

# The Joy of Revenge #Chapter 41 - Read The Joy of Revenge Chapter 41

Chapter 41

CHAPTER 41 A Warning

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"Yep. Just some things to make it look less..." Cristos paused to think of the right word.

"Dingy," I said. We all laughed.

"I have to agree the pub needs fixing. But you're keeping the hardwood floors, right?" Jack asked.

Cristos nodded. "I'll be having the wood refinished. You know...patch, repair and sand, then Noah's men will apply fresh stain and lacquer. When it's done, my floor is going to shine like it's brand new. I'm also having the walls repainted and the front bar, under bar and back bar replaced. I'm guessing everything will be done in a month or so."

"The pub will be closed every weekend for a month?!" Jack didn't sound too happy.

"Well, maybe longer when I have the floors done. I need everything to set and dry before any of us can step on the wood," Cristos explained. "I'll probably need the same amount of time for the bar."

"I guess we just have to drink at home then," Jack said, smiling. "So, I'll see you tonight,

Virtue?"

How can I say no to the both of you," I answered, smiling back. "I'll see you tonight,

the sheriff. Right now, Chip and I have to head to town hall."

Jack's brow furrowed. "What for?"

“For our building permits, silly,” Cristos replied, flapping his hand in the air. “Virtue needs hers right away. She wants her boutique operational before prom. That's still a thing, right? | mean, prom?” Cristos looked meaningfully at Jack, hoping to get a reaction. “Yeah, it’s still a thing,” Jack murmured, his eyes glazing over. “You're right... The spring formal is coming up.” He blinked his eyes rapidly and shook his head as if he was shaking away a bad thought or a bad memory in his head.

My hands instantly balled into fists. Unlike this bastard standing in front of me, | could. never shake away the memory of that horrible night.

Cristos, who had noticed my cheeks had gone red, coughed and opened the door of the passenger side of his car. “Virtue, get in. Jack, we'll just see you later tonight.” Cristos waved at Jack and sashayed his way to the driver’s side.

I smiled at Jack before entering the car. When | was seated, Jack gave me a small wave and

closed the door for me.

“You okay, Virtue?” Cristos asked as he drove us out of the parking lot.

I gave him a bright smile. “No pain, no gain.”

At town hall, Dan told us to head on up to see Abigail which meant | would have to face. Liam.

What a way to ruin my day...

Cristos knocked tentatively. After we heard a female voice say ‘come in’, he opened the door. Abigail was seated at her desk, wearing a salmon colored pant suit and a big smile.

“Good morning, Abigail! We just saw Dan downstairs and he told us we could pick up our building permits from you,” Cristos said in a hushed tone while practically tiptoeing across the room to Abigail’s desk. He pointed at Liam’s office. “Is Liam here?”

“No, but he’ll be here later in the day,” Abigail answered while shuffling through the documents on her desk. | entered the room, feeling lucky | was able to dodge seeing Liam, and closed the door behind me.

“Here are your building permits as promised. It would’ve been done when Lisa was here

earlier, but I had to wait for the floor plans and costs. Pete just sent them awhile ago.” She

ded us our documents. “Well, you guys are all set. If you need anything else, don’t sitate to ask me.”

“Thank you so much, Abigail,” I said while placing my permit inside my tote bag. “I hope when construction is finished, you can drop by.

“Of course I will, Virtue,” she replied, grinning at me. “So where are the both of you off to?”

“Maybe go and have brunch,” Cristos answered. I’m hungry. Since Liam isn’t here, why don’t you join us?”

“I’d love to, but I have to finish all of this before the day ends,” she refused politely while placing a hand over a pile of papers on her desk. “Tomorrow is a Saturday and I was planning to drive to Bismarck for some antiques. New stuff will be coming in today, so I’m excited I might find a new tea cup to add to my collection.”

“We should do that, Chip,” I suggested. “Noah told me Bismarck has great vintage finds.”

## CHAPTER 41 A Warning

“Alright. We can do that after brunch, Cristos agreed. “Since you have so much work to do, we won’t take anymore of your time, Abigail. Thanks again.”

Unexpectedly, Abigail stood up from my desk and grabbed my arm. “Wait, Virtue,” she said, her voice faint and subdued. “I know this will sound crazy, but I overheard Liam tell Noah to put up CCTV cameras in your store.” I stared into her eyes, my brow furrowing while my eyes slightly narrowed, trying to figure out why her voice sounded so familiar.

It’s like I’ve been hearing it over and over in my head. I needed a second to think. If only I

could remember...

She suddenly let go of her arm and laughed nervously. “I-I’m terribly sorry. You know what? Just forget I ever said anything.”

“It does sound... weird, but thanks for the warning,” I murmured. I took her hands in mine.

“Thank you, Abigail.”

I squeezed her hands before letting go.

After blowing Abigail a kiss, Cristos rushed forward to open the door so we could leave.

When the door swung open, I gasped. Standing in the doorway, leaning forward with his right ear towards us, was Liam. He was obviously eavesdropping, the prick!

h, why are you standing in the doorway of your own office, Liam?”

Chapter Comments.

Vickie Johnson

Good so far. Just hate waiting on updates.

Luna-Mom

POST COMMENT

this is really fun reading how they are all enthralled by Virtue. Joy and the guys are really enjoying watching the townsfolk. [VIEW ALL 3 COMMENTS >](#)

4

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Chapter 42

CHAPTER 42 Tug of War

Liam

Hangovers. One reason why | rarely drank to get drunk, but last night | wanted to forget about the past, my obligations, my responsibilities and this gnawing feeling | would have to do something inexplicably deplorable, if not, be at the commanding end of it. It didn't matter. All fingers would point to me....

Not my father. Not the boss. Not my friends. Me

| wanted to call in sick today, but it was a Friday. "Monday and Friday are reserved for the people, the rest of the days of the work week is for business, while the weekend is for yourself and family," my dad would always remind me when | didn't want to go to town hall. Today was no different.

"Get up, Liam. Today is a Friday. People are expecting you to come to work today," my father said, shaking me awake. He was dressed and ready to leave for the cabin in the woods.

"Dad, | have a hangover and a splitting headache," | reasoned while | rubbed my forehead, closing my eyes tightly.

And whose fault is that? I've told you time and again to drink within your limits," my dad aid. "Take the medicine Claire has left you on your nightstand and take a shower. Don't forget to brush your teeth. You have horrible breath."

| sat up on my bed and took the aspirin and the glass of water that was laid out by our maid. from my nightstand.

"| thought you were leaving early," | said after | had placed the empty glass on my nightstand.

"| would have, if you had come down for breakfast, my father answered, letting out a sigh of frustration. "I heard from Henry that you drove by the Old Taylor House. Why did you do that for?"

"| just wanted to make sure our new resident got home safely," | answered, pushing back my. sheets and getting out of my four- poster bed. My head was throbbing and the sunlight. pouring through the tall windows of my room was hurting my es

my eyes.

“New resident? The woman named Virtue Sullivan? Liam, I need to do a background check on her. A woman like Virtue Sullivan usually goes where the action is...big cities like New

175

## CHAPTER 42 Tug of War

York, Los Angeles, or Chicago. Not small towns where designer clothing is hard to come by. You don't think I haven't noticed her expensive car and her Prada bag? I doubt if she's here.

for the scenery.”

I grabbed my phone to check my calls and messages. Nicole had messaged saying Pete would be taking over Virtue's boutique. I quickly messaged her telling her it wasn't a problem. After sending a message to Abigail that I would be coming in late, I threw my phone on my bed and took out a piece of paper from my briefcase which Cris gave me last night.

“Cris says she checks out. All the information on Virtue Sullivan is on that sheet of paper. You can call her parents if you want. Their numbers are on there.”

I watched my father scan the sheet of paper. “It says here she was a victim of a mugging in Las Vegas and sought therapy after. Her shrink suggested she move to a small town with a low crime rate,” my father said, nodding his head. “She's fragile. Perhaps her parents will be moving in with her. The Taylor house has more rooms than the town inn.”

“Dad, we have to stop with the paranoia,” I said, quoting Cris. “It's causing us more problems. How about if I befriend Virtue? She's opening a boutique beside Bo's. Plus, she's single and of marrying age.”

“Friends, sure. More than friends, no. I have already made an arrangement. You will give me

heir who will be our ticket out of the pact our forefathers had made. I am sick and tired of

ing a pawn. I want us to be kings in this state he said frustratedly. “You should get ready for work. I'll be back from the cabin on Sunday.” He walked towards

my bedroom door. "And Liam, no more drinking." He left, closing the door behind him.

I wanted to scream. My father was such a pain. He even made arrangements for me to marry someone I didn't love. I had a feeling it was one of the daughters of the higher-ups in the organization and most of them were butt ugly.

After taking a long and relaxing hot shower, I got dressed and left. I hated eating at home alone. My mother died when I was a baby and ever since, it has only been me, my dad, the

servants and the guards.

I picked up breakfast at Harold's including a huge cup of coffee so I could eat in my office. As I parked my car, I noticed Chip's Range Rover in the parking lot.

Ah...building permits.

I walked inside the building, my food in one hand and my cup of coffee in the other, and quickly went up the stairs to my office. 2/5

## CHAPTER 42 Tug of War

I placed

my foot against the large wood door, listening in on their convention, when the door suddenly swung open almost making me lose my balance.

I saw Virtue jump and gasp while Chip gave me a dirty look. If Virtue was pretty yesterday, she was even more beautiful in her dress with her hair up.

"Uhm, why are you standing in the doorway of your own office, Liam?" Chip asked, crossing his arms in front of his chest. He knew I didn't like him. Hell, I didn't like him and his cousins. The people of this town were beginning to warm up to them and since they were all so handsome and kind, some of the town's folk were beginning to think of them as potential

leaders of this town.

"I was trying to nudge the door open," I said, showing him that my hands were full. "Have



you gotten your building permits?"

Virtue took out a piece of paper from her brown tote bag and showed it to me. "Yes. We are

all set. Thanks to Abigail."

"I heard Bismarck. What's happening there?" I asked, entering my office and handing Abigail

my food and my coffee. I noticed her hands were slightly shaking. I fixed my light gray suit and tightened my dark blue tie while I watched her through hooded eyes.

Why so nervous, Abigail?

les," Chip answered. "Abigail here told us about a new batch of antiques coming in at ea market. We'll be driving there after we've had brunch."

"So you'll be gone the whole afternoon?" I asked.

"Just for a couple of hours. I need to be back before Friday happy hour," Chip replied. "We need to go. Much to do, so little time. See you later, Mayor." Chip said 'mayor' like it. disgusted him. There was no doubt in my mind he knew it was my car following them last

night.

I wonder if he has told Virtue about the stuff the people say y about me..

"See you and thanks again," Virtue said, waving her hand and smiling brightly at me. Judging by her smile, I guess she was clueless then. She wouldn't be so nice if she had heard.

