

# The Joy of Revenge #Chapter 31 - Read The Joy of Revenge Chapter 31

Chapter 31

## CHAPTER 31 Sacrifice

at me. Fortunately, I survived gym class without any other inconvenience.

“You know, Chip, Nicole did a wonderful job for my house. Maybe she can do wonders for your pub,” I said, helping Nicole redeem herself. Cristos eyed me warily. I raised an eyebrow

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at him, daring him to challenge me. He knew we needed to get on her good side so she’d

talk.

Cristos rolled his eyes, finally agreeing to a ceasefire. “Oh yeah? I want to see your house.

then. If I like what I see, I’ll hire her.”

“Really?!” Nicole squealed. “Oh my gosh! I have so many ideas for this place!”

“Don’t get ahead of yourself, honey” Cristos said, going behind the bar. “I need to see Virtue’s house first before I make my decision. And I don’t want anything fancy. I want to keep the hardwood floors, but I do want to update the front bar, the bar top, back bar and under bar and include light installations and maybe oak panels on the walls. Once that’s done, I’ll need furniture that matches the interior.”

“I can get the construction done for you,” a familiar voice said behind me. I turned and found Noah. “I can show you my portfolio tomorrow and take measurements. We can change this

bart

ice dark granite or quartz depending on your budget or you can go for a

finish.”

rything in my store,” Sebastian said. “Why don’t all of you come by tomorrow

Dom, we live in the same house. Can't you just show me pictures so | don't have to wake up so early? You know | get home later than the rest of you.”

“Yes | do know, but your establishment doesn't need to open early in the morning like the rest of us, Chip,” Sebastian said, yawning. “And no, | don't have a catalog at home. Since you and Virtue are hiring the same contractor, it'll be more efficient for Noah, if all three of you came at the same time and did your shopping. Virtue wants her store to open in two weeks, but if you have construction done at the same time, it'll bump Virtue's opening to a later date. What | suggest, Chip, is do your shopping tomorrow, have Noah start construction on your new bar with the necessary materials, so when he's free, he can install everything without-having to eat up Virtue's time frame. As for the walls, Stanley, Bo and | can help

with that.”

“Hold up. I'm too busy to install wall panels,” Xavier argued. “The grocery store is open everyday which doesn't give me a holiday. P-plus, | just promised Virtue, I'd help her set up her store. Right, Virtue?” My eyes darted instantly to his as he wiggled me into their

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argument and | saw his puppy dog eyes begging at me.

“Yes, he did actually,” | confirmed, winking at Xavier. “Since I'm borrowing Bo for my store, | can offer you my services instead.” “Ah, no, Virtue. We'll be fine without you,” Sebastian remarked, knowing | was bad with construction. | was the one who botched up the painting job at our home in Calabasas. | could draw my own designs, but | couldn't paint a wall... go figure.

“Wow, you sound like Virtue here is bad with construction,” Lisa muttered, noticing the of Sebastian's voice. She was a bit drunk, having started since happy hour.

tone

“Look at her hands, Lisa,” Sebastian said, placing my hand in his. | felt that familiar tingling sensation whenever we touched. “These are hands that have never held a tool before. Not even a trowel for gardening.” He caressed the back of my hand gently, then turned it to show my palm. He ran his index finger along the length of palm, tickling my skin. | instantly felt that familiar warm longing erupt between my legs.

Sebastian’s lips curved into a knowing smile. He placed my hand back onto the bar top, his touch lingering on my skin. | sighed dreamily. Oh, how I missed them....

“Don't listen to him, Virtue,” Cristos exclaimed. It’s my bar. You can come and destroy anything you want! I'll just have to bill you.” Everyone laughed. Now this was fun. But I could tell the others were tired and needed to get some sleep.

“Well, | have to go home. | have an early day tomorrow. What about you, Bo? You coming or will you be staying longer?”

“I'm coming with you. | need to be at the grocery store early for the deliveries,” Xavier

answered.

“How about you, Nicole? Do you need me to drive you home?” Sebastian offered. He was always the gentleman.

“I'm fine, Dom. Dan promised to drive me home, Nicole replied.

“Well then, I'll see you all tomorrow,” Sebastian said and noticed Noah had a glass of scotch in his hands. “Noah, aren’t you driving?”

“Virtue and | will be walking home,” he answered.

“Oh no, you aren't. My bestfriend isn’t going to walk. Don’t worry, I’ll drive them home,

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Dom, Cristos said.novelbin

“Alright, then. Good night and drive safely. Nicole... Lisa... Sebastian patted both of them on

the back.

| waved good-bye at Xavier. | caught the longing in his eyes as he glanced back at me before leaving the pub and | felt my heart constrict in my chest. | didn't expect pretending not to know them would be difficult. Anyway, when construction starts for my boutique, I'll be able to spend more time with him.

Noah sat at the now vacant seat beside me while Nicole returned to Liam's group.

“Finally, she's gone, Lisa said and sat straight in her chair.

“| thought you were already drunk, | murmured while | watched her order a new round from

Cristos.

“Me? Drunk? Not even close,” Lisa said. “But since Chip here has offered to drive the two of

you home, you can join me. Chip, bourbon for me, beer for Noah and get your bestfriend a

new bottle of wine. On me.”

Nicole

| took a seat beside Dan and watched as Lisa, Virtue and Noah toasted to their new friendship. | heaved a sigh. Abigail used to be by my side all the time in high school, but things suddenly changed after the spring formal during our junior year. She began avoiding us, focusing instead on school and the SAT's.

| wasn't used to being alone, so during our senior year, | brought in Lisa to be part of our inner circle. Anyway, | owed her for helping me lure Joy Taylor into the boy's gym room. Joy Taylor wouldn't have come so willingly, if it weren't for Lisa. | knew she and her were friends even though Lisa would bad mouth her to me whenever we spoke.

We never mentioned Joy Taylor's name all throughout our senior year, hoping the past wouldn't catch up to our present. When we graduated high school, Lisa was accepted to

Northwestern University and since her family had money, she was fortunate to leave the

state.

Liam, Cris and I went to neighboring Bismarck to finish school while Dan went to University of North Dakota and Jack stayed in New Salem to attend community college.

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During the Christmas of our sophomore year in college, Lisa came home for the holidays and we were all shocked to see she had blossomed into a beautiful woman. Cris, who Lisa had a high school crush on, immediately began dating her. After we graduated, Cris proposed to Lisa, asking her to be by his side as he started his political career.

Lisa went into real estate while I opened my interior design business. I had thought everything was fine between us, until one night during Liam and Cris' victory party, Lisa became so drunk, she bitc hed about getting her involved in the Joy Taylor scandal. "Joy was my friend, Nicole," she said, while we were both outside of the venue, trying to get

some air. "She didn't deserve that. Actually, no woman deserves to be treated that way. You should have told me what they had planned. I could have probably prevented them from hurting her that way."

I rushed towards her and slapped her in the face. "I would like to remind you we are at your husband's victory party. Or have you forgotten Cris was one of the boys implicated in Joy Taylor's assault? I grabbed her shoulders and made her look me straight in the eyes. "Lisa, remember what I told you... keep your mouth shut and your head down or someone will come knocking on your parents' doorstep. You won't like what happens next. Now, get a grip.

love Cris and your parents, you'll make the sacrifice.”

Liam's voice suddenly interrupted my thoughts, “I need to talk to you. There’s thing | need you to do for me.”

nodded my head meekly and glanced at Virtue and Lisa at the bar.

| should have stayed with them.

Chapter Comments

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Chapter 32

CHAPTER 32 Keepsake

Lisa

up

from

“Lisa, honey, it’s time to go home,” Cris said gently from behind me. | gingerly stood. my barstool and gathered my things. It was one of the few nights I’ve gone home a bit sober.

“Night, Virtue. I’ll see you in the morning,” | said, placing the strap of my bag on my shoulder. “I really had fun tonight.”

“| had fun tonight too, Lisa. We should do this again, but with coffee,” she replied with such a charming smile, | smiled back in return.

Cris placed his arm around my shoulders and | waved goodbye to Virtue, Noah and Chip as

he led me outside.

When we exited the pub, I noticed Dan and Nicole drive off while a drunk Liam stumbled into the backseat of his black BMW. The window of the driver's side was rolled down and I noticed Theodore Cohen's trusted driver, Henry, waiting for Liam to get his drunk ass into the car. Liam rarely drank to get drunk, but I guess tonight was one of those rare nights.

Cris opened the passenger's side and waited for me to be seated comfortably before closing the door and climbing into the driver's side of our SUV.

Virtue made an offer to buy the house last year even though she wasn't ready to move in. She said she fell in love with the house and the location and decided to buy the house so it would be taken off the market.

I met with her in Bismarck a couple of months ago to discuss the renovations she wanted. done and I found her to be warm and friendly. After our meeting, I felt excessively guilty for selling her a home in a town where a lunatic mayor sits on the throne. Since she was still finalizing the sale of her home in Nevada, she asked me to oversee renovations, sending me huge amounts of money, telling me ten percent was allotted to me, just as long as renovations would be done by the time she arrives. We would chat on the phone from time to time and I found her polite and down-to-earth which is rare coming from such a beautiful woman as herself. Usually women like her were demanding and completely stuck up, but she never acted in such a way, which made me admire her more.

Honestly, it amazes me so much, seeing her carry herself with such humility.”

I glanced at Cris who was focused on driving us home. We looked like the perfect couple, but

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in reality, we could no longer stand being with each other. For the sake of appearances, we still lived in the same house together, but we slept in separate rooms. We've been sleeping separately ever since I caught him fucking his secretary on his desk.

"I think you surprised everyone, Lisa. We were all expecting an old woman to move into the

old Taylor house," Cris suddenly said, breaking the ice..

"What made you guys think that?" I asked, confused..

"Remember I asked you who was moving into that house that one night at the pub and you mumbled 'some woman,'" he answered. "We all expected it to be some retiree. You know, someone else who could get along with all the old folks at Taylor Loop." He paused and shrugged his shoulders. "Well, it seems you found a new friend. And I like how she's a positive influence on you."

I quietly scoffed at him.

Whatever Cris...

"I'm actually happy I met her, Cris," I murmured, "I-I'm just concerned for her safety. To tell you honestly, I feel guilty."

Guilty?

Why Lisa?" He asked. "Does this have something to do with Liam?"

