

Devil Lucifer 71

[Chapter 71 Ruckus](#)

After Tyler kicks out Mandy and shuts the door in her face, she walks around aimlessly, with no desire to return home right now.

She needs to clear her head and gather her jumbled thoughts.

After walking quite a distance, Mandy decides to sit under a tree for a while before continuing her journey.

Sighing heavily, she leans against the tree and closes her eyes, feeling the cold night breeze whooshing past her ears.

Mandy lifts her knees to her chest and rests her head on them as she wraps her arms around herself, attempting to protect herself from the cold breeze.

Her mind drifts back to a few hours ago.

Three hours earlier, Mandy had decided to visit Tony's grave when she spotted four men standing around the tomb, wearing masks and protective clothing.

Alarmed, she approached them and questioned them.

The men had told her they'd been ordered to dig up the grave.

Mandy had asked them to show her proof of permit by the local police, but they were unable to.

Threatening to report them for illegal activities, the men had disappeared without telling her who had contracted them to do such a heinous thing.

But Mandy needed no one to tell her that it was none other than Tyler's doing. No matter how much she racked her brain, she could think of no one else who would do such a thing except Tyler.

Coupled with the fact that she knew they had sneaked into St Martins Hospital, her suspicion seemed to hold water.

But Tyler is outrightly denying having anything to do with it, just like he's been denying having a hand in Tony's death.

Mandy laughs self-deprecatingly.

What was she expecting barging into his apartment like that?

A thief will never admit to their wrongdoings, even when caught in the act.

So why does she think Tyler is any different?

Mandy's phone suddenly rings, startling her.

"Yes?" she answers without checking the caller ID.

"Where are you?" the deep voice questions.

Mandy pulls the phone away from her ear to check the caller ID before placing it back.

"Somewhere," comes her brief reply as she gets up, continuing her journey home.

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

"I see. And how are you holding on?"

"I'm holding on as much as I can. Though I don't know for how much longer."

"Don't you worry, Mandy. It will be over soon. I give you my word,"

"How long should I keep believing your words? I think it's time to let everything go,"

"Don't even think about it! Are you out of your mind?!"

Mandy halts in her tracks when he suddenly yells at her.

The man sighs.

"I'm sorry for yelling at you. It's just that I can't believe you're willing to let Tony's murderer go unpunished,"

"Well, what else can I do? It's not like I have evidence to back my words," Mandy resumes walking, running a hand through her hair.

"Don't worry. I've got my cards laid out. All I need now is for Tyler to lay his out, then we can begin this game,"

"What game? I'm at a loss here. Can you elaborate?"

"You don't need to worry your head over this, Mandy. Just focus on what we talked about earlier. Leave the rest to me,"

Mandy rubs her forehead, "Okay,"

The line goes dead after that.

Mandy arrives home to find Lucinda already asleep. She stands by the door and watches her friend peacefully sleeping for a while, after which she carefully shuts the door and retires to her room.

Mandy strips off her clothes to take a shower, after which she retires to bed.

Lying on her back and gazing at the fan churning above her, she doesn't sleep for a long time.

The next day, Tyler receives the Pendrive as promised.

He goes about his day making sure everything is ready for the evening, and soon enough, night falls.

He meets Austin outside his apartment, where they place a call to the nurse to be certain he's not backing out.

After, Tyler gets in touch with Ron.

"I just wanted to give you a heads up. We'll arrive at the hospital approximately thirty to forty minutes from now," Tyler informs.

"Hmm," Ron hums, forking a piece of salmon into his mouth.

"I'll let you know as soon as we arrive," Tyler pauses, a thought suddenly occurring to him.

"By the way, are you sure this whole Pendrive thingy will work out?"

Ron stops chewing, twirling the fork between his fingers.

He snorts.

"Are you doubting my abilities? The app on the pen drive is an autorun application that runs in the background immediately after installing. It will be difficult to detect there's an app of that sort on the computer. Now, if you're done doubting me, I need to finish my food,"

And he hung up again rudely.

Already getting used to the hacker's rudeness, Tyler clicks his tongue and turns to Austin.

"Should we get going?"

"Your call," Austin replies.

Both men walk to the roadside, where they hail a cab to the hospital.

It's a quarter past ten when they arrive at the hospital. After paying the cab driver, both men near the hospital and cast glances around, making sure to appear causal.

Since it's nightfall, most visitors have left.

The waiting area is almost empty, an entirely different scenario during the day when it's bustling with patients.

Austin and Tyler find a spot behind the hospital, blending in with the darkness, after which they get in touch with the nurse.

Not a minute longer, Austin's phone vibrates with a message from the nurse, asking them to wait until he gives the signal.

While waiting, both men stand outside, making small conversations until a commotion breaks out inside the hospital.

Tyler glances at his friend.

"What's all the ruckus about?"

Austin shrugs, fishing out for his phone. "I'm not sure, though I might have an idea,"

Not a minute later, his phone vibrates with another message from the nurse, asking them to come in through the back door and change into the clothes he'd conveniently dumped at the entrance.

Immediately, both men do as instructed, and true to the nurse's words, they find clothes inside a trashcan near the door.

Tyler scrunches his nose at the sight, picking up the clothes daintily.

He gazes inside the trashcan and sighs audibly.

"For a moment there, I thought the nurse had dropped the clothes inside a dirty trashcan,"

Tyler comments as he spreads the clothes, realising it's a cleaner's uniform.

Both men hurriedly put on the uniforms over their clothes in addition to a net cap over their heads.

Tyler informs Ron of their arrival and then gets to work.

[Chapter 72 Ruckus 2](#)

Tyler picks up the mob and bucket, fills it with some bleach and water and turns to look at Austin.

"Shall we?"

Austin nods as they manoeuvre their way into the hospital's reception area.

There, they happen to see the nurse they'd bribed intentionally pouring a cup of steaming on the receptionist's clothes.

The receptionist shrieks.

Her shriek is barely audible as several other nurses run around trying to calm the patients running helter-skelter.

The receptionist glares at the nurse, cursing profanities.

"I'm so sorry, ma'am,

"God, do you people ever learn?!"

"I'm so sorry. Let me help you find new clothes,"

"Do you expect me to leave the desk to get changed?!" she sneers.

"Uh, I'll stay here till you return, ma'am. And I'll be the one to deliver your lunch for the next one week," the nurse offers.

"Two weeks!"

The nurse's eyes widen.

Two weeks? That's ridiculous.

"Ma'am.."

"I said two weeks. You ruined my favourite dress because of your unsteady hands!"

The nurse sighs, caving in.

"Okay, two weeks,"

Tyler and Austin better give him the amount more than agreed for this.

"Stay here, and don't let anyone near the desk, got it?!"

"Yes, of course,"

The receptionist then struts away to find the nearest washroom. Immediately after she's out of sight, Tyler and Austin rush inside.

"Oh, dear! The floor is wet again!" Tyler exclaims dramatically, dragging the mop and bucket with him.

Austin moves near the waiting area to be on the lookout and uses mopping the floors as a camouflage.

Tyler immediately gets to work, mopping the floors near the reception desk while the nurse pretends to yell at him to do a thorough job.

"Here! clean this place as well!" the nurse yells at Tyler, pointing behind the reception desk.

"Geez, take it easy on him, will you?" a doctor reprimands while ushering a patient inside.

Tyler rounds the reception desk and bends to mop the area near the computer. He swiftly brings the Pendrive out of his pocket, inserts it, and continues mopping the floor.

Five seconds.

Six seconds.

Seven seconds.

Eight seconds

Nine seconds.

Tyler counts, hoping the Pendrive is doing its job. Ron had said he would be installing an autorun app that would install itself immediately after inserting the Pendrive.

How long will this take?

"Hurry!" The nurse whisper-yells.

Fuck!

Twenty-eight seconds.

Twenty-nine seconds.

Thirty seconds.

Tyler's phone suddenly vibrates with a message from Ron, telling him the installation is complete.

"Thank fuck," Tyler swiftly removes the Pendrive and grabs the mop and bucket, steadily walking out of the reception area.

Noticing that, Austin counts to ten and then follows his friend.

