

## Unbreakable 1291

### Chapter 1291

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In a tone laced with dread, he uttered, "Don't die. Find another way to punish me..."

His deep voice trembled noticeably, exposing an undercurrent of fear.

His moist eyes fortunately remained hidden behind a veil of water, concealing his emotions.

With her face covered, Nicole couldn't discern Jarrod's expression, but she sensed the fear emanating from the trembling body that held her. What was Jarrod afraid of?

As Nicole's head weighed heavy, she wondered if her judgment was flawed. After all, what could a man like Jarrod possibly be afraid of?

Nicole felt suffocated, on the verge of running out of air. She was in agony, and the tight embrace she was in intensified her already desperate yearning.

"Mmm..." A faint sound escaped her lips as she struggled to gasp for air.

Finally, as if breaking out of a trance, Jarrod released her head.

"Do you think I want to die? I wouldn't consider killing myself even if you died!" Nicole scolded harshly, shaking off his hand. "Don't touch me!"

Nicole ensured her earpiece was intact, relieved it hadn't plunged into the water. Otherwise, all her efforts would have been in vain.

Nicole's body emanated an uncontrollable heat, juxtaposed with Jarrod's presence that simultaneously seared her heart and provided a comforting coolness.

Struggling to maintain composure, Nicole coldly commanded, "Step aside!"

Despite her directive, Jarrod seized her once more. "Remember your words..."

Easily irritable because of the doctored drink, Nicole shot a disbelieving look at him. "Get lost!"

Jarrod, unfazed, showed no sign of anger.

Beneath the night sky, his chiseled profile remained sharp and clear, and his eyes were deep and mysterious. Turning pale, he uttered, "If I die one day, live well."

At that moment, Nicole glimpsed a myriad of emotions in his eyes.

Reluctance, unwillingness, desire... But almost immediately, she dismissed the notion, convinced her mind was addled today. How could someone as cold and heartless as Jarrod harbor such complex feelings?

With a weak smile, Nicole assured him, "Don't worry. Not only will I live well, but I'll also celebrate your death with fireworks."

Jarrod's eyes deepened, a self-mocking smile gracing his lips.

Ignoring Nicole's resistance, he forcefully hoisted her over his shoulder.

Panic surged through Nicole, her fists pounding on his back as she gritted her teeth. "Put me down!"

As if deaf to her pleas, Jarrod continued to wade effortlessly through the deep end of the

pool.

Her heavy eyelids and aching body compelled Nicole to cease her struggle. Instead, she conserved energy by lying on his shoulder like a docile cat.

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A fleeting sense of pleasure rose within Jarrod's heart.

Meanwhile, Deniz, who had been kicked into the pool, struggled to pull himself up using the metal guards and collapsed onto the floor.

He lay there, gasping for air like a panting dog.

Deniz was perplexed by the sudden turn of events. Noticing Jarrod carrying Nicole out of the water, he wondered when Jarrod had started playing the hero, rescuing people from drowning.

Deniz's eyes roved, plotting how to snatch Nicole back. He intended to leverage his connection with the Hampton family, believing Jarrod wouldn't dismiss his request.

Although Deniz cursed Jarrod inwardly, he put on a sycophantic smile and pointed at Nicole. "Mr. Schultz, do you remember her? She's the escort you brought to us to play with before!"

The mention of the term "escort" triggered a drastic change in Jarrod's expression, transforming it into an ugly visage.

Deniz was trying to be shrewd, not knowing that he was in fact being incredibly foolish. He thought Jarrod had beaten him in the past merely out of frustration, and attributed his entanglement with Nicole to bad luck.

Now, fearing Jarrod might snatch Nicole away, Deniz resorted to dredging up the past to tarnish Nicole's reputation. After all, Nicole had recorded the damning evidence of his doings. For the sake of his future, he had to destroy all the evidence Nicole had.

Addressing Jarrod, Deniz asserted, "Mr. Schultz, this bitch tried to seduce me, and when it didn't work, she falsely accused me of trying to rape her!"

