

The Daughter In Law

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Chapter 14

The next morning we awakened to bedlam. The nephews were running around like mad hatters, mom had cooked enough breakfast for Napoleon's army and now she wanted us out of her hair for the next few hours while she did her thing in the kitchen. We were only allowed in there to do the grunt work. She still hadn't said anything about my little situation and I was getting nervous. It wasn't like her to hold her tongue where her kids were concerned.

"You okay baby you had enough to eat?"

"Yeah me and the pin are good." He came up behind me on my family's enclosed back porch and wrapped his arms around me. I felt so loved and secure in that moment. Why couldn't it always be like this? I enjoyed the peace and calmness that I always felt when I was close to him like this. I pushed aside the feelings of betrayal and just held on to the here and now. Was he ever going to bring up what had happened or was he, like me, trying to salvage the rest of our holiday?

"What's on your mind beautiful?"

"Nothing." My ass.

"I don't want you worrying about anything right now Vanessa, you know what the doctor said, avoid all stress."

I didn't even bother answering him, because as long as Kublai Kahn was still breathing I'll never have another moment's peace.

"Can I ask you something and please don't get mad?"

"What is it?" He turned me around to face him.

"Can you turn off your phone for the rest of the day? Please. I know you have to call and wish them a happy holiday but after can you turn it off?"

"Why?"

Why? So I can get rid of the knots in my stomach for one fucking day. I didn't say it out-loud but he must've seen the sadness in my eyes.

"Is it really that important to you baby?"

"Yes."

He took his phone from his pocket and turned it off and I felt a weight lift off my chest. He also let me know he wasn't mad when he pulled me in close and kissed my hair.

We spent the rest of the day until dinnertime playing with the kids and bullshitting with my brothers and their wives. There was no tension, no one was making snide comments to anyone, and the atmosphere was warm and festive. By the time mom called us to the table I had relaxed and was really starting to enjoy the day. The house phone rang but that had nothing to do with us.

Mom seemed a little harassed when she hung up and came back into the room, but she didn't say anything, just gave dad a look and took her seat.

Ten minutes later, just after dad had finished saying grace, it rang again. No one else seemed worried but my gut was starting to hurt. Mom got up again and was back in a few seconds, and I started breathing easy again when she didn't say anything.

The next time it rang dad got up and got the phone that was right there in the room with us, and I wondered why mom had walked all the way into the other room before?

"Listen I don't usually get involved in this shit because half the time I don't know what the fuck, but my wife let me in on some of what has been going on. Let me give you a little background here so we can clear this up once and for all." Everyone at the table was staring at dad like what the fuck? "Take the kids out of the room for a minute girls, I'll call you when it's safe to come back." Mom clasped her hands under her chin as I watched my two sisters in law take their boys by the hands, as the kids questioned why they couldn't eat. Damien was looking stupefied and I wasn't too sure as to what was going on myself but my gut knew.

"Vanessa is my only daughter, I've got two boys and the one girl. Now I don't know how they do things down your end but up here daughters are cherished. I've looked out for her her whole life and I don't mean to stop until I draw my last breath. When she was young, I was the one that dealt with the bullies and the assholes as they came. Now just because she got married doesn't mean that that's changed, she's still my kid and I don't like people fucking with my kid. I understand along with everything else there's a baby on the way. My kid showed up here with puffy red eyes and I'm thinking that can't be good for her or the baby. If you want to keep up this shit campaign of yours I'll come and move my kid back home, her and the kid she's carrying. If your son wants to come he's more than welcome I'm sure the army could find him a post up this way. Are you getting what I'm saying here or do you need me to spell it out? Good to hear it. Now I'm

about to sit down to dinner with my family, I suggest you do the same.” He hung up the phone and I was afraid to look at my husband. There was no doubt as to who that was.

Mom made as if to call the others back into the room but dad stopped her. “Just a second Jacks.” He turned to Damien who was sitting there with his stoic face on.

“Boy I gave you my daughter because you promised to take care of her. I let you move her halfway across the country to bum fuck U.S.A. are you gonna make me regret that decision? Because like I just told your mother I will move her back here, her and my grandkid.”

Damien got that tic he always gets in his cheek when he’s pissed. Then he took my hand and turned to face my dad. “No one is taking my wife from me, not you and not my family. I asked her to let me handle it and just because I haven’t been stressing her with all the details she thinks I’m a whipped puppy at the end of my mother’s leash. She thinks flying off the handle and saying fuck you is the answer. It’s not, that shit will only last so long before the next cycle begins again. I admit that I had no idea any of this shit was going on, how could I? I was halfway around the world. After she told me what was going on, she told me a few days later that she was carrying my child. I made the decision then to shield her from as much of this shit as I could, because contrary to what she seems to think, I love her enough to want her to enjoy her impending motherhood and all that entails.

I had a talk with the only other person I trust implicitly, my dad. He filled in the blanks and he didn’t sugar coat it. I wanted to commit murder when he told me some of the shit that had been said and done to my wife while I was off fighting a fucking war and believing my mother’s bullshit lies when she would tell me how she was looking out for my girl. As I said before, there’s a way to handle this and if it’s not the way anyone else would do things, it’s my way. I know what the fuck I’m doing so with all due respect sir let me do this shit my way.

