

Wild Night 541

Chapter 541 Shameless!

"What show was Tiffany talking about?" Lisa asked Anita curiously after they sat at the other end of the table, away from Tiffany, who was busy on her phone.

"Eric Howells invited mother and her daughters to his show," Anita explained since Tiffany had already let the cat out of the bag.

"Am I not one of the daughters? Why am I just hearing of it now? Don't answer that. Let me guess; mother asked you not to tell me about it because she doesn't want me on the show?" Lisa asked, and Anita shrugged without denying it.

Lisa shook her head, "She never ceases to amuse me. I wouldn't want to be on the same show with her even if I was being paid to do it, anyway," Lisa said, and Anita laughed.

"That cannot be true," Anita said, and Lisa raised a brow.

"It is the truth. The only reason I still visit her is because of you and Bernice. I have no business with her and Tiffany. They have negative energy, and whenever I'm around them, I always feel drained," Lisa said with a yawn as she reached for Anita's glass of drink on the table, and Anita picked it up and moved it away from her.

"You can't have this. There is alcohol in it," Anita said, and Lisa scowled.

"Why didn't Bernice reserve my own drinks, knowing I can't take alcohol? I feel so thirsty and unwelcome," Lisa complained, and Anita patted her hand.

"Give me a moment. I will go in and get you some juice or whatever nonalcoholic drink I can find," Anita offered.

Lisa smiled, "Thanks," Lisa said as she watched Anita leave.

As Anita walked into the kitchen, she met the chief housekeeper, "I need a glass of nonalcoholic drink for Lisa," Anita said, and the lady looked towards the backyard.

"Perhaps you should ask Lady Bernice. She reserved some drinks for her," the lady said, and Anita looked around.

"Where is she?"

"I don't know," the housekeeper said, and Anita nodded as she went around to find Bernice.

Away from there, Bernice sat on her bed; she clicked on her phone to check the CCTV footage so she would know where they were.

As she suspected, they were having a quickie in the restroom of the guestroom. Tears sprang to her eyes, and her heart sank as she watched her husband, who had never touched her, grab her mother's boobs from behind and fucking her passionately in a doggie position.

She had thought she would be happy to confirm her suspicion, but her head suddenly felt light, and she felt faint.

Her heart ached as she watched her mother mutter some dirty words and command her husband to fuck her.

Her own mother. How long had this been going on? This couldn't possibly be the first time they were doing this. Her heart ached as she watched them, and when she couldn't bear it anymore, she headed straight for the guestroom to confront them.

She didn't bother to knock when she got there. She pushed the bedroom door open and watched on her phone's screen as Rebekah and Adam turned their gaze to the door.

Rebekah raised a finger to her lips to silence Adam but did not let him take his cock out of her. Unable to continue watching them, she closed her screen.

"Mother? Are you in here?" Bernice called, her heart aching as she said the words. She couldn't stand this betrayal. She had thought she was ready for it, but it seemed like her heart was about to burst.

"Yes, darling. I'm using the restroom. I will join you soon," Rebekah called back impatiently, wanting her to leave.

"I want to speak with you," Bernice said. She was pained. Deeply pained. How could her mother, of all people, be the other woman in Adam's life? How could her own biological mother be the reason her husband was unfaithful?

"Let's talk later, Bernice. I will join you soon," Rebekah said firmly in a voice that told Bernice to leave.

"Alright," Bernice said as she walked to the door and pretended to shut it as though she had left but returned to sit on the bed quietly so she could wait for them to finish.

"She has left. Let's go on. Don't tell me you have gone soft already?" Rebekah asked, and Bernice shut her eyes as she listened to them.

"Maybe if you could rub it.... oh," Adam groaned, and Bernice resisted the urge to check her phone to see what was going on.

"Does my daughter make you this hard? Tell me!" She heard Rebekah ask.

"No, she doesn't. My cock belongs to you and recognizes only your touch," Adam breathed.

Bernice raised her hands to shut her ears. Her heart was pounding hard and fast as she waited to confront them. She had no idea what she was going to say to them, but she wanted them to know their sham of a marriage was over.

She didn't have to wait too long because she heard Adam grunt, followed by Rebekah's satisfied smile. And then they turned on the tap to clean up.

"I will leave first, and then you can come out after some time. That way, I can make sure no one sees you when you leave." Bernice heard Rebekah say as she opened the bathroom door.

Bernice rose as her cheating husband, and shameless mother stepped out of the bathroom with her husband's arm around her mother's waist, and she couldn't say she was surprised when all she saw in their eyes were annoyance after the initial surprise.

"What are you still doing here? Didn't I ask you to leave?" Rebekah asked in annoyance.

"Mother! How can you be so shameless?" Bernice yelled angrily.

"Don't speak to your mother in that manner!" Adam snapped at her with displeasure, and Rebekah placed a hand on his arm to stop him.

"Leave us," Rebekah ordered Adam.

"Are you su..."

"Now!" Rebekah ordered, and Adam eyed his wife with disapproval before walking away.

As Adam walked down the hallway to return to the backyard, Anita, who had gone to Bernice's bedroom to find her after hearing from the kids that she went upstairs, stepped out of Bernice's bedroom when she didn't see her inside.

She contemplated returning to the backyard but decided to first check the guest room to see if Bernice was there with their mother.

Just as she got to the guest room and raised her hand to knock, she paused when she heard Bernice's angry voice.

"How could you be so shameless? How could...." The rest of the words were lost when Rebekah slapped Bernice hard.

"Don't you dare speak to me in that manner!" Rebekah hissed at her, surprising Anita, who had a puzzled frown on her face as she wondered what was going on between their mother and Bernice.

Anita contemplated going in to find out what was happening but held back herself. She doubted they would tell her what was wrong. So she remained silent as she listened to them.

Without thinking twice, Bernice slapped her mother back, "Don't you dare tell me what to do, you shameless old whore! I can't believe you are my mother! How can you sleep with my husband under my roof?" Bernice shrieked angrily, and Anita's mouth fell open in surprise.

Their mother was having an affair with Bernice's husband? How could she? Why would she do that? Anita mused as she pressed her ear to the door.

Rebekah let out a burst of humorless laughter, "Your hypocrisy disgusts me, Bernice! For someone who is fucking her younger sister's husband, you have no right to be mad at me. You are lucky I didn't have your husband fuck me on your bed!" Rebekah spat out, her eyes blazing with anger as she watched Bernice stagger back in shock at being caught in her own trap.

Of course, Bernice wasn't as surprised as Anita, who quickly raised a hand to her lips to stifle her surprised gasp. What was happening?

"I— I..."

"What? You think I wouldn't know?" Rebekah cut in as Bernice stuttered. She was glad that she had followed her instinct and asked someone to follow Bernice, or else Bernice would have gotten away with her self-righteous act.

"Sleeping with Jack was a mistake, and you have no right to judge me for it! If you were not screwing my husband and taking his attention away from me, I wouldn't need to look for comfort in the arms of another man," Bernice defended as tears dropped from her eyes.

"A mistake? I don't think so since I'm sure yesterday wasn't the first time. I can't believe you stooped so low as to get involved with Jack. Someone who sleeps with everything in skirts. Are you that desperate?" Rebekah asked with disgust.

"Still, you have no right to judge me! How could you have an affair with Adam? You are older than him, and he is my husband, for crying out loud! Who knows if he is the only one you are fucking, you old slut!" Bernice cried, and Rebekah scoffed.

"I don't care what you think about me having an affair with your husband, but make sure you do not ever call me such names or treat me with such disrespect ever again! You should be thankful I allowed my lover to get married to you," Rebekah hissed as she headed for the door.

"Your lover?" Bernice asked in disbelief.

"I'm going downstairs. Pull yourself together and make sure you are on your best behavior...."

"I'm divorcing Adam," Bernice said, making Rebekah stop and turn to her.

"You will do no such thing! You hear me?"

"How do you expect me to stay married to him after knowing this?" Bernice cried.

"If you so much as file for divorce, I will forget the fact that you are my daughter, and I will give Adam proof of your affair with Jack. Adam is a lawyer, and his father is the chief judge. I hope you haven't forgotten that? Who do you think is going to lose at the end of it all? How do you think Tiffany is going to feel when she finds out you are one of her husband's whores? Be a good girl and pretend like you didn't see Adam and me. Only then will I pretend I don't know what is happening between you and Jack. This conversation is over," Rebekah said, and Bernice collapsed on the bed in defeat.

She couldn't believe that this shameless witch was her mother. She couldn't believe that she had gotten the proof she wanted, yet she was powerless to do anything about it. She was hurt. Deeply hurt. And there was nothing she could do.

Immediately Anita heard their mother heading for the door, she ran into Bernice's bedroom as fast as she could to avoid being seen.

Her heart was pounding really fast as she sat on Bernice's bed to catch her breath.

Their mother was having an affair with Bernice's husband, and Bernice was having an affair with Tiffany's husband? Unbelievable!

What sort of family was theirs? What was going on? Was this what her family really looked like behind closed doors? Everybody was sleeping with everybody's husband?

How could their mother and Bernice be this way? How could the two people she admired and looked up to as her role models be this disgusting? All her life, she had wanted nothing more than to impress them and meet their expectations, yet this was all they amounted to? How could they be this way? How could they live this way?

What did their mother mean when she said she let her lover marry Bernice? Hold on, was Adam the admirer their mother had spoken about? Was Adam the one who had gotten her the diamond necklace? It couldn't be, could it? How much did Tiffany know?

To think their mother had the guts to keep telling her she was a disappointment to her, yet she was the one living such a disgraceful and immoral life.

Chapter 542 Party Over

Anita looked up when Bernice opened the bedroom door, and Bernice almost jumped back in surprise, "What are you doing here?" Bernice asked with a forced smile as she quickly tried to compose herself and brush away the tears on her face with her hand.

"I was searching for you. Lisa needs a drink, and your housekeeper said you reserved some for her. Are you okay?" Anita said as she rose from the bed, trying to sound as normal as possible.

"I'm fine. You can leave. I will bring Lisa's wine," Bernice said, and Anita looked at Bernice for only a second before walking away.

As Anita walked down the hallway to join Lisa outside, she made up her mind that she was no longer going to remain a part of this disgustingly dysfunctional family.

Lisa was right. Letting her mother control her life was stupid. And seeing the kind of person her mother was, reinforced that fact. It was time to get out of their mother's unhealthy nest.

"I can't believe you came back without the drink," Lisa complained when Anita sat next to her.

"Benny will get your drink. She reserved some for you," Anita said flatly as her gaze moved from their Tiffany to Jack, who was playing with Bernice's kids, and then to their mother and Adam, who were having a conversation.

Although she wanted nothing more than to walk away from there, she also wanted to wait and see just how her mother and Bernice were going to sit there with them and pretend like everything was alright.

"Is everything alright?" Lisa asked as she observed Anita.

"Let's talk about it after we leave," Anita said, knowing she could confide in Lisa. There was no way she could keep such a disgusting thing to herself. She just had to talk to someone about all she had heard.

"Alright," Lisa said, and then smiled when she saw Bernice approach them with a bottle of nonalcoholic wine.

"I hope that bottle in your hand is for me," Lisa said hopefully.

"Yes. I'm sorry I took so long. I had to make sure the boys were in their bedroom," Bernice said with a cheerful smile that irritated Anita.

"Finally, I get something to drink. Thanks, Benny," Lisa said with a bright smile as she received the drink from Bernice, and Anita helped her open it and poured some wine into a glass.

Soon everyone settled to eat, and Anita watched as her mother and Bernice acted as though they had not just finished fighting over a man a while ago.

She watched as Tiffany and Bernice interacted like best friends and observed how Adam acted politely toward their mother while Bernice avoided Jack's gaze.

Had she not overheard all she did earlier, she never would have suspected a thing. She would have been fooled and would have continued to think that her family was the ideal family.

Rebekah cleared her throat when she met Anita's gaze, "I believe you are aware that you are no longer welcome to join us on the show. Not after that drama at the spa," Rebekah said, and Anita smiled stiffly.

"Thanks for letting me off the hook easily. I was going to apologize to you that I wouldn't be available to join you on the show. Something came up, and I will be busy." Anita said calmly, and Rebekah raised a brow.

That wasn't the reaction she had been expecting from Anita. She had expected her to show more remorse and to apologize for her carelessness and the embarrassment she had caused the family.

"Are you sure about that? You didn't say anything about being busy earlier," Tiffany quipped, and Lisa shook her head.

"Can you act your age for once instead of acting like a little mommy girl in front of your husband?" Lisa asked, and Tiffany shot a glare at her.

"Watch the manner with which you speak to me!"

"I will start doing that shortly after you start behaving like an adult," Lisa retorted.

"I think you all need to calm down," Adam suggested calmly.

"Then you all should ask Lisa to be more respectful! She has been insulting me since she got here, and I do not appreciate it!" Tiffany spat out angrily.

"As I said, I wouldn't insult you if you..."

"Enough!" Rebekah snapped at them both.

"...act like an adult," Lisa completed her statement before sipping from her wineglass.

Seeing that everyone was silent again, Rebekah focused on Anita, "It doesn't matter whether or not you are busy. You won't be on the show with us. Bernice and Tiffany are enough to represent my daughters," Rebekah said, and Anita scoffed.

"Of course. Bernice is your daughter quite alright. Tiffany too," Anita muttered under her breath, and Lisa, who heard her, looked at her, wondering what was up with her.

"Did you say something?" Rebekah asked as she kept her gaze on Anita.

"Yes. I said I am no longer interested in being with Tom, so you should let him and Lucy be," Anita blurted out, unable to hold back.

All three of her sisters looked at her in surprise, especially Lisa, who had not expected her to act on her advice so quickly. She had thought Anita would be too scared to do so.

"Why? Because of what happened at the spa?" Tiffany asked while Bernice simply watched them. She had a lot going on in her head, and she wasn't motivated enough to get involved in the conversation. She wasn't even entirely following the conversation since she kept zoning in and out.

