



mob queen

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

MARGARET MCHYZER

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MOB QUEEN

Frankie DeLuca

Jeremy Miller replaced the governor. The problem is he won't take a bribe like his predecessor.

Miller is a thorn in my side, and I can't find any dirt on him to use for my gain.

But, there's many ways to skin a cat.

I'll just force my way into his life and take what I want... when I want.

Jeremy Miller

Frankie DeLuca is unhinged. I'd go as far as to say she's most likely a psychopath.

She's crazy, passionate, and captivatingly stunning, but she's also the Don of a mafia family running rampant in my state.

Our values don't align; she has no moral compass, whereas I stand for integrity, pride, and respect.

I've made it my mission to get rid of her and her deadly underworld activity.

But when lines become blurred, I'm finding it harder to stay away from the lethal mob queen.

I should leave her alone, because no good can come by taking a bite from the forbidden fruit.

But that fruit tastes so goddamn sweet, I'm not sure I want to stop.

*For everyone who wants to see a kick ass woman owning the
mafia world.*

Strap in because this one is for you.

TRIGGERS

YES, THERE ARE MANY TRIGGERS:

This book is about a female mafia don. She's not sweet or nice. Frankie DeLuca is an anti-heroine.

So, I hope you're okay with (including but not limited to): graphic violence, drugs, guns, alpha-female, sexy-times, non-sexy-times, enemies to lovers, death, dark mafia, more graphic violence, (consensual) sex with violence, and (consensual) sex with pain. I'm sure there's more, but you get the picture.

Oh, and in case you're wondering...she's a damned queen and won't be disrespected.

She's cruel and ruthless, yet so passionate. But Frankie would fix your crown if she saw it was crooked.

If any of this doesn't sound like something you'd enjoy, then this book isn't for you.

PROLOGUE

FRANKIE

“Have you spoken with that brother of yours?” Dad asks as we drive toward one of our restaurants. His focus is on his phone, and the way he’s asked the question is supposed to make me think he doesn’t care. But I know better.

“No, not for about a month or so.”

“Hm,” Dad grumbles. “He should be here.”

“He doesn’t want this lifestyle, and you know it.” Dad’s mouth contorts with dissatisfaction. “You could always call him.”

Dad slowly turns to look at me and arches a brow. “G,” he calls while he staring at me.

“Yes, sir?” G, Dad’s personal security and consigliere replies.

“How long until we’re at the restaurant?”

I roll my eyes and turn to stare at the building we’re passing. Dad knows exactly how long it’ll take for us to reach our destination, because this is where we hold our meetings when the heads of the families need to come together.

“Ten minutes.”

I lean against the door and place my head on the glass to look up at the inky dark sky. “Frankie,” Dad says.

“Yeah.” A small sigh escapes my lips. I hate it when he brings my brother into this. “What?” I intake a deep breath

then turn to look at him.

“Rome needs to return to the family.”

“Then call him,” I counter.

“Sir,” G says as the car rolls to a stop. G is out of the car, and holding the back door open for Dad in a heartbeat.

Dad cocks a brow before sliding out and waits for me. Once I’m by my father’s side, G closes the door and rushes ahead to the entrance of the restaurant. “It’s important we get the Augustas to fall into line,” Dad says.

My teeth grind at the name of that family. My blood boils and instant distaste gurgles in the pit of my stomach. I hate those assholes. “Cut ties with them,” I say.

“No,” Dad barks with too much force. G pulls a chair out for me, and I give him a curt nod. “We need them and they need us. Just because you don’t like the way they do business...”

“They keep their whores addicted so they can’t leave. That’s no way to treat the prostitutes.”

“What they do in their area is their business.”

“But –”

Dad smacks the top of the table. “Enough, Frankie. No more talk about the Augustas.”

I clench my jaw together, frustrated that our family is in bed with the scum of the underworld – the Augustas. The quicker Dad realizes we’re done with them, the better it’ll be for us. I straighten in my seat and hold my head high. This meeting needs to take place, and I have to push my indifference for the Augusta family down until the meeting is over.

“Sir,” G says when he appears beside me. Dad and I both look over to him. “Don Sacco and his underboss, Dominic,” he announces.

The Saccos are a damned good-looking family, and I can’t help but check them out as they arrogantly waltz in for the

meeting.

Dad stands and extends his hand to Ruben Sacco. “Giovanni, good to see you,” Ruben announces as he shakes Dad’s hand. “Frankie.” He gives me a nod and smile.

“Ruben.” I stand and lean in to give him a kiss on both cheeks. “Dominic,” I acknowledge with the same European kiss gesture.

“Frankie.” Dominic sits beside me at the massive round table and Ruben sits beside Dominic. I glance behind me and see two of their men standing by the front door, cautiously keeping an eye on our surroundings.

Dad and Ruben exchange pleasantries while we wait for the Venanzis and the Augustas. It doesn’t take long before Petro Augusta arrives. He waltzes into the restaurant dressed like a fucking pimp. Submissively trailing after her father is his young daughter Elena. What the fuck is she doing here? Dominic clears his throat and I can tell he’s not impressed that Petro brought his daughter either.

“Petro,” I say as I stand and offer him a handshake.

He runs his sleazy gaze up and down my body and smirks. My skin crawls and I want to scoop out his eyes with my fingertips and shove them down his throat. “Frankie,” he replies with irritation. “Is your father finally marrying you off?”

Hold it together, Frankie.

He completely sidesteps me, and heads straight for my father. *Fucker.*

“How old do you think she is?” Dominic asks me quietly while my father, Don Ruben and Petro – *asshole* – Augusta all exchange pleasantries, although it’s clear the air is thick with tension.

“She can’t possibly be any older than eighteen,” I say. “Why would he have brought her?” The girl is standing to the side, her eyes downcast, and her shoulders hunched. “It’s clear she’s not part of our world.”

“I have a problem with this,” Dominic says to me.

“We both do.”

The door opens and in walks Don Vitale Venanzi with his underboss and oldest son Alessandro. “Frankie, you’re looking good,” Alessandro says as he comes in for the whole double kiss thing.

“You too, Alessandro. It’s been a while.” I turn to his father. “Don Vitale,” I offer a courteous nod.

“Frankie.” He steps in and gives me the customary double kiss. “You’re raising a shark here, Martino,” he says to Dad with an easy tone.

“Women shouldn’t be seen,” Petro grumbles. “They’re only good for one thing.”

Dad’s jaw jumps and I can’t help but groan my irritation. “Leo,” Dad calls the waiter. “Grappa.”

“Yes, sir,” Leo replies and scurries back to the kitchen.

Great, I’m going to have to control my urge to kill that drunk-ass sexist Petro. “Vitale, you didn’t bring Michael or Gabriel?” Petro asks.

“No,” Vitale’s reply is brief.

“It’s okay.” Petro turns and summons his daughter. “Elena.” Obediently, she darts toward us. Her posture hasn’t changed though, her head is down and she looks like she’s trying to fold into herself. “Alessandro, you need a wife.” Petro wraps his fat fingers around her upper arm and tugs her toward Alessandro. “She’s pure, she’s good for breeding.”

I look to Dad and beckon him to say something, because if he doesn’t, then I will. Dad shakes his head, silencing me before I rip Petro’s hand off of her and shove it up his fucking ass.

“Your daughter is beautiful, but not for Alessandro,” Vitale easily disregards Petro’s revolting offer. Vitale is clearly as unimpressed by Petro’s offer as Dominic and I are.

“She’s pure,” Petro insists. “Take her to the doctor to be examined.” He shoves Elena toward Alessandro. The poor girl is trembling with fear. My heart is hammering in my chest, and I’m ready to kill this fucker. “What about you, Frankie? Do you want her?” I stare at Petro for a good thirty seconds. My lips are pursed into a thin line, and I’m unblinking. Petro scoffs and pushes his daughter behind him.

What a piece of shit. He’d pimp out his daughter just to form an alliance with another family.

“Grappa,” Leo’s announcement breaks the anger bubbling through me. He pours the first bottle out for everyone, leaves a second bottle, and retreats to the kitchen.

I throw the first drink back, and turn to look at the girl. She’s nibbling on her lower lip and has backed away while her father jovially laughs and inhales his drinks, one after the other.

Thankfully, the meeting starts and the girl is forgotten about by her father. But, in the back of my mind, I’m already planning his death.



“How can you do business with that fucking animal?” I say to Dad once we’re alone in the restaurant.

“Because if we don’t, then he won’t give us access through Louisiana.”

“Kill him and take his territory.”

“Frank, you need to play this cool.” Dad faces me and gently runs his hands up and down my upper arms. “You’re my underboss, not the don yet. You need to calm down, and let me control things. I know what I’m doing.”

“The way he was treating his daughter though, that’s not right.”

“He wants to marry her off to create a binding alliance. He knows without us and the Saccos he’s in trouble.”

“Then why the fuck are we in bed with him?”

“Because if he’s willing to bring his own daughter to a meeting like this, then he’s ruthless and dangerous.” I shake my head as I turn to look off to the side. “Besides, without him we have the Scala family who will take over the Augusta area and they’re even worse than the enemy we know.”

I exhale a long breath and shake my head. “So, basically, it’s better to be in bed with the devil we know.”

Dad snorts as he turns and shrugs into his suit jacket. “The Scalas are a toxic tornado.” He buttons his jacket and moves toward me. “Augusta offered me the girl.”

I screw my nose and internally balk at the thought. “You’re old enough to be her grandfather.”

Dad barks out a throaty laugh. “If she’s eighteen, then that’s a good age.”

“You’re not marrying her.” I screw my nose toward Dad. I look to G and say, “Destruction.”

“What are we doing at the club?” Dad asks.

“Pace has asked for a meeting, and he’s offering us a new product.”

“What’s he got?” Dad asks as we head out of the restaurant.

“I’m not sure, but I know the Barrettas are moving quick, and I want more of them.”

The back door to the car is open, and I head toward it but my entire world comes crashing down.

I hear the shot echo through the abandoned street. I turn to see my father on the ground, blood oozing out of his head. “Dad!” I run toward him, but G pulls me back stopping me from getting to my father.

I throw my arms managing to land an elbow on G’s face and break free from his vice-like grip. I run toward Dad, and

fall to my knees beside his lifeless body.

G tears me off Dad and forcibly drags me to the car. He throws me in the back like I'm a ragdoll, slams the door and smacks his hand on top of the car.

Dario takes off so quickly that the tires screech as the car goes sideways.

I turn to look behind me, but my father's lifeless body has been hidden by the darkness.

My Dad is dead.

Fuck.

CHAPTER 1

FRANKIE

I pace back and forth in Dad's office. There's a sick knot in my throat and all I can think about is the way Dad's lifeless body laid unnaturally on the cold sidewalk outside the restaurant.

I try to pour myself a scotch, but my hands are trembling. I lift my hands and turn them over. They're so damn bloody. Taking shaky breaths, I try to calm my frantic mind. "Frankie," G's voice carries through Dad's office.

I lift my gaze and vacantly stare at G. "This is Dad's blood." I hold my hands out to G, showing him the dried blood coating my skin.

"Frank." He cautiously moves toward me. "Come."

"Wh-where?" My eyes are glued to my bloody hands.

G advances toward me and wraps his arm around my shoulders. "You need to wash your hands." G leads me toward the bathroom in Dad's office. He flicks on the light then guides me toward the basin. "Here." G turns the faucet on and waits.

My hands tremble as I hesitantly place them under the lukewarm water. "He's dead," I whisper.

"Yes, he is," G confirms in a strong, quiet voice.

The basin reddens with all the blood washing off of my hands. I know I should cry, but I can't. I squeeze my eyes closed but that dreadful moment keeps replaying. "He's gone."

“He is.” G’s arms envelop me and I turn to nuzzle into him. I stay in G’s arms for a long time as I calm my frantic mind.

I pull back and lean against the wall in the bathroom. “This now makes *me* the don,” I say.

“It does.”

I nod as I grind my teeth together trying to process what I need to do next. “Where’s Dad?”

“He’s downstairs in the basement.”

I lift my chin and stare at nothing. “I-I need to call Rome and let him know.” I’m not even sure I’m processing Dad’s death. *What is happening?*

“Whatever you need from me, Frank.”

I push off the wall and meet G’s hard eyes. “You’ve always been good to us.” I hesitantly head back into the office. I sit at the desk where my father made a lot of his decisions, and stare at my cell for a moment. I dial Rome’s number and put it on speaker.

He answers nearly immediately. “If it’s not my favorite sister.”

“I’m your only sister,” I say with a voice crack.

“What’s wrong, Frankie? Is everything alright?”

I lean back on the chair and rub at the tension across my forehead. “Dad’s dead.” There’s a long pause. “Rome?” I check the call is still connected. “Rome?”

“Dad’s – ” He intakes a sharp breath. “Dad’s dead?”

“Yeah.”

“What happened?”

“We were coming out of the restaurant, and he was shot.” Again, I’m met with silence. “Did you hear me?”

“I’m processing. When? Who? What?”

“It happened nearly two hours ago. I don’t know who yet.”

“Frankie,” Rome says. “You were there?”

“Yeah.” I swallow the hurt in my throat. “I was walking ahead of him, and I heard the shot. By the time I turned around, he was already down.” I shake my head in denial. I still can’t believe my father is gone. “I need you here, Rome.” My voice trembles as I hold in the tears.

“I’m already making arrangements. I’m booking my ticket now; I should be there by noon tomorrow.”

“I’ll send Dario to pick you up from the airport.”

“Thanks. Hey, how are you doing?”

“I’m still trying to process what I saw. But I’ll be okay. It’s not like this lifestyle is full of bows and pretty pictures. We know what the consequences are. I will say though, I know if Dad had to pick between being killed and going to jail, he’d rather the bullet. At least that’s something. Right?”

“Sure,” Rome replies with a tense voice. “Do me a favor, Frank.”

“What?”

“Go upstairs, take a shower and get some sleep.”

I snort and shake my head. “Easier said than done.”

“Yeah, I know. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

I hang up and sit staring at the phone. “It’s good he’s coming home,” G says.

“Yeah, I just hate that he didn’t get to make amends with Dad, but at least he’ll be here for a little while.” I look to G and intake a sharp breath. “I’m going to try and get some sleep. If anything happens, wake me.” I push up out of the seat, swipe my cell off the desk and head upstairs to my suite.

This is not how I saw myself taking over the family business. I’d rather have my father than be the head of the DeLuca crime family.

CHAPTER 2

FRANKIE

That was the worst night sleep I've had in my life. It was even worse than the night when Mom took her last breath, ovarian cancer defeating her. *Fuck cancer*. I lay awake in bed, staring up at the ceiling, and I keep replaying those seconds over and over again.

My mind is turbulent with many unanswered questions. The one that's living rent-free in my head is *who*. That's the one I'll find out, and I'll end the fucker who took my father down.

I extend my arm to reach for my phone, and I see it's not even nine in the morning. "Ugh," I grumble as I sit up in bed. I scrub my hand over my face while my thoughts scramble, still trying to deny what I saw with my own eyes.

I throw the covers back and take a moment before I leave the comfort of my bed and head into the bathroom. I strip and turn the shower on, the hot water is a welcome antidote everything that's happened. The knock on the bathroom door forces me to come back to the now. "Yeah," I shout over the sound of the water.

"Frank, you're needed downstairs," G calls.

"I'll be there in a minute." Once I'm out of the shower, I quickly change and head down to Dad's office. *My office*. G's standing by the door waiting for me. "What is it?" I head around the desk, pull the chair out and sit.

"That meeting with Ben Pace has been pushed to this afternoon. Also, two of the girls from Dreams were assaulted

last night.”

“What happened? Where are the girls now? And where the fuck was Christian?”

“He was taking a break,” G replies through gritted teeth.

“He’s there to protect the girls. That’s his only job, to protect our fucking property.” I sit back in the chair and stare at G. “And the girls?”

“They were taken to the hospital.”

“How bad?”

“Lidia was beaten, and Dina was raped.”

My stomach churns at the words. “What happened to the men who did this?” G turns down his mouth and shakes his head. “They got away?” He nods. “Tell me we ran their credit card?”

“We did.”

“Good, get the boys to track them down. I want to see them both.” I lean my elbows on the desk and steeple my fingers, tapping them to my lips. “Bring Christian to the docks, and find his replacement.”

“That’s a good decision, Frankie.”

I move to open Dad’s laptop, but stop and turn to G. “The word about Dad’s death will spread quickly,” I say and intake a small breath.

“I know.” G heads over to the liquor cabinet and pours us each a scotch. He brings over the two glasses, places one in front of me, then sits opposite. “How do you want me to handle it?” G lifts the glass and throws the amber liquid back. “I don’t want to speak out of turn, but if I may?” He waits for my reply, and I give him a nod. “Your father was tough, and now you need to be too. You can’t show weakness, Frank, or they’ll tear you apart. They’re old-school Italian mafiosos. Being a woman isn’t going to go in your favor. They know you, but,” he pauses and lifts his brows. “You need to think like a man.”

I swirl the amber liquid around in my glass, but finally relent and nod. “No, G, I have to think like a man, lead like a boss but act like a woman.”

G stands, pours himself a second scotch, and places his hand on my shoulder. “You have to work harder to prove yourself, but I know you can do it.”

I finally down the scotch, and with my chin lowered I ask a hard question, “Will you be moving on?” G was a formidable consigliere to my father, now I hope he stays with me.

“Frank, I’ve been here since before you were born. I’m not going anywhere.”

I lift my eyes to stare at him. For someone who’s nearing fifty, he’s still quite a sexy man. “You’re fine with taking orders from me?” I don’t want to lose G, and reality is, if he chose to leave I’d have to put him down. But I’d hate doing it.

“I’ll be your advisor just like I was for your father. You’re a natural-born leader, Frank. Don’t forget that. Now, if you can convince that brother of yours to stay and rule by your side, this family will be unstoppable.”

My mouth opens and closes several times. “It keeps playing over and over in my head. He’s dead.” I openly stare at G. “He’s gone.”

“I know.” There’s a softness to G. His shoulders loosen and he glances down at his hands.

“That shot was done from a distance. We need to find whoever gave the order, and make them an example.” I swallow the lump in my throat. “I’ve got work to do.” I pull my shoulders back and concentrate on the laptop.

“I have a list of things to take care of.” He stands and leaves the office.

I sit back in the plush chair and stare at the screen. I need to reach out to the people I know and begin compiling a suspect list of who might have shot my father. I reach for my phone, and dial for someone who may know who killed him. “Miss DeLuca,” the male voice says without me verbalizing who I am.

“I need a meeting.”

There’s a pause from the other end but I can hear him tapping on the keyboard. “Eleven tonight, abandoned warehouse on Robinson and Jones.”

“Done.” He disconnects the phone the moment I agree to the meeting point. This is a start to finding who killed my father, and taking them down.



The office door opens and I’m relieved to see my brother. “Frankie,” he says and rushes over to me. I stand to my feet and fling myself in his arms. Every single emotion tumbles out of me as we stand together in each other’s arms. This is the first time since Dad’s death that I’ve cried. Although my brother towers over me, I still feel safe when he’s near. “How are you doing?”

“I’m a mess, Rome.” I pull back and look up at him. “He was shot right in front of me.”

“Do you know who did it?”

I shake my head and lean against the desk. “No idea at all. But I have a meeting with someone tonight who might have some answers.”

“Who?”

“15.” Rome slowly lifts his shoulders. “She’s an assassin.”

“You think she took Dad out?”

“I hope not, because if she did, I’ll kill her myself.” Rome’s brows lift. “You’ve been gone for so long. When was the last time you were home?”

“This isn’t home, Frank.” He looks around the office. “This is hell.”

“You’re being a bit dramatic, aren’t you?”

“Dad was an asshole. He pushed me to the point that I left. There’s nothing here I want to be associated with, except for you.”

“He wasn’t that bad, Rome.” I walk over to the liquor cabinet and pour us both a scotch. “Here.” Rome snorts as he takes the glass. “What?”

“Dad has molded you to be a mini him. A female version of who he was.”

I swirl the glass as I stare at him. “I know you don’t *want* this life, but I do. I’ve always wanted it, and now I have it. I hate how I got it, but I did and I’m going to make it work.”

Rome pulls the chair out and plonks into it. “How can you want a life that’s this unpredictable? You have no idea what’s around the corner. Do you go to a restaurant and when you’re leaving, you get shot down? Or do the Feds show up one day and arrest you because of your involvement in the sex trade, or drugs, or weapons? You can’t seriously look me in the eye and tell me you want this.”

His dark eyes stay locked on mine. I place my glass on the desk, round it and with outstretched arms, cage Rome to the chair he’s sitting in. I look him dead in the eye and while my blood pressure is climbing into the red zone, I say, “I’ve worked my ass off learning everything because I live this life. Not only do I want it, I fucking love it. I bet you wouldn’t be saying this if I were a guy.”

“Hey.” Rome pushes me back and stands to his full six-foot-plus stature. I square up to him, refusing to back down. “Don’t be a fucktard, Frank. I don’t give a shit that you’re a woman, I’m more concerned that I’ll be getting a call from G telling me he’s putting you in the ground and to return for the funeral.” I lower my chin, ashamed that I jumped to that conclusion. I’ve always had to prove myself because of my gender, and I’m naturally on the defensive. “I don’t want to receive the phone call from G, or anyone else.”

There's a knock on the door before it opens. G hesitates to enter, reading the tension in the room. "Everything alright in here, Frank?"

"Yeah." I step away from Rome and pick up my glass. "What is it?"

"You have a meeting I pushed back from yesterday." G looks to Rome, then to myself.

Shit, I forgot about Pace. "What time is the meeting?"

"It's set for five." I glance at the wall clock opposite the desk. "Also, there's something else." G again shifts his eyes toward my brother.

"Your room upstairs has been made up and is ready for you," I say to Rome. "I've got some work to do."

"Dinner tonight?"

"Yeah, seven?"

Rome slowly nods and hesitantly steps toward the door. "About earlier."

"Don't even mention it," I say.

Rome turns to look at G, then me, then back to G. "Tonight," he says before exiting and closing the door behind him.

"What was that about?" G asks.

"Nothing I can't handle. Rome's concerned for me, that's all." G lifts his shoulders and appears to want to know more. "What else is happening?"

"Governor Hayes is retiring."

I scoff then chuckle. "About time, he's gotta be a hundred in the shade."

"Yeah, but Jeremy Miller is taking his spot."

I lean against the desk and release a frustrated groan. "Fuck." I smack my hand on the desk in annoyance. "Jeremy fucking Miller." I'm hoping G corrects me and tells me I misheard. "Are you sure?"

“Yeah.” G’s jaw tightens and he shakes his head. “There wasn’t even a whisper that Hayes was retiring. Nothing.”

“This is going to be a problem, G. Miller is straight as they fucking come.”

“I know. How do you want me to handle it?”

“If we can’t buy Miller off, we’ll have to ask the Saccos for passage through their ports, and I don’t want to do that. We need to find a way to get Miller on board.”

“I can send the boys down to him, have a talk.” The corner of G’s lip lifts as a wicked glint of evil flashes through him.

“No, not yet.” I chew on my lower lip as I try to think around this messy situation. If we can’t get Miller to take our ‘look the other way’ money, then he’s going to have to die. “Is there a dinner or something happening for him?”

“There’s a ball on Friday. Talk about a waste of fucking money. People are homeless and these pricks are throwing a ball.”

“Get me an invite.”

“You can’t be at the ball.”

“Why?” I look to G for a reasonable explanation.

“You’re the Don now, Frankie, you can’t be in the same room as those fuckers.”

I lower my chin and stare at a spot on the rich wooden floors. I need to find a way that’ll influence Miller so he takes the money, shuts his mouth and allows me access to the docks to import what I need. “Get me an invite.”

“Frank – ” G attempts to argue, but I lift my chin and silence him with a hard stare. He slowly lifts his hands in surrender. “I’ll get us an invitation.”

Jeremy Miller will give me access to the docks, or I’ll kill him. It’s as simple as that.



Dario comes to a rolling stop in front of the warehouse. “Stay here,” G says as he moves to exit the car.

“I asked for the meeting. I’m coming.”

“You need to let me make sure it’s safe.”

“She’s not going to kill me, G.”

“Fuck,” G mutters as he slides out of the back of the car and slams the door. He walks around to my side and opens it. I step out, and move toward the front of the car.

“Condolences for your father,” 15 says as she appears from the darkness. We’ve used 15 a handful of times to take out some particularly difficult adversaries, and every time we have a meeting with her, she’s always dressed the same.

Black, fitted clothes, a gun strapped to her thigh, two guns hanging off her shoulders, and her long dark hair pulled back into a severe ponytail. “Did you kill him?”

“Frankie,” G warns under his breath.

“You called me here to find out if I killed your father?”

“Yes.”

“You wasted my time.” 15 steps forward and I match her energy.

“Frank,” G calls.

I hold my hand up to him as I approach 15. “Did you pull the trigger?”

“I don’t answer to you.” 15 steps closer.

My heart is beating so hard I can feel it at the base of my throat. I’ve heard every urban legend about 15, but if she put a

bullet into my father's head, then I'll be returning the favor. "Did you kill him?" I square up to her.

15 arches a brow as a slow smirk tugs at her lips. "You've got balls, Frank." She looks me up and down. "No, I didn't."

"Do you know who did?"

"No."

"I'll pay you to find whoever pulled the trigger."

She shakes her head and scoffs. "What is it with you dons who want me to be a fucking babysitter?" She pulls her shoulders back. "Am I killing him?"

"No, I want to know who gave the order."

15 takes a step backward. "Call me when you want me to kill someone."

"15." I jump forward to grab her arm so she doesn't leave. 15 stops and without moving her head, looks up then back to me. I hear the whirl of the drones and know, 15 is beyond prepared to take us all down. She'd do it and not lose a moment of sleep. The thing is, I'm prepared to take her out too. "There's no bad blood between us, 15."

"Keep it that way," she warns.

"Find who killed my father, get the information then do whatever you want to the shooter."

"Now we're talking my language."

"Usual fee?" I ask.

She flicks her gaze to G, then back to me. "Not now, it's doubled." The smirk she's giving tells me everything I need to know. She respects me for challenging her, but I have to pay the price *because* I challenged her.

"What's the ETA on the information?"

"Fifty percent up front."

I look to G and give him the okay to transfer the money. When he looks up, he gives me a confirmation nod. "Done."

“When I have it, I’ll get in touch.” She takes a step back into the darkness. The drones continue to hover for at least another minute. And when the drones disappear, I know 15 has too.

I head back to G who has the door to the car open for me. I slide in, and wait for G to enter the car. Dario pulls the car away and heads home. “You don’t pick a fight with a person we need,” G warns.

“I didn’t pick a fight with her.”

G runs his hand through his thick salt and pepper hair then pinches the bridge of his nose. “You have to be careful, Frank. 15 is an assassin, she doesn’t give a shit if she puts a bullet between your eyes. That’s her job, and you can’t afford to piss her off.”

I place my hand on G’s thigh, and gently squeeze. “Trust me, it’s fine.”

He looks to Dario, then to me. His jaw is tight and his eyes are dark with rage. “Be careful.”

G’s right, I was angry when I approached her, but then a measure of respect passed between us. Something I’ve never seen her give my father in the past. I give us a few moments to sit in the quiet before I say, “Have the boys ready for distribution of the weapons.”

G’s nostrils flare, but he takes a breath and calms down. “You negotiated a good price on the Barrettas,” he says of the meeting we had with Pace earlier. “We’ve already got two more buyers wanting them.”

“Who?”

“One of the smaller cartels down south approached us and asked for two thousand units.”

“Who are they?” G rattles off the name and I’m impressed by them. “They won’t be small for too much longer.”

“We might be able to work with them.”

“No.” I shake my head. “We’re not buying anything they’re selling.”

“It’s good for business relationships, Frank.”

“No,” I say firmly. “They traffic and I don’t like traffickers.”

“I think...”

“We’re done,” I say and turn to look into the darkness.

I’ll sell to them, but they have nothing I’m interested with. And that’s final.

CHAPTER 3

FRANKIE

“What do you need done so we can bury dad?” Rome asks as I pull out the chair to sit for breakfast.

“Everything,” I say as I look for Mya. “Mya,” I call for my cook.

Mya enters the dining room already holding my coffee. “Good morning,” she says in a small voice as she places the cup in front of me. “Breakfast, ma’am?”

“Yes, thank you.” I pick up the cup and take a sip. “Dad’s in the basement,” I tell Rome.

“Shouldn’t he be at the county morgue?” Rome bites into his toast.

“If those fuckers get their hands on Dad, they’ll tear him apart.”

“He’s dead, Frank. What can they do to him?”

“I don’t care. The doctor’s been here and a death certificate is already being prepared. Dad’s being sent out in fucking style, because that’s what he deserves.”

Rome sighs and shakes his head. “Tell me what you want me to do to help.”

“Thursday we’ll have the funeral. We’ll do it here.”

“Do you really want other *families* coming to your home?”

I look to Rome and scrunch my nose. “This is for our people only. No other family is invited.”

Rome takes another bite and slowly lifts his head. “You’re also introducing yourself as the new Don, right?”

“There’s nothing to introduce. I was by Dad’s side from the moment I turned fourteen.”

Rome finishes chewing then sits back in his seat. Mya walks into the dining room and glances between my brother and me. “Ma’am,” she says as she places a plate with bacon, eggs and toast down for me. Mya quickly and quietly exits the dining room.

“What are you going to do with the staff?” Rome peers over his shoulder toward the kitchen.

“The house staff all stay. Mya, Heidi and the groundskeepers all stay. Why?” I snap, irritated with him.

“People will be uncertain right now. You need to show them direction, ensure stability.”

I lean toward my brother. “You wanted out of this life and you got it. You can’t come in and tell me what to do.”

He holds his hands up in surrender. Rome arches a brow while staring at me. “Stop talking to me like I’m the enemy. I’m not here to take over, or push you out, I’m trying to help.” He slams his hand on the table. “For fuck sake, Frank. I’m not the enemy.”

I turn away from Rome to pick the flatware up. I smoosh the fork into the egg to break the yolk before dipping the crusty bread into it. “Sorry,” I say after a long moment. “There’s a lot going on in my head. I shouldn’t have snapped at you.”

Rome intakes a sharp breath. “Are we burying him in the family crypt?” Thankfully, my brother has let this go.

“Yeah.”

“I’ll get everything sorted so you can keep doing what you’re doing.” Rome wipes his mouth with the napkin and throws it on the plate. He stands and walks over to me. Rome presses a kiss to the top of my head. “Love you, Frank.”

I look up to him and smile. “Love you too, little bro.”

Rome leaves the dining room, and I'm left feeling like a piece of shit because I snapped at my brother, who's only trying to help.



The knock on the door distracts me from the figures I'm looking at. "Yeah," I call.

The door opens, and G enters. "Lidia and Dina have been released from the hospital."

"Good," I say. "And what about the two guys who sent my girls to the hospital?"

"We've tracked them both down, and they're at the docks." G sweeps his tongue across his bottom lip. "What do you want me to do?"

I sit back in the chair as I continue to stare at G, trying to figure out exactly what I want to happen. Do I kill them myself, or have G do it? "It's best I do it," I say. G's brows rise and he tilts his head to the side. "You don't think I should?"

"Your father wouldn't get his hands dirty for pieces of shit like them."

I purse my lips together as I silently play every scenario over. "Has Christian been dealt with yet?"

G shakes his head once. "I'm waiting on your okay."

"Where is he?"

"I'm giving him a false sense of comfort." G's devious smile makes me chuckle.

"Good. Take care of the fuckers who hurt my girls. Make sure they suffer, and as far as Christian is concerned, leave him for now. I'll take care of him personally after the funeral." The corner of G's lips pull into a satisfied smile.

“I’ll take care of it.”

“Get someone trained over at Destiny to take Christian’s place once I’m done with him.”

G acknowledges me with a nod before leaving the office.

Those fuckers think they can get away with touching my girls without consent...they’d better watch their backs.

CHAPTER 4

FRANKIE

My world has stopped.

Dad's casket is surrounded by hundreds of our men who are spilling over outside the crypt. Rome and I are closest to Dad's casket while the priest finishes the service.

There's a sea of people dressed in black as far as the eye can see. Most are my men, but some are other families who've come to pay their respects, or to ensure Dad is finally dead.

Time seems to move slowly as I stare at the casket. My brother slips his fingers through mine and gives them a gentle squeeze. I can't drag my eyes away from the casket though. My father was a man who was bigger than life. He was tall, over six-foot-four and this coffin makes him look like a mere man. A *human*. Not a god or a leader or a pillar amongst his men.

"Frank," Rome whispers and gestures toward the door of the crypt.

I wish I could cry, to let the emotions flood through me. But, I can't. I can't be seen as weak or frail. If I collapse now, the men won't take me seriously. I'll hold onto the tears until I'm alone.

I pull my shoulders back and lift my chin as I head out of the crypt.

G is behind me and Rome is by my side. I head for the car, but I'm stopped by Ruben Sacco and his nephew Dominic. "Don DeLuca," Ruben says.

“Don Sacco,” I acknowledge.

“Your father was a great man, and I know he trained you well.” He reaches out to shake my hand. I extend my hand to shake his, then Dominic’s. “I look forward to working with you.”

“I do too,” I say.

“Don DeLuca,” Dominic acknowledges as he tips his head and steps to the side.

Rome and I continue to the car, where Dario already has the back door open for us. We slide into the back, and G sits in the front passenger seat. Once Dario is in, we slowly head out of the cemetery and I take a breath of relief. “What was all that about?” Rome jerks his head to the side.

“That was Ruben Sacco and his underboss, who’s also his nephew.”

“They were the only ones to stop you.”

“Because they don’t believe in pissing competitions,” G adds.

Rome brows furrow. “The others who didn’t come were disrespecting you?”

“When there’s a change of management, there will always be the people who are resistant to it. But the other Dons don’t worry me, not today.”

“Why?” Rome asks, seeming genuinely intrigued.

“Because today there is no war with any other family,” G says. “Think of it as parley.”

“A ceasefire?”

“Of sorts. But once the clock strikes midnight, then it’s back to business,” I say.

Rome scoffs. “So glad I left this shit behind. I’m not envious of you, Frank.”

“She’s in good hands,” G snaps defensively.

“G.” I lean forward and place my hand on his shoulder. “He was never part of this life. He’s only asking questions.”

G looks back to my brother with a serious glare. I pull my hand back and recline in the seat. “We’re on skeleton staff down at the docks because they all wanted to come to the house and show their respect to you.”

“Good,” I say and stare out the window. So they should, although I’m not fond of being so exposed.



“Don DeLuca,” one of the soldiers says as he bows his head in front of me.

I turn to G and give him a knowing nod. G removes a thick envelope and hands it to me. “For the birth of your son,” I say as I hand Leon the envelope.

Leon’s forehead crinkles as he takes the envelope. “My wife and I appreciate this. Thank you.” He shoves the envelope into his pocket and straightens before shuffling away.

“Don DeLuca,” another one of the soldiers whispers and he too lowers his chin.

“Alfio,” G mutters as he leans into me.

“Alfio. My father would have appreciated you being here.” He too walks away.

Renato, one of the capos approaches me. He looks to me, then turns to my brother. “Don DeLuca, I’m sorry for your loss.” Renato holds his hand out to my brother to shake.

My brother’s forehead wrinkles and he straightens to his full height. “Don DeLuca is standing beside me,” my brother warns.

Renato glances to me, then back to my brother. “You’re not taking over?”

“No, he isn’t. I am,” I say as I pull my shoulders back.

Renato looks me up and down and sneers. He takes a sharp breath while still sizing me up. “Huh,” he grunts with revolt. “What a fucking joke,” he says loud enough to catch the attention of all the men in the house.

A silence falls over the room.

G moves to stand in front of me, but I lift my hand and place it on his forearm, stopping him from advancing toward Renato. “I’ll take care of it.” I move so I’m beside Renato. “You have a problem with me?”

“No offence, Frankie, but you’re a woman. What would you know about this? It’s a man’s world, and you should be doing what women do best.”

I place my hand on his back and lead him toward the bar. “Have a drink with me, Renato and tell me what your problems are with me leading.”

Renato adjusts his tie and looks around the room, feeling like he’s proud that he’s disrespected me in front of all my men. When we reach the bar, I hold two fingers up and the bartender pours us two scotches in heavy crystal glasses. “It’s not just me,” Renato starts. “Women are no good in this business, you’re too...” He lifts his shoulders before sipping on his drink. “Emotional,” he finally admits.

“We’re too emotional, are we?” I down my two fingers of scotch, and place the glass back on the bar. Tapping the rim so the bartender can pour another two fingers.

G’s moved to be behind me with my brother on the other side of Renato. “This is a man’s job. The other men, they don’t think you’re capable.”

“I’ve been underboss for how long?”

“Yeah, but – ” He screws his face up and lifts his shoulders. “That’s because your father let you play dress-up with us big boys.”

Renato stands a head taller and has at least a hundred pounds on me. “Dress-up? Wow, so all the times I gave you an order, you didn’t do it?”

“Of course I did. But only because of life Don DeLuca, rest his soul.” Renato kisses his fingertips then makes a cross on his body. “He was one scary man, and no one would cross him.”

“Huh,” I say. I place my left hand on his shoulder. “Thank you for bringing that to my attention, Renato.” I look to my brother who’s moved back. “I understand what I have to do.”

“See, you’re a chick, and this ain’t for chicks.”

With my right hand I reach to the bar, grab my glass, and smash it against his temple. The glass shatters in my hand, and I feel some of it cut into my palm. I take the jagged edge and repeatedly slam it into Renato’s head. Blood splatters, but my anger has taken over. Renato collapses in front of me, but I don’t stop. I keep pounding the jagged sharp crystal into his head and throat. Every time I lift my arm to strike - blood spurts, covering me and anyone close by.

“Frank,” G finally says in a calm voice.

I stand straight and look around the room. Renato is gurgling while holding his throat, but he’s only seconds away from dying. I lean over his body and keep stabbing until his arms relax and all the life leaves his eyes. I drop what’s left of the glass, and stand to look around the room. “Does anyone else have a problem with me being the don?” I look each fucker in the eyes, waiting to see who’s got the balls to challenge me. They lower their chins, or look away from me. “No?” I move away from the piece of shit on my floor and head into the office so I can clean up.

“I’m done with him,” I say to G and purposely glance at Renato’s lifeless body.

“Dario, Carmelo.” G points to Renato.

Dario and Carmelo both advance toward the dead lump of shit and carry him out. Rome follows me into the office and

closes the door behind him. “What the fuck was that, Frankie?”

“He had to be taught a lesson.”

“That’s not what I was talking about.”

I walk into the bathroom attached to the office, and look at my reflection in the mirror. I’m covered in blood, and there are bits of skin stuck in my wildly curly dark hair. “Fuck.” I start stripping so I can take a quick shower.

“What’s wrong? Are you hurt?” Rome appears at the door and quickly turns away when he sees I’ve shimmied out of my black dress. “Come on,” he says.

“You barged in while I’m getting ready to take a shower.”

With his back to me, he leans against the door. “What happened back there?”

“He wasn’t going to give me his respect, and they all needed to be shown that I’m not going to let them walk over me.”

“I know that part, Frank. I get why you killed him, but you’ve been working with Dad ever since you could. Why the fuck wouldn’t they respect you?”

“You heard what he said.” I turn the faucets on and reach out to get a feel for the water.

“They shouldn’t underestimate you.”

“I’ll get more of it, until they figure out that I’m not stepping down, and if they want to live, they’ll do what I say.” The water has come up to temperature and I step into the shower. Rome is still leaning against the door jamb with his back to me. “You don’t have to worry about me because, trust me when I say, I’m lethal.”

“Yeah, well...” He shakes his head. “He had balls to do that in your home, on the day of our father’s funeral.”

“He won’t be the last.”

Rome mumbles something inaudible, then leaves the bathroom, closing the door behind him.

I wash all the blood off me, and once I'm done in the shower, I wrap a towel around my hair, and one around my body. Rome is sitting in the office, nursing a scotch. "What are you still doing in here?" I ask as I walk past him toward the door.

"You can't go out there dressed in a towel. Not with a room filled with men, Frank."

"Watch me." I open the door and stroll out to find G near the bar and Dario cleaning the blood off the floor. I still have a house filled with men who work for me. The men see me in a towel and turn away or lower their chins, refusing to meet my eye. Rome's steps hurry to catch up.

G straightens as he glances over my scantily clothed body. "Do you need anything, boss?"

With my shoulders pulled back, I look over the room. "What will it be gentlemen? Business or bloodshed?" I call over to all the men. "I'm fine with either." No one moves, nor are they willing to step forward and challenge me.

I wait for a moment, and when no one takes me up on my offer, I head upstairs to dress.

I walk into my room, and into my closet, my brother hot on my heels. He sits on the bed as I peruse the racks of clothing. I pull out a pair of black pants, and a fitted black V-neck. "I suggest you leave," I say to my brother.

He hangs his head and covers his eyes. "I've been thinking about something," he says from behind his hands.

"What?" I make quick work at dressing before I walk out of the closet and flip my hair over so I can towel dry my locks.

"What would you think if I hung around for a while?"

"Don't you have a job to get back to? Maybe even a girlfriend?"

"Are you dressed yet?" I lift my head to find my brother still hiding behind his hands. I can't help but smirk. I remain quiet until he finally lowers his hands and slowly cracks one eye open. "A simple yes would've sufficed."

“Why do you want to stay here, Rome?”

He stands and paces back and forth in front of the door that leads to my balcony. “I know you don’t need me, because the way you handled that guy downstairs was – ” He shakes his head. “I don’t have words for that.” He points to the floor indicating the room below.

I run my fingers through my wet hair to detangle it. “What are you babbling about, brother?”

“You don’t need me. That’s clear from what happened downstairs. But I want to stay and help you.”

“I don’t need help. I have G for that.”

Rome stops pacing and swivels on the spot. “Fuck, Frank.” He pinches the bridge of his nose. “I want to be here to have your back.”

I screw my nose and tilt my head to the side. “What’s come over you?”

“What I just saw.” He points downstairs. “I’ll never be able to relax knowing there’s so many of your men waiting for their moment to attack. Dad was shot in front of you, and I don’t want that for you. I thought I was okay with leaving once the funeral was done, but after today.” He lifts his hand to gesture toward me. “You literally had pieces of flesh stuck in your hair, Frank.”

“I know. I washed it out.”

“You’re not even affected by what happened.”

My body temperature rises as I open my mouth and shake my head at Rome. “Stay because you want to, not because you think I’m some weak-ass woman.”

“That’s what I’m trying to tell you. I know you’re not weak. You’re the complete opposite, and that makes you a target. I want to be here to be someone you can rely on. Someone you can trust. I *want* to have your back.”

“You want to be my security?”

Rome advances toward me and lifts his hands to grip my upper arms. "I want to help you run the business. I don't want to take over; I just want to be helpful. That's it. Nothing more."

I step back, breaking his grip on my arms. "Why now?"

He releases a humorless chuckle. "Because, Frank, what I saw downstairs tells me you're nothing like Dad."

They're not words I wanted to hear from my brother. "What the hell?" I screw up my mouth in confusion.

"You're more dangerous than Dad ever was. Coupled that with the fact that you're a woman, the threat isn't only from your enemies, but from those who work for you too."

"You have no idea how dangerous Dad was."

"Did he ever kill anyone in front of a room filled with his own men?" I cock a brow and dart my tongue out to sweep over my lower lip. "I take that as a no."

"Not to my knowledge," I answer.

"Let me be part of this."

"Would you kill someone if they came for me?"

Rome straightens and intakes a sharp breath. "Yes," he says without hesitation. "I think you can do amazing things, and even though I turned my back on Dad, I won't do that to you." He puffs his chest out. "If you let me."

I nod slowly. "If you're in, you're in for life, Rome. The only way out is in a bag."

"I know."

Truth is, having my brother on board will be good for me. In time I'll be able to move some of the responsibility to him. Besides that, two DeLucas is much stronger than one. "Are you serious about this, Rome?"

His jaw jumps, but slowly he nods. "I want in."

"Don't think for one moment I'll go easy on you."

A small smile tugs at his lips. "I don't doubt it."

“You don’t ever question me in front of anyone.” He nods. “What I say, goes. I’ve been in this life longer than you have.”

“I know,” he says.

The next words out of my mouth hurt. “I’ll fucking end you if you cross me.” I don’t want to speak them, but he needs to know this isn’t something he can come and go from. There’s an uncomfortable silence between us. “I’m going to go dry my hair, and if you’re gone when I return, I’ll forget about this conversation and you’re free to leave. But if you’re still in my room when I return, then there’s no leaving. Ever.” I love my brother, but he left once before.

“I understand.”

A silent exchange happens between us. I walk into the bathroom and take my time drying my hair. My stomach roils with uncertainty. Maybe I shouldn’t have threatened him, but he also needs to understand that this family is not a game. My hands shake as I turn the hairdryer off and stare at my reflection in the mirror.

It’s awfully quiet in my room. Maybe my brother has left. And if he did, I’ll respect his choice and wishes.

I lean on the basin and close my eyes, taking deep breaths to push the sick gurgling in my throat down. My eyes snap open and I stare at myself for another moment before pulling my shoulders back, lifting my chin and heading out to my bedroom.

Where I find Rome leaning against the wall, looking down over the garden.

He turns to look at me and pushes off the wall. He shoves his hands into his pants pockets. “Boss.”

Good.

CHAPTER 5

FRANKIE

“**W**ow, look at you,” Rome says as he casts his eyes down my body. “That dress is something else.”

I smile at him triumphantly. “I want people talking about me.”

“Red dress, black gloves, and gold jewelry. I’m *sure* that’s exactly what’ll happen. Tongues will wag.”

He holds his arm out for me. “You look okay in a tuxedo.” Rome looks to G. “Yes, get used to wearing a suit, because that’s how the head of this family dresses.”

“I was wondering why G wasn’t dressed in a penguin suit too.”

“Because I’m there to protect Frankie and you,” G says. “Actually, you’ve done me a great favor by not making me dress in one of those monkey suits to be Frank’s plus one at this stupid ball. By the way, it’s still a bad idea for the head of the DeLuca family to be at a ball with the chief of police, lawyers and God knows who else wants to lock you up.”

I walk over to G and fix his tie before flicking some fluff off his shoulder. “You worry too much.”

“Jeremy Miller is a shark, and he’ll annihilate you,” G warns.

I lean over and kiss his cheek. “Do you underestimate me, G?”

“Hell no. I know you’re a force, but I think this is a waste of time. Jeremy Miller isn’t going to budge.”

“Just so I have this right, we’re going to a ball for this Jeremy guy because he’s going to be the current senator?”

“Governor,” I correct.

“And you need him why?”

“Because the last governor was in our pocket, but this one is anti-corruption,” G says matter-of-factly.

Rome snorts with laughter. “A governor who’s not corrupt. Okay, that’s a first,” he says sarcastically.

“He’s not interested in anything I’m offering, so I thought I’d see if I can personally change his mind.”

G wolf-whistles as we head toward the door. “In that dress I’m sure you can get anything you want.”

Yeah, I look good. I strut out to the front where Dario is waiting with the back door open.



“Can they be any more pompous?” Rome says as we approach our table.

“Wow, what a waste of money. Look at all these elaborate decorations they’ve spent tax-payer money on. And they call me a criminal.”

“Imagine how many mouths they could feed with what they dropped on this ball. And for what? To introduce the new governor. Fucking bullshit,” Rome groans. “Here.” He pulls my chair out and waits until I’m seated before he sits beside me. “So, have you met this new governor?”

“Not personally. I know who he is though.” I look around the room trying to spot him. “There he is.” He’s working the room, stopping to talk to people as he moves around the guests. “Stay here.”

I stand and head toward Miller. There's a band playing background music, and a lot of chatter from rich people drinking crappy wine and champagne.

I maneuver through the guests until I'm close to Miller. Well, he's surprisingly better-looking than I remember him to be. He's tall with a chiseled, defined chin, and a hard, toned body. He looks damned good in a suit. I wonder how he looks out of one.

He makes his way closer to me, and when he's within reach, I step forward, link our fingers together and begin to walk toward the dance floor. "Oh," he says and smiles. "I do like a woman who knows what she wants."

"Good, because I want to dance." We get to the dance floor, and the people standing around drinking begin to part and move to the side. "Dance with me."

Jeremy places his right hand to my hip, and grips my hand in his left. With his warm hand cupping mine, and his fingers possessively digging into my hip he expertly moves me around the dance floor. "Miss DeLuca, I'd heard you bought a ticket to the ball."

I internally smile. He knows exactly who I am. "I wanted to congratulate you on your new role."

"I'm not going to take your money," he says as he continues to sway us to the music, pulling me in closer than he should.

"I didn't realize I was offering you any." His pinky skims across the top of my ass.

"I know who you are." Jeremy tightens his hand to my lower back, closing the distance between us.

"So you should." I stare up into his alluring dark gray eyes.

"I'm not giving you access to the ports you need." His eyes dart to my lips, then back up to my eyes. He visibly swallows then turns his neck so he's not looking at me. "I'm sorry you wasted your time here." Jeremy releases his fingers around my hand, but I grip his hand in mine. "What are you doing?"

“I told you, I want to dance.”

His teeth grind together as he keeps his steely eyes on mine. “Do you fight dirty?”

“If I have to.”

He brings me in closer, our bodies smashed against one another. Miller lowers his head, I can feel his hot breath skimming across the sensitive skin below my ear. “So can I, Miss DeLuca. So can I.” He steps back and while keeping his eyes on mine, he gives me a small bow. “Thank you for the dance.”

Miller turns to leave me stranded on the dance floor, but thankfully, my brother steps in and begins dancing with me. “What happened?”