Oblivious to Jarrod's darkening expression, Deniz pointed at the money and other items in the pool, fabricating a tale. "Look, she stole all this. Hand her over, and I'll take care of it."

Jarrood's eyes turned even darker, and his voice was ice-cold when he spoke. "You're saying she seduced you?"

"Yeah, she does that for a living, doesn't she?" Deniz sneered. "Have you forgotten how loud and forward she was when you brought her over for drinks? Practically shoving her chest in my face and begging to be called Nicky..."

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Deniz's lecherous gaze lingered on Nicole's long, straight legs. Her figure was undeniably tempting. Bitter about missing out on her and facing a beating instead, Deniz spat, "Damn this whore, selling herself everywhere and now trying to trick me! That..."

"Deniz," Jarrod called out abruptly.

With a flattering smile on his face, Deniz responded, "Yes, Mr. Schultz?"

Jarrood's gaze shifted toward the azure pool as he casually stated, "Jump in."

Deniz was stunned for a moment and chuckled. "Mr. Schultz, you're quite the joker.."

Before he could finish, a resounding bang echoed through the air.

Jarrold's kick sent Deniz's bulky frame plunging into the water.

This kick was even more forceful than the previous one, aimed directly at Deniz's face. It left Deniz with indescribable pain.

Maintaining his terrifying strength, Jarrold effortlessly held Nicole in one arm.

Towering over Deniz from the pool deck, Jarrold asked, "How do you like that joke?"

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Utterly confused, Deniz flailed helplessly in the water, creating countless splashes. "Ah!" he cried out, his voice gurgling in the water. "Help me..."

Observing Deniz floundering in the water, Jarrold spoke, his voice carrying a cold and threatening tone. "Cleanse that filthy mouth of yours. If I hear you saying such dirty things again..."

His lips curved into something resembling a smile, but his words dripped with bloodlust. "I'll cut off that tongue of yours."

Having delivered his warning, Jarrold turned away, ignoring Deniz's desperate pleas for help.

Nicole, too unwell to speak, felt her legs writhing uncontrollably.

Her mind was caught in a fluctuation between clarity and confusion.

Deniz's derogatory words branding her as an escort rang in her ears.

She knew that was the way others saw her, and it was all because of the role assigned to her by the man currently holding her.

To still Nicole's quivering legs, Jarrold lowered her from his shoulder and held her sideways in front of him like she was a princess, letting her legs rest within the crook of his arms.

Seizing the opportunity, Nicole bit down on his chest, clenching her teeth until the taste of blood coerced her to release her grip.

Unfazed by the pain, Jarrold casually inquired, "What, you're done?"

Can you endure it now?"

Nicole's entire body was flushed with heat, a symptom that spoke volumes.

Gritting her teeth to suppress her trembling body, Nicole demanded, "Put me down!"

Jarrold silently draped his jacket over Nicole, continuing forward as he pleased.

Nicole's clothes were completely wet. Her underwear clung to her skin, hot and uncomfortable.

She hit and kicked the man carrying her, struggling frantically. "Put me down!" she pleaded incessantly. She was determined not to let her efforts against Deniz go to waste.

Witnessing her restlessness, Jarrold paused for a moment and soothingly said, "I'll have Alec handle the aftermath. Deniz will face the consequences."

A sigh of relief escaped Nicole. With Jarrold taking charge of the situation, at least some things would go the way she wanted.

Deniz's sister-in-law was married to the brother of the Hampton Corporation's chairman. The Hampton and Schultz families were deeply entwined in business relations. Jarrod's move against Deniz, which had come without any prior indication, amounted to a slap in the face of the Hampton family. It was sure to create a crack in the rock-solid cooperation between the Hampton and Schultz families.

Nicole finally relaxed, but it was quickly followed by an intense craving. The restless itch at the bottom of her heart threatened to overwhelm her.

Carried by Jarrod's robust arms, Nicole found herself being ushered into the car.