"What do you mean by that? Don't tell me you are willing to lose Thomas to that nobody. I won't let you...."

"I wasn't asking for your permission, mother," Anita cut in coldly, startling Rebekah and her sisters, who all took a closer look at her, wondering what had gotten over her. This wasn't Anita. Anita would NEVER speak to their mother so rudely. They all knew how much she revered her. So what was happening?

Rebekah could sense that something was different in Anita's attitude, but she couldn't tell what it was. However, she could see that Anita's eyes had lost the warm sparkle of love and fear they once held for her. Why was that?

"If you are doing this because I threatened to take you off the live show, then you don't have to. Fine. I will let you join us...."

"I'm not saying this because of the live show. As I already said, I have better things to do than to appear on that show. Tom loves Lucy, not me. I don't want a man who doesn't love or respect me. I want a man that loves me the way Ron loves Lisa," Anita said passionately, and as the words left her lips, she realized, for the first time, that was truly how she felt.

What she desired was love. Real love. She wanted a wealthy man alright, but she also desired love. She could get it all, just like Lisa.

"Are you out of your mind? Who is feeding you with such nonsense about love?" Rebekah asked angrily.

Lisa giggled, unable to hold herself, as she raised her glass of wine to her lips. She had never felt more proud of Anita than she did at that moment, watching her face off with their mother. She never thought the day would come, but she was glad she was there to witness it.

All eyes moved to Lisa when she giggled, "It's you, isn't it? Are you the one feeding her with all this nonsense? You are the one who is confusing her?" Rebekah asked harshly.

"So what if I'm the one? What is wrong with her decision? Why not focus on the happiness of your daughters instead of using them to climb the social ladder?" Lisa asked as she set down her glass to face her mother.

"Anita, do not listen to Lisa. Do not let her ruin your life...."

"I'd rather she ruins my life than let you ruin it. Can't you see? She is happier than Tiffany and Bernice, whose lives you planned out. I won't get married to a man that cheats on me or treats me with disrespect like Adam and Jack do to Bernice and Tiffany," Anita said, itching to say all she had heard inside.

"HOW DARE YOU?" Tiffany shrieked angrily before their mother could recover from her shock and say anything, while Adam and Jack eyed Anita with displeasure for dragging them into their family drama.

Bernice sighed loudly, "You are right, Anita. I support you. Don't marry Tom if you don't want to. And don't let mother or anyone else control your life or tell you who to be with. It never ends well, trust me. Do whatever makes you happy," Bernice said with resignation and gulped down the wine in her glass, ignoring her mother's furious gaze.

"Thank you all for coming. I'm exhausted. I need to get some sleep," Bernice said with a sigh as she rose from her seat, making Tiffany and Lisa look at her, wondering why she looked so defeated.

"Are you alright, Benny?" Lisa asked with concern.

"It is ungracious to leave before your guests. Sit down!" Rebekah ordered Bernice.

"This is my home, mother. I can choose to be ungracious however I want. You should stop trying to control my life..."

"Sit down, Bernice," Adam said sternly.

"I'm going in. You can remain a gracious host," Bernice said without looking directly at Adam. Her heart hurt too much and she couldn't look into his face.

"I'm sure you all can find your way out," Bernice said to her sisters and walked away before Rebekah or Adam could say another word.

Adam rose and stormed after his wife furiously, while Tiffany looked at Bernice's back with a worried and confused frown, wondering what was going on.

"Maybe I should go and make sure she is okay. Adam looks pisse...."

"Sit down and keep shut!" Rebekah snapped at Tiffany, making her clamp her mouth shut.

Anita shook her head as she turned to Lisa, "I think the party is over. Are you ready to leave?" Anita asked, and Lisa bobbed her head.

"Sure. This is by far the most entertaining family gathering I've had the honor of attending," Lisa said as she gently rose from her seat.

"I won't let you destroy your life! I will cut you off if you defile me!" Rebekah threatened.

"That is only if I don't cut you off first. Good luck with that, mother!" Anita said as she picked up her handbag and walked away with Lisa.

"Should we check on Bernice before we leave?" Lisa asked, and Anita shook her head.

"No. Let's leave," Anita said as she pulled Lisa with her to the car.

"What has gotten into you?" Lisa asked Anita after they got into the car.

"Mother is having an affair with Adam, and Bernice is having an affair with Jack. Can you believe it?" Anita asked angrily as she turned on her car's ignition and drove out of Bernice's compound.

"How did you know this?" Lisa asked calmly and listened as Anita relayed all she had overheard earlier to her.

"Bernice? I can believe that mother is capable of that, but I'm disappointed in Bernice for following in mother's promiscuous footsteps," Lisa said with a shake of her head.

"Why would you believe that mother is capable of that? Has she ever done something to give you that impression?" Anita asked, and Lisa sighed.

"Dad told me she was having an affair. He was going to divorce her before everything went downhill for him. And I once confronted her after catching her with a younger man. She knows I know her, that is why she doesn't bother with me. I'm so disappointed she is sleeping with Benny's husband," Lisa said with a shake of her head.

"Dad told you that? And you caught her in the act? Why didn't you ever say anything?" Anita asked with a frown.

"Like you would have listened to me then. You are just like Tiffany. Mother can do no wrong in your eyes. You all took her side when she kicked dad out, remember? It's a miracle you are thinking for yourself right now. I can only hope you don't run back to her nest once you get over this shock," Lisa said, and Anita scowled.

"Get over this shock? I can never look at her the same way ever again! I can't even stand to look at her! I've never felt more disgusted!" Anita spat out bitterly.

"I can see now why you have been this way towards her," Anita said thoughtfully.

"I wonder if Bernice is going to be fine," Lisa said with a sigh.

"I don't care about Bernice! It serves her right. How can she be having an affair with Tiffany's husband? I feel so mad at the lot of them!" Anita said angrily, and Lisa sighed.

"You should calm down. At least now you see why it is a bad idea to follow Mother's footsteps. I'm glad your eyes are beginning to open. No matter what she says, please stay away from her influence and find your own path to happiness," Lisa advised.

"Do you think I should tell Tiffany about Bernice and her husband?" Anita asked, and Lisa shook her head.

"How do you know Tiffany is not also involved in some sort of immoral affair? Seeing how she takes after mother, I won't put it past her," Lisa said, and Anita sighed.

So much had happened in one day, and she was feeling so drained and mentally exhausted. All she wanted was to drop Lisa off at home and then go home and crawl into her bed.

She really needed to take another look at her life goals and reprioritize them. Pleasing her mother and being on her good book was totally out of it now.

"Maybe we should find time to speak with Bernice. I don't know what we are going to tell her. I can't imagine her confessing to Tiffany, and we can't tell Tiffany either," Lisa said feeling sorry for both Bernice and Tiffany. Their mother had successfully ruined their lives.

Neither of them said a word as they were both lost in their thoughts until Anita pulled the car to a stop in front of Lisa's house.

"Thanks, Annie. Don't forget what I told you earlier. Leaving Tom and Lucy alone is not enough. You have to apologize to them."

"Yeah."

"I want to hear you say it, Annie. Promise me you will apologize to them," Lisa said, and Anita turned to her.

"I can't say it won't be difficult, but I will do my best. That's if they will be willing to hear me out," Anita said, thinking she would need to figure out a way to go about that.

Chapter 543 Gullible Emotionally Needy

Sara was silent for some seconds as she tried to figure out why Harry could possibly be calling her. Did Aaron finally tell him about her? What about Lucy? Did she tell either Harry or Aaron about their discussion? What was going on?

"Are you that surprised by my call?" Harry asked when she did not say anything after some time. He had called her not only to satisfy his curiosity and to put his plans in motion, but he had also called to catch her off guard and to take a peek at what was in her head. He wanted to see just how smart she was.

"As a matter of fact, I am. I don't know what to say," Sara answered more honestly than Harry had expected.

"My father told me about you. I still can't believe that I never knew of your existence until now. Why didn't you say anything when we met?" Harry asked, sounding like he was genuinely surprised.

"Your father asked me not to say anything to you until he had the chance to open up to you," Sara said, still trying to figure out what Harry was up to.

"I must say I'm disappointed that you didn't reach out to me. I would love to meet with you. I think we need to meet and talk," Harry said, and a thin line formed on Sara's brows.

"Did your father tell you that we met recently? What did he tell you about me?" she asked, wanting to know how much Harry knew.

As much as Harry hated telling lies, he couldn't bring himself to tell her the truth right now. Telling her the truth wouldn't serve his purpose, and a person like her did not deserve the truth.

"Yes, he told me of your meeting. That's how I know you were the one I met at the restaurant. He told me you both got separated after my birth because you were dealing with postpartum stress and he couldn't be there for you as you wanted him to be," Harry said, and Sara paused.

That sounded like something Aaron could say. Knowing Aaron, he was capable of taking the whole blame for something like this just so his son wouldn't be hurt by the truth. She knew him well enough to know that he would be too emotional to tell Harry the truth, but what about Lucy? What did she tell Harry and Aaron? Had she told them of the twin who didn't die yet?

From the little she had seen, Lucy was nothing like Aaron, and judging by all Lucy knew about her and their family ties, she doubted that Lucy would withhold all that information from Aaron and Harry.

"Was that the only thing your father told you?" Sara asked cautiously.

"Yes," Harry said, knowing the reason for her wariness.

"What about Lucy?" Sara asked, and Harry almost smirked since he could tell the reason for her question.

"Lucy? What about Lucy?" Harry asked innocently.

Did that mean Lucy didn't tell him anything? Sara mused, "I just wanted to know if she told you anything about our meeting," Sara explained.

"Is there something she is supposed to tell me? Did you give her a message for me?" Harry asked sounding like he was genuinely confused by her question.

"No. Nothing. I'm just asking after her. You know, she was with your father the last time we met," Sara said quickly, not wanting him to suspect anything.

Did Lucy decide to keep everything she knew to herself seeing that they are related? Or did she tell Aaron and he asked her not to mention it to Harry? What was going on? Sara wondered.

"Oh, Yeah! I think I remember them mentioning it. Anyway, I called because I would love for us to meet in person. I figured that I should meet the woman who gave me life," Harry said, and Sara frowned as she looked at her laptop's screen.

It wasn't like she had genuinely wanted a family reunion or anything. If this research institute turned out to be legit as she was beginning to believe it was, then she wouldn't really be having any real need for Harry's liver unless she was keeping him as an alternative.

Although she still had to think about Lucy's warning. Lucy had warned her not to go anywhere close to Harry, or she would expose her. Not that she cared much if Lucy told Harry and Aaron the truth since it would be their word against hers. The doctor was dead, and the hospital records were destroyed. The other twin was nowhere to be found, so there was no evidence to prove that she had lied.

What she cared about, however, was Lucy exposing her to the world. Her reputation was important to her. She knew how gullible people were. With or without evidence, such a scandal would affect her.

She was now considered a veteran in the modeling world and she was still a role model and mentor to so many young ladies, and she couldn't let such a scandal destroy her life.

As much as she despised Lucy and would like to ignore her, she couldn't risk leaving such a secret with Lucy.

Could she count on Lucy being more reasonable now since it was Harry who was asking to meet her? Would Lucy choose to let peace reign and destroy whatever information she had?

"Are you there?" Harry asked when Sara remained silent.

Sara cleared her throat, "Yeah. Is your father aware of this? I mean the last time we spoke he and Lucy were keen on keeping me away from you, so...."

"Don't worry about my father. He is aware that I need to unite with my mother. And Lucy is not a part of our family so she really doesn't have a say in who I meet with or not. You are free to decide on the venue for our meeting and let me know," Harry offered, knowing that would make her let down her guard a bit and not feel suspicious.

"Are you sure she doesn't have a say? Your father seemed very fond of her," Sara said, still wanting to know just how close Lucy was to Harry.

"Yes, he is. She is my best friend's girlfriend. Do you know Tom? The guy who was with me when we met. Lucy is his girlfriend and she stays by my father's side to keep him company when I'm

busy, so they're sort of attached to each other," Harry explained easily, and Sara frowned slightly, feeling genuinely confused by Harry's attitude.

"I would really love to meet you, and get to know you...."

She couldn't understand what was happening or what Harry wanted from her, "You don't mind that I left?" Sara asked.

"I'm sure you had your reasons. I'm an adult and I don't think there is any reason for us to be stuck in the past. Let's all move on," Harry offered, and Sara relaxed.

It seemed like Harry was exactly like his father. Weak and emotionally needy, Sara thought with a smirk.

Although she didn't really need Harry anymore, If she could get close enough to Harry, she could find a way to confirm if it was true that Lucy had recorded their conversation at the restaurant that day, and then she would find a way to destroy whatever Lucy had.

After that, she would find a way to discredit Lucy. She wouldn't hurt her. That would be too much of a hassle. She would discredit her and make sure Harry and Aaron would never believe any word that comes from her.

She paused. What about Janet? Even if she discredited Lucy, she would still have to face Janet she reminded herself.

Almost immediately she remembered that Lucy had not even told Janet about their meeting. She was the one who mentioned their meeting to Janet.

Well, since it seemed like Lucy had not told anyone yet about their discussion and had failed to tell Harry about their family ties, she would just have to beat her to it and tell Harry first.

She would tell Harry about her family ties with Lucy and a bit of truth about her background. If Harry was half as gullible as his father, as she suspected he was, and if she pulled it off well enough, Harry would despise Janet. That was the only way she was going to succeed.

"Are you still there?" Harry asked again after a short while.

"Alright. I will get back to you on it," Sara said, feeling in control of the situation.

"Thanks. I look forward to seeing you," Harry said with a satisfied smile before Sara hung up.

He didn't mind that he was going to seem gullible and desperate to her. That was exactly what he wanted her to believe, Harry thought as he dialed another line.

