

UNREPAIRABLE LOVE / I MARRIED A MAN NOVEL ALTERNATIVE

Chapter 1

“Elizabeth Percy, don’t kid yourself. I’ll never love you!” The man grabbed her neck, pinning her to the sofa, his face contorted with disgust. “I’m done with you. Behave yourself. In six months, we’re getting divorced!”

“I didn’t push Esme Russell. She fell into the pool on her own!” Elizabeth said weakly, her frail body trembling. Soaked and terrified from nearly drowning, she struggled to speak.

“Stop lying. You’ve been friends with Esme for years. You know she’s scared of water!” His grip tightened. He blamed her instantly, simply because of their long-standing friendship.

A tear traced a path down Elizabeth’s cheek. It was almost unbelievable that the man berating her was her husband. She had loved Alexander Tudor for four years and been married to him for three. Three years ago, the prospect of marrying him had thrilled her beyond measure. But after the wedding, she discovered that his mother, Elara Tudor, was the true obstacle to his marrying his beloved Esme. Elizabeth had been merely a pawn.

When Esme fell into the pool, everyone rushed to her aid, showering her with concern. But when Elizabeth fell, no one cared; she nearly perished in the icy water. He remembered Esme's fear of water, yet conveniently forgot Elizabeth shared that fear.

Realizing her meticulously constructed marriage was a sham, Elizabeth found herself laughing. Seeing her cold smile, Alexander's eyes hardened.

“Crazy woman!” he spat.

And perhaps she was. To marry Alexander, she had repeatedly defied her father, Declan, shattering the Percy family and ultimately causing his hospitalization. Declan had warned her, “Marrying a man who doesn’t love you will only bring you pain. You won’t win.” But she had foolishly believed that Alexander's willingness to marry her was the ultimate validation, and that her love would eventually reach him. She had assured Declan of her

confidence, swearing she wouldn't lose, but she was wrong. Victory or defeat wasn't in her hands; it rested solely with Alexander.

Just then, Alexander's phone rang. The caller ID erased the anger from his face. In the quiet living room, Elizabeth faintly heard a woman's sweet voice.

He picked up his suit jacket, his tone softening, "Don't worry, I'll be right there." He hung up, shot Elizabeth a venomous look, and left.

"Alexander," Elizabeth's voice was hoarse, desperate to keep him. "I'm scared of water too."

He didn't hesitate, dismissing her words as absurd. Esme's terror stemmed from almost drowning while saving him during a kidnapping. *Elizabeth has a diving certificate, but she says she's scared of water? Does she think lying will make me love her? She's delusional!* Alexander mused.

Elizabeth watched him go, tears streaming down her face. Heartbroken, she finally understood: he had never truly chosen her.

With red-rimmed eyes, she asked, "In these seven years, have you ever loved me, even a little?"

He turned, sneering. "You think you have the right to talk about love with me? Elizabeth, spare me your pathetic pity. It disgusts me!" His eyes blazed with fury.

She knew he desired another woman, yet she had still plotted to marry him. Was this her definition of love? Elizabeth's heart ached; tears flowed silently as she closed her eyes. In seven years, she hadn't earned even a shred of his trust.

Ending the torment seemed preferable. She no longer wished to remain in a marriage that repulsed him. Wiping her tears, she looked at him and said, "Alexander, let's get a divorce."

Alexander stopped dead in his tracks, his eyes wide with astonishment. He couldn't believe it. For three years, she had played the perfect wife. No matter his cruelty, she had never mentioned divorce. What was this? His throat tightened, his brows furrowed. "Elizabeth, cut the crap. Go to the hospital and apologize to Esme!"

Elizabeth bit her lip, numb with despair. Then, gathering her strength, she snapped back, "I said divorce. Don't you understand?"

Stunned by her outburst, his eyes darkened. She stood near the sofa, physically close yet a world away. He hadn't truly looked at her in a long time. She had lost weight, a pale shadow of the vibrant woman she'd been before their marriage. It was May, and Lisbon's chill lingered. Elizabeth, still damp and shivering from her fall, looked utterly miserable.

He should be relieved, shouldn't he? Yet, seeing her face, he felt suffocated. "You sure about this?" he asked, studying her as if she were a stranger. She had schemed to obtain this marriage. Was she truly ready to relinquish it?

Alexander, impeccably dressed, was undeniably handsome. That face had been her undoing. She had endured his coldness and Esme's presence, clinging to their marriage. She thought she'd done everything possible, but a marriage requires two willing partners. She refused to be a puppet any longer, nor to stand between him and the woman he truly loved.

"I've thought it through," Elizabeth said, nodding with a genuine smile.

Alexander's brow twitched, his grip on his jacket tightening. That familiar, unsettling feeling returned.

"I've loved you for seven years, Alexander. I lost." Her smile was gentle, despite the pain. She had lost. Alexander had never loved her. She had refused to admit it before, but now she must.

Alexander listened, his irritation growing.

"Do whatever you want." He slammed the door and left.

Elizabeth was accustomed to his tantrums; a few days of silence and he would pretend nothing had happened. She slumped onto the sofa, a bitter smile playing on her lips. "Time to wake up from this seven-year dream," she murmured, picking up her phone and dialing a number.

Chapter 2

“Dad, you were right. I’ll never win Alexander’s love. I messed up. I want to come home,” Elizabeth’s raspy voice echoed in the empty living room. The Percy family was the wealthiest in Atlante, a dynasty of medical professionals. Her grandfather, Grant Percy, was a businessman, and her grandmother, Celine Percy, a renowned heart surgeon. Elizabeth had studied medicine under Celine since childhood; Celine always considered her a genius. They had meticulously planned her future. Declan had secured substantial assets for her, and her mother, Rose Percy, perpetually encouraged her to remain carefree. But she sacrificed it all for Alexander, now reduced to this miserable state.

