

His Destructive Toxic Love Chapter 83

“Mr. Casper, have you forgotten why you gave me this dress in the first place?” she mocked, pointing to the dress that barely covered her chest. “You must have handpicked this little number yourself, right? Wasn’t it just meant to seduce Easton?”

She couldn’t believe he was now trying to pin the blame on her. She really couldn’t figure out if he were genuinely twisted.

“So, when his hand slipped under your dress, you just let him?” he sneered. “Eliza, basically, that just shows you’re slutty and cheap. Were you the only one wearing a cocktail dress at the event? Who else would be as frivolous as you?”

Hearing these words from her own husband didn’t anger Eliza at all. It was almost as if he should describe her this way. In his mind, this was who she was. That was why he had sent her, still not fully recovered, to another man’s bed to trade for his own benefits.

“Yes, I let him touch me, hold my hand, and stroke my waist. Didn’t you tell me to ‘perform. well’ when you left, Mr. Casper? So, are you not satisfied with my performance?”

“You...”

Casper was left speechless, his tense shoulders and fingers gradually relaxing. After tossing her aside, he leaned back in the car seat, a light chuckle escaping his lips. “So... did you sleep with him

“Does it matter to you? You believe a contract is more important than me, more important. than being cuckolded, don’t you?”

Did it matter? Maybe it didn’t. He was always a man who pursued results, not caring about the process. But why was this gnawing at him, causing unbearable pain?

The car roared to life, speeding away. No matter how recklessly he drove, her heart. remained still. They returned to Welton Estate. As soon as they got out, Casper dragged Eliza inside by the wrist without a second thought. She couldn’t keep up with his pace, tripping and falling to the ground. Her knee hit the concrete tiles, causing her to wince in pain.

“Casper, let go of me. I can walk by myself.” She beat against his strong hand. Barefoot, her feet were already blistered, and now they were bleeding.

“Eliza, don’t test my patience.”

He showed no compassion and didn’t even look back as he dragged her upstairs. She was thrown onto the floor harshly. The bathroom faucet turned on, and warm water from

the showerhead poured down. Casper grabbed Eliza's arm, pulling her into the bathroom. He picked up the showerhead, showering her with complex and angry emotions.

"Did you sleep with him or not? Tell me," he demanded hysterically, almost crazily. The water quickly soaked through the expensive cocktail dress.

Eliza, drenched, couldn't even open her eyes, let alone beg for mercy

"Cough, cough..."

She was choked, powerless to fight back. He turned off the shower, crouched down, and grabbed her chin, glaring at her almost hatefully. "Did you do it in the bathroom? Is that it?"

"You could call Mr. Gillum. He could give you the answer." She was drained, her body limply lying on the anti-slip tiles. Casper was dissatisfied with her response, so he stripped off her clothes and threw her directly into a bathtub filled with water. Just as Eliza was about to bring her head above water, Casper mercilessly pushed her down, scrubbing her forcefully.

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She was gasping for breath. Her mouth and nose were filled with water, arms flailing. "Casper... let me... out."

He ignored her struggles. It was as if he was determined to scrub away every trace of Easton's touch.

Eliza's delicate skin was now marked with red trails, every inch he scrubbed leaving a bloody streak.

"Tell me, where else did he touch you?"

He was practically peeling her skin off.

Eliza had swallowed too much water, her strength ebbing away. Her body gradually stopped fighting, becoming limp, until she slid uncontrollably into the bathtub.

Just as her face slipped beneath the water, a pair of strong hands pulled her out.

"Eliza, Eliza," he tapped her face lightly. "Don't you play dead on me. We're not done here."

She didn't respond. She looked lifeless, water filling her eyes and ears.

Casper panicked, checking for her breath, his pupils shrinking in fear. “Eliza, wake up, please wake up.”

“Eliza, come on, wake up.”

She was still, like a cold, unresponsive Sleeping Beauty.

Frantic, he carried her out of the bathroom, laid her on the floor, and started CPR. “I won’t let you die. You can’t die. Breathe, come on, breathe! You hear me?”

His eyes were bloodshot. His lips trembled.

He took a deep breath, lowered his head, and breathed air into promised to spare your brother. You can’t die. Wake up.”

her lungs. “Eliza, I

“Wake up, please, I’m begging you.”

