

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

Chapter 81

Chapter 81 Inquisitiveness

"You know him, my doll?" Lucien curiously asks while intently staring at his wife and his grandfather. "He is the old man I talk to at the cafe while waiting for Dom" she explains. "But, why is he here?" bewildered, she looks around the men and her mother-in-law. Thus, a conclusion formed in her mind.

"Sir..?" with her eyes fixed on the old man, she waited for the confirmation.

"Your prayer is stronger than mine, Madame Wright. I've been praying for decades to have my daughter's forgiveness but got none. Not until you assured me of praying for her forgiveness. I should have met with you earlier. You seem to be a strong ally of heaven to have easily be granted of your prayers" the old man, with his tender smile, fondly explains.

Lexie stares at him for a long while. Her mind is busy connecting dots and the result made her smile.

"By the way, it's Carlos Petrov, I'm sorry I forgot to introduce myself to you earlier at the cafe "Carlos slowly walk, meeting Lexie and Lucien halfway.

"Nice meeting you, Mr. Carlos Petrov. I'm glad to see you again" with her charming smile, she gave her hand to the old man who receives it to place a gentle kiss. "My great honor to meet my grandson's precious gem. Thank you for accompanying your old man" Carlos, with his misty eyes hold her gaze.

"I was not able to discern what I felt earlier towards you, but I know we have connections. Though it's quite unfair since obviously, you know who I am from the start" she teasingly smiles making Carlos chuckle.

"Oh, my dear Alexzia. I'm a shrewd man aside from the curiosity to know the woman who will bear my heirs. But above all, I need to meet the one who stole my grandson's, cold heart. Lucien Wright is a true-blooded Petrov, fierce and cold yet devoted and faithful. Breaking the coldness surrounding his heart is not an easy quest. Only an extraordinary woman could do it and it is you, Madame Alexzia Wright" he smirked.

"And without a doubt, my grandson indeed has a great taste with his woman. Such a gem he found, I've never been appeased. My Petrov's heart is now sufficed" he continued with a wink.

"Thank you for the compliment, kind sir. I am honored for the acceptance" she playfully bows like a royal but his words made her tearful. She doesn't know this side of Lucien's family but she was moved by their attention.

The meeting she thought was a coincidence is actually planned. And she was unaware she was being gauged. Thus, whatever behavior she showed the old man is genuine. All the Petrov men were watching with earnest interest. And surprisingly, the interaction of the Godfather with the Wright woman is warming their stone-cold hearts.

If everyone is watching the sentimental scene, Donovan is intently staring at Lexie. He is trying to recall something which his mind is struggling to remember. Even after they were settled around the eighteen seaters long table, his head was filled with nagging feelings he could not discern.

"Ahm, Lexie...can I ask something personal?" he blurted out after a while of battling with

himself.

Turning to him, Lexie smiles. He almost changed his mind but he has to know. All eyes turn to him in question, especially Lucien. "Yes, of course, uncle Van" "Your parents? Where are they?" he carefully asks.

With what he asked, a pair of eyes narrowed at him, which he is so aware of, but ignored. The sudden interest of Arvin's father in her parents made her thoughtful. But thinking it was a family gathering it is just proper to discuss her origin. It is still painful for her but they are her family now, they at least have to know

"My parents were involved in a sea tragedy eleven years ago. I was about to finish college when it happened. They were into the trading business. Unfortunately, their bodies were not... found" painfully, she relays. She had accepted her loss a long time ago but the pain of longing is still inside her heart.

"Eleven years ago..." Donovan thoughtfully whispers while blankly staring at his plate. Missing to see Lexie nodding. "It's a catastrophe in the sea... a lot of victims died" he added before slowly turning to look at Lexie. "Yes, it was. I lost both of my parents together with the hundreds of passengers who were not found. The sea claimed their lives. Giving me no body to bury" reminded by the pain, her eyes brimmed with tears. Lucien grasps her hand and squeezes it. She had already told him about her parents and the pain has already lessened from the passing of time. Silence of sympathy rules around the table, which everyone respects.

"You have all of us, Lex. We are your family now, together with Dominic and his parents. Including this bunch of egotistical men here. But they are the warmest bastards you could have in a lifetime. They will always be by your side once you allowed them. They can be overly protective most of the time but since you are a Wright, protection is vital" Levinia appeases her while trying to lighten the mood.

"I don't know if you complimented or insulted us" Daniel amusingly mutters.

"Both" Levinia readily retorted.

"Just as I was thinking" he conceded.

"Thank you, mom. I know I have all of you" Lexie smiles at Levinia before she looks at the fierce-looking men around the table.

"I'm also a bunch of ego testicles and bastards, grandma?"

Everyone forgot they have a small gentleman with them. Grimacing from what Lucy said, they all glared at Levinia.

Gaping at the boy, Levinia was dumbfounded together with the rest.

"Yes, little Lucy. All men have testicles. You are a boy so you also have one but you are not a bastard, it was a bad word. Grandma will not be using it again" Samantha was the first to have come around. Grabbing the chance to divert the topic from the boy's mispronunciation. But not before she subtly glares at her mother.

"Yeay!...I have testicles too, mama. Like my papa and uncle, and grandpa. But I'm, not a bastard" Lucy raves excitedly while Lexie is mentally grimacing from embarrassment. What a topic for a family dinner.

"Yes, my love, you are not a bastard. And all boys and men have testicles" Lexie tries to be casual but her blush is telling otherwise. She was unprepared for the sudden change of the topic and it was about the testicle.

"How about the ego testicle, mama? When will I have it?"

She thought her son was sufficed, but he was not ready to drop the topic yet.

“When you grow like your papa and all your uncles and grandpas, you will have it” Levinia replies with amusement. “Mom...” Sam incredulously glares at her mother.

“Grandma is just joking, little Lucien. Ego is pride, we all have it but it should not affect our relationship with others, especially with family” Levinia became serious and retracted what she said.

“I don’t want ego, grandma. I’m fine with testicle” Lucy, like a grown-up, mumbles with disdain.

“Yes, the ego could sometimes destroy a relationship...could destroy a family...” Levinia forlornly whispers. But her eyes turn to look at Daniel who held her hand while gently squeezing it. Sharing a gentle smile, they peck each other’s lips. “Grandma and grandpa are like my mama and papa, they are always kissing” Lucy blurts out with a grin, making the adult chuckle. They continue to eat in comfortable silence until someone speaks again. 1 “You’re from not here, Lex, right? From where are you?” Donovan asks again after the charade with Lucy.

“I’m from the small island in the western region. Canary Island. Forty-four hours by land and sea, including stopovers. At least six hours by plane and sea. There’s still no airport on the island” she readily explains.

“Is your parent a native of Canary?” he continues.

“I was born on the island but I’m not sure if my parent were natives. We don’t have families aside from a family friend, Dom, and his parents” the man’s questions made her think. The things that she doesn’t give attention to before made her curious now.

“So there’s a huge possibility, your parents are from somewhere else” he mumbles thoughtfully, which also made Lexie paused to stare at him.

“Maybe, I don’t exactly know, uncle Van” she casually responded but she is scorching her head with the information she might have forgotten. She also wanted to know after he raised

the question about it. “Perchance, who do you look like? Your mom or your dad?” his inquisitiveness is already raising suspicion around the table.

If Lexie noticed his excessive interest, she choose to continue to indulge him. She assumed Arvin’s father is just curious. Though they all found Donovan’s ardent interest in Lexie’s family, quite strange, no one pointed it out. They continue to watch and listen. They suspected, Donovan, is into something, which they all wanted to know. Even Lucien remains watchful while he and Gabriel have been exchanging meaningful gazes. “Ahmm, I look like mom. Dad would always say we are twins” the wistful smile brighten her face. Donovan gulped hard before discreetly glancing at the man across him. “No doubt, your mom is surely as gorgeous as you are” Donovan smiles. “She is. She is dad’s doll” her dreamy gaze turns to Lucien. “As you are my doll” Lucien lovingly mumbles, making Lexie lean on her side to receive his kiss.

