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## The Moretti's - A Different Family Dynamic

### Chapter 168

Monday – Afternoon/Evening – Apollonia's House - 17 March 2003

Mario was surprised that his youngest daughter let him lay on the couch with his head in her lap for a good forty-five minutes. He was more than amazed when she rested her right hand on the side of his head and unconsciously rubbed his cheek as she spoke with Ming and her sister. The sound of the gate phone ringing was the impetus for Mario to rise to a sitting position, as he knew Apollonia would be summoned.

Colina walked into the great room to announce, "Nathan has returned from the city with the cleric. Also, Alessandro has arrived."

"Alessandro?" questioned Apollonia. She turned for a moment to look at Ming and saw the twinkle in her eyes and the corners of her lips moving ever so imperceptibly into a smile. The frown said it all to Ming as she heard Apollonia deadpan, "And fuck you too Ming."

Colina knew that Nathan should be allowed to enter, but did not know about Alessandro. "Mistress, what shall I tell the gatehouse about Alessandro?"

"Let him enter," said Apollonia. "I'll deal with him first."

Five minutes after the gatehouse phone rang, the back door opened and slammed shut just once. Everyone knew that Nathan, the Cardinal, and Alessandro had entered Apollonia's house. What they did not know was how Apollonia was going to deal with a man that so badly wanted a relationship that he took it upon himself to just arrive without a specific invitation at the compound's front gate.

Nathan and Cardinal Montenegro entered the kitchen followed by Alessandro Bruno. The three men were surprised to find Pasquale sitting alone at the breakfast table. In front of him was a half empty bottle of Moretti red wine and he looked a sober as a judge. The Cardinal knew the elderly man was immune to getting drunk on a single bottle of wine. Just as they made the entrance to the hallway that went from the breakfast area, Apollonia confronted them.

"Nathan," commanded Apollonia, "take Montenegro into the family room. He is not to move. If he tries anything, break his neck. No, don't break it. Just wrap your huge hands around it and whisper sweet nothings into his ear about how you're going to fuck him for shits and giggles."

Nathan did not respond because the tone of his employer's voice was enough to solidify in his mind the truth of her command. Cardinal Montenegro shivered where he stood and a small wet spot appeared on the front of his pants. He was about to speak when Nathan took him by his arm and guided him into the family room. Under his breath, Nathan said to the elderly cleric, "Don't even think about trying to talk your way out of it. One stupid move and I will have the pleasure of seeing the light of life dim from your eyes. I have no desire to fuck your old ass. The small wet spot on the front of your pants shows me just how scared you are of dying."

Apollonia stepped over to Alessandro. She looked up and into his eyes. She could see his desire for her. Knowing that she did not have the time to relieve him of his pent up sexual needs, Apollonia took his right hand into hers and said, "Come with me."

Alessandro knew he had made a mistake when she did not address him by his first or even his surname. The two walked into the great room. Alessandro tried to keep his eyes from wandering, but failed miserably as he took inventory of the people in the room. He nodded to each as Apollonia guided him to the staircase nearest the entrance to her atelier. No words were spoken as they climbed the staircase, walked across the balcony, and entered the door that led upstairs to her painter's lair. Once inside one of her two psychologically safe rooms, she guided him to her desk, turned, walked back to the door, and closed it. Apollonia made a point of not locking it.

Calm and close to exploding at his arrogance, Apollonia leaned against the door as she said, "I was not expecting you. You did not call. You're lucky I did not turn you away from the gate. I am going to say this only once. Never come to Columbus Place without an express invitation."

Alessandro started to speak and was silenced by her look and the fact she raised her right hand telling him to remain silent. He nodded his head and held up his hands palms out. The idea of a response was immediately cancelled.

"I know you want me. I know you're horny as a satyr. I have important Moretti business that must take precedence over the building of our relationship. I am well aware of our first conversation at the coffee shop in Manhattan and the impression I made on you."