“He’s not a fucking straight arrow at all.” I can’t help but smile as I watch Miller socialize with other guests. Interestingly though, he keeps looking over at me too. “He told me he can play dirty.”

“Did he?”

“He has no idea what I’m capable of.”

“I’m already dreading the bloodshed.”

“No blood will spill, Rome. But this is going to be fun. That’s for sure.” I look over to Jeremy who’s nursing a drink. We lock eyes and I tilt my head to him.

There’s no doubt in my mind that I’ll keep access to the docks. Because at the end of the day, Miller is still a man. I’m Frankie DeLuca, the don of the DeLuca Family – a fucking mob queen – and I get whatever I want.

Game on.

CHAPTER 6

JEREMY

I look down to the woman kneeling before me. Her blonde hair is falling loosely over her shoulders. Her head is bobbing up and down as she takes me deep into her mouth.

“That’s it, take my cock as far as you can.” I slide my hand to the back of her head and force her to take me deep. The blonde is certainly gorgeous. Her tight body is perfect. And ordinarily, she’s exactly the type I’d go for. Pretty, petite, nice tits, a mouth that can engulf my length, and obedient. God, how I love them to pamper to my needs without question.

But, for some reason, when I close my eyes to concentrate on the feeling of the blonde’s mouth, all I can see is Frankie DeLuca. Her wild brown hair, those deep, sinful dark eyes. Jesus, she’s a vixen if ever I’ve met one.

“You’re a dirty fucking slut, aren’t you, princess?” I say to the woman who’s kneeling before me. I force my eyes to open so I can watch how she takes my cock into her mouth.

Her blue eyes look up at me while she arches a brow and tries to take me right down to my balls. I feel myself going soft as my thoughts are consumed by the dangerous brunette I met only a few hours ago.

Fuck.

What the hell is wrong with me? The blonde is trying, but she’s a poor substitute for the woman I want on her knees in front of me. *Damn it.* I close my eyes and take myself back to the moments we were dancing. Frankie’s body was perfect up against mine. But why am I thinking of her the way I am?

She's nothing like my usual type. She's dangerous in so many ways. Frankie DeLuca is feisty and calculating and not who I want kneeling in front of me.

But the problem is, I *do* want her mouth on me. And I want every part of me on her.

My heart rate jumps when I think of her before me. She can come and see me at my office, and when she's there, she can crawl under the desk, unzip my pants and fuck me with her mouth. "Dirty fucking girl," I say and thrust into her mouth as she slips her hand down between her legs to fuck her own fingers. My balls draw up as my own release is nearing. "That's it, right there. Flick your tongue." Frankie's untamed brown curls fall effortlessly over her shoulders. Her brown eyes redden as she takes me down her throat, causing her to gag. I smile down at her, link my fingers into her hair and keep her there. "Choke on my cock." She tries to smile but her lips are stretched around the base of my cock. My eyes roll closed and I unload my cum into her mouth.

I buck my hips several times, delivering every drop of my cum.

"Yummy," she says.

I open my eyes to find it's the blonde kneeling at my feet, not Frankie. The blonde – I can't recall her name – wipes at the corners of her mouth. Effortlessly, she stands and saunters closer to me. I take a step back as I tuck my cock into my pants and fasten the zipper and button. "Thank you," I say as I turn away from her.

"I was thinking..."

I look over my shoulder to see her heading toward the bed. "You can go now."

"What?" The hurt on her face makes me feel like a prick. Her shoulders drop as does her chin. But, she pulls herself together and saunters toward me. "Why don't you join me over on the bed?" The blonde reaches out and begins to unzip my pants.

I take a step back, and turn to pour myself a scotch. “You can leave,” I reiterate without so much as looking at her.

“But –”

“I have work to do.” The burn of the peaty liquid heats my throat. “Thank you.” I look over my shoulder and glance toward the door. “Do you need money for a cab?”

“Fuck you, Governor.” The blonde shimmies into her tight dress and flips me off. The corner of my lips tug into a small smile as I throw my second drink back. “We could’ve had something beautiful together.”

“Are you still here?” I ask.

“Fuck you!” she repeats with more venom in her voice.

God, I wish I remembered her name so I could ask Zac to remove her. Fuck it. I pick my phone up and send Zac a message. *Get rid of the blonde in my room.*

“You’re going to be sorry, Jeremy,” she’s still ranting.

The door to the room opens, and my personal assistant enters. “Mr. Miller’s car is waiting for you, ma’am,” Zac says.

She looks to Zac, then to me. The anger exploding from her eyes is enough to tell me that she’s not happy. Her jaw is set with tension; her lips are thin and downcast. She points a finger to me and shakes her head. “Fuck you!” She picks up her little bag, slings it over her shoulder and storms out of the hotel room.

Zac arches a brow and takes a sharp breath. He looks just as unimpressed with me as she is. “When you see her to the car, I need you back here.”

“Great,” Zac replies with a hint of annoyance.

I pour myself a third scotch, and sit at the table where my laptop is. I open the computer, and check a few emails that have come through. The door opens and Zac enters, just as irritated as he was a few moments ago. “Did she get to the car okay?”

“Do you really care?” he snaps.

“Zac,” I say in warning. He runs his tongue over his teeth before nodding once. “Good.” I take a sharp breath. “I need you to pull all files on the DeLuca family.”

Zac lifts his head and locks eyes on me. “The mob?”

“Yes, I want to know everything about them.”

“I know Hayes was in bed with them,” Zac says.

“That’s not a secret. But I want to find out everything I can.”

“Why?” he asks. I run my tongue over my teeth as I stare at him. “Get me everything on the DeLuca family.” He lifts his brows and glances to the side. “You can leave.” I flick my hand, essentially dismissing him.

My attention is returned to my laptop, but honestly, I can’t get Frankie DeLuca out of my head.

Fuck.

CHAPTER 7

FRANKIE

G walks into my office, pulls out the chair opposite me and sits. “Frank,” he says trying to get my attention.

I lift my hand, indicating for him to wait a moment as I work out the numbers from Dreams. I scribble a few numbers on the notepad before looking to G. “What is it?”

“Christian’s replacement for Destiny is ready to go. Do you want me to take care of Christian?”

I shake my head. “I said I’ll take care of it.”

“We didn’t talk about what happened with the politician.” G lifts his hand and waves his two fingers from side to side.

I look to his hand and sit back in my chair. “What’s with the flick of the hand?”

“You know. Dancing, schmoozing, all that bullshit you have to go through so we can keep access to the docks.”

“Dancing? Schmoozing?” I tease as I fold my arms in front of my chest. “Do you want to go dancing and schmoozing?”

“You wouldn’t catch me dead with those uptight fuckers.” There’s a hint of amusement on G’s hard face. “How did it go?” I take an audible breath as I crinkle my nose. “That bad?”

“He wasn’t interested at all.”

“What do you have in mind to make him interested?”

“I’ve been thinking about it.” I unfold my arms and tap my fingertips on the desk.

“We could have a girl from one of the brothels chat him up, then take a photo of him in a compromising position,” G suggests. I screw up my nose. “Don’t like that?”

“He’s a bachelor. No one is going to care if he’s caught with his pants down and a hooker on his dick.”

“What are you thinking?” G scrubs at the stubble on his chin.

“He’s not like Hayes at all,” I say as I slowly intake a long breath.

“The politician won’t take a bribe. He’s too straight for that. Poor bastard probably hasn’t had a good lay in his life. Maybe if he did, then he’d know how much pussy he can buy with what you’d pay him.”

An unfamiliar flutter churns my stomach. *What’s that about?* “Maybe that can work to my advantage.” I snicker aloud. “If he doesn’t take our money, maybe we just need to make it *look* like he does.”

G chuckles and shakes his head. “Your father would’ve just sent some of the boys around to change his mind.”

“I know,” I say. “Violence has a place.” I look to the figures on the laptop, save my work then close it. “Speaking of which. Where’s Christian right now?”

“He’d be at...” G looks to his gold watch then to me. “He’d be heading to Destiny.”

“Good. Let’s meet him there.” I stand and take my laptop to put it in the safe. “Have his replacement meet us too.”

G snickers. “I’ll have Dario bring the car to the front.” G exits my office, and I head upstairs to find my brother.

“Rome,” I call as I walk down the hallway.

“In here.” I find Rome working on his laptop in his room. “You alright?” He looks up from the desk he’s sitting at.

“I can set you up an office.” I walk over to peer at the computer. “What are you working on?”

“I’ve been thinking about how to make the clubs work more efficiently.”

I look at the spreadsheet he has opened. “Did someone give you figures?”

“No, no one. But I’ve been looking at general information I can find on the internet, and working with that.”

“So, you were serious. You’re sticking around.” I lean against the wall and fold my arms in front of my chest. Although I said he had no option to leave, I wouldn’t have stopped him if he did. But I would’ve wiped him completely out of my life.

“I told you I was.”

I glance at the figures and jut my chin toward his laptop. “I’ll set you up in my office then. And pulling bullshit figures off the net isn’t going to do anything at all. From here on in, you can run the clubs.” I take a step back. “Pack your laptop up, and come down to the office.”

Rome shuts his laptop and follows me downstairs. We enter my office, and I indicate for him to sit in my chair. “G,” I call.

G appears within a few seconds. “Boss.”

“Who’s the builder Dad had?”

“Luciano.”

“Call him. I have a job for him.”

“What is it?”

I walk over to the furthest wall. “This wall needs to come down, and I want a sizeable space with two desks, two chairs. He built this for Dad, right?” I tap on my desk. G nods. “Same desk.”

“One of the safes is in that wall.”

“Reposition it to be built into the floor behind my desk.” I point to the space where I want the safe.

“Anything else?” G asks.

I look to Rome. “Do you want anything else done to the room?”

“You’re the boss. Whatever you want, Frankie.”

“That’ll be all,” I convey to G.

“What’s the time frame?”

“He’s got three days.”

G snickers. “Three days? It’ll take him a week just to make the desk.”

“Three days for the renovation, and a week for the desk. Get it started today.”

G shakes his head. “No one could ever call you unreasonable, Frank.” G laughs, followed by my brother. “The car is out the front.” G exits my office, leaving Rome and me.

“I’ll give you access to the books for the clubs. We’ll start with the nightclubs, and once you’re all caught up on those, then I’ll move you to the brothels.” I pat my pockets to search for my phone. “I have something to take care of.”

“I want to come.”

“You’re not going to like what you see.”

“Are you going to glass someone to death?”

“Not glass, no,” I reply honestly.

Rome’s hands still and his brows rise in surprise. “You’re going to kill someone?”

“I am.”

His forehead crinkles and my brother looks away, avoiding my eyes. “Can I ask why?”

“Two of my working girls were assaulted, which means the manager wasn’t doing what he was supposed to. He wasn’t looking after my property.”

“They’re women, not property, Frank,” Rome argues.

“While they’re at work, they’re my property. Just like that laptop. I own it, so it’s mine. And I look after what belongs to

me. His job is to look after my property, and he didn't. Which means now he's a liability because he can't look after what belongs to me. These girls who work for me, I make sure they're safe. And if they're not, then there's a problem."

"You're talking about them like they're things."

"They are. While at work. They're *my* things."

Rome intakes a long breath before slowly releasing it. "You're so cold."

"These girls could be out on the street turning tricks and giving all their money to a pimp who doesn't give a shit about them. Instead, they voluntarily come to my business, where they get forty percent, and I keep sixty in exchange for a clean and safe environment. They know that while they're on shift, they belong to me, they're safe, and they're good with that."

"I guess, if the alternative is the streets, why wouldn't they come to work for you?" Rome pinches the bridge of his nose before straightening. "You know, I've never been inside any of the brothels you have."

"Consider today a lesson." I grab my sweater and look to Rome. "Are you coming?"

"Sure am."

Something tells me my brother is nervous. I'll make a boss out of him yet.



"Don DeLuca, I had no idea you were coming in this evening," Christian says and looks to Rome, then G. "Can I help you with anything?"

"Lidia and Dina." I harden my jaw as I stare at Christian.

"Oh, them," he replies in a small voice and lowers his chin. He clears his throat before looking up to me. "I'm sorry."

“Sorry?” I walk around to his chair, and drag it out before plonking down in it. I gesture to the chair opposite. Christian nervously glances toward G, Rome, then me. “Sorry?”

“I wasn’t paying attention. I dropped the ball.”

“You cost me a lot of money. Two of my best money makers are out of action.”

“But that’s only until they can come back.”

“You’ve not only cost me money, but them too.”

Christian rocks back once and peers over his shoulder to the door. “What can I do to make it up to you?”

“Glad you asked.”

“I’ll do anything, Don DeLuca.”

G moves to stand in front of the door in case he jumps to his feet and attempts to run. Rome reads the room and moves to stand beside me. “Anything?”

“Anything,” Christian says. “Whatever you need me to do, I’ll do it.”

I open the top drawer of the desk and rummage around in it, then open the second and find the Glock below a stack of papers. I take the Glock, cock it, and point it at Christian’s head. “Good.” I lower the gun and shoot once at his chest.

The sound echoes through the room and the brothel. It’s loud, and unmistakable. “You’re forgiven.” I stand and hand G the gun. “Take care of this.” I look to Christian and add, “He’s done.”

G opens the door to the office and gestures for Dario. “Take Frank and Rome home, then return here.”

“Yes, sir,” Dario replies as he scans the room.

“Once this is cleaned up, talk with the girls and let them know we take their safety seriously,” I instruct G.

“Done,” he reassures me.

I turn to my brother. “You ready?”

Rome rubs at the back of his neck while actively avoiding Christian's lifeless body. "Yeah," he says, and his voice cracks.

"Let's go." I step aside to widen the distance between us, and Rome follows me out of the office.

"Frank," G calls in a voice barely above a whisper. He looks to Rome's retreating back and tilts his head to the side. "He'll be okay. He's just not used to this." G flicks his eyes to my brother.

"I know," I say with confidence. "He's in the life now, G."

"The two of you together will see this family soar higher than your old man could ever imagine." He lifts his hand and sweeps it between Rome and myself. "You two can be unstoppable."

I lean in close and whisper, "Better fucking believe it." I clasp my hand on his shoulder and give G an appreciative squeeze. "See you in the morning." I walk out to find Rome standing by the car with his hands shoved in his pockets. "Hey," I say.

Rome startles. "Hey," his voice is unusually high.

I slide into the back of the car, and wait until he's in. Rome's hands are tight in tight fists and his jaw is strained. "Are you okay?"

"You shot him."

"I did," I say with ease. "And I'd do it again. Two of the girls were attacked. One was beaten and the other was raped. His job is to look after the girls, not go out and be on a fucking break, or whatever the hell else he was doing. If I can't trust him to do his job, then he's useless to me."

Rome opens his mouth several times to start saying something, but he settles on, "I get it."

"This is the world we're in."

Rome clears his throat and lifts his chin to face me. "So I know where you stand, if one of the women is hurt what do you do?"

“Whoever hurt them pays with their life. And in Christian’s case, because he took his eyes off them, his penance was his life too.”

“You’re protective and psychotic.”

I narrow my eyes at Rome, before letting a laugh vibrate through me. “These girls have promised to work for me, and in exchange I promised to look after them. Protective – yes. Psychotic – you better fucking believe it. Especially if someone wrongs me, my family, or my workers.”

“You could’ve broken his hands, or hobbled him, Frank.”

“And what does that show everyone? It shows them that I have a tolerance for someone wronging me. This way, anyone who thinks they can fuck with me and get away with it, will know the price for being caught is fatal.”

Rome avoids my eyes, but finally nods. “If someone fucks with you, you end their life. That means others will take this as a warning.”

“Yes. They’ll know the consequences.”

The air is cold and thick and my brother taps his fingertips to his knee. “You’re the right person for this life.”

“You will be too.”

“I’m not sure I’ll ever be able to pull the trigger, Frank, but now I know I can watch you do it.”

I lean across and place my hand on Rome’s thigh, giving him a gentle, supportive squeeze. “You’ll be fine.” I move my hand and look out into the night sky. I need to change the trajectory of this conversation. “15 will find the shooter, and she’ll give me the information on who gave the orders.”

“Do you have any suspicions?” Rome’s returned to his normal self.

“None at all.”

“Could it be a rival?”

“Who else would want him dead?”

“FBI, cops, I don’t know.”

“FBI would’ve wanted him behind bars, not killed assassination-style. There’s no way this was above board.”

Rome nods. “I take your word for it, Frank. Besides, you’re right. This isn’t the M.O of the cops.” He runs his hand through his hair and sucks in a deep breath. “What are you going to do when you find out who killed Dad?” I flick him a dark look. “Good, but do me a favor.”

“What?”

“Let me be part of that one.”

Interesting. I never thought my brother would want to get his hands dirty, especially considering he and our father never saw eye to eye. Dad wanted him to live the lifestyle, and Rome wanted out. The fights and the screaming used to set me on edge. Yet here we are. Exactly how Dad would’ve wanted us to be. “Done.”

CHAPTER 8

JEREMY

“Here’s the file you requested.” Zac walks into my office and places a thick file on my desk.

I look away from my computer and glance at the folder. “On the DeLucas?”

“That’s what you asked for,” Zac replies with irritation.

“What’s wrong with you?” I pick the file up and begin to flick through it, not paying attention to Zac’s grievances. But his silence intrigues me. So, I stop scanning the pages and look up to Zac. “What?”

His eyes dart to the file in my hands, then back up to meet mine. “They’re dangerous.”

“The DeLucas?” Zac slowly nods. “Good, then I’ll do everything in my power to lock them up.”

“People like them don’t go to jail for long.”

“We got Al Capone on tax evasion, I’m sure I can get the DeLucas on something like that.” I smirk as I scan the top page, but Zac hasn’t left my office. “What is it now?”

“It’s usually people like me who become the first victims.”

I snicker and shake my head. “You watch too many movies. The DeLucas won’t come after you.” My brows lift when I see that Martino DeLuca was gunned down. “Why wasn’t I informed that Martino DeLuca was killed?”

“I only found that out while I was compiling information from the local police, and whatever information I could find

on the internet. The FBI wouldn't even return my call."

"They won't if they're investigating the DeLucas." I keep reading and lift my brows when I see Frankie DeLuca is now the new head of the family. "You can go," I say to Zac as I immerse myself in the file. No wonder it was Frankie at the ball and not her father.

It takes me over an hour to read everything in the file, and I smirk to myself when I see all the illegal activities Frankie DeLuca is part of. Guns, drugs, money laundering and prostitution. I'm surprised human trafficking isn't on the list too. Maybe they keep that part as quiet as possible.

I throw the file on the table and lean back in my chair, staring at it. Hayes was taking a bribe for him to look the other way at the docks so they could import what they needed. I scrub my hand over my chin, thinking how to flush these fuckers out of my state.

I need to get rid of her, and her entire operation. I pick my phone up and call a friend of mine at the FBI. "Jeremy," he answers on the first ring.

"Tyler, how are you?"

"I'm alright. You ready for me to kick your butt at squash again? Is it time for a rematch?" The bastard laughs and I roll my eyes.

"This is more of a work call."

"Aha," he says. "What do you need?"

"You know who the DeLuca family is, right?"

He scoffs. "Yeah, I know who they are."

"Is there any way you can pay Frankie DeLuca a visit?"

"Why? What have you got?" Tyler's voice changes in pitch, it becomes more serious – business like.

"I don't have anything, but I want to make it uncomfortable for them here, and run them out of the state."

"Good luck with that, Miller. Because let me tell you, there are a handful of families that own the east coast, from Maine

to Florida, and the DeLucas have got a wide reach.”

“Did you know the father was assassinated?”

“We knew about it within twenty-four hours.”

“Could you use that to drop in on Frankie?”

“Man, what are you doing?”

“I told you. I want her to know that we’re looking at her.”

“I need to get the okay from my superiors.”

“Do you think you can ask?” I drum my fingers on the closed DeLuca file as I wait for his reply.

“Let me see what I can do.”

I hang up and sit staring at the file for a few moments as a slow smile stretches my lips. Frankie DeLuca has no idea how much of a living hell I can make her life.

It’s time she finds out.



I’ve loosened my tie, and I’ve run my hand through my hair so many times that it’s a jumbled mess. The knock on the door is a welcome distraction. “Yeah?”

Zac opens the door and enters my office. “Before I leave for the night, do you want me to order you some food?”

I notice he has his jacket on, and his laptop bag is slung over his shoulder. “Um.” I close my eyes for a moment and run my hand over them, relieving the tension. “What time is it?”

“It’s nearly seven.”

“Seven?” I snap my eyes open to look at the time, and sure enough, it’s five minutes to seven. “No, I’ll get ready to leave too.”

“I’ll see you tomorrow.” Zac closes the door, and I’m left to finish working on the email I need to send. Today’s been a savage day with endless emails, phone calls, and millions of mind-numbing questions.

Although I could spend the next few hours stuck in the office, I decide it’s probably best if I head home and try to unwind. Maybe have a drink or two and call the blonde from the other night.

God only knows I need a good fucking to relieve the mounting stress. Maybe once I fuck the blonde, I’ll be able to get a decent night’s sleep.

I rub my fingertips across my eyes to alleviate the tiredness and pressure. The moment my eyes open, I focus on packing and leaving. I need to get out of here.

I navigate the streets effortlessly toward home. I take a deep breath as I relax against the seat, thinking about the day. But mostly, about Frankie. She’s...incredible. But also dangerous. I need to get her out of my state.

My phone is pinging consistently – as it does every hour of the day. By the time I arrive home, I glance at the countless emails and calls and decide to silence my phone tonight and deal with it all tomorrow.

I shrug out of my suit jacket and throw it haplessly over the back of the couch as I walk toward my liquor cabinet to pour myself a scotch.

I down the first and release an appreciative groan as I loll my head backwards.

There’s a knock on my door. “What the fuck?” I grumble as I place the glass on the edge of the liquor cabinet and look at my watch. Did I call the blonde and she’s here already? Wait, did I? I don’t remember. I walk over to the door and open it. What the actual...

“You sent your little FBI agent to intimidate me?” she asks, barging into my house and pushing past me.

“Get out, or I’ll call the police.”

A condescending laugh escapes past her lips. "Go ahead." She walks straight over to my liquor cabinet and pours herself a scotch. Frankie screws her nose once she's consumed it. "What is this shit?"

I'm still standing at the open door. "Get out." I point outside.

She saunters over to the sofa and sits. She extends her arms out beside her, all with a fucking smirk. "Who decorated? Your grandmother? Do you have doilies on your kitchen table too?"

My muscles quiver as my teeth grind together. "Get the fuck out!" I warn.

Frankie takes a deep breath and releases it slowly as she arches a defiant brow. "You're not hospitable at all, are you, Miller?"

I've had it with her brazen, childish behavior. I slam the door shut and storm over to her. I lean down and grab Frankie by the arm, yanking her up off my sofa. "I told you to get the fuck out." I drag her over toward the door, but she manages to land a punch in my side, winding me and forcing me to relax my grip on her.

She takes a step backward, but I regain my composure and grab her around the neck and pin her to the door. A slow smile tugs at her lips as she stares at me. Suddenly, I hear the *snick* of a gun's safety, then feel the cold barrel under my arm. "I knew this was going to be fun," she says with a husky darkness.

"Fun?" Adrenaline pumps through me as I tighten my fingers around her throat.

Frankie sinks her teeth into her bottom lip. "Aren't you enjoying yourself, *Miller*?" My name sounds like a blazing fire from her full lips.

I find myself wildly attracted to this dangerous game she's playing. My cock springs to life, and in the moment I want to be buried inside her. I want my hands wrapped around her throat while I'm thrusting into Frankie's wet pussy. I lean into

her, my mouth so close to hers I can feel her hot breath caressing my skin. “I told you to get out.” She jams the gun into my ribs. The pain is not unwelcome. “I could have you thrown in jail for what you’re doing.” I skim my thumb across her throat before applying more pressure.

She takes a breath, and with a dangerous glint in her eyes, Frankie sweeps her tongue across her lower lip. God, why am I so aroused by her and her mouth. “And your hands are around my neck.”

I drive my body into hers, caging her against the door. Frankie’s left leg widens, giving me the access I want. Our bodies push into one another’s. This interaction is dangerous in more ways than one. “I could easily take your life right now,” I whisper as I lean in closer, our lips barely touching.

She moves the gun so now it’s poking me under the arm. She skims her mouth across mine. I’m instantly craving more of Frankie DeLuca. I want to taste every part of her, ravage her like a beast with no control. “Imagine how much fun we could have if we just...” Frankie pauses as she stares at me. I could literally end her life right here, but she’s not afraid. Not even a little, and that in itself is terrifying. She re-engages the safety, and with the gun still in her hand she places both her palms on my chest. The smile quickly fades from her face, though her arrogance stays in place. With my hands still firmly around her throat, she leans into me and whispers, “Good luck trying to take me down, Miller.” She places a small kiss below my ear, forcing me to roll my eyes closed and lean into her tender touch. “Good fucking luck.”

She smacks me on the side of the head with the gun. My grip on her releases, and I stumble back, cradling my head. The door opens and she simply vanishes, like she was never here to begin with. “Fuck!” I scream with frustration.

I let her play me.

Fuck.

Frankie DeLuca is dangerous, and I’m going to tear her down.

CHAPTER 9

FRANKIE

“Hey,” I say to my brother when I enter the office. “Get ready.”

“Why?” He looks up from his laptop, a deep V on his forehead.

“We have a meeting.”

“What about and who with?”

“Saccos, Augustas, and Venanzis.”

“Do I need to be there? I’m inundated with work, and I need to head into Darkness and Destruction in about an hour.”

“What are you doing at the clubs?”

“There are some inconsistencies with products and sales. I’m going to do an inventory myself to see where the problem lies. Do you really need me at the meeting?”

“It would be good to have you there.” I lean against the desk and fold my arms across my chest. “It’s best you take care of that.” I pointedly look to the computer Rome is working on. I glance around the office and shake my head. “This should all be finished in the next day or two.”

“You gave the builder a deadline, and he’s gone over.”

“Yep.” Rome looks to me, his brows high with a questioning look on his face. “What?”

“You’re not going to...” Rome smacks his lips together. “Kill him, are you?” he finishes the sentence with tension.

I snort and shake my head. “No, I’m not going to kill him for doing a good job, Rome. Jesus, what do you take me for?”

He holds his hands up in surrender as he leans back in the chair. “I’m just saying, I know what a hard-ass you can be.”

I unfold my arms and wag my finger at him. “I’m a reasonable hard-ass. He’s doing something for me, and just because it’s taken more than the time I allotted, doesn’t mean I’m gonna kill him. But...” I tilt my head to the side. “If he wrongs me, then that’s another story.”

“Remind me to stay on your good side.”

“You’re my brother,” I say to ease his concern.

He stares up at me with wide eyes and a tight smile. “Again, remind me to stay on your good side.”

I release a chuckle before turning and heading for the door. “I’ll have G assemble a crew for you.”

“What do you mean?”

I stop at the open door, and turn to face my brother. “You don’t go anywhere alone, Rome.”

“No one knows I’m here working with you.”

I shake my head and click my tongue to the roof of my mouth. “If they don’t know now, they’ll find out soon enough, which means you’re now a target – either way. For everyone. Other families, the feds, even some of my men.”

“Why would your men want to get to me?”

“Because some of them think I shouldn’t be in this position, and they’re the ones I’m taking care of, one at a time.”

“Like at Dad’s funeral.”

“Exactly like that.” I tap the door twice as I head out to find G. He’s in the kitchen, sipping a coffee and talking with Mya. G sees me and places his coffee cup on the counter. “I need you to assemble a crew for Rome.”

“Who do you want?”

“I need three of our best.”

“That would be me,” he says with a hint of humor. “But I’m not moving to your brother. Sorry, Frank.”

I blink several times while staring at G. “No need to apologize. Just get him a good crew.”

“I’ll arrange it.”

“I need that done today.”

G already has his phone in his hand, sending off instructions. “Karter, Duccio and Abele.” He looks up from his phone. “They’re my picks.”

“Karter?” I ask and lift my brows.

“He may not be of our heritage, but he’s proven to be loyal to you.”

“He’s an outsider, G.”

“And he’s been with your father since he was fifteen. And now, he’s thirty and made his way up the ranks. I trust him.” He’s still looking to me for my final approval.

I don’t like having someone so high up who’s not cut from the same cloth, but, as G stated, Karter has been with us for over fifteen years. “Karter is fine,” I say.

“I’ll have the boys meet here this afternoon, and you can talk to them. But...” He slides his phone into his pocket and looks at his gold watch. “We have to leave for the meeting.” G falls into place beside me, and when we reach the front door, he opens it for me. Dario is already waiting by the car, and once I slide into the back and G is beside me, Dario is already driving down the long driveway to the security gate.

“I need you to keep an eye on Petro at the meeting.”

“I’ll be watching all those fuckers. Augustas, Saccos, Venanzis. I don’t trust any of them.”

“I don’t like Petro. If someone happens to put a bullet between his eyes, I’m not gonna miss him.”

G snickers. "That can be arranged." He looks over to me. "No news from 15 yet?"

"Nothing."

"For an assassin, she's taking her sweet fucking time."

Although I'd rather have the information already, I know I have to be patient, or I could end up starting a war I don't want. Especially considering Miller is going to be a pain in my ass. "I know, but..." I lift my hand to gesture for him to calm. "I want this done right."

"It's the only way to move forward," G says with a hint of irritation that this is taking so long.

"The balls on Miller," I say changing the subject. "Bastard sent his FBI friend to the house. I must admit, I like his style."

"Maybe we can get a two-for-one deal with him and Petro."

I snap my head to the side to glare at G. "No one touches him," I say.

"Whoa, hold up, Frank." G lifts his hands in defense. "If he needs to be put down, then that's what'll happen."

I lean over closer to G, staring right into his hard eyes. "No one touches Miller," I repeat slower. My muscles tense and my pulse quickens.

G shakes his head and adjusts his tie. "Understood." He squirms in the seat before pulling his shoulders back. "Is there something going on I should be aware of?" I lift my chin with arrogance. "Did something happen last night when you saw him?"

"No."

"Is there something I'm missing? Because if it was someone who's causing us problems, we'd be planning his death."

"You're not missing anything." I turn away and look out the window, choosing to end this conversation before anything more is asked.

Jeremy Miller is a pain in my fucking ass, but I won't take him down. I absolutely *will* turn him so I own him.



"I don't like this, Frank. It's not on our territory," G says as we walk from the car toward Petro's club.

"He asked for the meet, so we're all meeting here."

One of Petro's men is at the door. He must weigh easily three hundred pounds and stands a full head taller than me. Maybe even more. "Miss DeLuca," he acknowledges as we walk toward him. He opens the door and G walks ahead of me to scope the club out. Inside the entrance is another one of Petro's men. He steps forward and with a security wand scans it over G's body. The wand is beeping like crazy, and the guy indicates with a jerk of the chin to remove the guns.

"No fucking way," I say.

"Don Augusta has insisted that everyone needs to remove their weapons," he says as if he's calling the shots.

"Has he?" I ask.

"Hmh." His security arrogantly looks me up and down. *Fucker.*

I scan the club and can't see anyone else here yet. "He can call me when he's ready to talk like a big boy." I look to G. "Let's go." G and I turn to leave.

"Frankie," I hear the fucking old man's grating voice.

I take a few steps toward the door, refusing to back down from a ridiculous request like relinquishing our weapons. "Call me when you're ready to be a fucking man," I say from over my shoulder. I know my words could cause a bloodbath, but I'm Frankie DeLuca and no one tells me what to do.

"Frankie," he calls, his voice angry.

I don't stop advancing toward the door.

I hear his heavy footsteps rushing toward me. I hold the smirk, because I know he must need this if he's tripping over his own feet to get to me. "Don DeLuca," he calls. His proper address makes me stop and turn. I lift my head so I'm looking down my nose at him. Petro instantly slows his walk and clears his throat. "There must've been a misunderstanding." He looks to his right, and jerks his head toward the guy with the security wand. His guy takes out a gun and shoots the one who waved the wand over us in the head. "My apologies for the misunderstanding."

Fucking Petro killed one of his own men for following his directions. There's no doubt in my mind that Petro gave the orders, but now he has to save face. *Unhinged bastard*. I look at the dead guy on the floor and glance toward G whose high shoulders tell me he's on red-alert. "Apology accepted." I give G a small nod to make sure he's watching everything.

"I've got you," G says as he extends his hand for me to take so I can step over the body.

Petro is talking shit about something that I'm not really listening to. G and I follow him down a narrow hallway and up a set of stairs that opens up to a massive office. It's seedy as fuck up here, with a money counter on his desk, a set of scales with white powder residue and packets of condoms are scattered around. The furniture is dated and disgusting.

"Sir, Don Sacco has arrived," Petro's man says.

"Good, good, show him up." He looks to me and gestures for me to sit. I scrunch my nose, absolutely disgusted that he thinks this is a good place for a meeting of the Dons. "Drink?"

"No." What I want to say is no fucking way will I touch anything you offer me, because I'm afraid I'll have to get a rabies shot. Or get poisoned from how filthy this place is.

The door opens, and a meek girl steps in. She's wearing a tiny dress with heels that look ridiculously high. Her hair hangs like a blanket over her down-turned head. I can't see her

face, but she looks so fragile. “Ah, Elena, I’m glad you arrived.”

Elena? As in his daughter? She looks so much thinner than the last time I saw her. I scan her bare arms to check for any kind of marks, but other than a couple of bruises on her upper arms I don’t see much. I want her to lift her head so I can make sure she’s not being beaten. “Elena, it’s good to see you again,” I say as I step forward and offer her my hand to shake.

Her arm trembles as she reaches for mine. Elena’s cold, petite hand lands in mine, and she limply shakes it. “It’s good to see you too, ma’am,” she says in a small voice without lifting her chin. Her hair continues to conceal her features.

There’s a shooting pain in my jaw as I carefully read the room. Petro is pouring himself a drink, while Elena peeks out from under her hair. “Why’s your daughter here?” I ask, hoping to get rid of her before we talk about business.

Petro lifts his glass and brings it to his lips. “Do you need a wife, G?” He jerks his head toward his daughter. “She’s pure.” I hate how he’s still trying to marry her off.

He makes me fucking sick. “No, he doesn’t,” I reply with venom. “Perhaps the girl should be at home.”

“Elena needs to stay,” Petro replies with his own annoyance.

I lift my brows and nod once. Sorry *kid*, *I tried to get you away from here*.

The door opens and Don Sacco struts in and scans the room. He walks over to me, and gives me a double cheek kiss. “Being the Don agrees with you,” he says.

Dominic, his underboss and nephew approaches and kisses me on both cheeks. “Don DeLuca,” he acknowledges with respect.

G stands protectively beside me, and he too shakes Dominic’s hand. The room is tense while we wait for Vitale to arrive. There’s small talk about each of our businesses, although no secrets are being shared or spilled. It doesn’t take long before Vitale enters the room with two of his sons. His

underboss – Alessandro – and his middle son Michael. They greet me with the same respect as the Sacco men.

“Ah, Alessandro, Michael, have you met my daughter Elena?” Petro walks over to her, wraps his hand around her upper arm and jerks her toward the brothers.

“We met, when you tried to marry her off to me at Don DeLuca’s restaurant. God rest his soul.” Alessandro makes a cross over his body.

“Yes, yes, God rest his soul.” Petro makes a quick cross, then looks to Michael. “I have a bride for you, Michael. She’s a good girl, pure and ready to give you heirs.”

Michael arches a brow and clicks his tongue to the roof of his mouth. I glimpse toward Elena and see her shoulders shaking. He’s trying to sell the poor kid off like she’s fucking cattle. “You called this meeting, what do you want?” Michael asks.

I love his audacity. Petro snarls toward his daughter, and motions for his man to take Elena out of the room. His man grabs her by the back of her neck making Elena shriek in pain and he pushes her out of the room. “Get your fucking hands off her,” I say and step in front of the girl. The guy looks to me and turns for further directions from Petro. He doesn’t release Elena. Through a tight jaw, I repeat, “Get your dirty fucking hands off of her.”

The Sacco men unbutton their jackets and step forward, Vitale and his sons stand to their full height as they too move in toward me. G is right by my side. “Cool it,” G whispers.

Petro is on the spot. If he doesn’t give his man the order to stop manhandling her, he’s going to end up dead. It might be my gun that takes him out, or it might be one of the others. Either way, he’s outnumbered.

“Get your hands off her,” Petro says with forced ferociousness. There’s no doubt in my mind, he’s mistreating the kid. Fuck, he’s still trying to pimp her out to whoever will take her.

The tension in the room eases once Elena is gone and we start the meeting. But while the men seem to have relaxed, I can't stop thinking about the poor girl and what she's suffering at the hands of her father.

There's a lot of bullshit going around, but I'm done with this. "Cut the shit, Don Augusta, why did you call this meeting?"

The Saccos snort with a chortle. Petro flicks them a murderous stare. Dominic takes a cigarette out and lights it.

Petro stops himself from snarling at me, because he knows that whatever the reason for this meeting, he needs me more than I need him. Regardless of the fact that we need to pass through his territory. "Sit." He pointedly looks toward the couches, before he walks over and sits in the single armchair. I take a deep breath, glance toward G before heading over and sitting on the edge of one sofa. Ruben mimics me and plonks on the other side, and Vitale sits on his own on the second sofa. The rest of our boys each stand behind their Don. "I have a problem that's not going away."

"That seems like a problem you should take care of," Alessandro says.

"The Scalas are breathing down my neck."

Good, let them take him out.

"The Scalas?" Don Sacco asks. I catch a brief glance between him and Dominic. It was so quick that I'm positive no one else saw it, but I did. *They're worried.*

"What do you need?" I ask the question I'm sure is burning on everyone's lips.

"I need them gone."

"I'm not backing a war with the Scalas," I say straight out. Petro's jaw jumps as he glances toward me then to the Saccos and Venanzis. "What have you done to warrant the Scalas coming for you?"

"Nothing!" Petro replies with haste. It's easy to see that he's lying about something.

“I stand with Don DeLuca,” Ruben Sacco says.

“This isn’t my war,” Vitale adds. “I’m out.”

“If we don’t band together, then Scalas will wipe me out, and when they take over they won’t allow you access through my territory.” Petro is spooked by them, but something is telling me that there’s so much more to this than he’s letting on.

I stand and take a step away from the sofa. “This is your problem.” I pointedly look to the other Dons and acknowledge them all with a slight nod. “Good evening, gentlemen.” G is already ahead of me, opening the door so we can leave.

By the time we’re out in front of the club, Dario is pulling up with the car. The club door opens and I turn to see Ruben and his nephew walking out. “Frank,” he calls. I stop walking toward the car and wait for Ruben. “Something’s going on with Petro.”

“I thought the same.”

“I don’t like the way he treats his daughter.” I arch a brow and wait for him to say more. “I know you don’t like it either.” I slowly lift my shoulder, as if to say, *it is what it is*. Ruben looks around and smirks. “I think we need to take care of business.”

I see, Don Sacco wants us to team up with him and get rid of Petro. “Venanzi?”

“He’s a man who doesn’t like the way Petro treats his daughter either.”

“She’s not our responsibility.”

“No, she’s not. But if he treats her like that, how does he treat the merchandise in his whorehouses?”

Something I’ve thought about too. I wipe my thumb across my lower lip and nod. “The possibilities are endless, aren’t they?” I say to Don Sacco with a small smile on my lips. I clap a hand to his shoulder before turning to leave. “We should meet.” And with those words, I slide into the back of the car

and G closes the door. The moment he's in the car, Dario drives away from the club.

"You can't start a war with the Scalas." G turns in his seat to face me. "They're a powerful family."

"I have no intentions of doing anything with the Scalas. I'm not overly keen on the way they run their operation." I click my tongue to the roof of my mouth. "But I also don't like the way Augusta treats his daughter."

G's brows rise. "None of us did," he says. "I saw the way Ruben's nephew sneered when they were manhandling the girl." G snickers under his breath. "Now, if you want to take Augusta, I'm sure the other two wouldn't mind."

"I'm not starting a war with anyone, G."

"You said to Sacco that you should meet."

"I did," I confirm.

"But you're not going to meet with him?" G's slight headshake and rapid blinking tells me he's confused.

"If he reaches out I will. But for now, I've planted a seed and he'll do one of two things."

G considers my sentence before it finally dawns on him. "He'll either let Augusta know, or he won't."

"Precisely."

"And if he does... "

"Then he's an enemy who needs to be taken down."

"Your father was always good with the Saccos."

"I'm not my father. And, besides, the Saccos are feeling me out too. They need to know I'm a person of my word. They'll be keeping a careful eye on me. I won't make an enemy of them unless I have to. But for now, I know Augusta is unstable and he needs to be gone."

"What stops the Saccos moving in and starting a war?"

"We both know Dad wouldn't have allowed them to live if they wanted that. The circumstances have changed, and maybe

they'll want what's mine now that Dad's passed."

"This meeting wasn't as useless as I thought it would be," G says as he swivels his body to face forward.

"Meetings are never useless, G. I always learn something, and in this case, it's just how far the Saccos will go to get rid of me, or Petro Augusta."

My father held a lot of respect among other families. Now, it's all different and I have to prove myself.

One way or another.

CHAPTER 10

JEREMY

“Morning, boss,” Zac says as I walk toward his desk. “Coffee?”

“Yeah,” I grumble as I walk past him into my office. There are several files stacked high on my desk. “Great,” I grumble knowing the day will start with a ton of work.

“You look so happy,” Zac says with sarcasm as he places my coffee on the desk.

I exhale a tense breath and shake my head. “Close my door on the way out.” I flick my hand to Zac and pick the top file up as I relax back in the seat. The door closes with a soft thud and I’m left to peruse the stack of files.

Though, if I’m being honest, I can’t get Frankie out of my thoughts. The way she looked at me, her eyes darkening with desire while my fingers tightened around her throat. I try to dislodge the erotic thoughts from my mind, and switch gears. I can’t keep thinking of her the way I am.

I stand and pace as I try to think on how to get rid of Frankie DeLuca and her fucking family of thugs. She’s dangerous, and I don’t want her in my state. She can pack her shit and leave.

My door opens and Zac enters with a stack of papers. “I need your signature on these, please.” He glances at the coffee, then to me. “Is there something wrong with your coffee?”

“What?” I stop my pacing to look at him. “What?” I repeat.

“You haven’t touched your coffee. It must be cold now.”

I’ve been stuck in my head, angry at Frankie because I need to find something as a bargaining chip to get rid of her. I need to stop this incessant obsession with that toxic woman. I shake my head and straighten my back. “What do you need me to do?” I ask Zac, who’s patiently waiting for something.

“I need your signature on these please.” He taps the top of the papers.

I’ve been so stuck on Frankie that I’m not paying attention to anything else. “Of course.” I sit and pick my pen up. While I sign these letters, I quickly scan them so I know where they’re going. But in the back of my mind, Frankie DeLuca’s dark eyes and curly brown hair mock me. I pick the stack of papers up and hand them to him. “Here,” I say to Zac once I’m done.

“You have a meeting this afternoon at four. But, other than that, your schedule is open for the day.”

“Thank you.” I cross my arms in front of my chest as I stare at the files. Zac takes the papers and quietly exits my office, leaving me to thoughts of a woman who’s dangerous, yet so damn intriguing. My annoyance with her grows by the moment. There’s a stiffness in my neck at the memory of her throat in my hands. Frankie’s dark eyes glossed over with arrogance, as if she was daring me to tighten my fingers even further. “Fuck you,” I say with a clenched jaw.

I find myself pushing up out of the chair and slinging my suit jacket on. I head out of my office with determination. “Everything okay?” Zac calls.

“I’m heading out, I’ll be back later. Unless there’s a catastrophe in the state, don’t disturb me.”

I barely hear Zac’s reply as I hurriedly leave the office. I need to get Frankie out of my head, or I’ll obsess over her until I break. And let me tell you, she’s not going to be my undoing. She’s a mob boss, a delinquent. Nothing more than a fucking miscreant.

I have to get out of here and clear my head. Thinking about her is only going to make my blood boil.

...and my dick hard.



I've been driving around for an hour, and I'm furious at myself. I don't even know how, but I find myself on the road of her ridiculously large estate.

"What the fuck is wrong with you?" I curse at myself. Overgrown trees are concealing my car. Thankfully, I'm not stupid enough to rock up in front of those heavily guarded gates.

I lay my head back on the seat as I continue to stare at the massive white house in the distance. What am I even doing here? I shouldn't be anywhere near her. She's...*dangerous*. Especially to me.

I look down at my hands and shake my head, attempting to dislodge the thought of the way she stared into my eyes while I was tightening my fingers around her throat. Why am I still sitting here, stalking her? I close my eyes and rub at my temple, attempting to alleviate the pressure building behind my eyes and across my forehead.

Suddenly, someone knocks on the window. *Fuck*.

I slowly lift my head to see the soulful dark eyes staring at me. A smug smirk tugs at her lips. She's holding an apple and cutting chunks off it with a sharp-as-fuck knife. She gestures for me to lower my window.

I close my eyes for a few seconds before facing her like a man, and not a creep who's hiding in his car. I open the door to get out, and Frankie takes a step backward. "You lost?" she asks casually as she cuts another chunk of apple and pops it in her mouth.

“Not exactly,” I reply as I look down the isolated street. “Who are you?” I ask an older man standing behind her to the left.

“You really haven’t done that much research on me if you don’t know who he is.” Frankie juts her chin toward the guy.

I square my shoulders and step forward, offering him my hand to shake. The guy looks at my hand in disgust and draws his upper lip into a snarl. “I don’t think so.” He straightens and moves closer to Frankie.

“You’re an idiot,” Frankie says to me. “What are you doing out here?” I glance at the guy standing beside her, who has to be her bodyguard, then back to her. “G.” She flicks her head to the side, silently giving him an order.

“You sure?”

“I’m sure,” she replies. G – her bodyguard – steps backward, but keeps his eyes on me. Frankie easily maneuvers so she’s leaning up against my car. “What do you want?”

I have to think quick, or I’ll end up stuffed in my trunk with my car in the bottom of the ocean. “You’re a pain in my ass, and I wanted to see where you live.”

“A pain in your ass?” Frankie’s brows lift as she takes the last chunk of apple and pops it in her mouth. God, I love her lips. They’d look perfect wrapped around my cock. “Is that what you want me to be? I mean, if pegging is your thing...” her voice trails off.

“What? No! What?”

“You said I was a pain in your ass.”

“Not literally,” I retort.

“Hey.” She flicks the knife closed and places it on the hood of the car. Holding her hands up in surrender, she chuckles. “Whatever you’re into, I’m not one to judge.”

“Can we get off this subject?”

“You wanna get off? Man, you’re one horny bastard, aren’t you?”

“Shut the fuck up,” I groan at her in frustration.

“Can you be decisive in what you want from me? One minute you want me to peg you, then you want to get off, now you want me to be quiet.” Frankie shakes her head. “Phew, and they say women are unclear. At least with me, everyone knows where they stand.”

“Where do I stand?” the words tumble out of my mouth before I even have a chance to think about them.

“You?” She pushes off the car and slowly advances toward me.

“Yeah, me. Where do I stand?” My heart beat accelerates as she progresses closer. Fuck, I want to grab her and kiss her with everything I have. Force this little minx to her knees, unzip my pants and fuck her mouth until she’s choking on my cock.

Frankie lifts her hand and grabs my forearm. Her nails dig into my skin, causing my breath to hitch. “Do you really want to know where you stand?”

I lift my chin, staring down at her. My jaw tightens and I lift my hand to place it on her hip. She’s soft and fleshy, and her coffee-tinged aroma is sending me over the edge. My pulse quickens and I fight with myself to *not* respond to her appeal. Frankie leans forward, her warm lips skim across mine. I close my eyes to hold onto my control when suddenly, she pulls back. The echoing sound of a gunshot startles me. I open my eyes to find she’s shot at my front tire. “What the fuck is wrong with you? You shot at my car.”

“Pffft.” She lifts her shoulders. “It’s just a tire.”

“Why the hell would you do that?”

“You’re trespassing on private property.”

“This is a public road.” I point to it.

“No, it’s not. It’s my road, and you’re trespassing.” Frankie’s staring as she silently challenges me to question her. She sucks her bottom lip between her teeth and she lifts her

brows once in defiance. "I suggest you leave." Frankie takes a step backward.

She's going to be the death of me. "Lucky I have a spare," I say as I shrug out of my suit jacket and begin rolling my dress shirt sleeves up.

"Ah, about that." She lifts the gun and shoots the back tire. "I bet you don't have two."

"You shot the governor of Florida's car. I can have you arrested for that." Frankie's smile quickly fades, and G takes a few steps toward me. She lifts her hand to stop him. "I'll bring the power of my office down on you if you don't get out of my state."

"Frank," G starts.

She lifts her hand again, and shakes her head at him. Frankie hands him the gun, then walks up to where I'm standing. "All you had to do was ask."

"Good, so you'll leave then."

She blinks several times and finally smiles. "You said you want to go down on me. I hope that mouth is good."

"I said I'll bring the power of my office down on you."

"That could be fun." She leans into me and places a kiss on my cheek. Her lips linger on my skin for a long moment. My hand instantly reaches for her hip again. I love how she feels, and I can't wait to worship her body with my mouth. "I really do hope you like having your mouth full." She steps back breaking our connection. Frankie flicks a look to my car and winks at me. "If you're not gone in an hour, I'll release my dogs."

My shoulders sink as I watch her walk away. Her hips swivel with extra sass, and I can't tear my eyes off her ass.

"You have one hour," she calls over her shoulder.

Frankie DeLuca is fucking lethal.