"Find me a beautiful young lady between the ages of twenty-seven and twenty-eight," Harry instructed the moment the person received the call, and once he gave him the specifics he rose from his bed and headed to the living room to intimate Aaron and Candace with his plans.

Thankfully, the nurse was out and it was just his father and Candace seeing a movie and discussing in the living room when he got there.

"Jamal is still sleeping?" Harry asked when he noticed the kid was still not out yet.

"Yeah. He barely naps, but when he does, it takes all day," Candace said, and Aaron chuckled.

"Harry was just like that too. I think he still is," Aaron said as Harry sat down.

"I just got off the phone with Sara," Harry informed them, and Aaron's heart skipped a beat as it always did at the mention of Sara, while Candace raised a brow.

"She called you?" Candace asked as her gaze moved to Aaron whose face had lost all the traces of the smile it had held only seconds ago.

"No. I called her...."

"What for?" Aaron asked with a slight frown. Sara was bad news and he didn't want Harry to get involved with her.

As far as he was concerned, if Harry wanted to teach her a lesson, he should do so from a distance and not go anywhere near her.

"I told you not to try to stop me, remember? So calm down. This is me doing what I have to do to punish her. I didn't tell her about anything we heard from Lucy," Harry said, quickly summarizing the conversation between him and Sara.

"Sara is manipulative and deceitful...."

"I've heard enough about her to know that. Trust me, and don't worry about me," Harry assured Aaron, and he sighed in resignation.

"You are not going to tell her about me, are you?" Candace asked, knowing that she wanted absolutely nothing to do with Sara. She would rather not set eyes on Sara in this lifetime or in the one to come.

"I won't. But I need your help. I will need you to give me the details of the orphanage where you were raised and whatever you can remember," Harry said, and Candace narrowed her eyes.

"You want to get someone to pretend to be me?" she asked, and Harry smiled. Impressed by her smartness.

"Yes. I'm going to pay someone to be you. We have to know everything she plans to do," Harry said, and Candace nodded.

"You can let me know if you need my help," Candace offered.

"I will definitely need your help. You have to talk to the sisters at the orphanage to play along and help us convince Sara that whoever we will be using is you," Harry said, and Candace shrugged.

"That's easy enough. I can do that," she said, and Harry nodded.

"You're not bringing Jamal into this, right?"

"Of course, not!" Harry said, displeased that his father would even think that.

Satisfied, Candace yawned as her gaze moved to the wall clock, "I should probably give Adolf a call so he can be on his way to pick us up."

"You don't have to. I will drop you off. I need to see Tom," Harry said, and Candace wiggled her brows.

"Are you sure you did not mean Tom's sister?" she asked in a teasing tone, and Aaron chuckled.

"I think that was what he meant," Aaron said, and Harry tried not to scowl as he looked from Candace to their father and back again.

"I received a call that Matt wants to join I-Global entertainment. Did you know that?" Harry asked, knowing that would not only shut her up but also get their father's attention.

"What has that got to do with me?" she asked with a scowl while Aaron grinned, enjoying himself at both their expense.

"Well, he's your friend, isn't he? Do you want us to accept him or not?" Harry asked, and Candace glared at him.

"You're bringing Matt up only because you don't want to talk about Jade, right?" Candace asked knowingly.

"And you are going back to that because you don't want to talk about Matt," Harry said, and Candace sighed as she shook her head.

"Anyway, just so you know, Jade has no plans of visiting you anytime soon. She says you are not her boyfriend yet, and you won't be seeing her until after the anniversary," Candace said, and Harry raised a brow.

"What else did she say?"

"Nothing that concerns you. Just some stuff about someone called Anita having a clash with Lucy at the spa and inciting the other ladies to hurt Lucy. Do you know who that is?" She asked, and Harry raised a brow.

"Lucy was hurt?" Aaron asked with concern.

"No. I don't think so," Candace said as she picked up her phone and read out Jade's story to their hearing.

"Do you know who that is?" Candace asked, and Harry nodded.

"She is Tom's ex-girlfriend," Harry said distractedly. If they already did not plan to carry out the live show, he would have been very mad at Tom for not handling Anita's issue properly.

He glanced at the wall clock, he was going to have to inform Tom and Lucy about his plan to handle Sara. He could just as well see them after dropping off Candace and Jamal. He would have to see Jade too. It was obvious that he had hurt her feelings.

Chapter 544 Emotional Detox

Once Jade returned from her outing with her mother, she went straight up to her bedroom to freshen up and relax before dinner, leaving her mother to chat with the others and catch up on the events of the day.

As relaxing as the massage had been, she was exhausted from all the activities. They had gone out for lunch in a fancy restaurant together and did a bit of shopping after leaving the spa.

After she had showered, she put on combat shorts with a tank top and settled on her bed with her journal and pen in hand.

Now that she was finally alone, she could relax and think about all her mother had said earlier and also put her relationship with Harry in perspective.

As she opened her journal to jot down her thoughts, a knock sounded on the door, and glared at it. Why couldn't a person be left alone around here? She mused irritably.

"Princess?" Desmond called, and almost immediately her irritation died and her lips pulled into a smile when she heard her dad's voice.

"You can come in, dad," Jade called to him, and sat up on her bed as she watched her father walk into the bedroom with a glass of juice.

"You look so beautiful my eyes ache," Desmond said as he took note of her hair which had been washed and styled in a way that instead of the pixie cut which had grown a bit long, she now had a short bob. Her brows had been plucked too, and she had also gotten a lash extension done.

"Thanks," Jade said with a wide smile.

"Is that for me?" Jade asked even as she reached out to take the glass of juice from him.

"Sure," Desmond said as he let her have it, and he sat on the edge of the bed.

"Thanks," Jade said as she drank from the glass and gulped down everything, "I didn't realize I was craving something cold and sweet," Jade said with a smile of gratitude as she dropped the empty glass on her nightstand.

"How was your outing with your mother?" Desmond asked as he kept his gaze on her.

Jade shrugged, "Eventful. She told you about the incident at the spa?" Jade asked, and Desmond nodded.

"Yeah. She also said she slipped back into her age-long habit and you were disappointed," Desmond said, and Jade raised a brow.

"So you are here to scold me for being harsh to your wife?" she asked, and Desmond chuckled.

"That's between your mother and you. Besides, I chided her too. I'm just here to spend some time with you since we've hardly had any time to ourselves in a long time," Desmond said, and Jade smiled.

"That's true," Jade said as she shut her journal and pushed it away from her. She could do her reflection at a later time.

"So what has been going on with you lately aside from Harry?" Desmond asked, and Jade giggled.

"Why do I feel like the subject you just put aside is the real topic you want to talk about? Oh, I know why. It is because I know you very well," Jade said, and Desmond chuckled.

"I'm being real this time, trust me. Besides, what's there to want to talk about Harry for? I know him. And I pretty much know you both are into each other and he sent you some good morning flowers and stuff. I'm just here to really know how you're doing," Desmond said, and Jade looked at her father for a moment.

"I'm fine. You know I'm fine," she said, and Desmond nodded.

"You look fine. But we will know soon enough. Why don't you tell me all about Varis? Your job, your cases, your dating life over there... Before Harry," Desmond added.

"We never got the chance to visit 'cause you kept saying you were busy each time we offered to visit you. So I want to hear all about it. Bring me up to speed with your life. I'd also like to know how you met Candace and all that crime story in between," Desmond said as he let his back rest on the headboard of the bed, and Jade tucked both legs in front of her as she sat comfortably facing him.

Desmond listened to every word that came out of Jade's lips with rapt attention, laughing and exclaiming when he needed to, and expressing disbelief and disapproval when necessary.

"Interesting," Desmond said when Jade finished speaking. But Jade was not sure what part of her story he was referring to. Unlike her mother, she had told her father all about Candace and even Andy and their stripping job. She knew her father would never judge Candace by that.

Desmond did not miss the fact that she had spoken all about work and she did not mention anything about any guy in her life until Harry came over as a knight in shining armor to rescue his damsel in distress.

"You are so brilliant, Jady. Did you know that?" He asked, and Jade giggled.

"Of course, I do."

"And you are very smart too," Desmond said and watched as Jade's giggle settled into a smile.

"And you are so beautiful and kind-hearted and loyal. And I'm so proud of the lady you are," Desmond said, and this time Jade shifted uncomfortably as she tried not to squirm.

Knowing her dad, a long speech was going to follow those compliments, and she wasn't so sure what this speech was going to be about or if she was going to like it.

"Okay. Where is this going, dad?" She asked as she scratched the back of her ear.

"Well, your mother told me about your conversation with her earlier this morning. And she mentioned your misunderstanding with Harr...."

"Here we go. I knew it! I was wondering how long it will take you to get to the Harry talk," Jade cut in, and Desmond smiled.

"As I said, I'm not here to talk about Harry. It's you I want to talk about. This is about you not about Harry," Desmond said, and Jade rolled her eyes.

"Alright. Go on. I'm listening. But if you are going to repeat all that talk about how I'm a spoilt princess...."

"I don't think you are a spoilt princess," Desmond cut in, and Jade paused as she looked at him with suspicion, wondering what his deal was.

"Yes. You heard me. Maybe a broken princess, but definitely not a spoiled one. I think you are a very beautiful, brilliant, and smart young lady who knows exactly what she wants and goes for it. And I need you to always remember that. Never forget who you are. Not even for a second. Do not let events of the past make you doubt your worth, or affect the way you see yourself or the way you project yourself to others," Desmond said and paused to make sure she was following.

"What do you mean?" She asked, confusion clouding her blue eyes that looked very much like her father's.

"I'm saying you should always carry yourself with pride in yourself not just your job. Do not feel inferior or insecure about anything or anyone. I can tell you for free that Todd didn't cheat on you because you were not good enough or because you were lacking in any way," Desmond said, and tears gathered in Jade's eyes as she looked away from him, feeling as though he could see what was inside her head by looking into her eyes.

It was true that in the first year after Todd died she had been full of unanswered questions. She had always wondered why Todd cheated on her. She had wondered if she had been lacking in a way. But never had she voiced out those thoughts of inadequacy.

She had asked herself a lot of questions concerning their relationship and it had been harder for her to deal with Todd's betrayal because he was not even alive to tell her what she had done wrong or the areas where she had been lacking that made him decide to not only get into a relationship with someone else but to also engage her.

His betrayal had stung. Her feminine pride and self-esteem had been completely bruised and battered, and the only pride she had left was her pride in being a member of the Hank family and her pride in her career. And that was the reason she had invested all her time and energy into her career.

"I would have had this conversation with you long ago had you been open to talking about Todd. But you refused to say anything and I didn't want to force you. Look at me, princess," Desmond said, and Jade reluctantly met his gaze as a tear slid down her cheek.

She hadn't realized that the wound was still very raw and fresh despite all the time that had passed. She had deceived herself into believing she had moved on because she stopped thinking of it. But only now did she realize that the surface of the wound might have closed, and seemed like it was healed, but the wound was still bleeding inside.

Desmond reached out and brushed away her tears even as more fell, "You are beautiful, Jade. You are loved lavishly. You are more than enough, and any man that would have the honor of having you in his life is lucky. You have no idea how lucky your brothers and I are to have you. Todd never deserved you. I'm not saying this as your dad. I'm saying this because I know it for a fact," Desmond said, as he looked into his little girl's eyes and watched her lips quiver.

He realized that he should have spoken with her sooner. It had occurred to him while listening to Evelyn speak about her discussion with Jade concerning her conflict with Harry, that Jade might be feeling insecure because of self-doubt and not just because she had trust issues.

It was one thing to distrust other people, but it was completely another thing to carry such fear that anyone else could easily replace you. Such thoughts often stemmed from a deep-rooted feeling of inadequacy.

If there was one thing he knew, it was the fact that no one who truly knew their worth, would easily feel threatened by the presence of someone else unless, of course, the person felt the person was better than them.

"I know you are still hurt. And I suspect that somewhere inside you, a deep part of you probably blames yourself for what Todd did. You are probably thinking you did something to deserve what he did. Or maybe you are thinking if you were a certain way, he wouldn't have done that. I'm here to tell you that it wasn't you. It wasn't your fault. It wasn't about what you did or what you did not do. Todd did what Todd wanted, and it had absolutely nothing to do with you or your abilities," Desmond said and his heart ached as he watched Jade break into a sob.

"I'm saying this because I don't want you to keep carrying such a mindset or burden around. I especially don't want you to carry it into your next relationship. It hurts, but admit to yourself that he didn't love you. He found love somewhere else and that is fine. Now it's time for you to heal completely and move on. Forgive Todd, and let go of whatever anger or bitterness you harbor in your heart. You are forgiving him for not being honest with you. You are doing it for yourself, not for him. You are doing it so you can move on completely. And if it makes you feel better, tell yourself that it was for the best that he found the kind of love he wanted before he died whether it was with you or not," Desmond said as he pulled Jade to himself and embraced her as she wept.

"It hurts dad. My heart still hurts," Jade cried, and a tear dropped from Desmond's eyes as he patted her back.

"I know Princess. That's why you need to face it now and let it go. The emotional wound needs to be opened and treated properly for it to heal. You've let it fester for too long by neglecting it. Now face it," Desmond said and he continued to murmur silent assurances to her.

Once she had calmed a bit, Desmond rose from the bed and walked over to get her the box of tissue on top of the dressing table. After she had wiped her nose and face, Desmond looked at her, "Now say, I am beautiful."

"Go on and say it," Desmond urged her when Jade looked at him, reluctant to say it.

"I'm beautiful."

"I am more than enough," Desmond said, and tears clouded Jade's eyes again.

"I'm more than enough," Jade repeated.

"Say it confidently, princess. Your lips are saying it but your body isn't. I don't need you to say it like you believe it. I need you to really believe it," Desmond encouraged.

Jade sat up and raised her chin, "I am more than enough."

