

Wild Night 221

Chapter 221 - Uneasy

"What do you think?" Lucy asked, turning around for Tom to inspect the strapless red jumpsuit she was wearing, with a white blazer over it and a pair of half-covered high heeled white sandals which were decorated all over with diamond stones.

They had stopped by a clothes shop for her to change out of the clothes she had worn the previous day before they head to the office.

"Would I sound like a know-it-all if I said that I knew you were going to pick the jumpsuit the moment I set my eyes on it?"

"You wouldn't. Did you?" Lucy asked with a curious smile.

"I did. You know how you see an outfit and you can picture it on someone? It is just an outfit I can imagine you on. It's beautiful and classy just like you," Tom said, giving her a thumbs up.

Lucy smiled, "I will have it then," Lucy said, giving the sales attendant a nod.

"Are you sure that's all you want? You could get some more stuff so that we don't need to go back to your place to pick up anything after the close of work," Tom suggested as he watched her from where he was seated.

"Don't worry. I intend to shop for new clothes, but not when I'm in a hurry to get to the office. I have the whole of the weekend to shop. If you don't want us to go to my place, we could just buy whatever I need for the weekend on our way back from work. I will try to make a list of everything I want to buy," Lucy said with a happy smile as she looked at Tom, making him chuckle.

"One minute you're giving me the impression that you're not materialistic, and the next moment you are just something else," Tom said in amusement, and Lucy plopped on the couch next to him.

"Is that a complaint I hear in your voice?" She asked with a slightly raised brow.

"I wouldn't dare. You can get whatever you need," Tom assured her with a chuckle and she pecked his cheek, ignoring the sales attendant who was watching them both with fascination.

They both didn't care about the presence of the sales attendant since they knew that she had no idea who Tom was. To her, they were just like every other couple who walks into the shop to get clothes.

Once they took care of the bills, they walked out of the shop together. Tom walked over to Lucy's side of the car and opened the car door for her before dropping the bag he was carrying, which contained the clothes Lucy had taken off.

"Thank you," Lucy told him when he joined her in the car.

"Don't mention," Tom said as he turned on the car's ignition and drove them to the company.

"So... see you after work," Lucy told Tom as she got ready to alight from the car a few minutes later when he drove into the driving lot of the company.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" Tom asked, watching her curiously, and her hand faltered on the door.

"What?"

"They know we are dating now. Shouldn't you kiss me goodbye before leaving?" Tom asked, and then Lucy looked ahead of them to see some of the staff who had arrived early standing by the entrance of the company and looking in their direction as if to confirm the rumors that they had heard.

Lucy's stomach sank nervously. She had forgotten all about yesterday and all about Anita. She suddenly felt nervous all over again now that they were back to reality and she realized that she needed to face others.

Although she knew that what she did, or who she did what with, wasn't supposed to be anyone's business, she couldn't help feeling uncomfortable.

"What are you thinking about?" Tom asked as he watched her brows furrow, and she shrugged dismissively.

There was no point telling him what she was thinking about. She was just going to end up making him feel worried about her, "Nothing," she said with a small smile as she leaned forward and brushed her lips against his, "I don't want to see you talking to any female for longer than a minute," Lucy warned as she got off the car, and Tom smiled as he watched her leave.

Once she disappeared from view, the smile disappeared from his face. He could tell that she was still very worried. He had only managed to distract her the previous evening, but the things that were bothering her were still present and he needed to take care of them.

He picked up his phone and decided to first give Anita a call. He needed to see if he could learn what she was up to before making any move. He dialed her line and waited patiently for the call to connect while trying to calm himself so he wouldn't lose his cool.

Anita who had just driven into the parking lot of Ocean Airlines picked up her phone and raised a brow when she noticed that it was Tom who was calling. Not just any random Tom, but the CEO himself, Thomas Hank.

Without giving it a second thought she received the call, "I never thought you would dial my line again," she greeted in a cheerful tone once the call connected.

"I never thought I would have any reason to either. Why did you talk to Lucy?" Tom asked without wasting time.

"You mean your boss?" Anita asked, trying to play ignorant.

"I mean my girlfriend, Lucy. And yes, my boss if that's what you know her to be. Why did you talk to her about our past relationship when we both agreed to pretend that it never happened?" Tom asked, wanting to humor her.

"I thought I could pretend that it never happened, but I can't. I miss you so much, Tom. I miss your company and how you..."

"Cut the crap! I don't know what games you're playing, but I can assure you that it's not going to end in your favor, so you better get your head straight! You better don't bother Lucy anymore with

your incessant calls and shameless lies," Tom warned, and then he hung up before she could respond.

Once he hung up the call, he dialed another number and it connected almost immediately, "I want you to keep an eye on Anita Miller. I want to know everything she is up to. By everything, I mean every single detail. I want to know who she meets and talks with. I want to even know what she is thinking about, I don't care how you do it, but get on it immediately," Tom ordered and hung up once he was done giving the instruction.

Having dealt with that he got out of the car and dipped his phone into the pocket of his trousers as he headed for his private elevator. As he walked his thoughts drifted to the strangers he had run into in his home.

He was going to give Harry a call once he was settled in his office, and scold him for not convincing Jade to inform him first before bringing strangers into his home. On the other hand, he knew that he couldn't really blame Harry though. Knowing Harry, he was sure that he must have instructed Jade to give him a call, but Jade being her stubborn self must have ignored Harry's advice.

His thoughts were broken into when his phone started vibrating in his pocket, and his steps momentarily as he reached into his pocket to take out the phone before he continued walking.

Speak about the devil, he thought when he saw that it was a call from Harry, and he received the call immediately, "I was just going to call you. Why didn't you inform me that Jade...."

"Tom..." Harry cut in with a grave voice, shutting him up, and causing the hair on Tom's neck to prickle with unease.

"What is wrong?" Tom asked, stopping in his tracks.. Knowing Harry, he could tell that something was very wrong, and whatever Harry was going to say wasn't something he would like.

Chapter 222 - Murderer

As Lucy headed for the elevator, she noticed the way everyone she passed by was staring at her and murmuring under their breaths. It made her feel quite uncomfortable so she tried not to meet anyone's gaze as she kept walking.

Why were they staring at her that way? Was it because she was dating her driver, or was there something else she didn't know about? Although she knew that dating her supposed driver was going to stir some gossip in the office, she wasn't sure that it was bad enough to make them murmur about her in this manner, especially considering the fact that most of the ladies had shown interest in Tom at one point or the other.

Lucy stopped by the elevator and opened it. Just as she stepped into it, she noticed that the two ladies who were walking behind her and were about to take the elevator with her, quickly moved away so that she would ride the elevator alone.

"Good morning," Lucy managed with a polite smile, but neither of them responded to her greeting as they hurried away while murmuring something under their breath.

Their action only seemed to intensify Lucy's suspicions that something was wrong. It couldn't just be about her relationship with Tom. What was it? She wondered as she rode the elevator up to the third floor which housed the fashion unit, instead of the seventh floor where the CEO's office was.

She knew that whatever it was, she could find out from Amy, since Amy was not only her secretary, but was also the person she most interacted with in the company apart from Tom.

By the time the elevator door opened on the third floor to let her out, she had worked herself into a nervous mess. Her stomach was already in knots, her palms were sweaty, and she was having palpitations.

She couldn't remember the last time she had this feeling, but it was one she had hoped to never feel again. She grimaced against the slight headache she was already beginning to feel, "Calm down, Lu. It could be nothing serious," she assured herself under her breath as she approached her office.

Once she stopped by the door, she reached for the doorknob but paused when she suddenly heard her name being mentioned.

"I don't think Miss Perry is capable of something like that." It was Amy's voice.

"Well, you can't always judge a book by its cover. Who knows? Maybe that's why she is such a workaholic! She's using it to hide her psychopathic tendencies," Another feminine voice said.

"Thinking about it alone sends chills down my spine. I hope it isn't true. I don't think I will ever look at her the same way if it is true," one of the guys in the office said.

Psychopathic tendencies? Lucy's brows pulled together in a concerned frown as she tried to figure out what they were talking about. Just as she turned the doorknob she heard it.

"It's not just about looking at her. I don't want to work in the same office as a murderer!" The other female voice said, making Lucy stiffen.

Her heart skipped a beat when she heard that, and her stomach churned as she tried to process what she had just heard. Murderer? She asked herself as her vision blurred. Was this about Jamie's death? How did they know of it? The only person she had spoken about it to recently was Tom. Tom wouldn't do something like this to her by exposing such a painful secret, so who else could have done it? Perhaps someone from the neighborhood where she grew up knows someone working here and told the person about her past?