And I burn for her.

CHAPTER 11

FRANKIE

“Looks good in here,” I say as I walk into the completed office. Rome is sitting at his new desk, working on his computer. He lifts his head to acknowledge me and gives me a half-ass grunt before returning his attention to the laptop. “We need to go,” I say.

“I’m working, Frank. The Darkness and Destruction inventory was a mess, and I’m working my ass off to catch up with it.” I lean against his desk and cross my arms in front of my chest. Rome tears his eyes away from the screen and releases a long sigh. “Do I need to be there with you?”

“You don’t need to, but it would be a good idea for you to be.”

“Why?”

“I’m taking care of the two men who caused problems for my girls at Destiny. And, G has identified two of my soldiers who are disgruntled with me being the boss. So, they’ll be there, and they’ll see what I do.”

Rome twists his upper lip. “Why do I need to be there to see that?”

“United front, brother.”

Rome lowers his chin and blinks several times. “You’re gonna hurt them, aren’t you?”

I click my tongue to the roof of my mouth. “Let’s see how things go. But, I can guarantee I won’t hurt the soldiers, unless they try something they shouldn’t.”

“Then why have them there to begin with?”

“So they can reinforce that I’m here to stay, and if you want to mess with me or my family, then you pay the price.” Rome snickers as he continues looking down. “What?”

“I’m truly amazed anyone would cross you.”

I clap a hand to his shoulder. “Don’t worry, you’re safe. Unless of course you make me angry.”

He logs out of the laptop, and closes it. “Well, lead the way, boss.” Hesitantly, Rome pushes back and stands. He gestures toward the door where G is already hovering.

I walk toward G who gives me a knowing smirk. “I know,” I say.

G looks to Rome then leans into me and says, “It might be too much for him at this stage.”

“He has to learn.”

“Yeah, he does, but...” I silence G with a hard stare. “I’ll make sure the car is ready.”

G picks up the pace and heads outside while Rome catches up to me. “G’s protective of you.”

“That he is,” I say.

“He doesn’t think I should be coming, does he?”

I detour to the kitchen where Mya is making dinner. “Mya, I need a coffee to go.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Mya replies and moves to make me a coffee.

“G’s cautious,” I say to Rome.

Rome shoves his hands in his pockets and rocks once back on his heels. “He has to be.” He looks to Mya then to me. “And so will I,” he adds.

Mya hands me my coffee and turns back to dinner. Rome and I head out to the car.



The two men are facing me, each strapped to a chair. Their hands are tied behind their backs, and their legs are tied to the chair. “Who are you?” the fatter of the two spits when we head into the warehouse.

“Shut up.” G steps forward and smashes him in the jaw.

The fatter one straightens and spits to the side, his mouth covered in blood. “Are you the one who raped my girl?”

“What?” The guy’s forehead crevices with a deep V. “Raped? What the fuck?”

I look over my shoulder to see where everyone is in the room. The two soldiers who’ve been mouthing off are standing against the wall with their hands in their pockets. Rome is behind me, rigid and nervous. “If you didn’t rape my girl, then that means, *you* did,” I say, moving my glare to the second guy and pointing at him. He’s smaller in stature than the first, but still quite chunky. Both of them are young, maybe in their late twenties. “Do you know each other?” I point between them. They instantly shake their heads. “So.” I slowly step toward the rapist. “You like to rape women, do you?”

“Don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“You were recently at Destiny. My brothel. And you raped a girl. *My* girl.”

“She’s a whore. I fucking paid,” he says as if that justifies him raping her.

“She said no to you?”

“She’s a fucking whore,” he spits with vigor.

“She said no to you?” I repeat.

“I fucking paid.”

“Frank?” G asks as he advances toward the asshole. I shake my head, not giving G the okay to hurt this fucker. “Fine,” G mumbles and takes a few steps back.

“You paid for sex, not to rape my girl.”

“She doesn’t get to say no once I’ve paid.”

He has a death wish. “She doesn’t get to say no, huh?” I turn away and walk over to the table that’s holding an array of implements to cause pain. Simple things, a piece of wood, a steel pipe, fuck, there’s even a skillet. Of course, there are a couple of guns, knives, barbed wire, knuckle dusters, all kinds of fun things.

I pick the metal pipe up and walk toward him. His eyes are large and hyper focused on the metal in my hands. “Wh-what are you going to do with that?”

I smash it across his knees with all my force. His high-pitched, soul-piercing scream tells me I’ve shattered his kneecaps. “Did she say no?”

“Fu-fuck, man,” he screams as spittle drips out of his mouth. His eyes are red from the tears streaming down his cheeks.

With all my strength I smash the pipe again, this time over his thighs. His cry is echoing throughout the warehouse. “She said no?” He’s trying to catch his breath, while the guy next to him is attempting to jimmy the chair away from the one I’m coolly working over. “You’re not going anywhere, because your turn is coming.” The fear in his eyes sends a flutter of power down to my very core. Both of these fuckers are terrified, and I’m feeding off of their fear. I turn to the first guy and say, “I asked you a question.”

It takes him a few seconds to regain his composure, but he finally nods. “She said no.”

“And you thought you’d take what you paid for, plus more. Right?”

“She’s a fucking whore,” he repeats as if that’s a valid reason.

“I’m not even going to ask you how many women you’ve raped.”

“They’re just whores.” He bursts into tears.

I smash the pipe down over the top of his thighs making sure I’ve caught his crotch. His face pales and his eyes bulge. He turns his head and vomits to the side before passing out.

“Fuck,” G says as he straightens and winces.

“Now, you.” I look to the second guy, who’s already trembling. “You came to my club, and you beat one of my girls.”

“I’m so-sorry,” the sniveling asshole pleads. “I won’t do it again. I’m sorry.”

I place the pipe on the table and pick the heavy skillet up. “Better believe it.” I walk over to him and swing the iron skillet with everything I have, smashing him on the back of the head. The popping sound of his skull breaking makes the two soldiers suck in a deep breath.

I look over my shoulder at them and both have their heads down. I can see Rome is struggling, but he’s holding it together. “You two, clean that shit up,” Rome says to the two soldiers. They hesitantly step forward and startle backward when the guy I’ve killed twitches as all the life leaves his body. “Now!” Rome demands.

I’m proud of my brother for taking charge. The two soldiers move toward the dead-twitchy guy and are balking as they see blood oozing from his open skull. “I hear you two have a problem with management,” I say as they make quick work of untying Twitchy.

“No, Don DeLuca. Not us. Never,” they say almost in unison.

“Good to hear.” I keep watching them as they lift his limp body and begin to drag him out.

“Leave him there, and go back to work,” G says.

The two soldiers drop the body and leave the warehouse. Though I can tell, I’m sure they want to run like their asses are

on fire.

Rome approaches me and takes the skillet. "We have to get rid of this."

"You did good, I'm proud of you," I say to Rome. He nods once, but the tightness in his jaw and his refusal to look at me tells me he's processing. "G," I call.

"Yeah?" G glances over to the other guy who's still passed out. "What do you need?"

"Get Rome home." G discreetly glimpses at Rome then back to me. His brows are high in question. "He's struggling. I don't want his men to see him this way."

G maneuvers his body so his facing me, and so he can see Rome. G rubs at his chin several times. "How do you want to handle this, Frank?"

The only way I can get Rome out of here is if I give him a reason to leave. "Rome," I call and gesture for him to come over.

"Yeah?" His posture is stiff and it's easy to see he's uncomfortable.

"I need you to go back to the house and find who's at fault for the inventory."

Rome's gaze darts to the unconscious guy, then to the blood staining the concrete flooring. "Alright." He still can't look me in the eyes, but he puts on his own front and turns to leave.

"Walk him out," I say to G.

"I need a smoke anyway." G takes his cigarettes out of his pocket, taps out a smoke and puts it to his lips. Filthy fucking habit, but thankfully G's more of a casual smoker than anything.

The unconscious guy starts to blink awake. He groans several times and looks around. "Wh-what happened to the other guy?"

I pointedly stare at the blood on the floor. “He’s no longer with us,” I say.

This sends him into a panic. “So-sorry,” he stutters as snot drips from his nose and his eyes leak with tears. “I promise I won’t do it again.”

“You’re right, you won’t.” The door to the warehouse opening, forces me to turn to see who’s entering. G comes in and gives me a knowing nod. Good, Rome has left. “He promised not to rape another woman again.”

“And you believe him?” G’s lifts a brow while a sneaky grin tugs at his lips.

“Absolutely.” I wink to G. “Dario outside?” G nods. I look back at the guy tied in the chair. “Let him go.” G holds in his laugh. A relieved tremor washes over the rapist. “After you castrate him.”

“What?” the guy yells.

I pet G’s shoulder twice. “Have fun.”

“See you back at the house.”

I walk out of the warehouse to the guy begging G not to castrate him. He’s offering G money and even his car. But I trust that G will get the job done.

Everyone needs to know that if you mess with my property, you will pay with your life. No one fucks with me.

CHAPTER 12

FRANKIE

When I returned home late last night, Rome was in his room with the door locked. He didn't want to be disturbed, and I get that. Being in this lifestyle isn't easy...at first. However, I know Rome will not only be fine, he'll flourish if he allows himself.

The dining room is set for dinner, and I'm waiting for Rome to appear so we can eat. "Mya," I call.

"Yes, ma'am," she says once she promptly appears.

"Have you seen my brother?" She shakes her head. "Hmmm," I grumble as I stand and head upstairs. I knock on Rome's door and wait for his reply before opening it. "Hey, you alright?" I ask as I lean against the door jamb.

He's sitting at the desk in his room, working on the laptop. "What?" He turns to glance at me before returning his attention to the screen.

"Are you hiding out up here, or what?"

"What?" he repeats without looking at me.

"What the fuck is going on with you, Rome? I haven't seen you since yesterday at the warehouse."

"It's nothing," he replies. But his clipped tone screams volumes. I cross my arms in front of my chest, refusing to leave until he talks to me. It takes a good thirty seconds before he slams the laptop shut and swivels in his chair to stare at me. "What do you want, Frankie?"

"I haven't seen you all day. What's your problem?"

Rome's eyes widen and he slowly shakes his head. "You're kidding me, right?" He lifts his hands in frustration. "You killed a man with a fucking cast-iron skillet."

"Yep, and I'd do it again. Besides, what's the problem? You saw me glass a man to death right here, in my house."

"That was different, he was disrespecting you."

"It's the same thing. These people think they can steal, cheat, disrespect me, my property or my business. They need to be dealt with."

"With a cast-iron skillet?" Rome leaps to his feet and paces in front of his massive window.

"This isn't a pretty life, Rome. I gave you the option to get out, and you chose to stay. That means you take all of it. The good, the bad, and the motherfucking ugly." I push off the door and advance further into his room. "I'll never ask you to kill anyone. Hell, I'll do that part myself. But don't you dare be a martyr."

Rome stops pacing and looks out the window. His jaw tightens before it relaxes on an exhale. "I know what this lifestyle means, Frank, it's just..." his voice trails as he runs his hands through his thick hair. "Hearing the sickening crack of his skull breaking open..." Rome groans and closes his eyes. "That was disturbing." He inhales deeply and looks over to me. "Does it get easier?"

"If it does then that means you're as fucked up as I am."

"I couldn't sleep last night." The dark circles under his eyes is evidence of that. "It kept playing over and over in my head. When I saw you glass the guy-" He slowly lifts his shoulders. "That wasn't anywhere near as bad as yesterday. How do *you* sleep?"

"Like the dead," I reply honestly. Getting laid would've been a perfect ending to the night.

"Do me a favor."

"What?"

“Pre-warn me when the next death will be so gruesome and violent.”

“I guess, I should’ve started you off slow. A bullet between the eyes, not a skillet to the back of the head.”

Rome returns his attention to the darkness but he chuckles. “These are not conversations normal people have, Frank.”

I snort a chuckle. “Define normal, Rome. Because really, me taking care of those two fuckers mean they’ll never be able to hurt another person again.”

Rome’s shoulders slump as he leans against the wall, still looking out the window. His entire posture shifts, maybe his mindset is shifting too. “When you put it that way, perhaps having someone out there cleaning up the scum isn’t such a bad thing.”

“See.” I walk over to him and clap my hand to his shoulder. “That’s the spirit. Just call me judge, jury and executioner.” I snicker to myself as I head out of his room. “I’m hungry. Come down for dinner.”

“I’ll be there in a moment.”

I leave his door open and make my way down to the dining room where G is already sitting and waiting. Mya pops her head out of the kitchen and furrows her brows together when she sees Rome is missing. “He won’t be long,” I answer her unasked query. She smiles before returning to the kitchen. “Any problems from yesterday?”

“Not one. The two soldiers shit themselves. I went and saw them after I took care of the eunuch, and they couldn’t stop talking about you and why you wanted them there to see that. But, if I’m being honest, I think they have a hard-on for you.”

“I’m hot, why wouldn’t they?”

“And oh so modest too,” G replies sarcastically.

I sit back in the chair and chuckle. “What’s so funny?” Rome asks as he enters the dining room.

“Your sister has a sense of humor,” G says.

“Do I have more than one sister?” Rome adds with his own playfulness.

“Hey,” I bite with a smile. “I have a wicked sense of humor. Just the other day I shot the governor’s tires and told him he had an hour before I released the dogs.”

“You did what?” Rome asks, his voice dripping with shock.

“Speaking of the governor, word on the street is someone wants him gone from office,” G says.

Mya enters the dining room with a tray of stuffed peppers and places it in the center of the table. “What?” I push my plate aside and lean forward. “I want him gone from office too so I don’t have to worry about my shipments coming in through the docks.”

“A more permanent gone, Frank.” G reaches across the table for the peppers.

I dart my hand out and grab onto the tray. “Who?”

G groans and retracts his hand. “I don’t know all the details, just that someone wants him out and there’s a plan to get rid of him.”

“When’s this going down?”

“I don’t know,” G replies with frustration. I push up out of my chair with so much force the chair topples over. “Where are you going?” G stands to accompany me.

“To his house.”

“What the fuck for?” G asks as he follows me.

I stop heading for the door and turn to face G. “I told you.” I lift my hand, pointing at him. “No one touches Jeremy.”

G steps back, raising his hands in surrender. “Whatever you say, boss.” He jogs ahead of me and calls, “I’ll have Dario bring the car around.”

“Hey,” Rome says as he catches up to me. “Are you and the politician together?”

“What?” I place my hand on Rome’s forearm, stopping us from advancing toward the door.

“Are you two together?” he repeats in a lower voice while checking that no one can hear.

“No, we’re not. And even if we were, it’s none of your business.”

“Don’t be an asshole, Frankie. What am I supposed to think? I’ve seen you calm while killing people, and the moment G mentions how the politician might be in danger, you look like you’re about to lose your shit.”

I take a step backward and lower my chin as I take a deep breath. Without lifting my chin, I slowly nod. “I don’t know what to tell you, Rome. There’s something about him.”

“Well, that’s not what I was expecting.” Rome moves toward me and wraps me in his arms. What the fuck is he doing? “Stop fighting my hug and take it.” I smirk with his words. “I mean, if you like him...”

“It couldn’t ever work, even if I did.” I break out of Rome’s embrace easily. “But I’m sure as hell not gonna let another fucker touch him.”

“Do you want me to come with you?”

“No, I’ll take care of it.”

“A politician and the head of a mafia family, who would’ve thought,” Rome teases.

“Sounds like the start of a bad joke,” I reply.

Fuck, it really does.



G and I walk up the pathway to the front of Miller’s house, and I gesture for G to kick down his door. G steps back and

lays his boot to it, but the door doesn't fully open. He kicks it again, and the door flings wide open.

"What the fuck?" Miller yells when I walk in.

He's holding a wooden spoon, his expression stuck somewhere between disbelief and furious. "You're okay?" I barge into his house and look around. "Check upstairs," I say to G who takes off to the upper level.

"Are you clinically insane?" Miller is gawking at me. "Why the hell did you kick down my door?"

"Your door is shit. If I can get in, then anyone can."

"Get out of my house!" He points to the void in the wall where the door used to be. "Get the fuck out before I call the police."

G comes down the stairs and shakes his head to me. "Have one of the boys come and replace this," I say as I gesture toward the broken door. G flicks a look of disgust at Miller, but acknowledges my demand with a nod before leaving. "Someone wants you dead."

"Who?" Miller takes a cautious step backward.

"If it was me, you'd be dead already."

"Says the unhinged lunatic who kicked down my door."

I can't help but smirk. "Unhinged lunatic?" I question.

"Get out of my house." He points with the wooden spoon.

I roll my eyes closed and rub at the tension spiking across my forehead. I release a caught breath and open my eyes, staring at Miller. He's moved to the opposite end of the room. "Have you been getting any death threats?"

"of course. I always get them." His eyes flick to his cell phone as if he's thinking about making a run for it.

"Don't be an idiot," I warn as I walk over to his cell, grab it and hold it in my hand. "Think. Have you had any *recent* death threats?"

His high shoulders slowly relax until he heads back into his kitchen. I follow him in case he tries anything, like grabbing a knife, or gun and pointing it at me. I'm surprised to find he's stirring something on the range. "Death threats are part of the territory. They go with the job," he says as he lifts the wooden spoon that's now covered in a rich red sauce and brings it to his lips. *Damn, the boy can cook.*

"Do you have a list of the people who are sending you death threats?"

Jeremy looks over his shoulder at me and shakes his head. "I'm taking care of it," he spits with disgust.

"With what? Your wooden spoon?" I flick my hand toward him. "What are you cooking?"

"The police are looking into the serious threats."

"The police are as useless as tits on a fucking bull. By the time they get around to finding who *actually* wants to hurt you, you'll be blown up into a million pieces."

"You paint such a pretty picture." He adds some spices to the sauce, stirs it and once again brings the wooden spoon to his mouth to taste. His tongue darts across his lower lip, catching some of the residual sauce. "I'll be fine. Take your heavy and leave." I walk over to him, look at the pot of red sauce and dunk my finger into it. "How hygienic." A look of obvious disgust tugs at his lips.

"I'm sure you've had worse things in your mouth." I lick the sauce off my finger and I'm pleasantly surprised to find it tastes okay. "Needs more salt, and some oregano."

Miller swings around with a hard-set jaw, and growls at me. "Get out of my kitchen." He steps toward me, making me straighten and pull my shoulders back. "And get out of my house." He continues to advance toward me, caging me against the kitchen counter. "Now." His body pushes into mine.

"Or what?" I ask, desperate to know.

"I'll grab you by the hair and drag you out."

“Yeah? I’d like to see you try.”

He lifts his hand and laces it into the nape of my neck, his fingers tightening in my hair. “I told you.” Thankfully, Miller has a block of knives within reach, so I dart my hand out and grab the first knife my hand lands on. “You’re crazy.” His fingers tighten as he yanks my head down, causing my neck to curve unnaturally.

I bring the knife up to his neck, pressing the blade against his skin. The shock on his face makes my stomach flutter. His eyes harden but he keeps his intense stare locked onto me. With Miller’s free hand, he grips my waist, making sure to dig his fingertips into my side. I welcome the erotic pain. I bite my lower lip, and his gaze darts to my lips before lifting to once again stare into mine. His body closes tighter against me. “I’m going to start thinking you enjoy our little rendezvous.” I push my tits into his chest. He tightens his fingers in my hair, causing me to gasp with desire.

Miller lowers his head, his lips skimming mine. I could move forward and force him to kiss me, but I have no intention of giving him the satisfaction. I can feel his hard-on pressing into me. My pussy is desperate for his cock, or his mouth. God, I want him to fall to his knees and eat me like he’s devouring his favorite meal. “You need to leave,” he whispers against my lips. His hot breath mingling with mine.

“Do I really?” I challenge while I fight the images of us entwined dancing in my mind.

Instantly, Miller releases my hair and the death grip he had on my waist and takes a step backward. I relax my arm and lower the knife and drop it on the kitchen counter. “You have to leave.” He runs his hand through his thick dark hair. But I can see his breathing has changed, and he’s fighting with himself not to fuck me.

I push off the kitchen counter and straighten. “I need that list of people who want you dead.”

“You’re at the top of it.”

I snort with a condescending laugh. “I told you, if I wanted you dead, you’d already be gone.” I head out of the kitchen and see one of my men is staring at the door G kicked in. “My men are here to fix the door.”

“I don’t need your men doing anything,” the sexy politician replies with a bite.

I walk over to him and place my hand on his upper arm. His muscles strain beneath his long-sleeved dress shirt. “My men are here to fix your door,” I repeat in a low voice. “I need you to come by the house tomorrow with that list.”

“You’ll be waiting for a while then,” I chuckle

“Are you sure you want to do this the hard way?” Miller straightens to his full height. “I warned you,” I say as I point my finger at him while walking away backwards.

I turn to leave and Jeremy starts saying something, but I lift my hand over my head halting him from continuing. G is waiting by the car. “Another one of the boys is coming to help.” He juts his chin toward my man working on the door.

“Get a team here to watch the house.”

“Jesus, Frankie. You really think he’s worth all this trouble?” I lift a brow and purse my lips together. “Whatever you want, boss.” I slide into the back of the car, and G sidles up beside me.

“I told you; no one touches him.”

“Understood.”

I’ll find out who’s after Miller, and I’ll fucking kill them.

CHAPTER 13

JEREMY

Her brown eyes look up at me and my heart skips a damn beat. Fuck, she's beautiful on her knees. "Look at how perfect you are. On your knees, taking my cock like such a good girl." She tries to smile, but my cock is stretching her lips as it is.

I lace my fingers through her unruly curls and buck into her mouth. "That's it, take all of me." Her lips touch my balls as I jam my cock down her throat. Her eyes water and she gags while I fuck her mouth. "Ride your fingers while I fuck your mouth."

She pulls off of my cock and lifts her fingers to lick. "Like this?" she asks as she opens her legs further and fingers herself. "Mmm. Feels so good." She rolls her eyes closed and nibbles on her lower lip while her hand brings her pleasure.

I step forward, grab her chin and force her mouth to open. "Fuck me with this whore mouth of yours." I shove my cock between her lips and grab her head between my hands. "Fuck me until you choke, you horny slut."

Her groans of pleasure are sending me crazy. I want her to moan for me, to call out with her mouth full of my cock *for me*. I want it; I want her. "Mmm," she murmurs as I continue to fuck her perfect mouth. God, I want to gag her with my cum.

"Choke." I fuck her face, my hips speeding while the blood pumps through my veins ferociously. "My cum needs to spill out of your mouth."

Her fingers quicken and her eyes roll to the back of her head. Sweat rolls down my back forcing my shirt to cling to my body.

She's perfectly naked, I'm still in my suit. I want this to last forever. Hell, a part of me wants Zac to walk in and catch Frankie DeLuca – mob queen – naked and on her knees in my office. I want the world to know that the deadly mob boss has her mouth full of my cock.

“Fucking whore,” I spit as my balls draw up. “Fuck those fingers, I want your cum to drip on my floor.”

My heart rate increases and my throat constricts.

“That's it.”

My eyes snap open and I'm staring at the ceiling in my room. I'm covered in sweat and my hand is holding my cock. “What the fuck?” The bedding has been thrown off and my cock is now limp in my hand that's covered in streams of cum. “Fuck,” I grumble and lift my hand to place it on the mattress.

I close my eyes for a second, hoping to catch the look in her eyes before that dream totally disappears.

With the dream – or maybe a fantasy – now completely gone, I stand from my bed and head into the shower.

The hot stream of water is a welcome distraction from the intense and lifelike dream I had. Would Frankie allow me to fuck her mouth with vigor and force? Would she let me tie her body and mark her beautiful skin until all that's left are marks from my hand? Could she be the one who loves to accept the pain I'm wanting to give her?

She's not the type of woman who'd take direction. Hell, she barges into my home and refuses to leave until *she's* ready.

I lean my arm on the wall and close my eyes, allowing the hot water to wash over me. I hate how Frankie DeLuca is affecting me. Hate it with a passion.

She's not someone I should be thinking about, not in *that* way. Instead, I should be focusing on ways to get rid of her and her entire organization.

Fuck, how the hell do I get rid of someone who's so well connected?

I want her out of my state and as far away from me as possible. She's trouble, and I don't want her kind anywhere near me or my people.

My mind ticks trying to figure out how the hell I'm going to get rid of her unless I try to get the FBI involved. Maybe I can work with them to have her indicted. Maybe they have an ongoing investigation I can help with.

Clearly, she has some kind of one-sided fascination with me. Either way, I need her gone, out of my state.

And out of my fucking life. Once and for all.



"I'll be in the office soon," I say to Zac as I pull up to Frankie's mansion.

"Do you want me to push back the two meetings you have this morning?"

An armed guard walks up to my car, and taps on the window with the end of his assault weapon. "No, I shouldn't be too long. An hour at most." I eye the weapon as I lower my window. I hit mute on the phone and say, "Tell your boss Jeremy Miller is here."

He narrows his eyes as his jaw tightens. He lifts his hand to his ear, and nods once. "Drive up to the house, and park in front of the door. Nowhere else."

She must know I'm here. *Is she watching?*

The gates open and I unmute the phone as I roll through them. "I'll be in the office soon," I say to Zac, cutting off whatever he was saying.

I park around the side of the house, check that my phone is recording and walk to the front door. The older guy opens the door. "You were told to park in front of the house."

"Shoot me," I say as I barge into the massive house. Talk about overkill; marble floors, a sweeping staircase, gold sconces on the fucking walls. *Figures*. Gaudy and loud, like Frankie.

"At some stage, I'm sure I will." I turn to look at the guy who snickers. "Do you have a problem?"

"Did you just say you were going to shoot me?" I hope my phone caught that.

"You must be hearing things." He takes a step into the foyer. "Frankie is in her office. This way." He leads me to the right, down a hallway then stops and knocks on a door. He's the same old guy from last night, but it's now clear he's an important member of her crew. "Frank."

"Yeah," her sweet muffled voice can be heard through the thick door. He opens it, and enters. She's sitting behind her desk, working on a laptop. Her unruly, curly hair is a mess, but fuck, she's breathtaking. "Thanks, G," she says to the older guy.

"I can stay," he offers and glances at me with absolute revulsion.

"Do we have a problem?" I ask as I pull my shoulders back and take a step forward.

With a puffed chest he advances toward me, ready for a fight, but Frankie barely whispers, "Enough." G glances at her, then returns his attention to me. "Leave us."

He snarls while he walks past but ends up leaving Frankie and me alone.

If this is going to work, I need to get her to confess to something so I can take it to the FBI. Or, at least so I can hold it for blackmail and run her out of my state.

"How can I help you?" She pushes up out of her seat and walks over to the liquor cabinet. She pours herself a scotch,

and slams it down. She holds up the glass and offers me a drink.

“It’s nine in the morning.”

“You know what they say. It’s five o’clock somewhere.” She pours a second and throws that back too.

“No, thank you.” I wave my hand to her. “About that list.”

“What list?” she asks, cautiously.

“The list of people who’ve threatened me.” She gestures toward the seat opposite hers, and when I sit, she walks over, pushes herself between my legs and sits on the edge of the desk.

My cock jumps, and I’m fighting myself not to reach out and place my hands on her thighs. She’s not wearing anything particularly alluring. Tights and a t-shirt, something I could easily get her out of, lower to my knees and consume her pussy before turning her around, slamming her on the table and fucking her cunt, then turning her over and drilling her ass. God, I bet she’s fucking wild with a cock in her ass and a vibrator in her pussy.

“Do you like what you see, Miller?” she teases as she scoots back and lets her legs fall open.

I adjust my tie and clear my throat, trying to tear my eyes away from her. “Can you help me with my problem or not?” I’m holding on to my resolve. I refuse to let a woman like *her* distract me.

She licks her lower lip and arches one perfect brow. “And what problem is that?” The corner of her lip turns up in a cheeky smirk.

“You told me to have a list of potential threats ready.”

“Hmmm, did I? When was that?”

Fuck, she’s switched on. “When you busted into my house.”

She holds her hand out and I’m confused at what she’s wanting. “What?”

“Your phone.”

“Why do you want my phone?”

“So I can put my number into it.”

If I give her my phone, she’ll see I’m recording. I need to keep her talking so I have something on her. I’m not cut out for this shit. Frankie wiggles her fingers, indicating for me to hurry up. I take a sharp breath, reach into my pocket and give her my phone. She doesn’t even look at it. She turns and dumps it in a tall glass of water sitting on her desk. “What the fuck?”

“Wouldn’t want some shady shit happening, Miller.”

My mouth falls open as I stare at Frankie. She’s cocky and calculating. And I’d be lying if I didn’t say she’s making me hard. What is it about her that’s sending me fucking crazy? “You owe me a phone,” I say as I push the chair back, stand and head to the door.

“About that list of threats.”

I stop before I reach the door and turn to face Frankie’s smug look. “You dumped my phone in water.”

“You’re a perceptive one, aren’t you?” She eyes me up and down as her tongue sweeps across her lower lip.

With frustration, I march toward her and grab a handful of those unruly curls. “What the fuck is your problem?” Her sharp intake of breath tells me she’s loving this. I’ve never manhandled a woman – outside the bedroom – the way I do Frankie. It’s driving me insane that I *want* to hurt her while I fuck her. Her eyes darken as she continues to stare at me. My hand grips and pulls her hair. “Why did you destroy my phone?” My breath is husky and my voice is low.

Her deep brown eyes stare up at me. The tension is building between us, and I feel my resolve melting as I find myself drawing closer and closer to her mouth. “A girl can never be too careful,” she whispers as her eyes dart down to my lips, then back up to my eyes. She’s fucking teasing me, almost daring me to go in for a kiss that I know will fill me with lust.

“Everything you touch...” I weave my other hand into the nape of her neck, holding her in place.

“...fucking burns,” she says with fire in her eyes. She wraps her legs around my hips and tilts her head back.

This reaction I’m having is disturbing me to my very core. I want her, but... she’s fucking mafia and I’m the governor.

I shouldn’t have her, but maybe if I have a small taste then I’ll be able to move forward and forget her. But I think a woman like Frankie DeLuca is more like an addictive drug than a sample.

I release her hair and step backward, lifting my hand to point at her. “We’re done,” I say and turn away from her.

“Tsk.” The click of her tongue to the roof of her mouth stops me from leaving. This tiny sound forces me to face her. “We’re done when *I* say we’re done.”

My jaw tightens as I stare at the dangerous woman still sitting on her desk. “Fuck you,” I say before leaving her office.

Her cynical laughter tells me this *isn’t* over.

My cock strains in my pants, eager.

I’m screwed.

Fuck.

CHAPTER 14

FRANKIE

“What is it about the politician that interests you?” Rome asks as he works on the computer.

“Yeah, that’s been bugging the shit out of me too,” G says as he lifts his coffee and sips on it.

I turn my head to stare at my brother, then slowly give G the same look.

“She’s angry,” Rome snickers.

“Shut the fuck up,” I scold G and Rome. “Don’t you have work to do?” I look to G.

He lifts his coffee and waggles his brows. “I’m having my coffee.” He reclines further into his seat and takes another sip. I sit back and cross my arms in front of my chest. “Fine, I’ll take it out in the kitchen.” With his coffee in his hand, G walks out of the office.

“You need to get laid,” Rome grumbles. “You’re being difficult.”

“Do your fucking job,” I snap.

Rome snickers and arches a brow toward me. I return my attention to the laptop screen, but I start thinking about Dad. I’ve yet to hear from 15, which means whoever killed him is well concealed. This bothers me, because it means I’m up against an enemy who may have a longer reach than I do.

And this is something that’s weighing on me.

“What’s wrong?” Rome’s question snaps me out of my heavy mindset. I look over to him and lifts my brows. “You look worried.”

“That’s because I am.”

“About?” His chair swivels around to look at me.

“It’s been weeks and I’m still no closer to finding out who killed Dad.”

“These things take time.”

“Not in our world, Rome. 15 should’ve reached out by now. God only knows I’ve paid her enough.”

“How good is 15?”

“We’ve used her a few times in the past, and she has always come through.”

“Then give her time.” My jaw clenches as I look to Rome. “Give her time,” he repeats as he reads my mood.

“I want answers, Rome.”

“And we’ll get them.”

I’m becoming easily frustrated and distracted by everything. I need to refocus on what’s happening now. And when 15 comes through with the name of the person who gave the order to kill my father, then I can concentrate on taking them down. *Slowly and painfully.*

“You’re right.”

“Jeez, I bet that was hard to admit.”

“Like poison,” I say as I glance toward him. My head isn’t in the game today. I’m unsettled in every way. Maybe I need to get laid.

Ugh, no that won’t help.

Unless it is with the politician. Something tells me he’d be a good fuck. There’s something primal about him. I don’t think he’d be gentle. And that’s a damn turn-on because it’s what I crave.

“What are you thinking about?”

“Getting laid.” Rome’s groan to my response forces a smile. “But, that’s not gonna happen.” G walks into the office and I can tell by the look on his face that there’s a problem. “What is it?”

“Moonlight was hit early this morning.”

“My restaurant?” I ask in case my ears deceive me. G nods. “Who the fuck robs restaurants?” G slowly lifts his shoulders. “How bad?”

“Cleo just called me, she said she went to open for the chefs and it’s a mess.” G shakes his head. “She sounded scared.”

“Why?”

“She was scared to tell me. I think because of you.”

“Fucking ridiculous,” I grumble as I shut my laptop. “Rome, finish up, let’s go.”

“I’ll stay here.”

“You have to come and see shit that happens. Let’s go.” I stand and head over to the safe to place my laptop in it then look to my brother. He rolls his eyes, but he too powers down his laptop and brings it over to the safe. “The way you’re dragging your feet it’s like I’m taking you to your execution. Hurry the fuck up, Rome.”

G snickers which makes Rome straighten. “Got a problem, old man?”

“Call me old man again, and I’ll put you in an early grave.” G squares up to Rome and points his finger into Rome’s shoulder.

“Shut up, the both of you,” I say at their banter. G’s smirk grows and Rome huffs. I didn’t realize I’m dealing with children. G heads out of the office first, leaving Rome and me. “Stop antagonizing G. He might be old, but he’ll kick your ass.”

“Pffft.” He dismissively flicks his hand. “I can take him.”

I hold my hands up in surrender. “It’s your funeral,” I warn. I mean if it came down to it, I’d be conflicted if I had to kill G to save my brother, but I’d probably do it. *Maybe*.

“The car’s ready,” G announces as Rome and I walk toward the front of the house.

Dario is waiting by the open backdoor, and once Rome and I are in, he closes the door and rounds the front of the car to the driver’s seat. I pull my phone out of my pocket and check a few emails as we drive toward Moonlight.

“Did you see her?” Rome asks.

“Who?” I look up from my phone and quickly recognize the main street. “Who am I looking at?”

“The blonde.”

“Seriously? You want me to check out a booty-call?”

“No, it’s not like that. She looked like she was homeless, but also familiar. I think I’ve seen her somewhere.”

I turn in the seat and in the distance, I can see a blonde heading down the sidewalk. She’s huddled over, her arms wrapped around her torso and her head lowered. “She doesn’t look familiar.”

“Not from here, you can only see her back.”

“I’ve got more important shit to do then chase down a homeless chick.”

“You don’t have to be a dick, Frankie. I’m just saying she looks familiar,” Rome snaps with irritation.

“What’s your problem?” I lift my brows as I await his answer. He slowly blinks and angles his body away, giving me the silent treatment.

The rest of the drive to the restaurant is spent in silence. Once we arrive at Moonlight, Rome is out of the car and heading toward the door. G sidles up beside me. He opens the door and waits for me to enter before he follows. The restaurant has been trashed. Not one surface is untouched. I look to G and lift my brows. Cleo is standing toward the back

speaking with two of the chefs. She sees me, says something to the chefs and advances toward me. “What happened?” I look around the restaurant, already assessing the damage.

“I came in this morning and the moment I was in the kitchen I knew something was wrong. The kitchen took the brunt of it.” Cleo steps aside and gestures for me to head out to the back.

Rome is walking out of the kitchen while I’m heading toward it. “Fuck,” he grumbles. “Someone’s pissed off, that’s for sure.”

“How bad is it?”

“See for yourself.”

The moment I’m in the kitchen a toxic odor overtakes me. I cover my nose and mouth with my hand. “What the fuck is that?”

“Oh man,” G grumbles and gags. “Is that cow shit smeared everywhere?”

I spend no more than a few seconds in the kitchen to see so many broken surfaces. Thankfully the dining room doesn’t have fucking cow shit splattered everywhere, although it’s been destroyed. “Did they take anything?”

Chloe shakes her head. “The safe hasn’t been touched. They took the float that was in the register, but nothing else. They didn’t even take any of the equipment the chefs use.”

I take a few steps backward and gesture for G to follow. “This is personal,” I say. “Obviously it was targeted. If it was some punk ass kids, they would’ve taken everything of value. Not bring in cow shit to throw everywhere.”

“I was thinking the same thing. Someone has a problem with you.” Rome appears and stands beside me. “What do you want to do?” G looks around the restaurant. “Close it?”

“We need Moonlight to launder the money from the other businesses.” Whoever has done this is trying to scare me. I exhale and shake my head.

“What?” Rome asks.

“Fucking Miller,” I say with frustration.

“I’ll have him taken care of,” G offers.

“No, you won’t.”

“He’s messing with your business,” G replies with force. “We need to have him taken care of.”

“If he did this, then I’ll do it myself.” Fuck, if Jeremy has done this in order to get rid of me, then he’s forced my hand and I *will* kill him. “Chloe,” I call and break away from Rome and G. She wraps her arms around her torso and with a lowered head she approaches me. “Call the staff and tell them they won’t be needed for two weeks. I’ll have a crew in here by the end of the day to start clean up. Also, while that’s happening, we’ll do a refurbish too. I’ll have you and the head chef working with my crew. Whatever you need, let them know.”

Chloe slowly furrows her brows. “I thought you’d be angry at me.”

“Did you do this?” I wave my hand flippantly toward the kitchen.

“No.”

“Then why would I be angry at you?” Chloe darts her eyes to the side and purses her lips together. “I’m not going to glass you for doing your job.”

“Glass me?” Chloe asks with a confused look on her face.

“You have nothing to worry about if you weren’t involved in this,” and Chloe instantly exhales a relieved breath.

“I wasn’t.”

“Good.” I look her up and down and arch a brow before returning to G and Rome. “How did they get in?”

“Smashed through the back door.”

“And the cameras?”

“I’m just about to go to the office to get the hard drive,” G says.

“We’ll meet you out at the car.” I tap Rome’s arm before heading for the door.

“Whoever did this is screwed. Cow shit, man. That’s seriously demented,” Rome says as we walk toward the front of Moonlight.

My hand reaches out to push on the door, and the moment I do, I hear gunfire and a spray of bullets shatters the glass. Rome wraps his arm around my waist and yanks me back, throwing me to the floor and covering my body with his. “Stay down,” he yells as the gunfire relentlessly demolishes the restaurant. When it all stops, Rome jumps to his feet and sprints for the door. “Stay down!” He points, but I stand and brush myself off. “What the hell, Frank. I told you to stay down.” Rome is carefully scanning outside while keeping an eye on me.

“I’m okay.”

“Frankie,” G hollers. He’s by my side within seconds after the hail of bullets ends.

“I’m okay,” I repeat. Rome’s and G’s shoulders are high and tight, neither of them allow me to pass so I can head outside. “Did you see anything?” I ask as I look between Rome and G.

“No,” they say in unison.

I turn to the restaurant, and see Chloe huddled against the back wall. “Chloe.” I walk toward her. Chloe has her hands over her head and her eyes squeezed shut. “Chloe,” I repeat as I kneel beside her. I reach out to place my hand on her knee. She startles and releases a whimper as she opens her eyes. “It’s okay.”

“I’m sorry, but I can’t do this.” Tears are streaming down her cheeks.

“Are you hurt?”

“N-no,” she stutters. “But I can’t do this. I know who you are and you scare me. I’m terrified of coming in and having to face you, but now this...” She sweeps her hand across the front of the restaurant. “I quit.”

I should be more sympathetic, but compassion and me don't go hand-in-hand. "Okay." I push up off the floor and look to G. "Pay Chloe three months' severance and find a replacement." I look to her. "Remember you've signed an NDA."

Her nod turns into a shake. "I promise you I won't say a word."

I narrow my eyes and grind my jaw. "Make sure of that."

Chloe visibly gulps. "I promise."

G nods and heads toward Chloe. He holds his hand out to her and helps Chloe up off the floor. "Can you get yourself home?"

Chloe can't meet my eyes, she's too nervous to speak. Which is good for me, because that means she's terrified and I know she won't say a single word to anyone. Although, other than this minor hiccup, she knows nothing of my business.

"I can drive myself," Chloe says in a small voice.

"I'll have your severance deposited into your account," G says.

"O-okay," she mumbles. With downcast eyes, she ducks out through the shit covered kitchen and disappears.

The only other person left is the head chef. G exchanges some instructions with the chef before he too exits. "Where's Dario?" Rome makes a beeline for the front, and I follow close behind.

"You have to stay here." Rome pulls me back and charges ahead. G pushes past me and is right behind Rome.

"I'm not a fucking wallflower."

G turns and points at me. "No, you're not. But whoever did this knew you would be here, and it's likely they trashed Moonlight to draw you. This isn't about sheltering you; it's about protecting the Don Frankie DeLuca." G stands firm, refusing to allow me to move past him. "Now, stay the fuck here and let Rome and me handle this. I'll come and get you

once we know it's safe out there." He obviously glances at a chair, then back to me. "Sit your ass down, Frank."

I click my tongue and release a frustrated exhale. "Fine." I hate how they think I'm some precious flower who can't take care of herself. But I also know I'm the head of the family, and obviously there's a war. G will protect me with his life, as will my brother.

Ten minutes pass before Rome walks back into Moonlight. "Dario is hurt. He took a bullet to his shoulder."

I spring to my feet, but Rome wraps his hand around my upper arm and pulls me back. "Where's G?"

"He's outside, arranging another car for us. He's also called a doctor for Dario."

"How bad is he hurt?"

"The bullet went through, but he's bleeding badly." Rome lifts his hand and touches his right shoulder. "He'll be okay."

I chew on the inside of my cheek as I play this entire scenario out. The cow shit must've been a ruse to get me down here so they could open fire on me. I can't imagine Miller wanting me gone so badly that he'd hire his own heavies to do this. But it's not exactly like I know him. Maybe Jeremy *does* have it in him. Either way, I'll find out. And if he did send someone after me, I'll eliminate him.

"What's wrong?" Rome's question drags me out of my heavy mindset.

"Thinking."

"About?"

"Jeremy Miller."

Rome slowly closes his eyes and pinches the bridge of his nose. "We're dealing with this shit, and you're thinking about the fucking politician?"

I smack Rome in the arm. "I was thinking that if he's responsible for this, I'll end him." Rome narrows his eyes at me. "What?"

“Did you once tell me he wouldn’t take a bribe?”

“So?”

“And you think the guy who wouldn’t take a bribe would be capable of doing this?” I bite on the inside of my cheek again as I look around the restaurant while we wait for G. “You know I’m right.”

I exhale deeply and nod. “Yeah, I do.”

G enters the restaurant and jerks his head to the side. “Car’s here.”

Rome walks ahead of me, and holds his arm out to stop me. He looks up and down the street. “You’re good,” he says before stepping aside to allow me through.

There are two cars waiting. Dario is already in the passenger side of the second car, while G slides into the driver’s side. Rome and I climb into the first car. The drive home is quiet, and once we arrive, the doctor is already there and is set up in the basement. “Don DeLuca,” he greets me with a sharp nod. “What happened?” Dario is supporting his arm as he slowly walks toward the doctor.

“It looks like the bullet went through his shoulder,” Rome tells the doctor.

The doc cuts off Dario’s shirt and examines the wound from behind his square, black-framed glasses. “Yes, yes,” he mumbles to himself. He steps back and looks at the wound. “It did go through. However, I do suggest having a scan done on the area.”

“Stitch me up, Doc,” Dario says.

“If it’s chipped a bone –”

“I’ll be fine,” Dario cuts the Doc off. “Not my first bullet wound, and it won’t be my last either.”

The Doc clicks his tongue against the roof of his mouth. He turns to me, and slightly lifts his shoulders. “He needs a scan done to make sure he doesn’t require surgery.”

I look to Dario and nod, then back to the Doc. I could force Dario to go to the hospital, but I've seen my fair share of bullet wounds over the years, and this one doesn't look too dangerous. Dario waits for my answer. He'll do exactly what I say. "Stitch him up."

Dario lifts his chin then looks to the Doc. "I'm good to go, Doc."

"Okay then." The doctor starts cleaning the wound.

"I'll be in my office if you need me," I say to G, silently giving him the order to stay and supervise the Doc.

G confirms my order with a nod. I head up to my office so I can figure out what the fuck is going on.

CHAPTER 15

FRANKIE

I slept like shit last night. Tossing and turning while my brain wouldn't shut the fuck up.

My bedroom door opens and G waltzes in holding a cup. He leans against the door jamb and sips on the beverage. "15 has set up a meeting." I push the covers off my body and sit up in bed. G groans and turns so he's not facing me. "Warn me next time, will ya, Frank? I'm an old man, and seeing your tits out could give me a fucking heart attack."

"*You* came into *my* room. What did you expect?" I stand and head into my bathroom. "What time is the meeting with 15?" I call loud enough for G to hear.

"In an hour."

"Where?" Once dressed I head out to still find G with his back to me. "I'm dressed."

G hesitantly turns to look at me. "That's not a sight I ever want to see again, Frank."

I smirk as I look at his cup, see it still half-full, take it from his hands and throw back the rest of the coffee. "Well, don't come into my room again."

"*Don't come into my room again,*" he mimics with a grin.

"Smart ass." I hand him the cup and head downstairs to the kitchen where Mya is preparing breakfast.

"Good morning, Miss DeLuca," she chirpily says when she sees me. She makes quick work of handing me a coffee. "I'll prepare your breakfast, ma'am."

“We need to leave soon, so something quick,” I instruct as I take the coffee and head out to the dining room. “Anyone taking responsibility for what happened yesterday?”

G shakes his head and sighs. “No one is saying anything.”

“And Dario?”

G dismissively flicks his hand. “He’ll make a full recovery.”

“Good.”

Mya brings out a silver serving tray and places it on the table beside me. She serves a cappuccino and a croissant to me, then a croissant to G. “Thank you,” G says before she picks the silver tray up and disappears into the kitchen. I pick at the croissant as I drink my coffee. Thoughts of yesterday are still stuck in my head. “Frank?”

I drop the picked-apart croissant and look up to G. “What?”

“We have to go.”

I stand and throw the rest of my coffee back before heading out where Dario waits by the car. His arm is bandaged up, but he still looks capable of driving.



15 is standing at the opening of the abandoned warehouse. Her hair is pulled back in her trademark severe ponytail and she’s wearing her black, figure-hugging clothes. There are two guns strapped to her thighs, and she has a shoulder holster with another two. “DeLuca,” she acknowledges when I approach her.

“Who killed my father?”

My heart races as I hold my breath, waiting for her reply. “I don’t know,” she answers.

“What the fuck did I pay you for?”

“I found the assassin, but not the person who gave the order.”

I glance toward G then back to her. “What?”

“The assassin was an independent operator and refused to give up the name. My team looked for the paper trail but, nothing. No payments made electronically, no meetings, nothing.”

Who the fuck has this kind of manpower to pull off something so elaborate? “The assassin?”

A small smirk tugs at 15’s lips. “Dead.”

At least that’s something, but I need to know who gave the order so I can kill them. “And the assassin gave nothing away?”

“I worked him over for a week, torturing him, and he gave me nothing. Not a single fucking thing. I will say, he was a damned good assassin.”

I’ve paid 15 a small fortune to get me a name, but the fucking assassin refused to give it up to her. Without saying another word, I turn and head back to the car. This has left me particularly frustrated and angry.

Someone paid to kill my father, and I have no idea who.

Fuck.



I’ve been staring at the screen on my laptop since we returned from the meeting with 15 several hours ago. “You haven’t said a word,” Rome says pulling me out of my heaviness.

“Thinking,” I reply dryly.

“About?”

“All of it. Whoever killed Dad and trashed the restaurant.”

“Run it through with me. What’s on your mind?”

I sit back in my chair and turn to stare at Rome. “I don’t know.” I cross my arms in front of my chest and shake my head. “Someone wants me gone, that much is clear. They want the DeLuca name wiped out.” Suddenly, I’m hit with the realization that whoever wants me gone, may very well want Rome dead too. I look to my phone and send G a message. *Come here.*

Give me a minute.

I tap my fingers on the table as I wait for G. It doesn’t take him long before he opens the door to my office and waltzes in. “What is it?” He stands by my desk and waits for instruction.

“I need you to up Rome’s security.”

“Why?” Rome asks.

“Whoever is doing this wants the DeLuca name annihilated. That includes you now.” I point to Rome before returning my attention to G. “At least three more men.”

“You’re the one who needs the extra protection, not me,” Rome says. “No one even knows I’m back.”

“Trust me when I say, everyone knows you’ve returned. The other families, FBI, CIA, every acronym knows,” I say. Rome’s upper lips twitches. “You’re a DeLuca, Rome. This is how it is. They’ll come after me first, then they’ll move onto you and G.”

“Why G?” Rome asks.

“You cut off the head of the snake, but the body is ready to strike,” G says. “Just like your father. He was gunned down, and once Frankie has all the pieces of who did it, then it’s war.” I nod my agreement. “I’ll arrange men for Rome. And for you.” G pointedly looks to me.

“I’ve got all the protection I need with you, and with these.” I open my top drawer and line up my four guns.

