

The CEO's Ten Million Dollar Wife by R.C.BRIE

Chapter 41

Chapter 41 Threatened

No matter how hard she convinces herself Lucien is no longer interested in Ellen, her heart still feels heavy. And just like her dragging steps as she came out of the service elevator to transfer to the penthouse elevator, she feels like weighing a ton. All her limbs feel heavy.

She just sparsely look around, checking the surroundings as she waited for the elevator to open after she scanned her card. She feels like burying herself in the deepest part of her bed to have the serenity she needed. But she doubts if she ever finds one until Lucien gets home. Him, being with Ellen doesn't suit her gut.

Still lost in thoughts, she was unaware of the floor indicated on the screen and when the elevator opens.

Snapping from her trance, she was startled by the intense eyes staring at her. The pair of piercing eyes, Lucien Wright owns. Surprised to see him, she just stares at him without noticing she remains unmoving from her spot.

"Come in, Zia. Lucy is already waiting for us" his voice and hearing her son's name made her return to her senses.

Quickly while avoiding looking back at his boring gaze, she enters and stood rigidly beside him. Watching the door close, silence rules between them.

She was lost in her thoughts while Lucien is being observant of her. She expected him to deal with Ellen and she has been brooding about what time he would be finished with her. It's a surprise seeing him just following her.

It's been a while of silence when she felt his arm rounded her waist, pulling her close to him.

"What were you thinking earlier" his question surprised her.

She was torn between denying and knowing what she was curious to know.

"Nothing..." she chooses the first.

"I know your thoughts were full. What is it, Zia" he counters?

She remains quiet, watching the lighted number indicator.

"I...I thought you will take care of Miss Johnson first" she whispers after a while.

"I am not the person to take care of her. I let Ben send her to wherever she was staying. My family is waiting for me, and I don't want to waste my time on irrelevant matters" he softly retorted.

Though not expecting his response, she was greatly relieved. She may not easily overcome her

insecurities when it comes to Lucien, but he always makes sure to remind her of what he promised, not only to her but most especially to their son. .

She rests her head on his arm, giving in to the exhaustion she feels. His masculine smell made her nerves relax.

Rounding his arm around her shoulder to keep her steady, he pecks a kiss on her head. She almost drifted to sleep when the elevator door opens and they need to step out. "I will carry you..." he whispers and is about to lift her but she stopped him.

"I'm fine, I can walk" she was embarrassed seeing security around them. Though they

try not to look at them, she is fully aware they could see them.

“You’re tired” he insisted.

“I will just rest later. Let’s get inside, Lucy is surely waiting for us” she smiles to assure him she was fine.

Just like they expected, Lucy is sitting on the couch, facing the door. He is patiently waiting for them while his nurses were watching nearby.

“Papa! Mama!” the boy raves in enthusiasm upon seeing them enter.

With open arms, they both dashed to the boy who is already raising his arms to them.

Picking him up, Lexie showered him with kisses while Lucien hugs them both.

“How’s our brave boy?” he asks as he shuffles Lucy’s hair after he kissed his cheeks.

“I played with Nurse Joy and Nurse Kim. I also slept, I played at the pool but no swimming, I ate my fruits and drink my milk, and I took my medicines” Lucy was ecstatic while he tries to recall what he did the whole day.

“Wow, that’s awesome...” she raves happily while kissing the boy’s cheeks again.

“I’m a good boy Mama, Papa” he boasted, earning him a hug from his parents.

“Of course, you are” Lucien enthusiastically agreed.

It’s been a usual end of the day for Lucien and Lexie, despite how exhausted their day was. Their boy waiting for them to come home, spend time playing with him, eat dinner together, prepare him for sleep, and tuck him in bed while reading stories. And after Lucy was asleep, they will play their adult play before sleeping. It’s their blissful life.

But Ellen’s presence in their lives has been a persisting nuisance. It’s early in the morning when Lucien got a persistent visitor, ordering his staff around. And for the peaceful and productive day of his assistants, he let her come inside his office.

“Lucien, honey”

“I’ve told you a thousand times, Ellen, stop calling me that” Lucien mutters grimly without looking at her. He is busy reviewing documents.

“Then who would you want to call you like that, your fake wife?” though her voice was sweet, she sneers.

“Why are you here, Ellen?” he asks instead.

“Honey, it’s been so long you brought me to a date” as seductive as she can, she sways her way towards him.

“There’s no reason to bring you anywhere, Ellen, you know that. Hadn’t I talked about this several times? Are you that shameless?” he looks up at her with a cold gaze.

“Lucien...” she was astounded but she remains on her spot.

“What part did you not understand, Ellen?” he added, this time it’s contemptuous.

“Everything!” indignant by his callousness, she raves angrily.

Despite her outrage, he remains calm as he stares at her.

“I’ve been very patient of your mockery, of your distance... I came back for you but I just got this? I’ve wasted four years of my life just to have this!” she rants angrily. She was fed up and enraged but the man remains calm while staring at her.

“You threatened me with your fake marriage. I gave up my career for you, Lucien” she was so furious she was almost teary while glaring at him.

“You have nothing to give up, Ellen. Your career has been dying even before you started. You just stayed in the spotlight because my name was affiliated with yours. And I didn’t threaten you with my marriage” he calmly retorted while he slowly straightened on his chair, watching her outburst.

Speechless, she was nailed on her spot. It's the first time Lucien has been this straightforward towards her. Her anger suddenly dissipates.

"Lucien...why are you doing this to me?" hurt, she mumbles in disbelief.

"I've been patient with you. I ended whatever I had with you years ago, thinking of being fair to you. Don't act like a victim, now. It's your choice to stick to my side so as not to lose your spotlight. But people were smart enough to know your motive, and that's the main reason you stop your career in ballet. No one wants you and not because you gave it up for me. And for the record, I haven't threatened you with my marriage, I showed you I don't need you, just like you always imply to the public" he snickers like the shrewd man he is. He has his reasons why he married Žia on a whim, but never will he tell Ellen about it. Whatever issue he has with his marriage to Zia, he will be discussing it with her, not with anyone else, especially not with Ellen.

"You need me... I'm not just implying! I know you need me more than you realize. I'm the only woman who could understand you, no one else, even your fake wife!" she angrily counters but Lucien remains calm.

"Does she know, you cannot function as a man? You cannot even maintain your erection, so don't act haughty on me, Mr. CEO. I know your little dark secret" a glint of craze reflects Ellen's eyes as she raves at Lucien.

"Don't waste your time with trivialities, Ellen" he calmly retorted.

"Believe me, Lucien, I won't be wasting my time. Everyone would know how incapable of a man you are. Your little apple of the eye would know you cannot even pleasure her. Will she be okay with it?" she mockingly added.

"You will just be wasting your time with that nonsense" he was not deterred by her threats.

"Why? Because you could pleasure her now? Until when? The time will come you will lose it again, Mr. CEO... Just like what happened before. So don't celebrate, it's still not your victory. What would your fake wife do if she discovers one day, you cannot even make it hard? You may be perfect Lucien Wright, but you are useless in pleasing your woman" she continues insulting him.

"It's no longer of your concern" he calmly responded.

"Then let's see what your fake wife would say if she knows your incapability. I could almost see the disappointment in her pretty face. She will definitely be heartbroken" she sneers. A crazed smile grazed her lips.

"Suit yourself..." he shrugs off and calmly went back to what he was doing earlier. His cold treatment of her enraged her more. Glaring at him, her chest heaves with her raging breath.

"I will pluck the hair out of your fake wife's head if I have a chance!" out of anger, she threatened to hurt Lexie.

Pausing at what he heard, he looks up at her with chilling coldness in his piercing eyes.

"Try to lay a finger on Alexzia and you will know who is Lucien Wright" he mutters with a clenched jaw. His dangerously sharp eyes made her step back in fear.

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Chapter 42

Chapter 42 Rumor

Getting an exemplary response to her design during the spring collection, Lexie was given her brand name.

Already part of the Silhouettes Designs team, she had better room to study the company's market and explore her designs. She could feel the pressure coming from everyone around her, especially Eve and the president.

She has to prove her success during the recent launching is neither a one-shot nor out of luck. She must establish a substantial market for her design. And by doing so, she must strengthen the diversity of her style. And it will be increasing the pressure on the goal she set for herself.

Busy in their respective workstations, Jason suddenly stands up and increases the volume of the television.

"Look at the news, a result of CEO Lucien Wright's medical assessment regarding his erectile dysfunction has been circulating" Jason readily explains as he scans the television for the channel airing what he was saying.

Lexie abruptly looks up to Jason upon hearing the name he said. The issue was nothing new to her but she was still surprised Ellen had to stoop down to her dirty antics. What will she benefit from what she was doing? The sympathy of the public, then what more?

"How do you know that?" incredulous, Eve asks. Unconvinced of what Jason said.

"It's all over the web but news channels have them too... here" he explains while his eyes were fixed on the screen where indeed a report was being aired with the image of the laboratory result under the name of Lucien Wright was being flashed on the screen. The medical facility was blurred but the diagnosis of the patient could be seen.

"This may all be fabricated. With the technology nowadays, it's no longer impossible to produce such a document that looks legitimate" Emily interjected while also focused on the screen.

"People these days. Let's see what they will do once the Wright family, especially the CEO would take action against these malicious rumors" Jason also added.

They were busy discussing the news when footage of Ellen Johnson being cornered by some reporters was replaced on the screen.

"Miss Johnson, as the long-time girlfriend of CEO Wright, could you refute these rumors? Where do you think the document came from and who was responsible for doing this kind of attack"

Ellen looks panicked and confused while she remains speechless.

"What is your stand on this kind of malicious rumors about CEO Wright"

With Ellen's silence, another question was thrown to her. She continues to be dumbfounded.

"Was this a baseless claim? Or this is a legitimate document showing CEO Wright's physical health?"

Another question Ellen hasn't answered.

Watching the news, Lexie clenched her jaw. Despite how discreet, she could see the triumphant smile in Ellen's eyes hidden from her facade.

"Why can't she just answer them" Jason suddenly raves. His irritation is evident while glaring at the screen.

"Is she really in shock? She doesn't look one" Eve crosses her arms in front of her as

she narrowed her eyes.

Though Lexie wants to agree with Eve, she remains to be quiet. Her head is busy with the thoughts of Lucien and his family's reaction.

"We've been together for years and..."

Ellen started to talk with her misty eyes but pauses mid-sentence.

"I thought... he was just protecting my innocence..."

With her insinuating statement, murmurs and another clamor of questions from the reporters

were thrown at her.

"What do you mean, Miss Johnson?"

"Are you implying the document is real?"

"Have you experienced the CEO's physical incapability?"

Ellen was again bombarded by a lot of questions.

"What is she trying to say?!" Jason irritably exclaims with both hands on his waist.

If Jason was annoyed, Lexie is furious. She wanted to jump on Ellen to pull her hair and wipe off the glint of triumph in her eyes. If only she could reach her, Ellen would surely taste her anger. She was struggling to maintain her calm.

"I was grateful at first... I can't believe I found a real gentleman in this modern time...but as years passed by. Questions started to surface in my mind. There was even a time I question my physical attributes. Am I not attractive enough?"

