

Rewriting Life Chapter 31 – 40

Chapter 31

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The tennis club's registration ended, and the preliminary list was posted online along with try out date.

Willow, feeling confident, logged in to check the list with her friends.

But the moment she **saw** the first name on the list, her face fell.

She thought, her grip lightening. I tore up Eliana's form... there's no way she should still be on the list after the initial screening!

"Of all people. Eliana made it?" one of her friends scoffed.

Willow clenched her fists under the table, her expression tight. Eliana always has good luck," she said coolly. "Remember last time during boot camp when Landon, the tennis club's president, spoke to her? They must be pretty close

Her friends exchanged knowing glances.

One of them chuckled. 'Landon? **Isn't** he the notorious player who's had a string of girlfriends? You think he's interested in

Eliana:

"Wow, now that you mention it, she does fit his type—tall, aloof another girl chimed in.

"Gross!" another chimed in, disgust curling her lips. "If she's using that kind of connection to get ahead, I'm sick to my stomach. Eliana's got no shame!"

The gossip spread like wildfire.

Soon, everyone in the performing arts department was **talking** about Eliana and her supposed "affair" with Landon.

Whispers hinted she was the reason Landon had broken up with his previous girlfriend, accusing **her** of being the other

woman

Eliana ignored Red Riding Hood for five days.

When she finally hacked into Red Riding Hood's computer again, she **found** the text she'd left untouched.

But this time, there was a reply underneath: [Who are **you**? **Are** you Six Noir?]

Eliana's alias on the dark web is Six Noir.

Eliana smirked. 'So Red Riding Hood isn't completely clueless.

It's unclear how Red Riding Hood has been faring during the days **she's** been ignoring him.

She typed a series of **numbers**, separated by a period, and left a smiley face emoji at the end.

With a few quick keystrokes, she covered her tracks and exited.

Meanwhile, in Isonstead University's cafeteria, a **man** with long, unkempt hair slouched over his laptop, eating as he anxiously opened the file.

The moment he saw the numbers Eliana left, his face paled. It was his current IP address. She had found him.

If she wanted, she **could** show up at his **door**.

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The emoji taunted him a challenge in disguise: **You're** exposed, but if you have the guts, try to find me.1

Hands shaking, Jaerod Geert typed many words, then hesitated

Deleting everything, he left only a single line: Why me?]

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The weekend arrived, and Eliana set out early.

Her bag, with Lunchie **ticked** safely inside, bounced lightly against her side as the driver took her to Cedar Manor.

She stepped out of the car and took in the grand entrance of the luxurious apartment complex.

She **was** here to view her house—and to meet Willow, who **had** invited her.

The housekeeper, Ophelia Merritt, knew Eliana was coming and made a special trip down to the lobby to escort her upstairs.

Just **as Eliana** was waiting for **Ophelia** and the elevator, **Willow** and her three **entourage** happened to arrive as well.

“Oh, **Eliana!** Didn’t expect you to be here so early, one of Willow’s friends called out loudly, drawing attention.

Eliana turned slowly, her cool gaze meeting theirs.

It surprised her that Willow’s apartment was in the same building as hers.

I thought you didn’t want to come, yet here you are. So eagerly another one taunted. “Why not use **the** elevator?”

“She doesn’t have **the** access code or fingerprint, **obviously,**” the first girl said with a sneer. “No point in waiting.”

At Cedar Manor, access **to** each floor requires either a password or a fingerprint to use the elevator.

They weren’t wrong—Eliana came here for the first time and didn’t have fingerprint access yet, so her housekeeper was coming to help her.

Willow’s face lit up with a fake smile as she stepped closer. “Eliana, you should’ve called me if you **were** coming so early. We could’ve carpooled!”

“I was in the **back** of **a** stretch Rolls–Royce today—so spacious and luxurious!” one of Willow’s friends said.

Hearing their compliments, Willow couldn’t help but feel pleased. She raised her hand and placed it on Eliana’s shoulder, saying, “You don’t have to put on **a brave** face. You have my number, you can **always** call me...”

Eliana said nothing, but Lunchie’s fluffy head popped out of her bag, catching Willow’s attention.

Lunchie let out a yip.

Willow gasped, stumbling back in terror. "What is that?"

Willow's fear was obvious—her wide eyes and rigid stance betrayed her. She had always been afraid of dogs, ever since one chased her when she was younger.

The three people behind Willow quickly supported her **as** she stumbled slightly.

Their eyes shifted to Eliana's shoulder bag, and they immediately spotted a scruffy cub head peeking out from **inside**.

te do you have, **Eliana**, to

"God, **that** dog is hideous!" **someone** sneered, wrinkling their nose. "A mutt, right? What kind of taste do you carry around such an ugly thing?"

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"Yealy And in your bag of all places! It nearly **gave** us a heart attack another chimed in.

Lunchie tilted his head, his eyes narrowing as if he understood every word.

His fur bristled, and he barked sharply as if protesting their insults.

Stop barking." Eliana murmured, scratching his ears.

Willow steadied herself, her eyes narrowing with **malice** as she glared at Eliana.

That bitch must've brought the dog to scare me on purpose! she thought, her heart still pounding. Luckily, I reacted quickly enough—otherwise, I could've been bitten!

"Eliana, you know I'm terrified of dogs! Did you bring that thingust to mess with me?" she asked.

Eliana was surprised by her words.

Suddenly, a memory surfaced—Roman had once owned a Golden Retriever.

The dog had been gentle, and Eliana had petted it often.

But after Willow started dating Roman, the dog died unexpectedly, supposedly from eating something toxic.

Everyone had dismissed it as a tragic accident, but now Eliana had her doubts.

She really vicious, **Eliana** thought.

Her eyes narrowed as she stared at Willow, her voice dropping to a dangerous calm. “L unchie only barks at people he doesn’t like. If you come any closer, I can’t guarantee he won’t bite.”

Willow went pale, retreating a step.

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One of her friends leaped to Willow’s defense. ‘Eliana, you’re horrible! Willow’s scared o f dogs, and you bring one to her home?’

“Yeah, it’s outrageous! You’re vicious, Eliana. Willow, don’t let her into your apartment!” another girl shouted.

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“She should have never been invited here one of the girls declared with a huff.

The three of them. self-appointed defenders of Willow, surrounded her protectively.

Elana barely suppressed a **laugh** at their indignation. “Seriously get it straight,’ she said , crossing her arms with a smirk, When did I ever say I wanted to join you?”

The words were barely out of her mouth when the trio jumped at the chance to ridicule h er.

“If you’re not here for Willow, then why did you come to Cedar Manor one of them asked , raising an eyebrow

“Seriously, did you actually think you could own a place in Cedar Manor? Keep dreamin g!” another sneered, crossing their

“Yeah” a third chimed in, pulling out their phone. “I checked online– the occupancy rate is ninety– nine percent! Willow rented the last available unit. The only vacant space left is the top– floor penthouse.”

They all looked at her with a mocking smile. “Are you going to claim you own the penthouse?” the first one added, clearly amused. “Please, if you’re going to lie, at least do your homework!”

At Cedar Manor, the higher the floor, the higher the price, and the penthouse was worth several times more than the **regular**

apartments.

Willow had tried to rent it herself, but it was too expensive, and even availability was an issue.

There's no way Eliana managed to get a hold of that penthouse when I couldn't, Willow thought smugly.

With a knowing smile, she leaned forward. "Eliana, don't push yourself too hard. I don't mind. Just throw away that dog in your bag, and you can still **come** inside my apartment. In fact, if you want, you could even stay with me."

