

Luna & Joshua 261

Chapter 261

Alice rolled her eyes. What was there to feel accomplished about in making breakfast?

Just as Alice was about to retort, however, she caught sight of the way Joshua stared at Luna. Alarm bells immediately rang in her head. Luna must have said that on purpose!

Alice smiled. "I used to think that way. Although it's a small action, making breakfast for my family gave me the greatest sense of fulfillment ever." She let out a sigh before she continued wistfully, "

Unfortunately... I discovered that I couldn't even protect the people I love. I was such a failure. Ever since then, no matter what I did, I couldn't feel accomplished or fulfilled anymore."

Upon hearing these words, Joshua immediately turned his attention back to her. She was right. Joshua knew that he could not even begin to imagine what Alice had gone through in these six years apart.

Although she had changed and she was no longer the woman he fell in love with, Joshua felt that he should not have doubted her, much less fooled by another woman's words even if just for a split second.

Joshua sighed and glanced at Alice. "It's all in the past now." He silently made up his mind that no matter what it took, he would help her regain her old self again.

Joshua put down his cutlery and stood up. "Let's go."

His tender gaze made Alice feel triumphant. She grabbed his arm and leaned her head on his shoulder.

"Should I go to the Human Resources department first?"

Joshua gave her a gentle smile. "Yes, I'll take you there." With that, the two turned and left.

Before he walked out of the door, however, Joshua turned around and glanced at Luna. "I want to see you in my office at ten in the morning."

Theo watched as Joshua and Alice's figures retreated. He chuckled. "Well, that was a short encounter."

He glanced at his watch. "We still have 20 minutes to spare."

Theo lifted his head to stare at Luna. "Why do you seem to care so much about your boss?"

Luna laughed. "Aren't employees supposed to care about their bosses?"

Theo propped his chin up. "I guess that makes sense."

Luna did not want to be the topic of discussion, so she lifted her gaze to meet Theo's and diverted the conversation. "I'm a huge fan of yours, and I've always been on the lookout for your whereabouts. I know that you don't usually stay in any place for long, so what made you decide to rent a house in

Banyan City?”

Theo lowered his head and stirred the contents of his bowl with his spoon. “Do you want to know that badly?”

“It’s okay if you don’t want to tell me.”

“No, I don’t mind.” Theo let out a strained laugh. “Do you remember the painting that Alice tried to accuse you of ruining? Well, that painting is called The Girl with the Kite, and it was based on a scene I stumbled upon a long time ago when I passed by a school. The girl was wearing a white dress and chasing a kite. She looked so beautiful under the sun that I was mesmerized and painted the scene as soon as I got home. However, when I tried to track the girl down, I couldn’t find her anymore.”

He continued, “Many years later, this painting became my most well-known artwork. The more attention

it gained, the more I wanted to find this girl and thank her in person. Finally, five years ago, I managed to find out her name. It was Luna Gibson.”

Clang!

As soon as Theo finished his sentence, the spoon in Luna’s hand dropped and clanked against the

edge of her bowl. She froze for a moment before she hastily picked up the spoon and shot Theo a nervous glance. "Are you sure that's her?" "Yes, I'm positive." Theo gave a small yawn and gazed into Luna's eyes. "However, when I returned to Banyan City five years ago to track her down, I discovered that she had been dead for a year."

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"I even went to visit her grave. When I heard that she was still alive, I immediately came back to Banyan City to investigate. A few days ago, Joshua's assistant contacted me and told me he wanted to host an art show for me because of Alice."

Luna bit her lip. "So... The reason you stayed in Banyan City is that you wanted to thank Alice in person?"

Luna doubted that because ever since Theo had met Alice, he showed no indication of wanting to initiate a conversation with her.

"I wanted to confirm something first," said Theo as he brought his glass up to his lips and took a sip. "

When I found out that Luna Gibson had died five years ago, I was in grief, so I researched everything about her and even went to look at her social media profiles, including her blog. I don't believe the

woman that's with Joshua now is the real Luna Gibson. Although she claims to go by Alice now, from my knowledge of her, she wasn't as superficial and deceiving as Alice."

Theo's statement greatly shocked Luna, so much so that she was at a loss for words. She picked up her glass to take a sip as well. Then, after a moment, she composed herself and finally said, "People change."

