

## Wild Night 531

### Chapter 531 Giving Reasons To Plot

"I was napping when you called. I really don't think it's a good idea to do this today," Anita complained as she got into Tiffany's car who had been waiting outside her apartment to take her to the beauty spa as their mother had instructed.

"Yeah, I thought so too. You know, I told mother there was no hurry, and you could get it done within the week instead of today, but she insisted you get it done today. And her logic sort of made sense. Never leave for tomorrow what you can do today. You might end up being too busy with work to bother with it. She also said she didn't want it to look too obvious that you had a makeover, so it is best you do it today," Tiffany said, and Anita tried not to roll her eyes.

"Any word from mother's lips would make sense to you," Anita muttered as she glanced at her wristwatch.

"I heard that," Tiffany said with a scowl.

"You were meant to hear it. It looks like I will be late to Bernice's for lunch. I have to go get Lisa first," Anita said, and Tiffany rolled her eyes.

"Why are you the one to get her? Shouldn't her loving husband bring her over?"

"You know how Ron is. He can barely stand being in the same room with mother for longer than ten minutes without leaving. If Ron brings her, she might have to leave early," Anita said, and Tiffany snorted.

"He acts like he is better than everyone else," Tiffany said, and Anita giggled.

"That's not true. I get along with him just fine. The only reason you don't like him is because he doesn't get along with mother, and you're jealous because he treats Lisa better than your husband treats you," Anita said, and Tiffany glared at her.

"That's such a mean thing to say!"

"Mean but true nonetheless. So what about Jack? Is he coming? Or did he manage to come up with one of those thousand and one reasons why he can't be there?" Anita asked, and Tiffany smiled.

"Surprisingly he is coming. He even offered to cancel his tennis plan with his friends so he can come with me," Tiffany said, and Anita turned to her in surprise.

"Wow! That is very surprising."

"Yeah. All that is left now is for us to get you your own man. Who knows? Mother might decide to get remarried after you," Tiffany said with a grin and Anita giggled.

"Speaking about mother, do you know who her secret admirer is?" Anita asked with interest since Tiffany was closest to their mother and was always the first to know what was going on with her.

"I don't. But I'm pretty sure he is someone really impressive. Mother will never settle for anyone less than perfect," Tiffany said as she pulled into the parking lot of the beauty spa and Anita nodded in agreement.

"That's true."

Once they walked into the spa, Anita stiffened and stopped walking when she sighted Lucy and Tom seated at the reception while talking to one of the female staff.

"What is wrong?" Tiffany asked when she noticed that Anita had stopped walking, and she followed Anita's gaze to where the couple were seated with Tom's arm wrapped around Lucy.

This was the first time Anita was crossing path with Lucy since the scandal about Lucy and she wasn't sure how to approach her. Was she to approach her as a friend or foe? It wouldn't be weird if she ignored Lucy considering the way Sonia had spoken to her the last time she called Lucy, right?

She had kept her distance from Lucy after that because it had seemed like they were suspicious of her at the time. If Sonia hadn't said all of that to her, she would have remained by Lucy's side as a friend until she successfully got rid of her from Tom's life.

That was all water under the bridge now since she didn't want Tom anymore. Not after all he and Harry had said to her the last time in the conference hall. She would have also preferred to ignore Tom but the only problem was that Tom was still her boss, at least for now, so she couldn't completely ignore him.

"If you want us to leave, we can just go somewhere else," Tiffany offered, mistaking Anita's reaction to be jealousy.

Anita sent her a look that said she was being ridiculous, "Don't be silly, Tiff! Mother would be so disappointed if she heard her favorite daughter say something as cowardly as that."

"Mother is not here with us. If you feel uncomfortable we can leave. I won't be drawn into any catfight," Tiffany insisted, but Anita ignored her as she proceeded to walk towards them.

She was Anita Miller. The Millers were not the type to be intimidated for any reason. All she felt for the couple was anger and hatred, and she would love nothing more than to ruin their stupid relationship.

Lucy was the first to see Anita approaching, and she tapped Tom's hand to alert him, making him look down at her hand and then her face, wondering what was wrong.

He followed the direction of her gaze and when he saw Anita approaching he patted Lucy's hand to calm her since he knew she was upset. This was the first time she was coming face to face with Anita since her discovery that Anita was responsible for the scandal.

Because of the lady standing in front of them, Tom couldn't say anything to Lucy so he returned his attention to the lady he had been discussing with.

"Let her know I'm here to see her," he told the lady who gave him a nod before hurrying away to go inform the spa owner of the presence of Thomas Hank.

Once Anita got to where they sat she plastered a false smile on her face, "Hello, Tom! Hey, Lucy!" she greeted, and without waiting for them to respond, since she wasn't sure they were going to, she continued on her way, but stopped when Lucy greeted her, surprising both Anita and Tom.

"Hello, Anita! It's been a while," Lucy greeted with a bright smile.

If Anita could act so friendly despite all the evil she was plotting against her, then so could she as well, Lucy mused as she rose to face Anita, while Tom remained seated, wondering what Lucy was up to.

Tiffany didn't bother to stand with Anita, instead she went to say hello to some friends who were at the spa, leaving Anita to face Lucy and Tom alone.

Anita looked at Lucy, trying to figure out what Lucy was up to. But Lucy kept her smile in place.

"I always had the mind to return your last phone call after that misunderstanding with my best friend, but I haven't been able to find the right time to do that. I hope you are not mad? Sonia can be pretty jealous a times. You know how girls can be. I'm sure you have friends," Lucy said, wanting to make sure Anita didn't think they knew what she was up to.

"Of course. I understand how female friendships can be," Anita said with her graceful smile in place.

"I'm glad you do. Also, I think I need to correct something you just said. Tom doesn't like his employees referring to him so casually as Tom. Especially his female employees. He prefers to be addressed as Mr. Hank. Calling him Tom the way you did, could be misleading, don't you think so?" Lucy asked with her smile in place the same as Anita's.

Anita's smile faltered ever so slightly as her gaze shifted from Lucy to Tom, but Tom's loving gaze was fixed on Lucy with a grin on his face.

"He didn't complain..."

"Yeah, right? He is my man so I understand how he feels. He didn't have to express his displeasure out loud for me to know. Especially as he thought you'd know to do better after he told you he doesn't like you," Lucy said, and Tom chuckled.

"I guess some habits are hard to break. I didn't mean to upset you. I'm sorry," Anita said, and Lucy smiled sweetly as she patted Anita's arm in a way only close friends would do.

"Oh, don't worry about it, darling. I wasn't the least bit upset. It just didn't occur to me that it was a habit, since I didn't think you were close enough or together long enough to form one. I just thought to correct you so you wouldn't make such a mistake in the presence of others," Lucy said, and for the first time in her life Anita was thankful for all the lessons her mother had given them on keeping a stiff upper lip regardless of how annoyed or upset they were, else Lucy would have realised just how annoying she was being.

"I should return to MY man. He doesn't like it when I'm away for too long hence he followed me here," Lucy said as she turned to smile at Tom who winked at her.

"That's sweet. I shouldn't keep my sister waiting, have fun," Anita said as she turned and walked away from there as gracefully as she could to join Tiffany who was seated far away from the drama.

"See you at the anniversary dinner," Lucy called after her before returning to her seat beside Tom.

Tom chuckled, "That's so unlike you. Did you have to do that?"

"Of course, I had to. I did nothing wrong, yet both her and her family have been plotting against me, so I should as well give them a reason to do what they are doing. She is not the only one who can act so friendly while plotting," Lucy muttered grudgingly, and Tom chuckled.

"Why don't I give her something to be mad about?" Tom asked as he leaned closer to Lucy and turned her face to him before kissing her.

They were still kissing when two ladies walked out of an office at the distal part of the hall and approached them.

One of the ladies cleared her throat, and "Hello, Mr. Hank! It's a pleasure having you and your lady here. I'm Tracy, the owner of the spa, and this is my friend, Aurora," she greeted pleasantly.

"Hello! I don't think you know me, but I'm a friend of your sister, Jade, and I'm also acquainted with your best friend, Harry. I had to come out to say hello when I heard you were here," Aurora said with a friendly smile that made Tom and Lucy exchange an amused look once they realized this was the lady who Jade had tried to set up with Harry.

"Oh! I've heard a lot about you," Tom said with a pleasant smile as he shook hands with her.

"Oh, really? From Harry, I hope?" she asked with hopeful eyes, and Tom winced.

"No, we actually heard of you from Jade. She had only lovely things to say about you," Lucy chipped in with a bright smile.

Of course, the only reason Jade felt insecure or threatened was because she knew Aurora was a wonderful lady. The sort that any man, who didn't have another lady in mind, would fall for.

"Oh, really? Why don't I attend to you? I'd really love to hear all she had to say while I take care of you if you don't mind," Aurora suggested with a happy smile as she linked her arm with Lucy's as though they have been friends forever.

"Don't worry about them, I will attend to them myself," Aurora assured her friend.

"I take it you are also here to relax. I will have my best hand assist Aurora who would be attending to you. You can both use the VVIP room," the spa owner said as she let Aurora lead the couple to the VVIP room.

## Chapter 532 A Step Ahead

Anita seethed in her seat beside her sister as they listened to some of the other ladies around them gossip about Lucy and Tom, and how beautiful and lucky she was to get a man like Tom.

They were all seated there waiting for their turn, while Tom and Lucy were receiving such special treatment. Of course, Anita had heard all about the VIP room, and it was reserved only for the one percent of the one percent in the society. That meant not just anyone could go in there, yet here she was, and a nobody like Lucy was in there.

Tiffany placed a hand on Anita's hand when she noticed how she kept pinching at her nails as she usually did when she was irritated, "Don't worry, I'll handle it," Tiffany promised.

"What are you going to do?" Anita asked, and Tiffany smiled.

"Wait and see."

"I would love to be friends with her," one of the ladies was saying, and another nodded.

"Me too."

One of them turned to Anita, "We saw you talking with her earlier. Are you friends with her?"

Before Anita could respond, Tiffany took that as the cue she had been waiting for and joined the conversation, "It's a sad story. They used to be really close friends, and Tom used to be her boyfriend. That girl may look all sweet and innocent, but she snatched my sister's man," Tiffany said, patting Anita's hand, and the ladies gasped in disbelief as they looked at Anita.

"Is that true?" One of them asked.

"That sounds like something that happens in a soap opera," another said as they all looked at Anita, eager to hear this piece of gossip from the horse's mouth.

"How is that possible? Seeing how he revealed his identity because of Lucinda, I don't think there was anything serious going on between him and your sister," another said, earning her a glare from Tiffany.

"He was in love with her! That Lucinda lady seduced Thomas!" Tiffany snapped at her, and Aurora who was now dressed in a uniform as the rest staff and had been passing by to pick up a beauty product from the display shelf to show Tom and Lucy slowed down so she could hear what was being discussed.

"Go on. Tell them," Tiffany urged Anita.

Knowing that Tiffany was trying to paint Lucy in a bad light for her sake, and because she was already fed up with all the nice things the ladies had been saying about Lucy, Anita decided to tell them what they wanted to hear, since it was true after all that Lucy had snatched her man.

Anita tried to put on her most modest smile, "You really didn't have to bring that up, Tiff. It's all in the past now. I've healed," Anita said with a shake of her head.

"Oh, dear! Don't tell me it's true!" Another lady said, and Anita smiled in embarrassment.

"Lucy is really a nice person. You can't blame her for falling for my man. Tom is quite a catch after all," Anita said, and the ladies exchanged a look amongst themselves.

"So you mean she snatched your man? Why did you both speaking with her?" One of the ladies asked with a frown.

