

## **Seduced 361**

### Chapter 361

The crisis negotiator sent in was a female police officer. She had a pair of dimples that made her look extra cute. She comforted Felix with her soothing voice while approaching him silently like a leopard. Her small frame was taut with tension, waiting for the right opportunity.

As the female officer coddled to Felix, he slowly became quieter. He stopped yelling, but he still refused to step down from the ledge.

Blindness rendered his auditory senses to be extra sensitive. When the officer was less than five steps away from him, his neck jerked suddenly. He stared at where the officer was at. He threatened angrily, "Come any closer and I'll jump."

The negotiator was forced to remain on the spot. She shrugged sorrowfully, telling us that the first attempt was a failure.

Staying alive was our first instinct. I couldn't believe that Felix would go this far.

Colin rubbed his face. The powerlessness to change the situation and the fear of losing his younger brother pushed him to the brink of breaking down.

"Felix, listen to me. Do you not want me anymore? Do you not want Dad and Mom anymore? Mom loves you so much, and Dad has a health problem. You won't make them hold a funeral for their son, will you? Without you, they'll be devastated.

"Felix, listen to me. Come back. I can give you everything you want, even my life."

Colin's voice was hoarse. Tears rolled down from his puffy eyes.

My heart ached. It was all my fault.

None of this would have happened if I hadn't insisted on buying Colin cold medicine.

Colin wouldn't have had to deal with this tragedy.

I shouldn't have fallen for Colin. I shouldn't have agreed to let him be my boyfriend. I

deserved to be alone forever.

I was the reason why there was no way out of this predicament. I was a sinner.

"Colin, I don't hate you. I just think that there's no point in living. I see no light, no day or night. My legs don't work. I can't walk or play basketball like I used to. My heart is empty. It's aching and bitter. I made so many mistakes and hurt her. I have no right to ask her to

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come back to me.

"I have no other wishes, Colin. I don't want your life. I don't want to make our parents sad. But I can't live like this. How am I supposed to live without Lulu? I can't. It's too miserable for me. Just let me die, Colin. I'm begging you. Don't make me live without hope. It's torturous."

Colin clenched his teeth. He mustered every strength he had but failed to stop tears from gushing out. Tears fell on the ground and splattered. They shattered like my heart.

I felt bad for putting Colin through this, but I shouldn't do anything that could worsen the situation.

I ran and hugged Colin. In front of everyone, I kissed him. I kissed him with all my might. I suckled on his lips and tongue.

He returned my hug and my kisses. We discarded shame and kissed each other deeply. Neither of us wanted to let go of each other. We used every strength we had to seal our lips together.

The metallic taste of blood spread on our tongues. No one knew who bit who or whose injury

it was.

We let the physical pain take over. Perhaps it would reduce the pain our hearts felt.

Our tears mixed together, and they entered our mouths. Bitter and salty tears touched the wounds in our mouths. It hurt.

I didn't want to make the decision now, but Felix was threatening us with his life.

I couldn't not make the decision. The stake was too high for me to lose. Felix couldn't die. His life was a debt too huge to be repaid.

"Sorry, Colin. I must-" I said with a pained voice.

"Don't, Lulu. I can't let you go. Believe me. I can handle this. Don't make the decision that we will both regret," Colin interrupted me before I could complete my sentence. His forehead touched mine, and his tears dampened my will.

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To deliver Colin from suffering, to save the tough man in my heart from his moral dilemma, I made a shocking decision.

The decision was sudden and hurtful, but it wasn't selfish.

He told me that he could handle the situation. It wasn't that I did not trust him or think that

I had a better solution.

I merely felt bad for him. I didn't want him to go through so much pain and woe for me. I did not want my existence to be his burden.

The defeated look on his face filled my mind. It broke my heart. I told myself that I'd bring light and joy to his life, even if it meant I had to suffer in hell for eternity.

Was I mad? No, I wasn't. I just didn't want him to be sad.

When I recalled this incident many years later, I realized how thoughtless I was.

Colin imprisoned me in his arms, refusing to let me leave. He was searching for my lips, trying to seal it before I said the words he'd hate to hear.

But for some reason, an incredible strength burst out from me. I shoved Colin away, and he

hit a wall.

"Lulu, please come back, you idiot." Colin ignored his pain and tried to grab me, but I dodged away agilely.

