

Illusions 171

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Uzetta got hoisted into the elevator by Remington and they were going up.

She was freaking out, plus the dude's shoulder bones were hard. She felt dizzy, and her stomach was doing somersaults from the pressure.

She started kicking her legs around, "Remington, put me down! Or you bet I'll puke on you again?"

His voice was dark and ominous, "Go ahead and try."

The guy was like walking freezer, and the tension in his muscles made it crystal clear to Lizetta that he was holding back a storm of rage and irritability.

Gritting her teeth, Lizetta glared at his butt right below her line of sight, which reminded her of the times when she got spanked by him, and that he did it again in front of everyone just now. A wave of old grudges and fresh anger hit her.

She smacked his butt twice.

After the smacks, surprisingly, it felt pretty good.

Bouncy.

Has Remington's butt always been this perky?

She couldn't help herself and gave it another solid smack.

The next second, the world spun around again as he grabbed her by the waist and put her down.

Lizetta's legs went weak, and before she could steady herself, Remington's solid frame was pressing her into a corner of the elevator.

"Lizetta! Where the heck did you just smack?" His handsome face turned steel blue with suppressed fury.

Feeling a bit guilty but defiant, Lizetta retorted, "Well, it's your fault for not letting me go! You've hit me plenty of times, so what if I hit you back?"

Remington grabbed her chin, while his lips curled mockingly, "Spanking is a bit of a turn-on, Lizetta. Is this how you act when you want a divorce?"

Lizetta was taken aback; her face was flushed red as she scrambled for words.

"That's not it! How does that turn into a turn-on? You always... Mmph!"

She was about to point out how he often spanked her too, and that he started to do so when she was just fifteen. Why was it just a lesson when he did it, but when she retaliated, it became a turn-on? Talk about a double standard!

But before she could finish her protest, Remington's lips brutally sealed hers.

As the man had been drinking tonight, the taste of whiskey was on his breath. Not too strong, but it invaded every corner of Lizetta's mouth as he deepened the kiss.

His kiss was wild, and his breath was scorching: strands of his damp hair-brushed against Lizetta's nose, tickling her surprisingly.

Coming to her senses, Lizetta tried to push him away and went for a bite.

“Mmph!”

But before she could bite down, he nipped her first, not too gently.

The sharp pain made Lizetta’s eyes water with tears.

felt wronged and angry, yet the very spot that hurt was being soothed and coaxed by his fervent licks and kisses

The elevator was quiet, save for the noises of his kissing. It was embarrassingly loud,

Lizetta’s neck turned red with shame, yet she couldn’t break free. Her eyelashes fluttered and tears fell

Remington felt she was crying, and finally let her go, stepping back, he laid his gaze on the tearful girl in front of him.

“Crying now? You weren’t the one who flexed your muscles tonight.”

But Lizetta felt anything but good about it; she was suffocating with frustration.

Hearing him say that, she choked up.

“Let me go. Last time in the hospital, you said that you’d let me be. We’re getting a divorce, and we’ll be strangers, you can’t do this to me anymore.”

Remington’s thin lips twisted sarcastically, “Didn’t I also say to stay out of my sight? And what did you do, huh? Kept provoking me, even throwing sexual hints my way. Now playing hard to get? I think you’re just asking for it!”

He pressed his hips forward, which intimidated her

Lizetta's expression turned to panic as she shook her head.

"I didn't! Was it my choice to be in front of you? It was Evelina who started it, and I came to settle things with her. I had no idea you'd be here tonight, and I didn't throw any sexual hints your way. Don't get it twisted! Let's just say I was being handsy, and I apologize, okay?"

Lizetta was dying of regret. If she had known he'd react like this, there's no way she would have gone and smacked his butt on a whim.

"Apologize? Then show some real sincerity. You stirred me up, and now you want to back out? Isn't it a bit late for that?"

Remington loosened his tie, undid a couple of buttons on his shirt and pulled at his open collar.

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His exposed neck and collarbones were tinged with a faint blush, possibly from the alcohol or desire, as his Adam's apple bobbed.

It was somewhat mesmerizing.

But such allure no longer stirred Lizetta's heart; her face was icy cold.

"Remington, if you're in heat, go find your darling! She's the one who got slapped and needs your care and comfort right now!"

She shoved him towards the door!

She was getting pretty darn good at handling situations like this.

Remington felt a chill in his heart, but the heat and restlessness in his body didn't dissipate one bit.

He leaned into her, deliberately making a move, while his handsome face took on a dangerous and wicked look that wasn't usually there, thanks to his damp hair.

