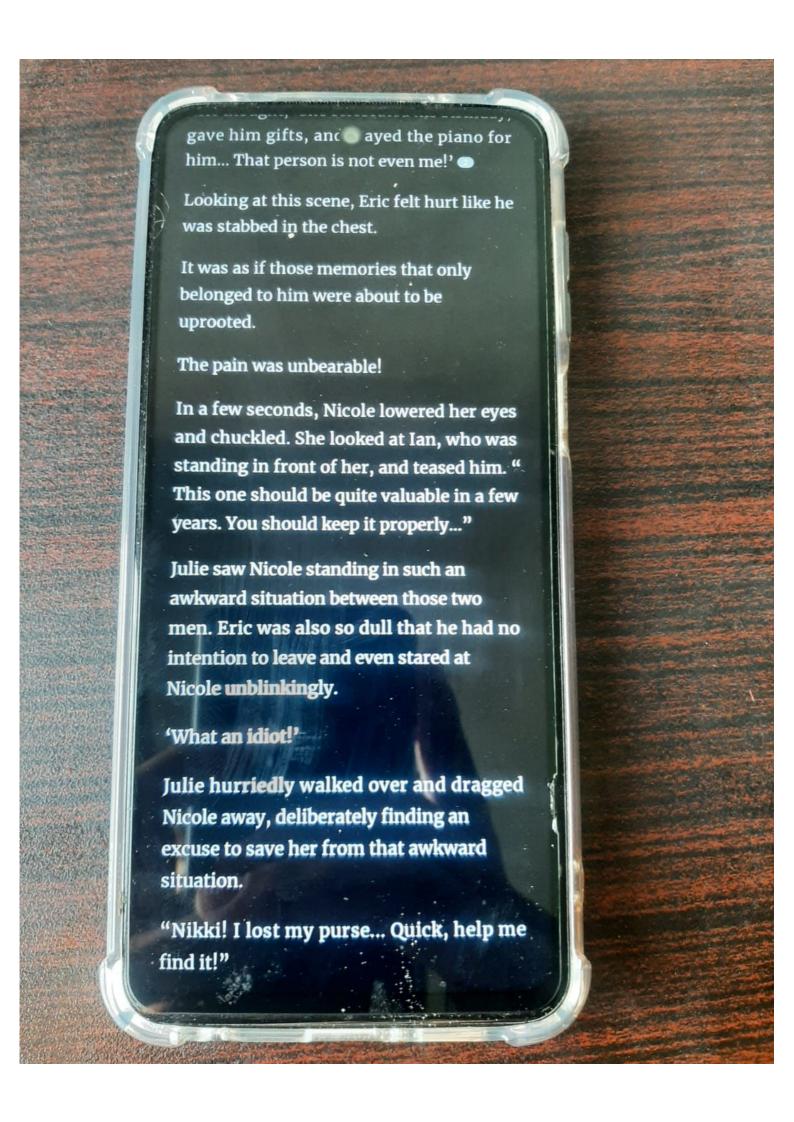


IVII. I CI guson, save whatever you want to say for later. This is cond Young Master Carter's birthday party, so you don't want to steal the limelight, right?" As she said that, Nicole smiled and carefully put the Patek Philippe on Ian's wrist. When she was done, she had a satisfied smile on her face. "Happy birthday, Carter!" Ian moved his arm exaggeratedly to look a t his new watch to deliberately rub it in Eric's face "Thanks, Nikki. This is the best gift I've ever received! It's really worth keeping for the rest of my life..." Ian looked at Nicole with such deep affection in his eyes. Nicole held her breath for a moment. Ian's gaze was so warm, passionate, and tender that she felt so overwhelmed. She also could not ignore the piercing cold gaze on the other side of her that was heavy and depressing. Eric thought, 'She celebrated his birthday, gave him gifts, and played the plano for



man: Nicole understood and quickly followed Julie. "You always lose your stuff..." Eric looked at Nicole's back until it faded away before he withdrew his gaze. In front of him, Ian smirked and said, "M r. Ferguson, it's clear that Nicole doesn't want to see you, so stop being an eyesore t o her." The surrounding temperature instantly dropped to freezing point. A bitter chill enveloped Eric's body. His gaze was dark and cold. "Mr. Carter, if you don't want me to ruin your party, you'd better stay away from m e." Eric's aura was so domineering with undisguised resentment. 'I didn't come here for Ian's bullsh*t birthday! Is he even worth it?" Keith saw what happened and quickly went forward to pull Ian away. He laughed and said, "Second Young Master Carter, don't mind him... He has a weird temper... By the way, I haven't wished you a happy hirthday vet..."

