

## Wild Night 311

### Chapter 311 Board Meeting

"Any contrary ideas? What about contributions or constructive criticism?" Lucy asked for the fifth time as she looked at each of her teammates with disapproval. It seemed like they had all turned to yes-men, and nobody wanted to disagree with her because of her relationship with Tom.

"What is the meaning of all this? How can none of you have an opinion of your own?" Lucy asked, trying not to snap at them in frustration.

"I have less than twenty minutes before presenting these new designs to the board, yet none of you is making any meaningful contributions," Lucy hissed as she gathered the sketches and walked into her office angrily, leaving them.

The other team members turned to Amy, "What does she expect us to say when she already did a perfect job?" One of the ladies asked with a slight frown.

"I will talk to her," Amy said as she stood up and followed Lucy into her office, "Director..."

"Lucy." Lucy corrected impatiently.

Amy looked at Lucy, "We agreed with your ideas and have nothing to add to or remove from it because it is perfect."

Lucy looked at Amy, "In the past..."

"During the last meeting, we all brought our designs and ideas, and some of us even disagreed with one of your ideas and gave better ideas when we had better ideas to give. But this idea is actually really good, and we believe that the board would love it."

"Am I to believe that you are all okay with my idea, and you're not just accepting it because of what happened or my relationship with the CEO?" Lucy asked, and Amy frowned.

"Is that what you think?"

"Isn't that what it is?"

"I don't know about the others, so I can't answer for them. But I won't lie to you or kiss your ass because of your relationship with the CEO. We were all employed to do a good job, and I won't jeopardize that just to curry favor with you. Your design is

perfect, and the presentation is great too. That is what the board is going to want to see," Amy assured her.

Lucy closed her eyes and took in a deep breath to calm herself. Maybe Amy was right, and she was the one who was overreacting and judging them harshly.

This was going to be the very first board meeting she would be attending ever since she resumed work at the headquarters since Tom had graciously canceled the first one because she was late. And as a result of that, she was nervous since it would be the first time she would be introduced to the board. She was scared that if she didn't do a proper job, they would all assume that she had gotten her promotion thanks to her relationship with the CEO, and she didn't want that. She didn't want them to undermine all the effort she had put into climbing this career ladder, and she also didn't want to embarrass or disappoint Tom either.

"If you start doubting yourself, everyone else will begin to doubt you too," Amy said softly as though she could read her mind before walking out of the office.

Lucy opened her eyes and watched as Amy walked away before walking following her, "I'm sorry for my outburst earlier. We are a team, and I trust your judgment. If you believe that my design is the best, then we will go with it. Amy, please make more copies of it," Lucy instructed as she handed the sketch to Amy before returning to her office to prepare herself mentally for the meeting.

Thirty minutes later, Lucy was certain that she would have a panic attack as she sat in the boardroom with the other directors while they waited for Tom and Harry to join them.

"Hi!" Cora whispered to Lucy, who hadn't raised her head since she sat down.

Lucy turned to her and immediately recognized her as the lady who had been flirting with Tom. So she was a director too? "Hi!"

"So you're dating the CEO, huh?" Cora asked, making Lucy blink in confusion. If Cora was a director, did it mean that she knew who Tom was even while he was pretending to be a driver? Was that why she had approached him?

Lucy contemplated between snubbing her and putting her in her place, but she didn't want to have any more enemies because of her relationship with Tom. Anita had caused her enough trouble already.

"So it seems," Lucy said with a stiff smile, hoping that Tom would come quickly so that the meeting would start.

"Good morning, everyone. I'm sorry for keeping you waiting. The meeting with the shareholders took a longer time than we expected," Tom announced to Lucy's relief as he walked into the boardroom with Harry beside him.

All the directors stood up as Tom walked over to his seat at the head of the table, and Harry went to the seat at his right hand.

"Before we sit, I'd first like to make a very important announcement. You all know Harry. I'm sure every one of you here has interacted with him much more than you've done with me. From now on, he is now my Co-CEO. That means he has as much authority as I have," Tom announced, and the directors clapped and congratulated Harry.

"I'm tired of having you sit beside me. Kindly move to the other end of the table," Tom muttered to Harry, who scowled at him before walking away from there.

Once they were all seated, Tom looked around the table, and his gaze fell on Lucy. One look at her and he could tell that she was very nervous. He narrowed his eyes when he noticed that she was avoiding his gaze. It was almost as if she was trying to put a distance between them. He wasn't going to let her do that.

"Since I'm sure everyone in this room knows about my relationship with Director Perry, I'm sure you'd understand why I need her to sit next to me," Tom said, and the other men around the table laughed while Lucy looked up at him in surprise.

"Come over here, Jewel," Tom said, and Lucy looked down in embarrassment as she stood up. She had not expected him to use the endearment during a board meeting. What happened to calling her director Perry?

Once she sat down beside him, Tom looked around the table once again, "Although I don't think I owe any of you an explanation, I would like to clarify something once and for all, as I have already done during the shareholders meeting. I never knew Director Perry personally until she was promoted and transferred down here, and I met her outside the company before realizing she works here. The head of the branch where she formerly worked recommended her for the promotion because of her devotion and dedication to her job. She got this promotion completely on merit, and so I hope you wouldn't try to undermine her efforts because of my relationship with her. Knowing her, I have no doubts that she would prove to every one of you that she earned her spot on this table. Director Perry, you're welcome."

Everyone around the table clapped, and Lucy raised her head, surprised that Tom had known to handle what she was worried about. This reminded her once again of why she had fallen for him.

From there on, the meeting went on smoothly. By the time the floor was open for Lucy to deliver her presentation, she had regained her confidence, and she did such a good job that everyone else was commending her even before Tom could comment on it.

After the meeting ended, some directors left, while others gathered around Harry to congratulate him. Tom glanced at Lucy when she started to stand up, "You're not leaving without me, are you? We are going to my office. It's time for lunch," he reminded her.

"Hello," a feminine voice greeted from behind Lucy before she could respond, and Tom looked at Cora.

"Hi!"

"I didn't realize that you were the CEO," Cora said with a friendly smile, while Lucy tried her best not to turn around to look at the lady who she was beginning to dislike.

"Cora, right?" Tom asked, and she smiled happily that he remembered her name while Lucy tried to maintain a blank expression.

"Yes. I'm surprised that you remember," Cora said with a bright smile, and Tom shrugged.

Knowing how jealous Lucy was, Tom didn't need anyone to tell him that she wasn't comfortable with Cora's presence, "I told you I was going to try not to forget your name. Is there something you want?" Tom asked, and her smile faltered when she heard the dismissal in his tone.

"I just wanted to say hello to you. I thought since your girlfriend is here, she wouldn't mind..."

"Thanks for saying hello. I'm sure you both know each other, so there won't be any need for introductions. If you'll excuse us, we have to leave for lunch now," Tom cut her off as he glanced at his wristwatch before standing up.

"Are you ready to leave, Jewel?" Tom asked, ignoring Cora, who was still standing there, and Lucy bobbed her head.

"Yes."

"Good," Tom said as he picked up Lucy's handbag before pulling her up. Seeing this, Cora decided to excuse them, so she walked away.

"By the way, you did great. I loved your presentation," Tom said with a proud smile, and Lucy returned the smile as she took her handbag from him.

"Why didn't you say anything just now?" Tom asked as he led her out of the boardroom.

"When?"

"When she was talking to me. I know you were jealous," Tom said, and Lucy scoffed.

"What was I supposed to say when she wasn't talking to me? If you were in my shoes, what would you say?" Lucy asked, and Tom shrugged.

"I would mark my territory. Introduce myself as your man in a way that will have any other man backing off," Tom said, and Lucy laughed softly.

"How would you introduce yourself to make them back off?" Lucy asked curiously as they both stepped into the elevator.

"Like this. Hi, I'm Tom, her man," Tom said and then pulled her forward and kissed her deeply before pulling away. "Or this. Hey, babe? Who's your friend?" Tom said as he squeezed her ass, making her giggle.

"You will do that in the presence of others?" She asked in amusement, grateful that they were in the elevator.

"Yeah. Don't try me. That's how I mark my territory. So if you don't want me to do that to you in public, don't let anyone flirt with you," Tom said with a wink.

"So you knew she was trying to flirt with you?" Lucy asked, and Tom nodded.

"She already said she liked me before now. So it wasn't unexpected," Tom pointed out as the elevator door opened and they walked down the hallway to his office.

"So tell me, why were you acting that way before the meeting started?" Tom asked, turning to spare her a glance.

"What way?"

"Like you were avoiding my gaze, or you didn't want anyone in the room to know about our relationship," Tom explained, and Lucy sighed.

"I was nervous. I didn't want to screw up," Lucy explained.

"Because then they would all think you got here because I am interested in you and not because you deserve it?" Tom asked, and Lucy nodded.

"How did you know?" Lucy asked, and Tom smiled.

"How can I not know how you think by now?" He asked with a grin.

"Thanks for addressing the issue."

"Don't worry. I got you always," Tom said as he turned to her and kissed her forehead.

"You shouldn't have called me that in their presence, though," she said, hitting him playfully.

"You shouldn't have pretended not to know your boyfriend in public," Tom fired back, and she giggled.

"So that was my punishment?"

"You got that right."

Chapter 312 Mr. Right

Once they walked into Tom's office and shut the door behind them, Lucy faced Tom when she remembered the offer from the foundation. "Uhm, I need to tell you something."

"I have something to tell you too."

"Let's talk before we eat," Lucy suggested, and Tom gave her a nod as he led her to one of the comfortable sofas in his office.

Lucy dug into her handbag and took out the letter the women had given her, "Two ladies came to see me earlier on. They're from the She Can Heal Founda..." She stopped talking when she noticed the slight frown on Tom's face.

"What is wrong?"

Tom shook his head, "It's nothing. What did they want?" He asked, feeling even more suspicious of them now.

"They want me to be the face of the foundation and also work for them on weekends, so it doesn't interfere with my job. The benefits are listed here," Lucy said, trying not to sound too excited as she handed the letter to Tom.

