

Chapter 99 Happy Birthday, Isabel

Upon hearing the words, Kaleb's gaze snapped toward the scene unfolding before him. In the distance, two figures came into focus, one male and one female, their outlines gradually sharpening against the backdrop of the harbor.

He narrowed his eyes, attempting to discern the girl's features. Her shape mirrored Isabel's too closely. And the man ...

A vivid image sprang to mind—a striking face, noble and alluring. The resemblance was uncanny.

Could it truly be them?

Before he could delve deeper into his thoughts, the pair ascended the gangplank of the Princess Charm.

"You're mistaken. It can't be them," he declared, disbelief coloring his tone.

After all, the Princess Charm was exclusively chartered by the Bennett Group for the day. It seemed impossible that Isabel and her companion could be there.

"But that guy really resembles him," Eva replied, uncertainty lacing her words. "They must be the president and his wife."

As she spoke, a sharp pang of envy twisted in Eva's chest.

That girl seemed to embody happiness, a joy far beyond her own grasp.

At that moment, Eva would have given anything to switch places with her.

"Kaleb, have you ever met the CEO of the Bennett Group?" she inquired, her curiosity evident.

Kaleb shook his head. "Mr. Bennett seldom makes public appearances. Few have seen his face. I'd like to meet him someday, though."

His gaze remained locked on the figure of the man aboard the Princess Charm. He had considered approaching them, but today was a special occasion for the wife. Any interruption might lead to unintended consequences.

"Let's put that aside for now. The guests are waiting," he said, redirecting his focus to Eva. "Eva, I wanted to give you an unforgettable wedding today, but—"

"Kaleb, none of that matters. Being with you is all I desire," Eva replied, her eyes softening as she gazed at him.

Seeing the warmth in her expression, Kaleb reaffirmed his conviction. Eva was undeniably the right choice for him, and his heart settled in peace.

Meanwhile, on the Princess Charm, Isabel stepped onto the deck, her eyes sweeping the desolate space. "Where is everyone? Did we arrive too soon?"

She had believed Xander brought her to the Princess Charm for another reason entirely. Yet, as she surveyed their surroundings, the truth dawned on her: it was only the two of them on the luxurious vessel.

Just as Isabel finished her thought, she caught sight of Xander's smile, bright and inviting. He pointed toward the sky, his expression full of anticipation.

What did he mean by that?

Isabel glanced upward, following the man's gaze, but the sky offered nothing but darkness.

"What are you—"

Suddenly, fireworks erupted, painting the night with brilliant colors. Each explosion was more spectacular than the last.

Isabel's eyes sparkled in amazement as she absorbed the spectacle.

Nearby, Eva, Kaleb, and the wedding guests stood transfixed, their eyes glued to the sky.

"It's so beautiful! Kaleb, you're incredible!" Eva cried out, convinced that this was a surprise arranged by her fiancé.

Kaleb blinked in surprise, momentarily lost for words. Just as he began to explain, the delighted chatter of the crowd drowned out his voice.

"The Johnson Group really knows how to throw a party! Just imagine the expense for all these fireworks!" one guest remarked.

"I wish I had a husband like that! Look how he treats her; I should take notes!" another added.

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Kaleb turned to Eva, a smile tugging at his lips. "I'm happy you like it."

In truth, he hadn't lied. Although he hadn't organized the grand affair, he felt no obligation to correct her misconception.

Just then, the fireworks shifted shape, morphing into letters that illuminated the sky.

"Happy birthday, Isabel!"

Kaleb's face burned with embarrassment.

Eva's expression transformed from joy to disbelief in an instant.

The guests aboard the cruise fell silent, their gazes shifting toward Eva and Kaleb, confusion etched across their faces.

They soon grasped the reality: this was not Kaleb's surprise for Eva.

To make matters worse, the name "Isabel" floated above them, signaling that another person was the center of attention.

Isabel!

Kaleb and Eva instinctively turned their gazes toward the Princess Charm, a sense of realization creeping in. Could it possibly be—

Before they could fully entertain the thought, they dismissed it.

No way!

If Isabel truly had a connection to the Bennett Group, she would have hurried over to show off her good fortune.

It had to be mere coincidence.

Isabel stared at the vanishing words in the night sky, overwhelmed by a surge of emotion that eluded any attempt at articulation. In her previous life, Beowulf and his companions had frequently celebrated her birthday, but none of those moments resonated with her as profoundly as this.

"Do you like it?" The man's voice flowed like music, rich and inviting, reminiscent of a finely played cello.

She blinked away the moisture threatening to spill from her eyes and turned to Xander, her gratitude evident. "Thank you."

"Don't mention it," he replied, a smile brightening his features at her delight. He made a mental note to praise Samuel later.

When Samuel first proposed the idea of fireworks, Xander had scoffed at its old-fashioned nature. But Samuel had insisted, arguing that traditional gestures held a timeless appeal, especially for women, regardless of their feigned indifference.

"It's windy outside. Let's go inside. I've set up dinner for us," Xander suggested.

Isabel wrapped her arms around herself, trying to ward off the chill. "I was so caught up in the fireworks. Now that they're finished, it does feel a little chilly out here."

Without hesitation, Xander removed his jacket and placed it gently over her shoulders, a flicker of concern shadowing his eyes.

He had been remiss, forgetting the nighttime breeze on the sea could be biting.

Isabel adjusted the jacket, feeling its warmth envelop her as she stepped inside behind him.

The Princess Charm was etched in her memory, a cherished place from her past. In a previous lifetime, she had booked the entire ship for a week, the reason lost to time.

She had enjoyed every minute, relishing its luxurious amenities, from the swimming pool to the bowling alley. It was a true haven for the wealthy.

A wave of nostalgia washed over her. It had been far too long since she had visited, and the ship sparked fragments of memories from her former life.

Xander noticed her awe and assumed it was her first experience aboard. "Let's eat first, then we can take our time exploring," he proposed.

"Sounds good," she replied, her excitement palpable.

Just then, the abrupt ringing of a phone sliced through the moment.

It was Beowulf calling.

As Xander glanced at the caller ID on Isabel's phone, his expression shifted, darkening with concern.

"Hello?" Isabel said.

The moment Isabel answered the call, Beowulf's animated voice burst through the speaker.

"Hey, Boss! Happy birthday!"

"Oh, thank you."

"Wait just a second before you start with the gratitude. Raoul and I have something big planned for you!" Beowulf's excitement was infectious.

"What did you prepare?" Isabel asked, intrigue sparking within her.

"Just glance at the cruise ship over there! That's where those two lovebirds are tying the knot!"

What in the world?

Isabel's mind raced as she moved toward the window, her eyes drawn to the ship in the distance.

In an instant, realization struck, and her eyes widened with disbelief.