

EMPIRE
"Dreams into Ashes"

PREVIOUSLY ON:

Cookie visits her former prison home where Hakeem performs for her friends. However, she discovers her prodigy, Jezzy, originally due to be released, is now serving a life sentence for murder.

Jamal's new promoter, Jameson, plans to promote both Jamal's talent and his homosexuality to turn him into a megastar.

Anika has kept her pregnancy secret from everyone, including the father, Hakeem, who refuses to have anything to do with her.

Lucious announces Empire's purchase of Swift Stream only to be voted out as CEO by the board with Hakeem casting the final vote against him in favor of his ex, Camilla Marks.

A heavily pregnant Rhonda is pushed down her mansion's long flight of stairs by an unknown intruder, suspected to be the increasingly unstable Anika. Rhonda is left lying in blood while Jamal and Lucious wait for the results of Song of the Year Award for which they were both nominated.

TEASER**INT. ANDRE'S MANSION - NIGHT**

ANDRE enters his mansion. It's dark. Quiet. He switches on the light and walks into the main area.

ANDRE
Rhonda? Rhonda, baby?

Nothing. He walks forward and sees Rhonda's sprawled body at the bottom of the steps and runs to her.

ANDRE (cont'd)
Baby, no! No!

He cradles her head in his hand which instantly fills with blood.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUCIOUS MANSION - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

The front lawn swarms with PHOTOGRAPHERS and REPORTERS.

LUCIOUS stands on the porch, proud. An upright microphone and lighting already in place.

COOKIE and JAMAL stand behind him in support.

REPORTER 1
How does it feel to finally win
Song of the Year?

LUCIOUS
I think the damn committee finally
got it right!

REPORTER 2
Do you feel guilty winning over
your son?

Cookie forces her way up to the microphone.

COOKIE
His son won five other ASA Awards
last night. I think he's just fine.

The Reporters chuckle. Cookie glances up at Lucious, smiles and steps back to Jamal.

LUCIOUS
I'm proud of my son's success. But
the better man won this time.

Jamal grimaces.

REPORTER 3
How does it feel to be removed as
CEO of Empire?

CUT TO:

EXT. ANDRE'S MANSION - NIGHT

Two PARAMEDICS place Rhonda's body on a gurney and wheel it
into an ambulance.

Andre jumps into the ambulance, holding Rhonda's hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUCIOUS MANSION - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Lucious stares at the Reporter and considers his answer.

LUCIOUS
It's just a temporary situation.

REPORTER 3
Weren't you fired?

LUCIOUS
Rumors. Gossip. People trying to
bring my company down.

Lucious scans the faces of the reporters.

LUCIOUS (cont'd)
Get this down. Lucious Lyon is
taking a short vacation to focus on
his music.

Cookie and Jamal look at each other. Cookie's phone
vibrates.

LUCIOUS (cont'd)
Empire is in good hands until my
return.

COOKIE
(into phone)
Andre?

CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Andre, his suit covered in blood, hangs up the phone in his hand and runs alongside a TEAM OF DOCTORS as they wheel Rhonda through swinging doors.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUCIOUS'S MANSION - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Cookie frowns as she hangs up the phone. She taps on Lucious's shoulder and whispers.

COOKIE

Problem with Rhonda and the baby.
We gotta go.

He nods as Jamal and Cookie walk around the media circus and into a waiting car. The Reporters are curious but Lucious taps on the microphone and forces a smile.

LUCIOUS

Next question.

INT. EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Cookie paces while Jamal sits quietly, his headphones on.

ON THE TV SCREEN is Lucious's interview.

HAKEEM arrives, his clothes wrinkled, his eyes barely open as if he just woke up.

HAKEEM

Ma, what happened?

Cookie looks him up and down.

COOKIE

Shacking up with that cougar bitch already?

HAKEEM

Dad shouldn't be running Empire and you know it.

COOKIE

You think Camilla should?

Jamal takes his headphones off and stands between them.

JAMAL

Can we forget about Empire for five minutes?

Cookie backs away.

HAKEEM

Where's Dre? How's the baby?

JAMAL

We're still waiting.

Jamal answers a phone call while Lucious bursts through the doors and heads straight for Cookie.

LUCIOUS

Where's my grandson?

COOKIE

In surgery.

Lucious moves towards the receptionist desk but Cookie grabs his arm.

COOKIE

I got this.

He reads her worried expression and nods. He turns and spots Hakeem.

LUCIOUS

I thought you decided you weren't part of the family.

Hakeem glares at him undaunted.

HAKEEM

I did the right thing.

COOKIE

No, what you did was stupid.

Lucious walks towards Hakeem and stands inches from his face.

LUCIOUS

You think you can become CEO just like that?

HAKEEM

Why not? I deserve it.

JAMAL
 Seriously? We're in a hospital.

Lucious stares at Hakeem intently, rage on his face. Cookie grabs Lucious's arm.

COOKIE
 Come on Lucious, we don't have time for this.

HAKEEM
 You're just angry you couldn't buy me the way you did the others.

Lucious shakes Cookie's arm off and reaches for Hakeem's throat. Jamal tries to pry them apart, but Lucious holds tight.

COOKIE
 Lucious, stop it!

Lucious presses harder.

COOKIE (cont'd)
 Stop it right now!

Lucious keeps pressing so Cookie hits Lucious with her hand bag, hard. Lucious doesn't stop. Cookie hits him again and again. Lucious uses his arms to defend the onslaught and lets Hakeem go.

COOKIE (cont'd)
 What is wrong with you?

She stares from one to the other.

COOKIE (cont'd)
 Sit your asses down and shut it.

HAKEEM
 (rubbing his throat)
 But he's the--

COOKIE
 I don't want to hear it.

Andre walks through the swinging doors, pale, weary. They all rush to him.

COOKIE
 Andre, baby, talk to me.

ANDRE
They delivered my son. On life
support. Both of them.

Cookie wraps him in her arms as he sobs.

ANDRE (cont'd)
I don't know if they're going to
make it, Ma. I don't know.

ANIKA struts in, her eyes tear stained.

ANIKA
(to Andre)
I'm so sorry.

Andre pulls Anika into his arms. Cookie stares at them.

COOKIE
Why are you always hanging round my
family?

ANDRE
Ma! Anika and Rhonda are friends.

ANIKA
Rhonda treated me like a person.

Anika glances at Hakeem and then turns back to Andre.

ANIKA (cont'd)
How's the baby? Can I see Rhonda?

Andre nods and takes her elbow. Cookie shoves her away.

COOKIE
Excuse me, family first.

ANIKA
Of course. I just...

She cries in Andre's arms. Cookie rolls her eyes.

COOKIE
Lucious! Get over here.

Lucious is about to protest when Cookie stares him down.

COOKIE
You think I'm gonna leave you out
here with your boys?

He buttons his jacket and follows her. Cookie glares at
Anika and leaves.

INT. NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - GLASS WINDOW - NIGHT

Through the glass window, Lucious and Cookie see rows of babies in incubators. On the nearest incubator to the window is a label - 'Lucious Lyon Jr'.