Tom tried to gather his thoughts as he read through the benefits. Once he was done, he turned to her, "I have a confession to make."

"What confession?" Lucy asked with a curious smile.

"I already knew about them. I spoke with Alicia earlier this morning, and she told me about it, but I asked her not to tell you about it. I'm sorry," Tom said apologetically.

"Why? Why didn't you want me to know about it?" Lucy asked with a slight frown.

"I know it was not my place to make that decision for you. I was just worried out of my mind and didn't want you out of my sight since we are yet to take care of Anita," Tom explained, and Lucy just stared at him without saying a word.

"Are you only telling me this now because I already met them? Or would you have told me about it even if they had not come to see me?" Lucy asked, hoping that the latter was the case.

"I was going to tell you about it and explain why I think you shouldn't work with them," Tom said to her relief.

"Okay, let's assume Anita wasn't a problem. How do you feel about this offer?" Lucy asked after some time.

"You were forced to share that dreadful experience only because of the scandal, not because you were ready for it. They can't just come to you like this. I don't like the fact that they contacted you so soon and couldn't even wait for Alicia to talk to you first. Their action reeks of desperation, and it is never a good sign," Tom finished, and Lucy looked at him with a slightly raised brow. He hadn't said the one thing she had expected him to say first.

"How come you didn't complain about them asking me to work during weekends when I'm supposed to be with you?" She asked, and Tom shrugged.

"I can't be selfish right now. I'm trying to think of what you want, not what I want," Tom said, and she smiled, pleased that he was thinking about her while she was also trying to think about him.

"The benefits look too good to be true, though," Lucy said, and Tom gave her a nod.

"If something looks too good to be true, then it's probably not true," Tom said, and Lucy giggled.

"Here I was thinking you were true," Lucy teased, and Tom chuckled.

"I'm not too good to be true. If I were, I wouldn't have deceived you from the start," Tom reminded her.

"Good people sometimes do bad things. That doesn't make them bad," Lucy said as she touched his face, "I still think you are too good to be true."

"I guess I'm the only exception to the rule," Tom said, and Lucy hit his arm.

"You're supposed to say that I'm too good to be true too," Lucy pointed out, and Tom chuckled.

"I don't think you're too good to be true. I know you are true," Tom said as he kissed the tip of her nose, and she giggled.

"Tell me honestly, do you want to accept their offer?" Tom asked, looking deeply into her eyes.

"The offer is quite tempting."

"I could give you all that is offered there and more if you want. The car, the house, the all-expense-paid trips, you name it," Tom said, and Lucy smiled.

"But it won't be the same as something I worked for. Besides, if I accept their offer, I can actually affect the lives of other young girls too," Lucy explained.

"You don't have to work for them to affect the lives of young girls. We can establish a foundation in your name if you want," Tom offered, and she smiled as she leaned into him.

"It won't be the same. I don't want my success to be tied to you," Lucy said, and Tom sighed.

"You don't think that everything you do now might be tied to me whether or not you want it to?" He asked as he held her shoulders and gently pushed her away from him so that she faced him.

"Lu, I understand how you feel, and I know how much your career means to you, but I also need you to understand that we will have little or no control over how people perceive you and our relationship. People are going to have a lot of things to say about us both behind us and in front of us. It is something you will have to learn to accept," Tom said, looking into her eyes.

"And you should know that being your man; I wouldn't also just stand aside and watch you struggle to get stuff done. I will always try to make things easier for you, and I won't be pleased if you turn down my help just because you don't want people to think that you're successful because of our relationship. Whether or not you let me help you, people will think whatever they choose to think," Tom pointed out.

Lucy gazed into his eyes, and she knew that he was right. Whether or not she liked it, every time she did something for herself now, people would always think that it was thanks to her relationship with Tom. She would have to work twice as hard to show people that whatever she got was earned, and it wasn't because she had Tom beside or behind her.

"So what are you suggesting? That I ride on your coat tail?" She asked, and Tom shook his head.

"I'm just saying that you shouldn't hesitate to accept my help when you need it or make rash decisions simply because you're worried about public opinion," Tom explained, and she sighed as she leaned against him once again.

"You really don't want me to accept their offer, do you?"

"Yeah, I don't want you to. But if you choose to, I will support you," Tom promised as he placed his arms around her.

"Thank you. That means a lot to me," Lucy said as she rested her head on his chest.

"So? Are you going to take it?" Tom asked, hoping that she would say no.

"I don't know. Can I at least think about it?" Lucy asked, and Tom shrugged.

"You can."

"Thank you. So what were you going to tell me about? Can we discuss it while we eat?" Lucy asked curiously.

"Maybe it can wait until after work hours," Tom said, not sure anymore if it was the right time to tell her about Rachel's role in her abduction, about Rachel and Anita's relationship, or even the fact that Anita's family were thinking of harming her.

Lucy looked at his face closely, and she could tell that whatever it was he wanted to say was something serious, and it was bothering him, "Is it about me or our relationship?"

"Yeah. But it can wait. Let's eat and..."

"No. Tell me about it now," she cut in.

"You need to return to your office. Lunch break will be over soon," he reminded her.

"Then you should start talking. When we leave work, we will be too busy with the rest of the family at your dad's party to talk. I don't want to wait," Lucy insisted.

Tom contemplated whether to play the recording or just tell her, "Rachel is Anita's cousin." Tom blurted out.

"Rachel? Which Rachel?" Lucy asked in confusion, wondering if there was a Rachel they both knew in common.

"Rachel. Your brother's ex-fiancee," Tom said, and confusion swam in Lucy's gray eyes.

"Rachel? Anita?" She asked in disbelief, trying to find the connection.

Seeing how surprised and confused she was, Tom picked up his phone and replayed the recorded conversation.

"That is not Rachel's voice," Lucy said, and Tom nodded.

"Yeah, that is Anita's elder sister, Lisa. Just listen," Tom said, and she remained quiet as she listened to all the conversations with mixed emotions until Anita mentioned Rachel's name, and her jaw dropped in surprise.

"Wait, what? What is she talking about?" Lucy asked, turning to Tom with wide eyes when Anita made reference to her abduction.

"Rachel? She... she helped Jamie?" Lucy asked, her eyes brimming with tears as her chest rose and fell with emotion.

"Jewel..."

"This whole time Rachel remained beside my brother and even wanted to marry him despite playing a role in what happened to me? Has she no conscience?" Lucy asked angrily as the tears dropped from her eyes.

She shook her head as she swiped at her tears angrily, "No. I'm not going to take this lightly with her. I can ignore Anita for whatever she is doing, but Rachel? I will not ignore her. At least she is no longer my brother's fiancee, and I don't have to hold back anymore," Lucy said as she tried to stand up, but Tom grabbed her arm and pulled her back.

She struggled to get up, but he embraced her and held her tightly until she stopped struggling and broke into a sob, "This is why I thought it was a bad idea to tell you about it right now," Tom murmured as he patted her back while she cried.

"Why? Why me? What did I do to deserve such wickedness?" Lucy asked as she cried.

"I was never a threat to her or their relationship. Lucas is my twin brother. Why would she do that to me? Why are Anita and her family doing this to me?" Lucy sobbed.

Tom held her and just kept patting her back while whispering to her that she did nothing wrong until she was able to pull herself together.

Once she was calm, she pulled away from him and looked at him with her tear-stained face, "Lucas can't ever find out about this. He is going to blame himself if he knows that she was involved in it," she said, and Tom gave her a nod as he took out his handkerchief and dabbed at her tears.

"Are we done with the tears now?" He asked hopefully, and she gave him a wobbly smile as he kissed her forehead.

"Thank goodness. For a moment there, I almost joined you but had to hold back my tears because I wouldn't look as pretty as you," he joked, and she laughed softly as she hit his shoulder.

"So let's assume for a moment that I didn't hold you back just now. Where were you going to? And what were you going to do? I doubt Rachel was standing outside my office door," Tom asked curiously.

Lucy scowled, "I don't know. Maybe I would have called her and given her a piece of my mind."

"Yeah, I thought you were going to do that. You can't let Rachel know that you are aware. That will make them know that we are on to them, and we can't have that. And secondly, to correct what you said a moment ago, you are not ignoring Anita and her family. We will deal with every one of them," Tom assured her.

"One more thing I want you to know. Anita's mother is involved in charity. She is a prominent member of a lot of nonprofit organizations."

"You think she has something to do with this offer from SCHF?" Lucy asked, thinking that it didn't make sense.

"It is not impossible."

"How is an offer like this supposed to hurt me? I'm sure there are less expensive ways to get rid of me if she wants to."

"It might not make sense to you, but you never can tell what goes on in the head of people like her," Tom said, and Lucy raised a hand to massage her temple.

"It makes sense that they are all related. My head is beginning to ache," she said with a sigh, and Tom lifted her hand to his lips.

"Enough of the serious conversations. Let's just eat. We can revisit this at a more convenient time," Tom suggested as he stood up.

"Yes. Let's do that," she said as she let him lead her into his mini bedroom, where Adolf had set their meal.

"By the way, are you trying to matchmake Harry and Jade?" Lucy asked, wanting to change the subject to something more pleasant and light.

Tom chuckled, "Where did you hear that?"

"Sonia thinks so. Are you?" She asked as they sat to eat.

"I'm not exactly matchmaking them. I think they will make a good pair, but I'm leaving it entirely up to them to decide. Although I think they are interested in each other," Tom said, and Lucy narrowed her eyes as she recalled her conversation with Harry.

Perhaps something happened between them while either of them was drunk? Lucy mused. She also recalled her brief interaction with Jade earlier. "I think you are right. They will make a great pair."

"Of course, I'm right. That's why I'm your Mr. Right," Tom said with a wink, and Lucy laughed softly as she looked at him.

As she watched him eat, she remembered her conversation with Sonia earlier. Was he going to be okay with just being in a relationship with her? Without marriage or kids? Was she supposed to raise the subject herself or wait for him to talk about marriage before doing so? If she was to raise the subject, how and when could she do so?

#### Chapter 313 One Big Happy Family

"I told you. I told you they were not going to remember. Not one of them remembered," Desmond told his wife glumly as they sat down for breakfast after Adolf informed them that both brothers and their women had left the house very early that morning and so wouldn't join them for breakfast.

