

Chapter 651 Was It Her Other Name

The elevator ascended to the fourth floor. When the doors parted, Cole maneuvered the car out and parked it precisely in the lobby.

Arthur and Milton had stationed themselves there, waiting. From the moment Elliana mentioned her return in a bit, anticipation had consumed them both.

The butler's report that Elliana and Cole had entered Harmony Estate sent Arthur and Milton leaping to their feet. They rushed toward the elevator doors, hearts pounding with excitement.

As soon as Cole's car rolled to a halt, Milton surged forward, reaching for Elliana's door handle.

Elliana emerged gracefully. Milton's protective hand hovered above her head, shielding her from the car's roof.

Arthur shed all his airs as the head of Sun Group and transformed into nothing more than an eager father, his face radiating pure joy as he approached his daughter. This precious daughter had returned to him only yesterday, yet she surpassed his expectations in every way. No amount of affection felt sufficient for what she deserved.

The man who commanded global finance markets became putty in his daughter's presence. He would move mountains if she whispered the request.

Elliana stepped from the vehicle. Arthur swept her into his arms immediately, his voice warm with fatherly affection. "Elliana."

He treasured this name—the one he'd chosen before her birth, the one he'd whispered into empty rooms for twenty agonizing years of separation.

"Dad." Elliana melted into his embrace, her smile radiant. She craved this

paternal love she'd been denied for two decades. Her heart opened wide, ready to absorb every drop of affection he offered. The awkwardness from yesterday's reunion had evaporated completely.

"Ha-ha..." Arthur's laughter rang through the lobby. His daughter filled his arms again. Euphoria flooded his chest as he stroked her back, savoring her sweet, natural "Dad." He wanted to shower her with every treasure the world possessed.

Milton beamed nearby, waiting for his turn with barely contained excitement. He'd dreamed of embracing his sister long before her birth. Now that she'd finally come home, he intended to make up for lost time with countless hugs.

Cole stood forgotten beside the driver's door. He watched the scene unfold, jealousy gnawing at his chest like a persistent wound. Logic told him these were Lilah's father and brother—that their embraces carried only familial love. Yet, rationality couldn't silence the possessive voice in his head. He despised seeing any man this close to Lilah, even her own blood relatives.

Silence became his prison. He couldn't voice his jealousy without destroying his chances with his future in-laws. Marriage to Lilah required their blessing, which meant swallowing his pride and waiting patiently.

The normally arrogant Cole practiced humility, hoping Arthur and Milton would eventually acknowledge his presence.

Then, Arthur's voice cut through Cole's brooding thoughts. "Elliana." The name struck Cole like lightning. His body trembled involuntarily. That name... It echoed through his consciousness like a half-remembered song, as if he had heard it and called it a million times before. Why did Arthur call Lilah "Elliana"? Was it her other name?

Before Cole could process this fully, Elliana broke from Arthur's embrace. Milton pulled her close, his voice tender with affection. "Elliana, let me hold you."

Elliana's smile blazed as she welcomed her brother's arms. Her mind drifted to darker days—the cramped storeroom in the Jones estate's backyard, where silence had been her only companion. No conversations, no caring touches, just crushing loneliness that had shaped her existence.

Now, everything was different. She could stride through Harmony Estate's grand entrance as a privileged heiress, ascending to the exclusive fourth floor where love waited with open arms. Though this familial devotion had arrived twenty years late, its intensity burned away every trace of past regret.

Cole remained rooted in place, a silent observer to the family's reunion. Milton's voice carried the same tenderness as his father's. "Elliana." The name rolled off his tongue with practiced ease.

Something stirred deep within Cole's chest—a yearning he couldn't name. He found himself wanting to speak those syllables, to taste how "Elliana" would sound in his own voice. The name possessed an almost musical quality, each letter sending warmth coursing through his veins like liquid fire.

Then, an unexpected drama unfolded before his eyes.

Arthur, it seemed, harbored his own streak of possessiveness. While he'd monopolized his daughter's attention without hesitation, watching Milton embrace her for even a moment longer than necessary sparked visible irritation in Arthur's features.

Before Milton could hug her long enough, Arthur's hand closed around his daughter's arm. He guided her firmly toward the living room, his voice carrying forced cheerfulness. "I've arranged an entire spread of delicacies for you. Tell me which ones catch your fancy."

Milton recognized his father's jealous streak immediately. Years of observation had taught him to read Arthur's moods like weather patterns. He watched his father shepherd Elliana away, amusement tugging at his lips. Only then did his gaze shift to the forgotten Cole still standing beside the car.

The memory of their previous encounter at Ublento Medical University's opening ceremony hung between them like an unspoken challenge. Their disagreement had been minor but memorable.

Ordinarily, seeing each other again would have fanned that ember of dislike into flame. But with Elliana standing between them, the usual animosity could not take root, leaving behind a faint, awkward air instead.