

Wild Night 621

Chapter 621 Romantic Fool

Although Jade had managed to handle herself really well earlier, she was quite shaken by the time she parked the car in front of Tom's mansion after Harry had left.

She didn't step out of the car immediately but remained inside with her head resting against the wheel as she thought about her carelessness and what could have happened had Harry not saved the day.

She didn't necessarily regret riling Rebekah up to the extent that she had acted the way she did. What she regretted was not being careful enough and not actually sharing her plans with Harry beforehand.

She had underestimated Rebekah's wickedness, and that could have cost her life had Harry not been a step ahead.

What if his men had not been watching her from a distance? Sure, if anything had happened to her, they would easily have known Rebekah was behind it, but that would have been long after the deed had been done.

She owed Harry an apology. A sincere apology for running her mouth at him the way she did over the phone at the restaurant. He had every right to be pissed.

Jade drew a deep breath as she thought about her new plan to use Rebekah's man against her. Before she proceeded with what she intended to do next, she was going to run it by Harry first and get his approval.

As proud and stubborn as she could be, she wasn't stupid. She knew that it would be in her best interest to involve Harry going forward in whatever plans she made, not only because he was her boyfriend but because, time and time again, he had proven that he put more thought into her safety than she ever did.

Jade raised her head when someone tapped on her window, and she opened the door when she saw Bryan looking at her with a slightly raised brow.

"Are you okay?" He asked as she got out of the car.

"Yeah," Jade said as she drew in a shaky breath.

"You don't look okay. Did something happen?" Bryan asked with concern, and she smiled.

Perhaps it was because she had not spent enough time around her family since she started her practice. She had almost forgotten how protective her family could be.

"You can't tell anyone, alright? Although I'm sure Harry is most likely going to tell Tom," Jade said with a slight frown.

"Tell Tom what? Are you pregnant?" Bryan asked, and she laughed softly.

"Is that all you can think of?" She asked with a sigh.

"Let's go in. I think I need to drink something strong and then I will tell you. Where is Sonia? Is mom and Dad back?" She asked as they both went inside.

"No, they're not back yet. Sonia is taking a nap," Bryan said, and Jade nodded.

"I suppose you must have been bored; hence you noticed I was back," Jade said, and Bryan shrugged.

Once they got to the bar, Bryan poured a little quantity of vodka into a glass and handed it to Jade.

Once she had swallowed the entire content of the bottle, she explained what had happened to Bryan.

"Jesus, Jade! Are you out of your mind? How could you do something so stupid? Shouldn't you be smarter than that? That was so damn careless!" Bryan half yelled, but Jade wasn't annoyed by his outburst.

She could tell he was thinking about what could have happened to her and not what had happened.

"I know. I know," Jade said, and then Bryan took a deep breath as he reached out to pat her back.

"Are you okay? You must have been really shocked," Bryan said, and Jade nodded.

"I'm fine," Jade assured him.

"You know, that woman deserves a good beating before she is arrested," Bryan said with a scowl, and Jade smiled.

"All I want is to see her locked up for life. I'm determined now, more than ever, to expose all her crimes. Including this attempt on my life," Jade said thoughtfully, thinking about Lisa's invitation.

"I'm glad Harry was there," Bryan said, and Jade nodded.

"Me too."

"Speaking of Harry. Sonia said something about a proposal in six months," Bryan said, and Jade rolled her eyes.

"At this rate, the whole family will know about it and start keeping counts with me."

"Well, if you wanted it to be a secret, you shouldn't have told anyone about it in the first place," Bryan said simply and then sat up.

"By the way, have you been able to get anything from Sonia?" He asked, and Jade grinned.

"Yeah. She definitely wants to get married, and she wants a diamond ring. She doesn't care if it's a private or public proposal," Jade said, and Bryan smiled.

"Thank you. I knew I could count on you," Bryan said with a wide smile.

"So? What's the plan for the proposal?" Jade asked curiously.

"I would love it to be a family and friends affair. If Tom gets back this weekend, then I will pop the question on Sunday," Bryan said, and Jade raised a brow.

"Friends? You are not talking about inviting your celebrity friends, are you?"

"Not at all. It's going to be an intimate engagement party. Matt will definitely be in attendance. Jeff and Mia too. You can invite the Jonas. I will need you to organize it. Get a good event planner if need be. Mia and Jeff will assist you as well. I'm still trying to find the right venue...."

"Why not use Tom's ballroom instead of hiring a hall? It's high time he puts that space into use," Jade said, and Bryan shook his head.

"I thought about it, but it's Tom's house. As accommodating as Tom can be, I don't want to abuse his hospitality by throwing a party..."

"He wouldn't mind," Jade said reasonably.

"Yes, I know. But this is my life with Sonia. I have an idea of what I want. Sonia and I will be going to check out some properties tomorrow..."

"Properties? You are moving?" Jade asked in surprise.

"Of course. I'm getting married to Sonia. We are starting a family," Bryan explained as though he was talking to a slow child.

"I know. I mean, I just didn't expect it to be so soon. Besides, you have your place in Sogal," Jade said with a shrug.

"We decided to settle in Ludus. If Sonia accepts my proposal, I'm getting married to her immediately. We need our own space," Bryan said, and Jade nodded.

"What now?" Bryan asked when he noticed the tears in Jade's eyes.

"I don't know. I guess I just feel somehow about all of this. I'm happy. But it feels like we have all grown up and are going our separate ways now," she said with a shrug as she swallowed past the lump in her throat.

"I'm in Ludus. Tom is in Ludus. You will be in Ludus when you marry Harry. We are all working together in I-Global. We are not going our separate ways," Bryan assured her, and she smiled as she blinked away her tears, feeling slightly embarrassed.

"I know. It's silly I'm feeling this way, considering that until recently, I was in Varis, and you were in Sogal, and Tom was here. Marriage and starting a family is just a different kind of change," she said, and Bryan ruffled her hair, making her glare at him.

"It's only different in the sense that the family is growing. More annoying Hank kids on the way," Bryan said, and Jade giggled.

"So, about the venue?" Jade reminded him.

"If we find a property we like tomorrow, I would like us to throw the engagement party there...."

"You can't be serious, Bryan. Tomorrow is Friday. You want the engagement party on Sunday. When are you going to set the place up in time for a party?" Jade asked incredulously.

"I'm very certain at the right price, I can get the right people to do the job at short notice," Bryan said confidently.

"Wouldn't Sonia want to set up the house herself?" Jade asked, and Bryan pursed his lips.

"I will discuss it with her and find a way to convince her so we can hire interior decorators. She is pregnant, after all, and shouldn't be stressing herself. If we don't find a suitable house by tomorrow, we can get a hall. But I'd really love to propose to her in our new home," Bryan said, and Jade shook her head in amusement.

"You romantic fool," she murmured, and Bryan grinned.

"You're that happy, huh?" Jade asked, and he nodded.

"Over the moon," he said, and Jade smiled.

"I will leave you to it then. I need to freshen up and spend some time plotting Rebekah's downfall," Jade said as she rose, and Bryan did the same.

Away from there, Candace and Jamal walked into the living room after seeing Matt off, and she raised a brow when she noticed the grin on Aaron's face.

"Matt offered to fly with us to Sogal in his jet, but mummy said no," Jamal announced.

"What is amusing you?" Candace asked with a raised brow at the same time.

Aaron ignored her and focused on Jamal instead, "She did? What was her reason? Matt seems like a nice guy," Aaron said to Jamal as he sat beside him while Candace walked past him.

"He is super cool. I like him," Jamal said happily.

"You like everyone," Candace said dryly as she headed for her bedroom, knowing fully well that she was avoiding her father and whatever it was he had to say about Matt.

She was thankful that Jamal had gone along with her to see Matt off, else it would have been a tad awkward. And she was thankful that he was present here, too, since that was the only reason Aaron wasn't asking her questions already.

Matt had said he was going to give her a call, and without a doubt, she knew why. She had accepted his offer and ran off before he could even say anything. He was going to want them to talk about it, and they were going to have to lay out the rules for their affair.

Should she just take back what she said? She could say it was a slip of the tongue or even say she had said it because she felt overwhelmed at the moment.

Just as she sat on her bed, her phone rang, startling her, and she eyed the phone when she saw the call was from Matt, "You can't possibly have gotten to your destination yet," Candace said immediately after she received the call.

"I couldn't wait. I didn't want to give you enough time to change your mind," Matt said, and Candace pressed her lips together.

"I see," she murmured and said nothing as she waited for him to speak.

"So, we are really doing this, right?" Matt asked, and Candace felt butterflies flutter in her belly.

"It's just sex, remember?" Candace reminded him.

"Friends with benefits, Candace. It's not just going to be about sex. We have to maintain the friendship too. That means normal communication and hanging out as friends, too," Matt said, and she narrowed her eyes.

"How is that different from us being in a relationship?" She asked, and Matt almost grinned.

"No commitment...."

"I said you can't have sex with anyone else while having sex with me, remember?" Candace reminded him.

"I know. We have to keep the intimacy part a secret, so it's different," Matt said, knowing this arrangement was either going to help him get what he wanted with her or drive him even more crazy than he already was.

"No public appearances," Candace reminded him.

"None as a couple. But definitely, we can go out as two friends, can't we?" Matt asked, and Candace raised a brow.

"How am I sure you're not trying to trick me into this arrangement and...."

"Candace, I promise I won't tell anyone about our affair. I'm going to treat you as a friend in public, and you will only be my lover behind closed doors," Matt assured her, making her heart race at the thought of being his lover.

"Okay," she said in a husky voice that made Matt smile.

"I'm not going to let you back off, Candace," Matt warned.

"I never said I was going to," she said as she rose and began to pace around the room.

"Good. So, how often do we get to see each other?" Matt asked, and Candace shrugged.

"Depends on our schedules. You're often busy..."

"I can make out time for you. That won't be a problem," Matt said, and Candace sighed.

"Maybe once a week?" Candace suggested, and Matt mulled over it for a moment.

"Only when my schedule is very tight. We will have to spend some weekends together," Matt suggested, and Candace bit her lip thoughtfully.

"Jamal..."

"He can always visit your dad when we have to meet. I'm sure they won't mind," Matt said.

"But that would make my dad suspicious," Candace pointed out.

"Suspicious that his adult daughter is seeing someone, which is absolutely normal. He just doesn't have to know I'm the one," Matt said, and Candace sighed.

"Alright."

"So, can we meet tomorrow?" Matt asked, making her heart skip a beat.

"Isn't that too soon? Besides, everyone we know is in Ludus, and we could easily be...."

"I've missed you, Candace. I don't think it's too soon. We can arrange to meet discreetly. I will figure out somewhere we can meet and spend some time alone without prying eyes," Matt said, and Candace bit her lips as her heart thudded with anticipation.

"Okay," Candace said, and Matt smiled triumphantly.

"I will let you know when I come up with something. Take care of yourself," Matt said before hanging up, and Candace slumped on the bed and placed a hand on her racing heart.

Her reaction was normal. It had been a while since she had sex, so it was perfectly normal to feel so excited, Candace assured herself.

Chapter 622 Pleasant Surprise

Lucy had a lot on her mind as she drove to work very early the next morning. Although it was not yet time to resume at office but she thought she was better off there than at home with her parents. She wanted to be alone.

Where was Tom? What was going on with him? Was he alright? She mused.

She was yet to hear from him since after the conversation they had in her office the previous day before her breakfast, and despite all the messages and pictures she had sent to him, she had gotten no response.

Well, to be fair, the messages had actually not ticked delivered as at the time she sent them even though they ticked sent.

She had tried to assure herself the night before that perhaps he was busy with series of meetings and had kept his phone off to avoid distractions.

She had hoped she would wake up to messages from him but had been sorely disappointed when she saw nothing of the such when she woke up despite the fact that she noticed the messages had delivered.

She had been in such a foul mood that she had snapped at her mother when she innocently inquired about Tom. Lucy took a deep breath as she drove into the empty parking lot of the company.

She was almost tempted to give Harry a call to find out what was going on, but decided against it since she would meet him at the office. She hoped that he would have an explanation for Tom's silence.

More than anything else she really hoped that Tom had been able to resolve whatever problem was going at the branch over there and was on his way back already or preparing to be leave there. That was if he still planned to make it in time for the dinner party.

As she walked into her office, she stopped short at the door when she opened it and saw Tom sitting behind her desk.

"Tom?" She called in disbelief, and her heart soared with joy when he grinned at her as he rose.

"Surprised?" He asked, and with a shriek of joy Lucy dropped her handbag and ran around the desk to throw herself at Tom who was now chuckling.

Before she could say anything, Tom covered her lips with his and gave her a long and hard kiss that told her just how much he had missed her.

Once Tom stepped away, he smiled into her eyes as he looked at her, "Why are you here so early?"

"I should be asking you that. What are you doing in my office by this time of the morning?" She asked, taking in his tired appearance.

"Other than wanting to surprise you when you get here?" Tom asked, and Lucy grinned, all her worries forgotten.

"Well, I have been pleasantly surprised. But why didn't you at least respond to my texts? I was very worried!" She complained and he smiled.

"I thought it wouldn't hurt to have you worry about me a little. Especially since you will get to see me soon anyway," Tom said with a shrug as he sat on the edge of her desk and pulled her close.

"I feel like I'm dreaming," Lucy said happily and Tom pulled her nose.

"Ouch!"

"I guess you're not dreaming then," Tom said, and Lucy smiled as her arms wrapped around his neck.

