

Unrepairable Love / I married a man

Unrepairable Love

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Louis was on his knees, writhing in pain. “You!” He jabbed a finger at Elizabeth, his whole body buzzing like he’d stuck it in a socket. He couldn’t get a word out, and his body was totally on the fritz.

Elizabeth had just wanted to give him a little lesson with a silver needle. But then Louis had to go and drop the Serenity Leaf. So, she figured, why not just stab him outright? Louis was such a loser!

Elizabeth yanked the dagger back and shoved the door open. The bodyguards outside gawked at her, totally stunned. Elizabeth flashed a sly grin, her fingers lightly brushing the faces of the two guards.

‘Man, folks from Nyxonia sure got the looks. Even the bodyguards are hot!’ she mused. Elizabeth made a quick exit.

It wasn’t until the bodyguards saw Louis sprawled on the floor that they snapped out of it. “Stop!” they yelled. Elizabeth turned and blew them a kiss. “You ain’t catching me. If I were you, I’d save Louis first.” With that, she bolted for the emergency exit.

One of the guards barked, “I’ll check on the boss, you go after her. Alert everyone, she took out the boss!” Soon, alarms were blaring all over the hotel. Elizabeth casually ditched the dagger in a random trash can. She took the emergency stairs down to the twentieth floor, then hopped in the elevator to the first floor.

The lobby was packed with people who’d gotten the alert, blocking her way. Elizabeth strutted towards the exit. “Hold up!” someone shouted, “We need to check you!”

Elizabeth turned and replied in perfect foreign language, “Sorry, no Nyxonian language.” They gave her the once-over. “What’s up? Need a band? My boyfriend’s outside; we’re off for dinner,” she added in the same language. “Probably not her,” someone muttered. Elizabeth smirked. “Get lost,” a guy snapped.

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Elizabeth nodded and quickly turned to leave. Just then, a huge dude yelled, “That’s her!” Elizabeth glanced back; it was the bodyguard from Louis’ room! She picked up the pace. The crowd behind her started chasing. Elizabeth dashed outside.

At the hotel entrance, she scanned the area and spotted a black car parked nearby. The folks in the car noticed her too. Elizabeth was about to make a run for it, but the bodyguards closed in. She was cornered.

Just as she was about to be trapped, a car came screeching towards them. The headlights were blinding, and it was barreling down like it had no brakes. Someone yelled, “Move!” The car was about to plow into them.

As everyone scrambled, the car screeched to a halt in front of Elizabeth, and the door swung open. Elizabeth peeked inside and froze. It wasn’t Felix. “Get in!” Alexander’s voice was icy and sharp.

Elizabeth glanced back; someone shouted, “We’ve been duped!” No time to think, she jumped in the car. They sped away from the hotel entrance. Elizabeth looked back; the crowd was left in the dust.

“Why you?” she asked, staring at Alexander behind the wheel.

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“Surprised?” Alexander asked, a smirk playing on his lips.

Elizabeth took a moment to compose herself. Honestly, she wasn’t all that shocked. She’d had a hunch the guy puffing away by the restroom was Alexander. Just didn’t think she’d be right.

“You really went to see Louis?” Alexander’s eyes bored into her, full of questions.

“My business ain’t your business, Mr. Tudor. Just drop me off at that restaurant,” Elizabeth pointed ahead, her stomach growling. She’d been running around all day and needed some grub.

Alexander glanced over and grinned. “But if I hadn’t shown up, you might’ve been caught.”

“Mr. Tudor, I’ve got my own crew. Don’t flatter yourself,” Elizabeth shot back with a sarcastic smile.

In her head, she thought, ‘Caught? Even if I got caught, I’d get out. Plus, I’ve got a backup plan. That dagger I carry? It’s poisoned. I wasn’t kidding when I said I’d mess Louis up. He should be feeling it by now. If he tries anything, I’ll use the antidote to blackmail him or go public.’

“Stop the car,” Elizabeth tapped the window, getting annoyed.

Alexander kept driving.

“I said stop the car. Didn’t you hear me?” Elizabeth’s voice was sharp.

“If you’re hungry, I’ll take you somewhere better. The food’s great,” he said, way too calm for her liking.

Elizabeth eyed him suspiciously. “Alexander, why don’t we just focus on our own stuff? What’s your deal?” Elizabeth’s tone was sour. She seriously thought Alexander needed his head checked. ‘Does he even realize how weird he’s been acting towards me?’ she wondered.

