

## **Becoming Strangers Again Chapter 41 – 45**

### **TheWorldWideBook**

Posted by Adminh, 271

Chapter 41 RYAN As I settled in, I found myself engrossed in the lively chatter of the kids, as they discussed their school experiences, favorite cartoons, and various other topics. It struck me, almost surprisingly, that I was now responsible for three young souls. Amidst the conversation, my thoughts wandered to Liam, wishing he could be present with us, sharing in the moment. Reflecting on their reaction to me, I hadn't anticipated an overly warm reception from the children, yet I also hadn't expected to experience this level of aloofness and coldness from Liam. Despite his tender age of six, soon to be seven, I couldn't fault him entirely for his actions; after all, I recognize traces of myself in him. The sound of shuffling feet interrupted our exchange as Lily made her entrance, announcing that dinner was served. With enthusiasm, the boys sprang from their seats, racing each other to the dining room, eager to satisfy their hunger. "I'll go call Liam, Lily informed me before she headed towards the stairs. Reacting instinctively, I reached out and gently grasped her forearm "Could you point me in the right direction?" I requested earnestly. "I'd like to be the one to call him down." Lily tilted her head and regarded me with a hint of skepticism. "Do you really think it's a good idea?" she asked, her voice laced with concern. An involuntary frown creased my brow. "My son harbors a deep resentment towards me; shouldn't I explore every avenue to mend our relationship?" I countered, my tone tinged with desperation. With a resigned sigh, Lily relented. "Sure. Go up the stairs, the second room on your left," she instructed, her words tinged with reluctant acceptance. I gave her a sharp nod of gratitude before turning to make my way upstairs. Following Lily's guidance, I knocked lightly on the door before gently turning the knob and stepping into the room. At the far end, Liam sat hunched over his desk, a book laid out before him. The slight furrow on his forehead betrayed his struggle with the material, highlighting the challenges he is facing with his assessment. I cleared my throat to signal my presence, and he glanced up from his book. "Do you need help with that?" I offered, extending a hand of assistance. He snapped his book shut abruptly. "I'll wait for Uncle Jake," he replied curtly, his tone carrying a hint of defiance. Suppressing the surge of frustration and anger triggered by the mention of Jake's name, I managed to muster a smile. "Or I can quickly lend a hand before we head down for dinner, I suggested, hoping to bridge the gap between us. He furrowed his brow, mirroring my own expression so closely that it almost elicited a chuckle. "Are you staying for dinner?" he inquired, I nodded, attempting to mask the swell of apprehension gnawing at me. "You don't want me to stay?" I asked cautiously, inwardly pleading for a different response. He shrugged nonchalantly. "I don't care either way," he replied, his indifference stomping all over my hopes for reconciliation. Observing him with an amused smile, I watched as he stomped past me, heading for the door. I followed after him, attempting one last effort. "It's not too late to reconsider the homework," I suggested, hopeful for a change of heart. "I'll be more comfortable with Uncle Jake," he retorted, each word feeling like a dagger to my heart. Opting to spare myself further anguish, I chose to let the matter rest. As we all settled at the table, I couldn't help but notice that Ethan, Noah, and Lily had opted for a different

meal, centered around seafood. However, I took notice of the fact that Liam and I were sharing the same food. Turning to Lily, I inquired, "Is he allergic to seafood too?" to which she nodded in confirmation. Glancing at the little boy, I attempted to lighten the atmosphere. "I guess we have a lot of things in common," I remarked, acknowledging our similarities. He grunted in response, his demeanor remaining unchanged as he focused on his meal. Catching Lily's apologetic smile, a silent plea for peace, I sighed and returned my attention to my own plate, resigning myself to the strained atmosphere.