He didn’t know how many cycles he performed

Over and over again, he didn’t stop for a second until she let out a faint cough. His heart, tight with fear, finally eased.

“Eliza, I knew you wouldn’t die.”

Eliza was weak. Her mind was foggy.

Casper called an ambulance, and Eliza was hospitalized again. She thought for sure this time she’d end up in hell, but she survived.

Casper’s secretary sat across from her, watching with a blank expression. “Mrs. Welton, you’re in the hospital way too often. You really don’t need to keep fighting with Mr.

Casper. He’s doing all this for Welton International. If the company goes under, you won’t have all the luxuries you’re used to, will you?”

Faithe’s words cut deep as if it was all her fault. Eliza had nothing to say to Faithe. Shel gave her a cold glance and then looked away.

Faithe noted her silence and spoke again, “Last night, Mr. Gillum was furious, and the contract didn’t get signed. It’s baffling. You had already left with him, so why did you return home? Do you realize how important that land is for Welton International? It’s a billion-dollar project, the lifeline for thousands of employees.”

Faithe got more agitated, pushing her glasses up her nose. “You’re really too irresponsible.”

Eliza smiled faintly.

Faithe took that smile as indifference, her tone getting nastier. “Of course, you don’t work at Welton International, so you don’t know how tough things are. If Mr. Gillum sells that land to our rivals, we’ll lose many projects. It’s a domino effect. Surely, even a housewife can understand that, right?”

“If Welton International collapses under Mr. Casper’s leadership, you’re letting down everyone in the Welton family. And you still have the nerve to smile.”

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Eliza shot a frosty glare at Faithe and said, “Faithe, you’re really dedicated to Casper, always putting Welton International first. If someone didn’t know better, they’d think you were the lady of the house.”

“If you’re upset about not getting that big bonus, I get it, but there’s no need for this passive–aggressive attitude.”

Faithe’s face turned a bit awkward. If the land deal went through, she would indeed get a sizable bonus. She couldn’t deny that part of her frustration came from this. But having Eliza, of all people, see through her motives was something she wouldn’t admit. Even though Eliza was Casper’s wife, Faithe believed she was superior to Eliza in every other

way.

“Mrs. V Welton, you’re quite the joker. I’ve been with Mr. Casper for years, and Welton

International feels like my own home. How could I not be concerned when there’s trouble at home?”

Faithe stood up, repeating her usual line. “Mr. Casper is very busy and can’t make time for you. If you need anything, call me. I gave you my card last time.”

Eliza didn’t say anything more.

Faithe shot her a disdainful look before heading out of the hospital room.

Just then, a nurse came in to administer Eliza’s IV, stopping Faithe. “You need to stay. She

needs someone to take care of her.”

“Have the hospital arrange for a caregiver and add the cost to the bill,” Faithe replied coldly, then left quickly.

The nurse couldn’t help but protest, “How can you just leave her like this?”

Neither woman responded to the nurse.

Eliza moved her lips and said, “It’s okay, I can manage on my own.”

The nurse sighed quietly and left after setting up the IV.

Eliza’s body was on fire with pain. It felt like every inch of her skin was raw. Turning either way was uncomfortable, so she decided to sit up.

She was in a basic ward that didn’t even have a bathroom. Needing to relieve herself, Eliza got up and started walking out, carrying her IV stand. She hadn’t gone far when she heard someone call her name.

“Elle.” She turned around and saw Renee.

“Renee?”

“Are you sick?” Renee quickly took the IV stand from her hands. “Why is no one taking care of you?”

“It’s nothing serious.” She noticed the food container in Renee’s hands. “Someone in your family is in the hospital?”

“My mother-in-law wasn’t feeling well, and Daniel asked me to bring her some food. She’s really picky about what she eats,” Renee said casually.

“Older folks do tend to have weaker stomachs.

“Mr. Casper... doesn’t have time to take care of you?”

Renee was puzzled. Casper was a prominent figure in Falconridge. If his wife was ill, he should at least have someone available to look after Eliza, even if he couldn’t be there himself. This kind of neglect seemed out of character.

Eliza forced a smile. Unable to answer, she chose to stay silent.

“Do you need to go to the bathroom?” Renee asked, supporting Eliza, who was unsteady on her feet. “Is your foot hurting too? You seem to be limping.”

