

Devil Lucifer 161

[Chapter 161 Another Guest 2](#)

Austin doesn't hide his suspicious gaze as he stares at the woman, trying desperately to see through the scarf covering her face.

When he fails, he sighs, turning to his father.

"Will you have breakfast with us, dad?"

Mr Miles nods, "Of course! I'm famished!"

A maid quickly provides extra plates and serves Mr Miles and his guest.

"Aliana, my love. At least eat a spoonful. Come on, love," Sophia trying to coax little Aliana into eating, catches the woman's attention.

She turns to them.

Aliana neither argues with Sophia nor acts stubbornly.

If that were the case, it would have made Sophia happy, but the little one had been totally unresponsive for days on end.

To say it's worrisome is an understatement.

Like always, Aliana clutches her teddy bear against her chest and stares into space, saying nothing.

Feeling defeated, Sophia sighs, dropping her fork.

Even she has lost her appetite.

All the while, the woman continues staring at them.

And Austin studies her.

He tries to read her body language as it's difficult to gauge her expression because of the scarf covering more than half of her face.

Her head is turned in Aliana's direction, indicating her attention is on them.

After a while, the woman looks away and faces her meal.

She breaks a piece of bread, and instead of eating, she turns to the little girl with an outstretched arm.

"Aliana, is it?" Austin is surprised at the softness in the woman's voice when she addresses the little girl.

At the voice, Aliana lifts her head and turns, curiously looking around to know the source.

"Ali, sweetheart," The woman calls again, and Austin swears he feels the familiarity and affection oozing from her.

Who's she?

"Would you like a bite of my bread? I can dip it in my soup and let you have a taste. It really is delicious. Do you want to try it?" the woman continues.

She pulls the scarf back, revealing half of her face.

"I won't bite you. I promise,"

Intrigued, little Aliana cocks her head to the side, eyeing the woman with the half face.

Though she can't see the woman's entire face, Aliana can't help but think how pretty she is.

And her smile is so warm.

"Do you not want to try my bread, Ali?" The woman repeats, faking a sad pout.

The woman pulls back, sadly turning away, when Aliana suddenly reaches out to grab her arm.

"Is it really delicious?" Aliana coughs immediately as her voice is hoarse from not speaking for a long time.

She coughs again, trying to clear her throat.

"Have some water, honey," Sophia pours a glass of water and helps the little girl drink.

After drinking the water, Aliana returns her attention to the woman, licking the remnants of water droplets off her lips.

"Can I please have some?"

"Sure! Of course, love!" the woman beams, quickly dipping the bread into the soup and bringing it to Aliana's mouth.

The little girl eats the bread, surprising everyone at the table except Mr Miles.

He smiles knowingly and continues eating.

"Do you want more, Ali?" the woman asks.

Ali hesitantly nods as her stomach grumbles.

The woman pouts, "Poor baby. How hungry must you be? Come, I'll feed you till you're full, alright?"

Aliana climbs down from her high chair and walks toward the woman who picks the little girl up and places her on her lap.

Aliana leans into the woman's chest as she begins to feed her bread and soup until she is satisfied.

"Are you satisfied, Ali?"

Aliana nods.

"What's your name?" Aliana asks, accepting the cup of water from the woman.

The woman affectionately smiles while glancing at the girl.

"You can call me Ana,"

Aliana's face lights up, "It sounds like my name!"

Ana chuckles, "Yes, it does,"

Amidst their interaction, Austin receives a phone call, and he excuses himself.

Before answering, he checks the caller ID and sighs.

Well, here goes nothing.

Immediately he answers the call, a commanding voice booms through the phone.

"Austin Miles?"

"Sir!"

"I need you at the base. Now. Do not give me excuses. It's urgent."

"Yes, sir. I'm on my way," Austin answers before hanging up.

He hurries back to the kitchen to notify his father.

"My presence has been requested at the base, dad. I'll be on my way,"

Mr Miles looks up, "Of course. Be careful,"

Nodding, Austin runs up the stairs.

He descends a few minutes later, dressed in uniform with an enormous backpack slung over his shoulder.

His boots disturb the silence as he runs across the room to grab a piece of bread from the dining table before rushing out.

Soon, he drives out of the compound.

Forty minutes later, Tyler arrives at the location Alex had sent the previous day.

He alights a few metres away and walks the remaining distance.

While walking through the neighbourhood, Tyler notices several men, young and old, smoking, playing cards, chess and whatnot.

It is clear as day the kind of neighbourhood in which he's found himself.

He shakes his head, keeping his distance.

Tyler glances at his phone to check the direction on Google maps.

He quickens his pace, hoping to get to the location soon and get the hell out of there.

The neighbourhood gives him the chills.

He follows the direction until he arrives at his destination.

Pocketing his phone, he looks up, noticing a detached two-storey building.

After walking for more than fifteen minutes, this is the only decent house Tyler has come across.

The corners of his lips curl up as he approaches the building.

No one tries to stop him as he enters.

The smell of tobacco and alcohol invades his nostrils immediately after he steps inside, causing him to scrunch his nose in distaste.

Well, he spoke too soon.

The house's exterior looks nice, but the interior is nothing to write home about.

The place is noisy, and everything is in disarray, including the furniture.

Women clad in little to no clothes walk around serving beers to the men playing cards and loitering around, doing nothing except drinking and going after everything in skirts.

No one pays Tyler heed as he walks amongst them. He climbs the stairs to the second floor and opens the first door to his right.

When Tyler steps inside, the strong smell of alcohol and cigarette invades his nostrils again, and he can't help but sigh.

Has he come to a house meant for smoking and drinking?

The stench here is unbelievably strong and nauseating.

Tyler's expression remains unreadable as he makes his way through the crowded room when he spots a familiar face.

Right on cue, their eyes meet, and the grin on the man's face morphs into a frown.

Tyler curses, "Fuck. Not here,"

He fights the urge to roll his eyes when the man drops his beer and approaches him in slow and steady strides, looking like a predator.

When he nears Tyler, he halts, sneering.

"Well, well, well. We meet again, Tyler fucking Brown."

Oh, well.

It turns out the guy still holds a grudge against Tyler after he rescued Lily from his clutches.

Tyler eyes him, "Hello, Banks. We meet again,"

[Chapter 162 You Wreak Havoc Wherever You Go](#)

Banks sneers.

Ever since his encounter with Tyler months ago, he's always hoped to cross paths with him again.

Banks could never accept defeat, especially from someone as unworthy and unimportant as Tyler.

After several weeks passed, he almost concluded their paths would never cross again.

But his luck seems to be shining today.

"Yes. We fucking meet again,"

Uninterested in his drama, Tyler rolls his eyes and sidesteps Banks, attempting to walk past him, but he blocks his path.

Tyler stops, raising an eyebrow.

"What is it?"

"Oh, wouldn't you like to know?" sneers Banks.

Tyler sighs.

"Look, Banks, I'm not here for you. I'm here on the job. So, I'm asking you politely to get out of my way. I have no time to spare."

"Are you saying you had no idea I was here?"

Tyler scoffs, "Why would I care about that? I have no business with you,"

"Oh, but I do. I still have unfinished business with you,"

"Unfinished business?" Tyler rolls his eyes.

"You seem to be talking to the wrong person. You and I have no unfinished business. Now, if you'll excuse me,"

Again, he attempts to walk past when Banks blocks his path.

Tyler runs a hand through his hair, pursing his lips.

"How dare you try to walk out on me when we're still talking?"

Tyler chuckles, "Your sense of entitlement is appalling. Lose it, please,"

He walks away after that and continues his search.

Banks stares at Tyler as he disappears into the crowd, fuming.

That fucker.

After walking around aimlessly for a while, Tyler finally spots the three men seated at the farthest corner of the room, drinking and playing cards.

Welp.

Is this what they've been doing with the money?

Tyler approaches them in slow and steady strides. When he nears them, he halts, pocketing his hands.

One of the men lifts his head when he feels a presence hovering over them.

He grins.

