

# Conflict



ARRANGED MARRIAGE

MAFIA ROMANCE

MICHAELA BRNKOVÁ

## COPYRIGHT

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## PLAYLIST

TWO FEET – *You?*

STATE OF MINE – *Can't Stop Me*

SKILLET – *I Want to Live*

RIHANNA – *Lift Me Up*

LITHE – *Fall Back*

NEFFEX – *Till I'm on Top*

NEFFEX – *What You Gonna Be*

NEFFEX – *Winning*

5 SECONDS OF SUMMER – *Teeth*

OLLY MURS – *Dear Darlin'*

SKILLET – *The Resistance*



## Chapter 15

Nero

When I opened my eyes, her face was right in front of mine. So close that it startled me. At first, I wanted to move and create some space between us, but then I realized that something was weighing down my side. I moved my hand and felt her knee underneath. She had her leg draped over me. I smirked mischievously. When she wakes up and notices what she did in her sleep, she might bite that leg off herself.

At first, I was preparing how to tease her about it until I realized that my left leg is firmly wedged between her legs. So, it was questionable who was actually bothering whom. What if I was the one who initially placed my leg there?

How the fuck should I know?

I've never slept with anyone. Is it normal to cling to someone at night? Or to wake up folded like origami? Completely confused, I looked at her face. She was still sleeping peacefully. She looked different when she wasn't yelling at me, angry, or furious. Her face was peaceful and beautiful. She had a few small freckles on her nose, and her lips were as full as two little pillows. I felt like tasting them, maybe just trying if they were as soft as they looked, and as spicy as when she talks. Her long dark hair was scattered across the pillow, and its scent enveloped me all around. It was sweet, perhaps vanilla-like.

Why did it bother her so much which family I come from? After all, she was born into exactly the same one. I thought she would understand with time, but she fought against it like a little lioness. I knew she would still be disappointed in me, that I would torment her many more times, but despite that, I longed for her approval. I had the most beautiful dresses and jewellery brought for her, and it angered her. None of the things that worked on all my mistresses worked on her. She threw me off balance so easily, it scared me. I never knew when and in front of whom she would effortlessly utter another sarcastic remark, and I wouldn't know whether to laugh or get angry. With certainty, I only knew that I couldn't control her, and I never would, even if it were possible to tame her, I

didn't know how. She was like a little fierce dog, and then she would take care of me and lie down next to me just so I could get some sleep.

Perhaps that's what frustrated us about each other... At our core, we were the same, but while she escaped from her family and condemned this life, I embraced my position and name within it.

When she moved, my body reacted exactly as I didn't want it to. Those damn sweatpants gave everything away.

She opened her eyes and first smiled, but when she realized that it was me lying next to her, she froze and immediately tried to move. I knew exactly the moment when she realized where my leg was wedged and where hers was placed. She tried to move her leg, still resting on me, and pull it down, but I just smiled, pressed my hand firmly under her knee, and didn't allow her to move.

"What are you doing?" She wanted to use an angry tone, but her voice sounded sleepy.

"Me? You're the one clinging to me like a vine," I observed her slowly waking face and chocolate eyes, which were trying to pierce me again.

When she kicked again, I moved against her, and she knew very well that what was happening down there between us was more pleasant for me than for her. Her eyes widened in panic.

"Any problem?" I raised an eyebrow. Yes, I was provoking her, and yes, I was enjoying it. I realised how much I enjoyed her reactions, the feeling it stirred in me when her eyes flared up, and I was aware that it was me who had pushed her buttons. I desired to evoke in her the same feeling I had now between my legs. When she kicked again, I let her go, and she rolled onto her back. My leg remained between her thighs, and I quickly sat up and turned to her. I didn't wait for her to realise what I was doing and brought my face close to her neck. When I touched the feathers of her neck and pressed them against her soft skin, she moaned.

It was just a gentle, faint, and quiet sound, but my head shot up immediately, and my eyes watched her in surprise. What was that?