"When did you arrive? Is Harry aware that you're back? Did you go home already?" Lucy asked curiously.

"You are the only one who knows I'm back. I arrived in the early hours of the morning and came here directly after freshening up and getting some rest in my office. I wanted to see you before anyone else," Tom said, and Lucy felt ripples of joy flow through her body.

"I missed you. I can't believe you were away for just two days. It feels like a really long time," Lucy said, and Tom nodded.

"I missed you too. You haven't told me why you are here by this time. Did something happen?" Tom asked with a concerned frown.

"I was in a foul mood and didn't want to be around my parents so I decided to come in early since I left work quite early yesterday," she explained.

"I see. And here I was thinking you were drawn by my presence," Tom said dryly and she laughed softly.

"Perhaps that was it. So? How did it go? Were you able to resolve everything?" Lucy asked, and Tom took a deep breath as he scratched the back of his ear.

After his conversation with Harry the previous day, he had decided to just leave everything and come back to Lucy immediately. He was going to get the DNA done and let her know what was going on.

All through his flight he had been worried about what her reaction would be and how she would take the news if it happened to be true. He didn't want to lose her. He just couldn't afford to.

"Is everything alright?" Lucy asked with worried eyes when she noticed the slight frown that now etched his brows.

Deciding not to go into it immediately, Tom smiled, "Yeah. I haven't been able to resolve it all. Something came up so I had to put everything else on hold," Tom explained.

"What came up?" Lucy asked with concern.

"Let's not rush into it yet. Why don't we go up to my office and you can tell me about your therapy session and how you've enjoyed my absence?" Tom suggested as he straightened and Lucy jabbed an elbow into his side.

"There was nothing to enjoy about your absence. I was counting the seconds until your return," Lucy said as she let Tom lead her take her hand and lead her to the door.

Tom picked up her handbag from where she had dropped it earlier and led her to the elevator.

"You became more beautiful in my absence. Perhaps I should stay away for some time," Tom teased and Lucy smiled at the compliment.

"I wish I could say the same about you. You look really exhausted. Perhaps I shouldn't let you out of my sight again," she said, and Tom took her hand in his.

"I hope you would do that," Tom said and Lucy looked at him.

Somehow she could tell that there was something going on with him, and she couldn't help but wonder what it was.

Despite his smile, she could see the worry in his eyes. What was bothering him? Did something serious happen? Did it have anything to do with the picture Cora had shown her and the reason he had lied to her?

"So? Tell me everything that has been going on with you," Tom urged her, and Lucy tried to fill him in on all that had happened since he left and finished by telling him about her therapist.

"I think I like her," Tom said, as he locked his office door behind door so that no one would be able to get in, and he led Lucy into the bedroom.

"Yeah. Are you going to tell me what's wrong?" Lucy asked, looking at him with serious eyes.

"What?" Tom asked and Lucy raised a brow.

"I know you missed me, but I believe you were waiting for me because there was something you wanted to say to me, am I wrong?" Lucy asked and Tom shook his head.

"You are right. But I don't think we should rush into it..."

"You look restless, Tom. You are going to remain that way until you say what is on your mind. Talk to me," Lucy said with a worried frown.

Without saying anything, Tom ran his fingers through his hair and took a deep breath as he looked at her. How did a man tell the woman he loved something like this?

Could he trust her to understand and not run in the other direction?

"I don't know how to say this. I've spent hours thinking about the best way to explain this, but I can't seem to come up with anything," Tom confessed with worried eyes.

Lucy's brows pulled together as she took off her glasses, "You are making me anxious. Did you do something? Were you with someone else?" she asked the first question on her mind.

"Someone else? Are you asking if I cheated on you? Of course, not! I could never do that," Tom said fiercely, and Lucy let out a relieved sigh.

"If that's not it, what could be so difficult to explain?" she asked, and Tom sat down on the bed and patted the space beside him for her to join him.

Lucy put on her glasses as she sat down beside him and took Tom's hand in support, "Tell me."

"I'm not sure if I should say anything until I'm certain..."

"If it's bothering you so much when you're not certain of it yet, then you should probably tell me about whatever it is and let's worry about it together," Lucy suggested.

He had thought about it too. Carrying her along all the way so she would know how important she was to him and how important this whole issue was to him as well.

"I told you I've been with other ladies in the past, right? I mean, I've had sexual relations with ladies in the past," Tom started, and Lucy looked at him with confused eyes as she gave him a nod.

Although she wanted to ask why he was bringing that up, she didn't want to interrupt whatever he had to say.

"You remember I told you about having a meeting in a club?" Tom asked and Lucy adjusted her position as she gave him a nod once again.

"Well, the man I met with invited someone else over. His niece," Tom started, and Lucy looked at him thoughtfully.

That would explain the lady in the picture that Cora had shown her, but that didn't explain why they were alone. Unless the person he had a meeting with was trying to hook him up with his niece? Was that it?

"Are you listening?" Tom asked when he noticed that Lucy seemed distracted.

"You said he brought his niece along. What for?" Lucy asked curiously.

"The thing is, she is someone I sort of hooked up with years ago. It was a fling not a relationship..."

"So he brought her to rekindle old flames?" Lucy asked sharply.

"There was never flame," Tom said tightly.

"The fact that you slept with her says there was one," Lucy said matter-of-factly.

"Shall I go ahead or let you work with your assumptions?" Tom asked, and Lucy sighed.

"I'm sorry. Go on," she said although there was now a nervous pit in her stomach.

"According to her she had been trying to find me all these years. You know, until recently my identity has remained hidden, so she didn't really know who I was until the interview," Tom explained, and Lucy withdrew her hand from his and folded her hands together on her thighs.

She could tell now that whatever it was he wanted to say was something she was not going to like and the longer she waited for him to get to the point the more nervous she felt.

"Can you just go straight to the point and tell me what she wants? Is she going to be another Anita we have to worry about?" Lucy asked, and Tom took a deep breath.

"I don't know how it happened, but she claims we have a child..."

"A CHILD?!" Lucy exclaimed as she involuntarily sprang to her feet.

"Lucy..."

"Did you just say she has a child for you? How can you even say you have no idea how it happened?" Lucy asked, cutting him off as she put some distance between them as he rose.

"I swear I had no idea of this until she showed up at the club. I used protection when I slept with her. I can hardly believe it myself. I'm going to carry out a DNA test. This happened four years ago, Lu. Long before I met you," Tom rushed to explain while Lucy merely stared at him like she was dreaming.

"Please say something," Tom pleaded when she merely continued to stare at him speechlessly.

"What am I supposed to say? What do you expect me to say?" Lucy asked in a broken voice.

"Anything. Tell me what you are thinking," Tom pleaded.

Lucy shook her head, "I can't think right now. Let's talk about it after you get the DNA test and you know for certain," Lucy said as she picked up her handbag and turned to leave.

"Lucy, please I need you to talk to me. I love you. I need you to listen," Tom pleaded.

"I love you too. But let's talk later. I'm sure you need to rest and sort out other things too. I need to be alone right now," Lucy said as she walked away from the office blinded by her tears.

She had no idea where she was going but she knew it wasn't to her office. She needed to be somewhere else where she could be alone and think. And cry.

Chapter 623 Selfish

A child? Tom already had a child with someone else? She couldn't explain what she was feeling or why she was feeling that way, but it felt like something sharp was piercing through her heart and it was breaking at the same time.

Perhaps she knew why she was feeling that way. It was because she felt that she was losing Tom.

Just when she thought Anita was out of the way and now she could do her best to make her relationship with Tom work something like this had to come up.

It was always one obstacle after the other and she wasn't sure they could surmount this one. It seemed like they were not meant to be together.

Anita did not even have a child for Tom yet look how much effort she had put into trying to come between them. Could she expect anything less from this new baby mama who had just shown up?

Regardless of whatever assurances Tom was going to give her she knew this was not going to be that simple.

A child was involved here. If the kid turned out to be Tom's child there was no way she would expect him not to take responsibility for the child.

And she knew well enough to know that by doing so his baby mama would remain a constant part of his life. Could she stand that? Could she live with any more drama? Lucy mused as she stepped out of the elevator stifling a sob as she headed outside.

"LuLu!" Harry who had just arrived and was headed for the elevator called out to her when she walked past him without acknowledging his presence.

"Lucy!" he called again but Lucy didn't hear him as she kept walking.

Harry frowned, wondering what was wrong with her as he quickly followed her. He was glad that other employees had not started arriving yet, else this would have given them something to gossip about.

He didn't have time to wonder for long as his phone started ringing and he stopped to receive the call immediately he saw it was from Tom.

"Let me call you back..."

"I just told Lucy about it," Tom said at the same time with Harry.

That explained Lucy's state, Harry thought as he looked in the direction Lucy had left.

"I will call you back," Harry said as he quickly hung up and hurried after Lucy.

By the time Lucy got to the parking lot, and opened her car she was already sobbing, but before she could get in and shut the door, Harry held the door to prevent her from shutting it and her tearfilled eyes gazed up at him.

"What is wrong? Did something happen?" Where are you going?" Harry asked with a concerned frown as he watched her try to pull herself together.

Even though he now knew what was wrong, he couldn't act like he knew about it. At least not until he got the details from her. He couldn't understand why Tom would share something like that with her over the phone. It was unlike Tom to be so thoughtless. He would have expected Tom to tell her that in person.

"Nothing," Lucy cried softly as she tried unflinching to stop her tears.

"What is the problem? Where are you running off to?" Harry repeated as he watched her.

Lucy shook her head with a half sob, "It's nothing. I just need a moment to be alone before I resume..."

"You can't say it's nothing when you're crying this way," Harry pointed out and she shook her head as she wiped her tears away with her palm and forced a smile.

She cleared her throat, "Really. I'm alright. You should probably go in. Tom got back early and he's in his office," Lucy said, and Harry narrowed his eyes.

"Tom is back? You saw him?" Harry asked in surprise.

The last time they talked was when Tom called to inform him about the situation, and Tom hadn't said anything about returning.

If he was back already that meant he must have gotten on the plane not long after their discussion, and he could guess it was because he was worried about Lucy's reaction. Tom wasn't one to sit around and do nothing when he was worried about something.

"Yeah. I really want to be alone..."

"You didn't even hear me when I was calling out to you, what makes you think I'm going to let you drive out of here in this state? And you can't possibly just sit here in your car to cry either. Soon, others will start arriving and they will easily see you. And then everyone would start coming up with stories and whispering," Harry said reasonably.

"I have no idea what could have transpired between you and Tom. But if you really want to get out of here I could drive you to wherever you want, and after you are calm you can tell me about it if you want to," Harry offered, and Lucy merely stared at him blankly.

"The key, Lucy. Give it to me. If you want to go somewhere, get into the passenger seat and tell me where. I will be your driver for today," Harry offered softly as he extended his hand to her.

"Don't you have work to do? Don't you want to see Tom?" Lucy asked and Harry shook his head.

"I've come to like you even more than I like to work. If anyone asks why I'm late I'm sure you can come up with a story for us," Harry joked, reminding her of her lie, and Lucy gave him a wobbly smile.

"Besides, Tom will have my head if he finds out I let you drive off in the state I saw you just so I could say hello to him," Harry assured her, and she sighed.

"Maybe I don't need to go anywhere. I will just return to my office," she said with a shake of her head as she fished inside her handbag for a handkerchief to fix her makeup.

"That's fine too. Do you want to tell me what Tom said or did to upset you?" Harry asked and she shook her head.

"It's nothing," she said without looking at him.

She did not want to talk about Tom's private business at least not until they were sure that kid was his. And she was certain that if Tom wanted Harry to know about it, he would tell him about it soon, or he probably has told him already, Lucy mused as she turned to take another look at Harry.

If she was in Tom's shoes and something like this happened to her the first person she would talk to about it was her best friend. She would most likely run it by Sonia before presenting it to Tom.

"Tom talked to you already, didn't he?" Lucy asked, and Harry raised a brow.

"About what? I don't even know he is back..."

"You know why he had to return early, don't you?" Lucy asked, and Harry shook his head.

"If you're asking me a question, it's best you ask a direct question so I can know what exactly you want to hear," Harry said and Lucy got out of the car.

"You know about the lady he met with at the club?" she asked, choosing to play safe.

If Harry said he knows nothing about that, then she wouldn't go further than that. But if he knew about her, then he knew the rest.

Harry looked at her for a moment before giving her a nod, "Yes."

"I think I will take you up on your offer to talk to you," Lucy said, and Harry nodded.

"Let's go to my office," Harry said, and Lucy shook her head.

"I don't want to run into Tom yet. I need to process it all before I say anything to him," Lucy said and Harry nodded in understanding.

"Let's go to the cafeteria then. It's usually quiet at this time of the morning. And I need to get my morning coffee boost. Don't worry, Tom never goes down to the cafeteria. The only time he did was when he was being your errand boy," Harry assured her with a small smile.

Neither of them said a word as they walked into the cafeteria and once Lucy was seated, Harry headed to the counter to get himself a cup of coffee after Lucy assured him she didn't want anything.

After he returned and took his seat, Lucy looked at him curiously, "Do you know the lady in question?"

"Lucy, you're supposed to be telling me what Tom said to you. I will tell you what I think you should know after I hear what Tom said," Harry said and Lucy sighed.

Harry took a sip from his styrofoam cup as he waited for Lucy to speak, and after a moment she told him all what Tom had said.

"Do you think the kid might truly be Tom's? Or perhaps this lady just wants to pin it on him because he is wealthy?" Lucy asked hopefully.