“You get extra security too, Frank,” Rome says. I open my mouth to argue but Rome holds his hand up. “This isn’t open for negotiation.”

“I’m with him.” G points to my brother.

Damn these overprotective men.

They both wait for my reply, but I ignore them and get back to work. G pulls his shoulders back in triumph and moves toward the door. “Find out what time the politician is due to leave work,” I instruct.

“Why?” G stops advancing toward the door and turns to look at me.

“I have some questions for him.”

“You think he’s the guy who smeared cow shit and shot up the restaurant?”

“Honestly?” I look up from my laptop. G waits. “I have no idea, but if he did, then he’ll be a dead politician.”

My gut is saying he didn’t do it, but I’ll find out either way.

For his sake, he’d better not be involved.

CHAPTER 16

JEREMY

“Sir, there’s been a drive by shooting,” Zac announces as he hands me a sheet of paper with the address.

“Casualties?” I take the paper and let out a sigh. How sad that the first thing I ask is how many people have been killed.

“None.” I read the report. “It appears to be gang-related. Maybe a turf war?”

I keep reading until I see the name of the business that’s been hit. “Moonlight?” I look up to Zac who confirms with a nod. I flick my hand at him, silently telling him to leave my office.

Moonlight is one of Frankie DeLuca’s businesses. Hesitantly, I reach for my phone to call her, but decide against it. There have been no deaths, which means she’s safe.

I keep reading the report and there’s no indication on who shot up Moonlight, or why. A part of me is relieved nothing happened with Frankie.

Maybe this is the wake-up call she needs to get out of the business. Who am I kidding? She was born into it, so this is probably nothing to her.

I place my hands on my head as I look up to the ceiling, thinking on what I have to do. I could let them all kill each other, then my state will be safe from the mafia. As much as I want Frankie DeLuca out, I’m not sure I could bear knowing she was killed because she’s a fucking mobster.

I push the intrusive, yet unsettling thoughts aside and continue with my work.

The end of today can't come fast enough.



I stand from my desk and roll my head from side to side. I release a massive yawn before grabbing my suit jacket and slinging it on. I pack my laptop into my briefcase, and head out to find Zac's already left for the evening. I pull my phone out of my pocket and see it's already after nine. "No wonder I'm hungry," I grumble to myself.

I look around the office, and flick the lights off before locking it and heading down to the underground parking. Once in my car, I take off toward home, eager for my head to hit the pillow.

I hit the fob to open my garage, roll my car into it, and shut the garage door. I stretch when I get out of the car then head around to the passenger side for my briefcase. There's so much work I still have to do, but I think I'll have dinner and go to bed. My body clock wakes me at around four every morning. At least I'll be able to get a few hours of work in after I wake.

I head into the house from the garage and pull my phone out of my pocket to check on my emails.

"About time you showed up."

I startle as I step back. Frankie is sitting at my dining room table, her legs crossed and her unruly hair a wild mess. "How the fuck did you get in?" I look around, checking to see if there are any signs of how she broke into my home. But I'm also relieved to see she wasn't hurt in the shooting.

"Really?" she says with a snort. "You're worried about how I broke in?" Frankie stands and walks over to me. She

takes me by the arm and leads me over to where she was sitting. "I have a question for you."

"What is it?" I place my briefcase beside me on the floor as I sit.

"Did you do it?"

I stare at her for a moment, not sure what she's asking. "Do what?" Frankie tilts her head to the side and clicks her tongue. "What are you talking about?"

"Who did you hire to destroy my restaurant?"

"What?" I abruptly stand to my feet. "You think *I* did this?" I pace back and forth while raking my hand through my hair. "The moment I heard about it, I wanted to reach out, but..." I stop pacing and pivot on the spot to look at her. "Get the fuck out of my house." I point to the door.

Frankie smirks and sits back in the chair, challenging me. "I'm not going anywhere until you tell me who you hired, and why."

"You break into my house to accuse me of something I'd never do? Get the fuck out before I throw you out."

"I'd like to see you try," she threatens.

"That's it. I'm sick of your shit, Frankie." I storm toward her and wrap my hand around her upper arm. I yank her up out of the chair and drag her toward the front door. "Get out." She maneuvers her body so she's in front of me, and slaps me across the face. "You're a fucking psychopath!"

"Passionate – psychopath. Same, same."

"No, you're crazy." I tighten my fingers around her upper arm and drag her closer to me. "Get out," I say through gritted teeth.

"Make me." Frankie moves toe to toe with me. My jaw jumps with frustration. "Thought so." She shrugs out of my hold and takes a step back. "Fucking pussy," Frankie grumbles as she lifts her chin and walks toward the door.

Frankie's arrogance has crept under my skin. I reach to grab a handful of hair and yank her back toward me. Aggressively I jerk her head back so she's looking up at me with her neck contorted in an unnatural way. "You're a pain in my fucking ass."

Frankie's eyes darken and she doesn't even try to fight her way out of the hostile position I have her in. My cock jumps and I love having her like this. No, I shouldn't like it...but I do.

Her eyes dart to my lips, then back to my eyes. "You're quite handsy, aren't you, Miller?"

For a few seconds my mind darkens with the primal things I want to do to Frankie. I want to fuck her, bend and break her until she's a fucking slut begging me to stop because she can't take anymore. I release her and step back, raking my hands through my hair and over my face. "Get out before I..."

"Before you what?" she challenges as she straightens and pulls her shoulders back.

I'm on the verge of breaking, but I refuse to give in to a mobster. Especially Frankie DeLuca. I step back and loosen my tie so I can take it off and forget about this night. "Leave." I stay rooted to the spot, waiting for Frankie to leave.

Frankie snickers as she obviously looks me up and down. "It feels so wrong doesn't it?" My brows furrow as I continue to watch Frankie. "This." She gestures between us. "Feels so wrong."

I pull my shoulders back and lift my chin. "I didn't do what you think I did."

"I know."

"Then why are you here?"

A slight smile tugs at her lips. "Because wrong is always fun." She shakes her head slightly and smirks. She clicks her tongue and takes a step away from me. "What a shame."

Frankie turns her back to me and advances toward the front door.

Everything inside is screaming to let her walk out of my house and never have anything to do with her again. But I find myself taking my tie off, and approaching her. I slide the tie over her head and onto her neck. I push her against the wall and grab the tie, wrapping it around my hand. “Where the fuck do you think you’re going?” I whisper in her ear.

“You want me gone,” she replies with a deep husk.

I sandwich her between myself and the wall, and slide my hand into her pants. Her pussy is soaking wet and greedily waiting for me. “You’re so fucking wet.” I push a finger into her and Frankie moans. I kick her legs out and use my forearm to push against the wall while tightening the tie around her neck. “This cunt needs to be fucked.”

“Yes, I do,” she admits shamelessly.

Jesus, why am I so desperate to fuck her? I should stop before it goes any further, but I can’t. I want this. *Damn it, I want her.*

I pull my finger out of her pussy and force it into her mouth. “Is your taste delicious?”

“So good,” Frankie moans as she sucks my finger.

My cock hardens with her pleasure. I tighten the tie around my hand and step back, exposing Frankie’s neck. “Strip.” She carefully begins to undress. When she gets to her shirt, I tear it off, refusing to loosen the tie around her neck. My God, her torso is tattooed with a black rose that starts at her navel and stretches all the way up to between her tits. There’s no part of her I don’t want to fuck. I can’t wait until my cock has filled every single hole. I push her to the ground so she’s on her knees. “You’re a good little slut, aren’t you?”

Frankie’s tongue peeks out and sweeps across her lower lip. “I’m anything but good.” She cocks a brow and smirks.

I tug on the tie and pull her toward me. “You’ll be a good fucking slut for me, and if you are, you’ll be rewarded with my cock.”

“It’s only a reward if you know how to use it.”

I jerk the tie, making it tighten around her neck. Frankie gasps then purrs as the pressure increases. I lean down and pinch her nipple between my fingers, applying so much force it causes her to moan. I squat in front of her, lean in and move her hair away from her ear. "Your cunt needs me," I whisper.

Although she's on all fours, I notice her thighs tighten. God, she's such a whore for me. *She's my whore*. My slut, mine to fuck. Mine to do whatever I want with. I push up and yank the tie so Frankie's head is tilted toward me. I loosen the tie as I walk behind her. I could kneel behind her and fill her ass or her pussy, but I want her to beg for me to fuck her. I want to hear her plead.

"Should I fuck this?" I spank her ass four times in quick succession. It instantly reddens from my hand print. "Or should I fuck this?" I slam two fingers into her pussy and twirl them until Frankie rocks back to find her release. I remove my fingers and bring them to my mouth, licking them clean. Frankie tastes amazing. I can't wait until she's sitting on my face and I'm feasting on her sweet pussy. "Maybe," I start as I move to stand in front of her. "I'll fuck this first." I rub my thumb over her lower lip.

"I want..."

I yank on the tie until she gasps. "I don't care what you want." I smile as I watch the tie constrict her air. "You want what I want," I say in a low voice before loosening the tie. "I'm hungry, I'm going to eat my dinner while you fuck me with your mouth." With the tie still firmly in my hand, I tug on it so she's following behind me as I head into the kitchen. "Sit there and be a good girl." I knot the tie to a cupboard as I take my dinner out of the fridge and microwave it. Thank God for leftovers. "Are you hungry?" I turn to find her fucking her fingers. "Stop that, *now*." Slowly, Frankie moves her hand. "Don't let that go to waste. Lick them." I indicate with a flick of my finger.

The microwave beeps, and I walk over to take my dinner out to the dining table. When I return to the kitchen, Frankie is still licking herself clean. My cock is now straining, desperate for her mouth, her cunt and her ass. I want it all, everything I

can have. I release the tie from the cupboard, and yank on it until Frankie is following behind. Once I'm seated, I sit back and say, "Crawl under the table." Obediently, Frankie crawls until she's in front of me. "I'm hungry, so I'll have my dinner. You'll fuck me with your mouth until I tell you to stop."

"I might bite it off."

I yank on the tie until she gasps for air. "You'll fuck me until I tell you to stop." Frankie doesn't try to stop this, instead she nods once. "You're such a good girl for me." I release the tie and gently stroke her chin. "Now, unzip me, and suck."

She makes quick work of my pants, her soft hand wraps around my cock and the next thing I feel is the warmth of her mouth. My eyes roll back as I take a deep breath. The sound of Frankie slurping forces me to focus so I don't blow my load right now. A known mob queen is under my dining table, on her knees, fucking me with her mouth.

I steady my breath as I relax back in my seat and open my eyes. I'm met with Frankie holding eye contact with me while her head bobs, taking me deeper and deeper. "I want my cum dripping out of your mouth." She shifts her body, giving me a better view of her bouncing tits. "Suck me, baby. Let me see your mouth full." Her pert nipples brush up against my legs, causing Frankie to moan. She rubs her chest against my pants, and it's clear she likes the scratch of my pants against her nipples.

I push back from the table a bit, lacing my fingers through her hair and push her down further. She gurgles, and chokes, but I keep her there while she keeps fucking me. My other hand leans down and pinches her nipple – rolling and pulling just so I can see Frankie's face soften with her own pleasure. My girl is a pain whore. She likes it rough.

I've never fucked anyone as kinky as Frankie, *and I love it*. "That's it, take all of me." I push her head down further, making Frankie gag and nearly choke. But I give her no reprieve. I lean down further and impale her with two fingers. Her bare pussy is fucking soaking and clenches around my fingers. Frankie welcomes my intrusion. I pull out of her and

lick my fingers. “God, you taste like fucking sin.” She gulps around my cock, her eyes watering. But it’s clear to see she’s loving this. “Make my cum drip out of your mouth.”

She closes her eyes and attacks my cock like it’s her lifeline. I sit back and watch Frankie enjoy herself. She lifts her hand and kneads my balls softly, then tugs on them. With my fingers still in her hair, I pull her further down on my cock. My fevered heart bounces hard in my chest. Heat blazes through me with all the delicious and unreserved moans tearing through Frankie. “I want to see my cum in your mouth.” My balls draw up and my cock is the hardest it’s ever been. Frankie’s lips touch the base of my cock as she deep throats me. She’s a fucking pro at giving head. “That’s it,” I breathe as I release into her mouth. My orgasm rips through me while Frankie continues to lick, slurp and rotate her tongue around the head. I reach down and grab her jaw, pinching it tight until she releases. She sits back, and in her mouth is my cum. I smear it across her lips, making sure I’ve fully marked her. “Now be a good little slut and swallow the rest for me.”

Frankie blinks twice and licks her fucking lips as my cum dribbles out of her mouth, then swallows. Jesus fucking Christ. She’s made me hard again without even trying.

“Your turn.” I grab the tie and wrap it several times around my hand. Dragging her to her feet, I turn Frankie around, kick her legs out and push her face down on the dining room table. My dinner is long forgotten, but at least I get to eat her. I want to bathe myself in everything Frankie, but I have to calm the fuck down before I lose my load and come off as a fucking dud. While keeping a tight hold on my tie, I fall to my knees and push my tongue in her pussy.

“Fuck,” she grumbles and thrusts backward. “Warn a girl next time.”

I lick, lave, and eat coaxing every morsel of liquid from her. She fiercely grinds against my face, deriving all her pleasure from my tongue and mouth. I suck on her plump clit, then drive my tongue into her dripping cunt. I thought her taste was addictive when I licked her off my fingers, now I know there’s no chance I’ll ever stop wanting her.

I bring Frankie to the verge of an orgasm, but pull back, refusing to let her release. “What are you doing?” she asks from over her shoulder.

“Shut the fuck up.” I force her head down on the table, smashing her cheek into it while tightening the tie like a noose around her neck. I lean over her naked body, still clothed except for my pants down around my ankles. “For once in your life be a good girl and stay exactly as you are.”

“Being good isn’t as fun as being bad.”

I chuckle as I reach for my wallet and retrieve a condom. I rip the packet and slide on the condom. Once it’s on, I cover her body with mine and thrust into Frankie. “I know you’re a bad, bad girl.” I lift off her and slap her ass, *hard*. My handprints instantly redden her cheeks. Frankie clenches around my cock, and that’s enough to tell me, she enjoys a firm hand. I pull on the tie, and she grabs the edge of my table. I spank her so hard it actually moves her forward.

“Yes,” she groans with a husky breath. Her upper thighs don’t escape my heavy hand. “More,” she shamelessly begs. I pull the tie back, carefully watching that I don’t take it too far. “More.” Her dark eyes glass over before she shuts them. I spank her even harder. Her ass and her thighs are perfectly red. “More.” I tighten the tie once again, watching her breathing patterns. She’s getting off on the hurt. I’m getting off on watching her melt from my *mistreatment*. I’m ravaging Frankie, degrading her. She loves it, and I’ve found something that’s sending me closer to my own release.

I pull out of her, spin Frankie around, lift her leg to hook it over my hip and flick her clit with force. I thrust into her again as Frankie lets out a throaty cry. “You’ll take everything I give you.”

“More, please, I want more.”

I wrap my hands around her throat, squeezing until I see her eyes close. Her breathing is rapid, and her wetness is dripping down our legs. I release her neck, pull out, and slap her clit three times in quick succession. It takes me thrusting into her once again for her to come so hard her body vibrates

against mine. She moans as I fuck her until I groan and roll my head back with my own release.

Frankie is limp as she lies on the dining room table. I pull out of her, grab her shoulders and move Frankie to sit on my lap. I reach for my suit jacket and throw it over her shoulders. She snuggles into me as she catches her breath. "Are you okay?" I draw lazy circles on her back.

I can feel her hot breath on my neck, but she finally nods. "I needed that," she says in a small voice. This is the most vulnerable I think Frankie DeLuca has ever been. "I had no idea how badly I needed a good fucking."

Of course, I hear the only thing I want to. "So I was good?"

"Ugh." She pushes off and throws my jacket at me. "Really, you had to go and fuck it up?" She takes a wobbly step backward.

I jump to my feet and reach for her. "Where are you going?" Frankie leans against the table and lifts her hand to stop me touching her. "Looks like calm Frankie is gone, and hard-ass Frankie is back."

She's leaning against the table, staring at me. Her eyes are hard, her jaw is clenched and she's shaking her head. "You like me on my knees, don't you?" she spits with venom.

"Yes, I fucking do. And, while we're on the subject, so do you."

"Fuck off." She moves off the table and heads to her clothes.

"Are you telling me you didn't enjoy that?"

"I had an itch and you were the one who was around to scratch it." Frankie is stiff, yet laser sharp with her movements. "Besides, you hit like a fucking pussy. This." She turns to show me the start of the bruising on her ass and thighs. "Isn't even worth telling anyone about," she berates.

"You're starting an argument over nothing." Frankie doesn't even bother putting on her clothes, she looks me up

and down and walks out of my front door completely naked. I run after her to bring her back so she can at least put her clothes on. But her henchman is waiting by the car, the back door open. “Frankie!”

She stops and turns. “We’re done. Watch your back, Miller.” Frankie pivots like she doesn’t have a care in the world and gets into the back of the car.

My head is still spinning as I watch her drive away. I stand staring at the back of the car until her taillights are out of sight.

I rake my hand through my hair completely baffled by what just happened. “What the fuck?”

CHAPTER 17

FRANKIE

“What am I doing today, Frankie?” Alfonso asks as I climb up on the portable bed.

“I want a gun, here.” I point to the back of my upper arm.

“Do you have a specific style in mind?”

“Something sleek and modern.”

“Hmmm,” Alfonso murmurs as he flicks through his phone. “Like this?” He flicks the phone around so I can see an image of a Glock.

I screw my nose at the thought of having a police-issued weapon on my body. “I’m thinking something more like this.” I find a hot-looking sniper rifle and show Alfonso. “Can you do this?”

Alfonso scoffs and rolls his eyes. “You of all people, should know I can do anything.”

“Good. I want it here.” I run my hand over the back of my arm. “From elbow to shoulder.”

“Do you want it black?”

I lie on the table and move my arm so Alfonso has access. “Whatever. Just make it look good.”

“Give me ten minutes to set up, and we’ll be good to go.”

There’s a knock on the door, and I groan at the disruption. “Yeah,” I call loud enough for the interrupter to hear. The door creaks open and my brother sticks his head in. Rome scans the room and furrows his brows. “What’s going on?” I sit up so

my legs dangle over the edge of the table. “Fuck!” Rome leaps forward and grabs my chin. “Who did this?”

Shit, he’s seen the marks around my neck. “Alfonso.”

“Yeah,” he replies as he continues setting up the inks to tattoo me.

“Go find Mya and get her to make you something to eat.”

Alfonso looks at me, then my brother. He pushes up off his stool and nods before leaving the room.

“What happened?”

“Nothing I didn’t want.” Rome’s brows slowly draw together. “I don’t want you to worry about me.”

“Ahhh.” He takes a step back, leans against the door and folds his arms in front of his chest. “You’re the head of the family, Frank. Someone clearly tried to kill you.” He gestures toward my neck, then folds his arms again. “Yeah, I think that’s something for me to worry about.” My fingertips brush against my throat, and a small smile tugs at my lips. “And now you’re smirking. Did you at least kill the fucker who did that?”

Jumping off the table, I approach my brother and place my hand on his tight forearm. “I wanted this.” Rome’s brows drag together, causing a severe set of lines on his forehead.

“What?”

“I welcomed this.”

Slowly, his features soften, but his eyes change from hard to confused. “Why would...” he pauses and darts his gaze to the corner of the room. “Oh.” Realization creeps over him. “Well, I um don’t know what to say. Um.” Rome uncrosses his arms, and rakes his hand through his hair. “I can’t believe I’m going to ask this, but I need to make sure.”

“Ask away.”

“You’re into kinky stuff?” He lifts his hand to stop my reply. “Before you answer the question, I don’t want to know what *kind* of kinky stuff you’re into, that’s not the image I want of my sister. But this is some kind of like...you know.

It's um..." He lifts his hand to his throat and gently scrapes his fingertips across it.

I enjoy watching Rome squirm. It makes me chuckle. "Yeah, it is."

Rome shoves his hands into his suit pockets and straightens. "Glad we sorted that out." He turns and opens the door. "Can we not talk about this again?"

"It wasn't me who brought it up."

"Yeah, I know, but." He scans my throat again and shakes his head. "How about if something happens that you don't want to happen, then will you tell me about it?"

I freaked my poor brother out. "Deal. Do me a favor, and send Alfonso back in, will ya?"

"I sure will." Rome hightails it out of the room, obviously uncomfortable with my *singular* tastes.

I make my way over to the fold-out bed and wait for Alfonso.



"Hey, I'm about to head downtown, talk to a few of the street soldiers," G says as I'm looking through the figures Rome has sent me.

"I'll come with you," I reply.

"You sure?"

"Yeah, I haven't been to the streets for a while, and I want to make sure everything is going okay. Besides, the soldiers may have heard whispers about Dad."

"Maybe." G clicks his tongue. "How long will you be?"

I close the laptop, stand and walk around the front of my desk. "How about now?"

“I love a low maintenance woman.” He juts his chin toward my arm. “Show me.” I turn and let him see my freshly added ink. “Sniper rifle.” He nods his head with approval. “Alfonso did a good job.”

Dario is waiting for us out in front of the house. I’m glad Dario wasn’t severely injured in the drive-by, as he’s a loyal driver for me. He gives me a curt nod as he holds the back door open. Once G and I are in the back, Dario navigates my long driveway easily, and is heading downtown. “Moonlight is under construction, and should be back up and running by the end of next week.”

“Good,” I reply as I flick through social media.

“Are we gonna talk about it?”

I lift my gaze and turn my head to look at G. “Talk about what?”

“The politician.”

My brows rise as I tilt my head to the side. “What about him?” my tone is hard and unrelenting.

G’s gaze following the marks on my throat, then back up to my eyes. “If this is a reoccurrence, then...”

I hold my hand up to stop G. “It won’t be, because we’re done.” G’s brows knit together. “Do you have something you want to add?”

“Frank,” G pauses and intakes a sharp breath. “My job is to keep you safe.”

“He won’t hurt me.” Miller is a cinnamon roll, he’s sweet and soft. He doesn’t have it in him to cause me harm.

G holds his hands up in surrender. “Whatever you say, boss.”

I turn to look out the window, opting not to engage further with G about Miller. It doesn’t take long before Dario pulls up to the curb downtown.

The street is filled with high-end restaurants, exclusive boutiques and entries to over-priced city apartment buildings.

G is out of the car and waits until I've sidled up beside him before he closes the door. "It's been a while since you've slummed it with the commoners," G says with a chuckle.

"Slummed it is right," I reply in an easy tone. Our conversation in the car is now long forgotten.

Between two buildings is an alley-way that leads to an old speakeasy we've converted for the boys on the street. With an air of confidence, I head down the alley toward the speakeasy. G knocks twice and steps back to wait.

The door opens and we're met by one of the soldiers. He looks to G and steps to the side, then he glances toward me. "G," he greets before doing a double take. "Don DeLuca," he quickly adds and straightens.

"Relax, Mario," G says and claps his hand on the soldier's shoulder.

It's been a long time since I've been here. Funny enough, it looks exactly like how I remember it. I spot an aluminum baseball bat in the corner. I walk over and smirk when I see the dent. "How did this happen?" I ask Mario as I point to the *used* bat. He screws his mouth up and lowers his chin. "I'm not opposed to violence, but I want to know who was on the receiving end to cause such an indentation."

"One of my dealers has been consistently short."

"*Your* dealers?" I lift my chin and stare at him.

"My apologies, Don DeLuca. What I meant was I recruited him, so I felt responsible for him. He was always short on collection day, and I warned him twice, but he kept cutting your money short. So, I had to teach him a lesson."

"And where is he now?"

Mario's jaw tightens. "His funeral was last week."

"And you still have the murder weapon here?" Mario intakes a sharp breath then instantly turns to look at the bat. "I'll take care of it. Out of curiosity, how short was he?"

"It was always small amounts, nothing most people would notice. Five large here and there."

I walk over to Mario and tap his forearm twice. “Good.” I head toward the office with G following behind. “How long has Mario worked for me?”

“He’s been working for your family for about three years.”

“Has he been pinched?” I ask as we ascend the stairs to the office.

“Not with us.”

“And he pays his tribute?”

“Like clockwork,” G says. “He’s an earner too. Brings in a solid six figures a month.”

Once I reach the top, I walk into the office and roll my eyes. “Keep an eye on him, G.”

“I have been.”

“Give Mario another two months, and move him up the ranks if he’s still solid.”

“Will do.” G heads over to one of the desks, and opens the top drawer. He pulls out a ledger and flicks it open to the page he needs. “Everything looks good here.” He stands and hands me the ledger.

I open the book and quickly scan the last page. Nothing seems out of whack. “As long as it adds up from the safe.” I hand the ledger back to G and we make our way back downstairs so we can empty the safe. The safe stands five feet high, and has a combination lock. Once opened, Dario hands G a duffel. “Wait at the car.”

Dario acknowledges me with a nod, and leaves.

We quickly empty the safe, and start toward the front. I see the baseball bat sitting where it was when we entered, so I grab it and sling it over my shoulder. G and I have been here all of fifteen minutes. As we head down the alleyway back to the car, I hear something from behind. I turn to look, and see someone walking after us. “Hey, pretty lady.”

“What the fuck?” G turns but I place my hand to his arm.

“Go ahead, I’ve got this.”

“Frank, you don’t know who this fucker is.”

He has a valid point. “No, I don’t. But I do have this, and it’ll be a shame to get rid of it before I do some damage with it.” I hold up the baseball bat.

“A baseball bat is not gonna stop a bullet.”

I stop walking and change direction, heading straight for the guy following us. “Hey.” I smile and tilt my head back in an informal acknowledgement.

Fucking sleaze ball licks his lips and winks at me. “This is a dangerous neighborhood, lady. You’re pretty, and there’s some freaks out here who’d...” He darts his tongue across his lower lip and slowly scans my body. “...do some dirty things to you.”

“Frank,” G calls from behind me.

I lift my hand to stop G. The guy is fully sleeved, but the tattoo that catches my eye is the double capital A’s. “You’re far from home, you should leave before anything happens to *you*,” I warn.

“You better be nice to me, because soon your boss will be dead.”

How the fuck does he not know who I am? “Is that right?” I taunt with a smirk.

“What the fuck did you say?” G advances toward him, but I stop G before he rips his head off.

“The old guy thinks he’s tough.” He lifts his hands and wiggles his fingers in a “come on then” gesture, like a damned badass.

“I’ve had enough of this,” I say to G. In one swift movement I lift the bat and take a swing. It connects with the guy’s head, causing him to fall to the ground. I turn to look at G. “How did he not see that coming?”

“Is this guy a fucking idiot, or what?”

“Are we being punked?” I look around in case more of Petro’s men come out from the shadow. “Hey.” I lay a swift

kick into the guy's side. "Name," I demand. He's groaning and holding his side. "Name!" I lay another kick in the same spot. The crack of a few ribs causes me to smirk.

"Fuck you, bitch," he manages to say between sharp intakes of breath.

I look to G then back at the guy and shake my head. "Did Augusta send you?"

"Fuck you!"

"Not in this lifetime." I stand over him and smash the baseball bat repeatedly over his upper torso and head. The last hit snaps the bat causing the bottom half to go flying to the left. I stand back and wipe the blood from my face.

"Get in the car, Frank," G says as he hurries me away from the dead guy. He pulls out his phone to make a call. "Mario, there's a body in the alleyway, clean it up." He tucks his phone back into his suit jacket pocket and shakes his head at me. "You could've gotten yourself killed."

I flick my hand dismissively. "Besides, the Augustas have overstepped onto my territory." I wipe my hands down my pants and exhale deeply. I point behind me. "Makes me wonder what his men are doing south of the border."

"He was a lone wolf."

"Was he?" I ask as I tilt my head to the side. "What would we do to any of our men who strayed as far as that fucker?"

"Kill 'em, because we don't want a territory war."

"Exactly." I sit back and stare out the window. I need a face to face with Augusta. He needs to explain why the fuck one of his soldiers was so far from their territory.

If this is his way to muscle into what belongs to me, then we have a *big* fucking problem.

CHAPTER 18

JEREMY

Today's been a clusterfuck from the moment I arrived at the office.

Partially because I'm getting emails and calls from everyone in my damned state, starting with unhappy tax payers to the party higher-ups.

But mostly because I can't seem to focus on anything but the way Frankie took everything I did to her and wanted more. That was...I don't even know how to describe it. She sparked a fire deep inside my gut, and all I want to do is have her again. And again. *And again.*

My office door opens and Zac enters. He has a stack of papers wedged under his left arm. He's also scrolling his phone while holding a cup of coffee for me. "Here you go." He places the coffee on my desk, then places the papers down beside my coffee. "Last month's budget is on top of the pile, Mr. Miller."

"Thank you."

Zac exits my office, and I push my salacious memories of Frankie aside so I can concentrate on the budget. It doesn't take long before my eyes are going crossed looking at the numbers, so I open my laptop to shift through my emails. The blinking light on my office phone catches my attention. "Yeah," I say knowing it's Zac announcing a phone call.

"Tyler Lewis from the FBI."

"Put him through." I sit back and release a stressed sigh. "Tyler, how can I help you?"

“I wanted to let you know that there’s a sting happening on one of your ports soon.”

“What’s coming in?”

“We’ve got intelligence on a human trafficking shipment that will be docking within the month.”

My gut churns when he speaks the words. Human trafficking, child brides and child prostitution is my hard limit. Anyone who profits for those can burn in fucking hell. “Who’s bringing them in?”

“We’ve got a task force set up to take down the DeLucas.”

My heart falls to the pit of my stomach. “This is a DeLuca shipment?” I’m trying to hold onto my anger.

“It looks like it is.”

My teeth grind while I clench my jaw. “What do you need from me?”

“Nothing. This is just a courtesy to you because I know you want to take them down too.”

“Thanks.” I hang up and sit back in my chair, staring at the ceiling. I know Frankie is unhinged and fucking crazy, but a human trafficker? If she is, then I need to cut all ties with her now and let her rot away in jail. I can’t be part of this.

Hell, I shouldn’t be entertaining thoughts of fucking her again.

I stand and pace back and forth in my office. I’m stuck. Should I ask her? But I also know she’s smart, and if I do, then she’ll know something is happening, and she’ll change the human cargo.

“What the fuck do I do?” I place both my hands on my head as I pace.



There's nothing better than coming home and switching off.

That would work for me if I could stop myself from thinking about Frankie and her being a human trafficker. I sit at my dining table, scrolling through the internet attempting to find whatever I can about the DeLuca name.

I've gotten myself into a mess, and I need to figure this out before it becomes public.

The knock on my door pulls me out of the heavy headspace I'm in. I close my laptop, then walk over to the door. I'm greeted by a bloody Frankie. "What the hell? Are you hurt?" I pull her inside and quickly scan and feel her body. "Whose blood is this?" Frankie throws her head back as she laughs. "What happened?" My heart is in my throat as I try to figure out what's happening. I take my phone out of my pocket and hit 9-1-1. "I'm calling the police and an ambulance."

She pulls a gun out of the back of her pants and points it at me. "I'll fucking shoot you if you finish dialing that number."

I take a step back and lift my hands in surrender, showing her the screen that I haven't dialed. "What is going on? If you're hurt, I have to get you to the hospital." She uses the gun to gesture for me to give her my phone. I hand it to her and she drops it to my hardwood floor, then stomps on it. "You're a fucking psycho, get out of my house."

Frankie fucking giggles like she has no care in the world. "Sit your ass down." She points to the chair ajar at the dining table.

There's a knot at the base of my throat, and my pulse quickens as so many worries jumble around in my head. I walk over and sit with Frankie still pointing the gun at me. She advances toward me and straddles my hips. My body instantly

reacts to her, my cock growing with a desperate need to be inside her. “Just tell me if you’re hurt.”

Frankie grinds against me as she lays the gun on the table. She makes light work of my tie, and my breath gets caught in my throat. My head is fucking with me. I want her, but...

“Shut up,” she says as she slowly, and seductively slides my tie off. I grab her hips, and thrust up once, my primal desire overtaking my logical mind. She’s covered in blood, and I don’t even know if it’s hers or someone else’s, but I want her. She grabs my hand and moves it behind the chair, then does the same with the other one. Within seconds, she’s looped the tie through the chair and around my wrists. Frankie pushes up off me and smirks. “Now, stay here.”

“You’ve tied me to a chair; I can’t exactly go anywhere.”

Frankie backs away, then pivots and heads for the staircase. She looks over her shoulder at me, winks and takes off upstairs.

“What the fuck?” I whisper. I should break this chair and untie myself, but I’m so damn hard and turned on that I *want* to see where this is going. My head lolls back and I close my eyes, desperately trying to find my sanity. “Get it together,” I scold myself. I hear my shower turn on, and I release a relieved breath. She’s crazy. A fucking nutcase. She comes into my home – covered in blood – ties me to a chair and goes for a shower. At least she didn’t break in this time.

The moments Frankie is in the shower gives me some time to talk myself out of this being something I want. But, the problem is, Frankie DeLuca will likely drown me – and I *still* crave her level of crazy. Maybe this should be a lesson for me and I should back away from her.

She makes me feel alive.

God, I hate how much Frankie affects me. I want to push all these insane feelings down and forget about her.

Damn it, I can’t.

But the fact she’s shipping human cargo is something I can’t get past. I need to get rid of her.

The water turns off, and I tilt my head up to look at the ceiling. I sit straighter and wait for whatever her level of crazy is going to bring now. I swallow the lump in my throat and my heart races while I wait.

I see her bare feet, followed by her long legs, then her naked torso comes into view. Frankie walks down the stairs slowly, causing a visceral reaction. A raw hunger grows in my gut as my eyes follow her casual footsteps toward me.

Frankie's wild hair has been tamed by water as it limply hangs down past her shoulders. Her body is glistening from the shower, she hasn't even bothered drying. She stops in front of me and seductively nips on her lower lip. "Why are you here, Frankie?"

She shifts from one foot to the other while she watches me. Frankie lifts her hand and gently runs her fingertips over her lips. My cock grows and I can't help but focus on her mouth. "Come here." I jiggle my tie, hoping for give so I can break out of my restraint.

Frankie traces a line from her mouth, lazily down to her tits, where she tugs on her nipples and fondles her plump breasts.

Dear lord, let me fuck her once more before she goes to jail. Just once, that's all I ask. Let me bury myself deep inside her and fill her with my fingers, cock, *tongue*. I need this. *Just one more time.*

Her hand dips even further until her fingers are inside her. She moans and closes her eyes while she fucks her fingers. I *need* a taste. "Give me those fingers," I say in a low, husky voice.

Frankie fucks her fingers while playing with her tits, as my cock strains inside my suit pants, desperate to have her on the end of it. She turns and bends from the waist while still fucking her fingers. Her silky moans increase while I can't tear my eyes away from her body, especially her ass.

My breath catches as I watch how comfortable she is with her body. I love how self-assured Frankie is. It's refreshingly

delicious to see a woman who has so much confidence. Though, at the same time I wish that woman wasn't the devil reincarnate.

Abruptly, Frankie stops pleasuring herself, she turns and saunters over toward me. With quick fingers, she unzips me and frees my hard cock. "What are you doing?" my gruff voice encourages her to do whatever the fuck she wants. I hate how powerless I am against Frankie DeLuca.

She turns and eyes my suit jacket. She walks over to it, rifles around until she finds my wallet, then opens it and pulls out a condom. Without missing a beat, she tears it open on her return, slides it onto my cock, and positions herself over me. She grabs my cock and lines it up to her wet pussy. "Tell me to stop and I will," she says.

I thrust up, silently giving her my answer.

Frankie lowers onto my erect cock and swivels her hips, using me for her own pleasure. I want to close my eyes so I can concentrate on how fantastic she feels, but I can't tear my eyes off of her. She's sinfully tempting. Her moans, her eyes, her entire body sparks my own to life.

She places both her hands on my shoulders as she rides me. Fucking me to get what *she* wants, using me for her own benefit.

This is crazy hot. I love how I'm nothing more than a tool for her own pleasure.

What the fuck is wrong with me? Why do I find this so erotic? I shouldn't want this, *or her*.

Frankie moves her hips, finding her own rhythm until she finally speeds her actions. "That's it," I say as I watch her use me. "Keep going, baby."

"You talk too much." She seals her mouth over mine, shutting me up with a fiery kiss. She drags her teeth across my lower lip, before nipping and biting. The kiss is scorching, igniting an electric charge to pulsate through me.

Frankie closes her eyes and throws her head back as she reaches her orgasm. God, I'm so damn close myself. I just

need her to clench her cunt around me and I'll be a goner.

She slows her movements and sits straighter. She slowly opens her eyes, lifts her hand and wipes at my mouth. Frankie gets off of me, leaving me with a hard-on, and walks toward the front door. "Frankie!" She looks over her shoulder at me, winks and fucking leaves.

Great, I'm tied to my fucking chair, with my cock out, and Frankie has walked out of my house, naked. *Again.*

"Frankie!" I holler when I hear the car start.

The driver toots the fucking horn as it drives away.

You've got to be kidding me.

CHAPTER 19

FRANKIE

I can't help but smile at my last interaction with Miller. Nothing better than using him for my own purposes, and leaving him tied to the chair. The car jolting to a stop snaps me back to the now and away from my delicious memories.

I step out of the car and look across the front of Moonlight. "It looks good," I say to G.

"It does." He walks ahead of me and opens the door, waiting until I enter before he follows.

"Miss DeLuca," the host says with a big smile on her face. "Your private room is ready." She steps to the side and guides me with a hand gesture to follow her.

"I'll look at the kitchen first." I break away from the host and head into the kitchen. Immediately, I notice the smell of food and not shit.

"Miss DeLuca," the head chef says when he sees me. He straightens and quickly scans the kitchen. "I'm sorry, it's a mess, if I would've known you were coming, I would've made sure it was clean."

There's nothing dirty in the kitchen except the pots and plates stacked where the dishwasher is cleaning them and stacking them in the industrial dishwashers. "The dining room is full; you don't have anything to apologize for."

The head chef is rigid. "Can I help you?" he asks with a strained tone.

"How is the kitchen?"

“It’s excellent.” He wipes his hands down his apron and clears his throat.

“Do you require anything for the kitchen? An appliance? Extra plates? Flatware? Anything?”

“No, ma’am, the restaurant has an exceptional budget which allows me a lot of creative freedom. I have everything I need.” Good, because this is a lucrative money laundering business for me.

“If there’s anything you need, then let me know.”

“Thank you.” He stands awkwardly, fidgeting with his hands. “Shall I prepare you a tasting plate of all our new dishes?” His eyes widen with hope.

I stand staring at him for a moment, before I nod and leave. G and I head into my private dining room, and G pulls the chair out for me to sit. “You know you intimidated the chef?”

He sits opposite me. “Yep.” I pull my phone out and scroll through my emails.

“And you know he’s the guy who’ll be making our food?”

“Yeah, which is why you can try my food and if you drop dead, I won’t eat it.” I rock back in my seat and lift my chin.

“Lovely,” G replies in a deadpan voice then snickers. “I can’t believe you’re willing to sacrifice me.” He lifts his hand and places it to his chest in jest. “How will my heart heal?”

“If it’s any consolation, if Rome was here, I’d sacrifice him first.” G throws his head back as a deep guttural laugh tears through him. “Self-preservation,” I add and lift my shoulders.

“Good evening, my name is Hayley, and I’ll be your server this evening.”

“Bring us a bottle of scotch,” I say without looking at Hayley.

“Very well, Miss DeLuca.”

She quickly exits, and G's eyes follow her. I turn to look at where G's attention is. "She has a nice ass," I say.

"That she does," G's voice cracks. "But she's too young for me."

"So?"

"She's probably twenty-five at most."

"Again...so?"

"I'm nearly double her age."

"I'm sure she can show you a few new tricks."

G rolls his eyes and shakes his head. "She's too young."

"Ahhh, I see what's happening."

"What?" G asks defensively.

"You probably need help getting it up, now you're what, eighty-nine?"

G roars a guttural laugh again. "You're an asshole," he retorts with equal mirth.

"Fine, seventy-three."

"You're such a shit. Just for that, I'm not trying your food, and if the chef poisons you, then don't worry, I'll look after Rome."

It's my turn to release a loud laugh just as the waitress returns with top shelf bottle of scotch. I look at the brand and give her my nod of approval. I'd be pissed off if she returned with a two- or three-hundred-dollar bottle. "Ma'am." She unscrews the bottle and pours me two fingers before doing the same for G.

I take a sip and wave her away. "Leave the bottle," G instructs as she's replacing the lid.

She gives both me and G a smile before exiting. G's eyes follow her ass. "You're right," I start. "You're way too old for her."

"Screw you, DeLuca," he playfully retorts. G throws his first glass back and pours himself a second. He scrubs his hand

over his chin while nursing the whiskey. “You and the politician.”

“What about it?”

“You’ve walked out of his house twice, naked. Don’t get me wrong, whatever you two do is your business. But, do you think it’s the smartest play to be screwing him?”

I arch a brow and glare at G. G holds my stare, he’s not easily intimidated by anyone, including me. “We’re done now.”

“You and I know that’s not true. You’ve never gone back for more to anyone. You’ve always been a one-night type of woman. The politician seems to hold your attention.”

I lift my glass and throw it back. “I told you; we’re done now.”

“G,” Dario announces from the door.

We both look to him, but G stands and walks over. At the same time, the waitress returns holding two large platters. They’re identical and have a selection of all different foods. She places one down in front of me, then the other where G is sitting. Quietly, she leaves and I start eating.

“Frank,” G says to get my attention.

“What?”

“The politician is here.”

I pick a black olive and pop it in my mouth. “Is he?” I stare blankly at G. “And?”

“He’s asked to see you.”

I take a long, sharp breath, and motion for G to let him enter while I continue eating. There’s a small commotion behind me, but I don’t turn to see what’s happening. Miller appears before me, holding a piece of wood. He slams it on the table and places his hands to his hips. “You owe me a blowjob or a new fucking chair.”

I run my tongue over my teeth and sit back, crossing my arms in front of my chest. Holding his heated stare, I turn

toward G. “What is it?” G asks as he squares up to Miller.

On my command G would happily kill Miller, but I don’t want him dead. “Give him three-hundred dollars.”

G takes his money clip out of his pocket and starts counting from his wad of cash.

“I don’t want your God damned money,” Miller spits.

I look to G and flick my eyes to the side so he can leave. G snarls at Miller, but does as I ask. I point to the chair opposite me and grab my fork. “You stalked me so you can demand I give you oral sex or money?” I continue eating while I wait for his reply.

“What the hell happened?”

“I needed to be fucked. You fucked me, I came, then I left.”

Miller clears his throat and glances away for a brief moment. “You make it seem so transactional.”

“That’s because that’s all it is.”

He slams his hand on the table with irritation. My jaw tightens as I continue to glare at him. I hear G’s footsteps enter the private dining room. I lift my hand and wave him away. Miller stays rooted to the chair, staring at me with his piercing dark eyes. “Fine, that’s all it is,” he relents. “I have a question for you.”

The air between us is sizzling with restless tension. The ache between my legs craves his cock, or preferably his mouth. “What?” I try to push the urge to the side.

He looks around the room and lowers his chin. Miller moves to place his elbows on the table. “I’m not going to sugar coat this.” I continue eating. “We both know you’re fucking deadly.”

“Phone,” I say before he continues.

“Your goons patted me down already. I’m not wearing a wire.”

“Then you won’t mind me taking your phone.” I hold my hand out.

Miller releases a frustrated breath, but reaches for his phone and hands it to me. “If you break this one then I’m gonna start charging you for every one you destroy.” I take his phone, then motion for him to stand. “Are you fucking kidding?” I repeat the same flick of my fingers. “For fuck sake, Frankie.”

“Open the shirt and lift it.”

Miller grumbles, but he does what I ask. “Happy?” I look at the phone, lift it and throw it against the wall. “Come on.” He clenches his jaw and throws his arms up over his head. “You owe me for a new phone.”

“Eat.” I pointedly look at G’s uneaten food.

“I’m not hungry.”

“Then don’t.” I click my tongue but continue enjoying my platter. “What’s the question?”

Miller sits back in the seat, staring at me while I eat. “I’ve heard it through the grapevine that you smuggle people.”

My fork stills, and I slowly lower it to the platter. “I’m a business woman, Miller. Not a human trafficker.”

“Business as in selling men, women and kids?”

My hands briefly clench at his repulsive question. “I do have a line I won’t cross.” I hold my hand and indicate with one finger, “One is forcing women into prostitution. I won’t do it, and I won’t force feed them drugs to keep them compliant.”

“Is that it?”

“Human smugglers who sell anyone are fucking scum and I’m happy to get rid of them. But kids, although I hate those little fuckers, I wouldn’t hurt them. Hard limit.”

“You hate kids?”

“Don’t you?” I lower my hand and tap my fingers with irritation on the table. “They’re like dogs. I don’t like them, but I wouldn’t kick one if we crossed paths.”

“You don’t like dogs either?” He shakes his head and blinks several times. “We’re getting off track.”

“That’s right we are. I think you should duck under the table and eat me.”

“What?” Miller chuckles.

“While you’re here you may as well make that mouth of yours useful, especially if you’re gonna accuse me of smuggling people.”

“I didn’t accuse you, Frankie. I’m merely asking a question.”

“You didn’t track me down, stalk me, just to ask if I’m a people smuggler. You want my pussy.”

“I prefer your mouth,” he instantly fires back.

A small smirk stretches my lips. “There has to be a reason you’re asking about human trafficking.” Miller avoids my hard stare. “What is it?” It’s clear he’s grappling with his own demons. “If you’re not here to tell me, then get out.”

He stays seated for a long moment. The waitress returns, holding two deep bowls of pasta. “The chef asked for you to try these,” she says as she lowers the bowls onto the table. “Should I bring an extra setting?”

“No, I won’t be staying.” Miller abruptly stands and makes his way toward the door. “You owe me for three phones, two tires and a fucking chair.”

I burst into laughter, and the waitress stands awkwardly shifting her weight from foot to foot. “You can go.”

“Thank you,” she says with relief.

G returns and sits. He looks at the broken phone and snorts. “You broke another one.”

“He asked me if I’m a human trafficker.”

“And you let him live?” G moves one of the pasta bowls in front of him, twirls some around his fork and shovels it in his mouth. “You’re losing your touch, Frank.”

“Find out where he’s going to be tonight.”

“Why?” A devilish smirk pulls at my lips. “Fuck, what are you gonna do?”

CHAPTER 20

FRANKIE

G and I are enjoying a scotch out on the deck as I wait for the aftermath of what I did. G's scrolling through his phone, while I watch the calm water in the brightly lit pool. A sliver of the moon is peeking out from behind a cloud, and the sky is dark, sprinkled with only a few stars.

"I've noticed something," G says.

"What is it?"

"There's been an increase in homeless disappearances."

"And you're telling me this, why?" I look over to G waiting for his reply.

"We have to be careful, Frankie. We don't want law enforcement sniffing around more than they ordinarily do."

Someone clears their throat from behind me, making themselves known. I turn to see Mya standing rigidly straight. "What is it Mya?"

"Mr. Miller is here to see you."

I look to G and smirk. "Didn't take him as long as I thought." He throws his drink back and stands. "Thank you, Mya. I'll have Dario take you home."

"Thank you." She smiles softly to G and me.

"I'll let him in." G leaves me sitting out on the deck and heads into the house to escort Miller.

I can hear his heavy footsteps before he even says a word. "You had my house burnt down?" he yells as he moves to my

line of sight.

“No, I didn’t have your house burnt down.”

“Bullshit, Frankie. You had one of your goons burn my fucking house down. What the fuck?”

I stand abruptly, and Miller straightens while keeping his chest puffed out. I invade his personal space, lean in and whisper, “I burnt it down myself.” I saunter past Miller, heading into my office.

“Are you fucking kidding me?” I hear him mumble as I walk away. I lean against my desk, and fold my arms in front of my chest, waiting for Miller to follow. “You’re a fucking psycho,” he yells as he enters my office and slams the door.

“Shouldn’t have accused me of trafficking.”

“You did this because I asked you a question? You’re insane, Frankie.” He lifts his hands and places them to his head. “You could’ve killed me by burning my house down.”

“You’re so dramatic. I knew you weren’t home,” I say.

He lowers his hands and tilts his head to the side. “Are you hearing yourself? You stalk me, you break my phones, you shoot my tires, and you burn down my house.” He shakes his head. “Not to mention you left me tied to a chair with balls the size of Texas.”

“Pffft.” I flick my hand at Miller. “When you say it like that you make me seem unhinged.”

“Because you fucking are.” His eyes widen with frustration.

I push up off the desk and come to stand face to face with Miller. He’s considerably taller, and has a solid build, but no man will ever intimidate me. “Don’t ever accuse me of trafficking.”

“I asked a question.”

“And you should know the person I am.”

“I do. A fucking psycho!”

“Cut the shit, what are you doing here?”

He looks around my office and throws his hands up. “You seem to like destroying everything of mine. And, thanks to you, now I have to sleep in my office.”

“Stay here. I have plenty of room.”

Miller expels a loud, condescending laugh. “Yeah, right.”

“Oh, this isn’t good enough for you? I’ve seen your little house, this is opulent in comparison.”

“Wow, look at that. I didn’t think your ego could get any bigger. I’m sorry, I was wrong.”

“It’s good that a man can admit that. That takes a lot of courage and balls.” A small smirk tugs at my lips.

“You’re so damn condescending.”

“Who, me?” I lift my hand and place it to my chest. “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

Miller’s jaw clenches as he stands, staring at me. “What is it about you?”

“I’m charming,” I reply.

“Charming isn’t the word I’d use to describe you.”