Elizabeth took a deep breath, ascended the stairs, bathed, changed clothes, and applied light makeup. She then systematically cleared out her belongings. A painting of a sunset, created collaboratively with Alexander, hung on the wall behind the living room sofa. With a heavy heart, she removed the painting, tore it to pieces, and discarded it. She then placed the divorce papers—tossed at her by Alexander on their wedding night—on the table. “Alexander, just as you wished. I wish you happiness,” she murmured.

Closing the villa door, Elizabeth saw her dark purple luxury car parked outside. A young man hopped out, grinning. “Ms. Percy, finally leaving this place?”

“You got here fast,” Elizabeth replied, sliding into the driver’s seat. Felix Garcia had been her constant companion since childhood. He’d been a mischievous child, whom she’d once saved from drowning. Since then, he had remained fiercely loyal.

“Been waiting three years for this day!” Felix exclaimed, his voice brimming with excitement.

A pang of sadness struck Elizabeth. “Did everyone think I’d fail in this marriage?”

Felix fell silent, studying her cautiously. Her eyes clouded. The entire world had advised against loving Alexander, yet she had felt compelled to try. The thought tightened her chest.

They soon arrived at a tattoo parlor. Elizabeth exited the car, followed by Felix.

“Gavin, I want this one,” she said, handing the tattoo artist an iPad displaying a unique and lifelike butterfly design.

“Where would you like it?” Gavin asked. She shrugged off her coat, revealing a significant knife scar on her right shoulder.

Gavin’s eyes widened. Before Elizabeth could speak, Felix interjected, “Ms. Percy was young and reckless, all for saving some jerk.”

Gavin understood instantly. It had to be for Alexander. No one else warranted such a risk.

Elizabeth lay down and calmly instructed, “No anesthetic, just do it.”

As the pain struck, Elizabeth closed her eyes, memories flooding back to four years prior. Alexander had been kidnapped. She had ventured alone to buy him time and save him. When the kidnappers discovered her, they demanded an exchange. She agreed. She fought them off, but was stabbed in the back. Upon realizing her identity as Ms. Percy, they attempted to kill her. They bound her, attached a stone, and threw her into the sea. The water enveloped her; she choked, sank, the suffocation agonizing. Since then, she had avoided water.

By covering the knife scar, erasing the visible proof of her love, she resolved to live for herself.

Later, in the hospital, lying on the bed, she whispered, “Alexander, maybe we should end this.”

Alexander looked up, his voice soft, “What are you talking about?”

“Elizabeth loves you a lot. I don’t want to hurt her,” Esme sobbed, tears streaming down her face.

Alexander frowned, Elizabeth’s words echoing in his mind: “Alexander, let’s get a divorce.” He couldn’t comprehend her desire for a divorce. Was she trying to prove she hadn’t pushed Esme into the water by taking this drastic action?

“I’ll bring her to apologize to you later,” Alexander said flatly.

Esme's eyes were filled with sadness and pity. "Alexander."

"I said I'd take responsibility for you. I will marry you," Alexander said, gently stroking Esme's hair. Esme nodded obediently, feeling a sense of satisfaction.

How shameless of her to cling to the title of Alexander's wife! Alexander thought, feeling irritated. He found an excuse to leave: "I have some work at the company. I'll come back to see you later."

As Alexander left the hospital, he received a call from Kieran Getty, president of the Getty Group, one of the four major families in Lisbon. They were childhood friends.

Kieran's voice was languid, tinged with amusement. "How's Esme?"

Alexander got into his car, his tone calm. "Esme's fine."

"Everyone went to save her. How could she be anything but fine?"

Kieran pressed, "And your wife?"

Alexander scoffed, "What could possibly happen to her?"

Kieran blurted out, "Alex, I saved your wife! Without me, she'd have drowned in the pool!"

Alex frowned, briefly recalling Elizabeth's terrified expression. He dismissed it. "You kidding? She can dive into the deep sea. A pool can't drown her."

"She was faking it? Didn't seem like it. If so, she's a good actress," Kieran sighed. "Elizabeth's ruthless. Doesn't she know Esme's scared of water because she saved you when you were kidnapped? She still messes with you."

Alex had married Esme because she had saved him during the kidnapping; he felt indebted to her. This news left Alex uneasy, a sense of unease settling over him. He ended the call.

Frowning, he remembered Elizabeth saying, "Alex, I'm scared of water too."

Doubt gnawed at him. Why would Elizabeth be afraid of water?

Back at the villa, Alex opened the door and called out, "Elizabeth."

Silence. Usually, she would rush down the stairs or be bustling in the kitchen, always cheerful. Today, an unsettling quiet reigned.

Alexander went upstairs and opened the bedroom door. It was impeccably clean. He paused. The walk-in closet was empty. Only his toothbrush remained in the bathroom.

Had Elizabeth left?

Chapter 3

Alexander couldn't believe it. He searched everywhere for Elizabeth, but found no sign of her. Even her belongings were gone. He trudged downstairs, noticing the empty space behind the sofa. Then he saw the damaged painting in the trash. His breath caught in his throat.

It was Elizabeth's birthday. She had come to his office and asked, "Alexander, can you spend my birthday with me? Even half an hour would do." Feeling sorry for her, he agreed. He expected fancy gifts or a perfect dinner, but she only wanted his company while shopping, asking, "Alexander, can I hold your hand?"

They went to a craft store, where she chose a painting for them to do together. He found it childish and mostly watched, taking a few calls from Esme. Elizabeth said nothing. When they returned home, she was thrilled, hanging the painting in the living room. But afterward, she never again asked him to go shopping or celebrated her birthday.

Just as Alexander was about to retrieve the painting, he noticed divorce papers on the table. Both their names were on the signature page. Alexander's throat tightened, his eyes wide with shock. Elizabeth had actually agreed to the divorce!

At that moment, he received a message from his family: "[Alexander, Grandma says you and Elizabeth must be at her seventieth birthday banquet on time!]" A wave of frustration washed over him. This birthday party couldn't have come at a worse time.

At the Percy family villa in Lisbon, Grant raised his glass, grinning. "Congrats to Elizabeth for escaping her misery!"

