

Chapter 10 No.10

"Let me help," she insisted.

They were in his bedroom. The lights were dim. Julian was lying on the bed, wearing only loose pajama pants.

"Elena, you don't have to," he said, his voice tight.

"I want to. Silas showed me the oil."

She poured the warm oil into her hands and touched his calf. The muscle felt dense, but strangely tight, almost spastic under her fingers. She began to knead the flesh, trying to work out the tension she thought was there.

Julian gripped the sheets. His head was thrown back, eyes closed.

She moved her hands up, over his knee, to his thigh.

His breath hitched.

"Does that hurt?" she asked softly, leaning closer.

"No," he groaned. "It feels... too good."

She kept massaging her hands moving higher, toward the inner thigh. The muscles here felt powerfully built, confusingly so for someone in a chair, but before she could question it, Julian's hand shot out and grabbed her wrist. His grip was iron.

"Stop," he commanded.

She froze. "Did I hurt you?"

He opened his eyes. They were black with desire. "Elena, I'm a paralyzed man, but not everywhere. If you keep touching me like that..."

Her face burned. She realized what he meant.

"Oh," she whispered.

She tried to pull back, but he didn't let go. He pulled her down. She lost her balance and fell onto his chest.

They were inches apart. She could feel his heart hammering against her ribs. It was fast. Too fast.

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He looked at her lips. She stopped breathing.

He leaned in. She closed her eyes, waiting for the kiss.

Buzz. Buzz. Buzz.

Her phone on the nightstand vibrated violently, shattering the moment.

Julian cursed under his breath and released her.

She scrambled up, grabbing the phone. It was a text from her best friend.

Check Twitter. Ryan is saying you tricked him into the prenup and that Julian is faking his accounts.

The rage was instant. "He just won't stop," she said, showing the phone to Julian.

Julian looked at the screen. The softness in his eyes vanished. The predator returned.

"Go to sleep, Elena," he said coldly. "I'll handle it."

"How?"

"Just sleep."

She went to her room, feeling unsatisfied and angry.

When Julian was sure she was gone, he picked up his encrypted phone. He dialed Silas.

"Initiate Phase One," Julian said. "Start gathering the intel on the Egyptian dig site. I want to know every permit violation Ryan has buried. And flag Victoria's recent transfers."

He lit a cigarette in the dark, the cherry glowing like a demon's eye.

"They wanted a war," Julian exhaled smoke. "We start by taking their eyes."

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