"Oh, are you here to serve more drinks? Great, please bring two more bottles of Chateau Margaux,"

Tyler raises an eyebrow.

"I'm not here to serve you. I'm not a barman," he answers coolly.

"Oh? Shoot, my bad," the man apologises drunkenly and turns to call over a barman. He orders two bottles of Chateau Margaux, after which he spares Tyler a glance when he remains standing.

The man clicks his tongue, "Do you need something?"

"As a matter of fact. Yes, I do," answers Tyler.

"Hmm. And what might that be? Can I be of help?" the man grins.

"Yes. You can be of immense help. I'm here for money," Ty deadpans.

"Money? Boy, which money?"

The question draws the attention of the other two men, and they stop talking to listen in on their conversation.

"Don't tell me you've forgotten. I'm sure you're aware of the money you owe Alex Garson. Let's not waste each other's time by stalling. Kindly bring the money out, wherever it is,"

The men frown, sizing Tyler.

"Ah, so Alex Garson sent you. You must be one of his men. Well, you can return and inform your boss that the deal from which we were supposed to earn profits backfired, unfortunately. Hence, the money went down the drain. There's nothing we can do about that,"

Tyler's lips curl up in distaste.

"I'm sorry to hear that, but that's not why I'm here. You are all businessmen and should understand the losses accompanied by a business. It was your loss when the deal backfired. But the money was lent by Alex on the promise of you paying back. Hence, you're expected to pay."

"Right," another man joins in.

"We aren't running away. We will pay back,"

Tyler doesn't believe them.

"How will you pay back when you're spending money buying several bottles of expensive wine?"

"What?" the third man chuckles.

"Are we no longer allowed to drink and have fun just because we lost a deal?"

Tyler shrugs, "Oh, what you do with your money is none of my business. I'm only here to do my job,"

"Well, return and relay our information to Alex. We'll pay some other time,"

"I'm sorry, but I can't do that..." Tyler pauses when the barman arrives with their wine.

"Here you go," says the barman before he turns to serve others.

Tyler eyes the bottles of Chateau Margaux, and before one of the men can reach for them, he moves first and grabs both bottles off the table.

The men stare at him in astonishment.

"What the heck, man? Give that back before you drop it. It's not cheap wine,"

Tyler rolls the bottles, studying them.

"Hmm. I know how expensive these are. What baffles me is how you can afford so many bottles at once and not have any money left to give me."

The men fume.

"Listen, we have given you information to relay to your boss. We won't bolt with the money!"

"And what if you do?" Tyler interrupts.

"Imagine how much I would earn if I sold these bottles of wine? It will be almost up to a quarter of what you owe,"

"You dare not!" the first man snaps, getting up.

"Then give me the money you owe, and I shall be on my way. Honestly, can we get this over and done with quickly? It's getting boring,"

"Well, well. I see you like to wreak havoc where ever you go, huh?" a voice chuckles from behind, prompting Tyler to turn.

He rolls his eyes when he sees Banks approaching them.

"Stay out of this, Banks. It has nothing to do with you,"

Banks shrugs, grinning.

"I'm only here as a spectator,"

Rolling his eyes, Tyler ignores him and turns to the men.

"Alright. Time is not on our side. Can you do the needful?"

Annoyed, the first man approaches Tyler and attempts to snatch the bottles of Chateau Margaux, but he quickly pulls away.

"I wouldn't hesitate to drop this and let it go to waste if you don't provide the money this instant,"

The man scoffs.

"Alex really knows how to pick his men, huh? As arrogant and self-centred as he,"

Tyler smirks, "Thank you for your kind words. I'd be sure to relay your compliment to him."

He sighs inwardly.

This is taking too long than he had imagined.

Tyler eyes each man.

"You can either give me the money, or we do this the hard way. Your choice,"

The other two men get up from their seats, casting menacing glares toward Tyler.

They near him.

"How about we do this the hard way?"

Tyler's expression turns cold as he smirks.

Unexpectedly, he smashes one bottle of wine against the wall.

It shatters into pieces as the red liquid spills everywhere.

"Fine, let's do this the hard way."

[Chapter 163 The Kind Of Man Your Boss Is](#)

The men smirk evilly when they glance at the broken bottle in Tyler's hand.

The first man chuckles.

"Will you fight us with that? Are you such a coward?"

Instead of getting offended, Tyler lazily smiles, playing with the piece of the broken bottle he held.

Unexpectedly, he uncorks the second bottle and gulps some wine.

"Now, this shit tastes good,"

The men's gaze darkens significantly.

They haven't had a chance to taste the wine yet, and this young, arrogant lad has already smashed one bottle and drank the other right under their fucking noses.

After drinking some of the wine, Tyler smashes the second bottle, watching it shatter into several shards.

Then he turns to the men with a lopsided grin.

"Now that that is out of the way, how about we get down to business?"

"You will regret this, you fucker!"

"Oh, trust me. You will be the ones regretting if I take you back to Alex.

Annoyed, the first man lunges at Tyler, throwing his fist.

Expecting the attack, Tyler swiftly slides out of the way, causing the man to get propelled forward as he punches the air.

With his back turned, Tyler wastes no time and elbows the man at the base of his skull.

Groaning, the man stumbles as his knees buckle.

The alcohol inside his system isn't helping matters.

He attempts to get up, only to stumble again.

Tyler rolls his eyes, "I would advise you not to start a fight when you have alcohol in your system. Unless, of course, you're a born fighter, which none of you certainly are,"

The second man charges toward Tyler.

And soon, the third man also joins in.

The men engage in a fistfight, with Tyler juggling between defending and attacking.

While fighting, the others in the room halt their actions to watch without bothering to intervene.

Banks also moves away to find a comfortable place to sit while enjoying the fight.

He would soon join in and settle scores with Tyler.

Despite being slightly drunk, both men maintain their stance and agility as they fight Tyler.

Tyler swiftly defends himself with moves he never knew he had.

How did he learn to defend and attack like this?

Was he a fighter before he lost his memory?

Maybe he was.

That's the only reasonable explanation.

While thinking, a distant memory suddenly flashes in Tyler's mind's eye, causing him to halt for a split second.

It was so quick he almost didn't catch it.

Tyler saw himself on a vast empty field, practising how to shoot.

Did he also know how to shoot in the past?

Instinctively, Tyler glances at his hands, wondering if those fingers have really held a gun before.

When the men notice Tyler distracted, they strike at once, each person punching him in the gut simultaneously.

Tyler inhales sharply as the pain courses through his body, but he refuses to cower or back down from only two strikes.

Instead, he spreads his feet to gain a better stance.

He glares at the men.

This damn fight has gone on for too long.

He should have ended it a while back and been on his way back to the mansion.

Thinking they had the upper hand, both men charge at Tyler at once, attacking him from both sides. But Tyler swiftly dodges and kicks the second man down while letting the other hit him.

He doesn't flinch when another blow lands on his back, causing him to stumble forward.

Tyler remains crouched, giving off the impression he's in pain.

Seeing it as an opportunity, the third man launches another attack, and Tyler swiftly turns around to backhand him.

It causes him to lose his footing as he stumbles slightly.

Tyler reaches out to grab the man's arms and twists them behind him painfully, and pulls him towards him.

The man groans, struggling against Tyler's hold.

Tyler sighs.

"I won't repeat myself after this. Where is the damn money?"

The man struggles. "I don't know!"

"Fine." Tyler strikes the man in the chin with so much force that his head twists.

He lets go as the man falls to the floor, unconscious.

He then turns to the other man, watching him trying to get up and lunge at him.

Without waiting, Tyler kicks him in the temple, rendering him unconscious.

He steps back, watching the three men lying on the floor, unmoving.

The first man is still conscious, though immobile.

Tyler faces the crowd.

"Do any of these men own a car?"

The crowd remain silent, watching him.

"I asked a fucking question!" Tyler roars impatiently.

"Yes. The bald man does," the barman answers, pointing to the first man.

Tyler squats near the bald man and inspects his pockets until he finds the car keys.

After retrieving the keys, he studies them.

These will do.

