and falls right onto his clear ivory skin, making him glow

my gaze to his, which was resting blandly on me.

reply as a sudden wave of heat travels through me.

before?"

at the screen.

He was making me crazy

grass below me, "But thank you."

"I'll be there soon, Serenity."

He smirks down at me, tilting his head to the side.

at me for that quick second.

"Okay, drive safely."

smiling in appreciation.

everything around us seem so small.

"Let him in."

"Always."

His cherry lips were pulling up the more I stared at them. I returned

"You look even more beautiful in the mornings, have I told you

My vocabulary gets stuck in my throat and I don't manage to form a

"No," manage to say before looking away from the screen and at the

But then I remember his colder attitude before and glare back down

"Silver? Why do you look mad?" He pu s out a silent breath and runs a hand through his wet hair, leaving his arm above his head while playing with a strand of hair. Distracting me momentarily, I eye the biceps peering through the black tee—tensing with each movement. I purse my lips and wait for his reply, giving him a certain look. "Are you home?" He shi s the conversation again but this time it caught me o guard. "I am, "I frown, "Why?" Bringing his hand away from his hair, he drops his arm and looks forward, the sound of his tires beginning to rumble told me he had begun driving. "I'm on my way." My eyes went wide. "What-

I sigh and watch him steadily keep an eye on the road, glancing down

The exact moment he hung up, I gathered all of my weak limbs and made a bee-line inside—Butterscotch gradually strutting behind me

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with no care in the world. I quickly looked over my appearance in the downstairs bathroom, making sure I didn't look like a depriving monster ready to eat him The sickness currently consuming me made me look a shade paler, bringing out the flaws on my already pale skin. I simply tried my best to ignore it, now leaving the bathroom and waiting near the front door for his arrival. I pace the floors. My legs move up and down the corridor and I receive glances from the guards standing aside. When the engine of his car rumbled its way through my street and into the long driveway, I froze. My eyes widened upon hearing his car door slam closed and I made sure to run in the opposite direction from the front door, appearing to not have been contemplating my entire being before he came by. "Miss Serenity? Mr Ceraso is here."

One of the guards call from the doorway of the hall I was currently hiding in. I breathe out a sigh, calmly walking towards him and

He nods but not without a second glance at me, a glimmering look of concern frowning upon him. He probably thinks I've gone insane.

As soon as the front door opens, my breath hitched once more as his

vastly tall, built body stepped through the threshold, making

from me and an e ortless smile slowly grows onto his lips.

Immediately catching my gaze, he stops his steps a few feet away

I couldn't help myself. My legs make three long strides toward his body and my arms circle around his waist tightly, resting my head right on his chest. It doesn't take long for Silver to react as he throws his hands under my thighs, wrapping me around his body like a blanket. He carries us through the house as if he owned it, pecking the side of my head. We landed outside on the patio, the doors falling closed behind us and he settled us gently on the couch there. I take this time to lean away from his chest, looking up at him with a bright smile. "Hi," I say shyly. He brushes hairs away from my face, scanning me thoroughly with the slightest pinch of his brows. "Feeling better?" I shrug lightly, nestling my hands around his neck and running my fingertips freely up and down the back of his head. "Better than yesterday."

He looks at me furthermore before slowly nodding his head, never

"What's bothering you?" I put my thumb between his dark brows, straightening the crease that hardly was ever placed there.

Taking this moment, I adjust myself on his lap, ignoring the pleasurable sparks that already pass through my veins when my

once redirecting his gaze away from me.

thighs brush against him.

He gently wraps his hand around my wrist, removing my thumb but instead wrapping his fingers through my own. Our eyes reconnect, strangely finding myself obeying whatever command he had behind his gaze. I wait patiently for his response. Silver never breaks eye contact, switching between my eyes intensely as if to contemplate what to say. Something was bothering him deeply, he was allowing me to read him. "Silver?" I whispered out, tilting my head to one side with a frown. Gently, he reciprocated my action and remained stoic. "Do you trust me?" His question makes me frown deeper. Nevertheless, I answer him. "Of course." Something passed through his gaze, and another glimpse of vulnerability shone through. He takes my other hand in his and kisses the back of each wrist. "I'll tell you soon then, sì?" Raising one perfect brow, all I could do was nod and agree.