When they arrive at the back door, they take off the cleaner's uniform and drop them back into the trashcan.

They exit the hospital immediately after.

The nurse follows them out less than a minute later.

"You've got to add a bonus to the original amount. That was freaking hard work, not to talk of delivering food to that bitchy receptionist for two weeks!" he complains, wiping sweat off his brows.

"Fine!" Tyler transfers the money with an additional three thousand cedis.

"Is that enough?"

The nurse checks his phone as it pings with an alert.

A smile breaks out on his face.

"More than enough. It was nice working with you," he turns away and disappears into the hospital while Austin and Tyler hail a cab back to the apartment.

On the way, Tyler places a call to Ron.

"I hope you got everything?" Tyler questions.

Ron leans back in his seat, studying the numerous patient files.

"That's a lot of information. Do you want me to send you everything? It'll take you weeks to go through everything,"

Tyler shakes his head.

"I only need information on one person, though he's deceased now. I could give you his name. Just search for his name and send me all information that appears under his name. Is that cool?"

Ron purses his lips.

Now, why would he want information on a dead person?

That's sketchy ASF.

"Why do you need info on a deceased person? Are you a detective?" Ron can't help but ask.

"Not that it's any of your business, but no. I'm not a detective. It's just something that could help me a lot,"

"Hmm," Ron nods.

He'd initially wanted to send the information through email.

But, on second thought, he's decided it's time to know the face of the guy he's been helping and the person Lucinda has been visiting since he started monitoring her.

"Alright,"

"Cool, I'll be expecting it then,"

"No,"

Tyler pauses, "What?"

"I said no. I'll drop by your house and hand it over personally, and then you return my Pendrive,"

"I don't have a problem, but why would you personally drop by?"

Ron shrugs, "Maybe because I'm less busy,"

"Hmm. Okay, whatever sails your boat. You do know my address, right?"

Ron chuckles smugly, "Well, what do you think?"

Tyler rolls his eyes.

"Right. You probably know everything about me, Mr Hacker,"

"Except your face,"

"Oh well, I guess I can grant you the privilege to see my face,"

Ron snorts.

"Talking to you is exhausting. Bye,"

Tyler says nothing else as he hangs up and leans back in his seat, closing his eyes.

No sooner than later, the cab pulls up in front of the apartment and both men alight.

They trudge lazily into the house and collapse onto the sofa.

"That was eventful," Austin murmurs.

"Hmm," Tyler hums.

They stay like that in silence for a while until Tyler gets up to take a shower. Austin follows suit soon after, and they both retire to bed.

That night, Tyler dreams again.

It's the same dream he had on the night doctor Grey flushed out his system.

Except this time, the feeling of agony and despair is so gutwrenching that Tyler jolts awake, panting heavily.

Beads of sweat cover his forehead and neck, dripping into his shirt.

He wipes the sweat with the back of his hand and props himself against the headboard, catching his breath.

Why was he covered in blood? Whose blood was it?

His? Or someone he used to know?

What was he looking at ahead?

Why did he scream with such agony lacing his voice?

Tyler shuts his eyes, running a hand through his hair.

He's always wanted to regain his memories, but now, there is an underlying fear.

The fear that he would wish he was left in oblivion if he ever regains his memories.

Chapter 73 That Will Never Happen

The next day, Tyler spends most of the morning in bed. His reason was that he barely slept the entire night after his dream. Tyler lays in bed, doing nothing but gazing at the fan above him, churning wildly.

He doesn't try to make sense of his dream anymore because no matter how much he racks his brain, he always ends up at a dead end.

Tyler glances at his cell phone lying on the bedside table. He hesitates before reaching out to pick it up.

Turning the phone on, he scrolls through his contacts, his thumb hovering over doctor Grey's number.

Tyler dials his number and places the phone to his ear. Just like the past week, it goes straight to voicemail. Frustrated, he hangs up and throws the phone carelessly on the bed.

He rubs his eyes while getting out of bed for his morning ritual. He exits the bathroom and joins Austin in the living room.

"When will you return to your house? It's..." he trails off when the delicious aroma of scrambled eggs, sausages and pancakes invades his nostrils.

"Oh wow," he happily joins his friend at the dining table, quickly helping himself to a plate.

Austin looks up from his plate.

"What were you saying about me returning to my house?"

Tyler fixes himself a cup of coffee before replying.

He blinks innocently, stirring his cup of tea.

"Oh, I don't remember,"

Austin snorts, forking a piece of pancake into his mouth.

"Yeah. I thought so,"

Tyler rolls his eyes and resumes eating, devouring everything on his plate and going for a second serving.

Austin chews on a sausage, licking his index finger. He leans back in his seat.

"That reminds me. I saw a textbook under the sofa. It's definitely not yours, so who could be the

owner?"

"What textbook? Is there no name on it?"

"It's an algorithms textbook. There was no name except for initials," Austin replies, gathering his plates into the kitchen.

Tyler nods.

No one else has been in his apartment except Lucinda.

And she's the only person he knows who studies mathematics.

Come to think of it, that girl must be damn smart to have chosen to pursue mathematics as a major.

He snorts.

Of course, she's a mathematician.

No wonder she's so uptight.

Not to forget, she loves to argue.

Why won't she love arguing when she spends all day solving math problems?

She probably argues with her questions on paper too.

"What are you smiling at?" Austin's question startles him, and he looks up, confused.

"What?"

"You were smiling like a loon a few seconds ago. Care to explain that?"

Tyler finishes his meal and gathers the used plates and cups into the kitchen.

"I wasn't smiling. It must have been your imagination running wild again,"

Austin smirks knowingly, placing the washed plates on the rack to dry.

He wipes his hands with a napkin and leans against the counter, still smirking.

"I have a vague idea why you were smiling so much. But, you can keep denying all you want,"

Tyler frowns, washing his plate and cup.

"What are you talking about?"

"Oh, nothing. Don't mind me," Austin teases, exiting the kitchen and making his way into the bathroom.

Tyler snorts.

Austin must be out of his mind again.

After washing the plates, Tyler retracts his steps into the living room and finds the said textbook sitting on the sofa.

He stares at the oversized textbook and opens the first page.

M.T. are the initials written in the book.

The initials do not match Lucinda's name, so he guesses she must have borrowed it.

Oh well.

Tyler shrugs, dropping the book on the centre table.

He makes himself comfortable on the sofa, switches on the television and retrieves his phone to call Lucinda.

She answers on the second try.

"Hello?" Though Lucinda's voice seems muffled, the agitation in her voice is hard to miss.

"Well, hello there, baby doll. It's been a while,"

Lucinda rolls her eyes, drops the books she's holding and plops down on the bed, exhausted.

"Stop talking like we haven't seen each other in months,"

"Hmm," Tyler grins.

"Why does your voice sound muffled?"

Lucinda takes off the handkerchief she tied around her nose to prevent her from catching a cold.

"Is it better?" she asks.

"Sure. Why do you sound so out of breath?"

"Nothing gets past you, does it?" Lucinda groans.

Tyler chuckles.

"What can I say? I'm highly perceptive,"

Lucinda snorts, "Why did you call me, Tyler? Get on with it and stop being a nuisance,"

"Aren't you forgetting something?"

"What could I possibly forget, oh the-ever knowledgeable Tyler Brown," she questions sarcastically.

Tyler chuckles, "Are you sure? Rack your brains, baby doll,"

"Seriously, Tyler, whatever it is, spill it out already. I was the middle of something before you called,"

"Were you perhaps searching for your Algorithms textbook?"

Lucinda does a double take, halting in her movements.

"Is it with you? Did I leave it at your place? Oh, my god, I've been ransacking the entire house searching for it!" She exclaims excitedly.

"Yeah, yeah. Turn the excitement down a notch, will you? At this rate, you will burst my ear drums. And yes, to answer your question, you forgot it at my place,"

"Alright. I'll be there soon!" and Lucinda hangs up.

Tyler pulls the phone from his ear, staring at his screen for a second longer.

"You're smiling like a loon again," Austin accuses, emerging from the bedroom in fresh clothes.

Tyler drops his phone, the smile slipping off his face.

"I was not!" he denies vehemently.

