

My Surrogate

My Love...

BY
RACHAEL
ABEAUTY



My Surrogate, My Love... (18+)

rayellito

Published: 2021

Source: <https://www.wattpad.com>

Chapter one

This book is dedicated to WinnieBibi3

Important note:

DO NOT PLAGERIZE ANY CONTENT WITHIN THIS BOOK. IT IS ILLEGAL!

This is the very first book I've written on wattpad, so, if at all you come across some spelling errors, please bare with me as I continue with the editing process.

Also, this is a MAFIA BOOK, and the mafia don is called so for a reason. Therefore, do not expect him to be all lovey-dovey.

Constructive criticism will ALWAYS be welcomed, but please, if you know that your comment will be destructive and not, in any way, helpful, kindly, just read in humble silence. I am very much human, and some comments could really ruin a whole day.

With that being said, happy reading and stay safe... ♡♡

I am sat in the Lime Light Cafe, awaiting my sister's presence, so that I can give her a piece of my mind, for the shitty mistake she had made. As I remain seated, my mind wanders back to one month back; to the beginning of my possible end. On that fateful morning, I arrived at one of the city's hospitals. To be precise, the hospital in which my damn ass of a sister works.

I recall matching up to the receptionist, explaining that I had an appointment with doctor Sarah Vega, and she, in turn, explained that Sarah was still handling a patient, and that I had to wait for another five minutes. So, I took a seat as told, and sent my boyfriend Simon, a quick text. Seconds fled into ten solid minutes of waiting, and eventually, my sister was done with her patient. I slid into her office, after us having exchanged our hellos and a brief hug.

Something was off with her though. Staring keenly at her facial features, I noticed the terrible eye bags, and her rather pale skin. Had she been crying? "Eva, go lie down over there," she begun, pointing towards the hospital bed.

It was the same hospital bed I'd been so accustomed to, since I came by the hospital every Tuesday and Thursday, due to the toxic shock syndrome I had contracted a while back.

"Sarah, are you okay? You look like you've been crying a lot, and you don't seem like you've had much sleep. Everything good?" I tried to inquire.

She only gave me a reassuring smile, but I wasn't buying that shit. I knew, and still know my sister better than anyone else. Something was bothering her, and what bothered her, bothered me as well.

"Was it Josh again?"

Josh was my sister's boyfriend. He was really sweet and shit, up until he suddenly just switched to volatile, and started heavily drinking. Over the past few months, he adopted this unjustified and uncalled for behavior, of constantly yelling at my sister, throwing temper tantrums over pathetic issues, and tossing objects whenever they'd argue; her words, not mine.

Taking in one deep breathe, I decided to dissolve all plunging thoughts of the disgusting pig, drawing back to reality, and looking over at Sarah. She just stood there staring at me, her brows knitting, and her glare venomous. I had struck a nerve, no doubt about it.

"It's nothing Eva. Now, lie down and stop with the questions!"

"Oh, so it was that son of a bitch then, wasn't it? How are you still in a relationship with...are those...are those handprints on your neck, Sarah? That fucker had the nerve to....oh, so help me heavens I'll fucking kill him!"

She took notice that her hair, which had previously been over her left shoulder, was now down her back. Leaping off the bed, and padded over to her, so as to get a better view of the markings.

"What happened, and don't you dare say nothing!"

She just stood there, staring at the tiled floor as if it was some object of such great fascination, then cleared her throat to speak. She was clearly trying her best not to break down.

"It's...it was uh, Josh. He...uh...well, he strangled me during an argument. You see, I was driven home by one of my colleagues, since my car had broken down, so Josh got all jealous, and started yelling at me, before he sorta snapped, and begun with the strangulation.

I...I swear I could have died last night, were it not for Ali calling the police, and them arriving on time," she explained, allowing the tears that she had been trying so hard to hold back, fall freely down her pale cheeks.

I embraced her, trying my best, to offer some emotional support. That imbecile of a man touched my sister. My sis-ter!

"I will kill him, I swear."

"Don't worry. He was arrested for assault and attempted murder. I will be going to court to testify," she clarified, her voice breaking.

Taking in a sharp breathe, I proceeded to lie down over the bed, as per her instructions.

I knew damn well, my sister was still in love with the bastard, and was willing to tolerate his bull crap, and that is exactly what irritated me the most! However, I wasn't going to let the plunging thoughts of that fucker, ruin my day.

He was already going to face charges, and hopefully, for a period exceeding fifteen years. Little did I know, however, that that little injection I'd be receiving from my nervous wreck of a sister, would ruin just more than my day.

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom 

Chapter two

The pic above is of Eva...

"Are you sure you can do this, Sarah? I mean, we could just get another gyne to assist, if you are not feeling okay," I tried to reason, taking notice of her trembling palms.

I knew that she was slightly drunk. I mean, her breathe was all toothpaste and tequila.

"I can do it Eva, don't worry yourself. Are you ready?"

"Yeah. If you're sure, then do your thing."

The injection was never a comfortable one, but I had to do what I had to do. As soon as she was done, I pulled up my pair of ripped jeans, and buckled my belt, grabbing hold of my sling back, and swinging it over my shoulder.

"Okay, I'm heading home now. I have to finish up some work. There is this drawing of a particular seven star hotel to be constructed in a few weeks time, and I have to present it tommorow, lest the boss be pissed as fuck. Bye girl," I voiced, engulfing her in a brief hug.

"Okay then. See you soon."

Sarah and I, didn't, and still don't live together. She lives with Josh, while I, live alone, in my own apartment. I'm the solo type, and I've always appreciated it that way, ever since our mum passed.

From my sister's office, I headed back home, finished up with my drawing, had a quick shower, ate my dinner, and was off to bed. And that right there, *was* my simple ol' life...

One month later(present day)

I wake up feeling nauseous as fuck, my head practically spinning. I didn't drink last night. Hell! I don't drink at all! The dizzy spells have been troubling me throughout this past week, each waking morning worse than the last. What is seriously wrong with me!

I rush to the bathroom, and empty all contents of my stomach, then rinse my mouth and brush my teeth, before heading back to my bedroom and lying

down for a while.

After a few silent minutes of me just laying there, rubbing my temples and forehead, I finally get off up, tread back to the medicine cabinet, and grab a tablet. I hate medicine, hospitals and their pale hued walls, as well as the smell of surgical spirit, but I need to down this shit.

It's the beginning of the the weekend, so I don't have much to do. And my heavens, where the hell are these dizzy spells coming from now!

I am pretty certain it's nothing I ate, neither do I have any others symptoms of malaria, anaemia, diabetes or typhoid, so what could be the issue? I draw the curtains, slide the windows open, then inhale and exhale deeply and repetitively, trying to calm myself.

Then, a thought strikes me. Could I be pregnant? Pregnant? I haven't lost my v-card yet. Hell, the only very intimate thing I do with Simon, is make out with him, and that's because I am not at all comfortable with the thought of indulging in sex. But I'm late this time round and I'm a regular. So could it be?

Bitch, shut the fuck up!

Nah, that's a very stupid thing to think, Eva. It doesn't make any fucking sense! Females don't just become pregnant miraculously! That's some damn shit right there.

But what's the harm in confirming anyways? I mean, it's ridiculous, but there is nothing to lose, so why not try? And if the test *miraculously* comes out positive, which I'm almost certain it will fucking *not*, I'll most definitely phone Sarah, since she's my gyne.

I get dressed in some white cropped hoodie, some denim ripped jeans, and baseball boots, tying my hair into a messy bun and grabbing my car keys and soon, I'm out of my apartment and into my car, driving to a pharmacy some few blocks away.

I quickly purchase that which I need, the embarrassment practically gnawing on my insides, and I'm on my way back home. So funny thing is, I'm actually nervous. Like, what if the results do come out positive? What then?

How will I explain the unexplainable to both Simon and Sarah? How do I even start carrying a child who's father I have no clue of?

No, calm down girl. You are not pregnant, Eva. That's absurd. Fucking ridiculous! Deep breathes.

I unlock the doors to my apartment, shutting them briefly, and walk straight to the bathroom. I take in one large gulp of air to try and ease the nervousness

that's sipping throughout my entire body, and quickly retrieve the testing kit from the box, tossing the box into the trash can, and carrying out the necessary test.

Seconds tick by, converting into long minutes of nerve-wrecking anticipation, until finally, I gather every ounce of courage, to check the kit. See, right now, I have no idea what emotions are swirling through my mind, and setting my entire system aflame, as I stare down at the stick.

First, I laugh. Like, laugh until I'm holding my ribs, as the tears temporarily blind my vision. Then, I snap, stand right in front of the mirror, and actually punch it, causing it to effectively shatter.

I know I got some real anger issues, and over the years, I've been attending some anger management sessions. It's been working pretty well, up until now, when I'm discovering that I am fucking pregnant. But testing kits do lie, right? So, with that thought in mind, I snatch the next kit, tear it up and grab the equipment, then carry out yet another test.

There it is again! The sign that I am fucking pregnant! How in the name of everything sacred, am I expecting a baby? Like, where's the logic in all this! My phone begins to vibrate against the sinks; an incoming call from Sarah.

"What!" I snap.

"Eva. I..uh I have to talk to you?"

"So, funny story. I'm pre..."

"Pregnant I know. Can we meet up at the 'Lime Light Cafe' and talk?"



All I see is red! Fucking blood-red! I pinch the bridge of my nose, jaws clenching and unclenching as the news continues to engrave itself in the back of my mind.

"Bitch, just tell me this. How the fuck, just how, do you know that I'm pregnant?" I question, my voice surprisingly remaining calm, overly calm.

"Can we just meet up and speak?"

"Sarah dear, fuck you," is the only response my mind is able to conjure, each syllable of each word dripping with a new kind of poison.

Then, just like that, I smash my phone against the tiled bathroom floors. She had better have a good explanation! A fucking good one, before I end up serving life sentence on the charges of first degree freaking murder!

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter three

The pic above is of Sarah...

So now, I'm seated in the cafe, patiently waiting...sorry. Did I say patiently? My bad. I am anything but patient right about now! So, as I sit there, thinking back to all that happened, my sister finally decides to show up. She really loves seeking attention.

She's dressed in a red, body fitting mid-thigh dress, her hair, which is braided to perfection, lain over her right shoulder, her red lips screaming for, and drawing in attention, and her black wedge ankle boots, just making her look all the more gorgeous. What am I even talking about? My sister has never not looked breathtaking.

She's actually managed to cause some few heads to turn. I cast her a rage-filled glare, rolling my eyes as she takes her seat.

"Does this look like a fucking date you're attending?"

"Eva..."

"Cut to the chase," I speak dryly.

"Okay, but before I tell you all what I'm about to, I deeply apologize. You're my baby sister, and I love you and goodness knows just how guilty I feel right now. Okay, so here goes nothing. Four weeks back, on the day before you came in for your very last injection, there was this guy that donated his sperm to the hospital, seeking a surrogate.

We did find one on the same day, who was to come to the hospital the next day, for the insemination. The patient that stepped out of my office right before you stepped in, was the surrogate. I swear, I thought I had inseminated her, but confused several different needles. So, I sorta inseminated you instead. That morning, I had a few tequila shots..."

"A few!" I almost shriek, slamming palms against table, and earning myself a few glares from persons near by.

"Eva, I am so sorry. I know you noticed my semi-drunken state, you just didn't want to rile me up. You even asked if I was sure I could handle injecting you, and I still insisted on doing so. I am so sorry Eva. I swear I am.

Say something...please Eva," she explains, placing a palm over the back of my hand.

I quickly retract my arm as if burnt, recoiling from her touch, and just spear glares in her direction. I have this ache in my chest. I can practically scoop some of that fury radiating off of me in waves. She has ruined my life, and successfully at that!

"Say something? Say something like fucking what! Who's the sperm donor?" I calmly question, jaws ticking, as my fingers clutch the edge of the table.

She takes some time, as if deep in contemplation, before finally answering me.

"I...well...he is a mafioso leader. He was here in Los Angeles a while back, though the sperm donation was done in secrecy. I have no idea what he looks like," she whispers.

Wow! Just wow! Now, I'm just...I don't even know what I feel!

Raw, unfiltered anger towards my sister for putting me in this shit hole, fucking petrification, because I'm carrying the child of a freaken mafioso leader, and immense disappointed, because I was not planning on becoming a mum, anytime soon.

But what towers all these emotions is the fury leaking and sipping into my venation.

"Fuck you, Sarah! How could you be so damn careless! What mafia leader is this we are talking about?" I actually manage to whisper, despite the rage combusting me.

"Leandro. Leandro Allesandro Leone. He is the leader of the Italian mafia and recently, he took up leadership of the American Mafia, so I've heard."

"So, let me get this straight, I am carrying the child of this supposed Italian/American mafioso leader? Sarah, lemme ask you this. What, exactly what, have I fucking done, for you to repay me with such repulsive actions!" I whisper-yell, then abruptly slam my palms against the heavy, mahogany table, noticing that I have earned myself, yet again, more stares from the different persons sat inside the cafe.

I graciously grant them a glare, while Sarah dearest, offers them a soft, apologetic smile.

I have heard that name somewhere before, maybe on the news, or in the streets, but I have definitely heard that name someone. The stories relating to

it, were beyond horrifying! I am sure as fucking hell, Leandro is called mafia leader for a very *good* reason!

I know that he is nothing short of cold blooded, and that shit shakes me to the very core of my existence!

"What the fuck did I do to you, so that you could punish me like this? You know what, just stay out of my life! Please, I beg you, for the love of the remaining shred of my sanity, and for the little amount of tolerance I have left, keep as far away from me as you possibly can," I conclude, palms pressing flat against each other, before finally standing up to leave.

Sarah's now struggling to restrain her tears from cascading, eyes watery and almost leaking, while I, on the other hand, just want to go home and lie down. Crying is not really my go-to when stressed or sad. It is a promise I made to myself, after my mum passed, and that was about ten years ago.

Back when she was still alive, she endured a lot of emotional and physical abuse, courtesy of my fucked up dad. I recall once, I found my her sprawled out against the floors, a deep cut running from her ear, down to her cheek, oozing and sipping blood, passed out.

My father had gone to wreck havoc in goodness knows where, and when he finally came back home that evening, he was completely fucking drunk, wasted and high on crack. Then, without any justification for doing so, he beat Sarah and I up, then dragged my mum by the hair, and into their room. I tried to kick the doors open, to beg, to fucking plead with my own father, to take pity on our mother. But of course, if wishes were fucking horses...

Seconds later, all my ears could pick, was the splitting screams, the toe-curling shrieks of agony, as our mother cried out for her life. He had overpowered her, broken her, leaving her only a shell of her former self. Apparently, even the neighbors had heard all the ruckus, and phoned the police, who arrived a tad bit too late.

When both Sarah and I rushed to our parents' room, our mother had a bloody knife sticking out through her stomach, and fresh rivulets running down, and staining her cheeks. And that was her end. Our dad had passed out from the heavy drinking.

I hated men from then on, except for Simon, who used to be my best friend back then. I still detest men. Can you really blame me? My father fucked me up mentally, resulting to me having the fucked up mentality of resenting males.

Sighing heavily, I discard the tormenting recollection of past accounts. I'm the one who's supposed to be sobbing, not her! I exit the cafe, willing myself not to look back. I can't be anywhere near Sarah right now. I don't trust my intentions. Thankfully, the distance between my apartment and the cafe, is a thirteen minutes walk.

I'm grateful I didn't bring my car along, so it gives me an opportunity to take in some fresh air as I begin to ponder about my life from here on out. I trek down some cold, dark, lifeless ally, rounding up a corner, coming up to my apartments.

Unlocking the doors, I glide past them, enthralled to be back home. Well, I was happy, right until I flipped the switch.

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter four

The pic above is of Leandro...

So, my living room is currently occupied by three men. One is sat on my sofa, while the other two, are standing by his left and right sides. All three are dressed so elegantly; Armani suites, polished, leather shoes, men-jewellery gleaming under the lights. But also, what the hell are they doing here? The one in the middle is the one who's managed to peek my interest the most.

He's got such beautiful midnight black hair, this alluring icy-blue eyes and perfectly sun kissed skin. What I'm trying to say is, he does look good in all honesty. But that's just as far as it goes. I really don't think this people, in any way, bring good tidings with them.

"What are you doing here and who the hell are you people? Also, how did you manage to find your way into my apartment, which I remember so well locking before leaving?"

"*Cón càlmà bàmbólìnà.* The name's Leandro. Yes, *the* Leandro. You have a lovely...home," the guy in the middle speaks, voice monotone, as he looks around, a look of contempt smeared over his face.

"Lovely knowing all of you. Now, get.the.fuck.out!"

"Oh come on, Eva. Why the hurry?"

Is this man insane? He's making this whole thing look so casual, one would think I actually invited both him and his buddies over for a cup of coffee.

"I'm here to take you, since you are carrying my child. So, you could choose to come with us willingly, or we can do this the hard way. Choice is yours really," is his simple, taunting response.

"Boy, you must be genuinely out of your mind...or high on crack. If you think, even for a second, that I'm leaving to go with you to heavens know where, then you are badly mistaken. I don't even know anything about you and neither do you about me!" I snap, glaring daggers at him.

"Oh, but that's where you are wrong. I know all about you Eva Vega. Your sister's Sarah Vega; gynecologist working in one of this city's most famous hospitals. I know that you studied in River North High, your grades

impressive throughout your year in highschool, might I add. For a short period of time, you studied nursing, but then, you quit and focused on architecture.

I know that your mother was murdered by your father, who is currently serving a life sentence, on the charges of first degree murder. I know you completely detest men, yet you have a pathetic excuse for a boyfriend who's name is Simon.

He apparently doesn't know that you love drawing? That art is a passion of yours? And he's your boyfriend? Drop him, *mîà càrà*. I'd love to go on, I really would, but time doesn't allow me," he speaks in a monotone.

Guy isn't even smiling.

He then stands up from his sitting position and, oh so slowly, walks up to me, until his huge frame towers over my small one. Oh, he is tall, say about 6'2 and I'm like 5'8. He's just standing there, glassy eyes looking into my own, like he could see right through the mask of confidence I'm struggling to keep from peeling off.

How the fuck does he know so much about me.

"After the hospital found a surrogate, you of course, they phoned me immediately, told me everything about you, but not enough.

So, I did a little digging of my own, and voila! I got all what I needed to know," he responds to the question that'd been previously bugging my mind. I keep my mouth shut, bitter bile combusting trails up and down my chest.

He walks back to his former sit and nods his head at both men, who I failed to mention earlier, are firmly holding onto AK-47 guns. I am almost certain those two guns are loaded.

Oh, if they think they are taking me without a fight, then they are in for a rude awakening. Both men walk towards me so confidently, so graciously, as if sure I won't try to protest. In one quick, fluid movement, I heftily kick one in the balls, making him double over, groaning and grunting, then strike the other across his left cheek, as hard as I can. The man doesn't even budge! Fuck.this.guy!


I spin and dart towards the door, but almost instantly, a strong arm encircles my waist, a palm holding a wet clothe pressing against my nostrils. I violently wriggle my body, struggle to get out of the person's firm grip, but my eyelids are gradually giving in to the sweet, welcoming, temptation of darkness.

No, no, no, I can't black out now! I try my best to hold in my breathe, but soon after, all efforts prove futile, as I take in one long whiff in surrender.

"She's a spirited one. Take her to the car."

"Sî càpó."

Those are the very last words my ears are able to make out, before I finally let the nothingness consume me.

Please don't forget to comment and click on the little star at the bottom 



Chapter five

My eyes flutter open, adjusting to the surrounding, blinding illuminations of the sun. Where the hell am I? Gradually, my brain begins with the recollecting of memories of my recent past. I was kidnapped! Fuuuuuck! I'm seated between two towering frames. Oh, this are the two numbskulls that were back at the apartments.

"Where are we going?"

Deafening silence.

"What time is it then?"

Still no response.

"Can I at least get a freaken bottle of water?"

"Here. Take this," the guy to my left, in his gruff tone, replies, Italian accent thick, as he pushes a bottle of water my way.

I chugg the whole drink down, appreciating the coolness as it trickles and flows down my perched throat. I'm so thirsty, and never in my whole life, has water tasted this good. After close to twenty solid minutes, we arrive at our destination which is, I don't know where. The gates to this place are undoubtedly more expensive than my entire apartment. They are a finely-polished silver, and at the middle is a big lion-head symbol.

Sign of prominence maybe?

Another man, covered in thick layers of muscle and tattoos, presses some remote thingy on the other side of the gate, and the heavy, gleaming metal barriers slide open with a low creak. I was seriously not prepared to see the exquisite-looking mansion at the very end of the small tarmac road.

As we drive, I gaze, in fascination, at the tall palm trees that stand proud one after the other, on each side of the roads. In front of the mansion, is a fountain; an angel sculpture situated right in the middle of the fountain, holding a jar of trickling pinkish liquid, that pours all the way down into clean waters.

When we finally alight, I look to my right, taking in the view of the well trimmed lawn, and to my left, at the furthest end, is a magnificent garden of

all sorts of flowers from daisies, to sweet peas, to dandelions, to roses and lotuses. How, just how in hell does a devil incarnate reside in such a heavenly place, for heaven's sake? The sharp contrast, the irony! The two mumm men, take hold of me by my left and right arms, padding towards the front doors to the house.

I really hate it when people get all handsy, but this men are way too physically powerful for me to fight and subdue. One of them places his left palm over the scanner, then shortly after, the crystal-glass doors slides open. Woah! The house is nothing short of perfection, interior decor on point, I must admit that much. The walls of the hallways are painted black, with tiny, glorious white floral prints.

The chandelier is white, the tiles below a polished black, with white rose prints. As we tread ahead, I manage a glimpse of the living room. The walls are a fine, golden brown, the chandelier a brilliant white hue, the carpets, sofas and curtains all blood-red, with numerous, golden strips interlocking.

The colour combination, the clash of hues is just so spectacular, too enchanting.

"Welcome to my humble abode," a voice, that is now etched into my brain, booms from the furthest end of the hallways.

Humble? Does this man, seriously need to bluff right now? This house is nowhere near humble.

"Catherine, take our guest to her room, get her something to eat, will you please?"

Throughout the making of the request, his expressions remain stoic, hard, voice tranquil, ovely calm.

Catherine, who looks to be in her late forties, makes her way up to me, genuine smile curving.

"This way, miss," she directs, and I follow behind quietly.

It's best to have them think I've submitted to their will.

One look back at Leandro, and I can make out just how agitated he is, having me as a guest. Damn that man to hell.

I can't help but think how it is, a woman like Catherine, could end up working for a serpent like Leandro.

And oh my heavens, this staircase will most likely be the death of me!

"Here's your room, dear," Catherine's velvet tone infiltrates my ears, drawing me back to reality.

Well, wow. This room is just that...wow. King-sized, four poster bed with

red pillows, a red duvet with white polka dots, white good-quality carpets with red cheetah prints on, a sixty two inch TV hanging against the wall, alabaster vase holding a dozen fresh, fiery-red tulips, and a white chaise lounge embroidered in red lotus prints.

Then, there's the closed door in the furthest corner of the room, I'm guessing the bathroom, and another slightly ajar one, that gives glimpses of clothing; a walk-in closet, nice. I walk over to it, and to my utter surprise, it's completely stocked with garment and lace bra and panties of various tints and hues.

"I'll bring you something to eat, then you can rest. Is that okay?" Catherine questions from far behind.

I simply nod, and offer a small smile.

Seconds fleet into solid minutes, before she treads back into the room, holding a tray of cookies, a glass of milk, a bowl of fruit salad, and a glass of water.

"Thanks, ma'am."

"Oh please, call me Kate, not ma'am. That's too formal for my liking."

"Only if you call me Eva and not miss. Deal?"

"Deal," she replies, smile tagging on her lipstick-coated lips, whilst we shake hands.

"Can I ask you a question, Kate?" I begin, deciding to test the waters.

"Sure thing, *tópólínà*."

I will ignore that pet name.

"I need...could you lend me your phone if you have one? I know what I'm asking for is..."

See, the amount of horror etched on her face at my words, is enough to have me rethinking the entire question, entirely.

"No! Forgive me, but no. For your safety, Eva, for the sake of your child, you cannot be making such requests."

Anger, raw and unfiltered, is exactly what I feel, fucking rage!

"I'll find a way out of this hell hole, Kate, I will," is my simple response, clenching jaws and glaring daggers, while shoving hands into my pockets.

"I will leave you to eat, bathe. You must be famished," she speaks, then, with arms folded behind her back, turns and makes to exit the room.

No, I am definitely leaving this place asap, so help me grace!

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter six

After I'm done sating my appetite, I decide to take a quick shower. Okay, not a quick shower, but I decide to do it anyways. I strip from my jeans, cropped hoodie, shoes, and walk over to the closet to grab a clean towel. As I grab hold of the soft, linen towel, I strip from my undergarment and rest them inside the laundry basket, along with my discarded clothes.

I'll definitely need to clean those before I leave...as soon as I figure out where the damned laundry room is.

Well, not to exaggerate or anything, but the bathroom in this room, is the equivalent of my bedroom back in the apartment. Tiled, slightly-rough bathroom floors, huge bathtub, tiny, glass-encased shower room, undoubtedly expensive hair shampoo, lavender and coconut scented, judging from the writings on the bottle, fragranced body soap.

Settling on the shower, I turn the taps on, awaiting the cascading waters adjust temperature. I stand under the furiously-pumping liquid, lathering my exhausted body, and letting my mind finally register the gravity of my situation. It is a thing that I'm now pondering, that I hadn't processed quite well, earlier.

I am pregnant; pregnant without having so much as to engage in any intimate, or sexual activity with a man. I'm going to be the mother of a little girl or boy. Gently, softly, I feel my womb, my palms smoothly rubbing, and just like that, a mix of emotions bombard my brain, swirl through my entire system. My *baby*. My innocent little boy or girl. I smile to myself, almost chuckle, but at the same time, feel tears sting my eyes.

I am delighted, because I'll soon bring into this world an innocent and untainted soul. Goodness, I'm going to be a mother! Then, there's the lump in my throat. This child will either be taken away from me as soon as it is birthed, or I will successfully manage an escape before it's actually born. That only means one thing; it's going to grow up without the love and affection of either, if not both, it's parents.

Why? Because Leandro and I, might end up killing each other. I am temperamental, while Leandro, is the silence before the storm. He is not just

anyone, he is *the* mafioso leader. The one that terrifies, horrifies so many. The one whom many have heard, but not many have seen, and the few chosen, who've managed to see him, have ended up dead, decomposing and forgotten.

