

CHAPTER FOUR

RAISING YOU

Twenty-four hours passed, am still trying to know why I exist like this. And for how long am I supposed to live as Azure. On top of everything, seeing this little time bomb is budging me relentlessly, if I knew how to make things right, I'd have done it with myself in my first life. What difference could I make it this time?

I am at my so-called workplace, doing my work as the manager while watching over Azile. She is sitting on one of the chairs, eating her ice-cream in a messy way, cream smeared all over her dress. It makes me smile a little. *Suddenly there's a flash, my hands, dress, face, smeared in blood.* A chime of bells, signalling the entry of customers pulls me out of the dreadful trance. I run a hand over my face, before forcing a smile at the couple clinging to each other.

"Good morning sir and ma'am, please have a seat." I bow slightly, before going back to wipe the mess off Azile's face. She looks up at me with a mischievous smile, earning a soft glare back, "Stay here. I'm coming in a bit." I whisper to her, signing a staff to look over. I take my notepad and walk back to the customer's table, "What would you like to order?"

"One iced mocha for me and one strawberry latte for my girl." The man places his order, his girl behind him winks at me suggestively. I turn back to the man, feeling pity.

"Order coming right away." I smile politely, going back to the counter. "Guys, this is the order of table M-085. Don't mess it up." I hand them the list. The staffs get to work, machines

buzzing, Azile's laughter, it all creates an easy to deal atmosphere. The way I actually imagined my life as a twenty-five-year-old citizen without any break downs, chaos and traumas. Just a normal life, socializing, smiling and working for my daily bread. Not locked, tortured and blamed... I glance at Azile. With me, she is in her happy period too. I wonder how long.

A sigh escapes my lips; I head for the washroom. As I zip down my pant, the memory of last night strikes. Around ten hours ago, I had my first sex as a man. Plus, I think I did pretty good, knowing all of female's *ahh* points as an ex-female. I stroke all the sensitive spots. And... who knew my girl's cunt would be so tight. I shudder slightly, my dick standing up in attention again, or for attention again. "Argh, focus. You're at work for fuck's sake." I take a release, relaxing. After few moments I hear someone locking the washroom door from inside, my heart stops. I zip up my pants, looking back. The man's girl. "Ma'am?" She acts shocked, folding her arms femininely, "Oh! I'm so sorry I accidentally entered men's washroom." Her voice overly pitched, dress falling off.

"I-It's fine." I mumble, arching an eyebrow. Why is she not going out? Instead, she steps closer, biting her lip, "Excuse me?" I step back slightly.

She whispers, invading my personal space, "Actually, it's kind of an emergency... so would you mind guarding me while I go inside?"

This is so awkward, I wish I could say no but I don't want to make this even more abnormal, "Ah, alright." I shrug, looking away, "Help yourself." She looks down as I buckle back my belt, before going inside the bathroom stall. I swear if her boyfriend finds out about her being in here, I will be out of this world

forever. After two minutes, as soon as she comes out, I begin walking towards the exit door.

“Wait,” she grabs my wrist, I stiffen, “We can just... have some fun in here. He won’t have to know.”

How annoying can this situation be. I snatch my hand away, “I have a girlfriend.” My voice firm.

“So?” she shrugs, “I have a boyfriend too.”

Now this is the most disgusting thing I can witness. I grind my teeth to control my rage, “But am not interested.” I mumble instead.

She reacts by coming closer, pressing herself against me, “But I always get what I want.”

Now, don’t piss me off, “Ma’am please, I denied.”

“Just once... it will feel really good.” She tugs onto my shirt; I can’t hold back my temper for long. This is it.

“I don’t want a cheap hoe like you.” I snap, pushing her hard against the wall. Adjusting my sleeves.

Her eyes widen in embarrassment; sure, she is offended now.

“Who do you think you are?” her voice dangerously low. What a bitch, if I were twenty-five-year-old Azile, I’d have murdered her up by now and won’t even want to eat her flesh.

“I am a person who clearly set up my boundary and you are crossing it.” I walk towards the door again.

Suddenly she screams loudly, lunging forward to drag me back, “HELP!! SOMEONE HELP!” she shouts.

My eyes widen in disbelief, “Excuse me?”

She continues screaming and wailing, now running out of the door herself, “Save me from this man!”

No shit. I need to clear things. I follow her out, looking at her wrapped in her man's arms, fake sobbing. On top of that, he looks furious. The other staffs circling around.

I stutter, not knowing what to say, "Sir I can explain-"

The man yells, "How dare you, huh? Is this how you treat your customers?!"

"No but she did it-"

"Oh! So now you will blame us?! You son of a bitch!" a swift punch lands against my jaw, it ticks. I crack my neck bones, looking back at them.

"Sir would you calm down? I can tell you what happened." I keep a hand before me, defending myself.

"You perverted dog! Think you can get any girl with your face!? I will sue you from your bloody job. Just you watch!" he threatens, giving me hate filled eyes.

What a bunch of crap to deal with. I look at Azile, who is making a teary face, looking back at me. I quickly walk towards her, ignoring the man throwing a fit. I carry her in my arm, her little hands clutching my shirt, as I take her in an isolated room.

"Sit here quietly. And don't make a sound." I take the scarf off my neck and tie it around her face, almost covering her ears. I stare at her for a while before leaving, "I will be back soon."

Rolling up my sleeves, facing those fuckers again, "Sue me you said?" without warning, I grab his hair and throw him across the floor, "Hah! Say that again asshole." My voice menacing, eyes darkened. They don't know what am capable off. I turn to his girlfriend, who is panicked, stepping back.