Declan Percy pleaded, "Elizabeth, now that you're back, you should take over my company! I want to retire!" He wanted her to inherit the billion-dollar estate.

Celine Percy firmly declared, "No way, Elizabeth has to keep going to the hospital with me. Your amazing medical skills shouldn't go to waste!"

Rose added, her face lighting up, "Or Elizabeth could come with me to learn jewelry design!"

Elizabeth looked around the table, a pang of bitterness hitting her. She had hurt them deeply, yet they never mentioned it. Surrounded by their love, she almost cried.

Suddenly, a motorcycle roared outside. Elizabeth knew her best friend, Lila Parker, had arrived. "Hey fam, I'm off to have some fun. When I'm done, I'll take over everything, one step at a time!" With that, she dashed out.

The billion-dollar estate and saving lives were tempting, but happiness was her top priority. She had to make up for three wasted years.

At Sk nightclub, Elizabeth, in a tight red dress, shone under the lights, her butterfly tattoo highlighted. Countless men stared, whispering, "Ms. Percy is a total knockout!" and "Alexander's one lucky guy to have such a gorgeous wife!"

Her gaze swept the crowd, her voice low, "On a night like this, isn't it gross to bring up Alexander?"

"I've booked the place tonight! Anyone who mentions Alexander can get out!" The crowd roared its approval.

Unseen in a dark corner, Alexander nearly crushed his glass in his hand.

"Hahaha, Alexander, looks like your wife's really cut loose after filing for divorce, huh?"

"How did I miss that tattoo before? It's something else!" Alexander remained silent, feeling irritation and disbelief. This was just one of Elizabeth's stunts; she'd be back in less than three days.

His eyes locked onto Elizabeth, turning icy. She was cozy with a man, whispering in his ear, casually accepting drinks from everyone.

Suddenly, someone shouted, "Ms. Percy and Mr. York look perfect together!"

Elizabeth swirled her wine, teasing, "Mr. York, they say we look good together. Are you married?"

Colin York, surprised, retorted, "I'm single. You got the guts to marry me?"

"Why not? I'm single too," Elizabeth grinned.

Alexander tried to appear calm, but couldn't stop glancing at Elizabeth. He felt strangely unsettled.

A man began, "You and..." but Elizabeth cut him off, pressing a finger to Colin's lips. "Don't mention that person. Total buzzkill."

Alexander's grip tightened on his glass, anger rising. 'A buzzkill? Elizabeth, who always said she loved me, is now flirting with others. Wasn't she the one who wanted to marry me?'

Elizabeth unbuttoned Colin's shirt, mischief in her voice. "You up for a big game?"

"What's the game?" Colin asked eagerly.

"Get a room," Elizabeth replied bluntly.

The club was wild, but Alexander's face darkened.

Colin chuckled, "Ms. Percy, I'm dead serious."

"Do I look like I'm joking?" Elizabeth shot back, cool and composed.

Colin stood, hand outstretched. "Shall we?"

A girl screamed, "Alexander?!"

Alexander seized Elizabeth's wrist, yanking her up. He glared at Colin before dragging Elizabeth toward the restroom.

Chapter 4

Elizabeth stumbled into the bathroom, the liquor hitting her hard. Alexander, a storm cloud incarnate, pinned her against the sink. "Elizabeth, we're not

divorced yet!” he growled, teeth clenched. Her back pressed against the cold porcelain, the mirror reflecting her beautiful, defiant butterfly tattoo. Hiding her hurt, she said calmly, “Mr. Tudor, I’ve signed the papers. We’re as good as divorced.”

His grip tightened on her wrist. “Mr. Tudor?” he repeated, each word laced with menace. She’d never spoken to him like this before. The usual sparkle in her eyes, bright and cheerful, was gone. This formal address felt strange, like a wall had risen between them.

“Is it wrong for me to call you Mr. Tudor?” she squinted, leaning closer. In three years of marriage, she’d never been this close. Surprise flickered in his eyes as their gazes locked. Was he shocked by the formality?

Studying the face she’d loved for years, her voice softened. “Yeah, it is wrong. I should call you ‘ex-husband’ instead.”

Alexander’s heart clenched. He gripped her wrist tighter, pushing her back. “Elizabeth, are you trying to provoke me?”

“Why would I dare provoke *you*?” she chuckled, dripping sarcasm. Her attitude only fueled his anger.

“Ms. Percy, are you alright?” a voice called from outside. Alexander recognized Colin. Had they already...

Elizabeth met Alexander’s gaze, her tone ambiguous. “I’m fine, Mr. York. Just give me a moment.” The emphasis on “Mr. York” was deliberate, a pointed message. She was showing him he was a stranger now.

Alexander frowned, anger flaring. Elizabeth had dared to meet another man, right in front of him.

“Elizabeth, you’ve got the guts to go to his room?” he snarled, gripping her chin.

She shoved him away, a smile plastered on her face. “Ex-husband, you’re crossing a line,” she said, her voice sweet, her words icy.

He yanked her back, pinning her to the wall, his hand at her waist. Then, unexpectedly, he kissed her hard. He would show her what crossing a line truly meant. They’d only *signed* the papers, not finalized the divorce.

Technically, she was still his wife! Meeting another man in front of him? That was a blatant insult.

Elizabeth's eyes widened, disbelief etched on her face. What had gotten into him? He'd never been this close in three years. Now, suddenly, he was kissing her?

His kiss was rough, and she felt the sting of his bite. The kiss, or perhaps the alcohol, was weakening her. She braced herself against the sink, stomping on his foot. He didn't release her, only tightened his grip and deepened the kiss. She struggled, freeing an arm to slap him across the face.

Alexander's head snapped to the side. He licked his lips, smeared with her lipstick and a hint of whiskey. Elizabeth panted, her lipstick smudged, eyes red-rimmed. He wiped his mouth, his deep eyes scanning her face, then let out a low chuckle. Had she really just hit him?

"Isn't this what you wanted?" he stepped closer, anger blazing. "Dressed like that to seduce men, huh? The guy outside is fine, but I'm not?" "Elizabeth, who are you trying to fool?"

