

REJECTED: CLAIMED BY THE ALPHA MAFIA

THE MEETING

Third Person Pov:

The day of the charity event draws closer, and the organizers are gathering for an important meeting. Gia and Zane are representing their family among the other co-hosts. While they wait for Zane to arrive in the VIP room of a club, Gia finds herself surrounded by two childhood friends, Jacob and Tristan.

Jacob, always harboring a crush on Gia, sees this as his opportunity.

"It's been a while, Gia, and you look even better than the last time I saw you," he says.

Gia, glancing up from her phone, barely acknowledges him with a scoff.

Jacob is tall, blonde, and handsome, but he's not what Gia wants. Her heart is still set on Zane, a crush that's lingered far too long. But since she can't have him, she's determined not to let Jacob have her, either.

Tristan nudges Jacob, whispering, "Ask her about the city or something."

Jacob, clearly nervous, tries again. "So, what's new in the city? It's been what, eight years?"

Gia sighs, setting her phone down on the table. Before she can respond, the door swings open, and Zane walks in, drawing Gia's full attention. Regret floods her as she remembers how she almost hurt him because of her jealousy.

"Sorry I'm late," Zane announces, taking his seat at the head of the table.

The group offers casual greetings as he settles in.

"I don't want to waste much time, but I have other matters to attend to," he adds, and the room falls quiet as one organizer passes him a file.

Zane quickly scans the documents, pulling out a single sheet of paper. "This outlines the budget for the charity and the generous contributions made. My father's goal is to raise enough funds to build two schools for the children of the deceased Mafioso within three months."

While Zane speaks, Gia is only half-listening, lost in her fantasies about him. She can't shake the memory of their last time together, the one time he mistook her for Kiara. The way he touched her and held her still lingered. The thought causes her to shift uncomfortably in her seat, pressing her legs together.

Jacob, noticing her distraction, leans closer. "You're still hung up on him, aren't you?"

His voice jolts her back to reality, her eyes snapping open with a frown as she tries to cover her embarrassment.

"That's all for now, and I'll take questions," he says, looking directly at Gia, his gaze lingering a little longer than usual.

Her heart races, and her face flushes.

What was it about him that she couldn't let go? He was obsessed with Kiara, and yet she couldn't move on.

As the room buzzes with chatter, an idea forms in Gia's mind.

Leaning closer to Jacob, she speaks softly, "I'm sorry if I've been distant. But you're wrong about Zane." Jacob raises an eyebrow.

Gia moves even closer, her voice dropping to a whisper. "I've had him before, and it wasn't great. But there's this girl I need to get rid of, and I think you can help me."

Jacob hesitates, unsure of what she's asking. "And why would I help you?"

Gia takes his hand and places it on her thigh, her touch sending a shiver down his spine. "Because you'll get what you've always wanted."

He swallows hard, torn between his feelings for Gia and the implications of her offer. Before he can respond, Zane clears his throat, drawing the room's attention back to him.

"Jacob, is there something you'd like to share?" Zane's tone is commanding, his gaze cold as it lands on Gia. "Gia and I are a team, but I'm the one who calls the shots."

His words hit Gia hard, her forced smile barely concealing her frustration. Zane's reminder of who holds the power stings more than she cares to admit.

"Mr. Fernandez and I were just discussing something private," Jacob says, trying to defuse the tension.

Zane keeps his gaze locked on Gia for a moment longer before dismissing it.

"Very well, I think this meeting is over. I'll be heading out now," Zane announces, rising to leave.

As Zane stands, Gia hurriedly reapplies her red lipstick. She hands it to Jacob, pinching him lightly. "Go, go, put this in his pocket," she urges in a frantic whisper.

The room gets rowdy as everyone gets to their feet, making their way to the door. Jacob, trying to follow through with Gia's plan, approaches Zane.

"Hey, Zane, before you go, how about we grab a drink? Catch up like old times?" Jacob suggests, reaching out to stop Zane just before he reaches the door.

Zane turns with a broad smile. "I'd love to, Jacob, but I've got a woman waiting at home."

Before Jacob can respond, Gia stumbles toward them, faking a trip. She stumbles forward, falling on Zane, who tries to break the fall as her lipstick grazes with his suit jacket.

Jacob seizes the moment, slipping the lipstick into Zane's pocket unnoticed.

"Clumsy me," Gia says with a coy smile as Zane steadies her. He looks down at her with a mixture of irritation and disbelief, his grip firm on her arms.

"If you'll excuse me," Zane says, before walking out...