"Where is the car parked?" Tyler asks the barman.

"Uh, it's parked outside. I think it's the black Benz,"

Nodding, Tyler grabs the bald man and begins dragging him out of the room.

He spots the bald man's car parked not too far away.

After unlocking it, he dumps the bald man inside the backseat.

He repeats the process, dragging the other two men into the backseat.

Before he leaves, the barman walks up to him.

"Sir. What about the wine? It hasn't been paid for,"

"Don't worry. They will pay,"

He turns away after that and heads for the car.

Before Tyler can enter the car, he suddenly feels a presence behind him and swiftly dodges the incoming attack.

He turns, glaring at his attacker.

"Aren't you such a coward for attacking me from behind?"

Banks fumes.

"We have unfinished business, Tyler Brown. How can you leave when we are yet to settle scores?"

Tyler chuckles humorlessly.

"Scores to settle? I honestly can't understand your problem with me. You made a deal with Alex. I was merely acting on orders. Are you doing this because you got your ass whooped?"

Banks shakes his head, "Deal? What fucking deal? I had no deal with Alex. He sold the girl to me. I gave him money and he gave me the girl. Why did he suddenly send you to retrieve her?"

Tyler frowns, "Sold? Sold who? Lily? What do you mean he sold the girl to you? Elaborate!"

Banks chuckles, noticing Tyler's confused expression.

"I see you have no idea the kind of man your boss is."

Tyler ignores him, "What do you mean by Lily was sold to you? Where? When?"

Banks smirks, "You seem quite interested in this issue."

"Tell me!" Demands Tyler.

Alex is involved human trafficking?

What the fuck?!

"Oh, I will tell you. But on one condition."

Tyler narrows his eyes, "Name your price,"

Banks grins.

[Chapter 164 What Are The Odds](#)

Meanwhile, Aliana hops off Ana's lap after having breakfast.

"Aliana, would you like me to bring out your books? I can help you draw some dinosaurs," Sophia asks, dropping her spoon.

Now that Aliana seems to be complying, she wants to take advantage and get the little girl to open up more.

Aliana turns to face Sophia with an unreadable expression.

After a while, she nods reluctantly.

With a smile, Sophia leads the little girl to the balcony after grabbing a couple of Kindergarten books from her room.

She places a box of colour pencils and a drawing book on the table between them.

She claps excitedly, "Alright, Aliana, here you go. You can start drawing here," Sophia points to a blank page with nothing but an outline of a dinosaur.

Aliana stares at the book for a minute longer before finally choosing a pencil and begins tracing the dinosaur.

Sophia watches her, feeling elated at succeeding in getting Aliana to engage in some activity.

After drawing for a while, Aliana drops her pencil and picks up her doll.

"Oh, have you finished?!" Sophia exclaims, picking up the book to examine the drawing.

She grins.

"That's so wonderful, Aliana! You're doing great. Would you like to watch some TV for a while?"

Aliana shakes her head.

"Alright. That's fine. I'll take you to your room,"

Aliana wordlessly follows Sophia back into the room.

Meanwhile, inside the guest room, Ana slides the curtains and peeps through the glass window, watching Aliana leave the balcony with an undecipherable expression in her eyes.

She watches Sophia and Aliana until they disappear into the other guestroom next to hers.

She sighs, closes the curtains and returns to sit in front of the dresser.

Ana stares at her reflection for a while before taking off the scarf and revealing her face.

She cocks her head to the side, lifting a hand to caress her face slowly.

A knock on the door startles her as she hastily reaches for the scarf.

"Yes?!"

"Ma'am, Mr Miles has requested your presence in his study," a maid calls from the other side of the door.

"Of course. I'll be there in a minute."

Ana drapes the scarf around her head and covers her face before exiting the room to meet Mr Miles in the study.

The tires come to a screeching halt as Tyler kills the engine and exits the car.

He enters the mansion and heads straight for Alex's inner chambers.

Upon arriving at the door, he knocks a couple of times before he gets a response.

"Come in,"

Tyler enters the room to find Alex smoking tobacco, as always.

Alex turns, sticking the tobacco to one side of his mouth.

"Oh, you're back. Did you get the money?"

"I didn't," answers Tyler.

"Oh. Did you come empty-handed then?"

"They are downstairs,"

Alex grins at the reply and leaps out of his chair.

"Oh, is that so? Lead the way,"

Nodding, Tyler leads Alex to the compound where the car is still parked and opens the backseat to reveal the three unconscious men squished in the backseat like a can of sardines.

At the sight of them, Alex grins even wider.

"Good. Perfect." He turns, gesturing to two guards stationed at the main gate.

The guards approach him.

"Get these fuckers into the basement and wake them up. I don't care how you do it, but wake them the fuck up."

The guards nod and carry the unconscious men into the basement one after the other.

"Good job, Tyler. Would you like something to drink before you leave?"

"No, thanks. I have to get ready for school. I'm almost late,"

"Of course. That's fine."

"Alright. I'll be on my way now,"

Tyler turns and exits the mansion.

Alex stares at his retreating back until he disappears before finally entering the mansion.

On the way to his apartment, Tyler's mind wanders to his earlier conversation with Banks.

The man had promised to give him information about how Lily got sold to him but on a condition.

FLASHBACK.

"Name your price,"

Banks grins, feeling beyond ecstatic.

He closes the distance between them and whispers into Tyler's ears, after which he pulls back.

Tyler frowns as he narrows his eyes infinitesimally.

"Are you fucking kidding me? Why the fuck would I do that?!" he sneers.

"If you really want to know what else your boss does behind closed doors, you would meet my conditions. Unless, of course, it's not important to you."

Of course, it's fucking important.

Tyler has been searching for Lily for a while now.

It baffled him how Alex sent her away barely two days after ordering him to retrieve her from Banks.

Then why is Banks suddenly claiming Lily got auctioned to him?

If that is the case, why did Alex send him to retrieve the girl after auctioning her?

A thousand and one questions run through Tyler's mind as he tries to make sense of the situation.

Could Banks be lying?

What if he's only trying to sow a seed of discord between him and Alex because he is a sore loser?

On the contrary, what if Banks is telling the truth?

Tyler eyes him suspiciously, "You aren't trustworthy. How can I be sure you won't play a fast one on me?"

Banks grins. "You're right. You can't trust me. It's like deliberately feeding yourself to the sharks. But what else have you got? All you can do is grant me the benefit of the doubt. Take this as a game of chess. You either lose or win. The question is, are you willing to risk it?"

Tyler isn't a fool.

He knows making a deal with Banks is like locking himself in a room with his enemy, hoping he won't get betrayed.

He might get lucky.

And he might not.

What are the odds?

If he really wants to find out the truth, he has no choice but to risk it.

What's the worst that can happen?

Banks will either lie or tell the truth.

"Give me some time to think about it," Tyler finally answers, earning a grin from Banks.

"Fair enough. Here's my number. Give me a call when you're ready to find out the truth," Banks hands Tyler a card and turns away, entering the house.

Tyler remains rooted to the spot for a while, staring at the card containing Banks' phone number.

He sighs, pushing the card into his pocket before entering the car and driving out of the compound and neighbourhood.

PRESENT.

"Sir. We've arrived,"

The driver's voice startles Tyler out of his reverie.

"Right," he pays the driver before alighting and heading for his apartment.

Tyler quickly takes a shower, changes into a fresh set of clothes and heads for the campus.

Throughout the two-hour test, Tyler was distracted for the better part of it.

He finally pulls himself together to finish his test, hands over his answer sheet and exits the hall.

[Chapter 165 Do You Have A Suspect In Mind](#)

A few days pass after that without Tyler contacting Banks.

He hasn't contacted Banks yet due to personal reasons.

In due time, he will.

And besides that, Austin hasn't returned after leaving on the day of his relaxation date with Lucinda.

Tyler has tried to reach his friend severally but to no avail.

Currently, he's lying in bed with Lucinda having a movie date.

Yes, you read right.

They're having a movie date with popcorn, burgers and fries.