"Alexander, you jerk!" she shot back, eyes filled with disappointment. What did she want? Did he really not know? All she'd ever wanted was his love, but he'd never given it. He'd made her feel worthless.

He glared, seething. "Jerk? Have you forgotten how you begged me to marry you?"

His cruel words chilled her to the bone. Her love had been a weapon he used to hurt her. She'd lowered herself for him, cut ties with her family, traded herself to kidnappers, hidden her true self—everything for him. But her sacrifices over the past seven years meant nothing.

She wiped away her tears, smiling bitterly. "Alexander, loving you was my biggest mistake."

His face went blank, slumping against the wall. He let out a few hollow laughs, unaware he'd lost the woman who'd loved him for seven years.

Elizabeth, eyes red, grabbed Lila and stormed out. "Are you okay?" Lila asked, worried.

Tears streaming down her face, Elizabeth snapped, “What could be wrong? I’m just peachy.”

Barefoot, heels in hand, she walked down the street, ignoring the stares. Then, as if making a final declaration, she shouted, “I’ll never love Alexander again. I swear!”

She didn’t remember getting home. When she woke, it was the next afternoon. Dazed, she sat on the bed, rubbing her aching head. A news alert popped up on her phone: “[Today, Alexander, President of Tudor Group, attended the launch of Tudor Group’s new makeup line with the heiress of Russell Group.]”

She clicked on the video, watching Esme smile, holding Alexander’s arm, waving to the media. They looked perfect together. Elizabeth gripped her phone, eyes burning. In three years of marriage, he’d never taken her to an event. Now, divorced, he couldn’t wait to show off his new prize. Thinking back to his forceful kiss, she felt only irony.

A knock came at the door. Pushing down her sadness, she said, “Come in.” Declan, in a dark blue suit, grinned. “Elizabeth, don’t forget our deal from last night!”

Elizabeth was stunned. ‘What deal?’ she wondered.

Chapter 5

Night had fallen on the 33rd floor of the Royal Orchid Resort, where a lavish banquet was in full swing. Elizabeth leaned against the bar, swirling her wine and surveying the room. The men present eyed her with avarice, eager to approach but hesitant to make a move. Her phone buzzed. She glanced down.

Declan: [Did you go to the banquet?]

Elizabeth sighed and typed back, [Yeah, I’m here.]

Last night, Declan had driven her home. While slightly intoxicated, he'd persuaded her to attend tonight's banquet and even arranged a date with a stranger. The worst part? She'd agreed.

“Elizabeth?”

She turned to see a handsome man. His eyes lit up with surprise and delight. “Is it really you?”

Elizabeth was equally shocked. “John Morris? What are you doing here?”

John’s assistant interjected, “Mr. Morris, do you know Ms. Percy?”

Elizabeth smiled. Five years earlier, while traveling abroad, John had been in an accident, and she had saved him.

His assistant continued, “Mr. Morris is tonight's VIP. Ms. Percy, he’s now a prominent financial investor overseas.”

Elizabeth was stunned, struggling to comprehend John's remarkable success. “So, what brings you to the States?” she asked, striving for a casual tone.

John was about to reply when he grinned, pointing to a man entering the room. “I’m here to partner with Mr. Tudor.”

Elizabeth's heart leaped at the name. She looked up and saw the last person she wanted to see—Alexander.

The moment he entered, all eyes turned to him. To Elizabeth, Alexander was perfect, except for his lack of love for her. Beside him stood Esme, the Russell Group heiress, in a white dress.

The Russell family was one of the four largest in Lisbun, and Esme was their cherished princess, adored by her three older brothers. Elizabeth and Esme had been close friends for years, but they had both fallen for the same man. Losing Alexander meant losing Esme as well, leaving Elizabeth feeling like a complete failure.

“Elizabeth, this is Mr. Tudor. He’s quite famous. Let me introduce you,” John said, taking her hand and guiding her toward Alexander.

Elizabeth couldn't help but laugh. Did she really need an introduction to Alexander? She'd loved him for seven years and knew him intimately.

“Hey, Alexander!” John called out.

Alexander glanced at John, then met Elizabeth's gaze. Startled, she tried to leave, but John held her hand firmly, pulling her forward. Alexander's expression remained impassive as he watched John's grip on Elizabeth's wrist.

She'd recently filed for divorce, and now she seemed to have a new companion daily. Elizabeth certainly knew how to attract attention.

“Elizabeth’s here too,” Esme said, surprised.

“Who’s this?” John asked, looking at Esme. “I heard Mr. Tudor’s married. Is she your wife?”

Elizabeth's heart sank. Three years of marriage, and she was utterly invisible. Even someone like John didn't know she was Alexander's wife.

Esme clung to Alexander's arm, nervously awaiting his confirmation of her status.

Alexander glanced at Elizabeth and said coldly, “Yes.”

“You two are a perfect match,” John said, smiling at Elizabeth. “Right, Elizabeth?”

Elizabeth clutched her wine glass tightly. He'd never publicly acknowledged her as his wife, yet now Esme possessed everything she once desired. Esme blushed slightly at Alexander's confirmation. It was the first time he'd called her his wife in public, and Elizabeth was present.

Elizabeth managed a smile. “They do look good together.”

Alexander's brow furrowed, and his hand clenched in his pocket. He recalled Elizabeth's first confession, her eyes bright with conviction: “No one else is good enough for you. Only me!” Now, she was smiling and declaring he and Esme a perfect pair. What was her game? Why was he playing along?

“Alexander, meet my friend, Elizabeth,” John introduced.

Elizabeth concealed her hurt, extending her hand and smiling at Alexander. “Hi, Mr. Tudor, I’ve heard a lot about you.”

Alexander stared at her, his face devoid of emotion. She smiled sweetly, but her eyes were sharp. He didn't shake her hand. Elizabeth didn't care; it wasn't the first time he'd disregarded her. She'd never been worthy of his respect.

John, oblivious to the tension, continued to praise Elizabeth. “Elizabeth is the kindest, most amazing woman I know. I admire her greatly.”