Was it all happening again? Would she have to deal with this one more time? Even though the court had pronounced her not guilty eight years ago, people had kept staring at her like a murderer so much so that her parents had to move them from the former neighborhood even though they had claimed it was because they didn't want the house to keep reminding her of the night of her abduction since she seemed to jump every time she heard the sound of the doorbell.

She dropped her hand from the doorknob and reached for the wall instead to steady herself when she started feeling lightheaded.

As she tried to steady her breath she didn't know when the tears started dropping from her eyes. One after the other the tears fell until her entire body started shaking from the force of her sob. When she heard footsteps coming from the opposite direction, she raised her hands to her mouth to muffle her sobs as she quickly dashed for the ladies' room on that floor, since she didn't want anyone to see her that way.

She knew that she shouldn't be hiding. If anyone was supposed to be ashamed, it should be the lot of them for judging her when they didn't even know the true details of what had happened eight years ago, but she knew that humans hardly cared for the truth. They only cared about the first part of the story they hear. Any other version of the story would be seen as a lame attempt by her to cover up the truth.

Once she got to the ladies' room, she heard voices coming from inside, and it sounded like they were also talking about her, so she took a detour. The only place she could be in right now without running into anyone was the storage room on that floor, so she quickly ran into it and shut the door before giving in to the tears.

Meanwhile, Tom's heart was pounding really fast in his ears as he took the private elevator to his office. He needed to get Lucy out of the company before she finds out what was happening. After seeing how merely telling the story had made her go into shock, he wasn't sure she would be able to stand it if she found out that the news was all over the net.

Immediately the elevator door opened and he stepped into his office, he didn't bother with wearing his disguise costumes, he just walked straight to her office, and his heart sank when he realized that she wasn't in her seat, and it seemed like she had not gotten to the office yet.

Judging by the time she left him at the parking lot and all the calls he had made in between, she should have been settled in her seat by now. So where was she? Had she probably heard of it already? But from who? He wondered and dismissed the thought since he knew that no one would be bold enough to confront her about such a thing. He was going to worry about who had started such a hateful rumor only after making such that Lucy was okay.

Once he opened the door and stepped out of the office, he looked down the hallway to see if she was still on her way and maybe had only just stopped to exchange pleasantries with someone, but the hallway was empty.

Perhaps she had decided to stop by her other office to pick up some documents? Without thinking twice about it he headed for the elevator and rode to the third floor. If he didn't see her there, he was just going to ask the head of the security unit to check the security cameras until he found her.

Once he stepped out of the elevator, he walked in quick strides to her office, but before he could open the door he heard them speaking.

"If I was the CEO I would fire her immediately. How can such a person be the CEO's personal assistant?" a female voice was saying.

"To think that he had stayed this whole time without a personal assistant, and of all people, the assistant he chose turns out to be a murderer! It seems the CEO has a poor taste in people."

"Andrew! You shouldn't say something like that about the CEO!" Amy snapped at him.

"But it's true! Isn't it? I feel for her poor driver. He's lucky she hasn't killed him yet," another female said.

"All these are rumors! We don't know for a fact yet. You shouldn't say such hateful things about her when you don't even know the truth," Amy half yelled at them, and they began to laugh.

"Amy you should just say that you feel bad that you're the secretary of a murderer. Stop sounding so defensive of her. Besides we all know that there is always an element of truth in every rumor," the other female voice said.

Tom's hands balled into a fist as he listened to them. What if Lucy had been the one standing here? These were the words she would have heard about herself? Tom wondered as he opened the door.

All conversations ceased the moment the door opened and they all turned to look at Tom, "Good morning! You read the news, right?" The lady who had been speaking ill of Lucy asked with a smile as though she couldn't wait to share it with him.

"Hi, Tom! What brings you here today? Does Miss Perry want something delivered?" Amy asked to distract Tom from what

"I'm looking for Miss Perry, did any of you happen to see her?" Tom asked, deciding to ignore all he had heard and focus on finding Lucy. He could always deal with these people later for running their mouth this way.

"How can you who drives her to the office be asking us such a stupid question? Or did your girlfriend ask you to come and find out if we are badmouthing her so that she can kill us too?" One of the guys asked with a scowl, making the other guy and lady laugh, while Amy gave him an apologetic look.

"Just ignore them. I'll come with you to find her," Amy said as she got off her desk, ready to walk out with Tom.

"Don't worry. I'm sure you have work to attend to," Tom said, feeling glad that Lucy at least had someone who was on her side.. He looked at the other three faces in the office making sure to check the names on their identity cards which were hanging on their necks before walking away to find Lucy.

Chapter 223 - Determination

Different thoughts ran through Tom's mind as he hurried down the hallway to the storage room on the third floor once he confirmed that it was Lucy's last location. Judging by the security footage he had watched he could tell that she had overheard the conversation of her team members hence had gone there to hide.

What could he say to her to make her feel better? She probably would think that he was responsible for the news which was going around since he was the last person she had told about it, he was most likely to be suspected.

How come a case which had stayed hidden in all these years suddenly came to light just after she told him about it?

Once he got to the storage door he pushed it open without knocking, but not so fast that he missed the sudden cessation of her sob.

She had been in here crying all by herself? It hurt him to know that she had to hide away in a place like this because of people who couldn't mind the business they were being paid to focus on. Tom looked around the room which smelt of dust and old books and then walked in the direction which he believed she was most likely to hide.

Once he stopped by the edge of the shelf where he believed she was hiding, he noticed the sudden movement of a white material which he recognized to be the blazers they had gotten that morning.

He let out a sigh as he lowered himself on the floor next to her and gathered her into his arms, "You should have called me," He murmured in a quiet tone as he took out his handkerchief from his pocket and wiped her tears.

A sob racked through Lucy's body as she clung to him, hiding her face in his chest as she wept, wanting to draw comfort from his scent. It seemed like no matter what she did her past was continually going to haunt her even though it was due to no fault of hers. Just when she thought that she was finally going to be able to move on from it, this had to happen? It just had to happen when she was beginning to think that she could be happy? Didn't she deserve happiness?

Tom whispered assurances to her as he patted the back of her head with one hand, and her back with the other hand, "Don't worry, I'll find whoever started this, and I'll make them pay for it."

Lucy said nothing as she cried her heart out. Once the tears stopped flowing, she pulled away from him, "Thanks," she murmured as she picked up her glasses from where she had left them. Once she put it on, she started gathering her things.

"I didn't tell anyone anything, I promise," Tom said as he watched her.

Lucy swallowed, "I'm not stupid. I know that it wasn't you," she said in a calm voice. Although she didn't know where all this had started from, she was going to find whoever had done this, and pay them back in like manner.

"What happened wasn't your fault. I don't think you should be ashamed..."

"My tears and hiding in here have nothing to do with being ashamed. I actually feel more angry than ashamed," Lucy assured him as she got off the floor and wiped the dust off her clothes with her own handkerchief.

Eight years ago she had been a powerless seventeen years old girl who had allowed people to trample all over her, this time was different. She wasn't going to allow people to trample on her this way and go scot-free.

"Good then," Tom said as he stood up and dusted his clothes too, "Let's go to the office and take care of this. We can leave through the private elevator if you don't want to..."

"I'm not leaving through your private elevator. I'm going to walk out of this building at the close of work as I've been doing since I started working here. Whoever did this wants me to be ashamed and cower, but I'm not going to give the person that satisfaction," Lucy said, her face set with determination as she turned around to leave the room.

Tom grabbed her before she could leave and turned her to look at him, "Don't do that. Don't try to push me away," Tom said, sensing from her action that she had emotionally distanced herself from him.

Lucy drew in a deep breath as she met his gaze, "I'm not pushing you away. I'm just trying to put myself together," she assured him with a small smile, and then brushed her lips over his cheek in a light kiss before walking away.

Although he didn't understand why she had cried that much if she had this much determination in her, Tom said nothing as he walked out with her.

Lucy stopped by the ladies' room and turned to him, "I need to fix my face," she informed Tom, and he gave her a nod to go ahead while he stood outside, waiting for her.

Once Lucy walked into the ladies' room, the two females who had been gossiping inside as they washed their hands quickly turned off the faucet and hurried away.

Lucy didn't spare either of them a glance as she kept her handbag on a dry surface and then took off her glasses. She turned on the faucet and washed her face. Once she was done, she dipped her hand into her handbag and took out her lipstick and powder which she carefully applied to her face.