"Feeling it? Right now, you're the only one I'm interested in. Let's call it a breakup shag, shall we? We haven't tried other positions and roles yet, and with the night being so long, let's take our time to explore, so we don't end up regretting it after the divorce."

Lizetta couldn't believe such words were coming from the usually abstinent and cool Remington.

Who would regret it? Who wants a breakup shag with him!

She was on the verge of a breakdown when the elevator dinged to
a stop.

Lizetta, as if facing a formidable enemy, clung to the elevator's handrail, determined to resist.

Without giving her another look, Remington bent down to scoop her up.

Lizetta clung to the railing, refusing to let go, but the man simply stepped forward.

How could she resist his strength?

She was carried out of the elevator against her will.

Luckily, a man was walking towards them.

Lizetta immediately cried for help, "Save me! Help me, I'm being kidnapped!"

The man hesitated, then approached, “Sir, this lady doesn’t seem too keen on going with you?”

Remington’s handsome face turned cold, “Didn’t you see my wife is drunk?”

Lizetta’s face was flushed red, but she hadn’t drunk anything; she was just bullied by Remington in the elevator.

She shook her head, “No! He’s lying, I’m not his wife, please help me call someone, or the police.”

The man, seeing her urgency, bravely stood in front of him, although he found Remington quite intimidating,

Remington chuckled and set Lizetta down.

As soon as her feet hit the ground, Lizetta tried to run, but Remington grabbed the back of her neck, trapping her in his embrace.

She wriggled like a chick unable to escape the eagle’s talons.

Remington pulled out his phone, tapped a couple of times, and shoved it in front of the man.

For yourself?

The man stared at the wedding photo on the screen, then back at Lizetta’s anxious and helpless face, and

ald with displeasure,

Drunk to the point of not recognizing your own husband?"

He shook his head and, before leaving, even offered Remington some sympathetic advice, "Buddy, you need to keep a tighter leash on her."

Remington's lips curled into a smile, "Thanks for the tip, just about to do that."

Lizetta was lost for words.

She felt utterly powerless as Remington led her forward again.

She asked resentfully, "What did you show him?"

She couldn't fathom it; with their sham of a marriage, and their expired sibling-like relationship, could Remington have their photo saved on his phone.

In her panic, Lizetta's mind was muddled, and before she could grasp what was happening, she was half-carried, half-dragged into the presidential suite at the end of the hallway.

The door slammed shut behind them, and Lizetta was forced to retreat step by step.

Remington removed his tie and threw it on the floor, then took off his suit jacket.

His shirt had also got wet, and after the tussle in the elevator, it was now crumpled at the chest.

He looked down at it, frowning in distaste.

He undid his belt, pulled the shirt out of his trousers, and then tore it open.

His solid pecs and taut abs were suddenly laid bare before Lizetta; the smooth lines of his muscle meandered down to where a teasing hint of a V-line could be peeked above his waistband.

Lizetta's breathing hitched as she was cornered to the sofa area; as her knees hit the sofa, she felt her legs buckling and fell backward onto the couch.

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Just when Lizetta thought she was about to be devoured by Remington on the couch with no escape, everything went dark

Turns out, Remington had chucked his shirt over her head. By the time Lizetta yanked the shirt away, the guy was already at the bathroom door, throwing some shade her way.

*Better think about what you're gonna spill later!"

He ducked into the bathroom, and the sound of running water filled the space.

Lizetta sprang up and dashed for the door, but whatever trick Remington had pulled on it, she couldn't crack it after fiddling with it for ages.

When Remington emerged from the bathroom in his robe, Lizetta was slumped on the couch, having thrown in the towel.

Remington, toweling off his wet hair, sauntered over. His robe was tied loosely, and that just-showered vibe made him seem even more dangerous and imposing.

Not daring to look too long. Lizetta ducked her head and scooted over. No sooner had she settled down than something landed on her lap.

A hairdryer.

She glanced over at Remington, who was now lounging against the back of the couch, and commanded,

“Come and dry my hair.”

“Can’t you do it yourself?”

Sometimes the guy could be so lazy

Even though he was religious about his one-hour workout every day, he often couldn’t be bothered to dry his hair after a shower, so he would just give it a quick rub and call it a day.

Back in the day, Lizetta would always worry he’d catch a cold or end up with some old man’s ailment, so she’d follow him around, with hairdryer in hand, and nagged him to use it.

When he found it too bothersome and didn’t cooperate, she’d press him into the couch and do it for him.

Sometimes, she’d even kneel by the bed and dry his hair while he slept; the buzzing sound never woke him up, but rather helped him sleep deeper.

