

Wild Night 341

Chapter 341 Validation

Sonia was rolling on the bed with laughter as Jade narrated all that had transpired between her and Harry when they met again in her apartment four years later because Tom had sent him to make sure she was okay.

"I swear, you are both a match made in heaven," Sonia said as she wiped a tear that had dropped from her eyes because of her laughter.

"His bluntness was very annoying at first, I can assure you. It's a surprise that I have somehow gotten used to it," Jade said with a small smile.

"That's interesting," Sonia said and then listened attentively as Jade told her how she had hooked Harry up with Aurora and how they were planning to go on a date soon.

"Oh-oh! That doesn't sound so good," Sonia said, and Jade sighed.

"It's what I get for being a meddling bitch. So it's either I just sit still and let nature take its course, or I find a way to sabotage their date," Jade said, and Sonia wriggled her brows, an evil smile playing on her lips.

"I'm all up for sabotaging their date," Sonia said, and Jade giggled.

"I didn't expect anything less from you," Jade said since she already knew that Sonia was the type to do crazy stuff, "If Lucy were here, she would probably advise me to let nature take its course," Jade said, and Sonia nodded in agreement.

"Yep. That's definitely Lucy. So what are you going to do? Sabotage or not?"

"Since I'm a perfect blend of both your personalities, I will figure out a way to balance it," Jade said with a brilliant smile, and they both looked at the door when someone knocked on it.

"If it's Lucy, come in. If it's not, get lost. We don't need you," Sonia announced, and the door opened.

"Oh!" Sonia's face flushed red in embarrassment when Evelyn walked into the bedroom.

"Should I get lost too?" She asked, and Jade laughed gaily at the embarrassment on Sonia's face.

"That didn't apply to you," Sonia said and pressed her lips together.

"What do you want, mom? I thought you said you were tired and wanted to sleep?" Jade asked curiously.

"Yes, I am tired, and I need to sleep. But I also have to talk to you. I've not seen you for a long while," Evelyn said as she sat down, and Sonia got off the bed.

"But we talked outside..."

"That was barely a conversation. Besides, you were busy being a daddy's girl. You don't think I'm going to just let you sleep tonight and leave in the morning without catching up on everything going on in your life, do you?" Evelyn said, and Jade rolled her eyes.

"Just come out plain and say you want to know if I'm in a relationship yet," Jade said while Sonia slowly made her way to the door.

"Well, there is that. But more than that I want to know if you are really fine. You don't have to leave on my account, Sonia," Evelyn said without looking at Sonia.

"We can finish our conversation over the phone some other time. I'm tired already and need to go to bed now," Sonia said with a fake yawn.

Both Evelyn and Jade could tell that she was faking it, but they nodded, "Sure. Have a good night's rest," Evelyn called after her as she left them to go and find Lucy to know why she didn't join them.

"I'm fine, mom. You should go to bed now. You need to rest," Jade assured her mother now that they were alone.

Evelyn looked at her without saying a word and just lay on the bed, balancing her head on one of the pillows as she looked at her.

Seeing her mother assume that position, she didn't need anyone to tell her that her mother wasn't going to be leaving her anytime soon, so she lay down too and propped herself up on her elbows as she looked at her mother.

"Work has been very stressful, but I'm about to wrap up this case finally. I'm considering joining the legal team in Tom's company when I'm done," she said, and Evelyn smiled at that.

"That is awesome. Tom didn't mention it to me when he said he was offering Bryan a job," Evelyn said, and Jade shrugged, not wanting to tell her Harry had been the one who offered her the job and not Tom.

"I think I need to do something different for a change. If I keep taking up such criminal cases, I'm afraid I might not live long enough to give you grandkids," Jade said, and Evelyn gave her a blank stare.

"I'm glad you are considering this. I will feel much better knowing that you all are in one city, and even if I'm not there, you got each other's backs. I was beginning to fear that you were all drifting apart because of your jobs," Evelyn said, and it was her eyes that gave her worry away.

"Not talking all the time doesn't mean we are drifting apart, mom. The three of us understand that we are all busy, but that doesn't mean we lose each other less or won't all drop whatever we are doing at a moment's notice if either of us needs help," Jade assured her.

"I hope so. I raised a close-knit family, Jade. I didn't give up my career to raise you kids only to watch you drift apart on account of your careers. Your father and I won't live forever. We are getting older by the day, and I don't want to think that if I'm not there to call each of you or remind you to check on each other, you won't do so," Evelyn said, and Jade snuggled closer to her and patted her arm knowing that she was speaking from her experience with her family.

"Stop sounding like that, mom."

"I want you three to always be there for each other. Even when you all get married, I'd love all of you to be one big happy family still," Evelyn said, and Jade smiled knowingly.

"It's already settled on Tom's and Bryan's side. So I guess this is the part where you ask me about the man in my life, so you will try to see if he will fit into this one big happy family image or not?" Jade asked, and Evelyn laughed softly at being discovered.

"Why don't you regrow your hair? Although this style looks good on you, but I miss your long hair," Evelyn said, subtly shifting away from the subject.

"I will think about it."

"Good. So what was that about you living with Harry?" Evelyn asked, and Jade blinked at her before laughing at her mother's tactic.

"I didn't live with him. I only spent two nights at his apartment," Jade said, and Evelyn eyed suspiciously.

"You must think I'm too old to not have noticed how you acted every time his name was mentioned earlier. Are you seeing him?" Evelyn asked, and Jade sighed.

Could she ever keep any secret from her family? "No, I'm not. He was just very helpful to me in the last couple of days," Jade said and explained how Harry had come to stay with her.

"What? How come something like that happened to you, and nobody thought it wise to tell me about this?" Evelyn asked with a displeased frown.

"Trust me, Harry is the best person that could have been there with me at the time. He even threatened to report to you if I didn't eat or get enough rest," Jade said with a grin, and Evelyn smiled.

"I've always liked that boy."

"Mom, Harry is hardly a boy..."

"Of course. I see you noticed just how manly he is," Evelyn said in a teasing tone, and Jade laughed.

"That's not what I meant. I think Tom and Bryan are men too. You can hardly call them boys," Jade said in her defense.

"Yeah, they will always be my boys, and Harry is my boy too. He is always so terrible at telling lies," Evelyn said with a fond smile.

"He lies?"

"He tries to whenever he is trying to cover your brother's ass. But I guess it's not just his thing," Evelyn said, and then she smiled when she noticed how Jade's eyes were gleaming.

It had been a while since she last saw Jade looking that way. Since Todd died, it seemed like a light had gone out inside her.

"You say you are not seeing him, yet you are smiling this way merely because we are talking about him?" She asked Jade with a teasing smile.

"Stop it, mom. I'm serious. I'm not in a relationship with him."

"You realize that I can hear the YET in that statement, don't you?" Evelyn asked knowingly.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Jade denied. As much as she loved her family, knowing her so well that they could read her, she also didn't want every one of them in her business.

"You are interested in him," Evelyn stated. There was no need to ask. She could just tell, and it made her smile.

She would love nothing more than for Jade to actually be in a relationship with Harry. She hoped that the feeling would be mutual too since she still remembered how Harry had been staring at Jade four years ago, but she had chosen not to say anything about it since Jade was in a relationship and her husband had asked her not to meddle even though they didn't like Todd.

"It could be infatuation. Or maybe I'm just crushing on him or something. It's not a big deal," Jade said lightly.

"That is fine, whatever it is. Now that I'm sure you are okay, I will just go to bed," Evelyn said as she rose from the bed.

"Seriously, mom? I told you I was okay before we started talking about this, but you didn't believe me. And now you are sure I'm okay just because I might have a crush on Harry?" Jade asked incredulously.

"I'm sure you are okay because I can see that happy light in your eyes that has been missing for years. You are in love with your life once again. I don't know if it has anything to do with you being infatuated with Harry or not, but I hope the light in your eyes stays that way," Evelyn said as she leaned forward to kiss Jade's forehead.

Jade teared up as she watched as her mother walk to the door, and then she stopped her, "Mom?"

"Yes, dear?" Evelyn asked as she turned to look at her.

Jade got off the bed and went to embrace her, "I'm glad you are my mother, flaws and all. I couldn't have asked for a better mom," Jade said, and it was Evelyn who teared up this time as she embraced Jade.

All these years, she had lived with just a sole purpose in mind. To not be like her mother. From the moment she agreed to marry Desmond, she had made up her mind to give her all to her husband and the children that would come along. All she wanted was to be a good mother, and she was glad that Jade believed she was. That was all the validation she needed.

Chapter 342 Contrasting Personalities

This chapter is dedicated to Viska01 and Mara_Heller. Thanks for the super gifts.

Sonia headed downstairs in search of Lucy after confirming that she wasn't in Tom's bedroom. Her steps faltered when she saw Lucy entering the house with

Desmond, who was holding his pair of sneakers in his hands, and they were both laughing at something.

From the sound of Lucy's laughter, Sonia could tell that it wasn't forced. She was actually enjoying the man's company, and this made Sonia smile involuntarily.

"There you are. I was looking everywhere for you," Sonia called out as she joined them.

"Forgive her. She would have joined you a long time ago. I held her back to keep me company," Desmond said before raising a foot for Sonia's inspection, "She got me this for my birthday," Desmond said with a proud smile, and Sonia gasped.

"You cheat! Why didn't you tell me you were getting him a gift? I would have gotten him one too. You wanted to win the girlfriend of the year award, didn't you?" Sonia said in an accusatory tone, and Desmond laughed.

"Don't worry. There is enough room in my heart for both of you. But right now, Lucy is occupying a bigger spot. You will need to get me a gift too in order to balance it out. I'm a very materialistic old man," Desmond said with a wide smile, while Lucy just kept grinning.

"I will see what I can do to correct this," Sonia promised, and Desmond nodded.

"Alright, I'll be waiting. I will leave you girls now. I need to join Eve in the bedroom. She won't fall asleep unless I'm there to cuddle her," Desmond said with a wink, leaving both girls staring after him speechlessly.

"I don't know about you, but I think I'm in love with this family," Sonia said as they watched him disappear.

Lucy smiled without saying a word. She couldn't believe that she actually felt better after listening to Desmond and talking with him. It must be because he was Tom's father, she mused.

"What did you both talk about for so long?" Sonia asked curiously as she and Lucy climbed up the stairs with no destination in mind.

"Different things. He told me about his wife, he talked about parenting, and about what happened between my mom and me. I cried, he consoled me, and after that, he just kept talking about funny stuff to cheer me," Lucy said, and Sonia smiled.

"I think he succeeded."

"Yes, he did," Lucy said with a nod, "So you are leaving with Bryan tomorrow?"

"Yeah. But if you want me to stay with you, I will," Sonia promised.

"Nah. That's not necessary. Besides, I'm sure you will be back soon. What about your apartment? Are you going to move or what?" Lucy asked curiously.

"Not immediately. But I might do that eventually," Sonia said as they stopped at the top of the stairs.

"Cool. So what about Jade? I thought you were going to be in her bedroom?"

"I was until mother Hank came in. You won't believe what I said to her when she knocked on Jade's door," Sonia said, and Lucy laughed when Sonia told her about it.

"That sassy mouth of yours is going to be your undoing. Do you remember that time in high school when we..." They both burst into a peal of laughter at the memory before she could finish.

