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## **His Untamed Heart by Sweetblunch**

### **Inroduction**

Oh my goodness! I cannot believe that we're actually on book 7. I never thought that the club would go this far. I always thought that the three original jealous guys were more than enough I never thought that their infamous club would gain so much member after their stories! Now we're going to focus on the mysterious cousin of the Fiorenza twins. Ever since, I met him in the

### **A Sicilian Marriage**

I was already intrigued about his background. I have a good laugh when he agrees to play as stalker for his evil cousin's matchmaking scheme until she threatened him to find him a bride. Now he surprised us once again when he suddenly lost his memories after a helicopter crash. I am so excited about his story and the woman who just saves him that fateful night. I

hope his story is worth the wait since I am going to finish my current book first.

P 1-1

*Let us always meet each other with smile, for smile is the beginning of love.*

-Mother Theresa

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

A man must know when to escape when his life was already at stake. In my years in the military I'd learn so many things about life. How can you take someone else's life so easily and value yours at the same time? The rules in war were quite simple: to kill or be killed. You will also learn how to trust your comrade with your life even if you haven't met them before in your life. The battlefield was really revolve around trust if you can't trust your buddy during war then you can't trust anybody even if your own self. But this war I have now was way different from the tours I have abroad. This war was against my own family primarily directly to my devious cousin, Leila Salazar. You see, when I unwillingly came home from the battlefield with after acquiring leg injury from my last tour the last thing I want was the regiment sent me home to recuperate and be with my family for once. The thing is, I don't want to be with my family especially with the company of my uncle Cesare who was the head of the Fiorenza clan. Imagine my shock upon arriving in Ragusa, a quaint little town in Sicily if I expected to find everything the same the last time I was here, well I was in for a

shock. My uncle Cesare, quite well despite his age with his infamous welcoming self—well, nothing new with that. I am expecting him to live until his 100th birthday other than that it seems that everyone I know changed somehow. But my twin cousins, Laila and Leila, were already married each with a child and even my childhood friend Rafe caught the lovebug that hit Ragusa with a quite force. To make most of my time here in Ragusa while I recover from my injury I agreed to the insane plan of my evil cousin, Leila to play as her cohort while she's busy playing matchmaker with her own sister-in-law. I asked myself now, why did I bother to agree to her ridiculous plan that time. The only answer that I gave myself was the fact it was only my escape to dodge Cesare Fiorenza's holy sermon about family and birthright. But the fact that the mischievous Leila had managed to marry off her own sister-in-law made me to have coldfeet at the sudden turn of events. If I didn't know better that little devil would betray me and sold me to Cesare and find me a bride.

*God forbid them from messing with my life*

, I thought passionately. That's why before they even think about pairing me with some girl of their choosing I vanished at the dead of the night travelling somewhere until my vacation from the army ended.

I made sure not to leave a trace where ever I go that's one of the things I learn from the army. So my feet brought me to America. I remember clearly it was late in the afternoon and I was flying the helicopter on my own since I need a good adrenaline rush. It was such a perfect weather that time but I encounter a smog area near the mountain I lost control of the helicopter and it sends me spinning out of control in the air. I tried to contact the tower but it's no use everything happens so fast and before I knew it I was tossed upside down. When I regain consciousness inside the helicopter. I tried to force my aching muscle to move to get out of the aircraft since I was still somehow alive. I didn't know what kind of willpower I had summon but I managed to get myself out of the helicopter.

*That's it*

, I thought with a groan slumping on the huge tree trunk while trying to catch my breath. I have walked long enough from the crash site this would be the longest walk my legs would carry me. I would probably die in some forest alone. I leaned on the tree trunk closing my eyes on the process. I could feel the blood dripping on the left side of my face. And I also could feel that grim reaper would probably fetch me any time soon. I've cheated death for countless times before I think death was

catching up with me now. I was slowly losing my consciousness when I thought I heard a dog barking somewhere.

*Great,*

I thought with pleasure. Wild dogs would probably eat me now at the smell of my blood what a great way to die. But as the barking goes near me I was arrested by a very bright light and an engine sound not far from me. I tried to open my eyes but I was only blinded by the lights that focus direct on my gaze. As I tried to focus my eyes open I saw a figure coming out of the pickup truck. I could almost smell her flowery scent when she near me. "Are you all right?" She asked with her cute little southern accent. "I guess so." I answered hoarsely. "You are bleeding!" She said, wiping the blood from my head with cloth. "Can you move? We need a proper dressing for your wounds. I will help you stand on the count of three. One...two...three..." I didn't know how we managed to put myself on the pickup truck but somehow it works as I slowly surrender to the darkness after that. Thankfully, that I will not die alone. Someone would bury my body somewhere properly...The next time I open my eyes the sun was already up. I tried to sit on the bed I couldn't help but to wince in the process as I look around at the unfamiliar bedroom filled with heavy wooden furniture.

*Where am I?*

I asked myself silently. As I tried to search for answer to my clouded brain a woman enter the room with tray in her hand. "Oh, you are finally awake." She said with the familiar southern accent I heard before.

"How are you feeling?" "Aching everywhere." She smiled closing the door carefully behind her. "You are lucky that my dog found you in the forest few days

P 2-2

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ago." I stared at him in disbelief. "I've been knock out for a few days now? I thought it only happened last night." "I understand." She nodded grimly, placing the tray near the bedside. "I already called a doctor to stitch up the wounds in your head that night I found you. He assured me that you would be fine after resting properly." Clear blue gaze stared at me intently that kind of blue that resemble to the sea at summer time. "In case you are wondering you are at our ranch here in North Carolina. My name is Willow Kinsella. And you are...?" I searched for answer on my opaque brain and found nothing it appears that my brain had stop working. I gave her a self-mocking smile. "It seems that I misplace my



memories somewhere, Miss." "Are you serious?" I smiled kindly at her shell-shocked face. "I wouldn't lie about this. How I wish I remember something about me." Compassion showed in her blue eyes. "Don't force yourself to remember. Give it a time I'm sure you'll remember something in no time." "But I want to remember now for all I know I am a jailbird who just escape a prison somewhere." I commented trying to mull something from my dislodge brain. "You think so?" I shrugged casually. "Who knows?" She grinned at me prettily. "Well, good news is, so far no news that someone escape from our country prison but bad news is, no one also reported about missing person in town. So we can only rely on your memory about your identity." My gaze was arrested by the fur animal on the doorway. "Come, Albert." Willow Kinsella invited the dog to come inside the room. The German shepherd join us inside the room while wiggling his tail happily. "Albert say hi to this man you save the other night..." She looked at me questioningly. "...what should we call you for a time being while you haven't regain your memory yet?" "No idea, just call me whatever you want." The southern girl thought for a moment. She placed her index finger in her chin and remain silent. "What about 'Neon'?" "Neon?" I echoed. She nodded with a smile in her beautiful face. "Neon means 'new' and 'strong' since it fits you perfectly. New life and strong man to survive such accident." "Fine with me."

P 2-3

"Really?" She seemed quite pleased with herself about giving me a temporary name. She extend her hand inmy direction. "Let's start over. Nice to meet you, Neon. Willow."I took the offered hand shook it briefly. "Nice to meet you, willow. My name is Neon."The dog bark besides us. Willow laughed and ruffled his brown fur. "And this is Albert the one who foundyou in the forest." "Thank you, Albert for saving me." I also pet him in the chin area. For now, I thank God for another life hespared me.

P 2-4

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*It is not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live.*

Marcus Aurelius

**Willow Kinsella's POV**

I closed the door as I firmly behind me as I went out of the guest bedroom of our house. I leaned my back on the wooden door as I tried to calm my racing heart.

*Holy hell*

, I thought with astonishment.

*He's hot*

. That man—that man that I have saved few nights ago was one hell of a handsome guy. From the moment our eyes collide a while ago the breath from my lungs had been knocked off. But any woman would agree with me that he's undeniably gorgeous he could be considered a campaign ad model. From his straight nose, chiselled jaw, high cheekbone and then there's his hair dark as Lucifer's soul but the most arresting in his face was his piercing dark green eyes.

*Get a grip, Willow*

. I reminded myself, pushing myself off the door. You have no business to appreciate his fine features even if he's a handsome fellow. The guy just lost his memories for all you know he already has a girlfriend waiting for him or worse yet a wife and children back home. But I couldn't deny how well-defined chest and those abs... Albert, my five-year-old German shepherd bark beside me. That's when I realize that he's patiently waiting for me. He was probably wondering what the heck is wrong with

me."Come." I said jovially. "Let's go to the kitchen it's time for your breakfast."My fur baby followed me happily tailing behind while wiggling his tail. Once I was on the kitchen I took out this bowl and water container and filled them with food and water. "

*Bon appetit*

. "My eyes got arrested by the pile of mails on the kitchen table. I scanned the mails hoping to get the goodnews I was hoping for. I sighed escape me when I saw another letter from the bank instead the loan I appliedfor. This was their second letter this month reminding me to settle my debts or I need to sell this ranch whichwon't do as long as I am alive. Feeling suddenly dejected from the letter came from the bank I decided to go outside the have some fresh air. I tried to open the back door from the kitchen but it's giving me hard time just like the bank for approving myloan. If only they could give me a chance for the money I was hoping to get that would be a big help to our dwindling ranch like this freaking door I would replace this thing once I get the money. With much annoyance building up inside me I kicked the door to force it to open. See? Easy as that just give it a little force.

P 3-1

Albert stopped eating and look at me with questioning eyes. I smiled at him reassuringly. "It's okay, buddy. I am not mad." My boy just continue to eat his food completely ignoring me. "Fighting with the poor door early this morning?" I heard the light teasing from Jace, one of the cowboy remained working at the ranch once I got outside. "Yeah," I replied, giving the door a dark look. "This one needs to be fix. Can I borrow tools later? I will fix this damn thing." Jace shook his head, smiling at me. "No, I will fix it after I fix the fence near the river. The cattle and colts are escaping from their pastures." "I will help you." Jace smiled shaking his head. "No need to do that, lady boss. I can manage." He tipped his head on the head. "How's he?" I didn't have to ask who does he meant by his question. Jace was very much aware of the unconscious man I have save the other day from the forest since he was the one who help me transfer him inside the house from my truck. I made a face, glancing at the window of his bedroom. "He's finally conscious but no memories." Jace eyes widened as if he couldn't believe his ears. "Truthfully? He's not pretending or anything, do you think?" "Yeah," I smiled at him sadly. I tucked my hands inside my denim jacket. "I don't think he's pretending. I think he really lost his memories from the accident. Any news about missing person in town?" The cowboy shook his head regretfully. "Sheriff Davis will inform us as soon as he got report on missing person on the other county." I

nodded taking a deep breath. "That's good to know I'm sure that his family is now sick with worry about him." "Any news about the loan you applied for?" Upon mentioning that I suddenly felt dejected. "No news yet but I hope that within this week we finally get the answer we are hoping for." "Just keep our fingers crossed and the bank will grant us that loan we are hoping for." Jace said in a reassuring way. "Don't stress yourself about it right now." I grinned at him. "You're right, Jace." "I need to go and fix that fence, lady boss." He arranged his Stetson hat in his head before leaving me and jumped to his truck. I am always thankful to Jace and the other few cowboys who remained in the ranch despite facing huge losses in sales these past few years since Daddy got sick before his passing last year. I need to save this ranch somehow this is the only legacy my dad left I need to keep this to the family that's why I would do anything to

P 3-2

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get that cash loan from the bank. A bark dragged me back to the present. I saw my dog patiently waiting for me at the kitchen door. "You're done, buddy?" Albert barked again, I smiled at him

coming inside the house. "Come, let's go and get some supply in town I also want to talk to Sheriff Davis about our guest." My dog followed me happily when I bump at the bare solid chest of a man. "Ouch!" My eyes widened when I saw the familiar emerald eyes staring down at me with amusement in their depth while standing at the foot of the stairs. "You're here." "It's so boring to stay in bed all day." "But your wounds!" I said worriedly, eyeing him in askance. "You don't want to aggravate your condition because of your stubbornness, do you?" "I am fine, miss southern belle." I could feel that my cheeks were flaming up at his words.

No

, I reminded myself. Do not get swayed by his words but one thing I was so sure about this mysterious man I found in the forest. He might lost his memories but never his smooth ways of talking. No one in this small town even the men I am closed with never called me something like that. But this man? I shook my head in resignation. He's really something else. "The reason I came down is because I want to ask if you have clothes for me to use." He said, forcing me to look in his face not in his abs. Focus, Willow. For God's sake! Stop looking at his half-naked body. "And soap and shampoo if you don't mind? I want to take a bath..." he paused. "Willow?" "Oh, yes!" I said forcing myself to focus here. Well, that's really hard

when he's flaunting his body like this."Clothes, shampoo and soap." "Yes," he smirked down at me as if enjoying a private joke. "Do you have anything for me?" "W-What?" I stammered, moistening my lips with my tongue. He leaned down until he's only inch away from my face. "Extra clothes and toiletries." "Oh, right..." I tried to push him to create some distance between us. Ops, wrong move. For my hands came contact with his bare chest. I tried to look in his face and my heart started to beat loudly in my chest when I saw fire in those dark green eyes. "Willow..." Was he going to kiss me? I mentally prepared myself for the onslaught I could feel that my eyes started to close when he spoke again breaking the spell completely. "Are you okay?" I blinked feeling mortified at the thought that he's going to kiss me. Where the hell did I get the impression that he was going to kiss me? "Oh, yes..." I said trying to salvage my remaining dignity. "I think I still kept some of dad's stuff at the attic. Maybe some of his old clothes might fit on you."

P 3-3

I didn't wait for his reply and run towards the stairs. I let out a frustrated groan. I wish I could turn back the clock and stop myself for fooling myself in front of him and then maybe I could look him again him again in the eye without remembering that



moment. Goodness, this was one of the reason why I don't let men get closed to me I always kept them at arm's length since my bitter experience in the past. No, I won't think that now. I learned my lesson in the past. I finally arrived at the attic on the third floor of the house. I searched for dad's clothes on the pile of boxes it didn't take long before I found his shirts and old boots maybe this would fit in him if not I will just buy him some stuff in town. I don't know how long he would be staying here but the man needs things while he was staying here at our ranch. He couldn't walk around half-naked like what happened a while ago. It wasn't good for my sanity. Gathering the things in my arms I hurried downstairs and I saw him again in the hallway in the second floor Albert was trailing behind him like they were friends' long time before. "Here." I pushed the items in his hands without looking at his face. "I think this will fit on you if not I will just buy you in town. There's a bit smelly but I will wash them when I come back from town." "Ouch!" He exclaimed, wincing at the process. "Try to remember my injury, woman. I'm still aching everywhere." "I'm sorry." I mumbled, still couldn't make myself to look him in the eye. I was still shy about misreading his action a while ago. "I will go to town right now. I will look for clothes and other things you might need to use while you're staying here. I hope you don't mind clothes from second-hand shops." "Not at all." "Is there anything else you need?" I heard him laughed softly. "Just a good bath." "All

right then," I replied, pointing the bathroom at the far end of the hallway. "There's the bathroom there's also soap and shampoo there. I hope you don't mind using them since they're mine but if you want I will buy your own." "They are fine as long as I can wash myself." "All right, then." I murmured still not meeting his eyes. "I will go now." "Willow?" I heard him call after me. I stopped from my tracks but I never turn around since I was about to descend the wooden stairs. "Yes?" "Thank you again for saving me." I smiled despite the fact that he couldn't see the smile in my face right now. "You already thank me and Albert there's no need to say that every time."

P 3-4

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"I promise to repay you with everything once I regain my memories." "Don't worry about it for now the doctor told me that you need to recuperate from your injuries you need to listen to him don't force yourself. He said you were lucky to survive such crash not everyone is so lucky like you." "I'm fine." He said with a smug tone. "I have cheated death countless times before." That arrest my attention for I gasped at him.

"You do?" It seems that he was also surprised from his answer. "I don't know why I just said that."

P 3-5

*No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar.*

-Abraham Lincoln

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

I drove to town to get some supplies for the ranch and to be away from Neon after my humiliating encounter with him a while ago. I couldn't help the blush in that spread through my cheeks whenever I remember my assumption that he wants to kiss me. "That's really embarrassing, Albert." I informed my dog who was with me sitting comfortably at the passenger's seat. My fur buddy just look at me with innocent eyes. "I really wish the ground would open up moments ago to swallow me whole." I also couldn't miss the teasing in his eyes when I gave him my dad's old stuff for him to use while he was staying with us. I would also buy him some clothes on the thrift shop in town I just need to squeeze that in my already tight budget. Thirty minutes later, I finally arrive in town. I parked my car in front of the hardware shop of Mr. Lufton. I jumped out of my pick-up truck and open the door for Albert. "Come on, buddy. We need to get some woods for the fence." "Good

morning, Mr. Lufton!" I greeted cheerfully when I push his glass door when the bell hangs on the door chimed in."Willow!" The elderly man behind the counter greeted with a welcoming smile. "What can I have you for today?"I walked further inside his hardware store and stop at the counter. "I need few timbers and concrete nailsneeds to fix the fence on the east side of the ranch. The cattle kept on coming on the neighboring ranch I can'tafford to lose even one cattle these days.""I understand." Mr. Lufton said gravely. "I'll ask my son to load the timbers on your truck right now."He left the counter for a moment to instruct his son who was working at the back of the store. Moments later,Mrs. Harris went inside the hardware store."Hello, dear." She said by way of greeting.I smiled at the white-haired woman. "Good morning, Mrs. Harris.""I heard that you rescue a man in the forest near your ranch few days ago. How is he, dear?"I smiled ironically. One of the downside in living such a small town of St. Petersburg, North Carolinanothing was really a secret from the town's people. Everyone would know everything in a matter of time.

No

wonder everyone knew that Matthew Graves and I broke up years ago despite trying to keep it as a secret from everybody."He's doing fine."There was an interested look in the older woman's face. "I heard from Dr. Mitchell that he suffered head injury from his accident. The poor soul, thank goodness he survived such horrific accident." "Yeah," I agreed, trying not to reveal much about the new guy in town. I bet there was much interest from the town's people about the Neon since gossip was their number one pastime here. Everyone wants to know gossip first hand. When Mr. Lufton went back to the counter he said. "Already loaded to your truck and here's the concrete nails." He looked at the old woman beside me on the counter. "What can I do for you, Mrs. Harris?" "How much for these?" I asked. The elderly man shook his head with a smile. "I will just put it on the tab just pay me when your loan approve." "Oh, all right." This was what I was talking about when I said that you cannot really keep a secret in this little town of ours. One way or the other surely they would hear about your finances and other personal problems. "No, I can pay you now." Mr. Lufton shook his head. "It's okay, dear. Just pay me when you have the money." "If you are so sure..." I said uncertainly. I picked up the concrete nails put inside the brown paper bag and tell Albert. "Come on, buddy. We have others things to do. Thank you, Mr. Lufton. Mrs. Harris." I went outside Mr. Lufton's hardware store and went to

buy some stuff at the grocery store and once again a good amount of people stop by in my direction inquiring about the guy who had an accident and now staying at our ranch. I tried my very best not to give too much information such as him losing his memories and how unsettling he made me feel whenever I am around him. Next stop was the thrift shop. Since Mr. Lufton didn't let me pay the lumber and concrete nails I bought in his store I have extra money to shop for Neon's clothes. I took my time to check on the plaid shirts and what color would look good on him. I saw Albert patiently waiting for me outside sleeping soundly outside the store since animals are not allowed inside. In the end, I choose four shirts and two denim pants this might do for now. I paid for my purchases and went out to the store. "Come on, Albert." I said to my dog once I was outside. "It's time to go home. We've been away for so long my work is waiting for me." Albert was trailing me silently as we walk back to my waiting truck. He jumped happily on the passenger's seat before I hop to the driver's side. I started the engine and drive away I smiled and wave back to the people walking on the streets who greeted me.

Drive back to the ranch was uneventful. When I arrived back at the ranch I saw Jace was waiting for me in front of the house. "Wow did you know that we need more timber?" He asked as soon as I park my truck in the driveway and turn off the engine, his blue eyes gleamed with delight. "Call it intuition." I announced haughtily jumping out of my truck. "I hope this materials will suffice until we finish fixing the fence." Jace looked at the items at the back of the pick-up. He nodded in agreement. "I think this will do. I certainly hope so. Since my budget was quite tight lately I don't have extra money for renovations right now but the fence was an exception since I don't want my cattle and colts moving freely to our neighboring ranch." I also bought concrete nails just to be sure. "I help you later I will just put this inside." I told him as I took the large brown paper bags at the backseat. "Need a hand?" I shook my head and smile to Jace. "No, I'm good." "See you around." "Yeah," I said, bringing my purchases inside. "Come on, boy." My dog bark and run inside the house. I placed my groceries in the kitchen table before deciding to give Neon the clothes and some toiletries I bought for him since I probably knew that dad's clothes needs some washing after being stored at the attic for more than a year now. I knocked first before entering his room. "Neon, I bought you some stuff in town—" The words dried down in my mouth as I notice him wiping his damp hair from the towel his bare chest was once

again on full display thankfully he already wore his pants on. Clearly, he just had taken a shower. "Oh, sorry..."

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

The little whirlwind dust devil prudishly turn around when she saw me half-naked just after taking a shower after...God only knows when was the last time I took a bath. This temporally no memories of me is starting to get on my nerve. I hate it when I don't even remember myself. "Oh, sorry..." she said and I smoldered a laugh forgetting my annoyance.

*Wrong move, sweetheart*

. The devil inside me had said. Now she gave me a good angle of her pretty backside thanks to her well-fitted denim jeans and cute cowgirl boots. When I woke up to find out that she's the same girl who save me from the crash site and she took good care of me after that I was really grateful for her generosity. I got bored just lying on the bed and do nothing. I think I

P 4-3

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was not that type of person who laze around even if I don't remember a damn thing about me or my past even if it hurts



the hell out of me I forced myself to slid out from the bed and search for my rescuer around the house. I collided with her at the bottom of the staircase when she accidentally bump into my chest. With the sunlight crept through the large windows I got a good glimpsed of her pretty clear blue eyes. I couldn't help but to tease this lively southern girl when I lowered my head and she thought for a moment— and prepared herself maybe, that I was going to kiss her. Honestly, I was sorely tempted to do just that but I held myself in check. The last thing I want was to take advantage of this kind-hearted girl who just save me from my near death.

### *Sweet God*

, I didn't know I have that I have such willpower in me to resist her lovely pink lips. I am not sure if I could still stop myself from kissing her in the future. I really wanted so badly to taste that tempting mouth. But after our little encounter a while ago made her stop looking at my face. She must feel embarrassed about our almost kiss not that I blame her but I got annoyed that I was deprived at the sight of those lucid blue eyes. Oh, I promised myself that before this day ends she will look at me again in the eye. "Sorry to barge in hastily." She muttered with her cute little southern accent that I found so appealing while her back still on me. "I didn't know that you are dressing. I will leave now." I chuckled devilishly, throwing the towel on the

bed. "There's no need for you to do that. It's not as if you didn't see me half-naked before." I was rewarded by an icy glare from her. "Not intentionally, I assure you." "Of course." I heard her took a deep breath and push a paper bag in my direction without looking at me, her gaze was fix on the floor. "Here. I bought you some clothes and other necessities in town. I thought this will suffice for now." "Thank you but you don't need to do this. The clothes you gave me a while ago are fine." "Still," she said, still not looking at me which made me start to be annoyed for some reason. "At least, you have some extra." I took the bag from her making sure that I brush my hand in hers. I felt unexplained kind of satisfaction when I heard her gasped as her eyes widened in my direction. "What do you think you're doing?" "What?" I asked innocently. "You keep on teasing me." "I don't do such thing." I started taking steps forward and she instantly took step backwards until she hit the

P 4-4

wall. "Yes, you do." She answered a little breathlessly. "And you know that." "Do I?" I whispered softly, I could see the rising and falling of her chest beneath her plaid shirt. How her breast molded perfectly...I need to stop thinking about this or I would have unwanted erection. "Yes, you are." She said hoarsely. What can I do it's so hard to resist teasing her. Her cheeks filled

withcolor when I do that. "I—I need to go..." "Okay." "You're blocking my way. Excuse me." "No, I'm not." I said, looking deeply in her eyes. I could lost myself in those depth, I mused silently. "You may go now." I announced but not moving an inch from my position. She glared at me hotly before pushing me as hard as she can but the gesture made my body remember how it's feel to be hurt like hell. I lost my balanced in the process and my back hit the hard floor taking her with me."

### *Sonofabitch*

..." I groaned like a beast in agony. I think I just got new injury from this mishap Willow fellatop of me. "Oh, I'm sorry!" She looked horrified as she frantically struggling to stand up. "I'm really sorry, Neon." "Stop moving like that." I warned, saying each words through my gritted teeth, as the excruciating pain seepthrough my body. "If you awake something I am not liable for the consequence afterwards." The look in her face made me almost forget the awakening of my private part...

*Well, almost...*

P 4-5

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*Nobody can be as agreeable as an uninvited guest.*

-Kin Hubbard

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

I hurriedly to stand up to remove myself from Neon's body. I could feel the heat that spread through my cheeks faster than a bullet train. From the moment he regain his consciousness I've been to every awkward situations as far as he was concern. "I'm so sorry," I mumbled apologetically, trying to help him from the floor. He's complaining about the throbbing pain in his body. "I'm really sorry, Neon! Oh, God..."

### *Sonofabitch*

..." He repeated, wincing on every move as I help him to his feet. "What's wrong with you, woman." "It's your fault! You keep on teasing me, that's why." I couldn't help but to be defensive while deep inside I really feel guilty about pushing him way too strong temporarily forgetting about his injury. "You nearly reopen the stiches in my head with your tackle." He remarked smartly as I help him sat on the bed. "Oh, lord..." I said, worriedly look at the bandage in his head there's no blood yet from the gauze so maybe it didn't open up as he thought. "Did it really open? Maybe I should call Dr. Mitchell...I'm really sorry, Neon." He carefully touched his wounded head. "Are you a pro-wrestler? Maybe you forgot to tell me that information." If I

thought that my cheeks would not go redder than at the moment I was sorely mistaken. My eyes widened at his direction. "I am not! I swear, I didn't mean to push you that hard. I thought you are stronger than that but I guess I was wrong." Deep green eyes stared at me with annoyance in their depth. "I am. Are you forgetting about my injury?" "Well, it's your fault." I said, trying not to feel guilty about this whole mess. "If you are not joking around me this will not happen to you." "Now you are putting the blame on me." "Yes." I said hurriedly, throwing the clothes I bought in town in his bed. "Here's the clothes I bought for you I think they will fit. I will just help the boys in fixing the fence on the perimeter next to our neighbor Big R ranch." I didn't wait for his reply and went out of his room with flaming face. Once I closed the door firmly behind me. I could still feel that my heart was once again racing on my chest. Goodness, I need to keep my distance

P 5-1

with him next time I was in his company. This temporary guest in my ranch was danger to my sanity. I took a deep breath before coming down the stairs but I still couldn't forget that sinfully handsome greeneyed man I left on the second floor. He might temporarily forget his past but he certainly didn't forget his playful and cynical manner. I wonder what kind of man he

was in the past. I didn't have time to dwell on my thoughts about him that long when I was about to reach the entrance door of the house. I frowned when I heard voices talking outside who might that be? I thought silently as I went out to find out. My eyes instantly gave the unwanted guest in my ranch a disapproving look. I went out of the porch and glared at the man standing next to his fancy pickup truck while having discussion with Jace. "What are you doing here?" I asked in annoyance placing my hand in the middle of my chest silently preparing for war. The blond man with a pair of icy blue eyes smile in my direction as he touched his Stetson hat with his fingers for a greeting. "Good morning, Will." There was something inside me tick when he had call me like he used to call me before. "As far as I am concern there's nothing good in the morning if you are around. What brings you here, Mr. Graves?" "So formal, Willow." He reflected, flashing me with one of his flirtatious smile that often made the girls in town swoon at the sight of me. And once upon a time I was one of those girls but not anymore. "We're more than friends before, remember?" Jace shook his head and snickered while the thunderous expression on my face was directed to him. "Don't dig up on the past. Let it rest where I belongs now tell me what bad force of wind brings you here and get out of my property after that." "Why so hot-tempered, sweetpea?" Before I could speak up again Jace was on his side, putting a hand on

his shoulder. "Please, just leave Matt. Stop annoying, Willow." The unwanted guest merely smiled at Jace. "Relax, I didn't come here to spoil a fight to your lady boss. I want to talk to her about business. In fact, I have proposition to her." My eyes instantly narrowed in Matthew Graves' direction. As far as anyone is concern, I don't trust this man he's a sly like a fox. "What do you want?" He leaned on the hood of his red pickup and crossed his arms in his middle mimicking my posture while trying to look sanguine and cool. "Heard that you are applying for a bank loan to save this property of yours..." I knew he would heard about it. Like I said before there's nothing such a secret in this little town of ours and it's not hard to guess if learned something like that since he was just practically living next to my ranch. Yep,

P 5-2

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his family owned Big R ranch and yes my animal kept on coming to his property that's why I need to fix the damn fence that separate our premise. "So?" I asked coldly. If he thought that I would loan money from him he got to think twice maybe thrice. I'd rather die than accept money from him. He smiled hopefully

in my direction. "I want to save your from the burden of thinking how to pay the debt your father left before he died so I think I am giving you a favor with this. I want buy this ranch of yours name your price." It seems that Jace saw the changes on me that he looked so scared for a moment. I couldn't blame him really since I felt my ears prick at his words I even couldn't believe my ears. Did he just say... I couldn't even dare to repeat his words? "Did you just..." "What do you think?" He asked pleasantly. Something inside me erupted with force as I stared at him with ferocity. "Get out of my property now!" "Willow, think about it..." "Out now...!" I said with measured breath. "Before I do something I am sure I will not regret. Get out, Matt." Disapproving blue eyes held my gaze. "Now, Willow. Don't be unreasonable. It's the perfect solution to your problem and we can expand our ranch considerably." "I'd rather sell my soul to the devil rather sell my land to him. Even if, I need to grovel at the feet of the bank manager just to give me that loan I will gladly do it I would not let this man have the land my grandfather and daddy took good care all of their lives and now it's my turn." "Go now." I warned him hotly, as I was starting to see red haze in my eyes. "Before I still have the strength to stop myself from killing you." "Now, Willow..." Matt had said with disapproving look. "Let's talk like any civilized citizen of St. Petersburg—" I suddenly went inside the house and get the double barren shotgun my father owned in the cabinet



in the living room. I knew how to use this thing dad taught me how to use it in the past. And I check if it's loaded thank God it is before I march outside again. "Whoa, Willow..." Jace started with wide eyes seeing me aiming the gun to this bastard who happened to be my ex-boyfriend. "Calm down." The alarmed on Matt's face was the kind of expression I would treasure in my life. He raised his arms as I pointed the gun at him from the porch. "Are you going to get off my property now or do you want me to shoot you first?" "Now, Willow..." He said, swallowing hard the pretty smile on his face was now waning. "You're not serious, are you? Please put the gun down."

P 5-3

Instead of answering him, I fired a warning shot on the vacant corral nearby. The loud bang sounded from the silent space. The arrogant man was brought down to his feet from the shot of my shotgun even Jace ducked to protect himself. "Are you crazy?!" Matt shouted at me, his face was flushed. "You nearly killed me with that shot, you madwoman!" "Oh, believe me I won't miss my next shot." I promised, savouring the expression in his face right now as I aim the gun back to him. "This might hurt you a little bit. Stay still..." "Willow..." He said carefully, his eyes filled with alarm. Oh, I should have done this with him before when he suddenly turns cold with me citing that we're

meant to take different paths in life that we should just partways." "What the hell is that?" I heard Neon bellowed from the house running towards the entrance door but before I could even put my index finger on the trigger again aiming the intruder inside my ranch Neon was with distance with me. "Willow..." he said carefully, gauging my temper. He held out his hand in my direction. "...give the gun to me." I shook my head resolutely. "After I put a bullet in this man's body parts." "If you do that you'll not only put a bullet in his body,

### *Signorina*

. You will blow the entire thing with your firearms." He replied dryly. I almost laugh at how casual his reply as if he was used to this kind of things. "Now give the shotgun on me." "Listen to him, Willow." Matt said with urgency while his hands still held upward. "Give him the gun for Christ's sake!" "Shut up! You're not the one who is calling the shot here, you dumbass." I pretend to aim at him again and then he paled considerably. I suddenly want to laugh out loud for I don't have any intention of shooting him I just want to scare him. Maybe I should frightened him a little more before I stop this charade. This might teach him a lesson not to mess with me again. "Willow..." Neon had said, taking a one step closer to me carefully as if I was a lunatic. "...he's not worth it on the time you will spend in prison if you accidentally kill. Now be a good girl and pass the

gun on me." I took a deep breath and stared at him sourly. This man really knew how to spoil my fun I suddenly lost my appetite to scare that tumbleweed guy more and gave the shotgun to Neon. "Here, take it." In one swift movement Neon snatched the firearms in my hand and remove the canisters from the ammunition with such familiarity. He carefully placed the shells in his pocket while staring at me exasperatingly. From the corner of my eye I saw Matt hastily jump to his car and drive off the ranch faster than category five hurricane but my gaze was locked to this man with disapproving dark green eyes. "You are one hell of a crazy woman. Do you know that?" He asked me sternly but his lips starting to curve with a sexy smile.

P 5-4

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I raised my chin in his direction silently telling him that I am would not be cowed by his severe look. "He pissed me off." I saw him exhaled deeply as he rolled his eyes with unmistakable amusement in the depth. "God help anyone who messed with you Willow Kinsella."

P 5-5

*Life must be lived and curiosity kept alive. One must never, for whatever reason, turn his back on life.*

-Eleanor Roosevelt

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

I followed Neon on the kitchen he was like a father reprimanding his wayward child the way he threw a disapproving look in my direction. I found Albert lying on the floor beside soundly asleep completely unaware of the havoc just happened outside moments ago. He must sense us approaching when his ears twitched and momentarily lifted his head and stared at us with curiosity before he resume sleeping. "How's your injury?" I asked Neon pleasantly as if nothing happens. "I'm surprised that you manage to get outside with such speed despite your wounds." He threw a dry look in my direction. "I believe you will do the same if you suddenly heard gun shot from your bedroom. My adrenaline rapidly surge up and somehow I found myself running down the stairs to see what's happening." "I see that you know your way with live ammunition. Do you know how to use one?" I said conversationally as I leaned on the kitchen countertops looking at my dad's already dismantled firearms. He stared for a moment at the pull apart gun in his hand. "Hell, if I remember. I just know that my hands work on their own as I parts out this thing." "What kind of work he does in the past? Given the way he

knew how to handle guns. I wondered silently. Police? Army? Maybe he was really a jailbird as he thought or perhaps member of mafia group. Yeah right, you're imagining wild things again Willow. "Coffee?" I inquired nicely. He gave me a condensing glance. "Don't you dare to think that you can bribe me with a coffee, Miss Kinsella? Do you think I will not give you an earful lecture about this? Hell, it's not even lunch time and so much things had happen in this house." I scowled in his direction, getting tired of playing nice with this whole fiasco. "Why do I need to listen to your lecture in the first place? I know how to handle gun Dad taught me in the past just so you know." He took a deep breath looking at me as if he was talking to a stubborn child. "Owning such ammunition requires huge responsibility. You just cannot threaten people so casually. I tell you, you can kill half the entire population of this town due to accident." I gasped at his words. "What a harsh thing to say, Mister. For your information, I am a responsible gun owner it's just that he pisses me off that's why I threaten him to leave my property is that bad?"

P 6-1

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"Yes." I threw a disapproving look in his direction while he did the same. That's when I realized that he was already wearing the clothes I bought in town and it fits him perfectly! He paired the blue plaid shirt with his own dark jeans and black combat boots and he was devastatingly handsome in it. But I would not tell him that so we stood at my kitchen glaring with each other waiting for the other one who give up first on the glaring contest. In the end, I took a deep breath and look away from our staring contest. I need to change the topic since I knew we're just going into circles about this since we clearly don't share the same views on how to handle firearms. "I just remember," I said conversationally mulling for my brain to remember the exact word that he used. "What did you call me a while ago? Something like

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*señorita*

? Is that is?" It seems that he even doesn't remember saying that foreign language moments ago for his eyebrow furrowed. "What? Did I say something like that? I don't even remember." "Yes, you did!" "I don't remember." I sighed shaking my head. "I thought you finally recall something." He grimaced, rubbing just stubble jaw. "I am starting to get irritated with this useless brain of mine until now it refuse to

cooperate with me." I gave him a reassuring smile. "You'll remember who you are soon I am sure of it. At least for now, we know that you knew how to speak other language other than English. I think you are not pure American." He gave me an arrested glance. "You think so?" I nodded, here I was again getting fascinated with his piercing dark green eyes. There was really about his eyes that way so captivating. I was about to speak again when I heard someone from the doorway. I frowned who might this be? "Excuse me," I said, walking towards the entrance door. "I think someone is at the door. I think the Sheriff is here to arrest me." But it wasn't the Sheriff on the porch but Dr. Mitchell giving me a friendly smile. "Good morning, Willow. How is my patient? Is he finally awake?" "He's..." Oh, dear lord. He's already running around the house with his injury. Should I tell the elderly doctor about that information? "I came to check on him." "Come this way, please." I muttered, stepping aside from the door to let the doctor come inside the house. Instead of leading him to the bedroom of Neon I brought him in the kitchen where the man he was about to visit stood proudly at my small kitchen.

