

Wild Night 691

Chapter 691 He Is Dead

"How do you feel?" Tom asked Lucy as they had lunch together in his office after the show since they had skipped breakfast because they had been too focused on the live show.

"Great! I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulder, and I can finally breathe now," Lucy admitted, and Tom nodded.

He understood that feeling. He was feeling very much relieved himself, too, now that Rebekah Miller and her family had been taken care of.

"That's good," Tom said and picked up his phone when it started ringing.

"It's Eric," Tom informed Lucy as he received the call.

"Mr. Hank, you're a genius! My show rating is at an all-time high. I have never had so many views on our YouTube Channel or social media platform in such a short time! Mr. Hank, I am forever in your debt for this!" Eric announced excitedly, and Tom smiled.

"Well, it was a win-win for us both. I'm glad you trusted us and let us use your platform. The show was a success," Tom said, and Eric chuckled.

"Success? It was a massive success," Eric announced, and this time, Tom chuckled because of how excited Eric seemed despite how dramatic the show was.

"Anyway, I'm calling to remind you that you promised to be a guest on my show," Eric said after they were done talking about the show.

"I thought you'd be willing to let that go seeing how your show benefited from doing this," Tom said in amusement.

"You thought I would let go of an opportunity to have an exclusive interview with you? No way!" Eric exclaimed, and Tom chuckled.

"Well, we can arrange for a convenient time to do that. But I can assure you that you wouldn't find anything interesting on me. It won't increase your rating."

"Let me be the judge of that. Let me know when next you have someone interesting you need me to bring on the show," Eric said, and Tom chuckled before hanging up.

Perhaps he would take him up on that offer someday. Who knew?

"Why are you frowning?" Tom asked when he noticed the crease on Lucy's brows as she raised her phone to her ear like she was making a phone call.

"It just occurred to me that I haven't heard from Sonia by now. It's weird because I know she would have called once the show was over to share her excitement. And I didn't see her among the audience on the show with Jade and Candace either. She said she was going to join them. I'm trying to reach her now, and she is not taking her call," Lucy explained, and Tom dialed Bryan's line and placed the call on speaker.

"Don't worry. I will give Bryan a call and find out from him. She is probably busy," Tom said as they waited for Bryan to receive his call.

"Is everything okay? How is Sonia?" Tom asked the moment the call connected, and Lucy looked at Tom expectantly as she waited to know what the problem was.

"She woke up feeling ill, so I had to take her to the hospital to see a doctor. We got back a short while ago, and she is sleeping now," Bryan explained, and Lucy frowned.

"But she was okay last night. What could be wrong?" Lucy murmured.

"You should speak to Lucy," Tom said as he passed the phone to Lucy, who looked even more worried after hearing that Sonia was ill.

"Hello, Bryan! What did the doctor say the problem was? Is she okay? Is the baby fine?" Lucy asked with concern.

"The doctor said they're both fine, and there is no need for alarm. She was feeling very nauseous and weak, so I rushed her to the hospital since I didn't know what to do," Bryan explained.

"Isn't it too early for the symptoms?" Lucy asked with concern."

"I thought so too. Hence I panicked. But the doctor said it's normal in the first trimester and that the symptoms vary in individuals," Bryan explained, and Lucy sighed.

"Alright. Please ask her to call me the moment she is up. And thanks for taking care of her," Lucy said, and Bryan raised a brow.

"Isn't it my duty to do that as her fiance?" He asked, not seeing any reason why she should be thanking him for something like that.

"Yes, it is. But Sonia has always taken care of herself, and she never even tells me when she is ill unless I find out myself. So, I'm just glad that she has someone now who looks out for her," Lucy explained.

"You don't have to worry about her. I will take good care of her," Bryan assured her before hanging up.

"If she has started feeling this way already, I wonder how it's going to be in a month's time. Don't you think this could affect their wedding plans?" Lucy asked Tom thoughtfully.

"I'm sure they will figure something out. Besides, the wedding is going to be for only a couple of hours. I'm sure by then she would have found a way to manage her symptoms," Tom said, and Lucy nodded.

"I will have to browse and make more research on it," Lucy said, and Tom smiled as they continued with their meal.

"Do you think I should apologize to your grandfather?" Lucy asked after a moment, and Tom raised a brow as he looked at her.

"What for?"

"My conscience is pricking me. I feel sort of guilty. Even though I keep telling myself that I handled the situation correctly, I still think I might have been too harsh and disrespectful while talking to him," Lucy explained with a concerned frown.

"Well, I wasn't there when you spoke with him, but if you think you were disrespectful, you could apologize to him so you feel better. I know you might be mad at him for doing what he did, but he is not a bad person," Tom said, and Lucy nodded.

"Sure. I know he is not. I will give him a call the moment I get back to my office. I also think you should try to smoothen things between your dad and grandfather. He sounded genuinely worried about this whole drama causing more problems between him and your dad," Lucy said, and Tom nodded as he recalled what his grandfather had told him about regretting not being a good father.

After they were done eating, Lucy returned to her office, and Tom decided to give his parents a call to find out how things were going and to know if they had resolved the issue between them.

He briefly contemplated giving his mother a call first but decided to do so later after speaking with his father since he remembered that he needed to talk to his father about resolving things with his grandfather.

All these years, they had grown up to understand that there was a rift between their father and grandfather, but none of them had actively done anything to resolve it. Not even their mother, since this rift had existed long before she even married Desmond.

The most they had done was try to maintain peace between them whenever they were all having family time together. And these gatherings were not done often.

It didn't take long before his father received the call, "Hello, son! How are you doing today?" Desmond asked as he turned down the volume of the television set in the guest room.

"I'm fine, Dad. How are you? And how is mom?" Tom asked, and Desmond paused for a moment before responding.

"I'm okay. Your mom is fine, I guess. I haven't seen nor spoken with her since last night," Desmond admitted.

"Since last night? Where did you spend the night?" Tom asked, sounding really surprised since he could not remember his parents ever having a misunderstanding that would make them sleep in separate bedrooms.

"In the guest room."

"For Christ's sake, Dad! Are you not taking things too far? What happened to talking things through? I know very well that you're not comfortable with not talking to her either, so why are you doing this?" Tom asked with a frown and glanced at his phone when he noticed an awaiting call from Kimberly.

He frowned, wondering why she was calling his line, but ignored it as he focused on his conversation with his father.

"I can't yell at her. I don't want to. I don't want to leave the house either. This is the only way I can let her know I will no longer condone or tolerate her stubbornness, especially when it comes to you, kids..."

"I'm sure she has learned her lesson now. You really should make up with her, and let's all put this behind us. She didn't mean for any of this to happen. If grandfather had told her of his plan, you know she would never have agreed to it," Tom said, and Desmond sighed.

"Don't worry about it, Tom. She is my wife. I know what I'm doing," Desmond insisted.

"If you say so, but at this point, I think you're just being stubborn. You really should let it go," Tom said with a frown.

"I will, don't worry about it. How is everyone doing over there?" Desmond asked, and Tom sighed.

"Everyone is doing great. What about grandfather? Have you spoken with him again?"

"What for? I have nothing to say to him."

"Shouldn't you speak with him and resolve all your issues with him once and for all?" Tom asked, and Desmond raised a brow.

"There is nothing to resolve. I cut him off already..."

"He is your father. Our grandfather. You can be displeased by his choices and choose to stay away from him, but you can't change what he is to you or to us..."

"Did he ask you to talk to me? Listen, Tom..."

"No, Dad. You listen to me for a change. I need you to just listen, okay? Grandfather is not perfect. He made choices that were not exactly fair to you and didn't treat you the way you would have loved to be treated, but that is only because he is human. He could have been worst. He could have been a deadbeat father or even abandoned you. He did what he knew best to do. And whether you like to admit it or not, it is thanks to him that you are where you are right now. He might have realized too late that he made the wrong choices..."

"Did he tell you he regrets his choices?" Desmond cut in.

"Yes, Dad. He told me that. And maybe if you stopped being so mad and judging him long enough to listen to him, he would tell you exactly how he feels. How can you be such a great father and so good at advising everyone else, but when it comes to your relationship with your own father, you are doing such a shitty job?" Tom asked with disapproval, and his father sighed.

"What exactly did he say to you?" Desmond asked, and Tom shook his head.

"If you're so curious about it, I suggest you ask him that yourself. You both need to talk to each other. Really talk, Dad. You know, some years ago, I happened to read one of the books in your library, and it said when we fail to forgive and move on, we get stuck in that same time zone of our past. It didn't entirely make sense to me back then, but thinking about you now. It makes so much sense now. The little boy who felt neglected by his father is trapped somewhere inside you. And no matter how many years have passed or how emotionally intelligent you've become over the years, that little boy is not growing. He has remained stunted all these years because you are still stuck in the past, and that is because of your inability to forgive your father and move on. You should fix things with him," Tom advised, and Desmond blinked back the tears that stung his eyes at Tom's words.

He knew that Tom was right, but merely thinking about talking to his father made his heart to hurt.

"Promise me you will talk to him, Dad? No matter how difficult it is, you should talk to him. Besides, I think his plan worked," Tom said, and Desmond raised a brow.

"What?"

"Apart from the fact that it has made me realize even more now that the only child I want to have is one with Lucy and not with anyone else, I think this whole episode has been making Lucy rethink her decision. She hasn't said anything to me yet, but I can sense the changes in her. So, as much as we didn't like the prank, it did yield result," Tom said, and Desmond sighed and glanced at the door when he heard Evelyn knocking.

"I see. Your mom is at the door. I will talk to her now and maybe give your grandfather a call when I'm done," Desmond said, and Tom smiled.

"Thanks for listening to me, Dad," Tom said before hanging up while Desmond rose to go to the door.

"Des? Open up. I really need to talk to you," Evelyn cried, sounding hysterical, and Desmond frowned when he heard her voice.

Was she this upset simply because he had locked himself up in the guest room and was not talking to her? He mused as he opened the door.

"What is wrong? Did something happen?" He asked in alarm when he saw the tears on her face and the grief in her eyes.

"It's Lawrence. He is dead. I just received a call from his P.A. Your father slumped while giving a speech at an event," Evelyn announced as she broke into a sob.

Chapter 692 Impromptu Trip

After his phone call with his father, Tom decided to return Kimberly's call and find out why she had been calling, and just as soon as the call connected, his office door opened and Harry walked in wearing a glum expression.

"What's wrong?" Tom asked Harry with a frown before he heard Kimberly's sob.

Harry said nothing as he turned on the television in Tom's office, and Tom's brows pulled together when he saw the headline on the screen.

EX-PRESIDENT, LAWRENCE HANK, DEAD!

Without speaking with Kimberly, Tom hung up the call as he stared at the screen with disbelief.

"What is the meaning of this?" Tom asked Harry, not wanting to believe it was what he was seeing.

"He died a couple of minutes ago. He slumped while giving a speech during a United Nations event and was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital," Harry explained quietly, and watched as Tom staggered on his feet and held the table for support.

"Oh, my God!" Tom murmured as tears pooled in his eyes.

His first thought was his father. His father was going to find out soon and he would be devastated by the news whether or not they had been close. And then there was his mother who had been like a daughter to Lawrence for all these years.

"What can I do?" Harry asked, seeing how Tom stood where he was with a lost look in his eyes which were glistening with tears.

"I have to go to my parents. Jade and Bryan would most likely want to come too so we can all arrange for his funeral. Can you give Jade a call and find out if she is aware already? Ask her to meet us at home. I will give Bryan a call to get ready," Tom said, and Harry nodded.

"I will ask James to be on standby," Harry said, referring to one of their pilots.

"Thanks," Tom said without looking at Harry as he fell back on his chair and covered his face with both hands.

Harry looked at Tom for a moment before walking out of the office. As he left the office he dialed Jade's line.

"Don't tell me you're missing me," Jade said in amusement as she received the call, and Harry could tell she was yet to see the news.

"Where are you right now? Are you done at the police station?" Harry asked, not sure how to break the news to her.

"Yes. But I have a meeting with the chief judge now, so I'm on my way there. I'm going to drop Candace off first so she can go home to your dad and Jamal," Jade explained.

"Can you postpone the meeting with the chief judge? Something came..."

"C'mon, Jonas! I can't start taking the chief judge for granted now simply because Rebekah has been arrested. I know you miss me but I still need to..."

"Your grandfather is dead," Harry cut in, and immediately Jade stepped on her brake pedal, bringing her car to an abrupt halt in the middle of the road.

"For Christ's sake, Jade!" Candace exclaimed as the car lurched forward, causing her drink to spill.

The driver behind Jade honked angrily at her as he drove past her, but Jade did not pay attention to any of that as she sat still in the car not minding where she was parked.

"I'm sorry. Tom wants you to meet them at home so you can all fly over to join your parents and prepare for his funeral," Harry said apologetically, wishing he was there to embrace her.

He would have preferred to break the news to her in person since he knew she loved her grandfather deeply and would be devastated by the news of his death, but knowing how stubborn she was, the only way he could get her to listen to him and go home was by breaking the news to her.