Desmond grinned, "Harry is such a lucky bastard to have you."

"Yeah. Harry is lucky," Jade affirmed, as she embraced her dad, and they both turned to the door when a knock sounded on it.

"Can I come in? It's Candace," Candace announced.

"Yeah, come in," Jade called without leaving her dad's body and Candace opened the door.

As Desmond watched Candace enter the room, he remembered what his wife had said Jade told her at the spa, and he also remembered what Jade had told him a while ago about her.

Candace looked from father to daughter and she didn't miss the crumpled tissues on the floor. Jade's red nose was enough to tell her Jade had been crying.

"Harry is outside. He wants to see you," Candace announced, making Jade's heart skip a beat as she sat up and pulled away from her dad.

Desmond chuckled at her spontaneous reaction as he watched her run to the mirror to look at her face.

"I will let you handle your business, Princess. Carry yourself like the brilliant lady I know you are," Desmond said as he got off the bed and picked up the empty glass of juice from the nightstand.

"Thanks, Dad. I love you," Jade said without looking at him as she powdered her face and applied a bit of lip gloss to her lips.

Desmond said nothing as he approached the door where Candace remained, standing there like she was waiting for him to leave so she could say something to Jade.

"Where is Jamal?" Desmond asked curiously.

"He is with Evelyn and Janet in the Den," Candace said politely.

"And how is your dad's health?" Desmond asked, deliberately referring to Aaron that way to see how she would react.

Candace's heart skipped a beat at that, but she nodded, "He looks much better than he did yesterday."

"Good," Desmond said with a nod, and without another word to her, he walked out of the bedroom.

Desmond sighed inwardly knowing that he was going to also have to talk to her. It seemed like Jade and all the young ladies connected to him through his kids went about with so much emotional baggage. And just like Lucy, Sonia, and Jade, Candace also needed a bit of emotional detox.

Chapter 545 The Lady I Love....

Although a part of Jade was still mad at Harry for threatening to end whatever they had if she showed up at his date with Aurora, she raced all the way from her bedroom down the stairs, and by the time she got to the foot of the stairs she was breathless.

She paused at the foot of the stairs to catch her breath and compose herself before walking to the front door.

As she walked from the door to meet Harry, who was waiting for her in his car, she reminded herself of everything her dad and mom had said.

She was going to consciously put away every feeling of insecurity and inadequacy. She knew it wasn't going to be easy, but she would make conscious efforts. She needed to start acting it by carrying herself properly. She was not going to make a fool of herself or give Harry the wrong impression about her anymore.

By the time she stopped by the passenger door and knocked lightly on the window to get Harry's attention, she was feeling more in control of her emotions.

Once Harry saw her standing there, he got out of the car and went around to join her, "Hey!" he greeted as he gave her an unhurried once over.

"Hi! Candace said you wanted to see me," Jade said calmly, not letting her face or tone give out her excitement at seeing him.

"Are you alright?" Harry asked with concern as his gaze roamed over her face.

"Yeah," Jade said, as she dipped her hands into the pocket of her combat to keep herself from embracing him or touching him as she craved to do.

"Are you sure? Did you cry?" Harry asked with concern, and Jade raised a hand to her face self-consciously.

"Why?" She asked, wondering if something was wrong with the light makeup she had applied. He wasn't referring to her new hairstyle and lashes, was he?

"I don't know. I guess your eyes just seem a bit dull," Harry observed.

"I'm alright. I was sort of busy before Candace came to get me," she said, and Harry nodded.

"I see. So what were you busy with?" he asked conversationally.

"Spending time with my dad," Jade said, and Harry nodded as he stuck his hands in his pocket.

"I see. Your hair is different. It is longer," he noted.

"Mom said she loves it long, so I'm considering regrowing it. We went to the spa," Jade explained.

"You look beautiful," Harry said softly.

"Thanks. Why did you want to see me?" she asked, curious to know so she could get that out of the way before telling him all she had in mind.

"Are you still mad at me?" Harry asked, and Jade raised a brow.

"I never said I was mad," Jade pointed out, even though it was true that she was still a bit miffed by his earlier threat.

"You didn't have to. Besides, if you aren't mad why didn't you show up today? And why did you tell Candace that I won't be seeing you until after the anniversary? Are you going somewhere?" Harry asked, and Jade scoffed.

"I didn't show up at your house because I had no reason to visit a place where I'm not welcomed. And no. I'm not going anywhere. I'm just not going to visit you or randomly show up in front of you until we become an item officially," Jade said, while Harry continued to observe her.

"Why?"

"Why? Did you just ask me why?" Jade asked, glaring at him.

"Yes. Why won't you visit me until you become my girlfriend? And why do you think you're not welcomed at my apartment?" Harry asked calmly.

Although he had come to apologize to her for being harsh earlier, he wanted to know exactly what she was mad about and to see how upset she was and how she would express herself.

Jade took a deep breath. She was not going to be unreasonable. She was going to behave like the reasonable and intelligent young lady she was.

"Tell me something, Harry, am I forcing myself on you?" she asked, and Harry frowned.

"Of course, not! Why would you ask me such a question when you know how well I feel about you?"

"How you feel about me?" Jade asked with a scoff.

"I'm honestly not sure I know how you feel about me. Lately, you've made me feel like I'm forcing myself on you," Jade said, and before Harry could speak, she shook her head.

"I'm not done yet. I realize that I may not have been on my best behavior lately, but that doesn't mean it is okay for you to boss me around or push me around. You can't push me away one moment, and be trying to pull me back the next. I'm not your puppet or plaything," Jade said, and Harry raised a brow.

"When did I boss you around or treat you like my plaything?"

"When? You make use of every opportunity to remind me that I'm not your girlfriend yet. And you, Harry Jonas, you asked me to leave your apartment because you needed space. You also threatened to not have anything to do with me if I showed up at your date. So pardon me if I don't understand why you are standing in front of me right now and asking me why I'm not coming over to your place. Isn't that the same way kids discard their toy when they don't have use for it and pick it up when they miss it? Quit giving me mixed signals, Harry Jonas. It's either you want me in your life or you don't. You may be old-fashioned, and love to do things the old-fashioned way, but I am not. I'm a 21st-century lady. Being old fashioned is your choice, not mine. So don't you dare expect me to walk down that path with you or put up with your shit anymore. I won't always get my way? That is fine by me, but don't expect to always have your way either. I won't let you shove your principles down my throat, and if you can't stand that, then you can shove your stupid principles and your so-called love up your ass," Jade said poking his chest as she paused to catch her breath, while Harry smiled as he watched her, the fire back in her eyes.

"I want to believe my anger is not amusing to you," she hissed at him, and Harry chuckled.

"I just caught a glimpse of the old Jade. It's attractive. And it's good to know you still have that fire in you," Harry said, and she raised a brow.

"What are you talking about?" Jade asked with an annoyed scowl.

"I will rather keep that to myself. I didn't come to fight with you esquire. I came to see you because I missed your presence, and I also wanted to apologize for being too strict with you earlier," Harry said, and Jade snorted.

"Missed seeing me? Didn't you say I was a nuisance and you needed time to recuperate from me?" she asked grudgingly, and Harry took a step closer to her.

"I never said you were a nuisance. I could never call you a nuisance, Esquire. However, I meant it when I said that you bothered me so much and I needed time to recuperate. That wasn't meant to be an insult. If you didn't leave, I have no idea what I could have done to you last night. You have no idea what you do to me or how I feel when I'm with you, esquire. I forget everything else when I'm with you. I've never been more tempted to throw away my principles as I've been since you got here," Harry said, as he touched her face gently.

Although Jade's breath hitched at both his touch and confession, she slapped his hand off her face, "Keep your hands to yourself. You are not my boyfriend yet," she hissed at him, and Harry smiled grimly as he dipped his hand into his pocket and moved away from her.

"Alright. I can see you're still mad about a lot of things, and there is a lot I need to apologize for. I will listen quietly while you express yourself, that way I can know what I'm apologizing for," Harry said as he relaxed his back against the car while Jade faced him with her back to the house.

"If I bother you that much, why are you here? Don't you want to recuperate anymore?" Jade asked grudgingly.

"I think I can handle this much of your presence. I just really wanted to see you, but I don't want to be with you in private."

"Why didn't you come inside if you didn't want us to be alone?" Jade asked and he shrugged.

"Because I would have had to talk to everyone else. I would rather spend the time talking to you, and go in to say goodbye to them when I'm ready to leave," Harry said, and Jade smiled reluctantly.

"But we are alone right now, aren't we?" Jade pointed out.

"You can hardly call this private. We are out here in the open. And we are not alone either. Your mom and Lucy's mom have been watching for some time. Don't look at them abruptly," Harry told her, since he had sighted the ladies at the window when he got out of the car to join Jade.

Jade smartly went to stand beside him, with her back against the car while looking at the windows in front of the house where she could see more than two heads.

"They are not the only ones spying," Jade said with a shake of her head.

"Do you mind spending some time with me? Maybe we could go for a little drive around and talk?" Harry asked, and Jade looked down at her fluffy slippers and the tank top, and the combat shorts she was wearing.

"Do I need to go in to change?" she asked, and Harry shook his head.

"It's dark already. We are not going to any public place," Harry said, and Jade eyed him reluctantly.

"Are you certain you want to do that? We are going to be alone if we drive away from here," she reminded him.

"Get in the car, esquire," Harry said as he held open the passenger door for her to get in.

"Alright," she said as she got into the car and Harry shut the door before going to get in the driver's seat.

Harry did not say a word as he drove far away from there, and it wasn't until he had driven a safe distance that he parked the car by the quiet roadside, and turned to Jade.

Jade was slightly startled when Harry suddenly pulled her close to himself and covered her lips in a hungry kiss. At first she wanted to push him away, but she was too drawn to him to resist the urgency of his lips on hers, so she kissed him back with equal fervor.

Unable to think straight as he drowned in the kiss, Harry used what little self-control he had left to break the kiss and pulled away from Jade leaving her wishing he had not stopped kissing her.

His kiss made her thirsty, and it wasn't for water. She wanted more. More of his kiss, more of his touch. More of him.

"You see what I was talking about? Only you can make me act this way, esquire," Harry groaned breathlessly as he looked into her face, and Jade raised a finger to her lips.

"I thought I asked you to keep your hands to yourself until you become my boyfriend?. You can't be having boyfriends benefit when we are not dating yet," Jade murmured under her breath.

"I did keep my hands to myself. You said nothing about keeping my lips to myself," Harry said with a grin, and Jade tried hard not to laugh but she couldn't stop the smile.

Damn her heart for being unable to stay mad at him. "Keep your entire body to yourself," Jade muttered.

"I feel hot. Let's step out of the car," Harry suggested as he got out, leaving the headlight on as he went to open her door.

He led her to the car trunk, and lifted her off the ground effortlessly so that she sat on the trunk of the car while he stood between her legs.

"I'm deeply sorry I was harsh earlier," Harry apologized, and Jade cocked her head to the side.

"Isn't being harsh sort of your thing?" she asked dryly.

"Hear me out, esquire," Harry cut in, so she wouldn't interrupt him.

"I'm sorry I said all that the way I said them. I had no intention of disrespecting you or hurting your feelings. I understand that was no way to talk to the lady I love and respect. I promise to work on my bluntness. I really do not want to hurt your feelings in any way," Harry said, and Jade sighed without saying a word. She had no idea what to say.

Chapter 546 I Trust You

"Say something, will you?" Harry urged her when Jade just stared at him without saying a word.

"You realize you just told me you love me, right?" Jade asked, and Harry chuckled.

"When has that ever been a secret?" Harry asked, and Jade shrugged.

"It's not something you've said outrightly," Jade pointed out, and Harry considered her for a moment.

"So do you want to hear me say it again?" He asked, and Jade bobbed her head.

"I love you, esquire. And I will love you to have more confidence in yourself and in my feelings for you. You are my first love, and I intend for you to be my only love till the day I draw my last breath," Harry said making butterflies flutter in Jade's belly.

"I love you too, Jonas. And I've got the answer to your questions," Jade said and Harry raised a brow.

"What question?" Harry asked, wondering what she was talking about.

"You said you weren't sure about my feelings for you. Now more than ever, I'm sure about my feelings for you. I'm madly in love with you. You wanted to know when I started feeling this way about you, I can't exactly point to any particular moment but believe I started feeling this way from the very first time we met but I never took note of it. I also believe it grew over the days we spent together in Varis, but I never realized it until after we got to Ludus. I love you and want to be in a relationship with you because I not only feel alive when I'm with you, but I'm also happiest when I'm with you. And you bring out both the best and worst sides of me," Jade said everything in a rush, and Harry smiled.

"You are slowly catching up," Harry said as his gaze moved over her face.

"A kiss would have been perfect at this moment, but you are not my boyfriend yet," Jade said with a playful grin, and Harry chuckled as his arms went around her waist and he pulled her forward for a kiss.

"You are not my boyfriend yet," Jade reminded him but did not move away from him.

"I thought 21st-century ladies are allowed to kiss guys they're not dating yet?" Harry asked, and Jade giggled, feeling much better now than she had felt all day.

"Not old-fashioned gentlemen," Jade said as she let him claim her lips.

Her stomach somersaulted as he kissed her with deliberate care. She could tell he was being careful so as not to drive himself over the edge.

The kiss they shared was short but intense and unhurried. A silent promise of what was to come.

As Harry broke the kiss, his eyes remained on her lips, "I want you so bad, esquire," Harry confessed, and Jade groaned.

"You are really not helping me by telling me that," she complained as she pulled back from him.

"It wasn't meant to help you," Harry said with a grin, and Jade smiled as they both wordlessly stared at each other.

"So?" Harry asked after some time.

"So what?" Jade asked, wondering what he wanted to hear.

"Am I forgiven?" Harry asked, and Jade shrugged.

"I guess so."