P 6-2

The stern look crossed Dr. Mitchell's face instantly. "Why does he already up from his bed? I thought I gave you specific

instruction not to let him move around yet if he wakes up, Willow?" I nodded in Neon's direction. Why does I have to be at the receiving end of Dr. Mitchell's severe lectures?" He's a stubborn fellow. Running around the house the moment he wakes up." "I'm fine." Neon said stubbornly, tucking his hand in his middle. "How are you feeling, young man?" The doctor asked, clearly wasn't prepared that he would check on his patient in the middle of my kitchen. "Fine." "He doesn't remember anything about himself." I informed Dr. Mitchell about his condition. The physician's eyes widened as he stared at Neon. "Is that true? You don't remember anything about yourself?" There was an annoyance in his face and I felt that it was directed to me. I just raised an eyebrow in his direction silently challenging him to deny that he doesn't remember anything. "Well, my brain at the moment is not cooperatively, let's just say that way." Dr. Mitchell examine him closely. "Do you know what is the date today, son? Can you tell me from month, date and year?" Neon was silent for a moment clearly thinking what would be the answer and then he said blankly. "I don't know." The elderly doctor took a deep breath, staring at Neon sadly. "Temporarily memories lost is beyond my knowledge so I cannot help you with this. I think the best way I can recommend is for you to go to the city and consult neurologist about his condition that way they can examine his brain fully with proper equipment. For now, let me see your



physical injuries." Neon and Dr, Mitchell both stared at me with amusement in their eyes for a moment I didn't understand and then it hit me. "Oh, right! I'll go to the living room first. I need to...err, fix the window." I didn't wait for their reply and went out of the kitchen feeling that my cheeks were already burning up from embarrassment. When the doctor said that he would look at Neon's physical injury he wasn't just talking about his head injury but he was also required to take off his shirt so Dr. Mitchell could see the bruises in his body. I went out of the house altogether and sat on the porch front steps and took a deep breath. The corral that once filled with livestock's was now almost empty the ranch was at the brink of bankruptcy and if I don't do anything I would be homeless in a matter of months at the most. For dad's memory I need to keep this ranch in our family. I rubbed my face with my hands and let out my frustration. I need to come up with the plan on how to save this place.

P 6-3

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After a while, Dr. Mitchell went out of the house. I stood from my seat and look at the elderly man. "How is he?" "His bruises

are healing nicely along with the cut in his head but I am worried about his loss memories." I eyed the doctor with curious stare. "What makes you say that?" Dr. Mitchell took a deep breath, staring at me with straight in the eye. "Let's just hope that this is just a temporary memory loss that this is just a cause of his trauma but..." "But?" I echoed when he trailed off his sentence. "There are some cases that people suffered from amnesia their loss of memories became permanent." I gasped in shock. Suddenly, I feel sorry for Neon if ever that happens to him. "Do you think his amnesia will be permanent?" Dr. Mitchell smiled at me. "Let's just hope for the best." I nodded in agreement. I hope his memory loss was just temporary I couldn't even imagine what it feels like not to remember your own self. "I'll walk you out, Dr. Mitchell." We walk in silence until we reach his car on the driveway. "Thank you for checking up on him." "No problem, child." He looked back at the house and sigh. "There's one more thing that's bothering me about him." I became alert at his words as I frowned at him. "What is it?" "When I check on his bruises he ask me about the scar in his right leg. He inquired if he also got that from the accident since he think it's still a new scar he also claim that it's still paining him." My eyes widened at this revelation. "Really?" The elderly doctor nodded and sigh again. "I gave him prescription for the pain and hopefully it helps him sleep at night. Now it makes me wonder what kind of life does he has to

have so much scar in his body?" Dr. Mitchell looked at me intently. "I don't want to think badly of him don't let your guard down on him. I believe he's not an ordinary man for all we know he's living a very dangerous life." I just gave him a nod as I couldn't help but to shiver at Dr. Mitchell's words about Neon. I silently watch his car drive away from the ranch but the mysterious past of Neon still lingering in my head. It made me curious more than anything on what kind of life he had before the accident given the scars in his body. There's no need to force him to remember his past now we'll just take the time one step at a time. Pushing his brain to remember might harm him more from his head trauma according to the elderly doctor. For now let's just think that there must be a reason why can't he remember his past. His brain might want to desperately forget something even before the accident happened. Now it made me wonder, what is that reason?

P 6-4

*The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind.*

-Sigmund Freud

**Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

*"Why are you hiding here?" I said to the woman sitting on a bench serenely looking at the calm ocean before her. "I'm not hiding here. I'm just thinking that's all." She said, I couldn't see her face well due to the bright sunlight. I sat on the bench next to her and we both stared at the picturesque scenery of our surroundings. "Nothing beats the rustic charm of Ragusa, don't you think?" I remarked, stretching my long legs before me enjoying the view. "Even if I am wherever part of the world at the end of the day this place still what I call my home as much as I want to forget this godforsaken place..."*

I suddenly sat up from my bed as I gasped for air.

*What was that?*

I asked myself silently. I placed my hand in my throbbing head trying to remember if that's dream or a fragments of my memory. But the most important question who that girl in my dream was? What's wrong with me? Why I can't remember who I am? I closed my eyes trying to recall what had happened after that. Do I need to sleep again so maybe I could see what would happen next? Yeah, right who am I kidding as if that would be possible? I glanced at the window and I notice that it was already morning throwing my feet of the bed I force myself I get up. I took a quick shower and get dressed I need to clear my head. I went to the kitchen to fix myself a cup of coffee to start my day. That's why I decided to go outside and find something

to keep me busy. I found a man arranging stacks of timber on the side of the corral. I slowly approached him. "Hey, need a hand?" The man looked at me with surprise in his eyes. "Oh...you are the guy—" I extended my hand in his direction. "Neon." "Neon?" He inquired with a mocking smile in his face. "As in Neon 'Lights'?" I threw a frown and felt slightly irritated by the smile in his face right now. I felt slightly defensive. "Yeah, Willow temporarily gave me that name." "Sorry." He said clearly trying to hold himself from laughing out loud. He took the offered hand and shook it briefly. "I am Jace Wilkinson."

P 7-1

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I nodded at the timber he's working with and repeated my earlier question. "Do you need a hand?" He gave me a head-to-toe look as if he doesn't believe that I could help him. The sardonic smile was still in his face. "Do you know how to fix the fence?" I shrugged casually. "How hard can it be?" "All right, there's a hammer and concrete nails at the back of the pickup truck and you can get my extra safety gloves there then start fixing the fence around the corral area." I placed my cup of

instant coffee on the side since it taste bland and follow his instruction and start fixing the cracked fence on the corral area removing the rotten wood. I aligned the new timber horizontally and start hammering on the wooden post. I noticed Jace was looking at me with amused expression. "You're quite good at this. I never expect that acity slicker like you know his way with hammering tools." "Thanks." I replied sarcastically as I concentrate on my work. "So is it true?" The cowboy asked casually, unloading the timber from the pickup truck. "That you have amnesia?" "It seems so." "How does it feel not to remember anything?" "Annoying." "What?" He seemed didn't understand my answer for he looked at me with a questioning eyes. "What do you mean?" "I said, you are annoying." I looked up from him with a serious face. He was worse than Willow in asking me question I didn't even know how to answer. "Oh!" He snickered, looking at me with mocking look again. "City boys are really know for being rude." "What makes you say that I am a city boy?" He shrugged, his brown eyes filled with cynicism. "For one thing, there's nothing about you that says that you are a country guy like the rest of us here. Second, you look every inch of a rich city boy who never works in a ranch before." Despite the insult I get from his I couldn't help but to smile. "I like you despite the harsh words coming out of your mouth—straight to the point no bull." He nodded, arranging his hat on his head. "That's me." I

continued to work with the broken fences in silence and we he was done unloading the wood from the truck he said to me. "Do you think you can manage here? I need to look after the cattle."

P 7-2

"Yeah, I can do this one." "All right, if you say so." Jace walked away from but before he could get any further he called after me. "See you around, Neon lights." I just completely ignore his jibe and focus on my work. Moments later, I sensed her coming out of the house with her dog Albert. Was that even possible that I became aware of her the moment I feel her presence near me without even looking in her direction? "Oh, you're up early." Willow stated with wonder in her signature southern accent. "Good morning too, my lady." I said without even lifting my eyes on my work. But even if I didn't look at her I was fully aware where exactly she stood near me and her signature flowery scent that teasing my nostrils at the moment. I gritted my teeth together. Way to go with your unwanted thoughts again, boy. "Have you had your breakfast already?" She asked squatting beside me, looking closely at my work. I nodded the untouched coffee mug nearby. "I already have coffee." "You really don't know how to follow orders." Willow stated with a grim expression. "If I remember correctly Dr. Mitchell had

specifically says that you cannot force your body to do heavy work let it recover on it's on." I sighed again, the last thing I want was another lecture from her early this morning. "I need to do something to occupy my mind, that's all." "And why is that?" She asked casually. "Care to share what's bothering you?" I noticed that she focus her blue gaze on me even more. And I found myself glancing at those lucid blue eyes despite preventing myself from doing so. I took a deep breath as I found myself lost on those eyes. "I dreamt something." Her eyes widened in my direction. "Oh, is it about your past?" I sighed and focus back on hammering the timber again. "I don't know if it's really happened in the past or it's just a dream." "What is your dream all about?" I debated if I should tell her or not but the curiosity in her face made me tell her despite having second thoughts about it. "I found a woman sitting on a beach looking calmly at the sea. I couldn't really see her face but I know that she's smiling at me." "Oh..." There was something in her eyes that I couldn't understand there was a long awkward silence envelopus until she spoke again. "...do you think that girl is your girlfriend or something?" "I don't know." I confessed. I feel that my head would snap in half just trying to remember who that girl in my dream was.



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"Did you talk to her or you just saw her inside your dream?" I glanced at her briefly before focusing my eyes on the corral. "I asked her why she's hiding there then she said she's not hiding but thinking. I sat next to her and..." "And?" She prompted when I trailed off my words. I stared at her with frustration. "I said something at her in my dream I clearly remember but when I woke up I don't recall what I said to her and it pisses me off." "Don't be pissed about it!" Willow chirped, clapping her hands happily. "Don't you think that this is good news? Even if you don't remember the whole conversation with this girl it means that you are slowly remembering your past. Isn't that a good way to celebrate?" Despite my annoyance at the fragments I saw in my dream I couldn't help but to share her enthusiasm about the improvement—if you could call it that way—I was having with my lost memories. "I will cook a hearty breakfast so we can celebrate this improvement you are having, Neon." She grinned at me cheerfully. I could feel that my mouth curve into a smile. "I'm good. I already have my coffee I need to finish this job before Jace starts to accuse me of being useless city boy." "Nonsense." She replied nonchalantly, waving her hand in the air. Her eyes held spark in their depth that I found truly fascinating to admire. "How can

you work with an empty stomach? Besides, you haven't touch your coffee I'm sure you're hungry." It was on the tip of my tongue to inform her that I suddenly feel a different kind of hunger as I stared at her rosy lips. "What do you think of an all-American breakfast St. Petersburg style?" She asked completely unaware of my not-so-gentleman thoughts about her tempting lips. "Sounds good to me." I replied but my gaze was still fix in her lovely mouth. "Okay." She answered back a little breathlessly and I found myself leaning towards her. I noticed the slightly rapid rise and fall of her chest. My face was only inch apart from her when her dog suddenly bark from somewhere behind us. We suddenly broke apart looking at the other direction like wayward children caught being disobedient. "I—I..." She cleared her throat as she stood up glancing everywhere except to me. "...I need to go and cook. See you later." I hid my smile when I saw the stains that spread through her cheeks before she literally run inside the house with her cockblocker of a dog. As I went back to my work my mind was still filled of the image of those exquisite lips of Willow Kinsella and growing temptation of tasting them even if there's hell to pay after that.

*So be it!*

The devil inside me have said without a hint of guilt.

P 7-4

*Sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.*

-Lewis Carroll

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

Breakfast was served almost half an hour when she left me outside and announced that she'll cook breakfast for us. Here I was, sitting on the kitchen small wooden table across her with array of food in front of me. "Dig in." Willow announced with grin. I stared at the food from waffles, sunny side up egg and bacon there was also a black coffee for me. I took my fork and start to eat the food she prepared. "What can you say about my cooking?" "It's good." I replied, sampling everything. The eggs are perfectly cook slightly runny just the way I like them, the waffles were fluffy and tasty they must be made from scratch and then the bacon were crispy perfect combination with waffle. "You're good at this." She seem pleased by the compliment as she raised her mug for a silent toast. "Eat well.

You need to be full if you want to finish renovating the corral. I don't want you to pass out in the middle of the day due to hunger." And then, unexpected thing happened I suddenly choke on my food as I started to cough. I could feel the food was blocking my airways. "Are you okay?" Instantly, she was on my side tapping my back gently. "I'm fine." I responded, still gasping for air. I drank my coffee as I tried control my coughing. She chuckled while still tapping my back with her palm. "Jace must be wondering where the heck you went. He hates when the cowboys leaving their unfinished work." "It's a good thing that I am not one of his workers, then." Willow grinned at me as she sat back from her chair. Her blue eyes gleamed with delight in their profound. "Finish your breakfast and continue to work outside since we're currently short for manpower as of now you will be a great help." "Actually," I said after a moment, sipping my newly improved coffee. "I am thinking of putting off my work until this afternoon I want to go somewhere else after breakfast." Curiosity fitted her face as she sat up straight in her chair and look at me questioningly. "Where do you want to go?" "I want to borrow your truck if I may. I think if I really want to know my identity I need to go back to the crash site. There must be something there to remind of me who I am.

"I'll help you if you want." She offered thoughtfully. "I can drive you there if you want." I shook my head, she's really very kind to me from the start and here I was who kept thinking about kissing her senseless every time I see those lips. "You don't have to do that..." "Nonsense. I will help you I have free time so there's nothing to worry about." She grinned at me while sampling her food also. "Thank you." I answered, trying to ignore the temptation that's growing inside me. That's the last thing I want to take advantage of the woman who have save me. "Finish your food and we'll leave after that." I couldn't help but to smile when she just said that like a lady boss she thought she was. Moments later, we were heading to the place where I nearly died I really don't know what to expect when I reach that place since it feels like it's only been a nightmare when I slumped under the tree thinking I was about to die that moment and then Willow found me. "You okay?" I glanced at Willow who insisted that she should drive the truck since I am still not hundred percent well from the accident. Here I was thinking what to expect once we get there. "I'm fine." "You seems agitated." She remarked, glancing briefly in my direction before settling her gaze on the road. I sighed and just look ahead. "I just don't know what to expect once we get there. If I would be honest I will say that I am quite nervous." She gave me a sympathetic smile. "That's understandable. Anyone would

feel the same if they are in your position." Now that we're on this subject it occurred to me that I haven't ask her yet how did she found me that night."Can I ask you a question?" "Hit me." I could feel my lips twitching with a smile. "How did you find me that night? Are you the type of woman who spend time in the forest alone at night?" She grinned at me mischievously before focusing on the road. "I am not alone that night Albert is with me. To answer your question I went to the neighboring ranch—" when I pointedly look at her she added. "—nope it's not Matt Graves's ranch just to be clear when I saw a helicopter just few meters high from the trees swirling out of control in the air after that I heard a loud sound and I knew it must be the helicopter. I know that it's pretty reckless of me but at that time adrenaline just kick in and then I saw you under the tree bleeding..." I didn't heard the rest of her words when I saw the wreckage not far from us. I took a deep breath as my heart pounded so loudly in my chest when I saw the unrecognizable helicopter. Willow parked the truck as we jump out as I slowly walk towards the debris with yellow tape with words

P 8-2

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'police line do not cross' wrap around it. I carefully crossed the line and search for my things which was unlikely to find my things here since the authorities probably retrieve them from this site. Still I wager my luck hoping to find anything that would trigger my memories.

*AT THE SAME TIME IN SICILY...*

### **Laila Pallis' POV**

"No!" It was already afternoon in Sicily and once again

*Patri*

and my twin, Leila were in the middle of a heated argument in the library of

*Palazzo di Fiorenza*

. No one was backing out from their glaring competition

*Patri*

sat in his favorite study table—or throne as was we privately called it—while Leila stood in front of him with her hands in each side of her waist totally prepared for the war. "Why being unreasonable?" She bravely questioned our father's command. "He is the only man that I can think who can help us locating Enzo. Why are you against the idea of asking Marco Orsini's help?" "I said, no!"

*Patri!*

"My husband who was sitting next to me on the sofa look down at me with questioning eyes. I shook my head sipping my tea and remain silent." "Should we stop them now before their fight takes an ugly turn? I don't want get unwanted scolding from your father after this." Nikos whispered softly near my ear. I grinned at him mischievously. "Don't worry, this is just their normal conversation." He looked at Leandro who was casually sitting on the sofa across to us browsing something in his laptop. "Aren't you supposed to stop your wife from having another confrontation with her own father?" Leandro raised an eyebrow in his direction while his gold eyes held amusement. "And I will be at the receiving end of her wrath? No, thank you." "Laila!" For the first time my name was dragged into their heated conversation. My twin's green eyes held annoyance. "Maybe you can talk some sense on him. Enzo is missing now for days! And the authorities as well as his goons doesn't have any clue about our cousin's situation." But before I could answer

*Patri*

spoke again. "Why I don't understand is why you think we need the likes of the insolent Marco Orsini to find Vincenzo? Why do you keep on dragging that boy in our family's business?" "For once I agree with him on something." My



husband muttered gently in my ears. I tried to stop myself from smiling while he's playing with the strands of my hair with his fingers.

P 8-3

Leila answered again this time she stomped her feet on the carpeted floor to make her point that made her husband gave her an alert look. "Because I'm getting tired of waiting for any improvements and he is the only man I can think who can find Enzo in no time." "No!" "Oh, for the love of God!" Leila threw her hands in the air as she let out her frustration that bubbling inside her. "Stop being pain in the rear,

*Patri*

. I know you don't like Marco but—" "Well, that's an understatement."

*Patri*

inserted with a serious tone in his commanding voice. Nikos and Leandro dared to chortle at that and unwillingly earn a warning glare from my twin sister. Her green eyes silently telling them that there's no funny and no one should laugh about

*Patri's*

harsh comebacks. "Still," Leila breathed deeply, clearly already reaching her the end of her patience. "Whether you agree or not I will ask for Marco's help, papa." There was unmistakable warning in our father's cold green eyes. "Do not wager your luck on me, young lady." "Oh, you bet I will." "Leila..." My sister had the nerve to defy the man who was considered as one of the most—if not—the most powerful man in Sicily. "I will do everything to find Enzo for all we know he's in a dire condition as we speak. How can you face Uncle Emilio and Aunt Rosa in the afterlife knowing you don't utilize enough the resources to find their missing son?" I bit the inside of my cheek to prevent myself from smiling even Nikos and Leandro did the same. I looked at

*Patri*

who gave Leila a thunderous look. "Now see here, young lady. I'm not going to die anytime soon..." I think it's time for me to intervene with growing discussion. "

*Patri*

," I said, standing from my seat and went beside my sister. I supplied a reassuring smile at my father's direction. "I think Leila is correct, though. Despite your opinion about Marco he's a good man and a good friend of ours and he can certainly help us finding Enzo just give it a try." "No." Our father replied

stubbornly. "You're running against time, sire." Leila warned sweetly to

*Patri's*

forbidding face. "Your heir is missing and you need to find him fast before something bad happens to him. And God forbids... I hate to see you still managing everything even at your deathbed." "You..."

*Patri*

started his face fumed with pure anger. I elbowed Leila's ribcage slightly as I murmured to her. "Stop goading him, please." Out loud I said. "For now, we need all the assistance we can get to help us find our dear Enzo. Nikos and I will fly to New York two days from now we'll personally coordinate with the American authorities in searching for Enzo."

P 8-4

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"Keep me posted, okay?" Leila had said to me her eyes filled with anxiousness and annoyance at the sametime at the progress we're having on finding our cousin. Not that I can blame her since she was pretty much close to Enzo in our

childhood days. She claimed that they think alike that's why— or as I put it they were both naughty children growing up." I will." I promised with a nod. For now, all I wish is to finally know the whereabouts of our cousin and hopefully he's alive and safe from his helicopter crash.

P 8-5

*Nothing gives rest but the sincere search for truth.*

-Blaise Pascal

### **Leila Salazar's POV**

Later that day after my maddening conversation with Cesare in the library I had a video conference with Marco in my laptop in the green drawing room. "Do you think you can find him?" I asked him, sitting with my legs tucked under me on the sofa. Right now, I am desperate to find Enzo and whether Patri likes my method or not I will ask this man's help to find him. There was a smug smile broke in his face when I stared at him with screen of my computer. "But of course I can find your missing cousin. When was the last time I failed searching for missing person?" I rolled my eyes at his arrogance and as much as I want to deny he was hundred percent correct. He has perfect long list of finding missing people in the past. And he certainly work faster than the authorities despite my husband and their

friends' objection about his ability. They say that he has connection to the devil or he's devil himself. But right I don't care whatever connection he have as long as he can find Enzo I would be fine with his method. "You said he disappear America few days ago and since then there's no report about him?" I nodded grimly, thinking it was supposed to be a happy day celebrating the wedding of Lucia and Diego but at the reception we received phone call telling us that the dolt soldier of our family gone missing on their radar. Enzo was skilful pilot trained in the military to conduct special mission he was one of the most elite pilot in the army so it baffled us specially Cesare how could a person like him be involve with a helicopter crash. "Are you sure he didn't disappear on purposed? Marco stated in a matter-of-fact. "Maybe your cousin intent to remain lost somewhere since I know for a fact that he doesn't want anything to do with your family." I scowled at him openly through the computer screen as I shifted my position on the sofa. Though, if I have to be honest that's not very far from happening. "Either way, I just want to know his location." "And if I ever find him what are you going to do about it?" I smiled serenely in his direction that kind of smile who reassured him that I have nothing but good intention towards my cousin. "I just need to see if he's truly fine with the life he choose and then I will let him live the life he truly wanted." There was a

mocking smile on Marco Orsini's face. "Why do I have a hard time believing the words you just said?"

P 9-1

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My face lit with delight, shaking my head in the process. No amount of acting would be enough for his knowing eyes. "Because we think alike, that's why. Of course, I will tell Cesare about his whereabouts and I will let my father do what it needs to do with my idiot cousin." "Bad cousin." I raised an eyebrow in his direction while giving him a sly smile. "Who knows he might find him a bride, you know. Enzo is not getting younger and he is the last Fiorenza in our family that can continue the family legacy." That picked his interest for he sat up straight from his chair and stared at me intently. "Now you are talking, little rebellious princess." But then he frowned slightly. "Though the cold-hearted plan sounded like my

*Nonno's*

attempt to save the bloody family dynasty even resorting to blackmail me in the process." "It seems that you don't mind the blackmail your grandfather did back then you even succumbed to his ultimatum." He thought for a moment and then a small

smile played in his mouth, probably remembering his courtship days with Francesca. "

*Touché*

, madam." "So how long do you think before you can get the information we needed about him?" I asked casually. He smiled thoughtfully while playing with his fountain pen in his hand. "As soon as I got the data I will give you an update." "Thank you, Marco." He grinned at me roguishly. "I should be the one thanking you, little one. It seems that we will be gaining another member of our club sooner. I could hardly wait to tell the guys about this good news. You bet I will find him faster than the others before him." "I could hardly wait for that day, Marco.

*Grazie*

..."

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

I stared at the moonlight as I sat on the wooden porch steps at Willow Kinsella's ranch. Silence filled the whole place while the emotions inside me raged. I knew that coming back to the crash site would be only futile given that nothing left to recover from the totally burnt helicopter. I sincerely hope that I could get anything from my things that could lead me to remember who I really am. After we went to the site we went to the sheriff's office to ask if they recovered something in the

helicopter but they only showed me the totally burned satchel bag even the things inside were unrecognizable. Willow and I went back to the ranch without anything. It pissed me off but I didn't let her know that. I just kept on silent throughout the ride and it seems that she understand my silence when she remain quiet throughout the drive back to her ranch.

P 9-2

Now I was once again alone to dwell with my thoughts. I closed my eyes and focus my brain to remember something...anything that would remind me about my past. Nothing came back from my memories apart from the dream I have last night about this mysterious girl my instincts told me that I knew this woman so well and I have a feeling that it's not on the romantic side. If it was, I would not be this attracted to a southern girl with clear blue eyes. There was something move slowly behind me. I didn't see it but I felt it and before that person could move any closer towards me my instinct kick in and I found myself pinning the subject of my thoughts on the wooden floor. I noticed her heavy breathing as her eyes were saucer wide staring back at me. I took a deep breath temporarily closing my eyes as I rested my head in the curve of her shoulder. "Do...not...come...to...me...like...that. Ever again." I could feel the pulse racing in her throat as I smell her signature



flowery scent. "Noted." The uneasiness I felt moments ago was now soothed due to this woman's warmth. "Maybe I should move now." "Yes, maybe you should." She replied a little hoarsely. I could hear her fast heartbeats while her hands were still trapped with my hands on the top of her head. "And maybe it's a good thing not to startle you again like this. I don't want to get tackled again like a football player." I felt myself smiling. "Maybe you should consider that next time." "I will." "Can I stay here for a moment?" "What's wrong, Neon?" She inquired quietly. "Is this because of what happened this morning?" "Hmm..." I just mumbled savouring her flowery scent. "You can talk to me, you know." Willow invited kindly. "I know that we only know each other for days but..." I forced myself to lift my head from the curve of her neck and search for her face. I threw a smirk in her direction. "Technically, you are the only person I know as of now...well, apart from that tyrant cowboy named Jace and that man you nearly killed yesterday." Her eyes danced with delight while there was a grin in her beautiful face. "You can tell me what's bothering you. I will try to help you can count me as a friend." It was on the tip of my tongue to kindly point out to her that being her friend was the last thing I have on my mind right now. When I want to strip her naked right this moment but held back myself from saying it out loud. "Wait..." She stated before I have the chance to say anything. She tried to get free from our position and

when I finally let go of her, she suddenly stand while I stared at her questioning. "...wait here. I will get

P 9-3

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something." "I hope it's not your riffle." "Funny." She said with a fake laugh before she disappeared inside the house and not long while she came back with bottles of beers in her hand. I raised my eyebrow in her direction. "This is what you need. The eternal answer to every problem." I was about to refuse I was not on the mood for a beer too late she already pushing the cold bottle in my hand. "Thank you." She raised her bottle for a silent toast before taking a shot. "I know you must be sad because we have not found anything about your identity but Sheriff Davis told us that they are coordinating with the authorities in the city to direct your case." "Hmm..." I mumbled as I took a swig of the cold brew. "Don't worry," she said brightly, sitting on the wooden railing on the porch as she stared at the vast land. "For all we know your family is now frantically looking for you. They will find you with the help of the authorities in no time especially the girl in your dreams. I am

sure she's waiting for your return." There was something in her voice that made me look at her sharply.

*Was it sadness?*

I asked silently. I wasn't really sure maybe I just imagine it. I permit myself to smile slightly as I took a sip. "I'm absolutely sure that I am not romantically involved with that woman." "What makes you say that?" She asked tentatively, her eyes were sharp and alert as they focus their gaze on me. "Because..." "Because what...?" She prodded when I trailed off. I shook my head in disbelief as a small smile played in my mouth. I silently debate on how to answer her so instead of responding to her my body move in its own and I found myself walking towards her. "Because of this." I said shortly before surrendering to the temptation of kissing her luscious mouth. I heard her short intake of breath as I invaded her mouth just like how I wanted to do the moment I woke up again and found her entering the room with her sweet smile. I sneaked my hands around her waist to prevent her from falling off the railing. I tease and coax her to respond to my kisses and it didn't take long for her to recover from her shock and sneak her arms around my neck and started kissing me back. I groaned against her lips from the pleasure of her mouth. I could taste the sweet and bitter taste of the alcohol inside her mouth. I even drew her

closer to me until the soft mounds of her breast pressed on my chest making me start to lose my remaining sanity.

P 9-4

"Willow..." I said, against her mouth forcing myself to stop kissing her before we enter even more dangerous territory and I was sure neither of us isn't ready yet. Because if this kiss didn't stop right now I was in danger of taking more than a kiss from her. I rested my forehead in hers as my thumb traced her already swollen lips. "We need to stop." "Yeah," She agreed biting her lower lip as she stared at me with her innocent eyes. "You're not helping me." I reflected out loud with a smirk playing in my lips when she looked at me like that she unknowingly awakened the devil inside me and that's not a good thing. "God forbid!" I said before taking her lips again. I would just mind the consequence of this after for now I would surrender to the temptation.

P 9-5

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*Work like you don't need the money. Love like you've never been hurt. Dance like nobody's watching.*

-Satchel Paige

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

I didn't sleep a wink last night. My mind was filled with the images of that handsome devil with a dark greeneyes. I still don't know what had happened last night one moment I was tackled and pinned to the groundwhen I mistakenly startled him as he was deep in his thoughts—and the next, I found myself trap in his armsand he was kissing me with such fervor. I ran my fingers at my thoroughly kissed lips last nights. It's been a while since I've been kissed since Mattand I broke up years ago. But the man could kiss. He's been an expert on how to seduce a woman with his sinful mouth making her forget all the other men she had kissed in the past that's how good he was in smooching. Albert barked beside me on the bed. I forced myself to focus on him as I smiled. "You're hungry, buddy?" The dog barked again and jumped out of the bed. I went to the bathroom as I brush my teeth and washed myface before coming down to the kitchen to fix some breakfast for us. I stopped dead from my place when I standing next to the kitchen countertops enjoying his cup of coffee. He smiled as his magnificent eyes twinkle with delight. "Morning." "Morning..." I mumbled softly, avoiding his intense gaze. I went to the

cupboard to get Albert some food before pouring myself a coffee from the coffee maker. "Sleep well?" I stared at him from the rim of my mug and gauging his expression. What's with his small talks early this morning? I looked away again. "Yes, thank you." I answered though in reality I was sleep deprived due to his kisses last night. "And you?" "Not really..." My gaze shot back to him instantly. I stopped from drinking my coffee and search for his face. "Why? Did you dream again?" Those green eyes smiled down at me that making me shiver down my spine. "Not really. I was kept awake with different matter." "Like what?" I queried nonchalantly. And then he focused his gaze on my lips. I suddenly felt uncomfortable in my position standing across to him

P 10-1

the wooden table was the only thing that separate us. "Something like when will I have the chance to kiss your lovely lips again?" My breath was caught at his words. He was really a devil I can attest to that now even though he has amnesia at the moment that doesn't mean he has forgotten his flirtatious manner. This guy was a ladies' man I am sure of that. "So you don't regret that kiss?" "Those kisses." He corrected me gently, there was devilry playing in his mouth right this moment. "Of course, I don't regret them,

## *Signorina*

. "That foreign language again. I think you're not really pure American." His eyebrow furrowed. "What?" "Nothing." I said shaking my head. There's no need to remind him that now. It would just throw him in a bad mood early in the morning. "Why would I regret kissing you?" He inquired casually, going back to our original topic when silence filled the kitchen. I shrugged casually, unable to look away from his forceful eyes. "I don't know, maybe blame the alcohol for your unpredictable action, I think." He smirked wolfishly in my direction that made me feel suddenly hot inside. "A bottle of beer cannot do anything to my consciousness. Besides, even if I was so drunk I know what I am doing like kissing you for instance." "It seems that you're in a habit of doing this in the past." His eyes clouded for a moment as he put down his mug on the countertop and crossed his arms in his middle that made the muscles in his arms become more defined through his shirt. I abruptly want to beat myself from reminding him about his lost memories. "I'm sorry... I didn't mean—" "I may not remember my past but I can assure you that deep inside me I know that I never want to kiss any woman more than I want to taste your lips last night, Willow." I felt my cheeks flushed from embarrassment with his words. "You got to be kidding me." Neon smiled devilishly in my direction, as he eyed me from head to toe it seems to be that he was enjoying my discomfort more than he should have. "I am not

joking, my darling belle. When did I ever lie to you?" My heart pounded on my chest so loudly, I swore he could hear it. I gave him a severe look but a small smile slowly slipping in my lips. "Stop playing games on me early on the morning, Neon." He surprised me when he suddenly burst out laughing and he crossed the distance that separate us. I swallowed hard when he was finally stood in front of me. "What are you doing?" "Standing next to you." I rolled my eyes as I tried to put some distance between us when I realized that I have nowhere to run since I was trap between his body and the countertops. "Save your sarcasm to other, Neon. They won't work on me."

P 10-2

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He flashed a heart-stopping grin. "I know what will work on you." Neon started to lower his head when I suddenly push him away. "I just remember that I need to go to town this morning." I was freed from his trap and I was about to leave the kitchen when I happened to glance back at him and I found him standing all along in the kitchen with blank expression. "Want to come with me?" His troubled face broke into a blissful smile and replied. "Yeah, I think I will love that." I didn't really have to



do in town I just said that since I thought he was about to kiss me again. It's not I don't like to kiss him again but I think things between us move faster than we both want. If we don't set the boundaries we might end up not catching up the pace of this roller-coaster ride. Albert didn't come with us since in town. The drive from ranch was silent one except from the county music on the radio that we're listening. I frowned when we finally arrived in town. I didn't expect that it would be crowded that the usual day and then it occurred to me that today is

### *Pie Festival*

in our town. "What's going on?" Neon asked as we slid out of my truck. There was a frown marked on his forehead. "Pie Festival." I answered shortly, as I walk to the pavement beside him. The mayor informed me about this few days ago but it slip on my mind since I found Neon on the forest wounded. "Mind if I leave you alone for a moment? I will just talk to Mrs. Carson over there." I nodded at the direction of the matron ladies sitting on the makeshift tent on the side of the road smiling at us while trying to get our attention.

"Sure. I'll just walk around." I walked to the elderly ladies on the other side of the road. I have completely forgotten to make our very own family recipe of Pecan Pie. I was just about to explain to the organizers about my lapses when they beat me in asking. "Is that the boy currently living in your ranch, Willow? The one

Sheriff Davis says that haveunfortunate helicopter crash in our town?"I gave the trio of women a slightly force smile in my face. "Yep, that's him." "You didn't tell us that he's such a handsome man. He commanded attention from the moment he step out of your truck." Mrs. Carson accused with a smile in her face. She nodded at Neon's direction. "Look how he'sattracting attention from the young ladies in our little town."I followed their gaze when I saw Neon was talking with three girls across the street. Clearly, they wereasking for his number. It was as if he knew that I was looking when he lifted his gaze from those women andsmiled at me."Apparently," Mrs. Banks inserted smoothly, giving a meaningful look to the widow Mrs. Carson who wassitting next to her at the registration table. "Not only had the younger generation seemed to have interest tothis handsome fellow even the old ones."I rolled my eyes at them. They were the typical matron ladies in your town who religiously attends Sundayservice at the local church but linger after the mass for a chitchat with each other's company to know thelatest town gossips. "I mean, if interested dating older women tell him I'm available, Willow."It took every ounce of my self-control not to scoff at her openly I just nodded and smile I felt my jaw would

crack at the effort I pulled in. "Don't worry, Mrs. Carson." I said in a dry tone. "I will ask him that." Mrs. Gilbert, the third one on the group had ask. "Are you not going to enter the competition this year, Willow?" I grimaced forgetting to make our family's Pecan Pie. I shook my head regretfully. "Not this year, I guess. I didn't have any pie with me today." Mrs. Gilbert nodded sympathetically. "That's understandable since you have a lot in hand lately. Maybe next year, dear." I couldn't miss the double meaning in her words. Since when my financial status became a public knowledge in this town? Oh well, maybe they already heard about me pointing a gun to my ex the other day but they didn't ask for the yet so... "Next year," I promised with a smile. "I won't forget. Excuse me, will you?" I didn't wait for them to speak again when I cross the road where Neon was standing. I was about to reach him when I saw a girl approach him with her signature demure smile so I stop from my place. "Hey." Tory Jennings greeted him with a batting her lashes on him. She extended her hand in his direction. "Tory. And you are...?" "Neon." He took the offered hand and shook it briefly. I couldn't help but to rolled my eyes on them. Of course, this is Tory we're talking about. I could say that we're frenemies since middle school from being homecoming queen up to being Miss St. Petersburg years ago we've been in each other's throat. Naturally, those competition we have in the past often involve a guy. And I guess Neon was not an exception from that. I

thought we're too old for this." Nice name. Would you like to dance, Neon?" Tory invited gamely. Alarm fitted on those dark green eyes when he suddenly look around and found me standing few feet away from them. A grateful smile broke into his handsome face. "Willow!" Tory turned around to give me a stiff smile in her face I return the smile with equal enthusiasm. "Hi, Willow. Long-time no see." Neon went beside me and swung an arm around my shoulder. "Sorry to turn down your offer, Ms. Jennings. But I already ask Willow for a dance." "Is that so?" There was a smile in her face that didn't quite reach her face. "Maybe next time then. I'll see you around." When Tory left us I raised an eyebrow in his direction. "I don't remember you asking me for a dance." He gave me disapproving look and I added. "Do you even know how to dance country style?" He gave me a smug look. "How hard can that be?" "Okay, let's see." I gave him a disbelief look as he led me to the dancing crowd with the live music near the open space. We join the towns people dancing 'line dance' a choreographed dance with a repeated sequence

P 10-4

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of steps in which a group of people dance in one or more lines or rows, all facing either each other dancing to the rhythm of the music. As we join the other dancer I couldn't help but to laugh when Neon struggling to copy the hop and wincing whenever his right foot need to stop on the ground. What madness this idiot think about dancing this particular song. After a moment I took pity on him and drag him away from the dancing crowd I told him to wait for me on the vacant bench nearby as I would buy drinks for us. On my way on the stalls that selling refreshments I bumped to Tory again. "So you and him, correct?" I pretended not to understand what she meant by that statement. "What do you mean?" "You and Neon." She repeated. There was something in her eyes.

