

Chapter 5

Alyssa

Leaving Zuri in the car with King wasn't my first choice, but I have a lot of shit to get and so little time. The diaper bag could only hold so much, but I stuffed what I could in it before I left. Now, I need to get the rest of her necessities that will at least last a little while. Isaac will freeze my accounts soon, and I'll be cut off from any money. I can't even check the app because I ditched my phone in the car to avoid being tracked.

I dash through the aisles, grabbing a travel crib, two boxes of diapers and wipes, a variety of pouched baby food, and a few cans of formula. My heart thunders in my chest as I make my way to the register. Thanks to Isaac, I know how to grab what I need and carry my ass.

I tap my card against the reader, praying it works. It declines.

A wave of anxiety and dread crash over me.

Fuck.

He has already frozen them. Panic sets in. What the fuck am I going to do now?

"Ma'am, do you have money to pay? If not, I can hold the items for you," the cashier says politely, her eyes showing a mixture of sympathy and impatience. There's a line starting to form behind me.

I run my fingers through my hair. "Uh, no. Just forget it, I'll find another—"

"I've got it," a deep voice rumbles from right behind me. I turn around, my heart skipping a beat. There stands King, holding Zuri in his arms. He looks almost ridiculous with her—my sixteen-pound baby in the arms of a giant, terrifying man clad in biker gear.

"W-What are you doing in here?" I whisper to him in horror.

His jaw tenses, but his eyes remain calm. "She pissed all over me, and I didn't know what to do."

I'm surprised he even took her out of the car seat, let alone brought her inside.

"Take her," he orders, passing her to me without waiting for my response.

He taps a card on the reader, and the cashier smiles, her cheeks turning a shade of pink. "Hubby to the rescue, I see," she says with a flustered laugh, her eyes flickering between King and me.

I bet she's trying to figure out how someone like him is here with someone like me.

Caught off guard by her assumption, I feel my own cheeks heat with embarrassment. "H-He's not..." I start to correct her, but King's amused smirk stops me mid-sentence. Rolling my eyes, I turn back to the cashier. "Never mind. Thank you."

With Zuri's onesie soaked and a sense of urgency pressing down on me, I tell King that I'll change her in the bathroom and meet him in the car. His response shocks the shit out of me.

"Absolutely not, Kitten. Go change her, and I'll wait out here with the cart," King insists firmly, his tone brooking no argument.

My eyes widen in disbelief. Did King die and get replaced with an actual decent human being?

I'm not used to this. Isaac never went into the store with me. I always had to juggle everything alone. That included my pregnancy, post-partum, and raising her. It seemed like his only focus was running his father's business and controlling me.

"Uh, thanks," I mutter, still processing King's unexpected kindness. "What about your shirt?" I gesture towards the noticeable wet spot concealed beneath his leather jacket.

He shakes his head. "It's fine. We're almost home, anyway."

As I head into the bathroom, my mind whirls with questions. While I mindlessly change Zuri's diaper and outfit, I dissect every interaction with King, trying to decipher his intentions.

Has he really changed that much in three years? Even when Zuri peed on him, he didn't react the way I expected. It's suspicious, unnerving, and I can't shake the feeling that it's all a facade.

I feel like it's only a matter of time before he says 'sike' and goes back to being a giant asshole. But for now, as long as he's willing to keep me and Zuri safe until Gray comes to pick us up, I can handle anything he throws at me. After all, I survived him and the rest of Gray's dumbass friends in high school. I'll survive this too.

Coming out of the bathroom, I find King leaning against the wall, his hands casually tucked into his pockets. "Have any trouble in there?" he teases with a wicked smirk that sends my heart racing. I shake off the strange feeling before it gets the chance to fester.

I force a laugh. "I had to wrestle her like an alligator, but the little strap on the changing table helps a little."

We walk out of the store, side by side, and I keep glancing at King, his stoic expression betraying nothing. What is he planning in that little fucked-up head of his?

Returning Zuri to her seat, I watch as King loads my purchases into the back of the truck. This feels oddly...domestic—going to Target with a giant, psychotic, dangerous man in a biker gang.

Once he climbs back into the driver seat, the truck silently rumbles to life, and we start heading towards his house. The closer we get, the more anxiety creeps over me. I know where he lives, but I've never stepped foot inside his place. Frankly, I never wanted to.

"I can feel your brain buzzing from here. Don't worry, you can leave any time you want. I don't plan on holding you hostage," he says, the corner of his mouth curling.

"I'm not worried about that," I lie, crossing my arms. I wish he'd stop acting like he can read me. He doesn't know shit about me, except that I'm Gray's little sister and I hate his guts.

He responds with an infuriating "mhhh," his eyes still glued to the road.

Once we pull into the driveway, he tells me to stay inside while he brings all of the stuff in. Then, he pulls out Zuri's car seat from the backseat and carries her inside.

What the fuck is really going on? I follow behind him, recalling the disgust on his face when he first saw Zuri. And now he's carrying her.

Yeah, something's up, and I'm determined to find out what it is.

As we step inside, my mouth drops open. His place is amazing, like the ideal bachelor pad. It's two stories with natural light pouring in from all of the spotless windows, casting a warm, inviting glow over the space. I was worried I would have to do some major babyproofing tonight, but besides a few sleek, modern couches, the massive flat-screen TV and expensive looking art pieces are on the wall, way out of reach. His maids must do an amazing job, there isn't a speck of dust in sight.

I'll have to make sure to clean up after Zuri the second she makes a mess, though. This is his space, and he's graciously allowing us to stay here for whatever reason. I want to make sure to show my gratitude, despite the feeling I think he's up to something.

"Uh, are you sure you want us to stay here until Gray comes to get us?" I ask in a low voice, still glancing around his mini palace.

As he begins heading up the stairs, he looks over his shoulder. "You called me for help, didn't you? What kind of man would I be if I didn't make sure you were safe until he could take over?"

The same asshole I grew up with, I want to answer, but I bite my tongue.

He smirks and disappears upstairs. While I assume he's showering, I lay out Zuri's blanket and set her down on it as I give her a pouch of pureed chicken and peas and carrots. As disgusting as it sounds, she happily sucks it down, her tiny hands gripping the pouch as if someone might steal it.

As she eats, I assemble the travel crib. Even though this is a new, unfamiliar environment, I hope she passes out after she eats, like she usually does. I need some time to think about our future. We can't live with Gray forever. I know Isaac will eventually find us, and try to take Zuri away from me, if he doesn't kill me first. We're not safe here in Moonshadow Creek.

I smile as I watch her. "I told you Mommy would get us out of there. I just need to figure out where to go from here," I murmur, more to myself than her.

Right now, my top priority is keeping Zuri safe while I find a way to start fresh, where nobody will ever be able to find us again.