"I want to help," said Alessandro. "I want to show you that I have more than a large sexual organ. Yes, I want to make love to you. Yes, you've made me do sexual things I never even considered before I met you. If we are to have a relationship, then I want to show you that I have abilities. Abilities that will enhance my intelligence, physical prowess, and allow me to become more than a sexual object. I have a legal education. I am published. I'm Italian. What more do you want?"

"What I want from you is your total acceptance that I do not have the time to engage in relationship building with you. I have three major conundrums that need my undivided attention. I..."

Alessandro interrupted not caring if he was digging his own grave, "But, you have the time to be intimate with Ming. I understand and accept your desire to be with her. But, I know you want a man to give you what you so sorely need to complete you as a woman. Ming cannot do that. Only I can."

Her eyes began to change color. The turquoise started to darken. The gold flecks began to disappear. What bothered her was his arrogant, egotistical, self-serving image of himself as a provider of potent sperm. Just as she was about to cross the room, a knock was heard. Her face softened. Her eyes returned to their beautiful color. Apollonia smiled knowing what he had just said was the truth and nothing but the truth. So help her God.

"What," she said. Her voice totally emotionless.

"Mistress," said Colina, "may I enter?"

Apollonia opened the door. She stepped back and snapped, "This better be important."

"Jon Clark just phoned," said Colina as he looked past his wife for just an instant to check out Alessandro's crotch. "He wants you to call him ASAP."

"Shit," said Apollonia more to herself than to either Colina or Alessandro. She turned to Alessandro and said, "I have no time for this bullshit. I was about to rip your balls from between your legs, but the knock interrupted my strategic thoughts. You are right Alessandro and I know it. But, if you need relief, then take advantage of an excellent cocksucker and pussy boi."

When Colina heard her Mistress, she knew Mistress was offering her up to Alessandro. She stepped across the threshold of the atelier hoping Alessandro Bruno would want her mouth and or her sweet sissy pussy.

"Thanks for the offer Apollonia, but I'd rather jerk off than have sex with a deviant."

Apollonia flew across the room. Alessandro wasn't ready for her physical attack. Her usual point of attack for a man was his genitals. One good punch or kick would be enough to disable a male giving her the upper hand. Instead, she stopped just in front of Alessandro and slapped him across his face. The effort behind the slap was enough to make him take a step back as his left hand went to his cheek. His eyes bugged out of his head. *'This bitch is crazy. I should have been prepared for her onslaught,'* he thought.

"That sissy is my husband," growled Apollonia. "You show her respect or you'll end up with nothing between your legs. She did something that a lot of transgendered men would never do; especially in a marriage like ours. Colina as a man was and as a sissy is a very intelligent, strong willed human being. If you want to become intimate with me, then you apologize to her."

"And if I don't?" sneered Alessandro. His Italian backbone stiffening as he began to show his masculinity.

"Nathan will guide out of my house. No harm will come to you. He will make sure you exit the compound never to return."

Alessandro swallowed. He knew she was serious. His physical demeanor changed. While gazing at the floor in front of him, he said, "I apologize for calling you a deviant."

The second slap was quick and painful. "Look at her when you say it. Look directly into her eyes."

He raised his head, looked at Colina, and said, "I'm sorry. I apologize for being an arrogant pig. I need to learn to accept people for what they are and revel in the differences among us."

Colina did not say a word, but she wanted more than anything to go to him, wrap her arms around his waist, and hug him. Instead, she nodded while licking her lips hoping the signal would entice him.

"I'm going downstairs," said Apollonia satisfied for the moment with Alessandro's apology. "You two remain here. Alessandro, you need to work out your issues. If you come downstairs without a resolution, I will never see or speak to you again."

Apollonia stepped through the door and slammed it closed behind her.

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"Was she serious about not seeing or speaking to me?" asked Alessandro. He thought he understood her, but he knew that she would forever be an enigma.

Colina decided to move across the room. As she stepped closer to Alessandro, she said, "As serious as a gunshot wound."

"She is one crazy bitch."

