

Becoming Strangers Again Chapter 16-20

Becoming Strangers Again

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Chapter 16 JAKE She also told me I really wasn't expecting to find them standing outside her gaze. Lily already told me who he is and what led to their separation. So that he is the father of her triplets and that he isn't privy of their existence and she wants it to remain like that. "Are you okay?" Lily asked, drawing me out of my thoughts. "You've been quiet ever since we left my house." She reached for my hand across the table. "Do you want to talk about it?" I shouldn't be worried or jealous, but I can't help it. There always is something about first love that scares me, "What was he doing there?" How did he even find out where she stays. "I don't know how he found me or what he wants," she replied whilst massaging my hand, "I saw him at the hospital earlier with his mistress. They came to see Dr. Sarah but turned into a nuisance when they were told that they can't see her without an appointment. He noticed me and asked for my help to see Dr. Sarah, which I refused." came to see her "Who is Dr. Sarah?" To be honest, I do not care much about who she is or why they came to "She is a fertility specialist. I think they are trying for a baby." She pulled her hand away and grabbed her fork. We are a couple, and as much, we ought to share our insecurities; there is no need hiding it. "Lily, there's something I need to talk to you about," I began my gaze searching hers for a flicker of understanding. Her eyes, usually so comforting, seemed distant tonight. "What is it, Jake?" Lily replied, her voice carrying a hint of concern. Taking a deep breath, I decided to lay my cards on the table. "It's about Ryan. I can't shake this uneasy feeling whenever he's around. It's like an unwelcome guest at our table." Lily's eyes widened slightly, and she reached across the table, placing her hand on mine. Jake, you know I divorced him for a reason. It's you I love, not him. Ryan's just a part of my past. I nodded, trying to absorb her words, but the knot in my stomach persisted. "I know, Lily. But seeing him tonight, it stirred up something in me. I need to know that we're solid, that you and I are in this together?" Lily's gaze softened, and she squeezed my hand gently. "Jake, I chose you. I love you. Ryan is history. He's just the father of my children, and that's the only connection we have. You are my present and future." I took a moment to let her words sink in, the weight on my shoulders lifting gradually. The flicker of vulnerability in Lily's eyes spoke volumes, and I felt a renewed sense of security in our connection. "I appreciate that, Lily. It's just hard for me to shake off the feeling of uncertainty," I admitted, my voice wavering. She leaned in her eyes never leaving mine. "Jake, I understand your concerns, and I'm committed to making you feel secure in our relationship. Let's work through this together. We're a team, and I'm not letting anything or anyone jeopardize what we have." Now that is just a fraction of my worry. "Lily, how do you plan on keeping the triplets a secret from Ryan, especially now that he's back in town?" Her gaze faltered for a moment, a subtle hint of worry flickering across her face before she steadied herself. "Jake, the best way to handle this is to avoid Ryan completely," she said, her voice carrying a note of resolve. "He doesn't know about the

triplets or the fact that they're his. I've kept that part of my life hidden, and I intend to continue doing so." I nodded, understanding the gravity of the situation, yet unable to shake the unease that lingered. "Avoiding him might not be as easy I remarked, my mind conjuring scenarios of unexpected encounters and the potential complications that could arise. as it sounds," Lily sighed, her fingers tracing invisible patterns on the tablecloth. "I know it won't be easy, Jake. But I can't risk exposing the truth to Ryan. The triplets deserve to grow up without the complications of their past. We'll be cautious, choose places and times carefully. If we happen to see him, we'll keep our distance and act like it's just a coincidence? As she spoke, I couldn't help but admire her strength, her determination to shield our family from a storm that threatened to shatter the delicate peace we had found. "I just worry about you, Lily: I admitted, my voice a quiet confession. "Keeping what if he finds out? such a significant part of your life hidden is bound to take a toll. And Lily squeezed my hand reassuringly. "Jake, I've been doing this for years. I've built a life for us, away from the shadows of the past, and that's all I need." past, We'll be okay. T With a gentle exhale, I made the decision to let the matter of Ryan and the triplets settle for the evening. Despite the lingering concerns niggled 11:32 AM Chapter 16 at the corners of my mind, I resolved to cherish the present moment with Lily, to bask in the warmth of our I love undisturbed by shadows of the Dipping my hands into my pocket, I retrieved the wrapped box I had carefully tucked away, a token of my affection, a testament to the journey we had embarked upon together. Placing it gently in front of Lily, I met her gaze, a flicker of anticipation dancing in her emerald eyes. "Happy anniversary, Lily," I murmured, my voice laced with tenderness as I watched her delicate fingers unravel the gift, anticipation painting her features with a hint of curiosity. Her eyes widened in surprise as she beheld the contents nestled within the folds of the wrapping paper. A key, sleek and polished Lamborghini keys, rested in the palm of her hand. "Lily," I began, a smile tugging at the