Yes, I was an idiot. Colin, I was an idiot who'd do anything for you.

At that moment, I thought I was doing what was necessary. I ignored the despair in Colin's voice and believed that I could be his hero.

I steeled my mind and looked away. Then, I ran toward Felix.

Felix had won. He out-stubborned us.

“Felix, as long as you climb back down, I’ll forgive you and date you. I promise.”

Those few words stabbed right into my heart and my soul.

Did it hurt? No, I had already grown numb. I only felt despair.

I felt despair because I just lost my chance to spend my life with Colin forever.

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I loved him deeply, and he loved me too. But I needed to ask for his forgiveness now.

I turned around to look at Colin. One of his arms was reaching out to me. The light in his eyes dimmed. I saw endless pain and hopelessness.

My voice caught Felix by surprise. The female officer immediately seized the opening, grabbed him from under his arms, and pinned him down. The male officer that came with me bolted in and dragged him out of the ledge.

The rescue mission was a success. The crowd under the building applauded the officers for saving yet another young life.

Unbeknownst to them, two lives were sacrificed to save this young man’s life.

An ambulance came. Felix was carried on the stretcher while Colin and I followed the

ambulance.

The door to the emergency room closed shut before us. I closed my eyes, refusing to look at the dreadful sight.

The corridor was eerily silent. My soul searched for a safe corner, to no avail.

Colin hugged me from behind, his warm tears wetted my neck. I turned around and cried loudly into his embrace.

"I'm sorry, Colin. I don't want to do this. I can't let you go either, but there are no other options. I can't let Felix die and do nothing about it. He's your brother, and he saved my life. Don't resent me, Colin. I don't know what else to do."

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I fumbled my words because I was trying to suppress the overwhelming heartache.

At that moment, I realized that Colin was my soul. Without Colin, I'd become a zombie. My love for him had taken root beyond my imagination before I knew it.

Colin held me tightly. His broad hands almost squeezed the life out of me. With reddened eyes, he uttered, "I don't resent you, babe. I know you did everything for me. Forgive me. I wasn't strong enough. I failed to give you a sense of security.

"I'm sorry, Lulu. But things weren't that bad. You should've trusted me when I said that I could handle it. What you did shattered my heart."

He kissed me, and I returned his kiss passionately. The wounds in our mouths reopened, and warm blood rolled down the corners of our lips. The bystanders gasped in horror, but we

paid them no mind.

At that precise moment, we only had each other. We lived in our own world.

He hugged me, creating a corner that blocked out the universe. I snuggled into him as if he were my entire world. We stayed in our little world, kissing and hugging each other deeply.

This could be our final chance to share an intimate moment, so I wanted to indulge myself.

The tears on my face had dried, but the tears in my heart continued to flow like a river. Light would become a foreign concept in my life.

“Colin, I love you. While I might not be with you, you’ll stay in my heart.”

“Babe, I love you. The first time I met you, I told myself I’d marry no one else but you.”

“Don’t, Colin. I don’t want you to wait for me. There are so many women out there. I’ll be happy so long as you’re happy.”

“You silly. Can’t you see it? You are my happiness. Without you, I’ll never be happy.”

I grabbed my heart with my right hand figuratively, held it in my hands, and put it where Colin’s heart was. “Colin, I hereby give you my heart. You’re my refuge, my haven.”

Colin pressed my figurative heart and hand against his chest. He whispered, “Lulu, my heart belongs to you too. It’s yours only. Trust me. I can handle everything.”

I was still smitten with the romantic and intimate moment we were having, so much so that I didn’t give much thought to what Colin meant when he wanted me to trust him that he

could solve everything.

It wasn't that I did not trust him. I just felt bad for him. I didn't want him to be stuck in a position where he had to choose between his lover and his brother.

The door to the emergency room flung wide open. Two nurses pushed the gurney out and yelled, "Felix White's family, please come here."

Colin and I separated. With one on the left and another on the right, we walked next to the gurney and entered the ward.

"The patient is alright. He fainted from mental shock. We'll monitor his situation for a night. If nothing goes wrong, he can be discharged tomorrow morning." The nurse left after explaining.

Colin and I sat separately next to the bed until late at night.

When the pain became unbearable, it turned into numbness and resignation. Those facing impending doom would experience the same.