"Good. Now we can deal with the other stuff you mentioned," Harry said, feeling the need to address all she had mentioned during her outburst.

"Can't we just forget it? I don't want us to ruin the mood," Jade said, but Harry shook his head.

"We won't ruin the mood. We are going to have a mature conversation so we can understand each other better," Harry said, and Jade sighed.

"Alright. I'm listening."

"Before we do that, I'd like to ask one question. When did you realize that I was in love with you?"

"Hmm, that. You hid it so well," Jade said in amusement as she thought about how annoying he had been when he showed up at her doorstep. Who would have thought she would be head over heels in love with him? Definitely not her.

"I had no idea you were interested in me. You were always so mean," Jade said, her lips curving in a smile as she remembered all their arguments and banters.

"I wasn't mean. You are the one who made a habit of making me uncomfortable," Harry pointed out.

"You were mean. Do you remember all you said when you came into my apartment?

You even implied that I was unattractive!" Jade said, feeling her blood boil at the memory.

"No offense, but you did look unattractive. You have no idea how upset I was to see you that way," Harry said, with a shake of his head, not wanting to remember that.

"I've always tried my best not to regret past decisions in my life that I can't change, but when I saw you I regretted not making any move back then," Harry said, and Jade smiled.

"We probably would have been married by now had you made a move then," Jade reasoned, and Harry chuckled.

"Yeah. Possibly with a kid. A pretty little girl that looks like you," Harry said, and Jade smiled at the thought of that.

"Or a little boy that looks like you," she said, and Harry grinned at that.

"But you would likely not be the hotshot lawyer you are right now," Harry pointed out.

"Why? You wouldn't want me to work?" Jade asked, turning to look at him.

"Didn't you say you buried yourself in your job to escape your grief?" Harry asked, and Jade nodded.

"True. But I also think if we were married, I would have still been a hotshot lawyer. I know you would have pushed me to become the best in my career. I would have given my best to my job because I was passionate about it and wanted to make you proud, and not because I was trying to escape my grief," Jade said and Harry smiled.

"What makes you so confident?"

"Remember the morning after we arrived at your apartment? " Jade asked, and Harry nodded.

"I was so touched to see you had stayed up all night to help me organize the file Cassidy left. That didn't seem like something any random guy would do for his best friend's sister. I remember thinking then that you would make a very supportive partner. A person that would stay up all night that way to help me organize my file wouldn't let me slack off in my career," Jade said, and before Harry could respond she continued.

"My heart melted too when you made my coffee the way I love it. Anyway, I don't need to be a hotshot lawyer. I don't mind being just a regular lawyer and your hotshot wife.... I'm getting way ahead of myself again, am I not?" Jade asked thoughtfully and Harry chuckled as he pressed a kiss on her lips.

"It's best you are hotshot Jade. You can be a hotshot lawyer and hotshot wife and hotshot mom," Harry pointed out.

"See? I know you wouldn't let me slack off," she said with a smile that made her eyes twinkle like one of the stars in the sky.

"You still haven't answered my question," Harry reminded her.

"I had a feeling you might be attracted to me hence I kissed you that night at the club I was trying to test the chemistry between us to see if the feeling was mutual, but then you disappeared and left me a fuck off note and you also told me at the company cafeteria that you liked Aurora," Jade said with a shrug.

"It was Tom, Bryan, and Sonia who pointed it out to me that you liked me," Jade said, and Harry narrowed his eyes.

"Bryan and Sonia? How did they know?"

Although he had never outrightly admitted to Tom that he was in love with Jade, despite all of Tom's attempts to get him to open up about it, he could understand Tom telling her that, but he couldn't understand Bryan and Sonia.

"I don't know. Maybe Bryan saw something in the way you looked at me. Sonia kind of guessed it when I told her all about our first meeting."

"You did? Why?" Harry asked curiously.

"She's a bestselling romance author, what do you think?" Jade asked, and then pressed her lips together when she realized her slip.

"She wants to write about us?" Harry asked with a frown.

"Well, it's more a story about the Hank siblings. And since she believes I'm romantically involved with you, she wants to write about us," Jade explained, and Harry shook his head.

"I'm not comfortable with that."

"Your name won't be there...."

"Almost everyone knows about her and Bryan's story and a bit of Tom and Lucy's story. If those stories are part of the novel, any person who makes good use of their brain would know the story is about the Hank siblings and that the partner of the Hank sister is me," Harry pointed out.

"I do not want my business to be public business, so kindly ask her to leave me out of her novel," Harry said, Jade pouted.

"But our story is beautiful. I'd really love to read about it," Jade pleaded.

"You can write it down in your journal and read it," Harry said, and Jade giggled.

"You know that's not what I mean. I want to see what Sonia would do with our story. Besides, I can't let her write about my brothers and not write about me. Please?"

"Is Tom aware that Sonia is writing about him?" Harry asked, and Jade shook her head.

"Lucy might have told him, but I'm not sure."

"I will think about it," Harry said, making a mental note to ask Tom about it later.

"Alright. What was it you wanted to say earlier before asking me that question?" Jade asked, and Harry smiled.

"Good thing you remember. Can I be honest with you? I mean, I know I can, but I don't want you to get mad," Harry said, and Jade looked at him for a moment before giving him a nod.

"I believe I can handle your honesty now. Go on."

"One of the things I loved most about you the first time I met you was your confidence in yourself. It was the first thing I noticed about you...."

"You noticed my confidence while I was falling off the stairs?" Jade asked in amusement.

"It was the first thing I noticed about you during our chat," Harry said with a grin.

"Yet you called me a spoilt brat," Jade reminded him playfully.

"Well, I wouldn't call you one if you didn't act like one," Harry said and chuckled when Jade pushed him away.

"I said I will try not to be blunt. I never said I won't be honest," Harry said as he got on the trunk and sat beside her.

"Earlier you implied that I was making you feel like you were forcing yourself on me," Harry said, and Jade nodded.

"Well, I want you, so it's not that you were forcing yourself on me. If I acted that way, it's most likely because I haven't exactly been comfortable with your attitude," Harry said, and Jade raised a brow.

"What attitude?" Jade asked defensively, and Harry took her hand in his own.

"There is a huge difference between a person being confident and assertive and being someone who wants everything to go her way out of sheer pride and unreasonable stubbornness. For some time now you've been the latter not the former," Harry said, and although Jade was tempted to respond defensively, she held back her tongue to let him finish.

"So are you saying I'm not confident or assertive?" she asked, and Harry shook his head.

"No. That's not what I'm saying. The Jade I met four years ago was all of that and more. But for reasons I don't quite understand, you've been more of a spoilt brat since I arrived at your doorstep in Varis. No offense. I know there is more to you than this, and I desperately want to see that part of you again," Harry said, and Jade sighed as she pushed backward and relaxed on the trunk with her back resting on the rear windscreen.

"And what if that Jade doesn't exist anymore?" she asked after a short moment of stargazing.

"I saw a glimpse of her tonight. So I know she is still in there. And if for any reason she is no longer there, we can always come up with a better version of her," Harry assured her as he kissed her open palm.

Jade sighed, "I'm sorry."

"What for?" Harry asked as he turned to focus on her.

"For being a spoilt brat. And for indirectly hinting that I don't trust you or your judgment," Jade said, and Harry felt his heart soften towards her.

"I trust you. Or so I think. But I guess I have some emotional baggage I need to deal with so I don't keep being such a spoilt brat. I will do my best to consciously and actively work on it," Jade said, and Harry took her hand.

"How can I help?" Harry asked, and Jade shook her head.

"I'm not sure you can. This is probably something I need to do on my own," Jade said, and Harry pulled her close so that her head was resting on his shoulder while they both gazed at the stars.

"Did he hurt you that much?" Harry asked, and Jade bobbed her head.

"Yeah. This whole time I thought I had healed, but thanks to my parents I got to realize today that I'm still very hurt, and it's affecting my reaction to things," Jade said, and Harry kissed the side of her head.

"I guess I sort of noticed it. Each time you talked about him you sounded bitter. I just didn't realize that was the reason you've been acting so out of character. I'm sorry I've been so hard on you. I promise to be more patient and understanding," Harry promised.

"Thanks."

"Was that why you cried earlier?" Harry asked, and Jade raised her head to look at him.

"How did you know I cried?"

"Your eyes don't lie to me. I can tell how you feel when I look into your eyes. You shouldn't have bothered with the makeup," Harry said, and Jade smiled.

"I could hardly come down to see you looking a mess. The last time that happened you said a lot of unpleasant things," Jade reminded him.

"That was the best way I thought I could handle it then. I'm sorry."

"What about now? How would you handle it?" Jade asked curiously.

"Carry you. Embrace you. Kiss away your tears. Tell you I love you," Harry said, and Jade giggled happily.

"I see. Why do you keep kissing me and talking to me like I'm your girlfriend yet you always remind me that I'm not your girlfriend yet?" Jade asked, and Harry smiled.

"Apart from the obvious reason of wanting to get on your nerves, and make you slow down, I don't want to feel like I'm lying to Aurora. She will feel better if she believes I'm in love with you but haven't asked you to be my girlfriend yet. I will tell her about my feelings for you during our hang out, and hopefully, she won't mind me taking you to the anniversary party instead," Harry said, and Jade nodded thoughtfully.

"I see. About your date with Aurora...."

"I won't end things with you because of that. But I still insist that you don't show up there," Harry cut in before she could finish.

"Yeah. I was going to say you don't have to worry about it. I won't interfere with your date," Jade assured him and Harry got off the car and faced her once again, taking both her hands in his.

"Look at me, esquire," Harry said softly, and Jade met his gaze.

"This heart has never raced for any other lady but you in all my life," Harry said as he placed her right palm on his chest.

"As far as I am concerned, no other lady holds a candle next to you. You don't ever have to worry about the nurse, Aurora, or anybody else. Neither of them means anything to me. And if you ever start having doubts, talk to me. I promise to always listen, and I promise to always clear your doubts," Harry assured her, and tears gathered in Jade's eyes.

"I trust you."

"Smart girl," Harry said as he placed his hands on her waist and carried her down, but when he let go Jade embraced him.

"Thank you."

"What for?" Harry asked as his arms went around her to envelop her.

"For staying single this whole time. I'm glad I didn't lose you," Jade said as she pulled away from him and Harry smiled.

"I'm glad I didn't lose you too. As much as I didn't like seeing you in that state, a part of me was glad you buried yourself in your job and didn't get into a new relationship," Harry said as he took her lips in a lingering kiss, that left them both breathless and restless.

Harry glanced at his wristwatch, "We should head back now," Harry said as he led her back to her side of the car.

"Why the hurry? Let's stay here and talk some more," Jade complained, refusing to get in.

"We've been out here for about an hour now. I brought you out without telling anyone where I was taking you. I have to take you back home before they start to get worried," Harry said, and Jade rolled her eyes.

"I'm not a teenager, Jonas. They all saw me get into your car. No one would be worried even if I don't go back tonight," Jade said, and Harry opened the door.

"They don't know we know they saw you. I'm not irresponsible," Harry stated simply, as he jerked his head for her to get in.

"You should just as well seek my father's permission before taking me out on a date," Jade muttered under her breath.

"Sure. I intend to. Now get in."

Harry chuckled when her mouth fell open in disbelief, and Jade wasn't sure whether or not he was joking.

"Are you serious?"

"Yes, I am. Now get into the car, esquire, and tell me how you enjoyed your day without me," Harry urged her and Jade sighed in resignation as she got into the car grudgingly.

"Good girl," Harry said as he shut the door.

Chapter 547 For Your Sake

Harry listened quietly as Jade told him all that happened at the spa, while he slowly drove them back to Tom's house.

When she was done he turned to her, "You do realize that you don't act in line with your profession, right?"

Jade scowled, "Being a lawyer doesn't make me less human or immune to anger. They were wrong and I had to make an example of them," Jade said defensively.

"By hitting them? How many others have you assaulted like this because you lost your temper? It's a wonder you still have your license," Harry said with a shake of his head.

"That was hardly an assault. They were wrong. Besides, don't you think you should be patting my back for standing up for your beloved cousin instead of scolding me?" Jade asked, and Harry chuckled.

"You never cease to amuse me, esquire. You do realize that you could have stood up for her without hitting anyone, right? I can understand Lucy losing her temper and hitting Anita. I can also understand your mom doing so. But you? A lawyer? You should know better," Harry said, and Jade mumbled under her breath.

"I'm sure if the story ever makes it out, Tanya would realize how lucky she was that I stepped in before you completely lost your temper," Harry said, and Jade snorted.

"Don't even remind me of that brat. She was so lucky you stepped in when you did and handled it the way you did," Jade said, and Harry grinned.

"I know, right? Tom used to tell me all about your quick temper and how you used to get into fights a lot in high school. And after seeing for myself how short your temper is, I knew I had to step in," Harry explained and Jade scowled.

"Is there a thing Tom hasn't told you about me?" Jade asked, thinking about all Harry knew about her merely from talking with Tom.

"Well, he didn't tell me how much I would enjoy kissing you. I guess some things were left for me to discover myself," Harry said with a wink, and Jade felt herself blushing.

"You're so silly," Jade said with an embarrassed smile that made her cheeks hurt as she looked away from him.

"I really do not want you to get in trouble. Your brothers are causing more than enough trouble already. Besides, you can't always cause trouble because you know your grandfather's name is capable of getting you out of it. So can you at least try to control your fiery temper for my sake?" Harry asked, and Jade turned in her seat to face him.

"For your sake?" she asked, and Harry gave her a nod.

"First for your sake. You should uphold the law you so passionately defend. And then for my sake. When we go public with our relationship, I wouldn't like to see or hear such news of my girlfriend," Harry said, and Jade sighed.

"Fine. I've heard you. I will try," she said, and Harry smiled.

"Good girl. So, you said Aurora was there and she helped Lucy and Tom?" Harry asked, and Jade nodded.