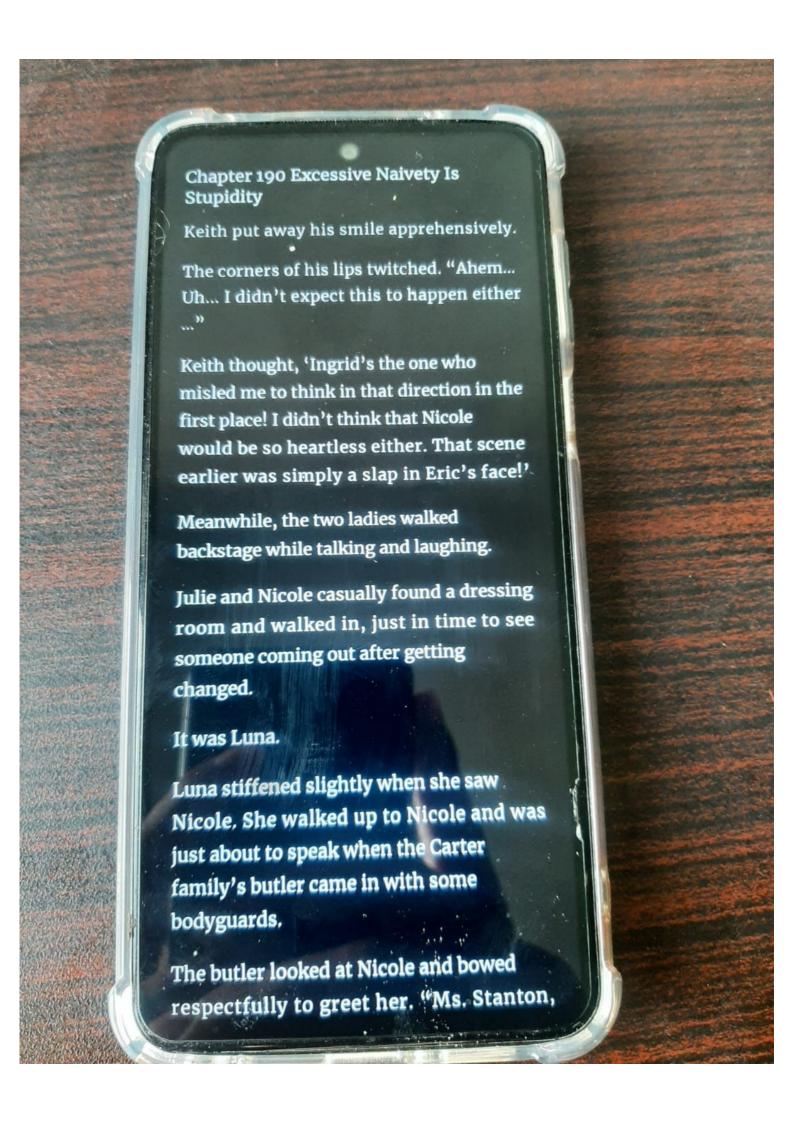
weird temper... By tl vay, I haven't wished you a happy birthday yet..." Keith pulled Ian away and came back to Eric after a while. Seeing Eric's cold and gloomy eyes affixed in one direction, Keith smiled and asked, " Whatchu lookin' at?" Eric ignored him. Keith did not give up. They were friends for so many years, so he knew what Eric was thinking about and grunted. "Are you looking at Nicole?" Eric coldly swept him a glance. "Will you die if you don't speak for a second?" Keith laughed and teased him. "Ferg, are you really starting to miss your 'ex-wife'? How could he mistake Eric's odd behavior? If Eric was only feeling remorseful, there was no need to be so angry when he saw Nicole giving someone else a gift for their birthday, right? Eric almost lost his stature and demeanor as the President of Ferguson Corporation!

