

# Claimed by my Brother's Best Friends

## Chapter 14

Mason

I pull in front of King's house on my bike, the weight of the new phone he asked me to bring tucked in my jacket pocket. It's not often King calls me over, so I assume something serious is going on.

Nobody really ever explains shit to me, but it's not like I care. Ignorance is bliss, they say. I don't ask questions. I just do what I'm told and try to stay out of the way.

In a way, I see myself as a vault. People come to me with their darkest secrets because "I'm such a good listener," but it's really just because I don't care enough to respond. Still, my memory is annoyingly exceptional, so I'm always gathering new information, filing it away for later.

When I step inside, my eyes instantly land on Alyssa Carter, holding a rather large and alert baby in her arms.

Interesting.

So, I guess her and Isaac had a child together. Why is she here, then? In the home of the man she has always claimed to hate the most? She's dressed comfortably and barefoot, as if she spent the night.

Okay, now my curiosity is piqued.

"Hey, Alyssa," I greet her. It feels strange seeing her again, considering I had a huge crush on her in high school, but I never got to tell her how I felt before she got married. Despite Gray's warning, I always assumed King or Niko would claim her before I got the chance anyway.

"Hey," Alyssa replies, her voice soft and tinged with fatigue. She sounds like a warrior who has fought too many battles, and now she needs to put down her swords and take a break.

Just as she responds, King's office door flies open. "Niko, Mace, come into my office. Now."

Alyssa watches us curiously as Niko and I step inside and close the door. The room is dimly lit, the scent of leather and musk hanging heavily in the air.

"What's up, King?" I ask, pulling out the iPhone box from my pocket and placing it on the desk. Niko sits on the edge, like there's not two chairs beside him.

King settles into his desk chair, his expression guarded. "Gray called me while I was out earlier--"

"What the fuck?" Niko cuts him off, his voice laced with irritation. "Why didn't he call me? I'm his number two, not you."

He has a valid point. Niko is the Vice President, but Gray seems to only call King for certain jobs. Maybe it's because King is as sick and sadistic as they come; his impulsiveness strikes fear into everyone.

I wouldn't say I'm afraid of him, but he's not exactly a guy I'd cross. Not if I want to keep my limbs. I've literally seen him saw someone's hand off and then slap them with it. That person is dead now, of course, but the torture beforehand was brutal to watch.

"Nikolai," King growls, his voice a low warning.

"Whatever," Niko mutters, defiance flashing in his eyes. "Keep going."

King narrows his eyes but continues, "Gray wants us to protect Alyssa until he comes back. Now that I've gotten her a phone and a car, the three of us need to keep eyes on her 24/7 while giving her the illusion of freedom."

What the hell?

"What's going on?" I don't usually care enough to ask, but it seems that my curiosity is getting the best of me today.

King's expression darkens. "Let's just say Isaac Carter needs to be eliminated as soon as possible. But that can wait until after Gray comes back. Until then, she needs the protection only we can provide."

So, she's in serious danger.

My jaw clenches, but I stay silent. It's rare that I feel emotions, but the night of Alyssa's wedding, we all saw how aggressive Isaac was, yet we let her leave with him. They don't have to tell me exactly what happened for me to piece together a picture that makes me see red.

It's a miracle she managed to get away from him alive.

What a strong little warrior she is.

I never usually voice my thoughts. I don't like people reading, learning me. Yes, the members of the Crimson Reapers are my brothers, but even they don't know the real me.

No one does.

Niko sighs, rubbing the back of his neck. "Well, I have to go to the warehouse soon. Looks like Mason will be staying with her tonight, since I assume you have something to do as well?" He directs his question at King, who nods.

I'm...staying with them? Alone?

My eyes flicker to Niko, a mix of surprise and curiosity washing over me. "What am I supposed to do with them?" I ask, keeping my voice steady.

I'm not a fan of people, much less children, but maybe this will let me get close to Alyssa. I bet she's changed a lot in three years. There's something about her that makes me want to know everything. When I looked into her hazel eyes earlier, I saw secrets I can't help but wonder about.

"Well, the baby is easy. So far, she likes me. I don't know about King," Niko smirks, glancing at him.

King shrugs, his expression indifferent. "We understand each other."

Niko snorts. "Do I even want to know what that means?"

"It means she knows that her mother belongs to me."

"Is that so? We were just talking and she told me how much she hates you," Niko replies, his grin widening.

"That's just because she's lying to herself. Seems I have more than one brat in my possession," he says sourly, eyes narrowing at Niko, the tension between them becoming palpable.

I'm not sure what tension that is, but if they start fucking in front of me, I'm going to be sick.

I've seen enough of that. Too many times, I have accidentally caught them kissing or Niko on his knees. Of course, I don't care, but I'd like for them to have a little control today. At least while they know I'm here.

"King, she's not automatically yours just because you fucked her first," Niko snaps, his voice rising slightly, but still low enough that you'd have to press your ear to the door in order to hear him.

Wait. King...fucked her? When?

Jealousy floods through my veins, a burning, foreign sensation. I force my face to remain impassive, but inside, rage simmers. I was content knowing neither of us has touched her, but now that I know King has, I think I have a problem with that.

And I usually never have a problem with anything.

While they go back and forth, I blend into the background, absorbing every word. I just hope Alyssa doesn't overhear; I know she'd be pissed about this pissing contest taking place right now. She's not a prize to be won, and she certainly deserves better than to be treated like one.

Suddenly, Niko pulls out his phone and groans as he glances at the screen. "Shit, it's Dustin. I need to go," Niko says, the displeasure clear on his face. As he leaves, he stops in front of me, his expression deadly serious. "Mace, you're my brother and everything, but if something happens to either of them under your watch, I'll kill you."

I don't enjoy being threatened, but I give my Vice President a curt nod.

I think he should be more concerned about him and King killing each other over Alyssa. Or, at least it might threaten to destroy whatever's going on between them.

"Niko," King growls, reminding him that he needs to leave.

Niko presses his lips together, stepping back. "Yeah, yeah. I'm going," he mutters, rolling his eyes.

"We'll discuss that attitude later," King shouts after him. Then he turns to me and smirks, a twisted gleam in his eyes. "Time to give my brat her gifts. I can't wait to see the fight she puts up, so I can punish her for it later."

Sighing, I follow them out of the room. I really don't care about whatever complete fucking shitshow is happening between them. But Alyssa and her baby are my responsibility tonight, and I plan to take my assignment from Gray as seriously as they do.