LUCIOUS

A Lyon. He's gonna make it.

Lucious looks back at Cookie with tenderness.

COOKIE

Guess we're grandparents now.

They intertwine hands in solidarity and admire Junior.

Cookie's phone BUZZES and she answers it despite the stern stare from the WARD NURSE.

COOKIE (cont'd)

What?

(beat)

Why?

She listens and nods, her face riddled with concern.

COOKIE (cont'd)

I'm on my way.

LUCIOUS

Where you running to, woman?

She lifts her hand to the window as if touching the baby and sighs.

COOKIE

Prison.

END TEASER

ACT 1**INT. PRISON INFIRMARY - NIGHT**

JEZZY lies on a bed, her head bandaged, eyes swollen and her breathing raspy.

COOKIE

Jezzy? Jezzy?

Jezzy groans in response.

COOKIE

Who did this to you? Was it the Scorpions? Those crazies get to you?

JEZZY

(in gasps)

Should've finished the job.

COOKIE

Don't be talking that way Jezzy.

Cookie strokes her hair and Jezzy's breathing calms down.

JEZZY

They made me kill her. I didn't want to. They said they got my baby.

Cookie shakes her head.

COOKIE

I'm gonna fix this okay?

INT. NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - JUNIOR'S INCUBATOR - DAY

Andre places his hand through an opening in the incubator and Junior grabs his finger. Jamal uses the openings on the other side and tickles Junior's feet.

ANDRE

You be strong okay? Mommy's sleeping now but she's going to be just fine.

JAMAL

(sings gently)

*I'd rather stand tall/ Than live on
my knees/ 'Cause I am a conqueror/
And I won't accept defeat!*

Andre smiles at Jamal but his eyes are moist.

Cookie watches momentarily before she walks in, squeezes Andre's shoulder and smiles.

COOKIE
He's got your ears.

JAMAL
Thankfully the rest looks like Rhonda.

Cookie turns towards Rhonda's room and notices DETECTIVE WALKER speaking to the Doctor outside.

COOKIE
You know, I think I'll go check on her.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR OUTSIDE RHONDA'S ROOM - DAY

Detective Walker moves down the corridor but Cookie is determined to catch him.

COOKIE
Hey.

He keeps walking.

COOKIE (cont'd)
Hey!

She catches up to him and forces him to face her.

COOKIE (cont'd)
I want to know why you're talking to Rhonda's doctor.

Cookie folds her arms and waits expectantly.

DETECTIVE WALKER
And you are?

COOKIE
I'm family.

DETECTIVE WALKER
(sighs)
We got an anonymous tip that her fall may not have been an accident.

COOKIE
When? From who? Why?

DETECTIVE WALKER
We don't know. That's why I'm
investigating.

Cookie doesn't appreciate the sarcasm. The Detective walks
towards the exit and Cookie follows.

COOKIE
I want to know everything you know.

He talks back over his shoulder, not stopping.

DETECTIVE WALKER
As soon as I know something I'll
let you know.

She wags her finger at his disappearing figure.

COOKIE
No one hurts a Lyon and gets away
with it, you hear me?

Detective Walker nods but doesn't turn back. Cookie stares
at his back, deep in thought.

INT. EMPIRE BUILDING - LUCIOUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Camilla removes Lucious's awards and places them in a box.
She places a photo of her and Mimi on the desk as Lucious
saunters in.

LUCIOUS
Wouldn't get too comfortable.

CAMILLA
One day Hakeem will sit here.

Lucious laughs. Hakeem stands quietly at the office doorway.

LUCIOUS
That boy doesn't have it in him.

CAMILLA
He just needs the right guidance.

LUCIOUS
He's a spoiled kid with mediocre
talent and my name.

Hakeem steps forward.

HAKHEEM

Dad!

Lucious looks at him with disgust.

LUCIOUS

Don't call me that. You're too stupid to be my son.

CAMILLA

And you wonder why he chose me?

Hakeem stands by Camilla. Lucious shoves his personal box towards Camilla.

CAMILLA (cont'd)

I'll have my assistant contact you about the tour.

Lucious scoffs.

CAMILLA (cont'd)

As an Empire artist who won Song of the Year, it's your obligation. Written in the contracts you wrote.

LUCIOUS

You really think you're in charge?

CAMILLA

If you don't, we'll drop you from the label.

LUCIOUS

You can't drop me, I am the label.

CAMILLA

Like you were the CEO?

Lucious looks at both of them and shakes his head.

LUCIOUS

(to Hakeem)

Guess she got her paycheck in the end anyway, didn't she?

INT. ANDRE'S MANSION - DAY

The blood stain at the bottom of the steps is dry but still visible. Detective Walker and two FORENSIC OFFICERS, all with gloves on their hands, take photos, measurements of the distance from the steps, any evidence available.

Detective Walker looks down at the floor at the top of the stairs. He bends down to see a small spec of dirt from a shoe imprint. He takes a photo and bags the dirt. As he turns to leave, he notices a small dark hair also. He picks it up with tweezers and places it in another evidence bag.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - NIGHT

Andre holds Rhonda's hand. Cookie walks in and places her arm around his shoulder in a protective hug.

COOKIE
Wasn't your fault, baby.

ANDRE
She was eight months pregnant and I was watching award nominations.

COOKIE
You were always checking in. You did everything you could.

The tears fall as he brings Rhonda's hand to his cheek.

ANDRE
I really love her, Ma.

COOKIE
I know.

ANDRE
She knows me. All of me. Crazy me. Desperate me. All my sins. She knows all of me and loves me anyway.

COOKIE
Hang in there, Dre. Give her time.

Cookie kisses the top of his head and looks up to the heavens for an answer.

INT. LYON DYNASTY - COOKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Cookie sits behind her desk, her head in her hands. PORSHA, her assistant, walks in and sits in the chair opposite her.

PORSHA
Can we save the Cookout if we get Jezzy in?

COOKIE

Jezy's not leaving prison for a long time. Not unless I make her some real money.

Lucious strolls in, touching things on Cookie's desk.

LUCIOUS

There's gonna be artists wanting to leave Empire without me there...

Cookie slaps his hands away.

COOKIE

Careful Lucious. Destroy Empire, you'll have nothing to go back to.

Lucious puts his arms up in surrender and Porsha exits, closing the doors behind her.

LUCIOUS

Maybe it's time for a new project. Make Lyon Dynasty so big, it could take over Empire. What do you say?

Lucious sits in the armchair opposite Cookie and puts his feet up on the desk.

COOKIE

We don't own Lyon Dynasty. I do.

Cookie shoves his feet off the table.

LUCIOUS

I thought we were a team.

COOKIE

You just worry about getting the first Empire back.

Lucious's smirk fades.

LUCIOUS

Why'd you call me then?

COOKIE

'Cause it seems Rhonda's fall wasn't an accident.

Lucious sits up, alert.