She was such a beautiful woman. I noticed the creamy skin of her breasts peeking from the low neckline of her dress and felt myself go hard. Maybe I could convince my father to marry her, if ever we became a couple. She's very charming and could probably charm herself into

3/5

13:35 Mon, Mar 25

## CHAPTER 42 Tug of War

my dad's good graces.

"Virtue, wait!" | called out to her before Chip could drag her away. She stopped and turned around, a puzzled expression on her face.

"Yes, Mayor?" Her voice was so seductive. She made 'mayor' sound like an endearment.

"| was wondering if | could invite you to dinner..." | croaked. | saw her hesitate. "N-not today. since | think you've made plans. 'H- How about tomorrow at my place?"

"Your place?" Virtue asked.

"| live on Prairie's Peak. The big house on top of it," | answered. "My dad is out of town so we'll have the place to ourselves. The view of the town at night is spectacular."

"I-1 don't know-"

Mugging...she's fragile...

"Chip, you can come too," | offered, "unless you have to be at the pub." As much as | disliked him, he could provide Virtue some security. | needed to show her | wasn't a bad guy.

"The pub will be closed tomorrow for renovations. | have never been to Prairie's Peak. |

na go," Chip said enthusiastically. | saw Virtue's resolve melt away.

Okay, but on one condition," she said. | raised my eyebrows, hoping it wasn't something difficult to do. "You have to come to my housewarming party."

"At the Old Taylor House?" | groaned. Sitting outside her house was one thing, but going inside? My dad won't like it. But | can pass by for a drink and leave.

"Ah, yeah. That's where she lives, silly," Chip said.

"You have got yourself a deal," I said, extending my hand. She took my hand in hers and

shook it. Her touch made me shiver and that sparkle in her blue eyes made my heart skip a

beat.

"So, what-time tomorrow, Mayor?" Virtue asked, her hand still in my mine.

"Six-thirty. We'll have pre-dinner drinks, then dinner will be served at seven," I answered,

letting go of her hand.

"See you tomorrow night then," Virtue said, waving goodbye. "Have a good day, Mayor."

4/5

## CHAPTER 42 Tug of War

She turned around and I caught the faint scent of her expensive perfume. I sighed happily. I have a date with Virtue.novelbin

My only problem was my father... and maybe the boss.

Well, there were ways to make my father disappear just in case he had a problem with

Virtue.

I closed the door to my office and dialed a number. The person answered after several rings.

"What?" He asked impatiently. Of all the people to be an underboss of the organization, it just had to be him.

"Cris said Virtue Sullivan checks out. If you still need to find out more about her, have someone bug her house. She will be having dinner with me tomorrow night. Noah said she doesn't have a security system installed, so it'll be easy to break in." "Alright," he said, then hung up.

| began eating breakfast feeling an inner tug-of-war of emotions. | looked forward to spending time with

e tomorrow night, but | was also anxious to find out the truth about

her.

is an undercover agent, I'll have my fun with her before | dispose of her. Maybe this Cris and Jack will join me.

| sighed. But waking up beside her every morning would make me so happy.

| clicked on my laptop so | could skim through the CCTV footage of my office, but | was interrupted by Abigail's voice from the intercom

“Mayor Cohen, Mrs. Lowell is here to see you.”

| closed my laptop. I'll look through it later.

Chapter Comments

Luna-Mom

uh-oh not good

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Chapter 43

CHAPTER 43 Up to Prairie's Peak

Joy

After getting our building permits, yesterday went by quickly. We met up with Big Man Lou and his team at a small warehouse in Bismarck. He was a capo

who worked under Cristos and was in charge of handling Cristos' team while he was away.

"We found a lead on the doctor who took care of you when you were hurt, JT," Lou said while placing a folder in front of us. "We suspect she's in Bali, Indonesia. From what Primo found

out last night, the money trail from one of the Cohen's bank accounts leads to an account in

that country. The doctor reverted back to her maiden name after she and her husband were

divorced. As for the husband, we don't know exactly where he is, but her name shows up at a local money remittance center. We think her husband might be living near her."

"At least we know where to find her. | already hacked into St. Elizabeth's database and found that joy's medical files have been deleted. | doubt if there's a printed copy at the records

section. The only reason why Theodore Cohen sends the good doctor money is because she has a copy of the files," Cristos said. "Have you hacked into the coroner's computer?" Lou

nodded his head.

Everything on Joan Summers is there, but the coroner's findings have already been doctored. Joan Summers and Kimberly Smith share the same findings except for the date and time of death which are consistent for a serial murder," Lou elaborated. "I'm guessing the coroner keeps copies of his 'true' findings at home."

"| think you're right. But just like the Cohens, his house is like a fort. Did you find a money trail?" Cristos asked. "He just bought a new Volvo for his wife."

"No, we didn't. We think the coroner is being paid in cash," Lou said. "If you turn to page three, there's something we found in one of Daniel Williams' files. It seems to be a spreadsheet set up for sales and profits. Of what...it wasn't listed. But whatever they're selling has earned them a cool three million dollars last month alone. Anyway, we're still going through the files. When we find anything important, you'll be the first to know."

“Well, I doubt if they smuggle in goods. I’m leaning more on the possibility of drugs. This is more of Sebastian’s arena. I’ll see he gets the data. By the way, I need info on a Noah Jensen. I found this in my car,” Cristos said, showing Lou a plastic bag of a circular listening device

chopped up in pieces.

“This is your police standard issued listening device. Did this Noah Jensen put this in your

115

## CHAPTER 43 Up to Prairie’s Peak

car?” Lou asked.

“Yep. He was seated in the back last night and I found that underneath the backseat when I got home. We also saw him snooping around Joy’s house last night,” Cristos said. “Lou, he pretends to be a nobody, but now I have my doubts.”

“This means whoever is running the town has a hold on law enforcement. As for Noah. Jensen, he isn’t a nobody. He’s someone trusted by someone up in the food chain to have stuff like this,” Lou said. “What does he do for a living?”

“He’s a contractor,” I answered.

“Contractor? He can build a laboratory without anyone knowing. I heard there’s a new residential area just outside of your town near the lake. They can make the drugs there and transport the drugs via boat to the nearby towns and cities for distribution,” Lou speculated.

“I’m beginning to think Noah deliberately withheld evidence and information when you were attacked, Joy,” Cristos murmured as he looked through the files. “And your attack was probably ordered by someone high in rank as an initiation of sorts. Why they targeted you? You must have witnessed or heard ‘something or maybe your parents did. It was their way to

shut you up.”

“I’ll have to ask my dad,” I told Cristos. “I don’t remember ever seeing or hearing something

out of the ordinary.”

“What else do you need, Primo?” Lou asked. “Say the word and I’ll do it.”

“I need you to make an anonymous tip to the good Sheriff of New Salem through a burner phone and get opera tickets for the coroner and his wife. Whatever else I need done is more Xavier’s arena. Just get that info I need on Noah and all the people under his payroll,” Cristos said. “And monitor all activity from Dan’s computer. I’ll hack into his home system so you can also monitor him from there.”

After our short meeting, Big Man Lou and his team disguised themselves as delivery men delivering antique furniture. While Cristos and I set up the pieces of furniture in a spare room, Lou and his men quickly set up my home security system. They were in and out in an

hour.

“Your security system is installed and it is time for me to head to the pub. You coming with or you’ll just meet me there?” Cristos asked.

“Coming with. I need to pick up my car at Bo’s. I’ll just have one drink with Jack and head

2/5

CHAPTER 43 Up to Prairie’s Peak

home. I need to get some sleep,” I said, yawning

“I bet you twenty bucks Jack is a no-show.”

Cristos won the bet. At the pub, Jack didn’t show up, but Lisa did. She said Jack and the Sheriff were on a manhunt for the accomplice of the Summers and Smith murders. I heaved a sigh of relief, thankful the anonymous tip worked, and called it an early night..

In the morning, news spread that a fire erupted at Sheriff Combs’ house while he was out on a wild goose chase. Xavier made sure whatever he took would never be discovered.

I stayed home the whole day. I did call Pete to check on their progress and he said they were on schedule

It was almost six o'clock and I was waiting for Cristos to pick me up. I was wearing a white short sleeved midi dress with a matching long white cardigan and white strappy sandals with a low heel. My hair was up in a neat and tight bun, accessorized with my favorite bladed hair comb.

Cristos called to tell me to come out before he entered the cul-de-sac. I punched in my security code, then turned off the lights and locked the door. I glanced at Noah's house before climbing in Cristos' car and noticed his truck wasn't in the driveway.

"You nervous?" Cristos asked me. He was wearing a dark blue long sleeved polo shirt with haki chinos. He looked simple, casual and dashing.

"No. But I would rather go out on a date with you," I said, giggling. He patted my knee lovingly.

"Me too, honey," Cristos said, driving to Prairie's Peak. "Let's just think of Liam as a third wheel. By the way, I got the medical records of Laura Jensen, the autopsy report of Owen Jensen and some news clippings about their accident. I also pulled out the school file of Peter McDowell. Apparently, he moved here from Texas his freshman year in high school after his father died. Not much is in his file so I'm going to do some digging."

"Do you know where he lives?" I asked.

"At Highland Oaks, the prime residential area where the coroner lives. His mom owns the local pharmacy," Cristos answered. "They have

business?"

money," I said. "So why is Pete working for Noah when he can put up his own

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13:35 Mon, Mar 25 MS

CHAPTER 43 Up to Prairie's Peak

"That's why I'm going to do some digging, Cristos replied. He glanced at my hair and nodded approvingly. "I know this isn't your first rodeo, but are you ready?"



“Yes, I have liquid latex covering my fingerprints and hydrogen peroxide wipes to destroy DNA from glass and utensils,” I said. “And when we’re there, what should you

do?”

“Drink at the same spot so it will be easier to wipe off lipstick. Hydrogen peroxide wipes should always be on hand to wipe glass and utensils if ever I have to leave them unattended. Place disposable seat cover before peeing and add soap when flushing. Make sure not to play with hair, so there will be no hair fall. If I sneeze, place tissue in my purse, not in the trash bin. I think I got it,” I said.

“Good girl. With Liam, it’s always a damn test,” Cristos said. “Since I’ll be the designated driver, I won’t drink, just in case he drugs you. If he does, I’ll send out a 911 message to Sebastian and Xavier.”

If Liam does drug me, Xavier will kill him,” I said. Cristos chuckled.

“Seriously, if he does drug you, I’ll kill him.”

Before entering the estate, we needed to wait at the guard house for Liam’s phone call confirming our appointment. Once he did, the guard opened the gates and waved at us to

enter.

It was a steep and lonely climb up to the top of Prairie’s Peak where we found the magnificent chateau-styled redbrick home, reminiscent of the 1920s art deco period...the time when the Cohens arrived at New Salem.

