

Wild Night 401

Chapter 401: Messed Up Family

"What's going on, Benny?" Tiffany asked from the doorway immediately Bernice stepped into the house, and she paused when she saw her homekeeper carrying Bernice's luggage.

"Why are you with your luggage? Did you have a fight with Adam?" Tiffany asked as she took Bernice's hand and led her to the living room while the housekeeper took Bernice's luggage to the guestroom.

"Can I get a glass of water?" Bernice asked as she sat down.

"Sure," Tiffany said before calling out to one of the housekeepers to get her a glass of water.

"What's going on?" Tiffany asked once again but Bernice didn't say a word until the housekeeper brought the glass of water.

"Adam hit me," she said after gulping down the entire content of the glass.

"Adam hit you?" Tiffany asked, not sounding exactly surprised by the revelation.

Bernice didn't miss Tiffany's tone, "Yes, Tiff. He hit me," she repeated.

"Okay. But he didn't send you packing, did he?" Tiffany asked, and Bernice shook her head.

"No, he didn't. I left on my own. I'm fed up, Tiff. I can't continue with that marriage anymore. I just can't," Bernice said, and Tiffany frowned.

"Benny, you can't leave just because he hit you. I told you before, we have to find a way to live with these men," Tiffany said as she went to sit beside Bernice and placed both arms around her.

"How do you do it, Tiff? I don't get it. How are you able to live this way? I can't do it anymore. I'm depressed," Bernice said as she broke into a sob, while Tiffany consoled her.

"Don't waste your tears on him. Your husband obviously doesn't care about you, and he's not worth it. There is no reason for you to care about him either. All you have to do is find whatever makes you happy, and spend his money on it," Tiffany advised as she held Bernice tightly to herself and patted her hair.

"What's going on here?" Jackson, Tiffany's husband asked when he stepped into the house and saw the sisters in a close embrace.

"You're welcome, honey. Bernice will be spending the night with us tonight," Tiffany informed him as he walked over to where she was and kissed her cheeks before glancing at Bernice who forced a smile as she wiped the tears off her eyes.

"Is everything alright? How is Adam?" He asked curiously.

"Everything is okay. I just needed a breather from him and the boys," she assured him, and although Jackson didn't believe her, he gave her a nod.

"Have you had dinner yet?" Tiffany asked Jackson, not bothered by the fact that he was coming home that late at night.

"No, I haven't," Jackson said, and she smiled at him.

"What about you, Benny? Have you had dinner?" She asked, and Bernice shook her head.

"Alright. Why don't you both go in and freshen up while I have them set up the table for dinner?" Tiffany asked with a sweet smile as she helped Bernice rise from her seat.

"Give me a minute and I will show you to your bedroom," she told Bernice as she called out to one of the housekeepers and asked her to set up the table, before leading Bernice away, while Jackson headed for his bedroom.

Tiffany led Bernice to the bedroom, which was at the other end of the hallway from Jackson's bedroom, but two doors away from hers, "That is my bedroom," Tiffany said pointing at her door.

"Why? You moved away from the one you share with Jack?" Bernice asked, and Tiffany gave her a nod.

"Yes. We both need our privacy," Tiffany said as they walked into Bernice's bedroom.

"Why? By the way, when did you change your housekeepers? Why are they all young ladies when you know your husband has roving eyes?" Bernice asked with a frown after they walked into the guestroom.

Tiffany giggled, "Don't worry about that. I made sure they're all lesbians. None of them will have anything to do with him. If he must act irresponsibly, it has to be outside here," Tiffany assured Bernice, whose eyes widened in surprise.

"What? They're all lesbians?" She asked in disbelief, and Tiffany laughed giddily.

"Yeah."

"How many of them did you hire? How did you even think to do something like that?" Bernice asked curiously.

"There are three of them. One cooks, another cleans, and another does the laundry. I told you I'm only going to do what makes me happy. I don't have the time to worry about Jackson or what he does or does not do anymore. I'm focused on me. You should do that too. And get rid of that nonsense thought about quitting your marriage. If you think Adam is having an affair, do whatever it takes to get your mind off it even if it means getting a lover for yourself too..."

"Tiffany!" Bernice called out in alarm.

"You already said it that he doesn't care about you," Tiffany said reasonably.

"I am married. I have my kids to think about. What will they think about me?" Bernice asked, and Tiffany rolled her eyes.

"Who cares? It's not like you're going to tell them about it, or are you? It's going to be a secret. No one has to know about it," Tiffany assured Bernice.

"What if Adam finds out?" Bernice asked thoughtfully as she considered Tiffany's advise. She needed attention. She needed to feel loved and to be touched. She couldn't keep begging Adam to have sex with her while he looked at her like she was undesirable.

"Like I said, it's going to be a secret. You could bring your lover into the home as your househelp. No one would suspect a thing. Your happiness must always come first, Benny," Tiffany said, and Bernice blinked at her.

"I don't understand you, Tiffany. Just what are you up to?" Bernice asked, and Tiffany shrugged.

"I've found different ways to please myself. And now I'm happy with myself. My life. And even my marriage. Trust me, Benny, you should listen to me if you want to be happy," Tiffany encouraged.

"Besides, Adam would most likely not be bothered if he finds out you're having an affair since he doesn't care about you. Who knows if that would be what he needs to spur him into caring about you?" Tiffany asked, and Bernice sighed.

"I really don't know, Tiff," Bernice murmured, thinking about their mother and what she would think. One her way to Tiffany's home she had thought about what her mother had said about cutting her off. Her life would be over if she left her marriage and her mother cut her off as well. She would lose on all sides and she wasn't sure she was bold enough for that yet. Besides, she still had her kids to think of.

"Don't worry about it and just freshen up. I'll be waiting at the dining," Tiffany said before walking away.

Once Tiffany walked out of the bedroom, she dialed her mother's line, "Bernice is here, Mother," she informed Rebekah.

"If she refuses to return to Adam's house, throw her out," Rebekah ordered.

"But..."

"No buts. Your sister is out of her mind to have left her home. And the only way we can help her come back to her senses is by abandoning her. Talk some sense into her. If she doesn't listen to you, throw her out," Rebekah ordered.

"One more thing, make sure neither Lisa nor Anita hears of this. You know how those two can be. I don't want Lisa encouraging her to leave her marriage, and we can't afford to have Anita start having doubts about getting married to Thomas Hank. All that love talk your sister is spewing is trash. Make sure she comes to her senses," Rebekah added before hanging up.

Tiffany sighed as she returned to the dining where dinner was being set. She looked around to be sure that her husband wasn't anywhere around before spanking the ass of the housekeeper who was setting the table.

The housekeeper grinned at her, and drew her in for a quick kiss, "Come to my bedroom by midnight," Tiffany whispered to her before sitting at the table to wait for her husband and sister.

After Bernice had freshened up, she stepped out of her bedroom dressed in a set of satin pajamas. She stepped into the hallway at the same time as Jackson stepped out of his bedroom, and they looked at each other since they were standing at opposite ends of the hallway.

Bernice resisted the urge to run into her bedroom and shut the door behind her when she saw her immoral brother-in-law. She usually avoided visiting Tiffany because it was a known fact amongst them all that Tiffany's husband could never resist anything in skirts, and she had caught him checking her out a couple of times in the past.

If she had a choice she would have gone to somewhere else, but she was closer to Tiffany than her other sisters. Lisa was too judgemental and wouldn't understand what she was going through, while Anita was young and inexperienced. Tiffany was the only one she could think of coming to.

She squared her shoulders and walked down the hallway while Jackson did the same. She tried to quicken her pace so that she wouldn't have to walk with him or speak with him, and Jackson smirked when he noticed how uncomfortable she was.

Bernice was the first to get to the dining, and she didn't make eye contact with Jackson who she noticed was staring at her regardless of his wife's presence with them.

Neither of them said much to each other. Bernice focused on her food while Tiffany did all the talking. Once they were done eating, Bernice said she was tired and going to bed. Tiffany said they would continue their discussion in the morning, and Jackson said he was going to bed too.

Glad that everyone had retired to their bedroom, Tiffany retired to hers too, and waited for a while before calling the housekeeper from earlier to keep her company for the night.

Bernice on the other hand, lay on her bed, thinking about Tiffany's advise. The thought of doing something as wild as that gave her a thrill of excitement. All she needed to do was to be very discreet about it.

Everyone had something that made them happy. Their mother devoted herself to charity, Lisa's was her jewelry store, Anita's was her job, and Tiffany... She didn't understand yet. She wasn't sure what to make of all Tiffany had said since she knew Tiffany was straight... Or wasn't she? Did she have a male lover somewhere?

Restless with all that thought, she got off the bed and slowly made her way down the hall to the living room. Everywhere was dark, letting her know the lights had been turned off and everyone had retired to their bedrooms for the night.

She walked over to the bar and poured herself a glass of wine. She walked outside to the balcony and sat there, sipping from the glass as she gave more thought to it all.

Taking Tiffany's advise would probably be the best thing to do for herself and everyone. Adam was cheating so she could cheat as well. Her mother had said she shouldn't complain since her husband was taking good care of her and their kids.

She could do whatever she wanted after her kids left for school and Adam left for work. That way she would be happy like Tiffany was and be able to live with Adam. Her mother also wouldn't be disappointed in her or cut her off. It was a win-win for everyone.

She let out a sigh as she took a sip from the glass, and almost jumped out of her skin when Jackson spoke from behind her.

"What a pleasant coincidence," Jackson drawled, sounding really pleased.

Immediately she stood up, wanting to go inside, but Jackson was leaning against the doorframe with both hands folded in front of him, his lips curved in a smirk while his eyes roamed over her body like a predator salivating over its prey.

"Why do you always avoid me, Benny?" Jackson asked, and she cleared her throat.

"I wasn't avoiding you. I'm not avoiding you. I need to retire for the night. I'm tired," she said, feigning a yawn as she tried to walk past him but he didn't budge.

"You're so beautiful, Benny. How often does Adam tell you that?" Jackson asked, and she blinked at him.

"I beg your pardon?"

"If you weren't already married to Adam, I would have married you, not your sister," he said as he reached out a hand and brushed his knuckles over her jaw.

Bernice sucked in a breath involuntarily before slapping his hand away, "Don't touch me! And do not say such words about my sister. I will pretend I did not hear you. Excuse me," she said hotly as she tried to push him out of her way, but Jackson chuckled.

"We both know you want me just as much as I want you. I want you badly, Benny. Take a look," he said pointing to his crotch, and Bernice's eyes moved on their own volition to the bulge in his pajamas.

She swallowed, "I'm not interested in you Jack. I'm not. You are embarrassing us both by doing this."

"Am I?" Jackson asked as he pulled away from the door and took a step closer to her, making her step back involuntarily.

"You are," Bernice said without meeting his gaze, and Jackson smiled.

"It is no news to me that Adam doesn't care about you. He said he's not sexually attracted to you, and I wonder if he's just blind or insane," Jackson said as he moved closer to her until her back touched the railing.

"I'm going to scream if you touch me," Bernice warned.

He chuckled, "Yes, you definitely will. By all means do so. You don't have to worry about a thing, your sister never comes out after she shuts her door, so feel free to scream," Jackson said as his left hand went around her back, and he pulled her forward, capturing her lips in a kiss.

Bernice tried to push him away, but Tiffany's words came back to her. Tiffany really didn't care about anything Jackson did anymore, and she had said it herself that she was happy. Tiffany had encouraged her to do whatever made her happy. What would make her happy right now was to go to bed sexually satisfied. Feeling desired and wanted. It didn't matter if it was Jackson. All that mattered was that she was sexually satisfied. Having sex with Jackson who also happened to be Adam's friend would be like getting back at Adam. All she had to do was forget for a moment that Jackson was her sister's husband. Tiffany didn't have to find out about it. It was going to be a secret.

With that thought in mind, Bernice gave in to Jackson, and let him take her at the balcony.

Chapter 402: Change Of Approach

After his phone conversation with his siblings, Tom returned to the Den and found Lucy watching a soap opera while Jamal slept on the couch beside her with his head on her thighs.

He stood by the door and watched as she patted Jamal's hair distractedly, but she didn't really seem like she was paying attention to the soap opera. She looked more like she had a lot on her mind.

"Care to share what you are thinking about?" Tom asked, startling Lucy who turned in his direction, and she smiled at him.

