

CHAPTER 008: You Haven't Found The Right Girl

~~KNOX~~

I'd be lying if I said I'm surprised Finn walked in on me holding Sloane.

I'd anticipated it.

Hell, I orchestrated it. 1

He'd been out there crying over his toxic little temptress, and I'd seen him coming back. I'd seen Delilah storm off like the walking soap opera she is. But Sloane had been too caught up in our argument—too riled up and flushed and breathless—to notice any of these.

Right now, she looks like she wants to dissolve into the floor.

I almost feel guilty.

"Making out?" she says. "Did you drink the pool water or something, Finn? We were just talking." 1

She tries to play it off with a smile, but it comes out looking like she's undergoing an electrocution.

"Talking," Finn repeats. "With his hands around your waist?" 2

"That was my fault," she blurts, stepping forward. "I saw you running after Delilah in a hurry and had this funny feeling you wanted to drown her. So I tripped while running to the window to watch and interfere if I had to. Knox caught me."



I blink.

Well. Damn.

That's... not bad.

Not bad at all.

I store it at the back of my head: Sloane's a good liar.


Finn, of course, doesn't buy it.

He steps closer, eyes fixed on me. "I've never known my brother to be a hero."

I flash him a grin. "I'll always be a hero to your friends, little brother."

"How very gentlemanly of you."

"You know me."

The silence that follows is pregnant. I can feel the tension buzzing in the walls, crawling across the back of my neck, a snake ready to strike at any moment. 

Finn isn't stupid. He knows everything Sloane said is horseshit.

She moves toward him, touches his arm, trying to fix the problem.

"Are you okay?" she asks softly. "What happened out there with Delilah?"

His face hardens. "She's going through with the wedding."

I watch Sloane's lips twitch—almost a smile. She swallows it fast, but I



see it.

She's relieved.

And maybe, somewhere deep down, that's what pisses Finn off more than anything else.

"You'll be alright, Finn," she whispers. "I'm here for you."

Of course you are, I think, rolling my eyes so hard I nearly sprain a muscle.

"I know, Sloane," Finn replies. "Can you give me a moment with my brother?"

She stiffens. "O-okay... I guess I can. Which room's mine?"

He squeezes her hand. "Just wait in my room. I'll come show you to yours."

She avoids my eyes as she walks past me, and something about that makes my chest feel... tight. Funny.

She disappears up the stairs, and the moment her footsteps fade, Finn rounds on me like a bloodhound.

"Stay away from her, Knox." 2

"Why do you care?" I ask. "Your hands are already full with Delilah."

"I know what you're doing. Stop it. You can't keep hating me for what happened so many years ago." 1

"Hating you?" I smirk. "Don't flatter yourself. I forgave you. You're my brother."



"You did not." His voice drops, dark and trembling. "Sloane means a lot to me. Keep her out of your bullshit."

"I've heard your request, little brother, and the answer's no. I'm not staying away from Sloane."

"You think I'm joking? This isn't a request."

"You're commanding me now?"

"I will do so much worse if you hurt her."

I step closer. "Funny you mention hurting her. Very ironic, even. You've known for years why she follows you around. But you keep her near because she's the only one dumb enough to stand your crappy self. She has unknowingly walked into a trap where she'll always be there for you and never have a life for herself." I lean in until we're nose to nose. "Guess what, brother. When I steal her from you, I'll be doing her a favor. At the same time, we'll be even." 2

His eyes blaze. "You know what? I'm not afraid of what you can do, because it's next to zero. Sloane will never fall for someone like you."

"Is that right? She fell for you, didn't she?"

"Stay the hell away from her," he growls. "Or you won't like the consequences."

"Run along now, little brother," I say with a smirk. "See her while you can. She won't give a damn about you in the near future."

He moves away, eyes on me the entire time. And then he stomps up the stairs. 1



I watch him go, smug satisfaction blooming in my chest.

Watching Finn squirm has always been one of life's little pleasures.

But watching him scared?

Terrified he's losing someone for the first time.

God, it's better than sex.

But this isn't just about getting back at Finn anymore.

It's about Sloane.