INT. ANIKA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Detective Walker sits on the sofa, his notepad already full.

DETECTIVE WALKER
So after you tidied the nursery
together, you left?

ANIKA
That's right. I left at six to meet
my parents for dinner.

DETECTIVE WALKER
What restaurant?

ANIKA
Barnaby's.

DETECTIVE WALKER
Would you mind if I confirm that?

ANIKA
Not at all.

He glances up at her and forces a smile, writes another note. She smiles back, that perfect smile.

DETECTIVE WALKER
One more thing. Did you know the
alarm code for the Lyon's house?

ANIKA
Not a clue. But I did know that
Rhonda was constantly complaining
about false alarms.

DETECTIVE WALKER
Right.

He stands and heads towards the door.

DETECTIVE WALKER (cont'd)
Thank you for your time.

Anika follows him and unconsciously strokes her abdomen. He stops and looks up at her.

DETECTIVE WALKER
Who's the lucky guy?

ANIKA
Oh, the baby? Just an old flame.

DETECTIVE WALKER

And where is he? I'd like to speak with him.

ANIKA

I don't know. He's out of the picture.

He considers her a moment and then continues to the door.

DETECTIVE WALKER

If you think of anything else, let me know.

ANIKA

Of course. Whatever I can do to help.

She closes the door behind him, leans against the door, and closes her eyes.

EXT. STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

Jamal's eyes are bloodshot, his face pale. JAMESON, Jamal's promoter, hands Jamal a bottle of water.

CHEERS from a stadium full of people.

JAMAL

(croaky voice)

Jameson, I got nothing left. I haven't slept. My brother's in hell...

JAMESON

You just won five awards. Now is the time.

JAMAL

But I--

JAMESON

Hear them screaming? Go do your encore.

Jamal rubs his eyes, shakes his arms and legs and forces a smile as he heads back onto the stage.

EXT. OUTDOOR CONCERT STADIUM - NIGHT

Jamal waves at the crowd, a little unsteady on his feet.

JAMAL
You want one more?

CHEERS and SCREAMS from the crowd.

JAMAL (cont'd)
This one's for my nephew.

He sits behind the piano and looks down at the piano keys.

JAMAL (cont'd)
You may know that little Junior and
his mom are fighting for their
lives. I wish I could be with them.

He wipes his face and begins to play a heartfelt song about
Unconditional Love.

JAMAL (cont'd)
*I never believed in love at first
sight / That my heart could burst /
If I didn't hold you tight / But
the moment your tiny fingers
reached for me / I knew I would
always love you / Unconditionally.*

The song continues to be heard over the following scenes.

INT. HOSPITAL - RHONDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Andre sits beside Rhonda, her hand in his. The only sound is
the BEEP of the life support equipment.

Junior's incubator is now in the same room as Rhonda. Cookie
peers into the incubator and smiles. Lucious walks in
quietly and joins Cookie.

LUCIOUS
How's my boy?

Lucious reaches for the incubator openings

ANDRE
Don't wake him, dad. Please.

LUCIOUS
I raised three sons. I know how to
handle babies.

Andre looks at Cookie but she shrugs.

Lucious places his hands through the openings in the incubator and strokes Junior.

LUCIOUS (cont'd)

I got plans for you Junior. You and me gonna go to basketball games and concerts. One day you'll be CEO of this great company I built.

Cookie arches her eyebrow but says nothing.

Andre smiles sadly as the baby awakens and SCREAMS.

COOKIE

You always did have the touch.

Lucious laughs.

LUCIOUS

He's gonna be a singer.

A NURSE rushes in and replaces the IV drip. Junior continues to SCREAM in agony.

LUCIOUS (cont'd)

He just needs to be held, poor thing.

ANDRE

Junior's in pain. A lot of pain. His skull was injured. His brain...

Lucious's face pales as Andre looks at him with sadness.

LUCIOUS

What's wrong with his brain?

ANDRE

He's just going to need more help with some things.

LUCIOUS

He's handicapped?

COOKIE

Lucious!

Lucious yanks his hands out from the incubator, which sends Junior into louder SCREAMS.

Andre places his hands inside the incubator and strokes his son.

ANDRE
Shhh. Daddy's here. It's okay.
Shhh.

LUCIOUS
I got to take care of some
business.

Andre looks up at Lucious, disappointed, hurt.

ANDRE
Dad!

Lucious backs out and Cookie follows him.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE RHONDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Cookie pulls on Lucious's arm and speaks in a harsh whisper.

COOKIE
What the hell is wrong with you?

LUCIOUS
He's half a child.

COOKIE
He's your grandson!

LUCIOUS
No. He's not.

Cookie slaps him.

COOKIE
You are not going to hurt Junior
the way you did our sons, you hear
me?

LUCIOUS
My sons are failures.

COOKIE
No, you're the failure Lucious. You
lost the company, not them. For all
our sons' flaws, they're making it.
And so will Junior.

She shoves him in the chest and walks back into the room.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2**INT. PRISON - WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY**

Cookie sits opposite WARDEN MYERS, her body tense, ready to do battle. Warden Myers leans in.

WARDEN

I've already been more than flexible letting you bring your little show here last week and now, to visit Jezzy.

COOKIE

You're not in control of this prison and you know it.

WARDEN

What do you care? You got yourself out didn't you?

COOKIE

I did what I had to just like Jezzy did what she had to.

WARDEN

Nothing I can do about that.

COOKIE

You owe me.

WARDEN

Do I?

The Warden leans back in her chair, her hands clasped as she considers her next words.

WARDEN

Tell you what. You get Jezzy to snitch on her inmates. Get her to tell me how the drugs are being delivered and I'll get her a special hearing.

COOKIE

She might as well hang herself.

WARDEN

It might come to that.

Cookie slams her hand onto the desk.

COOKIE

Let me at least work with her. Give her a little hope. Like one of those prison projects they have all the time.

WARDEN

No.

Cookie searches the Warden's impassive face.

COOKIE

Is it money you want? Or are they already paying you to keep quiet?

WARDEN

You know me better.

COOKIE

Yeah I do and you're scared.

Cookie stares at the Warden but she won't meet her eye.

WARDEN

If she gets special treatment, they'll think she cut a deal.

COOKIE

Then we'll find another way, won't we?

INT. LUCIOUS MANSION - LIVING AREA - DAY

Lucious pours himself a drink. He turns and offers his double scotch to Detective Walker.

DETECTIVE WALKER

No thanks. I'm on the job.

LUCIOUS

So was it an accident?

DETECTIVE WALKER

We think so. It's hard to tell.

LUCIOUS

How can I help?

Lucious sits in his armchair and Detective Walker sits on the edge of the sofa.

DETECTIVE WALKER

Can you tell me what Andre's state of mind was that day?

LUCIOUS

Andre? He was probably excited. We announced the Swift Stream purchase, Empire artists were winning awards. It was a good day.

DETECTIVE WALKER

And what's he like on bad days?

Lucious taps his glass with his finger.

LUCIOUS

Andre was with me all day.