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corners of my lips, "you'll see it when you get home." Her lips curved into a radiant smile, a symphony of joy and gratitude that filled the space between us, illuminating the dimly lit restaurant with the warmth of her affection. As Lily's excitement bubbled over, she couldn't contain her eagerness to see the Lamborghini waiting at home. "Jake, let's end the dinner, she grinned, her eyes sparkling with anticipation. "I can't wait any longer to see the car!" I chuckled, captivated by her infectious enthusiasm. "Alright, let's go," I said, signaling for the check. With a sense of contentment, I settled the bill, and we made our way out of the restaurant, the cool night air wrapping around us like a comforting embrace. The drive home was filled with lighthearted banter, our laughter blending with the gentle hum of the car's engine. Lily's anticipation was palpable, her excitement building with each passing mile. As we pulled into the driveway, I could sense the thrill coursing through her. Unlocking the door, Lily practically skipped into the garage, her eyes widening in sheer delight when she laid eyes on the sleek, modern Lamborghini. Jake, is this...?" she began her voice a mix of disbelief and joy. I nodded, a grin spreading across my face. "Happy anniversary, Lily," I said, savoring the moment as her squeal of delight filled the air. The car, a symbol of our journey together, gleamed in the soft glow of the garage lights, a testament to

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Chapter 17 I drove to work in my new car because Why not? The fact that I only mentioned it to him once that I'm thinking of buying the car, and he goes ahead to buy it for me made me fall in love with him all over again. Pulling over in my spot, I got down and headed for the elevator only to run into Dr. Sarah who was equally on her into the building. She smiled warmly the moment she sighted me. "Good morning ma'am," I feel odd when she calls me that "Please call me Lily or Ms. Bernard." She is twenty-years older than I am, so why call me Ma'am. We went into the elevator together. "Nice ride." She commented and I smiled in response. Pulling out my phone, I texted Jake, thanking him again for the car. However when I pocketed my phone, a thought came to me. Ryan. How he has become a thorn in my flesh without even putting in much effort. "Can you please free any time for someone today?" She glanced up from her own phone and stared at me. "I am a fertility specialist which means the emergency doesn't have to do with your kids." Her head tilted. "Is the slot for you?" I shook my head which made her brows furrow the more. I thought we all agreed on not calling for favor shots for someone!! I know; but I don't want him to keep showing up around me. "I know, but this is important. Can you free up something for you." She nodded. "Of course, you are the boss, so why not. I'll free up my noon for you." I smiled appreciatively at her. "Thank you so much" The elevator pinged and she got off, heading to her station while I rode up to my office floor. Around one in the afternoon, my phone rang. When I saw it was an unsaved number, and it was my work line ringing, I didn't hesitate to because sometimes, I am called by 911 emergency unit. Picking up the call, I placed the phone between my car and elbow while I continued writing on what I think about a medical condition. "Lily," Just one word. One syllable and I could tell who was speaking, "I am at the reception floor, can you come see me?" There is no asking him how he got this number. Almost everyone in Canada has this number; it's more like your second option of 911 fails. "I have no business seeing you Sir." I replied in a diplomatic tone, "if you have a problem, report it to the front desk. Without waiting for his comment, I disconnected the call. The phone rang again and again until I angrily picked the call. "Dr. Bernard," the familiar voice of Dr. Steve called out, "we need you in the emergency room asap. Rushing off my seat. I grabbed my coat and ran to the emergency whilst cussing Ryan in my head for making me refuse answering that call thinking it's him. By the end of the day, I was more than exhausted, Dragging my get to the garage, my feet remained planted on the same spot when I saw Ryan standing next to my car with his hands stuffed into his pocket. Why is he hell-bent on frustrating my life? Biting my lips hard in suppressed anger, I approached him. "I thought left." Grinning, he turned and gestured towards my car. "Nice ride you have here." How did he even know this car was mine! "I told you and you refused, so I had to wait." He rocked on his heels. "You see, I always get what I want, and when I say I want to see you, I have to see you." you to come see me "you are insane." I retorted. Pulling my key out of my purse, I unlocked the car and headed for the door, but he blocked my way, stopping me from getting to my door. "I just wanted to thank you for making it possible to see Dr. Sarah today" *I only did that because I didn't want you to see you anywhere around me I deadpanned,

