

After the Secret Wedding Rise of My Queen Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Xander Kissed Her

Tiffany, wide-eyed and transfixed, found herself standing up involuntarily at the sight of Xander

Isabel watched all of Tiffany's reactions, confident that she did not need to step in; Tiffany was likely reeling with regret by now.

"Are you Xander? How can you be Xander? Isn't Xander supposed to be some ugly brute with a receding hairline?" Tiffany blurted out in shock.

"Tiffany!" Morris scolded, gesturing for her to maintain decorum. He then turned to Xander, "My apologies for my daughter's rudeness, Mr. Bennett. She speaks without thinking"

Xander gave Tiffany a brief, indifferent glance that lasted no more than a few seconds before turning away.

"Gift," Xander directed his attention to Leo.

"Yes, Boss." Leo promptly retrieved a carefully selected gift and handed it to Xander.

Xander approached Albert, offering the gift with a blessing, "Old Mr. Perkins, happy birthday and may you live a long and prosperous life."

"Thank you," Albert beamed, receiving the gift, knowing anything from the Bennetts had to be of significant value.

"I knew those rumors were nonsense. Your grandmother was a legendary beauty, ethereal, almost otherworldly. I always said there's no way you could resemble those ridiculous rumors," Albert expressed his relief and satisfaction looking at Xander.

If such an outstanding man were to marry his granddaughter, he would find himself waking up with a smile even in the middle of the night.

"Now I can rest easy knowing Tiffany will be in good hands."

Hearing this, Tiffany quickly approached, her gaze still locked on Xander, "Um, I'm sorry about that day I stood you up."

Isabel stepped forward, cutting off Tiffany, "No need for apologies, in fact, I should be thanking you." "It's you!" Tiffany instantly recognized Isabel from their previous encounter in the mall.

Isabel arched an elegant eyebrow and replied coolly, "Yes, it's me."

"You... Let go of his hand! He's my fiancé!" Tiffany's anger flared as she moved to pull Isabel away from Xander.

Isabel not only refused to let go, but she tightened her grip instead. "He might have been your fiancé, but after you failed to show up for the registration, he married me. So now, he is my husband by law. Why would I let go?"

"What?!" Tiffany stared at Isabel, her voice laden with disbelief. "How could this happen? How could you?" Isabel calmly pulled out a marriage certificate from her purse, displaying it for all to see. "Look, this is official. Xander and I are legally married. Here's our marriage certificate."

Tiffany recoiled, her eyes widening as she caught sight of the document. The reality of the certificate in Isabel's grasp sent tremors through her.

Her heart sank with bitterness and regret.

"No, it should be me walking down the aisle with him, not you! Give him back to me now!"

Isabel responded coolly, "Ms. Perkins, unfortunately, there's no undoing past choices, no matter how wealthy one might be." After saying that, she glanced at Xander, pleased to see his approving look, which lifted her spirits.

"Let's leave, Darling," Isabel suggested with a warm smile.

"Sure," Xander agreed, his face lighting up with happiness as they prepared to exit the room.

Isabel was about to release his hand when Xander tightened his grip, signaling her to wait.

A bit puzzled, Isabel turned to him just in time to hear his hushed, compelling voice.

"She's coming out now."

Right after Xander said that, Isabel witnessed Tiffany hurrying out of the private room.

As Tiffany emerged from the room, her persistence was evident.

Yet, one could not entirely fault her; Xander's allure was undeniable.

“Xander, I apologize. It was a misunderstanding that day. I’m not usually so shallow. It was just the awful rumors -I was misled. I’m really sorry! I hope you can forgive me. I’ll make it up to you,” Tiffany pleaded, her cheeks flushing with urgency.

How could she not feel anxious? Xander was the most striking man she had ever seen. His charm went beyond mere looks, carrying a regal aura that was rare and unmatched.

If she let him slip away today, she would undoubtedly regret it forever!

“Ms. Perkins, our paths diverged the day you failed to show up, I’m married now. Please respect that and move on,” Xander stated flatly.

Anger flared in Tiffany’s eyes as she glared at Isabel, the woman who had seemingly stolen her future.

“I refuse to believe this! Was this all an act? Did you bring her here to rub it in? I regret it already...”

Before Tiffany could get all her words out, she saw Xander unexpectedly embrace Isabel.

Her eyes widened in shock at the scene.

The display did not stop there; Xander lifted Isabel, pulling her close against his chest, and then bent down to gently press his lips against hers.