"Random thoughts. Let's get Jamal to bed. You need to get out of those clothes," Lucy said as Tom approached her.

Without saying a word, he lifted Jamal off the couch and Lucy stood up and turned off the television before following him out. After they tucked Jamal in, they both went to their bedroom.

"Is everything okay?" Lucy asked as she sat on the bed while Tom took off his work clothes which he was still wearing.

"Yeah. Why?" Tom asked as he paused to look at her.

"I mean Jade and Bryan. Are they okay? Have your parents and Bryan met with that Simon guy?" she asked, and he gave her a nod before giving her the details of their conversation.

"Also, Jade wants me to help her do a background check on Candace," Tom added as he continued to undress, and Lucy raised a brow.

"Why? Is Candace aware of it? Is she okay with it?"

"No, she isn't aware," Tom said and went on to explain what Jade had told him concerning the details of how Candace ended up at the orphanage home.

Lucy sighed, "This is tricky. She must have moved past that now. Taking her back to her past might be like reopening her wounds, and there is every possibility that Candace wouldn't appreciate this gesture regardless of Jade's intention. Especially if you uncover something unpleasant about her background," Lucy pointed out.

"I don't think Jade will tell her about it if we find something unpleasant," Tom said, torn between standing there and continuing the conversation in just his boxers or leaving her to go have his shower.

Lucy shook her head with disapproval, "In the same manner you want to secretly investigate about Aaron and Sara without Harry's knowledge?" Lucy asked, but Tom didn't miss the disapproval in her tone.

"Why do you sound that way? You think it is wrong?" Tom asked, and Lucy shrugged.

"I'm not trying to judge you or bring back the past, but I don't think I like how you and your siblings keep secrets from the people you say you care about. First it was me, now it's Harry and Candace, I wonder who is going to be next," Lucy said, and Tom's brows pulled together.

"Lu, all those situations are not the same," Tom pointed out as he went to sit on the bed.

"Are they not?"

"Yes, they are not. I'm not trying to make any excuses, but the reason I lied to you is different. In Harry's case I'm trying to help him, and as for Candace, Jade wants to help her understand why her uncle left her at the orphanage and help reunite her with her family," Tom explained patiently.

"The situation might be different, but your action is the same. Tell me honestly, if you were Harry would you like him to go behind you and do what you're about to do? Who knows what family secret you might uncover, and how it might affect them? Do you think you would want Harry to do the same to you? No, don't answer that yet, I'm not done," Lucy said, raising a finger to stop Tom before he could respond.

"I know you said Harry would have done something to help you. What I'm asking is, do you think he would have gone about it this way? I understand you and why you want to do this, but no matter how much I think about it, I don't think it is right, and I don't think Harry will appreciate this. I

wouldn't want you to do anything that might affect your relationship with him," Lucy said, and Tom raised a brow.

"So what do you propose I do? Pretend you didn't hear anything? Say nothing to Harry, and do nothing about it?" Tom asked, and Lucy shook her head.

"I've been thinking about it. I think I should speak with Aaron," Lucy said thoughtfully.

"If it's bothering him that much, then he probably needs someone to speak to. I could get him to talk to me, that way if it's something Harry needs to know about I will convince him to talk to Harry," Lucy said, and Tom looked at her skeptically.

"What if he doesn't confide in you?"

"Then I will have no choice than to tell Harry what I heard. You shouldn't get involved. I understand you don't mean any harm, but I think you need to change your approach of getting things done," Lucy said, and Tom sighed.

"When are you going to speak with Aaron?"

"Tomorrow. I could take breakfast to him and then find a way to talk with him," Lucy said as she reached for Tom's hand.

"I love you, Tom. I just think you need to learn how to be there for those you love the way they want you to, not how you want to," Lucy said, and Tom gave her a nod.

"I've heard you. I will try to do better. What about Candace? I already promised Jade I would look into it," Tom said, and Lucy shrugged.

"I can't stop you from doing that. That's between Candace and Jade," Lucy said, and Tom gave her a nod.

"Alright. I will let you handle Aaron your own way, but if it doesn't work, you will have to tell Harry about it, and you both will have to let me handle it," Tom said, and Lucy smiled at him.

"Sure," Lucy said, and her smile widened as Tom pulled closer to her and kissed her.

"Thanks. I need to shower now. I'll join you in bed soon," Tom said as he stood up.

"Don't take too long else I might fall asleep," Lucy warned as he walked into the bathroom.

"It's been a long day, you should sleep now," Tom said as he returned to where she now lay on the bed, and kissed her forehead, nose and lips despite her protest.

"I'll wait for you," Lucy said as she tried to sit up, but Tom gently pushed her back down.

"Don't fight it. You can go to sleep. If you're up when I get back that's fine, if you're not, it's fine too," Tom said before walking away.

By the time he returned from the bathroom and joined her on the bed, Lucy had slept off, so he turned off the lights, and cuddled her before drifting off to sleep himself.

The next morning, as they both prepared to leave the house for the office Tom decided to give Harry a call to find out how Aaron was doing and know if he would be able to make it to the office.

Harry who had been in the middle of an argument with Aaron, in his bedroom, paused when his phone started ringing, "Good morning, Tom. Sup?" He asked while still looking at Aaron who was scowling at him.

"Good morning, HaHa. How is your old man doing today?" Tom asked, and Lucy, who was listening in on the call, smiled.

"He's doing better than he was yesterday, but I need to stay home with him to be sure..."

"He don't need to do any damned thing! He's just trying to skip work so he can laze around the house. Don't let him slack off, Tom," Aaron called out to Tom, before turning to Harry.

"I've told you countless times that I'm fine. Just go to your damn office and stop fussing over me like some old granny over her first grandchild," Aaron cut in with an angry hiss.

Although he loved having Harry around him, he couldn't help feeling guilty whenever he saw him, despite his resolve to tell him the truth later.

All he needed now was for Harry to leave the house, so he could find a way to fix his phone's broken screen and contact Sara so he could fix a meeting with her.

Tom chuckled, "If he can say all that then he's fine," Tom said, while Harry eyed his father.

"I'm not leaving him all by himself. I need to keep an eye on him and make sure he gets enough rest even if it means bringing him with me to the office," Harry insisted.

"Wow! Nobody told me today was bring your dad to work day. So because you're Co-CEO now you think you can do whatever you like," Aaron hissed at him, and this time both Harry, Tom, and Lucy laughed.

"I need you to accompany me to a meeting with some foreign investors today. So how about Lucy comes over and keeps him company instead while you come to the office?" Tom suggested, since that was another reason he had called.

"Lucy? Doesn't she have work to do at the office?" Harry asked skeptically. Although he wanted to stay with his father, he also needed to be at the office as he had work to attend to, and not all of the work could be handled from home as he had done the previous day.

"Hello, Harry! I don't have anything serious to do. I can assign my tasks to my teammates," Lucy responded before Tom could.

"Hey, LuLu! You really don't mind coming over to keep this grumpy old man company?" Harry asked, and Aaron's ears perked up when he heard that Lucy was coming to keep him company.

"Lucy, you can come over. I'm sick of seeing Harry around here," Aaron called out to Lucy, and Harry scowled at him.

"I don't mind. Is there breakfast or do I need to get something on my way?" Lucy asked curiously.

"If it's Samantha's delicacy, you can bring some on your way here. I'd love to have some too. Alright, Tom. I will get ready for work while I wait for Lucy," Harry said, and Tom exchanged a look with Lucy.

"I will drop her off at your place and then we can head to the office together," Tom said, and Harry agreed before hanging up the call.

"Lucy is coming over. She will spend the day with you," Harry informed Aaron, who smiled with satisfaction.

"That is not a problem," he assured Harry as he walked away to go and freshen up.

"Are you sure you can get him to talk to you?" Tom asked, and Lucy gave him a nod.

"I will do my best. Don't worry and just leave it to me," she assured him.

"Let's get going then," Tom said as he stood from the couch held out a hand to help her up.

"Call me if anything comes up," Tom said as they walked out of the house together.

"Relax, Tom. Don't fret," Lucy said as she rubbed his arm in a soothing gesture and Tom gave her a nod.

Just as they both got into the car, his phone started ringing and he received it when he saw that it was a call from Eric, the talkshow host.

"Good morning, Mr. Howells!" Tom greeted after he received the call.

"Eric is fine, please. I hope it's not too early to talk?" He asked politely.

"It's not. Is everything alright?"

"I wanted to let you know that I'll be sending out the invite to Rebekah Miller today. One of our guests was involved in an accident and can't make it to the show so I was thinking I should replace her. Is two weeks okay for you?" Eric asked, and Tom grinned.

"It's perfect."

Chapter 403: Danger

"Oh, shit!" Lucy exclaimed softly, and Tom who had just hung up his call with Eric turned to her curiously.

"Is there a problem?" Tom asked, and Lucy bit her lower lip.

"I just remembered Lucas," she said, reminding Tom that Lucas was around and she was supposed to see him.

"Oh! It escaped my mind too. I'm sorry," Tom said, not knowing what else to say. They had just assured Harry and Aaron that they were coming over, so he didn't know what to say.

"It's not your fault. I shouldn't have forgotten," Lucy said with a slight frown, wondering how she could have so easily forgotten about Lucas' text.

"Can we make a quick stop by the hotel first to see Lucas? I have to find out how long he's going to be around, and give him the key to my apartment so he doesn't have to stay at the hotel if he's going to be around for a while," Lucy said, thinking that she also needed to relay Miley's message to Lucas, and find out what his relationship with her was about.

Tom gave her a nod, "Sure. I'll just give Harry a call and let him know," Tom said before dialing Harry's line.

Once Harry received the call, Tom relayed the information to him, asking him not to be in haste to get ready as they would take some time to get there.

Once he hung up the call, Lucy gave him the direction to the hotel, before she dialed Lucas' line, "Good morning, Kiddo," she greeted cheerfully when Lucas received her call.

"Good morning, big sis," Lucas greeted with a yawn, and Lucy smiled since she could tell his response was meant to be sarcastic but it was ruined by the yawn.

"I'm sorry I wasn't close to my phone when you called last night. How are you doing? You arrived safely, yeah?"

"No, I didn't. I'm actually speaking with you from the ICU wearing an oxygen mask," Lucas said, and Lucy laughed softly.

"I'm on my way to the hotel to see you, and Tom is with me. You are fit for company, right?" Lucy asked, and Lucas looked down at himself. He had collapsed on the bed the moment he walked into the hotel room and had slept off wearing his clothes.

He couldn't remember the last time he had felt this exhausted, or the last time he had slept so soundly. Thanks to the nature of his job, he could never sleep for more than four hours without receiving one phone call or the other, and in the last couple of days since he left the hospital, he had crashed on Miley's couch and that had not been exactly comfortable.

Miley. He shook his head immediately to discard thoughts of her. He didn't want to think about her. Not now. Not later.

"I will be fit before you guys get here, and I will wait for you at the cafe beside the hotel," Lucas said, and hung up before Lucy could say another word.

"Well, that settles that," Lucy said with a small smile, glad that Lucas was beginning to sound more like himself.

"By the way, who was that with you on the phone earlier?" Lucy asked curiously.

"That was Eric Howells. The man on whose TV show we are going to expose Anita's family," Tom said, and Lucy nodded.

"He says one of his guests won't be available, so he wanted to find out if it was okay to push the Miller's interview forward," Tom explained.

"How forward?" Lucy asked curiously.

"In two weeks. That's the week after the anniversary celebration," Tom said, and Lucy smiled at him.

"It seems like lady luck is on our side," Lucy said, happy with this new information.

"I think so too. I hope Barry is able to find more dirt on them, and we can prove that Rebekah Miller murdered her husband before then," Tom said, and Lucy nodded.

"I hope so too."

Thirty-five minutes later they pulled into the parking lot of the cafe beside the hotel where Lucas was lodged, and headed straight inside.

Lucas, who was already seated at one end of the cafe sipping from a cup of coffee and eating sandwich, stood up immediately he sighted them, and held out his arms to Lucy who walked into his embrace with a wide smile on her face.

"I'm so happy to see you, Kiddo. Although it's been just some days since I last saw you, it seems like a really long time already," Lucy said after she pulled away from his embrace and looked into his face.

"I know, right? Good morning, Tom. It's good to see you again," Lucas greeted as he turned to Tom, and held out his hand to him for a handshake.