Colin was the first to break the silence in the dark. He asked if it was my final decision to cut him off from the whole relationship.

I said I didn't want to cut him off. But in this messy, three-way relationship, someone had to quit. Otherwise, everyone would get hurt. And I didn't want him to get hurt.

Colin sniggered. He asked if I'd regret my decision. I fell silent. It wasn't my intention to do what I had done. And what purpose did regret serve? The problem needed to be solved.

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The nurse said that Felix would be asleep for a long time. To stabilize his mood, she gave him sedatives.



Lights were switched off at nine at the wards. Colin and I sat silently in the darkness.

I looked outside while Colin stared at me with cold eyes. I knew he resented me, but I let him be. There weren't many things I could do for him. But by sacrificing myself, it showed that our love wasn't in vain..

I didn't dare to look at him or meet his eyes. I was afraid that once I turned around, my resolution would vanish.

My heart ached. It probably would hurt for the entirety of my life. But perhaps that was the only way to know that I still breathed.

When it was almost dawn break, I couldn't hang in there anymore and fell asleep.

The noises from the corridor woke me up. I realized that Colin's jacket was on top of me, but he was nowhere to be found.

Did he leave? A world without him felt so lonely.

I heard shuffling from the bed, and Felix opened his eyes. There was no light in his eyes, but they were lively. "Is that you, Lulu? I can smell you."

"Yes, it's me," I mumbled.

He smiled like a child who was given candy.

Then, he stretched out his hand. "Lulu, can you hold me? I want to feel you."

Right at that moment, Colin came in and heard his request. His eyes immediately turned glossy, and his broad hand froze on the door handle. He shot daggers at my hands, which rested on my sides.

Almost instinctively, I hid my hands behind me. Then, I uttered, "Tuck your hands back in your blanket. I don't want you to catch a cold."

Felix's hand trembled for a little bit. Then, he buried it under his blanket and said compliantly, "Okay, Lulu. I'll do whatever you tell me to do as long as you stay with me."

I hated it.

I wanted to ask why he was forcing me to date him when he knew for a fact that I did not like him. I wanted to know why he wouldn't let me go, despite knowing that nothing good would come out of this forced relationship.

But I no longer had the right to confront him because he injured himself by saving me.

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When Felix was discharged, the doctor said someone should look after him 24/7 as he wasn't stable psychologically.

I suggested hiring a professional caretaker. They would most certainly do a better job than me. However, Felix did not like the idea. He said he couldn't stand having a stranger next to him or taking care of him.

Out of options, I had to spend my day keeping him company, except for when I went to classes in the morning. And before the lights were switched off, I would return to my apartment.

Colin said that it'd be dangerous to return alone so late in the evening since I was a woman. Felix then offered to send me back together.

Therefore, Colin had to carry Felix downstairs, get into the car, send me back to my apartment, return home, and climb back to the sixth floor with Felix on his back.

It was awful to spend time together as a trio. Like an oversensitive detector, as soon as I moved, Felix would ask where I was going and what I wanted to do. Then, he would roll his wheelchair and follow behind me.

Even when I used the toilet, he would wait for me outside. He watched over me like a prison warden did.

More often than not, Colin and I couldn't even exchange a word during the entire day. How torturous!

Professor King told me that the proposal from the company was out. He asked me to meet him. in his office.

As I went to his office after my lecture, I ran into Colin.

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Colin was wearing a suit and a tie. Despite his bony cheeks, he looked dapper and walked in broad strides,

Behind him was a meek woman carrying a stack of documents in her hands. She was chatting with him shyly. She looked to be around 18 or 19 years old—the age when one felt fearless. Colin's maturity and dependability attracted women around that age.

Colin was expressionless, but he didn't quicken his pace either. He maintained the delicate balance where he was just slightly ahead of her.

I didn't know if he saw me or not. But when he turned around, he had this condescending look on his face. The grin he wore was taunting me.

Why was he taunting me? Because I made the selfish decision to agree to Felix's nonsensical demand?

But I did it for him. Couldn't he see that?

I froze on the spot. My heart felt like it had been put through a meat grinder. It hurt.

Had he found a new love this soon? Were all his sweet promises empty and fake? I had expected this to happen one day, but I thought it would only happen after a very long time. We loved each other deeply. Surely he'd need time to lick his wounds before he could date someone else.

