

Trading My Ex for His Uncle (Nyla)

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"This time it's for real, I promise!" Brandon argued.

He spoke with unwavering conviction, but Damon merely looked down, unwilling to engage with him any further.

Brandon let out a sigh, feeling the weight of his troubles with no one to confide in. He asked again, "Uncle Damon, are we still drinking?"

"When did I agree to drink with you?" Damon replied.

Brandon sighed, realizing he had misplaced his hopes.

After turning the car around to drop Damon off at his villa, they arrived just as Nyla and Oliver were coming out, holding hands with Mason. The three of them wore smiles, appearing like a warm, happy family.

Brandon noticed Damon's souring mood and instinctively quieted his breathing, fearing that Damon would take out his frustration on him.

The group soon spotted Damon, and Nyla bit her lip before saying, "Mr. Sumner, I'm taking Buddy home."

Damon didn't respond. His gaze remained fixed on the hand Oliver was holding-Mason's.

The thought that Mason had spent several years with Oliver and liked him stirred a wave of irritation within Damon. It seemed he would need to put in a lot of effort to win Mason over to his side. Seeing that Damon had no response, Nyla frowned, a hint of confusion flickering in her eyes.

Why did Damon seem off today? It had felt strange ever since he asked her to give him a ride to the

auction.

Oliver noticed Damon's gaze and met it without flinching, his eyes calm and unafraid.

Once they were standing directly in front of Damon, he finally addressed Nyla, "Are you free this weekend? Buddy mentioned he wants us to take him to the zoo."

Nyla nodded. "Sure, I don't have any plans. The zoo is close to our place. Let's meet at the zoo entrance at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday."

Damon's previously sullen expression softened slightly as he subtly glanced at Oliver before replying, "Alright."

"Then, we'll head back now," Nyla said.

Damon nodded. "Be careful on the way."

After they left, Damon turned to Brandon. "Weren't you in the mood for a drink? Let's go."

Brandon was speechless—he wasn't feeling up to it anymore, as he could clearly sense that Damon was in a bad mood.

"Uncle Damon... it's getting late. You should rest. Let's drink another time," Brandon said.

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Without waiting for Damon's response, he jumped into the car and sped off.

Watching Brandon's car disappear, Damon narrowed his eyes and walked back into the villa. +25 BONUS

On the way home, Oliver told Nyla, "Since you're going to the zoo this weekend, I'd like to join."

Nyla was a bit surprised. She hadn't expected him to make that request.

Then, recalling how she had taken Damon to the auction tonight, she understood that Oliver might be feeling a bit insecure about it.

"I need to check with Buddy first," she said, uncertain if Mason wanted to go to the zoo just with her and

Damon.

"I'll ask him," Oliver replied.

Just then, the car stopped at a red light.

Oliver turned to the backseat, where

Mason

was asleep in his car seat,

and couldn't help but chuckle. He's

out cold. I'll ask him tomorrow

"I can ask him. If you're worried about me being alone with Damon, I'll be mindful of that in the future," Nyla assured him.

Oliver glanced at her, speaking softly. "Nyla, I do have some selfish reasons for not wanting you to be alone with Damon. But I also want to be involved in Buddy's growth because I'm serious about marrying you."

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Nyla lowered her gaze, complicated emotions crossing her eyes.

+25 BONUS

The better Oliver was to her, the guiltier she felt. After all, she didn't reciprocate his feelings in the same way. Sometimes, she felt quite bad for him.

"Oliver, you don't have to be so good to me..../"

puts pressure on me," she said honestly.

Oliver tightened his grip on the steering wheel, a hint of wryness in his eyes. "Nyla, you can't actually develop feelings for me beyond friendship, can you?"

Nyla was silent for a few seconds before slowly replying, "I don't know... But I think I could. Just give me a little more time."

The car fell silent until they reached her building. Neither spoke.

Once Oliver parked, he turned to face Nyla instead of getting out of the car.