11:42 AM Chapter 41 Following dinner, Lily suggested a movie night since tomorrow is weekend and they don't have to be in school, but the boys, weary from the day's activities, opted for an early bedtime instead. Liam was the first to bid Lily goodnight with a kiss on her cheek, followed by the rest of the boys, who equally extended their wishes to me verbally. However, Liam remained silent as he vanished into his room upstairs. As soon as they disappeared from sight, I rose from the sofa and retrieved my jacket. "What time do they usually wake up?" I inquired, making my way towards the front door. "I'd like to be there when they do." The longing to connect with Liam tugged at my heartstrings, urging me to mend the rift between us. She accompanied me to the door, seemingly unaware of my subdued mood. "Liam is usually up by six, regardless of whether he has school or not. The others tend to rise around ten on weekends," she informed me as we reached the threshold. Pausing beside the driver's door, I turned to her. "I'll be here before six in the morning. Please instruct your security to open the gate for me," I requested, making her know that I do not want to be locked out. She nodded in acknowledgment. "I will." As I turned to unlock my car, preparing to leave, her voice halted me in my tracks. "I'm truly sorry for everything, especially regarding Liam. I'm certain he'll come around," she offered, her tone tinged with genuine remorse. Pinching the bridge of my nose, I exhaled heavily, "Stop apologizing, Lily. It only serves as a reminder of why I'm upset with you, and I don't want to be," I confessed, my frustration evident in my voice. She nervously bit her lip, a habit of hers whenever she is uneasy and nervous. "You don't want to be what?" she whispered. "Upset with you," I admitted softly. I reached forward impulsively, gently tucking a stray strand of her hair behind her ear. "Apologies won't change anything, so let's put an end to that," I urged, mustering a smile in an attempt to mask my simmering frustration.

"Goodnight, Lily," I bid her farewell before slipping into my car and exiting her compound. Upon arriving at my penthouse, Angelo wasted no time in questioning me. "Did you meet them?" he inquired eagerly the moment I stepped through the door. I rolled my eyes in response, sinking into the sofa with a tired sigh. "You could have asked me that from the balcony, considering your obvious impatience," I retorted, unable to suppress a hint of exasperation. Angelo chuckled, undeterred by my response. "We're two thousand feet away from solid ground," he deadpanned. "If you had heard my question from there, I'd be concerned there was something wrong with you." His dry humor didn't go unnoticed. Ignoring his sarcasm and dry humor, I got off the sofa and made my way to the bar to pour myself a drink. An impatient Angelo trailed after me, persisting with his questions. "So, did you meet them or not?" he pressed, his tone betraying his curiosity. "Of course I met them," I replied dryly, pouring the amber liquid into my glass. I did pay

a visit to their residence, didn't I?" A grin spread across Angelo's face. "So, did they take a liking to you?" he prodded, eager for details. Thoughts of Liam surfaced once more, and I chuckled wryly. "The other two are making an effort, but it's clear they're just trying to please Lily. As for Liam? He couldn't care less about impressing anyone. He's made it abundantly clear on more than one occasion that he dislikes me, I admitted. Angelo winced sympathetically. "I'm sorry to hear that, Ryan. But don't lose hope; I'm confident he'll come around soon. Don't give up just yet, he encouraged. I peered at him over the rim of my glass. "And you believe I'd ever consider giving up on my son just because he doesn't like me?" He shrugged casually. "I'm well aware of your patience level." Rolling my eyes, I replaced the bottle on the shelf and made my way back to the living room. "Speaking of patience, I plan to head over to Lily's bright and early tomorrow morning to spend time with the kids before they even wake up. Care to join me?" His eyes sparked with excitement. "Yeah, sure. Abruptly, he paused and narrowed his eyes suspiciously. "There must be a reason you're inviting me to be with you during the prime opportunity to be alone with Lily and the kids. I chuckled, seeing through his skepticism. "I have a feeling Jake will show up today, and I need someone to prevent me from sending 11:42 AM 180 Chapter 41 him to the emergency ward when he inevitably gets on my nerves. That man seems to thrive on getting under my skin."

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Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 42 RYAN In the early hours of the following morning. I left the penthouse with Angelo. Recognizing the limitations of my culinary skills and the inability to whip up a satisfying breakfast, I made a stop at a renowned local eatery to procure a delectable morning for everyone. Upon reaching Lily's residence, the imposing gate was effortlessly swung open by the security personnels. Driving through the entrance. I pulled over at the temporary parking space, got down from the vehicle and approached the front door, and rang the doorbell. After a few minutes, the entrance door was opened by none other than Lily, whose appearance proved that she just rolled out of bed. Suppressing a yawn, she greeted us with a comment on our early arrival, "You're earlier than expected." As she uttered those words, her nightwear's robe slid from her shoulder, granting a glimpse of her bare neck and shoulders, an unintended display that included a peek of her nipples because the robe no longer covered her boobs area, though Lily remained oblivious to this unintentional exhibition as drowsiness still clouded her senses. I turned sharply to fix Angelo with a disapproving glare, only to find him already engrossed in examining his shoes. With a determined. stride, I approached Lily. "The scenery is pleasant to me, but I do not appreciate an audience, I remarked pointedly. It took her a moment to grasp my meaning as I reached for her robe, gently sliding it back onto her shoulder. Her eyes widened in horror as realization dawned upon her. Swiftly, she crossed her arms over her stomach, a defensive gesture to prevent any further exposure. Clearing her throat, she composed herself. "Please, come in. Let me change into something more appropriate." As she retreated indoors, granting us permission to enter, I couldn't resist a playful jab. "Your current attire is perfectly suitable." I called after her, teasingly. However, my attempt at humor was met with a