"Oh, Anita is much too sweet for her own good. I even offered that we go some place else so she doesn't have to face that backstabbing man snatching lowlife tramp, but she said there was no need to be on bad terms with them, and that she wished them well. Can you imagine anyone so sweet?" Tiffany asked, and the others looked at Anita pitifully.

"You are such a sweet soul, you poor thing," one of the ladies said as she reached out to pat Anita's hand.

Anita smiled awkwardly, "They found love in each other. I can't blame them for that, can I? Maybe I was meant to bring them together. Tom did thank me for helping him find his true love," Anita said with a pained smile, and the ladies exclaimed in outrage.

"No, he didn't do that!"

"He can't be that cold, can he?"

Anita shrugged, "You think you know a person, but you never can really tell how a person is until you go close to them."

"Did you notice he didn't say hello to her? He acted like he didn't even know her!" One of the ladies pointed out, and the others agreed.

"And Lucinda had the guts to approach you with a smile after she stole your man? We should teach her a lesson!" A lady said, and the others nodded in agreement.

"You don't have to. I hold nothing against her. Really. You know, I think I understand her better after seeing that interview about all that happened to her. She deserves to find love and be happy," Anita said with a sweet smile which only infuriated the other ladies the more.

"Not with your man! That is unacceptable! It is because nice people like you allow people like her get away that we have so many ladies doing things like this they're not supposed to do," one of the ladies said.

"What should we do to her? We should teach them a lesson," one of them asked, and as they whispered amongst themselves, Aurora drew closer to them.

"Do you think maybe we could convince one of the staff to tamper with her skin or hair treatment?" One asked, and the others nodded in agreement and one leaned closer to the others.

"You know when Mira and Issa had their fight some months ago, it was really dirty, and they even used some of the girls to ruin each other's treatment. Of course, Tracy had to fire the girls, and canceled Mira's and Issa's membership at the salon, but I'm sure for the right amount, someone here could do it anonymously," one said in a conspiratorial whisper.

"I don't want to be a part of this," Anita said with a shake of her head as she moved away, but not without first exchanging a knowing glance with Tiffany who was more than thrilled to see that her little plan had worked out perfectly.

She couldn't wait to share the news with their mother and Bernice. They would all have a good laugh.

For Tiffany, she was doing this because, like her mother, she wanted Anita's transition as Tom's woman to be smooth. They knew just how easy it was for people to point fingers at the person considered to be the 'other woman'.

Lisa had also been seen as the other woman in her relationship with Ron, since he had been engaged when she met him. Because of this, Lisa didn't really flow well in these circles since she was considered to be the outsider who snatched the fiancé of someone else. No one cared if Lisa and Ron were in love or if Ron's previous relationship was only a business arrangement between two families, since most of them had gotten married by arrangement.

The only thing the ladies here cared about at the end of the day was right and wrong. As far as they were considered it was wrong to go into a relationship with someone who was in a relationship with another. It was wrong to be the reason a relationship comes to an end.

Their mother knew this, and this was why she had wanted Tiffany to accompany Anita to the beauty salon where she had first heard about Tom being the driver of one of his staff. Their mother had

wanted her to start a different kind of rumor here. But who would have thought that the duo would choose that day of all days to show up?

Tiffany had wanted to give up on the plan because of their presence there, but seeing how the other ladies had been talking about Lucy, she had decided to step up and do what she was there to do, so that Anita wouldn't have a hard time after she got Tom back. That way, everyone would be aware that she had always been Tom's woman from the start and had only taken back her man from Lucy.

"That is a new face here. I'm sure she doesn't know much. We could use her," one of the ladies suggested, pointing at Aurora who was standing by the shelf, pretending to be busy while eavesdropping on their conversation.

"Hey, dear! Excuse me!" One of the ladies said, and Aurora walked over to where the ladies sat.

They beckoned her to move closer, and then one of the ladies whispered to her what they wanted her to do.

Away from there in the VIP room, Lucy eyed Tom suspiciously since they were alone now that Aurora had excused herself, "You wanted us to come here because you were aware she would be here, didn't you?" Lucy asked, and Tom smiled.

It was true that he had known Anita was going to be here, and he had wanted to see how Lucy would handle being in the same space with Anita before the anniversary.

He had wanted to also see how Anita would act— whether as a friend or a foe. Apart from wanting them to relax, this had been like a test run to see what would happen at the anniversary dinner and also to witness something else for himself.

"We were going to come here to relax. I already planned..."

"But you knew she would be here, didn't you?" Lucy asked, and Tom sighed.

"Yes, I was aware. I still have someone keeping an eye on her and her family. But I wanted us to come here because on my way home last night Barry sent me something," Tom said as he took out his phone and played a voice recording for Lucy.

It was a conversation between Tiffany and Rebekah.

"Hello, mother! Were you able to find uncle Richard?" Tiffany asked when she received her mother's call the previous evening.

"Not yet, but I have someone on it. How did it go? Were you girls able to find the designer to make your sister's gown?" Rebekah asked.

"No, mother. The designer informed us that the person who bought the gown Anita wanted, also bought the design from him, as a result he can't remake that design but he agreed to make something close to that design."

"Someone bought the design? Did you find out who did that?"

"No, mother. He refused to say," Tiffany said apologetically.

At this point, Lucy paused the recording and looked at Tom, "Is the gown in question one of those the designers brought in yesterday?" She asked, and Tom gave her a nod.

"It's the gown you chose for the anniversary party."

"Did you buy me those clothes because Anita wanted them and you wanted to show off?" Lucy asked with a frown, not wanting to believe that Tom was trying to use her to get to Anita.

The corners of Tom's lips hardened as he looked at Lucy, "I believe you know me, so why don't you tell me?" Tom asked, and Lucy's frowned deepened.

"I wouldn't be asking if I knew," Lucy said, and Tom rubbed the bridge of his nose as he prayed for patience not to get mad at her for implying something like that.

"Did we agree to go shopping or not? Is there anything wrong in seeing a gown I like and paying for it despite knowing that someone I used to know wanted it?" Tom asked, and Lucy sighed.

"Now do you want to keep listening or are you done?" He asked with hand stretched out for his phone, and Lucy looked at him for a moment as though trying to make up her mind if she should believe him or not.

"Alright, I'm sorry I doubted your intentions for a moment. It would have helped if you told me all of this before now," Lucy said, and Tom considered her words for a moment.

"Are we ever going to get to the point where you trust my judgement and action whether or not I explain them to you first?" He asked, and Lucy shrugged.

"That level of trust takes time. We are not there yet, but I believe it's not impossible for us," she said honestly, and Tom held her gaze for a moment before giving her a nod.

With that out of the way, Lucy resumed the recording.

"That's fine. Do not forget to take Anita to the salon spa tomorrow as we discussed...."

"Aren't you forgetting that tomorrow is lunch at Benny's?" Tiffany asked.

"What is so special about the lunch compared to what you're supposed to do? You can be late. Don't worry about it and just make sure Anita is there with you and you bring up the issue of how her friend snatched her man," Rebekah instructed, and Lucy turned to look at Tom when she heard that.

"Anita isn't going to like that. What if she insists on getting her makeover on a weekday?" Tiffany asked, and Rebekah tsked in disapproval.

"You are her big sister. Convince her. If she fails to comply, give me a call. Just make sure you get it done today. I want the story out there already. If things go as planned at the anniversary party, I want people to be talking about how Anita took back her man from her evil friend and how their love prevailed. Imagine us talking about Thomas Hank as Anita's boyfriend at Eric's show! Rebekah Miller and her power puff girls," Rebekah said, and Tiffany laughed.

"Alright, I will do my best to get it done. I will have to take her there before noon so we can finish in time to make it to Benny's for lunch."

"That's fine. Do not disappoint me, Tiff," Rebekah warned before hanging up.

Before Lucy could comment on what she had just learned, Aurora returned with the beauty product she had been recommending to them.

"I was just offered quite an impressive sum of money to mess with your skin," Aurora announced in a singsong voice as she joined them.



"Really?"

"Yeah. You're so lucky I happened to be here. I bet any of the other girls would have accepted their offer considering how huge it is. I'm curious about something though, did you really snatch him from your friend?" Aurora asked as she looked from Lucy to Tom and then back again.

Chapter 533 Don't Stoop....

Evelyn and Jade, who had walked into the reception area of the salon shortly after Aurora left to join Tom and Lucy in the VIP room, were now seated in the backseat behind the ladies, whispering amongst themselves excitedly. At the same time, they waited for Aurora to come back and give them feedback on the task they had assigned her.

Neither of the ladies paid attention to the new people who had joined them as they resumed their gossip.

"Have you been here before?" Jade asked Evelyn since it was her first time visiting that salon spa. She had never been to any in Ludus because she resided in Varis, and Aurora's beauty salon and spa was where she took care of her beauty care.

"No, but I've seen good reviews about their services on Instagram. And since it's situated on Tom's property, I wanted us to have a look. Now that you're moving to Ludus, you could get their membership card before we leave if their services are satisfactory," Evelyn explained, and Jade sighed.

"So, how long do we have to wait? It seems like all these ladies are waiting too," Jade observed.

"I made a reservation for 2 PM, so there is still plenty of time for us to look around the tower to see what Tom did with the place. We got here early," Evelyn said as she glanced at her wristwatch.

She had wanted them to come into the spa early so they could observe the staff and see how they conducted their service before it was time for their appointment. That way, she could cancel if their service was not satisfactory or up to the expected standard.

"Don't worry, we can step out after some time," Evelyn assured Jade as she turned to the young lady seated beside her, who seemed to be in her mid-thirties.

"Are you a regular here, or is this your first time?" She asked, and the lady turned to her with impatient eyes, wanting to focus on the discussion going on in front of them.

"Regular," she said as she returned her attention to the ladies, and Evelyn did the same, wanting to know what was so important about their discussion and why everyone seemed engrossed in it.

"Don't sweat it. We will handle this for you," one of the ladies assured Anita, who kept pleading with them not to go on with their evil plan as she really held no grudges against Tom and Lucy.

"Why did you insist on messing with her skin instead of her hair?" Tiffany asked the lady who had told Aurora what to do.

"She can always get a wig to cover her hair, not her face. He should see her for the monster she is. Let's see if he will want to flaunt her with a blotched face," the lady explained, and the others laughed and commended her wisdom.

"What if Tracy finds out we are involved in this and withdraws our membership?" One of the ladies asked, and another brushed it off dismissively.

"She can't do that to us all. Do you know how many ladies are going to support us and boycott her business if they find out she withdrew our membership because we were teaching that girl a lesson?"

"I wonder who these ladies are conspiring against," Evelyn said to Jade, whose attention was now on her phone.

"Who are they talking about?" Evelyn asked the lady beside her, and this time she was more willing to respond to Evelyn's question since it involved gossip.

"You see that lady," the lady said, pointing at Anita's back. "Apparently, her best friend snatched her man, and the cheating pair had the guts to come in here together. And not only that, her backstabbing best friend was shameless enough to say hello to her. So the ladies decided to teach her a lesson," the lady said, and Evelyn smiled.

"That would serve her right," Evelyn said with a nod of approval. She liked it when women supported women this way.

"You are always too quick to judge. You don't even know the whole story yet, and you're already taking sides," Jade, who had been listening to them, said with disapproval since her mother was fond of doing that. Not long ago, she had done the same thing to Lucy, and here she was doing it again to a stranger without hearing the other side of the story.

The lady looked at Jade with equal disapproval, "What more is there to know? We all saw the cheating couple walk in together, and we saw the way the man ignored her and treated her like she didn't exist."