Without hesitation, Jarrod instructed the driver to raise the partition and speed toward the hospital.

In her half-dazed, half-resisting state, Nicole did not hear the car's destination.

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Her reddened eyes shot a glare at Jarrod, and her voice was raspy as she questioned, "What do you want?"

With a disdainful look, she warned, "Jarrod, if you dare to touch me, I swear I'll kill you!"

Her words dripped with venom, a testament to her deep-seated hatred.

Jarrod's hand slowly clenched into a fist, his gaze shifting from tense to inscrutable. "Kill me?"

He suddenly laughed, lifting Nicole's chin. "Dying by your hand doesn't seem so bad."

Despite his gentlemanly appearance, the ruthlessness in his speech revealed the wildness beneath his skin.

His hand shifted from Nicole's jawline down to her neck, his fingers hovering over her skin in a teasing manner.

Despite herself, Nicole heard a small moan escape her mouth. At the moment, even the slightest of touches made her feel as if her entire body had turned to water.

Jarrod's Lips curled into a mocking smile. His firm fingers continued down her neck, tracing the outline of her collarbone. "Are you going to take your clothes off, or should I do it for you?"

When Nicole heard his shameless words, her eyes blazed with fury. Her clenched hand quivered lightly, highlighting the stark contrast in strength between men and women, especially now when she felt weak and powerless.

Jarrod's deep gaze was filled with aggression. It was a look that Nicole knew all too well. It was a familiar nightmare that haunted her dreams. It was clear that he wanted her.

"Aren't you uncomfortable?" Taking Nicole's silence as consent, Jarrod let his fingers wander down to her shirt, and began to undo the buttons.

Wearing wet clothes for too long could cause one to catch a cold, a fact that Nicole was well aware of. But the thought of what would happen if she got undressed now was unimaginable...

Biting down on her lip until the taste of blood spurred her into action, Nicole suddenly reached out to grab him, a desperate measure in the confined space of the car.

However, her agility proved no match for the sober-minded Jarrod.

Jarrod firmly caught her hand, his eyes darkening for a moment before he let out a cold laugh.

"What are you trying to do?"

Nicole continued to struggle, but it was no use.

With his strong grip, Jarrod directed her hand downward, between her legs.

“Nicole...” Pressing his forehead against hers, Jarrod looked into her eyes, at the same time steering her hand without pause.

When he spoke, his voice was low and strained, and his breath was heavy on her face. “I didn’t want to do this, but since you insist, I’ll oblige...”

Unable to contain her anger, Nicole cried out, “Jarrod, I hate you!”

She was like a dam that was ready to burst at any moment. With her hand still moving under his control, she cursed, “You’re not human.

You’re a beast!”

“I’ll take that as a compliment,” Jarrod said casually, his lips curling up into a smirk. “After all, being human comes with too many constraints. I would rather live freely as a beast.”

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The two engaged in a silent struggle within the cramped car.

Nicole’s hair was matted with sweat on her forehead, and her eyes were bloodshot. Her hand continued to move between her legs, numb and mechanical under Jarrod’s incessant guidance.

Then, without warning, Jarrod suddenly leaned toward her. His handsome face twisted in madness as he parted his lips, letting his teeth fiercely latch onto her soft neck.

This seemed to be the trigger that finally set Nicole off. Deep under the effect of the chemical agent, she quivered uncontrollably.

After a moment, when she finally stopped shaking, she heard Jarrod’s husky voice next to her ear.

“Did you really come that fast?”

He lifted her chin with his free hand and, with a meaningful look at her, added, “See, you still have feelings for me.”

The feeling of Jarrod biting down lingered on Nicole’s neck, and her hand was damp and sticky, making her flinch with disgust.

Defiantly looking up at Jarrod, she hissed, “You damn well know what’s going on with me!”

Even though she was under the influence of the chemical agent, she couldn’t accept the fact that she was aroused by a mere bite on her neck. Especially when it was from Jarrod, the devil she hated with all her guts.

Overwhelmed with grief, Nicole extended her hand and slapped him hard.