Oh heavens! I will most likely provoke Leandro, and he'll end up raining bullets right through my skull. He might provoke me, and I might end up stabbing him in his sleep. My child will not grow without a mother, that's for sure, even if I have to slaughter someone, even if I have to soil my hands with man's blood! Only difficult, not impossible.

What the fuck are these thoughts!

I take in a deep, purposeful breathe, discarding all murderous thoughts. I think I've been standing for far too long, because my knees and feet, are now starting to complain. I turn off the taps, wrap the towel around my shivering body, then proceed to exit the bedroom. Leandro, the deranged ass, is sat comfortably over the chaise lounge.

"You startled me. Boy, what do you want?"

He just looks at me from head to toe to head, his gaze lingering on my chest.

"My eyes are up here buddy," I speak, snapping fingers repeatedly, to draw his attention.

"I know."

I firmly grip the towel, as an unfamiliar, unpleasant and unwelcomed feeling, begins to set in.

"I want you to have dinner with me. I'm not asking."

The tone he chooses to employ is overly calm, unsettling, screaming danger-danger. Is this person really that damn? He kidnaps me, then wants me to have dinner with him? One word; lunacy!

"Are you really that idiotic? You take me captive, then want to coerce me into having dinner with you? You really are a sick bastard, Leandro."

Yes, I do need a filter between my brain and mouth because he is who he is, but I am immensely frustrated.

"What did you just call me, *àmòrè*? See, imbecile, stupid, idiotic, I can tolerate. All degrading words, I've been called, but bastard? I can't tolerate being called that, love. It just resurfaces the gnawing demons within."

He rises from the seat, eyes scrutinizing my room, feet slowly treading in my direction, up until he's right before me, and just as I'm about to walk right past him, my body is effortlessly pinned against wall.

His demeanor remains composed, his gigantic palm gradually wraps around my neck, slowly starting to squeeze.

"Never.ever.call.me.that.again, *àmòrè*," his tone drops a few octaves, his voice now a taunting whisper against my ear.

I'm trying my best to fight him off, but zilch!

"You are hurting me!"

I am almost certain, I am going to face my demise. His once icy-blue irises, are now a glassy, deep shade of the blue hue. They hold no emotion whatsoever. He knows exactly what he is doing, knows the consequence of his actions will be my death, yet he is still compressing and constricting! Then, it's like realization dawns, and he let's go of my neck. My back slides against wall, my butt making contact with the carpeted floors, and my eyes pooling.

I cough and gulp for air, wet hair clinging to my face like a leech, and finger tips feeling the handprints on the assaulted flesh. Briefly, my eyes travel upwards, and I glare daggers at Leandro, who's running fingers through his black-as-midnight strands, an almost remorseful expression replacing the former look of disdain that'd been there. Is he rueful? Screw his sorry ass look!

"Fuck you, Leandro."

I'll be damned if I let myself shed a single tear in front of this psycho!

"Forgive me, Eva."

The words were so low, I would have missed them.

Then, he just turns, exits the room stoic-faced once again, palms buries in his pockets, then shuts the doors with a soft clink. I cried last ten years back, but now, I faithfully let the hot tears burn trails down the skin on my cheeks. I stand on wobbly feet, frail knees, grab a pillow, and toss it across the room, towards the doors.

"Fuck you, Leandro!" I yell out in exasperation, more rivulets flooding. Sitting against soft grounds, legs folded to my chest, with my arms snaked around them, I stare intensely at the walls ahead of me. Sarah, where are you, because I didn't sign up for this! Sarah, I didn't sign up for any of this shit! I hate that son of a bitch! I hate him so fucking much!

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom 

Chapter seven

My eyes flutter open and shut instantly, at the vengeful, blinding rays of the sun that flood the room. Wait, how did I end up in the bed? Well, that doesn't really matter. I'm still in my towel though. I pad over to the full-length mirror, then eye my reflection; my neck to be precise.

My fingers glide over the prints graciously plastered onto wounded skin, when suddenly, knuckles rap thrice against the doors.

"Come in, it's open."

"Morning, Eva. How are you this morning?"

"Alive, so I guess that's good."

"What happened to your neck, dear. It's the *càpó*, isn't it?"

I don't grant her a reply, because she's already familiar with the answer. Instead, I just stare at her reflection through the mirror.

"So, what have you prepared. The aroma is just calling out to me, " I try to dilute the tension, try to unsuccessfully switch topics.

"Eva, the boss...he is a very...complicated man. Rarely smiles, rarely let's people into his life. He is a man who's actions are lead by rage. You see, when he was young, he was the victim of abuse, courtesy of his drunkard father. His mother managed to give birth to him, didn't make it herself.

Because his father firmly believed that Leandro was the product of his wife's unfaithfulness, an outrageous and absolutely false belief, Leandro suffered for those transgressions. And even if that were true, what right has a man to burn, scald, break bones of an innocent kid? One night, when he decided that he'd have enough, he escaped his father's bondage.

Joined the Mafia at only fourteen, and indulged in the drug trafficking business, abusing the drugs that gradually begun wrecking a new kind of havoc in his mind, destroying his ability to think rationally. A heavy consumer of cocaine and heroin, he became, but that didn't seem to bother him. Then, years flew bye, and he was eighteen, finally taking over as the Italian mafia leader.

Shortly after, he met a girl; Lenia, daughter of the former American mafia leader, in one of those fancy, grand mafioso parties, and he was immediately

drawn to her, entranced. Maybe it was love at first sight? What was a simple infatuation, turned into highly intense love, you know, the 'I take a bullet for you, you take a bullet for me' kind.

Lenia helped him quit his drug consumption, though with a lot of struggle, almost calling it quits with the man. But she worked through the addiction, supported him in rehab, and soon, they got engaged. Then, Lenia became pregnant. One night, when Leandro came home from one of his long business trips, he found Lenia dead, knife driven into her chest, right through her heart. Right next to her body, was a small piece of paper with the name 'Savage'.

Never in my life, have I seen an already broken man shatter completely. The hurt he bottled, the ripping agony, coupled with guilt and self blame he buried deep inside, transformed him into the volatile mess he is now. That's why he's a ticking time bomb, ready to explode at any nanosecond. Many a times, he's murdered in fits of rage. He tries his best to keep the anger on a leash, but sometimes, best is not good enough."

"And you think what? He has the right to strangulate me? Murder others because of rage? And why would you tell me all these things, these secrets?"

"It wasn't right what he did, I know. And as for the reasons of telling you all this, I trust you, Eva, and coming from me who's worked for the mafia, and held the code of silence longer than you've been on this earth, that's saying something. I know, for a fact, Leandro will never sit down with another, discuss his tormenting past, because then, he'll feel vulnerable, exposed.

And this man is as complicated as they come. Now, you have knowledge of how he operates, you'll need it, *trust* me. I have never and will never tell another soul all these things, but you carry his child, it's best you understand the inner workings of Leandro."

Much as I detest it, I can't help the pang that slices through my chest, for Leandro. No one deserves all what he's gone through. No one at all. Now I think I comprehend why he flipped when I called him bastard, because it did remind him of his toxic relationship with his father.

Still did not give me him the right to treat you like that, bitch!

I'll have to really contain myself when I'm around that man.

After the conversation, Kate excuses herself to go finish her chores, granting me the opportunity to eat my meal in the paradise of solitude, take a quick bath shortly after, and brush my teeth. I slap on a cropped white hoodie, matching leggings and some black vans, let my unruly, curled locks fall,

because I don't feel like tying them, apply some Vaseline onto my chapped lips, and I'm out of the room.

Right on the other side of the hallways, stands Leandro, who's in front of his bedroom door, I think, in nothing but a pair of black sweats, towel draping loosely over his right shoulder, and nothing to shield his nude chest. He's got this gigantic tattoo of a lion's head right over his left tit, all the way to his shoulder and upper arm. He's hair's ruffled and wet, I'm guessing from taking a bath, and painful as it is admitting this, he does look fine.

In front of him, stands some platinum blonde cheek, yelling and cussing profanities at an unfazed mad man, clutching stilletos in one palm, and a jungle-green dress in the other, and dressed in an oversize t-shirt, her hair a tangled mess. He most definitely shagged this one.

Leandro tilts his head as if in deep contemplation, and unfortunately, our eyes clash and lock. He smirks at me, then winks. He actually winks at me! Annoying perv! The platinum bimbo turns to face her back, immediately taking notice of me, rolls her eyes, blows out a long breathe, then foolishly proceeds to match up to me.

Great, now I'll be involved in their drama. If she triggers me, I knock her front teeth out, I swear.

"And just what are you looking at, bitch, huh?"



"Morning to you to, and I was watching, in utter fascination, how you were shrieking your lungs out, at the man who just shagged you last night, and is currently asking you to leave because that's just how much you mean to him."

Then, I offer her a smile, sweet and innocent.

"Fuck you!" she screams.

"Oh sweetie, I'm straight, but he just did and judging by the looks of things, might have been the last time he actually did," I reply, not really bothered that Leandro's spectating. She attempts to slap me, but just before the strike lands, I grab hold of her wrist in time, twist it whilst looking her dead in the eye, then punch her square in the jaw.

She falls to the floors with a nerve-grating shriek, holding her bruised flesh, her mouth gaping like that of a fish out of water. I am not one to take crap from nobody. My eyes, on their own accord, travel back to Leandro one last time, only to find him mockingly clapping his damn hands, with his body leaning against the door frame. I flip him off, and tread back into my room, slamming the doors shut. You know what, screw this day!

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter eight

The pic above is of Costello and Giovanni...

I'm seated in my room, drawing the portrait of something. Sorry, drawing the portrait of someone. Yes, Leandro's imagine is exactly what I'm working on. You see, when I'm really frustrated, or angry, or just feeling blah, I draw. In this case, I just found myself capturing his image, *particularly*, on paper.

And I can't pinpoint why exactly, because I'm not experiencing any one of these emotions. Maybe it's the fact that he's imagine from today shirtless and all, hasn't left my head? Hell, not even Simon is that ripped.

I trace the outline of him, curve all curvings on the white sheet, as perfectly as I can. His wet black hair, his beautiful face, sharp jawline, powerful neck, broad shoulders and chest, the lion's head tattoo, bumpy torso, attractive v-line, his sweats hanging low on his waist that slightly reveal his briefs.

Once I'm done, I start shading all parts that require shading, up until I'm satisfied with my work. At least the guy had word of my passion for art, got me all necessary items to make artistic beauty.

My stomach begins to grumble, and immediately, I look up at the wall clock; twelve thirty. I need to go grab something to eat. I exit the room, pad down the long, insufferable spiral fleet of stairs, and finally make my way into the dining room.

Leandro's attention is held by the tablet clutched in his palms, fingers swiping up and and down, left and right. The two guys from yesterday are also present, each one busy sating his appetite in comfortable silence. And there are so many dishes and fine foods to choose from. My stomach grumbles once again, effectively alerting all three men of my presence, and instantly, all heads snap to face me.

"Must be starved. Come, sit," one of the guys invites.

I take in one long drag of the much needed air, then proceed to walk over to the table, sitting two seats away from Leandro.

"I don't bite, *àmòrè*."

"But you strangle, correct?"

He doesn't respond, and I am genuinely glad, because that'd definitely spark an argument. The two guys stare at me like I grew myself an extra pair of eyeballs, but I could care fucking less what they'd have to say.

Graciously, I feel my stomach, stuffing my face, and munching on the foods, almost moaning at the burst of divine flavours against my tongue. Then, I finally look up, to find the two men ogling and gawking at me.

And that right there, is what I call fucking irritating.

"Why you looking at me like that? Never seen a pregnant lady eat before?" Rolling my eyes in agitation, I resume from where I left off, the delectable meal. One's still eyeing me occasionally, only causing my irritation to spike.

"Boy, would you stop that? Busy acting like you just seen me grow two heads."

Now I have faithfully managed to capture the attention of each individual. Simply divine.

I can clearly paint out the faint, almost invisible smile curving on Leandro's face.

"Boss, the firearm shipment will be arriving today. Will you be coming with us, or will you let us take care of things for you?"

"Giovanni, I'll be coming with you."

"Yes, boss."

Both Giovanni and guy number two rise from their seats in perfect unison, excusing themselves shortly after. Now, I'm sat only a few seats away from the same man that'd tried to suffocate the living hell out of me yester night. I can't stand the very thought of our close proximity, neither can I tolerate the continuous plunging memories of his assault, so I just rise, take hold of my platters along with Giovanni's and guy number two's and tread towards the kitchen.

A short, petite, brunette female has her full focus on thoroughly cleansing dishes in the sink, and even as I offer to assist, I don't miss how she refutes my help with a curt no, eyes never making contact with my own. I won't argue with the young lass on the matter because, quite frankly, I have no energy within me to do so.

I exit the kitchen without any further words, and strut into the dining room, right past Leandro. His deep voice infiltrates my peace, as he calls out my name suddenly. Silence is the only response I have to grant the mad man, ignoring his nudging calls, and walking away unfazed.

He calls out my name once again, this time, his tone deathly cold. And so, I halt in my tracks, and just stand there, back towards him.

What the fuck does he want now?

Without so much as a warning, my body is pinned against the walls, both arms held firmly above my head by one of Leandro's huge palms, his face leaning in, hovering only mere inches away from mine, whilst his other hand presses flat against the walls on the left side of my face.

"When I call you next time, don't ignore me, *àmórè*," his mocking whisper meets my ear, and at that, I narrow my eyes into slits, jaws clenching and unclenching repetitively.

"Leandro, go.fuck.yourself," I purr, malicious smirk tagging against the corner of my lips, as each word drips with poison.

I'd give anything to have you dead.

Icey-blue irises pierce into coffee brown ones, and the hard expression once coating his face, dissipates into a smile, small and deceptive. I try to break free from his vice-like grip, but nada!

His body pins mine even more firmly against wall, whilst he brushes his lips softly against the skin on my neck, planting a sudden, lingering kiss right beneath my lower lip.

"Stay out of my way, and I'll do same, *àmórè*. It's simple."

Then, he abruptly draws back, and exits the room, facial features void, as if nothing even happened. Once he's out, I release a long breathe, trying to calm raging spirits, my wrecked nerves. I fucking hate him! His mere presence makes me want to puke my guts out! I'll stab him in his sleep! Fucking perv! Fucking asshole!

Catherine, out of nowhere, walks into the room, and with this crazed smile plastered on her face.

"I saw everything dear," she starts.

Oh, here we go.

"I don't know what you are talking about, Kate," I reply whilst folding arms, willing my voice to drop a few octaves.

I'm trying, with all my might, to look as uninterested in the conversation as possible, but that seemingly widens her smile.

"The *càpó* never behaves like that with any woman."

Bull-fucking-shit!

"Kate, one question. What are you talking about exactly? He was *literally* shagging some platinum bitch last night."

"You mean the blonde that stormed out of the house, sobbing and wailing, whilst holding her bruised cheek? What happened to her?"

"Punched her is all. Girl was out here looking for trouble, tryna slap me, so I punched her, the derange lunatic."

"I've never met anyone like you *tópólîná*," she speaks, chuckling at her own words.

I courtesy then smile back, leaving the woman to her chores, and mounting the fleet of spiral staircase to my room. There's a nice balcony in the room I slept, and so, I make my way over to the doors leading to the open space, unlock them, and step outside, taking in the magnificent and artistic view. I still have no idea how a demon can envision, create, and inhabit such a glorious home.

And in the backyard, is a blue-hued pool, shimmering under the illuminations of the hot afternoon sun. Without contemplating my actions any further, I strip, slap on a swim suite, grab hold of a towel, tying it securely around my waist, then I'm off to the inviting waters.

Resting my folded towel against the sun lounger, and my sandals next to its hind leg, I cautiously climb down the five steps leading into the pool, and submerging my tensed body completely. I've always appreciated the feel of cool waters and the sun massaging my skin all at once.

So, for goodness knows how long, I attempt every swimming style I've mastered in all my life; crawl, breaststroke, butterfly even backstroke.

Much as this place tempts me, begs for me to stay behind, I must formulate an escape plan, and as soon as I possibly can!

"Good afternoon, *àmórè*."

Leandro's baritone tone startles me, makes me almost choke on my own spit. My eyes swipe in his direction, taking in his towering figure, his smoldering stare, and for the life of me, I can't decipher why his scorching gaze causes me grow slightly irritable.

"Enjoying yourself, I see."

"Mhmm. Want to join me?"

"You tempt me, but I'll pass," he responds, head tilting, and one brow arching.

He decided to, oh so intelligently, tease me this morning? How about I return the favor, grant him a taste of his own medicine?

I emerge from the waters, then sashay hips towards the sun lounger, grabbing my towel and wrapping my waist. An unpleasant trail of

goosebumps coat my exposed flesh, but the last thing I'll do, is let my body tremble. My feet glide up to where he's standing, until now, I am positioned right before him.

My eyes linger on his pink, plump lips, as I seductively bite my own. All of a sudden, his arm has slithered its way around my frame, drawing me to him.

They are all the same, huh? Slight seduction has them rock hard.

His cologne, the mild, musky scent of him, infiltrates my nose. It is a strong but sweet blend of scents.

On the tip of my toes, I stand, brushing silky, stray strands from his face, then gliding my index finger down to his bottom lip.

"Let go of my waist, Leandro."

"Are you trying to tease me, *à'mòrè*?"

"I don't know what you are talking about, Leo. Now, let go of me."


"You sure about that?"

"Yes Leo, I'm sure. Quite certain, as a matter of fact. Let go."

"Okay. But just a gentle reminder. Do the both of us a favor, don't let yourself fall for me within the time period you'll be occupying this house. Be rational."

And with those few, disheartening words, his grip loosens, and I end up falling back into the pool with a hard splash.

I had no idea, no freaking clue, that my feet had been mere inches away from the edge of the pool. Damn it, this is so fucking embarrassing!

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter nine

I have now firmly established that Leandro is a complete nut job! He's just staring down at me, eyes glassy as ever, unfazed by what he just did! I am so angry, enraged, seething with fury! I swim out of the pool, and match up to him, shoving the wet, clinging locks out of my face to get a clearer view of him. On its own accord, my arm, folded in a tight fist, levitates to knock some remorse into him.

"Don't you dare," cool as always, he responds whilst palming my fist in one calculated motion.

He tosses my arm to the side, then begins to tread in the opposite direction. Abruptly, and before my mind registers my actions, I call out to him, compelling him to halt in his tracks, his powerful back towards me.

Foolish as it may sound, and without so much as reasoning, I grab hold of the slipper tossed to my left side, and aim it at his head, watching as it successfully strikes his back. Turning slowly, fiery eyes interlock with mine for the briefest of seconds, burrowing holes into my face, and no, he does not look pleased.

"It was too easy determining your next move, your mind is like an open book, *àmòrè*, and that's too dangerous. I'll let that one slide, for your own sake. Do not act irrationally around me, Eva. That's both a warning and a promise."

Then, he turns to look away, and treads on...

Some four weeks later...

It's evening now, but no one is in this huge house. Leandro and I have been avoiding each other like the plague, because for one, I shut myself in my room most a times, and two, he completely ignores me. I am not really complaining, however. I've thought of escaping this bondage, on several occasions. Yester night, I tried sneaking out through the back door, only for Giovanni to catch me in the act.

Was planning on jumping over the hind gates, since less attention is granted to them during certain times of the day as well as the night. But now,

thinking more rationally, the act would have resulted in irreversible, irreparable damage on both the baby and I. There is a wired electric fence that surrounds the premises, and is attached to both the front and hind gates, so if I were to jump, I'd be electrocuted real bad, fried to my very death

The only thing Giovanni did, was warn me, but not in any threatening manner, whatsoever. He explained that if I did want to live, it was best I avoid trying to pull such stunts on Leandro. I can't explain what I really felt at the time, but for sure, it wasn't petrification. Maybe disappointment and slight anger, but not fear.

I am grateful he didn't rat me out to Leandro either, because that would have given rise to the mother of all arguments, between the deranged lunatic and I. My train of thought is interrupted by Kate's heels clinking against tiled floors, whilst she walks down the fleet of stairs, and up to where I'm perched on the sofa. I rest the novel in hand against the velvet cushions of the seat, then look up at her inquisitively.

"Kate, where is Costello, Giovanni and Leandro?"

The other guy, guy number two's name, is Costello, I figured.

"Oh, they went to handle business, dear."

Suddenly, the front door slides open, and Leandro stumbles in, firmly held by Giovanni for support.

"Catherine, get me the first aid kit, now!" He barks then hisses between clenched teeth.

I jog lightly in his direction, taking in the sight of his left sleeve, completely soaked in blood, his blood. Catherine rushes down the halls, then back with the kit held firmly in her trembling palms.

"Costello, help me to my room. Catherine, come with me. I'll need your assistance on this one."

"Yes sir," is her firm response.

Well, I am not going to stand aside gawking idly, so I opt to follow quietly. Once in his room, larger in both width and length, and of a hue different from my own, Costello sits him gently against the bed, and takes his leave.

"Kate, let me handle this. You can go and take your rest. It's already late," I finally work up the courage to voice my thoughts.

"Catherine, stay back and do as I've asked."

"I can do it, okay? I used to be a nurse a while back, so let me help you. Please."

I don't know why, but viewing him in such a frail state, makes me empathize with him, serves as a reminder that though he is cruel in more ways than one, he is still human. He looks up at me, forehead beaded with perspiration, breathes growing more prominent by the minute, then grants Kate a curt nod.

I help him shrug off his suite jacket, unbutton his shirt all the way down, taking it off with low groans and grunts, then scrutinize the grotesque puncture sat on his flesh. Such an awful gun shot wound on his upper arm, and by awful, I mean sipping and oozing blood.

The bullet must've grazed his humerus, which only means he'll take time before finally using this arm without strain. I tie my cascading strands into a bun, throw on some rubber gloves, the proceed to sit next to were he is lain.

Carefully as I can, I inject anaesthesia some centimeters above the injury, and after a few nanoseconds of fleeting silence, I slip in a pair of surgical tweezers, grabbing a hold of the silver bullet. Working with dextrous fingers, I retrieve the metallic piece, then toss it into a small tray, before applying surgical spirit onto the wound, stitching it up shortly after.

Then finally, I sterile gauze the stitch, and I'm done. All this while, Leandro's keenly watching, intently observing my every move, and completely ignoring the crippling pain he's supposed to be experiencing.

"There you go."

"Thank you, *àmòrè*. I mean that."

For a moment, for the briefest of seconds, we sit in the comforting quiet, icy-blue irises piercing into coffee brown, until I snap out of the trance, and clear my throat.

"Uh, goodnight Leo," I speak, resting the kit against his bedside table, whilst rising from the bed to leave.

"Stay. Please stay. I won't misbehave, I promise."

He must be trying to fuck with my head right now.

Deeply, I inhale, searching his eyes, his facial features for any form of deception.

Only sincerity.

"Fine. But try anything smart, and I'll crash your balls, you have my word on that."

"I'll take a bath first. Make yourself comfortable," he finalizes, getting off the bed, with a ghost of a smile curving on those plump, inviting lips.

And in another fifteen minutes of only awaiting his presence, he glides past

the bathroom doors, cleansed, and in nothing but a pair of grey sweats, whilst ruffling his wet strands using a towel.

He sits on the thick, cosy mattress, scooting over without any further words, and leaving behind enough space to fit not one, but two people. Currently, I am dressed in an oversized t-shirt, some tiny sleeping shorts, but if he wants me to lay next to him, then he shouldn't mind my choice of dressing.

I switch off the main lights, leaving the lamp shade's illuminations on, before getting under the warm covers, and gently pressing my back against his now-very-close chest. I shouldn't be here, shouldn't have obliged to stay behind, yet here I am, pressed cozily against the enemy.

"Leo, what happened to you, and please, don't say nothing."

Momentary, deathly silence leaks into the room, and for a second or two, I am convinced he's already deep in slumber.

"Attended a meeting to close an illicit deal with an Italian cartel founder, things got heated, his men started firing at my men and I, and it turned into a blood bath. Lost a total of three men in counting, wiped out the enemy clean. Any more questions?"

Oh heavens, that tone alone sends icy chills down my spine.

"Do you regret it? Do you ever regret anything?"

"The term 'regret' does not exist in my world *or* in my vocabulary as an individual. When I hold a gun, a dagger, a knife, explosives, I know exactly what I'm doing. I know that when I shoot, plunge a dagger into guts, I have every intent to execute."

That answer alone allows me realize, all the more, how cold Leandro is. He is the epitome of merciless, and makes no attempt to conceal that aspect.

And yet here you are, carrying his child, and are currently resting right next to him, bitch!

I sigh, a long, frustrated sigh, dispelling all consuming thoughts, and turning to face him.

"Tell me something. That tattoo on your chest, what does it symbolize?"

He looks at me, then cracks a smile. He actually smiles. Monsters are not meant to be beautiful creatures, yet here he is. His face, his body physique, are nothing short of perfection, yet he, as an individual, is filled with so many errors, too many glitches, imperfections.

"My name Leone, means lion in the Italian language. The tattoo is a symbol of prominence, strength, dominance, power. Serves as a constant reminder

that I always have to remain on top of the chain, no matter what life throws at me, simple."

"And have you ever really thought of how life will be, once you become a father?"

"I am well aware of the lurking dangers. However, I am also certain that I will be the best father *they* could ever wish for, love *them* like my life depended on it, train *them*, *never* let anyone trample on them for whatsoever reason."

This man, hollow and empty as he may be, does have a heart. It might be tiny, frail, dark, somewhat shattered, but it's still there.

For the rest of the evening we keep conversation after conversation flowing, discussing nitty gritty, as ironic as it may sound, and soon, the fatigue catches up to me.

"Sleep, *à mórè*. Do not fight it," he whispers, low and soothing, before planting one chaste kiss against my forehead.

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom 

Chapter ten

Leandro's p.o.v

I finally walk into the house, fatigued and completely famished from all the travelling. But finally, finally, I've gotten that which I had been pursuing, and I am content. As soon as next month, my warehouses will be fully stocked with ammunition and weaponry of all kinds, from the black market weaponry manufacturing industries in America, courtesy of Lenia's father.

But why is the house so quiet, though?

"Lenia! Lenia, mîa rósà, where are you? Catherine!"

The house is unusual empty, desolate. Catherine never leaves at this time. But it's only six thirty, so maybe she's gone to get some groceries?

Making my way into the kitchen area, I spot a small note from Catherine pinned against the counter; the woman's left to go visit her family, since it is Easter. Fine by me. She works hard, works smart, definitely deserves a break, and an increase in salary. Not that she isn't paid handsomely for her services, but still.

