

Wild Night 561

Chapter 561 Crystal

Inside Harry's office, he and Jade assessed the young lady who had been found to impersonate Candace.

Her name was Crystal, she was twenty-seven years old, she had brown eyes, and although her hair wasn't as curly or gold as Candace's hair, she looked beautiful and was good enough to pass as Sara's daughter.

She was dressed in ripped jeans trousers and a blue t-shirt on which 'I Don't Suck Pussies' was written on the front. Jade found it funny, but Harry thought it was crude.

"So? What do you think?" Harry asked Jade, and she lifted a shoulder casually as he had noticed she usually did when she had something to say but didn't want to say it at the moment.

Jade looked at the lady instead, "How good is your acting skill?"

"It depends on how good the pay is. I could best Angelina Jolie at the right amount," she said with a confident shrug.

"The person you are going to meet is very deceptive herself. You can't make mistakes," Harry said, and the lady gave him a crooked smile.

"I con people for a living. Let me worry about her," she assured Harry, and Harry's gaze shifted to the man who had brought her and he gave Harry a confident nod.

"Alright then. I will get back to you. I will let you know when and where we will meet next again so we can all discuss the other details," Harry said as he and Jade saw them off to the door.

Once Harry and Jade were left in the office, Harry turned to Jade, "Any observations?" He asked after they both sat down.

"She doesn't suck pussies," Jade said with a grin, and Harry scowled.

"I can't understand how she could wear such an outfit to a formal meeting," Harry said with a shake of his head and Jade laughed softly.

"She seems wild. Sara deserves such a daughter. Let's just hope she doesn't try to con us," Jade said, and Harry nodded in agreement.

"That's why she will be signing a contract," Harry said, and Jade giggled.

"You are paying her to con somebody else and you want to bind your agreement legally?" She asked in amusement.

"For starters, I don't think it is wrong for a con artist to con a fellow con artist. And secondly, it's not exactly conning. She is going undercover...."

Jade tittered with laughter at that, "Undercover as Sara's daughter?" Jade asked, and Harry nodded.

"Yes, I don't see why not. I'm not asking her to steal from Sara or hurt her. All I want is to know exactly what Sara wants and expose her. That's not a crime," Harry said reasonably.

"Well, it is. But don't worry. I'm sure we can draft something up to keep her in check," Jade said and Harry gave her a thumbs up.

"I knew I could count on you. By the way, it seemed like you wanted to say something earlier when I asked what you think about her," Harry said, and Jade looked at him with an unreadable expression.

"What made you think that?"

"Well, you sort of have this thing you do with your shoulder when there's something on your mind but you don't want to say it," Harry said, and Jade shook her head.

"No, I don't," she said and Harry nodded.

"Yes, you do. You might not have taken note of it, but I have. Can you honestly say you didn't think anything when I asked you that question?" Harry asked, and Jade rolled her eyes.

"Well, I thought that making her pass as Candace isn't a problem since Sara has no idea what Candace looks like as an adult. I mean she only had the childhood picture. But what if Sara wants a DNA test?" Jade asked, and Harry raised a brow.

"Isn't that the easiest part? Candace can provide the blood for that," Harry said, and Jade considered it for a moment.

"That makes sense, but what if Sara decides to do it without her knowledge? I mean like take her hairbrush, toothbrush, or something?" Jade asked reasonably.

"That is the reason she would have to be the first to demand a DNA test. If she asks for it first, that would throw Sara off guard, don't you think? She wouldn't expect a con artist to request something like that, would she?" Harry asked, and this time Jade grinned.

"I see you've thought about it and covered all the bases," Jade said, and Harry nodded.

"I always do," Harry said and took Jade's hand.

"Speaking about covering bases, why haven't I kissed you today?" Harry asked as Harry rose and pulled her out of her seat making a tingle skitter up her spine.

"Because we are in the company I suppose?"

"Well, I don't see anyone here right now, do you?" Harry asked in a voice that was soft and smooth as silk as he pulled her to himself.

Jade swallowed as she got lost in his brown eyes, "Well, maybe you are not in the mood," Jade said as she licked her dry lips.

"I'm always in the mood to kiss you, esquire," Harry said in a husky voice as he took her lips which had parted in anticipation, and her mind went gloriously blank as her yearning for him blossomed inside her like an uncontrollable flame.

It seemed like no matter the number of times Harry kissed her, she could never get used to the knee-weakening effect of his lips on hers.

If she could read Harry's mind, she would realize that he felt the same way. Each time he kissed her felt like the first for him.

The kiss which Harry had meant to be simple and light was anything but that. It seemed like each time he kissed her his desire for her grew larger. It was like having a sip of your favorite drink and wanting to take repeated gulps.

He felt her body strain and tremble against his as she returned his kiss passionately, taking as much as she was giving with her hands buried in his hair since she didn't want to mess up his clothes.

Harry didn't dare to think about what he was doing or let the fact that they were in his office bother him as he let his tongue plunge between her lips and his hands moved to cup her boobs for the first time.

When she moaned, Harry felt his tight hold on control slip. Good God! He was losing control. It was as though an animal instinct was taking over him and he desperately wanted nothing more at that moment than to tear off her clothes and take her right there and then.

He needed to stop. He had to stop right now else he wouldn't be able to hold himself back anymore. Even if he was finally going to do something like this, it couldn't be this way. Not in this place. He didn't want his first experience, especially his first experience with Jade to be this way. Holding to that thought, he broke this kiss.

"Damn it, Jonas! I'm going to kill you if you stop right now!" Jade hissed, her blue eyes wild with passion, her lips red and swollen and her face flushed.

Harry rubbed his thumb over her lower lip, "You are too sexy for my good!" Harry said huskily as he turned away from her, needing to put some distance between them.

"You are evil and heartless," Jade hissed as she watched him go stand by the window with his back to her.

Harry chuckled without looking back at her, glad to know that he had almost as much effect on her as she had on him.

"It's because I have a heart that you're not going to walk out of here with ripped clothes," Harry said, and thanks to Jade's colorful imagination he didn't need to explain what he meant.

"I don't mind such wickedness. I could always leave through Tom's elevator or we could order some new clothes online and have them delivered to your office," Jade suggested as she sat on the edge of the table and struck a seductive pose.

Harry laughed, "We are not having this conversation, esquire. Maybe we can consider doing that in the future," Harry said as he turned to look at her when he felt he had his emotions in control once again and his hard-on had relaxed.

"In the future? Does that mean you don't mind having sex in your office?" Jade asked curiously.

"Am I supposed to?" Harry asked, and Jade grinned as she approached him slowly.

"I'm glad I quit my job. I'm so going to enjoy working here with you. I think I'm going to need to change my wardrobe and get more skirts and dresses for future purposes. You know, it makes the whole process easier and nothing gets in the way," Jade said with a wink as she stopped in front of him.

Harry shook his head in amusement, "I never imagined you would be this naughty."

"Is that a compliment?" Jade asked batting her lashes innocently as she used her thumb to clean off the lipstick stain around his lips.

"I'm not sure yet."

"Well, you will be soon enough. So about our vacation, you are coming with naughty Harry, right?" Jade asked hopefully as she played with his tie.

"Do I have to reconsider going on a vacation with you? Why do you keep making me feel like you can't wait to take my innocence?" Harry asked in amusement.

"Because I can't wait to be alone with you. I want us to get to know each other better. I want to explore your body as passionately as I explore your mind," Jade said with a flirty smile and Harry shook his head.

"That sounds like we reversed roles. I'm supposed to be the one saying something like that," Harry said, and Jade raised a brow.

"Do you have a problem with that?" Jade asked and Harry shook his head.

"I'm not sure I do. But your honesty is quite disturbing right now."

"I could lie. But you're the one who doesn't like games or being lied to. So you have to deal with the fact that apart from the fact that I am head over heels in love with you, I'm strongly attracted to you sexually. I didn't ask you to be so damn hot and sexy," Jade said, and Harry groaned when she embraced him, stirring his desire once again.

"You do something to me, esquire. I'm not quite sure I can explain it. But you make me feel all sorts of emotions," Harry said, and Jade pulled back to grin at him.

Her breath caught and she forgot what she had been about to say when she saw the desire in his gaze.

"Harry," She whispered, and he kissed her forehead.

"I love you, Jade Hank. Don't you dare doubt that or forget for a moment that I'm head over heels in love with you," Harry said, and Jade swallowed as her heart swelled with love for him and tears gathered in her eyes.

"I don't think I could ever get used to hearing you say that," Jade said as Harry wiped her tears.

"I don't think I want you to ever get used to it. I want your heart to flutter every time I say that."

Chapter 562 Pregnancy Test Kit

Alone in his office, Tom listened patiently to the recording which Barry had just sent him. It was the conversation between Anita and Lisa which confirmed to Tom that Anita now knew about her mother's affair with her brother-in-law and that Bernice had confessed to Tiffany.

That at least explained the change in Anita's attitude and why she was trying to go against their mother. Maybe she wasn't so terrible after all.

What Tom did not understand now was what he was supposed to do. Because from the looks of things, Rebekah Miller was the only one who was likely going to attend Eric's Live Show since she had fallen out with her daughters.

Tom paused when something suddenly occurred to him. Eric Howell was the name of the show host. Wasn't that also the name of his new assistant? Were they related? Tom mused and called for his assistant.

"Are you in any way related to the television show host, Eric Howells?" He asked the moment his assistant walked in.

"No, I'm not. I'm Eric Howell, and he is Eric Howells. I'm a huge fan though, but that's as far as our relationship goes," Eric said, and Tom nodded.

"Alright. You may leave," Tom said dismissively and as his assistant left, Bryan stepped into the office.

He had left a moment ago to have a word with Jeff and Mia who had called to let him know they were done with their business for the day and were leaving.

"Is there something you need me to do at home in preparation for the dinner with grandfather?" Bryan asked as he took his seat, but Tom shook his head.

"No. I'm sure mom would sort that out. You know how she is with him," Tom said, and Bryan chuckled.

Of course, they all knew. If one didn't know better one would think Lawrence Hank was Evelyn's father and not Desmond's since she got along with him better than Desmond did with his father.

"Alright then. I should give Sonia and Jade a call to see if they're ready to leave," Bryan said as he dialed Sonia's line.

"Sonia said Jade isn't with them. Can you help me find out if Harry is back in his office?" Bryan asked Tom after his phone call with Sonia and Tom called Harry's secretary to find out if Harry was back to his office.

"Harry is in his office and so is Jade," Tom informed Bryan and he shook his head as he rose.

"I thought as much. See you later then," Bryan said as he dialed Jade's line and walked out of Tom's office.

Inside Harry's office, Jade sighed in contentment as she stood looking outside the window with Harry standing behind her, his arms around her and his chin resting on the top of her head.

Although they were both silent, it was comfortable and soothing. No words were needed at that moment. They both knew how they felt about each other and wanted to just enjoy their presence.

Jade groaned and Harry's gaze shifted to Jade's handbag when her phone started ringing, but Jade made no move to go get it. She didn't want this moment to end yet.

"Aren't you going to get that?" Harry asked, and Jade shook her head.

"I don't want to," Jade said, but before Harry could respond a knock sounded on the door and she glared at the door.

"Too bad," Harry said as he brushed his lips against hers before asking whoever it was to come in.

"Why did you ignore my call?" Bryan asked Jade with a scowl as he walked in.

"I didn't know it was you. I wouldn't have received it if I had known it was you either way. How did you know I was here anyway?" Jade asked with a scowl of her own.

"Where else would you be within the building?" Bryan asked as his gaze shifted from Jade to Harry whose gaze was fixed on Jade, staring at her like he couldn't get his fill of her.

"What do you want?" Jade asked impatiently, wanting him to leave so she could return her attention to Harry who was yet to say a word since Bryan walked in.

"We are leaving now. Are you coming with us?" Bryan asked and Jade turned to Harry, reluctant to leave him.

"Don't worry, you can leave. I still have to get back to work," Harry said as he pat her hair.

Jade sighed, "Alright. Call me when you are free to talk, okay?"

"Sure. Take care of yourself. Text me if you need to talk and I will call you if I'm not very busy," Harry promised as he kissed her while Bryan watched them.