Jarrod didn’t dodge, instead taking the slap head-on. When he turned back to face her, half of his face was red. Staring at the hickeys on her neck, he exhaled as if in relief. “That felt good. Are you done though? Do you want to sleep with me?” he asked shamelessly.

Nicole headbutted him with all her might.

As she pulled back, her vision blurred. The last thing she saw before she blacked out was blood dripping from his nose onto his white shirt, making him look more like the demonic fiend that he

was.

With the final bit of her strength, Nicole warned, "Jarrod, if you dare to touch me, I'll castrate you." In the hospital ward.

After being injected with detoxifying agents, Nicole had gradually regained some clarity.

Two police officers arrived to obtain a statement from her. After that, they handed her a copy of the injury report that the doctor had filled out. The report read, "Residue in the stomach left by hallucinogens..."

Nicole's eyes scanned through the document until she saw the words "Body not harmed." All the tension in her body finally began to dissipate.

Aside from the lingering effects of the chemical agent, her body had not suffered much, but she still had not recovered her full strength, so she had to stay in the hospital for observation for the next twenty-four hours.

After the officers left, Nicole laboriously lifted herself out of bed and went to the bathroom.

The pale and gaunt face she saw in the mirror frightened her. Her eyes were instantly drawn to her neck, where the purplish-red hickey seemed to glare at her.

Nicole turned on the tap for the hot water and held a towel under it, before aggressively wiping her neck with the wet towel.

But her efforts were in vain. With every rub, her neck only turned redder and redder.

Looking at the indelible hickey, Nicole was frustrated to the point of tears. The wound was Like an outward reflection of the countless emotions she felt inside.

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Her hand holding the towel trembled slightly, and she smashed it on the mirror.

The movement caused a bit of the hot water to splash on her face, but she did not flinch. At the moment, the unbearable heat was the only thing that tethered her to reality.

Nicole turned her gaze to the hot water running from the tap and, as if possessed, reached out and held her hand under it.

In a matter of seconds, her palm was burned crimson.

She was like a machine that couldn't feel pain. Even as her palm was being scalded by the hot water, all she could do was numbly watch.

At this moment, the door of the bathroom suddenly opened, and Jarrod appeared.

In front of him was the sight of Nicole standing there like a broken puppet, not knowing how to retract her hand from danger.

With his heart leaping to his throat, Jarrod rushed forward and grabbed her hand out of the water.

"Are you crazy?"

His touch made Nicole, who seemed to be in a daze till now, explode like a lit firecracker.

In her struggle to shake him off, she ended up accidentally knocking herself on the sink.

Tension was written all over Jarrod's face as he hurriedly approached her to check if she was hurt.

But before he could touch her, Nicole shot him a wary look like an alarmed cat with its fur standing on end. "Get out of here!"

Then, regardless of his presence, she once again turned on the hot water and continued to wash her hand under it.

With a glint of coldness in his eyes, Jarrod grabbed her hand and turned on the other tap. Then, he firmly held her hand under the cold water.

Nicole finally looked up at Jarrod and said through gritted teeth, “Jarrod, don’t you understand? I need to clean this hand completely!

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It’s dirty because you touched it.”

“Dirty?” Jarrod breathed incredulously, his patience wearing thin.

Grabbing her from behind, he forced her to raise her head and look at their intertwined figures in the mirror.

“Take a good look. Can you see clearly? You are now in my arms. I’m the one who changed your clothes. You feel dirty because I touched you?” Jarrod’s eyes were clouded with a mixture of gloom and fury.

He said word by word, “So do you want to kill me or yourself?”

Nicole’s eyes were bloodshot as she stared at the mirror. Tightly restrained by Jarrod’s grip, she couldn’t move at all. At the moment, every fiber of her being was filled with disgust. Even his warm breath on her neck felt like an invasion of space.

Having reached the peak of her anger, she could no longer control herself. She turned her head and bit into Jarrod’s arm fiercely.