"We can't tell until we conduct the DNA test. But you should know that Kimberly Moore is a very wealthy lady from a solid background. I don't see what she stands to gain by doing this if the kid is not Tom's," Harry said honestly, and Lucy felt whatever fragment of hope she had, shatter.

"Yes. But we can't be so sure yet. Let's wait until the DNA test is done and we see the result," Harry suggested, and Lucy sighed deeply.

"That means the kid is most likely his," she said quietly.

"Yes. But we can't be so sure yet. Let's wait until the DNA test is done and we see the result," Harry suggested, and Lucy sighed deeply.

"And what if the kid is his? What am I supposed to do?" Lucy asked, and Harry shook his head.

"That's not for me to tell you. You have to make that decision on your own. Whatever I say right now will be biased because I will always look out for you and Tom's joint interests," Harry said honestly.

"He might have to get married to her since she has his kid, right?" she asked with a frown.

"That question should be directed to Tom after you've heard him out not me. Right now I'm here only to listen to you. I will tell you what I think only after the result is out and you've heard Tom out. But for now I think the most important thing for you to do is to listen to him and hear what he has to say. If the situation was reversed, Tom would do that for you too. Or maybe I'm just being biased because he is my best friend," Harry said with a sigh, and then he looked at her.

"You need to remember that Tom never planned for any of this to happen. The fact that he left everything he had to do over there tells me how worried he must be. And as much as I understand how you feel, I think maybe you should also think about how Tom feels, because I know for a fact that he has been thinking about how you might feel about this since he got the news. Tom always puts your feelings before his own. I'm not saying it's wrong to think about yourself too. I'm just saying maybe this time you should think about how hard all of this might be for Tom. Finding out he has a kid with someone he has met only once and never once gave a second thought in all these years. As beautiful as the idea of having a kid might be, this was unexpected and unplanned. He is confused and has a lot on his mind," Harry said calmly and tears gathered in Lucy's eyes as she listened to him.

"What I'm trying to say is that Tom needs you. I probably shouldn't bring this up, but remember how he stood by you when that scandal came up? He went as far as revealing his identity for your sake even before we knew for a fact that Anita was behind it. I think it's time you returned the favor. If you love Tom, it's time for you to prove it to both him and to yourself. This isn't about you, Lucy. It's about Tom. I'm pretty sure this won't be easy for either you, but I believe it will be better for you both if you stand with him," Harry said and then sighed.

"I said I wasn't going to say anything and then I ended up saying a lot more than you did," Harry said with a wry smile and Lucy sniffled as she brushed away the tears on her cheeks.

"You're right. I'm glad I ran into you, and I'm glad you said all of that. It was probably what I needed to hear. I was thinking only of myself..."

"That's only because you haven't had time to yourself to think and process things. I'm sure you would have realized everything I told you on your own," Harry said, and Lucy shook her head.

"I don't think so. Maybe I'm more selfish than I realize. I tend to think only about how I feel. I always overthink and dwell more on the negative side of things. The DNA test hasn't even been carried out yet and I ran out of his office that way. Tom deserves better than that from me," Lucy said as she pushed away from her seat and rose.

"Where are you going?" Harry asked curiously as he rose.

"I think I should go back to him. I still don't know how I'm going to navigate through this, but as you said, I will think of just Tom this time and focus on standing by him. He has done that much for me and I should do the same. Hopefully we will figure it out together," Lucy said and Harry took her hand and squeezed it softly.

"That's good. Everything will be fine. I will make sure of it, I promise. And if you need to talk, call me anytime or come see me," Harry said and Lucy smiled as she gave him a nod.

"This is the second time you're stopping me from running away. Thank you for not letting me leave once again," Lucy said before walking away.

Chapter 624 Trying Too Hard

Standing by the window in his office, Tom wondered if he should have followed Lucy when she left or just stopped her from leaving entirely.

He had been to her office few minutes before calling Harry earlier, and seeing as she wasn't there, he had no idea where she had gone to.

He had tried calling but she wasn't picking up. His only source of comfort right now was knowing that her car was still in the parking lot, which meant she had not left the premises.

He had even gone to the storage room where she had hidden the last time to see if she was hiding there but she wasn't there either.

He couldn't say he was surprised by her reaction. He wasn't exactly disappointed either. This was Lucy after all. And if there was one thing he had learned about her, it was the fact that she liked to run away from her problems. She preferred to hide rather than face her challenges squarely, Tom thought with a sigh.

He glanced at his wristwatch and scowled as he wondered why Harry was yet to return his call. He walked out of his office and walked over to Harry's office to check for him, but Harry wasn't there yet.

Deciding to get busy rather than hang around doing nothing, Tom returned to his office and picked up the envelope containing the DNA samples.

He was certain that by the time he arrived at the lab, it would be open. He would rather do something productive with his time by taking the sample over for testing rather than stay around and worry. He would try to reason with Lucy again when he gets back.

Just as he headed for his private elevator, his office door opened and he turned around to see Lucy.

"Lucy," he called softly, surprised that she had returned so soon.

"Are you going somewhere?" Lucy asked when she noticed the envelope he was carrying and saw he had been headed for the elevator.

"Yes. But it can wait," Tom said as he watched her. Waiting for her to say something.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have left that way," Lucy said apologetically as she shut the door behind her and stepped further into the office.

Tom shook his head immediately, "You don't have to be sorry. You did nothing wrong," Tom assured her as he approached her and stopped in front of her.

"I know I was wrong, Tom. You don't have to make excuses for my behaviour. I shouldn't have reacted the way I did..."

"You reacted how you knew to react. I showed up unexpectedly and told you something very shocking. It's expected that you would want sometime..."

"No! Just stop, okay? I know you're always trying to pamper me and make me feel good. I appreciate it, but now is not the time. I didn't think about how you must feel, and I made this about me, and that was wrong," Lucy said firmly, and Tom sighed.

Although he wanted to assure her that he meant what he had said and he didn't think she was wrong to react the way she did, let said nothing and decided to let her do the talking instead.

Lucy took a deep breath, "I know you were away for just two days, but I've been thinking a lot in your absence. And I've come to realize that I've been selfish. You're mostly at the giving end and I'm almost always on the receiving end. I'm more selfish that I realized. And what transpired between us earlier only reinforced it," Lucy said, while Tom continued to watch her.

He had no idea what she was talking about or where it was coming from, but he didn't think she was selfish.

Yes, there had been times when she came up with selfish suggestions such as the time she suggested he adopt a child she wouldn't care for, but he really didn't think she was selfish.

She had been single until she met him and he could understand that the concept of putting a partner's need first might be foreign to her, and he didn't fault her for it.

Besides, putting one's partner first was a thing of choice. It was his choice to put her first, she didn't have to return the favor out of a sense of duty. If ever she was going to put his needs before hers, he wanted it to be out of love and devotion and not because she felt she owed him.

"I've not been fair to you. I'm sorry. I'm sorry for always thinking about myself. And I'm sorry that every time something comes up my first reaction is to pull away from you. I don't want to only be at the receiving end of our relationship. I want to be there for you too, Tom. I want to stand by you. I hope it's not too late for that," Lucy said hopefully.

"You should know that between the time you walked through the door and now, nothing has changed. There is still every possibility that the little girl is mine..."

"I aware of that," Lucy said with a sigh.

"Still, it's too early for me to run away, right? I mean, I will never know how things will turn out eventually if I just pull away now," Lucy said with a shrug.

"Early? You still plan to run away eventually?" Tom asked thoughtfully.

"No. That's not what I mean. I won't lie to you or myself, Tom. I don't have it figured out yet. I'm scared. This whole thing scares me. I really don't want any dramas. But I'm here right now only because I'm trying for once to think about you and not myself. I'm trying to put your feelings first," Lucy confessed and Tom sighed.

"I'm sorry I'm complicating things..."

"No. Don't. You don't have to apologize. It's not like you cheated on me or anything. It all happened in the past, and you really do not owe me any explanation or apology for your past," Lucy said softly and Tom stepped forward and embraced her.

"Thank you, Jewel. This means a lot to me," Tom said and Lucy patted his back as she held on to him.

They remained in each other's arms for a while before Tom pulled away to look at her, "I was at your office earlier. Where were you?" Tom asked curiously.

"You went to my office?" Lucy asked, and Tom nodded as he went to sit on the edge of his desk and pulled Lucy against him.

"Yeah. I was worried. I wasn't sure it was right to let you leave that way," Tom explained and she smiled.

"I ran into Harry on my way out so we both went to the cafeteria," Lucy explained.

"Did you tell him I was here?" Tom asked and Lucy gave him a nod.

That explained why Harry had hung up without letting him speak, Tom reasoned.

"I did. Harry actually made me realize it was wrong to leave the way I did," Lucy confessed.

"I suppose he knows you came back to see me?" Tom asked, thinking that explained why Harry was yet to return his call or show up on his office. He was deliberately making himself scarce. Tom decided he owed Harry one.

"Yeah. I left him at the cafeteria. By the way, where were you going to earlier?" She asked curiously as she pulled away to look at him.

"I was going to head to the lab to drop off the DNA samples," Tom said and Lucy nodded.

"Oh! Can I come with you?" Lucy asked, and Tom arched a brow.

"It's work hours now," he reminded her, since he knew how much she liked to work.

Lucy smiled, "I'm dating the CEO so I can afford to skip work for a couple of hours, can't I? If we could stop by my office, I will give my teammates some instructions before we leave," she said, and Tom looked at her again, wondering what she was thinking.

"You don't have to. I could go on my own or ask Harry...."

"Harry will be busy. Besides, I'm your girlfriend, not Harry. I will come with you," Lucy said firmly this time, and Tom's lips curved in an amused smile.

"If you insist," Tom said as he rose, feeling relieved now.

"I insist. Let's go."

"Why don't I bring the car to the front of the building why check in with your teammates?" Tom suggested.

"Or we could take my car and I drive you for a change," Lucy offered with a wink, and Tom grinned.

He could see that she was really going all out to make it up to him. Not that he needed her to, though.

"You don't have to..."

"I want to. You can think of it as me wanting to show you off. I told you Cora was at my office yesterday, remember?" Lucy said and Tom nodded.

"Yeah. What was that about? Did she cause any trouble?" Tom asked curiously.

"Let's go while I will tell you about it," Lucy said as she linked her arm with Tom's and pulled him with her towards the door.

"Well, she started by insinuating that things were not going so well between us. And then she showed me a picture of you and a lady at the club," Lucy explained, and Tom stopped walking and looked at her.

"She did what?" He asked coolly.

"She wanted me to explain why you were at an erotic club with a different lady if things were going so well between us," Lucy explained and Tom frowned.

"Why didn't you ask me about it?" He asked as he watched her, knowing that it must have bothered her a lot more than she was letting on.

"In front of her? Of course, not. Besides, you told me you were at the club anyway..."

"But I didn't tell you I was with a lady. This could have caused a major misunderstanding between us," Tom said, feeling very annoyed now, but Lucy could tell his anger was directed at Cora, not her.

"But it didn't. And now I know who the lady was," Lucy said with a shrug.

"Are you going to tell me it didn't bother you?" Tom asked, and she sighed.

"It did bother me a little since you said you were meeting with a man, and there was no man in the picture. But I decided to wait for you to get back so I could ask you about it," Lucy explained patiently.

"I'm not going to let this slide," Tom said with a fierce look in his eyes as he resumed walking.

"You can't fire her or discipline her..."

"Why not? I'm her boss and she invaded my privacy. I can do whatever I want," Tom said harshly as he opened the door, startling Eric who had no idea anyone was in the office.

"Good morning, sir! Good morning, Miss Perry," He greeted politely and they both called back a response but didn't break their stride.

"I believe I warned her already," Lucy said softly.

"Let's stop by her office and clear any doubt she has," Tom said in a tone that brooked no argument.

As they stopped in front of the elevator it opened and Harry stepped out. Immediately he saw Tom his mouth fell open.

"Oh, my God! Tom? Is that you? When did you get back?" He asked dramatically making both Tom and Lucy laugh.

Harry smiled when he saw their arms linked. Everything was going to be fine, he thought.

"Cut it out. Lucy already told me you're aware I'm back," Tom said with a grin.

"Oh, she did? I can't believe you can't keep a secret," Harry said dryly.

"I see you both are heading out. Tom, I will catch up with you later," Harry said as he slapped Tom's back and walked away.

"So, the kid is a girl?" Lucy asked as they got into the elevator, not wanting them to return to Cora's subject.

"Yeah. She is three years old," Tom said, and Lucy nodded.

"I suppose you saw her already since you have her DNA sample with you," Lucy said thoughtfully.

"Yeah. She brought her to see me," Tom explained.

"To the club?" Lucy asked with wide eyes as they got into the elevator, and Tom chuckled.

"Of course, not. She brought her to the hotel," Tom explained.

"Oh," Lucy muttered, and Tom took her hand.

"You don't have to worry about her. We met and discussed in my office. I won't let this cause any trouble for you, I promise," Tom said and Lucy sighed.

"I know you won't," she said with a small smile.

"So, what was she like? The kid I mean?" Lucy asked, and Tom looked at her.

"Do you really want to know?" He asked with concern.

"Of course. According to Harry, there's every possibility that she might be yours. And I'm sure you believe it too. That's the only reason you must have decided to tell me about it before carrying out the DNA test, am I wrong?" Lucy asked, and Tom shook his head.