Silence rules despite the number of people surrounding her. No one wants to miss what she has to say. All her words were implying and led to the possible validation of the authenticity of the document, which is now all over any media and web portals.

"Despite making me feel insecure about my capability as a woman, I remain patient. Leading a multi-billion company is not easy. And I tried to understand the situation. As a devoted girlfriend, I waited. We even took up to this time of not being married"

"But honestly, it's been troubling my mind. There was even a time...I question his masculinity

"What are you trying to say Miss Johnson, and correct me if I'm wrong, CEO Wright never initiated to be intimate with you despite the years of being together?"

Ellen looks at the reporter who throws the question. Her eyes are brimming with tears and the way she looks almost answers the question.

"He had initiated but he would always, leave me hanging...at first I thought he is just being considerate. But five years? I know there is something wrong and now I understand it" her tears have finally fallen, rolling down her cheeks, which she bothered not to wipe.

"If I knew earlier, I could have helped him. He never discusses it with me. He kept it a secret and left me blinded by his situation. Like his girlfriend, he stripped me away from the chance to help him" she continues to be hurt in front of the sympathetic reporters and live cameras.

Just by watching, Lexie is seething with anger. She wanted to call Lucien but she doesn't know what to tell him. She knows Lucien is nothing like what the result shows. Of all people, she was the one who could prove it and not Ellen. But what will she do? Will she come out and tell everyone it's all untrue? Is the document legitimate? But how? Lucien has been a virile man since they met four years ago, even today. Or has he been taking medicines?

Realizing her line of thoughts, she fervently shook her head. He felt shameful of herself for unconsciously believing the rumors. Lucien is nothing like what they are saying about him. But she needs to talk with Lucien.

As she became lost in her thoughts, no one noticed her grim face. Everyone was still focused on the screen. Ellen's video was no longer shown but some anchors talking to each other. They are exchanging their different views, which added to Lexie's distress. A lot has been said and some were untrue.

"This is madness. I bet, that woman is behind all of these" Jason exclaims, still annoyed.

"Yeah, I think so too. It's been years they've been together but the CEO seems to have no interest in settling with her. This is all just a scheme. I don't like the way she looks earlier. She is a scheming bitch since then" Eve blatantly declares. A look of disdain adorned her face.

"Whatever the CEO's physical condition regarding his sexuality must be kept private. If she is that important to him, I don't think he will hide it from her. It means, she is simply insignificant to the CEO and she is doing this scheme to get even" Jason also added.

"Three years ago, a rumor of the CEO cutting ties with her has leaked to the media. But it was never confirmed. The CEO never validate it but everyone noticed he was no longer often seen with Miss Johnson. He doesn't attend her ballet shows which leads to organizers and dance studios omitting her from the list. She was never good anyway" Emily spoke.

"So it might be true they already broke up. But this scheming bitch is just shameless to stick her butt with the CEO. Who would want to lose the influence, CEO Wright has? She needs him for her dying career" Eve sneers.

"Now, she was acting like a victim. They were not together in the first place. How could the CEO be intimate with her?" incredulous, Jason raves.

"She is a bitch in heat, no wonder she seduced Greg. She cannot have the CEO. And my idiot ex-boyfriend fell for her scheme. They deserve each other. Now she is acting like a victim, she had a lot of men on the sides, even married ones!" Eve mutters grimly, earning her a curious look from Lexie.

Lexie stares at Eve and now she understands why she dislikes Ellen to the bone.

"They are hyping this issue. The CEO being famous, they are riding the issue. He deserves privacy, for goodness sake!" Emily also exclaims in frustration.

Listening to their discussion, Lexie was greatly pacified that there are people who believe in truth and could see the falseness in her. Their reasons to hate Ellen were valid. Several times she met with the ballerina, and it was not a good experience. Her charming lips spit a fire of insults, which surprised her at first. But now, she knows better.

Their attention was caught again when the footage of Samantha Wright was flashed on the screen. Reporters were cornering her but her security has made a decent gap to protect her.

"Miss Samantha, what can you say about the rumors being spread from the assessment result of the CEO?"

"Is the document authentic?"

"What is the Wright's stand on this issue?"

Reporters loudly ask but Samantha continues to walk inside the protection of her

security, ignoring the question.

“Do you have an idea about the erectile dysfunction of your brother?”

A question that made Samantha paused midstep. Slowly she faces the pool of reporters tailing

her. If looks could freeze, everyone would surely fall to the ground unmoving. Though all were being subtle, they took several steps backward to avoid her sharp eyes.

A mocking smile adorns her face as she faces the camera and the reporters.

“I’m not interested in Lucien’s dick, I don’t check every time he has an erection. I don’t care about his sexual activities. I’m his sister..not his wife” she snickers.

“Whatever his dick’s activities are nothing of my concern or anyone’s concern. Only his wife could tell if she is satisfied with her husband’s performance, not a scheming bitch who has been dumped a long time ago claiming to be a victim of my brother’s incapability in bed. You all tell her to wake up from her dream, Lucien Wright is picky with women he will bed. And she doesn’t belong to the category. And, she doesn’t deserve Lucien’s dick” Samantha sweetly smiles and left before any reporter could react.

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Chapter 43

Chapter 43 Worried

“That was savage” Jason mumbles in utter disbelief. Amusement laces his voice as he turns to Eve with a smile.

“Let’s see what that scheming bitch will do against Samantha Wright” Eve raves amusedly.

“She was nowhere close compared to the bitchiness of Miss Wright” Emily added, chuckling.

“But what if it’s true? That the CEO has that problem?” Jason curiously asks.

“It’s none of anyone’s business. We all have struggles and though his life is in the limelight, he still deserves privacy. We don’t know what he had gone through. The medical institution should investigate why his result was posted online and not securely kept. The CEO could sue them for the leak of pertinent documents. Whoever posts the result must be sued for breaching the CEO’s privacy” Eve seriously stated.

“This is the downside of being famous. Even your privacy is at stake. People will find something to tarnish your good name” Emily shrugs.

“I’m curious about the CEO’s reaction” Jason added.

“I don’t think he will give much time to this issue. He is too busy to be overly concerned but he will take action, that’s for sure. That scheming bitch will have her reward. I hope it would be worth all the relationship she broke” Eve, with a clenched jaw mutters.

It’s still a long time for the day to end but Lexie already wanted to go home. She can’t concentrate on what she was doing when her head is filled with thoughts about Lucien and the issue.

“We have been trying to get the CEO’s statement to clarify this issue. But his camp is denying our calls” one of the anchors reported after several hours of waiting for any statement coming from the famous CEO.

All day she has been closely watching the news, hoping Lucien would refute the issue. She was thinking that everything will stop once they would hear his side.

And she had her answer when the CEO's entourage went out of the building. The news was immediately aired. Reporters were scampering into the area upon spotting the man they were all been waiting for.

"CEO Wright any word about the rumors?"

"Mr. CEO, was the document true? Have you undergone assessment regarding the issue of you being impotent?"

"Mr. Wright, Miss Ellen Johnson had somewhat insinuated the truthfulness of the document,

what can you say about it?"

"CEO Wright, was there truthfulness in the issue being spread?"

"Will you sue whoever was spreading this misinformation, Mr. Wright?"

"Was the issue has a basis?"

"Will this mean, you cannot produce an heir for Wright Group of Companies?"

"Is the erectile dysfunction issue the reason why you haven't married Miss Johnson up to this time, Mr. Wright?"

Lexie nervously watch as reporters bombarded him with questions. Ben together with all his security had made a huge circle preempting anyone to get near to him. He looks dangerously grim and the clenching of his jaw is visible even from afar. Some of the questions are rather an attack than an inquiry. Reporters are quite assertively getting his statement.

"CEO Wright, do you have erectile dysfunction? What can you say about the statement of Miss Johnson earlier? Was she not aware of your health condition?"

"Wasn't you being unfair to Miss Johnson for not telling her of your ailment?"

Fed up with the bombardment from the media, Lucien stops in his tracks and turns to face them all.

"Miss Johnson is the least of my concern. Whatever between me and Miss Johnson had ended three years ago. Nothing is between us except being civil to each other. And I don't owe her or anyone an explanation" his piercing gaze scanned the people who cower from his sight.

"All of you as witnesses, I cut all the remaining ties I have to Miss Johnson starting today. And I will do the same for people who will stand on her behalf. And I prohibit her to set foot at any property bearing the Wright name. I should have done it three years ago when I broke up with her" Lucien Wright dangerously announced before he continue to walk towards the waiting vehicle.

More questions erupted but the CEO was already entering the vehicle without looking back. His statement has left, those who witnessed, shivers on their spines. The declaration will have a massive impact on Ellen Johnson's status in society. She was just been declared persona non grata by Lucien Wright.

"Serves her right!" Eve exclaims with triumph.

"And to think almost all major establishments in the capital were owned by Wright Group of Companies. She will be doing her shopping in small bazaars soon. And no more special privileges for an arrogant prima donna. She's been acting like a Wright's wife for so long, it's about time she wakes up from her dream" Jason chuckles.

"She just ignited her own bomb. Now she will realize the consequence of her action"

Emily added.

Lexie heaves a sigh to ease her painful and heavy chest. She had been very quiet since the issue had erupted though it troubles her. Listening to her colleagues has somewhat pacified her but she cannot cast aside the nagging feeling of worry towards Lucien. Her eyes were constantly on the clock, waiting for the time she could go home. She wanted to see Lucien. She has been getting her phone and staring at it, thinking to message him but she doesn't know what to say.

As the clock strikes five, she hurriedly tidies her table and got her bag. 1

"You will be going home, Lexie?" Emily asks, surprised she was already preparing to leave. Most of the time she will stay for at least thirty minutes

"Yes, Miss Emz. I have some errands today" fixing her bag, she smiles at her and Jason who had also turned in her direction.

"See you tomorrow, Lex" Jason waves at her.

"See you all tomorrow" she waves to everyone before rushing to go out. Her steps were quick and she immediately hails a cab the moment she went out of the building. If she is capable to fly, she definitely would at this time.

Although she knows Lucien will still be at the office, she yearns to go home to see her son. Being with Lucy could make her relax while waiting for Lucien.

At the time she reached the penthouse, Lucy was playing beside the pool together with his nurses. The boy was surprised she was early but was so happy to see her. She played with him until it was time for his bath and dinner. As she was used to doing, she bathe and fed him while his nurses prepare his medicines.

"My baby love is a good boy" she raves at him while she showers him with kisses. 1

"I'm a big boy now, mama and I want to become healthy" he sweetly smiles, earning him shuffles of his hair.

After his medicines, she brought him to brush his teeth before tucking him into bed. She will be reading him his favorite story.

Her son has already been asleep for a while but she remains on his bed, stroking his silky black hair. It's the first time since they went home to the penthouse Lucien has been late in coming home.

Lucy has been asking for his father earlier and she just told him, he has important things to do. Which the boy readily believes. Taking good care of Lucy had helped cast her mind away

from what was bothering her. But now that Lucy was asleep, she was again consumed by her troubled thoughts.

Where could be Lucien now? Is he that busy? She has been checking her phone since earlier but no message from him. She even tried to call him earlier with the hope he could at least say good night to Lucy but her call did not get through.