“Just grabbing a bite with my ex,” he said casually, “Considering she’s a big shot in Nyxonia now.”

Elizabeth frowned, sensing there was more to his words. Alexander chuckled and handed her his phone. “Take a look.”

Elizabeth saw that Nyxonia’s entertainment news was all about her. She finally understood how her cover was blown. It was the tattoo. ‘Damn, I should’ve worn something that covered it,’ she thought.

“So,” she suddenly thought, “was it you who called the waiter to help me out at the restroom?”

Alexander didn’t answer, which was answer enough. Elizabeth squinted and smiled. “Mr. Tudor, that was Louis.”

Alexander didn’t seem to care.

“And I just hurt Louis,” she reminded him.

Alexander shrugged, like it was no big deal.

“Aren’t you planning to team up with Louis?” Elizabeth cut to the chase.

If Louis finds out I was picked up by Alexander after hurting him, would he still work with Alexander? she wondered. But she didn’t know that the Tudor Group only partnered with people of good character. Louis didn’t fit the bill, and they didn’t need his resources anyway.

“No problem,” Alexander said, brushing it off.

Elizabeth studied him and leaned forward. “Mr. Tudor.”

He stopped the car in front of a restaurant and looked at her. “Yeah?”

“Did you buy the butterfly necklace?” she asked.

Alexander raised an eyebrow. “So what?”

“Sell it to me,” she said seriously. She really wanted it.

“Ms. Percy, how much are you willing to pay?” Alexander asked, clearly amused.

“Mr. Tudor, name your price,” Elizabeth smiled, giving him the upper hand. As long as he was willing to sell, she’d pay whatever.

“Let’s eat first,” he said, getting out of the car.

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Elizabeth was totally floored. She stayed put in the car, just staring at Alexander. Alexander stood outside, giving her a look. “So, you don’t want the necklace anymore?”

Elizabeth was still speechless. She thought, ‘How the heck did he get the necklace? Does this mean he’s got me cornered? I’m starving, might as well eat.’

Elizabeth walked into the restaurant and shot a text with her location to Felix: [Come eat. Someone’s buying.]

Alexander led her to a private room. Elizabeth was scrolling through the news, wondering if Louis would call the cops. They should probably head back home right after eating!

“He won’t call the cops. Just relax and eat,” Alexander said out of nowhere while ordering food.

Elizabeth was shocked. ‘How does he know what I’m thinking?’ Alexander didn’t say more, just kept looking at the menu and ordered some house specials.

Elizabeth stared at him. He looked up, meeting her gaze calmly. “What?”

She wanted to ask something but held back and said, “Order me a double portion.” She was curious why Alexander was so sure Louis wouldn’t call the cops but didn’t want to hear him say he was handling it. She didn’t want any more ties with Alexander; they were even now. Alexander just thought she was really hungry.

The waiter soon brought the food. Elizabeth had only had coffee that afternoon and hadn’t eaten all day, so she dug in fast.

Alexander asked, “When are you leaving?”

Elizabeth glanced at him. “I don’t know.”

“You can come with me,” Alexander offered.

Elizabeth smiled. “No, thanks, ex-husband.” Leaving with Alexander would be super awkward.

Alexander smirked, giving her a meaningful look. “Scared of me?”

You’re overthinking, Elizabeth said calmly. She just didn’t want any more connections with Alexander.

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“Elizabeth,” Alexander called her name. She didn’t look at him. Usually, when he called her name, she’d look right at him with sparkling eyes. But now, everything was different.

Just as Alexander was about to bring up the necklace, there was a knock on the door. Elizabeth looked up; it was Felix.

“Boss, you okay?” Felix rushed to her, looking worried.

Elizabeth patted his head. “Felix, I’m calling you out. Why didn’t you bring the car when I was being chased?”

“I did. I was right behind him,” Felix said helplessly. He was just a few seconds slower than Alexander.

Elizabeth glared at him. “Dig in. Mr. Tudor’s treating.”

“Alright.” Felix pulled up a chair and sat next to her. Only then did Alexander realize why she wanted a double portion.

Elizabeth served Felix food and poured him water. They were chatting and laughing. Alexander watched, feeling annoyed.

He thought, ‘Elizabeth treats everyone the same, but she keeps her distance from me. I really hurt her. If I express regret, would she forgive me?’