Tyler sighs, attempting to roll over, but Lucinda's grip on his arm tightens.

He almost cries out in frustration.

They've been cuddling for over an hour now.

To be precise, he means Lucinda has been using his arm for a pillow despite the many throw pillows available.

His arm has been stiff for so long he doesn't feel it anymore.

The movie they are currently watching isn't even worth Tyler losing feeling in his arm.

Shit.

He fights the urge to roll his eyes at the scene where help finally arrives, only for Rose to realise Jack has frozen to death.

Well, no shit, Sherlock.

Tyler almost snorts.

The guy had been in that fucking freezing water for God knows how long.

Of course, he would freeze to death.

Lying beside Tyler, Lucinda buries her face into his arm and sniffs while chewing on popcorn.

Tyler leisurely shoves a couple of fries into his mouth and turns to his girlfriend.

"Baby doll, are you crying?"

Lucinda sniffs, "It's so sad, Ty. They had a whole life ahead of them to get separated like that! It's so unfair!" she sobs.

Tyler's face contorts into an unreadable expression as he tries not to laugh and remain the supportive boyfriend, as it should be.

"Baby doll, shall I help you feel better?" he wipes his fingers with a tissue and caresses Lucinda's hair, but she slaps his hand violently away.

"Don't be naughty! How can you think of such things during such a crucial moment in my life?!"

Tyler frowns.

How can watching Titanic be considered a crucial moment in one's life?

It's just a movie.

Huh.

His girlfriend is such a drama queen.

"Baby doll, I wasn't trying to be naughty. I was comforting you,"

Lucinda briefly lifts her head off Tyler's arms, and he silently thanks his stars, pulling his arm back.

He massages it to increase blood circulation.

She glares at him.

"You weren't trying to comfort me! You were trying to get some!"

Tyler smirks, leaning closer. "What was I trying to get?"

Lucinda falters, leaning away as he advances.

"Get off me, Tyler! We're watching a movie,"

"Actually, you are watching a movie, sweetheart. I'm not,"

Lucinda purses her lips, sniffing some more.

Tyler closes the distance between them and showers her tear-stained face with kisses until she starts giggling.

Tyler finally pulls away, smiling.

"Do you feel better now?" he questions, to which she nods.

"Yes. I do,"

Tyler flicks her nose, "Good."

He rolls off her and picks up the abandoned burger.

"Eat your burger now,"

"Okay," Lucinda accepts the food without a fuss and returns her attention to the television.

While eating, she watches the rest of the movie until the credits start rolling by.

Only then does she tear her gaze away from the television.

"I'm full," Lucinda mumbles, dropping the plate of half-eaten burger on Tyler's lap.

Tyler finishes the rest of the burger, after which he discards the plate in the kitchen sink.

He returns to the room after.

Lucinda wraps her arms around Tyler when he joins her in bed and places her head on his shoulder.

They lay in silence until they drift off into sleep.

Lucas Henderson has just returned to his office after attending to patients the entire day.

He shuts the door behind him and gazes up at the wall clock.

It's thirty minutes past eight.

Whew!

Henderson kicks off his shoes and rubs his aching feet.

He then rubs his neck and shoulders before leaning in his chair and closing his eyes.

A knock on his door prompts him to open his eyes.

"Yes?"

"Doctor Henderson, I've brought your dinner,"

"Right. Come in, please,"

The hospital's chef enters, smiling as she places the covered food on the table.

Henderson returns the smile.

"Thank you, chef,"

"You're welcome." The chef exits immediately after.

With a tired sigh, Henderson picks up the food and heads into the little dining area he made inside his resting room/ office.

His shift is finally over, and he can now rest and have something to eat.

In the middle of eating, another knock interrupts him.

Groaning, Henderson drops his fork and attends to the visitor behind the door.

His lips curl into a smile.

"You?"

"Yes. Me," the visitor sidesteps Henderson, entering the office.

Henderson shuts the door behind him and follows him inside.

"Were you in the middle of something?"

"Will you leave if my answer is yes?" Henderson raises an eyebrow, walking back to his seat and uncovering his food.

He picks up his fork.

"Unfortunately, no." the visitor smiles, causing Henderson to roll his eyes as he eats a piece of sauteed shrimp.

"I knew that. What brings you here? I had no idea you were back in town, Daren."

Mr Miles takes a seat opposite his friend.

"Hmm," he hums, leaning back in the seat and crossing one leg over the other.

"I've been in town for a couple of days,"

"Right," Henderson scoops some rice into his mouth.

"So, to what do I owe this visit?"

"What? Can't I visit my friend whom I haven't seen in a long time?" Mr Miles raises an eyebrow.

Henderson chuckles, sipping some juice.

"Is that your main reason for coming here? You are here to fish out for information about Tyler, aren't you?"

Mr Miles grins, "You know me so well, my friend."

"I thought your son has briefed you about everything?"

"Hmm, he has. But I'm sure you still have more information to give,"

"Well, there's not much to tell, except I'm still trying to get in touch with someone I know who can help with hypnosis. I have a zoom call scheduled with him tomorrow. Let's see how it goes,"

"Hypnosis? You want to use that method to regain his memories?" asks Mr Miles, and Henderson nods, eating another shrimp.

"I mean. It's not an instant cure, but it's a good start. With hypnosis, we can reach the deepest parts of the brain and access certain memories."

"Hmm, and did Tyler agree to do this?"

"Yes. He did," confirms Henderson.

Mr Miles nods, staring into space as the wheels begin turning in his head.

"I hope you are aware of the drugs I found in Tyler's bloodstream. Your son informed you about it, didn't he?" Henderson asks after a while.

"Yes. I suspected it, though I had no substantial evidence to back my claim,"

"Do you have a suspect in mind?"

"Oh, you bet I do. I fucking do."

"Well, that's fine. I'd have to get in touch with Tyler this week. I'm afraid he might start having sudden withdrawal symptoms from the drugs,"

Mr Miles nods, "Of course. Thank you, Lucas,"

"What are friends for?"

"Alright!" Mr Miles gets up.

"I see you just got off your shift. I'll leave you to rest."

"Of course. I'll call you when I get home," says Henderson.

"Please do,"

Mr Miles walks toward the door.

"And Daren?" Henderson suddenly calls, prompting Mr Miles to halt as he turns.

"Yes?"

"Be careful. And do not do anything rash,"

Daren Miles smirks, "When am I never careful?"

Henderson shakes his head, watching his friend exit.

He resumes eating and finishes in no time.

He packs his necessities and leaves the hospital for his home.

[Chapter 166 Reminiscing](#)

After several days of being held up at the base and working nonstop, Austin finally gets the green light to return home.

Whew!

Austin wastes no time and immediately packs some of his belongings, slings his bag over his shoulder before finally departing the vast building.

After arriving home a few hours later, he heads straight upstairs to his room.

He had successfully missed the entire mid-semester exams and had no choice but to resit the exams.

Luckily, Austin was allowed to use a cell phone only once during his stay at the company. Hence, he spoke to the lecturer about his dilemma and was lucky enough to get sympathy and understanding from him.

After a quick shower, Austin returns downstairs and heads for the kitchen.

"Hi, nanny. I'm very starved. Is there anything to eat?"

The nanny turns to face Austin with a surprised expression.

"Oh!" she exclaims. "You're back, Austin!"

"Yes, I am."

"Oh, of course. There is mashed potato and plain rice with vegetable stew. Which would you prefer?"

"Oh, mashed potato is fine,"

"Noted. Have a seat, please. We'll serve you in a minute,"

Less than a minute after sitting at the dining table, Austin gets served his meal.

He wastes no time devouring the food, after which he rushes back upstairs to get his backpack and head for school.

He has an exam to resit.

Meanwhile, on the outskirts of town, in a cosy house near the river stands Lily.

An absent-minded look is etched on her face as she gazes out of the window.

She gazes at the river ahead for a while before finally looking away and returning to the couch.

She sighs heavily, picking up the glass of juice she abandoned almost an hour ago to take a sip.

As Lily places the juice back on the table, her gaze falls on the crescent-shaped scar on her arm.