When John looked at Elizabeth, the love in his eyes was unmistakable. Alexander noticed this and glanced at Elizabeth, a smirk playing on his lips.

Elizabeth had set up Esme countless times. She knew Esme was terrified of water and still pushed her into the pool. And this woman is supposed to be kind? Elizabeth thought.

Seeing the mockery in Alexander's eyes, Elizabeth's smile vanished. "John, Mr. Tudor doesn't seem to care for me. You two continue chatting. I'll leave you to it."

She turned to leave.

John retorted, "Who in their right mind wouldn't like Elizabeth? They'd have to be blind."

Alexander remained silent.

Esme watched Alexander closely. She'd noticed that since Elizabeth's divorce request, he hadn't seemed particularly enthusiastic about their relationship. Was Alexander developing feelings for Elizabeth?

Suddenly, a shout echoed through the room, "Something's wrong! Mr. Stewart's had a heart attack and collapsed!"

Chapter 6

The hall erupted into chaos; people crowded around, eager to see what was happening. "When's the ambulance arriving? If something happens to Mr. Stewart, the Stewart family will be after us!"

Elizabeth looked up to see a man, about fifty, lying on the ground, pale as a sheet. The city hospital was a fifteen-minute drive away, but it was rush hour. Waiting for the ambulance might be too late. Seeing his condition worsen, Elizabeth, possessing basic medical training, hesitated.

Elizabeth frowned and stepped forward. "Let me see." All eyes were on her.

"Can you even do it? Everyone knows the Percy family is full of doctors, except you. You're useless and know nothing about medicine!" "If something happens to Mr. Stewart, can you handle it? This is serious!"

The crowd grew louder and more chaotic, their noise filling Elizabeth's ears with doubt. Before she could touch the man, she was shoved aside.

“Even if he dies, we don’t need someone useless like you trying to save him!” A woman’s voice cut through the din, accompanied by a sharp push.

Even if he died, they didn't want her help? She was useless? Since when had her medical skills been questioned? She’d only been out of the public eye for three years. How had her reputation deteriorated so drastically?

“I am a doctor, let me!”

This strong, firm voice commanded attention, drawing surprised gasps. It was Esme.

The crowd erupted. “It’s Ms. Russell! Mr. Stewart will be saved, she’s a cardiothoracic surgeon!” “Wow, Ms. Russell really stepped up! She’s just as amazing and kind-hearted as the news says!”

Esme was treated as a miracle worker, instantly placed on a pedestal. Elizabeth’s earlier attempt to help now seemed futile.

Esme knelt beside Landon Stewart, found heart pills in his pocket, and said, “Everyone, back up a bit, give him some space.” “Is any of his family here? Does he have any other medical issues besides heart disease?” she asked, receiving no response. There was no time for such questions. She administered the pills and began CPR.

Many prominent figures attended the banquet, providing Esme the perfect opportunity to showcase her skills. She needed to impress Alexander’s family, proving herself as capable as Elizabeth if she wanted to marry him.

As everyone held their breath, someone shouted, “He moved!” Landon’s fingers twitched, and he slowly opened his eyes, still looking pale. Esme gently asked, “Mr. Stewart, how are you feeling? Any better?” Landon frowned, clutching his chest. Esme quickly added, “The ambulance is on its way. You’re safe now!”

The room erupted in applause and praise. “Ms. Russell is really something, unlike some others...” “Elizabeth’s from a family of doctors, but got into med school through connections. And now she thinks she can treat Mr. Stewart? That’s just reckless!”

Landon’s eyes fluttered shut, his lips moving silently. Esme, concluding he wasn’t fully recovered, ignored him. Elizabeth remained quiet, unfazed by their chatter. She had indeed gained admission to medical school through

connections, but watching Esme, her gaze turned icy. Was Esme truly the one who'd gained entry through unconventional means?

Esme shot Elizabeth a quick, guilty glance. "Thanks for the recognition. Actually, Elizabeth's pretty capable too."

"Her? I wouldn't trust her with my life!"

"Ms. Russell, can I get your contact information?" Alexander, who had been silent, spoke coldly. "Stop hitting on my fiancée."

Those around exchanged amused glances. "Look, Mr. Tudor's being protective." Esme blushed, shyly saying, "Alexander..."

Elizabeth's eyes dimmed; she looked down, a sharp pain seizing her heart. It wasn't their doubts and attacks that hurt, but hearing Alexander repeatedly call Esme his fiancée was worse than death.

Esme smiled subtly, feeling immense pride. Previously with Elizabeth, she'd been merely a supporting character, enhancing Elizabeth's brilliance. Now? Now, it was her turn to shine! Esme glanced at Elizabeth, malice flickering in her eyes. She was going to take everything from Elizabeth!

Amidst the praise, Mr. Stewart, who had been improving, suddenly began convulsing. "Mr. Stewart doesn't look good! Ms. Russell, check him out, quickly!"

Esme rushed over, noticing Mr. Stewart's labored breathing. She felt lost. Was it his heart? Or was he struggling to breathe? "Did you eat anything?" Esme asked Landon. Landon clutched his neck, his face contorted in pain. Esme, baffled, continued her examination, growing increasingly flustered.

Elizabeth looked up, assessing Landon's condition and checking the time. 'I can't wait any longer,' she thought. She borrowed a pen from a passing waiter.

"Ms. Russell, can you handle this?" someone asked. Esme looked up, seeing the crowd still admiring her. Even if she couldn't, she had to persevere. "I'll take another look," she said, her voice trembling. Even as a top heart surgeon, lately all she could think about was Alexander. Her studies had suffered. She couldn't afford to fail. If something happened to Landon under her care, her career would be ruined. No way was she risking her reputation!

Just as the situation intensified, Esme was shoved aside. A cold voice cut through the tension, “Move!”

Chapter 7

It was Elizabeth! Esme hit the ground, and Alexander rushed to help her up. Elizabeth dropped to her knees, yanked off Landon’s tie, and tossed it aside. Esme shook her head at Alexander, then glared at Elizabeth. “Elizabeth, the Percy family might spoil you, but now’s not the time for your drama. If someone dies...”

