

STEFANIA SALERNO

# ME AGAIN

*ricominciamo insieme*

«Siamo fatti di niente come le note musicali.  
Siamo solitudine e rabbia repressa, dolore e lacrime  
ingoiate, siamo spezzati dentro ma appariamo  
sempre bellissimi fuori.»



# Table of Contents

MADISON  
CHRIS  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
TED PARKER  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
CHRIS

CHRIS  
MADISON  
MADISON  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
CHRIS  
MADISON  
EPILOGUE – Madison  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS  
ABOUT ME

## MADISON

**How does it feel to start over again?**

**This is something I just had to do:  
an already destined path, it seemed then,  
that became my story, my dream too.**

*The day before  
Nashville, 22 August 2014*

“I’ve nailed it! I’m there, first row in front of the stage!”

I think I didn’t have any voice left out of the emotion that overwhelmed me when I was given the news. I’d be a hypocrite to mention that something was missing from my life. I live in a multimillion-dollar villa and I grew up enjoying all the perks that a certain type of work gives men who know how to grasp its potential, like my father in particular.

Without doubt, Parker Mansion is something I could’ve imagined by only watching Hollywood movies and, as such, there was no need to make an effort to, except to live up to it.

Often, however, living up to it implies it’s based on willpower and when this crumbles under the blows of normalcy, it gets repaid with great restrictions.

Leading this life is a little like having your destiny predetermined.

“You are kidding, right? Impossible! Nashville Arena has been sold out weeks ahead already!” exclaimed Libby, even more amazed than I was.

“Absolutely not. I’ve got the tickets and a little ... perk”.

“What have you been doing this time, Mad?” she asked a little enviously and worried that partly lifts me up and pulls me down.

Libby has always been on my side; we’ve always been together, no matter the predetermined norms and differences socially. Even at work, we could only be poles apart. I’m on an internal training course at my father’s company *Quest Industries* which will lead me to becoming manager one

day, whilst she will continue being a cleaner like her mother did without expecting anything else from life.

We come from different families, but we've always been like sisters. Libby has a particular beauty about her, with her red hair and freckles almost everywhere on her face with its china-like, almost translucent skin. She is that delicate in terms of her manner and language that she expresses sweetness without even saying anything. I remember making fun of her for her physical appearance when I was young; everyone called her a doll, but she never was offended. This was also when I'd give her my hand-me-downs. She still has one in pink and chiffon, which makes her look all the more carefree, cheerful and available, much as in the past.

I expect that, one day, she'll be a heartbreaker as once she finds serious work and stable accommodation away from this house.

"Thanks to my insistence, I've managed to get into contact with Arena security". I look pleased with the only advantage my position could give me these days. There's nothing my father can't do.

"Uh-huh ... so ... courtesy of Mr. Parker. Tell me ... will he let you go?"

"I haven't at all specified what the favor was for," I laughed without wasting time to explain further.

My father, attorney Ted Parker, didn't approve of me frequenting such establishments as they didn't fit in with his image of being a CEO.

He raised me in unrestrained luxury, had me fraternize with people of a certain class at fashion evenings and so on, and to respect etiquette at all times.

Chris Levi is by no means an artiste my father would lose sleep over. He isn't a songwriter, for example, nor does he play the harp or piano, but is just a country music singer who cut his teeth onstage in America's main cities, come rain or shine and wind, not inside a dolled-up opera house with decoration everywhere. It's precisely for that reason that he doesn't deserve my father's attention.

You'll think that Ted Parker, as a father, rules with an iron grip, which he does in a way, but he loves me in his way and would do much more for me if only I'd respect his wishes and abide by his rules.

At sixteen, so as to force me to attend a stupid elite club with him that served only to build his image, he humored me by allowing me to go to Chris Levi concert; it was there I fell madly in love with him. I went crazy

over that music and his voice, so much that I asked my father if I could see another one and he agreed. He maybe mistook it for a teenage crush like many others and, in the same way as he did an expensive fashion habit, he bought the tickets for that and some other concerts, making sure I'd always have vantage points over the other fans.

How could I explain to him that, even today, that voice goes straight to my heart and he creeps deep under the skin strongly enough as to awaken the dead? Such is the emotional impact his words have on me that I often can't find the right words to describe it.

