

Wild Night 351

Chapter 351 Tracker

Harry whistled after Tom relayed everything Barry had just said to him, "That's what you get when you go sticking your nose in other people's business when you have a dirty business yourself," Harry said, and Tom nodded.

"Who knows? Maybe if things had worked between you and Anita, she would have tried to have an affair with me," Harry said, and Tom raised a brow.

"Well, she's having an affair with one daughter's husband, another daughter's father-in-law. Who knows? Maybe she's having an affair with the third daughter's brother-in-law. So it makes sense that she might have wanted to have an affair with your hot best friend," Harry said, and Tom laughed.

"Well, at least you're single, and she's single. Who knows? You both would probably have made a power couple, and you possibly would have fallen for her," Tom said with a chuckle when Harry scowled at him.

"Yeah, and together we would have duped you of your money and murdered you!" Harry said, and Tom shuddered.

"Don't joke with something like that," he scolded, making Harry laugh.

"But do you really think it's possible that she duped her own husband and killed him? It doesn't make sense, does it?" Tom asked, and Harry shrugged.

"It doesn't have to make sense. People do crazy things. And if there's one thing we have learned about that family thus far, it's the fact that they are all mentally unstable. I won't put it past her," Harry said, and Tom nodded.

"When did all of this happen, though?" Tom asked, and without waiting for Harry to respond, he picked up his phone and searched for Richard Miller on Google.

"He lost his wealth to a bad investment twelve years ago, and he died eight years ago. They were not divorced, just separated," Harry summarized as he too checked it out on his phone.

"Does that mean she has been involved with her daughter's father-in-law for over twelve years? That has got to be long before her daughter got married into that family, right? And no one has suspected a thing?" Tom asked in disbelief.

"What's even more surprising is how they could both have consistently had an affair for that long. It doesn't make any sense," Harry said with a shake of his head.

"Unless of course, it is because they have something on each other, and maybe either of them doesn't want to let go. I'll place my money on Rebekah. I bet she wants to remain relevant by clinging to Bateman," Tom suggested, and Harry nodded.

"That makes sense. And her son-in-law? Why get involved with her own daughter's husband?" Harry asked, and Tom shrugged.

"As you said, people do crazy things. If even normal people can do crazy things, what do you expect from crazy people like them?"

"If normal people do crazy things, then it is expected that crazy people should do normal things. That's the way it works in mathematics," Harry said with a grin, and Tom chuckled at the joke.

"All we have to do now is expose all of this and then fire Anita after we are done," Harry said with satisfaction.

"I thought you didn't want me to fire her? Weren't you the same person that said something about not mixing business with pleasure?" Tom reminded him dryly.

"That was until she started showing us just how demented she is. One of the qualifications to be a staff here is mental stability," Harry said, and Tom laughed.

"So, as Co-CEO, you agree that she is not fit to be a staff here?" Tom asked, and Harry nodded.

"Hundred percent. Let's fire her after exposing their family."

"What do you think about getting a popular television host to feature Rebekah and her daughters in a show and exposing it all to them while the world is watching? I would love to make their fall even more colorful."

"I think it's perfect. They should have a taste of their own medicine."

Seeing that she wasn't going to say anything until he did as she wanted, Lucas pulled away from the table, "Can I use your restroom?" He asked, and she nodded as she pointed him in the direction of the bedroom.

Lucas left, and once inside the bathroom, he reached for the mouthwash he had hoped to find there, and after rinsing out his mouth, he washed his face before returning to join her.

She said nothing and just ate quietly as she watched him eat. After they had eaten in silence for some time, she spoke again, "My doctor said I have less than a year, but the oncologist I consulted said it's less than six months," she said with a wry smile.

"I went to the hospital too late. You know, I've had this terrible headache for a long time, but I kept thinking it was just a migraine or probably a result of stress, so I just kept popping pill after pill until they stopped relieving the pain, and then I had no choice but to go see my doctor," she brushed off a tear that slid down her face, and she smiled at him instead.

"I'm sorry," Lucas said, not knowing what else he could say to her.

"Don't be. By the way, I lied to you about a couple of things. Or maybe it was not exactly a lie, but I withheld some parts of the truth. I actually approached you at the bar last night because I recognized you from the hospital. I went to the hospital yesterday to see my family doctor, and you walked past me in the hallway. You looked so miserable and dejected that for a moment, I thought you had just been given similar news about your health, but then I overheard some of the staff talking about how you just quit your job," she said, and Lucas frowned.

"Dr. Drew, is your family doctor?"

She nodded, "Yeah. But I've not been in the country for some time. I came back to be with my family when I learned that my time with them is limited," she added as though to explain why they had never run into each other.

"So you lied about checking my ID card and Instagram page then?" Lucas asked.

"No, I didn't. You looked familiar when I saw you at the bar, but I still had to check your ID card to confirm that it was you. And once I did, I became even more curious about you, especially as you kept calling your sister's name. And since I could barely fall asleep, I decided to look you up on Instagram," she explained.

"Keep eating," she urged him as she served a portion of scrambled egg on both plates.

"Are you always this bossy?" Lucas asked with mild dislike, and she flashed him an apologetic smile.

"Kind of. Sorry about that. It comes with my job. I have to be bossy to have people take me seriously and not just see me as a bimbo because I'm pretty," she said and dropped her spoon when her phone started ringing.

"Excuse me," she told him as she picked up her phone and smiled when she saw the name displayed on her screen.

"Amy..."

"How could you? I can't believe that you kept something like this away from me! We even played tennis together on Saturday. How could you have kept that from me?" Amy cried, and immediately she stood up and walked away from Lucas.

"What are you talking about?"

"Don't you dare pretend like you don't know what I'm talking about!" Amy snapped at her before breaking into a sob again.

She sighed, "How did you find out about it?" She asked in confusion since she was yet to break the news to anyone, and Lucas was the first person she was talking to about it.

"Were you hoping we wouldn't find out until it was too late?" Amy asked, feeling annoyed and heartbroken at the same time.

"No. That's not it, I promise. I was just waiting for the right time. I haven't been around for a long time, and I wasn't sure this was something I should just spring up on you all. I'm sorry," she said apologetically.

"Where are you? I want to see you right now."

"Don't worry about me. I'm at my apartment in the hotel, so seeing me is impossible. Besides, You should be at work right now."

"I took the day off. How do you expect me to focus at work when I just found out about something like this?"

"Don't worry about me. I just need some time to myself. How did you find out about this anyway?"

"You listed me as your next of kin, didn't you? Your doctor called on my way to the office to find out why you haven't been taking his calls and why you missed your last two appointments. I asked what the appointments were about, and he told me," Amy explained impatiently.

"Damn doctor can't keep his mouth shut. I hope you haven't told anyone else about it?"

"Not yet. But I will if you don't..."

"Take a chill pill. I will tell everyone soon, don't worry. Let's talk later. I don't want to keep the gentleman waiting for long. I will call you after he leaves..."

"What gentleman man?" Amy asked before she could hang up.

She sighed, "Your boss' twin brother."

"My boss? You mean Lucy?" Amy asked in confusion.

"Yes. Don't ask any more questions. I ran into him by coincidence. Let's talk later," she said as she hung up, and then once she turned, she saw Lucas standing by the door.

"What are you doing?" She asked with a frown.

"I thought you made it clear that it was perfectly normal to eavesdrop on people's phone conversations?" Lucas asked, and she smiled as she approached him.

"That's fair."

"Who was that on the phone?" Lucas asked, and she raised a brow as she brushed past him.

"If you paid attention to our conversation, you would know that she works with your sister."

"Yes, I got that much from your conversation. My question is, what is she to you? How are you both related? And who exactly are you?"

Before she could respond, a knock sounded on the door.

"I guess your bodyguards are here to check on you," Lucas said, and she rolled her eyes.

"I lied about that. There are no bodyguards. What do I need protection from when I'm dying?" She asked as she walked over to the door to see who was there since this was a separate apartment within the hotel premises.

Once she opened the door, she was startled to see Rachel. One look at her tousled hair, flushed face, and the robe slipping off her shoulder, Rachel looked past her into the room to where Lucas was standing, and before she could stop her, Rachel brushed past her into the apartment.

"So this is it? Did you break off our engagement because of this... this whore? You pretended like it was something I did or said that made you want to end things, yet you were cheating on me!" Rachel yelled at him, her eyes burning with anger.

Lucas looked at her speechlessly, trying to figure out how she could have possibly known he was here since he did not even know where he was himself.

He glanced at her phone which she was holding tightly, before looking at his phone which he had left on the dining table, "How long have you been tracking my phone?" Lucas asked in a very calm voice, ignoring her outburst.

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"That isn't the point right now, and don't you dare try to make this about me, you lying, cheating, ungrateful sleazeball!" Rachel yelled at Lucas angrily as she attacked him, but Lucas was too mad to mind his manners, so he pushed her away roughly, and she fell back.

"Hey, watch it!" The lady told Rachel calmly as she placed a hand on her back to steady her, and Rachel turned on her.

"You! I know you caused this! You have always wanted whatever I had, haven't you? You just had to throw yourself at him, didn't you? You knew he was my man, and you couldn't keep your filthy self away!" Rachel hissed angrily as she raised a hand to hit the lady, but she was quick to grab a fistful of Rachel's hair with one hand and grab her raised hand with the other.

"Make no mistake, Rachel, this isn't high school, and I won't tolerate your insolence anymore," she warned, her eyes sparkling with undisguised anger as she glanced at Lucas, who was looking at them both in confusion, "I take it you don't want to speak with her, or do you?" She asked even as Rachel cursed and yelled angrily as she tried to free herself.

Lucas shook his head, "I don't," Lucas said as he stepped forward and snatched Rachel's phone from her hand.

"Give it back!" She yelled as she tried to grab him, but the lady's grip on her hair tightened, keeping her in place.

"For both our sakes, I hope I'm wrong about you tracking my device," Lucas said with a dangerous glint in his eyes as he returned to the dining, making it clear that he was done with her.

"It's time to get out of here, Rachel. You are interrupting our breakfast, and nobody wants you here," she said as she dragged Rachel to the door by her hair.

As a result of the burning pain on her scalp and because she didn't want to hurt herself any more than was necessary, Rachel followed her to the door, "Try not to go where you're not needed anymore, and for the sake of your parents do not show

your face around me. I mean it!" She warned as she roughly pushed her out and shut the door in her face.

"Open the door, you disgusting slut!" Rachel yelled as she hit the door.

"How do you know Rachel?" Lucas asked the lady confused, when she turned to him, "No, hold on. Before you answer that, just who the hell are you?" Lucas asked, thinking this was becoming too much of a coincidence for him.

Neither of them paid attention to Rachel, who kept hitting the door and hurling insults at them as they looked at each other, "You need to calm down. I know all of this might seem suspicious to you and..."

"Answer my damn question, and quit telling me what to do!" Lucas snapped at her, and she raised both hands defensively as she went to sit opposite him.