"Nyla, feelings can't be rushed. You don't have to force yourself. If one day you realize you can't like

me, just tell me. I'd rather you be free and happy than feel pressured to stay with me because of what I've done over these five years," he said seriously. "To me, your happiness is what matters most."

A wave of emotion washed over Nyla, making her nose tingle. "But that doesn't seem fair to you."

Oliver smiled softly. "There's no fairness or unfairness here. Everything I've done for you and Buddy over these five years was voluntary. You've given me feedback too. I've enjoyed these five years. Don't let that time bind you and cloud your judgment."

He loved Nyla, so he was willing to do anything for her. If she could return those feelings, it would be a blessing. If not, he wouldn't complain.

Life was too short-just meeting each other was already a blessing.

The car fell silent again.

After what felt like an eternity, Nyla finally spoke. "Okay, I understand. I'll think about it."

"Great, I'll hold you to that," Oliver said.

Unbuckling his seatbelt, he got out and opened the back door. He carefully picked up the sleeping Mason before shutting the door and walking with Nyla into the building.

After ensuring they were safely inside, he left.

Nyla was the only one left in the living room. She sank onto the sofa and began to reflect on her feelings for Oliver.

If it weren't for him, she wouldn't be

who she was today. Thus, she felt genuinely grateful. They had been through a lot in these five years, and he was important to her.

However, love....

She was truly unsure.

After thinking for a long time, Nyla couldn't reach a conclusion and decided to message Valarie.

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+25 BONUS

When Valarie saw her message, she couldn't help but raise an eyebrow. Nyla was actually asking her how to determine if she had feelings for someone. After pondering for a moment, Valarie called Nyla directly.

"It's easy to figure out. Just ask

yourself if you want to kiss him, if you want to sleep with him, and if you feel flustered during casual physical contact," she said

Nyla thought about it.

During a few instances of physical contact with Oliver, she had felt a bit flustered. When it came to kissing him... she had never considered it. "Okay, I get it," she replied.

Valarie asked, "Why are you suddenly asking me this? Aren't you and Oliver together? Can't you tell if you like him or not?"

Nyla lowered her gaze, feeling a bit gloomy as she answered, "I think I like him, but I've never really considered the kissing and sleeping part."

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+25 BONUS

Valarie suggested, "Now close your eyes and think about it. If he were to kiss you, would you resist?"

Nyla imagined it and realized she didn't feel like resisting. If she had to say she was looking forward to it, that didn't seem to be the case either.

She honestly shared her feelings with Valarie, who couldn't help but feel sympathy for Oliver. After chasing her for five years, Nyla still didn't seem to have any feelings for him.

"Okay, now imagine if it were Damon who wanted to kiss you," Valarie suggested again.

"Absolutely not," Nyla answered without hesitation, her tone laced with disdain.

She had never considered the possibility of getting back together with Damon.

The past hurt was real, and five years had passed between them. There was no way they could return to how things used to be.

"Why do you sound so certain?" Valarie asked.

Nyla pressed her lips together. "Because I'm sure I don't want anything to do with him."

Valarie sighed and slowly said, "Nyla, not wanting to be involved with him and whether you like him or not are two different things.

"You need to determine whether your dislike for him is the reason you want to avoid involvement or if your desire to avoid involvement is leading you to convince yourself that you don't like him." Nyla was left speechless.

Was there really a difference? After all, it was about not wanting to be involved with him, right?

"Valarie, let's not talk about him. I want you to help me figure out my feelings for Oliver. Damon has nothing to do with this," she said.

Valarie countered, "Well, I need a reference point for that. Otherwise, how can you differentiate?"

"Fine," Nyla conceded.

After thinking for a few seconds, Valarie softly suggested, "Honestly, you say you don't resist Oliver kissing you, but you're not exactly excited about it either. I can't figure out how you really feel about him.

"Why not try some couples' activities with him, like hugging or kissing? Also, pay attention to how you feel if you see him being affectionate with other women." Nyla carefully noted Valarie's words, feeling a sense of clarity in her heart. "Okay, I got it. I'll do what you said."

