Smitten: A Mafia Romance

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Chapter 1

She ran her fingers across the engraved letters on the ash colored tombstone. The coldness of the stone was shocking to her warm fingers.

R.I.P

PHYLICIA.S.BLACK

A loving mother,daughter

and friend.

"He cheated again." She said speaking out as if her mother now laying 6ft underneath the ground would hear her laments.

"I wish you were still here mom." She continued, fresh tears rolled down her cheeks.

She sniffed.

The graveyard was windy, the wind blew through the trees, the old tree leaves rustling and the skies were gloomy too. The atmosphere depicted a scenario that told tales of sadness and woes. Maybe this was the right time for such, for the young lady that knelt beside the lone grave under the old oak tree was beyond sad.

"Mom,I am leaving." She stated relieving her self of her squatting position.

She sat on the ground with her legs brought up and her knees bunched up close to her chest, she brought her arms around them hugging herself tightly.

"I don't know but I feel the need to move away from here and start all over again. I feel like a fresh start would help me a great deal. Nothing is working for me anymore. Ever since dad left and you died, every other person keeps leaving. No one stays. I don't have any luck in friendships or dating. It's the same old story all the time, friends betray me, men use me and get tired, I even lost my job. You and dad left me to face this cruel world all by myself. Am I cursed?Is there something wrong with me? Do I deserve all this?" She asked sobbing loudly this time.

The wind still blew and it grew chillier.

"Brian cheated again.This is not the first, or second or third time, I have lost count.This time mom, he wasn't even sorry. I caught him in bed with a different girl as always and you know what? he just had a smudged look on his face and dumped me right in front of her." She spoke angrily, She felt like pulling her hair out.

"The thing is I think I am actually done with men for good now." She continued,"No!I don't think, I know I am actually done with men for good, I will move to God knows where, get a nice apartment, a satisfying job, buy a pet and live like that till the graceful lord wills me to join you."

She paused for a moment staring at the grave as if awaiting an answer, secretly willing her dead mother to communicate with her.

"It would be nice right? living alone just you, your dog, your cuppa and nice books.That will definitely be my life from now on, at least I would be left alone and finally live in peace and loneliness with may be a pinch of tranquility."

She ran her palms over her face in exasperation.

I need a break from all these, She thought.

"Even when I leave, I will still come back to visit mom, you know I will. I love you and I will forever miss you till my death!" She proclaimed in finality.

She dropped the single red rose she was holding and ran her fingers across the engraved letters once more.

I love you, She whispered wiping the lone tear that rolled down her cheek.

Korina walked sluggishly out of the cemetery with her hands buried deep in the pockets of her long black trench coat, she stopped for a moment to adjust her glasses before moving forward.

The wind blew a page of an old newspaper in her direction and she caught it just before it slapped her in the face, out of curiosity she spread it open and she saw the words printed boldly.It was the headlines.

"STOP THE KILLINGS, BLACK LIVES MATTER." She read the words out.

She folded the page and flung it away in anger.

If only it really mattered, her mother would have been alive. She sighed and continued her journey home.

Korina sat across the desk munching away on the hamburger in her right hand while she tapped away on her phone in the other.

"So nothing, absolutely nothing can change your mind?" The man on the other side of the desk asked with a hint of hope in his voice.

"Nope, nothing." She replied not pulling her gaze from her phone.

"Look korina,I am really sorry that we couldn't solve your mother's murder case and bring the culprits to justice." The man said apologizing.

"It's okay." She dropped her phone and wiped her hands with the napkin on the desk.

She was at the police station, she had come to say her final goodbyes to someone who had served as a guardian to her, it was sad separating from him too but she had to go.

It's for the better, She often reminded herself.

"I am truly, deeply really sorry." Neil Blackwood said, Korina looked at the detective and shook her head."I guess solving the case wasn't meant to happen."

"But it was our job, we could ha..." Korina cut him short,"It's okay Neil, It's okay."

She stood up to leave after prolonged minutes of silence, he rose and followed her with the intent of seeing her off.

"I will miss you, baby k." He said pulling her into a tight fatherly hug as they reached the door, she wrapped her arms around him savoring the moment, It might just be the last, She thought.

"I will miss you so much and hey don't call me that, I am a grown ass woman now." She said bumping his shoulder playfully.

"Still a baby to me." He replied with a little laugh.

Korina got down from the taxi and paid the driver. She walked up the stairs to her apartment thrusted the key into the keyhole and opened the door with two swift turns.

Her apartment looked strange and empty now, even her footsteps echoed.

Everything was literally boxed except for the camp bed she laid on the floor to spend the night on.

After taking a long shower, she brushed her teeth and skipped dinner.She was on the camp bed parting her hair in sections and plaiting it, when her phone beeped indicating new notifications, the screen lit up and she saw two messages.

She left her hair to text back.

Dianiella-you still coming tomorrow?

Truck Driver -we still doing eight, yea?

She replied quickly and dropped the phone. Minutes later she finished braiding her hair and laid back on the bed, pulling a blanket around her body, she got comfy for bed.

Korina felt nervous considering she was moving to a new place and all, a lot of questions ran through her mind.

It didn't take long before she dozed off.

She had a long day tomorrow and a flight she wouldn't want to miss.

Chapter 2

Daniella held up the white cardboard paper with both hands, with the names 'KORINA BLACK' written on it, while she impatiently tapped her left foot in annoyance.

"Where the fuck is she?" She swore out loud.

An old woman standing next to her gave her a scolding look for swearing in an obscene word and Daniella glared back at her.

She tried peering through the sea of faces for the umpteenth time, trying to see if she would finally have a glance of Korina's but her efforts proved abortive yet again.

Her phone rang and she put her hand in her purse to pick it while still holding up the now arched cardboard with the other.

"Hello mum." She said putting the phone on her ear.

"Are you guys on your way yet? or you stopped to get lunch."Her mum asked assuming she had gotten her from the airport already.

"Nope, I haven't even seen her yet, I have been waiting for nearly half of my life and grown grey hair and she still isn't here." She huffed in annoyance.

The increasing crowd and the noise it brought with it added to her list of why she wanted to punch a wall, for she was growing more irritated and furious.

"Calm down dear and stop exaggerating, you have only been gone for two hours, maybe her flight got delayed or something."

She rolled her eyes.

"Okay, bye mum, love you." She said quickly and put the phone away.

The man standing on her left was beginning to go from irritating her to creep her out as he gave her weird looks which she thought maybe he thought were seductive and he winked a couple of times.

She moved forward away from him, held up the cardboard again and began to wait.

Korina felt giddy as she climbed down the stairs of the aircraft.

Flight delay, check.

Getting airsick, check.

Throwing up in the plane, check.

Messing up an air hostess uniform due to clumsiness, Check.

Being served the wrong food, check.

"Miss, are you okay?" A young man asked her slightly touching her shoulder.

She brushed off his hand rather Impolitely and saw a frown etched on the stranger's face.

"I am fine, thank you." She replied giving him a slight nod. He nodded in return and walked away.

She continued walking barely supporting herself, she had never been this airsick.

Suddenly, she clutched her stomach not being able to control herself, she emptied her bowels in front of her with some of the contents splashing on her outfit.

Throwing up on the tarmac, check.

Korina was already really bored

Of watching the moving line, waiting for her luggage.

She stared at the long line of moving boxes with her hands at akimbo.

She felt less giddy and sick now.

She could walk without staggering like a drunk, sighting her two brightly colored medium sized yellow boxes, she sighed in relief and brought them down.

Finally, she thought.

Korina crashed into a wall or she thought it was. Her boxes fell to the floor with a thud.

"I am so sorry." They both said in unision as they attempted to pick up the luggage from the floor.

"Wait, have we met before?" She asked, studying the features of the man in front of her.

He was stunning, you could say stunning, with his jet black hair sleeked backwards, full brows, piercing blue eyes, a pointed nose, plum slightly thinned lips and a moderately tanned skin.

" Oh my God, I am so sorry."She apologised on realising it was the guy she met when the plane landed, the guy she had been standoffish to.

"It's okay." He shrugged with a smile,"I am Cole Smith by the way." She shook his extended hand, "Korina, Korina Black, pleased to meet you." She smiled.

"So am I." He replied not letting go of her hand admiring the soft feel of it.

"I can help you with that." He said moving to collect her luggage.

"I think I can manage on my own and I should be on my way now." She replied as she realised she had stared at him too much and his piercing blue eyes were beginning to intrigue her.

No men, she chided herself before saying her goodbyes and practically running off.

Finally, stepping out of the airport was a task, finding her cousin Daniella in the sea of people was another. She had looked at all the held up cardboards, scanned through the faces, she couldn't find her name or Daniella, she brought out her phone and was about to start dialing when she heard her name being screamed.

"Korina! korina! fucking use your eyes! I am here!" She whipped herself in the direction of the voice and saw a very angry looking Daniella screaming.

"Didn't you fucking see me?" Daniella asked torn between ripping korina's head off or hugging her, It's been 4 hours, freaking 4 hours.

"Well thank you for that warm welcome." Korina said sarcastically, "And I would have seen you earlier if your dumbass wasn't holding the cardboard paper upside down."

"Was I?" Daniella asked feeling dumb, looking at her hand she confirmed that she indeed had been holding it upside down.

"Yes, you were." Korina replied,"Get me out of here."

"Nice ride." Korina complimented when they reached the Daniella's ride, she ran her hand over the bonnet, "Smooth, this baby is damn fine." she beamed.

"Thanks sis, Got it with my savings." She said proudly.

"I know." Korina said rolling her eyes before settling her luggage in the booth.

Just before they got in, a car drove roughly past them nearly hitting korina had she not jumped out of the way.

"Hey, Asshole!" Korina screamed at the driver giving him the middle finger.

"Is that how everyone behaves around here like lunatics?" She asked hoping into the car.

"Yeah." Daniella shook her head.

"What the heck?"

"Welcome to NY baby." Daniella said starting the car, "Welcome to New York City."

Chapter 3

"It's perfect." She said looking around the room, it was a studio apartment bigger than she expected, a little on the high side but she loved it, especially the fact that it was situated in a sky rise building and she loved the views from the tall glass walls.

"So korina, are you taking this one?" Daniella asked impatiently, she had heard these words 'it's perfect' for every apartment they checked over the weeks and korina never picked anyone.

"Yes,I am." She nodded in affirmative and turned to the landlord, "How do you want it, E-money or cash?"

Korina watched Daniella hand over the card to the cashier and looked at all the multiple shopping bags wondering who was going to carry them for her cause she sure ain't touching shit.

"Is that all ma'am?" The cute asian lady behind the counter asked.

"Errm, I think...I would ta...?" Korina hit Daniella cutting her sentence short, "That would be all."She nearly growled facing the cashier, she was never going shopping with Daniella ever again.

Her feet ached, her hands were sore from holding out various outfits and she was sure her mouth would get sore too after various comments like

"it fits",

"it's perfect",

"black suits you better",

" no,take the other one"

Never again, she sighed.

Looking at the bags was a perfect example of when your man says 'treat yourself baby, buy it all' and she was certain Daniella over did it.

"K babe, could you please help me with the bags?"

"No, fucking no."

"Please?"

"Nope, you bought your shit you carry it yourself, I warned you, the only thing I am taking out of here is my purse and this chocolate bar, bitch bye see you at the car." Korina said and walked out if the mall.

"I am never gonna forget this day, this day I asked you to help me and you refused, on this day you left me to face my troubles all on my own and here I was thinking I had a supportive cousin and a best friend."Daniella said as she got into the car.

She finally reached the car after nearly over 15 minutes, Korina didn't know how she managed to carry all her stuff but earlier on, she spotted Daniella talking to a man outside the mall, maybe he assisted her.

"Yea, yeah, whatever, start the car let's go already." Korina rolled her eyes at Daniella, always such a drama queen.

It wasn't long before they got home, it was already late and the sky had begun to darken.

"You cooking tonight?" Korina asked.

"Nope, too tired I will just order pizza."

After binging on pizza and movies both of them sat to talk.

"So what's next? now that you have gotten an apartment."

"Moving in??" Korina answered quizically.

"I mean, are you gonna buy a car or get a job or start getting furniture or something."

"Definitely not a car, I will find a job can't live off my savings forever and I will start buying furniture in preparation to move in."

Daniella just nodded.

"Dan, I thought you said your boyfriend stayed here, how come I have never seen him?" Korina asked.

Daniella's face turned slightly pale at Korina's question.

"What's wrong Dan?" She asked noticing the sudden change.

"Nothing, I just have a headache, a very bad one." Daniella replied quickly slightly touching her head.

"So about your boyfriend..."

"Oh you know rich guy, business stuff, bla bla bla, all those kinda..."

"Get straight to the point." Korina said cutting her short, her blabbing was irritating.

"He's always kinda busy, always on different flights, in different countries." She said,"He's never home a lot or at all."

"Oh, sorry about babe, you must really miss him."

"Yes,I do."

The rest of the moment was enveloped by silence.

"So does he ever take you on business trips with him? before you answer that, I don't know how to say this cause of course you are my best friend and family, we have been through a lot together, you are basically the only one that stayed with me.Thanks a lot Dan for everything, you are such a remarkable person, I love you so much." Korina poured out her words absentmindedly not taking her eyes off the glass of orange juice she held, "Mind you savour these words for I am never saying them again, ever!"She said with half a laugh.

Korina turned to her left to look at Daniella when she noticed she never heard a response, She was met with Daniella's sleeping form who was snoring lightly, She had been conversing with herself for long.

She stood in front of the mirror and stared at her reflection for a long time.

Why?

Why did they always leave?

Questions that ran through her head all the time.

People often said she was beautiful and could turn heads but to her,her looks were just modest.

But what use is all these, if I can't keep a partner?

That night, she cried herself to sleep as she had done every other night.

She still loved brian a part of her wanted him back but the other part of her knew she deserved better.

But she wished he would come back and take her, this time she would do everything to keep him, she would make sure he was happy and she would do everything to make him happy.

The next morning korina woke up with a banging headache and a new and strong resolution she sang happily in the shower during her morning bath as she kept on chanting 'be happy' quotes she had seen on the net.

She was going to move on and start all over.

She was going to live and forget it all.

She could do it and she had to.

She would.

That morning as she set out of the house to search for a job with a big smile on her face.

She knew she was certainly going to make sure her life was better here alone, she was going to start afresh and have a great life.

She would be happy.

Chapter 4

A year and some months later.

The worse thing to wake up to in the morning was the sound of an annoyingly loud alarm.

"Drrrrrrrrrggghhhhh." The alarm kept ringing continuously, Korina reached out a hand to the bed shelve top, grabbed the clock aggressively and put it off.

Well, happy lazy Sunday to me, She thought with internal joy as she leaped off the bed.

She stood in front of the tall glass window and watched the sun rising with squinted eyes, the rays streamed through the glass illuminating the room.

That was what she loved most about the apartment, it was the view.

She yawned and stretched before she felt a sharp shooting pain in her head.

"Ouuuuuwwww!" She shouted.

A hangover?

"Oh, you are up." A voice said.

"Yes,I am." She replied, wait what?she didn't remember having a roommate.

She whipped around in shock to see a man clad only in boxers, cooking and happily humming in her kitchen.

What the fuck?!She nearly screamed.

"Who are you? how did you get here?don't move, I am calling the police!" She screamed searching for her phone frantically.

"Hey lady, calm down." The man spoke.

She picked up a hanger and waved it dangerously at him wishing she'd scare him.

"Don't move!" She warned.

The man watched her amused.

"Daniella!Daniella!" She screamed into the phone, "There is a naked man in my apartment and he's making deliciously smelling pancakes."

"Your annoying voice wasn't the first thing I wanted to hear this morning, what is it?" Daniella replied.

"There is a strange dude in my apartment and I got a hangover, calling the cops."

"Oh, you mean kelvin?"

"K...who?"

"Kelvin from the club, you remember last night." Daniella tried explaining.

"I don't know what you saying, there is a guy in my apartment naked, making pancakes and they smell nice."

"At the club yesterday, dumbass." Daniella said palming her face.

"Oh..." Korina said in realization as the memories came rushing in.

"You do know you have..." Daniella began,"Bye Dan."korina cut her off and dropped the phone.

"You, so your name is kelvin from the club." She said facing him.

"Yes...my name is kelvin without the 'from the club' in it." He said emphasizing demonstrating with the mug cups he was holding.

"Don't you dare break my cups!" Korina warned eyeing him.

"I am so sorry."He apologised dropping the cups on the counter," So I was wondering if we could hang out some..."He hadn't finished before She cut him short with a question.

"Did we do anything yesterday? you know anything..."

"Nope." He replied.

She smiled lightly, bent down and picked his pants and shirt from the floor threw them in his arms and pushed him towards the door.

"Wait...i..." He said.

"What is it?"

"Could we hang out?maybe like a date or something, meet up for coffee perhaps?" He pleaded.

"Sorry,I don't do men"She answered.

" you do females then." It was evident that he was sad for his face fell after her response.

"No! I don't, you know what...get out!" She said finally pushing him out the door and into the hallways.

Phewww, She locked her door, walked over to the bed and fell on it embracing sleep again.

She woke up later to the sound of her phone ringing.

"Hello." She spoke, her voice still sleep filled.

"How's work? your boss unleashed her inner dragon yet?" Daniella asked with a chuckle.

"Dan, dumbass Daniella, today is Sunday."

"Nope, korina today is Thursday and you should be at work by now."

Korina looked at her phone screen.

"Oh My God!!!" She screamed.

Daniella shook her head wondering when her cousin would ever get her life straight.

"It's Thursday Dan, my boss would kill me, it's freaking 9:30 AM." Korina screamed running around the scattered apartment looking for clean clothes and undies as she smelled each cloth in the the midst of clothes thrown all over.

She took a whiff of a shirt and threw it aside in horror.

"My apartment is a mess."

"Your life is a mess." Daniella said pointing out the obvious, "And don't forget I got a date scheduled for you tonight, don't you ditch."She warned.

"I told you, no more dates."

"What was that you said? you would love to go on a date, well that's splendid." Daniella said and ended the call immediately.

Korina groned, Oh shit.

She ran out of the bathroom after what you could barely call a shower and picked up her phone.

Her boss was calling.

"Hello ma'am." She whispered as she carefully tiptoed to the bathroom sink still wrapped in a towel, her phone in one hand and brush in the other.

"Korina Black." The woman said, "where are you?"She asked calmly.

Korina was shocked that her boss was speaking calmly, she expected to get screamed at.

"Korina, the wonderful people of New York take breakfast at diners as early as 7:00AM and you happen to work at a diner and it's 10:00AM, korina where are you?" Korina was getting scared that she was still talking calmly.

"See ma'am, I just had a little accident." She lied.

"You had an accident next to a running tap? I can hear running water and a brush, you wouldn't happen to be brushing, would you?"

Korina spat at the contents of her mouth and dropped the brush,"yes, no, yes."She wondered why she even bothered answering.

"KORINA BLACK! IF YOU DON'T GET YOURSELF HERE IN THE NEXT 3 MINUTES, I WILL FIRE YOU!"

Her boss screamed and she wondered where the old lady got her strength.

Now there was the scream, 3 minutes?She gulped.

"I gave you 3 minutes, you took 20." The angry woman behind the desk screamed.

Korina wasn't even paying attention to her boss, the only thought on her mind was the fact that she didn't get to eat the pancakes 'kelvin from the club'made.

"Are you even paying attention? young lady, what was the last thing I said?"

"Uhmmm, the last thing you said was 'what was the last thing I said' ". Korina replied and that was it, her boss snapped and threw the files she was holding at her.

"You are lucky, I haven't fired your sorry ass yet!" She screamed after korina as she ran out of the office.

Korina changed into her uniform, got behind the counter and took her position.

She looked at the long line of customers before her.

It was gonna be a long day.

Chapter 5

"Nothing, absolutely nothing is changing my mind this time." Korina huffed in frustration as she looked at the now halved black comb in her hand.

It broke while she was trying to comb her hair.

"Nah, I don't think dreads would fit you."Daniella said.

She stood up from the bed and pulled some part of korina's hair playfully.

" oooouch."She slapped her hand away and gave her a threatening look.

"I am honestly tired of my hair, it's hard to comb, hard to detangle, always breaking combs! It's frustrating, ugggh!" She complained further.

"Try combing it again!" Daniella suggested, "But with this, this time."She said handing Korina another comb.

Korina took the comb and began combing.

"You see it works!" Daniella said in excitement as she saw Korina combing effortlessly.

Snap!

"Oh God!!!!"Korina screamed and looked at her palms, this was the fourth comb breaking today.

"That's it." She stood up, "To the saloon."

The hairdresser finished up and turned korina to face the big rectangular mirror.

"Wow, I look amazing." Korina said gazing into the mirror as she felt her hair with her fingertips.

"I know right! I told you dyeing blonde would make it look gorgeous."He stated as he rubbed his palms over her hair appreciating his master piece.

"Damn girl!Your hair has got me wowed." Daniella said from behind.

She had been outside the saloon, she advanced towards them and stared at the back length blonde dreads.

"Told you dreads would look good on me." Korina said.

"Guess this new look isn't so bad for your upcoming 21st birthday, I am so excited!" Daniella said with so much enthusiasm and was a little too loud, most of the people at the shop stared at them.

Daniella rolled her eyes and faced Korina.

"Let's get out of here, I am starving."

It wasn't the darkness or silence dominating the apartment that sent shivers down Korina's spine. It was the fact she felt that she was certain someone was watching her this time.

Since she began receiving all the mysterious, creepy, sweet messages, she concluded she was being stalked.

Private number -happy birthday my love, you are so perfect, so beautiful,

Perfectly made for me.

I hope you love the gifts I got you, as I am sure you have loved others.

Till we meet, bye.

Korina stared at the message and swallowed hard, earlier she had made sure all her doors, windows and possible break-ins were well secured.

She stared at the text again, it was a private number, inaccessible and untraceable.

Just great! Her first birthday message was from a stalker.

She had wanted her 21st birthday to be wonderful and pleasant not creepy and strange.

She lay on her bed and stared at the ceiling, the only noise that could be heard was the ticking of the clock.

Nothing is gonna happen, today is gonna be great, She ignored the unsettling feeling in her stomach and the heavy doubt on her mind.

Nothing could go wrong, she assured her conscience and forced herself to sleep.

Korina was very close to flinging the table lamp at Daniella.

She watched her in irritation as she squealed and gushed over the extravagant and outrageous gifts sent by Mr stalker.

"How the fuck did you even become my cousin?" She asked resisting the urge to smack her.

"By adoption, duhhh!"Daniella rolled her eyes,"Waoooh girl, look at these shoes, how did he know your size? so cute."She said.

"Are you insane? This person has been stalking me, sending gifts and weird lovey dovey text.Yet, here you are acting like it's my boyfriend that got me stuff."

"Oh come on, he's your future boyfriend." Daniella winked.

"Are you kidding me?" Korina asked, Daniella was so unbelievable at times.

"Okay, I am sorry, calm down, he's just a rich guy who is obviously obsessed with you and can't tell it to your face."

"What if he's a psychotic serial killer?"

"What if he's not." Daniella said before letting out a scream as she looked at the handbag she was holding.

"Why are you screaming? why?"

"Are you seeing this?" She screamed at Korina, "He got you a hermes bag, fucking hermes."

For a moment korina's jaw dropped in shock, how rich is this dude?

"So what do we do about the whole situation?"She asked after recovering from her mini shock.

"Sell the hermes and buy a royce rolls."Daniella said with a shrug.

"Fish for brains, I am being serious, a better idea please?"

"Husband him!"

That was all it took for korina to unleash, She unplugged the lamp with one swift move and threw it Daniella's direction.

"Stupid."Korina hissed staring at Daniella's amused face as the lamp met the wall shattering to pieces," It should have been your head, for reals."

The club was really noisy, the noise the clubbers produced competed with the DJ's music blaring from the speakers.

The lights were dim, people dancing, strangers grinding on each other.

The air smelt of cigarettes, sweat and sex.

In the midst of all these, Korina was looking for her cake.

"Who in the world is stupid enough to bring a cake to a club?" Daniella asked using her fingers to visualize air quotes, she was a little tipsy.

Korina stared at her angrily while Daniella's Co workers who came uninvited burst out laughing.

"Katrina, forget the cake and party, it's your birthday." One of the men said slapping Korina's back.

"It's korina idiot." She retorted.

Drunk fools.

The rest of the club stay didn't really go well, Daniella and korina got thrown out cause Korina started a fight with someone who she saw eating a piece of cake.

They began walking home, staggering down the streets extremely drunk.

"Happy birthday, sister, cousin and best friend, I love you." Daniella said throwing her arms around korina who was struggling to hold herself up.

"So are we taking a cab to Santorini?" Korina asked.

"I thought we were headed home?" Daniella replied confused.

"Yes, home is Santorini."

"You.....wait korina,what that on your dress?" Daniella slurred pointing a finger at the red dot on Korina's dress.

"Must be a button." she replied looking down.

"Do buttons move? or I am just drunk." Daniella asked then the both of them flared with laughter.

A few seconds later, a loud bang was heard.

"What was?..." Daniella began but crossed her hand over her mouth to silence an attempted scream as she saw a body laying on the floor bleeding.

"Korina look." She said, her voice quivering.

She noticed Korina wasn't by her side anymore and had a closer look at the body.

Lying face down was Korina with blood pooling around her, her arms laying limply by her side.

And then it happened, Daniella let out a boisterous scream such that the birds in the air were frightened.

Korina had been shot.

Chapter 6

The hours Daniella had to wait were the most tiring and elongated hours she had had to wait in her life.

She sat in the waiting room as she was tired of pacing around, her head bent over and shoulders slumped, tears streaming down her cheeks.

She was sober now, the shock of the incidence had gotten rid of the liquor.

She couldn't stop crying, thoughts of any possible terrible outcome of the situation ran through her mind.

What if she dies?

She raised her head and wiped her tears, chiding herself for being a cry baby, she going to live, she assured herself.

"Daniella." She glanced towards the direction of the voice and saw her mother approaching. She threw herself into the woman's arms and started sobbing all over again.

"Mom." She sniffed, "I am so scared."

"It's okay baby." She consoled her rubbing her palms over her back, "it's okay."

Immediately Daniella set eyes on the police officer, she had sudden distaste for him.He was a big man, annoyingly big, he sniffed too often as if he had a running nose and she wondered if his pot belly wasn't too heavy for him to carry. She thought he looked like those police officers who only sat behind a desk all day stuffing doughnuts in their mouths and downing excessive coffee.

The police officer sniffed again and coughed this time."Do you know if she made friends with any shifty people or made some enemies?" He asked Daniella rubbing a finger underneath his nose for the umpteenth time, that action was beginning to piss her off.

"No, she didn't, Korina isn't that kind of person." He nodded and jotted down a few words on his note pad.

"So if she didn't, maybe she got shot by mistake or it's a stray bullet." He looked up and continuously tapped his pen on his chin as if in deep thought.

"Well, it's your job to find out!" She said almost raising her voice, get out of here already.

"Okay, don't worry we would get to the bottom of this, I would be taking my leave now, take care."He adjusted his belted pants and gave her fatherly pat.

What the heck? she rolled her eyes and turned to leave, Good grief.

" uhmm...one more thing."Daniella heard the police officer say and whipped around, "yes?"

"The woman at the counter talking to the nurse over there." He said pointing towards the direction, "You said she's your mother, how?you are whi..."

"I am adopted." She replied cutting him off, he only nodded and turned to leave.

"He was so annoying." Daniella told her mother after feeding her details of what happened at the club and with the policeman, "He even asked how come you were my mother, like how's that any of his concern?"

"He's just doing his job dear, never mind him, we have korina to worry about."

"I do hope she's okay."

"She will be." Daniella's mum said reaching out and holding her hand giving it light strokes as she offered silent prayers in her mind.

Korina was awake the next evening, she opened her eyes to see she was on a hospital bed with a drip connected to her hand.

She tried sitting up but immediately relaxed herself as she felt a sharp pain shooting up in her abdomen and her head banged. She felt sore everywhere.

The door opened and she saw a nurse walk in with Daniella and her aunt.

"Daniella, aunt Dido." She muttered.

Daniella rushed to a side of the bed and pulled korina in a tight and deep embrace.

"Thank Goodness, you are okay!" Daniella wisphered.

"How are you feeling?" Aunt Dido asked walking over and giving her a peck on the cheek.

"I am fine aunt." She winced, "just hurt and in pain, I feel like I have been run over severely by a truck."

"Pheww...Thank heavens, I thought you would die, cause you were blee...I was so scar....i am just glad that you are okay. "Daniella's words rushed out as she was still enveloped in a tight embrace with Korina.

" what really happened?" Korina asked, trying hard to recollect the past events.

"Daniella said you got shot outside a club after you both were returning." Aunt Didi said, re-adjusting her glasses and they both knew with this action they were in for a long speech, "I thought I warned you girls against clubbing, now look what happened."Aunt Dido began.

Here it goes, Daniella rolled her eyes.

"Young lady,did you just roll your eyes at me?"

"No mom,I..see...there is something in my eyes and I tried to get it out..so." She said moving her eyes some more and turned to Korina, "If you could just blow right in here."She requested and used her index fingers to drag her lids apart trying to make her tale believable.

Korina eyed and ignored her then turned to Aunt Dido, "we are sorry aunt."She apologised.

"And that's why you shouldn't be found in a club or out at night." Aunt Dido said finally ending her lecture, over 30 minutes of pacing around with her hands folded behind her backs spewing her words which they have heard countless number of times, "Do I make myself clear?"

"She's old fashioned." Daniella wisphered into Korina's ear ignoring her mother.

"What did you just say?" She turned and faced them sternly.

"Uhmm...i..."she stuttered.

" she was complementing your dress, she said it accentuates your curves."Korina lied.

"I am wearing pants korina, D..." She was cut short by the door being opened, a young man stepped in.

He was dressed smartly in a dress white shirt, a tie on his neck and black pants.

He wore a white coat and a stethoscope hung loosely from his neck and his hands held a clip board.

"Good evening." He greeted generally and turned to gaze at the patient on the bed.

" Ah!you again?!" He asked smiling, his facial features portrayed he was slightly shocked.

Korina only nodded in return as she stared into those familiar blue eyes.

Chapter 7

His jet black hair wasn't sleeked backwards this time, unlike the day she first met him, it was more ruffled and neatly unruly, maybe he rubbed his palms through it, She thought.

Her eyes raked over his features, studying his oval face, blue eyes, a pointed nose and tanned skin. He had a real sharp jawline, she imagined it cutting through glass. She looked over him and guessed maybe he was about 6"1.

No, don't get attracted, no men, no men, She scolded herself.

"Korina!" She snapped back to reality at the mention of her name.

"Yes." She replied looking at him squarely.

"I asked how you were feeling now." He said, "Repeatedly."

"A lot better i think, just that my head bangs and I am a bit sore all over."She replied and looked around the room only then did she notice that aunt Dido and Daniella had excused them minutes ago.

" lie straight back." He said dropping his clipboard and pen, "I want to examine you."

Korina complied feeling a little nervous.

"So from bumping into you at an airport to meeting you in an hospital." He said smiling.

To a table in a restaurant, She smiled inwardly, no...no...no men.

"Pretty nice right?" He asked as he palpated her abdomen.

"Well you could say nice if I wasn't injured." She threw a light laugh and immediately winced in pain as he got to the wounded area, "It hurts there."

"After giving you prescriptions and you follow your medications strictly, you would be fine in no time." He said as he scribbled his observations on the clip board.

"So how come you got shot?"

"Look Dr Cole." She began,"It was my 21st birthday and we went to a club to have a nice time and my cake got stolen."She huffed.

"I am actua..." He tried saying but Korina stopped him, "I am not finished yet."She said.

"So, after looking for the cake with no success, I was told to forget it and party hard. Later on I saw someone eating a piece of cake, I knew it was my cake and didn't waste time in jumping on her and punching her."

"A little violent, yeah?" He laughed.

"Anyways the fight resulted into us getting thrown out, we got on our feet and headed home." She sighed,"and the next thing we heard was a loud bang and I saw black before finding myself in the hospital.

"You said you were looking for your cake? who the hell takes a cake to the club?" He asked.

"Oh please don't sass me." She retorted.

"Well happy birthday miss Korina."

"Awwwn, thank you." She smiled, a flirty smile.

"We are lucky the bullet didn't go too deep, if it had, it would have been disastrous."

"Thank God." She breathed.

"I would send your prescription to the pharmacy, please make sure you take your drugs, follow the medication and dosage well, in no time you'd be back on your feet."

"Okay doc." She said, "But I hate tablets, is there a way they could be substituted with injections and drips?"

"No dear." He laughed," you will be discharged soonest tomorrow, take care."He said turning to leave.

Korina muttered a bye and eyed his back as he made his way out.

"Korina." She looked up to see he had turned around. "Can I g....Never mind." He said never finishing his sentence and quickly exited the room.

"You snitch!" Daniella exclaimed as soon as she entered the room, "you never told me you met a hottie at the airport, you Little snitch."She smirked.

Korina rolled her eyes and sighed,"were you eavesdropping again? and where is aunt?"

"Of course I was, you know me and my mom already left for work, some emergency or something."

"Dan, why did you eavesdrop?"

"Did you tell him you were single and searching?"

"Why the fuck would I tell him that?"

"Did you tell him he was hot?"

"I do not find him attractive." She huffed.

"Oh quit it Korina, you were checking him out." Daniella said.

"How..d..."

"I peeped through the blinds, you were checking him out."

"I..."

"Don't." Daniella hushed her,"you can't even wiggle yourself out of this one."

"Look..."

"Shut it Korina!"

Korina laid back on the bed in defeat, she definitely wasn't getting out of this one.

"So did you tell him you were single?"

"I did not."

"He seems like the perfect match for you, he's cute, sexy, a doctor, quite tall and for all you know might be attracted to you." Daniella saw Korina frown angrily as she laid out her words.

"You are beginning to irritate me." Korina fisted the sheets.

"You need a man dear!"

"I do not."

"You need to get fucked." Daniella wasn't really the one to mind vulgarity, she said it as she wanted.

"I do not need that either." Her face was strained, "How on earth was I fated to know your ass?"

"I am a blessing to you, darling."

"I think not."

"You really need to get some action, you must be rusty down there."

"Coming from someone whose boyfriend is always away, you sure are getting action indeed!"

"Hey! at least I have a man and you don't."

"Didn't say I needed one."

"Then why did you ogle at the doctor?"

"You know, I could kill you."Korina nearly screamed.

Daniella laughed knowing pretty well she was frustrating the life out of her.

" would you now?"

"Try me!"

Several anger filled hours later, Daniella was still offending Korina with topics on why she needed a man with Korina replying with points of why she didn't.

"And what if he cheats again like the last one?"

"Then you get wine, get drunk and get over it then move on to finding a new guy."

"What the fuck girl? you got tits for brains?"

"Nope, I graduated with first class from business school and you know it."

"You are lucky I am confined in this bed, I would have put so much effort in finding something to throw at your dumbass." Korina stared at her angrily.

"You know I could just help you get hi..." She didn't finish her statement for a pillow hit her right in the face.

Korina didn't miss her aim this time.

Chapter 8

Korina wore her mittens immediately she heard the timer go off, she opened the oven and brought out the tray of brownies.

The aroma wafted through the air and she did a dramatic sniff, her mouth watered at the sight of the brown pastries. She set them down on the counter, took a knife and proceeded to cut them into shape when she heard a knock on the door.

"Coming." She yelled as she quickly made her way to the door.

There was no one in sight when she answered the door, even when she peeped at both sides of the hallway not a single soul was found. She was about to step out further when she hit her foot on something.

Korina looked down to find a white box and bouquet of flowers.

She picked them up and took them into the apartment silently praying that a bomb wasn't implanted in them.

She dropped them on a coffee table and took a whiff of the flowers,they smelt heavenly, yellow roses, her favorite, opening the box she found a dozen of chocolate covered cup cakes and her sweet tooth got excited , the sight of the cakes was delightful.

"I am so sorry you got shot love, get well soon."

Her heart quickened as she re-read the note over and over again. She recognized the handwriting, neatly written as always, it was the same handwriting on all notes that she had received from the Anonymous stalker, she knew it was him, as always.

Oh lord, she palmed her face, another thing to worry about aside healing from my injuries.

Korina munched greedily on the cupcake she held in her left hand as she typed furiously on the Google search engine 'how to deal with an Anonymous stalker'. She couldn't actually believe she was eating the cakes for all she knew they might have been poisoned but her weakness for pastries won this time.

The search result loaded and she clicked on the first one and began to read.

"The best way to deal with a stalker is not to react. Collect as much information as you can about this person and get anything that links them to you...

But nothing links, She thought.

Document absolutely everything and if you can take video recordings and pictures all these can be used as evidence when you report them to the police...

And here you are eating the evidence like a glutton, Her subconscious pricked her.

She finished reading the whole post and closed the laptop in exasperation, definitely not what she needed.

" so you ate all the cakes?" Daniella asked watching Korina, her eyes were glued to the menu.

"Yes, I did." Korina answered still not taking her eyes of it.

They were at a restaurant, it was a new place that just opened up and they have been frequent there.

The girls loved their food, customer service and some of the hot waiters, which Daniella always made an effort to comment on.

"What ever happened to 'what if it's poisoned? what if he's trying to kill me?" Daniella asked imitating Korina's voice and frightened face while swinging her arms dramatically.

"First of all, I look and sound nothing like that." She pointed out offended by Daniella's mimicry of her,"and second, I didn't die."She said in defense.

"Why do you keep studying that damn menu anyway? We both come here almost at all times."

"It's of proper etiquette to study a menu when one is handed over to you."She replied with a raised brow.

"Yen yen yen yen."Daniella mocked," You study the menu all the time and pick the same damn thing all the time."

"You are childish." Korina huffed before looking around and hailing a waiter.

"Good morning ladies." The waiter greeted flashing a bright smile on getting to their table.

"Morning, I would have some fries with ketchup, a tuna sandwich and a glass of orange juice please."He jotted down Korina's order and turned to Daniella," and you ma'am?"He asked

"I...uhhhmm...i would love a plate of scones with chocolate finishing, two king sized burgers, your largest pack of fries with extra ketchup, two medium sized sandwiches, some waffles with honey, a bowl of salad and a diet coke."

The waiter jotted it all down and went off with an amused look on his face.

"Nah girl...you didn't just do that." Korina laughed.

"Do what?"

"Do that." She said trying to control her laughter.

Daniella looked perplexed,"what is so funny?"

"You didn't just order a diet coke and a bowl of salad to satisfy your guilty conscience of your unhealthy eating." Korina said and laughed a little too loud.

"I did actually." Daniella said with a haughty look on her face,"it's not called 'satisfying my conscience'it's called uhm..."She suddenly couldn't find her words.

"Called what uh?"

"It's called maintaining the balance between unhealthy eating and healthy eating."

Korina looked at as if she had grown horns trying to read meaning to the words she just said.

"You get dumber with each passing day." Korina remarked shaking her head pitifully.

"You are lucky we are at a restaurant I swear, I would have lifted this table and smashed it on your head."Daniella said gritting her teeth, Korina just waved her words away and kept her attention on the vase in a corner of the restaurant that held black roses.

Their meal arrived soon and they concentrated on gobbling down the food with less conversations.

Daniella took a bite of her burger, she put it down to chew," So Korina..."She started with her mouth full.

"Oh don't talk to me while your mouth is full." Korina warned.

"Oh please! would you just listen." Daniella said and she rolled are eyes at her.

"So...what are you doing about him?"Daniella asked.

" who is this 'him'?" Korina asked knowing fully well where the conversation headed.

"The hot doctor, I want you both to get together." Daniella winked,"you know cole smith."

"You never told me you owned tinder." She remarked rolling her eyes wondering why are cousin still hasn't given up on this.

"Well, forgive me for trying to make an effort to lighten your life." Daniella huffed, She was offended.

"Look Dan." Korina began,"I am sorry, I know you care about me and want me to be happy, but having a man isn't what I need right now, I just want to heal completely in peace."

"What has it been now?A year and a half, you have had enough time to heal you wouldn't want to end up a spinster now would you?"

"Really Dan, I am 21, not 50." She rolled her eyes, took a piece from the fries and put them in her mouth.

"Still dosen't matter, I know what I am saying."

"Tell you what." Korina said,"If the doctor shows up again and makes a move I would give in to it and I will also try to meet up with the people you set me up with, without my consent of course."

"Great." Daniella said excitedly,"I love you babe and you also have to make some new friends."

"Fine I will."She responded waving her palms in affirmative," But if anything happens, I am having your head for it and would never take your advice ever."

"I cross my heart that nothing bad will ever happen." Daniella said placing her hand on her heart.

"Now can we get back to eating?"

"Yes of course." Daniella said,"And we have to hurry up, I got a date planned out for you tonight."She winked at Korina.

Korina forced a smile but groaned internally, what the heck have I gotten myself into?

Chapter 9

"Hey!" Korina's hand flew to her chest as she jumped off the chair in fright, the voice startled her.

"Daniella!" She screamed as she watched her walk excitedly into the apartment,"you can't just barge in like that, don't frighten me into having a heart attack."

Her hand was still on her chest, her rapid breathing was beginning to slow down.

"Oh come on." Daniella dropped her purse on the bed and began pulling off her jacket,"you knew I was coming and besides you gave me your spare key, remember?"

"That I did and I might have to retrieve it back, in fact why are you here? It's 7pm and it's dark and late." She asked resuming her position on he chair.

"You have a date tonight remember? I am here to fix you up."

Daniella walked over to Korina's closet threw the covers apart and started rummaging for an outfit.

"Oh my God, I totally forgot I had a date tonight."

"As usual."Daniella scoffed," Nah, this is too bright..."She murmured as she scrutinized the green outfit she held, she shook her head with her face scrunched up in apparent distaste for the dress and threw it aside.

"I ain't going, it's already late, I don't think I should..." Korina tried to explain but was quickly silenced by Daniella's angry stare.

"Oh yes you are! I put so much efforts in organizing dates for you but you bail out, the men aren't gonna cook you up to eat girl."Daniella said. She held two dresses in her hands now, She nodded in disapproval and threw them aside, does she own anything wearable? She thought.

"But I..." She didn't get to finish cause Daniella was staring her down angrily now, She thought she could literally see the steam escaping her head,"Calm down fire breathing dragon."

"If you think I would let you bail out on this one, wake up from lala land girl cause I won't, you have no excuse, the first date I organised after our meeting at the restaurant, you never showed up claiming some of your eyelashes fell off, for this one I am driving you there myself." The words rushed out of Daniella's mouth in a breath, she was still starting at Korina, breathing heavily and angry too.

"Jeez...fine I would go.", Korina said waving her arms in surrender, " just don't breath fire on me."She completed with a light laugh trying to lighten up the tense atmosphere.

Daniella's face muscles didn't move, not even a smile, she was still frowning.

"What? I said I am going already, ain't I?"She asked.

" Great, now hop in the shower while I pick out an outfit."

After minutes of screaming and threatening sentences from Daniella, Korina finally got out of the shower, doing it sluggishly of course.

She lotioned her body in the most lethargic movements much to the irritation of Daniella who was on the verge of snapping.

"Could you hurry up? your date is tonight and not tomorrow." Daniella hissed at a point.

Moments later, Korina was sat on a chair in front of the dressing mirror, a robe worn loosely around her body, with Daniella carefully fixing her hair.

"You really had to go all extra and light candles didn't you?" Korina scoffed looking at the lit red candles on the dressing table.

"I wanted to make the atmosphere more impressive and make your ass feel pampered."

"Does that even make sense to you?" She said trying to turn.

"Would you hold still while I try to make your hair look gorgeous." Daniella frowned, Korina got back in position with her hands folded neatly across her laps, diverting her thoughts to what to expect of her date later tonight.

"Remind me, why I am buying your advice and going on this date again." Korina asked as Danielle bent and helped her buckle her heels.

"Uhhm...cause I give the best advice and my plans always work out." Daniella said, "in fact after this date you would be walking down the aisle in no time."

"Yea, right." She scoffed wondering why Daniella thought her ideas were always wonderful when actually it always flopped one way or the other.

"Daniella, do I really have to wear this?", Korina asked as Daniella rose, " isn't it a little too revealing?" She tried adjusting the dress to cover the top of her boobs.

"Don't touch it." Daniella answered slapping Korina's hands away from her chest, "it's perfect."

Daniella grinned and turned Korina towards the full lengthened mirror leaning against the wall.

Korina nearly gasped in shock when she saw her reflection.

She blinked her eyes continuously and stared.

She was amazed.

She thought she looked way too gorgeous. Nah, this isn't me, She thought.

Her dreads were packed and tied up neatly in a tight bun, edges laid beautifully, her make up was nude, neatly carved out brows, light eyeshadow, her lashes were stretched with mascara, the concealer and foundation blended well with her skin and her lips were coated with a nude shade.

A necklace with a jade pendant hung beautifully around her neck with the pendant resting low below her collarbone.

She had on a white strapless gown which stopped mid thigh, it showed a little cleavage which she thought was too much, on her feet were a pair of black heels.

"Oh my God, Dan, I look amazing." She screeched in excitement , she gazed in the mirror once more and did a 360° turn.

"And your ass look amazing in this." Daniella said lightly tapping Korina's bottom and was rewarded with a glare.

"I look fabulous." Korina remarked again, maybe this date wouldn't be so bad afterall, She smiled.

"Yea you do girl, Hair, check! Make up, check! Nails, check! Dress, check! Body, check! Everything, check!." Daniella commented excitedly, "and we should get going now, you don't wanna be late." She grabbed both their purses and headed for the door.

Korina followed suit but stopped when she heard a beep from her phone.

She turned it over looked at the screen and saw a message.

"Going out on a date without me sweets? plus you look ravishing in that."

She got chilled with fear as she looked around her and saw no one, the message was from the same anonymous number.

"Korina, get your ass out here!" She heard Daniella scream outside the door.

Korina turned her phone screen off, summoned some courage and became calm. She ignored the text and the fear it sent through her spines.

She looked good and she was going on a date tonight and she was gonna have fun.

Chapter 10

"This him?" korina asked as Daniella parked her car and turned off the ignition.

"Yes, that's him." She replied, using her hand to pull some hair away from her face, "So that's the place." She pointed to a 3 story building they were parked two buildings away from.

The building was painted in all white, It looked a bit grand with the great architectural design of the pillars, Super fine tall glass windows and you could see the numerous chandeliers and all the other stuff associated with grandeur through them. The name of the restaurant was carved in bold italics on the top of the building, Korina thought the restaurant was simply magnificent, the type all the billionaires go to dine.

"You done gaping at it?" Daniella asked as she saw the way Korina scrutinized every visible detail of the restaurant.

"I think I should go now, I am running late." Korina said grabbing her purse and trying to open the door.

"So, you got his name right?" Daniella asked.

"Jeffrey peters, right?" Korina asked.

"Yes, of course and you got him facially?"

"Yes I do." She rolled her eyes, "I am not forgetful unlike you."

"I am not forgetful!" Daniella warned.

"Whatever, I should be on my way now, wish me luck." Korina moved to open the door.

"Wait." Daniella said stopping her.

"What is it again Daniella?", Korina stopped, " I am running late." She glanced at her watch and faced her cousin.

"Uhmm...How do I put this?" Daniella murmured.

"Anyhow you wanna put it, I ain't got no time miss."

"Uhmm..." Daniella fiddled her fingers.

"I have a date, could you hurry up!"

"I kinda didn't give him your details."

"What?" Korina asked.

"I only told him you were my sister,told him your name."

"And?"

"I didn't show him your picture." She broke out.

"You what?!"

Korina marched angrily into the restaurant, She marched ungracefully down the red carpeted aisle forgetting she was wearing heels and was supposed to do the catwalk.

She stopped in front of a dark haired man dressed in a waiter's outfit, he was holding a tab in his hand, he stood in front of a place barricaded with glass and she realised that was the dining area.

"Good evening." She greeted the man trying to muster a smile underneath all the anger she felt inside her.

How the fuck did Daniella forget to show him my picture, this ain't even a blind date, She thought.

"Good evening madame." He said courteously in a French accent.

"Reservation for Korina Black and Jeffrey Peters." She said.

"Okay, let me look it up." He replied tapping on his tab, Korina quickly looked around admiring the white and golden colored painted words, various framed paintings hung on the walls and giant flower pots adorened the corners of the walls. She peered through the glass and elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen enjoying their dinner graces her eyes, with a mini orchestra entertaining them on stage.

"That would be table 16." The man broke her out of her reverie, "follow me, madame." He turned to tap on the glass door, the two security personnels manning the inside slided the doors open and the waiter motioned for her to follow, which she did half-heartedly.

"Right over there." The waiter pointed at a table with a man, just five tables away from them, "Sorry madame I cannot escort you further, we have other guests." He gave a friendly bow.

"It's okay." Korina nodded slightly and made her way to the table.

Let's see how this goes, She sighed

Korina reached the table to find a brunette guy with slight beard, his head slightly bent, he was tapping on his phone paying no heed to his surroundings. She thought he looked more attractive than in the photo as she studied him, yes, this is him.

The man hadn't even noticed she was standing there.

"Hi." Korina greeted.

No answer.

"Hey." She said a little louder and this time she got a response, he looked up at her and frowned his face in disgust, ran her down with his eyes and looked back to his phone.

What the fuck, She was baffled, She wanted to sniff her armpits to see if she stunk.

"Hey." She said again.

"What the fuck do you want?" He snapped, "Bitch." He murmured under his breath, the word inaudible to her.

"I am korina...I..."

"Wait!" He looked at her, "you are Korina?" His face displayed shock and skepticism and Korina couldn't understand why.

"Yes, I am and you must be Jeffery." She watched him shake his head, "We are suppose to be on a date." She swallowed as she watched his fist curl.

"You have got to be kidding me." Jeffery screamed hitting the table, causing the lighter things on it to jerk.

His actions attracted a few stares and murmurs in their direction.

Okay, what the heck is happening?, Korina was so close to losing her calm.

"That Daniella fucking told me that I was to be on a date with her cousin." He breathed harshly, staring daggers at her, "I expected some hot blonde white chick, not an African looking clownish monkey with blonde dreads, you make me sick." He spat.

"Excuse me?" Korina stared wide eyed, She didn't know what to do and how to react. This was exactly why she hated taking Daniella's advices.

"You look like an Ape nigga." He taunted, "Did a clown spit you out?" He screamed and almost everyone turned their heads to watch, some stood up too.

"You accursed fellow." Korina lost her cool and slapped him hard, "you dirt." She hit him with her purse.

"You are the dirt here, how dare you hit me? You and all your bloody black apes should go back to the jungles and swamps where you came from." He hit Korina, punching her in the face earning multiple gasps from the crowd.

"Why isn't anyone doing anything?" Someone from the crowd shouted.

Korina dropped her purse on the table, the man watched her not knowing her next move. She removed the bottle of champagne from the iron bucket that held it, she picked up the bucket and dumped the ice on the man's head which he never expected before hitting him hard across the face with it.

Everyone dining at the restaurant was already in the circle formed around them, sirens could be heard outside, two security men appeared and made to escort them out of the restaurant to the police for questioning. Korina grabbed her purse and the bottle of champagne, she pushed the security men aside and stormed out the building herself.

Korina still couldn't believe her eyes, She felt her bruised lower lip, her finger tips got coated with blood, it had begun to bleed, Dammit, She cursed.

"So miss Korina." The policeman in front of her called out, "you know we could charge you for assault, you hit this man severally." He pointed to Jeffery who was leaning against the police car with a smirk on his face.

"In my defence officer." Korina stated calmly, "He riled me up, he made abusive and racist comments at me and he also hit me too, he ain't got no right to do that."

"Is that so?"

"The numerous eye witnesses also gave you accounts of what happened, he should be punished."

"You know people agree with you black people and make up pity stories when you offend someone."

"Excuse me?" Korina said, this is the 21st century for pete's sake.

"You must have done something to warrant his behavior." The policeman stated, "Afterall black people are always angry and violent."

"That's it, I am outta here." Korina grabbed her purse and champagne and trudged out of the restaurant premises, oh Daniella is so gonna get it.

She stood outside a building, not knowing what to do, she was torn between calling Daniella to pick her up or calling a Uber. She didn't do any, She was way too pissed, She decided to trek farther, She decided to trek away her anger not minding where she was headed.

As she trekked, the events of the night replayed through her head, She wanted to cry but she braced herself up.

He's not worth it, none of them are, they ain't worth the tears, She thought.

It had been a while since someone had been extremely racist towards her.

She never expected this to happen tonight.

Even the cops were a bigger problem.

She dragged her feet slowly as she walked, it was very late now, the streets were deserted.

Suddenly, she heard the loud crunching of gravel and fast tyres behind her, She turned to look and saw a car coming at her with full speed, she managed to get out of the way but the car followed her move, it's headlights were blinding but she could make out the appearance of the person behind the wheel.

It was Jeffery.

He smiled sickly as he headed her way, She tried to run but couldn't get away as he caught up with her and she fell down with a loud bang, the sound of the champagne bottle breaking to pieces could be heard.

She managed to stand up again and he swore at the fact that she didn't falter at once.

He reversed the car and came at her again with dangerously full speed.

Korina fell to the ground with a loud thud as soon as she felt the impact of the car on her back. Her head met the gravel and she thought she heard her skull crack, She tried screaming but found out that she couldn't and then all she saw was black.

Chapter 11

"You must be one lucky girl." Korina heard a voice say as soon as she opened her eyes.

Her vision was blurred, she could hardly see, she couldn't even make out the image of the person hovering above her or the image of her surroundings.

Her head ached, it felt as if it kept splitting into two, she felt slight pains all over her body.

She tried recalling the happenings, she tried remembering what led to what but her efforts proved futile and thinking made her head ache more.

"Korina." She heard the voice which she now found familiar call out again, "Can you hear me?" She almost screamed as she felt the pain in her head grow.

"Yes." She croaked, She closed her eyes and opened them again, She could see a little bit this time, her vision was gradually clearing up, She could make things out now, She saw she was on a hospital bed and she could see the face above her.

It was mr hottie, Dr cole smith's handsome face hovered over hers.

It wasn't long before Korina regained full consciousness and all events that had happened came back and replayed in her head and she felt enormous anger towards Daniella for setting her up with a moron and at herself for ever agreeing to go on that date.

She touched her forehead and felt a bandaged area.

Oh shit, She cursed.

Dr cole opened the door to Korina's hospital room. He found her sitting upright with the angry bird look on her face, scowling hard, brows furrowed together and her hand constantly touching her forehead.

"Hey." He called out feeling nervous that she could lash out on him considering she looked like she was very close to an outburst.

"Hey." She said replying, she withdrew her hand from her head and looked up at him, her lips curving into a smile.

Phew she smiled, He smiled back.

"How are you feeling?" He asked.

"I am fine." Korina answered, she watched him walk towards her bed, he stopped at the edge assessing the drip.

Are you always on duty? She looked up at him.

"I am, I guess." He replied, "Or maybe it's only when a damsel is in distress."

"Oh my, I said that out loud." Korina blushed, she mentally slapped herself for letting her thoughts escape her mouth.

He was standing directly at the side of the bed now, he looked down at her and admired her features for a while.

He couldn't deny that he found her incredibly attractive and interesting.

Even if he met her only a few times, he had taken a fancy towards her and was on the verge of asking her out.

It's too early, He thought, getting rid of the ideas in his head.

"Dr Cole." Korina asked noticing he was starting at her intently, "Is everything alright?"

"Everything is fine, just zoned out a bit." He lied noticing he had been caught.

"Okay." She mumbled.

"So Korina as I said earlier on, you must be one lucky girl." He said shaking his head, "You escaped the car hit with minor injuries and no concussion."

"You call this a minor injury?" She whined pointing to the bandaged area on her forehead, "Hurts like a bitch."

"Well, you should be grateful, having a concussion would have been worse."

Phew, She sighed, "Thank God."

"What happened this time?" The Doctor asked.

"I met with a racist, an angry one, a potential murderer, probably a member of the 'KKK' (klux klux klan)."

"What the fuck?" Cole yelled, "He did this to you?"

Korina saw him tightening his fists, his knuckles turning white.

"I know right." She sighed, "Daniella set me up on this date and she forgot to show him my picture, just gave him my name and told him I was her relative."

"Okay?"

"I got all prettied up, went to the restaurant, Identified and met him and the next thing I knew the fucktard was screaming monkeys and jungles and he harrassed me so much, I hit him with a champagne bucket holder."

"You what?" Cole asked bursting out in laughter.

"Yes I did that." Korina answered in pride.

"So what next?"

"He hit me."

"He hit you?!." Cole asked and korina felt nervous seeing him angry, it wasn't a pretty sight.

"Yes he did and someone called the police and they questioned us both and only made things worse." She said, "The policeman claimed Black people are always violent and wasn't ready to hear the truth, I got fed up and walked out on them."

"And how did the accident happen?"

"I was too angry to call Daniella to come pick me up and also too angry to call an Uber. I decided to walk with no destination in mind, I wanted to let my anger evaporate and half way through the walk, the streets were already getting deserted and out of no where, the guy I supposedly had a date with came out of nowhere with a car and hit me twice and well, here I am." She shrugged ending her narration.

"You mean to tell me that asshole ran you over?" Cole asked fuming, who would hurt such an angel?

Korina could literally see his head steaming, his face right now reminded her of cartoon characters when angry.

"Yes." She replied with a raised brow, "He did run me over."

"I would be right back."

"Cole wa..." She didn't get to finish, he had already exited the room, banging the door loudly behind him.

Wao,what just happened?

Korina heard something beep and traced the sound, it was her phone.

She found it laying in the cabinet admist other stuff of hers.

She picked up the phone and saw a message notification.

She swiped the screen open to read.

"I am so sorry you got hurt love, I will make him pay."

She knew exactly who sent it, it was the anonymous stalker.

Korina sat there staring into space not as if she had a choice of what to do with her position.

She held the phone with a firm grip as she pondered upon the message.

She read it again, she got afraid and worried again over the identity of the stalker and how dangerous he could be.

She thought he didn't sound like one to kill through the notes, texts and gifts.

He sounded like he was like one filled with care and obsession in a sick way.

She laid there still thinking till she fell asleep, her brows still furrowed like she was having a disturbing dream.

Dr cole never came back.

Aunt Dido didn't know if to be mad at her daughter or not. She had received a call from the hospital and even spoke to Korina. She was on her way to pick up Daniella.

"Get in now." She said as soon as she pulled up in Daniella's drive way, She was standing there looking sorry staring at her mother.

"Mum, I am sorry." Daniella pleaded and her mother saw her looking really remorseful.

"Not now Daniella." Aunt Dido said, "Just get in the car, we ain't got no time."

The ride to the hospital was silent with Aunt Dido thinking of how best to handle the situation maturely and Daniella planning another date for Korina with a guy she was sure was a non racist in her head.

The driver in the black sedan turned on his ignition immediately he saw the Bmw drive past. He gave a considerable amount of time before pulling onto the road and trailing them making sure he had them in sight.

His phone rang, he freed one hand from the steering wheel and picked it up, he maneuvered the steering with the other hand as they took a bend.

"Yes Boss." He spoke into the receiver.

"Have you sighted them?" The deep voice boomed through the speaker.

"Yes boss." The man answered, "Trailing them now."

"You have got your weapons and backup at hand?"

"Yes sir." He answered, "I got all weapons and backup in strategic places in case there is a mishap."

"Good, make sure you do exactly as you are told." The boss warned, "I do not want mess ups or a repeat of the other two incidents, my queen doesn't look good on the hospital bed and I am determined to protect her and her loved ones." He stated firmly.

"Okay Boss." The man replied and nodded as if his superior was present.

He dropped the phone and paid rapt attention to the road and the car he was monitoring.

He didn't want to make a mistake knowing fully well he would pay with his head if he did.

Chapter 12

WARNING ⚠: violent and bloody scene, violent themes, I repeat violent and bloody themes!please be warned.