The dark wood stained-glass doors opened to reveal a smiling Liam dressed in a white long sleeved shirt under a dark gray vest with matching dark gray pants and leather shoes.

“There are usually guards out here on the grounds. I guess Liam told them to go elsewhere so they wouldn’t freak you out,” Cristos said as he parked his car. He flicked his fingers in the air while he fixed his hair. “Well, time to get this show on the road.” I opened the door, exited the car and felt the chill in the air. I quickly tightened my cardigan around my body, shivering from the cold breeze blowing across the hilltop.

After securing his car, Cristos offered me his arm and guided me to the front doors of the mansion where Liam stood with a drink in his hand.

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## CHAPTER 43 Up to Prairie's Peak

| tightened my hold on Cristos' arm. | felt a sudden urge to inflict pain. There was no father and no army to stop me. | could tie Liam up and play pin the tail on the donkey with a knife.

As we approached, Liam mockingly bowed at us.

"Welcome to my humble abode."

Chapter Comments.

Luna-Mom

This mayor thinks highly of himself

VIEW 1 COMMENT >

POST COMMENT

27

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Chapter 44

## CHAPTER 44 The View

Liam

The cold wind was blowing, making Virtue wrap her cashmere sweater tightly around herself.

Oh, how I wanted to wrap myself around her naked body and touch every inch of her...

“Welcome to my humble abode,” I exclaimed merrily, gesturing at my two guests to follow me inside. “This is the entry hall. Everything you see is original from the hand painted ceiling to the paneling as well as the chandelier. We've done a few minor improvements, but it's mostly for entertainment.”

They surveyed the interior of the house, marveling at the shiny hardwood floors, the walls decorated with old paintings and the white birch paneling touching the painted ceiling above. They both paused to admire the chandelier hanging in the middle.

“It's absolutely stunning, Liam,” Chip said, disentangling himself from Virtue. She scoffed at him and backed away, raising her hands.

I took the opportunity of the little scuffle to offer her my arm instead. She smiled and wrapped her hand around the crook of my elbow. A shiver went through me, delighting at her

touch.

“So simple, yet so beautiful,” I whispered into her ear. “I'd take your sweater and hang it, but we'll be going out to see the view overlooking the town and there's a chill in the air. I wouldn't want you to catch a cold,” I said. She smiled at me.

“You have a beautiful home, Liam. A remembrance of the 1920s art deco era,” Virtue said.

“Please, continue with the tour.”

“Yes, please,” Chip said while peering through the glass cabinets filled with porcelain-

figurines antiques and rare vintage finds here must cost a fortune. Virtue, look. They

have a Lladro 18th Century Coach sculpture. That piece alone is priced at fifty grand.”

“That’s my grandfather’s collection. Some people collect cars, my grandfather loved. collecting-figurines,” | told him, then pointed to a doorway to our right. “Right through there is the formal living room.”

The heels of her sandals made a clickerty clack sound as she walked, her face full of admiration. | could tell she was impressed which made my heart swell with pride...

1/7

13:35 Mon, Mar

#### CHAPTER 44 The View

Chip followed us into the formal living room which featured an Italian marble hearth and a painted ceiling just like the hallway. The furniture were antiques while a few paintings covered the walls.

| placed my glass on the small rectangular table behind the sofa and led her through two double doors which led into the formal dining room where another set of double doors led outside to the view deck.

“| promised you the view of the town and | keep my promises,” | said as | led her to the double doors. Unfortunately, Claire, my maid, emerged from the door to the kitchen.

“Sir, dinner is ready,” she announced.

“We’ll go outside after we’ve had dinner. The steak won’t taste as good cold,” | said. Virtue smiled and nodded her head in agreement. “Would you like me to take your sweater? We’ll just hang it on the coat hanger by the door, so you can put it on later.”

“That’s okay. I’ll do it,” she said, letting go of my arm.

| frowned. | felt crestfallen without her touch.

She shrugged out of her cardigan revealing the white short sleeved dress that hugged every

ve of her body. The neckline was low enough to show her creamy skin and the cleavage of breasts. | stared as the twin mounds moved ever so slightly as she removed her cardigan. It didn't matter what she did or how she did it...every move she made was so sensual, sultry and seductive...without her even knowing it.

Even the simple act of hanging her sweater made me go hot with desire. | watched how her cute ass moved as she walked towards the coat hanger.

| bit my lower lip and groaned... there was no visible pantyline. | felt myself go hard.

| just wanted to grab her buttocks and rub myself against her. Unfortunately, Chip was in the same room with us. For now, | had to keep myself in check.

"| hope everything is to your liking," | said as | quickly assisted Virtue with her chair. Chip took the seat across from hers while | sat in front of the dining table.

"| won't be drinking tonight, Liam." Chip covered his empty wine glass with his hand, prohibiting my maid from filling it with red wine. "I'm the designated driver.

"| can have Henry drive you home, Chip," | offered. He shook his head.

217

## CHAPTER 44 The View

"| need my car tomorrow morning, Liam, Chip reasoned. "I have to clean the pub, so | can

open on Monday. The new ceiling is already up. Next weekend, I'm having the walls done."

"Finally the pub is going through an overhaul," | said after sipping a spoonful of my soup. "I love the place, but the floors need a good polish, | don't know why Old Man Eugene never

took the time to have the floors done."

“Well, even if the pub looks awful, people still come to drink,” Chip said. “So, who lives with

you here? Just you and your dad?” | nodded.

“Yeah, my mom died when | was young.”

“You should get married and fill this place up with kids. Are you dating anyone? Or are you and Nicole a thing?” Chip asked. | coughed and glanced at Virtue who stopped sipping her soup. She was interested at what | had to say.

“Nicole and | aren’t a thing and that’s the truth, | answered. “We were...back in high school, but it didn’t work out. Now, we’re just friends.”

“You sure about that? Because Nicole still seems to think of you as hers,” Chip argued.

“| thought Dom and Nicole were dating,” Virtue countered. Chip looked up at the ceiling, thinking.

bes seem that way, but I’m not too sure. I’ll ask Dom,” Chip said. “So, Liam? Are you

ating anyone?”

“Well, right now, I’m hoping... even wishing for someone,” | replied, trying to be vague. |

didn’t want to scare Virtue away.

“Hoping? | was hoping to get a yes or a no to my question, but I’ll settle for that,” Chip said, his eyes widening at the steak in front of him. “Filet mignon.” He took his steak knife and sliced through the meat. “Medium just how | like it.” He took a piece with his fork, placed it in his mouth and sighed blissfully. “| want to have dinner here every night.”

“Since you asked about my love life,” | said, “how about you, Virtue? Are you dating anyone?”

“Like you... I’m hoping. Mmmm...,” she purred blissfully at the piece of steak in her mouth. “My compliments to the chef. This is cooked perfectly.” | smiled. | love a woman who eats.

“Has anyone in town asked you out?” | asked, thinking of Dom and Bo. They were pretty attentive to her the other night at the pub. | felt a tinge of jealousy when Dom touched her

3/7

## CHAPTER 44 The View

hand. | didn't know what they were talking about, but the way he touched her looked like a

caress.

“Aside from you? Yeah, someone has asked me out. He stood me up last night,” she said to my shock.

“Who?” | asked, trying to sound nonchalant.

“Jack!” Chip answered for her. | paused, swallowing the piece of steak in my mouth, and

looked at him, urging him to say more. “He asked Virtue to have a drink with him at the pub, but he didn't show up.”

“He did, did he,” | mumbled before drinking some wine. “And Noah?”

“Oh, he helped me with groceries, so | decided to buy him dinner,” she answered casually.

So it wasn't a date. It was just her way of thanking him. And here | thought it was a dinner date. F ucking Noah... waving and smirking at me the other day.

| should have known Jack Emery would try to ask Virtue out. S hit. There must be something wrong with him. He couldn't even get to first base with Abigail, but now he thinks he and Virtue can become a couple?! | smirked while | sliced through my steak. e and him...undersheriff, a has been injured high school wrestler.... they weren't a good While Virtue and me, the mayor of this town, a Cohen... we were perfect together.

Cris, as much as he wanted to get into Virtue's pants, couldn't afford a scandal before the elections. He had to play it safe. | doubt if Virtue wanted a relationship with a married man. Someone as beautiful as her deserved to be the queen of her home, not some mistress.

After finishing our steaks, I asked Claire to serve us coffee at the view deck. I wanted to end the night romantically, hoping Virtue would see me more than just a friend.

After she put on her sweater, I opened one of the doors and took Virtue's hand in mine, assisting her onto the view deck.

She gasped seeing New Salem below us, its lights twinkling like stars.

"You weren't joking, Liam. This view is AH-MAY-ZING!" Chip exclaimed, patting me on the

"When I have enough money, I'm going to purchase land overlooking the town and build a house. I can already imagine myself at night with a glass of red wine. You will need to yank me away from my house." He

back. He took out his phone and began taking picture

4/7

#### CHAPTER 44 The View

suddenly paused, shivering. He didn't have a jacket. "It's so cold. Uhm, I'll have my coffee inside, thank you. By the way, can I use your restroom, Liam?"

"Sure," I replied. "Ask Claire for directions." Chip quickly left us, sashaying back into the

house.

My luck! Some alone time with Virtue.

I stared at her. The moonlight kissed her gorgeous face, her blue eyes shining like sapphires.

"You're right. The view is breathtaking," she murmured.

"You're breathtaking," I said, lifting her hand and kissing it. I thought she was going to pull her hand away, but to my relief, she didn't.

"It must be wonderful to see this during the day she murmured, shyly. Her eyes glanced at me while a small smile played on her luscious pink lips.



“It gives me a wonderful feeling sharing it with you. Honestly, having you here beside me has made this already spectacular view very special to me. | will never forget tonight,” | said, squeezing her hand.

Her cheeks suddenly turned a bright red. | caressed her cheek, marveling at the beauty

of her body beside me.

How

is it so sweet of you to say, Liam,” she murmured. “Tonight is special for me too.”

Her face was so close to mine | could feel her warm breath. | lowered my head. | wanted to taste those sweet lips. | wanted to feel her softness against my body and cradle her in my

arms...

But the sudden sound of a phone ringing interrupted my intentions. She backed away and

pointed to my pocket.

“That must be important,” she said.

I rolled my eyes, frustrated.

Who the f uck is calling me anyway?

| took out my phone from my pocket and saw ‘JE’ flashing on the screen. Did-Jack know | was. with Virtue? Was he on his way here?

5/7

## CHAPTER 44 The View

| excused myself and moved to the end of the view deck, keeping her within my sight. | didn’t want to leave her, but | had to take the call.

“What do you want?” | asked, ready to give him a tongue-lashing if he was on his way to get in the middle of my date. “I’m busy at the moment.”

| heard the unmistakable sounds of a siren in the background. What was going on?