"That poor girl must have been so hurt," Evelyn said as she stared at Anita's back pitifully.

"And you won't believe she is being so graceful about it. I feel hurt and angry on her behalf. Can you imagine her saying they deserve to be in love and happy? One would think, considering what happened to the backstabber girl, she would have more conscience. But who knows? Maybe all that story she told was a lie. Anyone capable of stealing a friend's man is capable of murder, and I won't feel sorry if she harms that stupid cheat of a man," the lady said spitefully, and Evelyn looked at her in confusion.

"What story did she tell?" Evelyn asked, and the lady was more than eager to tell.

"Some time ago, news of how she murdered a young boy and his family was all over the internet. I think you might have heard or read of them. The man she is dating is Thomas Hank, the CEO of...."

Jade's head snapped up at the mention of her brother's name, and she looked at the lady, "The so-called backstabber they want to teach a lesson is his girlfriend?" She asked, and the lady nodded.

Evelyn exchanged a look with her daughter and then looked at Anita's back. Who was the lady claiming to be Lucy's best friend?

"Are Tom and Lucy here?" Evelyn asked Jade, and the lady looked from mother to daughter with interest.

"I don't know. I haven't seen them all morning," Jade said, and then she took out her phone to dial Lucy's line and Evelyn decided to dial Tom's line.

"Do you know them personally?" She asked, but neither Jade nor Evelyn responded to her question.

Away from there, inside the VIP room, Tom stood in front of Lucy while Aurora, who was still waiting for the couple to answer her question, looked from one to the other.

"Where are we going?" Lucy asked when Tom extended a hand to her.

"Do you think we came here only to relax and hear what they have to say about you?" Tom asked, his hand still outstretched as he waited for Lucy to take it.

"Yes. That is what I came to do. That is what you said we were coming here to do. You said you always wanted to do this...."

"Yes. And I still plan to do so, but we can do that after setting things straight."

"What do you plan to do?" Lucy asked, and Tom raised a brow.

"I intend to confront her in the presence of her audience. She should be able to retell her tale in front of me confidently," Tom said, and Lucy shook her head.

"Is that necessary? You shouldn't stoop to her level. You are bigger than that...."

"Says who?" Tom asked, and Aurora stifled a giggle.

"Tom...."

"It is because she and those with her assume I am bigger than that, is why she must have the boldness to tell such a tale while I am under the same roof as her. I told you before being a CEO doesn't mean jack to me. I plan to live exactly like everyone else, and I won't let my wealth or title get in my way," Tom said, but Lucy didn't budge.

"You confronted her a while ago. What happened to your speech about giving her a reason to plot?" Tom asked, and Lucy shook her head.

"That is different. Besides, we can still expose the truth as planned during the live show. We don't have to do this now. It's good enough that they asked the wrong person to do the job," Lucy pointed out while Aurora watched them, wondering what live show she was talking about.

"Eric's live show and now are separate events. I wouldn't be confronting her this way if she did not sit out there and blatantly lie to everyone to tarnish your image. I didn't come here only to sit back and let her and her sister fill the mind of everyone with hate. Not that I care what any of those ladies out there think about me, but I care what they think and say about you. If we don't confront her now, by the time we leave here, you will be the topic on the lips of every woman who has ever walked through the doors of this spa. If Aurora didn't know us, do you have any idea what could have happened to you? What about the next time you need to come here or go somewhere else? If we don't correct this now, everyone will believe that what she said is the truth, and The damage will have been done before the live show," Tom said, and when he noticed that Lucy was still hesitating, he shook his head.

"If you're not going to come with me, I can as well do what I want to do on my own," Tom said as he dropped his hand to his side as he headed for the door, leaving his phone on his seat.

"What are you doing sitting there? You should go with him. You're lucky you have a man that has your back this way," Aurora said, taking Lucy's hand and pulling her up.

As Lucy took a step towards the door, her phone started ringing, and she glanced at it when she saw the call was from Jade. The call could wait. She had to join Tom.

After now, she and Tom would have to discuss how he brought her here without giving her complete information and yet expected her to go ahead with his plans, Lucy decided as she dropped her phone in her handbag and hurried after Tom leaving behind her handbag and Tom's phone which was also ringing.

"Tom," Lucy called as she caught up with him, with Aurora following closely behind them.

Tom turned to her, getting ready for another argument, "I'm not...."

"I think it's best I confront her myself. I don't want you to stoop to her level," Lucy insisted as she held Tom's gaze, and after a moment, Tom gave her a nod, and they both headed for the reception.

#### Chapter 534 Storytelling

As Tom and Lucy approached the reception area, they both stopped in their track in surprise when they saw Evelyn and Jade standing in front of Anita.

Since Evelyn and Jade were backing them, neither Tom nor Lucy made any attempt to alert them of their presence. Instead, they watched them, wanting to know what was going on.

"Go on. I'd like to hear the story you told these gullible fools. Tell me exactly how Lucy snatched my son from you," Evelyn demanded harshly while some of the ladies who didn't know her gasped in surprise at the realization that the woman in front of them was Evelyn Hank.

Tom exchanged a look with Lucy, both wondering what Evelyn was doing there and how she had known about what was going on. It was obvious that even if they had agreed to ignore it, it wouldn't have gone their way.

"And while she is at it, I hope for all your sakes that no harm is done to Lucy, else I will have every last one of you locked up and the keys thrown away. I care nothing about who you are," Evelyn threatened harshly while the women squirmed in their seats.

Jade looked at her mother and made a mental note to tell her later that she had no right to be so harsh on the ladies when she had been just as gullible as them a moment ago and had foolishly believed what she heard until she found out it was Tom and Lucy they were talking about.

"I'm not part of them. I only listened to what they said," the lady who had been seated beside Evelyn earlier said as she quickly rose to leave, but one glare from Jade and she sat down.

Tiffany stood up, assuming the role of big sister, "My sister doesn't have to repeat anything or say anything to anyone. Let's leave, Anita," Tiffany said, and when Anita rose, Jade stepped in front of her to block her path.

"If either of you takes one more step, I'm going to slap you so hard your head is going to spin," Jade threatened, daring her to take another step.

"You can't...." The rest of Tiffany's words were lost as Evelyn slapped her hard across the face causing the ladies to gasp in surprise.

"I don't make threats or issue warnings. Now sit down and shut your mouth," Evelyn ordered Tiffany, her eyes burning angrily as she turned to Anita.

"Now answer the question!" Evelyn snapped at Anita, but Anita remained quiet as she stared ahead of her without making eye contact with anyone.

She hadn't expected this turn of events, but she would be damned if she bowed her head in shame or let them intimidate her. The Millers don't scare easily.

"Do you know who I am? Who do you think you are to hit..." before Tiffany could finish speaking, Jade slapped her hard to shut her up, and she staggered back, almost losing her balance, but Anita was quick to hold her and help her regain balance.

"I don't give two cents who you are. Sit down and shut your filthy lying mouth!" Jade hissed at her angrily.

The left side of Tiffany's face burned red from the dual slap she had received from mother and daughter, and tears stung her eyes as she reluctantly let Anita lower her to her seat. They were not raised to indulge in physical combat, and there was no way they could leave so easily, so it was best to do as they were told.

Tiffany and Anita lowered themselves to their seat as gracefully as they could without making eye contact with either Evelyn or Jade, who were holding them hostage. From the corner of her eyes, Anita could see Lucy and Tom, and that made her eyes burn with tears of humiliation which she quickly blinked back.

"Mom," Tom called to get his mother's attention, and Evelyn turned from Anita to look at her son and Lucy.

"Why were you not answering your phone? Lucy dear, is everything alright?" Evelyn asked, and Lucy nodded, and the ladies breathed in relief, glad that no harm had come to Lucy since they didn't want any problems for themselves and their families.

"Aurora, what are you doing here?" Jade called in surprise when she saw Aurora standing beside Lucy with a grin on her face, obviously enjoying the show.

"I was just getting acquainted with your brother and his girlfriend. Thankfully, these ladies assumed I was a new staff here and offered me some money to tamper with Lucy's skin care," Aurora said, her eyes brimming with excitement, and the ladies shrunk into their seats while Tiffany turned her face to the side.

"Aurora?" Evelyn asked, looking at Jade to confirm if the name sounded familiar because she was the one they had talked about earlier who was going out on a date with Harry, and Jade nodded.

"What is going on here?" Tracy, the owner of the spa, asked as she stepped out of her office after one of her staff came to inform her of what was going on at the reception.

"These ladies offered me a huge sum to tamper with Lucy's skincare," Aurora informed her friend, and Tracy looked at her in disbelief.

"What? Why would they do something like that?" Tracy asked as she looked at the ladies seated in front of her, taking note of Tiffany's red cheeks.

"My sister and I had no part in it. It was all their idea," Anita said stiffly, and Tiffany nodded in agreement since Anita had kept trying to convince them not to harm Lucy even though they both knew she had done that to free herself from the consequence if they were caught.

"But they were going to do it because you incited them with your tale. Why not repeat what you said to them in front of us," Lucy asked, stepping forward since this was between Anita and her.

"I think you all need to take whatever this is out of...." Tracy snapped her mouth shut when Evelyn, Jade, and Lucy turned to glare at her.

"You should be grateful we are only talking here. If anything had happened to Lucy, this place would have been shut down," Evelyn assured Tracy.

Seeing how the three ladies in his life were handling the issue, Tom stood aside with hands in his pocket as he watched the scene unfold with a blank expression.

Anita's eyes filled with hatred as she stood to face Lucy, "I told them exactly what happened. I dated Tom first. Tom was my man until you showed up, pretended to be my friend, and snatched him despite knowing how I felt about him," Anita said spitefully.

"I pretended to be your friend and snatched your man despite knowing how you feel about him; is exactly what happened? Is that so?" Lucy repeated her tone, a mix of amusement and incredulity.

"Is that what you tell yourself? That I showed up and snatched your man? Does that take away your sense of shame and help you sleep better at night? I was going to ignore this because I didn't want to stoop to your level, but now I'm grateful that Tom insisted we confront you and expose you for the shameless gold-digging liar you are," Lucy said as she turned around and walked away from Anita.

Everyone looked at her, wondering where she was going and what she wanted to do, and they were all surprised when she returned with a single chair and placed it in front of Anita before sitting down, facing everyone else.

Evelyn and Jade let her take over while they stood beside her, daring everyone in front of them to leave until they were done.

"Since you are here, and your audience is still here, you don't have to retell anything. I will speak for myself and tell my own part of the story so I can strip off whatever it is you have used to cover your shame," Lucy said as her gaze moved to the ladies who were still squirming but didn't make any move to leave because apart from the fact that they were not allowed to leave, they also wanted to watch the drama play out between Lucy and Anita.

By now, the audience had increased. A couple of the staff who were out to get the next set of customers on their list, and some of the ladies who had been inside receiving their treatments and were about to leave, now stood there at the reception to see what was going on.

"Not that I owe anyone here any explanation, but you should at least find out whether or not I deserved whatever you plotted against me," Lucy said while Anita picked up her handbag.

"I don't have to stand here...."

"You are right. You don't have to stand," Lucy cut in rudely.

"You can sit if you please, but what you will not do, is take a step out of here. You won't leave this place until I'm done," Lucy said firmly, jerking her head to Anita's seat for her to sit down.

#### Chapter 535 Public Battle

When Lucy waited for some seconds, and Anita didn't sit, she shrugged dismissively and went on as she faced her audience, "Yes, it is true that Anita dated Tom before me," Lucy admitted and waited for the ladies to silently judge her with their eyes as she knew they would.