DETECTIVE WALKER

That's not what--

LUCIOUS

Let's get to the point. Whoever did this, it's personal and probably not against Andre.

DETECTIVE WALKER

Maybe.

LUCIOUS

The only suspects not with us that night, were Camilla and Hakeem.

DETECTIVE WALKER

You think your own son could do something like this?

LUCIOUS

I think Camilla Marks can make my son do anything.

INT. HOSPITAL - RHONDA'S ROOM - DAY

Junior is in his incubator near Rhonda. Andre holds Rhonda's hand as Cookie stands to speak with the Doctor.

COOKIE

What kind of damage are we talking?

Andre grips Rhonda's hand. The Doctor indicates for Cookie to sit.

DOCTOR

Rhonda has suffered some serious head trauma. The impact from the fall affected her temporal lobe.

ANDRE

So what does that mean?

DOCTOR

There will be problems with her long term memory, her ability to form a sentence, difficulty interpreting what she sees and hears...

COOKIE

But she'll get better right? With treatment?

DOCTOR

It's possible. It all depends on if and when she wakes up. But she may also never speak or remember anything again.

ANDRE

She will. I know she will.

The Doctor nods. Andre kisses Rhonda's hand.

ANDRE (cont'd)

Just come back to me.

The Doctor looks at them with sympathy.

DOCTOR

I'm really sorry. We're doing everything we can. If you have any questions...

COOKIE

Thank you.

The Doctor leaves. Andre stares out into the distance, lost.

Cookie slumps into the chair and looks at Rhonda.

COOKIE (cont'd)

Girl, you might be better off dead.

INT. EMPIRE STUDIO - DAY

Camilla stands behind the mixing board where an AUDIO ENGINEER is at work. Hakeem raps a song about betrayal. It's catchy but the energy is low. Camilla nods along.

CAMILLA
I need more Hakeem.

Hakeem stops and snaps his headphones off.

HAKEEM
This isn't working.

CAMILLA
You're right. It's not.

Camilla folds her arms while Hakeem paces in the studio.

CAMILLA (cont'd)
I thought this might happen.

HAKEEM
Why aren't you out promoting my other album?

The Audio Engineer gets the nod from Camilla and leaves.

CAMILLA
The one you leaked online to get back at your father?

HAKEEM
It was good!

CAMILLA
Not good enough.

HAKEEM
I thought you believed in me.

CAMILLA
I do. That's why I know you can do better.

Hakeem shakes his head in frustration.

CAMILLA (cont'd)
You need to trust me.

HAKEEM
I'm just distracted with Andre and Junior and Lyon Dynasty.

CAMILLA

Think big Hakeem. Lyon Dynasty is nothing to the might of the Empire.

HAKEEM

I know.

CAMILLA

We can't fail. We won't. Which is why I found you an amazing producer to take this album to the next level.

Anika walks in and smiles at Hakeem.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A group of tough looking GANG MEMBERS are spread around the building. QUEEN, the leader stands, her Scorpio tattoo noticeable against her muscular biceps.

Cookie raises her arms and they frisk her, slowly.

QUEEN

I heard about your grandson. I'm real sorry.

Cookie leans against her car.

COOKIE

Something about being a woman isn't it? That unwritten rule about not messing with kids right?

QUEEN

I told you I don't have Jezzy's daughter.

COOKIE

Then you need to tell me who killed her cell mate?

QUEEN

I don't have to do anything.

Cookie moves closer but the sidekicks step in front of Queen.

COOKIE

What if I told you it's more profitable to you to get Jezzy out?

QUEEN

Since the great Cookie Lyon came
all this way to see me, seems
Jezzy's worth more to me where she
is.

COOKIE

I heard your crew ain't doing too
well in prison. Lost the drug
trade.

Queen doesn't move but her body tenses.

QUEEN

We're doing just fine.

COOKIE

Jezzy's gonna be big. She's got
real talent. We're talking
millions.

Scorpio Gang Members hear this and look at each other.

QUEEN

I'm listening.

COOKIE

You could get a cut of that. But
there's no money if I can't get
Jezzy to lay down tracks. Or if
she's dead.

QUEEN

Ten percent.

Cookie laughs.

COOKIE

At ten percent, you and I know you
won't live long enough to spend it.
One percent is more than enough.

Queen considers it.

COOKIE

Or I can take it to the Razors.
They would be more than happy to
kill you all for it.

Queen narrows her eyes.

QUEEN

How about we take our cut now to
keep her alive?

COOKIE

How about I double it if you can
get her out?

Queen nods.

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

DETECTIVE MILES stands opposite Lucious. Lucious hands over
a roll of bank notes.

LUCIOUS

Are you sure it wasn't an accident?

DETECTIVE MILES

We won't be sure till Rhonda wakes
up but they know your soft spot.

LUCIOUS

Who's trying to hurt my son? My
grandson?

DETECTIVE MILES

You tell me.

LUCIOUS

No low life I know would mess with
a baby.

DETECTIVE MILES

All we have is a partial footprint
and a hair. The hair belonged to
Andre. The footprint was female but
didn't tell us much.

LUCIOUS

Keep me updated. Hourly.

Detective Miles nods and leaves. Lucious kicks the nearest
crate with all his strength.

INT. HOSPITAL - RHONDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jamal sits beside his brother Andre. A small iPod plays
gentle R'n'B music classics.

Jamal closes his eyes a moment but Andre elbows him awake
when the next song comes on - *This Is How We Do It*. They
look at each other and sing, grooving with their upper body.

ANDRE
Junior loves this song. Look.

Andre peers over the top of the incubator at his son's face.

ANDRE
His arms move around and he
scrunches his mouth like he wants
to sing but can't.

Jamal laughs and joins him to look through the incubator.

ANDRE /JAMAL
*This is how we do it / All hands up
in the air.*

BEEP BEEP. An alarms sounds on the incubator.

JAMAL
What is it?

BEEP. BEEP.

Doctors rush in, check the monitors and shove Jamal and Andre out of the way. They open the incubator and start to perform CPR with their fingers. Andre watches helplessly.

A DOCTOR turns and looks at Andre.

DOCTOR
One of his lungs has collapsed. We
need to get him into surgery.

ANDRE
Go! Take him! Fix him! Please!

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

The STAFF wheel Junior down the corridor. Jamal and Andre follow them till they pass through the swinging doors.

Andre throws his hands over his head and bends gasping.

JAMAL

They got this, Dre. He's going to be okay.

Andre hyperventilates. Jamal places his hand on Andre's back.

JAMAL (cont'd)

Breathe. He needs you to be strong right now. Breathe.

Andre laughs hysterically.

JAMAL (cont'd)

Andre?

Andre continues to laugh hysterically as Jamal looks around uncertainly.

JAMAL (cont'd)

(to the passing STAFF)
It's all good. He's just upset.

Andre slides down the wall, sits and sobs and laughs.

JAMAL (cont'd)

I'm calling Ma, okay?