I lean against my desk and cross my arms in front of me. “Please, go ahead. How would you describe me?”

Miller darts his gaze away from mine. “We’re getting off topic. I now have to sleep in my office.”

“There’s a perfectly good bed upstairs.”

“You’re even more insane than I thought if you think I’m going to stay here, with you. The governor, in a mafia don’s house?”

“I’m simply a business woman.”

“Who burnt down my house.”

“Pffft.” I half shrug, uninterested.

“You’re tormenting me now, Frankie.”

“Typical man. I offer a solution, but you don’t like it.”

“How about you don’t burn my fucking house down,” his voice escalates with irritation. His blazing eyes find mine, and he marches toward me and grabs my upper arm. “What is wrong with you? Is this some kind of sick entertainment?”

I shrug out of his hold and square up to Miller. “So very much,” I say slowly as my eyes dart to his lips, then back up to his eyes.

He pushes his body closer to mine and lowers his head so we’re eye to eye. His warm breath mingles with mine. Our lips are nearly touching, and my chest is pushed into his. My heart rate climbs to a desperate beat. I clench my thighs together waiting for him to touch me. “Do you even know how much you affect me?” He visibly swallows and wets his lips.

Jeremy Miller is completely vulnerable to me, and I’m in a prime position to use it for my own gain.

Fuck.

I want to, but something is stopping me.

I pull away from Miller, and head around my desk to pour myself another scotch. “Get out,” I say with a shaky breath. I don’t hear the door open, nor do I hear him leaving. “Get out!” I pour myself another drink and throw it back. With my back turned to Miller, I finally hear the door and know he’s left.

I throw back another drink and lean my hand on the desk while hanging my head. I need to forget about him, because no good can come from this. Besides, it’s clear he’s not going to let me use him to give me what I need.

I may as well cut my losses and end this.

I just have to figure out what I’m going to do with him. If he was anyone else, he’d find himself walking across the bridge.

I don’t know what I’m going to do with him. Either way, this has to end. Now.

CHAPTER 21

JEREMY

“Mr. Miller,” Zac announces after he’s opened my door.

I rub my fingertips across my eyes, trying to release the stress forming behind them. “What is it, Zac?”

“Um.” He nervously looks over his shoulder, then back to me.

“What?” I snap with irritation.

“Your driver is here.”

“My what?” I lift my hands and shake my head. What is he talking about?

“Your driver, sir.”

“I’m hearing the words, Zac, but you and I both know I don’t have a driver.” Zac shifts his weight and clears his throat. “Okay then.” I huff in surrender as I stand to my feet and head out of my office. Beside Zac’s desk is in fact, a man, dressed in a suit, standing to attention and staring at me. “Who are you?”

“My name is Niko, and I’m your chauffeur, sir.”

I close my eyes and intake a sharp breath. My eyes drift open and I turn to Zac. “It’s late, you can leave for the day.”

He softly nods while darting his gaze between Niko and myself. “Yes, sir.”

Niko stands awkwardly as Zac powers down his laptop, safely locks it away then packs his things and leaves. “Did

Miss DeLuca give you instructions?" I say to Niko once we're alone.

"I've been told that I'm at your disposal."

I lower and shake my head. "I have work to finish, you can leave."

"I'm under instructions to wait." He stands even more rigidly and pulls his shoulders back. I look at him before deciding to return to my office and finish what I'm working on.

Frankie DeLuca is fucking crazy, *that* is a certainty.



"You can leave," I say to Niko as I shrug into my suit jacket.

"Sir, I'm to drive you home."

A home I no longer have because bat-shit crazy Frankie burnt it to the ground. "I'm meeting the insurance adjuster at my house."

"I can take you."

I consider it for a split second, but, if I do then she has me exactly where she wants me. In her damn pocket. "I'll drive myself. You can leave." Niko stays rooted to the spot. Seriously, this guy must be getting paid big money to stay. "What's she paying you?" I take my wallet out of my back pocket and open it. "A hundred?" Niko scoffs. "Two hundred?" Niko shakes his head. "Three hundred."

"To be in the good books of Frankie DeLuca is payment enough. And, if I don't do this, then I'm *not* in her good books."

Great, I'm stuck with this guy. "I'm not going to use your services." I make quick work of locking the office, and head toward the elevator down to the basement toward the

underground parking. My brows draw together when I find my car isn't in my allocated spot. "Are you kidding?" I run my hand through my hair and pinch the bridge of my nose. She's a fucking psycho. I turn to Niko who's standing behind me, a smug smile is on his face. "Do you know where my car is?"

"No idea, sir."

Sure. She's painted me into a corner for tonight. "Where's your car?"

"Right here." He walks toward an ostentatious stretch limousine and stands beside it, proudly.

"Can we draw any more attention?" I murmur to myself.

"Sorry?" He opens the back door and waits for me to enter. I half expect Frankie to be in the back, waiting for my arrival. Thankfully, she's not. "To your home, Mr. Miller?"

Everything about this is agitating me. From this pompous car, to Frankie to even Niko. It's all annoying the fuck out of me. "Yes," I grumble as I settle back and look out the window.

It shouldn't surprise me that Niko knows exactly where I *used* to live. When he pulls up outside my burnt-down home, I get out and look around. "What the fuck?" The entire lot has been cleared. There's nothing other than land left. It's like I never had a house here to begin with. I pull my phone out of my pocket and dial Frankie's number. It rings without her answering.

"Mr. Miller?" a woman says from behind me.

"What?" I snap at her. Her brows lift and she tilts her head to the side. "What?"

"I'm from the insurance company," her tone hardens.

I roll my eyes closed as my jaw clenches. "My apologies, I've had a tough day." My shoulders are stiff with hard tension. "I'm sorry," I repeat as I open my eyes and extend my hand. After a quick introduction, Irene and I stand in front of the cleared lot.

What a total disaster.

“I can’t assess something that’s no longer here. Why did you have it cleared before I came out to assess it?”

Good question, and something I’m going to have to take up with Frankie. I clear my throat and look over my shoulder at Niko, who’s waiting by the car. “I’m sorry to have wasted your time.”

“We can’t pay for this.”

“I understand.”

She straightens and looks at the cleared lot, then back to me. “I must say, I’ve not been in this position before.”

I click my tongue to the roof of my mouth and nod. “Trust me, neither have I.”

“Enjoy the rest of your evening.” She shakes my hand and heads toward her car.

I’m left standing in front of where my house is supposed to be, bewildered by Frankie’s questionable behavior. She’s one wild person. I turn and walk toward Niko. “Take me to her.” I slide in the back of the car, not waiting for him to reply.

Frankie DeLuca is unstable, to say the least.

CHAPTER 22

FRANKIE

G pulls out his phone, reads his message and shakes his head. “The politician is on his way.”

“Good.”

He stands and heads toward the door. “Clear my setting and have a new one set down,” he instructs the waiter at Moonlight.

“Of course,” the waiter replies and makes quick work of removing G’s setting.

I sip on my scotch and wait for Miller to barrel in here and call me whatever names he’s come up with. I chuckle when I hear him say, “Where the hell is she?”

“Calm down, public servant.”

“What?” I hear Miller respond.

“I said calm the fuck down, *public servant*.”

I can’t help but laugh louder as G pushes Miller more.

“I’m the God damned governor.”

“Who I pay for with my taxes.”

“I didn’t realize gangsters paid taxes. Maybe I should have the IRS check on that,” Miller retorts with equal venom.

“Yeah?” G’s voice lowers, and I know that tone. “Do you...”

“Enough,” I call from inside the private dining room.

“You’re fucking lucky,” G adds. I then hear something or someone bang up against the hallway wall. Clearly, either G or Miller pushed the other. *Boys will be boys.*

Miller storms into the dining room, and hovers over me. “You’re certifiable, you know that, right?” He places his hands to his hips and stands to his full six foot plus height.

“Are you hungry?”

The waiter arrives with two dishes and places them on the table. “Thank you,” Miller says and waits for the server to leave. “No, I’m not hungry.” He doesn’t budge, standing over me.

“Sit, eat.” I move my plate over to the first of the dishes and scoop some out. Then repeat it with the second dish. “Eat.” I pick up my fork and begin eating, then stop and look up at Miller. “Are you going to stand there, staring at me? If so, go ahead, but you’re really missing out. Pork ragu with polenta.” I pointedly look at the first dish. “And puttanesca.”

Miller’s shoulders relax as he looks at the dishes. “You’re a fucking puttanesca,” he grumbles.

“I’m capers and pasta in a red sauce?” I shrug. “I’ve been called worse.”

The moment of tension passes, and Miller chuckles. He pulls the chair out, and scoops some of the ragu onto his plate. “Why are you doing this?”

“Doing what?”

“This.” He motions between us. “We’re not compatible, at all. But for some reason, we’re drawn to one another.” I stop eating for a moment but refuse to lift my eyes to look at him. I don’t want to talk about this. It’s not a subject I’m comfortable with. I guess he can sense it, because he asks, “Where’s my burnt house?”

“I had the land cleared.”

“Why?”

“Because the builders are going to start working on a new house in two weeks.”

“Two weeks? It takes months to receive the appropriate approvals.”

“Not when you have money.”

“My insurance won’t cover it.”

“Don’t worry about it.”

“No,” he says. “I’m not having you build me a house.”

“You said it yourself; insurance can’t cover something that’s no longer there. It’s already in the pipeline. All you have to do is pick your finishes. I can do that too if you like.”

“Frankie,” my name is said with a sigh. I lower my fork and sit back in the chair, lifting the glass of scotch to my lips. “I don’t know...this is all...” Miller presses two fingers between his brows and releases a long drawn-out breath. “I don’t even know what this is.”

“Labels aren’t necessary,” I reply.

He drops his hand and rolls his eyes closed. “What are we?”

“Fuck buddies,” I say without missing a beat.

“No, we’re not,” he replies. He slowly lifts his chin and opens his eyes. “I asked you if you trafficked people, and you burnt my house down.”

I scoff and turn away. “I knew you weren’t in the house.”

“What happens when I say something else you don’t like? Are you going to kill my dog? Put a bomb in my car?”

“You don’t have a dog, and Niko drives you now.”

He slams his hand on the table in frustration. “God damn it, Frankie.” G runs in with his gun drawn. He scans the room and holsters his gun before I wave him away. “And then there’s that. Any one of your men would put a bullet between my eyes at a mere wave of your hand.”

“You have to stop worrying about that.” Miller heavily sighs. “What?”

“Where’s my car, Frankie?”

“It’s in my garage at home.”

“Why is it in your garage?” he asks with a definitely annoyed bristle. I smirk and lift a brow. “I don’t know what you’re snickering at, you grate on every single nerve of mine.”

“I know.”

“I can’t do this, Frankie. You’re too far into the darkness for me.”

“Yeah, I am. And I’ve never promised otherwise.”

We’re suffocated in silence for what feels like hours, neither of us talking, nor eating. We’re both pushing our food around on our plate. Thankfully, I have my scotch though. With the food now cooling, it’s best I leave this alone. *For now*. Miller’s tensions are high, and he’s not able to talk effectively.

Silently, I stand and head out of the room.

“Are we done?” he calls.

“Not even close,” I reply as I glance over my shoulder to him.

Miller jumps to his feet and follows me. “We have to talk about this.”

“We will, later.”

He grabs hold of my upper arm and swings me around so we’re face to face. “Frankie, you can’t leave when things get difficult.”

“We’ll talk about it later tonight.”

He steps back and runs his hand through his hair. “Tonight?”

“It’s either the sofa at your office, or a nice comfortable bed with me in it. The choice is yours.” I lean in and place my hand to his firm upper arm. “I’ll be naked,” I whisper.

“Goddamn it,” he grumbles. He pulls back and looks me square in the eyes. “Your mouth needs to be full.”

My heart flutters and my pussy clenches. “With what?”

“With my cock jammed so far down your throat you’re choking and begging me to come.”

I love how this has switched. I arch a brow as I scan his body from head to toe. His cock is tenting his pants, and I can’t wait for the moments he’s promised. I peek my tongue out and run it over my lower lip. “Good.” I pivot on the spot and head out to where G’s already waiting by the car. “Niko, Miller will see you in the morning,” I instruct.

“Yes, ma’am.” Niko is quick to get in the limousine and leave.

“Come on, we’ll be gentle,” I hear from beside my building.

“Frank,” G calls. When I look to him, he gestures with a head tilt to get in the car.

“Leave me alone,” a woman replies.

“What the fuck,” I mumble and follow the voices.

Three men are surrounding someone, touching and pulling on her. “Leave me alone,” she cries with fear.

I walk toward what’s happening in the alleyway between my building and the one next door. “Shit,” G says. I hear him quicken his steps to catch up to me. “Hey,” he calls.

The three men turn to face us. “What have we got here?” one with an eye-patch says. He struts toward us and pulls his jacket to the side, showing me his gun.

“Let me take care of this,” G says and tries to overtake me.

I lift my hand to stop G. Miller is also right beside G, ready to jump in if needed. “What’s she doing?” Miller asks in a small voice. G ignores him, and I give Miller a wink.

Without saying a word, I walk straight toward the three men. Eye-patch guy snickers. “You’re a sweet piece of ass. Maybe we’ll take you too.” I see he has a toothpick in his mouth, and he’s swiveling it around like he’s some kind of fucking god.

By the time I reach him, I stand to my full height staring at him in his eye. “Hey,” one of his buddies says.

I don’t speak a word. “Wanna party, sweet cheeks?” Eye-patch asks.

I lift my chin and pull my shoulders back. Tension is mounting quickly, and the three don’t know what to do.

“Bitch, he asked you a question,” one of the other two says.

I step closer to Eye-patch, and he flinches back. I’ve not said a word, but he instinctually knows not to fuck with me. I’m hyper-aware of where G is, and I know he’ll fucking kill them with one word from me. But this is too much fun to pass up. Why should I let G have all the fun?

“Come on, sweet heart, you’re coming with us.” The third guy wraps his hand around the woman’s arm and attempts to pull her along.

“She stays,” G says from behind me.

“Yeah, who’s gonna stop us? You and this cunt?” Eye-patch condescendingly says.

G moves forward, but I stop him again. I move inside Eye-patch’s personal space. From here I can rip that toothpick out of his mouth and stab it in his good eye, and he’ll have no idea what the fuck happened to him. The second guy flicks open a switch blade, and the third tries to put the woman in front of him, like a shield. I see she’s pregnant, and know these guys don’t care. Her eyes are wide with fear and her chin is quivering.

Eye-patch is trying to stare me down. I hear the click of a safety being released from behind me. Then a second. G has his guns on these guys, which means two out of three are dead. And the third will have no fucking eyeballs once I’m done with him.

“Hey, let’s go,” the second guy finally says.

Maintaining eye contact with me, Eye-patch takes a step back. “Yeah, she’s used goods anyway.” Eye-patch guy turns

his head and spits.

The three of them back away, leaving me, the girl, Miller, who's advanced even closer, and G. We stay rooted in the same spot until they're gone. I look at the girl, and shake my head. "What are you doing out here?" She drops her chin and stares down at her feet. She's so skinny, and dirty but definitely pregnant. "Get yourself home, and look after that baby."

I turn to leave when she says in a small voice, "I don't have a home."

I stop walking and roll my eyes closed. "She's not your problem, Frank," G says.

"I fucking know. But she's knocked up. Look at her."

"Not your problem." His jaw is set with tension.

I take several breaths trying to clear my head. G's right, she isn't. But I can't let a knocked-up girl stay out here. "Kid, do you have any money?"

"No," she meekly replies.

"This fucking world will eat her up and spit her out," I say to G.

"Man, now we're taking in strays, are we?" He shakes his head. "First him." He points to Miller who's standing behind G. "Now her." He points to the girl.

"He's temporary. She will be too."

"Frankie DeLuca, collector of strays," G grumbles.

"Kid, get your ass over here," I call. She quickly makes her way over to me, and instantly drops her chin. Her dark hair falls like a veil around her face. There's a thick band of blonde peeking out from her bad hair color. "Where are you living?" She slowly lifts her shoulders. "Have you eaten today?" She shakes her head. "Do you have a name?"

"Jackie," she whispers.

Something tells me this isn't her real name. "Get in the car, *Jackie*," I command.

She lifts her chin only enough to make quick eye contact with me, before dropping her gaze again. “Yes, ma’am.”

We walk toward the car, and I make sure she’s in it first before I put my hand on G’s chest, stopping him from advancing to the front seat. “Does she look familiar to you?”

“She fucking stinks, that’s the only thing I can fucking concentrate on. Jesus, Frank. She probably hasn’t showered for a month.”

“She can take a shower when we get to the house. Tell me though, doesn’t she look familiar?”

“At this stage, let me get back to the house without passing out from that horrendous stench.”

I shake my head at G. “You’re an ass.” I look to Miller and flick my chin. “She’s coming home with us.”

A big smirk tugs at his lips. “I gathered,” he says and slides in beside the girl. *Jackie. Yeah, right.*

CHAPTER 23

JEREMY

She's a constant surprise, that's for sure.

Just when I thought Frankie was going to leave the girl to fend for herself, she bundled the girl up in the car and has brought her to her home.

Now, Frankie and G are huddled away in her office talking while the girl and I are in the dining room where she's devouring food. "Jackie, right?" I ask.

The girl has a mouth full of food when she looks up to me and nods once. It's clear she's lying about something. It might be as simple as lying about her name, but there's more to this than she's letting on. She swallows what's in her mouth and she says, "I know you from somewhere."

"Do you?" The cook, a youngish woman enters the dining room with another plate of food and places it in front of Jackie then refills her glass with more water before moving on to my glass. "Thank you." I give her a small nod.

"Yeah, you look really familiar."

If she can't place me as the governor of the state, then this conversation about me is futile. "Tell me about yourself, Jackie."

"Nothing much to tell," she says and lowers her head.

"How did you end up on the streets?"

She protectively places her hand on her growing belly. "I had to leave," Jackie says in a tiny voice.

My jaw clenches at this one small act. It tells me that baby may have come from a bad situation. “How far along are you?”

“Four or five months.” She nibbles on some of the food then adds, “I think.” I know nothing about pregnancy so I’m taking her at her word. “Frankie isn’t what I thought she’d be like.”

“What do you mean?”

“Nothing.” Jackie lifts her hand to place over her mouth, like she’s said something she shouldn’t have. I narrow my eyes and look at her. There’s more to this than she’s telling. No use in pressuring her to tell me, because that’ll end up having an adverse effect. Besides, she doesn’t know if she’s safe here yet or if it’s a false promise.

I want to push her more to find out her truth, but I know that could be detrimental. “She stays here,” I hear Frankie say.

Both Jackie and I look to where we can hear Frankie. She enters the dining room, and pulls out a chair. “Mya,” she calls her cook.

“Yes, ma’am.” Mya appears like magic.

“Bring me a coffee.” She looks to Jackie. “Are you still hungry?”

Jackie barely glances at Frankie, and shakes her head. The next thing I know, another guy walks into the dining room and stops when he sees both me and Jackie. “Seriously, Frankie? You brought the politician to our home?”

“He’s staying with me.”

He rolls his eyes and shakes his head simultaneously before he walks over and offers me his hand to shake. I stand and offer the same. “Romolo, but everyone calls me Rome.”

“Jeremy Miller,” I reply.

“I know. I’m Frankie’s brother, and you really shouldn’t be here.”

Trust me, buddy, *I know*. “I’m being held against my will,” I say with light mirth.

“You’re more than welcome to call the cops, but good luck getting one not on my payroll,” Frankie quips. *Smart ass*.

“I know you,” Rome says as he turns to Jackie.

“No, you don’t.” She shakes her head vehemently, proving they do know her from somewhere and it’s clear she doesn’t want them to figure it out. “I’m no one.”

“Shit,” Frankie says as she sits back in her chair. “Fuck.”

“What is it?” Rome asks.

I feel like I shouldn’t be here, considering I’m in a mobster’s home. Do people even say mobster anymore?

“G!” Frankie calls over her shoulder.

He appears the same time as Mya returns with Frankie’s coffee. What is it with these people? Everyone is at Frankie’s beck and call. Her mere presence holds a command. “What is it?”

“Elena,” Frankie says. Who’s Elena? What’s going on? Jackie sucks in a deep breath and covers her face with her hands.

“Fuck,” G groans.

“Fuck,” Rome echoes.

“Mya, take Miller up to my room,” Frankie instructs.

“Yes, ma’am.” She looks to me. “Sir?” Mya gestures for me to follow her. No, I want to know what’s going on. “Sir,” she repeats.

“I’m not going anywhere.” I recline and fold my arms in front of my chest.

“Yes, you are. This is family business,” Rome says.

“Then you shouldn’t have brought me here,” I say to Frankie. “Or burn my house down.” G snickers. “Or stolen my car.”

“It’s safe. It’s in the garage,” Frankie says defensively.

“I’m not going anywhere, I want to know who Jackie-slash-Elena is. I’m invested now.”

“This isn’t up for negotiation,” G says.

“But getting me involved in your life is? No, I’m not going anywhere.”

G and Rome looks to Frankie for direction. Her jaw tightens and she flicks her head to the side. “Go.”

“No.” Screw this, I’m not a fucking plaything she can toss aside or beckon whenever she wants.

“The boss told you to leave.” G walks over, stands beside me and flicks his jacket to the side showing me his weapon.

Frankie watches our interaction, but if I give in to this then she’s going to forever run my life. It might end with a bullet in my head, but I refuse to budge. “Go ahead.” I flick my gaze to the gun, then back to G. “Do what you have to, but I’m not leaving.”

Moments of tension shroud the dining room. G inches his fingers closer to his gun, Frankie watches as I straighten and lift my chin. “Enough,” Frankie finally says in a harsh whisper. G steps back and shoves his hands in his pockets. Frankie looks to me and arches a brow. “You’ve got balls; I’ll give you that.” She turns her attention to Jackie-slash-Elena. “Why are you on the streets, Elena?”

“My name’s Jackie,” the girl tries to convince Frankie.

“Cut the shit,” Frankie replies with harshness. “What happened? Why are you on the streets?”

“M-m-my name is Jackie.”

Frankie slams her hand on the dining table, causing her coffee to spill over the edge. “Don’t fucking lie to me.” Frankie is all business, there’s no softness to her at all. “Was that a fucking ploy to get to my house?”

The girl’s forehead crinkles as she crumples into herself. “N-no.” Her chin quivers.

“Frank,” Rome says and places his hand on his sister’s shoulder. “Go easy.”

Frankie’s jaw tightens as she lifts her chin to look down her nose at Jackie-slash-Elena. The girl’s head is hanging as her hair creates a barrier around her face. Her shoulders are shaking and little whimpers escape her. “Elena.” The girl lifts her chin. Her eyes are reddened, her cheeks are glistening with tears. “Tell me,” Frankie’s tone is dangerous. My cock stirs, and I feel my body reacting to her harshness. I want to fuck her, right here, right now. I want that powerful mouth of hers wrapped around my hardening cock.

Snap out of it.

“I-I-I...” Elena clears her throat. “I had to leave.” I still don’t know who she is or why she said her name is Jackie.

“Why?” Frankie pushes.

The dining room is eerily quiet. We’re all waiting for Elena’s response. “He was horrible to me.”

“Who?” Rome asks through a clenched jaw.

We all look to Rome, and personally I’m surprised at his reaction. Does he know the girl from previously? Have they had a relationship? Nothing makes sense.

“My father,” she replies meekly. “He’s not a nice man.”

“Did he do that to you?” Frankie points to Elena’s belly and asks the question I’m thinking. I’m not sure how I’ll react if her answer is positive.

“No, he’s not like *that*.”

I watch everyone’s reaction. Frankie takes a deep breath, her brother’s shoulders soften, and G remains stoic and hard. “Then why did you have to leave?” Frankie asks.

The girl lowers her chin as more tears fall. “He found out who the father was and killed him. He also told me that the doctor was coming in the morning to ensure my purity. He told me if I wasn’t pure, I was useless to him.” She purses her down-turned lips together. “I had to leave before he killed me too.”

“Did he kill the father of the child because he raped you?” Frankie’s question is harsh, and brutal.

“He killed him because he was supposed to keep a watchful eye on me. Not let anyone near me, because without my purity he couldn’t use me to make allies.”

Oh shit. I think I know what’s occurred. “You had a bodyguard?” Rome asks. Elena nods. “And you fell in love with him?” Rome’s voice breaks when he speaks the words.

“He showed me kindness.”

“That’s not really an answer.”

“Rome,” Frankie says and slightly shakes her head. Rome’s eyes are boring onto the poor frightened girl. Something about his reaction to her is personal and somewhat intimate. “Elena –”

“Please,” Elena begs. “This is too much. I’m sorry for causing you any inconvenience. Don’t send me back to him. I’ll leave. You’ll never see me again.” She stands to her feet, ready to run, but Rome springs up ready to chase after her.

“I won’t be sending you back to your father.”

“Frank,” G scolds. “Can I talk to you?”

“No, my mind is made up. Mya,” Frankie calls completely disregarding G’s concern. Mya appears and stands at the entry between the kitchen and the dining room. “Have a room made up for Elena. Also, see what clothes I have in the spare closet that’ll fit her. Tomorrow, I’ll have one of my men take you to the store.”

Elena’s eyes widen as she stares at Frankie. “But –”

“I’ll take her,” Rome says.

“Good.” Frankie takes a sharp breath, pushes the chair back and stands. “Mya will show you to your room.” She looks to G. “I’ll see you in the morning.”

G makes his disapproval clearly obvious with his head shake and scoffing, but he silently leaves. Frankie heads

toward the staircase, looks over her shoulder at me and winks. I jump to my feet and follow her.

The moment we're inside her room, I'm instantly taken aback by how normal her bedroom is. I mean it's obscenely large, and the bed is massive, but it's not gaudy or overdone at all. "Why did you do that?"

"Do what?" Frankie is already undressing.

"You took her in. Who is she?"

She slides her pants down, revealing a thong that leaves nothing to the imagination. "A rival's daughter. And I took her in because if she stayed on the streets she and her baby wouldn't have survived." She's now completely naked. "Are you done with your questions because I want to take a shower?" I'm completely blown away by Frankie. She's such a complicated person. She turns and heads into the bathroom, where I follow her and lean against the door. Frankie turns the faucets on and steps under the stream of water. "What?"

With my hands shoved in my pockets I shake my head. I don't even know how to react to the layers that are Frankie DeLuca. "You took in a person before you realized who she was."

"Yep."

"Why?"

"I told you, because she wouldn't have survived the streets."

Frankie has this hard exterior and although she's not a marshmallow, she still has a softness to her too. Her tight body beckons me like a damned beacon. I push off the door jamb and strip out of my suit. I walk into the shower where Frankie is standing with her eyes closed and her head tilted back. I grab her neck, and push her up against the wall. My body covers hers. "You're not so fucking tough, are you?" I snake my hand down over her stomach, and force two fingers into her pussy. She clenches onto my fingers and groans.

"I'm what I need to be in the moment, Miller."

“And what are you in this moment?” I thrust my cock between her ass cheeks, telling her I’m going to fuck her ass right here. She turns her head so I can kiss her, but I’m not giving her what she wants. Not until she gives me what I want. With one hand firmly planted on her neck, with the other I grab her chin and squeeze. A darkness passes over Frankie as we’re being assaulted by the spray of warm water. “I asked you a question.” I grip her chin harder causing Frankie to release a low, sensual groan.

“In this moment,” she starts and flicks her eyes open to look at me. “I’m a fucking whore for you.”

I lean down and take her mouth, but only for a few seconds before pulling away and licking her lips with the tip of my tongue slowly. “You’re such a good girl when you’re being an obedient whore.” I release her jaw and neck, and push her right up against the wall. “This ass needs to be fucked.” I spread her ass cheeks, dip my fingers into her wet and greedy pussy then rim her asshole with her wetness. “Do you want me to fuck this?”

“Yes, yes, I do,” she hungrily pleads.

Frankie DeLuca might be the head of a mafia family outside the bedroom, but when we’re inside she’s submissive and insatiable for everything I want to do to her. I love how greedy she is for me.

My cock is hard and desperate to be inside her, but fucking her ass without lube is going to be tricky. I don’t want to hurt her, *not like that*.

I rim her ass with my cock, pushing in only the very tip. Frankie sighs and clenches her ass. “Relax, baby. Let me in.”

With her body hard against the bathroom wall, her shoulders soften as she lets out a long breath. “I want you in.”

She’s damn uncontrollable in *her* real world, but when we’re together, intimate, Frankie is so...*compliant*. It drives me crazy knowing I can do whatever I want to her, and she wants it as much as I do. I push in a little further; her ass is so tight. I snake my hand around to her pussy and slip in a finger.

She tightens around my cock and finger, and I nearly lose my load at how phenomenal she feels.

While fingering her pussy, I push into her ass more. "You should see how perfect you look. You've taken half of me."

Frankie turns to look, and her eyes are clouded with want. Her breathing is fast and erotic. "My ass has never looked so good."

I push in further, and she cries out with a salaciously wanton groan. "That's it. You've taken all of me." I finger her pussy while my thumb rubs her clit. My cock is buried deep inside her ass, but I give her a moment to adjust to me before I totally fuck her ass, owning her.

Frankie pushes her butt into me, she's silently giving the go ahead to thrust into her. "Turn around." I remove my hand from her pussy, push on her neck so Frankie's face is plastered against the wall. "Be a good girl and lick my fingers." I drive my fingers into her mouth while my hips thrust into her. Frankie's mouth and tongue are making quick work at licking her juices off of me. "You look amazing," I whisper in her ear. The water is pelting over us, but in this moment, all I want to do is watch as my cock drives into her ass.

"More," Frankie moans and pushes back.

"How deep do you want me?"

"All of you, I want all of you." She lowers her chin and sticks her butt out.

I cover Frankie's body with my own, and twist her nipple between my fingers. Her groaning sends me wild. I release her erect nipple, lean back and spank her ass leaving a cherry red impression of my hand. I spank her again with so much force it causes Frankie to hiss. "My hand print looks good on your ass."

"More," she shamelessly begs.

My girl wants me to be rough, and I want to give her all the roughness she wants. I spank her in quick succession. With each strike Frankie releases a desperate mewl while her ass clamps onto my dick. "That's it," I say as I spank her with

force. "Take all of me." I stop spanking and hold her close so I can finger fuck her while driving my cock deep into her ass.

Frankie turns her head, begging for a kiss. I cover her mouth with mine, silencing her eager cries. It only takes my thumb to send her over the edge. Her body tightens in mine before completely easing. "We're not finished," I say as I step us back, push her head down so she's bending at the waist, open her ass cheeks and fuck her until my heart rate increases and I pump my cum into her ass. Once I'm done, I step back and watch as my cum drips out of her. "This looks good." I run my fingertip through my cum before the water washes it away.

Frankie straightens and turns. There's a look of arrogance on her face. She grabs my hand and forces it between her legs. I take the invitation and slip two fingers into her. Frankie's eyes darken and her lips part. "I look good on you," she says with a smirk.

"Not as good as I look *in* you."

She nibbles on her lip as I coax a second orgasm from her with my fingers. Frankie lifts her leg to hook around my waist. And although I want my cock in her, I know in this moment, she wants my fingers, not my dick. I fall to my knees in the shower, lift my hand to fondle her tits and feast on her pussy. She's already on the edge of her third orgasm, and I want to tease it from her with my mouth and tongue.

The water is pounding on me, but I don't care if I can't breathe. I want her pussy on my face, now and forever. "That's it, right there," Frankie moans when I swirl my tongue around her clit. I nip and suck on it, causing Frankie to swivel her hips on my face. "There. Keep doing that." I smile at her confidence, but what my woman wants, she gets. I nip, tease and lick until she grabs onto my shoulders and her body quivers. "I'm coming," she chokes.

Good, I want her to fill my mouth with her juices.

Frankie grinds her hips on my face until her body quakes with a second orgasm. When her moans stop, I pull back, stand and wipe my mouth. I seal my mouth over hers, letting Frankie taste how amazing she is. Frankie softens in my arms

as I claim her mouth. She's like no woman I've ever known before. "You're an obedient one when it comes to sex, aren't you?" I say as I take the soap and lather it between my hands before applying it to her body.

"I'm a fucking queen," she says.

"There's no doubt that's exactly what you are." I rub my hands over her shoulders, then down to her chest. She stands straighter and lifts her chin. "You enjoy me taking control."

"Only when it comes to sex." She looks at me and arches a brow. "You missed a spot." Frankie lifts her arms so I can wash under them.

"You have to soften up a bit, Frankie."

"No, I don't." She rinses where I've washed and turns her back to me. "Wash my hair." Frankie tilts her head back and waits until I've got the shampoo and begin lathering her hair. "If I let go just a little, then I'm a bigger walking target then when I'm hard."

I nip on her ear, taking the lobe between my teeth. "Maybe it's better to get out of this game."

"No, this is my life. But it doesn't have to be yours." With her eyes closed I massage her head, working the shampoo deeply.

I'm stuck with a dilemma. I know the FBI are going to close in on her, especially with that incoming human trafficking shipment. But, something in my gut tells me that can't be Frankie. "You could always get out too. Give the operation to your brother, or G."

"If I didn't know better, I'd think you were wearing a wire. But considering you're naked, I would've seen it."

I rinse off the shampoo while I let my mind grow increasingly loud. "I'm not willing to submerge myself into the dark. I won't compromise who I am."

"I'm not asking you to." She picks the conditioner up and hands it to me.

I squirt some into my hand and run it through her wayward curls. “The thing is, Frankie, I’m prepared to toe the line of darkness and tell you the FBI are onto a shipment you have coming in soon.”

“What shipment?” She turns to face me. Her face has hardened, her brows are drawn in close. “Which one?”

“Jesus,” I say as I take a step back. “How many do you have coming in?”

Frankie shakes her head slowly. “Which shipment?” she repeats.

“A shipment of people.”

Frankie blinks rapidly and rubs at her chin. “I don’t do human trafficking, I already told you that.”

“The FBI said they have a shipment of yours pinged, and it’s a ship full of people.”

“It’s not mine, because I don’t traffic.” Frankie looks over to the corner of the shower and brings her fingers to run over her lips. “If it’s not mine, then who the fuck is coming through my docks?”

“Authorities think it’s you.”

“It’s fucking not,” she says adamantly. Frankie leaves the shower, with conditioner still in her hair. I quickly turn the water off, grab a towel and head out of the shower after her. “G!” Frankie calls from her room.

G comes barreling up the stairs and stops when he sees Frankie pulling on a robe with me standing behind her in a bath towel. “Do I really need to see this?” G gestures toward us.

“Someone is bringing in a shipment under my name.”

“What kind of shipment?”

“Fucking people,” Frankie replies.

“What? How, who?”

Frankie turns to me and motions for me to repeat what I said to her. “The FBI have information that you’re bringing in a shipment of people.”

“Did they say where they got that information from?” I’m in this now. I shake my head. “What else did they say?”

“Nothing.”

“Then why did they tell you?” G pushes.

I pull my shoulders back and hold onto the fact that it was a courtesy. “Because they fucking did,” I say with an elevated voice. “You’re welcome.”

“Calm down.” Frankie moves between G and me. She turns to G and asks, “Where’s the girl?”

“She’s gone to bed.”

Frankie nods and chews on the inside of her cheek. “Fill the capos in, and get them to put feelers out. We need to figure out who’s bringing shipments into my territory. If it’s one of my men, you know what to do.”

“Do you want them to pay tribute?”

“Not on people smuggling. We don’t do that shit. Send them home, piece by piece.” G nods and backs away, but not before giving me a look of utter contempt. Frankie shuts the door, disrobes and heads back into the shower. “I’ll be out in a minute.”

It gives me a few moments to completely dry myself and sink into her bed. Frankie is out of the shower by the time I’m in the bed. I hear the hairdryer before she waltzes into the room naked. Her hair is slightly wet, her body is perfectly dry.

She sits at her dressing table and begins to lather moisturizer into her body. I can’t tear my eyes off of her. “Stop staring. You look like a freak.”

“Here’s this hardcore mafia don rubbing moisturizer on her body.”

She stops and looks up at me. “I don’t even know what to say to that, except you’re a weirdo.” When she finishes, she

stands and walks over to the bed. “If you fucking snore, I *will* shoot you.” Frankie pulls the covers back and slides in beside me.

“If *you* snore, I’ll shoot *you*,” I tease.

“I’d like to see you try.” She turns on her side and backs up to me. “And don’t even think about drooling on my pillow.” I place my hand to her stomach and move Frankie so my body is molded around hers. “Don’t snore in my ear.”

“Shut the fuck up and go to sleep.”

I hear a small chuckle from her, but at least she doesn’t argue.

CHAPTER 24

FRANKIE

My eyes spring open and I find myself on my back, with my legs open and Miller's head between my thighs, feasting on me. "What are you doing?" I ask with a croaky voice.

"Shut up, I'm eating." He lifts his hand to knead and play with my nipple as his mouth devours my pussy. "Mmm, delicious."

I roll my eyes closed as he flicks his tongue against my clit. I push my fingers through his dark, thick hair and grip it with force. "Keep doing that," I moan while holding his head in place. I scoot down further and open my legs wide. God, he has a magic mouth. I open my eyes, release his hair and lean up on my elbows to watch.

He looks up at me while he eats my pussy. Our eyes are locked as I watch him watch me. I love how his mouth is full of me. When Miller darts his tongue out and licks me, I nearly lose myself. "I love your cunt."

"For such a good boy, you have a dirty mouth, Senator."

He bites on my clit causing me to suck in a deep breath. "Governor," he corrects.

I smirk and wink. He stops and pulls back. "What the fuck are you doing? Why are you stopping, I haven't come yet."

"And you won't until you call me *governor*."

That bastard is using this for his own ego. "Fine." I open my pussy lips with one hand, and rub at my clit with the other.

Miller has his mouth only inches from my pussy, and he could easily flick my hands away to keep eating. Instead, he's watching and waiting."

"Two can play at that game." He hops up on his knees and grips his cock in his hand. He rubs up and down his thick, erect shaft.

"Two can, but it's a lot more fun when toys are involved." I lean over to my side table and get my rabbit ear vibrator. I too get to my knees, and sink onto the vibrator. I turn it on and begin to swivel my hips. "Nothing better than a toy that doesn't talk back."

"Jesus." Miller stops rubbing himself to watch me. "Fuck this." He grabs me around the hips, lifts and flips me. "This is nothing. Suck it." He hovers his body over mine, pushes my head on the bed and shoves the vibrator in my mouth while he impales me with one quick movement. "The next time you want to use a fucking toy, I'll make you suck it while I fuck you."

God, I love how rough and dominating he is with me. My pussy pools with desperation. A part of me hates how responsive I am when he's like this. The taste of myself on the toy is sending crazy shock waves through me. "Now, be a good girl and fuck that toy with your mouth while I fuck this." He thrusts hard into me and I close my eyes and groan with erotic desire. "I can't wait to own this again." I feel an intrusion rimming my ass before it pushes into me. I feel so full. My mouth, my ass and my pussy all have something in them. I want more, more of him filling me. My hips move to a rhythm all their own as I push back, on the brink of an orgasm. "Be a good girl and give it to me."

I let go and come so damned hard my entire body vibrates. Miller tightens his grip on my hips and thrusts hard until he finally comes. "Shit," he murmurs.

"What?"

"I didn't wear a condom."

"I had my tubes tied, so don't worry about a kid."

Jeremy pulls out of me, and I turn to lay on my back. He flops down next to me on the bed. “Why did you have your tubes tied?”

“Because I don’t want kids,” I say with certainty.

Jeremy avoids my eyes and releases a sigh. “Okay.”

“I wasn’t asking your permission.” I take a sharp breath and push off the bed. “I need to get ready for the day. You’d better leave.” I head into the bathroom.

“Wow, what a way to make a man feel special.”

“If you want special hire a whore,” I call from the bathroom.

“Un-fucking-believable,” I hear Miller grumble.

I can’t help but smile. “If you want hearts and flowers, better find a small-town girl who wants to give you foot rubs,” I call from the bathroom. He murmurs something inaudible and I snicker. When I finish, I walk out to find Miller dressing. “You don’t have to wear the same suit, half my closet has clothes for you.” I pointedly look toward my walk-in.

Miller does a double take as deep lines crease his forehead. “You bought me clothes?”

I walk over and place a chaste kiss to his lips. “I figured since I *did* burn your house down...”

He runs his hand through his hair and mutters, “Un-fucking-believable.” He looks to me and snickers. “You constantly surprise me.”

I head into the walk-in to get jeans and a tee, return to the bedroom and slide them on. “Just hurry up and get out.”

“Tsk.” Miller throws his hands up in surrender as he walks into the walk-in and I make my way downstairs.

I might let him control me in the bedroom, but there’s no fucking chance he’ll control me anywhere else.



“What are you going to do with the girl?” G asks as he nurses his coffee.

I look up from the computer and arch a brow. “I don’t know,” I reply honestly.

“And the politician? Is it a good idea he stays here?”

“He’s not going anywhere.”

“He’s a liability, as is the girl.”

The door opens and Rome waltzes in. He reads the room and stops before he reaches his desk. “What’s going on?”

“Talking about the girl and the politician,” G says.

“What about the girl?” Rome’s voice is hard.

I abandon the laptop for a moment and sit back in my seat as G answers Rome. “She and the politician would be better off not being around us. Especially considering the girl is an Augusta.” G looks to me and raises his brows. “I can take care of both problems.”

“No,” Rome says with force. “You’re not doing anything.” Interesting. My brother has a soft spot for the girl.

“She’s a liability,” G adds. “As is the politician.”

I flick a look to Rome whose jaw is set with tension, and his eyes are wide with fury. “I said no,” Rome replies. “Nothing happens to the girl.”

“She can’t stay here,” G replies.

“She’s not going anywhere,” Rome argues.

“She can cause trouble just because of her name. Do you really want to bring all the other families here on our doorstep, Frank? I can tell you right now, it would be a war not only

between us and the Augustas but think about the Saccos and the Venanzis. We don't interfere with family. That's something the four families have always agreed to."

"I don't give a fuck about what everyone agreed to." The vein in Rome's neck strain. "She's not being sent anywhere."

G stands to his feet and advances toward Rome. This will end badly for the both of them. "I –"

"Enough," I say, barely above a whisper. They both pause and look to me. "Neither the girl nor the politician is going anywhere."

"What the fuck, Frank? Have we turned into a halfway house?"

"Enough," I repeat silencing G.

"Frankie –"

I shift my gaze to my brother and arch a brow. "I said, enough. The politician isn't going to be a problem, and the girl, she's a just a scared, knocked-up kid. Let's find out why she's on the streets to start with and we'll go from there. But no harm will come to either of them." I look to Rome who nods once, then to G, waiting for his confirmation.

G licks his lips and shakes his head. "This is a mistake."

"If you don't like it, then you can fuck off," Rome says.

I slam my hands on the table just as G turns to swing at Rome. Both stop and look at me. "You, go and calm the fuck down." I point to Rome.

"But–"

"Go." I slam my hand on the table again. I'm two seconds from killing my own brother because he's being a dick. Rome flicks his gaze between G and me several times before leaving the office. "What the fuck is wrong with you?"

"Me? You're thinking with your pussy and he's thinking with his dick. You're both putting this family at risk." G paces in front of my desk and runs his hand through his hair. "Your father would've had them both taken care of."

“I’m not my father,” I say.

“Clearly,” G scoffs.

“Do you have a problem with that? If so, I can easily find a new position for you.” I round the desk and stand in front of G.

“We’re fucking family, Frank.”

“Yes, we are. We don’t kill innocents just because they don’t align with our plans. Instead, we regroup and see if and how they can fit into our dynamic. If they don’t or won’t then we...” I pause and lower my chin. “Then we take care of it.”

“What about Rome? He seems quite taken by the girl.”

Yeah, about that. “He’ll understand, business is business.”

G sighs and shakes his head. “I hope you know what you’re doing, Frank because this could end up badly, for all of us.”

“I know.” I lean against the desk and fold my arms. “You’ve been in this business since before I was born. We both know there’s nothing safe about what we do. And Rome and the girl both know it too.”

“What about the politician?” He’s a soft spot for me because I’ve dragged him into this life, regardless of the fact he’s not, he needs to understand the consequences. “Can you pull the trigger if it came to it?”

I look G dead in the eyes and pull my shoulders back
“Without a fucking doubt.”

I think.

CHAPTER 25

JEREMY

“The attorney general needs ten minutes with you today. Also, you have a meeting with the head of the department of health.”

“Marlene?” I ask as Zac follows me into my office. He nods. “What does she want?”

“She scheduled the meeting two days ago.”

“Okay, anything else?”

“You then have a meeting with department of transportation.”

“Alex is a pain in my ass. He’s always trying shit to benefit himself.”

“Do you want me to reschedule him?”

I shake my head. “I wonder if he was like this with my predecessor?”

“According to Governor Hayes of Pennsylvania, Mr. Wallace was painful for him too.”

I make a mental note that if I get to another term as the governor, I’m getting rid of Alex and appointing someone who’s not going to be emailing me for ridiculous reasons. “Anything else?”

“Um,” Zac’s voice cracks with uncertainty.

“What is it?”

“There was a reporter waiting for me when I came into work this morning.” *Shit*. “They asked if I had a comment.”

Fuck. “On what?” I ask trying to keep my voice steady.

“She asked me if you’re gay.”

I whip my head around with force. “What?” Here I thought the reporter may know about Frankie, apparently not.

“She asked me if you’re gay.”

“Why would she ask that?”

“Because, you’re unmarried, and have no children, and the last event was your inauguration but you didn’t bring a woman.”

I snicker and shake my head. “Because I’m unmarried and didn’t bring a date, that makes me gay?” I look to Zac who slowly lifts his shoulders. “What did you tell this *reporter*?” If she can even be called that.

“I told her I don’t comment on the governor’s private life.” He loudly swallows and waits. Don’t tell me there’s more. “She also asked for an interview.”

“Pencil her in.”

“What?” Zac asks with shock. “You want me to give her a spot?”

“Sure, make it the twenty-first of never.”

Zac snickers. “I’ve already told her I’d reach out when you have an available spot.”

“Good.” I take my laptop out of my briefcase, set it up on my desk, and head out to make myself a coffee. “Anything else?”

“Nothing else for now, but the day has only started.”

“Yeah, thanks for reminding me,” I say to Zac. He returns to the phone constantly ringing at his desk, and I make my way to the kitchen to prepare a coffee.

“Mr. Miller, how are you?” one of the young interns says. She steps to the side and lowers her chin.

“Am I in your way?”

“No, sir. I’m in yours,” she replies nervously. “I should go.”

“Don’t be silly. Are you making a coffee?”

“Yes, sir. For Mrs. Fields.”

Angela Fields, my lieutenant governor. I’ve never liked that woman. If she could she’d destroy this state of ours with her limiting views about how things should be done. “I won’t get in the way of her coffee, that’s for sure.” I move to the side for the intern while I finish making my coffee.

“I could make that for you,” she offers as she glances at my cup.

“It’s okay, I’m sure you have other things to do.”

She looks at me from below her lashes and bites on the inside of her cheek. “I wouldn’t mind.”

Wait is this young girl hitting on me? I’m fairly certain my psychopath girl would kill her if I mention the intern. *Possibly even me.* “Have a good day,” I say as I take my beverage and high tail it out of here.

The moment I’m in my office, the usual chaos of the day starts.



“Alex, good to see you,” I say as I stand and offer him my hand.

He grunts as he takes it to shake. “I need your help.”

“What with?” I sit and close my laptop.

“There’s talk of an upcoming strike.”

“Why?”

“They’re pushing for a ten percent increase, and I’m not willing to give it to them.”

“Is there a reason?”

“Ten percent will cripple my budget. If I give them ten, then that eats away at hundreds of thousands that I could be putting toward other necessary things.”

“Why are you coming to me with this, Alex? You’re the head of department of transportation.”

“I want to get rid of the union. Tell them to go get screwed.”

“Good idea,” I say as I sit back in my seat. “Get rid of the union, and let’s see what the staff do.”

“They can’t keep demanding things from us; they’ll cripple us.”

“You keep saying that word. But you know what I see?”

“What?” Alex spits with disdain.

“If you don’t negotiate with them, and you do get rid of the union, that’s when you’ll single-handedly paralyze this state. People won’t be able to get to work, companies will be losing millions, if not billions because they can’t get staff. Not to mention, when you go back to the unions to negotiate because with no transportation – everything stops – then they’re going to ask for more than ten percent because they’ll have us at their mercy.”

“We can’t let them control us.”

“Why are you here, Alex? To me it seems that you’ve made your mind up.”

“I need you to back me on it.”

“No.” I shake my head. “That’ll cause chaos and anarchy, and I’m not prepared for that.”

Alex stands in a huff, and shakes his head. “You have no balls,” he spits toward me.

“Negotiate, Alex, or I’ll do it myself.”

“Fucking hippy,” he murmurs under his breath as he advances toward the door. “Fucking pussy hippy.”

“I’m more than happy to find your replacement. Matter of fact, I already have someone in mind.” I don’t, but Alex is an old asshole who thinks he can push people around. “Should I expect your resignation by close of business?”

When he turns to look at me, his face is a crimson red. Fury and anger radiate off his porky body. “I’ll negotiate,” he spits and slams my door shut.

Within a few moments Zac is in my office. “The attorney general is here.”

“Show Emma in please.” I stand and button my suit jacket. Emma is a force. She’s sharp and she doesn’t mince her words. I have the utmost respect for her. “Emma,” I say as I shake her hand.

“Jeremy, I have a sensitive subject I need to speak with you about.”

This can’t be good. “Of course.”

I gesture for her to sit but she shakes her head. “This won’t take long.”