"It is also true that I pretended to be her friend. I never cared about being friends with her. There wasn't a single thing I liked about her," Lucy said with a careless tone she could only have gotten from Sonia.

"What is not true, however, is that I snatched her man. At the time I approached her, Tom here was pretending to be my driver. He even moved into the apartment next to mine just so he could be close to me," Lucy said smugly. The women exchanged a look amongst themselves, each wondering why they had forgotten that vital part of the interview when Tom and Lucy had talked about meeting at a club.

"I never knew of her existence, and that is because she and Tom had already broken up. Oh, have I mentioned that they both broke up because she thought he was a handyman and treated him like he was nothing without knowing he was actually Thomas Hank? She," Lucy said, and everyone started murmuring amongst themselves while Tiffany bowed her head.

Anita lifted her chin, "That is..."

"Shut it! You don't get to talk now. We asked you to speak, but you refused, so you only get to listen now," Jade snapped at her.

"Thanks to Anita, I met Tom for the first time at the club they were supposed to meet, but she failed to show up because she was not interested in dating a nobody. I only found out about that much later and..."

"You have...."

"Not another word, Anita. Not a single word. Do not interrupt me," Lucy warned as she rose from her seat to face Anita.

"At the time I met Tom, I was not interested in a relationship. And that was a fact I made clear even to you, yet you tried to set me up with him thinking he was my driver. I admit that at some point, I too was foolish enough to try to hook you up with him because I thought maybe Tom was interested in you, and I wanted him to stop bugging me. However, that was only until he told me how you used to be his girlfriend. The man I fell in love with was Tom, my driver. And that was before I ever knew he was the CEO. So who exactly did I snatch from you, Anita? Thomas Hank, the CEO, or the handyman, Tom?" Lucy asked calmly, but Anita said nothing, and everyone began to murmur and make side comments.

"What? Cat got your tongue? You can't answer the question?" the lady who had offered Aurora the money asked Anita harshly.

"Stay out of this," Lucy hissed at the lady. She was doing this to get square with Anita and not because she wanted anyone to take her side.

"Go on. I'm waiting for you to counter one thing I've said, you filthy gold-digger!"

Seeing that she was losing to Lucy, Anita decided to go all the way, "Golddigger? Pfft! I don't have to counter anything you said. It doesn't change anything. Just don't stand there sounding all self righteous and pretending like you didn't know who he was the whole time, you calculating murderer!" Anita hissed at her, and all the ladies looked at Anita, who had been acting all sweet and graceful earlier, in surprise.

With each word that left Anita's lips, Lucy felt the flames of anger igniting inside her. She remembered the scandal that had been engineered by Anita and how she had hidden herself to weep, how she had endured the whispers and hate speech. How even now, they were plotting to make sure she was absent from the anniversary and planning to tear her away from Tom's side.

"Why don't you say that one more time?" Lucy dared her.

"What? You can't?" Lucy asked, and Anita gave her a condescending look.

"Everyone heard me the first time. I said what I..."

Without waiting for her to complete her sentence, Lucy slapped her to shut her up making Anita fall back in surprise into her seat.

"Do you have any idea how long I've been wanting to hit you? Thanks for giving me a valid reason to do it publicly," Lucy said, feeling her whole body burn with anger and hatred for Anita as she longed to her again.

"Who do you think you are to spread such lies about me? Who do you think you are to call me a murderer? What gave you the boldness to release such details of my past to the world?" Lucy shrieked angrily, her whole body trembling with rage.

Everyone else watched in confusion, wondering what Lucy was talking about. Jade turned to Tom, wondering if it was okay for Lucy to reveal their knowledge of that detail to Anita yet.

For the first time, Anita looked stunned. She was surprised at the fact that Lucy knew what she had done. How did she know about it? If she had known why had she been silent this whole time? Why didn't either she or Tom confront her?

"Did you think I would never find out that you paid those people to release that horrible story about me?" Lucy asked when she saw the surprise on Anita's face, and all eyes turned to Anita in surprise.

"How long did you think I would be able to keep my calm after swallowing your nonsense for this long? You released that hateful news about me yet called to check on me, pretending to be my friend, and you had the guts to stand here and claim I pretended to be your friend? How dare you spread such hateful lies about me while I am under the same roof as you?" Lucy asked as she hit the other side of Anita's cheek angrily.



Although a part of Tiffany wanted to take her sister's side, she was too embarrassed by her to do so. She didn't want to be involved in Anita's mess. How could Anita have been careless enough to have allowed herself to be caught? Their mother was going to be very pissed if she heard all this.

Tiffany did not bother to take out her phone, which was vibrating in her handbag, since she suspected it was their mother calling to find out how everything was going. She couldn't tell her this now.

"You wanted my attention, now you have it. The battle between us was silent until now, but today you have made it public, and I hope you are ready for whatever I'm going to do. I intend to fight dirty going forward. I will stoop as low as you and even go lower than you if I have to, but I will make sure I drag you down to the very level a spineless swine like you belongs, and I will step all over you to climb back up. Tom is my man, and there is nothing you or anyone else can do about it!" Lucy promised, and without another word, she turned around and walked away from there, returning to the VIP room.

Seeing that Lucy was done, Tom stepped forward and faced the spa owner, "From this moment, I do not want any of these ladies on my property," Tom said and turned to Jade.

"Get their details from her. It should be sent to every I-Global establishment and property," Tom told Jade, and once she gave him a nod, he walked away, completely ignoring Anita.

"You are all so lucky that no harm came to either of them. You really should thank your stars," Evelyn hissed at them as she went in search of Tom and Lucy, leaving Jade alone with Aurora and Tracy, the spa owner.

Almost at once, all the ladies turned on each other, casting blames and yelling, and without uttering a word, Tiffany sneaked away from there, leaving a stunned Anita to follow suit if she wanted.

All the ladies snarled insults at Anita, calling her all manner of names, leaving the spa owner with no choice but to call security to escort them out.

Anita did her best to keep her head held high as she walked out of the spa without making eye contact with anyone. By the time she got to the parking lot, Tiffany had left already, so she boarded a cab.

After she got into the back seat of the cab and told the driver where she was headed, she let herself give in to the tears of humiliation, and she sobbed quietly until the car pulled to a stop in front of her house.

By the time she paid the driver and got out of the cab, her eyes were dry, and she was back to being Anita Miller again. Her mother did not raise her to be weak. She still had to pick up Lisa so they could head to Benny's house for the family lunch.

Chapter 536 Angry

Once Lucy walked into the VIP room where Aurora was to attend to them, she picked up her handbag and headed for the door, but before she could leave, Tom walked in.

"Where are you going?" Tom asked, and Lucy turned to him, her face flushed and her gray eyes still blazing with anger.

"Home. I'm done here. I'm going home," Lucy stated simply.

"But we are yet to get the massage and skinca...."

"Do I look like I'm in the mood for any of that right now? Maybe you should have thought of that carefully before bringing me here without informing me about anything," Lucy snapped at him angrily.

"I thought we already resolved that?" Tom asked, and Lucy glared at him.

"Did we? Because last I remember, you were walking out that door angrily like I had no right to refuse to go along with a plan you failed to inform me about!" Lucy hissed at him.

Tom sighed, "You are right. I should have told you. I'm sorry," Tom said, but that did nothing to relax Lucy, who was still boiling. She still had a lot of anger left in her, and an apology was in no way going to stop her from expressing her displeasure.

"Why would you make me believe we were coming here to relax when you had other things in mind? What exactly was your plan?" Lucy hissed angrily while Tom watched her.

It was the first time she was getting this mad at him since the day he revealed his identity to her. Although he was sorry he withheld such information from her and upset her, a twisted part of him sort of liked it.

He didn't realize he was smiling until Lucy flung her handbag at him angrily, "What are you smiling about? Do you find this funny?" She asked, glaring at him, and the grin vanished from Tom's face as he raised both hands.

"By God, I don't. I screwed up, and I'm sorry. This won't ever happen again," Tom pleaded as he took a step towards her, careful to step over her bag.

"It had better not! Do you have any idea how I felt knowing you brought me here because you knew they would be here?" Lucy asked, and Tom reached for her before she could move away.

"No, I don't. Why don't you tell me?" Tom said calmly as he held her waist to keep her from moving away.

"Don't touch me!" She hissed as she tried to wriggle away, and Tom kissed her.

She continued to struggle against him, but Tom held her firmly. Although she was tempted to bite his lips to teach him a lesson, she tried to rein in her temper. She wasn't the type to hurt someone she loved because she was upset.

When she stopped struggling, Tom stopped kissing her and looked at her, "Your five minutes are up," he reminded her, and she scowled.

Lucy took a deep breath as she struggled to bring her temper under control. Tom was being too reasonable right now, and it was taking the fight out of her.

"I'm sorry. I really am. And I promise you, I will never repeat this," Tom said as he placed a finger under her chin and raised her face so she would meet his gaze, but Lucy refused to look directly at him since it was hard for her to make eye contact when she was upset.

"Your five minutes of anger is up, and just so you know, you're eating into your next five minutes. That means the next time I upset you, you have less time to stay mad," Tom said, and she glared at him.

"Are you already planning to get me mad?"

"As much as I know, I will do my best not to get you mad. I'm human. So it's natural that I might offend you without meaning to," Tom said as he kissed the crease on her forehead, and then he planted a kiss on both sides of her cheeks and then the tip of her nose, and he moved to her chin, and by the time he got to her lips, a smile was already tugging on them.

"I really do not appreciate what you did," Lucy said as she finally met his gaze.

"I know. I'm sorry," Tom said as he embraced her, and she sighed.

When she didn't hug him back, Tom took both her hands and placed them behind him, making her giggle as she held him.

"Have I told you, you look sexy as hell when you are pissed?" Tom murmured against her hair, and Lucy scoffed.

"There is nothing sexy about hell."

"I'm serious. You look so beautiful. I should work on annoying you more often," Tom joked, and Lucy jabbed his ribs with her fist.

"Is my anger a joke to you?" She asked as she pulled away.

"No, it's not. But I can't deny that I find it sexy. And what I particularly found sexy was that line about Tom being your man. That was so hot," Tom said with a wink, and Lucy giggled.

They both turned when Evelyn cleared her throat, "Now that you are both done fighting, can I come in?" She asked from the doorway, and Lucy blushed at the thought that Evelyn had been watching her display of anger the whole time.

"We were not fighting," Tom said as he bent to pick up Lucy's handbag and placed a possessive hand around her waist.

"Thankfully so," Evelyn said, glad that everything was okay between them.

"How did you know we were here?" Tom asked before Evelyn could speak, and she raised a brow.

"By here, do you mean this room?"

"The spa."

"Jade and I came out together. We had no idea you were here until we heard the ladies talking," Evelyn explained.

"So you both just happened to be here?" Tom asked, finding it hard to believe it was a coincidence, and Evelyn raised a brow.

"Is there a reason you find that hard to believe?" Evelyn asked, and without waiting for his response, she jerked her head to the door, "What do you plan to do about that insolent girl?"

"Let's talk about that some other time," Tom said, and Evelyn gave him a nod before looking at Lucy.

"You handled her real good, my dear. Now don't be mad anymore and get your beauty treatment. And make sure to scrub the hand you used to touch filth. See you at home," Evelyn said before walking away.

Once she left, Tom turned to Lucy, "I learned something interesting today."

"Which is?"

"The fact that all the women in my life have violent tendencies. Is your hand okay? You slapped her really hard. It's a wonder her neck didn't snap," He said as he raised the hand with which she had slapped Anita and massaged her palm with his hands.

"I'm alright. Do you think Jade will be fine? I mean, she is a lawyer. Doesn't her action go against her profession? Hitting them when she could have threatened to have them arrested...."

