

Chapter 21

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By dinner time tonight, the cardboard box Enzo brought into the house is still sitting on the dining table. In the interest of setting the table, I try to move it, but it is very heavy—Enzo made it seem lighter than it was by the way he effortlessly carried it into the room. I'm scared if I try to move it, I'll accidentally drop it. Odds are good there's some priceless Ming vase inside, or something equally fragile and expensive.

I study the return address on the box again. Evelyn Winchester—I wonder who that is. The handwriting is big and loopy. I give it a tentative shove and something rattles inside.

"Early Christmas present?"

I look up from the package—Andrew is home. He must have come in from the garage entrance, and he's smiling crookedly at me, his tie loose around his neck. I'm glad he seems to be in better spirits than yesterday. I really thought he was going to lose it after that doctor's appointment. And then that terrible argument last night, where I was half-convinced Nina had murdered him. Of course, now that I know why she was institutionalized, it doesn't seem nearly as far-fetched.

"It's June," I remind him.

He clucks his tongue. "It's never too early for Christmas." He rounds the side of the table to examine the return address on the package. He is only a few inches away from me, and I can smell his aftershave. It smells... nice. Expensive.

Stop it, Millie. Stop smelling your boss.

"It's from my mother," he notes.

I grin up at him. “Your mother still sends you care packages?”

He laughs. “She used to, actually. Especially in the past, when Nina was... sick.”

Sick. That’s a nice euphemism for what Nina did. I just can’t wrap my head around it.

“It’s probably something for Cece,” he remarks. “My mother loves to spoil her. She always says since Cece only has one grandmother, it’s her duty to spoil her.”



“What about Nina’s parents?”

He pauses, his hands on the box. “Nina’s parents are gone. Since she was young. I never met them.”

Nina tried to kill herself. Tried to kill her own daughter. And now it turns out she’s also left a couple of dead parents in her wake. I just hope the maid isn’t next.

No. I need to stop thinking this way. It’s more likely Nina’s parents died of cancer or heart disease. Whatever was wrong with Nina, they obviously felt she was ready to rejoin society. I should give her the benefit of the doubt.

“Anyway”—Andrew straightens up—“let me get this open.”

He dashes into the kitchen and returns a minute later with a box cutter. He slices open the top and pulls up the flaps. I’m pretty curious at this point. I’ve been staring at this box all day, wondering what’s inside. I’m sure whatever it is, it’s something insanely expensive. I raise my eyebrows as Andrew stares into the box, the color draining from his face.

“Andrew?” I frown. “Are you okay?”

He doesn’t answer. Instead, he sinks into one of the chairs and presses his fingertips into his temples. I hurry over to comfort him, but I can’t help but stop to take a look inside the box.

And then I understand why he looks so upset.

The box is filled with baby stuff. Little white baby blankets, rattles, dolls. There's a little pile of tiny white onesies.

Nina had been blabbing to anyone who would listen that they were expecting a baby soon. Surely, she mentioned it to Andrew's mother, who decided to send supplies. Unfortunately, she jumped the gun.

Andrew has a glazed look in his eyes. "Are you okay?" I ask again.

He blinks like he forgot I was in the room with him. He manages a watery smile. "I'm okay. Really. I just... I didn't need to see that."

I slide into the chair next to his. "Maybe that doctor was wrong?"