

## **Chapter 1: Debt**

I sit on the edge of my bathtub, crying silently so that I won't wake up my daughter, Charlie. I shouldn't have borrowed that money. How could I be so stupid? I should've just found another job.

Ten minutes ago, I received a call from a man named Avery. I borrowed money from him a couple weeks ago. I just wanted to get my daughter a nice present for her birthday. I never knew that I wouldn't be able to pay back the man in time, or the fact that he's part of the Blood Web mafia.

He wants to meet me in an hour despite the fact that it's twelve at night.

I wipe my cheeks and stand up. I walk over to the dirty mirror above the sink and stare at my face. I'm a mess, my hair is tangled and frizzy, I have dark bags under my eyes, my cheekbones protrude from my face, and my skin is deathly pale.

I comb my hair out with my fingers, they end up getting caught on the snarls. I sigh and splash cold water on my face.

It's all his fault that things ended up the way they did. I was naïve then, let him convince me that he loved me, then left when he found out I was pregnant. All men are bad.

I should've known better, I should've learned from my mother's mistakes. Instead, I let my stupid feelings take control.

Walking out of the bathroom, I let out a gasp when I see Charlie standing outside of the door. She holds her teddy bear in her arms and looks up at me worriedly.

"Mommy, why are you crying?" she asks.

I force a smile on my face. "Nothing, it's just grown up stuff."

She frowns. "You always say that..."

Despite Charlie only being four years old, she's very intelligent. It's almost scary how smart she is. Apparently, my mom says that I was the same way when I was a child.

"Look, mommy has to go out for a while, okay? I'll be back really quick though, I promise." I say, kneeling down so that I can be eye level with her.

"I'm not a child anymore, mommy. You don't have to worry about me, I can take care of myself." she says.

I chuckle and ruffle her hair. "Alright. Go back to bed. If I come back and you aren't sleeping, I will be very mad."

She nods and walks back to her room.

I let out a breath and rub my forehead. Hopefully this won't take me long.

I walk over to the front door of our small apartment and grab my coat and a pair of worn out sneakers. I pull my hair back and tie it into a ponytail. Opening the front door, I leave the apartment, making sure to lock it behind me. We're on the first floor so I walk over to the exit and leave.

My phone dings and I pull it out of my pocket and see I have a message from an unknown number. I open it.

*"Meet me behind the Rose Nightclub. Don't be late."*

I gulp and put my phone back into my pocket. I pull my hood over my head and make my way to the Rose Nightclub. The place that I met him. Funny that I have to go there.

It takes twenty minutes but I make it to the nightclub. I didn't take a taxi so that I could spare money. Walking down the dark alley, I hear the faint sound of music coming from the club.

Turning a corner, I see four men standing. I recognize one of them as Avery. I bite my bottom lip and walk over to them.

Avery looks up and smirks at me. He's a heavier man, with balding hair, a red face, and yellow teeth.

"Hello there, Elizabeth. Glad you could make it." he says, a faint British accent behind his voice.

"Look, I'm sorry I couldn't pay you back. It's just really hard, I have two jobs and both of them pay minimum wage. I promise I'll try to get the money to you as soon as possible." I say in a rush.

He chuckles. "I'm afraid it's too late. You already knew what the rules were. No late payments."

I begin sweating, I clench my fists together, feelings the nails pierce my skin.

"C-Can you please... be lenient this one time? I-I promise I'll get you the money."

He shakes his head. "No can do."

He walks closer to me and that's when I see the blade he holds in his hand. I slowly begin backing away with each step he takes towards me.

Suddenly, the backdoor to the nightclub opens and a tall muscular man steps out.

Dimitri Laurence... The leader of the Blood Web mafia.

## **Chapter 2: His Eyes**

My eyes widen and I gulp. I know that I'm going to die. I'm going to leave my beautiful daughter behind all because I was dumb enough to make myself go into debt with a mafia.

Dimitri looks at his companions. "What's the problem, Avery?"

I look at Avery, giving him begging eyes.