A silence falls between us. Comfort with the buzzing and the birds

"You know I was going to call you right before you called me." I grin and slide my hands over his shoulders, watching my touch relax his

"Really?" He smirks only faintly, the look doing little things to my

"Oh yeah," I hum and slide my hands further down his body, landing just underneath his heart. I briefly feel the beats of it under my palm,

A small smile finds its way onto my lips, my own heart begins

"Your heart is beating really fast. Are you nervous or just out of

A chuckle escapes him. It was only brief, more like a throaty breath. Silver cups both of my cheeks with his palms, making me look up at

My lips part for him submissively as he swoops down and kisses me slowly. His tongue slips over my bottom lip, his mouth playing with

wailing behind us.

it was racing

breath?"

him.

properly.

much."

his jaw.

Thisbrought something out of him.

thigh, grazing his fingers under my shorts.

I blush, understanding what he meant.

"No." His reply was cold but unsteady.

pounding upon hearing his.

mine, savouring them.

I look up at him and just stare gleefully.

tense shoulders right as they slump and unwind.

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When he pulled back, he only moved back a single inch to whisper. "A little bit of both." His throaty reply ends with him kissing me again. I smile into the kiss, melting, falling under him. His palms slither to behind my head, controlling the weight of my motions. Absorbing the way I breathe into him and whisper for more. He refused, shaking his head as he broke the kiss. "Where are your parents?" I push myself further onto him, fisting my hands onto the back of his black tee. "Out on a mission. They'll be gone all day." He hums and I lean forward to reconnect our lips, only for him to inch back again, his plump lips parted with a smirk. "I don't want you getting any sicker, Serenity."

I roll my eyes, finally leaning away to look into his concerned eyes

"There's enough Vitamin D out here for everyone. You worry too

He grabs onto the back of my thighs, grinding his already bricked-up cock against me. My mouth releases out the smallest whimper, shamefully bringing my hands tighter on the backs of his shirt.

"Only for you." He replies, bringing one of his hands further under my

"Are you busy right now?" I murmur against his mouth, brushing them over his cheek. A shiver crawls up his skin as I graze my lips over

"Good," I kiss a spot under his ear, running my hands through his hair. He lets out a low groan and tightens his hold on me. His chin drops to

my shoulder, the warmth of his breath fanning my neck. "Do you want to go paint with me then?" I felt his lips curl against my skin into that pretty little smile he always gave me. Li ing his head, he faces me with a lazy smile. "Yeah," He leans down to my lips, kissing them so ly and leaving me wet all over. "I'd love to." Swi ly, he picks me up in his arms and I squeal from the sudden movement, laughing loudly when he began to stride back inside. "Are you just going to carry me around all day?" I wrap my arms around his neck, drawing in closer. He smirks and looks straight ahead, taking two steps up the long staircase at a time. "I'll do whatever I have to do to have you with me." A blush creeps up my cheeks and I stay silent the entire walk up to the art room. "I hope you haven't taken a peek at the portrait I made of you. Remember we have to reveal it soon, yeah?" I accusingly raise a brow at him and he shrugs it o, dropping me down to the floor silently.

"The date's coming up, we'll plan something?" He stares down at me

I nod my head continuously, grinning happily. But then I remember

"What's wrong? Are you feeling sick?" His palm caresses my cheek, a deepening frown creasing his ivory skin. I shake my head, mustering

making me stay home for the next few weeks because of, you know..."

"No, no," I look up at him and lean into his caress, "My father's

He released a short sco and removed his palm from my cheek,

I look o to the side, gesturing to my current situation.

taking both of my hands in his.

Unfortunately, that wasn't my fear.

silently, and my body turns weak with the knowledge of him

the boundaries I was currently working with.

My smile faded and I frown, making him frown too.

remembering.

up a smile.

"Don't worry about that, I'm taking you out. Unless you want to do it at home?" He raises a brow and I shake my head dismissively. "Whatever you plan I'm fine with." He nods slowly, looking down at me. "How are you feeling?" I shrug and contemplate whether or not to burst into a fit of laughter or to go on a whole rant about my feelings and thoughts on this bullshit. Instead, I manage to find one word to describe it all. "Su ocated." Silver pulls me to his chest, his strong, tattooed arms wrapping around my frail body. His hands slid around my hips to my waist and up to my back, then back down again—it felt like he was making sure I was actually here, in front of him. "My poor girl," His chest rumbled deeply, caressing me further. "You'll be okay, you know that Serenity? He won't touch you, I won't let

It was losing everything I had around me. It was facing him again.