"Maybe," I said, not wanting to say it out loud. I feared voicing out my concerns would make it a reality and I wanted to live in Never Never Land just a bit longer.

I heard Cris sigh. "I know what is going through your mind, Lisa."

"Is there anything you can do, Cris?" I asked hoping he would offer to help, but I knew he had his hands tied.

"Well, Dan is trying to convince Liam that she would make an exceptional wife. I'm hoping Dan will get through to him and make him realize Virtue is an asset and not a liability," he

answered.

"If there is anything you can do to help, I would be very grateful," I replied. "You know, Cris, I really want us to be friends. You and I, we make a great team."



“We do, Lisa,” he said, agreeing with me. “I know this may not mean anything to you, do love you and I'll always will. | know I'm a terrible husband, but Lisa, you can count on me

to be a friend.”

but I

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cheek. Thanks, Cris. You'll always be special to me too, | sniffed, a tear falling down my This was actually the first time we have spoken civilly to each other ever since we decided to sleep in different bedrooms. It was a breakthrough for both us.

Once we got home, | kissed him on the cheek and went straight to my bedroom to take a shower. After putting on my pajamas, | sat on the edge of my bed feeling a bit nostalgic.

My eyes went to the three picture frames on my nightstand and | gazed lovingly at the photos staring back at me.

One was a photo of me and my parents during my college graduation, the other was a wedding photo of me and Cris, while the third photo was taken during the spring formal of my junior year... my only keepsake of my friendship with Joy Taylor.

| picked it up and ran my fingers along the glazing of the frame, wistfully yearning for the young girl, who had her arms wrapped around my teenage self as she grinned happily at the

camera, to appear.

I often ask myself why. Why did I listen to Nicole? Why didn't | go back for Joy? WHY DIDN'T | DO SOMETHING... ANYTHING?!

What kind of a sick person am I?

So many questions... none of them with answers. Poor Joy. It has been ten long painful years and no one knew where she was.

| tried calling her aunt in California, hoping for some information, but she said she had no idea where the Taylor family could have gone.

| tried looking for her through social media, but there were so many women with the same name, it was impossible for me to find her.

| tried keeping the old Taylor house in the market, hoping one day, they would return and Joy would hug me tightly and tell me all is forgiven.

“| didn’t know, Joy. Honestly, | thought it was just a prank. | really didn’t know,” | whispered. to the young girl with chestnut colored hair and stunning aquamarine eyes.

get some sleep. |novelbin

| placed the picture frame back on my nightstand and prepared myself to get sighed, remembering my night.

Virtue Sullivan reminded me of Joy. They both had the same sultry voice and the same sing-

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## CHAPTER 32 Keepsake

song laugh. They were both optimistic and hardly spoke an unkind word to anyone.

| closed my eyes, allowing myself to drift off to sleep, feeling a heavy burden has been lifted. from my shoulders knowing Cris stood beside me in a way.

loy

“Chip, how far do you live from here?” | asked as we exited the pub with Noah in tow. We left Patrick, the bartender, to lock up for the night. Everyone went home early and we were fortunate to leave at half past midnight.

“About a twenty minute drive that way,” Cristos said, pointing to the direction of Old Man Eugene’s house.

Old Man Eugene’s family and my dad's family were pioneers in this town. Back in the day, my dad’s family was well-off, but a string of misfortunes

plagued the family. After his parents died, all he inherited was our house located on acres of property and the grocery store.

statue at New Salem Park where a Summers and a Taylor stood hand in hand ther. | did some research when | was in high school and saw an article on the mysterious death of Mayor Owen Summers. His successor, Ethan Cohen, was believed to have bought his way in, but no one could ever prove it. Ethan Cohen went on to say the malicious. accusations were made by his detractors who wanted a Summers or a Taylor in town hall.

The Cohens arrived during the prohibition period together with their unexplainable wealth. After Ethan Cohen seized power, no other Summers or Taylor was ever elected again. Instead, the mayoralty was handed from a Cohen patriarch to son.

Their mansion is perched atop Prairie's Peak, a hill overlooking town hall. It was secluded and well-guarded.

"Well, mine is five minutes away in that direction," | said, pointing the other way, as he helped me drag Noah to his bronze Range Rover, | whistled. | should get one.

"Uhm, my car costs as much as your car, so you shouldn't be impressed," Cristos said, practically pushing Noah into the backseat of the luxury SUV and slamming the door, clearly irritated. "Although, mine IS new. Fine, go ahead and be impressed." He opened the passenger door for me and | climbed in, checking out its interior. Nice, | waited for him to slide into the driver's seat before we talked cars.

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CHAPTER 32 Keepsake

"| was thinking of getting one... | mean an SUV. What does Dom and Bo drive?" | asked.

“You and Dom have the same taste. He has a Mercedes SUV while Bo, who is more masculine, drives a Land Rover Defender. I was about to buy one. It’s a real beaut,” he said,

driving towards the direction of my house.

“I can imagine,” I said, knowing Xavier. I glanced through the rearview mirror and noticed there was another car behind us. I turned in my chair to take a closer look and saw a BMW

emblem.

“You noticed too, huh?” Cristos said, looking through the rear view mirror. “Let’s get Noah

home first, shall we?”

Cristos drove calmly, but he opened the center console to have his gun readily available if

needed.

We dropped off Noah first. Cristos had to shake him awake because there was no way in hell and we could carry him. Then, Cristos parked his SUV in front of my house. He took his gun placed it in his leather sling bag while I readied my knife before exiting the car.

Liam’s BMW was parked near the trees at the entrance of the cul-de-sac.

calling Dom and Bo,” Cristos said walking into the house while dialing his phone. “You could get on the phone and call the police.” I took out my gun from a kitchen cabinet and placed it behind a throw pillow of my sofa before calling the Sheriff.

The home security consultant I hired would be arriving tomorrow. I had to wait until construction on the house was finished since I didn’t trust Lisa to oversee the installation.

I just didn’t expect Liam to begin stalking me so soon.

Chapter Comments

Luna-Mom

This book has me hooked so far

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Chapter 33

CHAPTER 33 What if?

Sebastian

During our first few months in New Salem, it was hard to move around. The weather was bad and the Sheriff was always doing his rounds around town at night. When we were at the pub, Jack would always be there with his friends.

One night, Xavier and I decided to go to the diner for some greasy cheeseburgers, but the Sheriff was at the entrance, blocking us from entering. He told us to go on home because there was some sort of meeting going on. We tried to peek inside, but the curtains were down, blocking our view.

Xavier installed a CCTV camera in front of the diner, but nothing out of the ordinary popped up. We did notice certain folks would come in at the same time during a particular part of the day and they all had a black sling bag with them. I tried peaking into a bag of one of those people who happened to enter my shop, but there wasn't anything out of the ordinary. Xavier did the same, but he didn't find anything to go with.

Since we couldn't use our cars or motorcycles to do surveillance at night, we would go on foot, dressed in white to blend with the snow if we needed to hide. This is the reason why we' decided we would stay in our offices once Joy moved in. It was an eight minute jog to get to

her house.

Xavier and I arrived at his secret office at the warehouse section of his grocery store from the pub. Since Joy was already in town, we were going to start spending the night in our respective offices.

| sat down on Xavier's leather couch, deep in thought. After Xavier and | arrived in New Salem, Cristos called after two weeks informing us someone had asked about us. For Joy, it

was a matter of hours.

“Sebastian, someone called asking about Virtue, Cristos said while we were in his office earlier this evening. “My team intercepted and answered all the questions that a certain Tom

Smith asked.”

“The people who run this town don't like to be caught off-guard especially by someone young,” | said. “For the past six months, I've noticed that the people who've been moving into this town are either middle-aged or older, people who like to stay at home or won't put up a fight. Before they even move into their respective homes, the whole town knows them by their names.” There was a section of New Salem that was now a sprawling residential area

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CHAPTER 33 What If?

with its own clubhouse and church.

“Cristos, how are Benny and Leo doing at the Cohen Mansion?” Xavier asked, hoping they had found some additional information that we could use.

Bernard and Leonard Primo were two of Cristos closest cousins and have been working as guards for the past three months at the Cohen Mansion on Prairie's Peak. We heard through De Luca's contacts that the Cohens were hiring new guards and asked them to go undercover. They were younger than us, muscular, tall, and didn't resemble Cristos in any way. Bernard was a blonde while Leonard was a redhead.

“They're on compound duty most of the time, but cargo comes in every two weeks as usual. They don't know what's in the crates although the other guards say the crates are filled with bottles of wine. They overheard Liam saying they will be moving the cargo come election,” Cristos said. “I told them if they need to kill someone to get into Liam's good graces, then do

it.”

“Who among the people on our watch has gone to the mansion?” | asked.

“Nicole, Cris, Jack, Dan and Noah,” Cristos enumerated. “The usual.”

There was something | noticed a while ago at Liam’s office. Nicole’s palms became sweaty ter she and Noah made eye contact. It's my first time to ever see Nicole react that way to Noah,” | told them. “I know Noah is one of the handful of people who has the privilege of entering the Cohen Mansion. I’ve always suspected he was on Liam’s payroll, but | assumed for odd jobs. What if Noah is a hitman?”

Xavier began to laugh hysterically. It did seem a bit farfetched. Noah obviously didn’t fit the profile. But then again, I’ve seen Xavier go out of his way to pretend he was a homeless man just to get close to his mark.

What if?

“And what makes you think that?” Xavier asked after he stopped laughing. “He doesn’t have the balls to kill someone, Sebastian. You know what | think? Noah’s a snitch. He keeps an eye on people and if they as much as think of betraying Liam, all Liam has to do is make life unpleasant for them.”

“But what do these people do for Liam exactly? Cargo comes in at the Cohen Mansion looking like crates filled with wine bottles. People going to the diner with black sling bags. This is a well-planned scheme they have going on,” | said, frustrated. “The only crimes that have happened in this town, that we actually know of, is the one involving Joy, which | may

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CHAPTER 33 What if?

82%

add is practically non-existent, and the death of Joan. Other than that, this town is squeaky

clean.”

"I told you we should put a bug in the diner," Xavier said, annoyed. "Wait, Virtue said she's planning to have a housewarming party. Why don't we ask her to go to the diner and order food for her party? Cristos, you go with her and plant a bug."

