

His Destructive Toxic Love Chapter 93

The doctor didn't get into specifics over the phone. His voice was laced with anxiety and helplessness, even tinged with regret. This left her mind racing with all sorts of possibilities.

"Take me to Hope Hospital, please," she urged to the driver, her voice tight with worry.

As soon as the taxi pulled up to the hospital entrance, she didn't wait for it to come to a complete stop. She grabbed her purse and the tin of cookies she had baked for Casper and jumped out.

Hope Hospital was bustling with activity today, more so than usual. Staff members were rushing in and out. She had no time to ponder why and made a beeline for Dr. Sanders' office, the doctor overseeing her mother's treatment.

"Dr. Sanders," she called out, her forehead dotted with sweat, her eyes filled with uncertainty.

Dr. Sanders looked up, got to his feet, and led her to the adjacent room. He pursed his lips, looking troubled and apologetic. "Ms. Eliza, your mother's program..."

"What about it? Dr. Sanders, please, just tell me, she pleaded, her voice trembling as she locked eyes with him. Her heart pounded erratically, and her legs felt like jelly.

Dr. Sanders sighed. "You must've seen the commotion when you arrived. The hospital has been acquired, and as a result, the program is temporarily suspended."

Her mother's treatment was at a critical juncture. An interruption now could worsen her condition, maybe even be fatal. Eliza struggled to comprehend the suddenness of it all. Hadn't there been any warnings about this acquisition?

"Dr. Sanders, does the acquisition automatically mean my mom's program has to stop? Isn't there another way? You know how serious her condition is. If the treatment is paused, she might not make it," she said, desperation in her voice.

The doctor knew the stakes better than anyone, but some decisions were out of his hands. "Ms. Eliza, you might want to call Dr. Martin. He's leading this project. Maybe he can find a way to resume it."

Aaron. How could she have forgotten Aaron?

Eliza hurried out of the office and called him. He had just heard the news and was already

looking for solutions. “Don’t worry, I’m heading to the hospital right now. We had no prior warning about this acquisition; it’s all so sudden.”

“I’ll be waiting, Aaron.”

“Alright.”

Eliza paced nervously between the doctor’s office and her mother’s lab, clutching her phone. When Aaron finally arrived, looking exhausted but determined, she rushed to meet him.

Aaron, she called out, relief flooding her voice.

“This acquisition blindsided us, but don’t worry, we’ll find a solution,” he reassured her, his words calming her a little.

Her immediate concern was her mother’s condition. “What about my mom’s illness?”

“She’s still on her medication. Even if the program is suspended, there’s a process we must follow. I’ll talk to the team to see if we can delay suspending the research for now. The most pressing issue is to discuss the situation with the company that bought the hospital,” Aaron explained.

Eliza nodded, feeling a flicker of hope. Aaron seemed to be the only one who could navigate this mess. “Thank you, Aaron.”

“No need to thank me. Come on, let’s go to my office and figure out which company is behind this.”

“Okay,” she replied, following him into his office.

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After the hospital was bought out, a lot of staff changes happened. Everyone was busy packing up their things.

Dr. Sanders walked in, knocking on the door with a document in hand. “Dr. Martin, the company that acquired our hospital is called CSP Corporation.”

CSP Corporation was a familiar name in Falconridge. This company was all about acquisitions and investments. They were involved in various industries and had a strong presence in Falconridge for years. Especially in the last year, their activities had been all over the news.

“Who’s the boss?” Aaron asked.

Dr. Sanders shook his head. “No idea, no one’s seen the boss.”

“Got it. Go ahead and do your thing.”

Eliza was getting anxious. “Aaron, if we knew who the boss was, could we try negotiating to keep the project going?”

“It’s the only option we have right now.”

The research project wasn’t the only issue. If the hospital didn’t provide the space, the overseas licensing would be terminated, and once the project was shelved, restarting it would be extremely difficult. It was like signing a contract and then unilaterally terminating it—that was a breach of contract. Losing credibility would make future collaborations nearly impossible.

He motioned for Eliza to stay calm. “I’ll call the team abroad first to see if it’s possible to transfer the project to another hospital, perhaps one owned by the Martin family, and continue there.”

This brought new hope to Eliza. Her eyes sparkled. “If that’s really possible, that would be amazing.”