Subconsciously, she runs a finger over the slightly rough skin around the scar.

Her mind wanders as she reminisces.

FLASHBACK.

After getting dressed, Lily picks up her bag and slings it over her shoulder while skipping down the stairs, humming a tune.

"No skipping!" The deep voice warns from the dining room, to which Lily rolls her eyes.

At the dining table, Lily grabs a bagel, slices it into two and makes a quick sandwich with chopped tomatoes and onions, cream cheese and a couple of slices of avocado.

She grabs a bottle of juice her mother made and stuffs it into her bag.

"Alright, I'm leaving now!" She announces, biting into her bagel.

"What would it cost to sit and have a proper lunch like the rest of us? Sit down, Lily."

"I'll be late, Ty!" Lily whines, holding up her sandwich.

"See? I have this bagel sandwich. I'll eat it on the way!"

"The world won't come to a stop if you spare a few minutes for lunch," Tyler answers, cutting into his steak.

He eyes his sister's outfit.

"And what are you wearing? Lily, go and change into something less revealing!"

Lily gasps, glancing down at her clothes.

"What's wrong with what I'm wearing?!"

"I don't like it. It's too revealing," Tyler grumbles.

Lily frowns, wondering what's so revealing about her strapless knee-length dress.

Is it because it's strapless? It's only her shoulders that are bare!

"Tyler, come on!"

At their bickering, their parents chuckle.

"Tyler, let your sister go," their father says, to which Tyler vehemently disagrees.

"No, dad. Her shoulders are too bare for my liking," he gets up and approaches Lily.

"You're a little girl. You can't dress like this,"

"I'm seventeen!"

"Still a child," shrugs Tyler.

"Please, brother. I have a jacket with me!" Lily pulls out the jacket she stuffed into her bag for a situation like this.

Tyler purses his lips.

"Fine. You can go. Although, I know you took that jacket because you knew I would have no other excuse to make you change out of this dress,"

Lily blushes, turning to glance at her parents for help but after being used to their son's protectiveness over his sister, they only shrug and continue eating.

"You can go, Lily. And don't forget to get home at exactly nine," Tyler leans in to kiss his sister's forehead.

"You're worse than mom and dad," Lily grumbles, scrunching her face when her brother places a wet kiss on her cheek.

"I know. The driver will pick you up at nine, so do not wonder around,"

"Okay, brother. I got it," Lily sighs, hugging Tyler briefly.

"Alright," he pats her head.

"Go now. Be safe."

She breathes a sigh of relief as she thanks him and rushes out to meet her friends waiting inside the car.

Her parents have asked the family driver to take them.

Lily's friends immediately squeal after she settles inside the car.

"Oh my God! Your brother is so alluring! He's so hot!"

Lily raises her eyebrow, "Were you peeping?"

"Yes, we wanted to know why you were taking so long,"

"You are such creeps. Stop talking about my brother like that. He's too old for you. Especially you, Selena," Lily points to the girl beside her.

Selena rolls her eyes, "He's not that old. Five or six years is not much of a difference. My father is twelve years older than my mother, yet they still live happily together!"

Lily rolls her eyes, "Stop having sinful thoughts about my brother. It's disgusting,"

"Come on. Can you at least introduce us one of these days?" Selena insists.

"I'll do your homework for you for two days. And I'll buy you your favourite chocolate and milkshake for three days."

"Okay, deal," Lily nods without hesitation.

"I can't believe you're selling off your brother for chocolate and a milkshake!" Lily's best friend, Marga, who's been quiet, suddenly says.

"I'm not selling him off," Lily denies, snorting as the car drives out of the compound.

"You are!" Marga accuses, pushing her glasses up her nose.

"I mean, I'm not denying you have a handsome as fuck brother..."

"Language!" Selena interrupts Marga.

Marga rolls her eyes and continues, "I'm not denying that fact, but maybe you can do me a favour and give me your brother's phone number?"

Selena gasps, "You traitor!"

"What? I'm doing this in your presence, so how am I being a traitor? Besides, this is the survival of the fittest. Whoever Tyler chooses wins!"

Lily groans, "My brother is choosing no one! You both are perverts!"

"What? You promised less than a minute ago you would introduce us! Why are you saying something different now?" Selena gasps, shifting closer to Lily.

Lily plugs in her earphones and shuts her eyes, attempting to drown her friends' bickering, but they tackle her, tickling her until she bursts out laughing.

"You guys! Stop it! You're ruining my dress!" Lily struggles while laughing.

"Promise you'll introduce your brother to me! Only then will I stop tickling you!" says Selena.

"And promise me you'll let me have his number!" Marga adds.

"No way! Perverts!"

Lily's laughter fills the car as her friends continue to tickle her for half their journey.

THE PRESENT.

A sudden knock on the door startles Lily out of her reverie, and she looks up, sniffing.

She hadn't realised tears were streaming down the sides of her face.

Wiping her face, she gets up to answer the door.

[Chapter 167 Display Of Affection](#)

"It's you," Lily mumbles as she steps aside, allowing her visitors entry.

She shuts the door behind her and joins them on the couch.

"What bring you here?" She questions.

Ryan raises an eyebrow, drops the bag of groceries on the centre table and leans back on the couch.

He crosses one leg over the other.

"Are we no longer allowed to come here? If that is the case, let us know beforehand. That way, we won't bother coming anymore,"

Lily rolls her eyes at Ryan's exaggerated answer.

Dean studies her.

"Are you okay? You look like you've been crying,"

"I haven't. It's just your imagination," Lily looks away, picking up the bag of groceries and heading for the kitchen.

Rummaging through the bag, she takes out the vegetables, deciding to prepare a quick stirfry.

Lily washes the vegetables under the running tap, after which she begins to chop them, albeit roughly.

Growing up, she never helped in the kitchen.

They had several maids to care for each person's needs, including cooking.

She never had to worry about doing household chores, except for occasionally cleaning her room when she wanted no maid to mess with her belongings.

But things have obviously changed now.

Lily has to do all the chores since she lives alone, including cooking.

While chopping the vegetables, Ryan joins her.

"Let me help,"

"Why? I'm cooking this for myself. You and your companion will have no share in the food,"

Ryan raises an eyebrow.

"I only offered to help you, so why the long lecture?"

"Because I know you offered to help me thinking you'd have your share after the food is ready." Lily glances up at him.

"Don't even think about it,"

Ryan chuckles, "Little miss. I never thought I would live to see the day when you'll become so outspoken,"

Rolling her eyes, Lily leaves Ryan to finish chopping the vegetables while she starts cooking the rice.

After placing the rice on fire, she turns to find Ryan staring at her.

"What?"

"I'm done here. What next?"

"You offered to help me, so it's fair that you start making the stirfry,"

"I only offered to help chop the vegetables and not cook,"

Lily shrugs, retrieving a carton of milk from the fridge and pouring a glass.

"Well, that's too bad," she shrugs, keeping the milk back in the fridge as she sips from her glass.

Sighing, Ryan heats some oil in a pan while wondering what to add next.

In the middle of cooking, Lily notices him struggling and reluctantly approaches him, offering her help.

"Here, let me help. The house might catch fire if you keep this up,"

Ryan doesn't refuse her help as he steps aside and lets Lily take over.

While cooking, Ryan suddenly grabs Lily's hand, causing her to halt.

She turns to him with a confused expression.

Without a word, he reaches into his pocket and retrieves a finger prosthetic.

Dazed, Lily watches Ryan unravel the bandage around her hand and replace it with the prosthetic finger.

Though her hand has healed, she still keeps the bandage on because she hates seeing her amputated finger.

But now, as she gazes at the prosthetic finger, which somehow matches her skin tone, she can't help but feel emotional.

She tears her gaze away from her hand and looks at Ryan.

"How did you get this? When?"

Ryan smiles, "I have my ways. Do you like it?"

"Thank you," feeling emotional, Lily hugs Ryan, and he stiffens.

"Thank you so much, Ryan! Thank you!" she repeats.