"Alright. I know the perfect spot. If we're able to enter the office of the diner, I'll get one in there too," Cristos said. "By the way, my team found a document from all the files I sent them from this office. It's a blueprint of the Cohen Mansion." He clicked on his laptop and showed us a photo of the blueprint which was hard to read. I zoomed in on a portion and pointed at it.

"There seems to be a tunnel leading towards town hall. Can you see it, Xavier?" I asked him. He inched his face closer to the screen for a better look.

"The crates seem to lead to the basement of town hall," Xavier answered. "It's possible those will be moved there. But the question remains, what is in those crates? Firearms perhaps?"

"Firearms being shipped here every two weeks? For what? To go deer hunting? No, it has to be something else," I said.

"Well, Theodore Cohen will be leaving this weekend according to Leo. He'll be going to the Cohen cabin in the woods near the lake," Cristos informed us.

"Have Leo place a tracker on his car. After you've pinged on his location, try and get satellite images. This is actually one of those rare times Theodore Cohen will be out on his own. If he's still running the show, he'll probably meet with someone... hopefully someone who can give us answers."

The sound of Xavier's phone ringing interrupted my thoughts, bringing me back to the

present.

"He's here with me. We'll be there in ten minutes, Xavier said before hanging up. "Get dressed. Liam's car is parked in front of Joy's house. They need back up."

"We'll take my car," I said without thinking. I quickly stood up from Xavier's couch, banging my knee against the small coffee table.



The pain from hitting the edge of the table didn't register. Instead, my pulse was beating so fast against my chest while my body had become cold and clammy. For the first time in my life, I was afraid.

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CHAPTER 33 What if?

I knew I wouldn't be able to live with myself if something happened to Joy.

If I was panicking, Xavier was all business. He had already taken off his jeans and was putting on a pair of black pants while I just stood there. After zipping up his pants, he threw a black long sleeved shirt with a pair of matching pants at me.

"Sebastian, we go on foot. This might be a test. If they see us coming to her aid, they'll know something's up," Xavier said matter-of-factly while putting on a black long sleeved shirt. "Get dressed and take whatever weapon you want." He nudged his head towards his weapons cache while putting on a pair of boots.

We quietly exited his grocery store dressed head to foot in black. Xavier was carrying his sniper rifle in a black bag slung over his back while I had a Nighthawk Custom GRP with a suppressor. We ran towards the old Taylor house as fast as we could.

We were already in position, hiding in the woods, when a dark gray RAM truck parked

behind Liam's black BMW.

Crouching down, I slowly crept my way towards the two vehicles, hoping to eavesdrop on Liam and the Undersheriff. I needed to know....

"What was Liam doing here?"

Chapter Comments

Luna-Mom

Another great chapter

Morgan

| can't believe | actually feel bad for her...

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Chapter 34

CHAPTER 34 The Undersheriff

Jack

82%

“Jack, we just got a call from the old Taylor house. | need you to go check it out before you head home,” Sheriff Combs said, as | was straightening my desk. | heaved a sigh. It has been a long day and all | wanted to do was get home, take a hot shower and climb into bed.

“Old Taylor house?” | asked, puzzled. No one has lived there for years. | followed him into his

office and closed the door.

“Haven't you heard? A young woman just moved in. They've been renovating that house for months. I'm surprised you didn't know, Sheriff Combs answered.

Oh, right...novelbin

“Now | remember. Yeah, Lisa mentioned she sold the house to a woman. She never

mentioned anything else. What's the complaint about?” | asked, hoping it was just another stray dog. When the Sheriff scratched his head, | knew it wasn't anything simple.

“A suspicious looking vehicle is parked near her home. A black BMW. I don’t need to give you

license plate. You already know who it is,” he said, shaking his head.

What the fuck is Liam doing there?

“Name and description of the woman living at the old Taylor house,” I asked.

“Virtue Sullivan. 27 years old. Single. Five foot nine. Moved here from Nevada. I saw her a while ago with Noah at Harold’s. Blonde hair, blue-gray eyes, pretty,” the Sheriff answered and gestured for me to come closer. “She’s not your typical helpless female. Tell your friend it isn’t ideal behavior to stalk women and follow them to their homes. If she takes a video or

a photo of his car and uploads it on social media then goes missing, he will be the first person the good people of the virtual world will point their fingers at.” He leaned back on his chair and gave me a telling look.

If he goes down, we all go down. Fuck!

“Got it, Sheriff. I’ll go over there and fix what needs fixing,” I said, annoyed. Liam was up to

his old tricks.

“You do that, son. Assure Miss Sullivan that it won’t happen again.” I tipped my hat at the Sheriff and rushed out of his office. The police station was just a quick drive to the old

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## CHAPTER 34 The Undersheriff

Taylor house and wasn’t far from where I lived.

82%

I explicitly told Liam to lay low after Joan Summers. We were lucky another body was found. Along with hers with the same cause of death making it look like a serial murder case.

Although initial evidence from Joan Summers' investigation went missing, we pinned her death on the same suspect who murdered the twenty year old college student from Bismarck. Sheriff Combs found him a couple of weeks ago, via an anonymous tip, hiding at an abandoned underground coal mine just within New Salem jurisdiction with the murder weapon in his possession. Forensics found Joan Summers' blood on it.

Despite of the 'new found' evidence and a suspect in tow, there were still people who weren't convinced we had nothing to do with it. I couldn't blame them. After a high school student claimed she saw Liam following Joan Summers and all four of us present at the New Salem High Spring Formal, who wouldn't? Especially after Joy Taylor.

Liam's black BMW was parked near the old Taylor house as I approached the entrance to the cul-de-sac. I parked my truck behind it, casually walked up to the driver's side of the car and knocked on the window three times. The window automatically rolled down revealing the Cohens' trusted driver, Henry, behind the wheel.

"Good evening, Henry. You wanna tell me why you're parked out here in front of the old

Nor house?" I asked, not surprised to find him in the driver's seat.

Before he could answer, the window of the door to the backseat of the car rolled down and out popped Liam's face. From where I was standing, I could smell the distinct aroma of

scotch on his breath.

"What are you doing here?!" Liam hissed.

"I should be asking you the same thing, Liam," I answered.

"We made a wrong turn," Liam lied. I rolled my eyes.

"We got a call down at the station about a suspicious looking vehicle parked out in front of the old Taylor house." I bent down to stare at him in the face. "I don't know what's going on, but whatever this is, Liam, it doesn't look good. If the woman in that house takes a picture of our car and posts it on the internet, whatever speculations this town has of you, Joy Taylor and Joan Summers... all of that will become true in their eyes." I wrinkled my nose at the

smell of alcohol on his breath. "What you should do is go on home and get some sleep."

Liam smirked at me.

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82%

## CHAPTER 34 The Undersheriff

"You know, Jack, you aren't Sheriff yet. If I don't get reelected as mayor, you can kiss your dreams goodbye," Liam threatened. I let out a frustrated sigh.

"Liam, I'm your friend and I'm just looking out for you. No more stunts like these until the election," I said, trying to persuade him to listen to me. Finally, Henry, the voice of reason, came to my defense.

"Undersheriff, you're right. We will be on our way home now," Henry said and started the car.

"Drive safely," I said as they drove off to Cohen Mansion.

All I have to do now is speak to Virtue Sullivan and I can go home.

Joy

I was hoping Sheriff Combs would come. We needed evidence confirming the close relationship between him and the Cohens. But he sent someone else to check up on my

complaint.

As the police officer spoke to Liam, I watched through the curtains while Cristos was outside.

I took photos using my DSLR camera just in case my CCTV footage was unclear.

Xavier and Sebastian were already hidden within the trees before the police officer arrived. Xavier was aiming a sniper rifle while Sebastian was probably somewhere near the car trying

to eavesdrop.

After several minutes, the BMW's headlights finally turned on and drove away. The police officer then began to walk towards my house. I quickly went to the powder room to fix myself and waited for him to ring the doorbell.

Once the doorbell rang, I slowly walked to the door and opened it as far as the door chain would allow. I peeked through the crack, looking frightened. However, when I recognized who it was, my eyes narrowed icily. No wonder Sheriff Combs didn't come to my rescue. He sent Jackson Emery instead.

Jackson Emery was our champion wrestler. He was dubbed "The Superman" because of his strength, his muscular physique, his black hair and his light blue eyes. During our junior year, his coach had already begun grooming him for college scouts, hoping Jack would be offered a scholarship at a prestigious university. An injury during his senior year destroyed all hopes of a scholarship and Jack, unlike his friends, had to finish school at the community.

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82%

## CHAPTER 34 The Undersheriff

college.

Jack wasn't as quick-tempered as Cris. Sure, he pushed people around, especially when they were in his way, but he wasn't as impulsive or reckless. He was quiet most of the time and always appeared to be daydreaming in class. When I became his lab partner in Science our

junior year, we bonded. And since I was naive and gullible, I thought he and I were friends.

Images of him pounding away on my raw vagina flashed through my mind. I remember him grabbing my breasts and squeezing them so tightly, his sweat dripping on me while he struggled to cum, his breath on my face as he pumped harder and harder while I struggled to remove my ankles from my restraints so I could close my thighs and kick him away. I remember how his hands wrapped around my throat and strangled-

“Miss Sullivan, good evening. I’m Undersheriff Jackson Emery,” he said politely, showing me his badge through the crack. “We received a call from you about a suspicious looking vehicle parked near your residence. I’d like to inform you there is nothing to worry about. The driver just seemed to have lost his way and stopped to make a phone call. After I gave him directions, he has gone on his way. He apologizes for the trouble he may have caused you and promises to never bother you or the people of this neighborhood ever again.”

I closed the door to unhook the chain so I could thank him properly when I noticed the

baseball bat Cristos had left on the corner beside the door. I imagined myself taking the bat and swinging it across Jack’s face. I pictured him collapsing on my doorstep, blood spurting out of his mouth.

I coughed, opened the door and gave him a bright smile. I noticed the momentary surprise in

his

eyes before his lips curved upward into that goofy grin of his. He always smiled that way when he saw Abigail. When we were lab partners, he admitted that he had a long-time crush on her, but didn’t have the guts to ask her out.

“Thank you so much, Undersheriff Emery,” I said. “You must forgive me. I’m new in town and living alone. I guess my emotions got the best of me.”

“Glad to be of service. I noticed the bronze Range Rover parked in front. Is Chip here with you?” He asked, pointing at Cristos’ car. Nothing goes unnoticed in this town.

