

Chapter 21

It had been two weeks since Christian stopped by, and crazy enough, he never stopped sending checks, and it also hadn't changed for me because, just like before, I had sent them right back.

I was sixteen weeks pregnant and started showing, which meant I had to work even harder than before because I couldn't hide for much longer. I was stressed out and unsure about whatever would follow, but I tried my best for the baby.

The only good thing about work at the moment would've been Olivia. We had grown closer, and our friendship seemed sincere, whether Vincenzo had anything to do with it or not.

I tried my hardest to avoid him, and he clearly noticed—but luckily, he respected my decision. The last thing I needed was for Vince to breathe in my neck, not after he offended me by giving me all those special privileges. Whenever I thought about it, I would realize that the reason why he seemed close to Christian was probably because the apple didn't fall far from the tree.

“Are you really not drinking anything?” Olivia asked. It was our day off, and we decided to go out for drinks. I had cut down my eating expenses and declined Faith and Luna multiple times, but it felt nice to get out of the house.

“No, I can't say sorry.” I apologized to Olivia with a slight pout on my face. I had yet to tell her about my pregnancy, but today would be the day. The only thing hiding my belly was a jacket, and without it, you could clearly see the little bump threatening to expose itself. “Not everyone can take alcohol, so it's whatever.”

I looked at Olivia, who had no idea about what was going on, and continued to sip her drink. “Olivia, I have to leave this month.”

She stopped drinking and looked at me with her big eyes, probably hoping for me to tell her it was a joke. I felt terrible towards her because we had grown close, and I didn't want to leave her alone again, but I didn't have a choice.

“W-why?” She asked while all I could do was apologize.

“Because I'm pregnant...four months.” I finally confessed while I tried to read the expression on her face. I had expected her to ask me a million questions, but she jumped up instead and hugged me. “That's so...wow!”

“Congrats, you must be so happy!” She cooed before finally let go of me. I couldn't help but smile at her positive reaction. The only ones who had given me this reaction and made me feel as if everything was going to be okay were Faith and Johnny.

“Aren't you going to ask me who the dad is? Why I got this job in the first place?” I asked, confused but all she did was shook her head.

“None of my business. I'm just happy to be an auntie because I don't have any siblings!” She cheered, but I couldn't help but feel guilty over the fact that I would leave her all alone again. “You should be happy that you're getting away from that creep!”

It didn't take me long to figure out who she meant by that, Vincenzo.

“Why do you call him that?” I asked him and watched her expression changed. Even though he took it too far by offering me his unwanted help, he seemed like a good guy to me, just rich, snobby, pushy—and unaware of his actions.

“It's not him. Vince has a good heart. He's just a bit pushy, one of those guys who is always trying to do everything to show us that he's nothing like his dad...let's just keep it at that.” She chuckled. “I know I told you it's none of my business, but if you don't mind me asking, who is the father?”

I was unsure whether to reply or not because Christian had made it clear that he did not want anything to do with the baby, but he was still the father. “If you don't want to tell me, that's alright.”

“His name is Christian...he used to be my boss at my previous job, not that it matters,” I whispered the last part and lowered my head in embarrassment.

“What did you do again? You worked at a club ri-“

“I was a stripper.”

I had expected her to laugh in my face, look at me full of disgust or run away while she still could, but all she did was shrug her shoulders. “My mom was a stripper back in the days. She told me I should try it, so perhaps if I was a bit more flexible.” She ranted. “Easy money.”

“Wait, the Lamberti club?” She concluded as I gave her a nod. For some reason, it seemed like she knew a lot about Vincenzo's business partners, so perhaps-

“Christian Lamberti is the baby daddy?” She asked with sparkling eyes. I scoffed in response and looked away as I thought about the thousand disgusting nicknames he had given me. “I suppose he has no idea that you're pregnant because otherwise, you obviously wouldn't be here.”

Right.

“Can you keep it a secret?”

Olivia smiled and connected her pinky with mine. “Of course I can, I promise.”

“He's really nice!” She admired him full of enthusiasm, but all I gave her in return was a glare. “How would you know?”