"Maybe they have a lot on their mind with all that has happened lately. You should have let me remind them," Evelyn said, looking just as sad as her husband.

"What is the point of reminding them? Having a lot on their mind is not an excuse to forget their father's birthday. What about Jade? They all don't care. Let's go

back home after breakfast," Desmond said, feeling dejected, and Andrew, who had been quiet, shook his head.

"I don't think that is a good idea. Besides, who knows if they plan to surprise you?" He asked, hoping that the girls had done what he told them and found a subtle way to remind the boys of their fathers' birthday.

"I'm not ready for that disappointment. I don't know what I might say to them if I stay here until they all get back only to find out that they had truly forgotten and no surprise was planned," Desmond said, and Evelyn reached for his hand.

"Honey, let's not make any hasty decisions. We can wait until they get home, and if truly they forgot about it, we will express our displeasure before leaving," Evelyn pleaded, while Janet just watched them, not knowing what to say to make them feel better.

"How do I know that you're not going to call them and tell them about it, so they come up with a surprise later?" Desmond asked suspiciously.

"You know me. I won't do that since you don't want me to," Evelyn promised, and Desmond gave her a nod before turning to Andrew.

"You're not going to speak with them either, are you?"

"Your boys don't like me, so I have no reason to talk to them," Andrew said, flashing him a grin, and Desmond chuckled.

"Okay. We will wait until they all get back home," Desmond said, much to their relief.

"Since it's your birthday, why don't we all go out and have fun?" Janet suggested, and Evelyn nodded in agreement.

"Yeah, let's do something fun for a change," Evelyn suggested.

"Where do you ladies suggest we go? And what fun thing do you want to do?" Desmond asked, and Evelyn turned to Janet, who was much younger than her and who she believed would come up with good ideas.

"Anywhere fun. Let's do what young people do these days. Amusement parks, cinema, Karaoke, name it," Janet said, and they all nodded in excitement.

"Let's do all of it. I will ask Aldof to drive us around," Evelyn said as Andrew stood up.

"Where are you going to?" Janet asked her husband curiously.

"To get wine. We should get the party started," he said with a grin, and Desmond laughed as he watched him walk again.

"I'm so glad that you're both here. Your husband is a good man," Desmond told Janet, and she smiled.

"Thank you."

"Now, let's just hope that Tom and Lucy would do the right thing quickly, and then we can officially become one big happy family," Evelyn said, and Janet laughed softly.

"But they barely started dating," Janet pointed out. As much as she wanted her daughter to get married, she knew that it wasn't going to be so easy to get her to do so, regardless of how much she loved Tom. It had taken her quite some time to get into a relationship, and Janet suspected that it would also take her some time to get around the whole marriage idea. She didn't want Lucy to feel pressured by Evelyn, and at the same time, she didn't want Evelyn to feel disappointed or annoyed if things didn't go her way.

"And it's obvious that they love each other. What else do they need?" Evelyn asked, and Janet exchanged a look with Desmond.

"I can list a couple of things," Janet said as she took a bite from her croissant loaf.

"Go on."

"Compatibility. Friendship. Trust. Loyalty. Understanding," Janet listed, and Evelyn shook her head.

"I think they're good to go. They relate pretty well together, so I think all those have been settled between them," Evelyn said, and Desmond yawned.

"How long have they been dating?" Desmond asked, and both Janet and Evelyn exchanged a look as though they weren't sure.

"I think it's three weeks now," Evelyn said, recalling that it was three weeks ago when Adolf called to inform her about the lady Tom had brought home.

"Are you sure you listened to everything Lucy said during that interview?" Desmond asked, and Evelyn frowned, wondering what the interview had to do with the discussion.

"Yes. Why?" Evelyn asked just as Andrew returned with a bottle of wine from the bar and a staff walked in with him, carrying the glasses.

"Sorry I took so long. I had to taste them in order to find the best," he said with a grin as he returned to his seat.

"She just started dating. Allow her to enjoy dating before you bring up the issue of marriage," Desmond said, and Janet would have given him a hug had the table not been standing between them.

"Who are you talking about?" Andrew asked curiously as he poured wine into each of their glasses.

"Your daughter. My wife wants Tom and Lucy to get married already so that we can officially become one big happy family," Desmond explained, and Andrew exchanged a look with his wife.

"Your husband is right. Let's just let them do their thing until they are ready to take the next step. We are already one big happy family, official or not," Andrew said with a grin as he raised his glass in a silent toast.

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"So about you and Harry..." Sonia said once Bryan moved away from them to the wine section of the departmental store where they were picking out drinks and snacks for the party, leaving her alone with Jade.

"You seem really interested in us," Jade observed, and Sonia grinned.

"Yes, I am. Who doesn't love sweet love stories?" Sonia asked as she walked beside Jade.

"There are people who do not like love stories," Jade said, and Sonia giggled.

"Well, those people are not me. And I'm sure they're not you either. So, tell me. I might be able to help you."

Jade stopped walking and looked at Sonia, "Is there something you stand to gain from helping me?" Jade asked suspiciously.

"Yeah. Inspiration. I'm actually writing a story about the Hank Siblings," Sonia said in a light whisper, and Jade looked at her with amusement.

"A love story about my brothers and me?"

"Yes. I started thinking of the possibility of something happening between you and Harry the first time I heard you were with him," Sonia confessed, and this time Jade giggled.

"Are my brothers aware?"

"No. Only Lucy is aware that I'm writing about you three. Bryan only knows I'm writing about the both of us. So you'll be the only one to know between you and Harry too. Only the female partner has to know the truth," Sonia said with a wink, making Jade smile.

"Okay. I will tell you about it. I think it might make for an interesting story, only that I'm not sure if it's going to have a happy ending yet," Jade said wistfully.

"Why not?" Sonia asked curiously.

"Are you both shopping or gossiping?" Bryan asked, glaring at them when he saw that they were standing idly and discussing instead of picking out more drinks.

"Why can't we do both?" Jade asked dryly, and Bryan shook his head.

"This is dad's favorite wine, right?" Bryan asked, holding up the wine in his hand for Jade to see.

"Yeah," Jade said to him before turning to Sonia, "We will have to continue our conversation later," Jade said as Bryan came to join them.

"What else do we have to get? We have been at this for hours," Bryan complained as he dropped the wine into the cart that contained all they had picked thus far.

"I think we have gotten enough. Now let's go and get my dress," Jade said with a happy smile.

"It's not your birthday. Why are we getting you a dress?" Bryan asked dryly.

"Because I'm part of dad's surprise package, and a package should be beautifully wrapped," Jade said with a wide grin as she spread both arms making Bryan roll his eyes while Sonia giggled.

"You invited Harry, didn't you?" Bryan asked suspiciously.

"He knows?" Sonia asked, surprised that Bryan knew about his sister's interest in Harry.

"Do I need to invite Harry specially? Wasn't he there when we were making the plans yesterday?" Jade asked with an innocent smile.

"You don't have to come shopping with us. You can pay for these items with your card and take them with you. Sonia and I will continue from here, and we will meet you later. Bye," Jade said as she took Sonia's arm and dragged her away before either she or Bryan could protest.

Sonia turned to look at Bryan, who she hadn't had the chance to kiss goodbye, "Do you want to hear the exclusive details about my relationship with Harry or not?" Jade asked, and Sonia blew Bryan a kiss as she turned around.

"You know I want to."

"Good. Let's go then."

#### Chapter 314 Romantic First Meeting (1)

Once Lucy returned to her office after having lunch with Tom, she shut the door behind her and walked over to her seat. She had tried to hold in her emotions for Tom's sake, but now that she was alone and could process all that Tom had told her, as well as Anita's recorded conversation, she couldn't stop herself from crying. She rested her forehead on her desk as she sobbed.

She stopped crying when a knock sounded on her door, and she cleared her throat, "Yes?"

"Can I come in?" Amy asked politely.

"Do you need something?" Lucy asked, reaching for her handkerchief to dry her tears.

"Yes, I want to see you," Amy said, and Lucy picked a piece of tissue from her table and blew her nose before giving her the go-ahead to enter.

Once Amy entered, she looked at Lucy closely while holding her phone to her, "You were crying?" She asked with a slight frown.

"No."

"Yes, you were. Is something wrong?" She asked with concern as she moved closer to the desk.

"No. Everything is fine," Lucy said and forced a smile, "What did you want to see me for?" She asked, wanting to move the subject away from her.

"The CEO asked me to check on you and report to him," Amy said, making Lucy frown.

"Tom? When?"

"Just now," Amy said, pointing to the phone in her hand, and Lucy sighed. How did she keep forgetting that Tom always read her like a book?

"I'm fine. I wasn't crying," Lucy said as she reached out a hand for Amy to hand her the phone.

"I'm fine. You don't have to be worried," Lucy assured him.

"You were crying again, weren't you?" Tom asked in concern.

"It's not like I can tell my eyes not to cry when I feel like crying, can I?" Lucy asked, trying to make light of the situation.

Tom sighed, "I don't like this."

"You do realize that this is Amy's phone, right?" Lucy asked since Amy was still standing there looking at her, "You could have just called me instead of disrupting her work," Lucy scolded.

"It's part of her job. I've just added it to her job description," Tom said, and Lucy giggled.

"I'm hanging up now. Don't worry about me," Lucy said as she hung up the call and returned the phone to Amy.

"I'm sorry," Lucy told Amy.

"It's fine. I don't mind. Is everything okay?" Amy asked, and Lucy gave her a nod.

"You haven't told us the outcome of the board meeting. Did they like the new design and your presentation?" Amy asked curiously.

Lucy almost sighed when she realized that she had almost forgotten all about the board meeting, "Yes. They all loved it and have given us the go-ahead," Lucy said, and Amy gave her an 'I told you so' smile.

"That's great news. I will relay the message to others. Call me if you need me," Amy said as she walked away.

Lucy watched as Amy shut the door behind her, and somehow she felt like the dynamics of her relationship with Amy had changed over the weekend. Or maybe it was just Amy's personality. She acted more like a friend than as a secretary.