"I know that, so that's why I'm still investigating her." Theo glanced at Luna. "Aren't you wondering who this Alice really is?"

Luna paused and smiled at him. "Of course I am."

Aura's words still lingered in her mind. Maybe Aura had told her the truth about Alice being Luna's real sister because she had finally succumbed to her conscience. That, or maybe Aura was just messing with her. Maybe Alice had no relation to her at all, and she was just a random person who happened to resemble Luna. No matter which one it was, Luna was determined to get to the bottom of it.

Theo stared at her and grinned. "Well, I guess we've discovered a common interest now."

Luna pursed her lips. "That's one way of putting it. "

Luna had suspected that Theo was interested in her, but as he had explained his intentions of moving back to Banyan City, she no longer believed that was true. Instead, he was merely getting close to her because of Alice.

He was an artist, and although he was determined to investigate Alice, he had no means of getting close to either Joshua or her. Therefore, Luna was his only link. She was an employee at Lynch Group who used to date Joshua, and he had witnessed Alice trying to frame her through his camera last night.

Obviously, Luna was Theo's only way of getting close to the Lynches.

Although she understood Theo's true motives for befriending her, she did not mind it at all. She knew that if she were in his shoes, she would do the same. She and Theo were on the same side, in a way.

As she thought of this, Luna lifted her head to look at Theo. "What if in the end, you find out that Alice isn't the real Luna Gibson? What would you do then?"

Theo pondered for a moment before he finally said, "Well, I'd leave Banyan City and go in search of the real Luna Gibson."

Luna was surprised by his answer. "Don't you want to expose her?"

"Why should I?" Theo chuckled. "If I, a total stranger, could unravel the truth and find out that Alice is an

imposter, then what about Joshua? He's been married to Luna Gibson for more than three years, but if he was fooled, then it serves him right. If that happens, I won't expose her because I don't think he deserves to know the truth."

Luna's heart sank upon hearing Theo's response. He was right.

This man sitting right in front of her was a total stranger, yet even he could tell that Alice was not the real Luna Gibson. How, then, could Joshua be so oblivious?

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8:29 a.m. Luna stepped foot in the design department with a minute to spare.

As soon as she entered, Shannon winked at her. "Someone's waiting for you in your office. He's been waiting for a while now."

Luna furrowed her brows in confusion and pushed the door open. Joshua's lean and slender body perched on her office chair, his gaze focused on the drafts and sketches strewn all over her desk.

When he heard her coming in, Joshua glanced at the time and snickered. "Came to the office with only one minute to spare. How obsessed are you with that man?"

Luna paused before she offered a polite smile. She strode to Joshua's side and snatched the draft he was holding. "Firstly, I wasn't late. Secondly, I didn't break any company policies. Besides, who I choose to befriend and have breakfast with is my personal business, right, Mr. Lynch?"

Joshua could not help but frown at Luna's harsh attitude. "What did I tell you last night? I told you he can't be trusted, and you should stay away from him!"

Joshua could not believe the audacity of this woman. He had given her a friendly warning just the night before, yet she still hung out with Theo and even had plans to move in together!

"You met him just last night, right? Tsk. You've known him for less than 25 hours, yet you've already gone on a breakfast date and even plan to move in with him. I never knew you were so desperate, Luna."

Luna burst out in laughter as she saw how flustered Joshua was. "I've always been this way, Mr. Lynch. How could you have never noticed?" As she said this, she started cleaning up her messy desk.

"Mr. Lynch, you're the CEO of Lynch Group, so you probably know better than anyone that the office is only meant for business. If you want to discuss personal issues, then I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to leave, Mr. Lynch."

Joshua squinted at her. "No, I'm here to talk business." He handed her a folder and said, "There's a jewelry exhibition in Sea City next month. I want you to come up with a design draft before next week and finalize it within another two weeks."

Luna flipped through the folder and said incredulously, "You want me to come up with sketches for an entire series within a week?"

She let out an exasperated laugh. "I'm not sure if you're aware, Joshua, but inspiration won't come with a snap of the finger. I need time to come up with ideas. I can't possibly create so many designs in a week, much less exquisite ones. Are you insane?"

Joshua merely gazed at her impassively. "Are you not capable of taking up this project?"

