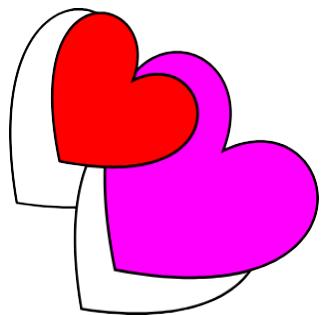


Melody May



*Lovers
Lust
Paradise*



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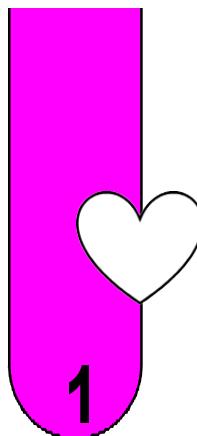
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Aaron Caldwell



No man envisions himself getting scolded for not being married at age 34, but there I was getting scolded by my father. Zoning out had become the best solution to this type of situation. All I could think of was the trip to the Maldives I had planned yesterday. I was going to be working, but it was still a way to get away from all the drama of everyone trying to set me up with their daughter, niece, sister, friend, or goddaughter every second. I was sick of it. Even the tabloids hadn't stopped speaking about me being an eligible bachelor. At the slightest recognition, some women throw themselves at me. It pissed me off, and all I wanted to do was yell at the world to leave me alone.

“Aaron! Aaron!” My father’s stern voice pulled me out of my deep thoughts.

“You never listen. I’m getting sick and tired of this. Maybe I should take matters into my own hands,” My father grunted and left the study.

“Aaron,” my mother’s serene voice followed the loud bang the door made after my father had shut it closed in anger.

“Aaron, your father means well. He is grumpy because he just wants to see his grandchildren,” she smiled lightly at me.

“But he has three already,” I mumbled.

“What was that?” My mother asked me.

“Nothing. I have a business meeting to prepare for, so this sermon would have to be held some other time,” I pecked her cheeks and walked out of the study. I could hear her call my name a few times, but I was tired of the conversation. A clear mind was what I needed before the meeting tomorrow.

I reached into my pocket and dialed my secretary’s number. “Brooke, move all my reservations and flights to this evening. I need to be in the Maldives as soon as possible,” I hung up, not giving her room to protest.

The air was different, different in a good way.

No smell of smoke, burnt meat,

And success to remind me that I was on the streets of New York.

My quality of life seemed to have improved just by inhaling the air around me. The soft smell of sea salt and a hint of jasmine

calmed my nerves. This was all I needed to drain out the constant voice of my father telling me to settle down.

“Mr. Caldwell,” I looked up to see who had called me and saw a short man holding a cardboard with my name boldly written on it.

Time to have the most peaceful week of my life.

The trip to the resort was a good twenty minutes, and we were on a boat. The magnificent clear, deep blue sea, the placid skies, and the colorful marine life that surrounded me brought a stillness that I hadn’t felt in all my years in New York.

“We’re here,” The skipper said to me. I nodded and noticed several hotel staff waving to me and giving me a warm welcome. I didn’t want all the attention, so I ignored the gesture and told one of the staff to show me to my room. The butler that was assigned to me opened his mouth to speak, but I shut him down immediately.

“If I wanted you to talk, I would ask questions,” He bowed his head gently and showed me to my room.

We arrived at my room, and I sent the butler away without any words. I opened the door, and something felt different. The room felt warm as if someone had just left or, even worse, someone was still living there.

Did they not know I was coming?

I saw a bunch of clothes scattered about the living room of my supposed room.

Am I in the wrong room?

I walked back to the door and checked to see if the number on the room door and the one in my reservation matched, and they did. I made my way to the room and opened the door in a furtive way in case there was a thief or an intruder. I stared at matching bikinis strewn around the floor of the room.

Whoever this person was, she was a mess.

I dropped my bag and raised my brow when I heard someone singing. The singing wasn't bad, but I wasn't in the mood for anyone or anything like that.