“How can I help?”

“It’s been brought to my attention that your house burnt down.”

I pause, not sure where she’s going with this. “It has,” I say slowly. “Why is the attorney general interested in my house?”

“Because the house was cleared before proper investigation could be completed.”

“It was.” I hold firm, not giving anything away.

“Why was that?” Emma opens her notepad, takes her fancy pen and waits for me.

“I don’t see why this is a problem. My house was my personal property that was bought years before I became governor.”

She runs her tongue over her teeth as she stares at me. “I need to protect the state, even from you. So, if something has happened that could come back and be detrimental to the party, to you, and to the state, it’s my job to make sure that doesn’t happen.”

“I can assure you, it won’t.”

“That’s not an answer I like, nor one I can work with, Jeremy.”

“It’s the only answer I have. My home has nothing to do with anyone, nor am I asking for anything. Whatever the cause, it’s done.”

“Did you set fire to your house for the insurance?”

“I’m not claiming it on my insurance.”

“Which leads me to my next question.” Great, I should’ve seen that coming. “How are you planning on rebuilding without the insurance money?”

“My personal finances were vetted when I took office. I have nothing to hide. You can see I have the funds to rebuild my house ten times over.”

Her intense eye contact could be unsettling, but considering she’s asking about my house and not Frankie, I’m not worried. “Corruption runs deep.”

“Audit my books. You’ll see everything is above board. I’ll even open up my personal finances, *again*, for you to see that I have nothing to hide.”

“You could’ve hidden it.”

“Am I being investigated?”

“Do you have a problem with that?”

If they scratch the surface, it’ll be an easy find to see I’m in a relationship with a mob boss. Well, I *think* I’m in a relationship with her. I don’t know what we are. “Whatever you need, let me know. I’m more than happy to provide you with documents, accounts, whatever you need.”

Emma writes something then shuts the notebook before I can see. “Thank you, Mr. Miller. I’m sure we’ll speak again soon.”

Yeah, that’s what I’m worried about.



“How was your day, dear?” Frankie is waiting by the door with a drink for me.

I look her up and down and crinkle my forehead. “This is something I never thought I’d see.”

I extend my hand to take the drink. “Are you sure it’s not poisoned?” Her features darken, and a part of me is now worried. She slugs the drink back in one go and smirks. “It wasn’t, and it wasn’t for you.”

“I should have known it was too good to be true.”

“So you want a submissive housewife to be waiting for you when you return from work. Do you want a foot rub too?” her voice is eerily calm.

“If you’re offering.”

“Pffft.” She turns and heads toward the dining room. “*You* should give *me* a foot rub.” And just like a fucking horny teenager, I follow her to the dining room. “I did wait for you so we can eat dinner together.” She looks toward the kitchen. “Mya, we’re ready.” I sit at the table and loosen my tie. “Are you okay?”

“I’m fine.”

“Hmmm.” Frankie stares at me. “What’s happening?”

“Work, that’s it.”

“Who do I need to kill?” She moves to stand, and I know she’s deadly serious.

“God, Frankie. No one. Don’t worry about it.”

“Then whose palms do I need to grease?”

“What are we talking about?” Frankie’s brother asks as he pulls a chair out and looks over his shoulder. “Elena, dinner.” He waits until she’s seated, then pushes her chair in. “Who’s on the take?”

“No one,” I say as I pinch the bridge of my nose.

Elena meekly sits at the table, her long hair falling like a barrier around her face. “He won’t let me kill anyone either.”

I release a huff as I stare up at the corner of the ceiling. In what ultimate universe have I fallen into? Talking about killing people and paying them off is not a normal conversation. “No one needs to die, and no one needs to be paid off.”

“Trust me, there’s plenty of people who *need* to be killed,” Frankie says. “I’ll get through the list.”

“I’m not hearing this.”

“Why, are you deaf?” Rome asks and smirks. “She said that...”

“I get it,” I say as I lift my hand to stop.

“The politician has virgin ears,” Frankie taunts.

Elena giggles and when we give her our attention, her cheeks redden, her eyes widen and she lowers her head. “Sorry,” Elena whispers.

“She has a sense of humor,” Frankie says. “Good to know.” Elena looks up from beneath her lashes at Frankie and allows a tiny smile to tug at her lips before she lowers her head again.

I’d love to know why she’s so meek, and exactly who she is.

Mya enters the dining room with two big platters of food. “Slow cooked pork shoulder with braised beans. And red pesto gnocchi.” She places them closest to Frankie and exits before returning with a massive glass bowl. “Insalata.”

The salad alone looks amazing, but that slow cooked pork...I could get used to this. Frankie helps herself first and then pushes the platters and bowl toward Elena. Her frightened gaze darts around the table as she waits. "Eat, Elena," Frankie says.

"But." Elena gulps and slumps her shoulders. "I'm last to get food."

"In this household the women are served first," Rome says.

Elena is clearly confused by the dynamics. "But, you're the don, you take food first, then the men, all of them, then I get what's left."

Her statement is wrong on so many levels. It churns my stomach to know this is how she's been raised. To be nothing more than wasted space. Who the hell are her parents? "In this household, the women are served first," Frankie reiterates her brother's words with finality.

Elena gulps and darts her eyes around the table once more before reaching for the pork. "Thank you." She places a small amount of her plate and looks to Frankie for approval.

"For God's sake," Frankie grumbles. She pushes her chair back, heads over to where Elena is sitting and scoops a heaping amount of food on her plate, before adding some salad and gnocchi. By the time Frankie is done, Elena's plate is full. "You need to eat."

Elena's enlarged eyes nearly pop out of her head. "Are you sure, Don DeLuca?"

"It's Frankie, and yes, I'm sure." Frankie sits once again and begins to eat while her brother and I help ourselves to the food.

"Thank you." Elena reaches for her fork and begins to eat.

Mya enters the dining room and pours us each a wine, but Rome takes Elena's glass. "No alcohol for Elena, Mya. Please bring her a soda or a water."

"Of course, sir. I'm sorry, I wasn't thinking." She smiles to Elena who responds in kind.

Frankie's brother is quite protective of Elena. I wonder why? The baby obviously isn't his, so why would he be sheltering her?

"Your father is north of our border. How did you get here?" Frankie asks.

Elena sinks into her seat. She really doesn't want to talk about it. "I hitchhiked."

"You did what?" Rome asks. "Do you have any idea how dangerous that is? Especially because of who you are, not to mention." He pointedly looks at her stomach.

"I had to get out of there. If not, I'm not sure what would've happened."

I stop eating, feeling sick to my core. "Why?" I stupidly ask.

Elena glances around the table before lowering her fork and placing both her hands in her lap. "He had a doctor's appointment set for me."

"Who did?" Rome asks.

She looks at Rome, her eyes full of tears. "My father," she says through a choke. "He told me that because I wasn't pure he'd..."

Bile rises to the back of my throat.

"What?" Frankie asks. "He'd what?" Frankie's jaw is tight, her nostrils are flaring as she's staring at Elena.

She protectively places her hand over her bump. "He said he'd fix this, then I'd be stitched up so I could be pure for my husband."

"You're married?" I ask, completely confused.

"No, but he had set a date with someone. I don't know who. Because I'm just a girl, I was a pawn in his plans."

"Motherfucker," Rome grumbles.

"It was important to my new husband that I bleed on our wedding night."

“What a disgusting tradition,” I say.

“It’s the old way,” Frankie says. “Made men like to take young brides who are pure.”

Out of that sentence I screw my mouth at the word young. “How young are we talking?”

“My father was trying to marry me off at thirteen, but no one would take me then.”

“And how old are you now?” I ask.

“I’m nearly eighteen.” There’s a knowing look that passes between Frankie and her brother, while I stare at them, horrified. “I don’t feel well, may I please be excused?” Elena asks and looks to Frankie. Elena pushes her chair out and Rome stands to his feet to help her.

“Mya,” Frankie calls when Elena disappears to her room.

Mya emerges and stands by the dining table. “Yes, ma’am?”

“Elena isn’t feeling well. Make her a sandwich and take it to her room.”

“Of course.” Mya nods and backs out of the dining room.

Frankie returns to her food like nothing has happened, while Rome slowly picks at his food. “I have to ask,” I start.

“What?” Frankie says as she looks up from her food, takes the glass of wine and sips on it.

“Is this normal for your...” I stop and try to choose the right words. *Fuck it*. I’m in it now. “For mafia families?”

“It can be,” Rome says. I’m surprised by his answer. “Which is one of the reasons I got out.”

Wait, he got out? But he’s back now. “Why would you come back?”

“Because my sister needs me.” He looks to Frankie and gives her an appreciative nod. “And it’s where I belong.”

I’m confused as fuck. “And treating women like that is normal?”

“Someone higher up, like a boss or an underboss would take a young virgin bride. Usually, it’s to align two families to make them even more powerful,” Frankie answers candidly.

“And this is completely normal?”

“It used to be the way it happened. But traditions change as time evolves.”

“My sister isn’t so much about stupid traditions. Like virgins and blood on the sheets.”

I lean my elbows on the table and cradle my head in my hands. “Too much for you?” Frankie asks with a chuckle. “This isn’t for the light-hearted. At any time we could be raided, I could be gun downed, anything can happen.”

“Why the hell would you want to stay in such a volatile position? You could easily give it up. Close it all down and move away from this. I’m sure you have the money to fall off the radar.”

“We have more money than the Catholic church, and they have a lot.” Frankie’s snicker confirms Rome’s statement.

“Then, why do you stay?”

“Because I’m good at it.”

Yeah, she is. I might not agree with everything Frankie does, but she’s good at keeping order and balance.”

“But...”

“There is no but to this,” Frankie says.

“What if...”

“Then I die,” she answers my unfinished question. “I know my time on this earth is limited, so I may as well make the best of it.”

I hate how blasé she is about her own life. There’s a tightening in my chest and a heaviness in my stomach at the thought of losing her. I push my plate to the side and stand. “I’m done,” I say as I grab my briefcase, suit jacket and head upstairs to the bedroom.

I strip and make my way into the bathroom to take a shower. Once under the stream. I close my eyes and relax into the warmth of the water. Frankie's hands run up and down my back. "Why did you leave?"

"Because death, to you, is nothing."

"We all die, Miller."

I turn and take her into my arms. "But you don't have to encourage it. Or seek it out."

"I'm not doing either of those. I'm simply living the life I was born into." Her curly, dark hair is being weighted under the pressure of the water. "Besides, it feels good to be bad." She reaches up and places a kiss on my lips. "You can't deny it, Miller. Since I've been fucking you, you're having way more fun."

"You've been fucking me?" I ask. Suddenly my mood is lifting.

"Yeah, do you honestly think a man like you could land a woman like me if I didn't want it?"

I slide my hand down to her ass and spank it. "I'm way out of your league, DeLuca." I grip her wrists and tighten my hands around them, immobilizing them. Instantly, Frankie's eyes darken as her lids droop to half closed. "Such a slut for my cock."

A smirk tugs at her lips. "It's only because you can go for more than two minutes. What was it last time? Three minutes?"

"You're begging to be spanked."

"You have no idea."

"If you want to be slapped..."

Her big brown eyes open and she says in a gruff voice, "Make me hurt."

Those words are a lightning bolt to my cock, making me hard and desperate for her pussy. I push her legs open, and

take both wrists in my hand. “If it gets to be too much, you just need to say gun.”

“Gun?” Frankie’s eyes light up. “Nothing you do will be too much.”

I insert a finger into her pussy and she automatically relaxes and sighs. I finger fuck her long enough to coax a beautiful moan from her. But that’s short-lived because I remove my hand and flick her clit, *hard*. She takes a sharp breath then releases it slowly. I should be careful, more loving, but Frankie doesn’t want loving. And neither do I.

I slap her pussy with so much force her arms and legs tense so she doesn’t hop backward. I lean down and take her nipple into my mouth, swirling my tongue and sucking on the tip. Frankie’s head rolls back as she enjoys the moment of calm. I pull my hand back and slap her pussy while I simultaneously move my head to bite on her tit. Her cry makes me rock hard. “More,” she blatantly begs.

My girl wants more; she’s going to get it. I bite harder until I have a metallic taste in my mouth and know I’ve drawn blood. I bite on her tits, causing each and every bite to draw blood. Fuck, the fact she loves pain is an absolute aphrodisiac for me. Simply watching her get off is enough to cause my cock to stiffen.

I spy a brush on her vanity and a thought passes over me. I release her hands and straighten. A small mewl of despair passes over Frankie’s lips. “Be a good girl, and stay here,” I say.

“Maybe I will, maybe I won’t,” she taunts with a smirk. But when she looks down and sees the bloody bite marks, she adds, “On second thought, I think I will.” She lifts her hands to trace the marks, and catches some of her blood before the water washes it away. She pops her finger in her mouth while keeping her gaze glued on mine.

Fuck me.

She’s so fucking sexy and self-aware. I love that about Frankie. Her confidence is alluring and makes my pulse

quicken. "Turn around." She does and I kick her legs out. "Brace yourself against the wall."

"Like this?" She leans against the wall, her butt sticking out, her tits jiggle as they hang. The water is relentless on us.

"Exactly like that." I take the hairbrush off the vanity cabinet. It's a weird one with wide spiky bristles. Frankie turns to look at what I'm about to do, so I spank her. "Turn around. Face the wall." With a devious glint in her eyes, she turns. "Good girl." I lower my hand and run it over her ass cheek. She pushes back, hoping for more. I spank her with the back of the brush, causing her to gasp. "Don't be a bad girl, Frankie. Because if you are, you won't get this." I turn the brush and spank her with the bristles.

"Oh fuck," she groans. She leans further onto the wall, adjusting her posture for better support.

I swing the brush again and spank the top of her thighs, then spin the brush and paddle her untouched ass cheek. Her rosy backside is beautiful. "This looks good enough to eat." I smooth my hand over her crimson skin, bend and bite her ass so hard I draw blood. "Does it hurt?" I ask when I straighten.

"It hurts so much." I slip two fingers into her pussy and she clamps onto them. She's so wet, and horny.

I remove my fingers, and spank her ass cheeks numerous more times while turning the hair brush so she's getting the smooth side, and the bristly side. I stop and caress her blistering skin, giving Frankie a moment of reprieve. "Your submission is frankly the most beautiful thing I've ever seen." I spank her with my hand causing Frankie to release a cry.

I step in behind her and bury myself in her wet pussy. She instantly accepts me and pushes back. With the hair brush, I run it up and down along her back. The bristles redden and mark her skin. My hips pound into Frankie while I continue to scrape the brush on her back. She jerks forward and begins to tremble. Her orgasm is fierce, yet silent. I drop the brush, grip her hips and fuck her until my own orgasm tears through my body. I pull out and swing Frankie around.

Her quivering body falls into my arms. Frankie's features are soft and calm. "Thank you," I whisper as I hold her under the water.

"For what?" she asks with a croaky voice.

"For trusting me with your body." I turn the water off and grab a towel to dry Frankie. Although she's still shaking, I make quick work of drying her body and towel drying her hair before I lead her over to the bed.

She sits on the edge, and allows me to lay her down and the slide in behind her. "You've so screwed my hair, you know that, right?"

And just like that, she's back to her normal self.

"Shut up and go to sleep because in the morning, you're fucking me with your mouth." I spoon into Frankie, tightening my arms protectively around her.

"If you're a good boy, maybe."

Yep, Frankie DeLuca, ruthless mob boss is back.

I can't help but smile because something feels so right about doing the wrong thing. Frankie could kill me without a second thought, and it makes me feel alive.

I'm in so much trouble.

CHAPTER 26

FRANKIE

My eyes open and I can feel Miller screwing me. “What are you doing?” I say as I look over my shoulder at him. My leg is up over his hips, and he’s pumping into me.

“I woke up hard.”

“And how do you know I wanted to be fucked?”

“Because you were wet.”

“And you knew I was wet, how?”

“You were wet while I finger fucked you.”

“Why were your fingers inside me?”

“Because I woke up hard,” he repeats as he keeps pumping into me.

“So, this is about you, is it?”

“Shut up and let me finish.”

He pinches my nipples between his fingers and a moan tears through me. “Didn’t you say you wanted me to suck you this morning?”

Miller stops with his cock still inside me. “I won’t stop you.”

I push my butt toward him. “Nor will I. But you’d better make me come.”

He continues fucking me, his balls hitting up against my ass while he pinches and rolls my nipple between his fingers. I

snake my hand down between my legs and rub at my sensitive clit, bringing myself to the edge. Miller grunts and groans, then stops. "Thanks." He kisses my shoulder and pulls out of me, leaving me wet and on the edge.

"Hey, get back here and finish me off." I turn to see him pushing off the bed.

He winks as he saunters toward the bathroom. "Now we're even."

"You bastard!" I call playfully. "Don't worry, I'll finish myself off."

He's back in the room and on the bed within seconds. Miller pins my hands above my head while straddling my hips. "Touch yourself and no more of this." He lifts his hand and slaps my nipples. "Got it?"

"You won't know what I do when you're not here," I tease.

He leans down and seals his mouth over mine. Our deepened kiss becomes frantic, *desperate*. Miller draws his teeth across my lower lip and bites with so much pressure I'm sure he'll draw blood. *Yes*.

He pulls back and jumps off the bed. "Be a good girl, and don't touch yourself." He leaves me on the bed, eager and wanting. And because he's fucking with my head, I won't make myself come because I *want* the hurt. That delicious pain he can bring. I close my eyes and tighten my thighs, desperate for the relief.

For a split second I consider finishing off what he started, he won't know. But I will, and I hate how dependent on him I've grown.

The shower starts and I turn to look at the bathroom door.

Fuck.

I'm screwed.



“Where’s Elena?” I ask Mya when I enter the kitchen for my morning coffee.

“She returned to her room after she had breakfast.”

“Has she been eating?”

Mya nods. “I make sure she’s having enough,” she adds.

“Make my coffee and take it to the office, please,” I say on the way out of the kitchen and down to Elena’s room. I knock, then open the closed door and find her sitting on the bed, cross-legged, looking out at the gardens.

“Don DeLuca,” she says and stands as fast as she can.

“Frankie,” I correct, again.

“How can I help you?” She wrings her hands together nervously.

“Come to my office.”

“Now?”

“Yes.” I turn to leave and hear her light footsteps following me. When we arrive in my office, Rome is already sitting at his laptop and my coffee is waiting for me. “Sit.” I pointedly look to the chair opposite mine. I make my way around my desk and pick my coffee up. “Have you had a doctor’s appointment?”

She protectively places her hand over her stomach. “No, ma’am.”

“None?” She lowers her head and slightly shakes it. I run my tongue over my teeth as I consider what I need to do moving forward. Rome is watching me carefully as I think. “What about clothes, personal belongings? Anything?”

“I brought a bag of clothes, and they’re where I was living.”

“Which is where?” She nips her bottom lip between her teeth and refuses to meet my eyes. Rome clenches his hands into fists as he carefully watches Elena. “On the streets.” Elena nods her confirmation. “Do you want to go and get them?”

“I don’t have much. My friend can have them but, I haven’t seen her for a while.”

“You have a friend on the streets?” This could potentially become a problem for me. Although, her friend doesn’t know I have Elena.

“I couldn’t find her for about a week before...” her voice trails off. She lifts her head to glance at both my brother and myself. “I’m sorry.”

“What are you sorry for?” Rome asks. I slowly look over to him and shake my head. He has a soft spot for the girl, and that has the possibility of being even more dangerous.

“I’ve caused you too much trouble. I should leave.”

“You’ll do no such thing,” Rome says with edge.

The girl looks at him and he offers a small smile.

Seriously, Rome?

“Do you want to collect your clothes?” I ask, snapping them out of giving each other googly eyes.

“My friend can have them if she ever returns. I hope she’s okay.”

I really don’t give a shit about her friend. “I’ll arrange for one of the men to take you to the store to buy more clothes. You’ll soon outgrow the ones you bought when you first arrived. I’ll also have the doctor come to the house and –” I wave my hand over her stomach. “You also need to make sure you’re okay.”

“I have no money.”

“Don’t worry about that,” Rome says.

For fuck's sake, he's gotta stop getting hard over this girl. "That's all, Elena, you can leave."

Quietly she stands and heads toward the door, but she stops and swings around to me. "I know you owe me nothing, but I owe you my life. Thank you."

I don't reply, instead I lift my mug and sip on my coffee. Elena silently leaves, closing the door behind her. "You," I say and point at Rome once she's gone. "You can't tap that."

"What?" he says in a higher pitch. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"You're getting a fucking hard-on for the girl. She's a liability."

"Fuck off, Frank," he says as he stands and paces back and forth in front of our desks. "It's not like that."

"She's not even eighteen and you're twenty-four, that's six years in case you can't count."

"It's not like that," he says as he rakes his hand through his hair.

"What's it like then?"

"What does it matter how old she is? How old is the politician? He's gotta be in his thirties, and you're twenty-six." He stops pacing and squares up to me.

"What I'm hearing is that you *do* like the girl."

There's a long moment of an awkward silence between us. Rome drops his gaze and comes to lean on my desk. I sit back in my seat and wait for his reply. "I don't know what it is, Frank. But I feel like I have to protect her from everyone."

"Is it because she's pregnant?"

"I don't know," he earnestly replies. "I can't honestly tell you what it is. The moment I saw her, I felt my entire body change. I want..."

"What do you want?"

Rome runs his hand over his chiseled chin and intakes a sharp breath. "I want her."

"Want as in to fuck, or want as in to fuck on a permanent basis?" Please let it be the first. Rome's awkward silence screams the answer. "I see." *Fuck*. "This might be a problem."

"I know."

"Are you claiming her?"

"All I know is I don't want her hurt, at all."

I tap Rome's thigh several times. "You have my word. She won't be hurt."

"I want to take her to the store."

"No fucking chance you're going on your own with her. Although I've given you my word I won't hurt her, that's not to say someone else won't."

"I know." Rome gulps as he stares at me. "I want a full team assigned to her too."

Fuck, he's got it bad. "A full team?"

"Wherever she goes, I want men with her."

"Jesus, Rome."

"I've asked you for nothing, Frankie."

"The fucking guilt trip doesn't work with me. But she can have three men."

"Five. Two with her all the time when she leaves the house, and three to hang back and be back-up."

"She's better protected than the fucking president." Rome smirks. "Or me."

"You know how to fight, and you wouldn't hesitate in pulling the trigger. I don't think Elena has ever been in that position in her life."

I snicker and shake my head. "You have no idea what a woman would do if we had to. Your girl included."

"She's too soft for violence."

“She’s going to be a mother soon, and I can tell you already that she’d lay her life down for that child.”

“I like how she always puts her hand on her stomach protectively.” He’s noticed. “And I want to protect her.”

“You need to find out how she got pregnant. I know her father killed that man who knocked her up, but I don’t want anyone showing up and thinking they have a claim on her kid. I need to know what – if anything – is coming.”

The door opens just as Rome stands. G furrows his brows and tilts his head to the side. “Did I miss something?”

“Rome has a hard-on for the girl.”

“Really?” Rome grumbles.

“He does?” G asks.

“Five men for the girl.”

“Five?” G asks. “Who the hell is she? Queen of the fucking East?”

I laugh and look to G. “Rome wants a team of five.”

G looks to Rome and shakes his head. “She better have a golden fucking pussy for five of my men.”

“Hey,” Rome says with irritation.

I laugh and open my laptop. “If you two want to take it outside, then go ahead.”

G grumbles as he walks out of my office, “Five fucking men. What the fuck is going on here?”

I look to Rome who’s now sitting at his desk. “All I can say is she’d better be worth it. Because if she screws us over, she’ll be dead, and you’ll be hurt.”

“I’ve never felt like this before, Frank. It hit me like nothing I’ve ever experienced. I just know she’s important to me.”

I stick my finger in my mouth and pretend to vomit. “Did I just eat a pound of sugar or are you a fucking marshmallow?”

“Go fuck yourself, Frank,” Rome replies with a slight smile.

As I open up the figures from the clubs, my mind can’t let go of the fact she’s having a baby of another man. “What about the kid?”

“What about it?”

“It’s obviously not yours.”

“I don’t care,” he immediately replies.

“If something happens to me, Rome, you and G take over. A bastard child doesn’t show strength.”

“I don’t care how it looks. And, nothing is going to happen to you, Frank. You’re the toughest bitch I know.” I chuckle. “You’re like a damn cockroach, you just won’t die.”

“I’m fine with you calling me a bitch, but a cockroach?” My brows rise as I stare at Rome, waiting for a fucking apology. “I didn’t realize you wanted me dead, *brother*.”

He throws his head back and laughs. “Not on my watch. Besides, I wouldn’t be any good at what you do.”

“Damn straight you wouldn’t.”

Rome smirks, and I flick him the evil eye before smiling myself and returning my attention to the figures from the clubs.

CHAPTER 27

FRANKIE

“Are you certain?” I ask as we travel toward one of my warehouses.

“Yeah,” G replies and sighs.

“How?”

Dario effortlessly moves through the city streets under the cover of a dark sky. “I double-checked everything, I wasn’t going to bring you this if it wasn’t right.”

“He’s an earner, G. Solid high-seven figures a year for the family.”

“Which is why I checked everything.”

“Fuck,” I say and close my eyes. “I’m going to miss out on a lot of money because of what he did.”

“It’s that or the alternative.” I open my eyes and turn my head toward G. “It has to happen.”

With a tight jaw I look out the window. There’s a heaviness in the pit of my stomach while my arms are tense with anger. There’s a part of me trying to justify his actions. Maybe, I’m reluctant because the money is so good.

“Frank,” G says snapping me out of my heavy thoughts. I notice we’ve arrived at the warehouse, and I take a few seconds to gather myself before sliding out of the car. “You good?”

I whip my head to look at G and he gives me an understanding nod.

G holds the door to the warehouse open for me to enter. The boys working the floor do a double take and slow in their work.

One of them approaches us. “Don DeLuca,” he says with a nervous twinge in his voice.

I give him the customary nod before heading up to the office.

G opens the door and we find Primo sitting at his desk, and a brunette bobbing up and down on his lap. Primo sees me and throws the brunette off of him. “Go home, darlin’,” he says. The brunette’s eyes widen and she sucks in a deep breath when she sees me. “Go home,” Primo instructs.

The girl is a hooker, that’s obvious.

“Give her a couple of hundred,” I whisper to G.

He takes out a wad of cash held together by a gold money clip, flicks through a few fifties and hands them to the girl. “Go downstairs, my driver will take you home.”

“O-okay,” the girl nervously replies.

G takes his phone out of his pocket and lifts it to his ear. The girl is scrambling to find her underwear while Primo zips himself up then pours two drinks. He extends his arm to hand one to me.

“I’m not fucking touching that.” I screw up my nose.

The girl is finally out of the office, and G closes the door. “Everything good, Don DeLuca?” Primo asks. He throws the second drink back, and I notice how he’s scanning the warehouse floor. He knows he’s in the shit.

“We have a problem.” I walk over and drag out a chair, sitting opposite the scummy sofa he has up here. “Sit.” I pointedly gesture toward the sofa.

Primo’s shoulders stiffen and he pours himself yet another drink. He looks to me, then to the bottle and grabs it before finally sitting on the sofa. “What’s the problem?” the slight break in his voice tells me he’s shitting himself.

“What business have we never done?” He darts his eyes to G who’s standing to my side, then to his desk. “Primo.”

“Don’t do this,” he says. “I’ve brought you in a lot of money.”

“When did the people smuggling start?”

His jaw tightens and he grips the neck of the bottle so tight that his knuckles whiten. “It’s –”

“When?” I ask, my voice low and eerily in control.

“I –” I lift my hand and with my palm faced up, I wait for G to put the gun in it. Primo eyes the weapon and exhales a shaky breath. I shoot his leg, then rest the gun against my thigh. “Fuck,” he yells. He grabs hold of his leg and tries to apply pressure.

“We can do this the easy way, or the hard way. The choice is yours. But, whichever you pick, you end up dead. The only question you have to answer now is do I kill your wife and three girls as well as you? Before you make that decision, let me tell you what’s going to happen. I’ll send Dario to get your wife, and I’ll have him bring her here. I’ll fuck her while you watch, then I’ll carve her into so many pieces that she can’t be identified. Or, you can tell me the truth now, and the next shot will be to your head. The choice is yours. Do I fuck your wife then take my time carving her up in front of you, or do I shoot you in the head and leave your family alone?”

Primo’s hands are trembling and there’s sweat dripping down his face. Suddenly, the door flies open and one of the men from the floor has his weapon drawn. He quickly assesses the room, then steps backward. “My apologies, Don DeLuca,” he says and leaves.

Primo’s breathing is short and raspy as he clasps his leg. I give him a few seconds and shake my head. “Hard way it is.” I look to G who dials Dario’s number.

“No!” Primo shouts. He lifts his hand and tries to placate me. “Leave my family alone, please.” I give G a knowing look and he hangs up. “I’ve been smuggling women and kids in.”

“For what reason?”

He squeezes his eyes shut then clears his throat. "I've been running a whore house."

"For the women?"

"Yeah, and the kids have been getting me top dollar on the black market." I shoot him in the stomach just because he's pissed me off. "What the fuck?" he gurgles as he holds his stomach.

"Where's the operation being run out of?" G asks.

"Industrial buildings on Eighth and Henry."

"What number?" I ask.

"The fifth and sixth units," he groans while spittle drips out of his mouth. His face is red, and he's gasping for breath. I shoot him again in the stomach. "You said it was going to be quick."

"You're selling kids and using my name to do it." I stand and straighten my shoulders. I press the trigger sending another round into his stomach. "You're done." I turn to leave and hear him begging for me to finish him. "Get rid of him," I say to G. "Take him out on the boat. Make sure he's alive when he goes under."

"You're fucking cruel." G chuckles.

"And give Saul his crew. Saul's a good captain. He'll clean them up." G is already on his phone calling in the crew to clean up. By the time I make it downstairs, Dario has already returned and is waiting for me. "Take me home, then come back and help G with the mess."

Dario closes the door to the car, and jogs around to the driver's seat. Primo did the one thing I fucking hate, and because of that, his life is done. But I'll leave his family alone. They had nothing to do with it and probably didn't even know about it.

Fucking pig. He deserves a hell of a lot worse than drowning.



I can't shake this feeling of repulsion. Primo has tainted by name. Not like it's not already smeared, but human trafficking is my hard limit. Dad and I agreed when I came on as his underboss that we would never cross that line.

Kiddy porn, and human trafficking are our limits.

And now Primo has been running his own operation of the things we stand against.

"You okay, boss?" Dario asks as we head toward home.

"Fine," I snap with finality.

The rest of the drive goes by in complete silence. The moment I'm home, I head over to the liquor cabinet and grab a bottle of scotch and make my way toward my office. Elena is at the dining table nibbling on a midnight snack. She sees me and her eyes widen with fear. "Sorry," she murmurs and stands to her feet.

"Stay." I gesture with a simple hand movement. Elena diverts her gaze to the plate in front of her. "Hungry?" I take a swig from the bottle. Her body tenses with her shoulders curving forward. "Are you doing okay?"

"Yes, ma'am- ah, Frankie," she quickly corrects. "You've been very kind to me. Thank you."

I've barely spoken five words to the girl. "Do you need anything?" She shakes her head. "If you do, let me or Rome know. We'll see to it that you'll have it."

"Thank you," she replies in a frightened voice.

I leave her to finish her snack and head toward my office. I flick on the light, and walk over to my desk, where I plonk down on the seat and take the cap off the scotch. I take another long swig from it then let my head loll back against the chair.

“I could do with some help, Dad.” I sit up to take another long drink before smacking the bottle on the desk. The door opens, and Miller walks in. “What?”

His eyes go directly to the bottle, then back to me. “Are you okay?”

I snatch the bottle and bring it to my lips. “Fucking perfect,” I say with heavy sarcasm then take another drink.

“Put the bottle down, Frankie.”

I lower it and tilt my head to the side. “What the fuck did you say to me?” I lift the bottle and bring it to my lips, consuming more in this gulp.

He advances toward my desk, and stretches out his arm to wait for the bottle. “Give it to me.”

“Do you have any idea what I could do to you?”

“Give me the bottle, Frankie.” He jolts his hand closer.

“I could smash this bottle and glass you to death. Do you want that?”

Miller is unrelenting. He’s refusing to back away. He slowly shrugs his shoulders. “Then do it.” He drops his hand and straightens to his full height. “You don’t intimidate me.” I jump to my feet and square off with him.

I snort with irritation. “Sure, I don’t.”

Miller refuses to let this go. “Hand me the damn bottle.”

“Why?” I hold the bottle by the neck, ready to smash it over his head if he tries to take it.

“Because that’s not going to solve your problems. If anything, it’ll make it worse.”

We’re so close that I can feel his body warmth roll over me. Miller is tall, solidly built, and could easily overpower me. But I have ruthlessness on my side, and I could easily kill him. “Why are you doing this?”

“Because your mind is fucked at the moment, and you might do something that you’ll regret.”

I turn down my lips and shake my head. "I've never regretted a single action."

He reaches for the bottle, and takes it from me. "But you might regret this."

I snatch the bottle out of his hands, turn and throw it against the wall. "You have no fucking idea what goes on in my head," I scream at him. He just stands there, taking my anger. I slap his face so hard it stings my hand. "Fight back!" I slap him again, and my hand is hot from blistering pain. "Fight me, you fucking pussy." Deep crinkles form over his forehead. "Fucking hit me, hit me!" I need this, I need the pain. The fucker steps forward and envelops me in a hug. "No! No! Fuck you." I push on him to release me, but his arms tighten around my body, clamping me to him. "I fucking hate you."

"No, you don't," he whispers and kisses the top of my head.

Something passes over me. I want to fucking hurt Miller so much. But I also know that if I do hurt him, I'll hate myself for it too. Tears fill my eyes and I shake my head to dislodge this feeling of sorrow. I'm a fucking boss, and bosses don't cry. "Let me go," I say through clenched teeth. Miller tightens his hold even more. But I fight it. "I hate you."

He leans down and whispers, "Enough." His tone is harsh and demanding. My shoulders soften and I release a caught breath. "Now, be a good girl and get your ass upstairs and in the shower."

A veil of calm fights with my hectic mind. "No," I push, though my resolve is quickly slipping.

He smacks my ass and a surge of arousal swallows my despair. "Now, be that good girl I know you can be." Miller steps back and folds his arms in front of his chest. His mere posture has changed, become uncompromising. "Shower, now."

I swallow the lump in my throat and look to the shattered and scattered bottle pieces. I pull my shoulders back and waltz

past him. "I'm doing this for me, not for you," I say with attitude.

He slaps my ass so hard it causes me to hop forward. "Now."

My mouth dries as an adrenaline rush takes over my body. But I hold it together as I walk slowly up to my room, though, my mind is telling me to run. Run like my life depends on it. I put my hair up in a messy bun before stripping and stepping into the shower. I keep looking at the door, hoping to see Miller enter, but he doesn't.

I quickly shower and when I'm out I wrap a towel around my body. When I re-enter the bedroom, Miller is standing by the bed. Jesus, my heart jumps when I see everything on the bed, and Miller with his dress shirt rolled up to his elbows, and his tie hung perfectly over the back of the chair. "Turn around," he instructs. A part of me wants to fight him, but another just wants him to take control and let my mind quieten.

I turn and stand incredibly still. He approaches me and grabs the end of the towel, allowing it to fall to the ground.

"This..." He skims his hand gently over my back and ass cheeks. "Is marked so beautifully. But it needs more, doesn't it?" My eyes are closed as I relax into his gentle touch. He smacks my ass and I groan with appreciation. "I asked a question."

"Yes, I need more marks."

"Good girl." God, I fucking love when he says I'm a good girl, regardless of how damn condescending it is. He grabs my neck with force and bends me over. "Stay like this until I tell you to get up."

Moisture is pooling between my legs. I saw the toys on the bed, but I have no idea what he's going to do with them or which he's going to use first. I'm trying to listen but there's no sound. I feel the tip of something pushing into my asshole.

"What do you say if anything becomes too much?"

"Gun," I say on a sigh.

His hand cups my butt cheek and he pushes further into my ass. "This butt plug looks perfect as your ass swallows it. Take a deep breath." I do and he pushes it further in. "Good." He twists it around and I moan at the feeling. "So beautiful." He spanks me and I groan with pleasure. "Now, get on the bed."

I straighten and feel the pleasure of the butt plug, and as I move, my body is tingling with desire. I climb onto the bed and wait for his instructions. I watch as he approaches me with his hands behind his back. "Close your eyes." I do, and feel the coolness of a fabric slide over my head. He places a soft kiss to my cheek. "Lay down on your back, arms up and legs open."

"I-" I stop talking, this has to be the first time in my life that I'm stumped for words.

Blindfolded, I feel nothing else. "What is it?"

I take several heartbeats to try to grasp the chaos of my mind. "I've had a bad day so please, make me hurt."

Although I'm blinded, I feel his warm breath on my cheek. I know he's close. He presses yet another kiss onto my blazing skin. "I'm going to hurt you so much, you'll be flying by the time I'm finished."

My black heart beats ferociously. "I want this."

There's a swoosh before his hand makes contact with my nipple. "Good, now shut the fuck up and put your arms over your head and open your legs."

Desire bubbles deep in my stomach. I lift my arms and feel the fabric as he ties them to the bed. There's a delicious bite at my wrists, and I try to move, but he's secured me in place. There's a dip in the bed, and he grabs my ankle, locking me to the bed.

The lump in my throat is quickly dissolving as excitement overtakes.

It feels like hours have passed, but I know it's only been minutes. Miller isn't speaking, but I know he's moving around the bed, checking the restraints.

There's an excitement pounding in my ears as I wait for him to bring the pain.

He inserts something into me and moves it around. "You're such a beautiful, wet whore." He removes his fingers, and suddenly I find them tracing my lips. "Taste." I dart my tongue out and lick myself from his fingers. But he removes them, and I mewl with want. His lips are on mine, kissing me with abandon. "You taste like pure fucking evil." He flicks my nipples.

"More," I whisper.

"Shut up, whore."

Suddenly, there's a zap on my pussy. "What the fuck!"

There's another zap on my pussy lips, then a quick spank in the same place. He gives me a moment to settle my breath before hitting me again with the damn zapper thing. Whatever the fuck that thing is, it's fucking magic. "God, you're dripping fucking wet." He runs his hand over my pussy and pushes in a finger. "Clench." I tighten my muscles and he hits me again with the zapper. "Jesus. You're such a slut." My heart rate increases with every degrading name he calls me.

"Please," I beg.

"What does this little cunt need?" He fucking zaps me while his fingers are inside my pussy.

"I need more," I breathlessly beg. "Please."

There's a deep chuckle, and I can imagine the smug look on his face. "So damn greedy."

"I am," I honestly reply.

But he stops. He removes his fingers, and even the zapping stops. No, no, I want more. I take several deep breaths while I listen to Miller moving around the bed. So, I wait. And wait. *And fucking wait.* Until a sharp and prickling wheel is dragged up my body, from my pussy lips, over my stomach then up to my tits. "Amazing," he says while using the spiky thing. His wet mouth is over my nipple and he sucks and tugs on it. The

spiky thing is running over my other tit. “Just amazing.” The sharp sting of a slap forces a desperate moan rip through me.

Suddenly, my body completely relaxes into the mattress. Not one ounce of stress is present in my mind. “Hmmm.” There’s a mixture of the zaps and spiky thing all over my body. My tits, my pussy, my stomach, even my thighs. It feels amazing and so damn freeing. “Yes,” I groan as my mind whitens with pure pleasure.

“That’s it, let go of everything. Good girl, give it to me,” his voice is throaty, yet calming. The pain is everywhere. The zaps are my favorites but the spiky thing just adds another level of intensity. “Your clit is so fucking swollen.” His mouth is on me, flicking, licking, sucking on my clit. With the zappy thing on my nipple, his mouth on my clit, and just the raw sensation of not being able to see or control anything sends me into a white space. Somewhere between earth and bliss. “Perfection,” his voice is muffled and almost like it’s beyond the veil.

Suddenly, I find my body being moved. The blindfold is being removed, and Miller is dragging me into his body. “What?”

He wipes at my face, and I’m surprised to see wetness. “Just let it go,” he says as he cradles me close to his body.

With my head on his chest, I can hear the strong rhythmic beating of his heart. “Am I crying?” Miller kisses the top of my head and runs his hand gently over my body. “What happened?” I’m so confused.

“You came so hard you began to cry.” He kisses me again. “How do you feel?”

“Like I need to sleep.”

He chuckles and adjusts the bedding so it covers my body. “Then do it.” The butt plug is still in, but it’s not uncomfortable. Besides, I can’t be bothered taking it out. He lightly spans my ass. “This will need to come out.” It’s like he’s read my mind. “But it can stay in for another hour or two. Sleep now, and I’ll take it out once you wake.”

“I can do it,” I say in a sleepy voice.

“Frankie,” he says and runs his hands over my ass,

“Yeah?”

“Just shut up and let me care for you.”

My eyes close and I feel so light as I drift off to sleep.

CHAPTER 28

JEREMY

Frankie's been asleep in my arms for the last two hours. And I need to wake her to get that butt plug out.

And all I think about is how she's a masochist, and I'm a sadist. And I fucking love hurting her. It makes me hard just thinking about ways to bring her over the edge of pain. There's something so erotic about the way her body responds when I'm hurting her.

I've always loved control in the bedroom, but this is something I didn't think I had in me.

Not to this level.

But I want to take it further.

I draw lazy circles on her back as I think about breath play, knife play, anything that can force Frankie to come as hard as she did tonight. She had no idea her entire body was trembling and she was crying so hard. It was truly the most beautiful sight I've ever seen. Her darkness is beautifully perfect.

"Frankie," I whisper and kiss her forehead. She tightens her arms around me and groans. "I need to remove this." I tap her ass and the plug.

"Okay," she moans and moves so her butt is sticking out.

I kiss her temple. "I'm going to fuck it too," I whisper.

Her eyes spring open and a slow smile tugs at her lips. "You could've led with that." She unwinds from my body, turns and sticks her ass out.

I reach for the lube next to me, and place it beside her ass. Slowly, I wiggle the butt plug out and drop it behind me on the floor. I take the lube and squirt some on my finger, then rim her ass with it. She groans. I squirt some on my hard cock, and spread her cheeks open. "This is for me, not for you. You won't come."

"You can use me."

I rim her ass with my cock and smirk. "It's cute you think you had a choice." I push in and Frankie tenses, then relaxes. The butt plug worked a treat, she's taken all of me and it hasn't hurt her. I give her a few seconds to adjust, and when she wiggles back, I know I'm good to fuck her.

She tucks her hands under her head and allows me to pound into her ass. She's so fucking tight and perfect. My own energy increases as I watch where we're joined together. "Mmm," Frankie breathes heavily.

"You're not going to come, but mine will be dripping out of your ass."

"Yes, please," she says.

I love how horny she is for me. Whatever I want to do to her, she eagerly takes it, letting me use her for my pleasure whenever I want. She's a formidable queen, and I love everything about her.

My heartbeat quickens and my balls draw up as the tension tears through my body. Her ass is taking every single pump of my hips. My body trembles as I offload my cum into her ass. "Jesus," I breathe and kiss her shoulder. She grabs my hand and snakes it between her legs, letting me feel how wet she is. "Such a sneaky girl," I say as I insert a finger into her while using my thumb to rub at her clit. "You can come now but no more for a week."

She grabs my wrist and flicks it away. "That's not fair."

I pump my cock into her once again, then slowly draw back. I bite on her shoulder hard enough to draw blood before pushing off the bed. "Stay there, exactly like that. I want to see your ass full with my cum when I return." I reach down for the

butt plug and walk into the bathroom. I turn the shower faucets on and wash myself and the butt plug.

When I return, Frankie hasn't moved and there's a thin line of my cum running down onto the bed. "I haven't moved," she says proudly.

I climb onto the bed, and spank her ass. "Now you can."

She turns over and looks at me. "What is it about you, Miller?" Frankie shakes her head. "Why do I let you do this to me?"

"Because you're a masochist, and you trust me." She blinks several times before slowly nodding. "Why were you upset earlier?" Now's as a good time as any to ask her. She's pliable and not such a hard-ass.

"I found out something, and it affected me."

"What?"

I reach for her, but she shakes her head. "Don't." Here we go again. Mob queen Frankie DeLuca is back. "One of my captains had his own business."

"Someone who works beneath you?"

"Yes. He had his own business."

"Do you not allow that?"

"Of course I do. As long as they pay their tax, and follow several simple rules, then they can do whatever they want."

"I can't believe I'm going to ask this, but what are the rules."

"Nothing to do with kids, no forced prostitution." I instantly release a relieved breath. "The DeLuca family also doesn't traffic. But everything else is on the table."

"And what did this *captain* do?"

"That shipment of people coming in? That was his but he was using my name. So, I did what I had to do."

"You killed him?"

"No, but he's dead."

“You had him killed?”

“I shot him, in the stomach, then I had him taken out to sea, and dumped.” My stomach churns with unease. “I wanted him to hurt for what he’s done.”

“How do you feel?”

“Killing him meant nothing, but he has a warehouse he uses for his brothel.”

“Where?” I ask.

“Industrial area.”

I push the covers off of me, and stand to my feet. “Give me the address, I’ll take care of it.”

“But, that’ll open you up to scrutiny,” she says.

“Give me the address, Frankie.” Scrutiny is the least of my problems.

“I’ll have my people fix it.”

I stop at the foot of the bed, and rake my hand through my hair. “Give me the fucking address.” Frankie stares at me for a hard moment before finally relinquishing and telling me where this brothel is. I search for my phone and notice the ungodly hour. But I dial the number.

It rings three times before he answers. “Must be important if you’re calling me at two in the morning,” Tyler says.

“I just received a tip and I think you might want to jump on it.”

“Who tipped you off?”

I look to Frankie and give her a wink. “That’s above your pay grade, Lewis.”

“I’m a FBI agent, not much is above my paygrade.”

“Do you want the tip, or do you want me to call it into the local PD?”

“You’re an asshole,” he says between yawns.

“I’m going to text you an address. You’ll find a warehouse filled with women who are forced into prostitution.”

“Whose are they?”

“No idea,” I lie. “But I received a tip that the warehouse has a lot of women.”

“How did they get there?”

“I have no idea. That’s all I have.”

“How did you get the tip?” he’s asking questions that he can cross reference. If I say email, he’ll subpoena my email. If I say phone, he’ll do the same for my phone records.

“I couldn’t sleep, so I went out for a walk. Someone approached me.”

“Bullshit.” He’s figured out that I know what he’s doing.

“Do you want the tip or not?”

“I’ll take care of it.”

I hang up and look to Frankie. “It’s done.”

“You know you’re in a world of trouble, right?”

I simply shrug and toss my phone over toward the chair. “I went for a walk.”

“They’ll trace your phone’s GPS coordinates to my house.”

Yeah, about that. “I know,” I say. I have to figure out what Frankie and I have, because I think the day is fast coming that I’ll need to make a choice.

Either her, or my career. And at this point, I’m not sure which one I’ll choose.

CHAPTER 29

FRANKIE

I wake with a delicious ache coursing through my body. Everything hurts, yet I wouldn't change it for the world. If anything, I want more.

I push the covers back and look over to the side to find the bed empty. After a quick morning routine, I dress and head downstairs.

My brother is at the dining table, sitting beside Elena. Neither have heard me approach, and it's interesting to see they're developing a relationship. Rome is leaning toward her, and Elena's head is lowered as she speaks softly to him.

I clear my throat and Elena's eyes widen when she hears me. "Good morning," she says in a small voice.

"Mya," I call and sit at the head of the table. Mya enters the dining room carrying my morning coffee. "Thank you." Mya offers me a small smile before leaving. "Elena, the doctor will be coming today to make sure you're okay. Do you need anything?"

"No, thank you."

"I'll be taking Elena to the store today," Rome says.

"What time will you be leaving?"

"What time is the doctor coming?"

"He'll be here at ten," I say.

"When the doctor is done, then we'll leave."

I sip on my coffee as I watch them. Rome's jaw tightens and he shakes his head at me. Mya returns to the dining room and places a plate on the table. "Garden frittata, ma'am."

I wave her away with a flick of my hand.

"Where's the politician?" Rome asks.

"You haven't seen him?"

He shakes his head.

"He left early this morning," Elena says in her meek little voice. "I woke because I was hungry and he was dressed and leaving."

"Thank you, Elena," I say as I savor my breakfast. I'm so ravenous I could eat the entire damned frittata.

"I-" Elena lifts her hand and places it to her mouth.

"What is it?" Rome asks.

Elena's posture stoops as she reaches with a shaky hand for her mug. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't say anything."

What has her so worried? "What's on your mind?" I ask with a drop of frustration. Rome slowly turns to look at me. His silent glare is telling me to back off. Jesus, he's so fucking pussy whipped and I doubt he's even fucked her yet. But, she's important to my brother, which means I need to be nicer to her. "What is it, Elena?" I ask with a softer tone.

She lowers her hand and darts her gaze between myself and Rome. "I never said how sorry I was about your father. He was a good man, and I always liked him."

"Thank you," Rome says.

"You should never have come to meetings. That was never your role," I say. She nods and offers me the smallest of smiles. "Thank you." I clear my throat and look to Rome who nods his approval of my *niceness* toward Elena. "Now I just need to find who killed him, and I'll be fine," I grumble to myself.

"I can tell you that," Elena says.

Rome and I both whip our heads to the side to stare at her. “You know?” Rome asks.

Elena nods and nibbles on her lower lip like she’s in trouble. “My father did a lot of business in front of me, because most of the time he forgot I was there. He always said...”

“Who killed my father?” I ask cutting her off.