“I brought over papers to his house once, but there was a really bad storm. He invited me in and yelled at Vincenzo for not treating me like a human and apologized on his behalf.” Olivia explained. “He told me to dress warmer next time and even gave me his jacket and a nice check to make up for it!”

Ah, there it was—the infamous check, and let's not forget about that jacket because he also gave me one. It was not because he was a good person. He probably just wasn't that fond of the idea of women freezing to death, which should've been the standard for any man.

“His voice sounded like honey to my ears. You are too beautiful to freeze to dead so take care of yourself.” She gushed and mimicked his words.

“Well, he doesn't want anything to do with me or the baby, so where do we go from there.” I rolled my eyes. Olivia looked shocked by my statement.

“I guess a baby is a bigger deal than a storm. I'm sorry.” She apologized as she reached out to hold my hands. I was sick of apologies and had, had it. Johnny apologized, Marc apologized, and now Olivia apologized while it wasn't their fault. Only one person owed me an apology.

“Are you sure the work isn't too hard on you?” Olivia wondered. No matter who asked me the question, I would always deny it, but it was true. It felt like an intensive workout, but I had two more weeks to go, and then I could finally rest. “I'm fine. It's nothing.”

Those words were a blatant lie as the next day, I felt like complete shit, but I went to work either way. Earlier in the week, the doctor had measured my blood pressure and did some tests, and it turned out I was as healthy as one could be. I was exhausted, but I was healthy.

After a long day of work, I was ready to go home. Unfortunately, Olivia had a day off, so I had to take the subway, which I was so happy to avoid.

“Serena!” I heard Vincenzo call out my name as I walked through the hallway. I stopped in my steps and let out a deep sigh. I wondered whether I should stand still or run away because I did not want to face him, but he was my boss, so that was not an option. I rolled my eyes and slowly turned around.

“So, how are you holding up?” He asked and placed his hand on my shoulder. I did not like random people touching me without my consent and prepared myself to throw a fit, but all I could do was smile at his kindness. He still bothered me, and I was still angry because of the special treatment, but in a way, it was kind of adorable how he made his crush on me that obvious. “I'm fine.”

He pouted with a desperate look on his face at my dry reaction. “Come on, walk with me!”

He gave me no choice and pulled me by my arm while I tried my hardest to release myself from his grip. “I have to get home!” I told him. Vince let out a chuckle and gave me a daring look.

“I'm your boss, and technically you have a few more minutes left.”

I gave in and followed Vince to his office, but what I did not expect was for him to close the door. He took a few steps forward while I stepped back. “So, w-what's the deal?” I asked him. I felt embarrassed, uncomfortable, and even considered running out.

“There is no deal. I think it's time to apologize for how I've treated you because you're obviously uncomfortable, but I only wanted to help out, that's all!” He defended himself.

“Stalking me is not exactly helping me out.” I stood up for myself. I could not understand how this man was so invested in me while we barely knew each other. Cute, but extremely weird.

“Stalking you...I wasn't.” He sulked. One baby was enough, and I was not in the mood to deal with another one, a grown one on top of that. “I really have to get home, I understand you're my boss, but your few minutes are over.”

Vincenzo just wouldn't take no for an answer and grabbed my arm so I wouldn't be able to take another step. “Let go of me, or I'll scream,” I told him as I slowly lost my patience. Vince seemed shocked by my threat and released his hand from my arm. “I'm sorry, I wasn't...I didn't...”

I could see the regret over his face, but his pushy behavior was becoming too much for me. Just a few more weeks, Serena, and then you never have to see him again.

I was saved by the buzz on my phone and looked down at the number, while Vincenzo, who definitely had no business with my phone, ended up doing the same. So he was nosy too, nice.

“Christian?” I heard him whisper and realized who the number belonged to. He was so nosy to the point he had even planted his friend's number in his head.

“I have to take this, so if you'll excuse me.” I sighed before I finally walked out and left him behind, flustered.

Who would've thought Christian would've been the one saving me from this disaster. I picked up the phone and mentally prepared myself.

“What is it now, Christian?”