

REJECTED: CLAIMED BY THE ALPHA MAFIA

DON'T EXPLAIN

Kiara:

After about thirty minutes to an hour, I'm dressed and ready for dinner. Zane walks into the room with a smile on his face, making his way over to me. He pauses, clasping his hands together as his gaze sweeps over me, warm and lingering.

"I've never seen anyone or anything more beautiful than you," he murmurs, causing my face to flush a little before he leans in and kisses my cheek.

He glances back at the couch where the bouquet lies. "You don't like your flowers?" he asks, his eyes searching mine.

I hold his gaze. I love the flowers-but I can't shake the thought that the man who gave them to me is hiding too many secrets. If he isn't being real with me, then how am I supposed to enjoy even the little things?

"I'm famished, and I'll spend time with the flowers when we get back," I say, forcing a smile onto my face. "Shall we go?"

He nods, taking my hand and leading me outside. Rufus stands by Zane's car, and from where I stand, I glare at him. He quickly looks away. I don't enjoy embedding fear in people, but since he insists on guarding his boss's secrets, he'll have to bear the consequences.

Zane opens the car door for me, and Rufus slips into the driver's seat. As we drive off, I try to calm my thoughts. Maybe I'm overreacting. Maybe nothing's going on. My mind wanders until Zane reaches over, his hand gently resting on mine, pulling me back.

I glance up at him, and a genuine smile finds its way to my face. Without a word, I lean closer, letting my eyes drift shut as I cling to the moment. We have only tonight, and I don't want to waste it being angry. He presses a soft kiss to my forehead, sending a thousand cartwheels through my stomach. Just for now, I feel lucky.

Soon, the car comes to a halt. Zane gets out and helps me, taking my hand as we walk into the diner-a small, cozy spot with soft, warm lighting and checkered tablecloths on each table. A gentle tune plays from an old jukebox in the corner. There are only a few people around, and a waitress offers us a friendly smile as we settle into a booth by the window.

As I glance around, I feel Zane's eyes on me. I shoot him a look.

"What?" I ask, narrowing my eyes playfully. He chuckles, leaning back with a grin.

"When has it been a crime to stare at one's girlfriend?" he asks, and I roll my eyes, grabbing the menu, its glossy cover cool under my fingers.

I bury my face in it, pretending to be engrossed, though I can feel his gaze piercing through.

"You need to stop-you're creeping me out." I lower the menu just enough to catch his gaze. He only shrugs, throwing his hands up in playful surrender.

Just then, the waitress arrives, dressed in a fitted gown with an apron.

"What can I get you?" she asks, pulling out her notepad. I glance at Zane, who doesn't even bother looking her way.

Dropping the menu, he looks at me.

"I'll have whatever my girlfriend's having."

There's a slight softness in his voice that catches me off guard, and I feel my heart skip. For a moment, I wonder if he really sees something more for us. Commitments scare me, but with him, it has been lighter, though I would never pressure him.

"I'll have the grilled salmon with rosemary potatoes and a side of asparagus, please," I say, glancing at the waitress. "Also, a bottle of red wine would do."

She nods, scribbling down the order.

"Two grilled salmons with rosemary potatoes, asparagus on the side, and two glasses of red wine. Anything else?" she asks.

I shake my head, offering a polite smile. "That'll be all. Thank you."

As she walks away, Zane's fingers find mine on the table, his thumb tracing slow, gentle circles over my knuckles.

"So, what else did you do today while I was gone?" he questions with a smile on his lips, which I watch intently, wondering if he is trying to distract me from something.

"Aside from crying and wondering why my boyfriend would leave me a day before he travels, I was reading." His expression falls slightly, but a part of me does not care.

"He is trying his best to be with you forever. Maybe you should view it from that point of view."

I do not say anything more. He changes the topic at once, and we begin to speak on random topics. We talk for a while until we see a waiter rolling a trolley of food towards us.

"Your order!" he announces, then he proceeds to assemble our plates on the table.

He places our glasses on the table, then he grabs the bottle of red wine. I stare at him as he attempts to open it, and I do not realize Zane is watching with his face crumpled until I glance at him.

I am about to speak when the bottle pops, getting my attention. The man pours some into the glass in front of Zane, then he attempts to pour into mine, shooting me a smile. Zane loses it. He reaches for the bottle.

"We do not require your services anymore," he says, and the man lets go of the bottle, giving him a bow, then he turns to leave, rolling his trolley away.

Zane looks at me.

"Come on," I roll my eyes, and he gives me an icy stare.

"You had your eyes on him for long-longer than you should."

His words do nothing but make me chuckle.

"It is not funny, Kiara. How am I supposed to behave when you look at men like that? It goes both ways for me. My blood boils when men look at you, and when you look at them," he says, and I reach out for his hands.

"Do not worry, I will make sure to keep myself blind next time, Mr. Malibu."

He withdraws his hands at once, then he takes my wine glass, pouring some wine for me. I sip from my glass, watching his face loosen up slowly. Shortly, we begin to eat. We make small talk as we eat, and Zane doesn't take his eyes off me for a second.

In no time, we are done with eating.

"More wine?" he asks, and I shoot him a smile, pushing my glass toward him.

He fills it up at once. The moment I reach for it, I see Rufus walking toward us. Zane looks back at once, and when he sees Rufus, he gets to his feet.

"Excuse me for a minute," he says, and then he leaves at once with Rufus while I sit there sipping my wine, trying to push off the ill feeling surrounding me the entire day.

While I am trying to keep my mind clear, Zane's phone beeps. I take a deep breath, urging myself not to look at it, but who am I kidding? I want to see who it is. Placing my glass on the table, I reach for his phone, causing my breath to hitch.

It is a message from Mindy.

"Sharing a drink with you today is the best thing that has happened to me in years. I am still in love with you, Zane, and I wish we could work things out."

As I read to the end of the sentence, I feel the entire room caving around me. I was right all along, and I should have trusted my instincts. He went out to be with Mindy, knowing he will leave the next day.

With trembling fingers, I grab the glass of wine, downing the contents, which does nothing to calm my nerves. I reach for the bottle, pouring what's left, but it does nothing to stop the tears building in my eyes. As I am panicking, I see Zane walk into the restaurant, and I get up at once, grabbing my purse.

"So are you ready to go?" he asks, and I look at him with anger boiling through my veins. My hands reach for the glass of water on the table, then I splash it on his face, placing the glass on the table.

"What the fuck?" he yells, then his phone rings with the name MIN boldly written on it.

I scoff, then I make my way toward the door. He grabs his phone and comes after me, yelling my name.

"Kiara, wait! I can explain!"

He grabs my hand as I walk out the door of the restaurant, but I yank it off at once.

"I do not need any silly explanation!" By now, my eyes is clouded with tears..