She took in a deep breath as she picked up her glasses after she was done and replaced her glasses on her face before looking at her reflection in the mirror. While inside the storage room earlier, both Lucas and her parents had called, but she had ignored their calls. She could tell that they had most likely seen the news too. She was going to have to return their calls once she was settled, and then search for the piece of news and read it. Although she doubted that it would require much searching seeing how everyone had seen it.

With a sigh, she returned everything into her handbag and went out to join Tom. Neither of them said a word as they took the elevator to his office, and once they were inside the office she turned to him, "You have a meeting with..."

"Cancel it and join me in my office," Tom said as he headed for his office but Lucy stopped him.

"I can't let you do that. Don't worry, go ahead with the meeting. I will handle this myself," Lucy said with a shake of her head.

Tom sighed as he watched her, "You should know that I won't be able to concentrate on the meeting or anything else until this is sorted out. Okay, tell me how you intend to take care of things," he added when she opened her mouth to argue.

"I'm going to find whoever started this and sue the person for libel. And whoever dares to call me a murderer to my hearing will be sued for slander. They would have to prove why they think that I'm guilty after I was declared not guilty by the court of law," Lucy said with a shrug.

"If it makes you feel better, I will take care of work after we are done talking. Push the meeting backward and let's talk about this now," Tom said and walked into his office without waiting for her to argue.

He needed to give Harry a call and find out why the news was yet to be taken off the internet as he instructed, and he also needed to hear Jade's legal advice on the issue before taking any step.

He dialed Harry's line first and paced around his office until the call connected.

"I was just about to call you," Harry said immediately after he received the call.

"Why haven't you done what I asked you to do?" Tom asked Harry calmly since he knew that Harry probably had a good reason.

"Your sister..."

"I asked him not to," Jade said from the background, and then reached out a hand for Harry to hand her the phone.

Chapter 224 - Legal Advice

After making the appropriate calls to the offices of those who were supposed to meet with Tom that morning, to inform them that the meeting had been pushed backward, Lucy decided to return both her parents' and Lucas' call first before joining Tom. She needed to assure them that she was alright.

She dialed his line, and almost immediately the call connected as if he had been waiting beside his phone for her call, "I suppose you've seen the news circulating on the internet?" He asked in a worried tone, and then glanced at his phone when it beeped to inform him of another call. It was Rachel. He knew that she was very upset seeing how he had run off, leaving her behind at the shop where they had gone to pick out their wedding ring after seeing the news of his sister online.

"No, I haven't seen it yet. But I've heard people talking," Lucy informed him calmly.

Hearing how calm she sounded, his brows pulled together, "Are you okay?" He asked since even though he wanted her to be okay, he wasn't expecting her to be okay. No one would be okay about having stuff like that about them circulating the internet.

"Sure. I'm okay," Lucy assured him.

"Okay? How can you say you are okay when we are not okay? You don't have to pretend to be fine, Lu!" Lucas said in frustration, making Lucy's eyes sting with tears, "You can cry if you want to. Just don't pretend to be okay," Lucas pleaded.

"Really, I'm okay. Don't let it bother you..."

"For godsake, Lu! I'm your twin brother and not a stranger! You can't ask me not to be bothered by this," Lucas snapped at her as he tried to focus on the road ahead of him, and then as if remembering that she was probably also feeling very terrible about it and there was no need to get angry with her, he took in a deep breath.

"I'm coming down to see you," Lucas said in a tone that brooked no argument.

"Please don't!" Lucy pleaded. The last thing she wanted was for her family to come over. She loved them, but she needed space to figure this out and deal with it herself.

"If I was the one in your situation would you let me handle this alone? It's bad enough that I've had to leave with the guilt of not noticing what you were passing through eight years ago until that bastard abducted you, and now you say I should stand by and watch you go through this alone too? Not a chance in hell," Lucas said as he stepped on the pedal.

Lucy took in a deep breath, "You're getting married. Rachel isn't going to want you to..."

"Screw whatever it is you think she doesn't want! We are one, Lu. I need to be there for you. Just so you know, I'm on my way home. Mom and dad are coming over to stay with you, and I'm coming with them. We will all figure out what is going on and deal with it together as a family."

"No! Don't let them do that. And you shouldn't either, you have your job to..."

"I already asked for some time off," Lucas cut in dismissively.

"There is no need for all of this..."

"No need for what? Maybe you need to go on Twitter and see how people who know nothing about us are bashing our family! Dad was accused of using his influence to make the case go in your favor! Not just you, but our family was accused of murdering Jamie and his parents! Do you think this is just about you? You have no right to ask us not to get involved!" Lucas yelled at her, and then hung up so that he wouldn't say something he was going to regret.

Lucy dropped her hands to her side once he hung up the call, and she took in a deep breath as she turned on her phone's data connection. She logged into her Twitter account, and she noticed that her name was on the list of trending hashtags.

Her breath hitched when she clicked on the first post and saw the words in a bold caption, 'HOW LUCINDA PERRY, PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO THE CEO OF I-GLOBAL, MURDERED AN ENTIRE FAMILY IN COLD BLOOD!'

"I'm handing her the phone. She will explain to you, and then when you're both done we need to talk," Harry said as he gave the phone to Jade.

"If the post is taken off the internet now after so many people have seen it, things would become even more complicated for Lucy and her family. Netizens would accuse them of trying to cover their atrocity," Jade pointed out.

"So what are you suggesting? We have to leave it and let more people see it?" Tom asked in frustration.

"Unfortunately, yes. Taking it down doesn't mean it will stay down. You have no idea how many people must have seen the news and even copied and shared it with others. Taking down the major source doesn't mean it will curb the spread of the news," Jade explained.

"So what do you suggest we do?" Tom asked impatiently.

"Before I say anything, I just have to know, are you sure she is innocent of this? Have you asked her about it?" Jade asked cautiously.

"Do you think I would try to do this if I didn't know most of the details before now?" Tom asked impatiently.

"I guess not," Jade murmured.

"The family she was accused of murdering is Sonia's family. Do you think Sonia would be her best friend if it were true?" Tom asked, making Jade's lips round in surprise.

"You mean the guy she was accused of murdering is Sonia's brother?" Jade asked in surprise, and Harry raised a brow.

"Half-brother. Sonia testified in court too. Listen, the Lucy I know doesn't deserve any of this, so if you know any way we can clear this up, let me know."

Jade took in a deep breath as she bit her nail and then scowled as she dropped her hands to her side when she noticed the disapproval on Harry's face as he watched her biting her nail.

She would have suggested that Sonia should make a public statement in defense of Lucy to clear the air but seeing her relationship with Bryan now, she wasn't sure Sonia would be allowed to do so.

"Let's start by finding the source. Although that is going to be difficult considering that it started on Twitter," Jade said thoughtfully.

"I already asked someone to locate the source," Harry informed them from the side.

"Good. Once we find the person who started this mess, we will make them clear it up by pressing charges," Jade assured them.

"Good. Let's start from there. Please hand Harry the phone," Tom told Jade as his office door opened and Lucy walked in.

"Hey!" Harry said as he excused himself from where Jade was.

"What did you want to talk about?" Tom asked curiously.

"First, how is Lucy taking everything?" Harry asked in concern.

"She's holding up," Tom said as he sat on the edge of his desk and motioned Lucy to sit next to him. Once she moved closer to him he placed his hand around her shoulder.

"I've received series of phone calls from some major shareholders, they want us to fire her immediately. They don't want something like this associated with the company," Harry informed Tom with a sigh.

Tom stood up from where he was seated and dropped his hand from Lucy's shoulder as he moved away from her, "And what did you tell them?"

"I told them we can't fire her based on such rumors, especially as she has been a devoted staff. We will investigate on the issue and only fire her if the allegations are true," Harry explained.

"That's good enough. Thank you. And you don't have to worry, the allegations are not true," Tom assured Harry.

"I know. I may not exactly understand what is going on, but I trust your choice and decisions even if you're an arse most of the time," Harry added in a teasing tone to lighten the mood.

"Don't worry. We will fix this so you can finally tell her the truth and get rid of those awful piercings," Harry said making Tom smile.

"I already got rid of the piercings.. Thanks for your help," Tom said, and then hung up the call before Harry could ask him any more questions.

Chapter 225 - Team Spirit

After Tom's phone call with Harry, he turned to look at Lucy who was watching him with a guarded expression, and he flashed her a reassuring smile to calm her.

"Don't worry, we are already trying to find the person who started this mess. Everything will be okay," he said as he returned to her side.

