

Unrepairable Love / I married a man

Unrepairable Love

Chapter 311

“No need,” Elizabeth shook her head.

“Elizabeth, don’t be stubborn,” Joseph’s tone was low. Elizabeth smiled and said, “I’m not.”

It was just a coincidence to run into Alexander and Esme while having a meal. The video slowly came to an end. Esme would laugh or cry along with the video’s content, while Alexander frowned, his face showing no emotion. When Alexander turned his head, Esme was already holding flowers and a pair of couple rings.

Only then did Alexander realize why Esme insisted on being discharged from the hospital and bringing him here. Behind Esme were a few of her friends. Alexander had only seen them once but remembered them because they all had identical surgically altered faces. Esme’s eyes were already red. She softly called out, “Alexander.”

Alexander withdrew his gaze and saw that Esme was still very weak, and when she called him Alexander, it was so soft that it made people feel heartbroken.

“I never regret everything I’ve done for you. I want to tell the whole world that I, Esme, love you very much,” Esme said, crying. The people behind her also started crying and said, “Esme, don’t cry.” Alexander, who was usually very proper, suddenly became the center of attention in such a scene, and he was at a loss. Esme wiped her tears, and a friend came over to put a veil on her. When she looked up again, Esme raised the couple rings and boldly said to Alexander, “Alexander, marry me. I want to marry you and be your wife!” Esme’s voice was loud, and everyone around could hear it.

Everyone admired Esme’s courage, and with the encouragement of her friends, the crowd began to applaud. But Elizabeth felt that this was like a farce.

Elizabeth thought, *Alexander really doesn’t like being put on the spot like this. Doesn’t Esme know? This isn’t a proposal at all; it’s coercion. Actually, at the*

entertainment industry party that day, Esme probably already had the intention of forcing a marriage.

Alexander frowned, looking at Esme with a complicated expression.

“Alexander, marry me,” Esme interrupted Alexander. Esme didn’t want to hear anything else; she just wanted to hear Alexander say yes, and that he would marry her and make her his. The waitstaff formed a circle, everyone covering their mouths and smiling as they watched the scene.

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There were quite a few customers in the store today, and everyone took out their phones to record videos.

“Esme, why did you give me a heads-up?” Alexander frowned, his tone filled with reproach.

Esme smiled and replied, “Because I wanted to surprise you. Alexander, I know you don’t like being the center of attention. Just this once, okay?” Esme was very humble in front of Alexander. She had to get Alexander to agree tonight before the Tudors knew the news of her medical license being revoked.

Alexander looked at the ring in Esme’s hand, feeling both anxious and conflicted. Alexander looked at Esme, and for some reason, at this moment, he didn’t feel happy at all; instead, he felt heavy-hearted. Through Esme, he inexplicably thought of Elizabeth. Elizabeth had also stood in front of him like this, smiling and saying, “Alexander, marry me. I will only marry you.” Later, she stood before him again, smiling, and said, “Alexander, let’s get a divorce.”

“Alexander, do you have any concerns?” Esme looked at Alexander cautiously. Alexander’s hand, hanging by his side, slowly clenched.

Alexander was just about to speak when a hurried voice came from the side, “Ms. Percy, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to!”

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The waiter clumsily spilled red wine all over Elizabeth. Elizabeth jumped up, attempting to tidy her clothes, and whispered to the waiter, “Hey, no biggie. I’m good. Thanks.” She glanced at Alexander and, bam, locked eyes with his stormy gaze. Elizabeth froze. She stood there, still clutching her clothes, unsure what to do with her right hand. She had planned to simply relax and observe the unfolding drama, but now she was the center of attention.

“Joseph, let’s leave,” Elizabeth announced, grabbing her bag. Joseph understood and nodded. Alexander watched her go and instinctively started to follow, but Esme caught his arm. She looked at Elizabeth, biting her lip. “Alexander, what’s your deal? Do you even care about Elizabeth?”

Alexander finally looked away. Esme’s eyes were full of hurt. “What do you mean? I need an answer.” “Esme, I will,” Alexander began to say.