Her eyes darted around my face, equally confused as my body. My penis twitched. What our bodies were doing, I suddenly couldn't stop or control. I closed my eyes and moved my hips against her. The sensation it evoked in me was incredible, intense, and so pleasurable that I wanted to do it again immediately. To thrust harder, press against her more intensely... I wanted her.

"Maurizio?" I heard a sigh and fear in her voice. Did she want to stop me? Did she not want to admit it? She must have felt it.

"Hm?" I looked into her eyes and didn't move any further. "I..." She looked just as confused as I did. Did it scare her, what was working perfectly between us?

My eyes dropped, and I frustratedly groaned as a voice from behind the door said, "Nero," followed by a knock.

"Don't forget what you wanted to say, except if it was 'no,' 'stop,' or 'get out.'"

I didn't wait for her reaction and jumped to my feet. I went to the door and opened it. Gio was standing there, looking serious. All the pleasant feelings that had awakened in me during the previous moments suddenly deflated.

"The association meeting is starting in your father's office. They're just waiting for you."

Damn it, I didn't realise it was so late. I nervously ran my fingers through my hair. "Tell them I'll be there in five minutes."

Gio nodded, and I closed the door. Elisa had already gotten up and drawn the curtains. I glanced at the clock on the table. Did we really sleep all morning? I can't remember the last time I slept so long. I noticed she was trying to sneak into the bathroom, so I reached out and pulled her elbow sharply, turning her face towards me. I stepped towards the bathroom with her, and she was backing away, opening her mouth, presumably to retort, so I decided to cut her off.

"I know you'd like me to take a shower with you or draw us a hot bath right now, but duties are calling, butterfly. I'll make it up to you later," I quickly tilted my head and spontaneously kissed her on the neck.

She pushed me away, her eyes flashing. "Forget about that, Brusov! From now on, I'm locking myself in my bedroom!"

"As if that could stop me," I chuckled and disappeared from her room.

\*

In my father's office, six men sat behind a large table. My father and I were seated across from each other at the head. I knew them all well; they were the Quintinis, which meant we had new information.

"Antonio's contact was right, my sources confirmed it too," said Domenico, my father's cousin.

"So, the Serbs," my father stated, nodding, and I straightened in my chair, fearing the confirmation of this information.

"Are they coming after us?" It was a pointless question, but I needed him to confirm it once more.

"Not just after us. It seems they collaborated with Arthur," when Domenico said that he surprised us all.

"Collaborated?" I gritted through my teeth. How could something like this happen? "We've been keeping an eye on Arthur after all. His activities are strictly monitored," I countered.

"Domenico shook his head.

"Someone must have worked for him as a liaison, and something fucked up."

My father's fist hit the table, and attention shifted to him.

"So, you're telling me they had someone providing information to Goran Paškevič, and he got rich because of it, and now he's going to try to wipe us out?" Steam was coming out of my father's ears as he put two and two together out loud.

Who did they get that helped them build power and make such money that they dare to go after us? This couldn't have been a short process. It must have

been months or even years. They were preparing, and all this time, we underestimated them.

"We need to find out what their plan is, know their next move. We can't afford to know absolutely nothing about them anymore. You, Lucio," I addressed Domenico's brother, "you have contacts in America, do they have influence with the Serbs?" I looked at the man whose slicked-back hair always gleamed, and his ponytail reached down to his shoulders.

"I sent two men to them, but we lost contact with both," he said.

"Fuck!" cursed my father, and inwardly, I echoed his sentiment.

"Send Mario there," I proposed, suggesting the best solution. Mario was a hired hitman who obtained secret information for us.

"Send him today. If they're coming after us and they know we're onto them, they won't hesitate. Monitor the airports. I want a report on every private plane that lands within a thousand-kilometre radius. Increase patrols on the roads. Also, make sure the guys working on the highway construction are alerted. Monitor the ports. Everyone should be on high alert. They must not get here." The men nodded and listened attentively to my orders.