What's happening, Lucien? The same question has been popping in her head but remains unanswered.

Slowly, she got down from her son's bed. After kissing him, she went out and thank the nurses who will stay with him the whole night.

Even she feels like dragging herself to move, she must prepare for bed. But doubting she could sleep even a wink without Lucien, she decided to kill time by doing some new designs.

Time passed by but she remains to stare at the blank screen of her iPad. No ideas pop

out of her head. In normal circumstances, she usually doesn't struggle with designs. But with all the things bothering her, her mind seems gone blank too.

It was almost midnight but Lucien still hasn't come home and she was worried. Not because something might have happened to him. With Ben at his side all the time, Lucien is well protected. She tried to dial his number again but she only got a busy tone. "Where are you Lucien?" she whispers as she went out of bed. After placing her iPad on the nightstand, she picks up her robe.

She would check outside. If she has to ask the security guarding the penthouse she will. They must know where Ben was and surely he is with Lucien.

Going out of the master's bedroom, she walks straight towards the door. But she was startled when in the middle of darkness she saw a silhouette of a man sitting on the couch.

Grasping her thundering chest, she squinted in the darkness.

"Lucien?"

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Chapter 44

Chapter 44 Casual Talk

"Lucien?" she whispers after she recognized him.

Slowly she walks closer to him.

"What are you doing here? Why didn't you get inside the room? What time did you get home?" she asks what has been bothering her mind. But she got no reply even after she had taken a seat beside him.

"Lucien..." she was suddenly bothered by how he looked.

Heaving a sigh, she placed her hand on his knee, giving it a gentle squeeze. She stares at his loosened tie and disheveled hair. He looks dejected almost defeated, which is troubling her.

"I've been waiting for you since afternoon. I got out of work earlier. I played with Lucy around the pool, I bathe him and we ate dinner together. I put him to sleep and read him his favorite story" she recounted what she did earlier. She waited for his reply but after a while of silence, she got none.

"I also tried to call. Lucy wanted to say goodnight to you...but your phone was quite busy" she added and waited again. When she got no response but a heavy sigh, she stands up and positioned herself, kneeling beside him. After her hands found his shoulder, she started to gently massage him.

"How was your day?" she softly asks. Putting pressure on his stiff shoulder and neck.

"I am doing new designs... By the next collection launch, I will have my brand name" she continues to talk despite Lucien remaining quiet.

She gently tidy his hair and started to massage his head, making him lean his back to her. Embracing his whole weight. She was relieved he didn't resist. Whatever his inner battle, she is willing to wait for him to open himself to her.

Her heart is heavy by the way Lucien look. She was not used to seeing him this defeated. Lucien Wright has been a pillar of strength of a multi-billion conglomerate but seeing him now, she realized, he was just another human being. Capable to be hurt, to

be exhausted, to be vulnerable like any human.

Wrapping him inside her embrace, she pressed her lips on his temple. She respects his silence but she can't allow him to be destroyed by whatever bothering his mind.

"I will listen, Lucien. I'm here" she whispers against his skin.

"No matter what the circumstances, I will be by your side, together with our son. I will be with you as you brave yourself in battling the demons in your head and your heart. I have embraced

whatever difficulties of having you when I let you in our lives" she softly added while pointing at his head and his chest.

Hugging him from behind, they fell into a long silence. They stayed in the dark and she gave him the silence he needs.

She doesn't know how long they have been on their spot until Lucien moves. He unwraps her arms from him and turns to hoist her on his lap. And this time, he was the one hugging her, tucking her under his chin. .

"It's all over the news..." he whispers.

"Yes, I've watched it..." she softly replies.

"The document..." he whispers but paused.

"I will only believe what you would say... and no matter it's true or not, it won't change the fact that you are Lucy's father...that you bore an heir through me...that above others I am the person who knows you are not what those rumors are telling. But...of course, there's no such thing as perfect life... neither have you. And I have embraced whatever imperfections may come our way while being together. You can fight your battle with me by your side, Lucien. If you will let me" she softly responded, caressing his chest. Playing with his loosened tie. She heard him heave a sigh while he tighten his hold around her.

"The result was done five years ago after I met Ellen. That's is what was posted. But there's another result four years ago after you left" he continues while she nodded, understanding what he meant.

"It's reflecting... the same diagnosis" she added. Questions rise in her head but she chooses not to ask. Instead, she wraps her arms around him.

"I lose it a few years after I become CEO. Leading this massive empire is tough, Zia. I've suffered tremendous stress. The pressure from everyone, the stockholders, investors, stakeholders... everything was too much. But I don't have a choice, I am the heir of this empire "his voice laced with pain. Needing to comfort him, she tightens her arms around him.

"During the time I'm with Ellen, I got some reactions for her that no woman had made me feel after losing it. And thinking she was the answer to my predicament, I pursue her..."

"But I cannot maintain it... I'm losing it even with her" frustration fills his voice.

"I tried to hide it even from her. She would always initiate to get to the act... I cannot, Zia. I'm incapable and it's consuming my self-worth"

"She was becoming persistent, talking about having an heir despite her career. I felt more pressured. I lose the little reactions for her. Then she went away, I thought it would make me yearn for her. That I would miss her. I would visit her after a few months, but still the same. I

totally lost it"

"I was becoming hopeless"

"Then I decided to have a check and my worst nightmare happened. I was diagnosed with erectile dysfunction due to psychological factors affecting my libido"

"I had several sessions with a psychologist, it helps but with the circumstance, I am with, it's difficult. The psychologist had been advising me to discuss my situation with my partner, so we can work it out. But I can't trust Ellen with my situation. My pride and the world I'm revolving in were restraining me to trust just anyone" frustration fills his voice the entire time.

"I know Ellen has become suspicious and she was investigating behind my back. Until she got hold of the copy of my result. She uses it to threaten me... But I was undeterred...she was furious when I won't give in to her whims. I get tired of all her qualms"

"And then you came..." he tightens his hold around her before he leans to the backrest of the couch.

"You've been an insatiable beast in bed... That's what is confusing me..." she mumbles, planting kisses on his neck.

"Yes.. with you I got it back... Surprisingly, my body is reacting normally" he explains.

"You should thank me, I chose to pick you among those men in the restaurant" she playfully teases. She was relieved he is starting to relax.

"Even if you didn't approach me, you will still be mine..." he mutters, making her gape as she straightened from slumping on him.

"What do you mean?" perplexed she stares at him. Though it's dark, she tries to see his eyes.

"You came in with a man by your side... I readily noticed you... And to my surprise, my body reacted uncontrollably" he responded, staring back straight into her eyes.

"I'm with Coby, before he dumps me, telling me I'm prude and frigid" she mutters softly.

"He made my task easy...and you were never prude nor frigid"

"I was so pissed with him... I don't know what got into me, deciding to throw my innocence on a spree" she chuckles remembering the past.

"And I'm glad I was there... I was your first man" he mumbles, a soft smile appearing on his lips. He reached out to caress her cheek.

"Yes, I'm fortunate it was you... I got a one-night stand with someone worth 500 billion dollars..." playfully, she added while closing her eyes to enjoy his feathery touch.

"But you only ask for ten million dollars" he counters.

"That's just what I need... And I had wonderful sex every night though" she retorted.

"You've released the untamed desire hidden for a long time. It came as a surprise even to me. You're simply gorgeous, Zia. Your dress was stunning... And the way your hips sways as you walk towards me is like tightly engulfing my manhood, I got so painfully hard that night" his voice is quite ragged and hoarse.

"Are you seducing me now?" she playfully raves. He chuckles while planting a kiss on her head.

"I will always love doing it" he whispers, inhaling her scent deeply.

"So, if I didn't go on a rampage asking for a dick that night, you will still go after me?" she softly asks as she fully understood the situation.

"I will have my ways to have you, but you made it easier" he smiles and it was heard in his voice. 1

"It must be meant to happen. I almost change my mind, seeing your grim look but I have no other choice, you are the only person who doesn't have a date that night" she was amused by the recollection.

"So, the marriage agreement?" she remembered to ask.

"I had no other way to tell you to marry me, except for the fabrication I made" he
After their playful exchange, they become quiet.

"I thought I could pursue you while being married. You were somewhat content with what we have. Despite my fears, I might lose it with you too, I did my best to be a great husband to you. But Ellen barged in one day. She got wind of a woman I brought in the mansion"

"I was worried when you didn't come home for a week and then I saw you with her" she mumbles softly. The memory still hurts her.

"I'm keeping her at bay. I don't want her to come barging into the mansion to confront you. Our families were friends and though we are on the difficult foot together, I have to treat her well"

"I understand...I was just surprised with the coldness you showed me..." she whispers.

"I'm sorry...I was caught off guard when you enter the restaurant. And then I saw the pain in your eyes. I don't know how to deal with it..."

"I was frightened, Zia... I know the kind of pain I saw in you... I was frightened to acknowledge it... and I also fear to acknowledge what I felt for you..."

Slowly moving away from his embrace, she stared at him. She remains quiet, waiting for him

to continue while her heart is thundering with anticipation.

"It was just sex at first, Zia... Your body is the answer to my predicament. But when you left without a trace...I went crazy" the pain in his voice is evident.

The CEO's Ten Million Dollar Wife by R.C.BRIE

Chapter 45

Chapter 45 No Faith

Staring, she remains to wait for him to continue.

"I don't know if it's love, Zia... I don't know I'm capable of such... I am with Ellen for years but I can't say I love her... She was just there beside me, but it doesn't bother me whether she was around or not. And I fear I will do the same with you" he added, sounding so conflicted.

"I was desperate to find an answer to my dilemma and I don't want to use you as I did to Ellen. You are...you are precious to me Zia. The first time I felt this kind of protectiveness but I was frightened of myself"

"These were all new to me. Everything in my life was easily offered, I can easily get anything I want...but for the first time...you gave me a difficult plight. A battle against myself"

"You were there for an easy take..but I don't want to just take you... I don't deserve you. I have so many demons inside me"

"I want to possess you but at the same time, I want you to be free from me... You deserve more than a man like me. You deserve to be happy with someone who could

take care of you better than I can”

“I’m thinking of just sticking at Ellen’s side. I can deal with her better than I could with you. I can just set her aside if I want to, I can just ignore her if the mood strikes me...I can be a useless man to her and I won’t be bothered”

“I’m that kind of devil, Zia. And I don’t want you to be the next Ellen in my life. You deserve more than me. I only have the money but I’m a useless man...I’m a heartless bastard” he quavered.

“I... I don’t see that kind of devil in you, Lucien. Don’t make yourself believe in the non-existent monster in you” she softly counters.

“I am, Zia. I may not do it now, but soon I might be. And it’s bothering me every single day” he persistently counters. His eyes were almost bloodshot from containing his emotion.

“No, you won’t. You are a passionate man, Lucien. You are capable to love just like any other man. Ellen is just not a person who could bring out the real you. All your fears and the demons you perceived yourself to be were all superficial, it’s not the real you” she earnestly explains as she cups the side of his cheek.

“I don’t know, Zia. I hope I was wrong and you were right. I don’t want to hurt you and our son when the time comes I would be a heartless bastard towards you two” conflicted, he mutters.