"If she is yours, as your girlfriend, I should know about her. I can't pretend like she doesn't exist," Lucy said, and Tom's brows pulled together as he looked at her.

Someone who had suggested he adopt a kid but not get her involved in the kid's life was suddenly so curious to know about a kid that might be his?

It seemed to him like she was taking everything in too quickly. If it were someone else he wouldn't be worried, but for someone like Lucy, she was acting like it wasn't a big deal too soon, and he knew very well that that wasn't the case.

It made him worry about how she would really feel and think when she was alone. He knew she was trying to be this way for his sake, but she was trying too hard and he couldn't help being worried about her.

"Why aren't you saying anything?" Lucy asked, poking his side as the elevator door opened and they got out on her floor.

"She seems very bright. Her name is Dawn. From our little interaction, I think she acts more like an adult than a kid," Tom said as they headed for her office.

"Like Jamal?" She asked with a smile and Tom chuckled.

"No. Not like Jamal. Jamal is completely different," Tom said thoughtfully.

"In what way?" Lucy asked curiously.

"Well, Jamal seems naturally mature. I mean, he observes everyone and everything. Dawn on the other hand seems like she was trained to not be a kid," Tom said, and Lucy frowned.

"That sounds kind of sad," she said as they walked into her office and every conversation and movement in the office stopped as her teammates looked at them.

Once Lucy had given instructions to those concerned, they both headed out of the office again and before Lucy could press the button for the first floor, Tom entered the button for Cora's office floor.

Chapter 625 I'm Scared

"You will go in first. I will wait outside the door," Tom suggested and Lucy looked at him with a puzzled frown.

"Why? What am I supposed to say to her?" Lucy asked as the elevator door opened and they stepped out.

"Why? Because I'm not letting her attitude towards my girlfriend slide. If I do nothing, it's going to make her think it's okay to walk up to you and say whatever she likes. If I show up in her office instead of inviting her to mine, it's going to make everyone realize something is wrong, and it will pass a message to them all that no one is allowed to mess with you. Go in there and say whatever you like to get a ride out of her. I want her to say something she's not supposed to," Tom insisted, and Lucy sighed as they stopped outside the door.

At times like this the difference between her and Tom seemed so obvious. Where she would rather ignore somethings, Tom would rather be petty.

"Don't you think this will refelect badly on me and put me on the bad books of the others?" Lucy asked, and Tom shook his head.

"You don't need to be on their good book. You are my girlfriend, Lucy. If they can't respect you, I want them to be scared of messing with you," Tom assured her as he raised her hand to his lips.

"It's best we go in together," Lucy said as she linked her hands with Tom's and opened the door.

Cora's teammates who were all gathered together looking at something Cora was showing them all turned to the door when it opened, and Cora froze when she saw Lucy walk in with Tom behind her.

In the short while since she became closely acquainted with Tom, not once had she seen his eyes look so cold and unfriendly. She knew without a doubt that Lucy had said something to him.

"Good morning, sir! Good morning, ma'am," her teammates all called out to the couple respectfully while Tom fixed his gaze on Cora.

Cora's frozen face twisted in a stiff smile as she gazed at Tom, "Good morning, sir. Good morning, Director Perry."

Lucy beamed a smile at Cora, "Good morning, director Anderson. I thought I should check out your office as you did mine yesterday, and I invited him to join me. I thought you would like that," she said pleasantly, and Cora's teammates remained where they stood around Cora, not sure what was going on and whether or not they should return to their desks.

Tom didn't respond to the greetings, "I have no interest in your office. I believe you know why we are here?" Tom asked Cora without taking another step into the office.

Cora looked from Tom to Lucy, and Lucy gave her a nonchalant shrug.

"Do you want to come into my office so we can speak privately?" Cora offered as she rubbed her sweaty palms down her pants.

"I didn't realize you cared about privacy. I don't see any reason why I should respect yours by talking to you in your office when you didn't respect mine," Tom said coldly.

Cora's teammates looked from Cora to Tom, and then started heading for the door but Tom's gaze moved from Cora to them, "I didn't say anyone could leave," he said briskly before returning his attention to Cora.

"I learnt you are very curious about our relationship. I believe you have questions for me. Go on," Tom said, jerking his head towards Cora for her to speak.

Cora looked down at her feet in embarrassment, "I'm sorry, sir."

"What for?" Tom asked with a raised brow.

"I shouldn't have said anything to Director Perry," Cora said quietly, and Tom shook his head.

"What did you say to her?" Tom asked, and Cora shook her head unable to bring herself to repeat everything she had said, especially not in the presence of her teammates.

"Do you love your job?" Tom asked, and Cora bobbed her head.

"Do you want to keep your job?" Tom asked again, and this time Cora looked up at him.

"If you do, I suggest you repeat everything you said to her right now. And you better not leave out a detail," Tom said, and Cora glanced at Lucy who looked away from her immediately.

"I don't have all day, Miss Anderson. And do not think losing your job is the worst I can do to you. Ask the staff who was fired for badmouthing Lucy the last time. She is yet to get another job," Tom threatened, and Lucy turned to look at him, surprised by that piece of information.

Tears gathered in Cora's eyes and her lips wobbled as she told Tom about her conversation with Lucy.

"I'm sorry," she said when she was done.

"Do you know what you should be sorry for? You should be sorry for being interested in my personal business. A business for which I did not employ you. But most of all, you should be sorry for thinking you could mess with my girlfriend and not have to deal with me," Tom said coldly.

"It will never happen again," Cora promised without meeting their gaze, and Tom shook his head.

"I believe it won't. I want the name and details of whoever sent you the picture," Tom said and Cora's head snapped up.

"Sir..."

"You can provide me with it, or hand in your resignation letter. I expect it to be on Lucy's desk within the next hour, or I will assume you are no longer a staff of I-Global," Tom said and turned to leave with Lucy.

He hesitated with his hand on the doorknob as he turned to her, "And just so you know, handing in your resignation letter won't stop me from going after your friend either," Tom said before opening the door but Lucy did not step out with him.

She gave him a nod to wait outside so she could speak to Cora, and once Tom had shut the door behind him, Lucy turned to Cora.

"I must say I'm disappointed by your reaction. I thought you were more gutsy than this. Why do you look so shaken now?" Lucy asked with a raised brow, ignoring Cora's teammates who moved away to their various desks, and pretended not to pay attention to what was going on.

"All I want is to have a peaceful relationship with Tom. One without drama. One in which things like this doesn't have to take place within the company. I don't know why you keep getting on my nerves, but I do hope this will be the last time this happens. It will be a shame for the company to lose a competent director like you," Lucy said, and without waiting for a response she walked away to join Tom.

"Are you okay?" Tom asked, and Lucy gave him a nod.

"What you said in there, is it true? About the lady you fired the last time " Lucy asked, and Tom shrugged.

"Someone like her doesn't deserve to work amongst other people. I don't like getting involved in other people's life, but when they decide to mess with me or mine, they leave me no choice," Tom said, and Lucy sighed.

"Isn't that too harsh? I mean I understand that she was wrong. But life is hard enough already and frustrating her efforts to get another job is only going to make her life tougher. You are bullying her," Lucy said and Tom shook his head.

"She tried to bully you first. She should know what it feels like to be bullied," Tom said and Lucy embraced him.

"Thanks. I know you're doing all this for me, but I don't want you to be so ruthless. I won't be okay knowing someone out there is having a tough time because they wronged me," Lucy said and Tom shook his head as he pulled away.

"You're too soft. They know it that's why they mess with you."

"And you're too hard," Lucy said with a small smile.

"That's why no one would dare to mess with me," Tom said confidently.

"Apart from me?" Lucy asked with a grin, and Tom smiled.

"Sure. You're the only one allowed to," Tom said as he planted a quick kiss on her lips before leading her away.

Once they got to the parking lot, Lucy got into the driver's seat of her car while Tom took the passenger seat.

"I guess we are headed to the same lab we went the last time, right?" Lucy asked, and Tom gave her a nod.

"Yeah. Do you remember the direction?" He asked, and she flashed him a smile.

"Sure. You can relax," Lucy assured him as she started the car and drove out of the company.

Tom turned to the side as he watched her with interest while she drove.

After she had driven in silence for some time, Lucy turned to look at him briefly, "Why are you staring?"

"I'm trying to figure out what you're thinking," Tom confessed.

"What I'm thinking about what?" Lucy asked curiously.

"About anything. What's on your mind right now?" Tom asked, and Lucy hesitated for a moment.

"Please tell me," Tom pleaded.

Lucy sighed, "I'm just wondering if you're happy. I mean, I know the situation might not be ideal and all that. But I also know you've always wanted a kid..."

"With you," Tom reminded her.

"Still, I'm just curious to know how you really feel about this whole situation," Lucy said, and Tom nodded.

"You can ask me," Tom pointed out.

"Will you be honest with me about your feelings?" Lucy asked, and he nodded.

"Yes. As long as you're honest with me about yours, Tom promised.

"Sure," Lucy said with a nod, "Let's talk after dropping it off at the lab," Lucy said, and they filled the time with other discussions.

After they had dropped it off, on their way back, Lucy parked the car by the roadside, at a comfortable spot where they could talk.

"So, go on and tell me. How do you feel? How did you feel when she told you about it? And when you saw the kid? Dawn, right?" She asked, and Tom nodded.

Tom took a deep breath and let it out slowly, "At first I didn't believe it. I couldn't believe it. I'm not careless. I always use a condom..."

"Sorry. Can I ask how you both met?" Lucy asked, and Tom pinched his nose.

"We met at the poolside of the hotel on the night it was opened. I was in need of female company. She joined me on my table and we flirted for some time over a few glasses of drinks which ended with us going up to her room. I left before she woke up, and didn't see her again until she showed up at the club," Tom summarized.

"I guess you both did not discuss any personal details?" Lucy asked thoughtfully and Tom shook his head.

"We didn't. Besides, my identity was still pretty much hidden at the time, and she would never have known who I was had I not revealed my identity," Tom said, and Lucy smiled wryly.

"I suppose it's my fault she found you," she said but Tom said nothing.

"Tell me how you really feel," Lucy said as she held Tom's gaze.

"A part of me hopes it's not true. But another part of me wishes it's true," Tom confessed, and Lucy nodded.

"I suppose the part of you that hopes it's not true wishes so because of me?" Lucy asked knowingly.

"Both parts wishes so because of you," Tom said and she raised a brow.

"How? Why?" She asked in confusion.

"I wish it's not true because I don't want to lose you. I don't want you to run away because you don't Lucy swallowed, "Would you be so upset and confused about all of this if I wasn't in your life? Wouldn't you be happy to be a father despite the situation?" Lucy asked again and Tom let out a want to be involved in my child's life. I also wish it's true because I hope that maybe your love for me will be stronger than whatever fear you have. And that maybe if you see we don't have a choice in this matter and I truly have a daughter, you won't mind being a part of both our lives. That way I could find a way to live with you not wanting to birth any," Tom said honestly, and Lucy felt tears gather in her eyes.

"Can you not think about me for a moment, Tom? If I wasn't in the picture how would you feel about this?" Lucy asked and Tom shook his head.

"I can't not think about you for a moment. You're in the picture, Lucy. I want you in the picture," Tom said softly, making her heart skip a beat.

Lucy swallowed, "Would you be so upset and confused about all of this if I wasn't in your life? Wouldn't you be happy to be a father despite the situation?" Lucy asked again and Tom let out a deep breath.

"She is beautiful, Lucy. And for a moment yesterday, I was happy thinking about the possibility of being her father. I would really love to be a father, Lucy," Tom said quietly and two fat drops of tears rolled down Lucy's cheeks.

Lucy's throat felt very tight, and she forced a smile when Tom thumbed away her tears, "I know you will make a really good father," Lucy said softly.

"Will you tell me how you truly feel about all this?" Tom asked, and Lucy drew in a shaky breath.

"I'm scared," she confessed.

"Of what?" Tom asked, taking both her hands in his.

"Of losing you. I'm scared of everything. What if this lady wants you? What if this poses another problem for us? What if you have to marry her? Harry said she is wealthy and from a solid background. What if..."

"Stop making up these scenarios, Lucy. Have I ever given you a reason to think I'm incapable of making my own decisions? You can't lose me. At least not to anyone. And you should know that what Kimberly wants does not matter to me. What you want matters most. All I want is to be a father to Dawn if she is mine. And I would want you to be involved. All that matters here is what we both want," Tom said simply.

Despite the fact that Jade had woken up earlier than usual that morning, she was in a foul mood because she had been plagued by nightmares based on the events of the day for most of the night until she had decided not to go back to sleep.

Who was Rebekah Miller to do this to her? Who did Rebekah think she was? She had faced tougher and more dangerous enemies than Rebekah in the courtroom, and she had defeated them, Rebekah would be no different. She would do everything possible to see Rebekah locked behind bars.

Jade had spent most of the time reading up every article she could find on Rebekah Miller on the internet, until she suddenly remembered the phone which Mr Bateman had given her and she immediately picked it up.

How could she have forgotten such an important item? If truly Rebekah had sent her hitman after her because of the phone, then it probably contained something she shouldn't see.

Once she unlocked the phone, Jade decided to check the messages first, and she raised her brow when she noticed that the last series of text on it were exchanged between Rebekah and her late husband.

Jade's heart broke for Richard a little as she scrolled through the text to see the start of the texts.

[How could you do this to me, Rebekah? How could you treat me this way?] Richard had first sent, making Jade curious to know what he was talking about, but it seemed she had been the only one curious since Rebekah did not respond to the text.