"I will be on my way home," Jade said with quivering lips and Candace frowned when she noticed that Jade's countenance had changed completely.

"Pass the phone to Candace," Harry said and Jade did so without another word.

She couldn't even think. The only thing that kept playing repeatedly in her head was Harry's words. 'Your grandfather is dead'.

"What did you say to her? Couldn't you have waited until she got home? We could have gotten into an accident, you know?" Candace asked with a frown.

"Her grandfather is dead. If you don't mind, can you drive her home?" Harry asked hopefully, and Candace turned to look at Jade with understanding now that she knew why she had reacted that way.

"Sure. I will hang up now. We are parked in the middle of the road and I need to get us out of here before the police come for us," Candace said before hanging up.

"Get out of the car. I will take you home," Candace told Jade as she unfastened her seatbelt and got out of the car.

Jade did not say anything as she got out of the car to let Candace take over, and immediately she got into the passenger seat, she broke into a sob.

Candace said nothing and just let her cry as she drove. She wasn't sure that if she decided to speak she would have the right words to comfort Jade, so she figured it was best to just keep quiet and let her cry.

Back in Tom's office, after putting a call across to inform Bryan that their grandfather was dead and he was on his way home so they could all arrange to fly out to Heden together to join their parents, he rose to leave and then remembered that he had to inform Lucy before leaving.

Thinking about Lucy, a frown creased his brow when he recalled their conversation during lunch.

She had said she wanted to apologize to his grandfather. Did she try to reach him already? Was she aware of the news? Tom mused as he made his way to her office. Deciding to see her before leaving.

As he walked down the hallway to her office, he could tell by the looks he received from most of the staff that they had all seen the news of his grandfather's death.

The moment he noticed that the blind was down in Lucy's office and he couldn't see through the glass, he knew she had heard the news already, so without knocking he walked into her office, and just as he knew she would be doing, he saw her weeping at her desk.

"Jewel?" He called, and she raised her tearful gaze to him as she cried.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Tom. This is all my fault. I killed him. I shouldn't have been so harsh," she cried as her whole body trembled, and Tom momentarily forgot his grief as he went to her and gathered her into his arms.

"Don't be ridiculous. This has nothing to do with you," he said as he patted her back but she shook her head.

"I should have let it go as you did. I shouldn't have pushed him so hard," Lucy cried and Tom sighed.

"Can you please do away with the guilt? I have to worry about my parents and organizing the funeral right now. I don't want to add this to it, especially when it is completely unnecessary. He is old. He slumped and died, simple. The timing might suggest otherwise but it is what it is. So, please pull yourself together and stop blaming yourself for something that has nothing to do with you," Tom said, trying to sound as patient as he could.

Almost as if a switch had come on in her brain, and she realized she was making this about her instead of comforting him, she looked up at him as she wiped off her tears, "I'm sorry. How do you feel? Have you spoken to your parents? How are they taking it?" She asked, but he shook his head.

"Not yet. I think my presence might be more important than a phone call. I need to fly out to Heden to be with my parents and help set things up for the funeral," Tom said and Lucy nodded.

"Is there something you need me to do?" Lucy asked, not sure what she could do.

As much as she would love to be with him and comfort him, she didn't want to face his family.

Even if he didn't agree that she was responsible for this and he wasn't blaming her, the others might blame her. Especially Evelyn. They might not say it directly to her face, but she knew deep down they would all blame her.

Before Tom could respond, his phone started ringing and he received the call the moment he saw it was from his mother.

"Tom? Your grandfather...."

"I know. I saw the news," he said, stopping her from completing her statement because of the way she was crying.

"How is dad taking the news?" Tom asked with concern.

"Not well. He hasn't said a word since I told him about it. He has remained silent," Evelyn cried, and Tom drew a deep breath.

"Don't worry. Hang in there, I will be with you soon," Tom promised.

"Bryan and Jade..."

"We will all be there together, don't worry about it. I will handle everything, okay?" Tom assured her, and Evelyn relaxed a bit.

"What about Lucy and Sonia? Will they be coming too?" Evelyn asked, and Tom glanced at Lucy.

"She wants to know if you're coming with us," Tom said and Lucy teared up again.

"I would love to if my presence there won't upset everyone," Lucy confessed guiltily.

"What is she talking about?" Evelyn asked with a snuffle since she heard what Lucy said.

"She blames herself for what happened..."

"Alright. I will. Thanks," Lucy said as she returned the phone to Tom.

"Pass her the phone," Evelyn said in a firm voice now and Tom did as she requested.

"Evelyn, I'm sorry..."

"Come along with Tom. I will be expecting you," Evelyn said firmly, making it clear she wasn't expecting no for an answer.

"Alright. I will. Thanks," Lucy said as she returned the phone to Tom.

Once Tom was done talking to his mother he looked at Lucy, "So?"

"I will come with you," she said, and Tom nodded.

"We have to leave now. I will be waiting in front of the building. Join me in the car after informing the head of operations that you will be away for a couple of days," Tom said before walking away, and immediately Lucy cleared her desk and reassigned her duties to her teammates.

They didn't need to ask any questions since they all had heard the news and understood that she was leaving with the CEO.

As Tom made his way back to his office so he could use his private elevator to his parking lot, he saw Harry coming out of his office.

"I thought you went home already," Harry said and Tom sighed.

"I had to see Lucy first. She will be coming with me," Tom said and Harry gave him a nod.

"I would have come with you but we both can't be away at the same time. I will see you guys at the funeral. Try to take things easy and let me know if you need me to handle anything from here," Harry said as he slapped Tom's back fondly.

"Thanks, man!" Tom said, feeling grateful once again for Harry's friendship.

"Don't mention," Harry said before walking away.

As he returned into his office he sighed when it occurred to him that just like that, the plan to spend the weekend alone with Jade at his apartment was canceled.

There was no way he could let her travel without seeing her first when he knew she was upset by the news. Harry picked up his car key from his desk and headed out again.

"Cancel the rest of my appointments for the day, and liaise with Eric to reorganize my schedule for the rest of the week. I will handle all of Tom's appointments," Harry instructed his secretary before walking away.

Maybe he could pay Jade a surprise visit on Friday and spend the weekend with her over there instead. That should cheer her up a bit, Harry mused.

He scowled when he randomly remembered that the last time he had been at the Hank family home with Jade, she had been there with her stupid ex-boyfriend.

There was no way he was going to spend time with her in that same bedroom she had shared with her ex boyfriend.

"Focus, Harry! It's not a vacation. She just lost her grandfather," Harry reminded himself as he got into his car and headed for Tom's place.

Chapter 693 Caring Boyfriend

"I can't understand. This is all so sudden. He didn't look so frail last week when we all had dinner together. How could he die just like that?" Jade asked Bryan in disbelief as tears rolled down her cheeks while Bryan just sat where he was staring straight ahead of them.

His last conversation with his grandfather had been just the previous day when his grandfather called to congratulate him and Sonia, and to ask what they wanted for their wedding gift.

Before that he had called the moment he heard about Sonia's pregnancy to express his joy over expecting his first great grand child.

Who would have thought he would die so soon? Bryan mused as he blinked back his tears.

"Have you called mom or dad?" Bryan asked, since he had been unable to bring himself to do that since he heard the news from Tom.

"I tried calling dad but he didn't pick up. I haven't called mom yet. She must be so devastated. You know how close they were," Jade said, and Bryan nodded.

"What about you? Have you spoken with either of them?" Jade asked and Bryan shook his head.

"Can't. Don't know what to say to them," Bryan confessed, and Jade nodded as tears pooled in her eyes again.

"I wonder how dad is taking the news," Jade said, and Sonia who had just woken up and had walked into the living room looked from Bryan to Jade.

"What's going on? What news?" Sonia asked, not missing the grief on their faces.

Bryan rose when he saw her, "How are you feeling now?" He asked with concern.

"I feel much better. What's the problem?" Sonia repeated as she watched Jade brush her tears off.

"Our grandfather is dead," Bryan said, and Sonia gasped in surprise.

"What? How? When?" She asked in disbelief and Bryan told her what he had gotten from the news, since it was all over the place now.

"Oh, my God!" Sonia exclaimed softly as she lowered herself to one of the chairs.

"Will you be able to travel with us? We have to fly down to be with our parents," Bryan said, and Sonia nodded.

"Sure. That can't be helped," Sonia said, feeling saddened by the news.

Even if she had not been very close to the man and had only met him just a week ago, she felt sorry to hear he was gone. He had sounded so happy at the prospect of having his first great-grand child and now he was no more.

They all looked up when the door opened and Harry walked in. Immediately Jade saw him, she rose from her seat and walked into his embrace.

"Oh, Harry!" She cried as she broke into a sob once again.

Harry said nothing as he held her closely and patted her back as she cried while Bryan and Sonia excused themselves to go pack their bags upstairs.

"Everything will be alright, sugar," Harry said after a while.

"It's all just so sudden..."

"Death usually happens that way, love. And nothing ever really prepares you for it," Harry cut in as he kissed her forehead.

"Why are you here?" She asked as she looked up at him through her wet eye lids.

"Why do you think I'm here?" Harry asked and she sniffled.

"Thanks for coming. I'm sure you had stuff to do at the office," she said and Harry nodded.

"Yeah, I did. But none of them was as important as comforting you. I will get back to work after I see you off. Have you packed your stuff for the trip? Tom will be here soon," Harry said and Jade shook her head.

"I haven't. I can't bring myself to do anything," Jade said with a sniffle.

"Come on, I will help you pack so you can be ready before he gets here," Harry said as he took her hand to lead her upstairs.

Jade was still too grief-stricken to realize that Harry was going upstairs to her bedroom.

It wasn't until they stopped in front of her bedroom door and Harry turned the knob, that it suddenly occurred to her what was going on, and immediately she snapped out of her daze and stepped in front of him to block his path.

"What?" Harry asked in confusion.

"You can't come inside," Jade said, and he raised a brow.

"Why not?" He asked, wondering why she had allowed him come all the way upstairs only to block his path now.

"Because I don't want you inside my bedroom," Jade said, and Harry looked at her for a moment before giving her a nod.

"Alright. I will wait downstairs," he said and turned to leave, but that only made Jade feel guilty so she stopped him.

"It's because I didn't clean up my room before leaving," she blurted out, and Harry turned to look at her with a slightly raised brow.

"Is your bedroom in a worse state than I met your apartment when I visited you?" Harry asked, and Jade's lips twitched involuntarily as she shook her head.

"Not exactly."

"So, what's new? I've seen you look your worst and I've seen your apartment in a terrible state, not forgetting that we lived together in the hotel suite and I saw first how you take care of your room. Or should I say how you don't take care of your room?" Harry asked, and a blush stained her cheeks.

"Are you calling me dirty?" She asked, and Harry raised a brow.

"Are you dirty? Don't worry, even if you are, I'm neat enough for two and can clean up after you. I'm also rich enough to employ people to clean up after you," Harry said and she grinned.

"I don't know whether to be annoyed or pleased," she said and Harry grinned.

"Can I come in now?" Harry asked, and Jade looked behind her at her door before looking at Harry.

"Give me a minute," she said as she dashed into her bedroom and locked the door behind her while Harry shook his head in amusement as he stood outside the door waiting for her.

Once inside her bedroom, Jade scowled when she realized that her bedroom had been cleaned already and nothing was out of place.

Did she just embarrass herself for nothing? She mused as she opened the door to let Harry in.

"Surprise!" She said, and Harry chuckled as he walked into her bedroom.

three times a week. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays," he said as he looked around her bedroom.

"I'm not surprised. I know Tom's cleaners do a good job. They clean the bedrooms three times a week. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays," he said as he looked around her bedroom.

"You could have just said that earlier. Besides, you don't even live here, how do you know that when I don't?" Jade asked with a scowl.

"What should we pack first? Your undies?" Harry asked as he headed for her closet, and Jade ran to her closet immediately to block his path, making him chuckle.

"Don't pack anything. Just sit down while I pack," Jade ordered and Harry gave her a nod as he went to sit on the bed.

He wouldn't have gone close to her undies drawer anyway. He had only wanted to get a reaction out of her.

He knew that his presence was momentarily distracting her from her grief, and that was what he wanted. To be able to cheer her up no matter how little before she left.

Harry watched as she took a bag from the top of the closet and he shook his head when he saw how she was just picking stuff from her closet and shoving them into the bag.

"Are you not going to fold those?" He asked, wondering how someone as organized as he was could have fallen for someone as disorganized as Jade.

"There is no time. Tom will be here soon and I don't want to keep him waiting," she reminded him without turning to look at him.

"You either fold those neatly or I'm going to help you do that," Harry said, and Jade turned to look at him over her shoulder.

Seeing the seriousness on his face, she scowled, "Maybe you should go wait downstairs. I will join you when I'm done."

"Do it now, esquire, or I will help you," Harry repeated, and she grumbled as she did as she was told.

"You're a bully," Jade muttered grudgingly when she was done packing her bag.

"That wasn't so hard, was it?" Harry asked as he rose from the bed.

"I hope you're not forgetting anything? By the way, were you able to reschedule your meeting with the chief judge?" Harry asked and Jade nodded.