The press applaud him, and his shows and humanity leave the audience delirious. Among the many things the press don't take much consideration into, I know that he supports a foundation whose job it is to help children in need in the Amazonian *favelas*. A noble gesture in contrast to that of so many other exhibitionists.

He has been the soundtrack to the most wonderful moments in my life, but especially for the ugliest ones, made out of pain and solitude. I'll never forget him, but you know that dreams don't last a lifetime and it's often much easier to dream than to lead a real life.

Given how much happened during his last concert, my father categorically forbade me to do any other crazy things for him.

"You seem to think I could let him slip away from me? I'll scream "Chris, I love you!" at the top of my lungs, right in his face. All I have to do is decide if I'm wearing that black sequin top from Prada paired with those D&G ripped jeans or to put on something sexier, given the occasion".

"Are you drunk outta ya mind? He won't even see you, even if put a neon blinker over your head, exactly like every other time. Maybe your father is right when he says you're exaggerating".

"You're a bad one. Do you bet instead that he'll recognize me? Last concert, I was just about jumping onto the stage to touch him as they were going down the runway; he has to recognize me".

Of course he will: if the runway didn't stop suddenly, I'd have managed to feel him.

*God, how I love him!*

"Miss, listen to me and good. I'm very disappointed in you".



My father's voice interrupts our discussion. *Damn it!* He must've heard everything.

Libby moves aside because, when my father approaches in that way, it usually isn't to make conversation.

"Dad? What's happening?" I ask swiftly.

"Tomorrow, you're going to Alan's place, understood?"

I gave out a relieved sigh; he's not talking about the concert.

"I'm sorry, Daddy, but on Saturday evening, I've already made plans with my girlfriends and Alan will be busy with his benefit dinner or something like that; so, as always, he won't have time for me".

"You're on the list of invitees! He wants you to join him for dinner," he says through gritted teeth to provoke fear in me and I don't manage to raise a laugh. I find it absurd to even as much as listen to him. "He wants me to join him? It's not even important enough for him to come and get me, do you realize?"

"He knows I'll have you accompanied by limo. He wants to leave you with the visibility you deserve," he answered, hinting.

"He thinks it's a red carpet thing? Come on, Daddy! I already told you what I feel about Alan. I'm not into him; he looks like a little dog on your leash, just drooling and winding up nowhere," I put out there ironically.

How do I explain to my father that this puppet he saddled me with a couple of years ago probably doesn't know my name and that, between us, relations are practically nonexistent, if not mechanical to say the least?

"He's interested in me and — most importantly — he's really "into" you, so you'll do as I say. You've been invited to dinner, so you're going to him. End of discussion".

I keep laughing in his face, making him as angry as the Hulk.

"Sorry for laughing, Daddy, but all this is absurd. Alan Bay is more interested in your money than in me; maybe you don't understand that?"

"That's what you think because you've still not looked at him the right way and neither of you have addressed the right topics. Keep on wasting time on this adolescent garbage and you won't understand how certain things are important. Don't do anything stupid, Madison, because I won't let you ruin everything".

*Jerk.*

As far as he's concerned, I've always been something to take care of, to keep sweet and bring out only when needed for purposes of image.

*No affection.*

I've never understood why he did all that for me when it didn't matter to him. But above all, I've never understood the reason why he never remarried after my mother died.

Looking back, it seems to me he heard a story from older times, a story of young pioneer women who'd die churning out children in the middle of plains on these lands, but then again, no. This kind of tragedy takes place even today and not even money or the most expensive therapy it can buy can do anything to save lives when it isn't so established.

I first saw light as my mother lay dying of a hemorrhage during my birth, condemning me to living in the luxury she had of having everything but, in the end, having nothing important.

"So, he can count on your support and consideration, but I can't? What about love, Daddy? Where's that?"

The very thought would've made me blush for shame, since I still believe in love — real love! — but to see it didn't matter to my father at all, it made me angry

"I'm not going to that stupid dinner!"

He whirls in anger, pushes me back with his bulk, grabs me by the wrist and grabs it tightly.

"You'll do exactly what I said, thank you! You're going to that dinner, period!"

*Will I hell, Daddy!*



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