Aaron went to make the call, while Eliza waited anxiously.

When he returned, his brow was furrowed. “They said an application was filed to discontinue the project this morning, and the termination fee has already been sent to their team’s account. The project has been terminated.”

It was like a punch to the gut. Eliza felt her mind go blank, and she nearly collapsed. Aaron quickly helped her to sit down. “It shouldn’t have happened so quickly.”

But what shouldn’t have happened had happened, and there was no chance to change the outcome. Tears filled Eliza’s eyes; the discontinuation of this project meant that her mother’s chance of survival was now slim. Aaron gently patted her back. This was an outcome no one wanted to see.

Suddenly, the door was flung open. Casper walked in. By his side was Faithe, carrying a stack of thick documents. “Dr. Martin, you must sign the termination letter for Rose’s project later. The group needs to make a backup.”

Aaron stared at the documents in shock, then back at Casper with astonishment. “It’s you? CSP Corporation is yours?”

How could it be Casper? If it really was him, why would he discontinue the project?

With tears in her eyes, Eliza turned back to stare at Casper. It was him! He was the one who acquired Hope Hospital? He was the one who discontinued her mother's project.

The hatred in her eyes was palpable; she walked up to Casper and slammed the tin of homemade cookies onto him. The tin fell to the floor, breaking open, and the shaped cookies scattered everywhere.

Casper met her gaze emotionlessly. "You're a monster," she said, grabbing his shirt and tearing at it. "What's your reason for doing this? Why? Casper, why? Tell me!"

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"Mrs. Welton, please, take it easy." Faithe tried to push Eliza away.

Instead, Eliza shoved her back forcefully. "Get away from me."

Tears welled up in Eliza's eyes, a torrent of pain breaking free. She glared at Casper standing in front of her with utter despair. "Why, Casper, just why?"

He gripped her flailing hands tightly, his eyes cold and unyielding. "Why? You seriously don't know why? Don't you realize what you've done? Eliza, you admitted it yourself—you slept with him."

Casper pointed a finger at Aaron, who stood across the room.

Aaron was taken aback. "Casper, what on earth are you talking about?"

"Am I lying?" Casper dragged Eliza over to Aaron. "Ask her if she didn't say you two slept together. Aaron, I considered you a brother, and you slept with my wife?"

"I would never do something like that." Aaron was firm, bewildered that Eliza would joke about such a thing. "There has to be a misunderstanding. You know Eliza."

Casper wasn't interested in Aaron's explanations. He grabbed Eliza by the back of her head, forcing her to look at Aaron. "Eliza, the ultimate expression of love is to go down together. Let's start with your mom accompanying your so-called love."

With a violent shove, he pushed Eliza into Aaron's arms.

Aaron quickly steadied Eliza and straightened himself up, his voice filled with indignation. "Casper, this is going too far. Do you think you can just say these things lightly? What you're doing is beyond cruel. Even if you and Eliza are fighting, her mom is still your

mother-in-law."

“If she saw me as her man, she wouldn’t be fooling around with you.” Casper’s face twitched with rage as he stare at Eliza. “This is just the beginning.”

The beginning?

All because she had been coerced into a lie, and now his revenge was relentless.

Looking at his striking face, she let out a bitter laugh. She had never hated anyone so much; she despised her own helplessness and weakness even more.

She forced herself to swallow her tears, suppressing the anguish surging inside, and approached Casper once more. “Will you only stop if I die?”

Her voice was barely a whisper, as fragile as ash.

Aaron shivered at her words, but Casper was eerily calm, a mocking smirk curling on his lips. That smirk was full of disdain, contempt, and scorn.

He knew she had too many ties; dying wouldn’t be so easy.

He didn’t give Eliza an answer. Turning on his heel, he walked away.

Faithe hurried after him, “Mr. Casper...”

Just as she caught up, Casper swung around and delivered a sharp, heavy slap. “Who told you to cancel the project with the overseas client?”

Faithe saw stars, her eyes filling with tears of humiliation. She had acted on her own, believing it was inevitable. “Mr. Casper, I just thought...”

“From now on, if you dare decide anything on your own again without my orders, you can pack your things and go.”

“I... I understand.”

Faithe, clutching her swollen cheek, trailed after Casper as he left.