"It's my family, Silver. I don't want anything to happen to them...or you." I squinted my eyes closed, hoping I hadn't sounded so clingy yet. I got attached fast and I was unsure of how he'd react to it. My feelings for him were so far deep, I wasn't sure how deep his was for

"Never worry about me, Flower," He says this as if caring about him

Shaking my head, refusing to believe anything of such, he pulls me back to look into my gaze. "And nothing will happen to your family, they'll be safe away from him. They're smart, nothing will happen." He assures. " You" I say, jabbing my finger at his chest, "Why shouldn't I worry about you're just as in danger as me, you almost got blown up the other night.' Silver looks down at me shortly, purely just staring. For a short moment, I briefly recall shock filling his gaze that remained emotionless, but something tells me I hadn't been seeing things the second a er I blinked. "Baby," He whispers, his hand falling to the side of my face, caressing my cheek with his thumb. " Neverworry about me. Sì?" a Rolling my eyes, I give him a half smile and shrug. "You can tell me not to but it won't stop me from caring." It was then his turn to roll his eyes. I laugh and lean away from him,

noticing the way his body tensed when I did. Walking further into the room, I bite back the smile that wanted to grow.

He became more amused and chuckled, leaning down to peck the top of my head completely unaware of how it made my stomach I begin picking out the colours I'd imagine using, simply unaware of what I'd be sketching yet. I went with whatever called out to me,

was a sin. It was the depth of his distraught in his voice. How unconcerning it was for me to be worried.

intuition if you must. Silver follows my lead, picking up some of the colours I had chosen but he had chosen more of the darker colours, like the greys, blues and greens. We headed over to the tables separated near the windows, I opened up all of the curtains for the natural light to beam through. Then, I I blush when he pulls out my chair for me, smirking when he sees the reaction I had. My heartstrings tug when he managed to swoop down "Forgot to mention," He placed an arm around my shoulder, using his

I briefly turn and wave at him to follow behind me, and so he does. Leading him towards all of the blank paper, canvases, and sketching pads, I take two and pass them over to him. "Pick out your colours," I gesture with my hand to the variety of di erent colours of pencils I had in one of my many drawers, he looks at it with amusement. "You sure this will be enough for us both?" I turn around and glare at him, smacking his chest lightly. "I like my variety, it's nice to know I have di erent selections." churn with butterflies.

other hand to pull the stool that was next to mine much, much closer. I become flustered, slapping his hand away, earning an even louder Ignoring his comment, I begin to open up my sketching book, tossing

moved back over to where Silver stood, waiting for me to sit down "I like this." He tugs at the strap of my tank top, sliding his finger my coloured pencils in front of me but beginning with a lead pencil to start the sketch.

I wait for inspiration to hit me, in the meantime, I look at Silver from

first. to my level, kissing the edge of my jaw. down the scheme grazing the top of my breasts. chuckle from him that only expressed the mischief in his gaze.

beside me. "Do you enjoy sketching?" I asked him so ly, being mindful of the concentration he had on his long fingers moving along the sketching pad. They moved so skilfully like they'd been made to design and produce. Every messy line turned into something appealing, that is what I loved about art. It was a "trust the process'type of thing. "Yes, it's liberating." I raise a brow at him, my eyes breaking back and forth from his piercing blue gaze and the sketch. "What do you mean?" He pauses to look at me, settling back against the chair with his other arm still flung over me. "It's freeing," He looks directly into my eyes as he says this. "It's like a

break away from our world." "Does it exhaust you? All the work? Keeping an eye on everything at once? I'm surprised you even have time for me, for this," I frown with concern, going over all of the duties he'd be piled up with currently. He was a leader, and every time he was with me I'd forget who he really was. A er I had spoken, he hadn't directly shown any element of surprise —as naturally, he remained nonchalant. A mist coated his blue gaze, resembling something as close to appreciation. "It doesn't exhaust me. Mentally and physically I was trained for it." I refocus on the outline of his sketch, finding the drawing of a perfectly pictured hibiscus flower. One of my favourite flowers.

"That's one of my favourites," I drew my finger over the sketch, making sure it was light enough to not smudge the lead. "Will it be He stared down at me briefly, showcasing that beautiful small smile smile he gave to no one but me. "Yes," He nods, pulling me closer with his arm around me, "It will be Finally, inspiration came to me and my head sunk down in the next second, his smile on my mind.

of his. I take it in like air, allowing myself to become transfixed by the