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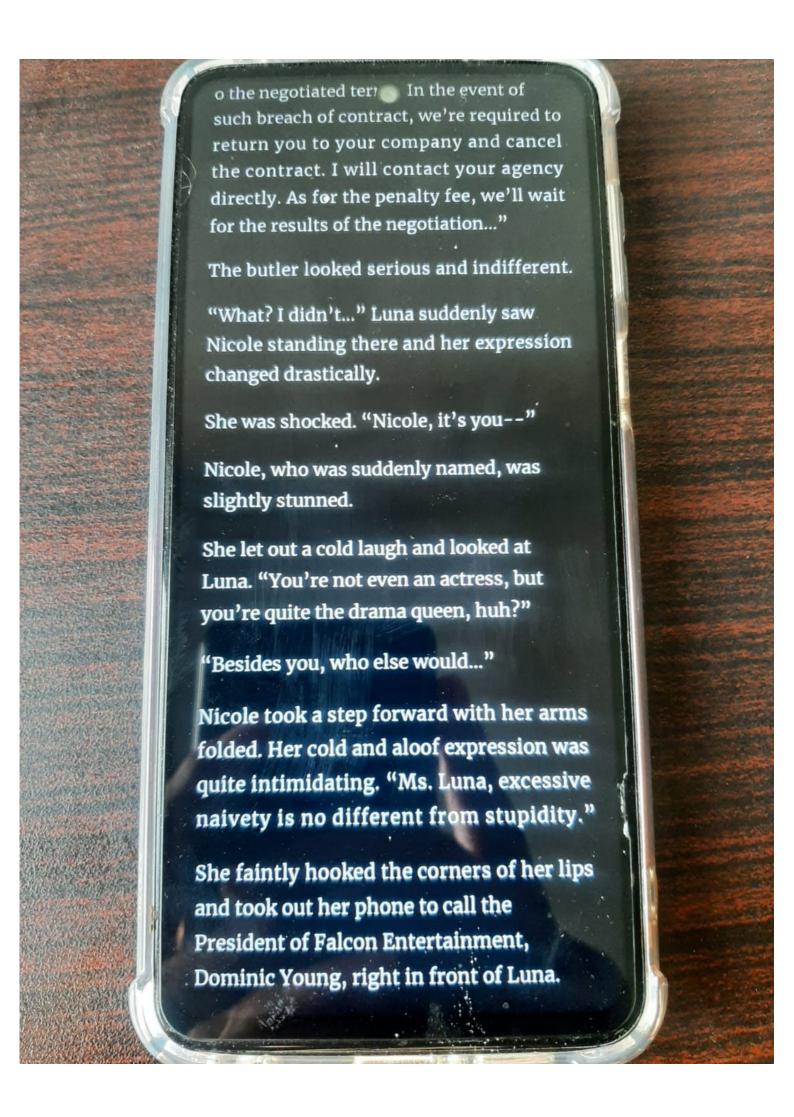
Eric's eyes sank. His breathing stalled for a moment.

His voice was cold and oppressive as he said, "Keith Ludwig, I haven't come to you to settle accounts and you still have the cheek to ask me this?!"

'Who swore that Nicole prepared a gift for me? Who said that Nicole would definitely attend my birthday party? Look what happened! My birthday is only one day ahead of Ian's, yet everything Nicole prepared was for Ian, not me! If it wasn't for Keith, I wouldn't even have such high expectations! Such high expectations only set me up for such bloody disappointment! Damn it!'