Just then, Elizabeth, who had reached the door, paused. She and Joseph took a couple of steps back. A luxuriously dressed woman entered, flanked by bodyguards. Elizabeth saw her and gasped. It was Elara! Elara carried a fancy bag, killer heels, and a coat draped over her shoulders. She surveyed the restaurant and dramatically yanked down a large bunch of flowers.

Elara marched straight to Esme and Alexander. “What’s going on here?” “Mom,” Alexander said, frowning. Esme’s shoulders shook. “What’s going on?” Elara looked at the rose petals on the floor, then at the ring on Esme’s hand, and laughed. “A proposal? Who’s proposing to whom?”

Esme’s face went pale. Every time she encountered someone from the Tudor family, she felt lost. Elara glared at Alexander. “Have you divorced? And you’re here accepting someone else’s proposal?”

“Elara, I’m sorry. It’s my fault,” Esme quickly apologized.

Elara gave Esme a cold look. “Not your fault. When a guy messes up, it’s not all on the girl. He should’ve protected his heart!” Elara’s words made Esme feel even more out of place. Alexander hadn’t divorced, yet Esme was here proposing.

“Mom, there are a lot of people,” Alexander grabbed Elara’s arm and whispered. “So what? Scared of looking foolish?” Elara snapped. “If you’re afraid of embarrassment, then don’t do it.” Alexander was speechless.

“Elara, don’t blame Alexander. It’s all my fault,” Esme stepped forward, shielding Alexander. Elara looked at Esme and smiled. “Ms. Russell, do you really think it’s your fault?” Esme felt trapped.

“If you think it’s your fault, then listen to me. Cut ties with this jerk, okay?” Elara pointed at Alexander but looked at Esme. Elara’s presence was intimidating, and with the bodyguards, she was unchallengeable. After all, Elara was from the Tudor family.

Esme bit her lip. “But Alexander and I truly love each other.” Elara sighed. “But you two just aren’t right for each other.”

“Elara, what’s wrong with me? I’ll change. Isn’t that enough?” Esme was desperate. “Esme, it’s not that I can’t accept you if you truly love each other, but...” Elara signaled a bodyguard to bring something out. The bodyguard produced several newspapers, all filled with damaging information about Esme, such as her fake degree and being fired from Evergreen Medical Center!

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Esme’s face turned stormy when she saw the newspaper. She freaked out, thinking the Tudor family would learn of the scandals, so she rushed to confront Alexander.

But, surprise, surprise, she was still too late.

“Look at you! How do you expect to marry into the Tudor family like this? If this gets out, won’t it be a total disgrace to us?” Elara snapped, tossing the newspaper at Esme.

Esme stumbled back. She stared at the newspaper on the floor, her heart breaking.

“Ms. Russell, the Tudor family isn’t just any family. Not just anyone can waltz into our home. If you and Alexander are just friends, fine, whatever. But if you think you can marry into the Tudor family and become Alexander’s wife, forget it.” Elara’s voice was ice-cold.

Marrying into the Tudor family? Esme’s got no shot! Elara thought.

After that, Elara glared at Alexander and said, “Alexander, come with me.”

“Mom, what’s the point of making such a scene?” Alexander’s voice dropped. I’m a grown man in my twenties, and Elara’s making a big deal out of this. Does she really have to go off on Esme like this? If the Russell family finds out, it’s gonna be another mess, he mused.

“Alexander, if you don’t come with me now, I’ll take it as you choosing Esme over this family!” Elara spat through gritted teeth.

Alexander didn't expect Elara to be so vehemently opposed to Esme. She even threatened to cut ties.

Elizabeth exchanged a look with Joseph.

Joseph whispered, "I knew Mrs. Tudor wasn't thrilled with Esme, but I didn't think she was this angry."

Elizabeth gave a helpless smile and heard Elara say again, "Esme or us, Alexander, pick one!"