[How could you have been cheating on me for so long? How can only Benny be mine? Why are Tiffany, Lisa, and Anita not a match?] Richard asked with an attached DNA result to prove his claims.

Jade's eyes were round with surprise as she looked through the results, and her eyes grew even rounder when she saw Rebekah's response.

[So? What are you going to do? Tell the girls that they're not yours? Go ahead and tell them then.]

Jade's heart broke as she thought about how Richard must have felt reading this. Did he weep? Was he mad? What sort of man was he? Jade mused curiously as she read his response.

[I am not going to do anything about it. I love my girls too much to put them through something as embarrassing as this. All I want is to be officially separated from you.]

Rebekah did not respond to the text anymore, and then two weeks later the next text from Richard came.

[Did you think I wouldn't find out? Did you think I would never know? I won't let either of you get away with this, Rebekah!]

Jade frowned as she wondered what he was talking about. It seemed like something had been deleted, Jade thought with narrowed eyes. Something told her it had to do with Mr Bateman and he deleted it. Perhaps it was when Richard Miller found out about their relationship?

That was the last text from Richard and there was no response from Rebekah. Jade checked the call log and noticed that Rebekah had given Richard a call that same day.

Jade went on to check the date and compare it to the date of Richard's death, and she wasn't surprised to see that Richard had died later that day.

According to the news, his estranged wife had been the one who discovered his body when she went to check on him.

Jade shook her head in disgust as she read through the details. It was said that Richard hung himself in his apartment and left a suicide note apologizing to his daughters for being a pathetic and incompetent father.

Jade jumped when her phone rang suddenly, and she smiled when she picked it up and saw it was Harry.

"Good morning, Jonas," Jade greeted with a yawn as she got out of her bed to stretch.

"Did you just wake up?" Harry asked curiously.

"No. I have been up since three a.m. What's the time now?" Jade asked as she glanced at the wall clock and gasped in surprise when she saw it was past eight already.

"Why were you up?" Harry asked.

"Why are you just calling me now?" Jade asked at the same time.

"I was busy. I had to make some international phone calls to take care of some stuff. Why were you up?" Harry asked again and Jade sighed.

"I had some nightmares," Jade said with an embarrassed wince.

"Why didn't you call me?" Harry asked with a frown.

"To do what? Chase the nightmares away?" Jade asked in amusement.

"Of course. I could have stayed up with you and kept you company since we couldn't really talk much last night because I was busy," Harry said, and Jade smiled.

"It didn't occur to me, and even if it did I wouldn't have called. You work really hard and you need to get all the rest you can. I can't disturb your sleep over..."

"I'm asking you to do that, esquire. If we were on the same bed, wouldn't I be up with you?" Harry asked, and Jade sighed softly.

"I guess so."

"Even Tom wakes me up whenever he feels like...."

"What? How dare him disturb your sleep when he isn't even your girlfriend?" Jade asked irritably and Harry chuckled.

"I am allowed to disturb his sleep when I want to as well. Once I was ill when we were in school, and Tom nursed me in for nights. And another time my car broke down when I went to a remote location and there was no phone connection to reach him. Tom drove out in search of me in the middle of the night when he didn't hear from me after only thirty minutes. We have that sort of friendship," Harry explained, and Jade scowled jealously.

"If you were to choose between Tom and I who would you pick?" Jade asked, and Harry shook his head in amusement.

"I will choose Tom," Harry said simply and Jade's mouth fell open in disbelief.

"Harry!"

"Yeah. Tom would never ask me to choose between the woman I love and himself. So, I think until you learn not to ask me such a question, Tom will have to remain my first choice," Harry said and she scowled.

"As long as he's male, he's my brother, and he has Lucy, I can live with that," Jade said, and Harry chuckled.

"Why did you even bring up Tom's name in the first place?" Jade hissed.

"Just to let you know that if Tom can wake me up in the middle of the night, so can you. What have you been up doing anyway?" Harry asked, changing the subject.

"I was looking into Rebekah Miller, and checking out the phone," Jade said as she told Harry all she had learned.

"Well, all of that was expected. It's not surprising. Did you tell Candace about your plans for today?" Harry asked and Jade groaned when she remembered she was yet to give Candace a call.

"I haven't."

"You can do so after our conversation. I need to take care of a couple of things now so that Tom can find time to get some rest before the dinner," Harry said as he glanced at his wristwatch.

"Is he back?"

"Yes. Although, I haven't had time to talk with him yet."

"I see. That's good then. That means Bryan can go ahead with his engagement as planned. By the way, I should invite you now. Bryan plans to engage Sonia on Sunday. It's supposed to be a surprise so you can't tell Lucy about it. All you have to do is show up with your family," Candace said Harry raised a brow.

"Bryan and Sonia are getting married for real?" Harry asked in surprise and Jade smiled.

"Yeah. They're expecting a baby," Jade said, surprising Harry even more.

"Well, that's good news. I'm happy for them," Harry said, wondering how Tom would feel after Bryan gets married and starts his family, and Jade does the same shortly after.

"Me too. Although I thought Tom would be the first amongst us to get married and start a family seeing as he has always been the one most interested in love and romance. He might just end up being the last after all," Jade joked.

"Jade?" Harry called, and she frowned.

"You hardly call me by my name. What?"

"Can you try not to repeat what you just said in front of Tom? It's going to upset him if you bring it up," Harry advised, and Jade raised a brow.

"Why would he be upset? Thinking about it now I think lately he gets upset a lot when it comes to such issues about him and Lucy. Why is that?" Jade asked thoughtfully.

"I can't tell you why. But since you've noticed he is sensitive to statements like that, you should try not to say stuff like that around him," Harry advised.

"You're such a good friend to Tom. I'm jealous," Jade said with a pout.

"I see we are back to that. I have to get busy now..."

"Wait! Don't hang up yet," Jade said, and cleared her throat.

"What else?" Harry asked when he noticed the slight pause on her end.

"I'm sorry about yesterday. I acted rashly," Jade said making him smile.

"It's alright, esquire. You're fine, that's all that matters to me," Harry assured her.

"I was fine thanks to you. Thank you for looking out for me the way you did..."

"For Christ's sake, esquire. You don't have to thank me for that. You're mine to protect," Harry said, and she smiled happily at his possessive words.

"Are you going to keep calling me esquire?" Jade asked curiously.

"Is there something else you will like me to call you?" Harry asked, and she pursed her lips as she thought of it.

"I like esquire. It sounds sexy when you call me that. But others might find it weird," Jade said, and Harry nodded.

"Alright. I will figure out something to call you when we are with others. Something sweet enough to annoy the heck out of your brother. Don't forget to let me know before you leave for your

meeting with the Millers, alright? You can leave a text. And take Candace with you. Take care of yourself. I love you," Harry said, and hung up before Jade could bring up another topic to keep him on the line.

Jade eyed the phone when she realized he had hung up, but a smile tugged on her lips as she sent him an 'I love you too' text.

The smile slid off her face when her gaze returned to Rebekah's phone and she decided to give Candace a call to fill her in on what had happened and their meeting with the Lisa Steel.

The moment Andy stirred in her sleep, a part of her brain told her she was no longer on the ship even though she couldn't remember exactly where she was.

However, once her eyes opened, she remembered. How could she not? When a pair of green eyes hiding behind round rim glasses were peering into her face with curious admiration.

Andy's first reaction was to smile, while the little girl took a step back from the bed, "I didn't mean to wake you up. Honest to God," she said, raising her right hand solemnly.

Andy yawned as she sat up on the bed and stretched, "You didn't wake me up," Andy said as she glanced at the window and was surprised to see it was bright as day already outside.

"Good morning, Maribel. Did you sleep well?" Andy asked, wondering why the little girl was always on glasses.

"Good morning, Andy. Yes, I did. I hope you did too?" Maribel asked, and Andy smiled as she gave her a nod.

"Do you always wear your glasses?" Andy asked and she bobbed her head.

"I can't see without it," Maribel explained, and Andy's brows pulled together.

"You can't see without it?" Andy repeated and she nodded.

"My eyes got injured when my mommy went to heaven," she explained and even though Andy wanted to ask further questions, she decided to save it for Cassidy.

"Daddy said you can stay in bed all day and get some rest," Maribel informed her.

"He did? How sweet of him. I can't believe he's giving me a day off already. Who is going to take care of you then?" Andy asked with a sweet smile, her sarcasm lost on the little girl, but not on Cassidy who could hear her from his bedroom.

"He already took care of me. I've had my bath and I've also had breakfast. Susan is resting today. We left you some breakfast for when you wake up," Maribel explained.

"That's sweet of you. Where is your daddy right now? I need to have a word with him," Andy said as she got out of the bed, not minding the fact that she had just woken up and was yet to freshen up.

"He is in his bedroom," Maribel said and Andy raised a brow.

"Where is his... WHAT?" Andy asked in disbelief when Maribel pointed to an adjoining door in her bedroom.

She had taken note of the door the night before when Susan the housekeeper showed her to her bedroom, but she had been too exhausted to check out what was on the other side of it.

How could there be an adjoining door between her bedroom and Cassidy's? What was the pervert thinking? She mused as she marched to the door.

"You stay in here, alright? I need to have a word with your daddy," Andy said before unlocking the door and walking into the bedroom.

Cassidy who had just stepped out of the shower a short while ago and had been listening to the conversation between Andy and his daughter while putting on his briefs, pursed when he saw the doorknob turn.

"You don't knock?" He asked when she walked in, and he noticed the sudden flush on her face before she quickly turned her back to him so he would dress up.

Andy took a deep breath to calm herself against the sudden rush of desire she felt at the very familiar sight of his body.

"Sorry. I wasn't thinking," she said in a rough voice, and then cleared her throat still not turning to look at him.

"Never mind. It's not like there's anything here you haven't seen before," he said dismissively as he unhurriedly tugged on his trousers and put on his shirt.

"Why did you give me the room next to yours with an adjoining door?" Andy asked, unaware that he was dressed now.

"Because that's the only available room left. Would you prefer to share a room with Mari or Susan?" Cassidy asked as he remained where he stood now staring at her back.

He wondered if she realized that her black nightie was see through and he could see she wasn't wearing anything under it. It was best she remained in that position with her back to him, since he would rather be assaulted by her back view than the sexy view of her boobs.

Her sleep-tousled hair made him think of wild sex with her, and the thought of it alone gave him a hard-on.

How was he going to be able to keep his hands to himself if his mind and body reacted her to this way? He mused as he tucked both hands into his pocket.

As much as he wanted her, he was going to do his best not to touch her no matter how hard it was going to be.

He had really hated the fact that all she thought about their time together was that he had raped her.

Perhaps the first time he had forced her, and that had been because he was drunk, miserable and angry. But the times that followed he had genuinely thought they had a connection.

Cassidy sighed, not wanting to remember any of that. It didn't matter. She hated him. She didn't want him. That was all he needed to remember.

"You could have moved either of them here and..."

"And share an adjoining door with Mari or my housekeeper?" Cassidy cut in.

"I don't see why not. Are you not dressed yet? It's awkward talking to you with my back turned," Andy complained.

"I'm dressed, but for your sake it's best your back remain turned. I don't suppose you realize the kind of suggestive nightdress you wore into my bedroom?" Cassidy said, and Andy looked down at herself, but didn't feel embarrassed about her outfit.

Andy turned around to look at him, "It's not like there's anything here you haven't seen before," Andy said dismissively as she eyed him.

She was surprised to see that he wasn't dressed in the usual pristine white clothes she was accustomed to him wearing. He was dressed now in casual jean trousers and a big sized gray long-sleeved turtle-neck top.

Somehow he looked even younger and more handsome now, and the restless and edgy energy she always could feel in the air around him was not there. He seemed like a different person here. Even his eyes looked mild.

"When you are done staring and want to talk, let me know," Cassidy said as he sat on the padded stool by his dresser, and watched with disguised amusement as color stained her cheeks.

It felt nice to know that despite her exposure and experience as a stripper he still could affect her this way in spite of her hatred of him.

"What changed?" Andy heard herself ask, and he raised a brow.

"I'm not sure I understand what you mean," Cassidy staring at her with interest.

"You seem different. You look different. Your outfit. Your attitude. Why?"

"I'm home," he said simply, not bothering with another explanation.

She wanted to ask him more questions, but remembered that wasn't the reason she had come into his bedroom in the first place.

'Priorities, Andy. Don't become too curious. You shouldn't care about anything else.'

"I can't stay in that bedroom. I don't want a door between our bedrooms," Andy said and Cassidy raised a brow.

"Then do you want to share mine?" He asked with a teasing light in his eyes.

"I have no intention of becoming your whore here!" She snapped at him, and just as easily the smile disappeared from his eyes and he sighed inwardly.

"That was meant to be a joke. I'm sorry," he said, and Andy frowned, taken aback by his apology.

What was this? Who was this man?

"Can you try to be more careful with your language around here? Mari picks up words really fast and I can't have her asking me or anyone else to explain certain words at her age," Cassidy said, and Andy's frown deepened.

"Listen, I don't mind switching rooms with Mari. She is your daughter and I'm sure it won't be bad for you to share interconnecting doors..."

"And if I have company with me?" Cassidy asked, and Andy blinked at him.

"You don't think I might bring in someone from time to time to keep me company? I don't want to expose Mari to all that. That's why her bedroom is on the other end of the hallway," Cassidy said, and Andy raised a brow.

"And I'm supposed to be exposed to that?" She asked in disbelief.