“Why have you become so interested in Lexie’s family, Van?” cannot be able to contain her curiosity, Levinia asks. Her intense gaze mirrors everyone. Sam had brought Lucy to get some ice cream in the kitchen, knowing a tense atmosphere had started to fill the dinner table. Donovan stares at his plate for a long time before raising her face to look around. “I am just curious...That’s all” he shrugs unconcernedly. He knows he hasn’t convinced anyone but he was unaffected. Looking away, he continues to eat.

Silence rules the table with just the clinking of Donovan’s utensils against the porcelain.

Knowing Donovan was finished with his inquiry, all returned to eating. But suspicious glances would constantly turn to his side. Which he purposely ignored, until they were all finished eating. As the family gathering has only started, everyone decided to gather in the family room after their sumptuous dinner. "Sullivan..." Donovan quickly grab his arm before he could follow the rest. He deliberately dallied behind to be alone with Sullivan. No one had noticed he has been blankly staring afar. Rigidly nailed on the floor, Sullivan remains quiet. His eyes were looking straight without turning to look at him. "I think, it's time to dig the past her mind failed to remember" he grimly mutters while staring at the side of Sullivan's stoic face.

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

Chapter 82

Chapter 82 Gentlest Smile

"Don't let your selfishness ruin their happiness" with a clenched jaw, Donovan grimly mutters.

It was past midnight and they were back at the safe house. Everyone had settled in their rooms except for him and Sullivan who went directly to the liquor bar after they arrived. "Mind your own business, Van" the other man dangerously warns without looking at him. His eyes were fixed on the glass he was holding. "It's my business..." with his chilling cold tone, he retorted.

"You forgot who brought them to you. It's my responsibility, it's my conscience at stake. And don't fucking tell me I'm a Petrov with a stone-cold heart. They are already family...they deserve to know" he counters, undeterred by the man's warning.

"I will give you within this month. You know what I would do after this month is over" standing, he looked at the solemn man across from him. Silence rules before he walks away, leaving Sullivan with his thoughts. It's been a while since Donovan left but he remains unmoving. The ice cubes inside his glass have already melted.

A deep sigh broke the silence while he facepalms himself. He is conflicted. Leaning at the backrest, he stares at the ceiling for he doesn't know how long. He hasn't noticed he had fallen asleep.

"Boss, Mr. Petrov would like to meet with you" Ben enters Lucien's office.

Looking at his man, his brows were furrowed. A few days after their family gathering, he thought all of Petrov have already left the country.

"Let him in" he mutters while being thoughtful. What business does he have to visit him unannounced? All negotiations about the new business venture have been finalized and construction has already started.

Aside from family matters, he cannot think of anything the Petrov man has to discuss with him. "Mr. Petrov, why the surprise visit?" he greeted the man after he quickly stands from his seat. "This will not be business, Lucien" the man seriously mutters while he sat on the couch without being invited.

Watching the old man's troubled face, he knew its indeed not business. Quietly, he took the seat across from him. His eyes narrow at how uptight the old man is in his seat.

"Speak" he commanded. He may be younger but he is in his territory. He has the full command over him.

Ben just stationed himself nearby. His distance is enough to give them privacy “I want to invite you to visit Soul island... with your wife” the man readily complies.

Surprised by the man’s intention, he stares at him for a moment, in silence.

“What do you want uncle Sul? No one had crossed your island, even grandpa. Why do you want to invite me and my wife?” suspiciously, he asks.

Upon his uncle Van’s ardent interest in his wife during the family dinner, he didn’t fail to notice the same interest from his uncle Sul. He may remain casual during the entire inquiry but he has been triggered by whatever motives both men have. And today, his visit partly divulged his concerns over his wife. Indeed, they are into something, which he needed to know.

Sullivan remains staring at Lucien in silence. He doesn’t know what he is doing but he knew it’s the right thing to do. If he won’t resist uncertainty now, he might change his mind. He could see Lucien is already suspicious but he has no other way but to face him.

“I will wait for you tomorrow at the hangar. Before dawn. I will wait until the first ray of the sun appears in the sky” he mutters instead of answering him. Unceremoniously, he stand up and left. Leaving Lucien, following his rigid back.

Silence rules after the old man left. Lucien turned to stare at Ben and their gazes lock. The man’s strange behavior has been getting their attention since the night of the family dinner. He becomes curious to know what he and his uncle Donovan have been up to. Until he went home that night, his thoughts remain to be filled with one of his old men. Sullivan Petrov has been the quietest of all Carlisle’s sons. He has an island, which no one could enter unless he would allow it. Even his father, Carlisle, could not visit unannounced.

“What is it, Lucien? You’ve been anxious since you arrive” Lexie could no longer contain her worry towards the man. They are already huddled on the bed and though Lucien is hugging her, he is not his usual self. She could see something is troubling him. “I’m just tired, my doll” he softly replies while trying to smile.

“Spill it out” unconvinced, Lexie mutters instead.

“Let’s sleep, I will tell you tomorrow” he placated while tightening his hold around her.

“Lucien...” she tries to argue but he claims his lips to a passionate kiss. “Sleep, my lovely doll. You have to rest, our little pumpkin needs his mother to be healthy” he insisted, his voice becoming a little stern. Giving no room for argument.

Recognizing Lucien’s seriousness, she conceded. She tries to sleep thinking of the little man inside her womb. She needs to take care of herself more than anything. She had suffered a lot during Lucy’s birth, she doesn’t want to repeat what happened to her firstborn.

After the long silence, Lucien moves to check on Zia. She was asleep based on the steady breathing coming from her.

His mind is still filled with uncertainty about his uncle’s motive in inviting them. Could he subject his wife to some predicament, he, himself doesn’t know the outcome? However, the seriousness on the old man’s face is troubling him. He wanted to know what he plans to do.

Sleep is elusive with all the haywire thoughts filling his head. He stays awake even after midnight. But exhaustion and sleep won. He had drifted but like he was awakened, he flinch from sleep even before dawn.

Turning to the table clock, he heaved a sigh. It's only past three in the morning. He had slept for at least two hours. Checking on Zia, he becomes torn between waking her up and ignoring his uncle's invitation. Staring at the ceiling, his deep breaths break the silence and his conflicted thoughts were in an uproar. Meanwhile in the hangar, right after midnight, Sullivan is already on his plane waiting. He cannot sleep a blink. He went to the ladder and choose to sit there for he doesn't know how long. His eyes would wander afar for any approaching vehicle but after several hours, he is still welcome by stillness. Before dawn, his staff arrives and was surprised to find him already on the plane. Everyone becomes busy preparing to leave but he remains on the stairs, staring afar. Not long, the huge bird was set to fly. Heaving a sigh, he took a last glance at the entrance. Not wanting to but he had given up that someone will come.

His staff was all waiting and his men were starting to gather to follow him once he get inside. Realizing he has no one to wait, he stands up and climbs the remaining ladder. He is almost at the door when several black vehicles were in a convoy, driving toward them. Turning to the incoming entourage, his eyes become misty. He doesn't know why but he was relieved Lucien acknowledge his vague invitation. At the same time overwhelmed by the trust, his estranged nephew has shown him.

"I'm sorry we were late, uncle Sul. I have morning sickness. This little man inside me doesn't want to be awakened at this early hour" Lexie spoke the instant they reach the foot of the stair.

"You're just in time, Lex. I'm sorry for disturbing my grandson's sleep" his smile is quite lopsided from trying to talk and not quiver.

"He will understand..." warmly, she smiles at the old man. Lucien has not been talking, but she knows the invitation is something important.