"Jade has a rash temper. She hates bullies and can't stand disrespect of any kind. She used to get into fights a lot in high school...."

"That wasn't the only reason I hit her," Jade cut in as she and Aurora walked into the room, and Tom and Lucy looked at her.

"Threatening them with the law won't do. Their family is connected by marriage to the Chief Justice. Did you forget? Besides, if we decide to take any legal action, it means you are ready to reveal every card you hold against them, and I can't let you deprive me of the joy of watching their disgrace on a live show. So, you see? The least I could was hit her insolent face. They can't pursue this by suing me because they know they are the guilty ones, and even if they do, the old man won't let it," Jade explained reasonably while Aurora set out to organize all they needed for the massage, facials, and skin treatment.

"What old man?" Lucy asked, and Jade looked at Tom.

"She doesn't know about grandfather?" Jade asked, and Tom shrugged while Lucy looked at Tom with questioning eyes.

"Thanks to you, she knows now," Tom said before looking at Lucy.

"Our grandfather is Lawrence Hank, one-time president," Tom explained casually in a way that told Lucy not to make a big deal out of it.

"Ah! I see," Lucy said, and although she had a lot of questions, she chose not to ask any.

Aurora, who was listening to their conversation while carrying on her business, cast Lucy an amused glance since that was the last way she would have expected her to react to such information.

"I got all the names and details of the ladies as you requested. What should I do with them?" Jade asked Tom.

"Thanks. You can send the list to my email. I will have it taken care of by Monday," Tom said before turning to Lucy.

"Do you still want to leave?" Tom asked Lucy, and Aurora raised a brow.

"Leave? We haven't even started yet. Don't tell me you are scared that something might go wrong," Aurora said, and Lucy smiled at her.

Even if she were no longer in the mood for any of this, she would have to do it for the sake of Aurora, who had been looking forward to bonding with them during the whole process, and who had also spent so much time consulting with them so she would know the condition of their skin and tailor their individual treatment to their specific needs. She had talked them through the various stages of the treatment, explaining the purpose and benefits of each and educating them on skincare and the benefits of visiting a spa. It was only fitting she received her first experience from her.

"No, I'm not. Thanks for helping me. We can start when you are ready," Lucy said, and Aurora beamed a smile at her.

"Alright. I've set out your robes, towels, and disposable undies. You can go into your private changing room and take off your clothes as we discussed already. There are flip flops too. I made a random guess on your sizes," Aurora said as she pointed them in the right direction, and they thanked her as they left.

Alone with Jade now, she smiled, "I have to get to work. Too bad they came first, else I would have taken care of you," Aurora said, and Jade waved it off with a smile.

"It's fine. Lucy should get a taste of all the special treatments I've enjoyed in your hands. And seeing as I won't be living in Varis anymore, I need to start finding someone else to take care of my skin," Jade said, and Aurora raised a brow.

"You won't be living in Varis anymore? Why am I just learning of this?" Aurora asked with a hurt expression.

"It's a complicated story. Why don't we talk about it later? Maybe we can meet sometime...."

"Perhaps we can talk about it during our double date?" Aurora asked with a bright smile that made Jade feel guilty.

It was impossible to get close to Aurora and not be drawn to her sunny and cheerful personality. Maybe this was why she was so worried about Aurora meeting with Harry--not because she didn't like Aurora but because Aurora was a very sweet and lovable person, and she feared Harry might fall for her charms.

It was silly of her to think so, but she couldn't help it, and she felt terrible about their love triangle. This was all a Jade problem and not an Aurora problem.

Thanks to her mother, who had talked some sense into her, she could see clearly now that Harry was right. Aurora was a good friend, and she didn't deserve to find out about her and Harry any other way than from Harry himself.

And she also owed Aurora an apology and a proper explanation, but that would be only after Harry must have spoken with her.

"I'm sorry, I kind of suggested that on impulse," Jade said with an apologetic smile.

"I don't have a boyfriend, and I think I should let you have your time alone with Harry. Maybe we can both hang out alone before you leave Ludus," Jade suggested, and Aurora nodded.

"Alright. Let's do that. See you some other time then," Aurora said as she embraced Jade, and Jade waved at her as she walked out of the VIP room.

## Chapter 537 Big Sister

Anita pasted a smile on her face as she watched Lisa and her husband walk down the stairs to join her in the living room where she had been waiting for them since the housekeeper let her into the house.

"Hello, Anita. It's been a while," Lisa's husband greeted cheerfully.

"How is my favorite brother-in-law doing?" Anita asked, and Ron grinned.

"Don't let your mother hear you. I'm certain if she had her way she would want even my angel to hate me and probably divorce me," Ron said, and Lisa slapped his arm playfully.

"Don't say that. Mother doesn't dislike you that much," Lisa said in her mother's defense.

"Oh, yes she does. And we all know that the only reason she tolerates me is because I'm not poor. If I were poor she would never let any of her daughters smile at me," Ron said, and both sisters giggled.

"That's true," Anita said, bending her lips to the side.

"That's why you are my favorite sister-in-law. By far the smartest too," Ron said, and Anita grinned at him.

"I know, right?" She asked as she glanced at her wristwatch. She couldn't deny that she was no longer as enthusiastic about the family lunch as she had been earlier. She knew without a doubt that their mother would find out about what had happened soon enough. That was if Tiffany had not informed her of it already. And then she was going to be scolded and talked down on the whole time. No, she wasn't looking forward to that.

"Make sure you take care of my angel. No alcohols. Make sure she eats healthy, and bring her back home early enough. She gets easily exhausted lately. Also...."

"Calm down, Ron. It's just for a couple of hours. I'm not going to spend a week there," Lisa cut in with a grin, and Anita smiled as she watched them.

"I know. I'm just worried. I'm not there to look after my babies, and..."

"You would be there to look after your babies if you didn't choose to stay back home," Lisa pointed out with a pout.

"Let's not get into that, darling. You know very well, that I can't stand your mother and elder sisters. They can't stand me either...."

"Guys will be there. Adam and Jack will be there...."

"I don't exactly roll in the same circle with those two either," Ron said with a wince.

"You don't get along with anyone in my family...."

"I get along quite well with Anita. Isn't that right, smartie?" Ron asked as he placed an arm around Anita's shoulders, and she grinned at him as she patted his hand fondly.

"True. We get along really well," Anita said, and Ron pecked her cheek.

"Good. So take good care of your sister, alright? Call me if she so much as complains of a muscle twitch and I'll be there faster than the speed of light," Ron said as he moved away from Anita to kiss his wife.

Lisa sighed, "I will be fine. It's not even close to my potential day of delivery yet," Lisa said as her husband led them outside.

"Two weeks is close enough. The doctor said so," Ron said, and then turned to Anita with a grin.

"I will be a dad in two weeks," he said with a proud smile, and Anita smiled back.

"And I will be an aunt. Make sure you call me when it's time to go to the hospital. I will love to be there," Anita said, and Ron gave her a nod.

"Sure, I will. I will need someone to pour some water on me if I pass out after all," Ron joked, and all three of them laughed as they got to Anita's car.

Ron held out the driver's door for Anita to get in, before leading his wife around to the passenger side. He kissed her lips, "Be good, alright?" He said as he opened the door and she gave him a nod.

"Yeah. And try not to miss me too much," Lisa said, and Ron stuck out his lower lip.

"I miss you already. Make sure you have fun and don't let your mother talk you into leaving me no matter what, okay?" He said, and she giggled as she got into the car which Anita had already started.

"She is not that bad," Lisa said, but Ron said nothing as he shut the door.

He knew enough about her mother to know she was that bad. But there was no reason to tell her that. He didn't like the woman, but he loved the woman's daughter, and for that reason, he wouldn't tell his wife just how well he knew her mother and what she was capable of.

"I love you," Ron called to his wife as Anita drove off.

"Do you think mother hates Ron?" Lisa asked after she had fastened her seatbelt and Anita shrugged.

"I wonder why they don't get along despite the fact that he is rich. Or perhaps she doesn't like him much because she didn't choose him for you herself?" Anita asked, and Lisa shrugged.

"I don't know. It bothers me at times. You know, going to family gatherings like this without Ron," Lisa said with a sigh.

"Well, if it's any consolation, what you have with your husband is beautiful. And it's better to have a wealthy husband that dotes on you the way Ron does than to have one who doesn't care about you, yet shows up in family gatherings," Anita said, and Lisa smiled.

"That's true. I'm hoping you will put that into consideration when settling down too. Don't just sit back and allow mother to choose your man. Your happiness is your own responsibility," Lisa advised, and Anita nodded without saying anything.

"Are you okay?" Lisa asked after a while as she looked at Anita's face.

Anita bobbed her head, "I'm fine," Anita said, flashing her a false smile, but Lisa was not convinced.

"Okay. Tell me. What's wrong?" Lisa asked, and Anita raised a brow.

"Why do you think anything is wrong? I'm fine," Anita assured her.

"No, you are not. I saw the fake smile on your face when I came downstairs. And your voice has a tinge of something... should I call it worry or sadness?" She asked with concern, and Anita smiled.

This was the reason she loved Lisa the most among her sisters. Lisa was more attentive, thoughtful, caring, and considerate. She knew without a fact that if it was Lisa who had followed her to the spa, Lisa would never have left her behind. Lisa would never have let any of that happen in the first place.

Anita's lips wobbled as she tried to find the right words to tell Lisa all that was going on with her, "Pull over," Lisa said when she noticed the distress on Anita's face.

"We will be late," Anita said, and Lisa waved it off.

"I don't care about keeping them waiting. I want to know what's wrong with you," Lisa insisted, and then joked, "We can just lie against the baby if you're scared mother will scold you. Tell her the baby delayed us," Lisa said, and Anita's lips twitched as she pulled over by the roadside.

Once she parked the car, Lisa took her hand, "What is the problem, Annie? You can talk to your big sister and I will make it alright," Lisa said with concern that made Anita break into a sob.

"Oh, dear!" Lisa exclaimed softly as she unfastened her seat belt and turned in her seat to embrace Anita.

Anita wasn't one to easily give in to tears, because their mother had raised them to believe tears were a sign of weakness, and the only time they were supposed to use it was as a weapon to get what they wanted from the opposite sex. So seeing Anita cry, told her that something was really wrong.

Lisa didn't ask her any questions as she allowed her to cry, and after she had cried to her heart's content, she pulled away and looked at Lisa, "I'm sorry," she said with a snuffle when she noticed she had stained Lisa's peach-colored dress.

"It's fine. I need to start practicing having stains on my clothes for when your niece comes," Lisa said with an easy smile as she patted Anita's hair fondly. Perhaps it was her pregnancy, she was feeling maternal towards her kid sister.

"Talk to me. What is the problem?" Lisa asked, and Anita took a deep breath before telling her what had happened at the spa.



She tried to be as honest as she could despite knowing that Lisa would scold her, and by the time she was done, Lisa sighed deeply.

"And Tiffany? What did she do?"

"She left without a word."

"I can't believe that Tiffany left you there after creating such a mess for you," Lisa hissed in annoyance.

"She didn't. She only tried to help, and I was the one...."

"Oh, Annie! You are still so naive if you don't realize what happened there. Tiffany would never do anything that mother didn't ask her to do. Don't you already know that by now? Do you think mother asked her to take you there only because she wanted you to look your best? Mother is always calculating. She does nothing without thinking of a way to get something else out of it, believe me. Isn't that the same salon Tiffany overheard them talking about Tom and Lucy the first time? Didn't she say the source was one of Tom's employees?" Lisa asked, and a confused line formed on Anita's brows.