Lucy folded both hands in front of her as she watched him approach her, "Do you think Anita might have a hand in this? Or am I being paranoid?" Lucy asked as she looked up at him when he stopped in front of her.

She did not want it to appear like she was being overly suspicious of Anita simply because she was his ex-girlfriend.

"I won't put it past her. Although I spoke to her earlier on," Tom said, making Lucy's brows furrow.

"You did? When? About what?" She asked with a frown.

Tom gave her the details of their conversation and Lucy sighed, "I see."

Tom watched her for a moment and then reached out to take off her glasses so that he could look into her eyes, "You read it, didn't you?" He asked knowingly.

"I had to. Have you read it?" She asked in return, and Tom shook his head as he took her hands.

"I haven't had the time to. I was too concerned about finding you, after Harry called to inform me about it. And now I'm too busy trying to clear things up," Tom said with a shrug, "What's the point of reading it anyway? It's not like it's true."

"I'm sorry."

"What for?" Tom asked, gazing into her eyes earnestly.

Lucy shrugged, "This whole thing is going to rub off on you and the company," she said, shifting her gaze away from him.

"None of this is your fault, so you have nothing to be sorry about. It's not just insensitive, but also stupid of people to try to make you feel like a murderer without even checking the facts," Tom said as he kissed the back of her hand.

"We will fix this, alright?" Tom said, but before she could respond his phone started ringing, "Excuse me for a moment," he told her when he picked up his phone and saw that it was his mother calling. He could tell that she had seen the news.

"Sure," Lucy said with a nod, and then he moved away from her as he received the call.

"What is this I'm seeing all over the internet? Lucy is your assistant? And she is a murderer?" Evelyn asked in disbelief.

"I expect better than this from you, mom," Tom muttered under his breath, not wanting Lucy to hear the details of their conversation.

"And I also expect better from you than getting involved with your employee. End things with her at once! Things are going to get messy with your shareholders if news gets out that you're dating her," Evelyn instructed.

He couldn't exactly blame his mother since she had always been the type of person who would choose her sentiments and moral beliefs over logic. In the same manner she had jumped to conclusion that Lucy was a prostitute simply because of how she was told Lucy had been dressed the first night.

Seeing the way Tom was murmuring under his breath, Lucy could tell that the phone call was probably about her and he didn't want her to hear what was being discussed, so she stood up and whispered to him that she was returning to her office and they could talk later.

Once she left and shut the door behind her, Tom drew in a deep breath, "Who I choose to date or not date has nothing to do with the company..."

"It has EVERYTHING to do with the company. Most people marry for connections to strengthen their companies, and secure their fortune. If you're not going to marry for that, then you should at least get married to someone who wouldn't bring such negative publicity to you."

"Have you stopped to ask yourself whether or not she is guilty of all these accusations?" Tom asked, knowing that his mother was being sentimental about the issue.

"Have you seen the old news articles on it? Did you see the videos the parents of the boy she murdered made before they died? I'm sure there is an element of truth in all that was published!" Evelyn fired back.

"Mom, I love you, but you're being too sentimental right now, and I can't stand it. Let's talk when you're ready to be logical," Tom said and hung up the call before his mother could say another word.

For the first time in a very long time, he felt like screaming out in frustration, and he could only imagine how Lucy was feeling if he felt this way when he wasn't even the one being gossiped about.

Without wasting any more time, Tom walked into his mini bedroom and put on his disguise costumes. Once he made sure that everything was in place he walked out to Lucy's office, "How many minutes do I have before the meeting?"

Lucy glanced at the wall clock, "Roughly twenty-five minutes."

"Push all the other meetings forward as well. I want to get it all done so we can leave," Tom said and then turned to return to his office.

He paused by the doorway when he remembered something, "Text me your secretary's office line. I want to speak with her," Tom instructed before returning to his office.

Just as he sat down on his office chair, his phone beeped with a text notification and he picked it up to see Lucy's text. It was the number he had requested for.

He dialed it on his office line and almost immediately Amy received the call when she recognized the number which was calling.

"Hello, sir!" Amy greeted as she quickly stood up, as though he could see her.

"You are Director Perry's secretary, am I right?" Tom asked, making Amy's heart skip a beat.

"Yes, sir."

"Good. I want to see everyone in Miss Perry's team in my office. You have less than five minutes to get here," he instructed, and then hung up the call.

Although Amy had defended Lucy the little way she could, he couldn't punish the others and leave her out else it would make them suspicious.

Less than four minutes later Lucy's office door opened and all her team members walked in, startling her. These were some of the people who had made her their topic of discussion that morning, Lucy thought as she looked at them. She could point out who had said what.

"Good morning, Director Perry," few of them who had bad-mouthed her earlier greeted, and Lucy just stared at them without saying a word.

"Good morning, ma'am. The CEO asked to see us," Amy informed Lucy politely, making her break her gaze away from the others to look at Amy

"Give me a minute," Lucy said as she stood up and walked over to Tom's office. She rapped on the door gently before walking in.

"Why are they here?" She asked after shutting the door behind her.

"If by they, you mean your teammates, then let them in. You'll find out soon," Tom instructed as he raised his head to look at her, "Trust me," Tom added, and Lucy sighed before walking away to usher them in.

While some of them were excited to see the CEO who they had never set eyes on before, some others felt very anxious about it, as they suspected that whatever had made the CEO invite them to his office wasn't something good.

"I have a meeting soon, so I'll be quick. I've heard the rumors going around the company concerning Miss Perry, who happens to be your team leader. I do not exactly know the details, but I'll have to fire her if indeed what was written about her is true," Tom said, making Lucy glance at him in surprise, while some of her teammates looked pleased with the news.

Wasn't he supposed to be on her side? Why was he saying something like that?

"However, seeing as you're all a team, she won't be the only one that will be fired. So I'm assigning all of you in her team the task of proving her innocence. If you're unable to do so before Monday, you can all submit your resignation letters. Work overtime if need be, but I need results by Monday so you can present it to the shareholders and board of directors," Tom said, making every one of them look at him in disbelief.

This did not make any sense. What did they have to do with Lucy's crime? They were not there when she murdered the family, so why did they have to share in her punishment? "But sir, how can we prove that she is innocent when she is..."

"What? Guilty?" Tom asked before the young man could finish, and he snapped his mouth shut.

Seeing the displeasure on their faces, Lucy decided to speak, "Sir..."

Tom cut her off before she could say anything, "I can see that most of you here have already concluded that she is guilty even without hearing her side of the story. If that is the case I do not want to hear what you have to say either. Feel free to submit your resignation letters before the close of work today. I don't want a group of staff that lacks team spirit. If anyone is caught making snide remarks or gossiping about this until there is proof that she did as she has been accused, that person will suffer the consequences," Tom said, and then jerked his head to the door in a way that told them that the meeting was over and they should leave.

As the others trooped out, Lucy remained in her position with her head bowed. She waited until the last person had left the office and shut the door before looking at Tom, "What was that about?"

"That's the least punishment I can give them for running their mouths over something they know nothing about. Don't worry, I'm sure they will all want to keep their jobs. Hence, they will look past what is on social media and try to find out the truth," Tom assured her.

"Now they will become suspicious of my relationship with you," Lucy complained.

"They won't. I told them I was going to fire you, so there's nothing to be suspicious about. Stop worrying and get back to work," Tom urged her since he knew that getting busy would distract her.

Now all he needed to do was try and focus on work while he waited to hear back from Harry.. He hoped for Anita's sake that she wasn't involved in this mess.

Chapter 226 - Two Can Play

Anita paced around her office biting her nails nervously as she thought about Tom's phone call to her and then paused when she realized that she was biting her nail. Her mother was going to kill her if she caught her exhibiting such dirty unladylike behavior.

She dropped her hands to her side as she sat down on one of the seats in her office. Had she played this card too soon? Although she had no fear since she knew that there was no way it was ever going to be traced to her. She had dotted every i and crossed all the ts. She was confident.

One major reason she had publicized this piece of news now instead of after talking to Lucy, was so that she wouldn't be suspected. Seeing how Tom had even called to warn her, she had thought he did that because he had seen the news already. So now they couldn't blame her of doing it because she was mad at them.

Knowing that Lucy was already dating Tom, she knew that Lucy was likely not going to want to let go of him, especially if Lucy gets to find out that Tom is actually the CEO. So by doing this and every other thing she planned to do, she was going to cause friction in their relationship and end up making Lucy end things with Tom on her own.