Austin shrugs, deciding to keep his observations to himself.

He lifts his hands in mock surrender.

"Fine. You weren't smiling. I get it. It must have been my eyes playing tricks on me. As you're aware, I'm growing quite old, so my eyesight is poorer than ever,"

"Quit being sarcastic, will you,"

Tyler increases the television's volume, drowning out his friend's obnoxious laughter.

Meanwhile, inside Lucinda's room, she lets out a heavy sigh and collapses into the couch. She looks around the scattered room and groans.

Now she has to clean everything up.

If only Tyler had called her on time, she wouldn't have impulsively ransacked her room searching for a book that was clearly not there.

She left the book at his apartment on Friday. Right?

So why did he wait that long?

Pfft! Knowing Tyler, he must have stalled on purpose to rile her up.

Begrudgingly, she begins to clean the room.

After a while of cleaning, Mandy enters.

She takes a glance around the room before settling her gaze on Lucinda.

"Did you finally find your book?"

Lucinda halts in her movements and turns.

"Yes and No. I mean, yes, but it's not here,"

Mandy furrows her eyebrows, "Then where is it?"

"Tyler just called me. It was at his place all along. I must have dropped it somehow. I'll be going for it immediately after putting this place in order,"

She resumes cleaning, mumbling to herself.

"I don't know why he took so long to call me. Obviously, he loves to annoy me,"

"Lucinda," Mandy calls out, cutting off her friend's ranting.

She turns, "Hmm?"

"If there's something going on between you two, you would tell me, right?"

Lucinda is taken aback.

She blinks.

"There's nothing between Tyler and me. Why are you asking all of a sudden?"

Mandy studies her friend for a while before flashing her a smile.

"No reason. I wouldn't like to be kept in the dark if my friend finally gets a boyfriend,"

"What do you mean by 'finally'? I've not been single that long,"

"Yeah, yeah. But still. Let me know if you and Tyler ever..."

"That will never happen," Luci cuts her friend off.

Mandy lifts her hands in surrender.

"Okay fine. Though, I still insist. If that ever happens, let me know,"

She leaves Lucinda to her devices after that.

[Chapter 74 It's A Small World](#)

While waiting for Ron's arrival, Tyler and Austin decide to play video games. After playing for nearly an hour, Tyler drops his console and faces his friend.

"I've been meaning to ask you something,"

"What is it?" Austin replies, pausing the game and dropping his console as well.

"I need to ask the nurse an important question. Everything happened so fast yesterday that it slipped my mind,"

"And what could this important question be?"

"It's about doctor Grey. Since I'm unable to reach him, asking staff at the hospital is the best option,"

Austin purses his lips, "Why? Can't you still reach the doctor?"

Tyler nods. "Yeah. Maybe he changed his number or travelled or whatever. But I need to know his

whereabouts. His address would even suffice. I mean, he was so invested in helping me, I found it odd at first only for him to suddenly go AWOL?"

Austin cocks his head to the side. "Are you suspecting foul play?"

Tyler chuckles.

"Why would I suspect foul play? Don't tell me someone cut off the doctor's communication with me because they don't want me to find out what's really wrong with me. Come on, now. That's ridiculous,"

His friend shrugs.

"It's just a suggestion. It's better not to leave any loose ends,"

"It's ridiculous to think of something like that even as a suggestion. Do you reckon my memories hold vital information from the past that could disrupt the present? Well, wouldn't that be interesting?" Tyler smirks.

"Come to think of it. You couldn't be far from the truth," Austin remarks suddenly, causing Tyler to laugh.

"Your imagination surely runs wild, huh?"

"No, think about it!" Austin shakes his head,

"You told me about doctor Grey's findings, right? In your case, either you suffered a traumatic situation or witnessed it, which led to your brain blocking out painful memories. Wasn't the possibility of a brain injury being the cause of your memory loss ruled out? So that leaves us with one cause,"

Tyler rubs his forehead.

"Geez, Austin."

"Imagine this, Ty. If it ever turns out that your memories hold vital information, what would you do then?"

Tyler purses his lips, thinking.

Honestly, he's had such thoughts, but he never allowed himself to dwell on it too much for fear of it being true.

If it turns out that his memories hold vital information, what would he do then?

He has no idea.

Sometimes, it's difficult to decide between wanting his memories back or living in oblivion.

Ignorance, they say, is bliss.

Right?

What he doesn't know wouldn't hurt him.

But what if what he truly needs is to regain his memories?

Maybe he would remember the faces of his family, that's if he ever had one.

The house in his dreams brings him a great sense of familiarity, as though he's lived there his entire life.

If that is true, judging by the house's interior, he must be from a wealthy family.

The house and its enormity is the only good thing about his dreams. The rest is pure gore and heart-wrenching.

The blood splattered over the walls, the agony in his eyes and his scream.

The scream that forces him to awaken, drenched in sweat.

Tyler sighs.

"I don't know what I would do," He finally answers.

"I guess we'll cross the bridge when we reach there. Lest I forget, let me call the nurse," Austin retrieves his phone and just when he's about to dial the nurse's number, the doorbell rings.

"That must be the hacker," Tyler gets up to answer the door expecting to see a male, but instead, it's a female.

"Oh hello, baby doll,"

Lucinda rolls her eyes, pushing past him inside his apartment.

Tyler shuts the door and follows her.

He crosses his arms over his chest.

"You've really made yourself at home, huh? You don't even wait for me to invite you in anymore,"

Lucinda places her hands on her hips, standing at akimbo.

"Anytime I try to knock, you ask me to enter. Have you forgotten? It's not my fault I've gotten used to it,"

Tyler bites his lips.

"What a smart mouth you have,"

Luci ignores him, looking around. She spots her textbook on the centre table and wastes no time picking it up.

Her gaze falls on Austin, an embarrassed blush rising on her cheeks.

"Hello. I'm sorry I didn't notice you,"

Austin waves her off, "It's fine,"

"It's all your friend's fault. He's so annoying it makes me incapable of thinking straight when he starts talking,"

Tyler frowns.

"Why are you blaming this on me? Is it my fault your eyes aren't working well? You should get them checked,"

Luci turns sharply, glaring daggers.

"My eyes work just fine!"

She turns again, facing Austin.

"How do you put up with him? Don't you feel like smacking his head anytime he opens his mouth?"

Austin chuckles.

"I try to reign it in sometimes,"

Tyler's nostrils flare up, "You..."

He pauses when the doorbell rings.

Flipping his friend the middle finger, he goes to answer the door.

After a while, he exclaims,

"Oh, so you're the rude hacker?!"

A man chuckles. "Rude hacker?"

Lucinda, who was about to leave, suddenly freezes.

"Yes. You always hang up rudely, and you're a hacker, so your name is Rude Hacker. A befitting name,"

The man chuckles again, "I wouldn't say rude is the right word. Secondly, I'm not a hacker. I told you that already. It's something I had to learn to protect my business,"

Lucinda retracts her steps until her feet hit the sofa.

It can't be. Right?

She's heard the saying that it's a small world, but not this small, right?

It can't be him.

It certainly isn't.

Convincing herself, Lucinda makes her way toward the exit.

"Anyway, may I know the hacker's name?" Tyler questions.

"Ronald Thurman. Just call me Ron."

"Okay, mine is.."

"Tyler Brown. I'm aware," Ron cuts him off.

Tyler shakes his head.

"Of course, you know,"

Lucinda freezes again, the book slipping between her fingers and falling to the floor.

The sound of the book hitting the floor draws Austin's attention.

He walks up to her, placing a hand on her shoulder.

Lucinda flinches, causing him to retract his hand and pocket them instead.

"Are you okay?" He questions, wondering why she seems so agitated all of a sudden.

Luci doesn't hear Austin. Her mind has gone hazy.

She can hear the men talking around her, but the words seem far off.

It's like she's slipping into an abyss of darkness.

She feels the panic coming.

It's rising from her toes, up her legs and stomach, settling in her throat.

Lucinda gasps for breath.

She feels the world spinning around her and the floor slipping away from beneath her feet.

Austin catches her just in time, steadying her.

"Hey, Lucinda, are you okay?"

His question draws the attention of Tyler and Ron, and they stop chatting.