Valarie's voice came through with a

hint of curiosity. "But I'm still a bit puzzled. You were with Clark for eight years and later liked Damon. How can you not know what it feels like to like someone and not distinguish your feelings for Oliver?"

Nyla lowered her gaze and replied flatly, "Because Oliver is very important to me, and we've been together for five years. We're just too familiar with each other. +25 BONUS

"During those five years, I've been busy with work, and the remaining time was spent with Buddy. So, I can't really determine whether I like him or not."

She was being so cautious because

of her fear that she might actually like Oliver Yet, because they were too familiar, she struggled to

him

understand her feelings

clearly, worried she might miss out on something special.

She also feared that she might only feel gratitude toward him, mistaking it for love, which could end up hurting him.

"I see. I understand. Just follow my advice for now, and we can figure out the rest later," Valarie said reassuringly.

After hanging up, Valarie set her phone down and couldn't help but chuckle wryly. Her own love life was a mess, and here she was trying to be a relationship guru for Nyla. There was a knock at the door.

"Valarie, are you asleep?" It was her mother's gentle voice from outside.

"I'm still awake, Mom. Come on in," Valarie replied.

Phoebe opened the door, carrying a glass of acai smoothie.

"I had the kitchen make you some acai smoothie. Drink it before you sleep," she said softly, placing it on the nightstand.

Valarie picked up the smoothie and stirred it with a straw. "Thanks, Mom."

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Seeing Valarie start to drink the smoothie, Phoebe smiled kindly. "How was today's auction? Did you find any jewelry you liked?"

Valarie nodded. "I did! Oh, I even bought a set for you! I get it for you!"

Phoebe stopped her. "No need to do that now. You can give it to me tomorrow, Just focus on drinking the smoothie first. I came over tonight because I wanted to talk to you about something." "What is it?" Valarie asked.

"About tomorrow's blind date. Remember to dress modestly. The Comstocks are quite traditional and don't like women who are too flashy," Phoebe reminded her.

Valarie paused, frowning at her mother. "Mom, even if I can put on an act for tomorrow, I can't pretend forever. I think it's better to show my true self during a blind date."

Besides, she wasn't a product that needed to be dressed up to meet someone else's expectations.

"Valarie, I know you don't want to go on this blind date... but our family isn't what it used to be. You're getting older, and it's no longer about you choosing someone. It's about others choosing you.

"A blind date is supposed to be purposeful. It's about presenting your best self with the intention of marriage. Just trust me on this. I won't steer you wrong," Phoebe insisted.

Looking at her mother's earnest expression, Valarie felt helpless and eventually nodded. "Okay, I understand."

"Great. Then I won't keep you. Drink your smoothie and get rest," Phoebe said.

After Phoebe left, Valarie glanced at the smoothie, suddenly losing her appetite.

She placed the glass back on the tray and bit her lip. As she thought about the blind date tomorrow, her mood plummeted.

Rebecca had just returned to the villa and sensed the oppressive atmosphere in the living room. She glanced toward the center of the room and saw Nathaniel's dark, angry face. With a calm expression, she withdrew her gaze and casually changed her shoes.

"Come here." Nathaniel's voice was strained with anger, and his gaze seemed to shoot fire at her.

Rebecca hesitated for a moment but slowly approached him.

Just as she reached his side, a slap landed squarely on her face.

"Idiot! Who told you to provoke Valarie and Nyla?!" Nathaniel scolded.

He had already realized that if Rebecca hadn't overstepped her bounds and deliberately raised the bid, she wouldn't have been set up by Valarie.

Ultimately, it was her own fault for overestimating her cleverness.

+25 BONUS

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Nathaniel's strength was substantial, and Rebecca was knocked to the floor, a bright red palm print appearing instantly on her cheek.

She looked up at Nathaniel, her gaze filled with mockery. "Nathaniel, if you were capable, you wouldn't be angry that I provoked someone else, nor would you hit me over 5,000,000 dollars." en FindNovel

It was precisely because he was useless that he was taking out his frustrations on her.