Elizabeth eyed Alexander and thought, *Elara's really pushing Alexander to make a choice. Who's he gonna pick?*

It only felt like Alexander had been making tough choices his whole life.

Elizabeth suddenly...

"Let's go," Elizabeth said to Joseph, her eyes soft.

"Not gonna stick around to see how it ends?" Joseph asked.

Elizabeth shook her head. "What's the point?"

"Elizabeth, if it were you, what would you choose?" Joseph asked as they entered the elevator.

Elizabeth thought about it seriously.

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"I don't know," she told him.

No matter what Alexander chose, it was going to be bad.

Joseph smiled, opened the car door, and as Elizabeth got in, he said, "If it were me, I'd only choose you."

Elizabeth paused.

"There's no option to choose me here," she said.

Joseph got in and buckled up. “It looks like none of the choices include you, but in reality, every decision revolves around you.”

Elara didn’t want Esme to marry Alexander because she didn’t want Elizabeth and Alexander to separate. Choosing the Tudor family was choosing Elizabeth—

Elizabeth didn’t want to think about Alexander’s mess anymore. She just looked up and could still see the rooftop lights flashing.

Joseph drove her home. Elizabeth got out, and Joseph followed. She looked at him, so gentle and classy, making it hard to refuse.

“Joseph,” Elizabeth suddenly called out.

“Yeah?” he answered.

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“If we’re just friends, cool. If you wanna go beyond that, maybe,” Elizabeth didn’t wanna hurt Joseph. Joseph was a good dude. But she felt she wasn’t good enough for him. Joseph kinda knew what Elizabeth was getting at. She’d been acting all weird since they watched that movie.

“This is my first time chasing a girl,” Joseph said, “I’m feeling all helpless; I probably messed up a lot.”

“You’re awesome,” Elizabeth quickly shook her head, cutting him off.

Joseph smiled, looking pretty chill. You can’t force feelings. He got that about Elizabeth. Elizabeth had been through a rough marriage, so she wasn’t ready to jump into something new. Even though Joseph really wanted to stick around with Elizabeth, she didn’t need that. So he wasn’t gonna push it.

“Friends then?” Joseph asked.

Elizabeth nodded right away. “I’d love to be friends with someone like you, Mr. Stewart.”

Joseph chuckled. He looked down, adjusted his glasses, like he had a lot to say, but kept quiet. The evening breeze was cold, and leaves rustled at his feet. Maybe, like those leaves, nothing lasted forever. Seasons changed, and everything got a fresh start.

Joseph nodded. "Alright." He looked up at Elizabeth, super gentle. "Then let's be friends, Ms. Percy. I hope everything goes great for you. If you ever need anything, I'm here, no questions asked." Joseph held out his hand, kinda like a goodbye.

Elizabeth looked at Joseph, really admiring him. Because Joseph had shown her the utmost respect. She shook his hand, and then they hugged gently. This was the closest they'd been in a while.

"Thanks, and I wish you all the best too." Elizabeth nodded.

Joseph just hummed in response, not saying much else. Elizabeth watched his car drive away and couldn't help but shake her arm. A relationship that wasn't gonna last should end cleanly like this.

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She didn't wanna hurt Joseph. As soon as Elizabeth turned around, she saw Rose standing there. Elizabeth and Rose looked at each other and then smiled.

"Mom," Elizabeth and Rose sat on the swing in the yard. Elizabeth leaned on Rose's shoulder and asked, "I turned down Joseph. Are you mad?"

"It's not the first time you've done your own thing. Why would I be mad?" Rose shook her head.

"But Mom, it feels like I never do anything right," Elizabeth looked down, her voice soft.

"Does right or wrong even matter? Does the outcome matter?" Rose's voice got even softer.

Elizabeth leaned on Rose's shoulder, feeling like a kid again. "Mom, you must blame me too, right? But because you love me, you always put up with me."

Elizabeth thought, *just like I do with Alexander. Don't I blame and hate Alexander? But because I love him, I put up with all the pain he brings me.*

"I love you and will never blame you." Rose's voice was gentle.

