

Chapter 20 - Daisy - Poor Unfortunate Idiots

The lightning flashes in the sky like a camera snap, and I rush out of the autumn rain before it can soak me completely. The darkening sky gives the precinct reception an eerie, edgy lighting.

I'm here for it.

I balance the box on the palm of my hand as I flash the officer at the front desk a goodie-two-shoes grin and he buzzes me into the now familiar offices.

Scanning the room, my eyes linger on the top of Cole's head, bent in fervent whispers with his partner.

Such a hard worker.

He's going to be so good at earning a living for me when we're happily married with a rabble of kids.

I am going to *rock* the pregnant look.

I saunter down the aisle of mismatched desks with a big smile. Sure, Chelsie was supposed to die either with a needle in her brain... or after a healthy amount of psychological torture, but, really, she's dead and that's the main thing.

And, at the end of it all. I got Cole. He's officially mine. Incontestably mine. No Eliza, she's been dumped and fired.

So when I'm walking through the desks making a bee line for my man I have the biggest beam on my face. The smile that always makes Cole soften when he sees me. He turns and looks at me coming between the desks and gives me a stiff wave, dropping his head to say something to Jahlani quickly before standing to greet me.

There's rigidness in the way he smiles, standing there like an ironing board.

Bless his cotton socks! He's nervous!

I could *not* love him more if I tried.

The sexual tension rolling off this man is extreme and I cannot wait to feel everything he's got to give. Because if his back is this stiff...

I think you know where I'm going with that one.

“Hey boys,” I chirrup, saucily. I am shamelessly pushing my breasts forward. It's true and I don't regret it because Cole's eyes flicker down to them like they're magnetised. He's so goofy.

“Hey Daisy,” Jahlani says with a small, awkward wave- he must know what happened last night.

Shit.

I'm not acting emotionally scarred enough.

My smile drops spectacularly quickly and I show a haunted expression of someone who's barely seen a drop of blood and yesterday watched a taxi nearly take a woman's arm off. (Nearly, but not quite. It was quite beautiful.)

“I-” I drop my gaze to the floor and grind a bashful foot against the stained and disgusting carpet. “I came to drop off some cupcakes to everyone. They were so nice last night, really put me at ease, you know?”

Both boys just nod.

It's a little weird.

“Would you like one?” I open the lid, looking up at them both through my lashes.

Jahlani steps back, like he's worried there's a snake in there or something. Must be a victim of a lot of office pranks, poor man. “Uh- uh no. I'm... I'm gluten free.” He stammers.

“Oh really?” I say a note of regret in my voice. “I'm so sorry, Jahlani. I didn't know! I'll go get you a gluten free cupcake.”

I start to turn but he practically shouts a “No!” at me. “No... I'm trying to slim down.”

Cole doesn't seem bothered by his partner shouting at me, which... not going to lie, Cole, bit of an orange flag, but I'll teach you better soon enough. His eyes are just fixed straight on the rainbow box of cupcakes, unblinkingly.

“Here, honey,” I say sweetly with the daintiest little smile. I reach into the box and pull out a blue cupcake (to match his soul) and hold it out to him.

His eyes flicker from the cupcake in my hand to my face and back. (God he has fallen *hard*- if I knew he was going to be this far gone after only one kiss I would have smooched him weeks ago.)

Eventually, he takes the cupcake from my fingertips with a shy “thanks.” I beam at him, bringing my finger into my mouth to suck off the bit of caught icing sugar on them. I make sure to catch Cole's eyes as I hollow my cheeks and pull my finger from my lips in slow motion.

The way his eyes zero in on the movement is absolute gold. I want to do it again but I can't find the excuse.

And, too bad for me, this is when Uncle M decides to arrive, pulling me into a one armed hug.

"Alright Daisydoo?" he booms in his loud, deep voice, startling the entire bullpen. "You brought cupcakes! You are too sweet. Lads?"

He turns around to the office and gestures, making the entire room swivel to its feet and start nicking cupcakes from the box with murmured greetings and thanks. I smile sweetly and bat my lashes at them all as they come, reveling in the attention. All the while, Cole can't keep his eyes off me.

