

# Becoming Strangers Again Chapter 1-5

Posted by Adminh, 774

CHAPTER 1 LILY My life would have been so perfect, married to a man who makes my heart flutter, a man, whose smile is capable of making me forget every other worry, whose words give me instant hope. Everything would have been perfect if the heavens blessed us with a child of our own. Although Ryan doesn't say it to my face, I know he wants a child; he desperately needs one as much as I do. I see him staring at little kids at the coffee shop for far too long, I catch a glimpse of him smiling at baby pictures on the internet. Having gone to the clinic countless times, and having seen different specialists, we were told that we were perfectly fine and that the baby w

uld come at the right time. Waiting for that baby for two years now is almost making me desperate. Ryan's love for kids makes him visit the orphanage twice every year, and today is the second time for the year. Although I'm late, I have a perfect excuse. I've been baking some cookies for the children at the orphanage which took most of my time. Pulling the car over in the parking lot, I got down, walking over to the trunk. The staff and volunteers at the orphanage who recognized me, approached me to assist in carrying out the cookie boxes from the trunk. Stepping aside, I let them carry the boxes as my eyes wandered around in search of my husband. It didn't take much effort to find him, because Ryan always has a unique way of standing out. "We're done with the boxes, ma'am." A female voice informed me, taking my attention away from Ryan and the lady He seemed to be in a deep conversation with. It was kind of difficult to figure out who the lady was since her back was faced in my direction. "Did you get the toys in the back seat?" I asked the young lady who shook her head before proceeding to get the toys. Locking the car, I sashayed towards my husband, already formulating an apology speech for my tardiness in my head. However, my step was fluttered when the lady who had been backing me turned to the side. Stephanie, Ryan's ex-finance. When did she get back to the country? Slowly moving my eyes from her face, I shifted it to Ryan who was smiling widely at something she said. I've never seen my husband smile this widely, at least not towards me. You see, in every relationship, there is always someone who loves the most, and I think that's me. I have always loved Ryan dearly, hoping that one day he'll love me as madly as I loved him. At least he hasn't cheated on me with other women all these years, and that gives me hope that one day, he'll love me as insanely as I loved him. Maybe, just maybe having a child with him should be able to solve that. Masking the panic I felt at the sight of Stephanie, I cleared my throat before approaching them. "Babe!" I called out, walking over to Ryan to give him a peck on the cheek. "I'm sorry I'm late." His hands lay limply at his side. "It's no news, Lily, you're never on time." I'm never late, just that he's always too early. Not sure how to respond to that, I moved my attention to Stephanie, forcing a smile for the sake of courtesy. "Hello, Stephanie." I stretched out my hand for a handshake to which she accepted. "I had no idea you're back in the country." Her grey eyes flickered to Ryan and she smiled fondly at him. "Ray never told you?" Ryan shrugged. "I didn't see the need to." He didn't see the need to?! His ex-fiancé who broke things off with him a few months before their wedding returned to the country and he didn't see the need to tell me that he met her? I faked yet another smile for the paparazzi. "Let's go in, we're