"This little bitch didn't pay me back in time." he says, snarling at me.

Dimitri finally looks at me. His dark blue eyes causes shivers to roll down my spine. Why am I reacting this way just from his gaze? I shouldn't, this man is going to kill me. There's no time to get all shy like a little school girl.

He looks me up and down and licks his lips. "How much did she borrow?"

"\$100." Avery says, crossing his arms over his big chest.

Dimitri scoffs. "You're going to kill her over \$100?"

Avery frowns. "Sir, it's the rules. No matter how much someone owes, they still have to return the money."

I clench my fists even tighter together, my knuckles turning white. I bite my lip and look between the two of them in anticipation. True, it's only \$100. Hell, I should've made that amount already by now with my two jobs

but I have to pay the babysitter, which takes away most of the money. Then there's groceries.

Dimitri looks at me once more. "What's your name?"

"E-Elizabeth..." I stutter out.

"Look, Elizabeth. It wasn't wise borrowing money from a mafia. I'm letting you go just this once, but, if you ever borrow money again and don't pay us back in time, then we'll have to do something bad. Got that?"

I nod and take a step back. "T-Thank you, sir. I really am grateful and I'm sorry I couldn't pay back in time."

"Whatever, it's fine." he says.

I look at Avery one last time before quickly walking away. My entire body is shaking from nerves and I wrap my arms around my body to try and calm myself down.

I make it back to my cruddy apartment complex and open the backdoor that I had left through earlier. Making it to my room, I open the door and walk inside, only to find my daughter sitting on the worn out leather couch, playing on her Nintendo DS.

"Hey, what did I say? I told you to be in bed. Why are you still awake?" I ask walking over to her.

She looks up at me and pouts. "Sorry mommy, I just couldn't fall back to sleep. I was worried about you."

I sigh and sit down next to her. I wrap my arms around her little body and pull her in close to me.

"You shouldn't worry about me, Charlie. Nothing's ever going to happen to me. Ain't nobody gonna hurt this woman." I say jokingly, winking at her.

She giggles and snuggles in closer to me.

As we sit on the couch together, me with my arms wrapped around her, I can't help but to wonder-why did he let me go?

### **Dimitri's POV**

I watch as the most beautiful woman I have ever seen walks away. I look over at Avery to see him looking at me in confusion.

"Why did you let her go, boss? You never let anyone go." he asks.

I smirk. "Who says I'm letting her go?"

He chuckles. "Oh I see how it is, she is quite a beautiful woman. I don't blame you for being attracted to her."

"What's her full name?"

"Elizabeth Rose Lee." Avery says. "She's thirty-two and has a daughter, who's four years old."

I nod. She seems younger than thirty-two, but age doesn't really matter to me.

"Husband?"

"She's a single mother, sir."

"Perfect, find out everything about her."

I walk back into the nightclub. Soon, she will be mine. She doesn't have a choice.

## **Chapter 3: Stalker**

The next morning, I wake up to my alarm going off. Groaning, I reach over and slam the snooze button. I rub my tired eyes and climb out of bed.

I walk out of my room and into the bathroom, I wash my face off with cold water and brush my teeth.

I have to be at work today at six in the morning. I'm really not excited. The people there are always really mean. Everyone else is earning twenty dollars an hour while I'm making minimum wage, even though I work my butt off and put in way too much work.

It's not fair that other people can be happy while Charlie and I have to suffer. It's all his fault for making us this way.

Heading back into my room, I open my dresser and find a white button up blouse and a pair of black jeans. Putting the clothes on, I put my hair up into a ponytail.

The only makeup that I own is a dark red lipstick. I don't have the money to afford anything else.

I put the lipstick onto my pale lips. It makes my skin look paler but I really could care less. At least I'm trying to look half decent.

Walking out of my room, I make it to the front door and slip on my high heels and put my coat on.

Charlie's babysitter should be here in a couple of minutes, but I don't have the time to wait for her. It's a thirty minute walk to work and I'm already kind of running late.