This sudden rush of memories sent a wave of mixed feelings through Lizetta.

She stayed put, while Remington’s eyes flicked open to look at her.

“Aren’t you gonna take responsibility for what you’ve done?”

As his words could easily be taken the wrong way, Lizetta was left speechless.

He drawled again, “Or would you rather serve me in bed?”

Lizetta felt even more speechless.

Forget it; drying hair is way better than having a breakup shag with him.

She stood up, plugged in the hairdryer, and walked behind the couch to help him.

The warm air brushed through his hair tips as Lizetta reached out to tousle his wet locks, but her fingers paused.

Gold

He had showered for quite a while, with cold water all along.

She frowned subconsciously, but she, not being naive anymore, knew why he'd taken a cold shower.

Talk about a breakup shag, it was clearly just to scare her.

He hadn't planned on hurting or forcing her after all.

She felt a mix of sourness and swelling in her heart, and she couldn't tell if she was relieved or tensed up.

At that moment, Lizetta paradoxically wished Remington could be a bit harsher with her.

"Figured out your explanation yet?"

The man lying there suddenly spoke up, which snapped Lizetta back to the task at hand. She continued to work on his hair, drying it with focus.

"What do I need to explain?"

Remington suddenly opened his eyes, and as Lizetta looked down, their eyes met—his deep gaze, ΠΟΥ seemingly chilled by the cold water, was piercing and sharp.

Lizetta's breath hitched, and she averted her gaze.

"You're not hiding anything from me?" Remington scoffed.

Lizetta's eyelashes fluttered, "What do you mean?"

She wasn't sure which secret Remington was alluding to; there were quite a few things she was keeping from him.

Seeing her playing tough, Remington chuckled, "At Dories', were you really just interpreting? Was it really worth making such a fuss over a part-time job—gone bad that you had to make sure Evelina swallowed that sleeping pill again?"

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Uzetta felt a jolt in her heart—turns out, he had sniffed out that something was off.

She had already figured that Remington must have got wind of her auditioning for that dance gig.

No wonder he was cool with her slapping Evelina a few times—if he knew Evelina had really screwed up big time by wrecking someone's future, he'd probably back her to the hilt.

Lizetta kept on with her blow-drying. "You already know the deal."

Remington fixed his gaze on her, "When were you planning to skip the country?"

Her grip on the hairdryer tightened, “When I bring up divorce.”

“Heh, why keep it under wraps until now; are you scared I’d put a stop to your little escape plan? You sure are something!”

A shadow fell across Remington’s eyes, and it was dark and dense like a forest that light can’t pierce.

So, she had made up her mind a long time ago.

The first time she brought up divorce, she had already burnt her bridges.

His recent disapproval and attempts to keep her have all been a joke.

He really had no clue that the once soft and sweet girl could be so cold and cutthroat, even more than him.

Finishing with his hair, Lizetta turned off the dryer, and as she was about to set it aside on the low cabinet, her wrist was suddenly seized by the man.

Thud.

The hairdryer hit the floor.

In a tumble, Lizetta found herself lifted from behind the sofa, hoisted over its high back, and pinned down on top of him.

With her chest heaving, and herself still in shock, she exclaimed, “Remington, what the hell are you doing!?”

His chest robe was loosely open, and his body was still cold as ice; Lizetta, feeling like she was lying on a slab of marble, shivered slightly.

Remington's hand pressed against her lower back, while his gaze bore down on her up close.

"When are you planning to leave?"

"In a month."

Lizetta bit her lip lightly, watching him with a hint of worry.

"You promised, as long as I repay my debt to the Dashiell family, you'd divorce me and let me go, you can't back out!"

Remington let out a cold laugh, then he suddenly gripped Lizetta's chin, and tilted her face from side to side. His touch was rough, and her neck felt so stiff that it might cramp.

"Let go, what's the big idea?"

"Checking to see if you've got a thick skin or if you really think you're all that and a bag of chips!"

He let go abruptly, "Lizetta, I won't keep begging a woman who's hell-bent on leaving me, with no place for

Lizette pursed her lips, squirming a bit.

Then why don't you let me go?

Yet Remington's hand remained on her waist, and his eyes were still fixed on her.

"Is there something else you're hiding from me?"

He had this nagging feeling that something else was up. Was her aggressive stance tonight really due to Evelina messing up her audition?

Lizetta felt her heart tightened, fearing that if he kept pressing, the secret about the baby would be out.

Luckily, at that moment, Remington's phone started ringing urgently—it was Cedric calling..

Lizetta quickly handed him the phone, "You better take this call."

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Remington released Lizetta, and as she scrambled to sit up, he answered the call. Cedric's report came from the other end.