"When you learn something, inform us immediately. We have two days until the wedding, and I want everything to go smoothly," I added.

That damn oversleeping made me check the time every half an hour since eleven. It was almost two in the morning when I decided to get up and go for a walk.

I went out and noticed that the door to the adjacent room, where Gio and Antonio monitored the home cameras, was open. Antonio poked his nose out.

"Is something happening?" he asked.

"No, just... can't sleep," I shrugged. Antonio knew my moods.

"Shall I send Gio for some pills?" he offered.

"No, I still have some in my room." Without them, I could hardly fall asleep anymore. They were addictive, and what was worse, lately, they didn't even work anymore.



"Even your fiancée can't sleep," he nodded towards the faint light under the door opposite. He raised an eyebrow with a smile on his face, and I grimaced, but then I glanced at her door again. Should I give it a try after all?

"Don't you have anything to do?" I crossed my arms and gave him a questioning look, but Antonio always had me well read. With an amused smirk and without unnecessary remarks, he disappeared into his room. That's why I liked the guy.

I didn't knock. What for? Even if she didn't respond or wanted to send me away, I would continue anyway.

"What do you want?" she turned her head towards me, lying on her stomach on the bed. My eyes fell on the round bottom in lacy panties, peeking out from under a long shirt. She immediately reached for the hem and pulled it down.

"What are you reading?" I focused on the book she was leaning over, causing her glasses to slide down her nose.

"It's called 'The Perfect Ones'," she closed the book and looked at its cover.

"Is it about us?" I smiled.

"Of course. They kill you right at the beginning. And I'm just enjoying sex with a masculine football player," she smirked.

I shook my head and smiled even more. Her remarks didn't bother me anymore, as they did before. On the contrary, I found her witty and amusing.

"Move over," I stepped closer and nudged her legs to make room for me.

"You shouldn't be here," she sat up, frowning. Her nose wrinkled amusingly as she pushed her glasses up.

"Reason?" I pulled my hands out of the pockets of my sweatpants, and she looked at my bare chest, and I was sure I noticed an empty swallow movement in her throat as I folded my arms across my chest, flexing my arm muscles.

"I don't want you here?" She said with an unconvincing questioning tone, her voice cracking. She was embarrassed.

"You're asking that?" I didn't care at all whether she wanted me here. I was enjoying playing this game with her.

"No! I don't want you here," she crossed her arms just like I did, and this time it was my mouth that swallowed emptily as my eyes fell to her ample cleavage.

The pathway between her breasts, deepened by that movement, begging for my touch, perhaps a kiss and a gentle lick. My penis immediately agreed with me and resisted against my boxers.

"I'm already here," I squeezed onto half of the bed, which I boldly called mine, and ignored her protests. I lay down and took her legs in my hands to lay them over me. I propped my head with one hand and left the other on her leg.

"Read, but nothing erotic," I nodded towards the book.

"I'm just at the chapter where it finally happens, I don't feel like reading anything else. I've been looking forward to it all day," she frowned and dismissed me irritably.

I ran my hand over my face and let out a desperate sigh. I rummaged through the pocket of my sweatpants and pulled out my phone.

"Here you go, feel free to read me the vacuum cleaner manual if you wish," I said, handing her the phone. Her lips curled upward at the corners.

"What's your problem?" she asked, raising an eyebrow.

Is that supposed to be a provocation? You're my problem, I thought to myself.

She closed the book angrily, but she didn't reach for my phone. I noticed her amused look as she tried to hide the fact that she was looking everywhere but at me. She lay there, leaning on the edge of the bed, and her gaze landed on the spot where my hand was resting on her leg. I looked there too. The finger of my hand was moving. Gently and slowly, it stroked back and forth. I was completely unaware that I was making that movement. It came from somewhere deep inside me completely spontaneously. I looked at her, and she turned her eyes toward me in the same way. We were silent. Just like that. And what scared me was how good I felt right now.