I mount the sickening, spiral steps, and slide past the doors to my room. Pitch darkness, quiet emptiness. Peculiar. Lenia knew I'd be coming home today, so she couldn't possibly be asleep at such early hours. I flip the switch, and instantly, the chandelier floods the room with the harmonious, white lighting. Then, my gaze travels towards the four-poster bed, and what my eyes manage to make out, cause my heart palpitations to heighten.

"Lenia? Lenia, what have they done!"

There on the soft mattress, is lain the love of my life, lifeless, soul ripped from body, knife driven into her chest, right through her heart, I'm sure. But it can't be! She...she can't be dead. No!

My feet glide over to where her stationary body is rested, and I will myself to feel her pulse. Nothing! No pulse. Gradually, my chest begins to constrict, lumps beginning to knot in my throat. I can't breath, won't breath. Tears temporarily blind my vision, freely cascading down my cheeks.

Her silver, striking eyes stare into nothingness, beautiful blonde hair spread out against the bed, sheets and carpeted floors soaked in so much blood, drenched completely, her arms gently placed, one over the other, against her womb. Our child is gone, that's the painful reality, a harsh truth. My life is gone, flashed down the toilet. Fate just punched me right in the gut, told me to go fuck myself. The heavens must be punishing me for all the lives I've taken, for all my sins.

"Lenia, you can't leave me."

But she just did...

"Not yet, mîà rósà. Please come back," It is a soft plea, my forehead resting against her folded arms, as I kneel next to her and mourn her demise. The love of my life, no longer in existence.

"Tè sèî sîgnîficàntó pèr mè, mîà rósà. Come back to me, pèr fàvorè," I beg in between sobs.

"Who did this to you, mîà rósà! Who?"

In that moment, I lift my head and spot a note right above Lenia's head. How did I not see it before? I hastily snatch it, read it. On it is, the name 'Savage'.

Who the hell is this Savage fucker? Wiping stray tears, I phone Costello and Giovanni, briefly explain most of the details, trying with all my might, to keep it together. In no time, they are budging into my room.

When they spot Lenia's lifeless body on the bed, that becomes their undoing. Sure they have seen countless dead bodies before, grotesque sights, appalling scenes, but those were the bodies of our enemies, not the bodies of the ones we loved ones.

"Lenia, Leniaaaa!"

"Leandro, wake up. It's only a bad dream. Calm down, please," from a distance, Eva's voice calls out to me.

My eyes snap open, whole body trembling, beads of sweat trickling down my forehead and spine, wound now bleeding through the gauze, from all the aggressive movements I'd been making.

Eva combs her fingers gently through my hair, massaging, smoothing, feeling, whilst she embraces me, whispering lowly into my ear. Her palms smooth my back, before her body pulls away, her concerned eyes now clashing with mine.

Our foreheads press softly, as she works to rest one of her palms against my chest.

"Breathe with me, okay? In, out. In, out. One last time. In, out. There we go, you're doing great. You'd just suffered an anxiety attack. Do you want to tell me what you saw?"

"I'm fine, Eva. Thank you."

She only nods her head in comprehension, and I appreciate that she doesn't nudge or pester for answers. I don't want to speak of my past, receive sympathy from another, no use wailing over spilt milk. I've already revealed enough vulnerability as it is.

"You need some water, Leo?"

"Yes, that would be great."

She pours me a glass of water, and I down the whole drink all at once. Unwrapping the injury, she takes time cleansing it, stitching the popped stitches, wrapping it up one more time.

"Thank you," my mouth speaks before my mind can register, while I hand her the glass.

It's only three in the morning, and Eva needs to rest because of her condition. She's been up and running for most part of the night, and I detest that I am somewhat a baggage to her. Yawning, she pads towards the bed, and lays down next to me, her back pressing against my chest. I wrap an arm around her narrow waist, drawing her closer, thankful that she doesn't protest.

I let my body take comfort, find solace in hers. Maybe it's wrong, maybe I'm wrong for pulling her to me, but in this moment, to me, it feels right. I know she is fighting sleep, battling to stay awake, but why?

"Sleep, *àmore*."

"I sleep when I'm sure you are asleep, Leandro."

Ah, what can I say. The girl's stubborn, a feisty little thing, and that, to me, is sexy. She is not scared to stand up for herself, stand up for her beliefs, is ready to put up a spirited fight, even though she's fully aware that she'll lose, she's not one to reveal weakness. She's gone through hell, that I can tell, and that's what makes her stronger than most females I've encountered, key word being 'most'.

"I'm sorry, *àmore*."

"About what?"



"For strangling you the way I did. I shouldn't have," I strain to confess, an unfamiliar pang settling deep within my chest, utterly combusting me.

Guilt? I *never* feel guilty about anything, so how come?

"Don't worry, Leo. I'd rather we forget about it if at all you do value your life. Now, sleep. Goodnight."

I am well aware that she's wished me a tormenting death, after our encounter, but I'm almost certain she'd never taint her hands with my blood.

She might have vowed to execute me, but she's nothing like me...like us, hence will not act on those vows. I let out a long breathe, shutting my eyes momentarily and soon, I'm actually drifting into slumber.

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter eleven

The pic above is of Simon...

When I wake up at first, I don't really recognize my surroundings, and the momentary fright grips me. Oh yeah, that's right, I spent the night in Leo's room. My eyes look up, to find that he is still sound asleep.

Apparently not a snorer. Still beautiful, regardless.

My left leg is draped over both of his, while his good arm, is slithered around my shoulder. I am lain against his chest, ravishing the coziness, almost welcoming it. Yes, this is weird, extremely out of the norm for me. I thought I detested men, and now, this guy right here, seeks to prove me wrong.

Taking sweet time, and against my better judgement, I stare at him, small smile planting on my lips. Who wouldn't stare, with all his beauty? I mean, persons shouldn't be this gorgeous.

Yeah, you are never saying that out loud.

"Are you done staring, *àmòrè*?"

"You were awake this whole time?"

"Uh-huh," he smiles whilst responding.

"Well, I have to..." I don't get the chance to finish my statement, because of the nauseous feeling that encases my guts, overwhelming my entire system.

I sprint to the bathrooms, puke all what I had eaten, into Leandro's bathroom. Leandro strides into the bathroom, then proceeds to hold my hair behind my head, preventing it from getting in the way.

I hate that he has to see me wrenching my guts out.

As soon as I'm done, I discard my mess, flush it down, rinse my mouth.

Leo, in silence, offers me a spare tooth brush and paste, and I quickly cleanse my teeth whilst he does same.

"You feel better, *àmòrè*?"

"Yes, thank you. I'm sorry you had to see that."

"You have no valid reason for apologizing, Eva. Yeah?"

I nod my head in comprehension, not really having the energy to speak a response. Once I'm done brushing, I move back into his room, taking a seat

against his bed, trying to regain some of the depleted strength. Leo grabs a glass of water, pours me some, and helps me drink it all up.

"Stupid morning sickness," I grumble. "It'll pass, *àmòrè*."

"I have something I need to tell you. This evening, we'll be attending a Galla. Before you so much as think about protesting, yes, your presence will be much needed by my side."

Rolling eyes is the only response I have to offer.

"I'll let you go out with Catherine, pick out an item, since this is Italy, nobody really knows you here, and all clothes I handpicked for you in your closet, are nothing short of casual, as per your preferences."

Wait, what? All this time, I have been in Italy and I didn't even know that? I feel stupid, utterly foolish for not questioning my whereabouts. I lived in Los Angeles, and now I'm in Italy. Italy! Is Sarah looking for me, going crazed over my absence?

Then, Leandro kneels before me, his palms resting against the exposed flesh on my thighs, our eyes holding.

"Can I touch, feel your womb?"

"Sure, why not."

Gradually, cautiously, he moves to uplift my t-shirt, compelling me to clutch it for him right beneath my bosom, whilst he presses his palm softly against my belly. It really hasn't swelled too much, just a slight bump.

"Hey there, little one. My name is daddy, and I'm gonna take care of you, spoil you, love you. I never got the love of a parent, a father, but that will not be your case, I promise."

He finalizes, leans in, presses a chaste kiss against the skin on my stomach.

I have no idea what feelings are currently swirling around in my mind, encasing and constricting my chest. My eyes well with tears, sting terribly, and immediately, I blink them back. Leo retains his kneeling position right in front of me, looking up at me with eyes overflowing with emotion. I clear my throat, rise from the bed, and he does just that, towering my small frame, his arms encircling my waist, drawing me closer.

No one says nothing, just foreheads softly pressing, eyes gently shut. I don't recall ever being this level of comfortable with a man, any man. I've always pushed every single one of them away, with an exception of Simon, of course. Simon! Oh my heavens, what am I doing!

"I think...I think I should go," I voice, trying to draw back.

"You don't love him."

"What?"

"Your so called boyfriend, you don't love him," he flat-out explains in a matter-of-factly tone, stoic-faced.

"I do love him. What the fuck are you talking about!"

"As a friend, most definitely. That's how it's been, that's how it'll always be. Not as a woman loves a man.

You only feel obligated to do so, because he's always been there for you, and so, you feel like you owe it to him to love him back or rather, coerce yourself into loving him, simple."

I shove him, push him hard, but the man hardly budes. You know what stings so bad? The truth. You know what's worse than the truth? Someone else telling it to your face, when you've tried you hardest to convince yourself otherwise, for so long.

"Don't speak about him like that, Leandro! You know nothing about him!"

"Why are you getting all defensive? Because it's the truth, because you have never heard anyone tell it to your face, always sugarcoated it in your brain? Tell me something, in the period you've dated, exactly two years in counting, have you ever pondered over a possible future with him?"

"I'm defending him because he is my boyfriend, because he will never lift a finger to hit me, to strangle me! That's why I am fucking defending him, Leandro!"

"If only you knew him well enough. Again, forgive my actions, but remember that hurt goes far beyond the physical, Eva. Ponder that," and with those few overly calm words, he's exiting the room.

I rake my fingers through tangled locks, blowing out a long breathe in exasperation. Now what does he mean by 'know him well enough'!

How did we even end a perfect morning, in a heated argument?

Well Eva, it all begun when you decided to forcibly shove the guy you are now somewhat starting to feel attracted to.

I sigh deeply, clenching teeth and pinching the bridge of my nose, then slip out of his room, heading for mine, only to cross paths with Costello.

"Morning, Eva. I see you coming from the boss's ro..."

"Save it, Costello. I'm not in the mood for your bullshit." I spit, walking right past him.

"Feisty. I like," he continues, and I entirely ignore him, walk into my room, slam the doors shut.

Goodness, I've had my fair share of arguments in all my life, punched a few, slapped the few lucky ones, but what I feel after arguing with Leandro goes far beyond guilt. I feel terrible, and trust me when I say, I never experience emotions of guilt after a heated exchange of words, at all.

Yes yes, I am short tempered, and to that, I plead guilty. So if one tries to spark a quarrel, I'd rather walk away and come off as rude, rather than stay back, grant myself the pleasure of exchanging a few brutal insults, because then, I'd end up breaking someone's nose, maybe their jaw. Sighing yet again, I discard the consuming thoughts, strip, and take a nice, warm dip in the tub.

Then, I end up sprawling out against my bed, shortly after which, Kate walks in, tray of food clutched in her palms.

"Morning, dear," she chirps, jolly as ever.

When have I never seen her smile?

"Morning, Kate."

"What's wrong, *tópólínà*?"

"I sorta-uh-we-argued?"


"Tell me everything, dear. That's if you don't mind," she replies, placing the tray gently over the bedside table.

So, I tell her most of everything, and she just gazes at me, occasionally nodding, occasionally chuckling and shaking her head.

"*Mièlè*, are you starting to feel a little something for him?"

"What, no! I love Simon, detest men, and that's that."

She only sighs at the rush response, and for a minute, I actually ponder over how I just reacted. Am I being honest with myself? Because, to me, there's no greater transgression, than one choosing to openly deceive themselves.

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter twelve

"Can we please not converse about this topic right now? And besides, Leandro spoke of some fancy Galla we'll be attending this eve, said that you need to accompany me to the mall to grab an outfit," I reason, trying to divert Kate's attention.

"Fine, dear. I won't push you any further. Finish eating, get dressed, then meet me downstairs, okay?"

"Mmhm."

Once she's out, I hurriedly switch outfits, from my t-shirt and sleeping shorts, to something casual; cropped, off-the-shoulder, black t-shirt, black ripped jeans, black supra shoes. I'm not a fan of dresses, never been, never will. Finally, I ponytail my brushed curled tendrils, then proceed to exit the room.

Kate's awaiting my presence at the bottom of the steps, purse clutched in hand. When I finally get down the last stair, a sense of relief washes over me. That fleet is no joke, will keep you fit whether you're for or against it. We walk to the front doors, where Kate rests her palm over the scanner, and the glass barriers slide open. At the furthest end, is this suite-clad guy, leaning against the body work of some black-as-death vehicle, waiting for, I'm guessing, Kate and I.

The car's a powerful Mercedes Benz, and even I have to admit it's pretty chic, cool. Soon enough, we are belted in, gliding smoothly past silver gates. It doesn't take us long to arrive at our destination, say a solid twenty to thirty minutes, and half of the day, we spend padding from one store to the next. Like I said, I am not a fan of dresses, or gowns, but since it's a fancy ass party, I have to at least look presentable. I mean, I'm almost certain Leandro will be a dashing diva this eve, so why not look same.

Finally, after seeking high, and searching low, I manage to grab myself a sexy, sandy-brown outfit, and a matching pair of three-inch heels. In most cases, I have no use for makeup, but Kate keeps insisting, pestering me on purchasing some. It's nothing much, simply some eyeliner, mascara, some

lipgloss, not forgetting nail polish and accessories, and we are done for the day.

"Kate, what time is it?"

"Oh, it's only two. Want to grab something to eat? You must be famished."

"Oh, I am, trust me."

We make our way over to the small cafeteria within the mall, then pick out our respective meals.

By the time we are finally done, it's exactly a quarter to four. Exiting the large building, the chauffeur drives us back home.

"Hey, uh, sir? I got you a little something," I speak, leaning towards the driver's window once I've alighted my side of the vehicle, handing the man a small bag.

"Ma'am, you didn't have to. I'm grateful," his baritone voice vibrates deep inside his chest, with him smiling a genuine smile up at me.

"You're welcome. Hope you enjoy," and with that, I push off the body work, and make my way up the steps leading to the front doors.

Unfortunately, and to my utmost disappointment, Leandro's not home. When we left, he wasn't within the vicinity either, and I was really hoping to patch things up when I arrived.

Oh well, might as well do that in the evening, because right now, I need to use the bathroom so bad, my feet are cramped and swollen, and my eyelids are desperately trying not to give in to the delicious temptation of sleep.

"Kate, I'm going to go to take a nap. Is that okay? I mean, you could always wake me up. I am genuinely exhausted, Kate."

"It's okay, honey. You go take your nap, you'll need it. I'll wake you up, ready you for the big event."

"Thank you, Kate."

I climb the stupid, spiral steps and slip into my room, kicking off my shoes, and sprawling my aching, tensed body against the velvet sheets...

"Wake up, *tópólínà*."

"Just five minutes, please. Five," I whine, turning away from the source of the voice.

"Get up, dear. You'll upset the boss, cause him arrive late at the Galla."

I sigh and get up, sitting up in bed, trying to blink the sleep from my eyes.

Yes, I am deeply agitated, offended, that my slumber had to be cut short, because of a stupid event, who's intent for being held, I have no word of! I

walk over to the bathroom, take a quick shower, brush my teeth. Once done, I oil my body, and Kate dries and does my hair, making it neat and shit.

Next, I throw on my outfit, and once done, Kate applies some mascara and eyeliner onto my eyes, smears a small amount of lip gloss against my lips, and I pucker them in satisfaction. I clip on the diamond studs I purchased, and to complete the look, I strap on the classy heels.

"Even with the slight baby bump, you look amazing, dear," Kate compliments, smiling and eyeing my reflection in the mirror.

Ah yes, sandy-brown is definitely one of my colours, and the outfit doesn't look too bad either.

"Thanks, Kate. I look amazing."

By now, it's six thirty, and I'm almost certain Leandro and the guys are all dressed, looking classy and shit.

"Hold on. One more thing," Kate softly coos, before padding into the walk in closet, and walking out, holding a brown purse, with silver intricate patterns interlocking to create floral designs.

I take it, place in two cans of pepper spray for security reasons, and wipes.

I am, after all, attending a party undoubtedly filled to the brim with blood-thirsty vultures. Exiting the room, we glide down the fleet of stairs. It's official, I detest this stupid staircase, especially when my feet are encased in this death-trap heels.

Down below, stands Costello, Giovanni and Leandro. All men are clad in Armani suites, silk locks jelled to utter perfection, loafers polished and gleaming under the glaring lights of the chandelier. Then, there's Leandro.

Yes, definitely a divine diva.

Costello shamelessly whistles, eyes swiping up and down, while Giovanni mumbles words in Italiano, his head shaking from side to side. Leandro simply stands there, in all his glory, raking and scrutinizing, lips pursed in a tight line, one brow arched. When my feet make contact with the last step, Giovanni takes my hand into his, places a short kiss at the back of it. Disgusted, repulsed, appalled, that's what I feel, not fluttered.

"Could you twirl around for me, bàmbinó?" Costello teases.

"Only if I can rip your balls, graciously wear them as a necklace, love."

Both Giovanni and Leandro snicker.

"You look nothing short of divine, àmòrè."

"Thank you, Leandro" smoothly, I reply, batting eyelashes playfully.

"Okay dear, you have fun," Kate finally speaks up from beside me.

"Thanks, Kate. Really wish you could come along, keep me company through the event."

"Oh, but it'll be fun, dear. Trust me."

Innuendo? Because there's definitely more to Kate's sentence than she's revealing.

"*Àmòrè*, I want you to have something."

Leandro reaches for the inner pockets of his suite jacket, reveals from his pockets, a scarlet red box, opens it to reveal a beautiful charm bracelet. He takes my hand in his, then wears the bracelet around my wrist. His rough, calloused palm holding onto mine, looks so large. Looking down at the charms, then up at him, a ghost of a smile tags on my lips.

"Thank you, Leandro. It's beautiful."

"As you are. Do not take it off, no matter what, your understand?"

"Mhmm."

"Shall we then?"

And with those few words, we all tread over to the glass doors, slip past them and out of the house, with Leandro's palm resting against the small of my back.

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter thirteen

The pic above is of Reina...

The pic above is of Alfonso...

So now, I'm sat next to Leandro, inside a black limo, while Costello and Giovanni, remain perched on the leather seats, directly opposite the two of us. All three men have champagne flutes half-filled clutched in their palms, fluently conversing in Italiano, occasionally nodding at this, chuckling at the other.

Therefore, feeling left out, I let my mind wander free, explore more. This evening, I'll desperately need to keep my cool. These people, are, after all, persons operating under the mafia, and therefore, any irrational talk that'll come tumbling down my tongue, could end up being my one way ticket to the land of the dead. Without a shadow of doubt, it'll be difficult pulling through, but for the sake of my life, and that of my baby, I'll have to keep myself on an invisible leash.

"We are here," Costello announces, causing my eyes to blink repetitively, as I work to discard all thoughts.

We are currently parked before this huge glass dome, a seven star hotel of sorts, and all around us, stand a ton of powerful vehicles of various models, shapes, hues.

And this right here, is what I like to think of as filthy rich. Costello and Giovanni alight the limo, and Leandro follows shortly. He stretches out his arm, gives me his hand, and I take without so much as protesting or contemplating, because in this very moment, he's the closest thing to safety, and I am not taking fucking chances.

Resting his palm softly against the small of my back, he walks us into the building in silence. The harmonious mix of saxophones, tunas, violas, harps, and trumpets, infiltrate my ears, and for a minute or two, my head sways gently in appreciation. Costello and Giovanni just happened to vanish amidst the throng of persons, but if I'm being entirely honest, I could care less where they'd go, seeing as they are two grown ass men, who can take care of themselves perfectly fine.

And of course, there's the mix of individuals seemingly from high-class societies, dressed in shimmering, fitting gowns, gleaming, gold and silver rings and bracelets, designer dresses that flow in soft tides, dragging against hard, marble floors, civilized-looking men, clad in expensive suits, blazers, fancy slacks, diamond wrist watches, and gold chains dangling loosely around their necks, laughing at one thing, hotly discussing about another.

Then there's the fancy, classy waiters and waitresses treading lightly, gliding from one corner of the room to the other, clutching trays of champagne flutes half-filled, wine glasses holding maroon-coloured liquid. One waitress, a pretty, five foot ten or so redhead, walks up to us, bows her head right before us, presenting a tray of champagne flutes.

"*Càpó*, fancy a glass?"

Leandro grabs one, motions for me to do same, gives me a curt nod and an arched brow. I grab one, of course, because I need not make a scene, but still, I eye him warily, brows knitting together. There is no freaking way, no way near hell, I'm drinking this shit. I don't drink, and I most certainly don't plan on breaking the principle now, especially with my condition.

The waitress excuses herself, disappearing amidst the crowd.

"Don't drink it. Just hold it for show," Leandro leans in, whispers in my ear.

"With pleasure, Leandro," is my only response, whilst smiling up at him.

I already detest the tensed atmosphere up in this building. Too fucking suffocating!

Then out of nowhere, appears a beautiful blonde, dressed in a short, tightly-fitting, low v-neck gown, that hugs and accentuates her curves magnificently. Her cleavage is so exposed, too exposed infact, that I fear her boobs will spill right out of the damned dress at any moment.

She pads up to Leandro, grants him a short, sensual kiss on the lips. Yes, the fucking lips. The gesture shouldn't have stung, but it does, surprisingly.

"Hey, Andro. I've missed you, *bèbè*," she whines in a sultry tone, then flashes the man one sexy, seductive smile.

Okay, hold on just a second. Andro? *Bèbè*? Sensual kiss on the lips? Am I missing something here?

"Oh, is this the surrogate bitch you were telling me about?"

"Reina, calm yourself, simmer down."

See right now, I'd be lying so hard, if I'd said the words didn't affect me even in the slightest.

"Oh, forgive me. I meant money-thirsty young lady," she rephrases, like that'd make anything better.

What the actual hell is wrong with this witch bitch?

Without realizing that my fingers around the stem of the flute have grown a tad bit firmer, the glass stem gives in, snaps.

See, what I will not do, is let perfectly glorious wine go to waste, and so, I spill the dense liquid against her cleavage, watching as she gasps like a fish out of water, whilst maroon rivulets cascade lower into the dress. Yes, I am petty, and yes, I was provoked, and hence, I retaliated.

"Forgive me."

She only gasps some more, and for a slight second, I actually want to burst into fits of laughter.

Dramatic bitch. Serves you right.

"How dare you! Do you know just how expensive this gown is? Better yet, do you know who the hell I am?"

"Did I ask?" Is my dry reply.

I can't fucking believe, that persons like her, are actually in existence.

She stares, wide-eyed, at Leandro, on the verge of tears, as if expecting that he'd do something about the whole fiasco.

Again, dramatic, pathetic bitch.

"Aren't you going to say something, defend me for the love of sin, Andro?"

"Reina, don't embarrass yourself any further, and don't make me grow agitated."

She turns, storms off cussing profanities under her breathe, muttering incoherently like some psychopath.

"Don't mind her, Eva."

"Boy, whatever. Let's get this night over and done with."

"Are you pissed at the fact that she kissed me? Is that it?"

'*Are you pissed at the fact that she kissed me, is that it?*' I mimick irritably in my head.

"Boy, I know you're not dense, so quit acting the part."

He doesn't reply, and I'm genuinely grateful. I'm not about to pick a fight with him, not now. We push past vibrant, blubbering individuals, walk up to a more quiet section of the building, where Costello and Giovanni are sat on one of the tables, in the company of some other guy. When we finally arrive, the man's eyes travel up to meet Leandro's, then clash and hold mine briefly,

before he finally proceeds to rise from his seat, sharing that weird guy hug thing with Leandro.

"Leo, my man. How have you been *fratèlló*?"

"Good good, brother. How's France treating you?"

"Oh, the place is like a little heaven on earth, got some hot ladies too."

"Ah, old habits die hard. Alfonso, you'll never change, will you?"

And for the very first time in all my living with this peculiar man, I witness him laugh, a low, throaty, sweet-to-the-ear laugh.

"What can I say, Andro. The ladies are drawn to me, like a moth would to a flame, and I give them what they want, exactly how they want it. I am *the* lady killer, incase you haven't taken notice."

Well, I refute to challenge that, because this guy, is straight up gorgeous.

And a man whore, a beautiful one, but still a man whore.

"Ah, Andro. Is this the surrogate you've been telling me about? Well, she is one fine piece of art, the heavens surely took their time on this one. Hella hot, my dude," he compliments, eyes never breaking contact with mine, as he takes my hand in his, kisses it sensually.

I stare him down, granting him no reaction, just staring. See, I never fathom how such acts, according to romcoms, should make butterflies crawl up my stomach walls. Meanwhile, Leandro's grip, around my waist, tightens, causing me to glare up at the side profile of his blank face.

He clearly gets the memo, because his arm loosens a tad bit.

"I need to use the bathroom, Leandro."

"Mhmm. Tread down the halls, and take a left turn. Third door, and you're there."

"Do you mind if I accompany you, *bèllà*?" Alfonso's quick to offer, flashing me one of those supposed panty-wetting smiles.

"Why exactly, would I let you accompany me? I hardly know you. Simply put, yes, I do mind. If you'll excuse me."

"Alfonso, when has a lady ever rejected your advances?" Costello's voice taunts from the table, causing both he, and Giovanni to chuckle heartily.

"Ídíótà! Shut up the both of you."

Following Leandro's instructions, I slide past finely-polished bathroom doors, walk up to the sinks, splash cold water against the skin on my forehead, then dry myself. The doors creak open, and in the mirror, I observe Reina sashaying hips into the room, in the company of gorgeous blondy number two. I finish up, then begin to make my way towards the doors, only

for Reina's fingers to snake my wrist, blood-red, acrylic nails piercing into my flesh.

Yep, there's definitely drama that's about to unfold.

I lift a brow, offer a teasing smile at the two women. Yes, I had been planning on keeping a low profile this eve, but bitches be trying to fuck with my moods. So, I might as well redecorate some faces, rearrange a few vertebrae here and there.

"Guess what, Barbara? This is the very bitch that's carrying Andro's child. So poverty stricken was she, that when the opportunity to instantly grow wealthy arose, she grabbed it."

