

Casiano R. Hamer

Dramatic Story

*Sapphire*

Raphael sits alone with his girlfriend, Gloria, at a clothed table coddled in each other's arms draped in white linen along with a mass of other family and guests. A wind from the nearby beach rolls under their large tent, lifting napkins and spilling cups. He watches older woman clutch for their floral hats with their jeweled fingers. He looks at mothers rubbing out spilled Merlot from their dresses, he nearly laughs at all the stained white around him. He stares at one woman in particular who is not satisfied with the level of wine removed from her laced shoulder pad. Her eyeshadow and nails match her Sapphire earrings. She catches his glance and tosses her eyes in embarrassment, she looks back only to repeat the same action.

A large wine glass is lifted in the air. Luis nearly shatters it with a fork as he grabs everyone's attention. He looks down at his wife, Michaela and removes a white veil from in front of her face. He squishes her cheek as he reaches down to kiss her on the lips. He yells, "Look at her! My god...and she only cost me sixty thousand dollars." The crowd responds in jubilation. "But it's all for her right!" Luis continues. Raphael tunes out the rest of the ceremonial toast. He stares at Luis' face, watching a glow of pride in his cheeks. He scans the tent full of pearly smiles. His stomach drops as he hears a chuckle from Gloria. She looks up at him and kisses his lips. She stops and notices his discomfort before resting her head on his shoulder. "Para mia, verdad?" she whispers. Raphael nods in defeat.

Raphael looks at the woman's blue nails again and begins chewing at the blue polish left on his index finger. Gloria looks up again, "Not good for your cuticles." She pauses for a second

and snatches his hand to take a closer look. Raphael snaps his hand back quickly, “ I know, I know it’s a bad habit” he says.

Gloria’s father comes up from behind them and grabs each of their shoulders. Raphael quickly straightens his posture and unfolds his legs, “She bothering you?” he says giving a hissing laugh. He smiles to return the gesture and Gloria follows. “Maybe you should say something, no? He love you more than Meekayla!” the uncle says. Gloria tries to signal him to stop, “Gloria por favor. He needs to confess his love to him already!” he says hissing in laughter again. He sprays Raphael in the mouth and he can taste the beer off him. The uncle raises Raphael’s hand, “Oye! He got something he want to tell you,” he yells to the crowd.

Raphael stares at the uncle surprised until he suddenly erupts from his chair. Gloria tries to pull him down but as she grabs for him, Raphael grabs her hand. He looks at it, thinking about what to say until he kisses it and returns it to her. “Congratulations Michaela, Luis... You deserve it. It’s so beautiful to see a man and a woman come together in such a powerful way. I envy you... Luis, you’ve taught me so much about love growing up together, I’m just glad you found someone better than me,” he says. Everyone erupts in laughter except for Raphael and Luis. Gloria’s chuckle is cut short as she studies the two of them. “Just know I’ll always be rooting for you two as you try to put together something so many fail to do.” He raises a glass, “Salut!”. Everyone responds, “salut” and takes a sip of Merlot before showering him with their applause. Luis still stares at him as Michaela kisses him and continues to clap for Raphael. Raphael returns to his seat. He turns to Gloria whose face is stoned with worry. “Baby, I was only bluffing”.