"Fine. My name is Miley. Miley Garwood and I can assure you that I didn't lie to you about anything. I only left out the part that I may know your fiancée..."

"Ex-fiancée," Lucas corrected coldly, and she nodded.

"Yeah, if she wasn't your ex-fiancée, I doubt I'd have let you spend an extra second in this place the moment I realized you were connected to her. I'm still surprised about the coincidence of it all, so you can't blame me for..."

"What's your relationship with Rachel? Did you find out about my relationship with her before or after approaching me at the bar last night?" Lucas interrupted.

"As I said, I didn't lie to you. I saw you at the hospital, heard you quit your job and called off your wedding..."

"You didn't mention that you heard about the called-off wedding," Lucas interrupted.

"Because up until now, it wasn't necessary. I still wouldn't have mentioned it or told you about knowing Rachel had she not shown up," she said with a shrug.

Lucas eyed her for a moment, "Go on."

"Running into you at the bar was pure coincidence. It's not like I was following you or anything. I brought you back here with me because you were knocked out, and I didn't think you were completely a stranger to me since I had already run into you. I became curious about you and checked you out on Instagram, which was how I found out about your relationship with Rachel and got to know about your sister. I didn't approach you because of Rachel or your sister. I found out about them after

bringing you here," she said, and Lucas looked at her for a moment as though he was trying to see through her and determine whether or not she was telling the truth.

"How do you know Rachel? You talked about high school. We went to the same high school, and I don't remember you being a student there."x

Miley opened her mouth to respond but winced when Rachel kept yelling and hitting the door, "If I'm going to answer your questions, I should first take care of her," she said as she dialed a number on her phone.

"Please get rid of the nuisance outside my door and make sure she never shows her face around this premise anymore," she warned before hanging up.

"Sorry, give me a moment," she said as she walked into her bedroom. She returned a moment later with a prescription bottle and took out a pill from it, which she swallowed.

Lucas' eyes fell on the Vicodin bottle, "Is the pain that bad?"

"It is. Rachel was transferred to your school mid-session, wasn't she?" She asked, and Lucas gave her a nod.

"Yeah." Rachel had joined them in the middle of 10th grade, and he had been assigned to help her catch up on all she had missed since they were both taking the same classes. That was how their ill-fated relationship had started.

"We used to be classmates. Maybe friends even. I don't suppose she told you why she left her former school, did she?" Miley asked, doubting that he would have gotten involved with her if he knew.

"She said she was being bullied," Lucas said, and Miley cackled.

"She said that, didn't she? That sounds exactly like something someone like her would say, unless that she was the bully and not the other way around," Miley said, and Lucas frowned.

"Rachel?" Although he wasn't supposed to be surprised, but he couldn't help it. It seemed like he didn't know anything about the lady he had almost gotten married to.

"Yeah. She was the cheerleading captain back at our school and a typical Queen bee with many underlings. Thinking about it now, I think she probably has princess syndrome. Everything always had to be about her. She could never stand anyone wearing the same outfit as her, not even the cheerleading uniform. She never wanted to share anything with anyone either," Miley said, neither of them noticing that the place was silent now and Rachel had left.

That sounded a lot like Rachel. She was possessive of everything that belonged to her. He knew that much about her, "So why was she transferred?"

"Although she has always been a bully, we never had any issues. Our problems started when I coincidentally wore the same outfit as hers to her birthday party, and it got worse when the guy she liked chose me over her. Rachel being Rachel, couldn't stand it. And guess what she did? She tricked me into the chemistry lab and set the place ablaze," Miley said, and Lucas' eyes widened in disbelief.

"Fire? She set the lab on fire?" Lucas asked, and Miley smiled.

"That was her last attempt before the school finally reacted. I didn't want to bore you with the details of her threats, or how she pushed me down the stairs once and broke my arm, or how she tried to drown me..."

"She did all of that, and no one did anything until the fire incident?"

"Evidence. There was no evidence to prove it. My parents wanted to withdraw me from the school, but I wasn't willing to leave just because of her. I wanted to expose her. I wanted justice for myself and the others she had bullied, and I believed the only way I could achieve it was by remaining there not running away. It worked," she said with a smile.

"You could have died," Lucas said, thinking of how foolish and risky her plan had been.

"Probably. But my boyfriend and friends were discreetly looking out for me, ready to capture any evidence of her next attack. Once the evidence was submitted to the school authorities, she was expelled. Her parents pleaded with mine to not press charges because of her father's political ambition," she finished.

"Wow!" Lucas exclaimed as he stood, unable to believe that he had been in love with a lunatic and had almost married her. He almost laughed at himself when he remembered how he could have sworn that Rachel could never hurt a fly.

"I'm sorry..."

"Why? Because you just told me that I was engaged to a sociopath?"

"Yes. Because I have a feeling that hearing this would only end up making you feel more upset than happy. I wish I had nice things to say about her," Miley said, and Lucas waved her off.

"It's fine. I should leave now," Lucas said as he picked up both his phone and Rachel's phone. He needed to figure out just how she had been monitoring him and find out to what extent.

Miley gave him a nod, not seeing any reason to stop him from leaving anymore. Once Lucas got to the door, he stopped and looked back at her, "You didn't tell me who was on the phone with you earlier," Lucas reminded her.

"Her name is Amy. She's your twin sister's secretary. We grew up together."

"You grew up together but she's not your sister?" Lucas asked as he tried to remember the face of Lucy's secretary. He couldn't really remember her face, but he remembered that she had sounded smart.

"You could call her that, but we are not blood-related. She's our housekeeper's daughter," Miley explained.

"I see. Thanks for helping me last night," Lucas said with a bow before walking out.

He had enough issues to deal with already and the last thing he wanted was to get dragged into this whatever it was.

She was terminally ill and nothing good could come out of being friends with someone he knew would probably die soon.

He definitely didn't want to become friends with anyone remotely connected to Rachel either. They had bad history already and he didn't want any part in that.

Chapter 353 I Forgive You

Inside Lucy's office, she stared at her phone for a moment as she tried to make up her mind whether or not she should speak with her mother.

Every attempt to focus on work was futile because her thoughts kept drifting to her mother, and she knew that her mother wouldn't be completely okay until things were resolved between them.

Although she still wasn't over what her mother had said, what Desmond had said made sense to her. Her mother was only human and she was still trying to figure out parenting. If Sonia had been the one who threw a word like that at her in the middle of an argument, she would have been upset, but she would have forgiven Sonia. Her mother deserved that much.

It was time she related with her family as she related with everyone else. Maybe if she expressed her genuine emotions with them for once, then they would all stop tiptoeing around each other and be more expressive.

Even though she didn't want to compare her family to Tom's family since she knew that each family operated on different dynamics, and had their problems tailored to their dynamics, she loved Tom's family and how they understood each other. She wasn't sure her parents understood her, and she also was beginning to learn that maybe she didn't understand her parents either. She wanted her family to do better, and to achieve that she needed to let go of her resentments.

Without wasting another second thinking about it, she dialed her mom's line.

Janet, who was still pacing around the house thinking about where Lucas could have gone, received the call the moment she saw Lucy's name displayed on the phone.

"Lucy," her voice came out as a hoarse whisper, and she cleared it.

"What is wrong? Are you okay? Did something happen?" Lucy asked in concern when she heard the distress in her mother's voice.

"I thought your father told you that Lucas is missing?" Janet asked, surprised that Lucy was asking her such a question when she knew about the situation of things.

"Lucas hasn't called you yet? I spoke with him earlier, and he said he was going to give you both a call after our call. I thought he did so already, else I would have called...."

"He called you? Did he tell you where he is? His line is going through now?" Janet asked as Andrew who had just returned from walking down the block to see if he would learn anything new, rushed to stand beside her when he heard her question. Janet placed the phone on speaker so that he could hear Lucy.

"Yes, he returned my call. He said he wants to be alone for the time being, and he doesn't want to come home now because everything at home reminds him of her," Lucy explained.

"Do you think he is okay? Did he sound fine?" Andrew asked as he took the phone from Janet.

"You don't expect him to be okay, mom. He isn't okay. He had a headache, so he must have gotten drunk last night, but at least he had the sense not to take his car. He assured me that he wasn't going to do anything stupid, so you don't have to worry," Lucy said, and they both relaxed.

"Still, it would help if we knew where he was staying. At least that way, I can be very sure that he is fine," Janet said with a sigh.

"Don't worry, at least now that Lucy has heard from him, we can relax until we hear from him directly. And we can also try to reach him again after talking to Lucy," Andrew said, patting her back.

"What about you? How are you?" Janet asked when she remembered that she was yet to ask.

"I'm holding up," Lucy said and then cleared her throat, "But I would like us to address what you said last night," she added.

"Baby, I'm very sorry..."

"I'm not talking about an apology," Lucy interrupted. "I just want to know why you said that. I don't think that was something that you blurted out carelessly," Lucy said, and Janet glanced at her husband helplessly.

"Lu..."

"Stay out of this, dad! It has nothing to do with you... At least not yet. It's either you both want me to talk about this and get it out of my mind, or you'd rather we all ignore the elephant in the room," Lucy said testily.

"Fine. I'm sorry. You can go on," Andrew said apologetically.

"I didn't mean what I said. I don't even know where it came from," Janet said apologetically.

"I'm sorry, mom, but I don't believe you. I really wish I could believe you and take your word for it, but I can't. The choice of words you used didn't sound like a mistake. But that's okay," Lucy paused to take a deep breath while her parents stared at each other, wondering what was going through her mind.

"I wish I could take it back. I wish there were a way you could see into my heart and see that I really didn't mean it," Janet said weakly. She was exhausted both physically and emotionally, and she didn't know what else to say to convince Lucy that she really didn't mean it, so she let her husband lead her to the couch where they both sat while he held on to the phone.

"I called because I wanted to let you know that I am not insensitive. I don't care if there is a tiny part of you that thinks so, or maybe it came from your subconscious. I'm letting you know that I am not insensitive, and I've never been insensitive... Well, apart from what I said to Lucas immediately after he broke up with Rachel."

She continued, hardly pausing for breath, "As far as I'm concerned, I have been the most sensitive member of this family for way too long, and now I'm done carrying that burden. My feelings matter too. Because I care too much about all of you, I have tried to keep most of my fears and feelings to myself, so you don't feel guilty or get upset, but now I'm done doing that too."

"I love you both very much, but I realize that I've not loved myself enough, and I think it's time I started doing so. I'm not angry with either of you anymore. I have chosen to no longer be resentful of you both for not noticing when I started withdrawing and for not trying to find out if I was okay as I would have wanted you to do as my parents. Also, I will no longer silently blame you for not being there for me as my parents as I needed you to be either. You have both been perfect parents in your own way, and I'm grateful that I got you both. I understand now that you're humans and because you do not have this whole life and parenting thing figured out as I assumed, you are still prone to making mistakes. I forgive you for being yourselves, and I hope you can forgive me for silently resenting you all these years based on my own expectations and for whatever else I may have done that triggered you to speak to me in that manner." Once Lucy was done speaking, she let out a relieved sigh, and that was when she realized that she had been crying, and her face was wet with tears.