“It’s okay, thank you.”

Eliza looked much more worn out. Seeing this, Renee felt a pang of sympathy. After they returned from the restroom, she sat in Eliza's room for a while.

"Elle, is Mr. Casper... not treating you well?"

Renee wasn't sure if she guessed right. She genuinely considered Eliza her best friend. That was why she was concerned.

Eliza didn't like sharing her family troubles with others, not even with Chelsea, her childhood friend. She seldom talked about such matters.

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Eliza didn't want to be a burden to anyone or cause any trouble.

"Let's just leave it at that."

"Leave what at that?" Renee glanced at Eliza, noticing the series of red marks on her neck. and arms, her eyes narrowing with concern. "Is he abusing you? Did he hit you?"

"No." Eliza lowered her gaze, trying to hide the emotions welling up inside.

Renee got it immediately. As a woman, how could she not understand?

"Divorce him, seriously. No matter how handsome or rich he is, you don't need that kind of man. I can help you find a lawyer."

Renee's words echoed Chelsea's.

Eliza felt a warmth in her heart. "Renee, my life with Casper... isn't really the best, but I can't leave him right now."

"Why not? Marriage is a choice. If he doesn't want to split, take it to court. Are you worried he'll fight over the assets?"

Eliza shook her head slightly. "It's not that."

Renee watched Eliza, who seemed hesitant to speak further. She got it; there were many things Eliza couldn't share.

She sighed softly. "That day you came to our house, your hand was wrapped in bandages. I should've realized then."

Eliza remained silent.

Renee held her hand sympathetically. "Whatever I can do to help, just ask. You really can't keep living with this man. It'll ruin your life."

Renee had barely finished speaking when Casper pushed open the hospital room door and entered. He had overheard part of their conversation, and his expression was dark.

Renee watched him with unprecedented disgust, not even bothering with a greeting. She just said to Eliza, "Elle, think about what I said. I'll leave you to it."

"Okay."

After Renee left, Casper, with a grim face, turned to Eliza lying on the bed.

After a long while, he finally said, "What nonsense have you been feeding her?"

Eliza was taken aback. She did not say much, but even if she had, it was the truth. What was he accusing her of?

Are you afraid of tarnishing your good image? Don't worry. People already know what kind of person you are."

"And what kind of person am I?" His brows furrowed, his expression darkening.

Eliza turned her face away, not in the mood to argue. His presence alone made the air tense because she never knew when he would snap. In the face of such madness, silence was the best strategy.

Eliza said no more, Casper just watched her: one evading, the other pursuing.

Eliza felt exhausted. "I want to sleep for a bit."

"Go to sleep. I'll keep an eye on your

For once, he said something humane. But... that was all it was.

When Eliza woke up, a nurse was changing her IV bag. "The needle backflushed. Did you fall asleep and forget you were still on an IV?"

Had Casper left? A wave of silent mockery washed over Eliza.

"My fault," the nurse adjusted the drip rate and noted the time. "When I came over, someone was here. I thought he would press the call button when needed. I didn't expect him to leave without a word."

"I'm sorry for the trouble." Eliza felt embarrassed.

The nurse comforted her in return. "It's okay, but don't let it happen again. Keep an eye on it yourself. Stay awake until it's done, then you can sleep."

"Alright."

Eliza lost all desire to sleep. She watched her IV drip until it was finished.

When the nurse came to remove the needle, Eliza asked, "Can I be discharged?"

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Eliza was worried the nurse might misunderstand, so she added, "I'll be back first thing tomorrow morning."

"Are you sure you're up for it?" The nurse eyed her with concern. "I wouldn't recommend you go home."

"I can't sleep well in the hospital." She lied casually.

The nurse didn't want to make things difficult, and suggested, "Alright then, just fill out a discharge form and get the doctor's signature. But you need to be back early tomorrow for your IV treatment."

"Got it, thanks."

Before leaving the hospital, Eliza called Chelsea. Then, she grabbed a cab to her apartment.

Robin was already back, looking lost. Sometimes, he wouldn't speak; other times, he just smiled vacantly.

"Robin, do you recognize me? I'm your sister." Eliza looked at her brother, feeling a constant ache in her heart.

Chelsea patted her shoulder, signaling her not to worry. "I've set up an appointment with a psychiatrist for tomorrow. Let's see what they say and plan out the next steps for his treatment."