Elizabeth had to look up at Rose, her eyes all red. "Mom, I'll live well; I won't make you worry anymore."

“Yeah, you’re growing up, I know,” Rose said gently.

Elizabeth didn’t even remember how she got back to her room, but she woke up the next day in her bed.

Chapter 315

Outside, the birds were chirping, and the weather was perfect. Elizabeth stretched and grabbed her phone. Today’s newsfeed was filled with Tudor and Russell family drama. After freshening up, Elizabeth headed downstairs. The TV in the living room was blaring the news too.

“Last night, the Russell family’s daughter proposed to the heir of the Tudor family and got brutally shut down.”

Elizabeth was about to sip her milk when she heard that and froze. She thought, *Brutally shut down? Did Alexander finally pick Elara?*

“Morning, sweetheart.” Declan walked over and ruffled Elizabeth’s hair.

Elizabeth looked up and said, “Morning, Dad.”

“You didn’t catch the news, did you? Last night, Esme proposed, but Elara crashed the party. Elara’s always been a go-getter!” Declan plopped on the couch, crossed his legs, and laughed heartily.

Esme’s just not cut out for it. The only decent job she had was thanks to our Elizabeth.” Rose came downstairs, adjusting her glasses.

Declan nodded. “Trying to be a homewrecker, she was doomed to fail.”

Elizabeth glanced at Declan and Rose, thinking, *Are they trying to cheer me up with their banter? Mom and Dad never badmouth anyone; they’re always so careful.*

“Alright, off to work you go.” Elizabeth shooed Declan and Rose, grabbing her breakfast to eat on the couch while listening to the news. Someone had caught last night’s drama on video. Elara made Alexander choose between her and Esme. Esme said she didn’t want to make things hard for Alexander and agreed to break up.

Elizabeth bit into her toast, shocked. Suddenly, her phone rang. Elizabeth picked it up. “Hello.”

“Elizabeth, did you see the news? Esme actually agreed to break up with Alexander?” It was Lila, her voice full of gossip.

Elizabeth pouted, “Aren’t you supposed to be filming? Why are you gossiping with me?”

“Of course, I have to gossip because I think I saw you in the news!” Lila said.

Elizabeth paused. Lila’s eyesight was really sharp. Elizabeth was indeed there last night.

Lila asked, “Come on, spill the tea. What happened?”

Elizabeth turned off the TV, took her breakfast, and went out, filling Lila in on last night’s drama.

As Elizabeth was about to reach the hospital, she suddenly changed the topic, “Lila, I gotta tell you something.”

“Go ahead, Ms. Percy,” Lila teased.

Elizabeth explained, “At the last industry party, Joseph wanted to discuss a collab with you. But you were swamped, no shot. Can you catch up with Joseph soon?”

Lila immediately perked up and asked, “What’s the deal? Helping out a new boyfriend?”

“What new boyfriend? Don’t start rumors. Joseph and I are just friends!” Elizabeth quickly replied.

Lila smirked and teased, “Just friends? Then I can’t catch up with him.”

“Oh, come on,” Elizabeth sighed, “Give him a shot.”

“I even turned down Kieran.” Lila laughed.

Elizabeth pouted, “I’m begging you this once, okay?”

Lila was silent for three seconds before laughing heartily. “Alright, give my agent’s Facebook to him.”

“That’s more like it.” Elizabeth huffed.

After a few more pleasantries, they hung up. Elizabeth meant to send the number to Joseph, but somehow, she accidentally sent it to Kieran.

Kieran quickly messaged back: [Lila's agent's Facebook?]

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Elizabeth hit the brakes for a second, then quickly canceled the button; she was in a rush to hop in the elevator. She jabbed the floor button. When she got upstairs, she saw Kieran had sent another text.

Kieran: [What's up?]

Elizabeth scratched her nose and typed back: [Mr. Getty, I sent it to the wrong person. My bad.]

Kieran: [Who were you trying to send it to?]

Elizabeth: [Joseph. He wants to team up with Lila.]