To the other three women, it seemed like an easy choice—throwing away that scruffy dog for a chance to **live** in luxury.

But Eliana chuckled and shook her head.

"Forget this apartment," she said, her voice dripping with disdain "Even if you offered me every unit in Cedar Manor, I wouldn't give up Lunchie."

She glanced at their stunned faces, eyes narrowing, "Maybe you should just check your eyes out Lunchie isn't a mutt—he's a Kenai Peninsula wolf"

Her words hung in the air, the implications twisting around their minds.

They exchanged skeptical looks.

"

She's lying. **No way that's** a wolf pup, they thought.

Willow replied. "Eliana, it's a mutt. Stop trying to fool us. The elevator's coming—just get rid of it

Eliana sighed. She wondered if Willow could even understand plain English.

There was no point arguing **any** further.

The elevator dinged, and the **doors** slid open. A middle-aged woman in a crisp black uniform stepped out, her gaze landing

on the group

She offered Eliana a respectful nod. “Miss **Davis**”

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The others froze, confined.

Eliana’s tone softened. “Ophelia Merritt?”

“Yes, Miss Ophelia replied with a slight how.

Willow and her friends exchanged puzzled glances, still trying to purce together what wa
s happening.

“Miss Davis, after you. **Ophelia** said, gesturing to the open elevator.

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Eliana stepped inside, and Ophelia turned to the others, her professional smile never w
aving. “Aren’t you coming?”

Slowly, they shuffled inside.

Ophelia pressed the button for the top floor and then glanced at the **group**. “You haven’
t selected **your** floor yet.”

Willow awkwardly jabbed the button for the twenty–first floor–
ust one level below the penthouse.

The atmosphere in the elevator turned tense as it climbed upward

Eliana’s phone buzzed with group messages–
Thomas and his friends were curious about Eliana’s appearance at Cedar Manor

Eliana casually typed out replies, barely sparing the others **a** glance.

Lunchie peeked out from her bag, baring **his** tiny fangs in a mock growl.

Willow and the others hadn’t expected **Eliana** to go to the penthouse floor.

No way! they thought.

When the **doors** opened on the twenty-first floor, Willow hesitated, **staring** at the open doors.

Eliana, unbothered, continued tapping away on her phone.

Finally, Willow stepped out, leaving Eliana behind. Before the doors closed, she blurted out a question to Ophelia. "Is she... is she really living on the twenty-second floor?"

Ophelia blinked, surprised by the question. "I'm sorry. Miss, what do you mean?"

"She's my sister, Willow stammered. "I don't understand—she couldn't possibly afford the penthouse. What's going on?" "You're her sister?" Ophelia asked, raising an eyebrow. "I think you must be mistaken."

Just then, Eliana finished her messages and tucked her phone away. **She** shot a cold glare at Willow, who paled under the intensity of her gaze.

"Eliana's in our class, one of them said. "There's no way we're wrong. She's just a regular person—there's no way she **could** rent the penthouse!"

Ophelia's professional mask cracked, a hint of annoyance creeping in. "I'm afraid it's you who are mistaken. Rent? The penthouse is never up for rent"

She pressed the button, and the elevator doors slid shut, cutting off their protests.

Willow's mind raced. Not rented... then bought? That's impossible!

Buying the penthouse was a financial feat out of reach for even Willow.

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Renting had been an option Willow barely managed to afford, buying was a different level entirely.

Watching the elevator disappear, Willow's face twisted in frustration. Nothing about this made sense.

"What's going on?" one **of** the other **women** asked hesitantly.

"I

Willow forced a smile. I have no idea. Let's just go **inside**. I'll ask Eliana later."

As they stepped into Willow's sleek, spacious apartment, one woman piped up, "Willow, you don't **think** Eliana tricked your parents into giving her money, do you? I mean, how else could she rent that place? How vicious!"

Willow knew better.

Ever since Eliana had left the Garcia family, their parents had cut her off completely.

There was no chance she'd managed to get a single cent from them, much less enough to rent a luxury apartment.

That manipulative brat must have found another way, she fumed silently.

"By the way," another friend mused, glancing wistfully upward, "living in Cedar Manor's penthouse would make you part of Dratora City's elite. I'd love to see that rooftop garden."

The eager tone matched the earlier flattery they'd lavished on Willow, but now it only grated on Willow's nerves.

Willow shot the speaker a withering look.

The girl immediately backtracked. "Of course, Willow, you're way better than Eliana. She's so vicious!"

Willow's smile didn't reach her eyes as she scanned her fingerprint to open the door.

Her friends eagerly rushed inside, gawking at the elegant interior

Upstairs. Eliana entered her penthouse with Ophelia, setting Lunchie down to explore.

The light streaming through the massive **floor-to-ceiling** windows illuminated the luxurious decor, the space exuding understated elegance.

Lunchie's paws padded excitedly on the hardwood floor as he darted into the sun-drenched living room.

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The rooftop garden of Cedar Manor was renowned throughout Dratora City for its beauty and serenity.

Eliana had taken a leisurely stroll around the loft, sunlight glinting off the glass and casting shadows over the artistic wall hangings.

The light filtered through, highlighting the plants, flowers, and creeping vines around the elegant arches.

It all looked like a dream scene from a movie

Ophelia, the ever-attentive housekeeper, **stepped** up the stairs and approached Eliana with a respectful smile. “**Miss**, would you like something to drink?”

Eliana turned slightly. Tee drinks, please. Thomas and the others will be over soon.

“Right **away**” Ophelia replied and headed back downstairs.

Eliana took another look around the loft, appreciating its charm. On her way down, she noticed **Lunchie**, the tiny puppy, struggling to climb the steps.

She paused at the top, watching him.

Lunchie **was** completely dwarfed by the shadow of Eliana as its round, curious eyes locked onto hers.

Lunchie let out a playful yip.

Eliana chuckled and bent down, grabbing Lunchie gently by the scruff of his neck. “You with your short little legs, these stairs are still too much for you. Maybe in another couple of weeks.”

A short while later. Thomas and the others arrived.

As they entered the apartment, Eliana settled **onto** the sofa, holding Lunchie, and gave them a playful look. “Drinks are ready, come sit!”

Thomas looked around, eyes widening as he admired the decor. “The more I see of this place, the more I like it. I should’ve gotten a unit here back when Cameron did.”

Landon teased him, “Yeah, with what money?”

Eliana, who had placed Lunchie down on the rug, turned toward them with a curious expression. “Does Cameron live here

Adam, standing by the window, **pointed** across at the opposite building. “He’s just across from you, on the top floor.” Eliana **paused**, walking to the window to take a closer look.

“He’s in the building across. Well, what a coincidence,” Thomas teased.

Cedar Manor had seven buildings, each with a single rooftop penthouse. The pre-launch buzz around the rooftop gardens had been intense, with prices soaring for those coveted spots.

Yet, before the official opening, all the penthouse units had been snatched up by private buyers, leaving no chance for the general market.

“You mean... we’re directly facing each other? What a coincidence Eliana murmured.

She glanced at Cameron, only to meet his gaze, which held a playful smile.

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His gaze was intense, and Eliana felt a flutter in her chest before quickly looking away.

After a short pause, Ophelia entered, setting down cold drinks and a plate of light **snacks**.

Sitting on the couch, Thomas casually suggested. “Why don’t we head over to Cameron’s place? There’s not much to do here. and we can’t just sit around and be bored out of our minds.

Landon agreed, nodding enthusiastically. “Yeah, this place **is all** about the aesthetics—there’s not even a projector here to play games on

Eliana picked up Lunchie without hesitation, her decision made. “Sure, let’s go. I’m curious to see his place too

The group got up and made their way to the door.