That had been the good old days before they found out about Jamie's craziness. They had returned from school one hot summer afternoon, and all Sonia had wanted to do was lounge around the house in just her undies or, best-case scenario, in her birthday suit.

She had been disappointed when they got to Lucy's house and found her father's car parked outside. They got inside the house, and because it was awfully quiet, they assumed that he was probably resting in his bedroom, so they just headed straight to Lucy's bedroom.

Once they shut the door behind them, Sonia started speaking, "For fuck's sake, Lu! Why did your dad have to come back from work so early today when I was actually looking forward to lounging on his favorite couch naked while we watch an episode of Good luck Charlie or Wizards of Waverly place?" Sonia complained as she threw her school bag on the bed.

"Language, Sony! Watch it!" Lucy chided in her proper good girl fashion.

"What part of the speech am I watching? The for fuck's sake or the naked?" Sonia asked with a roll of her eyes.

"You're incorrigible," Lucy said with a shake of her head as she started to take off her clothes.

"That, I am!"

"So you were going to tell me about the party last night...." Lucy reminded her.

"Yeah, about that. I still don't get why you are so scared to sneak out. You could tell your parents that you're at my place or we are going to a friend's house for a groupie..."

"A groupie? You do know what a groupie means, don't you?" Lucy asked with a giggle.

"Well, a word could mean more than one thing. And in my lexicon for cool kids, groupies here mean group reading, smartie. I'm sure your parents won't mind if you just tell them we are going for a sleepover group reading. And then we can go to a party. It's not a big deal. These parties are always fun, trust me," Sonia said, her green eyes glittering.

"I'm sure they are fun, but I'm satisfied with the photos I get to see, and you always tell the stories so well without leaving out details that I begin to feel like I was present at the party. I'd rather be indoors than go to those unauthorized parties. Now enough with the diversion. How did it go last night? Everywhere I turned today, everyone was talking about the party at school. I even overheard someone say you were seen necking with Davies," Lucy said as she adjusted her glasses and sat in the center of her bed wearing just her undies as she watched Sonia, eager to get the gist.

"Well, yeah. We were caught making out," Sonia said with a coy smile.

"Really? Was it fun? How far did you go?" Lucy asked, looking at her owlishly.

"God, yes! It was so much more fun than I expected. He actually used his..."

"Sonia dear, I think I've heard more than enough now," Andrew called from behind the closed door of the mini-library, which was directly opposite Lucy's bedroom, announcing his presence to them.

As Sonia and Lucy laughed at the memory, Sonia shook her head, "I swear to you, that remains the most embarrassing moment of my life. I wished the ground would open up and swallow me at the moment. Especially when I was leaving, and I had to walk past your dad," Sonia said, and Lucy laughed harder.

"Remember how you kept trying to replay all you had said to pinpoint exactly what he could have heard?" Lucy asked, and Sonia raised a hand to her face, which was burning in embarrassment from the memory.

"We should probably go to bed now. It's almost one in the morning, and we are out here laughing like maniacs," Sonia said, and Lucy nodded.

"Yeah. We should. I have to be at the office tomorrow. Did I tell you that I'm accepting that offer from the foundation yet?" Lucy asked, and Sonia shook her head.

"No, you didn't. Why did you change your mind?" She asked with a concerned frown and listened as Lucy explained Tom's idea.

"Although, he said it was Harry who suggested it," Lucy said, and Sonia nodded.

"It makes sense. Speaking about Harry, I sent you the voice recording I made of my conversation with Jade earlier this morning and this night as well. That would fill you in on all we discussed in your absence," Sonia said with a wink.

"Is she aware that you recorded your private conversation with her?" Lucy asked with a disapproving frown, and Sonia rolled her eyes.

"Yes, she is, and she gave me permission to share with you too. Geez! You never change, do you?" Sonia asked with a shake of her head, and Lucy flashed her a smile.

"I do change. As a matter of fact, I've changed a great deal. The only thing that hasn't changed is my good manners," Lucy said as she headed for Tom's bedroom, "Goodnight, Sony. Got to sleep now. Some of us are not privileged to be our own bosses," she called with a wave.

"Yeah, please, by all means, sleep. Some of us are not privileged to fuck our boss because we are our own boss. Or maybe I can, with a vibrator. I just might get one. Need to know what it feels like to fuck my boss," Sonia called back as she also headed for Bryan's bedroom, and Lucy turned to look at her, appalled that Sonia had actually said that out loud where anyone else could have heard it.

Sonia blew her a kiss and giggled when she saw how furiously Lucy was blushing. She laughed harder when Lucy gave her the middle finger, "Some of us actually have the guts to say the words out loud, honey. Fuck you too, baby," Sonia said as she walked into the bedroom and quickly shut the door before Lucy could respond.

Inside the bedroom not far from theirs, Desmond and Evelyn laughed, "Sonia is a really wild one, isn't she?" Evelyn, who was snuggled against her husband's body, complained.

"I think she is perfect," Desmond said with a chuckle as he patted her back, thinking that it was great that they were going to have all the personalities in the Hank family, both the good and the bad and the terrible.

"Why did you want me to be the one to speak with Lucy?" Desmond asked curiously after a moment. He had been surprised that Lucy had stayed back on her own when he had actually been planning on asking her to take a walk with him.

"Because I thought she might be more comfortable with you. You know you have a way with words, and I seem to make her nervous," Evelyn explained.

"She's a sweet child," Desmond said, and Evelyn smiled.

"I know. I just keep wondering how those two ended up becoming best of friends with their contrasting personalities," Evelyn said with a shake of her head. Although she loved Sonia, she still felt like Sonia was a mischievous handful.

"The same way we've been married for over thirty-one years with our contrasting personalities," Desmond said as he kissed the center of her head, making her sigh contentedly.

"You've talked to Jade, I suppose? Or are you planning on doing that in the morning?" He asked, and she nodded.

"I talked with her. She's interested in Harry," Evelyn said, and Desmond sighed.

"I thought as much. That was a long time coming. Do you remember how she looked at him when he broke her fall that first time?" Desmond asked, and Evelyn smiled.

"Yeah. Yet you asked me not to interfere even when it was obvious that Harry liked her too," she reminded him.

"Yeah. I believe if they were meant to be, they would find their way to each other on their own. Besides, what kind of parents will we be to matchmake our daughter whose boyfriend is under our roof with her elder brother's best friend?" Desmond asked, and Evelyn shook her head.

"It doesn't matter now. She looks happy now, and that's all that matters. She said she's thinking about joining Tom's company," Evelyn said, and Desmond chuckled.

"Of course, she has to be closer to Harry," he said knowingly, and Evelyn laughed.

"I can't believe that I didn't even think of that."

"Let's hope Harry is wise enough to get her this time and not run off like he did the last time. In the meantime, we can relax. Our kids are all doing well, and they are in safe hands. You did such a great job raising them," Desmond said, and Evelyn looked up at him, her eyes gleaming with love and respect for her husband.

"I could never have done this without you. You promised I was never going to regret being your wife or the mother of your kids, and not once have I ever had a reason to regret it. Thank you," Evelyn said, and Desmond smiled at her as he kissed her softly, making her melt against him.

Alone in her bed and unable to sleep, Jade tried to process all the information she had gathered during the day from Tom, Bryan, and Sonia.

They all seemed to believe that Harry was interested in her, and taking a third person's view on the issue, she would agree with them.

Thinking back to their discussion during their first meeting, all the signs had been there. It was very possible that he had been interested in her. Had there, being the keyword, because somewhere in the most logical part of her brain, she was also wondering how possible it was for him to have consistently liked her for over four years without doing anything about it. It just didn't make sense.

Maybe he had liked her back then but had given up after realizing just how much her relationship meant to her and that she wasn't going to jeopardize it for him even though she thought he was pretty.

That made more sense. He HAD been interested in her—past tense.

If she were to go by what they were saying, and think of his feelings for her in the present tense, then the central question on her mind now would be, why was he holding back?

Not once had he made any attempt to reach her in the last four years or see her, even when she was sure he heard of Todd's death. She also knew that if Tom hadn't asked him for his help on her case, he still wouldn't have reached out to her by now, so how could they all think that he liked her? If he did, why wasn't he doing anything about it? What if she had gotten married or met someone else? Was it that he did not care? Or was he just one of those silly people who believed that what will be will be?

With a sigh, she turned over on her large bed, which was feeling particularly empty tonight. Funny that everyone else had someone in bed with them. Her parents were together, Tom and Lucy were in bed together, and so were Bryan and Sonia, but here she was alone. When was the last she was cuddled? She mused with a sigh as she wrapped both arms and legs around a pillow.

Her eyes fell on the bedside clock when it struck the hour. It was one in the morning, and she couldn't sleep. She was worried, but she couldn't seem to place a finger on what was bothering her even though she knew it concerned Harry.

If it weren't so late in the night, she probably would have given him a call. She still had to clear up that little lie before leaving if she didn't want it to fester and cause unnecessary problems. She was worried enough already about developing feelings for him and being scared that the feeling might not be entirely mutual.

Yes, the feeling might not be mutual. Because if he really liked her as everyone else seemed to believe, he wouldn't be so comfortable with being away from her.

She sighed as she turned again on her side. Yeah, she knew that her thoughts were going around in circles, but there was nothing she could do about it.

Unable to help it anymore, she sat up and picked up her phone from the nightstand. Even if she couldn't call him because he was likely asleep, she could at least send him a text. That way, her message would be the first thing he sees when he picks up his phone in the morning, and then he would likely give her a call.

What simple text could she send that wouldn't make her feel like she was bugging him at this time of the night? She needed to send a natural and light text that he wouldn't read too much meaning to

She tapped her right forefinger against the tip of her nose thoughtfully until her eyes lit up with an idea. Yes! That was it, she thought as she started composing the text.

Away from there, Harry, who had just stepped out of the shower with a sky blue towel wrapped around his waist, preparing to go to bed, glanced at his phone when it beeped with a message notification, and then his gaze moved to the wall clock.

Why was someone texting him by one in the morning? Who could be texting him? He wondered as he went to pick up his phone, which he had left beside his pillow.

He blinked in surprise when he saw that it was a WhatsApp text from 'Esquire', and he clicked on it without thinking twice.

"Hey! I'm sure you must be asleep by now. Congratulations on your promotion. I guess you went to celebrate on your own and forgot my invitation to dad's birthday. Here are some photos of what you missed," Jade had texted, and attached to it were pictures of the hors d'oeuvres, the cocktails and wines, the cake, the meal, and then a picture of everyone around the table, and then a goofy selfie photo of herself.

Harry felt his lips curve with a smile, and then he snapped out of it when he saw that she was now typing another message. He decided to respond to the first text, "Thanks. And I'm sorry I couldn't make it. My dad came visiting, so I had to spend time with him," he texted back as he sat on the bed.

Jade grinned as she read his response. He was awake, that was good. "Yeah, Tom mentioned it. I thought you would be asleep by now." Jade texted again.

"I was just about to go to bed. We spent a lot of time watching the news and talking that we didn't realize it was this late," Harry responded before remembering to ask, "What about you? Why are you awake? Did you just finish partying?"

