

Wild Night 501

Chapter 501 HAJ Studios

Inside Aaron's bedroom, he sat on the bed with his back propped on pillows, with a wide smile on his face as he listened to Jamal's chatters as usual. This time he was talking about his aunt Andy.

"... So she said if I wanted them to stop working late at night, then I should get a job and pay the bills. And I'm like, but no one would employ me, and she said, how do you know that when you haven't even gone out to apply for a job yet?" Jamal said, and Aaron chuckled.

"So what did you do?" Aaron asked, and Jamal shrugged.

"I got a job. I asked a neighbour to give me a job, and she let me walk her dog every Saturday and Sunday," Jamal said, and Aaron smiled.

"She must be a very good neighbour," Aaron said, and Jamal bobbed his head.

"She is. She gives me cookies every time I bring back her dog," Jamal said with a happy smile.

"So, did they stop working late at night?" Aaron asked, and Jamal shook his head.

"No. She said I would need to rob a bank to get the kind of money that would make them stop working so late," Jamal said, leaving Aaron to wonder what sort of work they did at night.

They were not sex workers, were they? He hoped not. When Candace talked about the jobs she had done, she hadn't sounded like she did something like that. Or was that what she meant when she said he would cringe when she told him about some of them? He didn't want to imagine that his daughter could have been subjected to such a lifestyle.

Harry would know if she had led such a lifestyle, right? What would he do if that were the case? How was he going to be able to make it up to her?

"Does it hurt somewhere? Why are you frowning?" Jamal asked with concern when he noticed that Aaron was no longer listening to him, and Aaron blinked as he tried to return his focus to Jamal.

"I was just thinking about something. Do you know about your mummy's friend called Matt?" Aaron asked, and Jamal bobbed his head excitedly.

"He is an actor, and he owns a jet. Isn't that cool?" Jamal asked, and Aaron nodded.

An actor. That was indeed very cool. He could start by finding out the guy's surname and seeing his movies.

"It's super cool. So do you think your mom and aunt Andy like him?" Aaron asked, trying to be subtle with his question, but before Jamal could respond, Candace gave a single knock on the door softly.

"It's mom. Come in," Jamal announced, and Aaron looked at him curiously.

"How did you know she was the one?" Aaron asked when Candace walked in.

"That's how she knocks," Jamal said while Candace gave Aaron a pointed gaze.

"Matt is JUST a friend, and yes, Andy and I like him, so you don't have to ask Jamal about it," Candace said, and Aaron gave her a sheepish smile when he realised she had heard him.

"You said it is wrong to eavesdrop," Jamal pointed out.

"Yes, it is wrong. I didn't eavesdrop. I heard the question when I got to the door," Candace said defensively.

"Go wait in the living room with Tom and Harry," Candace said before Jamal could say anything, and immediately Jamal got off the bed and did as she instructed.

"I'm sorry. I was only curious," Aaron said apologetically.

"And you think Jamal is the best person to answer your questions?" She asked as she sat on the single couch in the room.

"Are you going to tell me about Matt if I ask you?" Aaron asked, and Candace shook her head.

"I already told you the truth. He liked me and wanted to be in a relationship with me, but I was not interested in being involved with him, so I pushed him away. We are just friends now, and that is all there is to it," Candace said, and although Aaron had more questions on the subject, he refrained from doing so and decided to ask the most important question that was bothering him.

"Jamal mentioned that you and Andy work late into the night. Can I ask what job you do?" Aaron asked, and Candace looked at him for some seconds as she tried to organise her response so that Aaron wouldn't feel bad.

"When Jade told me about you and Harry, I didn't want to come with her. Apart from the fact that I was angry and felt abandoned, I didn't want to come mostly because I was too embarrassed and scared. I thought you both would be too embarrassed and not want to be associated with me when you found out the truth about me," Candace said and listening to her, Aaron's heart broke for his daughter as he concluded that she was probably evading the question because she was a sex worker.

"You are my daughter. I could never be ashamed nor embarrassed by you no matter what you did," Aaron rushed to assure her, and tears gathered in Candace's eyes as she smiled at him.

She got off the couch and went to sit on the bed beside Aaron when tears gathered in his eyes too.

"After meeting you, my worry is no longer about feeling embarrassed. I'm more concerned that you would be sad and blame yourself, and that's not what I want. That's not what Harry wants, either. My life may not have been perfect, and though things weren't always easy, it wasn't all that terrible either," Candace added as she gave him a wobbly smile and wiped the tears from his eyes.

"I believe you made the most you could out of what life threw at you, and for that, I will always be proud of you," Aaron cut in before she could finish, and he embraced her.

"If you feel too embarrassed to tell me about your past, then you don't have to tell me about it. Don't worry. I understand. We can move on and make the future better," Aaron promised as he patted her back.

"We were both strippers. Andy and I. That was the only job we could find to take care of our bills," Candace said quietly as she pulled away from him to look into his face.

Deep down, she still felt ashamed and as difficult as it was to look into his eyes, she did. Somehow she was convinced that he wouldn't judge her and he wouldn't be ashamed of her.

Looking into her eyes, Aaron could tell that it had taken a lot of courage for her to voice that out. He knew they needed to clear this up, and once they were able to get past this, he would have his daughter.

As sad and heartbroken as he was about it all, he forced a smile, "You must be a pretty good dancer to do that. Between your brother and I, I've never seen a worse dancer," Aaron joked, and Candace smiled.

"Don't beat yourself over it. We have all done something we were not proud of at one point in our lives or the other. I will tell you a secret I never told anyone," Aaron said, and Candace looked at him curiously.

"I'm not sure I've mentioned it, but I own a photography company. HAJ Studios..."

"You own HAJ Studios?" Candace asked in surprise since it was pretty famous in the country as most celebrities use their service.

"Yes. Each letter stands for Harry, Aaron and Jonas. It was formerly called AJ Studios, but after I had Harry and relocated, I changed the name when I started afresh," Aaron explained and then paused.

"I might have to change the name again now with you and Jamal in the picture," Aaron said thoughtfully, and Candace giggled.

"No, you don't have to do that. Is that the secret you were talking about?" she asked, and Aaron shook his head.

"No. The money I used to start up my first studio and get my first camera was drug money. I sold drugs in the street for survival. I'm not proud of it. I never talk about it," Aaron said, looking into Candace's brown eyes.

"All I'm trying to say is that you have nothing to be ashamed of. In the same way I left my past behind, you could also leave yours behind. I will support you with all I have to make sure you reach your goals, and you never have to do something you are not proud of," Aaron said, and Candace sighed as she embraced him, and Aaron sighed in contentment as he held her close to himself.

Candace couldn't entirely explain how she felt being in his arms like that. But she felt light. She felt safe in his arms, and she felt like she didn't have to try so hard anymore. She felt like a little girl without any worries in the world.

"Thank you," she murmured against his chest.

"How does CHAJ sound? The J could stand for Jamal instead of Jonas?" Aaron said, and Candace giggled.

"You should leave it as it is. I prefer HAJ Studios," Candace assured him.

"So about this Matt guy..."

"C'mon! I already told you there is nothing between us," Candace cut in as she pulled away from him to glare at him and Aaron chuckled.

"Alright. Alright. I've heard you for now," Aaron said and grinned when she raised a brow.

"For now?"

"How did Harry know about him if there was nothing?" Aaron asked, and Candace sighed.

"Matt is Bryan's best friend. Tom's brother Bryan," she explained when Aaron looked lost for a moment.

"Oh! So you met him at Tom's house?" Aaron asked, and Candace shook her head.

"No. We were friends before I knew Tom and Bryan. He assisted Jade with the case," She explained, and Aaron nodded.

"I see. Sounds like a decent guy," Aaron said, and Candace sighed.

She didn't want to think about Matt. She didn't want to give any room to sadness or regrets. All she wanted to focus on right now was herself, Jamal and her newfound family.

"Yeah. He is a cool guy. What about you? Why didn't you ever get married?" Candace asked as she lay on the bed with her head propped on her shoulder as she looked at him.

And just like that, both father and daughter sat there in the bedroom, talking like new friends and sharing as much important details of their lives as they could share at that moment as Aaron tried to catch up on the twenty-eight years he had lost, while Candace tried to learn as much as she could about her father.

Chapter 502 A Long List Of Enemies

"Who is winning the game?" She asked when she looked at the scoreboard on the screen and saw 3-1.

"Who else? Your brother is only good at playing CEO and being Lucy's handbag," Harry said smugly without taking his gaze away from the screen, but Tom said nothing as he focused his attention on the game.

"So you told Tom that I'm like a sister to you? Was that before or after we kissed and cuddled?" Jade asked, causing Harry to choke in surprise, and Tom seized the opportunity to score a goal against Harry.

"That's cheating," Harry protested as Tom laughed.

"No, it's not. I saw an opportunity, and I seized it," Tom said smugly.

"Answer my question, Jonas," Jade said, poking at Harry's side.

"Let's talk about it later," Harry said, not comfortable with the idea of talking about something like that with Tom present.

Tom chuckled, "Why? You don't want me to hear about the kiss?" Tom asked, making kissing sounds, and as Harry turned to glare at him, he seized the opportunity to score another goal and burst into a peal of laughter when Harry looked at him in disbelief.

"You caused this," Harry hissed, eyeing Jade with displeasure.

"I will tell you all of Harry's secrets if you keep distracting him," Tom whispered loudly to Jade, and Harry dropped the pad.

"I'm not playing another game with you until Jade leaves," Harry said, and Jade flashed him a smile.

"That's even better. Now I can get both of your attention," Jade said as she turned to Tom deciding to talk to him about her conversation with their mom now that she had his attention.

"I spoke with mom a while ago and she told me that Lucy's mom was arrested," Jade said, and Tom gave her a noncommittal grunt.

He had come here to clear his head and forget about everything wrong that was going on. He didn't want to think about it yet since he was aware that Janet had been released.

"What are we going to do about Rachel? Especially with everything we know about her family?" Jade asked, looking from Tom to Harry and back again.

"We can all figure it out later. She's the least of our problems. Let's deal with the bigger ones first. One enemy at a time," Harry said, and Tom's lips twitched in amusement at Harry's response.

"Alright. What about Bryan? I learned that he arrived a while ago. How is he doing? Did you talk to him yet?" Jade asked with concern, and Tom looked at her.

"I tried talking to him, but he was being an ass. I don't know what he is thinking and frankly speaking, I'm not in the frame of mind to want to understand him right now either. I have a lot on my head and I'm stressed out of my mind. So maybe you should go speak with him," Tom said while Harry watched both siblings.

"Aww. My poor Tommy. Don't worry. I will talk to him," Jade promised as she patted his arm and rested her head on his shoulder while Tom sighed as he rested his head on the top of her head.

"I didn't pause the game just so you both could cuddle. If you want to talk, talk. If not, you should excuse us," Harry hissed at them, making the siblings laugh.

"She is my sister, Harry. Relax. There is no reason for you to be jealous," Tom said with a grin while Jade rose from her seat beside Tom and went to sit beside Harry.

"What are you doing?" Harry asked when she hooked her arm with his.

"Cuddling with you while talking with Tom since you are too jealous to let my brother hold me," Jade said with a sweet smile.

"I didn't say I was jealous..."

"Don't worry. Even if you are, we don't mind," Jade said, and Tom nodded.

"Yes, we don't," Tom parroted.

"Can you two behave yourselves? There is a kid in the house," Harry said as he tried to move away, but Jade held on to him firmly.