"He saw the news before I called. As much as he would have liked to prosecute her quickly, he doesn't mind allowing her stay that way for a while before she is taken to "That sounds good," Harry said as he watched her reach for her laptop and chargers.

They both turned to the door when a knock sounded on it and Jade walked over to open it.

Tom who had knocked on the door was not very surprised to see Harry standing behind Jade inside the bedroom since he had seen Harry's car downstairs so he knew Harry was with Jade.

Of course, Harry was her boyfriend and it was expected that he would be there to comfort his girlfriend.

"You're back," Jade said as she embraced Tom.

"Yeah. Lucy is packing our bags. Will you get ready to leave in thirty minutes?" Tom asked and she nodded.

"Alright. Let's meet downstairs when you're done," Tom said, and then gave Harry a nod before walking away to go join Lucy pack his bag.

"At times like this I wish you were not working for Tom," Jade said, and Harry raised a brow, wondering where that was coming from.

"Why?"

"Sonia and Lucy are coming. I know you can't come with me because you have to look after the company in Tom's absence," Jade explained with a sigh.

"I won't miss the funeral, don't worry," Harry promised as he hugged her.

There was no need to tell her he planned to visit and spend the weekend with her. He would prefer to just show up and surprise her.

"You had better not miss it. You have to be there," Jade warned as she held on to him.

She hated funerals, and she hated this one even more because it was her grandfather's. She didn't want to watch him being buried. And she didn't want to have to remember the last funeral she had been to as she watched them bury her grandfather.

The last funeral she had been to was that of her late ex-boyfriend. That had been the same day she found out the bastard had been cheating on her.

How do you transition from mourning a lover in one moment to weeping from a broken heart? The betrayal had hurt a lot worse than it would ordinarily have because he was dead and she couldn't even vent or confront him. It still stung.

She had avoided funerals like a plague since then, but unfortunately she couldn't avoid this one. She needed Harry's presence there to help her go through it without breaking down.

Even if she the wound was still very sore and she could still feel the heaviness in her heart, having Harry around had brightened her up a little, and had taken her mind of things. She wished he could be with her all through.

Jade sighed after a moment when she remembered that she wouldn't be able to spend the weekend with him as planned, "Sorry I have to rain check on our weekend arrangement..."

"That is hardly important right now. We have lots of weekends ahead of us," Harry assured her, and she nodded as she took in a deep breath.

"Thanks for coming," Jade said and Harry smiled at her.

"Aren't you lucky to have such a caring boyfriend?" He asked and she smiled.

"You are so full of yourself," she said with a shake of her head.

"I beg to differ. I think I'm full with love for you. Let's go downstairs and find you something to munch on before you leave. I doubt you've had anything else to eat apart from the popcorn you kept chewing on the show," Harry said wanting to make her smile but Jade sighed when she remembered the show.

"That seems like it happened ages ago. And I don't think I can eat anything right now," Jade said and Harry nodded.

"Yeah, that's more reason I want you to eat now. You're going to need energy to cry as I know you would when you get home. I also know you're most likely not going to eat anything when you get home and everyone else will be too sad themselves to care about that. So, you should eat something now before you leave. I want to see you eat something," Harry said as he took her bags from her and headed for the door.

Once they got downstairs, Harry headed for the kitchen to find Samantha, and as she quickly fixed sandwiches for Jade and the others, Harry took some fruits from the refrigerator and blended them into a smoothie.

"Here. Take this with you. You can't let my effort go to waste so try to take it when you can," he said to Jade as he handed her the bottle of smoothie before setting a plate of sandwich in front of her.

"Thanks," Jade said as she took the smoothie from him, and Harry sat down to watch her eat.

Forty minutes later, Harry stood beside his car, and watched as the jet took off.

He sighed as he got into his car after the jet disappeared from view and returned to the office.

Chapter 694 Another Child

The moment their flight touched down at the airport some hours later, two cars were already waiting to take them home.

Tom and Lucy got into one, while Bryan, Sonia, and Jade got into the other.

It had been a very silent trip since neither of them had been in the mood to talk. While Tom, Bryan, and Jade were still in a daze at the sudden loss of their grandfather, Lucy was still busy blaming herself for being responsible for the old man's death, while Sonia was doing her best not to get sick since the motion was making her nausea worse.

Inside the car, Lucy shifted closer to Tom and rested her head on his shoulder as she took his hand in hers.

"How are you feeling?" She asked quietly, and Tom sighed.

"I don't know yet. The only person I'm thinking about right now is my dad. You know, I just finished speaking with him about reconciling and fixing things with my grandfather before I got the news," Tom said and Lucy looked up at him.

"He would be devastated."

"I wish I had thought of convincing him earlier to make up with his father rather than doing it only when it was too late," Tom said and Lucy sighed.

"No one could have guessed that something like this would happen now," Lucy said as she squeezed his hands softly.

"Even at that. All these years we let them be at loggerheads with one another when we could have stepped in and made things right..."

"There is a limit to what you could have done. They are both adults and would not have resolved things unless they wanted to," Lucy cut in.

"My grandfather was sorry. He didn't like the state of things between them," Tom said and Lucy shrugged.

"Then he should have told Desmond so and pushed for a reconciliation. This isn't your fault," Lucy assured him and Tom sighed as he looked out of the window while she rested her head against him again.

"Kimberly was calling earlier. I guess she wanted to tell me the news," Tom murmured more to himself than to Lucy when he remembered.

"Did you return her call?" Lucy asked without raising her head.

"I was going to do so before Harry broke the news to me. After that I didn't think there was any need to return the call," Tom said and Lucy sighed.

"I guess this will be hard on her as well seeing how they were close," Lucy said thoughtfully.

It was past nine in the evening by the time they arrived at the Hank family mansion, and Evelyn was waiting outside to receive them all.

Her usual pleasant face was pale and her red nose and swollen eyes stood out on her face as she tried to force a welcoming smile.

The moment they stepped out of the cars, the smile collapsed on her face and she pressed a hand to her lips to keep herself from sobbing.

Seeing how she stood there, Tom embraced her and held her closely to himself, and just like that she broke into a sob.

Jade joined in her tears as she also went to embrace Tom and their mother while Bryan remained where he stood with Sonia and Lucy as he watched them with a heavy heart.

"I'm sorry. I know I shouldn't be crying this way," Evelyn said as she brushed her tears away and pulled away from Tom and embraced Jade who was still weeping softly.

"You should cry if you need to. There's no reason to hold back your tears," Tom said and her lips wobbled, but she forced a smile as she turned to Lucy.

"You're welcome, Lucy. I wish your first visit to our home wasn't on such circumstances," Evelyn told Lucy before glancing at Sonia.

"You don't look well. What's wrong?" Evelyn asked as she observed Sonia.

"Nothing serious. I'm just feeling nauseous," Sonia said with a forced smile not wanting to add to Evelyn's worry.

"Where is dad?" Tom asked before Evelyn could respond to what Sonia had said.

"He is in his study," Evelyn said, and Tom gave her a nod as he made his way past her into the house, and both Bryan and Jade followed him as they went to find their father, leaving Sonia and Lucy to their mother.

"Come in, I will show Lucy to Tom's bedroom and while you both freshen up I will prepare some tea to calm your stomach," Evelyn Inside the house, Tom did not bother to knock as he walked into his said as she led them into the house.

Inside the house, Tom did not bother to knock as he walked into his father's study, and when he did he wasn't surprised to see Desmond sitting behind the desk and drinking whiskey.

"Dad," Jade called in a shaky voice as she walked through the door and walked past Tom to go meet him.

Desmond didn't say a word as Jade walked around the desk and embraced him.

She held on to him very tightly as tears dropped from her eyes, while Tom and Bryan went to take the seats opposite their father.

Tom didn't say a word as he poured some brandy into two snifters and passed one to Bryan who received it appreciately.

Neither of them said a word for a long time, until Jade finally broke the hug, "I'm sorry, dad," Jade murmured, and Desmond gave her a nod.

"How are you feeling?" Bryan asked and Desmond shrugged as he drew in a deep breath.

"Any word from his assistant yet on what happened to him?" Tom asked and Desmond raised a brow.

"What happened other than he was a selfish bastard who chose to die at a time like this?" Desmond asked unable to hide the bitterness and anger in his tone.

"I get that you're mad at him for a lot of reasons, but can you set your anger aside and let's all figure out the way forward?" Tom suggested and Desmond sighed as he rose from his seat and moved away from the desk.

"Give us a moment alone. I need to speak with him," Tom told Bryan and Jade, and they exchanged a look before walking out of the office.

"How do you really feel, dad?" Tom asked calmly after the door closed behind Jade and Bryan.

"I was going to call him as you suggested. After all you said, I was going to give him a call just after speaking with your mother. So, can you tell me why he decided to die now? Why he chose today of all days to leave?" Desmond asked, and this time Tom heard the grief in his father's voice.

"He didn't choose to. I'm sure if he had a choice he wouldn't have wanted to leave just yet," Tom said quietly.

"All my life he was never really there for me. The older I grew I thought I had adjusted to his absence. I thought I was even okay with it. So, why does it hurt that he is gone?" Desmond asked as a tear dropped from his eyes.

He always had answers for everyone else and had wisdom to share with anyone who needed it. But now that he needed answers for himself, he couldn't be of help to himself.

"It hurts because he is your father. And whether or not he is here now, you need to forgive him and make your peace with him, dad. Right now it's more important for you to do so for your sake," Tom advised as he went to where his father stood and placed a hand on his shoulder.

Desmond took a deep breath as he faced Tom and placed a hand on Tom's shoulder, "Thanks for coming over. And yeah. I know you're right concerning all you've said. I know that in my head. It's my heart I'm still trying to reconcile with my head," Desmond said as he returned to his seat behind the desk.

"I should give Henry a call now. He has been trying to reach for all day," Desmond said as he picked up his phone and dialed the line of Lawrence's assistant.

"Desmond, I've been trying to reach you all day. I suppose you saw the news by now. Accept my condolences," Henry said sympathetically.

"What happened to him, Henry?" Desmond asked calmly and listened quietly as Henry told him all about his late father's health struggles and how he had visited the family to inform them about it last week but had changed his mind at the last minute.

"You mean he has been ill and has had a couple of surgeries over the years? Why am I just hearing about this now?" Desmond asked in disbelief.

"He didn't want you to know about it. He said it wouldn't make any difference to you whether he was alive or dead, so there was no need sharing such information with you. He made me promise not to say a word of it to you or Evelyn," Henry said and Desmond tried not to feel hurt.

Typical of his father not to care about sharing anything personal with him.

"I see. What is the plan for his funeral? Did he discuss that with you at any point?" Desmond asked, and Tom raised a brow.

"He said you were to decide how to bury him. Although as an ex-president he will be given a ceremonial state burial. So whatever you decide you have to relay to me so I can communicate to the state house. There is something else I wanted to discuss with you," Henry said and Desmond raised a brow.

"What is it? Is there a problem?" Desmond asked, wondering why Henry sounded like he wasn't going to like whatever he was about to hear.

"I'm not sure how you're going to take this. It's about your father," Henry cautiously.

"What about him?" Desmond asked with a frown.

"He found out yesterday that he has another kid," Henry said Desmond's jaw dropped in disbelief.

"What?" Desmond asked, making Tom frown as he wondered what was happening.

"He was quite upset yesterday. I'm guessing the shock of that and everything else that transpired between you all contributed to..."

"What do you mean? What are you talking about?" Desmond asked in confusion, not caring about anything else Henry was saying.

His father had another child somewhere? How? That did not make any iota of sense. And why was he only just finding out about it?

"It's complicated. I can't explain the details to you, but she will when she gets there," Henry said making Desmond's frown deepen.

"When who gets here? His other child is a lady? Is she coming here? What for? And why is she showing up after all this time?" Desmond asked, making Tom frown in confusion as he wondered what his father was talking about.

"As I said, I can't explain the details. I'm shocked myself. I wanted to give you a heads up before they arrive. I'm sure you will understand better when she gets there. I'm sorry you're finding out about it this way. But you should know that your father didn't plan for that to happen," Henry said quietly and hung up before Desmond could ask him any more question.

Desmond stared at his phone with a frown as he tried to understand what was going on.

"Whose other child? What did he say?" Tom asked his father, and Desmond raised his gaze to Tom.

"Your grandfather has another child and according to Henry she is coming over," Desmond said and Tom frowned.

"Grandfather has another child? How? Since when?" Tom asked, and just then a knock sounded on the door of the study.

"You both need to come out. We have some guests," Bryan said with a frown, and both Tom and his father exchanged a look before standing up and walking out of the library with Bryan.

Tom's steps faltered when he saw Kimberly and Dawn standing in the middle of the living room with Evelyn and Jade.

Chapter 695 Unbelievable!

Seeing Kimberly there, different thoughts ran through Tom's mind at the same time, and glancing at his father who was staring at Kimberly in disbelief, Tom suspected that they were having the exact same thought.

It couldn't be coincidence that they had just been informed of Lawrence's daughter who would be visiting and here was Kimberly.

