

Becoming Strangers Again Chapter 71-80

Posted by Adminh, 160

Chapter 71

RYAN

Having the pleasure of having dinner with Lily and engaging in the most random conversations wasn't something I expected to relish again anytime soon. However, to my surprise found myself thoroughly enjoying our **time** together. After our meal. I urged Lily to head home and unwind, assuring her that I'd take care of the kids for one more night. Little did I know, the next morning would bring an unexpected call summoning me to an important **meeting**

With apologies overflowing. I drove the still drowsy kids back to Lily's place early that same morning. Despite waking her and the boys up so early, Lily was remarkably understanding, offering reassurance that it was no trouble at all. She even mentioned that the boys would likely doze off again soon, and being an early bird herself, she didn't mind the early start.

By ten o'clock in the morning, I found myself already at the office, grappling with an issue concerning a stolen design. Our company was facing a lawsuit from a rival firm, accusing us of pilfering their design.

Initially, I brushed off the news with nonchalance. After all, this wasn't our first rodeo when it came to such accusations. Historically, we had always emerged victorious in such legal battles, often counter-suing for defamation of our public image and reputation.

However, as I examined the evidence laid out before me, a sinking feeling settled in the pit of my stomach. It seemed we were in serious trouble this time. Slamming the incriminating document onto the table, I let out a string of expletives in frustration.

"I believe we can resolve this," Angelo muttered quietly, but his words only served to fuel my anger further.

Turning my gaze sharply towards Angelo, I shot him a withering glare. "If you don't have anything meaningful to contribute, Angelo, then kindly keep your mouth shut," I snapped, my frustration nearing its boiling point. I felt like I was on the verge of firing anyone who so much as breathed or exhaled incorrectly in my vicinity.

verge

With a resigned sigh, I pinched the bridge of my nose, gesturing vehemently towards the incriminating design laid bare on the table before us. "Who the hell was responsible for this?" I demanded, my voice la

ced with exasperation. I entrust people with the responsibility of carefully filtering every single design, ensuring its absolute originality before it even reaches my desk. Yet here I am, grappling with a throbbing headache over an issue I shell out paychecks to avoid.

Angelo swiftly seized the document and began flipping through its contents. “It appears to be the handiwork of team H,” he responded, filling the void left by the apprehensive—silence of the others in the room, who seemed too petrified to even meet my gaze, let alone offer a coherent response.

My dark, angry gaze swept across everyone gathered in the room with me, seething with frustration. “And who has the honor of leading team H?” I snapped, my tone laced with indignation. A young lady timidly raised her hand. “Hope? Really?” I scoffed bitterly, my disappointment obvious. To say I was utterly disappointed would be a gross understatement.

Hope had once been regarded as one of our finest employees, but any semblance of praise or admiration I harbored for her had swiftly vanished in the wake of this catastrophic situation. “Could you care to explain how your team managed to provide us with stolen intellectual property for production?” I demanded.

Hope faltered, her mouth opening and closing soundlessly as she struggled to formulate a coherent response. “I... I don’t know how this happened, sir,” she stammered, her gaze pleading for leniency ever as tears threatened to spill from her eyes.

“Your ignorance regarding the matter at hand will hardly serve to save us from the impending lawsuit, I retorted sharply. My irritation mounting at the sight of her tear-stained face. “Ignorance, as they say, is no excuse before the law.”

She nodded solemnly. “I swear to you, I will get to the root of this,” she vowed.

Clenching my teeth, I stood with arms akimbo, fixing a piercing stare upon this woman who seemed to underestimate the seriousness of the situation. “Do you think we’re gathered here for a mere jamboree?” I retorted, my tone dripping with disdain. She shook her head in response.

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“Do you honestly believe your tenure here is secure enough to allow for leisurely investigation?” I continued, my voice laced with barely contained fury. Her mouth opened and closed wordlessly as she struggled to formulate a response.

Angelo cleared his throat in an attempt to diffuse the tensed atmosphere. “Let’s all calm down,” he advised, earning a withering glare from me in return.

“Interject again, and you’ll find yourself joining her in the unemployment line,” I seethed, my patience wearing thin. Did Angelo even comprehend the immense pressure I was about to face from the board as a result of the catastrophic mess she and her team had wrought?

Returning my furious gaze to Hope, I pointed emphatically *at* the document containing the incriminating sample. “Pick that up and tell me precisely who the hell submitted that abomination to you,” I commanded.

As she rose from her seat and retrieved the document, my impatience grew with each passing second. Watching her flip through the pages, I couldn’t help but feel my stress levels escalating as her expression shifted from curiosity to sheer

horror.

“What is it?” I snapped. “Why on earth do you look like you’ve seen a ghost?” I demanded. She couldn’t possibly claim ignorance regarding the origin of these designs; it should be recorded in our register.

“She quit last month,” she mumbled, her voice barely audible.

For a moment, I felt as though the ground had shifted beneath my feet. “What the hell did you just say?” I exclaimed.

