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Karla requested. "Keep driving until I say stop, please!" Her voice filled with a mix of urgency and exhaustion. She glanced at the side mirror, trying to catch her breath, her heart still racing from the adrenaline-fueled escape.

Duncan cast her a surprised look, his eyes darting between the road and Karla. With focused determination, he continued navigating through the busy traffic, skillfully maneuvering the car to keep them moving forward.

Unable to keep quiet any longer, Duncan couldn't help but ask, his voice tinged with concern and confusion, "What are you doing, Karla?"

Karla took a moment to gather herself before responding, her voice slightly shaky. "I'm trying to catch my breath," she simply said, her words conveying both physical and emotional exhaustion.

Duncan's brow furrowed as he glanced at her, an unpleasant expression crossing his face. The combination of his concern and the shock of the situation prompted him to probe further, wanting to understand the events that had just unfolded. "No, I mean... why were you at that bar? Why were you being chased, and..." He hesitated for a moment, searching for the right words. "Why do you look different?"

"How am I looking different? You recognized me at first glance, so there's nothing different about me tonight," Karla responded, her voice firm and defensive. She refused to entertain the notion that there was anything unusual about her appearance.

Duncan felt a surge of frustration as he listened to her response. "Stop it and be honest with me," he insisted, his tone tinged with exasperation. He had expected a straightforward answer, but Karla's deflection only

fueled his growing confusion.

"I owe you no explanation," Karla retorted, her voice laced with defiance. "I could equally ask you the same question, you know."

Duncan's eyebrows raised in surprise. "What?" he asked, taken aback by her unexpected counter-question.

"Yeah," Karla continued, her voice sharp. "Why were you at that bar? Did you come to check out some hot chicks?" Her words dripped with sarcasm as if trying to shift the focus away from herself and onto Duncan.

Rolling his eyes, Duncan felt a mix of irritation and frustration mounting within him. "You can't answer because you had another agenda for being there, right?" he replied, his voice laced with irritation. "Don't question me..."

Before Karla could finish her sentence, he abruptly halted the car, bringing it to a sudden stop. The tires screeched against the pavement, and the car fell into an uneasy silence as Duncan's actions hung in the air, reflecting his mounting frustration and the need for answers.

"Holy shit!" Karla exclaimed, her voice filled with a mix of surprise and pain as her head banged against the headrest due to the sudden impact of Duncan's action. "What's wrong with you?" she asked, rubbing her head and adjusting her wig to ensure it was still in place.

Duncan inhaled deeply, his frustration evident as he turned to face Karla. His teeth gnashed together as he stared at her intently. "You've been babbling, so just tell me the truth now," he demanded, his voice laced with determination. "Why were you at that bar?"

Karla's mind raced, searching for a plausible explanation that would satisfy Duncan's curiosity while keeping her secrets hidden. She knew

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she couldn't dismiss his question or evade it any longer. With a quick mental calculation, she thought of a lie and shrugged casually. "I went there to hang out," she said, trying to sound nonchalant.

Duncan peered at her, his gaze searching for any signs of deception. He could sense that there was more to her story, but he decided to let it go for the moment. "You went to hang out looking like this?" He asked, his skepticism evident in his voice as he gestured toward Karla's appearance.

Karla nodded, her lips tightening as she prepared to explain herself. "You know it's just my guise for the night," she replied, her tone defensive. "I didn't want anyone to recognize me and be like, 'Oh, is that you, Karla Burton? What are you doing here?'" She mimicked a mocking tone, emphasizing the potential judgment she wanted to avoid. "Then by the next morning, the headlines are going to be this - 'Karla Burton, the heiress of Burton Investments was seen looking unpleasant in a stinky bar! The young heiress of Burton Investments is so irresponsible!'" She paused briefly, the weight of her words hanging in the air.

Duncan listened attentively, his eyebrows furrowing as he processed her explanation. He could understand her desire for privacy and avoiding unwanted attention. However, he couldn't shake off his suspicion that there was more to her story. The intensity of his gaze remained fixed on her, waiting for her to continue and hoping to uncover the truth behind her secretive behavior.

She went on mimicking. "How can Samuel Burton be at peace while his irresponsible daughter takes improper care of herself? The Burtons' image is ruined by Karla!"

Duncan, observing her actions keenly, couldn't help but almost smile at her dramatic poses, but he quickly restrained himself.

"I'm going to be the center of attention for all media outlets tomorrow if I hadn't put on this facade, you know."

Curious about the situation, Duncan inquired further, "Okay, I understand that, but why were you being chased?"

Exasperated, Karla replied, "Goodness! I found myself in a bar filled with despicable idiots consumed by lust!"

"What happened?"

"They wanted to take advantage of me," Karla scoffed, her gaze averted. She released a brief sigh, realizing that Duncan had not noticed Peterson's presence at the bar earlier. She wondered how things would have unfolded if he had seen Peterson, and if he would have believed her lies.

Duncan, frustrated by the situation, responded, "In that case, you could have simply let me confront them and teach them a lesson instead of forcing us to flee."

Karla explained, "I didn't want that to happen. If a confrontation occurred, it would have created a scene, drawing attention and potentially involving the police. Then we would have had to go through interrogations and all the complications that come with it."

"Nothing of sort would have happened..."

"It would, Duncan. And why would you even do that, Duncan?" Karla questioned, her tone tinged with doubt.

Duncan raised an eyebrow, his eyes fixed on her. "What do you mean?" he asked, seeking clarification.

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Karla sighed softly, her voice filled with resignation. "I mean...I'm not your girlfriend or someone you need to protect. You don't have to fight for me."