### *Envy?*

"I can see that he likes you." "Maybe because I save his life that's why he's comfortable around me." "Do you like him?" I looked at her straight in eyes, silently challenging her. "Why? If I tell you that I like him you will suddenly feel attracted to him?" The looked of shock in her face was almost believable. "What a dreadful thing to say, Willow." I shrugged nonchalantly as paid the refreshment on the woman in the stalls. "Maybe I am just speaking from my experience don't you think?"

*Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.*

-Mahatma Gandhi

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

I woke up early in the morning preparing myself to cook breakfast. When I saw Neon already standing on the kitchen with a cup of coffee looking outside through the glass window. "Good morning," I mumbled softly. I slightly felt annoyed that he's already having coffee when I want to cook food for him. He turned around to look at me with expressive green eyes smiled at me. "Good morning, Miss belle." "I want to prepare food for breakfast but I can see that you're already having coffee." I gestured the coffee in his hand. He looked at the mug in his hand and smile slightly. "That's okay, I'm not really a morning person. A cup of coffee will do for me in the morning." "Oh..." Awkward silence filled the kitchen. I've never been nervous or tongue-tied with a man before only to this guy in front of me. "So?" Neon said conversationally he raised an eyebrow in the process. "Is it true about the rumors I heard about your family recipe of Pecan pie?" "Where did you heard that?" "At the town yesterday." He answered, sipping his coffee while never leaving my gaze. "I was being told by at least half dozen of town's people about your signature Pecan pie. When will I can taste your

infamous pie?" I stared at him questioningly. I never thought that he would hear about that now I suddenly felt shy about it. "Do you want some?" He grinned at me almost boyishly, his eyes twinkled with delight like the leaves during the first day of springseason. "I will be lying if I say I don't." I burst out laughing shaking my head in the process. "All right, we'll bake one for you." "We?" He repeated with questioning eyes. "But I don't any knowledge about baking I cannot help you, Willow." "Then it's a high time for you to learn how to make an authentic southern Pecan pie." I informed him, starting to look for the ingredients on the pantry. Thank goodness I still have pecan nuts from the last time. I looked at him with smirk when I saw him completely alarm at the thought that he's going to bake. "Now be a good

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gentleman and help me here." I saw him exhaled deeply as he moved beside me on the kitchen countertops. "What do you want me to do?" I pointed at the large bowls on the overhead cabinet. "Get those for me please and then start measuring two and half cups of flour, one teaspoon of salt, 90g of unsalted butter and half a cup of water in a large bowl." He looked at me

questioningly but did what I told him to do. I fascinatingly look at him the way he took his time measuring meticulously each ingredients before putting on the large bowl. When he was satisfied with his work he looked at me and smile.

"Done." "Now start kneading the whole thing with your hands. You need to make the crust and chill it in the fridge before making the filling...No!" I stared at him in horror when he start to massacre crust with his harsh way of combining the ingredients. "...you need to incorporate the ingredients gently look it's all over the place." I pushed him on the side with my hip as I teach him the proper way to combine the ingredients. "This is the proper way of doing this, sir. After this, you need to put it on the fridge to chill a bit." I told him to put in on the fridge once he's done. "Next for the filling. You know why my pecan pie is extra special?" "Why?" I eyed him sweetly. "A dash of cinnamon on the filling." Neon helped me—or rather, help me create more mess in my kitchen with his sloppiness. Most of the time I tried to stop him from creating more chaos in the room telling me to add more of this and that when I sternly told him that in baking everything should be precise in measurement. Finally, the pie was at last at the oven. "Now," I said turning around to look at him while wiping my hands on the kitchen towel. "All we need to do is wait for the pie to cook." After an hour it's finally done. When I put pecan pie on the wire rack on the table. I swatted his hand when he's about



to dig in with his fork. "Aw...!" I glared him sternly. "The best way to eat a pie when it's cool." He scowled back at me clearly doesn't want to wait. "How long does it takes for this to cool anyway?" "About another hour or so." His green eyes widened considerably. "That long?" When I nodded at him, he added. "Then I guess I need to find something to keep me busy for next two hours." He went out to the kitchen using the back door with annoyance vibrating out of him. I shook my head he's really sorely loser sometimes. I went into my room to take a quick shower and changed my clothes. A consistent rapping on my bedroom door got my attention. My hair was still damp from my shower when I answered the door. "Neon!" He eyed me from head to toe with unashamed male appreciation in his sinfully beautiful eyes. "Hey..." He

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said with a devilish smile playing in his lips. He held out the bucket of paint and brush in his hand "...we need some help outside make yourself useful, lady boss." I smiled slightly, I peeked my head from the back of the wooden door. "All right, I'll come down in a moment." "Okay, see you outside." I prevent myself from being over excited when I closed the door and brush my hair hastily before putting sunscreen on my face and join him outside. Act cool, I reminded myself when I was about

to go outside the house. I found Neon and Jace on the corral area brushing the whole area with white paint. "What do you want me to do?" I said by way of greeting. Neon looked up at me while sitting on the ground with household brush in his hand. He grinned at me gesturing the paint bucket and spare brush nearby. "Make yourself useful and help us here." I took the spare household brush and dip it on the paint bucket and started to brush the newly installed timber on the corral. "You do realize that you are the only person here that has the nerve to order me around? I am the ranch owner's daughter, you know." "Oh yeah?" He asked sardonically. "Since you don't want to give me a slice with your pecan pie you might as well help us here. For all I know you just want to eat the entire thing without sharing to us." I chuckled while concentrating on my work. "I am the one who bakes it! Besides, I cannot eat the entire thing think about the calories of it." "Women and their figures." I rolled my eyes silently as I continued to work on the fence and then Neon started to crowd my space I gave him a questioning look but he just remained focused on his work. So I just ignored him but he took sidesteps again until arms touching together. "What?" I asked, looking at him with a curve of smile in my face. "What?" He repeated my question with innocent face yet I couldn't miss the way his eyes twinkled with mischievousness. "You're crowding my space." "I am not." "You are!" I said with laughter in my voice. "Look how

close you are to me right this moment. Move to the other side, Neon." "I don't know what you mean, Willow." He stated but the devilish smile on his face tells me an entirely different story. I was about to retort on me when he suddenly ran his brush in my face instead of the wood.

P 11-3

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"Oh, no...you didn't..." "Willow..." Neon warned playfully as I poised to do the same for him. "I'm sorry, okay? Please..." I didn't listen to his warning and got my revenge on him. I smudged the wet paint in his face. "You ask for this, woman. The war is on..." I squeak and squeal as we fought with each other trying to get the best attack towards the others. We were like children playing and messing with each other. We were only dragged to reality when Jace coughed not so discreetly near us. We saw him staring at us with his eyebrow raised in our direction. "Are we going to paint this thing together or I will do this alone while watching the two of you flirt shamelessly with each other on broad daylight?" I felt my cheeks heated at his words while I glared at the paint-covered man standing next to me who remained stoic. "Of course we'll help you, Jace." "Yeah,"

Neon agreed humorlessly, wiping the smudge on his face. "Of course we'll help you pal. So hold your horses." "It seems to me that you guys completely forgotten about me." Jace accused sardonically. He adjusted his cowboy hat and stared at the sun. "I hate third wheeling." "So do I." Neon agreed gravely that made me look at him sharply. It seems that every now and then he unknowingly made casual statement that said something about his past. I didn't bother to point out at him again about his casual remarks again and just let go. "Let's go finish this things so we can eat the pecan pie waiting for us in the kitchen." I announced brightly as I started to dip my brush again on the wet paint. For the next hour or so we work silently focusing our attention on the animal fence in the middle of the ranch. After we're done my whole body was aching with still paint in every inch of me I went to the kitchen to get the pecan pie so we can enjoy it along with a bottle of Madeira that goes so well with the pasty. I tried to avoid Neon's company throughout the rest of the day as much as possible after painting the whole corral but that doesn't mean I wasn't aware of what's he was doing or he was looking at me from the distant even if he was with the cowboys outside. I spent my day removing the paint that sticks on me like it was already part of my skin. Later that night when I was about to go to bed. I discreet knock sounded on my doorway again. I went

to answer the door and my eyes widened when I saw Neon standing outside with hellfire in his eyes.

*What's going on?*

P 11-4

*All of our reasoning ends in surrender to feeling.*

-Blaise Pascal

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

I went to answer the door and my eyes widened when I saw Neon standing outside with hellfire in his eyes.

*What's going on?*

"Yes?" I inquired lightly but my heart pounded so loudly in my chest I could swear he can hear it from this distance. "Do you want something?" "Actually, I do." He replied softly in a dangerously low voice, the hellfire in his eyes was still there and he's making me nervous not for fear but something else entirely. "The boys are having barbecue party outside, come outside." "I think I'll pass." "What's wrong? Are you okay?" I swallowed hard, unable to remove my gaze from his magnificent eyes. He took a one step forward but I held my ground on my doorway holding the doorknob tightly as if it was my only lifeline. "I am not in the mood I want to go to bed right

now and here I thought you want another pecan pie?" I jested lightly trying to brush off the awkwardness that surrounds us at this moment. "I think, I am..." He suggested seductively. "But it's a different kind of

*pie*

that I am craving tonight." The air in my lungs had been knocked off at his words. My heart thundered on my chest as if there was a stampede. "Stop playing games with me, Neon. Go back to the barbecue party outside." "I am not playing games with you, Willow." This time he closed the distance that separates us until we're only an inch apart from one another. I could almost smell his spicy aftershave. "I came here because I want to know why you are avoiding me throughout the day." "I am not avoiding you." "Oh yeah?" He asked maddeningly, his beautiful eyes gleamed despite the darkness around us. "That's not why I think. Tell me, did I do something wrong?" "You are not making any sense." I tried to laugh but even in my ear I knew how off it sounded. "You are not making any sense, Neon. Did you overdose your pain meds tonight? You should go back to bed and let's call it a night now, shall we?" I was about to close the door in his face when a large palm flattened on the wooden surface of my doorway and stopped it from closing. "I stop drinking those prescription days' ago, Willow."

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"Good night, Neon." Too bad before I have the chance to shut the door firmly he already made his way inside my room and lock it behind him. I pretend to be scandalize with his aggressive demeanor tonight. "What do you think you're doing?" He raked his gaze on me from head to toe ardently. Suddenly, I felt that my exposed skin went hot with his scorching scrutiny. And then he said without an inch of remorse. "I came here to seduce you." I gasped at his brass announcement as I took step backwards until I hit the mattress. "You got to be kidding me. I have no time for your game." "This is not a game, sweetheart." He replied, stalking me slowly like a predator who was about to catch his prey. "I want you from the moment I saw you and now I will have you." He paused for a moment probably gauging my reaction. "And you will let me have you, right?" "Be sensible, will you?" I tried to put some distance between us putting him at arms' length. "You are not on your usual self tonight. Maybe you need to sleep now." "What do you know about my 'usual' self when I can't even remember my name?" His smile was dangerous and seductive at the same time. It was that kind of smile the devil might use to get what he wants no matter what. "Don't worry, I

will sleep...later." "Neon..." My breath was caught in my throat when he suddenly lifted my chin with his long fingers and force me to look at him in the eyes. "You will let me, right?" He inquired alluringly. "You will let me sleep with you tonight." I couldn't help but to gasp openly at him. This was the most blatant way of a man asking him to have sex with him that ever happened to me. I tried to open my mouth to say something— anything but nothing comes out. So he took the opportunity and pounce at me. He slowly lowered his head and I found myself closing my eyes as I wait for his mouth to kiss me. I intake a short breath when his soft lips touch mine. I flattened my hands in his solid chest I am not sure if the gesture was to stop him or I lean for support since my knees turn wobble. When the kiss turned passionately I try to break the kiss and stare at him. "Wait..." "What?" He asked, caressing my exposed neck slowly. I swallowed hard. "I have not agree to this yet." "Don't worry," He announced with a wolfish smile in his face. "Let me change your mind, Willow." Before I have the chance to argue with him more. He gently pushed me down to the bed and he went above me. I just lay there with my heart pounding hard letting him slowly peel my cotton t-shirt exposing my bra to his view. He feasted his eyes on my half-naked state giving me a series of hot little kisses from the flat of my belly to the valley of my breast and until to the hollow of my neck were my pulse was rapidly beating.



P 12-2

"Neon..." I started as I watch him remove his plaid shirt revealing his muscled but scarred body. In one swift movement he manage to unclasp my bra like a pro. It seems to me that he'd done this countless times before. But before I could accuse him but took one breast to his mouth and suck it while he cupped the other one in his hand. "Oh, my..." I couldn't help but to arch my back at the sudden sensation I feel while he's focusing his attention to my boobs. The unexpected movement made my hips in contact with his growing arousal in his pants. "Neon...please..." He stopped caressing my bust area and look at me briefly with wicked smile in his face. "Stay still. We're just starting. Don't move." Neon started to peel down my boxers and I stared in horror at the ceiling.

*Oh, crap!*

I thought helplessly. I immediately cover my private part with my hands as I thought that I should have at least shave first. "No!" "Now, Willow." He chided gently, staring deep into my eyes with unmistakable hunger. "You're not going to hide anything from me, right?" "But..." My protest only fell on deaf ear as he slowly remove my hands that covering my most feminine part of my body. A small smile crossed his handsome face as he feast his eyes on my genitalia. "Blonde everywhere,

I see." "You wouldn't..." I started in shock. "But I will," he replied shortly before clamping my wrist in his strong hands to prevent me from struggling, keeping me on my place, as he lapped me hungrily between my thighs. I let out a scream at the feeling of his skilful mouth on the apex of my legs. "Neon, please..." I don't really know if I was begging for him to stop or just continue with his exploration. "...sweet lord..." I mumbled incoherently as he ran his tongue inside. "Stop please...oh..." I nearly went crazy with this devil skilled mouth. When I was about to beg him again he seems finally satisfied tasting me and he removed his already tight pants hurriedly and I saw his proud manhood sticking straight that's when I also noticed the long scar in his right leg from what can I see it's still relatively new given how pinkish the scar is. I stared at him for a moment. Just what kind of dangerous life this man had before his accident? No wonder being a daredevil flying a helicopter alone was not a new thing for him. Before I could dwell more on my thoughts he dragged me back to our current situation. "Wait," I said when he started to position himself on the juncture of my thighs. I added hastily. "We don't have protection." He stopped for a moment while probably thinking about a quick solution. "Don't tell me you're going to instruct me to get one from the drugstore at this state of mine?"

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"But..." I cursed silently. I should have stock condoms some here in case of emergency. But that really wasn't in my mind in the past since I didn't have relationship after Matt. "Then we can't..." "We can." Neon started firmly. "Don't worry, I will take care of it." "How?" "The natural way, of course." Just when I was about to argue with him more about this. Clearly, he wasn't on the mood for this rubbish talk in his opinion when he tested the wetness at my center with his fingers before plunging his erection inside me. My breath was caught as I grip his shoulder blades tightly with my hands. My word, but he's so long and thick. I would be surprised if I will be able to walk tomorrow morning. "Neon..." "Don't worry," he reassured me, kissing me on the lips before giving open mouthed kiss on my neck. "This will not be that painful if you only not this tight and wet. It drives me crazy I know I have to be gentle on you but..." "Then don't." It seems that's the only reassurance that he's been waiting before slowly moving in and out inside me setting his pace until his tempo changed it turn aggressive pounding me so hard that leave me breathless at his restless onslaught. "Oh my God, Neon!" He took my mouth again stopping the words and I whimper at the pleasure of him

being inside me. I could already feel the pressure building up inside me. "Neon..." "It's alright." He assured me, seeing the sweat forming in his forehead. I knew he was not far away from his release. "Let it go, darling." When I finally found my release he took his time and found his exit on the wooden floor. I placed my hand on the top of my head while catching my breath. This was probably the best sex of my life. Then Neon went very still while wiping the moisture off on the floor. Something went to him lightning fast as if he'd been struck by a thunder. "What's wrong?" I asked when I saw him visibly pale from the bed. "Are you all right?" He abruptly stood and wore his boxers and pants like he just regretted the whole thing. "I need to go." "What? Why?" I asked in confusion that made me feel hurt about his sudden actions. There was really something wrong with him. He was as pale as the white linen. "What's wrong with you?" "I'm sorry, Willow." He said, zipping his pants. I notice the changes in him that moment, his flirtatious dark green eyes were now distant and wintry this was not the Neon I know. "I cannot do this. I am not the man for you." "What?! What the hell, Neon?" I demanded.

P 12-4

"You are better off without me trust me." He stated coldly, his eyes really withdrawn different from their usual warmth.

Without waiting for my reply he walk out of my bedroom with as much as backward glance leaving me wondering what the hell did just happened.

P 12-5

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*Life is a difficult game. You can win it only by retaining your birthright to be a person.*

A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

The following morning after a sleepless night I found him outside stacking up the hay in the barn. I was really dead-set to confront him to ask him what went wrong last night why he suddenly acting cold and distant from me after having sex. I approached him with a determined stride from my boots. I would not let this get away not after he has given me valid reason for doing that unacceptable behavior. "Can we talk?" I asked without preamble. I heard him stiffened as he took a deep breath and continue to stack the hays. "I'm busy, Willow." That's it. I thought vehemently. I already lost my patience at him and walk in front of him so he could face

me. "That's bullshit!" I hissed softly, in case some other cowboy might heard us. "I want to know why you bothered to seduce me last night and then regret the whole thing after." Something flashed in his eyes something dark and dangerous as he glared at me ardently. "Do you think I regret what happened last night?" "Did you not?" I retort back, looking sideways there might be someone at hearing distance with us. The last thing I want is for the people working in the ranch to know about what happened last night. "No!" He whispered back angrily. "I didn't regret what happened last night, damn it!" I blinked I didn't see that one coming but very happy at his admission. "Then why...?" "Because you're better off without me, that's why." He repeated this thing again just like last night. "You need a man that will take good care of you and I am not that man, Willow. You deserve better." "What the hell..." Our heated argument interrupted momentarily when a metallic grey Range Rover pulled in the driveway of the ranch. This kind of car weren't normal sight for our small town of St. Petersburg, North Carolina. Whoever is inside the car is real deal. I saw a man wearing an expensive suit with a pair of sunglasses slid out of the driver's seat while looking around the place as if making sure he got the right place he's looking for and then I saw a beautiful lady coming out of the passenger's side. They were ridiculously out of place in here with their fancy look. Neon and

I started to come closer to the driveway to get a better view of the newcomer when I heard the man

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beside me cursed loud and clear. I looked at him sharply but his focus remain on the newcomer. The dark-haired woman caught the sight of us—or rather—the sight of Neon and her beautiful dark greeneyes misted with tears. "Enzo!"

Who?

The woman literally run towards the waiting hands of Neon and hugged her tightly. I never seen such look of happiness in his face since I met him. So this was the woman in his dream before? His girlfriend maybe? Suddenly I felt uncalled feeling of jealousy. He had sex with me last night when there was a girl waiting for him. "Laila." Neon said as he drew back the woman in his arms, looking at her as if making sure she's really here. "How did you know that I was here?" "Leila said that you are here so we came to pick you up." The woman named Laila informed him with a shakysmile while the man with him walks towards us. "Believe me she want to personally fetch you but she's in Sicily at the moment and we're New York so it's been decided that we're going to be the one to bring you back to Sicily. Thank goodness you are all right, Enzo." I suddenly feel

lost and out of place with my own ranch. It seems that Neon realized my confusion. "Willow, I'd like you to meet my cousin Laila and her husband Nikos." He looked at his cousin with a smile. "Cousin, this is Willow Kinsella the girl who found me in the forest severely wounded." I was about to extend my hand in Laila's direction when she surprised me by giving me a friendly hug. "Thank you for taking good care of our Enzo. Our family owe you a lot." I shook my head while my throat clogged with emotion. "It's nothing..." When she drew back from our embrace she glared at her cousin Neon—nope, that's not his name I corrected myself silently. He's real name is Enzo. "It was bad of you not to give us a call and tell us that you're truly fine. Do you know that

Patri

worried about you so much since you've gone missing?" He rolled his eyes. "I lost my memories." "What?" Laila's mouth hung open. "No way!" Her intimidating husband stated as if he couldn't believe or he thought that Neon... Enzo, I mean was only messing with them. From the look on this man he's clearly an ultra-rich man and so this woman who happens to be Enzo's cousin. Clearly, Enzo came from a wealthy family it's not really surprising since he probably owned the helicopter he's riding when he had his accident. "It's the truth. I only regained my memory last night." Upon mentioning it, I couldn't help but to



give him a questioning look. So that's the reason of his sudden change and this bastard didn't bother to tell me that. The man named Nikos with a pair of light blue eyes shook his dark head in amusement. "Wow, I didn't see that one coming. I thought you just runaway."

P 13-2

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"Runaway?" Enzo repeated in confusion. "Why will you think that?" Nikos gave him a knowing smile. "You know a family trait of the Fiorenzas, running away when the situation gets sticky for them to handle." And then he gave his wife a meaningful look. "Like the certain someone I know that running away in the dead of the night to go home when she learns that her sister is back." A pink stain spread through the beautiful woman's cheeks. "Nikos!" I cleared my throat and they were all in my direction. "Maybe we should continue this discussion inside the house. Please come in." They were all followed me inside the house and inside the living room. I saw Ne—Enzo's cousin look around the minimalist living of our house. Sofas, wooden coffee table and a plasma TV on the wall above the fireplace and light lamps on the inside. She must think this

was not what she expected to see when she got there. "Coffee?" I asked when Laila and her husband sat on the sofa. Enzo's cousin wrinkled her nose. "None for me, thank you." I saw Albert coming out from the kitchen and gave a warning hiss to the strangers in the living room. From the corner of my eyes I saw Laila moved closer to her husband and grip the sleeves of his suit. I gave my dog a warning look. "Albert!" "German Shepherd?" Nikos asked me while giving his wife an amused look. "How old?" "Five." I answered giving Albert an affectionate tap in the head. "He lives here with me." "Do you live here alone?" "Albert is with me." I answered with a smile while he gave his wife's cousin a deliberate look that earned a scowl from him. "Does that count?" Neon... I mean, Enzo rolled his eyes on them. "In case you are wondering if it's safe for her to live here alone. Let me tell you that she has a shotgun and won't hesitate to shoot anyone who trespasses on her property." The look on their faces was priceless. I would have laughed if I didn't feel the heat spread through my face at this announcement. "I will just get my things so we can go now." He announced suddenly that made my heart constricted with unexplainable pain. Nikos nodded in agreement. "Good. We were given strict instructions by Cesare himself to bring you back to Sicily as soon as possible." I heard him sigh deeply before running towards the stairs. When I was left alone with his family I also excused myself

and went after him. I found him on his temporary bedroom while the door was open I saw him

P 13-3

packing his things on the bag we bought on the fair when we went to town the other day. I leaned myself on the doorway while folding my arms in the middle of my chest watching him pack his things. "So your memory came back last night?" I heard him took a breath again upon hearing my voice. Damn it, didn't I serve an explanation or something here? "Yes." "So that's the reason why you suddenly spouted nonsense after what happened between us in bed?" I demanded trying to calm myself. The last thing I want was to lose my composure here when we're about to part ways in a few moments. "Yes, damn it!" He suddenly turned around to face me, I was shocked to see the rage in his eyes. "Because I just abruptly remember who I am and how messy is my life. The last thing I want is to drag you in my chaotic life. Like I said, you deserve better than I am only willing to offer you." "But I want to be part of your life." He shook his head slightly while there was a sad smile in his face. "I cannot give you what you deserve I am not the man you used to know. I am way different from that man." "So what's wrong name then?" I queried, ignoring the pain in my heart. "Enzo is it?" He nodded giving a smile that didn't quite reach his eyes. He

extend his hand on my direction. "Enzo Fiorenza, a special force in the Italian army." My mouth hung open at his announcement. "You're serving the army?" He grimaced. "Currently on leave since acquiring this leg injury from an explosion on my last tour but I will be back once the doctor give me go signal that's why I am not the man for you. You need a man who take good care of you not giving you anxiety also wondering if he will be back safe from his dangerous mission." "Can't you just quit altogether?" He shook his dark head regrettably. "This is my life." This was probably the worst rejection a woman get. But I won't shed tears in front of him I need to be brave I will get over this soon. This is just another heartache I've been here before. He zipped his bag carefully and stare at me. "I know we don't use protection last night and I assure you that nothing to worry about but if you ever find yourself..." "Don't worry, I'll inform you." I finished for him with a courageous smile. "As cheesy as it sounds but thank you for everything." I just managed to nod in his direction and watch him walk away coming down in the living room where his family patiently waiting for him so they could bring him home where he truly belongs. Before they ride back on the Range Rover his cousin, Laila pushed something in my hand I notice that it was

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a calling card. "Thank you for what you did for our dear Enzo, if you need anything do not hesitate to give us a call. I will be glad to help and return the favor." With that my eyes were blurred with tears as I watched them drive away the ranch.

P 13-5

*There is no better than adversity. Every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss, contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to improve your performance the next time.*

-Malcolm X

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

The ride back home was smooth and eventful.

*Home?*

I smiled at the irony. And since when did I think of Ragusa as my home? For as long as I remember I never thought of that place as my home when I did everything that I can to leave that place that held so many bitter memories of my parents for good since I turned eighteen. So why the hell I suddenly thought

of it as home. There was really something wrong with my brain since the helicopter crash. Right now, I was sitting comfortably—or at least, trying to seat comfortably in Nikos Pallis' private plane as we head to Sicily. They been good companion to me since the beginning of this trip when they fetch me to Willow's ranch...

*What the freaking hell*

... My heart constricted with pain upon remembering that pretty blonde southern girl who is living in North Carolina. I never meant to hurt her like that... I rubbed my face with my palms due to frustration as I stared at the window looking the ocean below. I did not regret seducing her that night before but my only remorse was the fact that I did not remember myself at the time and my realization after my memories came back to me like a series of thunderstorm after our mind-blowing sex was the fact that I cannot give what she deserve to a man. She deserved a man who will take good care of her and help her managing her ranch and I am not that man. I don't do commitments and certainly I don't do family. That set-up may work with my cousins and to my best friend Rafe but not to me. From the corner of my eyes I noticed my cousin, Laila looking at me with worry in her eyes sitting across to me next to her husband. Growing up, I was not really closed to her since I favored the company of her mischievous twin sister, Leila. But

as we hit teenaged years I started to confide to her about my problems and my desire to leave Ragusa for good. She was also good at keeping secrets. I gave her a reassuring smile but I knew deep inside she's not buying it for the concern in her eyes was still there. I was really glad that they didn't bombard me with questions the moment I settle inside the plane. They just remain silent or having small conversation with themselves and leave me alone with my thoughts. "What?" I asked lightly. Giving them the impression that I was fine and there's nothing to worry about and hopefully they would leave me in peace and let my dark thoughts eat me throughout the journey back home...damn it...it wasn't home it's Ragusa. "Why didn't you contact and inform us that you are okay? Do you know how much

*Patri*

worries about your

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safety?" Typical of Laila to make you feel like a complete ass without her realizing it. I did everything that I can not to roll my eyes at her. My sweet-natured cousin who only wants the best for everyone. It really surprised me when I learned that she married this powerful Greek man when I knew in the past she has a thing for Rafe. Looking at them now you could say that they have nothing in common, one was hard and ruthless while the other one was sweet and caring. But I guess that's how they work out on their marriage right? Accepting each other's flaw... I cursed at myself silently. And since when did I become an expert in love? When this plane landed I will come to the hospital directly and have my brain check by the expert since it seems to me that there was really something wrong with it. When I realized that I haven't answer her question and my cousin was clearly waiting for a response from me so I force myself to speak up. "I told you I lost my memories from the accident I only remember everything last night after..." "After...?" Laila prodded when I trail off. "Nothing." I shook my head with a slight smile on my face. There's no way in hell I would share how I regain my memories after that mind-blowing sex I have with that feisty southern girl. I shifted in my position banishing the images on my head the last thing I want is unwanted erection when we landed to Ragusa. "And here I was thinking that the reason why you didn't bother to call your



family is because you are enjoying the simple life in the farmstead with that pretty cowgirl." Nikos joined the conversation with a knowing smile in his face. I gritted my teeth while giving him a hard look. Trust him to be an ass right this moment I knew he was just teasing me but it irks me to remember Willow and her ranch. There was an unexplainable pain in my chest that I don't understand. "Yeah, as if." I answered in a monotone. Not giving an inch of emotion a trait that I learnt in the army. One must think and act like a robot following your superiors command without a question removing any emotion in my heart making it a system that only pumps blood through my body and nothing more that's how I live my life before. So now why the hell it hurts like it's broken or as if someone put a dagger in it. The ache in my chest was worse than the time they treated my wounds in the battlefield without anesthesia. From the corner of my eyes I saw Nikos busy giving me a sardonic smile as if reading the thoughts inside my head. "What?" "Nothing," he replied, but the smile was still fixed on his damn face. Oh, how badly I want to remove it with my fist right now. I don't care if this was his damn plane I will trash the inch of his life so he would realize I am not pinning for Willow or something.

*Jesus. Can you hear yourself, Enzo?*

What's wrong with you? I demanded to myself silently. Do you hear

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yourself spouting nonsense like a fool? A sex with a girl would not change the way you view your life, you bastard. Get a life. Now I was really fully convince that I was crazy and that accident and my stay at that ranch made me more stupid than I already have with having such thought now inside my head. Then I realized that Nikos was still looking at me with secretive smile in his face as if he was enjoying a private joke in my benefit. "What?" I repeated, starting to get irritated with this plane ride. "Can you just spill whatever you are about to say than just looking at me like I am a plain stupid?" "I don't know what you mean." I grunted giving him a dark look but the man merely grin at me as if telling me he's been here than that kind of thing. I saw Laila elbowed her husband. "Stop baiting Enzo, dear. He's been through a lot lately." He gave his wife and affectionate smile while I was rewarded with those goading smirk. "Yes, I can tell,

*agape mou*

. He's been through a lot lately. Poor him." I glared at him darkly. "And what does it mean, again? Care to enlighten me,

Pallis?" "It means that..." He trailed off his sentence and stared at me with amusement in his icy blue eyes. "...nope. I will not say it. It will be fun if you discover it yourself." I cursed at him but the bastard merely shrugged casually while Laila only shook her head in resignation. Before this plane lands, I promised myself. I will reward myself a straight punch in his annoying face. "Rest now," The Greek bastard cheerfully stated, his eyes dance with delight at the thought. "Once we arrive in Ragusa expect a teary-eyed reunion from your beloved Cesare since the Fiorenza heir is finally home." And that was the problem, wasn't it? For all my life I was labelled nothing more than the Fiorenza heir that's one of the reason why I choose a different career path and find my true identity. I am more than just a Fiorenza heir, damn it. I eyed the man sitting across to me who never stop giving me verbal jabs since this conversation started it's time for me to shot back and what better way to do that than prick his damn ego. I gave him a condensing stare. "I like Rafe more to be Laila's husband." The changed in his was instant when I saw the way his eyes darkened and become deadly in my direction. "Dare you say that again and you will have your last breath in my bare hands." "Why don't you try?" "Oh, I bet I will." He promised and then he gave an evil smile. "Oh, you don't have any idea what awaits you in Ragusa, Enzo Fiorenza." I knew he was just playing with me but I couldn't help but to feel slightly worried—just a bit since

deepinside me somehow knew what kind of fate is waiting for me in Ragusa. I just pointedly ignore him throughout the journey and stared sightlessly on my plane window.

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\*\*\*\*\*It was already night when we arrived in Ragusa and as expected the welcome committee that was waiting for us at the airport was out of this world. Why does Cesare like to create such embarrassing scene from the people on the airport? They were probably thinking that we're some sort of a member of the mafia community with this convoy. When few moments later I finally saw the imposing castle at the top of the hill with a sense of dread inside me as we took the private road that leads us to the palace. But my mind was still wandering back to the lush green meadows in the ranch in North Carolina and how peaceful I felt with those short days I spent there. The motorcade finally pulled in front of the imposing citadel the place where I stay when I was on vacation in the army. Before we even had the chance to ring the doorbell the double heavy wooden door they were magically open wide and Leila was there to greet us. "About time you

return home, cousin." I gave her a big fake smile. "It's not my idea to return here." "But this is where you belong." "Nope." "Oh, it is. Trust me." She gave me a mischievous smile, as she eyed me from head to toe. "I'm surprised to see you in one piece and alive. Do you think Cesare will take off his eyes from you again after your running away stunt you pulled in?" I scowled in her direction while Laila and Nikos watch from the side-line with amusement in their faces. "Nobody can keep me from leaving this place. I repeat *nobody*

. "Want to bet?" Leila merely raised an eyebrow in my direction that made me grind my teeth together. I will not let their meddlesome attitude affect me. I knew how to control my emotion like switch I can turn it off and on according to my will. I mastered this trait before and I will not let my rebellious cousin make me reassess confidence. "Nobody will leave this place until I say so." The booming voice of Cesare sounded on the top of the grand staircase and we all turn around to face him with collective expression in our faces. But the way my blood runs cold in my veins at his sudden announcement made the most potent feeling I have in a long time. "Uncle." I greeted coolly, brushing off the uneasiness that runs down my spine. "Welcome home,

*Vicenzo*

."

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*Is there anything better than to be longing for something, when you know it is within reach?*

-Greta Garbo

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

It's been two days since he left all of a sudden and yet I'm still miserable as ever from the night he suddenly left me wondering what the hell just happened after seducing me thoroughly. He's only been here for eight days to be exact and yet everywhere I turn around the house it seems that he left his imprint. My eyes were misted with tears again as I curled in my bed and let the misery eat me every second that pass. Having cheated by a man with your friend was one thing—but it was entirely different thing when you were rejected by the same man in less than twelve hours after you have sex with him. It was the almost inhuman thing that could happen to a person. When I learned about Matt's betrayal on me I swear to myself that I would never ever let a guy do that to me again. I learnt my lesson the hard way and now it seems I realized that I really never learn a thing from my past experience. I flipped open my laptop again and stare at the candid photo of Vincenzo

Fiorenza on my computer screen. There was only one or two photos of him available in the internet. It seems that he doesn't always attend society parties but his cousins the twins—I couldn't really tell which is which from the two but apparently the other twin was the favorite fodder of the Sicilian tabloids. It wasn't really hard to dig information about their powerful family. From what I read in the internet their family was like some sort of royalty in Sicily and they were considered to be one of the wealthiest. His parents' died with undisclosed reason when he was still young and since then his uncle took care of him and groomed him to be his heir someday. We're really worlds apart that's why probably a relationship with him would only end in doom since we're practically living a different world. I suddenly shut my laptop screen and let out a groan. There's no way I would let my misery eat me. The sooner I accept that there's no chance for us the better for me to move on with my life. I would just think he's like my one-night-stand though I don't do such things. I threw the covers and I jumped out of my bed as I took a shower removing every trace he had put in my body and from my memories. If he could throw away whatever we have at the blink of an eye I can do the same. As the droplets of water pour over my head so do my tears streaming down my face. I promised myself that this would be the last time I would let myself cry over him. No man was worth my tears. After

probably an hour in the shower I step out with a towel wrapped around my body and pulled out my working clothes since I intend to bury myself with ranch work until my body and mind were too tired to think about him.

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"Come on, Albert. It's time to go out enough of sulking." I told my dog when I was ready to continue my life the way it was before I met him. I finally went out of the house since he left two days ago. Once I was outside I saw the white fence corral we just painted happily in what it feels like a different universe now. I could almost feel that my eyes were starting to get blurry again.