Now that she was alone and was no longer crying, she tried to think about everything from a logical angle. Although she had never really been fond of Rachel, she felt deeply hurt and pained by this new revelation. If she felt this way, she could only imagine how Lucas was going to feel.

Perhaps she should tell him about it and get it over with? She didn't like the idea of keeping away something that concerned him away from him, especially when she knew that if she were in his shoes, she would prefer that she is told about it. At the

same time, he was still struggling with the break-up, and she didn't want to add guilt to his sadness. Maybe she could tell him about it at a much later time?

Or perhaps she should talk to her parents about it, and then they can all decide whether or not they want Lucas to know about it yet. At least that way, it would be a family decision and not just hers alone.

Just as she picked up her phone to make the call, she remembered that she was yet to tell her parents about who was behind the scandal. If she told them about Rachel's involvement, they would want to know how she found out, and then she would need to tell them about Anita, and then they would want to know who Anita is and why Tom had a bug in Anita's office, and she didn't want to tell them about that.

Although she knew that her parents were smart enough not to blame Tom for Anita's mess, she just didn't want to create a situation where her parents might begin to worry about her safety and start asking her to stay away from him so that she would be safe.

Yes, her parents were smart. But they were also very protective parents and would choose her safety over any relationship regardless of how much they liked Tom and his family.

She thought about giving Sonia a call, but once she remembered that Sonia was out with Jade and Bryan, she decided to just talk to Sonia later in the day.

Meanwhile, Jade led Sonia into a restaurant in a different part of the mall where they had been shopping.

"I thought we were going to pick a dress?" Sonia asked as Jade sat down and picked up a menu.

"I'm hungry. Let's eat and talk before doing that," Jade said as Sonia took the seat opposite her.

"So about Harry," Sonia reminded her.

"Yes. About Harry..." Jade said with a wide smile as she signaled to a waiter to attend to them. Once they finished placing their order, she smiled at Sonia.

"There are no exclusive details. I kissed him last night pretending to be drunk... Okay, that's not exactly what happened. I actually..." the rest of Jade's words trailed off when Sonia shook her head.

"No. Not like that. I don't want a summary. I want everything. Please give me all the details. From the first moment you set your eyes on him to the moment you

realized that you were attracted to him," Sonia said as she dug into her mini handbag and took out her phone to record the conversation.

"I hope you don't mind if I record this? I would have preferred to jot this down, but I'm not with my journal," Sonia said apologetically.

"As long as you're the only one that listens to it. With the exception of Lucy, of course. Although I don't see her sitting down idly just to listen to this," Jade said with a grin, and Sonia giggled.

"I know, right? She is such a busy bee, whereas I'm a busy body," Sonia said with a wide grin, and Jade couldn't have agreed more with the description.

"Which category do you fall into? Busy bee or busybody?" Sonia asked thoughtfully.

"Busybeebody. I'm a bit of both, so I can relate well with you two," Jade said with a wink, and Sonia giggled.

"That's perfect! I am going to turn on the recorder now. So tell me how and when you first met Harry," Sonia said as she reached to tap on the record icon on her screen, but Jade stopped her.

"The waiter is coming with our order. I will start after he serves us," Jade said, jerking her head towards the waiter who was approaching them with their order.

They both waited until he had served their meal before Jade gave her the go-ahead to start recording.

"I met Harry for the first time four years ago," Jade said, and a small smile curved her lips, "Thinking about it now, I think I would probably have considered our first meeting pretty romantic if I didn't have a boyfriend then, and if he wasn't present there," she said, arousing Sonia's curiosity.

"Your boyfriend was there? What happened?"

Jade had a bittersweet smile as she remembered that day. Bitter because she would have preferred not to think of Todd, but unfortunately, there was no way she could think of her first meeting with Harry without thinking of Todd.

"C'mon, Todd. Let's take a stroll around the neighborhood. We can't just stay up here all day," Jade pleaded with Todd as she tried to pull him out of bed, but he refused to budge.

"But I already told you that my head is aching, and I don't want to go out. Besides, it's too cold to go out, and you are still recovering from the flu," Todd reminded her as he tried to pull her back on the bed.

"Although I feel better already, but since you insist that it's cold outside, why don't we just chill in the living room with my parents? We will be here for only a couple of days, so we should at least spend the time with them instead of staying locked up in my bedroom," Jade pleaded.

"Alright. You can go down. I will join you guys shortly," Todd said as he kissed her hand.

"Are you sure you're going to come down?" Jade asked doubtfully.

"Sure, babe. I'll just give my folks a call, and then I'll join you," Todd assured her, and then she leaned forward to kiss him.

She didn't bother checking her appearance in the mirror since she was just going down to chill with her parents. She was decently dressed in a red sweater which her mother had gifted her the last Christmas, and a pair of faded boyfriend jeans which was folded at the bottom.

Just as she walked down the stairs, the door opened, and Tom walked in, surprising everyone, "Surprise!" Tom exclaimed from the doorway, and both their parents, who had been cuddled together watching a soap opera, exclaimed in surprise as their mother hurried over to embrace him.

"TOMMY!" Jade screamed excitedly as she ran down the stairs to join them, and in her hurry, she missed a stair and fell forward. But before Tom could notice that she was about to fall, a pair of strong masculine hands caught her.

Chapter 315 Romantic First Meeting (2)

"Wait. What? You're not just making this up for my story, are you?" Sonia asked in disbelief, and Jade laughed softly.

"No, I'm not."

"You do know that a lot of romance stories started this way, right?" Sonia asked excitedly, and Jade grinned.

"Well, I didn't think of it that way at the time."

"You didn't? Fine. Go on. What happened next?" Sonia asked, wanting to hear about it.

Jade couldn't believe that it was only now, after four years, that she was actually recalling the fine details of how she had first met Harry. She had been trying so hard to forget everything about Todd that she had also forgotten that first moment. She had a small smile on her face as she tried to remember it all now.

Jade's heart had already skipped so many beats at the thought that she was going to fall and likely twist or sprain an ankle in the process. Her first thought was to protect her face with her hands so that even if she hit the floor, she wouldn't hurt her face. One of her biggest fears was losing a tooth by accident.

She gasped in surprise when a pair of strong masculine hands grabbed her waist, and she gazed into the most beautiful pair of brown eyes she had ever seen.

"Your eyes... I love your eyes," Jade whispered as she looked down at him, even though she didn't actually know who the stranger that had just saved her was.

Harry, on the other hand, who was standing at the foot of the stairs, was looking up at her since she was standing two stairs ahead of him while leaning towards him. Her long curly brown hair fell forward, and her blue eyes were full of life and mischief as she smiled down at him.

Despite being Tom's roommate and friend for over five years, he had never been opportune to meet Jade since he had never had reason to visit Tom's home. Although he had always heard about her from Tom right from their college days, especially on the few occasions, they spoke over the phone. Nothing Tom had said, and no pictures he had seen, prepared him for the beauty in front of him. And although he had heard what she said, he was too tongue-tied to give her any response.

"Jade, you are a grown woman now. Why do you keep running down the stairs like a kid? You could have hurt yourself," Desmond chided as all three of them watched them, and at once, Jade snapped back to her senses as she steadied herself, and Harry let go of her waist.

"But I didn't get hurt," Jade said with a wide smile.

"What is going on?" Todd asked from behind Jade when he noticed Harry standing at the foot of the stairs, staring at her.

"I almost fell down the stairs, and this fine gentleman here, saved me," Jade said as she turned to look at him before returning her curious gaze to Harry.

"You are Harry, right?" She asked, seeing as he came in with Tom, and she knew that the only guy who was this close to Tom was Harry, his best friend.

"Yes. And you are Jade," Harry said with a polite smile, and Jade extended her hand for a handshake.

"Right. It's nice to meet you. I've heard a lot about you from Tom," Jade said with a wide smile as Harry shook her hand.

"I hope you heard only good things. It's nice to meet you too," Harry said with a warm smile of his own, and Jade decided that he didn't just have pretty eyes; he was also very attractive and good-looking.

As though reading her thoughts, Todd slid a possessive arm around her waist at that moment, subtly letting Harry know that she was taken and he should back off while also bringing Jade back to her senses.

Harry's gaze followed the gesture, and he glanced at the young man who was now standing beside her. Both men sized up each other when their gaze met, and Harry looked away with disinterest as he returned his attention to Jade.

"This is my boyfriend, Todd. Todd, this is Harry, Tom's right-hand man. Tommy!" Jade grinned as she threw herself at her brother.

"How is our brilliant lawyer doing?" Tom asked as he embraced her.

"I will be better if you sent me more money," she said with a grin as she looked around the living room, "Why don't I see any luggage around? Don't tell me you're not staying for Christmas?" She asked as she broke the hug.

"Can I at least say hello to your boyfriend before you interrogate me?" Tom asked dryly as he turned to Todd.

"Hi! It's good to meet you in person finally," Tom said as he extended his hand to Todd.

"The pleasure is mine. I hope I can learn a couple of things from you before you leave," Todd said with a polite smile, and Todd nodded.

"Cut!" Sonia said, interrupting Jade's story.

"What?"

"Okay, I don't mean to be rude, but I'm not exactly interested in your ex or your parents and Tom right now. Can we just focus on the part of the story that involves just you and Harry?" Sonia pleaded, feeling like the story was going to take all day if Jade continued at that rate.

"Just me and Harry?" Jade asked, and Sonia nodded.

"Yes. Your interactions," Sonia explained.

"After that, we didn't really interact until much later. Todd was with me for most of the time, and of course, I was in love with him, so I was more focused on Todd than on Harry."

"Yet you thought Harry was attractive and good-looking?" Sonia asked.

"I was in love with Todd, not blind. You don't expect me not to recognize a good-looking man simply because I have a man, do you? Have you seen Harry? He is gorgeous and sexy. Especially when he smiles," Jade said with a grin, and Sonia giggled.

"No, I haven't seen him. I'm too busy looking at your brother to admire anyone else. But now that you've mentioned it, I will try to take a closer look at him when next I see him," Sonia promised, and this time Jade giggled.