"I-I won't come here again! Please let me go..." she whimpers, bumping against a wall.

Being a girl from heart I don't mind beating girls actually. So, I take the latte they ordered and pour it down her head, smirking as she whines, "There you go, whore. Having fun?" I say through gritted teeth, smashing the cup against her face before turning to her man, kicking his gut, "Want to sue me? TRY IT, FUCKER." I snarl. The man grunts in pain, the girl soaked in latte, "Pay your bill." I command, throwing the bill on his face.

"I won't throw a penny at you, dickhead!" he groans, I kick again.

"Either you give or you both are locked in the basement." My face serious.

The girl stumbles, pulling out his wallet and throwing it on the floor, stuttering, "Take it you psycho! I don't want to walk by this street ever again!" she drags the man out of the café, my staffs watching me with dropped jaw.

"Mr. Alarie, I doubt anyone is ever going to come again after this." One of the staffs' mumbles, a lonely wind passing by.

"Heh. No worries. I don't think I will be doing the job again after what happened today." I go to bring Azile back from the room, carrying her in my arms, "You guys, no need to panic. I lost my temper; I will talk to the boss."

"We know they started it first. But you ended it too badly, kinda scary." They chuckle nervously.

I adjust my hair, smirking. Not feeling guilty, but satisfied that I could beat that punk up without killing, "Well then, I will get going. Continue your shifts." I walk out of the building with Azile, already resigned in my mind. Maybe I should find another job.

I swing a leg around my bike, keeping her in front before revving the engine. She giggles, excited about a breezy motorcycle ride. Surprisingly, I never learnt how to ride a bike,

but being in a man's form, things are hitting up on instinct. A life I didn't imagine in the past, am enjoying it too much for my own good. At least, until Azile is still a baby. Whatever happened today, maybe I need to protect her from situations like that. Keep her eyes to look up to only where the world shines, with no dark shadows. If it shines too bright, I will be the shade. Afterall, my responsibility is mine.

Looking down, she looks like a little squishy ball, wriggling there below. Hate to admit, I think I was the most adorable thing at this age. How could any sane man leave this cute baby? Hah! I could or can never understand my father. Father. Whenever I think of that relation, a rush of mixed feelings hit my heart. Can't decipher if it's anger, guilt, shame or hurt. If I ever meet him in this life again, I'd have a lot to ask. But I won't be able to speak, he still haunts me with that slitted throat.

Around ten minutes later, we arrive grandpa's place. I get off the vehicle and pick Azile up too, before throwing her in the sky and catching again like a basketball. She laughs.

"Oh goodness! Stop being an amusement park to her!" grandpa comes out, slapping my back.

"Ow, grana! She loves it though..." I hand her back to him, smirking, "How was your therapy sessions?"

Grandpa swirls Azile playfully before landing her on feet, she toddles around. "It was relaxing. Thanks to you I could attend them. I had a lot on my chest."

"Anytime, actually I am willing to spend more time with your... uh, granddaughter." Can't believe am saying this shit, "But how do you trust a strange man you just met yesterday with her," I laugh awkwardly, "Just asking, I don't mind..."

He smiles, nodding, "There's a reason of course. How can I not trust you?"

Suddenly Azile stumbles on her own feet, I gasp and catch her fall, "Watch your tiny steps now!"

She clings to my leg, throwing her arms above her head, "Up! Up!"

Grandpa chuckles, "In-fact, I am about to leave her under your care after I hit the bucket." My breathe catches. He can't leave again. I swear if he left, nobody would stay with me. And by me, I mean her.

"Don't go too soon. Your granddaughter," I swallow a lump in my throat, taking Azile into my arms from down there, "needs to be raised for more twenty-five years..." I trail off, gazing at him as if he'll disappear when I look away, "Help me with her." *Help me with growing myself up.*

We both stare at him, as he goes silent. His eyes casting down with a wry smile, "If I could, I would love to die together with you." He glances up at me briefly before looking at Azile. I wonder who is he referring to by 'you'. Of course, it might be her.

"How can How can you leave her by herself?" I mutter.

"When did I leave her by herself? You are there." He smiles going back inside the house.

I stand there, holding my little soul in my hands, watching his retreating figure. My eyes glistening with unshed emotions. "Azile..." I whisper, looking at her when she looks back at me. "Go to your grandpa, nobody loves you more than him." She gazes at my face, her big round eyes, a little palm wiping my eyes. Making my heart melt is the most annoying thing she can... only she can do. I clench my jaw, landing her on her own little feet before closing the door from outside. I could hear her hovering behind the door, whining softly.

"Why do I see it." I breathe out, my throat constricting "Why do I see you covered in blood sometimes?" Lying dead with no eyeballs, still staring up at the sky. "So quiet, so unalive. Why do I see you jumping off that floor. Why..." I sniffle, breaking into tears streaming down my face, my body wracking in sobs and cries. Remorse and pain eating me alive as I slide down across the door, trembling in fear. Alone. Again. "God... I hate myself." I whimper, "But I can't hate you. What am I supposed to do?" I wipe my eyes, crying openly now. Gasping for air in between.

Suddenly there's a soft pound against the wooden door, I calm down slightly leaning against it. I hear a soft innocent voice, calling my name, "Azuur!" she slams her fist weakly again, "Azuur..." And I realise, that's her first name, not mom or dad, my name.

I'd be lying if I say it doesn't hurt even more now, I feel like a knife twisting in my guts. Somewhere I know, Azile, my past, is the only reason of my existence in present. To make up for all the blunders. I will take *my* responsibility.