My fatigued bones couldn't deal with any of this now. I just wanted to be alone and rest, away from everyone trying to become my possible spouse, my parents, the spotlight, and everything that had to do with settling down.

I believed I wasn't a child again, so I had no idea why everyone wouldn't stop meddling in my life. Okay, maybe it was because my family was a household name, and we owned a fortune, having a chain of different companies. We delved into everything: fashion, tech, gaming, cinemas, and hotels. So, people knowing that I was the potential heir to a fortune or soon-to-be CEO didn't help. My mother and aunties suddenly began to remember all their friends, kids, or nieces. I was suddenly set up on blind dates with women, and even some plans to have a 'natural encounter' with me, hoping it would be love at first sight.

So, this woman having a concert at the deck of my room was irritating and giving me a headache.

I needed an explanation. This needed to end.

I walked to the deck from the bedroom and saw a woman sitting with her legs in the water and coconut water by her side.

“What the fuck are you doing in my room?”

She screamed, and her reflexes made her grab the coconut shell beside her. She chucked the coconut shell at my head, but my fast reflexes allowed me to dodge the flying coconut shell.

“Who are you?” Her eyes roamed the area. I could tell that she was looking for what she could throw at me. She picked up her flip-flops and tried to chuck them at me before I yelled, “STOP.”

“Who are you?” She asked me.

“The owner of this room,” I stared at her, furrowing my eyebrows in anger. I didn’t have time for all of this madness.

“No, this is my room,” she stood up and placed her hands on her hips. I’m assuming she felt she was being stern, but her long, flying hair that was all over the place didn’t let me see it.

“Listen to me, Mister, leave my room this instant, or I’ll call security,” she continued. I almost let out a chuckle at her words, but the pain in my back and neck made me do otherwise. I scratched my right eyebrow with my pinkie finger, thinking of how to handle this situation because clearly, there was a problem, and I needed to get to the bottom of it.

I didn’t come all the way from New York to the Maldives for some drama.

Who knows, she could be one of the ladies my mum is trying to set me up with.

I reached for my phone in my pocket and called my secretary to find out what room she had reserved for me. It was the same one we were standing in.

I was getting really angry, and I needed an explanation. I grabbed the intruder's hand in my room, ignored her squirms and protest, and led her to the reception. I needed an explanation.

"Tell me why I came to my room and found this woman there. I need some explaining now," I said, finally releasing the woman's hand from my grasp.

The receptionist looked at me in fear. She opened her mouth to speak, but no words followed.

"Can I get someone that knows how to speak?" I looked around and asked anyone. I felt my jaw almost fall out from clenching down on my teeth too hard.

"I believe this was a mistake on our path, sir. We apologize for this. The switch in your reservation was too sudden, and Mrs. Smith was supposed to check out in the morning before you arrived. Your assistant also didn't have it. We tried explaining to her, but she hung up multiple times, and we had our new employees on the ground, so they didn't know what to do," A man in a plain white shirt and shorts with a bunch of flower patterns on them tried to explain.

"And you are?"

"The manager of the resort," He said. I clenched my jaw and forgot for a second the woman I had found in my room.

"I don't have time for this. Find a solution now," I said, walking back to my room. I heard footsteps behind me, but I didn't care

to look back at who it was. I wouldn't have had to take this trip early if it wasn't for my father's nagging. I wanted to call my secretary, but I was tired of yelling at everyone.

"Listen here, Mister, I don't know who you are, but I know that's my room, and you better start apologizing," I ignored her and swiped my card against the door.

"Could you clean up, for Pete's sake?" The mess she had made in the room was the least of my troubles, but it irritated me the more I looked at it.

"This room is mine till tomorrow morning, so I can do what I want," she scoffed, walked to the chair, and sat.

I rubbed my eyebrows with my fingers to calm the headache I had. This was not the week I wanted to have.