I told your daughter she needed to apologize because she was wrong to put her hands on Barbara. Not because I don’t think Barbara provoked her, but because what she did set me back. It made me lose ground. Last thing I’m gonna say on the subject, I have a kid on the way, he or she will hopefully be the first of many. I don’t want any of this shit flying around my kids. Let me work it; and don’t ever threaten to take my family from me again or I’ll pack her ass up and no one will know where the fuck we are.” You could’ve heard a pin drop. I was a little worried about dad’s reaction but all he did was clap Damien on his back and said ‘let’s eat’. Me, I didn’t know what the hell had just happened.

“This is for pin, thought it best to get this shit started from now.” Dad’s gift to his unborn grandchild was a hefty check for his college fund.

"Dad, where do you plan on sending him, to the top four all at once?"

"Have you been watching the news, following the market? By the time pin's ready for college one of two things will be happening: either we'll all be dust, or this will cover one and a half years tuition tops."

"You're nuts."

The atmosphere had calmed down somewhat since dad's little pow-wow, but I could tell Damien was still pissed. The truth is I was still learning about my hubby and his myriad moods. We'd had maybe eight months together before he'd been sent off. I knew one thing only, and that was that I loved him something stupid.

When he'd been gone, those first few weeks had been sheer hell; that's why she'd been able to sideline me so effortlessly. Just like a serpent in the grass, she'd struck when I was at my weakest. I also knew he was strong and sweet and he loved me fiercely. My only fear, was that hagfish would be able to hoodwink him and worm her way back in. If I had to live with that fear hanging over my head for the rest of my life I'd shoot myself.

When it was finally time to leave, mom had a minor freak out. "Are you sure you're gonna be okay?"

"Yeah mom I'll be fine."

"You call us the minute that's no longer true, I mean it; no matter what time it is, day or night. You know I ran away from your father once?"

"Mom?"

"Yep, and it was over this same thing. He refused to see his mother for what she was, a two headed monster. I swear that woman had two faces; she could turn on a dime like nobody's business. Anyway, when it looked like he was going to side with her the last time she fucked up, I waited until he was gone and hightailed it outta there. He went nuts. I didn't go to any of the places he'd expect and girl let me tell you, when he finally did find me three weeks later I was ready for him. Needless to say he put mommy dearest in her place after that and all has been well from then 'til now."

I started to cry because I knew what she was saying, but I didn't want to be away from my husband, especially not over this. It just wasn't fair.

Next it was dad's turn to give us the third degree. "You kids sure you're gonna be okay?"

"Yes dad we'll be fine. I'll see that no harm comes to her."

"I'm not so much worried about her, I'm more concerned about pin. What the fuck? How did I end up calling my grandkid by that stupid name? that's no name for a little girl."

"Girl what girl? Who's having a girl?"

"Calm down Dami dad's just joking."

"The hell I am, look here boy. I have six grandsons count them, six. Vanessa's the last girl we've had in the line for over twenty eight years, ask her how many male cousins she has."

"It's true."

"So by that token shouldn't you surmise that we're having a boy?"

"No because we're due. Not to worry son, she didn't start giving me grey hair until she was about twelve, up until then it was a cinch. But when you see ten, eleven rolling around, all I can tell you is hone up on your shooting skills soldier boy, you're gonna need them."

"Dad, stop scaring poor Damien he's turning green."

"Okay then, and you're sure you're not going to be walking into anything when you get back there?"

"I'm positive." The two men shared a look and from the way he said it, it was as if he was very sure. Me I wasn't convinced. We'd been gone for a week; Haggie could do a whole lotta damage in that amount of time. I'm thinking we might want to call out the bomb squad and maybe some of those sniffing canines or something. Now that dad had brought it up, that was something else for me to worry my ass over on the plane ride home.

He still hadn't told me about this great plan of his and every time I brought it up he'd change the subject. Last night after I'd ridden him reverse cowgirl and let him play in my ass, he still wasn't forthcoming. All he'd say in that southern drawl of his is that it wasn't fitting to burden a woman with such things. I have no idea what century my husband is living in. He thinks he's protecting me by keeping me in the dark. What he doesn't know is that I need to know everything all the time. How else am I supposed to protect myself when he's not around?

He held my hand throughout the whole plane ride, which I stayed awake for this time. "Look this would be good for pin." He was flipping through the inflight magazine and there was a picture of a carousel.

"Do you really think we're having a girl?" He looked spooked.

“I don’t know but there’re ways to find out.”

“Do you wanna do that?”

He seemed so excited at the idea, how could I say no? I guess when he thought we were for sure having a boy he was willing to wait and be semi surprised. Now with a daughter on the horizon he wasn’t taking any chances.

“If you promise not to freak out for the rest of the pregnancy if it is a girl.” He was turning green again.

“I won’t freak out, it’s just, damn, a girl? I have enough trouble leaving you home when I have to go, I can’t imagine leaving my little girl behind.” Aww he’s so cute. He got a kiss for that.

“What’s that for?”

“Because you’re so cute and I love you to bits.”

“Oh yeah?”

“Oh yeah.” I love this, just us being so free with not a care in the world. Now if I could just Shanghai Mengele and her part humanoid offspring I’d be good as gold.