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The Moretti's - A Different Family Dynamic

Chapter 180

Friday Afternoon – Hell's Kitchen - 21 March 2003

Nathan did not drive at a breakneck speed to get into the city. He arrived shortly after noon which gave him just about two hours to find the house of ill repute favored by the McCool character. Rather than drive around looking for on street parking, he parked on 46th Street and 8th Avenue at an outdoor lot. He spoke with the car jock to get his car placed at the beginning of a row that faced 8th Avenue so it would be easy for him to exit the parking lot. A fifty dollar bill sealed the deal. The streets and avenues were busy with native New Yorkers and tourists. Hell's Kitchen buttressed the Theatre District and went as far West as the Hudson River. The area consisted of restaurants, small businesses, and a lot of five and six story residential tenement buildings. Nathan pulled out his cellular phone and speed dialed a number.

"Maxwell here," said the voice on the other end of the call.

"Maxwell, Nathan here. Where are you and can we meet? It is very important."

"I'm in a small Italian joint on west side of 8th between 49th and 50th."

"Stay there. I am on my way."

Nathan ended the call and began his walk uptown by crossing over 8th Avenue to be on the west side of the avenue. He did not have that far to go. What he had to do was navigate the pre-theatre crowd and the workers from the skyscrapers surrounding Times Square. Broadway plays started at 2PM. The theatre goers were out and about seeking restaurants where they could eat and have them waiting on line to see their chosen show with enough time to spare. New Yorkers were just being themselves. Making their way to a favorite restaurant for lunch or as some were prone to do, headed to an 8th Avenue sex shop to go into a booth, drop a few dollars, and jerk off to their chosen pornography.

The Italian joint was exactly that. One of the narrowest store-fronts Nathan had ever encountered. The pizza ovens ran down the south side of the store. There were several small tables and chairs that ran down the north side. They were all empty except for the table furthest back. To Nathan, most of the customers took their pizza with them or had it delivered. He made his way down to the last table where Maxwell sat. No food or drink was in front of him on the table. Nathan did not say anything to Maxwell. He just pulled out a chair and sat juxtaposed to where his friend sat. The angle of his seat allowed him to easily turn his head and quickly survey the front of the store.

"What is so important?" asked Maxwell noticing that Nathan has not greeted him with a casual hello.

"I need to find a high-end executive whore house," replied Nathan. "All I know it is located in Hell's Kitchen. And, Hell's Kitchen is your stomping ground."

With a bit of a twinkle in his eyes, Maxwell asked, "Are you in need?"

"Funny," replied Nathan. "This is super important and super hush-hush. You have to keep your lips sealed."

The nod of Maxwell's head told Nathan he had nothing to worry about. They served together in the Corps. Maxwell was smart enough to keep his strengths secret and did his four year bid stateside. The only Marine who Maxwell trusted unconditionally was Nathan. When things went south for Nathan, it was Maxwell who moved heaven and earth to make sure all aspects of the imbroglia were covered and no one got into trouble.

"I know of two maybe three possibilities," said Maxwell. "Is there anything in particular I should know about this whorehouse?"

Nathan rubbed his face, put his hands flat on the tabletop, and said, "Yeah, there is. There is a strong possibility that this den of iniquity is geared towards the pedophile crowd. So much so, there is a strong odor of childhood slavery surrounding it."

"How soon do you need to know its location?"

"Yesterday. There is an individual that goes there every day at two in the afternoon." Nathan looked around and his face showed he did not feel comfortable continuing the conversation where he was seated.

Maxwell saw the change in Nathan. He stood and said, "Follow me."

Nathan did as he was asked and followed. Maxwell made his way to the rear of the store, through a door, and down into the basement. It was tight getting to the next door, which Maxwell used a special key to open. He nodded to Nathan and they went down another set of steps into a small but very clean subbasement. There was a desk, three chairs, and a small file cabinet in the room. Maxwell sat behind the desk and pointed to either of the chairs. Nathan pulled to one to his right out and sat.

"We're safe here," said Maxwell. "No one will bother us because no one can get down here without me. Also, the employees know better than to acknowledge to anyone that his little private space exists. Keeping it real, this space is very illegal based upon New York City Real Estate Law."

"I digress," said Nathan, "but what the fuck are you up to?"

Maxwell smiled, "I own this joint. It is a front for my money making illegal activities. I keep a low profile, but I am known for producing the best ecstasy on the market. The fuckin' Mexicans are furious over my capabilities. That being said, what is going on?"