Alexander’s expression was complicated. He lowered his head and ate silently. Even though it was a meal for three, it felt like only two people were there.

“Mr. Tudor, about the butterfly necklace,” Elizabeth suddenly called out.

Alexander looked up. Under the warm yellow light, his features looked especially gentle.

“Do you really want it?” he asked.

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“Yo, Mr. Tudor, if you’re cool with giving it up, I’d be super grateful,” Elizabeth grinned, trying to keep it real. “But if Alexander wasn’t down, she wasn’t gonna push it.”

Just a necklace, Alexander raised an eyebrow, took a sip of his drink, and said all chipper, “Ms. Percy, what you got to offer in return?”

“Offer? I’ll just buy it off you,” Elizabeth shrugged. “Double what you paid, deal?”

Felix glanced between Elizabeth and Alexander, feeling kinda uneasy. Even if they weren't a couple, they'd still be a power duo. Alexander was already a tough cookie, and Elizabeth? She was even tougher now, not giving a damn about anyone else.

"Talking money is so tacky," Alexander sighed.

Elizabeth rolled her eyes. "Mr. Tudor, just hit me up when you're ready to part with it. It's late, so I'm out. Later!"

She was about to bounce.

Alexander piped up, "Elizabeth, I did save your butt, remember? My arm's still messed up."

Elizabeth paused, her eyes blinking. 'Like I haven't saved him before? What's he trying to prove? And his arm? Not my fault,' she thought.

Keeping her cool, she looked at him and said, "I said I didn't need help. You did it anyway. Your call, your mess. I don't owe you anything."

She smiled, gave a nod, and turned to leave. Her words cut deep, like a knife straight to Alexander's heart. Cold as ice. The door slammed shut. Alexander clenched his cup, then let out a bitter laugh.

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"Mr. Tudor," Nolan walked in, speaking softly.

Alexander looked up, eyes tired. "What's up?"

"Our deal with Louis is off," Nolan said, head down.

Alexander nodded. "Alright. Get the stuff we won at the auction and let's bounce."

He stood up, ready to leave.

Nolan asked, "Mr. Tudor, aren't you gonna eat? You barely touched your food."

"Not feeling it," he said flatly.

Nolan glanced at the table. Only Elizabeth's plate was clean. Alexander's barely touched.

"What's up with Louis?" Alexander asked.

Nolan quickly caught up. "Louis didn't call the cops. It's settled. But he's not doing great; he's in the hospital."

Alexander frowned, thinking, 'Not doing great? Is Louis hurt?'

"Ms. Percy messed him up, but I handled it. Louis won't be a problem for her," Nolan said.

Alexander chuckled. Elizabeth had definitely toughened up after leaving him. She had the guts to go solo in a foreign country and even take on someone like Louis. Elizabeth always acted first, thought later.

"Book the next flight home," Alexander ordered, wiping his fingers.

"Got it," Nolan nodded.

On the plane, Elizabeth and Felix sat one behind the other. Elizabeth sighed, "All that hassle for nothing."

"Boss, it's my bad. I'll take the heat," Felix said, looking guilty.

Elizabeth pinched the bridge of her nose, eyes closed, feeling drained. Suddenly, a familiar voice hit her ears, "Alright, I'll call you when we land."

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As soon as Elizabeth cracked her eyes open, there was Alexander, just hanging up the phone. Man, what a small world. Alexander saw her and didn't even flinch. Guess this was the quickest flight home. Elizabeth wished she'd just gone for an economy seat. Felix cleared his throat and stared out the window. "Ms. Percy," Nolan gave a slight nod, acknowledging Elizabeth. Elizabeth just looked down and mumbled a response.

Then, silence. Awkward silence. It was still pitch black outside. Elizabeth turned away, putting some distance between her and Alexander. The plane took off, and Elizabeth tried to catch some Z's. But Alexander and Nolan kept

yapping about work, driving her nuts. “Too noisy,” she grumbled, eyes shut, not even bothering to look at them. Nolan looked up, “Sorry.” Alexander just raised an eyebrow and kept going, “End this project entirely. Inform the team in Lisbon to sever connections with Louis and close down all his operations there.”

Hearing Louis’s name, Elizabeth shot up. She turned to Alexander. Alexander looked back at her. Her hair was a mess, and her collar was all crooked. “Why not just off Louis?” she said, deadpan. Alexander almost choked. He stared at her, shocked she’d say something like that. “Just say you did it,” she smirked. Alexander was speechless. “Ms. Percy, you should rest,” he said, trying to be nice.