"You should speak to Dan." Aunt Dido said, she shifted the blanket covering Korina.

Korina frowned at her words and sighed.

"She feels bad and she's terribly sorry dear." She handed Korina a glass of water to take her tablets, She took it from aunt Dido took a gulp and put the tablets she held in her hand into her mouth, swallowing it all.

"Aunt." Korina said after recovering from the bitter taste of the tablets, "If she had shown that retard my picture at first we wouldn't be facing this, the date would have never been fixed, this disaster wouldn't have occurred and I could have been in my bed at home not a hospital bed."

"I was angry at first too dear." Aunt Dido replied, "But Daniella was trying to look out for you, she thought she could make you happy."

"Well look how it ended." Korina said pointing to herself, "A hospital bed, bruised body and a wounded forehead not to mention the insults and embarrassment at the restaurant."

"Calm down Korina." Her aunt pleaded, "you have to speak to her."

"Well not now." She said adamantly, "I would but I don't want to now."

Korina laid back on the bed, the effects of the drugs making her dizzy.

"She's technically your sister and best friend." Aunt Dido took her hand carresing it, "you would eventually have to make up and get back on talking terms." She said pointing out blatantly, "Try to get some sleep."

Korina could only nod as she was really weak, her eyes were closing.

Her aunt adjusted the pillows making sure she was comfortable.

"Rest well baby." She said and gave a fast asleep Korina a peck on the forehead before exiting the room.

The large door to the abandoned ware house was kicked open, two armed masked men walked in, carrying a limp body bundled up in a sack, they were followed by several armed men but unmasked.

"Boss said we should take him underground." The less bulkier of the two men said. They both proceeded forward entering a large room and following a flight of steep stairs downward.

The sack was dropped roughly on the floor when they got to their destination, several other armed men got in and took their positions while the other two got busy.

A chair was set up in the middle of the room, the man was removed from the sack and placed on the chair, he was stripped of his clothes with only his underwear left on. He was still unconscious as they bound him tightly to the chair with a rope.

The tallest of the men took a pail of water and threw it harshly on the man, "wake up bitch." He spat.

The bound man awoke startled, he opened his eyes, looked around him and assessed his condition before screaming hysterically.

"Why am I here?" He screamed, "who the fuck are you people?" He stared frightened at all the masked men.

"Answer me." He screamed louder, "Someone fucking answer me and untie me immediately." He yelled breathing frantically, he got no answer as they all stared at him, some chuckled.

"Fuck you all." He cursed and was rewarded with a blow to the face, "That should shut you up." The man who awoke him said.

"Enough!" They all heard a resonant voice which boomed across the room, all men bowed knowing it was their boss, they didn't even have to look at the entrance.

They all remained in that position as the man made his entrance, he was masked also, his right hand man who was by his side wore a mask too, they were followed by armed men who threaded carefully behind them.

"Well, well, well." The boss spoke clapping his hands dramatically, "If it isn't Jeffrey peters." He got closer to him and stopped few feet away, he signalled from his partner to move aside while he faced the victim.

"What do you want from me?" Jeffrey asked with all the courage and strength he could muster.

"No, no, slow down pretty." The Boss said, "I would do the asking here."

"I..." Jeffrey started but the boss hushed him.

"Shhh." He said putting his hands over his lips, "Marco!" He called signalling to one of the men.

"Yes boss." Marco answered rushing towards him, he stood while his boss whispered instructions to him before he went out of the room.

"When I get out of here, I will make you pay." Jeffrey boasted.

"Calm down, you wouldn't be getting out of here." The boss said slipping on some latex gloves, "I am called death for a reason."

Jeffrey stared in horror as the man brought out a pocket knife but he didn't want to beg, he thought he would get out of here, he wanted to maintain his tough guy image.

"We would play a game Jeffrey?"

"What game slime?"

"You have got quite a sharp mouth." The man remarked amusement laced his voice, "And it needs to be fixed." He landed an unexpected punch, it was aimed at Jeffery's mouth, a tooth fell out and blood trickled down his lips.

"So I am gonna lay out the rules, failure to abide by them, you meet your end, even if you abide by them, you still are gonna die, so let's proceed."

Jeffrey wanted to beg but his pride didn't let him, he kept his mouth shut, starting harshly at the man.

"Rule one, Do not speak unless you are spoken to, Rule two, I ask a question, you give me a wrong answer I cut one of your digits off, you give me a right answer, I slice you, Rule three, don't even beg, no matter how this goes, someone is gonna die and that someone is you."

"Bring over that table." A table was brought in front of Jeffrey, "Release his arms and cuff his hands to the table." The Boss instructed, and his henchmen cuffed the hands of a very reluctant Jeffrey to the table.

"Question one." The man said pulling out a butcher's knife from the box that had been laid on the table and Jeffrey gulped.

"What are you Jeffery?"

"A man dumbass." He croaked and was rewarded with the butchers knife landing on his right thumb, he screamed in pain as he watched it roll away.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk, wrong answer dear." He said, "you are a dead man, food for vultures." He screamed taking the pen knife and stabbing him in the stomach.

He smiled sickly as he watched Jeffrey groan in pain, he bled out, the blood staining his white singlet.

"Question 2." The man said, "What am I to you?"

"The fuck I know." Jeffrey screamed and his scream turned into a howl and the butcher's knife came down on his on his left hand cutting all his fingers away, he watched in horror as his digits rolled, 2 falling off the table.

"What the hell do you want from me?" He asked, tears running down his cheeks and he was stabbed on the shoulder.

"I said don't speak unless you are spoken to." The boss said pulling out the knife.

"As for the second question I asked, I am your killer."

"Question 3, what did she do to you?"

"Who?"

"The woman you hit, embarrassed and almost killed you motherfucker."

"Oh that black bitch, she deser..." A punch was landed on his face, he didn't get to finish.

The boss was beyond livid, he brought the butchers knife down on him severally, randomly cutting his limbs, blood splattered everywhere, Jeffrey's screams of pain sounded like music to his ears.

"I was gonna make your death slower but you irk me so much, I would kill you now."

"Please, please forgive me." Jeffrey pleaded, as he watched the man bring out his gun, "I will make it up to you, to her, I will never cross you again."

The man shot Jeffrey on his on his arms before shooting his laps.

"Please, spare me." He breathed.

"See you in hell." The man said pulling the trigger, the sound so loud, the birds near the building flew away, wings fluttering in fright.

Chapter 13

"I nearly died."

"I am sorry, truly deeply sorry."

"You almost got me killed."

"I am really sorry Korina."

"I didn't want to go on that date." Korina said, "you made me do it." She pointed an accusing finger at Daniella.

"How was I suppose to know he was a psychopath?" Daniella asked and Korina went silent.

She and Korina hadn't spoken to each in the last three days. Her cousin had refused to speak to her even when her mother pleaded, She was even surprised Korina had let her in, at first she was given the silent treatment but now she got words instead of nods.

"Still majorly your fault tho." Korina said breaking the silence, "you should have found out much more about him, you could have asked more, what if he had killed me?"

"Korina, I am sorry, I feel really terrible." Daniella pleaded, "And I am also sorry for what you went through and with the policemen also."

"It's okay Dan, I forgive you."

"Really?" Daniella asked excitedly.

"Yes." Korina said, "Come here." She spread out her arms initiating a hug and Daniella moved towards her, they both got engulfed in a tight hug.

"First thing tomorrow morning, I am marching to that psycho's office and giving him the death blow of his life with a kick in the balls." Daniella pulled away from Korina and did funny arm movements adding emphasis to her statement.

"First things first, you are not gonna win a fight with those funny arm movements you just did."

"Still fighting him"

"Calm down babe." Korina rolled her eyes, " I am just worried, that man is filled with so much hate, what if he comes back?"

"I don't know about that." Daniella answered, "We laid another complaint to the police right?"

"Yes, we did." Korina said, "And you know how it ends, it's going no where, some white privilege shit."

"Hmmm."

"Honestly, I am so scared Dan, he sure looked angry and full of hate, imagine he comes back and finally kills me, I saw the look in his eyes when he drove towards me, damn, he was determined to do what he wants."

"It's okay babe." Daniella said taking Korina's hands into hers, "it's going to be okay."

Korina and Daniella laid lazily

on the sofa flipping through Television channels and feasting on junk food.

"You sleeping over?" Korina asked Daniella who was handling the remote control.

"Yes." She replied not taking her eyes off the TV, "My apartment is way too big and boring anyways."

"Well." Korina said standing up, "I'd better go order some pizza for tonight."

"Okay, pepperoni toppings please." Daniella yelled after Korina who went to get the home phone.

She typed the number and put the call through, "Daniella, why are you watching a news channel?" She asked after hearing the news channel signature tone, "News is for old people."

She got no answer, she made the call placed her order and decided to go have a quick shower while she waited.

"Yo!Korina!you gotta see this!" She heard Daniella scream and she hurried back to the sitting area.

"What is it?" She asked.

"Watch." Daniella said pointing to the Television, Korina looked at the screen and saw a female reporter getting ready for the report and the headlines read, THE MAFIA STRIKES AGAIN.

"Earlier this morning while some police officers were on patrol near the outskirts of town, they got distracted by a smell and traced it only to find the severely maimed body of a young man.The body had been dumped on an open field on the outskirts of town"

"And maimed bodies are often associated with victims of the Mafia ruthlessness."

"The man tended to be identified as Jeffery..."

Korina and her friend stared in shock

as jeffery's name and picture surfaced on the screen.

"No!no!no! It can't be." Korina shook her head in disbelief.

"Korina keep it cool, you should check your phone it has been beeping for a long time now."

"Okay." She picked up her phone, "It says a message and some images." She faced Daniella.

"Well, view it."

Korina swiped on the screen and proceeded to view, as soon as Korina's eyes saw the contents in her phone, she let out a piercing scream.

"Korina, what is it?" Daniella asked, "you don't look too good." She noticed the horror written all over her face.

"Come...see...wh..."

"You are saying incoherent words." Daniella moved closer to her, "let me see." She said taking the phone and she looked at the screen, when she saw it, she dropped the phone immediately and fell to the floor puking her guts out.

"And that is why you never went to med school." Korina said watching Daniella in her own pile of vomit.

Gross.

"You have nothing to worry about honey, I took care of him like I promised." Korina read this text again and again and then she looked at the picture, her insides turning, the mangled form of jeffery's body and dismembered body parts.

It wasn't a pretty sight.

"I can't even look at that." Daniella dropped the glass of water she held and shook her head in irritation, "your stalker is one hell of a psychopath."

"I don't even know what say." Korina said, she was so nervous and scared, "what to do, how to react, uggh!"

"I think we should report this to the police, let's go." Daniella grabbed her purse and started walking towards the door before being pulled back by an angry Korina, "what? Let's go."

"Go where?" Korina asked.

"To the police of course."

"To do what Dan? You wanna join the Academy?"

"No stupid! To report the murder case." Daniella said, "And you need protection in case he plans to kill you now."

"So you want me to go to the police, the same police that took jeffery's side, you want me to go to them for protection." She looked at her in shock, "you sound so brilliant right now Daniella, very brilliant."

"Uhmmm..."

"Don't you know if I go to them considering they are racists and I already made a report about jeffery, they would pull some strings and dump the blame all on me."

"Oh." Daniella said in stark realisation and took a seat on the Sofa, "What do we do now?" she asked.

"I don't know." Korina said, " I wish I didn't have to deal with this, God!" She palmed her face.

"Hmm."

"I will delete the message and pictures and forget about this."

"You sure?"

"Yes." Korina took her phone and tapped on it, "Done." She said pulling her eyes away from the screen.

"You deleted them all right?"

"Yes." Korina said.

"So about your stalker." Daniella tapped her chin, "What if you are next on his death list?"

"I am sure he isn't gonna kill me." Korina said, "With all the sweet, messages, gifts and obsession, I am sure he isn't out to kill me."

"Yea, sure." Daniella replied, "you know this was all interesting and exciting before we discovered he's a sick psychopath."

"It was never exciting to me Dan, it was to you."

"He's in the Mafia too."

Korina rolled her eyes, "Mafia dosen't exist these days, the news is just being delirious."

"If it doesn't exist, why will he have the guts to maim someone?"

"Cause he's a sick criminal, duhh!"

"If you say so." Daniella shrugged.

"You know Dan, all these is driving me crazy, I feel responsible for his death."

"No you shouldn't, he got what he deserved for trying to kill you."

"I don't know."

"Look, all this would be over soon, your stalker would get tired, obsession dosen't last, it's love that lasts." She told korina, "Relax and live your life girl, it would all be over soon."

"I hope so." Korina wisphered, tears ran down her cheeks as she felt burdened with misplaced guilt.

Daniella drew her close as she sobbed having no choice than to comfort her.

Chapter 14

"When it rains, it pours" Korina remembered the old adage as she looked through the windows.

The proverbial term was literally playing out in front of her. She watched the rain drops come down aggressively, two huge rain drops fell on the window and her eyes followed their movement as they rolled downwards.

She sighed, I have a feeling that today is gonna be hella terrible.

She turned to look at the clock, it was 9:00AM and she was late.

"I just have to go in the rain." She mumbled, she buttoned up her coat, grabbed an umbrella and exited the apartment.

The elevator ride all the way down seemed longer than usual to Korina today, it was beginning to irritate her, as soon as it stopped, she got out of the elevator and raced towards the garage.

Thank God, She breathed as she neared her car.

Alas, there was a car in front of hers that had to pull out before she could.

She marched towards the valet and asked for the owner.

"I am afraid ma'am." The middle aged man said dropping the phone, "He doesn't seem to be picking up, you would have to wait."

"Look sir, isn't there a way you can contact him?" She asked, "I am in a great hurry and I need to go out now."

"Sorry dear." He apologised, "You just have to exercise patience and wait."

Korina was sure that the amount of time she spent waiting and the energy she put into exercising patience was enough to burn some calories, She had been waiting for more than fifteen minutes, She kept glancing at her watch and at the lobby to see if anyone was coming for the car in front of hers.

"Ah! There he is." The valet announced pointing at a lean English looking man coming their way, his coat tail flying behind him as he hastened towards them.

"I am so sorry for the inconvenience." He said apologising to Korina as they both made way for the garage.

"No offence." She replied tight lipped.

The man pulled out of the garage waving cheerfully at her as he drove into the rain.

Phew, She closed her umbrella, folded it and put her hands into her coat pocket to fish out her keys.

No keys, her pockets were empty, Dammit, she swore as she hurried back into the building to get her keys.

Damn me for picking an apartment far up, She cursed, the elevator ride was taking longer than the first time.

Korina scanned her scattered apartment, her hands at akimbo as her eyes wandered around.

Finding the keys would be hard, but let's get to it, She thought.

She threw the apartment upside down trying to find the keys but her searching tactics were in vain. She was standing on top of the bed now, her hands on her hips, things and clothes strewn everywhere.

"Where the hell is it?" She screamed, "okay, okay." She lowered her voice, "Calm down Korina." She pacified herself taking deep breaths, motioning with her hands, "just calm down and you would find it."

It took Korina extra five minutes to find the keys and she found them in the bathroom sink, how it got there? She never knew, all she cared was that she had found her keys and she should get to work instantly.

She snatched the keys, bolted out of the apartment and raced to the elevator, her boot heels making fast clicking noises as she ran.

"Hi, I am Rick." Korina turned to look at the man beside her, he had brown hair and slightly tanned skin, he was a bit on the tall side and his hands quaked but it was slightly noticeable.

Oh, now I have to be nice, She accessed him again with raised brows.

"I am Korina." She said and brought out her phone and started tapping on it, hoping he would get the cue and figure she wasn't in the mood for conversations.

"So, do you happen to live here?" He asked.

No, of course not I came to hunt for bugs, She did a 360° eye roll, "yes, I live here."

"Are you new?"

"No, I am not."

"How come I have never seen you around?." He asked, "It would be hard to miss such a pretty face."

"Look sir, it's a big building, you don't meet the same people every day." She sighed, would this elevator ride ever end?

They reached the ground floor and she sped out immediately the doors opened. Korina got to the exit of the building and was reminded that she wasn't with her umbrella when she caught site of the rain.

She hit herself mentally for her forgetfulness and turned back towards the elevator.

"Hi." She heard a voice say as soon as she got in.

"Oh, you are still here?" Korina asked the man who introduced himself earlier as Rick as she was shocked he was still in the elevator.

"Uhhmm... I just got in." He smiled.

"Huh?"

"My name is Sam." He said, "what's yours?" He asked with an outstretched hand seeking a handshake.

It's either this man is crazy or I am? She looked at him wide eyed.

"Didn't we meet earlier? You said your name was Rick."

"No we didn't." The man shook his head, "I am sorry, I can't seem to recall this face."

Korina looked at the man's face, scrutinizing it looking for hints of jest or a suppressed laugh to show he was joking but she found nothing but seriousness not even a muscle twitch.

She stared at him dumbfounded and just then the elevator stopped at her floor and she got out paying no attention to the man and scampering to her apartment.

Korina got to her place and saw she had left the door unlocked in a hurry to leave.

Dammit, She cursed.

She entered and did a quick scan of the room wondering to herself how she would know if anything was stolen since everywhere was scattered.

She grabbed her umbrella and got out but not before convincing herself that nothing was stolen.

"Excuse me ma'am." Korina turned to look at the person that stopped her, she was in the hallway now, what the fuck is it now?

"Yes." She answered the last who was dressed in a blue nurses uniform.

"Sorry to bother you, but my colleagues and I are looking for a man."

"And?" Korina asked rather impatiently.

"We are actually from the New York psychiatric hospital." The nurse continued, " And a patient escaped this morning so we want to know if anyone had seen him by asking around."

"I don't think I have seen him." Korina said, "Like I would definitely know a mental patient when I see one."

The woman smiled, "He's putting on a black suit which he stole from the hospital, he's brown haired, blue eyed, slightly tanned skin, he's about 5" 11 tall, his hands quake a bit but it isn't really noticeable, is anything wrong ma'am?" The woman asked as she finished her description, she noticed that Korina's face had paled.

Korina nearly screamed, I had been in an elevator with a psychiatric patient?what if he had attacked me?

"His accent sounds Australian?"

"Yes." The woman answered, "Did you per chance see him anywhere?"

"I saw him in the elevator." Korina said, "I was actually with him in the elevator twice, he introduced himself as different personalities twice."

"Oh yeah, he does that a lot."

"Oh, I thought I was crazy."

"Thanks so much for your help." The woman said politely, "He might be out of the elevator now, I will alert my colleagues and we will go look for him."

Korina nodded and the women turned away and walked in the opposite direction. She continued her way towards the elevator.

"Hi, I am Sandra." She heard the familiar voice say as soon as the elevator doors opened up, she pressed the buttons in an attempt to close the doors and turned away towards the stairs.

Not me taking an elevator ride with a mental asylum escapee, I am taking the stairs.

Chapter 15

"My life is simple." Korina said as she got into the car, "I wake up and suffer."

"You look terrible and you left some conditioner on your hair." Daniella said moving her hand to touch the whitish cream on Korina's hair.

"Don't." She said slapping her hand away, "Don't touch it, it's pigeon poop."

"Oh, jeez." Daniella laughed.

"What's funny? Why are you laughing?"

"Nothing." Daniella said shaking her head.

"Come on, tell me." Korina faced her angrily, " Am I cracking jokes now?"

"Nope." Daniella said, "Today is not your day."

"Tell me about it." She replied with a sigh, She looked out the car window, "Oh look, just as you got here, the rain stopped, How wonderful!" She remarked, "The skies are all cleared up and the sun shining brightly.

" Maybe you are jinxed." Daniella winked.

"Dan, I called you to come pick me up about 20 minutes ago, where were you?" Korina faced her, a nasty frown on her face.

"I was stuck in traffic." Daniella replied, "you know rain, flood, Erosions." She lied, she couldn't let her cousin know that she slept off immediately they got off the phone.

I mean the weather was so cozy, She tried satisfying her guilt.

"Erosions and floods, really Daniella? really?" Korina asked her sacarsm made clear enough.

Daniella nodded.

"What about hurricanes?"

"Huh?"

"What about hurricanes?"

"Are you doing that on purpose or you have no idea?" Daniella asked not minding her question.

"Doing what?" Korina asked puzzled, "What are you talking about?"

"You know, all that?" Daniella pointed at Korina moving her finger in circles.

"Huh?"

"Apart from the fact that you look like a big mass of messes, Girl you do realise you are wearing your bra outside."

"What are you saying?" Korina asked looking Dumbfounded.

"Is it a new fashion trend that I don't know about?" Daniella asked.

"Get to the point before I smack you."

"Girl, you are wearing your bra on your shirt, like your bra is on your shirt instead of inside on your boobs, it's outside "

Korina looked down and discovered that her bra was actually on her shirt, how did I manage to do that?

She had been wearing it like that all day, her cheeks heated up in embarrassments as soon as she realised.

"Kill me!" She groaned falling back on the seat "Just kill me."

Daniella took a bend and Korina looked at her confused, "Hey, we are going to my work place remember."

"Uhmm."

"Why did you take a bend?"

"I have to go to my place to check something."

"Why?" Korina questioned, "I need to get to work now and besides you never told me you were going to your house."

"Well..."

"What do you want to do there?"

"I think I forgot to unplug my hair dryer and electric cooker, I do not want the house to get burnt down."

"If I get sacked, you are getting me another job."

"What the hell?" Daniella complained, " I didn't cause all these in the first place."

"Well now, you are about to worsen it."

"Korina."

"Whatever Daniella." Korina said, "Whatever." She turned towards the windows, face plastered on the glass.

"I am done." Daniella got into the car hurriedly.

"Well, were they on?"

"I discovered I didn't even use them today."

"Tell me why I shouldn't kill you." Korina said and aggressively reached out to Daniella trying to grab her neck.

"I am sorry." Daniella screeched wrestling her way out of Korina's hold.

"You better get me to work in the next two minutes or Aunty is gonna kiss your ass goodbye."

They reached work after the next 30 minutes, it was 2 PM now.

The two girls stood in front of the boss's desk, quivering waiting for her judgement for her silence was putting them out of ease.

"So, are you gonna say anything? Miss Korina's boss." Daniella asked.

"Shut up." Korina wisphered hitting her.

"I warned you the last time, you seem to have this stupid habit of coming late to work Korina." Ms. Susie said.

"I..."

"Shut up." She said harshly silencing Korina.

"But... Ma'am it wasn't my fault."

"Are you saying it's mine?"

"Nope."

"That's exactly what you are trying to say that it's mine since it isn't yours."

"You are completely misunderstanding me ma'am."

"Why did you come late to work?" The woman asked, "This isn't even late, I don't know what to call it, a new word has to be developed."

Daniella rolled her eyes.

"You see..."

"Go on."

"But I gave you an explanation earlier."

"Are you questioning me?"

"No ma'am."

"I am bored, I wasn't paying attention I want to hear it again."

"Okay..."

"From the very beginning." She said, "Go on Korina."

Daniella picked her nails, this lady really is grumpy.

"So." Korina began, "I got dressed for work."

"I said from the very beginning." The woman said hitting her hand on the table, "Didn't you wake up before you got dressed?"

Oh dear, Daniella wanted to claw at her face, She's so annoying.

Korina looked at her boss and resisted the urge to roll her eyes, seriously bitch, seriously.

"I woke up." She began, "And I prayed and..."

"I do not pray." Ms.Susie said cutting her short, "So you want to rub it in my face that you pray, you wanna prove you are a 'goody too shoes' now."

"No, ma'am." Korina said, "I am sorry, you said I should start from the beginning and it was one of the things I did..."

"I asked you to start from the beginning not brag about your spiritual life."

Lady you got real serious issues, Korina sighed.

"Start again korina."

"I woke up and brushed my teeth."

"Not everyone has the time to brush." The woman said.

"I actually..."

"Start again Korina and be humble."

Daniella did the eyeroll for the umpteenth time.

"I woke up." Korina began, "And..."

After frustrating minutes of trying to explain to her boss, the woman finally decided she had heard enough.

"You are fired."

"WHAT THE FUCK?!" Daniella and Korina screeched.

"You heard me right." The woman said adjusting her glasses, "Get out of my office."

"Now look here woman." Daniella said attempting to lunged at her, she was pulled back by Korina.

"Let's just go." Korina wisphered dragging Daniella with her.

"I told you my life was easy." Korina said pulling the push door, "I wake up and suffer."

"Korina."

"What?"

"It's boldly written there, it says 'push'."

"Oh, give me a break."

Daniella pushed the door and they both got out.

"I got sacked." Korina asked, "So now what?" She asked throwing her hands in frustration.

"Be careful there, you do not wanna hit this face."

She looked at Daniella and scoffed.

"I need it in perfect shape to contest for miss world beauty queen."

"Miss World stupid queen, you mean?"

"Shut up."

"My life is a mess Dan."

"Oh come on don't say that." Daniella put a comforting hand on her shoulder, "Think about the children in Syria and Palestine, they were born in a mess."

"Oh right, I have thought about them, so now what?"

"Wanna hit the club tonight?" Daniella winked.

"Wanna receive a punch that'd send you to the hospital tonight?" Korina winked back.

Daniella frowned and was about to retaliate when she saw Korina's boss walking briskly towards them.

"Hey korina look." Korina looked and saw the woman, what does she want now? She groaned.

"Hey Korina." The woman said teaching them, "Get back in there even tho you look like a mess, ughh!" She was irritated, "you are hired."

"Why... I mean thank you ma'am."

"Good, I expect you here tomorrow at 6 AM sharp." The woman said before turning back and walking into the restaurant.

"Guess you got your job back girl." Daniella said, "I still want to claw at her face tho."

"Me too." Korina said, 6AM tho, what the heck?

Chapter 16

Korina considered turning her shopping cart over and climbing it when she realised that her efforts to reach the top shelves proved futile.

I just want to get my cereal in peace not to get a proof that I am short, She frowned.

She decided to climb the shelves to get her cereals, putting her feet on the lower rack, she raised her hands and held a higher rack for support.

"No need to do that.", She heard a voice say, " I got you.", Korina turned to look, it was a girl who she presumed was definitely Asian.

The girl brought down a box of cereal, "How many do you need?" She asked smiling.

"Just 4." Korina replied and came down from the shelves, "Waoh, you are tall." Korina exclaimed, "Like really tall."

"Here you go." The girl handed over the boxes to Korina.

"Just how tall are you?" Korina asked as she put the cereal boxes in the cart.

"5" 11." The girl smiled, "I am Anne, Anne Dimagiba." She said extending her hand for a handshake.

"Korina, Korina black and you are really pretty too." Korina introduced herself and also complimented the girl's beauty as they shook, She studied the girl's features, She was slimly built, black hair crowned her head falling back to her shoulders in waves, she had brown eyes. A cute small nose and thin yet plum lips, her skin was light brown, She was a beauty.

"And you are too." She replied.

The two ladies continued their shopping together and eventually made acquaintances.

"Wanna hang out Saturday night?" Korina asked as they exited the mall, she felt a little nervous asking, she didn't usually invite people, she rarely mingled and she feared Anne could turn her down.

"Sure, why not?" Anne replied with a wide smile, She was excited as she didn't have much friends either.

"Let's exchange phone numbers." Korina pulled out her phone and unlocked it, "I will text you the address later on."

They exchanged contacts and chatted for a while.

"Okay bye." Anne said pulling Korina into a hug, "Nice meeting you honestly, I rarely make friends."

"Me too." Korina replied as they got disengaged from their embrace, "So see you Saturday night?"

"You bet." Anne winked.

They both said their goodbyes and parted ways.

"I made a new friend today." Korina gushed excitedly to Daniella later that night, they were face timing while Korina made dinner and Daniella painted her nails.

"What?" Daniella asked startled, "Say what now?"

"Yes! I made a new friend." Korina replied, she raised her knife bringing it down to slice the cabbage neatly, "I am surprised too."

Daniella just stared blankly, holding the nail brush pointed up, she was trying to get a wrap on her cousin's words, " you made a new friend? Still finding it hard to believe, it's so unlike you and strange."

"Yep." She agreed nodding her head as she picked up the chopping board pouring the contents into a glass bowl.

"Congratulations." Daniella clapped dramatically, "you just made your first friend in more than half a year."

Korina rolled her eyes at her best friend's actions, "Dramatic much?"

"That makes it what? It makes it a second friend contact on your list."

"Thank you for pointing out the obvious." She turned towards the cupboards, she tiptoed reaching out to get a jar of cream.

"I didn't know what I was thinking but I invited her to come over on Saturday night." Korina opened the jar and dug a spoon in it, "And you are coming too, we could make it an all girls night out."

"Of course I would come." Daniella said, "you are saying an all girl's night out." She laughed, "Like you know any boys."

She rolled her eyes at her cousin, "yep I know none and my life is peaceful."

"Nah..." Daniella switched to painting her nails on the second feet, "Not with a stalker on your neck." She giggled.

Korina got slightly offended and turned the salad and cream furiously, the spoon hitting the glass bowl.

"Sorry about what I said." Daniella apologised seeing her cousin was offended, "How did y'all meet?" She asked.

"Well I want grocery shopping." Korina started, she proceeded to setting her plate, "I couldn't reach the top rack to get cereal and I kept struggling." She smiled, "She came out of nowhere and offered to help."

"Hmmm." Dan hummed.

"She's freaking tall Dan." She expressed with wide eyes, "She's freaking 5" 11, I am guessing she works in the modelling industry."

"Oh wow..." Daniella dropped at nail vanish, "You made a new friend cause you are short."

"I am not short." Korina argued.

"Yes,you are."

"I am not!" She retorted.

"You are." Daniella insisted, "look, you literally had to tiptoe to get that cream jar." She laughed at her statement, Korina was seething with anger.

"Fuck you Daniella." She said harshly, "I could throw this jar right at you."

"And break your phone screen." Daniella scoffed, "yeah right." She rolled her eyes.

"I would kill you."

"Whatever babe." She dismissed the conversation waving her hand, "Guess who I saw today?"

"Who?"

"I said guess silly."

"I can't." Korina grabbed a chair and sat on the kitchen island, her plate of food in front of her, she dug in.

"Don't be such a spoilt sport." Her cousin whined, "Just guess."

"Okay fine." Korina said, "hmmm...spongebob."

"Nope." Daniella stared at her cousin unbelievably, "And you call me tits for brains."

"Uhmmm...Barney."

"Seriously girl?"

"Uhmm...Ryan Reynolds."

"No, idiot." Daniella palmed her face, "I saw doctor Cole."

"And?" Korina asked, a bored look on her face.

"What do you mean and?" Daniella asked, "Aren't you attracted to him?"

"Nope."

"Not a bit."

"nahh..."

"Not even a tiny, winsy, tinsy bit?"

"Nope Daniella." Korina gritted, "get to the point."

"Fine, we exchanged pleasantries and he asked about you."

"Oh."

"And he asked for your digits."

Korina's brows raised, "you didn't give him did you?"

"Ooh, please sister, me give him your number? Cut me some slack girl, give me some credit." Daniella said pointing to herself looking offended.

"Pheeww." Korina sighed.

"I gave him your number, house address, where you work and a few details about you, okay maybe a little above few." She tried quantifying with her fingers.

"You what?!." Korina screamed, "How could you? What the hell? How..." She was livid, not knowing what to say next.

"I can see you are pissed." Daniella said, "Okay, bye boo." She blew a kiss and disconnected quickly.

Korina stood there, her face contorted in shock and anger, she was standing with a fork in her left hand and knife in her right hand.

I would kill that girl.

She stared at the blank screen lividly, her appetite gone.

Chapter 17

Korina was really busy, her hands were tied. It was finally Saturday night.

She arranged her always scattered apartment and ran around trying to put things in place. She got movies, fun games and some cool music to make the night with the girls more exciting and lively.

Korina was really excited that she was having a new friend over and didn't want anything to go wrong.

She hardly ever had friends.

She was just getting the drinks off the counter when she heard the door bell being rung.

"Would be there in a minute." She yelled, dropped the drinks and raced to the door.

She nearly opened the door immediately she got to it but then stopped as the thought of her stalker crossed her mind.

What if he's the one? Standing there waiting to kill me, Her thoughts ran wild.

She tiptoed and looked through the peephole instead and was graced with the view of Anne's head, it looked funny through the hole.

She chuckled has she moved to open the door.

"Hey." Korina greeted Anne cheerfully pulling her into a hug.

"Hey there too." Anne said. They got disentangled and went into the apartment.

"Wow." Anne exclaimed, "Your apartment is nice." Her eyes wandered all over the place, "You do know what to do with maximum space."

"Thank you." Korina beamed accepting her complement.

"Here, I brought this." Anne said dipping her hand into her bag, she brought out a white plastic bag, "It's cookies." She said handing it over to Korina.

"Awwn, you shouldn't have." Korina said, "Thank you so much." She emptied the bag and added the cookies to the other snacks.

"Please take a seat and select a movie for us." Korina gestured to the sofa, "I would be right back."

After sometime she returned with some stuff and saw that Anne already picked a movie, it was a comedy romance.

"What's the title?" Korina asked as she got settled.

"Think like a man." Anne replied opening up a bag of chips.

The movie was about starting when they heard the doorbell ring.

"Pause it." Korina stood up, "let me get this."

"Hey bitch." Daniella threw herself on an angry Korina immediately the door opened.

"What are you doing here?" She grimaced, "I clearly uninvited your dumbass."

Daniella ignored her with a scoff, she pushed past her and got into the apartment.

"Hi." She walked over to the Sofa with an outstretched hand for a handshake, "You must be Anne."

"Yes, I am." Anne smiled taking her hand, "You must be Daniella, I must say I am a bit stunned seeing you are white, I expected you to be black since you are Korina's cousin."

"Yea, yeah, we get that a lot." Daniella sighed as they both sat, "I am adopted."

"Oh."

"What are you doing here?" Korina asked her cousin, hands folded across her chest, she had been standing there in silence watching their exchange.

"Oh come on babe, you still mad at me?" Daniella asked.

"Hell yeah!"

"Why?"

"Uhmm...let's see." Korina said calmly extending out her palm to count on her fingers, " You fucking gave a stranger my number." She raised her voice a little above normal.

"He's not a stranger." Daniella defended herself pouting.

"You gave him my address."

"I was only helping."

"You gave him my work place address."

"There is honestly no reason for you to be mad at me and nothing for you to be mad about." Daniella said, "Right Anne?" She turned to Anne who was just watching them in amusement, she could already tell both of them would be great company.

"There is every fucking reason for me to be mad! What if he's my stalker?"

"Calm down sister." Daniella said.

"Wait! Wait! What?! You have a stalker?"

"Yea, she does." Daniella answered with glee, "An Anonymous one, also rich, like he got the bag." She winked at Anne and they both giggled.

"You two, this is not funny." Korina huffed joining them on the sofa.

"Please fill me in on everything, tell me all about it." Anne said excitedly, "The should be damn exciting."

Korina frowned.

"Fine, fine I would tell it all." Daniella stood up flinging her hair, "EVERYONE GRAB SOME POPCORN!"

Thirty minutes later, Anne was staring at Daniella wide eyed with her mouth slightly opened as Daniella finished the tale.

Korina rolled her eyes all through, trust Daniella to over exaggerate, She scoffed.

"So Korina." Anne said facing her, she still had popcorn in her mouth, "you mean to tell me that your life is more exciting than a movie, like damn! That was actual entertainment." She laughed.

"Fuck you Anne." Korina said and threw a sofa pillow at her.

"Exactly way more exciting." Daniella said joining them back on the sofa, she had been standing through the whole time, "So Anne where are you from?" She asked Anne as she reached for popcorn herself.

"Well...ahhehhm." Anne cleared her throat, "My parents moved here before I was born, my dad is from the Philippines and my mum is Arabian American."

"No wonder I couldn't quite place a finger on what race you were." Korina said, "But I knew you had to be Asian."

"And you are so tall." Daniella chipped in, "So you are a mixture of three different races."

"No wonder your beauty is kind of exotic." Korina complemented as she reached for popcorn herself, "Unlike Daniella here."

"Hey, hold your horses." Daniella argued, "I am fucking beautiful."

"Nah, you aren't unless beautiful is a new synonym for ugly." Korina joked, "You look like that real slow animal from zootopia...uhmm...what is it called? A slot?."

Anne burst out laughing at Korina's statements.

"Excuse me." Daniella said with attitude as she stood up, She flung her hair, "You see all this." She said in pride gesturing to her body with hands moving up and down as she did a 360° turn, she slapped her ass and spoke further, her actions causing the girls to giggle, "look at me ladies, all this is the real deal, I am a bomb, the bomb."

"Yea, a ticking time bomb." Korina said agreeing with her words, " when are you gonna explode? 30/ 11?." Korina asked and Anne fell over with laughter.

"Oh my God." She said giggling, "You guys are so funny."

Daniella smacked Korina on the arm and fell back on the couch in defeat, "So what do you do Anne? I Work in a firm" She asked.

"I work at a breakfast diner."

"I am into modelling, started 2 years ago." She told the girls.

"Yes! My guess was right." Korina and Daniella both exclaimed.

The girls continued their incessant chatting as the night grew less younger.

"So, let's make a toast." Anne declared, raising her drink.

"Okay?" Both korina and Daniella raised their drinks.

"To our new friendship, a great friendship." Anne proclaimed.

"So we bestfriends now right?" Korina asked, skepticism lacing her voice.

"Hell yeah!" Anne and Daniella both replied, they linked their cans and made silly victory noises.

"It's pretty late." Daniella said glancing at the wall clock, "Why don't we turn this into a sleep over." She suggested.

"Works for me." Anne agreed.

"No problems." Korina said standing up, "let me get the bed ready."

Later that night as Korina laid in bed with her cousin and her new best friend, she felt a tinge of happiness for once in a long time, she was carefree tonight and she laughed without worries, she managed to rid her mind of horrid thoughts of her Anonymous stalker.

She sure hoped Anne's friendship would last, she hope it wouldn't end like all the others that she wouldn't leave like all the others.

She was just about to doze off when she heard her phone beep.

Korina unlocked her and read the message.

"You know that cream you had earlier would be better on your glorious body while I lick it off, have a good night's rest my love."

She frowned at the message.

Darn it, She cursed, just as I thought I was free, way to ruin the moment whoever you are.

She dropped the phone with a groan and got comfy on the bed snuggling in with the rest girls.

Minutes later she joined her friends in sweet slumber.

Chapter 18

"My boss is being extra nice today." Korina wisphered into the receiver, she was in the rest room having a conference call with Anne and Daniella, "Wonder if she hit her head." Someone knocked and she turned on the sink tap to indicate that she was busy inside.

"Is it your break yet?" Anne asked.

"Maybe she has a new boyfriend who is really treating her well." Daniella said laughing.

"Yes it's my break Anne." Korina answered, "Maybe you are right Dan, any time she breaks up with someone it's a war zone but when she is in a new relationship she's all nice and sweet till when the man unleashes his inner devil."

"Did you even bother asking her why she hired you?" Daniella asked, "She seemed pretty mad that day."

"Pretty mad?" Korina scoffed, "She's always mad."

"I don't think asking her is necessary." Anne said, "just play along and enjoy it."

"That would be better." Korina agreed.

"Whatever you guys say." Daniella said, "we all know she would be back to her old self soon."

Korina groaned at her cousin's words.

"What?" Daniella asked, "it's the truth."

"Oh come on Dan." Both girls chided.

"Anyways, bye bitches." Anne said, "it's time for my shoot."

"And I have to get back to work." Daniella added.

"Me too." Korina said glancing at her watch, "My break is nearing it's end."

They all said their goodbyes and hung up. Korina the phone in her pockets washed her hands and excited the toilet.

"Korina, you are back on." Her colleague mark said as soon as she got to the dining area.

"Ughh..." She groaned stepping behind the counter, "Seriously?"

"Yeah." He laughed, "Table 10 needs a cup of coffee, French fries and pancakes."

"Pancakes?" Korina asked rolling her eyes, "People are weird, who the hell eats pancakes at this time, it's noon."

"Don't ask me." Mark laughed again, "Hurry up, the order came in like five minutes ago."

"Is it a take away or the customer is having it here?" She asked.

"He's having it here." He replied, "next!" He screamed turning to the growing queue.

Korina got the food ready on a tray, she dropped her face cap, straightened her skirt before picking up the tray and moving to find table 10 and it's customer.

"Here you go sir." She said dropping the tray on the table mustering a wide smile, just for etiquettes.

"Korina?" The man said looking up at her from his phone, he was grinning widely.

"Cole?" She called out, "Did you come here on purpose?" She asked arms folded across her chest.

"No." He lied causing her to look at him with a raised brow, "Okay yes actually, I did." He sighed, "I was hoping to see you, Daniella told..."

"I know." Korina said cutting him short, "I know everything."

"Oh."

"Yep."

"Take a seat." He said gesturing towards the seat opposite him, "Sit with me please."

"My boss..." Korina trailed off looking over her shoulder, her eyes searching desperately for Ms. Susie, she didn't want the woman's wrath, She was unpredictable.

"Oh, I am sure she won't mind." Cole said, "Sit please." He pointed to the chair again.

She sighed in defeat and sat, legs crossed, hands folded on her lap for some reason she was nervous and he was silent.

"So you are the one that eats pancakes at noon?" She asked with a small laugh breaking the awkward cessation.

"Why does everyone find it weird?" He laughed too.

"Pancakes are more of a breakfast thing bro."

"Bro?" Cole's face paled, "I am not your brother please do not refer to me as such."

It's obvious what he wants, he clearly doesn't wanna be bro zoned, She thought stiffling her laughter.

"And where exactly is it stated that it's a break fast thing?" He asked sipping his coffee.

"In the book of meals, I suppose." She shrugged.

"You are very funny dear." He smiled, "I like your sense of humour."

"Y'all like a girl's sense of humour when you want to get her." She mumbled low enough for only her to hear.

"Did you say something?" Cole asked not catching her words.

"Nope." Korina smiled straightening up, she leaned on the table her hands placed on the table folded in front of her now, "So what made you ask about me from Daniella?"

"Ermm..." He scratched his neck, "Just wanted to know about you from Daniella, you know your well being, since that accident."

"Really?" She scoffed, "That includes my number and address, I ain't no kid Cole."

"Uhmm...you sure your boss wouldn't mind you sitting here?" He asked stupidly, he was trying to avoid telling her the truth, he didn't want her to know, not now.

"Really cole? Really?" Korina was pissed, "So now you are like, sure she wouldn't mind you sitting here?" She shifted are chair backwards, "I am out of here."

She stood up and stomped away.

"Ouch." Cole said as he watched her walk away angrily, you are such an idiot, you fucked up big time, damn!, He palmed his face.

Korina was livid, what the hell? She thought, she was trying not to let what happened with Cole get to her, like why couldn't he just ask her on a date?

It's obvious he wants to, She thought, Why can't he just ask already so I can tell him no.

"Is anything wrong Korina?" Mark asked watching her, "You look pissed."

"Nothing is wrong mark." She replied.

"Yes, something is wrong, you are transferring aggression towards your work, you practically shoved that food into that costumer's hand and look what you did." He said pointing to the mess she made.

Korina looked down to see that while she was putting ketchup on the French fries, She had spilled it all over the fries and tray and some got into the coffee mug, it was a bloody mess.

"Oh God!" She groaned.

It was 8:00 Pm when Korina finally closed from work, She didn't bring her car so she had to take a cab.

After waiting for about 15 minutes outside her work place with no sign of a cab, she decided to walk. It had began to drizzle, as she continued her journey home, the rain became heavier causing her to quicken her pace but she wasn't making much progress.

The streets were strangely deserted considering New York City was always busy. The weather became unbearable and Korina had to look for a shade.

She was standing under the shade of a bus stop now, She pulled out her phone to make a phone call but it was low.

Darn it, She swore.

She knew couldn't continue in the weather for she was already shivering hard, wheezing and sneezing.

The loud honking of a car got her attention, she raised her head and saw a white range rover before her.

She took some time to admire it before trying to see who the driver was, but it's windows were tinted.

She strained her eyes trying to see through even with the realisation that it was impossible. The windows slid down and she was greeted with a familiar face. In there sat Cole, Cole smith, the doctor.

Chapter 19

"I ain't getting into the car of a stranger, nope!"

Cole frowned at Korina's stubbornness, couldn't she see that she could freeze to death. He put off the ignition switch and folded his arms across his chest.

"So how exactly are you planning on getting home?" He asked her.

"Anyway that dosen't involve you." Korina huffed.

"Why are you so stubborn?" He asked.

"Why are you so persistent?" She retorted.

"What exactly did I do wrong Korina?"

"What exactly are you doing here Cole?"

"Korina look." He breathed palming his face in frustration, "It's raining heavily, the streets are deserted, this area is crime prone, anything could happen, please hop in let me drop you off."

"I am not getting into the car of a stranger."

"What the heck? We have met four times Korina, freaking four times."

"Still a stranger to me." She shrugged coughing, "I don't know who you are...i mean I don't know you too well, you might be a killer, kidnapper or even a sick psychopath."

"Korina, I am none of those."

"That's exactly what one who is would say."

Damn it, she's stubborn, He sighed.

"Please let me drop you off." He pleaded again.

"No, I am calling Daniella to come pick me." Korina said.

"Fine." Cole replied, "Pick up your phone, call her right now, when she comes I would leave."

"Uhhmm..." She stared at him blankly wondering what she would say or do next.

"Do it." He pestered, "Please do it, I am waiting."

"My phone is low." She muttered.

Cole shook his head and they both held each other's gazes for sometime.

"Fine." Korina said breaking eye contact, "I will get in." She walked over to the car hastening as the rain drops landed on her, opened the door and got in.

"Just know that I know Karate, in case you are planning on making a bad move." She threatened him as soon as she got settled, you know nothing, you don't know shit, her subconscious called her out.

"That's totally fine Korina." He said starting the car, "you are safe with me, nothing would happen."

"Sorry about drenching your seats with my wet clothes." She took off her coat, wrapping her arms round her body.

"It's no biggie."

Korina watched him suspiciously as they drove off, she still thought it was a bad idea getting a ride from him but what's life without taking risks.

They reached the apartment few minutes later and Cole offered her an escort in.

"Here we are." Korina announced opening the door to her apartment, " welcome to my humble abode." She said giving a mocking bow before ushering him in.

"Wow!" Cole let out an amazed breath, "This has got to been the nicest studio apartment I have ever seen."

" please have a seat.", korina smiled gesturing towards the sofa, "I would be right back." She smiled at cole as he sat.

Korina plugged her phone, went to her wardrobe took a change of clothes before skipping to the bathroom.

She quickly got rid of her wet clothes and made a change.

She assessed her looks in the mirror. She had on a silk scarf tied around her head, she also wore a sweater and some loose jeans. The more she stared the more she wondered if she was presentable enough to meet him.

Why are you even bothered about your appearance, She rolled her eyes at her reflection and exited the bathroom.

"So, what should I offer you?" She asked Cole, she was standing before him now.

"I really should be going, no need." He said standing up.

"No, wait." She said stopping him, "Please stay, I was really rude earlier and I wanna make up for it."

"It's okay." He shrugged, "I understand why you were."

"My attitude was still kinda uncalled for, stay please." She requested, "Please?"

"Okay, fine." He smiled taking a seat on the sofa again, "Anything for a beautiful lady." He winked

Korina set out the tea cups and poured hot coffee from the tea pot into them.

"Do you want anything in yours?" She called out to cole, she was at the kitchen island, "Cream, milk, sugar, anything?"

He pulled his eyes away from the magazine he held and turned back to look at her, "Cream and a little sugar." He answered.

She nodded at him, put the cream and sugar in both cups and stirred them before putting them on a tray.

She picked up the tray and walked over to the sitting area.

"Here you go." She handed over his cup to him, took hers and joined him on the sofa, sitting at the far end.

"Thank you." He said collecting the cup and bringing it to his lips, he took a sip, "Hmmm." He savoured the taste immediately the liquid hit his taste buds, "you got it right this time, just the way I love it."

Korina laughed, "You mean the coffee I severed you at the restaurant wasn't exactly how you wanted?*

" yea, well you could say so." He answered, "Korina could you tell me more about yourself if you don't mind, that is."

"Uhhmm...sure why not?" She dropped her cup facing him now, "I moved here about a year and half ago."

"Where did you move from?" He watched her pick up the cup again and sipping continuously.

"Michigan." She answered smiling as some memories ran through her mind.

"I have been there once." Cole said, "Had to attend a conference there, it was a medical conference."

"Really?"

"Yep, I stayed there for about 3 weeks."

"What about you?" She asked, "What about your origins? Tell me where you are from."

"I was actually born in England." He said.

"Ah!Ah!uhh!" She exclaimed, "I knew it, there had to be something about that accent, I knew it, I knew there was something about your accent."

He smiled, "it isn't bad tho, just that really not really it tends not to sound American sometmies.

They both laughed and continued their chit chat.

" I moved here after medical school to try out a new country."

"Nice." She nodded.

No one said a thing after that.

"Korina." Cole said breaking the silence.

"What?!"

"I want to ask you a question." He said amatueredly.

"Okay??"

"Here it goes." He puffed air in and out feeling nervous, "Would you go on a date with me?"

Chapter 20

Korina definitely knew this was coming, she knew he was gonna ask anyway, but it still came as a shock to her. She stared at him unable to give a reply.

"Sorry, I asked." Cole said feeling really bad and nervous as he saw her staring without a reply, "Just pretend as it never came up, as if I never asked anything."

"Why?" Korina asked, finally speaking.

"Why what?"

"Why do you want me to go on a date with you?" She asked, "Why do you want to go on a date with me?"

"Uhhhm." He said scratching his hair, "Ever since we met, even though it has only been a couple of times, I took a fancy towards you and I have been meaning to ask you out but didn't know how to put it. I was so close to asking for your contact at the hospital but I couldn't. Hence I asked Daniella the last time we met and I talked to her and she gave me important details of you."

"Typical Daniella." Korina rolled her eyes.

"I would really love to take you out sometime." He said, "Please?"

"I don't know." She said, uncertainty and confusion lacing her voice, "You should go." She said standing up and moving towards the door.

"Okay." Cole grabbed his coat and stood up, "Thanks for the warm reception." He got to the door and opened it himself.

"I will think about it." Korina said unsure of herself, what are you doing, she slapped herself mentally. she didn't even know why she told him that, she guessed it was right at the moment.

Cole looked at her, shaking his head he brought out his card from his breast pocket.

"Please give me a call when you have thought things through." He handed it over to her.

Korina collected it, "Yes I will."

He nodded again, "Bye." He exited the room and began walking down the hallway.

Korina shut the door behind him and crashed on the sofa alone with her thoughts.

"Cole asked me out." Korina said and the juice in Daniella's mouth came out in squirts.

"Ewww." Both Korina and Anne said while grabbing tissues to wipe the juice off their bodies.

"What do you mean cole asked you out?" Daniella said, her words coming out rushed, "What is going on?"

"Who is cole?" Anne asked, "The Doctor?"

"Yes, he is the doctor." Korina answers Anne, "And yep Dan, he asked me out."

"What am I missing? How did it happen? Details! Details!" Daniella probed.

"Yea, tell us." Anne said before taking a long sip from her juice.

"Well..." Korina began, "He was at my place 2 nights ago."

"HE WHAT?!" Daniella stood up screaming, various heads in the restaurant turned towards them with questioning glances.

"Will you keep it down?" Anne hissed grabbing a hold of Daniella's hand and pulling her down.

"Yea Dan." Korina agreed rolling her eyes, "Keep it down."

"You sneaky little hoe." Daniella smirked twirling her hair, "You had a one night stand, huh?" She teased her cousin which got Anne laughing.

"I did not have a one night stand." Korina argued.

"So what was he doing at your apartment?" Anne asked.

"Yea, k babes." Daniella said, "What was he doing there? Giving you plumbing services?" She snorted.

They all erupted into loud laughter.

"You know we should tone it down." Anne said as she noticed eyes on them." We are beginning to irritate the public."

Anne and Daniella stared at korina with rapt attention as she narrated the incident to them.

"So you gonna call call him?" Daniella asked.

"I don't know yet."

"Can't believe you wanted to stay in the rain." Anne scoffed.

Korina glared at her.

"You know babe." Anne said, "I have said this before and I am saying it again, your life is more interesting and trilling than a movie." She earned a harsh scowl from Korina which caused her to smile.

"Guys, what do I do?" Korina asked.

"Since I am an expert in these matters." Daniella proclaimed rather proudly, "I would give you an advice, the perfect advice."

"Really?" Korina faced her squarely, " Miss expert, the last time you offered me advice I almost got killed."

"Uhmmm...i..s.." Daniella starmmered.

"What you gon' say now, huh?"

"At least look at the bright side korina." She mumbled

"What bright side?" Korina and Anne asked.

"You met Cole again and he might just be your soulmate." She shrugged and both girls shook their heads at her.

"In my opinion." Anne dropped her drink and scratched her head, " From what you have told us, it seems Cole is a nice guy and you should give him a chance."

"Hmm." Korina hummed starting into space.

"And also fuck him." Daniella added.

"Daniella!" They both screeched.

"What?!"

Korina looked at her phone screen as if missing something. It was night now, she was laying lazily on the bed. She wore a crop top and pyjamas bottoms, her hair strewn across the bed.

Weird, she thought as she went through her messages, real weird.

She found it strange that for about three days now, there wasn't any message from her stalker.

Are you missing him? Are you missing the messages? She closed her eyes and massaged her forehead with her fingertips.

Was he dead? Was he sick? Do you care now?

She felt like shouting "stalker" to know if he was still watching her, to know if he still spied on her.

What is wrong with you? You should be happy he's absent.

She wondered why she felt this way, she wondered if she felt some sort of attachment to his messages.

She sighed, stood up and walked over to her table.

She searched it putting things aside looking for Cole's card.

She found it, taking the card Cole had given her, she picked up her phone and types in the number. She hesitated for seconds before pressing the dial button but did it anyway.

Cole nearly leapt off his seat when he heard his phone ring, he hoped it was Korina, he had been anticipating her call.

"Hello." He said after picking up.

"Hey." He heard korina's voice and smiled.

"How are you?" He asked.

"I am good Cole and you?"

"I am fine."

"So uhmm." She said, "Cole?"

"Yes?"

"I would go on a date with you."

Chapter 21

"Since Anne is a model and she's very familiar with the make up and fashion industry, she would handle your make up and clothes." Daniella rubbed her chin thoughtfully, making her suggestion to Anne and Korina.

"That's a good idea." Anne agreed, Korina wasn't really paying attention, she was busy towel drying her hair.

"So, what you gonna do?" Anne asked Daniella.

"Oh me?" She asked pointing to herself, "I am just gonna sit over there and video call my man.

" what the..." Anne didn't even finish as she saw that Daniella had skipped over to the chair and pulled out her phone.

"Where is Daniella?" Korina asked gaining Anne's attention.

"Oh, she's over there, video calling her man." Anne answered as she laid down the make up stuff on the dressing table, "Please sit, we don't have much time on our hands." Korina took the seat closing her eyes, she faced the mirror excited by what Anne was gonna do to her face.

"I am done." Anne announced, "You can open your eyes."

"Let me see! Let me see!" Daniella sprang up from the sofa on hearing Anne's voice, she rushed to where they were.

"Oh my God." Korina was wowed as she gazed at her reflection.

"You look amazing." Daniella said to korina, "You did a great job Anne."

"I know." She grinned, "I am perfect at this."

"It's as if you didn't touch my face but also as if you touched it, it's so light, well blended and in fact looks magnificent." Korina gushed, "I don't even know what to say, how to describe it."

"Oh shit, it's 7:30." Anne said, "He's gonna come pick her up by 8."

"And your hair isn't done yet." Daniella groaned.

"You handle the hair." Anne spoke to Daniella, "I am gonna go powder my nose." She said rushing towards the toilet.

Daniella unraveled the towel that held Korina's hair, "Why don't we braid your dreads?" She asked.

"Yea, I think that would be great." Korina agreed nodding, "Besides I haven't gone with a braided style in months and I think it would most definitely suit the evening."

"Let's get to it then." Daniella said proceeding to part the dreads in sections before she started the weaving.

"That's five places." Korina said counting the braids, "Aren't they a little too big?" She asked.

"Nope, it's perfect." Daniella replied, "Now hold still while I style your baby hairs." She was holding a gel tube and a brush.

Korina stood up immediately Daniella was done. She walked over to the closet and found Anne sitting on the bed, she had already helped in laying out her outfit.

"What do you think of my hair Anne?" Korina asked Anne and she pulled her eyes away from her phone screen, "It looks great." She smiled.

"I know right!" Daniella said cockily, "I am a genius at this."

"Oh please." The girls hushed her.

"Why do you have a jean and a t shirt laid out for her to wear?" Daniella frowned.

"Cole said, " dress casually" like you are going out on a normal day." Korina said and that answered Daniella's question.

"That's why I brought out jeans and a t shirt." Anne dropped her phone rising from the bed, "Now lets dress you up, you have less than 10 minutes."

Korina stared at her reflection in the full length mirror, she was wearing a white t shirt, blue jean pants and white sneakers. She had on no jewellery, just a wristwatch on her left wrist.

"Here, have this." Anne said throwing her a coat, "you may need it, It might rain tonight."

"Why isn't he here yet?" Daniella huffed just then a knock was heard on the door.

"Oh, that might be him." Korina said.

"I will get it." Anne said rushing towards the door.

"Hi." She said as she opened the door a little, "I think it's him." She turned back to whisper to her friends.

Korina immediately grabbed her purse and wore her coat.

"Hey." Cole greeted, he wasn't expecting to meet a tall Asian girl at the door, "Is Korina in? I am here to see her."

"Yes, she is." Anne smiled stretching out her hand, "You must be Cole I have heard so much about you."

Cole too her hand, "And you are?" He asked feeling slightly embarrassed.

"I am Anne."

"Hey Cole." Daniella said interrupting them.

"Hey Daniella, nice to meet you again." He smiled as they shook hands.

"Uhhmmm....uhmmm." They all turned to see Korina standing there looking at them.

"Uhmm..." Cole assessed her, "You look beautiful and ravishing." He complemented running his eyes through her length.

"Nuh...uh..nah." Anne said standing between them with her hands up, "No one is ravishing anyone on this date."

They all laughed at Anne's statement.

"You don't look bad yourself." Korina said, she also appraised his looks. He wore a simple T shirt and some jeans with boots, his coat was held in the crook of his arm.

"Shall we?" He said extending his hand out.

"Yes." She took his hand and they walked to the door with Daniella and Anne following behind them, giggling.

"Wait!" Korina said suddenly remembering something, she faced her cousin and dragged her back into the apartment.

"What if this goes wrong?" She asked Daniella in a whisper.

"It won't." Daniella rolled her eyes.

"Don't you think it's strange I haven't received any texts from my stalker?"

"Missing him?" She teased, "Come on, you seriously couldn't possibly be worrying about that now."

"What if I fart?"

"For fucks sake K babes, you won't." Daniella assured her, "Now stop with your silly questions, go out and enjoy the hell out of yourself."

"I am ready." Korina said stepping out of the apartment.

"Okay." Cole nodded stretching out a hand, she took it interwining her fingers with his loosely.

Holding hands on a first date, she took a deep breath.

They said their goodbyes and made way for the elevator.

"Enjoy yourselves." Daniella and Anne screamed after them as they walked down the lonely hallway.

"Use protection!" Daniella screamed.

"You are truly unbelievable." Anne shook her head at Daniella and got back into the apartment.

"What did I do now?" She huffed following her.

Cole and Korina were about to get into the elevator now.

"Your friends are funny." Cole remarked.

"Yes, they are." Korina said throwing a light laugh.

They had heard their screams and it was a little embarrassing for Korina.

They both stepped into the elevator, they weren't holding hands anymore.

"Where are we going Cole?"

"Why not wait and find out." He smirked at her.