Besides, my agreeing to Felix's demand was but a temporary solution. I merely wanted to give him the courage to continue living.

A sentence I had seen in a romance novel came into my mind—the best way to get over an ex was to start a new relationship. Was this how Colin planned to bury our relationship?

I was brokenhearted.

I went to Professor King's office, distraught. He gave me the proposal and uttered coldly, "Think it through. This is a very precious opportunity. Seize it. The world can be unfair. But remember this, don't forget who you are, what you want, and how to chase after your goal."

His words were a confidence boost. The doom and gloom from the past few days, and the jealousy bottled up from earlier, all disappeared in an instant.

Indeed, the whole situation wasn't irredeemable. I shouldn't give up this easily.

The compromise was just a temporary solution. My love, my relationship, my freedom, and my happiness were things worth striving for.

Seeing another woman with Colin was enough to make me jealous. If Colin stopped abstaining

one day and he found another woman he liked... If he hugged, kissed, and even went further with her... I believed I'd go crazy.

To make sure I wouldn't be driven mad by jealousy, I decided to find the perfect solution to solve the current predicament. I would take back the promise I had made to Felix.

Yes, I regretted it. Even though it was just a white lie, I regretted it very much.

Still, I wasn't a virtuous saint. I couldn't care less if someone said I wasn't a woman of words and that I had broken my promise. I'd suck it up.

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I was ready to give my life to Colin. Verbal insults wouldn't break my

bones.

On Saturday morning, my parents and Colin's parents came.

I wanted to hide Felix's suicide attempt from them, but they heard about it and rushed here.

I wasn't told that my parents would visit me, so when I saw my parents before my faculty

entrance, tears came gushing out of my eyes uncontrollably.

I would've been fine if they weren't around. But when I saw them, the misery and the

grievances I had been feeling overwhelmed me. I hugged Mom and cried for a very long time.

That noon, we didn't stay at the apartment. We found a quiet place and dined together.

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"Lulu, are you sure you want to compromise?"

"No, I don't want to. But I don't want to give up either." Thanks to Professor King's and Colin's reminders, I decided to stop playing the hero.

People might call me fickle-minded or toxic, but come what may, I would endure it.

I was forced to promise Felix that to save him. I told him that as long as he saved his life, I'd stay with him. I didn't specify what we'd do or how long we would be together. Even if we only stayed together for a month, I still delivered my promise, right?

Criticize me all they wanted. Felix never took care of me. In fact, I was the one taking care of

him.

"Good." Dad gave a content smile and clasped my hand. "That's my baby girl. When facing adversities, we must think positively. Let's work hard together. There must be a solution."

"I know. Thanks, Mom, Dad."

I booked them a room in the hotel near my campus. After they settled down, I went back to Felix's place.

I was away from him longer than usual today. If I did not return now, who knew what Felix would do? And as I expected, when I arrived, Felix's wheelchair was waiting for me next to the door. He glared at me.

“Why are you sitting here?” I greeted his parents before asking.

He then replied sulkily, “Where were you? You came late today. I was so worried about you.”

I was so annoyed that I ignored him.

At first, we got along quite well, and he would talk to me with a smile. But a few days later, perhaps something triggered him, he began to insult me. He would throw tantrums for no reason at all and start annoying me. When I got mad, he would then beg for my forgiveness.

He told me he couldn’t believe that I’d agreed to be with him. He lacked confidence and asked me to forgive me, saying that he’d not repeat the same mistake again. But when I saw him the next day, the same thing would repeat itself.

His antics had persisted for more than a week, and I was sick of it.

However, before I found a solution, I needed to take care of him. This was my principle—to repay those who had helped me. Since I did not want to marry him in return, I’d just make sure that I took good care of him.

I admitted that I made a rash decision back then. I regretted it. I wanted to renege on my

promise.

tel. What else do you want to

“I had lunch with my parents and helped them check int know?” I answered stoically. I walked past him, placed my bag on the couch, and washed my

hands in the bathroom.

He sensed the aloofness and the annoyance in my voice. Then, he rotated the wheelchair to chase after me. However, he ran into the dining table, and the wheelchair was almost overturned.

