

Right Time, Wrong Brother

Chapter 2 - Alex

Of all the people I knew, who I thought would get married... my little brother Jake, was at the bottom of the list. The whiny, self-absorbed little twat was under do not answer on my contact list and the last time I'd spoken to him, I walked away with blood on my hands.

Now, staring at the gaudy wedding invitation sitting on my desk, I wondered if he'd sent it, or if this was what my mom had been talking about when she said she wanted us to talk again.

I glanced again at the name scrawled in fancy lettering alongside my brother's.

"Phoebe Fitzgerald?"

Why did that name sound so familiar?

I leaned back in my chair, wracking my brain. Phoebe...Phoebe...

"No fucking way..." Leaning forward, I opened my laptop and opened Facebook, scrolling through my brother's friends list until I found her. "Fucking hell. Phoebe Fitzgerald... Fee Fee. The slut of the school. Well, I hope you know what you're doing, little bro, because that girl is nasty..."

"Who's nasty?"

Standing six-foot-three with change, and taking up most of the doorway, was my right-hand man and best friend, Oliver. "You remember Fee Fee?"

"Phoebe Fitzgerald? The one you didn't want to go anywhere near. Fee Fee Forget it if you want to keep your pecker clean? Didn't she sleep with half the football team?"

"Yep, that one." I chuckled, putting down the lid of my laptop. I picked up the invitation and held it out to the big man. "Looks like we're about to become related."

"You're shitting me." Oliver crossed the room and plucked the invitation out of my hand, peering at it. "Well, fuck me dead. Little boy bastard is getting hitched, and to someone older than him too... Good fucking luck there, buddy."

Oliver and Jake had never really gotten along. Not since Jake had slept with Oliver's kid sister, after prom in high school and broken her heart. He had a

string of broken girls tagging behind him and my mind suddenly went to Joey. "Fuck..."

"What?" Ollie asked, tossing the invite back to the desk.

"Joey."

"Jake's best friend?"

I nodded. I could only imagine what the wedding would be doing to her brain. She'd always been in love with Jake. Everyone could see it... bar him. Now, with Jake marrying someone else, Joey would be heartbroken to say the least.

She had never been Jake's type... hell, I didn't even think she'd be anyone's type.

Chubby would have been a nice word to use. The kid—and I hadn't seen her since she was thirteen—had been almost seventy pounds heavier than she should have been and sported the worst acne I had ever seen on someone in my life. Coupled with braces and brown hair, she was not a popular kid.

"You think she'll be, okay?"

I shrugged, leaning back in my chair. "Doubt it, but what can I do? She's Jake's best friend, and I am in his eyes, public enemy number one. So, I can't do shit." Letting my anger wash over me, I finally opened my eyes and looked at Ollie.

He was peering at me, jaw twitching. It made a vein at the side of his head pulse, and I raised an eyebrow at the kid I'd grown up with, the man who had gone with me, when I'd left Miami. "You're going, aren't you?"

"Huh?"

"To that little shit's wedding. You're going, aren't you?" My gaze moved to the wall behind Ollie, and he groaned. "For fuck's sake. You know that is the stupidest fucking idea in the world, right? You broke his nose, last time you saw him."

"That was ten years ago, Oliver."

"Time doesn't heal all wounds, Alexander." Ollie spat back, crossing his eyes as he said my name. "I know even if I was invited, which I ain't, I wouldn't go, because of what he did to my sister. You shouldn't be going, because of what happened with Joey."

The man in front of me was turning an interesting shade of red and I had to calm him down, before he had a heart attack and his wife, Jade, came after me. “Relax, Ollie, I’m not going there to make up with him. I am going there to see my parents.”

Oliver raised an eyebrow.

“So, when is it again?” Ollie picked up the invitation and frowned. “Wow... next weekend. So, I take it our fishing trip is out of the question.”

“Fuck... is that the same weekend?” I grinned and Ollie flicked the invitation at me, hitting me in the chest with it.

“You damn right know it is, wanker. We’ve been planning it for months. I finally got away from Jade and the baby for two days, and you’re going to flake on me to attend the wedding of the brother you can’t stand.”

“I told you; I’m doing this for the olds. I haven’t seen them in almost three years.”

“And whose fault is that? Huh? You’re so snowed under with these business proposals and keeping up the tough guy image in the clan, you haven’t had time to think of the people who are the most important to you. Your parents.”

“They’re fine.” I muttered, knowing Ollie had a point. “I’ve been sending them money.”

“Uh huh... money that’s probably paying for that little shit’s big day.”

I had thought of that.

If Mom and Dad didn’t need money, most of it would have been funneled into Jake’s pockets, as an allowance. But I had done what any respecting oldest child had done and made sure his parents were taken care of.

“Does Yuka know you’re going?”

My mind snapped back to the room I was sitting in, and I frowned, lifting my gaze to the picture on the wall, above the small bar in my office.

Yuka Takada had been like a father to me. He’d taken Ollie and I in, when we’d left Miami. Giving us a chance in his business to earn some good coin, and a reputation which followed us, no matter where we went. We moved all the way to New York to work for him and he’d been nothing but supportive.

“No, I wasn’t going to tell him, until I got back.”

“Think that’s wise? You’ll be in Yamota’s territory, and you know you need permission to be there. If one of his clan saw you, the next time we saw you,

you'd be in a body bag." Oliver grimaced, as he leaned back in the chair., "Look, I love you man. Like a brother. But fuck... If Yuka found out you went there without permission, even if it's for your kid brother's wedding, even I couldn't keep you safe from him; and I'm his fucking son-in-law. And that's if you made it out of Miami alive..."

Oliver had a point. Even with his marriage to Yuka's only daughter, Jade, he'd never have a say about what would happen to me. If Yuka found out I went against clan protocol and entered a territory which we didn't control, without his permission... I shuddered with the thought.

"Fine. I'll clear it with him."

"The sooner the better. He needs a chance to ring Yamoto and let him know what's going to happen. That it's not a takeover attempt, or a scouting mission. That you're just there for that little shit's big day and then you'll high tail it back to New York."

I nodded and Ollie stood, adjusting the jacket which hid his huge frame. "Are you coming to the club tonight?"

"Nah, not tonight." I leaned back, watching Ollie fidget with the watch on his wrist, something he did, when he was stressed. "I'll ring Yuka and see if he's free for a meeting."

"This late at night?" Ollie looked down at his watch. "You might be lucky. Mama Takada will have headed to her Mahjong game. Yuka should be in his office for at least another hour. But you should already know that."

"Thanks, man."

Ollie nodded and left my office, closing the door behind him as he did. I picked up the invitation off my lap, where it had fallen and dropped it back to the desk. I would need at least four days' leave.

Because of clan meetings and setting up security for while I was gone, I wouldn't be able to get to Miami until Thursday. The wedding was Saturday, and I would have to be back on a plane Sunday morning, because of time-sensitive meetings on Monday. "Fuck."

Sighing, I reached out and picked up the office phone and dialed 1, before leaning back in the chair and waited for my boss to answer.