

A man in a dark suit and white shirt is shown in profile, holding a lit cigar. He is looking down at the woman next to him. The woman has long, dark hair and is wearing a black lace dress. She is looking up at the man with a soft expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

A DARK MAFIA ROMANCE

**UNDER
COVER
AGENT**

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Chapter 1

When Mia walked into the meeting room at the Manhattan FBI headquarters, all heads turned to look at her.

She was exactly seven minutes late, and the meeting had already started. She cursed internally. She'd changed her shirt a hundred times that morning, desperate to look perfect and respectable for her first day as a proper FBI agent. But instead, she'd made herself late.

"Nice of you to join us, Mia," said John Waterson, the agent-in-charge of the New York division.

Mia sat down sheepishly at the table.

All eyes were still on her.

"I'm sorry," Mia said.

“Now that our newest agent is here, let’s get started,” John said. “Greyson? What do you have for us?”

Greyson was cute, in a nerdy way. He stood up and clicked a presentation onto the large computer screen on the wall.

The first slide showed a bunch of photos of various people, connected by lines.

“This is the Rossi family tree. They’re the biggest mafia family in New York, with ties reaching all across the country, and even back to Italy.”

He clicked to the next slide. It showed two photos, both of very good looking Italian men.

“This is Lorenzo and Alessandro Rossi, sons of the boss. We think Alessandro might be our way into the family. Our data shows that he’s the most open to new people. I’ve secured entry to a party tonight, as a guest of one of our informants. We need an agent to go in and try to make their way into the good graces of the family.”

John nodded.

“Great work. O’Reilly, you’ll go.”

O’Reilly was an experienced field agent in his 40s, whose chest puffed up at being chosen.

Greyson cleared his throat.

“What is it, Greyson?” John said.

“Lorenzo and Alessandro are international party boys. They’re used to a certain type of uh... look.”

He clicked through to the next slide, showing the brothers partying in clubs and on yachts, always surrounded by beautiful women.

“I think we need a woman on this. A young one.”

John looked around the room. Everyone was older, in their 30s and 40s.

This was a huge case, Mia thought. The type that could make or break an agent.

“I can do it,” Mia heard herself say.

All eyes were on her again. She couldn't quite believe that she'd spoken, but she was in it now.

“It's your first day,” John said.

“I can do it,” she insisted.

John ran his eyes up and down her body, taking in the curves and the long brown hair.

“Let's get you some wardrobe.”

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Chapter 2

Mia stood in front of Allure nightclub, hot in the humid night air. She was dressed in a tight red mini-dress, with sky-high heels. The FBI makeup team had done a great job with her hair and makeup—she hardly recognised herself.

On the outside, she looked a million bucks. But on the inside, she was freaking out. How was she going to pull this off? She'd wanted to be an FBI agent since she was 14 and she'd finally become an agent at age 24, top of her class. But she was the newest agent in the division, only just passed her exams. She had no field experience, no idea how to run an undercover operation.

She'd thrown herself in the deep end, and there were sharks everywhere!

The Rossi's weren't just a Mafia family—they were THE Mafia family.

Mia had studied their file. There were over 40 unsolved murders that the FBI thought were carried out by the Rossi's, but they couldn't prove any of them. That was a lot of people who never went home, with no explanation.

And now she was about to swim right into the shark tank.

Mia felt someone grab her arm. It was Bethany, the informant. She was a bit older, around 30. She was tall and beautiful and very confident.

“You ready?” She asked.

Mia nodded.

“You remember everything?” She asked.

“Yes,” Mia said. “We met in the Hamptons, we've been hanging out and partying. You've met my family and I'm all above board.”

It stung Mia to talk about her family, even if it was her fake undercover family. Bethany didn't know about her real parents. Tears welled up in Mia's eyes as she thought about them.

“Jesus, why do you look so sad? We're meant to be party girls.”

Mia shook the thoughts of her parents out of her head. She plastered on a smile.

“Let's do this.

Inside, Allure was absolutely pumping. It was packed full of what seemed to be every beautiful person in New York.

The music was loud, a thumping dance music. Women in silver bikinis danced in cages high above the dance floor, which looked like a sea of sweaty bodies.

Mia felt instantly out of place. How was she going to pull this off?

Bethany led her to the back of the club, where a velvet rope separated the main club from the VIP section. A security guard looked them up and down as they approached.

Bethany smiled at him, and he opened the rope and let her in.

But he put up a hand to stop Mia.

“I don’t know you,” he said.

“Ummm..” Mia stumbled.

“She’s with me,” Bethany said.

The security guard didn’t look happy, but he let her in.

The VIP section seemed quieter and more intimate than the main club. It was only for the chosen ones, the extra special and beautiful.

And holding court in the middle, seated on red velvet lounge chairs, were the kings—Lorenzo and Alessandro.

Mia swallowed.

They were even more gorgeous than in their photos.

Alessandro was her mark. He was tall, blonde, with striking green eyes. He was dressed in a very expensive dark suit, with shoes perfectly shined. He was leaning over in his chair, talking to a blonde woman who Mia was sure she’d seen in a perfume ad in last month’s Vogue.

Next to Alessandro was Lorenzo. They were vastly different in looks and energy—though equally tall, Lorenzo had dark eyes and dark hair, which he wore longer than Alessandro’s. Lorenzo sat with one leg up on his chair, and wore his shirt unbuttoned, revealing his chiselled chest and abs. His skin gleamed with sweat.

He was also talking to a couple of beautiful women, but he seemed less interested. He glanced around the room and his eyes met Mia’s. It was like a bolt of electricity coursed

through her whole body. Every hair stood on end when his gaze met hers.

Mia looked away—she had to stay focused. Alessandro was her mark. She couldn't get distracted.

Bethany led Mia right up to where the brothers were sitting.

She physically pushed the blonde model out of the way.

“Excuse me?” The model said.

“You're excused,” Bethany said.

The model walked away in a huff. Bethany sat in her place.

“Hey Al.”

Alessandro watched the blonde leave, but he seemed amused by the situation.

“Bethany,” Alessandro said. “My favorite cousin. You know I love seeing you, but do you always have to drive the women away?”

“She wasn't that great.”

“She's a Victoria's Secret model.”

“I know you, Al. You would have fallen in love with her tonight, then dumped her by Monday.”

Alessandro laughed.

“That's true.”

Bethany pulled Mia down to sit beside her.

“Al, this is my friend Mia.”

Alessandro took Mia's hand and kissed it.

“Mi amore,” he said.

Mia smiled, but she couldn't help but steal a glance at Lorenzo, who was scrolling on his phone and ignoring the group of women dying to get his attention.

“How do you know my cousin?” Alessandro asked.

“We met at the Hamptons,” Mia said.

“We’re best friends,” Bethany said.

Alessandro laughed at this. “And you’ll dump her by Monday.”

Alessandro waved his hand to get the attention of the waiter.

“Bring us a bottle of Cristal. We’re celebrating a new friend.”

The waiter nodded and walked off.

Alessandro was about to talk again, when there was a commotion behind them.

Lorenzo leapt from his chair, yelling “HEY!”.

He stormed over to where a man was drinking with two women.

“I saw what you just did,” Lorenzo said to the man.

“I didn’t do anything.”

“You put something in her drink.”

“No I didn’t.”

“I saw you.”

“Fuck off.”

Lorenzo grabbed the man by the collar and threw him to the ground. People started yelling and screaming as Lorenzo hit the man in the face, over and over. Blood covered his face, and Lorenzo’s fist.

Finally, the security guard came and busted it up.

“He’s spiking girls’ drinks,” Lorenzo explained.

The security guard nodded and dragged the man away.

Lorenzo leant down in front of the two women, who were sitting in stunned silence.

“Are you okay?”

They both nodded.

“Did you drink any?”

“No,” one of them said. “You came over just in time.”

They both stared up at him in awe. He looked even more gorgeous now he was worked up.

“Do you want to come to our after party?”

They both nodded again.

Mia could only stare at Lorenzo, all thoughts of Alessandro gone from her mind. Lorenzo stood up, his muscles rippling.

Alessandro stood up.

“After party at our place!”

He put his hand out to Mia. “Are you coming?”

“Sure,” Mia said.

She was in.

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Chapter 3

The afterparty was in a huge penthouse suite, overlooking the lights of Manhattan.

The lights were dim, and chill out music played on the speakers.

When Mia and Bethany walked in, Bethany quickly broke off to talk to friends. Mia stood awkwardly, unsure what to do.

She found a spot in the corner and sipped on a soda water, watching the partiers talk and dance.

A group were openly snorting cocaine from the coffee table, sharing around a rolled-up hundred dollar bill.

In the middle of the room, Alessandro danced with two women. They draped themselves over him, while he ran his hands up and down their bodies.

Near the front door, a man and a woman fought loudly, while she cried.

The music grew louder and Mia's head started to hurt. She spied the set of glass doors leading out onto the balcony. She just needed some air to clear her head.

Mia stepped out onto the balcony and walked further around the corner, away from the view of the living room party.

She leaned against the railing, breathing in the crisp night air. The lights of the city looked beautiful, twinkling like stars.

“Shouldn't you be inside partying?”

Mia turned at the sound of the deep, smooth voice.