"How dare you shift the blame onto me?" Nathaniel demanded.

He raised his hand again to strike Rebecca, but she no longer flinched in fear as she had in the past. Instead, she looked up at him defiantly.

"Go ahead, hit me! You might as well kill me! I've had enough of this pathetic life!" she cried.

Gazing into her furious eyes, Nathaniel hesitated, his hand frozen mid-air.

Rebecca sneered. "Useless!"

"Say that again!" Nathaniel growled.

His suppressed rage ignited once more, his eyes burning red as if he might strike her again at any

moment.

"Am I wrong? The only person you dare hit is me. The one who messed up the Preston Group is Damon, yet

you won't even confront

just v

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Nathaniel was enraged, veins pulsing on his forehead. He clenched his fist and struck Rebecca hard. Despite the intense pain coursing through her body, Rebecca didn't scream or beg for mercy like before. Instead, she burst into laughter. She laughed at how she and Nathaniel were like two pitiful creatures, harming and despising each other yet unable to leave one another.

At first, she planned to live this pathetic life, but that changed when she saw that Nyla was still alive. Even if she were to die, she wanted to drag those who had hurt her down to hell with her!

The next morning, after Nyla woke up and washed up, she began making breakfast for Mason.

By 7:30 am., Mason was awake. Once he brushed his teeth and got dressed, he walked out of his bedroom.

Seeing Nyla bringing breakfast to the table, he cheerfully called out, "Mommy, good morning! What's for breakfast? It smells so good!"

"I made bacon and eggs, as well as some pancakes and waffles," Nyla replied.

"I love pancakes! Thanks, Mommy!" Mason cheered as he sat down.

He grinned when he saw the bacon and pancakes before him, his eyes squinting with joy.

"Dig in!" Nyla encouraged.

"Okay!" Mason exclaimed, taking a bite of the pancake and savoring its soft, delicious flavor.

Seeing him with syrup all over his mouth made Nyla chuckle as she wiped the corners of his mouth with a napkin. She said gently, "By the way, I want to discuss something with you." "What is it, Mommy?" Mason asked.

"Remember how you told your dad you wanted to go to the zoo this weekend? Uncle Oliver wants to come along, too. Would you mind if he joined us? If you don't want him to, I can talk to him, and we can go out together another time," Nyla elaborated. Mason took another bite of pancake and thought about how he wanted them all to be together.

He shook his head and replied, "I don't mind! I really like Uncle Oliver! Let's have him come along!"

If Oliver came too, his mother could build a connection with his father while also bonding with Oliver-it was a win-win situation!

The more Mason thought about it, the smarter he felt. He decided he would always invite Oliver from now

1. on.

Seeing he wasn't troubled at all, Nyla nodded and said, "Okay, I'll let Uncle Oliver know."

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After finishing breakfast, Nyla went to work, leaving Mason with the nanny at home.

+25 BONUS

On her way to the office, she called Oliver to let him know Mason was okay with him coming along.

After hearing this, Oliver chuckled happily and said, "Great! I'll come by Saturday morning to go to the zoo with you." "Sounds good! What time will you arrive? If you come early, I can make breakfast for you, too," Nyla offered.

"I'll be there around 8:00 a.m.," Oliver answered.

"Alright," Nyla replied.

After hanging up, she hesitated for a moment, wondering if she should mention to Damon that Oliver would

be joining them. Ultimately, she decided to tell Damon anyway.

As soon as she sent the message, Damon called her back.

"Why is Mr. Raynor coming? We're taking Buddy

Buddy to the zoo. Bringing along an outsider seems a bit inappropriate," he said.

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Hearing Damon refer to Oliver as an outsider made Nyla feel

uncomfortable. To her and Mason, Oliver would never be an outsider.

"He wants to spend time with Buddy, and I asked Buddy this morning. He hopes Oliver can come too," she replied.

