

THREE – KIDNAPPED

David opened the box, revealing a shimmering, luxurious diamond ring. From every indication, the ring was worth millions of pounds.

Luke stared down at the little fancy diary he got Fiona as a gift. This could never be compared to David's gift. Everyone would just laugh at him.

Luke was about to turn away when David looked straight at him, his eyes burning with challenge.

Finally, he got down on one knee.

"Fiona, I have loved you ever since you were just ten years old. Your beauty and intelligence have never failed to leave me in awe. This ring is worth ten million pounds and today, on your twentieth birthday, it is my utmost pleasure to ask you to become my wife.

Will you marry me, my princess Fiona?"

Shocked silence fell over the entire hall. Fiona looked dazed, while Mr and Mrs. Carmichael's eyes widened with pleasant surprise.

Luke held his breath, waiting for Fiona's response, then all around him, guests erupted in a chant,

"Say yes! Say yes! Say yes...!"

Fiona's eyes shimmered with happiness as she stared down at David with so much affection. Luke's heart trembled with anxiety.

When Fiona opened her mouth to speak, the entire hall fell silent.

"I think you are the most amazing man in the world, David." She waited a beat before adding,

"And it would be my pleasure to become your wife."

Luke froze, unable to believe his eyes...and ears. Around him, guests clapped and cheered as David and Fiona locked lips. Luke remained rooted to the spot, anger, pain and disappointment fighting for domination within him.

Mr and Mrs Carmichael walked over to the couple and formally introduced them.

"My dear esteemed guests, please join in my happiness as I present our future son-in-law, David Hummington!"

A thunderous applause swept through the hall.

Luke couldn't take it anymore. He needed to do something about this.

"Stop! Stop this nonsense right now!" He yelled.

A hushed silence reigned over the hall as everyone turned in his direction. Luke did not care. He walked forward and stood before the Carmichael family.

"What are you all doing? Grandpa Hanson promised Fiona to me before he died. To me! How can you disrespect him by going against his death wish before all these people? This is wrong. Fiona and I are already married. She cannot be negates to someone else."

Fiona stepped forward, her eyes glinting with anger.

"Did you honestly think that I would agree to get married for the rest of my life to a low class peasant like you? You have no class, no inheritance, no money and no social standard. Look at me!" She ordered, twirling around. "Can't you see that I am worth more than that? I never intended to marry you, Luke, hence this marriage is over."

Pain and shame filled him and tears pricked his eyes.

"But Fiona, you cannot mean that..."

"There are no buts." David stepped forward and wrapped his hands around Fiona's waist, spearing him with a mocking glance.

Luke suddenly wished he could break those hands.

"Why don't you go out there and find someone of your class, Luke. This family never accepted you. You will never be a part of us."

Luke's rage almost spiraled out of control.

"Take your hands off my wife before I break it." He said through gritted teeth.

David let go of Fiona and advanced towards Luke, standing toe-to-toe with him.

"Fiona is no longer yours to claim. She's mine now. All mine."

Luke had no idea how it happened, but in a flash, he was on top of David, punching and scratching at whatever part of the bastard's body he could reach.

"Security!" Fiona screamed. "Somebody get security."

Luke and David pounded at each other until the hall's security guards pulled them apart. While David was struggling to get to his feet, Fiona walked over and landed a stinging slap on Luke's cheek.

Luke's head snapped backwards from the force of the slap and he winced.

"How dare you touch him? you good for nothing?!"

Luke turned to Mrs Carmichael,

"Mother, you had I both know that this is not right. Grand pa Hanson specifically wanted..."

"Don't you dare call me that! I am not your mother." She seethed. "I never have been, and I never will be. Ever since you came into this family, all you've brought to us is shame and disgrace. Yes, we honored grandpa Hanson's last wish to get you engaged to our daughter, but that does not mean you are accepted here. This is where it ends Luke Bradford. Fiona is not yours to keep."

Who even gave you the right to speak during such an important family function, anyways? Are you not aware that when Kings like David are speaking, peasants like you are supposed to keep silent?" Mrs Carmichael was fuming now.

Luke tried to keep his tears at bay as he watched Fiona walk off. She came back a few seconds later, briefcase in hand.

A tense murmur swept through the crowd when she opened the briefcase to reveal several neatly stacked hundred dollar bills.

"I know Grandpa made you a lot of promises, but sadly, he's not here anymore."

She threw the briefcase at him and it landed at his feet, the money scattering in all directions. Her eyes gleamed with hatred.

"That is ten thousand dollars. Take it and get the hell out of here. I never want to see your face around here ever again."

Luke clenched and released his fists in frustration as she continued to heap insults at him. Offering him money in exchange of his disappearance before all these people was the highest level of disrespect.

"We no longer have any business with you, Luke Bradford." Mr. Carmichael declared. " Grand pa Hanson took you in,

but he's gone now. Look for someplace else to keep your wretched head for the night because if you are sighted at our gates, the security dogs will be unleashed on you."

Shocked, Luke stared at the people who were supposed to be his family.

"But, p-please...I have no where else to go. Please..."

"My husband's word is final. Now get out of here. Leave. Now!"

Luke's heart clenched with pain as he trudged out of the hall, head bowed.

Why was life so unfair to him? When it looked like things were finally getting better, everything came crashing down once more.

He had no idea where he was going. He just walked and walked. He could not go back home. What would he tell mum and dad?

When he finally arrived at a late night bar, he walked in without a second thought. Luke felt around in his pocket and found a twenty pound note.

The plan was to get drunk, and perhaps beg the management to let him sleep on their floor tonight.

"Hey man, excuse me. Two shots, please." He said to the bartender.

"Coming right up."

The shots were delivered and Luke swallowed both in two short gulps. The alcoholic burn did nothing to dull the ache in his chest.

Pretty soon, he was asking for more. Two shots turned to seven, until he was dead drunk and could barely see straight.

"Heyyyy..." he slurred at the bartender, "can I take out y-your trash tonight in...exchange for a...p-place to sleep?"

After consulting the manager, both giving him suspicious looks, the bartender agreed.

"Take it out back. Make sure you do not litter."

Luke staggered to his feet and made for the bags. He could barely see three metres ahead of him.

"Thanks...mannn."

He emptied the trash successfully without spilling and made a detour to empty his bladder before going back in.

Just as he was about to head back, he sensed a sudden movement behind him.

Before he could even blink, a loud pang reverberated through the empty alleyway, followed by a blinding pain in his skull.

Luke fell to his knees with a yell of pain and clutched his head, his vision already blurring.

The last thing he remembered was being shoved into a car by men dressed completely in black after those that had beaten him went away. Then he surrendered to the pain and darkness covered his world.

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