"Yeah. She saved the day. She is such a nice person. Seeing her today, I felt really guilty about everything. I really don't listen, do I? I ended up making things complicated for us all when I could have just minded my business and stopped trying to play matchmaker when you asked me to," Jade murmured.

"Don't beat yourself over it. I will be as polite and gentle as I can be when I let her down. That way your friendship won't be affected," Harry promised her softly.

"Are you sure? Do you think she will forgive me?" Jade asked, and Harry shrugged.

"Of course, she will. It's not like you snatched her man. As I said, don't worry about it. I will ensure her feelings and pride won't be hurt," Harry said, and Jade nodded.

"She is attending to Lucy. What if Lucy let's it skip?" Jade asked thoughtfully.

"Lucy isn't the type to do that. She won't say a word to her," Harry said confidently.

"How are you so sure of that?"

"Because I trust her. Lucy won't tell," Harry said, and Jade relaxed.

"Yeah. I suppose you're right. I'm sorry for leaving you to clean up a mess I made," Jade said apologetically.

"You won't be the first Hank whose mess I'm cleaning up," Harry said, and chuckled when Jade hit his arm playfully.

"Why do you keep badmouthing about my family?"

"Because I can."

"So, what about you? How was your day? How much did you miss me?" Jade asked, and Harry smiled.

"More than I thought possible. I was indoor with my dad, Candace, Jamal, and the nurse," Harry said, and Jade nodded.

"So how are you guys bonding?" Jade asked curiously.

"You mean the nurse and I?" Harry asked innocently, and Jade glared at him, making him chuckle.

"Candace can be quite annoying," Harry said with a grin, and Jade smiled.

"Siblings are generally annoying," she assured him.

"I've heard people say that for years, but I'm just beginning to understand it," Harry said, and Jade giggled.

"Your dad. He's feeling better, right?" She asked, and Harry nodded.

"Yeah. I spoke with Sara today," He said, and as he expected, she looked at him with interest.

"She called?"

"No, I did. I called her," Harry said as he drove into Tom's compound.

"You did? Why? What did you both discuss?" Jade asked curiously, and Harry told her about his conversation with Sara as he parked the car.

"I see," she said thoughtfully, after he had explained his plan to her.

"What do you see?" Harry asked, wanting to know exactly what she thought.

"I think it's a brilliant plan. Although quite dangerous if truly she is desperate to cover her crimes as you believe," Jade said, and Harry raised a brow.

"You think she might try to hurt the fake Candace?" Harry asked, and Jade gave him a nod.

"Think about it, do you think someone as selfish as she is would want to leave a daughter she abandoned alive? That would be too risky. If she gets someone she believes to be her daughter, she would most likely take the liver or whatever she wants from the girl and get rid of her. That way, neither you nor your dad would ever know of it. Her secret would be safe from everyone," Jade said, and Harry nodded.

"Good. I thought so too. And that's fine. I'm counting on her trying to get rid of the girl to cover her crimes. If I can't find the proof to make her pay for the crime she committed years ago, I should at least make her commit new crimes that would expose her past crimes as well," Harry said, and Jade smiled.

"You should have gone to law school."

"It's a good thing my soon to be girlfriend did, and my sister is in one," Harry said, and Jade grinned.

"Speaking about Candace, I heard from Sonia that Matt is joining Bryan," She said, and Harry nodded.

"Yeah. What do you think about Matt and Candace?" Harry asked, and Jade shrugged.

"They like each other but Candace is pushing him away," Jade said, and Harry smiled.

"I figured."

"Why do you ask?" Jade asked curiously.

"I just wanted to confirm it. The only way to get her to shut up is when I bring Matt up. I plan to get on her nerves," Harry said, and Jade laughed softly.

"I've laughed and smiled so much that my jaw aches. I think I smile thrice as much when I'm with you," Jade said, and Harry chuckled.

"Have you had dinner yet?" He asked, and she shook her head.

"At first I wasn't hungry because I had a lot on my mind, and now I'm just so full of you," Jade said with a content smile and Harry shook his head.

"Make sure you get something to eat before going to bed," Harry said, and she sighed.

"Alright. I will. You too. Or maybe not," Jade said with a scowl as she sat up and eyed him.

"Why did the nurse prepare your meal this morning? I mean, I know she is there to take care of your dad's health. But why is she looking after a man who isn't hers?" Jade asked, and Harry grinned.

"I only said that to get on your nerves. I ordered breakfast for everyone," Harry said, and Jade hit him arm making him chuckle.

"Do you have any idea how upset I was? Quit trying to get on my nerves. And don't ever refer to her as pretty again," Jade said, and Harry smiled as he watched her.

"Mind you, this has nothing to do with insecurity. It's pure and sincere jealousy," Jade said, and Harry threw back his head to laugh.

Jade felt warm as she watched him laugh, "I never knew you could laugh this much until today," Jade said with a wide smile, and Harry smiled.

"I can't remember the last time I laughed so much in a day. It goes without saying that I enjoy your company...."

"Yet you didn't laugh this much all the time we were together in Varis," Jade pointed out.

"I told you already. I wasn't comfortable. I was still sort of struggling with my attraction and feelings for you, and you really did not make it easy coming around me half naked and getting in my space," Harry said, and Jade smiled.

"I'm glad I didn't make it easy. I don't plan to go easy on you, Jonas," Jade said, and Harry raised a brow.

"I noticed you have been calling me that all evening. Why is that?"

"I sort of prefer it to calling you Harry. Everyone else calls you Harry. And Jonas sort of sounds sexy to me. Or maybe it just sounds sexy to me because it's your name. If your surname was Abraham it would probably sound sexy too," Jade said with a wink, and Harry shook his head in amusement.

"If I didn't know better I would think you had too much wine to drink," Harry said, and Jade grinned.

"Perhaps it's your lips. I'm intoxicated by you, Jonas," Jade said as she leaned close to Harry and he moved back.

"You need to go in now, esquire. We've been out here long enough," Harry said, and she pouted.

"But...."

"I still need to drive back home, remember? I can't just leave my dad alone with the nurse for so long. And I also need to get some rest, tomorrow is a work day," Harry reminded her.

"Oh! That's true. I guess I have to let you go then," Jade said with a sigh.

"Come here," Harry said, and Jade's heart skipped a beat when he pulled her to himself and kissed her long and hard.

Jade moaned into his lips as her fingers moved to his hair, and Harry groaned, wanting to break away but unable to let go. Thankfully, he didn't have to struggle much because someone knocked on the window, bringing him back to his senses.

He immediately let go of Jade, and turned with a guilty expression to see who it was. He scowled when he came face to face with Tom whose grinning face was pressed against his window, and beside him was Lucy.

"Go in, esquire. I will give you a call when I get home," Harry told Jade as she opened her door, but he did not do the same. Not with the bulge in his trouser.

"When I saw you drive in and didn't get out of your car for so long, I thought something happened to you so I decided to check. Who would have thought you were inside with our sister?" Tom asked with a knowing grin when Harry rolled down his window, and Harry glared at him while Lucy who was resting against Tom giggled.

"I suppose you're pissed I interrupted you? Don't worry. I didn't see anything, I assure you. I suppose you were getting something out of our sister's eyes? Or was it her lips? I guess something got stuck in there and you could only use your lips," Tom continued with a taunting smile.

"Shut up, Tom, or I'm going to kill you," Harry threatened and Tom chuckled.

"You'd need to get out of the car to do that, and we both know you can't," Tom said, and hooted with laughter while Harry swore at him.

"Tom, can you stop teasing him?" Jade asked as she joined them beside Harry's window.

"No, I can't. It's between me and him, so stay out of it," Tom said without taking his amused eyes off Harry who was now staring at Lucy, and deliberately ignoring Tom.

"Hey, Lulu! Are you okay?" Harry asked Lucy, who was still grinning.

"I'm fine, HaHa. How are you? And how is Aaron?" Lucy asked, her speech slightly slurred.

"Much better today. And I'm fine. I guess you had a lovely time with this good for nothing fool?" Harry asked, and Lucy giggled as she swayed slightly on her feet.

"I had a swell time with the love of my life. And we did lots of fun stuff you can't even imagine. And he is no fool," Lucy said as she placed her arms around his waist possessively.

"Are you okay, Lucy?" Jade asked as she watched Lucy with interest.

Tom chuckled, "She is not. She's sort of tipsy," Tom said as he placed both arms around Lucy to keep her steady.

"I told you I'm fine," Lucy protested, her speech still slurred.

"You neither look nor sound fine," Jade observed, and Lucy snorted.

"I was sober enough to see you pressed against HaHa with your fingers in his hair like this," Lucy said, puckering her lips in a kiss gesture as she dug her fingers into Tom's hair.

"I guess you're fine if you saw that," Tom said as he looked from Lucy back to Harry.

"No, she's not fine," Harry said, feeling both amused and embarrassed by Lucy's display. Knowing Lucy, he was certain she would be embarrassed come morning.

"I planned to speak with you, but I guess that won't be possible seeing the situation of things. And it's late too," Harry said, and Tom nodded.

"Yeah. Let's catch up at the office tomorrow. I've got to take my baby inside. And I'm sure you both have to continue whatever we interrupted," Tom said with a wink before sweeping Lucy off her feet and carrying her bridal style inside.

"Go in with them, esquire. I will give you a call soon as I get home," Harry said, and Jade blew him a kiss before running after Tom.

Harry waited until he saw her get into the house and shut the door behind her before driving away.

Chapter 548 No Regrets

As Jade ran up the stairs to her bedroom ahead of Tom, she ran into Candace at the top of the stairs.

"Seeing the smile on your face I guess you both made up," Candace said, and seeing that Jamal was nowhere in sight, Jade took Candace's arm and pulled her with her.

"Yes, we did," Jade said with a happy smile.

"Why are you pulling me with you?" Candace asked as she let Jade pull her along.

"Because I need someone to listen to me gush about how much I am in love with Harry. And since you are his twin sister and you happen to be available, you are the perfect person to tell," Jade said excitedly, and Candace laughed.

"I'm sorry, but I'm not available. I was on my way downstairs to meet with Lucy's mom. She asked me to join her at the patio after putting Jamal to sleep," Candace said, and Jade pouted as she let go of her arm.

"What about Sonia? Is she back yet?" Jade asked, and Candace gave her a nod.

"Yes. They came back some time ago. She complained of being tired so she retired to her bedroom after dinner," Candace said, and Jade remembered that Harry had asked her to get something to eat.

"I should probably see if there is anything left for me to eat," Jade said as she turned to go back downstairs with Candace.

"Is Lucy alright?" Candace asked with concern when Tom approached them carrying Lucy who was giggling into Tom's chest.

"She is drunk," Jade whispered.

"Hello, Harry's twin!" Tom greeted Candace, and Lucy looked up.

"Hello, cousin! Where is my munchkin?" Lucy asked with a wide smile, and Candace grinned.

"He has gone to bed. I think you should too, seeing how drunk you are," Candace said, and Lucy strained in Tom's arms to look back at Candace as Tom walked past them.

"I'm not drunk. I'm just a weeny bit tipsy and I'm not going to bed yet, I want to put your lessons into practice," Lucy called back to Candace with a wink, and Tom chuckled while Candace giggled.

"She is definitely drunk," Candace muttered as she and Jade watched them disappear into Tom's room.

"What lesson is she putting into practice?" Jade asked with interest.

"Lapdancing and stripteasing. I taught her and Sonia a bit about it," Candace said, and Jade giggled.

"I guess someone is about to have a fun night," Jade said as they resumed walking down the stairs and they both giggled.

"So when am I going to receive my lessons?" Jade asked, and Candace rolled her eyes.

"You can get it from Lucy after she is done tonight. If she remembers what she did," Candace said, and they both giggled.

"You will stop by my bedroom after speaking with Lucy's mom, right?" Jade asked, and Candace shook her head.

"I don't know how long it will take so I can't promise you anything, but I will try," Candace said before walking away to go meet Janet, while Jade went to find herself something to eat.

Janet was seated alone on the patio when Candace got there, and she said nothing as Candace sat down opposite her with the table between them.

"Lucy is back," Candace informed Janet for lack of anything else to say as she was uncomfortable by the way Janet was staring at her.

"That's good to know," Janet said as she sat up.

"I'm sure this must be awkward for you, and you're wondering why I asked to see you," Janet said, and Candace nodded without meeting her gaze.

"It's sort of awkward for me too. Meeting my full-grown niece this way," Janet said with a strained smile.

"I want to say so much to you, yet I have no idea what to say," Janet confessed, and Candace met her gaze.

"You don't have to say anything," Candace pointed out, and Janet smiled.

"I do. I owe it to myself and to you to say something. So I will start by apologizing to you. I'm sorry Sara did that to you," Janet started.

"You did not deserve that. No child deserves that. I'm sorry you had the misfortune of being born by someone like her. And I'm sorry for all the hardships you must have faced as a result of this," Janet said, while Candace stared at her.

"Why are you apologizing?"

"Because Sara is my sister."

"I thought you cut her off and you both are estranged?"

"No matter how much I hate her or how angry I am, there is nothing I can do to change the fact that she is my sister. I may have cut her off physically but we are still related by blood, and it is that blood that makes you my niece," Janet explained, and Candace sighed.

"I guess I understand," Candace murmured.

"We can't choose the people we are connected to by blood, but we can choose whether or not we want to communicate with them and keep them in our life. I would love to be an active part of Jamal's life and yours. I may have cut off Sara, but I want you both to accept me as your family," Janet said, and Candace shrugged.

"Jamal already sees you as his grandma."

"Grandmum you mean?" Janet asked, and Candace laughed softly.

"What about you, Candace? Would you let me be a mother to you? I know you have a father and a brother, but would you mind if I treat you as my daughter?" Janet asked, and Candace laughed unexpectedly.