"Are you sure Buddy wants him to come?" Damon asked.

Noticing the slight edge in his tone, Nyla frowned as she answered, "I'm sure. I said I asked Buddy."

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There was a brief silence on the other end before Damon's voice came through, sounding a bit heavy. Since Buddy agrees, I have no objections." With that, he hung up.

In the study, Damon set down his phone, his expression darkening.

He was supposed to be taking Mason to the zoo with Nyla as a family of three, and he didn't understand why Oliver had to tag along.

Frowning in thought for a moment, he called Spencer.

"Is the Raynor Group too idle lately? Find something for Oliver to do. Ideally, he should be back in Capitarnia these days and too busy to be in Saintornia," he instructed. Spencer was taken aback. "Mr. Sumner, did Mr. Raynor offend you?"

"Just do as I say! Why are you talking so much?" Damon snapped.

Spencer replied, "Alright, I understand."

After hearing the busy tone, Spencer set down his phone and looked at Luca, who was standing in front of

him.

He instructed, "Take this document to the Sumner Group and give it to Mr. Brandon."

Luca happily took the document. "Got it! I'll make sure it's done."

Since Spencer returned, Damon had stopped assigning tasks to Luca, which Luca found to be a blessing. He no longer had to receive late-night calls from Damon. Although Damon paid generously, it was still nice not to have to answer the phone at midnight.

Brandon was reviewing documents in the CEO's office of the Sumner Group when there was a knock on

the door.

His secretary entered, holding a file. "Mr. Sumner, this document was sent over by Mr. Fleming from Prospectus Technology."

Upon hearing that, Brandon immediately set down his papers. "Give it to me."

He opened the document and read through it for a while before looking at the secretary.

"Schedule a meeting with Mr. Wilkinson from Skywright at noon at Opulent Oasis to discuss our recent collaboration," he said.

"Okay, I'll do that right away," his secretary replied.

After the secretary left, Brandon finished reading the document that Luca had brought him and established an estimated baseline for the negotiations later. Chapter 696

+25 BONUS

Before long, noon arrived.

As Brandon stepped into Opulent Oases, he noticed a woman sitting by the window.

Valarie was dressed elegantly in a form-fitting dress, wearing a long, straight wig and light makeup. She appeared very demure.

At that moment, she was sipping coffee, her lowered eyes betraying a clear impatience.

The man opposite her seemed completely oblivious to her mood, talking nonstop.

"Ms. Weir, I'm not saying this to be rude, but your outfit and that bag you're holding must be worth hundreds of thousands. As a woman, it's better to be a little thrifty. Although my family isn't short on money, once we marry, you shouldn't spend it all on such things."

Valarie smiled, but internally, she was cursing him out.

This loser of a man had the nerve to lecture her while dressed in equally pricey clothing. It was acceptable for him to spend money, but if a woman did it, it was a waste?

She set down her coffee and tapped her fingers on the table.

Mr. Comstock, has your family business run into any difficulties lately?" she asked.

Benjamin Comstock paused, frowning as he asked, "No, why do you ask?"

"Then why are you monitoring what your date wears? I assumed the Comstocks were struggling," Valarie mocked.

"Ms. Weir, to be honest, you are very beautiful, but a woman shouldn't rely solely on looks," Benjamin 'Temarked.

Valarie huffed. "How do you know that's all I have?"

They had barely met, and he was already trying to dictate her choices. She thought he lacked emotional intelligence and was kind of unattractive, too.

Benjamin remarked with a frown, "Ms. Weir, I don't like overly aggressive women."

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+25 BONUS

Valarie raised an eyebrow, about to speak when her gaze suddenly fell on someone not far ahead.

A hint of surprise flickered in her eyes. She hadn't expected to run into Brandon at a blind date.

Their eyes met briefly, but Brandon quickly averted his gaze and acted as if he hadn't seen her. He turned to leave.

Valarie's expression remained unchanged as she redirected her focus to Benjamin across from her, who was still nitpicking everything.