"Would you like to come in?" Tyler asks.

"Sure," Ron answers, stepping inside.

Alarmed, Lucinda grabs Austin by the collar.

"B...Bathroom!" she stutters.

"There," He points to a door leading to the guestroom.

Lucinda gazes at the guestroom door.

If she goes that way, Ron will see her.

She looks to her right.

Tyler's room is that way, at the farther end.

Hearing their footsteps getting closer, she releases her hold on Austin's collar and dashes inside Tyler's room, shutting the door with a bang.

Tyler enters the living room with Ron in tow. Puzzled, he looks around.

"Where's..."

"She went into the bathroom. She isn't feeling well, I think,"

A worried expression etches Tyler's handsome features.

"So suddenly?"

Austin nods.

"You have a guest? I could leave and come back another time," Ron interrupts.

"It's fine. Lucinda's ugh..." Tyler pauses, searching for the right word to address her.

"A friend," he completes.

Nodding, Ron takes a seat.

He pulls out his phone, taps on the tracking app and notices the light blinking in this location.

She's here.

[Chapter 75 We All Have Our Demons](#)

Ron tightens his hold on his cell phone, trying his best to flash a casual smile.

She's here.

She's here.

The words continuously ring in his mind.

She's here, in this house, yet he can't see her.

She's inside one of those rooms.

If only he could force his way inside.

But he knows that is inappropriate.

He can't force himself on her more than he already has.

It will only increase her hatred for him. That's if there is still room for more hate in her heart.

After all this time, nothing has changed.

She wants nothing to do with him, even to this day.

Ron pockets his phone.

"So about the files you retrieved," Tyler clears his throat.

"Can I have my pen drive back? Then we can talk about your files," Ron answers, shifting in his seat.

Tyler reaches into his pocket and retrieves the Pendrive, handing it to Ron.

He accepts it before giving Tyler another Pendrive.

"All the information I gathered about the Tony guy is in there,"

"Thanks," Tyler accepts it.

He would check it after Ron leaves.

"Alright, I guess I should get going," Ron states, getting on his feet.

He casts a glance toward the room and looks away.

"Sure. Thanks for helping,"

"Don't thank me. Alex will return the favour someday. It's a win-win situation,"

Tyler is tempted to ask Ron how he's acquainted with Alex but decides against it.

They aren't friends, so there's a high chance he would brush the question off.

It doesn't matter anyway.

"Yeah, well. Thanks anyway," Tyler murmurs.

Ron nods, approaching the door.

"I hope we don't cross paths again, Mr Brown,"

"You never know where fate will lead you, Mr Hacker," Tyler smirks.

Ron chuckles, "We'll see about that. Until then...."

He lets the rest of his words hang in the air as he exits.

Tyler shuts the door and returns to the living room, retrieving the Pendrive.

His gaze lands on Lucinda's book lying on the floor where she dropped it. He picks it up.

"Where's Lucinda? She still hasn't come out?" Tyler questions, approaching the guestroom.

"She went inside your room," Austin informs, to which Tyler retracts his steps, nearing his room.

When he reaches his room, he halts and knocks on the door.

He calls out Lucinda's name, asking if she is okay, but he gets no response.

He knocks again after a while.

Silence.

Tyler presses his ear against the door, resting his hands on the doorknob, ready to open. He hears heavy breathing coming from inside the room.

He calls out her name again.

Silence.

"Lucinda? I'm coming in!"

Slowly, Tyler twists the doorknob and pushes the door open slightly.

He pokes his head through the open space and glances around, his gaze falling on Lucinda seated on the floor.

Alarmed, Tyler pushes the door wide and enters, approaching her.

He drops the book and squats before her.

"Lucinda? Are you okay?"

She doesn't reply.

Her mind is far gone to be aware of her surrounding.

Her eyes are closed, and her knees are up to her chest with her arms around them tightly.

She's rocking back and forth while panting.

An indescribable feeling envelops Tyler.

"You should calm her down. I think she's having a panic attack," Austin states from where he stands at the doorway.

Tyler looks up. "How?"

"Hug her?"

He blinks, "What?"

"Hug her," Austin repeats.

"Try to calm her down. If you hesitate, I will..."

"No! You stay back!" Tyler growls at his friend.

Smirking, Austin leans against the door.

"Do something then. Before I teach you how to,"

Tyler closes the distance between them, taking Lucinda's hand in his.

She doesn't react.

"Baby doll. Can you hear me? Snap out of it, Lucinda,"

Realising his words have no effect on her, Tyler lets go of her hand to wrap his arm around her, hugging her tightly.

Lucinda resists his hug, flailing her arms around and trying to get out of his hold.

"Relax, baby doll. Breathe. Everything is okay. Breathe," He coaxes her, rubbing her hair soothingly.

"Breathe, baby doll. Breathe," He repeats the words until Lucinda's breath slows down.

He hugs her tighter.

"There now, baby doll. Just breathe. Shhhh,"

After a while, Lucinda opens her tear-stained eyes, glancing around.

"Tyler?"

"Yes, baby doll. It's me," He replies, moving back for fear of triggering her attack again.

"Want me to let go?"

Lucinda shakes her head, her braids slipping out of their ponytail and falling freely around her shoulder.

She wraps her arm around Tyler's neck, clutching his shirt.

"Please," she pleads, her voice so small that it throws Tyler off.

He'd never seen her so vulnerable like this before.

It makes him want to hold her tighter, and he does exactly that.

"I've got you, baby doll. I've got you. Just breathe,"

They stay like that for a while until Tyler's knees begin to hurt from squatting for so long.

Impulsively, he slips one arm under Lucinda's thighs and the other under her back.

"Hold on tight," he tells her before carrying her off the floor unto the bed.

Lucinda curls herself into a ball, staring into nothingness.

She doesn't say a word, and neither does he.

Tyler watches her, pushing a braid away from her face every few seconds, and tucks it behind her ears.

Soon, Lucinda falls asleep.

Only then does he look away, noticing Austin's absence.

Tyler gets up and heads for the door. When he reaches the door, he halts and turns to cast a long glance at Lucinda before exiting, shutting the door softly behind him.

He enters the living room to find Austin using his laptop.

"What are you doing?"

Austin lifts his head briefly and looks back down.

"Nothing important," he replies.

Tyler joins him on the sofa, retrieving the Pendrive from his pocket.

He hands it over to his friend, asking him to insert it into the laptop.

Austin does as told, and while downloading the zip file, he questions Tyler.

"How is she?"

Ty purses his lips, shrugging.

"Fine, I guess. She's fallen asleep,"

"Hmm," Austin nods thoughtfully.

"I wonder what suddenly triggered her attack,"

"Why are you sure it's a panic attack?"

Austin rolls his eyes.

"Don't tell me you're that daft. What else would it have been? Her reaching orgasm?"

Tyler frowns, smacking the back of his friend's head.

"Don't be stupid," He rubs his neck, watching Austin unzip the folder after downloading.

"I guess we all have our demons," he comments after a while.

Austin nods, "Yeah,"

Silence envelopes the room as Austin double-clicks on the folder to open it.

When it opens, both friends stare at the numerous files, wondering where to begin.

After contemplating for a moment, Tyler suggests, "Let's start from the top and check the dates. Any record dated before 2018 is not our target, so skip those,"

And so, the friends begin to open each record, discarding the unimportant ones until 2018 medical record files pop up.

"Finally,"

Austin exclaims as he clicks open the medical record under 2018 and scrolls to February.

He scrolls through the reports until he stops at the last recorded information on Tony.

DECEASED

CAUSE OF DEATH - GUNSHOT WOUND TO THE CHEST.

Tyler leans back in his seat, staring at the information.

So Tony is dead, after all. He shakes his head, chucking humorlessly.

The cause of death was a gunshot wound to the chest?

Indeed.

Sounds like a perfect shot, huh?

[Chapter 76 Are You Embarrassed](#)

Ron arrives home and goes straight up into his study. He bangs the door and flops on his chair, angrily loosening the tie around his neck.

He retrieves his phone and opens the tracking app.

The tiny red light is still blinking in the location, proving that she's still at the house.