Chapter 22

Korina sighed immediately Cole stopped the car. They were finally making a stop after driving for minutes unending.

All the way she kept chanting prayers and considered calling for help cause she didn't fully trust him and the ride was taking too long for her liking.

"Here we are." Cole announced, she looked around the surroundings. They were parked in front of a building that looked like a casino, Korina was dead sure that it was a Casino considering the structure and bright neon lights.

"You brought me to a casino?" Korina asked him, her face dropping in shock, "You seriously brought me to a Casino on our first date."

"No! God no." Cole laughed, "Every one thinks it's a casino at first, wait till we get inside." He said unbuckling his seat belt and she undid hers too. He got down from the car, rushed to her side to open the door.

"I can see you are a gentleman." She teased highlighting, he still held the door open.

"Anything for you Korina, anything." He brought his arm and she linked hers with his, they both walked into the restaurant.

Getting comfy on the first date aye? She thought snickering inwardly.

Cole was right, Korina knew he was immediately they got into the place. The exterior of the restaurant looked like a Casino while the interior looked like that of any other regular restaurant.

"Wow, this place is filled up." She said looking around the crowded dining area, a lot of people were seated and she wondered if they would get one.

"Yea it is." Cole agreed, "They are more functional mainly at night."

They met a waiter who guided them to their sits at the far end of the room, a little secluded. Cole pulled out Korina's seat for her before taking his.

"So how often do you bring girls here?" She asked.

"What! Excuse me?" Cole let out a nervous laugh handing her the menu.

"How often do you bring girls here?" She asked again, "You know on dates."

Cole laughed, "I hardly go on dates."

"I find that hard to believe." Korina argued.

"Well, with work and everything." He explained, "I don't even have time for myself not to talk of dates."

"Really?"

"Yea." He sighed, "And I haven't really found someone that tickles my fancy as much as you do." He winked and Korina rolled her eyes.

"So, what are you having?" He asked her.

"I am thinking lasagna." She replied still skeptical.

"I am going to have that too." Cole said, "Their lasagna here is wonderful, waiter!." He called flagging one over.

"Good evening." The waiter greeted, he was standing beside their table, holding a clipboard and a pen.

"Good evening." Korina and Cole replied.

"May I take your orders?" He asked.

"Yes of course." Cole answered sitting up rightly, "Two plates of lasagna and..." He stopped, "What drink would you like Korina?" He asked facing her.

"Any drink you order is fine."

"Okay." Cole said and then turned to the waiter, "That would be two plates of lasagna and any bottle of non-alcoholic red wine you have."

"And for desert?" He asked, jotting down their orders.

"Scones would be delightful." Korina answered, "You like scones don't you?" She asked Cole.

"Well who doesn't?" He asked with a light laugh.

"Any thing else?"

"No, that would be all." He told the waiter waving him away.

Their food came minutes later, Korina and Cole were already deep into it devouring with sighs of pleasure as the food was pleasing to their taste buds.

"Wow." Korina said, "I have never had lasagna this good."

"I told you the food was heaven." Cole sighed, "Wine?" He asked lifting the bottle.

"Yes please."

"So..." Cole began talking after pouring the wine, "Tell me more about yourself."

"You are the one that asked me on this date, so you I suppose you go first." She pointed out.

"Fine, fine, I will."

"So..."

"Uh....so I am 26 years old and as you know already, I am doctor, born in England, I occasionally came here for holidays before moving over here permanently although I usually go home for holidays tho."

"Uh..huh..go on."

"I have 3 older siblings."

"So, you are the last?"

"Yes, I am."

"You must be mama's boy then."

"Well." Cole said laughing, "You got that right, my parents are still in England and I said I go back to visit sometimes."

"Any hobbies?" Korina asked.

"Saving lives."

"I meant apart from work." She scoffed.

"Do you read?" She asked, "Who's your favorite novelist or author."

"I don't read novels."

"Oh." She said, she was disappointed, "Tell me more about your job."

"Well..." He started, "you see..."

Korina didn't get to talk about herself anymore as Cole got carried away and talked about his occupation extensively. She deduced that he was passionate and in love with his job.

They were done with the date and were headed for the car now.

"So sorry I got carried away talking about myself." Cole apologised as soon as they got into the car.

"It's okay." Korina said, "Shows you must really be passionate about it

" Yes, I am." He smiled starting the car.

The drive back home was way longer than when they were on their way to the restaurant earlier.

Korina even dosed off and Cole occasionally stole glances at her face, he thought her features were quite exceptional.

"We are here." Cole announced turning off the ignition as they had reached her apartment, he looked over at her, "Korina." He called trying to wake her.

"Wake up." He said tapping her sides.

"Hmm." She turned over, getting more comfortable in the seat.

"Wake up Korina." He tapped harder.

She opened her eyes, looking around she saw they were at her apartment, she realised she must have slept hard.

They both got down and walked to the entrance of the building.

"So I have to go now." Korina said, "Thanks for the wonderful night, I had a great time."

"My pleasure, thank you for accepting to go on a date with me."

"So let's call it a night then."

"Yes."

Korina turned to go but was stopped when Cole called her.

"Yes Cole?"

"Uhh." He scratched his hair, "Would you love to go on a second date?" He asked, "I promise I won't get carried away this time."

"I will think about it." She said, "Goodnight Cole." She pulled him into a hug which he gladly accepted.

She pulled away and walked towards the building.

"Good night Korina." He whispered as he stood there watching her retreating figure fade gradually.

Chapter 23

"Details!" Anne and Daniella Screamed.

The girls were at Daniella's apartment laying on the big bed, hanging out.

"How did it go?" Anne asked immediately.

"Does he have a big d..." Daniella asked but couldn't finished as the other girls hushed her.

"Daniella!." Both of them frowned at her.

"What?" She shrugged, "It's a necessary question, can't be having a toothpick sticking in your..."

"Oh, Shut it." Anne threw a pillow at her, "Give us the details Korina."

"So...ahemm..." Korina cleared her throat.

"Well..." Her friends probed getting impatient.

"We set out and after this very long drive we stopped at a restaurant which I thought was a casino at first." She said.

"You that dumb?" Daniella rolled her eyes and Anne hit her.

"No idiot." Korina said scowling at her cousin, "The outward appearance resembles that of a casino."

"So..." Anne said sitting up, "What happened next?"

"I kinda freaked out that he brought me to a casino, he just chuckled and was like nahh it's not, so we got in and I found out it was pretty much a regular restaurant on the inside." She continued, "So we got seated, ordered our dinner, they have like the best lasagna and then we did the talking basic stuff and all but he talked of himself mainly."

"How old is he? What did y'all order? Is he a sexual freak?" Daniella asked in one breath.

"Oh my God." Anne shook her head, "You are most definitely unbelievable."

"Come on Dan." Korina groaned, "Stop with the sex questions."

Daniella just frowned at them and kept quiet.

"He is 26." Korina continued, "Born in England but he spent most of his holidays here before moving here permanently."

"He ain't boring right?" Her cousin asked.

"Uhmm...can't really tell." She answered, "He dosen't have much hobbies, really passionate about his job and dosen't read novels."

"What the heck? Who the hell dosen't read novels?" Anne and Daniella exclaimed in unison, their faces in awe.

"Was surprised myself." Korina sighed grabbing a pillow to play with.

"So you gonna go on a second date with him?" Daniella asked.

"I..." Korina was about answering but was cut short by a beeping noise from her phone. She picked it up immediately and unlocked it.

Private number- you know you should be spanked for going on a date with another man that ain't me.

All three girls were in the sitting room now, Daniella and Anne were sat on the sofa while Korina paced about with her hands crossed behind her.

"You should calm down and take a sit Korina." Anne said trying to soothe her.

"I thought I was free." Korina complained, "I thought he was gone and now this." She dropped herself carelessly on the sofa.

"Well..." Daniella faced her, "Actually you asked for this."

"What do you mean? Don't test me Dan." She growled.

"What's wrong with you Daniella?" Anne asked not being able to read meaning to what she said.

"Remember that night you went out with Cole?"

"Uh...huh."

"Yes?"

"You called me aside and said you found it strange that your stalker hadn't texted." Daniella said and Anne turned to Korina giving her an accusing look.

"Well..." Korina said, "In my defence I was just airing a thought."

"A thought that actualised." Anne rolled her eyes, "I think you should go to the police." She suggested.

They heard Korina's phone beep again.

Private number- Even if you go to the police, nothing would happen, you are stuck with me sweets.

Korina read the text out loud.

"Oh well dammit." She cursed throwing the phone on the couch.

"So." Daniella said, "Anyone wanna grab lunch?"

Korina hastily pushed the glass door making her way into the restaurant.

She was late again. The diner was already full with customers, she glanced in the direction of the counter and saw how tough it was for Mark to handle the growing line.

She waved at him as she made her way to her boss's office and got a scowl in return.

"KORINA, YOU ARE LATE!" The woman screamed immediately Korina set foot in the office.

Uhg, she's back to her normal bitchy self today.

"Sorry ma'am." She apologised, she noticed the woman's puffy eyes and used tissues scattered on the table.

"Just sign the attendance and get out of my office." She screamed.

She scurried out of the office before the woman's mood could worsen, grabbing one of the aprons hung in the hallway, she hurriedly tied it around her waist and dashed behind the counter.

"You are late." Mark grumbled, he was impatiently packing food in a paper bag, he parceled it and handed it over to the customer, "Next!" He yelled.

"I am so sorry." She apologised as she joined him in serving the customers, taking numerous orders.

She glanced around and saw other waiters and waitresses scattered in between tables taking orders.

The restaurant was extremely filled today.

"What happened this time?" Mark asked, "A giant Alpaca blocked your way this time?" He snorted.

"I would just have an espresso please." The customer in front of Korina said.

Korina rolled her eyes at mark's words, "Actually I over slept." She answered, "Here you go." She handed over the the cup to the customer with a smile.

"Just so you know, you are locking up." Mark reminded her, he was calmer now, doing things less aggressively.

"I have been locking up for about a week now, come on." She whined.

"That's because you have been coming late."

"Fine." She huffed, she attended to the next customer pretending not to see the way he looked at her with disgust.

Racist? She sighed.

"I don't know why they keep hiring you blacks." The thin white man said.

"Excuse me?" Korina blurted.

"What did you just say?" Mark turned to him.

"I said I don't know why you blacks keep being hired, go where you belong, the plantations or back to your jungles." The man glared at her.

There was mild hush in the restaurant now other customers watching the scene.

Mark was about to jump off the counter and attack the man but Korina pulled him back.

"Leave him be mark!"

"Nope, let me punch some sense into him." He growled.

The man just smirked and walked away not before flipping them off.

The chatter returned immediately he left, the incident quickly forgotten.

"I am so sorry Korina." Mark said.

"It's okay, used to it." She shrugged, "If I could survive being run over, this is just mild." She smiled trying to ease the situation.

"I hate it here." Mark whispered.

"I know right." She sighed.

"If I didn't have so much darn student loans to pay off I wouldn't be here."

"It's okay Mark." Korina said comforting him.

The line had really reduced now, the drowsiness had stopped and Korina let out a deep breath in relief.

"Man the post." Mark winked, "Taking a break."

"Aye, sir." She said giving a mocking salute as she watched him head out back.

Korina was preparing coffee for a customer when she noticed a tall figure come through the entrance of the restaurant with an elderly woman accompanying him.

He was dressed in a sweat shirt and sweat pants, his hair was messy today.

It was Cole.

What is he doing here? She groaned, and who is that with him?

Chapter 24

"Aunty, please do not embarrass me." Cole pleaded for the umpteenth time as they entered the restaurant.

"Oh please." The woman scoffed at him, "When have I ever embarrassed you?"

"We do not want to get started on that."

"Where is she?" The woman asked looking around.

"She's the one behind the counter."

"Oh my." She exclaimed fixing her eyes on Korina, "She's so pretty."

"I know right." Cole smirked, "Please no forward questions, we have only been on one date."

"Oh, Just trust me boy." The old lady said assuring him and he recalled he knew better than to trust her.

Korina stared in utter confusion as Cole walked towards her chatting and smiling with the old lady by his side.

The two quickly reached the counter and she wanted to bolt.

"Hi Korina." Cole said smiling tightly.

"Hey lovely girl." The old lady said, she gave Korina a very warm wide smile and reached out to pinch her cheeks playfully.

What? Korina stared in shock, horrified at the woman's move.

Cole shook his head, face palmed and let out a groan.

"Hey, Good afternoon." Korina greeted, "Good afternoon ma'am." She mustered a smile at the ederly lady.

"Afternoon dear." The lady answered and turned to Cole, "Oh Cole, she's such a sweet girl." She said cheekily.

Korina raised her brows and gave Cole a questioning look.

"I am sorry." He mouthed, "Can we talk?" He asked.

"Ok sure." Korina replied, "Just get a table, it's almost my break, I am gonna be with you soon."

"Okay." Cole said and turned, leading his aunt away in search of a table.

Korina let out a huge sigh of relief that they were gone for now, she still couldn't understand what was going on.

"Meeting the family already." She jerked in shock at the voice and turned to see Mark leaning against the shelf behind her with an amused look on his face.

"You startled me dirtface." Korina said poking him in his chest.

"Hey, no need for the name calling, Chill okay." He winked at her.

"Fine."

"So who do you think that ederly lady is?" Mark asked, "His mother?"

"I don't think so, his parents are not here, remember?"

He nodded, Korina had given him details of their date.

"Whoever she is." He said, "I can tell she likes you."

"Of course she does." Korina smirked, "I am me, a very likable person."

Mark rolled his eyes and snorted at her, "Likable indeed, Pest."

"I should go now." She said pulling off her apron, "Gonna use my lunch break to hang out with them."

"You should." Mark said his eyes finding Cole and the ederly woman's seat, he stared and saw that the woman wore a frown on her face, "For it seems she is getting impatient."

Korina made her way to the table that Cole and his Aunt were sat.

She pulled out a free chair and sat on it, joining them.

"Cole." She acknowledged, "And madam."

Ederly woman I don't know, She thought, starting at Cole's Aunt, she guessed she should be above 40 and she aged fairly well, she still looked good.

"This is my aunt." Cole said breaking her thoughts, "And..."

"I am Grace." The woman said cutting him off causing him to frown, "Pleased to meet you, Korina."

She took the woman's outstretched hand, "I have heard so much about you and Korina is such a fine name and the name matches the person." The woman smiled flattering her.

"Thank you ma'am." She smiled back.

"Just call me Grace dear." The woman said, "So tell me more about yourself, I would love to know more about the woman my nephew is dating."

"Dating?" Korina gritted looking at Cole in shock and she saw guilt and fear written all over his face.

You are so screwed man, She glared at him.

"Actually Aunt we..." He was cut short by his aunt as she pinched him from underneath the table.

"Oh hush Cole." She scolded, "I was talking to the girl not you." Cole rolled his eyes at her.

"So Korina, this is leading to marriage right? Would you love to marry him?" She asked, "You both would make cute babies."

Korina blushed at her statement unable to answer.

"This is gonna be disastrous." Cole muttered low enough for his ears only, he leaned back on the chair as his Aunt kept drilling Korina with embarrassing questions.

Cole glared at his aunt as she strode cheerfully out of the restaurant, she had given him a wink and a smile before waving goodbye and walking out.

He was sure she had ruined all chances he had with Korina with all her suggestive questions, marriage implying statements and forwardness.

"What was the meaning of that?" Korina asked Cole, her hands folded across her chest, brows furrowed in a frown and eyes staring daggers.

"Uhm...s..hi...i..."

"You aren't saying actual words Cole." She rolled her eyes.

"Look, Korina I am so sorry." Cole apologized, "I was about to come meet you here to talk and I had to drop her at her home but one thing led to another and here we are."

"Uh...huh..." She shook her head.

"I am sorry." He apologized again, "I know she made you uncomfortable."

"Yeap, hell she did." Korina said, "Talking of marriage, she sure did."

"I am sorry."

"It's okay." She sighed.

They stared at each other for sometime before Cole started small talk again and persuaded her into having some snacks with him."

"So can I drop by your place tonight?" He asked, they had been together for a while now, Mark was covering up for her, "pick you up and go somewhere?"

"Are you asking me on another date?" She asked.

"Nope." He lied, "I just want to make up for what happened today."

She raised his brows at him.

"Fine, fine, it's another date."

"Hmm."

"Please go out with me again, please." He pleaded.

"Okay, no problem, I will." She agreed.

"Really?" He asked his face brightening up with a wide smile, eyes shining with excitement.

"Yea."

"Yes!" He did a dramatic victorious first bump causing Korina to laugh.

"See you at 8."

Chapter 25

Korina was on her Whatsapp app, sitting texting her two best friends as she waited for Cole to show up.

She was putting on a mini floral short sleeved dress, she settled for it as she didn't know where Cole was taking her.

She had no make up on, her hair was let down and she wore a pair of fancy slip ons.

It wasn't really Cold tonight so she thought her outfit was appropriate enough, she intended on taking a coat with her per chance the weather got chilly.

"Is he there yet?" Anne texted.

"Nope." Korina texted back.

"Are you going to his apartment? Are you guys gonna fuck?" Daniella's text came in just as she was about to text something else to Anne.

"Jeez, Daniella I would block you." Korina rolled her eyes as she sent her reply, Dan is such a pain in the ass.

The doorbell rang and Korina knew that it definitely was Cole.

"Coming!" She yelled, "Be right there."

She grabbed her coat and purse hurrying to the door.

"Hey." She said opening the door and flashing her widest smile.

"What's up." Cole said taking in her appearance, "Sorry I came a little late."

"Nah." She said, "It's fine, it's just an hour's delay."

He winced noticing the sarcasm behind her words.

"You seem to grow more breathtakingly gorgeous each time we meet."

"Thank you." Korina blushed, "We should get going."

"Yea, we should."

She put off the lights and got out of the apartment, she locked the door and was about to start walking with Cole when her phone beeped.

Private number- My sweet Korina, I feel the need to tie you up and do really wicked things to you, lay you across my lap for a good spanking, you really going on a second date with him.

Korina clenched her thighs together on reading the message, her face paling too, she found the message quite arousing, whore! Whore! She scolded herself, he's a stalker jeez, a sick one, getting aroused really?

Cole watched Korina's face lose colour and she did a funny movement as she stared at her phone and he also wondered why she looked around as if they were being watched.

"Is everything alright?" He asked with concern.

"Yes! yes!" She shook her head shoving her phone back in the purse, "Let's go."

"Okay." Cole took her hand in his and they began walking.

They made small talk as they strolled hand in hand down the hallways and straight into the elevator.

Cole drove the car into the park of the cinema, finding a suitable park space, he manuevered the car into the space and parked.

"Thank God, I didn't get over dressed." Korina sighed as she took in the surroundings.

"You thought of wearing a cocktail dress?" Cole laughed.

"Not really." Korina said, "So what movie are we seeing?"

"Why not wait till we get in?" Cole said.

He came down from the car went over to her side and opened the door for her.

"Still being the gentleman, I see." Korina teased as she came down from the car.

"And then again, I say, anything for a beautiful lady."

They were holding hands again as they walked into the cinema trying to locate where the tickets were sold.

"So." Cole began talking as they got in, "What do want to see, an action movie, sad, horror or comedy?"

"No! Not horror please." Korina answered, "My life is already horrific enough." She said mumbling lowly.

"What was that?" Cole asked as he didn't hear her well.

"Nothing." She replied, "Let's pick a comedy."

"Okay." He nodded and turned to the sales man.

"Two tickets please." Cole said.

Korina looked around the place, not much people were at the Cinema, she guessed by the way it was kinda scanty.

"You get the tickets." She focused her attention back to Cole, "I would get the snacks." She said turning to go.

"Hey." Cole called her back, "I will pay for everything, my treat." He brought out some dollar notes from his wallet and stretched them out to her, "Take."

"Oh please." Korina snorted with an eye roll, "Keep your money, I would get them myself, it's a fifty-fifty kinda thing."

"But I..." He couldn't finish as she had already scurried away towards the snack stall.

Cole already got the tickets to the movie titled 'just friends'. They walked to the theatre hall with Cole dragging dozens of snack bags of popcorn, gummy bears, candies and crackers along with him.

He didn't even know most of what he was holding.

"Do you really need this much snacks?" He asked whining, he didn't understand why she needed them and why he was carrying most, if not all of the snacks when he was sure he wasn't even gonna eat up to half of it.

"They are so heavy." He complained.

Korina halted in her tracks and turned to face him, "What is heavy? Are you carrying a tractor?"

"It's fucking heavy."

"There is nothing, put those gym muscles to use, will you?" She pointed at his arms, "I think I need much more."

"I am carrying gallons of popcorn, uncountable packs of gummy bears and... I don't even know the rest."

"Oh quit it." She said, "Those aren't gallons, they are medium sized sacks."

Cole scoffed.

"Hey." She glared, "At least I am carrying something too." She showed him the contents in her hand and grumbled.

"You call that carrying something?" He asked looking at her hand. She held her purse and a pack of gummy bears, "Indeed, you are carrying things."

"Ahh, at least I tried." She defended herself, "let's just go, the movie is about to start."

Cole grumbled along the way with Korina glaring at him most of the time.

They got into the theater and located their seats. They took the seats and waited for the cameras to roll.

Cole watched Korina as she munched on her pop corn, he reached out to take some but she slapped his hand away.

"That's punishment for complaining." She waved a finger at him, "Don't touch my food."

He laughed and continued watching her in admiration as she ate and blabbed. It took a lot of time before the movie finally started.

She had already finished two packs of popcorn.

He sighed and turned his attention to the screen, it's gonna be a really long night.

Chapter 26

They wheezed with laughter as they walked slowly out of the Cinema. The sounds of their laughter was loud, real loud.

Cole stopped intermittently to clutch at his abdomen while in fits of laughter.

"My favorite part was when that bubble gum sensation girl went over to jamie's house to yell at Chris and they ended up burning the Christmas decorations and he messed up the night with Jamie and had to apologise." Korina said in one breath, "And when he got there, the old man of the house was like 'Have you come to destroy the rest of the house?" She said trying to imitate a manly voice which she successfully failed at causing she and Cole to erupt with more laughter.

"My favourite parts were when Chris and his brother fight and when Chris always tried to be rid of Samantha, the bubble gum sensation."

They continued chatting and laughing as they walked to the car.

"I am so down for any Ryan Reynolds movie." Korina said resting a hand on the car.

"I guess we have something in common now." Cole winked smiling.

"Yea, maybe we do." She breathed moving closer to him.

"But I do know there is something we do not have in common." He said shaking his head.

"What's that?" She asked.

"Gluttony." He said, "It's gluttony."

"You dick head." She slapped him hard on his arm and got more vexed when he laughed instead of yelping in pain.

"I am absolutely right." He said dodging the second hit, "You finished all the snacks and went for more."

"And so?"

"I had only a cup of popcorn." He shrugged, "You are gluttonous, you finished the entire packs of snacks and went for more."

"I am not a glutton." She huffed, "watching movies just drains my energy which needs to be regained."

"Yea right." She thought he agreed, "Whatever makes you sleep at night."

"Asshole." She cursed hitting him again.

They were both leaning against the car now staring into space, up at the starless night.

"Wanna go for a walk?" Cole asked breaking the silence.

"Would love to, but don't you think it's kinda late."

"Nope."

"Okay." She said standing straight, "Let's get going then."

"Let me get something first." He told her.

She watched Cole open the car, he stretched his hand to the pigeon hole and brought out something. She took a closer look and saw it was a gun.

She gasped.

"Cole." Korina gulped.

"Calm down Korina." Cole said rolling his eyes, he put the gun in his coat pocket, "We are about to take a walk and I can't risk anything happening, it's dark and there might be danger out there. Besides, it's licensed." He explained.

"Okay, okay." She nodded being a little calm now, "Let's go." She grabbed her coat from the car and threw it around her shoulder.

"Are you ready?" He asked.

"Yep, let's go."

The night was dead dark, they walked with only the street lights guiding them, lesser vehicles and people were on the way now, it wasn't almost completely silent.

The maybe would be couple walked with Cole's hands stuffed in his pockets and Korina's holding her coat in place. They stole occasional glances behind them as they conversed to make sure no one was following them.

"So..."

"So..." Korina repeated his word looking up at him.

"I really wanna ask questions." He said, "Get to know you more, everything about you."

"Hmm."

"I know you could maybe be uncomfortable with some but I really wanna know all about you Korina."

"No problem Cole." She assured him, "You can ask."

"Tell me about your childhood."

"Hmm...my childhood?"

"Yes."

"Here it goes." Korina said, "I grew up in Michigan, both parents black, I didn't entirely have a childhood filled with flowers and butterflies, in nursery school, I had a best friend named Onyx."

"Onyx?" Cole asked a little taken aback by the name.

"Yea, onyx." Korina replied with a light laugh, "Everyone used to tease him for his weird name back then."

"What race?" He asked.

"He was biracial, super cute, had a real cute gaptooth that gave him a charming smile, he used to bring cookies his mama made for him all the time and share them with me and I contributed by bringing milk."

"Awwwn." Cole said in a girly voice.

"Stop that." Korina said attempting to hit him which he dodged.

"Continue."

"I always helped him with his homework, he wasn't entirely bright."

"Oh."

"I remember he also had braces and used glasses."

"Wow."

"I used braces and glasses too, even retainers, made me look like a dork." She said.

"Wish I saw you in them."

"Uggh, don't make me push you into a ditch." Korina jested slightly giving him a push, "So where was I?"

"You being a dork."

She smacked him, "Then as we grew, we grew apart, he became the high school sweetheart belonging to the school basketball team and I just stayed on my own, had a few friends but they, you know, betrayed me."

"Sorry." Cole mumbled, "What was high school life like?"

"I was bullied a lot, was a smart kid and my school was filled with racist and people that hated my very existence."

"Ouch." He grimaced.

"My hair got burnt off about twice."

"The fuck?!." He stopped dead in his tracks.

"Yeap, first by cheerleaders, second by a girl who claimed I answered a class question before she did."

"Those fucktards." He growled, "Sorry about that."

"It's okay."

"My dad and mum had an argument one day, I was still really young, I watched him walk out the door and he never returned."

Cole just stared at her, he had no words.

"My mum died when I was 14, murdered. She got missing for a week, the same week unjust rampant killings of people from other races occurred especially blacks. I raised an alarm and later her body was found in a stream." She was sniffing now.

"She was swollen and bloated, beaten, bruised, battered, her eyes removed and monkies go home was imprinted on her abdomen." Uncontrollable tears were streaming down her cheeks.

Cole brought her closer as she sobbed, he had no comforting words. He wrapped his arms around her as she broke out into loud cries. He did the only thing he thought was appropriate, he gave her gentle back rubs whispering comforting words in her ears.

The ride back to Korina's apartment was silent with Cole putting is full concentration on the road and Korina staring out the car windows, she had stopped crying now. Cole had tried making small talk earlier on as they walked back to the car but he got ignored.

He parked the car and got down, rushing over to Korina's to help her as usual but she already helped herself.

They both stood for a while, Cole staring at Korina but she was looking down the whole time.

"I guess it's goodnight then." He said, he wanted to move closer and hug her but he didn't think it was okay to.

"Bye, Cole." Korina said, her voice heavy with sadness, she turned around and walked towards the building.

Cold stood there staring at her as she walked away. He was about to enter the the car when he heard his name.

"Cole!" Korina called again, she walked briskly towards him and pulled him into a hug,"Thank you." She whispered, tiptoeing to peck his cheeks.

"D...on't me..ntion." He stammered taken aback by her actions.

She pulled away from him and walked back towards the building.

Cole stood there staring at her before turning back and entering his car, a wide grin plastered on his face.

She kissed my cheeks, He gulped, she fucking kissed me.

Chapter 27

Korina woke up the next morning with a banging headache. She flinched in pain as she touched her forehead, it felt like her head was thumping. She expected it, she had cried herself to sleep the previous night.

She threw her covers off, knelt beside the bed and said a quick prayer, when she was done, she got to the bathroom to get cleaned up.

After washing her face and brushing, she took her phone out and dialled Mark.

"Hey baby cakes." He said picking up the phone.

She cringed at the nickname, "Hey Mark."

"What's up? You okay?" He asked, "Your voice is down, it sounds off."

"I am not feeling too well." She groaned, even talking right now was stressing her head out.

"Oh, sorry love."

"Calling in sick." She said.

"Don't worry, I got you." He replied, "Would hush up for you.

"Thanks a lot Mark." She thanked him, relief flooded her face.

"You are welcome, Do get well soon, okay?"

"Okay." She ended the call and threw the phone away not caring where it landed, it's old anyway, She shrugged.

Korina made her way to the fridge, she felt too lazy to make breakfast. She threw the fridge open and grabbed a jar of Nutella. She got a spoon and made her way to the sitting area, she put on the TV then she began flipping through channels and stuffing her face with ice cream.

My life sucks, Korina groaned and then let out a loud belch.

"Excuse me." She said and then realised she was alone, a loud sigh escaped from her.

Korina had spent the previous night crying. Cole asking about her childhood brought back long memories, painful old memories, sad memories.

She really missed her mother, frequent visits to her grave wasn't enough, staring at her pictures wasn't either.

She wished she was alive, she wished she could hold her and hug her. She wanted her to be here, to tell her about her life, ask how to handle her stalker, how to handle her job, what to do about her boss.

She missed her mother's nagging, overprotective behaviour.

She missed her hugs, her kisses, her warmth and her cooking.

She missed everything.

When she lost her she had to take therapy, she was advised to go out and mingle more to avoid further depression but she never really followed the advice.

She knew staying in would worsen her situation but she didn't want to go out and she couldn't care less about what could happen, she just wanted her mother back.

"There is no good TV these days." Korina groaned flipping through channels. She switched to E.News and grumbled seeing it was a reality show on.

"Uggh." She huffed, "Why the fuck would I watch a bunch of rich people living their life?"

She put off the TV and went to lay on the couch, moments later she fell into a deep slumber, the Nutella jar still wide ajar.

"Hey babe." Daniella said holding the phone tightly to her ear.

"I told you not to fucking call me when I am at work." The man at the end of the receiver replied harshly.

"I am sorry." She apologised, "I just miss you."

"Why the hell do you miss me?" He growled, "We spoke three days ago."

"I haven't seen you in about 6 months Landon or even more." Daniella said, "Even when you fly back here, you don't stop by, you hardly come by your own house. You go off immediately, always cooking up one flimsy excuse or the another." She was angry and hurt, she had never ratted out to him like this.

"Look." He said rather calmly, "You should understand that I am really busy."

"Really busy uhn?" She laughed dryly, "Are you the only business man in the world?"

"I give you a comfortable life, you live in a penthouse, I deck you in designers, you get the most expensive bags and shoes, why the fuck are you complaining?"

"Excuse me?" She was taken aback by his words, "Don't act like you fucking feed me, I work, remember?"

"Look." He sighed, "I've got to go back now."

"You always say you care about me but can't even make time out for me."

"Look, I am sorry." She could tell he was running his hand through his hair, "I am really sorry okay, We would talk about this later."

"When is later exactly?" She asked, "Next year?"

"I said I am sorry." He gritted, "Stop prolonging issues."

"Fine." She conceded, "Bye Landon, I love you."

"Bye." He said ending the call.

No I love you too as usual? Daniella wasn't surprised, she was hurt, she couldn't remember the last time she heard him say those words to her.

She dropped the phone and fell on the bed, fisting the sheets, trying to control her anger so she wouldn't tear down the apartment.

The control didn't last long, it wasn't long before she found herself in the kitchen smashing things, breaking ceramic plates.

"I hate you! I hate you!" She screamed as she threw more stuff about.

"Why do I love you so much that I let you treat me like dirt?" She smashed the tea pot in her hands.

The kitchen was a mess when Daniella was finally calm, she looked around and ran a hand through her hair.

What have I done? What the hell have I done? Almost everything was destroyed.

She picked up her phone and dialled the cleaning services.

"Hello." The agent answered, "How may we be of help ma'am?"

"Hey, Good evening." She croaked, "My apartment is a mess."

"Okay, apartment number please?"

"Number 304." She answered.

"Okay ma'am." The agent said, "Be right there."

She dropped the phone and went into her room to try fixing herself so she won't look like a mess.

After changing into a tank top and shorts, she went to the sitting room to await the cleaners.

The cleaning service arrived quite quickly and when she led the lady and other two workers to the kitchen, their faces depicted shock but they didn't bother asking what happened.

It took them about an hour to finish up. She gave them their pay, walked them to the door and said goodbyes before shutting the door close.

She picked up her phone and tried calling Korina again as she didn't pick up when she dialed her earlier.

Korina looked at her phone and groaned, she sent it straight to voice mail, she didn't want to talk to anyone not even her best friend her mood was still really sour.

Daniella sighed and dropped the phone, she gave up dialling her cousin repeatedly. She really needed someone to talk to, not just anyone but someone who would understand.

She dragged herself up the stairs and got to her room.

Daniella stripped to her undies and laid on the bed, hugging herself and she once again cried herself to sleep.

Chapter 28

"Daniella! Daniella!" Korina called rushing into the apartment, "Daniella, are you okay?"

She scanned the living room frantically, no sign of her.

"Daniella! Dan!" She screamed again, "Where are you? Can you hear me?"

She raced up the stairs and went straight to Daniella's bedroom not caring to knock before pushing the door open.

Daniella was laying there in her undies, she was shivering, her skin so pale, it was almost ghost white.

"Daniella?" Korina rushed to the bedside kneeling, "Oh dear!" She shrieked on taking in her cousin's full appearance.

Korina threw the bed covers over her, she went to the closet to find more duvets to lay on her.

She rested a hand on her forehead and withdrew in shock at the feel of her temperature.

"Damn girl!" She said, "You are burning with fever." Daniella only shivered in response.

"I would go make something hot for you." Korina mumbled rising from her position, "Soup or anything."

'How to take care of a person with fever.'

Korina typed the words and tapped the search symbol. The search results loaded, she read the instructions, rolled her eyes at some.

She dropped the phone when she was done and went on the heat water.

Korina turned Daniella over, bringing the covers down to her chest, she put the clean rag into the steaming water and winced slightly as the temperature was a little too high.

She squeezed the cloth dry and brought it down on Daniella wiping her face, neck and chest.

The treatment cooled Daniella down a bit but she was still shivering. Korina pulled the covers back up and went to see what she should do next.

'How to make soup for a fever patience.'

She huffed as the network was too slow in producing the results.

Korina was really disappointed in herself, she was disappointed that she was googling how to make soup.

The results loaded and she read through, searching for ingredients in the kitchen Cabinets as she did that.

She got everything and was about to start when she figured she had to call aunt Dido.

"Hey Dido." One of the fire fighters called rushing towards her, with her phone in his hand, "you have got a call."

"Thank you ramy." She said smiling at him. She dropped the water hose she was inspecting and collected the phone.

"Hello." She greeted putting the phone to her ear, "How are you Korina?"

"Hey aunt, I am fine." Korina replied, "Although, we have a bit of emergency." She inspected Daniella again, "Okay aunt, it's a really big emergency." Daniella's fever had worsened.

"What's wrong?" She asked Korina, her face paling.

"Daniella is down with fever and I don't know what else to call it." She sighed, "Her body temperature is skyrocketing."

"How's she doing now?" Aunt Dido asked.

"Worse!" Korina replied, "She dosen't look good."

"Okay, I would be there soon." She told her niece, "Take care of my baby." She put and end to the call immediately and got to taking an excuse from work.

She ran to get car and jumped in.

She was ready to race.

" you burnt the soup?" Aunt Dido asked staring at Korina unbelievably.

"You see..."

"Who the hell burns soup?" She asked again as she turned the burnt left overs in the pot, Korina scratched her head looking at her sheepishly, "How did you even manage to burn the soup?" The woman shook her head, "Where is Daniella?"

"She's upstairs in her room."

She dropped her handbag on the counter and went upstairs to the check on Daniella leaving Korina alone to clear up the mess she made in the kitchen.

"Korina!" Aunt Dido called, "Could you please bring my handbag?"

She rushed to the room with the bag and handed it over to her aunt who sat on the bed.

Daniella was dressed now, in a pair of pants and a sweater, the numerous layers of covers on her earlier were removed, just one was left.

"Get a glass of water please."

Korina returned with it and handed it to aunt Dido. They both moved and helped Daniella sit up, she was partially awake now.

Daniella opened her mouth as her mother brought the glass of water close to her for a sip, she took it and swallowed the pills, she wrinkled her face, the bitterness of the pills forcing her to be alert.

"Hey mum, hey Korina." She greeted blinking at them.

"How are you feeling?" Korina walked closer to the bed.

"Fine." She groaned.

"Young lady." Daniella's mother took her over protective stance, "Why would you sleep carelessly with your undergaments?"

"Mum, not now please." She fell back on the bed and drew the covers over her, "I want to be alone please." She said.

"Why?" Her mum asked.

"I said I just want to be alone."

She shook her head and pecked her daughter on the cheek before exiting the room with Korina.

"You look terrible yourself." Aunt Dido said assessing Korina as she sipped her smoothie.

"I just feel down lately." Korina said and went further explaining how she felt and how she missed her mother.

Aunt Dido's eyes welled with tears at the mention of her dead sister but she pushed them back wanting to be strong for her niece.

"You would be okay baby." She comforted her patting her back, "How's that kid Cole?"

"Cole?" Korina looked up surprised, she didn't remember talking about Cole with her.

"Yeap." She replied dropping her drink, "You went on a date with him right?"

"How did you find out aunt?" Korina asked.

"Daniella told me."

"Typical Daniella." She rolled her eyes, "It was two dates actually."

"So..." Her aunt probed with a raised brow.

"The dates were fine, he's fine." She said, "We are getting along pretty well."

She just nodded at her niece and took a long sip from her drink not knowing what to say next.

"Do you think my father is still alive somewhere?" Korina asked.

Aunt Dido's head shot up, she was startled at the question, "I don't know dear." She muttered, "I don't know."

They both sat in silence, none saying a word, both women just staring into space, Daniella was fast asleep upstairs, Korina had a lot of questions to ask her aunt but she decided to keep mute, to keep the questions to herself.

About an hour later, She was ready to leave, it was getting late already.

"You should get some rest when you get home." Aunt Dido advice as they pulled out of their embrace, they were standing next to the door now, "You don't look good."

"I will aunt." Korina said, "Take care good care of Dan."

"I will, she's my daughter." She winked and they both smiled.

They said their final goodbyes, Korina went out the door and Aunt Dido went into the kitchen to prepare some food. She was done soon enough and took the food up to Daniella's room hoping her daughters condition had improved, saying prayers intermittently as she walked up the stairs.

Chapter 29

A week later, Daniella was back to her usual, cheerful, bubbling and annoying self again.

"If you wanted steak, you would have just ordered it." Korina huffed, watching Daniella as she extended her cutlery to her plate and took a piece of meat again.

"I swear, if you extend your hands to my plate again, you would lose those hands." She glared at her.

"Stop threatening me like you are some mobster's wife." Daniella said rolling her eyes.

"Just eat your salad and leave my steak in peace."

"Fine, fine." Daniella raised her hands in mock surrender, "Is Anne still going to make it?" She took a spoon of her salad and her lips curled in distaste, "I shouldn't have ordered this." She grumbled.

"Nope." Korina replied, "She has a lot of shoots going on."

"You know, we should go see her at her work place, sometime." Daniella suggested.

"So you could ogle at shirtless male models?" She eyed her cousin.

"There is absolutely nothing wrong in admiring nature, I am appreciating God's work by ogling at them." Daniella defended herself, "The Bible said..."

"What did the Bible say?" Korina asked looking at her.

"It says..."

"Oh shut it Dan, can you hear yourself?" She laughed, "You sound stupid as always." She deadpanned.

"You are the stupid one. You burnt soup, who the hell can't make a simple bowl of soup?"

"You and Aunt would never let this slide would you?"

"Never." Daniella smirked shaking her head, it was her turn to laugh now.

"Shut up and eat your salad."

They both concentrated on eating their food in silence. Korina enjoyed the peace but it wasn't long before Daniella broke the silence.

"So did you receive any text from lover boy or mr stalker recently?"

"Well." Korina sat up straight, "Cole has been texting, I try my best to reply."

Daniella scoffed.

"How many texts did he leave Korina?" She asked.

"Twenty."

"And how many times did you try this best of yours to reply?"

"Once."

"Korina!" Daniella narrowed her eyes at her.

"What?"

"You should learn to open up more."

"I am trying, ain't I?" She said, "Former Korina ain't never gonna reply those texts." She explained, "Present Korina replied once, you see improvement."

"Nahh...boo." Daniella shook her head, "Nahh."

They finished up at the restaurant and went straight to Korina's apartment to spend the rest of the day.

"Mr stalker left a couple of good morning, good night, you look beautiful, you are so sexy texts." She said, "And he sent something this morning which I haven't opened."

"Come on." Daniella clapped her palms excitedly, "Go bring it."

Korina walked over to the closet opening it up, she brought out a box wrapped in black with a velvet colored ribon on it, she took the box back to where Daniella was and placed it on the table.

"Oh Goody, looks rich." Daniella squealed, "Like damn if it ain't gonna be some expensive shit, that fuckers middle name is rich."

"As in R-I-C-C -C-H." She emphasized spelling the word out, "Rich with a triple c."

"So let's open this up." Korina said, she lifted the box lid with the ribbon on top and carefully put it aside.

Daniella hurriedly put her hand in it and brought out a transparent rectangular glass case from within the box. Through the glass, you could see a red smallish pillow like thingy for jewelry and atop it was a golden bracelet, the sun rays streaming through the windows reflecting on it.

"Wow." They both exclaimed.

Korina took the box from her best friend and opened it carefully. She brought out the bracelet and read the letters stringed together.

K-O-R-I-N-A

He had a bracelet made in my name, she thought, a small smile forming on her lips which vanished quickly.

She looked at the bracelet, mouthing the letters. It seemed so elegant, she was certain it was pure gold.

Daniella snatched the bracelet from her cousin, stood up and hurriedly walked towards the window.

"Be careful with it." Korina warned.

"So you care about his gifts now, huh?" Daniella smirked at her, she turned her attention back to the bracelet.

"Damn." She said raising it up, her eyes fixated on it.

Korina drew closer to her watching her closely, she knew Daniella could be careless.

"This shit is real, no way." Daniella said, she put the bracelet in her mouth scraping it with her teeth.

"What the hell are you doing?" Korina asked alarmed, she stretched out her hands trying to get it back from Daniella.

"Shh." Daniella silenced her, she removed the bracelet from her mouth and bent down towards the floor scraping it on the tile.

"What the heck?" Korina shrieked but couldn't say anything else as her cousin started screaming.

"It didn't scratch." She screamed at her, "It's Gold baby."

Korina was staring daggers at Daniella as she went through her phone.

"I believe I have the right to privacy Dan."

"Not in this case hun." Daniella said.

"Uggh, give me back my phone this instance." She eyed her.

"You didn't tell me he was the kinky daddy type." Her cousin winked and Korina rolled her eyes.

"Girl he wanna spank that ass for you going out on a date with Cole."

"Can you imagine?" Korina asked, "He's really unbelievable."

"I'd let him if I were you."

"You are unbelievable Dan."

"You love me so."

Korina rolled her eyes at her for the umpteenth time. She moved to her window and looked out, staring at people as they moved about, it made her long for the outside world.

"Are you gonna use the bracelet?" Daniella asked gaining Korina's attention, she watched her pull her gaze away from the window.

"Nope." She shook her head.

"But why not?" Daniella stared at her wondering how she could refuse gold.

"Hmm, let's see..." Korina tapped her chin, "Maybe cause the sender is a psycho, killer and what not and above all, I don't know him."

"Good point, right." Daniella agreed with her and handed her the phone, "How did your last date with Cole go anyway?"

"It was going well." She said, "We went to the movies, ate a lot of snacks, got done, went for a walk and I ended up crying home cause I had to talk about my mum. Hence, the moody me is back and I am stuck in here now."

Daniella was about to say something but was cut short by the sound of a harsh banging on the door.

"Who is it?" They both yelled.

"It's me." The voice answered.

"You who?" Korina asked.

"It's I, Jeffery."

"Jeffery!" They both screamed and immediately put their hands on each other's mouths silencing themselves.

Both girls stared in horror, jeffery's ghost?

Chapter 30

Korina hid the frying pan behind her as she tiptoed to the door with Daniella following her.

"You can't use that on a ghost." Daniella wisphered, "It would pass right through him."

"What does his ghost want?" Korina asked shakinly, "I didn't kill him."

"Well, I guess ghosts don't care."

"Hello." The voice called again banging on the door, "Is anyone there?"

They were very close to the door now, "You open the door." Korina wisphered to her best friend,"And immediately you do that, amma turn and whack the fucker in the face."

"Wait." Daniella said, "If he's actually a ghost, he would just pass through the door right? And how did he know where you live?"

"Just open the door Dan." She took a deep breath and tightened her hands around the pan handle.

Daniella opened the door swiftly.

"Hel..." Korina didn't spare a glance or wait for him to finish, she swung the pan and hit him hard in the face.

"Ahh! What the fuck?" The person fell to the floor screaming.

"Yes!" Korina jumped in victory.

"Uhmm." Daniella looked at the man squirming on the floor in pain, "Korina, I don't think that's who we think it is."

The man clutched the ice pack to his head scowling, "Ouch." He grimaced as the bruise absorbed the brutal coolness of the ice.

"So you are a plumber?" Daniella asked.

"Yes." He growled, "And I came to inspect the apartments on this floor. There was a leakage complaint."

"So, korina." Daniella turned to her, "Did you know a plumber was coming?"

"Yes." She nodded, she felt totally foolish at the moment.

"Why couldn't you guess that maybe it could be him and not a ghost."

"A ghost?" The man asked perplexed looking at both girls, the ice pack still tightly pressed to his face.

"Well I forgot." Korina defended herself ignoring the man's question.

"And then you call me the forgetful one, hmm!" Korina rolled her eyes at her cousin and faced the man.

"Look sir." She began, "We...uhhh...i...the fi..." Korina blabbed incoherent nonsense, "Gimme a minute to think of something to defend myself."

Daniella watched her cousin wide eyed as she stood up and walked to the kitchen mumbling to herself.

The plumber stared at both girls unbelievably, what in the world? Were they crack heads?

"You see sir." Korina came back minutes later, "I had every right to do what I did but then you turned out to be the wrong person, so you..."

"I think what she means to say is that we are sorry." Daniella glared at her.

"Yes, we are sorry, we are both sorry, especially her." She pointed at Daniella.

What? Daniella stared at her cousin baffled, especially me? Really?

"It's okay girls." The man stood up, he dropped the ice pack, "I better get going, it's obvious you don't need plumbing services."

"Yea." Korina stood up too, "I ain't got no faulty pipes or leaks here."

The man opened the door, waved them bye and walked out.

"Gosh Korina." Daniella said as soon as he walked out, "you almost killed that man."

"You fucking said it was Jeffrey's ghost."

"I said so?" Daniella asked pointing at herself, "No, you said so."

Korina was about to retaliate when they heard a knock on the door again.

"I swear it's his ghost this time." They both said.

Korina grabbed the pan and she and Daniella walked to the door in their usual pattern.

Daniella opened the door and without looking again Korina immediately swiped attacking the man's face, "Die scum! Die!" She chanted.

"Yes! Go girl! Hit him." Daniella cheered, "Hit the fucking prick."

Korina raised the pan and gave him one last hit on the back smirking as he yelled.

"Now let's look at his stupid face." Korina said and both she and Daniella looked down, their faces paled in shock and remorse on seeing who it was.

"Argh, fuck!" The man groaned, "It's me the plumber, I came to take my tool box."

The walk was getting too long and Korina was beginning to regret ever agreeing to go out with Daniella and not taking the car.

"It's just a stone throw." Daniella had said when they were leaving the house but to Korina it was like she was going hiking in the woods.

"Are we there yet?" Korina asked again looking at her watch, "You know I could kill you."

"You can't kill me, you love me."

"Where exactly are we going?"

"Actually we are..."

"Uh, uh..."

"I don't know where I am...where we are going."

"What in the hell do you mean?" Korina glared at her.

"I wanted to go for a walk."

"And..."

"I wanted to go for a walk and I wanted you to come along, if I had told you it was a walk, you wouldn't have come."

"What colour do you want your casket?"

"What?!" Daniella asked feigning innocence.

"What colour do you want your casket?" She asked again, "You little wretch." She lunged towards her cousin who dogded and began running.

Korina followed sprinting after her chasing her down the streets of New York.

"You can't catch me!" Daniella screamed turning back to see Korina was fast on her heels, she quickened her pace.

"When I get my hands on you, I will roast you on a stake." Korina screamed at her cousin hastening her steps.

The people on the streets gawked at the two adult girls chase each other, certainly they were sure they had gone nuts. But the girls didn't mind the stares, they continued running, laughing even as they did so, it turned out to be fun.

They stopped to catch their breath at a point and Korina seized the opportunity. She reached out carefully grabbing Daniella's neck and trapping it within the crook of her arm squeezing playfully.

"I am sorry! I am sorry!" Daniella croaked and coughed, "I give up, sorry bitch."

"Next time, you would truly be sorry." She released her and let her catch her breath before landing a light punch to her abdomen.

"Fuck you." Daniella spat flipping her off as she crouched cradling her stomach.

Korina laughed.

"Let's get something to drink." She and Daniella walked to a small stall that sold smoothies and burgers.

"Good evening." Korina and Daniella greeted the ederly woman.

"Evening." The woman replied with a wide smile, "How can I help you guys?"

"Uhmm...we would take two cups of smoothie and two burgers." Korina said pulling out some change from her purse, "Daniella what are you doing with my phone?" She asked seeing Danille operating it, she didn't know how and when she took it.

"Cole just texted." Daniella said, tapping on the phone.

"Here you go." The woman stretched out her hands handing to Korina two wrapped burgers and cups of smoothies in paper bags.

"Thank you ma'am." Korina collected them and paid.

"What did he say?" She asked as she handed Daniella her snacks and dug into her burger.

"He's asking to hang out Saturday night."

"Well, give me let me text him back later."

"Never mind." Daniella said, "I already did that."

"You said no right?" Korina asked her, "you know I am not in the mood to see nobody."

"Nahh..." Daniella shook her head, "I

said yes."

"You fucking what?!" Korina screeched causing them to stop dead in their tracks, "The hell would you do that for?"

"You have to go out with this dude."

"Fuck no."

The phone beeped, "Oh look, he texted back already." Daniella said, "He said see you Saturday night, with love and kiss emojis, awwwnnn..." She said making a puppy face.

"Give me back my phone." Korina dragged it from her with force, "I will kill you, I mean it this time." She threatened, empty threats as usual, "So freaking nervous."

"Chillax babe." Daniella rubbed her shoulder taking a long sip from her drink, "You got a date not an exam."

Korina rolled her eyes, fucking great, guess I got another date.

Chapter 31

Cole had asked Korina to do the honors and pick where she would like to go on their first date and she was absolutely clueless.

She had asked Daniella for help but all suggestions brought forth by her cousin were ridiculous cause they would put them in a position of getting intimate and maybe having sex. Like who the hell proposes getting cozy in the apartment for a third date and he hadn't even asked her to be his girlfriend yet.

What if he asks? Korina panicked earlier, what do I do?

"So Anne, what are your suggestions?" She was presently on a call with Anne now. Anne wasn't even in New York City at the moment, she had to travel to an Island which Korina had forgotten it's name, she had a shoot there.

"Uhhmm...how about the museum?" Anne replied, she was lost and totally dumbfounded. She barely had a love life. She rarely went on dates.

"You are hopeless." Korina replied causing her friend to laugh, "What the fuck am I going to do at a museum?"

"Huh." Anne scratched her head, "Stare at artifacts?"

"How's work going?" Korina asked waving her current predicament aside as she realised her friend would be of no help.

"It's fine, things are going well." She sighed, "I met someone, he's so hot."

"Slut." Korina snorted.

"Oh shush will you?" Anne said, "He's a native, amma have a taste of him before I get out of here."

"Don't go on breaking a poor boy's heart." Korina warned with an eye roll.

"He ain't a boy Korina." She corrected, "He is a man, a grown ass man, a manly man."

"Well good luck on your carefree, rendezvous activities." Korina laughed, "I have to go back to finding a date location."

"Okay babe." Anne replied, "Bye girl, good luck, I have to go now cause I have an out door shoot tonight." She looked behind her to see her make up artist hurrying towards her.

"Okay bye." Korina put the phone down and huffed in frustration, she pulled her hair, she didn't know what to do next or where to pick for a date.

She closed her eyes while taking in deep breaths only to open them when she heard her phone beep again.

Private number- planning a date without me sweet cheeks?

She read the text and knew it was from the stalker as usual, doesn't he ever get tired?

You are lucky I haven't killed him yet.

She read the second text and flung the phone away with a long hiss.

She had a date to plan.

Rooftop dinners weren't really what Korina fancied but she had no other options in this case and it was her only resort after cracking her brains and not being able to come up with an idea.

It wouldn't be that bad, She had told herself.

She had never been to a roof top restaurant but figured it wasn't really bad to try one and it would be perfect for their third date.

She had looked up the restaurant and got some nice reviews and comments on it. She also got to know that they served all manners of delicacies from African dishes to French cuisine, pastries, junk food, smoothies, wines, literally anything you could think off, sea food, Asian food. She made sure the price was affordable and the restaurant wasn't too fancy before telling Cole it was her pick.

Anne thought her choice was okay, Daniella had thought it was bland and boring.

So, there stood Korina, she was presently in front of a mirror, a dark coloured short mermaid gown adorned her body fitting to it like a glove, her dreads were let down, she decided against makeup and opted for simple black wages for her feet.

I look good, She complimented herself while doing a 360 degree turn in front of the mirror.

She took one more look at herself and nodded in pure fulfillment at her appearance, grabbed a coat and headed out the door.

"Wow." Cole exclaimed as he drove, "This place sure got the most appropriate and most spacious parking lot I have ever seen." He complimented maneuvering the car into the restaurant premises.

"Yea, they do." Korina nodded, "I hope the food is good too."

"Of course it will be, I checked the reviews." He said.

He parked the car, they both got down and walked towards the building.

"Did you make reservations?" Cole asked as they increased their pace.

"Nope." Korina replied, "Reservations aren't needed here, it's like a walking into a cafe and grabbing a seat."

Cole rolled his eyes, "And what if we get in there and the seats are all taken?"

"Stop being a big pessimist, Asshole." She smacked his arm and he laughed.

"Chill will you?"

She snorted at him and smacked him again.

They walked into the building and saw that various chairs and tables in all sitting areas we're occupied.

"Oh." Cole said looking around, "They have a floor restaurant too?"

Korina looked up at him, "Of course Cole." She rolled her eyes.

He was about to say something but couldn't has a waitress was already in front of them.

"Good evening." She greeted, "Sir, ma'am."

"Good evening." They both replied the waitress.

"How may we help you?"

"Well." Korina said, "We are new here and we would love to get a spot on the rooftop for my date."

"Okay, you would give me a few moments please." The waitress was tapping on her pad, "I am in the process of requesting a table for you."

"Could you please make the spot a little secluded?" Cole asked.

"Yes." She nodded looking back to Cole, "We could do that, let me just send the people at the roof top some more details."

"I am done." The waitress said after they had waited for a while, "Come with me please."

She motioned for them to follow her, they got into an elevator and went up to the roof top.

Korina fell in love as soon as they got to the top. The scenery was simply beautiful.

It was surrounded with glass railings, lights hung up in the air, tables and chairs were spread all over with appropriate spacing.

"Uhhmm, please go take a seat." The waiter said pulling them from their admiration, "Someone would come take your orders."

"They both walked and picked a table next to the edge of the railing.

"This place is fabulous." Cole said as he took his seat.

Korina smiled at him uneasily.

She was having a strange feeling, chills ran down her spine.

God please, She prayed hoping the night would go well.

Chapter 32

"I will have fried rice and a chicken breast." Cole said, he looked up from the menu and faced Korina, "What would you be having dear?"

"Still going through the menu." She said flipping the pages, her palms were sweaty now, she felt really anxious, the feeling she got had gotten worse.

"Please be patient." Cole told the waiter who already looked tired from standing.

"Oh it's okay." The man replied with a forced smile.

"I would have what he is having." She said closing the menu not being able to make a choice, "But with ribs not chicken."

"Okay, sir, madam." He curtsied, "Be back in a few." The waiter turned away and left.

"Are you okay?" Cole asked noticing his date kept fidgeting, he saw she had sweaty palms and she glanced around her briefly as if expecting someone to jump out and pounce on her by moment.

"I am fine." Korina said, "Just stressed and nervous. It's normal."

"Are you sure?" He assessed her with raised brows.

"Yes I am." She nodded, "Oh look they have a pianist." She pointed over to a small podium.

A big black piano was on it with a man sitting near it playing slow melodies.

Korina managed to distract Cole from her nervousness. She usually felt like this when she senses something was about to go wrong and as usual something always went wrong.

The evening skies were getting darker now, it was starless as usual, there was a crescent, a lone crescent positioned her in the sky.

Korina looked up at it and compared herself to it, the crescent was lonely as she was but there was a difference.

The crescent was actually lonely with no stars around but she was a crescent whom had stars around but still felt very lonely.

Hmm, She sighed deeply, life is tough.

"Here you go, sir ma'am." The waiter startled her out of her trance, he pushed a mini cart in front of him containing their food. He took the filled plates and place them on the table.

"Enjoy your meal." He bowed slightly, "If there is anything you need, just signal."

"We will." Cole said, "Thank you."

The waiter nodded and took his leave.

"Let's eat." Cole said picking up his cutlery, "I am starving."

"Yea." Korina followed suit doing same, "Let's dig in."

They began to eat and ate in silence, even as Cole tried to make small talks, Korina gave him Cold replies and sighs.

"You are oughfully quiet tonight Korina." Cole said and he took a long sip from his wine glass and dropped it, "I am asking again, is anything the matter?" He looked at her.

"No." She said, "It's nothing, I am just really stressed that's all. Remember I told you I wasn't feeling too well the other day that's exactly why I am stressed." She explained hoping he would buy it.

"But that doesn't explain why you are sweating."

"It's the heat."

"We are in an open place and you aren't even putting on a jacket."

"Hey did I ever tell you about the first time I broke my teeth?"

"Nope." Cole shook his head, "You didn't and don't try to chan..."

"Wanna hear it?" She said not letting him finish.

"Go no." He gave up on the topic, "At least you would finally be making a conversation."

"So I can't remember my exact age then." She started, "But Daniella and her mum had come to visit and Daniella noticed I couldn't eat and chew well when we were having steak, one of my teeth was wobbling really badly." She took a break from talking and sipped some water, "Daniella told me to put the tooth under my pillow and I would receive money from the tooth fairy."

Cole laughed, "Every kid believed in the fairy then."

"But Daniella made it really believable and enticing."

"What did she say exactly?"

"She said the tooth fairy gave her a thousand dollars and she spent it on her trip to Disney land."

Cole erupted with laughter, "She actually said that?"

"Yea she did." Korina shook her head, "And I believed."

"Then what happened?"

"When the tooth finally came off I put it under my pillow." She said, "I woke up to pee later that night only to wake up to the sight of my mum stuffing bucks under my pillow and the woman tried to convince me that she was the tooth fairy but she wasn't in her costume."

Cole couldn't help the loud laughter coming from him.

"She sat me there explaining for minutes." She added.

"Oh my God!" He tried to stiffle his laughter, "Your mum was hella funny."

"Yea she was." Korina smiled sadly.

"Did you buy her explanation?"

"Of course not and I also bit Daniella on her arm when next she came to visit as revenge."

"Oh ouch." Cole grimaced, "Your childhood was quiet fun and eventful."

"Well it was till the bullies came."

"Hey! Cheer up." Cole told her, she was about to reply when she felt another wave of unease rush through her.

"I need to use the rest room." She stood up hurriedly and practically ran away from the table, she got directions on how to reach the restroom and got there in no time.