“I was somewhat relieved when you went away despite it breaking me inside. You escaped my

grasp. I went back to focus on Ellen but I realized I was just fooling myself. I broke up with her a year after you left”

“It would be useless to have her when I lost it again after you left. And I know it’s not her who I need. My fucking dick won’t go hard unless I watch the videos I had with you and your naked pictures” his voice was exasperated but Lexie’s eyes grow wide.

“Lucien...?!” she was incredulously in disbelief. She can’t believe he saves all the nude photos he took

“Those pictures made me get through all these years, Zia. I have my needs and you were not by my side. I need a release from time to time” he raves and glares at her as if he was entitled to do as such.

“Lucien...?!” she was scandalized.

“It’s in my private phone, no one could see it but me” he explains but it doesn’t sit well with her.

“You are crazy, Lucien!” she hissed

“Yeah, maybe I am...” he agreed, pulling her again to his chest.

“Then you came back. More gorgeous than before. So stunning. My dick went on a rampage by the mere sight of you”

“You’re not that blunt, huh...” she sneers.

“I swear, Zia. I was sporting a painful erection the whole night” he grumbles.

She rolls her eyes though he can’t see them.

“You gave life to my dick again..” he added, making Lexie burst out laughing.

“You are shameless, Lucien Wright! Others would say, you gave life to my dull existence, not to a dick” appalled by his audacity, she grumbles.

“But that’s my case, Zia. You gave life to my dick and then you gave me a precious surprise... our son, Lucy” his voice softens, which also made her smile, thinking of their

son.

"I've been afraid to tell you...how much I love you both...but I know it too well I have loved you since four years ago..." he whispers, almost indistinct but she heard him. 1 Surprised, she tensed as she looks up at him. Her brows furrowed as she gauge the truthfulness in his words. While he met her gaze and their gazes locked.

"Both? Four years ago?" she whispers. She had accepted Lucien's love for her son but not for herself. She thought it was just a common need for flesh. A mutual understanding. She loves Lucien but she doesn't have plans to impose the same love from him. She has accepted it a

long time ago, Lucien is a different person from others. She was not that ambitious to aspire for Lucien Wright's love, regardless of how many times he assured her she is important to him.

"I understand it along the way, Zia. No matter how hard I avoided acknowledging my feelings, it's been slapping me with the truth. I have loved you...since then... I love you till now... I'm just too dumb to listen to my heart. I thought I'm incapable of loving"

"I love you and Lucy so much. And my dick has been faithful to you even before I recognized my feelings for you" he softly added between his chuckles

"Are you confessing?" she whispers. She was in a daze but her thundering heart made her stay focused.

"I don't know how to confess. I just assumed you already knew. We've been making love since you arrive" he retorted.

"We've had sex...several times... even before we know each other's names" she mockingly counters.

"Sex is always great between us...that's undeniable" he grins.

"Yeah, it is..."

"But now I know it's more than great sex, Zia" he becomes serious as he tilted her face towards him.

"Yes," she nodded. Her eyes brimming with tears.

"But will you still accept me if the time would come I will lose it again? I can't promise how long I could keep up with this, Zia. I might lose it again tomorrow or the day next. I don't know when..." sounding so insecure, his voice quivers.

"We could work this out, Lucien. Just like what your psychologist had advised you. If you could trust me in this, we will make this through. This will not be your battle alone. We are together on this now" she moves away to cup his whole face.

"I trust you, Zia. But please be patient with me" he pleaded as he pulled her, hugging her tight.

"I promise, Lucien. And if I need to learn pole dancing just to excite you, I will" she playfully added while being buried in his neck.

"You will?" abruptly, he holds her by arm's length to look at her. Gauging her seriousness.

"You are not that excited, aren't you?" she amusedly glares at him, which was responded by a sheepish grin.

"I got hard just by imagining it, Zia. See" shamelessly, he made her feel his erection by pressing himself to her.

"I know you will not lose it this time. You are such a voracious man, Lucien Wright" she teased pressing her lips to his. 1

“But in case I lost it, Zia, despite our efforts?” the fear in his voice came back.

“Then, we cannot do anything about it. There is more to a relationship than making love, Lucien. Your dick is not the only thing that could make us happy. How you treat me and our son is already my greatest happiness. How we live our life together, is another one. How you share yourself with me is already precious to me. We have a lot of ways to be happy. Happiness is subjective. We can have sex every minute but still be unhappy. Happiness is a choice. And no matter how your dick performs, we will choose to be happy every day of our life together” earnestly, she assures him as their gazes lock.

“I love you, Alexzia Montes” with a quivering voice, he professes.

“I love you too, Lucien Wright. Then until now” she replies with misty eyes.

At last, they have spoken of their feeling to each other. Though it was long overdue, it still feels raw.

Hugging each other, they become silent. They savor the confirmation of the love they have.

“I can come out to belie all those rumors” she whispers after a while, which made him chuckle.

“What would you say? I’ve been making love with you every single night. They might need proof” he playfully retorted.

“I can bring Lucy. With one look, everyone would know whose son he is” she added.

“No, I won’t let the two of you be subjected to insignificant attention of the public. If they need to know of your existence in my life, it would be because I introduced you as my wife and Lucy as my heir” he firmly disagrees while her chest swells, hearing him say who they are to him.

“I don’t need to belie the rumors, Zia. It doesn’t affect me at all. What frightened me was you. I don’t know what you will think of me. I don’t want to lose you from the useless rumors”

“Then, you don’t have faith in me, Lucien. You already know it’s worthless but you still doubted me. I’m not that petty to just blindly believe. And even if it’s true, I don’t care. I didn’t love you because of your dick alone, though it’s a great bonus” she was annoyed after the flattery.

The CEO's Ten Million Dollar Wife by R.C.BRIE

Chapter 46

Chapter 46 Being Wright

Turning towards the door, a familiar figure enters.

“Hello, Miss Montes”

“Hello, Mr. Simon” Lexie replies with the greetings of the all-smile Gabriel Simon.

“What sorcery have you done to make yourself this small CEO Lucien Wright” he turns to the boy on the couch who is gaping up at him.

“Mama, is he a silly man?” Lucy whispers to his mother after he averted his gaze away from the visitor.

“No, baby. He is papa’s friend” softly, she assures the boy who looks afraid of the man.

“Hello there young CEO Lucien” Gab continues with his playfulness despite hearing what the boy called him.

“I am not my papa. I am Lucas Alexander Montes. You are acting silly. My papa is a grown man, I’m just a boy” Lucy exclaims, incredulously confused.

“Ohhh, is that so? But you look exactly like CEO Lucien. Are you deceiving me kiddo? What have you done to my best friend? Why did you make him shrink?” confusion reflects on his face while he closely scrutinizes the boy’s face. His serious playfulness is scaring the boy who hadn’t recognized he was teasing.

Lexie has been containing her laughter from Gabriel’s mischief while her son was being serious about proving himself.

“Papa is in the shower! Can’t you see I’m just a boy?” Lucy was appalled. His eyes were bulging while explaining himself.

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“Then, why do you have CEO Lucien’s face?” Gabriel seems to have no plans of stopping anytime while the boy is getting flustered.

“Because I’m his son... I just look like him but I’m not him” he persistently explains while glaring at Gabriel.

“What are you doing to my son, Gabriel?” the fresh-looking Lucien went out of the room and interrupted the two.

“Oh, you are there. I thought you shrank into this small boy” Gabriel hasn’t dropped his act even with Lucien around. He even pointed at Lucy’s head while looking surprised.

“See, that’s my papa...I am the son. You’re a silly man” Lucy exasperatedly interjected. By then, Gabriel chuckles and shuffles the boy’s hair while Lucien took his seat beside Lexie.

“I was just confused, little man. You look exactly like your papa” Gabriel explains while scratching his head.

“Yes, we are both handsome” the boy cockily responded, which made the adults burst laughing

“It’s not obvious you are an avid fan of your father” Gabriel exclaims amusedly.

“I love my papa” the boy retorted.

“Yeah, right” Gab gave up as he raises his hand in the air.

“So, nice meeting you Lucas Alexander Montes Wright, I’m Gabriel Simon, your father’s handsome friend” seriously, like he is meeting a business partner, Gabriel extended his hand to the boy for a handshake.

Though reluctant to accept the man’s hand, he stands up and receives his handshake like a man, making his parents proud. Lexie gushes to her son while Lucien looks immensely appeased by his son’s manly bearing.

“Nice meeting you, Mr. Gabriel Simon. You are handsome but not quite close to my father”

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A burst of laughter erupted before the front door opens and three figures enters.

“I could see you are having fun...hello my handsome brave boy. My little Lucien” Levinia immediately gushes while striding towards the boy.

“Grandma...” Lucy’s face brightens with his sweet smile seeing who arrives.

The socialite hugs the boy before Daniel and Samantha have their turns. After all the uproar, squeezing the boy with hugs and kisses, they greeted the rest.

Gabriel, who was so playful earlier becomes quiet while watching the exchange of greetings. His gaze would constantly dart towards Samantha but the woman seems to be avoiding him.

The atmosphere remains to be joyful as the grown-ups doted over the boy. The lunch they have planned together has also been successful and boisterous with Lucy. The boy's bright disposition gave a relaxing ambiance to everyone. And it's the first time they have gathered together to celebrate Lucy's existence. As the only Wright heir, everyone was so passionate about him that even Samantha is over-doting on him. The penthouse has just become quiet after Lexie put Lucy to bed to have his afternoon nap. And it's the time they will all gather to discuss the issue around Lucien for several days now.

Lexie came back to a more serious atmosphere while everyone was having afternoon tea. Sitting beside Lucien, his arm immediately wraps around her waist.

"So, we are all here" Levinia smiles at Lexie and the way Lucien pulled her closer to him.

"What's happening Lucien? I want every detail" Daniel seriously announces after carefully placing his cup down.

The same with what Lucien told Lexie, he relayed the whole information to everyone. He hasn't left anything out even the agreement he had with Lexie. And also the status of their relationship as of the moment. 1

"I am happy for the both of you, I know something will always be special between you and Lucien. Despite the circumstances and the long years you've been apart, love will always win. And Lexie, I'm hoping we could spend time soon and I welcome you to the family. We haven't talked much before, but I'm grateful it's you Lucien chose" Levinia gently spoke to her.

"Why mother? You don't like a ballerina as a daughter-in-law?" Samantha snickers.

"Oh, Sam you just don't know how hard I prayed..." meaningfully, Levina exclaims while she holds her chest.

"She is charming and sweet..." Sam added with a smirk.

"I don't mind someone outspoken and brazen. Someone who could glare at your intimidating brother without fearing his response" Levinia retorted. Her meaningful smile was set at Lexie who looks flushed in an instant. She recognizes she was the one Levinia Wright was talking about.

"You're overwhelming Zia, mom" Lucien spoke upon seeing the blush on Lexie's face.

"So protective, brother" Sam rolled her eyes while she sip her tea.

"She still not used to your bitchiness so tame it, Sam. You might be surprised how this kitten becomes a tiger once provoked" Lucien snickers at his sister.

"Oh, Lucien. I will never mind facing a furious tiger than to face a fox disguised as a lamb. I can handle a head-on fight, but not deception. The kind Gabriel's ballerina is capable" Sam sneers, her intense gaze boring her brother before it turns to Gabriel.