"Your word?"

"Absolutely brother. You should know better."

"I work for a very wealthy and strange family. My boss is a woman who makes me look like a fuckin' loser when it comes to fighting and shooting. Let's just say that if it wasn't for me proving myself I wouldn't be working for her. Her father is in a world of hurt. She is doing everything possible to stop any and all legal proceedings against him. Our background information on what we believe to be one of the main players brings me here. I trust you implicitly and with my life."

"There are very few people in New York much less on the face of the earth that could get you to give more than one-hundred percent of yourself to them. She must be one hell of a woman."

"She is. Her family goes back for centuries. But, that is not of import right now. I need to find this whorehouse. Think you can move heaven and earth and have me standing in front of the place by one-thirty this afternoon?"

"I need to know more Nathan."

"I understand. The person I'm after is a low level criminal who does what we believe is some very sick work for the Nassau County District Attorney. Her name is Melanie Margolis. Her husband is some big hedge fund CEO. My boss is after enough dirt to sink the bitch and her husband. She believes that the D.A. is a pedo and complicit in child pornography, slavery, torture, and murder. This low life employee, if you could call him that, goes to this whorehouse every afternoon to dip his wick. We believe he is also the individual that selects youngsters to be transported upstate. He may be the person that actually does the transportation, but we are moving blindly. I need to find him. I need to a quietly take him into my custody."

"Fuck... I hate people like that. What has a child ever done but be a child. Those fuckin' perverts. Rather than sit here while I make some phone calls, why don't you go across the street to the French Bistro and get yourself something to eat. I will call over there and make sure you are taken care of. I promise that you will be standing in front of this so-called executive whorehouse no later than one forty-five."

To his word, Maxwell had Nathan standing across the street from a six story residential tenement building on 58th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues. There were local stores, but for all intent and purpose it was a quiet residential block. What made Nathan more irate was the mothers pushing carriages or walking hand-in-hand with their children up and down the street. The building could be considered nondescript except for the steps leading underneath the main steps heading to the front doors. When you surveyed the buildings on the block, not a single building had a just below street level entrance. What also made the building stand out from all of the others was the lack of open windows or open shades to allow the small amount of sunlight available into the rooms that faced the front. From the moment Nathan stood in front of the building, his eyes moved from left to right checking out the single men that inhabited the street.

"Hey Max," said Nathan without looking at his friend, "I have to thank you. I knew you could do it, but in just a few hours; man that is incredible. Anything you need, just ask. I cannot thank you enough."

"We're brothers in arms, Nathan," said Maxwell, "and you never ever have to say that to me. It goes both ways. If what you told me is true, I'd love just one shot at some fuckin' asshole millionaire who thinks he or she can abuse children because they have money or political power. But, just do me a favor. Be careful and take care of business."

"Don't worry Maxwell," said Nathan, "I will."

The two men shook hands and without any other words, Maxwell departed for his small pizzeria on 8th Avenue. Nathan decided to walk to 10th Avenue, cross to the west side of the street and look back at the building. What struck him was the lack of residential activity. He looked at his cell phone for the time and decided to return to the east side of 10th Avenue juxtaposed to the building he was surveying. His eyes continued to search the street from what he hoped would be the telltale signs of the low-life criminal heading to his two o'clock rendezvous.

What surprised Nathan was at precisely five minutes to the hour, a group of men and women departed the building from the basement door. They did not speak to each other or acknowledge that they were in the same building for whatever time they had spent inside. A few men waited up the block before approaching the building. It was as if they were instructed to maintain their distance until the others left not only the building but the street. Nathan watched five men walk up to the steps, descend them, and enter the building. What he hadn't noticed was their entering a ten number code on the hidden keypad to gain entrance. He surveyed the block and could not believe his luck. Walking down the street from 9th Avenue was his prey. He was in a world of his own and because of the way he was dressed, you could not mistake him for anything other than a low-life Mafioso. Open collared shirt unbuttoned to his stomach, gold chains, gold bracelets, gold rings, jeans, sneakers, and a fedora from the thirties. Marshall McCool was the epitome of a man who rose to the highest level of a criminal enterprise without being made. By his stride and dress, he did not realize he was a total loser.

Nathan decided to try and take him on his way into the building was not a great idea. He would wait for as long as it took for McCool to do his thing and use the time to figure where it would be best to grab him. If he needed to, he would follow him for the rest of the day and use the night to figure out the best plan to grab the asshole. To make things easy for himself, Nathan found a spot across the street where he could lean against the steps, drink a coffee, and wait.