keeping a distance between us. I am certain that if any paparazzi should capture the moment, the news will spread all over the internet He chuckled arrogantly. "I am Ryan Williams, and I don't like owing people favors. He dipped his hand into his pocket and puffed his chest out. "What do you want from me in exchange for this favor? Name it and I will make it happen Tilting my head, I racked my brain for something until it clicked. "I want you to disappear and never show up before me." His grey eyes danced around with morose amusement. "I wish I could do that Lily, but I have a steady appointment with Dr. Satah for so I am going not only be in Canada for a month, I will be showing up in your hospital, so there is nothing we both can do about that" I scoffed. "I see you have not gotten over making empty promises," one month 11:32 AM Chapter 17 My muttered words made his jaw clench, his amusement disappearing slowly. "What promise did I make that I didn't fulfill?" 170 "To death do us part?" I mocked, "To love and to cherish? In sickness and in health?" the more I

listed the more his face darkened with anger. I am not afraid of him hitting me; he might have been an asshole in the past, but he never hit me besides, he can't try shit with me now, I have enough money to get him arrested, even if it is just for twenty-four hours. "I have another request," Pulling his left hand from his pocket, he pinched the bridge of his nose. "Let's hear it." I know his pride won't let him say no to me this time. if anything is going to bring the downfall of the Williams family, it will most definitely be their pride. "I want you not to show up anywhere close to my residence. That way, I will keep him away from my triplets. He stared at me intently for a moment then chuckled. "Fine" Despite this reassurance, I felt strangely odd because there is a look in his eyes that says, he is thinking of cooking up something else.

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Chapter 18 RYAN I went back to the penthouse I rented with so much anger, why I am angry, I do not know. I mean what she said was actually the truth. Even thou I do not want to admit it, I failed to fulfill the vows I made at the altar. Lily was a lovely girl, don't get me wrong, but when I got married to her, I didn't because I loved her, rather I did because I wanted to prove to Stephenie that I had gotten over her and that I could live life to the fullest without her. In the first year of marriage with Lily. I always kept my eyes on my phone, waiting for a text from Steplenie telling me that she was wrong for having left me, but it never happened. I kept my eyes on my social media, posting Lily and buying her things just to get Stephinie's attention but that didn't happen. I remember thinking to myself, maybe I wasn't doing enough, maybe I wasn't showing Lily off enough, which was why I doubled the gifts and attention I gave to her, it made Lily fall deeper and also convinced herself of the illusion that I loved her deeply. When all of my efforts to gain Stephanie's attention turned futile, my feelings slowly grew into frustration. I was frustrated at myself and everything, but I tried not to let it affect Lily. I thought of another way to grab Stephnie's attention and that was whe 1 thought about having babies with Lily, I was convinced that having babies would definitely grab her attention, besides, I too loved children. Lily failed to give me a child, I willingly visited