Hope bit her lower lip nervously, her eyes darting towards Angelo in a silent plea for assistance. Sensing her desperation, Angelo wisely chose to remain silent, refusing to intervene. “I said she resigned last month,” Hope repeated, her voice trembling slightly. “She mentioned something about relocating to an Asian country, although I can’t recall the exact details.”

“Shut up!” I bellowed, causing her to snap her mouth shut obediently. “Who authorized her resignation letter?” I demanded struggling to recall ever approving such a document.

Angelo hesitantly raised his hand. “I did,” he admitted.

Dumbfounded, I froze in place, my gaze fixed on him incredulously. If it had been anyone else, security would have escorted them out the door without a second thought. “Under whose authority did you sign off on a resignation letter?” I demanded, my voice edged with frustration.

He licked his lips nervously, his eyes darting around the room. I didn’t think it was a big deal, considering you were preoccupied with other matters,” he offered weakly, his justification falling flat in the face of my mounting anger.

Arching a skeptical brow, I leveled a piercing glare at him. “You didn’t think it was a big deal?” I echoed incredulously. “You didn’t think it was a big deal to let one of my st

aff members depart without my explicit permission?” The realization dawned on me that perhaps I had been granting him too much autonomy within the company. “What could I possibly have been so preoccupied with that you couldn’t spare a few minutes to inform me of her resignation?”

He scratched his beards as though he is uncomfortable with my question. His reaction to my question angered me the more. “I asked you a fucking question Angelo! What was I busy with that you couldn’t bring it to my notice?”

“Your private life.” He answered cryptically. I am guessing he is talking about me going after my family. He doesn’t want others to think that I neglected work because I was going after my ex-wife and my kids.

Honesty, I don’t care what these seated there has to say. Their opinion of me is not going to clear this mess. “I have never passed the night at Lily’s place.” I pointed out to him. “you see me almost every night, yet you failed to mention it.”

Understanding his offense, he sighed and avoided my gaze. “I am sorry sir.”

“I’ll address your negligence later, I muttered under my breath, my focus shifting to the matter at hand. “The woman who resigned, what’s her name?” I inquired, directing my question towards Hope.

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“Sophia,” she replied promptly. “Sophia Hampton.”

“Angelo, I need you to track down Sophia Hampton before the week draws to a close,” I instructed sternly. “The board and the press will undoubtedly be seeking someone to hold accountable for this problem. Find her and bring her to me.”

“Yes, sir,” Angelo affirmed.

Turning my attention back to Hope, I issued a stern warning. “Should anyone be held accountable, be prepared to face the consequences of your negligence,” I cautioned her. With that, I declared the meeting adjourned and swiftly exited the conference room, my mind already racing with the challenges that lay ahead.

This week is going to be a crazy week, that I am very sure of.

16:08 Mon, Jul 22 D

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 72

RYAN

On the second day, we managed to successfully negotiate a settlement with the company whose design we were accused of stealing. We reached an agreement to keep the matter confidential, away from the prying eyes of the press and the public. which they agreed to uphold.

The issue here is that they already had the design on the process of registration before release, while we worked on release before registration which is why before the law they are the rightful owners of the design.

Don't get me wrong, I am not accusing this Sophia girl of having stolen the design because YAEW company registered the product before us. The main issue is that during the period when they started the registration process and made necessary payment, Sarah was yet to submit the product.

Feeling tired and mentally drained, I pushed myself to plow through the mountain of work in front of me, hoping to at least grab a proper lunch since I hadn't had a decent meal since yesterday.

Suddenly, my phone rang, interrupting my focus. Absently, I reached for it on the table and swiped to answer before placing the call on speakerphone to free up both hands. "Ryan Williams, I greeted, my attention split between the caller and the piles of files demanding my attention.

"What's happening, Ryan?" Lily's voice echoed through my office, instantly grabbing my full attention.

Startled, I tore my gaze away from the hardcopy file in my hand to focus on her words. "What do you mean?" I asked a sense of unease settling in the pit of my stomach.

"There are rumors swirling around the internet alleging that your company stole and reproduced a design from YAEW company," Lily informed me, her tone laced with concern.

My eyes widened in disbelief as I swiftly grabbed my tablet, desperate to verify the unfolding crisis. Simultaneously, the door to my office burst open, and Angelo rushed in, his expression grave.

"The news is spreading like wildfire on the internet," he blurted out, thrusting a file towards me. "And they're suing us." His words hit me like a punch to the gut as I scanned the summon letter from the court that he brandished before me.

How could this be happening? Hadn't we agreed to keep this matter confidential and settle out of court? "Get Mr. Geo on the line," I instructed sharply, my frustration mounting.

Angelo winced, delivering unwelcome news. "He's not taking our calls. They're all being transferred to their legal team."

Running a hand wearily down my face, I felt a surge of exhaustion wash over me. "I'll have to call you back, Lily," I muttered into the phone, abruptly ending the call before she could respond. "Get our legal team here," I commanded Angelo, steeling myself for the battle ahead.

As Angelo confirmed the impending arrival of our legal team, his phone rang, and he apologized before taking the call. Ignoring his distraction, I feverishly scrolled through my phone, searching for contacts who might assist me in this dire situation.