"Mr. Comstock, I think we're not a good match. Let's end this here. Goodbye," Valarie said as she stood up to leave.

Benjamin blocked her way, saying with a hint of condescension, "Ms. Weir, I believe that, aside from your spending habits, everything else about you is still tolerable."

After all, Valarie was beautiful and fit his idea of innocence, so he felt generally satisfied with her. If she could just listen to him a bit more after they started dating, spending money on her wouldn't be an issue. Valarie smiled. "Mr. Comstock, I can't change my habits. If you can't accept that, then we really aren't suitable for each other. I hope you find someone more fitting for you soon."

With that, she brushed past him and left.

Back in her car, as she was about to start the engine, she received a call from Phoebe.

"Valarie, did something happen on your blind date today? The woman who introduced Benjamin called me and said he complained about your personality and wasn't interested in you," Phoebe explained. Valarie hadn't expected Benjamin to call so soon and disparage her immediately after she left. Despite that, this worked out-it saved her the trouble of explaining.

"Yeah, I'm just not good enough for him," she replied.

There was a brief silence on the line before Phoebe's worried voice broke through. "Today's date was supposed to be with the best family background. If this doesn't work out, the next ones will probably be worse."

Valarie frowned, her tone irritated.

"Mom, I'm not a product to be evaluated! A blind date shouldn't be just about family background. Isn't my happiness important?"

She had already compromised by agreeing to go on this blind date, but Phoebe's words made her feel like a commodity rather than the daughter they had raised for over 20 years.

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Realizing she had misspoken, Phoebe quickly apologized. "I'm sorry, Valarie. I misspoke. Don't be angry."

Valarie rubbed her forehead in frustration. "I get it. I need to drive now. Talk later."

After hanging up, she tossed her phone onto the passenger seat and pulled out a cigarette.

She hadn't smoked much before, but after Nyla fell into the sea five years ago, she found herself relying on cigarettes to ease her anxiety.

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+25 BONUS

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As she took a couple of puffs, someone suddenly knocked on her window.

Turning her head, she met Brandon's cold gaze.

She extinguished the cigarette and lowered the window halfway. "Mr. Sumner, what's up?"

Brandon looked at her lightly made-up face, his expression darkening. "You rejected me just to go on a date with that loser?"

Valarie frowned, about to respond, but Brandon continued. "Forget it. It doesn't matter anymore. Here's the contract for the recent project we're collaborating on. I've already signed it. Please deliver it to the Wein Group."

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After handing her the contract, he turned and walked away.

Valarie glanced at the document in her hands, a complex emotion passing through her eyes.

This was probably for the best. They should have completely severed ties a long time ago. Continuing like this would only lead to entanglement and hurt for both of them.
Today's Bonus Offer

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+25 BONUS

That evening, Brandon and Damon sat together in a private room at a high-end bar in Saintornia. They silently poured drinks into their glasses, both wearing grim expressions that radiated an aura discouraging any approach. Eventually, Brandon couldn't hold back and looked at Damon.

"Uncle Damon, was your pursuit of Aunt Nyla this difficult?" he asked.

The memory of Valarie's rejection, followed by her date with a loser, frustrated Brandon. Did she really

think so little of him?

Damon glanced at Brandon but didn't respond. He was too preoccupied with the upcoming Saturday trip to the zoo with Oliver to take on the role of emotional mentor for Brandon.

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It seemed that Brandon didn't expect an answer anyway. He took another gulp and angrily stated, Whatever, it doesn't matter to me anymore. There are plenty of women in the world. I'm not going to be hung up on her! "I've pursued her for five years, and now she's missed out. She's the one who should regret it, not me!

"I'm so angry! I'm never pursuing women again! She's such a jerk!"

In his fury, he pulled out his phone and angrily posted on social media.

Brandon: [I will never cry over a jerk again!]

Not long after posting, comments from friends flooded in.

[Which woman is so powerful that she can make you cry? I need to see this for myself!]

[LOL, look who's having a tough time now!]