How could Kimberly be his grandfather's daughter? It did not make any sense. Or maybe it was not entirely nonsense seeing how Dawn looked like him. It could be that the Hank gene had flowed from her to her daughter, Tom mused as he met her gaze.

"Hello, Thomas! I'm relieved you're here. I'm sorry I'm barging in on your family this way, especially at this time of the evening," Kimberly said politely.

Tom noticed that her face looked plain and puffy as though she had been crying, and he guessed it was because of Lawrence.

"What are you doing here?" Tom asked Kimberly in confusion, not wanting to believe that she was the one Henry had just told his father about.

"I stopped by your office at Ludus earlier and was informed by your assistant that you just traveled home, hence I had to fly down here," Kimberly said to Tom, making him frown.

Evelyn whose gaze was fixed on the little girl, Dawn, looked up at Kimberly, "Your daughter looks pretty exhausted. Couldn't it have waited until morning?" She asked, wondering what was so urgent that Lawrence's goddaughter had to pay them a visit without prior notice.

"I wish it could. But this is urgent. I'm sorry once again," Kimberly said apologetically as she rubbed her daughter's back, who had no idea what was going on.

"Are you saying you are here to see me?" He asked, not understanding what was going on.

"What is this about?" Desmond asked at the same time and Kimberly flashed him an apologetic look.

"Perhaps I could speak with you both in private?" Kimberly asked hopefully and Desmond looked at Evelyn who wanted to protest.

"Take care of the kid," he told Evelyn before signalling to Kimberly to follow him.

"What is going on? Why is she here?" Jade asked Evelyn and Bryan as they all looked at the little girl.

"Jade go prepare a cup of warm chocolate for the kid," Evelyn ordered as she jerked her head to the couch.

"Sit down, dear," Evelyn told Dawn who reminded her very much of Tom at that age.

"Thank you," Dawn said politely as she graciously lowered herself to the couch and sat down like a prim and proper young lady.

Bryan excused himself to go upstairs to check on Sonia, while Evelyn sat down beside the kid who was looking everywhere else but at her.

Inside Desmond's study once they were seated, Desmond fixed his gaze on Kimberly as he waited for her to speak.

"Were you in the country already? There was no way you could have traveled down just after hearing the news," Tom said, giving Kimberly the opening she needed.

"I was in the country. I flew in with Dawn on Saturday morning to attend a wedding in Sogal," Kimberly explained.

"You were in Sogal when I spoke with you on Saturday morning and when we spoke yesterday?" Tom asked, and Kimberly nodded.

"Yes. We were supposed to leave today," Kimberly said and Desmond raised a brow.

"That doesn't explain why you are here," Desmond pointed out, and Kimberly nodded.

"I know what I'm about to say might come as a shock to you and..."

"Are you about to tell us you are my father's daughter? Because that doesn't make any sense. I know your parents," Desmond cut in, and Kimberly frowned as she quickly shook her head.

"No. God, no! I'm not Lawrence's daughter," Kimberly said quickly, and both Tom and Desmond let out the breath they hadn't realized they had been holding.

"However, my daughter is," Kimberly said, and this time both Desmond and Tom looked at her with a dumbfounded expression.

"I know this must come as a shock..."

"You are telling us that little girl is my father's kid?" Desmond cut in, his disbelief evident in his voice.

"This is ridiculous! How do you expect us to believe that? First it was me, now it's my grandfather? Are you saying you had an affair with my old grandfather? He is over eighty for crying out loud!" Tom said, and Kimberly nodded.

"Yeah. I know it sounds outrageous. I know," Kimberly said as she wiped her hands over her face.

"If you know that, then why are you sitting there and saying something so unbelievable to us?" Desmond asked as he rose from his seat.

"Why is it so unbelievable? You don't believe the fact that your father is capable of impregnating a lady, or you just don't believe that my daughter is his? How do you explain the resemblance to your son?" Kimberly asked, and Desmond shook his head.

"The resemblance doesn't mean a thing. People look like people all the time. It's normal..."

"Don't tell me he was actually trying to make me take responsibility for his own daughter and claimed it was all a prank?" Tom said as the idea struck him, and Kimberly frowned.

"Is that how little you think of your grandfather? He would be so disappointed to know that," Kimberly said in a scathing tone.

"For your information, Lawrence never knew about the kid. He wasn't aware that Dawn was his. I didn't say a word of it to him until last night. All this time he thought I had her through artificial insemination, so leave him out of this!" Kimberly said hotly, defending Lawrence.

"How does any of this make sense? You are not making any sense. If he didn't know she was his daughter and you were bent on keeping it a secret why did you tell him about it now? And why are you here now? Is it because he is dead and you are hoping to have part of his wealth transferred to your daughter?" Desmond asked and Kimberly rose from her seat, feeling very offended.

"If I had a choice, I wouldn't have told him about it and I wouldn't be here either! Do not insult me by making my presence here about money!" Kimberly said coldly and Tom took a deep breath.

"Okay. Let's all calm down. Dad, please sit down. Kimberly, please sit down and tell us exactly why you are here and what you want," Tom said, knowing they wouldn't get anywhere if they continued with the arguments at the rate they were going.

Desmond reluctantly returned to his seat, and Kimberly took a deep breath to calm herself before doing the same.

"I know I'm not in any position to lose my temper right now. Especially not when I'm here to seek your help. I apologize," Kimberly said to Tom and Desmond.

"Seek our help? What for? Can you tell us exactly what happened? Were you romantically involved with my grandfather? Why did you keep your daughter away from him if truly he is her father, and why are you bringing it all up now?" Tom asked calmly.

"It was a one time thing. Lawrence did not mean for it to happen. He never would have done something like that sober," Kimberly said, and Desmond raised a brow.

"Did my father force himself on you?" He asked cautiously, and she quickly shook her head.

"No. Not at all. It was mostly me. I've always loved and admired him. Even crushed on him growing up. As I told you before I was in a bad state of mind following being jilted by my fiancé. Lawrence helped me to track him down. That happened weeks after we met at your hotel opening. And when Lawrence visited me after dealing with him, we got talking and drinking that night. It was mostly me. I made the move on him," Kimberly admitted.

"You had sex with a man old enough to be your grandfather?" Desmond asked, sounding completely disgusted.

"Yes, I had sex with a man I've always loved and respected. And if Lawrence had been willing for us to have an affair I would have been more than happy to. I'm not ashamed to admit that," Kimberly said, giving Desmond a pointed look.

"I guess he wasn't interested in having an affair with you?" Tom asked, not wanting them to get into another argument.

"Yeah. The next morning he was both ashamed and devastated when he realized what had happened between us. No matter how much I kept trying to assure him it was what I wanted, he blamed himself for taking advantage of me, especially considering his relationship with my father. So, how was I to tell him about the pregnancy when I realized I was pregnant?" Kimberly asked, and Tom took a deep breath, unable to imagine his grandfather doing all of that.

"Why didn't you take necessary precautions? And why did you decide to keep the baby knowing how he would feel about it? What about your family? Are they aware?" Tom asked, and she shook her head.

"They had no idea what had happened. The moment I realized I was pregnant I decided to keep the baby since I had been planning on having a baby through artificial insemination already. I was

already seeing a fertility doctor before then to discuss the process, so it was easy to make my family believe I became pregnant that way. I also made the doctor play along," Kimberly explained quietly.

"And he never suspected anything?" Desmond asked with disbelief.

"After what happened between us he didn't visit for a very long time. We talked over the phone sometimes when I called to seek his advise, but that was it. He withdrew from me out of guilt. He didn't know much about Dawn until he visited recently," Kimberly explained.

"Was that why you decided to tell him about her now?" Tom asked, and she shook her head.

"I never planned to tell him. I was going to take the secret to my grave...."

"So, what changed?" Desmond asked curiously.

"The prank. I never should have let him go ahead with the prank. And I never should have been a part of it. My uncle visited in my absence and told my parents about our meeting at the club. They asked me about it and I told them it was a prank, but I guess they didn't believe me seeing checked with the clinic and found out I lied about the artificial insemination. They're mad at me that I've been lying to them all these years," Kimberly explained with a shuddering sigh.

"And I suppose they insisted that Tom was the father?" Desmond asked thoughtfully, and Kimberly nodded.

"Yes. And then my father called Lawrence last night to inform him that his grandson had impregnated me and seemed not to want to take responsibility for the pregnancy," Kimberly explained, gradually letting them understand all that was going on.

"Your grandfather tried to convince them it was a prank, and reminded them I had artificial insemination, but then they told him they found out I lied about that. And that was how Lawrence figured out Dawn was most likely his. He called to ask me about it last night, and I had to tell him the truth," Kimberly finished.

"All this happened while you were in Sogal?" Tom asked, and Kimberly nodded as tears pooled in her eyes.

"Yes. Last night. I didn't imagine what it would do to Lawrence. I'm sure he must have thought about what damage it would do to his reputation if the truth was revealed. I shouldn't have kept the pregnancy. I killed him," Kimberly cried softly and both Tom and his father sighed in resignation.

"I wanted to see you and explain things to you before my parents call or your parents. I don't want them to find out about Lawrence being Dawn's father," Kimberly pleaded and Tom frowned.

"Are you asking me to lie to your parents and claim your daughter is mine?" Tom asked in disbelief as he rose.

"I don't know what else to do. I know I messed up with this whole prank thing, but please I really need your help. Not for my sake but for Lawrence's sake. I have no idea how my parents would react or treat Dawn when they find out she is Lawrence's kid. I don't want them to hate him. He doesn't deserve to be remembered this way for a mistake I made," Kimberly pleaded with a sob.

"Do you have any idea what you are asking me to do? This is ridiculous!" Tom said with a shake of his head as he headed for the door, leaving his father alone with Kimberly.

"What?" Evelyn, Bryan, and Jade exclaimed simultaneously after Desmond told them what Kimberly had said about Dawn being Lawrence's daughter.

Desmond had asked Kimberly to leave and give them time to think about all she had said so they could decide on what to do. And she had told him she would remain in Heden until a decision was reached and maybe until Lawrence's funeral since she was reluctant to go face her family.

"Is this supposed to be a bad joke or what?" Bryan asked incredulously.

"Please don't tell me you believed that crap! Grandfather would never do something like that. Never!" Jade said as she rose, feeling really annoyed.

"First she claimed the kid was Tom's, and now all of a sudden because grandfather is no more she claims the kid is his? This is ridiculous!" Bryan said with a shake of his head.

Tom said nothing as his siblings expressed their annoyance, while Evelyn on the other hand remained mute, and soon everyone noticed.

"Why aren't you saying anything?" Desmond asked his wife, and she sighed.

"What is there to say? As ridiculous as it sounds, we will have to carry out a DNA test. You all saw the kid. There is no denying that she does look like a Hank. And you did say Henry told you about it before she arrived. He wouldn't have mentioned it if Lawrence did not tell him about it," she said quietly, still reeling from the shock of both the old man's death and the news of his illegitimate child.

"This is annoyingly ridiculous! I can't believe that grandfather could have been that careless and irresponsible. There is just no way he could have slept with someone as young as that. Especially not the daughter of his best friend. That is so disgusting! Absolutely shameful!" Jade said in a slightly raised voice as she paced around the study while the others were seated.

"Keep your voice down!" Evelyn cautioned, not wanting anyone else to overhear their discussion.

Because it was strictly family business, Sonia and Lucy were not in the study with them and were instead having dinner at the dining, so they had no idea what was going on, especially since they had come downstairs shortly after Kimberly left and the Hanks went into the study.

They had met the cook who led them to the dining on Evelyn's instruction, telling them the family were having a meeting.

As far as Sonia and Lucy knew, the meeting was about Lawrence's death and funeral, so while they waited for the family to finish up their discussion, Sonia and Lucy talked about Rebekah's interview which Sonia had missed.

"Well, that's not all she said," Desmond said after everyone was silent and they looked at him.

"What? There is more to this ridiculous tale?" Jade asked, and Evelyn glared at her, silently asking her to keep shut and let her father speak.

"She asked that Tom claim to be the child's father," Desmond said and Evelyn raised a hand to head which was already throbbing and Jade looked at her father slack-jawed while Bryan raised a brow.

"That's sick! Totally sick and shameless! Simply because she had both grandfather and grandson doesn't mean she can just spring up shit like that," Bryan said with disgust.

"Please don't tell me you're considering it, Tom! Tell me you're not even thinking about it," Jade interrupted Bryan in annoyance.

"Can you both keep shut and let your father give us the whole details?" Evelyn hissed impatiently and they all turned to Desmond who sighed.

Desmond went on to explain to them all that Kimberly had said about her relationship with Lawrence and how she had kept the pregnancy away from him and her family, and how her family had uncovered the truth about her child not being from artificial insemination as she had claimed.

"... She is worried about what this might do to Lawrence's reputation..."

"No, I don't think so. She is worried about what it might do to her own reputation if it gets out! Grandfather is dead, and if anyone should be talking about his reputation it should be us worrying about that not her!" Jade cut in, and Desmond sighed.

"Christ! This is all so crazy!" Bryan exclaimed as he slumped against his seat.

