

Chapter 23

Christian

Christian clenched his fist in anger and made his way to his dad's office. He did not know whether he was angry because Serena had hung up the phone in his ear or because she had a pretty solid reason to fear him.

No, he wouldn't hurt her. He did not like hurting people at all and only did so when there was no other way or when Lucio encouraged him to do so, but the thought of hurting Serena or taking away the baby hadn't even crossed his mind.

This is all Lucio's fault, were the thoughts going through his head, and this time he would not bow down to his father but instead fix the situation as he should have from the beginning.

For the first time in a long while Christian stayed at his parents' place. Francesca had nagged her son about the way he had been neglecting his own family, leaving him with no choice but to visit. The whole week when he had tried to address the situation his father would eye Francesca as a way of telling him to shut up.

The mention of the situation was enough to cause a shouting match between the two of them which had created an uncomfortable situation for everyone living on the Lamberti estate. They had no idea why the father and son who had always been close seemed close to hating one another.

Lucio was a busy man and always on the move. Getting some alone time with him was much more difficult than it had been a few years back. Christian sensed this was probably due to Lucio training him to get ready for when the time came to take over the family business and since Lucio had already taught Christian everything there was to learn, he was back to working all day.

He was aware that his mother was a person with ears throughout the entire house and would perhaps unravel whatever was going on, but Christian couldn't take it any longer. He had to confront Lucio.

He slammed the door open and looked at Lucio who was peacefully sitting behind his desk. "Don't slam the doors, they are expensive," Lucio spoke, ignoring every bit of his presence and continued working.

Christian walked over to his dad's desk and slammed his fists on the table. "Dad, I will take care of both Serena and the baby and this is not up for debate. I'm telling you out of respect."

Lucio looked up glaring at his son and stood up to face him. In the past, Lucio had always laughed with the heads of the other families about how bold and disrespectful Christian could be and let him go his own way because it amused him, but only now he began to realize that this was his creation and his mistake for letting his behavior slip.

"Christian, you can't and I'm not discussing this with you!" Lucio yelled, trying to get through to him. Lucio had also felt guilty for taking his distance from Serena but in the end, he believed to be doing whatever was best for her and the baby. "Since when have you been jumping at the idea of being a dad, because as far as I know, you've never even wanted any children!"

"Dad, I made her a promise and I broke it. I lost Serena's trust meaning I will end up losing my own child's trust-"

"I've never told you to make her promises you can't keep or to call her any names, that was all on you so don't blame me for that!" Lucio yelled at him.

"If you won't let me take care of Serena and the baby, I promise you I will walk away from this family. I will take care of them, regardless of if I get your permission or not." Christian made clear. Lucio was right, he had no plans of becoming a parent but things had changed and so did he. Even Christian did not know that the baby's life could change his view on life.

"Christian, you don't mean that." Lucio took a step back. He knew that Christian could care less about the important title which would eventually get passed down to him, but he had not expected him to throw it away that easily.

"Look at my face, is it the face of someone's who's joking to you?" Christian spoke, not removing his poker face. Lucio growled out in anger and slammed his fist on the desk.

"Are you insane, do you honestly believe that will help Serena and the baby? I told you about what would happen if we get too involved and Fabio finds out the truth. Don't you care about this family, don't you care about all the people who are working for us?"

"You're saying I have to do this to protect the family but isn't the baby your family too? Do you not consider my baby— your own grandchild to be part of this family?" Christian asked and saw how Lucio failed to remain the cold look on his face. "Because if that is the case, then I have to apologize but I can't be your son anymore!"

"Christian!"

"Dad, you told me to convince Serena to abort the baby. Does the baby not mean anything to you?" Christian tried to get through to his father one last time after he saw the changed expression on his face.

"Is the baby not as important as Gianna and Pia, or did you also tell Dana to abort her children?"

Christian knew that it was dangerous to bring up Lucio's only granddaughters as a comparison, but felt as if he wasn't in the wrong. His dad had always accepted Gio's children with open arms and promised to protect him.

"Christian, you know the situation is different." Lucio sighed, thinking about what war would break down if Fabio Garcia were to get behind Serena's identity or his best friend, Matteo Alfonzo's reaction when he would find out that his daughter had been living this way while Lucio was aware of her identity.