I dried my hands and pushed him to an open space. "I told you many times to memorize the layout of your home. Otherwise, you'll injure yourself easily when there's no one home."

He lifted his head obediently and looked at me with his soulless eyes. "I know. I'll memorize it. Don't be mad at me, please."

"Why did you throw a tantrum, then?"

Felix squirmed in his seat before answering sheepishly, "Colin didn't come back."

It turned out that was why.

After Felix fell asleep, Aunt Mel dragged me to the balcony to have a conversation.

She held my hands and began crying, "I'm sorry that you have to do this, Lulu."

"It's okay. I owe him anyway." I withdrew my hands, not wanting to continue the

conversation.

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"I know you resent me, Lulu. I made a mistake last time. I made an inconsiderate demand because I was too afraid of losing Felix. I'm not going to apologize because I know it won't help. Whether you believe me or not, I want you to know that we don't expect you to sacrifice yourself."



“That accident took place when you were out buying medicine for Colin. If anything, Colin owes it to Felix, not you. This is a family matter. It doesn’t fall on you to solve this problem.”

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I stood up, poised to leave, but I decided to say my piece, “Colin’s debt is also debt. It doesn’t matter who’s repaying the debt. Let me be frank with you, Aunt Mel. I’m not as selfless as you think. I’m not sacrificing my love and my happiness for Felix.

“I’m doing this for Colin because I don’t want him to be wedged between Felix and me. I don’t want him to make a decision that he’ll regret. Agreeing to be with Felix is just a temporary solution. I’ll find a cure for him. And after that, I’ll go back to Colin.

“That said, even if it’s impossible to cure Felix, I still won’t marry him. But I’ll take care of him forever. This is the bottom line and the only thing I can do for Felix.”

I pushed open the door to Felix’s place just to see Colin grinning at me with keys in his hands.

He was eavesdropping again!

But when did he unlock the door? Why wasn’t I aware of it? How much of the conversation did he overhear?

It felt awkward because he had heard the confession I made just now. I played it cool and walked past him, trying to leave hurriedly.

“Let me walk you out.” Colin closed the door and followed me downstairs. “Where has your courage gone? Why are you so shy all of a sudden? Can you repeat the whole thing to me again? Stop running.”

He knew I was embarrassed enough yet he didn’t want to let it slide. How annoying!

My cheeks were warm. I lowered my head and jogged further. Colin tailed closely behind me.

The neighborhood wasn't that far from my campus, but traveling between them by foot and by car took around the same time. Walking allowed us to cut through the streets whereas we'd need to take a detour if we drove.

Knowing that I was mortified, Colin quit teasing me. He changed the conversation topic into something that I was concerned about.

"I went to see your parents."

+18 BONUS

"Okay."

"Lulu, it won't take too long. Just wait for me."

"Okay."

He stopped his car and peered at me grouchily. "My baby princess, can we have a proper conversation? Because for once, Felix isn't around to bother us. You cut me off from the relationship. You're the one who didn't trust me.

"Why are you behaving as if everything's my fault and that you're the victim?"

I was the victim. I was the biggest victim. I wouldn't have had to do this if Felix hadn't created so many problems!

"Is it my fault now?" I barked back. I was irritated. Not only did I have to put up with Felix's antics every day, but I had to be reprimanded by Colin too. "I did what I did because I didn't want you to suffer. If he had jumped off the building, you would've lived your life in guilt.

"I sacrificed myself for you and I should feel bad about it? How dare you!"

He unbuckled his seat belt and pulled me into his embrace. The familiar pinewood scent enveloped me. I took it in greedily, and the anger within me vanished instantly.

We hadn't hugged each other for a few days. I had missed it so much, and his scent too.

"Alright, I'm sorry. I know you did it for me. I was just ranting, okay? Being abandoned feels awful. You won't hold grudges against your boyfriend who feels abandoned, will you?"

Abandoned boyfriend? He was trying to make himself look vulnerable. I had never given up on him.

"Excuse me? Who are you? You're not my boyfriend." I crossed my arms and pouted.

Colin chuckled at my reaction. He seized my chin and kissed my lips.

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Colin's lips were warm and soft. I lost myself in yet another kiss.

"I've missed you so much. Did you miss me, my little princes?"

Urgh. Did he have to ask that? Did he not have the answer already? I couldn't possibly answer that.