[Brandon, if it's not working out, just switch to another! Don't limit yourself to one gender-men should never make you cry! Come into my embrace!]

Reading those comments made Brandon roll his eyes in exasperation. He wanted to reach through the screen and punch them all.

Just as he was about to delete the post, he noticed that Valarie had liked it.

How dare she like it? Was her heart made of stone?!

The more he thought about it, the angrier he became, and he started drinking faster. Soon, he was drunk.

Drunk Brandon was like a

completely different person. He no longer feared Damon and walked

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over to hug his leg, crying uncontrollably.

"Waaah! Uncle Damon, why doesn't Valarie want me? What's wrong with me? I was even the school

heartthrob! She's pretty, I know. Why won't she give me a chance?

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"Uncle Damon, you're the best! You're willing to drink with me when I'm feeling down. Hic!" Brandon cried.

Looking at the flushed, drunken Brandon, Damon felt a flash of disdain and kicked him away. "Stop bothering me."

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+25 BONUS

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Brandon fell to the floor, confused.

Hadn't he been hugging his uncle's leg to fall asleep? Why was he now lying on the floor?

In his

think

on

State, he couldn't

and crawled back to hug elwell

sleg again.

"Uncle Damon, I'm so heartbroken! I've only ever liked this one woman all my life. I can't just give up... Sob

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it hurts so much... but, Uncle Damon, why are your legs so cold and hard..." Brandon continued to cry.

Damon glanced coldly at the sobbing Brandon, his expression darkening to an extreme.

If he had known Brandon would be so embarrassing when drunk, he never would have agreed to go out drinking with him.

"Uncle Damon, why aren't you talking? Do you not want to talk to me either?" Brandon wailed.

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"Shut up!" Damon snapped.

He couldn't take it anymore and grabbed Brandon's phone to call Valarie.

When the call connected, he reported the bar and private room before hanging up and leaving. He couldn't stay any longer-Brandon was driving him crazy. +25 BONUS

On the other end, Valarie hadn't even had a chance to speak before the call ended. She tried calling back several times, but no one picked up.

Biting her lip, she contemplated whether to go over.

Finally, after five minutes, she changed her clothes and headed out.

Just as she opened the door, she spotted Phoebe, who was about to knock while holding a glass of acai smoothie.

Seeing that Valarie wasn't in her pajamas, Phoebe looked puzzled. "Valarie, it's so late. Are you going out?"

"Yeah," Valarie replied, her expression slightly unnatural. "Nyla said she needed to see me about something." Phoebe frowned and asked, "What's so urgent that you have to go out at this hour? Can't it wait until tomorrow?"

"I don't know, Mom. Stop asking. I promise I'll be back before midnight," Valarie said.

With that, she rushed past her mother and left.

Watching her hurried figure, Phoebe sighed, unsure of what was so urgent.

When Valarie arrived at the bar, I was already half an hour later.

She walked into the private room but didn't see Damon. Instead, she found Brandon rambling on about something while hugging a corner of the table.

She crouched down next to him and finally caught what he was saying.

"What's the big deal with blind dates? Who can't go on a blind date? Uncle Damon, you have to set one up for me tomorrow. I saw a bunch of gorgeous women at your office last time I was there. Some of them are totally my type..." Brandon rambled. "What type do you like?" Valarie asked.

"I like..." Brandon began to answer but sensed something was off.

He looked up at Valarie and immediately frowned. "Why do you look so much like that bad woman?! Get out and bring me someone else!"

Valarie was speechless.

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+25 BONUS

"What do you want?" she asked.

"Not someone pretty, not someone with a beauty mark at the corner of their eye, and not someone with dyed red hair or big, wavy curls. Oh, and the most important thing- they have to like me!" Brandon insisted.

Looking at Brandon's drunken state,

he felt at a loss for words. He belongs to en.kikistori ht

might as well have stated

he didn't want her.

