

THE DONOR

Struggling to stay afloat in a cost-of-living crisis, Mandy signs up to a private blood donation programme that promises fast money, flexible appointments, and no questions asked. At first, the arrangement feels like a lifeline. The clinic is polished, discreet, and reassuringly professional. Each visit brings another payment, another reward, and the first real sense of control she has felt in months.

But as Mandy becomes one of the programme's most valued donors, the boundaries begin to shift. New tests are introduced. Consent forms grow longer. Restrictions tighten around her daily life. Familiar faces in the waiting room start to disappear, and the clinic's language of care begins to feel less compassionate than possessive. What once seemed voluntary now carries the quiet pressure of obligation.

As the rewards increase, so does Mandy's value to a system she no longer understands. Drawn deeper into a process designed to identify and retain its most exceptional donors, she is forced to confront a terrifying possibility: the programme was never built to help people like her survive, but to decide what they are worth.

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