"Lucy, I'm sorry we hurt you without meaning to. We would have done whatever you wanted us to do as your parents if only you had told us. You always seemed so independent and self-sufficient even before the incident, and we didn't want to take that away from you because we believed it was your identity. Lucas was always more dependent and more open about his feelings. We wanted you to be yourself because we trusted you, not because we didn't care about you or notice the changes in you. When you stopped joining us in the living room for the soap operas, we noticed. We noticed, but we assumed you were outgrowing it, and we didn't want to bother you. When you started eating less, I asked if you were having boy trouble, and you said no, so I assumed you were just trying not to put on weight the way most teenage girls do. I always believed that we were the kind of parents you would come to if you needed help, and you wouldn't need to be coerced to tell us if something was wrong. Hence I didn't see the need to pressure you to talk. I'm sorry I assumed wrongly. It was my fault. I should have asked. I made so many assumptions, and I will always live with that regret knowing what it cost you, what it cost us. I should have made sure I found out what was wrong with you. I'm sorry I never realized this was how you felt. You just kept saying you were fine after everything, and I didn't want to force you to speak because I didn't want to trigger bad memories. I'm sorry I failed to be a good

mother," Janet pleaded amidst her own tears and covered her face in her hands, while Andrew just sat beside her with a sad look on his face and his hand draped around his wife's shoulder in comfort.

"You didn't fail me. Maybe I thought so at some point, but I don't think so anymore. You weren't perfect, but you were a good mother," Lucy assured her mother.

"I will do better, I promise," Janet said in a broken voice, and Andrew nodded.

"I'm sorry, princess. We will do better. We will pay more attention to you," Andrew said, and Lucy shook her head as she wiped her tears.

"You already do. I just wanted to get this off my chest because I've kept it in for so long. I love you both, and I wouldn't trade you for anything," Lucy assured them.

"We love you too, pumpkin. We really do, more than you can imagine," Janet said, feeling relieved that Lucy had expressed her feelings.

"Everything will be fine, mom. And don't worry, Lucas will be fine too," Lucy said confidently, wanting to move on from the subject.

"What about Tom and the others? How are they?" Janet asked curiously.

"Tom is okay. His parents should be on their way to Sogal by now with Bryan and Sonia," Lucy said and remembered that she was yet to speak with Sonia.

"I will give them a call after I hear from Lucas," Janet said, and Lucy nodded.

"I need to get back to work now. I love you both."

"We love you too. And give our regards to Tom," Andrew responded before hanging up.

Chapter 354 Serious Business

"You don't have to drive me around anymore. You're CEO now. I'm taking my own car. You should take yours too," Tom told Harry over the phone as he took his private elevator to his private parking lot.

"I'm not complaining. Besides, it's not practical. We are going to the same place, so it makes sense that we use the same car," Harry said as he left his office, they were ready to go to I-Global airlines for the last meeting before the official opening ceremony.

"You're beginning to make me feel you love my company so much, and you want to be in the same car with me by all means, even if it means you have to be my driver," Tom said in amusement, and Harry chuckled.

"Haven't I told you I'm in love with you?" Harry asked, and Tom's face scrunched up in disgust.

"Ew! I hope nobody heard that!" Tom said, and Harry chuckled.

"Since you don't want me to drive you, how about you return the favor and drive me for a change?" Harry asked as he walked into the elevator.

"You realize I'm going to be leaving to meet with those foundation ladies after the meeting at the airline?" Tom reminded him.

"Perfect! I want to come with you for that meeting," Harry offered, "And don't you dare say no. I have to be there. It was my idea," he reminded Tom.

"Whatever. Wait for me in front of the building now. If I get there before you, I'm leaving you," Tom warned as he hung up.

He got into his car before dialing Lucy's line after hanging up, "Hey, pretty!" He said once the call connected.

Lucy, who was trying to settle back to work after the phone call with her parents, smiled, "I take it you're calling because you're leaving the office?" She asked, believing he won't bother her during work hours unless it was necessary.

"Am I that predictable?"

"Being predictable isn't a bad thing. I like that I can guess what you're up to," Lucy assured him.

"Good response. That's not the only reason I called. How are you feeling? Do you need a belly rub?" Tom asked, and Lucy giggled.

"Like you're going to cancel your meeting to do that," she said in amusement.

"I guess I'm not so predictable then. I can postpone the meeting. Some things are a matter of urgency," Tom said, and she grinned again.

"Yeah, things like giving your girlfriend a belly rub. I'm sure you'll find a more diplomatic way of saying that to the shareholders and board of directors," Lucy said dryly.

"I'm sure they'll trust my judgment. The company needs me to be at my best all the time. And I can't be at my best if my Jewel isn't feeling well. Hence, I will need to

postpone the meeting and make her feel okay in order for me to be okay enough to attend to the company," Tom explained, and Lucy laughed.

"I love you, Ace," she said with a wide smile, and if he could see her eyes at the moment, he would have seen her heart in her eyes.

"I love you more. Since you don't need a belly rub, I should run along then. I'll be seeing Anita. Do you have any message you need me to deliver to her?" Tom asked, and Lucy giggled.

"I'm sure whatever you're likely going to tell her is enough for two. It will be your first meeting since you officially revealed your identity, so you both can't pretend not to know each other anymore. I'm curious to know how she would react to seeing you and how your conversation with her today plays out."

"I'm curious too. Don't worry. For your sake, I might just record our conversations so that you don't miss anything. Or would you rather I call you discreetly, so you listen in directly? I could even wear an airpod, and then you can tell me what you think as you listen," Tom suggested, and Lucy laughed softly, knowing that he actually meant it.

"I'm too busy right now to eavesdrop on your conversation with her. You can just tell me about it after work. By the way, has Harry told you about us having dinner with him after work?" Lucy asked, and Tom raised a brow.

"Dinner? When did you speak with him?" Tom asked curiously.

"Earlier this morning."

He had been talking with Harry earlier before he was called away to attend to something, and from there, he had gone to supervise the job interview, so that was why he probably had not mentioned it yet, "No, he hasn't told me yet, but I'm sure he will mention it later. What did you tell him? Are you up for it?" Tom asked, and Lucy smiled as she remembered what Harry had said about Tom being wrapped around her finger.

"I said it depends on you, and I'll wait for whatever you decide," Lucy said.

"You tell me what you want. Are you up for it? If you don't want to go, you don't have to," Tom assured her.

"And then what? Will you go without me? Or you will turn down your best friend's invitation to stay back with me?" Lucy asked curiously.

"I could go while you stay back home and rest. You will finally have time to yourself the way you love," Tom said, and Lucy frowned slightly.

She would have jumped at this three weeks ago, but the thought of Tom being out while she was inside didn't seem like fun. She knew she was just going to be waiting for him to return, and she would be bored, "Let's go together," she suggested, and Tom smiled.

"Okay then..."

"Harry seems to believe you'll just go along with his plan because I'm okay with it. So you can play a little hard-to-get game with him before giving in," Lucy suggested, and Tom chuckled.

"Where have you been all my life?"

"At the company's branch in Heden. You refused to promote me early enough," Lucy said jocularly, and Tom laughed.

"I love you, Jewel. I need to run now. I'll let you know when I'm done."

"I love you too, and don't call me again unless it's the close of work. As sweet as these calls are, I'm distracted..."

"I'm going to call you. And you better pick up when I do. Bye," Tom said and hung up before she could protest.

He started the car automatically and drove off immediately, knowing that he would probably see steam rising from Harry's ears by now. He had kept the guy waiting after warning him not to keep him waiting.

When he got to the front of the company, he chuckled when he saw Harry glaring at him angrily, "Sorry. I was on the phone with my crown Jewel," Tom said once Harry got into the car and shut the door.

Harry, who had been about to snap at him, scowled instead, "For Christ's sake, Tom! She's in the same building as you. You spent the night together on the same bed and left the house together this morning. Couldn't it wait?"

Tom chuckled as he drove off, "It couldn't. Don't worry. You'll understand me better when you finally find someone you love and go into a relationship," Tom promised.

"You're lucky I love Lucy. Else I would have thrown you out of the car," Harry muttered.

"It's my car, remember?"

"I've sat behind that wheel more times than you have, remember? It's not about who owns it. It's about the person who handles it. Ask Richard Miller," he said with a dark smile, knowing how much Tom hated such jokes, and as expected, Tom looked at him distastefully.

"Sometimes, when I listen to your dark humor, I wonder how you're my best friend. How can you joke with something like that?" Tom said with a shake of his head, and Harry laughed.

"How can I not joke with it? Feel free to admit that it's funny and true silently," Harry said before, returning to his serious mode.

"So about the interview earlier. We may have gotten someone. He will be resuming next Monday, so until then, I'll try to organize everything to hand over to him," Harry said, and Tom nodded.

"I suppose you want to use the time to run a background check on him?"

"Sure. If he's working that closely with you, we have to be sure he's someone trustworthy," Harry said, and Tom smiled in gratitude.

"Thank you. Feel free to let me know when I can repay anyone of the many favors you've done me."

"In friendship, there is no repayment of favors. But I'll appreciate it if you have dinner with me and my father tonight. You can come along with Lucy since I know you won't want to leave her alone," Harry said, and Tom turned to spare him a glance.

"Can't make it. Sorry, I have plans."

"What plans? I have already invited Lucy, and she is available. Who do you have other plans with?" Harry asked with a scowl since he had already made the dinner reservation.

"I didn't tell her about my plans. It's supposed to be a surprise dinner for just the both of us. I hope you don't mind?" Tom asked, and Harry scowled at him and looked out of the window in annoyance, making Tom stifle the urge to chuckle. As manly and strict as Harry could be, he sometimes behaved like he was his girlfriend, and Tom wondered if he knew that was how he acted.

"I will think about it, though, and see if I can cancel the reservation," Tom said, and Harry snorted in response, making him chuckle.

"I was just kidding. You know you're my second girlfriend. I can't say no to you and hurt your feelings," Tom said, slapping Harry's shoulder.

"You're lucky you changed your mind. I was already mentally composing my resignation letter, which I would submit tomorrow morning if you didn't show up. You want to hear it?" Harry asked with a smirk, and Tom laughed.

"Not interested. Did I give you the details of the last meeting we had in your absence yet?" Tom asked, and Harry shook his head.

"Shit! There are always so many distractions lately. That was the reason I came into your office earlier, but I got carried away by Barry's revelation," Harry said, and Tom chuckled.

"The last meeting was very entertaining. Lucy had a face-off with Anita," Tom said, and Harry sat up, looking at him with interest.

"What happened?"

Tom narrated how they had been arguing over their ideas for the airline and how he asked Lucy to excuse them...

"No, you didn't do that!" Harry exclaimed, feeling slightly annoyed on behalf of Lucy, and Tom chuckled as he continued his narration.

By the time he was done, Harry was howling with laughter, "You mean she pulled over by the side of the road and got out of the car just so she could receive your call?" Harry asked in amusement and then shook his head, "You're both crazy."

