

Chapter 39 - "Rehab", Amy Winehouse.

I'd kill you; I'm not sure whether with kisses or with comeuppances.

What the hell is happening... I don't wish this on anyone. Anyone! Well, no. On Leo, yes. This for Leo and a million comeuppances.

When I sat at my desk, I prayed that Pipa would have decided to spend her mother's birthday with her mother, but no. Pipa only gave a shit about Pipa's feelings, so she went to work without remembering that her holy creator had a birthday. She could relax. She received a bouquet of flowers with a note for her before midday.

When I saw her come back, I couldn't repress an avalanche of memories: her boyfriend sat with his legs open and a shirtless lad sucking him off between them. It's something that no one wants to see their boss's boyfriend doing. If it had been two strangers, I most likely would have applauded or whistled. I'm good at whistling with two fingers. My father and brother taught me how. I tried to smile at her, but it turned out weird, because she grimaced in response.

"What kind of face is that, Maca?"

"Nothing. Good morning."

"Ah! I know what's happening here. Did you decide to listen to me and put botox on those smile lines? Partial paralysis is normal. In two months' time, you'll smile like a human again. Now... show me the mirror. You look like a hyena."

And you're living with a guy who likes dick. I bit my tongue.

"Did you see my dressing room? What did you think?"

Badly and from a distance. Your boyfriend's lover blocked it, sucking cock. I rubbed my eyes.

"I've thought of some things that can help you with organisation." Things that I've thought about a for a while, of course, but that I kept for a moment like this. "The wooden hangers are a problem; they take up a lot of space. I think that you're going to have to get rid of everything that you don't wear. With the clothes in the drawers, we will try another organisation style."

"Okay. When Pelayo and I are in Paris next month, you can jump on the chance to reorganise it." Did she have to call me out in this exact moment? And the worst thing... Why did I feel so bad for her? But yes, she was an insufferable bitch. I grabbed my phone on the sly and put it in my handbag.

"Would you like a coffee?"

"Coffee gets cold. A green tea'd be better."

I put my back against the wall of the backroom and sent a message to my girls whilst the water was heating and the coffee maker was going.

Help. I know something about Pipa that I shouldn't and she has no idea. Morally, I think I should tell her. She's living a lie. I know she's a horrible person, but don't you think she deserves to know the truth?

I bit my lip anticipating a response. Jimena was the first to respond.

Bad idea. The tyrants always shoot the messenger. Imagine that your office is North Korea... do you really want to bring bad news to the Spanish Kim Jong-un?

I looked towards her desk. She was staring at the reflection of the turned off computer screen. She was right. My phone buzzed again.

Maybe for this step, be honest despite the consequences it could bring you. It will open her eyes and she will finally realise that you are someone she can really trust. Follow your heart.

Of course, that was Adriana.

No way. But... what do you know? Is it juicy? Tell me everything. I'll keep your secret.

Jimena, of course, was the one to ask about the secret.

No fucking way.

I closed the group and I put my phone in my handbag. I took the coffee cup for me and the tea for her and I brought them to our desks.

Pipa studied the state of her split ends with the interest of a scientist concentrated on a microscope. And I looked at her imbued in a bad, terrible trance where images of Pelayo's secret, the morally reproachable act of my silence and... something about my little secret also mixed.

Don't let us forget how the absurd revenge from the previous afternoon had tasted in the moment, but now, going on to the heat of the battle, I felt extremely stupid.

The blonde girl lifted her gaze towards me and I quickly concentrated on my computer screen, with my famous capacity for zero simulation.

"Hey. You..." she called me. How I didn't turn straight away (like most people at the office), she insisted: "Macarena."

"Yes?"

"What's up with you?"

"With me?" I signalled myself. "Nothing."

"You're looking at me weirdly."

"Nooo." I exaggerated denial.

"Yes." She affirmed, "is it my make up? Do you think it's too much?"

I looked, confused, at her impeccable complexion: the beige eye shadow on her lids and the perfect eyeliner on her long eyelashes. In what parallel world would the discreet and elegant make up she wore be too much?

"The make-up is great. You look very pretty."

Pipa blinked and smiled. Ah, okay. She wanted me to shower her with compliments. As always. In reality, she didn't have a clue... Or did she? A nervous knot in my stomach pushed me to keep talking.

"Hey Pipa, how's it going with Pelayo?"