Back in the office, Aaron handed Eliza a tissue. “Even if the project is terminated, and the medication stops, I’ll find another way. Don’t stress too much. I won’t let your mom just slip away.”

Eliza gave Aaron a grateful look. Then, her gaze dropped in despair. “You saw it, Casper’s a madman. I’m really scared he’ll come after you, too. If that happens, I’d never forgive myself. I don’t want to drag anyone else down with me.”

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“You don’t have to worry about me. What’s the worst he can do? Fight me?” Aaron had grown up with Casper, and although Casper had become unreasonable, Aaron knew deep down that wasn’t his true nature. Aaron chuckled, “I can hold my own against him.”

It was meant as a joke, yet Eliza still felt uneasy.

After she and Aaron had left, Casper returned to the hospital office alone. The tin was still on the floor, and some cookies inside hadn’t spilled out. They were just lying there. He reached out, picking up the tin. The cute pink box had a funky look. The cookies inside were colorful. They had eyes and ears that were lifelike—clearly, she had put effort into them.

If today’s events hadn’t unfolded, would she have appeared in front of him, offering the cookies with eagerness, saying words to comfort him?

He took a cookie and put it in his mouth. The rich aroma instantly filled his senses. He chewed contentedly, a faint smile appearing in his eyes. He carefully packed the remaining cookies, taking them with him.

Back at Welton Estate, Eliza took out the divorce papers she had printed earlier. Staring at the few words on it, she felt unusually calm.

“So, you’re back,” Nova’s mocking voice rang out.

Eliza put the divorce papers back in her bag and looked up. “This is my home.”

“It won’t be for long,” Nova said, leaning on a cane, her face lit with excitement. “Let me be honest with you, Tristan came to see me today. He had a fortune teller predict me and Casper’s compatibility. He said I bring fortune to my husband.”

“That’s nice, a perfect match in heaven,” Eliza retorted with a sneer.

Furious, Nova glared, “Stay jealous, oh no, I mean, just wait for your death. It’s almost time for Jeffrey to need another blood transfusion. Just wait to be drained of blood and die.”

Eliza didn’t care about Nova’s curse. If curses could kill, Casper would have died hundreds of times over.

“Nova, as long as I’m alive, you’ll always be the mistress who can’t see the light of day.”

“You...”

Casper walked in. Nova immediately started crying as if on the verge of tears, “Casper, you’re back.”

“Yeah.”

He ignored Nova’s dramatic expressions and focused on Eliza. “Come to the study with me. I want to talk about your mother’s project.

Casper was unusually serious. Eliza initially didn’t plan to engage, but she paused, then followed him.

“Close the door,” he said.

Eliza turned to close the door, and when she turned back, Casper was already standing in front of her. He was so close, their breaths intertwined.

Eliza turned her face away. “Mr. Casper, weren’t we going to discuss my mother’s project?” “Do you hate me?”

She found it amusing, “Isn’t that quite normal?”

“What if I said I could help restart the project? Would you still hate me?”

Eliza was stunned.

What did he mean? Restart the project?

Once the project was halted, it was supposed to be impossible to restart. If it were to be restarted, the penalty fees would need to be paid, and a significant amount of resources would also be required.

“Do you think I would believe you?”

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“Do you really have any other choice but to trust me?” His large hand braced against the door frame, his body leaning in, almost nose-to-nose with her. “You think Aaron can help? The best he can do is get your mom into his hospital and delay the inevitable.”

“You bought out the hospital, cutting off the project—was it all just to see my mom die, like you wanted?”

His revenge was successful, and now he was back, talking about restarting the project. What was his game? Was this all just a twisted game to him?

She looked into his eyes, searching for any hidden meaning, but she couldn’t read him.

“Restart the project? What are you really after?” She remembered what Nova had said earlier and couldn’t help but sneer, “If this is still about your grandfather, you didn’t need to go through all this. I can’t escape it anyway!”

“No,” he denied quickly.

It was not about that? Then what?

She was sick of guessing, like burning with anticipation. A quick answer would be less painful.

“Then what is it?”

His long fingers lifted slowly, and just as they were about to touch her face, she reflexively dodged to the side.

His fingertips missed, and he looked displeased. “Does it matter what it is? Who else but me can restart the project for you?”