“Yes, he is,” I answered. “He drove-”

“Undersheriff Jackson Emery! We missed you at the pub tonight,” Cristos said, back in character and appearing from the den, holding my universal remote. He snuck in through the back before Jack rang the doorbell. “I told Virtue it was nothing, but she told me to stay

until the car left.”

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## CHAPTER 34 The Undersheriff

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“Well, it's nice to know you're with her, Jack said, looking inside my new home. “Wow, | like what you've done to this place.” He nodded his Head appreciatively. “Anyway, Virtue, if you need anything and | mean anything, give me a call.” He handed me his card.

“Ill do that. Thanks, Undersheriff,” | said, as | reached for his card.

“Jack. You can call me Jack,” he said, while his fingers brushed against mine. It made my skin crawl.

“Well, thank you for all your help... Jack.”

“If | run into you in town, maybe we can go and get some coffee? Or maybe grab a drink at the pub?”

When pigs fly, Jack.

“Sure, I'm opening a small store beside Bo's so you'll be seeing me in town. We start

construction soon,” | answered.

“Alright. I'll see you soon, then. Good night, Virtue.” He waved at me and walked down the brick steps.

od night, Jack.” | slowly closed the door. | peered through my peephole and saw him walk

glancing back at my door with a silly grin on his face.

After he drove off, the back door to my house opened and in came Xavier and Sebastian.

After giving Sebastian a tight hug, | turned to Xavier and he held me tightly against his body, resting his cheek against my forehead. “I don't want to let you go. I've missed you so much,” he croaked and lowered his lips to give me a long lingering kiss. “I've missed you too, Xavier... All three of you...”



Cristos suddenly coughed..

“| hate to break the reunion, but you guys need to see this.”

5/6

## CHAPTER 34 The Undersheriff

### Chapter Comments

Luna-Mom

| too want to know what's happening in this town

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Chapter 35

## CHAPTER 35 Pretending

Xavier

After kissing Joy, | hugged her so tightly.

| didn't want to let her go. It has been six long months since | had Joy in my arms. Unlike Sebastian and Cristos, once | arrived in New Salem, | stayed, keeping a close watch on the people of this town. | had my suspicions, but | didn't have the evidence to prove my theories... not just yet.

Joy was supposed to arrive when construction on her shop was almost finished, but after they arrested a man said to be the primary suspect of the murders of both Kimberly Smith and Joan Summers, Joy decided to come early.

|, of course, was against it, but now | see how distracted Liam and his group have become now that Joy was here.

| saw how Cris stood in the middle of the pub, all tongue-tied, drooling right in front of her. | noticed the longing looks Liam gave her while she sat at the bar. | saw how Noah. whispered something into Liam's ear when they passed each other at the restroom. And just

while ago, | saw the grin on Jack's face when he walked back to his truck.

to admit, there was something different about Noah, although | still didn't agree with b astian's theory that Noah could be a hitman. If he was a hitman, why didn't he finish off Joy when he drove her home after her assault? Did he feel sorry for her because they were bestfriends?

| could see the dilemma. But Noah the assassin? don't think so.

"What is it, Cristos? What did you see from the CCTVS?" Sebastian asked as we followed them into Joy's sound proof den. | sat down on the couch and made Joy sit right beside me. | buried my nose in her hair, blissfully inhaling the floral scent of her shampoo.

"| miss the smell of your hair," | murmured, kissing the top of her head. She giggled and snuggled closer, wrapping her arms around my neck.

"Focus, you two," Cristos scoffed at us. | took a throw pillow and threw it at him.

"I've missed Joy," | murmured, staring at her and caressing her cheek. "I've been in this town. for six solid months helping everyone with their shopping. Please... let me be happy just this once." Sebastian rolled his eyes at me, then fixated his gaze on the screen of the huge Smart

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CHAPTER 35 Pretending

TV.

"Is that Noah?" Sebastian asked, surprised. Cristos nodded his head.

"I didn't expect this from Noah," Cristos said. "He pretended to be drunk and asleep in my car while I drove. Virtue, if we had slipped and reverted back to our names, he would have found out. We have to make it a rule to use our fake names everywhere and anywhere in this

town. It doesn't matter if we're alone in the car.

"Chip is right. We have to embrace our fake identities full time," Sebastian said. "Chip, I need you to call Lou and tell him to fly in as soon as possible, so he can install the security system of Virtue's home. I want him here later in the day." He pointed to the ongoing

now footage on one of the smaller windows at the bottom of the screen. Noah was looking through the windows of Joy's house, trying to find cracks within the curtains. "It looks like he's been employed by Liam to keep a close watch on you, Virtue, a very close watch."

"What did you hear from Liam and Jack's conversation, Dom? Do you know why Liam was parked outside?" I asked.

"Jack told Liam to lay low until elections and no, Liam didn't say why he followed Virtue," Sebastian answered while he reviewed the footage. "Noah came out from the back of his house and stopped at the big elm tree at the side of Virtue's yard. He was listening to her conversation with Jack. Now, he's trying to peek through the windows. This isn't the Noah we know for the past six months. There's something different about him."

"I was just thinking the same thing. Can we now include him on the list?" I asked them, hoping they would agree. Well, I gotta try. "To kill? It's up to Virtue," Cristos answered. "But I'm going to start doing some digging. I can't believe he outsmarted me... I mean, us."

"I think you should hire another contractor for your store, Virtue," I suggested. "He could do all kinds of sabotage or hook up CCTV cameras as small as a screw in hard to reach areas or even place a bug."

"I can't, Bo. I already hired him," Joy argued. "Don't worry. Lou is supposed to give me this camera detector and bug scanner device."

"If he doesn't, you can borrow one of ours," Sebastian said. "Chip, I need you to hack into his home Wi-Fi system, get all his passwords and check if he

orders anything online, especially CCTV cameras and audio listening devices," Sebastian ordered Cristos.

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## CHAPTER 35 Pretending

"Gotcha, I'll check his schedule while I'm on it," Cristos replied, nodding his head.

"Do you have anything on Nicole, Abigail or even Lisa?" | asked him.

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"I've hacked into their Wi-Fi network and have all their data, but | haven't found anything unusual in their group chat except for the usual Let's get a drink. Not even Cris. | suspect they use burner phones without Wi-Fi capability. | went over to Sheriff Combs' house and didn't detect a Wi-Fi system," Cristos said, sighing. "He's a dinosaur. As for the Cohen Mansion, it has security roaming twenty-four seven. That place is built to keep everyone out. Leo and Benny are currently on the inside getting information, but we need to move faster." Leonard and Bernard Primo are two of Cristos closest cousins. When we told them of our plans, they wanted in right away, but Cristos told them to wait until we can find them the perfect undercover job and now they have been working at the mansion for three months.

"Chip, you need to hack into town hall," Joy suggested. "Or place a bug or camera inside. Liam's office, maybe even Cris' office and the Sheriff's. Those three offices are easily accessible to the public."

"Why didn't |

| think of that? I'll hack into town hall asap. But bugging Liam's office... it isn't as easy as it sounds, Virtue," Cristos said. "Not everyone is allowed inside Liam's office. Have you gone into Liam's office, Dom?" Sebastian shook his head. "How about you, Bo?" | shook my head too. "I haven't either. See?"

nput a bug in Cris Murdock's office," | said. "He's been hounding me about sponsorship r his reelection. I'll ask him to meet with me at his office."

“One down,” Sebastian said. “Any takers for the Sheriff’s office?”

“I-I’ll do it,” Joy answered. The three of us looked at her reluctantly. “I-I think Jack has a crush on me. He asked me to have coffee with him if we ever bump into each other in town. I’ll try and visit his workplace after we’ve had coffee.”

“You are going to go on a date with that f ucker?” | asked, feeling jealous and angry.

“Bo, isn’t that why I’m here?” Joy took my hand and placed it on her cheek. “Remember, it’s for a  
od cause.”

“Bo, we’ve already discussed this,” Sebastian argued. “Virtue’s here to manipulate all four.... well, five, if we count Noah. I’ll place a bug in the newly renovated office at town hall. Nicole told me someone close to Liam will be using that office. Chip, have Benny and Leo place a tracking device on Liam’s car.”

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CHAPTER 35 Pretending

“Got it.”

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“One last thing,” Sebastian took out a black box which looked like an airpod charging case from his

his pocket. “Virtue, | need you to place a bug inside Noah’s house. It’s already preformatted so all you have to do is stick it in a concealed space like under a table.” He

give you a GPS tracking device if | can’t place one on Noah’s truck myself.” Joy nodded her head enthusiastically while placing the small black case in her pocket.novelbin

handed the box to Joy.

“Noah just ran back to the elm tree,” | said, pointing at the screen of the Smart TV. “Chip you need to leave while we run out the back door. Virtue, go outside and say goodbye to Chip,” | instructed. | saw the disappointment in her eyes. | lifted her chin so | could gaze into her beautiful blue eyes.

“Hey, we'll see you later in the morning. You can spend time at Dom's store or hang around at the grocery. Remember, we'll be sleeping at our offices from now on. Chip, though, is still clearing out Old Man Eugene's office,” | told her, kissing her on her forehead.

“Well, since I'm having construction done, | can fix the back and make it into an office slash bedroom and have a sofa bed placed inside, Chip. So all three of you are next to each other,” Joy offered.

|

that's a plan,” Cristos said, smiling. “Okay, we all need to leave. Virtue, make sure you your gun beside you when you sleep. Bo, switch off the lights at the back before you ys leave.”

gave Joy one last hug and quickly went to the back door of her house without looking at her. | felt | wouldn't be able to leave if | looked at her one more time.

“Hey, the GPS tracker | put on Dan's car shows me he and Nicole went somewhere else,” Sebastian said while | turned off the lights in the back. “You wanna check it out?”

“Sure.”

Chapter Comments.

Luna-Mom

another great chapter, full of suspense.

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Chapter 36

## CHAPTER 36 Donuts

Joy

After the boys left, | took a quick shower, crawled into my king-size bed...

..\_alone....