"With Pelayo? Well, as always. If there's any upside to the fact that Pelayo is a bit boring, it's that there are no surprises."

Oh, fucking hell.

"And.... Can I ask you about.... Eduardo?"

"Eduardo?" Her face lit up with the presence of even more compliments, "Well, he texted me last night and we were talking for two hours. Thank God we live in two different countries. He's one of those guys..."

"What guys?" I asked, intrigued.

"One of those who any girl could fall in love with without question."

"And that's a bad thing?"

"Terrible." She clarified harshly, "The worst. A woman should always ask questions."

I was surprised, I won't deny it. I didn't expect something like that from Pipa, the woman who's biggest worry was about being the prettiest woman on the face of the earth. It was an interesting reflection to say the least.

"Sometimes you give into love without doing anything, right?" I answered with a thread-bare voice.

"Yes, but that is the difference between emotion and emotional intelligence." Pipa leaned on the

desk and stared at me. “A few crazy nights with a wild guy from another country is... a bad idea. Falling in love with someone who turns you into a person that’s impossible to control... In other words, a woman should always be aware and responsible for her actions, Maca. Not even love is a sufficiently grounded excuse.”

“Love can do anything...” I saw how she looked at me and I regretted my cheesiness. “No?”

“No.” She denied, “Love doesn’t pay, love doesn’t lift you up, love doesn’t...”

“But... You love Pelayo, don’t you?” Pipa smiled condescendingly before straightening herself again.

“Ay, Maca, you know what happens to girls who keep believing in love? In a Disney-fairytale type love, I mean, in romantic love and that ‘butterflies in your tummy’ stuff... which will wither, because sooner or later, life makes sure to show us that magic no longer exists.”

My heart started beating strongly out of my chest, without really knowing why those words were affecting me so much. Pipa wasn’t talking about me. She didn’t even know half of the ins-and-outs of my love life. Even I didn’t know them, for Christ’s sake. I was talking to her in certain terms to try to decide if I wanted to tell her – or not – about Pelayo. What sense would it make to take her words and apply them to myself? None. No reason to worry. I swallowed and forced myself to speak.

“So, you don’t believe in love? You’re not, um, in love with Pelayo?”

“I didn’t say that.” She blinked. “It’s only that... I’ve learned what love is like in reality and how important it is in life. Pelayo can be a bit boring, but... it’s him. He’s ‘The One’.”

The bell saved me from an impulse to cross myself. I got up and answered the intercom.

“Yes?”

“Interflora. A delivery for Macarena Bartual.”

I opened it up with a strange pressure in my chest and I walked back towards Pipa. Could I have cocked up and sent myself the flowers that I wanted to send to my boss’s mother? Oh God, I hope not. I hope not.

“Who is it?”

“Um..., flowers.”

I don’t even know what I wrote in the signature box. My name, my ID number, my blood group or my bank password, your guess is as good as mine. Afterwards, with shaky hands, I had to take charge of the present: the most lugubrious funeral crown in history: dark green, purple, black and, as a sign of good will, a little bit of white. If Pipa saw it, she’d have a fit. What the hell, that’s what he was giving me right now! What kind of shit was that?

“Have they sent you flowers, Macarenita?” Pipa said in a happy voice.

Oh God.

“Uh...”

I had no escape route. I couldn’t fit through the window and I couldn’t abandon her in the landing. I came in with the flower crown and I was stuck looking at my boss with the only perplexed expression I could manage.

“But what’s this??”, she screamed in terror, “Dead people’s flowers?!”

I put them next to the pale pink sofa and I took a step back to look at them. A chill passed through my spine. Above the flowers, a purple band read: “Your dignity does not forget you”. I covered my face.

“Has someone died on you, Maca? Is that why you’re acting so strange?” Pipa asked, hiding under a jacket to not see the flowers. I approached it again to see the shiny plastic that contained a card that I rudely ripped off. Inside the envelope, with impersonal typed handwriting, it said:

Dear Macarena,
My sincere condolences for your loss of willpower. Don’t let it get you down. It happens
to most of us.
With all my love,

Sounds Like Love (Fuimos Canciones), Sample.

Tr, ALANNAH PURSLOW

Mobile: 07511721133/ Email: alannah@translatome.co.uk/SoA member number: 74682

Leo

PS: Fuck you. D.E.P.

“Son of a bitch!”