She still intended to call Lucy and act like a concerned friend. Nobody would suspect her of being behind the rumors if they saw that she was making efforts to be a good friend to Lucy. None of them needed to know just yet that she knew Tom's real identity.

Picking up her phone she dialed Lucy's line. She wanted to know Lucy's reaction to the publicized news, and also clear any doubt Lucy already had that she was behind it.

Lucy who had just finished trying to convince her parents not to travel down unsuccessfully, sighed when she saw Anita's call. What did Anita want this time? Maybe she was calling to find out her reaction to what was happening? Although she wasn't exactly sure yet if Anita was the one behind this, her gut feeling told her that Anita had a hand in it.

She received the call, and placed it on recorder just in case Anita might say something that would prove that she was behind it, "Hello, good morning!" Lucy greeted as she took off her glasses and placed them on the desk in front of her.

"Hey, Lucy! I hope I'm not calling at a bad time?" Anita asked, pretending not to know about the news which was all over social media.

Lucy's brows pulled together at Anita's question. How could she be asking her such a question as though she didn't know what was going on? Lucy wondered.

"I'm fine. Just in the middle of work," Lucy said, surprising Anita.

Middle of work? She was still at the company working? She had expected her to run away from work or be somewhere crying because of people's reaction to the news, or was it possible that the people at the company weren't giving her negative reactions?

"I'm sorry to bother you. I could call back later if you can't talk now," Anita offered instead.

"It's no bother. What's up?" Lucy asked, trying to sound normal since it was obvious that Anita was acting like she didn't know what was going on. There was no way she was going to believe that someone like Anita was yet to see the news flying around social media.

"Uhm, Tom called me this morning. I don't know if he mentioned it to you" Anita said and paused as she waited to hear Lucy's response.

Lucy didn't know why, but she didn't like hearing Tom's name from Anita. It always made her stomach churn, and it made her heart heavy. She preferred when Anita used to just refer to him as 'Your driver'.

"Lucy?" Anita called questioningly when Lucy didn't say anything.

"He did?" Lucy asked, pretending not to know.

So he didn't tell her. Anita assumed that Lucy's silence was because she had been surprised, "Yes. And he had a lot to say. I just wanted to let you know that I'm very sorry. I had no idea that he is the boyfriend you were always talking about. I wouldn't have told you any of that yesterday had I known," Anita apologized.

She didn't know? Was that true? Lucy wondered. "I wanted to tell you yesterday, but I didn't know how to go about it after you told me how you feel about him, I'm sorry," Lucy said, wanting Anita to also keep believing that she was naive enough to believe everything she was saying.

Anita sighed, "It's okay. I guess it's my loss. I should never have let my mother's words get to me in the first place. I guess she should be happy now that her plan has worked and I won't be with him anymore," Anita said in a wry tone.

Lucy who was feeling very wary of Anita and knew she had to be careful, said nothing as she listened to Anita. She really couldn't figure Anita out.

"We can still be friends regardless of this, right? I really like you and I don't want to lose your friendship over this," Anita said making Lucy narrow her eyes suspiciously.

She was just going to keep believing the worst of Anita until Anita proved to be otherwise. It would be too dangerous to just believe that Anita's intentions are pure.

"Are you sure it won't be awkward? I mean, it won't be easy for you to be friends with me knowing I'm dating your ex," Lucy said as she picked her glasses from the desk and wore them.

She honestly didn't want to be friends with Anita anymore, but neither did she want to cut her off in an offensive way. Especially since Anita had not exactly given her any real cause to believe that she meant her harm, she was only following her intuition.

Anita sighed dramatically, "Doesn't mean you should become my enemy, does it? Or wouldn't that be a double loss for me?" Anita asked making Lucy's brows furrow.

Was she perhaps judging Anita too harshly? Lucy wondered. Thankfully she didn't have to respond as Tom's office door opened and she quickly stood up, "Let's talk later. I have to get back to work," Lucy said with urgency and hung up the call immediately.

Tom stepped out of his office with the directors he had been meeting with, and once they left he looked at Lucy, "How are you holding up?" He asked with concern.

"Anita just called," she informed him, making his face twist in a scowl.

"And what did she say she wants this time?"

Without responding Lucy searched for the recorded phone conversation on her phone and played it before handing the phone to Tom.

His eyes narrowed suspiciously as he listened to the phone call, "She is probably doing this so that we don't become suspicious of her," Tom said when he finished listening and returned her phone to her.

"Or maybe I'm just being paranoid and she's actually being genuinely nice?" Lucy asked.

"That's exactly what she wants. She wants you to question your suspicion. Don't fall for her trick."

Lucy looked at him curiously, "Why are you bent on believing the worst of her? What if..."

"Do you know what she said when I told her I was done and wanted us to break up?" Tom cut in before she could finish her statement since he could guess what she was about to ask.

"No. What did she say?"

"She said, good riddance," Tom said without humor, "Does that sound like something you would tell a man you love but can't be with because of your mother? If she had been honest with you about everything, then maybe I would have believed all she is telling you. But she's a liar and I know we can't trust her. Don't let your guards down," Tom advised.

Lucy sighed. If only she hadn't gotten involved with Anita in the first place, she wouldn't have to be doing any of this with Anita.

"Have you heard from them yet?" Lucy asked, referring to the people Harry had contacted to help them search for the rumormonger.

"No, I haven't. As soon as I do I'll let you know," Tom assured her.

"I don't think I would be able to spend the weekend with you as planned. My parents and Lucas are coming over," Lucy explained.

"Because of this issue?" Tom asked, and she gave him a nod.

If Tom wasn't already furious about the situation of things, he became even more annoyed now as he had already planned out how he was going to spend the weekend with Lucy.

"I guess you don't want them to," Tom said as he watched her, and she shrugged.

"I love them, but right now I just want to be alone and I don't think they would understand that. We just have to fix this quickly," she said with a resigned sigh.

"Sure. We will. Would you want me to meet them now?" Tom asked, not bothering to sit as he stood in front of her desk just in case someone walked in and saw him there. He knew that she wouldn't want this to be added to the list of things being gossiped about.

"I don't know. Let's just take it as it comes," Lucy suggested, and Tom gave her a nod.

"Hang in there, okay? We will fix this," Tom promised.

Lucy gave him a weak smile and watched as he returned to his office. Her eyes fell on her phone and she suddenly felt the urge to talk to Sonia. She knew that she couldn't talk now because of the reality show, so she texted Sonia instead.

'Hey, busy celebrity! Call me as soon as you can. Love you.' Lucy texted.

She had been thinking about this all morning and she had come to the conclusion that suing the rumormonger or reacting angrily or pathetically to the news was going to give that person some satisfaction. She didn't want that. She wanted to disappoint the person instead.

She needed Sonia's permission before she could do what she had in mind. While Tom focused on finding who had done this, she wanted to deal with it appropriately by squashing the news so that it would never come up to haunt her again.

Maybe if she hadn't been in shock eight years ago and had defended herself in court to the hearing of everyone, no one would have had any reason to make up such stories. So it was time to deal with it once and for all.

Whoever had posted this on the internet has only succeeded in helping her face one of her fears. Thanks to the person, after now she wasn't going to be needing therapy anymore.. She was just going to open up and share her story with the world.

Chapter 227 - I'm Coming Over

While Sonia and Bryan were busy with their final shoot outdoor, her phone kept buzzing.

They had all unanimously agreed to have the final shoot outdoors since Bryan's ankle had healed considerably and he could get on and off his wheelchair and walk short distances.

The shoot was supposed to be done in several places. One scene at the beach, another at a Jewelry shop which he was endorsing, another at a game lounge and cinema, and the last at a restaurant where they would be wrapping it up.

So they were at the game lounge playing some of the games they had played the last time, the only difference was that this time Bryan was teaching her how to play the snooker game, and maybe it was because of the camera crew, everyone recognized them and some gathered to look at them.

"Let's take a short break," Mia whispered to Jeff and the producer, feeling the need to hand Sonia her phone. Seeing how several people had called her already, she felt like something was up, and Sonia needed to take her phone.

"Why?" The producer asked with his eyes fixed on Bryan and Sonia.

"They probably need a break. Let's have a five minutes break. I really need to stretch my legs too," Jeff said when he saw the concern on Mia's face. He could tell that she was worried about something.

"Alright," the producer murmured in displeasure, not liking the interruption.

"Cut! Let's take a break," he called out to the crew, and immediately they stopped filming.

Sonia and Bryan turned off their mic, and Bryan lowered himself to his wheelchair which Jeff rolled over, and Mia walked over to join them and handed Sonia her phone.