"Oh, such a pathetic low life social climber," Barbara's nerve-grating voice shrieks.



"Andro is mine, love. Let's make that very clear."

"Honey, you must be genuinely crazed. If he's yours, as per your claim, then riddle me this. Why didn't he let you mother his child? Instead, he had to search for a surrogate all the way in L.A, poor woman, because that's just how much you mean to the guy. Reina, I am going to give you exactly five seconds to let go of my..."

Hard slap strikes my left cheekbone, effectively numbing my nerves. She just slapped me? Me, for heaven's sake! Oh, all I see is red, fucking blood-red.

"I wouldn't have done that if I were you, darling."

So help me grace, I'm going to kill a bitch or two, tonight!

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter fourteen

I forcibly yank my wrist from Reina's hold, then using both palms, slam her nose against my knee, punching her square in the jaw, shortly after. She crashes against the tiled floors with a heavy thud, letting out a high-pitched scream, as the blood oozes from her nostrils, coating the grounds beneath. Then there's Barbara, who, oh so intelligently, decides to claw my back in retaliation.

I spin her petite frame, snake an arm around her neck from behind in one swift, fluid motion, keeping a firm grip on her, whilst she digs and drags acrylic nails against my skin, until her body finally gives in, and she's knocked out unconscious. Taking in one deep drag of the much needed air to quench my lungs, I rest her against the floors, cleanse my knuckles, pad over to the doors, and exit the room.

My eyes rake the multitude, till they land on Leandro's tall frame walking up to me, concern etched onto his facial features.

"It's been a solid nineteen minutes, Eva. Where have you been?"

"I thought I made it very clear, that I needed to use the bathroom? Let's get back to the table, shall we."

I walk past him, and towards our table, taking a seat immediately I get there. My nerves are wrecked, literally all over the place right now.

Deep breathes, Eva. Deep breathes.

"What's happened to your back, Eva?" Leandro inquires in low whispers once he's sat, and I don't miss the deathly tone he employs.

I don't need to face him, in order to establish that his jaws are clenched.

"I don't wish to talk about it, Leandro. Hey lady killer, wanna dance?"

"Sudden change of heart, but why not, *bèllà rósà*."

Alfonso gives me his hand, walks us to the dance floor, slithers an arm around my waist, and throughout the period of our dance, he interviews me on the nitty gritty of my life, joking about one thing, stating facts about the other.

Then abruptly and unpleasantly, my upper arm is gripped, body yanked from his hold, and I end up bumping into a muscle-rippling, clothed chest.

"We are leaving now!"

"Get your hands off me, Leandro!"

"Don't you dare question my authority, Eva!"

He walks us down dimly-lit halls, and through a back door, to the teeth-rattling, chilly colds of the silent night.

"Let go of me, what's wrong with you, Leandro! Why are you behaving like this? Why so jealous, when I mean nothing to you, huh? How many persons have stepped up to us, called me surrogate this entire evening, utterly embarrassed me? Do you think I signed up for any of this? I didn't sign up for any of this bullshit. My insemination was only accidental.

Right place, right time, wrong needle!

So now, I'm stuck here with you, in this fucked up world of yours! I am nothing but a surrogate to you, so, why the envy?"

My body's trembling as I stand on feeble knees, while he stares down at my pathetic state, brows furrowed, and lips pursed in a tight line. I run the back of my hand roughly against the flesh on my cheeks. I'm crying? Fuck it!

"I am jealous, Eva, no deceit in my words. I hated Costello's and Giovanni's reaction, back at home, once you climbed down that fleet of steps, absolutely detested Alfonso's reaction to you at the table, and I go green with envy, because Simon, that son of a bitch, does not realize just how lucky a man he is, to have you. Do you even know what he is doing back in Los Angeles with your sister, that perverted imbecile?"

Tone as overly calm as usual, even in the midst of an argument!

"Wait, what are you trying to say? I..I don't understand."

"Of course you don't. Eva, let me break it down to you. I have enemies everywhere. Some of them, are fully aware of the fact that you are with child, my child, and will stop at nothing, do just about anything, to extract as much information about you, as they possibly can.

That means, they will eventually find out that your closest family, is your sister, and will hence try to eliminate her, just to try and get to you, and ultimately, to me. So, I took it upon myself to protect her, sent two of my men to watch over her twenty four seven. Apparently, both men discovered that your sister had been, and is still seeing someone; Simon.

I know you don't believe me, I have offered you no valid reason to trust me. Neither did I believe it at first, until they sent me shots of your sister and Simon, making out outside some cafe," he finalizes, brows still knitted, arms folded behind his back, and jaws occasionally making these tic movements.

"You're playing, right? Trying to fuck me up mentally?" My tone laces with accusation, my breathes growing more prominent by the minute.

I, so badly, want to not believe those words.

This is what he meant, when he said he wished I knew what kind of man Simon truly was this morning. Burning tears temporarily blind my vision, making it almost impossible to clearly make out Leandro's figure standing before me. Simon's the only man I trusted, loved, cared for, and never, not even once, did I push him away. Goodness, I don't even know what to think.

I am so fucking enraged at, disgusted by all memories of Simon. Then there's Sarah, my flesh and fucking blood! My only family, the only human I'd trusted one hundred percent, looked up to, but sadly, betrayed me without a second thought. Did they search for me, give up, erase all thoughts of me from their minds? Was I really that worthless a human, that they'd simply forget about my existence?

It's like they both took a red-hot dagger, stabbed it right through my heart. I hate them so much, so fucking much! Damn it, these tears are threatening to spill!

Large arms wrap around my shoulders, drawing me closer regardless of my persistent struggles to pull away, until I can't take the choking lump in my throat, the agonizing pain branding itself in my heart, and I completely break down.

"Don't battle against the pain, face it, feel it, cry it out. You are only human, *amòrè*," smoothing my back, he whispers soothingly, softly against my hair, tightening his hold around me.

I'm ruining his suite with these damned tears! I fight to keep calm, taking in large gulps of air, then exhaling the stress. Drawing back, Leandro cups my cheeks, looks me dead in the eye.



"Do you prefer we go to the car?"

"That'd be much appreciated," I manage to croak out a response, despite myself.

In the vehicle, my head remains pressed against his shoulder, and his, against the leather seat. For the very first time since my mother's death, I actually let myself seek solace from another individual that's not Sarah.

It's rather ironic, now that I ponder over the situation. The petrifying, horrifying mafioso leader, the infamous, almost-immortal Leandro Leone, is the same man who's arm is draped around my shoulder in comfort. Ah, no more tears, no more sobbing, no more wailing over spilt milk. Now, what's

the point in trying to escape back to L.A, after the heartbreaking revelation of my sister's and Simon's treachery?

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter fifteen

"*Àmòrè*, can I take you somewhere, help calm your nerves?"

"Yeah. It'll do me some good to get some air. But what of Costello and Giovanni? Who'll drive them home?"

"They've got plans of their own this evening, so don't worry, *sì*?"

I can only nod in agreement, lifting my head off of him to stare into the darkness of the night via tinted windows. After some time, the vehicle reverses out of the parking lot, glides down highways smoothly, then drives into the outskirts of the city. Somewhere in between, I must've drifted into slumber, because the next thing I know, Leandro's voice is calling out to me like an distant echo.

"Wake up, *àmòrè*. We are here."

Finally coming to, Leandro alights the limo, offers his palm which I gladly take. We proceed to tread through a forest of what appears to be willows and firs, proud moon gleaming and glaring its illuminations down at us, providing the perfect amount of lighting to make out where to step and where not to.

"How far until we are there?"

"A few more steps, say five to seven minutes?"

Humming to myself, with Leandro's palm holding me, supporting me, we come up to a clearing. There's a spring, vengefully pouring waters into an even larger lake, the moon's reflection harmoniously dancing against the disturbed surface of the lake, that is surrounded by tiny, growing willows. From a distance, my ears pick the chirping of crickets, hooting of owls, and the whistling of the winds. The grass, beneath my shoes, has finely carpeted the earth, evenly spread to cover the earthen grounds.

Flowers flamboyantly decorate the entire place to magnificence, and from the lights of the moon, I see bluebells, a few orchids, morning glories.

"Used to come here back when I was younger. Helped to temporarily block out all tormenting thoughts. Kept my head clear," Leandro's cool voice speaks from behind me.

"It's peaceful, serene. I'd come here as well."

"Want to test the waters?"

"I don't have a swim suit, Leandro."

"But you do have undergarment, no? Come on. I'll do my best to behave."

"Your best?"

"Yes, my best. Can't promise you anything more, *àmòrè*. That would make me a terrible liar, and I don't fancy deception," he whispers the last part into my ear, lips grazing my lobe, whilst his palms move to rest gently against my sides from behind.

His cool breathe, against my skin, is in contrast to the heat that's igniting within the pits of my stomach. Drawing in a sharp breathe, I slowly exhale.

"Fine. I'll swim, but only on one condition; you turn to face away from me while I strip, deal?" I explain, turning to face him.

He keeps mumm, stares me down with one brow arched.

"Do we have ourselves a deal, Leo?"

"*Sì, àmòrè*. We have ourselves a deal."

His penetrating gaze wrecks a new kind of havoc in my system, and for a minute or two, he remains immobile.

"Leo..."

Rolling eyes, he finally turns to face away from me. I smile, unfastening the zipper on my skirt, allowing the material slide down my legs.

Unzipping my strapless top, I pull on it, discard it as well, picking up my clothes, and neatly folding them, resting them against grassy floors. I take off the diamond studs, unstrap my heels, release my curly strands from their confines, take off the bracelet on my wrist, working in nothing but a pair of matching, fiery-red lace bra and panties.

"Leo, I'm done."

He gradually turns to face me, eyes raking, scrutinizing, lingering.

"What? Cat go your tongue?"

"No. I was only thinking, that with a body like yours, and dressed like that, I am going to find it extremely challenging to keep my end of the deal."

"Ah, but you're a gentleman, so I trust you. Get your ass changed. I'm going in," I speak, gliding over to the edge of the lake, and jumping into the waters.

I finally swim to the surface, so that my head, neck and chest, hover above the surface. Eyes travel to drink in the sight of Leandro, who's now getting rid of his trousers, and is left in nothing but a pair of briefs. His got an athletic build, chest rippling with muscle, biceps flexing with every move, torso bumpy, and silk strands now disheveled.

Deep scar runs from his thigh all the way down to his kneecap. I'd rather not inquire about the source of the scarification, might resurface old wounds, darken the mood.

"Like what you see?" he questions, walking over to the edge of the lake.

"Seen better on the cover page of a magazine."

With arms spread out, eyes gently shut, he falls into the waters with a splashing noise, and swims in my direction, until now, he is standing right in front of me. Since he's taller, the water level only reaches slightly above his navel. Arms encircle my waist, drawing me closer, until our chests touch. It's only out of instinct, that my arms encircle his neck. He hoists me up like I weigh nothing, compelling my feet to wrap around his slim waist for support.

"Leo, your arm, remember?"

"Don't worry yourself. The simple sting is worth it. Do you have any clue of just how breathtaking you are, *àmòrè*? I am drawn in by everything, when it comes to you. The crazing smile, hardheaded nature, velvet, chocolate skin, that always seems to glow, tangled dark locks, all your curves in all the right places, how you don't let anyone walk all over you, your artistic nature, and then, there's the spirited fight you put up on the night we met."

Speechless, that's exactly what I am right about now. Maybe it's due to the unstable moods, that I lean in, capture those alluring lips in mine. Tongues meet, mouths intermingle, tasting, teasing, pleasuring, devouring. Our lips move in harmonious sync, breathes growing laboured, chests pressing flush against each other. Passionate, intense, laced-with-desire, that's exactly what this kiss entails.



Finally, he pulls away, drawing my bottom lip in his, until we are fully apart, foreheads pressing gently.

"Leo, I..."

"Calm yourself, Eva. Don't overthink, just calm yourself."

And with those few words, his kiss-swollen lips curve into one of those intoxicating smiles.

Yes, this man, will undoubtedly fuck my brains up...

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter sixteen

Leandro and I, are now fully clothed, and are currently heading back to the parked vehicle. In this moment, I understand Kate's last words before the guys and I left for the party. When we finally get to the car, Leandro opens the doors for us, helps me in, then proceeds to take a seat right next to me.

Okay, so now, my mind is reeling with rhetorics. Did he kiss me back simply because he wanted to, or because he felt some form of pity for my pathetic state, and therefore, couldn't push me away? Will things go back to being the same between us from this night hence? And why, just why in the name of the heavens, did I kiss him in the first place?

A few hours back, I discovered the truth about Simon, and then next thing I know, my lips are pressing against Leandro's! What sorta person does that make me? Fuck me, fuck me, fuck me! Fuck me for initiating the kiss in the first place!

Bitch act like nothing happened between the two of you. Just ignore the kiss. It's really that simple.

The whole ride back home is overflowing with pungent silence. Getting to the house, Leandro helps me out of the car, walks us into the house, leads me down halls, then sits me in the dining room.

"Want something to eat, *àmórè*?"

"Yeah, I'm starved."

"Okay then, give me a second," he replies, placing his phone and Rolex watch over the table, before leaving for the kitchen.

Suddenly, the phone begins to ring, causing my head to turn in its direction. It's only out of respect for privacy, that I end up keeping my hands to myself. The ringing ceases, then after thirty seconds or so, it begins to vibrate once again. Okay, that repetitively vibration is really starting to fuck with my nerves. And how long is he gonna in there, for pits sake!

Pinging, pinging, more pinging, signifying incoming messages from goodness knows who. Then finally, after having my nerves grated just about enough, I reach out for the phone, look down at the screen. Several missed calls, and five text messages from Reina.

The vibrations begin once more in my palm and out of irritation, I almost end up smashing it against the walls.

Calm down, Eva, calm yourself...

I chant the words like a mantra, rest the device against the table, then massage my temples. Leandro in all his glory, finally makes his way into the room, clutching a tray holding food, a glass of milk, two bananas, and a bottle of water.

"Sorry I took so long. Who was calling?" He inquires, folding arms in front of his chest, right after placing the tray against the table.

"Reina," I reply as I reach out for a banana, peeling and munching.

"Can I ask you a question, Leo?"

He sighs, then nods.

"Who is Reina to you?"

"Why? Are you jealous?"

"You wish. I'm simply curious."

"She and Alfonso, were my best friends growing up. Alfonso still is, but with Reina, it's complicated. You see, ever since Lenia's death, Reina has been making advances, which to me, is honestly appalling. I mean, we grew up together, so she is practically a sister to me," he explains, sitting next to me, grabbing an apple from the fruit bowl, and taking a bite out of it.

"Now, can I ask you a question, *amòrè*?"

"Shoot."

"How did you end up getting those scratches on your back?"

"Well, I was attacked by Reina and some other blond bitch, back in the restroom.

The other one, what was her name again? Bianca? Brenice? Oh right, Barbara. She's the one who gave me the marks. I mean, I don't really mind, since I beat them up pretty good."

He chuckles lightly, a deep, throaty chuckle, and I can't help how my mouth curves into a smile.

"Have you always been this tough, even as a little girl?"

"You won't believe it actually. When I was younger, back before mum died, I got bullied in school like fucking crazy. I was the silent girl, in the back of the class, that was a straight up book junky. And then at home, dad simply enjoyed his bloody ass, beat the shit out of Sarah and I, came up with any excuse to punch and kick us.

The piece of shit yelled at us, called us fucking degrading names, hurled insults at us, accused us of secretly meeting up with boys, doing all sorts of nasty shit, and then, he'd beat us till we passed out. Many a times, mum would try her best to stop him, but that infuriated the old fuck all the more, and so, the situation would grow even more volatile.

He'd slap, kick, punch her, cut off her hair with the same pair of scissors he'd been hiding for over five years. That man, was seriously fucked up in the brains. Every time he'd cut off her hair, you know what he'd say? He'd chant the same fucking mantra, "I don't want nobody looking at my wife the wrong way."

He's the main reason I've resented men for over a decade. He stabbed mum, I let myself sob like it'd give her new life, then vowed I'd never do that fucking cry again. Tonight, I found out about my sister's and ex-boyfriend's betrayal, and I completely shattered. They've messed me up, psychologically, emotionally.

Can I be honest with you, Leo? I am fucking scared of letting people into my life, because if they walk in, they could easily walk right out, any fucking minute they well damn please. I don't like investing myself emotionally in people, only for them to end up breaking me completely, and tonight's revelation will aid in firmly established that principle. The pain ain't worth it."

I have revealed truths I've been concealing for almost all my life, to Leandro, of all people. I have no idea why, but I've just let it all out tonight. "You don't seek pity in telling me all what you have. We are alike in that sense, so I'll tell you something, Eva. You can't alter your past, but you can contribute positively to your future. You're going to me a mother soon, that's all that matters."

I stare deep into those icy-blue, always-glassy eyes, just stare. "Thank you, Leandro. You're a really good listener. I have to go to bed now," finalize, cupping his left cheek, offering a genuine smile, then proceeding to rise from my seat.

"Sit, eat, then I'll walk you up to your room."

And so, without any more words, I take my seat once again, dive into the meal till I'm sated.

I rise from the seat, and make to exit the room, before sudden dizzy spells hit me like a brick in the face.

"Hey, hey. Let me help you to your room."

He kneels on one knee, his back towards me, then turns his head slightly to look over his shoulder.

"What are you doing, Leo?"

"Climb."

My mouth opens to protest, but I decide to purse my lips, bite my tongue, and do as instructed. Leandro gets up, carries me like I weigh nothing, climbs the spiral staircase, and in no time, we are slipping past my bedroom doors.

He sits me on the chaise lounge, walks over to the closet to grab a clean towel and an oversized sleeping shirt, walks back to me, squatting right in front of me.

"You're still experiencing the occasional dizziness, no?"

"Yeah. The world's spinning."

"I'll help you get dressed for bed, I won't look, I promise."

"I trust you to keep your promise, because I'm too dizzy to do shit on my own."

But didn't he see you in your bra and panties some minutes ago?

I let out a sigh at my own thoughts, shoving them to the back of my head.

Leandro shuts his eyes, begins unzipping my strapless top, helps me get rid of it, makes me stand, unzips my skirt, allowing it to fall and pool at my feet, helps unstrap my heels, and finally, I am left in nothing but my lace bra and panties. Wrapping the towel around my body, he reaches for bra clasp under the towel, unhooks it whilst his fingers glide over my skin, teasing me.

"Leo, let me take a bath, cleanse my hair. I smell like sea water."

"You want me to wait for you till you finish?"

"Thank you for the consideration, but I don't want to bother you anymore than I have. I'll take it from here. I jus..."

"Go take your shower, I'll wait."

Not wanting to bicker about it, I march over to the bathroom, take a long, nice bath, then head back to the bedroom. He is sat over the chaise, one leg draped over the other, face as expressionless as it's always been, with his eyes now interlocking with mine.

"Come, Eva."

And I do. My feet glide up to him, standing right before him, with his arms slithering around my waist.

My knees buckle slightly, my feet almost give in, the world around spinning once more, and I have to grip his forearm in order to steady myself.

"Again?"

"Mhmm. Leo, I don't know how long I have to endure this" I lament whilst massaging my temple with my free palm.

"It has been two months and a couple of weeks. The dizzy spells will fade, just a little patience, *amòrè*."

Nanoseconds convert into seconds convert into minutes, with his arms still wrapped around me, securing me in place.

"How do you feel now?"

"Better, thank you."

"Okay then. Give me a minute," he finalizes, sitting me over the chaise and rising on his feet.

Grabbing hold of yet another clean towel and making me stand, he dries off my exposed skin and hair, eyes gently shut, then, he helps me put on the sleeping shirt, buttoning the clothe all the way up, then unwraps and pulls on the towel from beneath the shirt. His eyes finally fluttering open, as he kneels on one knee, kisses my stomach, leans his forehead against it, whispers soothingly in Italiano.

Feeling overwhelmed, I comb fingers through his locks, too fatigued to comprehend the emotions swirling through my mind. He pulls me by the arm, sits me against the bed, takes hold of my now-dried, shrunk hair strands, then plaits them into two sets of thick braids.

"You can shoot and plait hair."

"Apparently," is his humourless response, and I can't help but laugh out softly.

"Goodnight, *amòrè*," he speaks whilst I lay down and pull on the covers, kissing my forehead, a soft, chaste kiss.

"Goodnight Leandro and, thank you."

Nodding, he makes his way towards the doors, then flips off the switch, shutting the wooden barriers, and leaving only my lamp shade on.

I will never be able to comprehend the inner workings of that man. Ice cold today, talkative tomorrow, shuts himself off the next day, smiles occasionally on the other. I do want to know him a little better. I want to know the man beneath the tough exterior, better...

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

chapter seventeen

I wake up fully convinced there's a rock band jamming to hard rock inside my head. Goodnesssss, my head hurts like fucking crazy, makes me want to groan, growl, grunt and bellow like a fucking bull all at once. What could be the issue, damnit!

"Morning, dear. How are you?"

Oh, it's Kate. Hadn't even noticed the woman's presence in the room, cleaning and dusting.

"In immense, and unfathomable pain. Feels like my head wants to separate itself from my body."

"There are some tablets on the bedside table. Boss instructed me to bring them up for you. Don't worry, they're completely safe for consumption during pregnancy."

She walks up to me, pours me a glass of water, and I'm quick to appreciate the gesture. Popping the pill, I sprawl myself against the bed, resting my palm against my forehead, taking in deep breathes. Then comes the fucking nauseous sensation! I have no idea where the strength sprouts from, but I manage to leap off bed, and sprint into the bathroom, emptying all contents of my stomach along with the medicine. Goodness, when will it all end!

I rinse my mouth in agitation, brush my teeth whilst incoherently mumbling to myself, then step out of the bathroom and walk over to the bed, lying down, and resting a folded arm against my forehead.

"Don't worry, it'll go away soon enough," Kate comforts, then switches topic in bubbly excitement.

"So, tell me everything about the party."

I sit up and criss-cross my legs, pressing folded elbows against my laps for support.

"A lot of crazy shit went down yesterday, Kate, you have no idea."

"I'm all ears dear."

And I spill most of the details pertaining to the evening.

"Wow," is all she manages.

"So your boyfriend..."

"Ex-boyfriend!"

"Sorry. Your ex and your sister are now a couple, and you kissed the boss. The boss, Leandro Allesandro Leone, actually comforted you?"

"Uh-huh."

"I really think the man likes you. The two of you complement each other magnificently. You, hot, him, cold, the perfect combo." she concludes, clapping hands in jolly.

"Yeah, no. I'm going to bath, because I'm not willing to sit around, and listen to how much the boss 'likes' me," I finalize, standing up to leave.

"Whatever you say, sweetheart."

I take a quick shower, slap on a comfortable, ash-grey, oversized, mid-thigh hoodie, white sneakers, tie my hair into a loose bun, and put on the bracelet Leandro got me yesterday, and I'm done.

I slide past my bedroom doors, bumping into someone's nude, sweaty chest, and even without having to look up, I know it's him. His intoxicating scent is so powerfully engrained in my mind, I'd be able to recognize it anywhere. I crane my neck, and our eyes meet. No t-shirt on, just some charcoal-black sweats that hang lowly on his waist, revealing his briefs and v-shape.

"Whatever happened between us last night, shouldn't have happened to begin with."

Even as he delivers the line, his tone still manages to remain cool.

See, this is exactly why I avoid attachments. Heavens, those words sting so bad, I won't deceive myself, but I know better than to show the hurt.

I fold my arms in front of my chest, brows knitting together, as I work to swallow the burning trails of bile.

"Dude, I get it. I was the one who kissed you, and it was obviously a grave mistake. Don't worry boss. It won't happen again, trust me," I simply reply, brushing past him, deliberately bumping into his left side.

I am so infuriated with him, I feel like I could easily drown in the embarrassment. But mostly, I am infuriated with myself, for allowing myself the pleasure of kissing him. I was so stupid! Stupid, stupid, stupid!

I make my way into the dining room, drag a seat at the table, then pour myself a glass of water. Costello and Giovanni are also sat at the table, eating their breakfast in harmonious silence.

"Morning, Eva," they greet in unison.

"Morning, guys."

"Had yourself a lovely night?" Costello adds.

"Yeah, I did, thanks for asking."

I rake the table, taking in the sight of the marvelous dishes sitting before me. Ever since I became pregnant, I have this crazing appetite. So, I serve just about everything set on the table, from the waffles, to the bacon, to the fried eggs, to the omelettes, and finally, to the glass pitcher of blended mango juice.

After all, I am eating for two people.

The rest of the day just goes by in a blur. The guys leave the house, and I'm left behind to ravish the solitude, doing just about nothing. I finally decide to make a black-and-white portrait of a young, broken female, who's screaming on the top of her lungs, whilst hot tears stream down her rosy cheeks. Maybe, it's because that is exactly what I yearn for right now, but won't grant myself the satisfaction of doing.



Once done, I decide to sit back, watch some television. The news speak nothing of my whereabouts, only about politics, economics, criminal activity, and more boring shit...

I wake up, to find my room pitch black. What time of night is it? I switch the lampshade, look up at the wall clock; it's a couple of minutes past midnight. I am famished to say the least, and so, I decide to go downstairs, grab myself something to eat. I tread lightly out of my room, down the hallways, down the stairs, down the halls again, and into the dining room, then the kitchen.

I walk over to the fridge, grab myself a pitcher of juice, some fried rice and chicken, and of course, water. Pouring myself a glass of blended fruit, I heat up the rice and chicken, then rest the platters and glasses over a tray, before proceeding into the dining room. Just as I'm done with my food, and I'm about to take my used utensils into the kitchen, my ears make out the soft sound of the front doors sliding open.

Who could be arriving at this hour? Then again, this is not my house, so whatever. Soft giggles, coupled with the loud smacking of lips, resonate from the living room not so far from where I'm currently located. Yes, this may not be my house, but seriously, can't whomever those two are, not get a room? Then again, what are my expectations from three, single, and fully-grown men inhabiting one home?

I take my platters to the sink, clean them up real quick, then head back to my room. As I make to mount the very first step, my ears pick the noise of glass shattering against tiled floors, coming from the living room. What's really going on down there? Curiosity compels me to switch directions, and make my way towards the living room. Oh my goodness...

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter eighteen

They are full-on making out on the sofa, redhead shoving her tongue down his throat. Then suddenly, he's attacking her neck like some starved beast. Moan after moan, groan after groan escapes from past the redhead's lips, echoing throughout the entire place. I feel...I feel pain, immense pain, much as I have no right to. It's as if someone just shoved a blunt dagger through my chest with a vengeful force.

