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The Moretti's - A Different Family Dynamic

Chapter 159

Saturday Midday – Private Hospital in Great Neck - 15 March 2003

Apollonia parked the F40 in front of the small private hospital in a parking sport reserved for the hospital administrator. The guard saw who exited the vehicle, nodded, and opened the front door for the women without commenting about where the Ferrari was parked. He nodded to Apollonia and she knew he would keep an eye on her vehicle.

The two women walked past the main nurse's desk and headed directly to Viviano's room. The nurse at the main desk picked up the phone and called Dr. Carter to inform him of Ms. Moretti's arrival. As they made their way to the room, they were stopped by a duty nurse just before the entrance to the short hallway that led to Viviano's room.

"Excuse me Ms. Moretti," said the older woman, "would you be kind enough to wait here with me for the doctor. He will be here momentarily."

Apollonia frowned and was just milliseconds short of pushing the nurse away so she could continue her walk to her brother-in-law's room. She thought for a second and said, "Of course. Would you be kind and give me some idea of how my brother-in-law is doing?"

From behind she heard, "I can do that Miss. Moretti."

"Dr. Carter," said Apollonia as she offered her hand. "How nice to see you again."

"Really now Miss. Moretti," said the doctor, "it isn't nice under the circumstances, but I will fill you in as we take the short walk to Mr. Rossi's room."

Dr. Carter took Apollonia by the elbow and guided her to Viviano's room. The walk was shorter than she remembered. The doctor did not say a word until they were in front of the glass windows of Viviano's intensive care suite. The curtains were opened, but the room was lit just enough to see in without straining one's eyes.

"Miss. Moretti," said the doctor, "he is an amazing man. We gave him one round of the most virulent antibiotic and he's come through with flying colors. His fever broke this morning just after 6:38 AM. He still has a way

to go, but I believe we have ducked the big one. If you want to go in and speak to him for just a moment, Nurse Jackson will dress you. It is still imperative that we keep him in a biosafety level 2 environment. I'll wait out here."

"Go," said Ming.

"Are you sure?" asked Apollonia.

"Of course you silly girl," replied Ming.

Nurse Jackson helped Apollonia into a white sterile gown, a hair net, booties that replaced her heels, and a surgical face mask. When she was dressed and double checked, the nurse pressed the access button and the door slid open. Apollonia entered the room and felt the negative air flow. She approached the bed and saw how peaceful Viviano looked. She turned to look at the doctor who nodded that it was ok to touch him. Apollonia put her right hand on Viviano's left arm. She whispered, "Viv, it is Apollonia."

She watched as he opened his eyes, turned his head, and whispered, "Raffaella?"

"She is home with the children."

Viviano nodded, closed his eyes, and did not say another word.

Apollonia put her right hand on his face, leaned in, and through the mask kissed his forehead. "You've made it through the toughest part. The doctor says that you need to rest and by Monday you'll be up and about."

Viviano nodded a second time, opened his eyes, stared hard into Apollonia's eyes, and said with a modicum of force, "Raffaella."

Her hand rubbed the beard stubble on his face as she said, "I promise she will be here on Monday."

Out of the blue, she felt his hand grab her left wrist. He squeezed with more force than she thought he had available. His eyes found hers, "No. I'll give you today. I want to see her tomorrow."

Apollonia did not respond to his grasp. She smiled, although he could not see it behind the mask, and said, "Tomorrow. I promise. Get some rest and I will talk to the doctor."

Viviano Rossi closed his eyes and thought about his wife and his children. He had no idea that his son was dead. His only thoughts after his family was getting healthy and returning home and to work.

Apollonia exited the room and immediately removed the mask. The nurse helped her with the gown and booties. Apollonia slipped into her shoes, turned, and said to the doctor, "How long before he is up and around?"

"If he does not have any form of a relapse, then we will get him out of bed tomorrow. He has to get vertical and walk. We know the quicker a patient gets onto his or her feet, the quicker they begin to recover."

"Can he have visitors?" asked Apollonia.

Dr. Carter thought for a moment before he responded. "I would prefer that he does not have people coming here all hours of the day and night. If you're willing to accept visiting hours between 3 and 7 PM, then he can have anyone who wants to come. The other times have to be set aside for physical therapy."

"Deal," said Apollonia. "Thank you for everything. I was not very hopeful that he would pull through."

"It was tough, but like I said Miss. Moretti; he is one very tough individual."

"That he is. No need to show us out," said Apollonia. "Ming and I will make our way to the front. You have performed admirably and I will take care."

Dr. Carter smiled, "No need to Miss. Moretti."

"Your humbleness befits you, but, I said I would and I never go back on my word."

The doctor and Apollonia shook hands. Without another word, she put her arm around Ming and began the walk to the front door.

Once in the car, Apollonia turned to Ming and said, "We need to be careful. He said only one thing to me." Apollonia did not wait for a response from her lover. "He asked for Raffy."

"Shit," was Ming's reply.

"Our day is fucked," said Apollonia as she started the Ferrari. "We need to go to the townhouse for a meeting. I'm so sorry, but I will make it up to you."

Ming touched her lover's face, "No you don't. We'll be in the city. What could be so bad? If we want, we take a room, get naked, and. . ."

Apollonia put the car into reverse and as she back out of the parking space said, "That is why I love you so much."

First gear, release the clutch, and depress the gas pedal. The Ferrari jumped from where it stood, exited the parking lot at near sixty miles an hour, and sped down the two lane road headed for New York City.