Korina's hands were places over the sink with her head bowed, her once rapid breathing had begun to slow down.

Nothing bad will happen, you are just being paranoid, She told herself trying hard to make it believable.

She put on the tap brought her palms together took some water and splashed it on her face.

Okay, Korina calm down, go out there and enjoy your date, enjoy your dinner, She braced herself up and left.

"Hey sorry." She was back in the dining area now, she pulled out her seat, "Sorry I took so long."

"It's nothing." Cole replied looking up from his phone, "It wasn't that long."

Korina nodded, "Let's finish up while I tell you more ridiculous stories of my childhood." He laughed at her statement.

They both went back to eating.

"Well, well, well." Korina dropped her spoon in shock as she heard the voice, "If it ain't Korina, maiden Korina, Korina black." She paled, she knew the voice anywhere, if she was asleep, she could even point it out.

"Who are you?" Cole asked staring at the man.

Korina turned to look at the person to be sure she wasn't mistaken.

It was him.

Her ex boyfriend.

Brian Trey.

She gulped, this cannot go well.

Chapter 33

"What are you doing here Brian?" Korina asked.

She looked up at him and noticed he was with a new arm candy, a red head this time.

Well, I am not surprised, She rolled her eyes.

"Is this your new boyfriend?" Brian asked nodding his head at Cole who sat there looking dumbfounded watching the events unfold before him.

"What he is to me is none of your damn concern." She spat eyeing him.

He still looked attractive, more attractive even. He was biracial, really light skinned, great dark hair she once ran her hands through, she felt a painful tug at her heart.

"Gotten a little courageous now, haven't we?" He smirked.

"Brian leave me the hell alone." She said, "Please."

"Why should I?" His smirk was beginning to infuriate her beyond reason, "I just want to see how my ex is doing."

"Ex? What's going on here?" Coke asked, korina never mentioned him.

"Well, as you can see, I am doing pretty well without you." She gritted.

Korina stood up curling her fists, she faced him squarely now, "What are you doing here? In New York."

"Uhhmm, you know." Brian said, "I came here on a business trip and decided to give this lovely lady here a treat." He turned to smile at the red headed lady who in turn smiled back.

Dumb assess, Korina shook her head.

"And how has that gotten anything to do with me?" Korina asked, why was he here? At her table, God why?

"Oh come on Rina."

"Do not call me that." She warned pointing a finger at him.

"I just wanted to say Hi." He said, "I mean no harm."

"Okay good, you said it, now get the fuck outta my face."

"Okay, okay." He raised his hands in surrender, "You don't really know when you are being played with huh?" He looked between she and Cole a smirk developing on his lips.

"What do you mean?" Korina asked.

"He's gonna play you, dump you like I did." He spat.

"Excuse me?" Cole stood up and walked towards him, "I think it's time you leave."

"Cole." Korina called pushing him back politely with her hands on his chest, "It's okay, please."

"Brian leave now!" She said turning to him with a glare.

"You are a prude bitch."

"What did you just call me?" She asked taking closer steps to him, she really wanted to smack the smug look off his face.

"A prude bitch, you got hearing problems?" He asked, "You don't deserve t..." A slap landed on his face before he could finish his vile words.

"You slapped him, you bitch!" The red haired screamed.

"Shut the fuck up." Korina screamed at her, they had every one's attention now.

"You slapped me?" Brian laughed, "No one would ever love you, you are really useless and unlikable. You are irritating."

Korina could feel tears welling up in her eyes, his words stung.

"You would always be used, dumped, lied to, cheated on and abused. You don't deserve love you bitch."

He said the words like she was at fault, like she deserved every calamity upon her.

Cole swung at him but Korina held him back, tears were streaming down her face now.

"Let's go." She whispered.

"Just let me punch the fucker." Cole really wanted to punch him, to cause him pain.

"LET'S GO!" She screamed, this time she didn't wait for him, she grabbed her purse and ran out of the restaurant with Cole hot on his heels chasing after her.

The ride home was silent. Korina had managed to stop crying, her eyes swollen and all red, her head banged.

"Why didn't you tell me about him?" Cole asked as they got down from the car, "Why didn't you tell me about your ex?"

"It wasn't necessary." She mumbled.

"It wasn't necessary huh?" Cole asked, damn she is unbelievable.

"Cole go home and leave me alone." She began walking away from the car.

"Korina." He said, "You are in a bad state let me in, let me in please."

"Cole go!"

"Korina." He called again, "Please let me comfort you."

"I said go, get out." She screamed.

She left him there and ran into the building.

She jumped in the elevator and went up straight to her apartment.

Korina stripped down to her underwear, went to the bathroom and got into the tub.

The warm water soaking her, seeping through her undies to her skin.

She cried, she cried loud and hard.

All the emotions, all the anger, all the sadness and pent up frustration in her, she had to let them out and she finally did as she laid there in the tub.

Maybe he's right, Her thoughts were all over the place, Maybe I am really unlikable and displeasing that's what makes men want to play with me, that's what makes people betray me and treat me like trash.

She looked up at the bathroom window, the lone crescent was still there, she remembered her earlier comparison and the tears couldn't stop rolling.

She put her hand in the tub playing with the water, her fingers causing bubbles to form.

I think I am belong in the nunnery, I am never gonna get it right, I am never gonna get this relationship thing right.

There are some people that are meant to be lonely and I am one of them.

This love and friendship thing wouldn't work.

I am done, the pain is all too much to bear.

Even Cole is gonna do worse, he's gonna leave, She wanted to retract her thoughts, she felt guilty, Cole had been nothing but good to her.

She sighed and from a distance she heard a dog howl and for some unknown reason the sound contributed to her sadness causing her to burst into fresh tears.

Korina wrapped the towel carefully around her body, she didn't bother towel drying herself, she was too tired, she decided to come out wet.

She was welcomed by the sound of her phone beeping as she entered her room.

She opened the message, it was from her stalker.

Private number- I could kill him for you if you want.

She huffed in frustration and pulled her hair, the fuck, the nerve of this guy.

"Hey, you!" She said, "I know you can fucking see me." She screamed.

After all she presumed he was always watching her.

"Don't kill him." She pleaded, "I do not want additional guilt."

"Who are you anyway and why the fuck have you been stalking me?" She yelled, "Don't you have better things to do, don't you get tired, for how long have you been stalking me? For months? A year? For how long have you been sending gifts? Ain't you tired? Damn you!"

"I know you can listen to me." She said, "You can hear me, I am crazy now, that's what you wanted right? a crazy Korina, that's why you have been frustrating me, look at me talking and yelling all by myself."

She picked up a flower vase and threw it, it met the wall smashing to pieces.

"God why me?" She questioned, "What the fuck did I do wrong?"

She leaned against the wall tears streaming down her cheeks as she dragged herself down the wall sobbing loudly.

Her phone beeped again.

Private number- I wish I was there to hold you, I hate seeing you in pain love.

"Fuck you." She cursed, "Leave me the fuck alone." Korina roared rocking herself as she cried.

Leave me alone, She whispered, Alone.

Chapter 34

Korina took the phone and angrily put it off completely.

She was getting tired of the incessant beeping and ringing.

She flung the phone across the bed not caring where it landed and settled back into her covers to sleep.

That's all she had been doing for days now, sleeping, eating, she hardly took a shower, she never came out and she ignored all calls and texts, she wanted to be alone.

Each time she remembered Brian's words, it stung her badly and made her eyes wet cause she believed they were true.

No one would ever love me, She thought, every one had actually left and hurt her. The only permanent people in her life were her mother, who was now gone, Daniella, Aunt Dido, Mark and now Anne.

She didn't know what to think of Cole, she didn't know what judgment to make about him, She wasn't sure what his motive was, was he gonna be like the rest? Was he gonna be different from them?

Apart from her life being in a clutter, her apartment was more than cluttered. She hadn't cleaned up for days, clothes, cans of food, soda cans, plates littered everywhere, it was a mess. She was almost out of food but didn't bother to go shopping, she stuck with cream and yoghurt sometimes nothing at all.

She was tired and felt emptier inside as the days passed by, she even had suicidal thoughts creeping her mind again.

It wasn't long before Korina awoke to the sound of her door being banged on.

"Go away." She muttered barely audible even for her own self to hear. The bangs grew louder but bearable.

She just laid there on the bed stuffed beneath the covers staring at the direction of the door then at the ceilings hoping her nonresponse would make the person go away.

"Open this damn door now!" She heard the person at the other end scream, it was Daniella, the banging was becoming unbearable now.

"Open up this door bitch." Daniella banged louder, "Open this door, this instant."

"Go away!" Korina mustered strength to scream, "I don't wanna talk to anyone."

"Well too bad, I wanna talk to you." Daniella said, "Please open the door babe." She pleaded convincing herself that Korina would agree if she pleaded politely.

"Nope, I won't."

"Hmm!"

"Nope!"

"Bitch! Asshole!" She growled angry that her pleading had gone to waste, "I am breaking this door down this instant, I have watched a lot of action movies to know how to do so."

"You wouldn't dare." Hearing Korina say so from behind the door gave her more courage, she was so going to do it.

Daniella dropped her purse and took retreating steps.

"Woooo." She said exhaling and inhaling, "Last chance Korina, open the door."

"Nope." She heard her cousin yell.

"Here it goes." She lunged forward running towards the door and then releasing her leg in a kick with full force.

Something went down, it definitely wasn't the door, it was Daniella.

Daniella found herself on the floor after falling with a loud thud.

"Ouch." She howled feeling pain shooting up her back, "That hurt, damn!"

The door opened, she looked up and found Korina at the door in shorts with a big t shirt.

"Hope that hurt?" Korina asked frowing at her cousin on the floor, "Serves you right." She said as Daniella groaned in pain.

A smug look developed on Korina's face, Daniella stood up and smiled at Korina.

"My sweet cousin and best friend." She said stepping in front of Korina, she brought her hand and smacked Korina on her forehead.

"Oww!" Korina whined massaging the area, "What the hell was that for?"

"Hope that hurts? Serves you right." Daniella mimicked her with a smirk, "Out of my way." She pushed her aside and went into the apartment.

"Damn!" Daniella exclaimed looking around the apartment, "What in the world happened here?"

"Pain happened." Korina fell on her sofa, "So much pain."

"You look like a mess, your apartment is a mess." Daniella said and bent down to pick an empty soda can, "Start talking."

"I don't want to." She huffed.

"Cole gave me a brief down of what happened and how you prevented him from punching the hell out of that dirt bag."

"I didn't want us to cause a scene." Korina leaned back on the Sofa, she looked around and saw an unopened can of soda, she grabbed it, opened it and started downing it immediately.

"Yen, yen, yen, yen." Daniella mimicked her, "What did he say to you anyway, how did it happen?"

"Well, at first I felt really nervous and hella anxious, sweaty palms and I was filled up with the feeling of something bad about to happen." Korina paused.

"Go on."

"And then I flung the feeling aside and decided to enjoy the rest of the dinner, at a point I went to the restroom and came back, continued eating my dinner only for that bastard to come with his new arm candy and ruin everything."

"What the fuck is he doing in New York anyway?"

"I think he came for a business meeting, I know the company tho, it's vilzeza's and Co."

"Oh I know the place too." Daniella nodded, "And then what?"

"He said a lot of things and asked if Cole was my boyfriend and..." Korina recounted everything and told it to Daniella, she was surprised that she wasn't shedding tears as she talked.

"Why did you hold him back from beating him?" Daniella asked, "You fucked up big time, you shouldn't have."

Korina rolled her eyes, "And you know what that monster called me?"

"What?"

"A prude." She said, "He freaking called me a prude."

Daniella stood up abruptly, "He what?!"

Everyone in the company watched as the young white lady marched into the Company, she went through the offices, corridors and lobbies with curses flying out of her mouth, they also saw a young black lady trailing her trying to stop her.

"That nitwit!" Daniella screamed taking another turn, "That bastard, that fool, he's a fucktard, that vapid slime."

"Daniella you should calm down." Korina said trying to catch up with her, her breathing was rapid, evading security and trying to find the board room was no easy task.

"Wait till I find that nincompoop, that brainless dunderhead." She shrieked, "I would cut his balls and shove them down his throats and pull his kidney out of him through his stank anus."

Korina winced, "Don't you think that's a bit brutal?"

They were in an open place now with a lot of cubicles with workers behind them and workers moving around them.

"Where the hell is the board meeting?" Daniella screamed looking around, "And where the fuck is Brian brainless Trey Butler?"

No answer.

Every one just stared at them.

"There was actually no reason to add the name Butler." Korina said scratching her neck, she didn't want to drag poor Brian's granddad's name in the mess.

Daniella ignored her and turned to grab a smallish man by his collar, the files he was carrying fell to the floor.

"Where the fuck is that nitwit?" She spat.

"What are you talking about ma'am?" The man asked shaking evidently.

"Let go of the man Daniella." Korina sighed, "Let the poor man go."

"Where the hell is the board meeting?" She asked him paying no heed to her cousin.

The man pointed in the direction of a big oak door, Daniella dropped him and marched towards the door, she flung it open.

"Where the..." She stopped screaming when she found no one but a receptionist behind a desk.

"Dan, let's return home." Korina tugged at her arm but Daniella freed herself and marched towards the desk.

"Good evening ma'am." She greeted sweetly showing a wide grin on her face.

"How may I help you?" The woman asked frowning.

Rude, Korina glared at the woman.

"We are looking for Brian Trey Butler." Daniella told her, "It's an emergency."

"He's in the meeting, you can't go in there."

"Okay." Daniella nodded backing off from the table and then she turned breaking out into full speed running towards the meeting too with Korina following.

"You can't go in there." The receptionist shrieked trying to catch up with them in her wobbling heels.

The doors were flung open and Daniella walked in causing all activities in the room to come to a halt, Korina stood behind her feeling somewhat ashamed and shy.

"Good morning, ladies, gentlemen and a fool." Daniella greeted with a wide smile.

Everyone looked at them, bewilderment was the expression on their faces.

"Who are these people?" Brian stood up raising his voice as he glared at the girls, "Someone call security."

The receptionist had finally reached them, she was breathing heavily, "I tried to stop them." She gasped.

"Ahh! If it isn't Brian brainless Trey Butler, ruler of the seven kingdoms of idiots." Daniella turned towards him her hands balled in fists.

Before Korina could process what was happening, her best friend was on top of Brian in a millisecond, kicking, punching and throwing curses at him.

All attempts to rip her off him were not too successful as the people who tried also go hit.

Then suddenly, Brian let out a howl, he howled in severe pain.

Daniella had ripped off a part of his hair.

Chapter 35

"It's all your fault." Korina growled at Daniella.

The police officer laughed as he closed the cell.

"Enjoy your stay ladies." He locked it and pocketed the key, whistling as he strolled off.

"What?!" Daniella scowled at Korina who stared daggers at her, "What did I do wrong?"

"What did you do wrong?" She asked staring at her wide eyes, "You assaulted him now we are in jail."

"Hey." Daniella pointed a finger at her cousin, "I was only trying to defend your ass, he insulted you for pete's sake."

"And I told you to let it go." Korina groaned in frustration, "Now look where it landed us."

She walked over to the empty bench in the cell and sat on it.

"He deserved it." Daniella said, she went over to join her cousin.

"And even more." Korina agreed, "But now we are in jail and he is walking free."

"I hope the spot when I yanked his hair off never grows back." Daniella growled.

Korina stared at her cousin finding her unbelievable, "Are you even listening to me?" She screamed.

"Hey." A police officer called out to them hitting his baton on a table, "Keep it down, will you?"

The two girls were still sat on the bench in the cell, not a word said to each other, Korina's mind was filled on how she would pee and Daniella kept wishing she had just broken Brian's teeth.

Korina was secretly happy that Daniella had done what she did, serves him right, She grinned internally.

He deserved even worse, but she didn't like the fact that it had landed them him prison when technically they weren't the first offenders.

She kept thinking of what would happen if he decided to press charges.

Would we end up in jail? Her heart skipped a beat at the thought, would our lives ever be normal?

She turned to peek and Daniella and maybe ask her what would happen if he pressed charges, if they ended up in jail. But Daniella was already dozing off, her body leaning on the wall.

The fuck? Korina shook her head, who the hell sleeps off when in prison?

Daniella of course, She scoffed.

It wasn't long before she also joined her cousin having no choice but to do that.

"Not a word till we get home!" Aunt Dido glared at the girls as they were brought out of their cells, she shook her head pitifully at them as their handcuffs were being taken off, they are so gonna get it from me, She was angry.

She yanked them both by their ears and dragged them out of the building, down the stairs of the New York state police department building and straight to her car.

"Get in both of you." Korina and Daniella scrambled into the car and she slammed the door shut. She muttered angry words as she walked over to the drivers side of the car, got in and started the car angrily.

"What were you thinking?" Aunt Dido asked angrily breaking the tense silence. They were on their way to her home now and she couldn't wait to get home soon so she could give them an earfull.

"I...erm...you see mum...ac..." Daniella couldn't finish her nonsense stuttering as she was cut off by her mother.

"Young lady, is this how I trained you?" Aunt Dido asked turning back to glare at her daughter before fixating her eyes back on the road,"When ever I talk to you or scold you, you are to keep your mouth shut, stop being disrespectful." Her hands tightened on the steering wheel as she took a turn.

Korina faced Daniella and stuck out her tongue to her, she was glad that Daniella got scolded.

"How the hell did you manage to land yourself in jail?" Aunt Dido asked, "Why do you chose to embarrass yourselves?"

None of the girls talked remembering her rule of not talking back to elders.

The car tires screeched making ear irritating noises as Aunt Dido brought the car to a forced halt.

She turned back to look at them looking really furious, the girls looked at her, they were really confused now.

"It has come to this uhn?" She gritted her teeth not reducing her glare at them, "Now I talk to you, you don't respond, now you being disrespectful and stubborn, you wanna act like those spoilt kids uhn? The hell your manners at?"

"Bu...but...you said."

"Shut the hell up Korina." She yelled at her niece.

It was Daniella's turn to stick her tongue at Korina now.

"And would you stop being childish Daniella?" Aunt Dido scolded her, "You both are beginning to piss me off, amma drag your asses out of this car now and give you some black mama whopping." She warned and both girls relaxed back on the seats.

"Not a word till we get home." She turned and started the car again.

"But you have been the one doing the talking." Daniella muttered.

"What did you just say?"

"Nothing mum." She lied, "Nothing."

Korina rolled her eyes and stared out the window watching the scenery as they rode on, no one said a word as the ride continued.

They had been sitting on the sofa in the cream colored sitting room for quite a long time and it felt like forever.

Aunt Dido was at it again with her lectures anytime they did something wrong.

This time it was worse, they had been there for about two hours with her while she did the talking pacing around thing, it was her specialty.

Korina really needed to pee and Daniella well, she just wanted to get up.

"And that is why you shouldn't go about crashing meetings, jumping on people and pulling out their hair cause they might actually be willing to throw you behind bars." Aunt Dido said finalizing her lecture.

Phew, Korina let out a sigh, "Aunt." She raised her hand as if in a classroom.

"What now Korina?" The woman asked.

"I really need to pee."

"Okay, fine." She replied and Korina rushed out of the room to find the nearest bathroom.

"And you?" Aunt Dido faced Daniella, her full attention on her.

"Oh come on mum."

"I didn't raise you to be like this, Daniella." She said.

"Mum I was trying to defend Korina." Daniella explained, "That son of a bitch really did her dirty."

"Mind your language young woman." Aunt Dido said sternly.

"Sorry mum." She giggled, "That son of a woman really did her dirty."

She stood up and walked to her mother wrapping her hands around her, she gave her a peck on the cheek.

"Please forgive me." Daniella pleaded.

"It's okay baby." The woman said, "Just promise me that this is the last time something of this nature would ever occur."

"I promise mum." Daniella said half heartedly, she had a hunch that this wouldn't be the last time, definitely not the last time.

Chapter 36

"There, all done." Korina said tying up the trash bag, she scanned the apartment and felt a deep inner satisfaction, it was clean and well organised now.

"Now it looks like where an actual person is staying." Daniella said, she was leaning against the cupboard, "And it's all thanks to me." She smirked, Korina shook her head and bent to pick the last trash bag, she had no strength to argue with her best friend.

The trip up and down the elevator was quite fast today unlike the day she got stuck with a mad man, she had gone to dispose the trash and the elevator decided to be fast.

She rolled her eyes at the thought of it being slow when she had to go to work.

"Whenever are you gonna reply Cole?" Daniella asked as soon as Korina stepped back in the apartment.

"I don't know Dan." She said moving to the sink to wash her hands, "I screamed at him while he was trying to help."

She squirted some sanitizer in her hands, "I feel so ashamed and stupid."

"Yes!" Daniella agreed with her, "you should be."

"Stop making matters worse and making me feel awful." Korina grumbled grabbing a napkin to clean her hands before moving to the sitting room.

"Why won't I?" Daniella asked, "You caused it."

"Fuck you, rub it in my face will you?" Korina grabbed a throw pillow and threw it in Daniella's direction which she caught perfectly.

"Uhuhn...nahh." Daniella said putting the pillow down, "I ain't playing with you." Korina watched her with quirked brows.

"I put in my soul and sweat to clean up this room, it ain't even thirty minutes yet and you wanna throw it upside down." Daniella frowned, "Not happening."

"Did you put your blood in too?" Korina rolled her eyes.

"Hmm?"

"Did you put your blood in too?" She asked her cousin again.

"Idiot." Daniella groaned, "What's the next on the list?"

"Grocery shopping." Korina answered.

"Have you made a list of what you wanted yet?"

"Nah." She shook her head.

"Let's make one."

Korina grabbed a pen and notepad then she and Daniella set out to list making.

"Cherries." Daniella said, "Add cherries."

"What else?" Korina asked after writing it down.

"Some rice and you do need some baking ingredients." Daniella suggested.

"Yeap!" She scribbled, "And also fruits." She wrote them down and looked up at her cousin for more items.

They did their final touch ups on the grocery shopping list and set out to go.

"Daniella!" Korina called, "Let's go." She looked at Daniella who was sitting in front of the dressing mirror, "What are you doing there now?"

"Looking cute, what else?" Daniella drew the lip gloss stick across her lips before pressing and rubbing them together.

"Let's go."

"Be with you in a sec."

Korina went towards her and grabbed her by the collar and began dragging her out the door knowing fully well that a second was gonna turn into an hour. Daniella grumbled all the way from the room down the elevator and to the car.

She didn't like the fact that Korina had dragged her and she was going out with just lipgloss.

"Why wouldn't you let me fix my face up?" Daniella scowled giving Korina death glares.

"Cause you obviously gonna spend hours at that table." She inserted the key into the key hole turning on the ignition.

"Wrong answer."

"Oh dear." Korina rolled her eyes, "she got a better and more reasonable answer"

"A real friend would gave said, " Cause babe, you look better and prettier without makeup, you are perfect." Daniella scoffed.

"You are never gonna ever hear that or those words from me."

"Asshole." She pinched her.

Korina sighed, "just shut up Dan."

The grocery shop was jam packed and so were all other shops. It took them a long while before they could get all they needed.

"So what are you gonna do about work?" Daniella asked as they took the paper shopping bags containing their groceries to the car, "Your boss is sure not gonna go easy on you."

"I don't know, don't even wanna think about it." Korina said, She opened the boot and they put their stuff in it, she reached in and arranged some of the fruits that fell off before closing the boot, " I told Mark to tell her that I am critically ill, which of course isn't really a lie, depression is an ailment right? A very serious ailment."

"Uhhmm...So when are you gonna resume?" Daniella asked, they were in the car now but weren't ready to move yet.

"I don't know really." She answered rubbing her face with her palms, "Monday I guess."

Korina looked outside the car window, " Oh look, a pharmacy." She pointed towards the opposite side of the street.

"I need to get some aspirin and pads." She quickly unbuckled her seat belt and Daniella did the same.

She and Daniella both went to the shop to get it and soon enough they were back in the car.

"What do you need so much pads for?" Her cousin asked.

"I hate coming out so I stock up nicely to avoid stories." Korina rolled her eyes at her.

"People stock up condoms and you are stocking up pads." Daniella smirked, she knew she was about to annoy her.

"Menstration is not a choice but sex is and it isn't one of my choices." She gritted her teeth, "Pads are essential dumbass and do not make another attempt to piss me off, amma pull you out of this car and run you over."

"Fine, fine." She laughed at her cousin, "So we riding home now?"

"Yea." Korina started the car and pulled out of the parking lot.

As they drove on Daniella got bored.

"Play some music, will you?" She suggested.

"Okay." Korina brought out a cassette and inserted it into the car stereo, Michael Jackson's 'starting something' began to blare through the speakers.

"Oh my God." Daniella squealed over the noise, "My fav oldie."

Korina smiled, "Every MJ's oldie is your favourite, our favourite." They both really loved Michael Jackson.

As they drove on, they felt the music with Korina moving her body as she steered the car and Daniella dancing swinging her arms, hitting the car roof.

She mimicked the lyrics and Korina thought the only word she got right was 'oww'.

They both sang out loud, swaying their bodies to the the music as the ride continued.

They were seemingly happy at the moment, both girls forgetting the sad realities of their lives.

Chapter 37

"So glad to have you back bitch!" Mark said pulling Korina into a hug, tightening his arms around her.

"Can't breathe." She said fake gasping for air making Mark laugh as he released.

"I missed you Mark." Korina said, she reached out a hand and ruffled his hair.

"Hey." He slapped her hand away frowning at her, "I don't joke with my hair yunno, it get's me all the girls." He winked.

"Oh shut up." She scoffed.

Korina had decided to get her ass back to work before her boss finally reached the conclusion that she has had enough and was issued a sack letter.

Moreover, she needed to get out, to get out of her house, meet and interact with actual real life humans not watching tv or playing games.

She hated to admit it but getting out of the house was really necessary and she felt better already seeing other people apart from her cousin and breathing in the city air.

Ms Susan dropped the cup of Coffee then swirled in her chair before finally stopping and facing Korina.

Korina sighed, she had been doing that stupid act for minutes, an act that had begun to bore Korina out.

"Korina." She smiled, Korina had to pinch herself to make sure that she wasn't day dreaming, she smiled? She just smiled at me.

She actually went ahead to pinch herself lightly to ensure that it was a dream so she would wake up, it wasn't a dream, it was real.

"GET BACK TO WORK!" She screamed causing Korina to jerk, she was startled.

Oh, she's back to her abnormal crazy self.

"But ma'am, with all due respect ma'am." Korina said, "You called me here and you haven't even said anything."

"I said get out and get back to work!" The woman grabbed the mug cup and threw it at Korina, she dodged scrambling out of the office, the cup meeting the wall shattering into many pieces. The coffee in the cup left a splattered brown stain on the white wall.

"Why did she call you?" Mark asked as soon as Korina got back behind the counter, "What did she say?"

Korina let out a long hiss grabbing her apron, scowling as she tried to put it on.

"What's wrong?" He asked noticing her facial expression, "What did she do this time?"

"That woman is nuts!"

"Everyone knows that." Mark laughed.

"No like, she belongs in an asylum."

"Oh! Oh! She must have done something really worse this time."

"I went into the office." Korina began talking as she grabbed a mug cup and began making coffee for herself, "when I got in there, I greeted her, no reply, She just sipped her coffee, twirled round in her chair a couple of times, she repeated the same thing boring me out and she never said anything, then suddenly she called my name smiling and before you know it, she screamed that I should get out and hurled her mug cup at me."

"What in the world?!" Mark exclaimed wide eyed.

"Can you imagine?" She said putting cream in the cup and stirring it, "Like she's going coconuts and nut banana's this time."

Mark shook his head.

"She's a little old, middle age, I don't know where the hell she gets her strength from, she acts like a crazy old lady." Korina said.

"Speaking of old ladies, there is one headed our way right now." Cole said pointing at the door.

Korina looked up and spat out the contents in her mouth in shock.

Grace, Cole's aunt was headed her way.

"Hello dear." The woman said as she got to the counter, she leaned on it, arms folded, flashing Korina a wide smile.

"How may I help you ma'am...i mean Grace ma'am." Korina said, She looked to her left to get help from Mark only to find not even the scent of his colonge.

He had gone, wimp, he's so gonna get it when he gets back here.

"Coffee? Sandwich? Smoothie?" She asked.

"No dear." The woman said pulling her dark aviator glasses off, "I came your to talk with you and I could treat you to something if you wanted."

Why are you even here? Korina smiled at the woman, "No ma'am that wouldn't really be necessary."

"So are you up for a little chat then?"

Grace asked, her eyes twinkling mischievously.

"Uhhmm." Korina thought for a while before answering, there wasn't any harm in agreeing to the woman's demands and what could possibly go wrong? She looked at her and nodded, "I would hang out with you for a while, let me just clear things up here first."

"Okay dear." She straightened up, "Would be waiting at my usual table." Korina nodded as she watched the woman walk away, she knew the table she meant. Grace had frequented the restaurant after meeting Korina for the first time, the woman always came in pretence to get treats where as she was there to monitor Korina.

"So, how are you doing, ma'am Grace?" Korina drew out the chair taking a seat.

Grace looked up and smiled at her.

"I am great." She replied, "Could you please get some scones and orange juice, you should get some for yourself too, bills on me, I insist."

Korina returned later with a tray of scones, a glass of orange juice for grace and coke for herself.

"They smell wonderful." Grace rubbed her hands in delight as Korina set the tray down.

"I made these myself." She said, "I usually make them when I am chanced." Korina added, you mean when you aren't late, her mind pricked her.

"That's nice, you should come over and make some for me some day." Grace said popping one of the scones in her mouth.

What?! Korina's eyes widened, she's moving too fast.

"What?" The woman said, she saw the look on Korina's face, "Is there anything wrong with what I said dear?"

"No, Not at all." Korina shook her head.

"Okay, so how are things with you and cole?"

"What do you mean?" She scratched her shoulder.

"Has he popped the question yet?"

"What question?"

"The question that says 'Will you marry me?' "

Korina's face actually paled this time, Grace laughed at the horrified look on the young girl's face, "I was just kidding." She said between laughs.

"Pheww." She sighed.

"He told me about y'all's argument and what happened at the restaurant."

"He did?"

"Yes." She nodded, "He did."

"Oh."

"When he arrived home that night, I was at his place, he didn't want to talk and he looked drained. I had to force it out of him."

"Sorry about that." Korina apologised, she didn't know if she even had to apologise.

"It's no problem dear." She said.

Grace reached out and grabbed Korina's hands enclosing them in a motherly hold.

"I really truly understand how you feel, what you have been through and what you are going through even tho you are silent about it. Believe me, I can see through you, the pain in your eyes tell your story."

Korina had no words, she could only nod at the woman, a sign of admittance of the truth.

"Please." Grace pleaded, "please give him a chance when he asks for it, I am not forcing you or anything but the ball is in your court Korina. You can't let the mistakes or wrong happenings of the past affect your future or happiness, you have to let go and heal. I want to see you happy and I want to see him happy." She said, "Please." She whispered tightening her hold on Korina's hands.

"I will think about it." Korina said.

They finished up their food while talking about other things, time went by and Grace got ready to leave.

Korina bade her good bye.

Grace's words weighed on her as she worked the rest of her shift.

That night as she got home, she finally texted Cole back. She dropped the phone and walked to the window to stare out into the night.

Grace was right, she really had control of this, she couldn't keep letting the past weigh her down and she had to heal, as she took her decision standing there staring at the dark night watching how the city lights shone, a lone tear slid down her cheek.

Chapter 38

Love is life, Love was essential, feelings were inevitable, suppressing them was nearly impossible sometimes and in some cases you just had to take the risk and give love a shot again even if your heart had been trampled upon severally.

These were the thoughts flowing through Korina's mind as she got ready for her home date with Cole.

Grace's words had invaded her mind severally and filled up her senses, she decided to give love another shot.

She had to admit that she at least felt an attraction towards Cole and she also felt if she gave it a shot it would blossom into a wonderful thing.

She knew Cole liked her a lot, it was obvious, the way he looked at her, his words and actions. She was sure he was gonna ask her out but she wasn't certain.

That afternoon as she put her apartment in place, getting snacks and movies ready, she decided she was taking whatever Cole was bringing forth as far as it meant no harm.

It was nearly 4pm when she was done. She did a quick sweep of the apartment with her eyes and sighed in satisfaction, perfect.

It took her extra twenty minutes to freshen up and change into some comfy clothes.

Korina dropped her phone and stood up the moment she heard the door bell ring.

"Hey Cole." She greeted opening the door.

"Hey sorry, I am late." Cole replied, he was dressed in a basket ball outfit, a sweat band around his slightly ruffled hair, he looked hot, "I decided to shoot some hoops with the guys and got carried away, I didn't even get the time to change." He entered the apartment, "Sorry about my appearance."

"Oh come on, it's nothing." Korina said leading him to the sofa, "Besides it suits you."

"Thank you." He blushed.

They both took their seats, none of them said a thing, speaking awkward glances at each other and sitting in uncomfortable silence.

"Uhhmm..." Korina cleared her throat finally breaking the silence, "I want to apologize."

"What for?" Cole asked turning, he was now facing her fully.

"I want to apologize for the other day." She scratched the back of her neck, "Our last date."

"It's okay, Korina."

"No, it's not Cole." She said, "I was rude and you were only trying to help me, my attitude was uncalled for."

"It's okay dear, I understand, you were livid and it's totally fine. It's all his fault." He said, he sincerely understood how she felt.

"Yea right." She nodded, "Still sorry tho."

"You should have let me punch the fucker in the face." Cole said making a fist and doing a dramatic air punch.

"Hey, hey, I didn't want us to cause a scene." She laughed, "He wasn't worth it."

"Well he started it." He said, "you Should have let me teach him a lesson."

"He isn't worth it Cole." She said again.

"Yea right." He agreed with her, "He's a flea bag, trash."

Korina laughed at Cole's insult and he smiled at her.

"I don't know if I have ever told you this." He said not taking his eyes off her, "Your laughter is beautiful like jingling bells on a Christmas morning."

Korina felt her cheeks heating up, she was sure if she was white, her cheeks would have been a deep shade of red, her whole face even, "Well thank you, let's get started on this home date."

The man standing behind the tree in front of Korina's apartment building shivered as he heard the words coming through the phone's speaker.

"I am sorry boss." He squeaked knowing fully well he was in trouble.

"The hell the you mean you are sorry?" His angry boss at the other end growled, the man could hear something break in the background, his boss must have probably thrown his wine glass.

"I tried to distract him I swear, I really tried to stop him from getting to her." The man said, "I tried to stop him."

He hoped his boss would be satisfied with his explanation which was very impossible.

"You have been trying to stop him since the very first date, you have never succeeded." The boss growled, "Not even once."

"I swear I tried my best, I really tried my best boss."

"I don't know why I keep sending you on this mission all the damn time." The man heard something else break, it was probably the wine bottle this time.

"Boss, I really tried, the man is just..."

"Just? Just what uhh?" He asked cutting him off, "There is a man in there with my queen cuddling her and you are spewing trash."

Maybe you should get your ass out here and stop him yourself, The man almost said but stopped himself, he wasn't ready to join his father just yet.

"Now, he is giving her a forehead kiss, what the fuck?" He heard his boss groan.

"I am so sorry boss." The man said knowing not what to do apart from apologising.

"How exactly did you try to stop him." The boss asked, "What method did you employ?"

"Here's what I did."

"Fucking talk!"

"I ran in front of him and stopped him, greeted him and told him there was a bird with a human face down the street and asked if he was interested in seeing it and he said no, I told him my water bed was on fire he should come help put me out, can you believe boss, he looked at me like I was nuts. When those two didn't work, I told him there was a human with a bird face up the street, he should come see it, he sad no. He has a problem boss."

"Is that what you did?" His boss gritted his teeth.

"Yes boss."

"We have a problem."

"What is it boss?"

"The problem is you, Clement."

"Sorry boss."

"I should blow your brains out already."

"No please boss, I will do better next time."

"You don't belong in the mafia, I should probably take you back to the circus."

"I am very sorry boss."

"Stop saying sorry, it's beginning to irk me."

"I apologise boss."

"Just shut up!" He screamed, "Get out of there and drive down to the headquarters immediately."

"Okay boss." The man ended the call and grumbled as he marched to the car. He got in and drove off, cursing the dark haired man in basket ball outfit, all the way.

Chapter 39

Anne was finally back from the unknown island she went to and the girls had gone to pick her up. It wasn't hard spotting her in the crowd, her tallness giving her away.

"Bitches!" Anne screamed as she sighted her two best friends running her way.

All three girls were soon engulfed in a hug.

"Get off me! Get off me!" She screamed fake choking admist Daniella and Korina's screams of excitement. They didn't heed, they only hugged her tighter.

"Wanna kill me?" She gasped.

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" Korina said, "You went on a vacation without your best girls, I mean come on."

"It wasn't a vacation." Anne said defending herself, they were all disentangled now, "It was work."

"Work you say?" Daniella asked with raised brows, "You go to a beautiful island, do photoshoots, get tanned, party, spend time on the beach and MEET HOT MEN!" Daniella emphasized the last part and Korina rolled her eyes, "You really have the nerve to call to that work."

"Well..."

"Shut up!" Daniella and Korina squealed at her.

"Let me explain." She said.

"Okay." Both girls turned facing her squarely.

"Well, you see..."

"You are living the hakunamatata life sister, just shut the hell up." Anne was glad Korina had spoken cause she had no idea how to explain herself or what to say.

"Yea, whatever." She said, "Let's go get some real American food, I am starving."

Daniella's car was in open roof mode, enabling the other drivers stuck in traffic with them to hear the music blaring from the speakers.

Anne stood on the back seats with her shoes off swaying crazily to the music. Daniella sang the lyrics out loudly with Korina bobbing her head up and down. They attracted a lot of stares.

"All the single ladies, all the single ladies." Daniella sang screaming the words.

"You know you shouldn't be singing this song." Korina yelled over the noise, "You ain't a single ass lady."

Anne laughed at Korina's statement still dancing.

"Fuck you Korina!" She flipped her off and put the car in motion, the lights were green, it was time to move now.

"You do not have to be single to sing this song." Daniella said taking a turn, Anne sat down and was putting on her shoes.

"But the song clearly said, all the single ladies." Anne said, "It's for single ladies only."

Korina and Anne high fived as they saw Daniella getting livid.

"I will throw y'all out of my car." Daniella threatened.

"Waooh, slow down." Korina said to her as she and Anne laughed at her expense.

They got to the restaurant in the nick of time and rushed in, they really were hungry.

The wait at the airport and all the dancing in the car had somehow drained their energy.

Anne's flight was tiring too, she looked like she could pass out anytime soon.

Korina's stomach even growled as they made their orders causing the waiter who attended to them to laugh.

The food came quickly and it looked more appetizing to them as they were visibly famished, they gobbled it down while paying rapt attention to Anne as they talked about her time on the island.

"I even almost got bitten by a water snake." Korina's eyes widened hearing Anne's words, "wow, really?" She asked slowly chewing on her burger.

"Yes, of course but luckily, I was saved tho." Anne beamed, swirling the straw in her drink.

She looked at her friends and sighed, she had really missed them a lot.

"Oh don't tell me, don't tell me, don't tell me." Daniella squealed, "Let me guess mhmm, by the hot native you met, the one you couldn't stop rambling about." She winked.

"Of course, it's him." She nodded at Daniella, "And that's how we met."

"So, did y'all fuck?" Daniella asked a little too loud and Korina choked on her drink.

"Get a fucking mouth filter." Korina hit her best friend's back and went back munching on her burger.

"Hey, leave me alone." Daniella glared at her cousin before sticking a French fry in her mouth, "So did you do it?" She went back to Anne who was watching them both with an amused look on her face.

"Yes, we did." Anne answered.

"How was it?" Daniella asked, excitement gushing through her, "Was he the vanilla type or the freaky type and was he big?"

"Daniella, that isn't your business." Korina chided.

"Oh shut up, she got some dick and you are still rusty down there."

Korina gave her the middle finger and faced her food.

"Yea, K babe is right Dan, you shouldn't know the details of my sex life." Anne said with wink.

"Yen, yen, yen." Daniella mimicked them both and snorted.

They all got silent and enjoyed the rest of their meal. After the meal they went to the shopping mall. Daniella had to pick new underwear and she insisted they tag along.

The girls finished up at the mall towards evening. They said their goodbyes and headed out to their various homes.

Korina hummed happily to the tune of Celine Dion's Alive as she walked out of the elevator, she made sure no one was in sight to see her as she mildly danced humming down the hallway towards her apartment.

She fished out her keys and moved to open the door when are leg hit something, she looked down to find two boxes carefully placed on her doormat.

She reached down and picked up the first white one.

Korina opened the box and the aroma of freshly baked glazed doughnuts hit her notrils. She reached into the box immediately and grabbed one covered with chocolate glazing.

"Hmm...mmmm...mmmm." She mumbled shaking her head, savoring the taste as it hit her taste buds, the aroma still pleasing to her, "This is good, wow." She sighed, "Real good damn."

You know not who sent it, but yet here you are muching away like a gluttonous hawk, her subconscious snorted.

She knocked herself mentally and dropped the box of doughnuts but not after stuffing her mouth with another one.

She reached down and grabbed the other box, opening it to find a pair of silver colored shoes.

The same shoes she had seen on Tv and had told Daniella that she wanted them but they were way too expensive.

The heels were Louis vuitton and she had badly wished she could them them for herself then.

She brought one of the shoes out and turned it over to see it was her size.

Korina grabbed the note attached to the side of the box and opened it.

The all too familiar cursive handwriting graced her sight.

Miss me?

Chapter 40

Ever since Ms susie, Korina's boss had decided that they serve more varieties of pastries at the restaurant, Korina had the cause to get out of bed early and get to work as she was one of the baker's, well actually, the only baker.

She literally shouldered the whole thing, her boss made her do it as she was very good at baking.

The alarm went off at 5:30 AM. She grumbled while getting out of bed, she knelt down beside it and said a short prayer before heading to the bathroom to clean up.

After brushing her teeth, she went to the kitchen and proceeded to making breakfast, she had egg, toast and tea as she didn't feel like taking Coffee today. She immediately went to take her bath after her short breakfast. Later on she got dressed and headed for work.

"Taxi." She screamed hailing one down with the movements of her arms. She got in and told the middle aged man her destination and he sped off with out a single hesitant thought.

Korina got to the restaurant in the nick of time, it was already 6:30 AM. Other restaurants and diners around them were already opened.

She found the doors to the restaurant unlocked and got in, she saw Mark already busy with the cleaners and other waiters.

Phew, I won't be lonely today, She reasoned as she walked to where Mark was.

"Good morning everyone." She greeted as she passed by the workers, they all responded cheerfully.

"Good morning Mark." Korina met him behind the counter and placed a kiss on his cheek while pulling off her jacket.

"Good morning Korina." Mark returned her greeting, "You are really early these days." He smiled.

"Why not?" She grabbed and apron and a chef hat, "With all the work load and not wanting to face Godzilla, I have to be early."

Mark laughed has she used their new nickname for Ms susie.

"The list of what you have to make and the batches are on the table counter." He told her, "Get to work, the other workers and I will handle the rest."

"Okay." She said as she tied her apron firmly around her waist, "Did you help me get the ingredients out of the pantry?"

"Yes, I did." Mark replied, "Oh dear, customers are swimming in already."

Korina looked at the door and watched the early customers troop in, in twos and threes.

Just another Monday, She sighed, another very typical Monday.

Korina wiped the sweat from her brows and rang the bell, a signal for other workers to come and take the pastries.

She was done with the three hundred batches of scones and two hundred and fifty batches of British meat pie and she did them all alone as usual.

She stopped to catch her breath for a moment and then flexed her fingers before she dug into the dough she had already prepared and followed the same old procedure to make some buns and crossiants.

"You look down beaten." Mark said accessing Korina's tired form as she came out from the kitchen.

"How the hell wouldn't I be?" She groaned, "I just finished making impossible numbers of all those." She pointed her hand at the show glass holding the pastries.

"I am pleased with you." He remarked, "But Godzilla isn't as usual. She came complaining earlier that the crushed berries were too sparse in the scones."

"What the hell?!" Korina was angry but not too surprised at her statement, "Did any customers complain?"

"Of course not." Mark rolled his eyes, "They found them perfect but you know her. She always has something to complain about."

"Yea, she does." Korina said, "I am famished."

She grabbed a paper plate and put some buns and scones on it while Mark helped her make an espresso.

"Here you go." He handed it over to her.

"Thank you." She grabbed it from him, took a seat and began to eat.

"Cole's aunt dropped by earlier." Mark told her.

"Again?" Korina rolled her eyes smiling slightly as she stuffed her mouth with buns, the woman really likes me I think.

"Yea." Mark nodded, "I told her you were really busy in the kitchen."

"Oh, what did she say then?"

"She said that she'd drop by tomorrow."

"Oh well...I..."

"NO EATING BEHIND THE COUNTER, KORINA! GET BACK TO WORK!"

She never got to finish her statement as the voice of her boss startled her. She jerked causing her coffee to spill on her white shirt.

Korina looked down and saw a big ugly brown stain on it, Dammit, just my luck.

It was 8:00 PM when she finally closed and Cole was already waiting for her outside the restaurant. They had another home date tonight but this time at his home.

She didn't know why but she already trusted him enough to hang out at his home.

"Hey!" They both said simultaneously as Korina got into the car.

"How was work?" Cole asked watching her buckle her seat belt.

"It was fine, a little tiring." Korina answered, "How about yours?"

"Not too bad." He replied.

"So let's go!" She tapped the dashboard excitedly.

"Ready to see my place?" He asked starting the car.

"You bet."

The drive to Cole's house wasn't less than thirty minutes, they entered a mildly reserved area with lots of trees and drove through it, the car tyres crunching on the gravel.

They got to an iron gate and Cole got a remote from the pigeo hole and pressed it, the gate opened and they drove in.

"Wow." Korina said marvelling at the tall white duplex as they got down from the car.

"You like it?" Cole asked smiling as he saw that he had manage to impress her.

"Of course." She grinned, "I knew you had good accounts and good taste but wow, this is just wow."

"You didn't expect this?" He asked.

"To be honest, Nah." Korina shook her head.

"I am offended." He faked frowned and gasped putting a had on his chest.

"Oh, come on." Korina said pulling his hand, "Come show me around."

The two were in Cole's sitting room now. It was painted white with a little splash of grey. Korina sat down on the snow white sofa marvelling at it.

"Your sitting room is nice, I love the decor, it makes my apartment look like a pantry." She joked, "It's even classier than Daniella's."

"Oh really?" Cole laughed, he was returning from the kitchen carrying a glass of water for Korina which she had requested for earlier.

"Do you like it?" He asked as he handed her the glass, "Do you like my place?"

"Like it?" She asked, "Nope I don't, I love it."

They both sat chatting excitedly into the night while looking through the pictures in an album Cole brought out. The album contained his childhood pictures.

"Oh look." Korina pointed at a pic, "You got some drool in this one." He looked about a year old in it.

"Now that's embarrassing." Cole said making her laugh. They continued looking through the pics with Korina either laughing or complementing each.

"Uhhmm...Korina I want to ask you something."

"What's that?" She said dropping the album and facing him.

"I would get straight to the point."

"Okay..." She trailed off not taking her eyes off him.

"I know you have been through a lot and you still carry the hurt from the past but I really don't care but I do care."

She nodded.

"The thing is I really like you and if you let me, I would show you how much you mean to me and how much I cherish you, How much I am attracted to you."

"So..." Korina said her heart beating fast, is this what I am thinking it is?

"Hmmm..." Cole cleared his throat, "Korina Black, would you be my girlfriend?"

Chapter 41

A wide smile appeared on Korina's face as she watched Cole enter the restaurant with a bouquet of flowers and a small wrapped box.

She thought he'd forget cause of work and his hectic schedule, her heart warmed at the fact that he didn't.

Today was their four month anniversary, it was exactly four months since Korina decided to take the bold step and give a shot at love again.

Exactly four months that she had said yes to him and had been receiving disturbing and threatening texts from her stalker.

Threats not directed to her of course but to her boyfriend, Cole.

The text contained words of her stalker whining about Cole not being good for her and how he was the only man for her, how she was supposed to be with him.

She had reached the conclusion that the man belonged in an asylum cause she didn't understand how he could say he was good for her and they were meant for each other when she hadn't even met him.

Men be crazy, She had scoffed.

She got really alarmed and disturbed when he began threatening Cole through the texts about how he wanted to cut him into pieces for touching what was his.

She was so horrified, she screamed and begged aloud in her apartment knowing he could hear her, she had begged him not to harm Cole. Hopefully for her, none of the threats were carried out.

Korina didn't bother telling Cole about what was going on that she had a stalker. She didn't bother telling him that his life was being threatened by a man obsessed with her, a man she didn't even know. She thought telling her boyfriend wasn't necessary and so she kept the information from Cole and kept hiding the expensive gifts he sent.

"There's my blonde dread headed goddess." Cole had reached where Korina was now, he dropped the flowers and gift he held on the counter, turning to her, he pulled her closer, putting his hands on her waist before drawing her closer and placing a kiss on her lips.

Korina responded back creeping her hands behind his neck trying to match the pace of his lips.

"Ewww! Ewww! Ewww!" Mark said gagging at them, "Get a room you two, horny people." He rolled his eyes.

The couple pulled apart laughing, Cole's hands still on Korina's waist.

"Happy Anniversary, my love." Cole kissed her on the forehead.

"More to go baby." She smiled up at him.

"You would understand when you find love." Mark rolled his eyes at what Cole said to him, "Whatever, just don't fuck in front of me."

"Mark!" Korina screeched reaching out a hand, she smacked him on his head.

"That was painful." He groaned rubbing his head, "Hold your woman, damn!" He said to Cole before sticking his tongue out at the Couple and leaving them be.

Korina and Cole laughed as they watched him grumble his way out.

"So." Korina said looking at the box he had walked in with, "Is that for me?" She asked.

"Nope dear." Cole said, "I got it for your boss."

He got hit on the arm and dogded the other hit, "Calm down vixen."

Korina rolled her eyes and picked up the box.

She pulled at the ribbon and it fell loose, she lifted the lid and dug her fingers into the box.

She found a bracelet in it. It was a charm bracelet to be exact, she raised it up studying the stones on it as they glinted.

"It's so beautiful." She gasped, "I love it." She said jumping on him giving him a tight hug, "Thank you Cole, Thank you." She whispered giving him a kiss on the neck.

"For what?" He asked puzzled, "It's our anniversary babe.

" I know." She said, "Thank you for all the love you have shown me and not repeating whatever I have suffered in the past."

"You deserve it and more." He gave her one more kiss on the head, "I should get going now." He took a glance at his watch.

"No, uh." Korina stopped him, "You aren't leaving till I give you your gift."

"You got me something babe?" Cole asked as he watched her go behind the counter.

"Yes, of course." She brought out something wrapped in a plastic bag and handed it over to Cole.

"Hmm...let's see what she got me." He collected the plastic bag and opened it up.

Cole brought out a plate, it was a plastic plate with the top covered with a silver foil paper.

"What's this?" He asked, "It smells nice."

"Will you just open it already." Korina stomped her feet getting bored that he was doing it slowly.

"Okay, okay love." He unwrapped the foil paper a little and very delicious aroma hit his nostrils.

"Hmm." Cole breathed in the aroma, "It smells fantastic."

He unwrapped it wholly and was met with an apple pie, one of his favorite pastries.

"Awwn baby, this is lovely." He said, "Best boyfriend in the world." He read out the letters inscripted on the pie top.

He was grining like he won a lottery.

"Thanks a lot honey." He began wrapping it all back up, "I should be on my way now, I am getting late."

"So dinner tonight?" Korina asked hoping he would say yes, they haven't really hung out like a couple for quite some time now, "At my place." She said.

Korina was walking him to the doors now.

"Nope, I am afraid I don't think I can make it." Cole said, "I am sorry, I got a really hectic night shift and cases at the emergency ward too."

"Oh." She replied feeling downcast, "It's okay, I understand but I miss you a lot yunno." She whined.

"I miss you too." Cole turned her towards him, "You know i'd make time out for you no matter what but i am very busy these days babe."

"Can't you take a day off or something?" She pouted looking up at him with puppy eyes.

"Nope." He laughed, "It's gonna be better soon tho."

"Promise?"

"I promise."

He drew her closer into a hug.

"Bye baby." He gave her a final kiss and withdrew, taking long strides outside the door and to his car.

Korina stood there waving, watching as he drove away, a wide smile on her lips.

She sighed, finally, She felt loved and she was happy.

Chapter 42

"Nice to see that this Cole boy is treating you well." Aunt Dido said as she put the shovel into the dirt, "Daniella could you please help me get the tomatoes, I wanna transplant them."

"Okay mum." Daniella said walking away.

"He makes me really happy." Korina said agreeing with her aunt, "I was skeptical at first but now I see he really has good intentions."

Aunt Dido smiled at her niece, "Make the dirt in the pots leveled." She told Korina who was filling the flower pots with soil.

They were in Aunt Dido's garden. The lady had decided to start a little green house converting a section of her backyard for the garden. She was gonna plant flowers, vegetables, fruits and anything she could lay her hands on and she got the girls to help her.

"So when will I be meeting this boy friend of yours?"

"I don't wanna freak him out Aunt." Korina shrugged, "It's a bit too early for that."

"What do you mean by a bit too early?" Daniella rolled her eyes, "She was back now, she handed over the transplant seedlings to her mum, " You met his aunt way before you even got together and you weren't entirely freaked out, were you?"

"I was a little bit at first, it seemed to make things look a bit too forward but then I got used to it and was comfortable with her." Korina explained.

"You got comfortable with her, then he has to get comfortable with mum." Daniella said, "Ain't that right mum?"

"Yea, yeah." Aunt Dido agreed nodding absent mindedly paying more attention to her plants.

"Aunt, Dan." Korina stood up aright, "Men are entirely different, he mightn't react the way I did."

"Okay dear, whatever you say." Aunt Dido said, "Just bring him over whenever you think it's right."

"And also use protection when you fuck."

"Daniella!" Korina screeched and turned to her eying her.

Aunt Dido reached out and smacked her hard on the back.

"What did I do wrong mum?" She whined rubbing her back while Korina laughed at her.

Aunt Dido shook her head, "Silly child."

Korina huffed in annoyance as she watched the news.

"Boring." She yawned, same old news, crisis all over the world, the world power being selfish as ever. She turned off the TV with a hiss and picked up her phone.

I really need to meet more people, She thought as she scrolled through her contacts, she had just five contacts. She shook her head pitifully and switched to YouTube, looking for funny videos to watch. She fell asleep later on the couch, the video of the Cosby show's episode playing on with no eyes on it.

Korina knocked on the door for the second time waiting for a reply, she hadn't told Cole she was coming, she wanted to surprise him.

She looked around, the hospital looked exceptionally rowdy today, a lot of workers, a lot of patients. She took a peak at the ice cream packed in the bag she held, she knew it had begun to melt.

After a long wait, the door was finally opened, she smiled at Cole but it faded quickly noticing his appearance. There he was breathing heavily, sweat trickled down his forehead, he had a ruffled look, his appearance looked like he just ran a marathon.

Or just had sex, She shut her mind at the thought.

"Hey babe." Korina greeted with raised brows, "Are you okay?"

"Hey, love." He said glancing backwards into the office, "You never told me you were coming." His words were rushed.

"Yea, I wanted to surprise you." Korina replied, "Wouldn't you let me in?" She asked craning her neck trying to see inside the office through him.

"Oh that, sorry." He apologised scratching the back of his neck, "Come right in."

She got in and accessed the office, it looked neat and all but had a faint odd smell and then she noticed the scattered table and case notes on the floor as if they got pushed from the table in one swift forceful move.

"Is everything okay in here?" She turned to face him finding it hard to read his facial expression, "Are you okay Cole?"

"Yea Korina." He said trying to avert her gaze, "I was just stressed from work and perplexed and..." He tried to explain but kept shut seeing it made no meaning.

"So...why are you sweating Cole?" Korina asked him under her scrutinizing gaze.

"See, there is heat, was heat." He said loosening his tie a bit, "Wooh, heat Korina, heat!"

"Oh." She shook her head, "But the Air Conditioner is on Cole."

"Hmm!"

"The air conditioner is on."

"I..."

"Good thing I brought some ice cream to cool down your heat." She dumped the paper bag on the table glaring at him.

"What did I do?"

"You are hiding something, you are fucking hiding something from me."

"No, I am not." He raised his hands, "Never hidden anything, why now?"

"Whatever Cole." She took a seat.

Cole rolled his eyes stood up and walked over to her, he took her face in his palms, leaned in and kissed her, Korina perceived an odd scent on him but ignored.

"I am sorry babe for making you think I am hiding things." Korina just started at him blankly, "And for you meeting me in this state, I am just stressed with work."

"Okay, if you say so." She shrugged reaching out into the bag to take her own ice cream cup. Cole also took a chair and placed it in front of her, he got seated and took his own ice cream cup.

"Uggh, it started to melt already." Korina complained putting some in her mouth.

"Mine too." Cole looked into the cup, "Must have been cause of the time frame, we would just take it like that." He said dipping in his spoon.

Cole's hand was thrown around Korina's shoulders. She giggled at something he said as they exited his office. They followed the hallways in a bid to exit the hospital, greeting cole's fellow health workers as they walked.

"I am really glad I came to see you today." Korina said hugging her boyfriend tightly, "Spending time with you today was amazing, we haven't seen each other in weeks."

"I know right babe." Cole said, "I am just busy with work and all, that's why can't meet too often."

Korina looked up at him.

"You understand right?" She nodded at him.

"I should get going." Cold said looking at his watch, they were outside the building now, "I got patients to attend to."

"Yea, you should."

"I would put you in a taxi first and see you off."

He flagged down a taxi easily and got her in.

"So baby, if I am chanced I would drop by tomorrow and take you for lunch." He said, he was holding her door open while she sat inside the car.

"That would be wonderful, you can come during my lunch break."

"Yea, sure." He nodded.

"Bye Cole." She blew him a kiss.

"By babe." He said locking the door, "Make sure to call me when you get home." He screamed after the moving car hoping she heard him.

Chapter 43

The gym room smelt of sweat, the air in it was polluted with different scents of perfumes, body odour and stench. Mirrors ardoning the walls reflecting images of people working out, some carrying out the simple workouts while others picked up the heavy ones.

Korina, Anne and Daniella were at the end of the room, each on a thread mill, they worked out while chattering in the process.

"Something was really off about him when I visited him the last time." Korina told the girls, her hair done in a pony tail bouncing up and down as she ran the thread mill. She was dressed in a black sports bra, jogging pants and a pair of running shoes, beads of swear gathered around her forehead and glistened on her chest.

"I agree." Anne said trying to catch her breath, she was dressed similarly to Korina but her outfit was yellow, "With all what you just related to us, I hope it isn't what I am thinking." She slowed down for a moment still trying to catch her breath. She got down and reached for her water bottle and began taking sips of water. She was kinda exhausted, she hadn't really ran a mill for sometime now.

"Like what on earth would he have been doing anyway?" Daniella asked, she was running the mill in slow paces, "His explanation dosen't even add up to me."

"I don't know what to think." Korina came down from the mill, she grabbed a towel and sat on a bench, "I don't want to start getting suspicious or anything." She dabbed the sweat of her neck slowly with the towel.

"Whatever korina, I think you should be more careful." Daniella advised, "I mean like super careful, vigilant and alert."

"Yea, she's right Korina." Anne agreed shaking her head, "Men can't totally be trusted, they can switch up on you anytime."

"I know." Korina said, "But maybe I am being too paranoid. It might have actually been the heat and stress."

"Oh really?" Daniella rolled her eyes.

"Yea, right!" Anne scoffed, "Heat and stress really? Was that what caused the scattered files?" She asked no one in particular.