It was Lorenzo, sitting on a chair, sipping from a bottle of water. He had his shirt off completely and his hair was tousled.

Mia tried to calm her nerves.

“I'm not the biggest party girl.”

“Didn't you come with Bethany? If you're with her, you're a party girl.”

He held out a bottle of water, and she took it gratefully.

“Maybe I'm trying to be something I'm not.”

“Aren't we all?”

“You don't look like you are.”

“You've known me for, what, two minutes? You don't know what I am and what I'm not.”

Mia took a sip of her water.

“I saw you at the club tonight, beating up that guy.”

“So?”

“So, I think you're a good person.”

Lorenzo laughed. It was gruff and sexy and made Mia weak in the knees.

“Do you have any idea who I am?” He asked.

Mia shrugged, in a way that she hoped look casual.

Lorenzo stood up and approached her. “You have no idea where you are? Who you’re with?”

“Bethany said you’re in construction.”

Lorenzo was right in front of her now. He brushed his hand along her face and she shivered.

“You’re just another bimbo friend of Bethany’s aren’t you?”

“Excuse me?”

Lorenzo yawned and stretched. He looked out over the city.

“Excuse me?” Mia repeated.

“Bethany brings girls like you around all the time. Trust fund girls, privileged babies who’ve never had to work for anything in their lives.”

“You don’t know what I am and what I’m not.”

“I know enough, princess.”

Without realizing what she was doing, Mia slapped him across the face.

Lorenzo froze, not expecting it.

“Don’t call me princess.”

She stormed off back to the party.

Back inside, Mia tried to focus on Alessandro. He was, as usual, surrounded by women, and he seemed to have forgotten her.

Mia noticed the sliding doors open and Lorenzo slip back in. He wouldn't look at her, and she did her best to ignore him.

Mia sat down next to Bethany.

"How's it going?" Bethany asked.

"I don't know. I'm pretty close to calling it a night."

Bethany looked up at someone who had just walked in—a stunning blonde dressed in leather trousers and a barely-there top. She waved at the newcomer.

"Who's that?" Mia asked.

"That's Gabriella. Lorenzo's sort-of girlfriend."

"Sort of?"

"They've been off and on for years. Seems a little more on at the moment."

Gabriella noticed Lorenzo talking to a couple of guys in the corner, and went straight up to him. She wrapped her arms around his waist and kissed his neck.

Lorenzo turned to see who it was. He gave Gabriella a cold look, and pulled her arms off him. She whispered angrily at him, but Mia couldn't make out what she was saying.

"Well," Bethany said. "We're moving on to another club. Do you want to come with?"

"No. I'm going to head home."

"Alright, well I'll call you tomorrow."

She kissed Mia on the cheek and started rounding up her friends to leave.

Mia grabbed her bag and, glancing back at Lorenzo, walked out.

She took the elevator down to the ground floor and walked out onto the street, happy to be free of mission for the night.

She looked up the nearest subway station on her phone, and started walking towards it.

What Mia didn't see, was someone following behind her.

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Chapter 4

Lorenzo followed Mia down the subway stairs, into the station.

He kept his distance, not wanting her to be freaked out by him. He followed her past the turnstiles, down the second set of stairs, and onto the platform.

It was 3:49am, and the place was deserted. A train sat on the platform waiting and he watched her get on.

Lorenzo held back for a while. Only when the announcement was made that the train was departing, did he jump on board.

When he got in, he was surprised and confused to find the carriage empty. He turned around—and was hit in the face with pepper spray.

Lorenzo cried out and fell to the ground, his eyes and face burning like the fires of hell.

“Stay away from me, sicko!” Mia shouted, as the train took off.

“Jesus Christ, Mia!” Lorenzo sputtered.

Mia stopped, and looked at him more closely.

“Lorenzo?”

She crouched down in front of him.

“Why are you following me? I thought you were a serial killer.”

Lorenzo took a few deep breaths, still unable to open his eyes properly.

“I was leaving the party and saw you walking on your own. I wanted to make sure you got home alright.”

“Why?”

“Because it’s a rough city. I should know. I’m one of the things that makes it so rough.”

“I really don’t need your protection, especially creepy secret protection.”

She stormed off and sat at the other end of the carriage.

Lorenzo was finally able to open his eyes. He took his own seat.

They both glanced at each other from opposite ends of the carriage as the train squealed and screeched through the tunnels. God, she was beautiful. Lorenzo couldn’t hide how much he was staring at her.

But then, Lorenzo realized something was wrong. He knew the subway well, and the screeching wasn’t how it normally sounded.

Suddenly the train braked, and Lorenzo and Mia both fell forward.

The train came to a stop, in a narrow part of the tunnel. The lights dimmed.

Mia stood up, looking around.

“What’s going on?”

She pushed the emergency button, but nothing happened.

The scratchy PA came to life, with the sound of the driver’s voice.

“Folks, we’ve had a mechanical issue. Please stay in your carriages, it’s not safe to move around outside. I’ll update you when I have more information.”

“You can’t be serious,” Mia said.

There was a sound as the AC switched off, and the air in the carriage immediately grew hotter and damper.

Mia paced back and forth. To Lorenzo is looked sexy as hell, the way she moved in her stilettos and the way her dress clung to her curves. But he could see she was panicking.

He got up and went to her.

“I’m sure it won’t be long.”

“I’m not good with being confined like this.”

Lorenzo took her by the waist and sat her down.

“You need to calm down.”

“Don’t tell me to calm down.”

He sat down next to her. It was getting intolerably hot.

“Take some deep breaths,” he said.

For once, Mia actually listened to him.

Mia took some deep breaths. She’d never been great with spaces she couldn’t easily escape from. She was sweating and panicking. And at the same time, she was here with Lorenzo.

She could barely think straight when he was near her, and all of this together was making for a very strange night.

She glanced up at him, and the spark she'd felt on the balcony returned.

He looked back at her, not afraid of staring right into her eyes. She got up again, fanning her face with her bag.

"It's so hot," she said. "Is that just me?"

Lorenzo got up. He put his hand on her shoulder to stop her moving.

"No, it's not just you."

Mia tried to stop what she was feeling. She was meant to get close to the family, but sexual relationships were absolutely forbidden. If she touched him, she'd be failing her mission.

"Why do you keep looking away from me?" Lorenzo asked.

"I don't."

"You're so scared to feel what you feel for me."

"I don't feel anything for you. I don't even know you."

Lorenzo laughed. He grabbed her by the waist and pulled her close.

She could smell the sweat on his skin, the remnants of his expensive aftershave. She was so close she could see the hairs on his neck, standing up in arousal.

He put his face to hers, their lips only inches from each other.

Mia could barely stand up anymore. She couldn't deny it—she wanted him more than she'd ever wanted anyone.

He kissed her.

His lips were full and soft as they moved against hers. He pulled her even closer, so their bodies were entangled, and she could feel every part of him.

His kiss grew more urgent and more passionate, his tongue slipping into her mouth, caressing hers.

She kissed him back with the same passion and urgency. He was intoxicating, he was like oxygen to her.

Then, Mia became aware of voices.

“Excuse me?”

Lorenzo pulled away. A subway employee was standing in the doorway.

Mia looked around—the train had moved, was at the next station.

“You have to get off now, this train’s out of service.”

Mia stared up at Lorenzo, breathing heavily.

She was in trouble.

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Chapter 5

When Mia walked into the FBI office the next day, she hoped she didn't look as tired as she felt.

She sat down in John Waterson's office, in a chair next to Greyson. They both waited for John.

"Are you alright?" Greyson asked.

"I'm fine, why wouldn't I be?" Mia said, a bit too defensive.

"It was your first time undercover. It can get intense."

"It was partying in a club, it wasn't that hard."

Greyson glanced sideways at her. Mia felt like he could tell that she'd gone too far, but he didn't say anything.

John Waterson walked in.

“Alright, let’s hear it.”

Mia wasn’t sure what to say.

“I have Mia’s report,” Greyson said. “There’s a lot of potential there.”

John sat down, looked from Greyson to Mia, then back to Greyson.

“What’s the potential?”

“Mia made contact with Alessandro and was invited back to his apartment for an afterparty. He appears to have bought the cover story.”

“Did you make a personal connection?” John asked.

“Alessandro was more difficult to get to know than I anticipated,” Mia said. “Let’s just say he lacks focus. But I did make a personal connection with Lorenzo.”

“Lorenzo’s the older brother,” John said. “Our intel said he’s a lot more closed off, harder to get to know.”

“I guess closed off men are my speciality.”

John nodded,

“Have you set up a next meeting?”

“Not yet, but he has my number.”

“And are you keeping the rules in mind?”

“No sexual relationships, I know.”

“It’s really easy to get carried away, but we have that rule for a reason.”

“I know. I won’t cross the line.”

“Alright. From now on, no coming into the building. You have to be fully undercover. Let me know when he makes contact again.”

Mia sat at her desk. She was on edge, couldn't concentrate. All she could think about was Lorenzo, and the steamiest kiss she'd ever had.

She was just imagining the feeling of his lips on hers, when her burner phone buzzed.

It was a message from Lorenzo: *Dinner?*

Mia stood outside the brownstone where she was living during the operation. It was too risky to be seen coming and going from her real address, so the FBI had organized an apartment for her to stay in.