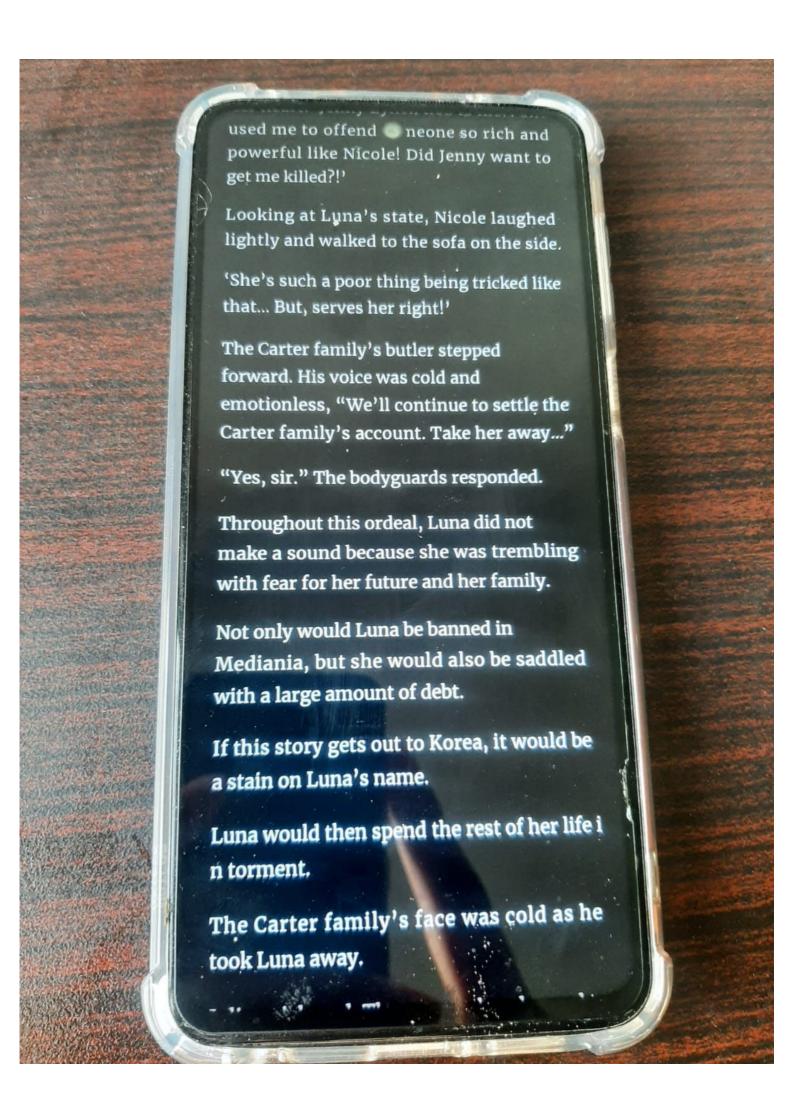


respectfully to gre her. "Ms. Stanton, please excuse me. I have to take care of a little matter. It will be settled in a few minutes." Nicole and Julie glanced at each other and nodded. "Go ahead." The butler nodded at the two burly bodyguards behind him. The bodyguards went forward and took Luna's arms, then dragged her towards the door. "What are you guys doing? Is there some kind of misunderstanding?" Luna knew that the Carter family's butler was an honorable man, whose words and actions represented the Carter family. In Mediania, one should not offend the rich and powerful. Thus, Luna was afraid of what the Carters would do to her. She did not want to ruin her career in the entertainment industry in Mediania. 'If I go back to Korea, I'll be laughed at! What's happening?' Luna thought. "Ms. Luna, you didn't perform according t o the negotiated terms. In the event of

