

## CHAPTER 003: Meeting The Wrong Brother

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I drag Finn by his jacket all the way to my company's parking lot, ignoring his protests.

The moment we're in front of his car, I whirl around to face him.

“What is wrong with you?” I ask. “You seriously want to crash your ex’s wedding? Have you completely lost your mind?”

Finn runs a hand through his hair. “I need closure, Sloane.”

“No, Finn. You need professional help. Therapy.”

“I can’t just sit still and watch the woman I love marry someone else.”

God. I want to punch him in the face. I want to kiss him until he forgets Delilah Crestfield ever existed. I want to scream until I shake the stars loose from the sky.

“So what’s the plan, huh? You gonna storm the aisle? Ruin her big day? Shove the groom off the altar and declare your undying love like some cliché rom-com protagonist? Jesus, Finn, you’re better than this.”

“I don’t want to destroy the wedding,” he mutters. “I just… I need her to look me in the eyes and tell me it’s over.”

My breath catches.

I hate him. I hate how stupidly, pathetically in love with Delilah he still is. How after everything—after the endless heartbreaks—he still thinks she hung the sun, moon, and stars.

“Well, I’m not going with you,” I say.

“Why not?”

“Because I don't want to.”

“You’re going, Sloane. End of discussion.”

“I am not.”

“I need you.”

Oh.

There it is. The words that crack me open and leave me bleeding all over this parking lot.

I hate how my pulse jumps. Hate how he still has this power over me.

“If things… don’t exactly go as planned,” he continues, stepping closer, “I need my best friend beside me. I’m not sure I’ll survive on my own if Delilah goes through with this wedding.”

Of course he needs me. He always needs me.

I’ve been stitching Finn back together for so long, I could probably rebuild him from memory. I know every crack, every fracture. I’ve held the broken pieces of him in my hands and pressed them back into place more times than I can count.

But I’m tired.

I’m so tired of loving him when he’s never even thought to love me back.

I swallow the lump in my throat and force myself to meet his eyes. “I’m not your emotional support animal, Finn.”

“Please, Sloane. I wouldn't ask if it wasn't important.”

And just like that, I cave.

Because I’m weak. Because I’m pathetic. Because I love him.

I will always love him.

“Fine,” I say. “But when this inevitably blows up in your face, I’m not picking up the pieces this time.” Even as I say it, we both know it's a lie.

Finn grins, that boyish, lopsided smile that makes my heart skip. "Deal."

“Did you at least get me a first-class ticket?”

“You know I don't do economy, Sloane.”

“Whatever.”

I turn on my heel and march back to the office.

We’re really doing this.

We’re really flying across the country to crash his ex’s wedding.

What could possibly go wrong?

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[[Seven weeks later]]

I’ve been waiting at Asheville Regional Airport for over an hour, my suitcase propped against my legs.

Finn was supposed to meet me the moment I landed. But of course, Finn Hartley, master of emotional chaos and poor decision-making, is nowhere to be found.

I’ve tried calling him. No answer.

Tried texting. Left on read.

I check my phone for the hundredth time. Still nothing. The battery's at 12%—just enough to call an Uber and find the nearest hotel if I have to.

I'm seconds away from throwing my phone against a wall when I hear the low purr of an engine that sounds like it crawled straight out of hell—a deep, thunderous growl that makes several people nearby turn and stare.

I raise my head just in time to see a monstrous black Ford Mustang Shelby GT500 glide to a stop in front of me.

The window rolls down, and—God help me—the man behind the wheel looks like sin itself.

He’s beautiful in a way that feels wrong. Dangerous. Sharp-jawed, dark-haired, and dressed in all black like he's either about to commit arson or murder.

His eyes drag over me from head to toe, sizing me up. I resist the urge to smooth down my travel-rumpled clothes or fix my hair.

"Sloane Mercer?" he says.

I blink. "Who are you?"

"I guess you can call me the wrong brother," he replies.

"What?"

"Forgive my manners," he says, his voice smooth, deep, and annoyingly sexy. "I’m Knox