already late as it is." I tried to reach for his hand but he slipped it into his pocket. "I'll see you tomorrow at the office." He informed Stephanie, and smiled at her one last time before heading towards the orphanage entrance, leaving me standing like a fool. Trying not to feel embarrassed over the fact that my husband just openly rejected my touch, I chuckled nervously. "I'll see you around," I muttered, ready to walk away from her. "It's surprising that I've been in this country for three months, working with your husband and he never told you about my return?" She chuckled. "Just how damaged is your communication life with your husband?" Tilting my head, I observed her slowly. "You heard him yourself Stephanie, he didn't see the need to." I met Ryan when he was wounded over the hurt and heartbreak she inflicted on him, I helped him heal, so she has no right whatsoever to act like she belongs to his side. "My husband and I tend not to discuss irrelevant issues, like our past." "I'm standing before you honey," she deadpanned, "and I'll be meeting with him tomorrow, I'll be working late nights with him in the future. Does that sound like the past to you?" "That sounds like a woman who is trying to ignite not only jealousy, but doubt in me." I took a step toward her, making sure to keep my face neutral so the paparazzi wouldn't be able to figure out what was going on here. "I trust my husband, Stephanie; I trust him not to go back to his old vomit." She threw her head back and laughed loudly. "Your naivety is entertaining." She mused. "I'll see you around cupcake." With that, she turned and walked away. I took deep calming breaths before going to join my husband, hoping that my bad mood would not reflect on my behavior towards the kids or my interaction with them. \*\*\*\*\* I had to wait until we were in the confined of our home before bringing up the issue of Stephanie. Watching him flip through the magazine, I thought of how best to bring up the topic. "Why didn't you mention you were working on a project with Stephanie?" I asked, decided to be blunt with my question. "I thought I gave you an answer to that question already?" Ryan responded without looking up from the magazine. "How can't you see the necessity to tell me that your ex is back in town and you're working with her?" I asked him with a baffled tone. "How would you feel if my ex shows up and I start working with him without informing you?" Closing the magazine, he dropped it on the table and stared at me with a stoic expression. "You don't have an ex, Lily, and you don't have a job. So, I can't really picture such a scenario in your case." "And whose fault is it that I don't have a job?" I snapped at him, feeling attacked by his statement. "I told you to quit your job because I wanted you to focus on this family." He folded his hands. "Two years later, it's still just the two of us and you show up for every event late." My heart dropped at his words. "Are you insinuating that I'm the reason why we have no child?" He heard the doctors, we were both healthy, so why is he blaming me for this? "Are you for real Ryan?" "Don't expect me to always explain myself to you, Lily, you haven't earned it." Grabbing his glass of wine, he stood to his feet. "What do you mean by I haven't earned it, Ryan?" I equally stood to my feet. "I am your wife Ryan in case you've forgotten." He looked me straight in the face, his face still stoic and expressionless. "If you're my wife, then start acting like it." He turned to walk away but stopped at the doorway. "About the charity ball tomorrow night, don't bother getting ready." With my appetite already gone with the mood, I pushed my plate away. "And why shouldn't I get ready for it?" "Mum needs your help in the garden." He responded. "Tomorrow night?" What will I be doing in the garden late in the night? "What happened to the daytime?" "She's a busy woman." He deadpanned, letting the silent 'Unlike You'

float in the air, “and the flowers are night bloomers. Make yourself available for her tomorrow night, and try not to be late.” “Ryan, I don’t think\_” “Don’t argue Lily, learn to be grateful.” With that, he walked away from the dining room. I was left standing all alone, wondering what the hell just happened.

## Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by **Adminh**, 618

Chapter 2 I don’t think I can ignore this anymore. The constant tiredness, oversleeping, and inability to keep food down. Although I started feeling nauseous two days ago, the tiredness and oversleeping started over a month ago. Rolling to the side, I ran my hand over Ryan’s side of the bed, and as expected, it was cold. I was hoping last night would be different, but he didn’t sleep in as usual. Ryan spends most of his nights at the office now. I understand the fact that he is working on a new project, but I’d like to see mor of my husband. The soft knock on the door pulled me out of my thoughts, Rolling out of the bed, I grabbed my robe before answering the door. Bella, the cook stood at the other end of the door. “Good morning, ma’am. Breakfast is ready. Would you like to have it in your bedroom or the dining room!” The thought of breakfast made my stomach churn. “I won’t be having breakfast today” I informed her, “Sorry for the inconvenience. She nodded. “What about Mr. Williams, will he be having breakfast?” Ryan hasn’t been home in one week; well at least he hasn’t been home when I’m around. “Yes, he won’t be having breakfast too.” It’s better than telling her that my husband hasn’t been coming home. Bella gave me a short bow before walking away. Closing the door, I walked into the shower, took a quick bath, and changed into something suitable for the day before leaving to meet up with my doctor. Becky has always been a friend, we met during my wedding preparation, and ever since, we’ve clicked, and the fact that she’s a doctor is a plus. Picking up the p picture frame of her family on her desk, I smiled at her cute son. Jayden has always been a sweetheart. The door opened and Becky sashayed in. “I’m sorry for keeping youwaiting Lily.” She apologized as she took