Cassidy wondered what she would say if he told her that he had built the house this way, with her in mind when he made the interconnecting doors. That room was for her. Built and prepared just for her.

"You are an adult. And you're not interested in me. So, I'm sure you won't mind. Better you than Mari or Susan," Cassidy said, even though he had no intention of bringing anyone to into his bedroom.

"I believe you can have the door sealed. I don't think I will sleep comfortably knowing you're on the other side of the door," Andy said and Cassidy sighed.

He had no intention of sealing the door. Even though she hated him right now, he believed with time and patience she would come to see that he really wasn't who she thought he was. He would show her he was genuinely sorry for the past, and that he meant her no harm.

"The door has a lock, Andy. You can keep it locked. A locked door is as good as a wall. You have my word that I won't walk through that door unless you ask me to. And if for any reason I need to go into your bedroom I will make use the front door," Cassidy said patiently, and Andy looked at him hesitantly.

"I believe you wanted to say something else to me before you found out about the door?" Cassidy asked with a slightly raised brow.

All he wanted was for the conversation to end so she would leave. Her nightdress was causing him distress and sitting was the only way he could hide it from her.

Andy nodded, "Maribel. What is wrong with her eyes?" Andy asked the top question on her mind since Maribel sounded like it involved her mother and she was curious to know about it.

Until the previous day she had no idea that Cassidy had a child, and hearing that the child's mother had gone to heaven made her even more curious.

Cassidy shrugged, "Aren't eye defects normal?"

"Defects and normal shouldn't be in the same sentence. And no. She mentioned not seeing without her glasses and something about her mother. If I'm going to take care of her I should know the basics about her," Andy said and Cassidy looked away from her for a moment before looking back.

"We can talk about that some other time," Cassidy said, not wanting to think about it.

"What about my sister. When can I talk to her? I need her to know that I'm okay," Andy said, and Cassidy nodded.

"You can send a text later..."

"A text is not enough!" She snapped at him.

"Only for now, Andy. I promise I will let you talk to her soon," Cassidy said calmly.

"You've made a lot of promises, Cassidy, do you know that? I wonder how you're going to remember them or keep them," Andy said as she eyed him.

"I'm not sure I will be able to keep my promise of not touching you for much longer if you keep staring down at me dressed in that excuse of a dress. You really should go and freshen up and change into something else, Andy," Cassidy warned, and watched, much to his pleasure, as color rose in her cheeks and she involuntarily took a step back.

She cleared her throat, "I'm not done talking to you yet," she said, and Cassidy rose.

"We won't be doing any much talking soon if you don't go and get changed. Let's talk after you're decently covered. DECENTLY, Andy. Don't dress to tease me and expect me not to have a reaction," Cassidy warned, allowing her to see the tent in his pants.

Andy looked away from him, "You bought the clothes not me..."

"For the comfort of your bedroom, not mine. Now leave, Andy. And don't come back into my bedroom unless it's an invitation for me to take you in my bed. I will be in the living room," Cassidy said, and without another word Andy turned around and fled.

Cassidy did not know whether to be amused or disappointed by how quickly she left, but he licked his teeth as he gazed at the door.

There was no way he was sealing that door. It was going to come in very handy in the future, that he was sure of.

He couldn't help it. He was strongly attracted to her and he liked her to the point of feeling possessive towards her. But more than that he felt an overwhelming sense of responsibility towards her.

At first he had thought he felt so because he had taken her innocence but now he knew it was because he had contributed to her hardships. He wanted to make up for it.

His daughter was only an excuse for bringing her here. He wanted her here, not just for Maribel but for himself. They both needed her.

For the time being he was going to focus on making up for his wrongs, even though he knew kidnapping her and forcing her into coming here with him wasn't entirely right either.

It wasn't like he had a choice anyway. She never would have willingly followed him, he reminded himself with a sigh.

Chapter 628 Time Will Tell

Lucy took a deep breath as she parked the car in front of the company, and she turned to Tom, "So, do you plan to go back? You said you weren't done with your business over there yet."

Tom looked at her, knowing that his response was very important to her. Although, his original plan had been to put some distance between them by staying out of the country so that she could miss him and realize how much she wanted to be with him, but with this new development there was no way he could do that. Especially not after knowing how scared and worried she was already. If anything, he needed to be closer to her now so he could reassure her that regardless of the DNA result, she was who he wanted.

As usual Harry had been right when he said he couldn't go back there. It wouldn't be safe for his relationship with Lucy. He didn't want her to be any more bothered by this than she already was.

"Initially, I planned to come for the dinner party and then go back to take care of things, but I don't think so anymore. However, if for any reason I have to, you will have to come with me," Tom said, and although he half-expected Lucy to argue about not leaving her job to travel with him, he was surprised when she gave him a nod.

"If it turns out that she is yours..."

"We will all work out a suitable arrangement. She can come live with me or visit me often," Tom cut in, and Lucy nodded once again.

"Your family. You're going to have to tell your parents about it. Can I be there when you tell them?" Lucy asked, and Tom looked at her incredulously.

"Of course. I expect you to be there with me," Tom said, and Lucy drew in a deep breath.

"Alright. Let's get back to work. It's good we are closing by noon today. I have to stop over at yours to pick up my dress before leaving," Lucy said, and Tom glanced at his wristwatch.

"Let me know when you're ready to leave and I will take you home," Tom said as he leaned forward and kissed her softly.

"Alright. See you later. I love you," Lucy said as they both got out of the car.

"I love you more," Tom said as he took her hand and they walked into the building together.

"You haven't had breakfast yet, have you?" Tom asked as he glanced at his wristwatch, and Lucy shook her head.

"It can wait until noon," Lucy said, and Tom eyed her with disapproval.

"I will ask Samantha to prepare something for us. Let's eat together at home," Tom suggested as they got into the elevator.

After Lucy got off on her floor, Tom rode the elevator to his floor and instead of going into his office, he went to Harry's.

Without knocking, he opened the door and Harry grinned when he saw him, "I can see it in your eyes. You missed me," Harry joked, and Tom chuckled.

"Of course, I did!" Tom said as he took the seat opposite Harry.

"I suppose the conversation went well with Lucy?" Harry asked hopefully.

"I suppose I owe you for that?" Tom asked, and Harry shook his head.

"No, you don't. She seemed really upset when I ran into her, so I just had to try to calm her. And when she asked if I knew about Kimberly, I couldn't lie to her," Harry explained.

"What exactly did you say to her?" Tom asked curiously.

"Nothing much. I told her this was about you, not her. And if she loved you, she would prove it by showing her support," Harry said reasonably and Tom sighed.

"We took the DNA samples to the lab," Tom said, and Harry nodded thoughtfully.

"That's good. So, what's the plan? I think we should plan towards her being your child. If she isn't, there's nothing to be done about it other than rule it as Kimberly's mistake. But if she is, there's so much you need to do," Harry said and Tom rubbed his eyes.

"Yeah. I know. I don't think I might be able to take care of the business over there as planned," Tom said, and Harry nodded in agreement.

"I understand. You don't have to worry about it. I will take care of it," Harry assured him.

"Let's just find someone else to go over there. Mr. Moore assured me he will handle the government. All that is left is restructuring of the management. We need to find someone we can trust to handle it," Tom said and Harry thought about it for a moment before giving him a nod.

"I will look into it. You look exhausted," Harry observed.

"You would too, if you suddenly found out you might be a father. Have you been able to find anything on Kimberly?" Tom asked, and Harry shook his head.

"I'm afraid she might be telling the truth. According to the guy I asked to look into her, her last relationship ended in a devastating heartbreak four years ago, that was a couple of weeks before the hotel was opened. He jilted her on their wedding day. And since then she hasn't been in any serious relationship. It's more like she swore off love," Harry said, and Tom sighed.

"She did mention that she was in a bad state emotionally when we met," Tom said as he pinched his nose.

"I saw the pictures of the little girl. She does look like you in a way," Harry said, and Tom nodded.

"I thought so too when I first saw her picture. This is all so messed up, Harry," Tom said, and Harry smiled.

"Yeah, I know. But it could have been worse," Harry said, and Tom raised a brow.

"How can it possibly get any worse?"

Harry chuckled, "She could have given birth to twins. Or five different women could have shown up with kids for you," Harry said, and Tom glared at him.

"How can you joke right now?" Tom asked irritably.

"I suppose being a father has made you lose your sense of humor," Harry said with a chuckle.

"I'm glad to know you're enjoying my misery," Tom said, and Harry smiled.

"I have to enjoy it now. Knowing you, I'm very positive that the moment the result confirms our suspicion and you get over this phase, you're going to torment me with the fact that you're a father. I can as well torment you now," Harry said, and Tom sighed.

"Do you really think Lucy will stay?" Tom asked, and Harry gave him a nod.

"You need to trust her, Tom. You know what she told me earlier? She said she was only thinking of herself and maybe she was more selfish than she realized. Lucy might be a bit slow when it comes to making up her mind on things, but her heart is in the right place. She cares about you and is very scared to lose you," Harry said, and Tom wiped hand over his face.

"Thanks."

"I heard about your visit to Director Anderson's office," Harry said with an amused smile.

"Already?" Tom asked with a slightly raised brow and Harry chuckled.

"I have ears and eyes all over place. It must be fun to be you. So many drama going on in your life at the same time," Harry said, and Tom sighed.

"I will be happy to share some of the drama with you..."

"No, thanks. If I wanted any drama I wouldn't have waited this long to have my first girlfriend," Harry said dryly.

"What has been going on? Anything I should know about? What's up with the arrangement for the dinner party? Is there something I can do?" Tom asked, changing the subject.

Harry quickly brought him up to speed on all the arrangement that had been made and told him all he needed to know, "...And you should know that Rebekah Miller made an attempt on Jade's life yesterday," Harry said, making Tom's heart skip a beat.

"What? Is Jade alright? Did anything happen to her?" Tom asked as he rose immediately.

"She is fine. We were a step ahead," Harry said, and explained all that had happened.

"I'm beginning to think sending her to jail is too good for her," Tom said with a frown.

"Jade is involved," Harry reminded Tom, in case he had forgotten that his sister was a lawyer.

"I don't know what I would do without you," Tom said and Harry smiled.

"Let's hope you never get to find out," Harry said as he rose too.

"Yeah. Yeah. I know. I didn't say we should do anything now, did I?" Tom asked with a grin and Harry chuckled.

"By the way, Jade told me about Bryan and Sonia expecting a baby," Harry said, and Tom groaned.

"I'm yet to give Bryan a call to congratulate them," Tom complained.

"I'm sure you can do that in person now that you're back," Harry said, and Tom nodded.

"Are you sure there's nothing I can do around here?" Tom asked, and Harry shook his head.

"Everything is in place. You look dead on your feet, Tom. Go get some rest. It's going to be a busy night," Harry reminded him.

"Are you putting Eric to use?" Tom asked, and Harry smiled.

"How else do you think I managed to get everything done?" He asked, and Tom rose.

"I don't know what I would do without you," Tom said and Harry smiled.

"Let's hope you never get to find out," Harry said as he rose too.

"If you need me, I will be in my office until noon," Tom said as he headed for the door.

"I won't be needing you. Go home and get some rest," Harry said with a dismissive wave as he sat down and returned his attention to his laptop.

Away from there, in Lucy's office, she sat behind her desk with her laptop in front of her as she thought about the events of the morning.

No matter how much she tried to focus on the designs in front of her, her thoughts kept drifting to it.

After a moment's hesitation, she let her curiosity win over her despite the fact that she had work to do. There was no point pretending to work when her mind obviously wasn't in it. She would only end up doing a clumsy job.

Work could wait, Lucy decided as she typed the name 'Kimberly Moore' onto her laptop's search engine, and almost immediately her profile came up.

If Sonia was here, she would probably say she was acting like a crazy ex stalking her man's present girlfriend, Lucy thought in amusement as she slowly looked through Kimberly's profile, and read most of the articles she could find on Kimberly online.

She soon confirmed that Harry was right when he said Kimberly was from a solid background. She seemed pretty loaded herself. So, why would someone like her lie about such a thing? Lucy mused as she scrolled through Kimberly's photos.

She easily recognized her as the lady who had been in the club picture which Cora had shown her.

Kimberly was a beauty. She looked so classy and stylish that Lucy felt tiny pangs of jealousy.

When Lucy saw a link to Kimberly's instagram handle, she clicked on it, and her breath caught when the first picture her eyes fell on was a photo of Dawn.

Lucy's gaze was transfixed on the photo as she stared back at the adorable kid who she now believed was unmistakably Tom's.

The resemblance was obviously there. But God, the little girl was such a beauty to behold!

Lucy found herself smiling as she looked at more pictures of Kimberly and Dawn rocking similar outfits with Dawn trying to replicate her mother's postures.

her interview with Alicia. It was the part where Sonia and her were being interviewed.

She scrolled past Kimberly's personal photos in search of more pictures of Dawn, and she mistakenly liked one of the pictures which she quickly unliked.

She scrolled further down, and froze. Her brows pulled together in a frown when she saw a clip of her interview with Alicia. It was the part where Sonia and her were being interviewed.

[I don't think anyone deserves to have their personal business out in public in this manner. It is very annoying that both friends had to relive such painful memories this way simply because someone stupid decided to cause trouble. I hope they both heal.]

Lucy noted that it had been posted on the same day of the interview. She took a deep breath and let it out slowly, not knowing what to make of Kimberly Moore.

She seemed like a nice person, but she had thought the same of Anita, had she not?