"It's fine, Lily," Ryan pats her back.

"Look, the food is burning!" Ryan exclaims, trying to distract her.

He isn't used to such displays of affection.

Immediately Lily turns around to attend to the food he bolts out of the kitchen.

"Alright, class! That'd be all. See you next week!" the lecturer dismisses as he packs his necessities into his bag and exits the hall.

Lucinda is the first to exit the hall.

She heads for the pavilion to wait for Tyler as agreed.

While waiting, she retrieves her phone to scroll through social media to while away time.

"Oh, hey, Lucinda!" a voice suddenly calls, almost startling her.

Lucinda looks up from her phone.

"Oh, hi, Liam," she smiles.

"Hi," Liam returns the smile.

"It's been a while, huh?"

"It has. We only have one class together, so we're bound to see each other rarely,"

"I guess. Besides, everyone will agree I've been to class less than ten times this semester," Liam answers, earning a chuckle from Lucinda.

"Yes, perhaps. Is it because you do not like art? I hope you know you're more likely to score low grades because of your attendance?"

"I know. That's why I've decided to learn more to catch up. And I was also wondering if you could help me,"

"Help you?" Lucinda raises an eyebrow.

"Yes," Liam nods.

"Maybe you can tutor me and help me catch up on what I've missed?"

"Uh," Lucinda purses her lips, contemplating.

"Please, Lucinda. I can pay you if you want. Just name your price,"

"I'm not sure if I can fit tutoring into my schedule,"

"Please? Twice a week is fine by me."

"Uh, I'll think about it and give you an answer,"

"Of course. Then can I give you my number? It will be easier to communicate your answer with me," Liam suggests.

"Sure," Lucinda stretches her hand, holding out her phone.

Liam accepts the phone and types in his number, after which he returns the phone.

While doing so, his fingers brush over Lucinda's wrists, and he lingers.

Smiling, Lucinda gently snatches her hand from his grip and pockets her phone.

"Right," Liam blinks.

"Then I'll leave you to it,"

As soon as he leaves, Tyler appears behind Lucinda.

"Who was that?"

Lucinda jumps in her seat, startled.

"Why did you sneak up behind me like that? You scared me!"

Tyler ignores her complaint.

"It was that guy in art class, right? What's his name again? Liam, Lucas, Little, or Limp?"

Lucinda giggles, "You know his name, Tyler. Stop pretending,"

"What did he want?"

"He wanted me to tutor him,"

"Tutor?" Tyler snorts.

"What's with that expression?" Lucinda raises her eyebrows.

"Nothing, baby doll,"

"Hmm. Are you jealous?"

"Why would I be jealous, sweetheart? He can't handle you as I can," Tyler gloats.

"Oh, really?"

"Yes. You would be bored of his skinny ass self and run back into my arms in no time!"

"You are so self-centred and annoying," Lucinda rolls her eyes, getting up and heading out of the pavilion.

Tyler follows, "And you, sweetheart, are fucking beautiful. But, I think you would look more beautiful with hickeys around your neck and chest," he wraps his arms around her.

"We're in public, Ty!"

"How about you follow me back to my apartment? We could make some magic there,"

"I wish, but unfortunately, I have a girls' night out with Mandy,"

"Girls' night out?" Tyler echoes.

"Yes," Lucinda nods, twisting around in his arms to face him.

"That's fine. Have fun, baby doll."

"How about you? What will you do when you get home?"

Tyler grins, "Don't worry about me, sweetheart. Go and have fun."

"Okay," Lucinda sighs when Tyler leans in to kiss her forehead.

He flicks her nose.

"Be safe,"

"Okay."

He lets go of her, watching her exit the school premises before leaving in the opposite direction.

At home, Tyler fixes a quick dinner, takes a shower and retires to bed.

He soon falls asleep.

[Chapter 168 I Have A Sister](#)

Not long after falling asleep, Tyler has a dream.

In the dream, Tyler finds himself walking down the corridor and passing by several doors.

The interior decoration looks similar to the mansion in his previous dreams, if not the same.

Tyler manoeuvres through the corridor as if he's familiar with the place.

It's almost as if he lives there.

He halts in front of a door with a pink placard reading "No trespassing."

Rolling his eyes, Tyler knocks before pushing the door open and entering.

He clicks his tongue as he approaches the pink-themed queen-sized bed in the middle of the room.

Tyler cocks his head to the side.

"Wake up. Hey, Lily!"

The figure continues sleeping, snoring softly.

"I know you're only pretending to be asleep. Wake up now, Lily!" he taps the sleeping figure.

Lily opens her eyes halfway to glance at her brother.

She yawns, stretching.

"What are you doing here so late, brother?"

Tyler rolls his eyes.

"Quit the pretence. It's only a few minutes past seven. You never sleep before ten,"

"Brother. I'm so exhausted," Lily whines, rolling over and pulling the duvet over her head, attempting to resume sleeping.

But Tyler pulls the duvet away.

"I can imagine how exhausted you must be. Who wouldn't be after running around all day giving their brother's contact to their teenage friends?"

Lily's eyes widen, and she quickly looks away, trying to mask her expression.

"What are you talking about?"

"You know what I'm talking about, Lily. Your friends have been bombarding my phone with calls and ridiculous emojis all day. Who else's would it be if not your doing?"

"Uh. I had no idea they would take it that far. Besides, I couldn't help it. I got bribed."

"I know. Anyone can bribe you with chocolates,"

Lily blushes, propping herself against the headboard with her pillow. She fidgets with her fingers.

"I'm sorry, Tyler. I didn't think they would actually call you, let alone disturb you. Please, don't be mad,"

Tyler sighs, sitting at the edge of the bed.

"I'm not mad at you, Lily."

She looks up, "You aren't?"

"No, you silly girl. What makes you think I'd be interested in someone your age? Your friends are too young for me, and I shall reprimand them the next time I see them,"

"Whew! I thought you'd be mad."

"Why? Are you scared I'd no longer dote on you?"

Lily nods, "Yes! How will I be able to get away with a lot of things if you no longer dote on me? I admit you can be overbearing sometimes, but you cover up for me most times. That's more than enough for me,"

Tyler chuckles, "I see. You're only with me for the benefits, huh? Then how about I stop doting on you so much?"

Lily's eyes widen as she leans forward, grabbing her brother's hand, "No way! I'm your only sibling! It's a must that I get doted on! Who else will you pamper if not me?"

"I have a few people that come to mind,"

Lily gasps, "Do you have a girlfriend?!"

"Silly girl," Tyler flicks her nose, chuckling.

Lily scrunches her nose.

"It's fine if you don't want to tell me about your secret affairs. I will find out anyway,"

"You shouldn't be talking about affairs. You're a child," Tyler chides disapprovingly, causing Lily to scoff.

"I'm seventeen!"

"Still a child,"

Lily rolls her eyes, deciding not to argue.

Tyler pats her head before getting up, allowing her to access his outfit.

"Are you going somewhere?" she enquires.

"Yes."

"Where to? Do you have a date?"

Tyler raises an eyebrow, "Why is my sister suddenly interested in my relationship status?"

Lily looks at him with all seriousness, "It's my duty to know your girlfriend, assess her and determine whether she's a good match or not,"

Tyler throws his head back, laughing hysterically.

"You crack me up, little girl."

"Stop calling me a little girl!" Lily huffs.

Tyler walks back to the bed and flicks his sister's nose again. He bends to kiss her forehead.

"Now, be good while I'm away."

Lily notices the shiny ornament fall out of her brother's shirt when he bends to kiss her.

She touches the pendant, studying it.

"I didn't realise you got a new necklace," she comments.

"I didn't. Dad gave this to me," replies Tyler.

"It's beautiful," Lily caresses the pendant, brushing her finger over it.

"Is it a key? It looks very much like one. Where's the lock?"

Tyler grins, "I don't think it's a key. It's just like any other pendant,"

"Mmm,"

"Alright. I'll be leaving now,"

Tyler pushes the necklace back into his turtle neck sweater and heads for the door.