“Liam, sorry to disturb you,” he said sarcastically. “But there was an accident on I-94.”

“And? What does that have to do with me?”

“Can you stop being an asshole just this once and listen to me?!” Jack roared through the phone. “I’m calling you because the person in the ambulance is Abigail. She was in an accident. She’s alive, but it’s bad Liam. | don’t think she’s going to make it.”

| could hear the fear and regret in his voice. |, myself, was taken aback at the news.

“-I’ll head to the hospital now,” | said, hanging up.

What happened?

“Liar

everything okay? You look like you’ve seen a ghost,” Virtue said. | didn’t notice she towards me.novelbin

“Go to the hospital. Abigail...” | couldn’t say it out loud. It would make it real.

“What happened to Abigail, Liam? Why is she in the hospital?” | heard the alarm in her voice.

“S-she was in an a-accident,” | whispered.

“Oh my God!” Virtue exclaimed, quickly embracing me. | let her comfort me. It felt good to be in her arms... she gave me hope. “Let’s go. We’re coming with you.”

6/7

CHAPTER 44 The View

Chapter Comments

Luna-Mom

let the fun begin

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26

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Chapter 45

CHAPTER 45 St. Elizabeth's

Joy

Before entering the backseat of his car, Liam kissed me on the cheek and whispered, “Thank you. If I wasn’t so concerned about Abigail, I would have vomited the steak we had earlier.

Cristos and I climbed into his Range Rover and sped off following the black BMW driving

ahead of us.

“Virtue, what’s going on?” Cristos asked. He was coming out of the bathroom when I told him we had to leave for the hospital. “Jack called to tell Liam Abigail was in an accident,” I answered. “Chip, I have this really bad feeling it was because she told us about the CCTV cameras Liam wants installed in my store.” I scoffed angrily. “The Angels of Darkness just love bureaucracy.” My hands were balled up into fists. I wanted to hurt whoever hurt Abigail...so very badly.

“Virtue, calm down. Jack said it was an accident. Let’s get the facts before we start making conclusions, okay? But, yeah, you have a point. I wouldn’t kill

someone for doing something like that, but the Angels of Darkness? They'd do it for far less atrocious reasons. Here's my

he said, unlocking it before handing it to me. "Send Dom and Bo a message that aded to the hospital. Tell them Abigail is hurt." what he said and waited for their reply. "Bo says they're already on their way to the hospital. They heard about Abigail through Nicole." Cristos sighed.

"Tragedy always has a way of bringing everyone together," Cristos mumbled darkly as he followed Liam's car out of the estate and onto the main road.

"Abigail and her family are very close to the Cohens, Chip. She's also someone Liam can't afford to lose. | highly doubt if Liam sanctioned the hit," | said. "Plus, you should have seen his face earlier when he got the news. | thought he was going to cry." "Associates killing associates...something that doesn't usually happen, but is not unheard of," Cristos muttered. "I need to call De Luca and ask him to rush the Angels of Darkness Mafia family tree. He keeps saying the list is incomplete. They had a major revamp once the former Big Boss' sister became the 'Boss of All Bosses' after Bo killed their nephew. You know what?

F uck De Luca. I'll have Lou do the tree for me."

"| remember Bo telling me that story. How old were you guys when that happened?" | asked.

115

## CHAPTER 45 St. Elizabeth's

"Young. It was one of our first sanctioned kills. Bo used a sn iper rifle and shot the underboss when he was throwing a party in his own backyard. It was a perfect shot," Cristos recalled. "Bo should've just exterminated all of them including their associates. That would have meant one less Cohen in the world." | heard the disdain in his voice.

"Uhm, but you left me to deal with a Cohen... all alone. | thought we were a team," | whined.

"You know why | had to, Virtue. While you were distracting Liam on the view deck, | was able to hack into their router. So yes, we are a team," Cristos

explained. He paused and glanced at me, a puzzled expression on his face. "Virtue, what happened while I was gone?"

"Liam almost kissed me if it weren't for that phone call, Chip." I sighed. I sounded like a

child.

God, Joy! Get it together!

Honestly, I felt so relieved when Liam's phone rang, but sadly, it was at the expense of someone else's pain and suffering. "And how did that make you feel?" Cristos asked curiously.

"I wanted to stab him with my hair comb," I answered truthfully.

ay...make sure to keep that thought in your head when you close your eyes. Passion

ets passion. These men want to fuck you while you want to kill them. Pour out all of your anger and you'll find them begging you for more, Cristos coached. "Whatever we need you to do is difficult, but remember, our goal is to watch them burn."

"Speaking of burn, what happened to the Sheriff's house?" I asked, remembering the news from this morning.

"Bo stole the Sheriff's laptop and sent it to Lou. He didn't find the missing evidence of

your assault nor the initial evidence from the Joan Summers' investigation. Unfortunately, we have to wait until Friday night to break into the coroner's house. He won tickets to see the opera at Lisbon Opera House plus a complimentary stay at the Hamptons Suites," Cristos explained. "If we can't find anything at the coroner's, best bet is Theodore Cohen has the evidence. I messaged Leo and Benny to find out where his safe is."

"And what about Theodore's cabin in the woods? Is it possible he has things hidden there?"

"F uck! | forgot to ping in his location," Cristos uttered while shaking his head frustratedly. "I'm focusing too much on the renovations. I'll get to that as soon as | get back to the pub."

2/5

## CHAPTER 45 St. Elizabeth's

You're right. That cabin might be hiding secrets.

When we finally arrived at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, | looked up at the tall white building and remembered the two weeks of my stay as a patient. | had passed out in the backseat of my father's car when he drove me to the hospital and when | became conscious, | found myself lying in a hospital bed, my arm and leg in a cast, my ribs and jaw broken, my face battered and a searing pain in my groin area from being ripped apart.

"Virtue, honey, everything okay at your end?" Cristos asked, taking my hand in his and squeezing it tightly. | swallowed back the tears and nodded my head.

"I'm okay. | just had another moment of weakness," | croaked. | sniffed and looked at him. "When I'm finished with all of them, they won't be seeing the inside of a hospital."

"That's my girl," Cristos said, then pointed at someone entering the hospital. "Dan's here. It's time for me to get my groove on." He ran his fingers through his hair.

"Well, that's one man off the list of men | have to seduce," | murmured. "Good for me, but bad for you."

"| heard Dan is purchasing a new house at Hillcrest. He's my ticket inside. Now, wipe your nose and let's go. Abigail needs us." ixing myself, we exited the car and walked inside the hospital. To my surprise, novelbin

one in Liam's inner circle was already seated in the waiting room... everyone except for Noah. Sebastian and Xavier were seated at the other end of the waiting room with Nicole.

1 clenched

my hands into fists to prevent myself from waving at them. | noticed Xavier nodded his head at Cristos while his eyes avoided mine.

“Virtue, oh my gosh, it’s so nice to see you,” Lisa rushed towards me and gave me a tight hug. “You look all dressed up. Where did you two come from?” She may have been worried about Abigail, but that didn’t stop her from gossiping.

“We had dinner with Liam,” | answered. From the corner of my eye, | saw everyone’s head turn towards Liam who was currently speaking to a doctor. “How’s Abigail?\*

“She’s in surgery,” Jack, who was standing behind Lisa, answered for her. “Virtue, about last night, 1-”

“Undersheriff, it’s fine,” | said before he could say anything else. “Right now, let’s focus on Abigail. She needs our prayers. Do you know what happened, Jack?”

3/5

13:36 Mon, Mar 25

CHAPTER 45 St. Elizabeth's

Before Jack could answer me, Liam patted him on the back and took his place beside me.

While Lisa gave Liam a small smile, Jack’s smile turned into a scowl and his eyes narrowed at

Liam.

“It’s still an ongoing investigation,” Jack answered gruffly, tight-lipped, not willing to talk. Lisa snorted in response...stating the obvious. He was jealous.

“| see,” | replied, playing it c ooly. “Well, | better grab a seat then and wait.”

“Virtue, | have to do some paperwork for Abigail since l’m her ‘in case of an emergency contact person’. Her parents are out of town at the moment. Is it okay if | leave you?” Liam asked, politely.

| watched Lisa's jaw drop. Liam is usually your typical asshole, but right now, he was acting like a perfect gentleman.

If it weren't for that wink he gave Jack, | would have actually believed he was a gentleman.

Sure, Liam," | answered smiling. "I'll be fine."

Liam nudged Jack to come with him. If they weren't going to have a man to man discussion about me, they were going to discuss the mystery behind Abigail's accident.

istos had already taken a seat beside Dan and both of them were engaged in a serious conversation. | decided to sit next to Lisa and Cris.

Cris looked like he lost the election. He was playing with his phone with this sullen expression on his face. Lisa, on the other hand, began discussing how hard it was for her to find something to do while the pub was undergoing renovations..

| pretended to listen to her, nodding my head at every mundane thing she said, while the memories of my stay in the hospital came rushing back.

| remembered my mother giving me a sponge bath, telling me over and over again that | would be okay. | remembered my father holding my hand while asking me to forgive him for being a failure. | remembered the tears | cried, knowing | would never be the same again.

| glanced surreptitiously at Lisa, fighting the urge to ask her why. Why did she lure me to the boy's gym room that night? What did | do to her to make her hate me?

Why, Lisa? WHY?

4/5

CHAPTER 45 St. Elizabeth's

| coughed, hiding my discomfort and sat up straight. | suddenly heard Sebastian's voice.

asking Nicole if she wanted some coffee. | moved my head to look at him and noticed Xavier



was gone.

Where did he go?

Chapter Comments

Luna-Mom

POST COMMENT

of course they tried to take Abigail out because she told Virtue about the cctv being installed at her home

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25

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Chapter 46

CHAPTER 46 Red Roses

Joy

| woke up to a beautiful Sunday morning. | sat up on my bed and stretched my hands above my head.

After the doctor came out to tell us Abigail was stable, we all heaved a sigh of relief and decided to head home, except for Nicole. She opted to stay with Abigail until her parents arrived and Sebastian agreed to stay with her. | felt a tinge of jealousy, but Nicole had information and if Sebastian had to fuck her for it, so be it.

Liam offered me a ride home, but Cristos intervened saying it was out of Liam's way and promised he would make sure | got home safely. Before Liam could say or do anything else, Jack pushed him towards his BMW with Cris chuckling behind them. Since Xavier rode with Sebastian and Sebastian wanted to stay, Xavier rode with us.novelbin

“You went missing awhile ago, Bo,” | said. “What did you find out?”

“| thought | went unnoticed,” he replied from the backseat. “Well, someone needed to spy on

Liam and Jack. Since all three of you were preoccupied, | decided to follow the two at the

ction. According to Jack, witnesses saw a truck sideswipe Abigail’s car which off the rode and hit a tree. The police will be going through the CCTV footage. tter grab that footage before the Sheriff has that wiped off from their database.

do, Cristos said. “Did you overhear anything else?”