"Yea Anne." Daniella nodded, "Maybe he has destructive heat stress issues. She said, the sarcasm dripping from her voice.

Anne laughed and Korina frowned at them.

" Hey, that's enough." She said, "It's my boyfriend we are talking about here."

"Sorry." They both mumbled.

"Honestly, Korina." Daniella walked over to her and placed a hand on her shoulder, "I don't wanna see you get hurt."

"Me too." Anne agreed with Daniella, "I do hope his lame excuses are actually what it is."

"Me too." Korina mumbled her shoulders slumping, "Me too."

They finished up from the gym and decided to freshen up at Anne's apartment and eventually they spent the rest of the day there.

Korina got out of the shower with an over sized robe on her. She held a towel in her hand trying to furiously dry her hair. Anne was on the bed operating her phone and Daniella sat up on a plastic chair toying with a pack of cards in her hands.

"So Korina." Daniella started looking in the direction of her cousin, "What are you gonna do about the sex issue?"

"Wait! Wait! Wait!" Anne screeched sitting up right signalling at them with her hands, "Hollup! Cole asked for sex?" She dropped her phone and turned to Korina.

"Yes, yes he did." Daniella answered, "You sure do miss a lot when you go on your shoots."

"Not my fault." Anne rolled her eyes at them, "A girl has got to hustle."

"I don't know what to do yet." Korina finally answered, she dropped down on the bedroom sofa tying the towel around her hair.

"Hello." Anne swung her arms, "Can someone fill me in on what's going on here, I am lost."

"Okay here's it." Daniella dropped the cards, "Cole wants sex and Korina dosen't want to, she doesn't really feel like doing it with him."

"Korina, are you a virgin?" Anne asked.

"Nope, I am not."

"And Cole keeps on pressing like it's his right or something." Daniella added.

"Oh." Anne shook her head.

"Yesterday when we were even making out, things got a little heated." Korina blushed.

"A little heated you say?" Her cousin smirked at her.

Anne folded her hands across her chest and gave Korina a pointed look.

"Fine." She huffed, "Things got very heated and he tried to you know..."

"Nuh huh...we don't know." Daniella said.

"Tell us." Korina glared at Anne.

"Gosh." She faced palmed in frustration, "He tried to have sex with me, I had to stop him."

"Hoot! Hoot!" Daniella squeeled excitedly while Anne laughed, Korina too two throw pillows and hurled both at them."

"But why don't you want to anyway?" Anne asked catching the pillow.

The one sent to Daniella hit her square in the face.

"I don't Know." She answered, "I just don't feel like it. I have noticed a lot of changes in him and I feel like I will regret having sex with him. There is really something always off about him these days. He acts shifty and all. He's not the same Cole I got in a relationship with. He doesn't pick calls where I am anymore, prevents me from coming to his office at times, a lot of things, I wanna be sure what I am doing before getting really intimate with him." She explained.

"Oh, I see." Anne sighed, Daniella just rolled her eyes.

"You don't know what you are missing girl." Daniella said standing up, "The feeling of that mmmmm dick inside you is amazing, the way it stretches..."

"What do you know?" Korina cut her short, "Your boyfriend is never around, he's never here." A smirk developed on Korina's lips seeing Daniella had begun to frown.

"Yea, she has a point." Anne agreed with her, "Where is your boyfriend Daniella?"

"Always away on business trips." Daniella answered.

"Still no excuse for him to never be seen." Anne shrugged.

"Like we never see him, he's never here, never around, no pictures either, never heard his voice over the phone, you are always discreet with him."

"Is he a ghost?" Anne asked.

"Is he faceless?" Korina probed further.

"Does he even exist?"

"Uhmm..." Daniella played with her hair looking sheepishly at her friends, "Who wants food?"

Chapter 44

Korina looked at the batches of pastries she had to make that morning and groaned. She was just two seconds away from drafting a resignation letter or better still walking out of her work place and never returning.

Five hundred batches, freaking five hundred batches, that's what she had to make, seriously, She huffed as her eyes ran over the list again.

"Having trouble there?" She looked up and saw mark entering the kitchen, his sleeves rolled up and there was a huge brown stain on his white shirt, she didn't remember seeing it there earlier.

"What happened to you?" Korina asked referring to the stain.

"I was being clumsy as usual." He smiled walking towards her spot.

"I heard your groans from out there, what's up?"

"Jeez." She slapped a hand over her mouth, "Was I that loud?"

"Yes, you were." He nodded, "Now what the heck is going on?"

Korina sighed and handed the list over to him, "Look what she demanded of me."

"Jesus Christ!" Mark exclaimed, his eyes widening as he read the list, "What the hell does she take you for? A machine?"

Korina shrugged, "At first I thought she made a mistake and then I went to correct her but I ended up being screamed at."

"You definitely can't finish this up yourself, you need help."

"Who would lend a hand?" She asked feeling more stressed, "Everyone is occupied with one thing or the other."

"True that." Mark nodded, "You just have to start first."

Korina looked at the ingredients on the counter in front of her, more than a dozen piled up eggs, about three big bowls of flower, there was baking powder, baking sodas, vanilla essences and a whole lot of other stuff. Looking at them made her confused and frustrated all over again.

"I don't know where to start from." She whined.

"Just calm down, get yourself together and start." Mark told her, "I would finish up quickly and come join you." He patted her on the back and exited the kitchen.

Korina lifted a crate from the crates of eggs to set it aside but she didn't expect or know how the next thing happened. The crate fell from her hands and crashed to the floor, egg whites, yolks and shells in a messy puddle.

Fuck, She swore angrily, just superb.

She wasted no time in cleaning up the mess and while at that she groaned irritatingly knowing it's cost was gonna be deducted from her pay check at twice the rate.

She brought out a bowl and poured the necessary ingredients in it and started whisking, when she reached out for more eggs this time she was extra careful.

As she got deep and busy with the baking she implored to the heavens that nothing should go wrong.

"She's really quite busy ma'am." Mark was speaking with Aunt Grace, the woman frowned and he shook his head. He didn't want to inform Korina that her boyfriend's Aunt was around. It would disorganize her further and with the work load her boss had meted out, her hands would still be full.

"When would she be done?" The woman asked, "I don't mind waiting."

"I don't think it would be anytime soon." Mark said, "She might be in there the whole day, today is rather a very busy day and our boss is over demanding, she wouldn't have time to spare."

"Okay, fine." She rolled her eyes dipping her hand into her bag. She brought out a polythene bag, "Give this to her please, tell her I would come over some other time." She handed it over to him.

"Okay, ma'am." He said collecting it.

"Thank you." He took a huge sigh of relief as he watched her leave the restaurant.

Mark brought out the parcel and found a very hot tempting plate of lasagna. He dropped it with the intention of giving it to Korina.

Well, the lasagna never got to Korina, Mark gobbled it down even before lunch break.

Korina looked at the mess she made and nearly burst into tears. Mark never came to help as he said nor did any other person. She had to do it all by herself, was she trying to fire me? Korina questioned herself, Did she do all this on purpose?

Ninety percent of the pastries Korina made turned out terrible.

Okay, terrible would be an understatement.

Some of them got burnt, badly shaped, others didn't turn out so well, some got over baked and some didn't even get baked at all.

She was never one to work well under pressure and she just made a big mess, the biggest she ever made in her life time, she didn't even want to think about their tastes, she wanted all this to be a dream.

"Korina I...what the fuck happened here?" Mark rushed to the counter where Korina was, he was appalled by what he saw, "This Is not good, this is not good."

"And you think I don't know it ain't?" She croaked, "Oh God!"

"Korina, what did you do?" Mark asked, "What happened?"

"I worked under pressure, that's what happened."

"What?!"

"She came in here repeatedly, screaming at me to hasten up saying I was too slow. She threw insults and fits, I got so disorganized and made the worse pastries ever."

"Owww...ouch." Mark looked over the pastries, "Serve this to customers and they sure are out the window."

"Tell me about it." She sighed, her hand up on her head. She removed the chef's hat in one move and dumped it on the counter.

"Korina!!!" Her heart lept as she heard her boss scream, she and Mark stood aright forthwith, "Where the hell are you?! Korina!"

Oh dear, Korina breathed.

"I told you I needed those pastries before 12!" The woman screamed entering the kitchen, "But why ain't I see...WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU DO NOW BITCH?" She shrieked seeing the mess on Korina's clothes and the counter, "WHAT IN NEPTUNE HAVE YOU DONE?"

"You see..." Korina began but was shut down as usual.

"Shut the hell up." She screamed, "And you." She pointed at Mark, "Get out."

Mark wasted no time in running out and Korina cursed him under her breath.

"I can explain." Korina said again rubbing her palms together.

"You wasted my money, time and resources." She gestured at the counter.

"I do not know how to work under pressure." Korina scoffed.

"What the hell do you mean?" Her boss growled.

"You fucking gave me an unreasonable task and you pressurized me too." She slapped her hand over her mouth and gasped realizing she had just talked back at her boss and swore even.

Oh lord, what is wrong with you Korina?

"Now, you are talking back at me." Her boss growled picking up a raw egg, she aimed it at Korina who dogded it quickly, "You will pay for this." She picked up more eggs, aiming them at her, "How dare you do this to me?"

The raging Ms Susie was calm later when other workers interfered and pleaded with her.

She seized Korina's car keys as compensation for herself until whenever she liked and made it that she worked more hours and cleaned too.

Korina wanted to lunge at the woman and scratch her face but she kept her cool, she needed the job.

It was really late when she finished and locked up. She was the last person, she locked the final doors and stood outside the restaurant thinking of what to do next.

She actually walked to her car and then remembered that she had no keys before walking back and standing in front of the restaurant again.

She stood outside the restaurant and began thinking of how to get home.

Korina slid down the wall after standing for a long time. She sat there on the floor in frustration, legs stretched outwards, she didn't care if her outfit got dirty.

She couldn't even call anyone, her phone was low.

She was still thinking when she saw a black car pull up suddenly by the road side in front of her.

Armed men got down from the car walking briskly towards her. She got up and bolted immediately screaming as she ran hoping someone would hear her.

But her legs weren't fast enough, the men caught up with her quickly and captured her. She tried to struggle but they were too strong.

A white handkerchief was placed on her nose and she almost immediately slipped into darkness.

Chapter 45

"Calm down Darius." Korina heard a voice bark, it sounded like a black man's voice but definitely not a black American accent she couldn't quite guess it, "Fucking calm down." The man barked again.

"Why should I calm down?" The other man screamed back, she guessed he was the Darius.

Korina was blindfolded, she couldn't see anything, she could only feel and the voices sounded so far off, her hands were bound behind her and she knew what she was on by feeling around with her fingers. She was on a bed, a very soft one.

"The hell should I calm down for? Uhn? You see what this dimwits fucking did."

Korina listened and for the first time she felt very attracted to a voice.

She thought it was the harshest yet sexiest and calmest voice she'd ever heard, damn!

You have a boyfriend slut, her subconscious invaded her thoughts when she began to wonder what he would sound like moaning, she shook her head riding the thoughts and strained her ears more to get the conversation.

"Look man, they made a mistake, a very stupid one." She heard the black man say, "We just have to think this straight and know what to do."

"You!" Darius said and she deciphered he was talking to another person now, "What did I fucking ask you to do?"

"You said to keep an eye on her and to make sure she was safe." She heard the other person say, he was obviously scared, his voice trembling.

"And why the fuck did you do the opposite?" Korina heard Darius scream and she concluded he obviously had anger issues.

"Boss you said to keep her safe, she looked lonely there and sad. So, we decided to bring her over here, of course this place is safer and very uhhmm...safer." She heard the man explain and she got angry, now she understood why the boss Darius was so livid, this man was way too dumb.

After the man spoke, She heard nothing, what happened? She thought, and I think I am way too calm for a person kidnapped, blindfolded and tied up.

Her thoughts were interrupted when she heard the dumb man scream, a very loud scream, a girly scream. She tried rolling her eyes and scoffed, she had forgotten she was blindfolded.

"Darius man, fucking put that gun down!" The black man with the accent Screamed.

"Hell no!" Darius matched the tone of his voice, "Stay out of this." She was sure she heard the cocking of a pistol.

"Damn you! Put it away." He said again, his tone was a bit less harsh now, more like he was pleading.

"I am the boss here and the boss of you, don't order me around."

"Get a hold of yourself Darius."

"I should rid bullets his fucking brain, that's if he has one. He's so plain stupid." She heard a shot and jerked in fear, is someone dead?

"Please Boss." She heard the man plead, "Please, spare me."

Phew, no one is dead, She took deep breaths.

"Darius." The black man growled, his tone harsh again, "Put it away or I swear, amma call mum."

Mum, Korina chuckled, they are so immature.

"Hell no, you won't, why you gotta involve her in this?"

"Put the fucking gun away or I am calling her I swear."

She heard him mumbled some incoherent words.

Hmm, Darius, thinking of it what a sexy name, She smirked.

Hoe, Her subconscious snarled.

"Boss, I am so sorry." The dumb man began to plead, "I thought I would be doing you a favour, seeing that you were always stalking her. I thought to bring your queen home."

"Get out!" She heard Darius scream.

"Sir?"

"Get out! Before I lose my fucking temper."

Korina wondered what it would be like if he actually lost his temper since with his present attitude, he hasn't lost it yet.

So Darius is the name of my stalker, She wondered and then it hit her that she was in her stalkers abode and he was a psycho and she had to scream now like an actual kidnapped person, she had to scream.

"What are you going to do now man?" She was about to scream when she heard the black man ask, "What are you going to do about her?" She was terrified, are they gonna cut me in pieces.

"I don't know." He sighed, "Now that she's here, I don't wanna let her go, ever."

"Why?"

"Cause she's mine." He growled.

Hey mister, I am nobody's you don't own me, asshole, She swore under her breath.

"Dude, that's definitely not gonna work, you have got to stick to the original plan, that's way better and safer. You don't want no loopholes or tragedy, it's gonna be okay, trust me..."

She strained her ears to hear more of the conversation but she couldn't get a thing. Their voices seemed to fade as if they were walking away. She huffed in exasperation and focused on trying to untie herself.

Okay Korina, you can do this, this is gonna be easy, just like in movies, 1...2...3...go, She moved and wiggled her hands, nothing loosed, the ropes were bound too tight. She wiggled and rolled, but nothing came off. She took a deep breath and then she did what any reasonable abducted person would do. Korina let out a very piercing scream.

Korina woke up the next morning on a bed, her bed. She sat up in haste and looked around her apartment.

Phew, She sighed, it was just a dream.

She rubbed her wrists and since in pain, looking down she saw bruises around her wrists.

It wasn't a dream after all, she had been with her stalker, in his home, she heard his wonderful sexy voice, he had been the one to carry her to the car while he muttered sweet nothings in her ears as she slipped into unconsciousness, they had pressed a handkerchief to her nose to knock her out.

She noticed she was still in her clothes of the previous day. She moved to stand up from the bed when she saw a note on it, the words again written in familiar cursive writings.

"I am sorry, it really pains me that I have to let you go. Sorry for the times I ever caused you pain, sorry for the times I invaded in your life and privacy, you are free now my love. Free from me, free."

Korina read the note over and over again and leapt in joy. Finally, She thought, I hope he is serious.

So this is it, no more gifts, no more letter, no more texts, no more stalking, She stood on her bed, spun in circles, jumped and screamed.

"Yahooooo!"She exclaimed beaming brightly.

" I am free! I am free." She sang as she walked to the kitchen to make herself a cup of coffee and toast.

After her light breakfast, she looked for her phone and decided to go on a conference call with her bestfriends after charging it for sometime.

It took quite a while for it to charge a bit.

She took the phone and dialed them.

Anne and Daniella picked after their phones rung for sometime.

"Girls!" Korina screamed excitedly before they even got a chance to say anything, "Guess what?"

Chapter 46

warning mild sexual content ahead

The weeks passed and Korina never got anything or heard anything from her stalker, well he wasn't technically her's anymore.

She often wondered what made him stop, she usually thought it was cause he finally saw her up close and found her displeasing like all men who took interest in her finally did.

She chided herself for her thoughts, she was supposed to be happy that he was gone and not wonder why or what his reasons for going were.

Sometimes Korina found herself thinking back to her kidnap. She allowed herself the guilty pleasures of reminiscing about his voice in her head as she found it really desirable, on some occasions she slept off thinking about his voice and cursing herself afterwards that she should exert control for she had a boyfriend.

After Darius her stalker withdrew, She had other things to worry about like the fact that Cole's attitude towards her was beginning to deviate for the worse.

He was no longer the sweet, doting and loving Cole she had agreed to date, he was something else now, he was turning into something she feared.

Cole was always having some excuse not to see her often. He restricted her from spending nights at his place and also told her not to come see him at his office anymore. He claimed he was too busy with the patients and other emergencies.

She had protested in the beginning, saying she didn't like the lack of dates and sleep overs in their relationship but backed down when he screamed at her repeatedly, she never said a word about it again.

She only nodded and agreed to his arrangements about when and how he wanted them to meet or hang out.

She made an effort to make it look like she was having a normal, healthy and happy relationship.

Korina moved the brush in her mouth in circular motions. It was her last wash, she spat out the foaming paste, opened the tap and rinsed her brush before proceeding to rinse her mouth.

She got a piece of cotton wool from the bathroom drawer, getting her cleanser, she dabbed a bit of it on the wool and started to clean her face with it looking intensely into the mirror.

Korina smiled to herself a satisfactory smile when she was done as she was sure she got all dirt on her face off. She got her hair bonnet and tried packing her hair into it, just then Cole entered the bathroom.

"Hey Love." He said moving closer to her.

"Hey." Korina responded turning away from the mirror and towards him.

He was shirtless and he wore sweat pants that hung low on his waist.

Her eyes travelled from his tired face to his chest and raked over his abs.

"Like what you see?" Cole smirked pecking her on the cheek and reaching for his brush.

"Maybe I do." She winked hugging him from behind. She tiptoed and kissed him on the shoulder rubbing her hands all over his abs, her fingers caressing his chest.

He turned round and leaned her on the sink, his toothbrush forgotten. He kissed her fully on the lips, nipping her lower lip with his teeth, his tongue invading her mouth, her hands got wrapped around his neck.

Korina pushed against him, her lips matching his pace. Cole ran his hands down her body, he reached behind and grabbed her ass giving it a little squeeze and she moaned in his mouth.

He went further dipping his hands into her shorts.

She felt his fingers creep into them, the odd feeling causing her to open her eyes. She reached down immediately and pried his fingers out stopping him.

They got disengaged from each other's arms, their heated make out session stopped.

"Sorry." Korina muttered, not knowing why she was apologising, but she felt the need to offer an apology.

"Why?" Cold asked, glaring at her.

"Why?" She questioned confused, "Why what?"

"Why do you keep doing this Korina?"

"Doing what exactly?" She still couldn't get what he was talking about.

"We make out." He started, "We go really heated and further in it but you freaking won't let me fuck you."

Fuck you! Korina thought, his words stung, he just used the expression like she was a whore, like she meant nothing.

"Did you get in a relationship with me for that?" She asked scowling at him.

"No." Cole let out a breath, "God no, I didn't."

"Really?" She questioned with raised brows, "If you didn't? Why are you making an issue out of it?"

"Look Korina, I didn't get in a relationship with you cause of sex. But eventually I thought we could have it, it's normal, everyone does it."

"I am not ready Cole." She said, "And I won't be ready now that you are acting up."

"Not ready?" He murmured, "If I happen to cheat, I would then be labeled as the bad one."

"Cheat?" Korina's face paled, "What the hell Cole? So you gonna cheat on me cause I didn't spread my legs for you? Is that what it is uhn?"

"No, that's not what I am saying." He gritted.

"Then what the hell are you saying? What the hell do you mean?" Memories flashed through her mind of how her exes had treated her, her anger piling up, "What the fuck are you saying?"

"I..."

"You are cheating already, ain't you?"

"Fuck no!" He denied her accusation, "I am not, the hell Korina."

"If you aren't, why are you bringing it up?"

"It was a fucking assumption."

"Assumptions that will turn into reality right?" She spat, "I can't believe you right now."

"Stop it Korina." He pleaded harshly.

"If you are tired of me already, fucking grow some balls and say it. I would walk away." She turned to exit the bathroom but he grabbed her arm pulling her back.

"Look, I am sorry." He said still holding her arm, "You know I would never hurt you."

"Pfft." She hissed, "Been there, heard it."

"I said I am sorry." He apologized again, "I didn't mean to say so, didn't mean it like that."

"Babe, say something please." He spoke again seeing Korina just stared at him blankly, not an emotion portrayed on her face.

He let out a deep breath and moved to kiss her but was stopped midway.

"Seriously Cole?" She scoffed pushing his face back, "You are unbelievable."

She stomped out of the bathroom. Cole watched her go, not knowing what to do next, he turned to brushing his teeth.

That night, they slept with their backs turned to each other. Korina really couldn't believe Cole's behavior that night.

As she thought about all that happened over again, tears welled up in her eyes.

This isn't the person I fell for, The words rang in her head repeatedly. She got tired of sniffing and crying and was more pained that he didn't even notice she was in pain, his back still turned he was snoring slightly.

Korina got to sleep sooner, tears stained marks still fresh on her cheeks.

Chapter 47

Sandy was a chatterbox. Korina knew it the moment she set eyes on her and she had no interest in making her acquaintance.

Apparently, Korina was right about her. All the girl did was talk, get things done wrongly and incite fight amongst other Co-workers.

The girl's mouth did all the talking and her brain did no thinking.

Korina would rather have molten larvae poured into her ears than listen to sandy's hearsay right now. The girl just didn't know when to stop.

Unfortunately for her, Mark wasn't around today, so it was she and sandy behind the counter. She wanted to let her know that she didn't care about what she was saying nor did she care about when she had her latest threesomes or who's friends got STD's.

Korina just wanted to enjoy the quietness of the noisy restaurant.

"So apparently James wasn't even into me." Sandy continued, making Korina roll her eyes, who the fuck is James now?

"He was into the girl from literature class and while banging her, he was still texting me and... Oh my, did I ever tell you about how my cat almost got roasted." Korina only nodded having absolutely no idea on what the girl was yapping about now.

"Is that a no or a yes?" She asked twirling her red hair.

"Look sandy..." Korina was Cut short when the girl started to talk again and her shoulders slumped in defeat.

"You know I never really wanted to work at a diner." She rolled her eyes at sandy's statement, why are you even here then? She growled internally.

"In fact, I detest working as a waitress." She added.

Korina palmed her face, Good then get the hell out of here.

"I just don't want to depend on my parents anymore or any of my boyfriends. I want to be an independent woman, get my own stuff and all that but it's really nice letting a man do that for you tho. Like, I wanna bag a rich guy someday, old preferably, he's just gonna keep spending on me while I give him all the sex he wants."

Korina wanted to vanish now.

"I need a fabulous wedding, let's say roughly forty six million dollars budget, a fabulous life style of jets and private islands. You know I am actually not set yet on pursuing my dreams of becoming a..." Korina wanted to peel her skin off, irritation coursing through her. She wondered if Sandy knew how stupid she sounded muttering blatant nonsense, not a single sentence made sense.

"I got to go pee." Korina finally finding a way to break free from her.

"Oh." Sandy said, "Hurry up, when you come back, I would tell you about how I lost my virginity in the school toilet."

She groaned as she heard Sandy's words while going to the bathroom, I don't think I am ever coming back, jeez!

Korina put the tap on, she took some water in her hand and splashed it on her face, she took a deep sigh as her skin absorbed the coolness of the water. She looked into the bathroom mirror and leaned over the sink, her hands grabbing the sides.

Korina gazed at her reflection in the mirror, drops of water still on her dark skin. She had bags under her eyes, her facial expression read stressed, she took in everything and sighed again, that's all she had strength for these days, sighing.

She hadn't spoken to Cole since their last argument, it's been two weeks now.

That morning after they made out and argued at night. He brought up the issue again and they ended up arguing and she left. He hadn't called her since then and when she tried to call him, it went straight to voicemail.

She picked her phone from her apron pocket and tried calling him again, it went straight to voicemail as usual.

She sighed in defeat and exited the bathroom making her way to the counter to hear Sandy blabbler all day.

Daniella rushed round and about the apartment trying to set things aright. She had to make sure things were perfect so that when Landon arrived home, he would be pleased and they would talk things out and be happy again.

She got prettied up and put on a knee length emerald colored dress, it had spaghetti straps and a plunging neckline revealing the right amount of cleavage. As she gazed at her reflection in the mirror, she smiled, definitely he would be happy to see her. She got her bun loose and let her blonde hair down her nape.

Perfect, She smirked.

The doorbell rang, Daniella jumped off the couch excitedly and rushed to the door.

She opened it and saw landon standing there. He was dressed in a suit and he held a brief case.

His facial expression read, not so happy and excited to see you Daniella, but she didn't mind, maybe he was tired, She reasoned before throwing herself on him and hugging him tightly.

"I missed you." Daniella said excitedly, "I missed you, blondie." She giggled using the nickname she had for him due to his very light blonde hair.

"I told you never to call me that." He huffed with a frown, he didn't hug her back either, he just pushed her away and made his way into the apartment.

"It's been months, Landon." Daniella said following him, "Aren't you happy to see me?" She asked.

"Look lady." He turned to her harshly, "I have had a long flight and I am tired." He fell on the couch, putting his brief case aside, he reclined comfortably.

"I am sorry." She mumbled, her feelings were hurt, why is he like this towards me? "I cooked dinner, your favorite."

"I am not hungry." Landon said taking off his shoes.

"You've had a long flight, surely you must be." She persisted.

"I had food on the plane. I am not hungry."

"Desert?" She asked.

"No Daniella, stop fucking pestering me." She watched him walk up the stairs straight to their bedroom, he didn't even glance back at her. She was fighting to keep back her tears, why is he being so mean to me? Is this even a relationship anymore?

She was about to follow him upstairs when she heard his phone ringing and suddenly he came rushing for the stairs, she acted on impulse and reached for the phone before he could get to it.

"Daniella." He growled, "Hand over the phone now."

"No." She shook her head, "Are you hiding something?"

"That's none of your business woman!" His words came out harshly, too harsh, "Fucking give me my phone."

"No." She tried operating the phone to see who was calling and before she could do that, he was before her and she felt his hand come down on her cheek.

The sound of the slap resounding in the room.

Chapter 48

Cole finally picked Korina's call and when he did, she ended the Call as all her anger came surging back when she heard his voice again.

She slammed the phone on the table and went about cleaning her apartment. It was Sunday which meant no work, no chatterbox and definitely no dragon lady.

She finished cleaning her apartment quickly and got into bed, intending to take a little nap so she won't feel tired when she was out later.

Korina was woken up minutes later by the continuous knocks on her door. At first she ignored the knocks expecting the visitor to get lost but the annoying knocks grew. She groaned pushing the covers away and got out of bed.

She was tying her robe around her as she walked to the door.

"Hey babe." Korina just stared at him blankly not batting an eyelid.

"Is my princess still angry with me?" Cole asked. She made mockery of his statement by glancing around dramatically in search of the so called princess.

"I don't see any princess here." Her arms were folded across her chest now, "What are you doing here Cole?"

"I came to apologise." He said, "Look, I brought flowers." He brought his hand from behind him showing her a bunch of daisies.

Korina snorted.

"Why not use them to make soup or better still shove them up your ass."

"I said I am sorry." His shoulders fell, "Please let me in."

They were sat on the couch, Korina keeping him literally at arm's length. He frowned at the distance but had to settle for it.

"I am sorry." Cole said again.

"Stop saying that, it's getting irritating." Korina said leaning back on the couch, "As a matter of fact, it's irritating already."

He kept shut not knowing what to say anymore.

"Why didn't you pick my calls or reply my texts?" She asked, "Why did you choose to ignore me like I did something wrong?"

"Babe, I swear it." He said, "It would never ever happen again."

She shook her head.

"You know I love you so much and I am willing to do anything for you."

"Yea, right." She scoffed, his face fell at her sarcasm.

"I am willing to wait even till marriage, I would never bring up the sex issue again."

"I don't believe you Cole." She turned away from him, "You have said these words before."

"Korina, please." He pleaded. Cole stood up and got on his knees in front of her, "I promise this time I won't go back on my words."

"That's not the only issue here."

"I know." He nodded and took her hands in his, "I promise to go back to the Cole you knew before, the Cole who had time for his princess."

Korina looked at him on hearing the words and she saw some genuine looks in him, she wrapped her hands around his, "Okay." She whispered and for the first time since they had been there, She smiled.

The girls shook their head in disbelief as they heard Daniella's explanation on why her face was bruised.

"You must be joking." Anne scoffed.

"I am not, I hit my face and it got bruised, period."

"More like someone hit you." Korina inspected her, "Did you and landon have a fight? Did he do this to you?"

"No." Daniella shook her head, "He would never." She knew she was lying, she so badly wanted to tell them but for some odd reason, she didn't want her friends to know the truth."

"How did it happen again?" Korina asked, she knew very well that her cousin was lying.

"I was coming back from the club." Daniella explained, "And I was a little tipsy as usual I wasn't watching where I was going and bamm! My face met with a pole."

"A human pole hit you or an inanimate pole?" Anne asked with pursed lips.

"Do you not believe me?" She asked Anne, "And you too Korina?" She turned to her cousin questioning the skeptical look on her face.

"Well..." Korina said, "It's not like we don't believe you."

"Have I ever lied to you?" Daniella stood up, she was angry, "You both are unbelievable, I am done." She grabbed her purse and made way for the door, stomping away angrily.

"Daniella, come on." Korina called going after her, she caught up with her and dragged her back to her seat.

"We are sorry." Anne said, "We totally believe you, let's just order something and forget about this."

"Fine." Daniella sat with a huff, "I forgive you both."

"So you and Cole have made up?" Anne asked Korina as the waiter placed their snacks on the table.

"Yes, we have." Korina answered, she hoped no one would ask her further questions.

"What did he say about the sex issue?" Daniella asked fumbling with her food, "Buscuits?" She groaned.

"Uhmmm... He said he's never bringing it up again till I am ready. He's even willing to wait till marriage." She shrugged, "Can we please not talk about it again?"

"Okay, okay fine." Her cousin said, "But when are you bringing him home to mama?"

"I don't know."

"Look." Anne interrupted placing a hand on Korina's shoulder, "Dan we shouldn't be asking her about these stuff, please drop it all for now."

"Okay." She replied, "If you all say so, then I won't."

After their date, Daniella went home immediately and Anne offered to drive Korina home.

"Do you really believe Daniella's story of the club, pole and her face?" Anne asked Korina as they drove through the streets.

"Nope, I ain't stupid." Korina answered, "Absolutely not."

"I don't get it." Anne took a turn, "Why would she lie to us?"

"I don't know Anne." Korina sighed, "It's fucking obvious that someone had hit her."

"You think he would do such?"

"Who?" Korina asked.

"Landon."

"I am not sure." She shook her head, "But if he did and I found out that he hit my cousin, amma electrocute his balls."

"I am gonna rip his heart out and feed it to the dogs." Anne tightened her hands around the steering wheel.

"Anytime I visit her, there is always some sort of tension between them like their relationship is breaking or something."

"I noticed that the very first time I hung out with them." Anne agreed with her.

Korina was about to reply Anne when her phone beeped.

She got the phone and read the text message. She honestly didn't know what to feel now as she read the words.

Cole had cancelled their date again.

Chapter 49

"What the hell do you mean you are in England?!"

"Korina, you are screaming?" Cole said.

"Well, I don't care Cole." She growled, "You cancelled on me last minute and fly out immediately like I mean nothing to you. You didn't even give me a notice nor did you tell me anything."

"It was an emergency."

"What emergency was it?" She queried.

"I...look Korina, it was important." He replied.

"That's not the fucking answer to my question." She held the phone to her ear with her shoulder and bent to pick her purse, "What emergency was it?"

"My mum had a heart attack."

"Uhmm...I am..." She stopped before she could say the sorry on realising something, "You just said your mum had a heart attack."

"Yes."

"Really?" She scoffed, "You constantly brag about how she is very healthy and you are surprised she ain't have none of those old age illnesses."

"Oh." He said and he was beginning to infuritate her, "I said my mom? I meant my dad had a heart attack."

"What?!." She screamed, "You are unbelievable Cole, I am not stupid." She put an end to the Call before he could lie further.

How the hell do I manage to get entangled in messy relationships? She growled falling back on the chair, "I always end up with stupid ass men." She was interrupted by a knock on the door.

Korina walked to the door and opened it, she was met with the image of a badly bruised, beaten up and swollen faced Daniella at the entrance with her luggage.

"What the hell happened to you sis?" Korina asked her cousin as she handed her the pain relievers and a glass of water.

"Thank you." Daniella muttered as she received them.

She waited and watched as her cousin put the tablets in her mouth followed with the water. She scrunched her face as she swallowed. Korina allowed her get settled and rested before she began probing her.

"What happened to you Dan?" She asked not expecting her to say the truth.

"I got in a fight with my neighbors." Daniella lied not meeting her cousin's eyes.

"And your luggage?" Korina questioned obviously not believing her one bit.

"I decided to leave to avoid trouble and besides my boyfriend wasn't around when it happened." She answered and Korina knew it was a well revised line that she must have practiced repeatedly on her way here.

"Daniella, I can only help you if you come clean with me." She moved closer to her and took her hand in her's, "We have shared a lot, we have been through a lot together. Why not just tell me the truth?"

Korina didn't get words as a reply from her. Instead, she laid her head on Korina's shoulder and broke in loud sobs, not a single word came from her mouth.

"You know where everything is right?" Korina asked as she got ready for work, she was running late again.

"Yes, I do." Daniella replied her cousin, not taking her eyes off the Television screen.

She was putting up at Korina's place now and she still didn't tell her the truth about what happened. Korina and Anne decided not to drill her further with questions. They thought she needed more time to let it all out.

"I wouldn't be back early." She reminded her while grabbing her keys.

"Okay." Daniella nodded, "Just get me something to eat on your way back."

"No problem." She looked at her cousin, she was a shadow of herself now, she almost cried out that she needed her annoying, loud and bubbly best friend back but maybe all Daniella needed was time.

Time passed and Cole had finally returned, Daniella also moved back to her place and she was gradually bouncing back to her normal self. Anne was real busy as there was a new fashion season, Korina had work as usual, luckily her boss was on a vacation, less screams, less troubles and all workers were joyous she was gone exactly Sandy who missed her and made an effort to whine about how much she did.

The girl was getting on Korina's nerves daily with her loquacious attitude.

Korina had avoided meeting up with Cole. She ignored all his texts and calls, she didn't know if she wanted to break up with him but she knew definitely that she needed space and that she couldn't ever trust him anymore. Aunt grace the cheerleader of the relationship was nowhere to be found and now she didn't know what to do as she stared at Cole's annoying, stupid but handsome face.

The dude was right in front of her and she wanted to punch him.

"I am sorry." He said again, the same three words he had been repeating over and over again, she slept to those words and woke up to them, she was tired.

"Babe, I swear, I am sorry." Cole repeated and she was completely unaffected, she just stared at him not batting an eye lid and not an emotion showed on her face.

"I know my behaviour was actually stupid and uncalled for but..."

"What's your point?" She asked not letting him finish, he was beginning to bore her out.

"I know I messed up big time." He said, "I mess up a lot."

"Of course." She nodded, "It's your super power."

"Look." He sighed rubbing his face, "I am sorry."

"You use the words, 'look' and 'Sorry' too often, it's irritating."

"I just want to ask for one more chance." He pleaded raising his index finger, "Please babe, one more chance and I swear I would be a better man."

Korina looked down at him and heaved with a sigh, "Fine, I forgive you, just explain what the hell is going on, you obviously look stressed." She had noticed the really dark circles under his eyes.

"I would in due time." He said, "But first babe, I need your help financially."

Daniella stared at Korina in horror and Anne was still speechless.

"Where in the world do you want to get more than five hundred thousand dollars from?" Daniella asked.

"I don't know." She muttered.

"Did he even explain what he needed such amount for?" Anne asked.

"He said stuff about debt and things to clear up in London and he said a lot of things that I couldn't quite process."

"What do you want to do now girl?"

"I honestly don't know."

After much deliberations and suggestions, the girls finally came up with a plan.

Korina walked to her closet and opened the locked up and untouched part of it. She stared at all the extravagant presents her stalker had gifted her.

She accessed them, time to trade these babies.

Chapter 50

"It's just a mild shock." The doctor told Aunt Dido, "The girls would be alright."

Korina, Daniella and Anne were in their respective hospital beds staring at the television in the room as the familiar news they already knew about played out before their eyes.

Cole Smith's wedding to the Duchess of Sussex was being forecasted live on the television.

As they gazed at the screen, Korina was too shocked to cry, Daniella and Anne were too shocked to curse or scream, as a matter of fact their initial shocked response when they first got the news had landed them in the hospital.

A blonde reporter related the news. She was in front of the majestic chapel the white wedding had been conducted, as she spoke her thick British accent was evident on every word.

'Cole smith, the noble man who had managed to capture the heart of our widowed duchess finally took her to the alter today. Reports shows that the two have been romantically involved for about three years now before he finally popped the question. Their love didn't even wave or falter all the while he had been in America and as we all know he is presently one of the richest doctors and of course a new millionaire worth over three million us dollars...'

Worth over three million us dollars, The words rang in Korina's ears, she realised then that the amount sums up to the money she had gotten from her savings and also from trading all the expensive stuff her stalker had gifted her, she had transferred every single dime to him in order to help out in his financial difficulties.

She was doing a lot of thinking and her heart monitor raced and she fainted again.

"Doctor!" Anne screamed as she saw Korina's state and it was the first word she had said since they got the news of Cole's marriage to the duchess of Sussex.

Aunt Dido's words of emotional encouragement went down the drain as her niece didn't even hear half of what she was saying.

"COLE SMITH, MARRIED TO THE DUCHESS OF SUSSEX." The headlines wouldn't leave her head, her mind, she stared into space not paying attention to anything around her, aunt Dido's words floating in thin air.

She was staying at her aunt's place for now, she had practically moved her to the house as she didn't want Korina to think of doing anything stupid.

It's been a week since she had been discharged from the hospital and Korina hadn't said a word.

She just grunted and nodded to questions she was asked most of which she couldn't even process.

Korina was becoming sick, losing weight. She refused to eat, She only sat staring into space not saying a word to anyone.

Her aunt, cousin, Anne and Mark had tried severally to talk to her, encourage her and get her out of her mood but all to no avail. She stayed practically mute.

"She would be okay soon." The doctor said, pulling her stethoscope from her ears, "That's if she puts in effort."

"She isn't saying anything or doing any talking." Aunt Dido told her.

The doctor waved her hands in front of Korina's eyes and not even a blink was gotten as a reaction.

"Miss Dido." The doctor faced her, "Can I talk to you outside?"

They were on the porch of the house now, the porch looked dull from lack of illumination for the sky was gloomy today.

"She would be okay." The doctor explained, "Let her just take her drugs, come for regular check ups and try your best to always make conversations with her, even if she stays mute and dosen't talk back, it would help a lot."

"Okay doctor." She nodded at the lady.

"And she might need therapy." The doctor suggested.

"I don't know about that yet doctor but let's take a step at a time and watch her."

She waved the doctor goodbye and got back into the house to prepare dinner for her niece hoping it wouldn't go untouched this time.

Korina stood by the window staring down at her aunt's garden. It was night but the hung up florescent bulbs illuminated the area. She had been standing by the window for quite some time now watching as the plants swayed with the gentle wind and how the annoying little insects fluttered around the bulbs.

She remembered how she, her aunt and Daniella had been working on the garden and how they talked of Cole, she smiled bitterly at the memories.

But where is he now? She questioned herself, he is married.

She still couldn't believe that Cole got hitched, that he got married just like that. He didn't even have the decency to break up with her. He just used her, took her money and ran off to get married to some duchess.

She had stalked and scrolled through his Instagram page even if she knew it was a suicide mission and it would sadden her further. He was certified now and had millions of followers, his marriage had automatically made him a celebrity.

She saw all his posts, his wedding photos and videos and also written epistles of how he loved his wife and there was Aunt Grace smiling like an innocent fairy in all photos.

Fuck that old hag, She cursed.

How could Cole do this to me? She fisted her palms and tried so much to fight back her tears.

Cole had wooed her, tricked her, used her and played her for a fool. She had to sell those gifts and turned in every single dime she got, she turned in her savings too cause she thought he was in real trouble and now he's suddenly married to a duchess.

Korina was tired of crying, she didn't have the strength anymore. She didn't want to talk to anyone so she did what she

thought was best. She ignored all conversations and stayed mute.

A knock on the door invaded her thoughts and aunt Dido came in with a tray containing her dinner.

"Eat up and take your drugs dear." She said as she dropped the tray on the bedside, "you would need to do well on your part to get better."

The young girl just nodded, she gave her a long pitiful look and kissed her on the forehead before exiting the room.

Korina walked over to the bedside and looked at the contents on the tray, more drugs, food and a cup of green tea.

She picked the cup up and threw it to the wall. It hit the wall and smashed into pieces, the liquid content staining the wall.

Cole had liked green tea, loved even, he thought it was healthy.

Chapter 51

warning trigger self harm

If unfair was the word used to describe Korina's life, it'd be an understatement for she knew life was more than unfair to her.

As she laid in the bath tub with cuts deep enough to hurt but not enough to kill, she looked at the razor in her hand and at the water turning slightly red crimson, tears flowing down her cheeks.

She hadn't done this in a long time but she knew she had to, it gave her a sense of relief, relief from the pain she felt.

She looked down at her arms and figured that she would have to put up with wearing long sleeves for a very long time and most importantly she knew she had to see her mother.

Korina had never been so pained in her entire life as she was right now. She laid sprawled on the floor besides her mother's grave. She wailed loudly not caring if her cries could disturb the occupants of the surrounding graves as she sobbed, she wished she was actually six feet down there with her mother.

"You said prince charming would come ma." She sniffed, "You said he was coming some day but you never told me i'd have to kiss so many distasteful frogs before I get to him."

Korina placed her hand on the tomb stone rubbing it as if she would get an intimate physical connection with her mother from the act.

"I have kissed too many frogs and met only jerks and gustons." She brought her hands to her face to wipe her tears but it was of no use as more tears kept spilling from her eyes.

"Life is so unfair to me mum." She gripped onto the tombstone, "Remember I came sometime ago to tell you about my boyfriend Cole, I know we both bet I had found happiness and the perfect man." More tears fell from her as she rested her head on the stone, her grip on it still very tight.

"But we plan and fate has a different one." She sniffed, "Cole is married mom, not to me but to another woman, the widowed duchess of Sussex."

"I don't know mum." She said, "Maybe you could talk to God for me, tell him to give me a break cause damn I am and have always been in pain, so much pain mum."

"I don't think I can hold on anymore, I can't, I honestly can't." She broke out into louder sobs, her body heaving as she cried, she didn't care that she disturbed the creepy peace of the cemetery. She let it all out, she wailed, she wailed like her life depended on it.

"What are you brooding about man?" Jace turned away from his office window on hearing the voice, he saw his best friend walking towards him with long elegant strides. He had walked in without knocking like he owned the place.

"How many times have I asked you to knock before entering?" Jace glared at him and went back to his seat the oak ornamented office table.

"I don't know...i...uncountable?" He replied, "What are you scared of? Hiding something?"

"I am not hiding anything." He rolled his eyes, "Ade, just knock next time."

"And why should I?" Ade scoffed pulling his gun out and setting it on the table.

"Maybe cause I am your boss man." Jace smirked.

"And maybe I shouldn't knock cause I am your best friend." He winked at have and reached his hand out to grab an apple from the fruit basket before taking a seat and biting deeply into it.

"What do want anyway?" Jace leaned back on his chair.

"I came to check up you." He replied munching loudly on his apple.

"I am fine." Jace scoffed, "I am not a baby anymore." He turned in his chair to face the window and stared outside.

"Yea sure." Ade snorted, "I can see bags under your eyes, dark circles and your skin is pale. You are stressed man."

"Bro, could we talk about this later please?" He turned away from the window and began organizing files on his table, "Give me some work reports."

Ade took in a deep breath and his best friend watched him with raised brows, "Please do not freak out when I tell you this."

"What is it?" He asked, "Nothing I can't handle, spill."

"The shipment of the last batch of cocaine and spill over fire arms got hijacked."

"What the fuck?!" Jace roared getting up from his seat, "How could this happen? Who the fuck is responsible for this?"

"We lost almost everything but luckily all the crew members survived."

"Okay, good." Jace nodded, "Now how did it happen? Who dared to mess with me?"

"It's Russo." Ade replied.

Jace growled tightening his fists, only Russo would dare cross him.

"Russo planned it, he hijacked us." Ade continued, "It was a surprise attack so the men weren't ready but they actually didn't go down without a fight and all was possible cause one of us sold us out."

"Who was it?" Jace's features darkened, betrayal, he fumed, something he had grown to get accustomed to.

"Frederick."

"That son of a bitch." He hit his fists on the table, "After everything I had done for him, I put him out of his miserable life, where the fuck is he now?"

"You don't have to worry." Ade reassured him, "He is a dead man, I ordered for him to be fed to the pet sharks immediately."

"Good." Jace smirked, "Russo seems to be testing me lately." He walked to the windows, his hands folded behind him, "He wouldn't want to be on the receiving end of my wrath."

"Jace just calm down, we would handle this."

"I trust you." He nodded at his best friend.

"You have more important things to think about, it's time to make your move and don't act like you know not what I speak off."

"I am not ready." He sighed, "I will make my move when the time is right."

Ade shook his head at him, he had heard him say this for a long time now and the right moment still hadn't arrived? He hissed.

"You wouldn't want to lose this opportunity." He warned him, "And don't even bring up that other stupid plan of yours."

"Well...i..." Jace stammered.

"Save it." Ade silenced him, "You had better make a move fast."

"Trust me man, I will."

"Okay, I should take my leave now."

He gave him a brotherly pat on the back and exited the office but not before grabbing another apple.

Korina gazed out the aeroplane window admiring the city's night view. She stared at the lights, sky scrapers and other pleasing sceneries she could see from above.

She was on her way back to New York and they would be landing any moment from now. She had stayed a week at Michigan crying daily at her mom's grave and wandering about taking aimless taxi rides.

After some time, she had decided that she had stayed enough and took her leave but not before swearing on her mother's grave that she was never looking in a man's way ever, no more men and no more relationships and she swore to stick to it.

Chapter 52

"What did you do with your hair?" Anne shrieked immediately she set eyes on Korina and Daniella turned to look at her cousin on hearing Anne's voice.

"What in heaven's name have you done with your hair girl?"

Korina rolled her eyes at her best friends as she dragged her luggage along with her.

"Could you come help me and not hound me with questions?" She told them, "Quit staring at me and no more questions please, I need some rest with absolutely no noise or talks."

The girls helped her pick up her luggage without questioning her anymore, they didn't want to piss her off or worsen her mood.

"How was your flight?" Anne asked as they put the luggage in the booth of her audi.

"It was fine." Korina muttered, she removed her sun glasses and got in the back seat of the car.

"Are you hungry?" Daniella asked as she got in herself, "Wanna stop for some food?"

"Nahh." She sighed, "I am okay."

Anne looked behind from the driver's seat, "You know we are here for you." She said.

"You can talk to us." Daniella chipped in.

"I said, I am okay!" Korina replied a little harshly, "Just drive."

Anne nodded and turned her head away. She started the car engine and honked at the vehicle in front of her before pulling out onto the road and driving away.

"Aunty, this isn't a case of the right one would come." Korina was having a mild argument with Aunt Dido as they both went up the stairs, "I told you I don't even want to talk about this."

"Korina dear, you can't say so, you have to let it all out and have hope that there is someone out there for you."

They were both in front of the room Korina occupied in her house now.

"Don't you fucking get it?" She glared at her aunt, "I am not meant for this love, friendship and relationship thing. There is no right one for me, I am one of those people who grow old with a cat, I don't even like cats.

I am done Aunt. I am done with men for good, I already swore on my mother's grave, I can't relive another nightmare and there is nothing you would say or do to convince me, fucking drop it."

"Are you done young lady?" The woman watched her sternly.

"I believe I am." She felt bad for raising her voice at her but she didn't want to apologize.

"Look dear." Aunt Dido took her hand, "I understand how you feel, I am just trying to be here for you, to give you the best of advice and tell you what I think your mother would have."

"Well, you are fucking not my mother!" Korina screamed pulling her hand away, she went into her room and slammed the door shut, leaving a stunned Aunt Dido outside.

Daniella was in her mom's room consoling her after the episode with Korina, "Daniella." Aunt Dido sniffed, tears stream down her cheeks as she got gentle back rubs from her daughter, "Even after everything, after much effort in trying to fill in the void after my sister died and do the best for Korina, she really had to tell me that?"

"Mum, she's just angry." Daniella said trying to make the issue look less aggravating, "Considering all she had gone through, she's angry at the world, at everyone."

"That doesn't give her the rights to be rude or say such words to me."

"Just give her time mum." She pleaded, "She really is angry, blind and frustrated right now, did you see what she even did with her hair?"

"I saw it." The woman half smiled.

Daniella laughed, "Seeing her hair like that sure took me back to the times when blacks didn't even have a voice."

Korina looked at her reflection in the mirror and her guts twisted, she felt sick. Her blonde dreads we're gone, her hair was back to it's natural black color and an unnatural texture.

She had the hair straightened, too straight for her liking.

It was like she had the hair done for an interview where natural black hair was deemed unprofessional back in the days. She reached a hand to touch her hair and flinched at the feel of it.

She definitely was getting rid of this look sooner than she had expected.

Korina sat back on her bed with a sigh, she knew Daniella and her aunt were probably having a conversation about her, she could hear their murmurs through the walls but couldn't quite pick out the words. She felt really sad for talking to her like that.

She knew her aunt didn't deserve the harshness she had displayed neither did she deserve the transfer of aggression. The woman had been nice throughout to her and she decided that she'd apologize but she would wait a little before doing that.

She laid back on the bed and began counting the ceilings hoping she would fall asleep.

Daniella was glad that hunting for an apartment for Korina wasn't as hard and stressful as it was the very first time she moved to New York.

She and Anne watched Korina as she looked outside the window of the apartment they were checking out presently.

"She really is stressed and tired, ain't she?" Anne whispered even tho she wouldn't have heard her.

"Yea." Daniella pulled her gaze away from her, "She isn't even putting effort, she isn't as selective as the first time."

They stopped their conversation on seeing Korina had started approaching them.

"I think I would take this one." She told them.

"You sure?" Daniella asked.

"Yep." Korina nodded.

She seemed satisfied with the apartment. It was a two bedroom apartment with a spacious parlour, a nice big kitchen and lovely balcony which she instantly fell in love with and she also loved the glass fitted walls in the apartment.

She really felt the need to move away from her old one as she had shared so many memories with Cole there.

Korina was standing at the balcony now, it was evening, Anne and Daniella had left already. She decided to stay behind and inspect the house a little more.

She stared at the horizons watching the sky go pinkish as the sun began to set.

So I would be blessed with this wonderful view from now on, She smiled to herself as she took in the breathtaking scenery, she felt at peace for a moment and knew her only problem now would be moving in and after that she would be ready to start afresh.

Chapter 53

She stared at the man in suit, her hands angrily gripping the tray she was holding, at this point she wanted to badly to smack his head with it. She wondered what sound would resonate if she actually hit the tray on his bald head.

"Do you know who I am?" The man growled, "Have you people here have no respect for people of the higher class?"

Korina rolled her eyes at him, really?

"Mr Russo." Ms. Susan said calmly, "I apologize, I am so sorry on her behalf." She pleaded with the man.

Ass licker, Korina scoffed at them both, both of you are alike.

"I want that bitch to apologise to me this instance." The man demanded, "I want an apology."

Me? A bitch? Korina glared at him and was ready to jump on him and knock some sense into his bald head.

"Apologise Korina." She got no response.

"I said apologise now." The woman gritted seeing she wasn't getting any response.

"I am sorry." She snarled, "I humbly apologise sir."

"She was rude." Mr Russo complained, "I want her to apologise again."

"Korina." Her boss warned.

"I am sorry." She smiled.

"Good." Ms. Susie nodded, "Now go get him another cup of coffee."

She returned soon enough with it and placed the cup of coffee on the table.

"Here you go sir." She said, "Enjoy!"

The man looked up and eye balled her from head to toe.

"How much to get you in bed with me?" He asked suddenly.

What the fuck?! Korina was beyond shocked, is 'I am a hooker' fucking written on my forehead?

"What did you just ask me sir?" She asked again just to be sure of what he said.

"I said how much to get you in bed with me?" He smirked, "What would it take to get you home with me for a night, that's all you black women are good for or am I wrong?"

Korina glared at him and then she did the unexpected. She raised the stainless tray she held and brought it down forcefully on the man's head, the sound echoes through the restaurant and she smiled.

It was exactly the sound she thought it would make and it was satisfactory.

"What the hell Korina?" Ms Susie cried, "Do you want to keep chasing my customers away?"

Korina just stared at the woman as she ranted, she knew she was nuts but she never thought she would be crazy enough to take that mad man's side.

"You shall be suspended for 2 weeks and half of your salary is to be withheld." She proclaimed.

"Yippe!" Korina screamed excitedly, "Thank you very much." She pulled off her apron in one swift move and dumped it on her boss's table.

Ms. Susie looked at her, she was perplexed by her reaction.

"See you in two weeks time madam." She turned around and danced as she made her way out of the office, her boss watched her as she got out joyously, she began to regret her decision. What she thought would actually serve as a punishment turned out to be a huge relief for the girl.

Being suspended was a real source of happiness for Korina. She was sure her boss was shocked and livid at her reaction but she didn't care, maybe the lady expected her to beg for mercy at the mention of her salary being deducted, she didn't give two hoots about that either, she would make up for it.

She had a lot to do with the time and she was ready to take much advantage of it.

Ever since Cole broke her heart and ditched her for the duchess, she tried to move on with her life and also put her super good baking skills to use.

She began baking not as a hobby anymore but for money at a small scale and she was earning quite well from it, actually more than she expected.

It had increased her income and helped her in meeting ends meet instead of waiting for her salary or dipping in her savings and she got quite a few stable customers.

Korina had it hard keeping up with her baking schedule cause of work, her boss's over demanding attitude had given her little or no time to meet up with her side business hence she was elated by the news of her suspension.

"No girls, I wouldn't be able to hang out with you guys tonight." She was having a conference call with her friends as she got out of the taxi, her phone held to her ear with her shoulder and her hands were filled with grocery shopping bags.

"What are you busy with exactly?" Anne asked impatiently, "Why are you suddenly not free?"

"I got two kid parties to deliver cakes to tomorrow and I would have to start working on it tonight, the batches I have to deliver are much." She explained, she was getting into the elevator now and was glad that no one was in it and she would have to ride alone.

"Seems the suspension really worked out in your favour then." Daniella laughed, "In that bitch's face."

"Yea right." Korina agreed, "She has no idea, you should have seen her reaction when I was so excited after she announced that I was suspended. I couldn't hide my joy, I practically danced out of her office."

"I bet she was shocked as hell." Anne laughed, "Now you got more time to work and some relief from her nasty ass."

"Of course."

"We would be there tomorrow to help you dispatch the cakes." Anne said.

"Thanks a lot you guys." She smiled, she appreciated all her friends have been doing for her.

"I love you bitches, bye." She ended the call after they said their goodbyes and got out of the elevator.

Korina unlocked the door to her apartment, she got in struggling trying to balance the shopping bags of baking products and groceries that she carried. She threw her keys on the sofa and stumbled her way to the kitchen.

She dumped the bags on the kitchen counter and let out a sigh, she had a long and stressfull shopping evening.

After taking dinner, she went back to the kitchen wearing her apron and chef hat.

"Time to get started." She rubbed her palms together as she stood there staring at the ingredients.

Jace sprung up from his bed, the sheets covering him earlier now pooled around his waist, he was heaving and sweating heavily, his chest matted with sweat and the sheets were damp too.

He threw the sheets aside and got off the bed, the chilly wind blowing from his open window caused him to shiver. He grabbed a robe, got out of his room, down the stairs and to the kitchen.

It wasn't hard to find his pills even with the memories from his nightmare clouding his vision. After downing the pills, he didn't go back to sleep.

Jace took a chair and got seated at the terrace of his room, he sat there staring into the dark night terrified of going back to sleep.

Chapter 54

"You may kiss the bride."

As the couple's lips joined, sparkles fell and people hooted, the bridal train sprayed flowers from the sprays they held and every other person clapped.

Weddings were usually a beautiful sight, this wedding was also, the decorations, the couples and the guests, everything was perfect and went accordingly.

As Korina looked on at the newly weds, she couldn't help but feel a prick of envy in her heart, of course It wasn't a bad thing, she had tried to convince herself that being envious was human nature, it meant you saw something good, liked it and wished you had it, It was only when it turned to jealousy that it was bad.

She couldn't help but join in the clapping but as she looked at the couple, she felt her envy turn to jealousy and the jealousy turned into hurt on realising that she might never get involved the the blessed union called marriage or have a stable relationship. Tears welled up in her eyes as she clapped knowing she would never feel such joy as she saw in the bride.

Korina never wanted to attend the wedding knowing what it would do to her, knowing that she would feel how she felt each time she saw happy couples.

"Nothing would go wrong, chill." Daniella had said, "Besides, you should be present there, you baked the cake."

It was her cousin's co worker's wedding and she had been given the contract to bake and she wondered how and when it was a must for a baker to attend the wedding.

She had no idea how Daniella had managed to convince her to appear at the wedding. She just saw herself getting dressed and prettied up, everything happened so fast, she delivered the cake and here she was clapping and staring at the couple, green with envy.

"Hello, did you bake that gorgeous cake?" Korina was pulled back to earth by a voice and she looked to see a woman dressed in blue standing in front of her.

"Yes ma'am." Korina smiled her eyes now fixated on the six stepped cake, "Yes I did."

"It's so nice." The woman said, "And I hope it tastes as nice as it looks."

"Of course ma'am, most certainly." Korina beamed.

"I would love to patronize you." The lady said, "My Son's seventh birthday is coming up soon."

"Okay ma'am." Korina dipped her hand in her purse, "Here is my card, give me a call when you are ready."

"I will." She smile retrieving the card from her, "Bye."

She waved the woman away and her attention turned back to the couple, lucky them, she smiled.

"Are you okay?" You have been staring at them for quite sometime now."She looked and saw Anne next to her now, her tight black dress clinging to her every curve, Korina had noticed the way the men ogled at her.

"I am fine babe." She said.

"I know what you are thinking." Anne said taking her friend's hand, "And I know how you feel but don't worry, things would fall in place."

"Sure?" Korina laughed, "When exactly?"

"Might be anytime and unexpectedly, just wait."

"Anne! Korina!" They turned in the direction of the voice and saw Daniella signalling at them to come over to the reception area under the canopy.

"Well." Anne cocked her head towards the direction, "Let's go party."

Jace lander stood there swirling his drink his eyes steadily observing the pretty black woman like a hawk, he also noticed her two friends standing beside her, the blonde haired one looked like a chatter box while the Asian looked more reserved.

"You are never gonna walk up to her are you?" He turned to see his best friend Ade glaring at him.

"Honestly man, you are the most ruthless leader of a mafia organisation, rumors fly around that you eat human babies and drink blood." He whispered and jace chuckled at the last part of his statement, "But you can't walk up to a lady you admire and let your feelings out."

"Would she like me?"

"Of course, it's not like you eat babies for breakfast and drink blood."

"It's not that simple Ade."

"Of course it is." He scoffed, "You are just a ninny."

"Hey, don't test me." Jace warned, "You know how angry and ruthless I can be."

"What would you do?" Ade rolled his eyes, "Shoot me?"

"She's standing right there." Jace sighed, "What do I do?"

"Do a strip tease." His best friend mocked him sipping from his wine.

"What?!"