“Frank,” Rome hisses and narrows his eyes at me. “Calm down.”

A blazing shock of electricity jolts my heart to beat faster. My mouth dries and I feel myself holding my breath as I wait for Elena’s reply. “My father had him killed,” she says.

Five little words are slowly pulsating through my body to my very core. “Your father?” I ask, my voice hard with hate. Elena gulps as her eyes slowly widen. I look to Rome, then back at Elena. I’m left feeling numb. “Are you sure?”

“I was in the room because my father tried to marry me off to the man he was talking to. The man my father hired to kill your father.”

“Frank,” Rome starts but I hold my hand up to him to shut up.

“Go on,” I say.

“The man didn’t want me, but my father insisted I be payment.”

With every word she speaks, I’m hating her father even more.

“Is that how you ended up pregnant?” Rome asks through a clenched jaw.

“No. He didn’t want me.” Elena drops her head. “No one wants me.”

I roll my eyes at her pity party, but I keep my emotions in check. “You’re telling me, your father paid a man to kill my father?” I ask.

“Yes, ma’am,” she says in a small voice. “Also,” she starts but retreats into herself.

“What?” My jaw tightens and I’m controlling every emotion inside me not to jump over the table, grab her shoulders and shake her until she spills every secret she’s heard.

“Your restaurant, Moonlight.” Elena looks up to me, tears brimming her eyes. “That was my father too.”

I flick a look to Rome, then back to Elena. “She has nothing to do with it,” Rome says, defending the girl. I reach for my coffee and lean back in my seat, sipping on it and staring at Elena. “Frankie.” I look to him and he slightly shakes his head, silently begging me not to kill the girl. I stand and jerk my head to the side then make my way to my office. Rome enters only a few seconds after I do. “This is fucked.”

“Yeah,” I say and walk over to pour myself a scotch and down it.

“She has nothing to do with this.”

I pour a second and walk over to my desk, where I lean against it. “You’re right.” I look down at my drink and take a sharp breath.

The door opens and G enters. He stops when he sees I’m holding a scotch this early in the morning. He looks to Rome, then back to me. “What happened?”

“We know who killed Dad,” Rome replies.

“What?” G stands to his full height and lifts his chin. He pulls his shoulders back and stares at me. “Who is it?”

I tilt my head toward the dining room. “Petro.”

G’s entire frame changes. His nostrils flare, his eyes narrow and his breathing elevates. “An eye for an eye.” He looks over his shoulder toward the door.

“No,” I say before Rome says anything and gets himself killed.

“What? We have his kid right here. We need to end her.”

“No,” I repeat. “Judging by the way she talks about her father she hates him.”

“Impossible,” G says.

“She was the one who told us,” Rome adds.

“Nope, this is bullshit. She’s been sent here to fuck you over.” G paces back and forth unconsciously.

“She hasn’t and you know it,” I say. “Look, you’re angry.”

“No, really? You can tell I’m angry?” G spits sarcastically. “I owe my fucking life to your father, Frank.”

“Calm down so we can figure out how to take him down. We have an advantage.”

“Yeah, what is it?” I point toward the dining room. “She’s a liability, not an asset,” G tries to argue.

“Think about it. We have her, and her father has no idea where she is. She told us he’d often do business in front of her. Which means, she’d know a lot of his secrets. Like, maybe, where he is,” I say. “Petro will die by my hand.”

“Not if I get to him first,” G says.

“But the girl, she’s an innocent. You and I both know Dad would never have killed an innocent. Not to mention, she’s carrying a child.”

G’s posture slightly softens, but his jaw remains clenched with anger. “I know,” he finally relinquishes. G stops pacing, sighs, and leans against the door. “What do you want to do, Frank?”

“We need to kill him.”

“Yeah,” Rome agrees. “But Elena is to be spared.” He looks to me for my approval, and I nod once.

“For now, we need to find out what we can about Petro, and hit him where it hurts before we kill him,” I say.

“What do you mean?” G asks.

“I want his operation, and I want him to bleed green before he’s finished.” G scoffs but smirks. “He took my father, and

now, I'll take everything from him." My skin tingles as goosebumps rise.



There's a world of irritation bubbling through me while I sit in the library, drinking my scotch.

Night has fallen and the house is unusually quiet. G's left, Rome is God knows where. Elena is in her room, I think. And Miller has yet to arrive from work.

Here I am, sitting in the dark, seething at the onslaught of information dropped on me today.

I nurse my scotch as I try to form a plan on how I'm going to handle Elena's father.

"Don DeLuca?" Elena's soft and timid voice calls. "Ma'am?"

"What do you need, Elena?" I answer as I flick on the light.

Her shoulders slump forward and she instantly drops her chin when the room lightens. "May I speak with you please?"

I take a breath, and gesture with a flick of my eyes for her to sit. She quietly shuffles forward and sits on the sofa. Her entire posture is rigid and tight. "What can I do for you?"

She clears her throat and rolls her lips together several times. "I know you're going to kill my father," she pauses and waits, but I don't respond. "Um..." Elena clears her throat, again. "Are you going to kill me too because I *am* my father's daughter?"

I don't flinch at her question, though I've already made my mind up that she's not involved. "That depends," I start.

"On?"

“Your loyalty.”

“It doesn’t lie with *him*, I can tell you that.”

“But it doesn’t lay with me either.”

“My loyalty is to my baby.” *Ugh*, children are not my thing.

“I respect that,” I say although kids make me want to throw myself in front of a moving train. “But...”

“I know nearly everything about his operation.”

“And you’ll tell me?” She nods. “Why?”

Elena protectively places her hand over her stomach. “You could’ve killed me when you found out who I was, but instead you allowed me to live here, you’ve bought me clothes, fed me, and made sure I was safe. For that you have my gratitude, *and* my loyalty.”

I slowly lift my glass and sip on my scotch while closely watching Elena. “You need to sleep.”

“You didn’t answer my question on if you’re going to hurt *us*.”

I arch a brow as I tap my finger on the glass. “You’re going to tell me everything you know about your father’s business, and if you screw me over, then you’ll find yourself in the same ditch *with* your father.”

She lowers her chin again and gives me a soft nod. “I understand.”

“You need to sleep,” I repeat.

She doesn’t move to stand, she looks up at me with reddened eyes and lifts her chin with pride. “I hate him, probably more than you do.” Elena stands, pivots and begins to leave. But she stops at the double oak doors and turns. “Please promise me one thing.” I lift my brows, and look to her. “Destroy him, make him hurt.” In this vulnerable moment of hers, she looks like a woman who’d burn the world just to see him on his knees. If I thought for one second that she’d be

strong enough to see the pain I'm going to bring, I'd invite her to watch. But I know she doesn't have that in her.

I feel the corner of my mouth twitch with a smirk. "Pain is my specialty." She acknowledges my words with a tiny smile, straightens and leaves.

I'm going to make Petro Augusta bleed before I squeeze the life out of him, all with a fucking smile on my face.

CHAPTER 30

JEREMY

I look at my phone and crinkle my forehead. “Hey, Tyler,” I say as I answer it.

“Hey, man,” he says, though his tone sounds more formal than normal. “That tip you gave me a few nights ago was good.”

“Yeah?” I ask feigning surprise.

“You didn’t think it would be?”

“I’m glad it worked out. Listen, I’m on the way out the door.”

“How did you say you got the tip again?”

I wet my lips and shake my head. “Couldn’t sleep, and went for a walk.”

“Ah, yeah, that’s right. Hey, where are you staying these days? I heard your house burnt down.”

Shit. “It did.”

“Where are you at now? I’ll come over, we’ll grab some dinner, maybe go out and play some pool.”

“I’m pressed for time so I’ll shoot you over a message with my address.”

“Just give it to me now.”

“I’ll be there in a second, Zac,” I call making it look like Zac’s waiting for me. “Sorry, Tyler, I have to go.” I hang up

and carelessly fling my phone on the desk. I sit back in my chair and pinch the bridge of my nose. “Fuck,” I grumble.

This is all becoming too complicated. My relationship with Frankie is likely known to the FBI, which means, I’ll be investigated. And if that’s the case, then my career is probably over.

Unless I end it with Frankie before either of us are in too deep.

Problem is, I’m not sure I want to.



The mansion has been on edge for the last two days and Frankie isn’t telling me why. She’s been holed up in her office, only emerging for food and sleep. Even sex has been pushed aside.

I loosen my tie as I take the steps up toward her bedroom.

“Mr. Miller,” Mya calls when I’m half way up the stairs.

I look over the banister to see her moving toward the stairs. “Yes, Mya?”

She stops and looks up. “I have your dinner for you.”

“Thank you. I’ll be down soon.”

She offers me a small smile before disappearing from view. I head up to the bedroom, and flick on the light. Frankie is nowhere to be seen, which means she’s either in her office, or out somewhere. I change out of my suit into jeans and a t-shirt before heading back downstairs to try and find Frankie.

I open her office door to find it empty, so I head into the kitchen to grab the plate Mya has for me. “I can bring it out to you once it’s warmed,” Mya offers.

“Thank you.”

“Would you like a drink?”

“I’ll pour myself a scotch.”

“Very well,” she says as I head out of the kitchen.

There’s a heaviness clinging to the air tonight, giving me a feeling of dread and gloom. Something ominous is coming, yet, I’m not entirely sure what it is. It could be an indictment because of my relationship with Frankie, or it could be something far more sinister.

If it’s a choice between either of those, I’d rather the indictment.

I flop into the chair and nurse my scotch while my head constantly spins with dark and intrusive thoughts. “Mr. Miller.” Mya places a plate of food down in front of me.

“You can retire for the evening, Mya. I can look after myself.”

“Oh.” Her lips press into a thin line. “Don DeLuca gave me instructions to make sure you’re looked after.”

I lift my hand to placate her. “You can leave. I’ll inform Frankie that I sent you home.”

Mya’s eyes dart between my food and myself. She worries her lower lip between her teeth before resigning with a nod. “Thank you.” Why the hell is the cook here at this time of the night anyway? She should be home with her family at nearly midnight. “Good night.”

“Drive safe,” I say as I watch Mya leave with her bag hanging off the crook of her elbow.

Once the door is closed, I return my attention to the amber liquid in my glass. I lean my elbow on the table, close my eyes and rub at the tension forming behind my brows.

“Sorry,” a soft voice says.

I open my eyes to see Elena dart into the kitchen. “It’s okay.” She returns holding a glass of water and moves to leave. “You don’t have to go.” I gesture toward one of the other empty seats. “Are you hungry?”

She shakes her head and shuffles toward the chair she usually sits in. “No, but I’m thirsty.” Elena taps the side of the glass with her nail. The silence between us is awkward and uneasy. “I’m not sure where they’ve gone but it probably has something to do with my father.”

Frankie did fill me in with the fact Elena’s father killed Frankie’s. “It probably does.” Elena slumps her shoulders and sinks into the chair. “He was horrible.”

I suspect she’s talking about her father, but, I could be wrong. “Who?”

“My father. My brother would try to protect me, but my father hated me from the moment I was born.” She has a brother? Why hasn’t she reached out to him? Why is she here with Frankie, her father’s enemy?

“Why?”

“Because I’m female and not another male heir. He wanted only boys. It’s why he killed my mother.”

What the fuck? “Your father killed your mother?” I ask, incredulous.

She nods as she stares at her glass of water. “He killed her after I was born.” She lifts her eyes. “He made it no secret that she *deserved* to die because of my gender. He said he wanted to kill me too, but then decided I might be useful when I hit a certain age.”

“Useful?” This is a life I know very little about. The whole mafia lifestyle is foreign to me.

“He decided to keep me so he could marry me off and form a strong alliance.” She purses her lips together. “But no one wanted me.” Elena’s chin quivers as she lifts her head to look at me. “Probably because I’m ugly.”

She’s anything but ugly. Although, it feels creepy me even thinking that, especially considering she’s fifteen years my junior. “You’re not,” I say in an attempt to give her some confidence.

“He’s not a nice man.”

“I wouldn’t think nice would be an option in this lifestyle.”

“Don DeLuca is... kind.” I can’t help but chuckle when Elena uses an alternate adjective. “Her father was always nice. I’ve met a lot of heads of families, and most have shown me kindness. Some...” Elena intakes a shaky breath. “Not so much.”

“You could always go to the police,” I say.

It’s her turn to chuckle. “If I wanted to end up dead, sure, that’s exactly what I could do. But, corruption travels deep in the veins of those who are supposed to protect us. Although I hated my life, I still want the chance to see if it gets better.” How heartbreakingly sad. “Since I left my father, my life is looking up. I’m grateful to Don DeLuca for giving me shelter and food. She didn’t have to do that, but she’s a kind person.”

Kind isn’t the word I’d use to describe Frankie. “She has her good days.”

Elena snorts as a wide smile cracks. She stands and pushes in her chair. “This is a world where loyalty means everything, yet nothing all at the same time. All I wanted was my father to tell me he loved me, so I did everything he wanted. If he wanted to marry me off, I would’ve let him.” A humorless laugh escapes her. “But not once did he ever say he loved me, or show me any kindness.” She lifts her head and I see her chin quivering. “Don DeLuca’s actions speak louder than any of the nasty words my father yelled at me.” She reaches for her glass and gives me a slight nod. “My apologies for disrupting your dinner. Good night, Mr. Miller.” Elena falls into the shadows of the night, retreating to her room.

I look at the plate of food in front of me, and lift my fork to pick at it. Elena is certainly an interesting young woman.

It's nearly one in the morning and I'm working on my laptop in bed. Frankie has yet to arrive, and although I know she can handle herself, I'm also worried about her.

I keep looking toward the door, hoping for Frankie's safe arrival.

It's not long after one that the door opens, and Frankie waltzes into the room. "You're still awake?" she asks.

I quickly scan her body, and breathe out a relieved breath when I see she's unharmed. "Is everything okay?"

Frankie strips and the moment my eyes land on her bruised body, my cock twitches. She looks down at her body, then back to me. "Admiring your handiwork, are you?" Frankie turns to show me the brilliant colors on and around her ass. "I'm particularly fond of these." She runs her hand over the globe of her ass.

"Pain slut," I say.

"Better believe it." She crawls up on the bed, pushes my laptop to the side and straddles my thighs. "I'd fuck you tonight, but..." She rocks back and forth causing a delicious friction between us. I grab hold of her fleshy hips and dig my fingers into them. Frankie leans forward and whispers, "I don't feel like it." She climbs off of me and saunters into the bathroom.

"You're going to put me in an early grave!"

She pops her head out and winks. "You can count on that." Frankie disappears again and I'm left a hard cock and balls that are going to explode.

"Prick tease."

I hear her laugh, then the shower turns on.

I decide to try to push past my hard-on by returning my attention to my laptop. But when Frankie walks out in a towel, with her hair up in a messy bun, my cock becomes easily invested in her again.

She pulls the covers back, drops the towel on the floor and slides into bed. "Is everything okay?" I ask again, hoping to

get a straightforward answer.

“Just lining my ducks up before I snap their necks.”

I close my laptop and turn to look at her. “I want to talk to you about something.”

She rolls her eyes, sits up in bed and drags the bedding up to cover her tits. “What?” Frankie folds her arms tightly across her chest.

The hair on the back of my neck lifts. “I’m going to quit my job.”

“What? Why?”

“I’m compromising my own integrity, and it’s making me uncomfortable.”

Frankie snorts and shrugs. “Do whatever you want.” She slides down under the covers and turns her back to me.

“That’s it? That’s all you’ve got to say?”

“I’m not your keeper, Miller. Do whatever you want.”

Anger bubbles through me as I sit staring at her. “Are you fucking kidding me?”

“What?” Frankie turns and narrows her eyes at me. “What’s the problem?”

“You. You’re the problem.”

“What have I done?”

“I’m about to leave my career because of you.”

“I didn’t tell you to do anything. You want to work, work. You want to leave, leave. I’ve got enough money to sustain us both for several lifetimes.”

I click my tongue as I stare at Frankie, and shake my head. “The FBI is breathing down my neck, and you don’t give a shit.” I push the bedding off of me and leap to my feet.

“I see.” Frankie’s eyes are hard, and her mouth is pursed into a thin line.

I stop looking for my jeans and t-shirt, and swivel to face Frankie. “What do you see?”

“You’re looking for a fight, so...” She too leaps out of the bed, and quickly dresses in a pair of tights and a loose-fitting t-shirt. “Go.” Frankie throws her arms up, waiting for me.

“I don’t want to fight with you, but I want...”

“What? You want me to say something mushy? I’m not that type of woman, Miller.”

My shoulders slump forward and my mouth falls open. “I want you to give me an indication of what we have.” I motion between us.

She screws her mouth in snorts. “How many times have I threatened you?”

“Too many to count.”

“I’ve burnt your house down, shot your tires, destroyed your phones, yet here you are.” She points to the floor. “What else do you want from me?”

I blink as I try to make sense of her words. “If I leave my job, it’ll be because of you. You’ve darkened my soul, Frankie. Because of you I might end up in jail.”

Frankie throws her head back and laughs. “You hold a position of power, Miller. I’m sure you know people across all law enforcement, hell, you reached out to your FBI buddy to shut down the whore house. Yet, you never told any of them about me. You think I’m solely to blame for this?” She shakes her head as she advances toward me. “You’re as much responsible for what we have, as I am.”

“That’s —”

“Don’t you dare make me look like the bad guy here,” she warns. “Because this—” She gestures between us. “Is a two-way fucking street. You want me as much as I want you. The only difference is you’re soft and I’m hard. You’re not used to my side of the darkness, but don’t worry, I’ll toughen you up.” She winks before heading out of the bedroom.

“I don’t want to be toughened up,” I yell after her.

She returns to the bedroom and places her hand to her hip. "Then there's your answer. You don't want this world." She points to the door. "So fuck off." Frankie is unrelenting as her face hardens. "Go."

"I don't want to," I say in a smaller voice.

"Then what do you want, Miller?"

I start pacing her room as I rake my hand through my hair. She's right, I am as responsible as she is. I wanted to blame Frankie, but, I can't. I twist to face her, but she's disappeared.

Of course she has. Frankie's had her say and is done.

I sit on the edge of the bed for a few minutes before I find my t-shirt and jeans, then head downstairs to find Frankie. She's in the library nursing a scotch. Her normal go-to when she's stressed. I pour myself a drink and sit opposite her. "Are you leaving?"

"No." I sip on my drink. "But, we do need to talk about what happened."

"What do you honestly want? Do you think I'm a white picket fence, two-point-five kids, happy family kinda woman?" She shakes her head. "I'm not the type to cook you a meal and wait on you hand and foot."

"That's not what I'm asking for."

"Then you must be looking for a way out, and if that's the case, then you've got it. But don't you dare say you're leaving because of who I am. Because we both know, I've never hidden it from you, or anyone else."

The library is blanketed in tense silence while we both nurse our drinks. My mind is clouded by the feelings I have for her, and I fucking love it. "My whole life I've been the *good guy*," I start. "I've never done anything at all that can put me in the villain boat."

"Until me. Because I'm the damn villain."

"Yeah, and I hate how easily I've fallen for you."

Frankie's brows rise but she slowly brings the glass to her lips and takes a sip. "You've fallen for me?" she says with a voice crack.

"I once told you I'd never compromise who I am, but..." I intake a breath and shake my head. "I'd give anything for you, including my job." Fuck, what did I just admit to?

Frankie slams the rest of her drink back then lowers the glass to sit on the arm of her chair. "Then don't quit."

"Why not?"

"Because recently you gave your FBI buddy the information to help those women who were forced into prostitution. Look at the good you did." She blinks and releases a humorless chuckle. "Both of us can't be evil fucks. You keep being the good guy you are and I'll keep being the soul-less fuck I am." I'm not even sure how to respond to that. "It's why we work. You keep me human and I show you how much fun the darkness can be."

"That's it then. Until I'm thrown in jail, I'll keep doing what I'm doing."

She shakes her head before quickly standing to her feet. She walks over to me, leans down and places her lips on mine. I weave my hand into the back of her hair and drag her to straddle my hips. "You know what I love about our arrangement?" she murmurs against my lips as she grinds onto my growing cock.

"What?"

"I love how much I own you out of the bedroom." She lowers her hand and grips my cock. "And how you own me inside of it."

Frankie palms my cock and I roll my head back, appreciating her hand. It takes me a second to lift my head, and push her off of me. "Then be a good girl, and suck me."

"But I want to fuck you," she says with confidence as she stands with her shoulders back in front of me.

I let my gaze travel her body until they land on her pussy. I grab her hips and nuzzle into her. She smells like sin, ready to rip my soul apart. I lift my head to look up at her. “No you don’t, you want my cock in your mouth. Now, on your knees.” I throw the cushion from beside me on the floor.

A slight smile tugs at her lips. I can see she wants to be defiant, but something darkens her and she lowers to her knees. She unzips my jeans and my cock springs free. Frankie lowers her head and licks at the tip. My eyes roll closed as I lace my fingers through her hair. Her bun is so loose now that it’s basically non-existent. I love her curly hair, it’s so unruly, like she is. But when she’s compliant and submissive, something else takes her over. She’s simply perfect.

“I said suck.” I push her head down until I hear her gag as my cock hits the back of her throat.

With my eyes glued to her, I bob her head up and down, gripping her hair in a fist. Frankie is gurgling while I fuck her mouth ferociously. She moves her hand inside her tights and plays with herself.

“I didn’t tell you to touch yourself.” Instantly, she removes her hand. I can see her glistening fingers and just knowing she was fucking herself makes me even hornier. I keep thrusting her head down while jacking my hips up so I can fuck her mouth fully. I want her lips to hurt, I want her eyes to cry because she can’t bear this anymore. I want her to beg for mercy, but I won’t give it to Frankie. “You look amazing.” She tilts her head back, and I’m gifted with all my desires. Tears are streaking down her face, while she silently begs for a reprieve. “Hold my cum in your mouth.” I thrust up once again, my cum erupting into her mouth.

She gags and chokes, ribbons of my cum spilling out of the side of her mouth.

“What a waste.” I use my finger to wipe it off her chin, then pull my cock out of her mouth. She has a mouthful of my cum, and I wipe my finger across her neck. Marking her.

“Get upstairs, strip, and get whichever vibrator from my bedside table you want. I want it in your cunt, but don’t turn it

on. Don't you dare swallow though."

Frankie moves like her ass is on fire.

I zip myself up and take a second to regain my breath. I stand and walk over to the drink cabinet to pour myself another drink before I head upstairs to watch my woman fuck a toy. God, she sends me fucking crazy.

Once I reach the bedroom, she's on the bed, legs spread out, her mouth slightly open with my cum still in it. The vibrator is inside her, and she's frantically trying to get the right friction from it. "Don't you look beautiful?" Her eyes darken as she watches me walk to the end of the bed and cast my gaze all over her now-naked body. "You can swallow."

She does and releases a groan. "I need to come."

I tap my finger to my lip. "Should I let you turn that on?"

"Yes!" she screams.

"On your knees." She moves her body so she's on her knees. "Good. Now, let me." I hold the vibrator and turn it on. Frankie grabs onto my shoulders and swivels so she can find her release. She hangs her head while small appreciative groans escape her freshly fucked lips. "Eyes on me while you fuck the vibrator." She lifts her head and keeps eye contact with me. "That's it."

Frankie's eyes darken, her brows draw in and her jaw sets. "I can't hold it."

"Give it to me."

She releases a cry as her body shakes with pleasure. I love watching how hard she comes. I keep the vibrator going, and within only a minute, she comes again. "No more," she begs.

"You can give me one more." I turn the vibrator up, and add my thumb to her clit. She wraps her arms around my neck, dragging me to be close to her while she rides the wave toward a third orgasm.

"I can't," she begs.

“You already are.” I flick her clit, sending her into a spiral of a third orgasm. “You’re so beautiful,” I whisper in her ear as I hold her quivering body against mine. I remove the vibrator and throw it to the side, then lay Frankie down on the bed. I cover us with the bedding, as I hold her against my body.

Frankie easily falls into a deep sleep, while my mind is overwhelmed with something I never thought I ever wanted.

I want Frankie DeLuca.

For now, and forever.

CHAPTER 31

FRANKIE

My eyes slowly open and I find myself wrapped around Miller. I kiss his chest before pushing off the bed and stretching. “It’s Saturday, get back in bed,” he says with a croaky voice.

“No can do, I’ve got work.” There’s a tightness in my shoulders and I try to roll them. “What did you do to me last night?”

“Nothing you didn’t want.”

I turn and offer him a smirk. “Smart-ass.” I saunter into the walk-in closet to get ready for the day.

“I think you should climb back here, and let me fuck you.”

I pop my head out of the closet to see the tent forming around his cock. I arch a brow and snicker. “Nah, not at the moment.”

Miller chuckles. “I could make you.”

I keep dressing. “I’d like to see you try.” Although, my inner slut awakens when he becomes commanding. Something about the way he treats my body, like I’m a fuck-toy, just sends me crazy. And when he brings the pain...chef’s fucking kiss. I walk out to see Miller sitting on the edge of the bed with his head in his hands. “Who do I have to kill?”

“What?” He turns to look at me and shakes his head.

“You look worried. Who am I killing?” I walk over to my dressing table, open the top drawer and take out two of my guns. I check the chamber, then the clip.

“I don’t want you to kill anyone.”

“Tsk.” I roll my eyes. “You’re no fun.”

“Would you seriously kill someone if I asked you to?”

I look at the guns, then Miller. “Obviously,” I say matter-of-factly.

Miller clears his throat and narrows his eyes. “Have you killed a lot of people?”

“Define a lot.”

“Shit,” he says in an elevated voice. “I knew you were a hard-ass.”

I slowly lift my shoulder. “What do you expect? I’m a leader of a multi-billion-dollar organization. I need to make sure they follow my fucking rules or they die.”

“You’re a psychopath.”

“Nah.” I lay the guns on the dresser, and flick my hand dismissively as I head into the bathroom. “I’ve never killed someone who didn’t deserve it.”

Miller follows me into the bathroom, and leans against the door jamb as I comb through my hair. “And who makes the decision that they deserve it?”

“I do.”

“So, you’re a psychopath.”

“Not at all. I’m just a walking judge, jury and executioner. The last part can be fun.”

He laughs and pinches the bridge of his nose. “Remind me not to piss you off.”

“You have, plenty of times. You’re not dead yet, are you?”

“Yet?”

I walk over to him and stretch up to kiss his lips. “There’s still time.” A belly laugh escapes as I head downstairs for breakfast. When I arrive, Rome and Elena are sitting opposite one another. He’s staring at her while she’s got her head down eating her breakfast. “You look like a stalker,” I say to Rome.

“Good to see you too, *sister*,” he says in a condescending tone.

Elena coughs and looks up to me. “Um.” She gulps and nibbles on her lower lip. “I haven’t had a chance to tell you, but the doctor recommended I have an OB-GYN to check on me and the baby.”

I did get a report from the doctor, but I haven’t read it yet. “Have you found one you want to see?”

Elena nods. “I was thinking I can make an appointment, if that’s okay with you?”

“I’ll do it, give me the name and phone number.”

“I have it in my room.” She points over her shoulder. “Can I go get it?”

I look to Rome then back to Elena. “That would be useful.” She jumps to her feet and hurries toward the room.

“Don’t be such an ass to her,” Rome says and smacks me in the arm.

“I’m not the one who wants to fuck her, you are. Besides, I *am* being nice to Elena.”

“At least say happy birthday to her.”

“It’s her birthday?”

“Tomorrow.”

“Then I’ll say it tomorrow.”

“I’m taking her out for her birthday.”

I shake my head and he smacks me in the arm again. “You’re so fucking pussy whipped,” I hiss.

Elena returns holding a piece of paper with the OB-GYN’s name and number. I make a mental note to check the doc out before I send Elena to see her. I don’t want some crack-pot of a doctor with her hands inside Elena if they’re shit at their job. She hands me the paper, and I read the name. It’s not sending red flags, but who knows these days. “I’ll take care of it.”

“Thank you,” Elena says in her soft voice as she continues eating.

Mya enters the dining room with a plate of food for me, and a coffee. She places it down, then retreats back to the kitchen. I eat quickly, ravenous from my extra-curricular activities of early this morning.

Once I’m done, I stand and lift my coffee. “Let’s go,” I say to Rome.

He looks to Elena who’s now on her second plate of food, and offers her a smile before silently following me out of the dining room.

“Can you be a little nicer to Elena?” he asks when we’re in the office.

“I am nice.”

The door flings open and G saunters in. “I can’t believe you didn’t wait for me to have breakfast,” he says with sarcasm. “And here I thought we were one big happy family.”

“What is it with everyone this morning?” I flick a look to my brother. “He wants me to be nicer to the girl.” I then look to G, and add, “You want us to sit around the dining table, holding hands and singing gospel songs.”

G heartedly laughs. “You need to get laid more often, Frank. You’re a grumpy asshole when you haven’t had any. The politician a dud in bed, is he?”

“We are *not* talking about my sister’s sex life.” I look at my brother who gestures his hand over my body. “I don’t want to know what you two do.”

“Two?” I ask. “There are more than two people in orgies.”

Rome instantly covers his ears like a child. G and I lose it at him. “Nope, I don’t want to know.”

“Seriously, boss. You’re into orgies?” G asks.

I shrug my shoulders. “Why should I keep my awesomeness to just one guy?”

“I have a newfound respect for you.”

Rome lowers his hands to look at us. “Is it safe, or am I going to have to hear about what freaky shit you and the politician get up to?”

I pull my chair out and sit, ignoring Rome’s question. “Rome, I want you to stay here today when G and I go to meet Pace.”

“I need to head down to Darkness.”

“Why?” I ask as I pull up the records for that nightclub. I scan it briefly, but nothing looks out of place.

“I’m emptying the safe. Also, one of the staff members is skimming the girls out of their tips.”

“Who?” G asks.

“Elias,” Rome replies.

“How do you know?”

“Three of the girls reached out to me. I’ve spoken with all three of them separately, and they’ve all said Elias is asking for a bigger house cut.”

“A bigger one? He shouldn’t be taking anything,” I say.

“I’ll take care of it,” Rome says.

I look to G then back to Rome. “If he’s fucking with my club or my girls, then you end him.”

“Frank...”

“No!” I point to Rome. “No one fucks with the DeLucas. If one fucker thinks he can, then they’re all going to. Get to the bottom of it, and if he is, then you end him.” Rome shifts uncomfortably in the seat. “I’ll do it,” I say.

“No, I’ll take care of it.”

Rome isn’t like me. If push came to shove and he had to kill or be killed, then he’d do it. But I’m not sure he’ll be able to take care of Elias if he has to.

Hopefully, he will.



Pace is already waiting at the meeting spot. He has his own security nearby. “Frankie,” he says as G and I approach him. “I have a new launcher available.” He runs his hand over a massive case.

“I’m not here for products.”

Pace taps the case and flicks his gaze between G and myself. “Why did you call this meeting?”

“You’ve been dealing to Augusta.”

“My clients are none of your business.” One of his security men begins to approach us with his hand on his gun. G flicks his suit jacket aside, and mimics the security guy’s stance. Pace holds his hand to stop his security, I give G a nod to back off too.

“I’m here for business, but a different kind of negotiations.” Pace scrubs his hand across his chin, and takes a long breath. “If you don’t want more money, then fine,” I say as I take a step backward.

“What have you got in mind?” Pace asks.

“Does Augusta owe you money?”

“He does.”

“How much?”

“Six-figures.”

“When’s your next shipment to him?”

“Wednesday.”

“What is he buying?”

“Semi-automatics, bullet-proof vests, and grenades.”

“How much will the shipment be?”

“Two-hundred.”

A knowing look passes between G and myself. He holds his hand up to Dario, who approaches us with a duffel bag. “There’s two-hundred in there.”

“You’re paying off his debt?”

“No. I’m buying his shipment.”

Pace takes a step back and laughs. “You want him out of business?”

“I want you not to supply him anymore. I’ll buy whatever it is he asks for. I want you to cut him off.”

“And what about what he owes me?”

“That’s something you will need to take up with him.”

There are a few seconds of silence before Pace flicks his chin toward Dario. One of his security guys walks over and takes the case. “As always, good doing business with you.” He extends his hand to shake mine.

G and I watch as Pace returns to his car, and the security packs the case away. I walk back to the car, where Dario is waiting. I slide in, and G sits beside me. “You know how to bring a man to his knees.”

Dario begins toward our next destination. I can’t help but smile.

The drive takes half an hour, and I play the scenario over and over in my head. Once we arrive, G and I both head inside. At a quick count there’s eight old men playing cards. The den is full of smoke and they stop to look at me as I pull my shoulders back and waltz inside.

One of the old men stands to his feet and stops me before I get to the back. “You lost, sweetheart?” he asks in his thick Italian accent. He scans G then returns his attention to me.

“Nope.” I side step him, but he stops me again. “Unless you want your brains on the roof, I suggest you move.” A few of the other men stand to support him. I inhale deeply before

lifting my hand. Within seconds, the den is flooded with my men. “As I was saying...”

The old Italians take a cautionary step backward. The one who approached me says, “This isn’t DeLuca territory.”

Technically, he’s right. I look him straight in the eyes and smile. “It is now.” I push past him and head to the back, where I open the door to find Mikey “Money Bags” Carter.

He looks up from his computer and crinkles his forehead. “This isn’t your territory.”

I pull the chair opposite him out, and sit. “We have a problem, Mikey.”

He crosses his arms in front of his chest and lifts his chin. “And what’s that?”

“This.” I make a circular movement with my finger. “Is now mine.”

“What? The boss hasn’t said nothing to me.”

I look over my shoulder to G and nod. G removes his gun from his holster and begins smashing through Mikey’s office. Mikey watches and says nothing until G moves toward the computer. “What do you want?” Mikey asks.

I gesture with one finger for G to stop. He places the computer back on the desk. “You now work for me.”

“Are you a fucking crazy broad?” I give G a nod, and he picks the computer up and smashes it to the ground before opening the desk drawers and taking everything out of them. “Wait!” Again, I stop G with a small hand gesture. “You’re fucking crazy!”

“I have an opening on my books. But once it closes then there’s a nice-looking bridge for you and your family.”

“You don’t threaten a man’s family, DeLuca.”

“Are you taking my job offer?”

Mikey swallows deeply as he runs his hands through his hair. “I can’t.”

I stand to my feet and nod. “Loyalty, I like that.” I hold my hand out to G who gives me his gun. I shoot Mikey in the head. *Twice*. “Find his books, I want the business.”

G easily locates the paper copy of Mikey’s loan shark and laundering business. “The girl was right about this place. The fucker is running laundering out of our territory.” He shakes his head. “This is a good earner, Frank.”

“Pass the information on to our bookkeeper, and let him take over this debt.”

“Augusta is gonna come for you, hard. Especially now that you’re hitting him where it hurts. His drug supplies are now ours, Pace won’t supply him with inventory, and you just took out his most profitable loan shark.”

Before I head out to the old men, I survey the destruction of the office and feel such a tremendous amount of satisfaction. “He took my father, and I’m going to take everything from him.” I open the door to find the old men standing around trying to see into the office. “Mikey is dead. You can either join him, or join me. The choice is yours.” They know the business. They’ve been around long enough to know this would happen.

“Fuck you,” one of them says.

“Yeah. DeLucas have no business here,” another grumbles.

“We owe you nothing.”

I’ll give it to them, they’re all fucking loyal. “So be it.” I walk out and give the go ahead to kill them all. Eight old wise guys made their choice.

And I don’t feel a single moment of remorse.

Augusta brought this on himself. Now he has me to deal with.

CHAPTER 32

JEREMY

The knocking on my office door drags my attention away from my review of the new state bill that's being proposed. "Yeah," I yell as I continue to read through this two-hundred plus page document. The door opens and Zac enters. "What is it?"

Zac shuffles uncomfortably on the spot. "Mr. Lewis from the FBI is here."

A knot tightens in my stomach, but I knew this was coming. It's sooner than I was hoping for. "Show him in," I say as I place a folder on top of the bill. Tyler walks in confidently and extends his hand. "Tyler," I say as I stand and shake his hand.

"Would you like a coffee?" Zac offers.

"I'm fine." Tyler waves his hand toward Zac, who then backs out of my office and closes the door.

Once we're both seated, I lean back against the chair and look at Tyler. With a tight jaw and my hands in fists I ask, "Why are you here?"

"We both know why." I arch a brow in question while I continue to stare at Tyler. "You're gonna make me say it, aren't you?"

I intake an audible breath and slowly lift my shoulders. "Is there a problem?"

"Where are you living?"

"My place of residence is of no concern to you."

“Where did that tip come from?”

I stare at Tyler, unrelenting and refusing to answer. “You wasted your time coming down here.” I push up out of my chair and head toward the door. “I have work to do.”

The tension is thick in my office, but I refuse to concede. Tyler finally stands and walks toward me. He stops before exiting my office and says, “This was a courtesy, the next time, it’ll be formal.” Tyler struts out like he’s dropped a bombshell.

If the FBI had anything on me, they wouldn’t be so generous in their admissions. They might suspect, but they have no idea. And I’m not going to give them anything either.

But, moving forward, this does mean I have to be extra careful. It might be a good idea for me to move out of Frankie’s house and into a hotel until I can get my house rebuilt.

I’ll talk to her tonight about that.

Great, now to prepare for the wrath of Frankie DeLuca. That woman is uncontrollable when it comes to any affairs outside the bedroom. And that makes me damn hard.



By the time I leave the office it’s nearing midnight. Niko has yet to take the same route back to Frankie’s since he’s started driving me, and tonight is no different.

The gates open to Frankie’s property and Niko slowly navigates the long drive up to the main house. He parks and is out of the car with my door open before I have a chance to gather my briefcase and suit jacket. I loosen my tie as I walk into the house. “Frankie,” I call.

“Library.”

I head down the hallway toward the library where Frankie is nursing a drink. “What are you doing in here?” I ask as I lean down and place a kiss to the top of her head.

“Is Lewis going to be a problem? If he is, I’ll take care of it,” her voice is a combination of hard and irritated.

“You’re in a good mood,” I sarcastically retort as I head over and pour myself a drink.

“I know he’s your friend.”

“Of course you’d know that.”

“I do my research, Miller,” she snaps.

“I see you’re choosing bitch this evening.”

She stands to her feet and advances toward me with crazy eyes. She pushes on my chest, but I hold steady and tilt my head to the side. “Fight back,” she says through gritted teeth.

I slowly lift my glass and sip on my scotch. “No.” I throw back the remainder. “What’s wrong?”

She knocks the empty glass out of my hands. “I’ll fucking kill him myself,” she warns.

I click my tongue as I stare at my crazy woman. “What’s going on?” I ask in a calm tone. She pushes me again, but I grab her wrist and wrap Frankie against my body. She’s not complaining though, and throws an elbow into my gut. “Stop,” I command. But Frankie isn’t a woman who does what she’s told unless she can get something out of it. “Stop,” I repeat slower when she tries to headbutt me.

“Fuck you, Miller!”

I tighten my arms, constraining her so the only thing she can do is stomp on my foot. Which she does. “I’m not letting you go until you calm down.”

“Who the fuck do you think you are?” she spits with hatred. “You’re fucking nothing to me.” I know she’s hissing malice to hurt me, but she’s going to have to do better than that.

“Stop.” I constrain Frankie with so much force, that if I squeeze any harder, I’ll break her ribs. I don’t want to do that. Finally, she softens as all her fight slowly leaves her body. I keep her bound to me as I ask, “What’s happened?”

Frankie’s head lolls backward and she releases a long, deep sigh. I kiss her temple and adjust the tightness of my arms, ready to constrain her if she fights me again. “One...” She clears her throat. “One of my clubs was hit.”

“Clubs?”

“One of my brothels.”

“Hit?”

“A bomb.”

My arms release Frankie, and I turn her around. “What happened?”

“I don’t know. G is heading there now so he can assess it. But, two of my girls didn’t make it.” Frankie pinches the bridge of her nose. “Two of my girls are dead,” she says with sadness dripping from her tone.

My thoughts are heavy with sorrow for these women. “Do you know how this happened?”

“G is on his way there now.” My forehead crinkles as I stare at Frankie. She’s a damn mess, like nothing I’ve ever seen before. Frankie grabs a bottle of scotch and takes a swig from it. She places the bottle with a thud on the cabinet top and walks over to lean against one of the armchairs. Frankie wraps her arms around her body and shakes her head. “Two of my girls,” she repeats with heaviness. Her ringing phone interrupts us. “Yeah?” Frankie shoots upright and turns to look at me. “I’m on my way.” She hangs up and shoves her phone in her pocket.

“What is it?”

“One of my other brothels was bombed too.”

“What the fuck is going on?”

Frankie takes off out of the library and hollers for Rome. She effortlessly runs up the grand staircase, I follow close behind. “Rome!” She makes easy work of his bedroom door and flicks the light on. “Wake up.”

“What is it? Is Elena okay?” Rome asks as he tosses the bedding aside and jumps to his feet. “What the fuck are you doing in here?” Rome looks to me.

“Dreams and Destiny have both been hit.”

“What are you talking about?” Rome quickly dresses as Frankie waits for him. “Robbed?”

“Fucking bombed,” Frankie replies.

Rome stills as he buttons his shirt and his forehead crinkles with worry. “Bombed? What?”

“Dreams was hit first, about an hour ago, and G just called me to say Destiny’s been hit too.”

“Why didn’t you wake me?” Frankie flares up, ready to go at her brother.

“Hey,” I say interrupting her anger.

She swings around toward me. Eyes wide with fury, her lips pursed and scowling. “What?”

“Let’s focus on what we’re going to do.”

“We?” Rome says and looks between Frankie and myself. “The politician shouldn’t even be hearing this. All we need is for him to tell his fed buddies and we’re all fucked.”

“He won’t say anything,” Frankie replies.

“But –” Frankie shoots him a silencing glare. Rome lifts his hands in surrender. “You’re the boss.”

“When you’re dressed, check on the girl and tell her to stay here. Under no circumstances does she go anywhere.” Rome nods and Frankie leaves his room. “You have to stay here too,” Frankie instructs as we head down the grand staircase.

“No,” I say. “If someone is after you, then I’m coming with you.”

“You’re not ready for that.” She rushes toward her office, but I stay next to her. I refuse to let her go because she’s stubborn and trigger-happy which is the perfect mix to get herself hurt.

“I’m coming with you,” I say with certainty.

“No, you have to stay here and look after the girl.”

“Fuck that,” I say. “I’m not a babysitter. I go where you go.”

Frankie opens the top drawer of her desk and lifts two handguns out and places them on her desk. “You’re not ready for this.” She lifts one gun and checks its ammunition. Without missing a beat, I grab the second gun, empty the clip and check it. Frankie’s brows drag in together when I check the safety and hand it to her. “You know guns?”

“I’m coming with you,” I repeat and not answer her question.

She clicks her tongue and slowly shakes her head. “Don’t get yourself killed, because I enjoy fucking you and I’m not keen on finding someone else.”

Is that her way of telling me she cares? I’ll take it. “I won’t.”

She moves past me and looks over her shoulder. “Keep up, and don’t get in my way.”

Ladies and gentlemen, Frankie DeLuca. Mob queen extraordinaire.



Police are everywhere when we arrive at the second brothel that’s been bombed. I hover beside Frankie as she answers

routine and mundane questions from the police.

The fire department has managed to contain the flames, but sadly another three of the workers were killed. “Something’s off,” Frankie says when we’re left alone. She looks back at the smoke billowing from the smothered flames and shakes her head. “Two of my clubs destroyed within hours. Five of my girls, killed.” Her jaw tightens as she groans.

“Is there a turf war I should be made aware of?” I ask.

Frankie’s features stiffen. Her tongue darts out and sweeps across her lower lip. “Fuck.”

Shit, this doesn’t sound good.

CHAPTER 33

FRANKIE

Rome and I are in the office while we wait for G to return.

“Where’s the politician?” Rome asks.

“He’s gone to bed.”

“Hmm,” Rome grumbles.

I slowly turn to look at him. “Where’s the girl?” I snarkily ask.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” he snaps. “I didn’t get Elena involved, like you’ve got the politician caught up in family business.”

The door opens and G walks in. He stops and turns his head to Rome, then me. “What the fuck did I just walk into?”

“Apparently the politician is involved in our business now.” Rome throws his hands up in frustration.

I audibly blow out the air trapped in my lungs. “You can shut the fuck up.” I point to Rome.

G slams the door shut, stopping an impending argument from breaking out. “Enough.” G shakes his head. “You’re pointing your anger at each other instead of at whoever caused this clusterfuck.”

“It has to be...” My phone rings with a private number. I answer the call and put it on speaker. “What?”

“You think you can hit me and get away with it?”

My skin breaks out into goosebumps. “I think I can tear you limb from fucking limb and no one is going to care.”

“You take what’s mine, I’ll burn yours to the ground,” Augusta says. Even through the phone I can feel his hatred. “Let the boys do their job, little girl. You’re not cut out for this world.”

My pulse elevates while my ears pound with fury. I find my hands closing into a fist as my body explodes with rage. “An eye for a fucking eye, Augusta. And let me tell you, I’ll tear yours out of your ugly fucking face.” I pick my phone up and throw it against the wall, narrowly missing G. A roar of pure mania rips through my entire soul. “Fuck!”

“I have to give it to Augusta,” G starts. “I thought we cut him off at the knees.”

I look to Rome, then G. Both are waiting for my instructions. “Get the girl, I want all of his operations,” I say to Rome. “Every single one of them.”

Rome is still seated, not making an attempt to get up.

“Frank, let the kid sleep,” G says.

“No, I need to know everything about her father’s business so I can tear it down.”

“She’s already told us everything.”

“She must’ve missed something. Because how the fuck does he still have the means to take out two of my businesses?”

The tension in my office is stifling, but I refuse to back down now. “Give —” Rome starts.

“Increase the men at the other clubs,” I instruct G.

“Already on it. And, I’ve increased security here too,” G replies. He looks to Rome then me. “You need to get some sleep.”

“I need to rip Augusta’s head off his shoulders and shit down his neck.”

G's brows rise. "That's oddly specific. But yes, you do. Nothing more is going to happen tonight. Go to sleep, and when you wake, you'll have a clearer picture of what to do next."

"How can you be so reasonable?"

"Because you and I both know, your father never retaliated without thinking about all the consequences. He built this from the ground up, and the way he did it was by thinking strategically. That's what you have to do. But you can't do it when you're not seeing clearly."

"You wouldn't dare say any of this to my father," I say with anger pulsating through me. I'm so fucking angry that my girls were killed.

"Yes I would, and I have. Remember when your father took down the bratva when they tried to muscle in on his territory? You were about fifteen."

I tear my eyes away from G and stare at my desk. "I do."

"What did he want to do?"

"He was angry when they hit one of the cocaine imports. He found one of their drivers and wanted to kill him."

"What did I convince him to do?"

I lift my chin and nod once. "Turn the driver. He fed us information until we no longer needed him." A humorless chuckle escapes me. "The driver was my first kill." I smile at the memory. "We took down the bratva piece by piece."

"Because your father was patient."

I look to Rome and click my tongue. "Let the girl sleep, but at first light, she needs to be up." Rome silently agrees. I need to calm my hatred, because if I don't, I know more of my people will die. They may have been prostitutes, but they were mine to look after and protect. And they didn't deserve this. "Get me the names of the girls who were killed."

"Why?" Rome asks.

"Because their families are gonna be paid."

A slight smile tugs at G's mouth. "That's exactly what your father would've done." He advances toward me and claps a hand on my shoulder. "Martino would be proud of you."

I don't reply, instead I head out of the office and up to my room. My mind is racing, but G's right, I need to think clearly if I'm going to annihilate Augusta.



My eyes snap open and my immediate thought is the Scalas.

I fling the bedding off of me, and grab my phone to see the time. I've had an entire two hours sleep, but my mind is overactive, planning a temporary alliance with the Scalas.

I run down the stairs to my office, and find G slumped over my desk and asleep. "Wake up." I kick his foot. He leaps to his feet and grabs his gun.

"Fuck, Frank. You scared the shit out of me."

"The Scalas." I pace back and forth with excitement and agitation.

"What about them?"

"I need a sit down with Carlo."

"You want to go after the Scala family?" G hesitates before adding, "Are you sure?"

"I'm not going after them."

"That's good to hear."

"Yet."

G lifts his chin to stare at me. "Yet?" he repeats. "What have you got in mind?"

"They want Augusta out. I want him dead. They want his territory."

“Getting in bed with the Scalas is dangerous.”

“I know,” I say. “But, once we get rid of Augusta, then I’ll get rid of them. I’ll be wiping out two enemies, and claiming both their territories.” G walks over to my liquor and pours himself a scotch. He throws it back, then chuckles. “Bit early to be drinking, even for us.” I pointedly look to the empty glass.

“You want to go to war with the Scalas, I think a drink is exactly what I need.” He places the empty glass next to the scotch bottle. “If this works, Frank, you’ll be one of the most powerful families.”

“*If* this works?” I question. “There’s no *if* about it. Augusta is on his knees. There’s no way he’ll be able to continue hitting me, not without it hurting him. If he had the resources, he would’ve done it last night.” I smack my hands together. “One after the other, but he hit me twice. So, now, I finally tear him down.”

“You can do it on your own.”

“Yeah, I can, but I want Scala territory too.”

“How?”

“I’ll meet with Carlo, and I’ll give him Augusta’s cocaine shipment.” G’s brows lift.

“What stops Carlo taking you out?”

“I’m going to offer him Augusta’s territory.”

“What the fuck, Frank? Why would you do that?”

“We need the territory to move our product. I’ll offer Scala a cut, in return for Scala taking out the rest of Augusta’s business. Then I’ll hit Augusta when he’s looking over his shoulder at Scala.”