He tapped his slender fingers against the desk and remarked with an air of indignation, "Well, I guess you're not as good as they say you are. Perhaps you can't do it because you're too busy running around with that artist?"

Luna knew Joshua was trying to get on her nerves. "This is an impossible task!"

"I believe you can do it," said Joshua as he leaned against the chair and glanced at her. "I have a

suggestion. If you manage to finish this job within a week, I '11 give you a day off, and you can take

Neil and Nellie out for a day trip. How does that sound?"

Luna's face immediately lit up at his offer. All this while, Joshua had forbidden Neil and Nellie to contact her, and he would not let her anywhere near Blue Bay Villa.

The two children had never been apart from their mother all these years, and as they had not seen Luna in such a long time, they were definitely miserable. It would be wonderful if the three could spend some time together again, even if just for a day.

Luna let out a sigh and snapped the folder shut. " Alright, I'll try my best."

"Great. I look forward to hearing from you." Joshua smirked and left the office.

Just as the door swung shut behind him, however, he turned around to glance at Luna. She was sitting at the desk, immersed in the folder's contents and busy making notes in the margins. It was obvious she was jumping at the chance to see Neil and Nellie.

Joshua sighed and left.

"Why do you think she's so attached to Nellie and Neil? They're not even her children."

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Joshua asked with a frown.

“Well, it’s either she has ulterior motives or that she’s a saint,” said Jude as he leaned back against the couch in Joshua’s office. “Although, from what I know about her, I don’t think it’s the latter.”

Joshua was sitting in his office chair as he gazed off into the distance. “Maybe she has ulterior motives...”

If that was it, what was she after?

Jude shifted into a more comfortable position on the couch and shot Joshua a glance. “You know, I’m not that bad-looking myself, but why are all the women always after you?”

Joshua picked up his cup and took a sip of his coffee. “What are you trying to say?”

“The eldest daughter of the Walters, Hailey has gone missing.” Jude yawned and gave a stretch. He raised his eyebrows at Joshua before he continued, “Mr.

Walter wanted me to ask you if you’d seen her lately.”

“Nope.” Joshua furrowed his brows. “I haven’t seen her in a long time.” Joshua recalled that the last time he saw her was at his and Luna’s wedding.

“I haven’t seen her in a long time either, and I think it’s been six or seven years, too. I heard that she’s obsessed with plastic surgery. Apparently,

nowadays, she’s either at the hospital getting yet another surgery or on her way there.”

Jude continued, “Both your families had an arranged marriage long before the two of you were born. I

know that she’s always wanted to marry you, and word has it that she hasn’t settled down yet. Now that she’s disappeared, I thought that she’d be with you or something.”

Joshua gave him a slight smirk. “Well, if she comes to me, I’ll let you know.” All of a sudden, he

seemed to recall something. He lifted his head and glanced at Jude. “Hey, why don’t you come over for dinner tonight? You didn’t even get to attend my wedding all those years ago, so why don’t you come over tonight and get to know Alice and the kids?”

Jude waved his hand dismissively. “Sorry, I can’t make it tonight. Maybe some other time.”

Night fell. The entire city seemed to settle down as the sky grew darker and darker. The Lynch Group Tower, however, still bustled with activity.

When Alice called for the third time that night, Joshua finally let out a sigh and put down the documents he was reading.

Joshua took the elevator down. When he arrived at the ground floor, he overheard a conversation between two employees from the design department.

“I don’t know what’s up with her lately. She didn’t come in for work for days on end, but now that she’s back, she’s been working like a mad woman.”

“Thank God I was quick on my feet. I told her that I had to go home because I had some personal issues to deal with. Otherwise, we’ll have to stay here and work until God knows what time...”

The two voices grew further away. Joshua frowned upon hearing their complaints and immediately turned around. He got into the elevator and pressed the button for the 18th floor.

The entire floor was deserted when he got there. The only noise he could hear was the faint rustling of paper and the sound of a pencil scratching from a corner of the department.

Joshua followed the noises and arrived at Luna’s office, the only bright place on the otherwise dark and deserted floor. He could see her through the glass window. Luna was sitting in front of an easel, her gaze focused on the sketch in front of her. She was so engrossed in her drawing that she did not even notice him watching her.