"Your cell phone has been ringing all morning," Mia informed Sonia, whose brows furrowed immediately as she checked her call log.

She hardly received a call unless it was from clingy exes, her editor, or Lucy. Seeing missed calls from Lucy's mom and Lucas made her even more worried. And once she saw Lucy's text message she immediately dialed Lucy's line, "I'll be right back," she murmured to Bryan as she walked away to find a quiet spot to talk.

Bryan watched her with concern as she left, "Do you have any idea about what is happening?" He asked Mia.

"I don't know. But I don't think it has anything to do with the both of you. I checked the internet to see if there was a scandal, but I didn't see anything. By the way, your brother's personal assistant is trending all over social media," Mia informed him in passing.

"My brother's personal assistant? Why is she trending?" Bryan asked with a frown as he glanced at where Sonia was standing with her phone pressed to her ear. Although she was standing with her back to him, from the way she stood stiffly he could tell that she was upset by whatever she was hearing. He knew that they were supposed to give both Tom and Lucy a call the previous day but they had been too engrossed with themselves to do so.

Mia took out her phone and once she opened the page, she handed it to him, "Murder?" Bryan asked with a frown. This wasn't good at all. Although he didn't know the exact details, he was certain that Sonia did. Was this about her family which she had mentioned to him?

Needing to find out what was going on, he dialed Tom's line immediately. Lucy was his brother's girlfriend after all, and he needed to know what was going on and make sure they were both alright.

"What? Who did something as hateful as that?" Sonia asked angrily the moment Lucy finished explaining the details to her.

"I don't know. I'm suspecting Anita, but then again she called earlier pretending not to know what was going on," Lucy said with a sigh.

"That bitch! I'm going to scratch out her eyes if I set my eyes on her," Sonia promised, and then took in a deep breath when she realized that she should be consoling Lucy instead of getting angry.

"How are you feeling, Lu?" She asked in concern.

"How else can I feel?" Lucy asked with a dry laugh, "Anyway, I called for something different. I want to make a video that I would upload on social media, and I might mention you in it. I hope you don't mind?" Lucy asked, making Sonia frown.

"Why would I mind?" She asked in confusion.

"You know you're a celebrity now, and you're dating one. I don't want anything that would..."

"Fuck all of that, Lu! You come first! I always tell you that but I don't know if you just do not listen, or you don't get it. You are all the family I have, and I'm always with you," Sonia assured her.

Lucy felt her throat clog with emotion. Although she had never openly admitted it to either Sonia or herself, she still harbored some sort of guilt that if not for her Sonia would still have her family.

Maybe if she had handled things differently she wouldn't be the only person closest to a family that Sonia had. If she had known that the police would show up that day she would have just continued to let Jamie do all he was doing, and let the police handle it. Then he wouldn't have died. His parents and most people wouldn't have accused her of murder, and Sonia wouldn't have been cut off from them before their death.

"What kind of video do you want to make, and why?" Sonia asked, cutting into Lucy's thoughts.

Lucy took in a deep breath and let it out, "I should at least let everyone hear my side of the story. They should only judge me after knowing the truth," Lucy murmured.

"Will you be okay doing that?" Sonia asked with a worried frown. This was something she had never talked about, and then even when she talked about it with Tom, she had gone into shock halfway into her story. How was she going to make such a video then?

"I don't know. I will have to be okay. Whoever did this doesn't want me to be okay, so I have to be okay," Lucy explained.

"I will join you in the video then. I have to make sure that you're fine," Sonia offered.

Although Lucy would rather have Sonia with her than her family, she knew that Sonia was busy, "You shouldn't. You are with Bryan, and then there's the shoot. Besides, what if people don't believe my side of the story? Associating with me might affect your..."

"Shut the fuck up! I'm coming over," Sonia hissed at her and hung up.

"Okay! Time up, let's resume!" The producer announced, but Sonia ignored him as she walked up to where Bryan was seated with a worried look on his face.

"I'm leaving.. I need to be with Lucy," she informed him.

Chapter 228 - Break Up

After confirming from Tom that it was Sonia's family that was involved in this, he couldn't bring himself to stop her. She had said her half-brother had committed suicide and her parents blamed Lucy for it, so why was Lucy being accused of her half-brother's murder?

Looking into her eyes, Bryan could tell that her mind was made up, "I will come with you." He offered instead.

He could tell that she was going over to offer her best friend the needed comfort and support. Even though she liked to act like she was very tough, she also needed to be comforted herself.

Sonia shook her head, "You shouldn't. First of all your ankle is yet to heal completely. Secondly, you're a celebrity, and public opinion matters to you. My getting involved in this is bad enough for you..."

"What's going on? Everyone is waiting for the both of you so we can start," Jeff said as he walked over to where they were discussing.

"Can't we just wrap it up now? Sonia needs to leave. She has an emergency that needs to be taken care of, and I'm leaving with her," Bryan said, ignoring what Sonia had been saying earlier.

Harry turned to Sonia, "Is it very urgent?"

"Yes. You're Bryan's manager, you shouldn't let him come with me. It might end up becoming a career suicide for him if he gets involved in this," Sonia informed Jeff who turned to Bryan with questioning eyes.

"What kind of a fiancé would I be if I let you go through this alone?" Bryan asked in annoyance, not liking how she was bringing up the whole celebrity thing again.

"What kind of a fiancée would I be if I let you get involved in this knowing the damage it would do to you? I love you Bryan, and I won't let you get hurt," Sonia said as she slid off the engagement ring on her finger, while the onlookers gasped in surprise.

"What are you doing?" Bryan asked, feeling his heart shatter as he watched her take off his ring. Although he had given her the ring without meaning to, somewhere along the line of their relationship he had come to see her truly as his fiancée.

"Can you give us a moment alone?" Sonia asked Harry and Mia who had come to join them and were watching in confusion.

Sonia lowered herself so that she was squatting in front of him, "Let's break up. After I have cleared up all of this we can get back together if you still want us to," Sonia explained.

"We only just started dating last night! How can you be saying this?" Bryan asked through gritted teeth so that no one else would hear him.

"Jamie abducted Lucy, and he died. I stood as a witness in court to clear Lucy's name when my mother and her husband accused her of murdering Jamie. Now Lucy is being accused of murdering them all and I need to clear her name since they were my family. We both know that I can't do that if I'm your fiancée," Sonia explained as patiently as she could.

"I will keep in touch. I love you," Sonia said as she brushed her lips against his cheek. Once she pulled away, she placed the ring on his thigh, and without allowing him to say anything else Sonia straightened up and walked over to where the producer was standing, "It has been nice doing this shoot with you all. I'm sorry I have to leave now. I need to deal with something," Sonia said and walked away without waiting for him to stop her.

Mia hurried after Sonia as she walked away, "Did you just break up with him?" She asked as she tried to catch up with Sonia.

"Yes."

"Why would you do that? You promised not to hurt him, but you just did," Mia said in confusion since she knew that Sonia genuinely cared for Bryan.

"I'm sorry I can't give you the exact details right now, but Lucy needs me and I can't be there for her as Bryan Hank's fiancée. We can get back together when all this is over," Sonia assured Mia.

She suspected that whoever had dug up this story to ruin Lucy, was likely going to do the same to her if she defended Lucy. And she knew that her supposed false relationship with Bryan could likely be used against her, so she needed to end their false engagement.

"I should drive you home and to the airport then," Mia offered.

"What about Bryan?"

"Don't worry about him. He won't mind," Mia assured her as they both walked out.

After picking up her stuff from Bryan's place, Sonia's heart felt heavy as Mia drove her to the airport. Just last night and this morning they had been making love, and now she had to leave his side.

She blinked back the tears that stung her eyes and looked out of the window so that Mia wouldn't see her face. She felt like she was leaving a part of herself behind. She felt empty.

However, her loyalty to Lucy would always come before anything else in her life. Including her own happiness. She couldn't afford to be happy when Lucy wasn't happy. She still felt partly responsible for all that had happened to Lucy.

If only she had reported Jamie to their parents immediately they found out what he was up to, none of this would have happened. He was her half-brother, and he had almost ruined Lucy's life. Lucy was just trying to recover, and she couldn't allow something like this to pull her down once again, even if doing this was likely going to negatively affect her own career.

"Are you okay?" Mia asked after a while. She could tell that what Sonia had done wasn't easy on her either.

"Yeah. Thanks for everything, Mia."

"C'mon, don't sound like it's the last time we are going to see each other. I'm sure you'll resolve this and you'll be back. You and Bryan are a perfect fit," Mia said confidently, making Sonia's lips curve in a small smile as she thought of him.