It had all the bells and whistles—photos of her fake family, a pretend degree on the wall.

But still, she felt nervous as she stood waiting for Lorenzo.

She watched as a black stretch limo came down the street. At first she didn't think much of it, but then it slowed as it approached her.

The limo stopped and the door opened.

Lorenzo climbed out, looking heartbreakingly good in a navy suit.

He held out a rose to Mia.

“You look beautiful,” he said.

She'd put in a lot of effort—a slinky black dress, heels, hair put up in a sexy updo.

He took her by the hand and helped her into the limo.

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Chapter 6

Mia sat nervously, watching the Manhattan streets zip by.

“Where are we going?” She asked.

Lorenzo grinned. “Dontellios.”

“That’s the hottest restaurant in Manhattan. I heard it’s impossible to get into.”

Lorenzo shrugged. “I know the owner.”

They pulled up outside a restaurant, which was absolutely packed with people outside, desperate to get a table.

Lorenzo got out of the limo and helped Mia out.

She could feel the stares of everyone around them—even if they didn’t know who Lorenzo was, it was obvious he was someone important.

Lorenzo greeted the doorman, and led Mia inside.

But once they got inside, he didn't take her into the main restaurant. He led her through the doors marked STAFF ONLY and into the kitchen. A few people looked up, but everyone seemed to know him, and they didn't say anything.

Finally they went through a set of doors and found themselves in an alley out the back of the restaurant.

Mia was confused.

“What's going on?”

There was a car waiting, a sleek black Maserati. Lorenzo unlocked the door for her.

“Let's go.”

Mia swallowed hard. But she got in the car with him.

Lorenzo started the engine.

“Can you tell me what's happening?” Mia asked.

“I use the restaurant as a cover. As far as anyone knows, we've gone inside and we're still there.”

“Who is *anyone*?”

“Anyone who might be following us.”

“Why would anyone be following us?”

He stared over at her.

“Don't play dumb. You know who I am.”

“I may have Googled you today. But I don't understand why anyone would be following us.”

“I have a lot of enemies. People who'd like to get me backed into a corner, or take out someone important to me.”

He put the car into gear. It growled as he hit the gas and drove out of the alley.

They drove over the Brooklyn bridge. It was getting dark, and the lights of Manhattan twinkled in the rear mirrors.

“Can you tell me where we’re going now?” Mia asked.

“I’m going to show you a good time.”

He gestured to the back seat.

“You might want to change your shoes.”

Mia looked in the back—there were a pair of sneakers, in her size.

Lorenzo pulled up at the back entrance of a jewelry store. He got out of the car. Mia followed.

Lorenzo walked up to the back door of the store and opened it without knocking. Mia went in after him.

They were in a dark hallway, but Lorenzo seemed to know where he was going. He led her up the hallway, and up a set of stairs. Just as they reached the top of the stairs, Lorenzo handed Mia a gun, without a word.

He drew his own gun, and walked through the door.

Mia was in shock. She didn’t know what to do, so she walked in after him.

The next room was the main shop, lined with rows of glass cabinets, all filled with all types of jewelry.

Only a couple of seconds had passed, but the five men in the room already had their hands up.

“Bobby,” Lorenzo said. “What’s all this about you not making your payment this month?”

“Come on Lorenzo, I’m good for it,” Bobby said. He was an older guy with a bad combover.

“But here’s the thing. I’m meant to be on a date with this beautiful woman, and instead I have to bring her here to make a collection from you. Do you think this is where she wants to be?”

Bobby looked at Mia and shook his head.

“How am I going to make this up to her?” Lorenzo asked.

Bobby thought for a second, then picked up a diamond bracelet from the table in front of him.

“She can have this. Just got it in yesterday.”

He threw the bracelet to Lorenzo, who looked it over.

“It’s a start,” Lorenzo said. “But I’m going to need everything you owe us.”

Mia saw one of the men reach for something under the table, and she instinctively pointed the gun at him.

“Easy there,” Mia said. “Keep your hands up.”

The man obeyed, and kept his hands up. Lorenzo glanced at her, impressed.

“Look Lorenzo, I don’t have all the money right now,” Bobby said. “But I can get it next week.”

“Not good enough,” Lorenzo said.

He took aim at a glass cabinet and fired his gun. The men all jumped as glass shattered nearby.

“You can take what you want,” Bobby said, terrified.

Lorenzo fired at another cabinet. Mia understood. She used the butt of the gun to smash another cabinet.

Lorenzo was fired up now. He began smashing cabinets at random, destroying everything he could see. Mia did the same, losing herself in the feeling of rage and abandon.

Finally, they stood back. The store was a bomb site, and Bobby was frozen with a look of shock on his face.

“I want my money, Bobby,” Lorenzo said. “You have twelve hours.”

He grabbed Mia by the waist and kept his body between her and the men as he pushed her back outside.

They ran down the stairs and down the hallway, back out to the car.

They jumped in and Lorenzo started the engine and sped away.

Mia couldn't help herself—she started laughing.

Lorenzo looked over at her and started laughing too.

He pulled into a random driveway and stopped the car. Mia stopped laughing, and stared at Lorenzo. She couldn't remember when she'd last felt so alive.

She grabbed him by the collar and pulled him to her, kissing him urgently and passionately.

Every cell in her body wanted him, It was like she couldn't breathe, like she'd scream if he didn't put his hands on her.

He did.

He grabbed her by the waist and pulled her on top of him, then let the seat down to give them more room.

She pulled off his jacket and undid his shirt, desperate to feel the warmth of his skin against hers. He pulled off her dress, stopping to admire her curves in her black lace underwear.

He ran his lips and his tongue across her skin, from her neck down to her breasts, expertly undoing her bra and sliding it off.

He slipped her nipple into his mouth and she moaned with the feeling of it as she undid his trousers and pulled them down.

She felt for him, found him hard and ready.

She lifted herself onto him and they both let out moans of passion and pleasure.

Mia lost herself in it, totally intoxicated by him, by his smell and his groaning, and the feeling of his hands and lips, the feeling of him inside her.

She pushed herself down into him more and more, wanting to take every bit of him that she could.

Her body was on fire. He slipped his hand down to her clit, and it was too much for her. She came, biting into his

shoulder. He came too, right after her, like he'd been holding back until she did.

They collapsed into each other, exhausted, gasping in air.

Eventually she climbed off him and settled back into the passenger seat. He reached out and stroked her hair.

Mia felt amazing, but she was quickly overcome by guilt and panic. She'd crossed the line. She'd had sex with her mark.

“Are you hungry?” Lorenzo said.

“Starving,” Mia said.

“I'll take you to the best place in Brooklyn.”

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Chapter 7

Lorenzo pulled the car up near a taco truck set up in Brooklyn Park. He saw Mia's confused look, and couldn't help but smile to himself. She had surprised him tonight, that was for sure. The way she'd handled herself in Bobby's store was electrifyingly hot. The sex had been even hotter than that. It pleased him to take her somewhere unexpected, a small surprise.

He led her out of the car and ordered them tacos and nachos. When their food was ready, they sat on a bench nearby and ate.

“Are we... uh...” Mia stumbled.

“What?”

“Are we going to get in trouble for what we did?”

Lorenzo laughed. “No.”

“We wrecked his entire store.”

“He's lucky that's all that happened, and he knows it. He'll pay up by tomorrow.”

“What does he owe you money for?”

“He took out a loan with very clear terms. My family makes a lot of loans, and we’re always upfront about what will happen if payments are missed. We can’t be seen to go soft on people, or they’ll all start missing payments.”

Mia nodded. She seemed so clueless, yet she was so suited to the life he led. Something about that seemed weird to him, but he couldn’t put his finger on it.

Yes, tonight had been a test. He tested all the women who came into his life, in one way or another. He couldn’t afford to give women access to him if they couldn’t handle themselves.

He didn’t always take them on jobs with him, but Mia seemed special, like she was ready for a more intense initiation.

He glanced over at her and couldn’t help but think of her naked, the feeling of her nipple in his mouth, how wet she was when he touched her. It gave him goosebumps.

He put both of their food aside and grabbed her, lifting her to sit on top of him. She was surprised again, and it made him even hotter.

He kissed her, deeply, penetrating her mouth with his tongue, feeling her submission.

He lifted up her dress, pulled her flimsy panties aside.

“What are you doing?” She whispered.

Lorenzo looked around. There were people around the truck nearby, but they were all facing away. It was darker around their bench, with no one sitting near them.

“No one’s looking,” he said.

She glanced around and saw he was right. Then, she unzipped his trousers.

She made him so hard that there was no waiting required. He pushed into her and she moaned softly.

It didn’t take long for him to cum, with how hot she was and the excitement of being in public. He was momentarily

embarrassed that it didn't last longer, but when he saw the look in her eye, he knew she was satisfied.

She fixed herself up and sat back down beside him.

"I've never met anyone like you before," Mia said.

"I was about to say the same thing."

"When we first met, you seemed so..."

"Mysterious?"

"I was going to say, cold."

"Ouch."

"Closed-off, maybe."

Lorenzo nodded and stared out at the water.