The dim light from her desk lamp cast shadows on her side profile. The determined and focused expression on her face was so attractive that she looked like she had just stepped out of a painting.

She looked so beautiful in the dim light that Joshua felt like his heart skipped a beat. This scene reminded him so much of his wife. Many years ago, he had watched Luna draw and design her sketches in a similar fashion.

This woman in front of him resembled the Luna he loved so much; down to the glint in her eyes and the unconscious habit she had of chewing the end of her pencil. Joshua could not help but continue to stare at her in awe.

After a while, he glanced at the time and decided to approach her before a familiar figure appeared at the end of the hallway all of a sudden.

Theo, dressed in all white, strode over with a takeout bag in his hand as he gently knocked on Luna's office door. "Director Luna, it's time for dinner." Theo's voice was low and gentle.

Luna perked up at his words. "Hey, why are you here?"

"I didn't want you to starve, so I brought some dinner." Theo walked toward her, all smiles as he set the paper bag on the table and opened the takeout boxes. "I'll give you two options: You can eat and finish

your work later, or you can eat and let me take you to my place afterward.”

Luna knew what Theo was trying to say. They had agreed beforehand that she would go over to his place and look around before deciding if she wanted to move to that area.

She sighed and started clearing her things. “Alright, I choose the second one.”

This whole conversation was misinterpreted by the man standing outside her door. Joshua could not help but clench his fists at her decision.

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“How did you know I was working late tonight?” asked Luna as she munched on the food Theo had brought for her.

Theo chuckled. “What if I told you I ‘d been waiting for you outside since 5 pm?”

Luna almost choked on her food. “Really?”

“Of course not, silly.” Theo leaned against the chair and stretched. “When I was at your friend’s place this morning, I asked for her number, too. I called her just now, and she told me you weren’t home yet, so I guessed that you were probably still working.”

Luna felt relieved upon hearing Theo's explanation.

Otherwise, she did not know how to react if Theo had indeed waited for her for more than three hours.

She stuffed the rest of the food into her mouth as quickly as she could. "Let's go."

Theo chuckled again and helped her clean up the food containers. "Let's go. The landlord is waiting for us."

Luna nodded and followed him out of the office. Joshua had been watching everything from his position in a dark corner of the office with none of them knowing. He watched with a somewhat displeased look on his face as the two walked to the elevator.

As Theo got on the elevator, he abruptly turned around and glanced in Joshua's direction, seemingly looking straight at him.

The elevator doors closed, and the two descended. A split second later, Joshua's phone rang. It was Alice again, asking him to come home.

Joshua muted the call in frustration and got into the elevator. When he came out of the building, he caught sight of Theo's car that seemed to head in the opposite direction of Anne's house.

Was Luna genuinely going home with Theo? That woman had no shame!

Joshua squinted as he clenched his fists even tighter.

The phone in his pocket started ringing again. This time, however, it was Nellie calling.

“Daddy, what time are you coming home? That crazy lady said that we’re not allowed to eat without you. Neil and I are starving! “

Joshua froze. “Alice isn’t letting you eat dinner?”

“Yeah! She said that we’re bad children, so she’s trying to teach us some manners.” Nellie pouted as she said it. “That crazy lady isn’t letting us have any snacks either. She says it’s bad for us! The last thing I ate was the apple that my teacher gave me at kindergarten, but it’s been more than six hours now. I’m going to starve to death! “

“Alright, alright. I’m coming home now.” Joshua hung up the phone and glanced in the direction that Theo’s car had left. Then, after a moment, he turned around and got into his car.

In the end, Luna was just an employee of his. It did not matter who she chose to go home with. It was none of his business, anyway.

Half an hour later , Joshua’s car stopped in front of Blue Bay Villa.

"Joshua, you're home!" Alice came out of the house and greeted him with a cheerful smile. "The kids and I have been waiting for you."

Joshua glanced at her, then looked toward the house. He caught sight of two small heads huddled together, watching them from a window of the second floor.

Joshua paused, then put his arm around Alice's shoulder and led her back to the house. "My working hours are very inconsistent. I'd come home on time on some days, but I'll also have days when I'll work late. In the future, you and the kids can have dinner first if you're hungry. You don't have to wait for me."

