
Mandy arrives at their apartment, exhausted.

With a tired sigh, she slides her bag off her shoulder onto the couch as she drags her feet to the kitchen.

Luckily, there was a pot of steaming rice and gizzard stew.

Quickly, she serves herself a plate, walks to the fridge and pours herself a glass of orange juice.

She returns to the living room and makes herself comfortable between the soft cushions.

Finding her favourite tv show, she settles back to watch while she eats.

Not long after, Lucinda emerges from the adjoining room, dressed in nothing but skimpy jean shorts and a white tank top.

Beads of sweat trickled down the sides of her face onto her neck, disappearing into her shirt.

Wiping her face with a handkerchief, she takes a seat beside Mandy.

"So?" She begins carefully, glancing at her friend.

With a loud sigh, Mandy turns to face her, dropping the plate of rice on the table.

"You won't let this go, will you?"

Lucinda only raises a questionable eyebrow in reply.

Puffing out her cheeks in readiness to start speaking, Mandy rubs her face in frustration.

"Was it true what I heard?" Lucinda questions.

"Yes. No. Uhh, I mean yes," Mandy bickers.

"Yes or no? Which is which, Mandy?"

At a loss for words, Mandy decides to start from the beginning.

"Tony and I met during our first year..." She begins, chewing on the bottom of her lip, dreading going down memory lane.

Lucinda nods in understanding, waiting for her to continue.

That much she had gathered.

"We were course mates for a few months before we began dating. At first, it was a whirlwind of romance. We practically couldn't go a day without contacting each other. A few months later, Tyler Brown got transferred here. I couldn't tell if he and Tony already knew each other or if they became good friends after meeting on campus. I was already familiar with Tony's circle of friends, so I didn't mind another addition. But then, Tyler. He was different. Granted, he has a very nasty attitude, but then there's just something about him that seems to pull you in..." Mandy rests her head on the sofa as though reminiscing.

Watching her, Lucinda could understand her friend's dilemma.

She is in the same pot of soup.

Tyler is a complete douche who has no regard for

anyone's feelings. And God knows she wants to slap him more than she would to admit. But then, whenever he's near, he's like a magnet.

And his kisses. God, his kisses are on another level.

And oh, how she hates him. She wants to strangle him and slap that dirty smirk off his stupidly handsome face.

Lucinda shuts her eyes in frustration when she realises her train of thoughts.

Damn it!

Mandy continues.

"I loved Tony, no doubt about it. But with Tyler, It was completely different. Thinking back, I wasn't in love with him. I was infatuated with him and his

ruggedness and carefree attitude. The rush of adrenaline it brought me. The sheer thought of not following rules for the first time in my life drew me to him. At first, Tyler resisted my advances. Until one day. It was a friend of Tony's birthday party. I took advantage of the scenery and spiked Tyler's drink. We had intercourse that night while my boyfriend was drunk out of his senses in the next room..."

She pauses to glance at her friend, studying her expression as though she were scared to find judgement in her eyes.

To her relief, she finds none.

So she continues,

"...After that night, my relationship with Tony started to drift apart while my obsession with Tyler grew from bad to worse. Tyler hated me for taking advantage of

him though he never spilt the beans to Tony, and neither did I. I could never. To cut long story short, Tyler and Tony had a huge misunderstanding a few months later. To this day, I don't know what brought about their argument. But then, that night was the last I ever saw of Tony. When I arrived at his apartment, it was in shambles. Tyler was nowhere to be found, but Tony was on the floor. Blood pooled around him like a river. He was barely alive. He accused Tyler of shooting him before he breathed his last. He was pronounced dead upon arrival at the hospital, and somehow, I can't help but think I was partially at fault. A part of me tells me that somehow, Tony found out about our affair and confronted Tyler, resulting in his death. But I'll never know because he's never coming back."

Mandy sniffs. She didn't realise she'd been crying.

Before long, Lucinda is by her side, hugging and

comforting her.

"Do not blame yourself for something you had no control over, Mandy. Sh*t happens. And it's unfortunate that things had to turn out like that, but don't you blame yourself,"

"I lost the only person who ever loved me wholeheartedly while chasing someone who didn't care."

Lucinda remained quiet after that, allowing her friend to cry to her heart's content. A few minutes later, Mandy pulls away, wiping her face.

"Is that why Tyler makes you sell drugs? Is it some form of punishment?" Lucinda asks after a while.

Mandy nods with a shrug,

"Yeah."

"And the relationship between you two?"

Mandy chuckles slightly

"He only comes to me for sex when he's angry or wants to vent. I'm his easiest target because, well, he still hasn't forgiven me for drugging him,"

"And did you think he's capable of murder? From what I understand, Tyler never liked you, so what motive does he have to kill your boyfriend?. Clearly, this isn't some twisted crime of passion," Lucinda voices out.

"Perhaps. But, Tony would never lie about something as grave as that..."

she pauses, Tyler's words from earlier echoing in her

mind.

"You're still as blind as ever, Mandy. You have no idea how much of a scumbag your pathetic boyfriend was," Tyler had said.

".. He wouldn't lie. Especially on the brink of death," she concludes, pushing Tyler's words to the back of her mind.

If anyone's the liar, it is Tyler and no one else.

"Has Tyler ever tried to deny your allegations?"

Mandu shakes her head.

"He never denies, nor does he accept his crimes. But I know without a doubt that it was him,"

"Are you sure? What evidence do you have that it was

Tyler who shot him?" Lucinda can't help but question.

Mandy's confession does not seem to add up somehow. Why would he make her sell drugs as punishment?

And why does Mandy fear him?

Mandy flares up at the question.

"What the hell are you trying to insinuate, Lucinda?! That my boyfriend came up with a lie while his life was slowly draining out of him?!" She couldn't believe her ears.

"I'm not trying to insinuate anything here, Mandy. I'm only trying to make sense of the situation as much as I can. I mean, I do not know him that well, but do you think Tyler is someone who doesn't own up to his mistakes? Why would he shoot Tony? Some people

would rather die than tell the truth. You and I know that there are people out there who have taken the truth to their grave and left a trail of lies..."

Exasperated, Mandy was off the couch in an instant.

"And what makes you think Tyler is telling the truth?"

I did not..."

she cuts her off.

"You have known him for not more than a month, and you're already defending him? Jesus, Lucinda, Has he f*cked you already? Is that why you can't think straight!"

Lucinda frowns.

"Stop right there, Mandy. Don't say things you'd regret

later."

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