"Yes. Why?"

"If Lucy and Tom had not been there, or if the news had not gotten to them and they reacted the way they did, what do you think would have happened? Don't stress your brain, I will tell you. The news would have spread like wildfire, in the same way, Ron's ex-fiancee spread the news of her breakup with Ron by accusing me of snatching him from her. And the news would have eventually gotten to I-Global and caused a lot of damage to Lucy at the company. Do you know how people treat ladies that snatch other people's men? I wasn't even friends with Ron's ex-fiancee, yet I was treated so badly and mother knew all about it. Now can you imagine how it would have been for Lucy, who you claimed was your friend?" Lisa asked, and Anita narrowed her eyes.

"You think mother asked Tiffany to raise the subject there?" Anita asked since she had assumed that Tiffany had brought up the subject simply because the ladies there had been singing praises of Lucy and she had wanted to make her feel better.

"I don't think. I can assure you that is exactly what happened. And when we get to Benny's you will find out for yourself," Lisa said confidently.

"But if that was the case why didn't Tiffany inform me she planned to do such a thing? Why didn't mother say anything?" Anita asked, and Lisa scoffed.

"Since when did mother need your permission to do anything?" Lisa asked, and Anita sighed.

"Now listen, you were wrong in doing what you did. I've told you countless times, leave Tom and Lucy alone. If you are wise, you would apologize to them and be on good terms with them. You don't have to be friends with them since I doubt they would want to be friends with you, especially after this nonsense you did. But I think you should apologize to them and make peace...."

"But...."

"Just listen to me! No buts! You can't afford to have them as your enemies. Tom is your boss..."

"I'm quitting my job," Anita said, and Lisa looked at her with disapproval.

"So?"

"So it doesn't matter if they're my enemies or not. We won't be seeing each other anymore," Anita said matter of factly.

"And why are you leaving your job?"

"Are you seriously asking me why? I can't possibly keep working for Tom after everything. I planned on quitting before now, and today's incident has only reinforced my conviction. I can no longer work there," Anita said, and Lisa shook her head, feeling very disappointed and sad at the same time. She wished their father was alive. Anita would never have turned out this way under their father's watchful eyes. Or maybe not. Seeing how Bernice and Tiffany who were the oldest had turned out.

#### Chapter 538 Family Time

Anita frowned as she looked at Lisa, "Say it," she said with a sigh, knowing that Lisa had a lot she wanted to say.

"You are leaving a good job because you are unnecessarily, and stupidly proud and stubborn. I'm not going to stop from quitting your job if that is what you want. Do what you please with your career. I know mother acts like she has all the right connections in the world so you must feel untouchable, but trust me when I say it is better for you to be friends with Tom and Lucy than to make them your enemies, whether or not you're quitting your job. For them to know you were behind that scandal, they must have evidence against you. What will you do if she decides to press charges? Oh, don't tell me. I know. Call in favor from your chief judge in-law, I'm sure. Does your conscience not prick you even a little? Why do you keep allowing mother who has lived her life to the fullest to dictate your life? You have your life ahead of you and there are so many good men out there that you can have so why..."

"Good wealthy men like Ron?" Anita asked, and Lisa grinned as she usually did whenever her husband's name was mentioned.

"Yes. Good wealthy men that will love you and worship the ground you step on. It doesn't have to be Tom. And it is stupid of you to try anything to ruin their relationship. You can never be happy if all you keep doing is finding ways to sabotage their relationship. I told you before, even if Tom leaves Lucy, he will never come back to you. I wouldn't if I were him. And from the reaction of his mother and sister, you can see that their relationship is pretty much sealed. It is foolish of you to want to destroy what they have for something you can't have. How would you feel if Ron's ex keeps trying to destroy what I have with Ron?" Lisa asked, and for the first time, Anita got what Lisa was saying.

"What you have with Ron is beautiful. It shouldn't be destroyed," Anita said, and Lisa smiled as she nodded.

"Exactly. And you say this because I'm your sister and you know us. You know our love story. Set aside your jealousy and foolish grievance and think about what Tom and Lucy share. Isn't it beautiful?" Lisa asked, and Anita was quiet for some time.

"It is."

"Now once again, set aside your annoyance and think of Lucy as a person. Not Tom's girlfriend. Think about her as you once did before you knew she was going out with Tom. Was she wicked or

unfair to you? Does she deserve anything you and mother are doing?" Lisa asked, and when Anita opened her mouth to respond she shook her head.

"No. I said you should think. It takes time. Take a minute and really reflect on it. Ask yourself, aside from being in love with Tom, did Lucy do anything to deserve what I'm doing or what I plan to do?" Lisa asked, and Anita paused as she thought about it and after some time she shook her head.

"No. She did nothing wrong," Anita admitted.

"And Tom? Was he wrong in choosing the woman that loved and chose him when he was a nobody over the one that rejected him?"

Anita sighed, "He was wrong to deceive me...."

"I remember the last time we spoke, you told me he apologized about that," Lisa reminded her, and Anita sighed once again.

"Yes, he did."

"Good. Now, why are you allowing mother to lead you in such a destructive path? Haven't you learned from Bernice and Tiffany? Nothing good can come out of mother's plan for you," Lisa said, and Anita sighed.

"But she will cut me off if I go against her," Anita said, and Lisa smiled.

"I think that might be the best thing that could ever happen to you. Leaving mother's unhealthy nest. Her nest drains you of positive energy and common sense. With mother, you can't use your brain. She thinks for you. I won't be surprised if we get there and she influences you once again and you decide to continue on this pointless quest," Lisa said as she continued to look at Anita with kind eyes.

"You are better than this, Anita. I know you. You are not so stupid and shallow. For once, make good use of your brain and do what is right," Lisa said with a yawn.

"Alright."

"Alright?" Lisa asked, and Anita nodded.

"I'm exhausted of it all already. Honestly, I already made up my mind to let go. But mother already has plans...."

"Then let's ruin her plans. Since you can't outrightly disobey right now. Let's ruin her plans until she gets tired and gives up on them. And maybe by then, you would have summoned enough courage to defile her to her face," Lisa suggested, and Anita smiled.

"Mother will have our heads if she ever finds out we did anything," Anita said, and Lisa smiled.

"Don't worry, I'm sure Ron will protect us. And if you've really given up on Tom, I can get Ron to hook you up with a couple of his nice single friends, and then you can find your own man," Lisa said, and Anita giggled.

"No. I think I need a break. I need to find out what I really want before going into anything with anyone. I need to put my life in order and make good use of my brain. I've been thinking. After I quit my job I will like to leave here. I mean relocate. Away from mother," Anita added, and Lisa smiled.

"I would hate for you to leave me and go far away, but if it's mother you're running from, I could even offer you Ron's jet to go as far away as you can," Lisa said, and Anita laughed.

"Let it remain between us. I don't want mother or the others to know of it until my mind is made up," Anita said, and Lisa gave her a nod.

"Sure. Hopefully, that will make mother give up on Tom and Lucy too," Lisa said, and Anita nodded.

"You still owe them an apology," Lisa reminded her.

"No, I can't."

"You can. And you will. I will come with you if you want. But you have to apologize to them sincerely. You hurt her not once but twice. You released such hurtful news about her past, and then you deliberately tried to paint her in a bad light. You need to let her know you are sorry. I would want Ron's ex to apologize to me," Lisa said, and Anita sighed.

"Alright. I will think about it. We are late. Fasten your seatbelt," Anita said as she returned the car to the road and Lisa did as she was told.

"Have I ever told you, you are my favorite Miller?" Anita asked, and Lisa giggled.

"I'm no longer a Miller. I'm a Steel."

"With a backbone made of steel," Anita joked, and they both laughed.

"Thanks, Lis. I love you," Anita said, feeling better now than she had felt earlier.

"I love you too. And don't worry, I won't sit back and let mother scold you. I have your back," Lisa promised.

Less than thirty minutes later, as she pulled into Benny's parking lot, Anita turned to Lisa when they saw Tiffany's car at the parking lot.

"Tiffany is here already," Anita said, and Lisa shook her head.

"It's not unexpected. She has always been the most selfish and self-centered of us all. It's not hard to see why she is mother's favorite," Lisa said, and Anita smiled.

"What do you have against mother?" Anita asked, and Lisa shook her head.

"Do I need to have anything against her to not like her nature?" she asked, but Anita knew there was more to it. Lisa had always disapproved of their mother, but she had only done so silently until some years back during her final year in college.

"Let's go in," Lisa said as she unfastened her seatbelt and got out of the car, leaving Anita to do the same.

Once they got into the house, Bernice's housekeeper informed them that the others were having lunch at the backyard, and they headed there.

"Aunt Lisa!"

"Aunt Anita!" the boys exclaimed excitedly as they launched at their their aunts, but Anita was quick to step in front of one of the boys to stop him from jumping on Lisa.

Lisa laughed as she watched Anita catch the boys and embrace them, "You can't throw yourself at Lisa that way. Do you want to hurt your little cousin?" Anita asked, and they shook their head.

"I wasn't going to hurt her," the little boy said, and Lisa smiled as she patted his head.

"It's been a while since I last set eyes on you munchkins. You seem to have grown taller," Lisa said, narrowing her eyes at them.

"What's your plan? To grow bigger than my baby so she doesn't have playmates?" she asked, and Anita turned to her with wide eyes.

"It's really going to be a girl?" Anita asked, and Lisa grinned.

"I was going to surprise you with that," Lisa said, and the little boys shot out to announce to their mother that aunt Lisa was having a girl.

"That's so good. I can't wait to meet her," Anita said as she gazed at Lisa's abdomen.

"I think she can't wait to meet you too. She responded," Lisa said with a wide grin as she took Anita's hand and placed it on her abdomen.

Anita's eyes lit up with wonder when she felt the baby's movement, "She is saying hello to her beautiful aunt," Lisa said with a happy smile.

"Oh, Lisa!" Anita said with a happy smile which quickly wiped off her face when she saw her mother approaching with Tiffany.

"How much longer are you going to disappoint me, Anita?" Rebekah asked harshly, her eyes gleaming with anger.

"Mother..."

"Hello, mother!" Lisa greeted pleasantly as she stepped in front of Anita, who she could see was beginning to cower as she did when their mother was mad.

"Stay out of this, Lisa!" Rebekah hissed at her.

"It's good to see you too, mother. We are here to have lunch. Why don't we enjoy lunch as a normal family today and leave all these theatrics for later. This is Benny's home. Respect it," Lisa said with a sweet smile ignoring the annoyance on their mother's face.

"It's a relief to see that you got out of all that drama in one piece," Tiffany said unashamedly, and Lisa turned to her with displeasure.

"You should be ashamed to look her in the face talk more of speaking to her. I can't believe I shared the same womb with someone like you. But then again, when I look at the person that birthed us, I can't blame you. I only wonder how I ended up in such a womb in the first place..."

"LISA!" Rebekah snapped angrily, losing patience with Lisa, while Tiffany glared at Lisa.

"It's just honest curiosity, mother. I'm certain you have also had the same thought seeing as I'm nothing like you," Lisa said with a sneer as she seized Anita's hand and pulled her with her to go join Bernice at the backyard.

Rebekah massaged her temple as she watched them leave, while Tiffany glared at Lisa and quickly followed them to go confront Lisa.

Instead of going back with her daughters, Rebekah headed for the guestroom where she usually relaxed whenever she visited Benny's house.

"Lisa!" Tiffany called angrily, but Lisa merely turned to eye her with displeasure.

"We are guests here. Respect yourself and act like a grown-up for once," Lisa advised without stopping still dragging Anita with her.