"No. How can I let that happen?" Alice pursed her lips and grabbed Joshua's hand, grinning. "I have to teach the children manners. I can't have them growing up and becoming rude people. I wouldn't want them embarrassing you in the future!" She paused and remarked, "Luna took great care of Neil and Nellie, but I don't think she ever taught them proper manners. I can't blame her, though. She's never been exposed to etiquette like this since she doesn't come from a noble or distinguished family."

Joshua could not help but frown at her words. He had grown up in a noble and distinguished family that placed a lot of emphasis on proper manners and etiquette. As such, he hated it when people tried to

educate their children that way.

He had discussed this with her when he first got together with Luna. He had told her that he wished for their children to be brought up like ordinary folks and not be confined to rules and restrictions like those he had grown up with.

Does Clearly works fine?

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He still remembered what Luna had told him in the past.

'If we have kids, I'll teach them to be true to themselves. They should act courteous in public, but when they're at home, they can do whatever they want.'

It was apparent that Alice had forgotten her promise. It seemed that six years truly could change a person, so much so that Joshua could not recognize her anymore.

He sighed and led Alice into the house.

"Daddy! "

"Welcome home, Daddy! We know you've had a long day at work! "As soon as they set foot in the

house, they came face-to-face with Neil and Nellie. The two children stood to either side of the door and bowed at Joshua, smiling.

Joshua immediately scowled at this sight. He took a closer look at his two children standing before him.

Nellie's face was red and tearful, while Neil's face was etched with impatience. It was obvious that the two children had been forced to do this against their will.

Joshua let go of Alice and shot her a cold glance. "Is this the so-called manners that you're trying to teach them?"

Alice froze. She could tell that Joshua was displeased.

She narrowed her eyes in annoyance. She had instructed the children to compliment their father when he got home from work, but she never told them to wait by the door and bow at him!

The looks on Neil and Nellie's faces clearly conveyed to Joshua that they were miserable and that Alice was the one who put them up to this.

Alice smiled nervously. "No, of course not. They must've learned this from television. They must've thought that you'd like being welcomed home this way."

She glanced at Neil and Nellie. "Your father has had to endure this for the whole day at work, so you

don't have to do this now. He doesn't like being treated like this."

Joshua felt a surge of relief upon hearing Alice's words. Just as he was about to say something,

however, Neil interjected sulkily, "You were the one who told us to do this. You said that we should be

respectful to Mr. Lynch and that this will make him happy, so why is he so angry now?"

Alice glared at him. "What on earth are you talking about? When did I say that?"

"This afternoon." Nellie blinked at the two adults innocently. "You told us that as children, we have to

learn to please adults so that they'll like us."

Alice furrowed her brows. "I never said that! "

"Hmph! I knew this would happen!" Nellie shot her brother a look. "Neil, play the recording for Daddy!"

Neil nodded and took a voice recorder pen out of his pocket and played the recording. Alice's voice

rang out: 'When your father comes home later on, you have to compliment him and be respectful to

him. This will make him happy. Children have to learn to please adults so that they'll like you.'

It was exactly as Nellie had described.

Alice's face turned pale in an instant. She thought that she had gotten away with it, but she did not

expect that the two children had recorded every conversation in secret!

After hearing the recording, Joshua's brow knitted much tighter together. He turned around and looked at Alice. "The kids are still young, yet you're telling them things like this. Is this what you should be teaching children?"

Alice bit her lip nervously. She had no way of denying anymore since the children had brought out evidence. She remained silent for a long while before suddenly bursting into sobs. "Joshua, I'm sorry... Ever since I returned, you've been working overtime every night. Sometimes you don't even come home at all. You leave at the crack of dawn and come back late at night, leaving the three of us at home. I thought..." Alice wiped away the tears that streamed down her face. "I thought that maybe you didn't like us, and that's why you didn't seem to want to stay home..."

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As soon as Alice started crying, Joshua could not help but feel sorry for her. He sighed and pulled her into his arms. "No, please don't think that. I'm just... really busy with work lately."

He lifted his head to wipe away the tears from under her eyes. "It's okay. I'm home now."

With her head down, a triumphant glint flashed across Alice's eyes. She nodded meekly and said, "

That's okay. If you're busy, you should do work. All I needed to know is that you don't hate the kids or me, that's all."

Joshua gently patted her back to comfort her. "How could I hate you?"