My cheeks dampen, my jaws clench, as I drink in the appalling scene. What the hell? Why the fuck am I crying? What right have I anyway? I swipe angrily at the tears, nearly choke on a sob, and stand rooted to the carpeted grounds beneath. The redhead is straddling Leandro, gyrating hips and dry humping the man, as he growls lowly, almost maniacally. I clear my throat, and that's when they snap out of their little heated session, staring wide-eyed at the source of interference.

"Eva? Emma, do yourself a favor, leave."

"But we were just getting started, *bàmbîno*."

"Out, now." His voice drops a few octaves, sends unpleasant, ice chills down my spine, yet his demeanor remains composed.

"Fred, are you serious right now? Well, fuck you!" She yells, then gets off of him.

"A guard will see you out, goodnight."

Fred? Seriously?

Unable to bare it any longer, I exit the room, and head straight for the stairs. I mount the steps, two at a time, walk hurriedly into my room, slam the doors shut, and lock them from the inside. Leandro yells out my name repeatedly, but you know what, he can go fuck himself for all I care!

"Eva, open this door!"

I keep silent, pacing back and forth.

"Open this goddamn door, Eva or I swear to you I will break it!"

I keep mumm, pinching the bridge of my nose in exasperation. I can only imagine that all what he said to me back at the lake, is exactly what he said to the redhead. Nothing but sweet lies.

He keeps rapping knuckles against the doors, knocking like some deranged lunatic, violently turning the door nob without even stopping for a short breathe.

"*Gèsû Chrîstó!* Open this door Eva! Open it, or I swear on our child, I will break it down!" He yells, now kicking, and that makes me glare at it.

"Listen to me you dickweed, I'm not opening the goddamn door, you hear me! Stop trying to break it down, or I swear to you, I will jump off the balcony right fucking now! And don't you ever swear on *my* child again!"

Of course I can't do that and yes, it's simply an empty threat. Hell, I love my life and that of my baby way too much, to jump into our very deaths.

"Could you just open the door so that we can converse like civilised adults?"

"Oh, so that you end up shoving your disgusting tongue into my mouth, then tell me that it was all just some fucking mistake? Boy, I think I'll pass! And for your information, you are anything but civilized, Leandro!"

"Just open the damn door!"

"Just leave me the fuck alone, Leandro! Recognize hurt when you hear it, see it!"

And that statement, gets him to tone it down.

"Please, I beg you, Eva. Open...just open up. I screwed up, I really did, and I know that, but please..."

Oh, now he's begging? This is new.

"Leandro, let me make it very clear to you. I am the supposed surrogate, not your wife, girlfriend, fiancée, or even friend, so fuck off, and leave me alone!"

The knocking, the pestering, the nudging finally seizes, and so does the consistent shouts. There's only tangible silence on his end, and I let myself believe he's decided to leave. After thirty minutes of me just sitting on my bed, staring at nothing, thinking about nothing, glass shatters and wood breaks from a distance.

It's like items are being smashed, one after the other, against the walls. There's a sudden, urgent knock that causes me to snap my head in the direction of my bedroom doors.

"It's Kate, dear. Open up!"

I glide over to the barriers, slide them open.

"What's going on, Kate?"

"I should be asking you this. I've been trying to get some sleep, but heard both

you and the *càpó* fiercely yell at each other. Now he's breaking objects in his room. I'm worried sick he might hurt himself. Please, Eva, come and get him to open his doors," she literally pleads, on the brink of tears

She really cares for her boss, huh? She's got motherly affection for the man, despite his psychotic tendencies.

"Let's go then," I sigh, stepping out of my room, closing the doors behind me. I highly doubt he'll open up, especially since I refused to open when he asked me to. Oh, how tables have turned so quickly.

"Leandro, open up," I start whilst knocking on the doors.

Glass shatters against wall!

"Leandro, open this door right now, damn it!"

Wood smashes against the tiled floor!

"Oh, so now you care, Vega?" he questions, then laughs out maniacally.

I'm starting to get really worried about him.

"Open up!"

"Listen to me and listen good, Eva! You've never had the privilege of witnessing me get really pissed. Now, I am, not at you, but with myself, so be a good little girl, match up to your room, slip right inside, lock the doors, and fucking sleep."

"I'm not going anywhere until I'm certain you are okay. I'm not scared of you, Leandro. I know, for a fact, you are incapable of hurting me."

He groans, laughs out hysterically, then hiccups.

"Ahhhhhh, Eva. Sweet, naive, rather *foolish*, Eva. You want to play the heroine so bad? Save me from my evil ways? Become my redeemer? And what did you just say? You are not scared of me?"

He bursts into fits of more hysterical laughter, opens the doors wide, and yanks me inside, slamming them shut in Kate's face. I almost fall onto the floors, but manage to support myself against the wall before I do.

This room, reeks of fucking cigarette smoke and tequila, with white powder spread over the bedside table. Tiny shurds of glass decorate parts of the floors, while splits of wood coat most part of his bed and the surfaces around it. I turn to face Leandro, only to find him clutching the neck of a vodka bottle.

He abruptly smashes the bottom part of the bottle against the walls right next to him, causing me to jump slightly in fright, then, he slowly treads in my direction, malicious smile tagging on his lips.

He's eyes are bloodshot, his hair disheveled and clinging to the skin on his forehead, and he has no shirt on, just a black pair of sweats.

"You. are. not. scared. of. me. love?"

"You got that fucking right."

Only the heavens know just how bad I I am trying to keep up with this whole confidence facade, standing there convinced that he won't hurt me. He now stands immobile right in front of me, his palm snaking my neck, thumb smoothly massaging up and down, but not actually squeezing. Am I shook? Fuck yes.

As I work to free myself from the loose grip, try to shove him to the side, my body is pinned back against wall.

He brings the broken beer bottle to my face, uses it to gradually brush strands of my hair out of my face.

"So, you are not scared of me? You should be, you know," he whispers demonically into my ear, before leaning back, and resting the broken bottle against the pulse of my neck.

His gaze burrows deep into my tear-welling eyes, staring long and hard, and in that minute, I see death laced in his icy-blue ones. He has every fucking intent to kill me. The door nob keeps aggressively turning, as someone from the outside, tries to kick the doors open. Kate calls out to Leandro, pleads, begs, cries out to him, with the urgency coating her tone.

"Leandro, *càpó*, open up!" She shrieks, as the knob continues to turn.

Then suddenly, Leandro snaps out of his trance, and jerks his arm away from me like he just got scalded.

"I'm s...sorry, Eva. I don't know what came over me," he tries but fails in making coherent speech.

"You are sorry, Leandro? Oh, you don't know what came over you? Fuck you! You come home with some slut, and start making out with her, you knock on my bedroom door like some crazy ass maniac, then a few minutes later, you are breaking stuff, getting all high and shit, and threatening me with a shattered beer bottle? Fuck you!" I scream, hitting his chest with folded fists, slightly pushing him.

"You do not have the right to treat me like dirt, Leandro! You have no fucking right to put your hands on me! I am pregnant! Pregnant with your child, Leone! We can't be fucking doing this! I can't keep fucking doing this! It's not just about me! You know what, I can't be anywhere near you right

now. I'm going to bed." I choke out, then push past him, angrily wiping a stray tear that's slid down my cheek.

He grabs hold of my wrist, turns me to face him, compels me to halt. "Wait, please. Let's...let's talk please...I beg you," he stutters, his voice now a whisper.



Using my free palm, I unwrap my wrist from his grip, shaking my head at him.

"I can't do this with you right now, Leandro. Hot and cold, hot and fucking cold. That's exactly what you are," I strain to explain, unlock the doors to his room, open them, and step out, slamming them shut to make a statement.

Kate has her head leaning against the walls, her chest heaving, breathes uneven. Once she sees me, she turns to me completely, embraces me gently. Hugging her back with all my might, I finally crumble, break down completely.

"I can't do this anymore, Kate. Heavens, I fucking can't! I want to understand him, to understand that he's from a dark place, but I can't with him! There's just this gnawing pain in my chest, and I just want to reach out for it, grab it," the words tumble down my tongue.

She speaks nothing, doesn't respond to my rushed statement, just holds me firmly to her, like a mother would...

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter nineteen

Leandro's p.o.v

Words cannot begin to describe that which I feel for Eva. That woman drives me insane, and the thought alone, makes me shudder in delight. When I kissed her, pressed my lips to her's, I knew right then, right there, I wanted more, *needed* more, and that she would, without a shadow of doubt, become my addiction.

However, there is an issue that constantly nudges my brain, claws at the back of my mind. I am the head of two of the most prominent mafia organizations, and therefore, I need not drag her into my shady lifestyle. As it is, it's already enough that we reside under one roof, and that I brought her to the galla.

Much as the idea thrills me, I can't let her to fall for me, constantly live with the fear of my death, have to bare the responsibility of raising our child in solitude, without its father, due to my sudden execution. Many yearn for my death, seek to tear down and destroy my empire along with everything I value.

She, as well as our child, are both individuals I care for, and would kill for in a heartbeat. Much as I hate to admit it, I am well aware that danger will always be lurking in the shadows, that despite Eva being heavily guarded twenty four seven, one day, I might walk through her bedroom doors and find her dead, just as I did with Lenia.

I am absolutely shook, because crazed persons may try to casue harm on our child upon, or after its birth.

Aside from that, I'm also too selfish an individual. Yes, selfish is the word. Too selfish to see her in the arms of another, too self-centered to let her rebuild her life as the wife of some other person. I guess all I'm trying to say is, I am slowly falling for this captivating woman. But of course, I won't act on my emotions, won't let her reciprocate those feelings.

That would only do more harm than good to her. She is the epitome of everything divine, while I symbolize death, darkness, and cruelty, terms I came to terms with a long time ago. We emerge from contrasting worlds, hold

very different beliefs. I can't let her fall for me, no matter what.

Tired of running on the treadmill, I switch it off, and get off of the machine.

I wipe the sweat off my neck and forehead, before going downstairs to grab some water. In another few minutes, my thirst is quenched, and I'm making my way up the steps, back to my room. Just as I'm about to glide past Eva's doors, her tiny frame bumps into my bare chest, and for a nanosecond, she stumbles back, then finally steadies herself.

Her beauty never ceases to captivate me, capture my attention. Staring down at her, I decide to dissolve any feelings she may have sprouted for me. It's only logical, the rational thing to do, and is for the best.

"Whatever happened between us last night, shouldn't have happened to begin with," I speak in a monotone, dreading the very sound of those words that have just escaped past my mouth.

She folds her arms in front of her chest, looks me over, lifts her chin in defiance, maintaining that fiery, scorching gaze, and it takes every ounce of self-control, not to cup her face and crash my lips against hers.

"I get it, dude. I was the one who kissed you, and it was obviously a grave mistake. Don't worry, boss. It won't happen again, trust me," she flatly explains, causing my heart to involuntarily clench at the venom dripping from her words.

She is desperately trying to mask the hurt, conceal the agony I've caused, but I see right through her. And for that reason, my self-loath heightens a notch. Brushing past me, she slightly bumps into my left side, and I can do nothing but clench my jaws at the action. It's only for the best, if she chooses to resent me.

I slide back into my room, take a quick shower, oil the gun shot wound that's healing pretty well courtesy of Eva's assistance. I don't really have an appetite for anything at this of morning, simply because I had eaten before my workouts.

In under forty minutes, I am fully clothed, and ready to leave, tucking two guns safely into the waistband of my trousers. Padding down the fleet of stairs, I find Costello and Giovanni awaiting my presence in the living room, and as far as I can deduce from their facial expressions, they've got some information for me.

"Boss, we've found the guy that betrayed us to the Russians. It's Alesio," Giovanni announces, and for a moment, I can't help the ghost of a smile that curves on my face at the splendid news.

Exactly five weeks ago, Alesio foolishly disclosed our plans of ambushing the Russian mafia, and retrieving ammunition that was originally mine.

Not only that, he also took a step further, granted vital information pertaining to one of the secret warehouses that holds over five hundred tones of the hard drugs we import from different parts of the world, via black market. And there's only one thing I can graciously grant such an individual; execution. In this world I run, sympathy is the equivalent of bringing an empire to shambles, especially when they are two in counting.

"Let's go then," with a lot mastered patience, I instruct.

Serenity is a trait I've acquired, adopted, coded inside my brain, because then, the enemy won't know when I'll strike. Tranquil one second, lethal the next.

We exit the house, mount the Rover, and the chauffeur drives us off. It only takes us a matter of minutes before our arrival in the outskirts of the city.

All this while, my mind is firmly fixated on the one person it shouldn't, Eva. Just the mere thought of her being a weakness of mine, makes my blood boil. Having a weak spot, as a leader, is one thing. Having your weaknesses discovered by rival gangs, is another entirely different story.

"He's in that building, boss," Giovanni points at some old, abandoned, and incomplete building, effectively drawing me back to reality.

The chauffeur parks us in a safe and well hidden space that camouflages with the vehicle, and the guys and I soon alight, walking up to and into the building, down murky, dusty halls, and finally, into a dimly-lit room.

To my at most pleasure, I find Alesio dangling midair, arms tied above his head, and his upper body cut, burnt, bruised and bloody. The men present in this room, are those that have been recently recruited into the mafia, as per their will, of course. It's best they learn, first hand, what happens to treacherous persons, a method I like to call general deterrence, much similar to how the Romans crucified criminals out in public, so the general public could learn from it.

"Alesio, Alesio, Alesio. I honestly don't know what to say to you, sir. Treachery is never an option and you, better than anyone, should know that. Why would you sign your own death contract? What joy is there, in saying yes, I am willing to lay down my life for the enemy? But don't worry, Alesio. I'll make you *wish* for actual death."

"B...boss, I'm...s...sorry I pro...mise."

"You ought to be sorry, Alesio. You betrayed us, betrayed me. Why would

you do that to yourself, to your family?"

"B...boss please don't..."

Before he gets to make completion of his statement, thick blood dribbles down his lips, chin, neck, chest.

I retrieve my pen knife from the pockets of my blazer, slap on a pair of leather gloves, then make my way up to him, completely void of emotion. Sinking the blade into the skin on his thighs, as deeply as I possibly can, I drag it from top to bottom, right above his kneecaps. He lets out a weak shriek, his chest jutting, and frail screams rebounding off the four walls.

I observe, fascinated, as the blood oozes, sips, leaks from his open wounds, dripping onto the floors.

"All of you ought to learn from this!" I boom, my focus still on the trickling blood.

"Giovanni, acid."

He walks forth holding a beaker containing some solution, hands it over.

"Alesio, I'm sure you know a thing or two about acids and chemicals. You know what happens when concentrated hydrochloric acid comes into contact with your bare flesh? Now, imagine aqua regia solution on your skin. It can corrode metal, ponder over that. Picture the burning sensation," I taunt, drawing some of the liquid using the teat pipette, and making a drop on the grounds.

"Let's see what happens, shall we?"

He screams, prays whilst cussing out profanities, as the liquid makes contact with the fresh wounds caking his skin.

"Painful, isn't it? You know how much I lost because of your betrayal, Alesio? You have no idea. You are the cause of your own death."

And finally retrieving my silencer, I rest the muzzle between his eyes, stare deeply into those fear-laden pupils, and without warning, fire.

Taking off the gloves, I toss them against the grounds, light them on fire, until nothing but fine ash remains.

"You, take care of the body. You, go up to his family, offer them one hundred thousand Euros in cash, I'll hand it to you, see to it that they are out of Italy by tonight. I won't punish them for the transgressions of Alesio."

"Yes, *càpó*," both respond in unison.

We exit the building, and climb into the vehicle once again, with Costello instructing the chauffeur to drive us to one of my casinos. I don't fancy gambling, and if I have to, its for the pleasure, not because of an addiction.

I shrug off the blazer, fold my sleeves slightly beneath my elbows, then grab a patella cigar and lighter, taking in one long drag from the lit tobacco pipe. Once we get there, we alight, walk into the building via a back door, move past the heavy, scarlet curtains, and into the V.V.I.P section, immediately pouring ourselves a cold drink.

Costello and Giovanni receive company almost instantly, while I, on the other hand, lean in my seat, sip on my drink, keep to myself, ravishing the solitude. Ah, but I only get to enjoy myself for the briefest of seconds, before a piercing, screech-like voice, interrupts my peace.

"Hey there, sir. Mind if I join you?" Some petite, redhead *pûtànnà* walks up to me, shoots her shot.

She's clad in a black see-through top, tucked into a short, black, leather skirt, and I swear, if that skirt would be any shorter, it'd be a belt. She's got on some black thigh boots, her lips a glistening shade of black, and her eyes coated in so much eye liner, I doubt she can clearly see a thing.

She takes the seat right next to me, crosses her feet, one over the other, then glides her fingers up and down my chest in seductive attempts.

I consider the whole look everything short of attractive, but I do need a destruction. Eva detests me, and so what's the harm in getting laid?


"Wanna get out of here?" I question, attempting to smile a charming smile.

She throws her head back in pearls of laughter, and for a minute, I have to consider her mental stability.

"Seducing me, handsome? Yeah, let's get out of here. I'm Emma by the way, fake name."

"I'm Fred, real name."

And you, Leandro, are fucked!

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom 

Chapter twenty.

I silently walk back to my room, in the company of Kate. I don't want to make conversation, or receive any form of sympathetic advise, simply because I don't fancy growing weak with emotions of sadness.

"Kate, thanks for everything. I really need to sleep now."

"It's okay, dear. Goodnight and don't worry, sweetie. Things always turn out okay in the end."

I wonder where she got that cheesy line from, because for persons like me, shit never works out, ever!

Walking over to my closet, I retrieve my sleeping garment, slapping on an oversized night shirt and shorts. I'm not sleepy, just needed an excuse to be alone, and actually breath. So, my feet glide towards the balcony doors, and I step out of my room, into the chilling breeze of the silent night. No stars tonight, only thick nimbo cumulus clouds, pregnant with rain.

I rest my palm against my womb, softly rub, whilst drowning in thought. It's an unfathomably marvelous feeling knowing that you are going to birth and mother a baby. Will it end up looking like me, or like its father? Will it be a boy or a girl? If it's a boy, then I'll call him Asher, and if it's a girl, I'll call her Chloe. My mind wanders back further, deeper, to the memories of my sister, and a bitter smile tags on my lips. The treacherous bitch was my only family.

I watched her defend me, back when I was younger, from the toxicity of those who bullied me, admired her strength. She and I were polar opposites, still are. She, the epitome of kindness, while I built walls around my brain, shoved everyone away. After our mother's death, we were coerced to move in with our aunt Polaris. I'm guessing, the woman saw the both of us as a burden, even though she never really voiced it. She didn't have to.

Her constant beatings, her degrading insults, every second of us being anywhere near her, were a constant reminder. However, up until now, I can't blame her for viewing us in that light. I mean, she already had her four kids to take care of. Nonetheless, she clothed us, educated us, medicated and fed us, and for that, I am eternally grateful. Then sometime later, she succumbed to

an overdose, lost her life in the process. Poor woman had been traumatized by her sister's, my mother's, murder.

Sarah managed to graduate out of med school, moved us to our own little apartment, and from there, I lost touch with my cousins. Using her earnings as a gynecologist, Sarah educated me, saw to it that I myself graduated, all the while paying the rent.

After three years, I did manage to graduate as an architect, then decided to move into my own apartment, in order to let her live her life and enjoy her money. Earlier on, I did study nursing for some few months, maybe one month or two, up until I quit, realizing it wasn't my calling. And again, Sarah supported my decision, as she had so many times in our past.

How did Simon and I meet? We schooled in the same school way before mum died and dad was jailed, he was my best friend. You know what's funny though? Simon was one grade older than Sarah, who was three grades older than me, but still, he remained to be my best friend, and one of my sister's closest. So on his part, he didn't just cheat on me, no. He actually betrayed the friendship that lasted for over one and a half decades.

I take in a deep breathe, pinch the bridge of my nose at the recollection of past accounts. Like I said before, I have, on several occasions, thought of escaping this hell hole. But how do I do that exactly? I can't sneak out at night, nor can I during the day, seeing as the house is heavily guarded and my moves, within this huge building, are heavily monitored. Also, this is Italy, not fucking Los Angeles! I have no passport, no money, no identity card, no visa, nothing at all, that'd help me escape this country!

If I seek help from any one of the people working around me, I'm almost certain, Leandro will have them executed, and their blood, will forever be in my hands. And even if I go back, would I want to face both Simon and my sister? I know that whether I'd like to avoid them or not, I'll still end up seeing them while vacating from my apartment.

My thoughts are interrupted by the striking of lightning and rumbling of thunder. It's going to pour real heavy tonight. Sighing whilst dispelling all intoxicating thoughts, I slip back into my room, shutting the doors to the balcony, then heading over to my bed, and get under the covers.

Soon, I'm engulfed in sleep...

I'm woken from sleep, by the loud, repetitive rapping of knuckles against the doors. Who could it be, at this hour? Switching the lampshade on, I look

up at the wall clock; it's only three o' three in the morning, which only means, I have barely slept past two hours. What is wrong with people? The knocking sounds again, and the urgency that comes with each tapping, is starting to piss me off bad.

I get from under the covers mumbling incoherently, then walk over to the doors, opening them. What the fuck, just what in hell, does he want!

"Leandro, listen to me. I am not in the right state of mind, to have my moods fucked with, so just leave," I gritt, arms folded in front of my chest, as my brows furrow in anger.

"Can I come in...please. I won't take up much of your time."

This has to be the second time I've witnessed this man sincerely pleading. I take in one purposeful breathe, then exhale sharply, standing aside, and gesturing for him to come in. He sits over the chaise, as I head over to the bed. My back and head are pressed against the headboard, my legs outstretched, one over the other, while my arms, are folded in front of my chest, eyes staring into empty nothingness.

I am so fucking exhausted, and just want to sleep, and so, if he came here to speak to me, then whatever he has to say had better be fucking important. He clears his throat, sniffs, then rubs palms together.

"Eva, I am so, so sorry for everything. I said things...did things, and in so doing, I ended up hurting you. I don't want to hurt you, Eva, and right now, I loath every bit of my existence for doing so. I am beginning to deeply care for you, nothing about the kiss we shared was a mistake.

I only said that to make you recent my guts, in case you were starting to develop any form of attachments. I don't want to keep you against your will, but neither do I want to lose you, see you with another. Forgive me, *àmòrè*, please forgive me," he explains, then begs, voice breaking occasionally, while combing fingers through his locks, then palming his face in frustration.

I keep mumm for a while, digesting those words, engraving them in the back my mind with my eyes gently shutting.

"Can I tell you something, Leandro? Men have appalled me for the majority of my life. Every single one of them, repulsed me. And you know why? Because most, if not all the bullies that abuse me back in highschool, groped me, fucking insulted me because of my petite structure were fucking males.

Not only that, but my own father, my flesh and blood, repeatedly beat Sarah, mum and I, to fucking pulps. He fuelled my hatred with each fleeting second of my life, and like I told you, he to, humiliated me, hurt my sister,

abused and fucking murdered my mother. Now? Now I'm living under one roof, with a cold-blooded, blood-thirsty, cruel-hearted, ruthless mafioso leader. But what can I expect, right?"

He lowers his head in, I'm guessing, shame, maybe even remorse. Good. I want him to feel every ounce of the hurt I'm carrying in my chest.

"When I saw you with that redhead, I felt...I felt horrible, Leandro. I felt like you simply used me to sate your appetite, on the night of the Galla, toying with my emotions. Leandro, you've hurt me. You've hurt me real deep. No one deserves to be treated like they mean nothing."

I keep my mouth shut, battle against the desire to break down once again. But I won't give him the privilege of watching me sob because of him, fuck pregnancy mood swings.

"You know what's actually ironic? You strangled me once, then threatened me with a broken bottle. You know what I feel right now? You have any idea? Yet I can't seem to stop myself from being drawn to you. That on its own, frustrates me, Leandro!"

It scares the living hell out of me Leone, you have no fucking idea. Heavens, I feel so stupid, I am *so* stupid for being infatuated with you. So fucking stupid, senseless," I conclude, then purse my lips.

Yes, my eyes sting, but I'll be damned if I let myself shed even a tear. As if in agreement with my emotions, heavy rain droplets slap against the windows, lightning flashes, and thunder booms.

Leandro gradually rises from the chaise, walks up to me, kneeling right in front of me on both knees.



He presses both palms flat against each other, looks up at me with teary, bloodshot eyes, breathes heavily as if fighting to dominate the tears.

"I am so sorry, Eva. No valid excuse, I have no legitimate excuse for treating you the way I did, and I hate myself for causing you tremendous pain. I hate that I hurt you, and I am on my knees pleading..."

He fails to make completion of his statement, chokes on a sob, as he palms his face, obscuring me from the sight of the tiny streams cascading down his cheeks. Rising from the bed, I mean to exit the room, put some distance between the two of us, only for him, in one fluid movement, to rise with me, pull me to his chest, and bury his face into the crook of my neck.

He sobs quietly, silently, trembling from head to toe, and mumbling lowly and incoherently. His embrace around me only grows firmer the more I try to push him off, and so, I give in, stand immobile in his embrace.

"Forgive me, Eva. *Pèr fàvorè*, forgive me. I acted so foolishly, I am sorry," he whispers softly against the flesh on my neck, and the only I can do, is keep mumm, contemplating deeply.

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter twenty one

WARNING!! THE CHAPTER CONTAINS STRONG SEXUAL CONTENT. ONLY SUITABLE FOR MATURE READERS!!!!

"I forgive you, Leandro."

"I...I don't deserve it."

"Yet I still do," I speak, moving to glance up at him.

"Thank you, thank you so much, Eva. I make this promise to you this morning, I will never ever hurt you, lay hands on you, or make you feel like you are not worth it."

I only nod my head in acceptance. I can only trust him to live up to his promise. He sits us on the bed, rests his head against my forehead, with his eyes falling shut.

His lips press against mine but don't really move. After a short while, he slips his tongue past my lips, cups my face, kissing me so tenderly, passionately. He pulls away, lips gliding over the flesh on my neck, nibbling, sucking and marking. He is definitely going to leave hickies there.

He showers my skin with light, feathery kisses, moving lower to my collarbone. I try my best to stifle a moan from escaping past my mouth, only to fail in my attempts.

His mouth claims mine, yet again, this time, in a slow, sensual kiss, as he undoes the buttons of my sleeping shirt, slipping the thin, linen clothe past my shoulders.