Meanwhile, downstairs in Willow’s apartment, the girls were deep in conversation, focusing on Eliana.

“Is it true that the penthouse is hers?” one of the girls asked, eyes wide in disbelief.

“Impossible. There’s no way she could afford it. She must be faking it,” Willow’s friend replied dismissively.

One of them turned to Willow. “Willow, did your parents buy that apartment for Eliana?”

Willow sighed, trying to **mask** her discomfort. “No, I don’t think so. My parents haven’t considered buying property in Drajóra City. They have plenty of homes in Avragow; there’s no need to invest here.”

“Exactly! If **Willow**, their real daughter, doesn’t get a **place** here, why would Eliana, who isn’t even their biological child, get. one? It’s all for show,” the first girl agreed

Forget her, one of the girls said with a dismissive wave. “Willow let’s go down and grab some snacks. You don’t have **much** here”

Willow shrugged and agreed easily. “Sure, let’s go.”

They waited for the elevator, but to their surprise, it arrived with Eliana, Cameron, and his friends **inside**.

Eliana gave them a cool glance before looking away.

Meanwhile, Willow and the others were left speechless, staring in **shock** as the doors closed without them.

The moment the elevator descended, the girls erupted into gossips

“Oh my god!” one of the girls gasped, clutching her phone tightly, “Why was Eliana with Cameron and the others

“T get it now!” another chimed in, lowering her voice with a conspiratorial tone. “There were rumors at school about her dating Landon. That penthouse must belong to him, not her.”

“That has to be it a third girl said with a scoff, crossing her **arm** Landon’s known **for** switching girlfriends constantly. Eliana’s probably just another fling. **So trashy**

I thought those were just rumors, the first girl muttered, her lips curling in disgust, “but it’s all true. How disgusting. I can’t stand women who act like that,”

Willow’s eyes sparkled as a malicious **idea** took hold. She leaned in, her voice a low whisper. “You shouldn’t say things like that. After all, if she’s been bringing multiple guys home, it wouldn’t be good for her reputation if word got out,

“I thought she had changed. But it looks like she’s the same even after coming to Drator a City. Back when we were in Avragow, our parents repeatedly warned her to change her flirtatious behavior. But instead of listening, she’s only gotten

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worse since she moved to Dratera City“

Willow pretended to be worried about Eliana.

The other girls looked stunned at Willow’s suggestion, their eyes wide with surprise,

They exchanged shocked looks, hanging onto every scandalous detail with eager anticipation.

Eliana followed Cameron **and** the others into his apartment.

The **space was** filled with high–tech **features**, every corner showcasing sleek, modern design.

Everything was automated, and even a simple command would summon a tiny robot carrying what was needed.

Lunchie chased the little robot around with uncontrollable excitement.

Eliana joined them in the **game** room, picking up a controller. The massive 5D projector screen enveloped the room in a futuristic glow, fully immersing them in the virtual experience.

It was easy to see why Thomas had said Cameron’s **place** was far more entertaining—the renovations alone probably cost

close to a million dollars.

It was clear that Cameron viewed the place as a playground rather than a home.

Curious, Eliana looked up and asked, “So, where does Cameron stay most of the time?”

Thomas grinned. ‘Oh, he lives with **his** family, of course. Haven’t you heard of the Wright estate here in Dratora city?’

The Wright estate in Dratora City is the largest manor in the area, with significant historical value.

The Wrights even sold off a few smaller buildings they didn’t bother to maintain, and those later became popular tourist attractions in Dratora City.

It goes to show just how influential the Wright family is—wealth **power**, and status, they have it all.

Cameron was born with every advantage.

Eliana thought for a moment, and suddenly, everything clicked into place. “Wait, do you mean the historic manor near Willowdale The Brookstone Manor?”

“Exactly.” Thomas confirmed.

Eliana remembered filming near Brookstone Manor in the previous life.

The antique–
style cottages had left a strong impression, especially a cozy lakeside cabin she’d loved

Thomas continued, “Those cottages were originally part of the Wright **estate**, but they didn’t want to spend money on the upkeep. Landon’s family took over and fixed them up. They’re planning to use them as a film set soon, but it’s still under

construction.”

Eliana pieced it together, **Brookstone** Manor belonged to Mitchell Studios, Landon’s family’s company. “I see. The location’s not bad. Why didn’t the Wrights want to keep it?”

Thomas chuckled. “You’ll have to ask Cameron for the details. I have no idea.

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Cameron walked over, carrying a few cans of beer.

Thomas noticed and grabbed one with a nod of thanks. Appreciate it, Cameron.”

You showed up at just the right time, Thomas said. “Eliana has a question for you.”

Cameron asked, passing a bottle of milk to Eliana, “**What’s** on your mind?”

Eliana gave a light smile and asked. “Why aren’t you interested in Brookstone Manor? The location is perfect. It would be great for a summer getaway.”

Cameron settled in next to her, “How about I take you to my place next time?”

Eliana blinked in surprise, thrown off by the sudden invitation.

Cameron’s lips curved into a faint smile as he took a sip of beer “Once you’ve visited, you’ll understand.”

Before Eliana could respond. Thomas jumped in eagerly. “That a great idea! We should take the chance to visit Cameron’s place while we can

He called out to Landon and **Adam**, who were nearby. “Hey, we’re heading to Cameron’s next week!”

The two quickly agreed, clearly excited.

Eliana, a little puzzled by their enthusiasm, wondered what made Cameron’s home so special. Seeing their reaction, she decided it must be worth the trip.

“Alright, let’s go after the tennis club assessments are over, Eliar added.

The weekend ended, but the rumors about Eliana and Landon spread even faster **than** the week before.

As Eliana walked to class, she noticed many students whispering behind her back

Willow’s trio didn’t disappoint; they eagerly spread gossip about Eliana’s supposed reputation as a flirt

Willow, for her part, couldn’t hide her smirk.

Eliana walked into the classroom, finding that only Stella was willing to sit with her.

“Eliana, there’s a big problem,” Stella whispered urgently.

“What is it?” Eliana asked calmly as she pulled out her laptop.

Stella lowered her voice further. “Someone’s been spreading rumors that you’re a gold digger. They’re saying you only joined the tennis club to chase after wealthy guys.

The details are really explicit, and everyone’s talking about it now, didn’t you notice **just** now?”

Eliana paused for a moment, then raised an eyebrow. “And how’s that different from before? I’m used to it.”

“No, this time it’s worse,” Stella insisted, worried. The rumors are coming from someone who supposedly knows your background. They even have multiple witnesses.

Eliana instantly knew who was behind it—Willow and her cronies.

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They must have seen Eliana with Cameron and the others over the weekend at Cerlar Manor, sparking the new wave of

Eliana had anticipated this. In her previous life, Willow had used the same tricks to run her reputation.

Back then, Eliana had been frantic, desperately trying to explain herself, which was in vain.

But now she wouldn't bother.

If they had wanted to gossip, she might as well have gone all in and made the gossip true.

At lunchtime. Eliana boldly invited Cameron and his friends to eat in the busiest area of the cafeteria.

Although they rarely dined there, they agreed at her request.

Why the sudden decision to eat here, Eliana?" Thomas asked, puzzled. "We could have gone somewhere quieter.

The four of them were too well-known at school, and with it being the lunchtime rush, many passing students cast curious glances in their direction.

Eliana continued to eat her meal slowly, then said, "Just think of it as doing me a **favor**. I know you all don't usually like eating in the cafeteria.

Landon raised an eyebrow. "**What** kind of favor?"