Angelo cleared his throat, drawing my attention. I looked up to find him shifting nervously on his feet. "What's the matter?" I asked wearily, feeling as though things couldn't possibly worsen any further.

He took a deep breath before responding to my query. "Your father is in the elevator, on his way up to your office," he informed me.

I clicked my tongue in frustration. "Of course he is," I muttered under my breath, resigned to the inevitable confrontation that awaited me.

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III

Chapter 22

As if on cue, the office doors swung open, and my father strode in his gaze sweeping the room until it settled on me. "I entrust my company to you and this is how you repay my trust?" he admonished, his voice dripping with disappointment. Ignoring Angelo's attempted greeting, he advanced further into the office. "What's going on. Ryan?" he demanded, his tone brooking no argument.

Nothing I can't handle. I replied, mustering a facade of confidence, though I knew it was a blatant lie.

My father settled into the chair opposite me, his expression skeptical. "This clearly looks like something you cannot handle. he countered, his disappointment palpable. "How do you expect the company to recover from **this** if we're found **guilty** in

court?"

His words only made my throbbing headache worst. "This won't go to court, I can assure you of that, I insisted, attempting to reassure him.

He shook his head, unimpressed. "I'm sorry, son, but your reassurances mean nothing to me. The fact that the news is spreading like wildfire across the internet indicates that you've lost control of the situation."

His relentless criticism grated on my nerves. "Your incessant nagging isn't helping me at all," I snapped, my patience wearing thin. "I've told you, I'm handling the situation. What more do you want from me?"

"Results," he deadpanned. "I want results from you, Ryan."

Leaning forward, he placed his hands firmly on the table, his expression intense. "What measures did you take to prevent this from becoming public knowledge in the first place?"

I straightened in my seat. "I had a discussion with Mr. Geo, and we reached an agreement not to escalate the issue publicly while we sought to settle the matter out of court," I explained, hoping to justify my actions.

My father's reaction was swift and vehement. He threw his hands up in exasperation. "You did what? You agreed to settle?" His disbelief was obvious, and I braced myself for his reprimand

Perplexed by his response, I allowed him to elaborate. "By agreeing to settle, you're essentially admitting to the crime," he explained sternly. "I'd wager every dollar I have that they've got a recording of you suggesting settlement outside of court as evidence of your guilt. By agreeing to your terms and agreeing to refrain from publicizing the issue, they effectively ensured that you would let your guard down and fail to mount a proper defense against them."

"Damn it! Why didn't I consider that angle?" I cursed inwardly, berating myself for not seeing the situation from a strategic perspective. My focus had been solely on containing the news and shielding myself from the board's scrutiny.

My father's voice cut through my self-recrimination, offering a clear path forward. "This is what you should have done," he asserted. "You should have taken the initiative to release the news to the public, despite yo

ur promise to YAEW. By doing so, you would have framed the narrative, casting them as the aggressors falsely accusing your company of theft. Instead, you find yourself in the unenviable position of being perceived as the perpetrator who stole their designs.”

His words hit me like a wake-up call. I should have sought his counsel from the start. “What do you suggest I do now?” I inquired.

“Find a way to position yourself as the victim in the eyes of the public,” he advised, his tone firm. He fell silent for a moment, lost in thought. “But did we really steal it?” he pondered aloud, his expression troubled. When I confirmed his suspicions, he muttered a curse under his breath.

“I can’t believe you allowed something like this to happen. You were too preoccupied chasing after your ex-wife to see this coming.

“Don’t bring Lily into this,” I cautioned him, unwilling to involve her in our fraught conversation.

He returned my glare with a steely gaze of his own. “I never intended to,” he retorted sharply. “I don’t have the luxury of discussing individuals of little importance.”—

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III

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Before I could protest, he waved me off, redirecting our focus. “Let’s get back to the matter at hand. While you work on rebuilding the company’s public image, dig up some dirt on YAEW. Use it as leverage to coerce them into dropping the

lawsuit.

“And if we can’t find any dirt?” I pressed, skeptical of his plan.

“You will,” he asserted confidently. “Leave that to me. I’ll deploy the right people to uncover whatever skeletons they’re hiding.”

I nodded. “And what about the stolen designs?” I inquired, recognizing that this was a crucial issue that couldn’t be overlooked.

He scrutinized me for a moment before absentmindedly scratching his beard. “Always striving to do what’s right. If it were up to me, I wouldn’t concern myself with the stolen design. The damage has been done, and life must go on. However, given your conscientious nature, I suggest a different approach.”

He leaned forward, his expression serious. "Have your team create three new designs and offer them as compensation. Ensure that it's documented that the misunderstanding has been resolved. Then, demand a public apology from YAEW, Before they produce the designs you gave them, produce something similar but not identical

I furrowed my brow, uneasy with the suggestion. "Do we really need to resort to such underhanded tactics? Why not simply allow them to keep the design?" I questioned, hoping for a more ethical solution.

"The company will suffer losses regardless, my father countered "But if you follow my instructions and they proceed to produce the design you provided, the public perception will shift. They'll see YAEW as the ones copying us, and the company will be at a disadvantage because despite receiving compensation in the form of new designs, they won't be able to proceed with production"

As I looked at him, a dawning realization washed over me. I finally understood why he refused to step down from the board even after officially resigning. My father's shrewdness and strategic thinking were indispensable assets, especially in times of crisis like this.