Harry seemed like a different person right now. He couldn't believe the confident man in front of him was the same Harry who had looked like he was going to pass out the last time they visited the company and Jade clung to him.

Once Jade stepped away from Harry and headed for the door, Harry looked at Bryan, "Did my secretary show you the office space?" Harry asked and Bryan gave him a nod.

"Yeah. Thank you," Bryan said before following Jade who had walked past him.

"Things seem to be progressing quite fast between you two," Bryan said when he caught up with her by the elevator.

"Was that why you decided to interrupt?" Jade asked with an annoyed hiss.

"If I had known you were both making out I would have left you to find your way home yourself," Bryan assured her and she scowled at him.

"Whatever," she muttered as they got into the elevator.

Jade turned to Bryan when she remembered that Tom had seemed to be in a bad mood earlier, "By the way, what's up with Tom?"

"Are you done sulking?" Bryan asked dryly and shook his head when Jade glared at him.

"He is having a bad day," Bryan said, and upon further inquiry, he explained the situation with Anita and her family to Jade which Tom had told him earlier.

"All that happened just between yesterday and today?" Jade asked incredulously as they headed for Lucy's office after getting out of the elevator.

She didn't believe that the Anita she had encountered the previous day was capable of such change within twenty-four hours. Unless of course something serious must have happened to change her heart, but Jade couldn't think of any such thing that could lead to such a change.

"Yeah."

"I don't think that is enough to put Tom in such a foul mood. I mean, I understand how this upsets his plans, but I think it's more than that. Perhaps the meeting didn't go well?" She asked as they walked into Lucy's outer office.

"Did your boyfriend seem upset about the meeting?" Bryan asked as he waved at Lucy's teammates as they walked past them.

Jade shook her head, "He's not my boyfriend yet, and no, he seemed fine," Jade said, and Bryan cocked a brow.

"Not your boyfriend yet and you're both like that?" Bryan asked in disbelief and Jade shrugged.

"It's hard to believe, right?" Jade said with a grin as they walked into Lucy's office.

"Are you ready to leave?" Bryan asked and Sonia gave him a nod as she rose while Bryan picked up her laptop.

"By the way, what is wrong with Tom? Why is he upset? Is it just because of the stuff with Anita and her family or did something else upset him at the meeting? Perhaps our grandfather said something?" Jade asked Lucy who tried not to look confused by the sudden question.

"What stuff with Anita and her family?" Sonia asked before Lucy could ask any questions.

"You didn't tell her?" Jade asked, assuming that Lucy was aware of it, but from the expression on Lucy's face, Sonia could tell that Lucy had no idea what Jade was talking about.

"Anita's oldest sister attempted suicide and Anita visited the foundation," Jade said and recounted all Bryan had told her he heard from Tom about Anita's conversation with Priscilla.

Lucy listened to Jade without saying a word or revealing any emotion, and Sonia's gaze stayed on Lucy the whole time.

"So, do you know what's up with Tom?" Jade asked Lucy again.

"They had a lover's tiff so that's probably contributing to Tom's foul mood," Sonia informed Jade and Bryan since she could tell that Lucy had no intention of saying anything, and saying nothing was only going to make them want to probe deeper.

"I hope it's nothing too serious," Jade said with concern.

"I hope you both resolve your differences soon," Bryan said, and Lucy forced a smile.

She hoped so too. She had decided to take Sonia's advice and go for therapy if that was what Tom wanted. She still thought it was stupid to just sit in a room with a total stranger and share her life story with them, but if that was what Tom wanted, she could manage that for his sake.

Sonia went around the desk and embraced Lucy. "Don't forget all we discussed. Talk things out with Tom. When you get back from work let's talk some more about this," Sonia whispered to Lucy before leaving with Bryan and Jade.

As Sonia walked out of the company with them, she tried to pay attention to Bryan's and Jade's conversation about Bryan's office space but she couldn't keep up. She had concerns of her own that were troubling her.

She had been able to distract herself by talking with Lucy about her problem, and now she had to face hers. Her menstrual cycle of twenty-seven days had been consistent for years, so what could be wrong?

She had always looked forward to having kids of her own, but right now she desperately hoped she wasn't pregnant. Bryan had clearly said he wasn't ready for them to have kids yet and after their conflict, she had come to agree with him too.

They weren't ready for that step yet. No matter how much they loved each other, they were still getting to know each other, and having kids right now was only going to complicate their relationship.

She needed to get a pregnancy test strip as soon as possible and discreetly too. Discreetly because she knew that if she walked into any random store or pharmacy to get it and they recognized her as Sonia Smith, Bryan Hank's girlfriend, that could lead to another scandal and she couldn't afford for that to happen. She was tired of being on the blogs.

There was only one person apart from Lucy that she could trust to do such a thing for her and that was Mia. She couldn't ask Lucy because just like her, Lucy would be easily recognized and that would also cause trouble for her and Tom.

"Are you okay?" Bryan asked when he noticed that Sonia was not saying anything and she had a slight frown on her face.

Sonia forced a smile, "Yeah. Sure. I'm just trying to figure out a plot in my story," Sonia lied since that was easier than claiming she was worried about Lucy. She knew where that line had landed them the last time.

"Do you have any idea what Lucy and Tom fought over?" Jade asked curiously.

"It's sort of a personal issue between them. I'm sorry, I can't tell," Sonia said apologetically and Jade exchanged a look with Bryan both wondering how serious the issue was.

"Did Mia and Jeff leave already?" Sonia asked, wanting to change the subject.

"Yeah. They left a short while ago," Bryan said, wondering what was wrong with Sonia as they got into the car.

Once they were seated in the car Sonia texted Mia, [Please, could you help me purchase a pregnancy test kit ASAP? I would do it myself if I could. You can't tell anyone about it. Not even Bryan.]

"Stop!" Mia ordered the cab driver who was carrying her and Jeff, immediately she saw Sonia's text.

"Is there a problem?" Jeff asked in alarm.

"Take us to the closest pharmacy. I need to get something," Mia told the cab driver and Jeff raised a brow.

"Are you ill?" He asked with concern since she looked like her normal insane self.

"It's just a slight headache," Mia lied, and Jeff's brows pulled together.

"When did it start? Is it only a headache?" He asked, and Mia gave him a nod and shut her eyes pretending to rest her head so that he wouldn't ask her any more questions.

Once the cab stopped in front of a pharmacy Mia quickly grabbed her handbag and opened the door before Jeff could get out, "I will get it myself. You don't have to come with me. Thanks," she assured Jeff as she hurried out to go get the test strips.

Jeff looked at her wondering what she was up to but decided not to follow her and just let her do her thing.

A while later Mia returned, and Jeff looked at her as she got into the car, "Did you get the medicine?" He asked since there was nothing in her hand, and she patted her handbag.

"Yeah. We can leave now. Thanks."

As the cab driver parked the car in front of their shared apartment and they got out, Alicia waved Mia over.

"Why is she always looking around the place like a spy?" Jeff asked Mia irritably but with a smile on his face so that Alicia wouldn't know he was speaking ill of her.

"You can ask her that when she comes over," Mia said with a sweet smile as she started to head in Alicia's direction.

"The key," Jeff reminded her.

"I have no idea how long this will take. She tends to chatter a lot so get the key from my bag and help me take my bag in," Mia pleaded as she handed her handbag to Jeff, forgetting about the pregnancy test kit.

Jeff rummaged through her handbag for the key as he walked to the door, and he paused when he noticed the pregnancy test kit in the bag alongside a bottle of acetaminophen.

A pregnancy test kit? Was Mia pregnant? He mused as he turned to look at her with a slight frown.

There was no way he could ask her about it unless she told him about it herself, so he was going to have to pretend like he hadn't seen anything.

Chapter 563 Distance Makes The Heart Grow Fonder

Tom didn't know how long he had spent working on the documents on his desk and reviewing company records but he glanced at his phone when it started ringing and he picked it up when he saw that it was his father, "Hey, dad!"

"Your mother just informed me about dinner. Do you think it's a good idea to have dinner here? I mean, Lucy's parents are here. Are you both ready for that step yet?" Desmond asked, and Tom's brows pulled together.

"What step?"

"If your grandfather meets Lucy's family that sort of makes things more official, don't you think? I have nothing against things being official, but I wanted to be sure that you are both ready for that step as I'm positive it might come up in the discussion during dinner," Desmond said, and Tom sighed as he rubbed his hand over his face.

He had not thought of that. Obviously, he had not been thinking much all day because he was in a foul mood and his head kept aching.

"No, we are not ready for any of that. You can ask mother and Samantha to hold off on the preparations. I will make a reservation for us to have dinner at a restaurant," Tom said wearily.

"Are you alright?" Desmond asked, not missing the weariness in Tom's voice.

Tom sighed, "I was going to seek your counsel on something personal after I get home from work, but maybe if you're not too busy we can talk now since I doubt we will be able to speak in private this evening," Tom said, and Desmond nodded.

"I'm alone, let's talk. Is there a problem?"

"Dad, this has to stay between us. You can't tell mom about it," Tom said, and Desmond raised a brow.

"Alright. What is the problem?"

"It's Lucy. She doesn't want to get married and neither does she want to have kids. I think maybe her traumatic experience might still be affecting her in a way, but she doesn't want to receive therapy. Maybe I'm the one who is making a big deal out of this, I'm not sure. I probably shouldn't be, but I'm mad at her. I know she probably expects me to be more understanding considering how I'm the one who did everything crazy to get her, but I feel like if I keep being the understanding one and keep sacrificing all I want just to let her get everything she wants I might gradually grow to resent her even though I love her. I'm not sure I'm making sense, but I know you were in a similar situation with mom. What do you think I should do?" Tom asked, and Desmond sighed.

"For starters, what I had with your mother is completely different from whatever is going on between Lucy and you. Your mother wasn't living with me, and she wasn't even interested in any sort of relationship with me outside of platonic friendship. Lucy on the other hand lives with you and is very much involved with you. So you see? It's different. Secondly, I don't think there is anything wrong with how you feel about the situation. I'm not saying this because I'm your father and I feel the need to take your side. I'm saying this because you seem to be the one willing to make all the big sacrifices in order for things to work, and any normal human would be upset by that," Desmond said, and Tom sighed.

"What can I do? I really love her, and I don't want to lose her. But at the same time, I don't want to sacrifice so much for her only to end up having regrets and resenting her. I really wish she would put in a little more effort...."

"What effort do you want her to put in?" Desmond cut in.

"She could start by receiving therapy. I need her to work on her unhealthy desire to have so much control over her life."

"Did you tell her that? What did she say?" Desmond asked, and Tom told Desmond all about their conversation that morning.

Desmond sighed, "Did you suggest therapy because you believe she might change her mind on marriage and kids after doing that? What if she receives therapy and still doesn't change her mind? Can you live with that? Do you think it will make you any less resentful when you eventually remain with her for years and see your siblings and everyone else around you get married and raise their own kids while all you have is a girlfriend and maybe a pet? Or do you want to remain with her, hoping that she would change her mind as time goes on? What if she never does?" Desmond asked, and Tom frowned.

"You remained with mom for four years...."

"As I clearly stated, your mom's case was different. She wasn't even my girlfriend. Waiting and trying to convince her for years was my choice not because she wanted me to. Lucy lives with you. She has access to you. Why would she want marriage when she already has you this way? She isn't scared of losing you because deep down she knows you love her and would do anything to keep her. She wants to have you and keep you all to herself without going all the way," Desmond pointed out.

"What are you trying to say?"

"Now I'm going to advise you as your father. I think you need to stop being so available to her. I wasn't this available for your mother. I was out of the country most of the time but I tried to be there for her whenever I could. Maybe you should stop treating Lucy like a wife and giving her wife privileges. If all she wants is to be a girlfriend, then treat her like one," Desmond suggested.

Although he knew that was sort of harsh, he believed Lucy had been pampered enough by everyone around her and it was time for them to forcefully push her out of her shell or whatever safe cocoon she had been covered in.

"How?" Tom asked with a frown.