It was as though the day kept moving from one level of crazy to another and he was stressed out already.

All day he had been in a state of turmoil. He woke up to find Sonia feeling ill and had been worried about her, and then the news of his grandfather's death came, and now this. He wished the day could end already, or maybe he could open his eyes and found himself sleeping on his bed in Tom's house and realize it had all been an unpleasant dream.

"So, what are we going to do if we carry out a DNA paternity test and find out she is actually Lawrence's daughter?" Evelyn asked the one question that everyone seemed to be avoiding.

"Tom, you carried out a DNA test, didn't you? What was the DNA percentage?" Jade asked curiously and Tom who had been silent the whole time frowned.

"I didn't take note of that. It didn't occur to me to do so. All I checked for was the statement part that said she was not my daughter," Tom said simply.

"But you still have the result, right? Maybe we can check it now and put ourselves out of the misery. That way we can come to a decision on how to handle this now. The earlier the better," Evelyn said and they all agreed with her.

"Give me a moment," Tom said as he took out his phone and scrolled through his emails for the eCopy result which had been sent to his email account.

Too impatient to wait, Jade went to sit beside him, and once he found it and clicked on it, Jade's gaze went right down to the part where the probability of paternity was written.

It was twelve point five percent.

"I think she might be telling the truth. Tom shares DNA with the kid even if he is not the father," Jade announced as she rose again.

"We will still carry out a proper DNA test. The last I want is for her to come for me or dad next, claiming the child is ours," Bryan said dryly, and despite the seriousness of the situation Jade giggled.

"It would have been easier to believe had she said the child was yours," Jade said and Bryan scowled.

"I don't dig ladies who are older than me," Bryan said and before Jade could respond Evelyn shot her a look.

"Let's focus on the issue at hand," Evelyn said, and all eyes turned to her.

"There is no issue to focus on. Kimberly has to handle her business with her family and leave is out of it. The child is not mine and I'm not going to claim otherwise. It's as simple as that. Since the child is possibly grandfather's, she is part of the family whether or not we like it, and so we will take responsibility for her as a family..."

"That child might be our aunt," Jade cut in when it suddenly clicked, and Bryan chuckled.

"Mom, how do you feel about having a kid for a sister-in-law?" Bryan joked, and Jade giggled while Evelyn glared at them.

"This is hardly anything to joke about!" She hissed at them.

"Well, it's either we cry or we laugh right now. I can't believe I went from mourning my sweet old grandfather to laughing about the possibility of a three years old kid being my half aunt. This is all so wild," Jade said with a sigh.

Desmond cleared his throat to get their attention, "I stand with Tom on this. As much as I have no interest whatsoever in associating with the child as my father's kid, the responsible thing to do will be to care for her as she is part of the family. Her business with her family is hers and has nothing to do with us. I'm going to have dinner," Desmond said as he rose, ready to leave.

"I agree with you both," Bryan said and Jade nodded.

"I support it as well," Jade said, ready for the meeting to come to an end so she could go upstairs to her bedroom to give Harry a call since she was yet to speak with him since she arrived.

Evelyn stopped Desmond and Tom before they could leave, "Des? Tom? I would like to speak with you both privately," Evelyn said and Bryan and Jade took that as their cue to leave even though they didn't like being left out of the discussions.

They hoped she wasn't planning on convincing Tom to do what Kimberly wanted seeing as she was the only one who had not stated that she was in support of Tom's decision.

They knew just how close she had been to their grandfather and wouldn't put it past her to want to consider saving his face even in his death.

Tom raised a brow as he watched his mother and waited for her to speak.

Desmond also couldn't help wondering what she wanted to talk to them about.

After gathering her thoughts, Evelyn cleared her throat, "Initially I was going to address the whole family, including Sonia and Lucy, since you're all here. But I decided to speak with you both directly first before talking to the others," Evelyn said, looking from Tom to her husband.

"What is this about?" Tom asked, and Evelyn's brows pulled together.

"About the prank and everything else that followed last night," Evelyn said simply.

"Not now, mom," Tom said, thinking it was all wrong timing.

"I want us to get that out of the way so we can focus on everything else. I know you are both mad at me and probably only talking to me right now because of the situation of things. You all have expressed your disappointment in various ways..."

"Mom, I'm not mad at you. Let's forget about it. It's all in the past now," Tom said, and she shook her head.

"No, it's not. You might no longer be mad because of all that has happened, but I'm mad. And I'm disappointed in all of you, and I have to tell you exactly how I feel," Evelyn said, and Tom frowned.

"What?" Desmond asked in disbelief, and Evelyn nodded.

"Yes. You heard me right. I admit that I was wrong to have put the blame on Lucy the way I did. And I admit that I said things I shouldn't have said. I also admit that maybe I should have listened when you asked me to let the issue go, instead of probing further. For all of that I am sorry," Evelyn said and Tom nodded.

"Then what are you mad about when you know you are wrong?" Desmond asked, and she took in a deep breath.

"I am mad because you both made me feel like an unreasonable person. Last night I was willing to do anything for peace to reign because I hate not being on good terms with you, but that doesn't mean I agreed with all you said, Desmond. During dinner with Lawrence last week, Tom made a statement about not wanting to get married, and I expressed my worries to you. Did you at any point in that discussion tell me the reason Tom made such a statement even though you were aware of it already?" Evelyn asked, and Desmond said nothing.

"Go on. Answer the question," Evelyn urged him.

"No, I didn't."

"I'm glad you admit that you didn't. You made me believe you were fine with his decision and tried to make me think it wasn't a big deal and I shouldn't worry about it. You didn't even want us to talk about it. I AM HIS MOTHER! If there is anyone who is allowed to meddle in his business, I believe I have every right to be..."

"Mom..."

"Let me finish," she said, raising a finger to stop him from speaking.

"You might not have been on good terms with your father, Desmond, but I was. I always have been even before you met me. Lawrence has always been like a father to me. I see nothing wrong in sharing my concerns with him when I know he cares about Tom as well..."

"But I asked you to let it go, didn't I? Couldn't you have trusted me and taken my word for it?" Desmond asked and Evelyn shook her head.

"No, I couldn't. Not when you acted like it didn't matter to you. I know all my kids and I know Tom had always wanted to get married. I believed something was wrong and I needed to fix it whether or not you were interested in fixing it. If you had told me what the issue was, I never would have gone

to Lawrence! How could you withhold information from me, dismiss my concerns casually and expect me not to act on my own?" Evelyn asked hotly.

"I asked him to keep it to himself," Tom said in his father's defense.

"That doesn't change anything. I had already spoken to Lawrence about it before Tom told me Lucy was the one who didn't want to get married. You can call Lucy in here and ask her what I told her after that," Evelyn said, forgetting that she had promised Tom not to talk to Lucy about it.

"You talked to Lucy about it?" Tom asked with a frown.

"Yes, I did. I spoke with her about it because I needed to understand her. I won't apologize to you for doing that. I am allowed to worry about you. It is my duty as a mother. Worrying about my kids is what I do best and I will continue to do so until the day I draw my last breath. You can't ask me not to be interested or interfere in your life. I was not wrong to worry about you enough to ask for Lawrence's help. I admit that he went about it the wrong way, and I was surprised since all I actually expected him to do was talk to you. So, on behalf of Lawrence I apologize to both of you for the prank. I called you both here to apologize and also to express my displeasure," Evelyn said and then paused.

"Also, I see no reason why you couldn't handle this yourself and had to involve Lucy..."

Tom shook his head, "No. Don't bring Lucy into this. She did nothing wrong. The prank affected her too. She is my girlfriend. And maybe if they didn't take it further by contacting her as well, I wouldn't have let her get involved," Tom stated.

"Lucy did the right thing," Desmond stated flatly.

"Tom could have done that. Lucy has no relationship with Lawrence. It was disrespectful to have your girlfriend treat your grandfather that way," Evelyn said and Tom sighed.

"Alright. I apologize for that. I should have handled things myself. Listen, mom, I understand that you can't help worrying about me and interfering in my life but I'm an adult..."

"Let me ask you a question. Why did you send Harry to Jade when she was having a hard time with her last criminal case?" Evelyn asked, and Tom frowned, not understanding where that was coming from.

"Why else? She was in danger and needed to be taken care of," Tom said simply and she nodded.

"Good. Now tell me, how was it your business? I mean, Jade is an adult and fully capable of taking care of herself so why did you have to step in when she didn't ask you to?" Evelyn asked and Tom raised a brow.

"She is my younger sister and I have to look out for her whether or not she asks for my help. That was how you raised us." As the words left his lips he understood where she was headed.

"Good. In like manner, whether or not you are an adult, you are my son and I have to be involved in your business and do whatever I can to make sure you are happy, whether or not you ask for my help," Evelyn said and Tom sighed.

"How would you feel if Lucy's parents chose to meddle in our relationship?" Tom asked, and Evelyn shook her head.

"I knew all this was about Lucy. Tom, every family is unique in their own way. Her parents can decide not to meddle in her affairs, that is their style but it's not ours. I didn't raise any of you to mind your business. I raised you to mind each other's business and be there for each other. Family is allowed to meddle. I agree that there is a limit to meddling, and that's why I chose to respect your decision about sticking with Lucy. But what I'm saying right here and right now is that I won't stop being interested in you or your affairs. You are free to live however you want or do whatever you want after I'm no more," Evelyn concluded as she rose and both Desmond and Tom nodded before heading for the door.

Tom sighed as they rose too.

"I've heard you," Tom said as he rose.

"I will be addressing everyone tomorrow, including Lucy and Sonia. So, you can let her know what I said before then," Evelyn said and Tom nodded before heading for the door.

"I demand an apology from you Desmond. I accept that I was wrong, but you were wrong too. We agreed not to keep things concerning the kids from each other and you did that," Evelyn said as she held her husband's gaze.

"I just lost my dad..."

"And I just lost my father-in-law," Evelyn said with a scowl, letting him know she wasn't letting him off the hook.

"Alright. I'm sorry I didn't tell you about it. But that doesn't mean I'm okay with your actions either. You don't listen and I'm beginning to find it increasingly annoying," Desmond said and she nodded.

"I'm sorry. I will do my best not to go against you anymore," Evelyn said, and Desmond held out his hand to her and she embraced him.

"I won't forgive you for sleeping in the guest room," Evelyn said with her head on his chest.

"I needed to make a statement you would understand," Desmond said and she scowled.

"Yeah. Well, that was a very loud statement. I got it. So, don't do that next time. We should always talk things through," she said and Desmond sighed as he rubbed her back.

"It will be best if you don't things we have to fight over."

"Were you able to sleep last night? Did you enjoy sleeping without me?" Evelyn asked, and Desmond chuckled as he broke the embrace.

"Yeah. For the first time in a long time I was able to rest my arms without any weight resting on it," Desmond said as he took her hand and headed for the door, and Evelyn scowled as she followed him.

Chapter 697 Reaching An Understanding

By the time Lucy returned upstairs to Tom's bedroom, he had freshened up and waiting for her to join him in bed.

"You haven't had dinner yet. I brought you some of the sandwiches Samantha packed us earlier," Lucy said as she walked over to the bed with a tray containing the sandwich and a glass of soy milk.

"Milk?" Tom asked in amusement since he couldn't remember the last time he drank milk.

"Yep. It should help you sleep well," Lucy said and pointed to the tray after she carefully placed it on top of the nightstand near him, "Sit up and make sure you finish it all," she ordered and Tom raised a brow.

"Or what?" He asked in a mocking tone and she crossed both arms in front of her.

"Why don't you try me and find out?" She asked with a smirk before walking over to sit on the dressing table.

Tom smiled as he watched her and even though he didn't feel like it, he took a bite from the sandwich.

"Kimberly and Dawn were here earlier," he said in case she had not heard it yet and Lucy, who had just sat down to comb her hair turned to look at him.

"Kimberly was here with Dawn? When?" Lucy asked in surprise.

"When you were unpacking and freshening up. She wasn't here for long though," Tom said and Lucy nodded as she returned her attention to the mirror.

"I guess she must have come to sympathize with your family and find out the funeral details? She must be pretty devastated herself," Lucy said thoughtfully as she removed the hairband that held up her hair.

"Well, she came for a different purpose actually," Tom said, and Lucy turned in her seat to look at him as she brushed her hair.

"What purpose?" She asked with interest.

Tom sighed, "Dawn might actually be my grandfather's daughter," Tom said and Lucy's jaw dropped open in disbelief even as her eyes widened in surprise.

Seeing how stunned she looked, Tom smiled as he wondered if he had looked the same way when he heard the news.

"You are kidding, right?" Lucy asked, and Tom shook his head as he took another bite from his sandwich.

"I wish I was. But it's not so unbelievable, right? I mean the kid does look like me in a way," Tom said and Lucy pursed her lips.

"That's true. But how? I mean, your grandfather is over eighty years old and Kimberly is so young. It doesn't make sense that they both would have had such a relationship," Lucy said and Tom shrugged.

"People get involved with older people all the time," he said and she shook her head.