"Boss, I've brought Ms. Hawthorne back, but she's making a scene. Maybe you should come over."

Evelina's wailing could also be heard, and Remington relaxed his grip.

Lizetta was truly thankful for Evelina for the first time, for taking the heat off her.

After leaving the hotel, Lizetta tried to contact Yolanda, but couldn't get through.

When Lizetta got back to their rented place, Yolanda wasn't there either. While worrying, she got a call from the police station.

Lizetta rushed to the station and saw Yolanda locked up.

"What's going on?: Lizetta asked anxiously.

Yolanda had clearly had a few too many, looking all wilted and like a sorry mess. But she perked up when she saw Lizetta, and clenched her fists in anger.

“That damn poser, who deceived everyone with his ‘national heartthrob’ act, with a heart smaller than the tip of a needle!”

After listening to Yolanda’s rant, it took Lizetta a while to figure out what had happened.

Turns out, after Remington had whisked her away, Cassius had given Yolanda a hard time, not letting her leave and demanding compensation for damages,

Yolanda wasn’t one to back down, and Cassius was a spoiled brat. They came to blows, starting with fisticuffs and ending up at the drinking table, both getting plastered. Yolanda ended up injuring Cassius.

Now, Cassius had called the cops on Yolanda for property damage and assault.

“Liz, just leave it. If Cassius thinks he’s tough, let him lock me up for life! I’ll spend the night in the cell, drawing circles and cursing him till sunrise.”

Yolanda was adamant about Lizetta not getting involved, but Lizetta felt both regret and guilt.

She had gone out with Yolanda that night, and it was because of her that Yolanda got into it with Cassius. How could she just abandon Yolanda?

She contacted a lawyer, but things were complicated because Cassius had provided surveillance footage of Yolanda and her crew trashing the winery, and since Yolanda had also damaged his pretty face, which caused him to delay a photo shoot, he was hell-bent on not settling.

He was a Sterling family scion, and the police, wary of the Sterling family’s influence and seeing that Yolanda didn’t have a leg to stand on, refused to grant bail.

Lizetta called Cassius, trying to apologize calmly.

“Mr. Sterling, I’m the one who messed up your event tonight, so I’m reaching out on behalf of Yoli to apologize and to compensate for any loss.”

She

e was cut off before she could finish.

“Why are you apologizing for her? Do you even know what she did?”

“What did she do?”

Feeling puzzled, Lizetta sensed from Cassius’ tone that Yolanda must have done something else to him.

Cassius was fuming, but couldn’t quite spit it out.

He remembered the drinking contest with that woman, and how they’d both gotten drunk and somehow ended up in bed, nearly going all the way.

Not only had she taken advantage of him, but at the crucial moment, she went berserk, kicking him off the bed.

He was left dizzy from the fall, and before he could react, she pounced on him like a tigress, accusing him

attempted assault and then beating him black and blue.

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His first kiss and almost his first time were nearly taken; on top of that, he got thrashed.

He had never endured such humiliation in his life!

ing like spitting blood, Cassius said with an icy voice, “Unless Yolanda gets on her knees, offers me a drink, and admits her wrongs, there will be no talk of settling! Hiss!”

Cassius winced as he pulled at the corner of his mouth, and his composure slipped with the pain.

With his face darkening, he just hung up.

When Lizetta tried calling back, Cassius had already turned off his phone.

Lizetta couldn’t possibly ask Yolanda to kneel and beg for mercy that just wasn’t in her nature, not even if her legs were broken.

With no other choice, Lizetta called Remington, but his phone was unreachable, too. Thinking he must have gone to see Evelina after she left the hotel, she hailed a taxi and headed to the Hawthorne family estate.

Indeed, Remington had gone to see the Hawthornes.

When he arrived, Evelina was still making a scene.

With a tooth knocked out and both her face and tooth aching, how could she just let it slide?

As Remington walked in, Evelina was sobbing in Elara’s arms.

Elara, feeling sorry for her, was applying an ice pack on her face while angrily confronting Remington.

“Remington, Eve was fine when she left the house, but Lizetta beat her up! You owe us an explanation today!”

Yolanda looked at Remington with tear-swollen eyes, and pleaded silently.

Remington was unfazed, “What kind of explanation do you want?”

Elara demanded furiously, “You bring Lizetta here now, make her apologize to Eve, and let Eve slap her back!”

With a chill flashed in Remington’s eyes, he let out a low scoff and looked do

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look in his eyes was just short of having “asking for the moon” written all over his face.

Bara choked in one breath, “You!”