"Even the most normal people do crazy things when they're in love," Tom pointed out.

"Yeah. Like Anita," Harry said with a chuckle, and Tom glared at him.

"Why do you keep talking about her and her family? Besides, who said she's in love?"

"She's in love, not necessarily with you. But she's in love with your money and your identity," Harry said with a shrug, "And now that we're back to the subject, I think you should make your stand to her known today. Spell out that even if she was the only girl left in the world and you have to choose between her and a female cheetah, you'd choose the cheetah."

"No. I'm not choosing either her or the cheetah! Are you crazy? You can be so weird sometimes," Tom hissed, and Harry laughed as Tom pulled over in front of I-Global airlines.

Harry cleared his throat and put on a straight face when he saw the long line of executives waiting for them, including Anita, "Time for serious business."

Chapter 355 I Don't Even Like You

All morning, Anita had paced around her office restlessly, trying to figure out the best way to face Tom. It was going to be the first time she would be meeting him since he publicly revealed his identity, and she knew that she was expected to have a reaction.

How would she have reacted to this announcement had she not known his identity already? How would she have felt about him and his relationship had she not known Lucy? She didn't want to ask either her mother or sisters, as this was something she felt she was capable of handling on her own.

After the close of work the previous day, she had gone shopping for the right office dress to wear. A dress that showed just how classy and sexy she was without revealing too much skin as was against the company's policy. She needed to look her best, as she would be facing Tom now as Anita, his ex-girlfriend, and not just Anita, his employee.

Her plan was simple. She was going to ask him to give her a minute after the meeting, and she would apologize for all the stupid things she did, tell him that she liked him and hoped they could remain friends, and then if possible, push her luck by asking him to prove he has forgiven her by letting her buy him a drink or dinner even if it means bringing Lucy along. Then gradually, she would find a way to stay in his life while they tried to kick Lucy out.

Now standing in front of the company with the other executives who had made it a habit of waiting for the CEO that way whenever he was coming, thanks to her arrogant uncle who always asked them to wait that way for him, she couldn't help but feel awkward.

"You don't have to stand here waiting all the time when I'm sure you have more important jobs waiting on your desk," Tom said after they greeted them, and he and Harry walked ahead of them to the conference hall.

Anita followed quietly, grateful that they had not brought Lucy along with them this time. It would be easier to face Tom and talk to him without having to face Lucy too.

Now that he was walking in front of her, she could look at him freely. Without the disguise or the playboy earrings and hairdo, he looked so handsome, confident, and powerful. And from the whispers she could hear behind her, it was obvious that she

wasn't the only one that thought so, especially when she saw a couple of female employees stealing glances at him as they pretended to go about their business. This was the man she wanted. The handsome, confident, wealthy, and powerful man. She didn't care if he treated her the way Tiffany's or Bernice's husband treated them. She wanted to be beside this man.

Once they got to the conference hall, Anita went to sit on the seat closest to Tom as she had wanted to do the first time before Lucy took over the seat. This made Harry exchange an amused look with Tom, and he mouthed 'Cheetah' to Tom, who glared at him with disapproval.

Tom ignored her and waited for them to settle down before he cleared his throat, "Before we move to the agenda of today's meeting, you should all know that Harry is now my Co-CEO, and he will be directly in charge of the airline. This will be the last time I have to sit here unless, for any reason, Harry wants me to be here. After the opening ceremony next week, Mr. Harry Jonas will be taking over," Tom announced, and everyone clapped, while Anita wondered if he was doing that because he didn't want to keep running into her here.

Following that announcement, Tom gave Harry a nod to take over the meeting while he sat back and just listened to them exchanging ideas about how to promote the airline and give it a competitive advantage over other airlines.

Anita remained quiet while letting the others speak, while she thought of how to talk to Tom after the meeting. They would need to speak, and she wanted him to listen to her.

"Director Miller?" Harry asked, tapping the desk with a pen to get her attention, and she blinked rapidly as she tried to focus.

Seeing the way everyone was staring at her, she could tell it wasn't the first time he had called her name, and her face flushed in embarrassment as she cleared her throat, "I'm sorry. I got distracted," she said, and Harry gave her stiff smile.

"I guess we should all be relieved that you're a director and not one of our pilots. Your distraction could cost the company a lot," Harry said dryly, and Tom tried not to look amused even though the others around the table didn't bother to hide their amusement.

"It won't happen again, sir," she said apologetically.

"I believe it won't. Everyone has contributed thus far, but you are yet to pitch in anything. What ideas do you have?" Harry asked coolly.

Anita cleared her throat as she sat forward, "During the last meeting..."

"Yeah. I've been briefed on that. I'm not asking about the last meeting. I'm asking about now," Harry said dismissively.

Anita swallowed when she met his cold eyes. His sudden coldness made her uncomfortable. He seemed to be angry with her, and she wasn't sure it was because she zoned out. Tom's coldness she could understand since she had been a bitch to him, but Harry had always treated her like he treated every other employee, so why did it seem like there was more to this?

"..."

"It seems like you only have amazing ideas when there's someone you want to compete against. I will remember to bring Director Perry along with me next time to be your muse," Harry said, and Tom chuckled at Harry's pettiness while the other directors hid their laughter.

It was not a secret to them that Anita had her eyes on the CEO, and neither was it anymore a secret to them that Lucy was the CEO's girlfriend, so they could all now understand why Tom had behaved the way he did the last time. The only thing they couldn't understand was why he had asked his girlfriend to leave so rudely during the last meeting, only to scold Anita in her absence.

"Since there is nothing else, is there something you would love to add, boss?" Harry asked, and Tom, who had been watching them quietly the whole time, sat up.

"Nothing much. I think the ideas are good. I'm impressed that you were able to come up with well-thought-through plans on how to execute the ideas. We will have to work on implementing them. I believe you have all taken note of the adjustments that have been made," Tom paused and waited until they all nodded.

"I look forward to seeing your best results," Tom finished.

"Alright, that will be all. I will be coming around daily to supervise and ensure that you're all on your toes and everything is in place for the opening. You will also receive an invite to the coming anniversary celebration of I-Global, so be sure to attend and participate in the activities as you're the newest staff. That will be all," Harry said without making any move to stand up.

As the others left, Tom turned to Anita, "Anita, wait behind. I want to have a word with you," Tom said, choosing to use her name directly since it was a personal matter and there was no need to pretend otherwise.

He had thought of it, and the best way to approach what needed to be done and take control of the situation was to be the initiator of their conversation.

If he let her ask to see him as he knew she would, she would be on top of the power differential, but if he initiated the conversation, she would have no choice but to listen.

Anita nodded, and Tom turned to Harry, who he expected to leave, but Harry looked away from him, making it clear that he had no intention to excuse them.

He had promised Lucy that he would keep an eye on them to make sure Anita didn't do anything since he didn't trust her not to have planted a camera around to make it look like she had something special with Tom. Tom was his best friend, and Lucy was, well... Like a sister to him. So he wasn't taking any risks. Besides, it would be suspicious if he was to leave alongside the other directors, leaving them alone. That would make people speculate, and he didn't want unnecessary rumors going around a company they had just taken over.

After the others had left, Tom glanced at Anita, who was seated with her head bowed, and both hands folded on her lap. Looking at how calm she looked, one would never guess just how evil she could be, Tom thought.

Harry, who was pretending to be busy with his phone, clicked on his camera and made a video record of them without their knowledge.

"I understand that based on the way things happened between us and following the revelation of my identity, you must be quite stunned to know that I'm the CEO. I apologize for lying to you about my identity even though you will agree with me that it was necessary," Tom said politely, choosing to act like he didn't know anything she had been up to.

What was she supposed to say to now? She had thought she was ready to handle the situation, but he had destabilized her by asking to speak with her first.

She cleared her throat and tried to retake control of the situation, "Tom, I'm sincerely sorry for not showing up on our date..."

Tom shook his head and cut her off, "All that is water under the bridge now. You didn't apologize when we met the last time. Why are you doing so now? Because I'm the CEO?"

"Because I never got the chance to apologize properly," Anita said, and Tom tried not to scoff.

"Well, don't be sorry. You already made it up to me when you tried to hook me up with Lucy at the movie house. Remember what you said to me that day? In your words, 'she is more suitable for you than I am or can ever be, and to make up for the past, I want to help pair you both together' do you remember saying that?" Tom asked, and Anita shut her eyes while Harry snickered. At least she wasn't entirely shameless.

She had said those words. How stupid had she been? What had possessed her to be so presumptuous? She had validated their relationship, so how was she going to be able to ruin it? Now those words were going to haunt her.

"You helped me find true love whether you meant to or not, so I'm sincerely grateful to you for not showing up. If you had shown up, I never would have met the perfect woman for me. So, thanks for not showing up. Things didn't work out between us, and I called off our relationship because I realized you were not the right person for me. I didn't love you, and I could never have loved you even if I tried. There is no reason for you to feel awkward or embarrassed. So please focus on your job, so we don't have to fire you for not paying attention during meetings," Tom said, and Anita felt her eyes sting.

She blinked back her tears of regret and humiliation that burned her insides and cleared her throat as she raised her head to look at him, "I understand. Can we at least be friends? Maybe I can buy you a drink, or we can have dinner sometime? You can bring Lucy along too. It will be a shame to go back to being strangers. I really did like you genuinely, and I like Lucy too, of course. I see her as my friend," Anita said, and they both turned when Harry scoffed.

He looked at them over his phone's screen when they both looked at him, "What? Oh! You heard that? Sorry. I just saw something ridiculous here," he said, pointing to his phone, "Don't mind me and just continue with your discussion," Harry said with a dismissive wave, but they all knew that he was referring to what Anita had said.

"We can't be friends. Besides, I hardly have the time for that. I have my best friend here who doesn't like to share, and I also have my girlfriend who I prefer to spend every moment of my day beside. There's no room for other people. Plus, I'm sure you still have to take care of your dog, and I'd hate to take you away from him. So you see? It just would never work because, honestly, I do not even like you. So let's stick to being employer and employee, alright?" Tom said as he rose, making it clear that he was done.

"I guess we are done here," Harry said as he pushed away from the desk and stood up after saving the video.

"Talking about friendship as though you were such a great friend when you thought he had nothing. People should learn to have some pride," Harry muttered under his breath, but loud enough for them both to hear.

Anita remained seated with her head bowed as both friends walked away. She was doomed! How was she going to ever get him to love her?

Chapter 356 Tiger Versus Sick Cat

"You didn't have to do that. That was too petty even for you," Tom said with a chuckle as he and Harry headed for the car.

"I'm surprised you were able to stay so calm. God! I really hate her! You had no idea everything I had in my head to say to her. I had to try my best to hold back because she's our employee," Harry said, and Tom laughed.

"And you weren't even the one that dated her," Tom said in amusement, even though he understood Harry's hatred. He was filled with anger and hatred too, but knowing that he already had everything in place to deal with her was what had helped him to speak calmly.