Eliana glanced at the cafeteria entrance, catching sight of Willow and her group. She straightened her posture and, in a surprising move, playfully ruffled Landon's **hair**.

Everyone froze. Landon, stunned, barely managed to speak. "Eliana, what are you doing?"

Without missing a beat, Eliana spooned some soup and offered it to him with a bright smile, "Just drink this, **okay**"

"W-what?" Landon stammered.

From across the table, Cameron's eyes locked onto Landon, sending a cold shiver down Landon's spine.

"Don't mess with me, Eliana. What's with the soup?" Landon pleaded

Just do it. Consider it a **favor**,” **Eliana said**, her tone gentle but firm

Landon hesitated for a moment, unsure of what was going on. But seeing the urgency in Eliana’s expression, he cautiously took a sip.

Eliana’s gaze darted back to Willow, who looked absolutely shocked, their expressions a mix of disgust and vindication.

“Good,” Eliana said with a satisfied smile.

“What’s going on, Eliana?” Thomas asked, confused.

“Some people in the drama department are spreading rumors that I’m a flirt, Eliana replied **with** a shrug.

“What? Who’s spreading that nonsense? I’ll make them regret it. Thomas said fiercely.

Eliana waved it off. Let them talk. If they’re so determined, why not play along? As of today, I’m the flirt they say I am

In the crowded cafeteria, many watched with envy **as** Eliana sat with the most sought-after guys from the computer science department, intensifying the gossip,

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The rumors were a mix of admiration and jealousy.

Cameron frowned slightly. “Don’t **talk** about yourself that **way**.”

Adam raised an eyebrow. “But why did you only make Landon drink the soup?”

“Because they’re claiming I’m Landon’s plaything.” Eliana explained nonchalantly.

“What?” The three men’s gazes simultaneously zeroed in on Landon, who straightened up like he’d been caught doing something terrible. He waved his hands frantically.

“No, no, no! Who’s saying that? I swear, I’d never—I didn’t do anything!” Landon exclaimed.

Given his reputation as a serial dater, it wasn't a surprise the rumors targeted him **and Eliana**.

Thomas, protective of Eliana, shot Landon a dangerous look. "Landon, if you want be with my sister, you'll regret it," he warned.

"Honestly, I didn't do anything," Landon said, sounding almost tearful.

He turned to Cameron with a pleading expression. "Cameron, you know I wouldn't. I'd never cross that line."

The four of them were **aware of** Cameron's special regard for Eliana. As close friends, there were boundaries they all respected.

Landon had only ever seen Eliana as a sister, so the accusations left him bewildered.

Adam's expression turned serious. "It doesn't matter what you did or didn't do. It's about what people believe."

"Why am I getting dragged into this?" Landon muttered, frustrated.

Eliana kept eating, unfazed. "It's probably because I joined the tennis club. Don't worry about it. I'll handle this myself."

Cameron remained silent, taking a sip of water.

The other three exchanged glances, knowing that their involvement would depend on Cameron's decision.

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Words quickly spread through the department that Eliana had fed Landon some soup.

With plenty of people crushing on Landon, Eliana soon found

herself the target of his most devoted fans.

After class, Hana headed to the restroom.

A group of girls exchanged looks before quietly trailing behind her.

Just before entering, Eliana **quickened** her pace **and** nudged a comer. The sudden move caught the girls off guard, but they followed and watched as the stall door closed.

Without hesitating they blocked the door with a mop handle and dumped a bucket of water over the top

A shriek echoed from **inside**. “Who’s there? A woman’s voice called out in a panic.

spenticat

The girls burst to laughter outside the stall, one of them taunting. “Eliana, you’d better stay away from Landon, or you can kiss your student life goodbye”

“Exactly” A trashy girl like you has no shot with him. Don’t think that just because you’re kind of pretty, you’re special. Landon’s exes were all way **more** attractive than you, another girl chimed **in**, gesturing animatedly.

Not to mention wealthier. Who do you think you are, some fake rich girl?” A third girl chuckled, crossing her arms as she joined the conversation.

Suddenly, Eliana’s voice came from behind them, and she clapped her hands. “Well done. Impressive performance.”

The girls whipped around, shocked to see Eliana standing behind them, her expression calm and composed. “Eliana! How... how are you here?” one stammered. “Weren’t you inside?”

Eliana folded her arms across her chest, her face perfectly serene. “Did you actually see me go in?”

The girls froze, stunned into silence.

“So who is in there?” one of them asked.

One of them slowly removed the mop handle, opening the door to reveal the drenched young dance instructor glaring at them. “I won’t forget this,” she **said**, her anger unmistakable.

“Sorry! We’re so sorry, Miss,” the girls immediately pleaded, apologizing profusely.

Eliana chuckled softly and walked out of the restroom without looking back

The tennis club trials drew a large crowd.

The court buzzed with energy as hopefuls lined up, numbers in **hand**.

To advance, they needed to win a four-on-four **match**.

Stella was lucky enough to be paired with Eliana.

She turned to Eliana and asked, "How's your tennis game?"

Eliana gave a light smile and bounced a tennis ball in her palm. Oh, **I'm** alright. Just **average**."

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Stella grinned, confident No worries. I've got you covered. I'm pretty good."

Ehana raised an eyebrow. "Really

Stella waved her racket proudly. "I played in a city tournament before. Our team won the group **championship**."

Meanwhile, Willow, surrounded by a group of friends, spotted Eliana preparing for the trials. Her eyes narrowed with determination—Elana had to be eliminated in the first **round**.

Willow had already bribed the trial organizer to pit Eliana against strong opponents,

Knowing Eliana's limited skills, she was certain Eliana wouldn't stand a chance.

One of Willow's friends pointed and snickered, "Look at Eliana's outfit—she doesn't even know how to dress for a tennis

match

Yeah, what's she thinking? Trying to catch the eye of some senior in the tennis club?" another girl scoffed.

Probably She's such a flirt, the first girl echoed.

Most of the girls at the tryouts wore proper tennis gear: sporty clothes and sneakers.

Willow herself had on a professional tennis skirt, showing off her long, toned legs, attracting the attention of many onlookers.

In contrast, Eliana hadn't changed out of her casual classroom attire, a comfortable outfit that **covered** her fully.

Willow laughed, "Oh, don't be so harsh. Maybe my dear sister has some hidden talent.

Willow, you're kidding, right? Her, talented?" The group cackled and continued to belittle Eliana.

Willow was satisfied to **hear** others belittle Eliana

Stella and Eliana approached the organizer to draw their opponents. The senior in charge **handed** them a slip with a number. "Your opponents are over there," he **said**, pointing to two **tall** freshmen guys.

Stella frowned. "Why are we playing against boys? We're both girl!"

The senior shot them an indifferent glance. "The trials are co-ed. Didn't you notice the mixed pairs over there? It's just your

bad luck."

Stella's face hardened. Something felt off—pairing two girls against guys was highly unusual unless they were exceptionally unlucky.

Just as she opened her mouth to argue, he cut her off, "Are you playing or not? If not, feel free to withdraw. We don't **have** time for whining

Stella went silent, her jaw tight with frustration.

Eliana glanced at his name tag: **Caius** Faulkner. She committed it to memory.

"We're playing," she **said**, giving Stella's shoulder a reassuring pat. "If this is our draw, then let's go for it."

As they walked away, Stella muttered angrily, "This feels like a setup. It's so **unfair.**"

A burst of laughter echoed from across the court. Eliana looked over to see Willow and her group, laughing among themselves.

Eliana understood **immediately**—this had Willow's fingerprints all over it.