Jade lay belly down on the bed with her elbows propped on both sides of her pillow as she texted back, "No. I just couldn't sleep."

Harry's brows pulled together in concern, "Why? Are you worried about the case? Were you able to talk to Candace?" He asked curiously.

Instead of responding, Jade decided to give him a call since she preferred to hear his voice than chat with him.

Harry was surprised to see her call, so he adjusted on his bed so that his back was resting on the headboard of the bed, with both legs on the bed now and the towel slightly loosened.

"Hey!" He said awkwardly when he received the call.

"I spoke with Candace. She agreed to go with me to meet Jero, but she wants to leave her son behind," Jade informed him, just wanting to talk to him about anything as long as he was on the line.

"Who is she leaving him with? Tom said your parents are going back tomorrow, and Lucy's parents too," Harry asked in concern, thinking that was probably what was keeping her awake.

"I'm sure Samantha and the others here will care for him. Besides, Tom and Lucy can check in on him daily. How hard can it be?" Jade asked lightly.

"I take it Tom agreed to this?"

"Yes, he did."

"Cool."

"So how is your dad?" Jade asked, changing the subject.

"He's fine. He's asleep now," Harry said as he tried to figure out what next to say, "I saw the pictures you sent. That looked more fun than Tom made me believe you guys were having," he said, and Jade laughed.

"Well, at first, it wasn't. But then we had to make it count for dad's sake. And I was looking forward to seeing you," Jade said, and Harry felt his heart skip a beat.

"Oh!" Wasn't that supposed to be a feminine reaction? Why did his heart keep acting funny?

Hearing the surprise in his voice, Jade almost smiled, and then she bit her lower lip when she remembered that she had to confess to him.

Deciding to go with the blunt and straightforward approach he usually used, to see his reaction, she blurted, "Harry, I know I kissed you last night."

This time Harry's stomach did a flip flop and he got off the bed. She remembered? When did she remember? What exactly did she remember? Why was she bringing it up now? If she remembered, then she had to have had a reason for kissing him, right?

There were a lot of questions he wanted to ask, but he was scared that he might not like some of the answers, and even if he ended up liking the answers, he might not accept them, so it was probably best for both their sakes that he dismisses it as nothing.

"Two nights ago," Harry said instead.

"What?" Jade asked in confusion.

"I mean, it was two nights ago. It's past one in the morning already," Harry said as he paced the bedroom, while Jade blinked back her surprise.

That was the last thing she had been expecting him to say. She just confessed to having kissed him, and this was the only thing he could say? She had at least expected him to ask her why or something, even if she had no intention of stating the exact reason. From his response, it seemed like the kiss didn't affect him as much as she had assumed after all.

"Oh, yeah. It was two nights ago. Why didn't you talk about it yesterday?" She asked curiously.

"I... I was embarrassed and ashamed of myself. I know that you were drunk, and I should have stopped you. I'm sorry for not stopping you. I was caught off guard," Harry explained, and even as the words left his mouth, he cursed himself for taking the cowardly way out.

Caught off guard? Yes, she had caught him off guard no doubt, but he had kissed her in return, hadn't he? What was there to be ashamed or embarrassed about? "I also remember that you kissed me back," Jade said, wanting to see how he would excuse that.

Harry shut his eyes, "That's more reason why I feel embarrassed. I don't know what came over me. I should have known better than that. You were drunk, and my action is inexcusable," Harry said, and Jade sighed.

Okay. Maybe she had learned something from kissing him while pretending to be drunk. She had learned that they had chemistry. And she knew that even if she tried to say she had done it of her own volition and not because she was under the influence of alcohol, Harry being Harry, would likely not believe her.

The only way to know for sure if he had avoided her and the topic because he was embarrassed for kissing a drunk lady or because the kiss had affected him more than he wanted to admit, was by kissing him for real. No alcohol. Just a passionate woman in her senses kissing a man she was sexually attracted to.

"You don't have to feel embarrassed. I'm the one who kissed you because I wanted to. I took advantage of you. I'm sorry," Jade apologized.

Although Harry heard what she said about kissing him because she wanted to, he didn't bother to ask her to elaborate on it. No, he didn't want to know about why she would want to kiss him.

"You were drunk. There is no need for you to apologize," Harry assured her dismissively and then feigned a yawn, "We should go to bed now. I have to be up early," Harry said awkwardly.

"Yeah. Sure. Take care of yourself. Goodnight," Jade said, knowing that he was running away. She intended to see just how much longer he could run, and how far his strength would carry him.

"You too. Try to get some sleep. And don't forget to let me know if you need my help," Harry said, and Jade smiled.

Of course. There was no way she was going to forget something like that.

Chapter 344 ACE

It was past two in the morning by the time Tom walked into his bedroom. His gaze moved to the bed, and he noticed that Lucy was already fast asleep. She had left the light on.

He quietly took off his shoes and put on his bedroom flip flop before walking as noiselessly as he could to the bathroom. He took off his clothes and dumped them in the laundry basket, and then stepped into the shower.

He tried to be as quiet as he could, and once he was done in the shower, he walked into the closet, lightly spritzed his body with his body spray, and put on a pair of clean boxers before turning off the light and joining her in bed.

The moment he raised the duvet and got under it, Lucy snuggled closer to his side of the bed, surprising him, "I thought you were not going to come to bed," she said sleepily.

"I thought you were asleep," Tom said as he adjusted to accommodate her so that she was lying on her side, facing him while he was lying on his back with her head resting on his left arm.

"I was," Lucy sighed contentedly.

"Sorry I woke you up," Tom said apologetically.

"I wanted to be awake when you got back. That's why I left the light on," She said as she sniffed his body and ran her hand over his bare torso.

"Sorry I took so long. Bryan refused to concede defeat," Tom said apologetically as he patted her back so that she would go back to sleep.

"It's fine. I'm glad you're here now," she said as she played with one of his nipples.

Tom tried to distract his body by thinking about anything else other than what she was doing. His nipples were very sensitive, and he could already feel a tent growing in his boxers. He wasn't going to touch her in any sexual way. For both her sake and his, he was going to resist every sexual urge or desire.

"Everybody is going back tomorrow. We will go back to being alone," Lucy said, and Tom looked down at her.

"I suppose you like that?"

She nodded, "Hm-hm. Although I will miss them, but yes, I like it. And I like your body too. It feels so cool and smells very nice too. I want to lick you," she said, and as though to prove it, she flicked her tongue over his skin, making Tom suck in a breath.

"You should sleep now," Tom suggested as he kissed her forehead and closed his eyes, willing himself to go to sleep. He wasn't sure he would be able to keep his hands to himself for much longer if she continued to touch him that way.

"I spoke with your dad earlier," Lucy said after a minute.

"You did? What did you both talk about?" Tom asked without opening his eyes, trying to relax his body.

"About my mom," Lucy said, choosing not to talk about what Desmond had said about his relationship with Evelyn. She didn't want to talk about anything marriage-

related that would remind them of the awkwardness and tension of their conversation the previous day.

"She called me insensitive," Lucy said flatly, and this time Tom opened his eyes.

"Why would she say something like that to you?" Tom asked, feeling a little pang of annoyance on her behalf. Thankfully the topic was enough to calm the tension between his legs.

"She was mad at me for telling Lucas about Rachel before talking to them first. She implied that I was trying to make him feel guilty, and then when I reacted and said it wasn't easy for me either, she said I've always been insensitive," Lucy said, and Tom pulled away from her and sat up.

Okay, now he was angry. He knew he shouldn't be mad since he had seen just how sorry Janet had felt, and he had even consoled her when she cried, but he couldn't help his annoyance. He was mad at her. How could she have said something that hurtful to Lucy? Lucy didn't deserve any of that, whether or not she meant it. That she was putting up a brave front for her family didn't mean they should also ignore her feelings.

Tom tried to calm down by reminding himself that they were his family, and sometimes misunderstandings like these were bound to happen. He couldn't let her know that he was upset, so he schooled his face to look neutral as he switched on the light so that he could look into her face.

Judging by how stiff his body had suddenly become, Lucy could tell that he was upset but was trying hard not to show it, "I'm okay now," she tried to assure him as she also sat up.

"I'm sorry she said that to you," Tom said as he reached out to pat the side of her head.

"At first, I was really upset. No, I was more than upset, actually. I was very angry with her. I was mad because, deep down, I've always blamed them for not paying enough attention to me. Not once did they notice that I was not fine. Not one of them noticed. But despite blaming them, I never once made them feel like it was their fault because I didn't want them to live with that guilt. I kept it all to myself. So I was mad that my own mother said those words to me. I didn't care whether or not she meant it. I was just mad that she, of all people, was the one who said it," Lucy confessed.

"I understand. You have every right to be mad," Tom said as he took both her hands in his.

Lucy took a deep breath, "Yeah. I was mad, but I don't think I'm mad anymore. Your dad talked to me, and then I felt better. Although it still hurts that my mother said that to me, but I'm not mad at her anymore. It's possible to feel hurt but not be mad, right?" Lucy asked, and Tom nodded as he raised her hands to his lips and kissed her palms.

"Yes. It's very possible. I don't know what my dad said to you, but I'm glad you are no longer mad. What can I do to make you feel better?" Tom asked as he held on to her hands, and Lucy smiled, feeling very lighthearted.

"I think you are like your dad in a lot of ways," she said without answering his question.

"Really? What makes you think so?" Tom asked curiously.

"You're both excellent listeners. You're both patient, thoughtful, caring, loving, wise..."

"Why do you sound like you're almost half as in love with my dad as you are with me?" Tom cut in, and Lucy giggled.

"Not almost," Lucy corrected with a grin and giggled when he scowled at her, "And you were right about the gift. He loved it. He even wore it right there," Lucy said with a proud smile.

"Who wouldn't love a gift coming from a beautiful lady such as you?" Tom asked, and a blush stained Lucy's cheeks while Tom watched her with an affectionately amused glance.

"Ace," Lucy said as she met his gaze, and Tom raised a questioning brow.

"What's that?"

"That's my nickname for you. I will call you Ace," Lucy said with a shy smile, and Tom chuckled.

"Ace," he repeated as though testing the sound of the word, "Why Ace?"

"Because you're an absolute genius when it comes to making me happy," Lucy said, and this time Tom looked at her with serious eyes.

"Are you sure I make you happy?"

Lucy nodded, "More than you can imagine," she assured him.

"It's good to hear that. I think I like it," Tom said as he leaned forward and kissed her forehead, "So are you going to call me Ace just when we are alone, or will you do

that in the presence of others?" He asked, knowing how much she was embarrassed by public displays of affection.

Knowing how much he liked public displays of affection, Lucy shrugged, "I won't call you that in official settings since you are my boss, but I can call you that in public as long as it is outside the work zone," Lucy said, and Tom nodded as his eyes fell on the wall clock which was hanging on the wall directly opposite the bed.

"That is fair enough. We need to sleep now, Jewel. It's almost three," Tom said as he turned off the light and pulled her to himself so that they were both lying on the bed in their former position.

"What about you? Do I make you happy?" Lucy asked curiously.

"Your existence in itself makes me happy," Tom said as he kissed her forehead, "Now sleep," he ordered softly, and Lucy smiled as she kissed his chest.

"Goodnight, Ace," she whispered softly.