stern glare in response. Chuckling softly, I observed as she ascended the stairs and disappeared into her room for a wardrobe adjustment. "Where should I drop these?" Angelo's question pierced through my thoughts, drawing my attention away from the staircase. They're quite heavy." Familiar with the layout of the house, I took the lead, guiding him towards the kitchen while pondering the whereabouts of the staff I had encountered during my previous visits. Angelo deposited the food in the microwave without turning it on, leaving the items nestled within its metallic confines. "Mind if I crash in the living room?" he inquired, stifling a weary yawn. "Had a bit of trouble getting to sleep last night." An eyebrow quirked in mild amusement at his request. "Wasn't it you who mentioned your working hours—commencing with my awakening and ceasing upon my slumber?" I queried, my tone laced with a hint of jest as I proceeded towards the living area. "Are you perhaps growing a touch too comfortable in my presence?" His response was a grunt, devoid of coherent meaning, as we walked back to the living room. Angelo, shedding his shoes with a casual nonchalance, settled himself onto the sofa, the weariness of the night's restlessness etched faintly across his face. "You can use the guestroom down the hallway, Lily informed Angelo, her tone laced with a hint of caution, as she made her way towards the living room. "Liam will instantly resent you if he finds you sleeping there. Angelo's posture straightened. "He dislikes people sleeping on the sofa?" he asked her. "That's one of the primary reasons he and Noah clash so frequently, Lily responded with a rueful smile, settling herself onto the sofa farthest from mine. Angelo rose from his seat, casting a brief glance in my direction. "Would it be alright if I took a quick nap?" he inquired, seeking my approval with a hopeful expression. I waved my hand in assent, and with a grateful nod, he ambled off towards the guestroom. Lily cleared her throat, her tone tinged with a hint of optimism. "Liam is a morning person, so you'll likely catch him in a better mood this time around." Lily's words, reassuring though they may be, failed to alleviate the knot of nerves tightening in my stomach. It's perplexing that I, accustomed to confidently facing crowds and sealing deals, find myself rendered speechless in the presence of that young boy! "I can't remain in Canada indefinitely, Lily," I voiced the pressing concern. This matter needed addressing, especially given my 11:42 AM Chapter 42 impending departure. I longed to ensure their presence remained a constant in my life. With a contemplative air, Lily leaned back, legs elegantly crossed, and blinked deliberately at me. I'm contemplating having them join you in New York for the holidays, she suggested. "And what about after the holidays?" I questioned, my voice carrying a raspy edge. "Holidays are but fleeting moments in a year, and I adamantly refuse to be a father who only sees his children on sporadic occasions." Her initially relaxed demeanor morphed into a discernible frown. "What exactly do you expect me to say?" Lily inquired, her voice tinged with frustration "Holidays are the most feasible arrangement I can manage right now." "I'm not disputing the holiday arrangement," I emphasized, "But, Lily, I've only just met my children. I've just discovered them, and I want more than just occasional holiday visits." Her frown deepened, and she leaned forward, the atmosphere growing tense. "So, what are you proposing?" she snapped, a note of irritation creeping into her tone. "If the current arrangement doesn't suit you, you could always jet down every weekend and spend time with them. You can afford it, can't you? Her lips pressed into a thin line, a challenge lingering in her gaze. "Alternatively," I countered. "you could come to New York. After all, you're the reason we find ourselves in this situation, so it only seems fair