“Just that Liam warned Jack to back off. Liam thinks Virtue likes him,” he scoffed. “It must have been one hell of a dinner for him to think that.”

Cristos scolded him. “What else did you

“Bo, it isn’t the time to play the jealous boyfriend,” hear?” Xavier sighed melodramatically before continuing.

“Well, Jack asked Liam if Virtue and him were a couple and Liam answered no. Jack argued Virtue has a right to choose,” Xavier elaborated. “And get this, Jack even said if he has to, he’ll warn-Virtue about Liam’s past. Liam became so angry, he was about to take a swing at Jack, if it wasn’t for a nurse standing next to them.” He laughed and shook his head. “I’m guessing they’ll be competing for your attention, Virtue. Chip, next weekend, | need you to keep the pub open.”

“Why?”

115

## CHAPTER 46 Red Roses

“While we were doing surveillance at Hillcrest, we overheard two men sporting identical

black sling bags discussing a delivery at the dock for next weekend. We had to climb the hill outside Hillcrest to find the da mn dock.”

“And?” Cristos asked, urging him to continue.

“There’s a dock just outside the clubhouse, obscured by the tall fence around the perimeter,” Xavier said. “Any news if Lou found the meeting point on the other side of the lake?”

“Nothing so far. But if there’s movement over the weekend, we’ll catch it. Lou and my men have put up cameras in the area,” Cristos answered.

“Good. I’m having a team of my men coming in as delivery men for Virtue’s merchandise. They’re on the road and will be here in a couple of days. Your men will stay

in Bismarck, mine will be at Lincoln while Dom is sending his men to Mandan. In the next couple of weeks, it will get nasty. Virtue, I need you to be prepared. Liam, Jack, Cris and Noah will find themselves in a shitstorm. Take advantage of it. By the way, we still need a bug at the Sheriff’s station. Come by the grocery tomorrow so I can give you one.”

“No problem. I’ll come in the morning, Bo.”

“I’ll wait for you. And Virtue, you look really beautiful tonight. When this is over, I’ll take you

a proper date that will take your breath away” Xavier promised as Cristos parked his car

out of my house.

The lights at Noah’s house are on and his truck is in the driveway,” Cristos pointed out. “He was a no show at the hospital earlier. He must have been ordered to do something

important. Make sure your security system is on. I have Lou watching from the cameras. He’ll inform us if something out of the ordinary happens.”

Well, nothing did. I was able to sleep soundly. I checked my phone for messages and saw one from Xavier reminding me to pick up my order from him and another from Liam thanking

me for the special night. Men.

I took a shower and got dressed in a pair of flared jeans and a fitted beige ribbed knit short

sleeved blouse. | decided it was a no make-up kind of day. | tied my hair up in a messy bun, put on a pair of beige pumps and filled a beige purse with my essentials. After grabbing my keys, | punched in my security code and opened the door to find Noah standing on my doorstep with a bouquet of red roses. He was wearing a white shirt, jeans and sneakers.

“Good morning!” | greeted him after | closed the door behind me. “We missed you last night.

at the hospital. Are the roses for me?”

2/5

13:36 Mon, Mar

## CHAPTER 46 Red Roses

“Good morning, Virtue,” he said thrusting the bouquet in my direction. “A delivery man came while | was about to ring your doorbell.”

| took the bouquet of long stemmed roses and immediately read the card. It was from Liam and had a cheesy dedication on it. “Roses are red, violets are blue. No one in this town is as

beautiful as you.”

| imagined sending him poison ivy with my own version of the poem written on a card.

Roses are red, violets are blue. | have five fingers and the middle one’s for you.

“Thanks, Noah,” | said, cradling the bouquet in my arms. “Is there anything | can do for you?”

“| came by to ask how Abigail was doing. My mom wasn’t feeling well last night, so | couldn’t make it,” he explained sheepishly. “Abigail is stable. I’ll be visiting her later,” | replied. “How’s your mom? Is there anything | can do for her?”

“She’s better, thank you for asking,” he replied, grinning at me. “I-I got to thinking the other day a-after | said those awful things to you...maybe you’re

right. | mean about fixing the porch and reading to my mother. That is, if you still want to..." His voice trailed off as he

ited for my answer.

elt something had changed. He was acting terribly nice... too nice.

What are you up to, Noah?

"Of course, Noah. The construction material are in the shed at the back. You are welcome to take the material at any time," | offered.

"I'll get the material now if that's okay and start with the repairs. It's a Sunday and my day

off," he said.

"Sure. | need to head to Bo's to pick up a few things, but I'll be back after | visit Abigail at the hospital. I'll tell her you said hi. Before | forget, how's the boutique going?" | asked.

"On schedule. Ceiling and walls have been painted and lights have been installed. We start installing the hardwood flooring and the tiles in the bathroom tomorrow."

"I'll drop by and check. Thanks Noah."

"Drive safely, Virtue."

3/5

## CHAPTER 46 Red Roses

| walked to my car and noticed footprints on the soil near the elm tree, including pieces of bark. | smirked. He couldn't break into my house so he placed a camera in the tree. | glanced at him as he walked to the back of the house. He'll probably put up another camera in the

back.

| sighed as | threw the bouquet in the backseat of my car. | sent Liam a message thanking him for the roses and another message to Lou to keep an

eye on Noah while I ran my errands. After my housewarming party, I'll have to bring Lou in to de-bug my house.

Xavier

He was waiting for me at the entrance of Bo's. Once the door to his office closed behind us, he pulled me into his arms and kissed me passionately.

"I want to do more, but we can't," he groaned when our lips finally separated.

How disappointing.

"Noah was waiting for me outside," I said, plopping into a chair. My knees were wobbling from

our kiss." I think he placed a camera in the big elm tree in front of my yard."

"Yup, Lou called to tell us that. I'm telling you we should put him on the list. He's as guilty as any one of them, Virtue," Xavier reasoned. "Chip heard him speaking to someone on the phone through the bug you placed inside his home. Whoever it was wants to keep an eye on

at all times."

he, put him on the list," I said, giving in to Xavier. He grinned, happy Noah was now a

target. "Was it Liam?"

"He didn't say a name, Xavier replied.

"They really think I'm undercover. I need to prove them otherwise. Anyway, where's that bug you want me to put in the Sheriff's office?"

"Here." Xavier handed me a black case. "And this is the blanket you ordered. Anything else?"

"Booze. I need to stock up for my housewarming party. Booze and jealous men are a great combination," I said.

"For when?"

"After 4

my boutique is done. | need champagne for the grand opening for the boutique while | need hard liquor, red wine and beer for the house.” | stood up and walked to the door.

4/5

## CHAPTER 46 Red Roses

“Got it. | will personally deliver everything myself,” Xavier said while he opened the door. “And what about food?” He asked as he led me out. “Steak, barbecue, burgers?”

“I’ll probably order food from Harold’s or maybe the diner. We’ll see. Thanks again, Bo.” | walked out and headed to do a quick inspection of my boutique.

| was inside playing with the lights and thinking of placing a light installation or a chandelier in the middle when the glass door opened and in walked Jack wearing jeans, a

blue shirt and brown leather boots.

Ah, the very man | needed to see.

The blue of his shirt matched his eyes. His chest muscles were bulging through his shirt and the short sleeves displayed his muscular arms. He looked good out of his uniform.

“Oh wow! You look different without your uniform, Undersheriff. Sorry, but my merchandise isn’t up yet,” | joked. “So, what can | do for you, jack?”

Chapter Comments.

Luna-Mom

interesting chapter.

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Chapter 47

## CHAPTER 47 Slow Sunday

Joy

| waited for Jack to answer my question, but he just stood in front of me, undressing me with his eyes. | coughed loudly to grab his attention.

It worked. He turned beet red... as if he was caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

“Uhm, I-I was hoping to ask you out to have-” He abruptly stopped, interrupted by the sound of his phone ringing. He took out his phone and looked at the screen. His face paled.

“Excuse me. | need to take this call,” he mumbled. | smiled and gestured for him to take the call in front of me.

“Yes, Sheriff?”

Ah, the other man | had to see.

Whatever Sheriff Combs had to say was utterly short. After a few seconds, the call ended, leaving a confused and extremely apprehensive Jack in front of me.

“Uhm, Virtue, | need to leave,” he said anxiously | stared at him looking disappointed.

soon?” | asked, not masking the disappointment in my voice. | needed to make him believe | wanted to spend time with him.

“| have to go see the Sheriff. He isn’t in a good place right now after his house burned down. He’s moving into a house at Hillcrest, but he’s not happy about it. His house was his childhood home,” he explained.

“Aw, poor man. | did hear about the fire, but | didn’t know to what extent. | should send him a gift,” | said. He grinned.

A gift with a small camera or a bug inside it...



“Anyway, I was hoping to ask you out for brunch, but I have to go to work. How about dinner? I'll pick you up at around six tonight?”

“Tonight?” His grin quickly changed to a crestfallen expression. He had mistaken my question as a rejection, so I quickly continued. I was thinking of going to Bismarck to do some antiquing later this afternoon. How about you come with me and help me pick out a

1/6

## CHAPTER

### 47 Slow Sunday

gift for the Sheriff? Then, we can have dinner there. You know...just chill and get to know each other,” I suggested.

The grin on his face returned “sure what time?”

“Pick me up at around four-thirty... ish? Give me your phone, so I can put my number in. Then, just call me when you're free. He handed me his phone and I typed in my number.

“I'll see you later then, okay?” He sounded doubtful.

“Hey, you're the one who stood me up, remember?” I reminded him before giving back his

phone.

“Touché! I'll call you later when I'm on my way to pick you up,” he said and waved goodbye.novelbin

I watched Jack leave with that goofy grin on his face, climb into his truck and drive away. Jack had threatened that he was going to tell me all of Liam's dark little secrets. Jack just needed a little push.

I grabbed all my stuff and headed next door to Dom's to see if he had anything to offer me. I

pushed the glass door open and walked in.

Apparently, it was a slow Sunday morning. The town's folk were still busy at church and

ly brunch. | found Sebastian by the cash register doing inventory.

m, good morning! | was hoping to see you," said. Stanley, who was standing beside Sebastian, quickly raised his head from the architectural digest he was reading and smiled at

me.

"Hi Stanley!" | greeted Sebastian's assistant. Instead of greeting me back, he waved at me,

blushing

ng to the roots of his hair. Sebastian chuckled at Stanley's reaction.

"| can see Stanley has good taste. It's nice to see a friendly face so early on a Sunday. So, how can | help you?" Sebastian asked. | smiled wickedly at him.

| have an itch that needs scratching, Sebastian.

"| was wondering if you sell light installations or chandeliers? | was thinking of having one installed in the middle of the boutique. To give it an extra oomph," | said instead of telling him what | really wanted.