He let go of Alice and bent down to hoist Nellie into his arms. "Come on, let's eat."

"Okay!" Alice replied. She watched as Joshua headed to the dining room with Nellie in his arms before she turned around to glower at Neil. "You recorded me? You're not so stupid after all."

Neil grinned at her. "Well, I learned from the best, though you managed to outsmart us in the end. I guess I underestimated you." With that, he turned around and swaggered off in the direction his father had left.

Alice narrowed her eyes. She wanted so badly to punish these two rascals, but she was afraid that it would arouse Joshua's suspicion. How dare they trick her!

"Neil, Nellie," Joshua called. "In the future, you can eat dinner whenever you feel like it. You shouldn't have to wait for me." He glanced at them before he added, "Children shouldn't have to please adults."

"Okay!" Nellie lowered her head and started stuffing herself with food. She gulped down her food

without even bothering to chew it thoroughly.

Joshua pitied the sight ; it seemed she was awfully ravenous. Finally, he sighed and said, "If it's not time for dinner yet, you can ask Mommy and Daddy for some fruits or dessert. You're growing now. You need to eat more so you can grow strong and healthy."

"Ms. Alice said that children shouldn't have snacks— not even fruits or dessert. Otherwise, we'll make it a habit and will be too full for our regular meals." Neil pursed his lips in indignation. "Who should I listen to, then? Ms. Alice or Mr. Lynch? Since you two have opposing opinions, why don't you fight it out and then tell us who we should obey?"

Alice could not help but roll her eyes at this. She chuckled and said, "Of course you should listen to your father. He's the head of this family."

Neil glanced at her. "This means we should only listen to him from now on, and we don't have to do everything you tell us to, right?"

Alice's face turned pale.

Joshua frowned and cast her a glance. "You still have to listen to your mother."

"Oh." Neil pursed his lips again. "Well, then, I guess I don't have to listen to her since she's not even my mother."

Alice's face lost its color completely.

"Neil." Joshua frowned at him. "Come to my study later after dinner."

"Okay." Neil gave him a childish grin. "Is Mr. Lynch planning to give me a lecture?"

Joshua shot him a glare. He placed some more food on Nellie's plate but did not say anything further.

After dinner, Neil sauntered into Joshua's study and plopped down on the sofa. "What do you want to say to me, Mr. Lynch?"

Joshua could not help but frown at his son's sloppiness. "Sit properly! "

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Neil rolled his eyes and leaned against the couch lazily. Joshua sighed. "It's all Luna's fault. She's spoiled you."

"This has nothing to do with Mommy. Fine, I'll sit properly. " Neil could not stand hearing anyone talk bad about his mother, so he immediately sat up. " Alright. What did you want to talk to me about?"

"Alice is your mother. " Joshua gave Neil a solemn look. "She's carried you and Nellie in her womb for

ten months and even suffered a car accident during her pregnancy. Life hasn't been easy on her. I

know you both have spent a lot of time with Luna and that she raised you, but it doesn't mean you can act disrespectfully toward Alice. She's your birth mother. Both of you are smart kids, so I 'm sure you understand why she wasn't there for you, but now that she's back, you have to treat her with the respect she deserves."

Neil rolled his eyes. Of course, they would respect their mother, but Alice was not their birth mother—
Luna was!

"Answer me," insisted Joshua coldly when Neil did not respond.

Neil pursed his lips. "There always has to be an adjustment period, right, Mr. Lynch? I know you want us to respect Ms. Alice, but we don't think she cares very much about us. In that case, why should we respect and care about her?"

"She doesn't let us eat anything outside of our regular meals, and she doesn't let us eat dinner on time.

Now, she's teaching us that as children, we should learn to please adults. Let me ask you, Mr. Lynch:

Would you want a mother like that if you're a kid?"

Joshua's expression grew wistful upon hearing Neil's words. He, too, was not a person who liked to be restricted by rules. When he was younger, he hated being told what to do and being lectured by adults.

Neil and Nellie reminded Joshua so much of himself...

Joshua sighed. "You're right. I admit that Alice was wrong there. I'll talk to her..."

Neil pursed his lips and replied, "Sure, go ahead, talk to her. If she learns how to be as good a mother as my Mommy someday, then we'll respect her!"