"She's not crazy my dear man. She is too fuckin' intelligent for her own good. She could be in MENSA. Einstein had an IQ of 160. Apollonia was tested and she surpassed him by fifteen points. To make it easy on you, her IQ is registered at 175. She is not a math or science prodigy. Her intelligence can be seen in her art and sculpture." Colina pointed to the unfinished painting that hung from the cathedral ceiling. "That is a commission for a client that wanted it finished by now; but, they know how she works. If it takes six months or longer for her to finish, they know when it is hung in their log cabin mansion in Wyoming, it will be more than perfect for the setting." Again Colin paused, stared hard into Alessandro's eyes before he continued, "Her mind never stops. While she was talking to you, I know she was running other issues through her brain trying to calculate resolutions. Do not underestimate her, Alessandro. Never for one second think you have or had the better of her. If you do, you'll come to regret it." Colina was now standing in front of him.

"Don't take this wrong, but I so want to make love to her. I know if I copulate with her, she will see the light. I want it to be more than; please excuse the language, a simple wham- bam-thank you ma'am fuck."

Colina smiled before he said, "If you think your cock is going to turn her away from Ming, you have another thing coming. If you think your cock will make her bow to you, be advised she does not bow to any man. You need to understand that she loves me. This may sound strange considering her relationship with Ming, but, I am the love of her life. She was heartbroken when I confided in her about my transgendered psyche. I stand here a happy sissy knowing my wife accepts my femininity and I will do anything for her."

"Anything?"

"Yes, anything."

Alessandro looked around the workspace, stopped and stared at the unfinished painting, and asked, "If I asked you to help me establish a relationship with her, would you?"

"No. If you want to succeed with Apollonia, you have to do it all and I mean all on your own."

Angry and frustrated, Alessandro spat, "So, if I use you sexually, it will not enhance my position in establishing a relationship with her?"

Colina got pissed, "Listen asshole, she is my wife. I will protect her even if I have to give my life to do so. We have been together since our second year of college. I was there when she met Ming. I was there when they made love for the first time. I was there when they broke up after college. And, I was there when they reunited because Ming knew Apollonia was the only person on the face of the Earth that could help resolve two major issues in her life. As for you, you're just a delivery boy. If your sperm is a viable as you believe, then Apollonia will consider having your baby. I say consider, because she will take my counsel whether it be positive or negative. . ."

"You've got to be kidding!!! Why would she talk to you about me impregnating her?"

"You don't see it because you're blinded by your desires. You say you're intelligent. You're a lawyer. You're a published writer. You're Italian to boot. But you think with your cock when it comes to Apollonia. The quicker you come to terms with the inevitability of you getting kicked to the sidewalk, the quicker you will see that you're not going to be dominant in any relationship with her. I learned very quickly that there was a time and place for me to express my desires and show her my dominance. You – you're just another man in a line of men that have tickled her fancy. Don't get full of yourself. Take a step back and decide whether or not if you're going to accept being shit on nine out of

ten times when you interact with her. If you can't, then say your good-byes and leave knowing that she will never seek you out."

"Jesus," said Alessandro as he shook his head from side-to-side. "When we first met, I thought I had hit the proverbial walk-off grand slam home run. She was so engaging that I never saw what she was doing. I do now and I understand completely. You are my access to her. You, Colina the sissy husband, has to approve of me to end up copulating with your wife. Correct me if I'm wrong."

Colina wanted to place her feminine hand on his package, but knew better. His ability to discern the truth of the situation had finally shown through. 'God, how I want to do him,' thought Colina. Instead of putting her body as close as possible to his, Colina stepped back, and said, "The light is finally shinning on you Alessandro from the opening at the end of the tunnel. But I will digress. If you were dating her and asked for her hand in marriage, do you know what you would have to do prior to walking down the aisle?"

His face showed his disgust at the thought of sucking her father's cock before he walked down the aisle. The thought of tasting his ejaculate as he said his marital vows further disgusted him. "Yes, I know. And truthfully, I do not know what I would decide. I have to ask. Did you?"