"Sam, please..." the charming and playful Gabriel Simon, whom Lexie had met several times, is now like a meek bear in front of Samantha Wright.

"Yes, Mr. Simon?" she raised her brows to him.

"She is not my ballerina and never will be" Gabriel seriously mutters. His earnest eyes met Sam's mocking ones.

"Whatever" Sam scoffs, while Gab heaves another sigh.

“Enough Sam. Lexie, don’t mind them” Levinia appeased her.

“No worries, Madame Wright” she gently smiles at the socialite. Until now, she can’t believe

she would meet the famous matriarch of the Wright family and she looks divine for her age.

“Don’t call me Madame, call me mom. Now that you and Lucien were together, it is just proper to treat each other as a family” Levinia counters and playfully glares at her, to which she responded with a polite and timid smile. 1

“So what’s your plan with your ballerina, Lucien?” Sam curiously asks, unconcerned about the glare from Lucien and even from their parents.

“She is not my ballerina” Lucien mutters grimly.

“Whose ballerina is she now? Gabriel’s?” Sam continues, sneering at her brother. She turns to Gabriel who just heaves a sigh but did not counter or retorted. The man chooses not to mind what Samantha said.

Lexie turns to Sam and Gab, gauging what’s between them. She was not sure if the others felt it but there is tension between the two. Or everyone was just ignoring it.

“As I have announced in the media, she won’t be allowed in any Wright properties” Lucien casually said, tearing Lexie from pondering deeper what is between Sam and Gab.

“I made sure everyone knows, I had already issued a Circular regarding it” Daniel seriously confirms.

“Will it be too harsh, Lucien? Her words don’t matter to those who know better” Lexie softly interjected.

“Don’t be fooled by that scheming bitch, Lexie. She can’t be trusted” Sam turns to her with a serious expression.

“She just needs a tiny chance to do her cunning scheme. She had fooled us once but never twice... I won’t allow it” Sam continues as her eyes sharpen from the raging fury inside her.

She was stunned by the anger reflecting on Sam’s face. She has seen her being cold and sarcastic, but never with the kind of hate she is showing now. Though she was talking in riddles, Lexie is guessing her anger involves Gabriel Simon.

“Zia, I won’t take chances with her. She can be unruly. But you don’t have to worry, Ben had you tailed” Lucien interrupted, getting her attention.

“Lucien, that would be unnecessary” she was appalled by Lucien’s attention. She cannot be having a tail all the time.

“It’s for your safety, Lexie. Though the attention won’t be too much on you since no one knows your connection to Lucien, soon you will be. And Ellen knows who you are. She might do something to you” Levinia carefully explains.

“And the tail will not be upfront, no one knows they are your tail, even you. Ben and his men

are the best” Gabriel spoke, assuring Lexie.

Though still flabbergasted, Lexie nods in agreement. She won’t counter their plans for her. They know better than what she was aware of.

One downside of being associated with a famous family like Wright is maintaining her privacy. She cannot have it all in the name of love. Loving CEO Lucien Wright is also a huge sacrifice for her ordinary life.

The CEO's Ten Million Dollar Wife by R.C.BRIE

Chapter 47

Chapter 47 Worth the Woe

The rumor continues to float around but Lucien or any Wright ignores it like it doesn't exist. It has receded by the inattention of anyone from the family. The cold shoulder added to Ellen's resentment.

Lucien did not bother to take down the document. He left everything unanswered and unverified. He left the decision to the public to believe it or not.

With all his hectic schedule, he has no time to be bothered by insignificant matters, more so Lexie.

She has become busy with the preparation of her brand and the design she will be launching. She has become too focused on her dream career and their family to mind gossip. Lucy's health has been immensely improving and she was so happy about it.

That's all that's important to her and Lucien, Lucy's good health.

She had just come out of the vehicle still several meters away from Silhouette Designs office when she was startled by someone's greetings.

"Hello, Lexie, wow great car! A limo!" Emily's voice gushes, making her tense.

"You're awesome. I hadn't expected you to be this rich" she continues with her amazement while Lexie remains speechless.

They both watch the vehicle drive away while Lexie was praying Emily won't ask anything.

"It still has no plate, it's brand new" Emily mumbles before turning her questioning look to Lexie.

"It was just a neighbor, he offered to drop me since he will pass by here" she casually explains while turning away.

"He?" Emily's hearing is rather sharp to Lexie's aghast.

"An old neighbor" she tried to dismiss the topic but Emily seems not ready. They were walking towards the building but Emily still looks unconvinced. "I don't think so..." the woman narrows her eyes to her but she just chuckles without saying anything more.

She doesn't want to prolong the discussion. They are nearing the building and once their colleagues knew of what Emily saw, she will be again subjected to their teases.

Lucien had bought another limo for her since she has been adamant about using any vehicle associated with the Wright. She was fine taking public vehicles but Lucien has been insisting to have her own for her safety. And just this week, Daniel Wright came to the penthouse to tell her he already brought the limo they have bought.

She can counter Lucien but definitely not the Wright patriarch. All she did was nod and say her thanks to the man, having no choice. She suspected Lucien had connived with his father to have her easy agreement. Which works. She had confronted her after his father left, but she only got a shower of kisses and tickles. He intentionally diverted her attention by making love with her until exhaustion. 2

"So that neighbor of yours, is he single?" her thoughts went back to the present, hearing Emily's question.

"He already had a son and a wife" she incredulously glares at Emily who immediately looks disappointed upon knowing the man's status. She almost laugh if she had not

contained herself. If only Emily saw her smirk. She didn't lie at all. Indeed Lucien has a son, though technically she was not his wife, she just qualify herself.

"Anyways, President Deutche is still single" Emily mumbles, linking her arm to Lexie as they enter the building

Thankful that Emily dropped the topic, she discreetly heaves a relieved sigh. She doesn't want any more inquiries about her whereabouts. She was not yet ready to face the life of being Lucien Wright's partner.

Haying an impending busy day, they were immediately met with all the deadlines they have to meet. The summer collection is coming and this time, Lexie will be using her brand name under Silhouettes Designs. The collection will also be her launch.

The launching will be done on a beach resort and high-profile clients will be invited. Summer is the highlight of the season and the company is in massive preparation. It's what everyone is looking forward to, especially Lexie. It would be her launch and the first time she will experience such glamour in the field of fashion design.

Models were already invited for the catwalk aside from the earlier pictorials for print ads and brochures.

"Why don't you wear one of your designs on the catwalk, Lexie?" Jason pointed out while they are reviewing the photos.

"Yes, Lexie. You are perfect for one of your sundresses" Emily easily agreed.

"That can be done. Designers have the opportunity to showcase their designs and I agree with them. You have that kind of model vibe. Like a real-life doll" Eve also added while her eyes trail Lexie's face down to her long slender legs.

Hearing what Eve said, she immediately remember what Lucien would fondly call her, his doll.

Smiling at her colleagues, she is pondering the idea. She had a fancy for one of her designs, the mint halter sundress with Dom's hand-painted design of white tiger lilies.

"I had modeled previously" she mumbles with a smile.

"Wow that's great...so you could do it" Emily excitedly exclaims.

"The finale..." Eve added with a wide smile.

"Yes, the finale of your collection. That would be dramatic" Jason raves, ecstatic by the vision he could see in his mind.

"I hope it would work" though confident in her modeling skills, she was a little nervous about the whole idea.

"It will work don't worry. It would be an additional attraction for the show" Emily gently assures her, she too is excited to see Lexie on the catwalk.

She is excited, no doubt about it. It's been years since she had her last modeling job and she misses posing in front of the camera.

"By the way, Sir Arvin invited us to grab some drinks later if you are fine with it, just the four of us and him. Just to unwind" Eve added while looking at Lexie before turning to look at Jason and Emily.

"Wow, sir Arvin has been acting cool these days" Jason meaningfully exclaims while Lexie remains quiet. She is avoiding being teased to their president again.

"Lexie is our lucky charm" Emily winks at her, which she chooses to ignore as not to lengthen the discussion.

"What you say, Lex?" Eve asks with a smile.

"Sure Eve, I just won't stay long" she smiles back.

“Why are you always in a hurry to go home? You are young, you should enjoy life while still single” Jason was incredulous, making Lexie chuckle.

“I am enjoying, Jason. That’s why I will be coming with you later but I have responsibilities too so I should not stay longer than I intend to do” she playfully responded.

“You sounded like a wife and a mother” Emily mumbles, earning her three pairs of curious eyes.

“It’s the vibe you are emanating. It’s like of a family woman” Emily added after she had several earnest gazes on her.

The eyes fixed on Emily darted towards Lexie, waiting for her to speak.

“We all have different levels of responsibilities in life” she just shrugs and went back to her work. She wanted to escape their scrutinizing eyes and she doesn’t want to lie either.

Seeing Lexie become busy again, no one speaks again. They too become focused on their tasks. Respect is the main thing they had a great rapport and neither of them would want someone prying on their lives too.

Came the afternoon, everyone is already excited as they wait for their president. And did not wait long, before they could even stand from their chairs, Arvin came striding inside their workstation.

“Ready!?” he asks, smiling.

“Ready!” playfully, everyone responded.

Though Lexie was somewhat uncomfortable with the attention Arvin has been giving her, she chuckles at the playfulness of the others.

Aboard Arvin’s vehicle, they all went to a nearby cafe, where they just ordered light snacks and their choices of drinks.

“What more do you like, Lexie? You order anything” Arvin softly told her, hearing her order just mint lemonade.

“I’m fine with the lemonade. I don’t want to be full for dinner” she casually replies with a casual smile.

“You can order the whole cafe and sir Arvin would pay for it” Jason playfully interjected, making everyone chuckle but putting Lexie in an awkward predicament. This is also mirrored by Arvin based on the blush on his cheeks. She wasn’t expecting the man to blush.

“Why are you two so awkward with each other?” Jason added seeing their predicament. Aside from Eve, Jason is the second person who could tease their president.

“Ahm I will just go to the powder room” Lexie mumbles before standing up, which also made Arvin stand up to assist her.

“Thank you” she politely smiles before casually walking away. Unconcerned of the eyes tailing her back

“I don’t think she will be interested in you, Arvin” Eve spoke after a while of silence.

“She is too aloof and she had mentioned before, she already has someone” Eve added.

Emily was quietly listening same with Jason. They all know about how their president feels towards the new designer but he seems to be on the track to break his heart.

Lexie is too focused on her growing career and on whoever is taking her time after her work. She is so dedicated and never did she indulge in any teasing pertaining to the president’s affection towards her.

“It could be worth the try” Arvin smiles. Though he is already aware of how Lexie would avoid

his moves on her, he will continue to try.

“Just don’t raise your hopes too high, boss. Lexie is a very dedicated person and she had already set her life to whoever she is with right now. It’s quite obvious” Jason also added while smiling sadly at Arvin.

Heaving a sigh, they all stared at the food on their table. Chapter 47 Worth the Woe
The rumor continues to float around but Lucien or any Wright ignores it like it doesn’t exist. It has receded by the inattention of anyone from the family. The cold shoulder added to Ellen’s resentment.