"We are cuddling, not making out. I'm sure Jamal won't be traumatised by the sight," Jade said without looking at Harry as she turned to face Tom, who was chuckling.

"Mom mentioned that Lucy was travelling over to see Sonia," Jade said, and Tom sighed.

"Is there a topic she didn't mention to you?" Tom asked irritably and Jade giggled.

"Are you still mad at Lucy?" Tom asked, and Harry raised a brow.

"You are mad at Lucy? What did she do?" Harry asked, and Tom told Harry about Jade's annoyance while Jade tried to shut him up.

"Not that I'm still mad at her, but I wasn't pleased with her. She can't just take information from others without giving back...."

Harry cut in with a scoff, "Yes, she can. Lucy didn't do anything wrong...."

"That's not the way the world works," Jade countered.

"That's not the way the Hanks' world works, you mean? She didn't force you to give her any information. Besides, you are the one who involved her in 'your business', not the other way around. The sooner you realise that the world does not revolve around you Hanks, and not everyone handles things like you Hanks do, the bet...."

"What do you mean by that?" Tom and Jade asked in unison as Tom glared at him, and Jade pulled away from him to glare at him.

"I believe my statement was self-explanatory. I would have done the same thing she did because that is the NORMAL thing to do. As I told you already, Tom, Lucy is a good influence on you. And Jade, I also think you should be friends with her too, so she would influence you positively on how to maintain boundaries. Everything doesn't always have to go the Hank way," Harry said to Jade ignoring her scowl as he rose when his phone started vibrating in his pocket.

"We are not done. Why are you leaving?" Jade asked grudgingly.

"Because I'm done. You can continue with your family discussion. You both should be done with your conversation by the time I get back so we can resume our game," Harry said before walking away to receive his call while both siblings stared at his back.

As Harry took out his phone from his pocket to receive the call, he paused when he saw Jamal approaching the living room, "Is my dad asleep?" Harry asked, wondering why Jamal had left the room.

"No. My mummy is talking with him and she asked me to wait in the living room," Jamal explained.

Seeing no reason to leave Jamal alone with Tom and Jade who were busy with their discussion, Harry took his hands, "Come with me then," he said as he took Jamal's hand and led him to his bedroom.

"He must be overjoyed knowing that he is related to your perfect Lucy," Jade muttered, and Tom looked at her when something occurred to him.

"Did you discuss Lucy with Bryan?" He asked, recalling Jade's annoyance the previous evening and how resentful Bryan had sounded as he talked about Lucy.

"Not really," Jade said, seeing no reason to tell Tom what Bryan had said.

"Are you sure?" Tom asked, and Jade nodded.

"Yeah. Why? Did he say something?" Jade asked curiously, and Tom sighed as he relaxed on the couch.

"He sort of sounded like he was mad at Lucy for something," Tom said, and Jade sighed as she explained why Bryan seemed upset at Lucy.

"He is acting up because he is jealous of the bond they share?" Tom asked incredulously.

"Well, it's not just that. Besides, I don't think Sonia has done much to help matters. He must be feeling pretty upset about everything even if he is lashing out at everyone. You know how Bryan is," Jade said with a sigh.

"I'm beginning to think the whole idea of establishing an entertainment agency with Bryan is a bad idea. I want to be there for him as his brother, but at the same time, I'm mad at him for getting involved in a scandal at a sensitive time like this. Emotions and logic are conflicting and I don't like this," Tom said with a sigh, and Jade patted his arm.

"Don't worry. I will go home with you so I can see Bryan and talk with him," Jade said and Tom sighed again.

"Do whatever you have to do and get him straightened out before Monday..."

"No, not Monday. It has to be Today. I have arranged an interview for Bryan within the next two hours. We have to clear the air before Monday or else things might get crazy," Harry said as he and Jamal joined them.

Harry was now dressed in clean corporate clothes since the clothes he had been wearing earlier were the same ones he had worn to the hospital the previous evening.

"But I don't think Bryan is in any state to handle an interview right now," Jade protested while Tom looked at Harry

"This is about his career, not his personal life, and I'm sure by now he knows that. He doesn't have to talk about Sonia if he doesn't want to. But he has to answer questions about the fight, apologize to his fans, and state that he has cancelled his contract with Golden Star..."

"The fight is about Sonia so there is no way Sonia wouldn't come up during the interview" Jade cut in before Harry could finish.

"Let Harry speak," Tom told Jade quietly as he watched Harry, knowing that something had come up, hence the urgency in his tone and that was the same reason he was dressed for work.

"Tell me what's up," Tom said, and Harry took out his phone.

"You should see this," Harry said as he passed his phone to Tom.

Tom frowned when he saw the caption under a video clip of Paul, "Why I Kicked Out Bryan Hank From Golden Star -CEO Of GSEA"

"What does he mean by 'kicked out' when everyone knows Bryan was the one who left the agency?" Jade hissed in annoyance.

"That's why Bryan needs to give his own statement as soon as possible. If he waits until Monday then we can't talk to the shareholders or the board by Monday. Besides, they will start calling the moment they see this video. How do you think they are going to feel about finding out about this clip?"

"When was this released?" Tom asked in a deadly calm tone after he had watched the video of Paul.

Paul had said a lot of things about Bryan, but had mostly praised himself for raising a star like Bryan, and had talked about Bryan being too impulsive and irresponsible for his liking hence he could no longer work with him. He had further displayed a picture of Bryan throwing a punch at Derek in the club, and said he was done with Bryan, and wished I-Global good luck in signing Bryan Hank, and he hoped Bryan would have better luck at I-Global since his big brother would take care of him.

"It was released on Golden Star's social media platforms a couple of minutes ago. Jeff called to inform me about it just now. I have asked him to bring Bryan to the company," Harry said, making it clear to Tom that was where he was headed.

Tom sighed as he rose from his seat. Another enemy just got added to the list. It seemed like the list was getting longer by the day.

Although he was exhausted and as much as he hated the fact that Bryan had gotten himself involved in a mess like this, he hated even more that Paul was badmouthing Bryan.

Bryan was his brother, and doing that to Bryan was the same as insulting him. They were going to fix Bryan's mess, and after that, he was going to push Paul out of the entertainment industry and make Paul's office into Bryan's changing room.

"Let's go to the company then."

He looked down at the casual clothes he was wearing. He had corporate clothes in his office which he could change into.

"Give me a minute to change my clothes. I'm sure Bryan might need a lawyer," Jade said as she rose and hurried inside to change.

"I will inform them we are stepping out while you change," Harry said as he took Jamal with him to Aaron's bedroom.

Chapter 503 Jade's Plan

The car was silent as they made their way to the company. While Mia sat in the front seat of the car busy trying to write out the statement for Bryan to read to the press, Jeff was occupied with his regrets and guilt as he drove the car, while Bryan just stared out of the window.

They were all upset and worried about this new development. Of course, they should have foreseen it, given Paul's threat to destroy Bryan's career, but they had all been too busy to think about it.

No matter how much this disturbed Bryan, he was much more disturbed by something else- his guilt over not keeping to his words and following Sonia to her meeting as he had promised.

Even if Lucy was going to be there with her, Lucy wasn't him. That didn't excuse his action. He was raised to keep to his words, but he had been too upset to think about it.

Fuck, he was still very much upset and mad at Sonia, but that did not excuse his action neither did it stop him from being worried about her. He loved her. He doubted he would ever stop loving her. He just needed time to figure out some things. He needed her to also understand that relationships involved two people and that she couldn't keep acting like she was the class captain in their relationship.

"Bryan," Mia called to get his attention, and Bryan looked up at her.

"I understand that you might not be in the right state of mind for this interview, but you know how important this is for all of us, right?" She asked, but Bryan merely stared at her without answering her question, while Jeff glanced at her briefly before returning his attention to the road.

As angry as she had been when she left Tom's house, Jeff had been surprised by how worried she had sounded when she called to ask if he had seen the video of Paul and had asked him to call her back immediately he informed Harry and Tom about it.

He had been on his way to Tom's apartment since Tom had asked Adolf to give him one of the cars and the key to the apartment beside Lucy's where he would be sharing with Mia until they got somewhere else for them.

Jeff had naturally called Harry first since he had seen just how upset Tom was, about Bryan's situation, but after telling Harry about it, Harry had thankfully asked him not to bother Tom about it since he was with Tom and would relate it to him.

The moment Harry asked them to meet at the company and he informed Mia about it, she had asked them to pick her up from the hotel on their way while she tried to come up with a suitable speech for Bryan.

"Although I get that you are mad at Sonia right now, but I will advise you not to say things about her during the interview that you might regret..."

"What do you mean by that?" Bryan asked, glaring at her.

Why were they all making him out to be an unreasonable person? He had not once badmouthed Sonia in all of this. He never would insult her, so where was this advice coming from?

"I'm just saying, don't talk about breaking up with her no matter how upset you are. You both still need some time to resolve your issues. Don't make any hasty decision. Last night must have been tough for her if she saw everything your fans and even your anti-fans had to say about her. Especially the threats," Mia said, and Bryan frowned as he looked outside the window.

This was probably the thing he hated most about being a celebrity. How people could blow something so minor in a celebrity's life out of proportion just for entertainment without pausing to think about how it affected them.

He remembered Sonia telling him that she couldn't give up her privacy and freedom all in the name of being successful. This must be tough on her, Bryan thought with a sigh.

"Are you done?" He asked when Mia stopped talking and looked out of the window.

"Not exactly. I'm just curious, what exactly happened between you and the guy at the club? Did you just show up there and met him by coincidence? Or did you track him down to the club to beat him up for the role he played in Jeff's drama or was it for something else? You will have to tell the press about it, is it something that you can say?" Mia asked, and as much as Jeff didn't appreciate how she was making it sound like he was responsible for everything, he didn't say a word. He was already beginning to regret bringing Derek into the picture.

Bryan shook his head, "I don't want to talk about it. I'm not going to talk about it," Bryan said, and Mia took a deep breath.

"Alright. I have a suggestion," Mia said, and both Jeff and Bryan looked at her with interest.

"It's going to be our word against his. Why don't we say it's a prank that went wrong? Bryan, we could say you noticed Derek's online presence in all of Sonia's posts, as Jeff observed and you decided to find out just how far he was willing to go with his obsession, so you asked Jeff to make him an offer. Jeff did, and Derek proved to be a nutcase by showing up at Sonia's house, and that got you mad..."

"That's too much unnecessary explanation for people that do not really care about me personally," Bryan cut in.

"Then I will say it myself," Jeff offered.

"I will take the blame for it since I am the one who decided to bring Derek into the picture. I will explain all that happened. I have all the evidence," Jeff said, and Bryan sighed as he massaged his temple.

"And how do you think that's going to make Sonia look? Everyone will blame her if we tell them we did this because she needed conflict. They are going to make this about her," Bryan said, and both Mia and Jeff exchanged a look.

Of course, he still very much cared about her.

"I think you should both do it. That will kill the narrative that Bryan decided to attack Sonia's poor ex-boyfriend. There is nothing wrong with a girlfriend telling her boyfriend that she wants some conflict. And there is nothing wrong either with you being romantic enough to want to do that for her. Everything would have been perfect and everyone would have been awwing had you not involved a real ex," Mia said as Jeff pulled into the I-Global parking lot, and to their surprise, some reporters from different news stations were hanging around already.

The moment the reporters saw the trio get out of the car, they rushed over to where they were, but Jeff raised a hand before they could ask any questions.

