

## Chapter 30

Cesca gathered everyone around the large table and the girl who sat down next to me gave me a warm and welcoming smile.

“Make sure you empty your plate, even if you feel like your stomach is going to explode.” She spoke and had a traumatized look on her face. “I’m Dana, by the way, Gio’s wife.” She introduced herself and leaned forward to give Christian a polite nod.

“Nice to meet you, I’m Serena,” I spoke, feeling more at ease that someone did seem to like me. The first thing I wondered was how she was even married to Gio.

My first impression of her was that she seemed like a nice girl, and was different from her husband who had been giving me nothing but glares the moment I had walked in.

“Just be quiet and ignore her comments, and if she takes it too far I will protect you...both of you,” Christian spoke and touched my belly for a split second. I blushed at his unexpected gesture and nodded my head. Of course, he wouldn’t go against his mom for me, at least not a second time. “Best would be to ignore her, promise?” He smiled to calm my nerves.

I nodded my head and smiled back. “I promise.”

“Everyone’s attention!” Francesca called out and stood up from her chair. “I would like to toast to my beautiful son Christian, my future grandchild, and his...fiancée...Selena lets hope she eats every dish to the last crumb.” She raised her glass towards me.

There it was again, Selena.

I looked at all the dishes in front of me and even though it was too far stretched, my first thought went to her going as far as putting poison into my food. She wouldn’t right? At least not when I was carrying her grandchild?

Emilio who sat on the opposite left of me blinked from me to the plate and mouthed, eat, to help me out. My eyes went to Johnny who was sitting next to him and gave me a nod.

Wasn’t there really any poison in it?

I turned my head to Christian, but he had a deep conversation with Enzo who was sitting next to him. So much for protecting me.

Running out of options I picked up a fork and took a bite, waiting to collapse but I didn’t. Of course, I didn’t, she would poison me here in front of everyone. At least the food was good and I had no issue finishing it.

Dana made me feel more at ease and spoke to me a lot, while Christian hadn’t turned his head to see how I was doing. “We woman should stick together and defeat the evil which is Cesca.” She giggled while I looked away, fearing that the woman on the opposite side of me may have heard it.

Perhaps that was the most stupid thing to do because the moment I made eye contact with her she gave me a smirk and shrugged off the person next to her.

“So share with us, how did this baby end up in your stomach.” She suddenly asked loud enough for everyone to shut up so they could overhear the situation. I almost choked in my drink at her bold question.

“Mom...” Christian started, and by the tone in his voice, I could tell that this would turn into a horror dinner indeed. “Stop pretending to be stupid, you know how.”

Everyone around the table gasped and chuckled at Francesca being embarrassed while I was afraid that he had only made it worse. I noticed his clenched fist under the table and quickly placed my hand over it to calm him down. All of this would go away in a few months.

“No, I don’t. I’ve been trying to figure it out but I do not know how you knocked up a stripper, so please enlighten me.” She glared at me.

“It just happened,” Christian told her while his eyes were telling her to shut up, but Francesca wasn’t anywhere near finished yet. She had it out for me and everyone knew it. “I see, just like the ring on her finger.” She sighed.

“So Selena, how do your parents feel about this engagement?”

I had expected Christian to tell her that I was an orphan so I could not believe that she was doing this. Too bad for her that asking me where my parents were was not going to do anything because I got that question a million times. “Just ignore and let me handle it,” Christian said, but I had enough so this time things would go my way.

“Francesca, it’s getting late.” Lucio stepped in to stop her but she held up her hand to shut him up, which he did. It was so crazy to see that the big Lucio Lamberti, listened to his wife— even though I could see that he was trying to protect me. He had a chance to redeem himself but he didn’t take it. It made me wonder, was there anyone by my side in the first place?

“I don’t have parents, so,” I told her with an annoyed look on my face. “Exactly, and now you’re after my son’s money with some lowlife trash baby who is most likely not even his and that ring on your finger costs more than all the money you’ve spent in your entire life!” She raised her voice. The money accusations I could take, but the one about the baby?

“Mom, that’s not true-“

“Do you want me to do a DNA test? Because we can go and do a DNA test, we can both go and take one together since you seem to have some insecurities about yourself, but I’m not like you!” I spoke back, causing everyone around the table to gasp once again. Okay, maybe I took it too far and didn’t have to cut off Christian like that, but she asked for it.

Christian released his hand from mine and it seemed as if he was conflicted between telling his mom to shut up or telling me to shut up for disrespecting his mom. “Christian, she just called your mother a whore and you’re just sitting there? You have to speak up!” Gio intervened, completely twisting my words. “No I didn’t, but you just did and I definitely agree with you,” I told him. This had been going on for way too long and I had enough. Christian promised to protect me, but the protection in question was not there. He was aware of his mom’s behavior and threw me to the wolves.