Marshall McCool approached the building and before descending the steps looked up and down the street. What made Nathan laugh was the man's stupidity for just surveying the side of the street he was on. McCool rubbed his hands together, checked his pockets, and descended the steps. It took but three minutes for the man to begin to scream. "What the fuck!!!" he yelled. "I've been using this code forever!!! Let me the fuck in!!!"

'Whoa,' thought Nathan, *'customers have a private code to enter that building. Not going to grab him inside.'* He watched McCool go off the deep end. He also did not want whatever security personnel was inside to exit and force McCool from the building. Maybe it was time to use his size, strength, and intelligence to convince the idiot to go with him to fix the entrance issue. Nathan stood tall, crossed 58th Street, and walked directly to the steps where McCool was beginning to throw a hissy fit.

"McCool," snapped Nathan, "what is your problem. You crazy or something?"

Trying to stand all of his five foot nine inches as compared to Nathan's seven foot two inch height, McCool responded, "Who the fuck are you nigger?"

"Wrong thing to say to be white boy," retorted Nathan. With the swiftness of a Cheetah, Nathan's left, non-dominant hand, found the right side of McCool's head. The open-handed slap sent McCool sprawling down the stairs. Nathan knew he had blown it by hitting the man but his hope was there was no security cameras around the basement entrance. He watched McCool hit the bottom of the six steps and waited a count of fifteen. When no one from the building came out, Nathan assumed he was safe. He descended the steps and with a simple pulled closed fist punch, knocked Marshall McCool out cold. The issue would be explaining to any NYC police officers why he was carrying an unconscious white man over his shoulder. Rather than debate with himself, he started down 58th Street towards 8th Avenue using his city smarts to keep as close to the buildings as possible. When he reached 8th Avenue he would cross to the east side of the street, turn south, and make his way to the parking lot at 46th Street.

The twelve block walk took twenty minutes to complete. Thankfully, he just got some strange looks from passersby and not a single NYC police officer stopped him or impeded his progress. It could have been his size or the absolutely insane idea that a seven foot black man would be carrying an unconscious white man down 8th Avenue without a care in the world in the middle of the afternoon. New Yorkers kept to themselves by knowing when to look or stare at someone or something. Their life depended upon the cliché, *'do not upset the apple cart'*. The Lincoln Town Car was parked exactly where he wanted. He use a second set up keys to pop open the trunk whereupon he dumped

McCool into the cavernous space. To be completely sure the asshole would not wake up, he punched him just hard enough on the temple to assure he would remain unconscious.

The parking lot attendant saw what happened, but did not do anything to stop Nathan. He approached with the keys and offered them to his customer. Nathan handed the parking voucher with another fifty dollar bill folded under it to the attendant. Nothing was said between the men. Nathan simply nodded, opened the driver's side door, and when the flow of pedestrians allowed it, he pulled out onto 8th Avenue and headed uptown to the townhouse."

He sat in traffic wondering if there was a God, because he had no thoughts or ideas that he would find yet capture McCool on the first day. He was not tense or nervous over what he had just accomplished. He pressed the voice control button on the steering wheel and said, "Call AP on mobile." The hands-free voice responded and in a few seconds he heard Apollonia's phone ringing.

"Apollonia."

No hello or banter from Nathan, just three words, "I have him."

"Wait," said Apollonia. Having noticed the time on her cell phone, she was amazed that Nathan had performed his capture so quickly. "You have him in custody?"

"Yes," replied Nathan. "He is alive but very unconscious in the trunk of the car."

"Fuck me you're good. You'll have to tell me the details. When will you arrive at the townhouse?" asked Apollonia.

"No more than twenty minutes," he replied.

"I'll call Pricilla. They will be waiting for you in the garage," said Apollonia.

Nathan heard the line go dead and knew Apollonia would not talk to him again until McCool was safely ensconced in a basement cell of the townhouse. He was amazed at how simple it was for him to capture the idiot. It will be fun to watch him beg and plead for his life. The bet would be how many times he would invoke without really mentioning her name his special relationship with a very powerful person. A district attorney. He'd threaten and cajole. The bottom line, he would not make it past the batter's box. Marshall McCool was in for an education. Nathan postulated to himself that the slime-ball would last only five minutes before he pissed himself and spilled the beans.