"Really??? I am her husband. Are you that fucking stupid?" replied Colina with a smile on her face. And before Alessandro could say anything, she added, "As did Raffaella's husband. Viviano, a man's man, knelt in front of Mario Moretti, Lucia Moretti, Raffaella, and his parents and sucked Mario's cock to completion. It is a rite of passage into the Moretti family when you marry a Moretti daughter."

"What if the reverse was true? Would a future wife have to suck her father-in-law's cock?"

Colina chuckled and shook his head as he replied, "No. A wife has to be totally chaste. No sex except for masturbation. Nothing should have entered her vaginally, anally, and orally. The future bride is taken to a doctor to be fully vetted. One issue and she cannot marry into the Moretti family."

The room started to close in on Alessandro. He remembered the day he was forced to have sex with himself and on a subsequent day with Colina. He was too close to the sissy for his own comfort. While looking at Colina, he stepped back and started to walk around Apollonia's atelier. His high level of stress made him touch the tables, her desk, and he finally settled back where he started. Colina knew he was fighting inside himself. He could see Alessandro fighting the desire to have sex with Apollonia's sissy husband. Underneath it all, he wanted to feel his body rise and fall through the physicality of an orgasm. Colina knew it by the look on his face.

"Alessandro," said Colina in a soft voice, "don't fight it. If you want her that badly, then take the plunge. I'm not going to say anything aloud or silently. You're not going to have a neon sign on your forehead flashing that you had sex with a sissy, a faggot, a transgendered man. The one thing you can and will be assured of is total discretion by everyone in the family. Believe me when I tell you that fellating a man is not frowned upon by anyone in the Moretti family. And that includes aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces."

The look on Alessandro's face was one of total confusion. Colina decided it would be best to not push the man to do something he would ultimately regret. Just as she was about to step closer and take his hand, there was a knock at the door.

"Who is it?" queried Colina.

The door opened and Raffaella Rossi entered. Alessandro noticed for the first time the difference between the sisters Moretti and their individual beauty. His breath was taken away by Raffaella. He stood in awe of her. Colina licked her lips and gave her sister-in-law a look of total disdain for interrupting.

"Apollonia wants you to take care of the children," stated Raffaella.

Colina showed her frustration by shaking her head and rhetorically saying, "Why me? The answer is easy. You're a fuckin' sissy cocksucker. And, you did it all to yourself."

Raffaella stood aside from the door. She stopped Colina and whispered, "Sorry sweetheart, but Apollonia sent me." She patted her on her ass as she passed through the threshold. Once she was gone, Raffaella closed the door. The smile on her face said it all. If she had the chance, she was going to fuck Alessandro's brains out. Without saying a word, she strode to where he stood, put her hands on his biceps, and cooed, "I could use a nice hard cock right about now."

Alessandro stepped back appalled at Apollonia's sister for even thinking he would have sex with her.

Her laugh cut to his core. "Oh my poor little boy. You're offended that I would ask you to fuck me while my husband is in the hospital recovering from a gunshot wound and the ensuing infection the nearly ended his life. I won't say anything if you won't. Just come to me and without even any preliminaries, shove that ten inch monster into my cunt, and fuck me silly."

Totally at wits end, Alessandro countered, "This is a test. Your crazy sister put you up to this. I can see her mindset all over you coming here and asking me to have sex with you. I'm not biting. In fact, I'll just exit the room, go downstairs, and make my peace with Apollonia." He started towards the door and just as he opened it, he turned, and said, "Ten-and-a-half inches."

Raffaella stepped close to Alessandro. She surprised him when she placed the palm of her hand against his crotch. She gently rubbed the outline of his cock. Her smile grew when she felt him begin to respond to her touch. "Don't fight it Alessandro. Apollonia has been trying for years to fuck my husband. So, I know she has this thing for you, so, all I'm doing is playing her game. So, why don't I unzip your pants, pull out your cock, and make it hard. Then I'll turn around, pull down my pants, and you can fuck whichever hole you prefer. I won't mind as my husband never tells me which one he is going to use. I really could use a good fucking."

"NO!!!" cried Alessandro. He did not say anything else to Raffaella as he bolted out the door.