"My best friend dated her, and that's enough. She made things difficult for both you and Lucy, and that, in turn made things difficult for me. I thought I was going to go crazy last weekend," Harry said, and Tom winced.

"I'm sorry. I know you must have been really stressed," Tom said apologetically.

"Don't be. Your problem is my problem, and your enemy is my enemy. Imagine her talking about friendship, the nerves! How can someone be that shameless? And what was that nonsense she was spewing? Did I hear her refer to Lucy as her friend? Really? If I were a lady, I'd have hit her head against that desk to reset whatever nonsense was broken in in that micro fish brain of hers," Harry swore, and Tom doubled over, ignoring the curious glances they were getting from the staff as they walked past them.

"Okay, now you should calm down, Harry."

"Sure. I will calm down after she and her crazy family pay for all they did and have planned to do. I won't let you take it easy on them," Harry said with a scowl as they stopped in front of the car that the valet had brought back to the front of the building.

Tom looked at Harry with a wide smile. His loyalty was second to none, and the amazing thing was that he couldn't even understand what he did to deserve Harry's friendship and loyalty. He really loved this best friend of his.

"Then let's get started on making them pay," Tom said as he slapped Harry's back lightly, and Harry got into the car while Tom went around to get into the driver's seat.

As Harry buckled his seatbelt, his phone started ringing, and his heart skipped a beat when he saw that it was Jade. All the anger he had been feeling a moment ago disappeared and left his mind blank and his mouth dry.

As he stared blankly at the phone which was ringing, he remembered their midnight chat and phone conversation, which he had been trying all day not to think about.

"Are you not going to receive your call?" Tom asked when he got into the car and saw Harry staring at his phone, which was ringing.

He cleared his throat before receiving the call, "Hey!" He greeted in a gruff voice and cleared his throat again.

"Hello, Harry! Did you sleep well?" Jade asked cheerfully as she sat in front of the dressing room. She was dressed now, and they were about to leave the house; hence she decided to speak with him.

"Yeah. I believe I did. What about you? I mean, did you sleep well?" Harry asked, and Jade smiled to herself when she heard how flustered he sounded.

"I didn't."

"I see," Harry said and then remained quiet as he waited for her to tell him why she had called.

Tom spared him a glance, wondering who he was speaking with, but he looked away from Tom. Seeing his reaction, Tom smirked. He could guess that it was Jade. Harry wasn't the type to look or sound so flustered when speaking with anyone.

"You see? You are not curious to know why I didn't sleep well?" Jade asked in a flirty tone.

"I'm kind of busy at the moment..."

"No, he's not busy. I'm driving, and he's just sitting here. Sup, Jade? Are you guys still at home?" Tom asked, and Jade giggled while Harry glared at Tom.

"We were going to talk about our plan for the meeting with those ladies," Harry reminded Tom, not pleased that Tom was insinuating that he had lied.

"Tell him we will be leaving in a couple of minutes. Since you're busy right now, I will call back later to let you know when I arrive. Is that okay?" Jade asked to Harry's relief.

"Yeah, sure. Have a safe trip," Harry answered quickly, and to his confusion, Jade giggled.

"Anyway, since you didn't ask, I'm going to tell you anyway. I didn't sleep well last night because I kept thinking about the kiss, and then I dreamt of kissing you. Although in my dream, we did a bit more than kiss. I will give you the details when I call you back later," Jade said before hanging up.

Long after the call ended, Harry still held the phone to his ear as he stared ahead of him with unseeing eyes. His heart was beating too fast, and his mouth was as dry as a desert.

Why did she tell him something like that? Why did she dream of kissing him? She said they had done more than kiss. What else had they done? Was it the same dream he had? Why was he even curious about it? Why was the thought of a mere dream making his body warm?

"Seeing how you have been silent for a while but still holding the phone to your ear, Jade must have so much to say to you," Tom observed dryly.

Harry snapped back to his senses and dropped his hand as he turned to glare at Tom, "You are not a good friend, you know?"

"I'm not? How? What did I do wrong?" Tom asked innocently.

"I have your back. I always have your back, but you don't have mine," he said accusingly.

"I'm sure you know that's not true. It's not like Jade was going to eat you up, and you needed protection. It was a simple phone conversation, yet you looked like you were going to pass out. When you talk to me, you sound like a tiger, but when it's Jade, you sound like a sick cat," Tom said in amusement, and Harry glared at him.

"How did you know it was her anyway?" Harry asked since he hadn't mentioned Jade's name, and the speaker hadn't been loud enough for Tom to hear her voice.

Tom shrugged, "In all the years I've known you, I'm not sure I've seen you react to anyone else this way before. The look on your face when you received the call was similar to the look on your face when she was holding your arm yesterday," Tom said with a chuckle, and Harry scowled.

"I'm NOT going to have anything to do with her!"

"I never said you were or you should. I thought we both already established that she is our sister?" Tom reminded him, and Harry cursed under his breath.

"I hate you, Tom!"

Tom chuckled, "You should maintain this energy when next you talk to Jade instead of shaking like a leaf."

Lucas had a wary look in his eyes as he walked out of a phone shop. He couldn't believe that he had been right and Rachel had been tracking his phone this whole time.

Just what did he really know about this woman? Everything Miley had said came back to him, and he paused to draw in a deep breath when he started feeling sick.

He was sick to his stomach. Frightened, and disgusted that he had thought she was the love of his life.

How? Just how had he ended up with such a scary person? If all of this had not happened with Lucy, he would never have found out the kind of woman he was getting married to.

He was lost in thoughts as he walked down the road aimlessly, unsure where he was headed. He still didn't want to go home yet... Speaking of home, he recalled that he was yet to give his parents a call, and his phone had been turned off once again while the guys in the phone shop were working on it, so he reached into his pocket and took it out.

He turned it on and then dialed his mother's line. Almost immediately, Janet received the call, "Oh, Lucas! Thank goodness you finally called. I've been worried sick about you. How are you? Where are you?" She asked in a rush.

"I'm fine, mom. And I'm sorry I made you worry," Lucas said apologetically.

"Are you sure you are fine?" Andrew asked from beside Janet.

"Yes, I'm fine. I just need to be alone for the time being..."

"Why don't you tell me where you are? And then I can bring you something to eat? Did you take your clothes? I could help you get some clothes too," Janet pleaded.

"Mom, thanks. But I can buy whatever I need. I'm fine, so don't worry yourself about me. I will leave my line on so you can reach me whenever you want. That way, you don't have to be so worried," Lucas said, and Janet let out a resigned sigh.

"Just make sure you call us whenever you need to talk or see us, okay? And come home when you're ready," Andrew said to Lucas' relief.

"Sure, dad. I have to go now." He hesitated, "Mom? Can you help me get my personal effects out of my apartment?" Lucas asked, not wanting to step foot in that apartment.

"Sure, we can. By the way, we called Rachel earlier when we couldn't reach you," Andrew said, causing Lucas' eyes to harden.

"You didn't have to. Please do not call her next time. She showed up here uninvited," Lucas said, and his parents exchanged a surprised look.

"Where? How did she get to know your location?" Janet asked since she doubted that Lucas could have gone somewhere he used to visit with Rachel when he was avoiding her.

"She installed a tracking device in my phone this whole time. I had no idea. She is dangerous and..." While Lucas was still speaking, the doorbell rang, and Andrew went to the door to see who was there.

"A tracking device?" Janet asked in shocked annoyance even as Andrew opened the door.

He was surprised to see Rachel standing there, "What are you doing here?" He asked without letting her in, and hearing his cold tone, Janet rose.

"I think Rachel is here," she informed Lucas quietly as she went to the door to see for herself.

"Mom, throw her out. Do not listen to anything she says. She is a liar, and she is very dangerous," Lucas said, but his mother was no longer listening.

Seeing the hostile expression on their faces, Rachel fell to her knees, "Please help me. Save my relationship with Lucas, please! I love him. I don't want to lose him. I can't live without him," she cried, making Janet's hand ball into a fist as she fought the urge to hit Rachel for all the pain she had caused her children.

"The only reason we had anything to do with you was because of Lucas. Now that he no longer wants to be involved with you, we have no reason to tolerate you anymore either. Leave!" Andrew ordered harshly.

"Andrew, please! Don't do this to me. I love Lucas! Please help me! Please help me save my relationship with him! Please!" She cried, reaching out to grab his calf, but Andrew sidestepped her, and she fell forward through the door.

Immediately, Janet dropped her phone and roughly pushed Rachel back, not wanting any part of her body inside their home.

"Save yourself this embarrassment and leave quietly. Make sure you don't show yourself around here or around my family again. Else I won't be blamed for what I do to a trespasser," Janet warned through clenched teeth as she shut the door in Rachel's crying face.

On the other end of the phone, Lucas gritted his teeth as he disconnected the call. Now he needed to just find somewhere he could stay for a while and try to figure out what he wanted for his life now.

He turned abruptly when a car honked loudly behind him, and his heart skipped a beat when he saw Miley seated gracefully in a red Ford mustang.

Chapter 357 Home

Miley waved at Lucas as she flashed him a smile, but the surprise at seeing her again had worn off, and now he was just pissed that she was following him.

He walked over to where the car was parked, "What the heck is wrong with all of you? Why can't you just leave me the fuck alone? Why do you keep following me around and monitoring my life?" Lucas yelled at her, not concerned that he was causing a scene.

Miley just stared at him calmly as he yelled, and she waited until he had run out of everything he had to say before letting out a sigh, "I understand how you feel, and you've got every reason to be mad, but I'm too dying to care. Why not get into the car, and I will drop you off wherever you are headed?" She asked reasonably, making Lucas all the more angry.

"No! I don't want to be in the same space with you or anyone else!" He snapped at her and started walking away.

"Hm. Too bad," she said with pursed lips as she continued to follow him while honking the car.

When Lucas couldn't take it anymore, he stopped again and turned to her, "What do you want?"

"For starters, I'm still with your ID card. You left it behind at my place."

"You can help me return it to Dr. Drew at your next appointment," Lucas said, and she nodded.

"Alright. But I will feel better after I know you are not going to any bar to drink yourself into a stupor or do anything silly. Sorry, I know I shouldn't care, but unfortunately, my dying brain is worried about you," she said with a shrug.

"Listen, if you're following me because you want to get back at Rachel or..." Lucas paused when he noticed the mild annoyance in her eyes.

"I'm dying, and somehow you think getting back at Rachel is the most important to me right now?" She asked incredulously, but Lucas just kept staring at her.

"There is nothing to get back at her for. She has won, don't you get it? She has her whole life right ahead of her, and I don't. I have limited time to make something for myself. To do something meaningful for me. I can't make what little time I have left to be about Rachel. I can't afford to," she said, blinking back the tears that stung her eyes.

"Listen, I know you don't know me or care about me, I don't like the fact that I'm worried about you either, but I am. Maybe it's because I see you as another victim of Rachel or something, I don't know. But get into the damned car. If you need a drinking buddy, I'll drink with you and listen to you swear and cuss at Rachel or whoever else. Just don't waste your life away on her account," Miley said, and Lucas shook his head.