Evelina’s tears came down even harder as she spoke through the pain.

“Right in front of you, Lizetta dared to drug me, and you blindly took her side. Tomorrow, she might as well go all the way and force an abortion pill on me. I’m really scared.”

Evelina, shaky on her feet, stood up, “Better to end it now than to wait for her to make me suffer. Let’s just go to the hospital, Mom.”

Elara, supporting Evelina, nodded, “Alright, to the hospital!”

Kevin’s face was also full of fury, “If the kid’s going through hell before even being born, what’s the point? I’ll contact a gynecologist right away.”

He whipped out his phone to make the call, while Elara shouted for the car to be readied. Evelina, being helped to leave, didn't believe for a second that Remington could ignore the baby.

Yet, there he stood, expression cold, without the slightest intention of stopping them.

The three Hawthornes were caught in a tough spot, all wearing ugly expressions. As they passed by Remington, the man still didn't make a peep, standing tall, just coldly watching without batting an eyelid.

Evelina, out of options, crumpled to the ground.

"Eve!" Elara exclaimed in shock.

Remington frowned, seeing Evelina lying there as if she had truly fainted. He ordered Cedric to call a doctor, then went forward to pick Evelina up and carry her back to her room.

He laid Evelina on the bed, ready to stand straight up. But Evelina clutched at the corner of his suit jacket. Remington paused and said in a deep voice, "Let go."

Evelina opened her eyes, tears streaming down, "Remington, you can't be so heartless. You promised to take care of and protect the baby."

There was little emotion in Remington's eyes, "I also told you not to provoke Lizetta."

"I didn't."

Before Evelina could finish, Remington cut her off with a cold voice.

"The hotel surveillance and Liz's glass, you managed to cover your tracks well. But getting sleeping pills in such short notice, you could only buy them from a nearby drugstore, which isn't hard to look into."

Evelina's face instantly went pale, realizing Remington had figured it all out a while ago. Evelina felt the icy chill in his eyes; her hand clutching his jacket suddenly let go, "I—I just..."

Remington stood up, his eyes and brows revealing impatience, and a sharp glint passed through his eyes as he interrupted Evelina.

"I don't want to hear excuses, nor do I like being threatened. The baby isn't a tool to blackmail me with. Remember today's slap, got it?"

Evelina felt a chill all over, biting her lip and nodding instinctively. Remington withdrew his gaze and stepped

out.

Elara and Kevin were still waiting at the door, unhappy to see Remington just walk away, but were stopped

by Evelina.

Remington left the Hawthorne family estate, got into his car, and rubbed his temples, instructing the driver to go.

Lizetta arrived just in time to see Remington leaving the Hawthorne family estate.

Remington had indeed come to visit Evelina. Lucky she found him. Lizetta hurriedly told the taxi to follow, not expecting that Remington would return to Oakridge Heights.

Had he been living here this whole time? This was their marital home. He used to refuse to come back, but now, was it because she was no longer there that he moved back in? Or?

Standing outside Oakridge Heights once again, Lizetta felt a mix of emotions. Especially thinking back to just over an hour ago in the hotel room, when she gave Remington the cold shoulder, wishing never to have anything to do with him again.

Yet in a blink, she was seeking him out. Lizetta's heart was more tangled than ever. She hesitated at the door for a long while, thinking of the locked-up Yolanda before mustering the courage, gritting her teeth, and stepping inside.

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The villa was pitch-black, not a glimmer of light in sight.

Lizette hadn't seen Remington's car roll into Oakridge Heights with her own eyes, she would've thought The place had been abandoned ages ago.

Thinking Remington might have headed straight upstairs to crash, Lizetta didn't bother flipping on the lights and just felt her way upstairs in the dark. But no sooner had she set foot on the stairs than a hoarse voice suddenly cut through the silence,

"Where you off to?"

"Ahl

Lizetta nearly jumped out of her skin, clinging to the banister before realizing it was just a dark figure slumped on the couch. It was Remington.

She caught her breath and frowned, "What the heck are you doing lying there in the dead of night without any lights on? You scared the living daylights out of me!"

He clearly knew she had come in but stayed silent, only to spook her now – as if he did it on purpose.

Lizetta walked over and turned on the floor lamp by the couch. The dim light revealed the man reclining on the couch, eyes slightly open, his gaze cold and alert, showing no sign of sleepiness.

“This is my place. I’ll hang wherever I want, lights off if that’s what I fancy. Not like some people who barge into others’ homes in the middle of the night and then have the nerve to play the victim.”

Lizetta felt a sting when he mentioned “others’ homes”, not painful but definitely uncomfortable.