Was Kimberly really a nice person? Was she going to cause any problems for them? Lucy mused as she continued her search for pictures of Dawn.

Lucy soon discovered that Dawn had her own Instagram page, so she switched from Kimberly's account to Dawn's, but frowned when she realized the account was on private, and she needed to follow the account before she could view the page.

Without thinking, Lucy let her curiosity get the best of her once again, and she clicked on the follow button.

She kept refreshing the page impatiently as she waited for her request to be accepted so that she could get access to Dawn's account, but to her surprise an Instagram message notification came up on her screen.

Her heart skipped a beat when she saw that the message was from Kimberly Moore, and she hesitantly clicked on it.

[Hello! I guess your boyfriend must have told you about Dawn. Hi, I'm Kimberly!]

Lucy's brows pulled together as she looked at the message, wondering whether or not she should respond. Had Kimberly been monitoring the account?

It was better for her to talk with Kimberly now, and determine whether she was friend or foe.

[Hello! I'm Lucy. I was sort of curious. I'm sorry if it offends you.] Lucy sent back, her heart beating fast as she waited for Kimberly's response.

Kimberly sent a laughing emoji [You don't have to apologize. It's completely normal. I have to say I'm genuinely surprised and impressed that he told you about it so soon. I asked my social media managers to let me know if or when you checked out our handles. I was going to reach out to you, but I thought it might be considered rude, so I decided to wait until you did so first. I hope you don't mind?]

Lucy pressed her lips together as she read Kimberly's message. What was Tom going to think if he found out she was chatting with Kimberly? She mused.

[It shouldn't be a problem. Your daughter is very pretty.] Lucy texted back.

[Thanks. I wanted to reach out to you because I figured I owe you an apology. I know the news must have upset you. If I could raise Dawn without letting him know, I would. But I thought it wouldn't be right for him not to know.]

Despite the fact that she was touched by Kimberly's message, Lucy frowned, still not sure what Kimberly wanted.

Perhaps it was because of her dealing with Anita, she was very wary of people now. Especially females. Most especially females involved with Tom.

[I don't think you owe me an apology. And I don't think you were wrong to inform him about it, if truly she is his daughter.] Lucy texted back.

[She is his daughter.]

[The paternity test will tell. I suppose you would want him to get married to you since you have his kid?] Lucy asked the question on her mind.

To her surprise, Kimberly sent a rolling eyes emoji, [Is that what you want me to do? I don't think so. The man is yours. The only reason I'm having this conversation with you is because I don't want you to misunderstand my intentions like you are already doing. I want nothing from your man. You might become my daughter's stepmom if he accepts his child, and I don't think we should be on bad terms. What do you think?]

Lucy took a deep breath, [I think time will tell.]

Chapter 629 Not Your Business

Alone in her bedroom after Jamal left to Aaron in the living room, Candace dressed up in some of the new outfits her and Jade had bought the other day.

A frown etched her brow as she worried about Andy. She had dreamt about Andy. In her dream Andy was being forced to marry Cassidy against her will and she had been weeping profusely.

Was that what was going on with Andy? Was that why Cassidy abducted her? To marry her? It did not make sense.

She wished there was a way she could reach out to her and find out for certain if she was fine.

"Where is Jamal?" Candace asked as she walked into the living room after she was dressed.

"He is in my bedroom practicing his spellings," Aaron said as he looked up from the television to Candace and then grinned.

"You look good," he said, and Candace smiled.

"Thanks. I should check on him before I leave," Candace said, wanting to leave but Aaron stopped her.

"I see you are still avoiding me," Aaron observed.

"Avoiding you? Why will I do that?" Candace asked innocently even though they both knew she had been doing her best to not be alone with him since Matt's visit.

"Since Jamal is not here to save you right now, why don't we talk?" Aaron offered, and Candace raised a brow, pretending not to know what he was saying.

"About what?"

"About the handsome visitor who visited yesterday," Aaron said, and she rolled her eyes.

"Matt? What about him?" She asked innocently.

"Nothing. He seems like a decent guy," Aaron said simply.

"So, you said yesterday. Why are you repeating yourself?" Candace asked, and Aaron grinned.

"He cares about you. He's really into you. And judging by your attitude yesterday, I think you are into him too," Aaron said, and she raised a brow.

"What attitude?"

"Do you really want me to spell it out? All I want to know is why you don't want to give him a chance," Aaron asked, and Candace glanced at her wristwatch before sitting down.

The time was past ten. Jade had asked her to come over to the house before noon, and to dress in her corporate clothes because they were going for a meeting together. She planned to meet up with Matt after her business with Jade.

Thinking about Matt, he had sent her a text early that morning, reminding her of their meeting, and a short while later had sent her an address.

Candace sighed as she looked at Aaron, reminding herself that he was her father and wasn't just trying to be nosy. He was just being her father and looking out for her, the way Desmond had done for Jade.

She remembered the conversation she had overheard between Desmond and Jade some time ago outside Jade's bedroom.

Even though she still wasn't used to all of this yet, she shrugged, "I need to figure out my life and put certain things in order. A relationship isn't priority for now," Candace said honestly, and Aaron smiled.

"So, it's not because you don't like him then? You just need time?" Aaron asked, and Candace nodded.

"Yeah. I need to sort out my life. A lot has happened in a short time and I still feel overwhelmed by it all."

"I think that's a valid reason," Aaron said, surprising Candace who had expected him to argue that she could do both simultaneously.

"So you support my decision?" She asked suspiciously, and Aaron smiled.

"I don't see why not? You are an adult. You raised Jamal all by yourself. I trust you to know what is good for you and what you need at this time of your life. I only wanted to be certain you were not denying your feelings for him," Aaron said, and Candace sighed.

"Was I that obvious?" Candace asked, and Aaron chuckled.

"You never even looked at his face the whole time. And don't get me started on your appearance when you walked in. Your eyes were sparkling and your lips looked red and swollen. Your hair looked like someone's fingers had ran through them..."

"Alright. That's enough," Candace cut in feeling embarrassed and Aaron chuckled.

"Well, I hope you can explain that to him and you both are able to work something out. It would be a shame to waste all that passion," Aaron said as Candace rose.

"I need to leave now. I will check in on Jamal quickly," Candace said as she walked away, leaving Aaron who was still grinning.

A short while later, Candace was seated in one of Harry's cars. Harry had insisted that she not take a cab anymore and use one of his cars instead since she knew how to drive.

It all felt different. She felt like a different person seated behind the wheels of such an expensive car and dressed in such expensive and fashionable corporate clothes.

She smiled at her reflection in the mirror surprised by how happy she looked. She wondered what Andy would think if she were to see her this way.

Once she arrived at Tom's house, she headed for the Den where she could hear the voice of the elders to say hello to them.

Evelyn was the first to see her, "Hello, Candace! I was just telling Janet that I miss Jamal. Did you bring him along with you?" Evelyn asked hopefully.

"No, I didn't. Aaron insisted he was doing well and wanted the nurse to leave. So, Jamal is keeping him company," Candace said apologetically.

"How are you doing? You look exceptionally beautiful today," Janet said with a pleasant smile.

"You look really smashing in that outfit," Andrew said, and Desmond nodded in agreement.

"You took the words right out of my mouth," Desmond said and Candace flashed them all a smile.

"Thank you. I'm here to see Jade. I stopped by to say hello to you before going upstairs," Candace said, and even though Janet looked like she still had something to say, she nodded.

"Why don't I walk you upstairs? It's been a long while since I walked beside a beautiful young lady," Desmond said as he rose earning him a playful glare from Evelyn, while Candace took the arm he offered.

"I've been meaning to have a moment with you for some time now," Desmond said as they approached the stairs.

Although he had forgotten about his desire to speak with her until himself and Evelyn were speaking with Jade last night and her name came up in their discussion.

"Really? What for?" Candace asked, genuinely surprised.

"Nothing much. I just like to catch up with all my girls from time to time," Desmond said, and Candace turned to him with an amused smile.

"I'm one of your girls?" She asked, and Desmond scowled as he stopped walking.

"You don't think you are?" He asked, and she laughed softly.

"I don't know. I'm only hearing it for the first time. Who are the others?" Candace asked curiously.

"Jade, Lucy, and Sonia," he said easily and Candace grinned, despite herself. She didn't know why she felt amused and relaxed chatting with him.

He was like another version of Aaron. She thought without the trauma Aaron had experienced, he would have been just like Desmond.

"I see," Candace murmured.

"So now that you know, how about you tell me how you have been?" Desmond asked, and Candace shrugged.

"I'm fine, as you can see," Candace said, and Desmond smiled.

"And how are you enjoying your family? Do you feel at home? Or do you feel like an outsider watching from the inside?" Desmond asked, and Candace's brows pulled together.

"I do feel at home," she said, wondering why he was asking her such a question.

"That's good," Desmond said with a nod and they resumed walking once again.

Even though he wanted her to open up to him, he knew it was too soon. She was nothing like Sonia and Lucy. Sonia and Lucy were his boys' girlfriends so talking to them had been much like talking to Jade.

Someone like Candace would find it odd that he was interested in talking with her. He could only engage her little at a time, and not push. He first needed to be friends with her and make her comfortable with the idea of chatting with him.

"Hey, Candace!" Sonia who just walked out of her bedroom, greeted cheerfully when she sighted them.

"I guess this is where we part ways," Desmond said with a cheerful smile as he let go of Candace's arm.

"Have fun, ladies," Desmond said as he stopped to kiss Sonia's cheeks before going into his bedroom, while Candace watched him with a mixture of amusement and curiosity.

"Are you very close to him?" Candace asked Sonia in a quiet voice.

"Desmond? I would say he is close to everyone. Why?" Sonia asked, and Candace shrugged.

"I don't know. He was asking me funny questions and said something about you and Lucy being his girls," Candace said, and Sonia laughed softly.

"He was probably just trying to find out if you needed to talk. If you ever need someone to talk to, you should talk to him. He's a great listener," Sonia said before taking a second look at Candace.

"I see. I will keep that in mind," Candace said as she eyed Sonia who was busy assessing her.

"What?" Candace asked, feeling uncomfortable by Sonia's silence.

"Wow! You look gorgeous," Sonia said, and Candace relaxed.

"Thanks. You all don't hold back your compliments, do you?" She asked with a small smile, and Sonia shook her head.

"Never," Sonia said and then tapped her forefinger on her lips.

"Is there a way I can convince you to tell me about your movement with Matt yesterday?" Sonia asked, and Candace shook her head.

"Nope. Not your business. I'm late for my appointment," Candace said, and without waiting to hear Sonia's protest, she hurried down the hallway to Jade's bedroom.

"That's not fair! My baby wants to know," Sonia called back making Candace giggle.

"I've been pregnant too, remember? I doubt your baby has a nose yet for nosiness. Your baby doesn't care about my personal business," Candace called back as she stopped in front of Jade's door.

Jade opened the door before Candace could knock, "I thought I heard your voice," Jade said as she returned to her bed, while Candace eyed her disheveled appearance.

"Why are you not ready yet? I thought you said we were going somewhere?" Candace asked as she sat on the padded stool by the dressing table.

"I've been busy. And we still have some time. I don't suppose Harry mentioned that I was attacked yesterday?" Jade asked, and Candace stiffened.

"Who attacked you? Is it the cartel?" She asked, her eyes wide with alarm as she rose.

"No. God, no. Not them. It was Rebekah Miller. She sent someone after me," Jade explained and rushed to give Candace the details.

"That's crazy," Candace with a frown.

"Yeah. So I've been busy all morning thinking of every possible way to fuck her up. We are having lunch with her daughter. Harry insisted I take you along with me," Jade said, and Candace raised a brow.

"I guess it's better to lose the girlfriend and annoying twin than to lose just the girlfriend?" She asked, and Jade looked at her for a moment before laughing out loud.

"Heaven knows I don't understand your sense of humor. I'm going to pop into the shower and get ready. You can read up all I jotted down. That should give you some idea about what we might be discussing during lunch," Jade said before taking off her pajamas and walking into the bathroom.

By the time Jade was done getting ready, it was almost 1 p.m. and Candace had finished reading through the notes on the journal.

"You're not going to tell her about their different paternities, are you?" Candace asked with a frown as she eyed the journal.

"If I have to...."

"I don't think you should do that. It's not your place to tell her the man she grew up loving as her father wasn't really her father," Candace said, not wanting to imagine how devastated Lisa would be to find out he wasn't her biological father.

As far as Candace was concerned, it didn't matter whether or not he was their biological father. It was obvious he had loved them all in spite of knowing they weren't his children. Biology didn't matter. Sara had taught her that much.

"If you were in her shoes wouldn't you want to know?" Jade asked, and Candace shook her head.

"As far as he loved me and treated me right, I wouldn't want to ever know. The knowledge would hurt me and I would always feel sorry," Candace said, and Jade sighed.

"Alright. I won't mention that. Let's go," Jade said as she headed for the door and Candace followed her.

"I will be driving behind you," Candace informed her, and Jade turned to look at her with a grin.

"I see you are driving now. I will join you in your car then. No need to take separate cars..."

"How will you get back? I have an appointment with a friend..."

"You don't have to worry about that. I will take a cab," Jade assured her.

As they descended the stairs, the front door opened and Tom walked in with Lucy.

"Tommy!" Jade called excitedly as she went to embrace him, "You look tired," she said with a concerned frown.

"I am tired," Tom said as he glanced at Candace who was smiling at something Lucy was saying.

"He asked if you were breaking up with Tom," Candace said, and Lucy giggled.