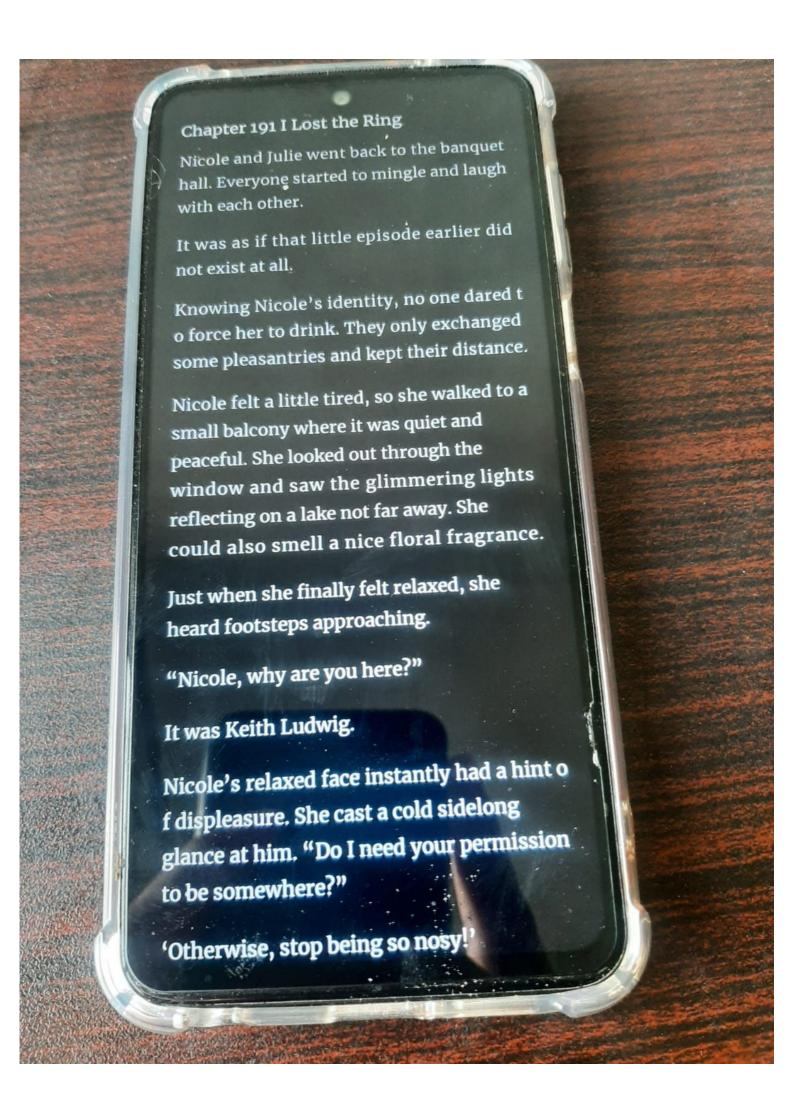


Dominic Young, rigl a n front of Luna. "Dominic, it's me. Find out which company Luna is from. From today onwards, I don't want to see her in any public event or on screen. Try to make her name disappear to the best of your ability." The other party did not even hesitate and instantly responded, "Yes, Ms. Stanton. That won't be a problem. The name Luna will completely disappear from showbiz from this moment on." Dominic Young was confident that he could bury an unknown artist in a snap of a finger. Luna's face instantly paled. Her body went limp, and she almost fell. Nicole raised her eyebrows with an indifferent expression on her face. Her voice was clear and cold. "Ms. Luna, whatever that was earlier wasn't me. Now, this is my doing. Got it?" Nicole had always been frank. She would admit to whatever she did. Why would she need to cover it up?

This was Nicole's capability. "Didn't Jenny Lynch tell you that her family's HS Corporation is about to go bankrupt?" Nicole looked at Luna's shocked face and continued to hit her with shocking information. "My Stanton Corporation is about to acquire HS Corporation, but it's a pity that you won't get the chance to witness this i n Mediania..." When the words fell, Luna's face turned pale. 'Nicole is acquiring HS Corporation? In Korea, HS Corporation is also a very largescale company, even more so than my family's KXY Group... But to Nicole, acquiring HS Corporation is just a matter o f words? She can do it so easily...' Luna suddenly felt a sense of trepidation. What if Nicole starts to target KXY Group... In an instant, Luna felt an icy feeling in her heart. 'Jenny Lynch lied to me?! She used me to offend someone so rich and



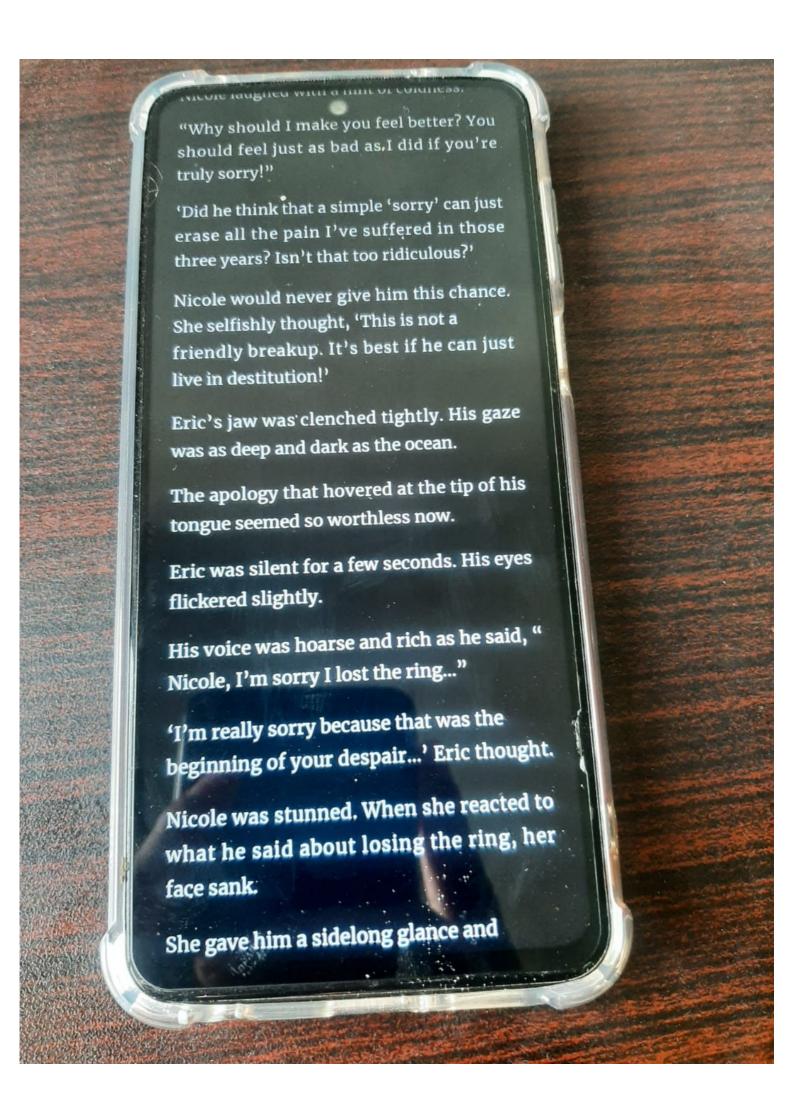
took Luna away. Julie snickered. They were already used to seeing small fry like this looking for their own demise. Jenny Lynch was a precedent, but unfortunately, Luna did not learn her lesson. Julie suddenly remembered something and looked at Nicole. "What's up with Eric Ferguson anyway?" Nicole raised her eyebrows and shrugged her shoulders. "How would I know?" "That look just doesn't feel right..." Nicole frowned and jolted up like she had just woken up from a dream. "Oh, right! I still owe him repair fees!"