"Call and text her as you should naturally. Take her out on dates when you can, but she has to return to her apartment. If you believe her apartment is her safety nest, allow her to go back to it. She should take herself to work going forward. You both don't have to see at work every day. Make yourself scarce. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. Allow her to return to her life the way it was before she met you. That's the only way she can find out for herself if she wants the changes that come with being with you or not," Desmond Advised.

Tom sighed inwardly. He knew something like that would really hurt Lucy's feelings, "Isn't that too much?"

"It's not. You are not breaking up with her. You are just taking some steps backward for her to step forward and meet you halfway. It's all psychology."

"Alright. I get you. But I don't think I can do that right now. Her parents are still around," Tom pointed out.

"We will all be leaving soon, so you can wait a bit. And mind you, I'm not asking you to wait because you owe them anything. I love Andrew and his wife, but they are not your in-laws. I'm asking you to wait just so it doesn't seem like you are acting out because of the misunderstanding you both had. Give it a few days, take your time to think about all I've said and if you are convinced

it's the right thing to do for your relationship, you can ask her to return to her apartment," Desmond said, and Tom sighed.

Doing that was going to be difficult since he was used to having her around and he was going to miss her, but he agreed that maybe this was what he needed to do to save whatever they had. If what they shared was important enough to Lucy, she would step forward. And if it wasn't.... Well, he wasn't going to think about that part.

"Alright. I will do that. Thanks, dad," Tom said, glad that he had spoken with his father about it.

Once he hung up the call, he glanced at the wall clock and sighed. It was almost time to go home and he was still not in the mood to talk to Lucy yet.

He dialed Harry's line, "Have you left for the meeting with the new investors for the mountainside resort?"

"I'm about to leave. Why?"

"I'm going with you. I will meet you in your office right away."

"Tom are you...." Harry sighed when he realized that Tom had hung up.

Away from there, after much deliberation, Lucy found herself heading for the company's clinic thirty minutes before the close of work. She had thought long and hard whether to take the company doctor up on his offer or to give Lucas a call and have him set her up with a good therapist, but she decided that since Tom was the one insisting she goes for it, he should as well be the one to pay for it.

Once Lucy arrived at the clinic, most of the staff greeted her politely as she walked past them, recognizing her as the CEO's woman.

She was ushered into the doctor's office immediately and she didn't waste any time telling him what she wanted.

A few minutes later she walked out of the doctor's office with the details of two therapists, and she returned to the company, wanting to catch Tom in his office before they left for the day.

She believed that by now he would be done with all he had to do since it was almost time for the close of work. They needed to talk. They had to talk about the stuff she had heard from Jade about Anita's family, and they had to resolve their misunderstanding. She didn't want to be on bad terms with him.

As she walked into his outer office space, she was surprised to see the young man seated there, "Hello, director Perry! I'm Eric Howell, Mr. Hank's assistant," Eric greeted politely, recognizing Lucy as Tom's girlfriend.

"Oh!" Lucy exclaimed softly. She had forgotten that Tom's assistant was resuming.

"I'm here to see the CEO. Is he in?" She asked politely, and Eric shook his head, surprising her.

"He left a moment ago. I was going to come to...."

"He left?" Lucy asked in surprise.

"Yes. He left for a meeting with Mr. Jonas. He instructed me to drive you home. I was just about to wrap up what I was doing and come to your office," he said apologetically, and Lucy's heart skipped a beat.

Was Tom so mad at her that he would leave the office without talking to her? What did she do that was so wrong? Lucy mused with a worried frown.

"Don't worry. I will go home myself," Lucy told Eric as she took out her phone from her handbag and walked away.

She dialed Tom's line as she got into the elevator.

Inside Harry's car, Harry looked at Tom with a slight frown, "C'mon, Tom! Don't tell me you are still mad at her?"

"Do you think I deliberately want to be mad or I enjoy being mad at her?" Tom asked in annoyance.

"If you don't enjoy it then you should talk things out with her," Harry said Tom snorted.

"Lucy is being unreasonable right now and it's getting on my nerves. I love her, but I just can't stand her attitude right now. Earlier, after the meeting, you saw how she behaved. If you hadn't stopped her from leaving or brought her back she would have left without saying hello to my grandfather. My grandfather, Harry! Do you know how disrespectful and embarrassing that would have been? I get that she doesn't want to get married, but did she have to act that way toward my grandfather? And the most annoying thing was that she kept trying to bring up the conversation right there. Not because she wanted to get what I was saying, but because she wanted to defend herself. Can you believe that?"

"Still, I think instead of avoiding her you should talk to her. How long are you going to avoid her anyway? You're both going to be sleeping under the same roof," Harry pointed out, and Tom's phone rang before he could respond.

He sighed when he saw that it was Lucy, and he reluctantly received the call but said nothing as he listened, and waited for her to speak first.

"Tom?"

"Yeah?"

"I just left your office and I was told you were not in," Lucy said in a small voice.

"Yeah. I told you I was busy. Eric will drop you off at my house. I will be back much later and might be late for dinner with my family. You don't have to join my family for dinner if you're not comfortable," Tom said in a cool tone that made Lucy's heart hurt.

She didn't miss how he had said his house instead of home and how he had just politely asked her not to show up for dinner with his grandfather.

"Are you still mad at me?"

"I'm busy. Let's talk later," Tom said and hung up.

"That was cold," Harry said, and Tom shook his head.

"Let's talk about something else," Tom said, and Harry sighed.

He could tell that Lucy's action had actually hurt Tom more than it annoyed him. He wasn't comfortable seeing Tom and Lucy that way, and he wished there was something he could do to help them. Unfortunately, this was something they would have to fix themselves.

Chapter 564 Your Family.

As Lucy sat in the cab on her way to Tom's house, different thoughts ran through her mind. What was going on? Why was Tom being so cold all of a sudden? Even if her action earlier had upset him, wasn't he taking things too far?

He had not even given her a chance to tell him about her decision to go for therapy before blowing her off. Was he getting tired of her already? If he was behaving this way over the phone, how was he going to act towards her at home? She wrung her hands in distress as she thought about all of this.

She wasn't sure what was going on with Tom, but she figured that maybe he was acting this way towards her because he needed space. Perhaps that was what she should do. Give him space. She couldn't stand the tension between them or the cold treatment.

If he didn't want her to be present at the dinner with his grandfather, then she wouldn't go there. If he didn't want to see her, then she would stay out of his sight.

Without wasting much time thinking about it, she asked the driver to make a U-turn and headed for her apartment instead. She took out her phone and dialled Sonia's line.

It took a while, but Sonia received the call just before it disconnected, "Hey!" Sonia greeted, trying to sound cheerful.

"I'm not coming over to Tom's house tonight. I'm just going to stay over at mine," Lucy said, and Sonia's brows pulled together as she sat up on the bed.

She had told the others that she wasn't feeling too well and had decided to stay in her room while Jade and Bryan discussed the dinner details with their parents.

"Why?"

"Why? Because it's my apartment," Lucy said, and Sonia shook her head.

"You didn't listen to anything I told you?" Sonia asked incredulously.

"I did! I did, okay? I even went as far as going to the company doctor to get the details of some top therapists. I went to Tom's office to talk things out with him, and guess what? He wasn't there. He left the company without telling me. If I were the one who did the same thing, he would be mad, but he left without telling me when he knew full well that I would have been waiting for him in my office. I think he needs space. I should give him that," Lucy said, feeling both angry and frustrated.

Sonia sighed, "Maybe you're right, and he needs space, but I don't think it's a good idea. Didn't you say he accused you of keeping your apartment handy because of times like this?" Sonia asked reasonably.

"Isn't it obvious that I need my apartment at times like this? That is his house! This is my apartment! He can as well move into my apartment with me if he wants to. No one said it has to be the lady leaving her place," Lucy said, and Sonia shook her head.

"You both shouldn't be mad at the same time. You got mad, and then Tom got mad, and now you're mad because he is mad, and then he will get even madder knowing you are mad again. Do you see where this is going? It's pointless. Tom might be taking things too far, but you started it, so you should apologise for reacting the way you did when he was only trying to point out reason with you," Sonia said, and Lucy sighed.

"I would have apologised if he stayed long enough on the phone to hear me out," Lucy hissed.

"You can send him a text. Let him know you are sorry and that you are going to start therapy. I'm sure that's a good start," Sonia offered and then remembered something.

"By the way, aren't you supposed to join them for dinner? Didn't you say his grandfather said something about getting to know you better during dinner?" Sonia reminded her.

"I don't think Tom wants me there. He said I don't have to join them if I don't want to," Lucy said, and Sonia raised a brow.

"He said that?"

"Yes! Does that sound like something he would have said if he wanted me there?" Lucy asked, and Sonia sighed.

"Maybe you are reading too much meaning into his words. I'm sure Tom would love you to have dinner with his family. He probably said that because he assumed you didn't want to," Sonia said, and Lucy looked out the window.

"I don't know...."

"Come back, Lu. Even if you think you both need a break, this is not the time for it. At least resolve whatever it is first, and then you can go to your apartment," Sonia said patiently, and Lucy sighed.

"Alright. I'm close to my apartment now. I will stop by and see how the place is and then come back home," Lucy said, and before she could hang up, Sonia stopped her.

"Since you're there, I will need you to help me get something from Mia," Sonia said, and once Lucy agreed, Sonia hung up the call and dialled Mia's line to instruct her to give the pregnancy test kit to Lucy.

Inside the apartment which Mia shared with Jeff, Mia hurriedly dressed up in an oversized polo t-shirt as she hurried out of her bedroom to answer the door.

Jeff, who had also heard the doorbell stepped out of his bedroom, and his gaze followed Mia as she moved from the door to the living room, carrying two boxes of pizza which had just been delivered with two cans of coke.

"Dinner is ready!" Mia announced with a cheerful smile as she set down the box of pizza and can coke on the table and went into the kitchen to get two plates.

"Do you know for every box of pizza you order, you get a free can of coke? So I bought two boxes of pizza. That way, we can get two free cans of coke," she said with a pleased smile that made Jeff want to laugh.

"You bought an extra box of pizza that we don't need so that we can get a free can of coke when we have a pack of can coke in the refrigerator?" Jeff asked incredulously.

"Don't tell me you don't know that free and stolen stuff tastes better," Mia said, not letting Jeff's tone affect her glee at getting two free cans of coke.

"And what is going to happen to the extra box of pizza?" Jeff asked, and she shrugged as she opened the box and tore out a piece of pizza which she stuffed into her mouth before taking the twin sofa across from Jeff and turning on the television.

"I could leave it in the refrigerator so you can have it in the morning or whenever you please. Or I could give it to Alicia and Jasmine. I'm sure they will appreciate it," Mia said with her mouth full, and Jeff shook his head.

"Do you always waste money this way?" He asked, wondering why she lived and acted like some rich kid who had too much money to throw around.

"Waste? How?" Mia asked in honest confusion.

"You don't cook. You claim you don't enjoy stale food, so you buy food daily. And now you bought an extra box of pizza just to get a free can of coke. That is pretty wasteful, don't you think?" Jeff asked, and Mia shook her head.

"I don't think so. I can't cook. As I've told you a couple of times already, we all don't have to cook or learn to cook. I buy food daily because I don't enjoy refrigerated food. And I already told you free stuff tastes better. So, no. I'm not wasting money. You should eat," Mia said and smiled happily as she chewed.

"How is your head?" He asked, and Mia looked at him with a puzzled frown for a moment and flashed him a smile when she remembered the reason for his question.

"I feel much better now. Thanks," Mia said, but Jeff only gave her a nod as he picked a piece of pizza.

Was she in a relationship now? Who was responsible for her pregnancy if truly she was pregnant? Was she going to tell him about it? He mused as he watched her from under his lid while they ate.

They weren't exactly close friends that discussed the personal details of their lives, but right now he was curious about a lot of things.

"Your family is in Sogal, right?" Jeff asked suddenly, and Mia stiffened for a moment.

"What?" She asked with a confused smile.

"Your family. Are they aware that you moved? Do they know you are sharing an apartment with a single man?" Jeff asked, and Mia grinned.

"Why? Are you scared that you will be harassed for cohabiting with me? Don't worry. No one is going to harass you," Mia said dismissively.

"That doesn't answer my questions," Jeff pointed out, and Mia rolled her eyes.