He places his hand on Andre's back but Andre shakes it off. Jamal calls Cookie. No answer. He sits beside his brother and calls again.

INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

Cookie arrives with an audio desk set, carried by her ENGINEER. The Warden waits with her. Cookie gives her a roll of cash and the Warden leaves.

Jezy shuffles in, cuffed hands and feet. Her facial swelling has subsided and the bandage is off but a scar across the forehead remains.

The Prison Guard unlocks the cuffs around her hands.

JEZZY

I don't want to do this Cookie.

COOKIE

You want to do something for your daughter or not?

JEZZY

I ain't done this since you left!

COOKIE

I know, honey. But it's there. I know it is.

The Engineer hands Jezzy the microphone and tests the sound.

COOKIE (cont'd)

Just do your thing and we'll do the rest.

Jezzy slumps in a chair.

COOKIE (cont'd)

All that rage and hope and anger, you tell me about it.

Jezzy picks up the headphones from Cookie and puts them on. The Engineer starts a beat and she moves in time. Jezzy looks up at Cookie who nods.

COOKIE

It's just you and me in here.

Jezzy closes her eyes and grips the microphone hard. Her voice shakes, but there's no doubt of the pain behind the words.

JEZZY

There ain't no God living in my street/ I tried to leave and find him but I only got beat/ First they take my baby cause she got no food to eat/ Then they tell me work so that she can be with me/ No jobs for mummies so I think I have to steal/But I try to do right and choose instead to deal.

Cookie nods, understanding. Her phone buzzes. It's Jamal. She looks at it and declines it.

COOKIE
That's my girl!

Cookie forces a smile of encouragement even as she holds the phone in her hand.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Jamal is on his phone. He has dark circles under his eyes, his face is unshaven. He paces and talks in a loud whisper.

JAMAL
(on voice mail)
Ma where are you? Andre needs you.

He hangs up the phone but it immediately buzzes back.

ON THE SCREEN, 'Camilla'.

He closes his eyes and answers the phone.

INT. EMPIRE BUILDING - LUCIOUS OFFICE - DAY

Camilla's phone is on speaker phone.

CAMILLA
Do you realize the millions you
cost me? Never mind the thousands
of angry fans screaming for blood!

INTERCUT BETWEEN JAMAL AND CAMILLA

JAMAL
I know! I'm sorry. I can't get a
hold of Cookie or Hakeem or dad. I
can't just leave Andre here alone!

Camilla purses her lips.

CAMILLA
Jameson and I will sort this out
for now but you owe me.

Jamal hangs up the phone and leans on the wall. He exhales and returns to Rhonda's room.

INT. HOSPITAL - RHONDA'S ROOM - DAY

Rhonda lies in a coma. Andre holds her hand, half-asleep. Jamal sits in the nearest armchair, and fights to stay awake.

Cookie bustles in and Jamal stands instantly.

JAMAL
Ma! Where have you been?

COOKIE
I had to take care of a little
business.

He pulls Cookie aside.

JAMAL
I had to cancel a show last night!

COOKIE
Jamal, I'm so sorry.

Jamal looks ready to pass out. Cookie pinches his face.

COOKIE (cont'd)
You look like crap. Go home. I'm
here now.

ANDRE
(to Rhonda)
Your son needs you. You have to
wake up!

Cookie looks to Jamal for an explanation.

JAMAL
He's been like that since Junior
went into surgery, changing between
hysterical laughter and tears,
talking to Rhonda, to himself.

Cookie nods. Jamal looks back at Andre and leaves.

Just as Cookie sits, the Doctor enters.

DOCTOR
Mr. Lyon?

Andre glances up as Junior is wheeled in.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
We've stabilized him for now but
he'll need a transplant.

COOKIE
On a baby?

The Doctor nods.

DOCTOR
It's rare to find a donor but
there's a chance.

Cookie stands and grips the Doctor's arm.

COOKIE
Where can we find a donor? What do
we need to do?

DOCTOR
All we can do is wait.

Cookie shares a look with the Doctor and nods.

INT. EMPIRE STUDIO - NIGHT

Hakeem raps into the microphone. It's the same song as
before but the beat is not quite right.

Anika steps in, says a few words to the Audio Engineer and
the beat changes.

Hakeem tenses but the beat is good.

ANIKA
Try it again.

Hakeem reluctantly sings again.

ANIKA (cont'd)
Come on Hakeem. You know what
betrayal feels like.

Hakeem ramps it up, anger seeping through.

ANIKA (cont'd)
Be a man! Show me real pain. Show
me what it's like to be tossed
aside like a used toy.

Hakeem takes off the headphones and tosses them aside. He
walks out of the studio.

INT. STUDIO HALLWAY - NIGHT

Anika intercepts him and forces his hand on her abdomen.

ANIKA
Feel this?

Hakeem pulls his hand away in disgust.

ANIKA (cont'd)
That's your baby Hakeem. A healthy
baby boy.

HAKEEM
You're one crazy bitch. Leave me
alone.

ANIKA
Camilla won't be happy.

Hakeem turns back.

HAKEEM
What do you want from me? Why can't
you leave me alone?

ANIKA
This isn't just your future
anymore, so stop crying like a baby
and get back to work.

Hakeem stares at her uncertain.

INT. PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Detective Walker sits across from Prosecutor ROXANNE FORD.

DETECTIVE WALKER
The hair belonged to Andre Lyon.
Nothing suspicious.

ROXANNE
Nothing in the Lyon family happens
by accident.

DETECTIVE WALKER
There's no evidence unless Rhonda
wakes up and tells us otherwise.

ROXANNE
Then make it up. And make sure it's
one of the Lyons.

DETECTIVE WALKER
Haven't they been through enough?

ROXANNE
They're a bunch of drug dealers and
murderers. This is nothing compared
to the pain they've caused others.

Detective Walker shakes his head.

ROXANNE

I'd hate to see you lose your job
over this one.

Detective Walker bows his head and leaves. Roxanne smirks.

INT. LYON DYNASTY - COOKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Cookie opens mail. It's one bill after another. Porsha shoves a notice under her nose.

COOKIE

Eviction? Why?

PORSHA

'Cause I got no money to pay for
it.

COOKIE

What about the refund from the
Cookout venue?

PORSHA

They said read the contract. It's
our fault the Cookout was canceled
so no refund.

Cookie leans back in her chair.

COOKIE

We gotta get Jezzy's song out
faster. Get some money coming in.
Get Tianna and Menage a Trois out
there. Right now!

PORSHA

Don't we need money for that?

COOKIE

Yeah.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE RHONDA'S ROOM - DAY

Camilla has her hand on Andre's shoulder.

CAMILLA

Empire will be waiting for you when
you're ready. Mimi and I know how
talented you are.

Hakeem arrives and watches surprised. He gives Andre a hug.

HAKEEM
He's the best.

CAMILLA
(to Andre)
Go. Take care of your family.

Andre smiles weakly and then bows out to go back to Rhonda. Hakeem follows but Camilla stops him.