Keith braced himself and decided to go over to say a few words for his friend. " Nicole, I didn't mean that. That watch earlier... Why didn't you get it for Eric? He waited for you all night at his birthday party, but you didn't come..." He muttered, "Poor Eric..." Nicole laughed coldly and gave him a look. 'When have I ever said that the watch was for Eric Ferguson? How ridiculous! Did he get kicked in the head by a donkey?' "Keith Ludwig, why are you guys so full of yourselves? Why should I go to some stranger's birthday party? Why would I buy a gift for someone I hate?" 'Shouldn't they at least figure that out by now?' Nicole thought. Keith was just about to speak when he saw a familiar figure coming out from behind the curtains where Nicole was standing. He opened his mouth and shut it instantly. A flash of shock and frustration crossed his eyes. 'Sh*t... This is bad...' Keith thought. "Hate? Do you hate me?"

Nicole's body stiffened slightly when she heard that voice and turned back in surprise. Somehow, Nicole was completely unaware that Eric had been standing there in front of her this entire time. It was just that he was covered by the floor-toceiling curtains. Eric looked at Nicole with a complicated gaze, but his voice was surprisingly calm. Nicole averted her gaze and curled her lips slightly. "Here I thought that I've shown my hatred very clearly, but it seems that you didn't feel it, Mr. Ferguson?" Since Eric had already heard it, she did not plan to cover it up and simply admitted it. It was good for everyone to be on the same page after all. Keith stood there awkwardly and already regretted going up to Nicole to ask about these. 'How good would it be if all of this never happened?' He coughed, closed his eyes, and quietly left the scene.

ett the scene. Keith felt like he had just fallen into hell! Eric's gaze was tightly locked on Nicole's side profile. His heart sank as he thought, 'Hate me? That's an unpleasant answer... But then again, she has so many reasons to hate me ... Even I'm starting to hate myself...' There were no outsiders around, and no one would dare to deliberately eavesdrop o n their conversation. Eric hooked the corners of his lips and laughed self-deprecatingly. "Nicole, no matter what I do, it seems like you won't forgive me, right?" Nicole glanced at him weirdly. She caught a hint of sadness in his eyes and thought, 'I must've misread it. How could Eric Ferguson feel sad because of m e? Nicole, don't make a fool of yourself...' "Mr. Ferguson, we can never be friends. I know that you just want to make yourself feel better by getting my forgiveness, but... Why should I forgive you?" Nicole laughed with a hint of coldness.