...-with my gun in the drawer of my nightstand and went to sleep.

| woke up to the loud sound of chiming bells and groaned. With my eyes still closed, | reached over on to the nightstand, blindly feeling my way to the source of the sound. Once | felt my phone, | quickly tapped on it and the blaring sound disappeared, allowing the silence of my room to surround me once more.

| was still groggy, but | had to wake up. | promised Lisa I'd be at her office early in the

my word. morning and when it came to business, | was true to my

I sat up and stretched my hands above my head, bending from side to side to wake up. It was five-fifteen in the morning and still dark, but | needed to go for an early jog before | started my day.

ressed in running gear. A simple white tee over a blue sports bra, blue running shorts and running shoes. | tied my hair into a high pony tail and placed my phone, wallet, and a face towel into a small jogging pouch. It was a bit chilly outside, but nothing I couldn't handle. | did some stretching exercises at the bottom of the brick steps in front of my doorway, holding on to the black railing while | held each foot behind me. After stretching, | proceeded down the street, exiting the cul-de-sac into town. | decided to jog to the diner to grab breakfast to go and pick up my car at Cristos' pub.

Sadly, Cristos had to leave to provide Sebastian and Xavier some cover. | was hoping he would spend the night. Unfortunately, we weren't expecting to find Noah sober and spying

on me.

At least | was able to share a sweet moment with Xavier. Among the three of them, | didn't

-see him the longest.

While Sebastian and Cristos made quick trips to California, Xavier sacrificed coming home. He didn't want Liam and his buddies snooping around while he was gone, especially when he had 'sensitive equipment' lying around the warehouse of his grocery store.

Well, as they say, good things come to those who wait, and finally, we were together again.

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CHAPTER 36 Donuts

| stopped right in front of the diner and steadied my breathing before entering. The diner opens at five and usually has fresh pastries served by six. | glanced at my watch and saw that | was ten minutes early.

| entered the diner and took a seat at the counter. | was patiently waiting for the server, playing with a dinner knife, when someone sat beside me.

| turned my head and saw Jack Emery smiling at me, freshly showered and dressed for work.

"Good morning, Virtue! | guess Go d heard my prayer this morning.

| smiled at him, but the grip | had on the dinner knife tightened.

| wasn't expecting to see him so soon.

What rotten luck...



Well, a dinner knife may not be sharp, but | can stab him in the eye with one.

Jack

driving to the diner when | saw her running. Her long legs kept a steady pace. while her a ss sashayed with every step she made. | thought she was going to turn around and ead on home, but she ran towards the diner instead. She took a moment outside to steady her breathing and wipe the sweat off her face before walking inside.

After | woke up, | had asked G od for our paths to cross again and here she was. | couldn't believe my good fortune.

She was sweaty, her cheeks flushed and there were errant strands of blonde hair on her forehead which made her look even more beautiful in my eyes. As the sunlight began streaming into the diner, her skin glowed, making her look like a sun goddess. "Good morning, Jack!" She smiled ever so sweetly, showing me her perfect teeth. Her blue -eyes twinkled like gems. "I didn't expect to see you out so early in the morning. Do you

usually have breakfast here at the diner?"

"Just every

every Monday and Friday. | have to be at the station by six-thirty. | actually wasn't expecting to see you here. You don't look like the type to eat all this greasy food," | said. She laughed. It was so beautiful to hear. There was one other woman who had a laugh | liked, but

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CHAPTER 36 Donuts

she doesn't talk to me anymore. If we did talk, it was usually because | had business with

Liam.

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"I had their cheeseburger yesterday and yeah, it was a bit greasy, but isn't that the reason

why we all come back for more? Nothing beats eating a greasy cheeseburger, especially when you're with good friends," she murmured. "Anyway, I heard their donuts and bagels are really good. Since I promised Lisa I'd meet her first thing, I can only have a quick breakfast. What about you, Undersheriff?"

The way she said 'undersheriff' was so sexy. Her face was so close to mine, I could smell the peppermint of her mouthwash. I imagined myself licking the sweat off her neck, my mouth moving downward to her supple breasts while my hands caressed her inner thighs...all the

way up her...

"Undersheriff, your usual?" Kate, one of the diner's waitresses, asked, interrupting my erotic thoughts. Kate was a middle-aged woman, who had circles around her brown eyes from lack of sleep, bony cheeks and white in her dark hair. She was wearing her pink and beige

waitress uniform which hung loose on her.

I was surprised. Even Kate's gaunt face couldn't bring down my boner.

I placed my hat on my lap, hiding my erection. If I have time later, I'll just jerk off to the

re I took of Virtue while she was jogging.

p, Kate," I croaked. I immediately coughed to straighten my voice.

"Okay," Kate wrote down on her notepad, amused she caught me off-guard. She ripped off the piece of paper, placed it on the cook's counter and rang the bell. Then, she turned to

Virtue.

"Hi honey. My name is Kate and I heard you're the new girl. Nice to see you so early this morning. Since you walked in, Lyle has been in a good mood. He said he saw you with Noaht yesterday." Kate pointed to the cook who was singing while he was cooking. Lyle was a thirty year old man and always had the morning and afternoon shifts. "So, what can I get you?"

“Hi Kate. I’m Virtue... and I would like three boxes of powdered donuts and a box a bagels,” Virtue answered. “You know what... make that four boxes of donuts. I forgot. I’m meeting

Lisa later. And oh, say hi to Lyle for me.”

“Four boxes of donuts?” Kate asked, surprised.

“Yes, Kate. One for me, one for Noah, one for Lisa and one for Jack here for being so helpful

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CHAPTER 36 Donuts

82%

last night.” Oh s hit! Of all the people Virtue could talk to, it had to be Kate. Kate’s daughter was Joan Summers’ bestfriend. “Marla honey, I need four boxes of powdered donuts and a box of bagels,” Kate instructed the other server and focused her attention to Virtue “You don’t say. What happened?” Kate asked, interested.

I waved my hand in the air, hoping to stop Virtue from saying anything.

“It was nothing. Honestly Virtue...you don’t have to buy me a box of donuts-”

“Don’t be modest, Jack,” Virtue cut me off and placed a hand on my shoulder. I trembled at her touch while I felt a throbbing in my nether regions. My c ock was throbbing for her... throbbing to be inside her.

I was so busy imagin ing myself in between her thighs that I didn’t stop her from telling Kate about what happened last night. ...there was this suspicious looking black car parked in front of my house last night. Jack confronted the driver and sent him on his way,” Virtue said as if I were her hero. I’d actually feel proud if it weren’t for the circumstances.

“Black car, huh?” Kate said, staring straight at me. I quickly averted my eyes from her

og gaze.

was grateful when Marla came with the boxes of pastries in paper bags. Virtue handed me at

bag and took out her wallet to pay.

“Thank you, Kate,” Virtue said, handing her \$200. “Jack, your breakfast is on me. Kate, keep the change. Have a good day everyone.” She hopped off her stool, took her paper bags of pastries and walked towards the entrance of the diner. | sighed dreamily while | watched her

walk away.

How can anyone be so beautiful?

Suddenly, | realized | forgot to ask her out for coffee.

“Hey Virtue! Wait!” | called out to her loudly. “How about-”

| was too late. She had already left the diner. | was about to chase after her when Kate dumped my plate of eggs, bacon and toast in front of me.

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CHAPTER 36 Donuts

| sighed.

I'll just look for her later.”

Chapter Comments.

Luna-Momnovelbin

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Chapter 37

CHAPTER 37 Bugs and Mrs. Jensen

Joy

| heard Jack call out to me, but | ignored him and hurriedly walked away. | was in need of some fresh air. The Undersheriff had horrible breath.

Before Cristos left my house last night, he gave me a small black case identical to the one Sebastian gave me and asked if | could place the bug in the diner for him. | thought it would be tricky, but it was pretty simple. | was even seated beside the Undersheriff when | secretly.

placed the bug underneath the counter.

Unfortunately, | had to suck it up and endure Jack undressing me with his eyes.

Ugh! How | wanted to use the dinner knife and poke his eyes out!

After picking up my car, | drove home, took a shower and got ready for the day. | decided to wear a sleeveless light blue floral maxi dress. | used a thin brown belt and a beaded necklace. to accessorize, then | paired everything with brown boots. | fixed my hair into a half ponytail, allowing the curled ends of my hair to drape my shoulders, then | inserted my beloved bladed hair comb accessory to hold it all in place.

ed everything | needed in a brown leather tote bag. Then | took a box of donuts from

r and walked straight to Noah's house.

| waved at Old Man Tucket as | walked to Noah's house. He was a grumpy and nosy old man who lived in the house directly across from mine giving him an unobstructed view. He could

keep an eye on my house until Lou arrives to install my security system.

I stood on the porch, in front of the Jensen's doorway, inhaling and exhaling deeply. | needed to plant a bug in Noah's house. Hopefully, we could get some useful information out of him, so we could plan accordingly.novelbin

| rang the doorbell and a young brunette in her early thirties wearing a nurse's uniform opened the door. | smiled at her sweetly. "Good morning! I'm Virtue Sullivan and | just moved into that house over there," | said, pointing to my

house with my thumb. I'm actually a client of Noah's and I was wondering if he's ready to go into town so we could purchase construction material." She gave me a small smile, but I noticed the apprehension in her light blue eyes.

"I'm Carol, Mrs. Jensen's private nurse. I'll go and check if Noah's ready. If you could just

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## CHAPTER 37 Bugs and Mrs. Jensen

wait-

81%

I had a feeling I wouldn't be allowed in the house.

"I brought some donuts from the diner," I said, quickly walking into the foyer. "You can share them for breakfast or have them as a snack later" I placed the paper bag on the entry table. near the door. "How about if I wait in the living room for Noah?"

I looked around and noticed not much has changed, although there was a dank smell of urine.

"O-okay," Carol stuttered. If she looked worried earlier, right now, she looked afraid. She led me into the living room where I found Mrs. Jensen seated in a wheel chair, so thin and frail, wearing an oversized pink nightgown. Her once beautiful light brown hair was now all white and willowy and her skin was pale and wrinkled.

"Hello, Mrs. Jensen. I'm Virtue, your new neighbor," I announced, hoping I could get a reaction. I heard a buzzing sound and the wheel chair turned automatically to face me. Mrs. Jensen was seated comfortably in a power wheelchair with a mechanical respirator attached,

"Till leave you

you two, so I can check on Noah. I'll only be gone a minute," Carol assured Noah's mother. Mrs. Jensen didn't do anything; she just continued to stare at me. She looked old

ickly, but her brown eyes had that same vibrance.

er Carol went up the stairs to tell Noah | was here, Mrs. Jensen blinked her eyes. Judging by the ventilator, she couldn't speak and used her eyes to talk.