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“Don’t worry.” Eliana said, “if we get eliminated early, we’ll just save ourselves some time. The next rounds are all about skill anyway, and eventually, we’d face strong opponents.”

Stella nodded, sighing. True. There’s no shame in losing to someone better.”

The match began, and both teams stepped onto the court.

The crowd’s attention shifted as Eliana and Stella took their positions. Even Willow’s group fell **silent**, eyes glued to the

COUT

Though Eliana’s outfit was simple, she was undeniably beautiful. The official event photographer captured every moment, planning to edit the footage into short clips later.

Eliana’s delicate features held up even under the high-definition camera, her face soon appearing on the court’s big screen, drawing murmurs **from** the crowd.

“Wow, she’s stunning. Is she in the drama department?” someone asked.

“Yeah, their department’s always full of beauties—future stars, you know.” A man leaned in, voice low but excited.

True, but she’s something special. What’s her name?” another man asked.

Seated in the front row, Willow’s smile vanished as **she** listened to the whispers.

Jealousy gnawed at her—Eliana always stole the spotlight.

She wished nothing more than to ruin Eliana’s flawless face.

She’d nearly succeeded once, when Eliana narrowly avoided using a tainted sunscreen.

Next time, Willow vowed, she’d make sure Eliana wasn’t so lucky

As the match continued, Roman entered through a side entrance with several student council members.

He paused, catching sight of Eliana’s focused expression on the court. Every time he saw her, she seemed to reveal **a new** side of herself.

Roman had come only **to** pick something up, but now he found himself lingering, watching Eliana play until the very end.

Chapter 36

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conversation

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“Thanks, Eliana replied with a nod

“Did that insect repellent cream 1 gave you help?” Roman asked,

Sitting next to Eliana, Stella’s eyes widened. She **was** amazed that the student **council** president was chatting with Eliana.

Stella couldn’t help but think they looked good together, even though Eliana seemed a bit distant.

“No, it didn’t help. Eliana answered flatly

Roman’s smile faltered, a flicker of disappointment crossing his face. “Why not?”

Before Eliana could respond, she noticed Willow hurrying over

A mischievous smile tugged at her lips “Why don’t you ask her?”

Roman’s brow furrowed as he turned to face Willow, who quickly composed herself and greeted him with a forced smile.

“Roman,” she said sweetly

Roman got straight **to** the point. “Did you use the repellent cream?”

Willow's expression went blank. The repellent cream?"

Stella seized the opportunity, her voice deliberately loud. "Wait So the repellent was given to Eliana? Some people are shameless. She was telling everyone on the mountain that Roman gave it to her

Stella finally found an opportunity to defeat Willow.

Her words hit like a punch, and Willow's **face** froze.

The **small** crowd that had followed her exchanged knowing glances, starting to piece together the truth.

Roman looked at Willow, puzzled. "I gave it to you? I didn't."

Willow's face flushed with embarrassment, but she didn't back down..

She turned to Eliana with an ingratiating smile. "**Eliana**, you gave me the repellent, right ? I must have misunderstood—it seemed like a gift from Roman."

Eliana arched an eyebrow. "I don't recall giving it **to** you. Didn't you just snatch it?"

Willow's complexion paled. **Eliana** couldn't care less about the repellent, but she certainly didn't mind using this chance to let Willow embarrass herself.

Willow's face paled.

Roman **glanced** at her briefly before turning to Eliana. "I have a few more bottles of water with me, he said calmly. "They're chilled—I'll give them all to **you**."

Eliana shrugged. "Sure. Stella, let's go."

"High" Stella replied cheerfully.

The trio walked away, leaving Willow seething in humiliation. Her hatred for Eliana only grew.

Once near the tennis lounge. Eliana stopped, letting Stella go inside to grab two bottles.

Feeling awkward, Stella didn't take more t

than necessary before exiting

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“Thanks Roman Stella said politely as they left

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Stella noticed Eliana's indifference toward Roman “Eliana, why do I like him? He was **kind** to us

get the feeling your dad

Eliana's gaze softened. “He is a good guy, **Stella**”

In previous life. Eliana had fallen for Roman.

But the memory of his relationship with Willow still lingered. Now, she wanted no part of him.

This time around, she **had** other priorities—things she needed to see through and places she wanted to reach that she never

had before

No matter if Roman would stay with Willow this time, it was no longer **Eliana's** concern.

“It's just... he's not my problem anymore.” Eliana **said**, her **voice** steady.

Stella pressed the cold bottle against her cheek, giggling. “Well, at least I got these thanks to you. Being your friend has its perks! Like meeting cute guys like Roman!”

“By the way, Cameron's good-looking, too,” Stella teased. “Between him and Roman, who do **you** think is more handsome?”

Eliana's step faltered for a moment. “Why are you asking me that? I don't know

Cameron and Roman couldn't be more different.

Cameron was as cold as winter pine—aloof, sharp-tongued, **and** distant.

Roman, on the other hand, was warm and courteous, never ignoring anyone he deemed unworthy.

Roman and Cameron were like the difference between an angel and a devil—there was no comparing them; each had his own unique qualities.

Stella nudged her with a grin. “Oh, come on! You must have an opinion. Spill!”

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66%)

Elana sat quietly, pondering **Roman and Cameron**—two men who couldn’t be more different. She finally broke the silence. I don’t want to choose either of them. But if I had to, I’d choose the devil,” she **said**.

In her previous life, she had chosen the angel—Roman—but his light had never reached her. She had been left wounded and scarred.

In this life, Elana decided she wanted to embrace the darkness of being with a devil meant a better life, then so be it!

She wanted to live well and ensure those around her did, too

Stella looked puzzled, not quite understanding, “What do you mean by the devil?”

Eliana just smiled faintly, leaving the question unanswered.

When they returned to the tennis court, it didn’t take long for a crowd to gather.

“Hey, look, here they are! Someone called out as a group of students closed in. “You two were amazing earlier! Have you competed **in** tennis before?”

guys **are** so talented another person **echoed**

“Yeah, that was a great game! You guys

Stella blushed. “I was just following Eli’s lead. You should ask her how she managed to catch those shots!”

Elana had no tennis experience, but to her, hitting a ball was just a matter of focus and timing.

Her background as a stunt double in her previous life, catching flying projectiles and standing still for long periods, had sharpened her reflexes far beyond the average person.

Handling a tennis ball was no great challenge for her. Before joining the tennis club, she had briefly familiarized herself **with** the rules—enough to get by.

With a humble smile, Eliana said, “Honestly, I’m not that **good**. just got lucky”

Their impressive performance had clearly cemented their reputation. It was obvious to everyone watching that Eliana and, Stella were prime candidates for the tennis club, sure to make waves as the season progressed.

It took some effort to fend off all the enthusiastic questions before they finally managed to sit down in the bleachers **for** a break.

Behind her, some mean-spirited gossip floated through the air.

“She’s such a fake,” one girl sneered. “Pretending she doesn’t know how to play—what an act.”

“Yeah, typical. And she’s always cozying up to the upperclassmen I can’t believe she’s in our class, another voice chimed in. “She’s got to love the attention.”

A third girl agreed, “She’s always showing off. Loves it when people praise her. And don’t forget how she keeps picking on **Willow**, who’s so **kind**. It’s pathetic

Eliana remained calm, her expression blank as she scrolled through messages on her phone.

Stella, however, **couldn’t** ignore it. She shot a fierce glare over her shoulder. “Mind your own business, you gossiping hens!”

The three girls in the back were Willow’s loyal followers, standing up for her in her absence.

Vespera snapped back. “At least we don’t have a rotten heart. Hanging out with someone like that? Birds of a feather?”