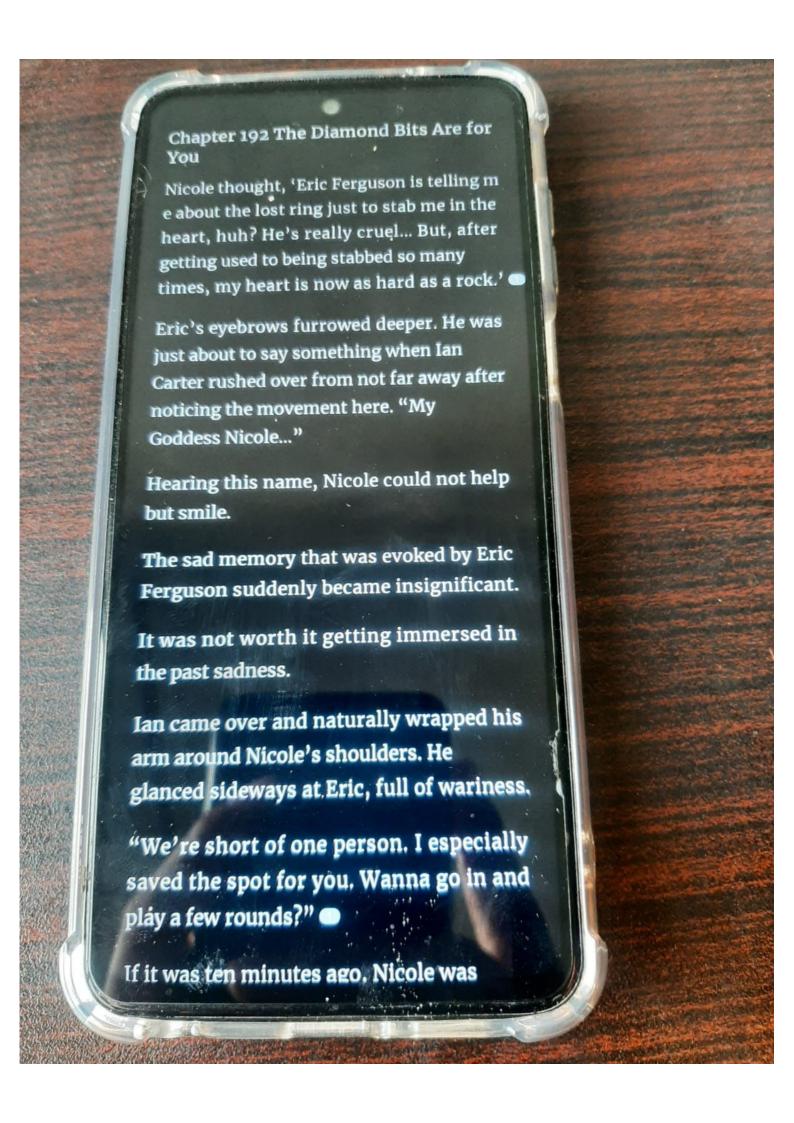


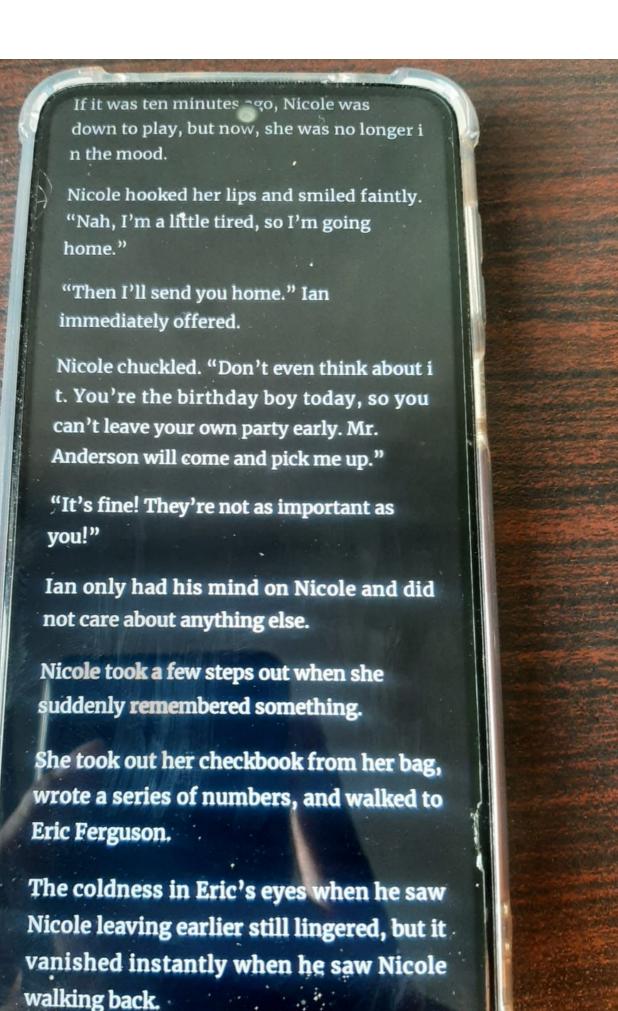
face sank.

She gave him a sidelong glance and hooked up her lips into a cold, piercing smile. "I know. You lost it on purpose."

