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The Moretti's - A Different Family Dynamic

Chapter 138

Saturday – Apollonia - 8 March 2003

Apollonia reached Fifth Avenue and decided she would walk on the west side of the avenue north to 84th Street where she would turn right, cross the avenue, and head east on the side of the townhouse. As she continued north, she was visually assaulted with families walking with their children, happy, and enjoying the impending spring weather. Grapefruit league baseball was starting in Florida and Arizona as the professional teams prepared for the upcoming season. Although she did not follow baseball or any sport for that matter, Apollonia did notice a number of boys and girls carrying baseball gloves and bats. The pang of motherhood began to rise and she immediately pushed it away as she had more important issues to deal with although the idea of bedding Alessandro made her shiver with delight. The coquettish question that arose in her mind was she going to lie back and let him fuck her or was she going to press him to eat her to test his oral capability. If he was average, she would fake an orgasm then give him a hand job before sending him on his way. But, if his oral ministrations were superb and she had an orgasm or two, she might allow him to place his manhood into her for a stroke or two before pushing him off and giving him a hand job. Either way, he wouldn't ejaculate inside her.

Once she crossed Park Avenue and continued east on 84th Street, Apollonia increased her pace until she was stunned by the sight of a young child running full speed ahead towards her. She did not see anyone running after the tyke and wondered where the youngster started his run. She quickly scanned the area ahead of her and decided it would be best to catch the youngster and try to find his parents. Decisions, decisions and when she made it, she put her body in front of the oncoming freight train of a child, and when he was just in front of her she bent over and scooped up youngster. No sooner than she had him in her arms, his mother and father turned the corner from Lexington Avenue and ran towards where she stood.

"Michael!!!" they cried.

Apollonia held the boy just tight enough as he tried to squirm his way out of her grasp. She did not have to fight the youngster for long. His parents closed the gap between Apollonia and them in record time. Apollonia smiled, held the young man under his arms, face forward, and presented him to his parents.

"Thank you," the mother said.

"You're quite welcome and it seems he is quite a handful. Hope he doesn't get away often. One cannot be too careful."

Michael's parents did not want to have a conversation, so they thanked Apollonia again, turned, and walked back towards Lexington Avenue while making sure they had a good hold on their son. Apollonia was thankful they did not cry for the police and charge her with stealing their kid. With the excitement over, she returned to walking to her main objective. She crossed Third Avenue and made her way to the front of the townhouse. Apollonia mounted the steps and just as she was about to put the key into the lock, her cellular phone rang. She retrieved it from her purse, noticed the number that displayed on the screen and was not knowledgeable as to who the number belonged to. Apollonia decided to answer the call.

"Hello," she said and waited for a response.

"H-h-h-help . . ." groaned the teenager trying to speak although in a lot of pain. "P-p-p-please . . ."

Apollonia was stunned and said, "Is that you Felicia? Where are you?"

She heard Felicia take a breath and cough before answering, "Y-Y-Yes. I-I-I'm in a stairwell at the hospital. I'm on the fifth floor. P-P-Please. I-I-I'm h-h-hurt p-p-pretty b-b-bad."

Apollonia wanted to ask her what happened, but the sound of her voice was enough to tell her Felicia was hurt and hurt bad. "I'm on my way, but I need a bit more info to locate you."

The cough sounded horrible, but Felicia mumbled without stuttering, "The staircase at the end-of-the-hall from Dr. Goldsmith's office. Please hurry, I need . . ."

"I'm on my way," said Apollonia. "I have to make a phone call and I will call you right back. Don't you dare leave me."

She ended the call and immediately pressed the speed dial number for Nathan. He answered after the first ring. "Where are you?"

"On my way to pick up the individual on Park Avenue and East 67th Street," he replied.

"How far away from the destination are you?"

"About two blocks heading south on Park."

"Fuck!!! See if you can beg off, but if he gives you any backtalk, pick him up and bring him to the townhouse. Don't drop him off. I'll be waiting outside. We need to set a land speed record and get back to the Hospital for Special Surgery."

Nathan having learned about his employer stifled his why question and said, "Yes, ma'am."