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Sharryl smirked, adding, “We all saw what happened when Roman waved her over—she went running like a dog.

Charlene joined in. sneering. Obviously, Roman was there for Willow, but some people can’t help throwing themselves at any guy **with** a pulse. Now, Willow’s upset, and it’s sickening. Some people will do anything for attention”

Spring

to her feet, glaring. “What’s wrong with you three? Need a trip to the hospital? How about the psych **ward** or the gynecologist? Seriously, stop spouting garbage—it’s polluting the city’s air.”

Just as things were about to escalate, three figures appeared at the entrance to the tennis club.

It was Cameron, Thomas, and Landon.

Vespera raised her voice, undeterred. What, am I wrong? Eliana’s a fake heiress! Every one knows it. She’s always chasing after men, and now she’s targeting Roman. It’s disgusting. A total tramp.

Her loud accusation echoed across **the** tennis court, catching the attention of Cameron and his friends.

Thomas’s expression turned dark.

To the Davis **family**, Eliana was a precious treasure, and now she was being slandered in public.

If Owen found out, he’d turn the entire school upside down.

All three of them stared at Vespera, who froze under their cold gaze, a shudder of unease crawling up her spine.

What do you think you’re doing here, disrupting the tennis club’s evaluations? Landon demanded, his eyes narrowed.

Thomas was even more direct, spitting back, “Are you just raised without any manners? Watch your mouth.”

Cameron joined in. “Does Isonstead University really allow students with such poor behavior!”

Eliana remained seated, casually scrolling through her phone, one leg crossed over the other.

Vespera’s face turned pale. The **tennis** club members, sensing the brewing storm, quickly intervened and drove her out.

Her two friends, Shacryl and Charlene, stayed silent, frozen in their seats.

Everyone knew Landon was the tennis club’s president, and if he said Vespera **was** out, she was out—no need to finish the

Tryouts

And Cameron's words carried even more weight, given that his family was a major benefactor of the university-

It was no longer just a typical spat between girls. Cameron's **appearance** had changed everything. Vespera's future at the university was now uncertain.

The room buzzed with realization—
Eliana clearly had a close connection with these influential boys.

Vespera was ushered **out**, and the tryouts resumed.

Cameron, Thomas, and Landon walked up to **Eliana**.

Done with the evaluations?" Thomas asked.

Eliana nodded with a satisfied smile. "Yup. It's in the bag."

Leaning against the railing, Landon teased, "Oh yeah? I'll have to check the tape when we get back."

Cameron smiled. "If you're done, let's grab some lunch."

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Elana grabbed her bag standing up Sounds good. Let's go

"Hey, Stella, you're coming too," she added.

Stella looked surprised but pleased. Oh, okay! Suret

Shortly after, Willow returned from the restroom, only to be met with worried faces from Shaeryl and Charlene, who hurriedly recounted what had happened.

"**You're** kidding!" Willow gasped, shocked. "Cameron and the offers stood up for Eliana ? No way!"

Charlene's voice trembled. "I know, it doesn't make sense. And they kicked Vespera out ! What do we do now, Willow? I heard. the Wright family are school trustees, Il Cameron 's involved, Vespera could be expelled!"

"They wouldn't go that far for Eliana, Willow thought.

She couldn't believe Cameron would pull strings for Eliana.

Eliana had never been close to them in their previous lives. But things seemed different now,

Willow shook her head, trying to dispel the doubt clouding her thoughts. "They wouldn't expel her over Eliana. I'll make sure Vespera is okay. Don't worry, I won't let this slide"

Her confidence eased Charlene and Shaeryl's concerns.

Charlene scoffed, "I don't know what Eliana did to get **those guy** wrapped around her finger. They're completely backing

her up

Sharryl rolled her eyes. It's **obvious**, isn't it? Must be her usual tricks with guys."

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Stella followed Eliana and the group as they left the school grounds.

Waiting by the entrance was Adam who waved them **over**.

The six of them—four guys and two girls—walked together to a nearby restaurant. They booked a private room and settled down to order.

Eliana handed the menu to Stella with a smile. "Stella, why don't you **pick** something?"

Stella hesitated as she carefully accepted the menu, her eyes widening at the prices. The cheapest set meal was over a hundred dollars

For a college student like Stella, who only **had** a six-hundred-dollar monthly budget, that was way too expensive.

She gently slid the menu **back**. "El, you guys should order," Stella **said**, **her** tone tentative.

Eliana noticed Stella's embarrassment. "It's okay. You're not paying

Thomas nodded in agreement. Exactly! We invited you, so you don't have to worry about the cost. Order whatever **you**

like

Feeling reassured, Stella finally placed an order, though she chose only modest dishes.

The menu made its way around the table, each person placing their order.

As the others focused on choosing their meals, Eliana's gaze drifted across the street to a coffee shop **called** "Sunset Cafe." Memories washed over her—it was a place she had worked during her previous life. The owners, a kind older couple, had supported her dreams of becoming an actress, even offering her free meals and lodging when she was struggling.

Unfortunately, the coffee shop had gone out of business, and she had never been able to repay their kindness.

Cameron noticed her distracted gaze. "Thinking about getting coffee?" he asked, drawing her attention back to the present.

Eliana pulled her eyes away from the window and gave him a light smile. "I'd like to check out the coffee shop across the street later," she said softly.

"Sounds good," Cameron agreed. "I'll go with you."

After their meal, Stella, grateful for the chance to dine with such a prominent group, said her polite goodbyes and headed back to her dorm.

Eliana, Cameron, and the others crossed the street to the coffee shop.

Inside, the cozy coffee shop held **just a** handful of small round tables. Behind the counter, a small fussy cat figurine **waved a** paw in welcome.

Eliana walked up to the counter and gently touched the little cat, feeling a wave of nostalgia.

The sound of footsteps caught her attention, and the owner stepped out from behind a curtain. "Welcome, she greeted warmly, holding up a menu. "Order whatever you'd like."

Though **Cameron** and the others were used to luxury coffee shops with hand-ground brews, they showed no **disdain**. They ordered politely and found a cozy corner to sit.

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It

Eliana requested an iced Americano and scanned the coffee shop, absorbing every familiar detail, it was as if her memories:

When the owner lent her the coffee, the rich aroma filled the air. The group was pleasantly surprised.

They hadn't expected such high-quality beans in a small coffee shop.

Eliana's expression clearly said "I told you this place was special"

"These beans are incredible" Eliana praised, taking a sip. It was the same favor she had come to lose.

The owner smiled, clearly pleased. "We may be small, but we don't compromise on quality. We pride ourselves on great value. Come back anytime?"

Eliana drank her coffee, savoring the taste. Then, she asked casually, "Are you thinking about selling this place?"

The owner hesitated, caught off guard. "How did you know? My husband and I have been considering it. Business has been slow, and we're thinking about moving back home, but it's hard to let go. This cafe has been my dream"

Eliana scribbled her number on a piece of paper. "If you decide to sell, give me a call. I'd be interested in buying it."

Her friend exchanged surprised glances.

It seemed out of character for Eliana to **make** such a sudden decision, especially when there were plenty of better locations available.

The owner grew hesitant. "I haven't fully made up my mind."

"No rush" Eliana said gently. "**Take** your time. And if selling feels too final, we could discuss a **partnership** instead. I'd hire you both to keep running the place"

The owner was taken aback, stunned by the unexpected offer.

She truly didn't want to let go of the cafe—it had been her dream to open one, and if she hadn't been struggling so much, she would never have considered giving it up,

But she hadn't expected Eliana to not only agree to take over the café but also to offer them their old jobs back with paid salaries.

