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The Moretti's - A Different Family Dynamic

Chapter 122

Thursday – Apollonia's Atelier - 6 March 2003

"Sit," said Apollonia as she pointed to a chair situated next to the desk where she kept the crayons, paint, and paper for the children.

Raffaella did as she was told without responding or making any gesture that would cause her sister to explode verbally or physically.

When she saw her sister take her seat, Apollonia walked over to the desk Colin used, shuffled through some papers, and in a fit of pique flung them across the room. "FUCK," she screamed. "I DON'T KNOW WHERE THAT FUCKIN' SISSY KEEPS ANYTHING OF IMPORTANCE . . ."

Raffaella responded to her sister's anger, "Doesn't he have his own office or place in the house where he would keep the day-to-day operational information concerning your work and the family's enterprises?"

Turning to her sister, Apollonia growled, "Since when did you become so fuckin' smart?"

"Ok," replied Raffaella, "I'll just keep my mouth shut and let you screw yourself."

Apollonia looked around her atelier, sighed, leaned back against the desk she thought Colin used, and moaned, "I'm making a mess of everything." Still dressed as she was the day before, Apollonia looked around a second time trying to remember where Colin would work on Moretti business when she was in her atelier, her room, or sitting on the toilet taking a shit. Nothing was surfacing except for her lack of control and the sight of the two incomplete paintings she was working on for her customers. The sight of her husband lying on the floor bloodied, swollen, and hardly breathing resurfaced in her brain. Apollonia Moretti, a tower of strength, fell to the floor, rolled into a fetal position, and began to cry as if she was a newborn.

The decision was instantaneous. Raffaella rose from her seat at the designated children's play table, quickly stepped to her sister, knelt, and tried to embrace her. It didn't work, so she lay down behind her and put her arms around her sister's shoulders and waist. "Shhh, Appy," Raffaella whispered in the space above Apollonia's ear. "You're stronger than this. You have the wherewithal to come through this unscathed and more importantly, a survivor. Colin loves you and you know it. He gave himself to you as no other man would. He showed himself to be stronger than all of us. He's accepted your brutality as well as your love."

Apollonia stopped crying and just allowed her sister to hold her close. She did not respond to what she heard.

"You said there was something coming between us," continued Raffaella, "and I have to admit there is." Raffaella felt her sister stiffen but did not remove her arms or her body from behind her sister. "There is no reason to be scared or afraid of what has come between us Appy. As I lay in bed alone for the first time due to my ultimate stupidity, I realized that I am jealous of you. Jealous of your beauty. Jealous of your intelligence. Jealous of your ability to create something beautiful out of nothing. Jealous of your ability to see the truth when everything around you is in turmoil. Jealous of your love for me because I have not been returning it even though I know you don't mean to intentionally hurt me. In my eyes, I am nothing compared to you. To complicate matters, think how I feel when I see Viv lust after you right in front of my eyes. I know he wants to have sex with you. Sometimes I think he's fantasizing he's doing you when he is in me. I may not hold a candle to you, but I know what I see."

Apollonia moved forcing her sister to raise her arms and create a space between their bodies. The floor was hard beneath her body and the spots of pain were actually an elixir bringing forth her ability to concentrate and dim the pain. She thought about rolling to face her sister, but she reached for the arm that was across her hip and replaced it there. Apollonia said with a gentleness of voice, "So, who or what was the circumstances surrounding Antonio's anal rape last night."

Raffaella could not stifle her ability to keep calm, "Please Appy, not that. Please let it rest and for once, give me the chance to make things right. I cried this morning when I say Viviano using Antonio out of hatred for me. My son did not have to be used as an implement of revenge for Viviano's anger at my distrust of him and you."

To Raffaella's surprise, Apollonia responded, "You're right. He did not. I will not tolerate or accept what happened to Antonio last night. The boy is in physical pain and more so deep emotional pain." Apollonia rolled to face her older sister, reached for her face, and held it as she said, "I know you caused the situation when you stupidly accused me of sleeping with your husband. He came to you and you denied him the opportunity to apologize for your self-centered stupidity. I can see it in your eyes, Raffy. Fear that I'm going to do something to you as we lay here. I love you and I know you're jealous of me because I had the strength to do what needed to be done to right the Moretti ship of state. Now, last chance..."