"In case you didn't notice, I'm an adult, and they don't need to know anything about me or my living arrangements. Now if you don't mind, can we drop the subject?" Mia asked, and Jeff shrugged.

It seemed to him like she wasn't on good terms with her family, and even though he was curious to know why he let it go.

Mia on the other hand suddenly lost interest in the pizza as she wondered what could have prompted Jeff to ask about her family. Did she do or say something to make him think she was hiding something? Perhaps she could have answered his question without sounding so defensive? It was bad enough that Harry seemed suspicious of her. What if they decided to look into her? She liked her life as it was, and she didn't need anything to upset it.

"Mia? Your phone is ringing," Jeff said, cutting into her thought when he noticed that she seemed distracted.

She rose from her seat immediately and went into her bedroom to get it, "Hey! Is everything alright?" She asked the moment she received Sonia's call.

"Yeah. Were you able to get the kit?" Sonia asked hopefully.

The kit. Mia thought with a slight frown when she realised she had forgotten about it. She glanced at her handbag when she remembered Jeff had brought it in. Did Jeff see it? She hoped not.

"Yeah. I go it."

"Thanks. Lucy will be stopping over soon. Could you help me give it to her?"

"Sure. What's going on? Are you alright?" Mia asked in concern.

"Yes, I am. My period is running late, so I need to confirm that everything is okay. You can't tell Bryan about this, promise?" Sonia said, and once Mia promised her, she hung up.

Chapter 565 Pregnant

Lucy sighed as she looked around her bedroom and paced the entire length. It seemed like forever since she had last spent time there, and though the apartment was hers, it felt foreign to her. She had spent more time in Tom's house than in her own apartment since she moved to Ludus.

She had jumped at the opportunity to move to Ludus when she received her promotion because she wanted to get out of Heden for a change and live alone.

She had wanted to live independently as an adult without having to live under the same roof as her parents anymore, and now that she finally had the chance, she had moved right in with Tom.

Did she love Tom? Yes. Did she love being with him? Yes, she did. Did she keep her apartment because she thought things were going to go wrong between them? No. That wasn't true.

She kept her apartment because it was hers. She wasn't planning on moving in fully with Tom. They were in a relationship, and the whole idea of not getting married to him was so they could both have their space when they needed it and retain their individuality. So why did Tom make it seem like having her own apartment was a crime? Lucy mused as she walked over to her bed and sat on it.

She took out her phone and decided to compose a long text to Tom as Sonia had suggested, but paused when she remembered that he was probably in the middle of a meeting and her text would only distract him.

She decided to put a hold on telling him about it and just wait to tell him about it after dinner. If he chose to hear her out, that was fine. If he refused to give her listening ears, she would just give him his much needed space.

Having made up her mind, Lucy rose from the bed and headed for the refrigerator in the living room. Once she opened it, she sighed when she saw the packs of cranberry juice that were seated inside and the chocolates.

Tom had added those to the grocery list she had sent him. This brought back something Sonia had mentioned earlier in her office about how much Tom had put into their relationship from the beginning until the present compared to hers.

Was she really not doing enough for him? So far, she had been doing all she knew best to do and had been there for him, with him, and beside him as best as she could. So what else were they talking about?

She turned from her refrigerator and went to sit on her couch. She looked at her door, remembering the first day Tom had shown up at her door as her neighbour and assisted her in setting up her apartment.

She sighed as she remembered every moment he had shown up at her door after that and everything else he had done for her, especially those little thoughtful gestures like reading about ulcers because of her and choosing to buy her the cranberry juice. Drinking juice with her instead of wine or coffee so she wouldn't feel like she was missing out by taking just cranberry. Taking her to work daily and always being present for her. Revealing his identity to the world and standing up for her when the scandal started. Refusing to fire her as she knew everyone else had wanted.

To the best of her knowledge, Tom had done his best to be as selfless as possible, and he had never deliberately said or done anything to hurt her feelings apart from the time he lied about his identity and took her to the spa to confront Anita without her knowledge.

She seemed to be the one that was mostly getting mad at him for things and annoying him, and each time he tried his best not to stay mad at her. So why did she make a big deal over what he said that morning? Why had she felt like Tom was attacking her? Was it really the control freak in her, as Sonia had said?

Her action that morning couldn't be the only thing that was annoying Tom, could it? Perhaps he was also worried about Anita's family.

She paused when she remembered the meeting. During the session, she had caught him staring at her on different occasions, and his gaze hadn't been hostile. It had been soft, sort of, like he was trying to figure out what she was thinking, so what had changed? She mused as she tried to recall what else she could have done.

She sat up when she remembered being in a hurry to leave and how Harry had stopped her. Was that why Tom was mad? If she remembered correctly, he had said something about introducing her to his grandfather so she could return to her office, as she had been in a hurry to do. Was that the reason he was mad? She mused with a sigh.

She had been about to leave without saying hello to his grandfather when everyone else had gone up to him to pay obeisance. Apart from the fact that he was Tom's grandfather, he was a major shareholder, and she was supposed to say hello.

She had been unable to draw the line between her personal and professional relationship with Tom. The line was blurring for her, and she was being blinded by emotions. She was acting unreasonably.

Sonia was right. Staying away right now wasn't the best thing. If Tom was taking a step away from her, she was supposed to be drawing closer, not moving away, as that would only widen the chasm between them.

She had overreacted this morning, accused Tom of calling her names without really seeing it from his perspective, and she had acted inappropriately in public. She was at fault, and she owed him a real apology, Lucy thought as she rose and headed for the door.

If Tom said she was a control freak, and Sonia agreed with him, then she needed to work on herself. If they both believed her traumatic experience was responsible for it, then she needed to deal with it. She could do better. She would do better.

With that thought in mind, she ordered a ride and headed for Tom's apartment to get Sonia's stuff from Mia.

Once she rang the doorbell, the door opened a moment later, and Mia flashed her a bright, welcoming smile, "Finally, I get to meet Sonia's best friend! I've heard so much about you. I'm Mia. Bryan's assistant," Mia said as she extended a hand to Lucy, and Lucy found herself smiling as she shook hands with Mia.

It was easy to see why Mia and Sonia got along just fine. Mia had a bubbly personality, much like Sonia. They were able to carry everyone along and talk to everyone like they had been best friends forever.

"I'm Lucy. It's nice to meet you," Lucy said, shaking off a feeling of nostalgia and sadness.

She felt sad and nostalgic standing in front of what she knew as Tom's apartment but talking to someone else. Tom's apartment held certain memories for her.

Mia turned when Jeff joined them at the door, "You must know Jeff. Bryan's manager," Mia introduced, and Lucy nodded as she shook hands with Jeff.

"It's nice to meet you," Lucy said with a polite smile, which Jeff returned.

"Please come in," Jeff offered, wondering why she was standing outside.

"I'm in a hurry. I stopped by to pick up Sonia's stuff," Lucy said, and Mia gave her a nod.

"She told me. Give me a moment, and I will get it," Mia said as she returned inside.

She came out a moment later with an envelope containing one of Sonia's novels and the kit, "Tell her I enjoyed the storyline," Mia said with a wink which Lucy didn't exactly understand.

"Thanks. See you around!" Lucy said with a wave.

She turned around in time to see her cab arrive, and she got in. After she had given the cab man the directions, she opened the envelope to see the novel Mia had read and then she noticed that something else was in the envelope.

Once she took it out, she raised a brow. A pregnancy test kit? Was that the reason Mia had winked at her? Was Sonia suspecting that she was pregnant? Lucy smiled at the thought. She knew how much

Sonia loved and craved a family of her own with kids. She did not doubt that Sonia would be ecstatic if it turned out she was pregnant. She was about to become an aunt, Lucy thought with a happy sigh. This was at least one bright spot in her day.

Once Lucy arrived at Tom's house, she met his parents and siblings in the living room, "Where is Tom?" Jade asked curiously.

"He had to attend a meeting, so I came back alone," Lucy said, and Bryan and Jade exchanged a look while Desmond looked at her without saying a word. Only Evelyn seemed not to guess what was going on.

"Alright. You should freshen up. We will be leaving to have dinner with Desmond's dad soon," Evelyn said, and Lucy gave her a nod before turning to Bryan.

"Where is Sonia?" she asked curiously.

"She is resting in the bedroom," Bryan said, and Lucy gave him a nod before walking away.

She dialled Sonia's line as she took the stairs, "I'm here now," she told Sonia immediately after Sonia received the call.

"Meet me in Bryan's bedroom," Sonia said just as Lucy stopped right by the door and tapped on the door.

"I'm right there."

Sonia hung up the call and opened the door immediately to see Lucy's beaming face, "Are we having a baby?" Lucy asked excitedly, and Sonia pulled Lucy in and shut the door behind her.

"What is wrong?" Lucy asked when she noticed the worry in Sonia's eyes.

"I don't want to be pregnant," Sonia said simply, and Lucy frowned.

"Why not? You have always looked forward to having a baby," Lucy said, and Sonia shook her head.

"I can't be pregnant yet. Bryan wouldn't like that. We are just recovering from our last misunderstanding. This might cause another problem for us," Sonia said, and Lucy sighed.

"So Bryan doesn't know about this?" Lucy asked.

"It has to remain between us," Sonia said, and Lucy gave her a nod.

"Hm. Alright. How about you get the test done? Let's know for sure. It might just turn out to be a false alarm, right?" Lucy said as she handed the envelope to Sonia.

"Get it done. I will wait here," Lucy encouraged, and Sonia nodded as she took the test kit out of the envelope, and once she had brought it out, she left the pack on the bed and locked the door.

Lucy stood by the door of the bathroom as Sonia carried out the test. Lucy tried to bring up different subjects to calm Sonia as they waited for the result, and when Sonia raised her head to meet Lucy's gaze, Lucy didn't need to see the strip to know the test was positive.

"Oh, Sony!" Lucy cried as she went in to embrace Sonia, and Sonia's body shook as she wept.

"It's positive, Lu. I'm pregnant!" Sonia cried.

Every time she had imagined the day she would find out she was pregnant, she had always imagined herself happy and excited, not this sad.

She had been careful all these years not to get pregnant because she didn't really consider the past men in her life as people she would want to share her baby with, and she had sort of let herself be carried away by her love for Bryan and had not been careful enough to take the right precautionary steps not to get pregnant.

Or perhaps she had not done so because she had thought Bryan would be okay with having babies with her until he mentioned he wasn't ready for them to be parents yet.

"You should tell Bryan about it. I'm sure he would have a change of mind," Lucy suggested.

"What if he doesn't? I don't want to put him in that situation. I don't want to be in that situation either," Sonia cried, and they both turned to the door when they heard the knob turn, and Bryan knocked.

"Take it. Help me pack it up and keep it. I will get it and dispose of it later," Sonia said in alarm as she quickly rinsed the strip and forced it into Lucy's hand.

"I'm coming, babe," Sonia called as she quickly rinsed her face while Lucy hurriedly dipped the positive strip into the empty pack and hid it in her handbag before opening the door to let Bryan in.

Lucy flashed a surprised Bryan an apologetic smile, "Sorry we locked you out of your bedroom. Sony, let's talk later," Lucy called out to Sonia as she hurried out of the room.

Lucy sighed as she walked into Tom's bedroom, thinking about Sonia. There was nothing good about the day. She wished she could sleep it off or wake up to find out it was all a dream.

Chapter 566 Overwhelmed

Anita and Tiffany sat on the two single sofas in Bernice's private hospital room as they watched her unconscious form, with an oxygen mask over her face.

She seemed pale and nothing like the gracious hostess she had been when she welcomed them into her home just the previous day.

Neither of them had said a word to each other since Anita joined Tiffany in the room after Adam and Jackson had been escorted out of the hospital by the guards.

Tiffany still looked visibly shaken and pale as she sat there, holding onto Bernice's hand. She had a lot on her mind and was feeling different emotions, but what she desired most was for Bernice to open her eyes.

She would worry about everything else later. She would worry about why Jack had seemed so upset to the point of fighting with Adam over Benny later.

She had turned off her phone after Adam and Jack were thrown out of the hospital because Jack had kept calling to find out Bernice's state. She didn't want to wonder why her husband seemed so concerned about Bernice. She knew it wasn't because he was being a dutiful brother-in-law.