"Same here. How have you been?" Tom asked as he shook his hand before all three of them sat down.

"Good. You can see for yourself. Not bad, right?" Lucas asked with a small smile as both Lucy and Tom looked him over.

Almost immediately, a waiter approached them. Tom ordered a cup of latte, while Lucy ordered a cup of hot chocolate and the waiter left.

"You look like you lost some weight," Lucy observed.

"Give him a break. You'd lose some too if you were in his shoes," Tom said lightly, and Lucas grinned, while Lucy scowled at him.

"Let her know. And just so you know, Tom, you've earned yourself some more brownie points. Lucy looks happy and well taken care of," Lucas observed, and Lucy eyed them both with displeasure, especially Tom who was grinning.

"Well taken care of? Who said he has anything to do with how I look? I take care of myself," Lucy hissed at Lucas.

"Yeah, she does," Tom agreed, and she glared at him.

"Now you're taking my side?" She hissed at him, making Lucas chuckle.

"I'm happy to see that you're fine," Lucas said as he watched her. He had feared that she was pretending to be okay over the phone, but seeing her this way, he knew without doubt that she was fine, and he knew Tom was responsible for it so he shot Tom a silent glance of gratitude, and as though he understood, Tom gave him a nod.

"How long will you be staying?" Lucy asked just as the waiter returned with hers and Tom's drinks.

"I haven't decided on that yet. I'm still trying to decide on the places to go. By the way, here's Rachel's phone. Have you decided on what to do with it?" Lucas asked as he took it out of his pocket and placed it in front of Lucy.

"Thanks. I'm still working on it. I will let you know when I'm done. By the way, why did you decide to come back to Ludus? I'm sure it wasn't just to give this to me. Don't tell me you were missing me that much?" Lucy asked with a grin, and seeing that the siblings needed privacy, Tom stood up.

"Please excuse me for a moment. I just remembered that I need to make some calls to readjust my schedule," Tom said as he picked up his styrofoam cup of latte, and both siblings gave him a nod and watched as he walked away.

"He's a good guy," Lucas said, and Lucy gave him a nod.

"Yeah, he is a great guy. Now why don't you tell me why you came here?" Lucy asked once again.

"When did it become a crime to stop by my twin sister before traveling on a long vacation?" Lucas asked, and Lucy shrugged.

"Of course it's not a crime. But lately I've become so curious about a lot of things about you that right now I've become very suspicious of you," Lucy said, and Lucas raised a brow.

"What are you talking about?"

"Tell me about your relationship with Amy's best friend, and why she called asking me for your number. Were you cheating on Rachel with her?" Lucy asked, and this time Lucas' heart skipped a beat.

"Miley called you? When?" Lucas asked curiously.

"Also can you tell me why out of all the questions I just asked you, the fact that she called me seemed most important to you?" Lucy said, watching him with interest..

After her phone call with Amy and Miley last night she had remembered that Lucas had mentioned knowing Amy's best friend casually. She hadn't taken it seriously because Lucas had sounded like it wasn't a big deal, but after hearing the interest in Miley's voice last night, she was not only curious but also now very interested in the nature of their relationship.

Lucas sighed, "Really, it's not a big deal. I met her two days ago. She's pretty cool, but I'm not interested in being friends with her," Lucas said with a shrug, and Lucy raised a brow.

"Why not?"

Jade, who had spent most of the night awake and staring at her phone as she awaited what was probably the most important call of her life at that stage of her life, nearly jumped out of the bed when her phone started ringing few minutes after she drifted off to sleep.

She grabbed the phone immediately, hoping it was a call from either of the national security agencies who she had entrusted to capture both Jero and the Lords of the legion cartel.

"Hello!" She greeted immediately she grabbed the phone.

"Good morning, Esquire," Harry greeted, making her heart skip a beat when she heard his voice.

Although she wanted to speak with him, but this wasn't the time, "Hey, hi! Good morning, Harry!" she greeted as she rubbed her eyes.

"Did I wake you up?" Harry asked with a concerned expression as he adjusted his tie while looking back at his reflection in the mirror.

While waiting for Tom and Lucy to arrive he had decided to give Jade a call to while away the time, seeing as she had failed to give him a call the previous evening as he had expected.

"Sort of."

"Are you alright? I was calling to find out how it went last night. I mean with Jero and the Cartel," Harry said, since that was also one of the reasons he had called, apart from wanting to see her reaction to what Aurora had told her.

"Yeah, I'm okay. About that, I decided to take your advice, and stay back at the hotel. I didn't go with them. I'm still waiting to hear from them," Jade said with a yawn, and Harry raised a brow.

"Oh, I see!" Harry said with a thoughtful frown.

She had been at the hotel all evening yet had failed to call him after she heard from Aurora? What did that mean? Was she not affected by what she had heard? Harry mused as he tried to imagine her, waving it off dismissively and turning on the television to watch a television show, or most likely taking out documents related to her case to pore over them.

He shook his head. That couldn't be it. She had said she wanted to live rent-free in his head, and even Aurora had said she had seemed more surprised than excited about the news. That means she cared.

If she cared, did that mean she had been too affected by the news that she had decided not to call him? He wondered as he tried to imagine Jade crying over the news of his date with Aurora and getting drunk to stupor. He shook his head once again. That image did not suit Jade.

"What about you? Are you at work already? Oh, by the way, how is your dad's health?" Jade asked when she remembered Aaron.

"He is feeling better today. Lucy is coming over to spend the day with him so that I can go to work today," Harry said, and Jade nodded.

"That's cool," she said, and paused, waiting for him to say something else.

Although she was feeling very tempted to ask him about his conversation with Aurora and why he had asked her to accompany him to the dinner party despite her confession to him two days ago, but she stifled the urge to ask him any related questions.

She was going to let him do what he wanted for now, while she focused on closing this case and relocating to Ludus. If he was still single by the time she was done, she would do as she had promised Candace, and confess her feelings to him, but if he wasn't, then it would just have to be her loss.

Harry on the other hand was also waiting for her to say something or ask him about it. When she didn't and the line remained awkwardly silent for some seconds, he rubbed the bridge of his nose as he cleared his throat.

"Esquire, about our phone conversation the other day. About what you said... What did you mean when you said you wanted to live rent-free..." Before he could finish his question, Jade quickly interrupted him when her phone beeped with an awaiting call notification.

"I'm sorry, Harry, but I have to go now. They're calling about last night. It's important I receive the call now," she said, her heart beating wildly.

"Sure. Let's talk later then," Harry said, and she hung up immediately.

"Hey! Good morning! How did it go?" Jade asked breathlessly immediately she received the call.

"Not so good. For some reason they came prepared. We lost some men, and your witness is badly injured too. He was just moved into the ICU. He was asking for someone called Candace before he passed out," the person on the other end of the phone informed her.

"What about the Lords of the cartel? Were you able to get them? All of them?" Jade asked, holding her breath as she placed a hand on the left part of her chest which felt like her heart was about to shoot out from it.

The response to her question was very important to her as it would determine what the future held for her. She knew without a doubt that if for any reason any of the lords escaped, then not just Candace's life, but her life too would be in danger too. She knew they were going to come for her.

Chapter 404: Date

Lucas looked at Lucy incredulously, "Are you seriously asking me that right now, Lu? Do you honestly think I'm in the state of mind to be in any way attached to any lady after I just walked out of such a toxic relationship with Rachel?"

Lucy sighed as she picked up her cup of chocolate. She sipped from it before meeting his gaze, "I understand what you mean. But I think she really likes you," Lucy said, but Lucas shook his head.

"It doesn't matter, Lu. I don't have to be friends with everyone that likes me, do I? I'm just trying to look out for myself right now. My mental health is at stake here. She is ill. You may not fully understand the extent of her illness yet, but as a medical doctor I know how bad her condition is and just how worse it's going to get overtime if she doesn't start receiving treatments. Being friends with her or getting involved with her in anyway is going to mess with me. I'm not there yet. I'm not ready for it," Lucas said, as he took a bite from his sandwich before sipping from his cup of coffee.

Seeing the turmoil in his eyes, Lucy could tell that he was genuinely worried about Miley even though he didn't want to be, "You care about her," Lucy stated, knowingly.

"I'm a medical doctor. Caring about sick people comes naturally to me," Lucas stated, sounding more defensive than he had intended.

"I know you, Luc. Your eyes don't lie. You care about her even though you don't want to. Care to tell me how you met her? Amy said you both didn't part on very friendly terms," Lucy said, and Lucas looked away from her for a moment as he contemplated if he should tell her or not.

"I will appreciate it if you don't lie to me," Lucy said, and Lucas sighed as he picked up his cup of coffee which had become cool and gulped down its content.

Deep down he wanted to talk about Miley. He wanted to tell someone else about his encounter with her and know if he was crazy for caring about her the way he did in such a short duration of time. And right now it seemed like Lucy was the only available person he could talk to. It wasn't like he had any other close friends who he could speak with about this right now apart from Tyler, who was thousands of miles away, and who he hadn't seen since for some years now.

Lucas took a deep breath before telling Lucy all about his meeting with Miley, how he had woken up at her house and how he had left her, he only left out her plan to get married and have a kid before dying.

By the time he was done, Lucy had a sad smile on her face, and a tear drop on her cheek which she brushed away with her thumb, "She sounds like a really sweet person," Lucy said, and Lucas smiled.

"She actually is," Lucas admitted.

"Are you sure you won't regret this? I understand that you are not ready for any sort of emotional attachment, and you need time to recover from Rachel. But if her condition is as bad as you have said, then she doesn't have the luxury of time to wait, so you can't blame her for coming on so strongly," Lucy said, and Lucas raised a brow.

"I didn't say I am romantically interested in her. It's just friendship. You don't expect me to just jump from Rachel into another lady's arms in such a short notice do you? I'm not interested in rebounding with Miley," Lucas said, and Lucy smiled as she sipped from her cup of chocolate.

"I didn't say you should do that, did I? Listen, what I'm just trying to say, is this; At least Miley has a couple of months left to live, so if you care about her why not help make that time more memorable for her? Haven't you seen healthy people die in the twinkle of an eye? I mean, there's no guarantee in life. One minute a person is alive, and the next a person is dead. Do you have any idea how many healthy persons without terminal illnesses have died since Miley was diagnosed? She has outlived them all," Lucy said making Lucas sigh.

"What are you trying to say Lu?"

"I know you are scared that when you get close to her and she dies you're going to be devastated by the loss, but you can't always shield yourself from being hurt, Luc. Life doesn't work that way. Pain is a part of life. At least when you feel pain you know you're still alive. If anything happens to Tom right now, I might go crazy with grief, but you know one thing I know? I won't have any regrets. I think the hurt I'd feel over losing him is worth having him in my life for even only a couple of months. I'd rather have spent that time with him, than not spent it at all," Lucy said, and Lucas looked at her with interest.

"You have changed a lot," Lucas observed.

"I know, right?" Lucy asked with a soft laughter, "You have no idea all the crazy things I've experienced and done since I met Tom. It feels like I'm a different person," Lucy said, and Lucas smiled.

"You are obviously a different person from Lucy that called me a few weeks ago asking me about her colleague's friend's driver," Lucas said, and Lucy giggled.

"That seems like such a long time ago," she said, and Lucas nodded when he remembered how he had been cuddled up on the couch with Rachel when that call came in. Who knew that so much could happen or change in such a short time?

"So? Am I allowed I text your number to her?" Lucy asked, and Lucas' brows pulled together.

"Do you honestly think it is a good idea? If you were in my shoes would you be friends with her at this point?" He asked, and Lucy shrugged.

"You care about her and being away from her won't make you care about her less. She likes you, and apart from the fact that she seems like a good distraction for you, you are not working right now so you have some time to spare. You can spend what little time you can with her. Who knows? Maybe she might agree to receive treatment for your sake. What is the worst that can happen? A couple of months or a year from now she probably dies and you are devastated..."

"Lu..."

"I know. I know it's not as easy as I'm making it sound, but if you think about it, that is actually the worst that can happen, isn't it? And as I said before, that loss is not something you can avoid or have control over, it can happen to anyone. Whether you live with a person for a year, ten years, or thirty years, loss is loss. In this case, it's something you're expecting so one way or the other you are partially prepared for it. It's not a brutal or happening suddenly and catching you unaware," Lucy said as she reached across the table and pat his hand.