CAMILLA (cont'd)
I have an idea that will catapult you to the top.

HAKEEM
I need to speak to you about Anika.

CAMILLA
It was her idea actually. That you sing with Jamal.

HAKEEM
We've got different styles.

CAMILLA
Your joint video won awards. And Jamal is really hot right now.

HAKEEM
I thought you wanted me to be CEO not Jamal.

CAMILLA
Everything I do is for you. And Jamal is good for you.

Hakeem pulls his arm away.

HAKEEM
I don't need Jamal and I don't need you.

Camilla frowns as Hakeem joins his Andre.

INT. HOSPITAL - RHONDA'S ROOM - DAY

Rhonda remains in a coma. Andre sits beside her with Junior in his arms, his breathing short and shallow. Reverend Price is by his side. Cookie bursts in and takes in the scene.

COOKIE
They let Junior out of the incubator? That's great.

Andre shakes his head.

ANDRE

There's nothing more they can do.

COOKIE

What? We'll get another opinion. We can try something else. We could still find a donor.

Andre sobs.

ANDRE

I wanted to hold him one last time.
Let Rhonda hold him.

Cookie looks at the Reverend and realizes what is happening.

COOKIE

We can't give up.

Reverend Price places a hand on her shoulder.

REVEREND PRICE

It's time for his soul to go to
God.

Cookie is stunned. She stares at her Andre holding his tiny son in his arms and wipes a tear.

She tosses her handbag to the side and sits on the arm of Andre's chair. She holds his shoulders and SINGS a lullaby.

ANDRE

I remember that song.

Andre gently rocks his son from side to side. Cookie then lifts the baby and places him against Rhonda's chest, wrapping Rhonda's arm around him.

Andre holds both his son and wife as Cookie sings.

The baby's chest rises and falls with Rhonda's. One, two, three breaths and his chest stops moving.

Andre's tears fall freely as he continues to hold onto his family.

END OF ACT 3

ACT 4**INT. HOSPITAL - RHONDA'S ROOM - DAY**

Junior remains against Rhonda's chest but Andre's grief overwhelms him.

ANDRE

No! No!

Reverend Price places a hand on Andre's shoulder.

REVEREND PRICE

He's with the Father now.

Andre shoves him away.

ANDRE

I don't care about the Father or anyone else! Lies! All of it.

Lucious rushes in and pulls Andre into a tight hug. Andre is resistant but calms down momentarily.

LUCIOUS

It's okay. Andre. We're here. It's okay.

Andre sobs loudly and then violently shoves his dad away causing Lucious to fall against the wall.

ANDRE

It's your fault. You and your fancy mansion. You ruined us!

COOKIE

Andre baby, you don't know what you're saying.

ANDRE

He killed my son. He killed my son!

Andre kicks the chair which knocks Rhonda's life support cords out.

BEEP BEEP BEEP of Rhonda's ventilator as Attendees rush to save Rhonda but Andre doesn't notice.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE RHONDA'S ROOM - DAY

Detective Walker watches as the Security Guards seize Andre. He fights them off, manic. But they grab his arms and steady him as the Doctor gives him a sedative.

ANDRE

Nooooo!

Andre gives one less rebellious shout before his eyelids flutter close.

ANDRE

Ma! Tell them to stop!

Cookie looks distraught as Andre is taken away on a gurney, helpless.

COOKIE

It's going to be okay, babe.

Andre disappears and Lucious joins Cookie in the corridor, a small cut on his face. Detective Walker approaches them.

DETECTIVE WALKER

People would call that violent.
Unpredictable.

LUCIOUS

He's just lost his son. How would
you be?

Detective Walker gives him a tissue for the bleeding.

DETECTIVE WALKER

I don't know. Feeling guilty maybe.

Detective Walker leaves. Lucious moves to go after him but Cookie holds him back.

INT. PRISON LAUNDRY STOREROOM - DAY

Jezzy moves a large trolley of folded sheets into a storeroom. As she places the sheets on the shelves, she's grabbed from behind and thrown against the wall. PRISON GUARD has a knife at her throat.

PRISON GUARD

I hear you siding with the Scorpio
gang. Giving them money.

JEZZY

I ain't in no gang. I'm just minding my own business.

PRISON GUARD

They offer to protect you hey?

JEZZY

I can take care of myself.

Prison Guard scratches Jezzy's neck so that it bleeds slightly.

PRISON GUARD

I got a message for you. Razor doesn't like the deal you made with the Scorpios. She wants her cut.

JEZZY

I don't know nothing about no deal with anyone.

PRISON GUARD

Ten thousand dollars by the end of the week or your daughter goes to hell before you do.

Jezzy pulls at the hands near her throat.

JEZZY

My baby done nothing. I ain't got no money.

PRISON GUARD

I'm just the messenger.

JEZZY

(shouts)

No! No! My baby.

Prison Guard presses against her throat so that the sound is a gurgle.

PRISON GUARD

Snitch to the Warden and you can join your daughter.

Prison Guard lets go of Jezzy and leaves. Jezzy slumps down against the wall, shaking, scared.

INT. HOSPITAL PSYCH WARD - DAY

Andre, in hospital gown, sits up in bed, his head against Cookie's shoulder.

ANDRE

Junior's gone Ma. My little boy.
How am I going to tell Rhonda?

COOKIE

It's not your fault, baby.

She grabs his face in her hands.

COOKIE (cont'd)

It's not your fault.

ANDRE

I hardly knew him but I loved him.
I can't explain it.

COOKIE

I know baby. I know.

ANDRE

How could dad hate him? This
beautiful little person.

COOKIE

Your father didn't hate Junior. He
just wanted more. Another chance.

ANDRE

I'll never forgive him.

She rocks Andre to ease his pain.

COOKIE

Listen Andre, I'm gonna tell you
something very few people know.

Cookie takes a breath.

COOKIE (cont'd)

Before there was you, your father
and I had another baby.

Andre looks up shocked.

COOKIE (cont'd)

A little girl. She barely took a
breath.

ANDRE
I'm sorry Ma, I didn't know.

COOKIE
She came too early. Aretha we called her.

They chuckle sadly.

ANDRE
What happened?

COOKIE
Lucious was out dealing. I was five months pregnant, this huge belly. I was meant to be with him but I didn't feel well that day.

She intertwines her fingers with Andre's and lets the tears fall.

COOKIE (cont'd)
I was alone, sixteen, no cell phones in those days. I felt these pains and couldn't move. I screamed until your Uncle Vernon found me. But by the time we got to the hospital, it was too late.

ANDRE
Ma...

COOKIE
Your father and I never spoke about it again but he knows. We know.

She snuggles up against Andre, their heads touch.

INT. STAGE WINGS - NIGHT

Jamal runs off stage to Jameson. He sweats profusely. There are dark circles under his eyes but he is hyper.

JAMESON
I told you to ease up on the pills.

JAMAL
I'm too tired, man. I wasn't going to make it.

Jameson frowns but pushes him back out on stage.