It seemed like the only option now, but it was the best outcome they could hope for.

Casper hadn't gone back on his word.

"Chelsea, I'm terrified that Casper might change his mind. If one day, he decides to take Robin to some godforsaken place, we might never see him again."

"Do you really think he'd do that?"

Chelsea didn't know Casper well, but judging by how he treated Eliza, it wasn't beyond him to do something so cruel.

Eliza just wanted to keep Robin safe. "Chelsea, I have an idea."

"Go ahead."

"I want to sell the house our parents left us."

Chelsea was surprised. "Why sell the house? Where will you guys live?"

"I never planned on staying in Falconridge."

Eliza's eyes darkened; she no longer felt any attachment to this city. Leaving was

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inevitable, and it was the ultimate choice.

Chelsea felt a pang of sadness. It took someone like Casper to drive Eliza to this point.

"I understand. Wherever you go, I'll support you. And I can help you sell the house."

Eliza nodded, offering a grateful smile. "Thanks, Chelsea."

"No need to thank me. I just want you to keep on living well."

"I will."

Eliza was scarred and wounded and had already lost the sparkle in her eyes.

She wasn't always like this. Her adoptive parents were busy making a living and rarely spent time with her, but she was nurtured with care.

By nature, Eliza was cheerful, generous, sincere, and uncalculating in her dealings with others.

But...she didn't know when she had become so submissive.

It probably started the day she married Casper, Love could keep a person vibrant and splendid or plunge someone into hell, never to rise again.

For Eliza, it was the latter.

“Enough about me.” Eliza picked up her phone and transferred all her money to Chelsea, “I know this isn’t nearly enough for Robin’s treatment, but I’ll figure something out... I’ll find another job.”

“I don’t want your money.” Chelsea sent the money back.

Eliza was going back to Casper’s home to face tough times. How could she leave without a penny?

“Chelsea...” Eliza hoped Chelsea would accept it.

Chelsea firmly refused. “When you finally leave that monster, you can pay me back. I’ll hold nothing against you until then.”

Alright.

Eliza kept a mental note of what she owed Chelsea. When she could, she would repay her double.

Eliza stayed at Chelsea’s place for the night.

That night, she bathed Robin, cut his hair, shaved his beard, and changed him into clean clothes.

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get a good night’s sleep, always waking up with a start. Eliza stayed by his side all night, barely catching any rest herself.

Robin could never

By morning, Eliza was back at the hospital. She had been there alone for almost a week. Casper hadn’t shown up, and neither had Faithe. The hospital room’s TV had been blaring nonstop news about Welton International all week long. From those reports, Eliza learned that Easton had indeed sold that piece of land to Welton International’s rival. The tension at Welton International towards Casper had reached an all-time high.

Would Casper blame her for this mess? But what did it have to do with her anyway? He was the one who asked her to stay with him overnight, and he was the one who took her away from Easton.

“You’re looking much better today,” the nurse said with a smile as she walked in.

“Yeah, I’m planning on getting discharged.”

“Sure thing.” the nurse said, handing Eliza some medication. She added casually, “We had a transfer patient today. The guy with her looked like the one who visited you the other day.”

A guy? Casper was the only one who had visited her.

“A transfer patient... for surgery or...?”

“They said she had a knife wound a while back, almost hit her heart. She needs a thorough check-up, the nurse said, rolling her eyes a bit. “This woman’s already been through a bunch of hospitals with a stack of reports this thick. I don’t get why she needs more checks. Maybe it’s just rich folks being paranoid.”

Was Nova afraid of dying? When she stabbed herself and framed Eliza, she didn’t show any hesitation then.

Casper had plenty of money. If he wanted to waste it and his time on Nova’s whims, that was his business, not hers.

“Maybe,” Eliza replied nonchalantly.

The nurse hummed in agreement. “Well, come find me in a bit, and I’ll get your discharge papers ready.”

“Will do.”

Eliza had healed up quite nicely. She quickly packed her things, slung her bag over her shoulder, and walked out of the hospital room

As she finalized her discharge papers, Casper appeared, pushing Nova in a wheelchair from the VIP ward. Upon spotting Eliza, Nova froze for a second, then turned to Co

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“Casper, can you go get the report for me?”