He just wakens her up by telling her about the visit they will have to uncle Sullivan's island. Questions fill her head but she asks nothing, instead, she stands up to prepare. She spared him of the alibis he would struggle to make just to make her understand. Quietly, they boarded the plane with Lucien ensuring she is comfortable with the long ride. He remains silent like the old man on the other side of the spacious cabin.

They had breakfast and lunch in the air, which doesn't sit well with Lexie's sensitive state. After eating, she would throw up. And the entire time she and Lucien were at the toilet, Sullivan has been pacing the floor in worry and guilt. "Lex, I'm so sorry. What else do you want? Just another hour and we will be arriving" Sullivan worriedly approach the couple after they went out of the toilet. "I will be fine uncle Sul. I'm used to this. I will be feeling better after I emptied my stomach and have some sleep" though feeling weak from throwing up, she tries to appease the old man from his guilt.

"I have ordered some warm soup for you later, Lex. We will arrive before dinner" he added while anxiously glancing at Lucien. "Thank you. Don't worry too much about me. This is just normal" she added with a reassuring smile.

The two men have been consumed by guilt since she started to feel sick. Lucien looks like ready to cry while she was miserably throwing up. He was so quiet but she knows he is blaming himself for what is happening to her. "I will just rest. I'm sleepy" despite her exhaustion, she smiles. "Come, my doll. You sleep for a while" Lucien led her to their seat but instead of making her sit on her intended chair, he pulls her to his lap. Which she didn't complain about. She needed to sleep and she could sleep better

whenever she is on his lap. "Sleep, my doll" he whispers while nuzzling her forehead. Like a baby, he cradles her to her most comfortable position. He didn't wait long before hearing steady breathing coming from her. She fell asleep for real, which relieved him. It's been torture watching her in her miserable state earlier. Pregnancy is a difficult plight and how he wishes he could take away the discomfort she felt. Despite her effort to assure him, guilt is eating his soul. Trying to imagine what Zia had undergone when she had Lucy made him more guilty. She was alone and had no one to comfort her except for Dominic. The remaining travel was spent in silence until they arrive on Sullivan's Island. Lucien carried Lexie who remains asleep even after they disembarked and transferred to a vehicle. It's Lucien's first time visiting and he was amazed at how Sullivan maintained the natural beauty of the place.

It's almost dusk but the orange streak of light on the horizon is still bright enough to see the surrounding forest.

"It's peaceful here..." Lucien mumbled without looking at the man across from them. His eyes were busy scanning the scenery they are passing by. If only he could wake up Zia, but she is still sound asleep and he has no heart to wake her.

"As it should be. The reason I prefer to stay here than the chaotic world on the mainland" Sullivan gently smiles.

He turn to look at his uncle's relaxed face and by then he realized something. The imposing aura he usually wears seems to have disappeared. Engr. Sullivan Petrov seems to be a different person from the man he was used to dealing with during negotiations. Still lost in his thoughts, he hasn't noticed the vehicle no longer moves.

"We're here..."

He was preoccupied but he immediately look around after he announce their arrival. The vehicle is in front of the not so huge mansion. But it's still a mansion. Bringing Zia outside, she started to stir until she open her eyes. Her smile instantly adorns her face upon seeing him. "We're here, my doll" he whispers while staring at her still sleepy face. "I'm sorry, I slept the entire ride" shyly, she buries her face to his neck "You deserve to sleep. Our pumpkin is being naughty again" he tenderly counters while placing a kiss on her cheek.

"You can let me down..." she whispers while she tries to slowly lower her feet after Lucien gently placed her on the floor. "Welcome to Soul Island, Lex' Sullivan interrupted, which made Lexie turn to him. "Thank you, Uncle Sul. This place is paradise" looking around, her smile brightens. Around her is picturesque scenery like a painting. It's breathtaking. The serene ambiance is sipping to her bones, it's calming. "So calm and tranquil" she whispers in awe. Basking at the beauty around her, she slowly whirls to look around.

The place is capable to heal a soul and even the nausea she felt earlier miraculously vanished. The surrounding beauty is simply refreshing. She could even smell the sea and it feels so fresh in her lungs. She is too busy admiring the beauty of the place when a figure appeared at the door, which she hadn't noticed. "Sul..? You have guests?" A gentle and soft voice from behind her floats like a melody to her ears, making her pause from taking another step. Despite not being able to see who speaks, the voice affects her to an immense surprise. Sullivan's steps sounded like a drum to her ears or was it her heart? Yes, it's her heart and it's violently thundering like she ran a mile. Gulping

hard and closing her eyes to compose herself, she started to take a step. Slowly, she turns around and was met by the gentlest smile she yearned for years to see.

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

Chapter 83

Chapter 83 One Day at A Time

Tears brimmed her eyes as she stare at the gentlewoman in front of her. She fervently blinks, trying to clear her vision. The tears threatening to fall fell like a downpour from the sky. Despite the tears, her vision is crystal clear. It's the face she will never mistake for anyone. It may have withered through time but its beauty hasn't faded.

Eleven years, eleven long years she hasn't seen the beautiful face she longed to see.

"Hello, dear. What's wrong? Are you hurt?" her voice, her soft melodious voice seems to fill the void in her well-being.

Though the old woman look so worried and conflicted, she was surprised by the unfamiliarity in her eyes. Seemed to not recognize her. Tears stream down her face at the realization. She feels lightheaded, her feet lost their strength. With her feet wavering, Lucien instantly rounded his arms around his wife who is painfully sobbing. He doesn't understand what's happening but seeing Zia break down is like a boulder hitting him hard. He never saw her this pained even during Lucy's surgery.

Worry and panic reflect on the old woman's face while watching the younger one bawl her eyes.

"Sul? What's happening to her? It hurt to see her cry like that..." she panics at the reaction coming from the visitor. Sullivan immediately comforted her seeing her grasping her chest and head. He only turns to check on Lexie after he made sure she is fine.

"Lex..." Sul softly calls her. He, too, is worried for her.

"Let's bring her inside. She might be tired" she suggested, grasping at Sul's arm. She is so worried for their guest.

Without wasting time, Lucien lifted Lexie into his arms. Weak from the turmoil of emotions overwhelming her senses, she immediately rounded her arms and buries her face in his neck. Her sobs fill the stillness.

Ben immediately follows, worried for the Madame. She is pregnant and her emotional state is very delicate. He doesn't want to see her in her condition now.

Settling on the couch, Lucien took a seat with Lexie on his lap. Still crying, she pours her heart while being enveloped in Lucien's warm embrace. She needs his strength and he is giving it to her without words. He didn't ask while he let her cry. Ben stood nearby and though with a stoic face, he worries for his boss's wife.

Even the woman and Sullivan who was seated across from them remain quietly watching. Worries reflect on their faces but they choose not to interrupt. It's been a while before Lexie had calmed herself down. Only her sniffles sounded amid the silence of the house. The entire place seems to be sympathizing with whatever she is undergoing. She stirs from her position and tightens her hold around Lucien's neck.

Inhaling his skin to calm her senses.

"Why...why didn't she recognize me?" she whispers in despair. She continues to silently

cry, clinging to her husband for strength.

Heaving a sigh, he tightens his hold around her. He has no answer for her. But looking at the old woman across gave him the answer to Zia's tears.

The woman with Sullivan Petrov is the older version of Alexzia. An obvious proof of their connection, unfortunately, no recognition reflects the woman's eyes toward his wife. And it's breaking Zia's heart.

"Dear, could you arrange for some warm drink for our guests?" Sullivan turned to the woman beside him.

"Of course, please excuse me for a moment" she smiles while anxiously glancing at the weeping woman whose face resembles her.

They were left in silence while following the gentle sway of the woman's back. The solemn atmosphere is disturbing Lexie's sanity. Her thoughts were filled with questions she doesn't know where to seek answers to.

"Eleven years ago, Donovan and I were returning from a successful transport. He spotted a life raft in the middle of nowhere" after the long silence, Sullivan spoke.