"Can I use your computer while you're away?" Lily suddenly asks.

"Of course. Just don't forget to turn it off after you finish using it,"

"Thank you, brother!"

Immediately after Tyler exits the house, Lily jumps out of her bed and rushes into her brother's room to use his computer.

Tyler wakes up with a start.

Dazed, he remains on the bed for some time, wondering if he's still dreaming. He retrieves his phone to check the time, only to realise it's only 11 pm.

He'd been asleep for barely two hours.

After a while, he gets out of bed and enters his bathroom to wash his face.

After that, he decides to prepare something quick.

While frying bacon, Tyler leans against the counter, his mind wandering back to his dream.

That girl, Lily, is his sister?

How?

If so, why didn't she say anything when they first met?

Why did she remain mute?

Why did she pretend they didn't know each other?

He has a sister?

Does this explain the familiarity he felt toward Lily when they first met?

Tyler was so lost in his thoughts that he didn't realise his bacon was burning.

Austin, who'd thankfully walked through the door barely a minute ago, rushed into the kitchen when the burning smell invaded his nostrils.

In the kitchen, he finds Tyler standing by the stove and staring into space.

"Fuck!" Austin curses, quickly turning off the fire.

"Dude!" he slaps Tyler's shoulder, snapping him out of his reverie.

Tyler blinks.

"You? When did you get here? Fuck, don't answer that. I keep forgetting you have a spare key to my apartment," he turns to attend to his bacon only to realise it's burnt.

"Fuck, it's burnt!"

"Yes, it's burnt. If I had come in a minute later, the kitchen would have been on fire,"

Tyler sighs, running a hand over his face.

Austin studies his friend.

"I've been gone for only a week, and you already look so troubled?" he teases.

Tyler rolls his eyes, discarding the burnt bacon and adding another batch to cook.

While the bacon is cooking, he cracks some eggs and adds precut vegetables, salt and black pepper.

"Seriously, Ty. What is it?"

After whisking the eggs, Tyler turns.

"Do you still remember Lily?"

"I think so. What about her?"

"Lily's my sister, Austin. She's my younger sister, and I had no fucking idea till now."

Austin is surprised.

His friend's memory is improving quicker than he thought.

"How did you find that out?"

"My dream," Tyler curtly answers.

"Your dream? Dreams can be born out of imagination too. They're not always real,"

"This is not a fucking imagination," Tyler cuts Austin off, frowning deeply.

"Alright. Alright. Don't bite my head off. What do you want to do now?"

"I need to find her,"

"How? Where will you start?"

"There's always a way to start," Tyler retrieves his phone and scrolls through his contact list.

He stops at Banks' number, which he saved after discarding the business card a few days ago.

Dialling the number, he presses the phone to his ear.

All the while, Austin watches in sheer curiosity.

The phone rings for a while before it gets answered.

"Hello?"

"Banks. It's Tyler speaking,"

There's silence at the other end of the line.

"Oh! Tyler? And here I was thinking you discarded my number,"

"Let's cut to the chase, shall we?"

"Mmm. I'm assuming you called to accept our deal?"

"Yes. I accept. Place and time?" Tyler answers without a moment's hesitation.

[Chapter 169 Have You Fallen In Love With Him](#)

Lucinda finally stuffs her pen into her sketchbook and shuts her laptop, yawning loudly.

Leaning on her study desk, she turns to find Mandy staring at her from across the room.

"What?" Lucinda shrugs.

"God knows how long I've been waiting for you to finish studying. I mean, it's a Friday!"

"I know. But look!" Lucinda points to her desk.

"It's all done and dusted. We can still go out, right? It's only a few minutes past ten. It's particularly lively around town at this time of the night,"

"Fine. Hurry up and get dressed," Mandy sighs.

Lucinda quickly changes into a sleeveless jumpsuit.

She lets her hair down and brushes her finger through her locks to detangle any knots.

She turns to Mandy while slipping her feet into nude flat shoes.

"Look! I'm all dressed up. Can we leave now?"

Mandy rolls her eyes, taking the lead outside while Lucinda follows suit after grabbing her purse.

While Mandy locks the door, Lucinda shifts her gaze to the apartment door at the farthest corner.

Without a second thought, Lucinda walks over to the apartment and knocks.

Chrissy opens the door after some time, rubbing her eyes while yawning.

She returned to her apartment days ago after her apartment got cleared.

It's been more than a week without hearing from Ronald.

Though worried about his whereabouts, she is helpless because she has no idea where to start looking for him.

"Oh. Did I wake you? I'm so sorry," Luci apologises.

"Oh, no! On the contrary, I was watching a boring ass movie to kill time only to end up almost falling asleep,"

"Is that so? Well, Mandy and I are on our way to get some food and probably a few glasses of wine. Would you perhaps be interested in joining us?"

"Absolutely!" Chrissy perks up.

"Give me a minute to change into something more appropriate,"

She shuts the door and opens it later, fully dressed.

"Alright! I'm ready!"

"Perfect! Let's go!"

The three ladies exit the apartment complex and head for the nearest restaurant.

At the restaurant, they each order meals of their choice.

And while waiting for the meals, Mandy and Chrissy reach for glasses of wine while Lucinda opts for

lemonade.

"So, how's your relationship going?" Mandy asks suddenly.

"It's going good, I guess." She shrugs, playing with the straw in her drink.

"Just good?" Mandy probes further.

"That doesn't sound convincing,"

"Well, what do you expect me to say?"

"I don't know. Enlighten me, does your darling boyfriend, by any chance, abuse you?"

Lucinda scoffs.

"Abuse?. What do you take me for, Mandy? Do you think I would allow a guy to do that to me? Be it emotionally or physically?"

Lucinda sips her lemonade, "Girl, I'm not that daft or stupid. Unlike other girls, I do not condone toxic ass relationships,"

"Now, that's more like it. Never become a doormat for a man. Do not settle."

Chrissy nods, agreeing.

"Never. Falling in love doesn't mean I should lose my sense of reasoning,"

Mandy and Chrissy lift their gazes from their drinks and stare at Lucinda in astonishment.

Lucinda raises an eyebrow, "Why are you looking at me like that?"

"What did you just say?" questions Mandy.

"What did I say?"

"You said something quite interesting a few seconds ago. Do you not recall?" Chrissy wiggles her eyebrows teasingly.

When Mandy notices the look of confusion on Lucinda's face, she adds, "You said, and I quote, 'Falling in love doesn't mean I should lose my sense of reasoning,'"

Lucinda's eyes widen when the words hit her.

"I said that huh?" She looks away, silently thanking her stars when the waiter arrives with their meals. She wastes no time picking up a fork and digging into her food.

Lucinda covers half her face with her hair while eating.

"You've fallen in love with Tyler, haven't you?" Mandy asks after a while.

Lucinda chews on a piece of chicken, her face flushed.

Has she?

Has she really fallen in love with Tyler?

Falling in love with him was never inevitable, was it?

"Uh, I don't know, Mandy. It was only a slip of the tongue,"

"A slip of the tongue indeed," Chrissy muses.

Lucinda rolls her eyes, "We came here to have fun and not to discuss my relationship,"

Mandy lifts her hand in surrender, "Fine. I'll let it go. For now,"

After eating, the girls order desserts, after which they spontaneously decide to attend an open mic night event at a nearby nightclub.

The bouncer allows them free entry.

After finding a place to sit, Lucinda glances around while Mandy and Chrissy rush to the bar to get drinks.

"No alcohol for me, please!" Lucinda reminds them.

"Got it!" Chrissy yells, disappearing into the crowd.

Alone, Lucinda shifts her gaze to the stage, where a man is seated, playing the guitar and singing a melodious song into the mic.

Without realising it, she shuts her eyes and leans back into the seat, savouring the music and soothing guitar strums.

"..It's all coming back. It's all coming back to me now. There were moments of gold, and there were flashes of light. There were things we'd never do again, but then they'd always seemed right. There were nights of endless pleasure. It was more than all your laws allow..."

The lyrics plunge her back into memory lane.