Apollonia turned and dismounted the steps. She stood at the cutout in the curb and watched the time tick away on her cell phone. Using her training, she forced herself to remain calm. This day was turning into a cluster fuck. Her first priority now was getting to Felicia. She'd deal with Alessandro if he did not take the hint from Nathan and return to his office. She'd deal with him after she made sure the teenager was in good hands. After Felicia was taken care of, she would take whatever steps she needed to find and bring to justice the asshole that hurt the young girl. Sex with Alessandro would have to wait for another day. The rest of the priorities would have to fall into line and be resolved or put into a position that would allow her to move to her most important issue. Although she left a message for Ming giving her the go ahead to leave with her parents, Apollonia now thought it would be better to do whatever she needed to keep Ming by her side. Her intuition told her that she was better off with Ming than without.

'Damn,' she thought, 'I told Felicia I'd call her right back.' She went to her calls found the most recent incoming and pressed the dial key. The phone rang three times and went to voice mail. 'Fuck', she said to herself. Apollonia immediately knew that something bad had occurred in the few minutes between talking to Felicia and calling her back. Now she began to pace. First back and forth in front of the garage and then in a tight circle bounded by the

curb cutout and the garage door. What she wanted to do more than anything was scream, punch the garage door, and somehow will herself to the hospital, but that only happened in Star Trek movies. Apollonia looked at the time on her cellular phone, groaned, and continued to pace to keep a tight lid on her emotions.

The normal sounds of the city – car horns honking, car doors slamming shut, people yelling, police, fire truck, and ambulance sirens blaring – were not as loud to Apollonia because her mind was filled with Felicia's status. She tried the number a second time. Again, it went directly to voicemail. Pacing was not really helping her, so she pressed the speed dial number for Nathan. When he answered she asked, "Where are you?"

"I'm headed uptown on Third Avenue," he replied.

"Alone?"

"No. He wouldn't accept any reasoning I gave him, so, he's in the back seat."

Apollonia had a gut that Alessandro would not accept any excuse for breaking the so called '*Fuck me, date*'. It took her but a moment, "Ok, it's not an issue. I'm in front standing in the garage curb cut out. How long till you're here?"

"You should see me turning the corner," Nathan replied.

Apollonia saw the Lincoln Town Car, ended the call, and stepped into the street so Nathan would not have to pull into the space made by the curb cut out. Internally she counted the seconds, but did not make a mental note of it when the car pulled up. By the look on her face, Nathan knew not to get out of the car to open the door. When he heard the door slam shut he accelerated and began the Indianapolis 500 drive to the hospital on 70th Street.

As the car accelerated, Apollonia actually took the time to put her seatbelt on before she tried Felicia's number again. For the third time, it went directly to voicemail. She put the phone down and finally acknowledged Alessandro's presence. "To be blunt, I was hoping you'd accept whatever Nathan told you, but since you're here, you're going to sit quietly, observe, and keep your mouth shut. Instead of you getting a slow, intellectually stimulating introduction to the Moretti family, you're going to see it at its basest. I don't have time to explain and if you want I will provide carfare for you back to your office. I had for all intent and purpose sexual designs on you, but . . ."

Alessandro interrupted, "Two things, Apollonia. First, I know about your family. Doesn't take a rocket scientist to Google your family name and read. Second, my interest in you, personally, makes me understand the situation. If I can be of any assistance just ask otherwise, I'll be seen and not heard."

Apollonia nodded her head. He placed her hand on his leg just above the knee and gave it a gentle squeeze. She could see how calm he was considering Nathan was flying down Second Avenue making use of any space available to get them closer to their destination. She pulled her hand back to her lap, found the incoming calls on her cell, and for the fourth time pressed Felicia Dwyer's number. Four rings later, it went directly to voicemail.

Apollonia screamed, "FUCK!!! NATHAN, FUCKIN' DRIVE ON THE SIDEWALK IF YOU HAVE TO!!!"

The Lincoln Town Car was not built for road racing or drag racing. As cars go, it was built for luxury and a comfortable ride. Nathan Childress did his best to make the beast nimble and weave it in and out of traffic. The fourteen blocks between the townhouse and the hospital would usually take twenty minutes in typical Saturday traffic. Nathan pulled up in front of the hospital on 70th in twelve minutes. He used the rear view mirror to see his boss say to park in one of the spots reserved for emergency vehicles. Before she could say it a second time, he pulled the vehicle into the closest spot, turned off the engine, and got out of the vehicle in tandem with his boss. Alessandro sat for a moment before he too exited the vehicle.