INT. CONCERT STAGE - NIGHT

Jamal waves his hands and the crowd cheers.

JAMAL

Now I know you know this last song.

CHEERS, SCREAMS.

The BAND begins to play the introduction for 'Heavy'. Jamal steps up to the microphone and then steps back. He looks back at the band and waves his hand to indicate a repeat.

He glances back at Jameson who looks worried. But he steps back to the microphone and sings, his voice unsteady but good enough.

JAMAL (cont'd)

*All hail the King/ They say heavy
is the head that wears the crown,
wears the crown/ They say heavy is
the head that wears the crown*

INT. STAGE ENTRANCE - DAY

Jamal can be heard in the background. Lucious approaches the doors with purpose. Two SECURITY GUARDS bar his way.

LUCIOUS

What are you doing?

SECURITY GUARDS

Sorry Sir. We were told not to let you through.

LUCIOUS

Are you crazy? Step aside before I have both your jobs.

The Security Guards look nervously at each other.

Hakeem appears and smirks.

HAKEEM

You're not part of Empire anymore.
You're not performing your song.

Lucious makes a run for him but he's held back by the Security Guards.

LUCIOUS

I won Song of the Year.

HAKHEEM

Yeah and that song is being
performed next without you.

LUCIOUS

Must feel proud knowing your songs
weren't good enough.

Hakeem is hurt but he holds his ground. Lucious straightens
his jacket and leaves.

INT. CONCERT STAGE - DAY

Jamal sways a little as he waves to the crowd.

JAMAL

And now, Best Rap Artist, Freda, is
gonna sing a song for you. You know
what it is?

CROWD

Bang Bang Bang

JAMAL

That's right. Song of the year by
Lucious Lyon.

CROWD

Lu-cious! Lu-cious! Lu-cious!

EXT. CONCERT HALL - DAY

Lucious walks towards his waiting car, smiling at the sound.

INT. STAGE WINGS - DAY

Jamal collapses into Jameson's arms. Jameson slaps him but
he won't wake up. A STAGE MANAGER steps in and helps Jameson
drag him away.

SNAP, SNAP as photographers capture the moment.

INT. LUCIOUS'S CAR - DAY

Lucious and Cookie sit side by side in the car and look
straight ahead.

COOKIE

I need money Lucious.

LUCIOUS

I got this.

COOKIE
For Lyon Dynasty. To tide me over.

LUCIOUS
Everything I had was tied up in
that Swift Stream deal.

COOKIE
The venue won't refund the deposit
and the rest went into promotion.

LUCIOUS
I told you not to trust Hakeem.

COOKIE
I wouldn't have to if you hadn't
kicked me out of Empire.

They sit in silence a moment.

COOKIE (cont'd)
We can't lose Lyon Dynasty. Not
now.

LUCIOUS
I'll see what I can do.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Lucious and Cookie step out of the car and stand before a
Funeral Home. They intertwine hands.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Lucious and Cookie walk through a room full of caskets.
Cookie touches each one she passes while Lucious looks
uncomfortable.

COOKIE
Wish we had one of these for
Aretha.

Lucious looks at Cookie and nods, a frown on his face.

FLASHBACK

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Lucious, eighteen, digs a hole in the ground in the backyard
of old terrace house. Cookie, sixteen, holds a tiny baby
wrapped in white, against her chest.

Lucious stops and Cookie sobs as she places the baby in the ground. Lucious covers it over gently with dirt while Cookie is inconsolable.

END FLASHBACK

INT. FUNERAL HOME - CONTINUOUS

Cookie walks over to the white caskets.

COOKIE

Do you really think someone pushed Rhonda?

LUCIOUS

I think it was an accident. The police are just looking for an excuse to poke around our business.

The FUNERAL ATTENDANT stands before Cookie.

FUNERAL ATTENDANT

Can I help you?

She trails a small, white casket with her painted nail.

COOKIE

This one. But smaller.

FUNERAL ATTENDANT

Of course. How small?

Lucious looks at Cookie and then holds out his hands about ten inches apart.

FUNERAL ATTENDANT (cont'd)

I have one right here.

He leans over and pulls out a tiny white casket, the size of a bassinet. Cookie holds it against her chest like a baby.

INT. PRISON - VISITORS ROOM - DAY

Jezzy paces alone. She bites her nails and looks out the window every constantly.

Warden Myers walks in.

WARDEN MYERS

Time's up.

JEZZY
Cookie promised.

WARDEN MYERS
She's not here. Go back to your
work detail.

JEZZY
I've got to see her!

Warden Myers shrugs.

WARDEN MYERS
She's too busy for you today.

Jezzy looks uncertain. She walks towards the door but then stops in front of the Warden, wanting to say something.

The Warden crosses her arms, impatient. Jezzy changes her mind, rounds her shoulders and continues out.

INT. RHONDA'S HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Andre is dressed in a black suit with a black shirt. He kisses Rhonda gently on the forehead.

ANDRE
I'm taking good care of him. I
promise.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

One BEARER carries the tiny white coffin up the church steps. Andre and Jamal walk behind it, while Cookie grips Andre's hand. The procession stops at the church door.

LUCIOUS (O.S.)
Get out!

Andre and Cookie turn to see Lucious shout at Camilla.

LUCIOUS
This is family only.

CAMILLA
(harsh whisper)
You're making a scene, you lush.

Andre shakes his head and turns in that direction.

COOKIE
I'll sort it out.

ANDRE

No. I will.

Photographers snap away without mercy.

CAMILLA

I'm paying my respects.

Andre grabs Lucious's arm.

ANDRE

This is Junior's funeral. My son. I say who stays and goes.

LUCIOUS

She betrayed your family.

ANDRE

No, she's my boss.

Lucious and Andre stare at each other.

CAMILLA

I'll go. It's okay, Andre.

ANDRE

No. He'll go. He wanted him dead anyway.

LUCIOUS

Listen, son, I know I said--

HAKEEM

You heard him.

Lucious is hurt. He looks from one to the other, eyes glistening and nods. He glances up at Cookie before he shoves a photographer away and steps into his limousine.

Hakeem grips Andre's shoulder but Andre shoves it away. He nods to Camilla and walks back to the coffin with dignity.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Reverend Price is at the lectern. Along the front row is Jamal, Andre and Cookie. Hakeem sits behind them.

REVEREND PRICE

A beloved son who barely had time to know his family. A pure soul in the hands of God.

Andre stares ahead, expressionless. Cookie's dark glasses don't cover her tears.

Jamal stands and moves towards the piano.

JAMAL

This one's for Junior.

He looks at Andre and plays *This Is How We Do It*. Andre sobs uncontrollably, smiling and crying at the same time. Cookie pulls him to her.

Hakeem moves and sits next to his mom.

HAKEEM

Ma, I'm sorry.

COOKIE

I know.

HAKEEM

I made a mess of things. A lot of things.

COOKIE

You gotta be man enough to fix it now.

As the song finishes. Jamal nods to the choir and they join him to sing *Unconditional*.