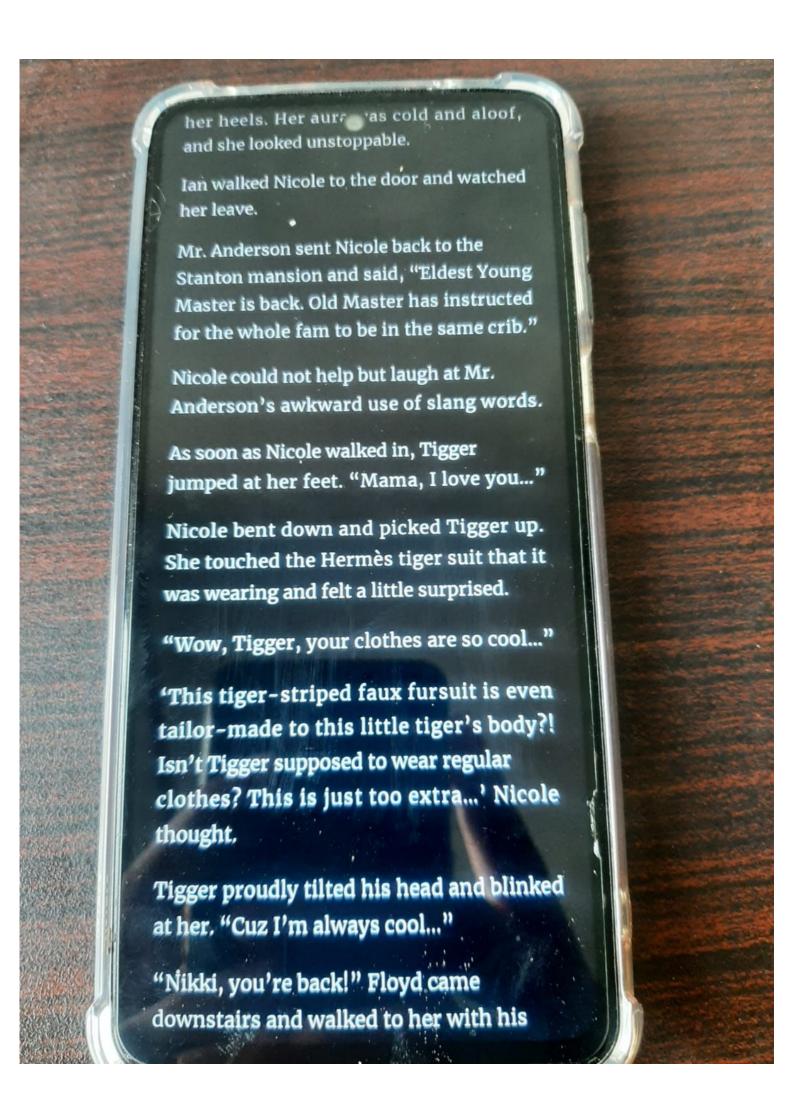
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waning vain Nicole forcefully shoved the check in her hand into Eric's breast pocket. "Here's \$40 million. It's enough for you t o buy a new car. Now, we don't owe each other." Nicole's smile was cold. That was well above the market price, so there was no need to worry about any follow-up. Nicole was annoyed with Eric's deliberate pestering and the conversation she had overheard of Eric and Gerard that day at J& L Corporation. 'He wants to fix our relationship because o f remorse? Screw him!' Nicole turned to leave without hesitation when the person behind her suddenly spoke. "Nicole, believe it or not, I didn't lose that ring on purpose." Eric's face was pale and sunken. 'I'll be a fool to believe it!' Nicole did not turn her head back and strutted away in her heels. Her aura was cold and aloof,



arms wide open. Nicole giggled and quickly pounced over, but before she could jump into her dad's arms, she was stopped. Floyd waved his hand at Nicole and said helplessly, "Not you! I want to hug my little Tigger..." Nicole's face stiffened. 'Aren't I Dad's favorite?!' Floyd carefully carried Tigger over and held it in his hands like a baby. "Tigger, Grandpa will take you for a walk..." Kai was lying on the sofa watching this scene and could not help but laugh. Looking at Nicole's surprised face, Kai said, "Hah! Lil N, you fell from grace!" Nicole glared at him. "Well, at least I'm still better than you. You're the bottom of the food chain!" Grant walked over from the bar and nodded approvingly. "Lil N, good job on the West Coast Project! You handled it well!" Nicole lifted her chin proudly and flipped her hair to the back. "That's for sure! Big

her hair to the back I hat's for sure! Big Brother, did you bring me a gift?"

Grant nodded and spoke with a flat face, "
I got you some diamonds. They're in your
room."

'Some?'

"How many?"

"About two hundred top-quality white diamonds. They're uncut, so you can design them into whatever you like..."

Kai chimed in. "Rich people are really thoughtful, huh? Big Brother, where's mine?"

Grant rolled his eyes at Kai. "The leftover diamond bits are for you."

Kai felt aggrieved. 'What?! Why do they all treat me like this?!' ■