He drops the phone and rubs his face in frustration.

Does she still hate him so much that she can't bear to look at him?

"I don't want to see you ever again. You disgust me!" Luci's voice suddenly rings repeatedly in his head like a broken record.

Back then, Ron thought he was doing what was best for her. But it turns out his sense of judgement was poor.

He didn't realise how much his actions hurt her, and it took Chris helping her escape to return to his senses.

If only he knew better back then, he would have done things differently.

But alas, as the saying goes, had I known, is always at last.

But as if Ron hadn't learned his lesson, he tried to get her back after she escaped, albeit forcefully.

He dragged Lucinda home, much to her disdain, only giving room for more hatred.

After she escaped the second time, he didn't bother bringing her back, though he's always been aware of her whereabouts.

He knew she had moved to a different region, changed schools, and got enrolled under a fake name with fake actors whom she hired to act as her parents.

After a year, Lucinda asked for another transfer to her current school.

Yeah.

Lucinda went that far to hide from them.

He knew she didn't want to stay in one place for too long for fear of being discovered.

And so he let her be.

Ron also moved his business to a city closest to Radford University so he could keep an eye on her from afar.

Ron figured if he let Lucinda be, she'd eventually let go of her hatred towards him.

It's been more than a year, and nothing has changed.

Fuck, he's been trying to do right by her.

He rubs his face again.

Guess some wounds take longer to heal.

How much longer, though?

Ron's thoughts are interrupted when his phone rings.

After checking the caller ID, he ignores the call.

He exits his study and orders his chef to prepare him a meal while he takes a shower.

After his shower, Ron exits his room and heads for the dining area.

He takes a seat, grabs an empty plate and scoops some rice.

Next, he adds a couple of baked chicken and asparagus to his plate. While in the middle of scooping some stew, Chris approaches him holding a telephone.

"Your phone has been going off nonstop in your study. And now the landline is also ringing,"

"So?" Ron forks a stick of fried asparagus and bites into it. He cuts a piece of chicken and eats it, savouring the taste.

Chris is stupified into silence, watching Ron eat, looking unbothered.

"The call is coming in for you," he clarifies.

"Hmm," Ron hums, mixing a portion of rice with stew.

"Answer the call and tell whoever it is to relay their message to you,"

The telephone in Chris's hand rings again, and he begrudgingly answers it.

He speaks to the caller, listens for a few seconds and pulls the receiver away from his ear, covering the mouthpiece with his hand.

"It's your father, Ron. He won't relay the message to me. He insists on speaking to you,"

Ron chews on his rice, forking another stick of asparagus.

He answers, "Then tell him to fuck off,"

Chris is taken aback, "What?"

"What?"

"He's your father. I can't.."

Ron drops his fork and casts a deadly glance at him.

"Can't you tell him to fuck off? He's my father, so what? Don't forget I haven't let you off the hook. I can put you in that dungeon just as quickly as I brought you out. Tell him to fuck off or get out of my sight,"

"Why are you in such a sour mood? Where did you go? What happened?" Chris can't help but question.

Ron angrily slams his hand on the dining table, causing his plate of food to waver.

He reaches out to snatch the telephone away from Chris and smashes it to the ground.

"Enough with your pointless questions, and let me eat in peace! Are you going to ask me why I'm eating too?!"

Chris stares at the broken telephone on the floor and walks away without another word.

Lucinda wakes up in an unfamiliar room. She slowly sits up in bed and glances around.

It's most definitely not her room.

Wait.

How did she get here?

She rubs her eyes, groaning when the memories from a few hours earlier come rushing back.

Of course, she's still in Tyler's apartment.

How could she let herself lose control like that?

She hasn't had a panic attack in, what, a year?

Out of all places, it never in a million years crossed her mind she would encounter Ron inside Tyler's apartment.

Now how is she supposed to face Tyler?

Embarrassment is an understatement for what she's feeling.

The door to the bedroom opens suddenly, startling her.

She shifts nervously on the bed and glances down at her lap, fiddling with her fingers.

She hears his approaching footsteps but doesn't look up.

"You're awake," Tyler's deep voice cuts through the thick silence.

"Yeah,"

"How are you feeling?" the bed dips with the extra weight as he sits down.

"I'm fine. Thanks," Lucinda murmurs, still with her head down.

Tyler says nothing else, watching her fiddle with her fingers as though she were nervous.

He outstretches his hand to touch hers, momentarily stopping her from fiddling with them.

Startled, Lucinda spares him a glance.

"You look like you're enjoying playing with your fingers,"

She blushes, looking away.

"Why are you avoiding eye contact? The Lucinda I know never wastes a chance to glare daggers at me. So why the sudden change? Is it because of what happened?"

Lucinda doesn't answer, looking anywhere else but at him.

Tyler suddenly asks, "Are you embarrassed?"

She stiffens.

Though she doesn't give him an answer, her body language is enough to answer.

Tyler chuckles at her silliness, flicking her nose playfully.

"Silly girl. Look at me, baby doll,"

She doesn't.

He purses his lips, "Look at me, baby doll. Eyes on me, else I won't hesitate to reach over and flip you over and take you from behind,"

His words catch Lucinda off guard. She whips her head in his direction so fast she almost has whiplash and glares at him.

"Tyler!" she exclaims, utterly mortified.

Tyler laughs, flicking her nose again.

"Aren't you a naughty girl, huh? Look the kind of words it took to get you to glance my way,"

Lucinda blushes profusely, slapping his hand away,

"You... You can't say things like that!"

"Why?" Tyler smirks, closing the distance between them.

Luci backs away until her back hits the headboard, trapping her.

Oh, God.

How many times is she going to end up in such compromising situations with Tyler?

Swiftly, she grabs a pillow and puts it in front of her, attempting to create space between them.

But Tyler snatches the pillow and throws it farther away.

"Why can't I say things like that? Are you afraid you might want me to take you from behind? Until you're a moaning mess?"

[Chapter 77 You're An Emotional Wreck](#)

For some reason, Lucinda's stupid mind conjures up images of Tyler and her in bed, doing wicked things to each other.

She presses her thighs together, suddenly feeling a tingling between them.

Noticing her actions, Tyler pries her thighs apart, watching her eyes grow as big as saucers.

"Answer me, witch,"

The embarrassment Lucinda felt earlier had dissipated, and in its place was desire.

Strong desire rises from her toes and settles in the pit of her stomach.

The fact that Tyler has her legs spread wide is worsening the situation.

She so badly wants to close them to ease the pressure down there.

"I'm not a witch," she forces out.

"That doesn't answer my question,"

Lucinda bites her lips.

Tyler's eyes darken with desire at the innocent action.

"What do you want me to say?"

"The truth. Maybe I could give you just that,"

"Give me what?" she questions, feigning innocence.

Tyler chuckles, rubbing her inner thighs.

"Want me to show you? It's much easier than explaining,"

"There's not much you can do, Mr Brown," Lucinda counters before she can stop herself.

Her eyes widen with regret.

Why the f*ck did she say that?

Why did she sound like some vixen right now?

It sounds like she's egging him on.

She gulps, wanting to get away.

But Ron.

Is he still out there?

The thought of running into him again outside sends her into another wave of panic.

"Show me," she finally says.

Suddenly, she grabs Tyler by his shirt and kisses him.

She knows she will regret this decision later.

She's heard how people make stupid decisions when they're emotionally unstable. And oh, how she's executing that theory so perfectly right now.

She's going against her word of never getting intimate with Tyler again because it will cause a wreck.

Not expecting her to make such a bold move, Tyler freezes.

He almost groans when Lucinda glides her warm tongue over his lips, prying his lips open.

Damn it.

Not minding that he isn't kissing her back, Luci kisses him harder as though she is satisfying herself and

doesn't care about him.

Tyler pulls away and gazes at her with desire swimming in his eyes.

"You don't seem to care that I'm not responding to your kisses?"

Lucinda bites her lips, peering at him from under her lashes.

She shrugs.

"Why should I care? My satisfaction is what I'm after, not you,"

Tyler smirks, "So you're using me?"

She smirks back. "It sounds bad when you put it that way, but who cares?"

She shrugs again.