Raffaella's eyes watered but no tears flowed down her face. She sniffled, shook a bit from the stress coursing through her body, and finally when she gained control she said, "It was my fault. I was hurt emotionally because I knew he wanted you from the day I brought him home to meet the family. I've never said this and he'll never admit to it, but he asked me several times if I would allow him to, just once, feel his manhood inside you. My God Appy, every man and boy I see looking at you unconsciously or consciously places their hand on their crotch. My own son wants to have sex with you. Fuck, I've had you and still want you. But, Antonio's night last night was precipitated by my misappropriated anger at Viviano and you. He responded in a way I never thought he would. If you want to take it out on anyone, take it out on me. I am the cause of your anger at me, at Viviano, and I caused him to seek relief with his son when I could have just as easily sucked him off multiple times to satiate his sexual needs."

"Yes you could have, Raffy," said Apollonia, "but you chose to be an egotistical cunt. Sure he probably would have wanted your rectum, but he would have relented and allowed you to fellate him considering your ability to take his full length down your throat. I have to ask, whatever made you think I would go behind your back and fuck your husband?"

"My jealousy," whined Raffaella. "My paranoia that you would use your position as head of the family to take what you wanted, when you wanted without any consideration for my feelings..."

"What do I need to do to reassure you that I know and live by the Moretti credo – family first," said Apollonia. "Viviano Rossi is not family. He married into this family and everyday he needs to show his commitment by his actions at home and at work. I and I alone decide if he is worthy. Asshole Mario has no input or decision making power in this family anymore. You may give me your input, but if he fucks up, I will terminate him. What he did to Antonio was nothing more than rape. Put your lips on my crotch and tell me that you will never doubt me or my actions."

Raffaella's eyes opened wide at what she just heard her sister ask her to do. She hesitated because she needed to express something, "Apollonia, I would in a heartbeat, but I have to say something and I will take the consequences. You kissed me the other day and I know the meaning of the kiss. Only you can rescind the implication of that kiss. I need to know, Apollonia."

"Kiss my crotch," said Apollonia with a clear edge to her voice. "Kiss my crotch and know that I hold your life in my hands. The kiss remains because I need you to live in fear of my judgment."

"OH GOD!!!" cried Raffaella, "I'M YOUR FLESH AND BLOOD!!! PLEASE..." Raffaella felt her sister push her down to her now parted legs. Knowing that she could lose her life for any simple indiscretion, Raffaella Moretti slid across the floor and placed her lips on her sister's denim covered crotch. She held them there longer than was expected and when she pulled them off she said with unbridled fear in her voice, "I give my life to you Apollonia Moretti. I give the fruit of my loins to you. Antonio Rossi and Carmen Rossi will know that they belong to you and serve you as I do. If I have to suffer the looks of abuse from my husband and looks of shame from friends, I give you permission to bed him when you please. Just give me the chance to prove I am yours to do with as you wish. I am yours to command. I willingly serve the head of the Moretti family."

Apollonia pulled her sister's face up so she could look down into her eyes, "Remember what you just committed to, Raffaella Moretti. By the fruit of our psychotic mother's loins, we are bound to one another by blood, but you have forever put yourself second to me in the family hierarchy. Kiss my crotch again to seal your fate."

Raffaella Moretti moved her head down and placed her lips for a second time upon her sister's denim covered crotch. Apollonia pressed her head as she raised her hips to impress upon her sister her secondary role in the Moretti family. Satisfied that Raffaella accepted her secondary position and future by not fighting the pressure, Apollonia relented. She slid backwards, rolled to her knees, and stood. Raffaella took her proffered hand and used it to help herself up to a standing position. As if nothing had just happened, the sisters embraced, kissed, and held it long enough to know that if there weren't other things to accomplish they'd have headed to Apollonia's room for some incestuous fun.

Pulling her head away from her sisters while keeping their hips pressed together, Apollonia said, "Your offer to have Viviano is noted, but I will never take you up on it. I've always told you I would love to fuck him, but never will because he is your husband. But, Antonio is another story. That boy has some moxie and is he so fuckin' cute."