a seat. “Did you wait for long?” I returned the picture to its initial position. “It’s fine, I haven’t been waiting for long.” I jerked my head at the nuts on the table, “this kept me company by the way.” Chuckling, she leaned back and stared at me scrutinizingly. “You look sick. Are you okay?” I shook my head in response to her question “I look sick because I feel sick.” I’m the type that hardly falls sick. “I’ve been feeling tired these days, I fall asleep at any given opportunity and I’ve been throwing up and feeling nauseous at the mention of food.” “Any fever!” She asked and I shook my head. “When was the last time you got your period Lily?” My period! I glanced at the calendar on her wall I was supposed to get my period last week. “I’m a week late,” I replied, trying not to get over- excited. Many times, I’ve gotten my hopes high, and many times it was crushed. “Did you get your period last month?” She asked again. My brows furrowed into deep concentration as I tried to remember if I got it last month “I don’t think so, Becky.” My hand went to my stomach. “You think I’m...” She smiled. “Let’s not jump to a conclusion until we have confirmed it through test.” Becky encouraged. Getting off her seat, she grabbed my hand and led me towards the lab where my blood was taken for

the test Although Ryan told me that I wouldn't be going to the event. I went ahead to shop for a dress, just in case he changed his mind. Walking into the store, I respectfully rejected the assistance of the salesgirl, opting to walk around myself and pick out something I liked. An hour later, I ended up with three dresses which I liked, and since I wasn't low on cash in any way, I decided to go for the three dresses. Tonight. I will wear them before Ryan and maybe he will change his mind about me not going to the gala. as sinile when I was about to walk into the fitting room when my phone vibrated in any purse. Fishing it out, my lips stretched into a saw Becky's name on the scrECTL young lady who walked in with me to help with the dress. All alone. I Swiping to the receive soon, I walked into the fitting room and dismissed the your Inally gave Hecky my undivided attention. Is the result out?" 11:28 AM Chapter 2 "Yes," her cheerful tone told me to expect some good news. "You are pregnant Lily," she blurted out, "the result came out positive." At first, I was frozen, unable to scream or shout, because I was still in disbelief that I was finally carrying my child. "I am going to have to call you back Hecky," I need to speak with Ryan. I need to share this news with him. "Thank you so much for this great news, Becky, you don't know how happy I am right now," Disconnecting the call, I hastily walked out of the dressing room. "Ma'am," the young lady called out, "are you ready to fit the dresses?" Fit what dresses? I have more important things to do. "Package the three dresses and have them sent to my house; I will pay via your website." I ar a regular, so my address isn't a problem, and they know that I do not owe them for any reason. If peradventure I'm low on cash. I do not bother buying Strutting out of the store. I got into my car and dialed Ryan's number to find out if he was still at the office, but my call went unanswered. I called his secretary instead who picked up instantly. "R&W Constructions. How may we help you?" "It's Mrs. William on the line." I said, "I just wanted to know if Ryan is in the office." "Good day, ma'am. I apologize for not recognizing your voice, and no, Mr. Williams isn't in his office. He closed for the day early today." He left already? My eyes went to the dashboard our of reflex and I frowned at the time. It is just two in the afternoon. "Thank you, Martha." Disconnecting the call, I opted to drive home instead. There is every probability that he isn't home, but since he isn't picking up my calls, I can as well go home and check if he is there. Pulling over in the parking lot, I noticed an unfamiliar car parked next to Ryan's car. Curious to know who was home with him, I turned off my engine and quickly made my way into the house. Do not get me wrong, I do not think he is cheating on me, that is something Ryan wouldn't do, but then he isn't the type to have visitors, which only makes me more curious. Stepping into the living room, I found it empty. I was about to go upstairs to search for him in his office when his familiar voice called out to me from the dining room. I changed directions instantly. On entering the dining room, I halted at the sight of the guest; what is Stephanie doing in my house? Trying not to let my thoughts show, I stopped right beside my husband. "I called your secretary and she told me that you already left for the day. Is everything alright?" Ryan doesn't leave the office early even if he is sick. Uttering no word in response to my question, he dropped a big brown envelope before me. I glanced at the envelope with furrowed brows, wondering what was going on. "Open it." He instructed with the tone he takes with his secretary anytime she is getting on his nerves. Unable to keep the worry from my eyes, I picked up the envelope and opened it. Dipping my hand into it. I pulled our documents from within. The other content of the documents didn't matter to me at the moment, not when

the heading was glaring at me. "What's going on Ryan" whispered. for a divorce. He shook his head. Slowly turning to face me whilst still scared, he crossed his hand. "What does it look like Lily!" he rasped, "I am asking for a divorce, "Scrap that, I am demanding a divorce." 11:28 AM Chapter 3

## Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, 497

Chapter 3 LILY My afternoon did not go as planned at all. When I entered my car to drive home, what I envisioned was telling Ryan about the pregnancy, and in

my imagination, he lifted me into his arms and peppered my face with kisses, telling me how we were going to be perfect parents. Divorce papers weren't part of that imagination at all. I was still seated in the same spot that Ryan was seated a few hours ago when he gave me the divorce papers. My legs had given out the moment he ignored my questions and walked away with Stephanie, and that was five hours ago. The distant sound of the front door opening and the soft thuds of footsteps proved that he was home. Dragging myself up from the dining chair, I gripped the papers tightly and went in search of the man who vowed at the altar that he would love me till death do us part, the man who swore never to hurt me or cause me any pain. I walked into our bedroom in time before he walked into the bathroom to take a shower, "What is going on Ryan? What is the meaning of this?" I flung the papers at him and they went flying all over the room. "This is the second time you are asking me that he deadpanned, "don't you have any more questions after going through the divorce agreements?" I can't believe what I am hearing "I did not go through any agreement!" I yelled at him, "And I won't be going through them, not until you tell me why you are thinking of divorcing me." Ryan sighed. "I am not thinking about it Lily, it is already a reality. Know the difference." I glared at him. "Is that all you are going to say?" I growled but he shrugged in response, looking indifferent to the whole thing "What was Stephanie doing here?" is she the reason why he is leaving me! "Why was your ex-girlfriend in our home when you chose to give me the divorce papers! Folding his hands, he stared at me with a tired expression. "She is a lawyer," he drawled out as though I was dumb or something- She is no divorce or family lawyer," I reminded him, "so don't make it seem I do not have the right to question her presence. Biting my lips hard, I tried to keep the tears in "Is she the reason you are divorcing me?" He stared at me intently without giving me a response. My heartbeat quickened as my lungs threatened to collapse. "Why aren't you answering Ryan I expected him to assure me that whatever I was thinking was all in my head, but his silence made me think otherwise. "Why aren't you saying anything?" I bellowed. "Because I am wondering how this happened. He spat, flicking his hand between us, "How did I end up here?" I exhaled shaky breath. "End up where?" please don't tell me he is regretting getting married to me because I might end up losing my mind. "Here." He repeated. "Look, there are certain decisions that we take that do end well for us. Let us take this marriage as one of them. can feel my lungs contracting no matter how hard I try to prevent it "This is because of Stephanie right? Everything was okay until she showed up again and you suddenly want to divorce me" "This has

nothing to do with Stephaniel” he roared angrily, “this has everything to do with us.” He inhaled deeply. “I have had a long day Lily, and I really want to take a shower and get ready for the team of designers who will be getting me ready for the gala.” He turned to walk away but I stopped him. “Is this because we don’t have a baby yet?” if that is why he is leaving me then he shouldn’t because the baby is already here “Baby?” he smiled sadly, “you know Lily, I have never been so glad that we haven’t had any baby since we got married.” My lips trembled, “what do you mean by that?” “I mean, there is no baby to deal with the aftermath of our divorce, and also no reason for us to see each other or tolerate each other.” “Tole\_” unable to take in air anymore, I began gasping. “I can... can’... Byan.....” He walked over to the drawer opened it, pulled out a paper bag then tossed it over to me. “You already know the drill,” he said flatly, “take slow breaths into the paper bag and you should be fine.” Without sparing me another glance, he turned and walked into the bathroom, slamming the door behind him. Watching my husband leave while I struggled for breath pained more than I could have imagined. I ended up not going to the gala, nor did I take his mother’s call for gardening. I wasn’t in the right state of mind to interact with anyone right now. 11:28 AM Chapter 3 If I face Ryan’s mother right now, I might end up snapping at her or cursing her which isn’t something I should do since I am trying to get Ryan to change his mind about this divorce, so I locked myself away in our bedroom and watched the gala live on TV hoping to take my mind away from the ordeal that has hit me. Watching the guests arrive for the red carpet, watching the camera capture them, and watching them pose for the camera made me wonder just how strong some of them are. I know for a fact that some of them are being faced with different problems, yet they smile at the camera as though all is well. I wonder if I can be that strong. I was still staring blankly at the screen when Ryan suddenly showed up for pictures on the red carpet, only that he wasn’t alone. Clinging to his arm with a wide smile is Stephanie The paparazzi became even more aggressive with their picture, no doubt wondering why he showed up with his ex to the event instead of his wife. This was Ryan making it known to the world that all is not well between us, that our marriage is about to crumble. His silent announcement wasn’t what scared me or broke my heart, rather it was the way he stared at Stephanie as she posed for pictures, the way he helped her with her dress, and the way he smiled widely when she whispered something in his ear. I watched my husband through the screen behave in a manner I have always yearned for, only that it wasn’t directed towards me but to his ex- girlfriend. He is looking at her like a man in love and he isn’t even bothering to hide it. How much more humiliation do I need to understand the fact that I have lost my husband to her? How much more heartbreak must I endure? He claims that Stephanie isn’t the reason for our crumbled marriage, but he is either lying to me or himself. Stephanie Waper is the reason my marriage is coming to an end.