"You will have all the time to ask questions, right now we need to go in and prepare for the interview. So I suggest you save us the time, and save yourself the stress," Jeff said as he made way for Bryan and Mia to pass, and they walked into the building.

Thankfully the building was empty since it was the weekend, so Bryan led the way to Tom's office since that was where they were to meet before the interview.

"Troublemaker," Jade greeted with a teasing smile as she embraced Bryan when he walked into the office, while Tom watched them from his seat without saying anything, and Harry's gaze was fixed on Mia.

"I didn't realize you would be here," Bryan said as he pulled away from her and looked her over, wondering why she was dressed so formally.

Jade was wearing a pair of navy blue tailored pants with a black three-quarter sleeved button-down shirt tucked into it, and white stiletto heels.

"Why would your lawyer not be present?" Jade asked as she adjusted his t-shirt, and Bryan raised a brow.

"My lawyer?"

"Of course. For what we plan to do, you are going to need a lawyer. We can't let Paul's insolence slide. And who best to represent you if not your darling sister?" Jade asked as she patted Bryan's cheek, and he glanced at Tom and Harry before returning his gaze to her.

"You are working here now?" Bryan asked, and Jade gave him a nod.

"Yes. And you are going to be my first client since the I-Global legal team can't represent you because they don't know about you joining the company yet. Aren't you so lucky to have me?" Jade asked, and Bryan's brows pulled together.

"What about your job?"

"Let's talk about that after we have cleared this mess. The interview is starting soon and we have to talk," Jade said as she moved away from him to face Jeff and Mia.

"Jeff, it's good to see you again," Jade said as she embraced him.

"Mia, it's nice to finally meet you after only speaking with you over the phone this whole time," Jade said as she pulled away from Jeff and embraced Mia.

While Jade exchanged pleasantries with Mia and Jeff, Bryan approached the sofa where Tom and Harry were seated, "I'm sorry about earlier," Bryan said without meeting his gaze.

"It's alright. We will address it later. Come sit let's talk about the interview," Tom said, and Jade took Bryan's hand and pulled him over to join them on the sofa while Mia and Jeff followed behind.

"It's good to finally meet you, Jeff. It's a good thing you saw the video when you did and you were quick to call me," Harry said as he rose to shake hands with Jeff.

"Mia saw the video," Jeff said, and Harry turned to Mia.

"You are Mia, right?" Harry asked as he faced Mia.

"That's me. I guess I'm famous," Mia said with a grin.

"I just told him your name," Jeff said dryly while Jade giggled in amusement.

"Have we met before?" Harry asked, and Mia shook her head.

"I don't think so, Mr. Jonas. Although, people ask me that question all the time. I guess I have a very common face," she said with a bright smile but Harry looked at her unconvinced.

He was good at recalling faces, and hers looked like one he had seen before, but he just couldn't exactly remember where he had seen her.

"You can call me, Harry," Harry said as he shook hands with her, and then they all sat down.

"I'm sorry for the cold reception earlier," Tom said, looking from Mia to Jeff.

"I would be just as cold if I were in your shoes. I'm sorry for not managing him properly," Mia said with a bow that made Tom, Harry, and Jade look at her in amusement while Bryan and Jeff exchanged a look at her seriousness.

"Straight to business," Jade said, clapping her hands so that all eyes would focus on her.

"I've got a plan. Let's talk about Derek. Jeff, you're the one who contracted Derek, right?" Jade asked, and Jeff gave her a nod.

"Yes, I did," he said, beginning to feel even more embarrassed and terrible now.

"Do you have receipts of your chat or phone conversation? Have you told him now that it was meant to be a prank?" Jade asked curiously.

"I have the receipts and I haven't told him anything," Jeff said, and looked from Jade to Harry and Tom, wondering why they all looked relieved by his response.

"Bryan, you are probably not going to like this, but we don't have much of a choice. This is the fastest way to put that fame-digger back in his place," Jade said, and Bryan raised a brow.

"Let's hear it,"

"I'm going to need you to put a call across to Derek during the interview and it's going to be on speaker for the reporters to hear. Make him talk. We have to paint him as the jerk he is," Jade said, but Bryan shook his head.

"No. I don't agree with that. What if he says stuff about Sonia?" Bryan asked, looking at Jade incredulously.

"Do you think I didn't think about all this already? I love Sonia and wouldn't even think of doing this if it wasn't going to help her too. Do you think avoiding this will make him not say stuff about Sonia? Do you know how much stuff he must have said to whoever cares to listen already? Sonia is a big girl and I'm sure she can handle this. Protecting her this way won't do either of you any good. It's best for us all if he says silly things. That way everyone would see him for the lowlife jerk he is and turn on him for wanting to rise to fame by tearing your relationship apart, and we can also sue him for defamation of character and whatever else he has said about Sonia. Everyone would applaud you for defending Sonia's honor by not caring about your reputation," Jade said, and everyone was silent.

While Harry looked at Jade with admiration, Tom and Jade looked at Bryan as they waited for him to think about it, while Mia and Jeff considered Jade's idea.

"I think it's a good idea. Much better than mine. I suggested Jeff exposes everything to the press. But I think it's better if Derek exposes it himself this way," Mia said, and Jade nodded.

"And what if he doesn't bite the bait?" Bryan asked with a slight frown.

"He will. He likes to talk and brag a lot," Jeff assured him.

"I don't know. Maybe you should run it by Sonia and see if she is okay with it. This involves her too and I can't make the decision myself. If she is fine with it then you can do it," Bryan said, and Jade pursed her lips.

"How about you call her yourself?" Jade suggested.

"No. It's your idea. You call her," Bryan said, and Jade sighed.

"Alright. I will do that while Tom and Harry tell you about our plan for Paul," Jade said as she rose from her seat and walked away to give Sonia a call.

Harry cleared his throat, "We plan to do the same thing to Paul. Tom said you've told Paul about your intentions to leave Golden Star Paul already. You will call him and place the call on speaker while you confront him for releasing such false statements. Someone as loud as he is is bound to make threats. Let's expose his lies. And once we are done with that part of the interview we can move to your contract signing today and release an official statement to the public about I-Global Entertainment. We will need to be quick with the interview since Tom and I still have to answer to the shareholders and board of directors," Harry said, leaving out their plan to buy off all of Golden Star's shares once the stocks begin to drop following their announcement.

"I'm down with this. I'm sorry for causing so much trouble," Bryan said apologetically as he looked from Tom to Harry.

"Don't you think either Derek or Paul might get wind of the interview if the reporters release the details of one before we get to the other?" Mia asked, and Harry nodded.

"Don't worry about that. It won't happen," Tom assured her.

Chapter 504 Not A Crybaby

After leaving the Hank family home and returning to her apartment, Sonia let herself give in to self-pity and she spent the remaining part of the morning until her meeting, crying.

She felt devastated by the sudden U-turn that her life and their relationship had taken.

Everything had been going so perfectly with her life and all of a sudden everything was upside down.

How did everything end up going so wrong? Less than forty-eight hours ago she and Bryan had been talking about growing old together and now he was talking about taking a break.

Where did she go wrong? Sonia asked herself as she sat up on the bed after some time and blew her nose into a napkin noisily before wiping her tears.

What did she do that was so wrong? Maybe if she could go over everything that transpired between them she would know exactly what she did to deserve being treated this way by Bryan.

Perhaps she had jinxed things. Everything had been going smoothly until she told him their romance story was a whirlwind romance that needed a conflict. Maybe if she hadn't said that they would have been fine.

She paused and reminded herself that what she had said was not the major reason for their misunderstanding. Maybe it had led to it, but it wasn't the reason.

Yes, she had said their story needed a bit of conflict, and yes Bryan had gone ahead and attempted to create one, which was sweet of him but that also was not the reason for their misunderstanding.

She agreed that she had been distracted and inattentive when Bryan tried to get her attention in the car. She had been wrong, but then again, she had realized it in time and tried to make it up to him but he had turned her down and insulted her instead.

Being distracted and inattentive was something natural that was bound to happen in any relationship at some point.

Even in the best of relationships, a partner may not always be attentive because everyone had stuff they were dealing with, and if the situation was reversed she wouldn't have reacted the way Bryan had done.

And yet she had to admit once again that people were different and she couldn't expect Bryan to react to things as she did. They had different temperaments and were yet to fully understand each other.

They were having these arguments because Bryan had chosen to misunderstand her. She had only said they should not hurry into moving in together so that they could get to understand themselves properly and build trust. What was so difficult for him to understand in that? Or had she been the one who had communicated it wrongly?

Why did he have to overreact to the extent of going out and getting into a fight when he knew how things like that could affect his image as a celebrity? Sonia mused, beginning to feel annoyed as she got off the bed and headed for the bathroom to ease herself.

As she turned to leave after easing herself, she caught a reflection of herself in the mirror and stopped to stare at herself.

Her eyes were red and puffy, and her nose was also. Her face looked dull and stressed out, and she would need a lot of makeup to fix her face for the meeting.

It was almost time for her to leave for her meeting with her editor and right now she had no idea what to say or do anymore. Could she go on with her original plan and fire him? Would she be fine without Bryan? She asked herself as she stood in front of the mirror and stared back at her reflection in the mirror.

What was she doing? She asked herself when it occurred to her that she was now having self-doubts and was also attributing her happiness and even her success to Bryan.

This was certainly not Sonia Smith. Sonia Smith was not weak or emotionally dependent on anyone for her happiness. She had been fine on her own this whole time before Bryan showed up in her life and she would be fine with or without Bryan. Her happiness was not dependent on him.

Who was Bryan Hank to make her feel this way? What was so special about him? She too was equally special!

"This is not you, girl," she said, pointing at her reflection with disapproval.

How had the almighty Sonia Smith transformed into such a crybaby? When did she become so emotionally weak? When did she begin to depend on people for her happiness?

Bryan wanted a break, so what? Was her life supposed to come to a standstill just because of that?

Yes, she was unhappy about how everything was going, but being this way wasn't her thing. This wasn't Sonia Smith! She was the fucking life of the party and she would be damned if she let herself be this way over a man.

He wanted a break? He could have it! If he also wanted a breakup, he could damn well have it as well! They were both at fault and if whatever was wrong was going to be fixed, then it had to be their joint effort. If he wasn't ready to work on it, then he should have it his way.

Having made up her mind, Sonia washed her face and returned to her bedroom to get ready for her meeting. As she looked through her closet for suitable clothes to wear, she made up her mind to go ahead with her plans.

She may have decided to move to Ludus because of Bryan, but she had not decided to fire her editor or make changes in her career because of him.

She was firing her editor because he did not trust her and she couldn't work with him. And now she was moving to Ludus to be closer to Lucy since Lucy was her only family, and also to start the next phase of her career.

If things worked out between her and Bryan after now, great! If it didn't, good too! She was going to do things for herself because she wanted to, not because of Bryan.

Sonia threw a two pieces pantsuit on the bed before taking off her clothes. As she started taking off her panties, she paused with her hand on the waistband and her head snapped to the door when she heard a sound like someone was turning a key in the lock.

Derek? She thought. And with eyes blazing with anger she quickly put on her clothes but before she could finish and hurry out of the bedroom to the kitchen to get a knife and teach him a lesson, Lucy ran into the bedroom and ran past her to the restroom.

Lucy? She had completely forgotten that Evelyn had mentioned that Lucy would be coming over.

"I was so pressed. For a moment I thought I might urinate in the cab," Lucy said as she walked out of the restroom after easing herself.

"I thought you were Derek. I could have stabbed you to death," Sonia said while Lucy watched her.

"How are you?" Lucy asked with concern.