Jarrod didn’t even try to dodge. He just let her bite him until she was satisfied.

Blood stained the sleeve of his freshly changed shirt, making him look even more fierce. Clenching his jaw, he sneered, “Why do you waste so much energy?”

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By this time, Nicole’s hospital gown was soaked with water, causing it to cling to her body and show off her graceful curves. Paired with her pale face, she evoked a picture of desolation that was heartbreakingly beautiful to behold.

Her shoulders trembled violently as she said, “Jarrod, you’re a pervert! A lunatic! Looking at you makes me want to throw up.”

Hearing these words, Jarrod felt an explosion of anger in his heart.

But at the same time, looking at the crumbling expression on Nicole’s face, he had no choice but to suppress that anger.

Taking a deep breath, he tried to make her see reason. “Do you remember the first time we slept together? You thought it was because you saw me first and pursued me, right? You’re wrong. I noticed you first. It was in an elective class in freshman year. You and your boyfriend at that time sat next to me, always cuddling each other.

Every time I looked at you, I wanted to pin you down right then and there.”

Nicole gritted her teeth, listening to the story that she had never heard before.

Jarrod continued, “Did you ever wonder why that boyfriend of yours suddenly broke up with you? I

gave his father a million to leave Ardlens with him. After that, I became the student union president so that you would notice me.”

His lips curled into a self-mocking smile. Wiping the wet eyelashes of the woman in front of him with his thumb, he spoke again, though more to himself than to her. “You said I’m a lunatic. Well, you’re right because what I showed you was a carefully crafted image of myself. I have always been someone who needs to get what I want. I did all this to lure you in, and you fell right into my trap. It was all part of my plan.”

Of course, after that, many other external factors had affected his plan. The fall of his family, followed by a series of misunderstandings, had driven Jarrod crazy.

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But from beginning to end, he had never stopped loving Nicole for a single second. It was just that his love had been obscured by misunderstanding for some time.

Now, Nicole and Jarrod had been irreversibly wounded, which put them in a situation that was almost impossible to salvage. But so what?

Nicole was the woman whom Jarrod had set his heart on. Regardless of what he had to do or sacrifice, he would never let her go.

But Nicole found Jarrod’s speech ridiculous. Pursing her lips in anger, she said, “Jarrod, I can already see you dying a miserable death.”

Silence filled the air. Two living people stood in the bathroom, but at that moment, neither of them talked.

The longer Jarrod stared at Nicole, the more he felt his self-control slipping away. Finally, as if a dam had broken, he pinched her waist and lifted her onto the washbasin. Then, he grasped her cheeks and lowered his head to ki\*s her.

Overwhelmed by his sudden advances, Nicole strained to push him away with both hands.

With her resistance, the ki\*s turned sour. The two people seemed to be engaged in a battle, with one fiercely trying to pry open the other’s defenses.

Even after the tender lips were broken and bleeding, the attack continued.

Blood stained their lips and teeth, though it was not certain whose blood it was.

What started as a simple ki\*s turned into a bloody entanglement.

Finally, Nicole wasn’t able to hold back her grief any longer. A salty tear slid down her cheek, scalding Jarrod’s thin lips.

It was only then that Jarrod paused. Suppressing the desire surging within him, he finally let her go.

A crisp smack echoed through the bathroom. The moment Jarrod released Nicole, Nicole’s palm landed solidly on his cheek.

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Nicole felt her palm tingling from the impact. After all, she had delivered the slap with full force. Blood streaked the corner of Jarrod’s mouth, and his eyes darkened.

With a dangerous gaze fixed on Nicole, he touched his lips with his tongue and licked away the blood.