## **Becoming Strangers Again**

Posted by **Adminh**, 590

LILY I have been avoiding the truth and reality for a week. Ryan behaves as though I do not exist, he comes home when I am asleep then leaves before I wake up, and the few times that I am awake when he returns, he simply ignores me. I want to give it one last

try, to try to save my marriage one last time, but Ryan isn't even giving me an opportunity "Lily," Becky called out, pulling me out of my thoughts. "Are you okay? You've been staring blankly at your juice for some time now." Smiling tightly at her, I picked up the glass and took a sip. "Sorry about that, but I just have a lot of things on my mind, that's all" The fact that I am boulding everything up while dealing with morning sickness is making the whole thing exhausting. "Is Ryan not happy about the baby?" Becky asked in a concerned tone. "You both seemed like you wanted to have a baby badly" Biting my lips, I stared into my glass to keep the tears from falling "You haven't told him, have you?" Trust Becky to quickly figure everything out. I shook my head. "I haven't told him yet."

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diately and sat down on the chair next to me. "You were ere excited about the news that day Lily, and it has been a week Why haven't you told him!" I remained mute, contemplating whether I should discuss my marriage issues with her or not. Becky reached forward and took my hand into hers. "You can talk to me. Lily. I always opened up to you whenever I had issues with Derek and you helped me fix them The tears rolled down and I reluctantly wiped them away. "This isn't just an issue Becky," I whispered, "Ryan wants a divorce." She gasped. "A what?" blinking rapidly, she tried to make sense of the situation. "What happened? Why is he leaving you?" I shrugged, hating myself for shedding tears in public. I guess he fell out of love with me." Seeing how he is with Stephanie; I wonder if he was ever in love with me. "He fell..." she smacked her lips, "what does that even mean!" Becky placed her index finger on my jaw and lifted my head. She wiped my tears with her thump. This has something to do with the girl he attended that gala with, right?" I shook my head in denial "Don't be silly girl!" she chastised softly, "which man goes to an event without his wife but with his ex?" she scoffed, "I didn't want to say anything about it because you weren't talking about it either." Not sure how to respond to that, I moved my gaze from her. "I can't bring myself to tell him that I am pregnant, not after he told me that he is grateful we don't have any baby." Her eyes widened. "He said that?" she exclaimed and I nodded. "Have you tried talking to his mum? Maybe she can help talk some sense into him." Mr. Sarah Williams? "She will be ecstatic to hear that Ryan is divorcing me." I mused, "She almost missed the wedding Becky, that is how much she hates the fact that I am married to him." don't get me started on his father. They all see me as a failed business deal "And his father?" she asked, I understand that women can be dramatic at times. Have you tried talking to his father?" I shook my head. "Richard Williams is a businessman through and through. That man hasn't said more than twenty words to me since I got married to Ryan. "Stephanie's family has the biggest law firm in the country, and if Ryan had gotten married to her. Waper law firm would have backed R&W Construction up legally for generations. I think he will be glad to hear that Ryan wants to get back with Stephanie." Becky sighed. "So, what are you going to do!" "I am going to have a conversation with Ryan for the last time and ask him if this is what he really wants, if he insists, I am going to give freedom. him his Becky cursed under her breath. "Be sure to get enough settlement from him, you deserve it after what his family put you through throughout this marriage duration" She seemed as pained as I am about the situation, "you literally

