

REJECTED: CLAIMED BY THE ALPHA MAFIA

EX

Zane:

I turn around to see Mindy standing behind me. She still looks the same as the last time I saw her five years ago, but her hair is short, and she dyed it brown to match her eyes. My mouth falls ajar for a split second, and I quickly clear my throat, adjusting myself on the seat.

"Zane!" she exclaims, opening her arms as her brown eyes gleam with the widest grin hanging on her face.

Ignoring her invite for a hug, I put out a hand, taking hers in mine, and initiating a handshake, which is short. Her smile remains while my expression hardens.

She takes a seat beside me, and I face my glass of martini, waiting for her to speak.

"Since I heard you were in town, I have been trying to reach you. I've been coming to this restaurant, hoping to run into you, and thank goodness, I did." When she says this, I sip from my glass.

"I am aware, because my phone keeps buzzing." Her expression tightens, but I do not care. This woman made my life hell, and she fueled my spirit of revenge so much that even my father feared her. She once threw him down a flight of stairs, landing him in the hospital.

"How is Boris?" she asks, and I glance at her. "I hope he isn't still bearing a grudge against me for that minor accident?"

I do not say anything to her.

Ethan walks out from the door behind the counter. His face contorts when he sees Mindy, and I can tell he fears her, too.

"I'll have whatever my man is having," she says to Ethan, who walks away at once while I face her with a straight look on my face.

"What do you want, Mindy?" I ask, and she shrugs, facing me with a smile on her lips. "Can't you take a hint when someone doesn't want to speak with you? You have spent the last thirty-six hours blasting my phone with calls and texts. Isn't that enough to pass the message?" I question, and she chuckles.

Ethan arrives with her drink, and she grabs the glass, taking a sip with her eyes on me.

She drops the glass on the counter. "Just like old times. Sipping a glass of martini with the love of my life."

Her words anger me more, but I try to keep my emotions in check.

"Mindy."

"Yes, love," she calls out, then she pulls her seat closer to mine, leaving not an inch of space between us.

"It hurt when you left me, Zane," she says, taking a deep breath. "You shut me off for years. Never called to know if I was still alive, and worse, my mother chose you over me. It was good knowing that bitch died!"

She slams her hand on the counter, startling me, then she looks up again with a smile.

"I decided to settle in Efla, because this is the only place holding the most memories of you. I remember how much you wanted us to stay here, and I couldn't just show up at your house because of my history with Boris, so I decided to settle for this. But hearing you were in town brought back all the memories, and I knew I had to see you at once, Zane," she says, then she reaches for my hand, looking into my eyes. "Because I am still in love with you."

Her words strike me like a boulder in my face, and I do not know why I still let her hold me.

"It... it's okay if you do not feel the same. I just wanted to let you know, and..." I pull my hand away from her, causing her to pause.

"You are right. I do not feel the same, and I have moved on, Mindy. I do not hold any grudges against you for our past, because we have both ourselves to blame for wrecking each other, but I am no longer in love with you. Sorry for telling you I would love you till the end, and for wasting your time."

Her face falls when I say this, and I can see the hurt embedded in it, but I do not want to care about her now. We were a recipe for disaster.

She sits there silently for a while before she speaks again. "Do you have someone else? Is that why you have moved on from me?"

"I do not feel comfortable talking about my relationships with you, Mindy. You may be right or not, but I choose to know what has made me move on, and I am sorry I cannot share that with you," I say, then I gulp the remaining contents of my glass before placing it down.

I check the time on my phone to see that it is almost three. Sparing Mindy one last glance, I get to my feet.

"It was nice running into you, Mindy, but I have business to take care of," I say to her, then I walk out of the bar, making my way to my car.

Once I am in there, I take a huge breath, pushing away all the old feelings that threaten to creep back in. I am better off without her, and my life has never been better.

I drive off at once with thoughts of Kiara swelling in my head.

I make a brief stop at a florist shop, then I buy a bouquet before leaving for the house.

Shortly, I arrive home, then I make my way into the house, holding the bouquet. The house is as silent as a graveyard, which is expected because of the news I gave Kiara this morning.

"I am home," I announce as I open our bedroom where she is lying on the bed with a book on her chest.

She opens her eyes at once, then she takes the book off her chest, and sits up while I place the flowers on the couch. Her face is void of a smile, which pricks my chest. I walked over to her, sitting close to her on the bed.

"You've been reading all day?" I ask, and she nods slowly, shutting the book.

I lean in towards her, kissing her lips gently while she remains still, without reciprocating my touch. I pull away from her, then I enclose her right hand with both of my hands.

"I am sorry I have to leave, but I promise we will speak every single day. It is just seven days, and I will be back here, I promise."

She stares at me when I say this.

"Are you still mad at me?" I ask, and she shakes her head. Then I lean in for another kiss, and I feel her lips move underneath mine.

She throws her hands around me, pulling me closer as she deepens the kiss. We pull away shortly, and I take her hand, bringing it to my lips.

"How about dinner?" I question, and she nods gently. "Great, then we should get dressed." I get to my feet, leaning in to kiss her forehead.

"I need to talk to Rufus for a moment," I say, then I walk out of the room, making my way down the hallway to find Rufus.

I find him in the kitchen speaking with Treasure, who is cleaning up. The moment he sees me, he ends the conversation, and walks towards me.

"Do you need anything from me, sir?" he asks, and I slide my hands into my pocket, trying to push away the nervous feeling in my gut.

But as my hand touches the ring, it does nothing but intensify the feeling.

"I saw the house today, and it looks great." I begin. "You know you have to make payment and sign the documents, because for now, I cannot have anything in my name." I look at him, and he nods.

"My life might change today," I chuckle as I pull out the box from my pocket, showing it to him, but his expression isn't what I expect.

He looks at me like he is afraid.

"Did Kiara speak to you while I was gone?" I ask, and he sighs, then I chuckle lightly. "Well, you must get used to her threats, because she is going to be here forever."