"| just moved into the old Taylor house," | said, trying to make small talk. "I hired Noah to help me open a small boutique in town." She blinked her eyes rapidly and | noticed a tear fall from the corner of her eye. | rushed forward and took a tissue from my tote bag to wipe her tears.

Poor thing.

"I can come visit you more often if you want, Mrs. Jensen. | can come read to you. What do you say?" | smiled at her tenderly.. She blinked once. | guess one meant yes and two for no. | sighed. It was such a shame to see

her like this.

Mrs. Jensen was like a second mom to me. She was the previous owner of the small

2/5

81%

## CHAPTER 37 Bugs and Mrs. Jensen

bookstore in town and she was one voracious reader. She just loved books. When Noah and | were kids, she was always seen reading a book on their porch. During my freshman and sophomore year in high school, | would sometimes join her on their porch and read as an escape from this cruel world.

After | was assaulted, she came to visit me in the hospital and left a book for me to read. Since both of my eyes were swollen shut from the beatings | got from the 'four horsemen of the apocalypse', my mother read to me, which helped me fixate my emotions on the heroine. of the novel rather than wallow in self-pity.

When my father decided to leave New Salem after having a heart to heart talk with Old Man Eugene, Mrs. Jensen asked my mother where we planned to move. My mother told her, "Wherever the wind takes us, Laura."

“Maggie...you'll give me a call, right? Or maybe send me a postcard?” Mrs. Jensen asked.

“I will,” my mother answered, lying to her. We had agreed we wouldn't contact anyone from New Salem except for Old Man Eugene.

We left during the dead of the night, not a soul was on the streets. We went straight to Bismarck where we changed cars, then drove to Wyoming where we traded in our car for another second-hand car. From Wyoming, we went to Nevada. My father loved playing ckjack, so my parents thought they could probably pocket some extra cash from the

inos. After waiting for them for four hours at the motel, they came back with their pockets full.

Since they won some money, my dad traded in our car for an SUV to my utter relief. The small compact car we got in Wyoming was quite uncomfortable.

My parents liked California so much, they decided we should live there. With the got from the grocery store, they were able to purchase a townhouse. It was smaller than what we were used to and there were people all around us. But none of them knew us which

worked well for us.

money

they

After a couple of years, my dad called Old Man Eugene to see how things were back in New Salem. That's when my dad found out about Noah's parents.

Earlier, when I rang the doorbell, I noticed the porch needed some repairs. Having a private nurse is expensive and I know Noah must be struggling to give his mom proper care.

“How about I come by the day after tomorrow? I'll pick up a good mystery novel at the bookstore and we can start reading. I'll even get you a thick blanket so we can read on the



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## CHAPTER 37 Bugs and Mrs. Jensen

porch,” | said, bending down and taking her hand in mine. She answered me again by blinking once.

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“Virtue?” Noah was right behind me and he sounded angry. | turned my head to look at him. and noticed his puffy eyes and unshaven face.

Of course. He was up late last night... drunk.

“| was just promising your mother I’d come by and read to her. | noticed all the books on the shelves,” | explained, standing up and walking towards the shelves of books which covered a portion of the main wall of the living room. | picked out a book and noticed how dusty it was. Perfect.

“My mom’s too sick to be entertaining guests, Virtue,” Noah scolded me. “She needs to rest. Reading to her will only get her excited and it’ll put a strain on her heart.”

Sadly, | wouldn’t be spending some time with Mrs. Jensen after all. Well, | could get that

porch done, so | can see her from time to time.

Noah bent down to talk to his mother. “Mom, Virtue and | need to go to town. Carol will give you a sponge bath and change what needs changing. | love you.” Noah gave his mother a quick kiss on the cheek. She blinked rapidly and a tear fell again. This time, Carol took over.

y, Mrs. Jensen. Let’s get you cleaned up and changed,” she said. Carol quickly turned the eel hubs of the wheelchair to manual and pushed Mrs. Jensen out of the living room.

“Come on, Virtue. Let’s get going,” Noah said gruffly.

| quickly placed the book back on the shelf and we exited the house.

“Since we need to purchase construction material for my shop, let’s buy some material for your porch. It needs some paint and the floorboards need changing,” | told Noah once we

were outside of his house.

“I’m not your charity case, Virture,” Noah snapped angrily.

Touchy, touchy...

“But your mom would appreciate it. She can come outside, get some fresh air and watch the neighbors,” | reasoned politely. “I’ll think about it,” he mumbled like a petulant child, then pointed to his pick-up truck. “I

4/5

818

## CHAPTER 37 Bugs and Mrs. Jensen

need to use my truck. We can meet up at Dom’s.

“Alright. Let’s meet at Dom’s. | still need to swing by Lisa’s office.” | waved at him then walked to my car.

This Noah reminded me of the Noah during our sophomore year...dismissive, arrogant and apathetic.

He obviously didn’t like the compassion | showed his mother. Well, | hated the indifference he showed me while | laid in the hospital.

| entered my car, fastened my seat belt and turned on the ignition. | waited for him to drive by before exiting my driveway.

Sure, Noah was an as shole.

But now, he was an as shole with a bug in his house.

Chapter Comments.

Emy Duvey

good job!

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Chapter 38

## CHAPTER 38 Breakfast

Joy

I pushed the uncomfortable exchange I had with Noah to the back of my mind and drove to Lisa's office to sign my lease papers. I was surprised to find her already there before office hours, fresh, fashionable and perky.

After signing the papers, I invited Lisa for coffee. She politely declined saying she didn't have time because she needed to go see a potential client. She did promise me she would personally pick up my building permit later in the morning and would call as soon as she had it. So, I decided to grab some coffee for Xavier and Sebastian and head to Dom's

Unfortunately, Dom's was still closed when I arrived. There was a small group of people gathered outside talking amongst themselves, wondering why Dom's was still closed.

I decided to go see Xavier instead.

He was running late too. After telling the store manager I needed to order something very specific from Bo, he pointed me to Xavier's office which was at the very back of the store.

When my dad owned the grocery store, it was much smaller and his office used to be near

produce section. I used to do my homework there after school, then I would help stock shelves before going home.

This whole commercial property used to be Taylor property, but most of it was sold after my great grandfather died and was subsequently divided among the children. My grandfather took the grocery store because he had always wanted it while his two other siblings took the money from the sale of the property, invested it and were scammed. One brother drank himself to death

while the other took a gun to his head. They were both single with no heir, leaving my grandfather to inherit what little they had left.

The four other houses along Taylor Loop were houses built by my great grandfather for his children. When my grandfather's siblings died, my grandfather sold the four houses and moved into their ancestral house which people know today as the Old Taylor House.

When I was old enough, I asked my father why there was an extra house. He told me my great grandparents had a fourth child, their only daughter, but she had died at a young age. He didn't know the circumstances of her death nor did he ever ask. He believed her death

was a result of an illness.

115

81%

## CHAPTER 38 Breakfast

My grandparents died in a freak boating accident on the lake at New Salem Park. My dad was in the middle of his junior year in college when it happened. He quit school and went on to take care of the grocery store. The grocery store was important to my grandfather and my dad wanted to honor his memory by keeping the business running.

He met my mother during one of his trips to Bismarck. She was a nurse who he bumped into while in line at a popular fastfood joint. My dad, who had kept to himself after the death of his parents, was given a second chance to live his life when he met my mother. When I was born, their lives became complete.

I stopped in front of Xavier's office and knocked. The door swung wide open, allowing me to enter. I knew he already saw me through the CCTV cameras scattered all over the store.

The door quickly closed to reveal a half naked Xavier behind it. He only had pants on and his hair was still damp from taking a shower. I bit my lip, not expecting to see his bare muscular chest.

I quickly placed the coffee, donuts and my tote bag on one of the empty chairs in front of his desk.

“Mmmmm... coffee delivered by my girl. Does a kiss come with it too?” Xavier asked, his voice husky with desire.

e and get it,” | murmured provocatively, licking my lips.

He locked the door and quickly walked towards me, wrapping his arms tightly around my waist. | ran my fingers on the smooth skin of his pecs and felt his muscles contract underneath my hands.

“I've been waiting so long to have you all alone, Xavier said, lowering his head to kiss me.

It was a passionate kiss. The pent-up desire from all the months we had spent away from each other... all the longing and yearning...was poured into this one kiss.

He suddenly lifted me to sit on the edge of his desk, quickly hiking my skirt up while his hands stroked my inner thighs all the way to my lace panties.

“I've told you... you shouldn't wear panties when you come and see me. It's one piece of clothing that just gets in the way of us f ucking, he growled, ripping my panties off and throwing them on top of his desk. “Now spread those gorgeous thighs of yours, sweetheart. It's time for breakfast.”

2/5

6.81%

## CHAPTER 38 Breakfast

| obeyed, spreading my legs far apart. He knelt down and began to eat me, sucking and nibbling while inserting a finger into my already wet pu ssy. Because he knew where to suck and what to touch, | quickly came. | bit my lip and stifled a scream. | didn't want anyone to hear us.

Xavier hurriedly pulled down his pants and slammed his delicious hard coc k into me, not wasting any time. | held on to him tightly, my eyes rolling in the back of my head. It felt so good to feel him inside me.

“Oh G od, yes,” | whispered, biting on his ear lobe.

He thrust hard and deep, faster and faster, f ucking me so hard it felt like heaven... and | wanted it to last forever...

But | desperately needed my release.

| felt his finger on my clit while his hard cock moved in and out of me. After a few strokes of his fingers and a few more thrusts, | arched my back and came, digging my fingernails into his back.

“Bo!” | gasped, throwing my head back, as | rode the waves of my orgasm. He thrust inside me one more time, finally coming, his body shuddering with his release.

kissed me tenderly. “Oh, thank God. | thought | was going to go insane without you,” he murmured against my mouth. | hugged him tightly, rubbing my hands against his smooth

skin.

| thought we were going to stay that way just a little bit longer, but he suddenly pulled out of me and quickly zipped his pants up, leaving me utterly disappointed. He then pointed to the monitor beside us, irritated at what he saw.

“Nicole’s here, babe. You can use the bathroom and fix yourself up while | distract Nicole,” he said, putting on a shirt and his apron. Then, he took a tissue from his desk and wiped my lip gloss off his lips.

“Dom is running late too. | passed by before coming here,” | told him as | gingerly walked to

the bathroom.