Then, suddenly lowering his head, he let his lips trace the path where Nicole's tears had fallen. Nicole's eyes glimmered in surprise. She hadn't expected this madman to dare to ki\*s her again. She raised her hand high, but this time, he grabbed her wrist and blocked her. On the swollen side of Jarrod's face, his lips curled up into a sinister smirk. "Every slap you give me will be paid with a ki\*s. And for every ten slaps..." As Jarrod spoke, he let his hand drift to the hickey on her collarbone and circled it. With a chuckle, he finished, "I'll claim you!" Nicole's pupils dilated for a moment and then gradually returned to calmness. When a person's emotions accumulated to a certain extent, the body's self-defense mechanism would kick in, shutting down those emotions like pressing a switch. To Nicole, showing any emotion to Jarrod, even anger, felt like a waste. She closed her eyes. When she next spoke, her tone was vacant, as if her soul had left her. "Jarrod, people die every minute in this world. Why aren't you one of them?" A hollow chuckle left Jarrod's lips. "Remember this well. You will always be mine. Even if I die, I'll make sure you remember me for a lifetime." After saying that, Jarrod scooped Nicole up in his arms and carried her back to the bed. Then, he went and fetched a burn ointment. While applying the ointment on her scalded hand, he coldly remarked, "Do you think I'll let you go because you're doing something stupid like this?" 's Now that their relationship had reached an impasse, Jarrod was ready to go to any lengths necessary to keep her in his grasp. The struggle just now had drained too much of Nicole's strength. She was too exhausted to have this conversation with him now. Staring blankly out the window, she responded in a tone devoid of any emotion, "I'm tired. Can you leave?" Jarrod's hand that was applying the ointment paused. He stared at her face for a few moments. Then, ultimately choosing not to say anything, he left. With a heavy heart, Nicole finally fell into a deep slumber.

Amid the night, a sense of thirst and restlessness enveloped Nicole. Out of nowhere, a comforting presence eased against her back, placing a pillow to support her and offering a sip of warm water. The moisture on her throat provided a newfound clarity and soothing comfort. A gentle hand delicately swept the corners of Nicole's mouth with a soft handkerchief. Still somewhat drowsy, Nicole wrestled with the effort to open her eyes, gradually bringing the man's face into focus. "Roscoe?" Nicole was surprised to see Roscoe at her bedside in the middle of the night. Since their encounter at the hotel, they hadn't met or had any contact with each other. "Yeah." Roscoe's response lacked any discernible emotion.

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Then, carefully positioning the pillow under her head, he ensured her comfort as she lay back down. Nicole sensed her hand being lifted, finding solace as it rested in Roscoe's palm.

Casting a sidelong glance, she observed Roscoe unwrapping her bandages and applying burn ointment.

Although her burns were not severe, the doctor had advised applying the ointment five times within twenty-four hours for optimal healing.

However, she had been asleep for a long time and had forgotten to do it.

Roscoe's shirt sleeves were casually rolled up, exposing slender yet powerful forearms sculpted by regular exercise. His muscles subtly flexed, exuding an appealing strength. He didn't seem to mind the ointment sticking to his hands as he skillfully massaged Nicole's hand, aiding the absorption of the ointment.

Nicole observed his well-defined fingers, savoring the repetition of the gentle massage. Abruptly, a warm sensation surged from the depths of her heart.

She diverted her gaze, no longer fixating on their intertwined hands, but rather on the IV stand beside the bed. "Why are you here?"

"My former colleagues informed me," Roscoe replied.

Seeing that Nicole was confused, he explained, "I requested them to update me on anyone named Nicole just in case something happened. I want to be always reachable."

Instantly, indescribable emotions welled up within Nicole, and her eyes teetered on the brink of tears. A distinct warmth rose from the sour emotions within her.

As always, Roscoe was straightforward and honest, concealing nothing.

It seemed that apart from Austin, she was his sole anchor in life.

Nicole's hand was wrapped in breathable gauze, but Roscoe continued to hold it, showing no intention of letting go.

Feeling a twinge of discomfort, it was Nicole who finally withdrew her hand. "I'm fine. You can go back."

"No, you sleep. I won't disturb you," Roscoe insisted.

Nicole was not naive. She understood Roscoe's feelings for her.

However, she did not label it as love. She attributed his feelings to the fact that she had once shined brightly in his life. Besides, he was probably grateful for her father's previous financial support.