My fingers rake through his silky strands, as his tongue teases and assaults the valley of my breasts. Pulling away, he takes precious time gazing at my nude chest, making me feel slightly embarrassed because truth be told, I've never been this level of intimate with any man in all my living.

I move my arms to palm my chest, but he grabs hold of my wrists, and looks deep into my eyes, his own dilating and overflowing with desire.

"So beautiful. You have nothing to be ashamed of, I promise, *àmore*."

He takes my left nipple between his kiss-swollen lips, flicking and swirling the hard pebble, then softly pulling on it. His palm reaches for my right bosom, squeezing gently, and massaging.

My back arches at the sweet torture, as a raw moan comes tumbling down my tongue, with my head falling back in ecstasy. He kisses, then sucks on the upper part of my breast, making my eyes roll to the back of my head at the waves of pleasure. Once he's done devouring my left nipple, he takes my right into his mouth, whilst kneading the other.

"Oh my...Lea... Leandro...oh my goodn..."

And there goes my ability to make coherent speech.

"What is it, *àmòrè*? Say it. I want to hear you say it."

Icey-blue irises pierce deep into coffee brown, as he utters those lust-glazed words.

"I...I want you, Leandro."

"Say it again," he speaks, grazing my nipple with his fang-like canines, then gently pulling on it.

"I fucking want you, Leandro," I unashamedly coo, as he completely draws away from me.

He smirks a cocky smirk, leans in, then speaks lowly against my hair.

"Your wish is my command, *àmòrè*. Let me worship your body."

Standing with me still clinging to him, he turns us around, then softly rests me against the velvet sheets. The pair of sweats he has on, does nothing to conceal his desires.

He gradually, painfully slowly, pulls on them, and I can't help how my body heats up at the sight of his stiff rod. Sculpted to perfection, is exactly what this man is, perfect imperfection.

"Like what you see, *àmòrè*?" He teases, climbing atop the bed, between my legs, and hovering over me, with our lips lightly brushing.

"Now, let's get rid of this, shall we."

The man literally tears my lace panties, tossing them to the floors aside, before turning to face me once more.

Yes, I am soaked, and embarrassed all at once. Tenderly, his mouth travels down my neck, marking and memorizing, gliding lower, with his tongue swirling around, and dipping into my navel.

My back arches further, curves deeper, breathes growing heavier, and fingers running through his locks.

He moves further down, then suddenly, halts in his movements.

"So fucking beautiful."

His head leans in, lips grazing my bundle of nerves, and tongue gliding flat, from bottom to top. Then, he captures my button in his mouth, sucks hard, not

once, but severally. I chant his name like a mantra, ravishing the ecstatic waves that threaten to swipe me off my feet.

And as if the delicious assault is not enough, he thrusts a finger into me, and pumps repeatedly, slow at first, then picks up pace as my groans intensify. Then, he adds a second and a third finger, continuously hitting this spot inside me, that causes my toes to curl in raw bliss.

"Lea... Leandro, please..."

"Just like that, *àmòrè*. Say my name just like that."

And finally, I reach the very peaks of my high, the euphoria washing over all my senses, as my chest heaves. Leandro's moves to hover over me, his face only mere inches away from mine, as he supports his weight on his palms.

He brings his fingers to his lips, licks them as his eyes interlock with mine, leans in and captures my mouth in his, allowing me to taste myself on him.

"I am going to be gentle with you, *àmòrè*," he whispers tenderly into my ear, sending shock waves down my spine, to my very core.

"Unless you want me to stop. Do you want me to stop, *àmòrè*."

"No, no. I want you, Leandro."

Smiling, he kisses me affectionately, as he positions himself at my entrance, and carefully eases himself into me. A sudden stinging sensation makes me clench my jaws, while he cautiously buries himself all the way in, staying perfectly immobile, as he groans lowly into the crook of my neck.

"Are...are you...*càzzó!* Are you okay, *àmòrè*?"

"Yes, Leo. Could you please -I don't know- move?"

"Are you sure?"

"Uh-huh."

Gradually, he pulls out of me, then thrusts back in. At first he is gentle, pounds slowly, I guess trying to ease the hurt, and with time, the aching simmers.

"Leo, faster."

He hammers into me, his tempo gradually heightening, until the stinging is replaced by a newly-found blissful experience.

I feel walls clenching around his shaft, whilst the pressure builds in the pits of my stomach.

He drills, and pumps, thrusts and pounds deeper, further, faster, all the while groaning and grunting, until his body above mine, tenses, and his hot seed shoots into me, with his lips connecting to mine, muffling his erotic growls.

"Oh, Leandro, I'm almost..."

He flips me over, palms my sides, then hoists me up, so that now, I am on my knees and palms. Then slowly, he sinks back into me. His palms glide smoothly against my skin, to my bosom, and tenderly, he begins to massage and swirl my pebbles around his dextrous fingers, all the while slamming and ramming into me.

His mouth leaves a trail of hot kisses up my spine, to the skin on the back of my neck, then against my shoulder blades, whilst my moans grow a tad bit louder, mixing and intermingling with his throaty groans. His hammering intensifies, as his one palm snakes softly around my neck, pulling me against his hard chest.

"You have me at your feet, Eva," lowly, he grunts into my neck, planting pecks on the flesh there, until finally, I shatter completely, and fall against the mattress with a bounce, breathing and gasping for air.

From a distance, my ears pick the sounds of his grunts, until finally, his seed spills into me, and his hot body collapses on the sheets, right next to me. Seconds fleet by, before regaining our composure, and once we do, he draws my nude frame against his, scoops me in his arms, and walks us to the bathroom. He cleanses us, helps me dry off, braids my hair neatly, then walks us back to the bed, and draws the duvet covers over our naked bodies.

Resting my head and bosom against his chest, and folding arms to support my chin, I look up at him whilst smiling, as he traces patterns against my back, with his other arm folding behind his head, and the covers draping low against our bodies, exposing us to the coolness of the room.

"I lo...care about you, I care about you, Eva."

"Do you mean that?"

"Every single word, I promise. Won't you say it back?"

My smile only widens, as I lean closer to his face, and peck his lips.

"I care about you to, Leandro. I care for you deeply..."

Okay writing this chapter was weird as freak but I'm finally done thank heavens. Anyway, please don't forget to comment and click the little star at

the bottom 

Chapter twenty two.

Slightly Sexual Content Up Ahead!!!

My eyes flutter open and, immediately, I search my surroundings. Why am I alone, and where is Leandro? I sit up in bed, sheets draping lower against my skin, and just then, a gentle breeze caresses my flesh, creating a trail of unpleasant goosebumps all over my body.

The balcony doors are ajar, and my guess is, Leandro is out there. Images from last night flood my mind with a vengeance, and I can't help how my body ignites, how my lips curve into a smile.

I get off the bed, body nude, pick up my night shirt, putting it on and buttoning it up, then walk out of my room, and into the balcony area. Leandro hasn't noticed my presence, since his attention is drawn to some paper he's holding.

"I knew you could draw but this...this is beautiful, *àmòrè*" he compliments, finally turning his head to look at me over his shoulder.

Oh, so he did hear me walk in then?

My feet glide over to him, and my arms wrap around his torso from behind, his intoxicating scent instantly infiltrating my senses.

I plant a tiny kiss over the flesh on his spine, then another over his right shoulder blade, and I feel him slightly shudder.

Yes, two weak spots. Standing on the tip of my toes, I look over his shoulder, to see the very first picture I drew while I was here; a portrait of him.

"I must admit, I do look hot," he comments, small smile curving.

My arms unwrap around him, and he finally turns to face me, shirtless, and only in his black sweats as usual.

"You've always looked beautiful, Leandro."

"Yeah? You think I am beautiful?"

"I mean, your icy-blue eyes, your lips, then there's the height, the gorgeous sun-kissed skin, black-as-midnight silky locks. Definitely beautiful," I finalize with a smirk, coffee brown eyes clashing with icy-blue. His arm slithers around my tiny frame, drawing me to his chest, as he holds onto the drawing in his other hand.

"Thank you, Eva, really. Today, I want to accompany you to the hospital for an ultrasound. Sounds good?"

"Yeah, that sounds okay with me."

"Also, tonight, we will be flying to New York. I've got some business I need to attend to in relation to my warehouses, and I'm not traveling without you. We'll take my private jet. I'll request Catherine to pack you a bag," he smoothly explains, then presses a kiss atop my head.

"How many days will we be staying in New York?"

"Well, I'm not quite certain, but I don't think we'll last a week."

"Okay then, I'll pack enough to last me a week. I am going to take a shower. Catch you later."

"And I am going to join you."

"Forgive me for asking, but boy, you sure we'll manage to shower? I think it's best we bath separately."

"Yeah, not happening, *àmòrè*. Correct me if I am wrong, but I'm sure you're feeling sore, so I'll help bathe you."

And so, tossing garment aside, and making our way into the bathroom, Leandro fills the tub, sinks in, then helps me into the scented waters. He ponytails my hair, his shaft pressing flat against my abdomen, then scoops the waters in his curved palm, pouring it over my bosom. Mastering every ounce of courage within my system, I lift my hips, sink myself against his shaft, with my palms clutching his shoulders for support.

"Àmòrè..."

The word is more of a moan, a soft husky whisper, than an actual word, with his arms moving to snake around my narrow abdomen.

I gyrate my hips, lips pressing against the skin on his neck, marking. Lips interlock, tongues taste, devouring, fight for dominance, whilst moans and groans of ecstasy rebound against the walls.

His kiss-swollen lips capture the pebble of my left bosom, tongue swirling around the hardened flesh, flicking softly, then sucking hard. And with that, my back arches, head falling back, and chest jutting. His attention switches to my right breast, and the sweet-assaults begin once again, while his free palm, he uses to knead my left breast.

With each lifting of my hips, with every gyration, his pelvis moves to meet, pounding, hammering, pumping deeper, harder, until finally, I reach the very peaks of my high, and the euphonic waves swipe me off my feet. Moaning, my head falls against his heaving chest, and just then, his entire body tenses,

and a deep, throaty groan escapes from past his lips, as his hot seed shoots deep into me.

"You will definitely be my death as well as my undoing, *àmòrè*," his raspy voice whispers, low and taunting, before he leans in, captures my mouth in one sensual kiss.

Lathering our bodies in scented soaps, he cleans us up, then helps me exit the room.

He has on one of my clean, unused towels clinging around his waist, water droplets trickling from his ruffled, unruly hair, down his neck and chest, as his skin glistens under the rays of the morning sun. No one should be this beautiful, and yet here he is. He moves to the chaise, sits on it with arms folding, gazes only in my direction with a small smirk tagging.

I walk over to my closet, pick out a casual outfit; cropped, red hoodie, red sweats and black sneakers, slap them on, tie my now-dried strands in a ponytail, then slide on my bracelet.

"You really do enjoy watching me, don't you?"

"What's there not to enjoy, *àmòrè*."

Oh, but those words, and how he says them...

"Yeah well, you should really stop looking at me like that, Leandro," I explain whilst looking at his reflection in the mirror.

"Why, *àmòrè*? You are mine, as I'm yours, no?"

"Leo..."

"Seems you can't breath properly. Let me go get dressed, then I'll see you downstairs," he teases, then chuckles at his own words.

I only nod, as he walks up to me, plants a kiss against the bridge of my nose, contrary to my expectations.

Oh, he knows that he affects me when he talks like that...

We exit the room, taking our different directions to our different destinations. On my way down the hallways, just before coming up to the fleet of stairs, I overhear the helpers conversing in one of the rooms. The doors to that particular room are ajar, and what they are gossiping about, causes me to halt in my tracks.

"I think he spent the night in her room, possibly slept with her. I detest her so much. Who does she think she is, coming into this house and snatching the boss away from me?"

"Lily, you know better than anyone else, you never had a chance with the boss. We all see how he looks at her, how his demeanor cracks up in her

presence. The last time I witnessed that look in his eyes, was when Lady Lenia was still alive."

"Oh shut up, Davia! Just shut it already."

I gently push the doors open, both ladies standing, and bowing their heads.

"So, which one of you is Lily?"

"It...it is I, ma'am," the brunette with jungle-green eyes speaks.

"Oh, she stutters now, does she? Weren't you, oh so confidently, speaking of just how much you detest me? Didn't you say, just a few minutes ago, that you have a strong 'liking' for the boss?"

Listen sweetie, I have nothing against you, I promise, but if you really want to have a damn good reason for hating me, then keep pursuing Leandro. Got that, hun?"

"Y...yes ma'am."

"Good then. I genuinely wish the both of you a lovely day," I speak, smile an innocent smile, then exit the room.

Climbing down spiral steps, padding down halls and making my way into the dining room, I find Costello and Giovanni sat down, and sipping coffee.

"Morning, guys."

"Morning, Eva," both reply in unison.

"Looking good this morning," Costello compliments, eyeing me from head to toe to head.

"Boy, I'm always looking fine and I ain't tryna sound cocky or nothing like that. It's a fact," I reply, dragging a seat, and serving myself some food. Sorry, did I say some food?"

No, I meant a lot of everything that's on the table. Leandro graces us with his presence, phone pressed against his ear, head nodding, and brows knitting.

"We will be arriving tomorrow, early in morning. No screw ups," he concludes, then hangs up.



"*Àmòrè*, we need to be on our way. Are you done eating?"

Well, that seems to peek Costello's and Giovanni's interest, because now, they are both staring at Leandro and I, brows arched.

"Ooooooh, now I understand why you seem to be glowing this morning, Eva," Costello teases whilst nudging Giovanni, and they both chuckle heartily.

"Are you done, ooor is there more?" I question in a monotone, which only causes their jolly laughter to increase all the more.

Leandro sits, without another word, serves himself some food, and as soon as he's done, we up and leave for the hospital.

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter twenty three.

I'm sat next to Leandro in the hospital lobby, here for the ultrasound. I'll actually get to see the little human growing inside of me, my baby. I'm actually...I don't know...excited, nervous maybe?

"Mr and Mrs Leone, your next," the nurse informs.

I'm Mrs Leone now, huh? I like.

Standing, she walks us down white-tiled floors, and finally, into the intended room.

"Welcome, Mr and Mrs Leone, my name is Doctor Andrez. Mrs Leone, please, go ahead and lie down right over there," the doctor, male, short, and grey-haired, directs, and I do as told.

He treads up to me, asks that I uplift my cropped hoodie slightly, and I do.

Leandro is sat beside me on a wooden stool, arms folded, feet crossed, one over the other, eyes piercing into the flesh on my stomach, watching in complete silence. The doctor holds up a small device, and some colourless tin of what appears to be gel.

"This, Mrs Leone, is a probe called a transducer," Andrez begins, before proceeding to rub the gel over my lower stomach.

Oh, this shit is cold!

"I will place it over the part covered in gel, then the high-frequency sound waves will travel from this probe, through the gel, and into your body. The probe will collect any sound that bounces back from your womb," he explains further, running the scanner over the part he just gelled.

I look at the little screen on my left, only to make out not one, but two images.

"Doctor, why are there two images on the screen?"

Leandro's hand reaches for mine, fingers intertwining, slightly squeezing, and causing my attention switch to him instead. That's when realization strikes me like a bolt of lightning. I am carrying...

"You are expecting twins, Mrs Leone. Congratulations ," Andrez announces, smiling down at me.

"I am carrying twins? I am carrying twins! Oh my goodness, bless the heavens!" I exclaim, palming my mouth, with eyes growing teary.

Leandro stands, embraces me gently, then presses a kiss against my forehead. "Àmòrè, thank you. Thank you so much. I am going to be the father of two all at once."

After the ultrasound session, Andrez gives me some instructions, simple dos and don'ts, because apparently, I've been stressing out a lot, and it's not healthy for the babies. After sitting in the room for goodness knows how long, we march down halls, in and out elevator doors, and out of the building. Some lady nurses, back there, repetitively stared at Leandro, and even now, I can't help the pang that slices my chest.

Leandro is one fine specimen, yes. His choice of dressing, is a bonus. He knows it, I know it, every fucking body that's had the privilege of *seeing* or *meeting* him, knows it. I can only roll my eyes at the ridiculous emotions of envy, as we continue towards the black sports car. I've noticed that he is a crazed lover of black, must be his favorite color.

"You appear troubled by *their* glances, àmòrè. Don't be."

"Boy, when I say you belong to me, I mean you belong to *me*, and I ain't sharing or none of that shit," calmly, I explain.

His only response is a low, throaty chuckle, as he walks over to his side of the car, and climbs in.

"Do you want to grab something to eat before we head back, àmòrè?"

"Boy, what kinda question is that? Of course we have to stop over at some food place. I am freaking starved."

He ignites the engine, drives off without another word, and that makes me think back to my response, makes me question myself.

Guilty, I feel extremely guilty for snapping at him.

"Leo, I'm sorry for snapping at you. I don't know what's wrong with me."

He keeps silent for a minute or three, focus drawn on the roads ahead, causing me to chew on my bottom lip.

"Pregnancy does come with a bonus package of mood swings, so you need not worry, àmòrè."

Driving to some classy restaurant, we order ourselves something to eat. For me, some french fries, two chicken burgers, a chicken burrito and blended juice, while Leandro only orders some french fries with ketchup, salad and a Coke. As we eat, we ponder and converse on the names we'd like to call our twins.

"How about Nathan and Daniel," I suggest, and that only earns me a stoic expression.

"Baby, the names have to be Italian, since I'm Italian," he finally responds. "Fiiiine. Hit me up with some Italian girl names, then the boy names."

"Girl names; Serena, Viola, Alessandra, Livia, Camilla, Paola and Aurora, boy names; Carlo, Cosimo, Filippo, Elia, Luca and Lorenzo."

"I like all the girl names on the list, with an exception of Paola. In the boys' section, I'm in love with the names Luca, Lorenzo, Elia and Carlo. Filippo and Cosimo, not so much."

"Gradually, we'll come up with the set of names for the twins, *àmorè*. Anyway, I want to take you somewhere. I'm certain you'll fall in love."

"Uh, where exactly?"

"You'll see. Finish up first."

I can only roll my eyes at his response.

"Why won't you just tell me?"

"It's called 'surprise' for a reason, *àmorè*. Now, stop plunging, and enjoy the meal."

"I don't like..."

Our conversation is cut short by the waiter that's now approached our table. Leandro clears the bill, and we are out.

Currently, I am stationary before this very large building, staring up at it puzzled, with Leandro right next to me.

"Let's go inside," Leandro speaks, pulling me by the palm, and walking us into the...art gallery?

How in hell, did I not see the sign board outside? This place is blooming, blossoming, and bursting with life. So many artistic paintings, magnificent art pieces and statues, all breathing beauty into this entire place. I turn to face Leandro, who's looking down at me, small smile tagging.

"You embrace art with a fiery passion, so I thought why not. Do you like it, Eva?"

"I love it, Leandro," I reply, standing on the tip of my toes, cupping his face and pressing my lips to his.

We move from one portrait to the next art piece, with me snapping a photo of this, and taking a picture of that, via Leandro's phone. All of them are so enchanting, hold their own truth, whisper a different story.

My fingers glide over one, fascinated by how the different hues used, blend so perfectly. So complex, yet so unique. Leandro watches, observes, nods occasionally as I work to explain my thoughts on each, and at some

point, I forcibly make him pose for a photo next to a painting.

The man's facial expressions are always hard, emotionless, void.

Once we are done touring the gallery, we exit the building, make our way back to the vehicle, and start our long drive back home. The song 'money' by 'Cardi B' plays on the radio, and I can't help but shriek in excitement, whilst turning the volume up. Then, Leandro does the one thing I'd never think he'd do. He sings along, head bobbing, and fingers drumming against the wheel.

"You know the song, Leo?"

"Yes, why wouldn't I?" Turning to face me, he inquires, tone dripping with sarcasm.

He looks away, smiles that innocent, panty-wetting smile of his, then continues from where he left off, head swaying. We sing along til the song comes to an end, and the next begins.

Different harmonious rhythms from various genres play, and we choir along to the ones we are familiar with, humming to the ones we are not. It's funny how the simplest activities we choose to engage in, with those we love, can create a variety of long lasting memories. One day, we'll look back, smile heartily, laugh out loud.

When we finally arrive home, it's some minutes to seven. We drive into the compound, Leandro carefully parking his vehicle in the garage, and for a moment, we just sit there, before I finally pop the bubble of quietness.

"Leo, thank you so much for today. It was the best I've had in a really long time."

He leans in his seat casually, reaches for my cheek and cups it, gently running his thumb over my lip, eyes interlocking with mine.

"You are welcome, *àmòrè*. I want to see you happy, make you happy."

He draws closer, rests his lips against mine, just rests them, then presses another against my cheek tenderly, before leaning back in his seat.

"Eva, I want you to know that I am deeply in love with you. I have no idea when it all begun, but right now, right now you have me at your mercy."

I smile at his words, compelling myself to trust them, to trust him.

"And I love you, Leandro."


"Are you willing to stay by my side, despite the fact that I run the mafia?"

It is a question he was bound to ask, and I have a honest answer for it.

"When I finally admitted my feelings to you, I knew what I was getting myself into. I don't expect you to change your occupation over night, I can't just walk into your life, and rearrange every single thing that makes you *you*."

I'm not in support of you killing people, however, and would appreciate it if you did it only when deemed *necessary*, only when there is absolutely no other way to resolve issues between you and those who work for and with you. When you feel the need to protect those whom you cherish, then I'll have to agree that desperate times do call for desperate measures."

I can either accept him for who he is, or just walk away, because trying to change him will be impossible. What am I even saying! I can't change him simply because I love him. He will change because he loves me, though that might take him time. It's in his blood...he's already in too deep...

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom 

Chapter twenty four.

"

I am lain on Leandro's chest, inside his room in the private jet. Costello and Giovanni are, of course, travelling with us.

"Leo, can I ask you something?"

"Go ahead, *àmòrè*," he speaks, stroking fingers softly through my tangled curls.

"What happened to your dad after you-uh-left your house?"

He takes in a deep breathe, as if contemplating whether or not to respond, remains completely immobile, and for a moment, I actually start to regret raising the topic.

"So, you've heard the story? It doesn't matter. I heard from around, that my old man passed. Murdered by some guys he owed some money, and since he wasn't able to pay up, he was killed," he replies, ends with a humourless chuckle.

"When I was young, his name for me was 'bastard.' I recall him burning my toes with a hot iron, starve me for days, said that since I wasn't his son, he wasn't obligated to feed or clothe me. Then one night, he came home drunk, staggered his way into my room, hurling insults and screaming profanities. I was asleep at the time, and was woken by a hefty blow across the cheek, accompanied by heavy, brutal beatings, that left me with a badly broken arm, humerus and radius disjointed.

My patience had run out, so I decided to escape. Treading down cold streets, I felt alone, I was alone, and happened to witness a murder during that time of solitude. I watched as a man got shot multiple times in some dark alley, and by the time I realized that the murderer had caught sight of me, it was already too late. Wrong place, wrong time.

I recall how he walked up to me, gun aimed in my direction, and gave me an ultimatum. Death that very minute or joining the mafia, I chose the latter. Was the sane choice to make. Four years down the line, and I had worked my way to the top, became leader of the Italian mafia. Another two years, and the American mafia became part of my empire.

I've lead the mafia for ten years now, that is my truth, Eva. I am a fucked up man, who's destroyed and wrecked havoc in the lives of many. It's rather ironic that you are not petrified by my mere name. However, I do not seek your empathy or pity. Pity is an equivalent of vulnerability," he explains, voice monotone, whilst he rubs my upper arm smoothly.

"Leandro, I've accepted you just the way you are. I can't walk into your life, compel you to change your lifestyle, demand that you quite the adrenaline rush. It's already in your blood. You've been doing this almost all your life, so what right have I, to force you into becoming someone your not?

Like I said, I do not support you killing *at all*, but I most certainly don't except you to switch behaviors, switch occupations overnight. I know it's not that simple to just change, it never is. Habits are like a second skin. Everything will happen in due time, at your own pace."

Not knowing what more to add, I fall mumm, tracing the outline of the tattoo plastered on his skin.

"You might find it rather cheesy, and slightly difficult to believe, but in this dark life of mine, you are the only light I possess."

"And this light will not go out. I'm all in, Leandro, and don't you forget it."

I am seated on one of the leather seats in the hotel lobby, awaiting Leandro to finalize the booking process. The receptionist is a fine young lady, who apparently, can't seem to keep her teeth as well as her 'seductive' smile to herself. Shamelessly, she throws her head back in pearls of laughter, while Leandro comments on something, acting oblivious to what's actually going on. See, that right there, is what I like to call a power move.

Costello and Giovanni are both staring at the screens of their phones, so they don't take notice of what's happening. I eye the receptionist once more, observing as she tilts her head, causing her long, neatly curled purple locks, to sway to the side. The nerve of this bitch. I am sorry, but that just about does it. I rise from the seat, walk over to the reception, stand right next to Leandro, with my palm resting over his shoulder.

"Babe, the kids just called, said they miss us so much. Carlo wanted to talk to you, but I had to explain to him, that you were rather busy."

My eyes travel to meet the receptionist, and my smile fades instantly. Gazing at her, with brows lifted, I watch as she shifts uncomfortably in her seat, clearing her throat.

"Hun, do what brought you to work, lest you lose your job," I speak, then offer an innocent, yet provocative smile.

Yes, I am possessive, and I am sorry, but I don't have any fucks to give.

I look up at Leandro, and the man seems to be holding in laughter.

"Uh, here are the keys to the three rooms, sir," she rashly chokes, handing the keys over to Leandro.

Oh, so now she's all professional and shit? I can only roll my eyes irritably, as I make my way back to my seat. Leandro follows behind clutching a set of keys, tossing Costello and Giovanni their set, and in another minute, our luggage is picked up by four bellboys and wheeled away.

"What was that, *àmòrè*?"

"What was what, Leandro?" I question in turn, before proceeding to walk away without another word.

We take the elevators to our floor, and soon, we are right in front of the doors leading into our hotel suite.

"So, you like it, *àmòrè*?" Leandro questions once we glide past the doors.

"Uh, yeah, this place is cool."

My feet glide into and out of every room, eyes taking time to appreciate the decor and blend of colours employed in each. The bedroom offers a magnificent view of the New York, since the walls are made of glass, and for the briefest of nanoseconds, I stand glued to the floors, staring out into the darkness of the early morning.

After taking a long shower, both Leandro and I, he prepares us a decent meal.

It's only seventeen minutes past three in the morning, so I decide to prepare him some coffee, grant him the quiet he needs to handle business on his laptop.

