

Chapter 43

King

Alyssa laughs loudly at her brother's words, and I have to fight the twitch at the corners of my lips. "Is this seriously your version of an apology, Gray? I told you I didn't want to see you until you said sorry for the things you said, but instead, you made them bring me here so you can still force me to stay?"

I lean against the walls, arms crossed, watching my kitten with her claws out. Hell, I'm impressed. My cock is already straining against my zipper, and I have to fight the urge to adjust myself. If Gray notices I have a raging boner for his little sister, he'll lose his shit. I could take him, but like I told Alyssa, the girls don't need to see that kind of violence today.

When he called both Niko and me this morning, demanding we bring Alyssa and Zuri by, I knew he was up to something. He thinks he's going to be able to convince her to stay. But one look in her eyes tells me all I need to know—she doesn't want to be here, and if she could, she'd walk out right now and never look back. He'd be blind or in denial if he couldn't see that too.

Gray's lips twist into a sneer. "What exactly are you getting out of this? Hiding out with them? Have you convinced yourself that they actually give a damn about you because I can assure you, they're just following orders."

Yeah, he doesn't know shit.

And I wish he wouldn't try to convince her that we don't care about her.

His eyes snap to Niko, then to me. I can see the accusation there, the

tension building, the moment shit might hit the fan.

He turns his glare on me, but I remain cool, calm, and collected as he stares me down. "Are you fucking her?" he growls.

I could admit it. I won't lie and say watching his face turn purple with rage wouldn't be the highlight of my day. But my eyes flicker to Alyssa and Zuri. Not yet.

So, deflecting, it is.

I smirk at him. "This is the second time you've accused me of touching your sister, Pres. At this point, it feels like you're asking me to." His face twists with rage, but before he can blow my head off, I add, "Even if she wasn't your sister, she's not my type. Too much baggage and you know how I feel about crotch goblins. Do I look like I'm in any position to raise a child?"

The partial truth in my words cuts deeper than he realizes. That's why I keep my distance from Zuri. I never knew my own father, so how could I ever be a good father figure to her? I'd only damage her. Unlike me, Niko has taken the roll naturally.

Gray's face tightens, but he's buying it. For now. He turns to Niko. "What about you?"

Niko raises his hands in mock offense. "Damn, Gray. You really think that low of us? We've always seen her like a sister. Plus, she's married. Soon to be a widow, sure, but still—she's off-limits."

Yeah, Niko's lying through his teeth, just like I am. I'm already addicted to Alyssa's pussy, and it won't be long until Niko is too, if he isn't already just from the taste. He's my dirty fucking slut, after all.

Gray looks between us for a long moment, the suspicion still clouding his features, but he finally turns back to Alyssa. I can feel the tension in her body from here, like our words have sliced through her. My words, mostly. I swallow the urge to comfort her. She can handle it.

Gray's gaze sharpens. "What about you?"

"Of course not," she spits back, disgust edged into every syllable. "I can't believe you'd even ask me that. You know I've always hated them, and King's the biggest A-hole alive. I wouldn't touch any of them with a ten-foot pole."

I can't help but smirk. She's a good liar — too good, but I've learned her body language in a short amount of time. Even if she hates my guts, her body craves me. I'm the asshole she loves to hate.

"Then why would you prefer to stay with King than come home if you hate him so much?" Gray asks.

Alyssa's eyes flash with anger. "Maybe because they leave me alone. They let me make my own decisions without breathing down my goddamn neck. After three years of being on lockdown, I'd like to live my life without you hovering over me like I'm some fragile doll that needs to be kept in a glass case."

He shakes his head, exasperated. "I know you've been through a lot, Alyssa, but you need to think clearly. You're vulnerable, and you need to be around family, the only family you have left. You think mom would be okay with you making a decision like this?"

Actually, towards the end, their mom was wild as hell. She would've told her to go for it, and do whatever the fuck she wanted to do. But it's not my place to jump in.

Besides, my girl can defend herself.

Alyssa's eyes are blazing as she glares back at her brother. "I think mom would want me to be happy. And I wouldn't be here with you and your Victoria's Secret model wife, who I didn't even know existed until a week ago. Sure, we're blood, Gray, but that blood's been tainted."

Gray grits his teeth. "We can fix that. I failed you before with Isaac, but I'm stepping in now. You're staying here and that's final. I'll have King and Niko bring your things over."

We all open our mouths, but Niko speaks first, his voice calm but firm. "No, she's not. Alyssa doesn't want to stay here, and I won't help you hold her hostage."

Gray quirks a dangerous eyebrow, his voice dangerously low. "Excuse me?"

"You can't hold your sister and her baby here against her will, Gray," Niko's voice softens, still holding an edge, but he's trying to reason with him without involving violence.

Gray leans in, challenging him. "And who's going to stop me?"

I step forward. My muscles are tight, coiled like a spring, ready for whatever's next. "I told you already, Gray. I won't let you take her choice away. Neither of us are okay with that."

I pledged my loyalty to the Crimson Reapers at fifteen years old. Gray's father was commanding, ruthless, a leader who knew how to mold boys into leaders. That's what he did to the four of us. I was just a kid then, but I knew I was sealing my fate, bounding myself to a life full of blood, violence, and loyalty that ran thicker than any brotherhood. But now, as I

stand here facing my best friend and the man who inherited that legacy, I realize that the chains of that loyalty no longer bind me in the same way.

I'd defy Gray, my president, for her. To keep her safe. To keep her happy. Niko is, too. We both know what's at stake here, and we're willing to break the rules we've lived by for years even if it ends in bloodshed.

The tension shrouds the room so heavily, you probably couldn't cut the shit with a chainsaw. My gun feels like a lead weight in the waistband of my jeans, my instincts kicking in as I see the chaos in Gray's eyes building. He's teetering on the edge, about to lose it, and I'm ready to get the girls out of here.

Just then, Christine enters the room, wearing a red teddy and a black robe. She blinks in surprise, clearly not expecting an audience, but that doesn't stop her from flaunting herself like she wants every man's attention in the room.

I roll my eyes, looking anywhere but at her. I would never have any interest in her, but looking at Gray's wife dressed like that would be an obvious sign of disrespect.

And we've pissed him off enough today.

"Gray, you should've told me we had company," Christine says, her annoying - ass voice making my ears want to bleed.

"I did, babe," Gray mutters, his voice tight with barely-contained fury. His teeth grind together as if it's taking every ounce of strength not to snap in front of her. And knowing him, it is. "I didn't expect my brothers to stay, so you need to go change. Now."

Without a word, she sashays back into the bedroom, her exit as dramatic

as her entrance. Alyssa watches the whole thing, her lips twisting into a grimace of disgust.

But then her gaze flicks back to Gray. "Can we leave now? I don't want to be here anymore," she says coldly. Her voice is a far cry from the sisterly love Gray seems to think he can revive.

Gray nods slowly, his expression carefully blank, but I can see the cracks in his mask. "Fine," he says slowly, his tone dangerously calm. "But I'll be popping by to check up on you frequently." His words are more of a threat than a promise, a threat intended for us. "You can go back with them for now, but I'm watching you."

Alyssa's response is a small, tight smile, one that doesn't reach her eyes. "Fine. Looking forward to seeing you again, big brother."



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