"| have several catalogs in my office," he replied to my surprise. He probably has an itch that

2/6

## CHAPTER 47 Slow Sunday

needs scratching too. | raised my eyebrows, urging him to invite me to his office. "If you find what you're looking for, I'll order it for you and you can expect it in a couple of days. Come on, Ill show you to my office."

"Great!" | exclaimed, smiling brightly.

"Stanley, you're in charge." Sebastian said, then gestured for me to follow him to the very back of his shop.

Once he locked the door, he pulled me into his arms...

I missed having him beside me, the smell of his hair, the smoothness of his skin, his c ock inside me, pounding away until we both came.

I dropped my things on the floor and wrapped my hands around his neck, pulling his head down for a kiss.

"I miss you," I whispered before his lips claimed mine.

His tongue plunged into my mouth while his hands roamed down my lower back, pushing my body tightly against his... so tight, I could feel his erection through his pants as he

hed against my body.

d him too...so much so, my panties were already wet with desire.

e suddenly dropped to his knees, unbuttoning and unzipping my pants, and pulled down my jeans and panties. Then, his mouth was on me, his skillfull tongue lapping the wetness in between my thighs.

"Dom," I gasped. It was so sex y and thrilling to utter their fake names. It was sort of like role

playing in a way.

While I squirmed from the confines of my jeans around my ankles, his tongue rubbed against my cl it. I felt his fingers glide through my wetness, moving up and down along my slick

seam.

As his mouth continued to play with my c it and suck on my juices, he quickly removed my shoes, pants and underwear. I held on to his shoulders, loving every second his tongue played with my c lit, but I needed more. My core was clenching with the need for my release.

He lifted one of my legs and placed it on top of his shoulder, opening me up even more. He buried his tongue between my folds, stroking my c lit to life while inserting a finger inside.

## CHAPTER 47 Slow Sunday

my dripping wet pussy, pushing in deep to my magical spot.

Both his tongue and his fingers were driving me to the edge...

“Don't stop... I'm so close,” I moaned, burying my hands into his hair, trembling while his tongue moved faster and harder on my engorged clit and his finger darted in and out of my pussy.

“Come for me, Virtue. Come all over my face,” he growled.

“Ooohhh...yeessss!” I cried, my fingers tugging on his hair, while I rode the tidal waves of my orgasm. He continued to lick my oversensitive clit until I bit my lower lip to stifle a scream.

He licked my juices from his fingers. “You taste so fucking good and I know burying my cock inside you will feel even better.” Sebastian stood up, unbuttoning and unzipping his pants, pulling out his hard and throbbing cock. I wanted to bend down and take his shaft into my mouth, but before I could, he led me to the couch.

He quickly sat down and pulled me on top of his lap, my thighs splayed wide apart, with the head of his cock positioned at the opening of my sex while he held on to my buttocks.

“Want you to fuck me!” Sebastian growled into my ear. I obeyed, moving downward and taking all of him inside me in one swift movement. He groaned in pleasure, throwing his head back, as I began to move up and down his shaft.

I started slow at first, then I picked up the tempo, moving faster and faster, until he couldn't keep up.

As I bounced up and down, I could feel myself surging quickly towards my orgasm. I wrapped my arms around his head and took his lips for one last passionate kiss before I reached the heights of ecstasy, shuddering violently with my release.

He lifted his hips upward, thrusting one last time deep into the heart of me as he came. I collapsed against him, breathless and trembling while he moaned blissfully.

“You are so amazing, Virtue...” Sebastian whispered, rubbing his hands along my back. I wanted him to continue cradling me in his arms, but I needed to move before anyone found

us.

I kissed him on the cheek and cautiously stood up, disentangling myself from our lover’s

4/6

## CHAPTER 47 Slow Sunday

embrace. I was deeply disappointed to have to leave him while still recovering from our throes of ecstasy, but I had to.

I picked up my things from the floor and hurriedly entered the bathroom to clean up and fix myself. When I came out, a cup coffee and a pastry was on the coffee table alongside a couple of opened

documents in front of him.

“I saw Jack come out from your soon-to-be boutique. Anything I should know?” Sebastian asked, leaning back in his chair.

“We have a date later. I’m going antiquing with him at Bismarck,” I answered before biting into my croissant. Sex always builds an appetite!

“You need to flip the switch, Virtue,”

“What do you mean?” I asked, puzzled.

“Make yourself more available. Give them a little taste of what you have to offer as

a woman. Forget about Bo. He will be jealous regardless. All of us will, but that’s besides the point,” he replied. “We are planning something big this weekend, Virtue, and I need you to comfort them in their time of need. Especially Liam. I need you to make him trust you enough for

to mention something...anything. Something here doesn’t add up and you may be the to discover that missing variable.” “Okay.”

“Okay? Chip told me how you felt when Liam tried to kiss you. Virtue, let him kiss you,” Sebastian urged.

“It's easier said than done, Dom. Plus, I've only been here for a couple of days. You've been here six months and you haven't even gotten into Nicole's pants,” | argued.

Sebastian looked at me, thunderstruck at my sarcastic remark, but | could still see the

determination on his face.

“If | sleep with Nicole, will you agree to kiss Liam, Jack and maybe Cris?” Sebastian bargained. | stared at him, not knowing what to answer.

“You don't have to-”

“You have been thinking about Liam since your junior year in high school, Virtue. Even if you

5/6

## CHAPTER 47 Slow Sunday

deny it, you have been wanting to be near him... so near, you can smell his fear when you show him your blade. Hatred is longing and longing is desire,” he explained. “You just need to give Liam one kiss. It only takes one passionate kiss and you will have him going insane. So, do | need to sleep with Nicole to get you to agree?”

“Fine, I'll practice with Jack later, but I'm not promising anything. Maybe a dead body, if Jack

tries something...”

\*You want your revenge or not?” Sebastian asked sternly.

“I do.”

“So you know what you have to do. If you play your cards right, one of them will fall in love with you and he will tell you everything we need to know. If all of them fall in love with you, then you've won the jackpot. Right now, you are seen as a threat. Make them see you.

lover.”

| needed to imagine Jack, Liam and Cris as Sebastian, Xavier and Cristos.

It was the only way.

Chapter Comments.

Cathy Lazo

Love it

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Chapter 48

CHAPTER 48 Dream

Joy

After ordering a chandelier from Dom’s, | went and bought a ‘get well soon’ gift box at the novelty shop beside the town’s bookstore.

When | arrived at Abigail’s hospital room, | saw Cris and Lisa sitting outside. Cris was wearing light blue jeans and a black polo shirt while Lisa was wearing black high waisted jeans and a long sleeved brown knitted top.

Lisa’s eyes were puffy and red and both looked utterly grief-stricken. Judging by their faces, | knew Abigail’s prognosis wasn’t good.

“Lisa, how is she?” | asked, sitting down in the empty seat beside her, placing the gift box on my lap.

Lis

looked at me teary-eyed. “She’s in a coma, Virtue. The doctors don’t know when she’s going to wake up.” She suddenly buried her face in her hands and began to sob.

| wrapped my arms around her and allowed her to cry on my shoulder.

a, I'll go and get you some water." Cris quickly left, looking uncomfortable with his wife's lay of emotion.

After drinking some water, Lisa's s obs died down. | rubbed her back while she wiped the tears from her eyes with a tissue. "How about we head to the washroom, so you can fix yourself?" 1 offered. "Cris, I'll tend to Lisa, okay?" | handed him my gift box and led Lisa to the restroom.

Gosh, Cris, you are so useless....

Lisa washed her face with cold water as soon as we entered the bathroom. "You know... I've only cried for two people... make that three, if 1 include Cris."

"I'm guessing the other person is either your mom or your dad," | said.

"No. Actually, there was this girl named Joy. She was a friend of mine. To make a long story short, something terrible happened to her during our junior year in high school," she

explained while fixing her hair.

1/6

## CHAPTER 48 Dream

"Joy? | haven't heard of her. Did she, uhm, pass away?" | asked, playing dumb..

"She and her family left after..." She paused, not wanting to say what happened to Joy. "I-I've

tried to find her, but it's like she disappeared."

"Well, maybe she needed to forget," | reasoned. Lisa nodded her head.

"You're right. | just wish | could tell her how sorry | am," Lisa said, lowering her head in

shame.



Lisa thought a simple apology could make up for what happened to me. | felt my anger bubble up inside me once again.

| wanted to grab her and smash her head against the mirror over and over again until | saw her blood drip down the side of her face. | wanted to scream at her and tell her how | felt

while Cris, Liam, Jack and Dan brutalized my body.

A simple apology won't cut it, Lisa!

"| feel much better now, Virtue. Thank you," she said as she wiped her hands with a paper towel and threw it in the trash bin. | inhaled and exhaled deeply in an effort to calm myself. Thank God she didn't notice my

mentary spurt of anger.

"Since you're feeling better, | think we can go back. I'll just drop off the gift | got for Abigail and head on home. Jack and | will be heading to Bismarck to do some antiques later. I'll probably get a tea cup for Abigail. She said she collects them."

"You're going out with Jack? Didn't you just have dinner with Liam last night?" Lisa asked, surprised.

"Friends are allowed to go out together, right? I've asked you out for coffee. | don't see what the problem is if | ask Jack to go shopping with me," | argued.

"| forgot... you're new in town. Jack is a great guy. He'll take care of you," Lisa remarked while exiting the restroom.

| was allowed to go in and check on Abigail. She was bruised and wounded. Her leg was in a cast and her head in bandages while a tube went down her throat. | squeezed her hand and told her to fight. | promised her when she woke up, | would be there to greet her.

2/6

CHAPTER 48 Dream

| waved my goodbyes to Lisa and Cris and quickly left the hospital.

Before | could enter my car, a hand tapped me on the shoulder. | spun around ready to

defend myself. It was Cris!

At all man like Cris sneaking up on me was a no-no. This will not happen again.

“Gosh, you scared me, Cris!” | exclaimed. “Did Abigail wake up? Did | forget something?”

“Sorry, Virtue. | didn’t mean to scare you,” Cris said apologetically. “I, uh, | wanted to talk to you about something. Bo suggested that | should ask for your help for additional campaign

funds.”

“I’m guessing you want me to be a sponsor?” | asked.

“Among other things. Since the spring formal is coming up, Bo recommended, as an opening promotion, you could give a discount to students and announce that a percentage of each purchase will go to our campaign fund.”

“I’m in. How do we do this?” | asked.

“Come by my office tomorrow around ten in the morning so we can discuss it,” Cris

were. “You have my card right?”

do. Okay, I’ll see you tomorrow morning.

Cris waved goodbye with a big grin on his face as | drove off to go pick up lunch and head home to get ready to see Jack.