Lucien did not bother to take down the document. He left everything unanswered and unverified. He left the decision to the public to believe it or not.

With all his hectic schedule, he has no time to be bothered by insignificant matters, more so Lexie.

She has become busy with the preparation of her brand and the design she will be launching. She has become too focused on her dream career and their family to mind gossip. Lucy’s health has been immensely improving and she was so happy about it. That’s all that’s important to her and Lucien, Lucy’s good health.

She had just come out of the vehicle still several meters away from Silhouette Designs office when she was startled by someone’s greetings.

“Hello, Lexie, wow great car! A limo!” Emily’s voice gushes, making her tense.

“You’re awesome. I hadn’t expected you to be this rich” she continues with her amazement while Lexie remains speechless.

They both watch the vehicle drive away while Lexie was praying Emily won’t ask anything.

“It still has no plate, it’s brand new” Emily mumbles before turning her questioning look to Lexie.

“It was just a neighbor, he offered to drop me since he will pass by here” she casually explains while turning away.

“He?” Emily’s hearing is rather sharp to Lexie’s aghast.

“An old neighbor” she tried to dismiss the topic but Emily seems not ready. They were walking towards the building but Emily still looks unconvinced. “I don’t think so...” the woman narrows her eyes to her but she just chuckles without saying anything more.

She doesn’t want to prolong the discussion. They are nearing the building and once their colleagues knew of what Emily saw, she will be again subjected to their teases.

Lucien had bought another limo for her since she has been adamant about using any vehicle associated with the Wright. She was fine taking public vehicles but Lucien has been insisting to have her own for her safety. And just this week, Daniel Wright came to the penthouse to tell her he already brought the limo they have bought.

She can counter Lucien but definitely not the Wright patriarch. All she did was nod and say her thanks to the man, having no choice. She suspected Lucien had connived with his father to have her easy agreement. Which works. She had confronted her after his father left, but she only got a shower of kisses and tickles. He intentionally diverted her attention by making love with her until exhaustion. 2

“So that neighbor of yours, is he single?” her thoughts went back to the present, hearing Emily’s question.

“He already had a son and a wife” she incredulously glares at Emily who immediately looks disappointed upon knowing the man’s status. She almost laugh if she had not contained herself. If only Emily saw her smirk. She didn’t lie at all. Indeed Lucien has a son, though technically she was not his wife, she just qualify herself.

“Anyways, President Deutche is still single” Emily mumbles, linking her arm to Lexie as they enter the building

Thankful that Emily dropped the topic, she discreetly heaves a relieved sigh. She doesn’t want any more inquiries about her whereabouts. She was not yet ready to face the life of being Lucien Wright’s partner.

Having an impending busy day, they were immediately met with all the deadlines they have to meet. The summer collection is coming and this time, Lexie will be using her brand name under Silhouettes Designs. The collection will also be her launch.

The launching will be done on a beach resort and high-profile clients will be invited. Summer is the highlight of the season and the company is in massive preparation. It’s what everyone is looking forward to, especially Lexie. It would be her launch and the first time she will experience such glamour in the field of fashion design.

Models were already invited for the catwalk aside from the earlier pictorials for print ads and brochures.

“Why don’t you wear one of your designs on the catwalk, Lexie?” Jason pointed out while they are reviewing the photos.

“Yes, Lexie. You are perfect for one of your sundresses” Emily easily agreed.

“That can be done. Designers have the opportunity to showcase their designs and I agree with them. You have that kind of model vibe. Like a real-life doll” Eve also added while her eyes trail Lexie’s face down to her long slender legs.

Hearing what Eve said, she immediately remember what Lucien would fondly call her, his doll.

Smiling at her colleagues, she is pondering the idea. She had a fancy for one of her designs, the mint halter sundress with Dom’s hand-painted design of white tiger lilies.

“I had modeled previously” she mumbles with a smile.

“Wow that’s great...so you could do it” Emily excitedly exclaims.

“The finale...” Eve added with a wide smile.

“Yes, the finale of your collection. That would be dramatic” Jason raves, ecstatic by the vision he could see in his mind.

“I hope it would work” though confident in her modeling skills, she was a little nervous about the whole idea.

“It will work don’t worry. It would be an additional attraction for the show” Emily gently assures her, she too is excited to see Lexie on the catwalk.

She is excited, no doubt about it. It’s been years since she had her last modeling job and she misses posing in front of the camera.

“By the way, Sir Arvin invited us to grab some drinks later if you are fine with it, just the four of us and him. Just to unwind” Eve added while looking at Lexie before turning to look at Jason and Emily.

“Wow, sir Arvin has been acting cool these days” Jason meaningfully exclaims while Lexie remains quiet. She is avoiding being teased to their president again.

“Lexie is our lucky charm” Emily winks at her, which she chooses to ignore as not to lengthen the discussion.

“What you say, Lex?” Eve asks with a smile.

“Sure Eve, I just won’t stay long” she smiles back.

“Why are you always in a hurry to go home? You are young, you should enjoy life while still single” Jason was incredulous, making Lexie chuckle.

“I am enjoying, Jason. That’s why I will be coming with you later but I have responsibilities too so I should not stay longer than I intend to do” she playfully responded.

“You sounded like a wife and a mother” Emily mumbles, earning her three pairs of curious eyes.

“It’s the vibe you are emanating. It’s like of a family woman” Emily added after she had several earnest gazes on her.

The eyes fixed on Emily darted towards Lexie, waiting for her to speak.

“We all have different levels of responsibilities in life” she just shrugs and went back to her work. She wanted to escape their scrutinizing eyes and she doesn’t want to lie either.

Seeing Lexie become busy again, no one speaks again. They too become focused on their tasks. Respect is the main thing they had a great rapport and neither of them would want someone prying on their lives too.

Came the afternoon, everyone is already excited as they wait for their president. And did not wait long, before they could even stand from their chairs, Arvin came striding inside their workstation.

“Ready!?” he asks, smiling.

“Ready!” playfully, everyone responded.

Though Lexie was somewhat uncomfortable with the attention Arvin has been giving her, she chuckles at the playfulness of the others.

Aboard Arvin’s vehicle, they all went to a nearby cafe, where they just ordered light snacks and their choices of drinks.

“What more do you like, Lexie? You order anything” Arvin softly told her, hearing her order just mint lemonade.

“I’m fine with the lemonade. I don’t want to be full for dinner” she casually replies with a casual smile.

“You can order the whole cafe and sir Arvin would pay for it” Jason playfully interjected, making everyone chuckle but putting Lexie in an awkward predicament. This is also mirrored by Arvin based on the blush on his cheeks. She wasn’t expecting the man to blush.

“Why are you two so awkward with each other?” Jason added seeing their predicament. Aside from Eve, Jason is the second person who could tease their president.

“Ahm I will just go to the powder room” Lexie mumbles before standing up, which also made Arvin stand up to assist her.

“Thank you” she politely smiles before casually walking away. Unconcerned of the eyes tailing her back

“I don’t think she will be interested in you, Arvin” Eve spoke after a while of silence.

“She is too aloof and she had mentioned before, she already has someone” Eve added. Emily was quietly listening same with Jason. They all know about how their president feels towards the new designer but he seems to be on the track to break his heart.

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work. She is so dedicated and never did she indulge in any teasing pertaining to the president's affection towards her.

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his moves on her, he will continue to try.

"Just don't raise your hopes too high, boss. Lexie is a very dedicated person and she had already set her life to whoever she is with right now. It's quite obvious" Jason also added while smiling sadly at Arvin.

Heaving a sigh, they all stared at the food on their table.

The CEO's Ten Million Dollar Wife by R.C.BRIE

Chapter 48

Chapter 48 Her Peace

As the summer event is nearing, all the teams were becoming busy. Lexie, together with Jason and Eve went to the venue to finalize the reservation.

"This place is gorgeous" Jason raves excitedly as he lounge on the comfortable chair. A huge tree shades them from the sun.

Waiting at the poolside with served fresh fruit drinks, they enjoy the serenity. The massive size of the area complies with the requirement of the event.

"Wright Hotel and Resort is the biggest in the capital, perfect for huge events" Eve explains before sipping her drinks. They are waiting for the final quotation. Madame Levinia Wright had approved the discount for Silhouettes Designs upon knowing their reservation the previous months.

"With great accommodation. Madame Levinia Wright has been very strict with the management" Eve continues.

"I feel like I'm so rich whenever I'm here. The relaxing atmosphere is superb" Jason added with closed eyes.

They were just interrupted when several staff arrived with some light snacks.

"Wow...for us?" Jason straightened from the chair, gazing at the mouth-watering meal being served. 1

"Yes, sir" one of the staff smiles.

"I didn't know they are this hospitable. I should come here more often" Jason gushes at the platters. basement fills his face.

Lexie chuckles at the way he was torn on what to pick first.

"We could stay longer here. I'm loving this ambiance" Eve announced, earning a clap from Jason. As the senior one among the three of them, Eve has the command.

They ate in silence, humming at every bite of the sumptuous snacks they have been served. Lexie is also enjoying the silence when another staff approaches to refill their drinks.

"Is this how you really treat your clients? I would love to come back here" Jason talk to the staff while munching his bite.

"For valued clients, yes sir" the woman smiles.

"So I need to always use the name of Silhouettes Designs every time I will visit here" he mumbles while looking up to the staff.

"We were not informed you were from Silhouettes Designs, sir. We were just instructed to serve the food on this tables the staff politely replies.

Staring at the woman, three pairs of eyes turn to her.

"Oh, maybe Miss Mabelle instructed you, she was the one catering the account of SD" Eve exclaims.

"No mam, Miss Mabelle was not aware of the instruction to serve snacks. She just instructed for the drinks. A different person ordered the snacks" the staff carefully explains before she excuses herself.

The three share bewildered gazes before shrugging off. "Maybe sir Arvin ordered for us... Lexie is with us...so, you know..." Jason winks at Lexie who shakes her head in amusement.

"Or another admirer..." Eve gushes over Lexie.

"You two have wild imaginations" Lexie amusedly exclaims.

"Any man would definitely give you a second look, Lexie. You are gorgeous! Stunning figure and the face, look at your face! Even CEO Lucien Wright would want to possess you once he had a glimpse of you" Jason exasperatedly exclaims but he was unaware, Lexie tensed from his words.

"Don't counter me... I'm still a man though my heart is of a woman. I know how to appreciate beauty" Jason put up his index for Lexie so she can't counter him after seeing her about to say something

"Whatever" she chuckles and shakes her head.

"President Arvin is smitten with you...so I won't gamble your charm with the handsome CEO, my loyalty is still with sir Arvin, I don't want him broken-hearted" Jason with all his dramatics, devoured a plate of sandwiches.

With nothing to counter the man, she smiles while sipping her drink. If they only know. She doesn't intend to make fun of any of them but she just can't announce she is with Lucien Wright and they have a son. It's still not time to be out in public. Though Lucas is already fully healed, he is still under observation. His doctors were starting to allow light activities. And lately, she was allowed to swim with a licensed swimming instructor. Lucien is taking care of their son as a precious gem, making her heart swell with immense happiness.