“Do you find this amusing?”

She couldn’t understand and wouldn’t agree to his terms easily. She didn’t want to be pushed to the edge, even if she was desperate.

“If you really need a reason, then... let’s have a child.”

His large hand gripped her slender shoulder, desire boiling inside him, yet his expression was eerily calm.

Have a child?

Her eyes widened in shock, and she shoved him away forcefully. Had he forgotten about the half bottle of birth control pills he made her take?

He didn’t want her to be pregnant, and now he wanted her to bear a child?

What did he take her for?

“Casper, I can’t get pregnant, and I won’t. If you think having a baby could produce antibodies to give your grandfather another ten years, forget it.”

Eliza was defiantly refusing to bear children. He felt deeply insulted. “How do you know if you don’t try?”

“Try?” She scoffed at his angry, twisted face, tears misting her eyes. “Haven’t you tried enough? Every single day, you pinned me down to have sex with me. Did you ever take precautions? Did I get pregnant? Mr. Casper, those birth control pills weren’t fake.”

Casper could never understand this pain. He could have kids with any woman he wanted, but she couldn’t have children anymore. She had lost the right and opportunity to be a mother all thanks to Casper.

“Do you regret it?” Her tear-filled eyes curved like a crescent moon, carrying a heart-wrenching sadness. “You should have gotten me pregnant, used the antibodies for your grandfather, then taken the child away. Instead, you made it almost impossible to have your child.”

Casper remained silent, staring at her and watching her tears fall, shattering on the ground like his heart.

His slender fingers gently wiped away her tears. “If you can’t have a child, then so be it. Why are you crying?”

“Will you still restart the project? Will you save my mom? After pushing her to hell, will you pull her back up? If she dies, and Robin goes mad, then you would have successfully torn our whole family apart—are you satisfied with your revenge now?”

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Every word she said hit him right in the heart, leaving him utterly defenseless.

They’d been married for two years, and she had always been as gentle as a kitten. This sudden burst of aggression was completely out of character.

His eyes darkened.

He retreated to his desk, pulled out a cigarette, and placed it between his lips. He couldn’t answer her question.

With a flick of his lighter, he took a deep drag. “Haven’t you always wanted to work? I found you a job.”

“I don’t need you to find me a job,” she replied coldly.

He took another deep inhale and exhaled a cloud of gray smoke. “Seems like you also don’t need your mother to come back to life.”

“What exactly do you want?” She knew Casper was up to no good. After

misunderstanding her relationship with Aaron, he probably wanted to send her to some shady place. "Do you want me to work in a nightclub?"

"A nightclub?" He scoffed like he'd just heard a joke. "Are you good at pleasing men or serving them submissively? You're as stiff as a board in bed. Who would like that?"

His insult stung. Stubbornly wiping away her tears, she asked, "Then where do you want to send me?"

"To the back alleys of Miami to hustle or to Las Vegas to run scams. Could you do that?" He blew a cloud of smoke right into her face in anger.

She coughed a few times, waving away the smoke. "I can't."

"Then just go to work like you're supposed to." He picked up an employment contract from his desk and handed it to her. "Report to the company tomorrow."

Eliza eyed him warily, then looked down at the paper.

Welton International, Design Department.

The words burned her eyes. She immediately handed the contract back to Casper. "I'm not going to Welton International."

He frowned. When they first got married, she had begged him more than once, dreaming of joining the Design Department at Welton International.

Back then, she was naïve and innocent, always dreaming of going to work with Casper and coming home together like a couple straight out of a romantic movie.

She had submitted her resume to the Design Department of Welton International multiple times. With her qualifications and experience, she met all the hiring standards.

However, Casper still intervened and refused. He wouldn't allow her to work, and going to Welton International was out of the question.

After that, she didn't bother trying.

Now...she wanted to be as far away from Casper as possible. If given the chance, she'd never want to see him again.

"I won't go."

She wouldn't accept a job with strings attached.

Her repeated refusals infuriated Casper. He fiercely stubbed out his cigarette, grabbed her by the arm, and pressed her onto the couch, his hands propped beside her.

“Work at Welton International to keep your mother alive, or don’t and let her die. Choose one,” he demanded.