The only thing Raffaella did in response to his departure was to laugh so hard she started to cry.

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Per Colina's request, Apollonia went to the great room, pulled out her cellular phone, and called Jon Parks.

"This is Jon," said the retired New York City detective when he answered his cellular phone.

"This is Apollonia. I understand you needed to talk to me."

"Yes. I need DNA Kits ASAP. I know you're overwhelmed with work, but, I assure you that I can represent you with discretion. We're losing time and I do not want to have to give you bad news when I know we have the bitch by her short hairs."

"Well said Jon, but I cannot give you the name of my contact. To do so, would be a dereliction of my duty and my sovereign word. Give me thirty minutes. I promise you will have a time hack on when the kits will be available."

"Ok. One last question. Will you fly them to me?"

"Absolutely."

Her next call was to the Nassau County Police Department. Her contact always answered the burner cellular phone on the second ring. Their conversation was muted. It took a bit of cajoling and a promise of additional money for the contact to find current DNA kits to rifle for evidence. They agreed on four kits. Two less than Apollonia wanted, but beggars cannot be choosey.

The second call to Jon was made in under twenty minutes.

"This is Jon."

"Four kits will be expedited to you. You'll have them delivered to your hotel before midnight."

"Good. I want to get out of this God forsaken place as fast as humanly possible. Every other word is '*thank you Jesus*'. If I thanked Jesus that much, I would have made myself into a martyr. Enough said. Thank you Miss Moretti. By the way, how is Viviano?"

"He's getting better by the minute. He should be home by Thursday. Be careful and be safe. Call me the minute you know."

"I will."

Apollonia ended the call thankful that she did because a riled Alessandro came bounding down the steps into the great room.

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He made his way to the conversation pit and without a care or discretion said directly to Apollonia, "I'm no fool. Sending your sister upstairs to try and seduce me was sophomoric at best."

Apollonia looked up and towards the door to her atelier. She did not immediately respond to Alessandro's accusation. When the door opened and Raffaella stepped out, Apollonia said, "Raffy come here now!!!"

Raffaella Russo nee Moretti, bounded down the steps. She strode across the great room stopping in front of her sister. Her eyes were twinkling and her smile went from ear-to-ear. "Yes Appy?" she queried.

"I want to hear it from your lips," growled Apollonia.

Raffaella knew. Her attitude changed in a nanosecond. "Appy," she said in a small voice, "it was a joke. I meant nothing by it."

"Why don't I believe you," countered Apollonia. "You've just proven to me that you're still nothing more than a whore."

Raffaella stepped in front of her sister. She fell to her knees. Wrapped her arms around her legs and cried, "Please Appy!!! I was joking. You have to believe me." Raffaella kept her gaze focused on the floor next to her sister's right leg. She feared a harsh slap in the face if she looked up and into her eyes.

The room was silent. All that could be heard was the breaths that were taken and the silence. The silence acted as a precursor to the expected explosion of anger from Apollonia. No one dared to interject verbally or physically between the sisters.

"Look at me," commanded Apollonia. The three words sliced through the silence like a hot knife through butter.

Raffaella did as she was told. She looked up and immediately felt relieved. Her sister's eyes were still a bright turquoise. Her decision was immediate, "I swear Appy. I did as you asked. I went to your atelier to tell Colina she had to care for the children."

"What precipitated your advances towards Alessandro?"

Raffaella sighed, "I checked out his crotch. I saw that he was partially erect. So, I decided to see if he would take the bait. I wouldn't have done anything. I was just being a bitch because I know he wants you. It is plainly obvious that he is head-over-heels in love with you. Why else would he come here without first getting permission?"

"You're just a fuckin' cunt, Raffy," stated Apollonia. "Sit your whore ass down and don't let me hear another peep out of your cock sucking mouth." Apollonia turned to Alessandro and said, "Sit. Don't say another word. I did not send my sister upstairs to try and seduce you. What I told you upstairs still holds true. You want to make something of this relationship? Then sit and if I ask you a direct question, answer, otherwise, be seen and not heard."