So many men, so little time.

| decided to wear white high waisted jeans and a green short sleeved floral cropped top with a low neckline paired with brown high heeled sandals. | pulled my hair back in a messy bun, put on a little make-up and accessorized with aviator shades, gold jewelry and my trusty brown tote bag. | also decided to bring a thin brown blazer if ever it got cold.

Jack arrived early, his dark hair still damp from taking a shower. He was wearing a long sleeved white buttoned down shirt with its sleeves rolled up, dark blue jeans and his trusty

brown boots.

“Mmmmm, | can smell the mint of your cologne” | said while | glanced through the rearview mirror, noticing Noah staring as we drove off.

3/6

CHAPTER 48 Dream:

“And you look and smell really pretty,” Jack said, smiling. “So, what did you do after | left you?”

“| ordered a chandelier and went to visit Abigail Poor thing is in a coma,” | said, glancing at him for his reaction. Cristos had called me earlier to tell me the footage from last night was already deleted.

| heard his sharp intake of breath. “D-Do the doctors know when she'll wake up?”

“Unfortunately, no,” | answered. “Any word on what happened to her, Jack?”

“We suspect she fell asleep behind the wheel. Her car was moving in and out of the lane. before it hit the tree,” he said, lying through his teeth.

“| see. Well, | pray for her recovery.”

“Yeah, we should pray she wakes up from this.”

It was a quiet drive to Bismarck. Mentioning Abigail had ruined the mood. | didn't care. | liked not having to talk to him anyway. Everything changed once we started shopping. | didn't know Jack liked antiques. He showed me where and what to buy. He was relaxed and fun to talk to and even if | didn't want to

it it, | had a great time.

reminded me of the time we were lab partners. During our junior year, | looked forward to sitting next to him for Chemistry. Too bad, it all went to s hit.

Jack

After shopping, I took Virtue to a restaurant located on top of a hill with a view of the city. It was a restaurant Cris recommended. I have never been this happy with someone. She loved antiques just like me and while we shopped, it was so easy to joke around with her and make her laugh.

We ordered pizza, pasta and chicken. As she ate, I stared. She was so graceful and elegant. She probably came from a family with money.

"Where did you graduate college, Virtue?" I asked.

4/6

## CHAPTER 48 Dream

"UCLA, you?" My eyebrows rose. Good school.

"At the community college," I answered sheepishly. "Your parents must be proud of you."

"They are," she said.

"Will they be moving here to live with you?" I asked.

"Maybe. I definitely have the space," she answered. "And what about your parents? They must be proud you're the Undersheriff at such a young age."

"My dad died a few years back...cancer. My mom is a teacher at the local elementary school. What about your parents? What do they do?"

"My father is a supervisor at a hardware store while my mom is in the medical field," she replied. "And I'm a former accountant soon to be store owner."

"Why did you move here? Someone like you usually heads to Hollywood or something. She laughed. Her cheeks turned bright red at the compliment.

"I can't act," she murmured. "But seriously, I moved here because I wanted to live in a close-

knit community. My shrink said it would help me with my issues."

A lot of people admit they see a shrink," I muttered before I could stop. I thought I had

ended her, but she smiled.

“There’s no shame in asking for help, Jack,” she said. “I was mugged during one of my visits to Las Vegas and sought help for the trauma. Look at it this way... If I didn’t go to therapy, I wouldn’t have moved to New Salem and you and I, we wouldn’t be sitting here having dinner.” I nodded, agreeing with her logic.

“Remind me to send a bottle of red wine to your therapist,” I said, “as a thank you.”

“A thank you for what?” Virtue asked.

“For bringing you into my life,” I replied honestly.

“That’s so sweet of you to say, Jack,” she gushed. She took my hand in hers and squeezed it. It was a simple gesture, but it made my heart race with desire.

Practice restraint, Jack.

I needed to be a perfect gentleman to her. I wanted Virtue to fall in love in with me...

5/6

## CHAPTER 48 Dream

Because I was falling in love with her.

I didn’t let go of her hand though. I kept her hand in mine until we had to leave.

On her doorstep, she caressed my cheek. “I had a wonderful time, Jack.”

“I’ll be at the diner tomorrow morning if you happen to go out for an early run,” I told her.

“Oh, I don’t know... I have a meeting with Cris at his office tomorrow morning,” Virtue said. My eyes narrowed.

“Why do you have to go see Cris?”

“It has something to do with his reelection,” she mumbled like it was irrelevant. Then, she leaned forward and kissed me on the cheek. “Good night, Undersheriff.” She gave me one last gorgeous smile before closing the door.

She kissed me!

| wanted to shout for joy, but | had to play it cool. | was being watched.

As | walked back to my truck, | saw Noah peering through his windows while talking to someone on the phone. | had a feeling he was talking to Liam.

itched off my phone. If anyone needed me, they could wait until the morning.

Tonight, | didn’t want to be bothered.

| was going to dream of Virtue.

## Chapter Comments

Mary Hall

He better not sleep with Nicole

Luna-Mom

ohhh noooo don't lower yourself to be with nicole but | guess it's needed

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## Chapter 49

### CHAPTER 49 Soldier

Dan

After cautiously stepping out of my Subaru SUV so I wouldn't get my expensive leather shoes wet, I fixed my black trench coat and pulled up the collar to hide my face. I disliked this neighborhood. It was exactly like the one I grew up in.

I knocked on the door of the Emery household. Jack had turned off his phone and now we

had to do our meeting at his house.

His house was built in the 1980's. Everything was outdated especially the smelly brown carpet that ran throughout the household. I would have preferred to have had the meeting at Cris' newly renovated modern-styled home, however, there was the peculiar case of the Undersheriff. Jack's massive truck was parked beside the small hybrid compact car his mom

drives, so I had no doubt he was home.

A stout middle-aged woman swung the door open, allowing us to enter. Mrs. Emery was our third grade teacher when we were kids.

"Good evening Mrs. Emery," I greeted her with a smile. "Tell Jack we'll be downstairs in the basement when he's ready." She nodded her head without complaint, knowing full well why

we were there.

I gestured to Cris and Liam to follow me inside. I walked towards a door beneath the stairs

to the second floor and opened it to reveal another set of stairs that led to the basement. I switched on the lights and carefully walked down the short flight of steps with the other two slowly following from behind. This basement used to be Jack's bedroom and a place we

would hang

ng out after school when we needed a place to chill or goof around. Now, it was an empty space with a small chalkboard and a table surrounded by four chairs. We took our seats and waited for Jack to come down.

When he finally showed up, he was wearing pajamas and his hair was still wet from his

shower.

“What are you guys doing here?” Jack asked. | rolled my eyes. | hated it when he played.

dumb.

“We wouldn’t be here if your phone wasn’t off, dufus.” Liam answered back, obviously

peevied; a clear reflection of what all three of us were feeling.

115

## CHAPTER 49 Soldier

“Guys, can we please get on with the meeting? | need to get some sleep. | have meetings tomorrow,” Cris said impatiently. “Yeah, | know. You have a meeting with Virtue,” Jack said.

“She told you?” Cris asked, feigning ignorance. “I forgot... You went shopping with her. Did you enjoy carrying her stuff around looking like her driver?”

Jack laughed. “Why would you care? You're married, Cris.”

“Knock it off, will yah?” Liam exclaimed, taking charge. “Jack, you and | have to talk. Cris, you can’t afford a scandal so near the election, so lay off Virtue and Dan, | need you to pay off novelbin

our friends.”

| took out two thick envelopes from my inner coat pockets and threw it on the table. While Cris enthusiastically took his, | saw Jack hesitate.

“| can’t keep doing this, Liam,” Jack said. “I want out.”



“Have you finished paying off your father’s medical bills, Jack? Have you even started fixing this house like you promised your mom you would?” | asked.

but I’m almost done with the medical bills and | can take a loan out to fix the house,”

eplied.

ou do know the cost when | inform the boss of your, uhm, exit, right?” Liam asked, staring

at Jack.

“| won't tell anyone about the business. You know I'll keep quiet. Please, | don't want to do this anymore,” Jack pleaded. “Abigail is ina coma and I-”

“Jack, why the sudden change of heart?” | asked, puzzled. “Is this because of Virtue? Are you already falling for her?”

“| just want a chance at a normal life with her- raised a finger to cut him off. | was surrounded by im beciles.

“Do you

think she’ll want to be with you when she finds out you’re in debt?” | asked, crossing my legs and leaning back against my chair. “Do you actually think she’ll get married to you and invite you and your mom to move in with her? Do you think someone as beautiful as her will play caregiver to your mom at her old age? Are you f ucking insane?”

2/5

CHAPTER 49 Soldier

“I don’t know, but-”

“That’s right. You don’t know,” | said, looking at my nails. “She drives a Mercedes-Benz, bought a house on her own, even renovated it, and is planning to open a business of her own. Do you know the dress she wore last night was Armani? Do you know that small white Louis Vuitton bag she was carrying with her at the hospital costs more than what you make in a month? You seriously think your sparkling personality will win Virtue over? You are f ucking dumb.”

“So basically you're team Liam,” Jack scoffed, taking the brown envelope in front of him. He opened it and peered inside, nodding his head appreciatively at the gracious amount.

“No, Jack. I am rooting for our team. We've been friends a long time,” I said. “A woman shouldn't be the reason why we stab each other in the back. Maybe... the three of you can share...just like what you guys did with Joy Taylor.”

Jack's face darkened with rage. “Don't you ever say her name in this house ever again! If it weren't for my dad's cancer, I wouldn't have agreed to that.”

“But your dick surely agreed,” I argued. “If I remember correctly, you came after you fucked her. Sorry, my mistake. You came after you raped her.” I leaned on the table and stared directly into his eyes so I could get my point across. “Before you ever think of leaving the

m, remember I have evidence against you. I can walk to Virtue Sullivan's house and tell

you are a rapist. Do you think she would want to have a relationship with you after I spill the beans? She will never ever want to speak to you ever again. Got it, Jack?”

Jack nodded his head and sighed, looking defeated. “Anything else on the agenda? I have to be up early in the morning.”

“We have a problem,” I said. “After doing some digging, the boss himself says Virtue checks out and just like the three of you, he has taken an interest in Virtue.” I heard the sharp.

intake of breath from all three men.

“That is a problem,” Cris said. “He isn't the type Virtue would go out with even if you hit him up. So what do you propose? Don't tell me you want us to play matchmaker?”

dressed

I sighed and looked up at the basement ceiling, praying for a miracle. Even I couldn't do the

impossible.

"I can only do so much," I said. "Virtue isn't the type to take money for a one-night stand. She isn't desperate."

3/5

## CHAPTER 49 Soldier

I watched Jack shake his head. He didn't want to step aside and have the boss take a chance with her. Actually, even if the boss tried, Cris was right. He wasn't the type Virtue would date. She was a Barbie and he was definitely not a Ken.

Liam was quiet. I already knew what was going through his head.