After the Secret Wedding Rise of My Queen Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Breakup

It was a deep and passionate kiss.

Isabel’s eyes widened in shock as the sensation of Xander’s kiss electrified her senses.

He was actually kissing her, not just a peck but a deep, engaging kiss that seemed to pull her entire being into the moment.

This was no simple brush of lips she had initiated before.

This time, he was fully pressing into her, their closeness leaving little to the imagination.

This was so exceedingly bold and thrilling.

He even drew her tightly against him, leaving her feeling somewhat overwhelmed by the physical closeness.

In comparison, she felt as if she had been taken advantage of!

“You...” Tiffany’s voice trembled with a mix of panic and fury, her complexion cycling through shades of red and purple.

Isabel subtly nudged Xander’s shoulder, signaling that their performance might have reached its peak. Xander slowly loosened his grip around Isabel’s waist, although his hand lingered for a moment longer than necessary before finally letting go.

Isabel glanced at his hand still on her waist, but considering their act, she brushed off any deeper meaning.

“Let’s leave now.”

“Sure.”

Together, Isabel and Xander walked away in sync.

Behind them, Tiffany watched with eyes that could ignite fires, filled with venomous jealousy.

She could not bear the thought of Isabel walking away with Xander.

Just then, Morris approached.

“I tried to get you two to meet earlier, but you refused. Feeling any regrets now?”

“Dad, please help me! I must marry him! And don’t you also want to be Xander’s father-in-law?” Tiffany implored.

“Don’t worry, you’re my treasure. How could I not take care of this for you?” Morris assured her with confidence.

“Dad, do you already have a plan?” Tiffany pressed, eager for a resolution.

Morris’s lips curled into a sly grin. “That marriage certificate might just be a facade. Remember, it’s widely known that Xander avoids women. My guess? He brought that woman here today simply to embarrass you as payback for ditching him earlier.”

Tiffany had considered this possibility herself.

“But what if the marriage is legitimate? What if they truly are married?”

“Real or fake, it makes no difference. I have my ways to deal with it,” Morris boasted.

Relieved, Tiffany urged him, “Dad, stop holding out on me. Tell me!”

Morris outlined his scheme, "We'll hire a few vagrants to ... Given Xander's known aversion to filth, how long do you think he'll stand someone 'used'?"

"Dad, that's ingenious! How did I not think of that?" Tiffany was eager to witness Isabel's downfall.

Who told Isabel to strip Tiffany of her dignity, slap her, and steal her man? This was the price for crossing Tiffany.

"Make sure they're hideous! The more repulsive, the better!"

Furthermore, she planned to document the ordeal with photos and videos, eager to see if Xander would still hold Isabel in the same regard once he saw them.

"Ah—choo!" Isabel sneezed suddenly.

Is someone gossiping about me?

Stepping out of the car, Isabel rubbed her nose just as Xander, ever the gentleman, offered his suit jacket to shield her from the chill.

"Thank you."

As she thanked him, she noticed Samuel rolling out of the villa in his wheelchair.

"Hey, why are you wearing my brother's clothes again?"

Clutching the jacket closer around her, Isabel shot back. "I didn't bring a jacket. Should I wear yours instead? It's quite chilly out here, okay?"

In Samuel's view, Isabel was craftily omitting her jacket just to have an excuse to borrow one from his brother.

Observing this, Samuel promptly removed his own jacket and offered it to her.

"Here, wear mine instead of my brother's!" he insisted, eager to prevent any further contact between Isabel and his brother's belongings.

Isabel eyed Samuel's more relaxed, casual jacket which indeed looked more comfortable than Xander's formal suit jacket.

"Fine, I'll..." Isabel began, but before she could finish her sentence, Xander had already snatched Samuel's jacket away.

He tossed the jacket back to Samuel and, with a firm push on the wheelchair, headed swiftly into the villa.

This left Isabel a bit bewildered by the swift turn of events.

A cold breeze whipped around her, causing her to wrap her arms around herself for warmth.

Despite the confusing actions of the men, Isabel realized the urgency of getting indoors due to the chill.

A week later, Isabel stepped out in a laid-back shirt for the day, Samuel trailing closely behind her.

Samuel was deeply protective of his brother and kept a vigilant watch over Isabel, fearful she might elope with his brother.

However, Isabel was not one to be easily tracked, and within minutes, she had completely lost Samuel.

"Where did she go? How did she vanish like that?"