But he wasn’t wrong- this wasn’t her home anymore. She apologized, “Sorry, I shouldn’t have come uninvited;”

He cut her off with an even colder look, “If you know that, then get out!”

Lizetta froze, her grip tightening on her phone until its edge made her palm tingle. She didn’t move.

“Are you feeling alright? Is it the booze making you queasy? How about I whip up some pasta for you, maybe you’ve got a headache? I could give you a massage?”

She set her phone and purse aside and reached out. She remembered Remington often got headaches after drinking. She was here to ask for a favor, and even if he was being a jerk, she had to suck it up.

Pride was nothing compared to Yolanda’s situation.

But before her hand could even reach his forehead, Remington blocked her. His eyes narrowed, he snapped coldly, “I don’t need anyone fussing over me. Spare me the fake concern!”

She quietly withdrew her hand and decided to cut to the chase.

“About what happened tonight, Yoli got locked up by Cassius, no bail allowed. Can you maybe...”

“No! Leave.”

Remington cut her off yet again, closing his eyes with a look of sheer exasperation.

Lizetta's breath tightened, "Can't you just help me out? Yoli got dragged into this because of me."

Remington suddenly opened his eyes, a chill in his gaze, "Lizetta, you're the one who refused to be my wife, who wanted to pay off the 3 million and sever ties with the Dashiell family, cutting me off completely. Why on earth should I make things hard for my own friend for someone who means nothing?"

Destie's face went pale. She knew it wouldn't be easy before she walked in, but facing his coldness now, she felt a mix of hurt and helplessness,

Seeing her eyes welling up, Remington got up to leave. On impulse, Lizetta grabbed his wrist, but he shook her off, and she collapsed onto the couch.

As he moved to step away, she said with a trembling voice, "Weren't we going to have a breakup shag? I can do that."

Remington stopped in his tracks and turned to look down at Lizetta. Backlit by the dim light, his figure cast a shadow over her, his face obscured, his gaze piercing her like icicles.

But she was out of options, recalling how strongly he had reacted that time in the hotel, followed by the long cold shower he took.

It seemed that aside from this, she had nothing else to offer, nothing else to negotiate with. With shaking hands, she started unbuttoning her shirt, slipped off her top, pulled down her pants, and took off.

As the pants hit the floor, she grew flustered, especially since he hadn't responded, and just watched with a detached air that made Lizetta even more embarrassed,

"Go on, keep stripping," Remington's voice cut through the air, sharp as a blade of ice.

Lizetta couldn't continue, hugging herself, her skin turning from pale to burning hot. Bathed in the faint glow, her face flushed, her eyes red and lashes fluttering non-stop.

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skin glowed, flawless and dewy, as she hugged herself, legs crossed, trembling like a leaf.

She looked pitiful from above, her curves on full display in her disheveled state – messy yet somehow alluring.

Emotions churned in the depths of Remington's dark eyes, but Lizetta suddenly lost all her nerve. She bent down uncontrollably to pick up her pants when the man abruptly closed in, his large hand clasping her delicate shoulder.

“Ah!”

Lizetta jumped, her head snapping up to look at Remington, her vision obscured by a swish of long hair.

She was yanked around by Remington, pushed down to kneel on the couch, her shoulder blades under his grip as he invaded her space from behind.

They'd never tried this position before. Lizetta couldn't see Remington, but she could feel his suppressed rage and ferocity.

Her defenses completely shattered, she tried to flee on her knees, only to be pulled back by his large palm gripping her slender waist.

Their bodies collided with a faint sound. Lizetta froze all over, the man leaning over her, his breath cascading down her trembling spine, trailing up her fragile back.

His lips never touched her, but the sensation was more nerve–wracking than if they had, climbing up to her ear and tickling her – Lizetta turned her head to dodge.

His voice was colder than the hot palm of his hand, “So, you stripped yourself for a breakup shag, and now you’re playing coy? Do you know how guys treat a girl who shows up at their door in the middle of the night?”

Lizetta felt no tenderness, only fear and embarrassment. Her voice broke as she shook her head, “No, not here.”

It dawned on Lizetta that the villa’s servants were actually around. If they heard a commotion in the main building, they might come to check.

Her plea was met with a cold snort from the man, his hand on her waist starting to wander and tease, watching her tremble under his touch. Suddenly, he asked, “Who were the bodyguards you took to the vineyard today?”

Lizetta’s focus was on his roaming hand. Sweat beaded on her forehead as she replied without thinking. “They’re Hogan’s men, ah!”