Lucas rubbed his eyes wearily as he considered everything she had said, "Alright. You can give her my number," Lucas said, and raised a brow when Lucy suddenly started giggling as she picked up her phone which was ringing.

"Amy is calling," Lucy said as she showed Lucas her phone's screen before receiving the call.

"Good morning, Amy or is it Miley? Or both?" Lucy greeted cheerfully, and smiled when both Amy and Miley giggled into the phone.

"Good morning, Lucy. It's Miley. Have you heard from your brother?" Miley asked, and Lucy extended the phone to Lucas.

"It's Miley," she mouthed to him silently, and Lucas' heart skipped a beat as he took the phone from her.

"Good morning, Miley," he said, and cleared his throat which was tight.

"Oh, it's Lucas!" Miley said excitedly, and Amy who was listening in on the call with the other pair of Bluetooth airpod, rolled her eyes.

"Hello, Lucas. Good morning!" Miley greeted cheerfully, and Lucas felt a pit growing in his stomach once again.

"Hi! I'm sorry about yesterday. I shouldn't have said..."

Miley cut in before he could apologize, "It's fine. I'm over it. I don't think I have the luxury of time to hold grudges right now. Your twin said you're in Ludus. We just arrived here. Can I see you?" Miley asked, and Lucas raised a brow.

"You are in Ludus?"

"Yes. And I'd like to meet with you if you don't mind," Miley said, Lucas gaze shifted to look at Lucy, who was watching him very closely.

"What?" Lucy mouthed.

"She's in Ludus," Lucas mouthed back, and Lucy giggled as she gestured to him to carry on with his phone call.

Lucas cleared his throat, "When did you arrive? And why are you here?" Lucas asked curiously, wondering if she was in Ludus because of him or if she had business to attend to.

"We just arrived. We are on our way to Amy's apartment," Miley informed him, ignoring his other question.

"So? When can we meet?" She asked once again.

"Uhm... Maybe we can do lunch or dinner," Lucas suggested, and Miley smiled happily.

"Please say dinner. I need to sleep," Amy mouthed to her.

"Dinner is perfect. Please text me your number right now. I will book a reservation and let you know where to meet us," Miley said, and Lucas raised a brow.

"Us?"

"Yeah. Amy will be coming with me. I can't wait to see you Lucas. I've missed you so much. I've been so lonely since you left," she said, and Amy sat up to look at her in disbelief.

"Seriously? You have been lonely?" Amy asked incredulously, and Lucas' lips twitched with amusement as he listened to their little argument.

"I'm not saying that I didn't enjoy your company..."

"But you are saying you prefer Dr. Hottie's company to mine? Seriously? Someone who you met barely seventy-two hours ago? Someone who left you while I stayed with you?" Amy asked with mild annoyance as Miley tried to kiss her cheeks.

Dr. Hottie? Where did that name come from? Lucas mused as he listened to them.

"There is no basis for comparison, and definitely no need for you to feel jealous of Dr. Hottie. You sound like a jealous lesbian partn.."

Lucas cleared his throat when it seemed like they had forgotten he was still on the line, and immediately they looked at each other feeling embarrassed.

"Sorry," Miley apologized with an awkward giggle.

"It's fine. See you later then," Lucas said, but before he could hang up she quickly stopped him.

"Don't forget to text me your number. And follow me back on Instagram. Why did you unfollow me anyway?" She asked, and Lucas sighed.

"I'm in the middle of a conversation with my sister and you're interrupting us," Lucas reminded her, and she gasped softly.

"Oh, that's true! Please return the phone to your kind-hearted sister," Miley said, and Lucas raised a brow as he handed the phone to Lucy.

"Amy or Miley?" Lucy asked, and once again they both giggled.

"Thank you so much for everything, Lucy. You're such an angel. It is thanks to you that I can see him today," Miley said happily, and Lucy smiled when she heard the excitement in her voice.

"You're welcome."

"Is it possible that I see you? Perhaps I could drop by your office and see you briefly? I'd really love to meet Lucas' twin sister in person, at least once," she pleaded.

"Why?" Lucy asked curiously. Although she was curious to see her too, especially after she heard from Lucas that she had an unpleasant history with Rachel. Any enemy of Rachel was her friend.

"Because I like Lucas, and I'm also curious him. I'm sort of curious about you too. There are a lot of questions I'd love to ask you, and I believe I can learn more about him from you," Miley said, and Lucy smiled, while she looked back at Lucas who was watching her with questioning eyes.

"That's fine. Unfortunately I have other plans for today and I'm not going to the office, so that would have to be tomorrow. I will answer whatever questions you have about my kid brother. I could even bring a photo album along if you want," Lucy said, and Lucas glared at her making her giggle.

"Really? That would be sooo awesome! I will really love that," Miley said happily.

"It is settled then. I look forward to meeting you. I have to go now."

"Before you go, please don't forget to text me his number. I'll text you mine so you have it too," Miley rushed to say before Lucy hung up.

"What was that about?" Lucas asked when Lucy flashed him a bright smile.

"She is a such sweetheart. Make sure you capture some nice photos during your outing with her and post them on your Instagram page. There is no reason not to get upset Rachel while you're having fun. Make sure you tag me to the posts. I'd love to leave some cute comments for her to see," Lucy said as she drank the remaining chocolate on her cup.

"Between you and mom I don't know who's worse," Lucas said as he told her what their mother had done to Rachel's clothes.

Lucy howled with laughter, "I can't believe she did that. I would have loved to be there. Rachel deserves nothing less than that!" She said with a satisfied smile as she glanced at her wristwatch.

"You have become so petty," Lucas observed, and Lucy giggled as she returned her attention to him.

"Proudly so too," Lucy said as she took out her apartment keys from her handbag.

"I have to leave now, Luc. Since you are not sure when you're leaving yet, why not move to my apartment instead of paying for a room at the hotel? I will ask Adolf to drop off my car at the apartment so you can move around easily, and he can bring you some food too," Lucy suggested as she stood to leave, and Lucas did the same.

"Please don't say no. I will feel more comfortable knowing you are at my apartment," she pleaded when it seemed like he was going to argue, and Lucas sighed as he took the key from her.

"Alright," Lucas said as they both walked outside and headed for the parking lot.

"Let me know how your date with Miley goes, okay?" Lucy said as Tom got out of the car.

"It's not a date," Lucas corrected as he held out the passenger door for Lucy.

"Sure. Still, let me know," she said as she embraced him.

"I'm serious. Besides, Amy will be there too," Lucas said, and Lucy flashed him a smile.

"Let me know how your hangout with them goes. Satisfied?"

"Yes. Lu? Make sure you don't take any photo albums to her. And don't tell her any embarrassing details," Lucas warned Lucy who was smiling at him mischievously, while Tom looked from one to the other wondering who and what they were talking about.

"You are still around, right?" Tom asked curiously.

"Yea. For the time being. I will let you guys know before I leave," Lucas said, and Tom gave him a nod before getting into the car.

Lucas stepped away from the car once Tom turned on the ignition and he waved at them as they drove off.

He took a deep breath to calm himself once the car disappeared from view, and tried not to worry whether or not he had made the right decision by listening to Lucy and speaking with Miley.

The only way he could overcome the feeling of unease in his stomach, was by trying his best not to think too much about the meeting with Miley.

Chapter 405: Package

"What about the lords of the cartel? Were you able to get them? All of them?" Jade asked, holding her breath as she placed a hand on the left part of her chest, which felt like her heart was about to shoot out from it.

"Yes. They were four. Two amongst them are dead. They were gunned down while trying to escape. One is in the hospital, and the last one is in our custody," the person on the other end of the phone informed her, and Jade's breath came in a whoosh of relief.

"That's great. I'm so glad this is almost over," Jade said happily as she let herself collapse on the bed. Now she didn't have to worry about anything or keep looking over her shoulders.

"It's not over. Don't let your guard down. By the way, they were supposed to be five. One of them is missing," he said, referring to Cassidy.

"Oh, yeah! That's true. I suppose he was not present at the meeting?" Jade asked, pretending not to know about Cassidy's disappearance.

"I'm not sure. We will question them about it and find out what we can."

"By the way, how bad is Jero's wound?" Jade asked curiously.

"Very bad. The doctor says he is likely not going to make it. Although Jero is unconscious at the moment, I asked the men guarding his room to grant you access to see him when you arrive. I will text you the location of the hospital. Thanks for your hard work. You made this arrest possible," the man said before hanging up.

"OH MY GOD!" Jade screamed when the magnitude of what she had just achieved occurred to her, and she dropped her phone on the bedstand and jumped on her bed happily.

Candace, who had just stepped out of her bedroom and was heading to Jade's room to find out if she had heard anything about the arrest, quickly rushed into Jade's bedroom to see what was wrong when she heard Jade's scream.

"Is everything alright?" Candace asked in alarm, and Jade jumped off the bed as she rushed to lift Candace off the ground, despite the fact that Candace was a bit bigger than she was.

"I DID IT! I MADE IT HAPPEN!" She repeated over and over again as she embraced Candace and spun her around.

"What did you do? Have they arrested them?" Candace asked, reasoning that was the reason for Jade's excitement.

"Oh, my God, Candace! I need a drink! I need to celebrate! We need to celebrate!" Jade said as she quickly let go of Candace and rushed out of the bedroom to the bar.

"What is going on, Jade?" Candace asked as she followed her into the living room.

"Give me a moment," Jade said as she took out two wine glasses and poured some wine into them before handing a glass to Candace.

"Cheers to the end of the legion cartel," she said, raising her glass in a toast, and Candace clinked glasses with her, "And to Jero's end," Jade added, making Candace's heart skip a beat as she watched Jade raise her glass to her lips.

Candace didn't sip from the wine. She followed Jade to the living room, and they both sat on the couch while her eyes remained fixed on Jade as she waited patiently for Jade to tell her what she was talking about.

"How much longer do I have to wait before you start talking? What exactly happened? And what about Jero?" Candace asked impatiently when she noticed that Jade was deliberately keeping her waiting.

"The operation was successful. Jero was injured, so he's at the hospital. I heard it is serious, and he might not make it. He is unconscious at the moment and currently at the ICU," Jade summarized with a brilliant smile, and Candace raised a brow.

"Jero? Unconscious?" She asked doubtfully, and Jade bobbed her head as she raised her glass to her lips again.

"I don't think I can believe that until I see for myself," Candace said with a shake of her head.

It definitely couldn't be that easy for her. Life had never been easy for her. She always had to work extra hard to get things done. So how was she expected to believe that Jero, who had made her spend most of the night tossing and turning on her bed as she tried to come up with a plan on how to get rid of him, was lying unconscious in a critical condition?

Jade gave her a nod, "Sure. Why don't you go in and get ready so we can go pay him a visit, and then you see for yourself?" Jade suggested with a happy smile.

"Alright. I'll join you shortly," Candace said as she gulped down the entire content of her glass before heading for her bedroom, and Jade did the same.

An hour later, Jade pulled her car into the parking lot of the hospital whose address the policeman from earlier had texted her, "Are you ready?" Jade asked as she turned to Candace, who was staring ahead of her.

Candace took a deep breath before giving her a nod, "Yeah. I think so," Candace said, and they both got out of the car.

Once they walked into the hospital, they received directions to Jero's room, and Jade led the way there. Candace stopped walking abruptly when she saw the two policemen guarding the door, and Jade reached for her hand.

"It's okay. They will let us in, don't worry," Jade assured her, before smiling at the policemen.

"I believe you've been informed of my visit? I'm Jade Hank, and I'm here to see Jero," Jade said politely, and both men looked her over before shifting their gaze to Candace.

Unlike Jade who was formally dressed in a corporate suit pant, Candace was casually dressed in a black sleeveless bodysuit which was tucked into a pair of jeans trousers, and a matching jean jacket.

"We will have to pat her down before she goes in with you," one of the men said, and Jade glanced at Candace who seemed to stiffen the moment they said it.

"Of course. I'm sure it's the protocol. You can pat me down too, but you are both male, and I'm not comfortable with that. Is there a female officer around who can pat us down instead?" Jade asked, and both men exchanged a look before shaking their head.

"Then do you mind if I pat her down while you watch? And she can do the same to me," Jade asked, and one of the men shrugged.

"Go ahead," he said, and immediately Jade stepped towards Candace and took her handbag from her.