"I also was told you kind of have a girlfriend."

"Who, Gabby? She's not my girlfriend."

"But she's someone?"

"She's a woman I dated casually. The first woman I dated, after..."

He trailed off, not sure if he wanted to tell her. But he guessed she'd find out sooner or later.

"I used to be engaged."

"Oh. And you broke up?"

"My fiancée, Natalie, was... she was murdered."

It felt strange to say the words. Everyone in his circle already knew, and never brought it up.

"I'm so sorry. Do you want to talk about it?"

Lorenzo nodded. "We were together since we were fifteen. It was always expected that we'd get married, by both our families. Then my family got into a war with her family, over a deal that they shafted us on. There were hits on both sides, and it got out of hand. We never found out who did it, but they dumped her dead body on my doorstep early one morning."

“My god.”

“I’m pretty certain it was her brother, Leo, but I’ve never been able to prove it.”

Anger welled up inside him, a deep primal anger. He pushed it back down. He knew he’d never be able to open up to someone like Mia, not really. Not again. But he couldn’t cut her off completely.

She put her hand on his shoulder and he brushed it off. It felt too intimate. He didn’t want that from her, not right now.

He opened his mouth to tell her that he was going to take her home. But instead, he said, “I have an apartment nearby.”

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Chapter 8

Mia woke at dawn as the sunlight streamed through the huge floor-to-ceiling windows in Lorenzo's hip warehouse conversion apartment.

She was exhausted—they'd had sex twice the night before, in the car and in the park, and when they made it to the apartment they kept going for hours.

She was insatiable when it came to him. Even now, on a couple of hours sleep, her muscles aching, she stared at him like she wanted him to fuck her again.

But he was still asleep and she let him stay that way.

She got up and went to the window, staring down at the early joggers and dog walkers below.

She was starting to freak out about how much control she'd lost in the operation. When she was with Lorenzo, she was just Mia, not an FBI agent. But when she left, she'd have to face the real world again.

And, more concerning, if Lorenzo found out who she really was, she was getting more and more sure that he would kill her. He wasn't a man who took to betrayal kindly, that much was obvious.

Behind her, Lorenzo yawned and sat up.

"Morning," he said.

She turned and smiled at him. "Morning."

He looked so gorgeous, naked with bed hair.

"Do you want coffee?" He asked.

"Definitely."

He got up and went to the kitchen. She heard him run the coffee machine, smelt the comforting smell of fresh coffee.

Soon he came back out, carrying two mugs.

He put them down on the coffee table and she sat down opposite him.

He took a sip of his coffee and glanced down at the table, where Mia had left her phone. It happened to light up as he looked at it.

"Jesus, you have about twenty messages."

He picked up her phone and she panicked inside, though tried to remain calm on the inside.

She stood up to take it from him, but he playfully kept it away from her.

"Is this all your boyfriends wondering where you are?"

"Something like that."

"You'd better tell them you can't see them anymore."

She lunged for the phone again and he grabbed her, pulling her into his lap.

He kissed her neck. It felt so good, but she couldn't concentrate. If he saw those messages, she was dead.

She made another lunge, this time grabbing the phone. She took it back to her seat.

She glanced at the messages—they were all from Greyson, checking in. Of course they didn't say anything incriminating, Greyson was smarter than that, but Mia was sure Lorenzo would work it out if he had enough clues.

“Oh man,” Mia said. “Big issue at work. I have to go in.”

“I don't even know what you do.”

“I work for a small fashion designer in Manhattan. We've just had a fabric shipment get confiscated by customs and I have to go and sort it out.”

This appeared to be enough detail to satisfy Lorenzo. Mia exhaled.

Mia entered a cafe in Manhattan. She didn't sit down—instead she asked the barista where the bathroom was. He directed her and she followed his directions through to the back. To anyone watching, it would have seemed totally innocent.

However, in the back, past the bathrooms, was a private room. Mia went inside, to find Greyson and Waterson there waiting for her.

“Where the hell have you been?” Waterson asked. “You missed multiple check-ins.”

“I was with Lorenzo.”

“Doing what?”

“He took me on a money collection job. I think he was testing me.”

“And what did you do?”

“I did the job. Won him over.”

“What else are you doing to win him over?”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Alright,” Greyson said. “Let’s all cool down.”

“I’m perfectly cool,” Mia said.

“I think what Waterson is asking, is are you okay? Are you in over your head?”

“I’m fine. Nothing’s happened, I’m just making my way into the family.”

She wondered if they could tell she was lying, but they seemed satisfied enough by this.

“Do you have any info we can use?” Greyson said.

“Not really. Nothing concrete. Unless you want to charge Lorenzo with destruction of property, then I need more time.”

“It’s important that you continue to advance your relationship with him,” Greyson said. “Keep yourself in front of him, keep things moving forward. Don’t be afraid to be a bit pushy.”

“Nothing to worry about,” Mia said. “I have it under control.”

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Chapter 9

Lorenzo stood in the shower, letting the hot water run over his skin.

He could barely focus, knowing Mia was in the next room.

He turned the water off and got out, grabbing a towel to dry himself off.

When he walked out into the living room, Mia was sitting on the sofa, still in just her panties, reading a book.

She lifted her arm to turn a page, revealing one of her perfect breasts, the nipple firm. It was enough to make him hard instantly.

But instead of going to her like he wanted, Lorenzo resisted. He was falling too hard, he could feel it. And he couldn't let himself do it.

Mia had come out of nowhere, and he wasn't sure if he could trust her. He'd pushed plenty of women away in the past by testing them, but what choice did he have? He wasn't just anybody. His life was dangerous. Being in his life was dangerous.

Natalie was always there, in the back of his mind. The way she'd been murdered by her own family and so cruelly dumped on his doorstep... he had to be careful who he got involved with. He had to be careful never to get too close.

He stared at Mia. There was something different about her. She didn't flinch when he showed his violent side. She didn't push him into being more open or vulnerable. If anything, he found himself on the other side—wanting *her* to be more open and vulnerable.

Mia looked up at him and smiled. He melted a bit, but he stayed strong.

“Get dressed,” he said. “We’re going out.”

Lorenzo pulled the car up outside a dark, old warehouse. He watched Mia take it in—her face was unreadable.

He got out of the car, and Mia followed.

“What is this place?” She asked.

“Come inside.”

Lorenzo led her through a side door into the main warehouse. The only light was from the middle of the room.

There, under a green-tinged spotlight, was a man tied to a chair.

Not just any man—Special Agent Mick Carmichael, DEA, about 30, good looking. He was gagged, bound, and very beat up.

Surrounding him were five of the Rossi crew, including Alessandro.

Lorenzo pulled Mia out into the light. The crew looked over, saw it was Lorenzo.

“You’re here, big brother,” Alessandro said. “We’ve been keeping him alive for you.”

Lorenzo glanced at Mia—she was more readable now. Scared. Unsure of what was going on. That was to be expected.

Alessandro clapped Lorenzo on the back. “What took you so long?”

He noticed Mia then, looked her up and down.

“Oh, I see what kept you.”

“Has he talked?” Lorenzo asked, ignoring his comment.

“Nope.”

“Let’s make him talk, then.”

Lorenzo grabbed the gag out of Mick’s mouth. Mick gasped in some breaths. Lorenzo crouched down in front of him.

“So,” Lorenzo said. “You really thought you’d get away with going undercover in my crew? With betraying me?”

“Come on, Lorenzo. I haven’t given them any intel. You can let me go.”

“Let you go? So you can go running to the DEA and get us all arrested?”

“I won’t. I’ll leave town. I’ll leave the country, go live with my granddad in England.”

Lorenzo stared at him. He laughed.

“In England? What are you talking about?”

“I’ll get out of your hair,” Mick said. “Just let me go.”

Lorenzo stood up, faced away from Mick. He looked at Mia. She looked very concerned, but she was holding herself together.

Alessandro handed Lorenzo a gun. It was cool, heavy in his hands.

He walked right up to Mia. Grabbed her hair, kissed her. She kissed him back.

He slid the barrel of the gun from her neck down to her breasts. He could fuck her, right here and right now, and no one would stop them. He imagined it, imagined the look on Alessandro’s face.

Alessandro had always been the playboy, the one who bedded a new model or three every night. Lorenzo had plenty of women, of course, but Alessandro made a sport of it. He’d never get someone like Mia, someone as different and dangerous.

He snapped himself out of it. He handed Mia the gun.

“We don’t let people betray our family,” he said to her.

Mia stared down at the gun.

“What....?”

“If you want to be with us, you have to show loyalty. That’s the only way.”

Mia looked at him, her eyes searching his, wondering if he really wanted her to do this. She could see in his eyes that he did.

She stepped forward, staring at Mick.

Mick shook his head. “You don’t have to do this.”

Mia raised the gun, pointed it at his head.

“Don’t do it!”

Lorenzo could see her hand shaking. But she kept the gun aimed at his head.

“Please!” Mick begged.

Mia's body went stiff. She pulled the trigger. The gun clicked, but didn't fire.

Mia turned around, looked to Lorenzo for an explanation. He took the gun from her, felt how much more she was shaking now.

"What's going on?" she demanded.

Lorenzo raised the gun at Mick and pulled the trigger. This time it fired, and Mick slumped down dead.

