

Chapter 21 Playing Simon Says

Liana POV

It has been six days since I heard from Axel and with each passing day, I feel more miserable than the day before. My message to him is still undelivered. My phone is glued to my side, and I eagerly look at it every time a notification comes through. But it is never Axel.

Dad has been discharged and is recovering at home. I miss seeing him every day. Visiting him, was the highlight of my day. Nina is practically seeing Wilson every night, and I am happy about it. As much as I want to visit her, it is better that I do not see her. She is in love and on cloud nine and I will only drag her down with my sour mood.

"Liana, table six," the manager, Brad, says as he passes me where I am stacking dirty dishes at the wash bay.

"On it," I reply and clean my hands before I walk to the table.

I do not think I ever was this relieved for a Sunday night. The restaurant was crazy busy during the weekend, and I worked double shifts. At least the weekend was profitable, and I will be able to send money home. Not much, but it is something. Honestly, if it were not for my dad, I would not have sent money at all. But I cannot let him suffer. Especially now while he is recovering.

I smile friendly at the customers and do my best until the last customer has left. The rest of the servers joke around as they clean their stations, but I do not participate. I am too tired and frankly, in too much of a bad mood.

One by one Brad calls the servers into his office to pay them and soon it is just me and him.

"Liana, your turn," Brad shouts and I sigh as I walk to his office. I do not like Brad. He is only the manager but parades around as if he is king. I swear, if he could, he would have ordered us to call him Your Highness. At the end of each shift, he calls us individually and makes a huge fuss as he pays us. And we have no choice but to play along. Because Brad will find an excuse to deduct from our tips if we do not seem grateful enough for the privilege to work under him.

"Close the door," Brad orders as I walk inside, and I roll my eyes. He says that every time I come in. One should think by now I will know to do it.

I take a seat and wait for the ritual to begin. He will ramble some nonsense about my work performance and then he will hand over my money after I praise him for doing such an excellent job as manager.

"You did well tonight," Brad says as he looks at me from across his desk.

"Thank you," I smile. "You're too kind."

Lie.

"I know you've been only working here for a week, but I think you deserve a raise," he smiles as he stands up and walks around his desk.

"Really?" I ask surprised. "Thank you. You're the best."

Another lie.

"I was thinking we should make this interesting," he smiles slyly as he rests his butt on his desk right in front of me. "We can determine your raise by your ability to follow orders by playing Simon says."

I master all my energy not to roll my eyes at him. How childish can one be?

"Stand up," he says and laughs heartedly when I do not move. "Very good. Now, Simon says clap your hands."

I grind my teeth as I clap my hands.

"Wonderful," he cheers and places a fifty-dollar bill on the desk. I feel like a monkey in the circus. This is so demeaning.

"Brad, this is not ..."

"Just one more," he cuts me off and holds up another fifty.

"One more," I agree reluctantly. As fucked up as this is, it is one hundred dollars, and it is not like I am selling my soul here. I am nearly entertaining the jerk.

"Simon says sit on your hands," his eyes sparkle as I obey.

Brad smiles satisfied as he stands up and places the bill down. He turns to face me and before I can comprehend what is happening, his hands are on my breasts.

"What the fuck are you doing?" I shout indignantly as I free my hands and shove him hard against his chest.

I use so much force that he stammers backwards and my chair tips over. The back of my head connects hard with the floor, but I get up and run for the door.

Brad grabs me by my ponytail and jerks me back.

"Let me go!" I scream as his arms go around me like clamps.

"Scream, little girl, scream," he hisses in my ear and repulse shivers through me as he licks my neck. "This room is not only bulletproof but also soundproof."

Forcefully he shoves me forward and my nose instantly starts bleeding when I hit the wall. I am dizzy and disoriented when he gets hold of my hair again and throws me on the floor.

I try to get up, but he straddles me. I kick and squirm for all that I am worth, but he is too heavy, and I cannot free myself.