Before I exited the car, Colin's broad hand ruffled and messed up my hairstyle. He wore a goofy grin.

Why was he so smug? He was still a probational boyfriend. How arrogant of him!

After my parents went home, I began designing the murals. After I read the proposal, I realized that it wouldn't be easy to earn this eight million dollars. The workload was unconscionably large, and it came with a tight deadline. To finish everything on time, I had to

work overtime.

But it was okay. At least I could kill time with it.

To save time, after my classes were over, I went to Felix's place to work.

Colin allocated one corner of the living room to me and set up a small drawing studio. It had everything—easel, paintbrushes, and watercolor. When I hit a wall, I could discuss it with him. When he was bored, he would sit next to me silently.

When I felt tired, all I had to do was look at him and smile. Then, all my fatigue would disappear. Felix often came to ruin the atmosphere, but I still cherished the few moments.

After I finished the first draft, I showed it to Professor King. Instead of looking at my draft, he stared at my face for a long while. I thought that there was something on my face. "Luna, no man wants to date a skeleton."

I wish I could punch him. He could just call me skinny. How hurtful it was to call me a skeleton.

But thanks to him, I realized that I had lost a lot of weight. I looked at myself in a mirror and indeed, I looked almost anorexic. No wonder Colin felt bad for me. Even I felt bad for myself.

Matthew contacted me and told me that his classmate's uncle recently came back from his studies abroad. He had dealt with cases similar to Felix's before. And coincidentally, he'd be attending a conference in Jinovy in a week. He said he could introduce him to me.

I was overjoyed by the news. I quickly ran to Colin to share the good news.

He was very happy, so he hugged and kissed me until my lips were glossy and swollen. Then, he also told me that he had recently found a doctor who planned to visit Jinovy too. The doctor used to study abroad.

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+16 BONUS

That day, we went to Felix's place together. Felix wasn't thrilled that we came together, but he didn't make a fuss.

He was only briefly happy when we told him the great times. Then, he fell silent.

Colin went to cook in the kitchen while I drew drafts on my table.

Felix had learned the layout of the apartment by heart, so he easily navigated to me. It seemed like he wanted to talk.

"Yes?" I asked.

He pursed his lips and uttered when he finally found his words, "Lulu, if I'm cured one day, will you still stay with me?"

I thought about it seriously and replied, "Felix, do you want to keep a woman whose heart belongs to someone else and who will never love you back?"

It was cruel to say that, but it was the truth.

Felix blanched. Even the color on his lips faded.

From the corners of my eyes, I saw Colin smiling at me as he stood by the kitchen entrance. There was a plate of food in his hands.

During the meal, Felix surprisingly stopped being difficult and did not make ridiculous demands. He ate what Colin put on his plate quietly.

“Lulu, your drawing has improved so much. It seems like Professor King has given you a lot of useful tips.”

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“Lulu, your drawing has improved so much. It seems like Professor King has given you a lot of useful tips.”

“I’ve worked very hard as well. By the way, while Tudor fashion is fascinating in itself, it’s still quite dated. I find it hard to imagine the Tudor aesthetics from the readings alone. Besides, we have so many more colors now. Back in those days, they must have only worked with a

handful of colors.

“It’s a shame if we can’t toy with more colors. Do you think I can mix some modern elements into the murals? I can combine Tudor elements with modernity. After all, the apartment is meant to be inhabited, no?”

“You’re right. Color theories in the present don’t apply to antiquities. As to whether you can combine Tudor elements with modernity... Putting the academic value aside, it depends on whether the developers like the idea or not.

“I suggest you draw several drafts with sharp contrast and show them to Professor King. But...” Colin paused. His tone turned appreciative. “I love the roses you’ve drawn. That red is so bright and poignant. I’ve never seen it before.”

Felix stopped eating, and his breathing quickened. Colin and I smirked at each other.

It seemed like Felix was intrigued. Good. We wanted the reaction. It meant that this act Colin and I had put up was not in vain.

Felix was not born blind. He had seen blue skies, green foliage, and colorful plants. The views he used to take for granted were slowly fading in his memories. If it was impossible to regain eyesight, perhaps he would give up on those memories.

But if hope appeared, he would be excited to look at those colors again. The desire would strengthen his will to seek treatment. It could be very powerful.