for you to make a compromise.” “At the expense of the kids’ comfort?” she hissed, her eyes flashing with defiance. “They have their lives here, Ryan, and I refuse to uproot them just to satisfy your whims.” The argument veered dangerously off course, a far cry from the reason for my morning visit. However, I’ve never been one to suppress my emotions or withhold my words. There are excellent schools in New York, Lily, I countered. “They’re children! They’ll adapt, they’ll forget about their lives here in due time. What matters is that they have you and they have me.” “You’re insane, Lily shot back, her voice laced with incredulity. “You’ve lost all sense of reason, Ryan.” Insults were not unfamiliar territory for me, and her words failed to elicit the desired effect. The one reluctant to be uprooted from her life is you, Lily, and that, my dear, is a remarkably selfish decision.” “I have a life here, Ryan!” Lily’s voice reverberated with intensity, her frustration palpable. I run a hospital,” she declared, her hand gesturing outward in emphasis, “and I’m knee-deep in wedding planning.” I offered a nonchalant shrug in response. “Running the hospital isn’t an insurmountable obstacle,” I reasoned calmly. “We can establish another branch in New York. As for your wedding plans, that’s none of my concern.” Lily’s jaw tensed visibly, her patience wearing thin. “And who’s the selfish one now?” she shot back, her tone edged with defiance. “Still you,” I countered firmly, refusing to yield ground. Why should I keep my kids away simply because you’re planning a wedding With another man?” A heavy silence settled between us as Lily’s glare bore into me, her expression filled with frustration and

resignation. Eventually, she reached up to massage her temples, closing her eyes in a moment of quiet contemplation. With a resigned sigh, she finally spoke. “I’m not moving to New York, and that’s final.” A sly smile played across my lips as I met her gaze. “That’s perfectly fine,” I replied casually. “You don’t have to move to New York with the kids.” Her glare intensified, sharpening like a blade. “You must be insane to think I’d ever allow my kids to go to New York without me,” Lily asserted firmly, “You won’t have much of an option, Lily,” I replied coolly, my tone devoid of emotion. Her eyes narrowed angrily, her fist clenching beside her in frustration. “Are you insinuating what I think you are, Ravel?” she demanded. the tension crackling between us. My indifferent shrug only served to stoke the flames of her ire. “Don’t you forget that I have more than enough resources to hire the best lawyer if you ever decide to file for full custody of my kids.” I couldn’t contain the bitter laugh that escaped me, fueled by a potent blend of anger and frustration. “You may have the money for top- tier legal representation, but I possess the influence and connections to sway the decision of any judge who presides over our case, so don’t push it!” I retorted sharply. “Why are you yelling at my mom?” Liam’s tiny voice pierced through the heated exchange, echoing down from the stairs and bringing 11:42 AM Chapter 42 our conversation to an abrupt halt

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Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 43 1.ILY The atmosphere grew tense as Liam’s voice cut through the silence, causing us all to freeze in place. I suddenly realized that I had completely lost track of time while engaged in a heated argument with Ryan Shooting a quick glance at Ryan, I



then turned my attention to Liam's inquiry. "He's not yelling at Mommy, my dear," I gently reassured him, rising from the sofa and motioning for him to come down the stairs to join me. "We're simply having a conversation, you know, like adult conversation." Liam's frown remained firmly in place as he voiced his concern. "But you have adult talks with Uncle Jake too, and he doesn't talk to you that way. I inwardly groaned, knowing that Ryan wouldn't appreciate the comparison. "Mommy's fine, sweetheart," I replied, attempting to ease Liam's worry. Stepping closer, I lifted him into my arms and planted a loving kiss on his cheek. "Good morning, my love." A bright smile spread across Liam's face. "Good morning, Mom," he chimed in. After coaxing Liam gently to the ground, I lowered myself to his eye level, signaling discreetly towards Ryan. "Why don't you take a moment to say good morning to him," I whispered tenderly, adding, "And let's make sure to be extra kind. With a tender caress, I smoothed away the faint crease between his brows. "It's far too early for a frown, Liam He straightened his expression dutifully, though with some reluctance, before shuffling over towards Ryan. "I am being nice, Mum, and I know you see that too," he mumbled softly under his breath. As we both moved to the living room, I watched attentively as Liam greeted Ryan with a hesitant "good morning Ryan's face lit up instantly with a radiant expression of delight at the unexpected gesture. With deliberate steps, Liam made his way to the kitchen, where he poured himself a glass of milk, before retracing his path back to his room, milk in hand. Ryan kept his gaze fixed on the spot where Liam had disappeared upstairs. "He's certainly a morning person," he grumbled, reaching for his phone. Not in the mood for further conversation, I grabbed my phone and made a quick escape to my bedroom. Promptly at seven o'clock, I emerged from my room, refreshed from a shower and dressed in a simple black dress. My plan was to prepare breakfast myself, as I typically did on weekends. However, as I stepped into the common area, I was surprised to find Ryan and Angelo setting the table. Perplexed, I approached them cautiously. "What's happening? I inquired, scanning the scene before me. Ryan turned towards me upon hearing my voice. I picked up breakfast on my way here," he explained, motioning towards the plates on the table. "And I made sure to avoid anything with seafood for Liam." Halting beside the table, I directed my gaze towards the cheese omelet. "Who's that one for?" I inquired, pointing at the savory dish "Noah, Ryan promptly replied. "I ordered the same for Noah and Ethan." "Actually, Noah detests cheese, I gently corrected, intending only to provide helpful information, However, Ryan seemed to take personal offense at the oversight. "It's alright, Ryan," I reassured him, attempting to alleviate any misplaced guilt. "I'll whip something up for him quickly." His lips pressed into a thin line as he scowled at the offending cheese, as though it bore the blame for the oversight. "I should have asked before placing the order for anyone, he muttered ruefully, shaking his head in self-reproach. "Hey, it happens, I offered a supportive smile, seeking to uplift his spirits before making my way towards the kitchen. To my surprise, Ryan rolled up his sleeves and followed me. "What can I assist you with?" Just as I was about to delegate the task of helping me wash the meat to Ryan, the insistent chime of the doorbell interrupted our conversation. With the domestic staff still in their quarters and Angelo, not being a resident of the household, it seemed unlikely that he'll answer the door without being told to 11:42 AM Chapter 43 As the doorbell sounded again, I turned to Ryan with a polite request. "Would you mind assisting me by answering the door?" I asked, confident that if it were someone

