

## The Billionaire's Prodigal Wife Chapter 61

Options

Mackenna sat on the sofa, her feet on Alessandro's lap as he sketched furiously in his notepad. They hadn't been in the condo ten minutes when he'd suddenly felt inspired to sketch something and he'd been instantly drawn to his pad. Now it had been an hour and he was sitting with a pencil between his teeth and another in his hand and he was sketching and cursing with equal ferocity.

"Why are you so annoyed?" Mackenna giggled as she watched him erase something with another scowl.

"Because what is in my head," he tapped his pencil against his temple, "and what is here," he slapped the pad with his hand, "are not matching."

He looked back to his pad, "Mackenna, there is something I've been wanting to ask. I'm trying to not look a gift horse in the mouth and please do not get irritated with me, but I've been thinking about this so much since our dinner with the Whitlocks." He looked sideways at her as if afraid to meet her gaze head on.

"Did I do something wrong?"

"No," he shook his head. "Not at all."

She was quiet for a minute and then looked at him as he appeared to be weighing his words, "Alessandro, out with it," she growled impatiently.

"Okay," he put his pencil down and then looked to her very seriously. "Why?"

"Why what?"

"I screwed up. I shouldn't have gone to Milan to deal with the release of the video. I shouldn't have stayed there trying to sort it out. I should have let my father manage it. I had already resigned from the company and was already to take on a new life here. It was a misguided sense of responsibility. When I was there, I learned the very first day I was there it was my grandfather," he rubbed his face. "I couldn't call you Mackenna. You gave me a week to sort things out, but I couldn't call. I was a coward and all I could think of was my blood, my family, set out to destroy you and damn near did. The notion my grandfather caused you such harm made me sick, and I had to stay there to

make sure he went to jail. I couldn't let him get away with it. Then when he was arrested, well all I could think of," Alessandro stared at her seriously, "Mackenna, all I could think of was the best thing for me to do was walk away and let you move on with your life. I couldn't imagine how you would even be able to look at me knowing I share his blood. My family murdered your family Mackenna."

She nodded quietly as a single tear drop edged down her cheek.

"You gave me a week and I bypassed the timeline, and I did it purposefully because I love you so much and I needed to let you go," his voice was hoarse with emotion. "I couldn't hurt you anymore. I couldn't let my family hurt you ever again."

He watched as another tear slid down her cheek. "So why Mackenna? I know you said you talked to Savannah but why did you call me? Since I arrived Saturday, you've been asking me to stay with you and, I promise, I'm so grateful and there is nowhere else I'd rather be, but I'd be lying if I said I understood how you could even want me to be here, let alone ask me to be here."

Mackenna swallowed the lump in her throat. "You're asking why or how I still love you after all we've been through." She wasn't asking, merely summing up his drawn-out speech.

"Yes, I guess I am." His golden eyes were fearful, as if terrified she was about to tell him it was all a lie and payback for hurting her for so long.

She sighed, "the day I called you and left you the message, I did get into a fight with Savannah, and she did call me out. Something else happened that day. I haven't really talked about it much." She paused and took a breath, "Savannah and Nuncio know but it's about work and it's not about work and it's confidential, but it's impacted me."

"Okay," he set his sketch pad and pencils down and stared at her. "What happened?"

"Well, I have a habit, we'll call it a habit, of going the extra mile for the people who come through my door at the hospital. Sometimes people need to hear more than the words of a bookkeeper telling them where to send their money. Sometimes," she rolled her eyes, "a lot of times, I end up spending a lot of time with the families."

“Like Ray,” he mentioned the bouncer. “Derrick told me how you sat with him when his mom was ill.”

She smiled, surprised he remembered Ray. “Yes, just like Ray.”

She paused, “there’s a woman, and her son is on the pediatric oncology ward. I call him Niblet because he can eat popcorn more than anyone I know.”

“He has cancer,” Alessandro said quietly.

“The day I called you, another little boy, only six was admitted to the floor so I went up with the family and said hello and then stopped to talk to Niblet and his mom. He was talking about how he was going to bust out of there and go home.” She wiped her cheeks, “Dr. Luke was going into his room as I was leaving. His cancer has metastasized. He’s not going home. He’s never going to go home.” She sucked in a breath, “his mom is a single mom, and he is all she has, and she likely only has a few weeks left with him.”

“I’m so sorry Mackenna,” Alessandro wiped his own tears off his cheeks.

“Dr. Luke had called me right after my fight with Savannah in my office to let me know. I was late leaving from work because of it. I didn’t get out of there until well past six. I just couldn’t stop thinking of how fleeting life is, how unfair it is, how cruel it can be.” She swallowed the lump in her throat, “his mom stopped by my office while he was getting another CT scan. She told me to never be sad to have been given the opportunity to love someone. She said all love is a blessing and to hold tight to love because it can be ripped away from you too fast.”