"You shouldn't have come. I'm alright and I have my shit together now," Sonia said without meeting Lucy's gaze as she began taking off her clothes again.

"You are such a terrible liar," Lucy said as she stepped closer to her and embraced her.

"Really, Lu. I'm fine now," Sonia insisted as she tried to break the hug but Lucy held her.

"You don't have to pretend like you are fine with me. You look terrible, Sony," Lucy said as she pulled back to look into Sonia's annoyed face.

"I wasn't okay initially but I'm fine now. Why travel all the way down here simply because Bryan decided he needs a break?" Sonia asked with disapproval as she moved away from Lucy.

"When did it become a crime to want to spend some good time with my best girl?" Lucy said as she kicked off her shoes and dropped them on the floor.

"It's a good thing you are fine. We can just have fun and talk..."

"I want to be alone..."

"You can't be alone when you have me," Lucy quickly cut in, ignoring Sonia's obvious annoyance and irritation.

"What is your plan for the day? How about we go see a movie? And then we can have lunch at an outrageously expensive restaurant? And go bowling or do anything fun you like. We can also eat ice cream and chocolates and cuss at Bryan," Lucy suggested, wriggling her toes.

"You don't like going to the cinema," Sonia pointed out.

"I don't have to like it to do it. I'm in a relationship now, remember? Tom loves seeing movies so I'm practicing for him..."

"Good for you," Sonia muttered, and Lucy blinked at her.

"Oh! I'm sorry. I didn't mean to imply that..."

"Relax. I know you, and I know you were not intentionally trying to make me feel bad by talking about your happy relationship. I'm just in a very foul mood, and I don't think coming down here was a good idea. Unlike you, I have more experience when it comes to relationships and the issue with Bryan isn't really a big deal," Sonia said, and Lucy's brows arched as she watched her.

"Yet you cried to the point your eyes are puffy," Lucy said quietly.

"I was surprised that's all. I'm alright now. I have a lot of things I need to do and you will only be getting in the way..."

"When can you say I have ever been there for you, Sonia? In all the years we have been friends, when have you ever really let me be there for you?" Lucy asked, beginning to feel her temper rise at Sonia's attitude.

It had always been this way. Whenever she had a problem she would go to Sonia with her problems, but Sonia always kept whatever was bothering her to herself. Sonia preferred to withdraw and take care of her issues herself rather than share them with her.

"This isn't about..." the rest of Sonia's words trailed off when her phone started ringing and she picked up her phone from under her pillow.

She sighed when she saw that the call was from Jade. She wasn't in the mood. She didn't want to talk to anyone or see anyone.

Seeing the way Sonia was staring at her phone, Lucy assumed she needed privacy to receive the call so she walked out of the room and went to pick up her handbag and travel bag which she had dropped in the living room in her hurry to ease herself.

Sonia sighed as she watched Lucy walk out of the bedroom, and then her gaze returned to her phone when it started ringing once again.

This time she received the call, "Sup?" she asked in a forced cheerful tone since she suspected that Jade was calling to check on her.

"How are you doing?" Jade asked, wanting to get that out of the way before telling her the reason for the call.

"Great! Lucy just got here. I'm going out for a meeting with my editor and after that, I'm hanging out with Lucy," Sonia said, and even though Jade could tell Sonia's cheerfulness was false, she didn't talk about it.

"I won't waste your time then. We wanted to find out if you're fine with Jeff giving Derek a call during the interview. We need to clear the air and..."

"Do what you have to do. I'm good," Sonia cut in before Jade could finish.

"Derek could say stuff about you..."

"I know, and I don't care. I'm sure there is nothing he is going to say that is unheard of. Do what you have to do," Sonia said, and before Jade could say anything else, Sonia hung up the call and went to the living room to meet Lucy.

"Lu..."

"If you tell me one more time that you want to be alone, I will walk through that door. And this will be the last time I will ever share my problems with you or come to you if you have a problem. You can't always be the one to decide how to be a friend to someone! You can't be the one calling the shots in our friendship! It is annoying that you think you have a right to be there for me when I'm down but I don't have a right to know when you are not okay. And God forbid that I try to be a caring friend," Lucy snapped at her angrily, and took a deep breath when she noticed the tears in Sonia's eyes.

Chapter 505 Relationship Counselor

Lucy pressed her lips together as she looked at Sonia, who looked like she would start crying at any moment. There were a lot of things she wanted to say, but she was trying to be careful with her words since she didn't want to hurt Sonia or say something she would have to apologize for later.

"I love you, Sonia. I really do, but you can be very annoying, and this attitude of yours is unacceptable!" Lucy said firmly.

"What do you want me to do? Do you want me to fall on your shoulders and be a crying mess? Tell me, is that what you want?" Sonia asked, and Lucy shook her head.

"No. That is not the point, and you know what I'm talking about. I walk into your apartment, and the first welcome I get as your best friend is that I'm not needed. Do you know how annoying that sounds?" Lucy asked, beginning to get angry all over again.

"I..."

"No, don't say a word yet, and just listen to me, okay? I've been tolerating this attitude of yours for all these years because I love you, and now I'm beginning to think that maybe I was wrong to do so. Maybe if I had called you out on it instead of just letting you do as you pleased, all in the name of 'it's your personality', we wouldn't be here right now..."

"What do you mean by that?" Sonia asked in a tight voice.

"All through the flight down here, I kept replaying everything you told me last night, and seeing your attitude right now, I think I can see where Bryan is coming from..."

"Lucy!" Sonia called in a warning voice.

"The plan was to come down here to comfort you and try to cheer you up, but since you insist that you are fine, then I don't need to do either of those. I'm just going to be blunt and tell you exactly what I think," Lucy continued, ignoring the warning in Sonia's voice.

"Oh, wow! Because she now has a boyfriend, she thinks she knows better..."

"I promise you, Sonia, I'm going to slap you hard if you make one more sarcastic reference to my relationship with Tom. Try me!" Lucy threatened, and Sonia blinked at her in surprise.

"What exactly is your problem?" Lucy continued in annoyance while Sonia merely stared at her in disbelief.

The Lucy she knew hated confrontations and would never talk to her this harshly or make such threats. She couldn't believe how Lucy had changed so much in such a short time. Or was she sounding this way because she was really upset? Sonia mused.

"So what are you trying to say? That I'm a bad friend?" Sonia asked with a frown.

"Far from it. You are a great friend, but you are also very annoying. You want to be a friend to others on your own terms, and it doesn't work that way. You can't just make decisions and expect everyone else to stick by them," Lucy said and paused to make sure Sonia was following.

"Can you honestly remind me of one time you've cried or been vulnerable in my presence apart from the times you cried with me or for me? Do you know how I felt hearing you cry last night while we talked? For a moment I thought, 'Sonia is finally becoming real with me'. Do you have any idea what it's like to be best friends with someone that only shows you their happy and strong side?" Lucy asked, and Sonia sighed in resignation as she lowered herself onto the couch, suddenly feeling exhausted.

"You are a wonderful person and an amazing friend, but I think you need to learn how to let people who love you be actively involved in your life the same way you are in theirs. You shouldn't just make decisions on your own and expect your loved ones to go along with them," Lucy said as she went to sit beside her.

"Alright. I'm sorry," Sonia murmured softly, and her lower lips quivered as she tried to blink back her tears.

"I'm not at my best right now, and I just don't want to inconvenience you. I'm sorry if I made you feel I don't need you. I do, but I'm just really sad and confused, and I don't even know what I'm supposed to do," Sonia said as she broke into a sob, and Lucy embraced her.

"I don't need you to be at your best. That's why I'm your best friend. Save all that for the paparazzi. All I need is for you to promise me that you will do better and then actually do better," Lucy said as she kissed Sonia's cheeks, and Sonia drew in a shaky breath.

"I will work on it," Sonia promised as Lucy wiped her tears.

"Good. Since we've gotten that out of the way, let's go out and have some fun. Then we can both figure out a way to fix your relationship with Bryan," Lucy suggested.

"I have a meeting with my editor. I need to start leaving now," Sonia said as she glanced at the wall clock, and Lucy followed her gaze.

"I guess this meeting is to tell him you no longer want to work with him again, as we discussed?" Lucy asked, and Sonia sighed.

"Yeah. I'm supposed to meet with a movie producer first. I plan to tell him after meeting with the producer," Sonia said, and Lucy gave her a nod.

"That's fine. I will accompany you if you don't mind. And then we can do whatever else you want for the rest of the day," Lucy said as she patted Sonia's hair.

"Alright. Let's do that. I should start getting ready," Sonia said as she rose, but Lucy grabbed her hand before she could leave.

"Everything will be alright," Lucy assured her, and she forced a smile.

"Sure," Sonia said before returning to the bedroom while Lucy picked up her handbag to take out her phone.

She just realized that she was yet to give Tom a call to let him know that she had arrived and to find out how Aaron was doing today.

While Lucy was in the living room trying to reach Tom, Sonia was in the bedroom replaying their conversation in her head, or rather, she replayed Lucy's words in her head as she tried to fix her face.

Lucy accused her of wanting things to be done on her own terms, and Bryan accused her of always calling the shots in their relationship. Was that really the case? Was she really making decisions on her own?

"You are going to be late for your meeting if you just sit there moping at your reflection," Lucy said as she walked into the bedroom with her phone in hand after unsuccessfully trying to reach Tom.

She had been unable to reach Tom. He was not receiving his phone calls, and neither was Harry. She wondered what they were up to.

Sonia sighed as she met Lucy's gaze in the mirror, "Do you think I am a control freak?" She asked, feeling unmotivated to go out.

She wasn't in the mood to dress up or put on makeup. She just wanted to lay in bed doing nothing. Both her head and body ached. She felt fatigued, and she was beginning to feel a cramp in her lower abdomen. She could sense that her menstruation was on the way. She made a mental note to wear a tampon on her way out. The last thing she wanted was to get stained.

"No. That is too intense. I won't call you that," Lucy said as she placed both hands on Sonia's shoulders while holding her gaze in the mirror.

"Bryan said I'm always calling the shots in our relationship. And you said something similar," Sonia said with a frown.

Just some minutes ago, she had managed to convince herself that she had done nothing wrong and all the fault was from Bryan, and now she wasn't so sure anymore.

"Do you want to hear what I think about your fight with Bryan, honestly?" Lucy asked, and Sonia gave her a nod.

"Alright. From all you told me last night, I think Bryan has a valid point. Put yourself in his shoes. I mean, really put yourself in his shoes and think about everything from the start. Only this time,

think about it from his perspective, not yours. Now, please don't misunderstand me. I'm not trying to say I am in support of all his actions. I'm only trying to say it would help if you see things from his angle while he also tries to see things from your angle. Now let's do it this way. I'm Sonia, and you are Bryan, alright? Let's act it out from the beginning," Lucy suggested.

"I know you've told me all that happened before, but that was over the phone, and you might have left a thing or two out, so let's go through it all again," Lucy said while Sonia tried to figure out whether or not she should tell Lucy that their friendship was also part of the reason Bryan was angry.

"Go on," Lucy urged her and walked away from behind her to go sit on the bed.

"I'm going to be late if we do all of that...."

"Then let's do it as you get ready. It's easier to solve a problem when you know exactly what the problem is. The purpose of this is not to know who is at fault. It is to know exactly what the problem is so we can fix it," Lucy said, and this time Sonia smiled.

"You sound like a relationship counselor."

"Do you know that this is your first genuine smile since I walked into your apartment?" Lucy asked with a wide smile.