Elizabeth’s eyes were ice-cold. “Shut up.”

Esme was stunned. Elizabeth’s fierce stare sent chills down her spine. Elizabeth turned to Alexander, who was still supporting Esme. “Mr. Tudor, control your fiancée.”

Alexander’s face hardened. This side of Elizabeth was new to him. “Elizabeth, Esme’s just worried about you. Don’t be so ungrateful!”

Elizabeth smirked. *Worried about her?* Or worried she’d save Landon and steal the spotlight?

“Elizabeth, seriously, don’t get involved,” Alexander warned, his brows furrowed.

Elizabeth offered a bitter smile. “You think I’m useless too, huh?”

His silence was answer enough. She sighed. “After all these years, you still don’t get me.”

Alexander’s face contorted with frustration. Elizabeth pulled out a pen. Everyone froze.

“What’s she doing?”

“The Percy family’s screw-up better not make things worse...”

As the murmurs grew, Elizabeth did something unexpected. She unscrewed the pen and quickly, cleanly, jammed it into Mr. Stewart’s neck.

Esme clutched Alexander's arm, her eyes wide. Was she creating an emergency airway? Elizabeth was fearless! Time seemed to stop until Landon's fingers twitched.

Just then, someone shouted from outside, "The ambulance is here!" Medics rushed in. Elizabeth finally exhaled, helping lift Landon onto the stretcher, briefing the doctors as they went.

"He has congenital heart disease. When he first collapsed, we gave him fast-acting heart medication. He woke up briefly, then slipped back into a coma."

"I believe he has severe asthma, possibly a blocked airway. I improvised an emergency airway."

The crowd retorted, "Mr. Stewart doesn't have asthma! You sound pretentious; are you even a real doctor?"

"If she's legitimate, I'll get on my knees and apologize!"

All eyes, burning with curiosity, were on Elizabeth. She smirked, a spark of excitement in her eyes. This bet sounded like fun.

Just then, a frantic voice cut through the tension, "My dad does have severe asthma!" Everyone turned to see Joseph Stewart, Landon's son, rushing in.

Elizabeth felt a sharp pain in her palm and looked down; she'd cut herself with the pen in her haste.

"My dad does have asthma. We never told anyone because it's not exactly something to advertise," Joseph explained.

After a quick examination, the doctor hushed the crowd. "You were right. Your quick thinking and actions were perfect! You bought us crucial time. Without you, he might have..."

The hall fell silent. Wait, could this so-called "useless" Elizabeth actually possess real skills?

Alexander wasn't entirely surprised. Elizabeth had always been interested in medicine; she'd devoured countless medical books and even published several SCI papers. Her medical expertise was genuine. But somehow, as her husband, he'd begun to see her as insignificant, just like everyone else. Reflecting on Elizabeth's earlier words, Alexander felt a pang of shame.

Elizabeth turned, swaying slightly, and took a shaky step back. She had low blood sugar and hadn't slept properly in days. Alexander frowned, sensing she was about to faint, and instinctively moved forward. Suddenly, someone supported her waist.

Elizabeth looked up to see Joseph holding her, his voice gentle. "Ms. Percy, are you alright?"

Elizabeth glanced at Alexander. Whatever Esme had said had prompted him to immediately scoop her up and leave. Elizabeth looked away, disappointment washing over her, her heart aching as if stabbed.

"I'm fine," Elizabeth murmured.

Joseph produced a business card and handed it to her. "Thank you for saving my father. Here's my card. The Stewart family will ensure you are properly thanked!"

"Mr. Stewart, there's no need for such formality. Get to the hospital first," Elizabeth replied calmly.

Joseph nodded and left. Elizabeth glanced at the uneasy crowd. She casually grabbed a disinfectant wipe to clean her wound. "So, who said they'd kneel and apologize to me?"

The people who were about to leave froze. The room fell silent, and a man in his thirties was pushed forward. Elizabeth eyed him and uttered a single word: "Kneel!"

Chapter 8

The man, terrified, stammered, "I was just joking. Did you take it seriously?"

"Why wouldn't I? I always take things seriously," Elizabeth said, sipping her wine. Thinking about Alexander protecting Esme, holding her, showing her such tenderness, ignited a surge of anger within her. Was she truly worse than Esme? Why did Alexander always perceive her as a problem?

"Elizabeth, why are you so narrow-minded? No wonder Alexander doesn't like you!" the man shouted.

Elizabeth's eyes narrowed at the mention of Alexander. It struck a nerve. She hurled her glass at his feet, her gaze icy. "Don't want to kneel? I'll make you." She produced a pen.

The crowd gasped. What was she planning? The man felt a chill run down his spine, remembering Elizabeth stabbing Landon in the neck with a pen earlier—quick, ruthless, and bloodless. The memory made him shiver. He swallowed hard and stepped back.

Elizabeth twirled the pen, eyeing him. "I can save lives with this, or end them." His spine froze. "You've got three seconds. Kneel, or..."

Before she finished, he dropped to his knees. "I was wrong!" he cried, kowtowing. "Please, spare me!" He bowed repeatedly, his legs shaking.

Elizabeth tilted her head, her gaze sweeping the room. *Who else wants to defy me?* her eyes seemed to ask. The room was silent; everyone watched, too afraid to move.

Since marrying Alexander, Elizabeth had remained out of the spotlight. People considered her a spoiled Percy family princess. But now, commanding the room like a queen, "useless" seemed a wholly inadequate description.

Seeing no one else speak, Elizabeth stood. The crowd recoiled. She laughed. Were they truly that afraid of her? Indeed, one should never be too weak.

She approached the man, who looked up at her. She stepped on his head, pressing it to the ground. Her expression wild, she said, "Now this is how you kowtow sincerely." Then she left without looking back.

John watched her go, shaking his head and smiling. Elizabeth had once again surprised him.