"I'm not going back to alcohol. And I don't need you or anyone to listen. Just leave me alone. That's all I need."

"Good. I'm glad you don't need a drinking buddy. Will you be my drinking buddy then? I want to drink myself into a stupor and wallow in self-pity. And I want you to be my audience and listen to me cry and cuss at the universe for giving me such an unexpectedly short lifespan," she said, and this time Lucas paused.

"Don't you have friends?"

"I told you before, I've been away for years and just got back. They're all acquaintances now, and Amy is my only friend. It would be selfish to drag her away from her job to help me. You, on the other hand, just quit, and you have all the time in the world right now. So please, can you just keep me company? I could pay you for your time if you want," She said, and Lucas looked at her for a moment, trying to understand her.

"I don't need your damned money," he muttered under his breath as he got into the passenger's seat, and her red-painted lips curved in a smile.

"Thanks. So where do you want to go?" She asked happily.

"Take me wherever you want to go," Lucas said without looking at her.

He wasn't sure he was making the right call by hanging out with her, but underneath her cheerful disposition, he knew that she was sad. And somehow, he couldn't bring himself to turn her away completely. He was a sucker for sick, distressed, and helpless people.

"Is there anything else you've not told me?" Lucas asked as he turned to look at her.

"Like I've been in love with you since you were in high school?" She asked, and Lucas' eyes rounded in shock, making her laugh out loud.

"Chill. I'm just pulling your legs," she assured him as she combed her fingers through her long hair.

Lucas relaxed, "You followed me from the hotel?"

"Yeah. I figured it would take me just as much time to dress up as it would take you to get to the gate, so there was no need to stop you when I could easily catch up," she said with a shrug.

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why did you follow me? Why are you doing this?"

"Well, for starters, if you leave here and anything happens to you, I'd be the last person that was with you, and I don't want to spend what little time I have left behind bars for a crime I did not commit," she said with an easy smile.

"Why are you always talking about your limited time?" Lucas asked with a frown, and she shrugged.

"I'm trying to be comfortable with the idea of dying. How do your patients react when you tell them they're dying?" She asked as she turned to spare him a glance.

"Some avoid the subject as though not talking about it will make the sickness disappear. Others keep crying when they talk about it, but you are smiling while talking about it," Lucas said, and he noticed the slight tremble of her lips.

"I have to learn how to talk about it without breaking down so that my parents won't break down when I tell them about it. I'm all they've got," she said with tears in her eyes as she turned to him.

"If I can't be strong, how can I expect them to be when I'm gone?" She asked, and Lucas felt her sadness as tears dropped from her eyes.

"I'm sorry."

She cleared her throat and flashed him a smile, "I told you before, don't be. You're going through your own hell. I'm going through mine. Life sucks. Hopefully, death won't suck," she said as she swiped at her tears.

"Sorry, I'm not with my handkerchief. Would have offered it," Lucas said, and she smiled.

"Why don't we get you something to wear? And then we can return to the hotel, so you freshen up. Unless, of course, you'd rather not," she said, reminding Lucas that he was looking rough.

"Let's do that."

Jade had a silly smile on her face as she walked out of her bedroom to join the others who were already waiting in front of the house. She wondered what would be going through Harry's mind by now.

She had decided not to confess her feelings to him as Tom had suggested, but she was going to make it difficult for him to ignore her or get her out of his mind. She wanted him, and she was going to make him want her back.

"I hope I didn't keep you guys waiting?" She asked apologetically.

"It's fine," Desmond assured her.

"Where are the others?" She asked, and Evelyn pointed to the car.

"Sonia and Bryan are seated inside already."

"What about Candace?" She asked just as Candace walked through the door with both Jamal and Samantha while holding a brown envelope in her hand and a small traveling bag.

"Remember all I told you? Be on your best behavior. Miss Samantha here will take care of you and make sure you don't be a bother," she reminded him, and Jamal nodded as he sniffed back his tears.

"Please, can you help me give this envelope to Tom when he gets back?" She asked, and Samantha nodded as she received it from her.

"I wish we could take the kid with us," Evelyn murmured to her husband sadly.

"We can't," Desmond said, and she nodded as she went to say goodbye to the kid.

"Make sure you take good care of the kid. You can hire a nanny if need be. Just make sure he has someone to attend to him round the clock," Evelyn said to Samantha, who gave her a nod as she took the kid's hand.

Inside the car, Bryan patted Sonia's head which was resting on his shoulder, "We can cancel this trip if you are not up for it," Bryan said, and Sonia shook her head.

"It's just a headache, Bryan," Sonia assured him.

"It's not just a headache. You look pale. You're running a temperature and are beginning to sweat," Bryan complained.

"I'm pale because of my headaches, and I'm sweating because you refused to turn on the AC because you say I'm running a temperature. You are sweating too," Sonia said in amusement as she watched him fuss.

"I'm going to make sure you get enough rest after we arrive, and if you don't feel better twenty-four hours from now, we are going to the hospital," Bryan said, and Sonia nodded.

"Sure. Just relax," she said, and Bryan wrapped his arms around her as he kissed her forehead.

"I can't. Not when you're involved. You are my family. My baby," Bryan said, and tears gathered in her eyes.

Even though she knew that Lucy and her family considered her a part of them, she never really felt like she belonged there. She loved them and all, but that was Lucy's family, not really hers.

That was one reason she had always thought about having a child or getting married. Family. She wanted a real family of her own, not like the one she had with her mother and stepfather. She wanted to experience the sort of connection she had with her father before his death.

Watching all of them interact with each other as family in the last couple of days made her realize the extent of her loneliness and how much she craved a family. She felt like she was part of them, but she wasn't really part of them.

Hence, hearing him call her his family stirred a lot of emotions inside her, and it made her feel like she finally belonged with someone. She felt at home in his hands. Home was no longer just a place. Home had taken the form of a person, and Bryan was home.

Tears trailed down her cheeks, and she used the back of her hands to wipe them off as Desmond and Evelyn got into the car.

"How are you feeling now, dear?" Desmond asked with concern in his eyes as he looked at her.

She nodded, unable to swallow past the lump that was still lodged in her throat after Bryan's words.

"I think she's spiking a fever," Bryan complained to his mother, who reached out to feel her forehead with the back of her hand.

"Don't worry, dear. When we arrive, I'll prepare my special soup," Evelyn promised, and Sonia smiled weakly, choosing to let herself be pampered since she couldn't remember the last time anyone had pampered her.

"We are ready to leave, Adolf," Jade said after she and Candace got into the car.

Chapter 358 Puppet

Inside Priscilla's office at the She Can Heal Foundation building, Rebekah Miller had a satisfied smile on her face as she sat back on a couch and sipped from a mug of tea while she listened to Priscilla, who was giving her the details about her meeting with Lucy the previous day, as well as Lucy's phone call a moment ago to accept the deal.

"I knew she was going to accept the offer. It was too good to be turned down after all. She is quite an ambitious young lady, don't you agree?" she said, and Priscilla nodded in agreement.

"So it appears."

"I will draft out the contract terms and send it across to your email. Get her to come down here and sign it as soon as you can," Rebekah instructed.

"Yes, I will," Priscilla said before leaning forward, "But if I may ask, why did you insist that we approach Lucinda Perry? And why that much of a hurry too? No offense, I understand that her story was quite touching, but I think there are other ladies with even more pathetic stories than hers who could have benefited more from the money we are offering her. She has a good job, and from what I saw, she is

doing well for herself. She also has Thomas Hank, so what's so special about her that you had to make us do this?" Priscilla asked, trying to understand Rebekah's intention since it still didn't sit well with her that she had approached Lucy in that manner.

Priscilla had been more than surprised when Rebekah called and asked her to reach out to Lucy with that outrageous offer, she had wanted to ask questions, but Rebekah had said she would stop by the office to get the feedback hence she had gone ahead to do as she was told, as usual, hoping to get answers from Rebekah when she met her in person.

Rebekah's smile faltered since she hadn't been expecting Priscilla to question her. She pushed the cup away from her and sat forward in an intimidating manner, "Other organizations are going to want to work with her as she's still under the spotlight at the moment, so I figured we get to her first. It would bring the foundation more exposure and also more sponsors," She said with a light shrug.

Priscilla looked at her, unconvinced, "Until now, we have never really been interested in such things so..."

"You might be the CEO in name, but I hope you haven't forgotten who owns this place and who keeps the foundation running financially. You should know better than to question my decisions," Rebekah said with disapproval, and Priscilla's hands balled into a fist on her lap as she looked at Rebekah, who was seated across from her.

"I just want to be sure that you are not trying to do anything that might affect..."

"And what if I am? Are you going to get in my way?" Rebekah cut in challengingly, and Priscilla decided that it was time to take a step back.

Nothing good would come from provoking Rebekah. As annoying as she was, and as much as Priscilla hated feeling like the woman's puppet, establishing a foundation had only been a pipe dream until she met Rebekah, and Rebekah offered to help her. Since then, Rebekah had brought her all the money and sponsors she needed to fund her work while taking the backstage.

That was how Priscilla got the fame she now had, and that was how she got the money she needed to sponsor the kind of lifestyle she had always wanted. She knew where she was coming from, and she didn't want to go back there.

"There is no need to get cranky, Madam. I wasn't trying to challenge your authority or anything. I know better than to do that. If you say we should do this, then we would. You are the one that truly owns this place after all," Priscilla said with a pacifying smile, and Rebekah smiled at her with approval.

"Good. Try not to forget that I can throw you back to the gutters where I picked you from if you start growing wings," Rebekah said with a cold smile.

"I'm well aware of that. All I'm asking is that you let me know exactly what your plan is. We both know that there is no way you are spending so much money on that girl without having some sort of plan. What if your plan backfires? I need to know what I'm getting into so that I can act appropriately, especially since you do not want your name involved in it," Priscilla insisted as politely as she could while holding Rebekah's gaze.

There was no need to let her in on her plans. The only person she could ever really trust was herself. She didn't want to be disappointed by anyone else, so it was best if she used her without letting her know just what she was doing for her.

"Can you at least let me know why you want her?" Priscilla pleaded when Rebekah said nothing and just kept staring at her with narrowed eyes.

"Quit this foolishness, Priscilla. I already told you all you need to know. There is no other plan," Rebekah said and then glanced at her phone when it vibrated with a media text message notification, and she picked it up.

Her lips twitched in a secretive smile when she saw the text from Adam, her daughter's husband. Attached to a short clip of him stroking his engorged cock was the text, 'Why are you late? I'm waiting at the penthouse already. I miss you so much I think it is going to explode.'

Her eyes glazed over with lust as she looked at the photo, and she bit her lower lip as she felt the hot fingers of lust clench her lower abdomen, and her feminine core pulsated with longing.

"If you say so," Priscilla said, and Rebekah cleared her throat and then put her phone away when she remembered that she wasn't alone.