Swiftly, Tyler wraps his arms around her waist and lifts her off the bed.

While remaining seated, he drops her on his lap with both her legs dangling on either side of him.

Startled, Luci grips his collar in fear.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm using you right back, baby doll,"

Without waiting for a reply, he kisses her jaw, planting featherlight kisses on his way down to her collarbone, where he stops to suckle on the flesh.

Lucinda tilts her head back to give him access.

While administering kisses to her neck and leaving hickeys in his wake, Tyler's hand slips under her shirt to massage her bre*sts.

When he expertly pushes her bra down to expose her bre*sts, Lucinda moans as he flicks her ni*ple.

She bites her lips, wiggling on his lap.

Tyler suddenly stops his assault on her neck and peers at her.

"Am I using you enough, baby doll?"

She opens her eyes momentarily, gazing at him with hazy and unfocused eyes.

"I want more," she declares.

"More?" He cocks his head to the side, squeezing her breasts.

"Is this enough?"

"No. More,"

Smirking, Tyler removes his hand from her shirt, lifts her off his lap and drops her on the bed.

He settles between her parted thighs, hovering over her.

Lucinda clings to him, pushing his head down for a kiss.

He doesn't resist.

He lets her kiss him aggressively, even biting on his lips and drawing out blood.

Tyler hisses, pulling back.

He opens his eyes to peer at her.

They'd had sex a couple of times, and Lucinda had never been so bold as she is today.

He can't help but think she's doing it on purpose, not to let her mind wander elsewhere, especially after her panic attack.

And like a fool, he egged her on.

With a heavy sigh, he rolls away from her.

He rubs his face in frustration.

Confused as to why he suddenly stopped, Lucinda, props herself up with her elbow.

"Why did you stop?"

"We can't,"

"Why?"

"Nothing. We just can't, baby doll,"

"Do I disgust you or something?"

Tyler sighs.

For a while, they sit in silence.

Lucinda bites her lips, looking away regretfully.

She tries to get out of bed when Tyler grips her elbow, stopping her.

"Where are you going?"

"How's that your business?!" she snaps.

"See? This is the main reason I didn't want to go any further,"

"What do you mean?" she glares at him.

"You're an emotional wreck right now, baby doll. You're probably not thinking straight right now,"

"My mind is in the right place," she denies.

"Is it?"

Lucinda doesn't reply.

"Look here," Tyler points at himself.

Hesitantly, Lucinda's eyes follow the direction his fingers are pointing and gasp audibly, noticing the bulge in his shorts.

"Do you see this, hmm? It's what you do to me. I would be lying, if I said I don't want to tear those clothes off and fuck you two ways to Sunday. Believe me, baby doll, I fucking want to, but not when you're vulnerable like this,"

She blushes profusely, embarrassment washing over her.

"I'm sorry. I .."

He cuts her off, shaking his head.

"It's fine. You don't have to apologize," Tyler tells her, and as if on cue, her stomach rumbles loudly.

Once again, Lucinda blushes, her ears turning red as she wraps her arms around her belly.

Tyler lets out a chuckle, getting out of bed.

"Come on. I guess it's time to feed your stomach,"

She follows him without a word, feeling beyond mortified.

"See? I'm not such a total douchebag, after all, huh?" he winks, opening his fridge and taking out a box of orange juice.

"Shut up!" Lucinda's voice is barely above a whisper.

"What do you want to eat, witch?"

She glares at him but answers him nevertheless.

"I'm not sure. I'm the guest here, so surprise me,"

Tyler raises an eyebrow, "Girl, your stomach wouldn't stop rumbling, so the faster you make a decision, the better,"

Luci wraps her arms around her belly.

"I'm not a picky eater. I'll take whatever you offer,"

"Alright then,"

Tyler retrieves a plastic container from the fridge, transfers the contents into a heavy bottom pan and places it on fire.

While his stew is heating up, he fries a few fingers of ripe plantain, after which he steams some gizzard he found in the fridge.

While cooking, Lucinda sits by the counter and watches his back muscles flex as he stirs the gizzard on fire, occasionally checking its tenderness. She absentmindedly bites her lips, finding the sight quite pleasing to the eye.

Suddenly, Tyler turns with a ladle in hand, startling her.

She looks away quickly for fear of being caught.

"Do you want your gizzard fried a bit, or do you prefer it just steamed?" He questions.

"Uh, I don't mind it fried a bit," she answers.

"Got it," Tyler turns.

"Don't you need my help?" Lucinda asks.

"If I let you help me, you might faint from hunger,"

"I'm not that hungry. Stop making it sound like I've not eaten for days," she pouts.

Chapter 78 She Needs Company

Less than fifteen minutes later, Tyler finally turns off the stove, grabs a plate and serves Lucinda.

He drops the plate of food before her and pours her a glass of orange juice.

"Enjoy,"

Luci's mouth waters at the sight of the food.

"Thank you, Ty," Thanking him sincerely, she grabs the fork.

"You're welcome," Tyler turns away to serve himself, pretending he didn't hear how good his name sounded coming out of her mouth like that.

After serving himself, he sits opposite her, and they eat in silence, save for Lucinda's ridiculous moaning each time she bites into a piece of the gizzard.

Tyler's fingers twitch around his fork when she moans again for the thousandth time. He bites into his plantain.

"Stop making those noises,"

Luci stops chewing. "Why?"

"If you keep that up, there's no telling if I'll be able to stop myself from bending you over and fucking you till you collapse," the vulgar words spill out of his mouth without restraint.

Luci almost chokes on her food.

Blushing, she looks down and eats the rest of her meal in silence.

Tyler smirks.

Now, he knows just what to say to shut her up.

After eating, Lucinda helps Tyler gather the plates into the sink and wash them. After washing, she gulps the remaining juice and drops the glass carefully on the counter.

She enters the living room to retrieve her book with Tyler in tow. She turns to face him, hugging the book to her chest.

"I guess I should get going,"

"Sure," he pockets his hands.

He walks her to the door.

Lucinda steps outside onto the porch as the wind hits her face.

She climbs down the steps and begins to walk away but halts suddenly, nervously looking around. Paranoia sets in.

What if Ron is still lurking around?

On second thought, she climbs back up and knocks on the door.

Tyler opens the door, surprised.

"Did you forget something?"

She shakes her head, biting her lips.

"Uh, no. I was wondering if you could... Ugh, maybe..."

"What is it?"

"Could you escort me home? Please?"

"Why?" he raises an eyebrow.

Now that's new.

"Please, Tyler,"

He cocks his head to the side.

"It's not that dark, is it?"

Lucinda sighs, "It's fine. Forget I asked,"

She walks away after that.

Clutching the book tightly to her chest, Lucinda keeps her gaze down while walking.

She doesn't want to run into him.

She fears he's back to force her home again.

Why now?

Where has he been all this time?

Lucinda is aware Ron is not that incompetent not to be able to find her for more than a year.

He has eyes everywhere.

Maybe he's known her whereabouts for a while but decided to remain in the shadows.

She shakes her head.

Whatever it is, she's never going back home unless as a dead body.

A hand suddenly reaches out to touch Lucinda's shoulder.

Startled, she screams in fright, dropping the book.

"Relax. It's just me," a familiar voice says.

Lucinda turns, glaring at him.

"Why did you sneak up on me?! You almost gave me a heart attack!"

"It's not my fault. I've been calling you for a while now, but you seemed so lost in thoughts that you didn't hear me. What going on this little mind of yours?" Tyler rubs her forehead.

She swats his hand away, picking up her book from the ground.

"Why are you following me?" she ignores his question.

He sighs dramatically, biting his lips.

"It seems you no longer want me to escort you home. Well, I'll go back now," Tyler turns away to leave, but Luci reaches out to grab his hand, stopping him.

"No, wait,"

He turns.

"It was just a harmless question. I didn't ask you to go," Luci purses her lips.

"Is that so?" he grins like a Cheshire cat.

Lucinda snorts at his smug expression.

"You really are so full of yourself,"

She turns away and resumes walking as Tyler follows closely behind.

Upon arrival at the roadside, they hail a cab back to the apartment complex.

After they alight, Tyler climbs up the stairs with her until they reach her apartment.