"It isn't. Protecting family who has done nothing wrong remains the same, no matter the situation, so you either accept your grandchild or I swear on my life that you'll lose me!"

"You're telling me you want to protect Serena and the baby but you'll end up bringing her life in danger and you know it. Do you realize what will even happen when the truth comes out and Fabio—"

"If I fail to protect her then he can do with her whatever he wants, I don't care. The only thing I care for is the baby." Christian who was even shocked at his own cruel words had admitted. For Lucio, this did not help the case and only made it worse.

"And what about Matteo Alfonzo when he finds out about Serena and you decide to hand over his daughter to Fabio like a piece of meat?" Lucio did a hopeless attempt to try to change his mind, but deep down he knew that it was already too late.

"What about him?" Christian shrugged his shoulders. The only thing going through his mind was the baby, his baby. His promise to protect Serena and to keep the baby with its mother was never intended to be a lie— but at the end of the day, all he truly wanted was to protect the baby and would sacrifice anyone for that cause.

"Dad, it's not forever. It's until Serena gives birth and after that— I'll let her go her own way, all I want is for the baby to be healthy and that's it." Christian pleaded and felt as if he finally got through his dad. "You claim to care for Serena, but you are aware of the state she's living in and I know she's a stubborn person that won't accept any money...I learned it the hard way...but for the baby to be healthy I need her to be healthy."

"Christian please tell me, why do you care so much for this baby?" Lucio wondered. Not even when it came to talking about his sisters Lucio had seen the sparkle which appeared in his eye each time he spoke of, his baby.

"Because I've never realized how lonely I have truly felt all this time until I felt the happiness when Serena told me she was pregnant." Christian couldn't help but smile at his own answer.

"I gave you my trust, I gave you my childhood, I have always done everything you've ever asked from me so please for once— I'm begging you to not take this away from me, please!"

Lucio took a deep breath and knew that his decision would eventually backfire, but he did not want to lose Christian and on second thought he would also end up regretting neglecting his grandchild and the girl he had claimed to care about so much.

"Then I guess I have no choice, do I?" Lucio chuckled, confused at his own words and the drama he knew it would bring.

"So...are you going to tell mom for me?" Christian carefully asked Lucio who shook his head before the sentence was even finished. "You deal with your mom, I'm staying out of this." He said and focused on the laptop in front of him.

"N-now?". Christian did not get scared very easily, but if he had to choose the number one scariest woman it would've probably been his mom with Serena following as a close second nowadays.

"The longer you wait, the more annoying she's gonna get," Lucio spoke and pointed his hand to the door. "Alright then." Christian sighed and made his way out.

Other than his dad, Marc, Johnny, and Enzo there was no one else who he had told about the pregnancy. Not even Gio or his best friends, Isobel and Vincenzo, or the woman who had always cared for him, Emmanuella. "Your phone?" Lucio commented and pointed his head towards his phone which he had just noticed was going off.

"Serena?" He whispered to himself, making Lucio look up. Christian was confused as to why Serena was calling him but picked up the phone either way. Did she perhaps have a change of mind?

"Serena?" He asked.

"Uhm hello?" He heard a voice speak and concluded that it was definitely not Serena. "Who is this?"

"I'm at the hospital right now, the owner of this phone fainted and this is the last number she called so I fi-"

"Is she okay?" Christian interrupted the woman and prepared himself for the worst. Lucio who had closed his laptop and listened to the conversation was just as worried as Christian.

"Yes, they told me that she and the baby were both doing fine and it's just due to overworking but she'll wake up soon but I overheard that she had no family and I still had her phone so I f-"

"I'm her family, please tell me where you are." Christian sighed and felt relieved to hear that the baby was doing fine. For a second he felt guilty that the baby was the only thing going through his mind, but he couldn't help himself.

Not long after the woman gave him the information he needed, he hung up the phone and decided for himself that it was enough. "What's going on?" Lucio asked and ran after Christian who had stormed away.

"Serena fainted, don't worry the baby is fine." He explained and hurried down the stairs. "And Serena?" Lucio asked while the mention of her name made Christian's skin crawl. He could not understand how she dared to be this selfish and put the baby in danger without thinking anything through.

All he knew was that he would force Serena to move in with him, one way or another.

"Serena will move in with me, whether she wants to or not."