unwelcome, my gate security would have promptly intervened. Ryan nodded in acknowledgment before setting off towards the door. However, minutes ticked by, and there was still no sign of his return. Sensing a delay, I wiped my hands clean and made my way into the living room to investigate. To my bewilderment, only Angelo was present in the living room. "Where's Ryan?" I inquired, a slight furrow creasing my brow as I sought an explanation for his absence. Angelo's nonchalant shrug only added to my confusion. "He hasn't returned since he walked through that door," he informed me. With a growing sense of concern, I made my way to the door, pulling it open to reveal Ryan standing face to face with Jake. Their intense glares made it abundantly clear that they had been engaged in a heated exchange. "What's going on here?" I demanded, quickly closing the door to shield our conversation from prying ears. "You do realize the kids could be watching, right?" Jake reluctantly shifted his gaze from Ryan to me, closing the distance between us to plant a ki\*s on my lips. I couldn't help but glance at Ryan, only to be met with a steely glare brimming with resentment. As Jake pulled away, he spoke up, his voice tinged with frustration. "Can you explain why your ex-husband is preventing me from entering my fiancée's house?" Taken aback by Jake's sudden accusation, my gaze darted swiftly to Ryan, silently demanding an explanation for his unexpected behavior. "Why can't he just give us a moment of privacy?" Ryan's voice carried a hiss of frustration. "It's already tough enough with the kids constantly comparing me to him, and now he chooses today, of all days, to show up and disrupt things." "It's not like I asked for their comparisons," Jake shot back defensively, his tone tinged with irritation. "It's not my fault that the kids are close to me!" Ryan scoffed, his eyebrow arching in disbelief. "Oh, so now we're shifting the blame to Lily? What's next, blaming the weather?" Feeling the weight of exhaustion settling over me, I intervened, my voice tinged with weariness. "Please, let's just put an end to this," I pleaded, already feeling drained by the escalating tension. "It's far too early for such arguments, and I really need to start cooking." With that, I gently took Jake's hand, leading him towards the door in a bid to defuse the situation before it could escalate any further. Ryan's voice cut through, his words dripping with hostility. "And where do you think you're going with him?" he growled, his gaze fixed firmly on me. "He's not setting foot in this house with you." I met his glare head-on, my own frustration bubbling. "Are you seriously trying to stop me from seeing my fiancé? I shot back, my tone tinged with disbelief. Ryan folded his arms across his chest, his expression dark and gloomy as he directed his gaze towards Jake. "I'm not preventing you from meeting or seeing anyone, he retorted evenly. "I mean you just ki\*sed him right in front of me. All I'm suggesting is that you have your little meeting with him outside, send him on his way, and then come inside so we can have breakfast with our kids." Jake's defiance was evident as he fired back, "I always have breakfast with the kids every weekend." Ryan's retort was swift and cutting. "Not anymore, he shot back, his anger simmering. I'm not stopping you from seeing them, but don't do it when I'm around. His gaze bore into mine, his tone leaving no room for argument. "Make him leave before I lose my patience. I opened my mouth to protest, but Ryan raised his hand to silence me. "If he doesn't leave, I'll take the kids and leave," he threatened. Jake threw his head back and let out a laugh. "You wish? Good luck trying to convince Liam to leave with you," he retorted, amusement dancing in his eyes. Ryan's response was swift "And good luck trying to see them today," he shot back. "Get rid of this clown before I decide to send him packing from