“No wonder she’s here. Wait for me okay? I’ll just take her to Dom’s, Xavier said, grabbing his phone and dialing before leaving his office.

| cleaned myself up, retouched my make-up, fixed my hair and straightened my clothes.

3/5

81

CHAPTER 38 Breakfast

When I came out, Xavier was already back, drinking the coffee I brought him. He winked at me and smiled wickedly.

Hmmm... I felt myself go wet. I wanted him to do me again, but from behind. Oh, how I wished we were back in California. "Why are the both of you running late, Bo? Where did you guys go after leaving my house?" I asked as I sat down in the empty chair in front of his desk.

"We did some surveillance work," Xavier answered. "Dom placed a tracker on Dan's car and we decided to check it out before going home. Dan and Nicole apparently went to the new residential area near town. We found them walking from a newly built house to the clubhouse where Dan's car was parked. There was someone with them, someone with a black sling bag. We've noticed a lot of people here have the exact same bag."

"I see," I said, trying to remember if I've seen anyone with a black sling bag. "Could be coincidence, could be something else. Anyway, can you tell Chip I've placed the bug he wanted me to put in the diner and I've also placed the bug Dom gave me on one of the book

shelves in Noah's house."

a

"I'm impressed," Xavier said, nodding his head appreciatively. He grabbed my panties and placed it in one of his drawers for safekeeping. I'll tell him when I see him." He let out a

rated sigh. "I want you to stay here with me, love, but we have to keep up appearances."

6d up from my

my chair, took my brown tote bag and the coffee I bought for Sebastian and blew him a kiss. "I'll be at Dom's if you need me. Enjoy the donuts."

I left Xavier's office light on my feet. After Dom's, I'll ask Cristos to accompany me to Bismarck so we can pick up Lou. I'll also ask him about some documents my dad gave Old Man Eugene before my family left New Salem.novelbin

I was about to exit the grocery store when someone tall blocked my path. He was wearing a nicely tailored dark blue suit and smelled of expensive cologne.

“Good morning, Virtue! Fancy seeing you here!”

I glanced at the cup of coffee in my hand, then at the tall man standing in front of me.

It would be such a shame to ruin that nice suit.

4/5

## CHAPTER 38 Breakfast

### Chapter Comments

Luna-Mom

Yes Joy let's show them what you and your men can do

Mary Hall

Great job Joy

[VIEW ALL 2 COMMENTS](#)

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Chapter 39

## CHAPTER 39 Divide and Conquer

Joy

I figured it would take about five minutes for Xavier to get to the storefront from his office. Five minutes is usually just a blip on the radar, but when you are with distasteful company, five minutes feels like an eternity.



As my blue eyes locked with the man's twinkling gray ones, the voice in my head screamed...

I hate you!

Luckily, it didn't take me much effort to smile brightly at the tall man while hiding my

disdain.

"Councilman Murdock, what a nice surprise! I was just with your wife earlier." I deliberately placed an emphasis on wife, hoping he wouldn't miss it. "After signing the lease, I came straight to Dom's to purchase construction material, but his store was still closed. So, I decided to come here and order a blanket from Bo instead. I just finished with him," I explained, fighting the urge to giggle.

And it felt soooo good.

enough about me. What brings you here, Councilman?" I flipped my hair and placed a active hand on his arm, hoping he would think with the head in between his legs. He suddenly coughed and turned red. That was the reaction I was looking for.

"I was hoping to talk to Bo about my campaign. Elections are coming soon and I was hoping Bo's grocery store could help sponsor my reelection, and of course, the reelection of our good mayor, Liam Cohen. Everyone in New Salem comes here and if they see Bo's supports us, it may help us win again," he replied. "But I must say it is wonderful bumping into yo like this. I would like to apologize for my behavior last night. It isn't everyday I meet such a beautiful young lady as yourself."

"I'll take that as a compliment, Councilman, so there isn't a need to apologize," I said flirtatiously. He grinned from ear to ear. you

"So, you'll be deemed a resident of New Salem after thirty days which means you can vote in June. All you need to bring is any form of identification with you and a current utility bill at your designated polling place. It will mean the world to me if I can get your support," he said, looking at me with puppy dog eyes.

13:33 Mon, Mar 25

## CHAPTER 39 Divide and Conquer

Why in the world would I support someone like you?

“Of course. Anything for you, Councilman,” I said, batting my eyelashes at him.

“You can call me Cris, Virtue,” he said, winking at me.

I noticed some of the customers were openly watching our exchange. Well, I needed to divert attention away from Cristos, Sebastian and Xavier. If people begin talking about me, the trio can move more freely.

“Well then....anything for you, Cris,” I murmured I saw his face turn unmistakably red.

“Cris! What can I do for you this fine morning?” Xavier suddenly asked from behind me. I heaved a sigh of relief.

Oh, thank God! The bagel I had earlier was threatening to come out from all this flirting.

“The very person I needed to see, Cris said, extending his hand for a handshake. Xavier grabbed Cris’ hand and shook it. Time for me to leave...

“Well, I need to go to Dom’s. Bo, please call me about that blanket I ordered earlier. It needs the perfect color of cerulean blue. Cris, I’ll go ahead. Have a good morning gentlemen!! I said goodbye at the both of them and quickly left the grocery store. I kept my smile plastered on my face just in case I was being watched.

Surprisingly, there were already a lot of people shopping at Dom’s when I entered. I noticed Sebastian was busy entertaining a group of housewives, leading them towards the house decor and furniture section of his store. I decided to browse around, looking for people carrying a black sling bag. Yet, I didn’t notice anyone with such a bag.

Dom’s was divided into two sections, mainly, home decor and furniture and hardware. I

didn't expect Dom's was just as big as Bo's. When I open my boutique, this whole commercial space will be our territory.

As I was walking around, I caught the familiar scent of Nicole's sweet-smelling perfume

while I heard the distinct timbre of Noah's voice.

They are here together?

I followed the scent of Nicole's perfume and found them huddled together looking at a

2/6

13.33 Mon, Mar 25

CHAPTER 39 Divide and Conquer

laptop atop a tall bar table near the 'Lumber and Building Materials' section of the hardware. A chubby-looking fellow with brown hair and glasses wearing a blue and maroon striped shirt and jeans was with them answering Nicole's questions. I coughed to grab their

attention.

"Virtue, you're finally here," Nicole said. "I went looking for you at Bo's, but I couldn't find

you."

Here we go...

"Oh, I was just talking to Cris," I said. She looked at me puzzled. Cris, being so tall, was a hard man to miss.

"I would have noticed Cris," she remarked, frowning. Today, Nicole was wearing a yellow halter ruffled bodycon dress with a matching yellow sweater and yellow platforms on her feet. Her hair was up in messy bun on the top of her head as usual, making her look tall.

"Well, if you did, then you would have seen me speaking with him," I murmured, running my fingers along some of the wood displayed on a rack.

“Nicole here sees Bo and everyone else in the store becomes invisible,” the man with them unexpectedly said. Noah smirked to Nicole’s utter dismay.

found myself a worthy ally.

i. I'm Virtue and you are?” | asked.

“Peter McDowell, but you can call me Pete, Miss Virtue,” he said, turning red. | love it when | make men blush.

“No need to call me Miss. Virtue will do just fine, Pete. So what are you guys discussing over novelbin

here?” | asked charmingly.

“Potential layouts for your store, V-Virtue,” Pete answered. “I and a co-worker of mine drew these up for you to choose.” “You're very talented, Pete,” | said after looking at the layouts and the designs on his laptop. Everything including the material needed was included in his design. He also incorporated images of what the boutique would look like finished and furnished for each layout.

“Did you also design the layout for my kitchen and bathrooms?”. Pete nodded his head

enthusiastically.

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CHAPTER 39 Divide and Conquer

Peter McDowell. | remember him. He was a year younger than us and was bullied worse than others. Apparently, now he worked for Noah. Judging how quick he came to my rescue

showed he had sp unk. | needed to get the story on Peter McDowell. He was wasting his

talent in this small town.

“So, Virtue, which layout do you want?” Nicole asked impatiently. | was taken aback. | didn't hire her. | glanced at Pete who looked as though Nicole was an inconvenience.

“Well, to answer your question, I want the free-flow layout with a bigger office,” I answered. “But I have to apologize for the mix-up, Nicole. I placed a hand on her upper arm to appear apologetic. “Chip will be hiring your services. The pub is a big project and I don’t want to get in the way of the renovations of the town’s favorite watering hole. Since Chip will be hiring

you, I think I’ll hire Pete here to oversee the interior design of my shop since he already has a concrete vision. What do you say, Pete?”

Pete began to nod his head, but the angry glare from Nicole stopped him. Noah bit his lower lip and looked away as if I had ruined their plans. Perfect.

“Actually, Virtue, I can do both projects at the same time,” Nicole hurriedly explained. “Plus, Chip hasn’t even called me to—” “Hold your applause, everyone. The star has finally arrived,” Cristos said loudly, interrupting

ever Nicole was going to say. Yesterday, he wore mostly black, but for today, he was in pink except for his white sneakers. “Nicole! You said you would help me with the pub. Why are you with Virtue?” Cristos pouted, looking sad and disappointed. “And I heard what you said. You can’t do both projects because I am a very demanding client.”

“And Virtue isn’t. I did her house with minimal supervision. I mean, aren’t you suppose to be bestfriends, Chip? Usually bestfriends share,” Nicole reasoned.

“Darling, this is business not friendship. Virtue already has Pete and Noah prioritizing her boutique. She doesn’t need you. I need you. Now help me pick out what I need or you will never get a bonus from me.” Cristos maneuvered the little bit of change away giving Pete some breathing space.

I had Pete discuss everything with Noah and Stanley, Sebastian’s very young assistant. I paid everything in full and told them I would give them a bonus if they have everything done in two weeks.

I wanted to see how far I could push Noah’s buttons, so I bought the material for his porch. As expected, he blew his top off to the shock of everyone in the store.

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## CHAPTER 39 Divide and Conquer

\$81%

“Didn't | tell you I'd think about it?! Who do you think you are, Virtue?!” Noah exclaimed

furiously. “Just because several people pay you compliments, doesn't make you a queen. You are nothing in this town!”

He knew he went to far when Nicole, Cristos and Sebastian suddenly appeared, looking

completely shocked, offended and appalled.

Sebastian opened his mouth to say something, but | raised my hand to stop him.

“Noah, the building material is for someone you love dearly. Don't let your pride get in the way of someone's happiness.” My lips were trembling and my voice was a bit raspy. “Dom, just deliver the material to my house.”