many clinics with her but to no avail, and when the baby wasn't forthcoming, I became even more frustrated. I was so convinced that this was the only thing that would make Stephenie feel bad and apologize. Two years after we started wanting for a baby, nothing happened. I even had to tell Lily to quit her job as a medical doctor, and that I will take care of her and all her needs because I felt the stress that comes from her line of profession was also part of the reason she isn't able to conceive yet. Even after she quit her job, nothing happened, and I felt both angry and frustrated towards her. I spent more time on my work than the time I spent with Lily, allowing my parents to keep her company, but I guess they aren't the best when it comes to keeping her company. Slowly, it became a pattern, only coming home to have with her and having her attend events with me. I began to feel empty, and I was still in the process of feeling guilty that I found out that the law firm handling my company hired someone else, and that person had been put in charge of any legal matters concerning my company. Curious to meet this person, and also out of curiosity, I set up a meeting, only to find out that it was Stephanie. At first, I rejected her working for me, but when she came to my office and told me that her parents forced her into getting married to an old man or using their power as one of the biggest law firms to file legal cases against my company. She told me she chose to marry the old man and decided to keep it on the low and avoid me because she couldn't look me in the eyes, which was why she broke up with me over the phone. She told me she was subjected to domestic violence by the man's children, and the old man just allowed his sons to treat her anyway they wanted. She claimed that she was only back in the country because the old man had died and his sons kicked her out, and this law firm is her way of getting back on her feet because her parents refused to let her back into the form. I took pity on her and let her in, allowing her to work as my company's legal team. While we worked together, I noticed the attraction, but I wasn't one to cheat, which was why I started demanding a divorce from Lily. Stephenie knew I wanted her, but I told her that I wouldn't have anything to do with her until I had legally divorced my wife and she was cool with it. I gave Lily all the wealth I gave her during the divorce settlement because I guess she deserved it for having endured the treatment from me and my parents. I gave to her as a form of appreciation for being there for me when Stephenie wasn't. She was a rebound that I never loved or so I thought. The day I divorced Lily and Stephanie stood on her tiptoes and me, I knew something was wrong. I found myself, comparing her to Lily. However, I chose to live in denial for six years until I ran into Lily again, until I saw her eyes desperately wanting me to stay away from her, until I saw her wrapped in another man's arms. So here I am, wanting her again, wanting her as badly as I wanted Stephenie back then, if not more. Walking into the penthouse, I was greeted with the sight of Stephenie, dressed in a tiny strap nightdress, and the robe flowing down to her body. "Where are you coming from?" she snapped. "You left me all alone in that hospital to take a phone call and you never returned, only to have your security take me home!" Walking straight to the kitchen, I grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge. "Didn't you miss the sarcasm, something Lily would have caught on get home safely?" I asked sarcastically and of course, she st

nine in the night!" That's beside the

point Ryan" she yelled, "Where the heck have you been? It is already past "Keep yelling and you will not see me for the rest of the night, I warned, walking out of the kitchen

with the bottle in my my gup. "I had a bad day Ad closed by Gla 11:33 AM Chapter 18 Stephenie, please do not add to it" "You went to see her right?" she asked, her voice trembling slightly. I halted abruptly, turned around, and glared at her. "Is that an accusation I hear!" she grumbled incoherent words. "Yes, I went to see her so thank her for helping is see Dr. Sarah Her lips tightened. "that wasn't necessary." "And who are you to decide that? I asked her with an arched brow. "You of all people know how much I dislike owing people a favor." Wrapping her robe tighter around her body, she glared at me. "what did you offer her?" "I told her to make a request," I replied. Stephanie scoffed. "I bet my ass she wanted you to kick me out out of you your life." That would have been a simpler request. "she wanted me not to show up around her or her house." I spat. "Happy?" just the thought of it is messing up my mood the more. "Are you happy now!!" "Yes, but you don't," she deadpanned, "that's by the way. I ordered dinner and I have been waiting for you to get back so we can so we can eat together." Turning. I returned walking up the stairs. "I am not hungry." Walking into our bedroom, I banged the door loudly, anger coursing through my veins. How dare she tell me to stay away from her? She is going to be seeing me more often now more than ever. I

