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*She hadn't done anything wrong; she was merely doing what was best for herself, ready to follow through no matter the cost—even if it meant selling her soul to the devil.*

Carla's hands shook with rage as she hurled a vase against the wall, watching it shatter into a thousand pieces. The sound was oddly satisfying, but not enough. She grabbed another object—one of the ridiculous but expensive gifts Hunter had bought for her. She had pretended to like it, even though she didn't. With a scream, she flung it across the room, her breath ragged and chest heaving as she watched it shatter alongside the vase. She threw things one after another; pillows flew across the room, clothes followed, and other objects landed in a messy heap on the floor. All the while screaming like a banshee, and soon the room was a chaos of shards of glass, scattered debris, and clothing, mirroring the turmoil in her mind.

"How dare he?" she screamed, pacing in circles. Her nails dug into her hair as she replayed the argument with Hunter in her head. How could he

treat her like that after everything? Cutting off her credit card? Telling her she was a burden, a waste? She laughed bitterly, the sound more like a shriek. And all that because of her? Because of Estelle. Her nails now dug into her palm as she paced.

That woman was ruining everything—every little thing—for her. Even after she was gone from his life, Estelle still showed her power. It was evident when Carla found the unsigned divorce papers.

“Unsigned!” she screamed.

A fresh wave of anger surged through her, and she picked up a perfume bottle from her dressing table, hurling it at the mirror. It struck the glass with a deafening crash, shards flying everywhere. Her chest heaved with rage as she stared at her reflection, now distorted in the broken mirror.

Hunter was supposed to be hers—hers alone. That’s what she believed when he chose her over Estelle, but it had all been a pretence. He didn’t actually want her; he had made a fool of her in her own game. Just like before, he chose Estelle and was ready to toss Carla away like trash. But no, no, no. She wouldn’t allow that. She would never let him discard her again, especially now that she had tasted wealth.

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Her phone buzzed from her bed, pulling her out of her rage. For a moment, she ignored it, but the insistent vibration continued, demanding her attention. With a huff, she grabbed it, her thumb swiping the screen aggressively. Her eyes

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narrowed as she read the message, but then her lips curled into a dangerous, satisfied smile.

*How could she have forgotten?*

Her heart raced with a new type of excitement as she read the message from the man on the other end: "What do you want me to do with the woman? Also, the balance is still owed."



The woman. Estelle.

She hadn't really thought about what to do with Estelle when she had her abducted. It was an impulsive action fueled by anger. But now, the thought of Estelle being gone for good sent a rush of exhilaration through her veins. She could almost picture it—no more competition, no more obstacles. If Estelle disappeared without a trace, Hunter would have no reason to look back. He would be hers. Forever.

Carla's fingers flew over the keyboard as she typed her reply, grinning. "I'll balance up. But I've had a change of heart." She paused, biting her lip, and then with a shrug, continued typing: "I want you to get rid of her. No trace—nothing that can lead back to me. Make sure she's gone. For good."

She hit send, her pulse quickening with the finality of her decision. It felt right. Estelle's disappearance would finally free Hunter, and he would see that Carla was the only one for him. They could have the perfect family—just her, Hunter, and Mara. It was a simple equation: if Estelle was out of the picture, everything would fall into place, just as planned.

But the response she received drowned her excitement: "The price to kill is different. A lot

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higher. I'll need a bigger amount."

Carla's mouth fell open, a wave of anger washing over her as her eyes scanned the numbers the abductor demanded. "Lowly bastard," she growled. How could he ask for more when she had already given him such a large sum to kidnap Estelle? "That's why you shouldn't hire a dirty lowlife for a job. Those bastards are greedy and ungrateful," she muttered, sounding more like a groan.

The price was huge, too much, but she needed this done. Her stomach clenched as she paced the room, her lower lip caught between her teeth. What would she do? How would she come up with that amount? Should she back out? No, she couldn't. She couldn't back out now, not when she was so close.

"Fine, I'll get the money. Just do it quickly," she typed angrily, her lip thinned in distaste. Her thumb hovered over the screen for a second before pressing send.

The response came back instantly: "Pay up by morning. No money, no deal."

"Bloody bastard," Carla yelled in frustration, her chest heaving as if she had run a marathon. How



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was she supposed to manage, not when Hunter had stripped her access to her own money? He had ruined everything by making her feel powerless and trapped.

"Damn it, Hunter!" Her frustration heightened, and she kicked the dresser, barely registering the pain in her toe through her anger.

Her thoughts raced, trying to find a solution to the mess she had created. She paced again, frantic now, cursing Hunter under her breath. If only he had stayed blind, sweet, and coercive as he had been, then things would have been as easy as pie.

Her phone beeped again. Carla's eyes snapped to the screen, a frown creasing her brow as she wondered what else the abductor wanted. But the message on her screen made her heart stop, her body freezing as a chill ran down her spine. It was a message from an unknown number, but one she recognized all too well:

"I hope Estelle's disappearance wasn't your doing."

Had she been found out?

Fear gripped her, and she swallowed hard, her fingers fumbling with the phone as she stared at the words. No, that couldn't be possible. She had been careful. She had played her game discreetly

to avoid being caught. But what if she had slipped? No, no. She shook her head. She needed to stay calm or she might get caught for real. She couldn't afford to slip up now—not when everything was so close to being perfect.

But then, what was wrong with what she did? Why was she even scared?

A flicker of defiance crept in through her fear. She hadn't done anything wrong here. The plan had been working perfectly. She was just... tweaking it. That's all. It was a necessary action, one she had to complete because Estelle had been a nuisance, a constant reminder of everything Carla wasn't. But with her gone, things would finally change and work perfectly for her.

"No," she replied simply. But her hands trembled as she pressed send.

She tossed the phone onto the bed, her mind buzzing with too many thoughts at once. *Was she doing the right thing?* Her heart hammered with fear, but the feeling disappeared as quickly as it came. *Why should she feel pity?* Estelle had been a threat to everything she wanted, and now, she had a way to eliminate that threat once and for all. She was doing what was best for her, and she would follow through no matter the cost—even if it



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meant paying that man every last cent she had.

However, if she was going to do this, she had to be smart about it. She couldn't let anyone connect the dots back to her. Estelle's disappearance had to look like an accident, a tragic turn of fate that had nothing to do with her.

With newfound determination, she sat on the edge of her bed, feeling satisfied with her choices.



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