*Aren't you tired of crying about him?*

I asked myself silently fighting away the hot tears that threaten to fall in my eyes again. The last thing I want was crying about him while working outside. I sniffed as I try to block the images inside my head. I could do this, I assured myself silently. Life goes on without him. "About time you show up again, boss." Jace jested lightly coming towards me with a brotherly smile in his face. "I thought it will take at least a week before you come



out the house. You okay?" I tried to give him a confident smile. "Why will not I be?" "You know," he said, placing his hands on his rear jeans pockets as he look away from me. "About that fancyguy you nurse back to health. Our small town is buzz with the gossips that Neon came from the wealthiestfamily in Italy." "His name is Enzo Fiorenza, Jace." I told him sadly. Until now I refuse to say his name out loud. He isn't thesame man I met in the forest last week. That guy Neon doesn't exist. "And yes, his family was probably thewealthiest in Sicily." "He probably can buy our whole town just a snap on his fingers." Jace commented and I couldn't help but tolaugh at the thought. But that idea might not far from happening if he wants." "But you're okay?" Jace urged after a moment. "You know, you guys seems to like each other before he regainhis memories." I walked and sat on the wooden steps on the porch. I stared up at Jace who follow me. "He is not the sameguy we used to know." "That's it?" I gave him a brave smile. "Yeah, that's pretty much it." He surprised me when he suddenly sat beside me on the wooden steps as he tap his shoulder. "Need ashoulder to cry on?" "I'm fine, Jace." "From what I can see you're not really fine." He said with brutal honesty. "I think you just need a good cryand then after that the heartache you are experiencing right now will be just fleeting memories of the past.Come on, I am like your big brother, right?" "All right," I exhaled a deep breath

as I stare at him helplessly. "But don't tell anyone about this, are we

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clear?" "I promised, Willow." There was compassion in his eyes but belied the playful smirk in his mouth. "But don't soak my shirt so much with tears, okay? The last thing I want when I get back to work is for my cowboys to think I took a nap and I spread drool in my shirt." I couldn't help but to laugh as I leaned on his shoulder with the heaviness in my heart. "In a span of eight days I really developed some kind of feelings for him despite my reservation when it comes to men." Jace whistled softly. "So he has that much effect on you, huh?" I just managed to nod since my throat lump with emotions that's about to choke me any moment now. "I wish I can deny it fiercely but I am only lying to myself if I told you that. From the moment I saw him I already feel the instant attraction for him if that is even possible." "You like the guy, then?" I smiled at the irony, remembering how he rejected me twice. "Too bad, he doesn't do relationship as he told me before he left. He told me I deserve better than he's willing to offer." "If that's the case then he deserve to lose you, Willow." Jace comforted me with his words more than I realize. "You are too pretty to waste your tears to that worthless son of a bitch." I held back

my tears and smile despite the pain I feel in my heart. I removed my head on his shoulder and stared at him with amusement. "You know what? For a man who can give advice like when it comes to love. I'm surprised to see you still single until now." He gave me a mocking smile. "Boss, there's a difference in just giving advice to others and applying it to yourself." Our conversation interrupted when my mobile phone sounded on my pocket. I frowned when I saw the unknown caller id. I slid my finger on the screen as I answer the phone call. "Hello?"

*Is this Willow Kinsella?*

"The deep heavily accented voice of a man said on the other line. "Yes. And this is...?"

*Cesare Fiorenza*

"Upon mentioning that surname I suddenly sat up straight as my eyes widened at the recognition. "

*I am Vincenzo Fiorenza's uncle.*

"I cleared my throat while my heart started to pound so loudly on my chest. How did he get my number? What does he want to me? That was only the questions that race through my mind at the unexpected phone call. "What can I do for you, sir?"

*I heard that you are the girl who saved my wayward nephew from his helicopter accident. I am thankful enough for your kindness*

.""It's nothing, Mr. Fiorenza."

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"

*I would like to extend my gratitude personally.*

" Cesare Fiorenza stated on the other line. "

*I'd like to invite you here in Ragusa*

.""What?!" I abruptly stood from the steps and stare at the vast land in front of me. Jace gave me a questioning look but I just ignore her and focus on the phone conversation."

*I'd like to invite you here in our home town in Ragusa, Sicily*

." He repeated calmly. "

*My daughters are throwing a party for Vincenzo for his safe return and I would like to personally invite you to come as our special guest.*

"I shook my head in disbelief. The last thing I want was come face to face with the man who broke my heart." "I don't think that's necessary, sir."

*I insist*

. "But I don't have a visa. Heck, I don't even own a passport I never leave North Carolina all my life!" I blurted out without even thinking about it. I suddenly feel embarrassed admitting that I never leave our smallhometown since I was born."

*That's not a problem. My private secretary will keep in touch with you and help you process the legal documents you need for your trip. I am expecting you this weekend in my home*

." Cesare Fiorenza stated with finality as if that's not so much as a problem. "But what if the airlines are fully book by then?" I asked, wondering if I still have time to check for the airlines for my sudden trip to Italy."

*Don't worry. My plane will personally fetch you*

." Of course, the Fiorenza family owns their own plane when my eyes wandered at my old battered truck park nearby. I couldn't even buy the spare parts that needs to be fix on my dad's pick up Enzo Fiorenza must have a fleet of cars back home. "Sir," I said after a moment of silence. "Maybe I should not come. I

don't want to leave me ranch but thank you very much for the offer, though.""

*Nonsense. I will wait for you here this weekend*

.

*I'm sure my nephew will be happy to see you*

.""I'm not so sure about that, Mr. Fiorenza.""

*But I am*

." With that he disconnected the phone call before I even had the chance to protest more. I was just left staring in disbelief wondering what had just happened.

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*The past, like the future, is indefinite and exists only as a spectrum of possibilities.*

-Stephen Hawking

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

"Okay, thank you." I disconnected the phone call and exhaled deeply. It's been two days since I received a phone call from Cesare Fiorenza personally inviting me to Sicily for the party he organize for the safe return of his nephew in their family. Since then he's private secretary had been in touch with

me asking me to prepare for the necessary documents I need for my trip. I wasn't sure if they get everything done in such a short week since the party will be held this coming weekends. Oh well, if they don't...that's okay, I never really want to attend since I will be probably feel like out of place there. Besides, I was not sure if Neon would like to see me at the party. "Problem?" I looked up to see Jace riding a horse as he near where I was standing near the corral fence after looking for a good signal with my phone conversation. I placed back my mobile at the rear pocket of my jeans and smile to Jace. "Not really." Jace went down to the colt and tied it up on the fence. "Your whole face is frowning when I see you. Is this about your coming trip to Italy?" I sighed deeply and move forward to touch the horse's neck affectionately. This was one of the few horses left in the ranch after I was force to sell the others so I could somehow pay the debt my dad left behind. "Something like that." I murmured while still looking at the innocent eyes of this colt. "Are they having problem with your passport and visa?" Jace inquired offhandedly as he adjust his hat in his head. I shook my head as I force myself to drag away my gaze to this brown stud. "It's not like that. I mean, the private secretary works really fast and probably using the connection of Cesare Fiorenza to the American authorities I already have my schedule tomorrow to get my passport in Charlotte." I heard Jace whistled softly. "That's fast. Hell, I know that it will take

you at least six to eight weeks before your appointment date arrive but you only take two days. Now I wonder how many days before your visit knocking at your doorway." "Three days?" I quipped lightly. We both laughed at the thought but that's not probably far from happening. "So what's bothering you then?"

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I sat on the top of the wooden fence in the corral and stare sightlessly ahead. "I am still not sure if this is still the best idea for me." "Are you having second thoughts coming to Italy?" He asked leaning on the fence with his hands while surveying the cattle inside the enclosure. "You can say that." "Then why are you still pushing through the whole thing if you have doubts with your sudden trip abroad? Don't you want to see him again?" I sighed deeply, remembering that night where everything went down to hell. "I would be lying when I told you that I don't want to see him again even after what he did but part of me—a little part of me still think that there are things that is left unsaid between us." "That's the whole reason behind this trip?" Jace inquired casually. He was really like a big brother to me he started working at the ranch at sixteen since



then he's been loyal to dad and now to me helping me running this place. I smiled slightly at his inquisitive eyes. "I think this is the closure that I need to get over with my unwanted obsession I have with him. After I see him one more time I move on with my life without his bothersome memories in my mind and the possibility of the things left unsaid between us." "Well, if that's the case." Jace said brightly, grinning at me rakishly. "I hope when you come back from your trip you will finally be the same Willow we used to know. Since he left I cannot see anymore the cheerful lady boss of this farm." "Am I that bad lately?" His eyes danced with delight while teasing. "Yep. Everyone here is getting worried about you. They often notice you spacing out and they claimed that you kept on sighing the whole day. The boys are wondering what's wrong with you." I laughed at the thoughts. "Sorry. I didn't mean to make them worry." "You can't blame them." Jace added after a moment. "You've been acting strange since the night of the barbecue party." "Sorry." I mumbled softly. "Tell the boys I will throw another barbecue party after my return from Italy that's a promise." Jace's eyes lit with pleasure. "Well, that's the nicest thing you've said in a while." I laughed again playfully slapping his shoulder. "That's mean! Are you sure you can carry on while I am away for a few days." He rolled his eyes on me. "Are you kidding me? Of course we can. Just finished your

unfinished business with this European boy and then come back here with the same will we know."

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"Thanks, Jace."

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

I went to the library with the intention of finding a book that could amuse me for a few hours since my mind kept on drifting away on a meadow ranch in southern America but I stop dead in the doorway when I saw my twin cousins busy with something at the table nearby with lots of paper scattered around them. "What's going on?" I asked them with curiosity. "Hi, Enzo." Laila greeted with a smile looking up from her laptop screen. "Oh, it's nothing." Her twin, Leila said dismissively without even lifting her eyes on the papers in her hand. "What do you think of this caterer, Laila? We hired them before and their food is really delicious." "You're hosting a party?" I asked, thinking that I might chat with them instead of finding something to read and hide in my room all day. Since I rarely see them away from their respective husbands. I scowled when I remember their husbands who kept on irritating the hell out of me since I came back here. "Yes." Leila answered shortly. "For Cesare?" I asked

as I moved closer where they were busy planning a party that I didn't even know. From what I could see they were already halfway through with the planning. "I'm surprised he's throwing a party knowing he doesn't like one." "Oh, it's not for him, dear cousin." For the first time Leila managed to remove her damn eyes from the papers in her hand, her eyes glinted with devilry as if she's planning something I would not like. "This party is not for Cesare. He might have told us to arrange the party but not for him but for someone else entirely." "For whom?" She gave me a speaking glance. It took me a full minute to finally comprehend what she meant by that gesture of hers. My eyes widened in disbelief in their direction. "You got to be kidding me!" "We're not." Leila said cheerfully, presenting the piece of paper with list of names in my path. "Look, we've already have the names of the people we want to invite for your party. So you don't need to stress yourself in organizing your party we'll do it for you." "What the hell!" I practically shouted at them. Leila looked at me questioningly while this maddening woman in front of me merely throw a disapproving look. "Who gave you permission to organize a party for me? I certainly don't." "Enzo..." Leila started conversationally. "Don't mind him, sis." Her twin informed her. "Just continue to search for the best caterer in the whole Sicily for

*Enzo's*

party. I will deal with him."

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"The hell you will do that!" I glared at her darkly. I am starting to see red haze in my eyes thanks to this woman. "Cancel this party at once. I don't like parties." Leila shook her head regretfully but her eyes tells me another story. "Nope. Cesare's orders, cousin. No offense." I carefully touched my forehead since I felt that I am starting to have headache. I would not let them affect me this way even if they were as annoying as hell. I took a deep breath. "What in the name of the devil do you think you can throwing a party for my benefit?" "For your safe return to the family, of course." Leila supplied, as if it was the most logical thing to do. "And then, there's the possibility of you finding yourself a sweetheart party." She gave me a knowing smile. "Who knows that might lead to marriage after a few months of dating?" "No

*fucking*

way!" I stared at her in horror. This was what I fear when I learnt moments ago that they were planning a party for me. I should have guess that they were up to no good since I came

back. "Why the hell do you think I need a woman in my life?" "Really, Enzo." My maddening cousin chided on me. "Why do you curse so much lately since you came back? Are you somehow turning out to be a Cesare in the making?" "Because of you, that's why!" I could feel that any moment a vein in my head would explode that would probably result aneurysm due to this useless conversations with her. "And what I don't understand is why are you still here in Ragusa? Didn't you guys married long time ago? The two of you supposed to be living away here with your husbands. But it seems to me that you are spending a lot of time here now than before you are married." Leila raised an eyebrow in my direction. "Have you forgotten, idiot? Cesare announced that no one can leave this place until he says so? Well, that command was extended to us thanks to you." She paused for a moment before adding. "Of course, that could be change if you will get married soon." "The fuck. A big no way!" "Oh, well..." Leila shrugged casually. "...that really doesn't change anything. Whether you like it or not you will meet pretty single ladies at the party. Cesare will start shoving girls under your nose from now on, cousin." Upon mentioning that, my mind wander back to the blonde blue-eyed southern girl who kept on invading my dream with her naked body. Christ, the last thing I want was my private part camping unwillingly due with Willow's naked body inside my head. "I will not let you do this to me." I

announced angrily, banishing the images inside my head. Now I would spend my time thinking about her, damn it. Leila gave me a goading look. "You can try but we both know you will not succeed. Mark my words, Enzo. Cesare will make sure you will be married before the year ends." "Mark my words," I mimicked her, longing for the woman I can't have. "I. Will. Not."

P 16-4

*A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it.*

-George A. Moore

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

It's been four days since I learnt that they were planning a party for me behind my back. Despite my constant protest my family seems to have developed deaf ears since I arrive. No one actually listens to me about my reasons why this party should be cancelled as soon as possible. Thankfully, my cousins managed to stop working with the plans for the party and now enjoying a cup of tea and desserts in the drawing room of this house while their husbands work from their respective makeshift offices somewhere inside this fortress. It was nice not my idea to join them for their tea but they invited me anyways and I don't want to be rude so I join them. It's a breath of fresh air not to

argue with them once in a while. I missed the old times when they weren't shoving girls under my nose and letting me lead my life the way I wanted it." "Would you like a slice of a Ricotta Pie, Enzo?" Laila asked conversationally, helping herself a slice of that sweet tart. "No, thank you." I answered tautly, looking at the pie I couldn't help but to remember the Pecan pie Willow and I baked together and ate after a day of work at the ranch. I silently groaned, I manage not to think about her for this past four days it wasn't an easy one but I somehow manage to do. Now I'm back to square one. "Is there something that's bothering you, cousin?" It was Leila who asked with curiosity in her eyes but I couldn't miss the smirk in her lips that she's carefully hiding from her tea cup. "Are you hurt? You look like a man in pain." "I'm fine." I said in a clipped tone. "If you say so." She replied nonchalantly before sipping her tea. Then she looked directly to her twin. "Laila, do you remember our old gardener?" My sweet-natured cousin's eyes lit with recognition as she smiled to her twin probably remembering the old man. "Oh, you mean

*Signore*

Antonio?" "Yeah," She grinned to her sister while sliding a look in my direction that made my frown. What does that supposed mean? I thought silently. "You see, I run to him when Leandro and I went to town the other day." "Oh, really? How is he?" Laila

asked. She was giving me that look again as if gauging my reaction before answering her twin sister. "He informed me about his

*will*

ingness to return as our gardener since he missed his old job. I told him that I

*will*

use my

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will

power to convince Cesare to hire him back. I even told him that I want a

willow

tree in the garden so it would be a good shade to play for the kids in the future." I placed my cup on the saucer plate a little harshly that made them look sharply in my direction.

Something ticked inside me the way Leila pronounced some words while casually talking to her sister. If I didn't know better



those words were focused to me. "For god's sake! Stop playing games with me, woman." She had the nerve to look innocent as if she has no idea what I am talking about but the smile that kept slipping in her lips tells a different story. "But I have no idea what's make you so angry about, cousin." "Stop stressing the word

will...will...will...will

in you sentences!" I exploded like fireworks as I stood from the sofa I glared at her hotly. "I am not playing your games, Leila." "Jesus, what has gotten into you?" Leila asked in confusion. "Do you want me to eat alive because of that? Well, I am deeply sorry next time I will think of another adjectives to use." Arguing with her was just pointless and waste of time and energy so instead of replying I walked towards the huge window and stared outside. I heard Laila sighed deeply.

"Will the two of you stop arguing, please? We're not children anymore." "I am not the one who is spoiling for a fight." Her twin sister defended herself. "It's not as if he remember something with that word, does it? Oh, wait! Maybe he does. Willow Kinsella, right?" I turned around to give her my darkest look but didn't bother to answer her. I would not let her bait me like this. "Oh, that reminds me." Leila said brightly. "I heard that Cesare will have a special guest at the party, Enzo. You might want to meet her." "Not interested." "Don't

tell me you like this American girl who save you from the crash site." The devil woman prodded when silence filled the room. "That must be the reason why you are so hype about the word 'will'." "I don't know what are you talking about, Leila." "Willow, Willow, Willow, Willow, Willow..." I sighed deeply, trying not to forget that she's my cousin or else I will do something violent to this maddening woman. "Shut up." Once again, I focus my gaze back outside. I squint when I saw a car stop on the driveway and a blond woman went out of the car. I couldn't really see her face from here but my heart starts to pound so hard that I found myself literally running on the hallways ignoring the evil laugh of Leila. I descended the staircase I don't care if my leg hurts like hell with my pace. I just want to run towards the entrance door.

P 17-2

The doorbell sounded, I open it with such happiness that fill my whole being. Could it be...? But the ready smile on my face faded when I saw the woman on the doorway. "Hi, I came to see Laila and Leila." I tried to smile at her while the hope in my chest died upon seeing Rafe's wife. "Yes, come in they are in the drawing room having tea." "Oh, great!" She said as I step aside so she could come inside the house. When she notice that I was looking for the sight of her husband on the driveway she

added. "Rafe is not with me. He's busy at the office. I went there all by myself." I just smiled at her but didn't bother to answer since my mind was still hoping for someone else a woman with a blonde hair also. Of course, she will not come here all the way to North Carolina after our bitter goodbye. I deserved to feel miserable like now since I have been honest about her that I don't do relationships casual affairs are my thing not the serious ones. The sooner we made clear that we do relationships differently the sooner we can accept that there's no future for us. But if that's the case so why the hell my heart feels like it's been ripped off my chest?

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

"Would you like some juice, ma'am?" I was startled and look up at the cabin crew who was smiling down at me waiting for my answer. I tried to return the smile and reply. "Yes, thank you." The woman nodded and left me alone in the luxurious Gulfstream G450 owned by Cesare Fiorenza. I still couldn't believe that I was on a private jet heading to Italy only moments ago I was on our quiet small town of St.

Petersburg. Everything went blur for me from getting the necessary documents I need to for my trip and up to the fact that Cesare Fiorenza took the arrangement of my transportation from the car ride going to the airport and until now. Once I arrived at the airport I didn't do the usual thing that ordinary

people have to endure on long queues at the airport terminals. Nope, I skip the customs just giving my documents to Cesare's private secretary and she did all the works. So this is how the elite one percent of the world travels, huh? I asked myself in awe as I stared outside my plane window. "Thank you." I said to the flight attendant who brought my drinks. "How many hours more before we can arrive in Sicily." "Two more hours, ma'am." "Oh," I suddenly feel nervous as I shifted on my seat. Two more hours and I will see him again. I still don't know what will be his reaction when he sees me but I need to remind myself that this trip will be the last time I will see him and nothing more. Whether he will be happy to see me or not that's up to him I just want a

P 17-3

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closure on whatever we had. "If you need anything else, ma'am. Please inform me." "This will be fine, thank you." I smiled at her grateful before she went back to her station near the cockpit. At exactly, two hours and ten minutes later we landed in Sicily. I gasped when I saw a heavily tinted black luxury car parked at the tarmac don't tell me that's going to be my ride now. But

before I even gather all my thoughts the cabin crew was back with a sympathetic smile in her face once the plane standstill at the runway. "Your car is waiting for you, Miss Willow." "That thing?" I pointed my finger on the plane window where the car was waiting. "That's my car?" "Yes, ma'am." Somehow my legs managed to carry me walk from the private jet and I saw the captain waiting for me at the plane's exit. "Welcome to Sicily, Miss Willow. It's my pleasure to be at your service. I hope you enjoy your stay in our beautiful city." "Thank you." I muttered softly to the captain not used to be treated like a royalty or something. Who would have thought that a small town girl like me who was surrounded by horses and cattle would experience something like this in her lifetime? It was a surreal experience for me. As I descended from the metal staircase of the private jet I suddenly feel that my cowgirl boots were out of place in this sophisticated city thank goodness I decide to wear my white cotton dress and blue denim jacket instead my usual jeans and plaid shirt. I quickly miss my buddy who left in the care of Jace while I am here. I thought it would not be appropriate if I bring Albert with me. Before I could even reach the car a uniformed driver went out of the car and open the passenger's door at the back. I muttered a thank you before I was ushered at the lavish interior of this car. When we drove away from the tarmac and I couldn't help to be amazed at the beautiful city of Ragusa. It

feels like I travel back to the fifteenth century with the baroque architectures of the buildings around us. I couldn't resist to get my phone and took photos of this magnificent city I will show Jace once I get back. Then I noticed that we took a private road that leads to the imposing castle at the top of the hill. "Where does the Fiorenza family reside in this area?" I asked the driver since I saw there's no other house in the area but I wasn't even sure if he understood English since he never speaks a word to me. He nodded towards the castle standing proudly at the peak. My eyes widened at him through the rear-view mirror. "You mean to say they are living somewhere beside that castle?" The driver shook his head staring back at me from the rear-view mirror of the car. "No, ma'am. They are living inside that

*palazzo*

"I felt my mouth hang open at the unexpected revelation. So Cesare Fiorenza and his family reside in that stately castle? Jesus, what kind of trouble I land myself in?

P 17-4

Before I have the chance to absorb all this astonishing surprised the Fiorenza family had thrown in my direction we finally arrived at the massive gate and drive at the meticulously

maintain courtyard complete with fountain and English garden I thought I only see this one on movies. Apparently, some people really like this. I stepped out of the car with my jaw practically touching the ground as I stare at the impressive palace. My goodness, I would be surely lost in this place in no time. "Oh, shoot..." I told myself when I was about to knock on the door. "I cannot do this." I was about to leave and go back to North Carolina when the door suddenly opened and Laila was smiling at me. "Welcome to Ragusa, Willow. Nice to see you again." I only managed to awkwardly mutter. "Hi."

P 17-5

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*Most plain girls are virtuous because of the scarcity of opportunity to be otherwise.*

-Maya Angelou

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

"Welcome to Ragusa, Willow. Nice to see you again." I only managed to awkwardly mutter. "Hi. How did you know I finally arrived?" Laila smiled at me kindly. "Oh, an old friend came to visit and I just see her out when I heard another incoming

car." "Oh..." "Please come inside." An elegantly dressed Laila step aside to accommodate me inside their intimidating home. As I expected the interior of the palace was as grand as the outside with high ceilings huge chandeliers and walls painted with white and gold detailing and then there's the grand double staircase connecting to the second floor. Jesus, where am I? I think my whole house could fit-in inside this palace. And then I notice that a maid was already holding my luggage in her hand I tried to stop her. "Oh, thank you but I can carry my own luggage." "Nonsense." Laila answered with a smile. She looked at the maid beside us. "Please, take her luggage in her room." The maid nodded and started to ascend to the staircase and then the woman beside spoke again. "I hope you will like the room we prepare for you." I just managed to nod. "Any room will be fine." "Come," she invited friendly, hooking her arms around mine as she led me to the grand staircase. "I hope you are not tired yet from your flight but I would like to introduce my twin first before showing your room." I nodded again as I force my legs to carry me even further inside their imposing home. Never in my wildest dream have I expected that they are living literally inside a palace. Laila led me to a series of corridors on the second floor I have to remember where exactly we're turning or I will be lost in here. I have the chance to study the painting and portraits hangs on the wall with gilded frames. These stern looking people on these oil paintings were probably



their ancestors given the striking green eyes. Finally, we arrived at our destination when Laila knock at the heavy wooden door at the far end of the hallway before opening it. My heart was pounding in my chest as I followed her inside and then I realize that this was their family library! Goodness, this library was way better than our community college library in our town. Look at those

P 18-1

collections of first edition books. Then I realized that the mirror image of Laila staring at me with amusement in her dark green eyes while there was a stern looking grey-haired man sitting on the mahogany study table near the bookshelves. That must be Cesare Fiorenza, I guess." Leila.

*Patri*

." Laila performed the introduction while a collective green eyes were directed to me. "I'd like you to meet Willow Kinsella. Willow, this is my sister, Leila and my father, Cesare." Before I could even speak the woman named Leila march towards us and surprised me when she envelop me with a bone-cracking hug. "I wanted to meet you so badly since Laila told me about you, Willow. Thank goodness you are finally here." I gave a shaky laugh unsure how to answer her but it feels nice to see

that's she's so welcoming. While her twin was more reserved and demure no one could deny that she's the rebel one the darling of the tabloids. She drew back from our hug and look at me from head to toe. She grinned when she notice my outfit. "Look atyou, a very southern girl. I like your fashion choices." "Thank you." Then I notice that the man silently sitting on the table finally stand up from his chair. I smiled at him. "Thank you for inviting me, Mr. Fiorenza. Thought I think this is not really necessary." "Welcome to my humble home, Miss Kinsella." He announced with his commanding voice. I nearly scoff the way he describe his home because as far as I am concern there's nothing humble about his home. Intimidating was one way to define it. "I hope you will like it here." "I'm sure I will." I said, though I highly doubt it since I don't belong here. The door sounded again, this time the galloping of my chest intensified.

*Is that him*

? My mind thought frantically. Does he know that I am here? Will he be happy to see me here? Or perhaps he will get mad. "Come in," Leila answered. I exhaled the breath that I didn't know I was holding when I saw a maid brought a tray of tea and sweets and place them on the coffee table. "I hope you are not so tired to join us for a tea. We want to get to know you better since...you save our cousin —that is." Laila

stated while pouring tea on the cups. So this was how the wealthy people spend their afternoon? Drinking tea with their expensive porcelain teacups. I wondered silently watching Laila administer the procedure with such expertise. "Would you like a cup,

*Patri*

?" She intently looked her father who sat back in his study table reading the local newspaper. He lowered the paper in his hand and look at his daughter dryly. "That tea will just ruin my throat, my daughter." He suddenly folded the newspaper in half and stood from his chair. "I hate having tea and the smell of it makes me nauseous I'll better just work instead of enduring the pungent of it."

P 18-2

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His daughters and I watched him walk away from the library. Once I was alone with the Vincenzo Fiorenza's cousin I abruptly feel nervous. "Is he mad or something?" The rebel twin grinned at me while sitting on the forest green satin sofa nearby. "Trust me, that's one of his best mood, dear. Believe me he's happy right now." I just raised an eyebrow in their direction

silently. I don't understand their weird relationship with their father. Laila smiled kindly at me while gently tapping the space next to her on the sofa. "Come seat with us, please." I reluctantly sat on next to Laila and accept the offered tea. I tried to sip the hot liquid and tried not made aface after. I carefully placed the delicate ceramic saucer plate on the table. It was on the tip of my tongue toask about their cousin but I was so shy to inquire."Laila told me that you own a ranch in North Carolina?" Leila asked conversationally, sipping her teacasually. "Tell me do you own farm animals and train wild horses?"I nodded with pride. "Yes, it's a family business.""My husband is also running their family estate in Spain along with his other businesses. I'm sure he will behappy to meet you since you have the same taste for wild horses."I stared at her questioningly while her twin threw a disapproving look in her direction but the woman merelyignore our reaction and just leisurely sipping her tea."Leila..." Her twin started."You know what my husband told me about taming a wild horse?" She continued, completely ignoring her sister's warning. "What you have to do is catch the attention of the horse and then shoo it away for a fewtimes until it realize that when it's looking at you you're in charge. Believe me you can get the horse and hisuntamed heart."I eyed her cautiously. "Are we still talking about animals here?""Of course."And then the door suddenly flung to open. "I have enough of being

detained in this damn house since I arrived!" The subject of my thoughts finally showed himself but he took no notice of me since he was so occupied with his outburst with his cousin. "I need to get away from here. Lend me your keys, Leila." "What about your cars?" Leila shot back, not even slightly bothered by her cousin's explosion. "You have at least three different cars as I remember." "Have you forgotten?" He reminded her, still focusing his attention to her. "Cesare took them as hostage even my spare keys are in his possession. Now give me your car key." He held out his hand impatiently. "I want to go to town."

P 18-3

"Cousin," The rebellious sister had said sanguinely but clearly enjoying what she sees. "Please remember your manners. Laila and I have a company don't act like some uncultured swine and humiliate our family name like this." "I think it's time to make myself known to this man. I tried to make my introduction as indifferent as possible." "Hi, Neon." That's the time he managed to slide his gaze on me. The recognition in his eyes was almost laughable. "Y-You...! What are you doing here?" It was Laila who answered. "Now, Enzo. Don't be rude to

*Patri's*

visitor. "The hell she is!" The shock in his striking green eyes was palpable, he was staring at me with such intensity that made me feel hot and uncomfortable. "That cranky old man never invite someone in his damn house." "Well, it seems that Cesare woke up in such a good mood this morning, don't you think?" Leila stated, the mischievous glint in her eyes were unmistakable. "In case, you forgot cousin. Let me reintroduce this woman to you so your malfunctioning brain will remember, all right? Cousin, this is Willow Kinsella the woman who save you from your death. Willow, this is my dolt cousin Vincenzo." "Enzo." He corrected firmly. "Whatever." His cousin replied nonchalantly. "She will be staying with us until your homecoming party, Enzo. Isn't that exciting?" He just remained silent while his eyes were still focus on me. I tried to look away but he held my gaze captive with his forceful presence. "Stop glaring at her, moron." Leila inserted smoothly while tossing the keys in his direction. "Now leave the hell out of here. Get lost." He didn't even bother to catch the keys and let them fall on the ground. I looked away from this forceful gaze. "As if, I will leave now." He muttered under his breath. "Leave me alone with Willow for a moment." "I don't think that's a good idea. He glared at Leila darkly. "I am not asking you I am telling you. I need to have a word with Willow now." "Ask nicely, then." Leila retorted, challenging her cousin. "Do you want me to inform Cesare that you are harassing his very

important visitor?" "Leila..." He warned dangerously. "I think we should give them so privacy." Laila stated, standing from the sofa and pulling her twin towardsthe door. When we were finally alone. I looked up to her from the sofa and ask. "What now?"

P 18-4

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"What are you doing here, Willow?" He asked in a much calmer voice this time. He was clearly finallycollected himself from his shock. I gave him a big brave smile that belied all the emotion inside me right this moment. "I came here to getclosure."

P 18-5

*The only thing to do with good advice is to pass it on. It is never of any use to oneself.*

Oscar Wilde

**Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

Enough is enough. I thought silently, as I march down the hallway on the second floor determined to find Leila in this ridiculously huge house. I need to get away from here for once. I have enough of their shenanigans this past few days and a few more hours in the company of my relatives would surely drive me crazy even more. I want to get away from this place and seek for the company of my best friend, Rafe. I don't care if he was busy working I will invade his office if necessary. I want to seek for the company of the people who really understands me. I knew that she spends her afternoon with Laila in the library for a tea. I just hope that Cesare was not with them since he would surely have something to say about my sudden trip to town. That old man took my car keys and refuse to give them to me. I need to borrow Leila's car since Laila doesn't own one she just using Cesare's cars along with his chauffeur when she goes out. She doesn't even know how to drive. I suddenly open the door in the library without even knocking and already prepare to have the usual argument with Leila as she started accusing me of being uncultured swine and rude to their guest. That when I happened to see the woman with them. My eyes widened at the recognition. Half afraid to blink away because she might vanish once I do that. I didn't really meant to sound rude at her it's just it caught me off-guard that she's actually here after our bitter goodbye. Part of me still doesn't want to believe that she's really here. Hell, I



even mistook Rafe's wife to be her when I realized that I was missing her so badly that there's no getting over with my fixation to her anytime soon. Well, it doesn't matter now. She's here in Ragusa and that's all that matters. "What now?" She asked coldly once we were alone in the library. When my cousins finally leave us to ourselves. "What are you doing here, Willow?" I asked when I finally recovers from my shock. She gave me a bright smile. That kind of smile that I haven't seen in her face after that fateful night. "I came here to get closure."

*Closure*

, she says.

P 19-1

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Suddenly, I felt an unexpected blow in my chest at her words. I should have expected that since I've been an ass and didn't tell her right away that I regain my memories back. But I never expected that she would come all the way to here just to have her closure. The mere fact she went here just to end everything between us made me want to do something violent. Like hell I will let her go now, she's here I just comprehend seeing her now that as far as I am concern whatever we have between us

is far from over. I might have turned her away at the ranch after that fateful night thinking she deserves better than me but I recognize my mistake now. I don't care if there's a better man for her but I will not let that man have her. As far as I am concerned, Willow Kinsella will not get the closure she's seeking for her trip here. I would make sure of it. "No." I heard myself saying, looking at her clear blue gaze. "No?" She repeated questioningly. "What do you mean no?" I took a step even further as I started to crowd her space on the sofa. "What it means is that...I will not let you have your closure." "What?! Are you kidding me?" She speedily stood from her seat while glaring at me insolently. Those blue eyes busy sending hateful glares in my direction. Oh, how I want to replace those glares from a passionate look if I could just listen to the devil inside me. "Are you playing games with me?" I smiled sanguinely in her direction, carefully taking a step forward towards her. "I am not playing games with you, Willow." "Well good to know since I don't have time to play with you." She still throwing acid glares at me. "If I'll have this closure from you then I can move on with my life—my old life—that is." There was something about her words that made me furious for unknown reasons. I thought she came all the way from here because she wants to see me. Why she's so dead set insisting on this closure between us when it was clearly as the daylight that we still have this lethal attraction with each other. "Why are you here, Willow?" I asked in a

dangerously low voice. Right now, I am just preventing myself from burying my face in the hollow of her neck and inhale her signature flowery scent and let myself lost in that sensation. "What brings you here in Ragusa? A four thousand nine hundred fifteen miles from home." "Your uncle invited me for your party." She muttered softly, my hands itch to touch her face and demand to look at me. But I held myself in check because I knew once I got to touch her that would be my undoing. "He said, he wants to personally thank me for saving you that I should be here to celebrate that day with the Fiorenzas." "That's your only reason for coming here?" I inquired perilously. My gaze was focus on her teeth that was softly biting her lower lip. How I want to do just that exactly only if she would let me. "Yes."

P 19-2

I took one more step until I was standing toe-to-toe with her. I could almost smell her signature scent. "What about your closure?" She looked at me for a moment before avoiding my gaze again. "Yes, that one too." "After that you will go back to your home town and move on with your life and probably save another stranger in the forest and nurse him back to health?" "Probably." My stomach clenched. I was just jesting her but the mere thought of her saving another wounded man in

the forest letting him stay in her house do thing with him...I felt my fist balled tightly at the thought of them. I already killed every man before they could even think of kissing Willow Kinsella. I would not waste my skills in the special force for nothing. I sneaked my arm around her waist and drew her closer to me until nothing separate us. I hid my smile when I saw how it quicken her breath. As I thought she's not as immune as she thought about this attraction we have for each other. "As if, I will let that happened, my beautiful belle." I was about to dip my head to claim the mouth I longed for when she instantly put distance between us pushing me away. "I am not playing your games anymore, Enzo. One mistake is enough for me." "Willow..." "I am not the usual women you are associated yourself with in the past." She stated with such coldness in her voice. "If you make advances on me again I promise I will not hesitate to shoot you. I'm good at guns remember?" "Did you bring your gun?" "Why will I tell you if I did?" She retorted back sarcastically. I couldn't help but to be amuse by the steel determination she has. I was completely aware that she's way different from the women who were linked with me before. Because those women never made me desire them more than I want this woman in front of me. I would be gladly choose her over my next breath. I knew that I hurt her in the past and I sorely regret it now. Since I realized that I couldn't live like this missing her so badly. I might as well take the risk to

be with her even if the thought scared the hell out of me. For now, I will let her think I am not a danger to her heart and let her think she can have the closure she seek as I bid my time. "Very well," I found myself saying, picking up the discarded car key on the floor. "I will not make advances on you since you are my dear old uncle's very important guest." I winked at her before heading to the doorway. "Nice to see you again, my lady." Just when I was about to leave Laila came back probably to check on us. I didn't say anything as I pass her but I saw the curious look in her face as she went inside to check on Willow. I forced myself to walk away for now. But there's no way in hell that I would let her return to North Carolina

P 19-3

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without her mind and thoughts filled with nothing but my memories. Our memories, to be exact. I went to the garage and ride Leila's convertible and drive off the house with the intention of seeking for Rafe's company. I don't care if he's really busy at the moment I will bother him in his work if necessary. Being in the same house for more than a week with my family it's time for me to have a sane company for once. I

drove to his office in town and after half an hour or so on the road I finally made it to his office building. "Well, long time no see." He supplied with a slight smirk when he saw me barge in his office. He acted as if he was expecting me all day. "I can say that you look fine for a man who is currently under house arrest." "You knew?" The smirked in his face widened. "

*Si*

. My wife told me. She went to visit your cousins and they have afternoon chitchat, that's why." "You mean, afternoon gossip about me?" I asked dryly, feeling slightly irritated at the thought while taking one of the chairs across his table. "Yep. That's not the only thing that Coco tells me about you." Rafe's brown eyes lit with amusement. "I also heard that Cesare put you on the marriage market, how much of it is true? I mean, that's the whole reason for this coming party in

*Palazzo di Fiorenza*

, isn't?" I grimaced in his direction. I slightly regret my decision to come here if I just had known that Rafe would roast me like this. "Don't tell me everyone in the whole island of Sicily knew about this imminent event?" Rafe's eyes held amusement in their depth. "From what I knew every single ladies in the society are invited. You know, my godfather is hoping someone might catch your attention at the festivity. Coco and I already receive our invites for the party expect us to be there." "I

thought you are my best friend?" I demanded to him hotly, giving him a betrayed look. "Why do I feel that you are now siding with them over me?" He held up his hands midway from his seat. "I am always on your side, Enzo. But if your lovely cousin who also happens to be a devil incarnate, oversee the invitation at the party. If she has the control on whoever should attend the said festivity and invite the certain group of people residing in Rome then game over for you." I cocked my head to the side, frowning at him. "What you mean by that? Why are you being cryptic today? What do you mean game over for me? And you are these people you are talking about?" "It means that..." Rafe trailed off his words and gave a self-mocking smile. "...if a certain cynical, crazy and over dramatic man finds you at the party and see you being jealous he will sign your name in his club." My eyebrows furrowed. "As if I will do such idiotic thing." I eyed him dryly. "Don't tell me you joined his club? That's why you are giving me this advice." Rafe grinned. "Yeah, he force me to join. I believe you are one step closer joining the club since rumor has it

P 19-4

that you are quite fascinated with a certain southern woman. Is she going to attend this party?" "Since when my life become open book for everyone?" I asked in annoyance, remembering

that certain southern woman who was giving me acid looks nonstop since she arrive."Since you are the last one who isn't married yet." "What the hell..."