Elizabeth didn’t reply, just lay back down, twirling her fingers. She thought, ‘Louis is useless now. That stab wound ruined him. For a guy, losing that function is like the end of the world.’

Elizabeth was beat and soon asleep on her side. Alexander kept talking shop with Nolan, all serious.

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When they finally wrapped up, Alexander noticed Elizabeth had fallen asleep facing him. Thinking about all the ups and downs she’d been through because of him, he felt a pang of regret. No going back now. He couldn’t love Elizabeth, and she didn’t love him anymore. Alexander looked down, a hint of sadness in his eyes.

They landed in Lisbon at 7 PM, and it was dark. Elizabeth and Alexander walked out of the airport one after the other. “Alexander!” A sweet voice called out, grabbing everyone’s attention. At the exit, Esme was there with a bouquet, smiling and waving. Elizabeth glanced at Esme, threw on her sunglasses, and quickly walked past Alexander. Alexander watched her go, his throat tightening. He looked away and headed towards Esme. Esme hugged him right away, “Alexander, I missed you so much.” Alexander gently pushed her back, “How’d you know I was coming back today?” “Nolan told me!” Esme beamed.

Alexander frowned. “You asked Nolan about my schedule again?” He turned to Nolan, who looked apologetic. Nolan couldn’t say no to her. “If you won’t tell me your schedule, I’ll ask Nolan. What’s the big deal?” Esme pouted. Alexander didn’t respond, his attention caught by something in the distance.

Declan had come to pick up Elizabeth, and there was a refined-looking guy with him. The guy reached out to shake Elizabeth's hand, looking all nervous.

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Esme trailed Alexander's gaze but only caught a glimpse of some backs; Elizabeth was already gone. Nolan couldn't shake the worry gnawing at him for Alexander. Esme was clueless about Alexander bumping into Elizabeth in Nyxona. If she found out, all hell would break loose!

"Hey, it's been a minute. How about we grab some grub?" Esme clung to Alexander's arm, pouting. "I'm craving a steak. Let's go get one."

Alexander nodded. He had some things to hash out with Esme anyway.

"Esme, how's your mom doing?" Alexander suddenly brought up Allen.

Esme's face twisted with anger. "Alexander, did you know? Elizabeth actually kidnapped my mom! She left her hanging in a high-rise all night! How could she do that?"

Alexander shot back, "Your mom did the same thing to Elizabeth."

"Even if my mom was wrong, she didn't deserve that!" Esme fumed, her anger boiling over. She'd get her revenge on Elizabeth, no doubt about it! After all, Allen was the wife of one of the big four families. Esme couldn't stand her being treated like that.

Alexander frowned and came to a halt. Esme turned to him, only to hear him ask, "Esme, do you wanna marry me?"

"Of course." Esme pouted. She wanted to marry Alexander more than anything, almost to the point of obsession.

Alexander furrowed his brows, thinking about everything that had gone down with Elizabeth these past few days. He knew their relationship was toast. He should keep his promise, divorce Elizabeth, and marry Esme.

Alexander took Esme's hand and said patiently, "Stop causing trouble. Let's work on us, okay?"

It was the first time Esme had heard Alexander seriously talk about their relationship. She was over the moon and nodded eagerly, “Alexander, I’ll do whatever you say.”

“I’ll make my family accept you, and I’ll marry you,” Alexander said in a low voice.

Esme nodded firmly.

Nolan watched them walk away. As an observer, he couldn’t see any love in Alexander’s eyes, just going through the motions, helplessness, and a sense of duty. Earlier on the plane, Nolan had caught a glimpse of how Alexander looked at Elizabeth. The emotions in Alexander’s eyes were anything but innocent. Nolan furrowed his brows, but because Esme had saved Alexander, he had no choice but to marry her. Nolan had also wondered, if it weren’t for that kidnapping years ago, would Alexander and Elizabeth be happy now? He really couldn’t bring himself to like Esme.

In a black business car, Elizabeth was rubbing her ankle when she heard Declan next to her scold, “Look at you. I still have clients here!” Elizabeth looked up and met the man’s eyes. Kyle Brooks, Declan’s client, was young and ruggedly handsome.

“No problem,” Kyle said.