But

business here is slow, the owner admitted, **shaking** her head "We barely make a few hundred dollars each month..."

Eliana waved off her concerns. That's fine. Just think about it"

She knew more than anyone else how hard it was for the cafe to stay afloat.

In her previous life, even when business struggled, the couple had still gone out of their way to support her, hiring her when they didn't really need another employer. **Now**, it was her turn to help them.

Moreover, if the **couple** had been more dishonest, they could have easily hidden the fact that the coffee shop **wasn't** doing well. They could have tried to raise the price with Eliana.

But the owner chose not to—showing they were genuinely good people.

The owner accepted the paper with Eliana's number, and the group left the coffee shop.

Outside, Thomas waved off her concerns. "Elana, if you want a cafe, there are better **spots** with higher foot traffic. This one might never break even"

Eliana smiled, her eyes twinkling. "That's exactly why I want it's quiet, just the way I like it."

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Thomas sighed, shaking his head. "Alright, whatever makes you happy"

Cameron checked the **time**. "It's getting late. Let's **head** home?"

"Yeah, let's go Elana agreed.

Three days later, the Tennis **Club's** semi-finals rolled around.

News had already spread about Vespera's expulsion, sending shockwaves through the school.

The news stunned Charlene and Shaeryl. Even Willow seemed taken aback—she hadn't expected Cameron to back Eliana so decisively.

despera's removal served as a clear warning, curbing the malicious rumors circulating in the class.

However, the resentment from Willow only deepened.

She subtly encouraged Charlene and Shaeryl to continue spreading rumors, painting Eliana as a tyrant in the drama department who expelled anyone who dared to speak against her.

Her ploy sparked resentment for Eliana among other students.

By the time the semi-finals rolled around, Willow was desperate for help, but no one was willing to take her side.

After what had happened in the tennis courts last time, the **club** members had caught on to Eliana's close connection with their president. No one wanted **to** risk siding with Willow.

Eliana, meanwhile, sat calmly at the sidelines, sipping water. Caius, one of the judges from the initial tryouts, approached her with a smile and offered her a fresh bottle.

"Hey, Eliana. Need a drink?" he asked eagerly.

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Eliana glanced at Caius with cool indifference, saying nothing.

Cas, unfazed, turned and offered the water to Stella, hoping she'd be more approachable. "Here, Stella," he said, trying to sound casual.

Stella raised an eyebrow and gave him a mocking smile. "Oh, Calis, that's not the attitude you had yesterday. Why the sudden change of heart?"

Cas hesitated, forcing a smile. "It was all just a misunderstanding"

"Please, Stella retorted, rolling her eyes. "Save it. We don't have time for you, right?"

Just yesterday, Caius had said he had no time for their request.

Now, Stella's sharp words **had** turned the tables, giving him a taste of his own medicine.

Eliana couldn't hold **back** a chuckle.

Right then, the call came for their match.

Stella nudged Eliana. "Eli. it's our turn."

"Yeah Eliana replied, standing up.

They left the sidelines, leaving Caius awkwardly rooted in place, holding the two bottles of water.

Charlene walked up to him. "**Give** it up, Caius. Eliana doesn't care about impressing anyone like us. She used to be part of the wealthy Garcia family in Avragow—lived the high life, you know

"What? Caius looked bewildered.

"But she's just a fake, Charlene said, adding a touch of venom. Playing the part like she still belongs, even though she's nothing special."

Charlene proceeded to tell him all about Willow and **Eliana's** complicated history, emphasizing that Willow was the true heiress, while Eliana had only played the role of a wealthy daughter.

Caius's face twisted in disgust. "I knew it—just a fake socialite. Pretending to be so above it all, huh? Disgusting."

Charlene nodded. "She's got Landon and his friends wrapped around her finger. We can't afford to get involved."

Cain's gaze turned dark as he watched Eliana on the court. "**Oh**, don't **worry**, he muttered. "Landon moves on fast. **Eliana** won't last two months **with** him. And when he's done, I'll make sure she pays for disrespecting me?"

Charlene smiled, pleased by his response.

Eliana and Stella sailed through the semifinals with a solid win.

Just one more match to go in two days, and they'd earn official membership in the tennis club.

Rumor had it that Landon **was** already planning a celebratory party for the new members at the Azure Hotel.

During a break, Eliana and Stella visited their favorite spot, the Sunset Cafe.

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Stella, remembering Elinna's gesture the other day, insisted **on** treating her.

Eliana accepted, knowing Stella wouldn't let it go otherwise.

Despite the gossip circulating about Eliana's closeness with Cameron **and** his friends, Stella knew the truth.

They treated Eliana like a little sister, nothing more.

Stella wisely kept her thoughts to herself, avoiding questions that weren't hers to ask.

The finals **arrived** quickly. Eliana found herself drawing lots next to Willow, who'd managed to reach the finals by bribing her opponents to throw matches.

Using this strategy, Willow made her way smoothly to the finals and was on track to secure a spot in the tennis club. Unfortunately for **her**, she crossed paths with Eliana.

During the drawing, they picked their numbers one after the other and ended up with the exact same one.

Number 7, Eliana said casually,

Willow opened her number slip, her eyes widening in disbelief. "Number 7, she murmured, stunned.

Eliana caught the words and glanced over, seeing Willow's clenched fist around the slip of paper..

"What a coincidence." Eliana said with a smile. "You might want to wear a mask during the match—my shots don't always land where I intend"

Turning on her heel, she left Willow fuming.

Frustrated. Willow crumpled the slip of paper and threw it to the ground, her jaw clenched in anger.

She gripped her racket tightly and gave it a fierce swing, venting her irritation

She believed that Eliana's tennis skills were nothing more than a rumor.

That noon, Eliana received a text from Cameron: [Meet me at the back entrance.]

Curious, she made her way there and **found** Cameron leaning casually against his sleek sports car. Dressed in a white, tailored outfit that caught the sunlight, he looked up at her approach, his eyes glinting.

Hearing the noise, **Cameron** glanced up, his eyes meeting Eliana's steady gaze.

Eliana's eyelashes fluttered slightly before she stepped **forward**. "What happened?" she asked.

Cameron smiled and then turned and opened the front compartment of his car, pulling out a tennis racket in a sleek case.

He **handed** it to her, his **elegant** fingers contrasting sharply with the black nylon bag.

"What's **this** about?" **Eliana** asked.

"It's for you. Cameron replied.

Eliana blinked **in** surprise. "A racket?"

Cameron shut the compartment and leaned back, a lazy grin spreading across his face. "You love the pastel purple and **pink** colors, right? I had it **custom-**made. Perfect for **your** match this afternoon."

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Eliana was surprised that Cameron still remembered.

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Without hesitation, she took the tennis racket from him **and** opened the cover to inspect it. The strings were a shade of purple with a subtle pink hue, and the quality was evident at a glance,

"Is this the standard perk for every member of the tennis club?" she asked, raising an eyebrow.

Cameron chuckled, **reaching** out to tousle her **hair** playfully. "Only for **you**."

Her breath caught as she instinctively stepped back, cheeks warming. "What's with the head-patting?"

“I felt like it. Want to pat mine in return?” Cameron teased.

Rolling her eyes. Eliana chose to focus on the racket **instead**. “It’s almost too pretty to use... but thanks. I’ll keep it.”

You’d better. Cameron said, half-teasing. I’m coming to watch this afternoon. If you don’t use it, you’re in trouble.”

Eliana didn’t believe Cameron would actually follow through with anything, so she shot him a defiant look. “I don’t believe you” she said, her tone a little mocking. “Alright, I’m leaving-

Just as she turned to leave, Cameron grabbed her wrist, catching her off guard.