Tom smiled, "Sweet dreams, Jewel."

Chapter 345 Missing

Long before Lucy became fully awake, she could sense something was wrong. Her body just didn't feel right, and she was feeling a kind of wetness between her thighs.

She moaned softly when she felt a slight discomfort in her lower abdomen and struggled between waking up and continuing to sleep since she was exhausted and had just barely fallen asleep.

She sat bolt upright when it suddenly occurred to her sleep muddled brain what was wrong. It was her menstruation. Her period started when she was lying next to Tom on the bed! She thought in alarm. And she knew without a doubt that the sheets were stained since she had somehow adjusted in her sleep and was lying on her back now.

Her period wasn't supposed to start until the next day, so why now? She had chosen to shop for her menstrual hygiene products the previous day to avoid such an embarrassment yet this still happened, she thought in distress.

Because of her sudden movement, Tom was jolted awake too, and he sat up immediately and switched on the light.

"What is the problem?" Tom asked with concern in his eyes as he looked at her, wondering if she had a nightmare like the other time.

Lucy looked at him, her face red with embarrassment. She didn't know how to explain the situation to him. Although it wasn't supposed to be a big deal since he was her boyfriend, it was a very big deal to her. Things like this still embarrassed her very much.

She knew that she was stained already, but how was she going to check to see how stained the sheet was when he was watching her?

Seeing the discomfort in her eyes, Tom frowned slightly, "Are you okay?"

She shook her head, "I think I might have stained the sheets," she said in a small voice without meeting his gaze, and Tom looked at her in confusion for only a moment before what she was talking about dawned on him.

"Oh!" He exclaimed softly, "It started this morning?" Tom asked, and Lucy's ears burned with embarrassment as she gave him a nod. She wasn't used to talking to the opposite sex about something like this.

Seeing how embarrassed she looked, Tom shook his head as he raised the duvet, making Lucy's face flush a deeper shade of red when she saw a red spot on the sheet between them.

"It's barely noticeable. Do you have the things you need to clean up?" Tom asked as he got off the bed, acting like it was every day he woke up with menstrual stains on his sheets.

"Yes," Lucy said without getting off the bed, even though she knew that the longer she sat there, the deeper the stains she was going to leave on the mattress. She just couldn't bring herself to stand up.

"Alright, go and clean up. I will take care of the sheets," Tom said, but Lucy remained there looking at him uncertainly, and mentally willing him to excuse her.

"Go on," Tom urged her as he glanced at the wall clock. It was almost 6 AM already. They had barely slept for three hours. By the time they would be done cleaning up, it will be time to leave for work.

"Are you having cramps? Do you need me to get you anything? Perhaps a hot water bottle or something? I think should have one in the house," Tom said, and Lucy shook her head.

Knowing that she was probably feeling too embarrassed to stand up because of the stain on her pajamas, he walked over to her side of the bed and placed his arm around her shoulders, gently helping her to her feet.

"There is no need to feel embarrassed. You won't be the first lady I've seen with..." Tom stopped talking when Lucy gave him a sharp look, and he chuckled as he led her to the bathroom.

"I wasn't referring to other ladies. I was talking about my mom and Jade. The first time Jade got hers, our parents weren't home, so I had to do the honors of getting her what she needed and telling her what to do. I was just eighteen then. Trust me, you don't want to know the magnitude of emotional trauma that caused me," Tom said jokingly, and Lucy smiled as she resisted the urge to turn back and see just how badly the stains on the sheets were.

"Take all the time you need... And let me know if you need me to tell you what to do too," he said with a wink, eliciting a shy smile from her this time, and then he kissed the side of her temple before walking away.

Once inside the bathroom, Lucy shut her eyes in embarrassment. Why did it have to come now? Her cycle was usually thirty days, and this was just the twenty-ninth day, she mused as she opened her eyes and went about cleaning up.

When she came out of the bathroom wrapped in a towel, she noticed that Tom had taken off the sheets, pillow case, and duvet and from the looks of him, he had been trying to get the stain off the mattress.

"I'm sorry," Lucy said apologetically, and Tom turned to look at her.

"Yes. I think you should be sorry for being embarrassed about something as natural as this in front of your boyfriend," Tom said lightly, even though he knew that wasn't what she was apologizing for.

"I will wash them," Lucy offered, and this time Tom glared at her.

"I can take care of it. Get dressed for work," Tom said, and without waiting for her to protest, he walked out of the bedroom with the stained sheets, more to give her the privacy he knew she needed to dress up than to actually take care of the sheets.

By the time he returned to the bedroom after placing the stained sheets in the washing machine, she was standing in front of the mirror, struggling to button up the back buttons of the sleeveless brown top she was wearing.

Without saying a word, he went to stand behind her and packed her hair to one side as he helped her button up the top. Once he was done, he kissed the back of her neck, sending tingles down her spine before he stepped away.

"Sorry. I couldn't resist," Tom said with an unapologetic smile.

She met his gaze in the mirror, "Thank you," she said in a hoarse voice and cleared her throat before adding, "For that and this," Lucy said, and Tom's lips twitched in amusement.

"By 'that' I suppose you mean for helping with your button, and by 'this' I guess it's for being unable to resist kissing your neck. You don't have to thank me for either of those. The pleasure is all mine," Tom said with a playful smile, and Lucy smiled back.

This man was just too easy to love, she mused.

"Are you sure you're not having cramps?" Tom asked, watching her with concerned eyes.

"I'm feeling just a little discomfort, but I'm fine," she assured him.

"Okay. Are you wearing your hair down today?" He asked when he noticed she was making no move to pack it up as usual, and she nodded.

"Cool. I should get ready so I don't make you get to work late," Tom said before walking away from her to prepare for work.

Forty-five minutes later, they both stood in front of the dressing mirror, dressed for work.

While Tom was wearing a black turtle-neck in his gray suit and a pair of black Italian leather shoes, Lucy was dressed in a brown sleeveless high neck knit top, which she tucked into a pair of navy blue dress pants. On her feet was a pair of white pointy-toe pumps, which matched her blazer as her handbag matched her top.

"You are always beautiful," Tom said, and Lucy smiled self-consciously as she smoothed her hair. Although she had let down her hair, her glasses were still in place.

"Thanks. You look good too," she said, and Tom smiled as he continued to admire her outfit. He loved her taste in clothes, and he couldn't wait to go shopping with her and watch her try out different outfits.

He wasn't usually one who liked to waste his time on things like that, but recently he had discovered that there were a lot of things he liked to waste his time on where Lucy was concerned.

His eyes fell on the cheap pair of diamond studs she was wearing, but he didn't comment on it. He was still walking on eggshells around her when it came to buying her expensive stuff since he didn't know just how much she was willing to let him do

for her yet. He wanted to do a lot for her, but at the same time, he didn't want to offend her.

For someone who had expressed so much happiness and excitement at the thought of her boyfriend being very wealthy, she was yet to demand anything or show any materialistic tendencies.

"Since you are ready, we can leave now," Tom suggested, and she nodded as she stepped away from the dressing table, and they walked out of the bedroom together.

"I think everyone is still sleeping. Are we going to leave without saying goodbye to them?" Lucy asked in a low voice as they walked down the silent passageway.

"We can't wake them up just to say goodbye, and we definitely can't wait for them to wake up before going to the office," Tom said, and Lucy silently agreed.

Besides, she was tired of saying goodbye already. Two days ago they had said goodbye to Lucas, and then they had done that to her parents the previous evening. She would prefer to skip this one. She knew Sonia wouldn't mind.

Once they got to the car and were seated, Lucy turned to him, "I will give the SCHF lady a call this morning once I've settled in," Lucy said, and Tom nodded in agreement.

"Yeah, you do that. I will meet with them during lunch break to present my offer to them," Tom said, and Lucy felt a pang of disappointment at the thought that he wouldn't be available to have lunch with her as usual.

Following that, the car was silent for a short while until Tom remembered that he had to tell her about Jamal, "The kid will be staying back after Jade leaves with his mom," Tom said, and Lucy looked at him in confusion.

"Jamal?" She asked, and when Tom nodded she asked, "Why?"

Tom quickly gave her a recap of everything Jade had told him, and then she sighed, "Poor kid. Everyone seems to be having some sort of drama in their life."

Before Tom could respond to that, Lucy's phone started ringing, and she took it out of her handbag to see that it was a call from her dad.

Seeing the call, she could tell that her father was calling because her mother was still feeling pretty awkward over what had transpired between them. That and the fact that she was probably feeling ill since she hated to travel by air, "Hey, dad! Good morning!"

"Good morning, princess. How are you?"

"I'm okay. How is mom feeling? When did you guys get home?"

Andrew hesitated for a bit, and Lucy noticed, "She is okay. We arrived in the early hours of the morning, but we didn't want to disturb your sleep by calling then. I suppose you are on your way to work now?"

"Yes, I am. What about Lucas? How is he doing?" Lucy asked curiously since she could hear the worry in her father's voice, which he was trying to hide.

Andrew was silent for a moment as though contemplating whether or not to say something, and then he sighed, "We don't know, Lu. He wasn't home when we got here, and we just got back from his apartment. He's not there either. His phone is off," Andrew said, and Lucy felt her stomach knot with fear.

Perhaps her mother had been right. She shouldn't have told Lucas about it when he was alone. "What about his car?" Lucy asked, trying to come up with a number of places he could have gone to.

Hearing the sudden worry in her tone, Tom turned to spare a glance, sensing that something was wrong.

"His car is parked here, and none of the neighbors saw him leave the house. Although it looks like someone broke into the house through the kitchen window, I don't know if it was Lucas..."

"What about Rachel. Maybe we should call her and find out if she has seen him?" Lucy cut in.

"Yeah, I planned to do so after speaking with you. Don't worry. He might be distraught, but I'm sure he won't do anything foolish to himself," Andrew assured Lucy before hanging up.

"What is the problem?" Tom asked with concern, and Lucy sighed.

"It's Lucas. He is nowhere to be found," Lucy said, unable to help the pang of guilt in her chest that was beginning to make her stomach churn.

"His absence has nothing to do with you. Don't blame yourself for it. He probably just needs to get away for a while. I'm sure he will call when he is in a good state of mind. Don't let it bother you too much," Tom said as he reached over to squeeze her hands softly.

Lucy took a deep breath to calm herself, as she kept telling herself that it wasn't her fault. She did what she believed was best for him at that moment, and she

trusted Lucas enough to not do anything stupid to himself because of something that wasn't his fault.

Chapter 346 New Friendship

After the phone call with Lucy, Andrew sighed as he turned to Janet who was sitting with her head slumped forward and her face buried in her hands.

She raised her head to look at her husband when we noticed that he was done with the phonecall, "How is she doing?" She asked, sounding exhausted.

"She is worried about Lucas. She thinks we should speak with Rachel to find out where he is," Andrew said, and he watched as the annoyance crept into Janet's eyes at the mention of Rachel's name.

"You will have to call her yourself, because I might not be able to hold back from saying something to her," she said, and her husband nodded in understanding.

He didn't want to talk to Rachel either, but they needed to know if she had seen Lucas, and when last she could have seen or heard from him, so he dialed her line.

Rachel who had barely managed to fall asleep after a long sleepless night, lifted her sleeping mask from her eyes as she reached for her phone when it started ringing.