"So, did you ever catch Harry staring at you? Or did you maybe lock gaze with him at some point? Anything to make you feel like he was attracted to you too?" Sonia asked, and Jade shook her head.

"Maybe if I had caught him staring, it would probably have been easier to believe Tom when he said he thinks Harry has always liked me," Jade said, and Sonia leaned forward excitedly.

"Tom thinks so?"

"Yeah. But Harry has never shown any interest in me," Jade said with a shrug.

"Maybe he has, but you just didn't notice. Okay, let's get back to your first meeting. Just now, you said you didn't interact with him until much later. What did you both talk about?" Sonia asked, and Jade's lips curved in a smile as she remembered that night.

Jade walked out of her bedroom angrily after having a misunderstanding with Todd. She was upset that he had come home with her, yet he had been on his phone for most of the time and had refused to step out of the house with her or even leave the bedroom long enough to spend enough time with her family.

She heard Tom's voice as she walked past his bedroom, and she could tell that he was having a serious conversation with someone. She didn't hang around long enough to find out if it was a phone conversation or whether he was talking with Harry.

As she walked down the staircase, she heard the sound of laughter coming from the living room, her parents were watching a television show, but she wanted to be alone, so she walked over to the kitchen. She prepared herself a warm cup of chocolate and carried it outside with her to the back porch.

The light was turned off, and she didn't bother to turn it on since she wanted to be alone. As she approached the swing, she noticed that someone was already seated there.

"Harry?" She called, knowing that he was the only one who was unaccounted for. Tom was inside the house, and so were Todd and her parents.

"If the cup you're holding is for me, yes," Harry said as he watched her, and Jade smiled as she went to sit beside him.

"I thought you were inside with Tom. I heard him talking with someone..."

"He was here with me until he decided to go inside," Harry explained.

"I didn't know you were out here. Else I would have come with a cup of chocolate for you. You know what? You can have mine. Take it as payment for saving me," Jade said, extending the cup to him.

"Payment? Don't I deserve something better? Definitely you worth more than a cup of warm chocolate, aren't you?" Harry asked as he eyed the cup of chocolate she was offering.

#### Chapter 316 Romantic First Meeting (3)

Jade giggled at Harry's words, "Fortunately, my worth is in no way attached to this cup of chocolate. You didn't ask for any payment. I offered this out of my free will, so you can't demand more," she said, and Harry nodded as he took the cup of chocolate from her.

"If you say so. Perhaps we can share the cup then? I'd hate to deprive you of your chocolate," He offered, and Jade pursed her lips for a second before standing up.

"You can have that. I will just make myself another cup," Jade said as she stood up, and then she looked at Harry in surprise when he stood up too, "You're going inside already?"

"Since I took your chocolate, and I'm making you make another for yourself, it's only fair that I keep you company while you prepare another cup for yourself," Harry said, and Jade grinned at him.

"You're such a perfect gentleman," she said as she led the way back to the kitchen.

"I try my best," Harry said, and she smiled.

"I'm sure you do."

Harry stood by the doorway of the kitchen, leaning against the kitchen door as he watched her move around, trying to fix hers.

Although she was just four years younger than he was, he couldn't help looking at her like she was a kid. Maybe that was because she had been just fifteen years old and in high school when he had first heard of her and saw her picture. And although he had been looking forward to meeting Tom's family, especially his kid sister whom he always spoke fondly about, somehow he had been expecting to see that little girl, not this beautiful grown-up young lady.

"Didn't you say you are here to keep me company? Don't just stand there, then. Go on and say something," Jade said, breaking into his thoughts.

"Tom said you owned a dog. Why haven't I seen the dog around," Harry asked for lack of a better topic to discuss.

She turned to him in surprise, "When did he tell you that?"

"I can't remember. Why?"

"Her name was Barbie. She died a year ago," Jade said sadly.

"I'm sorry. I wouldn't have mentioned it if I had known," Harry said apologetically.

"I know. I'm just surprised you remembered something like that since I'm very sure Tom must have mentioned it a long time ago," Jade said, and he shrugged.

"I was cursed with a very good memory," Harry said with a small smile.

"I'd like to have such a curse. It would definitely help me ace all my courses," Jade said with a grin.

"Trust me. You're better off without it. Especially when you have to clearly remember things you would rather forget, it's like having to relive unpleasant memories most times," Harry said, and Jade shook her head.

"It can't be that bad," Jade argued as she picked up her cup of chocolate and walked towards him, "My job here is done. We can return to the porch," she announced.

"That didn't take as much time as I expected," Harry observed as he held out the door for her to pass before following her. Harry turned on the light on their way out.

"It doesn't require more than ten minutes, at least not for me," Jade said with a shrug.

Once they were comfortably seated on the swing, Jade turned to face him, "Why did you turn on the porch light? I thought you preferred to stay in the dark?" She asked curiously.

"Maybe if I were alone, it would have been cool. Someone might misunderstand if they see us both alone in the dark," Harry explained, and Jade smiled at his thoughtfulness.

"By someone, do you mean Tom, my boyfriend, or my parents?"

"Someone could be any one of them and every one of them," Harry said, and she smiled.

"You're very cool," Jade said as she took a sip from her mug.

"Thank you."

"Why haven't you taken a sip yet? Are you scared I drugged it?" Jade asked with a teasing smile, and Harry chuckled.

"I just prefer it a bit cool," Harry said, and she nodded.

They both lapsed into silence until Jade decided to speak, "So, how do you like our neighborhood?" She asked curiously.

"I like your home. It's very... Homely. And your neighborhood looks cool too, but I haven't really taken a stroll around it to decide whether or not I like the place. Do you have nosy neighbors?" Harry asked, and she giggled.

"I think every neighborhood has those. Every neighborhood has a nosy neighbor. The aloof neighbor, the grumpy neighbor..."

"And the neighbor who thinks too highly of themselves," Harry added, and they both laughed in agreement.

"I agree with you. Maybe if you are not too busy tomorrow, we could take a stroll together, and I could take you around the neighborhood and show you each of them. Then you can decide whether or not you like the place." Jade said with a bright smile.

"I will like that as long as you don't bail on me," Harry said as he smiled at her.

"I promise not to bail. Tomorrow we will take a stroll after breakfast," she assured him.

"Alright. I will look forward to it since I doubt Tom has the time for that," Harry said as he took a sip from the mug, "Hm. Did you add whiskey to the chocolate?" Harry asked when he caught a whiff of whiskey before tasting it.

"Sshh," Jade said, raising a finger to her lips, "Don't say it out loud. That's my secret recipe for a cold night," she said, and Harry watched her in amusement.

"There is nothing secretive about it. I've done this before, but with rum, not whiskey," Harry said, and Jade turned to spare him a glance.

"Really? I guess genius minds like ours work the same," she said with a wink, and Harry chuckled.

"I see. So tell me about law school. Is it true that you have to be a genius to study law?" Harry asked, and Jade's lips twitched in amusement.

"Why aren't you studying law? Didn't I just call you a genius?" She asked with a teasing smile as she turned to look at him, and Harry smiled back.

"I suppose everyone in law school mixes their Chocolate drink with whiskey too," Harry said dryly, and Jade laughed softly.

"Well, to answer your question, I'm sure you need to be a genius to study medicine, and engineering, and business, and every other course that is important to humankind. We are all geniuses in our own capacity," Jade said, and Harry smiled.

"That's a good response. I think you're going to make a very intelligent lawyer. If I'm ever in need of a lawyer in the future, I will ask for you," Harry said, and Jade giggled.

"I guess I have my first potential client already. Has anyone ever told you that your eyes are beautiful?" She asked as she looked into his eyes, and Harry turned away from her in mild embarrassment since she was staring so intently at him.

"Your eyes are lovely too," Harry said, and Jade waved it off with a giggle.

"I wasn't fishing for a compliment," Jade said as she raised her mug to her lips.

"I didn't think you were," Harry assured her as he looked straight ahead. If he didn't know better, he would probably have thought that she was flirting with him, but Tom had already told him how she was the type to always say the best things about people, so he wasn't surprised.

Neither of them said a word for some time as each of them nursed their mug. The silence between them was not uncomfortable or awkward in any way.

"What about your boyfriend? Why are you here without him? Is he sleeping already?" Harry asked after some time, wondering why her boyfriend wasn't already out to find her, considering how he had been acting all day.

"No, he is busy with work. Why?" She lied easily.

"Nothing. I was just curious. He didn't seem like the type to let you out of his sight," Harry said, and Jade giggled.

"Todd can be pretty clingy and possessive sometimes, but it's one of the things I like about him," Jade said without turning to look at him.

"You both must be crazy about each other," Harry said thoughtfully.

"Yes, we are. He's my first love," she said as she turned to look at him with a wide smile, and Harry nodded without saying a word.

"Wait, what?" Sonia asked, interrupting Jade once again.

"What?" Jade asked in confusion.

"Remind me, please, how old were you then?" Sonia asked, and Jade raised a brow.

"Twenty. Why?"

"Gosh! You were so naive! I agree with Tom. I think he liked you. All his questions and everything he said was just his way of getting to know you," Sonia said, and Jade's brows pulled together as she thought about it.

"Do you really think so? But he didn't say anything personal..."

"What else was he supposed to say after you made it clear that you were hopelessly in love with your clingy and possessive boyfriend?" Sonia asked reasonably, "I think the clue was in everything he said, but you missed it."

Chapter 317 Romantic First Meeting (4)

Taking a deeper look at her conversations with Harry now, Jade had to admit that Sonia had a point. Someone like Harry would never have possibly just come on to her directly that he liked her, especially not when he had met her boyfriend, and they were all under the same roof. Harry was simply too much of a gentleman to cross certain boundaries.

"Even if I hadn't missed all the clues, I doubt that anything could have happened between us. I was really in love with Todd, so even if I saw the clues, I would have either ignored them or just told Harry off," Jade said, and Sonia sighed.

"You can't be so sure about that. You were attracted to him too," Sonia reminded her.

"By now, you should know that being in a relationship doesn't stop you from being attracted to others. You only have to be mindful of the things you do with that attraction," Jade pointed out.