Neil was very confident that Alice would never be half as good a mother as Luna was. Like Aura, Alice was just another woman who wanted to take Joshua for herself. To them, Joshua's children were obstacles that they had to get rid of.

When Nellie first arrived at Blue Bay Villa, Aura desperately tried to get her killed. She dared to do so because she thought that Joshua would forgive her easily since she had been with him for so many years. However, she was proven wrong.

Alice was smart enough not to make the same mistake. She did not dare do anything bad to the two children and even made a deal with them to release Luna, afraid of being exposed more than anything.

However, Neil knew that as soon as she got the chance, Alice would find a way to get rid of them as

well!

Joshua let out a sneer. He lifted his gaze and shot Neil a cold glance. "Is Luna that amazing of a mother? You two seem to love her very much."

"Of course!" Neil rolled his eyes at him again. "Mommy is the kindest person in the world!"

"The kindest person in the world, huh..." Joshua echoed. The memory of Luna leaving the office with Theo popped up in his mind, and it made him smirk. "I guess you're right. The kindest person in the world would go home with a man she barely knows."

Joshua's strange statement made Neil frown. He stared at Joshua with wide eyes. "Stop talking nonsense!"

"Nonsense?" Joshua had watched with his own eyes as Luna got into Theo's car and the vehicle headed in the direction of Theo's house. Unless he was hallucinating, there was no way all of that was fake.

Joshua glanced at the little boy sitting in front of him with an incredulous expression on his face and smirked. "Don't you have a phone? If you don't

believe me, just call her and ask her where she is.”

Chapter 269

Neil glanced at Joshua with a puzzled look. “I thought you told us not to contact her.”

Joshua sneered. “Since when do you even listen to me? Do you think I never noticed the new signal-jamming device you placed in the house?”

Neil immediately lowered his head in shame. When Luna got released from jail, Joshua had ordered them not to contact her and even warned them that he would be able to track their cellular signals to detect if they talked to her behind his back.

Neil had no choice but to ask Nigel for help and installed a signal jammer within the house.

Whenever the device was switched on, the signal they used to contact their mother could not be detected.

However, Neil never expected that Joshua would discover the device.

“Okay, so... Shall I call her?” said Neil meekly, somewhat ashamed that his plan had been exposed. He turned around and tried to slip out of the room.

“Stop.” Joshua stopped him sternly before he could leave. “You can call her right here.”

Neil pulled a face and retreated to the couch. He dialed Luna's number and waited for the call to be picked up.

Joshua sat on a chair across from him. "Put her on speakers," he ordered.

Neil jolted in shock. "I don't think that's..."

"Why? What's wrong with that?" Joshua raised his eyebrows skeptically. "Don't you want to prove to me that your 'mother' Luna isn't a promiscuous woman who goes home with every man she meets?"

Neil rolled his eyes at him; he had no choice but to do as Joshua instructed. Luna picked up the phone almost immediately.

"Hello?" Her voice rang out from the other end of the line. She sounded like she was in a good mood.

Neil, why are you calling at this time? Has Joshua gone to bed already?"

Neil glanced at the scowling man sitting across from him. "Yes, he's asleep."

"Alright, thank God. Otherwise, you'll get caught." Luna sighed and tried to tease him. "I know that he treats Nellie well, but Nellie's a girl, and you're a boy. If you get caught, Mommy's afraid he'll beat you!"

Usually, when Luna teased him like this, Neil would always counter by saying that he would not get

caught and beaten. At that moment, however, he did not dare say anything like that in front of Joshua.

Instead, he let out an awkward laugh and quickly changed the subject. "Mommy, where are you now?"

Neil could hear a crunching sound from the other end. Luna seemed to be munching on some fruits.

Luna answered, her voice somewhat muffled, "I'm at your godmom's place. We're eating a fruit platter right now."

Anne's voice immediately rang out, "Hi, Neil! Aunt Anne misses you! "

Neil let out a sigh of relief as soon as he heard that. He lifted his gaze and shot Joshua a look that seemed to say, 'I told you so.'

The corner of Joshua's mouth turned up in a smile. Somehow, he, too, felt relieved to know Luna was with Anne instead of spending the night with Theo.

Neil pursed his lips. "Mommy, have you met anyone interesting lately?"