Kieran: [What kind of team-up?]

Elizabeth: [Not sure. Maybe for a company spokesperson or some jewelry gig.]

Kieran got all worked up. He thought, 'Is this gonna mess with my plans? If Lila takes Joseph's offer, can she still do my endorsement?'

Kieran: [Elizabeth, are we friends?]

Elizabeth squinted, wondering why he was asking.

Elizabeth: [We don't have to be.]

Kieran: [Don't be like that!]

Elizabeth ignored Kieran and sent Joseph the agent's Facebook contact, leaving a message: [Here's Lila's agent's contact. I've already talked to Lila. You can hit them up later.]

Joseph quickly replied: (Thanks. I'll treat you to a meal if it works out.)

Elizabeth: [Nah, it's cool.]

Kieran kept blowing up her phone: [Elizabeth, let's grab a bite, I need to talk to you.]

Kieran: [Elizabeth! Even though you and Alexander are divorced, I think...]

Elizabeth couldn't be bothered with Kieran's texts, so she set her phone to Do Not Disturb and got back to work. Kieran was floored. He had personally approached Lila but got shut down, yet Elizabeth managed to get special treatment. Kieran suddenly had a lightbulb moment: to work with him, he needed to go through Elizabeth.

"Elizabeth," Amanda suddenly called out.

Elizabeth nodded. "Yeah?"

"Come with me to the clinic today."

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"On it." Elizabeth quickly threw on her white coat and followed. While riding down in the elevator, Elizabeth overheard a few department heads chatting with Amanda.

"Ms. C, deputy director spot is open?"

"What, you thinking of joining our department?" Amanda, in a rare good mood, joked.

"Oh, we wouldn't dare." They all laughed. "Your department's too intense."

"Which department isn't intense?" Amanda shot back, scrolling through her phone.

Elizabeth stood quietly behind them, just listening.

"Got anyone in mind for the promotion?"

Offienda replied, "Not yet. Let's see how things go for a month."

"I think Laura's pretty solid, you might wanna consider her."

Amanda teased, "Oh, you know our department well, huh?"

They all laughed and got off the elevator. Elizabeth followed Amanda, who asked, "What do you think of Laura Dr. Dixon? She's pretty good."

Elizabeth answered honestly, hands behind her back.

"Still not stable." Amanda sighed.

Elizabeth squinted, not getting what Amanda meant by "not stable."

"Wow, it's packed today." Amanda looked at the computer, feeling swamped. "Help me out more today."

"Ms. Carter, you kidding? How can I help you?" Elizabeth said, half-jokingly.

"Mr. York said you have potential." Amanda looked up at Elizabeth.

Elizabeth paused mid-chair-pull and asked, "What else did he say?"

Amanda replied, "Isn't it enough that Mr. York praised you? He never praises anyone, but he praised you!"

Elizabeth blinked. That wasn't what she meant. She was worried Nick might've spilled the beans about her other identities in his excitement.

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"Potential? I wanna see if you really got it!" Amanda smirked, her interest piqued.

Elizabeth frowned, thinking, *Is Amanda planning to watch me and then bump me up to Deputy Director?*

"Ms. Carter, isn't it a bit too soon?" Elizabeth shot back.

Amanda was caught off guard, about the deputy director, Elizabeth teased.

"Deputy Director? With your credentials, you're miles away!" Amanda snapped.

Elizabeth burst out laughing.

Just then, the consultation room door swung open. Elizabeth was about to call for the files when she heard a familiar voice, “Ms. Carter, I’m here for a follow-up.”

Elizabeth looked up and saw it was Lily.

“Lily?” Elizabeth was surprised.

Lily was also taken aback. “Elizabeth, you’re here,”

Elizabeth nodded and asked, “Not feeling well?”

“Here for a follow-up,” Lily replied.

“By yourself?”

“They’re busy, so I came alone,” Lily said with a smile.

Elizabeth pulled up a chair for her and sighed, “Your family really let you come alone? It’s a pain running around for tests.”

