

CHAPTER 006: They're Soulmates

Author: Elysian Sparrow

~~SLOANE~~

I can’t believe this.

Three hours on a plane. An hour stuck in that miserable Asheville airport. All to find Finn tongue-deep in Delilah Crestfield?

Finn has the audacity to look guilty.

“Sloane, I’m so sorry you had to see this—”

“Sorry?” I cut him off, my voice trembling with rage. “I expect you to have a modicum of self-respect, Finn. That woman is getting married in two days, and you're making out with her?”

“Would you rather he make out with you instead?” Delilah asks.

“Don’t do that,” Finn snaps at her.

“Why not? She’s miserable because no one wants her. That’s why she spends her life trying to control yours. You’re old enough to do whatever you want.”

"Old enough? You both are acting like children," I say. "What’s the plan here, Finn? Sneak around behind her fiancé’s back? Screw her in the honeymoon suite while poor Hunter’s passed out?"

Delilah laughs like this is all some kind of twisted joke. Her engagement ring flashes in the light, something obviously expensive, which only makes my blood boil hotter.

“Delilah’s leaving Hunter,” Finn says, looking confident.

But Delilah frowns. “No, I’m not. Where did you get that idea from?”

“We just kissed.”

“So? Doesn’t mean I should call off my wedding.”

“That's exactly what it means, Lila.”

“Are you serious right now? The wedding is happening, Finn.”

I watch the hope drain from Finn's face in real time, replaced by hurt.

This is killing him. And it makes me mad. When will he ever learn?

“Take your manipulative, cheating self out of here,” I spit at her.

Delilah smiles. “Or what?”

“You enjoy this, don’t you? You enjoy torturing him. You enjoy dangling yourself in front of him, knowing he’s too in love with you to see what a sick, manipulative game you’re playing.”

Delilah rolls her eyes. “What are you going to do about it? Scold me to death? Jeez. Even Finn is tired of your scolding, Sloane.”

“Shut that hole in your face,” I snarl, stepping toward her. “Get the hell out.”

“Sweetheart, he’s the one who invited me over. Maybe if you were as hot and as skilled in bed as I am, he’d look your way.”

I lunge for her.

But Knox catches me.

I'd completely forgotten he was here. His arms wrap around my waist like steel bands, pulling me against his chest and away from my target.

"Unhand me, Knox," I say.

"I can't do that, Sloane."

I struggle against him, fury lending me strength. "I'm going to get very violent with you right now."

“Let it go, Kitten. Let them be.”

Kitten? “Why the hell would I do that?” I ask.

“Because they need to sort things out between themselves. Your presence is only going to make things worse. Let's give them some privacy.”

I want to argue. I want to scream. But he’s right. And I hate that he’s right.

So, I let him pull me away.

I can hear Finn’s voice behind me, soft and broken as he pleads with Delilah not to leave. It makes me want to throw up.

By the time we reach the living room, I feel like I’ve been set on fire from the inside out. I drop onto the couch, fuming.

Knox sits beside me, stretching out.

“Is that how dramatic you usually are?” he says. “You were making it painfully obvious, by the way.”

“Making what obvious?”

“That you’re in love with Finn.”

My heart jumps. How did he figure that out? “I’m not in love with him,” I say.

“Oh, you are,” Knox says lazily. “Even Finn knows.”

“What are you talking about? Did he say something?”

Knox shrugs, studying me with those dark, knowing eyes. “Does he have to? We only just met today, and I sensed it. He's known you for years. Do the math.”

I stand and begin pacing, my hands shaking as I try to process this. The room suddenly feels too small, the air too thin. “Well, you're wrong about whatever you think you know. I’m not in love with Finn.”

“Right.”

“I’m not, Knox.”

“Whatever helps you sleep at night, Kitten.”

“Stop calling me that.”

“What? Kitten?”

Before I can hurl something at him—an insult, a vase—Delilah storms down the stairs, running for the front door. Finn is chasing after her like the goddamn simp he is. They both run out, and the door slams behind them, the sound reverberating through the house.

I don't even pause to breathe. I move to follow them, but Knox—being the troublemaker he is—grabs me by the waist again.

“What is your problem with me?” I hiss, twisting to face him.

“I don’t want you doing something stupid in my parents’ house.”

“I care about my friend. You clearly don’t care about yours, or you’d be calling Hunter right now to tell him his fiancée’s cheating on him.”

Knox snorts. “You think Hunter doesn’t know? She’s been cheating on him for months.”

My mouth falls open. “Are you serious?”

How does she do it? How does she have such power over these men?

Knox pushes me toward the window, his grip firm around my waist. I can feel every inch of his body pressed against mine. The heat. The muscles. His scent. They all wrap around me, making it impossible to think clearly. It's an odd sensation, so odd that I don't even know what to call it. All I can say is I'm painfully aware of Knox's presence. It's like he's everywhere at once. Or maybe I'm reacting this way because it's been so long since I was last touched by a man.

I try to focus on the scene beyond the glass. Finn and Delilah are by the pool, arguing. Finn’s hands are clenched at his sides, his jaw tight with frustration. Delilah, on the other hand, looks calm. I can’t hear what they’re saying, but I don’t need to. I’ve seen this scene play out too many times before—Finn pleading, Delilah stringing him along. A bitter knot forms in my stomach.

“If you want to spy on them, Kitten,” Knox says, his lips close to my ear, “you can get a good view from here. This way, you won't interfere in their business. We can even gossip about them if you like. Now tell me, Sloane, what do you think they’re arguing about right now?”

I try not to notice how ticklish his breath is, how it raises goosebumps along my neck.

“Probably about how she’s leaving him for good,” I say.

“You’re wrong. She’ll never leave him. And he’ll never let her go. They’re soulmates. Toxic ones. But it is what it is. The cycle never ends.”

There's something almost resigned in his tone, like he's watched this drama play out too many times to count. Unlike him, I’m not ready to give up on my best friend yet.

"Newsflash, Cupid," I say, "she's marrying someone else. Your soulmate theory isn't exactly fact."

"You think the wedding would hold?"

“Of course it will.”

“It won't.”

I scoff, turning to face him. "What do you mean by that? Are you going to sabotage it?"

"I don't need to. It's just the way they are. They break up, they make up. It's their toxic little cycle."

"You're sick, Knox. Are you seriously hoping that your friend's fiancée breaks his heart?"

"Nothing would gladden me more than to see Delilah back with Finn." His tone is so casual, so nonchalant. I want to slap that smug look off his face. "Hunter's a good man. He doesn't deserve to go through this."

"And your brother? Does he deserve this? Does he deserve to be constantly tortured by that woman?"

“What do you think my answer to that question is, Sloane?”

“I expect you to act like you care.”

“You think I don't?” he asks.

“Do you? If you did, you'd be chasing Delilah out of this house right now.”

“Why would I do that?”

“Because he's your brother.”

“A brother who is obviously in love.”

I can't believe this. “You call that love? She's using him. How is that love? Maybe you've never been in love before, so you don't know what it looks like. I can tell you with my entire heart that it doesn't look like that.”

“What does it look like, Sloane? Is it the same as the feelings you have for Finn? Because that looks really miserable.”