Even Uncle M. notices, "Don't worry Daisy, I already had The Conversation with Cole here. Made sure his intentions are correct." He looks so chuffed with himself. He's always been so good to me. Made sure I was safe, even at the cost of the rest of his family. He chose me over everyone else, and I'll forever be in his debt for that.

"Yeah?" I giggle, turning to Cole, still in his startled meerkat pose. "And what intentions would that be, detective?"

Cole goes honest-to-God bright red, to his ears. "I -uh... well, about that..." He looks so flustered, I'm just melting for this man.

The booming laugh of my uncle fills the precinct once more. "Look at that, poor fella. Don't put him on the spot like that, Dais. I've already warned him. You're going to eat the poor man alive."

All the colour disappears from Cole's cheeks in an instant, leaving him pale and wide eyed. I know exactly what kind of eating he's thinking about. Naughty boy.

As Uncle M chortles to himself and walks away I lower my voice so only Cole can hear me, my eyes fixed on his. "Only if you eat me first." I promise.

There's a beat, a long pause as Cole's eyes widen in realisation of what I've just suggested. The look he gives me is heated, passionate and filled with desire as his eyes flicker to his desk behind me. For a moment, I wonder if he's about to pick me up, throw me onto the desk, tear off my panties and eat me out right here in front of everyone.

I'd let him.

Obviously- wouldn't you?

But he wouldn't, because he's such a good man. He'd never disrespect me like that. Instead he just stands there like a lemming, frozen, cupcake in hand.

Jahlani breaks the tension with an awkward ha-ha-ha of a laugh, rising from his seat behind Cole.

“Uh... Cole... man... Uh... you remember what we were talking about... with that suspect?”

Cole nearly jumps out of his skin.

He hates talking about the case in front of me, protecting my fragile feminine ears from my own evil ways. It's endearing as fuck.

“Well...” Jahlani continues carefully, obviously sharing Cole's penchant for chivalrous gatekeeping. “I was just thinking we don't have enough *evidence*.” He stresses the word carefully.

Something about the way he says it is suspicious, like he's trying to keep something from me. Is Cole cheating on me? Surely not... Cole's too good. If he wouldn't cheat on *Eliza* with *me*. Then there's no way he'd cheat on me with anyone. So what is it about *evidence* that Jahlani wants Cole to understand?

It's probably nothing. These men and their frail, fragile, toxic egos are trying to make themselves sound important again.

“Right,” Cole says carefully, facing Jahlani. He carefully puts the cupcake down on his desk like it's about to explode. “Uh... can you... look after that for me, Sinclair? Don't let anyone eat it.”

His partner gives him a furtive nod like it's the greatest mission he'll ever do. Their bromance is so cute. I wonder if Jahlani and I could do Cole together one day?

Mmf. Maybe not, I don't think I'll ever be okay with sharing Cole.

Cole turns back to me and I give him a winning smile once more, channeling my inner princess just for him. “Daisy, why don't we go for lunch? I've just got to go grab something real quick and I'll be back with you in like... ten minutes?”

“Sure!” I chirp. “I'd love to! Can't show you the food truck spot I was telling you about, 'cause of the rain, though. We could go back to mine?”

As if on cue, the precinct is lit up by a flash of lightning and an ominous boom rattles around the room making several of the cops jump. Pansies.

“Uh... well... how about we go to a restaurant?”

I nod. “Exciting! It's like our first real date!”

He gives an awkward laugh once more. “Yeah. Well.. not really... Just wait here?”

Nodding once more as he disappears I turn to look at the murder wall that's grown exponentially since I sent them to DI Coombes.

Jahlani watches me carefully, no doubt making sure I don't move anything and I flash him a smile as I turn from the board.

Their desks are covered in box upon box of my guests. Evidence up to their ears and they're still no closer to catching me.

I sigh.

They've boxed up my guests, tacked them to the walls like trophies. Clues everywhere. But still: nothing.

I should be offended. But, really, I'm kind of flattered.

Poor, unfortunate idiots.