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Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

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this food. Drapping the napkin wesity on the tale i pushed me bachart and stood up. Sh e lo

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Shipping my hands my pocket, I nodded. Go ahead”

“I think someone, particularly YAEW Group planted Sophie in our company and used he r at the right time to their benefit.”

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 74

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Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 75

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I like these, I had to set aside my kun empathy for sekely on dogs when for w emerge fes this ordeal unscathed. It was a harsh reality, bet

tury #1 way we ws

I instructed Angelo to drive me to Sophia's preordained place wither bestation On the way the re. I Sally the soon on my phone, which I had been ignoring for the great two days or to the barrage of woon bet

members

As I tapped on Lily's name, a wave of guilt tootet over the wing her messages we wong the servant to prontire other pressing matters over responding to her had Been a mistake, one I sow wa reply. I opted to dual her number, hoping to comey **my** chores more s merely tweets & comenten

Surprisingly, she answered after just a couple of rings, her prompt response a testamen t to her cnemur me tesser busy hospital duties "Hello, sweetheart, I greeted with a teasin g tone, knowing full well that for reaction from her.

the t

Glancing at Angelo through the rear-view mirror, I noticed his raised eyebrows, ceny surprised by the sudden changin my de meanor. My recent moodiness and stress had become apparent to everyone wound me , bor in this memes, 3 de a gemmer of relief at the prospect of sharing a light-beared exchange with Liby

Brushing aside Angelo's unspoken curiosity, I focused on the call at hand Tow you a gol ogy began my son wer I acknowledged my lapse in communication I didn't realize you h ad messaged me werd day, and for that, I'm yo

She let out an audible sigh. It's fine. How have you been?

Fine" I led smoothly. We're close to resolving the cae, moter falsehood, to this should b e over soon 16twa Ly worrying about me on top of managing the hospital and taking care of the triplless emer the eas on her r esponsibilities rather than my staff's incompetence.

"Are you sure about that the questioned skeptically. "You're not just saying that to make me feel better and no worry abo you are you?

Her intuition hit the mark, and I couldn't help but smile at her perceptiveness "Really, thi ngs are falling in place I assured her, though I knew it want entirely true.

As Angelo pulled over outside the apartment complex, I knew our conversation had to b e car short. T have to call you back later tonight, Lily There's an issue I need to handle:

“Sure,” she replied instantly. We can talk later tonight. I don’t want to keep you from your work. Aber seed grave the added, “Be safe, Ryan. And if you need my help **in any** way, don’t hesitate to reach out.

My smile widened at Lily’s offer of assistance. I won’t, I reassured her before discipatecting the call. Exting the car. I made my way towards the building with Angelo by my side, while the yes of the security at remained stoned ontade.

Coming to **a stop** at the door, Angelo pressed the doorbell, **and** after a few moments, it swang open total a young woman, slightly younger than Sophia but bearing a striking resemblance so her

Angelo addressed her with a steely tone. “We’re here to see your parents, be informed her matter—of—factly to the h. The young woman nodded in response. And who are you, please the

We interested in our when far more pulite than I would have age

hypnor our chan. And id gone winters to ask has wty varpod at her miabile ty contain any frution.

ter eyes widened slightly at my wraps to

marrations that your company gives her an overwhelming workined that aar mount hear mid the stras was as acts for bars” ahur doordinatory.

I cached my jaw, seething with frustration at the was das untuale. Your daughter submitted a stolen design fo

collected her percentage for a sumarsful sale, and the dy left the company. I reiterated, my voter dripping with dudam. Now we’re facing a lawsuit because other company sulest evidence that they eightfully own the deano. I you don’t tell us where your daughter is. I expose fact as a mail lzurt, ensure the faces jail time, and ensure that every

His thr acus Thai way. ahr weariboradokey get by whenahe grad

Hier expression changed a bit as she absorbed my threat. “My daughter is in Singapore,” she finally divulged, her mine defunt. And just so you know. I don’t behove what you justok me aba bure

I scoffed inwardly at her refusal to acknowledge the truth. Whares about what you choose to believe? Eretorted sharplys I’ve heard you’ve been chatting with her, but you’ve never had phone call with her, have your

The woman's eyes widened in shock. "How did you know that?" she stammered, clearly unnerved by my knowledge

"Call her repeated firmly, my patience wearing thin

She shook her head still hesitant to comply. It seemed she didn't realize the seriousness of the situation. Leaning back in my seat I crossed my legs and stutted my gate to the other young girl in the room. "She just gained admission to amuly medicine right" I inquired casually though I already knew they were

Her eyes widened in disbelief. "How did you..." she began but I cut her off

"I will revoke that admission" I stated calmly, but with an undertone of threat "If you pass me off with your stubborn uncle again. Don't ask me how I do it but I assure you will happen. And as for your husband, his name is on the list of patients at Litech Hospital receiving donations for the medication and in closer, my tone ominous. "Tawear to you on my grandmother's grave that you were heard his name on that donation but if you do not do as you are told?"