Sighing, I walk outside and lock the apartment door behind me. Walking out the same exit as last night, I make my way down the streets.

My entire body is tired from lack of sleep and being overworked, but I won't give myself a break. I need to make money so that I can afford the rent. I'm trying not to be a failure, I'm trying to make Charlie proud even if it means that I have to suffer.

As I'm walking, I hear the sound of somebody close behind me. Frowning, I look over my shoulder slightly and see someone duck behind a building.

Who the hell is following me?

I turn back around and continue walking. The footsteps continue to follow me. I clutch my purse tightly, my knuckles turning white. I clear my throat and look behind my shoulder to see the man.

Dimitri Laurence. Why is he following me? I thought he said I didn't have to worry about the money? I should've known better than to trust a mafia boss.

He looks me up and down and smirks. "Looks like you caught me in the act. Good morning, princess."

I frown and look at him curiously. "Why are you following me?"

He chuckles. "I just couldn't stay away from you."

"Please... just... leave me be. You already said that I didn't have to return the money. So please just leave me alone."

"Can't do that, princess. I knew I wanted you from the moment I saw your beautiful eyes."

How can someone say such a thing so blatantly? Also, why would someone like him be attracted to me?

"I don't know what you want from me..." I say, looking down.

“I just want you to love me. Stay with me. I can take care of you and your daughter. You will never have to raise your finger again.”

My eyes widen. “How do you know about my daughter?”

“Darling, I know everything about you. I am a mafia boss after all. I can get anyone to tell me anything.”

I clench my fists tightly. “You stay the hell away from me and my daughter! If I ever see you again, I swear I...I’ll...”

What could I possibly do to a mafia boss? He could easily kill me in seconds.

“What will you do, princess?” he asks, a smirk on his face.

“Just stay away!”

## **Chapter 4: Together?**

It’s been five days and I still haven’t seen Dimitri. Today, I finally have a day off. I get to spend time with my daughter.

I hum as I make Charlie’s favorite breakfast, waffles and sausage. I bought the ingredients a couple days ago. I’m so happy that I can finally have some time with my Charlie.

I hear a tiny yawn from behind me and turn around to see a sleepy Charlie. She holds her teddy bear and rubs her eyes with her other hand.

“Good morning, honey.” I say, turning my attention back to the waffles.

She gasps. “Mommy, are you making waffles?!”

I giggle. “Sure am. Go ahead and take a seat, they’ll be done in just a little bit.”

I put a waffle onto a plate and sprinkle some nuts on top along with chocolate chips. Setting the plate on the table, I get the maple syrup along with the whipped topping.

“Feel free to use as much whipped topping as you want.” I say, winking at her.

She giggles and starts pouring syrup onto the pancakes.

A knock on the door makes me jump. Didn't I tell Charlie's babysitter not to come today?

Walking over to the door, I open it only to see the person that I hate the most.

"What are you doing here?" I ask, bitterness in my voice.

"Figured it's been awhile since I've seen you." Dimitri says, smiling at me.

I roll my eyes and mutter, "not long enough."

"Well, are you going to invite me inside?"

"Mommy, who's that?" I hear Charlie ask from behind me.

Shit.

"It's just someone that I work with. Why don't you come inside, Dimitri?" I say through clenched teeth.

He smirks and walks past me. He leans down to my daughter's height and gives her a friendly smile.

"Hello, you must be Charlie?" he asks, his voice gentle.

Charlie smiles at him. "Mommy made me waffles!"

Dimitri chuckles. "Really? Is that your favorite food?"

Charlie nods, excitedly. "It is! Come on, I'll let you have some."

She grabs Dimitri's hand and pulls him into the kitchen. I sigh and close the front door. I run a hand through my hair. Why did this have to happen today of all days?

I walk into the kitchen to see Dimitri put a piece of the waffle into his mouth. He hums in satisfaction and gives Charlie a big thumbs up.

"It's yummy." he says.

"Mommy's the best at making waffles. Nobody can beat her skills." Charlie says, smiling at me with a big toothy grin.