Raffaella wiggled her hips against her sister's and replied, "Thank you concerning Viv. As for Antonio, I do have one up on you. After his Rite of Passage, the little bugger machine gave me what you'd like and yes, he is quite an accomplished lover for a boy."

Both women broke out in laughter as they allowed the hard business side of the Moretti family recede into the recent past. Raffaella knew her sister would never bed Viviano, but she also knew if she ever allowed her own ego to interfere with Moretti business or pleasure, she would not survive her sister's retribution.

Apollonia stepped back from her sister, looked around her atelier, and said, "Do you really know where Colin keeps the family business information hidden or is it hidden in plain sight?"

"Sorry," replied Raffy, "I thought it would be obvious and be in or on his desk. Doesn't he have an office in the house?"

"Not anymore," replied Apollonia, "I made him keep all the..."

Apollonia turned and ran towards her bedroom. Raffaella followed. In the back of her second closet was a small built in armoire. Inside the armoire was a false back that exposed the wall behind. The wall contained a small safe that was hidden by the armoire. Apollonia never used it, but Colin always thought it would be a good place to keep things that needed to be secure. It took a few seconds for Apollonia to remember how to access the buttons to slide open the back wall. The wall slid up to reveal a safe. All Apollonia had to do was remember the combination. She stood befuddled because the number sequence did not pop into her head. "What would Colin use as a

combination?" she thought. Her frustration grew as she knew Colin did not use the normal birthday, anniversary, or special dates because of their ease of being broken.

"Damn him," cried Apollonia. "I love that sissy so much, but he can be such a fuckin' asshole sometimes..."

"What is it Appy?" asked Raffaella.

"The combination," replied Apollonia. "Knowing Colin it is some random combination of numbers that has no meaning to anything we've shared, I've done, or he's done. It is probably something that is important to him and only him. It probably relates to a date in history or the numbers of times he swirls his tongue to the left on the head of a cock before he swirls it right and the number of bobs up and down before it enters his throat."

"Why would he do that if this safe is both of yours?" asked Raffaella not understanding why her sister did not know the combination.

"This was his closet before he moved to the servant's quarters. I never used this safe," she replied. "Colin had it installed, but I never thought to ask him the combination and he never offered. We trust one another, but I never once thought to ask him about this safe." Apollonia pondered for a moment, "For a moment, I considered using it to store Lucia's journals, but it was too small to accommodate them all."

"Well, let's take a moment to think like Colin and maybe we can figure out the combination," said Raffaella knowing that it was a shot in the dark.

The smile on Apollonia's face and the twinkle in her eyes caught Raffaella off guard, "God, I do love you Raffy, but trying to figure out the combination would be like searching for the Holy Grail when it comes to the methodology used by Colin to stump anyone trying to break into this safe."

"So..." said Raffaella.

"I'm not going to give up," said Apollonia, "but I'm going to forget about trying to figure it out. I'm hoping by not thinking about it, it will come to me. Maybe he did tell me, but as of this moment, I can't for the life of me remember the combination. I have other calls to make and whatever needs to be done for the Moretti family will just have to wait until he returns."

"Appy," said Raffaella in a quiet voice, "What if he doesn't return?"

"Don't say that," Apollonia moaned, "If he doesn't return, I promise you, you'll be a widow. You heard me tell Viviano that I will take out on him what his brother did to my Colin. Either you remain positive or get the fuck away from me."

Raffaella fell to her knees. She wrapped her arms around her sister's waist. Pressed her lips to her sister's denim covered crotch and while keeping them there said, "I'm sorry to have said that. Colin will survive. Please forgive me, my darling sister."

Just as Apollonia pushed Raffaella's head away from her crotch, the sisters heard Ming's voice call up from the great room.

"Apollonia," yelled Ming, "Viviano is on the phone. I took a call from Howard Cohen but even though he insisted I told him I would not interrupt you."

Apollonia turned away from her sister, departed the walk-in closet, and her room for the great room. Raffaella Moretti remained on her knees. She was both relieved and afraid for her life as she knew it. She rose, ran to her sister's bathroom, and held her fear induced urine long enough to pull her running pants down with enough time to release her bladder into the toilet. Raffaella used the toilet paper to wipe her eyes and blow her nose as she sat

knowing her sister was a thousand times worse than their mother ever was. She prayed and made the sign of the cross multiple times. When she regained a semblance of calm she wiped her vagina and made her way downstairs.