"Will you be up long, Leandro?"

"An hour or two. I need you, on the other hand, to rest, *àmòrè*," is his only response, before he tips his mug, and sips the coffee.

"Say less, baby. And by the way, my feet are swollen, so I better get going."

His gaze travels down to them, then up to me, before he proceeds to shut his laptop, rest the mug against the table, and rise from the seat.

"Why are you getting up?"

"Come with me, Eva."


He pulls me to the bedroom, sits me on the bed, then retrieves some coconut-oil bottle from his suite case. Sitting cross-legged before me, he takes hold of

my foot, kneads and massages tenderly, until my head is thrown back in raw, unfiltered satisfaction.

Switching attention to the other foot, he oils it, squeezes softly, rubs smoothly, then rises on his feet, and rests the bottle aside. I almost snap at the loss of contact, but manage to keep my mouth shut, and drag my drowsy body into bed, pulling the duvet covers over me.

He cleanses his hands, makes his way over to the bed, tucking me in without a single word.

"Thank you so much, Leo. I needed that so bad," and with those few words, I press a chaste kiss against his forehead, gradually feeling myself drifting into slumber...

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter twenty five

The pic above is of Lenia...

"You sure you want me to come with you, Leandro? I mean, I could stay behind, and wait for you to come back," I try to reason, folding arms and gazing up at him.

He stares me down, brows furrowing, and tongue gliding over lower lip, a habit of his, when deep in contemplation.

He is fully clad in a pair of black jeans, white, tight-fitting polo-neck shirt tucked neatly, black trench coat, finely-polished Italian loafers, and a golden watch to complement the look. Yes, he is quite the sight.

"That's not gonna happen, love, so you better get dressed, because we are running late. Do you still have the bracelet I gave you?"

"Yeah, here it is. Took it off when I was going to take a shower."

"Good. Wear it at all times and don't take it off, okay?"

"I won't take it off, you have my word."

Smiling up at him, I stand on the tip of my toes, pressing a short, sensual kiss against his lips. His palms glide down my sides and hold my waist in position, just as I'm about to pull away.

"What happened to us running late for the meeting?"

"This is a valid reason, *à môrè*," he teases, raining light kisses against the skin on my neck.

"No, Leo. We finish up with the meeting first, then the rest will follow. It's that simple," I reason, trying to free myself from his hold.

He sighs, nods, then finally releases my waist, and exits the room. I reach out for my suitcase, retrieve a decent outfit, slap it on briskly, then eye my reflection in the mirror. Scarlet-red, tight-fitting cropped top, matching silk, fitting skirt with a slit at the front, silver three-inch stilletos strapped all the way to slightly beneath my kneecaps, hair tied in a tight bun, and minimal makeup to complete the look. Yes, this ought to do the job.

"I'm ready, Leandro," I announce, making my way into the living room where he is sat, with eyes trained on the screen of his phone. See, I've never had anyone have an effect on me, simply by gazing in my direction. But this

man, this man's glances have my thoughts disoriented every single time. He rises in silence, makes light, deliberate steps in my direction, slithers an arm around me, then draws me closer to him.

"See, *àmórè*, you genuinely lack understanding of just how bad you affect me, don't you?"

His voice is low, taunting, teasing, caressing my skin.

I push him away gently, walk towards the front doors, then turn to face him.

"Are you coming, baby?"

"I was going to, trust me, until you decided to push me away," he coos, smile curving, as he leans against wall, pockets his hands casually.

I roll my eyes, acting oblivious to the innuendo, and step out of our suite, only to find Giovanni and Costello awaiting our presence on the other side.

"*Gêsù Chrístó*, Eva. Why are you always insistent on trying to murder me with your dressing and gorgeous body?" Costello dramatically questions, eyes unashamedly raking my outfit.

"Costello, do well to keep your mouth shut, and your eyes to yourself," Leandro's voice is tranquil, but anyone that knows him well enough, knows that his promises are anything but empty.

He locks the doors, leaves the keys at the receptionist's desk, and we exit the building, mounting the Bentley parked outside.

We finally make it to the casino, a place built for the wealthy, those who carry bags upon bags of money, the filthy rich, high-class society individuals, and right next to the fancy building, stands a night club booming and bursting with music. It's not even nine, but the number of teens and youth queuing outside, speaks volumes of the quality services offered within the vicinity

Costello receives a phone call, and once he's done speaking to whomever, his gaze travels in Leandro's direction.

"Matteo requests that we meet him in the V.I.P section of the club, instead of in the casino, *càpó*."

"I am not in the mood to bicker with one of my employees this evening, so let's get going."

Alighting the vehicle, we make our way into the building via a back door. The atmosphere is thick, coated and laced with the pungent smells of cigarette smoke and liquor, and from my aerial view, I observe sweaty bodies grinding against each other, strippers moving perfectly and in sync with the beats of the R and B song playing in the background, waiters and

waitresses gliding amidst the throng, serving drinks, and not forgetting the neon rays flashing in various hues.

We tread past thick, lilac curtains, and into a secluded, more quiet section of the club, where we find a man sat on one of the dark-as-night leather seats, awaiting Leandro's presence. He is tall, looks to be in his early twenties, his ears thoroughly pierced, with different tattoo patterns and designs intermingling on the flesh on each side of his face.

"It is a pleasure finally meeting you, especially after such a long time, *càpó*," the guy is quick to greet, bowing his head whilst he speaks.

"Shall we commence then, Matteo?"

I do not miss Leandro's clenching jaws, neither can I ignore the chills that come with his tone. For some reason, he is a sulking mess.

He pulls me with him, sits me next to him on the seat, and once Costello and Giovanni take their respective positions, the meeting begins. After an hour or so of me sitting there, comprehending nada, since the meeting is being held in fluent Italiano, the fatigue creeps in, and my legs gradually begin to cramp.

"Matteo, do you find Eva's presence slightly distracting?"

"S...sir?"

"For a fact, I know you never stutter, so don't piss me off any further. Back to my inquiry. Do you find her presence distracting? Your eyes have been drinking her in for minutes now, and I don't take kindly to your actions."

"Forgive me, *càpó*."

"Now, where were we?"

And with that small exchange of words, Leandro has successfully managed to wreck the nerves of those present within the room, especially the Matteo guy's.

"Leo, I need to use the restroom?"

"Walk down the halls, then make a right turn. Two doors down, and you're there."

It takes me only a couple of minutes to get to my destination, glad that my feet can stretch to their full length. Padding over to the sinks, I press the waters against my forehead and cheeks, dry my face shortly after, then stare at myself in the mirror. Yes, I need this night to be over and done with. Oh, the chocking, toxic masculinity up in that room!

The doors creak open, and in, walks *him*.

"What are you doing here? This is the ladies bathroom, in case you missed

the sign outside!" I snap, turning to face him, folding arms, and knitting brows in both confusion and suspicion.

"I just needed to find you. You look so fucking hot in that outfit, *bèllà*, even with the baby bump," he compliments, making gradual, deliberate steps in my direction, before proceeding to kiss my lips.

It takes me by complete surprise, but once I regain my composure, I knee him twice in the balls, pushing him away from me, then sprint towards the doors, taking advantage of his weak state.

Just as I'm reaching for the nob, about to unlock the doors, a sudden, piercing pain rips through the back of my head, compelling me to fall on my knees, wincing and grimacing in raw agony. I reach out for the broken flesh, only to feel warm liquid trickling against my finger tips.

Blood, a lot of blood on my fingers. He grabs me by my bun, and yanks on the strands hard, causing my neck to crane upwards and face him. I refuse to reveal emotions of fear or weakness, because that would only fuel his ego. So instead, I glare daggers at him, whilst he stares me down.

"You are a spirited little thing. I like you already," he taunts, reveals an American Colt Pistol from the waistband of his denim trousers, and rests the muzzle between my eyes.

"Sleep now," he whispers gruffly in my ear, before the muzzle of the gun slams harshly against my temple, effectively knocking me out...

Hey guys. Please don't forget to vote comment and share. Love y'all 🤪❤

Chapter twenty six

Leandro's p.o.v

"So Matteo, where are the documents that require my signature?" I inquire, extremely bored by the meeting.

"Oh, they're right..."

He abruptly halts in his movements, after taking sweet time searching his briefcase.

"Uh, sorry, sir. I think I left them in the car. Give me just a few minutes to grab them."

Right about now, I have this overwhelming urge to retrieve my pistol from my pockets, and shoot the man dead, right between those fear-laden eyes. Sometimes, even my attempts to remain cool and serene, prove futile.

"Hurry," it is a simple order, with my fingers drumming against the mahogany-wood table in attempts to keep my anger at bay.

"Come down, *càpó*," Giovanni comforts, causing my lips to purse, and my eyes swipe over in his direction.

After sitting there, in the audible silence, for the next fifteen minutes, thirty two seconds, Matteo finally graces us with his presence, papers in hand. He hands them over, and after carefully reading, analyzing and evaluating the details, I sign the white sheets. I am a very cautious man, it's how I've managed to survive this world. A slight slip up, and one is done for, trust me.

I hand the papers back, and keenly observe as he neatly files then tucks them inside his briefcase.

"Well, *càpó*, I will surely contact you, immediately I have word from Mr Brandy. I must take my leave now."

Concluding his speech, he bows his head, and stride past the lilac curtains.

And where on earth is Eva? She's been gone for a solid twenty minutes.

"*Càpó*, where are you going?" Costello is quick to question.

"To find Eva."

I strut down the halls, and glide into the restroom, only to find that it's empty. No one is in here, except for some brunette that's busy throwing up. She

stands on her feet, and staggers her way out of the room. Pathetic. Doesn't even take time to rinse her mouth, the drunken mess of a woman.

But where is Eva? I search every stall, not once, but twice, and each time, my efforts only prove futile.

Or has she finally decided to escape. Would be the wiser thing to do. I haven't granted her good enough reason to stay behind, because of my volatile nature. But she promised, said she'd never leave me, and she's anything but deceptive...

That's when something catches my eye, a writing on one of the mirrors, in a blood-red shade, the name...Savage? No, no, this can't be happening again. This cannot be happening a second time! Each alphabet of the damned name tumbles down my tongue, and I run my hands over my face in exasperation, panic, frustration. Punching the mirror, I effectively shatter the blasted thing, feeling a new kind of pain pierce through my knuckles.

That son of a bitch has Eva, and I'll be glad to give him the agonizing death he so wishes for.

I yell out as if crazed, punching the mirrors right next to the one I just broke, pulling on the roots of my strands, and trying my hardest to keep a firm grip on sanity. I have sought that imbecile for a good five years, five fucking years of my life!

Costello and Giovanni walk in, halting right in their tracks as soon as they take in my disoriented state.

"*Càpó*, what's the matter?" Costello's voice echos.

"He took her. That fucker, Savage, has taken Eva. He fucking has her," I explain in a monotone, clutching the sinks for support, with my chest heaving. Even I manage to surprise myself with the amount of tranquility laced in my tone, despite the situation.

"Boss, was she wearing the bracelet you gave her?" It's Giovanni's turn to inquire.

"Yes, yes she was."

At this point, my thoughts are so overly clouded with rage, to the point of being incapable of thinking straight, or thinking at all, for that matter.

"Didn't you install a tracking chip in one of the charms? We can use that to try and track her down," Costello concludes, making me stand up more straight at the revelation.

"We are not going to *try*. We *will* track her down, find her, bring her home. Let's go now."

Exiting the restroom, I briskly search my pockets for my phone. Then, realization slaps me right across the face; I left it behind. I wasn't going to need my laptop for the meeting, so I left it deliberately. But my phone? How could I be so careless, and in a situation like this!

In the car, my fingers repetitively drum against my thigh, anxiety as well as anger, sipping into my venations, boiling my blood. I will my body to remain sober, will my mind to remain sane, and will my lungs to keep breathing.

It takes us a whole hour to arrive back at the hotel, and as soon as we do, I alight the vehicle, and make my way into the building, and up to the receptionist's desk.

"Keys to room one hundred and two."

"Sure big bo..."

"You better hurry if you wish to keep yourself breathing, love."

I have every intent to act on my words, if need be.

She rises from her seat without any further words, hands me the key, and I'm on my way. I can feel the pounding of the veins in my temple, I can hear my prominent breathing, and I can feel myself I loose grip on reality.

Breath, Leandro. Just breath.

Unlocking doors, I find my phone rested atop the sofa. I grab it, impatiently tap on the various icons, until I spot the red, blinking dot stationary on a particular street. Zooming in, I am able to clearly make out the location they have her held hostage; some old, abandoned church.

Walking further into the suite, I retrieve a small briefcase, unclasp the locks, and check for the contents within. Explosives, two silencers, aqua regia solution, and three silver daggers. They ought to do the trick.

I exit the room, lock the doors behind, leave the key at the receptionist's desk, and stride out of the building. When it comes to shattering an individual, it's best to employ psychological torture, and that is exactly what I shall be offering wholeheartedly tonight.

Seconds convert into long minutes of being stuck in traffic, and never has fear felt so prominent, so pungent, so vivid. I feel compelled to ditch the car, and make a run for it, but with the full knowledge that I won't make it on time, I end up strapping myself to the seat, impatiently waiting, clenching and unclenching fists at the multiple scenarios playing and replaying in the back of my head.

Even as I try to keep my optimistic side blooming, I can't help but envision the amount of pain they've already subjected her to. If this Savage son of a bitch has been working for the mafia, or for a cartel or gang, then the methods he must have already used...

The blinking dot is still on the abandoned church, but as we drive closer and closer to our destination, it suddenly stops gleaming.

"*Càzzó!*" I yell, slamming fists against the front seat, combing fingers harshly through my hair, and effectively drawing both men's attention.

"What is it, boss?"

"I've lost track of Eva. He's discovered the tracking chip, destroyed it most certainly!"

Reaching for my pockets, I retrieve a liquor flask, pop the cap, and chug the drink. I am going crazy, fucking insane!

I resent myself even more, for all the times I caused Eva any form of hurt, all the times I punished her, ridiculed her, even harmed our kids indirectly. I'd die for them without question, in a fucking heartbeat. Nothing will happen to them, nothing will happen to her, because I will permanently lose hold on sanity!

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter twenty seven

I am awake, eyes still shut, hair, which I remember, oh so well, tying in a ponytail, now fallen over my face, and my head in excruciating pain. I'm positioned between two steel-metal poles, my right arm and leg, tied to the pole on my right side, while my left arm and leg, are firmly bound to the one on my left.

I try my hardest to break free from the bondages, but the sisal ropes only gnaw into my skin, sinking deeper, shredding further with each struggle. I am nauseous, and the world around me is spinning so fast, too fast, as I battle to recall all that transpired. My head is hanging low in exhaustion, practically pounding as if begging to leave my body. I can't take this dizzy spells anymore.

I finally let my eyes flutter open, but instantly, I shut them due to the overwhelming, blinding illuminations that flood the room. Once again, and with all my might, I force them open, and feel them sting to the point of tearing up. I blink repeatedly, working to examine the room in which I'm being held captive. The place is so old, the paint on the walls has chipped off, so many cobwebs on the dusty walls, and on the floors, lie broken pieces of glass scattered everywhere.

There is a small, rusty, metal table to my right and on it, lay a couple of tools; steel nails, a syringe containing some muddy-brown liquid, a dagger coated in dry blood on the blunt-looking blade, and a bloody pair of scissors, fresh blood, might I add. In the far corner of the room, lies an old chair, with chains upon chains connecting it to a car battery. Whoever abducted me, has every intent to execute me, *painfully. Torture* me to my very death.

"Well, you are finally awake, my beautiful. It's about time."

"Son of a bitch. What do you want from me?"

Only the heavens know just how much energy that one sentence has sapped from my system.

"Oh, but it's not me that wants you. It's Savage who's taken an interest in you...in seeing you dead, rather. So, just sit tight and enjoy your stay here."

He makes gradual, deliberate steps in my direction, then proceeds to kiss my lips forcibly, so I pull on his lower lip, piercing the tender flesh as hard as I can. His glare remains trained on my face, with the raw, unfiltered fury radiating off of him in waves. Again, he devours my neck like some crazed psychopath, and my only form of retaliation, is to shake my head and wriggle my body violently, despite the agony I feel at the friction the ropes are creating against the flesh on my wrists and ankles. I feel so dirty, so fucking disgusting!

"*Pûtànnà!* You just caused me bite my tongue!"

"Go fuck yourself," I croak, battling to keep the tears from falling.

His fist connects with my jaw, causing my head to snap to the side with such a vengeful force. Salty, metal liquid dribbles down the corner of my lips, as I turn to face him, smiling a sadistic smile.

He grabs hold of my bosom, squeezing harshly, fondling to the point of me wishing for lady death to come swipe me off my feet. He showers a trail of kisses against the skin on my collarbone, hands still pressed against my chest. I try my best to fight him off, try to shove him away, but the fact that both my arms and legs are bounded, does not help.

"Could you stop protesting already!"

"Matteo, what do you want from me?"

He grips my chin, forces me to face him, to look deep into those sickening eyes.

"Like I said, I'm not the one that's interested in you. It's Savage, so stop with the questions already, damn it! Do you see that chair right over there?" he questions, tone low and gruff, pointing towards the old, termite-infested seat, "It's an electric chair. That only means, that if you make me any angrier than I already am, I'll gladly make you sit on it, and ravish the electricity jolts that'll literally course through all your venations, you hear me?"

He finally lets go of my chin, and my head ends up falling, disheveled strands cascading down my face. I feel like my skull weighs a thousand pounds, I am now overly dizzy, and all I want to do is pu...

"What is wrong with you, bitch! You puked all over my shoes, fuck it!"

That earns me another nerve-numbing punch right in the face, and now, I have a profusely-bleeding nose, and busted, chapped lips.

"Are you gonna punch me until I'm dead?" I tease, chuckling at the pathetic state I'm currently in.

See, life will never go smooth for persons like me, no matter what I do or

don't do!

All of a sudden, the clinking of heels against unfinished and uneven floors, resonates from a distance. The piercing noise grows louder and louder, until two familiar figures strut into the room. I am completely mesmerized at the sight before me.

"Hello, Eva. Remember us? I hope you are having the time of your life, because I went through so much trouble to get you here. Forgive me, where are my manners? Let me reintroduce the both of us to you, *bèbè*. So, I'm Reina, but I go by the name Savage instead, and this right here, is Barbara, my accomplice.

I'm gonna cut to the chase, love. You see, I have this tendency to get what I want, when I want it, and if I can't have it, I eliminate it, so that nobody else can have it. It's really that simple. In this case, I can't have Leandro's love and attention, and neither can I kill him, so you'll be his substitute. I can't get him to love me the way a man loves a woman.

Initially, it was because of Lenia's presence, but I eliminated that bitch in her sleep, may her soul rest in peace, effectively getting her out of the picture. Now, it is you that I will have to deal with. The only difference between your death, and Lenia's, is that yours will be agonizingly tormenting. I will make it as gruesome as possible, as grotesque as it can possibly get, welcoming the pleasure that comes along with torturing you to your very demise.

Why? Because of the little bathroom incident back at the Galla. I'm a petty bitch like that. If I can't have Leandro, if I can't get him to appreciate my presence, to take pleasure in the mere sound of my name, then there is no other woman on Earth he'll have the pleasure of sharing any blissful moments with."

She walks over to the table, picks up the dagger, staring at the blade like it was an object of such great fascination, feeling it between her thumb and index finger, then glides up to me, forcefully grabbing hold of my chin. The glint in her eyes, informs me that this whole process will be a lot more worse than the hand of death.

"Just chill, *bèbè*, it won't hurt," she whispers against my hair, sinking the blade into my skin, and making a deep cut from the top to the bottom of my humerus.

I clench my jaws, groan out loudly, shut my eyes tightly, refusing to grant

myself the pleasure of shedding even a single tear.

"I will shatter you, Eva. Just watch," low, her voice is low, overly calm.

Opening eyes, I observe as she looks at my wrist, my bracelet now drawing in her maximum attention.

"He got you this bracelet, didn't he?" She roughly yanks it from my bloody flesh, tosses it against the floors, takes out a pistol from her purse, then shoots at it maniacally. Blood trickles, droplets hit the dusty grounds, creating tiny rivulets that flow freely. My blood.

"It had a tracker installed in one of its charms, I'm sure. Leandro must've really thought he was smart, completely oblivious to the fact that some of us, were practically raised in cartels our whole life. Now, he won't be able to trace you at all, bèbè.

I'm really going to enjoy this little game, Eva."

"And so will I," Barbara finalizes, smirking like she just won the lottery.

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter twenty eight.

I should be long dead by now. To say every single fibre in my body has been set aflame, right now, would be a bad lie, an understatement. Fuck! I don't even know what kind of excruciating torment I'm in anymore.

Maybe, it's because of the fact that my whole entire face is all broken skin and bruises, and my lips may be non-existent, my nose is oozing out blood, and because my left eye feels smaller than my right, chances are that, I have a black eye.

Matteo has been repetitively punching the living shit out of me, for the past ten minutes *straight*. He just said, screw the no-hitting-women principle, the fucker! He really is enjoying his bloody ass.

Maybe, the immense pain is due to the fact that both my arms are now bleeding, and profusely at that.

Reina decided that she'd slice the skin on my other arm as well, only this time, she opted to slit it from my elbow all the way down to my wrist. I've lost a lot of blood, and my throat is perched from all the screeching and shrieking I've been doing for the past hour.

Maybe, it's all due to the fact that Reina successfully managed to drive six fucking nails into the flesh on my right thigh, or maybe, the hurt is due to the fact that Barbara decided to, not only break all the toes on my left foot, but to also shatter my entire left leg, by continuously striking it with some heavy piece of wood. My leg is bent in the wrong direction, still strapped to the pole. No, I should have already died or passed out from the repeated tortures.

Emotionally, physically and psychologically, I am *so* fatigued. Reina's taunted me, implanted all sorts of sick, twisted ideas in my head, Barbara's teased me to a point beyond vulnerability and sheer fragility, and now, my head is hanging low, breathes ragged, laboured and unsteady. I am ready to throw in the towel, call it quits with my own life, drink the bittersweet cup of demise, because they've shattered my being to the point of no return.

Never, and I mean never, have I yearned for death, so bad, up until now. I have two lives sprouting and blossoming inside me, but not even that

knowledge, is enough to keep me going. I am human, weak, frail, hopeless, and on the verge of death, so yes, I've given up! As the thoughts continue to engrave themselves in the deepest pits of my mind, a tear slips, then another, then another, until I *finally* break down into full-blown sobbing.

I am fucking vulnerable, fucking pathetic, couldn't do anything to protect my own children! They said I'm a terrible mother for that, both Reina and Barbara, and I agree. Funny thing is, neither one has attempted to punch me in the gut, or cause me any kind of hurt that'd most likely terminate the pregnancy.

Reina's standing right in front of me, all smiles, eyes trained on the rivulets cascading down my face. She's holding the syringe that contains the brown liquid in one hand, and a loaded gun in the other. Matteo just finished punching me a while back, and decided to exit the room in all his glory. Suddenly, several gunshots rent, disturbing the silent night, and effectively brewing confusion between the two blonde bimbos.

I'm not really sure they're gunshots though, because at this point, I might as well be hallucinating from all the trauma I've endured.

Both Barbara and Reina storm out of the room, as my breathes grow a tad bit heavier. After what feels like an eternity for dangling and waiting, Reina budes back, with tears streaming down her pale skin, ruining her dark makeup.

"He killed her! That imbecile executed Barbara. He fucking shot her in the head thrice, murdered her on the spot!" She screams, chokes on a sob, pulls frustratedly on her finely-curved locks, before suddenly, her gaze snaps in my direction, whilst she sniffs.

I watch, with almost shutting eyes, as she matches up to me, then stabs the syringe into the pulse on my neck with shaky fingers, emptying all contents into my artery.

Just when she's done pulling the needle out, she coughs out thick, dark, scarlet liquid, that spits onto the skin on my face. She stands there for a second or two, mouth dribbling, and eyes bulging out of their sockets, before her limp body falls on her knees, her head settling against my leg. At the contact of her skull against my broken foot, I let out a groan, a grunt, then a whimper.

That's when I see the silver dagger sticking out through her lower back, and of course, the person responsible for her brutal murder, Leandro. He

gently frees my hands and feet, and with all my energy depleted, I fall against his chest, dirtying the front of his shirt.

"What has she done to you, Eva. Don't you close your eyes on me, *àmòrè!* Hold on, please, please, Eva. Don't you die on me, you made a promise," he begs, eyes watery, as he scoops me cautiously, and walks us out of the building.

He makes his way over to the car, a safe distance from the church, and just at that very moment, a loud explosion raptures the chilly night from behind us.

"Stay with us, Eva. Please, stay with us," Costello's pleading voice infiltrates my ears, while Giovanni works to open the doors for Leandro. Leandro sits me on his thighs, tries his best not to hold me because of all the open punctures on my body.

"You'll be okay, *àmòrè*. Just hold on a little longer. Do it for the twins, for me. You said you were all in, remember? Please, Eva, I am begging you."

I can only offer him a ghost of a smile, as I fight my own self, to keep my eyelids from shutting. That is when my heart palpitations rapidly heighten, and I begin struggling to inhale and exhale normally. My chest cavity feels constricted, like some invisible, vengeful force is gradually wrapping around my body, compressing me, wringing the life out of my fragile frame.

"What's going on, Eva, *àmòrè* no, no, no! You will not die on me! I will not lose you! Drive faster Lucio, come on!"

Oh, but the gnawing ache in my chest, it hurts so fucking bad. I want to breath, need to inhale the air, to exhale deeply, but my body's shutting down.

Nanoseconds tick into seconds fleet into minutes, and finally, the vehicle screeches to an abrupt halt. Leandro cautiously alights the car with me in his arms, and makes his way into the building, desperately yelling and calling out for any form of assistance.

"Someone help us! My fiance is dying!"

His voice, always tranquil, is now laced with concern, coated in panic.

Nurses sprint in our direction, wheeling a stretcher, and carefully, gently, Leandro lays me over it. Now, I can only see the blurred images of the persons surrounding me, and hard as I try, I can't clearly make out Leandro's words. Only vaguely watch him help wheel me towards the operation theatre.

"Sir, you will have to wait outside. She needs to undergo an operation right now."

He runs both palms over his face, blows out a shaky breathe, stares down at me, then back up at the source of the voice. I'd give anything to comfort him,



but how do I do so, when I'm the cause of his sorrow?

Shortly after, the blurry image of a person dressed in all white, walks into the room and towards where I'm lain, with the doors behind him swinging shut.