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Chapter 19 LILY I find myself quite uneasy with the idea of my children being around Ryan, so I've made the decision to have them stay with Becky during the holiday season. I must admit, I'm feeling quite grateful that it happens to be the holiday season, as it would have been incredibly challenging to justify pulling them out of school solely because I want to keep them away from Ryan. Becky has been an absolute gem throughout this ordeal. She went above and beyond by arranging for her husband to travel all the way to Canada to pick up the kids. While Noah and Ethan didn't put up much of a fuss about leaving for the holiday, Liam was a bit more hesitant. He clung to me tightly throughout the journey to the airport, repeatedly returning for more hugs. Considering Liam isn't one to openly display affection, his actions spoke volumes to me. I found myself on the verge of tears at one point. However, I reassured myself that it's far better for them to be away for an extended period than to find myself entangled in a legal battle with Ryan, especially now that he's expressed an interest in having a baby. One can't help but wonder about his sudden interest in seeing a fertility specialist. I stayed back at the airport until their plane departed, feeling a sense of emptiness as I watched it disappear into the sky. It took a while before I could gather the strength to leave. Eventually, I made my way to the car, knowing that trying to work in such a distraught state of mind wouldn't be productive and I answered the call "Hey, I greeted, A few minutes into the solitary drive, my phone began to ring. Glancing at the screen. I noticed Jake's name attempting to mask the strain in my voice. "I'm in the car at the moment. Can I call you back later?" There was a brief pause on the other end of the line, during which I could almost hear Jake contemplating my response. "Have you been crying?" He asked suddenly, causing fresh tears to well up in my eyes. "I had a feeling you might be upset. If it weren't for this important meeting. I would've dropped everything to accompany you." I sniffed, hastily wiping away my tears. "It's fine" "No, it's

not okay, Kochanie. I should be there with you," His voice carried the same pain I felt in the moment. Where are you now!" "I'm heading home." I muttered, "but I'm thinking of ordering dinner, just in case I eventually get hungry later in the night, though that seemed unlikely. "And from which restaurant do you intend to pick up your dinner?" he asked. I could hear sheets rumbling in the background, followed by the sound of a door closing. "Any random one." I replied. I would have preferred my favorite restaurant, but it wasn't on the way. "When you get to the random restaurant, don't order takeout. Instead, find a seat for both of us, then forward the address to me. We'll be having an early dinner today" I frowned at the thought of putting anything in my stomach at that moment. I'm really not hungry, Jake," I reiterated, feeling certain he must have other pressing matters to attend to "Don't forget to forward the address to me," he insisted, seemingly undeterred by my lack of appetite. "I love you, Kochaniez. Without waiting for customary response, he disconnected the call, leaving me with a mix of emotions The Smiling softly to myself, I drove a bit further, eventually spotting a restaurant. I selected a table for us and promptly sent him the address as requested. While waiting for Jake to arrive, I decided to quench my thirst with a bottle of water. Engrossed in the refreshing drink and a medical video playing on my phone, I failed to notice anyone approaching until the sound of artificial. well-painted nails suddenly clattered onto my table, startling me out of my thought. Raising my eyes, I was met with the intense glare of Stephanie, creating an unexpected and somewhat surreal encounter. I observed her hand hitting the table before meeting her gaze. "What is the meaning of this madness?" I questioned, bewildered by the unexpected confrontation She scoffed dismissively. "This isn't madness, at least not yet. I want you to stay away as far as you can from Ryan," she spat, her tone dripping with disdain. "You don't know how deadly and dangerous I can be if provoked, so stay the heck away from him!" Taken aback and feeling a twinge of embarrassment due to the public spectacle, I scanned the restaurant, offering apologetic smiles to the other patrons. "You are a lawyer, aren't you?" I inquired, attempting to address the situation with reason. She smacked her lips together without offering a direct response. "You do realize that this is public assault, and it's a crime," Placing both hands on the table, she leaned forward, intensifying the confrontation. "Does it look like I care? I've invested so much effort in my relationship with Ryan, and I won't sit back and watch you ruin it." "What's happening here?" Jake's reassuring voice cut through the tension, drawing closer as he approached us. He positioned himself beside me, protective hand resting firmly on my shoulder. "Who is this? His inquiry was directed at me, seeking clarity amid the escalating confrontation 11:33 AM Chapter 19 Nestling into his comforting presence, I intertwined my fingers and regarded Stephanie with a serene smile playing on my lips. "An insecure woman," I replied calmly, observing her reaction with a hint of amusement. Stephanie's glare intensified, but I couldn't help but chuckle softly. "I understand her though. This tends to happen when you disrupt other people's happiness. There's a fear that karma might come knocking, or perhaps the person whose happiness you've taken will come reclaim it." "I assume this is your man," she spat out, her anger now directed at Jake. "You'd better keep your woman on a leash. I won't tolerate her sneaking around with my man!" Jake