He lifts his hand and I scream at the top of my lungs as I watch his hand transform into a brown paw. He slices across my chest, ripping my shirt and underwear to shreds. I am numb with fear as he bends over and painfully starts fondling my breasts.

Desperately I wiggle my body to break free, but he tightens his grip on my breasts and I scream out in pain. Tears of fear and humiliation run over my cheeks as his mouth covers my breast. His mouth is merciless and hungry on my chest, and I can do nothing more but weep. Fresh pain radiates through me as he bites my breast and I cry out.

I am not going to survive this; the thought is so devastating that I stop resisting him. No, Liana, no. I reprimand myself. You must fight this. Brad is still feasting on my breasts when I use my thumbs and press them against his eyes with all the strength I can muster.

This time it is his turn to scream in agony as I apply more pressure. One of his eyeballs pops underneath my thumb and I yell in disgust as warm blood covers my hand. But it is enough for Brad to roll off me and I jump up.

My hands are trembling and numb and I cannot get the door open fast enough.

"You'll pay for this, bitch," Brad yells as he grabs me from behind and throws me back onto the floor.

His chest is heaving as he walks to me, and I wait. When he is within reach, I kick him with everything I got right in his balls. He doubles over and falls to the floor on his knees. Without wasting a second, I get up and dart to the door.

Brad growls loudly behind me and I start screaming uncontrollably. That growl can only mean one thing – he is going to shift.

Fresh tears stream down my face when I finally manage to open the door and I run as fast as I can. I can hear Brad's wolf behind me, but I do not look back. My eyes are xated on the front door which symbolizes freedom to me.

I run, but something hard and heavy lands on my back and I fall forward and land on my bare chest. I want to get up but the weight on my back does not give away. Five sharp things are pressing into my back, and I realise it is Brad's paw.

This is it; panic rises in me. This is how I am going to die.

"Brad, back off!"

I look up and see Missy, one of the senior waitresses. She is glaring at Brad and behind her are three more waitresses. Where do they come from? They all left for the night.

"I said," Missy growls angrily. "Back. Off!"

Brad's only response is to growl low and increase pressure on my back and I start screaming again. My screams of agony get interrupted with the sound of clothes tearing and I watch in horror as Missy and two of her friends shift.

They attack Brad simultaneously and I take deep breaths of air when the pressure releases on my back.

"Come on," I recognise Chloe as she helps me up and drags me away from the fight. "Let's get you to safety."

A pained howl pierces my ears and I turn around in time to see how Brad bites into one of the girls' legs.

"No," I look at Chloe. I will not be able to live with myself if one of them gets hurt because of me. "They need help."

"They're not," Chloe says urgently. "Look!"

I turn to them and sigh relieved. Missy has pinned Brad down and is towering over him with her baring teeth. Her two friends standing next to her, growling at Brad.

"Thank you," tears of relief rush down my face and I hug her tightly.

"You're shivering," Chloe holds me tighter. "We need to get you to the hospital. You're covered in blood."

"No ... no, not my ... my blood," I sob and cling tighter to her. I do not care about my bleeding nose or chest. I cannot bring myself to let go of her. I am afraid I will lose my mind if I die. Plus, I do not have money to pay for medical care and the very last thing I want now, is more strangers touching me.

"Is there somebody I can call?" Chloe asks gently.

My first instinct is to say, Axel. But after a week of silence, I know I am the last person he wants to talk to. And I vividly remember his last words to me. When he hears about this, there will be hell to pay.

"Carol," I sniff after a moment. She is the only one I can think of now. As much as I adore Drew, he is a man and I do not want him to see me in this state. And Nina is human, she is as much at the wolves' mercy as I am.

"Bea," Chloe shouts. "A little help here."

"What's up?" Bea asks behind me where I still cling to Chloe for dear life. Holding onto her is the only thing standing between my sanity and screaming uncontrollably.

"She's in shock," Chloe explains. "Find her phone and call Carol. Once she's safe, we can contact Alpha Grant."