planted flowers while the rest of the family merry inside.” I chuckled, unable to help it, “I actually liked planting those flowers.” It gave me time to escape their judgmental glares. Later that night, Ryan walked in as usual, probably thinking that I was asleep. I let him have his shower and change into his pajamas. The moment he crawled into the duvet; I opened my eyes. “We need to talk.” 11:28 AM Chapter 4 Ryan sighed. “Can’t it wait till morning?” he asked, “I am really tired.” “You will be gone before I wake up.” He puts in too much effort to avoid me. “So no, it can’t wait till morning.” “o this?” I asked calmly. “There is no His face tightened “What do you want to talk about?” “You know what I want to talk about.” I stated firmly, “It is about the divorce, are you sure you really want to do going back if I sign those divorce papers.” Craning his neck, he stared at me. “I am a business man Lily; I do not say or do things that I do not mean.” He folded his hands, “before I reach any decision, I think about them carefully to be sure I do not have regrets.” I bit my inner lips. “Can you at least tell me why?” Ryan cursed under his breath. Do I need to spell it out for you Lily!” “Yes, I do not want to assume things, I want you to spell it out for me.” “Our marriage has become an unwanted distraction, and I think it is best we let each other go on good terms before the feeling in me grows into something else.” “Something else like what? “Hatred.” He deadpanned. “Anger and frustration, the list can go on if you want.” Lifting my left palm, I shook my head. “That won’t be necessary,” As much as I do not want to ask this, I have the right to know. “Did you ever love me, Ryan?” He stared at me intently, unable to answer my question I chuckled bitterly, “Do you love Stephanie?” again, he remained mute, but his eyes gave me the answers I needed. Wiping the silly tears that rolled down, I reached for the bedside drawer, pulled out the divorce paper, picked up a pen, and signed on each before passing it over to him. “Goodnight Ryan This is the last time we are going to share the same space,

## Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 5 LILY As the sun rose the following morning. I parked my belongings shortly after Ryan’s departure for work. Climbing into my car, I embarked journey to Becky’s place. The night before, I had phoned her to share the distressing news, and she graciously offered her home as a sanctuary until the divorce proceedings concluded. Becky’s sacrifice to remain home today was solely on my account. Upon arriving at her residence, I spotted her standing in the driveway, patiently. awaiting my arrival. Bringing my car to a stop, I stepped out and walked into Becky’s embrace. Tears streamed down my face, mirroring the heartache of a child who had just lost her favorite treat. my hudand Well, maybe my tears is justified, seeing that I just lost my Becky signaled her housekeeper to retrieve my bag from the trunk, then guided me into her home, leading me straight to the guestroom she had arranged for my stay. “I’m sorry, baby girl she murmured softly as she patted my back. I am really sorry.” My tears dampened her shirt, but she didn’t seem to mind. “All I did was love him,” I sobbed. “All I did was dedicate my time and affection to him. and this is wha