"Who asked that?" Tom asked with a frown.

"Who else but Jamal? I'm going on a date with him this weekend," Lucy explained, and Tom shook his head.

"Well, tell him to get ready to go out with me after his date with Lucy. Seeing how gorgeous you both look, I guess you're going out?" Tom asked, and they both nodded.

"We have a lunch date with Anita's sister. Lisa Steel," Jade said, and Tom raised a brow.

"Did she call for the meeting or you did?"

"She did. She wants to discuss something about her father's death. By the way I found out the sisters don't share the same paternity," Jade said, and Tom exchanged a look with Lucy.

"Are the sisters aware?" Lucy asked, and Jade shook her head.

"I don't think they are aware. Candace is of the opinion I don't tell Lisa about it," Jade said, and Lucy nodded in agreement.

"It's not your place to tell them that," Lucy said, and Candace smiled at her.

"How did you find out about their paternity?" Tom asked and Jade shook her head as she glanced at her wristwatch.

"You're not traveling anytime soon, are you? Why don't I tell you all about it when I get back? I don't want to be late," Jade said, and Tom nodded as he watched Jade and Candace head for the door.

Lucy sighed, "I guess this is why you shouldn't throw stones when you live in a glass house. Rebekah's secrets would have remained a secret if she didn't interfere with us."

"Or maybe not. We have nothing to do with all that is going on with them right now. We haven't even done anything yet. I guess it's just time for Karma to catch up with her," Tom countered.

Chapter 630 There Is Hope

"Let's get something to eat before going upstairs," Tom suggested as he led Lucy towards the kitchen.

They both turned when Sonia squealed with a mouth full of corn dog as she descended the stairs.

"Lucy!" She cried excitedly as she ran to embrace Lucy with an empty plate in hand.

Lucy giggled as she hugged her, "Why do you seem so excited?" Lucy asked as Sonia pulled away as she quickly swallowed.

"I'm happy to see you, of course. And you too, Tom. Welcome back even if it's your house," Sonia said, and Tom smiled at her as he embraced her.

"Congratulations," Tom said, and Sonia pressed her lips together with a contrite look on her face.

"I should thank you for making Lucy insist I speak to Bryan," Sonia said, and Tom waved it off.

"That's nothing. I'm glad it worked out. Where is everyone else?" Tom asked, and Sonia pointed to the Den.

"Both your parents are seeing a movie. Jade just went out with Candace, you must have seen them on your way in. Bryan is upstairs getting ready for us to go house hunting," Sonia said, and Lucy raised a brow.

"House hunting?" Lucy and Tom asked in unison.

"Yeah. We can't live here forever, can we? Not with the baby coming. Lu, lets catch up later. I need to quickly drop this plate in the kitchen and go get dressed," Sonia said, and Lucy plucked the plate from her hands.

"I will help you," Lucy offered, and Sonia blew her a kiss as she hurried away, leaving them.

"It seems like everyone is going out," Tom said as he took the plate from Lucy and pulled her along with him.

"Shouldn't we say hello to them first?" Lucy asked as they walked past the Den.

"They're busy with their movie. We can do so before going upstairs," Tom said, and Lucy nodded.

She wasn't exactly very keen on seeing them right now anyway.

"Welcome home, Tom! You're right on time. You can sit down while I serve you," Samantha said, and both Lucy and Tom sat by the kitchen Island while Samantha moved around quickly to serve them.

"Thanks for the meals you sent over, Samantha. I enjoyed them," Lucy said, and Samantha smiled at her.

"Although I was instructed to do so, but thank you for thanking me," Samantha said as she set their meal in front of them.

"This looks delicious. Thank you," Tom said as he gazed at the plate of steak and baked potato.

"Enjoy your meal," Samantha said as she excused them.

"This was waiting on my desk when I returned to the office," Lucy said as she opened her handbag and took out a folded sheet of paper.

Tom opened it and saw the name written and other details written on it, "I guess she likes her job," Tom said referring to Cora who had submitted the friend's name he asked her to.

"What are you going to do with it?" Lucy asked curiously as she picked up her cutlery to cut her steak into smaller pieces.

Tom said nothing as he focused on cutting his steak quickly and then swapped their plates, "I will get in contact with the management of the club. She is a staff there so they should deal with her actions," Tom said and watched as Lucy visibly relaxed.

She had been worried he was going to take it up personally. It bothered her in a way that he seemed to always go the extra mile to punish people.

They both ate in silence, while Lucy contemplated whether or not she should tell him about her conversation with Kimberly.

Before she could make up her mind, Bryan walked into the kitchen, "There you are! For a moment I thought Sonia was seeing things. It's good to see you," Bryan greeted happily and Tom grinned.

"How is the expectant father doing today?" Tom asked, and Bryan squared his shoulder proudly.

"Great! I feel really great, Tom. I can't wait," Bryan said, and then glanced at his wall-clock.

"Sonia said you're house hunting?" Tom asked and Bryan nodded.

"Yes. Sonia prefers to live in Ludus since Lucy is here and I might not always be around. I'm in a hurry to meet up with the realtor right now. Let's catch up when I get back. Just wanted to say hello to you before leaving. Hi, Lucy!" Bryan remembered to call to Lucy as he hurried away from the kitchen.

"Hi! Bye!" Lucy called back making Tom smile in amusement.

After they were done with their lunch, they stopped by the Den to say hello to their parents.

"Lucy! I can't believe Tom left and you disappeared just like that. I missed you, you know?" Evelyn said as she went to embrace Lucy.

"I'm sorry. I should have called or said something," Lucy said apologetically.

"It's fine. Can we speak privately for a moment?" Evelyn asked, and Tom who was talking to his dad, shot his mother a warning look.

"I believe I owe you an apology. Let's speak privately," Evelyn insisted, ignoring Tom, as she took Lucy's hand and led her away.

"I will meet you upstairs," Lucy told Tom as she followed Evelyn.

Lucy tried not to frown as Evelyn led her outside to the patio where they had celebrated Desmond's birthday and they both sat on a bench.

If it was just an apology why did they have to sit? It shouldn't take more than a minute, should it? Lucy mused.

"How have you been?" Evelyn asked with a friendly smile.

"I've been good. And you?" Lucy asked, and Evelyn nodded.

"I'm alright. I wanted to speak with you privately for two reasons. First, I want to apologize. I wasn't snooping through your stuff. I saw the bag there and assumed it had fallen or something. I wanted to help you set it right, but then I saw the test kit and I got carried away with my excitement after I saw it. I'm sorry," Evelyn said, and Lucy sighed.

"It's fine. I'm glad the misunderstanding has been resolved," Lucy said with a small smile, and Evelyn nodded.

Neither of them said a word for some time and just when Lucy was becoming impatient and was about to ask her what else she wanted to say, Evelyn spoke.

"The first time I met you, I told you I really liked you. Do you remember?" Evelyn asked, and Lucy smiled when she remembered their first meeting

"Yes."

"Some how reminded me of my younger self. And I was surprised when Desmond told me you reminded him of me when I was younger," Evelyn said, and Lucy smiled when she remembered her heartfelt conversation with him and how he had told her the same thing

"I apologize in advance for what I'm about to say. I understand you might not appreciate it," Evelyn said, and Lucy frowned.

"So, why say it?" She asked, and Evelyn smiled.

"Because it's my nature to not be silent when I have something to say. Please bear with me," Evelyn said, and Lucy shifted uncomfortably, suspecting that she was going to talk about the marriage issue as well.

"You see, I know my kids. Tom, Bryan, and Jade. I know what their desires and passions are. I've always let them express themselves and be themselves. I love them and I always put their happiness above mine," Evelyn said, and drew a deep breath.

"Once when they were teenagers, I asked them what they wanted to be. Bryan said he wanted to be a very famous celebrity. That was expected since he was already pursuing his career as an actor from a young age. Jade being the youngest wasn't quite certain then. She said she wanted to be a superhero and fight bad people. She always hated injustice so I wasn't surprised she chose to study law. Do you want to know what Tom said?" Evelyn asked, and Lucy gave her a nod.

"He said he wanted to be very wealthy. But most importantly he wanted to be a great father and loving husband like his father," Evelyn said, and Lucy sighed deeply.

"Do you know how shocked I was during the dinner with his grandfather? I was taken aback to hear Tom whose dream had been to be a loving husband and father, suddenly regard marriage so dismissively. I couldn't sleep that night. I thought long and hard about it. And then the next day I saw the pregnancy test strip. I had to take it to him because I needed to understand what was going on," Evelyn explained, and this time Lucy nodded in understanding.

"After deliberating on everything, I figured you're the one who is against the idea of marriage, and not Tom. Am I right?" Evelyn asked, and Lucy nodded reluctantly.

"I'm not talking to you about this to convince you to change your mind. So, don't misunderstand me. I'm not asking you to end things with Tom either..."

"Why not? If you believe getting married and having a family is his dream, and it is what will make him happy, shouldn't you ask me to either change my mind or let him go?" Lucy asked with a frown, and Evelyn smiled.

"And what if you are what makes him happy? What's the point of getting married to someone else and having a family with someone else if he isn't with the person that makes him happy?" Evelyn asked as she reached out to touch Lucy's hair lovingly.

"I'm a very partial mother, Lucy. I love my kids endlessly. I would love Tom to have all the happiness he deserves with you. I can set my desires aside for Tom's happiness. I see you as my daughter-in-law already. Although the wedding documents make things sort of official, but I don't think it is the documents that determines our relationship. I think it's the heart," Evelyn admitted with a small smile as she took Lucy's hands in her own.

"You know, I've been in your shoes before. As a matter of fact it took Desmond four years to convince me to be with him. I don't know. Maybe what you need is time, or maybe you really never want to get married, I can't tell. But whatever it is, I just wanted to let you know that as long as Tom doesn't mind, I won't mind either. And I know the rest of the family wouldn't too. So, you don't have

to worry about us. That is, if you were worried. I thought you might be after that conversation during dinner with their grandfather. All I want is for Tom to be happy. And you too," Evelyn said, and Lucy's brows pulled together.

That was it? That was what she wanted to talk to her about? "Is that it?" Lucy asked before she could stop herself.

Evelyn nodded, "Yes. That's what I wanted to say to you. We can go back inside," Evelyn suggested as she rose.

"Can I ask you a question?" Lucy asked, and Evelyn sat back down.

"Sure."

"What was the reason you didn't want to get married and why did you change your mind about getting married?" Lucy asked, and Evelyn heaved a deep sigh.

"I was raised in a foster home. My mother was an alcoholic and my father was worst. I lost my kid sister because of them, and swore never to get married or have kids. I didn't want to turn out like my mother and I was scared to marry a man like my father. I didn't want to have kids I might not be able to protect," Evelyn said, not wanting to go into the details of her dysfunctional family.

"So, why did you change your mind?"

"Hmm. My roommate back then asked me some questions that made me rethink my choices. Her fiancé had just been diagnosed with a terminal disease then, and it was a tough time for her. She was upset and took it out on me once when I complained about Desmond not calling me as often as I expected him to," Evelyn said with a nostalgic smile.

"What did she say to you?" Lucy asked with interest.

"If you love him so damned much why not marry him and stop whining to me all the time? Some of us have real challenges, not self-made challenges! Or do you think he's going to live forever pining away for you? Would it take losing him for you to realize you want him in your life?" Evelyn said and then laughed softly.

"It's funny that I still remember her words, isn't it? After she said that she broke down in tears and then I consoled her. When she was calm she apologized to me. And then she asked me, 'Would you rather lose Desmond than marry him? If he was dying like Max, and getting married to him would save him, would you rather he dies than marry him? Does the benefit of marrying him not outweigh the risks? What harm can come from marrying him?' those were the questions she asked, and it took me almost a week to answer them," Evelyn said with a wide smile.

"What was the answer?"

"I figured I would rather marry him than lose him because I was too scared to give us a try. I like to believe my love for Desmond outweighed my fears. But it wasn't easy. When has love ever been easy? Love itself is a gamble. Giving your heart to someone and trusting them not to break it. Loving someone and trusting they won't die on you. Getting over my fears was a struggle, but Desmond was right there with me in the struggle, and it made it worth it. I don't know if that makes sense," Evelyn said, and Lucy shrugged.

"Can I ask why you don't want to get married?" Evelyn asked, and Lucy sighed.

"I've always been more career driven. I don't know. Maybe I'm scared of not having control over my life. I'm still trying to figure it out why I've never really fantasized about marriage. I don't know," Lucy said, and Evelyn smiled.

"I'm relieved to know you don't know why," Evelyn said as she squeezed Lucy's hand softly.

"Why?" Lucy asked with a frown.

"It means there is hope. If you had a strong conviction or reason against it, then changing your mind would be very difficult or impossible. On the other hand, I believe that if you don't know the reason yet, it means you probably haven't really thought about it. If it is something you didn't think about deeply and haven't really made up your mind on, then you can easily change your mind by yourself," Evelyn explained.

"I don't understand," Lucy said with a confused frown.

"For instance you are invited to an event. Let's say you have a cogent reason why you can't go. Could be because you have to be somewhere at the time, or you are ill. When you say you can't attend, it's because you very well know why you can't make it. But if you simply turn down the invitation without a reason just because you don't feel like, then there is every possibility that you can still be convinced or you can even change your mind in the last minute. Does that make sense?" Evelyn asked and Lucy nodded thoughtfully.

"Yes."

"Good. Let's go in now," Evelyn said as she rose and Lucy did the same.