Uptown and crosstown traffic was typical for a Friday afternoon. He pulled up in front of the cutout for the garage eighteen minutes after he departed the parking lot on 46th Street. He did not have to get out of the vehicle. The garage door rose from its closed position the moment the nose of the Town Car stopped a foot from the closed door. Nathan pulled in and turned off the car. He exited the vehicle and saw Giuseppe standing at the door after pushing the button to close the garage door.

"Where is he?" asked Giuseppe.

"In the trunk," replied Nathan.

"Out cold?"

"Very much so. I'll carry him to where you want me to deposit him."

"Follow me."

Nathan retrieved the unconscious McCool, flipped him over his shoulder, and followed Giuseppe into the basement. He could see that one of the cells was occupied, but the door was not closed fully or locked. It could only mean that Pricilla's former boyfriend was in residence. He saw the elderly man go to the furthest cell, unlock it, and open the door. He dumped McCool on the steel cot and said, "Undress him. Take all of his jewelry. I want nothing in this cell that he can use to commit suicide. If you have to, stand watch over him or if you have the ability, keep him sedated."

"Sedation would be best," said Giuseppe. "I will give him a dose now. Then I will cut off..."

"No!!!" cried Nathan. "Undress him. We'll need his clothing unless for some unforeseen reason he succumbs to his stay here. I will reiterate; I want nothing in this cell that he can use to permanently hurt himself. You should sedate him, but not so much that it will kill him or take hours to revive him."

"The sedation I use has an immediate antidote. Miss Moretti knows what I use. Be assured, nothing will happen to him," said Giuseppe.

Nathan went upstairs to the kitchen and was pleasantly surprised to see Pricilla standing in front of the stove cooking what appeared to be their evening meal. Although he promised never to do anything sexual with the girl, she looked stunning dressed in a simple cotton frock and work shoes. Her face glowed.

"Hi Pricilla," said Nathan.

The teenager put down the wooded spoon she was stirring the pot with, turned, and stepped over to Nathan. She raised her arms and attempted to hug the huge man. Nathan relented, bent, and allowed the girl to put her arms around his shoulders. He remained bent over until he felt her lips on his cheek. He stood up and looked her in the eye. Pricilla said, "My dear Nathan. Do not take offense with a simple kiss on the cheek. I know what I said to you, but we agreed that nothing was going to happen. You are my friend and I expect that you will allow me to show my friendship by kissing you on the cheek."

"Yes you may Pricilla," said Nathan. "How are you doing?"

"I am well," replied the girl. "Had a bit of a problem earlier today, but Miss Moretti calmed me down and I accomplished what she wanted. Otherwise all is well."

"Giuseppe included?" asked Nathan.

"He's suffering the loss of Sienna," said Pricilla. "It will take some time, but he's pretty tough for an old man. I could not and do not understand the deep incestuous relationship they had, but life is full of strange things."

"I am going to leave the car in the garage," said Nathan not responding to the girl's take on Giuseppe's life. "I do not expect Miss Moretti here until tomorrow. But, I will call just to be sure. As far as the guy in the basement, Giuseppe knows to keep him sedated. Also, the other faggot in the basement is not to go near him or talk to him if for some reason he becomes conscious. I find out that Marco went within five feet of him, I will reduce him to a sniveling piece-of-dog-shit and I will have a long conversation with you young lady."

"You needn't say that about Marco," said Pricilla, "and you did not need to threaten me."

"I did to impress upon you that he is not to go near him and that you are ultimately responsible," stated Nathan. "Can I depend on you to make sure it does not happen?"

"Yes. I will lock him in his cell and if I have to and I will sedate him if I need to," replied Pricilla.

Nathan put his hands on the teenager's shoulders, bent down, and placed a chaste kiss on the top of her head. He had to control his body's swoon because of the sweet smell of her hair. Without another word, he turned, and left the kitchen. He stopped by the front door and called his boss.

"Apollonia."

"Miss Moretti," said Nathan. "He is safe and under your control."

"At the townhouse?" asked Apollonia.

"But of course," replied Nathan not at all taken aback that she asked the question again. "He is naked so he cannot use anything to end his sorry life. He will be kept sedated. Giuseppe will keep him so until you arrive. I suspect that we will meet at the townhouse in the morning?"

"Yes," replied Apollonia. "You staying in the city?"

"I am going to see Golda," said Nathan.

"We'll start early tomorrow," said Apollonia. "I will have Alessandro drive me into the city. See you at seven."

"Seven," said Nathan.

The call ended. Nathan departed the townhouse and headed to see the little Jewish girl that is doing everything to make him fall in love with her. The sad part for Nathan was he was succumbing to her charms.