

# The Girl He Craves

Chapter 176

Meredith's pov

The young girl shuts the door behind Grant and me, leaving us in the presence of my father and Margo, who had been working here since I was young.

She beamed when she noticed me, her features lighting. "Meredith dear."

She looked a bit peeved that she could not come over to me and had to remain positioned by father to nurse his wounds.

I looked at his wounds closely, smiling as I took a further step.

"Did Aiden do that to you?" I pointed at his nose and jaw. He looked like he had gotten punched relentlessly.

Father pushed Margo's hand away from his lips. She had been dabbing a cloth on the split flesh.

"What do you think?" He questioned, lounging back in his chair casually as though his face did not pain him. I didn't miss the slight wince.

I grinned. I guess you deserve it, father. You are, after all, trying to ruin his life."

His grin widened. "I haven't tasted my own copper blood in years." He licked his split lip. "I've missed the tang."

I shook my head and walked over to the huge bookshelf. My fingers skim the backs and stopped on the huge book he used to read to me when I was younger.

He still had it.

I took it from the shelf, opening it to that page I knew was important. Grant leans over me protectively.

I smiled warmly at him, reassuring him with my eyes that my father would not hurt me.

He wasn't convinced.

"Grant, son. It's been a while. Sorry I hadn't seen you at first."

"Don't act like you like my presence here Sergio," Grant grunted, leaning against the shelf.

Father's eyes narrowed. "How has work been, still scrapping for money?"

I stiffen. Father always blamed Grant for me ending the agreement marriage with the Muralo's. He didn't understand that love was far greater than a simple agreement for more power.

Perhaps before he understood love...

But now.

I looked down at the photo, brushing my fingers over her face. "She wouldn't have approved of this father."

I cast my gaze back to him, he's frozen. He heard me.

I took a step forward but Grant stops me. I looked up into his concerned eyes and lift my hand to brush my fingers over his stubble jaw in affection.

I reassured him with a smile and the silence of my soul mirroring in my eyes.

He sighed and reluctantly let me go.

I continued my stroll toward father who motioned for Margo to get out of the room.

She looks at him reluctantly and nods. When she walks passed me she smiled tenderly. "It's good to see you, Meredith."

I nod, smiling at her warmly. Margo was a few years older than me and actually grew up here. Her mom had been working for my grandparents and then my father before she passed away.

So Margo and I were friends before I left.

"It's good to see you too Margo."

When she leaves, father looked at Grant over my shoulder. "I would like to speak to my daughter in private Grant."

My eyes narrowed. "He's family. Whatever we speak about, he will be included."

Father's eyes narrowed.

There's one thing I got from this man, and it was stubbornness. We didn't like to give up easily.

"Fine." He muttered, his voice casting with displeasure.

I placed the photo on the desk, right before him while looking into his swollen eyes.

Aiden had done a number on him.

Though I feel bad about it, I knew he deserved it.

"Remember this?" I whispered, keeping my eyes focused on him to see his reaction.

He stiffened, his bony fingers reaching out for the photo.

A rare smile paints on his face and I feel relieved. The man still had some humanity and wasn't all the way cold to the bone.

"How can I forget?" His watery smile made my heart ache.

The photo he's staring at with tears brimming in his eyes is the last family photo we took with mom. She had been awfully sick here but she was the one who prodded for one last family photo.

I was about twelve here I think. Those days were always a huge blur. It was because I was trying to forget them seeing as they were so painful to remember.

A couple of days after that photo was taken, mom died. She died happy though, with a smile on her face one last time.

She had been happy to leave, but we were not ready for her to go.

It was selfish of us, she suffered through the pain for years. And she didn't want to fight it anymore.

So she gave up.

We were angry, especially father.

He loved her so dearly, he was the first man to ever love me too.

When she died though, father went into a dark gloomy hole and never really came out.

He thought love was painful, it was bitter and it left a hole in your heart.

The father who would spin mom around to make her giggle or lift me on his broad strong shoulders was no longer here.

He had gone into his cold shell. He never loved another after her. He didn't do love anymore.

Mom was his soulmate he once said.

Mom was his life.

And when she died, she took his life with her.

When I was a certain age to understand, he tore all my dreams of finding someone who looked at me the way he looked at mom.

He engraved in my mind that love was painful. Love was evil and selfish. Love was not worth all the hassle.

Marriage shouldn't be about love.

In his now corrupted mind, he wanted to protect me from the heartache he suffered when mom died.

And I understood him.

Until I met Grant.

I couldn't stop my heart from beating for him. I couldn't stop those butterflies in my belly. I couldn't stop my fall and when I did fall in love with Grant. I already knew. He was the one. The only one.

So I took a chance. I took a chance to get that love father and mom once shared. And I've never regretted it since.

"She wouldn't like this father. Mom wouldn't like what you're doing right now." I whispered, my voice cracking.