Tiffany sighed as she shook the thought out of her head. She needed to think about something else. Anything else other than Bernice and her husband.

Her thoughts returned to their mother, and she sighed, "How? How could mother do such a thing?" Tiffany asked after some time, breaking the silence in the room.

Anita, who had been busy on her phone, looked up when she heard Tiffany's voice, "I kept asking myself the same question yesterday. All my life I wanted to be like her, and now... Now I feel lost. I don't want to be anything like her," Anita said with a shake of her head as she rose when she started feeling cramped.

"I need to move around for a bit. Do you need me to get you something to eat or drink?" Anita offered, and when Tiffany only gave her a noncommittal grunt, she placed a hand on Tiffany's shoulder. This time Tiffany looked at her.

"I asked if you wanted me to get you anything," Anita repeated, realizing now that Tiffany hadn't been listening to her and had most likely unintentionally asked the question on her mind out loud.

"No. You should go get some rest. I will stay with Benny," Tiffany said with a sigh when she glanced at the wall clock and saw that it was past 6 PM already.

"I told you already. I'm not leaving. Stop asking me to leave as though Bernice is not my sister, too," Anita snapped at her irritably.

"I'm sorry. You don't have to leave if you don't want to. Everything is just so messed up. Our lives are messed up. Our family is messed up," Tiffany cried, and her voice hitched as she broke into a sob.

Anita moved close to her and placed her arm around her, "I'm sorry I snapped at you. I'm just really short on temper right now," Anita said contritely, and Tiffany nodded.

"I understand. I wish I could snap at someone too," Tiffany said as she brushed her tears away and returned her gaze to Bernice.

"What do you think would happen when she regains consciousness? Do you think she will want to go back home to her husband and kids?" Tiffany asked thoughtfully.

"I hope not. I won't be a part of that. I'm hoping you won't support that either. She had no business staying married to Adam. She has to get a divorce and leave that marriage...."

"It's not like I don't agree with you. I do. But what else can she do? Even if she files for a divorce, she won't gain anything. Adam is a lawyer, and his father is the chief judge. The case will always go in his favor, especially now that he knows she cheated too. Benny will lose the boys to Adam, and he won't pay her a dime. I don't think she has much money, and she can't move in with mother. I can't let her move in with me, you know, not after her affair with Jack. Where will she go? What will she do?" Tiffany asked, and even as the words left her lips, it occurred to her that Bernice must have thought of all these hence she decided to take her life.

"She can live in my house. It's our family home, after all. She will work! She is educated. Bernice is very intelligent and can get a job with her degree. You should divorce Jack as well," Anita said, and she moved away from Tiffany when she shook her head.

"I'm not doing that. I'm not leaving my marriage," Tiffany said, making Anita frown.

"Why not? What is so special about your marriage with Jack that you can't leave? Is it the money? Is it mother? Are you still scared of her despite all you've seen and heard?" Anita asked incredulously.

"It's not any of that. My marriage affords me the freedom I want and everything I need...."

"Freedom? To do what?" Anita asked in confusion.

Tiffany rose and turned to face Anita, "I am a lesbian, okay?"

"A what?" Anita asked in surprise as she looked at Tiffany like she had just sprouted another head.

"You heard me. I'm not attracted to men. I'm not sexually interested in Jack. I tried my best to be, but I'm not. I thought maybe I could be bisexual, but I'm not. You can judge me all you want, but it's who I am. That's my sexual orientation," Tiffany said with a defiant look in her eyes as she watched Anita stumble backward and lower herself back on the couch.

"How long have you been interested in ladies?" Anita asked, wondering if she truly knew anyone in her family.

Every one of them seemed to be hiding something. First, it was her mother and Bernice, and then it was Lisa telling her about what she knew about their parent's marriage, and now it was Tiffany telling her this.

"For as long as I can remember."

"Then why? Why did you marry Jack? Why didn't you say anything this whole time? Was mother aware? Is Bernice aware?" Anita asked, not knowing what to think.

"Was I supposed to announce it to everyone? Why did I marry Jack? Knowing mother, do you think she will ever let me get married to a lady or come out publicly as a lesbian? I once tried to talk to mother about it when I was seventeen, and she told me never to think about it or talk about it. My arrangement with Jack works perfectly for me. Staying married to him allows me to have access to his money, and I can be with any lady I want without being suspected of anything," Tiffany explained, and Anita shook her head.

"I can't believe any of this. I'm sure this is all a nightmare, and I will wake...."

"It's not a nightmare, Anita. Deal with it. We all have stuff going on with us. We are human," Tiffany said as she returned to her seat and faced Bernice once again.

They both turned when the door opened, and Lisa walked in.

"Lisa! You should be resting. You shouldn't have come," Anita said as she rose to meet Lisa.

"I'm okay. Ron is with me. I had to come and see Bernice," Lisa said as she approached the bed while Ron embraced Anita and gave a reassuring look to let her know everything was okay.

"Hello, Tiffany!" Ron greeted, and Tiffany responded noncommittally.

"What did the doctor say?" Lisa asked Tiffany and Anita.

"I told you already. He said she might be unconscious for some time, but she will be fine," Anita supplied.

"Darling, can you excuse us for a moment?" Lisa asked her husband, and he pecked her cheek before excusing them.

Once he left, Lisa turned to Tiffany and Anita, "Have you both decided on what we are to do?" Lisa asked, and they looked at her in confusion.

"What we are to do about what?" Tiffany asked, setting aside her grudge against Lisa for the time being.

"About mother. Bernice. Our family. We can't just pretend like mother didn't have an affair with Benny's husband or that nothing happened between Benny and your husband...."

"Whatever happened between Benny and my husband is none of your business. This is between Benny, Jack, and I, so you both should stay out of it," Tiffany said, and Lisa turned to Anita, who shook her head.

"And mother? What about mother? Are you going to also turn a blind eye to her action?" Lisa asked, and Tiffany sighed.

"I don't know. I don't think I can forgive her yet. You can do whatever you want to mother. All I want is for Benny to recover," Tiffany said, and Anita signaled to Lisa to step out of the room with her.

"Did you know that Tiffany is a lesbian?" Anita asked the moment they walked out of the room.

"She is?" Lisa asked, not sounding completely surprised.

"Why don't you sound surprised?" Anita asked, and Lisa shrugged.

"Dad always suspected it," Lisa said, and Anita sighed.

"She doesn't love Jack. She says their marriage is convenient as it lets her be herself. If dysfunctional were a family name, it would be ours," Anita said, and Lisa smiled.

"Every family has their secrets...."

"Not like ours, Lisa, and you know it! Our family is all shades of screwed up. I won't be surprised if Benny wakes up and decides she still wants Adam or decides to forgive mother. I'm exhausted. Since you are here and have seen her for yourself, I don't have to stay here anymore. Tiffany can stick to her side like the dutiful sister she is. I don't think I understand anything or anyone anymore. I'm overwhelmed. Do to mother whatever you please. I'm out of here," Anita said, but Lisa held her hand before she could leave.

"Where are you going?" Lisa asked, and Anita shook her head.

"I don't know. Home or anywhere that is not near here, I suppose. I would have really loved to be by your side when the baby comes, but I'm not so sure I am in the best state of mind right now. I might have to leave sooner than I planned. I will keep in touch with you. I love you," Anita said as she embraced Lisa, and Lisa patted Anita's back as she hugged her.

"I love you too, hon. But what about all that you need to do? Mother's plan for Lucy, and your apology...."

"Don't worry. I intend to do all of that. I'm still trying to come up with the best way to go about it all. Thank you, Lisa. Thank you for being different. I can dare to do things differently now only because you were beside me and kept pushing me," Anita said as she pulled away, and Lisa gave her a proud smile.

"Be fine, Annie. Although I will miss you sorely, I believe this is probably for the best. Come back better. We will be waiting for you," Lisa said as Anita pulled away from her.

Lisa watched Anita walk away until she disappeared from view, and then she turned when she felt her husband beside her.

"Is everything alright?" Ron asked as he placed his arm around his wife's waist.

"Everything will be alright. I need to have a word with Tiffany, and then we can leave," Lisa said before returning to the room to join Tiffany.

"Tiffany," Lisa called softly as she lowered herself to the seat which Anita had earlier occupied.

"What else do you want to say? I have told you to do whatever you want. Can you just let me be?" Tiffany asked impatiently as she turned to look at Lisa.

"No, I can't. I promised dad I was going to look out for my sisters, and I intend to do just that whether you want me to or not," Lisa said softly.

"Are you here to look out for us, or do you just want to gloat?"

"Gloat? About what?" Lisa asked incredulously.

"I don't know. You tell me. Maybe you want to show us you have a perfect life and the perfect husband...."

"My life is not perfect, and this is not about me. It's about you and what you're doing with your life," Lisa cut in patiently.

"Your life is not perfect, yet you want to tell me how to run my life?" Tiffany asked incredulously, and Lisa drew in a deep breath to control her temper.

"You are beginning to get on my nerves, Tiffany," Lisa said irritably.

"You always get on mine....." Tiffany rose immediately as she felt Bernice's fingers move.

"Benny? Benny, are you awake?" Tiffany asked when she noticed the flutter of Benny's lashes, and Lisa rose immediately and went to the door.

"Ron, please get the doctor," Lisa called to her husband, who was seated some feet away from the door, before returning to join her sisters.

Tears gathered in Bernice's eyes when she opened her eyes and saw Tiffany standing over her with concerned eyes.

Bernice shut her eyes and turned her face away so she wouldn't face Tiffany. She couldn't face her, not after what she had done.

"How are you feeling, Benny? You scared us," Lisa said softly.

A doctor came in with some nurses and asked Tiffany and Lisa to excuse them while they checked on Bernice to see how she was doing.

After some minutes the doctor and the nurses left the room after reassuring them that Bernice was fine.

"Benny," Tiffany called softly as she approached Bernice, and tears dropped from her eyes when Bernice broke into a sob.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry," Bernice cried with her hands over her face, unable to bring herself to look at Tiffany.

Lisa sighed as she watched Tiffany embrace Bernice as they wept together. She was glad that Anita had decided to take a different path, but she had no idea what to do to help these two or how to punish their mother.

One thing she knew for sure was that Rebekah had to pay for her immorality, greed, and wickedness.

Chapter 567 Awkward Family Dinner

Lucy had never felt more uncomfortable in her life than she did when she walked into the reserved part of the restaurant where they had made the dinner reservation for the evening.

In the middle of the room, there was a round table with eight chairs around it, and Tom was already seated with his grandfather chatting and sipping from a glass of wine by the time the rest of them joined them.

Lucy tried not to let her face give away her emotion when she met Tom's gaze. Tom was slightly taken aback when she smiled at him.

"Tom, you are here already? Why didn't you come home?" Evelyn asked as they joined them.

"I got here less than ten minutes ago. I figured it would be easier and quickest to come here directly rather than get home before coming here," Tom explained with a dismissive shrug.

"My lovely Evelyn," Lawrence Hank said with a wide smile as he rose to embrace Evelyn.

"You don't have to rise on my account, Lawrence. It's always a pleasure to see you," Evelyn said with a bright smile as she kissed both sides of his cheeks.

"How have you been?" Evelyn asked when she pulled away and took the seat next to him by his right since Tom was seated on his left.

"Excellent," Lawrence said as his gaze moved to Desmond, who had taken his seat, "Is he still foul-tempered?" Lawrence asked Evelyn, and she grinned.

"He is not foul-tempered. And if he seems that way towards you, it's probably because you deserve it," Evelyn said as she took the seat between her husband and Lawrence.

"I see you're still defending him as usual," Lawrence said dryly, but Desmond said nothing to his father as he watched Bryan and Jade, who was waiting to say hello to him.

"My pride," Lawrence greeted fondly, and Jade flushed with pleasure as she leaned forward and embraced her grandfather.

"I've missed you so much," Jade said, and the old man smiled as he patted her face fondly.

"As I have missed you. I'm glad you're joining I-Global," Lawrence said, and Jade smiled brightly.

"What did you get me?" Jade asked expectantly and Evelyn looked at her with disapproval.