“I love you Alessandro and I didn’t want to waste any more time. I knew Savannah was right when she said you must have been reeling in learning what you learned about your family and hadn’t been sure how to approach me, so I called you. You didn’t call me back. On the Friday when you and Dulce released your statement, I believed you had made your choice and I hated it, but I knew I had to move on with my life.”

He nodded unable to speak.

“I told myself, you had made the decision for us and so I had to live with it, and I was going to live with it. I made Savannah and Nuncio go to the Cabaret,” she smiled with the memory, “I stayed in and watched movies and made nice with Romeo and refused to let myself dwell on the rejection. I fully

intended to just move forward but it hurt so much. My heart hurt and all I wanted was you being your bullying self driving me nuts and demanding I take you back.”

“My love, it was not meant to be rejection. I believed in my heart I was doing right by you.”

“I know,” she smiled tightly, “and when Dulce came here and she argued I should go to you and talk to you because you were hurting so much, I was angry and I told her, you had made your choice and didn’t call me back, so I was going to respect it and just leave things as they were.”

She sniffed, “but when I came to in the recovery room and you were there,” she felt her heart thundering, “I could hear Gina in my head saying love is a blessing. I know we are like chalk and cheese, and we fight and argue but when we’re good together, we are so good, and I live for those moments. I love the man you are. I love your passion and your heart and the way you immediately jump to help someone in need. Do you think you know everything and tell me what to do all the time? Sure,” she grinned through her tears at his scowl, “but do I know you love me more than anything else in the world? I know it deep in my soul. I’m glad you came home to me on Saturday Alessandro. I love you and I just want to be with you.”

She sighed, “as for being a bit of a clinger lately,” he shook his head to protest her description, “I haven’t been feeling myself and I had a good talk with my counsellor this morning about it.”

“And?”

“I’m still feeling insecure,” she spoke quietly, “and Farrah thinks I’m projecting the impending knowledge I will be losing my friend in your direction. She suggested the mind is a weirdly wired organ and it is confusing emotions from two separate events and merging them in my psyche and so I’m being a bit of a baby about it. I’m not at work right now so I’m out of sorts and bored and have no distractions from the feeling of being in control. She suggested I take charge of the things I can take charge of and work to accept, as difficult as it will be, the things I cannot control.”

“Ah,” he smiled as he understood, “taking charge of the publicity of our relationship, makes you feel more in control.”

“Yes,” she nodded. “I was furious reading the things posted today about me being a side chick and I thought, hell no, I’m not a secret. I’m not playing second fiddle to anyone, let alone Dulce. I’m not doing it, so I told Nuncio either he cooperated and took me to the airport, or I was going to invite one of the journalists downstairs up for a tell-all interview.”

At his surprised look she laughed, “I knew he would take me to the airport. Thank heavens he didn’t call my bluff.”

He chuckled quietly, “I want you to know something Mackenna.”

“What?”

“I know you told me yesterday to go to Milan to see Dulce but,” he groaned, “maybe I’m a bad person for it but I truly didn’t have any intention of going to see her. My entire reason for going to Milan was to make sure he was dead. I do not think you understand the depths of my hatred for Salvatore. My orders to my team were to shoot him the minute he stepped out of line. The only reason he was allowed to leave the jail cell alive was because my grandmother begged me to make sure he answered to his crimes first. She said once he was found guilty, I could do what I wanted to him, but she wanted him to go to court. My desire was to make him pay slowly for what he’d done.” He held her gaze meaningfully, “I mean very slowly.”

She swallowed the bitter taste in her mouth, “Nuncio offered,” she couldn’t finish her statement.

He nodded, “I will tell you this one time only,” he held her eyes seriously, “the individual responsible for sneaking Salvatore out of the house no longer exists on this earth. Anyone ever associated with Salvatore and his nefarious schemes no longer exist on this earth. The man who was in the photo holding a gun to Yara, he no longer exists on this earth.” His voice was cold and hard as he held Mackenna’s eyes unblinking. “You never have to worry about him ever again.”

She nodded slowly and felt the nervous feeling in her stomach. “Can you get into trouble?”

His laugh was low and dark, “no, you never have to worry of such things.”

She wiped her face and then took a deep breath. “I love you Alessandro. I want to spend as much time as we have in our lives, whether it’s five more

minutes or fifty more years, I just want us to not waste a moment of the love we have.”

He pushed his books to the floor and climbed up the sofa to lay over her and cupped her cheeks with his hands. “I love you too and I look forward to spending the rest of our lives loving each other.” He kissed her mouth tenderly.

“Oh my god, they’re doing it in the living room,” Savannah’s voice carried from edge of the hall.

Alessandro laughed and looked to Mackenna, “we need to find a house of our own and soon.”

Mackenna giggled as he ignored Savannah’s gagging noises and kissed her thoroughly.