"Walk up to her idiot!" He smacked his back, "You can do this, you rehearsed it, you knew she was coming, so get your ass over there and say hi."

"What?" Jace asked his face paling, "Now?!."

Ade looked at his friend and wondered if he was actually the same person that killed people without a thought. He collected his wine glass from him, "Now!" He said giving him a push.

"I can't...i..." Jace stammered.

"Now! Go!" Ade gave him another push.

"Fine." He grumbled walking in the direction of the ladies.

"Don't look Korina." Daniella said excitedly, "An angel is walking towards us."

Korina rolled her eyes, "What man did you see now?"

"Wow." Anne exclaimed, "just wow."

Korina looked at where her friends eyes were focused and she saw a tall man in dark blue suit approaching them, he looked unsure of himself and she didn't see anything to wow about him or maybe it was the hurt and envy clouding her vision.

The man stopped in front of them and began to stare, saying nothing.

"Hi." Anne and Daniella greeted him, he just smiled not giving them a reply and then continued to stare at Korina while smiling sheepishly, not a word came from his mouth.

What a creep, Korina managed to smile at him, seconds passed and he still stared without saying a word to them and then a frown appeared on his first before he turned and left.

Ade had every reason to believe that Jace was the biggest idiot on planet earth and probably other planets.

"You said absolutely nothing." He palmed his face.

"I let my eyes do the talking, she would definitely know I like her now." Jace felt stupid as he heard the words that came out of his own mouth.

"You sound really dumb right now and to think you run many businesses and a mafia."

"Don't make me shoot you." He growled.

"Yea, you can shoot me but not come clean with a girl about your feelings, bravo!"

"What do I do now?"

"You are going back there and you would introduce yourself, you would say words that actually make sense."

"I am not going back there man."

"And why not?"

"Cause I ain't ready."

"Yes you are and you will."

"As your boss, you have no right to tell me what to do, I am not going there."

But Jace lander found himself in front of Korina and her friends sooner than he expected with his bestfriend paces behind him.

Korina looked at the man and his friend who had a frown on his face, what does he even want? She wondered if he would say something this time around and then the man spoke.

"H...i..hi..." He stuttered as he brought forth his hand, "My name is Jace lander and I wanna marry you, please say yes."

Chapter 55

"Damn it!" Ade groaned, he just had to see his best friend make a complete fool out of himself and worse of all Jace still stood there looking like a lost sheep his hand still out and the girls were laughing at him, at them.

'Men be wilding' Korina had to agree with this saying as she laughed, who in the hell walks up to a woman and says 'I wanna marry you please say yes.'

"I won't marry you". She scoffed and turned to drag Anne and Daniella away as she left so they wouldn't make issues worse for her.

"Wait." The strange crazy guy Jace called after her, "you haven't even gotten a chance to know me yet."

Korina laughed at his statement, "Well wasn't I supposed to know you before a proposal."

"Dip shit." She scoffed still dragging her laughing friends towards the tables, she needed food and cake.

"What the fuck were you thinking." Ade face palmed himself in frustration, "you just made a total and complete fool of yourself and a bad impression too."

"I don't know...I...tr...i..." Jace was even bewildered at his own actions, "When I got there, I couldn't quite control myself and everything I had practiced flew out the window."

"Well, at least you didn't forget your name." His best friend rolled his eyes, "You have to try again."

"I can't, no I can't." He shook his head, "Maybe some other time." He looked in the direction of the girls, they were eating, chatting and laughing now probably at his stupidity.

"You would go there are try again." Ade insisted, "Fucking man up, you sleep with guns by your bed side for fucks sake."

Try again? Phew, Jace sighed.

"Men truly are unbelievable." Korina was speaking to her friends, "Really he wants to marry me?" She giggled.

"Well, Korina you shouldn't have insulted him tho, the dude surely looked really not at all composed and somewhat scared." Anne sipped from her wine glass and placed it on the table, "Dip shit was uncalled for."

"Yea, I know right." She agreed, "In my defense I was irritated and angry and I am not going to apologise." She said making herself clear before they forced her to.

"What just happened has got to be the most hilarious moment of this year apart from when I pulled Brian's hair out." Daniella laughed, "I mean the dude looked like he could get on his knees if he had a ring at the moment."

"Men, truly be crazy, who walks up to a stranger and asks them to marry him?" Korina asked no one in particular, "Let's get over and done with this wedding, I am tired, I swear."

"Look at the bright side." Her cousin spoke and Korina knew that whenever Daniella said look at the bright side, she was about to say something utterly dumb, stupid and would probably piss her off, "At least you got more customers." She shrugged.

"Oh, she's right about that." Anne chipped in.

"Really, oh wow." Korina beamed, "You know Dan, this is actually the first time you have said 'look at the bright side' and really said something reasonable."

"I don't blame your stank ass." Daniella growled jabbing her Cousin's elbow.

"Hmmm." Anne moaned as she put a piece of cake in her mouth, "Korina, you really did a great job, this cake is mmm-tastic."

"Mmm-tastic, is that even a word?" Korina asked and they all laughed.

"Oh, that reminds me." Anne dropped her fork, "Can you make like four dozen mini cup cakes for me?" She asked, "I need them at work, don't know when exactly tho."

"Absolutely." Korina replied, "Just tell me when and where and then we would discuss further on the price and all."

"No problem babe."

"Korina." Daniella called her cousin, a mischievous smirk on her lips.

"Yea." She rolled her eyes.

"Can you make a cake for me?" Daniella asked, "A big ass gigantic one?"

"Yes, I can."

"For free tho."

"I could kill you for free too."

Anne laughed as she watched their exchange.

"On a more serious note, that Jace lander is a hottie." Daniella said.

"I totally agree with you on that." Anne smiled, "He is a pleasing sight to behold."

"When you guys are done drooling over a dumb ass, then you can talk to me." Korina snorted, she still didn't find anything attractive about him and she wasn't sure she would ever, he was dumb and she didn't deal with dumb people.

Time was passing slowly, real slow and Korina was getting irritated by the moment.

Soon she was left alone at the table, Anne and Daniella had left and she had to stay back cause not only did she bake the cake, she was kinda part of the catering department too and the bride's mother insisted on her stay.

As she sat there, bored with her idle mind, her thoughts ran back to Jace lander, she hadn't seen him after that incident and she laughed remembering his words, men are so dumb and funny, She sighed.

"Hi." She was pulled back to reality by an all too familiar voice, she looked up and Jace was standing there in front of her, he didn't look nervous as the first time, what the hell does this man want? She rolled her eyes.

"Can I sit with you?" He asked, she only nodded looking at him skeptically, her gaze full of suspicion.

Jace pulled out the seat and sat on it, he laid his arms out on the table rubbing his thumbs together unsure of what to say next and he still felt her uneasy stare on him.

"I am sorry." He blurted, "I am really sorry for what I did."

"Uh...uh." She nodded at him not reducing her harsh gaze, "And?"

"I was carried away, too excited and nervous." He explained, "I actually don't know what got into me."

"It's okay." She said hoping he'd leave already, "I never really expected less, you men are crazy."

Jace gave a light nervous laughter.

They got silent for a while none of them knowing what to say next.

"They look good together, don't they?" Jace asked her, he noticed her eyes wouldn't leave the couple on the dance floor and he couldn't help but stare at the couple too, he wanted that, he wanted what they had with the beautiful woman in front of him.

"Yes, they do." She sighed, "And they are lucky to find love, really lucky." Her heart ached at their happiness, as she watched the woman laugh genuinely at what her husband bent to whisper in her ear.

"Would give anything to be that happy with someone who loves me." She said absentmindedly.

Jace heard her and he wanted to tell her that they could be that happy together, but he knew he couldn't say so, things would go wrong and that he did not want.

He watched her as she still stared at them, he took the opportunity to admire her beauty, her shiny dark skin, nice nose and all and then he said the next thing that came to his mind.

"Korina." He called and she turned to him.

"What man?"

"Wanna dance?"

Chapter 56

Korina was wondering what had gotten into her, and why she was being nice to a man. She wondered if she had gone nuts as yes was the answer that came from her lips and Jace was currently pulling her to the dance floor.

Damn! I must have had too much to eat and drink, She thought as she followed him.

Jace felt elated as he wrapped his arms loosely around Korina's waist, he couldn't believe she was actually dancing with him, her arms around his shoulders, finger tips grazing the nape of his neck sent tingles down his spine, he got worried that he'd get over excited and mess things up.

He looked up and saw Ade standing in a corner giving him thumbs up and a smile before signalling that he was leaving.

"You know I normally don't do this with guys." Korina said drawing his attention back to her. "I honestly don't know what has come over me this evening."

"Maybe it's cause, I am special."Jace smirked and she pinched his neck.

"Owww" he winced.

"Serves you right." Korina said, "Don't get all arrogant with me."

"Okay ma'am." He rolled his eyes causing her to smile.

They danced slowly to the music, we are one by Westlife was blaring from the speakers, and Korina began mouthing the lyrics as they moved, Jace joined her. Turned out they both knew the song. Endless love was next, Jace knew this one but Korina didn't, she made a mental note to get the song later as she found an interest in it. The last song they danced to was night changes, they both knew this so they sang as they danced happily and any one who saw them would think that they were actually a couple.

Korina and Jace couldn't quite lay a finger on how their first meeting was going so smooth, while Korina wondered why she was nice, Jace hoped for things to continue like this so he could get a shot at wooing her.

"Thanks for all your help Korina and the cake was lovely." The bride's mother complemented.

"It's okay ma'am." She said, "I better get going it's late."

"Ooh dear." The woman said taking a glance at her watch, "It really is, you should be on your way."

Korina bade the lady goodbye and got out of the building. As she descended down the stairs, she slipped and fell, breaking the heels of her shoes.

Fuck! She cursed as she stood up. She removed her shoes and walked barefooted out of the building. She sat outside on a pavement with a sigh and brought out her phone to call a taxi.

Her eyes registered on the empty bars on her screen. She had no service, she considered going back in and asking for help but decided to wait a bit, and there she sat with her broken heels and serviceless phone.

"Go up there and offer her a ride man." Ade told his best friend, "Things aren't really going as planned but look, they are working out in your favour."

"What should I say?" Jace asked and he looked in Korina's direction from where he stood far away, she looked really frustrated as she stared at her heels in her hands.

"For fuck's sake Jace, " Ade groaned, "Do I need to tell you how to talk to a lady?"

"First off, mind it I am still your boss." Jace warned, "And also you know I am fucking not used to this."

"Go up there and offer her a ride and the rest would figure itself out, Bye!" He put an end to the call before his friend could say something else.

Jace put his phone angrily in his pocket, and looked at Korina again. He had waited, he wanted to see her leave safely before he did. But now she was there in distress.

Ade was right, things although not going as planned were working in his favour. He had waited too long and he couldn't mess this up, he took deep breaths and began walking towards her.

Korina was surprised to see Jace walking towards her, It was late and she thought he already left.

"What are you doing here?" She asked as he reached her, he still looked nervous.

"I waited around, wasn't ready to go home." Jace said not being able to meet her eyes, "You look like you need help".

"No I don't," Korina replied," just broken heels."

"Oww." He looked at his watch, "How would you get home now?"

"I would order a taxi."

"Would you care for a ride?" He asked meeting her eyes and holding her gaze this time.

"No I dont." Korina said, "I am totally fine."

"But you don't look it." He joined her sitting on the pavement, "It's past nine already."

"I can manage."

"Please let me give you a ride." Jace asked again and he was surprised that he could hold a normal conversation with her.

"I can't. For all I know you might be a killer or a psychopath." Jace's heart skipped a beat as the words flew out of her mouth, surely he was what she mentioned but he'd never hurt her or anyone who didn't deserve to be hurt.

"You surely have a wild sense of imagination." He laughed trying to be rid of the unease he felt, "I would never hurt you or anyone who doesn't deserve to be hurt."

"Still not getting in the car with you strange Mr."

"Strange?" Jace asked looking at her, "We laughed, danced together at a party and you still call me strange."

"Of course."

"Well since you are stubborn, I would stay here till you get a cab."

They waited for sometime in silence before Korina gave in and agreed to his offer."

"Race you there." She felt playful enough to do that, she handed him her heels and got the head start but he caught up easily cause he was taller.

They stopped outside the gate heaving and laughing.

"I won even tho you got the headstart." Jace teased.

"Hey you cheated cause you are taller."

"Whatever makes you feel good." He smirked and she smacked him.

"So there is my ride." He pointed and Korina's eyes followed. She saw a black scooter parked.

"Uh....a scooter." She asked, this is unbelievable.

"Is there a problem?" Jace noticed her face. She looked a bit disappointed.

"No, no problem." Korina smiled, "I just didn't peg you to be a scooter kinda guy."

"So what did you peg me for?" He asked, they were walking towards the scooter now.

"I thought you'd be more of a G-wagon or a range rover type." She said.

"Why?" Jace asked.

"I mean you clean up nice and look really rich." Korina said concluding appearances really were deceiving.

"Well, I am sorry to disappoint you."

"I am not disappointed in you Jace." She sighed, "Just get me home already."

The scooter ride was more enjoyable than Korina thought it would be.

Her arms were wrapped around Jace's waist which he found rather pleasing, she could feel the wind in her face, the cool breeze caressing her skin. She automatically fell in love with bike rides and knew she would have to do this again.

Jace stopped the bike suddenly, he stopped it along the road in front of a place with lots of trees.

"Get down." He spoke to her authoritatively.

"Is this the part where I scream cause you actually wanna kill me?" Korina asked, she was partially alarmed and scared.

"Nope." He laughed, "Give me your hand."

Korina hesitated at first looking at his out stretched palm.

"Trust me." He winked.

She placed her hand in his and he led her into the place passing through trees, it wasn't long before they reached a clearing with a little pond.

Jace bent and picked up a stone throwing it into the water, it rippled, the moon light reflection dancing with it.

"I usually come here more often when I want to let things off."

"It's a beautiful place." Korina complimented looking around, "How did you find it?"

"I just stumbled upon it." He lied, he couldn't tell her that he bought the place.

"So Jace, why did you bring me here?" She asked.

"Cause I noticed how you looked at that couple today, it was obvious, too obvious how you wanted what they shared, I knew you must have been hurt before or something."

"I..." She stopped to look at him, at his face to be exact. She paid attention to his features for the first time that night, long blonde hair swept backwards and packed, a lock fell on his forehead, he had thick brows and gleaming grey eyes with a nice nose, presentable lips and an appealing face shape.

She found him quiet handsome.

"I don't know if to trust you."

"It's okay." Jace said turning to face the pond.

Korina took one more look at him and her senses told her not to say anything to him but her mouth had a mind of it's own.

She told him everything, she told him all about Cole.

Jace brought the scooter to a stop in front of the building and Korina highlighted.

"Nice place." He said, "You must have a good pay check to be able to afford this."

"Thank you." She replied, "Thanks so much for tonight."

"you are welcome." He gave her a warm smile.

They bade each other goodbyes and she watched him as he kick started the scooter and drive away into the night.

Chapter 57

Korina laid in the bed thinking about her night as she got into her apartment, her thoughts were wild.

Wow, she was amazed and shocked. She had never ever let someone in on her so much as she did tonight. She let someone in, a stranger at that, she didn't even know if they would meet again. She told him everything about Cole, she had let out her pain and she felt better and relieved, a thing she hadn't felt in months.

She didn't know what to think of Jace Lander yet, she didn't even want to think of him, nothing was gonna happen and they would never ever meet again, she was sure of that.

She had been wild tonight not the party wild but the letting her guard down wild.

She had become an open book to a stranger, an handsome stranger at least, she smiled internally and knocked herself mentally as she remembered her vow to stay off men, she wasn't suppose to find him handsome.

She strayed her thoughts away from Jace as she got ready for sleep for she needed rest, lots of it and she had a young boy's birthday cake to make.

She got comfy in bed and closed her eyes in deep slumber, Jace lander's face invading her dreams later on.

"Dude, she let me in, we even touched hands and danced." Jace was rambling about how the night went on to Ade, they were having drinks on his porch,"Do you think it is a progress?" He asked.

"Surely it is." Ade patted his shoulder, "If you hadn't summoned the courage to meet and talk with her, would this have happened, I told you things would figure themselves out."

"She was in so much pain as she related the incidents, she had been through a lot." Jace sighed.

"You mean she told you all of it?" His bestfriend asked with raised brows.

"Yea man and I wish I could put a bullet in the fucker's head."

"Calm down,nah!" Ade smiled, " We wouldn't want her to see that side of you now, would we?"

Jace only nodded smiling at his friend. Apart from the night he overthrew his father, tonight had been one of the best nights ever, he talked to Korina, he actually held the woman of his dreams in his arms.

Sweet, he sighed, sweet.

"I don't wanna ruin this and I don't want anything external to ruin it." He spoke, fear creeping his mind, "I don't want anything to go wrong like she not wanting to speak with me when next we meet or so."

Ade looked at his best friend and sighed, "Nothing would go wrong I assure you." Jace only nodded in silence.

Ade wanted the best for his friend, he had seen him go through so much pain over the years and he wanted him to be happy finally, his friend deserved happiness.

He was determined to destroy anything or anyone that would hinder Jace's way to happiness, he was ready to help his friend.

Daniella and Anne screamed as Korina gave them the brief of last night's happenings.

"Korina." Anne called, "Are you sure you got no crush on that dude?" She asked, still shocked that her best friend had been free with an entire strange, a male at that.

"No." Korina shook her head, "Believe me, nope."

"You don't have a crush on him?" Daniella looked at her, "If you don't? then why tell him all about your stale ass ex, still wanna rip his head off."

Korina and Anne laughed at Daniella's statement.

"I don't know girls."

"You sure are attracted, cause this is so unlike you."

"I am not attracted to him and I have no crush on him."

Daniella scoffed, "And you talked to him like you have been waiting for him to come hear your sob stories your whole life?"

"Oh come on, and honestly, It felt like that, exactly how you described it." Korina agreed with her.

"Did you guys kiss?" Daniella asked, eyes thinking mischievously.

"Hell no bitch." Korina growled at her, "The hell would we be locking lips for?"

The girls were silent for a while.

"Look." Korina finally said after no one spoke for some time, "I don't know what came over me, I just gave in, I danced with him, talked, rode with him, I admired him and I let him in on the dark side of my life, like it was really crazy last night." She laughed.

"I don't know Korina." Anne sighed, "It's so unlike you."

"You sure you haven't even met him somewhere before?" Daniella asked tapping her chin.

"Nope, I haven't." She sighed.

"Oh well, let's see how it all goes." Anne said and none of them said a word afterwards.

Mark stood mouth agape as Korina filled him in on the details of the wedding.

"Bitch, you have got to be kidding me." He scoffed, "The Korina I know would never do that even on a life and death point."

"Oh shut up Mark." She frowned.

"We both know I'm saying the truth, " He told her and she sighed, "What got into you to do something like that?"

"I don't know and we should drop the issue already, I don't think I will ever see him again." She said, "I don't even wanna."

She knew she was only deceiving herself, a part of her wanted to see him and admire his long hair again and maybe talk with him.

"Yen yen yen yen." Mark mimicked her, "How are you tho?"

"What do you mean?"

"Everything."

"Oh." She said in realisation of what he meant, "I am coping putting up, it ain't easy."

"You will be okay." He placed a hand on her shoulder, "You will be okay."

She raised her hand and placed it on his holding it firmly in place, she shook her head,"Yes I'll be okay."

She knew she would, she had gone through worse, she had been through hard times and heart breaks. She had been bowled and broken over but yet she survived it.

I would be okay, She chanted to herself, I would be.

Chapter 58

"Please could you stay and hang around." The woman pleaded with Korina, "I will pay you extra."

Korina shook her head, for some odd reason, she had been delaying her leave and now she wants her to stay.

"No problem." She sighed, "I will just hang around and help."

"Yea, I could use a little help over there. She pointed to a stack of paper plate on a table, " They need to be arranged."

"On It." Korina said walking in the direction, she was ready to work.

Guests started trooping in soon enough and Korina found it surprising, that there were more Adults than kids at a kid's birthday party, but she didn't ponder upon it much as everyone marveled at the cake. She baked, It was a Ben 10 sculpted cake. She received a lot of compliments and more offers and she was pleased.

Time flew and the boy blew out the candles with everyone cheering, the cake got cut and they were all being served cake and food with a one direction song blasting from the speakers.

"Here you go." Korina cut a piece of the cake and put on a plate, she handed it to the last kid at the table, "Don't eat too much." She reminded.

"I won't," The girl smiled, Korina already knew she was definitely Mexican.

"Miss Korina." A boy called her from the table, she had gotten familiar with the kids over time, "I like your hair."

"Awwn.... Thank you." She smiled and faked wiped tears from her eyes causing the kids to laugh.

"Can I touch it?" Another girl asked and Korina walked to where the girl was and semi-crouched. The brunette girl put her hand in her afro, "It's so brisky and also soft." The girl mumbled feeling the hair with her finger tips, Korina was glad that she had gotten rid of her disturbing straightened hair, "I like it."

"I like yours too honey." She touched some hair behind the girl's ear, "Now eat up. Eat up kids." She told everyone at the table and the kids faced their food.

"Miss Korina." Another kid called, It was a boy this time and the other boys near him were giggling.

"What is it dear?" She asked.

"Carlos thinks you're pretty." The boy said and the whole table erupted with giggles.

"I think you are pretty too." Korina got startled and turned to see who spoke behind her, the voice was familiar and it was Jace's.

Jace Lander was behind her.

He just stood there staring at her, unsure of what to say next, he didn't want to embarrass himself.

"Hey Jace." Korina looked up at him still shocked that he was here, "What are you doing here?"

"I came to help with things around, you know work and stuff." He mumbled, "Nice to see you again."

"Nice seeing you too." She said and she wondered why she was suddenly pleased on seeing him, I thought you never wanted to set eyes on him again, She blocked out her subconscious.

"You look nice." Jace complimented with a smile, he was glad that he hadn't said anything embarrassing, "And your hair is nice too." His compliment caused her face to brighten up and she smiled at him, "I want to bury my fingers in it."

Damn! Jace wanted to smack himself, there he said it, he said something totally embarrassing and has disgraced himself.

"What the fuck man?!" Korina shouted staring at him unbelievably, such a perv she hissed pushing him out of the way and walked away taking real angry steps.

Dammit! He cursed palming his face, I just fucking had to ruin things, can't I get it right for once? He turned to follow her trying to catch up with her fast angry strides.

Korina felt a presence behind her and she turned around to see Jace had been following her, now what? She saw he was smiling at her sheepishly not saying a word.

"Stop." Poke, "Following." Poke, "Me." She poked him with her index finger one more time and she turned away leaving him standing there. Jace watched her go not moving an inch, his eyes following the movements of her hips.

He didn't know if to follow her or wait or call his best friend for advice as usual, so he just stood there staring at her as she walked farther away from him.

"Wanna bury your fingers in my hair." She scoffed, "Men!" She shook her head as she put food on her plate, was he crazy? He's always saying the wrong things.

"You know anger really dosen't suit you." He was here again, she looked up at him with a frown and practically growled.

"What suits me?" She asked, "Marriage and fingers in my hair?"

"Yes." He smriked.

"I am so close to dumping this food on your big ass head." She threatened, "Get out of my sight."

"I am sorry." Jace apologise with a sigh, he ran his hand through his hair, "That was inappropriate, I didn't mean to, I really am sorry."

Korina sighed and looked at the man in front of her, dressed in a simple t-shirt and jeans, he looked nervous, he easily towered over her and she guessed his height to be about six feet over her own five feet four, his mesmerizing grey eyes looked sad, he...no men! She screamed internally, remember Cole and Brian bitch.

"Apology accepted." She said.

"Really?" He beamed.

"Yep."

"Thanks so much."

"Just stay away from me Jace." She said walking away from the buffet, "I want you to stay away from me."

"What?!." His heart skipped and it felt like she had just plunged a knife deep in him, he was horrified, "I can't, I just can't." He mumbled for his ears only.

"What was that?" Korina asked, she was sure that she just heard something.

"Nothing." He sighed.

"Look Jace." She said, "What do you want from me?"

"I want a chance to talk to you and get to..."

"I get it." She stopped him raising her free hand, "I know when we first met, we clicked, talked, danced and all that mushy stuff but it meant nothing to me. I can't give you what you want, nothing can happen between us, I was carried away that night. I ain't even interested in a friendship, I am sorry."

Korina tore her gaze away from him and turned to walk away, she knew she would never forget the hurt in his eyes when he heard her words and she knew that look was gonna hunt her.

Chapter 59

"She doesn't want me, she freaking said it to my face." He roared and turned to his table, he picked up the item he could reach and threw the already broken laptop to the wall again.

"Sir, I need you to calm down please." The nurse standing quietly at the end of the room pleaded, her voice trembling in fear.

She didn't know if to run out of the room, she had never been this scared.

"Why always me? Why always fucking me?" He screamed and picked up a chair throwing it through the glass window, the nurse hoped it didn't land on anyone.

The office was a mess, literally almost everything was broken, she had tried to get to him to inject him with what was in her hand but she feared she would be broken too. Her boss Jace Lander could get extra violent.

"What the hell did I do wrong?" He was banging his head against the wall now and she feared he could begin to bleed. She didn't know if the text she sent to Sir Ade as she called him was delivered for her phone was also snatched and smashed to pieces.

"If Ade had let me follow my original plan, none of these would have happened right?" Jace asked punching the wall, "Right?" He turned to the nurse, glaring at her.

"I... Y... Yes, Sir." She stammered in panic, hoping his best friend would arrive soon.

Ade arrived at the moment literally flying through the doors.

"You! Bastard!" Jace screamed running towards him as he got in the office, "I will kill you."

Ade got a hold of his best friend before he could throw a punch, he tightened his hold around him and signalled to the nurse, "now." She ran towards them and stabbed him in the neck with the needle.

"I will kill you!" He mumbled before his eyes finally closed shut.

Ade stared at his best friend as his eyelids fluttered, his skin paled, lips cracked and his hands were confined to each side of the bed, he shook his head trying to force back the tears in his eyes.

"Ade!" Jace croaked finally opening his eyes, "What happened?" He asked noticing his hands were confined.

"You had another episode and trashed your office." Ade told him.

"Release me." Jace said, It was an order, Ade pushed a button by the side of the bed and Jace's hands were free. He sat up rubbing his wrists. "Water."

He was downing down a glass soon and when he was done he threw it across the room, the sound of it shattering filled the void.

"You should fucking get control of yourself."

"I am trying to for fucks sake." He growled."I shouldn't have listened to you, I Should have gone with my original plan."

"Like your plan wouldn't make matters worse." Ade scoffed.

They both fell silent.

"Why always me?" Jace asked his best friend, "I never did anything wrong, aren't I lovable."

"You didn't." His best friend held his hand, "You didn't." He said calmly.

"Do you think she would ever love me?" Jace asked and Ade could see the raw pain in his friend's eyes.

"She will." Ade stood up and held his friend's hand tighter, "She will, I promise you."

Guilt was eating Korina up as she remembered what happened at the party and her words to Jace.

"Gosh, Dammit." She groaned, "I was such a bitch,"

"Yea you were." Daniella snorted, "Such a fine young man and you shenked him."

"Shenk?" Korina looked puzzled, "You speaking English?"

"Dunno." Daniella shrugged, "Got it from Nigerian twitter."

"Gosh Daniella, I feel so stupid right now." Korina took the throw pillow and fell on the seat.

They were in a couture shop, Daniella had a dinner to attend and she was getting fitted for one of her dresses.

"Remind me why I even accompanied you here again." Korina looked at her cousin whose head was buried in a magazine.

"To tell me how good I look in the dress." Daniella raised her head and dropped the magazine. She took her glass of champagne and brought it to her lips, taking a sip. She dropped it and cleared her throat before facing Korina.

"So what do you want now?"

"I don't know." Korina sighed, "I feel like I should apologize.

"Where would you find him?" Her cousin asked, "You have no idea or information about him."

"That I have no idea."

"If you meet a third time he's your soulmate." Daniella giggled raising three fingers

"Cole and I met three times." Korina snorted and Daniella kept shut not wanting the conversation to lead to where it wasn't suppose to.

They were done and were walking out of the shop now.

"So you are helping with my preparations tonight?" Daniella asked Korina.

"Yep." Korina nodded, "Meet you at your home."

"Okay babe." They hugged and kissed each other bye. Daniella got in the taxi and waved Korina as they sped off.

Korina had decided to walk home, the evening seemed cool and she wanted to savour and feel it.

She plugged in her ear piece, her hands deep in her pant's pocket as she walked home. She bopped her head to perfect by one direction and hopped and skipped at almost every step.

She decided to stop by a park and rest for a while. And there Korina was, sitting alone on the bench feeling the cool breeze on her skin when a lovey dovey couple passed her by, they made no effort to hide that they were in love, as she watched them, her eyes welled knowing she would never experience that which she just saw.

She tore her gaze away, stood up and began walking home.

Chapter 60

Jace was getting better as the days rolled by. He could eat now and make more meaningful conversations but his skin was pale and he still looked lifeless, it worried Ade a lot.

The past few days had been hell for him, medications upon medications were administered. He had refused to come out, he hadn't seen sunlight in a while and he also forbade anyone from drawing his curtains open.

He just wanted to remain in his room drowning in his sadness, reminiscing all the happenings of his life which only made him sadder.

Things are never gonna be right for me, He sighed, I will never be good for anyone to love.

He sat there on his bed staring into space, the meal placed beside him was untouched. He just stared into space as he played with the stress ball held in his hand.

The door opened and in came Ade, he got into the room, locked the door and walked towards the bed.

"I thought I made it clear." Jace frowned, "I don't want to see no one."

"You have to eat." Ade rolled his eyes at him ignoring his statements, "You have to eat and go out there, you can't remain like this."

"Who says I can't?" He asked not taking his eyes off the empty space he stared at.

"If you remain like this, she's going to fall in love with another man and have his babies."

Jace head snapped at the statement, he reached for the gun at his bedside, "Dude." He growled.

"Put that away." His best friend snorted with an eye roll, "You can't do it."

He dropped the gun and fell back on the bed, leaning his body on the head board, he knew he couldn't do it, he couldn't shoot his best friend.

"Look." Ade sat on the bed and faced him, "You have to get better, go out there and get your woman. If you just stay here expecting some miracles to happen, trust me you would get an invite to her wedding."

Jace said nothing.

"Eat your lunch and take your meds." He said standing up from the bed and walking towards the door, "And take a bath too, you stink, you stink like three days old semen."

Jace smirked at his joke and watched him walk out the room.

He reached out for the tray of food and placed it on his lap, he knew he had no choice but to eat.

The bald headed man Korina had smacked with a tray was back again.

"You again?!" She growled as she reached the table, if she knew the order had come from him, she would have ignored.

"Hey." Russo greeted, he flashed a wide smile at her and closed the files before him.

Korina replied with a snort.

"Hey pretty black girl." He winked, "Nice to meet you again."

Nice to meet you again?! She knew the man was definitely nuts, she slammed the coffee on the table making sure it spilled on his files, gave him the middle finger and turned to walk away.

Hell yeah, She smirked as she got into the kitchen, she wanted to get suspended again.

Korina sat at the back, hoping to hear her boss's voice yelling her name soon.

She hoped for the woman to scream for her and tell her that she had been of bad behavior and was suspended.

She waited but she never heard Ms Susie scream, she even did a mini countdown to when she would hear the scream.

She lost patience after sometime and went out of the place only to meet with a scene that totally disturbed her.

The bald headed guy was with her boss, and they stood in front of the counter laughing and talking like old time pals.

She moved closer to them still unsettled by what she saw.

"Oh." Ms Susie turned to her with a smile, "There she is." She took out her hand and grabbed Korina pulling her closer.

What?! Korina was sure she was hallucinating.

"Our Good luck charm." The woman wrapped her arms around her and hugged her, "Thank you." She winked at her with a whisper.

What the hell was going on? Korina had every reason to believe that the world was coming to an end, She hugged me, smiled at me, even gave me a thank you.

"She's such a lovely girl." She saw Russo remark with a smile and she wanted to pull his teeth out with pliers.

"Okay dear." Her boss patted her hair.

Dear? She wanted to smack the woman and get her back to her senses.

"You can go back to work now." Ms Susie shooed her away as she retraced her steps with a confused look.

"The fuck was all that about?" Mark asked Korina immediately she got back into the kitchen.

"You saw?" She asked.

"Yes, I did." He replied, "Now spill, it was hella weird out there."

"I had no idea what that was all about." Korina shook her head, "I can't even think."

"Wow, I can't believe I just saw her in that kinda mood with you, can't believe she did that." He laughed.

"Yea." Korina shrugged, "I am still puzzled myself." She said, "As far as she ain't planning on selling me out, I am good." She sighed and then she tried to rid her thoughts of what just happened.

Anne dragged a mini skirt or of Korina's closet and it got her wondering how it got there and if it was even hers.

"I thought you said you had none." Anne attacked her as she pulled out four additional mini skirts, she dangled them in her sight.

"I swear I have never seen those,I have no idea how they got there." Korina was still stunned as she looked at the skirts, two were jean and the rest were leather.

"Do you have crop tops?" Daniella asked her with a pointed look.

"No, I don't think so." Korina shook her head.

"Then what is this?" Her cousin showed her a lacy crop top and Korina just wanted to faint, what the fuck?!

"Wait." She told her friends and paused to think, "Did you both sneak into my closet in my absence, did you?" She pointed at them.

"Uhmm." Anne looked away from her.

"Daniella! Anne!" She called sternly, "Answer me."

"Well..." Daniella said scratching her chin, "As a matter of fact, fans kinda actually move more electrical than mechanical and it causes fish beautiful scales, so frogs eggs wouldn't be nice, at all they wouldn't and maybe rams should be birds."

"WHAT THE FUCK?!" Korina screamed at her cousin, "Have you fucking gone nuts?"

All the ride to the club Korina kept thinking of the nonsense that Daniella had spewed back at the apartment.

She thought about it while the other two girls chatted excitedly.

Fans? Frogs? Fish? Eggs? Rams? Birds? Korina shook her head, well coming from Daniella, it ain't suppose to make sense, She snorted.

"What?" The girls turned to her on hearing her snort, "What's wrong with you?" They also noticed the frown on her face.

"What's wrong with me?" She turned to them, "I should be asking you both that question."

Daniella and Anne rolled their eyes at her and continued their chatting.

Korina just sat there, hands folded on her chest, a constant frown on her face.

She remained silent all through the ride to the club.

Chapter 61

violent scene and mild mature content ahead

"I told you guys earlier, I do not feel comfortable in this." Korina looked down at her outfit and complained for the umpteenth time that night.

She was putting on a crop see through top that was similar to a bralette, that displayed way too much cleavage. Her short mini skirt was mid-thigh high, she was sure if she bent over, her panties would be on display.

"What's that?!" Daniella screamed over the loud music.

"We can't hear you!" Anne screamed too.

Korina glared at them, they had only just got here and were already dancing like crazy and sweating like cow herders.

Cow hereders? She was puzzled by her thoughts, where did that come from?

She left her friends and walked up to the bar area.

"A glass of water please." She told the bartender while taking a seat, "And a bottle of orange soda."

"Sorry ma'am." The bartender said sliding the glass of water to her, "No sodas available."

She shook her head in disappointment and took the glass of water, she down almost nearly half of it immediately and dropped it with a sigh.

"A pretty lady like you shouldn't be sitting here, all alone." Korina turned to her side to see a big blurry man that just spoke next to her, alcohol stench reeking from his breath.

She rolled her eyes.

"The name's Cole." The man spoke further and all the anger Korina had managed to keep aside for the past few months resurfaced, "Wanna come with me to my place?" He offered with a wink, "I would make it worth your time."

She turned to him mustering the meanest glare she could come up with and she knew it worked cause the bartender erupted with laughter and the man fled with a scared look on his face.

"Bad night?" The bartender asked as he wiped unused glasses laid on the counter.

"Yea." She brought the glass of water to her lips and looked in the direction of where her friends were, she watched their bodies move and sway to the music.

They had totally forgotten her, she turned back to the bartender, it's gonna be a long night.

Korina was sure Denzel Washington was before her in a thong and he had a halo with angel wings.

Well, she started seeing a lot of things after her sixth mini shot of tequila.

"I can swear that ain't Denzel Washington." Anne slurred placing a hand on Korina's back, "It's Trevor, Trevor Noah."

"It's the fucking King of England." Daniella raised her voice, "King Henry the fourth." She turned to the bartender, "Ain't that right?"

The man laughed looking at the direction of where they were pointing at. It wasn't any of the celebrities that they mentioned, it was a lone table with a lamp on it.

"Do you think Cole would have married me if I was a duchess?" Korina turned to her friends.

"No." Anne replied, "I don't think so, cause you ain't one and that mother fucker stood your ass up, forget him." She reached out and downed another shot.

"And he ran away with your money." Daniella added, "Now, you poor."

They all erupted with loud laughter.

"Oh my God." Korina screamed as a new song blared through the speakers, "That's my song."

Daddy yo by wizkid was coming out loud from the speakers and she jerked up from her seat and ran to the dance floor.

She stood for a moment bobbing her head up and down to the rhythm and then she did what she thought was right at the time, she put her hands on her thighs, let out a loud excited scream, bent down and started twerking.

Jace brought the battle axe down on the man's arm, he was filled with satisfaction as he saw the man's face twist in pain, he couldn't scream, his tongue was already out. He got rid of his other arm and threw the axe aside.

"Next time, think twice before forcing yourself on a lady." He brought out his gun and aimed it at the man's head, "Oh, there won't be a next time." He smirked and pulled the trigger, shooting him right between his eyes, his victim's head rolled back, he was gone.

"Clean this up." He signalled to the his men in the room while tucking the gun back in his pockets, he watched them get into action immediately obeying his orders before leaving the room.

The elevator came to a stop and the doors opened. Jace got out following the passage which led to his office, once he got in, he closed the office door and was glad that it was sound proof as he didn't have to hear the loud irritating noise from his club and the clubbers.

"Dude." Ade bounced into his best friend's office with an amused look on his face, "You have got to see this."

"You came in without knocking." Jace growled.

"Just come along, quit being stubborn."

"What again?" He rolled his eyes, him owning the club didn't mean he had to see every single thing.

His best friend dragged him out if his office to the balcony, there was a view of the club floor from up there.

"Look." Ade pointed down.

Jace looked in the direction and was filled with mixed emotions as he took in the sight. Korina was there dancing and twerking with reckless abandon.

Firstly, he wanted to kill all the men, who ogled at and stood too close to her and secondly, damn she looked sexy as hell dancing in that attire.

He took in her outfit and growled, he found it too revealing.

"Dude, where the hell are you going?" Ade raced after Jace as he matched down the stairs onto the club floor.

"What the fuck is she thinking? Dancing in front of pervertish men and dressed like that." He grumbled.

"Dunno man." Ade shrugged, "But damn, she's so hot and that ass..."

He couldn't finish his statement cause Jace already had him pinned to the wall with his fingers gripping his neck.

"Don't test me." He groaned.

Jace dropped his choking best friend and matched the where Korina was, when he got there, he stood numb staring at her, all the courage and anger he felt while coming here was gone.

Korina rose slowly from her squatting position when she felt a presence behind her, still tipsy, she turned around and saw it was Jace. She smiled at him and cat walked sluggishly to where he stood, few feet away from her.

She stopped in front of him and tiptoed to reach his ear.

"Hey." She whispered into his ear, bringing her tongue out and giving it a slow lick, she felt him shiver and she smiled knowing the effect she had on him.

"Hey." Jace gasped, she was so close and her hands were resting on his shoulders now.

"White boy." She whispered and kissed his neck then she drew back with a wink, "Want a piece of me daddy?" She laughed at the shock on his face and before he could react or say anything, she had turned around and her ass was already on his crotch.

She was grinding against him and whining slowly, moving with the rhythm of the song.

Jace was filled with excitement, instincts directed him to place his hands on her waist and pull her closer.

"Yes." She breathed in a moan like voice, "Just like that."

She continued twerking on him and she twerked harder as she felt his hard on growing and straining beneath his slacks.

Jace didn't know if it was her voice that excited him so much or the movement she did against him, his face was all red and he looked around shyly trying to see if anyone saw them.

She gyrated faster against him, moving her ass seductively and she had begun to let out low moans too.

He moved against against her, trying to match her pace as he couldn't control himself no more, "Yes!" Korina breathed, "Just like that."

And then it happened, Jace let out a low moan and his body shook a little, he felt warm liquid oozing down his thighs and he knew he had just cum.

Jace lander just had his first orgasm ever.

Chapter 62

Korina's cheeks heated up in embarrassment as she watched the video again, apart from handling the stress and pain of a hang over, she had to deal with this too.

"That can't be me." She shook her head, "That can't be me, I swear it." She said again not taking her eyes off the video, of course she knew it was her, there was no point in denying it. She was right there, twerking and grinding seductively on James, calling him daddy and his facial expression held shocked and excited as he held her waist unsure of himself, as usual.

"It's you bitch." Daniella said, "That's why I made sure to record it, I knew you were gonna try to deny."

Anne replayed the video from the very beginning and this time, she saw how she had walked up to Jace like a stripper, teased him and danced on him.

Oh my God, She groaned, my drunken ass be doing the most.

"I hate you both!" She whined as her friends laughter increased while they replayed the video and watched it repeatedly, countless number of times.

"At least that should be a thank you, actually an apology to be exact." Her cousin said.

"For what exactly?" Korina questioned her with a scowl.

"For being an ass hat to him." She said, "A remarkable apology."

"I mean look at his face." Anne said pointing at the screen, "He got the grinding of his life, that man ain't never gonna forget you ever."

"Gosh guys." Korina said picking up her coffee mug, "I am so embarrassed and ashamed right now, imagine meeting him on the street or elsewhere, how the hell am I suppose to face him?"

"What do you mean?" Daniella asked stuffing sandwiches in her mouth and Korina was certain that she must have gobbled down more than a dozen.

"These things happen Korina." Anne said, "You just have to let it go, at least he was hot." She winked at her.

"And if you meet next time, it's gonna end on a date or a one night stand." Daniella squealed excitedly.

"Don't you make me fling this cup at you." Korina warned her, " And no more talks about this, I want a quiet, stress free morning."

There was a hush and the girls settled down to having their breakfast without making any further comments.

"Do you think you make him cum tho?" Daniella asked breaking the silence and Korina flung her teaspoon at her, hitting her exactly where she wanted it to, it hit her on her lips.

"What are we toasting to?" Jace asked with a quirked brow on seeing Ade enter his office with a bottle of wine and two wine glasses, "And why the fuck are you dressed in a bright green suit?" His best friend never wore green.

"We are toasting to your first orgasm." He winked at him, Jace grunted and went back to tapping on his laptop.

He can't be serious, He frowned.

"And why I am dressed in a green suit is cause I can dress however I want." He took a seat and placed the items he was holding on the table.

Jace continued typing on his laptop and ignored him as he uncorked the wine bottle and filled the wine glasses.

"You really can't be serious." He said shifting his gaze to him.

"I am." Ade said, "Take." Jace grumbled as he collected the glass being forced in hand.

"So, let's toast." His best friend winked raising his glass, "Cheers to your first orgasm, many more to come bro." They both clinked glasses with Jace still grumbling and Ade roaring with laughter.

"I embarrassed myself big time, Gosh!" He sighed reaching out for the bottle, he poured more wine into his glass, "I can't believe I cummed from just a little twerking like I was some high school pubescent teenager."

"Not bad for your first time ehn, and you call that a little twerking?" His best friend rolled his eyes, "You should be glad tho."

"Did she even realise what was going on at the moment?" He asked.

"I don't know, I don't think she did, she looked dead ass drunk." Ade shrugged, "Too drunk to realise what she was doing, too drunk to realise that she made you cum." He winked.

"Stop it." Jace smiled, "Well, I hope she didn't, I can't imagine facing her after everything and knowing fully well that she might remember what went on."

"Look at the bright side." Ade said, "At least you got your first orgasm."

"Can you please stop stressing that." He groaned, "It's becoming really embarrassing." He complained and he had also began to blush real hard.

"Fine." Ade raised his hands in defeat and took a look at his friend's blushing face before erupting in laughter again.

Mr Russo was back again and this time he put up a more civil act and was calm, but all of it was soon blown away when he asked her on a date and her answer was a big fat no.

"What did you say?"

"NO!" Korina said again, "You want me to spell it out for you?"

His temper flew off the roof and he began to fume.

"What? You gonna scream at me?" She asked as she watched him with his fisted palms and deep breaths he took, like he was trying so hard to control his anger.

"Do you know who I am?" He growled.

"No, as a matter of fact I don't." She shook her head, "And I am absolutely not interested in helping you find yourself so amma just take my leave now."

"You know not who you are testing young lady." He moved closer to her breathing harshly, "I could make your life better than it is or worse."

"First off your breath stinks." She put a hand over her nose dramatically, "Secondly, what are you gonna do?" She asked matching his harsh looks, her gaze unwavering, "Order your men to shoot me?"

She looked at the heavily armed men surrounding them and wondered if it wasn't illegal carrying guns about like this.

"You Little...little...little...ughh." He screamed in frustration, "I am not done with you yet." He huffed and signalled to his men.

Korina watched them marching aggressively away with him towards the cars. They got into their vehicles and drove away speedily and she wondered if the cars were angry too.

Chapter 63

"I am glad you are okay now." Aunt Dido caressed Korina's cheeks looking and smiling at her lovingly, "It's good to see you lively again, I missed the old you."

"I am so sorry Aunt, I am sorry." She apologised hugging the woman tightly. "I am sorry for my childish attitude towards me when you were only trying to help."

"It's okay, Okay everyone." Daniella grumbled, "Enough with all that stuff can we get to the part where we eat the food cause I am starving."

"Oh shut up." Anne hit her with her purse, "Let them be."

"Hungry cow." Korina scoffed pulling away from her aunt's embrace, "Glutton."

"Glutton?" Daniella asked, "says someone who could eat a full chicken."

"Please can you both not argue, I want a very peaceful dinner." Anne reprimanded them both.

The girls helped Daniella's mum set the table, she had prepared a large feast and she invited them over to come share with her.

"Daniella say grace." Her mum asked her. They were all sat at the table now ready to dig in.

"Uhmm... Lord bless this food, Aamen."

Daniella said and immediately dug into the food.

The rest rolled their eyes at her and joined her making small talks as they enjoyed their dinner.

They were in the middle of the food when the doorbell rung.

"Oh let me go get it." Aunt Dido said, she stood up and went to the door.

They heard voices at the door and She returned with a man dressed in a plumber outfit carrying a tool box.

"Jace." Korina whispered on seeing him and the rest girls were shocked just as she was.

"Be right back girls." Aunt Dido said, "I wanna show him what needs to be fixed." She led him away into the house and he didn't even spare them a glance.

"Wow." Anne gasped as soon as they were gone, "so he's a plumber?"

"A hot plumber." Daniella smirked fanning herself.

"What the hell is he doing here?" Korina growled, she wasn't comfortable and she didn't want to see him after what happened at their last meeting.

"He came to paint the house dumb face." Daniella snorted earning a scowl from her. "He's a plumber, what do you expect him to do? Paint houses?"

"I could do that too if you like." All three girls turned to see him standing right there, "I am actually an all weathered kinda guy." He added, he wanted so badly to look at Korina but was afraid that he'd embarrass himself, he was red all over by just being near her now.

The memories of their time at the club together raced back and he shut them out instantly, he didn't want to mess things up or do any thing embarrassing.

"Thanks a lot son." Aunt Dido joined them in the room, "It's working perfectly fine now."

"You are welcome ma'am."

She got her purse and dipped her hand in it to pay him but changed her mind on a second thought, "why don't you join us for dinner Jace? That's your name right?"

Korina's heart accelerated at the mention of him joining them for dinner, No! No! No! Hell no! The fuck no!

"Yes ma'am it is." Jace nodded, he was glad for the invite and was also nervous, he didn't want to stay, "And no thank you, I wouldn't want to impose."

"Oh no." Aunt Dido laughed, "You wouldn't be, we have more than enough."

Before Korina could think, her aunt had already pulled out the chair beside her and Jace got seated and she was already serving him as she had immediately instructed.

Damn! She thoughts she put food on his plate, things happen so fast, she frowned at Daniella and Anne as they giggled in her direction obviously enjoying her torture.

Having dinner with them was not what Jace had planned, he felt nervous as he watched Korina serve him and he noticed her wobbling hands making him wonder if she was as nervous as he was.

"Thank you." He whispered to her as she sat back down, she only nodded before digging back in her food.

The silence at the dinning table was gravely like his presence had changed everything, of course it would, he was a stranger. As time passed Aunt Dido started making conversations and the girls joined in, he just ate his food quietly and was observant.

He got to know the Daniella was the liveliest and loudest amongst them. Anne was a little reserved and Korina was a bit of both.

He watched them converse freely and laughed at some things they said or just nodded and at a point Jace envied them.

He wished he had the type of people around him but he had just Ade and his old mum.

He hoped one day he would be a part of Korina's life and get to share this with her, get laugh and be joyful with her like this.

Soon enough, dinner was over and everyone left, Aunt Dido had coerced Korina to get on the scooter with Jace so she could drop her home, she grumbled and complained but her aunt insisted and there she was holding him tightly again as he drove her home.

The ride was silent, none of them saying a word to each other as they both found the situation awkward.

Jace reached her apartment in no time and Korina jumped down from the scooter immediately.

"Thank you for the ride." She said.

"It was nothing." He said.

He was about to start his bike and be off when the sky rumbled and It started raining heavily.

The heavens poured down all of a sudden.

They both looked at each other, a knowing look.

Korina wanted to cry out in frustration.

What the fuck? She nearly screamed, why the fuck is it even raining in autumn?

Chapter 64

Jace lander ending up on a couch in her apartment with a cup of hot chocolate with his shoes and socks off wasn't what Korina had dreamt to happen, not even in a million years and for some odd reason, she couldn't tear her eyes away from his feet. She thought them attractive, too damn attractive for a man's feet.

"Done checking my feet out?" He smirked at her, he found it pleasing that at least she found something about him attractive.

"I wasn't staring at your feet." She jumped to defend herself lying, "I find them totally displeasing and ugly."

"I know they are not." Jace took a long sip from the mug and leaned backwards on the couch, "Admit it, you are attracted to them and quit denying it."

"Don't you find it weird that we are talking about your feet?" She asked him, if he didn't find it weird, she found it super odd and she wanted it to stop.

"No, I don't." He nodded and kept sipping on the hot liquid.

Korina scoffed at him and turned to look at the wall clock, it was 8:00pm. She glanced at the window, the rain drops landed furiously on the glass and she could see a flash of lightning in the sky.

She knew the rain wasn't going to stop anytime soon and why the fuck is it even raining at this damned time of the year? She was mad, mad that it was raining and furious that a strange attractive man was in her apartment, making himself comfy like they were best of friends.

What the hell? She frowned.

She turned back in her previous direction to speak to him but he wasn't there anymore, the couch was empty.

Korina got alarmed, where is he? Is he inside waiting to kill me?

"Jace!" She screamed, her voice laced with dismay, "Where the hell are you?"

"I am right here." She heard him answer and followed the direction of the voice to the kitchen.

Jace was in the kitchen with her apron on, the gas cooker was on with a pot boiling on it and the kitchen was heated up, several ingredients were laid out on the counter.

The fuck, Korina stared wide eyed, he's fucking cooking in my kitchen.

"Why are you cooking in my house? In my kitchen?" She asked glaring at him harshly, arms folded across her chest, the audacity of this man, gosh!

"I am hungry." He replied opening up the pot and turning the contents of the chopping board into it, "Ain't you dear?"

Before Korina could think of a lie, her stomach rumbled loudly betraying her and giving her away.

"I guess you are." Jace chuckled, "I will be done soon." He winked.

"We are both hungry still doesn't give you enough reason to come into my kitchen and start cooking like you own the damn place." She growled.

He only smiled at her and continued with his cooking, he so wanted to tell her how cute she looked while angry but he figured that would be crossing boundaries and he didn't wanna get kicked out.

"What?!" Korina shrieked, "You are baking too?" She had heard the oven timer go off and saw him turn to the oven, he brought out a tray of brownies and set it on the counter.

"Okay." She took a deep breath, "You entered my kitchen, cooked and baked a tray of brownies." Delicious looking brownies, her subconscious chimed in, "What next? You gonna take a bath and spend the night?"

"Nope." He said turning off the gas cooker, "unless you want me to." He shrugged.

"Don't make me throw you out man." She grumbled and pulled out a chair, she took a seat and sat there watching him while he finished up his cooking.

Jace was done about thirty minutes later. He brought out plates and laid them out, then proceeded in dishing out the food and desert.

The way he did everything with expertise amazed her, as if he had been doing it all his life, she wanted to ask if he had been a chef once and she also hoped and wondered if the dishes would be as delicious as they looked.

Korina watched as he pushed her plate of food carefully towards her.

He had prepared rice, sauce and steak. She wanted to dive in immediately as the aroma invaded her senses but decided to compose herself and not cause further embarrassments.

Jace also took his seat opposite her and set his food in front of him.

"Where did you learn to cook?" Korina asked him as they began to eat, the food tasted so damn good.

"I have practically been on my own for as long as I remember so I had to learn and get these things done." He said and from the look on his face, Korina knew that it was a touchy subject.

"So what exactly do you do?" She him asked diverting from the topic, she stood up and went to get more food from the pots, she was done with her first serving already.

"I can see you are really enjoying my cooking." He smiled as he watched her get more.

"Just managing it." She rolled her eyes trying to deflate his ego, "You haven't answered my question tho."

"Oh that." Jace turned back to his food, "I do all kinds of menial hand jobs painting, plumbing, repairs and other stuff to survive." He said, "I can even repair cars, mechanical and electrical stuff."

"Ohh, that's nice." She nodded at him.

"What do you do?"

"I work at a diner." She replied, "It's mainly a breakfast diner and as you know already, I do part time baking."

"Your pay must really be good." Jace remarked, "Cause your place is damned nice, too damned nice. I guess you aren't one of those under paid waitresses."

"I guess maybe." She laughed, "I am not really highly paid, just have to save up and all that stuff."

"Hmmm." He nodded.

Korina's eyes went to his wrist all of a sudden, something from it glinted brightly in the light.

"Is that what I think it is?" She asked leaning closer for a better view.

"What?" He eyed her suspiciously.

"Is that a Graff Diamonds Hallucination watch?" She shrieked, "You do menial jobs, how in the hell can you afford this?" She frowned, "I can swear it's the watch jeez!"

"Uhmmm." Jace shifted uncomfortably, damn! He swore under his breath, I forgot to take it off, fuck!, "I don't know what you are talking about Korina." He covered his wrist with the other hand.

Of course, he knew what she was saying was true, he had gotten the watch a week earlier.

"It is the watch Jace." She said with a straight face, "The diamonds are glinting."

"It's totally fake, an imitation, you know like the cheap imitations of designers clothes and stuff." He hoped she bought his explanation.

"No man! That shit is real." She argued, "Take your hand off, I wanna see it and I need an explanation." She moved to remove his hand.

"Nope!" He growled, "It's a fake Korina."

Before she could react to him, Jace suddenly jumped over the counter, tackled her and pushed her to the ground, a loud gunshot rang in the air.

Chapter 65

violent scene ahead*

"Why the fuck is someone always trying to kill me?" Korina's voice was filled with rage and she was literally fuming.

"Would you bring your voice down and lessen your tone?" Daniella pleaded, "We are at the hospital."

"Why the hell should I bring it down?" She screamed, "It's either I am getting shot at or someone is trying to run me over or I am getting kidnapped or having I shock. I need a break Goddamit, I am thinking of relocating away from here to the united kingdoms, oh no! That bastard Cole is there. Asia would be better, I would relocate to India..."

Daniella rolled her eyes listening to her cousin rant and with the strength she sported, she knew Korina was strong enough to be discharged now.

"And where the fuck is that man Jace?" Korina asked.

"He is right there." Her cousin pointed to the other side of the room, Jace was sitting there with a bored look on his face, he was tired of Korina's ranting.

"You entered my kitchen without my permission and even cooked and baked." She growled at him.

"You really wanna talk about that now?" He asked, "You weren't complaining when you were gobbling down the food.

" And were you the reason I got shot at?" She asked.

Yes, I was, I am sorry, The words so desperately wanted to come out of his mouth but he didn't want to ruin things, "What the fuck Korina? The hell would you think that for?"

"Did you steal something? Did you kidnap somebody's child? You did something nasty didn't you? Huh? Jace come on, answer me now?" She probed irritatingly.

"Girl!" He growled, "You don't even know me." He cried out and Daniella just watched them both hoping not to get dragged in it.

"Yes, exactly I don't know you and I want you to stay away from me, far far far away from me like the distance from earth and pluto. You and every other man should stay away cause the next thing I know is someone grinding me in a cement mixer and..."

Daniella and Jace listened to her rant her head off without saying a thing.

"And can someone fucking get me out of here before I meet a doctor that courts me and leaves to get married to a king this time."

The man cried out as he felt the saw go through his left leg, the pain was excruciating.

"You thought I wouldn't find you huh?" Jace growled, he took the man's face in his hands, "Who the fuck sent you?"

"I ain't telling you shit." The man spat and a blow was instantly landed to his mouth, two of his teeth fell out, blood pouring out of the sides of his mouth.

"I see you want this the really hard way." He pulled out his gun and began to shoot at the man's toes, Jace counted as he shot each one, his counting gradually being drowned by the man's cry for help.

"Now, I would ask one more time, who sent you and what was your mission?" A knife came down on the man's wrist cutting it away.

"It...it...was Ru...sso..." He said gasping for breath, "Please don't hurt me anymore, I would tell you the truth."

"Okay." Jace smirked, "Speak up, scum!"

"He asked me to assassinate you and bring the girl to him, he knew that you were with her that night. He was keeping tabs on you." He explained, tears were rolling down his eyes non stop.

Jace brought out his gun and aimed at the man's head.

"No...please...don't..." He cried for mercy, Jace stared at him for a long time before pulling the trigger shooting him right on his forehead.

"Cut his head off and wrap it up nicely for me." He instructed his men while pulling off his gloves, "I think Russo would love a very very early pre-chrismas gift."

"What exactly happened?" Anne and Daniella asked Korina as she ate her peas. She had been discharged and they were in her apartment now.

"One moment we were having dinner, the next moment, he was pushing me down on the floor, I heard a gunshot and boom I saw black."

"Oh wow." Both girls remarked astonished at her statement.

"Now to what I actually wanted to know." Daniella said, "What led to him spending the night time at your apartment?"

Korina rolled her eyes at her cousin and began relating what happened.

"He cooked and like real good?" Anne asked.

"Yep, he did."

"Wow." She said, "Majority of men can't do that."

"I know right, I was surprised myself and his expertise was amazing."

"So, who do you think did that?" Daniella asked.

"Did what?"

"Tried to shoot you."

"I don't know." Korina sighed, "But I do know the next time it happens and I end up alive, I am moving out of this continent."

Jace stood at the door and knocked, he was going to wait patiently for her to come open the door and shut it in his face and that would be the fourth time.

The door opened again and Korina was there glaring more than death glares at him now.

"Mr man." She growled, "What the fuck do you want? What part of no you can't come in don't you get or should I say it in gun language?"

"Korina, please can we talk?" He pleaded again using the same words he had used the previous times.

"No, we can't talk."

"Okay, can I come in then?"

"No, for fucks sake, you can't come in Jace." She growled, "You really are thick headed."

"Please?"

"Nope."

"Pretty please."

"No!"

"Please with cherries on top." He grinned annoyingly.

"What the hell do you want Jace?" She felt like scracthing his face.

"I want to date you Korina."

"What?! " She got alarmed by his forwardness, "Hell no!" She grabbed the flowers in his hands and threw them at him.

"Why wouldn't you date me?" Jace asked calmly.

"Me not wanting to is enough reason in the first place."