"I think that happens mostly when money is the major motivation. Kimberly is young, wealthy, and beautiful. She doesn't need to be in a relationship with a man as old as your grandfather when she can have a multitude of attractive young men," Lucy said and Tom shrugged once again.

"I'm sure she has her reasons for doing what she did. It doesn't change the fact that the kid is my grandfather's," Tom said and Lucy sighed.

"How did your parents react to the news? Was that why you all were locked up in the study?" Lucy asked and Tom nodded.

"Yes. My dad was stunned no doubt, and he didn't like it one bit," he said as he contemplated how to tell her about what Kimberly had asked.

"It's normal. I wouldn't like it either if I were in his shoes. Imagine having to find out after my dad's death that he had another kid," Lucy said with a shake of her head as she kept brushing her hair.

"Why did she decide to inform you about it so soon after your grandfather passed? Was he against your dad finding out before now? Or is there something else?" Lucy asked thoughtfully.

"It's sort of complicated," Tom said as he held Lucy's gaze.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Lucy asked, and Tom sighed as he told her all that Kimberly had said about her one night stand with their grandfather and how her family had found out she had lied.

"Although she messed up, I think that doctor's license should be withdrawn. He had no right to divulge her personal information whether or not they are her parents," Lucy said with disapproval before Tom could finish.

Tom's lips twitched in amusement. It was funny and sort of expected that that was what she picked to comment on out of all he had just said.

"What's funny?" She asked when she noticed the amusement on his face.

"Your reaction is funny. Anyway, in conclusion, Kimberly was here because she wanted me to claim to be Dawn's father," Tom said and Lucy rose up.

"What?" She asked in disbelief.

"She doesn't want her parents to know it was Lawrence, and since they already believe I'm the kid's father I should play along," Tom said and watched as anger lit up her eyes.

"She has some nerve! How dare her come here to make such a request?" Lucy asked hotly.

"Does she think you are stupid or what? Why do you have to ruin your reputation because you need to cover up for your grandfather? And what happens after you claim the kid is yours? She wants her parents to insist that you marry her or what? Because that is what I see coming up next," Lucy said angrily while Tom merely enjoyed her reaction since he had gotten over the shock and annoyance of the request already.

"Why aren't you saying anything? Please don't tell me you agreed to go ahead with it," Lucy asked glaring at him, and Tom chuckled.

"Why are you getting mad at me when I only told you what she said?" Tom asked in amusement.

"This is not funny, Thomas," Lucy said and Tom raised a brow.

"Now it's Thomas, huh? Next you're going to be calling me Mr Hank, I guess. Right, Lucinda?" He asked and Lucy's lips curved in an involuntary smile.

"I'm not joking. What was your response?" She asked and Tom beckoned to her to sit down next to him.

Lucy sighed as she went to sit down on the other side of the bed beside him and Tom took her hand.

"I would never have made such a major decision without talking to you first. And in this case, there is nothing to talk about. I won't complicate my life just to protect my grandfather's reputation. I'm sure he wouldn't have wanted me to do that," Tom said and Lucy relaxed.

"And your parents? Do they agree with your decision? What about Bryan and Jade?" She asked and he gave her a nod.

"We are all on the same page. Kimberly will have to find a way to deal with the mess with her family on her own. All we can do is be responsible for our little aunt," Tom said and Lucy paused as she tried to figure out who he was referring to, and then she giggled when she realized it was Dawn.

"Oh, my God! That is hilarious," she said as she flashed him an apologetic smile.

"You are free to laugh. I'm sure everyone would be able to laugh over it in due time," Tom said with a small smile.

"You are not going to change your mind later and decide to claim the child, are you?" Lucy asked and Tom shook his head.

"Claim my aunt as my kid? Then my dad's half-sister would be his granddaughter, and my mom's half-sister-in-law would be her granddaughter, and Jade's and Bryan's half aunt would their niece. That would mess up our family tree," Tom said with an and shake of his head making Lucy laugh.

"That's fine then. It is late already. Finish up your dinner so we can throat.

"She insists that she doesn't like how I let you handle things. She is go to bed," Lucy said as she rose to return to the dressing table.

"By the way, my mom wants to talk with everyone tomorrow about the prank and stuff," Tom said, and Lucy raised a brow.

"I thought it was resolved already?" Lucy asked and Tom cleared his throat.

"She insists that she doesn't like how I let you handle things. She is not blaming you for anything. She just doesn't like that I didn't handle things myself and thought it was disrespectful to my grandfather," Tom said, and Lucy simply nodded.

"Is that all?" She asked and Tom sighed.

"She also made it clear that she is not going to stop being interested in my business either," Tom said, and Lucy nodded once again.

"Are you not going to say anything?" Tom asked, and Lucy shook her head.

"I don't think I should. I'm sure you agree with her," Lucy said and Tom raised a brow.

"What does that mean?" He asked and she shrugged.

"Don't you agree with her? Are you going to say it hasn't crossed your mind that you should have handled things yourself instead of letting me get involved? You can be honest," Lucy said, but Tom said nothing.

"You don't have to feel guilty about agreeing with her. I have my regrets too. I was going to apologize to your grandfather, remember? I wish I didn't speak with about this at all. And I wish I simply accepted his apology and let you deal with everything however you wanted. Don't worry, I will apologize to her tomorrow," Lucy said with a sigh.

"Nobody is blaming you for anything, Lucy. If anyone is to be blamed it should be me. I should have handled things properly myself," Tom said softly and she nodded.

"I know. But I'm allowed to have regrets, am I not? This whole thing has taught me that you Hanks have your own way of handling issues. Expecting your family to do things differently simply because my own background is different, might be somewhat selfish and unrealistic. I'm going to learn to adjust and be more accommodating," she said as she resumed brushing her hair.

"By the way, she also said you both talked about your decision not to get married. What did she say to you?" Tom asked and Lucy shrugged without turning to look at him.

"She said she wanted you to be happy and if being with me made you happy then she was going to let us be regardless of my decision. She was very understanding," Lucy admitted, and that made Tom feel relieved in a way.

Tom said nothing as he watched her and did his best to finish up his late night snack. Once Lucy was done brushing her hair she went to pick up the tray and took it downstairs to the kitchen.

As she rinsed the glass and plate, Evelyn walked into the kitchen, "I thought you would be asleep by now," she said, and Lucy turned to face her.

"Tom just had dinner now so I'm cleaning up," Lucy said as she dried the glass and plate.

Evelyn smiled, "I'm glad he was able to eat something. Thanks for making sure of that. I was too distracted to pay attention to any of that," she said and Lucy nodded as she dried her hands.

"Can we talk for a moment?" Lucy asked and Evelyn looked at her slightly surprised since she had not expected that.

She had always been the one to initiate conversations between her and Lucy so this was new.

"Sure. We can talk in the patio," Evelyn said as she opened the back kitchen door and they both stepped outside.

They both sat on the swing, and Lucy adjusted so that she would face Evelyn, "Tom said you plan to address everyone tomorrow," Lucy started and Evelyn nodded.

"Yes. That's right."

"I was going to talk to you tomorrow, I could just as well do so now since we are both here," Lucy said and Evelyn turned curious eyes to her.

"I understand you do not approve of the way I handled the situation," Lucy began and Evelyn shook her head.

"I do not approve of you handling it. I agree that Lawrence was wrong to have pulled such a prank, but Tom should have been the one to scold his grandfather not you," Evelyn corrected.

"I'm sorry. I felt Tom was being too lenient and I wanted to handle it so that you all would quit meddling..."

"Meddling?" Evelyn asked with a small laugh.

"I love you, Lucy. And as I told you already, I do think of you as my daughter-in-law even though you're not married to Tom. I know my definition of family might differ from yours, and I also understand that you might not particularly like how things are done in this family, but I do not want you to come in and change how things are done," Evelyn said carefully.

"Change things?" Lucy repeated, and Evelyn nodded.

"Let me ask you a question, the day at the spa when that brat and her sister were instigating others to harm you, did you think Jade and I were meddling by handling things the way we did?" Evelyn asked and Lucy's brows pulled together.

"No. What you did was normal. I would have stepped in had the case been reversed," Lucy said and Evelyn raised a brow.

"Why? But it wasn't really our business, was it?" Evelyn asked and Lucy frowned.

"That doesn't mean you should stand by and do nothing when you know I'm in danger," Lucy said and Evelyn nodded.

"There are different kinds of dangers you know? We interfered because they were going to do you physical harm. What if it was an emotional harm or something else? Are we supposed to stand by and do nothing?" Evelyn asked and Lucy sighed.

"What are you trying to say?"

"I'm trying to say there is nothing wrong in getting involved in the business of those you love just to keep them safe and happy. That is the kind of relationship I raised my kids to have with each other. Tell me something, if Lucas suddenly said he never wanted to get married anymore, wouldn't you worry and try to find out what is wrong? Wouldn't your parents worry and try to fix it? Will you all just accept it and wish him luck?" Evelyn asked and Lucy's frown deepened.

"I don't know about my parents but I know I would want to find out his reason and I would try to talk him out of it but I wouldn't try to fix it," Lucy said and Evelyn smiled.

"And if he refused to tell you anything?" Evelyn asked and Lucy sighed.

"Alright. I get what you're trying to say," Lucy said and Evelyn smiled.

"I raised my kids to love and care for each other and to have each other's back. I raised them to interfere in each other's lives to ensure their happiness, and they have always been that way even when they didn't see each other often. However, they also know where to draw the line. I don't want you to change that, Lucy. You might be a private person, and I respect that, but don't try to change how things are done here. I've seen what happens in homes where everyone is allowed to mind their business, it's not what I want in my home. I told Tom already, and I'm telling you now as well. If there is anything wrong with Tom and I see the need to interfere, I will. I am his mother and I will do all I can to make sure he stays happy and safe. If or when you have kids of your own, I believe you will understand me better," Evelyn said and Lucy sighed.

There was no need to say more, especially since it was obvious that Evelyn wasn't going to change. This was an argument she was not going to win, so there was no need to push it.

And maybe she would try to see things from their perspective. That should help her find a way to accommodate their excesses as she knew they were also accommodating hers.

"Alright. I've heard you. Once again I'm sorry if I crossed a line. And thanks for your time," Lucy said as she rose to leave even though she had not said all she had in mind to say.

"Thanks for your understanding. I promise to discuss my worries concerning Tom with you going forward. That way we can both come to an understanding so I don't have to take any actions that might affect you both in anyway," Evelyn said as she rose and Lucy smiled.

"That's fair enough," Lucy said before bidding her goodnight.

Chapter 698 Daughterly Advice

Evelyn woke up earlier than usual the following morning, and got out of bed, ready to start her day.

Regardless of the circumstances, it wasn't every day she had the rare opportunity of having all her kids together at the same time under her roof. It had been such a long time since they all visited this way, and in as much as she was mourning her late father-in-law and friend, she knew she had to make sure her family was well taken care of.

She sent one of the housekeepers to go inform everyone in their various bedrooms that they should be down for breakfast by 8:30 A.M.

As she busied with preparing breakfast for her family, her thoughts drifted to Kimberly's visit the previous evening and she sighed as she thought about Lawrence and how much damage it could do to his reputation if the news got out.

Lawrence was a very respected world leader, and so many people would be disappointed to know he had been involved in such an illicit affair with his best friend's daughter to the extent of getting her pregnant.

No one was going to care about the real details. Everyone was just going to judge him, and then it would also affect the family in one way or the other.

She turned around, startled when she felt an arm come around her waist, and she smiled when she realized it was Desmond.

"Good morning, Eve. I was surprised not to find you in bed when I woke up," Desmond said as he kissed the crook of her neck and she giggled as she stirred the egg sauce.

"I have to feed my family. The kids are home after such a long time," Evelyn said and Desmond raised a brow.

"I can't remember the last time I saw you standing over the cooker this way. So, you can't cook for me but you don't mind cooking for the kids?" Desmond asked as tucked his chin in the crook of her neck.

"That is precisely the reason I stopped preparing your meals. You stopped joining me in the kitchen this way and making such romantic gestures," she said dryly and Desmond chuckled.

"Really?" Desmond asked as he bit her ear and she giggled as she turned around to look at him.

"Of course. Did you sleep well?" She asked, and he sighed.

"I did surprisingly. You missed a call from Janet. Andrew called to say he saw the news and they would be coming around later in the day," Desmond said, referring to Lucy's parents.

"That's fine. They must be aware that Lucy is around," Evelyn said and Desmond shrugged.

"I don't know. I didn't mention it just in case she had not done told them yet. She can do so herself," Desmond said and Evelyn smiled as she walked away from him to go take out the bread from the oven.

"Lucy is such a nice girl, you know," Evelyn said, and Desmond raised a brow as he went to pour himself a cup of coffee.

"Why do you say that?" He asked, and she shrugged.

"Because she is. I had a nice little chat with her last night after you had gone to bed," Evelyn said and Desmond raised a brow.

"What did you both chat about?" He asked curiously and she shrugged.

"We were trashing out our differences..." Evelyn paused and shook her head, "I suppose I did most of the talking," Evelyn said when she realized that she had not really allowed Lucy speak much.

