

Chapter 19: A Visit

Nora gazed up at the imposing gates of the university and let out a sigh from the depths of her heart. She had chosen this place solely to be with Antonio. A couple of months ago, they had visited here together to submit their Intention to Attend letters and explore the campus. Antonio had been insistent on registering for Housing and room assignments as well, so they could live together without any concerns.

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Nora sighed again. It seemed she'd made Antonio the center of her universe, with everything revolving around his wishes. Even as thoughts flew past her mind, another nagging question intruded, Had Antonio insisted on living together because he had been worried about cheating on her? Or had he already been cheating and his insistence on living together was a sham so that she would not get suspicious?

Shaking her head, she hoisted her backpack over her shoulders and walked into the university grounds. Now, she was going to be the sun of her own universe while Antonio would be reduced to a speck in her large galaxy.

Consulting the campus map, she decided to begin by picking up her textbooks and enrolling in her required courses. Next on her list was obtaining her student ID and retracting her application for financial aid and housing application. When she had secured admission to college, her mother had made it abundantly clear that she would not contribute to her tuition fees.

Nora shook her head, reflecting on her mother. No, she was not going to refer to her as mother anymore. It was only now that she realized the woman had been receiving an allowance in her name from the trust fund. Lara Anderson had spent a lifetime ridiculing her as a burden on her but the truth was largely different. She had often pondered why her mother hadn't just sent her away if she held such disdain for her. Now, she knew the answer: Her departure would mean the loss of the money. Money that had barely been used to care for her.

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Well, too bad for her the woman that the money been lost despite everything. Though the allowance barely covered tuition, leaving little for living expenses, Nora felt confident in her ability to manage. Her recent move to Demetri's home meant she required no rent money or clothing. Moreover, she had taken on a part-time job, making it feasible for her to navigate her finances and even save some.

When contemplating all this, she didn't even factor in the black card that Demetri had given her; she didn't regard it as her own.

Thankfully, everything turned out to be a breeze and Nora almost whistled as she made her way to her last stop. The Resident House to cancel her appointed room. And then she would be able to report to her first day of the job, making everything relatively easy.

Barely had she taken a few more steps, that Nora could not help but curse her fate. Her relatively easy day had just been ruined. Hoping against hope that the person was not lying in wait for her, Nora ignored the man standing on the curb but subtly quickened her steps.

Unfortunately, she was spotted. Antonio hurried over to her and stopped her from entering, "Nora, I need to talk to you."

"I have nothing to say to you, Antonio. Anything that needed to be said has already been done so."

Antonio frowned and shook his head, "No. It hasn't been done. I want to know why you hired a fake priest for our wedding."

Nora ignored him and would have walked away but suddenly Antonio yanked on her hand and before she had a chance to scream or yelp, she had been pulled into a small hallway.

Pushing him hard so that he would be forced to let go of her, Nora rubbed her wrist and glared at him, "So now you are going to resort to force and violence."

Seeing the imprint of his fingers on her wrist, Antonio felt remorse and quickly held her hand gently, "I am sorry. I did not mean to hurt you."

"That seems to have become your pet phrase Antonio when it comes to you and me..."

Antonio rubbed a hand over his face and tried to calm himself as he spoke, "Nora, let's go and talk, please. I want to understand why you did what you did. Why don't we do this? You go and submit your student identification card, etc., get the keys to your room and then we can go for some coffee."

"Antonio, I do not want to talk to you, I do not want to go for coffee with you. What part of this do you not understand?"

"Nora! Hiding and not talking is not going to solve anything! Stop being a stubborn ostrich and talk to me. We are going to live in the same residence house for the next year at the very least! It will make things uncomfortable if you keep behaving like this!"

"And Antonio does not want to be uncomfortable! To hell with others' comfort, isn't it?" Nora burst out.

Quickly, Antonio stepped forward and cupped her cheeks, "Nora. That is not true! I made a mistake, I agree, but am I really that horrible to you? I won't ask you to forgive me. But help me understand, please. Why did you do what you did?"

Nora stared at the man and realized why she had held onto his for so long. It was this look. The way he had always looked at her like this as if she was the only woman in the world. As if her happiness was above everything. Nora felt her heart soften. Shaking her head to break his spell, she quickly spoke, "No Antonio. You have no right to question me. And if you want me to answer your questions then answer mine first," Why did you betray me, Antonio? Why did you cheat on me with Sara, of all people?"