blinked at her with an air of indifference, his composure masking any irritation he might be feeling. "How about you direct your concerns to your own man"" he suggested

calmly, his voice steady despite the escalating tension, "He's already had his chance and let it slip away, so perhaps he should stay away?" Stephanie pointed an accusatory finger at Jake, prompting me to rise to my feet. I stepped forward, coming to Jake's defense—not because I doubted his ability to handle the situation, but because I trusted him to exercise restraint, especially considering Stephanie's gender.. "Keep pointing at him, and I might have to break that tiny finger of yours," I asserted, ready to intervene if the situation escalated. Murmurs began to circulate among the onlookers, and Stephanie, seemingly realizing the attention, suddenly appeared embarrassed by her actions. I, too, felt a pang of embarrassment at the public spectacle "This isn't the last of me," she hissed before storming off, leaving behind a lingering sense of unease and glares from our audience. Losing whatever trace of appetite I had managed to muster, I swiftly retrieved my purse. "Please, I want to leave," I requested, not waiting for Jake's response. With a sense of urgency, I made my way to the car, sliding inside and slamming the door shut, hiding from the unwanted attention of passersby.

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Chapter 20 Steph hit me with unexpected news. "I don't want to continue with the test my eyes In response, I dropped my tablet onto the dining table and directed my gaze at her. "What on earth did you just say?" I demanded. narrowing in frustration. Dealing with this at such an early hour was not on my agenda. "Stephanie, answer me. What's going on!" Undeterred, she reiterated. "I don't want to continue with the fertility test with Dr. Sarah. And, I've made up my mind—I don't want to remain in Canada any longer." Annoyance surged within me, prompting me to tilt my head and blink at her. "Really Is it because Lily happens to own the hospital?" My attempt to make sense of her decision her words lingered between us. She averted her gaze, her eyes reflecting her discomfort as she candidly expressed, "I am not comfortable in that hospital, and the thought of allowing someone I'm not at ease around to probe my uterus is just unsettling In an attempt to grapple with the unexpected twist in our plans, I dropped any pretense of composure, taking a menacing step closer to her, my frustration evident in every stride. "Do I need to remind you," I questioned with an undertone of exasperation. "that you were the one who essentially dragged me down here?" the ro As she blinked rapidly, her nervous energy intensified, and she resorted to licking her lips, a subconscious manifestation of the tension in "I had no idea that she works here she muttered, finally unveiling the core reason for her desire to depart. "If she had disclosed her current occupation as a doctor the last time I ran into her, I would have diligently checked out the hospital before persuading you to accompany me. room. A deep, angry frown etched itself across my face as I processed what she just said. "Wind up a bit, I muttered, my voice laden with frustration. The confusion compelled me to seek clarification, "You've met Lily before that day at the hospital!" Her response was marked by an eye roll, a defiant jutting of hips, and a readiness for the inevitable argument that loomed due to the apparent lack of coherence in her words. I ran into her in New York, she stated, her tone carrying a touch of disbelief. Scoffing, she glanced past me, recollecting the encounter. I initially thought she didn't take a cab because she was