With a shaky hand, the woman picked up her phone to dial Sophia's number, while Angelo instructed her to put the call on speaker. Unfortunately, the call didn't connect, adding to the tension in the room.

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Chapter 75

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"If your daughter had the choice to be anywhere else other than Singapore, where do you think she would be?" I pressed, my

tone firm.

She licked her lips nervously before answering. "At her grandmother's place."

Angelo, ever efficient, omitted checking the old woman out since she was already deceased. "And where does this grandmother of hers live?" he inquired.

The woman quickly rattled off the address, and I gave Angelo a nod, signaling that he understood what needed to be done.

He is to find her and drag her ass to me.

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 76

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Chapter 76

I'm being serious, Ryan benapped, clearly irritated by my digginssive aminunte mands t
ile wurde sis was was k unearthed this evidence against the YAEW Group"

I raised an eyebrow skeptically. "And how exactly did she manage to find it inquired. Wi
nte firas aware det her father t a prestigious legal firm, obtaining such sensitive docume
nts recidired more them just connections.

My father shrugged indifferently. "Honestly, I don't know, and frankly, I don't cure to kne
w he admitted tux) maring the document in my direction. "The important thing is that we
have it in our possession o

Despite the significance of the evidence we now held, I couldn't shake the uneasy feelin
g gawing at the pet oder "Any updates on the individual responsible for putting us throug
h this ordeal?" he pressed, has gave feed on the t

continued to eat.

I swallowed hard, feeling the weight of his stare. "She may be hiding at her grandmother
's *place*? 1 indoned tam Tox dispatched my men to bring her in."

He nodded curtly as he rose from his seat. "I'll let you get back to your
food, he remarked, pasting the document further across the table towards me. "I just sto
pped by to show you what we have. So, get yourself busy. We're paying that while CEO
, who doesn't know how to keep his promises, a visit."

I nodded in acknowledgment. "I'm sorry, but I can't see you to the door right now. I'm in
the middle of exting 1 explained unapologetically.

He scoffed dismissively. "I know you're not sorry," he retorted, his tone laced with amus
ement. Lifting thy head, 1 **thet** gaze head—
on. "What? You're practically a mini version of me, so can read your thind

Ignoring his comment, I returned my focus to my meal. It was clear he wasn't going to g
et a reaction one of the Wha resigned shake of his head, he turned on his heel and walk
ed away, leaving me to finish try dinner in peace.

After dinner, I retreated to my room in hopes of catching some much-needed sleep, knowing that tomorrow would be a long day. However, after an hour of tossing and turning in bed, it became apparent that even sleep was eluding me

to

Frustrated, I reached for my phone and decided to FaceTime Lily, longing to hear the voices of her boys. After a few rings she answered. "Hey," her voice greeted me, instantly calming my restless mind.

"Hey," I replied, noticing the faint glimmer on her face. "What are you up to?" I inquired, already feeling mischievous thoughts creeping into my mind about our conversation tonight.

"Skincare," she responded, her tone relaxed. "You ended the call abruptly last time. Did everything go well today?" she asked, her concern evident.

I nodded. "By tomorrow, I should have everything sorted out," I assured her, though secretly hoping that there would be any unexpected obstacles standing in our way.

"Best of luck," she wished me sincerely, her voice tinged with uncertainty. "Although, with YAEW Company involved, it doesn't sound like everything will be resolved that easily."

I raised an eyebrow in confusion. "What are you talking about?"

"They released a video an hour ago," she disclosed, her voice tinged with concern. "They said they're going to me, but nothing is going to stop them."

I chuckled softly, though inwardly feeling confident. "They're just trying to garner sympathy from the public. It's a perfect marketing strategy," I remarked, trying to downplay the seriousness of the situation.

Lily nodded in agreement. "Either way. I just want you to be relieved of this stress," she said sincerely, her concern for my well-being evident.

I couldn't help but smile at her words. "What about the boys? I'd love to speak to them in

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"They're already fast asleep," she informed me gently, her tone softening

A pang of guilt washed over me. I've really missed them
I admitted, longing to be with my boys.

"They've missed you too Lily reassured me, her voice gentle. But I've explained to them that you have something important to handle, and that you'll be back soon. So please, don't end up in jail. It would be difficult to explain that to them," she teased lightly, trying to lift my spirits.

I chuckled lightly. "Sure, ma'am" I replied, trying to lighten the mood.
However, my mind drifted to something that had slipped my
mind amidst the chance. "What about Jake? He hasn't done anything stupid, has he?"

There was a brief silence on the other end of the line, causing a knot of concern to form in my stomach "Lily?" I called out. My worry growing "What did he do?"

She shook her head, her voice sober. "He didn't do anything," she assured me, though her tone betrayed a hint of distraction. "I just need
something I need to attend to right now."

Before

I could respond my phone vibrated with an incoming call from Angela. "Let me call you back, love," I said as I put Lay on hold and answered Angelo's call. "This had better be serious," I stated, my tone more urgent

Angelo's voice came through the line, grave and solemn. "Sophia was found dead in her grandmother's apartment," he announced, and my eyes widened in shock. Her body is still warm, which means it happened not long ago

My heart sank as the situation became clear. Sophia's mother would undoubtedly name me as a suspect.