Lucinda turns to face him.

"Thank you for walking me home, Ty,"

He reaches out to flick her nose playfully. She doesn't bother to swat his hand away.

"You're welcome, baby doll,"

Nodding, Lucinda turns, reaching for the doorknob when his voice halts her.

"Lucinda?"

Her heart almost skips a beat at the mention of her name.

Tyler rarely addresses her by her name.

It surprises her how she's gotten used to hearing him calling her baby doll or a witch.

Luci faces him.

"Yes?"

"You shouldn't be embarrassed over what happened earlier. If anything, I should be embarrassed,"

Confused, she asks, "Why?"

Tyler chuckles lightheartedly.

"I've fallen sick in your presence more than twice. I even passed out, and you had to be the one to send me to the hospital. Yet, here I am. Shamelessly unperturbed. Do not be embarrassed over things out of your control, yeah?"

Touched, Lucinda nods.

"Thank you,"

"You're welcome. See you when I see you,"

"Sure. Bye," Luci turns away from him and reaches for the doorknob.

She sighs when she notices it won't budge. The door is locked.

Mandy went out again.

"Do you want to come in?" Lucinda asks without turning.

She can still feel his presence behind her.

"Why would I?" Tyler questions, watching her back muscles stiffen momentarily.

"It was only a silly question," she replies after a moment of silence, but he knows better.

Tyler doesn't need a soothsayer to tell him she needs company.

"I'll come in, but on the condition that there's good wine," he adds without thinking.

Fuck, Tyler.

Why are you changing your mind?

How many times will you change your mind in one day for her sake?

Initially, he didn't want to escort her home, but something about the disappointment on Lucinda's face had him locking his door and following her without a second thought.

And here he is again, following her inside when he'd planned to return immediately after walking her home.

What the hell, Tyler? His subconsciousness chides.

Turn away and leave.

It's not too late.

However, Tyler's body seems to be acting contrary to his subconscious words.

His feet move on their own accord, and before long, Lucinda's already offered him a seat.

Fuck.

He bites his lips, begrudgingly taking a seat.

"Hit me up with your strongest wine, witch," he grunts.

"A minute, please," Lucinda replies and disappears into one of the rooms.

Soon, Tyler hears the sound of running water.

He blinks.

Is she taking a shower right now?

What the hell?

Why didn't she give him a heads-up?

Suddenly, Tyler conjures images of Lucinda showering.

He wonders what it would look like, having water running down her face, trickling onto her chest, down and down.

Fuck, Tyler.

This isn't good.

He can't start fantasizing about her now.

He always manages to push these stupid feelings down, but of late, he's been having a hard time suppressing them.

It's as if the feelings are defying him, wanting to surface at all costs.

Maybe he should leave.

When Tyler tries to get up and leave discreetly, Lucinda suddenly emerges, wearing a short-sleeved crop top and shorts.

She seems to love crop-tops, he notices.

His eyes rake over her milky, smooth skin, noticing tiny droplets of water here and there.

She must have gotten dressed in haste without properly wiping herself clean.

Her face looks fresh, youthful and void of makeup, not that she wears much of it.

Lucinda halts in front of the refrigerator and bends to retrieve a bottle of wine.

Tyler averts his gaze, gulping.

Fuck, fuck.

Is she doing this on purpose to get him all hot and bothered?

Because it's fucking working.

[Chapter 79 Taste The Wine Off His Lips](#)

Lucinda returns with the wine and two glasses and occupies the space next to him.

She then uncorks the bottle, fills two glasses and hands one to him.

Tyler accepts it and takes a sip.

"So, how come a sharp-tongued witch like you has no friends to the extent of asking me to keep you company?" He teases, desperate for something to talk about to divert his attention.

"I do have friends,"

"Oh yeah? How many? One?"

"Two," Lucinda glares at him, gulping her wine.

"I only know of Mandy. Who's the second person? Me?" he smirks.

"Her name is Chrissy," she adds out of spite, not wanting to admit that Tyler is right.

She may have had a few glasses of wine with Chrissy in the past, but that's just about it.

They haven't had much interaction after that, so it's hard to say whether they're friends or not.

"You're no better than me. You have only Austin,"

Tyler shrugs, sipping on more wine.

"I have few friends because I choose to. Unlike you, who can't make any. You've been in this school for a couple of months already,"

Lucinda doesn't bother to refute his claims because it's the truth.

She can't make friends here because she's scared of forming relations when she knows they're temporary.

There will come a day when she'll have to up and leave without a trace and cut ties with every friend she made here.

To save herself from the stress, she would rather make little to no friends so that when that day comes, it won't be hard on anyone if she leaves.

Lucinda refills her glass and gulps more wine.

"Easy on the wine, baby doll. You'll get drunk," Tyler advises.

"Is that so?" she gulps more, hiccuping.

Sighing, Tyler snatches the glass away from her.

"Why are you drinking when you can't handle your alcohol? You're already tipsy from having two glasses,"

"Stop scolding me," she whines like a child, resting her head on his shoulders.

They remain silent for a while.

"I can't make friends because it lessens the pain when you have to leave suddenly," Lucinda mumbles.

"Leave to where?" Tyler is curious.

"Somewhere far," comes her reply.

He doesn't bother asking her any more questions but channels his energy into finishing his wine.

After sitting in utter silence for some time and drinking, Lucinda lifts her head and eyes him.

"Have I ever told you I like you better with your mouth shut?"

Tyler chokes on his wine, coughing violently as laughter bubbles out of him.

When his coughing subsides, he replies to her, "I think you have, baby doll,"

"Hmmm," she hums.

"You better keep that in mind at all times,"

"I will, baby doll," he chuckles lightly.

Silence ensues once more.

After fifteen minutes or so, Tyler looks over his shoulders, realising Lucinda's fallen asleep.

He waits a few more seconds before shifting in his seat and lifting her off the sofa.

He kicks one of the doors open and gently drops her on the bed, covering her with a duvet.

He steps away from the bed and stares at her face a little longer than he would like. He turns to exit the room when Lucinda's hand shoots out to grab him.

He faces her with an arched brow.

"I thought you had fallen asleep,"

"I've had too much sleep in one day, and it's not yet nightfall. I fear I'll become retarded if I sleep more," she gets out of bed, throwing the duvet off her.

She stumbles as she approaches the door.

Tyler silently follows her back into the living room, where she pours herself another glass of wine.

She refills Tyler's glass and hands it to him.

"Drink with me," she clinks her glass with his and takes a sip.

Lucinda's unfocused eyes gaze at Tyler as he rolls the stem of the glass between his fingers.

"Why aren't you drinking? Am I boring you?"

Tyler smiles.

"I don't mind drinking that entire bottle. I can handle my alcohol, but it's obvious you can't,"

She nears him, handing him her glass.

"Then drink on my behalf, will you?"

"You poured that, so finish it,"

Lucinda casts a longing gaze at her glass.

How long has it been since she had alcohol without restraint?

It's been a long fucking time, that's for sure.

She sighs.

Things have changed now.

"I wish. If it were in the past, I would have singlehandedly drank the entire bottle," Luci pauses, recalling she had a few drinks with Chrissy not too long ago.

If she continues drinking, she will end up in the hospital again.

"Who would have thought baby doll here used to be a heavy drinker?" Tyler teases.

Luci shakes her head, lowering her gaze to hide the sadness in them.

"But now I can't drink like that anymore. Doctor's orders,"

Tyler is curious to know why a doctor will order her not to drink, but he knows better than to pry into her private life.

She'll tell him if she wants to.

Besides, it's not like they're buddies.

Tyler takes the glass from her and gulps it all at a go.

After, he smirks mischievously.

"Now that I've drank on your behalf, how are you gonna thank me?"

Luci looks up, confused. "Thank you?"

"Yep. You've been using me the entire day, baby doll. I cooked for you, walked you home, shared a bottle of wine with you, and helped eradicate your loneliness.."

"I'm not lonely!" she snaps.

"Don't I get anything in return?" he completes, ignoring her outburst.

Lucinda bites her lips.

"I have nothing to offer,"

"Are you sure?" he cocks his head to the side, gazing at her with a teasing glint.

