

# The Girl He Craves

Chapter 177

Meredith's pov

He hauled in a shaky breath, his eyes swimming with sadness. I had hit him with the past, something that could potentially bring out the man he once was.

'She's dead.' He whispered, pushing the photo away. "The dead can't speak."

I blinked in sadness, pitying the man he is now today. "But they can still see and hear. If mom was here, she'd smack you upside your head and then nurse your wounds."

He clenched his fists, turning away from me completely. "Is this why you came here? To remind me of why I'm actually doing what I'm doing? Look at me, Meredith." His eyes snapped up to mine suddenly and I had to take in a very sharp inhale as emotions swam through the windows of his soul.

Father was in more pain than I realized.

'I'm a shell of a man because of her. I can love no other, I have a permanent hole in my heart because of her. Love is selfish Meredith, the pain is unbearable. I tried to save you from it too," He looked over my shoulder at Grant.

He continued. "But I was too late. I need to save my grandson before it's too late."

I shook my head, reaching out for him. My heart ached for my father. A man who once believed love was the answer to everything now made love his enemy. It was painful and tormenting to watch him become this person.

When my fingers touched his hand, he flinched. His eyes swept to mine in shock. I don't remember the last time I held my father's hand or the last time I voluntarily stood this close to him.

After mom died, our father-daughter relationship was swept up and tom into shreds. He would come home late from work, smell of booze, and trash the entire place.

I can recall listening to a few bottles shattering on the wall. I can even remember the feeling of that broken glass piercing through my heel one of those mornings after his rampage.

He didn't even flinch when I cried out in pain, he looked at me dead in the eyes that day, his soulless eyes, and told the maid to help me. He didn't come to see me that day too.

Instead, he had me stay up alone in my room, crying my eyes out. My foot wasn't the only thing that hurt that day, my heart was too.

That day I came to terms with the fact that I lost my father the same day I lost my mother.

From that day, we regarded each other coldly, like we were not father and daughter at all. I did what he asked and made sure to not upset him.

But of course, I met Grant and everything changed.

"You're wrong dad,' I whispered.

I hadn't called him dad in a while too. Always regarded him as father.

He looks surprised when he heard my words. There's a flicker in his gaze, a flicker that reminded me of the past and the way he looked at me before mom passed away.

'Love is beautiful. It's worth it. Those years you shared with mom, I was sure were the happiest you've ever been. Do you regret meeting her? Sharing life with her? Making life with her?'

I watch his adam's apple bob as he swallowed and croaked out. "No. I don't regret anything when it comes to your mother Meredith.' He tore his eyes away, burying the pain deep within his soul.

'If I had to go back I'd do it all over again." He whispered. "I'd choose her all over again. ■

My heart squeezed. I could hear the raw emotions playing in his voice.

'Don't you think you're hurting her now that you're trying to hurt her grandson dad? He has a son, a woman who he loves dearly. You're trying to tear his family apart. Why do you think this is a good idea? Why do you want to hurt him?'

He snapped his eyes to me. "Don't you see I'm trying to help him Meredith? Yes. I love your mother and would choose her all over again, but the pain of losing her is unbearable. Love is painful."

I let go of his hand, growing angry now that he was trying to justify his absurd mental thinking. "Love is beautiful. Every bit of it is beautiful. Every single emotion is beautiful. Stop hurting Aiden because of what I had done."

When I fell in love with Grant, my father had tried his best to change my mind so I could marry into the Muralo's. But Grant and I run away and never turned back. In a way, he thinks that I had abandoned him.

But he didn't realize that it was his actions that drove me to do such a thing.

He lost his wife and then he lost his daughter.

In a way, I understood his loneliness and how a dead mind and heart can really turn someone insane to think any action they take, is really for the best.

Tears blurred my vision as I cracked. 'I'm sorry for leaving you the way I did. I'm sorry I didn't leave a letter. I'm sorry I stayed years not checking up on you dad. But please, you can't hurt Aiden because of me. He's my son and I want to see him happy. He deserves to feel happy. Don't tear him away from his family. If you truly don't want him to get hurt by love, then don't ruin his happiness. Because either way, you will end up hurting him.'

He looks away, swallowing before whispering. 'That girl....she reminds me of you. She's strong-willed."

A watery smile appeared on my face as I nod. 'Which is why she's perfect for my son. Let them enjoy love dad. Let them go through the stages of it. Let them learn and grow. Don't tear them apart. Let them love."

I reached out for his hand again, squeezed it and whispered. "Whatever action you take now will be the start of your future, either go with this absurd plan and lose your family or fix that bond with your family and forget about gaining more power."

With that, I left him in his sturdy looking at the last family photo we took with mom.

Grant swung his arm over my shoulder and pulled me closer. 'You did well my love. I'm proud of you."

I smiled shakily at him. "Let's hope he'll do the right thing from now on."

Sergio stared deep at the photo, clutching it tightly. A tear streaked down his face as he peered into her eyes.

'Am I really ruining their lives Jenai?' He croaked out into the silence of the room.

His heart hurt, his mind a jumbled mess.

He knew exactly what response his late wife would give him and he can't help but feel like a complete asshole.

Was he wrong from trying to protect his family from heartache?

Sergio place the photo down on the desk and reached out for the phone.

The phone rang for a few before Christopher answered.

'Sergio I was just about to-

'It's off. Aiden will not be marrying Lillian."