Canada altogether. With that, he stormed inside and slammed the door shut behind him. Jake blinked in shock, his expression mirroring his disbelief. "I think you forgot to mention that your ex-husband is completely bonkers, he

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remarked, his voice tinged with incredulity. "More like he's just stubborn." I replied with a sigh, feeling the weight of the situation pressing down on me. Jake reached for my hand, attempting to pull me inside, but I remained rooted to the spot. "I hope you understand what I'm about to say, Jake," I began, my voice heavy with resignation. "But Liam is already struggling to connect with Ryan, and your presence here isn't going to make things any easier." 2/3 11:42 AM Chapter 43 His brows furrowed into a deep frown. "Are you telling me I should just leave?" he questioned. "I'm saying that I hope you'll be the rational one here and understand where I'm coming from," I replied, my voice filled with sadness and frustration. He watched me in silence for a moment, his expression unreadable. Eventually, he nodded slowly and turned to walk back to his car. I stood there, watching as he drove away, a heavy feeling settling in the pit of my stomach. It was only after his car disappeared from view that I noticed the gift bags he had left behind on the ground. Sighing heavily, I bent down to pick them up. Carrying the bags with me, I made my way back into the house, feeling disheartened by how the day had gone bad before it even began. 11:42 AM Chapter 44

## Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 44 RYAN My brief visit to Lily's hadn't gone as smoothly as I'd hoped, but there were small victories, particularly with the kids. Noah and Ethan seemed more receptive, and even Liam showed a slight improvement from our initial encounter. However, duty called, and I found myself rushing back to New York due to an urgent business matter. Little did I anticipate the shock awaiting me upon my return: Stephanie, standing outside the gates of my residence. Surprised yet composed, I signaled for my driver to halt, rolling down the window to address her. With a subtle nod, I motioned for her to approach, observing as she made her way over with an air of defiance, folding her arms and fixing me with a steely glare. "What brings you here?" I inquired, masking my surprise with a hint of curiosity. "To see you, obviously," she retorted, her tone dripping with sarcasm as she turned her attention to the security guards stationed at the gate. "I've been waiting for you to return, but they won't permit me entry." "That's because I told them not to," I rasped, my voice laced with tension, before shifting my attention to Harry. "Open the gate." With a curt nod, Harry complied, swinging the gate open. I signaled to my driver, and he maneuvered the vehicle into the compound, with Stephanie trailing behind in her car. As I entered the living room, I wasted no time in making my way to the bar, pouring myself a generous glass of scotch. Dealing with Stephanie always required a bit of liquid courage. She barged in behind me, slamming the door loudly, a move that earned her a sharp glare from me. Taking a defiant stride toward her, I took a deliberate sip of my drink. "How can I help you?" I inquired, my tone