Samuel fretted, pulling out his phone to check in with his team.

"Mr. Samuel, we've lost sight of her as well!" came the reply.

Samuel was baffled. He had deployed his family's top bodyguards who were skilled in surveillance to follow her.

Clearly, Isabel was no ordinary woman; her ability to evade such seasoned professionals marked her as truly remarkable.

Meanwhile, at the Perkins residence, Morris was on the phone.

"She's gone to the hospital? Okay, make sure you guys keep an eye on the entrance."

Tiffany, barely containing her excitement, chimed in, "Has she finally made an appearance?"

"Yes, today she'll meet her downfall," Morris muttered, his mind on Isabel's captivating beauty—a regrettable thought crossed his mind about sampling her charms if not for the mess with Xander. "Such a waste."

"I'm going to see for myself," Tiffany declared, getting to her feet.

"Just be discreet, don't get spotted," Morris cautioned.

"Understood, Dad, I'm on it. It's about Xander getting cheated on, so I'll be cautious."

“Make sure you do.”

At the hospital, Isabel, carrying a fruit basket, paused at the entrance to a ward upon catching a sharp, unwelcome voice inside.

“Reggie, I can’t bear this any longer!”

The voice was too familiar. Peeking inside, Isabel spotted a woman by the bedside, hands on her hips—it was Jessica, her brother’s girlfriend since university.

They had been close until her brother’s accident disfigured him, after which Jessica grew distant and cold.

Reggie was silent, his expression pained.

“Reggie, just look at yourself. What have you turned into all because of your reckless sister? You were the heartthrob of our university, and now? You’re barely recognizable!” Jessica’s tone was scathing.

Reggie’s hand tightened, but he managed a weak adjustment of his blanket before looking up. “Jessica, you can yell at me, but this has nothing to do with Isabel.”

Jessica’s anger flared even more.

“Look at you, a shadow of your former self, and still defending her? You’re just obsessed with your sister!”

From her spot by the door, Isabel’s heart sank with guilt.

“Reggie, despite your transformation into what some might call a monster, I’ve never looked down on you. But now, I hear that your father has disowned you, is that right?” Jessica probed, her voice edged with accusation.

Reggie’s response was a tight-lipped silence.

“You’re quiet again! Silence always means agreement with you. It must be your sister’s fault again, isn’t it?” Jessica’s frustration was palpable, her voice rising with each word.

“I’m telling you now, you have to make your way back to your family, or we’re through!” Jessica’s ultimatum was clear, her tone implying that Reggie’s value lay in his status as the Zimmermans’ heir.

“No,” Reggie replied firmly, shaking his head. “I won’t return to the family. If I go back, what about Isabel? I can’t just abandon her.”

Overhearing this, Isabel felt a pang in her heart, her eyes moistening.

“Always Isabel! Reggie, who matters more to you, Isabel or me? You need to give me an answer today! If you choose your family, I’ll marry you. If not, we end things today! Make your choice!” Jessica demanded.

After the Secret Wedding Rise of My Queen Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Don’t Even Think About Coming Back to Me

Jessica’s anger flared as she stared at Reggie with intense disdain.

Raised in a humble rural family, she had used her attractiveness to her advantage upon meeting Reggie at university.

Captivated by his wealthy background and good looks, she orchestrated multiple serendipitous encounters, learning his hobbies and preferences to position herself as his ideal partner. This manipulation led to their relationship.

A few years back, Reggie risked his life by running into a fire to save Isabel, which left him with extensive burns on his face. Overnight, he went from being the school’s heartthrob to someone disfigured.

If it had not been for his position as the Zimmerman heir and his mild-mannered nature, Jessica would have moved on from him long ago..

As Isabel entered, she quickly sized up the situation.

“There’s no need to force a choice. Do you think Reggie doesn’t see through you? When he was admired, you were sweet and docile. Now, faced with his adversity, you turn critical and scornful. Do you actually care for him?”

Before Jessica could respond, Isabel cut her off.

“Don’t claim love; your interest lies solely in his position as the Zimmerman heir. You’re nothing but shallow.”

Jessica, exposed and embarrassed, retorted defensively

“Stop accusing me falsely! I’m not like that!”

“Is that so? Well, let me be clear—my brother isn’t going back to the family, and he’s no longer the Zimmerman heir. If you still want to stay with him, you’ll have to get used to a tougher life. You won’t be able to just buy anything whenever you feel like it.