I had never intended to call Francesca a whore, it was definitely what I meant but it was not what I said. All heads turned to Lucio who sat at the corner of the table as he laughed and clapped his hands to switch the mood, which had appeared to be working for a second. “So it seems like dinner has come to an end.” He spoke, but the look on Francesca’s face showed that she was not impressed.

“Lucio, shut up or I will let you sleep with the cows,” Francesca warned him, and those words were enough to shut him up. It was still beyond me to see that the man who was feared by many, feared his wife. “Christian, you’re really letting her comment pass?” She asked with a painful expression on her face.

I looked at Christian and waited for him to speak, but he didn’t. He was probably wondering who to protect and didn’t know what to do, and at first I was convinced that I didn’t need his protection, but that was before the baby got into this conversation.

Francesca smacked both her hands on the table and stood up to face everyone.

“Do you hear that everyone, because this is why I called you over? The future heir to the Lamberti family chooses his knocked up stripper fiancée over his very own mother and lets her call me a whore. This is who will be ‘protecting’ all of us in the future, this is who we are giving our live-“

“So my baby is not family?” Christian calmly interrupted her. A relieved sigh escaped my mouth. He didn’t have to defend me, but after the baby was born I wouldn’t always be around to protect it— so I needed him to at least defend the baby.

Francesca grabbed her glass and threw her wine straight to my face while the room was filled with gasps. “Here you go.” Dana quickly handed me a napkin while I stood there flustered.

“How can you choose this disrespectful trash and this trash baby over your own mother, you get rid of her, or I’ll do it myself!” Francesca yelled, and that was enough for me to throw my glass of water into her face.

Once again everyone gasped, and this time they all stood up, anticipating Francesca’s next move. All she did was pick up a napkin to wipe her face and the fact that her mouth was close, was enough to prove to me that I did something which I probably shouldn’t— but she had it coming for her.

“Christian, I’ll give her one chance to get on her knees and beg me for forgiveness.” She spoke. “W-what?” I chuckled in disbelief. She was not the queen and I would not bow down to anyone. Matter of fact, I wouldn’t even bow down to the queen, so whatever this woman had planned— it was not going to happen.

“She won’t.” Christian immediately spoke up. It was nice to know we were on the same page about that one.

“Christian, I’m giving her a chance to earn the bit of respect I have left, and trust me, she better take it.” Francesca crumpled the napkin and threw it at his face.

“Earn respect? How about you go on your knees and beg for her forgiveness.” Christian said.

“Christian, that’s enough!” Lucio yelled out.

“What?” Francesca asked, trying to see if he was serious.

“Mom, Serena is the mother of my child and if you don’t respect her that means you don’t respect me.” He spoke and grabbed my hand. It seemed as if his battle with himself had finally ended and he decided to stick up for me.

One thing I could appreciate was that everyone else at the table kept their mouth shut instead of putting their nose where they shouldn’t.

“Christian are you insane? She is disrespecting our mother— dad you can’t let this pass!” Gio yelled and also stood up while Lucio was unsure of what to do.

All Francesca did was glare at me as she ran out of words and was probably shocked by Christian defending me. “Christian, when this trash runs away with your money I’ll be the one standing by your side, I am your mother-“

“And she’s my fiancée!” Christian yelled. “And if I hear any of you disrespect her or my baby again, there will be consequences...for everyone, no matter who you are. Since all of you came here to observe the situation and to report live from my business I expect you to relay this message to all families.” Christian spoke and looked at everyone to make sure they were listening.

“Anyone who has something to say about my fiancée or my baby can come out and say it— but know that you will be dealt with. Now if you’ll excuse me.” He said and pulled my hand to drag me to the car.

He seemed irritated so I kept my mouth shut for the entire ride as I tried not to provoke him anymore than I’d already done. I knew that I had taken it too far, but Francesca started it. She started it and I was going to finish it, one way or another. If he had protected me from the beginning just like he promised, then non of this would’ve happened. Even when we arrived back home all he did was open the car door without giving me as much as a glance and stormed back inside.

“I’m sorry,” I whispered, but Christian pushed me against the wall and looked into my eyes. “Sorry? I told you I would handle it and you just had to open that big mouth of yours...you make me sick.” He spat out the last word and brought his face closer to mine.

“Well you didn’t! She yelled at me and you just stood ther-“

“Because I was going to handle it, after dinner, but you don’t listen— from the start you’ve never listened!” He yelled in my face, making me flinch. Yes, I did not listen but he wasn’t that much of a saint either. He also had a habit of not listening to me or even ask me about my feelings.

“If you ever disrespect my mom again...” He continued, but stopped his eyes when he saw the look on my face. I felt guilty but I hadn’t apologized so I did not know what the issue was. His mom called me a whore first and I gave her what she deserved.

“You should go to sleep, stress is not good for the baby.” He said, lowering his head and released his hand from the wall.

“And don’t even think about moving out, I won’t let you. In the future let’s only discuss matters about the baby, fine?” He spoke with his back turned and walked off.

Coming here was a mistake.