When she had come, she had only hoped to have him fall for her, she hadn't expected that she was going to fall this hard for him too.

She was already missing him sorely, and maybe if she didn't know how much he loved his career or how much it meant to him, she would have gladly allowed him to come with her without caring about the consequence.

Chapter 229 - As The CEO?

"Do you think perhaps the CEO heard what we said earlier?" One of the men in Lucy's unit who had been badmouthing Lucy earlier that morning asked his colleagues as they all sat together trying to put their heads together to find a way to do as Tom had ordered.

"Or maybe her driver reported us?" The other male suggested.

"It really does not make sense that he will ask us to do this! It's as if he is supporting her!" One of the ladies complained.

"Is this important right now? Is this why you all wanted us to meet?" Amy asked coldly as she looked at them with disapproval.

"You're right. Let's focus on what's important. Shouldn't we just ask her to tell us how to prove her innocence? She is the reason we are all in this mess after all," one of the men suggested.

"I think Amy should be the one to ask her," One of the ladies suggested.

"Yes, I agree. You're her secretary after all. Ask her if she did it or not," One of the guys added, and the others gave their consents with a nod.

"Isn't it funny how you are suddenly interested in asking for her side of the story when some hours ago you were so busy running your mouths as though you knew the facts already? Self-centered jerks," Amy muttered with a scoff.

"What are you being so cheeky about? It's not like we are the only ones who will lose our job. You're also going to lose your job if you don't do it, so quit acting so self-righteous," another female teammate hissed at her.

"Amy, do you want to lose your job? I have my parents and my wife to take care of. I can't afford to quit or be fired. So instead of exchanging words with us, you should..."

"Exactly why I don't want to be a part of this nonsense! I'd rather lose my job than work with the lot of you. I feel embarrassed that I'm associated with the selfish likes of you! Your words and actions today made me ask myself if any of you would have had my back had I been the one who was faced with this. Do whatever you want to do by yourself!" Amy snapped at them as she stood up, picked up her handbag, and walked out of the office.

"Why is she being so touchy about this?" They asked amongst themselves as they watched her leave.

Once Amy walked out of the office she took in a deep breath to calm herself before taking the elevator leading to Lucy's office. It was just a few minutes to closing hour already, and regardless of all that was happening she was still Lucy's secretary and needed to find out if there was any task Lucy needed her to do.

Once she got to Lucy's office, she noticed that Lucy was still busy with work, so she stood by the desk and waited until Lucy raised her head to look at her, "Do you want something?" Lucy asked with a polite smile when she noticed Amy's presence.

"I'm sorry to interrupt your work. I wanted to see if you need me to do anything else before I call it a day," Amy said, making Lucy glance at the wall clock. She sighed when she saw that it was almost time to leave. Both her family and Sonia were on their way already, and she still had no idea how she was going to manage to have all of them in her little apartment at the same time.

"Thanks, but there's no task for you," Lucy said with a shake of her head.

"I also want to talk to you."

"Okay. You can sit down if you have something to say," Lucy said, jerking her head to the seat opposite her for Amy to take it.

"Thank you," Amy said politely as she sat down, and then looked at Lucy, "I know it's probably not in my place to say this, and although I don't know the details of whatever happened, I'm sorry you have to go through all of this. No one deserves this," Amy said sadly.

"Thank you," Lucy said as she watched her. She was glad that she at least knew that Amy was being sincere with her. She didn't know what else Amy had probably said after she left, but from what little she had heard, she was thankful.

"I also wanted to know if you have any plan in place on how to salvage the situation. I will like to offer my assistance," Amy said hopefully.

Lucy's brows curved, "You are not curious to know whether or not I did it?" Lucy asked curiously, wondering why Amy wasn't asking her if she was guilty or not.

Amy took in a deep breath, "Whether or not you did it isn't the point right now. Although I don't think you did it, and even if you did, I believe you must have had a good reason for it. So tell me what I can do to help."

"You are so kind, Amy."

Amy's eyes welled up with tears as she looked at her, "When I was in high school my elder sister was accused of seducing her boss and destroying his home which led to his wife's death. The news was all over the place and no one gave her the benefit of doubt apart from our family. When she couldn't take it anymore she took her own life because of the constant embarrassment she was faced with every time she stepped out of the house. It wasn't until her death that the truth was finally revealed," Amy explained, and raised a hand to wipe the tears on her cheeks, "If only there was one person at her place of work, or maybe a neighbor who had believed in her, she probably wouldn't have taken her life," Amy said with a snuffle.

"I'm sorry," Lucy said with a snuffle of her own as she offered Amy a roll of tissue paper to wipe her eyes and nose, while she did the same.

"Don't be. Just tell me what I can do," Amy pleaded.

"Offering to help me is already more than I hoped for. Thank you for giving me the benefit of doubt and standing by me," Lucy said with a genuine smile that touched her eyes, "And inform those in the office that they don't need to worry themselves. I will take care of it myself, and none of you will have to lose your job on my account," Lucy promised.

Amy shook her head, "I think you should let us do as the CEO instructed even though you might not have a need for it. This will go a long way in teaching everyone a lesson to find out both sides of a story before contributing in a hateful conversation," Amy suggested, and Lucy smiled.

"Don't hesitate to let me know if you need my help. You can call me at any time of the day and I will come running," Amy promised as she stood up to leave.

"Thank you very much," Lucy said once again as she stood up.

"Alright then. I should let you get back to what you were doing," Amy said with a polite bow before leaving the office.

Once Amy left, Lucy shut down her laptop and stood up. It was time to leave, and she suspected that Tom was probably getting ready to go wait for her by the car park as usual. All she needed to do now was summon the courage to leave her office and face others.

Even though she wasn't guilty, it was hard for her to walk amid people who believed her to be a murderer. Now she wished she hadn't tried to be so strong earlier and had just taken Tom up on his offer to leave the office using his private elevator.

"What? Did you change your mind?" Tom asked from the doorway of her office, startling Lucy who was about to walk into his office.

"Why are you here?" She asked when she noticed that he had not taken off his costume yet, and had also come from outside, and not his office.

"I figured you wouldn't be comfortable walking out alone, so I came in so that we can walk out together," Tom offered as he approached her.

"You haven't taken off your costume yet," Lucy reminded him.

"Being your driver, I'm powerless. I'm walking out with you as the CEO today," Tom informed her.

"As the CEO? You can't do..."

"Then what? You expect that I should just stand by and watch you suffer? What is the point of having all this if I can't protect you? It's bad enough that I can't take down the post. I should at least make sure that no employee under my payroll makes you uncomfortable."

Lucy closed her eyes and took in a deep breath. She opened her eyes when she felt Tom's lips pressed on her forehead, "We will be alright," he assured her with a small smile as he took her hand and led her out.

He could feel how tense she was as they both walked out of the elevator, and even her hand which he was holding was sweaty as many curious eyes followed them, "Relax, Lu. You are safe with me," he whispered to her as he led her out.

"Tell me something," Tom said, wanting to distract her.

"What?"

"Anything," Tom said with a shrug.

"Sonia is on her way," Lucy said the first thing that came to mind.

"So I heard. If your apartment isn't enough for you all, you can use my apartment," Tom offered, not wanting to ask her if Sonia had mentioned to her that she had broken up with Bryan just so she could come and be with her. He doubted that Lucy would want to hear of that.

"I can't believe she is shameless enough to show her face around here after murdering an entire family," A lady muttered to her colleague as they walked past them, and Tom stopped, making Lucy stop too.

"Make an example of her..." Tom whispered to Lucy, "Or I will," Tom added in a threatening tone as the muscle in his jaw twitched with barely concealed anger.

Lucy turned to look at the lady, and she raised a challenging brow at Lucy, "Yes? What are you looking at? Or you want to kill me too?" She asked with a scoff.

Lucy's teammates who had just gotten out of the elevator watched in surprise as the lady spoke carelessly before the man who she didn't realize was the CEO.

Lucy said nothing as she took a few steps closer to the lady, and then she took note of the name and department unit displayed on her identity card, "I murdered an entire family? I suppose you can prove that in court. You will receive a letter from my lawyer tomorrow..."

"Within the next hour the letter will be delivered to your apartment alongside the letter of termination of your employment," Tom cut in, and then placed his arm protectively around Lucy's shoulder as he led her out, leaving the others who were stunned to silence.