"Why not say that to me when I'm standing in the dock, and you are my prosecutor after your brother ends up in the accident and emergency ward if I catch him being attracted to any other girl?" Sonia said, and Jade giggled.

"C'mon, don't be dramatic. Sometimes you can't help these things. No matter how much you love your partner, there are more good-looking people than your partner..."

"I'm afraid I don't agree with you on that. Yes, there will always be more good-looking people than my partner, but I personally think that when you're in love with a person, every other person becomes unattractive to you. Yes, they can be good-looking and all that sexy shit, but you just don't give a fuck about them enough to sit up all night admiring the color of their eyes," Sonia said, and Jade raised a brow.

"So are you trying to say that you don't think I loved my ex? Or that you think I would have cheated on him with Harry if I had the chance?" Jade asked in a slightly defensive tone.

"Well, I don't know. That's a question for you to answer now that your ex is no longer in the picture. But I should also point out that you said your ex was very clingy and possessive, yet you were the same person who offered to take Harry on a stroll around the neighborhood. He didn't ask. You offered. And I think you offered because a part of you wanted to spend more time with him the next day. Or what were you thinking? That your clingy ex was going to like to see you with the same guy that caught you romance novel style and broke your fall? Or maybe you made Harry the offer just so that you could make your boyfriend jealous," Sonia said, and Jade's brows pulled together as she shook her head.

"No. Harry was Tom's best friend, and I saw him like an elder brother or something. Don't forget that it was his first visit to my house. Todd didn't want to step out of the house, but I wanted to. Harry was good company, so I offered to show him around the neighborhood. It wasn't a big deal, and it had nothing to do with me

not loving my ex or anything. And honestly, I wasn't even thinking of Todd when I made the offer or while we talked. I only remembered him when Harry asked about him," Jade said defensively, and Sonia cleared her throat.

"Did you just hear what you said?" Sonia asked with an I told you so smile, "You weren't thinking of your boyfriend, who was just probably about a hundred feet away from there. Don't you think you would have kissed Harry if he had made a move considering that you didn't even remember your boyfriend's existence? Don't be in haste to defend yourself. Just think first before you answer," Sonia said with a knowing smile.

Jade had a frown on her face as she thought about it. She hated that Todd was a cheat, a manipulator, and a liar. She didn't want to be on the same level as him. She would never have cheated on him in any way with Harry. She was at least sure of it. Not just because she wasn't a cheat but also because the Harry she had come to know would never have made that move, and maybe that was one of the reasons she was attracted to him.

Jade shook her head, "I wouldn't have kissed Harry. We weren't even friends then. We were just two people in a backyard having a conversation," Jade said, and Sonia nodded thoughtfully.

"Am I to pretend that five minutes ago you didn't say he was like an elder brother or something, and now you're saying you were just two people in the backyard having a conversation?"

"An elder brother, two people in the yard, what difference does it make?"

"You were flirting with him, telling him how pretty his eyes were," Sonia said, and Jade rolled her eyes.

"That wasn't a big deal. I do that all the time. I see something I like in a person, I walk up to them and say it. In Harry's case, I sit next to him and tell him. His eyes really are beautiful. They still get me every time. I guess I'm an eye person," Jade said with a wide smile, and Sonia laughed softly.

"Or maybe you are just Harry's eyes person. Let's assume you thought he was just like an elder brother to you. Bryan has beautiful blue eyes too. Have you told him that before?" Sonia said, and Jade giggled.

"Have you noticed that Bryan and I have exactly the same eye color? Why would I compliment him for my eye color?" She asked in amusement.

"Okay then. I give up on the argument. I will just try to convince myself that it is a coincidence that you are now having feelings for a man you offered to take a stroll with four years ago who you didn't feel anything for other than honest admiration for his beautiful eyes," Sonia said with a straight face, and Jade giggled.

"You are pretty consistent, do you know that? Have you ever considered getting a degree in law or counseling? You'd make a great relationship therapist," Jade said, and Sonia laughed.

"I'd rather stick to what I love. Making love stories. So continue with your story. We've spent enough time arguing, and the food you ordered is cold already," Sonia said as she picked up her glass of non-alcoholic cocktail and drank from it.

Jade signaled to the waiter and asked him to help them pack the food before returning her attention to Sonia.

"So after you declared your love for your ex to him, what did he say?" Sonia asked, reminding her of where she stopped in her story.

Harry said nothing as he drank from his mug until Jade broke the silence, "So what are you and Tom up to these days? Why is he always busy and hardly has money to spare," Jade asked curiously, and Harry smiled.

"We are really busy trying to grow the company, and you can see that even while I'm here enjoying the cool evening breeze, he is inside trying to convince some potential investors. All the money we have is either invested in cryptocurrency or real estate. So how can he have enough to spare when he is still trying to gather money?"

"I see. I will try to be more understanding."

"Yeah, you should be. So what about your boyfriend? Is he a college student too?"

"Todd? No. He graduated two years ago. He works in his father's forex company," Jade said, and Harry nodded.

"Are you going to be a prosecutor or a defense attorney?"

"A prosecutor. I want to help people get justice and lock up bad guys," Jade said without thinking twice.

"You do realize that there might be cases when you mistakenly lock up innocent guys because the so-called evidence points to them, right?" Harry asked, and Jade looked thoughtful for a moment.

"Like the New York central park rape crime," Jade murmured.

"What is that?" Harry asked curiously.

"On April 1989, a female jogger was assaulted and raped in New York's Central Park, and five teenage boys were subsequently charged with the crime. It took over twelve years for them to be exonerated," Jade said and went on to explain all she knew about the case.

By the time she finished, Harry's brows were drawn together in a frown, "I don't even want to imagine how those boys and their families would have felt if I feel this pained. Your profession is quite scary. How do people live with things like these on their conscience? How do you go to bed at night knowing that you ruined someone's life?" Harry asked, and Jade sighed.

"That is why I will have to do a thorough job. I won't be like every other prosecutor. I will give my best to every case I'm assigned, and ensure that justice is served, so help me God," Jade said with so much passion and sincerity that Harry had a proud smile on his face as he watched her.

"I told you before. You will make a brilliant lawyer. So what do I call you after you get your degree? Barrister? Prosecutor? Or just Miss Hank?"

"Nah. I didn't study so hard for anyone to refer to me as 'Miss' I prefer to be referred to as Jade Hank, Esquire. But since you are like family, you can just leave out the title and call me Jade," she said with a sweet smile, and Harry chuckled.

"Thanks for the privilege, Esquire. I feel honored," Harry said dryly, and she giggled.

"Don't mention," she said, making Harry chuckle.

"I think it might be past your bedtime. You should go in now," Harry suggested when Jade yawned.

"No, I'm fine," Jade said with a shake of her head. Although she was tired and wanted to go to bed, she was enjoying their conversation and staring at him too much to want to leave. Besides, she wasn't ready to talk to Todd yet.

As though summoned by her thoughts, the kitchen door opened, and Todd walked out to the porch.

Chapter 318 Romantic First Meeting (5)

Harry wasn't surprised to see Todd, since he had been expecting him to show up since the last two hours, he was just surprised that it had taken him that long to come out in search of his girlfriend.

"I told you so twice. First, it's past your bedtime. And two, he can't let you out of his sight for too long," Harry whispered, and Jade stifled a giggle.

"Jade?" Todd called from the porch as he stood under the light, looking in their direction.

"Over here," she called out to him with a wave even though he was looking at them already.

"What are you doing out here?" He asked as he took a step forward.

"Just chatting with Harry. Did you want something?" Jade asked innocently.

"You should come in now. It's getting late," he said in a cool tone as he watched Harry with a glare in his eyes.

Once again, Harry looked away from him with disinterest as he glanced at his wristwatch, "It's almost midnight already. You are good company Jade," Harry said, surprising Jade who hadn't realized just how long they had spent there talking and enjoying the silence.

"Give me a minute," Jade called to Todd as she stood up, and then she looked at Harry with a smile, "The time really flew by without my notice. I guess I have to say goodnight now. See you tomorrow. Don't forget our stroll," she said with a wave as she picked up both their empty mugs and headed for the porch.

"What were you doing there alone with him?" Todd asked as they both walked into the kitchen, and she took the mugs to the sink.

"Chatting."

"Chatting? About what?" Todd asked as he followed her.

"Just general stuff. Tom's business, law, stuff. Nothing specific," Jade said, wondering what exactly they had been discussing, but she couldn't lay a finger on anything serious.

"I'm supposed to believe that?" Todd asked, and Jade tried not to roll her eyes as she rinsed the mugs and dried her hands.

"Yes, you're supposed to believe it, unless there is something else you want to add to it," Jade said as she turned to face her angry boyfriend, "Let's not do this, okay? It's been a long day, and I'm tired."

"You're tired? I don't think so. Not when you were out there with him and had no plans of coming inside until I came to get you," Todd pointed out.

"I am not going to fight with you. Especially not in my parents' kitchen," Jade said as she walked away and headed for the bedroom while Todd followed her.

"Do you like him?" Todd asked the moment they walked into the bedroom and shut the door.

"Like who?"

"Don't play dumb, Jade. We both know that you have been..."

"Is that it? Are you trying to pick a fight with me over this and turn the tables so that I have to apologize now, simply because I was mad at you earlier?" Jade asked incredulously since it was the same pattern with him every time. He would do something wrong, she would complain about it and get angry, and then he would bring up something else and turn the table on her so that she would be the one to apologize.

"You are the one who left the bedroom in the middle of a discussion to spend time outside with your elder brother's best friend! What am I supposed to think?" Todd asked, and Jade shook her head.

"We were just talking, for crying out loud! Why do you have a problem with that?" Jade asked in disbelief.

"You are my girlfriend, and you expect me not to have a problem with you talking with another guy in the middle of the night while I was in your bedroom waiting for you?"

"Harry is Tom's best friend. He is like family! It isn't a big deal!"

"That is my problem! He is like family, but he isn't family! He doesn't even look at you like family! First, he catches you when you fall, and then..."