“And when you marry my brother and become part of the family, you’ll need to contribute financially as well. Of course, if you choose not to work outside, my brother will take responsibility for providing for you, but that doesn’t mean you can just sit

around all day. You'll still need to take care of basic household chores like cooking and laundry."

Isabel watched as Jessica's face twisted with shock and indignation, her emotions clearly etched across her features.

"Reggie," Isabel said as she turned to look at Reggie.

Being his sister, she knew this was a decision she could not make for him.

Reggie had been with Jessica for years, and while she might have only been drawn to his outward qualities, Reggie was someone who took everything seriously, especially matters of the heart.

When he chose to be with Jessica back then, it was not just a fling; he was genuinely considering marriage.

Ultimately, it was still up to Reggie.

After a brief internal struggle, Reggie finally looked up at Jessica, his expression firm. "If you're so eager to break up, then let's end it."

Jessica's eyes widened in disbelief. She never imagined that Reggie would be the one to suggest breaking up.

She had always thought of herself as the beautiful one, and he, with his disfigured face, should have been grateful that she had not left him yet."

In her mind, he should have been begging her not to go.

"Reggie, are you seriously ending things with me?" Jessica asked, feeling a wave of frustration she could not quite explain.

Reggie exhaled deeply, meeting her gaze. Instead of directly answering, he posed a question of his own. "I'm not going back to the Zimmermans. Like Isabel said, I want to start over from scratch. Can you stick with me through that?"

Start over from scratch? Was he joking? With her looks, why should she suffer through hardships with him?

"Fine, let's end it then!"

Jessica snapped, pulling off the ring Reggie had given her and tossing it at him before storming out. However, just as she reached the door, she hesitated, turning back to glare at Reggie with gritted teeth.

“Reggie, if you ever regret this decision, don’t even think about coming back to me, no matter how much you beg!”

Jessica spat out her words with a finality that left no room for doubt.

Isabel watched her with a frosty gaze. “I’ll return the same message to you: “The wheel of fortune turns, and the tables will too. Don’t underestimate someone just because they’re down.’ When my brother rises again, he won’t take you back even if you crawl back to him.”

Jessica scoffed, “I’ll be waiting! Waiting for your brother to make something of himself, though I doubt I’ll live to see it, even in another lifetime!”

With a mocking laugh, Jessica stormed out, slamming the door so hard it echoed through the hall. Isabel rolled her eyes and muttered, “So loud in a hospital—no respect for the patients trying to rest.”

Reggie, his resolve solidifying, turned to Isabel. “Isabel, I promise I won’t let you down. Once I’m back on my feet, I’ll start fresh and make sure we have a good life.”

Isabel smiled, handing him an orange from the fruit basket.

“I believe in you, Reggie.”

Reggie had always been deeply involved in running the family business, proving his capabilities beyond doubt.

“So, Reggie, what’s your next step?”

“I’m thinking we should set up our own business first, but the issue is capital ...” Reggie’s brow creased, knowing he had only 50 thousand dollars available.

“Don’t worry about the funds,” Isabel interjected.

“What?”

From her bag, Isabel produced a sleek black card and handed it to Reggie.

“Relax, it’s all legitimate. This card was given to me by my mentor.”

Reggie paused, baffled for a moment.

After a short silence, he asked, “Is this card legitimate?”

“My mentor is the renowned Miracle Healer; she wouldn’t give me something fake,” Isabel reassured with a smile.

Reggie had been somewhat skeptical of Isabel's claims about her mentor. Now, seeing the black card solidified his belief in her story.

"But isn't this your mentor's card? Isn't it improper for us to use it?"

Isabel explained, "She instructed me to use it as needed. Not using it would actually be disrespectful. Plus, if it really bothers you, we can always repay her once the business is up and running."

Convinced by Isabel's logic, Reggie slowly came around to the idea.

The reality was, that starting anew without any capital would be exceedingly tough. While he could bear the hardship, he did not want Isabel to endure the same

He aspired to be a strong support for her.

"You make a good point," Reggie conceded, taking the card with a firm grip, filled with newfound determination.

"Let's check your progress," Isabel said, gently beginning to unwrap the bandages from Reggie's face.

As each layer peeled away, Isabel's expression brightened with satisfaction. Handing over a mirror to Reggie, she encouraged, "Have a look for yourself."