"Aren't you too old to be expecting gifts from your grandfather...."

"What do you mean too old? No matter how old she is, she remains my granddaughter. Your package is in the car, my dear. You will get it after dinner," Lawrence assured her.

"I knew you would never come without a gift for me," Jade said with a happy smile as she kissed his cheeks.

"Where is the rascal of the family?" Lawrence asked as he looked behind Jade for Bryan, who was grinning.

"You can't keep calling me that," Bryan protested.

"I can, and I will. You haven't introduced your lady to me," Lawrence reminded Bryan as his gaze moved to Sonia, who was standing beside Bryan with Lucy, and Bryan reached for Sonia's hand.

"Meet Sonia Smith, my girlfriend. Babe, meet my grandfather," Bryan said easily, and the old man smiled at Sonia, who easily returned his smile.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, sir," Sonia said politely, and Lawrence gave her a nod.

"The pleasure is all mine," he said, and Bryan held out a seat for Sonia as he sat between her and Jade, leaving the remaining empty seat for Lucy since that was next to Tom.

"I'm sorry about my conduct at the company earlier. I was sort of flustered. Thanks for inviting me to dinner," Lucy said politely, and Lawrence smiled at her.

"It's alright. Please sit down," Lawrence said, and as Lucy went around the table to take the seat beside Tom, he rose and pulled out the seat for her.

"Thanks," Lucy murmured as she sat down.

Lawrence's gaze shifted to Jade, who was seated next to her father, "Your brothers are here with their partners. When am I going to meet yours?" Lawrence asked Jade, and she flashed him a wide smile.

"Some day soon, hopefully," Jade said as the waiters came in to serve them.

Perhaps it was because Sonia had a lot going on in her mind, she was more composed and organized than usual as she sat down and merely watched the interaction with a polite smile.

She had been unable to have another conversation with Lucy after Bryan interrupted them earlier, thus when their eyes met now, Lucy's gaze was questioning as she discretely jerked her head in Bryan's direction, wanting to know if Sonia had told Bryan about the pregnancy, but Sonia shook her head making Lucy sigh.

Hearing Lucy sigh, Tom turned to look at her, "Are you alright?" Tom asked, making a deliberate effort to push their misunderstanding aside and act appropriately in the presence of his family.

"Yeah. Thanks," Lucy said with a soft smile.

"How did your meeting go?" Lucy asked curiously.

"It went smoothly," Tom said and glanced down in surprise when Lucy placed a hand over his wondering what she was up to.

"I'm sorry about that today. I missed you," Lucy whispered, and Tom met her gaze.

"I missed you too," he admitted, and Lucy smiled as she focused her attention on the meal which had been served and ate silently.

She moved her attention to Lawrence when he mentioned her name, "...I loved your presentation during the meeting today. I can see why you are a director," Lawrence told Lucy, and she smiled.

"Thank you, sir," she answered politely.

"Please call me Lawrence. So what is it like being the head of the fashion...."

"Lawrence, this is a family gathering. Can you not talk about work while we are eating?" Evelyn cut in politely.

"I'm only trying to know my grandson's lady better, not talking about work," Lawrence assured her before returning his attention to Lucy once again.

"I gathered that you are living with Thomas, am I right?" Lawrence asked, and Lucy looked lost for a moment, not knowing the best way to answer the question.

"She is not. She has her own apartment but visits me often," Tom said casually as he continued to eat.

"Ah! I see," Lawrence said with a nod as he shifted his gaze to Sonia.

"I've read through a couple of your bestselling novels. You are a talented writer," Lawrence said, and Sonia smiled at the compliment.

"Thank you, sir. I've also read some of your books," she said, and he smiled at her, pleased to know she had made an effort to read his books.

"Before or after realizing I am Bryan's grandfather?" Lawrence asked, and Bryan answered before Sonia could.

"She only got to know about you less than forty-eight hours ago," Bryan assured him.

"Really? So what made you read my books?" Lawrence asked curiously and Sonia shrugged.

"The same reason everyone else buys them I suppose? You are a great storyteller and we get to travel to places we might never visit in reality through your books. The places you write about aren't locations anyone would want to go spend a vacation. We learn about other cultures and lifestyles through you," Sonia explained, and Lawrence smiled, pleased with her response.

"Perhaps I would gift you a signed copy of my latest book, and you can give me an autograph," Lawrence suggested, and Sonia beamed a smile at him.

"That would be a pleasure. Thanks."

"The first time I read Sonia's novel, I couldn't sleep a wink until I finished the story. My baby is that good," Bryan announced proudly.

"Really? Which novel was that?" Jade asked curiously, and even Sonia looked at Bryan with interest, wanting to know which story it was that had captured his interest.

"Hm, I can't recall the name, but it's something about a Witch and a hunter, I think," Bryan said thoughtfully, and Sonia smiled.

"The witch and her hunter?" Sonia asked, and Bryan gave her a nod.

"That was the first novel I read as well," Lawrence said, and Bryan grinned.

"I really enjoyed that story. You all should read it. Believe me when I say my baby is really good," Bryan said as he took Sonia's hand and kissed her palm.

"Are you trying to show off because grandfather is here?" Jade asked with a scowl, and Bryan chuckled.

"You should have just invited Harry to dinner if...." Bryan shut his mouth when Jade stepped on his foot.

"Harry Jonas? Are you going out with Harry?" Lawrence asked with interest.

"You loudmouth!" Jade muttered under her breath and hissed at Bryan before flashing her grandfather a smile.

"We are just good friends for the time being. We hope to see where that leads," Jade said, and Lawrence gave her a smile of approval.

"I hope that works out. Harry is a very reliable lad," Lawrence said as he shifted his attention to his grandsons once again.

"So, how are things going on with you both? I'm wondering whose wedding I'm going to attend first," Lawrence said as he looked from Tom to Bryan and back again.

Desmond, who had remained silent the whole time, cleared his throat, "What brought you to Ludus?" Desmond asked, wanting to change the subject when he noticed Lucy's sudden discomfort.

"I came to see how Tom is running the company, and I wanted to see my grandkids," Lawrence said easily.

"I see. So what country did you fly in from this time?" Desmond asked, and Lawrence smiled when he heard the subtle annoyance in Desmond's tone.

"One of those countries that needed my voice as usual," Lawrence said, and knowing that if she didn't step in, both men were going to start arguing soon, Evelyn decided to cut in.

"Are you ever going to get tired of moving around?" Evelyn asked in a casual tone.

"I don't think so. I will keep serving humanity until I cease to exist. I know your husband is not pleased with that, but that is the path I have chosen, and it can't be helped. I'm, however, glad that my grandkids are family-oriented like their father," Lawrence said with a proud smile.

"And if they were not? If I decided to follow your footsteps to serve humanity and not raise a family, would you have a family gathering like this where you can just show up out of the blue and walk in and out of our lives as you please?" Desmond asked irritably, and both Evelyn and Jade touched him.

"Dad," Tom called quietly, but Lawrence stopped Tom before he could say anything else.

"Probably not. But this is your path. And since you chose to raise a family, it is my responsibility to meet with the family when I can and see how everyone is doing," Lawrence answered easily and then focused on Tom and Bryan once again.

"So, which of you is getting married first? Is it going to be you, Tom? Or Bryan?" He asked once again.

"I don't know about Bryan, but it's not in my plan," Tom said when he noticed how Lucy was wringing her hands on her thigh.

"What do you mean it's not in your plan?" Evelyn asked with a frown.

"Isn't it too early in their relationship to be asking them such questions?" Desmond asked, and Bryan nodded.

"I agree with dad. It's still too early for any of us to be talking about marriage. Sonia and I are not ready for any of that yet," Bryan started with a shrug, and Lucy sighed inwardly as she glanced at Sonia who was wearing a forced smile.

"I'm not sure that is what your brother meant," Evelyn said as she turned to Tom.

"Does that mean you don't want to get married? You both don't want to get married?" Evelyn asked as she looked from Tom to Lucy, and Desmond looked at her.

"You heard him. He said it's not in his plan. He has a right to choose his path," Desmond said, and Evelyn frowned.

"Tom said it's not in his plans. It's not the same as being too early, is it? Shouldn't that bother you?" Evelyn asked her husband, but before anyone else could speak, Tom spoke again.

"Can we talk about something else? I'm sure there are so many other topics that we can talk about as a family that doesn't have to revolve around my personal life," Tom said irritably, sounding harsher than he had meant to.

The room was silent for a moment as Sonia and Lucy watched the scene before them awkwardly.

"We haven't seen you for a long time. Why not tell us about the places you have visited? I'm curious to hear all about that and know what you have been up to," Jade suggested with a bright smile as she broke the silence, and Lucy almost let out a breath of relief when Lawrence began to talk about his trip.

Lucy sighed inwardly when she glanced at Tom and noticed that his face was carefully blank as he picked up his wineglass and took a long sip. She couldn't wait for the evening to be over.

Chapter 568 Foot Rub

After dinner, Lucy decided to go home with Tom rather than join the rest of the family as she had done when coming.

Once they got into the car, the tension that had hung between them all day took over the car, and neither of them said a word to each other as Tom drove behind his family.

Lucy said nothing as she tried to compose her thoughts and put her words together so that she wouldn't make any more mistakes, while Tom simply kept mute because he just didn't want to speak.

"I'm sorry," Lucy said after some time.

"It's okay," Tom said simply without taking his attention away from the road.

"I know you're still mad at me. I overreacted. I shouldn't have reacted the way I did. And I shouldn't have behaved that way at the company either," Lucy added, but once again Tom did not look at her.

"It's alright," he said dismissively as he kept his attention fixed on the road.

"I contacted two therapists," Lucy said, and this time Tom raised a brow.

"Why?"

"Why what?" Lucy asked in confusion.

"What for? Why did you contact a therapist? Last time I checked you said you didn't have a problem and you didn't need to see one," Tom reminded her.

Lucy rubbed her hands together, "I spoke with Sonia. She sort of agrees with the stuff you said. I may not exactly buy into the therapy thing, but I choose to trust you. If you believe I need it, then I will go for it," Lucy said, and Tom sighed.

"Good for you," he said without much interest.

This was what he had wanted her to say earlier this morning, so why was he not satisfied even after she had said it? Tom mused.

"Can you say something?" Lucy asked, and Tom sighed.

"I'm not sure what you want me to say," Tom said simply.

"Tell me how you feel. You can vent if you want to," Lucy encouraged.

"I need to feel something to vent, I don't feel anything. There is nothing to vent about," Tom said, and Lucy's brows pulled together.

"What do you mean?" Lucy asked in confusion and Tom shrugged.

"I feel emotionally exhausted and drained right now. Maybe by morning I might know what to say to you. But right now, I'm not in the mood to say anything," Tom said, and the crease between Lucy's brows deepened.

"Earlier you said you missed me," she reminded him.

"I can be upset and still miss you, can't I?"

"I know you're still upset by my reaction...."

"It's not just about your reaction, Lucy. I wish it was, but it's not," Tom said still without looking at her. Some how he couldn't look at her and stay mad at her.

As much as he was tempted to put this whole episode behind them and move on, he knew better than to do that. This awkward and uncomfortable moment was necessary if they were going to progress in their relationship.

"Then what else is wrong?" Lucy asked, and this time Tom pulled the car over by the roadside and turned to face her.

"A lot of things. For starters, I'm wondering how long things will continue between us like this. I'm trying to figure out if I'm as ready as I thought to walk down this path with you. I understand that you never wanted to be in a relationship and I'm the one who put everything on the line to chase you until you fell in love with me, but now I'm wondering if I'm ever going to stop chasing you. I'm wondering if I'm going to be okay with living this way. I don't want to grow to resent you or end up having any regrets," Tom said and Lucy pressed her lips together for a moment.

"Do you need space?" Lucy asked, and Tom sighed.

After all he had just said, this was what she could ask him? If he needed space? Tom mused in disbelief.

"Space?" He asked, wondering where she was driving to with that.

"Yeah. I read somewhere that when men are upset they need space. Do you need me to give you space so you can calm down? Do you feel suffocated?" Lucy asked, and Tom sighed inwardly.

"Is that all you got from what I just said? What if I say I do need space, what would you do then?" He asked, wanting to know exactly what she was thinking.