"Of course, you did," Desmond said as he pulled out a stool by the kitchen island and sat down.

"What does that mean?" She asked and he shrugged.

"We both know you don't leave anyone much of a chance to say stuff when you have your mind set on what you want to say," Desmond said and raised a finger before Evelyn could argue.

"Let's not argue over that. It's too early in the morning. You are free not to agree with what I said, but no arguments," Desmond said and Evelyn scowled.

"Are you not going to ask me what I told her?" Evelyn asked and he shook his head.

"I don't think there is any need to. I can guess that you probably told her you won't stop getting involved in Tom's business and she agreed without putting up any argument," Desmond said and Evelyn looked at him curiously.

"How did you know that?" She asked and Desmond chuckled as he sipped from his coffee.

"Because I know you well enough, and I understand Lucy. If she had put up an argument you wouldn't have started by telling me Lucy is a nice girl, and neither would you have said the chat was nice. Lucy is much too smart to argue with you," Desmond said and Evelyn raised a brow.

"Meaning?"

"Meaning I'm sure she will find a way to handle the situation that won't require her fighting with you. The girl doesn't like conflicts," Desmond said and Evelyn sighed.

"How are you feeling today?" Evelyn asked to change the subject.

"I don't know how I feel or how I'm expected to feel considering the fact that I didn't even like him much. So, let's just say I'm okay and not thinking about anything," Desmond said and Evelyn scoffed.

"You liked him a lot. Do you think I never noticed how you followed up on every news that concerned him over the years?" She asked and he shook his head.

"That doesn't change anything. I'm mourning him as every other person would mourn him since he wasn't a father to me but to the world," Desmond said and Evelyn sighed when she remembered Kimberly again.

"The girl would be back again today, right?" Evelyn asked, and Desmond didn't need to ask her who she was talking about.

"I believe so."

"What can we do to help Lawrence?" She asked, and Desmond looked at her with a blank face.

"What do you mean what can we do to help him?"

"His reputation is at stake here and..."

"Is this your way of suggesting that we ask Tom to claim the kid as his?" Desmond asked suspiciously and Evelyn looked at him like he had lost his mind.

"Why would I jeopardize Tom's reputation to salvage Lawrence's? I loved your father, but my son comes first and I would never do or suggest anything that would hurt him in any way," Evelyn said fiercely, and Desmond relaxed.

"Good. I just wanted to ensure that we were all on the same page. Besides, I don't think there is any reason to worry about my father's reputation. I doubt that her parents would want to announce to the world that she got pregnant for such an old man. If I were her parents I would want to keep it under wraps so that it would remain a family secret," Desmond said reasonably.

"Do you really think so?" Evelyn asked, and he gave her nod.

"Yes. All we have to do is convince her to tell them the truth, and maybe offer to help her speak with them as well and assure them we will take full responsibility for the kid." Desmond said and Evelyn sighed.

"Alright then. Let's do that," she said with a nod just as Jade walked into the kitchen.

"Good morning," she greeted as she kissed her father's cheeks before going to pour herself a cup of coffee.

"This kitchen smells divine, mom. Why are you doing the cooking?" She asked when it occurred to her that none of the domestic staff were present.

"It's been a while since I had you all here with me, so I want to feed you. I've missed doing that," Evelyn said and Jade smiled.

"Nice. Can't remember the last time I ate something prepared by you anyway," she said as she took a seat beside her father.

"Did you sleep well?" Evelyn asked and Jade smiled.

"I did. I never realized how much I missed my room until I walked in there last night. It seemed like I walked back in time. Everything was still in their place," Jade said with gleaming eyes, and Desmond gave Evelyn a smug smile.

"Your mom said your room looked too much like a teenager's room and wanted to redecorate your room some time ago, but I opposed the idea," Desmond bragged and that earned him another peck from Jade.

"Thank you, dad. I prefer it just the way it is," Jade said and Evelyn rolled her eyes as Desmond rose and walked out of the kitchen to give mother and daughter room to talk.

"Apart from the fact that it looked like a teenager's bedroom, I thought one of the reasons you didn't want to come home was because it might remind you of your last visit home with that brat, so I wanted you to have something different when you come around," Evelyn said defensively.

"That was thoughtful of you, but I'm glad you didn't change a thing. The room has more pleasant memories for me than memories of that visit with him," Jade said as she took a sip from her cup.

"Well, that's good to know. I'm glad I listened to your dad. But don't you think you should change the room decor? The whole place looks pink and is covered with Barbie stickers. What if Harry decides to visit and sleep over? Wouldn't that room decor be too immature for someone like him?" Evelyn asked reasonably and Jade giggled.

"Harry is much too busy to visit. And even if he did, I'm sure he would manage the room as it is. After all he wouldn't be the first guy to sleep there..."

"I can't believe you are comparing that cow to Harry," Evelyn said with disapproval and Jade tittered with laughter.

"Cow?" Jade asked in amusement.

"Yes, he's a cow. And if I remember correctly which I do, Harry was here the last time you visited with the cow. I'm not sure he would be comfortable staying in the same room," Evelyn said thoughtfully.

"You are thinking too far ahead, mom. I'm sure Harry wouldn't be sleeping over. He will be here for the funeral and will most likely stay at the hotel or leave the same day," Jade said and Evelyn sighed.

"Well, you're going to have to change the room decor before before your wedding at least. I won't have my son-in-law sleeping there when you both visit after you get married," Evelyn said and Jade grinned.

"Alright. You can change it then. But leave my keepsakes and other stuff," Jade said and Evelyn nodded, satisfied.

"How do you feel, mom? I know how close you were to grandpa," Jade said, and Evelyn sighed.

"I'm okay I suppose. I will definitely miss him, but the living has to keep living, right?" She asked and Jade nodded.

"And thanks to the distraction, I'm thinking more about the little girl than I'm thinking of Lawrence right now," Evelyn said and Jade nodded.

"Me too. I wonder how her parents are going to take the news," Jade said thoughtfully.

"What else can they do other than accept it and move on? How are things going with Harry?" Evelyn asked, changing the subject and Jade smiled at the mention of Harry.

Her sweet Harry. She had spoken with his before going to bed and first thing that morning. The man knew just how to make her happy.

"Great. He's wonderful. I planned to spend the weekend with him before this whole stuff came up," Jade said and Evelyn smiled.

"I'm glad to hear that," Evelyn said and then Jade looked at her with interest.

"I saw you stepping out to the patio with Lucy last night," Jade said, and Evelyn nodded.

"Yeah. She wanted us to talk," Evelyn said and Jade raised a brow.

"I guess she talked to you about meddling and prying in their relationship?" Jade asked and Evelyn smiled.

"I guess she wanted to do that, but I didn't let her. Tom is my son first before he became her man. So, I will keep doing all I can to make sure he is okay," Evelyn said and Jade sighed.

"Well, maybe you should tone it down a bit," Jade suggested and Evelyn raised a brow.

"What?"

"Lucy is not the only one complaining about the way we meddle and pry. Harry has pointed out the same thing and so has Candace. Do you know what Harry calls it? The Hank trait. I've always thought it was normal and okay to pry as long as I'm looking out for the best interest of the person involved, but I'm not so sure about that anymore. When someone says you need to butt out of their affair, you should respect them enough to butt out," Jade said with a shrug.

"You are my kids and I can't butt out of your affairs. I am your mother, I have to look out for your best interest," Evelyn insisted stubbornly.

"No one is disputing that fact that you're our mother. But do you really think you know what is best for us more than we do? And would you rather upset us with your interference than trust us and listen to us? Your role at this point in our lives isn't to try to fix our lives for us. Your role is to advise us when we come to you for guidance," Jade said and Evelyn scowled.

"You are asking me not to do anything even when I see things not happening right?" She asked incredulously.

"What I'm saying is that it wouldn't hurt to give minding your business a try. I know it has become a habit for you. It is for me too but now I'm trying to change so I wouldn't always get on the nerves of those around me. You've lived your whole life looking out for us, maybe now you need to focus on looking out for yourself and enjoying your time with dad. Tour the world and have fun instead of focusing on us. We are fine and can take care of ourselves," Jade said and Evelyn frowned.

"Go set the table for breakfast. Your brothers and the girls should be down for breakfast soon," Evelyn said not wanting to continue with the unpleasant conversation anymore and Jade rose to do as she was told having said her piece.

Chapter 699 Family Breakfast

Lucy cleared her throat to get everyone's attention at the dining after they had eaten for some time and all eyes turned to her in surprise since she wasn't usually one to initiate a conversation or even contribute much during conversations.

Tom raised a brow as he looked at her, wondering what she wanted to say since she had not told him anything about addressing his family.

"I would like to address everyone since we are gathered here right now. I wouldn't want to disturb everyone by calling you out to talk later," Lucy explained, but no one bothered to eat as they waited for her to speak.

"First of all, I'd like to start by expressing my deepest sympathies. I may not have known Lawrence so well, but I knew you all loved him. Please accept my condolence," Lucy said and they all nodded but kept staring at her with varying degrees of curiosity.

"Now to the main reason I wanted to address everyone. I'm sorry for all the problems that my being Tom's girlfriend may have caused the family...."

"Lucy, don't...."

Lucy placed a hand over Tom's hand to stop him from interrupting her. She had thought long and hard about her conversation with Evelyn after Tom had slept off, and she had decided that she was going to say her piece before Evelyn addressed the whole family.

She knew that if Evelyn addressed everyone she wouldn't be able to say anything the same way it had happened last night, and she wanted to say what was on her mind in front of everyone since speaking with Evelyn in private had not worked last night.

"I understand that we are from different backgrounds and might not always agree on certain things. And I can also see how my decision to not get married to Tom might have led to Evelyn and Lawrence trying to help Tom, the result being the prank and the conflict that followed..."

"The prank and the conflict that followed had nothing to do with you. It was all my wife's fault," Desmond cut in, and Evelyn frowned.

"Desmond..."

"Let's let Lucy finish," Jade cut in before Evelyn could start arguing with her husband.

"Thanks, Jade," Lucy said before she continued, "Well, last night I got thinking that maybe if I did not get involved and so harshly ask Lawrence to confess to you, all of that misunderstanding wouldn't have happened," Lucy said and Sonia shook her head.

"I don't agree. Maybe all that was meant to happen," Sonia said, surprising everyone.

"What?" Evelyn asked with a frown.

"Yes. I think all of that needed to happen so that everyone would learn from it. I'm not okay with Lucy trying to take the blame for all of this when the truth is..."

"Babe," Bryan called, trying to stop her. The last thing he wanted was for her to get involved in all the mess and end up having a fight with his mother.

"What? You don't want me to say anything? So, if the situation was reversed you'd want me to sit there and take the blame like Lucy is doing? Jade, would you have let even Harry's dad do something like that to Harry and you?" Sonia asked, looking from Bryan to Jade.

"Neither of us supported our mom or grandfather. We all agree that it wasn't Lucy's fault. So, maybe we should all move past that now," Jade said as she took a bite from her bread roll.

"So, what are you all trying to say? That I don't have a right to worry about my son?" Evelyn asked, looking directly at Sonia.

"No one is saying that, mom," Bryan said in Sonia's defense.

"You do have a right to be worried. But I'm saying that it was wrong of you to blame Lucy for all of this. Lucy wasn't the reason for all that happened. Everything happened because instead of simply communicating with Tom, you decided that you needed something to be done. You could have easily talked to Tom and shared your concern with him before discussing with Lawrence. Lawrence could also have easily talked to Tom. Why did you both feel you had to do something?" Sonia asked and Evelyn raised her chin.

"Because Tom is my son," Evelyn said and before Sonia could respond Lucy spoke.

"He is also a full grown man. Why let him be CEO then? Why are you not running his company on his behalf if you find him so incapable of making his own decisions?" Lucy asked before Sonia could respond.

"I thought we were done with this and we reached an agreement?" Evelyn asked Lucy with a frown.

"You said your piece and I agreed. But I didn't say mine, and I want to say it now since it involves the entire family. I understand that you all like to look out for each other, but Tom is..." Lucy stopped talking when Tom rose.

"I think it's best I excuse myself if you're all going to keep talking about me as though I'm not present here," Tom said when they all looked at him.

"Sit down," Desmond ordered calmly.

"Dad..."

"Sit down. This is all happening because you failed to handle things as you should. You can either listen to them talk about you and make decisions that involve you like you're not present, or you can man up and make a decision for yourself. So, sit down," Desmond said sternly, and Tom took his seat once again.

Seeing that Tom was offended, neither Lucy nor Evelyn said another word and an awkward silence fell in the room as they all sat there quietly.

Desmond cleared his throat, "Lucy, I'm going to commend you for not letting Tom sweep everything under the rug. What you did had "I don't need to be in good terms with my father to determine what is right and wrong. If he wanted to be treated with respect, he to be done and I'm glad you did it..."

"You wouldn't be saying that if you were in good terms with Lawrence. It was disrespectful..."

"I don't need to be in good terms with my father to determine what is right and wrong. If he wanted to be treated with respect, he shouldn't have done such a thing. What did he expect? That everyone would laugh and tap him on the back for coming up with such a stupid prank?" Desmond asked, and Evelyn pressed her lips together.