She didn't plan on arguing with a drunk, so she reached out to help him up. "Come on, I'll take you home." Brandon paused for a moment when he saw the fair hand extended to him, before instinctively grabbing it. Just as Valarie was about to pull him up, he suddenly yanked her toward him, and she stumbled into him. She collided with Brandon, his scent of bluebell cologne filling her nose.

"Brandon, what are you- Mmph!"

Before she could finish, he pulled her in and kissed her deeply, holding the back of her head firmly.

Valarie tried to push him away, but it was no use.

The crisp scent of alcohol wafted from him, and she gradually felt herself getting a bit tipsy, her resistance weakening. Suddenly, the private room door swung open.

A server's voice called from the entrance, "Mr. Sumner, do you need-"

Before he could finish, he caught sight of the two kissing on the floor.

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The server froze for a moment before quickly regaining his composure. "I'm sorry... Mr. Sumner, I didn't know... I'll step out and let you be..."

He stammered through the sentence before quickly turning to leave, closing the door behind him.

Today's Bonus Offer

GET IT NOW

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+25 BONUS

Thanks to that little interruption, Valarie snapped back to reality. She pushed Brandon away and got to her feet, her cheeks flushed.

"Brandon, I'm warning you! If you pull something like that again, I won't care about you anymore!" she

barked.

Brandon stared at her in confusion, seemingly unable to recall what had just happened.

"Who are you?" he asked.

Valarie was exasperated. He had just kissed her, and now he didn't recognize her?

Nonetheless, this wasn't the time to dwell on that. She needed to find a way to get him home.

After thinking for a moment, Valarie called a driver to help her get Brandon to the car. Fortunately, after what had happened, he seemed tired and fell asleep without a fuss.

Once she helped him into the back seat and buckled him in, she told the driver the address.

"He has someone at home. Just ring the doorbell, and they'll come to get him," she instructed. The driver nodded. "Okay."

As Valarie watched the driver pull away, she turned and headed back home.

The next morning...

When Brandon woke up, his head throbbed painfully.

Rubbing his temples, he slowly sat up and was surprised to find himself in his bedroom.

How had he gotten back?

His last memory was drinking at the bar with Damon, then getting drunk and crying while hugging Damon's leg. After that, he thought he saw Valarie.

It must have been a hallucination. She was so heartless. Why would she go to the bar for him?

With that thought, Brandon's expression soured.

It must have been Damon who brought him back.

After getting ready and heading downstairs for breakfast, he called Damon.

"Uncle Damon, when did you take me home last night? I can't remember a thing," he said.

"I didn't take you home," Damon replied.

"It wasn't you? Then who brought me back?" Brandon asked.

As soon as he finished speaking, the line went dead.

Brandon was speechless.

Looking through his call history, he saw that he had called Valarie around 10:00 p.m. and that she had

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called him back several times, but he hadn't answered.

No way! Last night wasn't a hallucination? Valarie had really come to the bar to find him?

A glimmer of delight crossed Brandon's eyes at that thought.

Just as he was about to call Valarie, he remembered what she had said when the auction ended. The smile on his lips flattened into a straight line.

She had been so straightforward that day, and now he was getting all sentimental over just a phone call. It felt ridiculous.

Once he called her, she would definitely tease him about it.

With that thought, Brandon took a deep breath and decided against contacting Valarie. Valarie had just woken up when Phoebe started talking about her blind date for the day.

After a while, noticing that Valarie wasn't responding, Phoebe looked up and saw her daydreaming. She couldn't help but frown, feeling a bit annoyed.

"Valarie, what's wrong with you? You've been zoning out all morning," she questioned.

Snapping back to reality, Valarie met Phoebe's displeased gaze and shook her head. "Sorry, Mom. probably didn't sleep well last night. What were you saying?"

"I said your blind date, Mr. Zayn Updike, has studied abroad just like you. You two should hit it off. He wants to meet you at the racetrack today so make sure to make a good impression," Phoebe reminded

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her.

Valarie frowned as she asked, "Who sets up a blind date at the racetrack?"

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