Jade handed both their handbags to one of the men to search, before she moved her hands over Candace's body. She paused for only a second when her hands brushed something hard which was tucked into the back pocket of her trouser. She continued patting her down like she didn't feel anything, and when she was done she looked at the men.

"Done. You can search me now," Jade told Candace, but they shook their head.

"That won't be necessary. We were informed of your visit," one of the officers assured her, and Jade gave them a polite smile as she took her bag from them.

"Thank you for your service," Jade said as the men stepped away from the door to grant the entrance.

Immediately they both walked into the room and Jade shut the door behind them, she grabbed Candace's hand and dragged her to into bathroom, and stretched out her hand to her.

She didn't need to say a word for Candace to know that she was furious, "It's for self-defense. I wasn't going to hurt him," Candace said defensively as she reached behind her and handed the pocket knife to Jade.

"Seriously? After everything I told you? Why would you need a knife to defend yourself against an unconscious man?" Jade asked, sounding more disappointed than angry as she threw the pocket knife into her handbag.

Although she wanted to yell, but she couldn't because she didn't want to draw the attention of the officers to them, but her eyes passed the message to Candace.

"I wasn't going to hurt him. I have no reason to lie to you. If you know Jero the way I do, then you'd understand the need I'm so cautious," Candace said quietly before walking out of the bathroom and approaching the bed where Jero was lying with an oxygen mask over his nose. Apart from temple which was wrapped with a bandage, his body and face was bruised and he looked like he had taken a serious beating.

As she looked down at his unconscious form she remembered how they had met, and how she had been fooled by his act into falling for him without really knowing who and what he was.

Her blood boiled with anger when her previous resentments resurfaced as some memories came back to her. She remembered how he had refused her breastfeeding Jamal. He said her body was his, and she had done her bit by giving birth to Jamal, and so he should be fed with formula for infants. The couple of times he caught her breastfeeding Jamal, he had taken her baby away from her for days as punishment.

She remembered how he had obsessed over her and abused her verbally and emotionally while he abused Andy physically and stole all the money they worked for leaving them penniless and solely dependent on him.

Her body trembled with anger, and tears dropped from her eyes when she remembered how he sold Andy to men for money. How he beat her and locked her up whenever she refused to sleep with the men. She remembered how Andy often came back in torn clothes with bruises on her face.

Seeing how the bastard now lay unconscious, Candace silently prayed that he would never wake up. Even though such a death was too good for a bastard like him, she hoped he would die so that neither her nor Jamal and Andy would have to face him again.

Jade watched as Candace's body trembled with emotion she didn't understand, and putting her anger aside for a moment, she stepped towards Candace and embraced her, "It's alright. He can't hurt you again," Jade murmured softly as she patted her back.

"I want him dead, Jade. For Andy's sake, I want him dead," Candace cried as Jade continued to pat her back.

"Can...dace," Jero called in a muffled whisper when he opened his eyes and he saw her standing by his bedside.

Hearing the sound, both ladies turned to look at him, and Candace took a step back while Jade took a step forward, "You're awake. I should call the doctor," Jade said as she turned to leave, but Jero raised a hand to stop her.

"No," he said breathlessly as he reached for the oxygen mask and pulled it away from his face so they could hear him.

"Excuse us. I... want to... speak with her... alone," Jero said slowly before replacing the mask, but Jade shook her head.

"No. That won't happen. Whatever you want to say to her, say it in front of me," Jade said stubbornly as she dragged one of the seats beside the bed to the window.

Seeing that he didn't have a choice, Jero lifted the oxygen mask again, "Thanks for agreeing to see me," he told her slowly and replaced the mask.

"What do you want?" Candace asked impatiently.

"I wanted to see you one last time to say I'm sorry," Jero said and took a deep breath.

"If that's all you wanted to say, I will leave now," Candace said, not interested in his apology.

"How is Jamal? Did you bring his photograph?" He asked before she could leave.

"He is fine," Candace said coldly, and dug into her handbag for the picture of Jamal she had brought with her on Jade's request.

"Although you don't deserve this, but I will let you keep it," Candace said as she dropped the picture on the bed.

Jero picked it up and looked at it for some time before staring at her, "Thanks. He has your stubborn gold curls," Jero observed as he looked at the picture, and Jade who was listening to their conversation took a closer look at Candace and something seemed to click in her head.

"I was hoping you would visit me, but you never did. I left you a package with Bill," he said and quickly replaced the mask when he started gasping for breath.

"What?" She asked with a frown.

"You will find out what it is when you see it. I was working on it before I was arrested. I was going to surprise you. I love you, Candace. I'm sorry I didn't know the right way to express it," Jero said, and Candace's frown deepened.

Of course she knew that he loved her, but this wasn't the meeting she had been expecting. It seemed like something was wrong with him, "Is everything okay?" She asked hesitantly, and he smiled weakly.

"Don't worry about me. Try to be happy. I want you to be happy. You can leave now," Jero said to her before turning to Jade.

"Take her away."

Chapter 406: Hunch

"Where can we find Bill?" Jade asked as she rose from her window side seat and approached the couple.

She didn't know about Candace, but she was curious to know what Jero might have left her. Was it money? Documents to some secret property? Or maybe details of a trust fund account for Jamal?

"He will find you when everything is settled and deliver the package," Jero managed weakly, and it seemed like the more he spoke the weaker he became.

"Don't you think you should give us a clue as to what to expect in this package? What if Bill tampers with it?" Jade asked, wanting to bait Jero into telling them what it was.

"He can't. Only her can access it," Jero said, and Jade's brows pulled together.

"And Andy? What about my sister? Is she safe with Cassidy?" Candace asked, and he nodded slowly as though he didn't have the strength to speak again.

"Where is Cassidy headed with her?" Jade asked, and he shook his head before removing the oxygen mask again.

"I don't know where. But I overheard something about a cargo ship," Jero managed before replacing the mask and then he closed his eyes to catch his breath.

"You mean they are traveling in a cargo ship?" Jade asked, and he nodded slowly without opening his eyes.

"He's exhausted. We should let him rest," Jade said to Candace who was watching Jero with a slight frown.

Jero opened his eyes one more time to look at Candace, "Don't let them know I'm awake," he said, looking at Jade.

"Why? Are you thinking of escaping from here?" Jade asked, and he smiled weakly.

"Whatever they're giving me for pain makes me drowsy. I don't want to sleep. I want to feel it," Jero said before turning his face away.

"Let's go," Jade told Candace who was still looking at Jero with a frown. Seeing her reluctance to leave, Jade placed a hand over her shoulder and led her out of the room.

"What is wrong?" Jade asked when Candace abruptly stopped walking after they

"Something is wrong," Candace said with a slight frown unable to shake off her worry, and Jade looked at her with a slightly raised brow.

"What makes you think so?" Jade asked curiously, and Candace shook her head.

"Jero would never let me go that easily..."

"Hold on a second, let me get something straight. You were worried that he was going to try to hurt you or something, and now that you have met him and he didn't do any of that you're worried about him?" Jade asked incredulously, and Candace shook her head.

"I know Jero. Something is wrong. Can we speak with the doctor?" Candace asked, ignoring Jade's sarcasm.

"Candace..."

"Trust me, Jade. I know better than you how much I despise Jero. And I want nothing more than to see him die. But I can't walk out of this place without knowing what is wrong with him. This is likely going to be the last time I see him, and I need to know what is wrong. He's still Jamal's dad," Candace pleaded, and Jade frowned.

Jade shook her head incredulously, not understanding why Candace, who had been plotting to kill Jero suddenly seemed so concerned about him, "You forgot he was Jamal's dad when you wanted to kill him?"

"I was going to kill him if I perceived him to be a threat not when he is being this way," Candace insisted, and Jade sighed.

"Fine. Let's go see the doctor," she said as she led the way, and Candace followed her.

The doctor was busy attending to some other patients so they had to wait for a while before going in, and after Jade introduced herself and Candace to the doctor she gave Candace a nod to ask the doctor whatever questions she had.

"Is Jero going to be okay? I mean apart from the injury he sustained, will he be fine?" Candace asked as she leaned forward in her seat, and the doctor exchanged a look with Jade who gave him a nod to answer the question.

"I don't know how much I'm allowed to tell you, but you should know that he's dying. His vital organs were failing when he got here and after running some series of blood test on him we found some poisonous substances in his blood..."

"Poison?" Jade and Candace asked in unison.

"Can't you flush it out of his system?" Candace asked.

"Yes. We've done that, but the damage has been done already. We are still trying to identify the poison. But whatever it is has damaged his heart, lungs, kidneys, and liver so badly that he can only survive by immediate organ transplantation. I don't know how the poison got there or how long it has been in his system but I do know it has been there for a while," the doctor added before either Jade or Candace could say a word.

"Do you mean it has been there for longer than Twenty-four hours?" Jade asked in confusion since she had been suspecting that the Lords of the cartel were behind the poisoning.

The doctor gave her a nod, "I suspect it has been there for much longer. That extent of damage couldn't have happened in such a short duration. Also we found traces of morphine in his blood, that means he must have been in severe pain," the doctor said, and Jade glanced at Candace who suddenly stood up.

"I need to see him again," Candace said, and Jade gave her a nod as she stood up.

"Thanks for your time," Jade said as they both walked out of the office.

Candace walked in hurried steps and Jade tried to match her pace. This time the men keeping watch by the door didn't stop them as they walked into Jero's room.

"Jero?" Candace called as she stood by his bed, and he slowly turned his head to her and opened his eyes.

Candace's throat tightened when she saw his tearstained eyes, and she stepped closer to the bed, "Who did that to you? Who poisoned you?" She asked quietly, and Jero's gaze shifted to Jade before returning to Candace.

"Cassidy," he said with a small smile as a tear slid down the sides of his eyes.

"Cassidy? Why? When did he do that?" Jade asked with a frown.

"It is my punishment. I deserve it," Jero said, meeting Candace's gaze.

Without saying another word to him, Candace turned around and walked away from the room, leaving Jade to hurry after her. They were both quiet as they walked away from there and returned to the car.

Candace couldn't explain exactly what she was feeling in that moment as all her emotions were conflicted. She was still very bitter and angry with him, she was happy that he was going to die, and at the same time she felt sorry for him. She felt sorry that he was dying so pathetically.

Pathetically? Candace asked herself as she suddenly burst into a peal of laughter, startling Jade who had been about to turn on the car.

Jade watched as Candace's entire body shook with laughter and just as suddenly as the laughter started, Candace broke into a sob. Jade sighed but said nothing as she turned on the car and drove away from there.

As Jade drove she replayed all that had happened in Jero's room in her head and her head cocked to the side when her thoughts drifted to something Jero had said and the unbelievable connection she had made.

It didn't make any sense, but taking a closer look at Candace, it somehow made sense. She had completely forgotten that Candace's hair had been a long mass of curly gold hair when she met her the first time. It wasn't until Jero had mentioned the stubborn curls that she remembered it. And once she remembered that, she recalled another face she had seen recently with similar curly gold hair. A face she had thought looked familiar but she had been unable to place until Jero referred to it.

How did it make sense that Candace looked like the lady in the photo frame beside Harry's bedside? It definitely didn't make sense that Candace looked like Harry's late mom. Perhaps she was mistaken? She needed to take another look at the picture to be sure they did look alike and she wasn't mistaken.

Even though it didn't make much sense, she couldn't dismiss her hunch. The inquisitive part of her needed to pursue it and confirm it. Maybe they were distant relatives or possibly doppelgangers.

She briefly contemplated calling Harry and asking him for a picture of his mom, but she discarded the thought, reasoning that would be awkward. How would she explain suddenly asking for a picture of his late mom? She couldn't ask Aaron either.

Her eyes suddenly lit up when she remembered that Harry had mentioned that he was going to work and Lucy would be at home with Aaron. Lucy was the perfect person to ask for such a request.

Away from there, Tom and Lucy walked into Harry's apartment, with Tom carrying the pack of breakfast Samantha had prepared.

"I'm so sorry for the delay. My twin brother got into Ludus in the early hours of this morning and we had to stop by to see him," Lucy said apologetically as she and Tom walked into the house.

"It's not a problem. How is he?" Harry asked as he held out his arms to embrace Lucy who was approaching him, but she walked past him to embrace Aaron who was standing behind him, and kissed his cheeks.

