

Beyond Saving

Grace

"Ethan, I need to—"

"Stay." Ethan holds on to my waist, nudging me in the direction of the influential men approaching him.

He doesn't let me go, no matter what excuse I present or how I try to pull away from him. In the sea of irrelevant people, I find myself constantly searching for Tristin and when I locate him, I can not look at him for long.

The web of search resets, pushing me to continue the same cycle of push and pull again.

My heart is beating too fast and my hands are sweating, making me unable to hold still.

"Look at her. Isn't she Lily's sister?" I hear a group of women talking from somewhere behind us.

Ethan is engaged in a tense talk with the two expensively dressed men in front of us, while his arm remains around me, keeping me in place.

"Didn't she recently report her sister for attempted murder?"

"I bet she was jealous of her and thought Ethan would ditch her for Lily after all." Another one sneers.

"Lily is better in every sense. This bitch just proved it! Look how shamelessly she is latched onto her sister's boyfriend. If I were her, I would have died before marrying my sister's man and sleeping with him."

The disgust in their voices makes me steal a glance at them. The three ladies meet my gaze before they turn away, giving me their back.

I sigh, shifting my focus to the host standing on the stage, asking for everyone's attention. His words sound muffled in my ears as my eyes stare at the big screen behind him.

Presentations.

Proposals.

Projects.

And potential investors.

It's not a charity event, but a confidential display of every company's best construction designs.

Suddenly, I find Ethan's arm more repulsive than usual. An invisible hand tightens around my throat, making it hard for me to breathe.

If a company's reputation takes a hit in such an important international event, it's bound to become a massive blow to them.

I catch sight of Mr. Costello in the distance, working on the system. My chest tightens.

He picks his head and looks in our direction. His eyes widen for a second, before he looks away, at Ethan.

I watch, as he nods, oblivious to everyone else's eyes. My lips twitch.

"Is this your plan? What if I just go and tell Tristin that his trusted Director is messing up his designs?" I whisper under my breath.

" What will that do? They either present a faulty design or present nothing at all because they can not make something up in a few minutes that follows the criteria. In the end, they lose face. And what is worse than losing face in our business? " Ethan replies smugly.

I glance at him. He has his eyes on me. His gaze is soft and light as if he can no longer bother with the coldness.

" No RB Group members will lose their sleep over such a stupid failure. " I grit my jaw.

Ethan's lips curl, as he strokes the side of my waist with his rough fingers. " there is going to be a special feature to everyone's presentation today. They will run the simulation. Once they see it fall, they will wonder...how many RB-constructed buildings can fall the same way. How easy it will be to pull some strings and make everyone believe that all those designs were passed because of the decades-old influence of the Roberto family. "

My heart misses a beat. " You think you can pull this off? Not every design is bribed to be like this, Ethan. "

" Oh. " He smiles and looks away from me. " But I have the power to make them pass it as faulty. Once they do, they will demolish every big project of RB Infra. That's the biggest company under RB Corporation, isn't it? Without it...where do the Robertos fall in the power chain? "

I press my lips in a thin line, my heart still beating like a drum. All this time, Ethan was already after Tristin. The war between these two giants was always inevitable.

" Right, my sweetheart. Without RB Infra, the Robertos fall far below me. What do you think will happen to your lover boy after that? How will he go after Lily then? How will he— " Ethan's eyes meet mine

again, and suddenly, I find myself asking.

" Why did I ever fall in love with you, Ethan? "

The smile vanishes from his lips. I jerk my waist free and step away.

" You talk about destroying a company over some lies as if you don't even care about how many people will have to suffer because of it. And to think it's all because of Lily... " I smile bitterly. " You...I...I regret it. I will regret this for my whole life. Loving you was a sin I should have never committed. People are right, Ethan. Even after knowing you were in love with my sister, I should have never become your wife. Because you deserved her. You still do. " 1

My voice attracts attention but Ethan doesn't look away, nor do I. I glare at him for some time, and then I find myself going completely numb towards him.

Silently, I turn around and march away from him. This time, he doesn't chase me. He stays on his spot, probably reveling in his victory.

As soon as I am away from him, I search for Tristin again. My legs become wobbly, as time passes quickly.

I need to find him and tell him to send someone to the office. I have made the error right. If only he gets that design in time, they can present it right now.

My head buzzes. It feels like I am in a tunnel, racing against time to reach the other end. But no matter how fast I run or how far I get, I can not come out.

Tristin. Where are you?

I gather my gown in my hands and run up the stairs, to search the



upper floor of the venue. I look everywhere until I come to a sudden halt on a balcony overlooking the hall.

Mr. Costello is already on the stage and the design is being displayed. My mind zones out. I stagger towards the railing and look at him, hating every moment of my life that I endured this man.

If I had reported him instead of thinking that I shouldn't bother because I was dying soon anyway...

If I had done it for someone else, someone I didn't even know...

If only I had done what was right...

He wouldn't be here today, harming the man who saved me in some sick ways.

"Now, it's time to run a simulation..." He is saying, quite happily and confidently.

I squeeze my eyes shut, my hands clenching by my side. A deafening silence falls around me.

I wait for the uproar, for the sudden shock that takes over the audience, but instead of it, I hear the muffled applause.

A presence looms on my side. My eyes snap open, landing on the people in the hall. They don't look shocked or alarmed.

Instead, they look amused and impressed. Confused, I look up at the screen, and like Mr. Costello, I am baffled too. 1

The simulation has run smoothly, and now people are only admiring the new spectacle RB Infra has designed, a world-class design for a big Mall that will be constructed soon.

"Tristin." I murmur, directing my numb gaze towards the man



standing beside me.

He places his hand over the railing and turns to face me. His eyes are still distant, radiating a certain wrath I can not avoid.

"I—"

"It's true. Once a woman loves a man, she can not stop herself from becoming a rug underneath his feet. So how does that feel to let Ethan walk all over you again?" Tristin interrupts, and asks coldly. 1

My blood freezes, and I find myself unable to come up with an answer. I am not used to his harshness or hurtful words.

"I didn't—"

"You are beyond saving, Grace Whitlock." Tristin whispers distantly and turns away to leave.



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