"I tried to talk him out of trying to check the raft. I know it's full of bodies but we could not meddle with whatever happens. But he is stubborn. He pulled the raft" he continues with his solemn tone.

Lexie, upon hearing the old man speak, turns to look at him. She is curious and she wanted to know what happened.

"As I expected, it's full of bodies...dead bodies. Mostly wounded" he inhaled deep after pausing.

"I have no choice but to meddle. Van is so stubborn, insisting there might be someone who might be alive among all the stack of corpses. We pulled it to the nearest island and check the bodies" he added.

"I let our men brought everyone out and...and two hugging figures caught my attention" he paused again while staring at Lexie who is now seated upright on Lucien's lap.

"I don't want to intervene, but I saw her flinch from the movement..." his voice was fading but his determined gaze was fixed on Lexie. "Among the six bodies, she is the only one alive..." "The man hugging her has a huge wound on his head. And like the man, she was also battered from head to toe but she miraculously endured.

Unfortunately, the severity of the man's injury is fatal. He seems to have embraced the impact, protecting her" he continues and pauses seeing the torment in Lexie's face. "I don't know what come into me when I rushed her here. Summoning the Petrov doctors to mend her. I don't know her and I can just leave her to die together with the others" the conflicting emotion during that time came back like a bolt of lightning. "But I cannot leave her like that. I am not that heartless. She has life left in her body and I know I could do something to save her. I need to threaten the doctors to keep it a secret from the Godfather and my father" frustrated, he facepalms himself. "We pulled her from death but she remains sleeping. Her injuries are fatal but the Petrov doctors are more cunning. We battled with the devil not to claim her and we succeeded" an assuring bitter smile grazed his face while he look straight into Lexie's tearful eyes. "But she chooses to sleep for so long. Eight long years of sleep I thought she wouldn't wake up" he added.

"She was in...coma?" Lexie found her voice to whisper what was in her head.

"Yes, she fell into a coma for almost eight years" he slowly nodded.

"I watch her grow old while the machines were making sure she lives. It was a hopeless case, I know. But until a flicker of life lights her feeble body, I can't give up. She is fighting and I have to give her the chance. And our patience paid off. Three years ago she opened her eyes. She woke up from her long sleep" his smile is wistful while meeting Lexie's tearful gaze.

"I was so relieved. This won't be possible if not for all the doctors who never gave up on learning about her case. Also, Donovan would constantly visit and transport the medical supplies we needed. I owe him all this too" he carefully explains.

"The reason why uncle Van was so curious about my wife" Lucien mutters.

"When she saw Lexie's face, he immediately concludes. Lex is the younger version of the woman we kept for eleven years" he softly explains. "The man with her, where is he?" Lexie desperately interjected. Heaving a sigh, he faces her again.

"He was long dead when we found them, Lex, I'm so sorry" he sadly explain. Sympathy fills his face.

"Where is he?" she softly asks.

"We buried him here. I assumed, she would want it that way. While we return the rest of the bodies to the raft and dragged them near where the tragedy happened. They were found after a few days of search and rescue" he carefully explains. Her painful sobs echoed in the four corners of the house while Lucien gently rocks her like a baby. Giving her time to cry, they all remain quiet while her sniffles fill the silence. Even Lucien has no words to comfort her.

"I had accepted... I lost them... eleven years ago, but... knowing how... dad died and... what happens to mom... brought back the pain... I struggled to heal all these years..." after a while of crying, Lexie spoke with her quivering voice.

"It's okay to mourn again, my doll. I'm here to hold you. You owe yourself these tears knowing where they are. You have your answers. I know it's painful but please don't feel alone. I'm here, Zia. We are all here for you" Lucien whispers near her ear while he continues to gently sway her.

"Yes, I know it. And I thank you. All of you" fervently nodding while buried in his neck, Lexie whispers

Through her sniffles and hiccups, she tries to calm herself to face the old man who remains watching her in silence.

"Her memory, will it come back?" with her uncertain voice, she asks him.

"Even the doctors could not assure me that, Lex. Her head was severely damaged. Her skull was cracked but she survived. I know she has a strong reason to fight and after seeing you

several months ago, I understood her plight" his warm smile aside from his words made Lexie curious. Her questioning look was not missed by the man.

"During the negotiation at Wright's main office. You fainted at Lucien's arm. But I had clearly seen your face and I instantly know I have some digging to do" he added with a sly smile

"Last night, Vavan threatened to divulge everything if I won't do something. But after I saw you with Lucien, I had already decided to meet with you but a lot had happened. We are still dealing with Anya's hatred toward us. I cannot approach anyone of you without raising suspicion. I choose to postpone it, until the night of the family dinner. I

was relieved after Anya called for us, I've seen hope. And today is the time. I don't want to keep this a secret forever. You deserve to know and you might help her regain her memory" he continues, his expression pleading for understanding. "Please be patient with her. She cannot remember anything, even her name and the man she was with. I called her Dolly, from the name engraved on the man's ring. We assumed he was her husband because of the identical ring around their fingers. She would visit his grave, hoping she would remember but to no avail. She has been struggling, Lex. Please don't feel bad if she can't remember you" his voice is miserably desolate while begging her. "My mind is empty from my previous life. But seeing you gave me hope. You have my face... and I felt something stir inside here..." a quivering voice interrupted.

Surprised by the soft voice from the kitchen, they all turn towards it. Standing with tearful eyes is the subject of their discussion. Her misty eyes were tenderly looking at Lexie. .

Seeing her miserable state and uncertainty while she fidgets on her feet, Lexie slowly stands up from Lucien's lap and walks toward her. She wanted to run and hug her right but she don't want to scare her. She is a stranger in her eyes.

Lucien followed Lexie while Sullivan went to the woman's side. The two women remain quiet as they face each other.

"I am Alexzia Montes. My mother's name is Alexandria Montes and my father's name is Dimitri Montes. We live on Canary Island in the western region. Dad used to call mom, my doll, because of her beauty just like mine. We are twins from different generations. I was raised witnessing how they love each other. Mom is dad's queen, while I'm the princess" with tears streaming down her face, Lexie introduces herself. Her tearful smile adorns her beautiful face.

"During high school and college, I do part-time modeling. Mom and dad would always accompany me but dad doesn't want me to show so much skin during fashion shows. He is so protective of me and mom. But I understand, I love my parents so much. I know they only want the best for me" she wistfully smiles despite the tears welling in her eyes. As she tells their story, the old woman was so engrossed in listening to her. She could see how she struggled to recollect from her empty memory. "We live in a decent size cottage with acres of land. We have a lot of fruit-bearing trees and cropland. But after... I lost them. The land is no longer as productive as it was used to with dad around. I don't know anything about farming" she bitterly chuckles, making the woman grimace. "I survived... Dominic Lint and his family helped me get through. They are our closest family friends" she added, hoping the woman would recognize their name. But staring at her face,

she sees no recognition. She felt hopeless but as Sullivan said, she must be patient. Staring at the older version of her face, she realizes words could not help their plight at the moment. And maybe she doesn't need words.

"Can...can I hug you?" she whispers in despair and almost bursts crying when the woman eagerly opens her arms while smiling.

Slowly, she steps inside her embrace and wraps her arm around her. Feeling the familiar warmth, her tears started to fall again. She clung to her as if her life depended on her. Like a lost child.

"What am I called?" she whispers after a while of silently hugging each other. Her mind could not recognize her but her heart knows she belongs to her. The connection she felt

the first time she laid her eyes on her is overwhelming.

“Andrea...your friends call you Andrea. But if dad was pissed, he calls you Alexandria” she giggles at the recollection, earning her a chuckle from her.

“I have a nice name. Same with you” she mumbles after.

“Dad wants my name to be like yours. And growing up turning to look like you, dad would call us his twins” she tenderly explains. “Everything you said...It all warms my heart but I’m so sorry if I cannot remember. I’m trying to but it only hurts my head” she hopelessly whispers. “It’s okay, don’t force yourself. I’m here to help you remember” she assures her.