Casper shot a quick glance at Eliza before walking away, his face dark and brooding.

gaway,

Nová rolled up to Eliza. “So, you were in the hospital too? Eliza, stop with your little schemes. Trying to imitate me won’t get you anywhere. Casper won’t pity you,” she said, her slender fingers lightly stroking her wheelchair. “He treats me differently, you

know? Look, this wheelchair is super expensive and costs tens of thousands. Casper got it for me.”

Nova loved asserting her presence over Eliza, especially when Casper wasn't around, allowing her malice and nastiness to shine through without restraint.

Eliza didn't want to engage with her nonsense. But she also didn't want to let her revel in it too easily. “Oh, so he got you this fancy wheelchair? You look thrilled. I thought he gave you a new pair of legs.”

“You...” Nova's face twisted in anger.

Eliza took the discharge forms from the nurse and stepped closer to Nova, “Enjoy my man, but don't return him. I wouldn't want to catch STDs.”

“Eliza, you...” Nova seethed, gritting her teeth..

Eliza arched an eyebrow and walked away. It wasn't that she lacked the words to clap back at Nova. Most of the time, she just couldn't express her feelings freely. Nova had Casper backing her up. And Eliza, well, she was just a poor soul bound by constraints.

As she turned, she saw Casper standing right behind her, his expression stormy. “What did you just say?”

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Eliza shot him a cold, emotionless glance, didn't bother answering, and walked away purposefully. Moments later, her phone buzzed. It was the hospital calling—they needed her to come in. Rose was showing signs of waking up.

She quickly flagged down a taxi and headed to the small town hospital. On the way, Aaron called, “Eliza, did the doctor get in touch with you? Your mom has made a lot of progress.” “I'm on my way to the hospital now,” Eliza's voice was a mix of excitement and nerves.

“I'll be there soon. We can talk when we see each other.”

“Alright.”

Eliza's eyes sparkled with determination, hope, and confidence about the future. Her brother was already safe. If her mom's condition improved, she was ready to divorce Casper. Her breathing quickened, and her heartbeat raced as she hurried into the hospital.

“Hi Aaron.”

'This is amazing news.'

Aaron had gotten there a bit earlier and was waiting for her. His face lit up with excitement. He'd been involved in the project from the start and didn't expect results this soon.

"Yeah, I was thrilled when I got the call, but..." Eliza's voice wavered. "My mom's been in a coma for so long. What if her mind...?"

"It should be fine. Relax."

"Okay."

They walked together into the doctor's office. The doctor responsible for the project showed Eliza a presentation of Rose's progress over time.

After the presentation, Aaron turned to Eliza. "How about we go see your mom now?"

"Yes, I can't wait."

"Let's go, then."

Rose was lying on a hospital bed in the ward, with a personal nurse and various devices attached to her. Previously, no matter how much Eliza called out to her mother, there was no response. Now, when her name was called, her eyelids twitched. For someone who had been in a coma for years, it was nothing short of a miracle.

Tears welled

up

in Eliza's eyes. Aaron gently patted her back. "Don't get too worked up.

Everything will get better."

"Okay."

They weren't allowed to stay too long in the research ward. After leaving, Aaron talked with Eliza about health matters and being a doctor.

"I have a friend who's a gynecology specialist. I told her about your condition, and she thinks there's hope for treatment."

Aaron's idea was straightforward. If Eliza got pregnant, the antibodies in her blood could be her best protection. The Welton family would do anything to keep Jeffery alive. Even

if they eventually showed her mercy, it was her body, her life, and she had a long way to go.

But Eliza shook her head. "I don't need that."

"You're still young. There are many possibilities."

"Aaron, I don't want to get pregnant, especially not with Casper's child." The thought of it now repulsed her as much as she once longed for it. "Don't worry about this."

Her strong aversion made Aaron a bit awkward. He quickly changed the subject, "I'm not working as the family doctor for the Welton family anymore. After this project, I'll be going back to work at my family's hospital."

She looked surprised. "Really? What about Jeffrey's illness?"

The Welton family will have no shortage of good doctors." He put his hands in his pockets, looking off into the distance with a sigh. "Casper isn't the same person I knew. Leaving early is better for him, for me, and for all of us."

"From now on, you don't need to hold back with me. If you need any help, just let me know." He turned to look at Eliza with a hint of hope in his eyes.