"I won't call you, mom. I'm too old for all of that now. You can just treat me as you would a niece. It would be too weird and awkward for me to refer to you as anything else other than Lucy's mom or Janet. Maybe with time that could happen, but not right now. I'm still trying to figure out things," Candace said as honestly as she could, and Janet smiled.

"That's fine. There is no hurry. You don't have to treat me as your mom or call me anything. I'm only asking that you open your heart to be loved by me. We can take every other thing one step at a time," Janet said as she passed her phone to Candace.

"Can I have your contact details? I would love to be able to communicate with you and Jamal even after I return to Heden," Janet said, and just as Candace reached to pick up the phone, it started ringing.

"Please give me a moment," Janet said to Candace as she picked up her phone, and when she saw that it was a foreign line she received the call since she was still expecting a call from Lucas.

"Hello, mom! It's Lucas. I hope I did not disturb your sleep," Lucas greeted, and Janet smiled.

"No. I'm still wide awake, sweetheart. I was almost beginning to worry about you. How are you? When did you arrive there? And how is Tyler doing?" Janet asked excitedly.

"Tyler is fine, as I am. There was a slight delay in my flight so I only just got here. This is Tyler's line. You can reach me through him," Lucas said with a yawn.

"Why? Did you lose your phone?" Janet asked while Candace looked around the patio, not wanting to stare at Janet directly as it would be rude to make it obvious she was listening to the conversation. And she couldn't leave either since they were not done yet.

"No, I didn't. I'm just not going to turn it on for some time. I need to stay off the grid until I'm in a good place psychologically. Is dad there with you? I should say hello to him before giving Lucy a call," Lucas said as he glanced at his wristwatch, rethinking his decision to give Lucy a call until morning.

Unlike his parents who could receive his call at any moment, he knew that Lucy was most likely with Tom, and he didn't want to interrupt anything in case they were 'busy'.

"No. He isn't here right now. He is at the Den watching a football game with Desmond."

"Desmond? Tom's father? Are they visiting?"

"We are back in Ludus right now," Janet explained, and Lucas' brow pulled together.

"Is everything alright? Did something happen to Lucy?" he asked with concern, and it occurred to Janet that he wasn't aware of all that was happening.

"No, dear. Lucy is fine. Something came up so we had to come back," Janet rushed to assure him, but Lucas found that hard to believe.

"Are you sure? Did Rachel or her cousin cause any more problems?" Lucas asked, and even though Janet was tempted to tell Lucas that Janet had gotten her arrested, she chose not to add to his worries.

"No. It's not that. Everything is alright. You said you just arrived, didn't you? You must be exhausted. You should freshen up and get some rest. Let's talk sometime later," Janet said, and although Lucas wanted to know what was going on, he was exhausted and needed to get some rest.

"Everything is fine, right?" Lucas asked one more time, and when Janet assured him that everything was okay, he hung up, promising to call back after he was well rested.

"That was Lucas, my son. You met him the last time we were here, remember?" Janet asked, and Candace gave her a nod.

"I'm only just hearing from him now since he left the country, so he isn't aware of the whole 'Sara' situation," Janet explained as she returned her phone to Candace to input her number.

After Candace had typed in her number, Janet smiled at her, "Thanks, dear. It's late. I shouldn't take up any more of your time. I'm pretty sure you need to go in and get some rest. Let's talk again tomorrow," Janet said, and Candace gave her a nod as she rose and walked away from there.

Although she genuinely liked Janet, this was still very awkward for her. For some reason, it had been easier to connect with Aaron and Harry. Perhaps it was because they were her direct family, she couldn't tell.

The discoveries of the last couple of days had been really tough and emotionally draining for her and she couldn't wait for them to deal with Sara so she could leave everything behind her and start afresh with her newfound nosy family and friends.

As she returned upstairs, she made her first stop at Jade's bedroom, but before she could knock on the door she heard Jade's voice like she was on phone with someone.

She waited for some seconds to be sure, and she smiled when she heard Jade's girlish laughter and it occurred to her that Jade was on the phone with Harry. She decided to retire to her bedroom instead and leave the lovers to their romance.

As she walked further down the hallway, she heard Sonia moaning loudly, and she grinned. So much for being exhausted and retiring early. She was obviously not too exhausted to go some rounds.

It seemed like everyone was having a fun time with their partners, Candace thought with an amused smile.

'Everyone but you' a voice in her head whispered, and she sighed.

"Yeah. Everyone but me, and that is completely fine. I have enough on my plate already," she muttered to herself as she walked into the bedroom she shared with Jamal.

'Enough on your plate won't keep you warm at night' the voice came again.

"I have Jamal to keep me warm at night," Candace said as her gaze moved to her bundle of delight who was soundly asleep.

'Jamal won't make you moan like you heard Sonia do. What you need is a man' the voice said dryly, and Candace scrunched up her nose in disapproval at her internal dialogue.

She knew where the conversation was going and she needed to put a stop to it.

"Alright, enough! Shut up!" Candace hissed at herself impatiently as she got on the bed beside Jamal. She wasn't going to think of anything, and just go to sleep.

She wasn't going to think about the fact that everyone kept talking about Matt and making her feel like she was throwing away something good.

She had no regrets for pushing him away. She had made the right call to focus on herself and her son. At least for now, Candace tried to assure herself.

She wasn't going to think of Matt either and wonder what went wrong with his date. She was going to sleep away her curiosity, and by the time she woke up in the morning, her mind would be clear enough for her to decide on her next course of action and whether or not she wanted to remain in Ludus.

Although from all indications, she was most likely not going to stay here. If anything, she was going to live with Aaron.

They had lost so much time already and she would rather move in with Aaron when he returns to his base than live here in Ludus with Harry, where she would most likely be running into Matt often.

Yes. That was it. She would leave with Aaron, after all, he lived in Sogal just like her. That way she wouldn't need to transfer schools, and Jamal would have a good male figure like Aaron around him.

Any man that could raise an admirable person like Harry was more than perfect to be Jamal's role model. It would be a win-win for her and Aaron, who she knew without a doubt would love to have them live with him. Apart from Jamal of course who wouldn't be so pleased about leaving Lucy, Candace thought with an amused smile as she slowly drifted off to sleep.

Chapter 549 Scared Of Change

Monday morning came very fast, and as usual, Tom and Lucy left for the office before the others came out of their bedrooms.

They had woken up a bit late and had to hurriedly get ready for work and leave. It was the week of the anniversary and there were a lot of things that needed to be done, starting with the annual meeting with the shareholders and board of directors to present the company's financial performance to them, and to discuss the way forward for the coming year.

Tom pretended not to notice the way Lucy kept glancing at him at intervals as he drove them to work. He had noticed that she seemed to have a lot on her mind, so he had decided not to ask her any questions and wait for her to tell him what she was thinking when she was ready to talk.

Knowing Lucy, he knew if she wasn't ready to talk about it, he would need to probe for a while before she would say whatever she was thinking, and he really wasn't in the mood to probe.

"Are you okay?" Lucy asked after some time.

"Yeah. Why?" Tom asked, and Lucy shrugged.

"You've been silent," Lucy said, and Tom shook his head.

"No. You've been silent. I'm just letting you be while also trying to work out some of the details of the meeting and also a couple of other things," Tom explained as he turned to spare her a glance.

"This is going to be a busy week," Lucy said, and Tom nodded.

"Yeah. Is your head still aching?" He asked since she had complained of a throbbing headache earlier.

"No. I feel much better after taking the hangover medicine. I'm sorry I slept off once again," Lucy said, and Tom smiled.

He had stepped out to the balcony to receive a phone call from one of his foreign-based shareholders, and by the time he returned to be entertained by Lucy, he had met her sprawled on the bed fast asleep in the same manner she had done the first night they met.

"Nah, It's not your fault. I should be the one apologizing. The phone call took longer than I expected. Besides, I know yesterday was pretty exhausting for you. I'm also surprised you remembered last night, considering the fact that you never remember the details each time you are drunk," Tom said, and Lucy scowled.

"I told you I wasn't drunk. I was tipsy. I didn't think that the alcohol content was enough to make me tipsy. I was drunk the last two times but I was tipsy last night. I know the difference," she said, and Tom nodded.

"Does that mean you remember all you said to Harry, Jade, and Candace last night?" Tom asked, and a blush stained Lucy's cheeks.

Tom chuckled, "I see you do."

"You could have stopped me from making a fool of myself," Lucy pointed out.

"There was no need to. You didn't make a fool of yourself. You are cute that way," Tom said, and Lucy scowled.

"What is cute about being a blabbermouth? What if I had said something more embarrassing that I wasn't supposed to say?" Lucy asked with a displeased frown, and Tom smiled.

"I don't think it's a bad idea to let loose sometimes and allow those around you to see that side of you. Besides, I wouldn't have let you make a fool of yourself in front of strangers. Everyone you spoke with was family," Tom pointed out.

"I think I should stay off alcohol completely seeing how loose-tongued I can be when I'm under its influence."

"On the contrary, I was thinking I should let you indulge in alcohol more often so you can loosen up as that is the only way I can know what you are really thinking. You are often too cautious," Tom said, and Lucy raised a brow.

"Too cautious?" Lucy asked, and Tom gave her a nod.

"Yes," Tom said without explaining further.

"What do you mean?" Lucy asked, and Tom sighed.

"I can barely tell what you are really thinking. It's like I know you and I don't at the same time," Tom said, and Lucy frowned.

"But I always tell you what I'm thinking," Lucy said, and Tom shook his head.

"No, you don't. Sometimes I have to probe, and other times I have to guess. You only tell me the outcome of your thoughts, not really what you are thinking. It's almost like you are scared to voice out your raw unfiltered thoughts," Tom said, and Lucy shook her head in disagreement.

"I do tell you what I'm thinking. I did tell you my unfiltered thoughts yesterday, and where did that get us?"

"No. Yesterday you told me the outcome of your thoughts, not your unfiltered thoughts. If it were your thought you wouldn't have said it the way you did like you had it all figured out. You would have told me what led you to think that and how you got to that point of conclusion."

"That doesn't make sense to me," Lucy said, and Tom shrugged.

"It doesn't have to."

"Can we talk about yesterday?" Lucy asked after a moment.

"What do you want to talk about yesterday?" Tom asked without looking at her.

"About our misunderstanding concerning my suggestion?" Lucy asked, and Tom shook his head.

"We are done with that. I already told you I'm not discussing that subject until next year," Tom said with a note of finality in his voice.

"I wasn't saying we should talk about my suggestion or the subject. I just want to ask you something different," Lucy said, and this time Tom looked at her.

"Alright. Go on," he said as he returned his gaze to the road.

"Do you think I am a selfish person?" Lucy asked, and Tom shook his head.

"No. You are not," Tom said without hesitation.

"You don't have to lie to please me. You can be honest with me," Lucy said, and Tom glanced at her briefly again.

"I honestly wouldn't be with you right now if I thought you were a selfish person. If you are asking this because I said your suggestion was selfish, you should know that bringing up a selfish suggestion once doesn't necessarily mean you are a selfish person. Every one of us does this at some point," Tom assured her, and Lucy sighed.

The first thought on her mind when she woke up that morning had been their misunderstanding. Thankfully, Tom had still been fast asleep. She had taken the time to think about their situation and misunderstanding since she had been too occupied the previous day to find time alone to think.

"Can you tell me what you are thinking? No filters," Tom said when he noticed the concentration lines that fanned her brows.

"I don't know. I think I'm not happy," Lucy said, and that made Tom's brows pull together in concern.

"With what?"

"My life I guess," Lucy said, and Tom raised a brow.

"What about your life?"

"I always thought I knew what I wanted and I was in charge of my life, but I no longer feel that way. I feel like everything is changing so fast and going out of my control, and I no longer know myself or what I'm doing. It makes me anxious because I don't know what might change next or how that change might affect me. Does this make sense to you?" Lucy asked, and Tom nodded.

He could tell where this line of thought was coming from, and quite honestly, he understood. She used to be so meticulous and had a pattern she stuck to, but since he came into her life all of that had changed in a matter of weeks.

From never wanting to be in a relationship, she had not only gotten into one but had sort of moved in with him. From being an introvert and having her own space, she was now always surrounded by people who never minded their business, and she could hardly find time to be alone.

And now she was scared that she was going to change even more and no longer be able to recognize herself. It scared her because she felt like she was not in control of the changes.

The car was silent for some time and Tom looked at her again, "So can you tell me the areas of your life you feel are out of your control?" Tom asked, and Lucy wrung her hands together.

"My whole life. My life is spinning out of my control and I can't help it. The incident with Anita yesterday, that person out there was not me. I'm acting differently and I can't seem to recognize myself," Lucy said, and Tom nodded.

"Do you regret handling Anita as you did? Do you like or hate the person you are becoming? Would you say these changes are positive or negative? I mean, apart from the fact that you feel anxious by the uncertainty of it all, do these changes improve your quality of life? Do the effects make you happy?" Tom asked, and it took Lucy a moment to carefully consider it before giving him a single nod.

"Yes. I guess," Lucy murmured.

"Yes to which of the questions?" Tom asked since her response was not specific and he wanted her to spell it out.

"The changes are not exactly bad. It's just...."

"So would you say it's not exactly that you are unhappy with your life, but rather you are anxious and scared about the changes that you are seeing in yourself? You like how things are right now, but you are just not comfortable because they are not as they used to be?" Tom cut in, and Lucy shrugged once again.

"I suppose," Lucy said, and Tom sighed.

"You know what I think? Change scares you, Lucy. You love to stick to what you know and what you believe to be safe. You are scared to try out new things. I really think you should be more open to change," Tom said, hoping she wouldn't misunderstand him.

"Open to change? I'm very open to change. I'm in a relationship with you because I'm open to change. Who suggested that we have sex in the car? That was something new for me," Lucy said, and Tom shook his head.

"That was not exactly the kind of change I was talking about, but since you brought it up, can you remind me how long it took me to convince you that it was safe to have sex in the car despite the fact that you were the one who suggested it?" Tom asked, and Lucy grimaced.