"I'm late for my next appointment. I need to leave now. Make sure you do as I've said if you want things to keep going smoothly for us all," she said as she quickly stood up.

"I will," Priscilla said as she stood up and escorted her out of the office. Maya stood up immediately as they walked past her desk, but Rebekah didn't spare her a glance.

"You don't need to see me off, I'm in a hurry," she said dismissively, and Priscilla gave her a nod as she watched her walk away.

Once Rebekah disappeared from view, Priscilla returned to meet Maya, who was standing beside her desk, which was positioned outside Priscilla's office.

"Did she tell you why she wants Lucinda Perry to work with us?" Maya asked, but Priscilla shook her head.

"Not exactly. I don't exactly believe anything she said," Priscilla said and went on to tell Maya about their conversation, and Maya sighed.

"I'm not sure I'm comfortable with this. It is one thing for her to use the foundation for their money laundering, but this involves a person. A lady like those we are trying to help," Maya complained.

"I understand how you feel. I feel the same way too. We just need to be careful and try not to get on her bad side at the same time," Priscilla said as she headed for her office, and Maya nodded in understanding.

Away from there, Tom pulled into the parking lot in front of the building that housed the foundation just as Rebekah stepped out of the building.

"Isn't that Rebekah Miller?" Harry asked, and Tom looked in time to see her get into her car.

"She's the one," Tom said, and neither of them made any move to get out of the car until they watched her car disappear from view.

"Even if we didn't already suspect that she was involved in this, she just told us so herself," Harry said, and Tom nodded.

Without saying another word, they both got out of the car, adjusted their suit, and headed for the building.

Once they arrived inside and Maya saw them, she quickly rose from her seat since they were men that needed no introduction. Harry Jonas was known since his face was one they had seen on the papers and every news relating to I-Global enterprise. Thomas Hank, on the other hand, was a face that was still fresh on the first pages of newspapers and magazines ever since he revealed his identity that weekend.

"Good morning, sirs. What can we do for you?" She asked nervously as she glanced at the door to Priscilla's office, hoping this had nothing to do with their offer to Lucinda Perry.

"We want to see your boss," Harry demanded in his authoritative tone as he stepped forward out of habit.

Maya cleared her throat, clearly disconcerted by this unexpected visit. She dared not tell them they couldn't meet Priscilla since no prior appointment had been made for this meeting, not when they had barged in on Lucinda Perry the way they had done the previous day on Rebekah's instructions. Something told her that their presence had to do with that, and it made her feel very anxious. She really hoped they were not in trouble for doing something they didn't even know about.

"Excuse me for a minute," Maya said as she quickly walked away.

Once she got into the office, she rushed over to Priscilla's desk, and Priscilla looked at her in shocked confusion when she saw the worry in her eyes.

"What is the matter?"

"Harry Jonas is here with Thomas Hank to see you," she whispered, scared that somehow Tom might have a magical hearing ability to hear whatever they were saying.

Priscilla's heart skipped a beat, "Thomas Hank?"

Maya bobbed her head, "I don't know what he wants, but I suspect it might have to do with our visit to his girlfriend. What are we going to do? I don't want any troubles," Maya said, and Priscilla's brows pulled together.

"Trust me, and let them in."

"What if..."

"Relax, and let me handle it. If it's about Lucinda Perry, then this might be the opportunity we need to take over completely and get rid of that controlling bitch. Let them in," she instructed as she straightened her shoulders and sat up.

Maya nodded and took a deep breath before returning to join Tom and Harry, "She is ready to see you. You can go in," Maya said with a polite smile, and both men walked into the office with Maya following behind them.

Immediately they walked through the door, Priscilla stood up with a welcoming smile on her face, "Today must be a great day seeing as distinguished gentlemen like you chose to grace my office with your presence," she greeted with false confidence, and both Tom and Harry flashed her a smile.

"I'm Harry Jonas, and this is Thomas Hank, CEO of I-Global enterprise," Harry said politely, and Priscilla smiled as she stepped away from behind her desk, extending a hand to Harry.

"I must be living under a rock if I do not know who you both are. I am Priscilla Peters, and this is my assistant, Maya Adams," Priscilla said as she moved away from Harry and turned to Tom.

"We hope you don't mind us barging on you this way," Tom said politely as he shook hands with her while observing her closely.

She waved a hand dismissively, "Of course, I do not. I don't mind people like you coming to see me. It's an honor to have you here. Please make yourself comfortable," Priscilla said as she led them to the comfortable settee in her office.

"Would you love to have tea or coffee?" She asked as she sat down opposite them, and both men shook their heads.

"No, thanks. We are fine. We just want to talk," Tom said, and she nodded as she turned to Maya.

"You can excuse us," she told Maya, who gave her a nod before walking away.

Now that they were alone, Priscilla sat forward as she looked from Tom to Harry and then back again, "So, to what do I owe this pleasure?" She asked, looking at them with calculating eyes.

"If you know us as you said, then I'm sure you know why I am here," Tom said flatly, his eyes hard as he looked at her.

Chapter 359 Disloyal

Priscilla looked at both men with a poker face as she tried to figure out the best way to approach the subject.

She knew they were intelligent men, and it would be stupid of her to try to play them for a fool. At the same time, she had to be careful as she didn't want to overplay her hand since she wasn't even sure yet if they were friends or foes of Rebekah yet.

Although she doubted that they were friends of Rebekah since the lady wasn't one to hide her connection with affluent and influential people. If she so much as knew Thomas Hank personally, she would have bragged about it by now, and his identity would not have remained secret for so long.

Her eyes twitched suspiciously when she remembered that Rebekah had left only a moment ago. Was it possible that she had sent them here to test her? Was this some sort of test?

She mentally shook her head. No. It couldn't be. Thomas Hank didn't seem like the kind of man that would spend his time doing something as unprofitable as testing a person like her.

Perhaps he also had illegal business dealings with Rebekah? Nah. That didn't make sense. If that were the case, he wouldn't need to deal with her directly when he could just talk with Rebekah.

If he wasn't friends with Rebekah, and he wasn't working with her, then he was here on his own. The only business that connected them was Lucinda Perry, so that had to be it.

Having come to that conclusion, she met his gaze confidently, "I know you. But I'm not sure it's wise to say I know why you are here. But I think you're here regarding my visit to your office yesterday, to see Miss Lucinda Perry, your girlfriend. Am I right or wrong?" she asked, and Tom's lips twitched in satisfaction.

She wasn't a stupid woman, and he liked that about her. He had half expected her to act ignorant or try to play games with him, but seeing how she went directly to the point, he was half sure he could work with someone like her.

"Yes, that is why we are here. You see, I love Lucy very much, and I always love to support whatever she chooses to get involved in. Hence I'm here," Tom said as he watched her, and Priscilla gave him a warm smile.

"That's so sweet of you," she said as she watched him, still trying to understand what was happening.

Was that all there was to this meeting? Why did she feel like there was more to Rebekah's request and Tom's action? She mused.

"Thanks. As my own way of supporting Lucy's decision to work with you, I'd love to become one of your top sponsors. What does becoming a sponsor entail?" Tom asked, and surprise flashed in Priscilla's eyes.

A sponsor? Even though she had been hoping that Tom would say something like this or maybe even offer them some money without wanting to partner with them, somehow she hadn't really expected it. It was like luck was on her side or something.

Until now, Rebekah had been solely responsible for bringing in sponsors. From the first time they met, she had asked them to leave the financial aspect of the foundation to her. Rebekah brought in the money and sponsors and also had her own people manage the financial records.

All Priscilla was allowed to do as the CEO of the foundation was come up with grande event ideas and communicate with the beneficiaries of the foundation. She wasn't allowed to ask Rebekah questions. She was only meant to do as she was told.

Whenever she had an idea for the foundation, she would submit the plan along with an estimate of the total sum of money it would cost to Rebekah, and then Rebekah would give her the money she needed to take care of the event, as well as enough money to care for the beneficiaries of the foundation, and at the end of each month, she received her huge salary like the rest of the staff.

She knew that the foundation was a front for Rebekah's money laundering, but she tried not to care because, at the end of the day, she also got all she wanted—doing good for young ladies who had been abused or sexually traumatized, while also making money.

If Thomas Hank was offering to be a sponsor, then maybe this was the opportunity she needed to finally get out of Rebekah's shadow and actually do something really good for herself before Rebekah decided that she wanted to cut her off.

She would hate to go down with Rebekah if or when the time came and all her evil deeds were exposed. It was time for her to set her own path, and maybe Tom could help her achieve that. But first, she would need to earn his trust.

"Miss Peters?" Harry called, snapping his fingers in front of her when it seemed like she had zoned out.

She blinked as she tried to focus on them, "I'm sorry. I was just stunned by your offer," she said with an apologetic smile.

"Can I see your financial reports? I would love to see exactly how things are being run here so that I can offer as much help as I can," Tom requested, and he could see all the wheels turning in Priscilla's head as she watched him.

Could she trust him? Priscilla mused as she watched him. She desperately wanted to trust him since something told her this was the opportunity she had been waiting for.

Throwing all caution to the wind and choosing to try her luck, she leaned forward, "Are you familiar with Rebekah Miller?" She asked, wanting to see if she could trust him.

Tom narrowed his eyes, "Why do you ask?" He asked, wondering what that had to do with his request.

"Because your response is important to me, and it might determine whether or not I need your sponsorship," Priscilla said, and Tom exchanged a look with Harry, who was seated beside him, before looking at her.

Harry wasn't saying a word as requested by Tom since they had both agreed that Harry would focus on reading her posture and listening to whatever she wasn't saying. He was to step in only if he felt Tom was mishandling it. Thus far, Tom was doing fine, so he just sat back while observing Priscilla.

"I've never crossed paths with her, but I know who she is. What has she got to do with your accepting my sponsorship?" Tom asked once again.

"Do you know if your girlfriend knows her personally? Or is affiliated to her in any way?" Priscilla asked again, and this time Tom's curiosity was piqued.

He looked directly into her eyes, trying to decide whether or not to tell her the truth, but seeing the determined look in her eyes; something told him that she had her own agenda. He highly doubted that Rebekah would have wanted her to mention her name in such a conversation.

"She doesn't. They've never crossed paths either," Tom said and watched as her brows creased as though she was trying to figure out something.

"However..." Tom continued, and she looked at him sharply.

"Her daughter, Anita, used to be in a relationship with me, but she didn't really take me seriously because she didn't know who I was. Now that she knows who I am, I suppose she is interested in me again. She also used to be friends with Lucy," Tom explained, and Priscilla's eyes narrowed as she finally connected the dots.

She had been right. Rebekah had an ulterior motive for wanting Lucinda Perry. She possibly wanted to get rid of Lucy so her daughter would have Thomas Hank. But how did she hope to achieve that by offering Lucy these benefits? Or perhaps was she thinking of doing that by tearing her away from Tom's side? Crazy bitch! Priscilla mused in amusement.

Seeing as Tom was being honest with her, even more honest than Rebekah had been, she decided to be honest with him as well, "Ask your girlfriend to turn down the offer," Priscilla said, and this time Tom looked at Harry, who looked almost as surprised as he was.