“Will you come with me?” Lily looked up at Elizabeth.

Elizabeth sighed, “Lily, I’m working.”

Lily immediately looked at Amanda. Amanda was busy ordering tests when she felt a burning gaze on her. Elizabeth didn’t want to be disturbed or trouble Amanda, so she said, “Lily, I’m really working...”

“Elizabeth, you turned me down again!” Lily pouted, clearly upset. Last time, Lily had asked Elizabeth to go for afternoon tea, but Elizabeth had refused. This time, she asked Elizabeth to accompany her for a check-up, and Elizabeth refused again.

Elizabeth felt a bit awkward.

Amanda cleared her throat and said, “Go ahead. It’s a hassle to be alone.”

“Thank you, Ms. Carter!” Lily beamed.

Helpless, Elizabeth had no choice but to comply. Amanda called Laura down, and Elizabeth accompanied Lily for her check-up.

Lily, in her seventies, was very healthy except for her heart condition. Lily always had an elegant vibe. Unlike Celine, who always seemed serious and decisive, Lily was all kindness.

“Lily, sit here. I’ll go pay the bill,” Elizabeth said, helping Lily. Elizabeth was busy running around, and Lily noticed everything.

Lily thought, *What a good girl! It’s a shame Alexander doesn’t appreciate her and lets such a good wife go.*

“Elizabeth, while we wait for the results at noon, why don’t you come home with me for lunch?” Lily held Elizabeth’s hand and said, “I’ll cook for you.”

“Lily, I grab lunch at noon. After your check-up, head home. I’ll have your results by the afternoon. I’ll update you if needed. If not, no need for back and forth.” Elizabeth said as she accompanied Lily to get her blood drawn.

Lily sighed, “Elizabeth, are you pushing me away?”

“Lily, no,” Elizabeth said helplessly.

“But I feel like we’re growing distant,” Lily said unhappily, “We used to do facials, go shopping, watch movies together, and you even bought me ice cream.”

“Lily, let’s get the blood drawn first,” Elizabeth reminded. But Lily was unwilling; she sat in the chair and didn’t move. Lily looked pitifully at Elizabeth; she just wanted Elizabeth to go home with her for lunch.

Elizabeth sighed, unable to refuse. “Alright, Lily, I’ll go home with you for lunch, okay? Can we get the blood drawn now?”

Lily smiled and immediately cooperated with Elizabeth for the check-up.

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By the time they wrapped everything up, it was pushing eleven. Elizabeth and Amanda took the day off to drive Lily back home. Lily had actually taken the bus by herself, which threw Elizabeth for a loop.

On the drive, Elizabeth couldn’t help but say, “Lily, don’t go out alone like that again, especially without anyone with you. It’s really dangerous.” The Tudor

family had a big name, and Lily was a big deal in society. If some creep decided to mess with her, it could spell trouble for the whole Tudor clan.

“Yeah, I used to have you around, but now I don’t,” Lily pouted from the back seat, tapping away on her phone.

Elizabeth glanced back and sighed, “Lily, you have a butler.”

“What good is a butler? He’s not family,” Lily huffed, putting her phone away and crossing her arms.

Elizabeth was quiet for a few seconds. “Seriously, just don’t go out alone anymore, okay?”

Lily just stared at Elizabeth. Elizabeth looked back while waiting at a red light and asked, “Okay?” Lily didn’t answer, which meant she’d probably still do her own thing.

“Lily, if you don’t listen, I’m not gonna look out for you anymore,” Elizabeth had to lay down the law.

Lily finally gave in, “Alright, fine. I won’t go out by myself anymore.”

Elizabeth nodded and smiled. “Good.” They pulled up to the Tudor Mansion soon after. Lily lived there with Elara and Blake. The place was massive.

As soon as Elizabeth’s car rolled up, the villa’s door swung open, and Timothy Reed came rushing out, grinning, “Welcome back, Mrs. Lily Tudor.”

Elizabeth was helping Lily out of the car and nodded at Timothy. “Timothy, long time no see.” Timothy nodded and followed them inside.