Shut

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 77

knew I had to push these thoughts aside and focus on the

future with my father Angelo suggested from the driver's seat, his tone grave. I'm sure you don't want to be in the press

Walking at the company's parking lot, I waited for my father to exit his car and join me in mine. We had agreed earlier that

ng to drive to YAEW together for our meeting

As my father settled into the passenger seat, his keen gaze immediately sensed that something was amiss. His eyes flicked from Angelo to me, searching for answers. "What's going on?" he inquired, his tone tinged with concern.

"Nothing" I replied quickly, attempting to brush off the tension in the air.

But before I could say more, Angelo interjected with a blunt revelation. "**Mr.** Ryan is about to be accused of **murder**," he blurted out, causing my father's expression to shift from concern to shock in an instant.

He glanced at me with furrowed brows, his confusion evident. "What is he talking about?" he asked.

Letting out a heavy sigh, I turned to look out the window, gathering my thoughts before responding. I accompanied the mento question Sophia's mother about her whereabouts, and they found her dead in her grandmother's house, I explained. "**Sh** **it** my father cursed, his frustration evident. "What the heck is wrong with you, Ryan? Why are you working so hard to land yourself in jail? he demanded, his tone sharp with admonishment.

I shot him a glare, feeling defensive. "How is this my fault?" I retorted, my voice rising slightly. Did I look like someone who wanted to leave Lily and the boys alone and rot away in jail? "I didn't anticipate things would end up like this. Nobody did

Running a hand down his face in exasperation, my father sighed heavily. "What did your men do after they found her *dead*?" he inquired, trying to piece together the situation.

instructed them to report it."

"You did what?!" My father exclaimed, throwing his hands in the air in frustration. "Do you ever consider the repercussions of your actions before you carry them out?" he demanded, his tone laced with anger. "What happened to pretending like *you* were never there?

I met his glare with a steely gaze. "I don't know, probably because I don't want to have to cover up a crime I didn't commit," I retorted, my voice tinged with frustration.

He licked his lips, clearly agitated. "How is that covering up a crime you didn't commit?" he countered sharply. "It's more like not concerning yourself with something that isn't even your business to begin with

I shook my head, feeling the weight of the situation pressing down on me. "You and I both know that they'll find out someone was there. Their footprints alone are enough to lead the

police to them, I explained, trying to make him understand. “And what do you think will happen when they find out that I knew she was dead but didn’t report it? Do you think they’ll ever believe that I didn’t do it? And don’t even get me started on Sophia’s mother. The moment she hears that her daughter is dead, my name is going to be the first on her list of suspects.

He shook his head in disagreement, still not seeing eye to eye with me. “If it had come to that, I would have known what to do to handle the situation, he insisted with confidence.

“And that brings us back to my initial point about covering up a crime I didn’t commit, I countered, feeling the frustration mounting,

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Chapter 77

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Reflecting on my life, I couldn’t help but wonder how different things might have been if I hadn’t been burdened with such immense responsibilities. What if my parents hadn’t treated my sister as though she were invisible, leaving me to bear the brunt of their attention and pressure?

As we approached the gates of the golf club, I noticed news vans already arriving, their cameras poised to capture every moment. We *had* informed the security at the club about the emergency press meeting, so they waved the vans through with practiced **ease**. I also spotted our legal team pulling in, ready to handle whatever legal battles lay ahead.

My father let out a weary sigh, his exhaustion obvious. "I just hope this ends in your favor," he muttered.

At that moment, I realized that I, too, had no idea what the future held for me. All I could do was face the challenges ahead with courage, hoping for the best possible outcome.

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, 128

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ed gulf for her response. When she didn't reply. I

waited before ending the call

mom, I made my way to the grid field where the press awaited. My security team flanked

between repwell and the crowd of reporters. With a deep breath, I prepared to address the

the crucial in shaping how things will go with the public.

wees as

to why I've called for this emergency press conference. I began, my voice steady as I reporters and photographers, their fingers flying over their keyboards and cameras clicking in light of the ongoing situation with YAEW Group, we've refrained from making any official statements until we fully understand the complexities of the issue."

went to allow the journalists to jot down my words, I continued, "The design that we were accused of merely strutting us as by Sophia Hampton, who had recently retired from our company. We sought her out galley of the design so that we could determine our next course of action. However, when our attempts to

successful, we reached out to her family and learned that she was staying at her grandmother's house

Canong belly a Mr. Waper, who nodded in encouragement, I pressed on

est a sense of calm wash over me as I spoke, knowing that I was not deceiving the public with my words. "I dispatched my

location where her mother claimed Sophia was staying, I continued, my voice measured as I recounted the

They chose to approach at night, hoping to find her at home, unaware of her schedule. However, upon their arrival, they discovered Sophia's lifeless body, still warm, indicating that the perpetrator was likely still in the vicinity."