P 19-5

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*What is there more kindly than the feeling between host and guest?*

-Aeschylus

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

I kept on tossing and turning to my bed unable to sleep. My mind was still grappling with the fact that Willow was actually here in Ragusa to have her 'closure' somewhere in this house probably soundly asleep in her bed while I was kept awake unable myself to stop thinking about her. Did she also pack her sexy boxers and worn-out t-shirt on her surprised trip here? I cursed silently as I remember that night in her room. Her appearance a while ago really caught me off guard. But she's really beautiful than I remembered. The memories of her in my brain didn't do justice on how fine-looking she was wearing dress and her cute cowgirl boots. The devil inside me



had been whispering me since I went to bed to go and visit her bedroom again. But I don't have any idea where her bedroom in this ridiculously big castle. I knew that my cunning cousins will not tell me her bedroom is. I was sorely tempted to scan every room in this place even if there's at least one hundred and fifty rooms in here just to find her. Nothing would ever happen to my night if I kept on tossing and turning when the subject of my thoughts probably soundly asleep in her room while I was on a devil's mood. I tossed the cover in my body and jumped out of bed and wore my discarded pants and shirt laying on the chair nearby.

*I need a drink*

, I thought silently. I need a bottle of whiskey to help me sleep tonight. So I went out of my room and walk in the hallways with the purpose of going to the cellar. I was about to descend on the staircase when I found myself smiling wickedly when I saw a familiar figure downstairs looking side by side frantically. Like a wolf slowly stalking his prey I slowly went down to the stairs without spooking her. She must be lost finding her way I would gladly show it to her if she would just let me. She wasn't yet aware of my presence. "Lost, my lady?" She gasped and turned around to face me. "Neon! I mean, Enzo. What are you doing here?" "I should be the one asking you that. What are you doing here? Are you lost and looking for

your room?" I stated, eyeing her cute pajama. There's nothing really sexy about her nightclothes but it awakens something inside me as if she's standing naked in front of me right now. She shook her head and probably doesn't any idea who inappropriate my thoughts about her choice of outfits

P 20-1

tonight. "I am looking for the kitchen since I am thirsty." I frowned at that. "Didn't my cousin assign a maid for you? Why are you getting it for yourself you should just ask your maid for it." She rolled her eyes as if that's the most ridiculous thing she ever heard. "Are you serious? It's almost midnight. Besides, I only want a glass of water I don't need to bother someone to get it from me. Have you forgotten I do things on my own at the ranch?" Arguing with her was pointless beside I don't want to debate with her over small things. I took a deep breath gesture to way going to the kitchen. "Come, I'll help you get water this way." I was already heading on the direction of the kitchen when I glance at my back and saw her immobilize in her place. I raised a questioning eyebrow in her. "I thought you said you want water?" "You don't need to help me just point the way of the kitchen and that will be fine." She muttered, looking away from me. "I don't want to be a hassle for you." "Don't worry," I replied dryly. "I am also going to the kitchen. I want to get a

drink."She looked at me for a long moment probably debating if she could trust me. I hid my smile well not I can blame her since I am very much feel attacking her right this moment. "All right." She finally said after a moment.If I want to be welcome in her bed again first I need to earn her trust back. And from what I could see that'snot really hard to do.I walked ahead of her since I don't trust myself walking beside her at the moment. I might do something reallystupid and ruin my carefully laid plan.

"Welcome to the kitchen. I believe there's sparkling water on thefridge." "Thank you." She murmured demurely, still avoiding my gaze as she open the sub-zero refrigerator and pulled out a green bottle twist the cap open and drink the sparkling water. I watched her the movement of her throat as she drank the liquid. I think I never been thirsty in my life more than I have at this moment.

*Can I man feel jealous with bottle?*

My mind wondered silently. Jesus, Enzo. Do you hear yourself? You are jealous over a bottle that's been in her lips while she drink..."What?" She asked when she became aware that I'd been staring at her for quite some time.I shook my head and gave a self-mocking smile. "Nothing." I replied shortly, heading even further in thekitchen."Where are you going?" She asked curiously.I glanced back at her over my shoulder with a slight smile. "I am going to the cellar to get whiskey. Do youwant to

see the wine cellar of this house?" Her eyes lit with excitement at the thought. "Can I?"

P 20-2

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"Of course," I replied feeling ridiculously happy about inviting her to show-off Cesare's extensive collection of wine. "Come this way." We went downstairs where there was a wooden door at the basement. I opened the door and switched the lights on. I heard her gasp when the dark room illuminated with lightings. This was Cesare's private collection of rare, expensive and world-class wines. She scanned the wine racks with awe in her expression. "So many vintage and limited edition wines. This place must cost a fortune." I raised an eyebrow while watching her scanning some labels. "You have knowledge with wines, I see." Willow gave me a sardonic look. "Far from the usual beer I have in my fridge, right? But to answer your question my dad loves wine. He sometimes rewarded himself with a good wine on special occasion when he's still alive." "Do you drink wine?" "Sometimes," she replied with a grin on her face that I haven't seen in a while. The same smile she had given me when I woke up in her ranch. "But I still refer the

cold beer after a whole day of work at the ranch. Howabout you?" "I refer booze." I said, searching for the particular bottle I want on the shelves at the far end of the cellar. I walked back to where she was standing near the table at the center of the room when I found the one I like. "Just like this one." "You're going to drink all of that?" She asked eyeing the bottle of whiskey in my hand. "Maybe." I answered suavely, giving her an amuse look. "Since this might do the trick to help me sleep tonight." She gave me an alert look. "Why? Are you still having trouble sleeping because of the accident?" "Not really," I stated with a chuckle. "I have trouble sleeping lately because a certain blonde blue-eyed girl is keeping me awake almost every night." It took her a minute or so before finally comprehending what I meant and a pink stain spread through her cheeks. She gave me a guarded look. "I told you before don't have time to play your games, Enzo." I closed the distance that separate us until I was standing only inches apart. Who says I am playing games with you, Willow?" "I have enough of this hot and cold attitude you gave me." I frowned at me, gently lifting her chin with my fingers so I could force her to look at me in the eyes. "What do you mean?" She moistened her lower lip with the tip of her tongue that I find truly seductive. "You know your usual way one moment you are this flirty guy and then next you are this cold guy who keeps on telling me that you don't

do relationship. I am tired of this game, Enzo. Let's just finish it clean and let's be friends and nothing more." Something prick on my ears the way she delivered her words with such conviction in her voice. It seems to me that I haven't made clear of myself or explain it fully to her about my reason for that night after I thoroughly seduced her. "I am sorry for my action that night. I know that I hurt you the way I acted like a complete ass after our sleeping with you." I confessed, staring deep in her eyes. "It hit me like speeding train after our mind-blowing sex my memories came back in an instant swirling in my head coming back on me at once..." "Did you really regret sleeping with me?" "I told you, I didn't." I retort hotly. "I never regret coming to your room that night with the intention of seducing you. I only tell you those hurtful words before I finally knew that night who I really am and what kind of mess my life is. I still think that you deserved better man than me even now." She looked at me with those blue eyes exasperatingly. "If you still believe that now why don't you just let me go? Once and for all let's have this closure. Who knows we might not meant as lovers but great friends?" I eyed her cynically. "Do you honestly believe that? Do you think we can just be friends and nothing more?" She shrugged. "Better than enemies, don't you think?" "No way!" Willow took a deep breath and stare at me helplessly. "I don't understand you. You already

push me away rejecting the idea of having a relationship with me even it had the chance to gain momentum. And now I heed your warning you are acting strange again hinting that you don't want this thing to end." I took a deep breath, taking about emotions were not my kind of thing. I have difficulty of expressing myself through words. I never spoke this way to others before. "I want you, Willow. I always want you. I only said those words to you that night is because I need to push you away since that was the first time I let myself to get attached to someone even with my own family. I thought if I have push you away so this madness I have for you would end." "Does it?" She asked warily, her eyes held vulnerability in their depth. I found myself shaking my head while a smile slip on my face. "Not even close, darling. It only get worse since I am now starting to take a double look on other blondes to be sure that you're not them." She made a face. "Do I look that common for you?" "Believe me you are one of a kind that makes me still think that you deserve a better man but at the same time I won't let that happen." A frowned mark her eyebrow. "What does that mean? I don't understand you..." I smiled ruthlessly in her direction, already made up my mind on what to do with this woman and my insatiable attraction I have for her. "It means that even if I think you deserve better I will not let any man have

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you...as long as I am alive." I closed the little distance that separate us until my body was already touching hers. "You are mine, Willow Kinsella. Mine alone." Before she did have a chance to formulate a reply I already dip my head and claim the mouth I've been dying to taste since the last time I have them.

P 20-5

*Just because you got the monkey off your back doesn't mean the circus has left town.*

-George Carlin

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

The following morning after a relentless night unable to sleep due to the images inside my brain I kept on remembering Enzo's passionate kiss at the wine cellar. What madness had possessed me last night to come with him at the basement and seek for his company at midnight when the whole reason for my trip here was closure? Now in less than twenty-four hours since I step in his home turf I was back in his arms again when I already promise myself that I will not do such thing. A swift



goodbye and then no regrets or whatsoever so I could move on with my life without his bothersome memories wandering inside my brain. Now I am trying to enjoy my breakfast at the company of his cousins and their husbands at their fabulous garden overlooking the ocean the scenery of this place was really breath-taking. I sipped my freshly brewed coffee grateful for the company of these two lovely ladies as they never let me feel alone here in their palace and their husband who seems also eager to make me feel home. As I expected from these two heiresses they were married to billionaires! I already met Laila's husband when they fetched Enzo at the ranch but Leila's husband who owns an entire estate in Spain was also a Spanish count! Who would have thought that a southern woman like me would ever have breakfast with the likes of them in my lifetime? Thankfully, their cousin was still no show. He was still probably soundly asleep if he really does consume the whole bottle of whiskey by himself he would be out until afternoon. I scowled when I remember how we just casually chatting with each other about wines one moment and then I just found myself plastered in his body and he was once again possessing my mouth as if he had every right of doing so.

*But you let him kiss you senselessly, you dimwit*

. A voice inside my head reminded me, So okay, I may have let him kiss me again last night since he just caught me off-guard

but that doesn't mean that I am enjoying his kisses or what. I was just surprised that's all." "Don't you like your food, Willow?" It was Laila who dragged me out of my reverie. "You haven't touched your food yet." "Oh," I looked at my untouched food in my plate. "I like it." "You seem miles away from here. Are we boring you to tears with our conversation?" Her twin quipped. "Or perhaps you are already missing home?" Then her dark green eyes lit devilishly. "Or better yet you

P 21-1

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already miss taming wild horses, that is." I frowned at her while the member of her family gave her a collective amusement as if they were enjoying an inside joke and I was out of the loop. I didn't bother to answer and pretend that I didn't realize that her words have double meaning. One thing I learned since I met this woman who was once been the darling of the local tabloids. Leila Fiorenza – Salazar was one cunning woman she didn't do or say thing by accident everything were meticulous well-planned inside her bright mind. "Are you excited about the party tomorrow night?" Leila asked me offhandedly, while sipping her coffee. "I hope you don't mind but I want to give you

a gift." "A gift?" She nodded with a pretty smile in her face. "Yes, Laila and I want to buy you the prettiest evening gown we could find in Sicily. I want you to be the prettiest girl tomorrow so every man in the party—except our husbands, of course—can't take off their eyes on you." "I don't think that's necessary but thank you for your generosity." "We insist." Laila inserted with a hard to refuse smile in her face. "Why don't you humor us with this? We always want to have another sibling—" "But

*Patri*

doesn't." Her rebel twin inserted dryly. Nikos and Leandro choke their coffee while laughing at the thought. Looking at them they seem to be intimidating men but it was clear how much they adored the twins even though they were opposite as day and night with their attitude. "Good luck if Cesare doesn't hear you saying that." Nikos warned his sister-in-law sweetly. "Remember that man has ears all over this place." She rolled her eyes. "Goodness, why would he be mad when it's the truth." She pointedly look at me with determination. "So you will agree to let us doll you up for the party tomorrow?" "What other choice do I have when four sets of eyes were intently focus on me? I managed to give a short nod and let them do as they please. I might as well be grateful to them since I don't think I have suitable to wear in attending society parties like this the only fancy party I attended was country weddings back

home."One more thing," Leila added, making sure I already agree to their first request before bombarding me with another request. This is what I am talking about her being manipulative woman."What is it?" I asked guardedly. There was manipulation in her eyes that I swear I saw before schooling her features to remain impassive."Attending parties like this one often requires a date..."My heart nearly stop beating as I stare in disbelief in her direction. She's not thinking of pairing me to her cousin, right? I shifted in my position, starting to feel uneasy with this conversation. "Don't tell me you are planning..."

P 21-2

"Of course," She supplied with a calculated smile in her face. "I hope you don't mind that we already arrange a date for you at the coming party tomorrow night. Don't worry, this man is perfect gentleman since he's the older brother of our good friend Coco. He's name is Oliver Spencer."I exhaled the breath that I didn't know I was holding. Of course, they won't be thinking of pairing me to their cousin since they don't have any idea what happened between us back in North Carolina. I was only giving myself a heart attack thinking that they're playing matchmaker between us."So are you okay with that set-up?" Leila asked when I remain silent. I tried to smile but my face

took an effort to execute that. "Yes, of course." I would have any problem as long that's not their cousin who will be my date at that party. "Based on how this conversation leads, I think I will have an impromptu visit to town today with you guys?" "Actually," Leila started with a sad smile. "Laila and I will be busy finalizing the party tomorrow and I am sure you will be uncomfortable going shopping with either Leandro or Nikos in town but don't worry I already have someone in my mind who can help you..." Before I could ask who will join me for this trip her face lit with delight. "...and he just show himself. Enzo, dear cousin! Over here." I think my heart just practically drop on the floor as I stared at her in disbelief. No way, she couldn't be serious! I watched Enzo slowly walking towards us with confusion in his handsome face. "What?" "Can you help Willow look for her evening gown for the party? I am quite busy today with Laila—that is if you not busy?" "I hate shopping." "Okay," Leila answered swiftly. "That can't be help. I will just ask Cesare's driver to help her in town." "Wait," He looked at me silently for a long moment. I was unable to look away from his powerful gaze and then he answer his cousin without even looking at her, a mirthless smile fitted his sexy mouth. "I'll do it." I started to shake my head. "I don't think that's necessary." "Don't worry, Willow." Leila vouched for his cousin. "Enzo will be a perfect gentleman, isn't that right, cousin?" When I managed to look at the people sitting

around the table deep inside I knew there's something going on and I don't like any of it." "When do you plan to leave?" Enzo asked me directly. I found myself looking back at him. There are still unresolved issues with us how can I go with him and pretend that we didn't passionately kiss again last night. "Right now if that's okay with you. I will just change my clothes." "When do you plan to leave?" Enzo asked me directly.

P 21-3

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I found myself looking back at him. "Right now if that's okay with you. I will just change my clothes." "Fifteen minutes?" "Yes." I excused myself from the table and went to my room to get change. I scanned my clothes and look for a suitable outfit for this trip. This isn't a date, I reminded myself as I look for something to wear. Finally, I decided to wear the last one out of the two dresses I pack for my trip. It was a floral print wrap-around dress I ditch my denim jacket since it's quite humid here in Sicily. I also apply some tint in my cheeks and lips so it could add color in my face. At exactly, twelve minutes and twenty-five seconds I found him patiently waiting in the garage area leaning casually in a sleek black

## *Ferrari*

. I froze in my place when I saw him unlock the car. "Yours?" He gave me a faint smile. "Maybe." "I thought your uncle took your car keys?" I asked when I saw him opening the passenger's door for me. "What's with the change of heart?" "I told him that you need a driver for your trip to town so he gave me one. The other two is still in his possession." "I don't know if it's the right idea to ride such thing. I knew this type of cars could go from 0-100 km/h in just three seconds. I didn't have time to argue with him and I don't want to let him know that I was half-scared of riding his car. When I was inside the luxurious interior of his sports car I took a deep breath when he started the engine and drove off the castle with dexterity. I found myself clutching on my seatbelt as he made this thing almost fly on the road. He's crazy driving like this when the road in their town was zigzag one wrong move and we'll be tossed on the sea beside the cliff. Finally, after driving like a maniac we manage to arrive in town alive somehow. He parked his Ferrari at the pavement with the rows of high-end boutiques lining up in the whole streets. Several female heads both from tourist and local drew their attention to him as he slid out of his powerful car. He just took no notice of them while his eyes were concealed by a pair of sunglasses. By the time he arrived in my side I already slid out of the car. I gasped when he abruptly clamped my wrist like a vice in his long fingers. I tried to shake off

his touch buy he's not letting me go. He led me to this brand that sells evening gown even Hollywood celebrities often wearing this label during red carpet events. He was about to pull the glass door when I stop him. "Wait! Can we find shops that sells inexpensive dress than this high-ends brand in this part of town?" Seeing his confusion in his face I added. "I mean, your cousins are paying for this dress I don't such expensive gift." "Don't worry, I will pay for this dress." "What?!" The shocked in my face was palpable. "Why will you do that?"

P 21-4

"Because I want to." Before I could further any longer he pulled me inside the boutique and two efficient sales lady immediately greet us with a ready smile in their faces. "Welcome, Mr. Fiorenza. What can we do for you today?" I stared at him in disbelief. It seems to be that he's a frequent shopper in this kind of place. He finally let go of my hand and gesture me to the sales lady. "This lady needs an evening dress show her your best collection." "Certainly, Mr. Fiorenza." One of the sales lady had said while giving me a kind smile. "This way please, ma'am?" I looked at him questioningly while he settle himself on the cream-colored leather sofa in the middle of the boutique. The sales lady helped me to the dressing room with racks of evening gowns to choose from. I slightly feel



shy when she help me undress and assist me to slide in one form-fitting white gown studded with crystals."What do you think?" I asked him coming out of the dressing room showing the gown for his inspection."I don't like it."I stared at him in disbelief but didn't say anything and I went back inside the dressing room to try another dress. That's how we spent the next half an hour trying and fitting the gowns in variety of color and designs for his inspection. Finally, we met halfway and settle to this blush pink sheer top with crystals and flowery embroidery from the base of my chest cascading down to the hemline of the skirt.They need to alter the gown a bit so it could fit really nice on my body and they promise that they would deliver the gown tomorrow morning at the palace. He paid it with his card despite my protest and I kept on asking him as we went outside how much is the gown since it has no tag when I fit it.I thought that we're finally going home but he pull me to this store that sells shoes. I sighed deeply when once again I need to fit series of shoes that needs to complement my dress. I was about to remove my boots when Enzo surprised me."Allow me." He said as he kneel in front of me removing my leather boots and pushing this latent silver studded crystal pumps in my foot. He grinned at me. "This goes well with your dress, darling.""I don't know how to wear heels remember? I will break my ankles in no time with this."He grinned at me. "Don't worry, I will not let that

happen."The salesladies sighed with envy upon seeing us. I threw a dirty look in his direction silently asking him why he put this kind of show in public we're as if lovers but that's far from reality. Before I could protest more he already paid for the shoes and matching clutch bag. While the salesladies packed the items that we just bought he excused himself telling me that he just needs to go somewhere really quick and I should wait for him here. I just gave him a short nod and watch him go. After a few minutes he was finally back with a mysterious small paper bag in his hand. "What is that?" I asked.

P 21-5

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He automatically hid it behind him as he picked the paper bags on the floor beside me. "Nothing. Let's go."

P 21-6

*You can be the moon and still be jealous of the stars.*

-Gary Allan

**Nikos Pallis's POV**

I stood at the lawn of the

### *Palazzo di Fiorenza*

talking to Leandro, Lucca and his wife enjoying to see the familiar faces. Being detained here in Sicily for a whole week makes me miss Greece or New York as long as it's away from Cesare's dire humor. I couldn't wait for my wife and me to finally go home. Right now my beautiful wife was with her father helping him entertain their guests. Our light and friendly conversation was interrupted by another man with equally dreadful humor like my father-in-law. "Having fun without me? I'm so wounded." Lucca and Leandro rolled their eyes while I—this was probably the first time I would be happy to see him. I smiled at him while Tatiana exchanged cheek-to-cheek kisses with Francesca. "You're late." "How can you be late on a party?" He drawled with the signature smug smile in his face. "A man like me is never late on anything. By the way, is this really Enzo Fiorenza's homecoming party? I thought they are shooting

### *The Bachelor*

Italy. Look at those single ladies eagerly want to get the attention of the man of the hour." "Nikos has a gift for you that you will surely like, Marco." Leandro quipped sipping his champagne glass. "Oh, really?" This sarcastic Italian's eyes lit with excitement. "What is it,

*amico*

? Be sure that I will like it or else I will snap your head for ruining my announcement." "Announcement? What announcement?" I asked with a frown. He shook his head while getting a fluke of champagne to the passing waiter. "You first." I scanned the crowd for a moment and finally be able to spot Enzo busy giving someone a deathly glare. Itapped Marco's shoulder with my hand and discreetly gesturing the man in question who was busy sendingmurderous look at Rafe's brother-in-law. "We have a gift for you, boy. Look at that guy any day now he willsign his name in your club." The Italian bastard's eyes merely ignited with amusement. "Since I have the misfortune to be your dorm mate back in College this is probably the first time you say something that made me happy,

*amico*

. I hope everyoneis like you getting member for our club." Those words were solely directed to the other men with us who also happens to be a member of his freakingclub they remain silent ignoring his barbs. "He's busy giving Rafe's brother-in-law nonstop deathly glaessince the woman he fancy is in other man's arms. Leila's doing, I might add." "She's really the best." Marco complimented my sister-in-law with soaring pride. "I never been more proud

P 23-1

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of her helping her big brother like this. This must be the reason why she's so eager to find her cousin in the first place. I never regret my decision to help her locate that wayward soldier." "Stop being dramatic." I informed him with impatience. "He has a long way before he can join your club. He doesn't realize the 'L' word yet. You have to wait a little longer since he is slowly catching up. Now about your announcement." "Ah, yes." He raised his champagne, placing his hand around his wife's waist. He gave us a conceited smile again while his wife blush. "Francesca is pregnant with baby number two. You know I have a duty to continue our family dynasty, right?" Tatiana squealed with delight hugging her close friend tightly. "I'm so happy for you, Francesca. And of course for you Marco." We congratulate them with the happy news. Marco gave the duke a sardonic look. "If I were you, Lucca. I will start making baby number three. I hate to see my goddaughter and godson to grow up without another siblings." "No, thank you." Lucca shook his head, his grey eyes was fix on his wife affectionately. "Tatiana had difficult pregnancy in the past. I hate to put her on such situation again the twins should be enough for us." Tatiana tiptoe to kiss her husband on the lips briefly. "It wasn't that

bad, darling." Leandro squint at the far end of the garden. "What the hell...?" He said with annoyance. "Excuse me, will you? I need to have a word with my wife." We watched him march towards the seductively dressed Leila talking animatedly to Rafe and his wife near the buffet table. "That man will go bald before he turns forty I bet you." Marco commented watching Leandro's decisive stride in his wife's direction. "His wife is really a handful little conniving she-devil." Lucca choked his champagne while I laugh at the thought. "Stop saying something like that when someone is drinking, For god's sake!" "Jesus, I am only stating what's obvious." Marco smirked, throwing a glance to the Spanish man who was about to reach his wife. "It must be really love to stay sane while married to that woman." Leandro's brother-in-law remarked joining us with his wife in his arms. "No one could keep up with that woman except Leandro." "You're late." Marco accused, giving them a wicked look. "Don't tell me you lost your way here at the party, my boy?" "That's your habit not mine." The bastard merely shrugged with a wistful smile on Enzo's direction. "Well, it's fun to get lost sometime. I wonder how soon we can sign his name in our club. I hate waiting."

P 23-2

**Leila Salazar's POV**

"He's going to kill my brother. And then he's going to kill me." Coco informed me with annoyance in her face. "Do you think this whole charade is worth risking our lives to make your cousin jealous to Oliver?" "Relax." I smiled at her pleasantly, pushing a flute of champagne in her hand. "Here drink this. Enzo will not kill anyone tonight, I assure you." "I am not so sure about that." Coco muttered, sipping her vintage drink in her hand. "He was really murderous while standing next your father. Let me remind you, woman. My brother and I doesn't have any plan reuniting with our deceased grandfather anytime soon." I laughed at her outburst. "Oh, come on now. Rafe talk some sense to your wife, will you? She needs to chill." "Honey," Rafe started with a reassuring smile in his face. "Leila is right. Despite her evil plan against her cousin, Enzo will not harm you or Oliver I assure you I know him since we were kids." She still not fully convinced not that I could blame her since Enzo was really sending her older brother deathly glare from the distance while Oliver Spencer and Willow seems having fun talking to other guests. "Are you sure that your brother will not be a danger to Willow's heart? Don't get me wrong but I only want to make Enzo jealous not to make someone steal his girl." Coco rolled her eyes. "I told you that my brother is homosexual. So he is a safe choice for your plan though I sorely regret it now." "Just making sure." "If Rafe became widower before this party even ends I will haunt you for the rest of your

life." She warned and then she look at her husband with equal ferocity in her eyes. "And you, if you remarry even before your mourning period ends, I will haunt our bedroom." Rafe rolled his eyes. "I will never remarry, honey. Thought I have been married twice—but with the same woman. I only have one wife in this lifetime and that is you." I grunted at their sweetness. "Ew...get a room." My eyes widened when I saw Leandro striding my direction. "Oh, shoot..." "What the hell are you wearing?" He demanded, removing his tuxedo jacket and wrap it around my shoulder. I threw a disapproving look and then he added. "Dare to remove that,

mi dulzura

. And I will lock up in our room. Try me." I made a face at him but he's not having any of it. He placed his hand securely in my waist as he tightened his grip on my side. Not long after Nikos and his original best friends are coming in our direction. I hid my smile when I saw my favorite schemer walking towards us, this should be fun.

P 23-3

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"Hey Rafe, you bastard. Are you avoiding us?" Marco Orsini demanded vehemently without preamble. "Why aren't you attending our club meetings?" I rolled my eyes on them. The club meeting he was talking about was like a casual Friday night where they would gather around here in Sicily or Rome or sometimes if they are in a good mood some unknown destination for a drink. "I'm busy at the office." Rafe answered defensively. "Are you forgetting that I am starting to rebuild our company?" "Too much work end your life earlier than you expected." Marco commented dryly. "Look, the last time you work so hard you were kidnapped in front of your office building." He gave him a meaningful look. "You don't want that to happen again, right?" Coco stiffened at the thought. Clearly, she hasn't recover yet from the trauma that happened to Rafe before. Little did she know that it was this man's doing that whole kidnapping thing. I feel so stupid that time that I haven't realized that they're the people who kidnap Rafe. Even my own husband didn't tell me that. "Are you threatening me?" Rafe demanded, giving him a foul look. Marco shook his head. "Nope, just reminding you. We'll have another club meeting this coming days we need to talk about something. Actually, we need a plan." He gave him an eloquent stare. "Be sure to be there don't wait for me to resort to drastic measures just to drag your ass off your office chair." "I'm busy." He feigned a look of shock in his ruthless face, as if he couldn't believe his

ears. "I'm warning you, Rafe..."He cautioned. "Remember our code, you bastard. 'The club before anything else'." "Actually," I inserted smoothly, making Marco focus his gaze on me. "I want your help. I want to sign someone on your club if you'll help me." From the devilish smile that broke in his face was the only answer I was waiting for. "I'm all ears, little one." I eyed my husband and his friends who gave me an interested look. "Here's what I am thinking..."

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

If he doesn't removed his damn arm around Willow's waist I will cripple this man right now. The secured hand in her waist wants me to do something violent that would shock this glittering folks. I knew one hundred one ways to kill a man and I am not thinking how I should end the life of Oliver Spencer in my hands.

*Gun?*

Too easy.

*Slit his throat?*

Too messy.

P 23-4

*Fist?*

Possibly..."Stop glowering, Vincenzo. You are scaring your guests." Cesare chided softly in my side. "One would think that you are not enjoying your own party. At least, try to smile. That's the fifth girl you threw dark look in her direction." "Enzo." I corrected him ardently, ignoring the women who wants to start conversation with me. "And for therecord, you are correct I am not enjoying this party." Not when I was about murder someone in front of this crowd. "Don't tell me you are in a bad mood becauseof that girl." "I don't know what you mean." "Oh, come on now Vincenzo." My uncle looked at me with his knowing eyes. "You are smitten to thatAmerican girl that's why you are in a bad mood because she is with someone else to this party. You arehoping she's with you right now." I pointedly ignore him. I don't wish to discuss my personal relationship with Willow to anybody elseespecially with my uncle. "If you think that inviting such large crowd of unmarried ladies will force me tochoose a wife you are mistaken, uncle. These women will not make me change the way I view life." "Vincenzo," The old man started, giving me an amuse look. "You just need one woman to help you change howyou view life and I believe you already found that woman." "You know what, uncle?" I informed him. It's time to take this matter on my hands, eyeing that one womanwho was currently on another man's side. "Excuse me, will you? I think I want to dance." This would be the last time Willow Kinsella would be on

another man's side. She belonged to me even if I need to remind her that."Would you honor me a dance, Miss Kinsella?" I asked with a pleasant smile in my face that belied all the emotion that rage in my heart since the last time I made her mine.

P 23-5

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*Isn't it amazing how much stuff we get done the day before vacation?*

-Zig Ziglar

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

My heart was pounding in my chest as I stood from the sidelines of the progressing party in Palazzo di Fiorenza. The elite of the Sicilian society were all present to this festivity. I tried to smile and join the conversation with Oliver Spencer in my side enjoying my last day here in the beautiful island of Sicily. He's been a perfect gentleman throughout the night, putting a secured hand around my waist to prevent me from falling with this heeled shoes I've been wearing. From what I could see he's a pro when it comes to this kind of gathering

talking casually with people we just met here as if he'd known them for a long time but at the same time he's making sure that I was not left out of the discussion. Even though, I was far away as possible from the celebrant I've been always aware of his presence and right now he was standing next to his uncle ignoring the females who were clearly eager to talk to him. It seems that Oliver also aware of his brooding look when he lowered his head and whisper something in my ear. "Enzo Fiorenza is kinda cute when he's jealous. He hasn't stop giving me deathly glare since we join the party. He really likes you a lot." I couldn't help the stains that spread through my cheeks at his words. Part of me—a tiny part of me hope how those words could be true. But I just probably deluding myself here. "Would you honor me a dance, Miss Kinsella?" My heart nearly jumped out of my chest upon hearing his deep voice beside us. I swore he was just standing near his uncle moments ago. From the look in his face rejecting him was not an option I glance to Oliver who gave me a reassuring smile. "It's okay." I looked at his hand that was held out in my direction, completely aware of the curious stare we're getting from other people. I slowly took the offered and he rudely snatch me to his side lightning fast. He smiled to Oliver that didn't quite reach his eyes. "Thank you very much for looking after my

*girl*

while I am busy but I'll take it from here." I gasped at his words while the British guy merely raised an eyebrow in his direction but says nothing. He took my hand and led me to the dance floor. "What's wrong with you?" I asked as soon as we're in the middle of the dance floor. "You've been acting weird." His dark green eyes slits like a dagger in my direction. "I will kill him if you will not stop flirting with him, Willow. I meant it."

P 24-1

I gasped at his words, looking back to the poor Oliver who had been a nice companion since the party started. "What are you talking about?" "Why the devil did you agree to be his date in the first place?" He asked irritably as he pull me closer to his body until we're probably making a scene in the middle of the dance floor. "Are you out of your mind?" "It was your cousin suggestion..." I mumbled, as he starts to sway me to the sultry music. His hip making aggressive move between my legs. "...she said I need a date for this party." "Which cousin?" "Leila." "That woman." He muttered with dangerous tone in voice. "I really need to have word with that evil woman." "Why are so angry?" I asked searching on his face for answer. But the anger was still visible in his face. He looked down at me with such intensity in his eyes. "I paid for your dress and other ensembles and yet some other man will enjoy the benefit of it. I will not let that

happen." I shook my head. "You are not making any sense, Enzo." I sighed deeply looking away in his upset face. "Can we not argue about this tonight? Can we just enjoy this night together? I want my last day here in this beautiful island of Sicily filled with happy memories with you." He tightened his grip on my waist. "You're leaving tomorrow?" I gave him a sad smile. "Yes." "You can't leave yet." He stated firmly, his face was taut with emotion. "I will not let you leave Sicily. I want you here." I wretched at the thought of leaving him but... "I don't belong here, Enzo. My home is in North Carolina and you in here with your family." "Willow..." We stopped dancing and just stand in the middle of the dance floor facing each other. I gave a slightly forced smile remembering the original reason why I want to come here in the first place. "Your family are nothing but kind to me since I arrive. I am delightful to meet your adorable cousin and your uncle." "Extend your vacation here." I looked at him sharply. I don't know how to answer his surprised statement. "Why?" "Because..." He was lost for words for a moment. He swallowed hard looking at me intently. "...because whatever we have is far from over, Willow. We both know that." I tried to put some distance between us because talking to him with this close distance I couldn't think

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straight. "Don't you think sooner we accept that we have no future together the less heartache for us?" "I will not accept it." He took a step forward towards me but I took one step backward at the same time. "Why?" I asked, with a false laugh. "Because I am novelty to the women you usually associated yourself with? That's why you are enjoying the chase." He took a deep breath, there was a troubled expression in his face. "Don't lie to yourself, sweetheart. We both know that whatever we have is far deeper than a mere fling. Stay a little longer here in Sicily." He cajoled, his eyes were hard to resist. "Let me prove it to you." "I don't know, Enzo. The ranch..." "Please." He pleaded quietly. I bit my lips torn between my brain tells me to leave as soon as possible to save the both of us from unwanted despair from the future but at the same time my heart pleads me to stay with him for a little longer and to hell for the consequence after. "Willow?" He demanded gently. "Will you stay a little longer with me?" I took a deep, despite the warning in my head I stupidly listen to my heart. Because I knew deep inside me I want to stay a little longer here with him. "All right, I will extend my vacation for few more days." "Two weeks?" I looked at him for a moment. Two weeks? Would I dare to stay here that long? I finally gave



him a short nod after he pleaded again. "All right, two weeks. But no more extensions after that."

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

I was still reeling at the thought that Willow just told me that she will leave tomorrow. She cannot leave yet. I will not allow her to leave the island even if I need to suspend all the flights tomorrow going out of Sicily.

*I am a Fiorenza, after all.*

Thank goodness, she agree to stay here a little longer for a period of two weeks. In that time I need to persuade and convince her that everything about us is far from over. Our conversation interrupted when a group of people marching in our direction. I frowned when I saw my devious cousin, her husband and some male strangers. "Willow!" Leila chirped happily, raising her hand for a greeting. I instantly went to Willow side and place a protective hand in her lower back. She gave me a pleasant smile little did she know how much I want trowing her neck right this moment. "I'd you to meet our friends from Rome."