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Eliza didn't even glance up at him. She just gave a slight smile and nodded. "Hmm."

Aaron offered to drive Eliza home, and she agreed. During the ride, she mainly asked about the steps to take once her mother woke up and how to help her regain her physical abilities. She even inquired about Robin's chances of recovery.

Aaron answered all her questions, patient and gentle as ever. Every now and then, they'd reminisce about their school days.

At a red light, Eliza's phone slipped from her grasp and fell to the floor. She unbuckled her seatbelt to retrieve it. When she tried to buckle up again, she struggled a bit.

Noticing her difficulty, Aaron reached over to help her with the seatbelt.

Right at that moment, Casper driving by saw the scene. From his angle, it looked as if Aaron was leaning over Eliza, intimately close, without any reservations. Was it a kiss, a peck, or something else? He could only guess.

Casper quickly turned the wheel and followed Aaron's car.

Eliza didn't let Aaron drop her off at the entrance of Welton Estate. Instead, she asked him to stop at the crossroads. "Aaron, thanks for the ride. And thank you for taking care of my mom's case. I really look forward to the day she opens her eyes and talks to me."

"Don't worry, that day will come soon," Aaron reassured her.

"Okay," she replied.

After saying goodbye to Aaron, Eliza returned to Welton Estate. The house was eerily quiet. Without Casper and Nova around, even the air felt fresher.

However, just as she had taken off her shoes, Casper's car pulled in. Marian quickly fetched a pair of slippers and waited by the door.

Casper said nothing and didn't even bother to change his shoes. He walked briskly behind Eliza, grabbed her wrist, and dragged her upstairs.

"What now?" she snapped.

Whenever she felt a bit better, he treated her roughly. It's like he didn't want her to enjoy a moment of peace.

"Found someone new and feeling all bold now?" he sneered, gripping her wrist tightly. "Eliza, what exactly are you up to?"

don't know what you're talking about."

"You don't know?" He leaned in close, his gaze piercing her trembling eyes. "Where did you go after leaving the hospital? Went on a date with your precious Aaron, didn't you?"

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Eliza stared at him, a deep-seated disgust rising within her. He could spend every day with Nova and do whatever he wanted. But if she even spoke to Aaron, she had committed a

cardinal sin.

"Is being with a man always considered a date? If so, how should I interpret your intimate relationship with Nova?" she retorted, glaring at him.

It wasn't jealousy of envy but about standing up for herself. He clearly didn't love her, yet he was so suspicious of her. If it was about preserving the so-called honor of the Welton family, he should manage his own actions better.

“You’re questioning me?” He glared at her hatefully, throwing her onto the bed with force. “Eliza, I’ve overlooked your past, given you respect, and you still have the nerve to question me?”

She seemed resigned. What she was to him didn’t matter anymore.

As he leaned over her, she coldly said, “If I’m so tainted, aren’t you afraid of getting sick?”

“Can you swear you haven’t been with Aaron? Did Easton ever touch you? Eliza, can you swear you’ve always been faithful to me?” His eyes reddened as he grabbed her clothes and tore them fiercely. “Can you?”

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A chill smile.

ran through her, freezing her heart in its grip. Eliza’s lips curled into a cold, mocking

It wasn’t that she was afraid to say that. She just didn’t see the point anymore. She was done trying to prove her innocence, begging him to understand.

“Casper, why are we still dragging this out? Aren’t you tired of this pointless, painful mess? Seriously, let’s just get a divorce.”

Casper’s eyes widened for a moment. Divorce? He thought she’d never bring it up again. Was it because of Aaron? Or was there someone else?

“Oh, so are you tired of playing house? Are you looking to upgrade to Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Lynch, or Mrs. Gillum? Are you open to any of those titles?” His voice dripped with sarcasm, like he’d just heard the world’s biggest joke. The smirk on his face radiated mockery and disdain.

Eliza pulled her clothes tighter around her, her gaze steady. “I think I’ve almost paid my dues, even if you think I owe Nova something. Just let me go. Let my family go. I’d be grateful, okay?”

“You don’t think you deserve this?” His eyes were sharp, cutting into her like a knife.

It didn’t matter anymore; she was numb to the pain. As long as she could get away, she wouldn’t complain, even if she had just one breath left.