The rapid dicing of cameras intensified as I spoke, the journalists eager to capture every detail of the narrative. "Some of

my personnel went into the surrounding area to investigate any suspicious activity, while others contacted the ties to report the incident, I explained.

As of now, our company's primary focus is on identifying and apprehending Sophia Hampton's killer," I declared. "We have decided to prioritize this investigation and are seeking to resolve the matter of the stolen design out of court, given the

current nature of the circumstances."

Angrio spoke up. "you can now ask your questions."

The first journalist to speak addressed me directly, her voice filled with skepticism. "Are you suggesting that you have no

connection to the murder of Ms. Sophia Hampton?"

I shook my head firmly, meeting her gaze. "Why would I have any involvement in the death of someone who could potentially save me millions of dollars and spare me from a lawsuit?" I replied, my tone laced with conviction. Furthermore, I intend to cooperate fully with the authorities and will be providing a detailed report of everything I know

I hope that my assertion would help mitigate the fallout from my arrest. As the journalists continued to pose their questions, I offered concise and composed responses, careful to maintain my composure under the scrutinizing gaze of the

Sensing my father's subtle signal, I concluded the **press** conference, eager to exit the stage and avoid any further exposure to the camera and live recordings. With a nod of gratitude to the assembled journalists, I made my way off the platform.

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Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 79

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fway by with a sue, which only served to stoke his ire further. “Listen carefully, for

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Chapter 79

Leaning back, I intertwined my fingers and fixed my gaze on Mr Waper. "You heard me,
Waper, I reiterated firmly.

With a resigned sigh, he turned on his heel and exited the room. My attention then shifte
d to James. "So, are you going to regurgitate the same inquiries those fools asked, or d
o you have something fresh for me?" I inquired, my tone laced with impatience.

A chuckle escaped James's lips. "Your confidence leads me to believe you already hav
e an escape plan in mind," he remarked, amusement dancing in his eyes.

"That wasn't a question," I pointed out, raising an eyebrow in response to his observatio
n.

"Can

you reiterate what you disclosed to them, Mr. Williams?” James redirected, his tone now more businesslike.

Letting out a weary sigh, I ran a hand down my face, feeling the weight of the interrogation bearing down on me. “My were to fetch Sophia and bring her to my office because she was the only one capable of saving the company’s reputation,” I explained, my frustration evident in my voice.

He twirled his pen thoughtfully. “And how, exactly, was she supposed to do that?” he probed further.

“Because she was the one who submitted the stolen designs,” I replied flatly, a hint of frustration creeping into my tone. It seemed it was time to redirect the narrative and make them realize they were barking up the wrong tree. “She was hiding from someone.

James’s interest piqued. “What do you mean by that?”

“At first, I assumed she was hiding from us,” I explained, “but given that she was murdered, it’s clear she wasn’t actually evading us. It’s possible that the same person who was after her is the one who killed her.”

“Are you going to elaborate on that?” James pressed for more details.

“When she resigned,” I continued, “she informed her supervisor that she was relocating to an Asian country. However, we later discovered that the Asian country she claimed to have moved to was Singapore. Our investigation revealed she never left the country, prompting us to pay a visit to her mother.” I blinked. “And the rest, as they say, is history”

“So you believe the person she was trying to evade ended up being her killer?” James inquired, leaning forward with interest.

I nodded in confirmation. “Are you going to try that?” I redirected the conversation, gesturing towards the untouched water. He glanced at it skeptically, scoffed, and decided to take a sip before handing it to me. I accepted the bottle and emptied its contents in one go.

“How can we be sure she wasn’t hiding from you?” James pressed further, his tone probing.

With a solemn expression, I slowly lowered the now-empty bottle. “I entertained that possibility initially, but my perspective shifted after her untimely demise,” I confessed.

“You’ve shared your narrative, Mr. Williams. Now, allow me to offer my perspective, James began, his tone measured as he prepared to deliver his analysis. I listened intently, curious to hear his conclusions drawn from our discussion

“I believe she was hiding from you, James continued. “She knew you would pursue her once you discovered she had stolen the design. And that’s exactly what happened. Unable to tolerate the tarnishing of the company’s image and reputation that you had worked so hard to build, you tracked her down and ultimately ended her life”

I couldn’t help but chuckle at his assertion. “Is something amusing?” James inquired

“What you just suggested,” I replied, my amusement evident, “does it sound logical to you?” I probed, questioning his capacity for rational thought. “Why would I contemplate killing someone who could potentially aid my company in overcoming this predicament?”

“Because you have other means of rectifying the situation,” James retorted, rising from his seat with

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Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 80

LILY

Murder? Are you fucking kidding me? His call yesterday is beginning to make sense. He was taken to the station as a suspect in the murder of one Sophia Hampton and her mother is even making matters worse, she is trying her best to Ryan the villain.

The first thing I did after hearing the news was to try calling him, but of course, he didn't take my calls. How did we go! being accused of stealing a design to being accused of murder? This is so insane.

When he didn't take my calls, I didn't know who else to call which was why I ended up calling Becky. She is in New York she should find out what exactly is going on.

I can't leave my kids all alone with their nanny and I can't take them along with me either because their school is still in session.

She picked on the second ring. "Hello, sunshine."