broke, but I guess she was just taking a stroll” Closing the physical distance between us, I seized her shoulder, squeezing tightly as a gesture of both frustration and insistence. “You ran into Lily back in New York, and you didn’t think to tell me about it?” Her eyes bulged, the disbelief in her expression surpassing mere shock. “Are you for real, Ryan? Why do I have to tell you that I ran into her?” Rather than attempting to free herself from my grip, she boldly shoved her face into mine, a confrontational act that seemed intent on emphasizing her perspective. “Do I need to spell out your harsh reality to your face! You left her for me, Ryan. She is now your ex–wife, which unequivocally means you have no business with her anymore. Her candid words, an unfiltered reflection of the truth, intensified the anger welling up within me. Reacting impulsively, I forcefully pushed her away, the physical separation mirroring the emotional chasm that had seemingly widened between us. “We are going to take whatever treatment we have to take here, I asserted with a stern determination, “I do not have to remind you just how paramount and crucial having that baby is to me.” Rubbing the spot where my grip had left its mark, she shot me a defiant glare. “Well, if having the baby is so important to you, you’ll listen to me and get me out of here!” she yelled, her feral eyes darting around in protest. “I do not want to be here!” she yelled with intensity. “You either fulfill my request or you have no baby.” I met her fervent gaze with a momentary silence before a smirk crept across my face. “Were you originally this stupid, or is your ability to comprehend situations dwindling just because you’re upset?” Her jaw clenched as she demanded, “What do you mean by that?” her words gritted out with frustration “What I mean is that the board demanded a baby, no one insisted that the baby must come from you, I clarified, each word punctuating the undeniable truth. The more I highlighted the stark reality, the more she turned red with anger. “It’s either you give me an heir, or I’ll find someone who will “You bastard!” she spat, her words laced with both anger and hurt. “Is this what I get for sticking with you up in her eyes, a realization hit me – perhaps I had indeed crossed a line. you all these years?” The moment tears welled Exhaling heavily, I attempted to bridge the emotional gap by taking a step towards her. “Look, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to say the things I said. Your words caught me off guard, and I reacted impulsively As I approached, she instinctively stepped back, creating a physical distance mirroring the emotional one between us. “I can’t believe you said all those words to me,” she expressed, wiping away tears with a hint of roughness. “Will you blame me for behaving this way? This is the first time you’re seeing her after the divorce, and you’re already behaving like this, leaving me all alone in the hospital just to be with her? As I opened my mouth, poised to utter the right words to appease her, she lifted her palm, a preemptive gesture to halt my spouse. “Don’t tell me 1133 AM Chapter 20 “What?” I blurted out, a mix of surprise and confusion coloring my response. “What else do you want me to say to you then!” Allowing the tears to fall freely without interference, she smiled sadly, a melancholy expression that struck a chord within me. “Do I have to remind you that that was the same thing you said to her, and then we ended up as a couple.” Her words sank in, intensifying the headache that had been creeping in from the ongoing argument. Massaging my temple, I asserted, “I’m not doing this with you this morning, Stephanie. I took a month away from my responsibilities at the office just to make this work. I can’t have you ruin things for me just because of your insecurities.” Done with this silly conversation, if one could even

classify it as a conversation, I snatched my tablet and attempted to walk past her. However, she intercepted my path, grabbing my forearm with a desperate plea. "Swear to me on your mother's life that nothing will go on between you and Lily?" I pulled my hand forcefully from her grip, bewildered by the sudden involvement of my mother in this situation. "Why are you getting my mother involved in this?" The vulnerability in her eyes transformed into anger as she stood taller, lips thinning in frustration. "Why aren't you swearing?" she scoffed, accusation laced in her words. "You want to go after her, right? That's the reason why you aren't agreeing to this!" What the hell? Shaking my head at the absurdity of the situation, I stomped upstairs, grabbed my car keys, and walked away from her and her early morning craziness, leaving the chaotic conversation hanging. Leaving the house with the intention of grabbing a coffee and taking a leisurely drive to

allow Stephanie some time to cool off, I inexplicably found myself parked outside the hospital. This spontaneous action became a self-realization, acknowledging that Stephanie's morning anger might indeed have a valid foundation. Chuckling at my unpredictable behavior, I reached forward to start up my car and leave when a familiar face entered the premises, carrying two cups of coffee. The recognition hit me instantly, and I didn't need to strain my memory to recall where I had encountered the guy. Involuntarily, his face haunted me every time I closed my eyes, especially in those quiet moments before sleep, where the image of his hands circled on her waist played like an unwelcome reel in my mind. Is that the reason I suddenly want her back? Because another man has staked a claim on her! I am a man who does not like to share, and I definitely do not condone cheating. To be honest, I'd rather walk away from a relationship than cheat, the major reason I walked away from my marriage with Lily is because I'd rather leave than cheat with Stephanie. Do I regret that decision? Hell yes! I had always thought of my relationship with Lily as a rebound, maybe that was why I failed to see my love for her back then. In regards to my policy, before making Lily fall for me again, I have to make them break up. I will not have her cheat on her relationship. Getting off the car, I walked towards the young man.