"Seriously? Do you know how ridiculous you sound right now? You have a problem with him saving me from falling down the stairs? You would have preferred that I fall? Are you kidding me right now?" Jade snapped at him irritably.

"That guy likes you. I don't want to see you alone with him anymore," Todd said with finality.

"You are the one making a big deal out of this. Harry is just..."

"I don't want to hear it, Jade. You are the love of my life, and I'm not comfortable seeing you with that guy. So just stay away from him, okay?"

"Todd, you are being unreasonable. Harry is a gentleman and he..."

"And I have said I don't want to see you anywhere near him. He may look like a gentleman, but he is a player. He looks at you like he wants to undress you. I'm a man, and I know these things. You are just being naive and gullible. That guy is a player, and I won't be surprised if he caused you to fall on purpose so that he would catch you," Todd said, and Jade looked at him in disbelief.

At this point, she decided that there was no need to argue any further with him, seeing how bent he was on being unreasonable, "Fine. I will stay away from him after I show him around the neighborhood tomorrow..."

"No! You won't do that. You can show me around the neighborhood if that's what you want. You want us to spend time with your family? Let's do that too. Just stay the fuck away from him," Todd said, and Jade took in a deep breath.

"I already promised him."

"Jade, I'm not having this argument anymore. If you love me and you respect our relationship, you will stay away from him. If I see you with him, I will assume that you choose him over us."

"What? I can't believe that you dated such a douchebag," Sonia said in disbelief.

"Yeah. Thinking about it now, even I am cringing. He was right about one thing though. I was really naive and gullible to have been with him. To think he called Harry names, and he was the cheat," Jade said, and Sonia shook her head.

"Well, I'm not surprised. I sensed he was a cheat from the moment you said he was always on his phone and refused to leave the house with you or spend time with your family," Sonia said with a shrug.

"So I take it that you avoided Harry and didn't go on the stroll with him as planned?"

"I avoided him like the plague. If I walked into the living room and saw him there, I would leave immediately. I continued like that until he left two days later. Thinking about it now, he didn't make any effort to talk to me after that night either. He didn't even ask why I was avoiding him or why I failed to go on a stroll with him as planned," Jade said thoughtfully.

"He didn't ask because he probably knew already. You did say your boyfriend was clingy and possessive after all. I think he stayed away because he understood and didn't want to make things difficult for you."

"Knowing him, I think you're right. Oh, Harry! The more I think about him, the more I fall for him," Jade said with a groan, and Sonia giggled.

"Isn't it funny that even your douchebag ex-boyfriend realized that Harry was interested in you, but you didn't?" Sonia asked, and Jade shook her head pitifully.

"No, it's not funny. It's pathetic. It took me four miserable years to get here. And because of my stupid stubbornness I've managed to matchmake him with someone else. It's either I'm still very naive and stupid or Harry has probably moved on is no longer interested in me," Jade said sadly.

"Let's not be in haste to make conclusions. Now tell me all about about your second meeting with him, and this kiss you mentioned earlier. I'm sure I should be able to help you fix this," Sonia said confidently as the waiter returned with their packed food.

As Jade paid for the meal, Sonia's phone vibrated with a phonecall from Bryan and she picked it up from the table to receive it, "Hey, babe!"

"It's been over two hours already. Are you not done shopping yet?" Bryan asked irritably.

"It's been two hours already?" Sonia asked in surprise, and Jade also checked her wristwatch to confirm it.

"So you're having so much fun without me and not checking the time?" Bryan asked irritably and Sonia smiled.

"No, I'm not having any fun, I promise," she said with a fake yawn, "I will be with you soon. Don't miss me too much."

"I'm still at the parking lot waiting for you. Meet me in the car when you're done," Bryan said and hung up before she could respond.

Sonia looked at her phone in surprise, and then her lips curved in a smile, "Bryan is still waiting in the car," she told Jade.

Jade smiled, "He must really love you. You can go to him. Let's continue our conversation later."

"What about your dress? Are we not getting it anymore?" Sonia asked as she saved the recorded voice note.

"I can shop for it alone. Don't keep my brother waiting much longer else he's going to take it out on me," Jade said, and Sonia smiled as they both stood up to leave.

Harry raised his head from the documents in front of him when Tom opened his office door and walked in, "Wow! What a rare sight to behold. Thomas Hank walking majestically into my office," Harry said since Tom hardly ever had any reason to visit his office.

"You're CEO now, so I can't order you around anymore," Tom said with a grin as he took the seat opposite Harry.

"Oh! I forgot about that already," Harry said with a chuckle, and Tom laughed too.

"So... how are you?"

"Your concern for my wellbeing today is very... concerning. Is there something you want to talk to me about? Or perhaps I'm dying, and I don't know it yet?" Harry asked curiously.

"Since when did it become a crime to check on my best friend and find out how he is doing?" Tom asked dryly, and Harry snorted.

"Do you realize that this is the fifth time you're asking me how I'm doing? Just say whatever it is you want to say," Harry said, and Tom smiled at him, making him wonder if perhaps Jade had told him something. He doubted that was the case since Tom had been this way since he first saw him at the lobby that morning, and he was certain that Jade had woken up early enough to call him to report anything.

"You know that I love you, right?"

"For god's sake, Tom! Just tell me whatever it is, and stop beating around the bush. You are making me anxious," Harry said in frustration, and Tom chuckled.

"Thanks for watching over Jade. I'm sure she was a handful," Tom said, watching him closely.

"Oh! So it's about your baby sister?"

"She's hardly a baby anymore, and I'm sure you would have noticed that by now, yeah?" Tom asked, a smile playing at the edge of his lips as he watched Harry.

Harry silently agreed with him that Jade was in no way a baby. Not with those lips, and definitely not that body she kept flaunting at every chance she got. Not that he was going to say any of that to Tom though.

"We've been over this topic before, but I guess you're just trying to know if I'm still mentally stable after spending some days babysitting your grown-up sister. If

that's the case, you don't have to worry. I'm okay. Besides, she wasn't that bad," Harry assured Tom, who was watching him closely.

"I'm glad. Is there anything else you would like to talk to me about?" Tom asked, and Harry looked at him with a confused frown.

"Like what?"

"Like the night you spent making love to my sister?" Tom asked with a straight face, and Harry blinked a couple of times in confusion before his brows pulled together.

"What night are you talking about? I never touched her!" Harry denied it fiercely, and Tom chuckled.

"I had the best night of my life making love to your sister all through the night. It was sooo hot! Does that statement ring a bell?" Tom asked, and Harry glared at him as he threw a balled paper at him, making Tom laugh.

"I already told you that was a joke," Harry hissed at him, and Tom laughed even more.

"But you did think about doing it, didn't you?" Tom asked, and Harry looked at him in mortification.

"You surely don't expect me to talk to you about fantasizing about your younger sister, do you? Are you crazy?" Harry asked, and Tom shook his head.

"You could have easily said no if that were the case. So you did fantasize about her," Tom pointed out with a grin.

"What kind of an older brother are you?" Harry asked in disbelief.

"Right now, I'm being your best friend, not just Jade's older brother," Tom said, and Harry stared at him speechlessly.

"Listen, okay? I'm not interested in Jade if that's what you are asking to know. She is pretty, intelligent, and all of that, but she is your sister, and since you are like a brother to me, that makes her my sister too," Harry said, ignoring the voice in his head which was calling him a liar.

"Jade is like a sister to you?" Tom asked, trying not to sound amused.

"Yes. Even if she wasn't, but she is, I'm not going to pursue anything with her. If I do and anything goes wrong between us, it's going to affect both my personal and business relationship with you, and I don't want that to happen. So let's maintain the

boundary. She is your sister, and as such, my sister too," Harry said, trying his best to convince both himself and Tom.

"Yes. You are right. My sister is your sister too," Tom said with a nod as though he was convinced.

He knew that Harry was good for Jade, Jade was beginning to believe that he was good for her too, but it seemed like Harry was the one who needed a little push to make a move.

If it were a different guy in the picture, Tom would probably have suggested that Jade try to seduce him or even make a move and tell him that she was interested in him. But Harry was old-fashioned. No matter how much he admired women who were gutsy and bold, he would prefer he court his woman the old-fashioned way. He was the chocolate and flowers type.

Tom decided to change the subject, "By the way, our sister told me that you both ran into Tanya Reynolds," Tom said, and Harry sighed.

Our sister? Harry decided to ignore that part of the sentence and just focus on the other part, "Yeah. That spoilt brat," Harry muttered under his breath, and Tom smiled.

"I heard you handled it pretty well."

"I had to. Your sister looked like she was ready to pull out her hair and tear her apart. I couldn't let her do that even though it would have been fun to watch," Harry said in amusement, and Tom laughed softly.

"Our sister, you mean? Maybe you should have let her do it. I wonder if Tanya would have had the guts to press charges when she finds out who Jade is," Tom said, and Harry shook his head.

"You shouldn't encourage her to indulge in fights like that simply because you have the means to help her. Jade is a lawyer, and it wouldn't tell well on her image if she goes around pulling out people's hair simply because her big brothers can save the day," Harry said, and Tom's lips twitched with a knowing smile.

"I hear you," Tom said with a nod, and then his eyes became serious when he remembered the other reason he had come to see Harry.

"I spoke with Barry earlier," Tom said, and Harry raised a brow.

"You called, or he called?"

"I called."

Harry looked at him, "I take it you didn't call just to check on him or did you?"

Tom didn't say a word as he played the voice recording he had been sent earlier, and Harry listened to it quietly, "Who is Rachel?" He asked after it ended.

"The lady Lucy's twin was engaged to," Tom said, and Harry shook his head.

"This whole thing is crazy," Harry said, and Tom nodded before going on to tell him about the information Alicia had sent concerning the Miller family, as well as the foundation that was offering Lucy a job.

"If it's what I think, then they're trying to remove her from your side. Maybe you should let Lucy take the job," Harry suggested.

"Are you crazy? What are you talking about?" Tom asked, looking at Harry as if he had lost his mind.

"Before I say what I want to say, what is Barry's role in this? Why did you reach out to him?" Harry asked curiously.