"We don't even know what the problem is yet, and you are smiling already. By the time we figure out what it is and how to resolve it, I assure you that you'd be laughing in no time and twerking for me. So, go on. Be Bryan. Talk to me as you dress up," Lucy urged her.

Chapter 506 Seeing Things From Bryan's Perspective

Sonia considered it for a moment and decided there was no harm in going along with Lucy's suggestion.

"Alright. It all started in the car. Bryan was trying to talk to me, but I wasn't really paying attention," Sonia said, and Lucy gave her a thumbs up.

"So why don't we do a little practical? Talk to me while I act distracted," Lucy suggested as she lay on her stomach and picked up her phone.

"By the way, I don't suppose you saw him before leaving, did you?" Sonia inquired as she dressed up, but Lucy's attention was on her phone.

She just noticed that she had an unread message notification from her mom and was checking it out.

"Did you hear me?" Sonia asked when she didn't get a response from Lucy.

She paused what she was doing and turned to look at Lucy, thinking that Lucy was pretending to be distracted.

"Hm? Yeah," Lucy grunted noncommittally as she continued to read the text.

"You can act distracted after answering my question. Did you see him before coming?" Sonia asked impatiently when Lucy still had not answered her question after some seconds.

"You've got to be kidding me," Lucy hissed as she sat up while Sonia watched her, feeling slightly irritated that Lucy was overdoing it.

"Lucy..."

"Sorry to interrupt. Can you believe that Rachel had my mom arrested?" Lucy asked, and immediately Sonia swallowed her annoyance and looked at Lucy in disbelief.

"No, she did not! Is she in need of a whooping?" Sonia asked as she reached for Lucy's phone to see what Lucy had been looking at.

She read the text from Janet asking Lucy to call her immediately she saw the text and telling Lucy that they had missed their flight because Rachel had arrested her, but Evelyn and Tom had stepped in to get her out, and they were at the Hank family house and would leave later in the day.

"That girl must be crazy," Sonia hissed in disapproval.

Lucy shook her head with a thoughtful look in her eyes, "She has to be out of her mind," Lucy muttered before focusing on Sonia again.

"I'm sorry for interrupting you. So what were you saying?" Lucy asked, and Sonia shook her head.

"You should give her a call and find out how they're doing," Sonia suggested.

"I'm sure they are okay. You can hardly be around any Hank and not be okay. I will call them later," Lucy said, and Sonia sighed when she remembered how she had wept like a baby while Evelyn and Desmond did all they could to comfort her.

"So, how did you feel talking to someone that isn't paying attention?" Lucy asked with a broad smile since she had heard everything Sonia had asked her.

"You did that deliberately?" Sonia hissed at her, and Lucy chuckled.

"It's annoying, isn't it? You wouldn't have realized how annoying it was if I didn't really ignore you..."

"I didn't deliberately ignore him. I was..."

"Distracted. So was I too. What difference does it make to the person being ignored?" Lucy asked, and Sonia sighed.

Okay, she got the message. Being distracted while being spoken to wasn't nice at all. Yes, she understood that she had been wrong in that and she had apologized for that in the bathroom. So that wasn't the cause of their problem. It was the cause that she wanted to know.

"I don't think we should go all the way to the beginning of our fight. We can just focus on all the points that Bryan got angry. He first got mad about the message from Derek... or maybe not. On second thoughts I think he didn't really react much to Derek's message until I was too distracted to pay attention to him and then he got mad. To me, his reaction showed that he didn't trust me and I got mad too until we both realized that Jeff had planned it to help me generate conflict..."

"I don't care about your perspective right now. We are focusing on Bryan's perspective, remember? As long as you keep seeing things from your end, you will remain right and you won't see what the problem is. Now before I digress, let me get something straight. Why exactly did you need him to generate conflict?" Lucy asked, realizing that she had failed to ask that question the previous day because Sonia had been too upset.

"I told you I'm writing about us. Romance stories thrive on conflict..."

"Romance stories, Sony. Not real-life relationships. Every normal person wants a peaceful and drama-free relationship. Only toxic relationships thrive on conflict. You didn't have to cause unnecessary drama in your relationship just to write a story and entertain people that don't really care about you," Lucy interjected.

Sonia sighed, "I can't defend myself right now and say I didn't ask him to do it. I made him feel like he needed to do something, so I'm responsible for all of this too, I know. However, his reaction made me realize that he doesn't trust me..."

"There you go again. I said focus on Bryan, not you," Lucy said, and Sonia sighed.

"Alright. Maybe you should do the talking," Sonia suggested.

"Okay. What did Bryan's reaction tell you about him apart from the fact that you believe he doesn't trust you?" Lucy asked, and Sonia's brows pulled together as she thought about it.

"If Bryan wasn't your boyfriend. Let's assume Tom acted the way Bryan did. How would you interpret his behavior?"

"I would say he was insecure?" Sonia said, and Lucy raised a brow.

"So pardon me for being amazed that somehow you figured that the best way to build trust was to change all the plans you both made together in the heat of that moment. Have you thought about how you changed your plans in the middle of an unresolved misunderstanding? One minute you were fighting about Derek, and just before you could completely resolve that, you shoved your new decision down his throat, and while he was still fuming from that and got into a fight with Derek, he asked you not to get involved and you did. It all seems like Sonia does what Sonia wants, doesn't it?" Lucy asked, and Sonia frowned as she replayed all her conversations with Bryan in her head.

"If the situation was reversed I'm sure you would want him to listen to you, but you haven't really done much listening on your end, have you?" Lucy asked, and Sonia pursed her lips.

"And if I remember correctly you said you insulted him..."

"He was being annoying by bringing up unnecessary issues from the past," Sonia said weakly.

"Have you related those issues to what he said to see how true they are and if you need to make some changes?" Lucy asked calmly as she watched Sonia who was still processing everything.

"He says you are more important to me than him, and he can't get over the fact that I left him to come to you despite the fact that he knows why I did that," Sonia said, expecting Lucy to take her side on this.

"I don't think Bryan is upset simply because you left him to come to me. I think he is upset because of the way you went about it. If I remember correctly you suddenly broke up with him in the middle of your shoot and left, right? Do you think he would have been upset if you explained the situation to him and told him you needed to be with me, and asked for his opinion concerning breaking up to save his reputation? Imagine him doing that to you regardless of his reasons. Anyone would be upset about that. I would be too if Tom did something like that to me, and I know for a fact that you

would be too. He said he wants a break and you feel like crap, right? That's probably how he felt when you did that too," Lucy said, and Sonia frowned.

"We both know I'm new at all of this myself, Sony, and I'm probably the last person to be giving you relationship advice given that you relate better with people than I do. But let's not forget that there are relationship experts out there that are divorced," Lucy said with a grin to make Sonia smile.

"I know you are used to controlling the guys you date and having the upper hand in your past relationships, but Bryan is not one of those guys and if you value what you both share, you would learn to make some changes. Believe me, there is no harm in learning how to be the kind of person your loved one wants you to be for them. You have no idea the kind of stuff I read on the internet every day because of Tom. I even watched videos on how to give a handjob and blowjob," Lucy said, moving her hand in an upward, twist, and downward motion like she was holding a cock and sucking, and Sonia burst into a peal of laughter.

"What has happened to Lucinda?" Sonia asked in amusement.

Lucy shrugged, "I love Tom. I'm learning different ways to show him that. But that's not the point here. Listen, I know you love Bryan, and he loves you too. And just so you know, I'm not saying you were wrong to suggest putting a hold on moving in together. I'm just saying the timing was wrong. You could have brought that up at a later time and as a suggestion so you both would discuss it the same way you discussed moving in together in the first place. And also maybe when Bryan asked you not to do anything at the station you should have trusted him and listened to him. You hurt his ego more than you realized. You really need to think about everything that happened between you two and try to hear exactly what Bryan is saying to you, alright?" Lucy said, and Sonia sighed.

"Yeah. I think I need to do that. I feel much better now. Thanks for helping me put things into perspective," Sonia said with a smile of gratitude and Lucy got off the bed and curtsied.

"Thanks for coming to my Ted talk," Lucy said, and Sonia giggled.

"Tom is good for you, Lu," Sonia said, observing Lucy who seemed too cheerful and confident.

"Duh! I'm good for him too," Lucy said with a flick of her hair.

"Now that you are smiling, can I talk about Tom without sounding like I'm showing off?" Lucy asked, and Sonia laughed.

"Only if you're going to tell me if you put the videos into practice," Sonia said. Imitating Lucy's handjob gesture, and Lucy giggled.

"Sure, I did put it into practice. But I don't think I'm there yet. I read somewhere that practice makes perfect, so I'll just keep doing it until I get it right," Lucy said with a wink and Sonia chortled.

"See? I told you by the time we are done you'd be laughing. Now all that's left is getting you to twerk. Do you need music?" Lucy asked, and Sonia giggled.

"You've become so silly, Lu," Sonia observed.

"I can be just about anything to make you laugh, Sony. Going forward, if you must cry, never cry alone. Alright? Do so in front of me and I will do all I can to make you laugh as you've done for me

all these years," Lucy said as she got off the bed to embrace Sonia when she teared up.

"I love you, Sony. And I want you to be happy," Lucy said as she patted her back.

"I love you too. And I'm sorry for everything I said when you walked in. I didn't mean any of it," Sonia said, and Lucy smiled.

"I forgive you. Now hurry up. There is no reason to keep the man waiting only to fire him," Lucy said, and Sonia grinned as she pulled away to pick up her sandals.

"You are going back to Ludus with me tomorrow, right?" Lucy asked as she watched Sonia put the finishing touch on her face.

"Yes. But I have to visit my mom's gravesite," Sonia reminded her.

"We can get some flowers and go together after your meeting. I should say hello to her," Lucy said, and they looked at each other for a split second before breaking into laughter.

"Yeah! Let's do that. No one would know even if she turns in her grave," Sonia said with a grin as she picked up her handbag.

"I'm ready," she told Lucy and Lucy put on her shoes and went to the living room to pick up her handbag.

"Why don't you tell me about Harry and Candace," Sonia suggested as they walked out of the apartment.

"Oh, no hurry. There is so much I have to tell you, and the best part is we have all day," Lucy assured her as they linked their arms and walked down the road to find a taxi.

Chapter 507 Lunch Invitation

While everyone else was busy chattering and talking about the coming interview with Eric Howells and the possible questions they might be asked, Bernice kept mute as she looked at her mother's neck but with a distant look in her eyes.

After they spent hours shopping for the clothes and jewelry they would wear to the interview, they had decided to have a quick brunch together before going to find the designer who had made the dress Anita wanted.

"Why are you so silent, Benny? Are you alright?" Tiffany asked when she observed Bernice's disposition.

Rebekah smiled knowingly as she looked at her oldest daughter, thinking that she was probably distracted because she couldn't wait to go be with her lover.

Of course she could understand that feeling completely. It wasn't easy staying focused on any conversation when you knew someone was somewhere waiting to eat you up.

"You can go home to get some rest if you are not feeling too well," Rebecca suggested, wanting to give her an excuse to leave.

Bernice looked into her mother's face. She didn't know what to say or how to feel. What sort of mother gave the sort of advise her mother did? She didn't even ask for the details of the affair, but instead had asked her not to be so obvious.

Didn't that mean she was experienced in having affairs herself? Or was she just feeling this way because of the necklace?

If her mother had merely come out right to say the diamond jewelry was a gift from Adam she wouldn't be feeling so suspicious, but the fact that her mother had said it was a gift from an admirer was what she couldn't wrap her head around.