“Sure, I deserve it. But does my family deserve it? If I’d known marrying you would lead here, I’d never have chosen love”

“So, have you found someone else?” He sneered.

She was too exhausted to explain. “Fine, let’s just say I have.”

“Say that again?” His eyes darkened as he grabbed her neck. “I dare you.”

Her face tightened as she struggled to breathe, her eyes burning with resentment as she stared him down. “Casper, have you forgotten how you framed my dad? How you drove Robin insane? Have you forgotten these past two years of hell?”

Her eyes were bloodshot, tears streaming down her face. She’d never hated anyone more. This was the first time she’d stood up to him, and it showed a fierce determination. If it came to it, she wasn’t afraid of dying. She had nothing left to lose.

His grip loosened, a flicker of surprise in his eyes. “Haven’t I explained Robin’s situation? And your father? His own dirty dealings got him reported.”

He spoke as if it were all his actions were justified. It was as if he had no part in it. Eliza’s tear-filled eyes were heavy with disappointment. She knew he’d never admit it. She’d find out herself if Robin had assaulted Nova and why her father was arrested and died in prison.

Casper tightened his grip on her chin, disliking her defiance. “If you think you can settle scores with me, you’re mistaken. You’d better behave and stay as Mrs. Welton, or else...

Or else her family wouldn’t be safe. She understood his threat all too well.

Eliza glared at him, her lips trembling as she bit down hard. He pinched her face, forcing her to relax, and then crushed his lips against hers.

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His tongue slipped between her lips, demanding her to get tangled up with him. “Be good, listen to me, alright?” he said, softening his tone.

Eliza wasn’t having any of it, her fists pounding against him, fighting back.

But to him, her weak punches felt more like playful flirting. His interest spiked, their breaths mingling as he nibbled her earlobe, demanding, “Who’s better, me or Aaron?”

Eliza couldn’t respond. Faced with such a twisted question, she bit down hard, letting him wonder.

She stayed silent, but his frenzy escalated, gripping her waist and pressing against her burning skin. ‘Tell me, who’s better? Who satisfies you more? Speak.’

She wouldn't say a word, and he kept tormenting her. In the end, he got nothing out of her lips.

Panting, he bit the soft skin behind her ear. "I heard that your mom is showing good results in the research project. She's waking up, right?"

Eliza's heart sank. She was terrified Casper would meddle in this.

"Please."

"Please, what?" His hand caressed her slender waist gently, "Hmm?"

"Please, don't go after someone already in a coma. My mom raised Nova; she hasn't done anything wrong."

He scoffed, his lips brushing her ear. Then tell me, who satisfies you more, me or Aaron?". He was fixated on getting an answer. It was all about his ego.

Cornered, she reluctantly lied, "You."

"You slept with him, didn't you!" he exploded, shoving her away, his face twisted in rage, "Eliza, you've got some nerve, cheating on me. You'll pay for this."

Eliza's eyes trembled. Wasn't this the answer he wanted?

"Eliza, you're something else."

He pointed at her fiercely before storming out of the bedroom, slamming the door behind him..

Eliza's heart ached. Wasn't this what he wanted to hear? What's with the rage, then?

Soon, a car roared out of Welton Estate.

Eliza curled up, hugging her knees, sobbing softly.

For two days, Casper was nowhere to be found.

Eliza was on edge. She called the hospital almost every day, checking on her mom's progress. They always said things were going smoothly.

She also called Aaron, as he was involved in the project, but he didn't say much.

Eliza's anxiety eased a bit. She thought Casper's anger had cooled down, so she planned to apologize, to sweet-talk him, hoping to lighten his mood so he wouldn't hold a grudge. After all, she couldn't handle his revenge.

Three days later, in the morning, she woke up early, dressed in one of Casper's favorite outfits, and did her makeup meticulously, ready to visit Welton International.

In her hands were homemade cookies. Prepping and baking them took almost two hours, and they smelled delicious.

Before she left, she checked herself in the mirror, looking radiant. She was like a blooming rose, dazzlingly beautiful.

Just as she got into the car, a call came from Hope Hospital, "Hello?"

"Ms. Eliza, could you come to the hospital? There's been a sudden complication with the project. Your mother, she..."

Eliza felt a sharp pain in her chest, as if a bad omen loomed, "What happened to my mom?"