clipped With an air of superiority, she dropped an envelope on the table with a flourish. I think it's safe to say that the heavens have answered your prayers," she stated matter-of-factly, her demeanor oozing with smugness. Glancing at the envelope resting on the table, I sauntered over to the sofa, settling into its plush cushions and crossing my legs. With a leisurely demeanor, I let my gaze wander from her legs to her face, not out of any sense of admiration, but rather out of curiosity about the audacity behind her actions. "If you expect me to entertain whatever is in that envelope, you'll need to do better than just dropping it on the table like some sort of insolent child, I remarked coolly, my tone dripping with disdain. Stephanie bristled at my words, her expression contorting with irritation. "Fine, if you're too lazy to pick it up yourself. I'll enlighten you," she snapped, her voice tinged with sarcasm. Unperturbed, I took another sip of my scotch, maintaining my nonchalant demeanor as I peered at her over the rim of the glass, awaiting her explanation. "I am pregnant, Stephanie announced, her words hitting me like a freight train. I nearly choked on my drink, struggling to process the unexpected revelation. "I found out two days ago, and you won't even take my calls, and your security won't let me through. Setting my glass down on the small stool beside the sofa, I felt a wave of disbelief wash over me. "What the hell did you just say?" I managed to stammer, my mind reeling with shock. "I said I'm pregnant," she repeated, her tone laced with frustration. "What part of that didn't you understand?" Her excitement at the news was plausible as she made her way over to the sofa with a slight smile and took a seat beside me. "Why aren't you celebrating? You finally have an heir, and the board won't be breathing down your neck anymore." Stunned into silence, I could only blink at her in disbelief before letting out a bitter laugh. "You're pregnant, I echoed, the irony of the situation not lost on me. When I had yearned for a child, it refused to come to me, and now that I wasn't prepared for it, fate had a cruel twist in store. "Say something." Stephanie whispered, her voice tinged with desperation. "Aren't you happy that you finally have an heir?" I shot her a scathing glare, growing increasingly irritated by her insistence on referring to the baby as my heir. "I already have an heir, Stephanie," I retorted sharply, my tone laced with annoyance. "Don't delude yourself into thinking that baby is going to be my heir. 11:42 AM Chapter 44 Her expression darkened instantly, her frustration evident. "What do you mean by that?" she spat, her voice tinged with accusation. "Did you get Lily pregnant already?" "I refuse to entertain such baseless accusations, Stephanie," I replied tersely, refusing to dignify her question with a response. In case you've forgotten, we're no longer together." Taking a sip of my drink to steady my nerves, I continued, my tone firm. "How far along are you?" Despite my reservations, I knew that if the baby was indeed mine, I would have to take full responsibility. Stephanie hesitated for a moment before running her hands through her hair, a nervous gesture. "I'm four weeks along, so about a month," she replied. "I don't know how long it takes before a paternity test can get done, I guess I have to visit my doctor to find out," I mused aloud, contemplating the next course of

action. "Are you free tomorrow?" I inquired, already planning our visit to the doctor to determine the paternity of the baby. Before I could finish my sentence, Stephanie snapped, cutting me off mid-sentence. "Don't you dare!" she seethed, her voice filled with venom. "Don't you dare demand that we do a paternity test, Ryan, or I will lose my mind!" Her eyes blazed with fury as she glared at me. "How dare you?!" I regarded her

with a steady gaze, maintaining my composure despite her outburst. "I fail to see the reason for your anger, Stephanie," I replied evenly. "It's not unreasonable for me to want confirmation regarding the paternity of the baby. I paused, licking my lips before continuing. "The last time I checked, you took a pregnancy test and it came out negative." "Pregnancy strips are not one hundred percent accurate, Stephanie drawled, her tone dripping with defiance. "It's obvious that whatever test I did that day was wrong because I'm sitting here right now as a pregnant woman, and my doctor already confirmed it." I shrugged nonchalantly, maintaining my composure in the face of her frustration. "I'm not disputing whether you're pregnant or not," I replied calmly, "All I'm saying is that I need to get the test done for confirmation," Her jaw tightened as she rose to her feet, her resolve evident in her posture. "I refuse to get tested right now," she spat, her words laced with defiance. "If you want to find out if the baby is yours or not, then you'll have to wait until the baby is born. Grabbing her purse, she continued, her voice tinged with anger. "And don't think for a second that I need you," she added fiercely, her gaze piercing. "If you try to stress me out, I won't hesitate to kick you out of our lives." With that final declaration, she stormed out of the living room, slamming the door behind her. I remained seated, my mind reeling from Stephanie's unexpected bombshell, when Angelo's voice cut through the silence, snapping me back to reality. "I guess you're over fertile," he remarked with a wry chuckle. "One more set of triplets from Stephanie and you'll have six children referring to you as father." His comment hit me like a punch to the gut, a stark reminder of the complicated situation I found myself entangled in. "Yeah, lucky me, I replied dryly, unable to summon even a semblance of humor. "Just what I needed. Angelo's laughter faded, repl

## Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 45 LILY "He is threatening to take the boys from me." I stressed, already feeling myself grow much older than my age just from thinking about it. "He said it to my face that he can influence the decision of the judge and we both know what that means!" Becky sighed in the background. "it means he has every damn judge eating off the palm of his hands!" how did my life take such a turn within few days?! "I am going to need you to calm down." Becky advised, "You must have done something to set him off and he said that out of anger." She reasoned. "You and I both know he didn't mean whatever he said in there." I scoffed. "he meant every damn word!" I stressed, rubbing my temple to relieve the headache. "you weren't the one listening to him, and you most definitely weren't the one looking at him in the face. I know what I saw Becky!" "Stop shouting at me!" she snapped at me, "your, loud voice is making me stressed, and when I am stressed, I cannot think." "I'm sorry." I mumbled, taking deep calming breaths. "it just feels as though everything is happening at the same time." "How about you do something outside Ryan and this custody issue?" she suggested and my nose crinkled. "And what should I possibly be doing?" I do not even find work appealing these days, and work isn't something one can use as a distraction, it will stress you the out, "I am thinking that maybe we should start planning your wedding. She stated and I stopped pacing abruptly and ran back to my laptop screen so I could see her face, "what?!" she