Because someone like her doesn't need to be emotionally caged to a golden boy who'll never give her what she needs. 1

She deserves fire. Obsession. And maybe a little sin. 16

The way she reacted to me—the trembling in her voice, the way her body arched like it recognized mine before her brain caught up—that wasn't nothing. That wasn't a mistake. That was instinct. Pure, buried instinct. 2

She's not the angel she pretends to be. Not the soft-spoken nerd with her nose in data sheets and sci-fi novels, as Finn often claims.

There's chaos in her. Desire. A storm she hasn't learned to unleash yet.

And if I unlock that part of her—if I really open her up—she won't be able to go back to who she was before.

She'll be mine. In every way that matters. 3

Finn getting hurt in the process? Well, that would just be a very satisfying bonus.



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I make my way to see Hunter at his hotel suite.

The door swings open before I can knock twice.

Delilah's standing in the doorway wearing nothing but a silk robe and a pair of panties. And of course, she's braless. Her entire chest is on display.

"Knox," she says.

"Delilah. I'm here to see Hunter. He told me he's in."

She leans against the frame, the robe gaping open. "I'll only let you in if you say the right words."

"The right words?"

"That you're not going to tell Hunter anything about what happened with Finn earlier today."

"Why? Are you afraid he'll believe me?"

She shrugs. "I'm not taking that chance."

"You know what doesn't help your case?" I say. "Opening a hotel door with your tits on display."

"You used to love them." 13

I push past her into the room.

"Hunter?" I call out. "Buddy, where are you?"

"Shower," comes the muffled reply from the bathroom. "Be with you in





a minute."

I drop into one of the velvet chairs, watching Delilah tie her robe closed.

She glides across the room and pours herself a drink like nothing happened. Like she didn't just offer me a bribe in the form of tits and a thinly veiled threat. The woman's a walking contradiction.

I'll admit—I used to find it fascinating. The duality. The dangerous game of never knowing what version of Delilah you were going to get.

Now?

Now it just makes me sick.

"Care for a drink?" she asks.

"No, thanks. I'll just sit here and wait for Hunter."

I can hear him whistling in the bathroom. He must be done.

Delilah panics. "Come on, Knox," she whispers. "Don't tell him."

"You think I came here for you? Get over yourself."

"I want things to work out with Hunter."

Of course she does.

Because he's rich. Gullible. Easy to mold.

"Then maybe don't kiss someone else two days before your wedding."

The bathroom door opens, and Hunter walks in, towel slung low on his hips, still whistling.



"Knox!" he grins. "My best man. You look as annoying as ever."

"Hunter," I say. "So great to see you too."

Delilah walks over to him and slips her arms around him. "Hey, baby," she purrs, planting a long kiss on his mouth.

Yeah. Because that's gonna fix anything.

She whispers something loud enough for me to hear. "Send your friend away so we can have a nice evening together."

"Soon, love," Hunter says, smacking her ass. "Be there in a bit."

She leaves. Finally.

"Love is sweet, I tell you," he laughs, grabbing a bottle of whiskey from the bar. "You should get hooked."

"I'm very comfortable with my singleness."

"You just haven't found the right girl."

I don't reply.

He pours himself a drink, then raises an eyebrow. "Care for one?"

I stare at him.

"Are you certain this is what you want, Hunter?"

He freezes. "If you mean the marriage, then yes. Delilah makes me happy."

"You know she doesn't love you, right?"





He hesitates. Then he sits on one of the couches.

"Hunter..." Dellilah's voice sings from behind the sliding doors. "I'm still naked."

"Just a minute, babe," he shouts back. Then he addresses me in a lower voice. "I'm not a fool, Knox."

"I know," I say.

He's not.

He's just in love.

He's a very successful investment banker, so calling him a fool would be a stretch. But even some of the smartest men in history have lost everything because of a woman who knew how to smile just right.

I sigh.

I told myself I wasn't going to interfere.

But maybe Sloane was right.

I am a terrible friend if I don't try.

Okay, maybe it has 30% to do with Hunter and 70% to do with a short-haired girl with glasses and a mouth I want to bite. 4

One way or another, that wedding isn't happening.

"How about we go to a strip club?" I ask.

Hunter frowns. "My bachelor party isn't until tomorrow."



"Every day before your wedding is a bachelor party."

He laughs. "Alright. Can I bring my girlfriend?"

"Hell no."



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