"I was worried someone might see us."

"You mentioned our relationship as part of the changes you've made. While I agree that it was a major change for you, I don't think you are entirely open to it yet. I'm pretty sure our relationship is part of the changes that are making you anxious, am I wrong?" Tom asked, and Lucy frowned.

"I just don't like to make mistakes."

"What sort of mistakes do you think you could make by being in a relationship with me? Besides, what's wrong with making mistakes? Mistakes are a natural and integral part of learning and growth. When you make a mistake, you learn from it and that is how you grow and become better," Tom said, and Lucy shook her head.

"What if it's a mistake that can't be corrected? Some mistakes are more costly than others," Lucy insisted, but instead of arguing with her, Tom said nothing.

"It's not like I like to be this way. I just can't help it. I'm really trying," Lucy said, tears gathering in her eyes.

Tom sighed, "No one is disputing the fact that you are trying. I think you need to understand that no one is perfect. If you plan to do anything worthwhile in life, you are definitely going to make mistakes, unless you plan to stick to only the things you already know. And you won't grow that way. You'd only be setting yourself up for a mediocre life," Tom said, but Lucy said nothing.

"For someone who is so scared of change, why did you accept the promotion and move from Heden to Ludus? Wasn't it scary for you, leaving everyone you know behind?" Tom asked, and Lucy shook her head.

"That was different. It was about the advancement of my career. I was coming here to do something I know," Lucy said, wondering if she was making any sense.

"So you are only open to change as long as it has to do with your career?" Tom asked, and she shrugged once again.

"My career is predictable. If I put in the work, I get good results. I can see where I'm going. It is within my control. I could wake up and decide to quit my job if I feel like it has become too much to handle. I could always make a switch to a different company, and it will be entirely my decision...."

"Or you could be fired. That's not within your control," Tom pointed out.

"Still, I will always have other options. I have control over my career but it's not like that with relationships. You can't just quit and resign on people. When it comes to dealing with people there is so much more at stake and a lot more to consider. There are lots of uncertainties. People change, feelings change."

Was that what her fear of marriage and having kids was about? Control? She was scared that things could change between them? That didn't make any sense, Tom mused.

Chapter 550 Control Freak

"Is that it?" Tom asked, and Lucy looked at him in confusion.

"What?" she asked, wondering what he was talking about.

"Is that what you are scared of? Is that the reason you don't want to get married?" Tom asked, and Lucy frowned.

"Didn't you say we were not to talk about it until next year?" she reminded him.

"I said we would both revisit our final decisions after a year. That doesn't mean I don't want to understand the reason for your present decision. If I understand your reason it could influence my decision," Tom said, and Lucy sighed.

Her unexplainable fear of marriage and having kids both unsettled and bothered her more than she cared to admit. No matter how hard she thought about it, she couldn't fathom why the thought of having kids of her own who would rely on and depend on her made her feel like a weight was sitting on her chest. The thought of it made her feel very anxious.

"Tell me something, Lucy. Are you completely involved in this relationship, or are you still testing the waters?" Tom asked, and Lucy's brows pulled together.

"What do you mean?"

"You are still not completely sold out on the whole relationship thing yet, are you? This is only as much of yourself as you are willing to give to me, am I wrong? Based on what you said yesterday, you love being just my girlfriend. I'm sure you love the idea of having your own apartment where you have all your stuff and you could easily run back to it at the slightest inconvenience. Deep down you are still expecting something to go wrong between us, and that was why you implied that you don't trust me yet as that level of trust takes time, right? You don't want to make too many changes so that if things crash you can return to your safe little world and meet it exactly the way you left it. Tell me, am I wrong?" Tom asked, and Lucy frowned.

"Is this the part where I respond and you call me selfish? Because your questions seem to be leading up to that."

"Contrary to what you think, this is not an attack. I'm not trying to attack you. I'm only trying to understand you better. So can you calmly consider my question and give me an honest response?" Tom asked, and Lucy shook her head.

"That sounds very much like an attack. I love you, Tom, but I have no idea what you are talking about," she said without looking at him.

Tom already knew that saying she loved him was her way of avoiding the subject, and thankfully he had a fair idea of what her problem was. Unfortunately for her, this wasn't a subject he was willing to drop.

"Your love for me isn't what is in question right now. You probably think your feelings for me might change and so you don't want to get married to me even though you love me and would want to remain in my life, am I wrong? You want the relationship to be on your own terms. You want it to still be within your control because you feel that the moment we get married you will have to give up complete control of your life and give all of yourself to me and our kids, and that is exactly what scares you, isn't it?" Tom asked thoughtfully.

He had made a mistake in assuming that talking about her experience during the interview with Alicia was all she needed to heal. If she still craved this much control over her life then she probably wasn't there yet. She still had a lot going on inside her, and she very much needed therapy. Why didn't he think of that? Tom mused.

Lucy considered Tom's words. Was that it? Did that make sense? Was that the reason she was scared of getting married? Why did this awfully sound like the conversation she had with Sonia?

"You make me sound like a control freak," Lucy murmured.

"I think you are a control freak," Tom said simply.

"You think I'm a control freak simply because I don't want to get married?" she asked, looking at him like he was being ridiculous.

"No. I think you are a control freak because from all we have discussed in this short time, you seem to have a problem with not having control, and that can't be normal. Although I hate losing control over situations myself as I'm sure every human does, but I don't obsess over control of every aspect of my life. I think maybe it's time you receive therapy as we discussed before" Tom added as he drove into the company premises.

The edges of Lucy's lips hardened, "So now you think I'm crazy because I told you my unfiltered thoughts as you wanted me to?" Lucy asked fighting back her annoyance.

"At this point, you are just being unreasonable. I never said you are crazy. I'm glad you shared your thoughts with me because now I think I understand you better. I believe you need therapy because some of your decisions might have stemmed from past trauma," Tom said as he parked the car in front of the building for her to get down.

"Oh, wow! Now you think you know so much about trauma," Lucy muttered as she unfastened her seatbelt and reached for the door without looking at him, "Have a nice day," she said tersely, but Tom held her back before she could step out of the car.

"I don't like fighting with you, and I really don't want to fight with you over this, Lucy, but I will if I have to, for both my sake and yours. I'm hoping for your sake and for the sake of what we have that you will be willing to give it a try," Tom said before letting go of her, and immediately she got out of the car and walked away.

Tom sighed as he watched her leave. He needed to be sure if her decision to not get married stemmed from some past trauma, and if something could be done about it.

It was one thing for him to be willing to make such a huge sacrifice and give up his desire to be with her if she had clear logical reasons for her decision, and it was another thing to make such a sacrifice if he knew that something could be done about her fears but she was unwilling to face them.

He made a mental note to speak with his father later in the day. He was going to need to tap from his father's wealth of knowledge to deal with Lucy as he worried that he might run out of patience with her if she remained adamant about receiving therapy.

As he parked the car at his private parking lot, his phone started ringing, and he picked it up and received the call when he saw it was from Barry.

"Good morning, Bar. How are you?" Tom greeted as he got out of his car and headed for his private elevator.

"Good morning. I'm alright. Uhm, I wasn't sure whether or not to report this to you, but something is up with the Millers," Barry said, and Tom raised a brow.

"What do you mean?" Tom asked with a sigh. He was beginning to think that this was going to be another long and annoying day.

"First of all, Rebekah has men searching for someone called Richard Wyatt. I gathered he is her brother. She also had someone following her eldest daughter and found out about Bernice's affair with Tiffany's husband. Bernice also found out about her mother's affair with her husband...."

"When did all of this happen?" Tom asked with a slight frown as he rode the elevator up to his office.

"Over the weekend. They seem to have had quite a busy weekend. And things seem intense this morning. Bernice's husband called Rebekah a while ago to report that Bernice has not stepped out of her bedroom her opened her door since she went in the previous afternoon despite her kids crying for her. The reason I called, Bernice just sent Tiffany a text informing her of her affair with her husband," Barry explained, and Tom's brow pulled together.

"She did?" He hoped all their secrets wouldn't come to light before he had a chance to expose them himself.

"Yes. The text sort of unsettled me. I don't think she is alright. What should I do?" Barry asked, and Tom sighed.

"Just keep your eye on them all, and let me know whatever happens," Tom said and hung up just as he stepped into his office and saw Harry standing there with a young man.

"Good morning, sir," the young man greeted Tom with a polite now and Tom raised a brow as he looked at Harry with questioning eyes, wondering who the stranger was.

"You didn't think a CEO of my caliber will remain your assistant forever, did you? Meet Eric. Eric Howell. He is the young man I told you will be resuming at your office today" Harry said and turned to the young man.

"Do not forget all I've instructed you. Talk to my secretary if you're confused about anything. I will leave you to get acquainted with your boss," Harry said but before he could leave, Tom stopped him.

"Excuse us. I will let you know when I need you," Tom told Eric, and immediately he walked away and shut the door behind him.

"Don't you like him?" Harry asked as he unbuttoned his jacket and sat down, while Tom went around his desk to take his seat.

"I have no problem with him. You chose him, and I trust your judgment," Tom said simply as he sat down.

"So what seems to be the problem?" Harry asked as he watched Tom.

"I'm just not in the best of moods. The day just started yet I feel exhausted already. I had a misunderstanding with Lucy, and I just received a call from Barry about the Millers. Their secrets are beginning to come to light, and that could affect our plans," Tom said, and Harry raised a brow.

"What secrets are coming to light?" Harry asked choosing to focus on that before talking about Tom's misunderstanding with Lucy.

Harry listened as Tom told him everything Barry had said, "That doesn't change the plan. The secrets are still within their family. The most important goal is to expose them to the world and not just to each other. Besides, only one of Rebekah's offenses has been revealed. Her other crimes have not been revealed, especially the money laundering and the issue of how she and her lover duped her husband and murdered him. That was not mentioned, was it? Unless of course her daughters knew about it this whole time but said nothing. The goal is to reveal everything," Harry pointed out.

"Yeah. You are right. Let's hope it remains within the family until it's time for the live show," Tom said, and Harry nodded.

"It's unlike you to be bothered about something as obvious as that. I suppose your mood has a lot more to do with your misunderstanding with Lucy than Barry's phone call," Harry said knowingly.

"Perhaps you are right. Lucy is being unreasonable. I told her she needs to get therapy and she got mad claiming I called her crazy. Can you believe that?" Tom asked in disbelief.

"Therapy? Did you call her crazy?" Harry asked wondering about the origin of the conversation.

"Of course, not!" Tom briefed him on the conversation they had the previous day and that morning and how it had led to his suggestion.

"Well, I can see your point. She does need therapy whether or not she believes she is fine. I'm surprised she never received one after going through such a horrible experience," Harry said, and Tom raised both hands.

"Thank you! I mean, I may not be an expert on the subject, but what if there is a slight chance that her decision is in a way related to what happened to her? I'm not asking for too much, am I?"

"I think she reacted that way because she felt attacked. Lucy is reasonable. Give her time. She would come around after calmly thinking about it," Harry said confidently.

"I genuinely hope she does!" Tom said, and Harry rose.

"Well, while we wait for her to come around, don't sit here sulking. Today is a busy day and we've got a lot to do, so...."

"Not so fast. Did you think I wouldn't bring up last night?" Tom asked with a grin and Harry grimaced.

He had been counting on avoiding this discussion, "Don't you have more important things to do like prepare for our meeting with the board, instead of talking about my private business?" Harry asked, and Tom threw his head back and let out a good laugh.

"Kissing our sister in front of my house is now your private business? Were you counting on avoiding me so I don't bring it up?" Tom asked with a taunting smile.

Knowing that Tom would only taunt him more if he didn't admit his feelings, he decided to do so, "Fine. I'm in love with Jade. Is that what you want to hear? I've said it. So can we not talk about it?" Harry said, and Tom grinned.

"Took you long enough to admit it. So I guess she is out of probation?" Tom asked dryly.

"I haven't asked her to be my girlfriend yet. I will after I resolve the issue with Aurora. I was told you met her yesterday," Harry said as he returned to his seat since there was no reason to avoid Tom anymore.

"Yeah. She has quite a pleasant personality, and she is pretty smart and outspoken too," Tom said, and Harry smiled.

"Yeah, she is. She left a similar impression on me the first time we spoke, hence I couldn't just push her away," Harry said, and Tom nodded.

"Let's hope she doesn't get too hurt," Tom said, and Harry nodded.

"I will make sure of it. By the way, Jade told me about the incident at the spa. Shouldn't we fire Anita after that stunt she pulled?" Harry suggested, but Tom shook his head.

"We don't mix up our private issues with business, remember? One has nothing to do with the other. We won't kick her out for personal reasons, but she will quit on her own by the time we are done," Tom said, and Harry sighed.

"You are right."

"Speaking of dealing with people, any update concerning the fire incident at the hospital?" Tom asked, and Harry nodded.

"Yeah. I was going to tell you about it last night and also relay the detail of the virtual meeting with the shareholders to you," Harry said and went on to tell Tom all about it.

"Perhaps I should let you in on what I'm also doing," Tom said, and when Harry raised a brow, he told him about the fake research center.

"Were you ever going to tell me about it?" Harry asked, and Tom nodded.

"Sure. But only after she falls into the trap and has paid back in multiple folds all the money she stole from her family, your dad, and what she got after selling her daughter. I was concerned you might feel sorry for her and not want me to go to that extent," Tom said, and Harry shook his head.

"I can't feel sorry for her. No punishment is too great for her. She definitely has to pay for all the pain she has caused everyone," Harry said, and Tom nodded.

"Good. We are on the same page then. Also, Lucy raised a suggestion about Rachel's father," Tom said as he told Harry about it.

"I think that's a good idea. It saves us a lot of stress. Let's run with it," Harry said and seeing that they were done with their personal issues they delved into business.