Anxiously, Reggie inhaled deeply. Isabel had promised him noticeable improvement within a week. Now, as that week concluded, he was about to see for himself whether his appearance had truly healed.

After the Secret Wedding Rise of My Queen Chapter 24

Chapter 24 The Ambush

Reggie's reflection in the mirror left him speechless. His face, which he had only dared to hope would slightly improve, had nearly returned to its original condition, and the scars and burns markedly healed.

"How? How is this even possible?" he muttered, his voice laced with disbelief.

The healing was almost miraculous, far beyond what he could have anticipated for such a short period.

While not entirely perfect, the vast improvement meant that to any casual observer, his face appeared almost normal.

"In a couple more weeks, you'll be completely healed," Isabel affirmed with a confident nod, seeing the shock mixed with relief on Reggie's face.

Reggie turned towards her, his eyes shimmering with unspoken gratitude.

"Hey, no need for thanks between us, okay?" she chimed in quickly, wanting to ease the emotional weight of the moment.

Caught off guard by her prompt, Reggie smiled warmly and playfully pinched Isabel's cheek, "Alright, I'll keep the formalities to myself then."

Their bond transcended mere words of gratitude; they were family, deeply entwined in each other's lives. Isabel handed Reggie an apple she had just washed. "Eat up, it's good for your skin," she advised.

"Sure," Reggie agreed, taking the apple and biting into it.

As he enjoyed the fresh fruit, Isabel's thoughts drifted to Jessica, who had left in a huff, issuing threats.

She wondered silently who would truly end up regretting their actions.

Suddenly, Isabel felt a persistent twitch in her right eyelid. She rubbed it, trying to soothe the annoying flutter.

"What's up, Isabel?" Reggie asked, noticing her discomfort.

"Just a little eye twitch, probably from lack of sleep," she replied casually, trying to dismiss her concern. "You should head back and get some rest then," Reggie suggested.

"Okay, I should head out now," Isabel said, wrapping up the conversation. Just then, her phone rang. It was Xander.

Glancing at Reggie, she hesitated. Sharing the truth about her marriage with Xander was not something she intended to do; it would only worry Reggie unnecessarily.

Isabel had no intention of revealing the truth to Reggie once her assignment was concluded, she aimed to divorce Xander and move on, pretending that none of it ever occurred.

Stepping outside with her phone, Isabel answered the call. "Hello?"

"Did you go to the hospital?" Xander asked immediately.

“How did you know?” Isabel questioned, not waiting for his reply before she sharply added, “Have you been checking up on me?”

“Does that bother you?” Xander’s voice carried a note of concern, sensing potential upset on her part.

“It’s expected, isn’t it? Given your background, skepticism towards me isn’t surprising,” Isabel responded coolly.

Her tone was matter-of-fact, aiming to play down the situation, though Xander interpreted her words as self-deprecation.

“I didn’t mean to imply that.” Xander’s expression was so tight it looked like he could snap.

“Wait, I... ” Isabel started to respond, but before she could finish, a group of rough-looking men with tattoos approached her..

“Hey, beautiful, why don’t you join us for a drink?” one of the men called out.

Xander’s voice came tense through the phone, “Where are you now?”

Just then, Isabel’s phone emitted a low battery warning “I have to go, my phone’s dying,” she quickly said, and the line went dead.

Silence fell in Xander’s car, the atmosphere turning icy with his worry.

Leo was so frightened he almost lost the ability to drive.

“Drive to the hospital, fast!” Xander commanded, his voice sharp with urgency.

He understood from the disturbing encounter Isabel just described that she was in potential danger.

So, he had to get to her right now.

Isabel quickly pocketed her phone and surveyed her surroundings. There were six individuals eyeing her with crude stares.

Nearby, Tiffany watched from her car, laughing viciously as she recorded everything on her phone. She was intent on ensuring Isabel, whom she viewed as foolish, would be irreversibly disgraced.

“Tell them to make a move now!”

“Roger that.”

Tiffany commanded her driver, who communicated the order to the unruly crowd.

After getting the go-ahead, the drifters quickly closed in on Isabel.

She remained calm and composed, delivering swift kicks to the sensitive spots of the attackers as they approached.

For individuals like these, Isabel showed no leniency. She had the skills to protect herself, but she could not help but think of other ordinary girls who might face such a threat, likely ending up in a situation far graver than hers.

“Ouch!” One of the drifters clutched his legs, writhing on the ground in pain after Isabel’s precise kick.