*What the hell...?*

Suddenly Rafe's warning came back to me lightning fast. So this was the group of people he warned me about coming to this

party. I watched silently as she introduce everyone to Willow exchanging

P 24-3

pleasantries while the man with dark cynical eyes fix his attention to me."What?" I asked defensively. Suddenly, I have a feeling that this group of people were up to no good."Nothing," He replied with a secretive smile in his face. From what Leila introduce him he was MarcoOrsini. He came from the prominent family of winemakers. "I am very pleased to meet you,

amico

."Your family is known for making wines, right?" I asked, just making sure but curious at the same time."I believe so, for centuries more or less." He grinned at me with a mysterious glint in his dark eyes. "If youwant I want to invite you and your lady friend to our vineyard and have wine tasting to the famous Orsiniwinery. It's located just thirty minutes outside Rome."It was on the tip of my tongue to turn down the offer but I held back myself when I saw the delight inWillow's face at the thought of visiting their family vineyard. She looked at me expectantly as if waiting for me to accept the offer. I took a deep breath as I force to accept the offer. "Thank you we love

to do that." "Great!" He said with too much enthusiasm in his face. "Just tell me when you plan to visit and I will prepare everything for your arrival. Leave it to me. I am sure you will enjoy your stay at the vineyard I will make sure of it." I gave a stiff smile. There was a sly look in his face that I don't trust. "Thank you." He gave me one last lingering smile before he excused himself with his friends. I left staring at them with this feeling inside me that I couldn't shake off. "Are we really going to their vineyard?" Willow asked with gleam in her pretty blue eyes. "I mean, a real vineyard imagine that. When?" I couldn't help but to share her enthusiasm. Pretty pleased that I accept the offer last minute. "This coming days." "I'm so excited for this." "Me too." I replied, tucking some loose gold strand of hair that fall in her updo. For now I will use everything to keep Willow here even if it's only temporary. But in span of two weeks I am sure I already think of another method of persuading her to stay here even more. Because as far as I am concern fate have given me another chance to be with this woman and I am not stupid enough to throw away my chance again. I might messed up with the first one but it won't happen again. Oh yes, she will stay, all right? I will make sure of that. From the corner of my eyes I saw that people now giving me curious look even my own family didn't hide their interested expression they throw in our direction. My eyes narrowed when I saw Oliver talking to my best friend and his wife

while giving me an amuse look at the far end of the garden. "Willow." I called out her name and she look at me with a quizzical smile in her pretty face. And in thatmoment I did something might regret later but I don't particularly care. I cradle her face in my palms and took

P 24-4

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her mouth in an ardent kiss.

*You're curious about our relationship?*

The voice inside my head silently telling the people around us. I'llshow you exactly what's going on between us.

P 24-5

*A man's character may be learned from the adjectives which he habitually uses in conversation.*

-Mark Twain

**Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

The following day after the party my head hurts like hell. Not only my family demanded answers to why I justkiss Willow for all the elite society of Sicily could see as soon as the party ended. They didn't care the factthat it's already past one in the morning and yet they are acting like its only 10 p.m.Truth to be told, I really didn't know how to answer them since I just acted out of my instinct at that timesince looking at Oliver Spencer makes me want to be possessive to Willow. I will not let that bastard near Willow ever again. He made her laugh several times at the party which was unacceptable.I took a deep, descending to the staircase. I need to get away from this damn house before one of my cousinscould catch me and start interrogating me with what happened last night and the status of my relationship withWillow.I was about to reach the receiving room when the maid open the main door and Rafe walks in. My eyesinstantly narrowed in his direction. "What are you doing here?"He seems a bit surprise to see me early this morning, then he smiled at me. "Relax, I didn't come here early inthe morning to interrogate you with the stunt you pulled in last night. I came here because I have a meetingwith your uncle. It's business, don't worry."I remained silent as I continue to walk. I need to clear my head with all the madness that's happening aroundme since I met this fiery little southern girl."Want to talk about it?" Rafe suggested when I was about to reach the door.I turned to look at him with accusing eyes. "I

thought you came here for business with Cesare. This is your real agenda, right?" My childhood best friend grinned at me while showing the folder in his hand. "I really have a meeting with my godfather, Enzo. But this can wait...want to talk about what's bothering you,

*amico*

?I was really torn between accepting his offer or just leave and be on my own until I clear my thoughts. But in the end I finally agree in his suggestion. I looked around the house making sure that no one was around that would eavesdrop our conversation. "Let's go to Cesare's study room." I gestured the room located at the far end in the hallway. He followed me silently until we reach the room. "Do you think it's still early for a whiskey?" I asked when I saw the decanter on the table.

P 25-1

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Rafe shrugged nonchalantly, taking the leather chair across the study table. I poured the two glasses with the amber liquid and gave the other one to Rafe. I choose this place because Cesare rarely went here he usually spends his time in his favorite part of this house which is the library. "I always knew that when a

Fiorenza create a scandal they don't do it by half measure. It will surely be a media frenzy. You are starting to replace Leila as the favorite of the Sicilian tabloids,

*amico.*

Cheers!" I frowned at him, taking the chair behind the study table. "What are you talking about?" He smiled at me mockingly. "You don't have any idea? It seems that you didn't see the morning papers yet. Assuming that you have not seen one yet let me fill you in." My good friend eyed me sardonically. "It has your little stunt last night while possessively kissing your lady friend in every front page of the Sicilian tabloids." I cursed long and hard. I should have expected it really but for some reason I don't regret it. I noticed that Rafe was busy giving me an amused look. "What?" "I thought you're not into blondes?" "I thought you're not also?" I retorted back at him, sipping my liquor. He, who was madly in love with his blonde wife. Rafe thought for a moment before a smile broke in his face.

"Sometimes you really don't know what you want until you find it." "She's difficult." I told Rafe after a moment. My mind wandered back last night after I kissed her in the middle of the party she just dismissed after like it's not that important. I was once again locked out of her room. "She's different from the women usually linked with in the past. She inflames emotions I never experienced before. I feel every emotion while just

merely talking to her from anger, frustration, disbelief, annoyance and...""And...?" Rafe inquired interestedly.

*And jealousy*

. I added silently. I never thought that I would experience such emotion in my life. In the past, I don't care if I saw the woman I'd been sleeping with another man but with Willow the mere thought of her with another man made me want to do something violent. My trusted friend shook his head. He sipped his whiskey there was a small smile playing in his mouth while staring at me with interest. "If a woman doesn't provoke you dump her for god's sake. She's a fake. The one for you behave like evil spirit while talking to her every now and then especially when she's mad." Rafe commented grimly, taking a sip of his whiskey. My eyebrow titled upward. "Just like your wife then?" Rafe's face curved with a self-mocking smile, his brown eyes warm with some emotions I don't understand. "No. I think I married the leader. The original. The mother of all. You don't have any idea what she's like when she mad,

*amico*

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P 25-2



I couldn't help but to smile at him. "You must be nuts to marry such woman, Rafe. But that's nothing compared to Willow who threaten to shoot her ex-boyfriend with a shotgun when he trespass her property." He stared at me in horror. "Are you serious?" "Yeah." He shook his head in disbelief. "Clearly, she's the adventure that you're looking all your life. A life with her will never be boring." "Aren't you thinking ahead of yourself?" I asked dryly. "I am not even sure on what I feel about her is this only desire or something deeper than lust. But one thing I am certain I don't want to see her with another man. Like that Oliver Spencer." "Careful," Rafe warned light-heartedly. "That's my brother-in-law that you're talking about." My mouth hang open in his direction. "No way!" "Yes, he's the older brother of my wife." My best friend announced cheerfully his eyes danced with delight. "Why didn't you tell me that?" "You didn't ask. Besides..." "Besides what?" I asked with a frown when I saw the amusement in his face. "Tell me, Enzo." Rafe demanded with laughter in his eyes. "Are you jealous to Oliver?" "Why do you want to know?" "Are you?" I took a deep breath as I stared at his inquisitive eyes. There's no reason for him to lie since he knew me well. "So what if I am?" Rafe barked a laugh that made me cringe. "Jesus! You are really been played by your devious cousin. You are jealous of Oliver! That's rich. Let me tell you a secret, amico." Rafe said between laughter while waiting the moisture in his eyes. "My brother-in-

law is gay." "What?!" I stood from my chair and stare at him in disbelief. "What did you just say?" "He prefers men over women to be his partner in bed." "No way!" Damn Leila for playing me like fool being jealous to a guy who is homosexual. I would have my revenge on that woman one of these days, that's a promise. "That reminds me. Remember the other day you warned me about this certain people from Rome who will attend the party. Are you talking about Marco Orsini?" "Did I say something like that?"

P 25-3

I glared at him coldly. "Stop playing games with me, Rafe. I think you are really on their side." He gave me a guarded look with a reassuring smile in his face that made my eyes narrowed in his direction. "I don't remember,

amico

. But I heard you and your lady friend is going to their vineyard for wine tasting. Stop thinking too much and just enjoy your time with her. Get to know her better make her fall for you. That will not be hard, is it? You are Enzo Fiorenza, after all." I gave him a dry look. "I don't know if you are complimenting me or insulting me, Rafe. I will not accept his invitation if not for Willow's eagerness to see his family vineyard." "I understand." Rafe nodded in agreement. I could see laughter lurking in his eyes. "I will do the same if I am in your position. You know, trying to please the woman I like." "Rafe..." "Okay, okay..." The bastard stated, trying to stop the laughter escaping in his mouth. "I will shut my mouth now. I think I already have said so many things." I was silent for a moment, studying his face. I really thought he would end up with my sweet-natured cousin Laila since they have this secret affection for each other since we reach teenage years. I couldn't believe when I went home after years living abroad that they are now married to different person. I think fate had always have different plans for

the two of them. "How did you do it, Rafe?" "Do what?" He asked curiously, stretching his legs in front of him. "What do you mean?" I swallowed hard. Do I really need to inquire him this? I asked myself silently. "How did you court your wife?" He gave me a smug smile that made my eyebrow drew together. "To tell you honestly. I did not court my wife. I believe it was the other way round. She did all the work persuading me to marry her." My eyes widened in his direction. "You got to be kidding me!" "I wish I am but I am not lying." Rafe said while the conceited smile in his face was still there as if goading me. "From the moment I laid eyes on her on the bar she never stop bothering me until she get what she wants from me." "Are you serious?" My friend nodded with a quite smile in his face. He was probably remembering those early days of his courtship with his wife. "I believe we didn't have a long courtship only a matter of two weeks I guess, since we married at the early stage both with desperate reasons." I open my mouth but no words came out and then I tried once again. "But how did you manage to stay married to her after all this time."

P 25-4

"Love,

amico

. " Rafe said simply as if it was all the answer I need to hear. "You really don't need a reason to stay married to a person other than you love her with all of your pathetic heart." I shook my head in disbelief. "I didn't realize that I will hear such words from you, Rafe. That's not like you." "You will be saying those words too if you will just listen to your heart." He commented with a serious tone in his voice. "I heard that Willow will extend her vacation here." "Yeah. Two weeks." Rafe stood from his chair. "Then, you have two weeks to convince to figure it out what will you do: keep that southern girl or let her go but you can't play with her feeling forever. Either way, I think this girl already left a mark in your untamed heart,

amico

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P 25-5

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*Though we travel the world over to find beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.-*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

After my disturbing conversation with Rafe at my uncle's study table. I found my cousins, their husbands and their babies having breakfast at the dining table. When Leila caught the sight of me walking in the room she started singing a song about young love. I just glared at her while I took the vacant chair next to Laila. I frowned when I noticed that Willow was not at the dinner table. "Where's Willow?" Leila gave me a mischief smile while she stopped feeding her son from his high-chair. "How should we know that it's you who was glued to her last night never leaving her side even for a moment?" "Maybe she's avoiding you." Her husband supplied with laughter in his eyes. "Given the scandalous kiss you guys shared last night." "Maybe she's still asleep given what time the party ended last night." Laila answered feeding her daughter with fresh fruits while sitting comfortably in her daddy's lap. "Have you seen the morning papers?" Leandro asked casually while sipping his coffee. "No. And I am not interested." I replied dryly as I started to dig my food in my plate. "I'm surprised to see you and Willow dominate all the tabloids' front-page this morning. I am sure Cesare is in his best mood when he woke up earlier." Nikos commented, wiping her daughter's mouth with his napkin. I rolled my eyes on them. "Why don't you just focus your attention feeding your kids instead of ruining my day?" "How can we resist this to pass?" Leila grinned at me like a sly little fox. "It's not every day you are creating scandal for yourself."

Usually, that's my job before, you know putting the Fiorenza name into the tabloids." I grimaced at the thought. "I don't understand what so big deal about it is? I don't understand the paparazzi's fascination about our kiss." "Let me tell you, cousin." Leila supplied. "You are Vincenzo Fiorenza who stay away from society gatherings and who never had scandal attached to your name even once. You do really think that the press will let this go easily." And that's the problem, isn't? When you were born on a wealthy family whether you like it or not everyone seems to be interested to your private life. Everyone expect me to follow the footsteps of Cesare and when

P 26-1

the right time comes I should continue to manage the business. Don't I have the right to choose path I want to take? Why my life does needs to be mapped out for me? I sighed deeply. Nothing would really change even if I dwell with my dark thoughts right. I was unfortunately born in this family and I have to accept that would not change everyone would be interested in our private life." "When do you plan to bring Willow in the Orsini vineyard?" Leila asked offhandedly. I eyed her guardedly, halfway sipping my coffee. "Why?" "Relax. I am just merely asking, cousin." She answered suavely. She stopped feeding Anton to give me an innocent look before turning back

her attention to her son. "Say 'Mama'." "Dada..." The toddler in the high-chair had said. My devious cousin frowned at her son while her husband seems completely pleased with the word Anton kept on repeating. "Da-da..." "I gave birth to you, you know." Leila reminded him crossly. "I carried you in my womb for nine months. I have a scar in my belly to prove it and yet you look like your father and your first word is also 'dada' despite teaching you how you should call me every day." I laughed out loud. For once this woman learned her lesson no less from her own son. "Karma is a bit—" I stopped the words that was about to come out of my mouth instantly. As four sets of eyes gave me warning glance. "Karma finally bites you." I rephrased my sentence when I remembered that we have toddlers here. "Ma-ma..." Laila's daughter stated giving the crush raspberry in her hand to her mother. She smiled to her daughter taking the offered mushy raspberry. "Thank you, darling." Laila focused her attention to me. "Willow will like the Orsini vineyard, I assure you. Especially if she will meet Marco's grandparents they are lovely folks." "I bet you like them." Nikos said tediously, giving his wife a sardonic look. "You nearly become their granddaughter-in-law, remember?" Laila just looked at her husband for a long moment before burst out laughing. "You are impossible, Nikos. It was not even a real engagement and I only played as Marco's fiancée for a whole week. On the weekend



of his grandfather's birthday."He gave his wife a distrustful look. "It still pissed me off whenever I remember that you were once engaged to that moron."My kind-hearted cousin just rolled her eyes on him. "Goodness, Nikos..."By the way, do you know Marco Orsini's number?" I inquired casually to the table."Why do you want to know?" Leila asked with curiosity in her eyes.

P 26-2

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"I am planning to take Willow to their vineyard today." I don't think I should waste the two weeks extensionshe agree to stay here. Rather than being confined here at this damn house with my relatives watching our every move its better if we just go out on a trip. There was a self-satisfied smile playing on Leila's lips. My eyes instantly narrowed in her direction whenshe notice my disapproving look she immediately schooled her expression. "All right. I will give him a call. I am sure he will be delighted to welcome you to their vineyard, Enzo."I nodded at one before standing from the table. "Excuse me, will you? I will just inform Willow about our sudden trip to the city."Leila gave me a devious smile. "Don't forget to bring souvenir from

your trip, okay?" I didn't bother to answer her since I knew she was just baiting me. I walked away from the dining hall and marched on the second floor of the house. I shook my head in disbelief when I realized that Willow's room was just two rooms away from mine. Those two really tempting the devil inside me. If I have known that she's just almost next door from me there was no force could stop me from coming inside her room. I knocked lightly in her room. Maybe she was still asleep, I thought silently. I was about to retreat to my room when her door open. I saw her peeking her head from the doorway. "Hey." I greeted with a smile. "Hey." She repeated, hiding her face from the door adorably. I hid my smile when I realized that she's maybe shy from last night. "You didn't come down for breakfast." I accused sternly when I noticed that she's been awake for quite sometimes now. "I am not hungry." She mumbled avoiding my gaze. I suddenly felt the urge to kiss her senselessly but I held myself in check. Now was not the right time to think about that. "Pack." I announced with authority. "We're leaving in an hour." Her clear blue gaze suddenly shot in my direction. "Where are we going?" I grinned at her stunned face while she's busy giving me a questioning look. "We're going to the Orsini vineyard today." "Today?!" She repeated with wide eyes. "Why so sudden? Marco Orsini just invited us last night." "So we can have other dates in the following days ahead. Two weeks will pass in a blink of an eye before we know it the

short two weeks are over." "Don't you think it's rude if we just suddenly show up in their property unannounced?" She inquired, her face was somewhat troubled at the thought of showing up at the vineyard unannounced. I gave her a reassuring smile. "Don't worry, Leila already informed the man in question about our arrival today?"

P 26-3

She was still look not convince. She sighed deeply. "Is this a day trip only?" I hid my predatory smile while giving her an innocent look. "Pack for overnight trip just to be sure." "Since I don't have any plans of going back here tonight. I added silently. "All right," she said with a sigh. She was about to close the door on my face when I flatten my palm on the heavy wooden door. "Wait!" I announced abruptly. "What?" My lips twitched with a smile. I fished out something in my pocket it's been on my pocket since last night. "Turn around. I want to give you something." She gave me a distrustful look and then I added. "Come on, don't be stubborn and do it." She slowly turn around until her back was on me. I felt the familiar chain in my pocket and pulled it out. I fastened the gold necklace around her neck and I heard her gasp. "I was supposed to give this to you last night..." I grimaced when I remember the unfortunate event that happen before the party even starts. "...but I got side-tracked." Willow's face

broke into a slight smile while unconsciously touching the gold chain in her throat. "You mean, because you got jealous to the poor Oliver Spencer." "Yes, you are correct." I admitted softly. I admired the gold chain in her neck. I knew that it would fit her perfectly from the moment I saw the pendant of a horse inside the circle studded with diamonds I knew I should have it for her. "What's this? I cannot possibly accept such gift, Enzo." I grinned at her, stopping her in removing the necklace around her neck. "Yes, you can Willow." She shook her blonde head. "This must cost a fortune. I don't want such expensive gift from you." "Trust me, it's not that costly." "How much?" She challenged. I shook my head in resignation. She's not making this easy for me, I mused silently. "Don't you know that it's rude to ask the price of the gift you just receive?" "But..." "This conversation is over." I informed her arrogantly, tilting an eyebrow in her direction. "Before I stop the words coming out from your lovely mouth with my kisses. I am sure if that happens we will be late for our flight. Your choice, sweetheart."

P 26-4

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She squeaked closing the door in my face. I found myself laughing at her skittish reaction, shaking my head I went to my room and also pack for our overnight trip. Half an hour later, Willow and I settled at the back of Cesare's SUV going to the tarmac of the airport. Willow gasped while looking outside from her window when she saw the sight of a private plane. Right now, I was so pleased to see the necklace I gave hanging around her neck. The Willow Kinsella that I met in North Carolina was back with her signature cotton dress and cowgirl boots. "Don't tell me we're going to use this plane." "Of course." "Is this really how rich folks usually travel? Using their private aircraft? I feel so poor right now." I rolled my eyes. "Correction, Signorina. I don't usually travel like the rest of my family. I usually ride a C-27J Spartan on my travels abroad." "I see." I couldn't miss the way her lovely blue eyes load their sparks at the casual mentioning of a military aircraft. I wanted to beat myself for ruining our date before it's even started. I noticed the changes in her she remained silent throughout the flight and until we're about to reach the vineyard. "What's wrong?" I asked conversationally, trying to break the annoying silence in the car ride. "Nothing." I bit back the curse that wanted to escape my mouth. "Willow..." "It's not your fault, really." She said, still refusing to look at me stubbornly looking at her window. "I kept on forgetting your line of work. This conversation just reminds me why we don't really suit each

other, Enzo."This time the curse I was holding back escape my mouth. "Please, don't say that. Whatever we have is justgaining its momentum please don't execute it immediately."She didn't bother to answer until we reach the Orsini vineyard. We both went out of the car at the same timeand I saw the familiar figure of Marco Orsini coming out of the manor. There was a huge grin of his face as if he was really glad to see us.

"Welcome to the Orsini vineyard, amico. At last, you are finally here."

P 26-5

*Love is like a trap. When it appears, we only see its light, not its shadow.*

- Paulo Coelho

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

I walked beside him as we went out of the car in silence. I was completely aware of the awkward silencethat envelop us before we even board the plane going to Rome.I knew part of this tense atmosphere between us was my fault. I didn't mean to ruin our date or tour as I wantto call it privately when he casually mention that he was used to ride military plane instead of a normalaircraft the civilian citizen normally take.Being here with him in his hometown made me forget his original line of

work. He's not the Enzo Fiorenza who is the heir to his uncle's business but the Enzo Fiorenza who is serving the army. Do I really make the cut to be a girlfriend of a member of the special force if this thing between us continues? The last thing I want was waiting for any news of him while he's away in his dangerous mission abroad thinking if he will still be able to come home alive. The scars in his body proved that he'd barely managed to escape death in number of times. And right now, he was not yet done with his military thing as he was only in his leave since he was still recovering from his leg injury just what he told me on the ranch the following day after he regained his memories. Before I could dwell on my train of thoughts the man who invited us in their vineyard coming in our direction with a happy smile in his face as he greeted us outside the magnificent manor. "Welcome to the Orsini vineyard, amico. At last, you are finally here." "I am sorry for the short notice." Enzo commented shaking the offered hand of the powerful Italian billionaire. "Nonsense." He dismissed like it was nothing. "You are always welcome here. The Fiorenzas are dear to my heart even that unsmiling patriarch of your clan." He surprised me when he focused his attention on me directly. "Nice to meet you. We haven't had the chance to talk last night, little one." "Nice to meet you, Mr. Orsini." I said shyly. "Thank you for inviting us here in your beautiful place." He smiled pleasantly. But there was something

lurking in his eyes that I don't decipher. "Before we start the tour and wine tasting. Please allow me to introduce my grandparents who were still running this vineyard even at their advanced age. Come, they are in the library where they usually spend their day spying on people." I raised an eyebrow in his direction. He's really something else teasing his grandparents like this. I dared to sneak a glance on Enzo who remained impassive while we trail behind Marco Orsini. He led us inside the magnificent house with carpeted staircase leading to the second floor. It was not as huge

P 27-1

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as the

*Palazzo di Fiorenza*

but it was big enough nevertheless. At the far end of the hallway on the second floor he went inside the door without as much as knocking. We followed him inside and froze in the doorway. "Audrianna!" He said disapprovingly, giving the toddler a stern gaze. "What are you doing? Do you want to break



*Nonno's*

back?" And then he gave the elderly couple the same expression in his face. "And you, Nonno, what madness had possessed you to think you can give Audrianna a piggy back ride?" My mouth went hanging in their direction. I didn't expect that their powerful family was like this. Imagine the former head of the Orsini Industries was giving his great-grandchild a piggy back ride on the floor no less as if he was like a donkey while his wife beaming on the side joining their great-grandchild's laughter. I glanced on Enzo who was mirroring my initial reaction earlier. "Get down from

*Nonno's*

back now!" He commanded his daughter firmly. "No!" The toddler who was probably age three or four said stubbornly. "Again,

*Nonno*

. "Audrianna...!" Her father started to warn and the tears on the child's eyes started to form. "Stop shouting at her, Marco." His grandmother stepped in reprimanding her grandson for upsetting the little girl. "Why are you shouting at her? We certainly didn't shout on you when you were in her age despite being a little rascal." Marco shook his head in resignation. "You are spoiling that child so much that's why she's starting to

behave like a brat." "That's a horrible thing to say." His grandmother stated disapprovingly. He took a deep breath, probably calming himself. It seems to me that the elderly couple didn't notice our presence on the doorway so Marco perform the introduction. "At least try to look respectable. We have visitors." The elderly couple managed to slide their gazes on us. "I'd like you to meet my grandparents Alfonso and Claudia Orsini. This is Enzo and Willow new acquaintance of mine." The woman name Claudia move closer to us and gave us a friendly hug while her husband remain on the floor with his great-grandchild in his back. "Nice to meet you and your lovely wife." Mrs. Orsini had said to Enzo. I could not help the stains that spread through my cheeks at her misconception. "Uhm...she's not my wife—" Enzo started. "Yet," Marco's grandmother nodded. "I understand." I stared at the elderly woman in disbelief. How could she mistaken me to be Enzo's wife? From the corner of my eyes I saw Marco's private smile in our direction despite his annoyance in his daughter's stubborn

P 27-2

behavior. I was waiting for Enzo to correct the woman even more about the status of our relationship. Heck, do we even

have one in the first place?"They're here to have a little bit of wine tasting and tour around the vineyard,

### *Nonna*

. "Claudia clapped her hands together, her eyes spark with delight. "That's a great idea. I remember clearly howMarco tour Francesca around the first time she went here."I found myself stifling a smile in her direction. It seems to me that she really believed that Enzo and I were anitem. I dared to peek a glance at the man beside me but his expression remain stoic."Hello." Enzo and I both turned around to look at the woman behind us. I smiled at Marco's pregnant wife."What are you doing at the doorway please come inside."We moved further inside the room with her when the ready smile in her face vanished upon seeing her daughter."Audrianna Orsini! Get down on

### *Nonno's*

back this instant." She said with horrified expression in her beautiful face."No...!" Once again the toddler said obstinately.She threw an exasperating look in her husband. "I wonder where she got that trait from." She threw an acidlook on him."Why are you looking at me like that?" Marco said defensively."It's okay, dear." Marco's grandmother said with reassuring smile. "Will look after Audrey while you tour this lovely couple at the vineyard.""But..."

Francesca Orsini started."Let's go, darling." Marco took his wife's hand. "I'm sure your daughter will be fine and hopefully

*Nonno*

too after this." His wife was about to protest more and he led her outside. "Shall we?" He asked us with a pleasant tone in his voice. They led us outside where the process of making wine starts. From harvesting the right grapes to the de-stemming and sorting up to the pressing and fermenting and of course aging and finally bottling the wine. I was quite surprised Marco knew the whole thing. I didn't realize that level of knowledge he has in their business my initial thought of him was a playful, ruthless billionaire. Right now we were at the cellar where they ferment the wines in these huge wooden barrels. Marco and Francesca were walking a few steps ahead of us arm-in-arm while I was walking side by side to Enzo who

P 27-3

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remained silent throughout the whole thing. From what I could see he's not enjoying this whole thing. I have this enough silence between I would ask him what the hell is wrong with him but before I have the chance to speak up he suddenly take

my wrist with his signature rude manner and took me inside this slightly open door. "What's wrong with you?" I demanded when he suddenly released me from his grip that made me nearly lose my footing while he closed the door behind him. "Why did you abruptly take me here? What if Marco and Francesca realized that we're not behind them anymore." "I just need a moment with you." I looked at him for a moment with an exasperating look. "Where did you agree with this whole thing when clearly you are not enjoying this?" He looked at me in disbelief. "You think I am not enjoying this?" "Well it's certainly not from my point of view." I answered dryly, folding my hands in front of my chest. Enzo sighed deeply, scratching his head warily. "I just want some time to be alone with you away from my family for once. But it seems that it didn't go well as planned, does it?" I gaped at him. That's the reason why he looks as if he was on a bad mood? Unexpectedly, my annoyance at him lessened a little bit. "I want to make this a happy memory with you." I admitted. "I hate fighting with you, Enzo." "You think I do?" My lips curved with a smile. "Can we start this day over?" He gave me a boyish grin. "I'd like that. Deal?" "Deal." I said with a short nod. "Now let's go before Marco and Francesca realize that we're missing." I was about to open the door when my eyes widened and I tried again. "What the..." "What?" Enzo was instantly on my side. "What's wrong?" I tried it again but it's really locked from the outside. I tried and

tried again but it's not working. "I cannot open the door." Enzo cursed while trying himself to open the door, tapping his palm on the wooden door. "Hey! Somebody can hear us?" He looked at me for a moment. "I swear I didn't lock it from the outside." I stared at him in horror unable to believe my ears. "What shall we do now?"

P 27-4

He thought for a moment and then he fished out his mobile. "Damn. No signal." I did the same with my phone but it's also out of coverage. I bit my lower lip looking at him warily while looking around the small room. "Do you think they will realize that we're missing and start looking for us?" Enzo moved even further inside the slightly illuminated room. He surprised me when he suddenly tucked his arms in his middle, staring at me from head-to-toe. "That little devil. He must have planned locking us here all along. If that's his plan I might come willingly if he just informed me earlier. Leila must have given him heads up on what to do with us and this is their idea of fun." My eyebrows drew together. "What are you talking about?!" He gave me a wolfish smile as he started closing the distance between us. I automatically took a step backwards until my back hit the wooden door. "What do you think you're doing?" I asked with wide eyes while completely aware of the

hard pounding of my chest. "I'm going to seduce you." He whispered in my ear that made shiver, when he drew back there was unholy light in the depth of his dark green eyes. "I miss you, Willow." "No..." My mouth felt like it's suddenly went dry. I tried to moisten my lips with my tongue. I found him focusing his eyes on the movement of my tongue. "Sweetheart," he breathed, his eyes darkened with passion his lips were only inch away from mine. "Can I kiss you? Will you let me? I know you will." Before I have the chance to say anything. He took the chance to claim my mouth with an open mouthed kiss. I whimpered softly, as his strong hand travel his way to my ribcage. He invaded my mouth like a barbaric man demanding my obedience. "Enzo..." I half-protected, half-encouraged him to continue when he gave me a series of open-mouthed kiss in my neck. I automatically arch back to give him more access. "I miss you so much, sweetheart." He said while kissing my cheeks, the tip of my nose and down to my lips. I moaned escape me when his hand found my breast and squeezed it through my cotton dress. It seems that my hands move on their own as they travel to the hard wall of his chest. "We shouldn't be doing this." I protested softly while his skilful hands travel to my exposed legs. "Yes. We should." He answered in his deep voice, his accent was thickening more. I realized that when he was overcome with emotions. He removed my dress let it fall on the floor. Here I was standing

half-naked in front of him. I became consciously shy why he feast his eyes on my body I look away while completely aware of his burning gaze. "So damn beautiful." He stated with a deep sigh. Before I have the chance to react he already claim my mouth

P 27-5

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in a heated kiss his hand sneak on my waist pulling me closer b him while his other hand was at the back of my neck probably to prevent me from escaping our position. I could feel his growing erection on my pelvic area. My hand travel to his crotch and trace his bulging manhood. I heard a guttural sound coming from him. Like a beast in agony. "Willow..." I knew that he's my greatest weakness. His deep voice making me surrender to him completely. He lift me off the ground I found myself hooking my legs around his waist while kissing him back with passion. He lowered me on the sturdy wooden table in the middle of the room. He slowly removing my boots and unclasped my bra. I moaned again as he expertly knead my breast with his hands before sucking them with his mouth. I was completely helpless while watching his dark head in



my chest. And then his mouth travel even further down until he remove my underwear. A devilish grin escape his mouth as he met my gaze. "I swear there was blonde hair here last time." I felt my cheeks heated considerably even my ears feels hot at the moment. Before I could say anything he dip his head and took my most private part of me in his mouth. The sensation of his lips, tongue and hot breath between my thighs was almost for me to bear. "Enzo please..." I wasn't really sure what I am begging for but I just knew that I grab a handful of his hair to encourage him more. When I thought I was about to explode when finally stop and remove his clothes abruptly when he was completely naked in front of me he took something in his jeans pocket. He ripped the foil and sheath himself with the rubber protection. He teased my feminine trance with the head of his shaft for a few times before sliding inside. A bit my lower lip as I wait for him to move inside me. At first, he move with slow and precise movement but then he started to pound me hard and fast. "Enzo..." I breathed, hooking my arms around his neck while kissing him. "Sweetheart," he said raggedly. I knew he was near to his climax since the sweat now forming in his forehead. "I am about to come." I encouraged him move, running my hands in his back until few seconds more and he found his release deep inside me. We were both panting of breath while staring at each other. He gave me a mischievous look. "One more?"

P 27-6

*Love is like a virus. It can happen to anybody at any time.*

-Maya Angelou

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

With her being in my arms again feels like heaven. I don't mind to be lock up like this for few more weekswith her. All I know that she was in my arms again and I could not ask for more. Willow was sitting on the wooden table while her legs wrapped around my waist. We're already fully dress,I might add after having two rounds at the cellar. I was cupping her face with my hands while kissing her playfully in the mouth."You are insatiable, Mr. Fiorenza." She mumbled against my mouth when she could feel my growing arousalagain."Can you blame me?" I said between kisses. "It's been half an hour, I guess, since the last time, sweetheart.What can you say about round three?" "Round three?" Her blue orbs widened as she feign the look of horror in her pretty face. "Just how manycondoms did you bring for this trip?" "A few."She cocked an eyebrow in disbelief. "A few?" "Boxes." I supplied as I feel my lips curled with a smile. "I'm a soldier,

*Signorina*

. I am always prepare for my battles."She started to shake her blonde head. "I don't think round three is a good idea. For all we know our hosts are probably wondering where we are at the moment and currently looking for us. I suggest you tame down your desire until we can find proper place to tend your hunger, Mister.""But I want you now." I gave her a suggested look, my hands move to her ribcage in a playful manner. "I fear that my hunger for you will not sated, Willow.""No," she gave me a stern look but I could see the way her blue eyes darkening with my touch. "The last thingI want is for them to find us in a compromising position that will be so embarrassing even to think."My throat rumbled with a low chuckle, kissing the tip of her nose. "When you say

*position*

all I can think isyou referring to a sexual position." I wiggled my eyebrow suggestively. "You know I can be adventurous if you will give me a chance.""Enzo..." She warned while glaring at me ardently. "I'm dead serious."

P 28-1

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"So am I." I stated giving teasing her with little kisses in her mouth. "I miss you like hell. There's so much going on since we arrived in Sicily. We barely have time to be with each other." She smiled slightly, her whole face glow. "Well, can't help it since your cousins we're always made sure that I will not feel alone in your palace." "Hmm..." I inhaled down in her neck enjoying her sweet and flowery scent. "I'm in pain, Willow." Making sure the part of me that's currently in pain craze her crotch area. I hid my smile when I heard her gasped. I heard her chortle. "Oh, no. Your pleas will not get you anywhere, Mister. It's only a matter of time before someone will show up on that door and the last thing I want is to give them a quite scene." I sighed deeply as I took her mouth again slowly seducing her until she finally give in. I just knew how to make her melt with in my arms. But before I even have the chance to continue with my seduction the door opens. We reluctantly broke the kiss when I saw bright light coming from the doorway and Marco and Francesca Orsini was busy giving us a look. "Well, it seems that they are okay, Francesca

mia

." Marco commented with knowing smile in his face. "For a moment we got worried that you might be 'lost' without us realizing it. Sorry if it took me three hours before finding you guys." I forced myself to put a distance between me and

Willow who hurriedly scramble out of the table. "We were locked in here." I reasoned out flatly. There was a mischievous smile in his face that I don't like. "

Si

. I can tell,

amico

. My apologies, I forgot to tell you about this certain door that automatically locks from the outside when you shut it. "I realize that now." The man gave us a thoughtful smile. "Shall we continue with the tour?" "Of course." I replied glancing down to Willow who hasn't stop blushing since the couple barge in. "I hope you didn't grow grey hairs while waiting for us to rescue you." Marco mentioned with a twitching smirk in his face. "Not at all." I answered suavely earning a deathly glare from the woman beside me. She walked ahead of me joining Marco's wife now leading the tour while I was left in the company of this cunning man like my certain cousin trailing behind the ladies. Marco gave me a friendly smile—to friendly, actually. "Would you like to join my club,

amico

?" I stared at him in disbelief. "You mean the 'club' where Rafe also join?" "Yes." "Then. No thank you."