"You had all of us worried about you," Lucy said as she pulled away from him, and Aaron grinned at her making Tom laugh at Harry who was scowling as he dropped his hands to his side.

"I'm sorry. I got sick of seeing Harry. I feel better now that you're here," Aaron said and Lucy laughed as she went to embrace Harry.

"You both should run along now. You're late," she said before turning to Tom who was dropping the pack of breakfast on the table.

"The CEO is never late. The others arrived too early," Harry said making them laugh.

"Take care of yourself, Jewel," Tom said as he kissed her lightly on the lips and Aaron rolled his eyes.

"Can you just leave already?" He asked with false irritation making them laugh.

"Dad..."

"Take him away, Tom," Aaron cut in before Harry could speak, and Tom jerked his head to the door.

"Let's go," he said, and Harry sighed as he picked up his padded briefcase.

"Lu..."

"Don't worry I'll take care of him and if anything comes up I will let you know," promised, cutting off whatever he wanted to say, and he gave her a nod before walking away with Tom.

Once they left, Aaron let out a sigh, "He worries too much."

"You're all he has. You can't blame him for worrying about you. Besides, I'm sure you'd do worse if he was the sick one," Lucy said as she walked over to the dining, and Aaron followed her.

"Still, he worries too much. I swear I've told him I'm fine more than a hundred times today yet he wouldn't listen," Aaron complained, and Lucy smiled.

"I believe he took after someone. Probably you or his mom," Lucy said lightly, and watched from the corner of her eyes as the smile on Aaron's face faltered at the mention of Harry's mom.

"I believe you haven't had breakfast yet, have you?" She asked, and without waiting for his response she walked into the kitchen and looked around the place before pulling out a couple of cabinet drawers until she found the drawers containing the dishes and cutlery.

"Harry says Tom's chef is the best," Aaron said as he watched Lucy return to the table with the plates and cutlery.

"I agree with him. Samantha can make anything taste good," Lucy said with an easy smile as she set the breakfast on the table in front of Aaron and herself.

"What do you think?" Lucy asked when Aaron bit into the biscuit and gravy, and he gave her a nod of approval.

"She's second only to me," Aaron said, and Lucy giggled.

She watched as Aaron ate, contemplating on the best way to raise the subject, and after a while Aaron looked up at her, "Why are you just watching me and not eating?"

"Did Harry tell you we came around last night?" She asked, and Aaron gave her a nod.

Chapter 407: Possessive Brother

Candace looked up when Jade offered her a handkerchief and she took it from her, "Thanks," she said with a sniffle, and Jade gave her a nod.

"You must think I'm crazy for crying over a man I desperately wanted to kill," Candace said, but Jade shook her head.

"I don't think anything. Our feelings and emotions are not entirely within our control," Jade said, and Candace gave her a shaky smile.

"It's crazy. I resent him for everything he did to us, but at the same time a part of me feels so sorry for him. A part of me that also remembers some of the good moments I shared with him wants to go there and care for him until he dies. I know it's crazy, but I can't help it," Candace said as tears streamed down her cheeks.

"I can't tell you how to feel, Candace. I believe you loved him at some point in your life. It would be crazy if you didn't feel this conflicted," Jade said, feeling sorry for her.

"Do you mind stopping the car?" She asked, and Jade looked at her curiously before finding somewhere to park the car.

"I think I should go back there and be with him. If for nothing, for Jamal's sake. He did all sort of evil things, but I have Jamal thanks to him. I can live knowing that he's not dying just because of his other crimes, but he's dying such a painful death because Cassidy is punishing him for what he did to Andy. He didn't go scot-free. I can live with that," Candace said, but Jade didn't say a word or try to stop her as she got out of the car.

Jade watched until she flagged down a cab and got into it before driving off. She thought about Todd's betrayal and wondered if she would have been willing to stay by Todd's side at the hospital if he survived that accident and she found out he had been about to marry another woman.

Although the nature of Todd's offense was different from Jero's offense, she wasn't sure she was as forgiving or kindhearted as Candace. She would never have wasted a second of her time taking care of him. Although she didn't support crime or murder, she thought Jero deserved to be poisoned.

Once Jade got to the hotel, the receptionist informed her that someone was waiting for her at the lobby, "Who?" She asked with a puzzled frown.

"He refused to say. He's the one hiding behind the magazine," the receptionist said, when Jade turned to take a look at the people seated at the lobby.

Jade's brows pulled together as she approached the man, wondering who it was. Was it possibly Bill? Perhaps he had come to deliver Jero's package to Candace? She hoped that was the case.

"Hello! I was told you are waiting for me?" She said, and immediately the person looked up at her.

Seated there with sunshades on and a hat over his head, which she believed he was wearing to disguise his identity, was Matt. She tried to hide her disappointment when she realized it wasn't Bill.

Thankfully it worked since she was more surprised to see him than disappointed. She had completely forgotten that she had called him the previous evening to intimate him on all that was going on so he could talk Candace out of her plan to harm Jero. Now he was here without knowing that Candace's plan had changed already.

"Matt!" She exclaimed with a wide smile as he stood up and embraced her, "How long have you been waiting? Why didn't you call?"

"I couldn't leave immediately you called. We had to film all through the night, and in my rush to leave after my shoot in the early hours of the morning, I left my phone," he explained, and Jade raised a brow.

"You could have told the receptionist who you were or simply..."

"It doesn't matter. Where is Candace?" He cut in as he looked around for her.

"Why don't we find somewhere private to speak and I will bring you up to speed on what has happened?" Jade suggested, and Matt dumped the magazine he had been reading on the chair he had just vacated and they both walked away from the lobby and headed for the suite.

Immediately they walked into the suite, Jade turned to him, "Do you care for wine or should I order breakfast?"

"Nah. I'm alright. I just want to know what's happening. Why don't I see Candace around?" Matt asked as he looked around the suite.

"She is at the hospital," Jade said, and he looked at her in alarm.

"Hospital?"

"Relax. She is fine. She went there to look after Jero. He's hurt," she said, and Matt blinked in confusion.

"I beg your pardon?" He asked, not sure he had heard correctly. He had come running because Jade told him Candace was determined to put an end to Jero's life even if it meant her going to jail, so what was Jade talking about?

Jade quickly summarized everything to him, and when she was done, Matt frowned, "So she went there to take care of him?" He asked, and Jade gave him a nod.

"It's crazy, but yeah. I'm sorry I made you come all this way for nothing," Jade said apologetically.

"Did she say how long she was going to be there with him? How long does he have left?" Matt asked, and Jade shook her head.

"She didn't specify how long she's going to stay there. And I don't know how long he has left either. But his condition is pretty bad," she said, and Matt looked at her thoughtfully.

"Can you give me directions to the hospital?" He asked, and Jade looked at him curiously.

"I suppose you are ready to talk to her now?" She asked, but Matt said nothing as he waited for her to give him directions to the hospital.

"You can give me a couple of her personal stuff she might need while she's there," Matt said after she had given him the direction to the hospital and Jero's room number, and Jade looked at him with a slightly raised brow.

"You don't feel upset or jealous that she is taking care of her baby daddy?" Jade asked, and Matt shrugged.

"I'm not in a competition with him. And I think she is doing what she believes she ought to do in order not to leave room for regrets," Matt said reasonably, and Jade gave him a nod as she walked over to Candace's room to get some extra clothes and whatever else she believed Candace would need to stay at the hospital.

"I will let her know you are coming," Jade said as she returned to join him, but Matt shook his head.

"Don't. I'd rather she doesn't know I'm coming. Let it be a surprise," Matt said, and Jade looked at him hesitantly before giving him a nod.

After seeing him off, Jade returned to her bedroom and after only a moment's hesitation, she dialed Tom's line.

"Good morning, Jady. Sup?" Tom greeted immediately he received the call, enunciating her name for Harry's benefit, and as expected, Harry who was driving the car turned to spare him a glance when he heard Jade's name.

"Good morning, Tommy. Please can you text me Lucy's number right now?" She asked hopefully, and Tom spied at Harry from the corners of his eyes.

"Why? Is there a problem?" he asked curiously.

"Not at all. I just thought I should have her number. You know, as my favorite brother's girlfriend," Jade said, and Tom smiled.

"Alright, I will text it to you after the phone call," he promised, and she thanked him before hanging up.

Even though the call had ended, Tom held the phone to his ear and continued, "Really? You're going on a date with that guy?" He asked with false surprise, and Harry turned to look at him sharply, while he pretended not to notice.

"What guy?" Harry asked before he could stop himself, and Tom hid a grin.

"I will call you back, Jady. It seems like your other elder brother is curious to know about your new boyfriend," Tom said as he pretended to hang up the phone before turning to Harry.

"Jade is seeing someone?" Harry asked with a frown, and Tom shook his head.

"No, she is not. The call ended a while ago so I said that to see your reaction. You are quite the protective elder brother, aren't you? Jade must feel so lucky to have brothers like us who care about her," Tom said with a grin, and Harry glared at him making Tom chuckle as he texted Lucy's number to Jade.

"You're an idiot," Harry said, and Tom laughed harder.

"By the way what lady were you talking about the other night?" Tom asked curiously.

"A lady? What night?" Harry asked in confusion, wondering when he ever talked to Tom about a lady.

"Your father said you mentioned having a lady in your life. What lady was he talking about? Are you seeing someone? Is it the lady Jade introduced to you?" Tom asked, and Harry looked at him suspiciously.

"Why are you asking?"

"What do you mean why am I asking? Don't I have the right to know if my best friend is seeing someone?" Tom asked, and Harry sighed.

He couldn't lie to Tom, and at the same time he couldn't tell him the truth. He knew that if he told Tom the truth about Aurora, Tom would likely tell Jade about it and he didn't want that.

"I'm still getting to know her. You can say we are still in the talking stage. I will let you meet her at the anniversary dinner," Harry said before changing the subject.

Away from there, Aaron waited until he had swallowed the food he was chewing before spoke again, "Yes, Harry told me you both came to check on me. Unfortunately, the sleeping tablets had me knocked out so I couldn't see you," Aaron said apologetically, and Lucy gave him a nod.

"That's fine. I saw you though. I came in to sit with you for some time so that the guys could talk alone," Lucy said as she continued to look at him.

"Really? You must have been bored," Aaron said with a grin, and then his eyes gleamed with mischief as he leaned forward in his seat, "Tell me, did I look handsome while I slept?" He asked, and Lucy smiled.

"You always look handsome," she said, thinking of the best way to ease into the subject. He was yet to take his medication. Perhaps she shouldn't say anything until he was done with his meal and his medicine.

"More handsome than Tom?" He asked, and Lucy giggled.

"Don't even dream of it. Your medication is in your bedroom, right? Give me a moment to grab it," Lucy said as she picked up her phone and rose, and Aaron smiled at her as he watched her walk away.

Once she got into his bedroom, she headed straight for his nightstand where the medicines were kept and she picked them up.

Just as she walked out of the bedroom, her phone started to ring and she received the call when she noticed it was from an unsaved contact, "Good morning. This is Lucinda Perry on the line," she greeted politely as she walked down the passageway.

"Good morning, Lucy. It's Jade. Tom's sister," Jade said, surprising Lucy.

"Oh, Jade! How are you? I'm pleasantly surprised to hear from you," Lucy said in a pleasant tone, and Jade smiled.

"Harry informed me you are at his apartment?" Jade said after exchanging pleasantries with her.

"Yes, I am. Do you want to say hello to his dad?" Lucy asked, thinking that was the reason she had called.

"I will call him later. Right now I need you to do me a favor," Jade said, and Lucy stopped walking.

"What favor?"

"Please, could you go into Harry's bedroom and send me the picture of the lady in the photo frame by his bedside?" Jade asked, and Lucy's brows pulled together in a frown.

"Is Harry aware of this?" She asked, not wanting to believe that Jade was asking her to invade Harry's privacy.

"No, he's not. And I'd appreciate it if you don't let Aaron know about it either," Jade pleaded.

No. She didn't like this. She didn't want to get involved in whatever Jade was scheming, especially if it involved her sneaking around Harry's apartment like a thief.

Chapter 408: Who Is Sara To You?

What was the problem with these Hank siblings? Lucy mused with displeasure as she looked ahead of her to the living room. She knew that what she wanted to say to Jade couldn't be said right there at the passageway as Aaron was likely going to overhear their conversation.