She was feeling very tempted to confront her mother about it, but she didn't want to offend her mother just in case her mother was not aware of the identity of her admirer. But her mother was smart. There was no way she would accept a gift from someone she did not know or flaunt it this way if she didn't know who had sent it.

"I'm okay. I will leave after we are done," Bernice said with a forced smile, and Rebekah gave her a nod.

"So, can we know the identity of this secret admirer of yours?" Bernice asked casually and she noticed how her mother's smile wavered as she looked at her as though she was trying to discern if she was asking because she knew who the person was.

Bernice flashed her mother an encouraging smile, "Don't tell me you don't know the identity of your admirer," Bernice said, urging her to tell them.

"There is no way mother would accept a gift without knowing who sent it. She taught us that much," Anita said, and Bernice nodded in agreement.

"You shouldn't tease her. Mother has been alone since dad's death, so she deserves every attention she is getting," Tiffany said, and Bernice rolled her eyes.

"Can you stop being mummy's girl for a moment? No one said she doesn't deserve it. Shouldn't we at least know if our mother now has a man in her life? There is nothing wrong in knowing who she is seeing," Bernice insisted, and Anita nodded.

"Bernice is right. Do you know the person who sent it? If you don't we can just find out where the necklace was bought..."

"That won't be necessary," Rebekah quickly cut in. She was beginning to think that wearing the necklace was a bad idea. She had wanted to flaunt it before her daughters, but had she known it would get so much attention she wouldn't have worn it.

"I know the identity of my admirer, however, I can't tell you his name right now due to personal reasons, so I request that you respect my privacy," Rebekah said, giving Bernice a pointed look since she was the one championing the issue.

Respect her privacy? Respect her privacy when she just admitted that she knew Adam had bought her the necklace and was still referring to him as her admirer? There was no way in hell she was going to respect her privacy. She was going to look into this, and if she found out that her mother so much as had anything to do with Adam, there will be hell to pay.

Thinking about it now, it occurred to her that her mother had an unusual relationship with Adam. They were sort of close, and how come her mother was always taking Adam's side whenever she complained to her? Why did her mother keep advising her not to pry into Adam's business?

It was weird that she was suspecting her mother of having an affair with her husband, but after the sort of advise her mother had given her, she wouldn't put something as immoral as this past her.

"Bernice? Why do you keep zoning out?" Anita asked, snapping her fingers in front of Bernice to get her attention.

"I can't wrap my head around the fact that mother still has such generous admirers at her age. Don't you envy her?" Bernice asked Tiffany and Anita, and they laughed.

"We've left that topic. Keep up," Rebekah said irritably, wondering what was going on in Bernice's head. She didn't happen to know about the necklace, did she?

"Oh, really? So what are we talking about now?" Bernice asked as she tried to come up with an idea on how to find out the truth.

"Your uncle Richard. It's been a while since I heard from him. Have you heard from him recently?" Rebekah asked, and Bernice shook her head.

"No, I haven't. Have you tried reaching him on phone or visiting him?" Bernice asked, and Rebekah shook her head.

"His lines are not reachable, and I don't have the time to make the trip to his house," Rebekah said, while Anita pursed her lips thoughtfully.

"He sounded weird the last time I spoke with him. He kept asking questions about what I was going to do about Lucy and Tom," Anita confided.

"He did? Why? What exactly did he say?" Rebekah asked and Anita told them the details (chapter 246) of their conversation.

"It's probably not a big deal. I'm sure he was only asking out of concern. You know he sees you like a daughter," Tiffany said, and Anita nodded.

"Maybe he traveled out of the country on a vacation?" Bernice suggested.

"Without informing me? Besides, I don't think he would have traveled just like that when he is supposed to be receiving treatment," Rebekah pointed out.

"How about you give his doctor a call? You have his doctor's line, right?" Tiffany asked, and Rebekah gave her a nod.

"That's a good idea. He must keep in touch with his doctor," Rebekah said as she took out her phone to dial the doctor's line.

The phone rang for some time before the doctor received the call, and when he did he sounded pissed the moment he realized who the caller was.

"Have you heard from Richard?" The doctor asked before Rebekah could ask, and she frowned.

"I don't know. I was hoping you would know as his doctor. I haven't been able to reach him for some time now and I'm very concerned about him," Rebekah said, and the doctor snorted.

"Did he ask you to tell me this? If you who are his sister doesn't know where he is, how do you expect me to know? If you hear from Richard, tell him to pay me what he owes or else I will go to

the press with the information I have," the doctor threatened, and Rebekah frowned while her daughters watched her, wondering why she was frowning so much.

"Information? What information are you talking about?" Rebekah asked before the doctor could hang up.

"Richard is not ill. His major illness is his chronic gambling addiction, and that is what has taken all his wealth. If he doesn't pay up what he owes me I'm going to release this piece of information to the press," the doctor promised, and Rebekah raised a brow.

"The first time we spoke before we concluded on selling off the airline to pay his medical bills you said he was dying, and needed money to..."

"Richard asked me to tell you that. He said that was the only way you would let him sell the airline. He was knee deep in debts and needed to sell the airline to pay off his debts," The doctor explained, and it was all Rebekah could do to not to explode.

"Are you telling me the truth?"

"Do I have a reason to lie to you?" He asked irritably.

"Text me your account details and the amount he owes you. I will clear it up. Keep this information to yourself," Rebekah said before hanging up.

She couldn't let such a scandal taint her. Especially not when she had to be on Eric Howell's sure. She was going to clean up his mess, and then find him. She had to take care of him once and for all. She didn't need a liability in her life.

"What did he say?" Anita asked as they all looked at their mother expectantly.

Rebekah balled her hands into a fist, "Richard is not dying. He lied just so he could sell the airline and take care of his gambling debts," Rebekah announced, leaving her daughters stunned.

"I can't believe he did something like that," Anita said with a frown.

"I thought he was done with gambling," Tiffany murmured.

"It's an addiction. He didn't give it up, he only learned how to hide it," Bernice said with a shake of her head.

"Tiffany, you can go with Anita to see the designer. Make sure she gets a makeover for the anniversary week. I have to find your uncle before he causes any more trouble and clean up his mess. Bernice, you can go see your friend," Rebekah said as she rose.

"I was thinking we could all have lunch tomorrow at my house?" Bernice asked as they all rose to leave.

"Lunch?" Anita asked as she looked at their mother and Tiffany to hear what they had to say.

"Yes. It's been a while since the whole family gathered together. You and Lisa could come along with your husbands. The boys miss their grandma and aunties," Bernice said as she dropped some bills on the table and Tiffany smiled.

"That's not a bad idea. Please let it be outdoor and I don't mind a pool party," Tiffany said with a wink as they all walked outside.

"A pool party would be great! The ladies can cool off at the pool while the men play a game or talk about football, politics or whatever they like to talk about," Anita suggested.

Rebekah sighed, "Alright. Tomorrow then. Remember, do not bring up the interview in Lisa's presence," Rebekah warned as she got into her car and rolled down the glasses.

"Are we really not going to tell her about it?" Anita asked with a slight frown.

"Not yet. I will tell her about it if I want her to know. Just keep it to yourselves," Rebekah warned as she shut the door and turned on her car's ignition.

"What are you going to do about Uncle Richard?" Tiffany asked curiously as they remained standing beside their mother's car.

"Isn't it obvious that he has lost his mind? I'm going to have to keep him in a place where crazy people like him are kept. Let me know how it goes with the designer. See you ladies tomorrow," Rebekah called as she rolled up her glasses making it clear she was done.

Once they moved away from the car, Rebekah drove off. As she drove, she dialed a line, "Make sure you keep an eye on Bernice. Find out who she is going to meet," Rebekah instructed.

She needed to know who her daughter was involved with to make sure she didn't make any silly mistakes that would tarnish their reputation.

Still standing at the parking lot with her sisters, Bernice had a satisfied smile on her face, as she was pleased with herself at coming up with the Sunday lunch idea.

She was going to observe and monitor her mother and husband during lunch tomorrow so she sees if they were hiding something. God save them both if they were.

She sighed inwardly when it occurred to her that Tiffany would most likely feel this same way if she found out that she was having an affair with her husband. Her heart skipped a beat at the thought.

Tiffany was her sister and best friend and she loved her. She didn't want to hurt Tiffany.

This was wrong. All of it was wrong. If her suspicion ended up being true and she was going to punish her mother and Adam, she had to do so with clean hands not with guilt.

Why did she let herself get involved in something as stupid and immoral as having an affair with her own sister's husband? She was better than all of this for crying out loud.

No. She was done. She was going to meet Jackson and let him know that she didn't want to continue with any of that anymore.

"I have to run now. I need to meet up with my friend and also prepare for our lunch tomorrow," Bernice said as she embraced Tiffany and Anita.

"See you tomorrow. I will come with Lisa," Anita said, since they all knew Lisa might not want to join them.

"I can't promise you that Jack will come with me. But I will let him know," Tiffany said with a wave as she watched Bernice walk to her car.

"It's just me and you now," Tiffany said as she looked at Anita, "Let's go find that designer," Tiffany said, and they both headed for their cars.

Chapter 508 Phone Conversation With Derek

The moment they all walked into the general conference hall of the company, Tom, Bryan, Harry, Jade, and Jeff got on the stage, while Mia was assigned to ensure that things went smoothly by moving around and monitoring the activities in case anyone decided to be stupid and upload the contents before time.

Bryan was seated in the middle, with Jade and Tom flanking both sides. Harry was seated beside Tom, while Jeff was seated beside Jade.

Because only reporters from the most reputable news agencies in the country were invited, the hall was not packed full.

In the hall were about ten reporters with their aids, two people from I-Global's PR team, one member of I-Global legal team, and two security guards who were stationed at both the entry and exit doors of the hall to ensure that no one entered or left until they were done.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you are all welcome to this press conference. And thank you for coming on such short notice," Tom started, getting all their attention.

"Although Mr. Jonas has told you the rules already, I'm going to repeat myself. If anyone dares to leak any information in this room out before we give the go-ahead to do so, I will not only make sure you lose your job, and the agency you present is shut down and converted into a bakery, I will sue you for all you are worth. For that reason, and to be sure we are on the same page, you are to sign the non-disclosure without consent agreement form on your desk before we begin," Tom ordered, ignoring the noise coming from the reporters as they murmured amongst themselves.

Once they had all settled down and had finished signing the non-disclosure without consent form, Tom signaled to Harry to continue.

"Before we start, I will introduce myself and everyone seated here with me. I'm Harry Jonas. Although Mr. Hank says I'm Co-CEO, he uses me like an assistant and pays me peanuts," Harry joked, and the reporters laughed while Tom snorted.

"Seated beside me is no other than my employer, Thomas Hank. First of his name. Founder and chairman of I-Global, slave driver, and...."

"Shut up," Tom hissed, forgetting that his mic was still on, and everyone laughed while Harry grinned at him.

"Moving on, I'm sure I do not need to introduce Bryan Hank since he is the major reason you're all gathered here. The beautiful lady on Bryan's left is Jade Hank, the one and only Princess of the Hank family. Although she is a recent addition, she is part of I-Global's legal team and will be representing Bryan Hank. And lastly, the man beside her is someone I believe you are all familiar with. Jeff Winfrey, Bryan's former manager, who is now the director of I-Global entertainment," Harry said, while Jade watched him like a lovestruck puppy as he did his thing.