Elizabeth still put her shoes and feet down. She smiled apologetically at Kyle. “Sorry, Mr. Brooks.” She didn’t mean to disrespect Kyle; she was just too tired and couldn’t help herself. Mainly, Kyle and Declan were talking business, and she thought sitting next to them, they wouldn’t notice her.

Declan said to Kyle, “Kyle, my company will be handed over to my daughter in the future. If we have the chance, I hope you can guide her. You know, it’s easier for you young folks to bond with each other.”

Elizabeth glanced at Declan and reminded, “I don’t have any intention of taking over your company right now!”

Kyle looked at Elizabeth, a smile in his eyes. “It’s just a waiting game. With a business this size, if not you, then who?” Declan ruffled Elizabeth’s hair and continued talking business with Kyle.

Elizabeth took another look at Kyle. She thought Kyle was quite handsome.

Elizabeth's phone suddenly rang. It was a text from Lila: [Landed. Want to grab a drink?]

Elizabeth: [Sure!]

Elizabeth turned off her phone and called softly, "Dad."

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"What's up?" Declan didn't even flinch at the interruption.

"Lila called me out. Drop me off up ahead," Elizabeth pointed forward.

Declan just nodded, "Cool."

Before hopping out, Elizabeth gave Kyle a nod. "Mr. Brooks, hope you and my dad hit it off. Catch you later."

Kyle gave a slight smile, "Yeah, see ya."

The door shut. Elizabeth hurried off to her meet-up.

Little did she know, Kyle, who'd been on the fence about teaming up with the Percy Group, finally decided to go for it.

At the bar, Elizabeth slipped into a black dress, her hair thrown up in a messy bun, showing off her neck. She grabbed a drink and scanned the crowd, finding Lila chilling in a corner, glued to her phone.

Elizabeth raised an eyebrow, sauntered over with her drink, and teased, "Hey gorgeous, flying solo? Wanna join me for a drink?"

Lila's head shot up at Elizabeth's voice. They shared a grin.

Lila groaned, "That's so cheesy."

Elizabeth just shrugged, swirling her drink. "Miss me?"

"I'm telling you, I'm thinking of teaming up with Joseph," Lila said.

Elizabeth nodded. "Sweet. I also checked out the Stewart Group's new beauty line. Totally your vibe. It's gonna blow up!"

“Elizabeth, that’s not the point,” Lila said.

Elizabeth raised an eyebrow, puzzled.

“From what I’ve seen, Joseph’s a solid guy. Seriously, why not give him a shot?” Lila frowned. As a good friend, she wanted Elizabeth to find someone good. If needed, she’d play matchmaker. But Elizabeth felt nothing for Joseph. Elizabeth was blunt; she only saw Joseph as a buddy.

“Lila, I can’t fall for him,” Elizabeth said honestly.

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Lila was quiet for a few seconds and sighed. “Elizabeth, be real with me about Alexander.”

Hearing Alexander’s name, Elizabeth shot back, “Just cause I can’t fall for someone else doesn’t mean I’m still hung up on Alexander.”

Lila frowned, looking conflicted.

Elizabeth continued, “Lila, I’m not going back. Alexander and I are done.”

“Alright, our Elizabeth deserves better!” Lila hugged her. “Screw Alexander. Let him rot! Elizabeth, remember, he’s not into you; you dumped him! Forget it. Let’s drink.” Lila raised her glass and clinked it with Elizabeth’s.

After a bit, they leaned on each other.

Lila said, “Elizabeth, I gotta tell you something.”

“Yeah, what?” Elizabeth replied.

Lila’s eyes were a bit glassy. She leaned in and whispered, “Actually, back in college, Alexander...”

Lila’s breathing got heavy. Elizabeth turned to her, sensing something was off. Lila felt hot. Elizabeth frowned and quickly touched her own forehead. Her temperature was normal. Elizabeth looked at Lila’s empty glass and quickly sniffed it. Something was definitely off.

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Elizabeth yanked Lila up in a flash. In no time, a bunch of guys circled them.

“Put her down,” barked a short-haired guy.

Elizabeth shot them a look, pretty sure these were the jerks behind it all.

“This is my friend, and she’s coming with me,” Elizabeth said, not backing down.

The guys exchanged smirks. “Does she really think she can just walk off with someone we want?”

“Better wise up, or we’ll get rough,” one of them stepped up, glaring at Elizabeth.