His nod said it all as he sat down on the couch opposite Mario and Raffaella. He looked to his right and saw Ming smiling and imperceptibly nodding her head. Inside, Alessandro knew he had just accepted his submission to Apollonia Moretti. He did his best to quell the shiver that ran up and down his spine in response to her verbally dominant statement. Not a command, but a statement of fact. Alessandro hoped and prayed no one saw him shiver.

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They all heard the loud voice.

"I SAID TO SIT YOUR ASS DOWN NOW!!!"

Then they heard the cry of a man being forcibly restrained.

Apollonia rose from the couch first. The rest followed as Apollonia made a beeline for the family room. She stopped short when she saw Nathan holding the elderly cleric around his shoulders with his feet at least six inches off the floor.

"Put him down Nathan," said Apollonia relieved that Nathan did not have his hands around his scrawny throat. "It is time I talk to the old fool anyway."

Nathan did as she told him.

Cardinal Montenegro stepped away from the huge black man. He looked into Apollonia's eyes and said, "Enough. Give me my cell phone and I will call the Vatican. I will put an end to all of this nonsense."

Not caring that everyone from the great room followed her into the family room, Apollonia responded, "Like you have that power? Please, don't test my meddle. I was going to sit with you and discuss an option before I took it. I was going to give you an opportunity to look like a superstar. So, now I'm faced with the certainty that you will lose your life before the end of this day."

Cardinal Montenegro started to shake uncontrollably where he stood. He felt pins and needles all over his body. His hands were frozen at his sides. When he tried to speak nothing came out. His ability to verbalize was gone. His eyes showed his abject fear of what could happen to him. In all of his life, especially the years devoted to the church, he never felt such fear as he did now. Serving Jesus and God was his life. Somewhere deep inside, he forced a level of calmness to the forefront. His body began to relax. He felt his mind clear. Cardinal Montenegro looked at Apollonia and said, "Please. Please give me a chance to stop this nonsense. The other Cardinals will listen to me. I beg you."

"The only way the schism between the Moretti family and the church will close," stated Apollonia, "is when the pope and the College of Cardinals agree to rid the priesthood of all pedophiles and pay the boys and girls who were abused a substantial amount of recompense. Otherwise, I will as head of the Moretti family take down the church."

"Excuse me," said Mario. He looked at his youngest daughter for a sign that he should remain silent. To his relief, Apollonia nodded to him. "Cardinal Montenegro. You understand that you were returned here to witness a phone call that only two people in the world can implement. One is the Holy Father and second is the head of the Moretti family. As my daughter knows, I will make the initial call. When connected I will explain the change in leadership. Without question it will be accepted as it has through the centuries. The individual at the other end will hear the Moretti side of the story. I know in my heart-of-hearts the individual will without question accept our side of the schism."

Frightened to the core at the implication of the phone call, the Cardinal said, "You wouldn't."

"Assuredly we will," replied Mario. "As is stand here, I will take you and my daughter to my house and the phone call will be made. The end of the papacy will come and with it the start of a new millennium. The man elected will be chosen by the Moretti family. We will rid the church of each and every pedophile protected under the guise of doing God's work."

The elderly man fell to his knees. He genuflected multiple times. He looked at Mario and said, "Tell me what I need to do. I will do it. Then I will offer myself up as the first to be banished from the church. God, forgive me. Please!!!"

Mario looked at Apollonia. He saw calm introspection on her face. Her hands were not balled into fists. Her eyes were still soft and the turquoise color vibrant as ever. The decision was made by Mario. He stepped up to the kneeling priest, opened his pants, and lowered them. His chastity encased genitals were at eye level to the elderly cleric. With a controlled anger he said, "Kiss my balls. Show my daughter that you mean what you say. Fail to do so and I will make the call."

Cardinal Montenegro was beyond shocked. His eyes sought out Apollonia. She was smiling at her father's methodology. The cardinal was in the proverbial pickle. True, he was a pedophile for young boys. False, that he ever had a homosexual encounter with another man. He closed his eyes and thought about the consequences. His life as he knew it was at an end. His power no longer existed. The church would sooner end his life than give in to the demands of the Moretti family. But, if it weren't for the Moretti family, the church as it stood for millenniums would not exist.