Exhausted, Elizabeth reached the hotel entrance, her feet aching terribly. Annoyed, she removed her high heels and walked barefoot, ignoring the stares. Outside, a drizzle had begun. She tilted her face up, letting the raindrops fall on her cheeks. The mask of dominance fell away, revealing an indescribable fragility.

She paused, noticing Alexander leaning against a car in a black shirt. He turned to light a cigarette, the flame illuminating his face. Raindrops fell on his shoulders, but he remained without an umbrella, his suit jacket draped

over his arm, a cigarette between his fingers. A heavy chill emanated from him; his gaze was distant and indifferent.

“Elizabeth, we need to talk,” he said slowly, deliberately, as if he’d been waiting forever.

Elizabeth clutched her shoes. Why here? Why now? Was this about the divorce? Was he so eager to leave her for his new love? The thought stung. She swallowed the pain, managing a smile to maintain her composure. “I know you’re busy. We don’t need to talk.”

“I don’t want anything. I’ll go with whatever you decide.”

Alexander frowned. She was always like this. At family dinners, she’d say, “I know you’re busy. I’ll handle things at home.” On her birthday, “I know you’re busy. Just half an hour with me is enough.” Even sick in the hospital, she’d say, “Go ahead and work. I’m fine. You don’t need to stay.” And now, with divorce looming, she was still the same. Whoever said Elizabeth was inconsiderate?

“I’m not busy,” Alexander said suddenly, locking eyes with her.

Elizabeth’s heart skipped a beat; her eyes widened in surprise. In three years of marriage, this was the first time he’d responded like this. It felt unreal. Yet, considering his eagerness to discuss the divorce, she found it ironic.

“Elizabeth,” John’s voice came from behind.

She turned. He held a black umbrella over her head, smiling. “Why are you standing in the rain?”

“I didn’t know it was raining,” Elizabeth replied, looking into his eyes. He gently wiped the raindrops from her hair. “Elizabeth, want me to take you home?”

The sudden closeness startled her. She almost instinctively stepped back, then glanced at Alexander, quickly looking away. She’d always worried about Alexander’s perception of her, never daring to get close to other men, fearing he’d think her unfaithful. She’d been so cautious, forgetting Alexander didn’t care at all.

“You take me home? Seems more reliable if I take *you* home,” Elizabeth said to John with a gentle smile.

“You taking me home works too,” John nodded.

Alexander watched quietly, his eyes swirling with emotions. Since Elizabeth proposed the divorce, he felt increasingly insignificant. He pressed the car horn.

The loud noise gained everyone’s attention. John looked up, surprised to see Alexander. “Mr. Tudor, waiting for someone?”

Alexander took a drag from his cigarette, flicked the ash, and pointed at Elizabeth. “I’m waiting for her,” he said, cool and firm.

Elizabeth stared at Alexander. John was confused. “Mr. Tudor, you know Elizabeth well?”

Alexander’s eyes burned with a quiet anger. “I’m her husband!”

Chapter 9

Elizabeth’s heart skipped a beat. Did Bill Alexander just say that? He never wanted to acknowledge their marriage before. Alexander saw the shock in her eyes and felt a wave of frustration. He said he was her husband. Why was she so surprised?

John pointed at them, doubtfully. “You two are married?” He felt like he was being played, not getting the respect he deserved. But John had a personal interest in Elizabeth. “Elizabeth, I admit you won’t pry, but if you need help, I’m here.” He was sincere.

That sincerity made Elizabeth feel even more apologetic. It had been a long time since anyone, besides her family, cared for her like this. She was about to thank him when Alexander suddenly grabbed her wrist.

“Mr. Morris, thanks, but my wife doesn’t need your help,” Alexander’s cold voice cut through the air. His icy gaze swept over John before he dragged Elizabeth towards the car. John stood there, stunned.

“Alexander, let go! What are you doing?” Elizabeth shouted, frowning. Alexander’s grip was iron, his steps quick, ignoring her struggles as if she wasn’t even there. Her toes hit the damp ground, the cold biting into her bones. She stepped on a stone and gasped in pain.

Alexander finally stopped and turned. Elizabeth's eyes were red. He glanced down at her feet. "Alexander, it hurts," she choked out, her voice hoarse. 'He never cares about my feelings,' she thought bitterly.

Something tugged at Alexander's heart. He picked her up, realizing how thin she was. Elizabeth clutched his sleeve, disbelief in her eyes. He placed her in the car, then got in himself.

She couldn't understand him at all. The car was silent, the atmosphere thick. Elizabeth's hair dripped from the rain, making her look even more pitiful. Alexander shot her a look, memories of their steamy kiss at the club last night flashing through his mind. His throat felt parched. He fished out a cigarette and lit it.

"So, what's the deal with you and John?"

"We're just friends," Elizabeth said, straight to the point.

Alexander didn't buy it but let it slide. He bit down on his cigarette, tossed some disinfectant and gauze her way, and said flatly, "Handle it yourself."

"Huh?" Elizabeth blinked, confused.

"Your hand," he snapped.

Elizabeth opened her palm, suddenly remembering the cut from the...

Chapter 91

"It's no big deal," she shrugged.

But Alexander grabbed her wrist, tending to the wound with a mix of irritation and care. "Weren't you always the drama queen? Crying over every little scratch, dragging me to the hospital!"

Elizabeth felt a pang of nostalgia. Back when they were newlyweds, she always found excuses to go to the hospital, hoping he'd show some concern. Sometimes, she'd even hurt herself on purpose. That he never seemed to care.

"You said it yourself, that was before," she said, watching him focus on her wound, her heart aching a bit.

Alexander looked up suddenly, cigarette still dangling from his lips. The smoke was thick, making Elizabeth cough. Alexander's eyes went dark. He crushed his cigarette and rolled down the windows, muttering, "You're so fragile."

Elizabeth stayed quiet, just staring out the window. She always hated smoke. No one in her family smoked. Alexander had been a smoker even before they got married. Elizabeth had told him a few times she didn't like it. Eventually, he quit. She thought he did it for her.