"First round wasn't chambered," Lorenzo said.

"So it was some kind of test?" Mia asked. Her eyes were fiery—she'd gone from shocked to angry.

"This life is all about tests," Lorenzo said. "I didn't know if you could really be trusted."

"And now?"

"Now I do."

Alessandro walked up to them.

"Well, brother. You got yourself a keeper there."

He winked at Mia and he walked away.

"Now what?" Mia asked. "More tests?"

"The biggest test of all," Lorenzo said. "I want you to meet my family."

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Chapter 10

Mia walked into a dark, deserted parking garage. She waited near the elevators, as instructed.

A few seconds later, a figure emerged from around the corner—Greyson.

He touched her shoulder tenderly.

“Are you okay?” He asked.

Mia was definitely not okay. The stunt Lorenzo pulled at the warehouse freaked her out.

“I’m in way over my head.”

“What happened?”

“He’s testing me..”

Greyson nodded. “That’s to be expected.”

“He tried to get me to shoot a cop.”

“But you didn’t, obviously.”

Mia shook her head. It wasn’t exactly a lie—she hadn’t shot him. But she had pulled the trigger. She wasn’t sure why she’d done it—it was against every moral she had. But in the moment, with Lorenzo and his crew, something had come over her.

And now she didn’t trust herself.

“That’s part of being undercover,” Greyson said. “The Rossi’s aren’t stupid. They’ve been infiltrated before. They’ll take any opportunity they can to test you. You just have to stay a step ahead.”

“How do I do that?”

“That’s what you have me for.”

He put his hand on her shoulder again, let it linger. She looked up at him—there was something there. He had some kind of feeling towards her.

He pulled her in for a hug. Mia let it happen. It felt safe with Greyson, not dangerous like life with Lorenzo was.

Greyson pulled back a little. He looked into her eyes.

He kissed her.

It was tender, a little unsure. Nothing like the depth and passion she had with Lorenzo. It was pleasant—but it felt wrong.

She pulled away. “I can’t.”

“I’m sorry,” Greyson said.

“It’s everything with Lorenzo...”

Greyson narrowed his eyes. “You’re not blurring the lines are you? You know a sexual relationship is totally against the rules.”

“Of course not,” Mia lied. “But I have to stay focused.”

Greyson nodded. He didn't look like he quite believed her.

"I want you to start wearing a recording device," Greyson said.

"Won't that put me in more danger?"

"They'll never find it. It's not like the old tapes and wires. We can give you something the size of a button. But I want to see and hear everything that goes on while you're with him."

"He invited me to his sister's birthday party on Saturday. The whole family will be there."

"Including Matteo?"

"Yep."

"We need to capture everything. I'll get the device to you before the party."

Mia nodded, absently. How was she going to be natural with Lorenzo, knowing Greyson and anyone else at HQ were watching her?

She was getting further and further into this, and she didn't know how to get herself out.

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Chapter 11

The birthday party was held on the Rossi estate in the Hamptons. It was late July and sweltering hot, and the Hamptons was in full swing, every house occupied and constant parties and events.

Mia watched the town go by as Lorenzo drove. Soon, the town gave way to rows of mansions. Unbelievable houses, the size of hotels. Mia had seen photos, of course, but seeing them in person was something else.

Lorenzo pulled the car in at an iron gate. Next to the driver door was a face scanner, which scanned Lorenzo's face. The scanner went green, and the gate slowly opened.

The house was stunning, bright white with Roman columns all across the front. The garden was perfectly

manicured, with a fountain taking centre stage.

At the front of the house, people were getting out of cars, caterers were bringing in covered trays, maids were rushing about.

Lorenzo pulled up, and one of the valet's opened Mia's door.

He helped her out and she straightened her dress. She tried not to touch the embroidered decoration at the chest—that was where they'd hidden the camera. She sweated, terrified she'd be found out.

“Mr. Rossi,” the valet said. “Let me know if I can do anything for you.”

Lorenzo nodded and handed the valet a tip.

He grabbed Mia's hand and looked up at the house.

“You ready?” He asked.

Mia nodded.

The front of the house was stunning, but it was the back that really stole the show. There was a large white marquee set up with tables inside, and everything was covered in pink roses.

Lorenzo led Mia down the marble stairs to the paved patio, where the party was in full swing.

Mia watched as every female head in the place turned to stare at them. Some looked interested to see Lorenzo show up with a woman on his arm. But most of them looked angry. Jealous.

Mia understood—she'd feel the same way if roles were reversed.

At the bottom of the stairs they were met by an impeccably dressed woman, around 45. She kissed Lorenzo on the cheek.

“Hello, darling,” she said.

“Mom, this is Mia. Mia, this is my mother, Patty.”

Mia put her hand out and Patty shook it while sizing her up.

“So you’re the one who’s stolen my son’s heart?”

Mia didn’t know what to say.

Patty grinned. “I’m dying to hear how you did that. Come on.”

She pulled Mia away towards the bar. Mia looked back at Lorenzo, who shrugged and smiled.

At the bar, was a woman in a sparkling silver dress, who looked a lot like Lorenzo and Alessandro.

“Kiki,” Patty said. “This is her.”

Kiki turned to look at Mia—this was the sister, Mia recognized her from the files.

“Oh. My. God,” Kiki said. “You’re Lorenzo’s girlfriend?”

“Uh...” Mia said. “I mean, we haven’t had THE talk yet.”

“He bought you to my birthday party, that means you’re his girlfriend, trust me.”

Another girl came running up to Kiki, and Kiki squealed and turned away.

“You’ll come and sit at our table,” Patty said.

Patty led her into the marquee, where people were taking their seats. She took Mia up to the front, to the family table.

Mia sat down. She looked up, and saw someone she recognized—Gabriella, Lorenzo’s kind-of-but-not girlfriend.

Gabriella hadn’t noticed her yet. Neither had anyone in the tent, now she wasn’t with Lorenzo.

As if on cue, Lorenzo came up to the table. He sat down next to Mia and put his arm around her.

Now, Gabriella noticed. She stared daggers at Mia, and Mia went red.

Patty got up onto the makeshift stage and spoke into the microphone.

“Alright everyone, please come into the tent.”

Everyone started making their way to their seats. Kiki sat at the same table as Mia. Alessandro also sauntered up and took his seat.

Mia turned her attention to the side of the tent. Walking in was the head of the family himself, Matteo Rossi.

Mia turned her body towards him, so the camera pointed to where he was. Greyson and Waterson were watching live, and she wanted them to see.

Matteo sat down at the head of the table, without even a glance at Mia.

Now everyone was there, Patty continued her speech.

“We’re here today to celebrate the 21st birthday of my only daughter, Kiki. No mother has ever been blessed with a more beautiful daughter...”

As Mia listened to the speech, she felt Lorenzo’s hand on her leg.

The tablecloth was long, hiding his hand. He found the edge of her dress and ran his fingers up her thigh.

Mia shivered. She glanced around to make sure no one could see.

Lorenzo’s hand travelled further up. He found her panties and pushed them aside.

She was already wet as he sunk his fingers inside her.

Mia focus on her breathing, trying to not give away the game. It was risky, but she didn’t want him to stop. She never wanted him to take his hands off her, ever.

He ran his fingers over her clit and it was almost too much for her to handle. She closed her eyes for a few seconds

as he gently rubbed her.

She bit her lip as she came, and somehow managed to stay quiet.

Lorenzo looked at her with a mischievous grin.

Mia breathed to calm herself. She suddenly wondered if Greyson and Waterson could tell what had happened.

Mia tuned back in to Patty's speech, which was almost done.

"So, to my daughter, a happy 21st, and a magical life."

Lorenzo stood up, his glass raised. "To Kiki!"

Everyone stood and did the same.

Then, the music started. People milled around near the dance floor, no one wanting to be the first to go out.

Lorenzo took Mia's hand. "May I have this dance?"

Mia nodded and Lorenzo led her out onto the dance floor. They were the only ones, totally on display as the rest of the guests watched.

Lorenzo led, and Mia followed. As he spun her, she looked at the crowd. Those jealous faces again, all around her.

She spied Gabriella, who looked like she was about to explode.

Lorenzo dipped Mia, and kissed her passionately. There were audible gasps from the crowd.

Gabriella stormed out of the tent.

Even Matteo was watching now, interested in who his son was with.

Finally the floor began filling up with other people.

When the song finished, Lorenzo led her back to the table.

"Dad, this is Mia."

Matteo nodded, searching Mia's eyes. She did her best to hold his gaze.

“Mia who?”

“Anders.”

“Where are your people from?”

“Maine.”

“And before that?”

“I’m half Italian, half Swedish.”

This seemed just acceptable to Matteo.

“And what do you do?” He asked.

“I work as an assistant to a fashion designer in Manhattan. But I’m working towards being a designer myself.”

“Working your way up in the industry?”

“That’s right.”

“Good. People your age seem to have forgotten about hard work and paying your dues.”

Lorenzo rolled his eyes, but Matteo paid him more attention.

“Did you get enough to eat, Mia?” Matteo said.

“Yes, thank you.”

“Eat more, you’re too skinny. No one likes a skinny girl.”