P 28-2

He scowled in my direction as if he was really crossed with my refusal. "I see no reason for you to refuse joining the club since I remember clearly how much your friend Rafe excitedly wants to join us." I stopped myself from smiling little did this man knew that Rafe already gave me a fair warning about him the other day. "That's not what Rafe told me." He frowned in his face deepening. "That bastard is lying." I shrugged there's no point of arguing with him when he invited us in their vineyard. At least, I should refuse him in a nice way. "All the same, thank you for the offer but I am not interested." "I should have locked up for three damned days in that dungeon." He muttered under his breath. "What did you just say?" "Nothing." He smiled eerily. "I won't be so smug if I were you, my friend. You might find yourself begging to join my club one of these days." "I assure you, I won't." I answered firmly. That's when I happened to glance at the set of keys peeking slightly in his pocket. "You didn't, by any chance, intentionally lock us in the dungeon, right?" He discreetly pushed the keys even farther down in his pocket while staring at me with a straight face. "Of course not." I nodded but didn't believe him a bit. "Just making sure." We finally arrived at the driveway of the Orsini vineyard. I informed them of our intention to leave since we plan to make a tour around the city also. "Such a shame that we didn't reach the part of wine tasting before you depart." Marco noted giving us a sardonic

look. "That's the fun part of this tour." "Believe me." I gave him a satisfied smile. "I enjoying tasting what your vineyard has to offer, I assure you." The man seems to get my meaning for he smile meaningfully in our direction. "Well, I'll be damned." I thank him for his generosity and time as well as his wife while Willow did the same. It appeared that she had got quite fond with Marco's wife in such a short span of time. Once we got inside the car driving away from the vineyard. Willow gave me a side way glance. "Are we going back to Sicily now?" "What?!" I asked irritably glancing briefly in her direction. "There's no way in hell we're going back to Ragusa right now. I told you we're going to stay here..." I paused before adding. "...for few more days." "What?!" She looked at me with wide eyes. "What are you talking about? Where are going to stay here? More importantly, I cannot wear the same clothes every day." I smiled reassuringly. "Relax, I will take care of everything you don't have to worry."

P 28-3

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She gave me a devious look but remain silent through the journey until we reach the hotel. I saw her gasped when I

help her slid out of the car. "You can't possibly mean that we're going to stay in this fancy hotel?" I rolled my eyes on her. "Of course, as if I will take you on some cheap motel in the area. We might as well enjoy this time to the fullest since no family member will disturb us." She shook her head in disbelief. I took her hand and led her inside the hotel and book for suite in the lobby for a whole week. Of course, Willow doesn't have any idea about it since I was speaking Italian to the receptionist. Once they have me the key card I took her hand and led her to the elevator. It took us few moments before reaching our hotel room. Willow gasped once we enter the suite. "My goodness, Enzo, it feels like we have taken a piece of your family palace with us in this place." "Wait until you see the bathroom." I whispered behind her. She slowly went to check the bathroom and a gasp escape her mouth. "Good Lord, look at the size of this. This is probably the size of my living room and kitchen back in North Carolina." "There's a huge bathtub with Jacuzzi jets for two people." I muttered in her hair as I stood behind her. I could feel her shiver that runs through her body. "Think maybe we can use them now, Willow." She turned around to face me. She arched her eyebrow in my direction while there was a smile playing in her lips. "I thought we already established that two is enough for today." "I don't remember we agree on something like that." I wickedly smile at her while open the faucet and let



the water starts to fill the bathtub."You're not serious, are you?" She asked warily with a tight smile."Oh, completely serious." The wicked grin was still in my face when I start to strip in front of her.She started to yelp, covering her face with her hands. I chuckled softly when I saw her prudish behavior.I closed the distance between us and whispered for her ears only. "I will make love to you as long as I want and as hard as I want and you will love every seconds of it, my dearest."I heard her catch her breath when I stood behind her completely naked. My hand found her breast and start kneading it while my other hand travel down until I found her most sensitive part between her legs.Willow groaned, molding her body on me as I inserted my one finger inside her pushing aside her underwear."Holy cow, Enzo!" She moaned grinding her butt in my erection while my finger start to slide in and out."What kind of devil are you?"

P 28-4

I chuckled darkly in her ear, ignoring the blood that pounding in my ears. "I am the devil that will satisfy you, Willow Kinsella. Shout as loud as you can but no one will save you with my hard fucking."Just like that, I inserted two fingers inside her and she whimpered in my arms. "Shoot...Enzo...my legs.""Don't worry. I will catch you." I stifled a chuckle when I notice how much she's

trying to stop the moaning sound that's coming from her mouth. "Enzo, please..." "Please what?" I asked enjoying the power I have on her. "What do you want, sweetheart? Say it." She slightly turn around to look at me. Our mouth were only inch apart. I could see how her eyes clouded with passion. "I want you. Just you..." My face broke with a self-satisfied smile before claiming her mouth again. I only stop kissing her when the huge bathtub finally filled with water. I put some distance between us as I put bubble bath liquid soap in the water. I ran my hands on the water to create bubbles on the surface when I was finally satisfied with the outcome I finally slid her out of her cotton dress. "Now, shall we take a dip,

*cara*

? "I helped her get inside the tub while I position myself behind her making sure I already have another foil within reach. I kissed her shoulder running my hands in the flat of her stomach seductively under the water. "Relax." I urged her when her body was so stiff. "It's not like I am going to eat you again." I paused before adding. "That's for later." "You..." She started. I cupped her breast with my hands and squeeze them. I playfully bite her neck. "No one will save you from this hungry lion, you know. Not my cousins. Not my uncle. Certainly not the Orsinis. You are all alone at my mercy, Miss southern belle."

P 28-5

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*Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them - that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like.*

-Lao Tzu

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

I stepped out of the shower area with just white towel wrapped around me as I tiptoe on the luxury suite to look something to wear on the paper bags from the high-end brands that haphazardly toss on the sofa sets. From the corner of my eyes I saw the naked man on the bed stir. It would not take long before he would be fully awake, I thought silently. "Come back to bed, sweetheart." He drawled sexily, not bothering to open his eyes tapping the vacant space from the massive bed. "I miss you here." "No!" I said harshly, glaring at him in the process. I scanned the paper bags to something suitable to wear for my destination today. With all this ridiculously expensive clothes he insisted on buying why there was nonnormal clothes that I could wear without gaining unwanted attention. "Sweetheart..." He called again, dragging me out of my reverie in his bedroom voice that often makes me swoon and fall in the bed with him

despite my annoyance but not this time. "No!" I repeated firmly, glaring at him hotly. "I'm going out today even if you are not coming with me." I heard him sigh deeply sitting up from the bed. I averted my gaze when the sheets fell in his body revealing his naked state. "Where are you going early this morning? Shopping again?" I threw one of the dresses in his severely but it only landed on the floor. "Shopping? I haven't wear a thing from this clothes you bought on our first day here in Rome. So why do you think I need more dresses?" "You're going out so I assume..." "Well, you assume wrong, Mr. Fiorenza." I replied acidly, giving him a deathly glare. "I want to go out...no, scratch that—I need to go out from this hotel room." "Why?" He asked in confusion. I could almost see the way his brain works. He must be thinking the reason why I want to go out today. "Why?" I repeated in disbelief. "You have the nerve to ask that when you are completely aware that since we book a room in this freaking hotel we never leave this room even once." He looked at me for a moment, his dark green eyes studying me with intensity. But I couldn't miss the way his lips curve with a satisfied smile seeing me wrap with only a towel around my body. "We got everything we

need here, Willow." I rolled my eyes on him sometimes he was really dense I want to smack his head for that. "Oh Lord, EnzoFiorenza! I don't even know what is the date today? Is it our eighth or ninth day today? Since we arrive here all I knew is only day and night and your constant seduction." The devil merely gave me a predatory smile. "But you love every second of it." "Would you please cover yourself?" I asked tartly, looking away from his naked body when he rolled off the bed and unashamedly standing in front of me wearing nothing. He cocked an eyebrow, looking pleased that I couldn't look at him straight in the face when he was standing stark-naked. "Are you still shy, babe? It's not as if you didn't explore every inch of my body these past few days." I was probably as red as a ripe tomato still refusing to look at his godlike glory. I noticed that his feet started to move coming in my direction.

*Oh no, bad idea*

. I thought helplessly.

*Run, Willow. Run.*

"Where are you going, sweetheart?" He asked dangerously soft when he was only a few feet away from me. My eyes were just focus on the floor. "I want to go out." I muttered on the floor. "I want to explore the city. I don't want to spend my two weeks locked in hotel room with you and having nonstop sex." He ran the back of his hand on my bare skin in a feathery light

touch. "Are you really dead-set of leaving me alone here and explore the city alone?" "If necessary." I exhaled deeply, fighting off the excitement that runs through me just a single touch from him. He knew very well and he didn't hesitate to use it ruthlessly on me. "How cruel." I threw a disapproving look in his direction there was a wicked smile playing in his lips and his touch turned aggressive. "Stop doing that." "Doing what,

*cara*

?" He asked coyly that belied the emotion in his dark green eyes. He really looked like the devil himself this morning with his dishevelled hair and that sinful smile playing in his mouth. "Why won't you tell me?" "I will not be swayed by your touch, Mr. Fiorenza." He took my announcement as a challenge. I saw the way his eyes held guile in their depth. "Let's shower together. And then will go sightseeing as you wish." He invited enticingly, his mouth twitched with a smirk while removing the towel in my body. I gasped trying to cover my naked body. His eyes feasted with my nakedness running his gaze appreciatively on me. "What are you doing?" I cried in protest. "Can't you see I just had my shower?"

P 29-2

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"Oh, believe me." He replied looking approvingly on my unclothed body. "You miss a spot on your shower, sweetheart. You need to take one again. I will help you clean the spot you miss." I let out squeaked as I unconsciously loop my arms around his neck for my balance he didn't wait for my reply when he lock his strong arms around my waist and carry me back to the bathroom.\*\*\*After a quickie in the shower we were finally out of our hotel room after eight or was it nine days since we arrive in Rome? Honestly, I really don't know the exact days of our stay here. But it doesn't matter now I finally managed to convince him to explore the city. Since we arrived here, the date that I was expecting didn't happen. First, we were locked for three hours in the dungeon of the Orsini vineyard and then after we went shopping for the clothes he said we would be needing to the next few days of our stay here he next locked me up in the hotel room doing nothing but sleeping, sex, eating, sex again, sleep, shower and then sex again...I shook my head, it doesn't matter I have enough of this beast and his insatiable hunger. I was surprised that I am still walking like normal person after such sex in my life. I peeked a glance at him briefly as we walk side-by-side in the streets of Rome near the

*Colosseum*

. There was a tiny part of me—just a tiny part—not larger than half an inch wish that we just stay at the hotel, after all. This man beside me who is wearing dark jeans, dark shirt with black leather jacket and then let's not forget this favored black combat boots. He finished his ensemble with a pair of sunglasses that obscure his striking green eyes. He commanded so much attention with his bad boy look from both local and tourist women also doing sightseeing around the

### *Colosseum*

area. Walking next to him I suddenly feel like a country bumpkin that I was. He looked down at me for a moment since he probably realized that I was staring at him.

"What?" "Nothing." I said nonchalantly. "You are staring at me." He accused giving me a lopsided grin. "Fascinated with my handsomeness, are you? Told you if we just at the hotel you can feast your eyes on my good looks." I couldn't help but to laugh at his arrogance. "You wish!" A gasped escape me when he unexpectedly took my hands in his and continue to walk with our intertwined hands. I looked at our link hands I couldn't help the smile slipping in my face right now. "Let's get you a

### *gelato*

." He announced pulling me towards the ice cream truck nearby. "It's such a shame not to try the famous



*gelato*

in Rome when you go sightseeing." I just manage to raise an eyebrow in his direction when we reach the food truck selling the famous ice cream. "What flavor do you like?" "Vanilla." I watched him order to the middle-aged man in Italian. I found it sexy when he's speaking in his native tongue. There was something about him the way the words rolled off his tongue like silk. He exchanged short conversation to the middle-aged vendor while sending look in my direction. I have a feeling that there

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exchange is about me." "What is "

*mia moglie*

'?" I asked curiously once we're walking away from the ice cream truck. "Hmm...?" He inquired absently while he was still holding my ice cream in his hand. "Why do you ask?" "Well..." I bit my lower lip not really sure if I should continue to query since I didn't understand a word they were saying moments ago but I knew that the kind-looking vendor ask him a question and he answered '

*miamoglie*

' with a nod. "...the vendor ask you something and you reply that word. I am curious what does that mean." There was an amuse look in his face. I could see that he was preventing himself from smiling but he was failing considerably. "Why don't you

*Google*

it to find it out." I grimaced in his direction. "I think if you will just tell me what it means it will be nice on your part." "Nope." He said, giving me with those lopsided grin. "I will not tell you. If you really want to know you can search for the word in the internet." "Why being an ass?" He chuckled irresistibly. He held out the ice cream in his hand in my direction. I was about to take the waffle cone on him but move the ice cream slightly. "This is my

*gelato*

. I just want you to taste it." "I thought that's mine?" "I am always yours, sweetheart." "Not you. The ice cream." I replied ignoring the loud pounding of my heart. This guy really have way with his words. I scowled in my direction. "I already change my mind giving you this ice cream after calling me an

*ass*

. "I looked at him in disbelief. "Fine. Eat that whole thing and I hope it will choke you in the process." I was about to leave him

there when hold my hand lightning fast. "Wait." He said preventing the laughter that wants to escape him. "Here. Take a bite. No one can resist vanilla ice cream." He held out the creamy cold dessert in my direction. I was about to taste the ice cream but he held it up last minute making look like an idiot. I glared at him but he doesn't mind. "Okay, I won't tease you anymore." He promised, once again presenting me the ice cream to taste. "Here." Once again, I fell straight in his bait when he did the same on my second try. The glare I threw in his direction intensified. This time the laughter he was holding back break free. "Sorry, I couldn't resist." I smiled back at him but it was laced with poison. "I will really kill you once I get to hold a firearms, I swear." "Cesare will be heart-broken when you kill me." The devil had the nerve to use his uncle to make me feel

P 29-4

Guilty at the thought of murdering him. "I don't care I will be far enough to see his wrath. I will be safe in our little town in North Carolina." "Here's your ice cream, sweetheart." He pushed the cold dessert in my hand with a rakish grin. "I really don't like sweet things." I took a bite of the frozen cream dessert while watching him watching me lick the ice cream. I could not miss the way his green eyes darkened in my direction. "Don't tempt me like this, Willow." He warned in a dangerously low voice near my ears that made me shiver down my spine. "You will find yourself in dark alley in the streets of Rome while I am deep, very deep inside you." But before I could retort at him, his mobile sounded. He looked at the screen and the changed in him was instant. "Excuse me, will you?" He said with a troubled expression. "I need to take this." With a nod from me he moved a little farther from me. I watched him cautiously while taking the phone call. I could see the way his stance became rigid. After taking the phone call I knew something was wrong. "Everything okay?" I asked trying to sound nonchalant. He took a deep breath. I knew in that moment that trouble had come in our way. "That's my superior that just calls me. They already want me to report in base." My heart stopped for a moment. "Does that mean...?" "Yes," He said warily. I hate the way I couldn't see his eyes from his sunglasses. "I need to wear my uniform again." I definitely

heard something that breaks and I have a feeling that's my heart. "Well," I said brightly, ignoring the pain in my heart. "If that's the case. I think we need to cut this vacation short. It's time for me to go back in North Carolina." "Willow..." "It's okay, Enzo. Really." I told him with the brightest smile I could muster. "We need to go back to reality."

*Really?*

The voice inside my head asked in skepticism.

P 29-5

*A sap run is the sweet goodbye of winter. It is the fruit of the equal marriage of the sun and frost.*

-John Burroughs

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

The ride back to Ragusa was enveloped with a painful silence. After his unexpected phone call from his officers requesting him to return to their base and probably there was already a mission waiting for him once he returned to their camp. I swallowed hard fighting off the tears that started to blur my vision of my plane window. I would not shed tears from this goodbye. I should have expected this when I agreed to extend my vacation here in Sicily when the whole reason for this trip was primarily closure to whatever unfinished business we have back in North Carolina. We suddenly depart with his family. Now once again we're facing another goodbye but this time I would make sure that this would be the last one. No more regrets after this despite my heart had another thing to say about this matter. But right now I don't have time to listen to it. From the corner of my eyes I saw him studying me intently but I choose to ignore him and continue to stare at my plane window sightlessly. I heard him sigh deeply, rubbing his forehead to ease his frustration. "My officer inform me that they already sent a formal letter requesting for me to return at

the base last month but I didn't receive such letter. I think Cesare intercept that document." I gave a non-committal sound while I rested my chin in my hand and my eyes were still fix outside. I really don't want to talk to him at the moment but I couldn't help to give snide remark. "Well, they personally call you now. You don't have to worry about your uncle." "Willow..." For the first time I let my gaze wander in his direction. There was something in his eyes that gave me a pause.

### *Sadness*

? I couldn't really tell. "We can't end like this." He said almost in desperate tone. "I will not let this thing between us end like this." "Our two weeks are almost over, Enzo." I stated without a hint of emotion in my voice. "I need to go back to my old life in North Carolina. The country girl needs to go back to her old life her fairy tale vacation is over. And you need to return to once you've been before we met." "Willow...please..." I shook my head, not giving an inch for my heart to betray me and do something really stupid here. "As cliché sounds but thank you for the beautiful memories you shared with me. I will treasure them as long as I live."

"Willow!" In an instant he was on my side, crossing the distance between us. "Please don't say that. Don't end this so heartlessly." He cupped my face with his large hands demanding me to look at him. "Just give me a little time. I'm sure my superior knew that I am still recovering from my injuries. I will ask for extension to my vacation just don't leave Ragusa yet." I shook my head again. "The sooner we accept that there's no future for us—" Before I could even finish my sentence his mouth came down crashing on me. This wasn't his usual playful kisses. This one was hard and demanding like some pure possession silently reminding me all the time we spent together. The way his mouth demanded access in my mouth left me breathless. This was the side of him that I didn't know yet. This was the soldier in him who wants to win his battle always. "Stop..." I managed to tear my mouth from him. I saw the hellfire in the depth of his dark green eyes. "This isn't over, Willow." He stated coldly. "I will not let you leave Ragusa without getting a promise from you that whatever we have between us is far from over." I remained silent avoiding his gaze my hands locked together in my lap. "Just give me a few weeks or a whole month at the least. I will just sort out something in the camp and then I will come back for you." I ignored him,



biting my tongue to stop myself from answering him. Instead, I just focus my attention outside my plane window this was better than to see emotions in his eyes that made me weak with my resolve. I felt him take my hand and kiss my palm tenderly. I hardened my heart at the unexpected surge of reaction that filled inside me. I swear I am stronger than this. I could survive this. I can... We didn't have time to chat again when we finally landed in Sicily. As usual there was a car waiting for us at the tarmac. We rode the car in silence I am sitting as far away from his as possible. I disregarded the emotion raging inside me when he suddenly took my hand and entwined his fingers with mine. The way he held my hand nearly crushed my bones at the force he exerted as if he was afraid that I would run away from him once this car stopped from moving. Well, I might just do that. Finally, we arrived at their imposing castle. I was about to exit the car when he stopped me. "Promise me that you will wait for me—either here or in North Carolina. I will just ask my superior to extend my leave and then I will come for you." "After your leave extends." I finally said to him, eyeing him blankly. "After those weeks or months end again. You will finally go back to your dangerous work and I will be left alone at the ranch wondering if I still have a boyfriend breathing somehow, somewhere." "Willow..." I shook my head regretfully. "I'm sorry, Enzo. I am not cut to be a special force girlfriend. I am too scared for



P 30-2

Your work. This might be the best time for us to separate ways before this thing between us go deeper that we are willing to risk." I didn't wait for him to speak again before I literally run inside their palace. If I had to be honest to myself I have to admit that I was scared...scared at the thought I just have realize that I might not recover from this after all. Since now I have so much to lose more than I thought when we first got to know each other in our ranch. Because I quickly understand what I really feel about him and there's no escaping it.

*I am slowly falling in love with this untameable man.*

I nearly choke with the emotion with my realization. He doesn't need to know, I thought silently. If he does, he will just ruthlessly use it against me and demand to stay with him. Thank goodness, his cousins were out of sight when I enter the palace. Since I don't wish to speak with anyone else at the moment as I gather my thoughts about this whole thing. I finally reach my bedroom I lock myself inside completely aware of the hard pounding of my chest. Just when I thought that I started to calm myself my mobile phone sounded. I looked at the screen to see Jace's name. I slid my finger on the screen and answer his call. "What's up, Jace?"

*Willow*

..." he sounded distress from the other line. "

*I hope you are doing fine there. But I think you need to go home now.*

"Jace was right. There's no reason for me to stay here. I need to go back to my life away from this certain Fiorenza heir.

"Yeah..."

*The request from the bank has finally come*

. " I heard him said on the other line and my heart startsthundering again in my chest. "

*And we've been deny at the loan we requested it state in the letter that theydon't think we can repay the loan with its interest with the current situation of the ranch. They will also put the ranch at the auction this coming week if we didn't pay the debt in time*

. "My hand flew to my mouth as I gasp at his words. This was worse than I expected. "Don't worry, Jace. I willfly home today." Jace sighed from the other line. "

*All right. We'll wait for you here*

. "When I disconnected the phone call. I immediately throw my luggage bag on the bed and start packing mythings. I can't lose my family's ranch like this. I need to think of a plan how to save it with only a week beforethe deadline. Once I was done

packing. I have been thinking of leaving without saying goodbye to the Fiorenza clan but they'd been nothing but good to me. The least I could do was say a proper goodbye even if this would be the last time I would see them. I would never forget the time I spent with them especially the Fiorenza twins. They would always remain dear to me even if years had been passed. I knew where to find them since they usually spent their day at the library. I was about to knock on the doorway when I heard commotion inside with a mixture of rapid Italian and the Sicilian dialect Cesare

P 30-3

Fiorenza favored. I think twice before deciding to get this done since I don't have so much time in my hands right now. I knocked lightly before peeking inside the room. I didn't expect that everyone would be here including the twins respective husbands and in the middle of the commotion was Enzo and his uncle who were clearly having heated argument. I cleared my throat, fully aware of their eyes now focus on me. "Excuse me, I'm sorry to barge in unannounced but I just want to say goodbye before I leave." Enzo's face hardened in my direction while rage swirl in his eyes but he remain silent. It was his cousin Leila who speak. "But why so sudden, Willow?" I smiled brightly in her direction. "Something came up at the ranch that needs my instant attention. I need to go home in North Carolina today." There's no need to elaborate that I was on the brink of losing our family ranch. I don't need them to know my problem—that is mine alone. I should be the one solving it. "Did you book your flight already?" Laila asked in concern voice. She was standing next to her husband looking sad at the thought of my sudden departure. I shook my head. "I will try to be a chance passenger. I hope I will get available flight to North Carolina today." "Nonsense." The patriarch of the Fiorenza family spoke in his throne as his family privately calls it. "My plane will fly you to back home, Ms. Kinsella." I started to

shake my head while I happen to glance at the man who remain silent until now. "That's not necessary, sir..." "I insist." He said in his commanding voice. "I am the one who brings you here so I should be the one to bring you back home safe. I will instruct my pilot to have the plane ready at the tarmac say one hour?" I just manage to give a short nod. "Thank you, sir. Thank you for the warm hospitality you have shown in me. I am really grateful to find such friends in Sicily." I stopped the words coming from my mouth before my emotion get on me. I was about to leave the library when I notice Enzo was about to say something but then he shut his mouth again and remain silent.

*Very well*

. I said silently. I guess this was goodbye then? I forced my legs to move out of the room and wait for the plane to be ready for my trip. After an hour or so, the maid informed me that it was time to leave. She helped me with my luggage despite my protest and the car was waiting for me outside the palace. I permitted myself to look one last time at the

*Palazzo di Fiorenza*

before climbing to the SUV. My eyes blurred with tears seeing the familiar road for one last time. Who would have thought that this place would have a special place in my heart? It didn't take long before we finally reach the airport. As usual, I

P 30-4

skip the customs and they brought me to the private plane waiting for me. The driver help me with my luggage and I climbed to the iron steps of the private plane. I frowned slightly. I don't think this was the same plane I used before. Oh well, it seems that the Fiorenza not just have one private plane but a fleet of them. I settled myself inside the luxurious interior of the aircraft closing my eyes as I calm my emotions inside me. I heard the plane engine starts and the door of the plane being closed. I took a deep breath and open my eyes readying myself for my travel back home. And then my eyes widened considerably. The blood in my face drained. I saw a handsome man dressed in expensive suit sitting across to me giving me an amused look. "Who are you? What are you doing here?" His lips curved with a slight smile, the amusement in his pitch black eyes were still there. He crossed his leg over the other. "I should be the one asking you that,

*Signorina*

. "What are you doing in my plane?" My mouth gaped open in his direction. "Your plane...? But..."

*Good Lord, how did this happen?*

*What kind of misfortune is this?*



I thought frantically. Does that mean I rode the wrong plane due to my distress? But the more important question is, where the heck he was taking me? Since now the plane starting to go up in the air. "Where are you taking me?" I managed to summon my voice to speak up. "It seems that I hop the wrong plane. Please take me back to the airport." The hilarity was still fix in his pitch black eyes. "No." He declared with a smirk in his lips. "I find this fascinatingly hilarious so I decided that I am taking you with me. It's not every day I find a pretty companion waiting for me at my

*plane*

. "I cringed the way he emphasize the word 'plane'. "You're not going to hurt me, are you?" He smiled again as if he really couldn't believe this mishap or my stupidity but I couldn't shake off the dangerous vibe I was getting from him. "No. Why will I do that?" He replied puzzlingly as he extend his hand in front of me. "Santi Marchesi. May I know the name of my unexpected companion?" "Willow." I shook his hand briefly before snatching it lightning fast. "Where are we going?" He shrugged nonchalantly. "Who knows?" He was definitely playing games with me.

P 30-5

*Even a mistake may turn out to be the one thing necessary to a worthwhile achievement.*

-Henry Ford

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

Later that afternoon after Willow unexpectedly return to North Carolina without resolving the issue between us. She's once again guarding her heart from me and choose to return home and leave everything behind here. Including me. My heart ache just at the merely thought of her travelling right now further and further away from me. I went back to the library after my heated argument with Cesare moments before Willow announced her plan to leave the same day. I didn't have the chance to say something because of the unexpected shock I felt at the thought of her going back in her home town all of a sudden. I went inside the library to say goodbye despite our conversation a while ago. For the first time in my life I would say goodbye to my family before leaving unlike before I would slip out at the dead of the night to return at the army. I was surprised when I saw another commotion inside the library. The same people who witness my heated argument with Cesare were still here. "What's going on?" I asked when I saw Leila probably for the first time looking frantically worried. Dropping my backpack on the floor searching for

answer. Leila spared me a glance before she continued to pace the room. "You're still going to leave?" "What's going on?" I repeated my question earlier ignoring her own question. Right now there's something going on here that I don't think I like it. "There's a slight mishap at the airport a while ago." My heart practically stopped at her words. I crossed the distance between us to demand an answer from her. "What do you mean slight mishap? Is Willow involved in this mishap?" She gave me a guarded look before looking briefly at her father who remained silent at his throne. She slid back her gaze on me. "Well, you see..." She started looking away. "...

*Patri's*

plane supposed to bring Willow back to North Carolina but— "But what...?" I demanded hurriedly. Is there something bad happen to her? Plane crash? Engine error? I don't think I can bear if there's...

P 31-1

Before I have the chance to throttle my cousin as I have been dying to do since she start manipulating me and Willow for her own satisfaction. A familiar man barge in the library with his signature cynical manner. "I have good news and bad, little one." Marco Orsini strode inside the library like he was freaking living here with the Fiorenzas with his familiarity as if he was a member of this family. "What are you doing here?" Uncle asked disapprovingly to the man who just barge in. "I don't remember inviting you here." He smiled pleasantly to Cesare as if my uncle was so excited to see him. "Hello, uncle. Long-time no see." "You're not my nephew." Before he have the chance to retort Leila interrupt them. "Enough. I ask for his help that's why he is here. Thank you for coming with such short notice." "No problem." He smiled sardonically and he happened to slide his gaze on me. "How are you, amico? You have healthy glow in your skin. I guess your vacation is a successful one." Nikos and Leandro chortle out loud at the corner. I glared at them murderously as well as this good friend of theirs. "What did you find out?" Leila asked demanding Marco's attention. The man focus his attention to Leila with a slight smile. "What do you want to know first the good news or the bad news?" "Good news first." "Good news is..." The Italian man started. "...Willow Kinsella, indeed boarded a private plane." "And the bad news?" Leila asked warily as my heart

beating so loudly in my chest. I won't be surprised if they could hear it. Marco Orsini took a deep breath. "The bad news is, it wasn't the Fiorenza plane." "What?!" I couldn't believe my ears. What kind of stupidity is that? "How did this happen?" "Our private plane was delayed at the tarmac because someone else who is also a very important man is using the runway."

Laila explained while sitting beside her husband on the sofa. "You see, after this plane supposed to take off that's the time Patri's plane can go to the tarmac." "Are you saying...?" I couldn't really finish my sentence. I couldn't believe this was happening. "Yes," Laila supplied for me with sad eyes. "Willow board that plane." I stared at them in disbelief as my heart practically stopped beating. How could they let this happen? But the more important where the hell is Willow right now.

P 31-2

"Do you know who owns that plane, Marco?" Nikos asked his friend. He smiled at him with his gleam with delight. "Of course, I know. No information elude me,

amico

. "Who is it?" I demanded at him hotly. "Who owns this damn plane?" He eyed me for a moment before glancing at his wristwatch. "Oh, just look at the time. I need to go back to Rome. You see, I am a very busy man overseeing the vineyard, looking after my growing family and of course my other businesses is waiting for me. I need to go." "This is not a game, damn you!" I spat at him when he was about to leave the library. "Tell me who this bastard that kidnap

my

Willow. "I couldn't miss the glint showed in his eyes as well as the smirk in Leila's mouth that she's trying to control. Marco Orsini sighed deeply. "I would love to tell you, really. But what do I get in return from this favor? I didn't left everything in Rome to be here and endure one hour and thirty minutes flight to be here without some reward for myself." "I will do anything you would like me to do, damn you." As soon as I blurted those words I regret it. For this man's cynical eyes glinted with deviltry. "Anything?" He repeated with a knowing smile. "Y-

Yes..." I swallowed hard, unsure what to do next. "You know what I truly wants,

amico

. Remember?" I frowned at him for a moment thinking what he wants from...holy hell. "Don't tell me..." "Yes,

amico

." The bastard stated with glint in his dark eyes. "That's what I want." "Fine." I answered in a clip tone. "I will join your club. Just tell me who is this bastard who kidnap Willow?" I heard Nikos and Leandro groaned in disbelief as the man in front of me threw them a goading look. Then he looked at me again with a smile in his face. "Very well, his name is Santino Marchesi." "Who the fuck is that?" They all look in my direction as if they couldn't believe their eyes. Marco gaped at me. "You don't know him?" "No." I answered. "Who is he?" Marco shook his head in disbelief. "Seriously, you don't know Santino Marchesi or Santi as he wish to be call. He is a Sicilian don." "A what?" I couldn't believe my ears. Of all the people should be boarding that damn plane why it does needs to be that man. This was unbelievable.

"A Sicilian mafia." He supplied for me with a mocking smile. "Or as I wish to call him simply as gangster." "Don't tell me..." He nodded with a devious smile in his face. "Yes, he is a good friend of mine. And you should know Santi's penchant thing for blondes." I saw red hazed in my eyes with Marco's words. I stood toe-to-toe with this man until we're eyes level. "If that friend of yours touch even the single strand of Willow's hair." I stated with menacing. "I will make sure that I will not leave traces of his carcass. And I will include you in his dead body." Marco didn't even flinch in fact there was amusement gleam in his eyes. He gestured the men sitting casually on the sofa with his head. "I'm sure my friends over there will not let you do that. They will save my ass from you." "No. We're not." Nikos and Leandro said in unison. Marco scowled in their direction. "Now see here, you traitorous bastards..." "Where is he?" I asked him with the threadbare patience that left on me. "Where the hell this man took Willow." "Relax, amico." The Italian man reminded me. "Santi didn't abduct your lady friend. That little southern girl willingly went inside his plane without knowing that it's the wrong one. Besides, I know where he's traveling at the moment. He's going to Los Angeles to fetch his ward. You see, his mentor and good friend not so long ago died



and this man's daughter is left in his care." He smiled at the thought. "He, a twenty-seven years old will be a guardian of twenty-one years old college student." "Is your plane still at the tarmac as of now?" I asked Cesare a direct question. "I need to use it. I will go to Los Angeles now." "I'm coming with you." Marco inserted smoothly. "You don't know where this man reside in Los Angeles,

amico

, but I do." He glanced briefly to the men unconcernedly sitting on the sofa. "Your cousins' respective husbands will come with us too." "What?! No way!" Both of them stated in disagreement as they threw an annoying look in his direction. My cousins looked at them reproachfully. After a moment both of them stand from their seat with resign look. "All right, fine." Nikos said with troubled expression. "We'll come with you." "Do we need to pack?" Leandro asked conversationally. Nikos shook his head. "I'm sure this is a round trip flight." "Now we should get going." Marco announced too cheerfully for my liking as if he was enjoying this whole thing more than he should have. "But I want to use my plane going to America. It's just I am uncomfortable riding a plane not knowing the pilot personally." He looked at Cesare with apologetic look. "No offense, Uncle Fiorenza."

P 31-4

"Offense taken." The man cold green eyes met his unflinching one. We about to march out of the library when Rafe enter the room. He stopped dead in the doorway seeing us. "Did I interrupt anything? Maybe I should—" "Rafe!" Marco greeted chirpily. He swung his arms around Rafe's shoulder. "How did you know that I was here? Come, where's going somewhere?" "Wait a moment!" Rafe protested as Marco literally drag him out of the library. "I came here because I have a meeting with my godfather. Let me go." "No. you are coming with me." The Italian man declared, still holding Rafe like a hostage. "I just hope our pitiful extra of a friend is coming with us but there's no time to collect him in Rome. Maybe we should just give him a call later."

*Willow, wait for me*

. Was my last thought before going at the airport.

P 31-5

*Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes... but no plans.*

-Peter Drucker

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

I stared outside the seaside beach front house of Santi Marchesi watching the women clad in string bikinis laying on the white sand in hope of achieving natural tan. The last thing I want was a sudden detour in Los Angeles on my way home. I can't stay here any longer our ranch is in trouble I cannot stay here in California and play with this dangerous man. If I stay here any longer I might lose my ranch. I already thought of escaping from here but this mansion was guarded by bodyguards around. "Want to swim outside?" The question came from the same man who brought me here against my will. So far he'd been a good host to me since we arrived here late last night. But at the same time I am still wary of his intention on why he's doing this. Besides, from what I notice he's really a dangerous man his house surrounded my men all wearing black and carrying guns. "No, thank you." I replied with a tight smile, glancing back to the slightly crowded beach. "Sleep well last night?" "Yes." I lied through my teeth since I didn't sleep a wink last night. My mind was a mess. I barely can keep up with what's going on in my life since I met Enzo Fiorenza. "I have such a

nice view outside, don't you think?" He went to stand beside me at his floor-to-ceiling glass windows. I eyed him guardedly. It seems that he has double meaning in his words so I just choose not to answer him. "By the way," he said conversationally while his eyes were fix on the women outside appreciating their figures with his eyes. "Your friends are on the way to get you here. They should be here any moment." My gaze shot at him instantly. "Friends?" "Yes," he nodded as he permitted himself to smile a bit. "I didn't know that you are closed to the Fiorenza family." "You know them?" He smirked in my direction, tucking his hands on each side of his expensive trousers. "Who doesn't know the Fiorenza of Sicily?" "How did you know them?" I asked curiously.

P 32-1

He cocked an eyebrow, there was a slight smile in his face. "Why do you want to know?" "I'm just curious, that's all." "If I tell you then I have to kill you." He replied in a monotone. The smile was still playing in his mouth but the truthfulness of his words can be seen in his dark eyes. This man was really dangerous for my liking. "Is that okay with you?" "Excuse me, sir." One of his burly bodyguards had said from the doorway. "But they are here." He turned his attention on my direction with the same playful smile. "They are here, my dear." My heart suddenly pounded in my chest. Did he mean the Fiorenza were here to pick me up? Was...was he also here? Before I could dwell more with my thought five familiar men entered the living room but my eyes were only fix on him.

Enzo.