If I failed to get the boss what he wanted, the boss will tap Theodore and Liam to abduct

her.

Cris and Jack didn't know all the details regarding Joan Summers, but I did. Just like Theodore Cohen, I was a soldier of the Angels of Darkness, the reigning mafia family of the Central States. I carried vital information and withheld it from my friends, including Liam

and Nicole.

It wasn't easy becoming a soldier, but because of me, the production and profit of crystal meth went up, earning us millions.

I first met the boss during high school, but he wasn't the boss then, his mother was. He was just a regular student like the rest of us. When his mother 'stepped down', he continued the business. Currently, he's hidden in plain sight and acted like any of the town's folk.

One day, during gym class, he asked if I wanted to make some money. His mother needed orge Taylor to sell his property by the lake. The only way for him to sell is if he needed

money. The boss offered us one hundred and fifty thousand dollars in exchange for the orutal assault of Joy Taylor, George Taylor's most cherished

daughter. Since | was from a poor family who didn't have the means to send me to college even if | got a scholarship, | quickly agreed.

It wasn't easy to convince the others, but once Jack caved after discovering his father had cancer, Cris and Liam agreed.

We raped her, but we weren't able to kill her. Joy was like a cockroach who was almost-impossible to kill. When | called the boss that night, terrified the Sheriff would come to arrest me, he laughed and told me his mother's friends would take care of it. Sure enough, without even batting an eyelash, Theodore Cohen told his men to clean the mess up and threatened Abigail he would set her family's bee farm on fire if she ever spoke a word to

anyone.

The boss said his mother would only pay up if the Taylors sold the land. Fortunately, they did. So Cris and | got money to help with college, Jack for his dad and Liam for his extravagant lifestyle.

4/5

## CHAPTER 49 Soldier

After graduating university, | became New Salem's Auditor, laundering money and helping with the drug business. Unfortunately, | couldn't flaunt my wealth, but if | decided to turn

back on mafia life, | could retire in Asia and live comfortably for the rest of life.

my

my

"Dan, I'll talk to the boss first to get details," Liam said. | saw Jack open his mouth to argue, but Liam raised his hand to silence him. "I'll go see him Friday night."

Chapter Comments

Luna-Mom

ha jackey boy you think your in with a chance

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Chapter 50

CHAPTER 50 Joan Summers

Liam

Dan had a smirk on his face while I sat, thinking. I thought I was done after Joan Summers,

but when Dan said that sleazebag had taken an interest in Virtue, I had a sinking feeling, this was just the beginning.

When Joan Summers walked into my office to ask for sponsorship for the Spring Formal, I was amazed Old Man Eugene had a beautiful and bright young granddaughter, a stark contrast to him and his son Edward who looked like hillbillies. Her long thick auburn hair was tied up in a simple ponytail and her bright brown eyes looked so happy and carefree. She was dressed simply in a white blouse and a pair of jeans when she came to see me, but her simplicity was charming. While she talked about herself, she circled the chessboard resting on the old wooden table of my grandfather, eyeing it curiously. I asked her if she knew how to play chess and she said she was part of the chess club. So while we played, she

gave me her pitch for the Spring Formal. That was the start of our friendship.

I visited her in school sometimes, just to say hi, while she would come to the office for a quick game of chess after office hours. We didn't speak much throughout the game, but after each session we felt more relaxed.

Unfortunately, our new found friendship came to a halt

when

Eugene forbade her from seeing me and started telling everyone how much of and how we Cohens were land grabbers.

for photos during the Spring Formal of New Salem High, she went missing. | en search for her, but they couldn't find her. It wasn't like her to leave; the Spring al was the culmination of her presidency. As the dance went on without her, | could ly feel dread and despair.

The boss called a week later, telling me to clean up his mess as payback for the time he and his mother helped us when we f ucked up the Taylor job. | didn't understand what he meant, but when | arrived at his secluded home in Bismarck, it hit me. Joan Summers was inside.

was tin

| thought she was dead. She up to the bed at the far end of the basement, naked except for her torn gown. Her body was completely covered in bruises, burn marks and wounds. | ordered my men to prepare the body bag and untie her from the bed, but she suddenly opened her eyes and began to scream. One of my men took his gun and hit her in the head to shut her up.

An image of Joy Taylor tied up on the bench press, bleeding, flashed before my eyes.

115

## CHAPTER 50 Joan Summers

“Kill her and bury her body where no one can find her, | said, gagging. | covered my mouth and took a deep breath to stop myself from puking. The smell was horrible.novelbin

“How do you want us to kill her?”

“Shoot her, strangle her, hit her on her head, stab her... | don't care. Just do it!” | yelled, quickly leaving the basement. | ran to the kitchen and vomited into the kitchen sink, remembering Joy's so bs as she tried to free herself from her restraints.

As | washed the puke from the sink, an image of the bench press we used suddenly entered my mind, but instead of Joy Taylor, it was Joan | saw tied up and crying out, her blood dripping from her injuries, and | puked again.

F uck! Now, he wants Virtue. That night when we all met at the pub, | saw him standing across the street staring at someone having dinner at Harold's as

Henry and I drove by. I told Henry to stop the car, so I could watch. That's when I saw Virtue come out with Noah.

I know it was reckless of me to follow her home that night, however when I saw the silver Audi parked a couple of blocks away, I decided it was best if I accompanied them home.

"I'll go see him Friday night. I'll get details and convince him it isn't in our best interest to cause another scandal," I told Dan, Jack and Cris, Jack, you and I have to talk. I'll see you at my office around ten?"

Sure, I'll be there," Jack answered, nodding his head sadly.

"Dan, Virtue is new in town and seeking new friends. Tell him to invite Virtue for some coffee or better yet, tell him to bring coffee and maybe a box of pastries for her. Bo's new bakery serves really good pastries and has many to choose from," I suggested.

"I can't do the impossible-"

"Dan, tell us what you really want to say... that you don't give a sh it. All that matters to you is the money," I hissed at him. "Everyone in this town thinks I'm a monster. Although I don't

like it, it keeps the town's folk submissive. Why don't I leak the recording I have of you telling us to rape and torture Joy Taylor for one hundred fifty thousand so you can join in on

the fun?"

"It's not my fault people think of you that way Liam," Dan scoffed. "You were Joy Taylor's. date at the Spring Formal, you were spotted at New Salem High talking to Joan Summers, and you were in a group chat with her. Oh, don't forget that fact that your men killed her. It's

just the same as you pulling the trigger."

2/5

CHAPTER 50 Joan Summers

I stood up and grabbed Dan by the collar of his designer trench coat. "My men had to kill her to silence her or she and her grandfather would have pointed

their fingers at you, your precious little boss, and whoever else had their way with her. All of you were her captors, molesters, and tormentors,” | said through clenched teeth. “I was just the clean up crew... repaying a debt from the Joy Taylor assault.” | let go off him, disgusted.

“That's w

where you're wrong, Liam,” Dan said, stretching his neck and fixing himself. “I only assisted in the abduction. It was the only way to lure Joan Summers away from the party. | thought you were one of her captors, molesters and tormentors... along with your father.” Go d, | wanted to punch him in the face.

“She was like a sister to me, Dan,” | sat down, lowering my face. “We liked playing chess against each other. That was all.” | closed my eyes from the pain. Remembering her...hurt. “I didn't have the guts to kill her myself, so | had my men do it.” | shook my head. “They did a really great job of burying her. Well, as they say, if you want the job done, better do it yourself.’

“Hey, Liam,” Jack said mournfully, “I'm really sorry, man...”

“The hell you are, Jack!” | yelled at him. | inhaled deeply to calm myself. “Dan, announcing he wants Virtue only means one thing... he needs all four of us to abduct her and he will use whatever evidence he has against us to get what he wants.”

the assault and death of Joan Summers,” Cris added sullenly.

nas nothing to do with you, Cris,” | argued. | stared at him and was shocked to see it in is soulless eyes. “You raped her, didn't you?! You f ucking t wat!”

| punched him in the face, took out my gun and aimed it at his head. “Do you know | vomited when | saw her, naked on the bed in that filthy basement, unrecognizable, with bruises, welts, burns and wounds all over her body? If it weren't for her auburn hair... Why, Cris? Why?!”

“I'm s-sorry, L-Liam, b-but...”

“But what?!”

| didn't notice | was crying. All the heartache | had kept inside just came bursting out through my eyes. | wiped my face, shocked to find my cheeks wet with tears.



“Liam, calm down. We're friends, remember?” Jack said calmly to deescalate the situation, his hands spread out in surrender while he slowly approached me.

3/5

## CHAPTER 50 Joan Summers

Jack quickly took the gun from my hand and gave me a hug.

“Jack, we have to do something,” I whispered in his ear. “We can't let them do that to Virtue.” Jack nodded his head, patted me on the back and let me go.

“It's time to put an end to this meeting. You guys need to go home and get some sleep,” he said. “Liam, I'll see you in the morning. I'll keep your gun for now, but I'll bring it over when I see you tomorrow.”

Jack reached down and helped Cris up. “Put some ice on your face when you get home.” He crossed his arms and shook his head. “Guys, I'm really disturbed hearing all of this. Honestly, Liam, I actually thought it was you, because of all the shit Old Man Eugene has been saying behind your back.” Jack looked at Dan. “Dan, you have to tell the boss to lay low. It's reelection. If we want to keep Liam and Cris in town hall, women in this town shouldn't go missing or worse, shouldn't pop up dead. I heard Sarah Hughes is gaining popularity in the mayoral race. If we continue to be reckless, we will risk it all.” Jack opened the door and gestured for us to leave. “Now go home. What is done, is done. Tomorrow is a new day.

I entered my

car and told Henry to drive back to the mansion. I leaned back and stared outside while he drove, extremely exhausted.

I bit my fist as I imagined Virtue tied up, bruised and wounded. I imagined her being raped

used as a punching bag. I imagined her lifeless body after cracking her skull and I

open

nauseous.

| did it once. Once was enough.

Henry stopped the car at the entrance of the mansion. Leo, one of our new guards, opened

the door for me.

“Good evening, Sir,” he said. Leo was tall and muscular, his red hair cut short. He was hired along with another, a blonde-haired man by the name of Benny. | remember reading in their file they were trained mercenaries and whatever | needed done was right in their area of . expertise.

I'll play along. If the boss still wants Virtue even if Dan tells him to wait until election is

over,

then I'll promise I'll bring Virtue to him. While he waits in that secluded house he has in Bismarck, I'll have Leo and Benny put one in his chest and one in his head.

Then, I'll have them kill whomever gets in my way.

After it's done, this town will be mine.

4/5

13:37 Mon, Mar

CHAPTER 50 Joan Summers

But before | clean up this town, | needed to keep an eye on my friends. Two in particular.

Chapter Comments

Louise

The twist. It was Dan all along.

Luna-Mom

dan your playing with fire now my boy

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5/5

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