"Now to business. The purpose of this press conference is first to clear up the scandal that went viral on the internet last night about Bryan Hank. Bryan won't be defending himself. He will rather be explaining himself with evidence. The second thing we will be doing is responding to the video

CEO of Golden Star Entertainment Agency uploaded a while ago on the agency's social media page and website, with evidence too. And finally, I-Global will be releasing an official statement. As you all know already, during I-Global's annual anniversary, we announce the addition of a new subsidiary, but this year there will be two subsidiaries. I-Global airlines, as you already know, and I-Global entertainment. Bryan Hank will be the first entertainer we sign. He will be signing the contract today as the last part of the press conference. Once again, you are welcome. You can now direct your questions to Bryan Hank in an orderly manner. Please stick solely to questions related to the issues I've mentioned, and make good use of your opportunity. You only get to ask one question," Harry said before leaning back in his seat.

Gone was the playfulness on all their faces as everyone was now in their professional mode, ready to tackle the mess.

A hand shot up almost immediately, and Bryan gave the lady a nod to go on, "Some pictures and videos were released on the internet last night but were taken down shortly. Were you the person in those pictures, or was it doctored?"

"It depends on the videos and pictures you are talking about. If you are referring to the videos of a club fight, then yes. I was the one in the videos. It wasn't doctored," Bryan said calmly.

"Is it true that the guy you beat up is your girlfriend's ex-boyfriend, and she was the reason for the fight?" Another reporter called out.

"Is it just me, or did that sound like two questions in one?" Bryan asked, turning to look at Jade.

"He definitely asked two questions," Jade said with a nod.

"Is the guy Sonia's ex-boyfriend?" The reporter asked quickly, not wanting to lose his chance.

"Yes, he is."

"Can you tell us the reason for the fight?" Another reporter asked.

"No," Bryan said, and the reporter realized he had phrased his question wrongly.

"However, I will let the guy in question tell you the reason himself," Bryan added, and although the reporters wanted to ask how he planned to do so, no one wanted to waste their question slot on such a question.

They watched as Bryan turned to Jeff, and taking that as his cue; Jeff cleared his throat.

"I'm largely to be blamed for all of this. I'm not saying this as Bryan's manager or because I was asked to take the blame. Bryan wanted to create a bit of conflict in his relationship to spice things up, and he asked for my help. I contacted Sonia's ex-boyfriend, Derek, without Bryan's knowledge, asking for his help to make Bryan Jealous, but things got out of hand," Jeff said, and unlike most interviews, everywhere was silent as they tried to understand what Jeff was saying.

No one was in a rush to ask questions, even though they had a lot of questions.

Seeing this, Jeff picked up his phone, "To prove this, I will give Derek a call and place it on speaker. That way, you can all hear what happened for yourselves," Jeff said as he dialed Derek's line.

Jeff placed the call on speaker as he had said he would immediately after Derek received the call.

"Hey! I was just going to call you. Don't you think I deserve a raise after what I did last night?" Derek asked in an excited tone.

"A raise?" Jeff asked while everyone else remained silent so that they could all hear Derek.

"Of course. The money you paid me is not enough for the job I've done or the beating I received from Bryan last night. That bastard was determined to kill me," Derek said with a chuckle as he licked his busted lip.

"Bryan Hank beat you up? What could you have possibly said to annoy him so much?" Jeff asked with a chuckle, goading Derek to reveal more details.

"It wasn't so hard. The poor bastard is in love with Sonia. Too bad for him that people like you and I exist who don't want to see them together," Derek said in an amused tone.

"Did you want to call me only to boast, or are you going to tell me exactly what you did to make him so angry? You realize that he could file a complaint against you if you crossed a line you shouldn't have, and that could be messy," Jeff said impatiently.

"He won't do that. He loves Sonia too much to expose her to any of that. He doesn't even want me to say any foul words about her, so how do you expect him to sue me when he is trying to protect her image?" Derek asked smugly.

"You can't be too sure...."

"I am. I studied him already. If he were going to sue me, he wouldn't have beaten me up in the first place or deleted the video from my phone. Besides, he refused to give his statement at the station. I swear that bastard is too full of himself to want the public to know I had Sonia before him," Derek said, and Jeff sighed.

"So you deliberately made him beat you up?" Jeff asked, and Derek chuckled.

"I was only trying to confirm if he fell for the stunt I pulled in the afternoon. I did a live video talking about horny bitches like Sonia, who would jump on the nearest available cock. I tagged Bryan in the video, congratulating him on losing a bitch like her. I didn't expect him to suddenly show up at the club where I was drinking with my friends," Derek said with annoyance.

"Well, it worked out well for us both, didn't it? We both got what I wanted...."

"What did you want?" Jeff cut in.

"Everything. The money from you, the fame I'm getting from it all. My Instagram followers increased. Right now, everyone is against him and Sonia, and they're both bound to crack under all that pressure regardless of how much love they feel for each other. He even left her at the station last night," Derek said, laughing happily.

"Yes. You did a good job. Everyone believes you're the victim, and Bryan is bullying you," Jeff said, and Derek roared with laughter.

"Yeah! Too bad for him. I almost want to feel sorry for him, but no man. Whenever I remember how he almost broke my jaw for saying we were fucking the same bitch, I get pissed," Derek said with an angry hiss.

"Anyway, I need more money. You know, to get myself treated and to keep things rolling," Derek said, and Jeff sighed.

"Unfortunately, I don't owe you any money. I never asked you to get into a fight with Bryan. Our deal ended after I paid you yesterday," Jeff said, and Derek scoffed.

"You owe me, man. It's either you pay me, or I go to Bryan...."

"And tell him what?" Jeff cut in rudely.

"I will tell him everything. That you contacted me to ruin his relationship with Sonia," Derek threatened, but everyone listening to him in the hall could tell he was bluffing.

"Are you blackmailing me?" Jeff asked incredulously.

"I wouldn't exactly call it that. But you could call it that if it makes you pay me...."

"You are free to tell Bryan everything. Better still, I can help you do that...."

"Do what?" Derek asked incredulously.

"Tell not just Bryan but everyone what you just told me. You admitted that Bryan attacked you because you insulted Sonia and not just because he was jealous...."

"Why would anyone believe you? Besides, you don't have any proof..." before Derek could finish speaking, Jeff hung up, and all eyes turned to Bryan, who was gritting his teeth in annoyance.

"Phew! Who wouldn't hit a jerk like that? I know I would," Jade said, and Tom nodded.

"I definitely would too, and damn the consequence," Harry said in support while Tom looked at Bryan with an unreadable expression.

"Tell me you broke his ribs. And this is not my question," one of the female reporters asked, and Bryan chuckled for the first time.

"I was close to doing that before the cops showed up," Bryan said, and the lady nodded in satisfaction.

"Good job," Tom said, giving Bryan a thumbs up.

Although, as the CEO, he wasn't in support of Bryan's action as it wasn't good for the company. But as his brother and as the boyfriend of Sonia's best friend, he was in support of Bryan's actions.

He knew he would do worse if anyone said shit like that about Lucy, be it privately or in public.

Chapter 509 Jerk

As the interview went on, Harry kept his gaze on Mia as she moved around the hall. Why did she look so familiar? Where had he seen that face before? He mused, and before he could look away, Mia caught him staring and flashed him a smile.

Of course, this did not skip Jade's attention. She followed Mia's gaze and saw the way Harry looked away from Mia as though he was embarrassed at being caught staring.

If she didn't know better, she would think Harry had been staring because he had a thing for Mia. She hoped Mia wouldn't misunderstand Harry's curiosity for attraction.

Jeff also was not left out. He also noticed the smile that Mia flashed Harry, and he couldn't help but wonder where Harry could have seen her.

They all returned their attention to the interview when one of the reporters asked a question that caught their attention.

"Does this mean the rumors about you breaking up with Sonia Smith are false?" One of the reporters asked Bryan, and everyone was silent as all eyes moved to Bryan.

It seemed like everyone in the room was curious about the answer to this question too and Bryan looked at Mia, remembering her warning to him in the car not to say anything about Sonia that he might regret.

Although Mia appeared calm, she held her breath as she exchanged a look with Jeff, both praying that Bryan wasn't going to act immaturely and say something stupid that would jeopardize his relationship since they both knew he loved Sonia.

Bryan, on the other hand, took some time to contemplate the question. He knew he didn't have to answer it, but thinking about what Matt and Mia had said about his fans giving Sonia a hard time, he knew he needed to address it.

Was he breaking up with Sonia? Did he want that? The answer was NO. As annoying as the whole situation was, he didn't want a breakup. He loved her too much to want to be apart from her.

"Bryan?" Jade called softly when Bryan had remained quiet for some time without answering the question.

"Those rumors are ridiculous. Why would I want to break up with the most incredible, most intelligent, and sexiest woman I've ever had the privilege of knowing?" Bryan asked while Jade eyed him.

"Most intelligent? Seriously? You're saying that with your unintelligent sister seated right next to you," Jade muttered, and everyone laughed, including Bryan, who grinned, while Harry shook his head.

"Perhaps I should rephrase that. Sonia is one of the most incredible and intelligent women I've ever known. Hank Women are incredibly intelligent. My mom, Jade, and of course, my would-be sister-in-law, Lucy," Bryan added, looking at Tom apologetically.

Although he had apologized earlier, but he still felt sorry. He knew he was definitely a jerk for saying those ridiculous words to Tom about Lucy. It was stupid to feel resentful towards her when she did nothing wrong to him.

"So, to answer your question, yes. The rumors are false. I love Sonia Smith with every fiber of my being, and although we've known ourselves for only a short time, I can't imagine living without her," Bryan said with a sigh.

"But you left her at the station. Wasn't that the action that fueled the rumors that there was trouble in your paradise?" Another reporter asked, and Bryan nodded.

By now, he knew without a doubt that he had screwed up last night by leaving her at the station the way he did.

Leaving her this morning without properly talking things through was also a bad idea. He had yelled and said a lot of things but had failed to communicate clearly why he was pissed. And despite her insistence to fix things between them, he had walked away.

He let Derek get into his head without even knowing it and allowed the idiot to succeed in creating a rift between him and Sonia.

He had been too blinded by his ego and anger at Derek to think clearly, and he had gone as far as breaking his promise to her. Was she going to forgive him?

There was no doubt about the fact that Sonia was wrong too. She was wrong for treating their relationship the way she did, for calling him names, and for not trusting him enough to take his side at the station, and as much as he liked to believe that he had a right to be angry, his anger did not justify the fact that he had acted like a jerk. He was brought up better than this.

All he wanted was for her to understand that if their relationship was going to work and if they were going to be together, then their relationship couldn't be about her or him. It had to be about them. They were both equal partners in the relationship, and he didn't want her calling the shots without caring about his opinion. That was exactly what he needed to communicate to her.

"You are right. I was a jerk. It is ridiculous that I got myself into this mess because I fought to defend and protect her, yet I let my ego and anger get the best of me, and I abandoned the same person I fought to defend at the station when all she wanted to do was help. Sonia did nothing wrong. And only a stupid person would say she is damaging my career. I hate to believe I have stupid fans," Bryan said honestly.

"Aww, you've become so mature merely by sitting next to me. We should do this often," Jade whispered, and Bryan glowered at her while Tom and the others chuckled.

Harry made a mental note not to involve Jade in any press conference with her brothers in the future since she seemed to have a hard time staying serious.

"So, should we be expecting a real engagement and a wedding soon?" a reporter asked.

"No. There is no reason to rush it. We still have to get to know and understand each other better so that we can properly handle our misunderstandings in the future without it becoming a public business," Bryan said, and the reporter nodded.