This sun is definitely not shining right now. "what is going on with Ryan?"

She shook her head. "I don't know girl. I wish I could give you an answer to that question." She sighed. "It is like New York divided right now some think he did it because they believe that the rich are willing to do anything to remain in power and protect their reputation and the other half thinks that he did not do it, that he is being set up by someone out there to wait his downfall."

Who the hell did he offend? "I am scared Becky," I mumbled. "I know he didn't do this." Ryan can be a lot of things but he no murderer. "what if he ends up going to jail over something he didn't even do?"

“This isn’t an ordinary family Lily,” she tried to assure me. “we are talking about the Williams family here. Do you think Richard Williams will let his only son rot away in jail for something he did not commit?” I hope so too. “even if he did commit the crime he is being accused of, his father will do everything in his power to make sure he avoids jail time.” She asserted.

“I hope so too.”

I can’t tell my kids that they won’t be seeing their father very often because he is being locked away, for what crime? For killing someone.

We talked for a while before exchanging our goodbyes. I had to drown myself in work as usual to keep my mind away from Ryan’s predicament. *****

A few hours later, while I was clerking a patient’s file, my phone rang on the table and I picked it up, almost letting it ring and disconnect when I saw Jake’s name on my screen.

On second thought, I picked up the phone and answered the call. “Jake?”

“Hello, Lily.” He breathed out, “I have been trying to reach you since morning.”

That’s because I haven’t been with my phone since morning. I intentionally left it behind after speaking with Becky. “I have been busy with work.”

“Okay...” he cleared his throat. “Actually, I have been thinking about having dinner together.”

I frowned. My mood is deep in the shit, I don’t think this is the right time for us to hang out because I might lose my shit with him and say things that Ryan won’t be happy with when he gets back. “I promised my kids I would have dinner with them.” I fibbed.

What the fuck. No I’m not having dinner with me and I have that text

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surrounding the sea where The File whispered in a breathy mine. “I just want to spend some time with

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huseraph now and Idurrow when I will be getting off work.” Now that’s a lie. I

sure have I will all your When I am done”

remony red no had any chore Twill be perting your cadisconnector the call, cuttin
g him off.

After week, I’mally forgen thin 1 wa wipped to call him for us meet up. I was alrea
dy halfway home when I remembered h. Sighing, I decided to leave him hanging
when thought occurred.

I pulled over, picked up my phone, smal sent him a text

BIJAKE 1 TOTALLY FORGOT ABOUT OUR PLAN FOR THE EVENING. IF YOU AR
E STILL IN THE OFFICE, THEN WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN BUT IF YOU HAVE LEF
T FOR THE DAY, WE CAN RESCHEDULE

This response came instantly.

TAM STILL IN THE OFFICE YOU WANT ME TO COME PICK YOU UP?

I STILL HAVE ONE MORE PATIENT TO SEE TODAY. I WILL LET YOU KNOW WHE
N I AM DONE SO YOU CAN COME PICK ME UP

SURE I WILL BE WAITING FOR YOUR CALL

Changing my direction, I made my way to his office. Pulling over, I walked into the
reception, sat down, and gave him a call. He picked almost instantly.

“Hey, are you done already?”

“yes,” the way the lies rolled out of my lips, I considered changing careers. I will
make a great actress or perhaps a great con artist like him. “I received a call from
my secretary immediately after I finished with your call and I was told that the last
patient canceled. You are still in the office right?”

“Yes,” he blurted out, “should I come pick you up now?”

I smiled inwardly, curious to know how this would play out. “that won’t be necess
ary Jake. I didn’t want to stress you, so I came down to your office myself. Come
down, I am in the reception area.”

Heavy silence ensued which almost made me chuckle. I bet he didn’t see that co
ming. “Jake?” I called out when he didn’t say any more words. “are you still there
?”

He cleared his throat. "Yes." He fell silent again, probably thinking of how to get out of this one. "I went to send a file to a client not too far away, can you give me like five minutes?"

Pathetic liar. "Sure. Take your time."

A few minutes later, he showed up, racing towards me with an apologetic smile. "Sorry about that."

I stood to my feet with a tight smile. "it's fine." I turned heading towards the elevator but he grabbed my hand. I stared at his hand which was holding mine then back at his face. "What?"

"Where are you going?"

I blinked slowly at him, "to your office of course."

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Chapter 50

Clearly uncomfortable and nervous, he bounced from one foot the other, "why? We are already late. Remember you said you want to have dinner with the boys"

Tilting my head, I observed him for a while before reaching forward to wipe sweat from his forehead, "*why* are you sweating? I just wanted to follow you so you can grab your bag di jacket from your office" Folding my hands, i watched him think of an excuse, "come to think of it, I haven't seen what your office looks like" I turned to head towards the elevator again but he quickly grabbed my hand.

My office is under renovation, so I am currently pairing with someone else" He blurted out, "and my bag is already in the car, and I am wearing my jacket"

I watched him closely for a while, "Sure, Come on, let's go" I led the way, sashaying out of the building with a wide smile when I heard him exhale heavily.

Too bad Jake, the shit you are trying to hide has been found out