t I get in return. Becky gently pulled my shoulder back and cupped my face, her thumb tenderly wiping away my tears. "You are going to be fine. Lily. You are a strong woman, and I believe you can overcome anything." Feeling utterly lost, I confided, "I don't even know what to do right now, I know this happened because of Stephanie. I am sure of this." Letting out a heavy sigh, Becky eased back, leaning against the sturdy bedframe, her hands folded in front of her. "Let's not dwell on the reasons behind Ryan's decision to file for divorce. It won't change anything at this moment. We should focus on planning for your life after the divorce," she suggested, her gaze steady as she looked at me. "Are you considering accepting the divorce settlements?" Just the mention of divorce threatened to bring tears to my eyes. "Of course, I'm taking it. I deserve it after leaving my job and devoting four years of my life to him." "You shouldn't have listened to him and quit your job," Becky murmured softly, her tone tinged with regret. "But that's not our concern right now." I couldn't help but regret my decision. If only I had known that our marriage would end like this, I wouldn't have sacrificed my career to be the perfect wife to Ryan. "I'm considering going back to work," I admitted. Becky's expression shifted to one of exasperation. "Of course you should go back, Lily. You're a medical doctor, and a very astute one at that," she emphasized, her tone tinged with conviction. Licking her lips, she leaned in closer. "You were the brightest in our class. I was genuinely disappointed when you mentioned quitting your job to focus on starting a family with Ryan." "I know," I admitted with a heavy sigh. I realize now that it was a foolish decision. I may not have recognized it back then, but it's crystal clear to me now. Becky extended her hand, gently clasping mine. "Returning won't be an issue. All you need to do is have your credentials reviewed, engage in ongoing professional development, and complete a few necessary steps. Then you'll be back on track," she reassured me with a reassuring smile. "I don't want to stay in New York," I reflected, a sense of unease settling over me. "I don't think I can handle the thought of running into Ryan or seeing him with that woman at events," Becky's eyes lit up with a glimmer of hope. "I know someone in Canada who could help you secure a job at a hospital," she disclosed, her voice filled with assurance. "Mrs. Georgina is a remarkably affluent widow. Her late husband owned one of the largest hospitals in Canada, and upon his passing, he entrusted its operations to her. She's been successfully managing the hospital ever since, and I'm certain she'd welcome you to her team." "And how did you come to know this remarkable woman?" I inquired, curious about the connection. A shy smile graced Becky's lips. "We met at a conference, and we've been friends ever since. Becky had always possessed an infectious charm and a warm demeanor that drew people to her effortlessly. It was such a meaningful connection with Mrs. Georgina. No wonder that she had formed. I would truly value the recommendation; I expressed my gratitude. The idea of moving to Canada seemed increasingly appealing, offering a fresh start far away from Ryan and his family." 11:28 AM Chapter 5 Three weeks later, the divorce was finalized. I was presented with five apartment complexes in New York and a compensation package of five million dollars. It appeared to be a reasonable arrangement, so I accepted the money, intending to invest it for the future of the baby. In my perspective, this was not merely compensation for a failed marriage. Instead, it was securing a portion of my child's entitlement to his father's wealth. While Ryan might view it as compensation, to me, it was ensuring my child's rightful share in his father's legacy. As soon as the legal seal was affixed, I swiftly grabbed my purse, rose

from my seat, and made my way out of the office. Stepping into the elevator, I anticipated a moment to gather my thoughts, but to my surprise, Ryan entered just before the doors closed, accompanied by his lingering shadow, Luke I chose to ignore him, fixating on the descending floor number. "I'm truly sorry that things had to end this way, Lily," Ryan apologized, "We both had our moments during the course of this marriage, and I'm sure you wouldn't label it a failure, considering the substantial fortune you've gained from it." Finally shifting my gaze from the numbers, I stared at him, starting from his shoes and moving upward. "I made a fortune?" I questioned incredulously, "Do you genuinely believe this money can compensate for the heartache you've put me through!" Ryan's smirk persisted. "Oh, it will. A week in Paris or Miami will make you forget about this divorce," he asserted, slipping his hands into his pockets. "It didn't work out. Lily. Suck it up and move on with your life." As the elevator pinged, signaling our arrival, I responded evenly, "You don't owe me anything, Ryan. At least I no longer expect anything from you, and when you don't have expectations of someone, you don't become disappointed or heartbroken by their words or actions." "Cut to the chase, Ryan interjected, his tone impatient. "Stephanie is the real reason why you ended our marriage, isn't she?" I confronted him directly, refusing to dance around the truth any longer. "I've reiterated this countless times, and I'll repeat it again for clarity: Stephanie had absolutely no bearing on the dissolution of our marriage, Ryan maintained firmly, his tone unwavering "Cease attempting to attribute blame to someone else for your perceived shortcomings." His denial provoked a scoff from me "This marriage isn't solely my failure, Ryan. It's a collective failure." I asserted with a hint of bitterness, striding purposefully out of the elevator and towards my awaiting car. As I was about to ignite the engine, the arrival of another vehicle interrupted the moment I observed as the car pulled into the parking lot, and to my dismay, Stephanie emerged from within. She hastened into Ryan's awaiting embrace without hesitation. Right before my eyes, she carefully rose on her tiptoes, planting a tender ki\*s upon his lips, and Ryan made no move to deter her advances. For someone who vehemently denied any involvement with Stephanie, who insisted she wasn't the reason for the divorce, he seemed all too comfortable receiving and indulging in her affectionate gestures.