Eliza moved her lips. It was always an ultimatum. It seemed she never really had a choice. “What’s your real reason for wanting me to work at Welton International?” She met his gaze directly, those dark abyss–like eyes plotting something she couldn’t understand.

He chuckled mockingly. “I’m just curious how you’ll manage to date other men right under my nose.”

So that was his reason.

She looked up to meet the scorn in his eyes. “If I truly want to do that, it’ll be impossible to prevent it from happening.”

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She always knew how to push Casper’s buttons.

In a fit of rage, he grabbed her shoulders and shoved her down onto the couch, his teeth clenched in anger. “You’re addicted to this, aren’t you?”

Eliza met his furious gaze with cold indifference. His body pressed tightly against hers, and the weight and warmth of him made her skin crawl.

He leaned in to kiss her, but she turned her face away in disgust. “Casper, let’s just let each other go.”

His voice was rough, almost a whisper. “Have you paid back what you owe me?”

Eliza was at a loss for words. How could she ever repay him? Would it only be settled if they were both dead?

“Casper,” Nova said, stepping into the room. She took in the scene—Casper pinning Eliza to the couch—with eyes red from jealousy, although her face remained calm and composed. “Are you busy?”

Casper released Eliza and stood up, turning to Nova. “What is it?”

“Dr. Ramos called. They found both a kidney and a heart donor,” she said, casting a deliberate glance at Eliza. “Apparently, it’s from Hope Hospital. Some project was shut down.”

Eliza's heart sank. They were talking about her own mother.

Everything clicked into place. Casper hadn't bought the hospital just to get back at her; he had done it for Nova. He didn't start the project to save her mother's life. He just wanted her mother to live long enough to harvest her organs for Nova.

The realization hit Eliza like a truck. Her mother had raised Nova for over a decade, and was now nothing but a pawn.

With a shake of her head, Eliza stepped back, her vision blurring as she collapsed to the floor.

"Eliza, are you okay?" Nova asked, her concern obviously fake as she bent down to help. "Feeling unwell?"

As she got closer, Nova whispered in Eliza's ear, "You can't win this. Casper bought that hospital for me. Your mom is still alive because I need her."

They were so close that Casper couldn't hear a word.

Eliza's eyes blazed with fury. Without warning, she grabbed a fistful of Nova's hair and yanked hard, making Nova scream. "Casper, help! She's gone crazy!"

Casper tried to pry Eliza's fingers loose, but she wouldn't let go. With a final tug, a clump of Nova's hair came free.

"Eliza, have you lost your mind?"

Nova glared at the hair in Eliza's hand, seething with anger. Eliza's eyes bore into her, filled with a murderous rage.

"Marian, take her downstairs to rest," Casper called out.

Marian hurried in and escorted Eliza away.

Nova covered her face, tears streaming down. "What's gotten into Eliza? What did I do wrong, Casper?"

Casper's face was icy. Even he could see Nova had provoked Eliza on purpose.

"Isn't the patient at Hope Hospital your mother?"

Nova feigned shock, her eyes wide. "You mean the organ donor... is my foster mother?"

"If you had to take her organs, would you?" His eyes were dark, unreadable.

Nova bit her lip, tears falling. “You know she sent me to that hospital to save money, which left my leg damaged and gave me all these complications. I did hate her for it, but... Casper, she still raised me for many years. I couldn’t.”

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Casper’s expression softened a bit.”

In his heart, Nova was never a cruel person. He gently tidied her hair, feeling a sense of relief. “You’re not well. Go rest. I promise you won’t have to wait too long for a donor.”

“Casper, I really didn’t know that the donor Hope Hospital provided was my foster mother. I had no idea.”}

She shook her head, taking the chance to wrap her arms around his waist and bury herself in his embrace.

He didn’t push her away but gently stroked her back. “Go get some rest.”>

“Okay, you should rest early, too.”&

After Nova left, he sat in the study for a while. On the bookshelf, there was a picture frame wrapped in blue cloth. He took it down and gently unveiled the cloth.

The painting was a portrait of himself from six years ago. The date below was written in elegant handwriting.