Then one day, she found Esme on his lap, purring. "You quit smoking for me, Alexander. You're the best!" That's when Elizabeth realized he never quit for her.

Right then, Alexander got a call from Esme. In the small, quiet car, Esme's voice was clear, "Alexander, the doctor said I'm fine."

"Okay," he replied, cool as ever.

Esme paused, then asked, "Did you see Elizabeth? Did you talk about the divorce?"

Elizabeth pulled her hand back. She knew Alexander wasn't being nice for no reason. There was always a catch. Esme's flirty voice came through the phone, "I saw her. I'll come see you later. Alright, I'll take a bath and wait for you."

Elizabeth turned to look out the window, her heart shattered. She felt numb. Alexander hung up the phone.

Elizabeth spoke up, "If you've got something to say, just say it." Alexander stared at her back, but the words got stuck in his throat.

After what felt like forever, he finally broke the silence, "Grandma's turning seventy soon. The family's throwing a big party. She wants us there together."

Elizabeth turned, surprised. She'd been so out of it lately, she'd forgotten Lily Tudor's birthday was coming up.

Chapter 9

"I'll get a dress ready for you and pick you up," Alexander said.

But Elizabeth shot back, “I’m not going to Grandma’s birthday party this year.”

Chapter 10

Alexander was stunned by Elizabeth’s response. She was closest to Lily, who treated her like a granddaughter. Anytime he messed up, Lily was the first to defend her.

“Elizabeth, the whole thing with you pushing Esme into the water is ancient history,” he said, frowning but trying to keep his tone calm.

“What do you mean ‘ancient history’?” Elizabeth snapped back. “By saying that, you’re basically saying I *did* push her.”

Alexander didn’t want to argue anymore, his eyes showing his frustration.

“Can you stop making a scene?”

Elizabeth looked at him, her eyes slowly filling with disappointment. He still thought she was just throwing a fit.

Elizabeth lowered her head, gave a wry smile, and said, “In all these years of marriage, except for when I was immature at the beginning, how many times have you seen me make a fuss?”

“You said you wouldn’t coddle me. I get that.”

“What am I fussing about? And who am I making a fuss for?” Elizabeth said calmly while putting on her shoes.

“If I were Esme, I’d definitely cling to you and make a big scene.” Her eyes curved into a smile, bright but hiding endless bitterness. But she wasn’t Esme, so she didn’t have that privilege.

Alexander’s throat tightened, but he said nothing.

“When you have some free time, give me a call. We’ll go to the City Clerk’s Office to get the divorce papers.”

She wasn’t the Elizabeth who would cry and beg him to stay anymore. This time, she was really letting go. Alexander’s brow furrowed, his heart aching.

“Elizabeth, Grandma’s health isn’t good. Let’s not tell her about our divorce for now,”

Elizabeth interrupted, “By the way, do you remember the ring I gave you three years ago?”

Alexander was taken aback. Seeing his reaction, Elizabeth knew he didn’t remember.

“The gifts you gave me are all in the third drawer of the study,” Alexander said.

“For the divorce, I don’t want anything except that ring. I’ll swing by the villa, grab my stuff, and be out.”

Chapter 10

Alexander instinctively grabbed her hand, watching her handle everything so methodically. A surge of anger bubbled up inside him. “In a rush to get divorced, are we?”

Elizabeth laughed. “Absolutely. Plenty of guys out there waiting for me,” she said, eyes twinkling. *Doesn’t Alexander want to marry his beloved ASAP too?* she thought.

Alexander’s face twisted, a chill creeping over him as he tightened his grip on her hand. Elizabeth winced; he was squeezing her wound, and it hurt. The car’s atmosphere grew tense.

Alexander stared at her, blurting out, “Have you fallen for someone else?”

The question threw Elizabeth for a second, but she quickly recovered. She leaned in, her breath brushing his face, eyes locked on his.

“Mr. Tudor, as my ex-husband, isn’t that a bit much to ask?”

Alexander opened his mouth, but her words shut him up. The titles “Mr. Tudor” and “ex-husband” stung more than he expected.

Elizabeth pulled her hand free, opened the car door, and stepped out. Facing the drizzle, her smile slowly disappeared. She waved goodbye, turning her back to him. The car’s headlights lit up her slim figure, making her look fragile. Alexander gripped the steering wheel. Elizabeth wasn’t clinging to him

anymore. Weirdly, he didn't feel any relief. Instead, it felt like something was slipping away, making him anxious and irritable.

Elizabeth got home at eleven. Declan and Rose were still up. When Elizabeth walked in, Rose waved, "Hey, you're back!"

"How was your night?" Declan asked.

Elizabeth paused, looking at them on the couch. Her empty heart suddenly felt full. She walked over, squeezed between them, and hugged them like a kid.

"I was so immature before. I'm sorry."

Chapter 10

Declan's smile faded, feeling a weight in his chest.

"Why are you apologizing? Parents don't blame their own kid."

Elizabeth's wild emotions calmed down, and she leaned into his embrace, just like when she was little.

"Tell me what happened at the party today," Declan said, ready to listen.

Elizabeth took a deep breath and started recounting the events,

"You saved Mr. Stewart?" Declan was shocked.

"Yeah."

"And you met his son too?"

"Yeah."

Declan burst out laughing. "My daughter's a genius! But don't let Grandma find out, or she'll whisk you away to med school!"

"When are you gonna take over your dad's company?"

"Dad, not this again."

Elizabeth stood up and made a quick exit. Declan called after her, “Sweetheart, the best way to forget pain is to stay busy! I’m not just pushing you to take over the family business. I’m helping you move on!”

“I’ve got a dinner meeting tomorrow night. Why don’t you go instead?” Declan suggested.

“Dad,” Elizabeth snapped. She stormed back to her room, face red with anger.

She climbed into bed and had just picked up her phone when a text from Felix popped up.

“Boss, did you get the ring? Can’t wait to go all out with you!”

Elizabeth replied, “I’ll get it tomorrow. Meet at Hidden Camp at noon.”