"Wouldn't you like to have waffles everyday? Or eat whatever you want?" Dimitri asks.

Charlie frowns. "What do you mean by that?"

"If you and your mommy came to live with me, you could have unlimited waffles. You can eat all the food you want and go to a very nice school. You'll live in a huge house with a big room you can do anything you want to with."

Charlie's eyes widen. "Really? Can we go now!?"



I bite my lip nervously. “Honey, we can’t.”

“Please mommy!? I don’t want to live in this place anymore. I hate it here!” she whines.

I glare at Dimitri. This is all his fault.

“We can’t just move in with a complete stranger, Charlie. That’s just not how it works.”

“What do you mean, Ellie? We’ve known each other for years. What would be the problem with moving in? After all, we are together.”

My eyes widen in shock. The hell did he just say?

Charlie squeals. “Mommy, you didn’t tell me you found a handsome prince!” she pouts. “I thought we don’t keep secrets.”

“That’s because it’s not-”

“She’s just shy, Charlie. You are the only one who knows about this so you better keep it a secret.”

I can’t believe this guy. He’s insane!

Charlie runs over to me and clutches onto my shirt. She gives me big puppy dog eyes. “Mommy, can we please live with him. You don’t have to worry about anything anymore. You wouldn’t be alone and... and I’ll finally have a daddy...”

Tears begin to fill her eyes and I cave in. “Oh honey, don’t cry.”

I pull her into my chest and hug her tightly. I can’t believe I’m about to do this.

“Alright, we’ll live with Dimitri.”

## **Chapter 5: Love?**

My jaw drops at the huge house in front of me. Large gates surround the outside and there’s gardens filled with roses.

“Mommy, look how big this place is!” Charlie yells from beside me.

“I know honey, I can see it.” I say with a gulp.

Dimitri smirks at me and leans in close. “Like what you see, princess? It’s all yours now.”

I roll my eyes. “Stop calling me that.”

He chuckles and heads into the mansion. I grab Charlie’s hand and follow inside. A man is carrying our luggages which makes me feel bad.

My eyes widen when I see the foyer. A large glass chandelier hangs from the ceiling and the floors are so shiny that I can see my reflection.

“Charlie, why don’t you pick out a room on the second floor? I’m going to bring your mommy to our room.” Dimitri says.

Charlie nods and flies up the staircase. Dimitri grabs my hand and I immediately pull it out of his grasp.

“What are you doing?” I snap.

“Showing you to our room.” he says, smiling at me.

“I’m not sharing a room with you. Nice try.”

“You don’t want Charlie to find out of the truth, right? She would suspect something if we don’t sleep in the same room as each other and act all lovey dovey.”

I glare at him and he smirks. He begins walking up the stairs and I follow close behind him. We make it to the second floor and he walks all the way down the hall to a set of double doors.

He opens them and motions me inside. My eyes nearly pop out of their sockets when I see the large room. In the center is a large canopy bed with velvety red blankets on it. In one corner there’s a fireplace with chairs around it. The entire room is the same size as my apartment!

“Like it?” Dimitri asks.

I feel his breath on my neck and shiver. “Yes, I do...”

“It’s all yours now. This entire place is yours. You can do whatever you want to it. You can decorate it the way you want, you can bake anything you want, there’s even a library that is filled with books.”

“Why... Why are you doing this?”

“Haven’t I already told you? It’s because I’m absolutely infatuated with you.”

“You’ll just leave me like everyone else.”

He frowns. “I would never leave you. You’re the one I want. Forever and always. The only thing is... will you be mine?”

I look up into his eyes and blush. “I-I don’t know...”

He cups my cheek and makes me look back at him. "I know you feel what I feel. Don't lie to yourself anymore. Just... let go."

A single tear rolls down my cheek. It's true. No matter how hard I try to get rid of this feeling, it just won't go away. Everything about this man attracts me towards him.

"Please don't leave me..." I say.

He smiles and pulls me into a hug.

"Never. I will always be here."

*The End.*