Since Nicole assumed most of his actions stemmed out of gratitude, she couldn't accept his feelings with a clear conscience. It would be too unfair to Roscoe.

In fact, the lack of contact between them since their last encounter at the hotel had brought Nicole a sense of relief. She deemed herself unworthy of his kindness. She had hoped that Roscoe would come to this conclusion on his own, but it seemed that he hadn't realized it yet.

With resolve, Nicole shut her eyes and ruthlessly uttered, "Roscoe, I don't need you."

Roscoe's body stiffened for a second but quickly returned to normal.

"I know. I'm the one who needs you." A palpable melancholy tinted his voice.

Nicole felt a pang in her heart as though a weighty stone pressed upon her, hindering her breath.

This oppressive sensation made her hands tremble uncontrollably.

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She secretly hit her hands under the blanket, pausing for a moment before clenching her teeth in determination. “Roscoe, don’t you understand? When I say I don’t need you, I mean I don’t need you in my life.”

The air around them seemed to freeze.

Stunned, Roscoe remained silent for a few minutes. Upon regaining his composure, the first thing he said was, “Nicole, did I do something wrong?”

He meticulously retraced his steps, pondering if he had done anything wrong since he entered the ward. Could it be that Nicole was unhappy about him asking his colleagues to keep him updated about her?

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“I know asking my colleagues to keep me informed might be a bit too much, but I was genuinely concerned about you. You don’t have any family in Ardlens, and I was afraid that you wouldn’t be able to reach me if something happened.”

Roscoe’s serious explanation only intensified Nicole’s heartache. The blend of that piercing pain left her breathless.

With gritted teeth, Nicole asserted, “It’s not because of that. I’m just not comfortable with having people in my life anymore. I don’t like being cared for like this, and sometimes, I even find your presence annoying.”

The most difficult part of any undertaking was the beginning. Now that Nicole had already begun, and the most hurtful words had already been spoken, she knew that it would only get easier from here.

Nicole bit her lip. “As for Austin, let the nanny take care of him from now on. She was the one who had been taking care of him till he turned one. The search for a matched heart for him will take time, and you have your own concerns, so I won’t burden you.”

When Austin was born, Nicole had enlisted the help of a local nanny to help in his upbringing.

When Austin turned one, Nicole, not herself at that time, decided to withdraw from his life, completely leaving him under the care of the nanny. This was the toughest decision she had ever made.

Throughout this time, Roscoe had been there. Back then, Roscoe had been furthering his studies. Later, when Austin fell ill, Roscoe suggested that Austin stay with him. Ever since then, Austin had become dependent on Roscoe as well as the nanny.

“I’ve never considered Austin as a burden,” Roscoe retorted suddenly, his voice not loud but tinged with indignation.

Swiftly containing his anger, he continued, “Nicole, whatever you don’t like about me, I will change it. If you find my presence bothersome, I’ll make myself scarce. I can...”

“Stop it,” Nicole said with reddened eyes. Her hand trembled beneath the blanket, and she was afraid that her tears would escape at any moment. “Just pretend you never met me. Roscoe, we were never meant to be from the start.”

Nicole’s words put a clear distance between them, hitting Roscoe hard.

Roscoe felt like he couldn’t connect with Nicole anymore. He thought back to the soft, moonlit way she used to look at Austin, puzzled about why she was being so harsh with him...

“Is this because of him?” Roscoe asked, his eyes locked on Nicole’s Lips and neck, noticing the telltale marks.

No room for self-deception remained.

Nicole, aware of his stare, felt a wave of shame wash over her. She tried to hide it by covering her neck with her hand and letting her hair fall over it as though she had done something unforgivable.

For a second, Nicole almost tried to justify her actions.

Somehow, she paused. Then, deciding not to hide, she exposed the hickeys under his unwavering gaze.

“This has nothing to do with him. I just don’t like you. Don’t bother trying...” Nicole said, avoiding Roscoe’s gaze.