She silently prayed it was Lucas calling, and not one of the vendors calling to express displeasure over the sudden postponement of her wedding like a lot of them had done the previous day. She had told everyone the wedding was postponed and not cancelled. She couldn't bring herself to say that out loud. She didn't want to believe it.

As far as she was concerned Lucas was very upset at the moment, but she knew that he loved her. Once he was calm, he would forgive her and then they would move on from this. She couldn't give up yet.

Her heart skipped a beat when she saw Andrew's name displayed on her phone's screen, and immediately she received the call, "Good morning, Andrew! I've been trying to reach you for the past three days. Lucas wants to call off our wedding," she complained, hoping that he was calling because he sympathized with her over the break-up and was going to help her settle things with Lucas.

Andrew's blood boiled when he heard her voice, but he reminded himself that he couldn't let her know that they were on to her yet, "When last did you see or hear from Lucas?" Andrew asked, ignoring her greeting.

"Lucas? oh, my God! Is he missing?" Rachel asked in alarm and quickly got off the bed when she heard the impatient worry in his tone.

"Have you seen or heard from him since yesterday?" Andrew asked, wanting to know if she was aware that Lucas was back.

If she wasn't, then he had no business talking with her when he wanted nothing more than to sit back and watch his wife and daughter hit her.

"Yes. I saw him yesterday. I was at the house, but..."

"You were at the house? At what time?" Andrew cut in.

"In the morning. I was there yesterday morning but he was very upset and he didn't want to speak to me. You won't believe he even made me go out through the kitchen window..." She let her words trail off when she realized what she had just admitted to.

Andrew frowned in confusion, "Lucas was the one who broke the kitchen window?" He asked, wondering why Lucas would make her leave through the kitchen window.

Rachel realized that she had forgotten about the broke window. She had thought he would get it fixed, but seeing as Andrew knew about it, it meant that he had left it to her to fix it. That was so unlike her Lucas.

"I'm sorry. I broke into the house through the kitchen window when Lucas refused to open the door. I'm going to fix it, I promise. Let's just focus on finding him first. I heard after I left him, he went to the hospital and quit his job, and..."

"Are you monitoring his movement?" Andrew asked coldly before she could finish, leaving her speechless, but only for a moment.

"No, I'm not. His boss called my dad, and that's how I heard about it. Where are you? Are you guys back? I can come over to the house immediately and then we can find him together if he is missing," Rachel suggested, but Andrew was done talking to her so he hung up the call without another word.

Now that Rachel was out of the question, Andrew let out a sigh as he faced Janet, "She doesn't know where he is..."

"Let's report to the police," Janet suggested.

"And tell them what? We can't just assume that he is missing. He probably just needed a break and went out," Andrew said reasonably.

"And what if he didn't? What if something has happened to him?" Janet snapped at her husband.

"What else do you think could have happened to him? Do you think he will hurt himself because of this? Or you think someone kidnapped him?" Andrew asked, and Janet took in a deep breath.

"I don't know. I just know that I want to see him. I want to know that he is fine. I just want to know that he is okay," Janet's voice hitched as she spoke, and Andrew went over to where she sat and placed his arm around her shoulders.

"Let's just trust him and wait a little."

Away from there, Lucy had a lot on her mind as she walked into the company building, after Tom dropped her off at the front and left to go in through his private elevator.

She caught sight of Harry standing by the reception desk and scolding the receptionist, and contemplated between saying Hello to him, or just pretending not to see him and going her way since she wasn't in the mood to talk.

Before she could make up her mind, Harry turned around and waved at her once he saw her, "Good morning, LuLu," he greeted with a pleasant smile, which she returned as she met him halfway.

Looking at him now, she remembered how she had spent some time listening to the voice note which Sonia had recorded of her conversation with Jade before she fell asleep, and her smile widened at the thought of a younger Harry flirting with a younger Jade.

"Good morning, CEO HaHa," Lucy joked when she got close enough to say it without others overhearing her. As much as she liked being friendly with him, they were still in the work zone.

"Where is your escort? Don't tell me he didn't come to work," He asked, looking behind her dramatically like he was searching for something and Lucy laughed.

"I don't know who you are talking about," Lucy said innocently.

"I'm talking about your stalker of a driver. Where is he?" Harry asked, and Lucy laughed again.

She thought it was strange that she wasn't even in the mood to talk, yet he was making her laugh this way, "I didn't have any need for him anymore since my boyfriend works here too and can easily drop me off," Lucy said, and Harry raised a

brow as he fell in step beside her, and by silent mutual agreement they headed for the elevator.

"You are too modest, Lucy. Your boyfriend doesn't just work here. He owns this place," Harry corrected.

"He still comes to work here. By the way, I didn't get a chance to properly congratulate you on your new title yesterday. Congrats," Lucy said said, and Harry grinned at her.

"Thanks. About that, my dad is around and he wants us to celebrate tonight. I was thinking maybe the four of us can go out together for dinner after work, unless of course you already have something planned for tonight," Harry rushed to add.

"I don't have any personal plans, but you will have to check with Tom," Lucy said, and Harry waved it off dismissively.

"All I need is for you to be available. As long as you agree to it, I know Tom will be available," he said with a grin, and Lucy giggled.

"Don't be so sure about that."

"Do you want me to prove it to you? Tom would come flying down like a superhero if you call for him. You have him completely wrapped around your fingers," Harry said with a shake of his head, and Lucy smiled.

"You guys can let me know whatever you decide," Lucy said as they stepped into the elevator, and Harry nodded as she pressed the button for her floor.

Neither of them said a word since there were three other people in the elevator, but once the elevator door opened and they stepped into the empty hallway, Harry looked at her.

"Tom told me about your brother's fiancée. How are you feeling?" Harry asked with concern.

Lucy looked at Harry, and she smiled involuntarily when she realized that he had been deliberately trying to make her laugh this whole time when he actually wanted to talk to her about this, "Can I snatch you from Tom?" She asked, and Harry sighed pathetically.

"Everyone wants to snatch me from Tom, yet he doesn't value me. Maybe I should just let myself be snatched," he said dryly, and Lucy laughed.

"I like you, Harry. You are cool," she said, and Harry's eyes lit up.

"You really think I'm cool?"

"I don't think so. I know so."

He beamed a happy smile at her, "Does that mean you won't mind becoming my friend? Not just being friendly because I'm Tom's best friend. Maybe I can call you and seek your opinion on stuff I may not want Tom or anyone else to know about?" Harry asked, and Lucy shrugged.

"I already consider you a friend."

"Great. Just so you know, I will need a lot of advise from you as you are going to be my first female friend," Harry said, and Lucy nodded.

"I might need some too, from time to time," She said, and Harry grinned as he held out a hand to her.

"To being friends," he said, and Lucy laughed softly at his enthusiasm as she shook his hand.

"So back to my question. How are you Lu?" He asked again.

"I'm trying my best to be okay. Tom told me about your suggestion," Lucy said, and Harry nodded.

"Why don't we talk for a moment in your office?" Harry suggested since they were still standing by the hallway, and gestured with his hand for her to lead the way.

Chapter 347 Game On

"Thanks," Harry said as Lucy gently placed a mug of steaming coffee in front of him before going to sit behind her desk.

"You are welcome," Lucy said with a small smile as she watched him raise the cup to his nose and sniff it before taking a sip.

Somehow this made her remember what Jade had said about Harry offering to share a mug of chocolate with her. That had sounded flirty even to her... She still couldn't believe that a person as intelligent as Jade could have missed that.

Well, maybe it made sense that Jade had missed it. People generally seemed to have more insight on issues that are not directly connected to them. How else could she explain how she had not known that she was the one Tom was interested in yet had tried to play cupid and hook him up with Anita? Thinking about it alone made her sigh inwardly. She had been pretty dumb.

"So, how did you feel about it? My suggestion, I mean," Harry said as he looked at her curiously. He still couldn't explain what it was about Lucy that he liked, but for some reason, he felt protective towards her. In a brotherly kind of way.

Lucy shrugged, "I don't think it's a bad idea. I know you would not have suggested it if you hadn't thought it through. And neither would Tom have agreed to it if he didn't think it was our best shot. I trust both your judgments on this," Lucy said, and Harry nodded.

"Of course, you should. We are your bosses, after all," Harry said with a teasing smile, and Lucy smiled back.

"Yeah. There is that too," she agreed and then cleared her throat as she looked at Harry with serious eyes.

"Can I ask you a question?" She asked, and Harry gave her a nod, wondering what she wanted to know as he watched her.

"I probably shouldn't be asking this, but I couldn't bring myself to ask Tom..." Lucy started as she adjusted her glasses on the bridge of her nose, and Harry raised a brow.

"How far did things go between Tom and Anita?" She asked, and Harry's brows pulled together in a confused frown.

She shook her head, "No. I'm not talking about physical intimacy. I mean, you are his best friend, so you would know if he was really into her or something..."

"Lucy, believe me, I've seen Tom with a couple of women in the past, and he doesn't follow any woman around like a lovesick puppy the way he does with you. And I've never seen him put any lady before the company either. He not only put you before the company, but he also put you before himself by revealing his identity the way he did. Tom adores you," Harry said, and Lucy sighed.

"I get what you mean. And yes, I know he loves me. I don't doubt it. I'm only asking because I'm trying to understand why Anita and her family are so confident to believe she stands a chance with him if they get me out of the way. I've been thinking long and hard about it, but it just doesn't make sense. Maybe Tom was crazy about her and did similar stuff to get her attention, so maybe she believes she still stands a chance with him," Lucy explained, and Harry nodded in understanding.

"I think I get your point now. However, I don't think their craziness has anything to do with Tom being into her. Their plan is probably to get you out of the way and

then find any means necessary to get Tom to be interested in her. That's how people like them work," Harry said, and Lucy shook her head.

"But it still doesn't make any sense. Even if I get out of the picture today, there is no guarantee that Tom will look her way, so why waste so much time and resources on me when they can channel that energy directly into trying to get Tom?" She asked, and Harry raised a brow before sipping from his coffee.

"You won't mind if she approaches Tom?"

"Am I supposed to mind? I love Tom, but this issue is between them, not me. I wasn't there in the beginning when they had their thing, whatever it was, and I don't particularly appreciate how I've been dragged into it this way either. Maybe she needs closure. I kind of wish Tom would just take it up with her directly and tell her off once and for all so that she would stop before things get out of hand."

"You got involved in their 'thing' when you approached Anita and tried to set them up together. If you hadn't done that, she possibly wouldn't be trying so hard to get you out of the picture. It's personal for her because she knows you," Harry pointed out.

"And I wouldn't have gotten personally involved with her if Tom hadn't lied to..." Lucy let the rest of her words trail off in a sigh. She wasn't going to blame Tom for it.

Yes, he had deceived her, but that was in the past now, and they were past that. This wasn't the time to pass blame. It was time to get solutions. She needed to keep reminding herself of this.

"Don't worry about it. We are handling it. Besides, maybe now that Tom has revealed his identity, she would approach him freely without pretense, and he would reject her once and for all," Harry said confidently, and Lucy nodded.

"I hope so," Lucy said, and Harry nodded as he watched her from the rim of his mug.