Elizabeth gave Timothy a heads-up, “Lily’s not in the best shape, so don’t let her go out alone from now on.”

Timothy threw up his hands, looking helpless. Lily never listened to him anyway!

“Don’t blame him,” Lily said, pouring herself a glass of water.

Elizabeth sighed, “Alright.”

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“Did you get all the groceries I asked for?” Lily asked Timothy.

Timothy nodded right away. “Yes, Mrs. Lily Tudor, got everything.”

“Great,” Lily said. “I wanna have lunch with Elizabeth. You guys can take a break.” Lily waved them off.

Elizabeth walked into the living room. The mansion was decked out, surrounded by greenery, with huge windows showing off the beautiful outdoors.

“Lily, what do you wanna eat? I’ll cook,” Elizabeth said, heading into the kitchen, washing her hands, and rummaging through the fridge. Lily trailed behind her. Elizabeth still knew her way around the place.

Elizabeth turned to see Lily leaning against the door, looking all sad. “Elizabeth, I really don’t want you to leave.”

Elizabeth chuckled, “You say that again.”

“Since you can’t decide, I’ll just whip something up,” Elizabeth started pulling out ingredients. Everything was fresh and ready to go.

“You must’ve seen the news this morning,” Lily sighed. “It’s so frustrating.”

Elizabeth didn’t say anything, just kept prepping the food. Seeing Elizabeth stay quiet, Lily felt like she couldn’t get the words out. Elizabeth was a pro in the kitchen, so she was quick.

In less than half an hour, she had four dishes ready. Lily tried to help but got shooed out by Elizabeth. Elizabeth set the last dish on the table.

“Lily, come sit,” Elizabeth called out.

Lily sighed, “Elizabeth, about Esme proposing to Alexander...”

“Lily, I think you should just let them be. Alexander really loves Esme,” Elizabeth’s voice came from the kitchen, a bit louder.

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Lily shot back, “You for real?”

Right then, the door swung open. Lily turned around. Elizabeth walked in with some food. “Lily, let them be,” she said. She didn’t spot Lily by the dining table. Elizabeth was about to set the bowl down when she noticed Alexander coming in. She froze, locking eyes with him, and her words died on her lips.

“Mr. Tudor,” she said, trying to keep her cool, but she was clearly thrown off.

Alexander’s brow furrowed, wondering, “What’s Elizabeth doing here?”

Elizabeth took a sharp breath; the bowl was burning hot! She quickly set the food down and touched her ear.

“You good?” Alexander stepped forward, looking concerned.

Elizabeth shook her head quickly.

“Grandma texted me, said she wasn’t feeling well,” Alexander said, pulling out his phone, ready to show the message Lily had sent.

A moment later, he realized he’d been played. Lily had tricked him into coming home.

“Lily did go to the hospital today, but it’s no big deal,” Elizabeth said, taking off her apron and glancing around. She saw Lily coming out of the bathroom.

Lily snorted when she saw Alexander. “Why you so late?”

Elizabeth pressed her lips together. Lily went to the kitchen and brought out another set of utensils.

“How about we all have lunch together?” Lily asked Elizabeth and Alexander.

Alexander eyed the food on the table, knowing Elizabeth had made it. Elizabeth loved cooking shrimp but hated peeling them.

“Say something?” Lily knocked on the table, looking at Elizabeth and Alexander standing on either side.

“Sure,” Alexander said, pulling out a chair to sit down.

“Lily, since Mr. Tudor’s back, I’ll head back to the hospital,” Elizabeth said, wiping her fingers with a napkin, ready to leave.

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Alexander hadn't even sat down yet but stood up again. Elizabeth was leaving? Lily was about to dig in, but her face fell when she heard Elizabeth was leaving.

"You got divorced, not enemies. Can't you even sit down and have a meal together?" She slammed the utensils onto the table.

The vibe got tense real quick. Elizabeth saw this coming.

"I only took the morning off. I really need to get back to work," she explained gently.