"It is because Tom has always condoned your behaviour that it has gone on for this long, and I'm glad that Lucy is not having that," Desmond said and Evelyn eyed him with displeasure but Desmond did not pay attention to her.

"As Sonia rightly said, this was meant to happen. I agree that some adjustments needs to be made in the family and it will be made now that we are all here together. Although, we raised you kids to look out for one another, but I expect that as adults you would all understand where to draw the line. Eve, there is nothing wrong with you worrying about the kids. But they don't need you to fix their lives. I've always told you that. You can choose to talk with them but when you see they don't want to share their problem with you and they don't want you to get involved, you should leave it alone. Now all three of them have partners who come from different backgrounds and might not appreciate the meddling. You need to step back and let them be so you don't cause problems in their relationships," Desmond said and Jade nodded.

"I concur," Jade said in agreement.

"You are all asking me not to get involved in your lives?" Evelyn asked, looking from Jade to Bryan and then to Tom.

"We are asking you to let us do things our way. We are not kids anymore. We are capable of taking care of our business. Take for instance, I was supposed to take Sonia to the clinic for her first appointment but you insisted you go with her instead. I didn't like that, but I let you do it just for peace to reign..."

"Sonia didn't want you to go with her," Evelyn cut in defensively.

"I told her not to worry about it and would have taken her there myself had you not insisted on taking her yourself. I'm just saying, you are a great mom but you should know when to step back and let us handle our stuff ourselves," Bryan said even though he was disturbed by the tears that were now shimmering in Evelyn's eyes.

"No one is trying to hurt your feelings, mom. We love you, and we appreciate all you do for us. But all we are asking is that you let us handle stuff ourselves. If we need your help we will let you know," Jade said as she reached out to place an arm around her mother.

"Tom?" Desmond called when Tom remained silent and Tom sighed.

"First of all, I have no idea why you think I've always let her interfere in my private business. Mom can be too much some times but I've always handled it and she can attest to that. This whole stuff happened only because we have all spent more time together under the same roof in recent times than we have done in years. There is no way mom would have known much about my relationship with Lucy had we all not lived together. I was going to let it slide only because I believed there was no way it would repeat itself, but on second thought I decided to let Lucy handle it because she was also affected by it," Tom said and then rubbed his temple.

"Mom, Lucy did nothing wrong. Had I been the one who asked grandfather to report himself, dad would have been mad at you regardless. None of this was about Lucy. It was about you. So you can stop hiding behind that excuse now and take full responsibility for all that happened," Tom said calmly and tears dropped from Evelyn's eyes.

"I was only trying to look out for you because I love you," she said tearfully.

"I understand that, and I appreciate it. But next time I expect you to talk to me and do as I ask instead of doing what you think is best for me. If you are truly doing all this to look out for us, then you should be able to listen to us and do it as we want," Tom said and Evelyn sobbed softly.

"I've heard you all. I'm sorry. I will stop interfering in your lives," Evelyn said as she rose and excused herself from the table.

She couldn't help feeling heartbroken that all her kids were asking her to stay out of their businesses. She had given her life to raising them and they were her world, yet they were all asking her to mind her business and let them be.

Desmond, Jade, and Lucy rose at the same time to follow her, but Lucy looked at Desmond and Jade, "Please let me talk with her," Lucy said, and they gave her a nod before she walked away.

Lucy caught up with Evelyn before she walked into the guest room, "Evelyn," Lucy called softly, feeling bad that Evelyn's feelings were hurt.

"I'm sorry your feelings are hurt. It was not my intention to hurt your feeling," Lucy said when Evelyn stopped.

"I know. I just need a moment alone. You don't have to worry. I will be fine," Evelyn assured Lucy as she brushed off her tears.

"And I'm sorry. I really did not mean to put the blame on you. I know it's not your fault. All I wanted was to be able look out for my kids like I couldn't do for my sister. I'm sorry I need to be alone," Evelyn said and Lucy couldn't help feeling guilty as she watched Evelyn walk away.

Although she had brought up the discussion there because she hoped that Tom and Desmond would help her make Evelyn understand, now that they had done that she wasn't so sure anymore if she had done the right thing.

"You did the right thing," Desmond said from behind her as though he could read her mind and she turned to look at him.

"Don't worry about it. She will be fine," Desmond assured her.

He knew without a doubt that no matter how hurt Evelyn was, she would do her best to change now that she had heard directly from all her kids.

Chapter 700 Hurt Feelings

"I don't think you should have gotten involved in it," Bryan said as he and Sonia walked into Bryan's bedroom after breakfast.

"It's okay if you don't think I should have gotten involved," Sonia said and Bryan raised a brow.

"What?"

"It's okay for us not to always agree on everything. I did what I believed I needed to do. If you think it was wrong, it's fine. Since I also think you are wrong for telling me I shouldn't have gotten involved," Sonia said as she got on the bed and picked up up laptop.

"Song..."

"Bryan, let's change the subject, please," Sonia said testily.

Bryan sighed as he joined her on the bed, "I'm not saying this because I want us to fight. I just don't want you to be in a bad place with my mom," Bryan said softly.

"And you think I want to be in a bad place with her? I only stated a fact that you all were too relaxed to want to state," Sonia said, giving him a pointed look.

"You only did that because this was about Lucy..."

"Really? Are we back to that? You know what? I don't want to have this conversation right now. I will just go find somewhere quiet to do my writing," Sonia said as she started to rise from the bed, but Bryan held her back.

"Let's talk it out. I want us to talk not fight or argue," Bryan said calmly and Sonia looked at him.

"You agree that your mom was wrong but you also think it was wrong of me to point that out to her? Tell me, is it because we are not married yet and you think I'm not a part of the family so I shouldn't express myself freely? Should I excuse myself whenever you're having family discussions going forward?" She asked and Bryan frowned.

"Of course not. You know that's not what I mean. I'm only looking out for you, babe," Bryan said reasonably as he rubbed a hand down her arm to calm her since he could see she was upset.

"And I was looking out for Lucy because none of you were going to say a word," Sonia said and Bryan shook his head.

"That's not true. Lucy was handling things well enough and didn't need you to speak on her behalf. My dad had her back already. All I'm saying is I would prefer you stay neutral next time. If anyone should be in a bad spot with her, let it be me. I will speak up on her behalf next time. I just don't want you to be on bad terms with my family." Bryan said and Sonia raised a brow.

"You are not trying to ask me to apologize to your mom, are you?" Sonia asked suspiciously.

"I would appreciate it if you do because I don't want any friction between the both of you. My mom is big on respect and you came off a bit rude. She might have been wrong but she is still my mom and I love her. And I love you too and wouldn't feel comfortable knowing she is not happy with you," Bryan said and Sonia sighed.

"Alright. Fine. If that's what you want, I will apologize to her," Sonia said and Bryan kissed her forehead.

"Thanks," Bryan said and Sonia scowled.

"I'm a bit disappointed in the way Tom handled things earlier. I don't believe he wanted to walk away just like that," Sonia said when she remembered how he had been about to leave.

"I would have done the same. I don't think Lucy discussed with him before raising the subject there. He had every reason to want to leave. Tom has always been the closest to our mother and he already expressed how he felt to her the other night over the phone. He didn't have to speak up there in front of everyone to prove anything," Bryan said and Sonia shook her head.

"He should have been the one to do what your dad did," Sonia said but Bryan shook his head.

"And he has to do that in front of everyone in order for you to know he is defending Lucy? Do you want to know what I honestly think? Tom isn't necessarily upset because our mom went behind him to talk to our grandfather. He is mainly upset at her because she ignored what he said about letting things be and kept wanting to find out about Kimberly. And also because she tried to make it about Lucy instead of apologizing to him for not listening to him. The only thing we all blame our mom

for is trying to put all the blame on Lucy. If our grandfather had not pulled that prank and he had only talked to Tom about getting married, do you think anyone would be mad at her for seeking grandfather's help?" Bryan asked, and Sonia frowned.

"Not exactly," Sonia said honestly.

"So, how is it her fault that our grandfather pulled such a prank? Tom understands that it wasn't entirely her fault, and that was why he wasn't going to do anything about it. This whole thing put Tom in a bad spot of having to take sides..." Bryan stopped when Jade knocked on the door, and he went to open the door.

"Can I come in?" She asked, looking somewhat downcast, and Bryan let her into the room.

"I think we hurt mom's feeling," Jade said, feeling bad as she sat on the bed.

"No doubt about that," Bryan said with a sigh, and Sonia rose to excuse them but Bryan pulled her back on the bed once again.

"What should we do?" Jade asked, and Bryan shrugged.

"Nothing. Let's stay out of it and leave it to dad, Tom, and Lucy," Bryan said and Jade sighed.

"I don't like the way all of this is going. Maybe Lucy should have just let things be especially now that grandfather is no more. And you too, Sonia, you didn't have to also attack her. She must have felt like everyone was against her," Jade said, but to Bryan's relief, Sonia said nothing.

"It doesn't change the fact that we needed to talk to mom about this. We were not willing to do this because we didn't want to hurt her feelings, but Lucy made us face it. I've always found it annoying the way she gets the people who work for us to spy on us. All my previous assistants did that and I had to keep firing them until Mia showed up and proved she was different. Simon always reported to her about everything I did so it's no wonder he could rat me out to Anita and to the press. In case you didn't notice, Adolf does the same to Tom. I don't know how she keeps tabs on you, but I'm sure she did too. It is all a lot. What I'm trying to say is that this discussion was necessary. It may not have happened at the best time or in the best way, but we needed to talk to her about stepping back. She might be hurt now, but I know once she gets past this feeling she will understand us and do better," Bryan said, and Sonia eyed him, not sure where he stood.

One moment he was defending his mother to her, and the next he was sounding as though he had been tolerating her for so long and waiting until now to speak out.

Jade sighed, "She told me some time ago that she did a background investigation on Todd, and grandfather did on Harry before he started business with Tom," Jade said and Bryan sighed.

"You see what I mean? I understand they were trying to look out for, but that's too much," Bryan said and Jade nodded.

"I don't suppose she did any background search on Lucy and I?" Sonia asked with a slight frown.

"She didn't have to. The scandals told her all she needed to know about the both of you," Jade said and Sonia relaxed.

"You know what I think? It's our fault. If we had been honest with mom this whole time and told her how we felt, Lucy wouldn't have had to be the one to do it," Jade said after some time, and Bryan nodded in agreement.

Away from there, as Lucy joined Tom in his bedroom, she could tell that he wasn't happy with her for raising the discussion during breakfast without discussing it with him first.

Although he did not say a word, but she had come to know him well enough to know when he was upset.

"You are mad at me, aren't you?" Lucy said when Tom said nothing to her and kept his gaze on his laptop.

Tom raised his gaze from the laptop to look at her briefly, "I'm glad you are aware," Tom said as he shut down his laptop.

to stir things up. I know you well enough to know that was a calculated move. That is my family out there. If you were going to "I only wanted to clear things up before your mom brings it up."

"That did not look like you were trying to clear things up. I know you, and that's not how you clear things up. You deliberately tried to stir things up. I know you well enough to know that was a calculated move. That is my family out there. If you were going to address them, you should have spoken to me first, especially since this involves me," Tom said as he rose to face her.

"I wasn't trying to stir things up. I know I should have told you beforehand..."

"Just last night you assured me you were going to apologize to her and do your best to adjust and be more accommodating of them..."

"I did apologize to her already and was getting to the other part before all the interruptions," Lucy cut in.

"Do you really expect me to believe that was what you had in mind? Someone who planned to apologize wouldn't say some of the things you said out there..."

"You mean what I said about her running the company in your stead? Cause that's the only thing I know I said wrong there. I was out of line and for that I apologize."

"You shouldn't have said anything in the first place. Things were messy already..."

"I wouldn't have had to utter a word if you had handled it all yourself from the beginning," Lucy hissed irritably, and Tom frowned.

"I beg your pardon?" Tom asked in a tight voice.

"You heard me. Are you scared of your mom? While I agree that I may not have handled things right, it wasn't in my place to handle any of this in the first place. Do you have any idea how mortified I was the first time I met your mom and she told me to 'keep things down tonight'? Do you think I don't know Adolf reports everything to her? You knew about it the whole time but did nothing about it. Do you think I reacted this way just because of the prank?!" Lucy asked and Tom shook his head as he headed for the door, not willing to get into an argument with her.

"Sure. You can walk away. You wanted to do that earlier during breakfast anyway. So, go ahead and leave. Or better still, you don't have to leave. I will leave since this is your home and I'm causing too much trouble for everyone. I was wrong and I admit it, but you have no right to be mad at me

when you're the one who put me in this position and you're the one making me look like the bad one now," Lucy said as she looked around for her stuff.

Tom shook his head and continued for the door, but before either of them could leave the bedroom, a knock sounded on the door and Tom scowled as he opened the door, "Your parents want you downstairs. They said to tell you that Kimberly is here," the housekeeper announced before going to pass the same information to Bryan and Jade.