"Well, I'm sure we will find out today since we will be leaving for I-Global airlines soon. I will keep an eye on them to make sure she doesn't force herself on him, don't worry," Harry said, flashing her a grin.

"I'm sure you will," Lucy said as she eyed him with interest, "Your girlfriend must be one lucky girl," Lucy said, changing the subject even though she was aware that he didn't have a girlfriend.

"Girlfriend? Tom told you I have a girlfriend?" Harry asked in confusion.

"No, he didn't. I just assumed you have one. Don't you?" Lucy asked, and Harry looked at her for a second before shaking his head.

"I don't. You know, usually, when ladies ask me questions like this, they are often interested in me. I'm beginning to feel that maybe you want me instead of Tom, am I right?" Harry asked, blinking at her in a way that made her giggle.

I'm not, but I know someone who is, Lucy thought in amusement, "Maybe I am. Who knows? I just might be polygamous in nature and I never realized it till now," Lucy said, batting her lashes at him, and Harry chuckled.

"About the question I asked you last..." He paused when his phone started to ring, "Excuse me," Harry said politely as he took out his phone from his pocket and received the call.

"Yes?" Harry asked and listened for a moment before glancing at his wristwatch, "Oh, yes! I will be there. Thanks," Harry said and hung up the call.

"Sorry, I have to leave now. I need to take care of a couple of things before joining the HR team downstairs to interview the shortlisted candidates and pick out the most suitable for the position of Tom's assistant. Would you like to sit in for the interview?" He asked Lucy, who looked surprised

"Today? So early? But we only just decided that he needed an assistant yesterday," Lucy pointed out.

Harry said nothing until he finished drinking the remaining coffee in his mug, "When it comes to business, we work fast. And there is a lot that needs to be done, so an assistant is needed. Next week is the company's anniversary, and I-Global airline will also be officially opened."

"Oh? I wasn't aware of that," Lucy said, wondering why she hadn't heard anything of the anniversary.

"That's because Tom was too busy chasing you to remember that, and I only just reminded him of it yesterday before the board meeting. I think he probably couldn't mention it to you because of all that happened yesterday," Harry explained.

"Oh, I think you're right," Lucy said, remembering all that had happened the previous day.

"So this anniversary, how is it done here? Is it a very big deal?" Lucy asked curiously.

The only thing she knew about the anniversary was that they always gave them bonuses at that time of the year, but since it was her first time at the headquarters, she had no idea how it was celebrated here.

"Yeah. There are usually lots of activities during that week, ranging from sports competitions to award ceremonies and cocktail parties. Tom has never attended these functions in the past apart from the closed dinner parties with directors and shareholders, but this year he will be doing so," Harry said, and Lucy nodded.

"The circular will be sent out today informing all staff of the coming events. Don't worry about it. I'm handling the preparation so that Tom can give you all his attention," Harry said as he stood to leave.

"When you eventually have a girlfriend, I will make sure Tom handles the business so you can have time to date too," Lucy promised, and Harry chuckled.

"So, do you want to sit in and get a chance to choose who becomes his assistant?" Harry asked, and Lucy shook her head.

"Nah. We can't let our relationship get in the way of work. It will make everyone uncomfortable," Lucy said, and Harry looked at her for a moment as though he was contemplating something.

"You don't want to see the female that might be working closely with Tom?" Harry asked, and Lucy's ears perked up at that.

"Females?" She asked in alarm.

Harry chuckled, "For a moment there, you were acting too relaxed like you didn't care about Tom, so I wanted to ruffle your feathers a bit. Don't worry. Tom said they all have to be male, so I'm going to be there to pat them down myself if I have to, just to be sure we don't have any female CT. You can relax," he said with a wink, and Lucy glared at him as she relaxed.

"What do you mean, female CT anyway?"

Harry grinned, "CT stands for Crazy Tom. That is the term I've coined for anybody crazy enough to pretend to be what they're not to get somebody. So a female CT in this case is a female that might want to be disguised as a male to get close to him," Harry explained, and Lucy laughed softly.

"I see."

A knock sounded on the door, and Amy walked in once Lucy gave her the go-ahead. She looked slightly surprised when she saw Harry and clutched her bag tightly, "Good morning, Mr. Jonas, Director Perry," Amy greeted politely.

"You are late," Harry said sternly as he glanced at the wall clock.

"I...I am sorry," she said apologetically, and from the looks of her, Lucy could tell that she wasn't okay.

"She called to say she would be running late," Lucy said as she stood up, and Harry turned to look at her with disapproval.

"I don't like being lied to... Especially by people I consider my friends," he said, and Lucy looked at him apologetically.

"I'm sorry. Can you let it slide this once?" she asked, and Harry gave her a nod before walking away.

"I'm sorry," Amy said apologetically, feeling sorry that she had made Lucy look bad in front of Harry.

Lucy waved it off dismissively, "Don't be. You don't look fine. What is wrong?" She asked, and Amy teared up, unsure she wanted to share her problem with her boss.

"I need the day off. I know it's impromptu, but please, can I go home? I don't feel well," Amy pleaded, making Lucy go around the desk to meet her.

"What is the problem? Do you want to talk about it?" She asked as she offered Amy her handkerchief, but Amy shook her head.

"I'm not sure. I just want to be alone right now. So please, can I go home?" She asked, and Lucy gave her a nod.

"Sure. Just bring me all the documents you were supposed to submit today before you leave," Lucy said, and Amy gave her a nod.

"Thank you," Amy said before walking out of the office, leaving Lucy staring after her with concern.

Immediately Lucy remembered that she also had Lucas to be worried about, so she returned to her desk and picked up her phone as she tried to reach him again, but his line was still off, so she left him a text instead.

Once she was done, she fished inside her handbag and took out the card the ladies from the foundation had left the previous day, and she typed their number on her phone.

Lucy closed her eyes and took a deep breath, knowing that the moment she dialed their line and accepted their deal, there would be no going back.

She would have to play this game with Anita until either of them gives up. Hopefully, she will not only be ahead of Anita in this game, she will beat her to it.

"Game on," Lucy said as she dialed the line.

Chapter 348 Stranger

Lucas opened his eyes slowly and shut them almost immediately because of the bright light in the room that flooded his vision. He waited for some seconds before opening his eyes again. This time he opened them one at a time.

His gaze swept across the room slowly, and he wondered why the place felt so unfamiliar. He tried to sit up when he realized that he wasn't at home, but his movement was too sudden, and it made his head spin, so he fell back and shut his eyes.

His head was aching so much that he could have sworn that there were a group of drummers doing a live performance in his brain. But then again, that was what he deserved for consuming so much alcohol until he was knocked out by it.

The alcohol had been a temporary solution to help him forget about his problems and sleep. But now that he was awake, it felt pointless. He was feeling even more lost and anxious now than before. His heart kept beating fast even though it also felt empty. He didn't know what he was supposed to do.

Slowly he tried to sit up again, and he raised both hands to the back of his stiff neck. He had been knocked off on the couch, and as a result of how he had positioned his head, his neck was feeling stiff.

When he finally managed to sit, he reached for his phone, which was on top of an ashtray on the table beside him, and he scowled at the empty bottle of whiskey he had consumed the previous night.

As he took a closer look around, he decided that this had to be a hotel room. Although he couldn't remember exactly how he ended up here, he remembered going to a bar.

He had left the house because there were too many memories of Rachel there, and the more he thought about what Lucy and Sonia had said about her, the more tempted he was to go over to her place and do something crazy. Hence the last place he wanted to be right now was anywhere that reminded him of her.

He shook his head, not wanting to think about it, and he groaned when pain shot through his back. Damn alcohol! Lucas decided that getting drunk was stupid since he not only had to deal with the ache in his chest now, but he also had to deal with the physical pain in his head and general body discomfort.

Once he turned on his phone, several text message notifications came in, but he clicked on Lucy's text first.

'Lucas, cut the crap and give me a call, will you? I'm worried sick about you. You are not the only one in this, you know? CALL ME, or I'm going to drop everything I'm doing over here and find you!' he sighed as he read her text.

It wasn't fair that he was adding to her worries. He had done enough harm to her already by dating someone as despicable as Rachel. Making Lucy worry was the last thing he should be doing. With that thought, he dialed her line.

"Lucas! Where have you been? Are you okay?" Lucy asked in concern the moment she received the call, and Lucas winced because she was speaking loudly and his head was aching.

"Can you lower your voice a little? Please? My head aches," He added wearily.

"Oh, dear! What did you do? Are you fine? Where are you?" Lucy asked as quietly as she could.

"I'm sorry, Lu. I'm sorry for everything. And I'm also sorry I made you worry. I just wanted to have some time to myself," Lucas confessed apologetically.

"It's fine. What have you been up to? How are you feeling now? Where are you? Mom and dad are very worried," Lucy said as she took off her glasses and placed them on her desk.

"I will give them a call when I'm done speaking with you. I think I'm in a hotel. I will be here for some time," Lucas said, and Lucy frowned.

"You think?" Lucy asked, not missing the uncertainty she could hear in his tone.

Knowing that if he told her he didn't know exactly where he was, she would freak out, he decided not to, "I'm in a hotel."

"What is the name of the hotel? Why are you in a hotel?"

"I don't want to be home right now. Everything there reminds me of her. I've never considered myself a violent person, but I think I might explode if I see Ra..." Unable to call her name, Lucas sighed.

"I don't want to see her, so I'll rather avoid her," Lucas explained.

"Mom and dad are back home now. Please go home to them. That way, I will worry less about your well-being. If what you want is a change of environment, then come back here. You can just live with me," Lucy pleaded.

"You don't have to worry about me. I won't do anything stupid. What can I do anyway? Just let me stay here for some days more. I can't face any of you yet..."

"Why not? You didn't commit any crime. Lucas, I hope you don't blame yourself for any of it. If you are wise, you would know that none of this was your fault," Lucy pointed out, and Lucas sighed.

"We both know you wouldn't have had any of those horrible experiences if I wasn't dating her..."

"Says who? I'm sure he would have easily found another way to get to me if she wasn't in the picture. It has nothing to do with you."

"We don't know that for sure. The girl I almost got married to did that to you," Lucas said in a shaky voice.

"It doesn't matter. Let's just forget about it and put that behind us. Besides, if the table was turned, and you suffered hardship because of a guy I love, would you want me to behave the way you are doing right now? You are putting me in a difficult position?" Lucy said, and Lucas sighed.

"Lu, we all deal with things differently. Trust me when I say I need to be alone right now. If it's any consolation, I will leave my phone on so that you can reach me any time you want," Lucas pleaded, and then he almost jumped out of his skin when he heard a door open behind him.

"Let me call you back, Lu. I have to go now," Lucas said and quickly hung up when he heard footsteps heading towards him.

"Good morning, handsome! I see you are awake now," a beautiful bright-eyed brunette with tousled long curly hair greeted as she joined him, and Lucas followed her elegant movement with his eyes as she sat on the couch adjacent to his and stretched out her legs before crossing them at the ankle.

"Who are you?" Lucas asked as he took another look around the room, which he had assumed to be a hotel room.

She watched him for a moment without saying a word as she raised a cigarette to her lips which he hadn't noticed she was holding before.

She lit it and took a puff before speaking, "You don't have to concern yourself about who I am. You were drunk and knocked out at the bar. The barman was going to throw you out, so I had to step in. You can call me your savior," she said with an easy smile.