blurted out when she saw the incredulous look I was giving her. "Surely you are going to get married to him right? I mean you accepted his ring I sighed. "I know" Becky's eyes narrowed. "You are going to get married to him right?" when I didn't respond right away, her eyes widened. "Lily! That's cruel! "It's not like I do want to to get married to him." I mumbled, "it's just that I do not know if I am ready to get married just yet." She blinked slowly at me. "Then why did you accept his ring?" Staring down at the ring in question, I sighed dejectedly. "He said we won't be in a hurry to plan the wedding." Becky stared at me in silence for a while before folding her hands. "I know you Lily, that is not the reason you accepted that ring." She is right. "he was insecure because of Ryan and I wanted to reassure him. rejecting his ring will make him feel even more insecure and bad and I didn't want him to feel that way because he has been a wonderful guy to me and my kids" "So in summary, you accepted the ring out of pity?" she completed. When I didn't accept or deny it, she frowned before cursing under her breath. "Are you kidding me, Lily?! You shouldn't have done that!" "I know and I am sorry I did." She glared at me. "you shouldn't be apologizing to me Lily, I am not the one you wronged." She licked her lips. "How do you think he will feel if he finds out that you accepted his ring out of pity and not because you really want to get married to him?" "He doesn't have to know," I muttered which only annoyed Becky further. "Don't be ridiculous!" she snapped, "what do you mean by that? Are you going to get married to him when you know you do not want to?" Lifting her head upwards, she blinked rapidly. "I get it that what you did was wrong, and they did had already been done, but you will not get married to hirm, not till you are ready." My phone vibrated on the table. I glanced at it and frowned when I saw Ryan's name on my screen. Talk about the reason for my problem and he shows right up. "Ryan is calling. I have to call you back." Becky glared again. "don't you dare disconnect my call just to answer his call? Ad closed by Gonals 0 11:43 AM Chapter 45 Rolling my eyes at her dramatic behavior, I left the call going and answered Ryan's call. "It is ten pm. Ryan, you shouldn't be calling me by this time." I chastised firmly. He can't just wake up and think it is okay to pick up his phone and call me at any time. He didn't respond as promptly as I expected him to, only his breathing could be heard over the phone. "Are you going to say something?" He chuckled. Like he chuckled as if I just cracked a joke. "After a hectic day at the office, it is really refreshing to hear your voice." "Please tell me that is not the reason you called me." I deadpanned, already feeling pissed at the phone call. Once again, he chuckled. "I called to inform you that I will be coming this weekend and every other weekend until we reach an agreement on the kids" "There is no other agreement to reach Ryan, I am not moving to New York, I stressed, hoping to get it into his head this time. "I did not call to argue with you, Lily." Replied calmly, far too calmly to be considered normal. "During my visits, there are some terms I want you to keep." Becky silently pleaded with me with her eyes to place the call to speak out. I did as she wanted and placed the phone close to the laptop. speaker so she could grasp

everything he was saying. "Why are you making this seem like a business meeting?" I asked him for his choice of words. Who sets terms and conditions while spending time with his kids! "Don't force words out of my mouth Lily. He replied with a tired sigh. "Whenever I am around my kids, I do not want that blond anywhere around." "His name is Jake." I gritted out, "You don't have to be rude about everything." "I don't care about

what his name is," the aloofness in his tone did not go undetected. "I do not want him anywhere near my kids. anytime I am around." "Is that going to stop you from threatening me about demanding full custody of our kids?" He remained silent. "I am trying to be considerate here Lily. The moment the paparazzi find out that I have kids with you, life won't be as it used to be for you all. They are going to be there every morning wake up and every night you go to sleep, can you deal with that?" "Yes." I replied in a heartbeat. "it's not like they can come into my house, and my building is miles away from the gate, so yes, I can deal. with that. "Well, I do not want you to." He countered, "Like I said earlier Lily, I did not call you to argue, I will be coming over by the weekend and we will talk about how to reveal the identities of the kids to the world." I frowned, "is that even necessary. "Yes." He deadpanned, "I have to inform the board about them and I want a certain someone to know that I have heirs.