"The Wrights will be attending the event. Madame Levinia and Miss Samantha had confirmed their attendance" Eve casually announced. Jason was ecstatic, while Lexie becomes uneasy

with the idea. If it would happen, its the first public event she will be attending with their presence after she and Lucien had come out to the family. And she doesn't know how to deal with the situation once they will have a chance to closely meet.

Contrary to her thoughts, the Wright family would surely be within the presence of equally high-profile personalities. Surely, they won't mingle much with someone like a striving designer and model like her. Though they were family.

"I really wish the CEO would also attend. I know he won't spare me a glance but his mere presence in one place with me could already be orgasmic" Jason added, gushing with his thoughts.

"Arvin had invited him but I don't think he had confirmed his attendance. Everyone knows, he is the busiest man in the entire country. But his presence would add prestige to the event. It means more exposure to high profile clients" Eve casually explains.

If the two were too apt to have the CEO's attendance, Lexie was desperately praying he won't attend.

Their discussion was just cut when Miss Mabelle arrives with the contract. As pertinent as Eve, they became very quiet while she reviews the content. Ensuring all the stated guidelines and requests were all stated.

After their palliative moment in the hotel and it's almost the end of the day, they decided not to go back to the office. Lexie asks Eve to drop her at the mall near Wright Hotel and Casino to avoid questions about where she was staying. She also plans to grab some groceries for Lucy's needs. Lucien had people for all their necessities and errands but she insists on personally overseeing and buying all of Lucy's needs. She was in the toiletries area and was carefully selecting Lucy's baby wash when someone bumped into her.

"Hey, careful" she snaps as she was startled. She almost dropped the bottle she was inspecting.

Facing the one who bumps her, she tensed. Looking at her is a sharp gaze of Ellen Johnson.

"Having a great time of your life Miss Montes?" she snickers.

"What do you want this time Miss Ellen?" though anxious about the woman's presence she calmly faces her.

"So how's your lover boy? Can he make you happy?" she sneers.

Heaving a sigh, she calmly stares at Ellen.

"If it's Mr. Wright you are talking about, it's no longer of your concern if he is making me happy" she softly retorted.

"What drama are you trying to act, Miss Montes? Had you not seen the news? Your lover boy is impotent. Are you hoping to make a difference? Are you hoping you could cure his inadequacy?" the woman mockingly scoffs at her.

Staring at Ellen as she mocks her, she pities her. She can't blame the woman for her frustration. Lucien Wright is the epitome of perfection. The kind of man any woman would dream of. And Ellen has the once-in-a-lifetime chance to possess the ultimate dream husband. Unfortunately, Lucien's body was the one disagreeing to be owned. And it is immensely frustrating on Ellen's part.

"I don't need drama in my life, Miss Ellen. Whatever I have right now, is what I deserve. And I don't owe you an explanation. I can't understand why you are so concerned about my reaction regarding Mr. Wright's issues. I choose to be private so don't drag me with whatever dealings you have with the CEO" calmly, she counters. 1

"I know something is between you and Lucien. Don't deny it. You may have thought you fooled everyone but not me" she persisted, glaring at her.

Looking at Ellen's desperation, she heaves another sigh. The woman is hopeless. She is slowly destroying her life for someone impossible for her to have. She is battling with uncertainty about the life she wanted to have but hasn't realized it is not what she needs.

"Miss Johnson, you are still young. You are beautiful. Don't waste your life living in bitterness and hatred. You will have a lot of chances to be happy if you will just allow yourself. What you will become is your choice, not by other people or the circumstances around you. It's your life, so choose what makes you happy. Choose what makes you feel fulfilled. Money, prestige, the influence was all temporary. We could be happy with

all of those but once the glitter fades away, it will become useless. A hollowed battle” she tries to make her see the other side of the coin.

“You are just saying that because you have what you wanted” Ellen earnestly counters.

“Yes, I have everything I wanted. My kind of life is what I choose to have. I choose to be happy, I choose to be contented with what I have and strive for the things I dream of. I treasure every moment in my life and do not covet something or someone I cannot have. I choose to be happy and that’s it. Life is simple, why should we complicate it?” she sincerely stated, hoping Ellen could ponder her words.

“I’ve wasted several years of my life for him and I got this. He is so heartless ordering everyone to throw me out from his territory. I thought he will value even the littlest things I did for him, but he disregarded it all. I’m tired of chasing him. I failed to have him, I’m a failure in my career and you are telling me to cherish that moment” painfully, Ellen retorted.

“You haven’t wasted those years, Miss Ellen. It was what you wanted at that time and you were happy with it. It’s the path you choose to walk and you cannot blame anyone for it, even Mr.

Wright. Some things are not meant and we cannot do anything about it. You’ve tried your best to make it work but it’s not meant, so move on. You fulfilled your part and you will live your life without ‘what ifs’ when it comes to your relationship with Mr. Wright. And about your career, reflect on what you really want. Ballet may be a prestigious career but if it’s not your passion, it won’t work. Your craft speaks about what your heart desires, so reflect if it’s what you want. If it is what you are dreaming” she earnestly added. Watching her face with all the emotions in her expression, she could see her pondering her words. She just hopes Ellen will see her reasons.

“I had several paintings done... I love to paint... I love art...” she whispers after a while. Its almost indistinct with a trace of insecurity but it still gave Lexie hope to convince her.

“Then, pursue it. My best friend is a painter and it’s an amazing craft. I have great respect for him and all the artist. Art could heal a wounded soul, Miss Ellen. Give yourself time to be healed with your art. It’s about time to live your life the way you wanted it and not dictated by society” she added with pure sincerity. She was so relieved Ellen listened to her. 1.

Without saying anything, Ellen stares at her for a long time. Whatever she was thinking, Lexie was sure it was good thoughts, a plan to be exact, based on what she was seeing on her face.

Unceremoniously, Ellen turns and walks away. Though surprised, she lets her go without disruption. But the woman stopped midstep.

“I plan to go abroad... I want to clear my mind...” she speaks without turning to look at her.

“Do whatever could comfort you Miss Ellen and leaving might be best at this time” she softly replies.

Ellen’s rigid back seems to relax before she silently walks away. Watching her leave, Lexie’s heart comes out for her. Ellen is a strong woman and whatever she had decided will surely be what is best for her.

“I pray for your peace, Miss Ellen” she whispers.

The CEO's Ten Million Dollar Wife by R.C.BRIE

Chapter 49

Chapter 49 Lost Ring

Ellen's departure has been quiet. No media had known of her plans of leaving the country. But Lexie knows about it from Lucien. His men reported Ellen's flight together with her parents and it's doesn't look like a short vacation.

"It would help her to leave for a moment," she said to him.

"Yes, it will do her good. I wonder what made her decide. She was a brat and spoiled to be convinced by her parents" he mumbles.

"Miss Ellen is a smart woman. She might have some realizations to make her life better" she smiles while snuggling close to him with closed eyes.

"I hope so" he mutters with a shrug.

They just finished making love and they are ready to sleep while having a casual conversation. But too tired to stay awake, Lexie no longer had the chance to reply as she enters slumber.

"I tire you again, my doll" he whispers while caressing her face.

After placing a gentle kiss on her forehead, he gathers her in his arms and closed his eyes to sleep.

The next day, Lexie had an occupied schedule. All designers were in the house for the final preparation of the summer event. And she was coping with the final touches of her designs like the rest of the other designers.

The main workstations were full of all the teams with their models, fitting the designs. Mixing and matching accessories.

"Look what I got from my trip with my boyfriend!" one of the models boasted while raising her open palms for the others to see.

"Wow! Is that an engagement ring?!" the closest to her gushes over her hand, looking closely at the sparkling ring around her ring finger.

"Yeah! He proposes!" she raves, ecstatic with everyone's reaction. 1

"This ring is undoubtedly very expensive. Just look at how it sparkles!" one of the models exclaims after holding her hand to look closer.

"8.5 carats emerald cut diamond...roughly worth 5 million dollars" she added haughtily. Pride is evident in her smile as she enjoys the attention.

"It's worth my whole career. I so wish I have a handsome and wealthy boyfriend" one of the | models exclaims. Envious of her friend.

"This event might give you the chance. A lot of wealthy businessmen were invited and President Arvin is one prospect" another model speak in a hush.

Giggles fill in their group while the teams were too preoccupied to mind them. They are beating the deadline and they have to hustle.

They had a working lunch to save time, which was nothing ordinary for everyone.

Though it was Lexie's first time, she had coped quite well with the pressure and the tension around her.

She has Jason and Emily on her team, who are both a pro when it comes to runway shows.

It was after lunch when she took the chance to take a break by going to the restroom to

freshen up. Thankfully, the powder room is already empty and she had her silence. It's been an uproar inside the main room. Everyone is scampering and models trying on dresses were unending.

Splashing water in her face, she sighs. The cool water was heaven on her skin. She usually wears light make-up for the office but she still prefers her face bare. Washing off all the sticky feeling from her stressed skin, she feels clean and refreshed.

"That was good" she smiles as she faces her reflection in the mirror. Carefully wiping her wet face, she is smiling at herself. Her thoughts were filled with the impending event, which will give her the chance to be recognized in her craft. The models will be wearing her designs and they will be showcased for everyone to see. And days, weeks, or months after, her designs and brand name will be displayed in different shops and boutiques.

"This is it, Lexie. This is the start" she keeps on whispering to herself while applying matte nude lipstick on her lips. She was done with her face powder and some highlighting of her already perfectly shaped brows. She doesn't use eye shadow or mascara. Her lashes are naturally long and curvy. She had the last look at herself when she noticed a sparkling thing on the floor. Slowly, she picks it up and found a ring. A diamond ring. Checking around, she walks to every cubicle but just as she assumed, she was indeed alone.

Thinking it belongs to anyone in the main room, she brought it with her, together with her kit.

On the way to the workstation, she met Eve who looks to be heading to the powder to freshen up too.

"Hello Eve"

"Hello Lexie, finished freshening up?"

"Yes, this day is quite busy" she smiles.

"After today, we could breath freely and at least relax" Eve chirpily replies.

"Yeah, I hope so. Oh, by the way, I found a ring on the floor of the powder room.

Someone might come looking for it. I will give it to you" she mumbles while she scavenges the small ring inside her beauty kit.

"Just keep it for a while, I will announce it later once I'm done. I look horrible. I won't be long Lexie. See you later" Eve dismisses before turning away to hurry to do her freshening up.

Without a choice, she stop looking for the ring and went to her workstation to leave her kit. Her head is full of all the things she needs to do when she met Emily who came looking for her.

"The dress cannot fit the model" Emily immediately announces, which tears her attention away from everything. It would be a disaster if she will not have a model for one of her designs.

Hurrying, they both rushed to the main room to salvage the situation. The whole afternoon becomes more chaotic as the end of the day was nearing. All were tired and some were frustrated. Like Lexie's team, some clothes did not fit the models, giving them any choice but to revamp them.

It's already late and they are all preparing to leave when a commotion happened. One of the models was crying while being pacified by her other coworker.

"I swear, it was just on my finger. I did not notice it slipped off"

“Have you checked the floor?” one of the staff worriedly asks while everyone was already checking every crevice of the room.

“We have checked everywhere. I even came back to the powder room hoping it was just there. But it was nowhere” frustrated, she cries hard.