"No it's not Korina." He told her, "That's a very invalid reason."

"Says who?" She scoffed.

"Date me." He demanded ignoring her question.

"Nope."

"I swear I will keep on pestering you till you agree."

"Fine!" She yelled, "You are only gonna get tired man, bring it on!"

Chapter 66

Korina saw Jace everywhere, at her place of work, at the mall, on the streets, at the movies.

She saw Jace when she went out with the girls, she saw him when she went to the convenience store.

Jace was everywhere, and everywhere had Jace.

She was running crazy, her stress ball was equally stressed. She swore that the next time she saw him, she would kill him and get rid of that handsome face of his.

Handsome? Her conscience had questioned, oh now, you find him handsome.

She knew that if she saw him one more time she would literally go crazy.

"I swear, I am going nuts if I see that man one more time." She had told her friends, and they had laughed.

Anne and Daniella found the situation very funny and they saw no reason why Korina was refusing Jace.

She had threatened them both that if they rooted for Jace again it would be a question of their friendship and after that they both dropped the issue, none rooting for him anymore.

"Don't you think she's gonna get really irritated by you, if you keep on like this." Ade asked Jace as they were inspecting one of his warehouses.

They had received new shipments of arms and wanted to check them out themselves to avoid any mess ups.

"Dude." Jace laughed, "She is already irritated." He lifted a cloth wrap and threw it open revealing a pack of bullets, "You should have seen her face the last time we met, She wanted to explode in anger."

"And you think it's a good thing for you to piss her off and irritate her always."

"Yes." Jace nodded, "She's gonna get so angry and I would irk her so much that she would agree to go on a date with me just to get rid of me."

"You think it's gonna work that way?"

"You would see." Jace patted his shoulder, "Just wait." He smirked.

Korina was so excited that she finally got someone to wash her windows and glass walls. She didn't know who it was yet and wasn't interested in knowing, all she cared for was that her windows got washed.

"No." She told Daniella over the phone, "I have no plans of going out today."

"Why?" Daniella asked over the phone. "I know if I go out, I am gonna see that lunatic Jace and my day is gonna be ruined."

"Suit yourself."

"Yes I will, If I stay in today, I can totally avoid him. It's not like he's gonna be the one to wash my windows." She laughed.

"Okay bye, see you tomorrow."

"Yea you too." They said their goodbyes and Korina got down to making sandwiches.

She was enjoying her sandwiches later that afternoon and flipping through a magazine admist the squishy sounds coming from the window area.

Her attention was only commanded when she heard a continuous tapping on her window. She ignored it at first and then turned to look when it grew repetitive.

Jace Lander was standing there dressed in an overall holding a wide brush, waving at her and smiling widely.

She thought she was hallucinating and shook her head before looking again.

Jace was actually there, washing her windows and she wanted to scream.

Korina was livid, through out the weeks since he promised to always bother her, she had been seeing him non stop and now he was here washing her windows and smiling brightly like he was totally innocent.

She wanted to haul something at his face and knock out his perfect teeth, destroying his beautiful smile. You find his smile beautiful, She smacked herself mentally.

"Jace is in my house and he's washing my windows for goodness sake. What is going on?" Korina whispered harshly into the phone?

"Well... Uhmm... I don't know why you're taking it out on me?" Daniella said sipping her drink, She was getting her nails done, "I am here getting my manicure done, I don't know how you expect me to know what's going on there."

"Don't you dare piss me off Daniella." Korina growled at her and her cousin wondered if she bore any resemblance with Jace that made Korina wanna take out all the anger on her.

"Calm down sis."

"This man is here and I am so livid." She growled, "I am fucking going to kill someone."

"Then you go to Jail." Daniella said stating facts.

She was about to reply when she heard the door bell ring, so she put an end to the call and walked over to the door.

"Hi." Jace smiled widely at Korina immediately she opened the door, he saw that she was seething with rage, "Why do you look so angry Korina?"

"You asking me?" She growled, "You can't be serious!"

"I am done washing your windows." He told her.

"Well good." Korina gave him a sinister smile, "I hope I never have to see your annoying face ever again."

Jace's face fell, he was hurt by her words, really? Am I that bad? Is there something wrong with me?

"You would be seeing me a lot Korina, more than the times you have seen me previously." Jace said giving her a determined look, "You would see me everywhere till you agree to go on a date with me."

"You are sick." She poked a finger at his chest.

"As a matter of fact I am." He smirked, "I won't stop."

"Arrgh!" Korina let out a frustrated scream, "What the hell is your problem?"

"Go on a date with me." He requested, "Please."

"No!" She replied, "Hell no!"

"Get ready to see more of me." He said, "And it's a promise."

"I would kill you." She stared at him, "Get off my back."

"Just one date Korina."

She stared at him, at his long hair, his beautiful face and eyes, he can't be that bad, She thought.

"Please?" Jace pleaded.

"One date and you are out of my life for good?" She asked and he nodded with a grin.

"Fine." Korina sighed, "One date."

Chapter 67

Korina was really excited about her date with Jace but she lied to her friends that she just wanted to get it over and done with.

She didn't want them to know that she was anticipating their date.

"I am only doing this cause after the date I am never gonna see him again." She said to them.

"Your eyes speak differently." Daniella teased her, "I can see the excitement."

"What?!" Korina turned to her cousin, "You are a psychologist now?"

"Look Korina, the boy ain't that bad." Anne said, "Give him a chance, some benefit of doubt maybe, he definitely can't be all that bad."

"That's exactly what I thought about Cole too but look what happened." She sighed, "See, that man Jace is really annoying and I ain't ready for a relationship. In other words, after this date, it's bye bye to him."

Daniella and Anne looked at her not saying a word and Korina was glad that they bought her pretense or at least she thought they bought it, she couldn't let them see that she took quite a liking towards Jace and that she was scared.

She had a strong ass woman picture to put up and she rather it remain just like that.

"Where are you taking her?" Ade asked Jace, "Have you made a decision yet?"

Jace looked up from the engine of his Ferrari he was bent over working on, "I don't know yet man." He said, "Have no idea what she might like or want to do."

"Take her out to Del cruzzos." His best friend suggested, "It's a really nice place, she would love it, all females love it."

"Nah man." Jace shook his head, "Then she would question how I afforded the place and then she would find out the truth."

"Are you planning on hiding it from her forever?" Ade asked with raised brows.

"I am not." He replied, "It's just that, things haven't moved between us yet and she's even planning on getting rid of me after this date which of course I wouldn't allow."

Ade watched his best friend as he spoke further, "I want things to go smoothly between me and Korina and then everything would fall into place like she knowing the truth."

"Okay." Ade shrugged, "As you wish bro."

Jace closed the bonnet and got into the car, Ade got in with him.

"Time to plan this date." He said starting the engine.

Mark was sure that Korina had glanced at the wall clock like a million times in the last couple minutes.

"I thought you said you didn't like him." He snorted at her.

"I do not." She lied huffing, a frown developing on her face.

"Yea right and you keep glancing at the clock to check what time it is."

"That's cause I am excited to get him out of my life." She said, liar, her subconscious backlashed, bloody liar.

"You are attracted to him." Mark attacked.

"I am not."

"Admit it, you find him handsome."

"I do not." She lied again as if she hadn't wondered what kissing his lips would feel like.

"Liar." Mark snorted and left, leaving her behind the counter.

She watched him go and then turned to glance at the clock again and a smile developed on her face, finally it was 8:00 Pm, time for her date.

Jace was leaning against his scooter when she saw him, his hands tucked in his pockets, his legs crossed and head lightly bent.

His hair wasn't packed this time, he let it loose and some of it fell over with his head bent, he was clad in a simple white T-shirt, denim jeans and big black boots.

"Hi." She greeted on reaching him, he looked up at her and she couldn't help but smile.

"So you aren't so angry to see me today?" He asked.

"Who told you that?" Korina asked frowning immediately.

"You smiled." He laughed, "Don't deny it, I saw it, I caught you."

Korina rolled her eyes at him, "What's with the basket?" She asked noticing a picnic basket on the bike.

"You would find out when we get to our date location." Jace said getting on the bike, "Hop on."

The ride went through familiar roads and Korina knew they were going to the place they hung out on the night they first met.

She was glad that he had picked the place for their date, she felt at peace the first time she was there and she wanted to get that feeling again.

They reached the spot and got down from the ride.

Jace took her hand and led her into the trees and to the clearing.

They got there in no time and Korina sat on the grass staring at Jace as he unloaded the basket.

"You cooked?" She asked taken by surprise as he brought out food flasks laying them on the picnic blanket he had spread out earlier.

"Of course I did." He replied bringing out plates and cutleries with a bottle of wine and glass cups.

She watched him put things in place, admiring him as he did so.

He was done soon, "Come here." He demanded patting an empty space on the blanket and Korina got up proceeding to join him on the blanket.

He tossed the empty basket aside and faced her, his gaze on her giving her the feels.

The place was clearly and beautifully illuminated by the moonlight as the moon was exceedingly bright that night.

"Thank you." Jace said with a smile, "Thanks a lot."

"For?" Korina asked him confused.

"For agreeing to finally go on a date with me."

"I only agreed to this to get rid of you." She scoffed.

"Really?" Jace laughed, "We would see about that, won't we?"

"There aren't snakes here right?" She asked looking in the direction of the bushes.

"Nope, I can assure you of that." He said to her lessening her fears.

Jace always made sure the place was fumigated constantly to avoid snakes and other pests.

"So what are we gonna do?" Korina asked as he dished out food for them.

"I won't ask you questions or anything." He said, "We are just gonna eat, chill and watch a movie."

"Oh, cool." She shrugged, "A movie? Where?"

"On my phone."

The moon light shone beautifully on the dou as they happily ate up the food and watched the notebook.

He was really surprised that she hadn't seen it before.

Her eyes were glued to the screen as he watched her and he was really content at the moment, gazing at her as the moon shone brightly on her dark skin, he smiled, he was happy just to have her by his side.

Chapter 68

Korina didn't get rid of Jace on the first date as she vowed, in fact she had gone on many other simpler dates with him after that and she had taken more than a liking towards him.

"So are you guys like a thing now?" Daniella asked as she watched Korina apply extra mascara on her lashes.

"No Dan!" Korina sighed, "We are just two friends hanging out and having lots of fun."

"But you like him uhn?" She was smiling at her teasingly.

"Not deep feelings idiot but only as a person I love to hang out with." Korina rolled her eyes at her cousin, "And quit trying to get me into admitting my feelings, I do not have feelings for him."

"Uh uh... Whatever you say girl." Daniella stood up from the bed as Korina signalled her to come help with her zip, "Why haven't you made Anne and I formally meet him yet?"

"You haven't cause there is nothing between us, we are just friends." She let out an exasperated puff and grabbed her hand bag, "Drop the issue dear."

"Fine! Fine!" Daniella raised her hands, "Have a nice and safe day at work."

"Thank you." They air kissed.

She bade her cousin farewell and rushed out of the house.

Korina walked into the restaurant and groaned, a long irritating groan.

Mr.Russo was right there waiting for her with a bunch of what she knew not in his hands.

"Good morning beautiful." He said in a sing song voice that sounded like nails being scratched on a black board.

She cringed and walked right past him behind the counter and into the kitchen.

"He is here again?" Mark asked on seeing Korina enter the kitchen with a scowl on her face, she was literally huffing and puffing.

"Damn yes! He is." She growled, "I have to come every morning and see his annoying ass face, like who the fuck does he this he is?"

"I wonder myself." Mark shook his head.

"Men!" Korina shrieked, "So damn annoying."

Mark rolled his eyes, "Me included?"

"Oh come on, didn't mean it like that." She reached out and playfully ruffled his hair, "you are never annoying to me."

"Yea, right." He scoffed, "Jace dropped by earlier and stay away from my hair, it gets me my girlfriend all the time." He warned putting his hair back in place.

"He did?" She looked up at him and he saw the way her face lighted up at the mention of his name, "What did he say?"

"You don't like him huh?" He snorted, "Just look at your face at the mention of his name."

"Ughh! Not you too." Korina frowned, "Would you all stop it already?"

"Your face literally lighted up when I said he dropped by." Mark said, "Stop denying your feelings for him already."

"I do not like him." She sighed, "We are just friends and what did he say?"

"He brought flowers and a box of chocolates." He said, "I placed them in your locker and hmmm..."

"Hmmm...what?"

"I ate a little of the chocolate."

"Glutton!" She growled and smacked him before leaving.

Korina got to the locker room and went straight hers, putting in the key combination, she opened the locker.

In there sat a small bouquet of yellow roses, they were are favourites, she smiled, how did he know?

The last time she had received yellow roses was when she still had her stalker on her neck, she shuddered at the thought and bent to pick up the box of chocolates.

Mark ate a little out if it alright, he ate twelve pieces out of fifteen.

Jace really felt like pulling the trigger and shooting Russo right between his eyes and also on his mouth cause he talked too much.

He wanted so badly to have the man dead at his feet, he riled him up way too much.

"Waoh! Waoh! Waoh!" Russo said, "Calm down Jace or should I call you your real name?"

"What the fuck are you doing here at my work place?" He growled still holding up the gun, I should just shoot him, finish him up and be done with his ass, He so wanted to carry out his thoughts.

"I came to pay my best rival a visit and hang out with him." Russo stated calmly taking a seat, he crossed is legs and relaxed comfortably, "My greatest rival in the mafia, business and now in a woman."

"Stay the fuck away from her." Jace growled knowing fully well he was talking about Korina, he knew about Russo's plans, his moves on her even tho she hadn't mentioned all about it to him, he knew it all, he had eyes on her always.

"Hmm...should I?" He stormed his chin thoughtfully, an act that irritated Jace, "What do you say I tell her about you?"

"What the hell do you mean?" Jace growled.

"I will tell her the whole truth about you and she would like to know about her dead mother too, yunno?" He was getting more on Jace's nerves by the minute.

"You wouldn't fucking dare me Russo." He growled at him, "Don't fucking push me."

"Does she know how filthy rich you are? Does she know you are a murderer and you run one of the deadliest mafia organization?"

"Why can't you fucking stay out of my business?" He had dropped the gun now, his fists were balled by his sides with strained knuckles and his face was red with anger.

Russo smirked enjoying Jace's reaction, "How about I tell her how daddy passed you around and used you daily as his sex toy?"

That statement pushed Jace to the edge, he leapt over the office table to where Russo was and tackled him to the ground, he wrapped a hand around his neck and landed a punch right in his face.

Russo screamed, he knew he was no match for him as each punch descended , Jace's fist got red with blood.

He was ready to beat the living day lights out of the man.

"And what's his explanation for not wanting to see me?" Korina asked, she was hurt.

Jace had ignored and cancelled all their dates, he hadn't texted nor called nor did he pick or reply hers.

She was happy that she hadn't seen Russo's face in a while but Jace ignoring her ruined everything.

"Is he...yunno...done?" She asked.

"It's not like that Korina." Ade tried to pacify her, he didn't know how to explain things.

He looked at his best friend on the bed, fast asleep and still confined with the metal clasps.

"He's just going through hard times now." He said.

"And is that why he hasn't spoken to me or anything for days?" She asked.

"Look..."

"Save it Ade, I know, I get the memo, he's done." She growled, "I don't ever want to see you or that piece of shit that calls himself Jace ever again." She put an end to the call and fell back on her bed.

Korina curled up and sniffed, this was exactly why she didn't anything to do with a man.

Now another fool she had begun to like had stood her up again.

She should have stuck with her vow on her mother's grave but she didn't and here she was crying over man.

Chapter 69

"Serves you right, dipshit!" Daniella scowled at Jace as she watched him press the ice pack to his bruised face.

He hissed at the feel.

"Oh come on Dan." Anne reprimanded her, "Cut the man some slack."

"Thank you, Anne." Jace said, at least someone reason's here.

"Shut the fuck up!" She screamed at him, "You deserve worse."

He let out a deep breath, just when he thought that Anne was reasonably on his side.

"What gave you the other black eye?" Both girls asked him.

"I went over to Korina's to have a talk with her." He explained, "But immediately she opened the door and saw me, she landed a punch in my face and shut the door."

"Oh!" Anne said with a frown.

"And then I came here and Daniella did exactly the same damn thing." He continued, "What the hell is wrong with you all?"

"What is wrong with us?" Daniella looked at him like he had craters on his head, "I really should get you tied to an electric chair and electrocute your balls off."

"Okay Dan, hollup." Anne held her, "There shall be no need for that."

"Oh let me at him." She growled trying to escape from Anne's grip.

"It's okay babe." Anne said, "And you!" She turned to Jace, "Explain yourself."

"He dosen't need to explain himself, leave him be!" Ade said harshly from the corner of the room where he was, he had been silent all along, "Leave Jace alone." He said getting over protective over his friend, knowing fully well Jace couldn't talk about his issues to them.

"Hey!" Daniella pointed a finger at him, "All because you are handsome and I find you incredibly attractive dosen't mean you can talk how the hell you want." She slapped a hand across her mouth on hearing her own words, what the fuck is wrong with me?

Ade smirked at her and relaxed back in his chair, so she thought him handsome and found him attractive.

Jace looked between Daniella and Ade then shook his head before talking, "Let's just say I was sick and in a hard place so I couldn't really see anyone." He explained, "It really is complicated to explain, very complicated."

"Yea, right." Daniella scoffed, "Men and their lies." She said, "Complicated indeed."

Jace was tired, he didn't know why they just couldn't believe him.

"Really?" Anne said, "You saying the truth?"

"Yes, I am." He hoped that they believed him, at least he wasn't lying, "Just come help me plead with her, please."

"Okay." Daniella sighed, "You do look down, sick and drained, so I guess, I believe you."

"But that's not a valuable reason to completely avoid her." Anne said, "Our friend was in pain cause of you and unless there is something you are hiding from us all, I don't see any reason in what you did."

"I am not hiding anything." He said quietly, "Stop doubting me."

"My friend is saying the absolute truth." Ade stood up and walked over to them, "Just help him out please."

"Okay fine, we would." Anne nodded, "Right Daniella?" She turned to her but she found her staring at Ade, "Ahemmm..." She cleared her throat comanding her attention.

"Right, right." Daniella turned to Anne, "We would totally help him."

Anne made a mental note to question her about her acts later, she was sure she could have a growing crush on Ade.

"Thanks a lot." Jace said, "Thank you both very much."

"What the fuck?!" Anne suddenly screamed, she was starting at Jace's feet, "Daniella look at his feet."

Both girls looked down and squealed, "Are those fucking real Alexander Mcqueen sneakers?!" Anne asked, eyes wide with shock.

Jace looked up at his best friend and gulped, he was in big trouble.

Trying to convince a supermodel that the sneakers he was putting on were fake when they weren't wasn't easy.

"Are you a stinking rich billioniare or something?" Anne had asked him, "You had better not be lying to us all these while."

"They are fake, come on." He shrugged trying to make it look like he was saying the truth, "How could I even afford them in the first place, I survive off menial Jobs." He had explained hoping she bought it.

And of course Anne hadn't believed his lies one bit, she only nodded and agreed when Daniella had pleaded with her to stop asking him questions and that they had to plead with Korina before it became too late.

So, they all left the apartment and rode in Anne's car to Korina's place.

Getting Korina to talk to Jace wasn't a lenient task and they were still on it.

In fact when they got there, she had attacked Jace and punched him again but not before kneeding Ade in the balls.

"You both brought those men here." Korina screamed at her friends, "I am beginning to rethink our friendship, I can't believe you brought them here."

"And you mark!" She turned to Mark who was leaning on her kitchen island, "You let them in and I clearly asked you not to."

"Daniella threatened me." He raised his hands, "Totally not my fault."

"Threatened you?!" Daniella turned to him with a questioning look, "I offered you a box of chocolates and you willingly let us in."

"Offering me a big box of chocolates is like a threat." He said, "Cause you know I can't resist."

Korina glared at him angrily and bent to take her slipper off, she hurled it at Mark.

"Get out! Get the hell out!" She screamed, "Get out you three, join those mad men outside."

Korina finally let them all in when her anger weared off.

They were all seated in her living room now with Korina staring daggers at Jace and he knew if looks could kill, he could have been dead under her gaze.

"So." Daniella started, breaking the silence, "Are you two gonna talk or you gonna keep starting at each other?" She asked.

"I think we should excuse them." Anne said, "So they could be able to talk alone."

"You are right." Ade agreed with her.

"I even have to meet with my girlfriend anyway." Mark informed them.

They all stood up and left the apartment leaving just Jace and Korina alone.

Chapter 70

"I am sorry." Jace apologised for the umpteenth time but korina still said no word, "Please talk to me, please."

"I want you to leave." She said finally speaking, she still hadn't lessened her glare on him, "I don't want you here."

"You still haven't given me a chance to explain myself." He said to her, she really was stubborn, "You haven't heard me out yet."

"What's your excuse uhn?" She growled at him, "Look I have been through this whole process. You already gave the memo, I get it, you ignored me for days without explanation and now you are here, for what?"

"I came to explain myself, jeez!"

"What do you wanna say?" She rolled her eyes, "Talk, explain yourself."

"Please sit down." He pleaded gesturing to the sofa.

She huffed and took a seat, "Speak." She said.

"Look, I had..." Jace started but was rudely cut off by Korina.

"Anytime a man starts with the word 'look'." She yelled, "He is about to lie."

"Korina." Jace sighed, "Would you please let me at least talk."

"No! Get out." She glared at him, "You aren't even my boyfriend yet and you are acting like this." She mumbled with her hands folded across her chest.

"So you want me to be your boyfriend?" Jace smirked, her words raising his hopes, maybe she actually likes me?

"I...i...never said that." Korina muttered looking away from him, "Leave my presence please."

"Look Korina." He stood up and joined her where she sat, "I had been through rough patches these past few days and I promise you, you wouldn't want to get involved."

"Really?" She turned to him, "Why make me feel special if I can't get involved in your life?" She questioned and told herself that she had to tone it down, she wasn't his girl nor his wife.

"I am sorry for making you feel bad." He apologised, "What matters is that I am here now."

Korina sighed and turned to him, "I thought you left Jace." She let him hold her hands, "I thought it was happening all again and..."

"Shh." He brought a finger to her lips silencing her, "I am never leaving you I promise." He said, not even in the after life, he thought but not saying the words out loud, he didn't want her thinking he was a freak.

As they laid there watching television, Korina felt weird that they were acting like a couple, she looked up at him and her eyes met his.

"I caught you staring." They both said and then laughed.

"What were you staring at?" Jace asked Korina meeting her gaze bodly.

"I was admiring you." She reached out a hand and grazed his face with her finger tips, "You are quite handsome, have I ever told you that?" She asked and was shocked by her boldness.

She wanted to stop, afraid that she would tell him about how she felt.

"Do you have feelings for me Korina?" He asked suddenly wanting to be sure so he could push things faster than they were.

"No!" Korina sat up immediately, "No, I don't have feelings for you." She shook her head lying to him and Jace's face fell but he quickly braced up not wanting her to see it.

"Are you sure?" He asked again.

"Yes Jace, I am." She replied, "We are just friends hanging out and stuff. Nothing special or serious."

"What?!" Jace stood up hurt by her words, "Nothing special or serious?" He repeated what she had said.

"Look Jace..."

"Save it Korina." He said sternly, "Is that how you see this? If it was nothing special or serious, why hang out with me? Why get mad that I ghosted on you for over a week? Why get angry that I didn't tell you what was going on?"

She just stared at him not knowing an answer to give, she opened her mouth to speak but closed It on seeing that no reasonable words could come out.

"Am I a joke to you Korina?" He asked.

"No Jace, you are not, I didn't mean it like that." She reached to touched him but he flinched.

"Then damn! Why do you keep acting like this, leading me on only to withdraw?"

"I don't know what you are talking about." She lied.

"You don't know what I am talking about?" He glared at her walking closer to where she stood, "you come close to me, touch me, go on dates with me, laugh and Joke with me.

Well, very well you know I have got feelings for you but you keep giving me mixed signals. These past few days I have been in shambles but also had a glimmer of hope that you asked after me and got angry that I ghosted. It made me believe that at least you felt something for me, but what now? It's suddenly nothing special."

Korina just stared at him as he let it all out, he let out all he felt in one deep breath, tears welled in her eyes, she could see that he was hurt through his eyes, he wasn't really good at hiding his emotions.

"What?!" He voice was raised, "You are suddenly speechless."

"Jace..." She called hoping he would listen, how was she suppose to let him know that she was scared, scared to get her heart broken again, scared to be used over and over again.

"Swear you don't feel anything for me Korina." He moved way too close to her, "Swear it and I would leave never to bother you again."

"I..." She couldn't finish her words, she just looked up at him, he was way to close now, their bodies touching, his breath fanning her face.

"Swear it?" He whispered.

Korina looked up at him, into his gleaming grey eyes, she didn't have to swear, she had to show him.

She grabbed him aggressively by the collar and pulled him down smashing her lips onto his.

Jace was moved by shock, she's kissing me? This is happening in real life, his thoughts were excited.

He tried to match the pace of her lips, their tongues englufed in a heated erotic dance.

This kiss was better than they both imagined. He pulled her closer by the waist and dominated her mouth, she moaned into submission.

After their heated lip lock, they pulled apart trying to catch their breaths.

"Korina, you stole my first kiss, you are automatically my girlfriend now, no buts!"

First kiss, She stared at him wide eyes, what did he just say?

She had no time to think as he grabbed her by the waist, squeezed her ass and smashed his lips onto hers again, his mouth claiming hers.

Chapter 71

"And that's how you became his girlfriend?" Daniella asked with a shocked expression, she couldn't believe what Korina just told her.

"I am not his girlfriend." Korina rolled her eyes at her cousin, "He might have been joking or something and how's that even his first kiss?" She laughed loudly and stopped when she noticed her friends staring at her, their eyes unblinking.

"What?!" She asked them, "What is it? Why are you staring at me like that?"

"I am very sure it his first kiss." Anne said, "Strange I know, but have you seen that man around you, man! He's always nervous, I doubt he had ever approached a woman before you."

"Anne is right and he is definitely serious about the girlfriend thing, like this dude is really into you."

"Hmm." Korina just nodded at them.

"And you like him?" Daniella asked.

"Don't ask her girl." Anne said, "She fucking likes him."

"I do not like him." Korina lied again.

"Yea, right!" Daniella scoffed, "You love him then."

"Stop it Dan!" She growled.

"Stop lying Korina, admit you like him." Anne probed.

"Fine! Fine! I do." She grunted, "Happy?"

Her friends only answered her with giggles and she blushed at them, She liked Jace, She liked him a lot but she was frightened.

She didn't want to give her all to a relationship that would come crumbling down eventually.

"What if she doesn't accept to be your girlfriend? What would you do?" Ade asked his friend as he watched him throw aggressive punches at the black punching bag.

They were in the gym in Jace's house working out.

"She doesn't have a choice man." Jace smirked then paused for a moment to catch his breath, "She's mine now, I am done beating around the bush, I want her and I wanna have her, now!"

"Finally that's my man." Ade smiled patting Jace's back, "Time to go after what you want."

"Yea." Jace sighed, "I have waited for too long."

"But I think you should tell her the truth." Ade said, "About everything, you wouldn't want her finding out from a source that ain't you."

"I will but not now..." He said, " Not now."

He didn't want Korina to leave him, he had the feeling she would once she found out all he had hidden from her, he was determined on keeping it all away from her till he could tell that she was gonna stay.

Korina was just getting out of the bathroom when her phone began to ring.

She walked carefully to where she kept it not wanting to slip and picked the phone when she got to where it was.

"Hello." She spoke into the receiver, It was an unknown number.

"Hey Kitten." It was Jace, his rich baritone voice drilling through her ears causing her pleasure.

"Jace?" She asked, "How did you get my number? I don't remember giving you this line."

"I am your boyfriend remember?"

"About that I..."

"Shh babe." He hushed her, "Get prettied up, I am coming over." She never got to respond even tho she had a lot to say, he had hung up.

She dropped the phone and walked to her closet, smiling sheepishly to herself as she got dressed, she was excited that he was coming over.

Korina had changed her clothing numerous number of times and she was getting riled up that she hadn't found the perfect one.

Why am I trying so hard to impress him? she thought, it's just a home date, nothing more or less so I definitely have to calm the fuck down.

It was either an outfit was too slutty or she found it too plain, she had never had it hard deciding on an outfit till this very moment.

Later on she settled for a big T-shirt and knee length shorts. Her hair was tied up in a silk scarf and she only had lip gloss on, she sat on the couch patiently awaiting his arrival.

The door bell rang and she raced towards it not hiding her excitement, she threw the door open.

"Hey Jace." She jumped on him hugging him tightly.

"Easy." He laughed, "Calm down babe."

She got released from his embrace, "What's wrong?" She asked seeing his face contort in pain and he was slouching grabbing his right shoulder.

"What happened to you Jace?" Her voice evident with worry, "Her you alright?"

"I got shot." He replied.

Korina looked at his arm to confirm his statement and saw the blood oozing through his white shirt, she went into panic mode and let out a loud scream.

Jace winced as Korina touched the cotton bud on the bleeding area, "Can you sit still and stop acting like a child?" She huffed, "I am trying to clean up your wound."

"Damn woman." He grunted, "It hurts, so freaking much."

"Well, I didn't ask you to go get shot, did I?" She glared at him, "Sit still and let me clean this up."

"Can I at least get a kiss?" Jace pouted winking at her.

"Nope." She wanted to smack his head, "Not until you tell me what the hell is going on."

Jace didn't say a word, he just leaned back and let her clean him up.

"Here." She stretched out her hands holding a glass of water and pills, averting her gaze, "Drink it up and get some rest."

"You know Korina." Jace collected them from her, "You can peek at my abs if you want to, I am all yours and I don't bite." He smirked.

Korina's cheeks got flamed up, she knew he must have caught her trying not to look, "Shut up Jace, you are just so full of yourself." She hit him on his back causing him to smile real wide.

Hours later of him trying to convince Korina that he was shot by accident, he was knocked out, asleep on the couch.

Korina didn't know if it was the weariness or pain or the after effect of the pills.

She had things to do but she sat there watching a shirtless Jace snoring slightly as his sleep got deeper.

Chapter 72

"So are you ready to talk?" Korina asked Jace, they were having breakfast.

He had woken up earlier before her and prepared it. The pain in his arm had reduced, it wasn't the first time he was getting shot.

"There is nothing to talk about." He responded dryly while refilling his glass with orange juice, "I was on my way here and I got shot."

"I don't believe you Jace." She deadpanned, "Something isn't right, you are keeping things away from me."

"I am not." He lied, "Just trust me Korina and let it go."

"Trust you?" She looked at him, "I don't even know much about you, I don't know where you live, who your parents are and other important stuff."

"And I don't know much about you either." He lied again, "I only know that you have been hurt severely."

"Yea right." She scoffed.

"Wanna know about me?" He asked staring at her and she nodded excitedly.

"I am in the mafia." Jace winked, "Give me all the names of people that hurt you and I would say a very pleasant hi to them."

Korina looked at him and bursted out with laughter, "In the mafia?" She scoffed, "You can't be serious man."

"Okay." He shrugged, "If you say so." He didn't bother arguing or trying to convince her. He figured that they would discuss it another time.

"I know a man that runs a mob tho." Korina said as she reached out to open the jam and began spreading it on her bread, "A bald headed guy. His name is Russo and damn he's fucking annoying."

Jace went silent, he knew Russo had been bothering her and he was alarmed.

What if the fucker carries out his threat and tells her about me? He pondered.

"Jace." She called him seeing he had zoned out, "Jace!" She called louder.

"Yes?" He turned his attention back to her, "What was that?"

"Are you even listening to me?" She asked, "You zoned out."

"Sorry love." He dug back in his food, "I was in deep thought, sorry."

"What were you thinking about?" She asked him curiously.

"What did the man say to you?" Jace asked Korina and she assessed him with raised brows, he looked disturbed.

"He wants me to date him." She shrugged, "And then he got a little aggressive and harsh when I said no."

"He laid his hands on you?" He growled.

"No." Korina shook her head, "Calm down Jace." She reached out a hand and touched his touched rubbing it in circles, "His words just got heated that's all."

"Stay away from him and any other man Korina."

"What do you mean by that?" She glared at him, any other man? The words rang in her head.

"You are mine." He said calmly, "I don't want any other man near you." His tone was authoritative now, "You are mine, you are my woman."

Korina found herself clenching at the sound of his voice, the way he exerted dominance and possessiveness.

"I am not yours Jace." She challenged him ignoring the ache now developing between her thighs, she decided to be stubborn.

"You don't have a say in this." He growled at her, "We both like each other, you stole my first kiss and now we are a couple."

"Oh cut the bull shit will you?!" She stood up, what the hell is wrong with me? Why am I acting like this? Of course I like him a lot.

"This ain't bull shit babe." He said watching her calmly.

"Cut it all, the first kiss thing, it's definitely not your first kiss and I ain't yours man."

"Don't piss me off woman." Her words were beginning to hurt him and he had began to over think, "We like each other, stop making things worse."

"You are going to behave like every other man in my life." She screamed at him, "Leave now!"

"Okay, okay, if that's what you want." Jace was livid, he couldn't argue with her anymore, he grabbed his things and left the apartment slamming the door behind him.

Ade rushed into the house and straight to the kitchen where he guessed Jace would be.

Broken dishes and glass utensils scattered on the floor, the kitchen was a mess like there was an aggressive fight in it.

Of course there was a fight, Jace must have battled with himself and destroyed all these out of anger. He shook his head and sighed, it wasn't the first time it was happening.

"Jace." He called to his friend who was leaning against the counter, he had bloody knuckles and he looked weak.

"Jace." Ade called again and still got no response, "Come on man, I am right in front of you, you can't ignore me like this."

"Ade, I need some time alone please." He got off the counter and started walking out of the kitchen.

"Look." His bestfriend called after him, "You have got to quit all these." Ade followed him, "How would sh..."

"I said I fucking need to be alone." He roared and Ade fell silent, he watched Jace drag himself up the stairs and to his room.

He hated seeing his best buddy like this, in this terrible state, he had to talk to Korina.

She didn't bother wiping her tears or cleaning her running nose when she heard the door bell ring. She raced to the door immediately with renewed excitement thinking it was Jace.

"I am so sorry Jace." Korina said flinging the door open but she got disappointed on seeing not Jace but Ade there.

"Oh it's you." Her voice was low, "Come in."

They got into the apartment and got seated.

"He's done with me right?" She sniffed, "He sent you to tell me, I understand I have be..."

"He needs you Korina." Ade interjected her, he took a look at her face and was glad to see she was affected as much as his friend was, "My friend needs you and you have feelings for him, why are you making this hard?"

"It's hard Ade." She sobbed, "It's hard to trust someone again and he's keeping a lot of things from me, I don't even know who he really is."

"Look." He said, "Get to know him more, date him and every other thing would fall in place, I promise you. Just trust the process." Ade told her hoping she'd understand, he didn't want to be the one to divulge to her about Jace's secret life.

"What if things go wrong?"

"You have to take the risk." He stood up, "You have to give a shot at this if you truly care and if you don't wanna lose him forever."

His words brought her hurt.

Ade left the apartment leaving a crying Korina to do a lot of thinking and reflection.

Chapter 73

"You haven't heard from him?" Daniella asked Korina while adjusting her sunglasses.

"What's up with the large sun shades and dark fringe wig?" She asked her cousin ignoring her question.

"Nothing." Daniella lied, "Just decided to go for a new look today." She hated lying to Korina but she didn't want her to know or how to come clean on her abusive relationship, Landon had beat her up again.

"Okay." Korina shrugged, she reached out and picked a black shirt from the rack.

They were at the shopping mall for some shopping, Daniella had forced her cousin out.

"What do you think of this?" She asked holding the shirt up against her body.

"It's too plain." Daniella snatched it from her and hung it back on the rack, "Haven't you heard from Jace? I asked earlier."

"No, I haven't." She shook her head, "And I ain't calling his ass."

"Why?" Daniella rolled her eyes at her cousin, she was so stubborn.

"He's suppose to call me." Korina said.

"No." Her cousin disagreed, "You hurt him, so you are supposed to call him."

"I have to keep my pride." She rolled her eyes, "I would wait till he calls or comes over."

"That's how you lose a man."

"Look sissy, a man who wants to stay would and a man who doesn't want to would leave, no matter what you do."

"I agree with you." Daniella said, "But sometimes you have to fight for love especially for someone who has been fighting for you."

Korina didn't know what to tell her friend, she just bobbed her head and they continued with the shopping.

They were done now and were on the escalator going downwards when Daniella stopped Korina and pointed in a direction.

"Isn't that him?" She asked, "Isn't that Jace?" Korina focused her gaze on the spot. It was actually Jace with a girl close to him, too close, too too close for Korina's liking.

What the fuck? What the actual fuck? She was literally fuming, how could he?

"How dare he?" She growled, "I am going there right now."

She handed over to Daniella her shopping bags and began marching where Jace was, with Daniella following her.

"Hey." Korina hit Jace on his shoulder and he turned around to face her, before he could say anything, she grabbed him by the collar, pulled him closer and smashed her lips onto his.

She released him after what was quite a long kiss, smirked at the girl next to him and grabbed Daniella immediately walking away not waiting for what he had to say.

Jace pulled out his phone as he watched the woman he loved stomp angrily away.

"Hey man." He smirked as soon as Ade picked the call, "It worked."

"Really?" His best friend replied excitedly, "What was her reaction?"

"Yes." Jace laughed, "She came over to grab me and kissed me."

"Holy shit." Ade laughed, "So what's the next move bro?"

"I would be going over to her house as soon as I am done here."

"Okay." Ade said, "Bye."

After the call, he fished out some couple of dollars from his wallet, "Here you go." He handed them over to the dark haired girl.

"Thank you so much sir." She bowed excitedly before turning and skipping away.

He thought about the kiss he just shared with Korina and smiled inwardly as he got his stuff ready to leave, he knew he was gonna get more kisses when he arrived at her house, he was super excited, he couldn't wait.

Jace was about to kick start his scooter but stopped when he saw his best friend running out of the house towards him.

"What's up?" He asked pulling off his helmet.

"You gonna do what we planned right?" Ade asked him with quirked brows, "You gonna go exactly as we discussed?"

"Yes, I will." Jace sighed, "Can I go now?"

"Sure." Ade said, "Good luck man." He patted his back and Jace drove out of the garage with his mindset on doing exactly what was planned, he was gonna go over to Korina's place, kiss her senseless and tell her the truth about his life, he was gonna stop all the lies from this day.

"I don't want to see you." She frowned and moved to close the door but Jace stopped her.

"Why are you so damn stubborn huh?" He growled, "You literally saw me at the mall with a lady, got jealous, walked up to me and kissed me.

Now, you don't wanna see me?" He was baffled at her attitude.

"I wasn't in my right state of mind." She lied.

"You are never in your right state of mind." He mumbled running a hand through his hair, she's damn so hard to deal with, ughh!

"What did you say?" She raised her brows at him.

"I got you ice cream." He said cheerfully raising the bags in his hands.

Korina was almost done with the second tub of ice cream and Jace sat there watching her in admiration, her head bent over with full concentration devouring the treat, he found every action of hers pleasing to the eyes.

"You do eat a lot." He smiled.

"Shut up idiot!" She rolled her eyes and put the ice cream tub aside, "Why are you here?"

"Isn't it obvious?" He licked his lips and smiled sinister moving closer to her, "I came to finish what you started at the mall love."

"Jace!" She said wide eyed, "Don't you come any closer." Her heart skipping beats as he became unbearably near.

"Why shouldn't I?" He asked, their faces were closer now, she could feel his breath fanning her face, "We both want each other badly." He rested a hand on her bare lap rubbing circles causing her emotions to run wild, "We both want each other." He whispered in her ear before giving it a light bite and sucking it in his mouth.

"Jace." She moaned putting her hands on his shoulders, "I..." Her words never came out fully as he locked lips with hers, she moaned in his mouth and moved to straddle him, grinding on him with her hand creeping under his shirt.

They were both lost in pleasure, telling her the truth was forgotten.

Chapter 74

"When the hell are you going to tell her dude?" Ade growled, "It's been two months, the sooner she finds out the better and the lesser the damage."

"Ade, everything is going so well, I don't want to ruin it." Jace said, "Besides I think it's better keeping things away from her."

"Fuck shit man!" His best friend growled, "The woman you claim to love doesn't know anything about you, how fucking rich you are, about your mafia or her mother."

"It's safer for her not knowing."

"And it would be worse if she finds out from Russo."

"Russo wouldn't dare." He growled, "I told him to mind his goddamn business."

"Mind his business?" Ade snorted, "Russo minding his business would only happen when dragons shit coins which is never." He said and Jace knew he was telling the truth.

"It's been two months Jace, she sure deserves to know so she could forgive you earlier."

"I can't tell her." He stood up from the table and moved to drop the dishes in the sink, "If she finds out she would get to know everything about my dark past."

"Of course she has to know." Ade said, "Don't be selfish Jace."

"I am not being selfish, no woman would stay with me knowing what has happened to me or what I have done." He said, "She wouldn't stay with me. I can't let her leave me and she knowing the truth would result to her leaving me."

"I trust she wouldn't." His best friend said, "She's not like that."

"How would you know?" Jace leaned against the kitchen counter, "I have seen the way she looks at me, like she has been wanting me to come along since all these while, I have seen how she trusts me and occasionally makes me know I make her happy, me telling her the truth would destroy it all and make her miserable again than she was when we met, an emotion I promised never to cause her. I can't tell her the truth."

Ade looked at his best friend and shook his head, not telling her the truth now was going to bring trouble and he knew it, they both knew it.

"Let me see that." Daniella dragged the phone from Korina's grasp, "Awwn." She said gawking at the wallpaper, it was a picture of Korina smiling widely and Jace kissing her on the cheek, "You guys look so fucking cute."

"Give me back my phone." Korina dragged it from her and stuffed it back in her purse, "Mark and his girlfriend are having a baby, she's three months gone." She told her cousin.

"Oh my God, the player has been tamed and put to commitment." Daniella said causing Korina to laugh, "When are you and Jace having a baby?" She asked suddenly.

"You better shut it Dan, you are such an idiot." She snorted, "We are still knew to this."

"Two months ain't knew bitch."

"And you have been in a relationship with Landon for two years, where are your kids?"

"Uhmmm..." Her cousin scratched her head, "What's your favourite football club?"

"You are such an idiot Dan!" Korina rolled her eyes, picked up her purse and aimed it at her.

She was worried that she still hadn't heard a knock on her door. Jace was usually at her house on weekends at exactly eight o'clock but it was about thirty minutes past eight now.

She paced around the apartment while waiting for him and then she went closer to the door to wait there so she could open up for him immediately he knocked.

"Got you!" Korina screamed immediately she heard the voice and felt herself being lifted up.

"Put me down." She screamed, kicking and throwing her arms in the air.

"Calm down vixen, it's me." Jace laughed, "I am offended that you don't know the feel of my arms."

"Asshole." She hit his head and he dropped her, "Dick!"

"I have a big one."

"You such an idiot." She screamed repeatedly hitting his chest, "Wanna give me a heart attack?"

"Hey! Hey!" He held her arms and laughed, "I am sorry okay." He apologised, "I cooked for you, it's lasagna." He winked.

Korina's gaze softened and she hugged him, "I miss you and your cooking." She said, "You especially tho." She whispered.

"I missed you too baby." Jace placed a chaste kiss on her lips.

"How the hell did you get in?" She asked as he lifted her in his arms carrying her to the couch.

"I have my ways." Jace laid her on the sofa, "Through the window."

She rolled her eyes.

"Why didn't you lock it?" He frowned looking at her worriedly, "I told you always to be careful, anything might happen."

"You are too paranoid Jace." She scoffed at him.

"And you need to be spanked." He growled lowly and she clenched her thighs at the sound if his voice.

Jace brought his hand to her bum tracing slow tracing circles, "I want to spank you till you can't sit."

She shivered, excitement coursing through her, she licked her lips expecting him to continue his slow torture.

"And after that..." He whispered lowly in her ear, "Let's go eat I am hungry." He said smirking and stood up.

"Uggh!" She groaned, "Way to ruin the mood Jace."

They finished their food and were laying on her bed now, Jace was stroking her hair with her head on his chest and her legs intertwined with his.

"Jace."

"Hmm."

"I feel like I don't know much about you Jace." Korina said.

"What do you mean babe?" He asked even while knowing fully well what she was referring to.

"I told you everything even to how my mother died." She said, "But I don't even know where you live, it's been two months."

"Aren't you happy with me?" He frowned.

"Of course I am." She smiled up at him, "But I could be happier knowing all about you, your house, your family and your childhood. I want you to share all about yourself with me."

"I would." Jace sighed, "I would when the time is right, it really is hard to tell."

"You would tell me?" She asked.

"Yes, I would."

"Promise?"

"Yes, I promise." He whispered and he bent his head putting his lips on hers sealing their promise with a kiss.

Chapter 75

"You don't have to do this mum." Jace said moving closer to her, "Let me help you." He took the plates from her and began setting them on the table.

"I am done with your laundry and the cleaning." Ade announced entering the dining room, "The cleaning lady doesn't even have to come in this week."

"Thanks boys." The woman said and gave them each a kiss on the cheek, "Let's have dinner now."

She brought the food to the table and served the boys before joining them at the table.

"So how has the week been?" Claire asked the boys.

"Jace has been his idiotic self as usual." Ade told her with an eye roll.

"Don't make me pull out my gun." Jace growled and Claire smacked him on his back.

"No guns at the table." She told them, "Behave yourself."

"Fine ma'am." They both grumbled and kicked each other under the table.

"So Jace what have you been up to?" Claire asked ignoring their childish antics, "You haven't really visited me much these past few days."

"I have..." He started but Ade rudely cut him off.

"He's been hanging out with Korina." Ade said and Jace glared at him for the rude interruption, "He wouldn't leave the poor girl alone and give her some breathing space."

"She's my woman." Jace argued,"Why the fuck would I leave her alone?" He asked, "I am not a lonely ass nigga like you." He smirked.

"Lonely ass?" His best friend frowned, "I still get more pussy action than you do, so who is lonely?"

Claire reached out and smacked Ade on his head, "Mind your language young man." She warned him and Jace laughed at his friend.

"When are you bringing her over? Is it soon?" She asked, "I want to meet my future daughter in law."

"Frankly, You wouldn't be seeing her anytime soon ma." Ade answered, "She doesn't even know where Jace stays."

"So, you still haven't told her the truth yet." She turned giving him an astonished look, "You haven't told about your life or anything."

"No ma'am." Jace said lowly, " I haven't."

"Ade?!" Claire turned to him.

"What did I do now?" He asked, "I don't think I wanna be dragged in this."

"Why didn't you talk some sense into him?"

"I tried." He shrugged, "But he's an idiot."

"Mum I am afraid she would leave me, if she knows." He said, fear coursing through him each time he thought of the possibility that she could leave.

"And you think keeping it away from her is better?" She asked, "Take me to her today, it's time to meet her in person."

"No mum, no!" He exclaimed,"You can't meet her, you will eventually but not now." He told her, " And besides you have can't come out like that in public just like that, I kept you here for protection."

"If you must know Jace, before you I was." She rolled her eyes, "I can very well take care of myself and I helped you with training sometimes, don't underestimate me."

"Mum, please not now." He pleaded hoping she would see reasons not to press him further.

"Fine." Claire said, "Anything you say." She dug back into her food.

"Let's eat please." Ade grumbled, "But in case anything happens, I warned you Jace, she did too." He nodded in Claire's direction, "We both warned you."

Korina whined and Jace really felt like giving in but he couldn't, he found it ridiculous and stupid.

"One more time Jace." She pleaded, "I swear, it's the last time."

"Babe." He sighed exasperated, "That's what you said earlier." He said, "And every last twenty times, come on."

"I am serious this time." She pouted, "Please...please...please." She begged giving him puppy eyes and Jace's heart melted.

"Fine, fine." He said getting on all fours, "This is the last time I am giving you a horse back ride round the room, we ain't toddlers Korina." He explained.

"Yippe! Yayy!" She cheered excitedly and kissed him in the cheek then got on his back.

Jace crawled taking her around the room while she sang out loudly the nursery rhyme, 'she be coming down the mountain when she comes' like a child.

"When am I finally going to see your place Jace." Korina asked looking up at him.

The couple were holding hands taking a random walk in town, stopping at nice places also and taking pictures.

"Soon Korina." He answered tight lipped hoping she wouldn't ask more questions, he didn't want to continue the conversation.

"Why the hell do you keep postponing it?" She asked him angrily.

"Look." He stopped and faced her, "I am ashamed of where I live." He lied.

Korina rolled her eyes, "I don't care Jace."

"You wouldn't like it one bit." Jace said, "It's run down."

"As far as I am with you." She looked up at him with loving eyes, "I don't care Jace."

He was about to respond when his phone began to ring.

Korina saw him look at the caller ID and watched as he stepped aside to answer it.

She stood there watching him, she depicted that from the movement and gestures he made, he was very angry and she pitied the other person at the end of the line.

"I have to go babe." He came over to her giving her a kiss, "It's an emergency, really urgent."

"Okay." She nodded and kissed him back.

Jace stopped a taxi soon, "Bye." He blew a kiss at Korina and she waved back at him.

She watched the car move before stopping a taxi herself, "Follow that car." The taxi driver nodded and did as told.

Korina laid back on the seat hoping for no one to see her.

"We are here ma'am." The driver announced with a stop and she rose to look out the window.

She say a gigantic white mansion and saw Jace entering the premises.

She saw him waltz in and the security personnel greeted him like he owned the place.

What the heck is happening, She was lost for words.

Chapter 76

"Maybe he went to the house to clean or do one menial Job or the other." Korina said trying to convince herself that Jace hadn't been lying to her all these while.

"No, I don't think so." Anne said, "I am very sure he's rich girl, I can swear those were the real Alexander Mc queen sneakers he wore."

"And that time you talked about the watch on his wrist Korina." Daniella reminded her.

"What the fuck is going on?" She dropped on the sofa and let out a drained sigh.

"I seriously can't believe this." She said running her hands over her face, "I just can't believe this."

"What are you going to do now?" Anne asked, "Like would you call him out? And if you do, he's definitely going to deny or give an excuse."

"Yea he is gonna." Daniella said, "Probably say he went there to work or bring up some pretty convincing shit."

"Who the hell is this man?" She cried out, "Why wouldn't he just tell me who he is and the truth about him like for real?"

"Look Korina." Anne stood up and joined her on the sofa rubbing circles on her back, "You have got to take it easy."

"I just can't relive another night mare." She breathed, "I trusted him so much, he can't do this."

Daniella joined the girls on the sofa, "Calm down." She said, "It's gonna be alright."

Korina was gloomy at work, doing things sluggishly, less cheerfulness towards customers. The reality of Jace probably lying to her was heavy on her mind.

She hoped her assumptions and friend's findings were false, she hoped there was a better and truer explanation to this.

"You look gloomy." Mark said noticing her face was down cast, "Is anything the matter?" He asked going closer to her and turning her towards him.

"It's nothing Mark." She said, "How's Helen and the baby?" She asked trying to change the topic.

"Nope, don't do that."

"Do what?"

"Try to change the subject."

"I don't wanna talk about it Mark." She shrug him off."

"Okay." He patted her shoulder, "I would be here when you need me, when you are ready to talk." He gave her an assuring look and left.

"Do you even know whom you are dating?" Russo let out a hearty laughter staring at Korina in the eye, "Do you know who he is?"

"I might not." Korina gritted, "But I do know he ain't a bloody asshole like you." She stared back at him lividly wondering where he got all his nerve from.

"I can't believe you turned me down to date Jace lander." He bumped his fist in the air, "What does he have that I don't?"

"For starters." She smirked, "A brain."

"You little scoundrel." He growled.

"You big imbecile."

"Don't test me Korina." He warned, "I would destroy you." He scowled angrily at her and so wanted to suck out her life causing Jace pain.

"How do you even know my man?" She asked skeptically.

"It dosen't matter." Russo replied changing his mind about ratting Jace out to her, "You just have to be careful." He said, he wanted to put every single piece of doubt in her.

"Is he really who he says he is?" Russo asked, "Is he the Jace lander you know? Is that even his real name?" He winked, "Is he really whom he presents himself to be?"

Russo's plan worked Korina just stared at him confused, Her mind full of the doubtful questions.

"Hey Jace." She spoke into the receiver, "How have you been?"

"Babe." He laughed, "Why you acting like we didn't see few days ago?" His phone was held to his ear by his shoulder.

He was cleaning his guns.

"I miss you." She pouted sitting on the swing seat on her balcony, "We haven't seen for about three days now."

"Just busy babe." He said, "I would try to make it up to you, maybe see you tomorrow evening."

"That would be great." She smiled excitedly, "What are you busy with anyway?" She asked.

"It's nothing just some stuff." Jace replied quickly, of course he couldn't tell her there was a mild mafia war.

"Okay babe, I should go now." Korina yawned.

"Okay babe." He said, "I love you Korina." He blurted out not minding if she would say it back.

"Sleep well Jace." She said ending the call, her heart racing at his last words.

He loves me? She smiled, he said he loves me.

The girls were going down the escalator at the designers mall. Anne took them there on a shopping spree, she had gotten a bonus from working with a brand.

"I do not understand why you are still moody Korina." Daniella bumped her shoulder playfully, "Come on, we are shopping, you should be happy girl."

"She's still thinking about Jace." Anne rolled her eyes, "You shouldn't let the issue weigh you down."

"Yea sis." Daniella agreed, "You shouldn't."

But Korina wasn't paying attention to them, she was staring in a direction her face pale as if she had seen a ghost.

"What is it Korina?" Daniella asked in a worried tone

"Why do you look so pale?" Anne asked noticing her too.

"Jace!" The name came as a weak whisper from her Korina's lips and they looked at where her gaze was fixated on.

Jace Lander was there in a sleek suit with heavily armed men surrounding him.

Ade was there too holding the hand of an elderly woman.

They were all at the most expensive spot at the mall and with the look of things, the girls realised that Jace must have taken them and they knew he had lied to them, big time.

Korina and her best friends matched to where Jace lander and his company was, she was angry.

Well, hell hath no fury than a woman that discovers she had been lied to.

She marched through the armed men straight to where Jace was and tapped his shoulder.

Jace turned to her, shock embracing his features, "Ko..." He couldn't finish the sentence for she landed a harsh slap on his face.

"Korina, please calm down." Ade approached her knowing fully well that they were doomed now.

"Back off." She barked at him and turned to Jace.

Claire watched the events unfold in front of her, with her hands arms folded across her chest.

"Korina, I can explain." Jace pleaded.

"Save it Jace." She said, bitter tears welling up in her eyes, "How dare you?" She screamed, "How dare you?" She asked again choking on her tears now streaming down her face.

"Please." He held her hand.

"Don't touch me!" Korina screamed jerking her hand away, "I never want to see your disgusting lying self ever again. Don't call me, don't text me, don't come over to my place, forget my existence."

She stormed off after her words, Anne and Daniella followed trying to catch up with her, their day was ruined, the shopping trip ruined and Jace lander's love life ruined too.

Chapter 77

"I warned you man, I clearly warned you but you didn't listen." Ade growled at Jace, "Now she's gone, you are here whining like a child that got his candy snatched from him, fucking go look for her and set things straight."

"She doesn't want me near her, she made it clear." Jace said weakly, "She doesn't want any thing to do with me ever."

"Then let me talk to her like a mother." Claire interrupted the conversation, "I bet she would listen to me."

"No mum, I don't want you getting involved in this, I feel it would complicate things, things are already as bad as it is." He told her, "Besides, it's hopeless."

"That's it? Hopeless? You are giving up on her just like that?" Ade asked, "After all this time? After all that has happened? After everything?"

"Are you doing this because you wanna keep seeing Daniella?" Jace asked with raised brows.

"Nope." Ade denied, "I know not what you speak off, just doing my Job as a caring friend."

"Hmm...really?"

"Don't try to change the topic fucktard." Ade growled, "Man up and go get your woman, Russo would like to take advantage of this, he would love to manipulate and woo her."

"I won't let him." Jace growled, "What do I do? She hadn't let me see her for weeks."

Ade looked over at his best friend, "First step." He said, "Take a shower!"

Korina stared at Claire. She was pristine and elegant. Her greying hair pulled backwards, her face was spotless but had wrinkles caused by aging. She wore a simple floral dress.

"Hear me out please." She said and Korina wanted to scream at her that the last ederly lady she had spoken to about a relationship had back stabbed her.

"I really appreciate you trying to talk to me about Jace but I can't do it anymore." She said to the old lady hoping she didn't hurt her feelings by what she just said.

Claire looked at her and sighed, she had traced Korina to work without her son's knowledge and tried to get to have a talk, she was adamant at first but then agreed.

"Please dear." She pleaded, "He needs you, my boy needs you."

"Well, he doesn't." Korina said sternly, "If he did, he would have told me the truth from the beginning."

"He's at fault for that." Claire said knowing Jace was very wrong for what he did.

"How can he hide from me his societal status? How dare he pretend?" She asked, "I wonder what other things he had kept away."

You have no idea, Claire didn't voice out her thoughts, "Please give him a chance to explain himself." She pleaded hoping the girl would stop being stubborn.

"I can't stand a relationship based on lies." Korina sighed, she would begin to second guess all Jace had to say now, "It's all destroyed."

"It's your choice dear, it's your choice." Claire stood up and put her sunglasses back on, "All I am asking is for you to make the right decisions."

Korina didn't say anything, she watched the old lady take long elegant strides out of the restaurant and into the black Audi parked outside, she never removed her eyes from the spot even as the car drove off.

The night was darker than what Korina was used to and she had begun to regret ever taking the short cut home.

She walked faster increasing her pace hoping something terrible wouldn't happen to her as she passed the dark alleys.

Korina heard footsteps behind her and looked backwards, four blurry men were walking behind her, she increased her pace, hoping they weren't following her, anxiety coursing through her.

The men doubled their steps and she broke into a run with them hot on her heels.

They caught up with her quickly and surrounded her.

"Look what we got here." One of them said laughing, "Let's kill her already."

"No." Another one said, "Fun, then kill."

"Yea." The one that spoke earlier said and they all agreed laughing.

"Don't come near me!" Korina screeched, "I can fight." She threatened assuming a karate pose. The men stopped to look at her and laughed before lunging at her.

"Help!" She screamed, "Some one help me!"

Korina was about to give into their torment when she saw one of the when being thrown aside, his body met with a well before he crashed to the ground. The other two men their attention away from her and focused to fight her rescuer.

She looked in the direction, familiar long blonde hair flying as he threw each kick and punch, it was Jace and she wondered how he learnt to fight like that.

The other two men were down now and Jace walked towards her with an outstretched hand.

"Give me your hand Korina." He said looking at her.

"Nope." She stood up from the ground, "I didn't even need you, I got everything under control."

Jace snorted, "Really?" He asked, "And yet I could hear your cries for help."

"Leave me alone Jace." She started walking away with Jace following her.

"Could you please hear me out?"

"No."

"Please?"

"No!"

"Please Korina." He stepped in front of her, "Let me explain."

She looked into his once sparkling grey eyes that were now dull with grief and gave into pleas.

They both walked out of the alley and to the tarred road.

"Is that your car?" She pointed at a black sleek Ferrari parked by the roadside.

"I am not getting in that." She screamed walking away, "I can't believe you own a Ferrari and..."

She was cut short when Jace lifted her and threw her over his shoulder, "What the fuck Jace?"

"Stop talking." He slapped a hand over ass and she felt a tingling sensation between, the action turned her on.

"Put me down."

"Nope." He refused and took her towards the car, he opened the door and dropped her in, "Buckle up babe." He smiled, "We are going to my home."

Chapter 78

"Just how rich are you Jace?" Korina asked looking around the room she was in.

They were in Jace's mansion and presently in his room, she found everything in the house simply magnificent. All the decor and interior design looked simple but screamed expensive.