She stumbled, falling right into Cameron’s chest. Her neck, pale and smooth, was exposed to his gaze, and his eyes narrowed as he looked down at her. He leaned closer, voice dropping to a near-whisper, “If it doesn’t work... you’re in big trouble.”

Eliana’s breath caught as she met his intense stare.

Her heart raced as she pulled away, eyes wide. “Do you realize how that looks? If some one saw us, they’d say I was-

“Let them talk, Cameron interrupted, smirking. “I don’t care.”

‘He’s insane, she thought, feeling a thrill despite herself.

But her practical side quickly **took** over. “Fine, I’ll use it. Now let go, I’ve got to go.”

With a satisfied smile, Cameron released her wrist. “Till see you at **the** match. Don’t disappoint me.”

Eliana dashed **back** to the cafeteria without looking back, where Stella **was already** waiting for her.

Eliana sat down, taking a few **gulps** of water to steady herself.

“What’s that you’re carrying, Eli?” Stella asked with a curious smile. “Why are you in such a rush?”

Eliana’s face flushed bright **red**. “This is ridiculous,” she muttered, flustered.

Chapter 40

Eliana looked up as Stella joined her at the lunch table, smiling “What’s up?” she asked, her voice casual.

Elana shook her head quickly. "Oh, it's nothing. Are you finished eating? Let's get going if you are.

Yeah, I'm done. Let's head to **the** courts." Stella smiled, standing up with her tray,

Together, **they** left the cafeteria and walked to the tennis courts;

The space was already buzzing, filled with students warming up for the upcoming match . Several players were already

warming up

Eliana carried the racquet Cameron had given her, with Stella by her side, **as** they settled into the lounge area.

It wasn't long before Willow arrived with Charlene and Vespera.

Willow and Charlene were partners, while Vespera had originally been paired with Shae ryl, who had to drop out after Vespera was expelled from the team.

As the trio passed by, Charlene shot a disdainful look at **Eliana** and Stella,

Stella wasn't one to back down; she returned the glare without hesitation.

Willow, choosing not to engage, sat nearby and pulled out her own racquet—a bright, grass-green model that drew

attention.

Charlene's eyes widened as she noticed it. "Wow, Willow! Your racquet looks amazing—Is it a custom design?" **she** asked. loudly.

Willow blushed and nodded modestly. "Yeah, my parents had it made for me when they heard I joined the tennis club. It's a global limited edition—only one like it in the world

"Can I take a look? Charlene asked eagerly

"Sure." **Willow** handed it over without hesitation, and Charlene examined it with envy.

This must be one of Aurea Haven's custom models, right? Super expensive! They go for 20 thousand dollars each Willow, your parents must really spoil you, Charlene exclaimed.

Charlene's loud **admiration** caught the attention of the nearby crowd, who turned to look at Willow.

Willow **basked** in the moment, a sense of vanity swelling inside her.

Then, Eliana **took** out her own racket.

With a mischievous grin, Stella mimicked Charlene's earlier enthusiasm. "Wow Eli, your racket is stunning! So much better **than** some people's green monstrosities.

In an instant, all eyes turned towards her.

Eliana paused for a moment, feeling Stella was laying it on too thick. But Stella just winked at her, leaning into the performance.

"Look at this," Stella continued loudly. "Another Aurea **Haven** model—a special, limited-edition custom piece. You can't get one of these for less than seventy thousand dollars!"

With Stella's enthusiastic help, the attention shifted from Willow to Eliana, stealing the spotlight completely.

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Chapter 40

Willow clenched her jaw in anger, furious that her moment had been overshadowed

"Stop yelling like that Charlene snapped. "So tacky"

* 66%

"Oh, I'm sorry Stella shot back, smirking. "I guess it's okay for you to yell about a twenty-thousand-dollar racket, but not a seventy-thousand-dollar one?"

Charlene's jealousy was palpable as she sneered, "Who knows if it's real? It's probably fake.

At that moment, a deep male voice cut through the noise from the back row of the bleachers. I bought it. Any other

questions

All eyes turned to see Cameron seated at the very top, his gaze piercing

Not far from him. Thomas and his friends strolled over casually, lounging next to Cameron with a relaxed confidence.

Everyone froze.

Charlene's face flushed with embarrassment. She thought of Shacryl's fate and immediately backtracked. "**No**, no, I didn't mean anything by it. I was just joking, she stammered.

Cameron's expression remained cold. His eyes narrowed slightly as he replied, "Just joking? Do you think you can spread rumors without facing consequences?"

Panic flashed across Charlene's face as she turned to Eliana, stammering, "Eliana, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to imply your racket was fake. Please, don't hold it against me

Eliana regarded Charlene coolly, then glanced up at Cameron.

Seeing that Eliana wasn't pressing the matter, Cameron let it drop as well.

Moments later, the match began.

Eliana and Stella stepped onto the court, rackets in hand.

Stella looked nervous, but Eliana was calm, her steps steady and confident.

"Eli, aren't you nervous? There's such a huge crowd here today. Stella whispered.

The finals of the tennis club's tournament had drawn in a sizable audience, filling the stands to capacity.

Especially with Cameron and his friends sitting in the back row, Stella thought.

Eliana smiled gently. Just focus on the game. We've got this,"

Stella **took** a deep **breath**, nodding as they moved into position.

On the other side, Willow and Charlene took their places.

The humiliation earlier had clearly fueled Charlene's determination—she **played** aggressively, sending powerful serves their

way.

Willow, while not the most skilled, seemed to channel her frustration into every **swing**.

With both girls good looks, the match was **as** much a spectacle as it **was** a game.

Eliana, her gaze icy and intense, locked eyes with Willow. She gripped her racquet firmly, her expression unwavering and focused

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Chapter 10

Eliana's lips moved, forming words **that** were barely visible.

Willow froze for a split second, reading the silent taunt clearly. "Watch your face

It was exactly **what Willow** had been itching to say herself.

The sight of Eliana's poised expression only enraged her more.

The match began with the ball flying high into the air.

After several fast—

paced rallies, Willow's hands were already aching. She had assumed Eliana's earlier victories were **flukes**. strokes of good luck.

But now, facing her directly, Willow realized the truth—

Eliana was a formidable opponent, every shot deliberate and powerful.

Her doubt solidified when a ball whizzed past Charlene's ear—just barely missing—causing the scoreboard to flash: 1-0.

Willow shot Charlene a frustrated look, but Charlene's face was already tense.

"It's over. Willow," Eliana said calmly, tossing a new ball in her hand.

Eliana tossed another ball into the air, effortlessly controlled. Her gaze bore into Willow, her stance radiating determination. She didn't give Willow any time to recover, serving s wiftly with well—practiced move.

The ball sliced through the air toward Willow, who dodged instinctively.

The scoreboard updated: 2-0.

The ball bounced off the court with enough force to echo.

Willow had heard the rush of air **as** it passed; if she hadn't move, it might have broken her **nose**.

Shock **washed** over her. The bitch! she thought.

Eliana's eyes, shadowed under her cap, watched Willow with a detached calm. The look infuriated Willow—it was pity.

A condescending sympathy that only fueled Willow's anger.

With a furious **snarl**, Willow hit the ball, her shot fueled by pure anger.

Eliana's racquet moved like lightning—there was a sharp thwack, and the ball flew back, hitting Willow in the face. The pain was sharp **and** immediate, her nose bruised but not broken.

The match ended in a swift, undeniable defeat.

"A-Team wins," the referee **announced** clearly.

Applause erupted from the stands, a roaring wave of approval.