He's here. Despite trying to tame down the happiness that surge me seeing him here with his friends. The pleasure of seeing him in flesh again after our bitter goodbye made me want to jump in his arms right now but I stood on my ground. "Long time no see, Santi." Marco greeted the man with hand shake. "It's good to see you again." "Good to see you too." "Can you please leave me alone with her for a moment?" Enzo's commanding voice sounded on the room. Santi Marchesi looked entertained at his authoritative announcement at his

own house. "I can't believe I crossed North Atlantic Ocean for this." I heard Enzo's best friend muttered softly in the corner while in the process of removing his tie. "There is an earful lecture waiting for me from my wife when I get back to Ragusa." "This is the most boring rescue I've been." Mr. Orsini muttered under his breath. "I am expecting some live action." "Let's go to my study room. Drinks on me." Santi Marchesi invited the rest in his study room leading the group exiting the room leaving me alone with Enzo. Once we were alone the state-of-the-art living room silence filled the room. He was just staring intently from head-to-toe as if checking me if I was okay. I averted my gaze the way the concentration of his eyes on me it made me uncomfortable. He moved closer to where I was standing near the glass window. I was fully aware of the thundering of my heart. "Did he hurt you? Did he touch you in the wrong way?" He asked in a voice that feels like wasn't his. "I'm fine." I replied, looking outside the sunny day. "He's a perfect gentleman apart from the fact that he's refusing me to leave for his own amusement." I permitted myself to glance at him briefly. Just one look surely that wasn't so much to ask, right? "What are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to be reporting to your

P 32-2

officers by now?" He shook his head, there was trouble in his expression. "You don't think I will be at least worried about you when I learn that you took a wrong plane back to North Carolina? Don't I have the right to be anxious about your safety?" "But what about your work?" He looked at me for a moment that's when I realized how dishevelled he looks right now his hair was unkempt, his clothes were rumpled and the uneasiness I saw in his face made my heart ache. He was way different from the playful devil in Rome yesterday. "Don't worry about it, Willow. What's important now is you are safe. I am taking you your ranch myself." "You don't have to do that." I answered quietly. "I am already in America. I can book a flight to North Carolina from here." I heard him took a deep breath, he placed his hands in each side of the pocket of his jeans. I was aware that he was keeping himself in check in case he would lose his composure. "Willow..." I smiled bravely. "I'm okay, Enzo. You don't need to feel guilty about this isn't your fault." He surprised me when he closed the distance that separate us. My eyes widened at him when he suddenly take my hands in his. "Please, Willow—" We both turned around at the door when it suddenly flung to open and four men nearly stumble on the floor trying to regain their balance while Santi Marchesi standing at their back with his arms tuck in his middle looking entertained with the whole thing. "What the

hell!" Enzo snarled at them, his dark green eyes filled with annoyance. "What a fucking gossip mongers are you guys? What in the name of holy hell didn't you understand with the word privacy?" "I told you we should leave them alone."

Laila's husband said to Marco Orsini directly, trying to salvage his dignity. "This is Santi's fault!" Marco accused. "Hey, watch your mouth!" "I told you this isn't a good idea, Marco." Enzo's best friend commented, not meeting Enzo's deadly glare. The Italian man feigned a look of incredulity. "Why are you putting the blame on me, Rafe? You are the one who nearly swap face with the door." Then he looked at Leila's husband. "And you, if you didn't leaned too much on the door you will not accidentally open the door." "Like hell I did that!" The Spanish man protest. "Enough!" Enzo roared. He took a deep breath trying to calm himself. "Let's continue this conversation in your ranch without moron listening to us. They will not leave us alone."



P 32-3

I only managed to nod in his direction. Everything went into blur after that from leaving Santi Marchesi's beach front mansion Enzo renting a charter flight to North Carolina while the guys went back to Sicily via Marco Orsini's private plane. Six and half hour later I was back on the ranch. I didn't realize how much I miss this place until I came back. Before Enzo and I could even slid out of the car Jace was already running towards us. "Thank goodness you are already here." Jace started, his blue eyes went wide when he saw Enzo with me. "Neon, it's good to see you again." "Sup, Jace." Jace nodded in his direction and then look at me with troubled expression. "We have situation, Willow. I heard that there won't be an auction next week after all. Matt is offering the bank an exclusive deal to buy this ranch and there's a rumor circulating that he's bribing the bank to get this land." "That man." I muttered darkly. "What's going on here?" Enzo inquired his eyebrow furrow. "Are you selling your ranch?" Jace looked at me questioningly while I just shook my head silently telling him that Enzo doesn't any idea about this problem of mine. And he will not know if I have my way. "Give us a moment, Jace." The cowboy nodded leaving me alone with this Sicilian man. "What's going on, Willow? Are you in trouble with your ex again?" "Everything is fine." I waved my hand in the air. "Don't worry about that." "That's not what I think." He said in disbelief. "Jace will not be eager to

see you if you don't have a serious trouble with this ranch. Tell me what's going on?" I shook my head. "Don't worry about this. It's nothing really." I was about to come inside the house when he blocked my path. "Tell me now or I will just ask Jace. I am fine either way." "Oh, you arrogant son of a—" "Yes. Now tell me what's wrong? Is this the reason why you are so eager to go back? Because you are facing woe?" I took a deep breath. "Enzo..." He took my hand in his and stared deeply in my eyes. "I know you still believe that we don't suit each other and it's better if we parted ways now but I beg to disagree. Give me a chance to prove it to you that whatever we have is worth fighting for." "Why?" That's all I manage to ask. I couldn't think straight when he was this close to me.

"Because you know deep inside you that I am correct."

He reasoned out. He sighed deeply his eyes vulnerability in their depth that I haven't seen before. I shook my head, my resolve starting to waver. "I don't want you to be drag in this mess, Enzo. I can do this alone." "You can trust me." He said seriously, squeezing my hand in the process. "I know I didn't give you enough reason in the past to have faith in me but believe me now. We can make this through. Let me help you with your problem." "I don't know, Enzo." "Please?" I bit my lower lip while staring at his magnificent eyes. "All right, fine. Our loan was denied by the bank and now I only have one week before the bank repossessed this property." "How much I will pay it." I glared at him hotly. "This is the reason why I don't want to tell you this. I don't need your help, Enzo." He glared back at me with equal ferocity. "Why being stubborn ass?" "That's my pride we're talking about." I told him with much dignity that's left in me. Enzo shook his dark head. "Why are you being unreasonable? You're going to lose your property because of your pride, let me tell you." "I will not." He took a deep breath, staring at me with incredulity. "And where does your good-for-nothing ex fit in this whole drama?" I looked away from his knowing gaze. I couldn't really lie to this man.

"Well...he's planning to buy this land if I cannot pay the amount I owe the bank. I believe he already have agreement to the bank about this." "That bastard..." "You're not going to interfere with this, Enzo." I warned him severely. "I will not let you. This is my problem alone." "No." "What?" "Your problems are my problems too." He declared firmly, he must notice the annoyance in my face when he added. "Give me a few days, Willow. I will just sort out my problem at our base. I promised I will come back a better man—the man you deserve."

P 32-5

"Why will you do that?" I asked hoarsely, there was something in my chest that lit at his words. "I thought your life belongs in the army?" "Because I realized that you are more important than anything else in this world. Without you I will be lost forever just that thought of you being kidnap accidentally I nearly died while travelling to Los Angeles praying that you would be safe." "You care for me?" My heart was beating so fast in my chest."

*Si,*" he gave me a heart aching smile that made the world stop from spinning right this moment. "Because I love you, Willow. I know I am not a romantic guy since I spend the late years of my life in war. I was hardened by the life in the middle of battle field but when I met you everything has change, you evoke emotion I swear buried long time ago." "What the hell?" I cried in disbelief. "Why are you saying that all of a sudden? You told me before that I am better off without you, remember? Why are you playing with my feelings?" He gave a self-mocking smile. "That's not what expect to hear from you after my declaration of love. But I only did that in the past because I am scared...scared of what I feel about you. I thought pushing you away was the best at the time. You don't know how I sorely regret my actions that day, Willow." I was lost for words. "I—I don't know what to say." He smiled tenderly in my direction.

"You don't have to answer me yet. Just give me time to sort out my life and then I will come back for you." "I don't know, Enzo." I looked away from his magnificent eyes. "Just give it a try." He insisted, gently forcing me to meet his eyes with his hand. "I know I didn't give you a reason to believe in me in the past. But allow me to take good care of you from now on." I sighed deeply. "Okay." "So you trust me to deal with your ex?" I glowered in his direction. "That's my problem." "Your problem is also mine from now on." He stated with a determined look. "I just know how to deal with the likes of him." "I am not sure about this..." I started. He smiled heart aching at me, his eyes focus on me immensely as if trying to memorize every inch of my face. "One week, my love. Just give me a week. I will come back here a better man for you." Enzo pulled me in a tight hug before kissing my forehead tenderly and then burying his face in my hair while I buried my face in his chest and I inhaled his masculine scent. "This is going to be the longest week of my life."

*So am I*

. I thought silently.

P 32-6

*For many men, the acquisition of wealth does not end their troubles, it only changes them.*

-Lucius Annaeus Seneca

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

It's been a hell of a week. I thought this wouldn't come without me losing my sanity how I miss Willow throughout the week but I barely calls her in the last seven days thinking if I do that if I heard her voice I would become weak with my resolve and drop everything and fly straight to North Carolina to be with her. But I held myself thinking after all of this I would with her forever if she would accept such untamed, uncultured, unromantic man like me. From the moment I fetch her in Los Angeles until our goodbye at her ranch I've been counting the hours since then. The first thing I did when I came back to Sicily I went to our military base to formally request my dismissal from the service despite the dismay of my superior. They said that I would take time before they could find someone with same skills that I have. Right now, my prospective in life had change since I met Willow. Dying in battlefield is something I don't want to happen I want to grow old and have children with that southern girl who stole my heart without merealizing it. Next I

talk to Cesare about finally quitting the army but I made it clear to him that I don't have any plans of taking care of the family business. He seems pleased—for now—at the set-up as long as I quit my dangerous job. On my fourth day in Sicily I finally learnt how to utilize my family's wealth and connection. I ordered a thorough investigation to Matthew Graves who happened to be Willow's ex also. Having a military background I knew how important well-planned tactics before going to the battlefield. And dealing with this man is just the same when I am still in the service. Two days later the reports from the private investigator finally came. I have in my hands what it was like the whole biography of Matthew Graves' life. I tried not to flinch when I reach the part of his life when he and Willow started dating. So they broke up because he slept with Tori Jennings so now I knew the friction between Willow and that woman. I was already on the last of the report when my hands tightened at the documents in my hand.

*That bastard...*

I thought irritation. Is Willow already aware of this? I was half-tempted to call her but I decide last minute that I will deal with Matt Graves myself. I don't want her to worry about this. I will solve this on my own. Carefully placing the documents on the envelope. I gulped the last remaining brandy in my glass. I have a busy day ahead of me tomorrow. \*\*\*\*





P 33-1

The following morning, the breath the familiar scent of the country air as I step out of my car. Finally, I sighed with relief I was at last in the small town of St. Petersburg. I didn't went directly to Willow's ranch. Nope, I need to deal with someone first. Wearing my finest clothes, I stop the urge tugging the collar of my shirt wearing this kind of clothes didn't really suit me well. I walked straight to the entrance door of the huge wooden house of the Graves' family. A housekeeper answer the door with a welcome smile in her face. "I came here to see Mr. Graves." "The older one?" The housekeeper inquired. "No. The son is he around?" The woman nodded and let me come inside the house. She told me to wait at the receiving room as she calls Matt Graves in his room. Once I was alone in the room I took the chance to look around. It seems that his father and this man loves hunting from the display of animals head on the wall. I saw couple of photographs from their happy family. So he has other two younger sister? "You're looking for me?" He asked coming down to the staircase. I turned around to face the man who once broke Willow's heart. I gave him a pleasant smile his eyes narrowed in my direction upon recognizing me. "Hey, I know you. You're the guy Wills save few weeks ago, right?" Something irked me inside when he was still using his pet name for Willow so casually. But I held myself in check I need composure when dealing with this bastard. "I want to talk

to you about something. Are you free?" He gave me a guarded look before gesturing the door on the end of the hallway. "Come this way." I followed him inside the room it turns out that this was a study room. "Have a seat, please." I took the leather chair across the wooden table while he took the chair behind the desk. I eyed the man atypical cowboy with his all-American character. No wonder he's quite a ladies' man according to the reports the investigator had dug. "Let's cut the chase, shall we? I know you are not the type of man who conduct social visit early in the morning. What brings you here Mr...?" "Fiorenza." I supplied, making myself comfortable in my chair. "You are correct. Let's cut the bull as the American likes to say, right? I came here for Willow." "Ah," There was a satisfaction in the man's eyes as he leaned backwards in his chair. "I know she might be the reason for your visit, Mr. Fiorenza. Brandy?" "No. thank you." I gritted my teeth with his knowing look but I need to act cool and compose with this whole thing. How I wish Cesare rub me his signature haughtiness before I fly to America. "I heard that you already purchased her ranch at the bank without even informing her about this unfortunate event." There was a smile playing in his lips as he rub his chin. Oh, how my fist itch to remove that damn smile in his conceited face right this moment. "So the cat's out of the bag now? I carefully plan to tell her personally



tomorrow when her deadline from the bank is finally up. Damn it."It took every ounce of my self-control not to kill him this instantly. My adrenaline was already out for blood and it would only take me a few seconds to end his life with my hands. "You do realize that I know hundreds of ways on how to kill a man and I am now starting to think what good tactics I should use to you."I couldn't miss the way alarm entered his eyes or how he paled considerably.

Good

, I thought with satisfaction. It's time to know your place."You won't do that." He said more of a reassurance to himself than actually intend for me. I smiled coldly in his direction making sure that I am completely serious with my warning. "Let's try to find it out, shall we?"He swallowed hard. I had to revel at the sight of panic in his face. "What do you want? Did Willow tell you to threaten me like this in my own house?" "Don't worry," I replied to him with a curve in my lips. "She doesn't even know that I am here talking with you." "Then what do you want?" I crossed my legs over the other staring straight in his eyes. "I want to buy Willow's ranch from you. Name your price." He surprised me when he burst into laughter as if he finds the whole thing hilarious. "You? Buying her piece of land for my

asking price? I don't think so." "Try me." He looked at me for a moment. He was probably thinking if he should seriously consider my offer. "Fine." He finally answered. "Twenty-five million dollars." "Very well." I smirked in his direction. "What mode of payment do you prefer? Thru bank transaction? Check? Or perhaps you want it to be paid in cash? I am fine which ever do you prefer, Mr. Graves." His mouth hang open. "You can't be serious! You are really willing to pay twenty-five million dollars for that piece of land?" I shrugged nonchalantly. "If that's your price why not?" He gave me a malicious look that made my eyes narrowed in his direction. "Clearly, Willow already spread her legs for you if you're willing to pay that much for her bankrupt farm. Tell me, was still as good as I remember?" I lost my composure in a blink of an eye. I found myself pinning the man on the wall with my hand in his throat if I didn't stop myself in time I nearly crush his windpipe with the force I exerted. "Don't you dare disrespect her like that..." I hissed at him with a murderous intent. "...she's worth more than few million dollars I assure you."

"Hands off me, you bastard!" "Not until you learn how to respect a woman." I muttered menacingly. "Why are you treating her like that? You once loved her, right?" Despite the alarm in his eyes he manage to give me a mocking smile.

"Whatever I have felt for her in the past vanished in the thin air when she threaten me with her shotgun in the driveway of her ranch and I become laughing stock of this freaking town. I swore that I would have my revenge on her. And this is the time I collect what she owes me. I will humiliate her for all the town to see when she became homeless tomorrow."

*That's it*

. I thought furiously.

*This man really have a death wish*

. In one swift movement I manage to twist his hand at his back while I position my other hand in his shoulder blades while he's now facing the wall. "As if I will let you do that." He struggled to be free but I held him fast. "I will give you two choices. Sell it to me for the price you want or I will expose your family's dirty little secret in this little town of St. Petersburg. Take your choice." He stiffened for a moment. "What are you talking about?" "Really, now." I said in satisfaction. "I made you

thoroughly investigate and I found some interesting facts about your family. Do you want me to expose your family's skeleton to this quite little town of yours." "You're only bluffing." "Shall we try, Graves?" I challenged him. "Are you going to deny that your father is involved in illegal trade in Africa? Poaching those poor animals so you can sell their body parts in black market." I heard him gasped as I release him slowly from my grip. I could see the way blood drain in his face. I permitted myself to smile a little. "Fine. I will expect the twenty-five million dollars on my account." I pulled out my mobile phone in my trousers' pocket and dialled Cesare's private secretary. After a few rings. "Hey, it's me Enzo. I want you to transfer twenty-five million dollars in Matthew Graves account today. I will send the bank details later. All right, thanks." I held out my hand. "Now give me the land title." "How should I know that you are not bluffing that you're going to transfer the money on my account?" "You can always find me at the neighboring ranch, my friend." He reluctantly pulled out his drawer and tossed the land title in the desk. I took it and read the content making sure that it's Willow's ranch. "Give me your bank details so I can send it to my representative. I guess I'll see you around, Matt. Since we're going to be neighbors from now on."

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**



I heard an unfamiliar car outside the house. My heart leap off my chest hoping that he could be that man outside. It's been a hell of a week since he came back to Sicily as he ask to sort out everything. In those days that he'd been away he was heartless not to call me even once. Leaving me wondering if he would ever fulfil his promised to come back to me.

I literally run towards the entrance door to see who drives that car. Albert was trailing behind me happily. And then I saw him slid out of the car looking like every inch of the Fiorenza heir with his expensive suit. I felt my mouth quirk with a smile I thought I would never see him like this after the party his family organize for him. "You're here!" I stated those words happily more than I should have. I couldn't contain my excitement to see him even though I don't know how to solve my current problem. My last resort was to lend money from him and I will try to pay him monthly or annually depending on the terms of the agreement we would come up. He spread his arms and I willingly went to his waiting arms and hug him tightly. "I miss you so much!" "Me too." I excitedly reply. He drew back from our embrace and carefully bring me back to my feet. He took something inside the car and presented it to me. I questioningly took the envelope and look at the content. I gasped escape me when I saw my ranch land title. "W-Where did you get this?" "Matthew Graves." His mouth twisted with distaste. My blood runs cold in his announcement. I felt my hands started to shake. "How...how did...?" "He already owns your ranch since last week and he is just waiting for the right time to expel you in this place with the most humiliating manner as

possible." My mouth suddenly went dry. Of course, that man wants his revenge on me after what I did on him. "How did you manage to get this from him? Did you kill him?" Enzo's mouth curved with a smile. "Of course not. I bought it to him." "What?" I asked in disbelief. "How much?" He shook his head, giving me a reassuring smile. "It doesn't matter. What matters now it's your again and this time forever." It was my turn to shake my head. "I cannot accept such thing from you! Tell me, how much is it and I will try to pay you back." "Twenty-five million dollars." My eyes widened at him in disbelief. I think that I misheard him. "What? Care to repeat the amount?" "I bought it from him for twenty-five million dollars." He repeated calmly. "Are you crazy?!" I squealed in incredulity, watching his face carefully. "Why would you buy it for such amount? Did you realize that he kinda quadruple the value of this farm?"

P 33-5

"So what?" "How can I pay you with such amount?" He smirked in my direction while his eyes held amusement in their depth. "Well, it's a good thing that I am on my first day as businessman, Willow. I'd like to discuss some business proposal to you. Do you think we can conduct this one in a more private setting?" I stopped the smile slipping out of my lips. "Let's go to the study room, Mr. Fiorenza." We went inside the house and led him to my dad's study room. I watched him carefully closed the door behind him. I put good distance between us standing at the back of the chair behind the desk. "What's your proposal, Mr. Fiorenza? I am listening." He loosen the tie around his neck. "I can't properly breathe with this freaking suit. I have a once in a lifetime business proposal for you, Ms. Kinsella. If you cannot accept this land title as a gift and you're willing to pay me. I might as well use this as leverage to get what I want from you." "And that is...?" I am consciously aware of the hard pounding of my heart. "Be my wife." He announced all of a sudden. "Marry me. Share your life with me. And let's work together to make this ranch thriving once again." My eyes widened at him while my mouth hang open. "Are you serious? What about your work? Your family in Sicily?" "I'm done with my dangerous job, Willow. Done. Over." He said closing the distance between us. "I want to be with you always. I want us to grow old together." "But your family...you are your uncle's

heir."He smiled tenderly in my direction, taking my hand in his.  
"We can work this together. We can go back and forth between Ragusa and here that way our children will grow up two heritage." "Children?" I couldn't help but to giggle at him.  
"Aren't you thinking ahead of yourself, Mister? I haven't agree yet to marry you." "But you will, right?" He eyed me teasingly.  
"If not. I will not give you this land title." I laughed out loud.  
"Take it it's your now officially." But it's us I want to be official."  
He fished out something in his pocket and place it in my palm.  
"I don't have an engagement ring right now but I promise we'll look for the grandest one for you. As of now this is the only thing I can offer at the moment." He placed the dog tag collar in my palm. I gasped when I realized that it was his identity when he's still serving the army. "This is who I am before, Willow. And I want you to keep it. For I am yours forever." Tears now forming in my eyes. "Have I told you how much I love you?"

P 33-6

He looked stunned for a moment before breaking into a boyish smile. "Say that again, will you?" "I love you, Vincenzo Fiorenza." Hooking my arms around his neck. "And yes. I am going to marry you." He closed the distance between our lips and I closed my eyes relishing the moment to be in his arms again.

*Finally he is home*

. I thought with gladness in my heart.

P 33-7

*Stop acting as if life is a rehearsal. Live this day as if it were your last. The past is over and gone. The future is not guaranteed.*

-Wayne Dyer

### **Willow Kinsella's POV**

I carefully trying to get out bed without waking up the man beside me. But before I could manage to walk away he spoke behind me. "Where are you going?" I turned around to face him. His were still shut but I knew that he's now fully awake. "Stop slouching on the bed, Enzo. We have a long day ahead of us. Any moments now your family and our friends will startstrooping up here." "Exactly." He said in agreement, patting the space beside him. "That's why this is our last moment beforethose people starts creating chaos in this little town of St. Petersburg." My lips twitched with a smile, looking at him with amuse look. "The people of our little town doesn't knowwhat's coming in their way with the arrival of those certain group of individuals. We have so many thingsneeds to finish before their arrival." It's been two months since he proposed to me on the say day he bought this land to Matt with exuberating price which still I have to get over with. So far, it

has been the happiest day of my life living here with him. We were slowly making progress in keeping the ranch operational again buying few livestock's and training new horses. He was now bragging that he has knack in business despite the fact that he spend twenty-five million dollars in his first day as businessman. But really figures and Enzo Fiorenza didn't go along. He's more useful helping Jace with the work outside than spending his day working ledgers. He slowly sat up from the bed and rub his still sleepy eyes. "That leaves me no choice but start my day now, correct?" "Yes." I grinned at him. "I will wait for you outside." I didn't wait for his answer and left him in the bedroom, as I went outside to see that the people we hired starts decorating the barn for our wedding tomorrow. The ceremony will be held inside the barn.

### *We're getting married tomorrow*

. My heart warmed at the thought. I looked at the shining engagement ring in my hand. The yellow band with a diamond at the center glinted at the sunlight. Only last month we flew to Paris to meet Leila's sister-in-law, Lucia Suarez, to create my wedding dress. She's one of the finest fashion designer according to her own sister-in-law and Leila was not mistaken about Lucia's talent. She brings to life what I have envision to be my wedding dress. We also met her husband in Paris, Diego,



who like Enzo share the same fate when they were blackmailed  
to

P 34-1

join Marco Orsini's club. The two instantly hit it off like long lost friends when console each other on how the Italian billionaire bullied and blackmailed them they needed his help. As for Matt? His father's dirty work finally exposed and now facing criminal charges for illegal poaching and his family left the town to leave in the city since they cannot take the scandal and gossip about their family in our little town. He may live in the lap of luxury in whichever part of the world right now after the amount Enzo paid this ranch. I still think that bastard won lottery for that such ridiculous amount. But Enzo told me that forget about it since now he's finally out of our lives he even joke about buying their ranch so I could be ours too. I still think that bastard didn't deserve a penny. So far it was a blissful two months for us after the wedding tomorrow we will have our honeymoon in Sicily and spend few weeks or months there. Jace was now our ranch manager and often overseeing farm animals at auctions. I saw black SUV coming from the driveway. A smile form in my lips watching the car halt inside the ranch I didn't notice that my fiancé was now standing beside me. "Ah, here comes the chaos." We watched the Duke and Duchess of Caprielle step out of the SUV with their dark-haired twins who literally run on the grass lawn the moment

their parents unclasped them from their car seats. I laughed when I saw the annoyance at the duke's face seeing his children behaving like wild banshees. "Makis and Mariya are really excited to be here." Tatiana said by way of greeting, her unusual violet eyes smiling delightfully. "You two get down from the fence this instant!" Lucca reprimanding the twins sternly, who weren't listening to their father's command. They still perched on the white fence watching the mounts on the corral with awe in their expression. "Papa," the little girl with pretty grey eyes said looking over her shoulder. "I want to ride a horse." "No." She pouted at her father. I smiled at her reassuringly. "Perhaps we can arrange that later if your papa doesn't mind." "Oh, goodie!" The little girl chirped looking back to the corral. "I am sure Audrianna will like to ride a horse too." Her father only managed to shake his head. Not long after another car pulled in the driveway this time my smile widened when I saw the familiar faces. The Fiorenza clan were finally here. I waved happily when I saw Laila and Leila with their husbands and children. But my eyes widened when I saw Cesare coming out of the car trailing behind them. I thought he said he would be here on the same day of the wedding. I am so glad that he changed his mind. "Where's everybody?" Leila asked casually looking around. I raised my eyebrow in her choice of shoe wear. "Woman," I said teasingly. "You are in a

farmstead do you think such heels is advisable in this kind of place?It would fill with mud and horse dung in no time."

P 34-2

She spared a glance to her husband who was carrying their son. "Don't worry. I am sure my husband will benew pair, right darling?"The Spanish billionaire only manage to shake his head. I noticed that Cesare was casually looking around asif he couldn't believe that he's actually here as if he was lost in the wilderness away from the comfort of hiscastle."So this is where you train wild horse, yes?" Leila asked with a devilish glint in her green eyes. "Nice."I just stared at him questioningly but she just ignore me and continue to survey the land."You got fine breed of colts here." Nikos commented, surveying the foals running free inside the corral. I justrecently learned that he plays polo in his free time that's why he knew a fine horse when he see one."Want to try them? Let's go for a ride later." Enzo invited. He just recently learn how to ride one and I haveto be honest I would say that he has a long way to go if he plans to compete with a polo player.The Greek billionaire's face twitched with a smile. "Maybe later when Marco is here."Half an hour later, the man arrived with his pregnant wife and their strong-willed daughter. She might be themirror image of her beautiful mother but her attitude was certainly from her father."Audrey!" The duke's daughter greeted waving happily to the newcomer. "Come, papa says I can ride a horselater.""I didn't say that." Lucca replied strictly.Shortly after that Rafe and his wife arrived followed by

Lucia and her husband. I was excited to see Lucia at the most because she's bringing my wedding gown." "We need to fit your wedding dress. Come inside, so I know if we need to alter something." Lucia announced literally dragging me away from the crowd. The ladies and children joined us leaving the men to amuse themselves outside.

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

"I cannot believe that you're really getting married tomorrow, Enzo." Marco commented overdramatically once the ladies went inside the house. Cesare retired to the newly built guest house nearby since we want to rest after a long flight. I am sure he won't appreciate squealing females tonight when they have their little bachelorette party inside the house. "It feels like it's only been yesterday when you being a stubborn lout refusing to join the club." "I will still refuse to join your club given a chance." He eyed me exasperatingly. "Ungrateful bastard. Is this how to treat a man who help you with everything? Hell, maybe I should have not rescue you when you locked yourself in the dungeon of our vineyard."

Collective laughter erupted around us. I just glared at the man who put his arm around my shoulder. "I think I should really throw a punch or two in your face so I can get even." The man merely smiled, looking around the newly renovated ranch before him. "I can't believe we're really going to sleep on a bunkhouse tonight. Imagine that a night in the wild." "Are you sure you city slickers are up on what awaits you tonight?" I asked the men around me who were all busy running their businesses in the city. "You are going to share lodgings on real cowboys, I remind you." "Oh, trust me." Marco gave me a haughty look, there was a smug smile in his mouth. "I am sure that I mount more horses than them,

amico

. "My eyes narrowed at him and then I heard Nikos curse and said in disgust. "Can somebody call Francesca? This man's unfiltered mouth is starting again. The last thing we want is for him to spout nonsense early in the morning." "How cruel,

amico

. " He placed his hand in his chest dramatically. "You wounded me." Nikos icy blue eyes narrowed in his direction before his lips twitched with devilry. "Enzo is inviting me to try

their colts. Marco do you want to join us?" "Of course." The cynical Italian replied but I could see how his smile falter. Moments later, Nikos, Diego, Leandro and I already found the horses we like to use for our little side trip around the ranch. Marco was still in the process of picking the stallion he would like to ride while Lucca and Rafe flatly refuse to join us since they admitted that they haven't ride a horse before. "If I suddenly died because of this will you guys put it on my obituary something like this: 'he's dearly love by his friends and they will forever carry his legacy'." Marco said with a deep sigh. "Oh, come on now. Stop being dramatic." Nikos threw a goading smile to his friend. "You are not by any chance afraid of horses, are you, Marco?" He scowled in his direction. "Of course not, you bastard." "I'm sure Lucca will not agree with you." The Greek man replied. Lucca laughed from the corner of the stable, his rich grey eyes dance with laughter. "Why don't you just tell them,

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? You have phobia riding a horse since that incident when we're thirteen or fourteen at that time?" He glared at his long-time friend. "I don't remember such thing, Lucca." Rafe exhaled deeply with a relief smile in his face. "Finally, the chink of his armor had been finally reveal. He's not perfect as he initially think he is." "Hey, watch your mouth, bastard!" Marco



snarled at him. "Or I will let the wild bears eat you tonight." "There's no wild bears in this part of North Carolina." I said while shaking my head in resignation.

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"I am not asking for your opinion, Enzo. Thank you very much."  
The Italian bastard said acidly. I only managed to shake my head. Being with them again makes me happy though in the past I dodge their presence like plague. I guess their chaotic presence is all what I need for my shift from being a soldier to regular civilian.

*I must be mad, for me to always look forward spending more time with them lately*

. I mused silently, as I watch them torment Marco and his phobia with horses.

P 34-5

*Weddings are important because they celebrate life and possibility.*

-Anne Hathaway

### **Enzo Fiorenza's POV**

I stared at the progressing party at the barn with my wife in my arms. I still couldn't believe it that I am now a married man. The ceremony was simple and short with the wedding officiant waiting at the wedding arch while Willow walked the aisle in my uncle's arms. The breath in my lungs knock upon seeing my bride dazzlingly with wedding finery. My lips twitched with a smile when I saw that she's wearing her cowgirl boots beneath that long white gown and the mischievous smile in her pretty face. Everything went blur after that, from saying our vows to the part of exchanging rings and of course announcing us as man and wife finally. Right now, I was looking at the town locals mingling to the elite members of the Italian society welcoming us in their little town with open arms. "You okay?" I heard my wife drag me out of my reverie. I saw her looking at me with her clear blue eyes questioningly. I gave her a reassuring smile despite the pounding in my skull right now. "I'm fine. Just suffering from slight hangover, that's all." Upon

mentioning that she threw a shrewd look in my direction.

"Well, you're not going to suffer hangover in your own wedding party if you and your friends didn't drink like drunkards last night in the bunkhouse like there's no tomorrow. I'm surprised to see you and the gang manage to stay awake throughout the ceremony since they are probably suffering from hangover." I winced at her words. "It was Jace's fault! He said we should do it how southern men do stag party. Believe me it was worse than a college frat party, Willow. By the time of our third bottle of Cognac the guys forget about their glasses and drink straight to the bottles like some wild animals. I think I will not drink alcohol again until next year I have my fill last night." "Thank goodness you all manage to look presentable this morning." I smiled as I vaguely remember some events last night. "You don't know how many times Marco asked Jace to join his club last night. The idiot also promised your cowboy to find him a suitable wife back in Italy." "Oh, dear." Willow raised an eyebrow at the thought. "What did Jace say about his plan?" "I don't remember." I answered regretfully, trying to recall but failing miserably. "I am too drunk to recollect what happened after that."

"I am expecting a wedding night." I hissed near my ear. "Deny that to me later this night and I promised to shoot your prized possession. You shouldn't have drink that much." "I know. I learn my lesson this morning." Despite my headache I couldn't help but to give her a wolfish smile. I leaned down and whisper something for her ears only. "And as for the record, I will let you sleep a wink tonight. No more condoms, Willow." I felt her shiver with excitement but I just ignore it for now. We're in the middle of our wedding party after this crowd leave that's the time I would think how I should slip her gown off her body slowly. I smiled at her innocently while she doesn't have any idea what's going on inside my head. For now I will act like a perfect gentleman in front of this crowd and tonight when we're all alone I would unleash the devil inside me. "Care to dance, Mrs. Fiorenza?" She gasped looking at me with surprised expression. "That's me, right?" "Yes. You. Only you." I held out my hands in front of her. She took it with a smile and led her to the dance floor for our first dance as man and wife. We swayed at the sweet music and not long after we were joined by other couples on the dance floor. "Oh, look." My wife said looking over my shoulder. "I think your uncle needs

rescuing from the widowedmatron ladies of St. Petersburg. They were eagerly wants to talk to him and even batting lashes on him. Heseems uncomfortable with the attention."I looked where Cesare was standing with three widowed ladies I met at the Pie festival before. Clearly, theywere flirting with him and he looks like he wish to be anywhere but here right this moment. I laughedfocusing back my attention to my wife. "He's known for being formidable in every corner of Sicily,

*miamoglie*

. I'm sure he can handle them.""But...""Don't worry about him." I said smiling down at her. "Just focus on our dance, okay?""I love you, Enzo Fiorenza."I smiled tenderly at her. "I love you more, Willow Fiorenza."\*\*\*\*I stood around Marco's previous recruits to his club before me. We believed that we were all suffer the same fate in his hands. They dragged me here to have 'club' time as he stated earlier when all I want was to be withmy wife's side all the time."I'm surprised to see that you manage to drag our unsmiling uncle here, Enzo." Marco's lips curved withsarcastic smile. "You are one heck of a kind.""You're still drinking even after last night?" I asked him disgustedly, watching him holding a glass of champagne in his hand.

He looked at the fluke in his hand and smile. "Relax, this is only for a show. I don't want people to suspect that I nearly vomit my internal organs this morning." "We should not have drink too much last night." I told them with a sigh. "I barely even remember what the hell happened last night or how I manage to sleep just two feet away from my bed." "That's much better than the certain someone I find sleeping on the bathroom." Leandro threw a meaningful look to Diego. His own brother-in-law, shook his head. "I swear I just know how badly I want to pee so I went to the bathroom and then it seems I find it more comfortable to sleep in the cold tile." "But my favorite part last night was when Nick and Leandro arguing who is more between Laila and Leila." Lucca shared with a smile forming in his lips. "The hell but they're identical twins." Nikos frowned, probably trying to reminisce that part. "How come I don't remember that?" he looked at his brother-in-law. "Have you?" Leandro shook his head after a moment. "No." "You guys are like bunch of immature kids last night." Rafe commented with distaste. "Wow. That comment really came from you Rafe. Wow." Marco said in false admiration. "When you're the one who wants to show us your 'carrot' last night claiming it's perfectly fine. Jesus, my poor innocent eyes nearly tainted

with sin." "I didn't do such thing!" Everyone laughed since we barely all remember everything so we can't really know if Marco had been telling the truth or he was just messing with Rafe. "But as the saying goes: 'what happened in bunkhouse stays in bunkhouse'." The sarcastic Italian stated with a mischievous grin in his face. And then his eyes widened when he saw something in my back. "Is that...?" He looked at me with a sardonic smile. "I'm surprised that you invited him, Enzo." I glanced to where he was looking at my back when I saw Santi Marchesi arrive with a young woman with cotton-candy pink hair beside him. "Willow wants to invite him despite my reservations about this man." "Whipped, are you?" Marco quipped looking at the newly arrived guests with interest. "That's his ward, Haven Pierce. I heard she's quite a handful little firecracker not that surprising look at that bright pink hair of hers. Jesus, in a span of two months look how frustrated he is, he's getting older than his actual age. She will be the Santi's downfall, I tell you." "Maybe I should greet them with my wife." I said and was about to leave them. Marco stopped me from leaving. "Wait, before you leave we need to talk." "About what?" I frowned when I saw the other men with us gave us interested looks all of a sudden. As if this was the most interesting part of the party. I don't think I like where this was heading.



P 35-3

"I am so ready for this." Rafe whispered making me grimace in his direction. The Italian man took a deep breath.

The way he stare at me with such intensity made me nervous all of a sudden. "Hmm, how should I say this...?" "Oh boy, here he goes.

"Someone muttered beside us." "Everyone's personal nightmare." Another mumbled. "Just spill it, damn it." I said irritably, eyeing their collective amusement as if they completely forget their hangovers. His dark's eyes glinted with deviltry. "I want to prepare you on what to expect on your wedding night. French letters are not advisable to use on wedding night, brother.

So I suggest throw them away you're chance of having a baby is considerably go high, trust me." Silence filled the group as if the angel of death had come to collect our souls at once.

I couldn't believe my ears as I feel the blood that thundered in my ears. I just stared at him dumbfounded.

What the hell he's talking about?" He outdone himself this time, don't you think?" Nikos murmured to the duke.

The last thing I want was to murder someone in my own wedding party. So I took a deep breath and ignore him. "I am officially done talking with you guys." I managed to force myself

to walk away from them."I am expecting a pregnant Willow the next time we meet. " He called after me but I just ignore him.I would not him get under my skin on my own wedding, I swear. I will not.

.....**The End**.....

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