When Apollonia reached Ming she stopped, bent, and kissed her lover quickly on both cheeks. They embraced for a moment and just as they were separating the private phone in the kitchen rang again. Ming handed Apollonia the cell phone she was holding and quickly made her way to answer the private line. Apollonia looked at the face of the phone and saw it was her brother-in-law calling.

"Yes, Viv," said Apollonia.

"We have a problem here, Apollonia," he said. He did not wait for a response, "First, I am going to pull the plug on my brother. There is no way he is going to survive the self-inflicted injuries. I will take care of my parents and brother. I have made the decision to cremate him before they have a chance to view his body. Joshua agreed albeit somewhat reluctantly to sign a death certificate that puts the cause of death as a fall from scaffolding in the rear yard behind our corporate offices."

Apollonia started to interrupt, but heard Viviano continue speaking.

"If you want your husband to look as he did when you married him," continued Viviano, "you have to move him to Joshua's hospital. The maxillofacial surgeon does not have the instruments to do the job properly. Joshua explained that the surgeon needs to pack his face in ice to reduce the swelling. Put him on a regimen of antibiotics to insure against infection today. He will MRI and x-ray Colin's face twice. Once today and a second time when the swelling has been reduced enough to show the damage to the skin of his face. The surgeon will use the scans to rebuild his face on a computer before he attempts any corrective surgery. Without that process, he advised that Colin will not want to be seen ever again in public. As before Apollonia, Joshua will cover for his injuries. You need to move him now. You don't and he'll live his life hiding in the house wearing a full face veil."

Apollonia fell against the wall in the hall between the great room and the kitchen/breakfast area. She moaned, "Noooo... Nooooo... Nooooo..."

Ming said something into the receiver, placed it on the counter, and went to her lover. All she said was, "What???"

Apollonia raised her hand not in a mean way but to tell Ming she was regaining control of her emotions. She rested her left hand on her shoulder and returned to her conversation with Viviano, "Do whatever needs to be done. I'm sorry Sonny did what he did, but I completely agree with your decision to terminate his life. Transfer Colin as soon as humanly possible."

"Yes, I will," replied Viviano, "I kept the ambulances here. One will transport Colin to Manhattan. The other will transport Sonny to Uncle Gino's for cremation. Where do you want me?"

"Call Uncle Gino and then off to Manhattan," said Apollonia. "Like I told you earlier, you stay with him until he is out of the woods. I'll be there as soon as I can. There is no way I won't be there."

"Ok, but, may I talk to Raffaella?" asked Viviano.

Apollonia did not answer his question. She simply pushed to end talk button on her phone and walked to where Ming stood holding the private phone line receiver. She saw Ming mouth Howard Cohen's name.

Digging deep Apollonia found the strength and said, "Yes, Howard?"

"Miss Moretti," Howard said finally relieved to hear her beautiful voice on the phone, "I have some news for you. Mrs. Goldsmith's accident has been staged. From the information given me, it should be at least a week or maybe more before she is found. I would suggest we put out a missing persons bulletin no later than tomorrow evening. If you agree, I will have Jon contact Joshua and have the doctor make the call to the local police department."

"No," said Apollonia. "We need to wait. First we need to make sure he gets the story right and second, he needs to finish taking care of my husband."

"What happened to Colin?" asked Howard.

"Sonny Rossi is dead," she answered. "From all things, a self-inflicted skull fracture. He beat up Colin within an inch of his life last night. Colin is presently being transferred from the broken down hospital in the Bronx to the Hospital for Special Services in Manhattan. A maxillofacial specialist has to rebuild Colin's face. Joshua's wife can wait. I truly don't care if she fuckin' rots wherever you staged the accident."

"Apollonia, I'm so sorry," said Howard. "What do you want or can I do for you?"

"Nothing now, thank you Howard," said Apollonia. "Just a reminder as I know we came to this only yesterday, find a DNA lab or build one. I have this uncanny feeling that Mario is going to be arrested any day."

"It will be taken care of Miss Moretti," said Howard. "Take care of Colin. I'll say a prayer for him. Please call me anytime day or night. I am and always will be at your service."

