

Crushed Affections

Chapter 17 Don't Do Anything Reckless

Too much had happened that night for Bella to process, so she kept drinking, drowning her thoughts in alcohol.

Lia wanted to drink with her, but Bella stopped her. "You better not. If your heart condition flares up, I'll be too drunk to save you."

Lia chuckled. "With a doctor by my side, what's there to worry about? My heart's not that fragile. Besides, you became a cardiologist because of me. I owe you a drink for that."

Bella had chosen to study medicine and become a cardiologist because of Lia's congenital heart condition. Lia was her only friend, and Bella had tasted loss enough times to know she feared loneliness more than anything.

By the time it was past midnight, Bella was so drunk her consciousness had started to blur. For someone who rarely drank, this night had been far too wild.

"I'll take you home..." Lia slurred while holding onto a shred of sobriety.

Bella fumbled with her phone as she mumbled, "I don't want you to... I'm calling Dominic..."

Lia couldn't help but laugh at that. "No offense, but you're hopeless. Even drunk, you're still thinking about him. Fine, call him. Let him pick you up."

Bella squinted at her phone, struggling to make out the words on the screen. After a few failed attempts, she finally managed to make a call.

When the line connected, she mumbled, "Dominic, where are you? Come pick me up... I'm at Zero Bar... I can't go home..."

On the other end of the line, Felix frowned as he got out of bed and started getting dressed. "Stay there. I'm coming to get you."

It was obvious she had dialed the wrong number, but Felix couldn't leave her alone. After all, his confession to her back in college hadn't been a joke.

When he arrived at the bar, he scanned the area until he spotted two women slumped over in a corner booth, both completely out of it.

He approached them and gently said, "Bella, I'm here. Let's get you up. I'll take you home."

Lia looked up blearily. "Why are you here, Felix? Didn't she call Dominic?"

Felix paused before responding, "She called the wrong number."

Lia was too out of it to argue, and she trusted Felix. She'd heard enough about him from Bella to know he was a stand-up guy. "Alright, take her home. I'll manage on my own."

Before leaving, she gave a half-hearted warning, "You better not try anything!"

Felix nodded, noting that Lia still had some presence of mind. "Be careful on your way home. Once you're there, send a text to Bella's phone to let us know you're safe. I'll keep an eye on her."

After helping both women outside, Felix made sure Lia got into a cab and gave the driver strict instructions before letting her go.

Bella was practically leaning entirely on him. He hadn't expected that after all these years, this would be the closest they'd ever get.

But he was a gentleman who wouldn't take advantage of the situation. "Bella, I'll take you back to Miller Manor."

Bella heard him but didn't recognize his voice. She mumbled incoherently, "I don't want to go back... Don't take me back... He doesn't like seeing me... He'll be angry..."

She was so drunk she'd completely forgotten Dominic wasn't home. What she blurted out was something deeply ingrained in her, something that had become second nature.

Felix frowned. The girl he had longed for had become so cautious and timid after being with Dominic.

Whether it was selfishness or something else, Felix decided to take Bella back to his place.