She had borrowed those bodyguards from Hogan, who had also wanted to come along, but she insisted it wasn’t necessary. If only she had known, she would have gone alone, not dragging Yolanda into it.

Now she was relieved Hogan hadn’t joined them, but before she could finish, the man’s hand had moved to the front, squeezing firmly.

Lizetta cried out, and from behind her came Remington’s even colder voice, “Heh, did you strip down and beg him like this to help you this afternoon?”

Lizetta went rigid, as if plunged into an icy cave. She blankly stared at the couch below her, one she had personally chosen, its bright and warm orange hues, its cushions with patterns she had designed and had” custom–made.

She had fantasized about snuggling with Remington on that couch, watching soap operas and feeding each other snacks.

She had also imagined more shameful scenarios, embraces and kisses, but never this kind of humiliation.

The more she had looked forward to it before, the colder and more unbearable it felt now. Suddenly, Lizette started to struggle fiercely, tears silently falling.

*Remington, you jerk! Let me go. I was just desperate tonight, out of my mind! I shouldn't have come to you; mmph!

“Her angry words were cut off as he flipped her over and sealed her lips.

Lizette shook her head, trying to hit him, to scratch him, but he pinned her hands down on the couch. She kicked out, but he bent his knees, parting her legs, and dove in deeper.

Lizette leaned back on the couch, her hair spread wildly over the back of it, unable to struggle, at his mercy. The quiet, dimly lit living room was filled with their overlapping, relentless breaths, growing more, intense, until Lizette's cellphone on the coffee table abruptly rang.

Remington seemed to be jolted back to reality by the ringtone. He lifted his head, his Adam's apple bobbing, trying to catch his breath.

Lizette turned her head away, eyes closed, more tears rolling down, shining clearly in the soft light.

Remington looked down at her, his voice hoarse and mocking. “You're the one who showed up in the middle of the night, ready to demean yourself, and you have the nerve to cry!”

Chapter 179

Lizette bit her lip, “I just wanted to save Yoll, I thought...

Thought what? That I'd go soft on you? You think you can just show up, put on a little act, and I'd be at your beck and call?"

Lizetta's unfinished words were effortlessly decoded by Remington.

And that just made him even more despicable. He saw right through her, just toying with her, and tears welled up even more in Lizetta's tightly shut eyes.

Remington was irritated by what he saw, his words growing sharper, "I only go soft for my sister and my wife. What are you now? Presenting yourself like some plaything, barely started and already blubbing? How low can you stoop!"

This was the girl he'd raised. Four years ago she'd been foolish enough to drug him, and now she hadn't learned her lesson.

The thought that she'd rather degrade herself than return as Mrs. Dashiell made Remington wish he could crush her rebellious spirit.

Lizetta couldn't handle the insults any longer. She opened her eyes, which were red with rage, "Yes, it was my fault! I'm low; I've learned my lesson. Oh, high and mighty Mr. Dashiell, can you let me go now? And stop acting like some debauchee who enjoys being seduced by my tricks!"

A vein throbbed on Remington's forehead, and the hand on her waist suddenly clenched into a fist.

He got up off her and stood straight, saying, "Don't flatter yourself. I'm not that into women who throw themselves at me."

Lizetta frantically grabbed her clothes to get dressed, while her phone kept ringing on the table. She feared there might be new developments from the police station, so she hurriedly picked up the phone, and her face changed when she saw "Jenny Abbott" on the caller ID.

She had used Jenny's identity for her prenatal checkup, and left Jenny's name. She had taken sleeping pills today, worried and restless; she had asked Jenny to consult the doctor. Lizetta hadn't expected Jenny to call back now.

Lizetta quickly hung up.

"Why aren't you picking up?" Just as she let out a sigh of relief, Remington's probing voice came from above her head.

Lizetta's heart skipped a beat, and the clothes she was holding dropped to the floor.

Remington wasn't one to pry, but his question clearly showed suspicion. Lizetta pushed down her guilt and glared at Remington, her eyes red, "Do I look like I'm in any state to answer the phone right now?"

Her voice trembled slightly, but Remington's scrutinizing gaze didn't waver as he asked again.

"Jenny, is she the one you went with for the prenatal checkup? Why is she contacting you?"

Lizetta picked up her clothes again and casually replied, "Don't know."

She didn't bother making up a bunch of excuses, which seemed to dispel Remington's doubts as he turned and walked towards the stairs..

Only when his figure vanished into the living room did Lizetta collapse onto the couch. Exhausted, thinking of Yolanda still at the police station and her fruitless visit, she cursed Remington fiercely in her head,

Dressed and head down, she left the villa, scrolling through her phone contacts, considering asking Lucian for help.