Seeing their companion in agony, the remaining drifters hesitated, shocked that the seemingly fragile girl could handle herself so adeptly.

Meanwhile, Xander was urgently speeding towards the hospital in his sleek black Maybach.

“Speed up!” he commanded, his face set in a grim expression of urgency.

Leo, pressured by his boss’s stern demeanor, responded nervously, “Boss, this is the fastest we can go.”

“She’s waiting for me,” Xander muttered, each minute stretching into an eternity as he imagined Isabel’s distress.

His mind raced with concern, almost losing his composure with worry.

The scene shifts to Isabel, who casually brushed off her hands as she surveyed the drifters scattered on the ground.

“Will you turn yourselves in, or do I need to escort you to the station?” she asked coolly.

Inside a nearby car, Tiffany was recording everything on her phone, her face a mix of shock and malice. She had hoped to capture Isabel’s downfall, not witness her overwhelming the attackers.

“Tell them to run!” Tiffany urgently instructed her driver, fearing the drifters might reveal their family’s involvement if apprehended.

Her father’s initial strategy was to have the drifters handle Isabel in an unmonitored area, then pay them to vanish completely. This way, even if the Bennetts initiated an investigation, the lack of surveillance and witnesses would ensure that her family could not be linked to the incident.

Yet, they had not anticipated Isabel's martial arts skills.

The drifters, receiving the cue, clumsily rose to their feet.

"Thinking of escaping?" Isabel swiftly restrained one of them.

"Dirty brat, watch this!" Another drifter turned and sprayed her face with a can of pepper spray.

"Ah!"

The searing pain—forced Isabel to stumble backward, finally collapsing against a wall, her eyes stinging terribly.

Her eyes were burning painfully.

As Isabel shook her head, trying to regain some focus, her vision blurred, and she felt dizzy.

The chemical mist from the spray not only impaired her sight but also seemed to sap her physical strength, leaving her feeling weak and lethargic.

From her medical knowledge, she quickly deduced that the spray contained a potent substance with significant physiological effects.

"Perfect!" Tiffany cheered from a distance.

"The spray I prepared for them is highly effective, Miss. It won't let you down," the driver responded confidently.

"Good work. Remind me to have my father reward you if this goes as planned, Tiffany mentioned, pulling out her phone to continue recording the scene.

"Thank you, Miss."

Despite her attempts to shake off the dizziness, Isabel's head continued to spin.

She knew she could administer an antidote to herself, but that required time she did not have as the drifters closed in around her.

"Quit fighting, darling, and join us," taunted one of the men, reaching out towards her.

Isabel, driven by desperation, kicked forcefully at the nearest man.

She had to get out of here!

Her shoe connected, and the man collapsed to the ground with a grunt.

She spotted a brief opening in their circle Now was her chance to escape.

Isabel bolted toward the gap, but just as she thought she was clear, a strong hand grabbed her, pulling her back with such force that she stumbled and fell into someone else's grasp.

After the Secret Wedding Rise of My Queen Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Xander's Gentleness Towards Isabel

Oh no!

They got me!

Isabel was frantically trying to break free.

"It's me." A deep voice soothed her panic.

At those words, Isabel ceased her struggles, her frantic heartbeat slowly calming as she looked up at the man holding her. The irritation from the spray caused her eyes to water heavily, and as she blinked through the pain, tears streamed down her cheeks...

Each tear traced a path down her face, falling onto his hand and deeply stirring his emotions.

"Don't cry," Xander murmured, his fingertips gently brushing away her tears.

"Huh? I'm not crying," Isabel said, slightly dazed.

Xander's heart ached more at her brave facade.

"I'm sorry I got here late," he murmured as he pulled her into a gentle embrace.

Tiffany watched, seething with envy and rage, her eyes nearly bursting with fury.

Leo, having subdued the threat, turned to Xander. "Boss, what should we do with them?"

"What do you think we should do?" Xander deferred to Isabel.

"Let's hand them over to the police. They should be locked away for a good long while so they can't hurt anyone else," Isabel suggested.

Simple, yet firm. Xander agreed internally, despite his own deeper anger.

“Let’s get you to the car,” he said, supporting Isabel as they walked past the downed men. His foot “accidentally” crushed the hands of the men on the ground, eliciting a chorus of pained howls.

“What happened?” Isabel paused, turning to him.

“Just stepped on something,” Xander responded nonchalantly.

Leo, who had seen the man reaching towards Isabel earlier, appreciated his boss’s subtle revenge.