“But my heart knows who you are. My heart will lead me to all the wonderful memories we had created. Please help me remember” tears started to fall as she cup her face and stared at the younger version of herself.

“What do I call you?” she mumbles softly while her thumb caresses her cheeks.

“Zia...like how dad calls me...” she whispers in a fading voice. “Zia...lovely Zia...” she tenderly plays the words on her tongue, hoping it could ignite something but got none. With a tearful smile, she nods at her while enjoying the warm hands caressing her face. Their gazes lock while basking in silence. “What...do you call me...?” her voice quivers as she asks. “Mom...” with a constricted throat, she whispers as tears stream down like a downpour.

“My mom...” not able to contain what she felt, Lexie hugs her again. This time, it’s tighter, almost desperate.

“Zia...” hugging her back, Andrea whispers while she cries with the daughter she cannot remember. Her head hurts from trying but her heart seems to be at peace. She could feel the love her mind failed to recognize.

“I know I love you. I know my heart knows you, my lovely Zia...”

my lovely daughter. My heart loves you so much, my doll” she added as she tighten her hold around her.

Both cried in silence while the men watch solemnly. Despite their bloodshot eyes, they stubbornly struggle to contain the tears threatening their composure.

“I will be patient. I won’t get tired of helping you remember the memories you forgot, mom. I will walk you through this unfamiliar world. One day at a time we will make this through” this time, it was Lexie who cups her mother’s face to assure her.

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

Chapter 84

Chapter 84 Happily Ever After

“Lucien, my love, my CEO...my Mr. Wright...” she playfully smiles, seeing Lucien grimace from what she calls him. It’s a kink he hasn’t overcome to be affected with. Today, they are facing the altar to profess their vow of a lifetime commitment to God, family, and closest friends who were present to witness their intimate union.

A union between a Wright and a Montes.

A union not for another business venture, not a merger, not an alliance of power, connection, and influence, but a union of two hearts who battled uncertainty to be together.

"I was a pauper compared to the high pedestal you are in. I'm a nobody. You're the star and I'm the dust. I'm just a mere spectator of your greatness. Two polar poles apart. We are everything opposite, Mr. Wright" she sadly smiles while Lucien incredulously glares at her. The officiating priest remains smiling as he listens together with all the guests.

"I am a dreamer...ambitious. But never did I dream of having a Wright, particularly, CEO Lucien Wright" she added with a teasing smile, enjoying Lucien's incredulous state. "But I'm gorgeous, you were snared by my charm. You have no way out. I'm cunning..." she winks at him, earning her a chuckle.

"I can be a gold digger for your immeasurable fortune but you gambled on me. You can choose to just make me a mistress, a stand-by woman for your whim but you cherish me like a precious gem by making me your wife. We started in an unconventional setup, and I thought it was all that is" brimming with unshed tears, she manages to smile. Recollecting the memories of their past has brought a bitter taste.

"I am everything a Wright doesn't deserve but here you are, bringing me in front of God and your family to be your better half" a tear escaped, which Lucien hurriedly wipe.

"You never failed to make me feel so cherished and I can't ask for more. You gave me more than I need, more than I deserve, even more than what you have" another tear fell despite her charming smile. "Why do I deserve you, Lucien Wright? What exceptional goodness did I make to deserve you?" her voice quivers as she asks. Even their family and guests become silent while listening to her vow. Dom together with his parents and her friends was struggling not to shed a tear. Everyone was witnesses how the two struggled to achieve their happy endings.

with his hand inside her veil, Lucien cups her face, wiping the tears that are now streaming down her face. His thumb did not stop from caressing her damp cheeks, trying to comfort her.

"I love you more than words could say. I love you more than love could be defined. I love you more than the beat of my heart. I love you more than a lifetime. I love you so much, Lucien Wright" with closed eyes she whispers, basking in the comfort of the thumb caressing her face.

She proclaims her vow with tearful eyes. It was her wedding day and she was surrounded by the lavishness and extravagance Lucien is capable of. Aside from Samantha and Levinia's excessive indulgence in the wedding ceremony, Lucien imposed his own frivolousness.

Despite Wright's eagerness to have the grandest wedding for her, they gave her the chance to

design her wedding dress. And today, she wears her design on her wedding day. Donning an A-line design, long sleeve, off-shoulder sequence gown made of the finest chiffon and daintiest lace fabric, she indeed becomes a real-life princess. The fitted bodice and cascading fabric display her curves despite her twenty-eight weeks baby bump. The wedding ring? She doesn't want to know how much it costs. By looking at the stone, she has a nagging feeling she should not ask for its price. "I love you so much too, my doll" he responded before placing a gentle kiss on her forehead outside her veil.

"I'm the most privileged woman not for your fortune but for being a mother to your children. I'm greatly humbled for the chance to bear Wright's heirs and for being the wife of the most wonderful man this world could have, my lovely Lucien" lovingly, she gazed

at him.

“As God, our families, and closest friends as my witnesses, I vow to cherish you as my beloved husband and father of our children. Through sickness and health, I vow to be by your side. With me and our children, you don’t need to be the tough CEO Wright. Let me be your resting place, your haven. You don’t need to be perfect even if you already are. I embrace all your weaknesses and imperfections as you embraced mine. I am your best friend, your confidante, your critic, and most especially...your partner...your wife, till the end of time. Thank you for this greatest gift to be your Mrs. Wright” her quivering voice did not deter her from speaking what she opt to say. It’s her chance to share her heart not only with Lucien but with all the people closest to them.

With misty eyes, Lucien places another tender kiss on her forehead while cupping her face. It’s too surreal to speak as they remain in silence for quite some time.

“I have everything, there’s no question about that, my lovely doll, Zia. I have all the money I could spend in a dozen lifetimes or more. I have all the influence, the connection, the fortune any man could dream of. My name speaks of immeasurable power, capable to inflict terror. Everyone would scurry to do my bidding as they strive to earn my favor” he started speaking.

“I thought, it’s all that is all to me. But then you came. You meant nothing but an answer to a quest. Never did I expect you will etch your existence until I can no longer live without you. I’m never perfect, I did a lot of things that hurt you but you refuse to give up on me despite having the chance to do so. You thought me to be a man...”

“You are the only person who laid my heart at peace. I have a tough and chaotic world but you created a haven for me to rest, and it’s by your side...in your warm embrace. Thank you for believing and staying by my side despite my shortcomings. I am far from being perfect but you uphold me as one” smiling, he continues.

“I won’t be getting tired of thanking you for giving me this wondrous chance to be a father. No one could be tougher than you, my lovely doll. No money or power could equal how you raise our son, Lucy. I will forever regret missing the chance to see our son born and leaving you with the burden to raise him alone. You were the one who struggled, but despite it all, you never failed to appease my soul” he emotionally announces. “Thank you for accepting me not as the powerful CEO and heir to a billion-dollar empire but as a man who will be by your side as husband till the end of time”

“This day forward, we will face every tomorrow as a family. We will welcome every dusk and dawn holding each other’s hands. We will raise our children in the luxury and abundance of

our love. As we walk the path to our forever, please hold my hand tight, my doll. Never let go of me...even if I turn out to be not the prince charming you dreamed of. My world will be crumbling down if you will leave me, Zia” for a rare moment, Lucien quivers while speaking. His usual intimidating manner was replaced by vulnerability while he begs Zia. “It will never happen, Lucien. I am your home and will always be” fervently shakes her head while cupping his face.