"I could go to my apartment and stay away for some time until you are back to normal...."

"Until I'm back to normal? What exactly do you define as normal for me, Lucy?" Tom interrupted in an annoyed tone.

He couldn't believe that he had felt conflicted about taking his father's advice to ask Lucy to return to her apartment because he didn't want to hurt her feelings, yet she had no problems with suggesting it herself. She was in a hurry to run back to her nest at the slightest inconvenience. It made him feel like she was only living with him for his sake and not because she really wanted to stay there.

"You not being so mad me. I don't want us to fight. I'm not comfortable with any of this," Lucy explained, and Tom nodded.

"As much as I hate fighting with you, I think we need to fight sometimes to get on the same page. I think this is one of those times we need to disagree to be able to reach an agreement," Tom said, and Lucy looked at him, not understanding what to make of what he was saying.

"What agreement?"

"Since you don't mind moving back to your apartment to give me space, I think we should do that. Maybe you need space as well...."

"Tom, I don't...."

"I think we need to spend some time apart from each other. You can move back into your apartment since you love your personal space so much," Tom said in a flat tone.

"I don't understand you. What do you want from me? What do you want me to do? You said you wanted me to get therapy and I agreed, so why are you saying all this? Don't you think you're taking things too far? I apologized for behaving the way I did earlier, so what else do you want me to do?" Lucy asked, feeling both scared, confused, and annoyed at the same time.

"I should be asking you that. What do you want from me? Because I'm beginning to think that no matter how much I give it would never be enough. I think you expect me to make all the sacrifices in this relationship while you give me whatever is convenient for you. You want me to take hundred steps towards you while you remain comfortably seated," Tom said feeling very annoyed, and when Lucy opened her mouth to argue he sighed wearily.

"You know what? Let's not argue anymore. I'm exhausted. I'm tired of the back and forth. Just do whatever you want, Lucy. It's what you've always done anyway. Do whatever makes you happy, even if it means not receiving psychotherapy. I will tolerate it all until I can't and maybe then we can break up," Tom said, and without waiting for her to respond he started the car.

Tears stung Lucy's eyes as she looked at him, shocked that he had actually talked about a break up. Although she still wanted to talk to him so they could resolve things, she kept mute. He was obviously not in the mood for a conversation and forcing it would only result in more misunderstanding.

Neither of them said a word until they got to the house, and by the time they did, the others had arrived ahead of them and gone into their various bedrooms.

"Lucy!" Jamal called excitedly the moment they walked into the house, and the frown on Lucy's brows straightened into a wide smile as he hurried over to embrace her.

"It's past your bedtime, Jam. Why are you still up?" She asked, surprised to see him awake.

"He said he missed you, and insisted on seeing you before going to bed since you might leave for the office before he wakes up," Candace explained as she joined them.

"Oh, dear! I've missed you too," Lucy said as she kissed Jamal's forehead.

Jamal looked up at Tom who had also stopped, "Are you fine?" Jamal asked with a curious frown, and Tom forced a smile.

"Sure."

"You look tired," Candace observed, and Tom gave her a nod.

"I'm exhausted," Tom admitted, and Jamal walked away from Lucy to meet Tom.

"You need a cold drink and a foot rub. Aunt Andy always says there is nothing like a cold drink and a good foot rub after a busy day," Jamal said, and Tom chuckled involuntarily while Lucy and Candace smiled.

"Are you going to give me a foot rub then?" Tom asked, and Jamal shrugged.

"I could if you want, but your foot would be too large. My hands are not big enough," Jamal said, spreading them so Tom could see how small his hands are.

"But Lucy can do that, right Lucy?" Jamal asked, and Lucy smiled awkwardly as she looked at Tom, and Candace did not miss the tension between the two who were often lovey dovey.

Seeing how exhausted Tom was, Candace would ordinarily have asked Jamal to let them be, but she decided not to. Jamal's presence might be just what they need to talk to each other.

"Right," Lucy said, and Jamal nodded in approval.

"Lucy will help you. And I will get you something cold to drink while you freshen up," Jamal offered, and Tom smiled.

"Thanks Buddy, but you don't have to worry...."

"Let's go and get the drink," Candace said, ignoring Tom's protest as she took hold of Jamal's hand and pulled him away leaving Tom and Lucy.

Without saying a word they both headed up the stairs to their bedroom, and once they walked in Lucy went to sit on the couch and watched as Tom stripped off his clothes.

No matter how hard she tried she couldn't seem to figure out what to do or what to say. This was the first time Tom was staying mad at her for so long and it made her anxious uncomfortable. She wasn't used to this awkward atmosphere between them.

"Are you not coming to shower?" Tom asked when he started heading for the bathroom and noticed that Lucy was still seated where she was staring at him.

"I will," Lucy said in a small voice as she rose and began to take off her clothes while Tom walked into the bathroom.

He knew she was uncomfortable, and so was he. He wasn't this sort of person. Maybe that was his major problem; loving her so much to the point that he didn't want to see her the least bit unhappy. Seeing her look so confused and sad made him feel terrible.

After undressing, Lucy joined Tom in the shower, and as she reached for her shower gel, Tom grabbed it and after pressing some on his palm, he applied it on her body without saying a word.

"Tom," Lucy called, her voice coming out in a whisper.

Tom said nothing as he gently spread the soap lather on her back and Lucy stood stiffly as she let him massage her nape not knowing what to say to him or what to do.

Tom paused when he felt her body tremble against his hand, and he sighed inwardly when he looked into her face and noticed she was crying.

"Please don't do that," Tom murmured.

"I don't know what to do to show you that I'm trying. Please, stop being mad, Tom. I don't want to break up. I don't want to lose you. I'm really trying my best and if you say it's not good enough I will try harder," Lucy cried and Tom sighed.

"Please stop. I can't deal with this right now," Tom pleaded, feeling weak against her tears.

"Then what should I do? Tell me whatever it is. I don't want us to go to bed this way," Lucy cried as Tom brushed her tears away.

Tom turned towards the door when he heard a knock on the bedroom door. He knew it was most likely Jamal coming to deliver the glass of cold drink as he had promised.

Tom walked away from Lucy and moved to the edge of the bathroom door, "We will join you in five minutes," Tom called out to him before turning to Lucy.

"As much as I love you, I respect your choices and decisions, and I expect you to respect mine as well. I can't throw away all I want just to let you have all you want. You will have to meet me in the middle. I don't know how you're going to do that, but that's left for you to figure out if our relationship is important to you. I won't fight you over this anymore. Let's clean up. Jamal is waiting," Tom said as he turned on the shower on all sides.

Chapter 569 Selfish

Tom smiled as he watched Jamal, who sat at the edge of the bed watching him sip from the glass of cold juice while telling him all about his day.

Jamal had insisted that Lucy massage his foot, but Tom had playfully declined, not wanting to put Lucy in an awkward position.

"We will be going home after grandpa gets better," Jamal announced, and the smile disappeared from both Lucy's and Tom's faces.

"Already?" Tom asked, and Jamal bobbed his head.

"I'm going to miss you," Lucy said, and Jamal's brows pulled together.

"I will miss you too. I didn't want to leave you, but mom said we have to. We need to go back to school, and we need to be home when Aunt Andy comes back," Jamal told Lucy with a sad sigh.

"Your mom is right," Lucy said quietly.

"You don't have to worry, we can visit you, and I can always talk to you over the phone," Jamal promised, and Lucy smiled.

"How soon are you leaving?" Tom asked thoughtfully, and he shrugged.

"When grandpa gets better. Are you still going to give my mom the job and car?" Jamal asked, and Tom smiled.

"Sure. You could decide on any car you want and let me know. I will have it delivered to your home after you get back. And your mom can let me know after she decides on the sort of job she wants," Tom said, and Jamal smiled happily.

"Thank you," Jamal said with a yawn.

"Are you feeling sleepy?" Lucy asked with concern, and Jamal shook his head even though they could both tell he was feeling sleepy.

"Why are you both not talking to each other?" Jamal asked with a concerned frown. He had wanted to spend time with them because he enjoyed their company, especially how Tom pretended to be jealous whenever he went too close to Lucy, but tonight things seemed different between them.

"We are talking to each other," Lucy said with a bright smile.

"No, you are not. You are talking to me, not each other. Tom is not even mad that I'm sitting so close to you and holding your hand," Jamal pointed out as he looked from one to the other.

"That is because I'm too exhausted to be jealous of you tonight," Tom assured him with a grin, but Jamal eyed them suspiciously.

"Did you fight?"

"No, we didn't. We have been talking all day, so we have nothing left to say to each other right now," Lucy explained patiently.

"That's true. You look tired. You should go to bed now," Tom suggested.

"I look tired because you both keep looking at me. You are not even looking at each other," Jamal complained with another yawn making both Tom and Lucy smile.

Their eyes met, and they returned their gaze to Jamal, "Why don't you go to bed now? I need to sleep. Tomorrow is another busy day for me," Tom said, and Jamal sighed as he got off the bed.

"Goodnight, Lucy," he said as he embraced Lucy, who kissed his cheeks, and then he moved to Tom's side of the bed.

"Don't be mad at Lucy for too long," He said quietly, and Tom raised a brow.

"Who says I'm the one who is mad at her?" Tom asked, and Jamal shrugged.

"Because you're the one who looks mad. She just looks sad," Jamal said simply, and Tom sighed, wondering how the child got to be so observant and perceptive.

"See you tomorrow," Lucy said as Tom rose and escorted Jamal out of the room.

Lucy didn't bother to follow them. Instead, she went to lie down on her side of the bed. She knew without a doubt that she wouldn't be able to fall asleep. She wasn't the type to fall asleep easily when her heart was so troubled.

Tom didn't want to talk, and it wasn't like she could force him to resolve things with her either. She was just going to let him rest and try to figure out what next to do on her own.

Her heart skipped when she heard the door open, and she shut her eyes, pretending to be asleep since it would be too awkward for them both to be awake and not talk.

Tom shut the door behind him and stood by the door staring at her still form. She was lying at the edge of the bed and not in the middle as usual.

His heart ached as he watched her. He knew without a doubt that she was pretending to be asleep, and it made him sad. He wished things weren't this way between them. He loved her so much that it hurt him to see her this way.

What was he going to do? He wasn't even sure if he was going about it the right way. He knew that he needed to take his time to think and map out a better plan that would work out perfectly for them, but his head had been aching all day, and saying he was exhausted would be an understatement. He couldn't think straight or have a normal conversation with her right now the way he knew she wanted.

Deep down, he knew there was nothing he wouldn't give to keep her in his life, but all he wanted right now was for her to really show him that she wanted their relationship as much as he did. He wanted some sort of assurance that it would all be worth it, Tom thought with a sigh as he got on the bed and turned off the light on his side of the bed.

He lay on his side of the bed for a minute and then moved to her side of the bed and pulled her into his arms, surprising Lucy, who was pretending to be asleep.

She said nothing as she let him cuddle her, but she found it hard to relax against him. Her heart was racing, and it was hurting at the same time. She couldn't breathe. Tears stung her eyes as she lay stiffly in his arms, and she bit down on her lower lip to keep herself from making a sound.

Tom patted her back and kissed her forehead, "I have no idea how to deal with any of this or make it easier for us both. I wish I did," Tom murmured sleepily, and tears dropped from Lucy's eyes, but she remained still and waited until Tom had dozed off before getting off the bed.

She picked up her phone and quietly walked out to sit on the balcony. Once she was there, she let the tears flow freely and raised both hands to her lips to stifle whatever sound accompanied the tears.

She had thought apologizing for her behavior and contacting the therapists, as he had wanted her to do, would resolve their misunderstanding, but it seemed that wasn't all that Tom wanted, and right now, she had no idea what else to do.

She was experiencing a myriad of emotions that she could not even explain. She was in pain, and she was scared. She was terrified that she was losing Tom. All she knew was that her heart was breaking, and she didn't know what to do about it.

Without thinking she dialed Tyler's line, hoping that Lucas was close to the phone so she could talk to him. She needed to talk to someone right now and he was the only one she could think of. Sonia already had her own problem to deal with, and she couldn't bother her parents with this.

