

## Chapter 25

“You should’ve told your mom first.” Lucio shrugged his shoulders and walked past Christian to avoid his wife.

Just as expected everyone had heard about the rumor and all it took for the word to get spread was one visit to the hospital.

Christian did not get the chance to tell anyone himself— but instead, they had to hear about the pregnancy from others. He knew that Francesca would be pissed, but he didn’t have the heart to apologize over the phone and wished to do so face to face.

He looked over at his two brothers who had also stopped by to anticipate their mother’s outburst.

“Look who’s here.” Gio chuckled.

“Uncle Chrissie!” Gianna called out and ran towards him to hug his leg, while Pia crawled towards him to do the same. Christian smiled at the four-year-old and picked her up to kiss her before he patted Pia on her head.

Gianna and the two-year-old Pia were Gio’s children. To this day Christian could still not understand how an ass like Gio was blessed with a kind wife and two cheerful children.

“Up!” Pia stuck out her tiny hands but was interrupted by Francesca who had entered the room. “I heard grandpa had ice cream for you guys.” She told them to lure them away which had immediately worked.

Christian tried to avoid his mother’s gaze and prepared himself for the scolding he knew he would receive.

“I know I always speak low of you, but getting a stripper pregnant was something even I did not expect from you.” Gio stirred the pot and crossed his arms while waiting for his mom’s outburst.

For Gio, this was a perfect opportunity to prove to everyone that Christian was not that perfect as they made him out to be.

“Don’t be like that. Squirrel is a nice girl.” Enzo corrected his brother. Gio rolled his eyes at his brother and gave him a push against his shoulder. “If he really wants to, he can defend her himself.”

Gio gave Christian a daring look and had already expected for him to let the insult pass, but Christian had other plans. “You’re right. I won’t let you disrespect Serena and I still have more power over you— so I suggest you keep your mouth shut!” He scolded him and turned towards Francesca who had not said a single word.

His mother had always been outspoken, but even she kept quiet this time.

Francesca walked towards him while Christian tried his hardest to avoid her gaze, but that seemed useless as she grabbed him by the chin to turn his face.

“Ridiculous,” Francesca had whispered and caressed his cheek before it was met with a hard slap followed by another.

“The first one was for getting a hood rat pregnant, the second one was for bringing her into this family and I am supposed to give you a third one for making her your fiancée and a fourth one because you embarrassed me and I had to hear it from my friends, but I’ll spare you,” Francesca spoke.

Christian touched his cheek and kept his mouth shut. Francesca was the queen of the household and nothing could change that.

“I’m sorry mom.” He said and looked down. Not once had his mother been disappointed in him and had always praised him, so getting scolded by his mother was not something he was used to.

“How the hell did your dad agree to all of this? Do you even know this girl? She’s probably after your money an-“

“She’s not like that.” Christian immediately jumped to Serena’s defense. He had wished for her to be like that because that would’ve made the situation a whole lot easier but she wasn’t. It was not difficult for him to figure out that she was the complete opposite. If anything she did not want anything to do with him or his money and only gave in for the baby’s well-being.

“She’s not? How would you know because your dad told me that you’ve known her for just six months.” Francesca spoke. Christian figured that Lucio would not tell Francesca about Serena’s true identity and for a blabbermouth as Francesca it would probably for the best, but he also knew that her reaction wouldn’t be like this if she had known about Serena originally being an Alfonzo.

“So what? Are you also turning your back on your own grandchild?” Christian asked. He hadn’t forgotten about his father’s words and how quickly he had changed his narrative about protecting his family.

The look on Francesca’s face had softened and she shook her head in denial. “The baby is a Lamberti so I’ll give it a pass...but the hoodrat?”

“Serena, her name is Serena and she will stay by my side so you will accept her.” He had immediately made clear. His mother’s reaction gave him the truth he had needed to let everyone including his own family believe that the engagement was real. He couldn’t even imagine how all the families would try to disrespect Serena if she did not have a ring on her finger.

“Were you planning on introducing me to her?” Francesca asked and Christian shook his head. “No, I don’t want her near any of you.”

“That’s too late for that, I’ve organized a last-minute family dinner. Is Selena going to show up or will she disrespect my offer and decline, what do you think?” Francesca asked.

Christian knew that his mother had put him in a trap and that she was going to go through with it. Christian declining the offer on Serena’s behalf would’ve made her look bad in front of the entire family and that was the last thing he wanted. He had promised to keep her safe until the baby was born and tried his hardest to not break it this time. “Her name is Serena.”

“Nice, then she can come over tomorrow and correct me herself. I expect the two of you at dinner.” Francesca spoke and had walked out, leaving behind a flustered Christian.

“Are you really making her a Lamberti?” Enzo wondered. Christian was grateful for his brother keeping the pregnancy a secret and knew that he could trust him, but the same could not be said about Enzo.

“Yes, I will make her a Lamberti and everything that’s mine will go to her and the baby,” Christian stated while staring right into Enzo’s eyes. Christian had often thought about why his brother would be so disturbed by this news and thought it was perhaps because he thought the business would go to him and his children instead. The last thing Gio had expected was for Christian to put a child in this world.

“That’s great, I really like squirrel.” Enzo smiled and was proud of his younger brother for finally getting his life together.

“Anyway, I have to get home to Serena and I only came here to pick up my stuff— so if you mind.” He excused himself and had finally walked away from his brothers. Go home to Serena.

No matter how many times he had repeated it in his head it still sounded off. He meant it when he said that Serena and her selfish personality were getting on his nerves, but he could not deny that it felt as if a weight had been lifted off his shoulders. He did not have to worry about Serena or whatever she was doing and could keep her in check by himself instead.

After he was done packing his stuff he prepared himself to leave but was stopped by his father’s hand on his shoulder. “Yes?” He asked, preparing himself for an unwanted remark but the look on Lucio’s face told otherwise.

“Are you aware that your mother has invited Emilio Alfonzo on the Alfonzo’s behalf to welcome Serena tomorrow?” Lucio mentioned.

“So you tell her not to!” Christian said back. “You think I didn’t? You know how your mother gets and besides that— would be to suspicious.”

For Christian, it felt like things couldn’t get any worse upon hearing Emilio Alfonzo’s name. Emilio was Matteo’s eldest son and heir.

All Christian could think about was that Emilio had to face his own sister tomorrow without knowing her identity and all Christian could wish for at that moment was that everything would go well without either of the two suspecting something. A sibling bond can’t be that strong, Christian thought thinking about his own siblings.

He had remembered how angry he had been with Vincenzo. It was not for him hiring her or for overworking her— just how it was not for him connecting the puzzle pieces and realizing Serena had been the girl he was talking about.

Christian had his own reasons. He knew that Vincenzo would probably not be that cozy with her if he found out about her true identity, so for the time being he did not want him anywhere near her.

Leave and don’t ever contact her again, were the exact words he had used against his best friend. It had pained him to say it but all he ever wanted was to make sure that the baby was safe and was not about to throw Serena straight into the arms of the enemy.

Francesca inviting Emilio Alfonzo didn’t made things all that better.

One step closer to the Alfonzo’s meant one step closer to the truth and not to forget, Fabio Garcia.