After ensuring the men were taken to the police station Leo returned to the car and drove off.

“Did they get to you?” Xander asked, his expression tense.

“No, I managed to get away in time,” Isabel answered, her voice faint.

Isabel’s reassurances did not quite ease Xander’s concern. “I’m taking you to the hospital.”

“No, there’s no need for that, I’m okay. I’m familiar with medical stuff, so I know my own state—it’s just exhaustion. Resting will be enough,” Isabel swiftly replied.

She knew she could not visit the hospital now; instead, she needed to return home to administer a necessary injection to herself.

“Are you sure you’re alright?” Xander inquired with concern, his brow furrowed

“Yes, I’m fine, just exhausted. I just need to rest my eyes a bit. Isabel responded, scooting toward the car door and leaning her head against the window, maintaining a significant distance from Xander

Xander watched the gap between them widen, his mood sinking

After a brief pause, Isabel’s anxiety grew. Her hand drifted to the side, inching closer to Xander’s hand until she finally grasped it.

Xander looked at their hands, puzzled about her intentions.

Before he could decipher her actions, Isabel suddenly threw herself at him.

This sudden move startled Leo, who was driving attentively, almost causing him to swerve.

The scene changed.

Samuel was engrossed in a soccer game when he was disturbed by noises coming from outside.

It was likely his brother returning.

Samuel glanced up just in time to see Xander entering with Isabel in his arms.

The remote clattered to the ground.

What's happening here?

Why is Xander holding Isabel?

Samuel's confusion quickly turned to alarm when he noticed how Isabel's hand was wreaking havoc with his brother's clothes, fumbling inside his suit.

"Isabel! Are you really so desperate that you can't keep your hands off my brother in broad daylight?" Samuel exclaimed.

A look of embarrassed resignation crossed Isabel's face. I wish I could stop, but my hands have a mind of their own."

"Let go of my brother!" Samuel urged as he pushed his wheelchair forward.

"I'm sorry, I can't," Isabel replied, her expression rueful

Samuel turned to Leo, frustrated. "Why are you just standing there? Get her off him!"

Leo inwardly cringed. Sorry, he thought, I really can't.

Xander intervened, his voice calm. "She was drugged." He gave Leo a pointed look that sent a shiver down his spine.

Leo knew better than to cross his boss; no way he was touching Isabel.

"Drugged?" Samuel scrutinized Isabel's flushed face, wit was red from her cheeks to her neck.

Despite his concern, he could not bear to see her pawing at his brother

"Xander, just let her go. Don't bother with her

"No, don't let me go. Isabel pleaded, gripping, Zander's shirt tightly.

She was in obvious distress, and Zander's embrace seemed to be the only relief.

Hearing her softly spoken plea, Zander felt a tug at his heart and found himself nodding almost without thinking “Okay, I won’t,” he reassured her.

Samuel watched, dumbfounded, as the scene unfolded, struggling to reconcile what he saw and heard.

His brother seemed totally under a spell.

“Xander, you can’t let her manipulate you like this, she might end up completely devouring you!”

Isabel felt increasingly anxious, sensing the situation could quickly become unmanageable.

“He’s right. Maybe you should just knock me out?” she suggested half-seriously.

“Yes, do it!” Samuel looked at Leo, urging him, “Knock her out now,”

Leo, forever caught in the middle, sighed in frustration. Why does it always fall on me?

Pretending to be in pain, he clutched his stomach and excused himself, “I need to use the restroom!”

He made his escape, preferring safety over involvement

Samuel, ignored by Leo, refocused on Xander. “Xander, please! Just knock her out!”

Isabel, feeling the mounting tension, gripped Xander’s shirt tighter.

“Please be gentle, I bruise easily,” she whispered.

She had always been the one to render others unconscious, not the other way around.

When Isabel braced herself for the impact, Xander did not strike.

Instead, he lifted her in his arms and ascended the stairs.

Not knocking out, then?

Isabel opened her eyes to gaze at the man. As her vision had cleared up a bit, she could clearly see his face from up close.

His strikingly handsome features nearly overwhelmed her, almost unleashing the formidable force within her.

Samuel stared as Xander carried Isabel away and disappeared into a room, shutting the door behind them.

He then rushed up the express elevator to Xander's room and pressed his ear against the door to eavesdrop.

Just as he did, a loud bang from inside caused the door to tremble violently, painfully rattling his ear against it.