"The easiest way to find something tangible against them is to find out something they did that no one else knows about. Something that can bring them down. I can't put investigators on their tails since even that won't tell me enough. We both know that Barry is the best when it comes to stuff like this. If Barry hacks their phones and systems and he finds something that I can use to bring them down, then it makes the work easy," Tom explained, and Harry nodded.

"You have a point. So I stick to my suggestion, while Barry works on this, allow Lucy to accept the job," Harry suggested.

"No. There is no way I'm taking that risk. Why should I expose her to such when I don't even know what their plan is?"

"If she doesn't accept this offer, they will come up with an alternative plan. And most likely, it will be a more dangerous plan. At least we know that this is their plan. Why don't we pretend to be stupid and go along with it to see what they actually want to do while Barry does his job? You could even offer to become a sponsor too. Invite those ladies and talk to them without Mrs. Miller's knowledge," Harry advised, and Tom became thoughtful.

"We don't know how she is connected to the owners of the foundation or what she offered them. The last thing I want is to reach out to them, and they inform her about it," Tom said, and Harry paused to think about it.

"Just tell them you want to be a sponsor to support Lucy since they offered her a job. And trust me, if they are greedy enough, they will accept your offer without telling Mrs. Miller about it, even if they have any dirty dealings with her. You can also have someone keep an eye on Lucy to make sure she is safe. Let's use this to buy enough time until Barry gets us some useful information. It's safer for Lucy this way," Harry suggested, and Tom nodded.

"I think I agree with you. I will talk to Lucy and hear what she has to say before I proceed," Tom said with a smile, grateful that he had a best friend like Harry.

"If you don't want to get involved, I could talk to them myself," Harry offered.

"Nah. I can handle that myself. You have no idea how relieved I feel now," Tom said as he stood up, ready to leave.

"I've always been the wise one," Harry said with a grin, and Tom shook his head.

"Unfortunately, you lack wisdom when it involves your personal life," Tom muttered as he headed for the door.

"I heard that," Harry called after him, and Tom turned to look at him as he opened the door.

"You were meant to hear it. I hope you're coming tonight?"

Going there meant he would have to face Jade again. They had said their goodbyes already, and he didn't want to go through that again and have to start struggling with thoughts of her.

"I haven't made up my mind yet. If I can't make it tonight, I will drop by the house before your parents leave to say hello to them," Harry said, and Tom shrugged before walking away.

It was obvious to him that Jade was going to need all the help she could get to bring Harry to his senses. He was more than willing to help.

#### Chapter 320 Smart Girl

Once it was closing hours, Lucy exited her office, glad that she had been able to accomplish all her tasks for the day, and grateful that she could leave for the day.

As she stepped into the elevator she couldn't help thinking how much she had changed within the last couple of weeks. She never would have thought that she was the type to be excited about the end of a work day, or about not taking any work home, but here she was, looking forward to spending the evening with Tom, Sonia and the rest of both her family and Tom's family.

Thinking about family, her thoughts drifted to her conversation with Sonia that morning, and she let out a sigh as she walked out of the elevator. This didn't change anything. Loving them and wanting to spend time with them didn't mean she wanted to get married. She was just going to have to find a way to communicate this to Tom soon, so that he wouldn't get his hopes up.

As she stepped out of the company building, her heart fluttered when she saw Tom standing beside his car without his coat, while he waited for her to join him. She lips curved in a smile when he winked at her, and she walked over to the car.

"Did I keep you waiting?" She asked as he walked towards her to meet her halfway.

"You didn't. I was early, ma'am," he said as he stopped in front of her.

"Ma'am?"

"You haven't asked me to stop being your driver yet, have you? I think I have my roles mixed up," Tom said, and Lucy giggled.

"Why were you early? Are we going somewhere?" She asked curiously.

"No. I was worried about you. I wanted to come down to your office to check on you and spend some time with you, but knowing whom I'm dating, I wasn't sure you would be comfortable with that, so I had to wait," Tom said as he embraced her.

"Tom..." She protested, knowing that people were probably watching them.

"Everyone knows that we are in a relationship already, and even if they didn't know already, I'd like them to know now," Tom murmured as he held her in place.

"But this is work environment," Lucy said weakly.

"I knew you'd say that, and that is the only reason I'm doing this outside the company building after work hours. I'm not your boss right now, I'm just being your boyfriend. So embrace me or I'm going to have to grab your arse," Tom warned, and Lucy's lips curved as let herself relax.

It was difficult to argue with the man when he was being this way, especially when she really wanted to bury her face in his chest and let his scent calm her.

From the corner of her eyes Lucy saw Cora standing by her car and watching them, so she grabbed Tom's ass, surprising him, "How does that feel?" Lucy asked in amusement when Tom broke the hug to look into her face.

"You want to know?" Tom asked, wanting to return the favor, but she moved away with a giggle.

"No, thanks. I was just putting what you taught me into practice," she whispered to him, and Tom looked to the side and saw Cora who was getting into her car.

"Smart girl," Tom said with a grin as they both returned to the car.

Once they were both seated inside, Tom turned to her, "So how do you feel now?"

"Much better," she said with a warm smile as she took off her glasses and looked into his eyes.

"I'm glad. We will be stopping by our apartments to join the others before heading to my house, I hope you don't mind?" Tom asked as he turned on the car's ignition.

As much as she was enjoying his company and that of the others, she also missed her apartment and her personal space, "I don't."

"Alright. This morning you mentioned something about wanting to stop by a department store later in the day, should we stop there before going home?" Tom asked, and Lucy nodded when she remembered what she needed to get.

"Yes. Let's stop by a department store. I need to get my shower gel," Lucy said, and Tom gave her a nod as he drove out of the parking lot.

They were both silent for a while until Tom turned to spare her a glance, "What are you thinking about?"

Lucy smiled, "Your dad's reaction when he sees Jade. I think he's going to be very happy," Lucy said, and Tom grinned.

"Your dad asked you and Sonia to remind us about our dad's birthday, didn't he?" Tom asked, and Lucy shrugged.

"Don't tell anyone I told you that."

"Thanks. I'm glad he did," Tom said, and Lucy turned to look at him.

"Do you always forget his birthday?"

"Not always. Although, Harry reminds me most of the time. I'm not exactly good with dates. Harry helps me keep track of things like that. But don't worry, I won't need him to remind me of your birthday. I can't forget it anyway, it's the first time I met you," Tom said, and Lucy shook her head.

"You should set reminders on your phone. It is one thing to not be good with dates, but it is irresponsible to completely assign that duty to Harry. So how do you remember Harry's birthday? He reminds you too? Or you have someone else to do that?" Lucy asked, and Tom shook his head.

"It's not intentional. Before I met you I used to be so busy that I hardly remember my birthday until either Harry, my parents or siblings reach out to me," Tom said defensively, "Harry's birthday is two days after mine, so I try not to forget it," Tom added, and Lucy nodded.

"So I'm making you not work as hard as you used to?" Lucy asked, and Tom shrugged.

"Not exactly. Harry has always asked me to slow down or take a break, so I'm taking his advise now that I have you. Talking about work, have you made up your mind about the job offer?" Tom asked as he turned to spare her a glance.

"I thought about what you said, I decided not to accept it," Lucy said, and although Tom was glad that she had listened to him, he now had to think of a way to get her to accept it.

"Are you sure? You don't have to reject it if you want it," Tom assured her.

"I'm okay, don't worry about me," Lucy assured him, and Tom sighed inwardly.

Why was he feeling hesitant to tell her about his discussion with Harry? It wasn't like she was going to scold him or beat him for anything, yet he just couldn't bring himself to say it.

"So I was thinking about something," Lucy said, and Tom spared her a curious glance.

"What?"

"I have to tell my family about Rachel," Lucy said, and Tom nodded.

"Sure. You should do so if you want to," he encouraged.

"If I do so I might have to tell them about Anita" Lucy explained, and watched him closely to see if he understood what she was trying to say.

"You can do that too," Tom said, and Lucy raised a brow.

"You are not worried that my parents might overreact if they find out about Anita and your past relationship with her?"

"Overreact in what way?"

Lucy bit her lower lip, "What if they start trying to make us break up?"

"I'm glad that you are this concerned about our relationship, but I don't think your parents will do that. Besides, I already have plans in place to make sure Anita and her family doesn't cause any more problems for us. Don't overthink it and just tell them everything if you want to," Tom encouraged, and Lucy sighed.

"I will tell them tonight after the party," Lucy said as Tom drove into the parking lot of a mall.

"Do you remember where this is?" Tom asked as he turned off the car's ignition, and got out of the car, and Lucy smiled as she opened her door and got out too.

It was the mall where they had come grocery shopping the last time, "Of course, I do."

"You said I wasn't your type then," Lucy reminded him as they both walked towards the entrance.

"You also said I wasn't your type," Tom reminded her.

"No, I said I didn't have a type. Now you are soooo my type," Lucy said with a grin, and Tom laughed softly.

"That seems like such a long time ago," Tom said, and Lucy nodded in agreement as she recalled their conversation that day.

"You really told me a lot of lies. I can't believe you made me beg you not to quit your job, after also threatening to fire me if my driver quits. You were a jerk, you know?" Lucy asked, turning to glare at him.

"Yes, I know. I was trying to be a bad boy, I'm sorry," Tom said, and Lucy shook her head.

"And where did you get that idea from?" Lucy asked, and Tom squirmed not wanting to mention that his siblings had said being a bad boy would help him get her.

"Can you forget about all the nasty things I did, please?" Tom pleaded as they walked into the department store.

"Yeah, let's do that. I will only think of you as the gentleman Tom that took care of me on our first night and didn't take advantage of me despite taking me home for a fling, and the one that bought cranberry juice because of my ulcer, and also made sure I had always had lunch. Those were your actual selling points," Lucy said, and Tom smiled.

"Thanks. Let's go get your shower gel then," Tom offered, but Lucy quickly shook her head.

"No. Don't worry, I can get it alone. Just go and do other stuff," she suggested with an embarrassed smile, and Tom looked at her closely.

"Why?"

"Because I want to get it alone. You can window shop or do whatever you want. I will be right back," Lucy said as she quickly walked away from him.