Lucinda blinks slowly, fixing her hazy eyes on his handsome face.

When Tyler takes another sip of his wine, her eyes travel to his lips, watching him lick them, attempting to wipe off the remnants of wine.

A single droplet of wine remains sitting on the corner of his lips.

A sudden wave of need courses through Lucinda as she settles her gaze on his lips, wanting badly to taste that wine off his lips.

The alcohol in her system is making it hard to think straight right now, coupled with her attraction toward Tyler.

With parted lips, Luci squishes her flip-flops into the tiled floor and rises onto her toes, licking the drop of wine from his lips.

Tyler doesn't react. Maybe physically, but mentally God knows he's fighting a damn battle with himself not to grab her right now.

These feelings are unexplainable.

It's so strange and unfamiliar it's scary.

He needs to get the fuck out of here and never return.

He seems to lose control of his bearings when Lucinda's near.

It's as if his body and mind stop obeying him and concentrates solely on her.

He clenches his fist, almost losing control when Lucinda kisses him properly.

After tasting the wine off his lips, Lucinda suddenly wants more.

No, she doesn't want the wine in the glass.

She wants the one on his lips instead.

And so, she kisses him, tasting his lips, pulling his lower lips between hers sensually.

She hears Tyler let out a low growl before dropping the empty glasses carelessly and grabbing her waist, pulling her flush against his chest.

He takes charge, prying her lips open and deepening the kiss.

Lucinda lets him as she wraps her arms around him, kissing him with just as much passion.

[Chapter 80 Unrequited Love Sucks](#)

They continue to kiss until Lucinda suddenly slows down, kissing him much slower but deeper than ever.

Her tongue finds his, fighting for domination.

Tyler follows her lead, kissing her back at the same pace.

The pace at which they kiss gives them more room to deepen the kiss while savouring each other's lips.

Lips collide, tongues fight for dominance, breaths entangle and feelings overflow.

Passion courses through their veins like electricity, and desire fills their very being.

Tyler's hands involuntarily loosen their grip on her waist slightly at the sudden turn of events.

They had kissed a couple of times but never like this.

This kiss is somewhat passionate.

So passionate it feels like Luci's speaking to him through the kiss.

So passionate his heart feels like it's about to burst out of his chest.

This kiss feels different.

Unlike the kisses he's used to, this feels far from lust.

It feels pure, laden with desire and unspeakable emotions.

They kiss so hard, never stopping until they run out of air.

Lucinda breaks the kiss, breathing heavily.

Her cheeks are flushed, and her lips are swollen and pink.

Unconsciously, she places her hand on her chest, where her heart is beating erratically.

Her legs feel like jelly. And it feels as if she's about to fall.

Luckily, Tyler tightens his grip around her waist, steadying her.

They share a glance, unspoken words hanging in the air between them like a thick cloud.

"Are you okay?" Tyler's raspy voice cuts through the tension like a knife.

Suddenly tongue-tied, Lucinda only manages to nod.

Nodding in return, he lets go of her and looks away.

"I should go now,"

"Okay," Lucinda's voice is barely above a whisper.

She watches him walk away, heading for the door. Tyler reaches for the doorknob.

There and then, Lucinda opens her mouth, and the words spill out of her mouth before she can stop herself.

"I like you, Tyler,"

At her words, Tyler halts in his steps, his hand freezing around the doorknob.

"I think I'm developing feelings for you, and I don't know how to stop it,"

She waits for him to speak up, but he doesn't.

His hand remains on the doorknob, ready to push the door open and leave.

Silence envelopes the room again, with one person waiting for a reply while the other keeps mute.

They stand so close in one room yet feel so far away, a total contrast to when they kissed a couple of minutes ago.

The silence feels so suffocating that Lucinda is unable to bear it.

"Please say something,"

"What do you want me to say?" Tyler finally answers.

His answer isn't what Lucinda expected, and it plummets her hopes down the drain together with her heart.

She smiles bitterly.

What was she expecting? That he would give her a charming smile and confess his feelings?

Of course not.

Whatever they have going on between them has always been nothing but sex and kisses with no strings attached.

However, she let herself forget that detail and went ahead to develop feelings that might remain unrequited.

Tyler's kisses were like strawberry wine, sweet, savoury and delicious.

His touches were like hot lava, burning her skin through and through, leaving her yearning for more each time.

His eyes are like the depth of an undiscovered lake, and every time he smiles, the light in them shines, giving way to the mystery lurking beneath the lake.

And when he nears her, her heartbeat quickens as if she were running a marathon.

When he kisses her neck, it's as if the world has stopped, evolving around only her and Tyler.

When he calls her baby doll. That fucking cheesy name she thought she hated. It gives her butterflies.

And when he's inside her, rocking his body above her, making her moan profanities, it plunges her into a whole new world of sweetness.

Lucinda rubs her face, the alcohol beginning to wear off.

"Nothing," she finally answers.

"I don't want you to say anything. I'm only telling you how I feel. I know that whatever was between us, the jokes, laughter, sex, kisses, and flirtatious words have always been nothing but two adults fooling around. For a while, I thought so too. But somehow, I couldn't stop these feelings from surfacing. Honestly, I have no idea why I told you about it. Perhaps the wine gave me courage. Otherwise, I would never say it. My feelings have nothing to do with our friendship. Or whatever relationship is between us. So please, let's not act like children and avoid each other like the plague when we meet anywhere."

Lucinda walks away and into her bedroom, shutting the door and leaning against it. Less than a minute later, she hears the front door open and close.

He left.

Tyler left without a word after everything she fucking said.

She smiles self-deprecatingly.

Unrequited love sucks.

After leaning against the door for a while, Lucinda steps away and approaches her bed, lying on it.

She blinks severally, willing herself not to shed tears.

There's no need to shed tears.

She likes him, but he doesn't.

It's as simple as ABC.

What matters now is to move on.

Shit happens.

Life happens.

Lucinda gets out of bed and sits at her study desk instead.

She retrieves a pamphlet and begins to study.

Mid-semester exams are around the corner.

Better channel her energy into learning to ace the fucking exams.

A couple of hours into the night, Mandy returns home. She goes straight into her room to take a quick bath, after which she goes in search of Lucinda.

She knocks on Lucinda's door.

"Luci? I'm home,"

Not a minute later, the door to her room opens.

She rubs her face, tucking a loose braid behind her ear.

"You're back," Luci states.

"Yeah. I'm sorry I had to leave impromptu," Mandy apologises.

"It's fine," she leans against the door with a sigh.

Mandy studies her friend, frowning slightly.

"Is everything okay?"

"Why do you ask?"

Mandy shrugs, "I'm not sure, but you kinda look down,"

Lucinda sighs, stepping away from the door and gesturing to her friend to enter.

Mandy enters, shutting the door behind her.

Lucinda sits at her study desk while Mandy occupies the bed.

She looks up at her friend eagerly, "Tell me. What is it?"

Luci picks up a pencil and twirls it between her fingers.

"Tyler and I kissed. A lot," she announces.

Mandy's expression doesn't waver, "And?"

"I kinda got tipsy and ended up telling him I liked him,"

"And what was his response?"

"That's the thing. Nothing." Luci chuckles humorlessly.

"He fucking said nothing while I poured my heart out. He left without a damn word,"

"Oh, Luci. Are you okay?" Mandy knows all too well how it feels to be rejected by Tyler.

"Yeah. I'm fine. I won't break down and cry, Mandy. Sh*t happens after all,"

Mandy climbs down from the bed and approaches her friend, hugging her from behind.

"I'm sorry, Luci,"

Lucinda chuckles, "Why are you sorry? Don't act as if someone died, okay? I'm not the first person to be rejected by someone they like, and I certainly won't be the last,"

They stay like that for a while until Lucinda breaks the hug, getting on her feet. She drops the pencil.

"Okay, enough of the boring talks. I'm famished. Should we order takeout or cook something?"

Mandy purses her lips, "I'm feeling too lazy to enter the kitchen. It's a Sunday night, so I say let's order takeout. Chinese food, to be precise,"

Lucinda retrieves her phone, nodding in agreement, "Chinese takeout it is,"