A car stopped in front of her, and the driver, Christ, lowered the window, "Mrs. Dashiell, Mr. Dashiell asked me to take you to the police station."

To the police station? That meant he was sending her to get Yolanda.

Lizetta stood there stunned, and only at Christ's urging did she hurry forward and open the car door.

As she bent to get in, she paused, turning to look toward the direction of the second-floor bedroom.

At the window, there seemed to be a tall figure turning away, and for some reason, Lizetta's nose tingled with an inexplicable sourness. In the end, he had gone soft on her.

On the car ride, Lizetta replied to Jenny, who promptly responded.

[Dr. Isaac says considering the time you've been asleep, the dosage of the occasional sleeping pill you took. shouldn't be large, and it's unlikely to have a significant impact on the fetus. He advises you to relax and proceed with regular prenatal checkups, and if you feel unwell, seek medical attention immediately.]

Lizetta thanked her and finally breathed a sigh of relief. Holding her phone, she thought for a moment and finally sent a message to Remington.

[Thanks.]

Chapter 180

Remington didn't respond.

She went to the police station and, sure enough, it was a breeze springing Yolanda out. By the time the two got back to the apartment, it was 2 a.m. As soon as they walked in, Yolanda wrapped Lizetta in a hug, her voice thick with emotion.

"Sorry, Liz, I couldn't keep myself in check and landed you in trouble. Did you go to Badass Remington for help? Did he give you a hard time?"

She wasn't clueless; seeing Remington's car outside the station, she knew it was Lizetta who had gone to Remington for help.

"No, he didn't make things difficult for me. Don't worry about it, just go wash up and hit the hay."

Lizetta ruffled Yolanda's hair, and after another tight hug, Yolanda headed back to her room. But she didn't buy it for a second. Knowing Remington's true colors, there was no way he hadn't given Lizetta a hard time, especially with her eyes still red.

If she had known Cassius could stoop so low, she would've kept her cool.

Yolanda gave herself a firm slap in the mirror as a warning- no more getting hammered. Some people were just untouchable, and the next time she saw that poser Cassius, she'd make sure to steer clear!

The next day, Lizetta was jolted awake by her phone ringing. She picked up groggily, and an unfamiliar male voice echoed on the other end.

"Maestro Adagio, right? Hello, this is Mr. Ernest. We've been in touch before."

Lizetta snapped to attention, sitting up quickly.

"Yes, Mr. Ernest, I remember you. Is this about the advertising contract signing?"

"That's right. We need to reevaluate this advertising contract, so we can't sign it for now. Sorry about that."

Lizetta frowned, "Is there any problem?"

She had selected a few companies to advertise on Twitter, and the deal with Francesco violins was set to be signed today. A sudden change like this usually spelled trouble.

“You haven’t heard? You might want to check out the online buzz first.”

“Just a sec.”

Lizetta hurriedly opened Twitter, and frozen for a moment. After she caught up with the whole story, she was almost amused by the absurdity.

“I’ll handle this right away. Can we possibly reconsider the signing?”

“Of course, if you can tidy up the mess online, Maestro Adagio, we’re still very much interested in working with you.”

After wrapping up the call, Lizetta hung up.

[To be honest, the piece is really nothing special. Maestro Adagio’s appearance is just fishing for compliments.]

[Paying 200 grand for the first performance of such a piece? Evelina must be crying her heart out by now]

[Violin solos should stick to the classics. This mishmash of a piece is a total ear sore.]

feed was full of such mocking and derogatory comments. And Evelina was at the center of

It was the opening piece at Evelina’s solo concert, recorded and uploaded online in its entirety. Because Evelina had previously made headlines for paying 200 grand for the first performance of Maestro Adagio’s piece, the video sparked immediate attention upon release.

Netizens clicked out of curiosity and anticipation, only to find Evelina’s performance lackluster, earning ridicule paine. And this morning, Evelina had responded.

She posted Maestro Adagio's piece online, claiming she played it exactly as written and thought it sounded quite nice.

By doing so, and with a little help from her online army, Evelina turned Maestro Adagio, the composer, into the scapegoat for her own lack of skill.

"Liz, did you see the trash talk online? I wasn't exactly gentle yesterday; how can Evelina still rise to play dirty? Is she like a cockroach or something?"

Yolanda burst in, fuming. If only she knew, she would have hit harder yesterday, to knock Evelina out for a dozen of days.

"After getting punched yesterday, causing a stir is just her style," Lizetta said with a light laugh.

Seeing Lizetta's relaxed expression, Yolanda blinked in surprise, "Liz, do you have a plan for a comeback?"