"Why? You are the one who offered her the job, why are you asking me to ask her to turn it down?" Tom asked, acting ignorant.

By now, he was curious more than ever before about the relationship between Rebekah and Priscilla. Something seemed off. Why would she so easily want to ruin Rebekah's plan?

"It wasn't my idea to approach her with the offer. It was Rebekah's," Priscilla explained.

"Rebekah? But you own this foundation. Why is Rebekah the one giving the orders?" Tom asked, wondering why she was being so open with him. What did she stand to gain from this?

"She is one of our top sponsors," Priscilla lied.

"And you're willing to go against your top sponsor for a new sponsor? Why?"

"I can't answer that question," she said, not wanting to say something that might implicate her.

"You do realize that asking her to reject your offer means you don't want my money? Since Lucy's job here is the only reason I'm offering to be a sponsor. I will ask her to reject your offer then. Thank you for your time," Tom said as he made to stand up.

"You don't get it, do you? I'm doing you a favor here. Isn't it obvious that Rebekah is up to something? Why would she make such an outrageous offer to the girl in a relationship with her daughter's ex? A man that her daughter still wants, and I'm sure she also wants you to be her son-in-law," Priscilla said, making Tom return to his seat.

"I suppose you'd be needing a favor in return?" Tom asked insightfully.

"What I'm trying to say is that I don't know what she is up to, and I don't want to be involved in whatever she plans to do," Priscilla said, and Tom nodded even though he didn't entirely believe her. She wanted something. He could see it in her eyes.

"What would happen to you if she finds out that you went against her and told me this?" Tom asked, and Priscilla shrugged.

"She will probably kick me out, I suppose," she said without thinking, and Tom raised a brow.

"She has that much power?" Harry asked quietly, giving her the impression that she was slowly being backed into a trap.

"She has all the power. She owns this place. I'm just a front," Priscilla confided, and Tom raised a brow.

Interesting. He had thought she was just a sponsor. This new information just made it clear that there was more to the Foundation than he had thought.

"Is there another reason you are giving us all this information aside from the fact that you don't want to get involved in whatever she is planning? What do you hope to benefit from this?"

Priscilla cleared her throat, "In exchange for the information, I would like you to promise to be my first real sponsor when the time comes that I have to leave here and establish my own foundation for abused girls. Lucy can also work with us if she is interested in helping teenage girls with a history of abuse or sexual-related trauma," she said, and Tom nodded.

It made sense that she was doing this because of her personal ambition. This just made things easier. He silently thanked Rebekah for whatever she must have done to make Priscilla this disloyal to her.

"I will do that on one condition," Tom said, and she raised a brow.

"Go on."

"Lucy is going to accept your offer, but you will communicate every instruction that comes from Rebekah concerning Lucy to me," Tom said, and Priscilla's eyes narrowed when something occurred to her.

"This is the reason you came here, isn't it? You already knew that there was something fishy about the offer. You already knew everything, didn't you?" She asked, even though she wasn't expecting an answer. She had been right to not have underestimated these men. They were successful businessmen for a reason.

"Why do you want her to go ahead with it?" She asked in confusion.

"I have my reasons. Just report to me, and help me keep an eye on Lucy. In return, I will become one of your major sponsors after I've taken care of this," Tom said, and she nodded.

As Tom and Harry walked out of the building a moment later, Harry turned to Tom, "Are you sure it was wise to trust her? If she could easily turn on her boss that way, I don't think she can be trusted."

"I never said anything about trusting her. She is ambitious, and that is what I trust. We are not going to be doing any business with her. All we have to do is keep Lucy safe until we put our plan in motion. We have one final stop to make before we return to the office," Tom said, and Harry raised a brow.

"Where are we going?"

"To find someone who is desperately in need of exclusive news," Tom said in a tone that told Harry that he already had someone in mind. He didn't need to ask him what he was up to. He knew it already.

"What about the good sister?" Harry asked, referring to Lisa, who was the only sane person in the family.

"If she is wise, she will keep her distance from her family. If she joins them for that interview, she deserves whatever embarrassment she will face."

Chapter 360 Bucket List

Miley sat on the couch which Lucas had slept the previous night, with both legs folded under her as she watched a television show while she waited for Lucas, who was cleaning up, to finish and join her.

She had to admit that Lucas was a welcome distraction. She had been distraught since the moment she heard about her condition, but focusing on Lucas and his own problems seemed to take her mind off hers.

She had gone to get drunk as usual, wanting to go home with a random stranger for another night of wild pleasure, when she saw him. That had been her lifestyle since she found out she was dying. Excessive drinking and sex. There was no reason not to indulge herself and get as much pleasure as she could before dying.

That was one reason she had been keeping the news of her cancer away from her family. But now that Amy had found out about it, she was going to have to tell them herself before Amy did.

She didn't know what she was going to do. How was she ever going to bring herself to inform her parents that she, their only kid, was going to die in six months or less?

Although the doctors had suggested that she stay in the hospital and receive treatment as that might increase her chances of survival up to a year, but what was the point? What was the point of living for a year if she was going to spend the entire time on a sick bed? She mused with a scoff.

The doctors had also said she would be in a lot of pain if she didn't receive treatment. But that was merely the physical pain. The pain, anger, and resentment she harbored in her heart at the unfairness of life beat whatever pain in her head.

She wanted to delay the announcement to her family for as long as possible since she knew very well that her parents would bundle her to the hospital if they had to and get her admitted if that would mean a better prognosis.

She wasn't interested in any of that since she knew they would be doing that for themselves. They would be doing that because they wanted to spend some more time with their dying daughter, not caring if that was what she wanted.

She wanted to be selfish and do something for herself just because she wanted to. Not that her parents were bad or anything, no. On the contrary, they were excellent and supportive parents, and indeed they deserved to spend more time with her. But she also deserved to live longer than this, but she wasn't, was she? People rarely got what they deserved.

She winced when her eyes twitched with another bout of intense headache. She was at least glad that her doctor had given her such a potent pain relief medication to improve the quality of her life, if not the quantity.

She stood up to take the medicine and saw Lucas, who had been standing by the doorway watching her as different emotions flickered across her elegant face. From the look in his eyes, she could tell he was feeling very sorry for her, and she didn't exactly like it.

People often looked at her with respect, admiration, envy, lust, longing, adoration, and even fear sometimes, but never pity. The last time she saw that look was in high school when Rachel picked on her. She absolutely hated that look.

Her face was carefully blank as her gaze swept over him, taking in the new outfit he was wearing. She tossed back her hair with lazy femininity, "You look much better. How long have you been standing there?" She asked as she casually walked past him and went to the dining to take her pain relief medication.

"Long enough to know you must have a lot on your mind," Lucas said as he sat down on a couch adjacent to the one she had been sitting on.

"We all have thoughts. That is why we are living beings," she said dismissively as she poured herself a glass of water, and Lucas watched as she swallowed the medicine.

He could tell that she was masking her emotions once again. He had seen the flicker of dislike on her face before her face went blank. She hated that he had seen her in a vulnerable state.

"Your head is aching?" Lucas asked when she remained there with her eyes closed after taking the medication.

She opened her eyes and looked at him with mild amusement, "My head is almost always aching. I thought I told you that already?" She asked.

"When are you going to start receiving your treatments?" He asked and she shook her head.

"I don't have any plans of doing that."

"Why? That would at least give you some more time," Lucas suggested.

"Some more time to do what exactly? Lie on the hospital bed looking sickly? And lose my precious hair during chemotherapy? Spend what little time I have left in hospital gowns when I have designer brands hanging in my wardrobe that I'm yet to wear? I'm too vain to live out the rest of my life that way," she said with a wry smile as she returned to her seat.

"Chemotherapy isn't the only option. You could have a craniotomy. Or a radio..."

"Do you think I haven't considered all my options? I have. The risk involved is too much because of how far gone it is, and I don't want to take any risks. I'd rather spend the remaining time having fun and ticking every item on my bucket list," she said with a bright smile.

Lucas remained silent for some time, "Losing your hair is nothing compared to losing your life," he reminded her.

"Even if I go through with it, I'm still going to lose my life eventually, am I not? I'd rather die with my precious hair than lose a strand of it getting a treatment that would only extend my life a little," she said dismissively, and Lucas sighed.

"What about you?" She asked, and Lucas looked at her in confusion, wondering what the question was. He wasn't the one who needed cancer treatment, so what was she asking? He wondered and looked at her when she giggled.

"Your face is so preciously expressive. I was asking if you have a bucket list," She said, and Lucas sighed inwardly. How could she have expected him to know that was her question?

Lucas shook his head, "I don't think I do."

"Yeah. I didn't either until I realized I was going to die. We always think we have so much time to live and do all the things we want, so we don't give much thought to those things we really desire," she said thoughtfully.

"What is on your bucket list?" Lucas asked curiously.

"Lots of ridiculous stuff, I assure you," she said with an embarrassed giggle that made Lucas smile involuntarily. She seemed like a delightful person when she wasn't being annoyingly bossy.

"Now I think I'm curious," Lucas said, wondering what it was that could possibly make someone like her look so embarrassed.

"I'm too embarrassed to tell it to you right now. I'll tell you about it later," she promised as she reached for her pack of cigarettes which was on the table.

Lucas was quick to grab it before she could, and she raised a brow, "What?"

"I think maybe you should give up smoking now..."

"Why? Don't tell me you are going to say smoking is bad for my health or something," she said sarcastically.

"Or at least do me a favor and don't smoke when I'm with you," Lucas said as he pocketed it.

"Why?" She asked, and Lucas' dimples winked at her.

"Because smoking is bad for your health," he said with a grin, and she laughed softly.

"Don't be ridiculous. I'm dying. There's health to preserve. So you'll have to let me indulge myself," she said as she held out a hand to him.

"Sorry, not giving it back. Tell me more about yourself. You know about me, but I don't even know anything apart from your name and your relationship with Rachel and my sister's secretary," Lucas said, and Miley sighed as she withdrew her hand and relaxed on the couch.

"My family owns Oasis Hotel..."

"Oasis?" Lucas asked since he knew they were currently in the Oasis hotel. This was the biggest hotel in the country, and he knew they had branches in different parts of the world.

"Yeah. It has been passed down from generation to generation. It was supposed to be passed to me," she said with a wistful smile.

"As I mentioned before, I studied outside the country. I studied hotel management, and I've since been overseeing some of the branches abroad since then," she said, and Lucas nodded.

"And you don't have a man in your life, do you?" Lucas asked, and she blinked back in surprise at the sudden expected question.

"I've never had the time to be in a stable relationship because I had to travel around too often to take care of business. It is one of those things I kept putting off for later. May I ask why you asked such a personal question?"

"Apart from the fact that you know about my relationship, while I know nothing about yours, I wanted to understand why you would rather spend your time with a stranger than your partner," Lucas explained.

"I don't have one. And that is why one of the things on my bucket list is to get married and have a child before I die."