“Augusta might go on the lam.”

“He won’t have a chance,” I say. “He’s gonna be hit so fucking hard, he won’t know where it’s all coming from.”

“You’re gonna use Scala to get to Augusta, then hit Scala.”

“Exactly.”

“You’re either going to get us all killed, or you’re gonna make us richer than the Catholic church.” G does the cross from head to chest, then shoulder to shoulder. “Your father would’ve played it safe.”

“I don’t want safe. I want Augusta to pay for what he did to my father, and then I want to take Scala territory,” I say in all seriousness.

G takes a long, slow breath, but finally nods. “You’re fucking dangerous, Frank.”

“I know.”

“And the girl? Do you think she’ll forgive you for killing her father?”

“She wants him dead too.”

“What about?” G points upstairs, gesturing toward Miller. “He’ll get in the way.”

“No, he won’t. He’s had more than ample opportunity to turn me in, but he hasn’t, and he won’t.”

“Do you love him?” I screw my nose at the thought of such a debilitating emotion. “Would you put a bullet in him if you had to?”

“Without a doubt.”

G takes a moment and looks around the office. “I’ll set up a meeting.”

The door opens and Rome walks in. He reads the room and furrows his brows. “What’s going on?”

G fills him in while I think about the question I was asked. Would I kill Miller if I had to? *Maybe*. But could I pull the trigger? *I’m not sure*.



“Miss DeLuca,” the flight attendant says to get my attention.

“Yes.” I look up to her, still on a high that my meeting with Scala went to plan.

“The pilot has instructed that we’ll be landing soon.”

“Thank you,” G says. She returns to the front of my jet, leaving G and me alone. “I don’t know, Frank, Scala is a snake.”

“So am I,” I say.

“He’ll prepare for that though.”

“As will I.” I lean forward and tap G’s thigh several times. “You worry too much.” G clicks his tongue and shakes his head. “When the time comes, I’ll cut the head off the snake. Then I’ll pummel it to ensure it can’t ever grow back.”

“What if Scala has the same plans for you?”

“That’s what I have you for.” I give G a smirk. “Besides, soon I’ll have two territories. And I have a feeling a lot of Augusta’s men won’t follow him to his death. They’ll choose to work for me rather than die.”

“You can’t be sure of that, Frank.”

The jet begins descending and I sit back in my seat, completely unfazed and relieved that soon, Augusta will be dead, Scala will follow, and my territory will instantly increase.

CHAPTER 34

FRANKIE

“It’s been two weeks and we’ve yet to hear anything,” Rome says as we work in the office.

“I don’t like this,” G says.

“I know.” I look to both of them and nod. “It’s been too quiet.”

“And we’re no closer to finding Augusta,” Rome adds.

“He’s gone the lam,” G says.

“Fucking pussy. He’s gone into hiding and is probably licking at his wounds, feeling sorry for himself,” I say. “He knows if he shows his face, I’ll fucking tear him apart.”

“But you know what’s worrying me?” G says.

I look to him and slightly nod. “Me too,” I reply to G’s silent doubts. I recline back in my office chair and look up at the ceiling. “His crew is still under his control. His men are loyal.” *For now.*

“We need to find him,” Rome says. “Before he comes at us and fucks everything up.”

“He does have another shipment coming in.”

I sit straight and look to G. “What kind of shipment? I made sure Pace cut him off.”

“Cocaine,” G replies.

“You’ve been holding out on me, G. When’s it coming?” I rub my hands together, excited by the possibilities.

“I’ve arranged for it to be taken down. But it’s coming in, in two parts. Twenty keys is coming in via truck.” He proudly smiles. “That’s being taken down.”

“And the second part?”

“Sea drop.” He waggles his brows.

“We’re taking that one too?”

“Already organized.”

I scratch at my chin as a feeling of wreaking havoc passes over me. “Get the boat ready.”

“The speed boat?” G asks.

“Yep.” I stand and walk over to the liquor cabinet. “This is going to be fun.”

G snorts as he shakes his head. But, he stands, and pulls his phone out of his pocket. He glances toward me and chuckles. “Have I ever told you that I love how ruthless you are?”

“Frank,” Rome says. I throw my drink back and jut my chin toward my brother. “Remember, Elena has her appointment tomorrow with the lady doctor.”

“Lady doctor?” G grunts.

“So fucking what?” I say. “Besides, I was the one who made the appointment for her, so of course I know.”

“I can’t be with her.”

Rome is quickly killing my buzz. “She has five men with her, she’ll be fine.”

“What if something happens?”

“Five men, Rome,” G says. “Even Frankie doesn’t have that many with her when she leaves the house.”

I can see Rome becoming agitated by my and G’s response. “I’ll put another man with her.”

I look to G who shakes his head. “I’m not doing it.”

I arch a brow and roll my eyes. “Make sure she has someone with her,” I instruct. G’s face drops as if to say, are you fucking serious? “Get it done.” I turn to face Rome. “Happy?”

Rome gives me a half nod, then returns to his work.

This girl better not fuck my brother up, because if she does, I’ll kill her myself.



“It’s a good night,” I say as we glide through the water.

“You’re gonna fuck shit up, aren’t you?” G asks with humor.

“Hey,” I start. “If they’re smart, then no.”

The sky is dark, the wind is cold, but my blood is pumping heat and excitement through my body as we approach the drop point. G kills the motor, lifts the night vision binoculars, then hands them to me and points in the direction I should be looking. “On my go,” G says into the comms.

Ahead is a small boat and three men are lifting packages out of the water. G starts the engine again and slowly navigates toward the boat. We approach it and the three all stop and draw their weapons on us. “What the fuck?” one of them grumbles.

“Boys, what are you doing?” My eyes skim the ten bricks of cocaine sitting at their feet.

“This has nothing to do with you,” one of Augusta’s men say.

“I want those bricks.” I pointedly look at the cocaine.

The one doing all the talking snickers. “Over my dead body.”

“Sure,” I say. G lifts his hand, and the mouthy one is shot dead. The other two look around, trying to find where my other men are. “As I was saying, I want those bricks.”

The two remaining men are fucking idiots. If this was me, I’d try to get at least one round off before being killed. But nope, they’re standing in their boat, looking like dumb fucks. “No,” one says.

“Wait,” the other says.

“The one on the right,” G says into the comms. And with the second one down, now there’s only one left. “Frank?” G waits for my go-ahead.

The third looks like he’s about to shit his pants. I gesture for him to start tossing the bricks over to us. He throws them onto our speed boat, and once he’s finished, he waits to see what I’ll do. “What’s your name?” I ask.

He flicks his gaze between G and myself before finally answering, “Pio.”

“How long have you been with Augusta?”

Again, there’s hesitation. “Three years.”

“Well, the choice is yours. You can work for me, or, we’ll leave you out here.”

“Doing what?”

“Whatever the fuck the boss wants you to do,” G replies with a hard tone.

“You’ll start as a soldier,” I say.

Pio’s shoulders slump and he pinches the bridge of his nose. “*Putana*,” he grumbles under his breath.

I lift my gun and shoot him twice in the head. G looks at me, then the dead guy. “Alright then,” he says and starts the speed boat to head back to shore.

Once we reach the mainland, G and Dario take the bricks and load them up in a car waiting for us. “Test it, cut it, and sell it,” I instruct the driver.

“Yes, ma’am.”

G slides in beside me and chuckles. “You gotta work on your anger issues.” Dario laughs and when I look at him through the rearview mirror, he shuts up. G snorts and I flash him a silencing look. But they don’t work on G.

“Dario, take me to Destruction.”

G’s brows rise as he slowly turns to look at me. “Going out on a school night. Rule breaker.”

“Have Niko bring Miller to the club once he’s finished work.”

“I have to hand it to the politician. He’s a hard worker.” I wait for the *but*. “But.” *There it is*. “He’s not in our world, Frank.”

“He’s proved himself to me.”

“I hope you know what you’re doing. I wouldn’t want a fucking politician to bring everything down.”

“He won’t,” I say with certainty. I stare out the window as Dario navigates the roads toward Destruction.



The music is pumping, and the club is bustling with bodies. G walks ahead and enters the downstairs VIP area. “I haven’t been here since your father was killed,” G says and gestures toward our waiter. “Bring us a bottle of Johnny Blue.” Our server silently backs out of the VIP area.

I sit on the sofa and extend my arms out while I watch the dance floor. I catch a guy selling his shit in my club. I flick my chin at him. “Is he ours?”

G shifts to get a better look. “Nope.” He stands and walks over to the guy. He grabs him around the back of the neck, twists his arm behind his back and disappears for a good ten

minutes. In the meantime, I'm watching and appreciating the music while enjoying a few shots of Johnny Blue.

When G returns, his knuckles are red, and he's wiping the blood off his hands. "Problems?"

"Not anymore."

I pour him a shot and hand it to him. The vibe is electric, and people seem to be having a good time. One of the women on the dance floor is stumbling all over the place. I gesture to one of our security. "See that girl?" I point to the drunk woman.

"Yeah?" he replies with a deep growl.

"She's had enough. Make sure she arrives home safely."

Security leaves the VIP area and G throws his second drink back. "Are you going soft, Frank?"

"She's vulnerable."

"You're a big softie."

I roll my eyes as I turn to continue watching the club. It's then that I see Miller approaching. His suit jacket is open and he's loosening his tie as Niko escorts him toward the VIP area. Miller stops at the bar and waits to order a drink.

"Your boy isn't too bright, is he? Does he know you own the club and he doesn't have to pay for drinks?" G says and throws back yet another drink.

"He'd know." I can't seem to wipe the damn smile off my face.

A chick approaches Miller and says something to him. He shakes his head and takes a step back. She counters and moves closer to him. "Oh shit," G says. "The world's filled with dumb fuckers who have a death wish."

I stand and watch as Miller takes another step back. He points toward the VIP area, and the girl doesn't even turn to acknowledge me. She runs her finger down his arm, and he flinches away. All I see is red, some slut thinks she can fuck with my man. With purpose, I head straight to Miller.

“Is she bothering you?” I say to him as I invade her personal space.

“I was just saying, if he gets bored...” The chick clicks her tongue and scans her eyes up and down my body. “I’ll be over there, baby.” She puts her hand on Miller’s chest.

My eyes widen, my blood boils with rage. I grab a fistful of her hair and slam her head on the bar. “You don’t fucking touch what’s mine,” I say.

The girl brings her hands to her nose, that’s more than likely broken because of the amount of blood oozing from it. “You broke my nose.”

“Count yourself lucky that’s all I’ve done.”

Miller takes his drink and hands the bartender money. But the bartender refuses it with a flick of his hand. “You’re gonna hear from my—”

I grab another fistful of her hair and yank it down. “Breathe a word of this, and I’ll gut you like a fucking fish. From here.” With my free hand I grab her pussy. “To here.” I run my hand up to her throat. I release her hair and lean in to whisper, “Don’t fuck with me.”

Her eyes redden and widen and she clutches at her throat. “I’m...”

“Everything alright?” G asks, flanking me on the right.

“Get a copy of her license, and throw her out.” I lift a warning finger. “If I ever see you again.” I stop and run my thumb across my throat. I look to Miller and gesture for him to follow. “What the fuck?”

“I think someone is a little possessive.”

I’m surprised by how unfazed he is with what happened. I thought he may have freaked out, but judging by his cool appearance, it doesn’t seem to have bothered him. “You’re not upset?”

“How can I be upset when the woman I love is willing to kill for me?”

I stop and place my hand on his forearm. “What?”

“I love you,” he says with absolutely no stutter or remorse. He rears back when I slap him across the face. “What’s that for?”

“Love is for pussies.”

“Are you trying to say you don’t love me? What the fuck just happened with the girl then?” He points over his shoulder.

“No one touches what’s mine.”

A stupid smirk tugs at his lips. “So you do love me then?”

“Breathe a word of this conversation to anyone and I’ll fucking slice your cock up and make pepperoni pizza with it.”

“You wouldn’t do that. You love my cock too much.” His smirk grows even wider and the asshole winks at me.

“What are you smirking at? Don’t tempt me.”

“You do love me.” He leans down to kiss my cheek but I back away. I turn and walk over to the bottle of scotch. Miller’s reflection is in the mirrored back wall behind the sofa, a proud and loud smile tugs at his lips.

How the hell did I get here?

CHAPTER 35

FRANKIE

I roll over in bed and see Miller on his side, facing away from me, snoring like a rumbling rocket about to take off.

I reach across and gently run my hand through his thick hair. He's not someone I thought I'd ever have in my bed more than once.

Pretty fucked up if you ask me. As a choice of suitor, I could do worse...I guess.

Wow, that's too much sentimental crap to start my day. If I kick a puppy that might make me feel better. I flick the covers back and head into the bathroom, before getting ready for my day. I head downstairs to find my brother, G, and Elena all sitting in the dining room while Mya is bringing out breakfast.

Elena's bump is certainly protruding and I couldn't imagine anything worse than growing a human. Actually, I lie, maybe pushing that fucker out would be worse.

"Good morning," Elena chirps.

I scan the room, and G snickers. Good morning? Since when are we so...*happy*? "Yeah," I reply and sit in my seat.

Mya brings me my morning coffee then places a plate in front of me so I can help myself from the breakfast smorgasbord she's created.

"This looks so good, thank you, Mya," Elena says.

Rome looks to the girl and smiles. Jesus, the way he's looking at her makes my stomach churn. For a guy who hasn't screwed her yet, he's hard-core obsessed.

Miller arrives downstairs dressed in one of the suits I bought. Damn, he looks good. I watch as he takes his place to my right and smile. Shit, am I turning into my brother? “I got word yesterday that your house will be ready in the next four weeks.”

“It will?” Miller lifts his coffee and takes a sip.

“I’ll have it furnished then rented.”

Miller lowers his mug and slowly turns his head toward me. “It’s my house.”

“I didn’t say it wasn’t.”

He clicks his tongue and shakes his head. “We’ll discuss this later.”

“There’s nothing to discuss.”

“I think I’ll have a nap.” Elena pushes her plate to the side, stands and exits the dining room.

“Can you wait until I’m done before you argue?” G asks.

“No one’s arguing,” I say.

“But you didn’t ask, you commanded,” Miller says. “I have to do what you tell me.”

“Do you want me to burn your house down again?”

“I’m out. I have work to do,” Rome says and stands to his feet. He taps G’s shoulder and juts his head to the side.

“Man, I was hoping to watch the boss shoot the politician.” G stands, wipes his mouth with a napkin and aggressively tosses it to the table. He looks to me, smirks like a mofo, then follows Rome to the office.

“Are we going to talk about this?”

“There’s nothing to talk about,” I say as I butter my toast.

“Shouldn’t you ask me what I want to do with *my* house?”

“Well.” I grimace. “Is it your house? I technically paid to have it built.”

“After you burnt it down,” he says with frustration.

“Which I can do again.”

Miller pinches the bridge of his nose and shakes his head. “You’re a pain in the fucking ass,” he grumbles. He takes a deep breath and lifts his chin to look at me. “Is this your way of asking me to move in?”

“Asking?” I screw my nose. “I’m not asking you to do anything, Miller.”

He lifts his arm to rest on the table as he rubs at his brows. “You make my blood pressure rise.”

“Do you need the doctor?”

“You do it!” he snaps. I try to hide the smile, but I can’t. “Look,” he starts with a calmer voice. “If you want me to move in, just ask.” I tilt my head and narrow my eyes. “Is asking such a foreign concept to you?” He moves his hands back and forth between us. “Is having a conversation so out there?”

I point to our room upstairs. “You live here now.”

“For fuck’s sake.” Miller rolls his eyes closed and allows his head to loll back. “Stop demanding, and just ask.”

“Why?”

“Because that’s what people in a relationship do.”

“I swear to God, if you say that L word again, I’ll kill you myself.”

He snaps his head up to stare at me. Miller’s eyes are wide, and his mouth is gaping open. “I…” He lifts his hand and points to me, then lowers it. “I…” Miller rapidly blinks and shakes his head. “How can you not comprehend that this needs to be a discussion?”

“There’s nothing to talk about. You live here, your house needs to be either sold or rented. What’s so hard to work out?”

He throws his arms up with annoyance, then smirks as he looks to me. “You’re lucky I love you.” Bastard. He’s only saying that because I won’t *talk* about his feelings and shit. “Fine. I’ll move in.”

“There was no other option.”

“I love you.”

“Shut up.”

“Tell me you love me.”

“You’re still breathing, aren’t you?”

“So, you do love me?”

“Pepperoni pizza,” I warn.

“Tell me you love me. Go on,” he pushes.

“We’re not talking about this.”

“Then *ask* me to move in with you.”

“What? No. This is now your home.”

“Either, you tell me you love me, or you ask me to move in with you. The choice is yours.”

“Pepperoni pizza,” I repeat.

Miller throws his head back and laughs. “You know,” he starts. But he stops and pushes up from his chair. He walks over to me, and jarringly moves my chair. He leans down and drags my hair to the side. “I love this crazy hair of yours.” Miller skims his fingertips across the back of my neck before forcibly gripping and squeezing. He licks below my ear, and my body instantly reacts. “You’re a pain in the fucking ass. But God, I love you.” He sucks my earlobe into his mouth and nips with pressure.

Moisture pools between my legs while my pussy throbs with desperation. “Fuck me,” I whisper.

Miller dips his hand into my pants, and rubs his thumb across my clit. I clench my thighs together as want overtakes my body. “If I lived here permanently I’d be able to fuck you whenever I want,” he whispers.

Damn bastard. He knows what he’s doing. I grab his wrist, and flick his hand away. I stand and back away from Miller. What pleases me is to see the bulge in his pants. “You do live

here,” I say and arch a brow, my own *screw you, buddy* smirk forming. I fold my arms in front of my chest.

“You’re the most stubborn person I know.”

I lift my chin, and head into my office. “Hell yeah, I am,” I call over my shoulder. “And I’m still not asking.”

I hear Miller’s bellow of a laugh.

We’re in a good place. I’m the boss outside the bedroom, he’s the boss inside of it. He knows it, I know it, and it works.

CHAPTER 36

JEREMY

What a day.

I walk into the bedroom and toss my suit jacket to the floor. Frankie is already in bed. She's got her laptop opened and is working on something. "What is it?" she asks.

"What?"

"You're angry." I sit on the side of the bed and run my hands through my hair, stressed. The bed dips behind me, and I feel Frankie massaging my shoulders. "Talk to me. What is it?"

Frankie isn't a tender person, but in this moment, she's not her normal authoritarian self. She's soft, and I like that about her. "It's work."

"What about it?"

"I'm not going to talk to you about it." Her hands squeeze my shoulders with too much force. "Hey." I turn to look at her, a cheeky grin tugs at her lips.

"Give me the abridged version, nothing specific. Maybe I can help."

"By killing people?" I say and shake my head.

"If that's what's needed."

"We're not killing anyone, Frankie."

"Tell me what's going on."

I loll my head back as she continues to massage my shoulders. “This feels nice,” I say and angle my head for a kiss.

“Don’t become a marshmallow on me, Miller.” Frankie squeezes my shoulders with an easy, friendly warning. She’s letting me know this is outside of her normal, and in truth, I’m okay with it. “Now, keep talking.” She stops massaging my shoulders, sits behind me and wraps her legs around my hips while she plays with my hair.

Who the hell is this woman? Is she a clone of Frankie? It doesn’t matter, I’ll take her tenderness as long as she’s willing to give it. Because I know, at any moment, she’ll become the hard-ass she always is.

“I had another visit from Tyler today. He’s my...”

“I know who he is,” Frankie cuts me off. “I told you; I can make him go away.”

“No,” I say adamantly as I rub at the tension on my temple. “You’re not killing him.”

There are a few seconds of silence before Frankie asks, “Why did he come to see you?”

“He’s digging, and wants to know how I got that tip. I’m afraid it’ll only be a matter of time before he gets a warrant and investigates me. Which will link me to you. And then, I don’t know what’ll happen.”

“My offer to –”

“No,” I snap. “We’re not killing him.”

“I can pay him off. Everyone has a price. And if he doesn’t, I could always *convince* him to leave you alone.”

“And how would you do that?”

“I’m positive he has a family member he loves,” she says with ease. I turn to look at her, staring into her molten dark eyes. “Don’t worry, I wouldn’t kill them. But I could motivate him by threatening or maybe even kidnapping them.”

“Frankie, no. Violence, kidnapping, killing, paying people off isn’t the answer.”

“Then what’s the alternative?”

That’s something I’ve been grappling with since the moment I realized how much Frankie means to me. I run my hand across my lips as I think about my response. “As much as I love what I do, I love you more. And if it comes down to it, I’ll resign.”

Her brows draw in creating a set of soft wrinkles across her forehead. “You’d do that, for me?”

“For you, I’d do anything.”

Frankie worries her lip between her teeth and slowly nods. “Then I’d give you a job.”

A humorless chuckle vibrates through me. “I’m not cut out to do anything in your world.”

“Don’t sell yourself short,” she teases. “I think you’d be a good bodyguard.”

I tilt my head back as a full belly laugh escapes. “A bodyguard?”

“*My* bodyguard,” she corrects.

“I wouldn’t let anything happen to you.”

“I know,” she says. “Which is why I wouldn’t ever ask you to do anything else.”

“Anything else? Meaning kill people?”

“Among other jobs.”

The absurdity of this conversation morphs onto reality. “How the hell did I end up falling in love with you?”

“Ugh, you have to stop using the L word.”

“Does it make you uncomfortable?” She waves her hands and drops them beside her body. “One day you’ll tell me you love me too.”

“Nope.” She shakes her head. “The best I can do is not kill you.”

“You know, you’re one walking red flag. If I was smart, I’d be running.”

“Pffft.” She flicks her hand dismissively. “I’d track you down and find you.”

“Now you’re a stalker too,” I tease.

“This isn’t new information.” She playfully narrows her eyes. “You had to know I’ve kept an eye on you for a while.”

“You stalked me?”

“Obviously,” she shamelessly admits.

“I can honestly say, I’m not even surprised.”

She leans forward and places her soft lips on mine. “You can keep telling me you love me, but for me, I’ll fucking kill anyone who touches you. That’s how you know I care.” She arches a brow. “But one word you’ll never bring up is marriage.”

“You don’t want to get married?” The thought had crossed my mind.

“God no! What for?”

“So, if I propose your answer will be no?” She looks around the room as a deep V crevasses her forehead. “What are you looking for?”

“My gun.” She pushes up from the bed, but I reach out and grab her by her cute black silky bed thing she’s wearing. “Let me go,” she warns.

“Or what?” I push back.

She steadies herself and shakes her head. “You like playing with fire, don’t you?”

I grab her hips and move Frankie to straddle my thighs. She makes me so damn hard. I love how ruthless she is, but how submissive she can be in the bedroom. I push my fingers into the base of her hair and tighten them into a fist. I yank her head to the side, exposing her flawless neck. “For a bad girl, you make me so fucking hard.”

“I don’t know, Miller, I think you like pushing me.”

I lean in to kiss her, but instead I draw Frankie’s lip between my teeth, and bite. “You need to be taught a lesson. Get up.” I lean back and wait for her to push off my hips. Like an obedient slut, she does. And I fucking love it.



I hit that wall hard as Miller easily over powers me, slamming me with a low thud.

He grips me tightly from behind, one hand around my waist and the other binding my wrists behind my back. I lean into him, his hot breath on my neck as his nose grazes my beating pulse. I try to resist but his grip tightens.

“If you fight me, this will be a vanilla fuck for you. Is that what you want, Frankie, a slow and steady fuck?” His every word drips with cruel sarcasm. I couldn’t think of anything worse and he knows it.

The hand around my waist pulls away, his weight still pushing against me. “Don’t fuck with me, Miller.”

A devious smile in my peripheral vision stops my next threat. He’s loosening his tie and when he removes it he wraps it around my wrists in an efficient, tight knot. It’s so firm it bites into my skin. Tension builds between my legs with anticipation.

He wraps his other fist around my hair, tugging my head back and arching my neck so forcefully a welcome pain shoots through my body. “What a rare sight to see you so obedient. Now bend over.”

He steps back enough to let me dip forward, my face awkwardly pushed against the wall as I spread my legs. His hand is still tightly wrapped around my hair, the other now gliding down on my back as he pushes his bulging cock at my

ass. My breath hitches as I wait patiently for him to free himself out of his zipper. I want it. I *need* it.

Miller yanks my hair as if drawing my attention back into position. My scalp is on fire but I fucking thrive on its pain. His hand glides down his zipper. I wait but instead of feeling his size against me, his hand glides down my thigh, curving over the globe of my ass. His hand comes down with force, the sting of his slap causing my body to shiver with want. A small moan escapes as another hard slap follows. The burn pulses but I can't help but focus on his less than gentle fingers as they dance against the edge of my thong. In one clean rip they're torn and dropped on the floor by my feet. A reminder that I own him outside the bedroom, but inside of it, I'm his fuck-toy.

My legs want to brush together to relieve the pressure building. His inquisitive fingers rub against my pussy. "Already soaking wet for me like my good girl."

"Just hurt me already, Miller," I growl. A hard yank tugs my neck further back and I can't help the crooked smile that spreads across my face.

"Don't move." I see the glint of a knife, my curious gaze wondering where he got it, what he might do with it or how far he'll go. With precise swiftness he cuts up the back of my silky nightgown, the material spilling to my front and dangling over my shoulders. One by one he cuts the shoulders away, catching the material, scooping it up and covering my face and head with it. My breaths are fast and heated. The fabric is almost impossible to breathe through.

He yanks me back by the hair, my body in an awkward position as I feel his possessive lips, on my collar bone, tits, followed by the sharp bite of his teeth grazing my nipples. I hiss, still trying to inhale as my heart pounds while my face is covered by the silky material. The delicious sting of his teeth has me momentarily pulling at my bound hands, but I can't escape. *Nor do I want to.*

He's attentive to every part of my body but the one that's pounding for him. His hot breath only inches from my skin.

Miller's taking his time, torturing me in the process. I just want him to hurt me. But I know if I beg for it... demand it even, he'll take his sweet time.

He knows and toys with me as he pushes my boundaries. I obey because the pain is a need and not a want. With my own silky nightdress being used to torture me. I'm unable to see, I'm exposed, vulnerable and he loves it, he has total control of me.

I hear his clothing hit the floor and I wait with anticipation. In those few moments I relish the pain, the throb of my ass, the raw sting of my nipples and the sharp shallow breaths through the sleek fabric. And my pussy is absolutely soaking.

Like a calming balm of relief, I feel the head of his cock push against my inner thighs. He toys with me, rubbing it back and forth at the entrance of my pussy as I arch myself trying to force myself on him. But when I do, he pulls away.

"For fuck's sake, Miller," I breathe.

A dark chuckle follows as I feel him pull away entirely before his rough fingers are on my clit, circling and pinching, so sharp it vibrates up my spine. I buck forward with a cry. He assaults me with his fingers as his mouth bites and rips at my shoulder and throat. Animalistic and primal. Marking me as his as he breaks me from the inside palming my pussy with the knowledge that it belongs to him.

A part of me hates how compliant I am with him in the bedroom, another part of me craves more of his abuse.

I soak his hand, my breaths hot and shallow and I'm not entirely sure if I might actually pass out. But I cling to the sensation because I want more. The build is slow and then voracious, taking over my body as I fight the orgasm building. "Is this what my slut wants?" He places his hand over my face forcing my breath to become shallow and erratic as I gasp. I love his degradation nearly as much as I love the pain he brings.

"Yes," I explode as my orgasm takes over. His cock isn't even inside me, but the fact my life is in his hands has caused

me to come so hard.

My trembling legs barely hold me up as Miller peels the material off of my face and I let out a shaky gasp. He kisses my shoulder as he unties my wrists. I pant as I catch my breath, but I realize I'm still on fire for this man. This straight-laced politician who is light to my darkness. How have I found myself in this position?

Once my hands are unbound, he gently scoops me into his arms before I can manage anything myself. He drops me onto the bed, the subtle bounce eliciting a small groan.

He spreads my legs wide, his mouth already on my clit as he devours every drop. The assault has my eyes rolling in the back of my head. This dominant possessive man eating every inch of me. He holds my hips down, preventing me from wriggling when he hits that sensitive spot that he continues to tease. When I challenge him and try to adjust myself, he forcefully pushes me back down with another growl which sends a delicious vibration through me.

Fuck me. This man and his tongue. I can't stop arching into him as another wave threatens to erupt. He sinks his teeth into my clit, being my undoing as he holds me down even when I buck and pull.

On the come-down he stands over me. I know my hair is sweaty and splayed around me and my body proudly displays the brilliant marks from this man. He grabs one of my legs and drags me to the end of the bed.

I'm flipped on my stomach, and he pulls my hips up to meet his cock. Before my very next breath he slams into me. My pussy isn't given any time to adjust to his size as he begins to pound my cunt ferociously. My sensitive nipples brush back and forth on the sheets as he pins the back of my neck to the firm mattress.

"My cock sends you crazy, doesn't it?" I bite my lip. Because I want to be punished for not answering him. He places his foot on the bed and slams into me. From this new angle it strokes a different spot. "Speak, Frankie." He moves slower now, eventuating the movement. I want him to go hard

and pound me again. His thumb brushes against my asshole and I instinctually lean into him further. I want him filling every hole, from every angle. A loud slap on my ass has me bucking. “You don’t move unless I tell you. I’m the only one doing the fucking and you’re going to take it.”

Miller is controlling and downright dominant. “Are you upset because I won’t answer your question?” I ask innocently. Which is foreign to the both of us but arousing all the same. His hand finds my ass again and I hold the urge to moan. “Fuck please do that again.”

Smack. Smack.

“I own you in this room and you should be grateful I’m feeling especially kind tonight.” He says as he slaps my ass again, just how I want it. “Do you want more?” My ass will be bruised for days. *Yes!*

“I do,” I whisper into the sheets. His cock assaults my pussy again, filling me as his thumb slowly enters my ass, jerking me. I try my hardest not to move. To avoid matching him thrust for thrust. Being obedient and just taking it as he fucks out my brains. As much as I know he enjoys this, I’m also relinquishing my control to him because it serves me too.

I feel every groove on his large cock. I twist my head slightly, barely enough but I see it. The animalistic lust this man harbors for me. His gaze meets mine and his speed intensifies. Neither of us look away as he fucks me exactly how he wants to. How he needs to. How we both need it to be. He wants to break me.

He pushes my hips lower so I’m almost flat on the bed. He’s deep inside of me, making me a hot mess. He scrunches his eyes closed and plummets into me, a deep growl of desire escaping his chest. My pussy tightens around his pulsating cock. My own body reacts to the sexy veins protruding from his neck as he uses me for his own pleasure.

From nowhere a third orgasm tears through my body. I lower my head for a second to lean against the mattress while I catch my spinning head.

“Watch,” Miller commands. When I turn to look, he pulls out of me, leans back and tugs on his cock. The reminder of his cum sprays across my back. Streams of warmth mingle with my own sweat. I look between my legs, and see drops of his cum land on the sheet. “Fucking perfect,” he says as he wipes his finger across his cum. “Suck.” He pushes into it my mouth, and like the greedy whore I am, I lick it and watch him, desperate for more.

Miller rears his hand back, and spans my ass so much it jolts me forward. “I don’t think I could have another orgasm,” I say though wish he’d give me more.

His hot breath is at my ear. “Good, because you’re not getting another.” And just like that, Miller disappears into the bathroom. I go to move, but he calls, “Don’t fucking move, stay where you are.”

My brain is fighting with me, I’ll never let a man tell me what to do.

Unless of course it’s Miller, and it’s in the bedroom.

I stay, and wait. Because we both know, in the bedroom, he controls me. Outside of it, I rule with an iron fist.

EPILOGUE

FRANKIE

“So...” G says as he takes a deep breath. I peer over the laptop and wait for him to finish his sentence. G lifts his mug and sips on his coffee before adding, “The politician, eh?”

“What about him?” I find myself crossing my arms in front of my chest, instantly protective of Miller.

G shifts in his seat and clears his throat. “You two are together now?”

My jaw tightens and I slowly blink. “Why?” I ask with tension.

“I take it he’s off limits.”

A small smirk stretches my mouth. “I didn’t realize you were so...” I pause for dramatic effect, “...into him.” I waggle my brows.

“What?” he shrieks. “No, that’s not what I meant.”

Rome enters the office and catches the end of G’s statement. He stops and looks between G and me. “What are you talking about?”

“G has an interest in Miller,” I tease.

“No, I don’t,” G defensively slings.

“As in, you want to...” Rome pauses and lifts his brows. “How do you feel about G wanting to ride the politician?” my brother asks.

“Fuck,” G groans and runs his hand through his hair. “I’m not gay.” Rome and I both laugh. “Fuck off, the both of you.” G points to Rome, then me.

“So, what is happening between you and the politician?” Rome asks as he settles into his seat and opens his laptop.

“Are you interested too?”

“No, I wanna know if I have to get my tux ready.”

I narrow my eyes at my brother. “No,” I say with a mixture of certainty and disgust.

“Come on, we can all see it. Mrs. Frankie Miller,” my brother continues to taunt.

“If we ever got married, and let me tell you that’s a bloody big if, he would be Jeremy DeLuca.”

“Ew.” Rome screws his nose up. “No thanks.” He waves his hand and shakes his head simultaneously.

“It’s not your choice, it’s mine and Miller’s.”

“You’re actually thinking about getting married?” G’s voice elevates with surprise.

“God, no!” I balk at the thought. “Miller knows that marriage is off the table for me.” I look to Rome, hoping to deflect these ridiculous questions. “What about you and the girl? You’re close to her.”

“As in Elena?” G asks. I nod causing G’s eyes to widen and a soft ‘oh’ to tumble from his lips.

“She’s so frightened about everything. She’s keeping me at arm’s length because she thinks her father is going to do something.”

“Her father is an asshole,” G says.

“Soon to be a dead asshole,” I add. “Where’s Elena now?”

“She had to go back to the lady doctor for her...” He makes a circular motion around his stomach.

“For the baby?” I ask. Rome confirms with a grunt. “That’s right, the appointment is today. I’m surprised though, I

thought you'd be with her."

"I've got work to do, and I don't want to come across as pushy."

"Pushy? You're a DeLuca, you don't know the meaning of the word." I flip G off and he releases a wholehearted laugh. "Like your sister." G jerks his head toward me. I arch a brow as I stare at G, silencing his teasing cackle with a hard look. "Sorry," he mutters as he lowers his head. Though the wide smirk tells a totally different story.

"Good for you, Rome. Show her who the boss is," I say with my own grin because I know, my brother has fallen for the girl, *hard*.

"Are you antagonizing me, sis?"

"Who me?" I ask as I feign hurt while lifting my hand to place to my chest.

"How are things with the politician going?" Rome provokes.

Fucker.

G stands, takes his phone out of his pocket and heads out of the office. "Yeah?" I hear him as he walks into the hallway.

"Frank," Rome starts. He looks toward the door then back to me. "Can I ask you something?"

Obviously he doesn't want to talk in front of G. "What?"

"What do you think about..." He gestures to his chest and flicks his hand away. "About..."

"Spit it out, Rome."

"Elena is an Augusta, and they're one of our rivals. I mean, how will this look to our men?"

"I don't give a fuck how it looks," I answer honestly. "If you want her, claim her, if you don't, then she's out."

"You can't throw her out now, Frank. Especially considering she's been here for a while. And, before you know it, she'll have the baby."

“Ugh, great.” I roll my eyes. “I’ll need to soundproof the house.”

“Yes please. I can hear you and the politician sometimes. That’s when I sleep downstairs.”

“Sucks to be you. That reminds me, I’ll change the bed to a pull-out sofa downstairs.”

“That’ll screw my back up,” Rome argues.

I snort as I laugh. “That’s the whole point, *fucker*,” I tease.

“You can be cruel when you want to be, you know that?”

The door springs open with so much force the handle slams up against the wall, creating a divot. I instantly stand to my feet, open my top drawer and reach for my weapons. G is amped up, which means something has happened. “What is it?” I ask as I check the rounds in my gun, preparing for the worst.

“They killed all our men and got her,” G says and turns to face Rome.

All the color drains from Rome’s face as the realization of G’s words seep in. “Elena?” he breathes with a sharp clipped tone.

My own body breaks out into goosebumps. I turn to G and say, “Her father got to her.”

G nods.

There’s a second of silence before Rome releases an angry roar. He grabs the edge of his desk and flips it to the side. G moves to step forward but I shake my head and lift my hand to stop him.

I’d fucking gut anyone who’d dare to touch Miller, so I can imagine the fury pumping through my brother’s veins.

Rome steps back and looks around the destroyed office. His desk is overturned, one of the bookshelves has been torn off the wall, and there’s a scattering of debris in my ordinarily clean, neat office.

Rome's crimson face, wide eyes and clenched hands tells me everything. "You know what this means?" he asks in an eerily cool and collected voice.

"I do." My muscles jump as I rock back on my heels and nod once to my brother.

A calm flows over him as he sucks in an agitated breath. Something has changed in my brother, and I love how he's taken on the role he was born for.

My underboss.

My second in command.

He's finally a DeLuca through and through.

"This means war, Frank. I'm going to tear Augusta apart, limb by fucking limb."

A slow smile tugs at my lips.

Finally. "Let's go to war."

COMING SOON

Rome and Elena's story....

Mob King

DID YOU ENJOY READING ABOUT THE SACCO MEN?

THE VIPER

PROLOGUE

ROSE

My breath catches when I walk into the room. My older sister looks amazing, staring at herself in the mirror. The white dress hugs her body, showing off her beautiful curves. Her sheer veil falls softly over her face, somewhat concealing her bright blue eyes.

“Hey,” I say as I approach her.

Eliza lifts her chin to look at me in the reflection of the mirror. “Hey,” she replies and offers me a slight smile.

My gut churns with unease. “What’s going on?”

She dips her chin again for only a few seconds before she takes a deep breath and smiles wider. “I’m just nervous.”

I step closer and stand by her side, forcing Eliza to turn to me. I lift her veil and stare into her eyes. “There’s something else. What is it?” I skim my gaze down her strapless white wedding dress, and I notice a small, fading bruise on her shoulder. “What’s this?” I brush the veil away and run my fingertips over the fading bruise.

Eliza’s eyes widen as she intakes a sharp breath. “It’s nothing,” she dismisses easily.

“What is it?”

“I ran into a door,” she says with an added hand flick. “It’s nothing.”

I narrow my eyes at her, and shake my head. “If you don’t want to do this, you don’t have to.” Eliza’s brows furrow together. “I’ll go out there and tell Adrian you’re not ready to marry him.”

“No!” She nearly leaps at me. “Don’t do that.” Eliza averts her eyes and sucks in a shallow breath. “I’m fine,” she finally says in a small voice. “Like I said, I’m nervous. And I guess I wish Mom and Dad were here. But...” She looks at me with tears in her eyes. There’s something more to her words. “They’re not.” Eliza’s chin quivers as she attempts to hold back the tears. “I wish they were here to...” She catches herself before she continues.

“Here to what?”

Eliza lifts her chin and returns her gaze to the mirror. “I miss them,” she says with little conviction.

“I know this wedding happened fast, hell I’ve barely met any of his family. But I miss them too and I think they’d be proud of you.” I step forward and hug Eliza. We stand together for a long moment. Eliza’s body slowly softens as her arms tighten around me.

“Rose, can I let you in on a secret?”

I step back and slide my arms down until we’re holding hands. “Of course. What is it?”

Eliza blinks several times to hold back her tears. “I’m not sure I want to marry Adrian.” I pull away from her, and start heading toward the door. “Where are you going?”

“To tell Adrian the wedding is off. You’re not ready for this.”

“No!” Eliza leaps forward, grabbing me by the upper arm and thrusting me back. “Don’t do that.”

“Why? If you’re not ready to marry him, then you don’t have to do it.”

She releases my arm and walks over to the steepled window in the bride's room in this ornate church. "You don't get it."

"Get what?"

"These people don't take 'no' for an answer." She points toward the front of the church. "Besides, there are over three hundred people waiting for this to happen. Not to mention Adrian."

"I don't care about those people. I care about you. And only you. If you're not ready, we can just leave. We don't even need to return home. We'll..." I shake my head as I try to think of a plan. "We'll..."

"We'll what? Our parents are dead, so they can't help." She snorts and rolls her eyes. "Not like they would. Plus, you're just a barista in a café and I don't work. Where do you think we can go where he won't find me?"

"Why are you with him?" I ask.

Eliza turns to look out the window again. She slowly shrugs and lets out an audible sigh. "I have to, Rose," she says in a small voice.

"No, you don't. We can jump in the car and leave. You don't have to do this."

Eliza pulls her shoulders back and turns to look at me. "Could you let Adrian know I'm ready?" she asks in a strong, confident voice. This request is the complete opposite to how she was acting only a few seconds ago. "Please?"

"Eliza." I advance toward her, attempting to plead with her to see reason.

"Please?" she repeats and lifts her brows. "I'm ready now."

"You don't have to do this," I beg. "You're not happy; I can see it. It's so damned obvious," the tension in my voice is laced with frustration. "I don't want you marrying a man you don't love."

Eliza lifts her chin and arches a brow. "I love him," she says in an even tone. "I love Adrian very much."

No, she doesn't. But, what can I do? My shoulders slump forward as I shake my head. "Eliza," I plead for one last time.

"Please let Adrian know I'm ready."

The pain in my chest tells me I need to stop this wedding. But if I do, I'm afraid Eliza will hate me forever, and I can't live a life without my sister. We've already suffered enough at the murder-suicide of our parents, I don't want us to have to go through life without each other. The lump in my throat makes it hard to genuinely smile. "Sure," I say as I head toward the door.

I stand for a moment, watching Eliza, hoping she changes her mind. But, instead, she stares out of the window and refuses to look at me. I don't want this for her, but it's her choice.

I walk out and head toward the front of the church, where I expect Adrian to be. But I find Adrian, and two other men standing outside. Two are smoking, but the older one isn't.

One of the men sees me first and instantly stamps out his cigarette. He stands taller and smiles. "You must be Rose. You look beautiful," he says as he advances toward me. He instantly causes my breath to hitch. His eyes bore into me, making my pulse quicken. "I'm Dominic, Adrian's younger brother." Fuck, he's Adrian's brother? He's probably one of the most beautiful men I've ever seen, with his dark tousled hair, square jawline and intense auburn eyes.

Up until recently, I'd never met Adrian. But I'd heard rumors about the Sacco family and how notoriously dangerous they are. I take a step backward, stopping his advance. I can't allow his presence to overtake my sanity. "Thank you," I say through a clenched jaw. I look toward Adrian and cast my gaze once over his body. "She's ready." My tone is short and clipped.

The older of the three walks around the two brothers. His bodyguards all form a protective barrier behind him. "Rose, you truly are breathtaking." I straighten as he gives me two small kisses on the cheeks.

“Who are you?”

The men all laugh. “My apologies. I’m Ruben, Adrian and Dominic’s uncle.” I thought that was him. “You’re quite striking.” I should be grossed out.

His face is hard, almost suspicious though his actions and words are a complete contradiction. I flick a look at Adrian from over Ruben’s shoulder and sneer. “Thank you.” I’m no fool, I’d known the names, but now I can put faces to the names. Ruben Sacco is high up in the underworld and his nephews – the Sacco brothers – work for him. What their exact roles are, I have no idea. In truth, I don’t want to know either. I just wish my sister had never become involved with Adrian, although their relationship was very fast.

One day she was studying to work in childcare, and the next she came home telling me she’d met a man she could see herself marrying. Fast forward a month, and here we are. Ridiculously fast.

Ruben turns and gestures for Adrian and Dominic to follow. Dominic steps forward, and as he passes me he whispers, “You’re stunning.”

“Thank you,” I reply curtly. I haven’t really given Dominic a chance, because I figure he and Adrian are cut from the same cloth. I mean, aren’t they all? I look to Adrian and let out a murmured groan. “I’ll see you in there,” I say.

“You know,” Adrian starts, stopping me from entering the church. I look at him from over my shoulder and see he’s quickly caught up to me. “You and I will be related in a few short minutes.”

“Only by marriage,” I reply flatly while I try to turn back into the church. His hand lands on my ass, and I turn to look at him while moving my body away from him. “What the fuck do you think you’re doing?”

He winks at me and slowly licks his lips while scanning my figure-hugging dress. “Don’t I get a two for one deal?”

“Fuck off,” I say and quickly move away.

“My dick will be in your pussy, Rose. The only question is, do we fuck in front of your sister, or behind her back? The choice is yours.”

I turn and poke my finger into his shoulder. “You’re a fucking pig. Don’t ever touch me again.” He smirks and sweeps his tongue over his lip. There’s a curdling deep in my gut.

“I bet you taste better than your sister.” He clicks his tongue to the roof of his mouth.

I back away from him while shaking my head. “You’re marrying my sister, and hitting on me. Are you for real?”

Adrian grabs onto his crotch and squeezes it once. “Come feel, and you’ll see how serious I am.”

“Fucking pig,” I repeat as I back away from him. I make my way down the hallway toward my sister. I have to tell her what he did. She has to call this wedding off. I burst into the room to find Eliza back in front of the mirror. She’s staring at herself with the saddest look in her eyes. “Eliza.”

“Is he ready?”

I slam the door shut and point out the front. “He grabbed my ass.”

Eliza lifts a hand to place on her chest while she hesitantly turns to look at me. Her grimace morphs into a smile and she drops her hand and waves it once. “He’s such a jokester.”

I feel my own eyes prickling with tears. How can she not believe me? “It doesn’t matter what I say, does it?” I don’t understand how she can go through with this.

“Adrian loves me,” Eliza says flatly. She doesn’t believe her own words, so why is she doing this? Is he holding something over her?

I can’t save her because my sister doesn’t want to be saved. “Okay,” I say, cut to the core. “He loves you.” There’s nothing I can say or do to stop Eliza from marrying him if she truly believes that.

She moves past me and heads for the door. “Let’s do this,” she says with an obvious level of resignation.

“Sure.” I open the door and wait until she’s out before I close it and catch up to her. Standing at the entrance of the church, I look out at the sea of people, most of whom I don’t know. I’m not sure if Eliza knows who they are either. “Do you know any of the people here?” I whisper as she peeks.

“Only a handful. But they’re all associates of Adrian’s, so it’s important to him to have them here.”

“Who’s paying for all of this?”

“Ruben has been kind enough to do so. He looks after the people who work for him.”

“What exactly do they do again?” I ask and squint my eyes, challenging her to speak the words.

She shrugs. “Doesn’t matter. I’m not involved.”

“Ladies, you both look perfect,” Dominic says as he heads toward me.

“Thank you,” Eliza says.

I give him a small smile. The quicker we can get this over with, the sooner I can be away from him and his captivating looks. The music starts and I turn to look at Eliza, silently begging her to stop this. “Maybe you should go stand up next to your brother, and I can walk Eliza down the aisle,” I offer.

“We’ve already been through this, Rose. I’m going to walk myself. I’ll be fine.”

“Miss Hopkins?” Dominic arches his arm so I can loop mine through his. I look once more at my sister, hoping she will come to her senses, but she doesn’t. I don’t even know why Dominic is doing this. It’s not very traditional, considering this is a conventional wedding. Dominic leads me down the long aisle. “You don’t like us very much, do you?”

“I don’t know you,” I whisper as we walk toward Adrian who’s not even looking to where Eliza will enter from.

“We’re not bad guys.”

“Huh,” I reply, emotionless.

“We’re not. Maybe, you should come to one of our family dinners.”

“No, thanks.” Dominic’s aftershave drifts past me and I catch myself deeply inhaling the ocean breeze smell. I glance at him, and can’t help but like the way he looks in his expensive, fitted black suit.

“I’d be honored if you came as my guest to our next dinner.”

“No, thanks,” I repeat.

He tightens his arm around mine as we approach the altar, where the cardinal is standing in his crisp red and white gown. He’s clutching a Bible in his hand and offers me a soft nod and smile. “I insist,” he whispers, not letting my arm go.

I turn and smile at him. “How about, fuck off?” I snatch my arm back and give him a nod.

Dominic smirks as he steps back to stand next to his brother. The music changes and I look down the aisle, secretly hoping and praying that Eliza has bolted from the church. Although I think Ruben’s men guarding the church probably wouldn’t let her go. Alas, my wish is quashed when Eliza appears at the entrance. Everyone in the church stands to their feet as she floats toward us.

“Wow,” I hear someone whisper from the front. I look to see Ruben intently watching Eliza. His eyes are wide, his shoulders are pulled back and he’s smiling at her. He can’t drag his eyes away from my beautiful sister.

She walks past Ruben and flicks a glance to him. Eliza’s eyes light up with happiness when she sees Ruben staring at her. He’s looking at her like she’s the sun, and he’s completely mesmerized by her.

The glance is small and discreet, but I catch Adrian glaring at her. Has something happened between Ruben and Eliza? Have they had a moment? Why isn’t she with him? He’s single and judging by the look they both exchanged, they like one another.

A small smile tugs at my lips as I see Ruben out of my peripheral vision watching Eliza. The cardinal begins the ceremony and a part of me hopes Ruben stops this madness.

But as the moments melt into one long ceremony, he doesn't. My heart hurts for my sister, because for some reason, she believes she has to go through with this.

I drop my gaze to look at the floor as the ceremony nears its conclusion. Someone clears their throat and I look up to catch Dominic watching me. He offers me a small smile with a slight nod. It's almost like he knows they shouldn't be getting married too.

Wait, is Dominic as opposed to this wedding as I am?

Whatever. All I know is I'm going to be there for my sister, and if she tells me she wants out, then I'll move heaven and hell to make that work.

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