"Hello, Adam! Hello, Jake!" Lisa and Anita greeted both men, who were busy barbecuing and grilling with a wave.

"Hey, Lisa! Hello Anita!" both men waved back pleasantly.

"Hey, Benny!" Lisa greeted as she and Anita joined Bernice who was seated with the boys.

Bernice grinned, "I heard you are having a girl. I envy you," Benny said as she rose to kiss Lisa's cheeks.

"You could try again...."

"Nah! I'm done. One experience is enough," Bernice said before looking at Anita.

"I heard what happened at the salon. Are you okay?" Bernice asked, and Anita nodded.

"Mother said you won't be on the show with us anymore," Tiffany informed Anita, and Lisa raised a brow.

"What show?" she asked, making Tiffany realise she had slipped.

"A show you are not welcome on as well," Tiffany said with a sardonic smile and Lisa turned to Anita for an explanation while Bernice who suddenly noticed her mother's absence glanced in her husband's direction, and she wasn't very surprised to see that he was no longer standing beside Jack.

She had been avoiding Jack since he surprisingly arrived with Tiffany. She hadn't been counting on him joining them since he hardly ever showed up for family gatherings. The way he kept looking at her, anyone with eyes would know that something was up between them, and the last thing she wanted was to be caught in her own trap.

She quickly looked away from Jack when he winked at her, and she glanced at Tiffany, "Where is mother?"

"I don't know. I left her inside," Tiffany said with a careless shrug as she shooed the boys away and stuffed her mouth with a piece of Apple pie.

Bernice rose from her seat and excused herself from them, "Where is Adam?" she asked Jack who was smiling at her lecherously.

"He got some stain on his shirt and went in to wash it off," Jack said, and Bernice nodded as she walked away from him. It was time to confirm her suspicion.

## Chapter 539 Sparks Will Fly

As mother and daughter sat still for their pedicure session, Evelyn looked at Jade, "She seems like a nice person," Evelyn said, and without asking, Jade knew her mother was referring to Aurora.

"Yes, she is."

"And she is very beautiful and pleasant too. I can see why you are so worried about their date," Evelyn said, and Jade rolled her eyes.

"I'm beautiful and pleasant too, and I'm not bothered about their date anymore. I'm just going to relax and let things play out naturally," Jade said, and Evelyn nodded with approval.

"That's more like it. You should do that," Evelyn said, and once the ladies who were tending to their pedicure excused themselves briefly, Jade turned to her mother.

"You do realize that you had no right to scold those ladies the way you did earlier, right? You should have just left the scolding to me since you are exactly like them," Jade said, and Evelyn glared at her.

"What do you mean by that?"

"You may have conveniently forgotten how you were on their side until you realized they were talking about Tom and Lucy, but I haven't. I'm frankly disappointed that you still let yourself react to things that way," Jade said, and although that stung Evelyn, she knew that Jade was being honest so she didn't say anything in her defense as the ladies who were tending to them returned.

Evelyn sighed as she reflected on her action. She was not proud of it, and she knew that if Desmond was to hear of it, he wouldn't be pleased with her either since he always told her to get her facts right before casting any judgement.

It was a flaw. A major character flaw that she had been trying to work on for years but each time she was presented with a real-life situation to exercise what she had learned, she always gave in to her emotions rather than logic.

Jade glanced at her mother, and seeing the crestfallen expression on her face, Jade reached out and squeezed her hand, "I'm sorry I was harsh," she said, knowing how sensitive her mother could be despite her brave front.

Evelyn shook her head, "You were right. There is no reason for you to apologize," Evelyn said with a small smile.

"Still. I didn't have to say it in that manner. You are great, mom. You'd be too perfect if you didn't have some of these little character defects," Jade said, and Evelyn forced a smile.

"That's you trying to make me smile," Evelyn said, and Jade sighed.

"Yes, I want you to smile, but I also mean it. And I want you to put more effort into doing better. It is always better to dish judgement from a logical viewpoint than an emotional viewpoint," Jade advised and picked up her phone to continue her solo scrabble game from where she stopped.

She paused the game when she remembered that she had seen a message notification, from the girls' group, that Sonia had created the previous night when she turned on her data earlier, so she went online to see what it was, and to also inform Sonia about the drama that had just taken place.

[Hey, girls!!! Guess what? Double good news! Matt's date didn't work out! And he plans to join Bryan at I-Global! I think the universe is saying something. \*wink\* What do you girls think?]

Jade grinned as she read the text, and texted back, [The universe is definitely saying something. Candace, I think you still have a shot! Don't shy away, girl!]

"What are you grinning at? Are you texting with Harry?" Evelyn asked curiously.

"It's Sonia. Matt plans to join Bryan at I-Global," Jade informed her, and Evelyn smiled.

"At this rate, I won't be surprised if Tom employs your dad and I. Seems like everyone is working at I-Global now," Evelyn said, and Jade giggled.

"Well, I'm glad that Matt is coming over. With Candace here and all that. Did you know that he used to be involved with Candace?" Jade asked, and Evelyn nodded.

"Yeah. Bryan mentioned it while we were at his place and Matt came around. Do you think there is hope for things working out between them?" Evelyn asked hopefully.

"I believe so," Jade said as she went on to tell her mother all about how Matt had reconnected her with Candace and how they had fallen apart, and she also told her mother how Matt had shown up at Varis hours after she informed him of Candace's plan.

"It appears that he is more invested in her than she is in him. If she doesn't want him there is no reason to force things. They both deserve to love and be loved," Evelyn said, but Jade shook her head.

"Not exactly. From what I've seen, they both like each other. Candace likes him. Even if she won't say it out loud, I think the problem is that she sort of feels like she is not good enough for Matt...."

"What nonsense is that? How can a beautiful girl like her think that way?" Evelyn asked incredulously and Jade shrugged.

"That is just the way she feels," Jade said, not making any reference to the fact that Candace had been a stripper.

"Well, she shouldn't feel that way. She has every reason to be proud. She is not only beautiful, she also did such a wonderful job raising a bright kid like Jamal, and now she has Harry and their father. She needs to know that she deserves to be loved and so she should let herself be loved by Matt," Evelyn said, and Jade nodded.

"Maybe you should tell her that. Just don't say I told you anything about Matt. She prefers to skirt around that issue," Jade said, and glanced at her phone when it beeped with a text notification.

She raised a brow as she read Candace's response to her comment, [I don't know what you are both talking about. Sonia, the universe isn't saying anything. I already said whatever was between Matt and I is water under the bridge.]

[Really? I fulfilled my end of our deal and confessed to Harry, but you are going to shy away from yours?] Jade texted back.

Candace, who was seated with Harry, Aaron, and the nurse, watching a movie on Netflix, picked up her phone when it beeped again.



She had turned off her data all morning, since Adolf dropped her and Jamal off at Harry's apartment, and had only turned it on to browse the meaning of a new word she had heard in the movie they were seeing, when she saw the message Sonia and Jade had dropped in the group chat.

She sighed when she saw the messages. She had thought they would have dropped the subject of her relationship with Matt following their conversation the previous day, why were they actively back to it again?

[I'm not shying away from anything. That Matt's date didn't work out doesn't mean he wants me. And even if he does, now is not the time for me to get into a relationship. I still have to put my life in order. And even if Matt moves down to Ludus, I might not be here since I'm still trying to figure out what I want to do now.] Candace responded.

[Why am I not surprised? As usual, you have an excuse. I knew you would always come up with a reason.] Jade texted back, and Candace frowned irritably.

[Why don't you girls focus on your relationship and let me be? Enough of the Matt talk, else I'm going to exit the group!] Candace typed, and hesitated for a couple of seconds.

She didn't want to sound rude or anything, but she really wasn't used to having everyone in her business in this way and she wished they would all just forget about her and Matt and let her be. If she didn't draw the line now, they would keep thinking it was cool to bring up the subject and she didn't want that, Candace reasoned as she tapped the send button, and almost immediately, Jade responded.

[Alright. If that's what you want I'll drop it.]

"Is everything alright?" Aaron asked when he noticed the frown on Candace's face and she forced a smile as she looked at him.

"Yes. Just chatting with Jade," Candace said, and that got Harry's attention too.

"Speaking of Jade, why isn't she here? Is she not coming over today?" Aaron asked Harry, and Candace looked at him.

"Why are you asking me when Candace is the one chatting with her?" Harry asked with a scowl since he had also been expecting her.

He had thought she would come over following how she had been persistently and stubbornly pursuing him since she arrived, but seeing how she had not called back since their last conversation, he guessed she was still mad at him for saying their relationship would be forgotten if she showed up during his date with Aurora.

"Well, she is your girlfriend, isn't she?" Aaron asked Harry, and he sighed.

"I guess she is busy," Harry murmured.

"Are you sure about that? Or did you do something to annoy her?" Aaron asked suspiciously and Harry glared at his father.

"She is busy," Harry insisted as he rose from his seat and headed for his bedroom.

"Seeing how you are grumpy, I smell a lovers' tiff," Aaron said, making both Candace and the nurse, who had been silent to giggle, while Harry paused to glower at his father.

"For someone who isn't in any relationship, you sure do know so much," Harry muttered as he walked away.

"Of course. I was in one long enough to have you. Check on Jamal while you are at whatever you're going in there to do. Tell him grandpa is missing his company. And don't bang the door like an annoying teenager," Aaron called after Harry, but he didn't stop.

Candace returned her attention to her phone when it beeped with a notification from the group. It was Jade.

[By the way, Sonia. You won't believe what happened today. We ran into Anita and her elder sister at the spa. You would have been so proud of Lucy had you been there to see her handle Anita.]

[Are you not coming over to Harry's today?] Candace asked, not bothering to ask Jade about who Anita was, since she knew whether she asked or not, she was going to find out soon enough.

[I'm not.]

Candace raised a brow, [Why not? Did you fight with Harry?]

[Did he say we fought? I don't have to come to his house often. He isn't my official boyfriend yet.] Jade pointed out.

Although she missed him and wished she could talk to him or see him, she wasn't going to. She was going to take some time to evaluate her feelings and get on the right track with her emotions.

[He didn't. But I think he misses you.] Candace confided, and Jade felt her lips twitch.

[Too bad for him. He won't be seeing me until after the anniversary.] Jade texted back, hoping that Candace would deliver her message to Harry.

Away from there, Sonia, who was in the car with Bryan, heading out to meet Jeff and Mia, looked down at her phone when it kept beeping with message notifications as she contemplated whether or not to check her messages.

Bryan was speaking to her, and she didn't want to give her attention to her phone and risk another emotional outburst from him.

As if he could read her mind, Bryan who was driving, turned to look at her in amusement, "If you are ignoring your texts for my sake, I suggest you don't."

"Huh?" Sonia asked, and Bryan smiled.

"You will most likely not hear anything else I say until you check your messages, so go on and do it," Bryan advised, and Sonia flashed him a smile of gratitude as she unlocked her phone and checked Jade's and Candace's messages.

She wanted to respond to Candace's message, but became caught up in Jade's last message about Lucy and Anita so she responded to that instead, [We? Lucy went to the spa with you?] Sonia asked with a frown.

"What's wrong?" Bryan asked when he noticed her frown.

"I think Jade and Lucy went out together," Sonia complained.

"I don't think so. Dad said Jade and mom went out together. He didn't mention Lucy leaving with them," Bryan said, just as Sonia's phone beeped again.

Jade sent a rolling eye emoticon, followed by a long explanation of what had transpired between them and Anita at the spa.

"Can you believe that Jade and Evelyn just happened to be at the same spa with Tom and Lucy and overheard the ladies plotting to harm Lucy?" Sonia asked in disbelief and Bryan turned to spare her a glance.

