The study door was forcefully shut, leaving Ariana standing in the hallway with her emotions in disarray. Her eyes welled up with tears as she tried to comprehend what had just happened.

All she wanted was to make things right between her and Theodore, but his unkind and hostile attitude made her feel like a villain with devious intentions.

Judy, seeing the distress in Ariana's eyes, placed a gentle hand on her back, offering words of comfort. "Madam, don't fret. Mr. Anderson is just upset. The study is off-limits to outsiders, and perhaps he didn't close the door after leaving, and you innocently wandered in."

Though her eyes were red and puffy from crying, Ariana managed a small smile, grateful for Judy's empathy. "Thank you, Judy. I get it," she said, trying to keep her voice steady.

She squatted down and took the initiative to clean up the shards and stains, pretending as if the outburst of rage had never occurred.

Judy joined her to lend a hand, and her voice lowered

# +120 Points at most

to share a tidbit of advice. "And, the room at the end of the fourth floor is also forbidden."

Ariana paused, absorbing the warning with a nod. "I know. I apologize for putting you in this situation."

Judy, noticing Ariana's sadness, felt the urge to lift her spirits. "It's okay. Don't be too hard on yourself. Mr. Anderson has strict rules, but if you abide by them, he's not so bad. You're the first woman he's allowed in his life, and your patience and care will eventually win him over."

Ariana masked her dissent, hiding it behind a curt nod.

She sneered in her heart, for she knew that whoever was loved by such an insidious and unpredictable man was cursed with misfortune.

The cleanup was now over, and Judy made sure that everything was in place. Ariana bid Judy a polite goodbye and rushed back to her room. She turned on the computer and began browsing through job postings.

Theodore's lousy behavior tonight sparked a sense of uncertainty in her. She dreaded the thought of being kicked out of this place. Thus, she needed to create a stable income source for herself before he did something erratic again.

Ariana's path to a fulfilling career was fraught with

13:17

14.5%

163%

## +120 Points at most

impressive academic obstacles. Despite her credentials and experience in several international companies, she was faced with a heartbreaking choice when she received the news of her father's serious illness just before her graduation oral defense. She rushed back home, missing the oral defense and delaying her graduation, which prevented her from obtaining her graduation certificate.

worse, Ariana's malicious To make matters stepmother, Glenda, froze all her bank cards and took away her identification. Glenda even applied for a suspension of Ariana's studies.

With no graduation certificate, Ariana's job search was complicated, to say the least.

As she browsed through the recruitment websites, Ariana's eyes widened as she stumbled upon a job opening that seemed almost tailor-made for her.

The advertisement was for an assistant at the BRD Group, the media juggernaut known for dominating nearly every aspect of daily life. Ariana's heart quickened as she read the qualifications: overseas study experience, fluency in multiple foreign languages, a degree in management, and a driver's license. The requirements seemed to match her skills perfectly. 3

With its subsidiaries spanning every industry worldwide, the BRD Group's wealth and power were even greater than that of the Anderson Group.

Ariana couldn't believe her luck in finding an opening in such a prestigious and successful organization.

However, the application process wouldn't be easy, and she was determined to give it a try. With that in mind, she decided to apply to a few other companies as her backup plan.

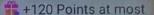
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The following morning, Ariana's exhaustion from her job search caught up with her, and she almost overslept. Luckily, Judy was there to help wake her up. Ariana had stayed up until the wee hours of the morning scouring the Internet for job openings, leaving her feeling groggy and weak.

She didn't expect to cross paths with Theodore on her way out of her room.

The last thing she wanted was to engage in conversation with the inscrutable man. After all, who knew when his temper would take a sudden turn for the worse? She opted to ignore him completely, hoping to avoid any trouble.

Theodore's eyes fixated on Ariana's back as she walked away, completely ignoring him.



Frowning deeply, he directed his attention to Judy, who was polishing a vase nearby. "Make sure she gets her eyes checked after breakfast," he commanded, his voice low and menacing. "Clearly, she must be blind if she can't even see a person here."

Ariana's chuckle echoed in the hallway, and she didn't bother to turn around to face Theodore. "If I recall correctly, Mr. Theodore Anderson doesn't want to lay eyes on me," she retorted with a sarcastic lilt. "So, to spare your precious feelings, let's pretend we don't exist to each other, shall we?"

Theodore's countenance fell, but Ariana had bigger fish to fry and paid him no mind. Her wildest dreams had come true—she received an interview offer from the BRD Group! 6

Overcome with disbelief, Ariana checked the invitation on her phone multiple times to ensure it wasn't counterfeit.

Her interview was scheduled for the afternoon, but she could hardly contain her excitement. Before leaving for the interview, Ariana meticulously tidied up her appearance to exude the aura of professionalism.

Upon arriving at the BRD Group, she promptly made her intentions known to the receptionist and was provided with a temporary pass and an interview

# +120 Points at most

notice, which instructed her to proceed to the 99th floor.

As she stepped out of the elevator, Ariana was met with an eerie silence. Despite wandering for a while, she couldn't spot a single soul in sight.

As Ariana wandered down the quiet corridor, the closed office doors on either side loomed over her like sentinels, and she began to feel lost in the maze of rooms. Suddenly, the sound of a wheelchair caught her attention.

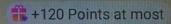
Intrigued by the sound, Ariana followed the noise to a corner and glimpsed the back of a man in a wheelchair, flanked by two imposing bodyguards.

As she drew closer, she gasped in surprise. It was Theodore!

But what was he doing here on the 99th floor of the BRD Group's towering skyscraper?

Curiosity piqued, Ariana trailed after him, her heart thudding in her chest. Suddenly, the man disappeared into an office, and Ariana was about to sneak in after him when a burly bodyguard blocked her path. "Ma'am, unauthorized people are not allowed to enter."

The door to the office slammed shut, blocking her view of what was happening inside.



Ariana glanced at the office door and caught sight of the nameplate. It read "CEO Office". Her eyes widened with astonishment. 28