That day, a group of art students went on a field trip before their final exams. He passed by unintentionally. Full of youthful vigor, the young boys and girls cheerfully greeted him. He looked up and locked eyes with a beautiful pair of eyes.}

The girl wore a white baseball cap, a white sun protection outfit, her hair tied in a high ponytail, and a sky–blue face mask covering her small face. Like her classmates, she waved at him, her eyes curving with a smile.

That was the first time his heart fluttered.}

Near the end of the field trip, the girl approached him, handing him a portrait. “Hey, this is for you.” Her voice was a bit hoarse, and she smiled shyly. “I’ve got a cold, so my voice is a bit weird. Don’t mind it.”}

“Did you draw this?” He was surprised. He looked like an innocent teenager in the painting. “You made me look younger.”>

The young girl’s teacher called her, and she waved her hand. “I have to go.”>

“Hey, what’s your name?”>

He didn’t get a response from her. Throughout their conversation, he never saw her face, but the sunlight was so beautiful that day. She was covered up so thoroughly but still shone brightly.”

Later on, Nova found him, claiming she was the one who painted that portrait. Even though it felt off, he still accepted her as this girl who had once made his heart skip a beat. Taking a deep breath, he locked the painting away in a cabinet.

Eliza returned to the bedroom. Her petite form was curled up tightly, hiding in a corner of the large bed.

As Casper came in, a surge of intense hatred filled her. She staggered out of bed, marching towards him. She raised her hand, aiming to slap him, but he caught her wrist in mid-air.}

Her hatred was unresolved, and she lowered her head and bit into his arm. He was unable to push her away until her mouth was filled with blood. Then she finally let go, defeated.}

“Eliza, you’re getting too bold, huh?”

He pushed her away, staring at his arm. On his arm were two rows of neat, fleshly bite marks.

“Did you plan all this?” she asked, trembling.

Casper looked at her coldly. “Did I plan what?”}

“From the moment Nova needed a heart and kidney transplant, you planned to take my mother’s organs, didn’t you?” Eliza knew he wouldn’t admit it, but it didn’t matter; she didn’t need his acknowledgment. “The project was also your doing, right? You wanted my mother’s body in the best condition to meet Nova’s needs for a heart and kidney transplant.”}

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Her eyes turned red as she glared at Casper standing before her. “You stopped the project because my mom’s health finally met your requirements. You don’t need her to wake up, do you?”>

“Casper, you’re despicable and shameless. You’re worse than an animal,” she spat out, her voice filled with pain.

He grabbed a tissue to cover his bleeding wound, looking down at her. "The Pinotti family owes her this.">

"Do we owe her everything? Doesn't she owe us anything?" Her voice cracked as she screamed, years of pent-up injustice crashing over her.

She felt like she was about to snap and wanted to lash out violently.

Eliza stumbled back and collapsed onto the floor. "Murderers, you're all just murderers."}

"Can't handle it?" He crouched down, meeting her eyes. "Eliza, only you can save your mom now. If you're willing to work at Welton International..."

"So, if I go to Welton International, you'll let my mom live without taking her organs?" Her lips trembled uncontrollably.

She could take the bullying and agree to all his demands as long as he spared her mother. "Casper, my mom is innocent. You can't do this to her.")

"I promise you," he said softly, not sounding particularly sincere."

But what else could she ask for?!

"Fine, I'll go." She shut her eyes in despair. "I'll work at Welton International."}

Her voice got weaker with each word. She'd do whatever he said."

Afraid her sobs would break loose, she stuffed her hand into her mouth. Her life was already a wreck, and she could only swallow any more resentment. She bit down hard on her palm until blood dripped down."

Casper finally noticed and pried her hand away from her teeth. "Doesn't it hurt? You're so hard on yourself."}

He forcibly removed her hand from her mouth.

"Marian, bring the first aid kit."}

Eliza laughed, her tears falling like broken beads. She had no dignity left.}

Marian brought the first aid kit without asking any questions and left.

Casper opened a bottle of alcohol and poured it directly onto her palm. "It'll hurt. Just hang in there. If you really can't stand it, bite me.">

Eliza felt numb as if she couldn't feel any pain. When the alcohol touched her wound, she couldn't help but jerk her hand back.

"Stay still, it'll be over soon.">

"Casper, get lost! I don't want you here. Just go..." She lost it again."