Mario waited a moment before he demanded, "Look at me and suck my balls. In fact, I think Apollonia should let me out of chastity so I can face fuck you."

Alessandro interjected, "You've got to be kidding me. This isn't really happening."

Cardinal Montenegro opened his eyes, leaned forward, and as he tried to maintain eye contact with Mario Moretti, he pressed his lips to the man's testicles.

"Enough," cried Apollonia.

Mario stepped back and pulled up his pants. Cardinal Montenegro prostrated himself on the floor. Apollonia stepped over to the Cardinal, placed her foot under his face, and lifted it from the floor.

"Get up," she said.

The Cardinal did as he was told.

"I have your cellular phone. You will make a call to your associates. You will tell them that they have exactly one hour to make known to the world that the Pope has abdicated his throne. When that is done, a member of the Moretti family will come to the church. He will allow food and water to enter the Vatican. He will sit in the election. He will be in contact with me. When I have vetted the man I want to succeed to the Papal Throne, the College of Cardinals will vote and white smoke will pour forth from the chimney. Do you understand," commanded Apollonia.

Still frightened to the core, Cardinal Montenegro shook his head in the affirmative as tears of fear and sadness rolled down his cheeks.

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Exactly ten minutes after Cardinal Montenegro finished the call to his contact in the Vatican, Apollonia received a call from her Uncle Donaldo. The conversation was short and to the point. The six other Cardinals agreed to the Moretti terms and each man signed a useless legal document accepting their fate. What they did not know to a certainty was how long the Moretti family was going to let them live. Apollonia agreed to allow her Uncle to act as the inside man for the Moretti family. Knowing him, she knew he would steer the College of Cardinals towards one of the men who were indebted to him and the Moretti family.

CNN carried the news first. Their man in Rome reported that the present pope had renounced his throne and the papacy. Apollonia noted that her demands were met well within the time frame she set.

To no one in particular, Apollonia said, "One down. Two to go."

To Mario she said, "I am going to release you. You will return to Moretti Construction. You will be allowed to fornicate with clients. You know that you will have to check in with the court when you leave the compound." She saw him start to speak and silenced him with a look. "I really shouldn't have to verbalize this, but, one false move and I will personally end your life."

Mario nodded his acceptance. "May I go home and remove the chastity device?"

"Yes. Then return here. I want you to make arrangements for the old man to return to his family."

"What about the Cardinal?"

"He is not going back to Italy. I am going to arrange a place for him in some god forsaken area of Africa. He will live the remainder of his life, naked, and afraid," said Apollonia.

"Raffy, call Colina. Have her return with the children. I'm hungry."

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Dinner was prepared, cooked, and served by Colina and Raffaella. The children were taken by Apollonia to her atelier where she set up paint and paper for them. Her only admonition to them was to be quiet, not make a high holy mess, and when the adults were done they would come downstairs to eat. She returned to the breakfast area where she took her place at the breakfast table and asked everyone except the Cardinal to take seats for dinner.

She looked at the Cardinal and said, "Too bad I don't have a dog bowl. I would love to see you on your hands and knees eating like the piece-of-dog-shit you are." She paused, rubbed her temples, and said, "I'm going to send you back to the townhouse. You will stay there until I can make arrangements to transport you to Africa or maybe South America."

"Would you like me to return him to the townhouse?" asked Nathan. "I wouldn't mind spending some time with my friend."

"Why didn't I think of that," replied Apollonia. "How stupid of me. But of course, take the Cardinal back to the townhouse. I want him naked in a basement cell with a short chain around his ankle to limit his movement. Make sure Giuseppe knows that he is to be fed gruel once a day. Then go see your friend. Be sure to be nice to her."

The smile on his face was sincere. "Thank you Miss Moretti." He turned to the Cardinal, took him by his right arm, and guided him out the door. Nathan was thankful that the elderly cleric did not try to fight the inevitable.