"Really? That's some crazy stuff! Why would they want to hurt her?" He asked, and Sonia read out Jade's message to him.

"I'm glad nothing bad happened," Bryan said with a sigh, wondering why it was taking Tom so long to take care of Anita.

"I wonder why Candace doesn't want to get involved with Matt. I mean I can get why she was staying away in the past due to the nature of her job and Matt's career, but I expected her to jump on this opportunity now," Sonia said with a frown as she read through the earlier chats.

"Did she say something?" Bryan asked, and Sonia read out what Candace had said.

"You should let her be. I believe they will both find a way to make it work if they really want to," Bryan advised as he pulled up the car in front of Tom's apartment.

"You mean like we did?" Sonia asked with a grin, and Bryan smiled.

"Not quite. But something like that. As long as Matt remains my best friend, and Candace is a part of the family through both Jade and Lucy, they will always cross paths. And when that happens...."

"Sparks will fly," Sonia said with a wide smile.

"I was going to say when that happens, they will decide if they can stand just being acquaintances or friends, or if they want something more," Bryan said, and Sonia giggled.

"Doesn't matter what you were going to say. Those two have great chemistry, believe me. I know it," Sonia said confidently, and before Bryan could say anything, Mia burst out through the front door to welcome them.

Chapter 540 Hello, Mother!

"MIA!" Sonia screeched excitedly as she jumped out of the car quickly and went to embrace Mia.

Mia laughed happily as she hugged her, "It's so good to see you again, Sonia! For a moment there, I really thought you two were over," Mia said when she pulled away to look at Sonia.

"Same here! Thanks for kicking Bryan's ass. He told me you didn't take it easy on him," Sonia said, and Mia grinned as they looked at Bryan, who was getting out some food packs from the booth.

They had been the last to leave the house because they had been waiting for Samantha to prepare and pack some dishes for Mia and Jeff.

"No one took it easy on him. I'm glad you both worked out your differences," Mia said as they turned to the door when Jeff stepped out to join them.

"Is that food?" Jeff asked hopefully when he saw Bryan carrying the food packs and quickly went to take some from him.

Jeff paused when it occurred to him that he had walked past Sonia, and he turned to her after taking some of the food packs from Bryan, "I'm sorry for causing such a misunderstanding for everyone. I wasn't thinking clearly," Jeff said, looking contrite, and Sonia smiled.

"We all had our faults. I hold nothing against you," Sonia assured him, and he gave her a nod before returning inside the house.

"I can't believe that you can't cook. How have you been feeding this whole time?" Bryan asked Mia when he got to where she was standing.

"If we all cook, who would patronize the cafes and restaurants? I have to help those honest people make a living," Mia said with a bright smile, and Sonia giggled while Bryan shook his head as he walked away without responding to her question.

Mia pointed to Lucy's apartment, "I guess that is your best friend's apartment?" She asked curiously, and Sonia nodded when she turned to look at Lucy's apartment.

"Yeah. I should probably drop in to see the place. It's been a while since she came here," Sonia said and looked across the street when Alicia called out to her, and Jasmine waved at her.

"That's the lady who interviewed you guys the last time, isn't she?" Mia asked since she recognized Alicia.

"Yes, she is," Sonia said with a wide smile as she waved at the couple who were now heading in their direction.

Sonia excused herself from Mia to meet them halfway, "Hello!" Sonia greeted pleasantly.

Seeing how they had looked out for Lucy and stood by her in her time of need, she considered them friends.

"Hello! How have you been?" Alicia asked with a friendly smile.

"Great!"

"We saw the scandal about you and Bryan. I told Jas that you both would never break up," Alicia said confidently, and Sonia smiled.

"Yeah, she said so," Jasmine affirmed.

"I guess you have more faith in what we have than I do. I actually thought we were going to break up. How are you two doing?" Sonia asked, and Jasmine shrugged.

"We are fine. How are Tom and Lucy? It's been a while since we saw them around here," Jasmine said.

"We are fine. Still trying to find suitable sperm donors since our Tom is taken," Alicia joked at the same time, and Sonia giggled while Jasmine looked at Alicia, wondering how she could say that so carelessly.

Although Sonia wasn't a stranger to them, she wasn't exactly a very close friend either, so she saw no reason for Alicia to say that.

"Tom and Lucy are doing beautifully. I will be sure to let them know I saw you two," Sonia said to Jasmine before she returned her gaze to Alicia.

"Have you tried other gay couples? Or gone to a sperm bank?" Sonia asked, and Alicia shook her head.

"We don't want other gay couples, and I don't want a sperm bank either," Alicia said, and Sonia nodded.

This beggar was obviously a chooser, Sonia mused. "I'm sure you will find a way," Sonia said, and Jasmine nodded.

"Yeah, we will. Thanks."

"So, will the couple be living in Tom's apartment, or are they just visiting briefly?" Alicia asked, referring to Mia and Jeff.

"They are not a couple. The man is Bryan's manager, and the lady is Bryan's assistant. They will be sharing the apartment," Sonia explained as she waved to Mia, who had been standing beside the car waiting for her, beckoning her to join them so she could introduce her to the neighbors.

"I recognized the guy as Bryan's manager from the interview yesterday but assumed the lady was his wife. So is he single? I mean, his wife wouldn't allow him to live under the same roof with such an attractive female, would she?" Alicia asked as they watched Mia approach.

"They are both single. Why? Are you considering Jeff to be a potential sperm donor?" Sonia joked, and Alicia grinned.

"Well, he is good-looking. I could put him into consideration after I get to know him," Alicia said with a wink, making Sonia giggle, and Jasmine shook her head.

"Hello! You are welcome to the neighborhood. I'm Alicia, and this is my wife, Jasmine," Alicia said cheerfully when Mia joined them.

"I'm Mia. It's nice to meet you both," Mia said with an equally cheerful smile, and Jasmine nodded politely.

"I guess you will be around for the live show with Eric Howells?" Alicia asked, and Sonia grinned.

"I wouldn't miss that for anything. Do let me know if you need my help in compiling the questions," Sonia said with a wink.

"Sure. I will text you on Instagram," Alicia said, and Sonia nodded.

"We will leave you to go in now. Give our love to Lucy and Tom," Jasmine said as she took Alicia's hand.

Knowing Alicia and her penchant for gossip and poke-nosing, she knew that Alicia would want to go into the house with Sonia and Mia, and she couldn't let her do that.

Alicia looked at Jasmine with a pout before waving to Mia and Sonia, "Mia, do stop by whenever you can for a visit. I will find time to drop by with some homemade pies to welcome you to the neighborhood officially. You will love my pies," Alicia said, and Mia smiled.

"Jeff and I will appreciate that," Mia said, and they watched Jasmine lead Alicia away before heading for the house.

"One talks too much, and the other one doesn't talk much," Mia said, referring to Alicia and Jasmine.

"Probably the reason they're a good match. Why is Jeff single?" Sonia asked thoughtfully since it had never occurred to her to ask.

"I don't know. Never asked. Perhaps he is asexual?" Mia said with an amused laugh.

"You have never seen him with a lady before?" Sonia asked seriously.

"Until recently, our interactions have been strictly about Bryan. We only meet at work, so I wouldn't know. I could ask him if you want me to. Why? Are you planning to hook him up with someone?" Mia asked, and Sonia shook her head.

"I was only curious," Sonia assured Mia as they opened the door and walked into the house.

"What live show were you both talking about?" Mia asked, and just before Sonia could respond, Mia turned to Jeff.

"Jeff, why are you single?" Mia asked, causing Jeff to choke on the sandwich he had been eating.

Bryan raised a brow, "Why are you asking that out of the blue?" Bryan asked, looking from Mia to Sonia and back again.

"I just realized I never asked. Do you need me to create an account for you on the dating app?" Mia offered, and Jeff shook his head.

"No. Thanks," Jeff said, and Mia shrugged as she went to sit beside him to pick a sandwich.

Only Sonia noticed that Jeff did not answer the question, but she said nothing as she sat down beside Bryan.

"What took you both so long outside?" Bryan asked as he picked up a slice of sandwich and fed Sonia.

"We were saying hello to Alicia and Jasmine," she said, and Bryan had a puzzled look in his blue eyes at first as he tried to recall who they were, then his eyes cleared when he remembered, and he nodded.

"The nosy lesbian couple," Bryan said, and Sonia hit him playfully.

"They are not nosy. I can't believe that's the only thing you remember them for."

"That's not the only thing I remember them for. Anyway, I was talking to Jeff about my conversation with Matt," Bryan said, and Mia raised a brow.

"What conversation?" Mia asked curiously since she was the only one in the dark about it now.

Bryan informed her about his conversation with Matt and what Matt had said about Paul plotting with Sophia.

Mia shook her head, "That has to be the reason he is trying so hard to settle with you. All his plans are in tatters."

"Yeah. I should give Harry a call. I need to communicate everything to him, and I also have to find out what we are to do tomorrow. You know, like our office space and stuff," Jeff said as he picked up his phone and dialed Harry's line.

Harry, who was lying on his bed contemplating whether to call Jade to apologize for being too harsh earlier or going over to Tom's house to see her, glanced at his phone when it started ringing, and he received the call from Jeff.

After exchanging pleasantries with Jeff, Harry listened to all he had to say patiently, "Dont worry about Paul or Derek. We will take legal action if they make any move. As for Matt, he is welcome to join us after he ends his deal with Golden Star. And about the office space, you can come over to the office tomorrow, and we will work out the details," Harry said before hanging up.

Just as he threw his phone on the bed, it started ringing again, and he received the call when he saw that it was from the person he had asked to look into the cause of the fire at the hospital of his birth.

"What did you find?"

"They claim it was an electrical problem, but I checked the security footage in the hallway that leads to the medical record room. A man dressed in a doctor's coat walked into the room, and the fire alarm went off minutes after he left. He was wearing a face cap and a face mask so that I couldn't see his face, but I was able to find out who he was by checking the plate number on his car. The security camera outside the building captured him getting into his car," the man explained, and Harry sighed inwardly.

"Should I anonymously send the information to the police?"

"Yes. Do that," Harry said, knowing that if Sara Walker was anything like he thought she was, she would be able to come out of this unscathed. He was curious to know just how influential and powerful she was. That would determine how to deal with her. He didn't want her to recover from whatever he would do to her.

"Keep a close eye on the suspect and the case. Let me know if they make a connection. I suspect this is going to lead you to a lady named Sara Walker. If this happens, keep a close eye on her and let me know how everything plays out," Harry instructed before hanging up.

Between bonding with his family, preparations for the anniversary, and his budding relationship with Jade, he had almost forgotten all about Sara.

He needed to take care of Sara quickly. He couldn't bring himself to pretend like he did not know of her existence. He needed to at least let her know he now knew of her existence so that when he punished her, she would know exactly who was behind her downfall, Harry thought as he dialed Sara's line, which he had collected from Lucy.

"Hello! This is Sara Walker's line. Emma speaking, how may I help you?" Sara's assistant greeted once she received the call.

"Put me on to Sara. Tell her it is Harry. Harry Jonas," Harry said, and immediately Emma glanced at Sara, who was busy on her laptop trying to find all she could on the research center.

"It's Harry Jonas," Emma said, and immediately Sara heard his name, her head snapped up.

"Harry? Are you certain?" Sara asked, and when Emma gave her a nod, she extended her hand for the phone.

Harry was calling? What could be the reason? Sara wondered as she raised the phone to her ear, "Harry?" She asked doubtfully.

"Yes, this is your son, Harry. Hello, mother!"