"Thank you, Howard," said Apollonia. She returned the phone to its cradle and pushed the drawer shut. The only sound she wanted to hear right now was silence, but that was not to be.

The chime on Apollonia's cell phone told her it was someone who had the number but didn't have a distinctive ringtone.

"Hello," she said with a bit of frustration in her voice, but at the same time hiding the fact that she knew who was calling from the caller id.

"Ummmm," said Jon Parks, "did I interrupt something?"

"Maybe," deadpanned Apollonia. "What do you have for me Jon?"

"Really Apollonia," said Jon, "if there is something pressing this can wait."

"Life is pressing," said Apollonia.

"Yeah, I know," replied Jon. "I think we're going to have to build a lab from the ground up. Every search I've done has shown that there are no failing DNA labs. If they fail, they fail within the first few months. Do you want me to find real estate that will handle what we are looking to establish? This could also be a great business investment for the future."

"Did you just talk to Howard?" asked Apollonia piqued at his quick response to her command to find or build a DNA laboratory.

"No," replied Jon. "I haven't spoken to him today."

"Ok, no problem," said Apollonia. "Shit, how did you..."

Jon laughed and said, "I didn't sleep. I was driven to find an answer to your request. I'm also looking forward to seeing the look in Ms. Margolis' face when you drop the DNA nuclear bomb on her fuckin' head."

"You don't like her much," said Apollonia.

"No," replied Jon, "I don't."

"Ok. Call Howard. I want him to find the real estate," said Apollonia. "Don't take it wrong, but he knows the business. You're my eyes and ears for security as you both look for available space. It must not stand out like a sore thumb."

"I understand, Miss Moretti," said Jon. "Anything else?"

"No," she started and then realized maybe he could do the background check on Nathan Childress. "Yes, there is one more thing. I met someone last night. He drove for the car company the family uses. His name is Nathan Childress. He's an ex-Marine. I want to hire him to be my personal driver. The company he works for will not stop me from taking him from them. In fact, he'll still be driving one of their vehicles, except the Moretti family will be his direct employer. Do a complete local, state, and federal background check on him. Expense is not an issue. If you need cash, go to Howard or pay for it out of your own pocket, get receipts, and I'll reimburse you. I want and answer before the end of business today."

"Nathan Childress," repeated Jon. "You know this is not going to be cheap considering you want a full check in less than a day." He paused and then asked, "Do you have an address on him?"

"The car company should have an address. If I were standing in front of you Jon," said Apollonia, "I would have slapped you across your face for your questioning my request."

"Ouch," said Jon in a playful mood. "Ok, Miss Moretti, you'll have the information by four."

"Thank you, Jon," said Apollonia. "If he looks good on paper, call him and have him pick up a Town Car. Tell him to drive to Columbus Place. I trust your judgment."

Jon Parks heard the connection close before he could respond.

Ming watched as Apollonia made no effort to go into the family room where Mario and her nephew Antonio sat, but instead she went to her place at the head of the oak breakfast table where she crossed her arms and placed her head on them. She did not cry, moan, or shiver. The sinews in her neck were taut as she rested her head. Ming Zheng knew her lover was keeping something inside and it was causing her stress and pain. If she didn't get her to release the stream of evil in her brain, Apollonia Moretti's head would explode not figuratively but literally. Raffaella entered the breakfast area, saw her sister, and immediately went to fill a mug with hot coffee.

Both women went to either side of Apollonia. Ming to her right. Raffaella to her left. Raffaella placed the mug of coffee in front of her sister's crossed arms. Apollonia couldn't help but smell the strong black coffee. She raised her head, unfolded her arms, and took the mug into her hands. She did not take a sip of the steaming coffee. Instead she held the mug feeling the heat rise through her hands and into her body. Apollonia felt her muscles relax and both Ming and Raffaella relaxed knowing for the moment she was in total control.

"Raffy, take Mario to his house," commanded Apollonia. "Make sure that stupid son-of-a-bitch does not do anything stupid. Remind him that I know he isn't wearing his chastity device. Tell him you'll return later to make dinner for him. No go."

Raffaella stood and asked, "What about Antonio?"

"Leave him here," was all Apollonia said.