“You and our children will always be my home...my home sweet home” he fervently nods as he presses his quivering lips to hers. As happiness fills the heart, tears brimmed the eyes. A surreal moment for Lucien and Lexie, witnessed by the important people in their lives. “Thank you for accepting my daughter into your family, Madame Wright” Andrea softly spoke after she turns to Levinia. Her timid and nervous look made

Levinia sympathize with her predicament. "Andrea, call me Levinia. And Lexie is a sweetheart. She made our Lucien human. She heals his soul no woman was capable to do and we owe it to her" Levinia counters the gentlewoman while she holds her hand. She understands Andrea feels strange in the unfamiliar crowd around her. The woman has been tense and anxious in her seat since the start of the ceremony. Thus, she was surprised when she initiated the conversation.

"We are a family, Andrea. Please relax. Sully is so worried for you, he has been pestering me with messages" she tries to comfort Lexie's mother while playful smiling at her.

"He has been overly gushing on me. I'm an old woman for goodness sake but he is treating me like a child" shyly, she mumbles.

"He is just worried for you. Adding to the fact that he cannot be with you at this time" she softly explains.

"I know. Though it's unnecessary" she smiles.

"He could be petty when it comes to you. Overprotective of his gem" Levinia teased and was amazed at how she blushed. She watches her turn to watch the wedding again.

"And please give me a baby girl doll, a princess for our kingdom. We already have two princes, it's time for a mini version of you, my doll. I can't let your beautiful face not adorn my daughter's face" he playfully begs, making her giggle. "We will work that out, my love. I would love a baby doll to dress with" she cheekily replies while receiving another kiss from Lucien outside her veil.

"I still haven't announced to kiss the bride but Mr. Wright had been kissing her for a dozen times" the priest playfully announce making all the guests chuckle. "You can't blame me, look at my wife. She is dashingly beautiful" Lucien raves at their guests and the priest. Lexie giggles with a tinge of blush adorning her cheeks.

Chuckles fill the cathedral as they continue with the ceremony. Rings were exchanged and the most awaited kissing of the bride added to the festive atmosphere.

The reception follows and their first meal as official husband and wife was shared with all of their guests. Business associates and Wright shareholders came to greet the newlywed. Before

midnight, the gathering ended. Leaving only the couple and their family. The instant the last guests left, a group of serious-looking men entered the hall. Approaching the family.

"Congratulations and best wishes"

One by one, the men gave the couple their greetings with hugs and kisses on their cheeks. "Thank you, all" Lexie smiles at the men as they start to get settled on the freshly set up table. They will be having dinner with the other side of their family.

"How are you, Dolly?" Sullivan softly asks after he took a seat beside Andrea.

"I'm fine, Sul. Levinia and Carla accompanied me the entire ceremony. Zia has been busy greeting guests" the gentlewoman mumbles with a grateful smile. She had immensely relaxed seeing Sul enter. "You did great... I'm proud of you. I'm just in the other room, I'm watching you. You were never alone" he praises Andrea. His lingering gaze fixed on her beautiful face. After she has fully recovered and gained some weight, her beauty like Lexie's become more prominent. "I know, Sul. Thank you so much. You eat now, it's late" she gently smiles before reaching out for the food to serve him.

The two were unaware of the eyes set on them as they continue with their hushed conversation.

“Uncle Sul seems to be smitten with your mother, Lex” Arvin whispers near her ear.
“Yes, Arv, he is. But I don’t mind. Mom deserves to have someone to take care of her. Dad would surely understand” nodding, she smiles at Arvin before turning to watch her mother and Sully.

“Another Petrov heart ensnared by the Montes” Donny whispers, winking at Lexie after she turns to look at him.

“Love has no age limit. Uncle Sully has been the coldest one among Carlisle’s sons. He doesn’t mingle too much but with mom Andrea, he becomes willing to go as far as attending a family gathering as this” Lucien whispers as he leans toward Arvin.

“I could see mom’s happiness every time she is with uncle Sul. I’m happy for both of them” she added while watching her mom serve the old man.

“Has there any improvement with her memory loss?” Arvin asks.

“Nothing. But I want it this way. The memory of the past will just hurt her. I don’t want her to remember anything about dad. She will just yearn for the man she can no longer be with. She could have a fresh start with uncle Sullivan. I want the memory she lost to protect her from the pain of losing dad. If the time comes she will remember, it will no longer be that painful” she mutters while smiling every time she sees her mother get flustered from whatever Sully was saying to her. Her mother is like a teenage girl with her crush. And happiness is radiating on her face from just sitting next to him.

“She looks so happy...” Lucien whispers.

“Yes, she is...” she whispers back.

Today she has her happily ever after and she dreams the same for her mother.

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

Chapter 85

Chapter 85 Hate

“Wait till you see who joins the exhibit” Dom whispers near her ear. They are entering the venue where Dom is one of the main artists to exhibit his works.

Turning to him with her questioning look, she waited but the man just winks at her before turning away. “What Dominic said?” Lucien asks, seeing her look perplexed. “I don’t understand either. Dom could sometimes be an ass” she shook her head while they continue to walk.

“Language, my doll” he glares at her but tightens his hold around her waist. His hand rests on the side of her baby bump. “Sorry...” she sheepishly grins. The hall is starting to get filled with other guests and several times, they have to stop to greet other guests. Lucien as famous as he is become occupied with associates who approach to make their presence known.

With her in his arms, he would cut short any conversation he was engaged but it would just be replaced by another.

“The payment to be a Wright” Lexie playfully whispers as she leans closer, intentionally brushing her lips to his ear.

“The event has not started yet, my doll. Don’t tempt me or I would drag you out of here. You won’t be able to support Dominic tonight” he softly threatened while squeezing her hips.

A melodious chuckle fills not only his ears but also the rest. Eyes turn to them and seeing the intimacy displayed by the couple, no one dares to approach. Unable to resist his lovely wife, he pulls her closer to claim her lips. It was a quick suck but too bold to fluster the surrounding guests. An odd scene from the fierce and shrewd CEO of the biggest corporation in the country. Though his wife is a goddess, who is heavily pregnant with their second child, they didn't expect such a show of intimacy. Not long, several men were clearing their throats and women were looking away with a tinge of blush on their already perfectly made-up faces. A pink tint of lipstick was even left on his, which he didn't bother to wipe. "A pink lipstick suits you, my lovely CEO" she seductively whispers only he could hear. "I could wear one if you fancy it...maybe while making love with you, my doll" he softly replies.

"Nah...I like my masculine CEO more. I wear the lippies...while you wield these marvelous lips to better use..." trailing her index rounding his lips, she winks. Discreetness is no longer the case.

"Ahem" someone clears a throat, which made Lexie turn to it. "Save the seduction later at home, lovebirds. We have a show to finish" whispering, Dom step closer to glare at her.

"Can't blame me...he is dangerously hot" she whispers back. "Shameless..." Dom sneers.

"Yummy..." she continues to tease while he rolls his eyes.

"Come, let's look around the collections. I can't leave you two without creating a scene. For goodness sake, you are pregnant" incredulous to her, Dom whispers his rants.

"My libido is kicking in...and my pregnancy doesn't hinder our playtime. I would usually ride him, baby Alek Vasili is not disturbed" she playfully counters while they slowly walk along with the hanged masterpieces.

"Lexie..." he warns while glaring at her. But she was amused instead of being afraid, she even giggled. "You are teasing Dominic too much, my doll. He might go home to cuddle with Jason instead of doing his exhibit" Lucien amusingly shakes his head from the bickering of the two. She is about to respond when she notices the figure standing in front of her. Sensing her tense, Lucien turn to where she was looking and he was surprised to see the last person he wanted to see.

Tensed silence rules as they remain unmoving with their gazes fixed on the person blocking their way. Even other guests who notices the situation froze on their feet.

"I can see a fruitful marriage" a snicker breaks the silence. Dom steps closer to Lexie on reflex despite having her husband by her side. "Long time no see Miss Johnson. How are you?" regaining her composure, she casually asks.

"Yeah, it's been a long time. You're on your second child and I have seen your firstborn" tauntingly, she responded.

"You're a great keeper of a secret, Alexzia Montes. You have fooled us all" she added, not giving the other woman the chance to respond.