"And where is this place?" Lucas asked as he watched her, wondering why she looked so comfortable when her robe was almost slipping off her shoulder.

"This is where I live. You have never gotten this drunk before, have you?" She asked as she eyed him with interest while letting out a ring of smoke through her pouty lips.

"Why do you ask?" Lucas asked as he tried to stand up slowly.

"Because you don't just strike me like the type that makes it a habit to get drunk and knocked out that way. Also, I listened in on some parts of your phone call," she said, unashamed to admit that she had been eavesdropping on his conversation.

Before Lucas could respond to that, she stood up and returned in the direction she had come from, while Lucas wondered where she was going. A moment later, she returned with a bottle of water and aspirin, "Here. This should help you feel better," she said as she placed it on the table in front of him.

Lucas eyed the medicine and ignored it as he picked up the bottle of water, "Thanks," he said as he opened it and gulped down the content. He didn't stop drinking until the bottle was empty.

All the while the stranger continued to drag and puff her cigarette as she watched him, "You are very trusting, you know? I could have poisoned that water or something," she pointed out, and Lucas snorted.

"You brought a stranger into your home—a male stranger. Yet you talk about trust," Lucas pointed out.

"I'm kind but not that trusting or stupid, trust me. You can't do anything to me. I have my guards standing outside that door," she pointed at the door.

"It's good to know that. I'm thankful for your help. I should leave now," Lucas said as he headed for the door.

"I thought you told the person on the phone that you wanted to remain here for some time? Why the rush to leave?" She asked as Lucas walked past her, and he stopped to look at her, wondering just how much of their conversation she must have heard.

"That was until I realized I slept in a stranger's house," Lucas said and then winced at the throbbing ache he felt at the right side of his temple, extending to his eyes.

"You don't feel okay yet. Sit down, and I will order for breakfast. I should at least feed you before letting you leave," she said, and from her tone, it sounded like an order. She seemed like the type that liked to have her way. Unfortunately, he was done with ladies like her.

"Miss, I appreciate your help, but I don't need it, thanks," Lucas said as he turned to walk away.

"It won't hurt you to sit down, now will it?" She repeated when she noticed the annoyance that crossed his handsome face as he turned away from her, "Please," she added, and Lucas stopped.

Since he had nothing else to do with his time other than sulk, he sighed as he returned to his seat while she picked up the ashtray and flicked the cigarette ash into it before standing up.

"So, who was that on the phone with you?" She asked casually as she returned to the bedroom once again and returned with her phone while Lucas watched her.

She dialed a number, "Please serve us breakfast. Preferably something good for hangovers," she added before hanging up.

"Is this a hotel?" Lucas asked, still unsure of where he was.

"Yes. And like I said, this is where I live. At least for now. Who was she?"

"She who?" Lucas asked in confusion.

"The person you spoke with. I think you called her Lu," she asked as she looked at him through the haze of cigarette smoke.

"Why are you so curious to know?"

"I don't think it's a crime to want to know more about the stranger I brought into my home, is it?"

"My wife. She is my wife," Lucas lied, hoping she would drop the issue.

She hung her head to the side as she studied him, "That actually makes sense in a way... Only that it's not true."

"Why not?"

"Because you mentioned something about the person you almost got married to doing something to her. That means she's not your wife," she said with a smug smile.

"She could be an ex-wife I'm still in love with," Lucas pointed out, and she pursed her lips as she studied him.

"Tsk. Is there something you're good at? You're terrible with alcohol and you're such a terrible liar too, Lucas Perry," she said with a shake of her head, and Lucas raised a brow.

"You know my name?" He asked in alarm, making her giggle.

"You really do not remember anything about last night, do you? You should give up alcohol," she said with an amused smile.

"What happened last night?" Lucas asked, too curious to feel embarrassed.

"I walked up to you at the bar and hit on you, but you asked me to go fuck myself without bothering to spare me a glance, much to my chagrin, I tell you."

"I did?" Lucas asked, surprised. He couldn't remember anything he had done. Alcohol was really stupid, and he had no idea why he bothered with it.

"Not in those exact words. But that was the message I got. I was going to leave, but I noticed you were knocked out, and the barman was trying to get you to leave. You didn't seem like you wanted to go home, so I decided to bring you with me."

"If I was so knocked out, when did I mention my name to you?" Lucas asked, not sure he completely bought her story.

"I got that from your ID card. At least you were smart enough to take one with you. And you kept crying and apologizing to Lucy in your sleep. I thought maybe she was your wife or something, so I decided to check you out online. I put two and two together, and guess what I found?" She asked, and Lucas stared at her, completely lost.

"Lucas Perry. I checked you out on Instagram. You are a medical doctor, you have a beautiful fiancée called Rachel, and I saw your twin sister's pictures. She looked familiar, and then it clicked. Lucy Perry. Lucinda Perry. The lady who trended all over social media few days ago," she said with a wide smile and spread both hands with a flourish.

"If you knew all of this already, why did you keep insisting to know who I spoke with?"

She shrugged, "To see if you would lie or tell me the truth about who you are. And now I'm wondering why you lied."

"What do you want?" Lucas asked, wondering where she was headed with all this.

"Nothing," she assured him just as someone knocked on the door, "I think breakfast is ready."

Chapter 349 Interesting Woman

Inside his office, Tom tried to forget about anything else and focus on the documents in front of him.

Now that he had promoted Harry and had also revealed his identity, he couldn't leave the bulk of the job to Harry anymore. He needed to return to working just as hard as he had been doing before Lucy came into his life.

He had to admit that since he met Lucy, he had slacked much in his duties and had become quite irresponsible where the company was concerned. It was in no way Lucy's fault, since she had remained devoted and diligent to her work as always, he was the one who was distracted.

He was the one who even now still worrying about Lucy and wondering how she was doing while hoping she wasn't crying or too worried about Lucas when his attention should be focused on the documents in front of him since there was a lot he needed to do.

First, he had to leave for I-Global airlines in less than an hour with Harry, and after that, he would meet with the foundation ladies during lunch break, and then he also had a meeting with some directors.

Thinking about his meeting at I-Global airlines, he thought of Anita. He tried to imagine how he would be able to stand being with her in the same space when he was so disgusted by her right now.

Never in his life has he thought it was possible to be as angry or as irritated with a person as he was with Anita right now. Thinking of her name alone caused his blood to boil. As harsh as it sounded, he felt pure hatred for her.

He had sent her phone number and email address to Barry the previous day, and he hoped that Barry would be able to find something on her and her family soon. He wanted to be rid of them before the coming anniversary celebration.

He glanced up when his phone started ringing, and he immediately received the call when he saw it was from Lucy, "Tell me you are missing me," he said in a teasing tone, not wanting her to know that he had been very worried about her.

Lucy smiled, "Is that why you sent this package? So I will miss you?" She asked as she looked down at the bouquet of flowers and box of dark chocolates on her table. She didn't need anyone to tell her why he had sent dark chocolates.

Despite assuring him that she wasn't having cramps, he had sent the dark chocolates. Tom's thoughtful gestures always left her speechless.

"Well, there is that. And you can also think of it as me backtracking and following the proper procedure I should have followed from the beginning before asking you to be my girlfriend, instead of asking for Bryan's silly bad boy advice," Tom said and felt relieved when Lucy giggled. Her laughter didn't sound forced, so that had to mean she was okay.

"I don't think everything you did was Bryan's idea. Stop blaming him," Lucy chided.

"You know I try to give my best to everything I do. I gave my best to being badder than Bryan," Tom said jocularly, and Lucy laughed.

"Yeah, you did. You deserve an award," Lucy said dryly.

"Yeah, I do. And that's why, even though we are in a relationship already, I still want to make up for my errors. So I will go about being a good boyfriend the right way now, and then in the future, I will ask you to be my girlfriend the proper way," Tom said, and Lucy's face pulled into a silly smile.

"That's sweet, but I don't think there is any proper way to woo a lady. People are tailored differently, so I suppose what works for one person might not really work for another. Any way that works for a person is the right way. And even though I didn't like it, your style worked," Lucy pointed out.

"Maybe you are right. Still, I want to start afresh. So get ready to be swept off your feet," Tom said, and she giggled.

"Again? I've been swept off my feet already," Lucy said in amusement.

"Then get ready to be swept off your back or ass," he said, and Lucy laughed, "By the way, the flowers are meant to cheer you up. I hope it worked?"

"Yes, it did. Although I was going to call you before it was delivered to my office," Lucy said, remembering why she had wanted to call.

"Okay. What's up? Or were you just missing my voice?" Tom asked curiously.

"Lucas called. He said he's okay and just needs to be alone," Lucy said, and Tom relaxed.

"Do you believe him? Did he sound okay?"

"Kind of. I think he had too much to drink. He said he's staying in a hotel because he didn't want the house to remind him of Rachel," Lucy explained.

"I understand. Anyone in his shoes would want to be alone to sort out their thoughts too. Just let him be for the time being," Tom said, and Lucy nodded.

"Yeah, now that I know he's okay, I will let him be. Also, I've called to accept the offer," she added, not needing to spell out what he meant to her.

"That's good then. I will let you know after I meet with them. I should get back to work now. Think of how sweet I am when you enjoy the chocolates," Tom said, making her giggle.

"I will. I love you, Ace," Lucy said, and Tom smiled.

"Me too, Jewel."

"You too what?" Lucy asked with a frown before he could hang up.

"I love you too, Jewel," Tom said with a grin.

"Better. Have a lovely day," Lucy said with a silly smile, and Tom chuckled as he hung up.

His phone started to ring almost immediately, and he quickly received the call when he saw that it was from Barry.

"Good morning, Bar," Tom greeted, hoping he had found something helpful.

"Good morning, bro. I hope it's not too early to call?" Barry asked as he played with a pen while staring at his computer screen.

"Not if it's important and related to the job," Tom said.

"Yeah, I thought so too. However, you will have to decide if this is important or not. I have been able to gain access into their phones and devices," Barry announced smugly.

"So soon?"

"I told you all I needed was a phone number and an email address linked to everyone you wanted me to spy on. Once the Anita lady carelessly clicked on a link I

sent to her phone and email, I gained access to her phone, and from there, I was able to get the..."

"Thanks, Bar. But I don't need the details of your profession. What did you find?" Tom interrupted impatiently.

"Yeah, about that. I came across something interesting. Rebekah Miller seems to be a very interesting woman," Barry said, sparking Tom's interest.

"Is she now?"

"There seems to be a lot more to the relationship between Rebekah Miller and her in-laws," he said, making Tom's ears perk up.

"More to their relationship?" He asked curiously since he had been finding a way to pull them all down together.

"Yes. First of all, from their phone and email records, it seems she has been having an affair with the CEO of Bateman Corp for years now. Long before her husband died, I tell you," Barry said, surprising Tom.

That wasn't what he had been looking for when he asked Barry to look into them, but if he could release such a scandal, that would throw them off balance for some time, and while they're trying to clear their name, he could launch his own attack against them, "Do you have solid evidence?"

"Sure. There are a couple of transaction receipts, he has some nude photos of her, and she also has some sexually explicit photos of them in bed together. There are texts too. But that's not the most interesting thing I found," Barry said, sounding more and more excited.