Raffaella bent and kissed her sister's cheeks. She went into the family room to gather her father and take him home. Antonio was on the couch watching the Cartoon Network oblivious to what was going on around him. Mario Moretti stood and followed his daughter, but he stopped when he entered the breakfast area. He stared at his youngest daughter for a moment and felt the pain she felt as if his wife was lying under the knife of a surgeon. Mario did not look at his youngest daughter's lesbian lover. His insides roiled that she was living as a cunt lapper rather than making love to a strong man to continue the Moretti line. He decided to take a chance.

"Apollonia," he said in a quiet subservient voice, "may we speak for a moment?"

"What do you want, Mario?" replied Apollonia her frustration with her father showing in her face and tone of voice.

"May I sit?" he asked.

Apollonia saw Raffaella shrug her shoulders signaling that she knew absolutely nothing about what he wanted or why he stopped in the first place. Rather than be a total asshole to her hated father, Apollonia decided to let him speak, "You can sit, but make it quick."

Mario pulled back the chair that faced the kitchen, sat, and said, "Raffaella, would you get me a mug of coffee, please?"

Apollonia nodded to her sister to remain where she was standing. She looked at Mario, "Who fuckin' died and left you king? If you want coffee asshole, get up and get it yourself. Even better, why don't you just go home and brew a pot for yourself."

Mario Moretti did not move from his seat. He held his hands up, palms out, pursed his lips, and made it known that coffee was not necessary. "I wanted to express my thoughts to you about Colin. I'm concerned for him, especially being taken to that broken down hospital in the Bronx. If you'd allow me to, I can make one phone call and he'll have the best surgeon working on his face. No matter what you think of me, I do love you Apollonia."

"Ha," she spit. "Sure, you love me like you love having needles shoved into your eyeballs. The only reason you're being cordial to me is I control your fate. I make one phone call and you're in an orange prison jumpsuit in the Nassau County Jail. Think you'd survive in stir Mario?"

"I have my own set of friends, Apollonia," replied Mario. "I know they'd protect me. I'm still Mario Moretti."

Apollonia's eyes twinkled and she smiled at him like the loving daughter he thought she once was, but then she said, "One phone call from me and the world knows you're a pedophile. A torturer of children and a cannibal to boot. Or, did you forget I have all of Lucia's journals? Don't fuckin' try to go mano-a-mano with me. You'll lose."

Mario smiled, "So, you're telling me when you make love to your chink bitch, you're the pitcher and she's the catcher? I fuckin' raised a piece-of-shit lesbian. You'd rather eat pussy than bring a child into this world."

Ming's eyes widened. Her hands opened and closed. Apollonia saw and made it known to Mario he'd better apologize, "You don't want to mess with Ming, Mario. Everything I learned when it comes to the martial arts she taught me. I release her and tell her to kick your ass you won't know what hit you. Before you have a chance to protect yourself your neck will be broken. She won't kill you. She'll turn you into a quadriplegic. You'll spend the rest of your shitty life in a three-hundred and sixty degree rotational bed wishing you were dead. What is even better, I'd let the world know your ass is available because you won't feel any pain."

Mario Moretti saw the seriousness in his youngest daughter's face and eyes. He also saw her lover continue to prep her body to react to any move he would make against her. It was Raffaella's touch on his shoulder that told him it was time to leave and stop the bullshit. He did not relax or relent until he heard Raffaella whisper in his ear, "Daddy, don't fuck with her. What Appy just told you is the truth. That little sprite of a woman can take your life simply by using her pinky finger. Get up and go home. Now."

Mario Moretti heeded his oldest daughter's words. He stood up, glared at his youngest daughter, and made his way to the back door. Raffaella watched for a moment as he walked away and then she saw her sister mouth to her that she should lock him in his room. She closed her eyes and nodded her acceptance of her sister's desire to keep their father imprisoned in his room rather than giving him run of his house. It wouldn't be easy for Raffaella, but she knew if she did not succeed it would be reason for her sister to react physically.

"Ming, I'm tired," said Apollonia. "Let's go upstairs to my room."

"What about Antonio?" she asked.

Apollonia stood, pushed her chair back, and said, "Let him quietly watch television on the couch. He'll probably fall asleep so he doesn't have to think about last night's activities. Raffy should return soon."