"I wonder how you hid the boy with that face" he continues.

"I don't owe anyone to show my son but his father. What do you want, Miss Johnson?" Lexie calmly speaks, a smile grazes her lips.

Lucien was watchful. Clenching his jaw, he remains quiet beside Lexie. He was not aware the woman had come back to the country. And if she plans to surprise them, she succeeded.

“Yes, of course. But I admire your great acting. All along you had a solid plan to trap Lucien using your son” mockingly, she mutters.

“I never used my son to gain anything. And I don’t owe you an explanation, Miss Johnson. Whatever happens between me and Lucien is no longer of your concern” she casually shrugs, unaffected by her hostility.

“Step aside, Miss Johnson” her casualness was replaced by a chilling cold warning, which surprised Ellen.

“Such arrogance... You’re just a nobody” Ellen was triggered. Her face flushed with irritation. “Let me remind you, Miss Johnson. I’m Alexzia Montes-Wright, the wife of CEO Lucien

Wright and I’m entitled to such. Now step back or I will let security deal with you” she charmingly smiles while she made her threat. Aghast by her attitude, Ellen glares at the man beside her who remains placid despite their heated discussion. “You will let her treat me like this, Lucien?” with her voice turning soft and pained, she asks. She is earning his sympathy and it’s quite obvious. “You heard my wife, Ellen” Lucien grimly mutters under his gritting teeth. “Lucien...” Ellen tries to continue but paused mid-sentence upon seeing his dark look. “My wife could do anything she wishes. One word from her and I will make it happen. You should realize that” Lucien continues his threat. Frightened by the dangerous glint in the CEO’s eyes, she unwarily steps back. Even guests nearby seeing the CEO’s dark aura scurry away. Particularly after Wright security moved closer to the commotion. Ben is already standing behind Lexie, ready to protect her. “Lucien...I am not a threat, why are you treating me like this? We’ve been together for a long time, I don’t think I deserve this treatment” looking at the security who started to gather, she whispers in despair. “I had set the boundary of protection around my wife and anything stepping beyond the line will be considered a threat and will be treated as such” he coldly replies.

“I don’t plan to harm her or anyone” painfully, she mumbles. “Then, what purpose do you have here?” unconcerned of her forlorn state, he queried. Silence rules when Ellen stays quiet, unable to speak while staring back at his cold gaze. “She is part of the exhibit. She has entries” Dom was the one to reply after they got none from Ellen. Surprised, Lexie turns to Dom with a questioning look. “The one I mentioned to you earlier. I’m also surprised to see her name on the list. I didn’t know she paints” Dom explains seeing her unspoken query. “You told me to follow my passion...and I did” Ellen spoke and though it was soft, Lexie heard her.

Turning to look back at Ellen, their gazes met. She saw a different woman from earlier. “After I left the country, I used my time to recollect. Everything you said rings in my mind. I thought I have nothing left, but then I saw my unfinished works and I started to finish them. Until it becomes spontaneous. I live every day for my art, not realizing I am slowly healing” Ellen spoke softly, never leaving Lexie’s gaze. “Then after a month of finishing several works, mom and dad urged me to join in a local exhibit. Which I did. I wasn’t expecting the response I got. They are loving my art and you can’t imagine how happy I am. It’s a fulfillment I wasn’t able to feel during the time I’m doing ballet. It’s a different feeling of achievement” she added, her wistful smile softening her aura.

“Upon hearing the exhibit being organized by your friend, I submitted my portfolio. I don’t have any ill intention but to showcase my art. This is what I’m good at and I want to explore my potential”

"A month ago, I got the message of approval and I was ecstatic. I'm starting to create a name abroad but I have this yearning to share my art with people who know me. I long to be back home bringing my art and this is my chance" her genuine happiness reflects in her whole being.

"I started to dream because you made me realize I'm chasing a different dream for myself" she added with a smile.

"But seeing you, two..." she pauses. A bitter smile crosses her face.

"I was surprised by what I felt earlier. Of course, I expected to see you tonight but I was not ready for the emotion upon seeing you together. And you are heavily pregnant with his child. Envy and jealousy overwhelmed me" honestly, she mumbles with a bitter smile.

Silence rules after Ellen pause for a long while, composing herself.

"I want to share what I have achieved these past months while pursuing what I love doing. You were the one who encourage me to follow my dream and I want to share it with you. I swear I don't intend to threaten you. But I want to be honest, it hurts seeing you together. With you carrying his child slapped me hard. It's the dream I failed to achieve" painfully she continues. Her eyes brimmed with unshed tears. "Not all dreams are for us, Miss Johnson. There are things we cannot have no matter how we strive to achieve them. Things that are not meant to happen" Lexie softly counters. She understands Ellen but she cannot do anything about it. "Yes, I know. But it still hurts" she smiles bitterly while a tear escaped. But she quickly wipes it and composed herself. She doesn't want to cry this evening. The event will just be starting and she has a long night. "I won't be sorry. This is my destiny and I will ensure no one could take it away from me. During the time I thought you two were together, I didn't meddle. I know where I stand during that time. I left, giving up my love for him" she calmly speaks. Though she is tolerant, she wanted Ellen to realize where she should place herself.

"I didn't steal anything, Lucien is a free man" she added.

"For four long years, a lot could have happened. You had your chance, Miss Johnson" she continues.

"Yes, I know. I swear I understand. But I can't disguise what I feel" she mumbles softly.

"You are entitled with your emotions, we all are. We cannot control emotions but we could control our actions. I hope you will always choose the right thing and not just what could make you feel good. It's called responsibility"

"There's no such valid reason to justify actions. Life is a boomerang, you must keep that in mind" she added with a smile though her seriousness is evident.

Silence rules after she pauses. Ellen remains staring at her before a smile carved her face. "Upon learning Lucien married someone, I hated that woman without even knowing her. I plan to destroy whatever affection he has for whoever she is. Then, I met you. The woman his eyes lingered the night we were together after several months of being away. I got curious but I was appeased when you went away. I thought it was just an act from his end to get me back. But after months without you, I realize who you are to him" she smiled bitterly.

"He ended the years we had. He lives with your memories like a fool. But I kept silent, I stayed by his side hoping he will come around" she chuckle but her tears fell. "Which didn't happen until you come back. I was immensely threatened. I provoked you. I want

you to be angry... to show your true color. But despite what I did you remain calm and tolerant" pain is evident in her voice. Silence ruled as they gave her time to compose herself. She has to look upward to stop the tears streaming down her face. She is struggling but winning. And with a bitter smile, she looks at Lexie again. "I wanted to hate you for stealing the only dream I have. I wish to be blinded by anger to have the reason to harm you. I desperately strive to erase you from Lucien's life, especially in his mind, and heart" she smirks, though lopsided. Lucien narrowed his eyes, gritting his teeth. He heard enough and he will protect his wife at all costs. "I wanted to loathe you, to despise you" she added while sharply staring at Lexie. Seeing the crazed look in Ellen's eyes, Lucien steps forward to protect his wife.

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

Chapter 86

Chapter 86 Her Frivolous Husband

Trailing her eyes to the man who blocks her view of the pregnant woman, she smiles. "I could see how he would always protect you. He never did that to me" she whispers, almost inaudible.

"Have you realized, you had issued a threat to my wife, Miss Johnson? You, threatening a Wright is unforgivable" Lucien dangerously mutters and was about to step forward when a hand stopped him.

His body tensed at the gentle squeeze around his arm amid the consuming anger engulfing him. "No one dares to threaten my wife in front of me" the spine-chilling terror fills everyone's core. Lucien looks dangerously deadly with his eyes fixed on Ellen. "She is not threatening me, my love" her soft voice caught his ears.

Turning to Lexie, his unconvinced look meet her. Torn between protecting and believing, he narrows his eyes, gauging her words. He was ready to wage war on the person who threatened their peace but his wife is looking at him with begging eyes. "She is...complimenting me, Lucien" she added after she got no response from him aside from his suspicious look.