Duncan's expression softened as he responded, "Karla, I will stand up against any perverts or individuals who disrespect women. It's not about you being my girlfriend or not. It's about doing what's right."

Clearing his throat, Duncan shifted his gaze away from Karla, focusing on the road ahead through the windshield. Karla, appreciative of his help, acknowledged, "Thanks for assisting me. I can manage from here to reach my destination."

Duncan nodded, his eyes still averted, contemplating his next words.

"Bye," Karla muttered, her voice filled with a mix of frustration and resignation. She attempted to open the car door and exit, but before she could, Duncan swiftly pressed a button on his side, automatically locking the doors. Confused, she looked at him and mumbled, "Hey...?"

Duncan's eyes met Karla's, his gaze fixed on her dress. "You're not leaving by yourself looking like that," he stated firmly.

Karla's expression hardened as she replied, "Excuse me? You don't get to tell me what to do."

A hint of determination flashed in Duncan's eyes. "Really?" he challenged.

"Yes," Karla replied, her voice defiant.

"Watch me," Duncan retorted. Without further hesitation, he started the car and accelerated, leaving Karla surprised and uncertain of his

intentions.

Bewildered, Karla asked, "Where are you taking me to?" She received no response from Duncan, which only increased her anxiety. "Damn it, say something! You're freaking me out."

As the car raced forward, Duncan remained silent, his focus fixed on the road ahead. Karla's sense of unease grew, unsure of what awaited her at their destination and what Duncan's intentions truly were.

"You better stop the car, or I'm just going to do something that you might not like," Karla threatened, her voice filled with determination. As Duncan pulled over to the side of the road, Karla's expression shifted to a smug one. "Good. You can't have everything go your way all the time, Duncan," she said, feigning annoyance. She made an attempt to leave the car, but Duncan grabbed her hand, preventing her from doing so. "What?" she demanded, her tone sharp.

Duncan slowly shifted his gaze to Karla's face, his eyes filled with concern. "What happened to you?" he asked, his voice laced with worry.

Karla furrowed her brows, confusion was evident on her face. "What do you mean?" she questioned, unsure of what he was referring to.

Leaning forward, Duncan gently rubbed the corner of her bleeding lips, causing Karla to wince in pain. "Ahh," she let out, the discomfort evident in her voice.

"You've got a burst lip, Karla. How did that happen?" Duncan inquired, concern etched on his face.

Karla nonchalantly shrugged, avoiding eye contact. "Oh, that? I don't know," she replied dismissively. However, the memory of being punched by one of the men suddenly flashed in her mind, prompting her to return

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her gaze to Duncan. "I was punched by one of those perverts," she admitted, her voice tinged with a mix of frustration and vulnerability.

"Damn it," Duncan groaned, his frustration evident as he punched the steering wheel. "I regret leaving like that without giving them a taste of my fist."

Karla tried to downplay the situation. "Hey, it's nothing..."

"Come on, look at your lips," Duncan interrupted, his tone firm. "You look like shit," he added, his concern overriding any attempt to be gentle.

Karla's lips parted, caught off guard by his blunt comment. She couldn't find the words to respond, instead simply staring at him, her expression a mix of surprise and gratitude for his unexpected concern.

Sighing, Duncan exited the car, leaving Karla to wonder about his next move. Curiosity and confusion filled her mind as she watched him walk towards the front seat door. He opened the door and extended his hand, gently guiding her out of the car, holding her hand firmly.

"What is it?" Karla asked, her confusion evident in her voice, as Duncan started pulling her towards a nearby bench. He stopped and motioned for her to sit down, and she complied, still uncertain of his intentions. Duncan then walked back to the car, retrieving a small first aid box.

Returning to the bench, Duncan took a seat next to Karla. Without uttering a word, he took out some cotton wool from the first aid box, ready to tend to her injuries. He attempted to wipe off the blood from her burst lip, but Karla leaned back, instinctively pulling away.

"What do you want to do?" Karla asked, her frown deepening as Duncan tried once again to clean the blood from her wound. However, she swiftly grabbed his hand, abruptly stopping his actions. "I don't want you to do

that," she asserted, her voice firm.

Narrowing his eyes, Duncan stared at Karla, a mix of frustration and confusion evident on his face. The tension between them was palpable as they locked eyes, both silently recalling their earlier argument in the hospital that morning. In a sudden burst of emotion, Karla's hand instinctively slapped him away. "Don't touch me," she warned, her voice laced with defiance.

Feeling provoked by her reaction, Duncan leaned forward, his hand slipping around her neck, pulling her closer until their faces were just an inch apart. The intensity between them was undeniable, the air charged with unresolved emotions and unspoken words.

"Just let me care for you this moment the same way you did for me the other day." With that, he gently wipes away the blood from her burst lip using a ball of cotton wool, showing a tender and considerate approach. Each time Karla winced due to the stinging pain, he blew air at the injured lip, attempting to provide some relief. Once he completed the process, Duncan applied a bandage to the injured lip.

"This bandage won't leave a scar on your beautiful face," he assured. His comment had an impact on her, almost making her blush.

Surprised by his response, she asked, "So...am I beautiful?" She didn't expect him to admit it so openly.

"Exceptionally...beautiful," he responded and a smile tugged at his lips. He couldn't believe he said that too.

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Gem Lynne author

We've reached chapter 100. What's your take on the story so far? What do you think about Karla and Duncan? What's happening next now? Can you decipher the upcoming events? 🤔 If yes, fill me al