He disinfected the wound, applied the medicine, and wrapped it with a bandage, his gaze on her calm, almost indifferent. "Get some rest. Report to Welton International first thing tomorrow.">

As the bedroom door closed, Eliza cried uncontrollably.

That night, she sat on the floor, staring at the night sky, crying all night long. Several times, she thought of jumping from the second floor, head first, but she had too many people she couldn't leave behind.

She couldn't be that selfish.

After staying awake until dawn, she washed her face and looked at her reflection in the mirror. Despite being in her twenties, she looked as exhausted as a laborer returning from the market.}

Downstairs, Marian had already prepared breakfast. Though she had little appetite, Eliza sat down and began eating her toast.

Casper and Nova came out of the elevator. Both instinctively looked at Eliza having breakfast.

"Good morning, Eliza," Nova greeted cheerily.

Eliza just shot her a cold stare."

Feeling awkward, Nova turned to Casper with a pout. "Casper, I heard Eliza is going to work at your company. I want to go too. Can you arrange a job for me?"

"Your leg needs rest and recovery as you wait for surgery. Just stay home and take it easy," he soothed her gently.

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"No way, I don't want you to take care of me. I want to earn my own money." She pleaded, hugging Casper's arm tightly. "My leg might be injured, but my heart isn't. I want to be independent. I want to work."

"Let's discuss this later."&

He neither agreed nor refused.

To Nova, that was as good as a yes. "Eliza, we're going to be colleagues soon!" She was bubbling with excitement and couldn't resist showing off a bit in front of Eliza.

Eliza finished her toast and shot her a frosty look. "Welton International is hiring high school graduates now?"

"What do you mean by that?" Nova's face flushed with anger. She hated when people used her education to belittle her. "I only lost my chance to go to college because of my leg injury."

Eliza couldn't be bothered to argue further. She grabbed her bag, ready to report to Welton International.

Casper quickly caught up and grabbed her wrist. "Let's go together."

"I'll take a cab," she snapped, shaking him off and walking away.

Casper's brow furrowed slightly as he turned and headed to his car.

Sitting in the car, his irritation grew. He picked up his phone and sent Eliza a message, [We must not reveal our relationship at the office. Otherwise, there will be consequences.]

Eliza glanced coldly at the message. Without hesitation, she blocked him.

She didn't need his reminder.

Casper paused, then sent another message, [I mean, it would be inconvenient for work.]

[Message sent. Recipient has blocked you.]

Had she blocked him?>

Casper was so furious he tossed his phone onto the passenger seat.

...0

After reporting to HR, Eliza headed to the design department alone and found the manager, Molly.

"Hi, I'm new here. My name's Eliza."

Molly adjusted her glasses and scrutinized Eliza for a moment. "You're new?">

“Yes.”

“Quite pretty.” Molly was always wary of pretty faces without fundamental skills. She suspected Eliza was another one placed by higher-ups. “Who recommended you?”}

“I applied on my own.”}

Molly’s skeptical gaze lingered on her for a few seconds. “I see.”}

She didn’t say much more and led Eliza to her workstation. “You’ll work here. Our department is busy with the company’s promotional designs. Even though you’re new, you can try to participate.”}

“Sure.”

Eliza was quiet, rarely moving from her desk.

Molly checked on her several times and, seeing no issues, felt reassured.

At noon, HR came by to ask if Eliza needed employee housing.

“This is a company benefit. All single employees can apply for housing. We have double rooms, quadruple rooms, and single rooms. 4-person apartments are free, 2-person apartments are three hundred a month, and single apartments are five hundred a month. This cost will be deducted from your salary. Utilities and internet are included.”}}

A single apartment would be more convenient, and five hundred wasn’t much. Plus, saving on utilities and internet was a good deal. “I’ll apply for a single room then.”}

HR noted it down. “Single rooms are in high demand. We’ll see what’s available, and you’ll be notified if a room opens up.”§ “Alright, thanks.”}}

Not long after HR left, Molly hurried over. “Eliza, could you go to the CEO’s office and ask Faithe for the original drafts of the company logo our department submitted last year?”

“Sure, Molly.”

Before she reached the secretary’s office, Eliza heard Faithe’s laughter. “Ms. Nova, you’re really something, asking me to look after you? You’ll be the CEO’s wife soon; I should be asking for your favor.”}