Lily lowered her head, not saying another word. "Okay, fine! Go ahead, be busy! I'm getting old, and no one wants to hang out with me. I just wanted company for lunch, but everyone's making excuses."

Lily was genuinely upset now. Elizabeth was the only one in the family who always kept her company and didn't mind her age. But now, Alexander had even driven Elizabeth away.

Lily put down her utensils and stood up. "I'm not eating. I don't need you!"

Seeing Lily genuinely heartbroken, Elizabeth felt a bit helpless. Just a moment ago, Lily had been quite happy.

Alexander looked at Elizabeth with a complicated expression and reminded her, "Elizabeth, Grandma's always been good to you."

Elizabeth knew that well. She sighed in her heart again and again!

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Alexander yanked out a chair for Elizabeth, giving her the "stay put" (no leaving) look. Elizabeth let out a big sigh. "Alright, Grandma, I'll stick around for dinner."

Lily froze when she heard that. She turned to Elizabeth, "Not bailing?"

Elizabeth sighed inwardly again. *Can I even bail?*

“Nope, I’m staying,” Elizabeth plopped down.

Lily snorted and shot a look at Alexander. “You leaving?”

Alexander was at a loss for words. He sat down too, and both he and Elizabeth stared at Lily, not daring to make a move.

Lily glared at them before finally sitting down. “See, that wasn’t so hard, was it?” But she had been genuinely ticked off earlier.

Elizabeth dished out some food for Lily. “Eat up.”

“You eat,” Lily motioned for Elizabeth to dig in.

Elizabeth nodded, grabbed her utensils, and started munching. She mostly went for the veggies, barely touching the meat.

Lily scooped a bowl of meat for her, but Elizabeth shook her head. “Grandma, I’m not into meat.” Elizabeth wasn’t feeling it and preferred the greens.

“Then have some shrimp,” Lily suggested.

Elizabeth didn’t want to deal with peeling shrimp. She nodded and kept quiet.

“In the future, come have meals with me more often. I’m lonely,” Lily said to Elizabeth.

“Sure, Grandma. If I’m free, I’ll swing by,” Elizabeth tried to brush it off.

Lily nodded and hummed in acknowledgment.

Just as Elizabeth was about to eat, Alexander handed her a peeled shrimp. Lily raised an eyebrow, watching them, silently sipping her soup.

Thanks, Elizabeth hid her surprise and thanked Alexander softly.

Alexander said nothing and peeled two more for her.

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“Why couldn’t you be this thoughtful earlier?” Lily remarked.

Alexander glanced at Lily and stayed silent. But he noticed the shrimp he peeled for Elizabeth stayed in her bowl, untouched. Even after Elizabeth finished eating, the shrimp were still there and eventually got tossed in the trash.

As Elizabeth turned around after dumping the trash, she saw Alexander watching her. Elizabeth placed the utensils in the dishwasher.

Alexander watched her bustling around, feeling a bit annoyed. “Do you think I’m dirty?”

Elizabeth was caught off guard by his question.

Alexander furrowed his brows and said in a low voice, “Elizabeth, I don’t peel shrimp for just anyone.”

“What does that have to do with me?” Elizabeth shot back.

“Do you have to be so hostile?” Alexander was even more ticked off, his face darkening.

“Am I? I don’t think so.” Elizabeth dried her hands and was about to leave.

Alexander grabbed her wrist, stopping her. He looked at her with a complicated expression.

Elizabeth looked up at him and calmly asked, “Mr. Tudor, is there something you need?”

Alexander was momentarily speechless. “Last night,” Alexander started.

Elizabeth cut him off, “I went to dinner with Joseph and ran into you by chance. I didn’t invite Elara.” Her expression was firm, and her tone quick, like she was afraid of being misunderstood if she spoke any slower.

“I didn’t say Mom was invited by you,” Alexander said in a low, frustrated voice.

“Doesn’t matter. You’d think so anyway,” Elizabeth shrugged, pulling her wrist free, her tone very calm.