Mia laughed and picked up a bread roll from the basket on the table.

Matteo started talking to someone beside him. Lorenzo leaned in.

“He likes you.”

“Does he?” Mia asked.

“He wouldn’t have insulted you if he didn’t like you.”

Mia shrugged. She almost forgot that she wasn’t who she was pretending to be.

Almost.

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Chapter 12

The party was beginning to die down a bit, though the music still played and there were still guests on the dance floor.

It was dark, and Mia made her way into the house to find the bathroom.

She had a chance to look around now. The house was unbelievably luxurious, full of expensive furniture, artworks, sculptures.

Everything was spotless, no doubt cleaned by an army of maids every day.

Mia walked up the hallway towards the bathroom.

As she reached it, the door opened and Gabriella came out. She had a bit of white powder on her nose, and she rubbed

it off.

Mia tried to walk past her, but Gabriella put herself in Mia's way.

"He's just using you," Gabriella said.

"Sure," Mia said.

"I've known him for years. He's not the type to settle down."

"Maybe not with you."

"Not with anyone. Natalie fucked him up too much. He'll get bored of you in a couple of weeks and move on. He'll come back to me. He always does, even when he was with Nat he was still fucking me."

A voice rang out behind Mia.

"You should have more respect for yourself, Gabby."

Mia turned—it was Kiki.

Gabriella scowled at her and walked away.

"Don't listen to her," Kiki said.

"I'm not," Mia said.

"He's my bother and I've known him longer than her. And I can tell you, I've never seen him act this way with any woman, including Natalie. He's head over heels for you."

Mia blushed. "I'm pretty keen on him myself."

"He needs someone like you. Someone strong, but not too aggressive. Someone who understands him. You do understand him, don't you?"

"I think so. It feels like I've known him for my whole life."

"That's how you can tell."

She kissed Mia on the cheek. "I always wanted a sister."

Mia hugged her.

“Isn’t this heartwarming,” Lorenzo said, coming up behind them.

Kiki rolled her eyes at him. “I’m going out. Don’t tell mom and dad.”

Lorenzo laughed. “Of course not.”

Kiki walked away.

Lorenzo stared at Mia. “We have some unfinished business.”

He pushed her into the bathroom and locked the door.

He kissed her and it felt deeper and more passionate than ever before.

He picked her up and sat her on the vanity. He pulled up under her dress and slid off her panties, then knelt down in front of her.

Mia moaned as his tongue slid over her. The feeling of his wet tongue and his warm breath made her gasp.

She grabbed his head in her hands, pushing her fingers through his thick hair, pulling his head closer.

He could sense she was going to come and he pulled back. He stood up and pulled her down, then turned her around, facing the mirror.

He undid his trousers and pushed inside her from behind.

Mia could barely take it. She screamed in pleasure as he thrust harder and harder, and he clamped a hand over her mouth so they wouldn’t be heard. She watched him in the mirror, how hot he was, how turned on he was by her.

He reached around and stroked her clit and she came harder than she ever had before.

He came too and they both slumped forward, exhausted.

Eventually he pulled out, and got a towel to clean them both up.

Mia stood, straightened out her dress and smoothed down her hair.

Lorenzo kissed her neck and stared at her in the mirror.

“I can’t get enough of you,” he said.

Mia smiled up at him.

Then —

She looked down at her dress and froze.

The camera. She’d forgotten all about the camera.

It was right there, pointing right at the mirror. Greyson and Waterson would have seen everything.

“Are you okay?” Lorenzo asked.

Mia nodded. “I’m fine.”

“Let’s go out, my mother was looking for you.”

Back at the table, Patty sat next to Mia.

“I have no idea where Kiki is at her own damn party.”

“She’s 21,” Alessandro said. “She’s probably out with her friends.”

Mia was still distracted, thinking about how she was going to explain what she’d done to her bosses. Her stomach was a knot.

“Well, Mia,” Patty said. “You made quite the impression tonight. I know a lot of women have been hoping to win our Lorenzo’s heart.”

Mia forced a smile, but didn’t reply.

“I think all of us would love to get to know you better. We’re having a getaway at our lake house next weekend. Would you like to join us? Immediate family only.”

“I’d love to,” Mia said.

She only wished she could run away to the lake house and not have to face the music with the FBI when she got back

to New York.

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Chapter 13

“WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU THINKING?”
Waterson yelled.

Mia sat in Waterson’s office, in tears. Greyson was there too, but he couldn’t meet Mia’s eye.

“What were you told? No sexual relationship. I knew we couldn’t trust a rookie on this one. The whole case is destroyed.”

“The case is still going,” Mia said.

“No it’s fucking not!” Waterson said. “You think we could take any of this to court? Every bit of evidence we have would be thrown out.”

“I can fix it.”

“You’re off the case and you’re most likely out of the FBI. We’ll see what internal affairs has to say.”

“We can’t just let this go now,” Mia said. “I’ve given everything to this case.”

“Oh I know, we saw that clear as day on the fucking camera.”

“Greyson?” Mia said.

Greyson said nothing.

“I know I messed up,” Mia said. “But I know I can get the case back on track. Just give me another chance.”

“The only chance you’re getting is the chance to get out of my office before I lose it completely.”

Waterson stared at her, nostrils flared.

Mia left the office.

Outside, everyone was staring at her. How many of them had seen the video? Probably all of them.

She put her head down and walked out towards the elevators.

She pressed the elevator button continuously, wanting to get out of there as soon as possible.

Finally the elevator opened and Mia got in and sighed with relief.

The doors closed. But just before they shut completely, a hand pushed in and the doors opened again.

It was Greyson. He got in the elevator with her and the doors closed completely this time.

Mia glanced at Greyson as he stood there, looking like he wanted to say something.

“I’m sorry,” Mia said. “I ruined your whole case.”

Greyson took a deep breath. He hit the ‘Emergency Stop’ button and the elevator came to a jarring stop.

“What’s going on?” Mia asked.

“I’ve been working on the Rossi case for 7 years.”

“I know. I’m sorry.”

“No one’s ever gotten as far as you did. Not even close.”

“Well, that’s all over now.”

Mia was totally deflated. Everything she’d worked for, all gone. She didn’t know what to do, or how to feel.

“I got some intel this morning,” Greyson said. “There’s a big deal going down between the Rossis and the Monatto family.”

“The Monatto family? Aren’t they —?”

“The Rossi family’s biggest competitors and enemies.”

“That’s the family of Lorenzo’s ex-fiance. He thinks they killed her.”

“They probably did.”

“What kind of deal could they be doing?”

“I don’t know. I only know where it’s going down.”

“Where?”

“The lake house. The one you were invited to.”

Mia nodded, stunned.

“I need you to go,” Greyson said.

“You heard Waterson. I’m off the case. Probably out of the FBI.”

“Waterson can’t know. We need to do this off the books.”

“Do what?”

“Find out what the deal is. If they’re willing to deal, they might be willing to join forces. And together, they’d be an unstoppable wave of crime not only in New York, but across the whole country.”

Mia considered this. “If Waterson finds out...”

“If we manage to stop this thing, Waterson will probably forget about what happened. Cracking a case like this will look

very good for him in Washington.”

“And what about everyone else? I saw the way they looked at me back there. Have they all seen it?”

“No one’s seen that video apart from Waterson and me.”

“Why were they staring at me?”

“They heard yelling. That’s all.”

Mia was quiet, while she thought about everything Greyson was saying.

“What do you think about what happened?” She asked.

“I think you got carried away in the moment. Undercover work is extremely difficult. It takes time to learn how to separate undercover from reality. But as long as you know that it’s not reality, that the feelings aren’t real, then I think you’ll be fine.”

Mia wasn’t sure what to make of that. Were her feelings fake? They didn’t feel fake. She didn’t know.

“Alright,” Mia said. “I’ll do it.”

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Chapter 14

When Lorenzo had mentioned a lake house, Mia had pictured a quaint cabin, a bonfire, something small and calm.

But when they pulled up at the Rossi lake house, she realized just how wrong she'd been.

It was more of a lake mansion, on a lake estate. A huge, three storey house sat in the most prominent position on the lake, like a queen on her throne.

It was, of course, perfect — perfectly painted, a perfect garden, not a thing out of place.

Lorenzo parked the car behind a row of others. Everyone else was here, it seemed.

He put a hand on Mia's leg.

“You feeling okay?” He asked.

“Fine, why?”

“You’ve been really quiet. I know the last family get-together was hard for you.”

“I’m better prepared this time.”

Lorenzo leaned over and kissed her. His lips were so soft, his tongue so passionate. Mia wanted to lose herself in him, but there was something holding her back now. She was scared.

Lorenzo felt it and he pulled out of the kiss. He stared into her eyes, but he didn’t say anything else.

He got out of the car, came around and opened her door for her.

Inside, the place was buzzing with the arrival of the family. Lorenzo had said that they paid the staff to be there full time, so anyone from the family could come at any time. But most of the year, the staff waited on an empty house.

Now, they rushed around, taking bags and bringing bottled water.

There were people Mia recognised from the party, and a lot of people she didn’t.

A maid stopped in front of them and smiled.

“I’ll show you to your room, Mr. Lorenzo.”

They followed her upstairs to their room.