Although he knew that the shareholders were not going to like what he had just done, since he had been asked to fire her, yet he had just fired another staff on her account, he didn't care. He wasn't going to just stand by anymore and watch just anyone speak ill of her.

Once they got outside, one of Tom's cars was parked in front of the company already with a driver waiting for them, so he held out the door for her to get in, before getting inside.

"I don't think it was a good move exposing yourself that way," Lucy said with a concerned frown.

"Don't worry about me, let's just focus on clearing this up quickly."

Chapter 230 - Nosy Fellow

As the private investigator organized the documents and pictures in front of him, he made up his mind that he was going to retire from his line of business after submitting the information to the dangerous men who had abducted him three days ago.

He had done his findings on the men and had found out that they were members of the legion gang, and he didn't want to be involved with them in any way. They had given him only three days, and thankfully he had gotten all the information they needed. He was only now waiting for them to come over and pick up the information he had gathered. Once they did that, he was going to move out of this apartment and travel out of the country to somewhere far away to start over.

His instincts told him that if he continued like this he was going to either end up in big trouble or end up dead, and he didn't want any of that. He had made enough money by digging into people's lives, and now it was time to stop and enjoy all the wealth he had amassed.

He quickly tucked everything into a brown envelope and turned to the door when he heard the lock being picked from outside. Couldn't they at least knock or use the doorbell? Why did people keep breaking into his apartment? He wondered irritably and stood up just as the door opened.

A tall and handsome-looking man, with cold gray eyes, stepped in. He was dressed in black jeans trousers and a blue long-sleeved shirt. His low-cut hair was covered with a black face cap, and on his feet, he was wearing a pair of black tennis shoes.

"Oops! You're home. Sorry, I broke in," he murmured with a grin that revealed his crooked teeth when he noticed the presence of the private investigator.

For reasons unknown to the private investigator, the smile sent a cold shiver down his spine and he involuntarily shifted on his feet. He looked the man before him over, wondering why he looked kind of familiar. Was he a member of the gang? Or was he someone he had seen elsewhere?

"I'm here to pick up the information you gathered on Candace Roberts. I believe that is what you are holding," he said, jerking his head towards the envelope which the private investigator was holding.

"Are you one of them? Did they send you to pick it up?" The private investigator asked doubtfully.

"Would I be here if I wasn't?" The intruder asked back as he held out his right hand for the envelope to be handed to him.

"What proof do you have?" He asked tentatively, and the man in front of him smiled again. But like the first time, the smile didn't touch his eyes. He soon realized that it was a warning smile.

"Don't make me repeat myself," he warned as he took off his face cap.

The private investigator's eyes widened slightly when he saw the jagged scar that ran through the right side of his face from his hairline to his eyebrow and remembered where he had seen him. His picture had been in the file which they had given him for the job. He was Candace's boyfriend. Jero.

From what little findings he had made, Jero was in jail because Candace had testified against him, and members of the gang had let him take the fall, so Jero being in his house right now, and asking for this document wasn't going to end well for him either way. If he handed the information to Jero and the members of the gang came, they were likely going to kill him, and if he didn't give it to Jero, the man was also going to kill him too.

"I see you recognize me. Now hand it over quickly," he ordered quietly as he took a step closer.

"How did you know about this? And why do you want it?" The private investigator asked with a frown, wondering just how Jero knew that he was with information concerning Candace. Had he been following him around? If so he wouldn't need the documents as he would already know where to find Candace. Then was it one of the gang members who had snitched to him? If so what did he want with the information? Was he trying to find Candace himself and protect her or did he want to harm her? What did they all want from the lady?

"I don't like answering questions or repeating myself," Jero muttered in annoyance as he reached for a gun with a silencer which was tucked in the waistband of his trousers, and without saying another word he fired it directly at the private investigator.

The private investigator's eyes widened in shock as the bullet sank into his forehead and he dropped to the ground.

"Damn nosy fellow," Jero muttered as he snatched the envelope from the dead man's hand before his blood could stain it. He looked inside the envelope to confirm the contents, and once he saw a picture of Candace with his little boy, his lips pulled up in a smile as he returned the picture into the envelope and walked out of the apartment.

Jade walked into the living room she shared with Harry and raised a brow when she saw that he was still busy on the phone. With the way he had been receiving call after call all morning, one would think he was the CEO of the company and not Tom.

She watched as he paced around the living room, and judging by how tense his facial features looked, and how he kept taking in deep breaths before speaking, she could tell that he was trying really hard to control his temper and not snap at the person he was speaking with. That told her the person was important, likely one of the company's shareholders calling again.

It was difficult not to feel sorry for him. Here he was trying to help her solve her problem, and now he also had to deal with helping Tom and Lucy clear up what was going on with them.

She walked over to the minibar, poured some wine into two glasses, and then walked over to where he was standing and handed him a glass, "Take it easy," Jade muttered to him and patted his shoulder gently.

"Thanks," Harry mouthed to her distractedly as he continued with his phone call.

She hurried back to her bedroom with her glass of wine when she heard her phone ringing, and she quickly picked up the phone and received the call when she saw that it was her mother, "The world's sweetest mom!" She greeted fondly to cover up her guilt over not calling to check on her this whole time.

"What are you so excited about? Have you seen what's going on with your brothers?" Evelyn asked Jade impatiently.

"My brothers? What is going on with them?" Jade asked, wondering if something had happened that she wasn't aware of.

"Bryan just got dumped by his fiancée on the set of their reality show! It's all over the news. And Tom's girlfriend... They say she is a murderer!" Evelyn said with a hysterical sob.

"Bryan got dumped by Sonia? How? Why?" Jade asked, ignoring her mother's reference to Lucy.

"I don't know! People took pictures, and everyone is talking about it. To think that both girls are best of friends! They are out to ruin my boys' life! Tell your brother to break up with that girl immediately!" Evelyn cried.

"Mom! I'm very disappointed in you! You of all people should know better than to say things like that! If you know the kind of kids you raised, then you should trust their choices. I'm hanging up now," Jade said with a disapproving tone as she hung up the call.

She wondered how Bryan was doing. At first, she had doubted their engagement, but after watching a few clips of their reality show and speaking with Sonia, she knew for a fact that they genuinely loved each other.

She dialed Bryan's line immediately, but the call failed to connect. When she tried several times and it didn't work, she called Mia instead.

"Hey, Mia! I'm trying to reach Bryan. Is he alright?" Jade asked immediately Mia received the call.

"I don't think so. Sonia ended things with him earlier. I wonder why she had to go that far knowing she would hurt herself too," Mia said with a sad sigh.

"What happened? Where is he?" Jade asked in a worried tone.

Mia quickly explained all that had happened, "...So I went to drop Sonia off at the airport and by the time I got back, I didn't meet him. I went to his apartment and he wasn't there either," Mia explained.

"Alright. Thank you," Jade said as she hung up.

Just a few days ago she had been thinking that her brothers were getting all the fun and romance in the world that she was lacking, and all of a sudden they were both facing so much hardship at the same time. How was she going to help them? Jade wondered as she walked out of her bedroom.

She returned to the living room in time to see Harry hang up the call. She watched from the doorway as he gulped down the entire content of the glass and gently dropped the glass on the table before heading for his room. Jade watched him curiously as he walked away, and then she followed him so she could see what he was going to do.

Once he got inside his room, he dropped the phone on the nightstand and lay on his bed face down, picked up his pillow, and placed it over his head before screaming into the mattress.

Jade who had followed him, and was watching quietly, could only imagine just how frustrated he was feeling to resort to such measure to let it out. It was just one stupid move from an equally stupid person that was causing so much trouble for everyone.

"Did something happen again?" Jade asked curiously.

Harry sat up and tried to compose himself before turning to look at her. Before he could respond to her question he received a text message notification, but his phone started ringing before he could check the text message.

He picked up the phone once he saw that it was one of his men calling, "Yes?" He asked once he received the call.

"We found the person who made the first post on Twitter."

"Good. Send me the details of the person."

"One more thing," the man added before Harry could hang up.

"What?"

"The private investigator was found dead in his apartment an hour, and Jero was captured going in and leaving his apartment before then. I asked one of the men to tail him. And I sent you the pictures already."

"Alright. Thank you," Harry said before hanging up the call.

"What?" Jade asked curiously.

"Is this person Jero?" Harry asked, showing the picture to Jade.

"Yes. Why? Where is that place?" Jade asked curiously as she looked closely at the pictures.

"That is the private investigator's apartment. He was found dead in his apartment," Harry informed her with a sigh.. Too much stuff was happening at the same time and it was all beginning to get to him.