"Alessandro," said Apollonia, "if you want to be helpful, stay here. Make up whatever you need to so the police do not tow the car." Apollonia turned to walk away when she stopped; turned back to the man she just met a

few hours earlier and said, "Just tell them the vehicle belongs to Apollonia Moretti. If they have a problem, tell them to call One Police Plaza."

Nathan tossed him the keys and followed his employer into the building. Apollonia made a beeline to the elevator bank and as luck would have it not a single car was headed down to the lobby atrium. She looked at her cell phone and made her decision. She remembered the layout of the building and decided it would be quicker to run up five flights of steps than wait for one of the elevator cabs. She looked around to orient herself, looked at Nathan, and pointed towards the left hallway. Apollonia did not say anything to her driver. She took off at a dead run for the staircase she figured Felicia Dwyer was lying on the fifth floor landing injured. Nathan Childress did not need to be told and although he was close to seven feet tall, he was quick afoot.

Both Apollonia and Nathan passed through the stairwell door and took each flight two steps at a time. First thirteen steps, the landing between floors, and the second thirteen put them on the second floor. Thankfully, each landing had a sign with the number of the floor. The one thing that Apollonia was banking on was her memory of the building's layout. She remembered which way she walked towards Colin's room when she exited the elevator. Based upon conversations with Joshua Goldsmith she ascertained that his office was on the same side as Colin's room. Before she could say anything, Nathan passed her on the staircase. She was taking steps two at a time while Nathan had increased his to three and sometimes four at a time. She lost him in a matter of seconds.

Ten minutes after she entered the stairwell, Apollonia made it to the fifth floor landing. She stopped short when she saw Nathan sitting against the wall cradling Felicia. Her head lay cradled in the crook of his left arm as his right hand gently stroked her face. Aspirated blood was dribbling from the corners of her mouth. Bubbles formed between her lips as she labored to breathe. Nathan was shaking his head as he tried to calm the girl by whispering to her that help was on the way. Apollonia fell next to the floor next to Felicia, picked up her hands, and just held them while she counted to ten so she could gain control of her raging emotions.

Felicia Dwyer opened her eyes, saw Apollonia Moretti kneeling next to her, and with her last breaths said, "Goldsmith."

The sound that emanated from her mouth was the sound of death. Apollonia Moretti held her hands and said, "Nathan, let's try to resuscitate her." What she didn't see was the pool of blood that surrounded her body.

"She's gone, Miss Moretti," said Nathan.

"Noooo," groaned Apollonia.

It took a few minutes but Apollonia got control of her emotions and knew that she needed to keep this incident under the radar. Phone calls would have to be made so people could do what they're best at doing in situations like the present one. First call was to Howard Cohen. Second was to Jon Parks. Third call was to her brother-in-law.

"Viv," said Apollonia. "Bad news. Felicia Dwyer is dead." She waited for a response and heard only his measured breathing. "She was murdered."

That got a response, "Murdered? You know the what, when, where, and how?"

"Yes. Face-to-face. Make sure everything is under control at home. Then come to the townhouse. I don't care how many speeding tickets you get, I want you there as fast as humanly possible."

"On my way. Do you need Raffy to do anything or for that matter Mario?"

"Mario, no. Tell Raffy she is in charge of Columbus Place. No one enters or leaves the compound."

"What about Ming? I believe she's in the city. Should Raffy let her return to her house?"

Frustrated Apollonia growled, "Of course, she is family."

This time Viviano ended the call. Apollonia returned her cell phone to her purse. She looked down at the dead girl and said, "Police will be here momentarily. We have to get out of here. Don't worry; we'll give our statements after I take care of some personal business."

"You'll please excuse me, Miss Moretti," said Nathan in a quiet small boy's voice, "But, we're covered in blood. Please, let's just stay here until the police arrive. We're here because she called you. I think it would be a whole lot easier if we stay put."

"You're right Nathan," said Apollonia. She moved away from where Nathan continued to hold the body of Felicia Dwyer, leaned against the wall, and sank down to a sitting position. It was then she put her hands to her face and shed a tear for the young girl. It was then the last thing she uttered struck home. In her head she said, *"I'm personally going to make him suffer. I may just become my mother."*