"Princess Lu! Tell me you're calling because you miss me and not because you want to talk to your brother," Tyler greeted in a cheerful tone that would have made Lucy smile if she wasn't so upset.

"Is Lucas there?" She asked, and hearing her voice, Tyler could tell that she wasn't okay.

"Give me a minute to get the phone to him," Tyler said as he rose and hurried to Lucas' bedroom.

"Lucy is on the line for you," Tyler said as he knocked on the door, and almost immediately the door opened the Lucas took the phone from him.

"Are you okay?" Lucas asked with a concerned frown which was also mirrored in Tyler's face.

"I'm not fine. Can you talk right now? I need to talk," Lucy said, and Lucas looked at Tyler.

"Excuse me for a moment," Lucas told Tyler and returned into the bedroom after Tyler gave him a nod and walked away.

"What is the problem?" Lucas asked wondering what could be so serious to make Lucy was call him by that time of the night.

"My relationship with Tom is crashing and I don't know what to do," Lucy cried, and Lucas did his best to calm her and encouraged her to tell him what the problem was.

Lucas listened patiently as Lucy told him about Tom's desire to settle down, as well as all that had transpired between her and Tom that day, including the awkward dinner conversation.

"You told him you don't want to get married?" Lucas asked, sounding slightly surprised.

"Yes," Lucy said and Lucas sighed.

"If your fear was only about having kids, I might be able to understand that, but I can't understand why you would feel anxious about getting married to the man you love and already live with," Lucas said, but Lucy said nothing.

"I don't blame Tom. I can imagine how devastated he must feel, considering that he had already imagined you pregnant with twins...."

"He told you that?" Lucy asked in surprise.

"Yeah. That first night at his house. He said he wanted to have a boy and a girl, or two girls who looks and acts just like you," Lucas said, and Lucy's eyes filled with tears.

"What do I do? I would get married to him and have his kids if I could but I can't. The thought of getting married or having kids makes me feel so anxious I can barely breath," She cried in a voice that tore at Lucas' heart.

"Well, therapy is a good starting point. After therapy you can know for sure if you want to be married to him or not...."

"What if I still don't want that?"

"Then you will have to let him go," Lucas stated simply, shattering Lucy's heart.

"But I can't! I love him!" Lucy cried.

"Love is never enough. Your desires and goals have to align too else you will both be unhappy. Love is not selfish. It would be selfish of you to want to keep him when you can't give him the kind of life he wants. Can you stand seeing him unhappy and unfulfilled? How do you think his mother and grandfather would feel about you when they find out you are the reason Tom is not talking about marriage and not because he doesn't want to get married?" Lucas asked softly.

He knew that this was tough for Lucy, but he believed deep down that her decision not to get married had more to do with her trauma than it did with anything else and he had no doubt that before the end of her psychotherapy she would be more open to the idea.

"So you are saying it's either I give him what he wants or we break up?" Lucy asked, and Lucas shook his head.

"No. It's not just about Tom. It's about you too. It would be senseless of you to get married to Tom and have kids if you genuinely don't want to. You will end up unhappy and resentful. You have to also want it to do it. So, go for therapy. But make sure you do it for yourself not for Tom. Do it because you need it. You really do need it, Lu, whether or not you change your mind about marriage. You need to be whole," Lucas said, and Lucy sighed.

"I think you should move back to your apartment. That should help the both of you. It would be easier to break up and move on at the end of the day if you're not living with him. Living with Rachel made things worse for me," Lucas said, and Lucy sighed again.

"Alright, I've heard you. Thanks for listening to me. I should go back to bed," Lucy said before hanging up.

Maybe if she could stop being Lucy for a minute and look at the issue from a logical standpoint, she would know what to do, Lucy mused as she wiped her tears and decided to set emotions aside and approach the subject as she would an official assignment.

She tried to cheer up by reminding herself that Tom loved her. This was a rough patch in their relationship that they could get over if she would be able to be there for Tom as he wanted her to be.

As she had done several times already, she went over all that had happened in her head again, only this time she did so not as Lucy. She tried to think about her relationship with Tom from a logical and unbiased point of view.

She knew that Tom's primary desire was to get married and have kids. Even as she thought about it, her heart began to race. Getting married and having kids was not something she was sure she could do.

Lucy shook her head to discard the thought and remind herself that she wasn't Lucy at the moment. She needed to be objective.

Just as Lucas had said, it would be selfish of her to try to hold on to Tom if she couldn't be there for him in the way he needed her to be. It would be selfish to want him to give up all he wanted for her sake.

Tom was an amazing person, and he deserved to be happy, Lucy thought as tears gathered in her eyes once again, but she brushed them off as she rose to go back into the bedroom after making up her mind on what to do.

He had said he would keep tolerating her until he couldn't, and then they would break up. She was just going to enjoy their relationship while doing her best to be there for him in the ways she could until she also knew for sure what she wanted.

She was going to move back to her apartment and she would give Therapy her best shot whether or not she believed in it, and if her feeling concerning marriage and having kids remained the same after therapy, then she was just going to have to let him go regardless of how heartbreaking it would be for her.

Once Lucy got on the bed, Tom sleepily reached for her, "I love you," Tom murmured in his sleep, and Lucy sighed as she snuggled against him.

"I love you too," Lucy whispered and listened to his steady heartbeat until she drifted off to sleep.

Chapter 570 Uncomfortable

Lucy's heart skipped a beat when she opened her eyes the next morning and saw Tom watching her the same way he always did whenever he woke up before her, the only difference was that he was holding her hand this time.

Tom smiled, "Good morning, my Jewel," he greeted pleasantly, and although she was still feeling a bit anxious, she smiled back.

"How long have you been awake?" She asked, and Tom shrugged.

"Long enough to know to behold your beauty," he said with a grin and Lucy blushed.

"Did you sleep well?" She asked awkwardly and he gave her a nod.

"I did. Did you?" He asked as he looked down at their joined hands.

"I guess so," she said, as she watched him while wondering what he was thinking.

Why was he acting like everything was alright and they had not just had the most awkward day of their relationship the previous day? What was going on in his head? Lucy mused.

If he was trying to brush off all that had happened yesterday and pretend like everything was fine, she was more than willing to move on from it as well but she wasn't so sure that was the best thing to do.

"That's good. Let's get ready for work," Tom said as he kissed the back of her hand before rolling off the bed.

As they both prepared for work, Tom's gaze moved to Lucy at intervals and when he could, he watched her from the corners of his eyes as she dressed up.

Like her, he had pretended to be asleep so she could relax but had been awake when she went to the balcony to cry and he had eavesdropped on her part of the conversation with Lucas.

Now that he was well rested and refreshed, his mind and thoughts concerning Lucy and their relationship was clear.

He was going to make her his wife and the mother of his kids.

He wanted Lucinda Perry to be his wife and the mother of his kids, and he was going to find a way to make her want the same thing no matter how long it would take.

If he could get her to fall in love with him and be in a relationship with him, then he could also get her to marry him.

He was a patient man, and he wasn't the type to give up on what he wanted so easily.

Although his father's suggestion was a welcome one, he was smart enough to know that Lucy's personality was very different from his mother's personality regardless of what little similarities they shared, and what worked on his mother might not work on her.

Taking the same approach as his father had done might not necessarily work since Lucy was more reserved than his mother and he knew her well enough to know her default response to emotional disturbance was withdrawal.

He was going to need to be more careful with Lucy. He would let Lucy return to her apartment as his father had suggested, but that was as far as he planned to go. He hoped that staying apart would make her miss living together.

"What are you thinking about?" Lucy asked when she caught him staring at her and noticed he seemed lost in his thoughts.

Tom flashed her a smile as he shook his head, "I was just thinking that you look really beautiful," Tom lied, and although Lucy narrowed her eyes suspiciously, she didn't push further.

"Are you ready to leave?" Tom asked as he looked her over.

She was dressed in a black corporate dress that stopped at a knee, and had a rose colored floral scarf around her neck which matched her stiletto.

"Yeah," Lucy said, and they left the house together.

"Are you going to be very busy today?" Lucy asked as they got into the car.

"Yeah," Tom said as he started the car.

"You met my assistant yesterday. What do you think about him?" Tom asked as he drove off.

"He said his name is Eric Howell. Is he related to the television show host?" Lucy asked, and Tom shook his head.

"He is not. Harry looked into his background and it was clean," Tom assured her.

"That's quite a coincident," Lucy said thoughtfully, and Tom nodded.

"By the way, you haven't gotten someone to replace your secretary yet, have you? Do you need help?" Tom asked, and Lucy shook her head.

"No, thanks. I'm not sure I'm comfortable with working with just anyone right now. I think I can manage on my own for the time being," Lucy said, but Tom said nothing.

The conversations they were having was sort of awkward and they both knew it. It was clear they were avoiding the real issue they needed to talk about.

"I heard from Jade about Anita and her family," Lucy said, and Tom sighed.

"I should have told you about that. I'm sorry. I forgot."

"It's okay. I'm sure you would have told me had things not happened the way they did between us yesterday," Lucy said, hoping this would be an opening for them to talk about yesterday.

"About Anita's family...." Tom started and passed his phone to Lucy so she would listen to everything Barry had sent him while he drove.

Lucy sighed when she was done listening, "This changes everything, doesn't it?" Lucy asked, and Tom nodded in agreement.

"Yeah, it does. But we will have to wait and see what happens next," Tom said, and he took his phone from Lucy when Harry's call entered.

"Good morning, sunshine! Sup?" Tom asked sweetly immediately he received Harry's call.

Harry chuckled, "Save the endearments for your girlfriend, I don't need it. I see you are feeling better today," Harry observed.

"Yeah. I'm sure you didn't call just to check on me when you know we would be meeting at the office soon. What's up?" Tom asked curiously.

"Don't be so sure. I missed you so much that I dreamt of you...." Harry trailed off with a chuckle when Tom laughed out loud.

"Good. I see you are okay. So, the thing is this. I just received a distress call from one of the hotel directors in one of the branches outside the country, and one of us is needed over there to resolve the issue...."

"What is the situation? Can't it be resolved from here?" Tom asked without letting him finish.

Tom listened as Harry gave him the details "...You know I can't travel right now," Harry finished, and Tom nodded.

"I will take care of it. Don't worry about it," Tom assured Harry before hanging up.

"Is everything alright?" Lucy asked with concern since she had heard the worry in Tom's voice.

"Something urgent came up, and I have to travel out of the country today," Tom said, and Lucy's heart skipped a beat.

"Today?"

"Yeah. Hopefully I won't be gone for too long," Tom said, and Lucy frowned.

"What about the anniversary events?"

"Harry will handle it. I should be able to resolve the problem and be back before the anniversary dinner party on Friday," Tom said, and Lucy sighed.

They were both silent for some time and then Lucy cleared her throat, "Um, can we talk about yesterday?" She asked, and Tom turned to look at her and took her hand in his.

"Your reaction to my observation hurt me, but I also took things too far. I'm sorry I hurt your feelings," Tom said, and Lucy looked at him, not sure why she felt like he was saying this so they won't argue further but he had other plans in mind for her.

"I'm sorry I hurt you. I didn't mean to," Lucy apologized, and Tom raised her hand to his lips.

"It's fine now. So which therapists did you contact? And how can I help?" Tom asked, and Lucy smiled as she told him about the two therapists and how she was still trying to make up her mind on which of them to go for.

"Maybe you can start by talking with them both and settle for the one you feel more comfortable speaking with," Tom suggested.

"Alright. I will do that. Do you still want me to move back to my apartment?" Lucy asked, her heart racing as the question left her lips.

Tom nodded, "Yeah. I think you should. You can do that after our parents leave," Tom said, and Lucy looked at him for a moment.

"Tom? Are we good?" She asked, and Tom smiled at her.

"Sure. We are," he assured her, and Lucy sighed.

She wasn't sure if she believed him. She was still very uncomfortable. He was traveling and would be away for a couple of days. He still wanted her to move to her apartment even though things still seemed sort of tense between them.

Lucy took a deep breath. She was going to move back to her apartment no doubt, since Lucas had also suggested the same thing. But the problem was that she wasn't sure how things was going to be between them going forward, and that was what made her feel very uncomfortable.