"Please give me a minute," Lucy said as she returned to the dining and dropped the medicine on the table, "Please, I need to use the restroom," Lucy told Aaron, and he directed her to the visitor's bedroom where Jade had stayed.

Once she walked into the bedroom and shut the door behind her, she went into the restroom before continuing with the call, "Are you still there?" She asked, and Jade sat up on her bed.

"Yes. Are you in his bedroom now?" Jade asked, thinking that Lucy had lied to Aaron about needing to use the restroom so she could go to Harry's bedroom to snap the picture.

"I'm sorry for the delay," Lucy said politely.

"That's not a problem. So, are you in his bedroom now?" Jade asked hopefully and Lucy shook her head.

"Let me get something straight. Are you asking me to secretly sneak into Harry's bedroom to get the picture of his mother and send to you?" Lucy asked in a very calm tone that left no doubt in Jade's mind that she was being scolded.

Jade cleared her throat, suddenly feeling awkward and uncomfortable, "It's kind of important, and I really need to confirm something," she said in a small voice.

"Then I suggest you give Harry a call and ask him for permission. Do you know how much trust must have had in me to have left me alone with his father in his apartment? Even I wouldn't leave just anyone in my apartment. I'd rather not break his trust by sneaking around his apartment and going to places I have no business being in," Lucy said, and Jade frowned.

She was surprised that Lucy hadn't even bothered to ask her about what she needed to confirm before turning down her request. Lucy was a lot tougher than she had thought, "I'm sorry for making such a request," Jade said apologetically.

Lucy paused for a moment thinking that she might have been too harsh, "You don't have to apologize. I'm sorry if I sounded too harsh. I just do not like going behind people. If it makes you feel better, you should know that if this was a request from Sonia, I'd turn it down too," Lucy said, and Jade sighed softly.

Considering Lucy's past experience, she could understand why Lucy wasn't comfortable sneaking around people or doing things behind people. Jamie had done that to her and had captured photos of her without her knowledge, so naturally she wouldn't want to do the same to others.

"I understand. As I said, I'm sorry. I will find another way to..."

"Jade?" Lucy interrupted Jade.

"Yeah?"

"You are interested in Harry, aren't you?" She asked, and Jade was silent for a moment before responding.

"Yeah."

"Then the only proper way you should get that photo is by asking either Harry or Aaron for it. I don't know what you are so curious about, but what I do know is that as long as it involves Harry, you shouldn't go behind him this way else you might end up ruining your chances with him. Besides, isn't it a crime to invade people's privacy in that manner?"

"It's not exactly a crime. Harry is our friend. Besides, if this were one of my cases..."

"Well, it's not. Harry is not a case. He is someone you are interested in and you should treat him as such," Lucy cut in firmly, and Jade stopped speaking.

Lucy took a deep breath when she realized that she was sounding harsher than she intended, "I'm sorry. I can't help you."

"It's alright. I understand," Jade assured her even though she wasn't exactly happy that Lucy had turned down her request.

Although she understood Lucy, and she got the message Lucy was trying to pass across, that didn't stop her from feeling a bit disappointed. She had been this close to solving a puzzle, and now she had nothing.

How was she going to get a picture of Harry's mom to confirm what she suspected? It would be suspicious if she suddenly asked either Aaron or Harry for it. Or perhaps she could ask Aaron for it? It wasn't a big deal, was it? Harry's mom was late, besides, Aaron had seen her checking out the photo the last time.

She could tell Aaron that she found someone who looked exactly like Harry's mom and perhaps she was a distance relative. Surely, Aaron would love to know if Candace was in anyway related to his beloved late wife.

"I hope you do not feel offended?" Lucy asked, wanting to clear the air between them.

The last thing she wanted was to be on bad terms with Jade over this. Aside from this nasty streak the Hank siblings seemed to share, Jade seemed like a nice person and she would rather be friends with her than be on her bad side.

"Not in the least. Thanks for your advice. I will do as you have said and ask Aaron for it instead," Jade said, and Lucy sighed in relief.

"Thank you very much. Now I don't have to feel so terrible for not doing it," Lucy said, and Jade smiled.

"Can I ask you something?"

"As long as you're not asking me to plant spy cameras in Harry's bedroom, you can ask me anything," Lucy joked, and Jade laughed.

"Why didn't you ask to what I want to do with the photo?" Jade asked curiously.

"If I had asked, I'm sure you would have said something interesting and then I'd want to do as you requested to also satisfy my curiosity. The only way not to get involved in something you don't want is by not being curious about it," Lucy said, reasonably and Jade smiled.

"Tom is so lucky to have you," Jade said, and Lucy smiled.

"Thanks. I need to get back to Aaron now. By the way, how is Candace?" Lucy asked when she remembered she was yet to enquire about her.

"She is fine. I should let you go now. I need to give Aaron a call," Jade said before hanging up.

After the phone call, Lucy returned to the living room and found Aaron taking his medication, "I'm not taking the sleeping pills. I had enough sleep yesterday to last me a week," Aaron said, and Lucy smiled as she gathered the dishes and leftovers and took them to the kitchen.

She returned to the dining when her phone started ringing and she received the call when she saw that it was Jade again, "I'm sorry to bother you, but I just realized I don't have Aaron's number. Can you hand him your phone?" Jade asked immediately after Lucy received the call.

"Sure," Lucy said before looking at Aaron, "It's Jade," she said with a grin, and Aaron's eyes lit up as he took the phone from her.

"Hello, beautiful," Aaron greeted, and Jade smiled.

"You don't sound ill. Were you pretending to be ill?" She asked, and Aaron chuckled.

"Oh, you are so brilliant! You caught me in the act!" Aaron said in a mock weak voice, and this time Jade giggled, while Lucy smiled as she excused him to go finish up in the kitchen where she was storing the leftovers

"How else would Tom have let his damsel out of his sight long enough to fuss over me this way?" Aaron asked, and Jade smiled.

"I'm glad you sound better. We were all worried about you yesterday," Jade said, and Aaron smiled, grateful that Harry had a lot of people in his life who cared about him.

"It's good to know that you were worried about me," Aaron said, just as Lucy returned to the table to join him.

Jade cleared her throat, "Apart from calling to know how you're doing, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions if you don't mind," Jade said, and Aaron winked at Lucy, making a her smile.

"About Harry I suppose?" Aaron asked jokingly.

"Sort of. I hope you don't mind me asking, but do you know of any living relatives of your late wife? I mean Harry's mom?" Jade asked, and almost immediately Aaron froze, and his face went pale, making Lucy who was watching him to sit up.

"Aaron?" Jade called, wondering why he had suddenly become quiet.

"Why are you asking?" Aaron asked as he tried to speak evenly despite his racing heart, but his voice came out tight with all trace of playfulness out of it.

Jade's brows pulled together as she began to wonder why Aaron was suddenly sounding that way. Deciding to be honest with him, she cleared her throat, "I know a young lady who looks almost exactly like the lady in the photo frame beside Harry's bed. I was just wondering if perhaps she is a distant relative or maybe they're just look alike," Jade said and Aaron relaxed a bit.

For a moment there he had thought that Jade ran into Sara or something. What was the likelihood of such a meeting taking place? Besides, over the years Sara had gone under the knife a couple of times to work on her face so she didn't exactly look the same.

Although she had looked perfect to him in the past, she had worked on almost every single facial feature, and the only thing that she had left the same was her hair and her eye color. It had seemed like she was running away from who she was and doing her best to change everything about herself.

He had encountered news and photos of her over the last couple of years, and he had been somewhat glad for the changes she had made as that had made it easy for Harry not to recognize her. And even if Harry had spotted the resemblance he would most likely have lied to him that she was a mere look alike and not his late mother.

"Aaron?" Jade called again to regain his attention.

"His mother was an orphan. Her parents and only sister died in a car crash. The person you saw is most likely a look alike, and not in any way related to her," Aaron said, but watching him and seeing how lost he had appeared a moment ago, Lucy could tell that there was more to what he had just said.

She couldn't help wondering what Jade was asking him and why. She tried to piece together Jade's request to her, and Aaron's side of the conversation.

Was it possible that Jade saw someone who looked like Aaron's late wife? Why was she interested enough to want to see a picture? Was it perhaps someone close to her?

Her brows pulled together when she recalled what Tom had said about Jade wanting to dig into Candace's past.

No. It didn't make sense. It couldn't be Candace. Judging by what little she knew about Jade's and Candace's release, she knew that Jade had known Candace for about two years. She would have made such a connection a long time ago if it was Candace. It was probably someone else.

"Wow. The resemblance is so uncanny. She has similar curly gold hair and facial features," Jade murmured more to herself than to Aaron.

Curly gold hair? Was it possible that this person was related to Sara? He wouldn't put it past her to have lied about losing her family. But even if that was the case and this person Jade had seen was related to Sara in any way, he didn't want them in Harry's life. At least not until he had been able to tell Harry the truth.

"Alright then. I wanted to confirm she isn't a relative. I'm sorry for being a bother," she said apologetically.

"It's alright. I suddenly feel exhausted. I need to rest now. Let's talk some other time," Aaron said before returning the phone to Lucy.

Lucy dropped the phone on the table when she noticed that Jade had hung up already, and she looked at Aaron with interest.

"I've noticed the way you've been staring at me all morning. Is there something you want to talk to me about?" Aaron asked when he stood to leave the dining and noticed the way Lucy was observing him.

"Yes," Lucy said with a nod,

He returned to his seat, "Go on, then."

"Who is Sara to you? You kept mentioning her name in your sleep."

Chapter 409: Ten Days

Even though Aaron's heart was beating really fast and a million thoughts were running through his mind at that moment, he remained silent for some time after he heard the statement that followed Lucy's question.

That was the last thing he had been expecting her to say or ask him, and even now he was trying to figure out what he could have possibly said in his sleep about Sara to make Lucy curious enough to ask him such a question.

What exactly did she hear him say? Did she tell Harry about what she heard? He wasn't sure about that since he knew that if she had told Harry then he would probably have questioned him more about it, especially after the way he had reacted the day before when Harry received his call from someone called Sara.

If she didn't tell Harry about it, then that left even more question in his mind. He raised his head and met Lucy's curious gaze. From the way she was staring at him, he could tell that she was giving him all the time he wanted to speak.

"Can you tell me what I said?" Aaron asked curiously.

"You talked about your daughter amongst other things," Lucy said, and watched as his eyes widened in alarm.

"I did?" He asked, and Lucy gave him a nod, not wanting to say more than that.

She wanted to tell him enough to prove that he had said something important, but not give him too much information so that she could get the rest from him.

"What else did I say?" He asked, hoping that she would tell him everything so he would know how best to answer her question.

"You don't expect me to tell you that, do you?" She asked with a slightly raised brow.

Aaron looked at her for a moment and sighed, "Did you tell Harry about it?"

She shook her head, "Not yet. My telling him depends on what you tell me, and how much you tell me," Lucy said, and Aaron looked at her wearily.

"What about Tom? Did you tell him about it?" Aaron asked, and Lucy gave him a nod.

"Yes, I did. Harry is his best friend so it won't make sense if I don't tell him about it. However, you don't have to worry. Tom won't mention any of it to Harry. If anyone is going to talk to Harry about it, it's going to be me. So your secret is safe with me. At least for now," Lucy said, and Aaron smiled sadly.

"This was why you offered to stay with me today, isn't it?"

"Not entirely. I did want to speak with you without Harry's knowledge, but I also wanted to stay with you and keep you company," Lucy assured him as she reached a hand across the table and covered his hand.

"I care about you, Aaron. We all do and we are worried about you. You cried so sadly in your sleep, and it bothered me a lot more than I care to admit to see a sweet man like you so broken in your sleep. Tell me what's wrong, Aaron. Who is Sara? And why does she keep calling you?" Lucy asked, and Aaron's heart skipped a beat, surprised that she knew about Sara's call. Just how much did she know?

"Did I mention her phone calls in my sleep too or did Harry tell you about it?"

"No. I overheard Harry telling Tom about it last night. I'm going to try to be as honest with you as I can, and I'm hoping you would do the same," Lucy said, and Aaron gave her a nod.

"I take it that the Sara you talked about in your sleep is the same as the person who has been calling you non-stop?" Lucy asked, and Aaron merely looked at her without saying a word as he thought about what to say.

He wasn't ready to reveal the truth to Harry yet. He had been hoping to meet with Sara to put things on hold for some time. Why was this happening now?