I wanted to continue to talk about the scenes of those athletes on the field, but Colin mouthed

the words, "Not now."

As Colin tidied the dining table, he mentioned nonchalantly, "Felix, the expert will be here in a week. I've scheduled an appointment for you."

Felix said yes almost immediately.

Six days later, Matthew called me in the morning, sounding all excited. He said the expert would land soon and that he had agreed to see Felix. He asked us to prepare all the necessary documents. The expert would see us the following morning at the latest.

I was elated by the news.



Once Felix's condition was cured, my mission would end. This wasn't the main reason for my happiness, of course. I just hoped he could see the world again like he used to and go wherever he wanted. Colin would no longer have to live with guilt because of Felix's disability either.

Excitedly, we gathered all the medical records and imagery. We double-checked regularly in case we missed anything.

Colin carried Felix to the bathroom. Ignoring Felix's protest, he bathed Felix from head to toe and helped him put on a new sleeping gown.

We had a wonderful day. Even Felix smiled several times when we weren't looking.

That day, after dinner, Felix intercepted me by the kitchen entrance and asked again if I'd stay with him if he was cured.

I told him categorically that I wouldn't because I loved Colin. I said he was my responsibility, not my love. When I left, Felix was brooding. He ignored me when I bade him goodnight later.

The next day, Matthew drove to pick us up.

The expert was someone called George Skeldon. Mixed-raced, he was tall and pale. Green veins could be seen underneath his skin.

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After we showed George everything we brought, the three of us sat on chairs like criminals, waiting for the judge to pronounce their sentence.

George took out the papers and looked through them carefully. He also grabbed the imagery and inspected it against a projector. Then, he put everything back on his desk and looked at us.

He smiled, amused by our anxiousness. He smirked so brightly. His ruby lips parted like a blossoming red peony.



Colin and Felix were both handsome men, but they were attractive in their own ways.

Felix was scholarly while Colin was flirty. And George was simply exuberant.

“So George, can you do it? What’s the chance of success?” asked Matthew.

“It’s not a complicated case. If I operate on him, I’ll say more than 90%. However, I need to conduct a comprehensive checkup on him before surgery.”

I almost jumped from my seat and cheered. But Colin pulled me down and continued politely, “ Mr. George, what will happen if the 10% occurs?”

George glanced at us, surprised. Then, he uttered, “I’m very confident in my own skill. However, I didn’t say 100% because oftentimes, this kind of case requires luck and human cooperation.”

Then, he threw us a look of bemusement.

“So, do you want to take your chances?” George lifted his chin proudly. “If yes, you’ll check in now. We’ll perform a check-up and prepare everything. I’m free the morning of the day after

tomorrow.”

Colin and I waited for Felix’s answer. He was the patient here. Even a skillful doctor had to rely on the cooperation of his patient.

Felix raised his head and answered, “Yes.”

Then, we scrambled to get Felix admitted. Colin made several trips between the school and the hospital. Matthew saw that we needed help, so he called Helen to assist us.

I took out time to notify my parents and Felix's parents. They were over the moon and said they would drive here. They would arrive in the afternoon at the latest. Aunt Mel was overjoyed. When she heard that Matthew had helped Felix, she cried and kept saying thanks.

She didn't have to thank anyone. Everyone wanted to help Felix. Besides, he got injured because of me.

It was nearly 3:00 pm when Felix was checked into a single ward. None of us had time for

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lunch. That said, we were all very excited. No one made a fuss about hunger.

I was exhausted. I had never been this busy before, so I sat on the chair and rested.

Helen suggested we get food together. But Matthew said no and left with Helen, saying that he had a family gathering at night. He said we should use the time to rest properly. The meal could be saved for another day. It didn't have to be on that day.

Once Felix fell asleep, Colin woke me up, fed me some water, and opened a packet of bread so that I could nourish myself. We leaned against the chair and whispered to each other.

"Felix will be cured tomorrow. Are you happy, Colin?"

"Of course. Dad and Mom will be happy too. But there's something else I'm happy about. Do. you know what it is?"

I knew the answer, but there was no way I'd say it.

"What?"

"Don't play dumb, you little devil." Colin nibbled on my earlobes. His warm breath tickled my cheek.

I dodged his assault and insisted on having him elaborate.