"She's lost a lot of blood, and there's hardly any blood type o's left in the blood banks. Hurry up, and carry out a blood test to determine her blood group, then arrange for a blood transfusion this instant!" He commands, and one of the nurses briskly exits the room.

My ears can only pick up the faint sound of his voice, as if from a distance, like an echo in a cave, that goes on, and on, and on.

Then, comes the darkness, the void emptiness, the consuming feeling of peace, as my body finally gives in to temptation, and my eyelids fall shut. Serenity...

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter twenty nine.

Writer's p.o.v

Eva lay on the bed, eyes shut due to the anesthesia they had injected into her system, her breathes now shallow and even. She had been in the operation theatre for the past six hours straight, and the doctors had been doing their best to drain the poison that had been injected into her venation. IV tubes, filled with blood, were slid into the skin on the back of her left hand, while the steel nails that had been driven into her flesh, had long been taken out.

The poison that had been sipping and leaking in her system, was meant to kill her, grant her a gradual, pain-filled death, by slowing down her heartbeat, immobilising all her limbs, and finally, stopping her heart palpitations. Most of the poison had been pumped out, but not all of it, and the little amount of venom that had been left behind, was now successfully acting its part.

"One, two, three, clear!"

Her chest rose with the defibrillators, fell again, slamming against the softness of the hospital bed.

"She's not responding."

Ignoring the words of the nurse on his left, the old surgeon focused on the task at hand, rubbing the two metals flat against each other.

"One, two, three, clear!"

Eva's body rose off the bed once more, then fell back with a thud, as the two metals made contact with her chest, yet again...

Meanwhile, outside the operation theatre.....

Leandro was sat against the floors, legs folded and pulled to his chest, face buried in his knees. He'd heard the yelling of the doctors in the operation theatre, and had stood up immediately, trying to peek through the translucent glass on the doors, without much success. His eyes were red, puffy and teary, chest heaving, and heart thrumming so hard against his ribcage. The last time

he'd shed a tear because of someone, their souls were no longer one with their bodies, and now...

"She's not going to make it," he whispered to himself, as the streaming rivulets freely slid down his cheeks.

The truth was always a bitter pill.

"Boss, Eva is the strongest woman I've ever met. She's got the fierceness of a tigress. She will fight for her life and make it. She'll pull through, you'll see," Giovanni comforted, offered some sort of solace, whilst gently patting the shoulder of the man who'd come to mean more than just a boss to him.

"Yes, *càpó*. She's going to make it. You have my word on that," Costello cooed, hoping to convince himself more than his boss.

On his knees, Leandro fell, palms covering his face, as even more tears fell from his face, down his neck, wetting the bloody front of his shirt.

Costello and Giovanni both kept mumm, no one speaking any further, no one attempting to comfort the other. Maybe, it was because, for the first time in their lives, they'd been secretly praying to the One above, hoping that maybe, just maybe, He would be gracious enough to respond...

Eva's p.o.v

I stand right next to my battered, assaulted, and disfigured body, drinking in my exhausted features lain against the bed. Against the white sheets, I look a lot worse than I had envisioned myself to be. But right now, in this form, dressed in a long brilliant-white robe, one that drapes over my feet, swiping the grounds beneath, I feel lighter, no scars, no bruises mur my skin.

"One, two, three, clear!"

My chest rises, falls back, and my eyelids still remain shut. No, I can't be in this intoxicating environment any longer. My feet glide up to the walls, and I manage to move right through them, and to the other side of the room, where I find Leandro sat on the floors, along with Costello and Giovanni.

Leandro has his head against the walls, eyes softly shut, and I watch, as the silent streams cascade down the face of the toughest, most stoic and emotionless person I've ever met in all my life. His legs are folded and brought up to his chest, and his arms are snaked around them. My heart shatters at the sight before me, the broken sight of him.

"She can't die, she made a promise, said she was all in," his strained voice rings deep in my ears.

I reach out a hand to wipe away the tears that keep slipping from his eyes,

keep staining his flesh and the front of his shirt, but my fingers go right through him.

He can't see me in this state, can't see me right in front of him. Rising on my feet, I look to my right, and that's when I see the doors at the very end of the halls, illuminating glorious, blinding white beams. There's an invisible, compelling force, a magnetic pull that draws me to the light, and so, I match up to it, soul and mind willing to be engulfed wholly.

On one side, stands a creature, a winged creature, in bright, swaying robes, and luscious locks that cascade in soft tides. Drawing closer, I am able to fully make out the face of the magnificent angel facing me, the face of the one person I loved more than life itself, and at the revelation, I can't help the sob that escapes from past my lips.

"Mama? Oh my goodness, I can't believe that you..."

"It really is me, my love. I've missed both you and your sister so much," she softly voices, embracing me against her.

"Darling, you have to go back. I *know* the pull you feel towards the rays, but if you walk past it, there's no coming back."

"I don't think I want to go back. All my strength is gone. Mama, I've had to endure things, face things, experience things, and I've only just seen you. I don't..."

"Walking away is a choice, I know. It is a tempting offer, and I've seen the tribulations you've had to endure. But you had the grace, and so you made it each time. I want you to look at him, darling. He already lost his first love, as well as a child.

Do you honestly want him to go through the same fate? Do you not see just how broken he is right now, because of the thought of losing you to? Don't you realize that you are carrying life in you, his children? Go back, my love." It's not a command, but a soft plea.

"Will you always be there? It's been... it's been so so long, mama," I try to speak amidst the tears.

"Darling, I will always be with you. Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay, and your people shall be my people, you should always remember that, because I love you," she replies, cupping my face, and kissing my forehead.

"And I love you, mama."

She steps right through the blinding illuminations, and instantly, the light vanishes, leaving behind a calm breeze that blows against my hair, caressing

the skin on my face ever so gently. I make my way back to the operation theatre and there, I find Leandro embracing my limp body, crying out silently against the crook of my neck.

"I'm so sorry, sir. We did all we could to save her," the doctor explains, arms folded behind his back.

"You've left me, *àmòrè*. Why would you do this to me? You made a promise, Eva, and you've never deceived me."

I made him a promise, said I was all in.

Walking up to the body, I stare down at myself for the very last time in this form, then up at Costello and Giovanni. These two strangers, somewhere along the way, became family.

My body and soul merge into one being, a fresh breathe of life filling my once dead frame, quenching my lungs. Deeply, I breath, whilst my eyes painfully flutter open.

Leandro jerks his head away from the flesh on my neck, and stares hard at me, with teary, bloodshot eyes.

"Eva? Eva, you're alive? *Àmòrè*, I..."

He moves closer, rests his forehead tenderly against my own, as he works to calm his raging nerves.

Costello and Giovanni embrace each other, laughing amidst the tears.

"Eva, *àmòrè*, I just...I love you more than anything else in my life, yeah?"

"I love you too, Leone. I'm all in, I promise," I croak, straining to voice my thoughts, before letting the dark emptiness engulf me...

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Chapter thirty.

As soon as I come to, the concentrated smell of surgical spirit assaults my nose. I examine the room in which I am lain, taking in every plain detail. It's painted a faded white from ceiling to walls, with thick cream-white curtains drawn to let in the glaring sun rays.

I've got these tubes sticking up my nose, my arms are firmly wrapped in gauze where they had been slit open, and my foot is elevated, and completely covered in an orthopedic cast, from my knee all the way to my toes. The entire limb feels lead-heavy, and just like that, I detest it.

My punctured thigh is wrapped up in more sterile gauze, and there is an extra one slithered around my forehead, I'm guessing because I must have bled out from having the muzzle of a gun slam twice into my skull. And finally, another cast has been faithfully plastered around my neck, withholding me from making any unnecessary head movements.

I turn my body slightly, in order to have a clearer view of the left side of the room, but halt abruptly, due to this crippling pain that shoots throughout my entire body. I spot Costello and Giovanni, sat on the leather seats, heads resting against the walls, deep in sleep.

Leandro is also dead asleep, sat on the wooden stool right next my bed, head placed against the softness of the sheets, one hand holding mine, while the other, he is lying on. He slowly wakes, and the minute his eyes meet and lock with mine, he jerks away from the seat and leans, pecking my cheek fondly.

"*Àmòrè*, how are you, what do you need?"

"Leo, oh my goodness. I'm alive?"

"You are the strongest person I have ever laid eyes upon, Eva," he compliments with a genuine smile, caressing my face tenderly, smoothly.

"How long have I been asleep?"

"It's been eight days now. Let me pour you some water, yeah?"

He moves to pour me a glass, helps me chug the drink, then helps me back to my lying position.

"How are my babies?"

"They are doing fine, based on the tests run by the doctors. Eva, you scared me. I held you in my arms, you were *gone*. I just...I don't know how..."

"Hey, hey. I'm here now, Leandro, the twins are safe, and that's all that matters."

"That's all that matters," he repeats as if trying to convince himself, subconsciously gliding the tip of his thumb against my eyebrow.

"Eva, *bèllà*, you are finally up and blubbering again. Girl, don't scare us like that again, you hear? Your absence was strangulating the life out of all of us, most especially me," Costello's voice interrupts our little conversation, as he walks up to the bed, carefully embracing me.

"The *càpó* was a mourning, temperamental mess. He never sheds a tear, the old goose," Giovanni's quick to add, taking his turn to hug, then kiss my forehead.

"I am glad to be back, Gio."

"You rest up. We need the energetic version of you back, beautiful," are Costello's final words, before he excuses himself from the room, phone pressing against his ear.

"In relation to that, Eva, we need to talk. But first, I need you to get discharged from hospital."

"And what of Reina, Barbara, Matteo?"

"Took care of them, so don't worry yourself, *àmòrè*..."

Four months later...

The journey of recovery, both physically and mentally, is never a simple walk in the park. The cast they'd wrapped around my leg, was taken off about a month ago, and the flesh on both my thigh and arms is healed, with only the scarifications left in place of the piercings and slits.

Yes, the shitty ordeal that'd happened to me, will forever be a memory permanently engrained in the darkest parts of my soul. Sometimes, the feelings of horror become too vivid, to the point of me succumbing to anxiety attacks. Then, Leandro holds me, vows to keep me safe, to grant me protection, and I have to compel my brain to believe him, to trust those promises. And yes, much as I hate it, I've had to see a psychologist.

"Come on, *àmòrè*. Life has given you a second chance. Can't you do this one thing, please? *Pèr fàvòrè*, Eva."

"What was my answer the first fifty times you asked, Leandro?"

"You adamantly refuted the proposal."

"Exactly. And boy, trust me when I say my no means no. So, stop asking me to do that, please. Stop it, Leo."

For the past eight weeks, Leandro has been trying to convince me to go back to LA, and make amends with my sister, in his company, of course. And every single time, I gave him the same reply, a curt no. It's not that I still hold feelings for Simon.

Hell no! I didn't even love the guy romantically in the first place. It's just that, I don't know how I'll react upon seeing those two. I don't know if I'll be vexed at the both of them, for their treachery, or be happy that they actually found true love in each other. What if I flip out, and say things, do things. No, I can't go back there, not now at least.

"*Àmòrè?* Earth to Eva," Leandro calls out, snapping fingers to draw my attention.

"Huh? Oh, sorry. I kinda zoned out for a minute or three."

"Eva, please. Make peace with your past. You say you are ecstatic, living this new life, but deep down, you know, better than anyone, that you deceive yourself."

I look up at him, stare deep into those mesmerizing icy-blue irises, before wrapping arms around his neck, drawing him as close as I possibly can.

"Damn it, I hate it when you speak your truth, Leandro."

"And you love me still," is his smooth response, whilst encircling my waist, and planting a combusting trail of kisses down the skin on my neck.

"Fine, I'll do it. I'll make peace with my past."

He pulls away, smiles down at me, an action he's been doing a lot more often, before resting his forehead against mine.

"I am proud of you, Eva, for a countless number of things. You and the kids have become my only valuable chattels, forget my empires. I love you."

And as usual, his baritone voice is as serene, as calm, as cool as it's always been.

"You ought to love me, Leandro. You really don't have an otherwise, lest I chop your balls off," I reply, standing on the tip of my toes, pressing my lips sensually to his.

"It is settled. We leave tonight."

"What? Can't we wait for me to give birth, at least?"

"Eva, no more excuses. I've had enough of those from you, in the past two months. We leave tonight."

"Okay, okay. Let me go request for Kate's assistance in packing a bag, yes?"

"Fine by me. I have some work I need to finish before we leave."

"Then you'll rub my feet? Please, Leo."

The usual unreadable mask plasterers on his face once again, before finally, after taking precious time sighing dramatically, his head nods.


"You're a real sweetheart. Thank you," I chirp excitedly, beaming up at his void facial expressions.

"Go pack your bags already."

"I love you too, Leone."

And with those words having being said, I turn, and exit the room in high spirits.

Mood swings got me saying some weird shit...

Please don't forget to comment and click on the little star at the bottom 



Chapter thirty one.

Had to rectify some issues in this chapter, as well as the next. Now, enjoy



Currently, I am immobile, right in front of the doors leading into my sister's apartment. I've been pacing back and forth for the past ten minutes, trying to work up the courage to knock. I mean, it has been a while since I last saw or spoke to Sarah, and the very last time we had a conversation, we didn't end it on good terms. Leandro has been 'politely' *demanding* that I ring the doorbell, and finally gave up five minutes ago. Now, he's just leaning against wall, graciously offering me this bored-to-death, slightly-pissed look.

Of course, the man had to alter his appearance before we got here. His usually icy-blue eyes, are now an alluring coffee brown, well hidden behind a new pair of spectacles, and his dark-as-night, silky strands, have been concealed perfectly beneath a stylish hat, with the few strands visible at the front, having been dyed a silver hue.

Usually, he has a small, neat beard growing, but since we had to switch up his look, why not go all the way? So, he had to plaster on a larger, fake beard, a moustache, as well as cover up all his knuckle tattoos, because the guy likes to be extra cautious. If I'd see him like this anywhere, after having lived with him for so long, I highly doubt I'd be able to recognize him.

"Fine, fine. I'll do it, my goodness," I snap irritably, after witnessing him roll his eyes at me.

I ring the doorbell once, then a second time, but no one responds from the other end. I'm starting to think nobody is home, I really hope so.

"Well, looks like no one's here, so we better get going," I conclude, walking away from the wooden barriers, overwhelmed with relief.

Then, they finally creak open, with my back towards them, and my heart begins to thrum a lot faster.

"Eva?" Her voice calls out to me, and immediately, my eyes temporarily go blind, stinging and tearing.

I turn around calmly to face her, and woah? She is pregnant, fucking pregnant!

I wasn't expecting this at all.

She walks up to me and engulfs me in a hug, burying her face into the crook of my neck, but since I don't reciprocate her little gesture, she lets go.

"I...I-uh-missed you...so much."

"I can only fucking imagine."

Leandro's arm moves to snake my waist, holding me possessively to him.

"Why don't you come in, please," She offers, a look of sheer desperation caking her face.

I look her in the eye, clenching jaws, and regretting my decision to come over in the first place.

Leandro leans in, whispers a low, "*Àmòrè...*" and I simply nod my head in agreement to the invitation.

We slip past the doors, and into the apartment, and I stop dead in my tracks. See, my eyes cannot even believe that which they fucking see! The walls around us, are flamboyantly decorated with pictures of Simon and my sister embracing, laughing heartily at this, or just posing for the camera like the loving couple they make out to be.

One particular photo draws my attention, makes my heart clench even more, a photo of Sarah, in a gorgeous wedding gown, with Simon's arms slithered around her petite frame. He himself, is dressed in a nicely tailored, charcoal-black suit, looking like the happiest man that ever walked this fucking earth. They are smiling for the camera, acting completely oblivious to the fact that I was fucking kidnapped!

"Wow, you are married and you didn't think to invite me?" I question, tone laced with sarcasm, as I turn to face Sarah.

She doesn't respond, I don't expect her to, just stares at the carpeted floors beneath, making me scoff and roll my eyes.

At that very moment, Simon decides to grace us with his presence, climbing down the stairs and walking into the living room. When our eyes meet and interlock, he stops in his movements, eyes bulging behind glasses. I am fully convinced he's about to hyperventilate.

"E...Eva?"

"It's lovely meeting you to Simon, especially after such a long time. I've been good, thank you so fucking much for inquiring."

We all stand there in awkward silence, before Sarah finally clears her throat and speaks up.

"Let's go have dinner everyone."

We all move to the dining room, take our respective seats in pungent quietness. Leandro sits right next to me, intertwines our fingers, and I, in turn, grant him a tight smile. Sarah serves each one of us food, but since I'm not in the mood to eat, I end up picking on mine with the fork. The silence is so suffocating, I am certain I can scoop some of that tension and taste it.

"Eva, we are sorry. We didn't mean to hurt you," Simon speaks up, pushing his glasses at the bridge of his nose.

Well, fuck! That just about does it. I rise from my seat, and storm out of the room, up the steps, and into the room I once called mine, slamming the doors shut. Soon after, Sarah walks in, shutting them, and turning to face me.

"How could you even do this to me, Sarah! I haven't been gone for a year, and you are already married to Simon, and pregnant by him? Wow. See, this is what I call comedy fucking gold! Did you even look for me? No, that's not even the real question. Did you even consider, that Simon was my boyfriend? I don't even know what to say to you. First, you inseminate me, then, you get married to Simon, and then, you become pregnant, oh, and to top it all off, you inseminating me, is the whole reason I got fucking abducted in the first place!

What's next? You trying to steal Leandro away from me, huh? Am I even your family? Did you ever love me enough to consider how I'd feel if I were ever to find out about your little affair with Simon, or were you too infatuated with him, too fucking self-absorbed to recall that I even existed! Was the insemination even accidental, to begin with, because now, bitch, now, my trust in you is completely shattered!"

I've been bottling up the hurt, the pain of betrayal from not one, but two persons I trusted with all I had, and now, I'm letting it all out. There is no turning back. I want Sarah to feel my ache, to feel every fucking ounce of guilt for causing it.

"I'm so sorry, my goodness, I am. I'm sorry for everything I've done. Eva, I've...I've always loved Simon. I just didn't have the guts to fess up. How was I to even begin?" She tries to explain, with tiny streams sliding down her face.

"Bitch, screw your fake ass tears! Are you apologizing because of your treachery, or because you got caught! You were supposed to be my sister! You should have told me the truth right from the very start! You know what hurts the most?"

I wasn't even gone for that long, Sarah, and the both of you were already the fucking couple of the year. It's like you were praying, secretly hoping and waiting for me to step out of the picture, so that you could step into the fucking frame. Tell me something. Did Simon love you as well, even when we dated?"

She keeps silent, fuelling my anger all the more.

"Well, did he!"

"Yes! Yes, he did love me even then, Eva! " She replies, running her palms frustratedly over her face.

"So, for the two years we dated, you two were secretly in love? I was just like some fucking puppet to the both of you? You kept the truth from me, for that long, Sarah?"

She only keeps silent, eyes focusing solely on the carpeted floors. I need to get as far away from this people, as humanly possible.

"One last question. If you were in my position right now, would you have forgiven me?"

She fucking keeps her mouth *shut!*

"I have my answer then."

I make an attempt to brush past her, only for her fingers to wrap around my wrist.

"Tell me something, Eva. If you were in my position, would you have told your sister, whom you know so well hates men, that you are in love with her boyfriend? I knew it was going to be extremely difficult for you to start loving another man other than Simon.

Do you think, I was going to tell you how I truly felt about him, and allow you to sacrifice being with him, the only man you truly cared for, just so I could have him?

So, I chose to destruct myself by dating Josh, in the hopes of killing the feelings I had for Simon. But of course, I failed. I am not proud of it, not proud of any of this, but it happened the way it did, Eva! Forgive me for everything I've done to inflict both physical and emotional suffering on you. Just that mere thought makes me loath my entire existence for being the worst sister alive.

I love you more than my own life, Eva, and I'd do anything to see you happy again. Please, forgive me for everything I have done to cause you pain," she begs amidst tears, palms pressed flat against each other in front of her lowered face.

She kneels down, wraps her arms around my feet, her tears sliding down her cheeks, and trickling down my legs.

"Forgive me, Eva. You are my blood. Don't leave me like this. I won't be able to forgive myself if you walked out through that door resenting me. I know I don't deserve your forgiveness but please...please forgive me...I beg you Eva."



"If I were your blood, then you should have stayed faithful, remained fucking loyal to *me*. Stand the fuck up."

Watery, swollen eyes look up at me, before Sarah proceeds to wipe her face, sniffing repetitively, and literally grating on the last of my nerves.

"I forgive you, but you'll have to give me *a lot* of time to process my emotions, get over all these pain. For the time being, don't expect me to contact you, because I won't. You've broken more than just my heart, numerous times, and this is not something one can easily forget. I am human, I'll need weeks, months, maybe even years, to erase the memories both you, and Simon have successfully managed to formulate in my head."

"I completely understand, Eva. I wrecked our relationship, put you in a predicament, broke your trust, so I'll pay for my sins. Thank you for your forgiveness."

Without anything more to add on my part, I spare her one final glance, turn, and exit the room.

Please don't forget to comment and click the little star at the bottom  

Epilogue

All this while, in all these past few months, I've been blocking out feelings of exasperation and hurt inside my chest. I've been telling myself that with time, they will fade away, and I'll be happy once again, that as the days flew by, I'd forget, erase, and my heart would eventually heal. Oh, but how wrong I was.

Tonight, all these negative, toxic emotions just sorta pushed me to my breaking point, and I exploded. I said things I've been yearning and itching to say out loud, but just couldn't. But now, I'm so glad it's all over. I climb down the stairs, with Sarah following closely behind, and the quiet that welcomes us into the room, is rather uncomfortable.

Leandro is seated on one of the sofas, manipulating his phone, completely ignoring Simon, who is holding a steaming cup of hot cocoa in one hand, and a newspaper in the other. Well, that looks like a montage of fun. You do notice the sarcasm in my tone, right? Seriously though. Who reads newspapers anymore?

Both men take notice of our presence, and Leandro gets up, immediately putting away his phone, and walking up to me.

"Sorted out issues?" He whispers into my ear, arms now around my waist.

"Mhmm. We'll take our leave now. Baby, shall we?"

"Yeah. Thanks for having us over Mr and Mrs?"

"Carter," Simon answers, as he offers Leandro his hand to shake.

"Carter, right," Leandro finishes, whilst shaking his arm.

We walk up to the doors, with Sarah and Simon following closely behind.

Leandro excuses himself after sharing his brief goodbyes, leaving me behind to speak with the two of them.

I finally turn my head to face Simon.

"Still best friends?" He questions, stretching out a hand for me to shake.

I look down at the outstretched arm, then up at him, arching a brow in disbelief.

"I need time Simon," I voice in a monotone, heart clenching with each word.

"I understand, Eva," he concludes, his arm finally dropping to his side.

I nod, and without another word, exit the premises. I find Leandro outside, patiently awaiting my presence, head and back against wall, and eyes burrowing holes into the ceiling. I don't know why, but I just make my way up to him, and embrace him tightly. He reciprocates the hug, burying his face into the crook of my neck, before proceeding to kiss my temple, and cup my cheeks.

"Another reason I am so proud of you. You took the first step, *àmòrè*." I can only nod my head in acceptance of his words, heart overwhelmed with emotion.

He intertwines our fingers, leading us to the exit of the building, and into the car. After ensuring that I've safely mounted the vehicle, he walks to his side, and climbs in.

"Leo, thank you for everything. You didn't give up on compelling me to come back and face both Sarah and Simon. If it weren't for you, I swear on my mother's grave, I would have never set foot in this building ever in my life, neither would I have communicated with the both of them. I love you so much."

"You have nothing to thank me for, *àmòrè*. If anything, I should be the one thanking you, for giving me yet another chance to fall in love, I am very soon going to become the father of not one, but two angelic beings, and I couldn't be more enthralled. Just one more thing."

"What?"

I watch as his arm dives into the pockets of his blazer, retrieving a small, black velvet box. He opens it, to reveal a gleaming, diamond ring, and I can't help but palm my mouth in both shock and surprise.

"Marry me, Eva. Please?"

I take in a deep breathe, carefully selecting my next words.

"I want to say yes, Leone. But I feel like we'd be moving too fast. Let us take time to get to know each other better, *deeper*, know each other's likes and dislikes, then, we will get married in due time. It's not really been a year since we crossed paths. So, let's take it slow...please?" I try to reason, cupping his cheeks, making him face me.

He intertwines our fingers, then kisses my knuckles fondly. I know I've disappointed him, but I also know that what I've spoken is the truth.

"You are right. I see your point, and I'll wait for as long as it takes. Eva, I promised, and still promise you, that for as long as I am breathing, I won't intentionally cause you any kind of hurt. I screwed up once, I won't repeat it a

second time."

I smile at his confession, pulling him in for a passionate kiss. I trust that he'll keep his word.

"I love you so much, Leandro, for everything you are, everything your are working to become, and everything you are not."

Leandro might be a mafioso leader, the devil himself to so many, but to me, he is the man who's helped me realize what true love really is.

"All in, *mî àmóre*?"

"All in, Leandro."

And with that, we share one final kiss, then drive off...

THE END.

I'M SO GLAD I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO FINISH THIS BOOK. I HAVE A MIXTURE OF EMOTIONS AT THIS POINT, BUT WHAT CAN I SAY? ALL THAT HAS A START MUST HAVE AN END.

Anyway, I really hope you enjoyed the book as much as I did when writing it♥. I'd love to hear your thoughts on the book if you managed to go all the way and please don't forget to click the little star at the bottom. Love you and stay safe🙏♥♥.




Author's Note.

Hello everybody. I just wanted to say thank you so much for giving this book a try. It really means a lot to me. And for the supernatural novel lovers, I think you'd enjoy my paranormal romance novels (18+ mature):

And for the BWWM novel lovers, I think you'd like my BWWM novel (18+) mature):

If you are a major black love fan, I think you should check out this book (Mature 18+):

And of course, for my sci-fi, thriller, romance lovers, be sure to check out my latest book, "Subject 3033 (18+)" whenever you have the chance:

Otherwise, I wish you all a lovely day/afternoon/night from wherever you may be, and stay safe   

Book Two Of The Mafia Series

Good morning/evening guys. I just published book two of the mafia series. I honestly wasn't expecting that I'd do so, but I did. The second book, is purely about Leandro's and Eva's twins. I really do hope you enjoy, and I wish you all a lovely lovely day/afternoon/night ♡ ♡. #MY UNFORGIVABLE, MY UNFORGETTABLE... 😁 😁 😁 😁