"Let's say rich enough." He shrugged scooting closer to her on the bed.

"Uhm uhn." She reached out a hand stopping him midway, "Do not come to me closer than that man, I am still angry at you fuck face!"

"Korina." He called and sighed, "Let me explain."

"Explain what else?" She asked, "You fucking lied to me, what did I do to deserve this?"

"It's all my fault Korina." He looked at her, his eyes pleading, "You didn't do anything, I was just scared."

"Scared that what?" Korina asked, "Oh I see you weren't scared, you thought me a gold digger."

"No, Never!" Jace looked at her astonished, "I would never think of my woman like that."

"Your woman?" She scoffed, "You do not lie to someone you call your woman."

"I am sorry." He apologised, "I am deeply sorry."

"Yea, sorry." She snorted, "Like it fixes everything." Jace only stared at her.

"I told you every single thing about me, you know every single fucking detail, from my mother's death to who betrayed and broke my heart, every fucking thing Jace and what do I get in return? I get lied to!"

Jace stared at her as she talked, he saw that pain filled her eyes and he felt bad for being the cause of her pain.

"I am sorry." He said again, "Please."

"It's hard to." Korina said, "It's hard to forgive, maybe forget, you fucking broke my trust."

"I know I did." He said, "I would do everything or anything to get you back, to make you trust me again."

"I just need to know everything that you have hidden from me, every single detail from your childhood to Now."

Jace took in a deep breath, "I promise I would." He said looking into her eyes, even though he knew it would be hard telling her everything even though it would take him through hell to tell her.

"Okay." She gave him a small smile, "I am listening."

"I didn't really have a pretty childhood Korina." He started, they were holding hands now and he was rubbing small circles in her palm, "It was terrible, I had it rough.

" Tell me about it." She demanded.

"I would." He said, "Not everything tho but I would." He reassured her.

"Okay." She nodded and watched him waiting for him to start his story.

"I was very young when my mother died, my father murdered her. She caught him cheating and got fed up cause she had been enduring all his harshness and ridiculous wickedness. She confronted him and they got into a fight, he killed her right in front of me. I stood there crying, begging, watching how he strangled life out of her, how she begged and pleaded for mercy but he did it anyway and had his men clean her body up. No trace of murder left." He sniffed, "I was only five then when he took her away from me."

"Men? Clean up how?" Korina asked, her heart was breaking, she saw Jace's eyes glistening with tears.

"Let's just say he was an influential man just like me." He said omitting the part of their being in mafia.

"But you called Claire mum, who is she then?"

"I call her mum cause She brought up, She was always there for me whenever she could, other times when she wasn't I was on my own. My dad never cared, he never spent a dime on me, he only paid attention to me when he was...."

"Was what?" She asked rubbing Jace's back trying to calm him down.

"Was extremely sickly horny." He breathed.

"Oh my God, Jace." Her eyes widened in disbelief. She knew what he wanted to say now, "I am so sorry." She hugged him close, "I am so sorry, you didn't have to talk about it."

"I want to." He said, him talking about it made him free inside, "He used me a lot Korina, and his friends too. Both male and females, they made me do things to them orally. It was sick. I was disgusted with myself and when I refuse or resisted, I was beaten to a pulp, I ended up in the hospital several times, I ran away several times only to get captured and come back to being

tortured. I remember nights Claire would cry with me soothing my broken self, I remember how Russo teased me every now and then of being used by his beloved father!"

"Russo?" Korina questioned with raised brows.

"Yes, " He is my half brother." She was getting shocked as time passed.

"I had to fend for myself, I got to work at restaurants in my early adolescent years, I was really small thin and scrawny then. They didn't wanna employ me, I came back everyday persistent as ever, until I was given the job, that's how I learnt to cook. It was during these times I met Ade." He smiled sadly at the thought, "He became my friend and brother, we have come a long way together and..."

Jace was cut short by sounds of gun shots, Korina wanted to scream but he put a palm over her mouth.

He signalled at her to keep shut and tip toed to the window, he surveyed the compound his men were already all and about.

"What's going on Jace?" Korina asked frightfully as he matched back to the bed.

"We are under attack!" He said.

"Under attack how?" She questioned confused as she watched him run around the room bringing out bullet proof vests and guns. "What the hell is going on?" She screamed, "Answer me."

Jace pushed a part of the wall and it divided leading way to a secret storage room of arms. He came out fully loaded and Korina just stated in awe.

"Who the hell are you?" She cried.

"Babe I will explain." He said calmly reaching to the back of his neck and he peeled something off, "I guess I don't need this anymore."

He said in an entirely different voice, and the pieces of the puzzle was coming together for Korina, he had just removed a voice changer.

"When were you going to tell me?" She cried, they heard more gun shots.

"When were you gonna tell me you were him."

"I was going to when the time was right." He answered. Korina looked at him, his voice was all too familiar, one she would never forget. Jace Lander the man who stood before her wasn't who claimed to be. Jace was the person who stalked her, who killed Jeffrey, who had showered her with gifts, Jace was the one that was obsessed with her, Jace was the one with the voice she found attractive. It had masked that voice all this while.

Korina was running mad. Jace Lander was Darius, her stalker.

Chapter 79

"What happened?" Ade asked barging into the room, he saw Jace holding Korina in his arms, she looked pale.

"She passed out." Jace explained.

"Why?" Ade laughed, "Cause of the situation?"

"No." Jace said, "She found out that I am Daruis."

"Well, fuck shit." His best friend cursed, "We need to get her out of here now!"

They both exited the room with Korina over Jace's shoulder. He kept thinking about how she would react when she woke up. she would be more hurt knowing he had been the one stalking her all these while. He knew she might probably leave him forever but he wouldn't let her, he was going to use all means to make her stay.

He had stalked her from the moment she set foot in New York when he saw her at the airport looking sick. He had been filled with thoughts of her and became smitten.

He had trailed her every move, watched every step, now that he had her, he wasn't going to let her go.

"Revive her when you her there." He instructed Ade as he put Korina into the car, "Don't let any harm come to her and make sure she doesn't escape, tell mum what she instructed."

"Okay captain." Ade rolled his eyes, "I am not a kid man."

"Just be safe, take care of her." Jace pleaded looking at Korina's unconscious form.

"I will man." Ade got into the car, "Be careful out there, I will come join you soon." He said and sped off.

Jace watched the car go and pulled out his short gun then turned back to the house premises, bullets were flying and shocks rang in the air.

He went back into the house and everything was in shambles already, broken ornaments and destroyed furniture, damn! He cursed, Russo was gonna pay for dearly for this.

His men were trying to hold up battling with the opposing gang. He ducked at bullets and stood up to aim three shots killing the men in front of him.

He got out the house and premises, bodies littering everywhere, he looked up and saw more men advancing towards the gate.

Dammit, He swore, this would be tough.

Korina woke up and found herself foreign surroundings, she was on a bed, a very comfortable big bed. Her head was hurting, her body ached too and she discovered she had been changed into an oversized T-shirt.

She looked around the white painted room studying it, the room didn't look masculine nor feminine either, it was just neutral.

There was a dressing mirror and a stool attached to it, she saw another door that looked like it led to a walk in closet, looking around more she saw a sofa in it and spotted her clothes of the previous day on a chair.

She sat there and the happenings of the evening poured in.

She felt sad and sorry for Jace for how he was treated and what he went through in the hands of his father.

His father was surely cruel and vile to do that to his own son and even kill his own wife, his psycho was on another level, the man was mad beyond words.

She wondered how he had managed to survive all these years living with the pain and bottling it up and then she wondered why he didn't tell her the truth all these while? why he kept so much away from her? Why he had made her see a false picture and fall in love with the false version of him?

Falling in love with all the deception and lies was painful.

She stood up, walked to the door and tried to open it but it was locked. She couldn't get out of here or escape. She so wanted to get away from the place and see the outside world and maybe run away, her thoughts were haphazard not knowing exactly where she was and whom she was with killed her.

She tried once more pulling harshly at the door but it never opened, after some time she gave up, slid down the door and began crying her heart out.

"It's all hard to take in." Korina sniffed, she was laying on Claire crying her heart out, "He's a murderer and a criminal."

"But you have seen the Good side in him, haven't you?" Claire asked, she was still trying her best to make sure Korina didn't leave Jace even tho she had valid reasons to do so.

"He lied to me." Korina rose her head from Claire's laps, "I have been swimming and living In lies all these times."

Ever since she came to check up on her, she had been whining and crying like a baby.

"Please calm down dear." Claire pleaded, "I admit Jace has been in the wrong all through but calm down please."

"What would it have taken for him to tell me the truth?" She asked, "Even his voice was a lie, he masked everything." She said, "Jace is a fucking liar." She added.

"Considering all what Jace had been through, I guess he thought this was the right way." Claire tried to find an excuse for Jace, she tried to justify his actions."

"Considering all what he had been through, he ought to tell me the truth." She back lashed, "You are only defending him cause he's your son and you are his mother."

"Korina!" Claire called sternly.

"I want to leave this place." Korina demanded, "Let me go home."

"You are not leaving."

"What?!"

Jace ordered that you stay put here."Claire said, "You do not want to get on his bad side."

"You have to let me out!" She screamed, "I don't want to be here."

Claire shook her head sadly at Korina, she turned and excited the room making sure to secure the door locks firmly.

She pitied Korina but she knew she would get past the stage, the girl was as well smitten by Jace and she would stay with Jace no matter what.

She would stay for him.

Chapter 80

The slap landed across his face and before he could react several other slaps and punches followed. She tried so hard to make them hurt, to make sure he was inflicted with pain but he just stood there unfazed staring at her.

"Stop it Korina." Jace gritted using his uninjured hand to hold hers, "Fucking stop it."

"That bullet shouldn't have gone in your arm!" She screamed, "It should have gone in your head." She screamed, "It should have gone in your head, asshole!"

"In my head?" Jace smirked, "Can you bear to see me die?"

"Of course, I can." She scoffed, "I don't think I love you anymore."

"So you actually loved me before or you still in love with huh?" He smirked releasing her hands.

She walked away from him with a frustrated sigh and went over to the bed to sit, Jace followed joining her.

"You don't know how sorry I am." He said, "I am sorry for every thing."

"Why?" She asked, "Why did you lie to me and stalk me for all that time? Why did you do all these?"

"Cause I was scared Korina." He told her, "We can start afresh."

"No!" She said standing up, "You are a murderer and a criminal, I just can't."

Jace was hurt, her words drilling in his heart, "I don't kill unless necessary or in self defence." He explained.

"Jeffrey?" She asked, "Why did you kill Jeffrey?"

"He tried to kill you." He gritted, "He deserved to die."

Korina stopped to think for sometime and figured that maybe Jeffrey really deserved to die.

"You push drugs?" She asked her next question.

"Yes." He nodded, "I push drugs."

"You do illegal arms?"

"Of course."

"You traffic girls?"

"Nope, Korina." He sad eyes widening, "The fuck!"

"You use your legit business to cover up your tracks?" She asked.

"I don't really make an effort in covering up my tracks." Jace smirked, "I am untouchable."

Korina shook her head and looked away from him with a sigh.

"You are never gonna let me out of here are you?" She asked.

"Nope." He said and moved to her towards him, he placed his hands on her shoulder and faced her to him, "Till you promise never to leave me."

She looked into his eyes and felt bad.

"Jace, I can't be in something built with lies." She removed his hands from her shoulder.

"We would start over." He told her taking her hand in his, "I would make things right I swear."

She pulled away from him giving him a disgusted look, "It's not that easy Jace." She said, "You played me."

"It wasn't easy for me too okay?" Jace began to wonder why he ever lied to her, "I was too damn intoxicated and smitten by you, I wanted to do everything to keep you."

"And you thought me never knowing the truth would set things right?"

Jace had no answer, he was guilty as hell.

"You thought I would never find out?" She was near tears now, "You thought me for a fool. You knew everything about me, how I have been hurt before and yet you are doing the damn same thing."

"I am not doing the same thing Korina." Jace said, "I am not leaving you like they did. I admit I was wrong, I admit I did a lot of terrible things to you but I deserve a chance to clear my name and repair my actions."

"It's not that easy Jace." She said again, "It is not."

"Korina please." He pleaded, "you have got to hear me out."

"I can't." She stood up, "I want to leave."

"Please Korina don't." He pleaded, "I love you, you can't leave."

She stood up and began scrambling for her things.

"I can't stay with someone like you."

"But you love me."

She didn't reply, telling him the truth that she loved him would give him more reasons to push on his pleading.

"I have to go Jace." She told him again, "I can't stay with you."

"I said you are fucking going no where." He screamed and punched the wall causing her to fear.

Korina refused to accept Jace's apology for screaming at her.

"So let me get this straight." Jace said, "You are gonna eat the ice cream I bought you but still stay mad at me?"

"Yes, of course." She nodded scooping a spoon of cream in her mouth, "I am mad at you and not the ice cream."

"You have got to be fucking kidding me." He stared at her unbelievably.

"Jace." She called, "When I am done with the ice cream, we would talk."

"Okay." He sighed.

She was done later and they both sat on the bed with Jace talking to her.

"I was scared." He said, "So scared that you wouldn't want or love me, that's why I didn't approach you and I resulted to stalking but when I finally got the courage to approach you, I put of a facade." He argued, "That was a dumb move."

"Hmmm." She looked her him, "Continue your story please, I wanna know all about it."

"Well, I met Ade when I was 14, he was trading drugs on the street then. He came into the country illegally, sold against his will, from there we became friends and he helped me over throw my father." He told her, "I forgot to mention, I am only American by birth, but my parents are Italians so I am Italian also."

"Ohh." She gazed at him wide eyed, "How did you manage to over throw him tho?"

"When my dad became unbearably ruthless, I brought Ade into the training camp with me, my dad didn't object, he needed more men after all. He already planned Russo to be his successor but still had me training endlessly even hurting and killing people. Eventually I rebelled against him at 18 and killed him. I already got some of his men on my side making it easier to carry out my mission."

Korina listened with rapt attention saying no word.

"During this time." Jace continued, "I never had a love life or even had time for girls I have never been involved with anyone before, that's why I said you are my very first everything."

Korina smiled, her heart warming.

"After I took over the organization, Russo tried to take me down but couldn't and so he became very bitter and he broke off to form his own mafia. Since then, he had always been in my way and tried to make my life miserable.

"He's an asshole." She said.

"So, you see Korina, I have been broke and damaged all my life, that's why..."

"Shhh." She sad putting a hand over his lips, "It's okay Jace."

"Really?" He asked.

"I can't leave you." She said, "I ain't going no where, no matter who you are or what you have done or still do."

Jace's eyes widened in shock, she's forgiving me?

Korina smiled at him, "I love you Jace lander."

Chapter 81

They laid in bed naked except for the covers drawn over their sweat glistening and tired bodies staring at the ceilings smiling like fools.

Jace's heart swelled, he had just lost his virginity to the woman he loved, his first time was fantastic, slow and sweet.

He had taken his time memorizing every curve of his body, every inch of her skin. He had explored her womanly parts with expertise that he hadn't known he possessed.

"Jace." Korina called breaking into his thoughts.

"What love?" He turned to her smiling seeing her face carrying the expression of a well pleasured woman, he was satisfied that he could please her.

"That was amazing!" She giggled rubbing her hand on his chest, "I can't believe it, it was better than I ever imagined." She had often wondered a lot what sex would be like with him, would it be slow torturous or rough and harsh. She discovered that her imaginations hadn't run this wild and the reality of having sex with Jace was simply wonderful and she had run out of words to describe it.

"Really, so you imagined it a lot?" He smirked.

"Of course I did."

"It was amazing too." He whispered into her ear, "Your moans were exquisite and very loud, it pushed me to go harder."

"Oh stop it Jace." She turned away shyly, "Stop it."

Jace laughed out heartily, "You really are a vixen in bed, you literally clawed at my back with your nails when I was pounding into you."

"And if you don't stop right now, I would claw at your face." She whined pushing him away from her.

"I love you babe." Jace whispered drawing her close.

"I love you too." She said kissing his hose and drowning in his embrace.

Ade pulled landon from her and punched him in the face, he growled angrily at him and punched him again.

"How dare you lay your hands on her?" He growled.

"Ade please stop it." Daniella pleaded watching him beat her boyfriend up, she was afraid that they would attract attention in the lone Cafe and someone could call the cops getting them in trouble, "Stop it before someone calls the cops."

He jacked him up and threw him on the floor.

"Scram!" He whispered, "Before I lose it and kill you."

Landon growled aggressively in Daniella's way before running out of the Cafe, jumping in his car and speeding off.

"Why the fuck would you do that?" She screamed at him angrily, "Are you nuts?"

"You are the one who is nuts here." He glared at her, "I can't believe you are stupid enough to stay in an abusive relationship, your friends don't even know, fucking break up with him already."

"No, I can't." She cried, "I can't leave him."

He walked closer to her, "What about what we have?" He asked, "What about what we share?"

"I can't be with you." Daniella felt stupid at the moment, "My life is with Landon."

"Yea right." He scoffed, "Till he kills you."

"Ade..."

"Save it." He silenced her, "Did you just use me?" He asked, "That night you were drunk and I picked you up, did you just use me to kill the pain?"

"I was drunk and not in my right senses."

"Really?" He laughed sickly, "And the next morning you stayed over and the weeks after you came over fucking me, it meant nothing? You are gonna stay with him and leave me?"

"I..."

"I should have known better than to trust a white bitch." He growled angrily at her as he began to regret catching feelings for her.

"Stop it Ade."

"No you stop it." He said, "You were just using me, that's why you said know one should know about us and that's why you can't leave him. You took advantage of my feelings."

"It's not like that." She cried, "I swear it." Daniella stared at him, he was angry and hurt.

"You know what Dan?" He moved closer to her, "Stay away from me, stay far away from me, cause if you don't, I will do something terrible that we both would regret."

"Ade, please." She held his hand crying, "Please."

"Fuck you!" He drew away from her harshly and stormed out of the place and towards his car, leaving Daniella at the little cafe all by herself crying her eyes out.

Aunt Dido was absolutely rooting for Jace in her niece's life. She loved the way he treated and cared for her despite all he had done, she forgave him and welcomed him back but not after threatening to cut his head off, should he try it again.

"It's been years now." Daniella said to Korina, "Ain't he gonna pop the question?"

"It has just been two years Daniella, don't pressure your cousin." Aunt Dido scolded her daughter.

They were all at Korina's bakery shop now, she finally left Ms Susie and started her own business.

"Fine mom." Daniella yelled, "I would stop bothering her when she brings forth babies."

"Who is bringing babies?" Every one looked up to see Jace entering the shop grinning with Ade by his side.

Daniella saw Ade and immediately found an excuse to leave and he pretended like he never saw her on his part.

"Hey Aunty." Jace greeted Aunt Dido hugging and pecking her on the cheek.

"Nice to see you son." She smiled hugging him back.

"Hey babe." He went over to Korina and drew her into his arms, "I missed you."

"Yea he did." Ade rolled his eyes already searching for a cake piece to stuff his mouth with.

"Shut it Ade." Jace growled at his best friend.

"Get this over and done with will you?"

"Get what over and done with?" Korina asked looking between the two guys.

Jace took a deep breath and knelt before her, he pulled out a ring box from his back pocket.

Korina stared at him, breathing heavily, she was excited, she knew what was about to happen.

"Korina Janet Black." Jace said calling her name, "Would you marry me?"

Chapter 82

"Let me see that." Anne grabbed Korina's hand excitedly, "Damn! That's a big rock." She gazed at her friend's engagement ring.

"Sure is baby." Korina smiled, "Sure is." She had marvelled at the rock herself when he had put it on her finger and she knew it'd worth millions.

Jacs always wanted to spend on her, she wasn't surprised at the ring price as he had got her a Lamborghini on her last birthday.

"You deserve it." Anne hugged her, "Let's start planning the wedding."

"Calm down jeez." Korina laughed, "Not too soon, come on."

"It's due idiot." Daniella strode into the room with snacks, "I need babies."

"Go have yours." Anne snorted at her, Daniella kicked her leg and sat down.

"So about the wedding?" She asked.

"Jace wants it soon." Korina blurted, "Like he wants to rush the wedding."

"Why?" Anne asked, "For a wedding to be perfect, I don't think it should be rushed." She didn't see why they should rush the wedding not like any of them was dying soon.

"Oh come on." Daniella put crackers in her mouth, "Jace is loaded, Korina is a damn good baker, things are gonna go smooth even if the wedding is rushed."

"I am not complaining of the wedding being rushed." She sighed, "It's just...the way he's acting around me like he's hiding something that he doesn't want me to find out." She told them.

Jace had been acting really fishy around her, weird calls, nervousness and anxiety. He even woke up in the middle of the night to take walks round the premises and if no one found it weird, she did on her path.

"Stop being paranoid." Anne scooted over to Korina and began massaging her shoulders, "I take it that it's the pre wedding stress."

"Yea." Daniella said with her mouth full, "She damn right."

"Anyway how's Mark and his family in Denmark." Anne asked Korina, "How's the new place treating them?"

"He called days ago and said it was fine." She shrugged, "I can't believe he's a family man." She laughed.

"Me too." Anne sighed, "He used to be a big time player."

Korina zoned out as her best friends talked about Mark, her thoughts were on Jace, she didn't want to think he was doing anything fishy or something that would hurt her.

He looked stressed these days, she shrugged as Anne's words invaded her mind, maybe it was actually pre wedding stress.

"I swear to God damn!" Jace growled into the phone, "I am going to end you Russo."

"No now brother you won't." Russo laughed, "You would do as I say or jeopardize your wedding and your love life."

"Russo." Jace called, "Stay away from me and my to be family. You wouldn't wanna cross me."

"I am the one to threaten you here." His half brother said angrily, he hated the fact that Jace could still boss him, "I call the shots, I have in my hands what could destroy you."

"Russo, please what do you want?" Jace pleaded, "Anything."

He smirked pleased that Jace was begging now, of course he wouldn't want to lose the life he had with Korina but he was going to destroy his life anyway, he wanted to avenge his father's death more like get back at Jace for taking over the mafia.

"I just want to ruin your life and make you miserable." He said and ended the call before Jace could say anything.

He took his wine glass and sipped from it smirking to himself, this would be fun to watch, He laughed, finally he was going to watch Jace's world crumble to pieces.

Jace growled in frustration and threw his phone to the wall. He had to do something fast, he had to be steps ahead of Russo and the first step was marrying Korina immediately and making sure she was his forever.

"She can't find out Ade." Jace said frankly pacing up and down the office, "She can't find out what I did, I would never be able to get her back."

"Calm down." Ade tried to soothe him, "Do you know where he is? Russo? We need to capture him and shut him up for good."

"I don't." He replied walking over to his best friend, "He had been very careful about covering up his tracks this time, fuck!"

"You need to do something." Ade said, "We need to think of something first and something real good."

"You think I don't know that?" He asked not expecting a question.

They were silent for a while before Jace finally spoke.

"I would marry her tomorrow and we move far way from here immediately."

Ade looked at his besfriend in schock, "What man?!" He asked alarmed, "Tomorrow?"

"Yes, that's the only thing to do, I need to have her bound to me should something crazy happen."

Ade looked at his best friend, he knew the look he saw in his eyes and he knew that once Jace had that look there was no turning back on his decision.

"Marriage? Tomorrow?" Korina laughed, "Dude no." She said, "Are you that excited to finally have me or it's something else."

"God no korina." He said hastily and then hugging her from behind, "Excited? Yes, Hiding something? Nope."

"Then why you wanna get married to me tomorrow?" She asked not believing him.

"Okay, fine." He said, "We'd get married in two days time."

"Nope Jace." She argued, "The least I can do is in a week's time."

"Four days." He bargained turning her towards him, "Just four days please."

"Okay." She sighed agreeing not being able to resist his pleading eyes, "Four days."

"Thank you." He kissed her on the lips, "I love you."

"I love you too." She smiled.

She went into the bathroom and took out the pregnancy test strip discreetly, the test result was ready now.

She took a look at it and saw the lines, it read positive. Her mind leapt seeing the results, guess I would have to get married sooner after all.

Chapter 83

Korina took a deep breath before turning and looking into the mirror, she stared wide eyed, is that me? Her eyes welled with tears.

"Oh my God." Daniella gushed staring at her cousin as she rushed to her side

"Don't make me cry." Anne sniffed, "My best girl looks magnificent."

The dress was of white colored lacy material. It was a mermaid gown with medium short straps. It clung to her body fitting her like a glove.

Korina began to cry, she never imagined she'd try on one of these on but here she was wearing a wedding gown and getting married to the man she loved in two days.

"Don't cry." Anne hugged her, "It looks wonderful on you, I have no words."

"You look breath taking." Daniella said, "Simply breath taking."

"I can't believe this guys." She sniffed, "I am getting married."

"Yes! You are." Her friends screeched hugging her.

"So." The shop attendant said walking into the room, "Are you taking this one?"

"Yes." Korina squealed, "This is definitely the one." She looked at herself in the mirror smiling again, admiring the dress on her, she couldn't wait for Jace to see her in it.

"Mum, just get a priest to marry us." Jace was speaking to Claire, "I told you what's at stake here, I can't risk anything."

"But Jace..." She didn't understand why he should rush the wedding, she felt nothing would happen as Russo had no mind to carry out his threats.

"No buts mum, please." He sighed, "You can put up flowers, balloons whatever you like in the back yards but get a priest there, I want the vows exchanged immediately."

"Okay, boy." Claire rolled her eyes, "Whatever you say."

"Mum, you know what is at stake here, I have to get married to her before Russo gets to her and ruin everything." He said, "Once he gets to her, it's over but if she gets married to me before she finds out, the issue would be aggravated."

"I understand son." Claire said, "I would meet up with Dido and kick start the preparations."

"Okay mum." Jace smiled, "And remember no people shall be invited just close friends, in other words, just Ade, Daniella, Anne, you and Aunt Dido should be present with us."

"I heard you boy." Claire scoffed, "I know exactly what you want."

"Thanks a lot mum." He said to her, "I just want nothing to go wrong."

"You are welcome." She smiled, "And nothing would go wrong."

Korina looked at Jace and reached out to pull some of his hair from his face, "You look flushed babe." She said, "What's wrong?"

"Maybe the blow job you just gave me in the car drained me." He said and she looked away blushing shyly.

"Oh stop it." She said shyly, "We are in public."

"You weren't complaining about public when we banged in the lingerie dressing room." He smirked.

"Oh my God Jace." She screeched and hit him with her purse causing him to laugh loudly, "You are so blunt jeez."

"Can you stop it you two?" Ade scoffed, "We can hear you guys."

"Close your ears next time." Jace rolled his eyes at him.

"Why not shut up next time?" Anne asked not expecting a response, "We don't need to hear about your rendezvous activities."

Korina stuck out her tongue at her, "Where is Daniella?" She asked and Ade's facial expression changed but no one noticed.

"She sent me a text saying she cancelled." Anne told them and Ade sighed, he knew she wasn't here cause of him.

"Can we just get this over and done with?" He asked trying to change the topic, "It's getting late." They all agreed with him and got into the caterers shop.

Claire and Aunt Dido got done quickly at the decorator's place and were leaving now.

"Why does Jace want the wedding so quickly tho?" Aunt Dido asked.

"He is just so excited to have her as his wife, you know these kids, love and all." Claire lied, "He needs her in his life you know, he can't wait to have her legally."

"I do." Aunt Dido nodded, "But a rushed wedding isn't always the option."

"Everything would go fine." Claire assured her hoping things would be fine herself, "Who knows Korina, might want a quick wedding too."

"Yea." She nodded, "She seemed really excited.

" you see." Claire smiled patting her back, "Things would go well."

Aunt Dido nodded pushing the terrible feeling she had aside.

Korina's bridal shower was a very small one, with just her and her two best friends, they tried to make the most of it.

Her bedroom was decorated with balloon and flowers, they were all in matching nude colored robes with Korina having a crown on her head.

"Have you told Jace?" Anne asked feeling giddy with the thoughts of her best friend having a baby.

"Not yet." Korina answered.

"Why?" Daniella asked, "You shouldn't keep such things from him."

"It's a surprise ladies." She giggled,"I would let him know on our wedding night."

"Then it would be followed by some passionate love making." Her cousin smirked.

"Or maybe some rough sex." Anne winked and Korina smacked their heads.

"Shut the fuck up." She told them both.

"So you are finally getting married?" Daniella sighed, "Look at you walking down the aisle to the altar soon and you were crying and whining years ago."

"Hers is like a wattpad story." Anne said, "She's getting married to a mafia hot lord, who would have thought? I am happy for you babe."

"I never thought I would get married to him, a mafia man, I once argued that mafia never existed." She laughed, "I guess it doesn't really matter where you find love, with, how, when and where , as long as you are happy and the person loves you just as much as you love them, it's all good."

Daniella looked at her cousin and smiled.

Her heart hurt, you are stupid, her subconscious said and yes she was, she found this and let it go, she had let Ade go.

Chapter 84

Korina felt like a princess looking in the mirror, yes she was a princess who had finally found prince charming or so she thought.

Her white transparent veil was pulled back on her full well styled afro, her make up was nude as usual extremely flawless, a diamond necklace Jace had got her rested on her neck. Her white gown fitted to her body with a train past the royal long length, it was twelve feet long. Her shoes were actual glass slippers with diamond encrusted stones. Her bouquet of flowers which she didn't hold yet was of yellow roses, her favorite and it grew to be she and Jace's favorite.

"Are you ready?" Aunt Dido asked entering the room.

"Yes ma." Korina replied.

"Awwn... Look at my baby." Her eyes welled with tears seeing how Korina looked dazzling. She walked over to her and pulled her into a hug, "You look marvelous."

"Thank you Aunt." Korina was near tears too, "Thank you."

Daniella and Anne entered the room, they both wore strapless nude mermaid gowns.

"Bestie!" They squealed excitedly and ran up to Korina hugging her.

"Don't ruin my outfit please and my make up." She said but they didn't budge, they only hugged her tighter.

"Okay, that's enough girls." Aunt Dido said, "Let's go, Jace is getting impatient."

"Mum." Daniella rolled her eyes, "He ain't even out yet."

"I know but we got to get ready." She told the girls and held Korina's hand, "Let's go get you married."

"Cold feet?" Ade asked his best friend as he watched him pace up and down the room, "Calm down."

"No, it ain't cold feet and you know it." Jace said harshly, "Russo can be here, could be here to jeopardize everything. If he comes and gets to her, it's all over man."

"He won't." Ade walked over to Jace, "We got the place heavily guarded and your wedding is top secret and secure, nothing would happen."

"I hope so." He sighed, "I hope nothing goes wrong I can't lose her."

"But you have to tell her after the wedding."

"I can't do that." Jace shook his head, "I can't."

"You can't keep it away from he." He said sternly, "You have to tell her what happened and by then she would be married to you."

"I would try." He bowed his head, "It's hard you know, it wasn't my fault."

"Of course it wasn't." His best friend comforted him, "Now let's go and get you hitched Jace lander or should I say Daruis Alec Giovanni." He winked.

"You know she found the name Darius really sexy, that's what she mo..."

"Okay, enough, I don't need to know." Ade cringed, "let's go they are waiting already."

Jace nodded and followed his best friend out off the room, he prayed that he could get hitched without an hitch.

Russo walked through the hallways trying to locate the room of the bride, it wasn't really easy getting past the guards and into the house and he hoped he'd find it soon.

He began searching for the room and finally located it on the second floor of the mansion, he got in and saw Korina there alone, no one was in sight, perfect.

Korina was fixing herself up, aunt Dido and her friends had left to wait outside for her.

"Hello, we meet again." She jumped at the voice and turned around to see a person in her room dressed in black with a mask covering half of his face.

"Who are you?" Korina asked trying not to get alarmed, "What are you doing here?"

The man pulled the mask down and her face contorted in shock.

"Russo?!" She gasped, "What are you doing here?" She asked him, "I would scream and call for them."

"You would do no such thing." He pulled out a gun and aimed at her, "I am here not to hurt you but to let you know a secret of Jace's that he has kept from you."

"What?" She laughed, "That he is Darius Alec Giovanni? I know that already."

"Not that idiot." He gritted.

"Jace hasn't kept anything from me so whatever you are going to say now is a fucking lie, so get out!"

Russo laughed sickly, "Oh, this is going to be fun, watching your reaction when you find out the truth."

"Russo I want you to leave, you are nothing but bad news and a scoundrel." Korina spat, "And you know nothing than to speak bad of Jace."

"I think I am gonna have to sit down for this one." He laughed heartily and went over to take a seat on the bed still pointing the gun at her..

"First of all." He said, "You look ravishing in that dress." He smirked.

"Get out Russo!" She told him harshly.

"Don't you wanna hear what I have to say?" He asked.

"I don't."

"It's about your dead mother."

"You have no right to talk about her." She growled, "Get out."

"Wanna know how she died?" He was getting on her nerves now.

"Russo stop it!" She screamed.

"Your beloved Jace lander or should I say Darius Alec Giovanni? Whatever name he wants to bear." He rolled his eyes.

"Shut up Russo."

"He killed her." Russo said, "He killed your mother."

Chapter 85

warning, violent scene

"What's taking her so long?" Jace whined impatiently, "The priest is getting impatient." He whispered to Ade who was by his side.

"You know how females are with delaying." His best friend shrugged, "She would be walking through that door soon."

Jace was about to turn to the priest when a loud scream was heard. It was obviously from Korina's room, the two men looked at each other before breaking into a run with the rest of the family following them.

"You are full of lies Russo." Korina screamed, "How dare you say so? How dare you even show your face here?"

"I have proof sweetheart." He said throwing an envelope towards her, "and I have a video." He smirked feeling proud that his dad had recorded Jace doing sick stuff.

"She died years ago." She said, "What ever you say now is false."

"Look in the envelope bitch!" He screamed at her.

Korina opened the envelope, gruesome images of her mother's body met her. She was freshly dead in them on the floor of a warehouse. She looked at the next pictures and saw her naked with what looked like a teenage Jace bent over her with a knife.

"No! No! No!" She wanted to tear the pictures, "This can't be him, he didn't kill her." She screamed at him, "It's all lies, it's all fake."

"Well the pictures don't prove that he killed her but this does." He pulled out his phone and walked over to her.

He handed her the phone and clicked on a video.

Korina watched it and her world turned up side down, her fairy tale turned into a nightmare.

"Please, please don't do this." She saw her mother plead, even tho the video quality was low, she knew it was her mother, she was tied to a chair, bleeding, her naked body badly bruised.

She saw a man go before her, he looked exactly like Jace and she knew he was his father, he usually ranted about how much he hated their similarities.

The man slapped her mother repeatedly across the face, "Shut up bitch." He spat, "Black monkey."

Her mum sobbed, nodding and keeping her mouth shut.

"Bring that fucker over here for me." The man growled, "Bring Darius here." She saw him being dragged to his father and watched his his dad slapped him in the face, "Worthless piece of shit, swine!" He spat.

The poor boy whimpered.

"You helped her escape didn't you?" He dragged his son by the hair, "Now you are gonna kill her."

"I can't, I won't." Jace challenged him and he received a blow which caused him to land on the floor.

His father handed him a gun when he rose to his feet, "Kill her." He instructed him, "Kill the bitch or I will kill you."

"I won't." Jace screamed, "And you already killed me a long time ago."

"You dare to challenge me?" He pounced on him beating him mercilessly.

Korina's tears had ruined her make up by now.

"Shoot that monkey." Jace resisted and with each resistance he got beaten.

It was when her mother couldn't take it anymore that she nodded her head his way and Jace agreed, he pulled the trigger killing her.

The door was broken down, every one rushed in and Jace wanted the earth to swallow him, she knows, He knew that she had found out with the look on her face.

"Korina!" Jace called, "I know..."

"Stay the fuck away from me!" She screamed.

"Korina please." He moved closer to her, "Please let me explain."

"When were you gonna tell me?" She screamed at him, "When were you gonna tell me that you killed my mother?"

"Korina, babe." He said, "We can talk about this."

"Now, this is fun to watch." Russo laughed.

"You told her!" Ade screamed at Russo and dragged him out of the room.

Claire was in tears while Korina's friends and her aunt remained shocked at the scene.

"I was going to tell you when it was right." He looked at her pleadingly and got on his knees, "Please my love, we can talk about this."

"I hate you!" She screamed, "I can't marry you." She pulled off her engagement ring and threw it at him, "Go to hell."

"Korina." Jace was crying now and still on his knees, "I swear I didn't want to do it, I didn't mean to do it, I didn't mean to kill your mother."

"Mum!" Daniella screamed as Aunt Dido collapsed, "Help!" She screamed, Anne and Claire rushed to her side.

Korina and Jace didn't notice that aunt Dido had fainted as their attention were on each other.

"I don't want you to come near me or my baby."

"You are pregnant?!" He smiled, "I am gonna be a father?" He asked pointing at himself.

"No, you are not going to be in this child's life, not now, not ever." She bent to pick a gun from the ground and pointed it at Jace.

"Korina please, I love you." Jace pleaded, "We can work things out."

"I can't believe you killed my mother." She cried out, "You never told me all this while even after witnessing my grief, I can't believe that I am carrying the child of my mother's murderer."

"Korina, I love you, don't leave me please." He pleaded even while knowing it was useless.

"I can't stay with you." She removed her veil and shoes throwing them aside, the glass shoes got shattered, "You will stay away from me Jace, I will make sure of it." She said pulling the trigger on the gun she held, she aimed it at his leg, the shot rang out loud and Jace's world became black.

Chapter 86

Korina was angry and furious on day one after breaking up with Jace, she had destroyed literally everything on her path, even when she received a text from Claire stating Jace was unconscious in the hospital, her anger didn't lessen.

"He deserves it!" She yelled, "That bastard, he deserves to die."

Even Aunt Dido had tried to calm her down despite her own grieving self, Korina's anger never lessened it only worsened and eventually she was left alone.

On the second day, she finally cried, she cried her heart out mourning for her mother, knowing that her mother died at the hand of the man she loved, the man she loved killed her.

All the memories came down on her and she cried at each one. She didn't move from her spot on the bed that day, despite all the knocks at her door, she didn't move.

She just drowned in her tears missing her mother asking why she left.

She mourned the death of her mother.

Ade never left his best friend's side by the hospital, he shed tears staring at Jace's lifeless form, the doctors weren't sure about Jace's condition and it was the third day.

Korina didn't stop crying on the third day, she cried cause she missed Jace. She cried for she was in love with the wrong person or maybe she thought she was.

She missed his touch, she missed her lover, she missed his voice, the way he smiled at her, the way he cared for her. She missed Jace's cooking. She missed having him near her at arm's reach, she missed her mother's murderer.

On the fourth day Korina agreed to converse with Aunt Dido and her friends.

"I can't believe this aunt." She cried burying her head in her shoulder, "I can't believe he would do this to me."

"It's okay." Anne tried to comfort her, "Stop crying."

Daniella just sat in the corner, she was mute, she couldn't process all what had happened.

"I can't handle the pain." She sniffed, "I am even carrying his child, how did I let myself get fooled and be this stupid?"

"you aren't a fool." Anne rubbed her back, "You are just a human in love."

"Korina let's be fair here." Aunt Dido said, "He didn't do it at his own will."

"I don't give a fuck!" She screamed, "He killed my mother, lied to me, used me and kept it all away from me."

They all didn't say anything anymore, Korina's mind was made up, they all sat there in silence watching her cry out more.

Jace was awake and Ade was all over with glee.

"Where is she?" Was the first question he asked his best friend, "Where is Korina?"

"I don't know." Ade answered.

"What do you mean you don't know?" He asked harshly sitting up on the hospital bed but he lay back immediately at the pain in his head.

"You killed her mother man." Ade said, "What did you expect her to do? Stay behind and wait for an explanation?"

"Yeah." Jace nodded stupidly.

"If you were in her shoes, would you do that?"

"Look Ade, I can't let her go." He said, "You should have stopped her when she was going."

"Really?" Ade scoffed, "And leave you to die? Wow!" He stared at his best friend, "It seems the bullet wound affected your head cause you sure ain't thinking straight."

"Have you heard from her?" Jace asked.

"No man."

"Why the fuck ain't she here?" Jace growled.

"You did something terrible to her and you expect her to hang around fucking stop it, you acting like she ain't hurt."

"Get out Ade!' Jace growled, " Get out!"

"Oh, so now you are pissed?"

"Just get out." Jace said weakly this time.

Ade shook his head and left the hospital room slamming the door behind him.

Korina packed her things on the fifth day, she packed everything about her and everything she possessed at Jace's place and had them moved out.

"Are you sure you wanna do this?" Daniella looked at her cousin.

"Yes." Korina shook her head, "I want to there is nothing here for me anymore."

"I am coming with you." Daniella blurted.

"You don't have to Dan." She said, "What about aunt?"

"I have to go and find my own life, I am no longer with landon, I need a fresh start too." Daniella explained.

"Are you sure about this?" She asked.

"Yes, I am." Daniella nodded, "It would be better for us both."

Korina nodded and drew her cousin into a hug.

The trip to the airport was very short, they got down from the car with their luggage.

"So, you both are leaving me behind?" Anne asked teary eyed, "Come here."

She enveloped her friends in a big tight hug.

"I am gonna miss you both." She whispered, "You are lucky I am rich, I am gonna fly all the time to Spain to see you bitches."

"My turn now." Aunt Dido said hugging the girls, "God bless you both and protect you."

They stayed together in the hug for a while before pulling apart and having each other goodbyes.

"I know why I ain't fortunate In love Dan." Korina said as they put on their seat belts, they were in the plane now.

"Why?" Daniella laughed, "Why do you think you have bad luck?"

"I am Korina." She said, "It means maiden, I am living by my name."

Daniella shook her head and turned back to her magazine, it was gonna be a long flight.

Chapter 87

4 years later.

Spain, Madrid.

"Andre!" She screamed, "Come put on your shirt if you do not wanna get some ass whooping."

"No mum." The little boy giggled and ran down the stairs making Korina chase him.

"We are gonna be late." She growled, "I don't have time to play all day Andre."

"But I wanna play." The boy pouted and ran to hide beneath the tables.

Korina stood with hands at akimbo trying to find her son, "Andre! Andre!" Come out where ever you are." She smirked, "Mummy is gonna find you."

She tiptoed to the dining area and bent over the dining table, she stretched her hands to drag out a giggling Andre.

"Yayy!" He hugged her, "Let's do that again." He pleaded.

"Nope." Korina patted his head, "You have to go to school baby."

She dropped him and wore his shirt for him, "And I have to get to work."

"Can we go out to get ice cream when I get back?" Andre asked looking at her with puppy eyes.

"Of course." She smiled and pecked him on the cheek, "But first you have to be a good boy."

"I will mummy." He smiled, "I love you."

"I love you too Andre." She said smiling down at her little bundle of joy.

Jace stroked his beard grinning as she scrolled through the pictures, his woman was right there with their child, they looked happy, too happy without him. Her hair was now fuller than he remembered and he saw that the boy bore some resemblance with him.

It's been been four years since he saw her, four years since Korina dumped him, shot him and left him.

It's not her fucking fault, His conscience snapped.

"What does she do?" He dropped the phone and turned to Ade, "What's her life like?"

"Funny enough." Ade laughed, "You asked those same questions when you were stalking her years ago."

"What's your point man?" Jace rolled his eyes.

"Don't make the mistake you made the last time." His Best Friend said, "Get up and go get her."

"Look man..." Jace began to talk but Ade stopped him.

"You have got to do the right thing this time." Ade said, "All these stalking shit I ain't doing it for you man."

"She wouldn't accept me even if I go after her now." He sighed.

"How sure are you?" Ade scoffed, "So what you gonna do? Stalk her for the rest of your life?"

Jace didn't answer he just looked away from him unable to accept the reality that he is about to make stupid moves again.

"Coming!" Aunt Dido yelled when she heard the door bell, she dropped what she was doing in the kitchen and went to the door.

"Hello." She said sweetly opening the door.

"Hi." The person at the door replied gruffly.

She opened the door wider and was met with the image of Jace standing at her doorway, he had a beard now and his eyes looked sad.

"Hi madam." He said again adding 'madam' as he felt he wasn't in the position to call her aunt.

Aunt Dido reached out and pulled him into a hug, "God." She whispered, "Look at you boy, come in."

Jace was really shocked at the warm reception he had received, he followed her wide eyed as she ushered him into the house, sat him down and went to get him a glass of water.

"How have you been dear?" She asked smiling brightly returning with the water, "It feels so good to see you again."

"I...uhmm...so..." He stammered, "I honestly wasn't expecting this kind of welcome."

"But why?" She asked.

"Cause I killed your sister and..."

"It's okay Jace." She rested a hand on his shoulder, "I have forgiven you."

"Really?" His head shot up.

"Yes." Aunt Dido smiled, "It wasn't entirely your fault, you were forced to do it, it wasn't of your will."

"I know but..."

"Shhh..." She hushed him, "We do things, we make mistakes but at the end there is forgiveness especially for things carried out unwillingly."

"I swear I didn't want to kill her." He said breaking down into tears again.

"Stop being such a big baby." She said patting his back as he cried.

She knew he was still pained and would want to get Korina back, but it's all about time.

Anne wasn't furious to see Jace nor was she happy either. She was just neutral.

"You aren't gonna let me in right?" He asked standing tiredly at her door way.

"Nope." She shook her head, "Say what you wanna right here."

"Anne..." He started, "I am sorry for everything."

"Tell that to Korina." She growled, "You put her through hell."

"I know." Jace said, "I want to make things right." He pleaded.

"I can't help you Jace." She shook her head.

"I just need you to answer a question." He said.

"What?" She asked bluntly staring at him.

"Is she seeing anyone?"

"No." Anne shook her head sadly, "She isn't."

Jace left Anne's apartment with a light hearted feeling, glad that Korina wasn't romantically involved with anyone, "Get the jet ready." He told one of his men, "We are going to Spain."

Chapter 88

Andre ran out of the school happily, excited to go home, he went to a corner and sat on a bench quietly waiting patiently for Korina to come pick him up.

"Hello." He looked up at the sound of the voice, a tall blonde bearded man was before him.

"How are you?" The man asked.

"Fine sir." Andre answered shifting uncomfortably, his mum had told him to beware of strangers and not talk to them.

Jace gazed down at his son and studied his features, he saw how he cowered from him and felt his heart break, he didn't know how to react to that.

A lot of emotions stirred up in him, he wanted to pick up the boy and hug him close but at the same time didn't want to do that as it would scare him more.

"What's your name dear?" He asked.

"Andre." Andre looked up at him, "What's yours?" He asked frowning.

Jace almost laughed, his son tried to look fierce, "I would like to keep it a secret." He responded sitting on the bench with him.

"Why?" Andre asked curiously, "My mum said secrets are bad and they destroy lives."

"Really?" Jace asked, he knew exactly what Korina meant by that, "She said that?"

"Yes." The little boy nodded, "My mum is very pretty." He said proudly, " she's a very strong woman and has great hair."

"What about your dad?" Jace asked curiously.

"I ain't know nothing about him." Andre shrugged, "But she says she could get me a new dad someday and he would love me and her."

"Over my dead body." Jace growled and stood up.

"Is anything wrong sir? Did I say something wrong sir?" Andre asked looking at him.

"Nothing is wrong boy." Jace smiled, his mind was boiling that Korina had thought of bringing someone else that wasn't him into their lives.

Andre looked up to ask another question but found out that the strange man was already gone. He shrugged and forgot about him quickly, sitting there quietly waiting for his mama to come take him home.

"I saw a man today mama." Andre said while Korina tucked him into bed, he was really tall.

"Where did you meet him?" She asked alarmed, "What did I tell you about strangers?"

"You said to stay away from them."

"So..." She gave him a disapproving look, "Why would you talk to one?"

"He came over to where I was." He pouted, "I am sorry mama, please don't be mad."

"Oh, it's okay my baby." She said, "Did he touch you?" She asked cradling his face.

"No, mum." He yawned.

"You should get to sleep boy." Korina said, "We have a long day tomorrow."

"Okay mummy." Andre kissed her Good night and laid on the bed.

She blew him a kiss and left the room.

Korina didn't go to sleep, she sat at the porch of her room thinking about how life had been. It's been four years and she still loved him dearly.

They hadn't been in contact, no one had been able to fill the void he left.

"Andre needs his father and you need him too." Her friends had told her and she knew it was true.

She missed Jace and for the past years, she had been in misery trying to get over him but couldn't. He still held her heart, he was still the one she loved.

She wondered what his life was like without her, had he moved on? Did he forget about her? About what they shared? Did he still love her? Her heart burned at the thought of him loving someone else.

After coming to Spain few years ago, she went to therapy and she learnt to forgive, she forgave everyone that had hurt her including Jace. It wasn't really Jace's fault.

She knew he was forced to do it, to kill her mother but that doesn't hide the fact that he's her murderer and she was pained then.

But forgiveness wasn't by saying you forgive, it's by seeing the person who wronged you and not feeling the same anger you felt towards the person.

She didn't know if she would feel the anger or anything but she knew that if Jace was to come to her asking for forgiveness and for another chance, she would give him a chance.

Korina stood up to get some rest when she heard a knock at her door.

She looked at the clock on the wall it was past 10 and Daniella who would be the only person to come at this time wasn't around.

"Who is there?" She asked as the knocking increased, "Who is it?" She got no answer.

She went to her shelves to pick up a gun before walking towards it.

Korina swung the door open and pointed the gun at the person, "Don't move!"

She looked at the man and her eyes widened, she assessed his features, it was Jace, the man she missed so much.

Her eyes got clouded and she did the next thing Jace never expected of her.

She jumped on him and hugged him.

Chapter 89

Their exhausted and sweaty bodies were still wrapped together, none of them said a word trying not to ruin the blissful moment.

How they went from hugging to kissing and he ending up pounding into her in the bedroom wasn't what they both planned or expected to happen.

The sex was still as great as Korina remembered, even better.

Korina remembered Jace's hands, tongue and mouth were still very skillful.

"Damn, that was great." She let out in a raspy breath, "God!"

"I missed you." He said kissing the top of her forehead and then proceeding to kiss her. She climbed on top of him and began grinding against his erection leading to yet another vigorous love making session.

Korina woke up naked the next morning to an empty bed side and rumpled sheets, "Holy fuck, no!" She screeched on realising what happened the previous nights.

She and Jace's clothes were still all over the floor, she shook her head hoping Andre wasn't awoken by her moans, she grabbed her rob and went out of the room.

She got into the hallways and the aroma of pancakes hit her nostrils, she knew Jace was definitely in the kitchen cooking. She went in there and found him in his trousers from last night at the counter and memories from how he always made breakfast years ago invaded her mind.

Andre was sitting at the counter already stuffing his face with pancakes.

"Mummy." He squealed excitedly running towards her, "This was the man I told you I met at school."

Korina frowned at Jace and he shrugged.

"Have you had your breakfast baby?" She asked soothing his hair.

"Yes mummy." He smiled, "The nice man made breakfast."

"You enjoyed it?"

"Yes mum." He said, "I wanna go play with my building blocks."

"Okay baby." She bent and kissed his head, "Have fun."

Andre blew her a kiss and ran to his room.

"He has my energy and my looks but he got your hair." Jace said leaning against the counter, "I can't believe we both brought that beautiful creature into the world."

"Jace!" She called sternly trying not to get distracted by his abs, "We need to talk."

"I know." He shook his head staring sadly at her.

The silence was uneasy and deafening, none of them said a thing, the air was tension filled.

Jace didn't want to say anything that would piss her off or bring about bad memories.

"I am so sorry Korina." He apologised, "I am sorry for all the pain I caused you, I am sorry for every thing."

"Is that so Jace?" She asked angrily, "Why did you keep it away from me?"

"I didn't want to hurt you, I swear." He told her, "I thought keeping it away from you would be the best."

"Where is Russo?" She asked.

"Dead." He said without emotions, "Remember the first time you came to New York on your birthday, he was responsible for the shooting, he did it to hurt me cause I knew I had interest in you then."

"So you killed him?" She wouldn't be shocked if he did.

"No, I did it." He sighed, "He killed himself." Jace told her.

"I want you to leave." She stood up, "I need time to process all these."

"Korina, please give me another chance." He pleaded, "I promise you won't regret it."

"Leave Jace." She said, although she didn't want him to, her heart was breaking.

"What about Andre?" Jace asked, "My son needs me."

"Oh now, you know you have a son?" She laughed dryly.

"I tried to reach you babe, you blocked me everywhere and covered your tracks." He told her, "I couldn't trace you."

"Well." She shrugged, "Did you email me?"

The fuck? He stared at her like she had gone nuts, email? She's still the crazy woman I fell in love with.

"Korina." Jace started, "I want you to think about this, about our son, about you and me." He stood up, moved closer to her and took her hands in his, "We can still be happy and whole again, we can still be back to the way things were, how things were and even better, please."

She was crying again, he took her face in his hands and kissed her eyes, "I will leave." He whispered.

Jace left soon and she crashed on the couch, loneliness seeping into her even Andre's liveliness couldn't fill the void.

"How did it go?" Ade asked on seeing Jace coming into their hotel suite.

"I don't wanna talk about it man." He replied gruffly, "I just wanna sleep it off, I am exhausted."

"Okay." Ade shrugged, "I am going out anyway."

"Okay man." Jace went into his room and shut the door. He laid on his bed looking at the ceilings.

Things were going so well, He thought, why did she suddenly switch up?

He missed his son and her.

He wanted to have them both in his arms at the moment but sadly, things were different.

Chapter 90

"God Daniella, I miss him so much." Korina groaned.

It's been two months now, she hadn't let Jace come in contact with her but she knew he was still in Spain hanging around waiting for her to give him an answer and she wondered why he was so stubborn and she knew he was going to wait no matter how long it took.

"Then tell him you have forgiven him already." Daniella rolled her eyes, "And quit your whining."

"I don't know." She said, "I am scared that he might still be hiding something from me, that something might go wrong."

"Does Andre know Jace is his Dad yet?" Her cousin asked, "Did you tell him?"

"Nope." Korina shook her head.

"Then who the fuck did you tell the kid the guy is?" Daniella asked raising her voice.

"Well...i always try to avoid the questions." She sighed, "And I restricted him from seeing Andre although I know he still goes to see him at school."

"Korina." Daniella said, "Stop doing this to yourself, Jace and your son."

"I don't even know what I am doing." Korina was really frustrated.

"It's been years babe, you know you are over what happened and it ain't his fault." Daniella said, "You know you have forgiven him, quit this attitude of yours and set your life straight give Jace the chance to become a father to Andre and a husband to you, I know he still wants to marry you, that dude is smitten."

"I don't know Dan." She sighed, "I don't know."

Daniella ended the call with her cousin and sank back into the bath tub.

Ade, the name was branded on her mind like a fire scar, she couldn't shut out thoughts of him. She was still in love with him but he didn't want anything to do with her and it was all her fault.

She often wondered if he still had feelings for her.

She was being stupid holding on to the toxic treatment Landon gave her and throwing Ade's love away, no wonder he thought she only used him.

She sighed, life wasn't fair after all, she was torn between staying back in India and elongating her holiday or going back to Spain.

Daniella didn't want to go back, she knew he would be there cause wherever Jace went, he went also. She decided to give up on having something with him, he was so mad that he didn't want her and besides, no one knew about their affair.

She concluded that staying apart was the best for them.

He so desperately wanted to ask about her cousin, he wanted to find out what went on in Daniella's life now but doing so would only bring back memories and he didn't want that to happen.

She isn't worth it, He thought folding his fists, she just used me.

Ade was never the type to love and commit but meeting Daniella made him rethink and she played him, used him.

He was thankful that she wasn't in Spain at the moment, as seeing her would only aggravate his anger and feelings.

He knew that up till this moment no one knew about their affair and what they had going on years ago and it made him determined to move on, he would try to forget her, he would try.

The following days Korina practically became a shadow of herself, she stopped going to work, she was always in the house, even Andre noticed something was wrong with her.

"What's wrong mum?" He asked touching her face, "Why are you so sad?"

"It's adult issues baby." She pecked his cheeks, "Go on and play."

He nodded and kissed her back then went off to his room.

She couldn't tell her poor boy what was going on, she felt he was wise but too young to understand her present plight.

Her heart ached emotionally and sometimes physically. The pain of being away from Jace after having him so close was too much for her to bear.

That night she couldn't hold it anymore, she picked up her phone and called Jace over.

Jace leapt off the bed after the phone call with Korina, he was super excited, she finally called, maybe she wants to give me a chance, he thought as he got dressed.

He hurriedly put on his shirt and sweat pants, grabbed his rented car keys and practically ran out if the apartment.

Ade laughed watching his best friend run out of the apartment like a mad man, he wondered what was it this time.

Korina opened the door immediately the door bell rang, she jumped on Jace kissing him and grinding on him. Jace moaned in her mouth and lifted her up, shut the door behind him, took her to the bedroom and dropped her on the bed.

"We need to talk." He said in a rasp breath.

"Fuck me first, talk later." She grabbed him down on her kissing him fully. Jace had no option than to concede, he couldn't resist her charms.

They were soaking in the bathtub after ravishing each other, Jace was rubbing his palms all over Korina's body.

"Korina, we need to talk." He said, "I..."

She kissed him on the lips shutting him up.

"Jace, I love you so much." She confessed, "I want to be with you, I want to accept you back but you have to give me time." She explained, "I am willing to try for you to love you more than I do now, I am ready to give you a chance to be a father to Andre."

Jace looked at her with misty eyes, savoring her words.

"Are you serious?" He asked, "You want me back? I love you so much Korina Black, I would do things right this time and love you and my so till my last breathe."

"I love you too Jace Lander." She winked, "Or better still Darius Alec Giovanni." She said placing her lips on his kissing him like her life depended on it.

Epilogue

Love is a beautiful thing but it becomes more beautiful when two people in love agree to exchange vows and spend the rest of their lives together.

Walking down the aisle to the altar was a dream to Korina, She couldn't contain her excitement as she saw Jace standing there waiting for her, Andre smiled all the way walking her to Jace, he was happy that his mama and papa were finally going to be together.

It wasn't a small rushed wedding this time, it was well planned event, it was classy and unique with important people of all walks of life present.

Jace couldn't control his Joy either, he was finally having the woman he loved to himself, he had kissed her when she reached him and also after the vows.

Ade couldn't contain his Joy of Jace finally finding happiness and getting the woman he was smitten by, for the first time in long ass years, he cried, he cried tears of Joy.

Her best girls were the happiest, giggling, smiling, making faces, they were happy that Korina had finally settled down and had the man she loved all to herself now and Mark came from Denmark with his pregnant wife and two kids, he couldn't miss Korina's wedding for the world.

Claire couldn't hold back her tears, her little boy Jace was finally getting the happiness he deserved.

She had brought him up and nurtured him, assisted him all through his life, she had witnessed his happy and sad moments and now she was here on the best day of his life.

Aunt Dido had been elated and gave them all the advice they needed on living together and having a happy marriage.

Korina thought her name was the reason why she was unlucky in love all these while.

"I am meant to be a maiden as the name implies." She once said but she was proved wrong, today she had joined her life with someone else's.

Jace never thought he'd find love, he never thought she would love him but he was wrong, today he is a father and a husband.

They were ready to stay with each other through thick and thin as they have been through more than a lot together. They were ready to grow old together, they were ready to live their lives to the fullest with each other.

"I promise you to do my very best." Jace whispered into Korina's ears as they slow danced to 'I wanna grow old with you' by westlife, "I am going to be the best you have ever had."

"You are already the best Jace." She smiled up at him, "I would love you till my last breathe, I am here for you, we didn't pass all these trials and tribulations for our love not to live on."

"I love you." He pulled her close.

"I love you too." Their lips met, it was a soft but sensual and passionate kiss, a kiss sealing their love and holding promises of good times to come.

Jace finally got the woman he was smitten with and he was going to keep her.

All isn't fair in love and war after all but love does conquer all.