Confused by his wife's words, his brows furrow. But instead of an explanation, he got a reassuring smile. "It's not easy to deal with a broken heart and broken dream. It's suffocating and painful" she speaks but her eyes were on Ellen after she stepped aside from Lucien's back.

"I would feel and might do the same as what runs into your thoughts. But I'm glad you took the time to reflect on your action" she added while smiling at Ellen.

"I'm blessed to have the man I love and I'm greatly humbled. You too, Miss Johnson, will have this kind of love if you will only give yourself the chance to be happy" she warmly smiles. Lucien has his eyes on her, still contemplating what she was doing. Even all the security were looking confused while watching her. Eyes only turn to Ellen Johnson upon hearing her scoff.

"You're a terrible enemy, Alexzia Wright. The reason why I can't come to hate you despite the circumstance between us" her tearful eyes never left Lexie who warmly smiles back at her.

"Why can't you be angry with me?" Ellen hopelessly asks.

"I have no reason to" she softly retorted.

"I hate you for being so tolerant and understanding. Look at you...look at them...they are ready to protect you from me" Ellen crazily raves while looking around the security nearby before turning to Ben and lastly to Lucien.

"They saw a threat" she added incredulously but Lexie just shook her head while smiling. "How could I hate you if you are the only person who could understand me, Alexzia? The society I've been with has forsaken me for what I did, but here you are...like a mother to her child, giving me chances"

"Why can't you just be vindictive as I am? Why can't you just be spiteful? I can deal with that better than this" frustrated, she raves at her. If Lucien and his security were triggered, Lexie surprisingly giggles.

Confused gazes turn to her like she lost her mind while Ellen exasperatedly rolls her eyes. For a while, no one spoke as the two women seem to have a different world from them. "Unfortunately, I cannot be what you wanted me to be. I am a woman and I know how it feels to be ignored by the man you love. I lost my virginity on a whim just to spite the man who ditched me. Thankfully it was to the smoking hot billionaire" she winks at Lucien after she turns to look at him.

With a raised brow, Ellen looks at her in question. Lexie met her gaze but choose not to elaborate on what she said.

"Human as we are, we are sometimes clouded by our emotions. Once we let it control us we could do things we are not capable of doing. And it's best to have someone to remind us of our boundaries" she continues.

With their locked gazes, Lexie and Ellen became silent for a while. And it was only interrupted when Ellen heave a sigh.

"I appreciate you as a person. You could be a great friend but as of the moment, I can't offer you friendship. I cannot face you without feeling envious of what you have. You will hurt me with your happiness" after her long silence, Ellen spoke.

Understanding her predicament, Lexie smiles and nods at her.

"But...if the time comes. When I achieved the healing I need...I will find you.

Then...maybe we... we could work things out as friends" tears brimmed her eyes despite her hopeful smile.

Smiling at her, Lexie fervently nods. Her eyes were getting misty

"See you around, Madame Wright. Thank you for taking good care of my soul. Thank you for believing in me, you just don't know how it reminded me of how great of a person I am. You restored my self-worth" she smiles at Lexie before turning to Dominic.

"I'm sorry if I cannot stay tonight, Mr. Lint. I'm asking for your supervision over my work. You can call me anytime at the number indicated in my portfolio" has been able to compose herself, she spoke to Dominic.

"You don't need to leave, Miss Johnson. I know how important this exhibit is to you. The CEO and his wife's presence must not deter you from achieving your dream. This has nothing to do with them. This is your night, a step closer to creating a significant contribution to the world of art. You are an artist and you must not be dissuaded in any circumstances. Gather yourself and mingle with guests. Let them know how strong you are and that is what your art signifies. You won't sulk in one corner like a kid who spilled her milk" he seriously mutters. He is imposing as the senior to a new artist.

Becoming thoughtful, Ellen stares at Dominic for a long time before heaving a sigh.

“Yes sir” thoughtfully smiling, she nods. She saw his point and she acknowledged it. Before turning away, she looks at Lucien and Lexie. With a smile she nods at the two, excusing herself from their presence.

With her back facing them, she took several deep breaths to clear her heavy chest. Indeed tonight is her night. She must endure for her dream. Her art is her healing, thus, she will allow it to heal her soul. She will be looking forward to that day. By then she could face Alexzia without hurting.

Despite having several assistants and people to do their bidding, Lucien and Lexie personally shop baby stuff for their second child. With Wright security swarming the mall, Lucien and Lexie leisurely did their shopping. “Mama, look. This is a very small sock. Did I wear this too when I was a baby?” Lucy shows his mother the tiny pair with pure bewilderment.

“Yes, my baby love. You are so small and these small socks fit perfectly on your tiny feet” wistful by the memory of Lucy’s birth, her eyes got misty. “Cool!” his eyes grew wide in excitement. Lucien shuffles his son’s hair while he and Lexie were chuckling. People around them were watching the adorable family. Mostly at the little man who is religiously tailing his parents.

People were witnessing how the cold and fierce CEO become a doting husband and father. He would personally choose baby clothes and baby stuff, which astonish the attendants.

“This is too much, my love. Alek could not wear this all. Babies grow fast. He will quickly outgrow all these clothes” Lexie tries to stop her husband from picking dozens of dozens of clothes.

“Then we will buy more if he grows fast. These are all cute. He will love these, my doll” he retorted, making her incredulous.

“Lucien, he won’t know what clothes he would wear. He cannot even open his eyes and could not see for at least a week” she incredulously counters. “He will see his pictures when he is old enough. So he must look good. I don’t want my son to think we lack in buying his clothes” casually, he mumbles while still looking around for more clothes. Looking at the carts overflowing with his choices of small clothes she didn’t understand the point of lacking in baby clothes. With the stacks of clothes they have, Alek could change his clothes every hour and won’t be able to wear them all before he would outgrow them.

“Shoes!” the little man who has been tailing his father raves at the display of newborn shoes.

“Wow, these are cute. You choose for your little brother, buddy. He will love those” Lucien turns to his son to indulge him with several pairs.

Excited as his father, Lucy chose several dozens, which he thinks were cute. But everything was cute so the two got everything on display. “These two...” Lexie exasperatedly watches the father and son with her hands on her waist.

“Wait till you see the electric cribs and rockers, the boss ordered. It’s all customized” Ben whispers. Turning to the big man, Lexie narrows her eyes. Her head is about to explode at the

frivolousness of her husband. “He also bought several baby stuff for his office. A nursery is being added to the CEO’s office and it’s almost finished. Some few touches on designs and baby stuff to be added and all were set” Ben added. “This man...”

shaking her head, she was incredulous at what Lucien was doing. "He wanted to do what he hasn't done with our little boss" Ben continues.

Ben's words made Lexie's heart melt. She has to take a deep breath to free her constricted chest. Lucien has been vocal about regretting not being able to witness Lucy's birth and hasn't been by their side at difficult times. He is simply doing what he is supposed to be doing as a father.

"Will we buy, winter clothes for our little Alek, my doll?" They were interrupted by Lucien's question and it made her return to her exasperated state. She can't believe how trivial Lucien could be. "Lucien, winter will be over when I give birth" she counters. "Oh, then maybe some summer clothes" Lucien mumbles thoughtfully before turning to the other section of the boutique with Lucy running behind him. "The CEO is not that excited for the second heir, Madame Wright" the store manager amusingly whispers, afraid the scary CEO would hear her.

"He is not excited. It's so obvious he is not excited at all" mockingly, Lexie shook her head while mumbling "Yes, Madame Wright, he is just emptying the entire shop" the manager cautiously whispers her amusement. She doesn't know the CEO's wife's reaction to her playful observation. "He is acting silly sometimes. Please forgive him. He could be a pain in the ass" Lexie turns to apologize to the woman who was taken aback by her response.