

# REJECTED: CLAIMED BY THE ALPHA MAFIA

## FUNERAL

Kiara:

The past few days have been trying for everyone around us with the passing of Boris and Rufus's injury. Rufus got better after a few days, but he is still at the hospital. Zane transferred him to a hospital in Efla.

Today is Boris's funeral, and Zane has been mute the entire day. We are back at Boris's place with the entire family present.

"You are doing just fine," I say to Zane, who has been sitting for hours without a word. The thoughts of my pack members going into exile hurt, but I have learned to let go.

I have lost once, and it is easier letting go instead of hurting yourself.

"Kiara," Zane calls out to me, and I place a hand on his shoulder.

He tilts his head a bit, resting it in my hands. Then I caress his other cheek with my free hand. We remain like that until he lets out a forced gasp, straightening his head. His eyes are reddened, and it hurts.

"The ceremony is in half an hour, and you need to get yourself together, please." I sit close to him, sliding my hands to his thigh.

He grabs my hand, bringing it to his lips, and planting a kiss on it, holding my hand to his lips for a long time, before dropping it. Then he gets to his feet, his arms around his waist.

"Zane, is there something you're not saying to me?" I ask, and he stares at me, causing my heart to drop. "What is it?"

"I handed everything in Boris's company to Yusuf, and I fear it might have contributed to his passing," he says, and my lips fall apart for a moment.

"Why... why would you do that?" I question, and he sighs.

"Because I needed to save you. I made a deal with him to hand over his mutant army, then I would give him the entire estates, and in return, he handed me half of his monetary inheritance." My heart sinks when he says this, and I can't help but think of how this is my fault.

"I have to go out there and look at my father's dead body. The plans for this funeral were made a long time ago, and he always talked about how he wanted me to speak when he died, but I do not think he would still want that now. He got into a coma when I told him about you being alive. It's my fault he is..."

"Don't." I cut him short before he can finish, then I reach out for his hands.

Getting to my feet, I cup his face, looking into his eyes.

"If Boris had killed me, you might have been worse, and although it is sad, we need to move on. I lost my entire pack, but I have you, Zane. Tough situations call for tough decisions, and we made our choice." My gaze doesn't leave his. "You are the strongest man I know, Zane. Seeing you cry makes me love you more, and you do not need to shy away from me. It makes me see the parts of you no one can ever see, and that makes me happy. I love you so much, and I will be with you in every step you take." He presses his lips against mine, wrapping his hands tightly around my waist and pulling me close to him.

"I love you," he mutters against my neck as he pulls away, then I let him bury the weight of his body on mine.

My hand finds his back, rubbing it in soothing circles.

"Boris wanted me out of your life because he thought I would betray you. He had no idea the depth of what we shared, and only the both of us know. It is terrible to know that you lost everything to Yusuf, but was it really worth it?" He pulls away when I ask.

"I mean, this thing keeps you all fighting and trying to shed each other's blood, but you have pulled yourself away from it. Gia and Yusuf can share peacefully or kill themselves over it. It's none of our business now. You have the monetary share, and we can always start all over. I am sure Boris would still want you to speak at his funeral, and he trusts you will keep his legacy alive." My hands glide up to his face as I say this. "When there is life, there is hope, my love. We have hope, and I will always be there." He nods, and I capture his lips in a brief kiss, which is interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Mr. Malibu, the guests have started arriving, and the function is about to begin," a guard answers. He takes a deep breath, and I grab his hand.

"Come. Let me take care of you," I say, leading him to the bed.

I help him sit, then I walk to the table, getting the combs and brushes. I readjust his tie properly, and arrange his collar before I brush his hair, styling it to perfection. When I am done, I plant a kiss on his cheek.

"You look perfect, and you are going to be great out there," I say to him, returning everything back to position before I sit close to him.

The funeral service is somber and intimate, held in a grand hall of Boris's home. Heavy velvet drapes mute the afternoon light, casting the room in soft shadows. Rows of chairs line the space, occupied by family members, close friends, and a few dignitaries who know Boris. A large portrait of him hangs above the wall in front, surrounded by a wreath of lilies and white roses. His closed casket rests at the center of the room, adorned with flowers and draped in a deep crimson cloth embroidered with the family crest. The scent of incense wafts through the air as the priest begins the ceremony. Dressed in a simple black cassock, he stands before the gathering.

"We gather here to honor the life of Boris Fernandez, a man who stood as a pillar of strength and resilience in the face of adversity," the priest begins. He speaks of Boris's dedication to his family, his leadership, and the legacy he leaves behind. Moments of silence punctuate his words, allowing the room to absorb the gravity of the loss.

Zane sits at the front, his hands clasped tightly together, the tension in his shoulders visible even through the crisp lines of his suit. I sit beside him with my hand resting lightly on his knee. I try to offer him all the support he needs. To my left, in the next column, are Gia and Yusuf. Gia keeps stealing glances at me throughout the occasion, but I try to ignore her. When the priest concludes his eulogy, he gestures for Zane to come forward. Zane rises slowly, making his way to the front of the room. His head is bent in grief, and I try to mind-link with him.

"You've got this." He glances at me as he grips the microphone tightly. His eyes leave mine, scanning the room before settling on the casket. Then he inhales deeply. I catch the sight of Yusuf nodding at him in support, then he starts to speak.

"Thank you all for being here," Zane begins in a steady tone. "My father was a complicated man. He was difficult at times, but he was also fiercely devoted to those he cared about. He lived his life with a purpose, one that often required sacrifice-sometimes too much sacrifice." His voice falters slightly, and he glances at me briefly, and I give him a reassuring nod to help him.

"I stand here today not just as his son, but as someone who loved and respected him, even when we didn't always see eye to eye. He took me in as a child. I was an outcast, but Boris nourished me and molded me into the man I have become. My father believed in strength and perseverance, and those are values I will carry with me. But today, I also want to remember the moments when he let his guard down-the rare times when he showed his softer side, even if only briefly." Zane takes a deep breath, his gaze fixed firmly on the casket now.

"We may not always agree with the choices our loved ones make, but in the end, love keeps us together. Rest easy, Father. You've done your part. It's our turn now." The room is silent except for the soft sound of muffled sobs from a few attendees.

Zane returns to his seat beside me, sliding his hands onto my thigh. I grab his hands, offering the support he needs. The priest steps forward again, leading a brief prayer to conclude the service.

Afterward, family members take turns approaching the casket, some placing flowers, others simply touching its polished surface as they whisper their final goodbyes. That is the last of Boris Fernandez, but his legacy will forever live because Zane will never let it die.