It was simply breathtaking. The four-poster bed was draped in sheer white curtains and the furniture was all made of dark mahogany wood.

Mia and Lorenzo couldn’t take their eyes off each other as they stepped inside the room. As the maid left, and before Mia could even take in the view, Lorenzo had already pulled

her close and swept her into a passionate embrace. She felt warm and safe in his arms, and his kiss filled her with a sense of belonging.

He kissed her neck, slipped off her jacket.

Mia hesitated. She wasn't supposed to, she knew that. But this was off the books, and she wasn't wearing a camera.

She felt how hard he was through his trousers, and she gave over to him.

He lifted her and put her gently on the bed.

He slid off her dress, her underwear, leaving her naked.

She didn't feel self-conscious, not with Lorenzo.

He pulled down one of the thin sheer panels draped over the bed, and grinned.

He pulled her arms up over her head, and tied her hands to the bed. The ties were tight, and it felt dangerous... but exciting.

She pulled at her hands, but they didn't budge.

Then, Lorenzo went to work on her.

He took his time. Kissed her deeply. Slid his tongue over every inch of her.

He gently sucked her nipples, licked her stomach and hips.

By the time he reached her clit, her whole body was on fire. Their sex in the bathroom at the party had been mind-blowing, but this was deeper. They had all the time in the world.

She came almost straight away. But Lorenzo didn't stop.

He sunk his fingers deep into her, and kept gentle pressure on her clit.

Soon her excitement was rising again. His fingers worked in a rhythm that drove her crazy, and his tongue pressed harder and harder.

He brought her to the brink of orgasm again—but this time he pulled away.

She was desperate for his touch and she moaned for him.

“I need you,” she cried out.

He unzipped his trousers, not in any rush. Letting her squirm.

He was rock hard, and she was dripping wet, so when he was ready he slid right in.

Again, he took his time. Started slowly, built up his rhythm.

He looked deeply into her eyes, kissed her with insane passion.

His thrusting grew quicker and quicker, until Mia came harder than she thought was possible. Lorenzo came right after her.

Mia just lay there, her whole body tingling. She had never known sex like it, never had a lover this skilled.

Lorenzo rolled off her, and Mia cuddled into him. They lay there, feeling the breeze on their naked skin.

After a few moments, Mia looked around to admire the room. “It’s a beautiful room,” she said.

Lorenzo smiled, his eyes lighting up. “Let’s go for a walk down by the lake,” he said.

They walked in silence, the sound of the birds chirping overhead the only noise. Once they reached the lake, Lorenzo stopped and looked out at the still water. There was so much going on in his head, so much he wanted to say. So much he felt.

Finally he turned to Mia. Damn, she was lovely. The sunlight caught in her hair and she looked like an angel. He

knew she wasn't though. He knew that very well.

Lorenzo looked into her eyes and smiled. "I've been scared to get close to anyone again," he said, his voice full of emotion. "Since Natalie. But you, Mia, you're different. You're the first one who's gotten into my heart since, and... I love you for it."

He saw her flinch. There was something about her, something he couldn't put his finger on.

She looked away, out at the water.

Lorenzo took her hands in his and looked into her eyes. "It's okay," he said, desperate to see her smile. "Just tell me what's on your mind."

Mia took a deep breath. "I love you too," she said. "But I'm scared because you don't know everything about me. I'm scared that if you knew the truth, you wouldn't love me anymore."

There it was, Lorenzo thought. He knew there was something, something she kept from him. A hesitation.

"What is it?"

Mia looked like she wanted to talk, but the words wouldn't come out. She cried instead, and it ripped his heart apart.

Lorenzo pulled her close. "You don't have to be scared anymore," he said. "I love you, no matter what. Nothing in your past could ever change that."

She hugged him tightly.

But she said no more.

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Chapter 15

Mia and Lorenzo returned to the lake house, as the sun was going down.

There, they found Matteo and Patty, with Kiki coming inside behind them. Matteo smiled at them both warmly, and kissed Mia on the cheek.

“Good evening, bella.”

He smiled.

“I’m so sorry, but I need to pull my son away on some business.”

“That’s okay,” Mia said.

Lorenzo gave her a squeeze, then walked away with Matteo.

She watched him leave, wishing she could go with them, to listen to the business they needed to discuss.

Kiki came straight up to her and hugged her.

“Hey, Mia! What do you think of the house?”

“It’s amazing,” Mia said.

“Come,” Patty said. “Let the boys talk their business. We’ll go to the sitting room.”

The sitting room was warm and cozy, all Hamptons-luxury.

Before they’d even sat down, Kiki said: “So, how’s it going with Lorenzo?”

Mia sat and glanced awkwardly at Patty.

“Don’t worry about me, dear. I’ve heard it all. And what happens in the sitting room, stays in the sitting room.”

Mia smiled.

“He just told me he loves me.”

Kiki squealed. “Oh my god, this is so romantic! You said it back, right?”

“I did.”

“But?” Patty said.

Mia swallowed. “I do love him. But I worry that our relationship can’t last, long-term.”

Patty smiled knowingly and said, “I’ve been married for forty years now, and I can tell you the secret to a lasting love. You have to wake up every day and commit to loving your partner all over again. They’ll drive you crazy, you’ll feel like giving up sometimes. But every morning you get up and make that commitment. That’s how you make it work.”

Mia smiled and nodded, feeling a sense of peace wash over her. Patty stood up.

“That damn maid is putting flowers on that table again. How many times do I have to tell her?”

Patty sauntered out of the room.

Once Patty had left the room, Kiki moved closer to Mia.

“So, are we thinking marriage? Babies? How many babies?”

Mia laughed. “I have definitely not thought that far ahead.”

“What about your family?” Kiki asked. “Are they excited?”

Mia shook her head, and her mood dropped.

“I don’t have any family. My parents both died in a car crash when I was a teenager.”

For once, Kiki didn’t look upbeat. She reached out and took Mia’s hand.

“It’s ok, sweetheart,” she said, her voice full of understanding. “You have a new family now, and I’m part of it. We all care about you, and we will always be here for you.”

Mia smiled and nodded, feeling overwhelmed by all the love she was being shown. She and Kiki both started to cry, and they hugged each other tightly. Mia knew she was finally in a place where she belonged, and she was grateful for it.

But she also knew that as soon as they found out who she really was, they’d kill her.

That night, after dinner and conversation, Lorenzo and Mia went back to their room. After a solid hour of sex, they lay in bed, entangled with each other.

Mia could sense Lorenzo’s distraction.

“You’ve been quiet,” Mia said.

“I was preoccupied with that body.”

Mia laughed.

“I mean at dinner. Something with your dad?”

Lorenzo nodded. He didn't seem to want to talk about it, but Mia had to know. She needed the intel.

“You can talk to me about it.”

“It's just business.”

“Something you don't want to do?”

“Yeah.”

He was quiet again. Mia knew she'd have to push.

“What was the point of testing me the way you did, if you weren't going to trust me?”

“It's not that.”

“Then why don't you tell me what's wrong? I know what you do, it won't shock me.”

Lorenzo sighed.

“It's this deal my father worked out.”

“What kind of deal?”

“Remember how I told you about my fiancée, Natalie?”

“Yes.”

“And how I thought she was murdered by her brother, Leo?”

“I remember.”

“Well, my father wants to make a deal with Leo and his brothers. The whole Monatto family.”

“What? Why? They can't be trusted, surely?”

“Nope. But he has this idea that if we meld the two families together, and trade land and territories, we'll gain control over the entirety of New York State.”

Mia nodded. Bingo. She had what she needed.

But why didn't it feel like a win?

“I don’t know what to do,” Lorenzo said. “I can’t go against my father, but this whole deal feels wrong.”

“What does Alessandro think?”

“He doesn’t care. He just wants more money and more power.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I don’t know.” He pulled Mia in close. “I don’t know.”

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Chapter 16

Mia awoke with a start, her heart pounding against her chest. She lay still for a few moments, trying to make sense of what had disturbed her. Then she remembered: Lorenzo was sleeping in the bed next to her, his breathing slow and steady.

Mia carefully slipped from the bed, trying not to disturb Lorenzo. She tip-toed out of the room and down the hallway, her bare feet padding silently against the thick carpet.

Mia crept down the stairs and across the living room, freezing at the sound of a voice. But she looked around, and there didn't seem to be anyone there.

She continued on her way, finally making it out of the house and into the cool night air.

The night was dark, the only light coming from the stars above. Mia started to make her way down the driveway, flinching at every crunch of gravel under her feet.

Finally, she made it to the end of the drive and out the gate.

A little further down the road, was a car. Mia jumped in. Greyson was in the driver's seat.

"You okay?" He said.

"Yes," Mia said. "I'm fine."

"Did you get the intel?"

Mia nodded.

"And?"

"You're right. The Rossi's and Monatto's are joining forces. They plan to take over the entire state."

"Do you know when the deal goes down?"

"Tomorrow."

"Alright. You did good. We can take it from here."

"What do you mean?"

Mia looked up towards the house. She saw a figure running across the lawn.

She jumped out of the car, seeing another figure, and another.

Greyson got out of the car. Mia spun to look at him.

"You're taking them down?"