“I think this chick looks good too. Why not take her along?” A bald dude pointed at Elizabeth, rubbing his chin.

Elizabeth narrowed her eyes.

“Yeah, she’s a looker. Let’s grab her too,” the leader chuckled.

Elizabeth balled her right hand into a fist. “Last warning, get outta my way.”

Lila, all woozy, felt someone yank her arm. Elizabeth slapped the guy’s hand away. “Hands off!” She quickly threw a hat on Lila to hide her face. If word got out that Lila got harassed at the club, it would be a mess! Lila was usually so careful; what the heck happened? Elizabeth had to keep Lila safe.

“If we can’t touch her, can we touch you?” The guy pointed at Elizabeth. “Who do you think you are? Do you know who I am? I’m Cameron Murphy from the Murphy Group!”

“What kinda low-rent group is that? Why are you name-dropping? I told you my name, you’d wet yourself!” Elizabeth snapped. She’d never even heard of the Murphy Group, yet Cameron was acting all big.

A nearby guy shouted, “Mr. Murphy, she dissing you? She’s just a chick, but she’s dissing you. You gonna take that?” The guy’s mouth was filthy, and Elizabeth wanted to sew it shut.

“You don’t know who I am? You must be blind!” Cameron grabbed a bottle and smashed it. Elizabeth was fuming. She couldn’t even have a drink in peace. These guys were really asking for it!

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“What are you so cocky about?” Elizabeth grabbed a glass and splashed its contents in Cameron’s face. “Do I owe you something? You drugged my friend. Consider yourself lucky I’m not calling the cops. Still want trouble?” Elizabeth stormed over, lifted Cameron’s hand with the bottle, and pointed to her head. “Go on, smash it right here! If you don’t, I’ll think less of you!”

Elizabeth’s words got harsher, making Cameron gulp.

“Do it!” Elizabeth yelled.

The guys around looked uneasy.

“You!” Cameron glared at Elizabeth. “Think I won’t?” He raised the bottle, eyes flashing with anger.

Elizabeth leaned her head forward again. Cameron gritted his teeth, ready to swing.

Suddenly, Elizabeth was yanked back, and someone kicked Cameron, sending him flying. Elizabeth turned to see Alexander, looking down at her with a stern face. “Causing trouble again,” he said.

Elizabeth was speechless. It was Alexander, again.

“Who the hell are you?” Cameron, sprawled on the ground, pointed at Alexander. “You have any idea who my old man is?”

Alexander shook his wrist and retorted icily, “Don’t you dare start with the ‘my dad’ crap.”

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“My dad is...” Cameron began, but Alexander interrupted, “You really wanna go there?”

If Cameron dared to speak, Alexander would have him on the streets in no time. If Cameron didn’t believe it, he could try.

Cameron opened his mouth, wanting to say something, but someone next to him whispered, “Mr. Murphy, that’s Mr. Tudor. He’s the president of the Tudor Group, runs the whole economy of Lisbun. You really don’t wanna mess with him.”

Cameron shut up real quick. He eyed Alexander, feeling super uneasy.

“Get these people outta here,” Alexander glanced at the bar owner and ordered, “and don’t let just anyone in here from now on.”

“Yes, Mr. Tudor!” The bar owner responded, not daring to slack off.

“What’s up with her?” Kieran’s voice suddenly cut through. Elizabeth looked behind Alexander and saw Kieran lounging on the sofa, eyeing Lila.

Elizabeth walked around Alexander and quickly shoved Kieran aside, helping Lila up.

Lila leaned entirely on Elizabeth, her head drooping, and her voice soft, “Elizabeth, I’m so hot.”

Both Alexander and Kieran heard this loud and clear.

Elizabeth looked at Alexander and Kieran and hurriedly said, “Gotta go.”

Alexander frowned, his eyes full of concern as he looked at her. “You sure you can handle it?”

“I’ll take you,” Kieran quickly offered.

Elizabeth glanced at Kieran, not trusting him. “No need.”

“You know what to do?” Kieran asked her.

Lila suddenly felt nauseous and patted Elizabeth, immediately heading towards the restroom.

Elizabeth quickly followed.

Lila tried to vomit for a long time but couldn’t. She washed her face with cold water, but the heat wouldn’t go away.

“Lila, I’ll get you a glass of ice water. Wait here,” Elizabeth reminded Lila.