"I'm the only reason Tom isn't busy digging out Sara's identity right now. Although Harry is sick with worry and wants to know who she is too, he insists on waiting for you to tell him about it yourself. Unfortunately, Tom is not going to be as patient with you as Harry is. Especially if Harry is being affected so much by whatever is weighing you down, and in this case it seems to be Sara. Whatever you are hiding right now won't stay hidden for much longer," Lucy said when he seemed to be taking too long to respond to her question.

"Tell me who she is and what she is to you. If she's here to cause you trouble we can all join hands together and fix it so that you will be fine. Please," Lucy added as she squeezed his hand, and Aaron's eyes glistened with tears, making her brows pull together.

"Who is she, Aaron? And what did she do to hurt you so much?" Lucy asked as she stood from her seat and went to stand beside Aaron to embrace him.

Perhaps it was best he told some else about it. Someone neutral who would listen to him and give him a honest opinion and advise. As she had said, he doubted he could hide this from Harry much longer, and even if everything became exposed today, he wanted to at least know that there was someone who knew exactly what had happened and understood his reason for doing what he did. He believed that Lucy could be that person for him.

She held him close to herself for a moment while Aaron tried to organize his thoughts. After some time he pulled away from her and looked up at her, "It's more complicated that you think," he said quietly, and Lucy sat down.

"Is it something you can tell me? Maybe we can start from something simple. Who is she to you?" Lucy asked, and Aaron looked at her for some time before heaving a deep breath.

"My wife. Harry's birth mother."

Far away from there, in one of the cabins in a Cargo ship sailing across the sea, Andy lay on the bed panting hard after another bout of retching. Her hair was plastered to her sweaty face and her skin looked quite pale and sickly.

She raised her head when the cabin door opened and Cassidy walked inside the cabin, "I'm glad you are awake now. I was becoming very worried about you," he said as he walked over to the bed and sat down beside her.

"Get lost," she spat at him weakly, and slapped off his hand when he reached to brush her hair away from her face.

"This can't be the way you greet me after five days of not seeing or talking to each other," Cassidy said as she eyed him in annoyance.

"You almost got me killed. What do you expect? That I lick your feet?" She asked, her eyes blazing with fury that made up for the weakness of her voice.

"I apologize for that. That was my fault. I didn't expect that you wouldn't know how to swim, neither did I expect that we would have to swim such a long distance to catch up with the cargo ship..."

"How could you make such plans without knowing if I could swim or not?" She snapped at him angrily.

"As I said, I'm sorry. But I did my best to make sure you didn't drown, and here we are..."

"I wouldn't have been at the verge of drowning in the first place if you didn't include me in your crazy plans!" She snapped at him, and Cassidy sighed.

"How are you feeling?" He asked with concern, ignoring her outburst.

"I feel like being alone. So can you just leave?" She asked, and he shook his head.

"I'm sorry I can't do that. I've been waiting to see you for two years, and waiting to speak with you for the past five days. I can't leave," He said as he looked at her with a soft expression on his face.

"I have nothing to say to you," she said, and this time he smiled.

"That is where you are wrong, Andy. We have quite a lot to talk about," he said, and she eyed him as she felt her stomach churn again, and she quickly moved away from him to reach for the bucket beside the bed.

Cassidy patted her back gently as she vomited into the bucket, "I'm sorry, my love. You are not fairing so good," he said as he stood to pour her a glass of water to rinse her mouth.

"Whose fault is it? And stop calling me your love! I am not your love," she hissed at him as she dropped the bucket and collected the glass from him grudgingly.

Cassidy brushed her hair away from her sweaty face as she rinsed her mouth, "You will want to be. Soon you will want to be," he promised her.

"How much longer do we have to be on this godforsaken ship?" She asked, and Cassidy looked at her pitifully.

"Ten days more. We will get to our island in ten days, and there we can start our life afresh and put our past behind us," Cassidy said, and she frowned.

"Ten days? What about my sister? How am I supposed to reach her in that time? How am I supposed to know that Jero isn't going to hurt her?" She asked with concern.

"Don't worry. Jero won't be alive for much longer. He is not going to hurt your sister ever again. I made sure of it," he promised.

Chapter 410: Familiar Face

"Harry's birth mother?" Lucy ask, not sure she had heard him correctly. Wasn't Harry's birth mother dead? Or perhaps someone else had given birth to him, and it was the woman who had raised him who was dead? Probably the woman who had raised Harry was the love of Aaron's life, and Sara was the one who had given birth to Harry? That didn't make sense. He had just said Sara was his

wife and Harry's mother. So who then was the person who had died who was the love of his life? Lucy wondered as she looked at Aaron.

"I thought his mother was dead?" She asked, hoping that Aaron would clear her confusion by explaining the relationship between Sara and Harry's late mom.

"Can you keep whatever I tell you between us? At least for now. Until I'm able to summon the courage to tell Harry the truth myself?" Aaron asked, and Lucy's brows pulled together.

Just how bad was this revelation that he needed to summon courage to tell Harry about it? And by asking her to keep it from Harry, did he mean she had to keep it from Tom too? That was going to be impossible, "What about Tom? He knows I'm talking to you about this. He would want to know about our conversation. I can't lie to him. So maybe it's best if you don't tell me whatever you wouldn't want Tom to know about," she said, and Aaron looked at her, impressed by her honest and straightforward character.

"You are no longer curious to hear everything?" Aaron asked curiously.

"Of course, I am. But my curiosity can not be more important than what you want. I wouldn't want to break your trust merely to satisfy my curiosity. Asking you to tell me your secrets when I know that I wouldn't be able to keep it away from Tom, would be wrong. I promised to be honest with you, so I have to tell you," Lucy said easily, and warmth filled his heart as he looked at her, impressed by how she was putting her concern for him above everything else.

"You are so purehearted Lucy," Aaron said, glad that she was the one who had been in his bedroom that night and not anyone else.

"Thank you," Lucy said with a warm smile.

"Would you like to have a glass of juice? Or perhaps red wine? I read somewhere that it's good for the heart," Lucy offered, and Aaron gave her a nod as he returned her smile.

He watched as she walked over to Harry's mini bar to get them wine. She poured red wine into a glass for him, and a nonalcoholic wine into another glass for herself before returning to join him.

"Here," she said as she placed it in front of him and sat down.

"Thank you, Lucy," Aaron said quietly as he picked up the glass and took a sip.

Neither of them said a word to each other for some time, and after a while Lucy glanced at him, "I don't mean to pry, but I suggest you tell Harry about whatever it is you are hiding from him before he finds out some other way," Lucy advised.

"How would you react if you were Harry and you found out that you have been lied to all your life?" Aaron asked, and Lucy pursed her lips thoughtfully.

"It depends," she said with a shrug.

"On what?" Aaron asked curiously.

"For me it depends on the intention. Why did you lie? Why couldn't you tell me the truth. Surely I'd be hurt that you didn't trust me enough to tell me the truth, but if your intention was purely out of genuine love for me, no matter how angry I get, I will come around. Because you matter to me," Lucy said, thinking about how hurt she had been by Tom's lies, but also how it had been easier to forgive him when she focused more on his intention not the action.

"I lied to him about his mother. His mother is not dead. Sara walked out of our lives days after she gave birth to Harry," Aaron said after a while, and Lucy's eyes widened slightly at that piece of information.

"What?" Lucy asked, and Aaron gave a nod.

Although she had briefly suspected that, but had dismissed the thought because it didn't make sense. Hearing Aaron admit to it greatly surprised her.

"I couldn't tell Harry about it. I was abandoned by my own mother and I know best how much damage such a knowledge can do to a person's heart and self-esteem. I didn't want that for my son," Aaron explained, and this time Lucy felt her heart break for him.

"The daughter I spoke about in my sleep was Harry's twin sister. I was told she died at birth, but I never got to see her body," Aaron said, before picking up his glass again with trembling hands and raising it to his lips.

Lucy's eyes filled with tears as she watched him, "I'm so sorry," Lucy said softly as she began to put the pieces together.

She could now understand why he was asking for his daughter, and why he kept pleading with Sara in his sleep. She could understand his pain and tears. Those had been tears of a heartbroken man. Tears of a man who had just lost a daughter, been abandoned by the woman he loved and was forced to raise their baby boy alone.

"She said she never wanted to have anything to do with us. She wanted to pursue her modelling career. Now she is dying and wants to see Harry," Aaron said, and this time Lucy reached across the table as she had done before and took his hand.

"Did she tell you why she wants to see him?" Lucy asked softly.

"Do I need to know why? Tell me honestly, Lucy. Am I wrong for not wanting to tell Harry about her, or not wanting her to be a part of Harry's life in any way?" Aaron asked, and Lucy shook her head.

"No. You are not wrong. Still, Harry has a right to know and to decide whether or not he wants her to be a part of his life despite what she did," she said apologetically.

"But he is never going to forgive me if he finds out I lied to him all these years," Aaron said as tears gathered in his eyes.

"Don't say that, Aaron. He will. You raised him better than that. You did a good job raising such a fine and intelligent son. I'm sure all you need to do is sit him down and explain the details to him. Harry will understand why you had to lie to him," Lucy assured him.

"What if he never understands? Am I also going to lose my son because of Sara? Losing his sister was enough. Do I have to lose Harry too?" He asked as a tear slid down his cheek, and Lucy sniffled as she went to embrace him.

"You should have some faith in him. You will never lose him to her. I won't allow it. Tom won't allow it," she promised fiercely as tears rolled down her cheeks while she tried to console him.

As Lucy held him, she thought about what Aaron had just revealed and her heart broke for both father and son. She couldn't begin to imagine how Aaron was going to be able to hold such a conversation with Harry.

How was he supposed to start? She didn't want to imagine how shocked Harry would be or how he would react. For someone like Harry who hated being lied to, it was obvious that things were going to be tough for them in the nearest future, and she could understand why Aaron felt so scared. It wasn't going to be easy in any way. Neither her nor Tom was going to be able to tell Harry about this. Harry needed to hear it directly from his father.

"Harry has to hear it from you. We can't let Harry find out about it from her or any other way. Because then it would be your word against hers," Lucy said after a while as she returned to her seat.

"What do you suggest I do? I was hoping to hold off on telling him the truth until he is in a stable relationship. Harry has always taken my words about my relationship with his mother to heart. He has high expectations when it comes to love. I fear that he might be disappointed and change his mind about it after he gets to know the truth," Aaron said, and Lucy shook her head.

"Whether he is in a committed relationship or married won't make any difference when he finds out the truth. If he chooses to walk out of such a relationship he would do so without second thoughts, and if he chooses to remain with his partner because he is too much of a gentleman to walk away, he will be resentful and unhappy. I think it's best you tell him the truth now so that he can face it before he gets involved with anyone," Lucy advised, and then she paused when she remembered her conversation with Jade a while ago.

Was it possible that it was all related? If there was one thing she had come to learn in this past weeks, nothing was mere coincidence. Everything happened for a reason, and if for some reason Jade was suddenly asking for the picture of Harry's supposed late mom, then something was up.

She looked at Aaron curiously, "Just now I heard snippets of your conversation with Jade. I suppose you were both talking about Harry's mom?" She asked, and Aaron gave her a nod.

"Yeah."

"Is she really an orphan?" Lucy asked curiously.

"That was what she told me back then, but I don't know how true it is. Although after she left I started to doubt her story but I had no desire to look into it," Aaron said, and Lucy nodded.

"Did Jade tell you why she was suddenly asking about her?" Lucy asked, and Aaron sighed.

"She said she knows someone who looks a lot like Sara," Aaron explained, and Lucy looked at him curiously.

Knows? Not saw? So she knew the person it wasn't like a random stranger who she had just run into? Lucy mused.

"Do you have a picture of her? I would like to see what she looks like if you don't mind," Lucy said, and Aaron gave her a nod as he rose from his seat.

"Although she looks completely different now, but there is an old picture of her in Harry's bedroom. Hold on while I get it," Aaron said as he walked away to get the photo frame.

As Lucy waited for him to return, she thought about Tom and how this news would affect him knowing how much he loved and cared for Harry. How would this affect Harry's blossoming relationship with Jade? She wondered, and raised her head when Aaron returned with the photo frame and handed it to her.

"That's Sara," Aaron said, and Lucy's heart skipped a beat when she looked down at the photo and saw the familiar face of Harry's mother.