"Yes, I did! " Luna got up and went into her room. She laid on her bed and started chatting with her son,

"Didn't I tell you this yesterday? I got to meet the artist I love, Theo Allen, in person! I've been staying with Anne for a while now, but I'm thinking of finding a place of my own so as not to inconvenience her.

It just so happens that Theo rented a house in Banyan City, and he offered to let me have a look

around his place. I went over just now, and I think it looks quite nice, so I'm planning to rent it! I'll send you my new address as soon as I settle in."

The truth uncovered itself. Neil did not feel the need to prove anything to Joshua anymore, so he quickly hung up the phone after a few more minutes of conversation. As soon as he hung up, he gave Joshua a smug look.

"Did you hear that, Mr. Lynch? Mommy went to Theo's house to look around. It's not what you thought it was at all!" With that, Neil turned around and sauntered out of the room triumphantly.

Joshua remained motionless in his chair as he watched the child leave, unable to fight off the smile on his face. It turned out everything was just a simple misunderstanding.

"Joshua." As soon as Neil left, the door was pushed open again. Alice came in with a faint smile on her face as she held a cup of coffee.

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Alice placed the cup on the table and wrapped her arms around Joshua's shoulders. She gently let out a soft exhale next to his ear. "I thought you said you don't have work to do tonight?"

Joshua's brows furrowed. This interaction was normal for every couple, but somehow, her behavior annoyed and even repulsed him. Perhaps it was because they had been apart for too long, or perhaps something had changed.

Joshua contemplated for a moment before finally removing her arms from his shoulder. Alice gaped at him in shock. Joshua did not seem to notice this and instead picked up the cup and took a sip.

After a few more drinks, he regained his composure. "Alice, you should go to bed now. I wanted to finish up some work..."

Alice frowned and shot him an exasperated look. "Joshua, do you think your work is more important than me? Ever since I returned, you've never even spent any quality time with me! I thought we used to be very close. Why did you change?"

Joshua immediately frowned. He squinted and looked up at her. "Do you really think we used to be... close?"

Alice was aware that she had said something wrong. She immediately shifted her gaze elsewhere and bit her lip. "I meant...I felt close to you."

Joshua narrowed his eyes. "I didn't treat you well at all."

Joshua was aware that to the public, he and Luna appeared to be a very happy couple. At that time, Luna had insisted on marrying him, much to everyone's disapproval. He had also defied his parent's arranged marriage with Hailey Walter and insisted on marrying Luna instead. However, Joshua knew that he did not fulfill his responsibility as a husband at all.

He thought he would never fall in love with Luna, so he spent countless nights away from home and focused most of his energy on work instead of her. It was not until she left that he realized his mistake and discovered his true feelings for her. He had spent the last six years shadowed in his guilt of mistreating Luna, but it was at this moment he found out that Alice did not seem to remember all of that at all. Instead, she thought their marriage was a happy one.

Joshua did not know how to go about this. He was not sure if she was lying to herself or that he put too much blame on himself. He rubbed his brows. The guilt and regret he felt in his heart reached a crescendo, and he turned around and lifted Alice into his arms.

Alice paused, but she immediately coiled her arms around his neck seductively. "Joshua..."

Joshua carried her all the way back to their bedroom and laid her down on the bed.

Alice gazed up at the ceiling, her chest rising and falling as she panted rapidly. This was the night that she would become Joshua Lynch's woman. This was the night she had waited for!

The dim lights created a romantic atmosphere. Joshua gently tilted Alice's chin upward and forced himself to kiss her.

It felt no different than before. Just as they were about to take things to the next level, he stopped abruptly.

"What's wrong?" Alice asked, her gaze clouded with lust.

"Why don't you take a shower first?"

Alice froze. Although she was reluctant to do so, she still got up from the bed and headed into the bathroom.

Joshua watched as the glass fogged over with water vapor, outlining the faint silhouette of a woman.

He closed his eyes.

He still could not do it. Was there something wrong with him? Everything seemed fine when he was

with Luna...

Joshua sighed and forced himself to overcome the anxiety and worries swirling in his mind. He knew

that life had not been easy on Alice—she had suffered and sacrificed so much for him all these years.

He could not take all of this for granted. He had to treat her the way she deserved. At the thought of

that, Joshua's brow furrowed, and he tugged on the sheets.