Lila nodded. She walked to the restroom door and tugged at her collar with her fingertips.

A man walked by, staring directly at Lila.

Suddenly, someone walked over, “Hey beautiful, we...” Before he could finish, he was kicked away.

“Get lost,” Kieran kicked the man hard.

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Lila looked up and met Kieran’s gaze. Lila turned to go back into the restroom but stumbled. Kieran immediately stepped forward and caught her.

Kieran’s body was cool, while Lila felt like she was burning up. She couldn’t help but lean against him.

Kieran froze, not daring to move, feeling his throat tighten. “Lila,” he called in a low voice.

Lila looked up, “Yes?” Her soft voice made Kieran’s heart tremble.

“No, I can’t.” Kieran was about to push Lila away.

Lila felt too uncomfortable. She tilted her head up, looking at Kieran’s blurry face, her voice hoarse, “Just once, okay?”

Kieran hadn’t yet understood what she meant. Lila had already stood on tiptoe, wrapped her arms around his neck, and kissed him.

Just once meant just one kiss.

Lila closed her eyes, gently kissing Kieran’s cool lips, her breathing heavy. Kieran’s Adam’s apple bobbed wildly, his eyes growing deeper, a fire ignited within him.

Just as Lila was about to let go, Kieran wrapped an arm around her waist, pressed her against the wall, and kissed her back.

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When Elizabeth came back with the water, she found Lila all snuggled up on Kieran's shoulder. Kieran glanced at Elizabeth, his voice raspy, "Elizabeth, I'll get you both home."

Elizabeth frowned, missing the hickey on Kieran's neck in the dim light. "No need." She tried to pull Lila away from Kieran, but Lila clung on tight. Elizabeth was taken aback. "Lila!" she called, pressing the cold water against Lila's face.

Lila's eyes fluttered open. She sniffled, her voice barely a whisper, "Yeah?"

"I'll take you back. Let go of him," Elizabeth said, feeling a headache coming on.

"No," Lila mumbled, "I wanna hold him a bit longer."

Elizabeth was speechless. 'What the heck happened while I was getting water?' She shot Kieran a look that screamed for answers. Lila was fine a minute ago. How'd she get all clingy with Kieran?

Kieran coughed, looking guilty as hell. He didn't dare tell Elizabeth he'd kissed Lila, or else Elizabeth would murder him.

"I'm still taking you both back," Kieran repeated. Seeing Lila like this, Elizabeth couldn't argue. "Alright."

"Alexander, I'm not drinking with you tonight. Gotta take them back," Kieran called out to Alexander. Alexander just nodded, staying quiet. Elizabeth glanced at Alexander as they left. Alexander looked down, touching the wound on his arm, his eyes full of mixed emotions. When he pulled Elizabeth earlier, he must've strained the wound.

'Lila, get in the car. Stop holding on,' Elizabeth tried to pry Lila off Kieran, but Lila wouldn't budge.

Elizabeth sighed, "Do you want me to be your chauffeur?"

Kieran smirked at Elizabeth. "Then we'll trouble you, Ms. Percy." Elizabeth's face darkened. In the end, Kieran held Lila in the back while Elizabeth drove them to the villa. Elizabeth got some cold water ready and told Kieran to dunk Lila in it.

Felix showed up with the antidote, and Elizabeth gave it to Lila. Thinking about how Lila had been glued to Kieran all night, Elizabeth just hoped Lila wouldn't die of embarrassment when she sobered up.

Downstairs in the living room, Kieran sipped some water. Elizabeth thanked him, "Thanks, Mr. Getty."

"No problem," Kieran said, shaking his head. That's when Elizabeth noticed the fresh hickey on Kieran's neck. She wondered who'd kissed him.

"Mr. Getty, don't let Lila's antics get to you," Elizabeth said with a smile.

"I won't," he replied. Elizabeth nodded. "If there's nothing else, Mr. Getty, you should head out."

"Alright," Kieran said. Elizabeth was seeing him off, so Kieran didn't stick around.

"By the way," he suddenly called out, "Ms. Percy,"

Elizabeth turned, "Yeah?"

"Actually, Alexander... Before he could finish, Elizabeth cut him off, "Don't bring him up again. It's all in the past."

Kieran frowned. Seeing Elizabeth had moved on, he didn't push it. "Alright, take care of Lila. If you need anything, call me."

"Goodbye," Elizabeth said, seeing Kieran out.