"What else?"

"She is also having an affair with her daughter's husband," Barry said, just when Tom thought he couldn't be surprised anymore.

"What? Her daughter's husband? She is having an affair with father and son?" He asked in disbelief.

"No. She is having an affair with her first daughter's husband and her second daughter's father-in-law," Barry explained.

"WOW!" Tom exclaimed, unable to say anything else. He glanced at the door when it opened, and Harry walked into his office. Harry, who had been about to speak, shut his mouth when he saw that Tom was holding his phone to his ear.

"She's something, isn't she? And wait for it, her husband didn't take his life because he lost his wealth as they claimed. I have reason to believe that Rebekah and Bateman are responsible for his death. The so-called business her husband invested in and lost all his money belongs to Bateman. I think they both planned to dupe him off his money when he first started suspecting her of cheating on him, and when her husband found out she was not just having an affair with Bateman but that he also owned the company he was tricked into investing in, they got rid of him before he could expose them. That is part of the reason she is still so wealthy despite the fact that her husband lost all he had," Barry finished.

By now, Tom's thoughts were all over the place. When he had asked Barry to look into the Millers, he had not expected to find something like this. All he had wanted was a way to take out the backbones of the Miller family, and that was Bateman Corp and the Washington family. This was even more useful as it would affect every one of them.

"I'm not done yet though. What I found was just so interesting that I couldn't keep it to myself, so I wanted to share it with you. I'm still browsing through their computers and phones. It's kind of slow because you insisted I do it myself and not assign it to anyone else. Once I'm done, I will send you everything you need on them," Barry promised Tom, who was still speechless.

"You do that. I will give you a call after I process all you've just told me," Tom said, and Barry chuckled as he hung up.

"Who was that?" Harry, who was now seated opposite him, asked curiously after seeing the disbelief on Tom's face some seconds ago.

"Barry," Tom said, thinking that this was going to be even more interesting than he had thought. Rebekah Miller had chosen the wrong enemy this time, and he was going to make her pay for her greed and insolence.

He might have to start by tearing their family apart and turning them against each other. That would be easier. Even Anita wouldn't want to be controlled by her mother anymore if she found out just how spiteful and irresponsible her mother was and how she had lied to them all.

The best way to deal with his enemies was to turn them against each other. That way, they would be too busy fighting themselves to think about him. It was perfect!

Chapter 350 Glioblastoma

"Good morning, everyone," Jade greeted with a yawn as she padded across the room to the dining where the others were gathered for breakfast.

"You still look so exhausted," Desmond observed as she took the seat next to him, "Don't tell me you didn't sleep well," he asked, concerned.

She had stayed up for quite some time after her phone call with Harry, thinking, plotting, and strategizing. "It took me a while to fall asleep. Where are Tom and Lucy?" She asked when she noticed that they were missing.

"They left for the office already. Why couldn't you fall asleep? Do you have insomnia?" Evelyn asked curiously.

"She probably had nightmares," Bryan said dryly, and Jade scowled at him.

"Doesn't seem like either of you have any plans of outgrowing your bickerings, do you?" Evelyn asked in amusement, and Jade raised a brow.

"Do you want us to?"

"Please don't. Pass it on to your kids too," Evelyn said, and Bryan exchanged a look with Jade.

"Change the subject now, else she's going to start asking us about marriage and kids," Bryan told Jade in a loud whisper, making them laugh.

"It's not a crime to want my kids to get married and have kids of their own, is it?" Evelyn asked defensively.

"Of course, it's not. We all have plans to settle down but at our own pace. We don't need you constantly breathing down our neck on the subject," Jade said, and Evelyn sighed.

"Very correct!" Bryan seconded.

"That's the only time you ever agree with your sister. When you want to join forces against me," Evelyn said with disapproval.

"Sonia, you are very quiet this morning. Are you okay?" Desmond asked, making everyone turn to look at her.

"Did Bryan do something to upset you?" Evelyn asked with concern.

"Why do you have to assume I did something to upset her?" Bryan asked with mild annoyance.

"Because you are always doing something wrong and can be very annoying too," Jade said, and Bryan glared at her, but before he could say another word, Desmond silenced them with a look.

"Other than a slight headache, I'm fine," Sonia assured Desmond.

"Oh, dear! Have you taken anything for it? I think I have some pain relief medication in my bag somewhere," Evelyn said, wanting to stand up.

"I already took something for it before coming down. You don't have to worry," Sonia rushed to assure her, and Evelyn relaxed.

"It must be stress. I doubt you've gotten enough rest since you got here. Hopefully, you'll get enough rest once we get to Sogal," Desmond said sympathetically, and Sonia gave him a weak smile.

"Eat up," Desmond said as he rose and transferred a chicken waffle sandwich from his plate to hers.

"Thank you," Sonia said and continued to eat quietly while listening to the conversations going on around the table.

"Why haven't I seen little Jamal this morning? Isn't he coming down for breakfast?" Evelyn asked after some time since she had reserved the seat beside her for him.

Jade cleared her throat, "I'm leaving with his mother today. We are leaving him behind, at least until we are done with the case, and it is safe for them to return to their home," Jade explained, and Evelyn frowned.

"Who is going to watch over him when you leave him here?"

"Samantha, Adolf, and the others can keep their eye on him, at least until Tom returns from work," Jade said reasonably.

Evelyn frowned, "Tom agreed to that?" She asked.

"Yes, he did. Oh! That reminds me, I need to ask Candace to make a list," Jade said as she quickly stood up and excused herself.

"The kid needs more attention than that. Can't we just take him with us?" Evelyn asked her husband with concern.

"No, we can't. We also have serious business to deal with. He should stay here. Tom and Lucy can look after the kid," Desmond insisted.

"But they're both busy, and I can..."

"There is no buts, love. If he was Tom's kid, would you want us to take him along with us? His mother wants him to stay here because it is safer here. I'm sure Tom will find a way to ensure the kid is fine," Desmond said confidently.

After breakfast, Bryan stayed behind to talk more with his parents while Sonia excused herself.

The moment she walked into the bedroom, she noticed that her phone's screen light was on, and she picked it up to check why. She sighed when she noticed that she had missed her editor's call.

Even though she probably shouldn't be angry, she was pissed at him at how easily he had bought the story about her riding on Bryan's coat-tail. She had expected a little more understanding from him than others since she had worked closely with him for a couple of years. She had expected that he at least would have given her the benefit of the doubt especially considering the fact that he had been the one who had suggested they hold a book signing event in Sogal because her relationship with Bryan would attract more fans to the event if they found out Bryan would be there.

When the phone started to ring again, she reluctantly picked received the call, "Good morning," she greeted coolly as she sat on the bed.

"I know I owe you an apology..."

"Let's not bother with that. Why are you calling?" She asked dismissively.

"Sonia, I'm sorry. I know I should have handled it better. I was upset when I..."

"I really don't care about that, James. If that's the only reason you called..."

"No! That's not the only reason I called," he rushed to stop her before she would hang up.

"About the book signing event..."

"I'm not doing that anymore," Sonia cut in before he could finish.

"But we have already started the plans..."

"Then are you ready to hold a book signing event without the author? Because I can assure you that I'm not going to show up."

The editor sighed. He knew he deserved this much, "Alright, I understand. I also wanted to find out when you can come down to sign the contract with the movie producer. He is ready to sign the contract immediately. Some other producers have also shown interest in some of your other stories and would like to discuss the details with you in person," her editor rushed to inform her, and Sonia paused.

Of course, she should have known that the scandal was going to give her this much publicity. "I will get back to you on that later," she said and hung up the call just as the door opened and Bryan walked in.

"How are you feeling now, babe?" He asked as he went to sit beside her.

"Not good. When are we leaving?" Sonia asked as she leaned into him.

"Within the next hour."

"You might have to leave without me. I need to fly down to Heden and meet with my editor. There's a contract he has been trying to seal with a movie producer for a while now. I need to get down there and sign it," Sonia explained.

"They will wait. They need you more now than you need them. Besides, there's no way I can let you go down there on your own when you're not feeling well. Let's get to Sogal first since my parents are coming with us, and we can't just cancel the trip. Once I've settled all I need to do there, we can all go down to Heden together since that's where my parents live. You will get to do your work and visit the home where I was raised at the same time," Bryan suggested as he kissed her forehead.

"Okay. That sounds like a good plan," Sonia said with a nod.

Away from there, Lucas raised a mug of coffee to his lips as he observed a uniformed lady lift plate after plate out of a food service trolley as she arranged their breakfast on the dining table.

She first placed a bowl containing some diced fresh fruits at the center of the table, and then she arranged the other plates around it.

Lucas eyed the table, wondering why they had prepared so much for a simple breakfast. There was egg McMuffin, sweet potato, fried egg tacos, crispy fried egg, scrambled egg, a bowl of oatmeal, milk, sugar, and different flavors.

Once the lady was done, she bowed politely before excusing them. By now, the strange lady was done with her cigarette, and she had dumped it in her ashtray.

"I hope you enjoy the meal," she said, gesturing for him to eat.

"Do you usually have such a lavish banquet for breakfast?" Lucas asked, and she shrugged.

"Not exactly. It's a recent development," she said as she rubbed her hands together. She was already itching to have another cigarette.

"What is your name?" Lucas asked, and her lips curved.

"Why? Don't tell me you don't eat with strangers, and so you have to know my name before you eat with me?" She asked with a teasing smile, and Lucas felt himself smile back involuntarily.

"Something like that."

She sighed, "As I said, you can call me Savior. There will be no need to know my name after now," she muttered the last part under her breath as she stood up.

"I need to wash my hands," she excused herself, and Lucas watched as she walked into the bedroom. He heard the sound of running water a moment later.

Once she returned, she smiled at him as she sat, "Why haven't you started eating yet? Scared I put something in the food?" She asked as she served some quantity of the oatmeal into a white china bowl and added milk, sugar, and what he suspected to be cinnamon flavor before adding some diced fruit.

"After you warned me about being too trusting, I figured I should be less trusting," Lucas said, and she giggled.

For some reason, Lucas found himself smiling as he watched her laugh. As annoying as she was, she was charming.

"You have no reason to fear. I mean you no harm. I'm just a bored young lady trying to find little excitement in the short time I have left," she said as she took a spoonful of oatmeal in her mouth and chewed softly.

The medical doctor in Lucas became activated, and concern crept into his eyes as he watched her with a frown, "Short time? Are you ill?"

"Yeah. It's terminal. Don't feel sorry for me. It's not a big deal. People die all the time. I like to believe that I've lived a good life thus far," she said flippantly as she continued to eat, "You should eat," she said when Lucas just stared at her.

"What's wrong with you? How long have you known about it?" Lucas asked, and she dropped her spoon with a sigh.

"Glioblastoma. I found out about it three weeks ago," she said with an indifferent shrug, but looking at her eyes, Lucas could tell that she was still shaken by the news even though she was trying to sound brave.

Lucas swallowed, "I'm sorry."

"Don't be," she said with a forced smile as she looked upward and blinked back the tears which had gathered in her eyes.

"How bad is it?"

"Eat. I doubt you ate before drinking last night. And please do not ask me any more questions about it," she said as she picked up her spoon and resumed eating.