"Is it true that you got kicked out from Golden Star Entertainment Agency, as the CEO said?"

"No, I wasn't. I was there some days ago to cancel my contract with Paul. And I will prove it by giving him a call," Bryan said as he dialed Paul's line.

Paul deliberately didn't accept the call until the last second when it was about to disconnect, "Don't tell me your brother has kicked you out already, and you want to come back," Paul said in an amused tone.

"Why would I return to an agency whose CEO lacks integrity?" Bryan asked, and Paul roared with laughter.

"Integrity? This has nothing to do with integrity, Bryan. By the time I'm done with you, no agency would want to sign an ingrate like you, not even your brother," Paul promised.

"What makes you think I won't do anything about this? I will tell everyone what a liar you are and...."

"Don't be silly, Bryan. It will be your word against mine. What evidence do you have of this?" Paul asked smugly.

"What do you want me to do, Paul?" Bryan asked, pretending to be scared.

"I told you before, didn't I? I made you the star you are today, and I have all it takes to break you. I will stop at nothing to make sure you regret turning your back on Golden Star because of that girl," Paul promised, and without another word, he hung up.

"That was faster than I expected. On the bright side, we not only have proved that he lied, but now we also don't have to pay any termination fee, so we can say the termination of the contract was a mutual agreement," Jade said with a bright smile as she patted Bryan's shoulder.

The reporters murmured amongst themselves as they wrote down all they had gathered from the conversations between Bryan and Paul.

"Let's proceed with signing the contract," Harry said, and the reporters, as well as the PR team of I-Global, took pictures of them.

"As you all know, I've been the one releasing the official statements on behalf of I-Global this whole time, and today will be the first time Tom releases his first official statement, but before we move on to that, do you have any more questions?" Harry asked once they were done signing the contracts.

"Does this mean the I-Global has become a family-run company, seeing how the three of you are now working together?" One of the reporters asked.

"I see no reason my siblings should work for other people and be treated unfairly when there is room in my company for them. Unlike their other employers, I won't try to stifle them, and I will only look out for their best interest as I do for all my employees. However, this doesn't mean I'm going to be partial because they are my siblings," Tom said, and the reporter nodded.

"Why isn't Miss Lucinda Perry present?" Another reporter asked.

"That isn't a related question. If that's all, I will release the official statement about I-Global Entertainment, and then we can all call it a day," Tom said politely.

A couple of minutes later, Tom, Harry, Bryan, Jade, Mia, and Jeff walked into Tom's office once they were done with the interview, leaving the reporters and the PR team to release the details to the public.

"That went well. I was touched. You meant all you said about Sonia, right? Or were you putting up a show?" Jade asked, and Bryan sighed.

"Of course, I meant it," he said, and Jade nodded.

"That's good. You did a good job," Jade said, and Mia nodded in agreement.

"This is the best interview you've had. Straight from the heart without Paul at the side whispering into your ears," Mia said with approval and looked at Jeff.

"You did well too. I'm sorry I snapped at you both earlier. It was for the greater good," Mia said with an awkward smile and quickly walked away from the office before either Jeff or Bryan could respond.

Chapter 510 Double Date

Immediately Tom and Harry walked into the office, they walked over to the office cabinet where they had left their phones as they both liked to do during press conferences, and picked them up.

"Lucy called," Harry said as he lowered himself on the couch, when he saw the missed calls notification on his phone. Two of it were from Lucy, two were from Aurora, one from Philip, and a couple of others from some shareholders.

"She tried to reach me too but now she is not answering her calls," Tom complained with a concerned frown on his face as he sat down.

"You can keep trying to reach her while I return the calls of some shareholders. I guess they've seen Paul's video and were calling to find out if it's true," Harry said, as he excused himself.

"What's wrong?" Jade asked as she joined Tom. She had excused herself earlier to use the restroom.

"I'm worried. I've been trying to reach Lucy but she's not taking my call," Tom explained as Jade sat down beside him.

"She is probably out with Sonia. Sonia mentioned that Lucy was with her when we spoke earlier. According to Sonia she was going out for a meeting and then hanging out with Lucy after. So I suppose Lucy accompanied her to the meeting," Jade said reasonably, and Bryan looked at her with interest when he heard Sonia's name, and he went to sit with them.

Tom glanced at his wristwatch. The interview had taken two hours, and Lucy had called just some minutes after they left the office. That meant they should be done with their meeting soon.

"Did mom tell you what time their flight would be leaving?" Jade asked Tom.

"No. I haven't spoken with her since she called to inform me of Janet's arrest. Excuse me," Tom said when his phone started ringing and he walked away from there to another end of the office to receive the call of the shareholder who was calling.

"Lucy's mom was arrested? Are mom and dad going somewhere?" Bryan asked as he joined Jade.

Although she wanted to make a snide remark, she decided not to, "Yes, Lucy's mom was arrested, and yes mom and dad are coming back to Ludus..."

"Just because of me and Sonia? They are overreacting. It's not necessary...."

"Oh, please! The world does not revolve around you and your relationship," Jade said with a roll of her eyes.

"Then what are they coming for?" Bryan asked, glaring at Jade.

"Didn't you hear about Candace and Harry being twins?" Jade asked, and Bryan nodded.

"I heard Tom's staff talking about it. What's that about? And what has that got to do with mom and dad?"

"Harry is family. Candace and Jamal have been living under Tom's roof too and you know how they feel about the kid. Not forgetting that Lucy's mom is also their mother's twin sister," Jade said and Bryan looked at her in confusion.

"Lucy's mom is whose mother's twin sister?"

"Harry's and Candace's. Lucy is their cousin. Lucy's parents, including mom and dad are coming back for a family reunion," Jade said as she gave him a quick recap of everything that was happening, and Bryan sighed.

"Wow! That's a lot."

"Exactly. Everyone has a lot going on right now, and that is why we were all upset about your scandal. Although, now that we know why you got into a fight we are no longer mad at you about that, but I'm disappointed you handled things the way you did," Jade said, and Bryan sighed as he combed his fingers through his hair.

It just occurred to him that if his parents were traveling down, that meant Sonia would be alone. If Lucy had not traveled over to be with her, then Sonia would have been over there with no one beside her. He had left without even making sure she was alright when she had been ill just the day before.

He looked up just as Tom and Harry returned to join them after their respective phone calls.

"I don't have to be here until next week, do I?" Bryan asked, looking from Harry to Tom.

"Why? Are you going somewhere?" Tom asked as he returned to his seat, and Bryan nodded.

"Yeah. I need to go and resolve things with Sonia. I shouldn't have left the way I did, and I don't think I want to let this drag on longer than it has already," Bryan said, and Harry exchanged a look with Tom.

"You had your time to resolve things, but you lost it. You can't cut in on their girls time. Besides, she might come back with Lucy tomorrow...."

"You don't expect me to wait until tomorrow to clear this up, do you? They can have their girls time some other time. I need to set things right with Sonia," Bryan insisted and Tom thought about it only for a moment before reaching a decision.

"Alright," Tom said, and turned to Harry, "Since you called me a slave driver, do you mind if I use you?" Tom asked Harry, who raised a brow.

"I mind. You can't! Harry needs to get some rest!" Jade said with a scowl of disapproval, and Harry cast Jade an amused smile at her protectiveness.

"Stay out of it," Tom told Jade, and Harry scowled at Tom.

"Don't speak to her in that manner," Harry fired at Tom.

"She is my sister...."

"So what?" Harry asked, leaving Bryan speechless, while Jade smiled broadly as she went to stand beside Harry, and Tom sighed deeply as he shook his head.

"What do you want?" Harry asked Tom.

"I was supposed to take Lucy out on a date tonight, but I had to cancel for her to travel. She will be alone if..."

"Don't tell me you want to travel with Bryan just so you can take Lucy out on a date?" Jade asked incredulously.

"Yes, I plan to," Tom told Jade before returning his attention to Harry, "You can take an all-expense paid vacation to any place of your choice after the anniversary week," Tom offered.

"Deal. I will handle the shareholders as promised. Lucy deserves a break. I'm not doing this for you, I'm doing it for my darling cousin," Harry said, and shook hands with Tom.

"Since you're doing it for your darling cousin I don't need to send you on an all expense paid vacation, do I?" Tom asked, and Harry chuckled.

"What I meant was, my cousin is one of the reasons I'm accepting your offer of the all expense paid trip," Harry said before turning to Bryan.

"You can go. But when you come back, you have to tell me what's up with your best friend and his deal with my sister," Harry said smugly, and Bryan snorted.

"Like you told me your deal with my sister," Bryan said dryly as he stood.

"Hey! Don't talk to my boyfriend like that!" Jade snapped at Bryan.

"I'm not your boyfriend yet," Harry reminded her softly.

"It doesn't make any difference. We both know you will be soon," she said with a grin, while Tom shook his head.

"Keep shaking your oversized head that way and it's bound to fall off sooner than later," Harry promised.

"Whatever. I just spoke with Mr. Matthews. Who did you speak to?" Tom asked, and before Harry could respond, Bryan cut in.

"I will be waiting at the parking lot," Bryan said and walked out of the office in search of Jeff and Mia who had disappeared.

Tom and Harry spent the next couple of minutes discussing the details of Harry's meeting with the shareholders while Jade busied herself going through the interview articles that the reporters had now released.

"I will give Candace a call to let her know I can't pick them up. I will ask Adolf to do so," Tom said after he and Harry were done with their conversation and he was ready to leave.

"Don't worry about it. I will drop them off myself," Harry called after Tom who was already walking out of the office.

"Let's go," Harry said to Jade as it was just them both left in the office.

"I'm coming with you on your vacation, right?" Jade asked as she rose.

"No. You only just resumed your job. Does it make sense that you are going on a vacation already?" Harry asked as he led the way out of the office but before Jade could respond Harry's phone rang.

When Harry saw the identity of the caller he turned to look at Jade who was pouting, "It's your friend, Aurora," Harry said, and chuckled when he saw the annoyance on her face as he received the call.

"Hello, Harry!"

"Hey! I'm sorry I missed your call earlier, I was in the middle of something," Harry said politely.

"That's not a problem. I was calling to inform you that I just got into Ludus and...."

"Already? I thought you said you were not coming until next week?" Harry said, surprised by the news.

"Well, yeah. But something came up so I had to come earlier than I planned," Aurora explained.

"I see. Well, I..."

Before Harry could finish, Jade cut in, "Is that Aurora?" Jade asked innocently, and Harry raised a brow.

"Is Jade there with you?"

"Yes, she is. Do you want to say hello to her?" Harry asked when Jade extended a hand.

"Sure," Aurora said, and Harry handed the phone to Jade.

"Hey, Aura! What's up?" Jade greeted.

"I'm fine. I didn't know you were going down to Ludus else we could have traveled together," Aurora said pleasantly.

"Yeah. Something came up so I had to come to be with Harry. And I brought his t-shirt with me. I found it," Jade said pleasantly, and Harry shook his head.

"Oh, I see! Maybe we could meet up after my date with Harry," Aurora suggested, sensing that something was up between Jade and Harry.

"Or perhaps could we have a double date," Jade suggested, and Harry raised a brow.

"A double date? That will be great!" Aurora said, and then Jade returned the phone to Harry.

"What double date are you talking about?" Harry asked, looking at Jade like she had lost her mind.

"There is no way I'm letting my boyfriend go on a solo date with another lady," Jade said with a sweet smile as she walked away from him and Harry hurried after her, wondering what she was up to.