“Sure thing, Virtue.”

| checked my phone for messages and saw a missed call and a text message both from Lisa. The message read to meet her at town hall. | sighed.

Great...

“Pete, make sure everything is ready to be transferred next door. If you need anything else, order it.” My voice cracked and | could feel the tears welling up in my eyes.

tue, I'm so sorry. If you could just wait and listen to my explanation-”

No need to explain, Noah. Just make sure everything is ready. Once | get the building permit, | want the construction to start,” | said, my voice going h o ar se again. | lowered my head to hide my eyes and sniffled.

| took a tissue from my bag and quickly wiped my eyes and nose. Then, | fixed my hair, took some calming breaths and smiled, finally composed.

I called out to Cristos who had just finished paying for his construction material. "Chip, I think our permits are ready at town hall." He tucked his receipt in his bag and took my

varm.

"See you later, everyone," Cristos said, waving as we exited Dom's. Before the doors closed, I secretly glanced behind me and saw a scowling Nicole and a troubled Noah looking at each.

other.

The ends of my lips curved into a small smile.

Divide and conquer.

5/6

CHAPTER 39 Divide and Conquer

I'm sure Liam is not going to be happy about this.

Chapter Comments.

Nina Caldwell

POST COMMENT

The first part of this book was straightforward, but this second part has so many twists, I'm actually trying to figure out what will come next. It's absolutely exciting. Aft...

Luna-Mom

Wow love how great this story is flowing. With so many twists and sneaking around is brilliant

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6/6

Mon, Mar

The Joy of Revenge

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Chapter 40

CHAPTER 40 A Stir

Noah

| made Virtue cry. It wasn't my intention, but | didn't want her near my mother.

981%

Last night, | pretended to be drunk when we left the pub. My arm was around Virtue's shoulders with my hand dangling in front of her as she and Chip helped me outside. | even felt myself go hard when my hand slightly brushed against her breast. But when Chip pushed me into his car like | was a major inconvenience, | was offended. Apparently, | wasn't his 'favorite construction man' after all.

When they dropped me off, | saw Liam's car. | quickly walked inside of my house and watched through the window. After Chip parked his car in front of the old Taylor house, he and Virtue casually walked inside like they didn't notice anything.

Then, Jack's truck suddenly pulled up behind Liam's. | thought they were going to jump Virtue and Chip together. Liam was a spoilt, little rich boy who was utterly bored with his life. Once he tasted the titillation from the thrill of raping joy Taylor, he kept looking for that same feeling. And | could tell, Virtue Sullivan was next on his list.

| exited through the back of my house and ran towards the big elm tree in Virtue's yard. If



ig were to happen, | needed to be ready to record the whole thing and use it as

hing

age.

Yet, | was wrong. Virtue had apparently called the Sheriff's office to deal with Liam. Surprisingly, no one else came to help her. After Jack left looking like a giddy teenager, | snooped around, wondering what Chip was doing inside, but | couldn't see or hear anything. | was guessing they were in Virtue's soundproof room which had no windows.

I ran back to the elm tree after | had noticed Old Man Tucket peering through his windows. It was about to run back to my house when Virtue's door suddenly opened and out came Chip. Chip blabbered away about whatever movie they were watching and Virtue said he could come by anytime and finish the movie. After waying goodbye, the downstairs lights in the old Taylor house switched off. | debated whether | should break in and take a look around, but all the lights at the Tucket house from across the street turned on, so | decided to call it a night.

I'm worried Virtue might decide to have a security system installed after the stunt Liam

115

81%%

## CHAPTER 40 A Stir

pulled. She didn't have one installed yet, so it would be easy to break into her house. But Old Man Tucket, whose house was directly across from hers, was always on neighborhood watch.

When | left the cul-de-sac, | saw the old man sitting on his porch, reading the morning newspaper. Nosy old man. I'll just have to put a wireless CCTV camera on the big elm tree and hope | find something.

Nicole was waiting for me at my office at Hillcrest, the new residential area several minutes outside of town. Just seeing her so early in the morning

ruined my day, but she needed to set up those cameras. We all needed to know why Virtue was here. If she wasn't undercover then. who was she?

Unfortunately, our plans didn't pan out. In this business, customer satisfaction is important. I didn't want Virtue to employ Clayton Benjamin, the person behind Bo's and Dom's. He was a contractor working out of Bismarck, who happened to be the cousin of Kimberly Smith, the twenty year old who was found dead in the lake along with Joan Summers.

Because of the trio's association with both the Summers and Smiths, Liam kept a close eye using Nicole as his spy.

Nicole looked at me, nudged her head at Virtue and Chip who had exited Dom's and. mouthed, "Fix this."

I went outside to chase after Chip and Virtue when I was stopped by a group of n telling me to apologize to Virtue.

"Noah?"

I turned my head and found Cris with a puzzled expression on his face.

This married so nofab itch, who I've never seen buy a light bulb, is here at Dom's. If it wasn't for sponsorship, most likely he's here because of Virtue.

Cris

Finally my hard-on from earlier was gone and I was able to walk without any trouble. But I wanted to see her again. I didn't care if it would take a while for my erection to subside.

I swiftly walked out of Bo's, hoping to catch Virtue at Dom's, but I saw her with her arm linked with Chip's, both of them walking to Chip's car.

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13:33 Mon, Mar 25 de

CHAPTER 40 A Stir

Suddenly, out came Noah from Dom's with a few of the town's folk.

“Noah, I hope you apologize to that sweet girl. It’s not everyday you meet an angel,” one of the women told Noah before waving her goodbyes.

“Noah? What just happened? And why is Virtue with Chip? Where are they going?” I asked,

alarmed.

“To town hall. You were at Bo’s?” Noah asked, surprised.

“Yeah. I spoke with her awhile ago. Noah, what just happened?” I wanted answers. I glanced through the large storefront windows of Dom’s and saw Nicole talking to Pete. Nicole looked

angry.

Huh?

“I blew it. I yelled at her for buying construction material for my porch,” Noah explained. “God, I am such an asshole.”

“Noah, are you intentionally acting like an asshole so Liam can find someone else to follow her? Because if you are, it’s working. “I don’t know why Liam is going bonkers anyway, Cris. She isn’t a Taylor or a Summers. She’s just a lone woman who moved into the old Taylor house,” Noah replied. I placed an arm on his shoulders, turning him away from Dom’s storefront windows. “It’s not that simple, Noah, and you know it. You know their families have been warring against each other since the Cohens came to New Salem. Problem is Theodore believes they have evidence against them. Right now, he and his men are hunting down Old Man Eugene. They didn’t expect for him and his family to leave so abruptly and sell the pub and their home to the trio. Theodore still suspects the trio are either working undercover or related to the Summers and plans to do away with them. Sadly, Liam thinks the same way about Virtue. We need to prove to him and to Theodore that she isn’t a threat,” I explained, patting Noah’s shoulder. “The spy cameras were supposed to be the only viable evidence to prove Virtue isn’t what Liam thinks she is. You need to find a way. Beg for her forgiveness and take the construction material. Appreciate the gesture.”

“Easy for you to say. You weren’t the one who insulted her,” Noah muttered under his breath.

“Did she say anything derogatory to you when you insulted her?” | asked.

“No.”

3/5

13:34 MOT,

CHAPTER 40 A Stir

“She'll forgive you. Noah, think of what Dan said. She's an asset. Remember, we need to prove she isn't a threat. Once Liam is convinced, he might even listen to Dan and | don't know...maybe befriend her. You're doing her a favor. Don't be hard on yourself.”

“You're right, Cris.”

| patted Noah on the back. Although Noah has been friends with us since high school, we

kept him in the dark. That's all he needed to know for now.

| lifted my head and was surprised to see Virtue speaking with...

Jack!

What. In. The. F uck! That c ock-blocking so nofabitch! Virtue is mine!

A sudden cough behind us interrupted my thoughts.

“Noah, | need you to sign these forms,” a deep-toned voice said from behind us.

We instantly turned around, obviously caught off-guard.

“Sure, Dom.”

How long has he been standing there?

Sebastian

Joy has only been here for two days and she has already caused a stir. Clever girl.

Noah didn't want Joy near his house. I was guessing he didn't want her near his mother. Xavier always wondered why he wasn't allowed to bring his deliveries into the house. It never dawned on any of us that Noah's mother may know something. We have been so busy looking into Liam when Noah may have all the information we need..novelbin

I glanced through the windows and saw Cris talking to Noah. I left Nicole and Pete, who were both busy bickering at each other, to eavesdrop on the two men.

Cris did not disappoint. Now, I knew we were on Theodore Cohen's s hit list, that they were

looking for Old Man Eugene, and Liam was suspicious of Joy.

I wasn't surprised to hear Cris speak so fondly of Joy nor was I surprised to see Undersheriff

4/5

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## CHAPTER 40 A Stir

Jack Emery pop up at the parking lot. It would be easy for Joy to manipulate the two men. which would leave us to contend with Liam, Theodore, Sheriff Combs, Dan and Noah.

I noticed Cris' eyes darken with jealousy as he watched Jack speak with Joy. From inside my store, I could hear Nicole arguing with Pete.

It was time for me to break up this little discussion and pacify a brat.

I coughed, grabbing their attention. "Noah, I need you to sign these forms," I explained. I saw

a flicker of anxiousness in Cris' eyes when he turned around to acknowledge me.

Inside my store, | watched Jack wave goodbye to Joy with a big grin on his face while a

jealous Cris approached him.

Town hall was next. The game was becoming exciting, in fact, so exciting that | had a red- faced Nicole desperately trying to convince Pete she should oversee the interior of Virtue's

store.

Pete, Liam is going to hear about this," | heard Nicole hiss through clenched teeth.

"Liam? Is there something | should know?" | asked. Nicole jumped at my voice.

"| was just reprimanding Pete about a mistake he did in one of the houses at Hillcrest. Noah and | need to go to the pub to make sure the measurements are correct. See you guys later," she said and left, grabbing hold of Noah and dragging him to the parking lot.

Pete heaved a sigh of relief. "Thanks, Dom."

"My pleasure. Have you had breakfast? Let's have some coffee in my office while you wait for

Virtue."

Chapter Comments

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4

Luna-Mom

absolutely brilliant, looking forward to reading what's happening with the way noah and nicole treated Virtue

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5/5

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