“We’ve been asking around if someone might have seen it, since after lunch” one of her friends also added.

“If it fell off, someone could have found it. And they should be returning it or turning it over to the company officers”

“If that someone is honest enough. It’s worth five million dollars. It was too expensive. Anyone could be tempted to keep it for themselves”

“I really hope, no one in this company is a thief. I can’t accept it if someone stole my ring. I’ve been modeling for Silhouettes Designs for several years and this never happened” the model continues to cry.

“There is a new designer for this event. Just joined SD in just a couple of months. We have lost a lot of our things with previous events but it was all been returned. Nothing happened like this”

Assumptions have been formed and suspicions were announced. And Lexie as the only new

designer in the group was unaware she was suspected.

“What happened here?” Jason, who was the first to notice the commotion approached the group of models.

“Someone has been stealing around here” the crying model exclaims angrily.

“What? What did you lose?” in disbelief, Jason curiously asks.

“My engagement ring. An emerald cut diamond ring worth 5 million dollars” she replies.

“You might have misplaced it. It’s small and could easily be lost in this mess. Just try to find it. No one would steal it here. We have been together for several events and nothing was stolen, we don’t tolerate such behavior” Jason sternly explains.

“But do we not have a newbie here?” one of the models pointed out, earning her an earnest gaze from the man.

“The only person who is new here is Miss Alexzia Montes and I can vouch for her, she is not what you were thinking. A ring as expensive as yours should be kept around your fingers. Not somewhere where it can be lost” he seriously counters.

“I lost my diamond earrings last event of SD but it was immediately returned by one of the staff. It’s a stud earring and very small” one model recalled.

“Exactly, so rest assured the ring will be returned once it’s found by one of us” Jason stated, matter of factly.

“But this time we have rummaged every part of this room, even the hallway, and the restroom. The ring is nowhere to be found. We have asked even the janitors and some staff. They found nothing, which might mean someone had found it first” the crying model insisted.

“Well then, we will all look for it” Jason mutters.

“Everyone! Your attention please” he loudly called. Getting everyone’s attention, all eyes turn to Jason.

“Miss Mariz Segovia had lost her engagement ring, an emerald cut diamond. Could we try to help search for it before we could leave? Thank you” he announced.

Obligated, every one helped to look for the ring while they tidy their stuff. However, after

several minutes of turning the whole place up and down, they found no ring. Mariz has started to cry again with her ring lost nowhere. She is getting frustrated together with her friends.

“Why don’t we check everyone’s bag?” one of them suggested.

“I don’t want to think that someone in this group and the employees had the intention, even the slightest, to steal from someone. We have been doing this event with respect and trust. I don’t want to entertain the idea of anyone starting this kind of dishonesty” Jason seriously implores.

“But it’s nowhere Jason. It can’t be lost if it’s just here and no one had taken it” Mariz insisted.

Jason stares at her while being thoughtful. It’s the first time the situation happened.

“Why don’t we check the new designer’s stuff or ask her” someone suggested.

Incredulous of the idea, Jason glares at the model.

“Lexie will do no such thing” he muttered with a clenched jaw, making the room tense. Silence fills the room when the atmosphere turns tense. No one dares to speak again as Jason’s face becomes grim.

Some continue to tidy their stuff when something dropped on the floor after Emily accidentally nudge a small bag placed at the edge of the table.

Some makeup was tossed on the floor, together with the sparkling thing which rolled farther away.

“My ring!”

Gaping eyes followed the sparkling ring. Mariz cries in happiness as she dashed to pick it up from the floor.

Silence fills the room before they all turn to Jason who instantaneously turns to Emily.

“Whose bag was that?” he asks.

“Ahm...I think it’s Lexie’s” Emily hesitantly mumbles.

The CEO's Ten Million Dollar Wife by R.C.BRIE

Chapter 50

Chapter 50 Fierce

Lexie went back to the main room and she paused at the door, sensing the tensed atmosphere while all eyes were on her.

She looks around and she could see different expressions, which confuses her. She was trying to assess the situation when she noticed her makeup kit.

“Oh my...my kit” she mumbles as she rushes to pick up her stuff on the floor.

“Lexie...” Jason called.

Turning to Jason, she turns to look at him and she narrow’s her eyes upon seeing Jason’s grim expression.

“What is it Jason?” she asks. She could sense everyone’s hostility towards her.

“Someone lost a ring” Jason seriously stated.

Earnestly listening and looking at him, she mulls with something.

“Oh... I found a ring in the powder room during lunch... it’s here in my kit...” she immediately checks the bag and looks for it.

"This?" Mariz raises the ring in her hand.

"We've been looking for this thing the whole afternoon" she added.

Turning to the model, she squinted her eyes to look at the ring.

"I don't know if that's the ring, I didn't look at the design, I just stashed it inside my kit..." she tries to explain but something dawned on her, making her pause.

Intently staring at her scattered makeup, she heaves a sigh. Slowly, she stands up to face Jason.

"I was in the powder room, alone after lunch. I saw a ring on the floor, I picked it up. I didn't check what kind of ring it was since I was not interested. I saw Eve in the hallway, I told her about the ring and I was about to give it to her, but she said I just keep it for safekeeping and she will announce it later. Things got busy and it slips my mind" she explains through her clenching of the jaw. The entire time she was talking, she was staring straight at Jason's eyes.

Jason remains quiet while meeting the intense gaze Lexie has for him. He could see the emotions she was trying to curtail.

"I believe you" Jason mutters firmly as they lock gazes.

"You could have announced it after you came back and haven't you noticed we were frustratedly looking for it?" Mariz persisted.

Calmly, Lexie turns to face the model.

"I didn't notice anything and I'm too preoccupied to mind whatever everyone was doing aside from the predicament we were in with my team" she calmly retorted but Mariz scoffs together with her friends.

"This ring is worth a fortune. No one could mistake this for a cheap one. This could tempt anyone who would find it" Mariz sneers while the others were nodding their heads, agreeing with her.

"I was not tempted. And I don't care if it cost a fortune, I was not interested to even look closely. I know it's a ring but I didn't waste my time figuring its value before stashing it inside my kit" she retorted while looking straight into the model's eyes.

"If it's that valuable, you are supposed to be guarding that with your life and not let it slip from your finger without noticing it. Whose fault is it now?" she added, challenging her.

"Don't twist the issue. The mere fact that you hid it after you found it, there's the intention to keep it. This is a piece of expensive jewelry. I doubt your paycheck for one year could pay for this ring" Mariz snickers to Lexie's aghast.

"Enough" Jason interjected, stopping the two from further argument.

"Miss Segovia, Lexie kept it for safekeeping. Let's just be thankful it was found and returned to you" Jason pacified the situation but the two obviously were not placated.

"We should keep an eye on our belongings starting today" Mariz murmurs but loud enough for Lexie to hear.

"Miss Segovia never did I covet for someone's property. Everything I have now is from my hard work I didn't steal your ring" with a clenched jaw and grim face, she steps closer to the model who was surprised by how she looks.

"You can't convince me with your drama. We've been looking for it the whole afternoon and you have a lot of chances to announce you found it. If your bag didn't fall, no one would know it's in your possession" Mariz sharply counters.

"This is hopeless..." Lexie mutters in frustration. She turns to face Jason who is looking at her with sympathy. The kind of Mariz cannot be easily convinced. They are used to

being set in their ways. They are the brats of the modeling industry.

“The next time I have an invite from Silhouette Designs, I would be thinking twice if she is still around. I can’t just take chances for my valuables” Mariz snickers while rolling her eyes.

Clenching her jaw, she contains her furiousness. Her chest is heaving with her triggered breath. If not for professionalism’s sake, she was tempted to sharply snap at the model. She can’t believe she will be subjected to such an irrelevant issue.

“It’s your choice Miss Segovia, but we stand to the fact of what Lexie was saying” Emily spoke, breaking her silence. She has been quietly listening and she knows which side she is.

“Well then, I could skip this event too” Mariz shrugs. She issued a challenge while looking around the staff and designers of SD.

“Mariz please...we are all set. You can’t do this. My entire collection will be ruined once you back out” the designer she was assigned pleaded.

“May I remind you, Miss Segovia, you have signed a contract for this event. Breaching would mean legal action against you and your agency. President Deutche will not be taking this lightly. You are aware of his influence in the fashion world” Jason seriously mutters while staring at the model with his unremarkable expression. He was not deterred by her threat. He knows the value of the company to models like Mariz Segovia. SD is one of the fashion pillars of the country.

The model somewhat looks wavered from her decision upon hearing what Jason said. She knows her obligation toward her contract. She doesn’t want to create trouble for herself and her agency. Silhouettes Designs is a great company for exposure to her modeling career. The company has already participated in international runway shows aside from what they were holding in the country. They are starting to create a name in the international market.

“What’s going on here?” Arvin enters just in time to hear his name mentioned by Jason. All eyes turn to the door, starting at his inquisitive eyes.

“Good day President Deutche, I lost my ring earlier in the afternoon and one of your designers found it but did not announce it was in her possession. I just found out after her bag fell and my ring was along with her stuff” Mariz immediately explains before anyone could.

With his intent attention, Arvin turns to look at Jason. He could feel the tension inside and he bet there was more in the story than what the model was saying.

“Lexie found the ring in the powder room. She brought it with her and told Eve about it. But we got all busy and it might slip her mind to announce she got the ring. We are looking for it after I was informed of the situation when Lexie’s bag fell. The ring was among her stuff” Jason briefly explains while the two men look at each other.

“It’s very expensive jewelry Mr. Deutche and I can’t blame anyone for having the interest to have it” Mariz interjected, snickering at Lexie who just took a deep breath to compose herself.

Seeing Lexie about to explode, Jason held her arm. He doesn’t know the extent of how Lexie was dealing with the model’s words but he could see she is on the verge of losing her patience.

“Silhouette Designs employees especially designers are credible people. I personally assess who belongs to my team, so you are all assured that whatever valuables you

have are safe inside this company. No one in this team has ill intention” Arvin announces without openly defending Lexie.

“We are all exhausted and our perspectives might be clouded. Let’s all rest and be ready for the event” he added, specifying the situation.

“You might have missed one, President Deutche. She was just with SD for a short time. We don’t know how capable she is of manipulating circumstances and people. And that’s the irony, we are all exhausted and the least we need is someone who steals” Mariz sarcastically counters while looking at Lexie.

She is on the verge of exploding but she tries to compose herself. She cannot simply be distracted by the model’s words. She keeps on reminding herself to maintain her composure regardless of her provocation.

“I’m warning you, Miss Segovia, you are crossing the line of your sarcasm. I may be new to this company but I was never interested in anything that doesn’t belong to me. Your five million worth ring is not of my interest. I may not have a paycheck equal to the price of that thing but I won’t steal to have it. Don’t you dare accuse me of something I am not, I won’t be taking it lightly. I don’t care about money or the expensive things you value so much. I am here to achieve my dream. Your life is different from mine but it doesn’t mean you are free to demean me or anyone you see as inferior” she snaps and she hasn’t held her tongue.

Stepping closer to the model who in response took a step backward, her expression looks fierce. Even Arvin, Jason, and Emily we’re surprised at how Lexie looks.