Previously, Lucinda lived a life of confinement most times. But there were times when she managed to sneak out and have real fun.

One of those times was when she sneaked out of the house to attend an open mic concert with Ronald.

Despite hating concerts, Ronald went with her only to keep an eye out for Lucinda.

After having a couple of drinks, Lucinda courageously climbed up the stage and began belting the lyrics to Celine Dion's "It's all coming back to me now."

Ronald tried dragging her down the stage.

But instead, Lucinda dragged him to join her on stage.

Reluctantly, he joined her, and together they sang their hearts out until their mics got snatched from them, and they got sacked from the stage to allow others to perform.

Ron and Lucinda walked home hand in hand, laughing their hearts out.

It was undoubtedly one of Lucinda's happiest moments.

Lucinda is startled out of her reverie when her phone vibrates.

Frowning, Lucinda reaches into her purse and realises it isn't her smartphone ringing.

She fishes out her smaller phone and checks the caller ID.

The frown on her face deepens.

Right on cue, Mandy and Chrissy return to their seat.

"Here is your non-alcohol drink!" Chrissy announces, pushing the drink towards Lucinda.

"Thank you, Chrissy. Uh, I'll be right back, guys. I have to take this call,"

Lucinda exits the club to pick up the call.

"Lucinda, my love! You finally answered my calls!"

"Mom.." Lucinda's words get stuck in her throat when she looks ahead and spots a familiar figure walking towards the club.

She pulls the phone away from her ear and unconsciously hangs up.

Shaken, Lucinda quickly turns and rushes inside the club.

Mandy notices her friend's pale expression and questions.

"Are you okay, Luci? You look like you've seen a ghost,"

"I'm fine. I'm fine. Uh, I've got to use the washroom," Lucinda rushes inside the washroom and locks herself inside.

She lowers the toilet seat and sits on it, never coming out until her friends come searching for her.

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Lucinda takes some time to compose herself while her friends call out for her behind the door.

Staring at her reflection in the mirror, she opens the tap and splashes water on her face.

Luckily, she went barefaced tonight, so there was no need to worry about ruining her makeup.

Lucinda splashes more water on her face before dabbing it with a paper towel.

After, she applies a little bit of lipgloss and smoothens her eyebrows with her fingers.

She pretends to flush the toilet before unlocking the door and stepping outside to meet the worried faces of her friends.

She flashes them a reassuring smile.

"I'm sorry I took so long,"

"Are you okay?" questions Mandy, to which Lucinda nods.

"Yes. I'm fine. Perhaps the food we had at the restaurant is trying to mess with my stomach,"

"Oh. I could go and get you some medicines. There's a drugstore nearby," Mandy offers, but Lucinda declines.

"Thank you, but I'm fine."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, Mandy. Now, come on. Let's go out there and have fun, okay? Isn't that our sole reason for coming out tonight?"

"Well, I'm not against having fun!" Chrissy grins.

The three ladies return to their seats, discard their drinks and order fresh ones.

None of them wants to risk getting drugged after leaving their drinks unattended.

Throughout the night, Lucinda uneasily searches the crowd.

Luckily, she doesn't set eyes on the familiar figure for the rest of the night.

After the three ladies return to their respective apartments in the wee hours of the morning, Lucinda's cell phone begins to ring again.

She retires into her room, changes into her nightwear and gets into bed.

The phone continues to ring.

Annoyed, Lucinda begrudgingly answers it.

"Yes?"

"Lucinda, are you okay?! Why did you suddenly hang up? Did something happen to you?!"

Lucinda rubs her forehead, sighing.

"Have you checked the time, mother? It's half past three. Why are you calling me at such an ungodly hour?"

"You suddenly hung up the first time I called. I was worried something had happened to you, and that is why I kept calling,"

"Well, for your information, I'm still alive and breathing,"

"May.."

"Don't!" Lucinda sneers, cutting her mother off.

"Don't say that word, mother. My name is Lucinda, in case you've forgotten. Do not address me with any other name,"

Mrs Thurman sighs, casting her husband a miserable look.

Sitting beside Mr Thurman is one of their hackers, doing his best to trace Lucinda's location.

He rubs his wife's shoulders reassuringly and gestures to her to keep the conversation going, prolonging it as much as she can.

The longer she remains on the call, the higher their chances of finding their daughter's location.

Though it wouldn't be the first time trying to track down Lucinda, they are still hoping to get results.

She really is their daughter, after all.

Having grown up in the midst of wealthy people, Lucinda certainly learned how to keep herself under the radar.

She knew how to make herself disappear without a trace.

It's no wonder they haven't been able to track her cell phone even after all this while.

Mrs Thurman takes a deep breath.

"How are you doing, my love? Do you not want to see me? Can't we at least meet up somewhere and have coffee?"

At the other end of the line, Lucinda scoffs. "You want to meet up so that you can let your husband hide a few metres away and catch me unawares?"

Mr Thurman purses his lips.

Does his daughter hate him so much that she's unable to address him as "dad" anymore?

Mrs Thurman shakes her head, "No, Luci. I promise to come alone. No bodyguards,"

"I would be a fool to believe in your words, mother. Your words mean nothing to me."

"Lucinda, please! How long will you hate your father and me? We've been trying everything to make amends, yet our actions only seem to push you farther away." Mrs Thurman chokes on a sob.

"All I want is to be away from unscrupulous people like you. Tell me, have you abandoned your dirty business? Dad, this question is directed at you. I know this call is on loudspeaker, and you can hear me."

The silence that ensues after confirms Lucinda's thoughts.

She laughs humorlessly.

"Of course. You both are too self-centred and self-absorbed to let go of such a dirty business. Thankfully, I'm not like you neither do I aspire to be. I will have no hand in spending your dirty money. I will hate you as long as you continue engaging in such business. I would have handed you over to the police long ago, but I do not have any evidence. It's such a shame. Besides, who would believe a nobody like me over the almighty Mr Craig Thurman? Absolutely no fucking one!"

Mrs Thurman sobs.

Hearing such words from her daughter is worse than getting stabbed.

"Lucinda, baby. I'm sorry for what happened to you. Please, come back home, and I promise to fix it. Please!"

"News flash, mom. You can't fix what happened to me, nor can you reverse time. I would have to live the rest of my life like this. And it's all thanks to you and your husband."

Lucinda pauses, resting her head against the headboard to control her breathing.

In a much calmer voice, she continues. "I know you're trying to track my location as we speak, but it's useless because you will never find me. Goodbye, mother," Lucinda hands up, throwing the phone onto the bed.

She sinks into the bed, buries her face into the pillow and screams.

After screaming to her heart's content, Lucinda lies in bed, feeling defeated.

The memories of a year and a half ago return to hunt and plague her.

She shuts her eyes, willing the memories she tries so hard to suppress every day to disappear.

But the more she tries to forget, the harder it becomes.

After a while, Lucinda stops struggling with her mind as she lies limp in bed, gazing at the ceiling until her eyes close in sleep.

At the Thurman Villa, Craig asks the hacker.

"Did you get the location?"

The hacker shakes his head apologetically, "I'm sorry, Mr Thurman. Different locations keep popping up. It's hard to track the cellphone,"

"Hard but not impossible, right?"

"Yes. The hacker nods. "If we can get someone who knows how to override and to counterattack such programs encrypted into the phone, it can be possible,"

Mr Thurman nods.

His face is calm, but only God knows how his heart has shattered to pieces after hearing the resentment and disdain in his daughter's voice.

He understands how she feels.

Except, he won't stop searching for her.

Craig would move heaven and earth to find his daughter.

Right now, he can only think of one person who's fucking good at tracking people.

And it's none other than the fucking bastard locked up in his dungeon.

For the past weeks, Ronald has refused to talk, though Craig has an inkling feeling he knows Lucinda's whereabouts and refuses to disclose it.

By hook or crook, Craig will make him talk.

He turns to his wife, wiping her tears.

"Go to your room and have some rest. I have something to attend to."

He turns and exits the house unto the main compound, walking towards the boys' quarters where the dungeon is.