"No. That's not us. That's the Monatto's. We'll come in tomorrow and clean it all up."

"For fuck's sake, Greyson! They're going to kill the entire family!"

She started towards the house, but Greyson grabbed her arm.

“This is what mafia life is,” he said. “Constant betrayal and death. This is what the Rossi’s do. Today they’re getting it turned on them.”

Mia pulled her arm away. She bolted towards the house.

Behind her, Greyson got in his car and drove away.

She ran up the driveway.

The figures were near the house now.

She ran across the lawn, her feet pounding against the grass.

While the Monatto’s were heading around the side of the house, Mia ran right to the front door and slipped inside.

She could see them all outside the windows. Could see the light flashing off guns.

Mia run upstairs.

She burst through the door of the bedroom.

Lorenzo was sitting on the edge of the bed, awake.

“Lorenzo —“

“Where have you been?”

“You have to get the family —“

“Where have you been, Mia?”

“You don’t understand, the Monatto’s are outside. They’re double crossing you.”

“And what about the FBI? Are they coming in too?”

Mia stood, staring at him. He knew. She didn’t know how, but he knew.”

“I’m trying to save you and your family right now.”

Lorenzo stood. He towered over her.

She now saw the gun in his waistband.

There was a crash downstairs, the sound of broken glass.

“Please,” Mia said. “You have to do something.”

Lorenzo looked at her with cold eyes. He ran from the room.

Soon there was the sound of shouting, of confusion. More glass breaking.

Then, gunshots.

Lorenzo crept into Alessandro's bedroom, and shook him awake.

"We're under attack," Lorenzo hissed, as Alessandro sat bolt upright. "We need to arm up."

The brothers ran across the hall to their father's bedroom, where their weapons were stashed. Lorenzo quickly grabbed his favorite gun, a Beretta 92FS, and checked it to make sure it was loaded and ready to go. He didn't have time to check the other guns, but Alessandro was already doing that.

Just then, the bedroom door swung open and their father, Matteo, strode in. He was carrying a shotgun and had a pistol tucked into his belt.

"We don't have much time," he said gruffly. "Grab all the weapons you can and let's go."

The men quickly grabbed all the weapons they could carry and ran out into the hall. Bullets flew past them as they ran, and Lorenzo was sure he felt one whiz past his ear. He ducked, pressing himself against the wall, and Alessandro followed his lead.

Once they were out of the line of fire, Lorenzo looked around. He had to make a decision: which way should he go? He wanted to get back to his bedroom, to make sure Mia was safe, but he knew that was impossible. Her betrayal still stung, but he still loved her and wanted to protect her.

He glanced over at his father and brother.

“We should split up,” he said, his voice firm. “I’ll go down this way and you two go the other.”

They all nodded, and Lorenzo set off down the hallway, gun in hand. He had only gone a few steps when he heard the sound of gunfire coming from the direction of his bedroom. He froze in fear.

He couldn’t just leave her there.

He’d seen her leave the house, and seen her get into the car from his bedroom window. He knew what that meant, when a woman left in the middle of the night to talk to a man in a dark sedan.

That was FBI.

But she’d come back. She didn’t have to do that. She could have let them all be slaughtered in their sleep.

He stared back at the bedroom.

Mia was trembling with fear as she crawled under the bed, hearing the sound of heavy boots pounding up the stairs and down the hallway. She felt completely helpless and exposed, certain that the gunmen were coming for her. Every muscle in her body tensed as they got closer and closer.

Mia held her breath, her heart racing. She knew that if they found her, she was done for. After what felt like an eternity, she heard the door open and the sound of a gunman entering the room.

He stood there, and she could hear his heavy breathing. He looked around, turned around.

Mia hoped she was hidden enough. She just needed to get out of the house —

Suddenly she felt a hand grab her leg and pull her out from under the bed. She screamed, her terror now at its peak. She thought this was it, she was going to die.

But then, something inside her snapped into action. She remembered her FBI training and before she knew it, she had kicked the man's legs out from under him. He tumbled to the ground, and Mia jumped to her feet. She quickly scrambled to the other side of the room, putting some distance between them.

The man got up and charged at her, but she was ready for him. She dodged his punches and managed to get a grip on his gun. He tried to grab it back, but Mia was too quick. With a surge of adrenaline, she wrenched it from his hands and shot him point-blank. He fell to the ground, and Mia stood there, trembling and breathing heavily.

At that moment, the door flew open and Lorenzo came crashing into the room. His eyes widened in shock when he saw Mia standing there, gun in hand, and the corpse on the floor.

Mia cocked the gun and stood facing Lorenzo.

"Let's go take care of these assholes," she said.

Lorenzo smiled, as much as she knew he didn't want to.

"Yes, ma'am," he said.

They ran downstairs together, covering each other's back.

Lorenzo shot to the left, Mia to the right. They were both excellent shots.

Each time a Monatto would move, they took him down.

They walked through, room-by-room, clearing each.

Mia was sure the Monatto's couldn't have many men left.

Finally, they made it to the kitchen.

Mia looked around. The kitchen was quiet. Still.

But she had a feeling.

She pointed towards the big island bench, and Lorenzo nodded.

They split up, and walked around either side, guns trained on the ground below.

They found themselves with guns pointed at a big, burly Monatto.

Lorenzo scowled. "Leo."

Leo scowled back. "Fuck you, Lorenzo."

"Looks like you tried that," Mia said. "How's it working out for you?"

"Who's this?" Leo said. "Another one of your sluts?"

Lorenzo hit him with the butt of his gun.

"Don't talk about my future wife like that."

Leo laughed at this. "Maybe I'll take her from you, just like I took Natalie."

Lorenzo's face twisted in rage. He pulled the trigger and shot Leo in the head. He shot him over and over again.

Mia understood. She understood everything about him.

Finally, he was out of bullets.

He threw the gun down and spit on Leo's very dead body.

"I knew it," he said. "I knew he killed Natalie."

There were tears in his eyes. Mia pulled him close.

"It's over now," she said.

Lorenzo pulled away and stared down at her.

"Is it?"

Mia nodded.

"You made a choice, didn't you?" He said.

"Yes."

"And you chose me. You chose the family, over the FBI."

Mia nodded again. "I did."

“Is it real?” He said. “Do you really love me?”

Mia broke down, then. All her lies, everything she’d been holding in, was all coming to the surface.

“It was all real,” she said. “I wasn’t meant to get this far in, but I feel hopelessly in love with you. And I couldn’t tell you who I really was. I was too scared. I thought your family would kill me.”

“They will kill you,” he said. “They can never find out, understand?”

“Does that mean... you still want to be with me?”

Lorenzo shrugged. “I can’t fucking explain it, Mia. But I don’t care. I just want you, every day. Forever.”

“That’s what I want, too,” Mia said.

He grabbed her and kissed her gently.

Then there was a noise, footsteps. They both turned, to see Alessandro run into the room.

“You both okay?” He said.

“We’re fine,” Lorenzo said.

“They’ve all retreated.”

“Good.”

“But...”

“What?”

Alessandro gestured for them to follow.

In the foyer, lay Matteo. He had a gunshot wound to the chest. He was gone.

Lorenzo knelt down beside him.

“They killed our father,” Alessandro said.

“We’ll take them down,” Lorenzo said. “Every last one of them. But we do it smart. We don’t get taken down by the feds over it.”

“I agree.” Alessandro said.

“Let’s get rid of these weapons, and get the cops out here. The story is they invaded the house and we fought them off with the registered handguns. Got it?”

“Got it.” Alessandro ran off.

Lorenzo took a deep breath.

“With your father gone, who’s in charge?” Mia said.

“I am,” Lorenzo said. “I’m in charge.”

Mia took his hand.

The man she loved, the love of her life, was now the head of the biggest crime family in the city. And she didn’t care. She’d follow him anywhere, do anything to be with him.

She was all in.

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Chapter 17

Mia yawned and stretched out on her beach chair.

The sun in Sicily was beautiful, made all her thoughts and troubles melt away.

She looked down the beach — the private beach, devoid of anyone else. Totally private and relaxing.

A shadow appeared over her. She looked up, but she didn't need to know who it was.

Lorenzo climbed into the beach chair with her.

“Good morning, my love,” he said.

“Morning.”

“I missed you.”

“I’ve been gone an hour.”

“An hour without you is a lifetime.”

He climbed on top of her, slipping her string bikini off.

He cupped her breast in his hand, and stared into her eyes.

She wrapped her legs around him, pulled his body close in to hers.

He pulled his shorts down, already hard for her.

He pushed straight in, and Mia moaned with the feeling of it. She still wanted him more than food, more than oxygen. Every inch of him, every part of him.

She flipped him over and rode him, as played with her clit.

It was maddening, how well he knew her body. How easily he could make her crazy.

She came, and revelled in the feeling of the tingles all over her body.

Lorenzo came too.

She leant down and kissed him.

“You hungry, Mrs. Rossi?” He said.

“Damn straight I am.”

“Pancakes?”

“Always, Mr. Rossi. Every day. Forever.”

She stared into his eyes, totally and hopelessly in love.

THE END

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Chloe Cartwright

Chloe is a writer of dark romance novels. Her books are known for their thrilling plots, steamy romances, and brooding love interests.

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