Flowers are placed on and around the tiny white casket by MOURNERS as the music floats through the church.

Cookie's phone lies on top of her bag and vibrates. It's Jezzy. But Cookie doesn't even notice.

Jameson discretely films Jamal with his phone.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

The music continues to play in the background.

Andre, Jamal, Hakeem and Cookie watch in silence as the small white coffin is lowered into the ground. Lucious stands back and watches from a distance.

Detective Walker and two other Police Officers stand at a distance also. Anika notices them and discretely leaves in the opposite direction.

END OF ACT 4

ACT 5**EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY**

MOURNERS shake Andre's hand and murmur condolences as they leave. Cookie stares at the hole in the ground. Jamal squeezes Andre's shoulder and Hakeem shuffles his feet.

Detective Walker approaches them grips Andre's arms and pulls them behind his back.

DETECTIVE WALKER
You're under arrest for the
attempted murder of Rhonda Lyon.
You have the right to remain
silent.

Cookie pulls at the cuffs.

COOKIE
Are you crazy? We're at a funeral!

DETECTIVE WALKER
One he probably caused.

Hakeem and Jamal look on in shock as Andre is carried away with little resistance.

DETECTIVE WALKER
Anything you say can and will be
used against you...

Cookie holds the phone close and follows them to the car.

COOKIE
Lucious, what did you do? They
arrested Andre!

INT. LUCIOUS'S LIMOUSINE - DAY

Lucious sits in his luxury car with a double scotch. He can see the commotion from the car window.

LUCIOUS
They're using him to get to me.

INTERCUT BETWEEN LUCIOUS and COOKIE

COOKIE
Then you get yourself over to that
station right now and get your son
out of jail.

LUCIOUS
You heard him. I'm not his family.

Cookie watches as Detective Walker presses Andre's head down to get him in the unmarked car.

COOKIE
(to Andre)
Your father and I are gonna sort this out, okay Andre?

Walker smirks as he gets into the car and drives off.

COOKIE (cont'd)
I swear Lucious, if you don't do something...

LUCIOUS
It's on you now.

He hangs up the phone.

COOKIE
(shouts)
Lucious! Lucious!

She pulls the phone from her ear. Jamal and Hakeem have run down to join Cookie.

JAMAL
Ma! What are you going to do?

She looks at them both and then walks off.

INT. POLICE STATION - JAIL CELL - DAY

Andre slumps against a bench inside a jail cell. Cookie looks through the bars and holds her hand out to him.

COOKIE
I'm sorry, baby.

Andre approaches the bars, calm, in control.

ANDRE
I need you to get Thirsty down here.

COOKIE
You trust him?

ANDRE
In this situation, yes.

Cookie grips his hand.

ANDRE
Keep an eye on Rhonda? I don't want
her to be alone.

INT. LYON DYNASTY OFFICES - NIGHT

LAURA, the Latina lead singer from Menage a Trois, sings in the glass recording booth. She sings vocals over Jezzy's rap. She's visible from the office floor.

Cookie pleads on the phone on the other side of the studio.

COOKIE
We're not canceling. We're just
rescheduling. Yes, we'll have the
acts. Tianna, Menage a Trois and
Jezzy, a new rapper. It'll be huge!

Cookie paces as Porsha walks in tentatively.

COOKIE
Booked out? I can pay more. I--

Cookie looks at the phone surprised. They hung up. Cookie throws her phone at the wall nearby.

PORSHA
You're gonna need that to call
Jezzy.

Cookie looks up at Porsha before reaching for the land line.

INT. WALLACE PRISON - WARDEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Warden Myers puts on her jacket and reaches for her handbag. She hesitates but answers the phone.

WARDEN MYERS
Wallace Prison.

INTERCUT BETWEEN COOKIE AND WARDEN MYERS

COOKIE
It's Cookie. I need to speak to
Jezzy.

WARDEN MYERS
This isn't a hotel.

COOKIE
I don't want her to think I forgot.

WARDEN MYERS
There was a riot. Prisoners are
back in their cells. Call back
tomorrow.

COOKIE
Is she okay?

Warden Myers looks in the mirror and touches up her hair.

WARDEN MYERS.
She's fine.

COOKIE
Will you let her know I called?

WARDEN MYERS
I'm not a receptionist. Show up
next time.

Warden Myers hangs up the phone and leaves. Cookie stares at
the phone.

COOKIE
Give me one more day, Jezzy.

INT. PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Prosecutor Roxanne Ford sits on the edge of her desk, her
arms folded. Lucious sits back on the chair, relaxed.

ROXANNE
You can always give yourself up in
exchange for Andre's release.

LUCIOUS
(laughs)
Give myself up for what? A murder
you couldn't pin on me last time?

ROXANNE
The evidence against Andre is
pretty strong. His mental
instability, his obsession with
Empire, disapproval from his
father.

LUCIOUS
You know there's no case.

ROXANNE
It's enough to bring you to the negotiating table.

LUCIOUS
How about I offer you a better deal?

ROXANNE
The only thing I want is to see you behind bars.

LUCIOUS
It's going be hard to do that if you lose your job.

ROXANNE
What could a thug like you possibly have that I want?

Lucious smiles.

INT. PRISON - JEZZY'S CELL - NIGHT

Jezzy is in a cell writing on a scrap piece of paper. She looks at a photo of LETITIA, a little girl aged five.

PRISONER 1 (O.S)
I didn't see Cookie today. She run off with our money?

Jezzy folds the paper, the photo in the middle.

PRISONER 2 (O.S)
You gonna be a star right? Make us all rich?

PRISONER 1 (O.S)
Don't worry. We'll give you the star treatment tomorrow.

There is laughter from the Prisoners as the lights go out.

Jezzy pulls out a shard of broken glass, places the note on her pillow and leans against the wall.

JEZZY
For you baby girl.

She slits one wrist and then the other and lies back as the blood drips down her leg and onto the floor.

INT. RHONDA'S HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Rhonda remains unconscious in her ward. Anika closes the door and stands at the end of the bed.

ANIKA

It wasn't meant to be like this.
There should be room for all of us.

Anika approaches the life support machine. She watches as the heart beat lights up the screen. She turns to Rhonda and gently moves some hair from her face.

ANIKA (cont'd)

You don't deserve this. But it's
for the best.

Anika pulls the ventilator from Rhonda's mouth.

INT. LYON DYNASTY - RECORDING BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Cookie listens as Laura's vocals soar over Jezzy's hard hitting rap. She smiles.

Jamal leans over her shoulder.

JAMAL

That sounds hot!

COOKIE

That's my girl Jezzy.

She turns to Jamal.

COOKIE (cont'd)

What's this about my boy on drugs?

JAMAL

They were harmless. Caffeine pills.

COOKIE

Do I look stupid?

JAMAL

I was desperate Ma. Between the
concerts and Andre...

She claps him over the head.

COOKIE

This is your time. Don't you dare
mess it up with some nasty drugs.

Lucious leans on the wall of the recording booth.

LUCIOUS
 Guess your gay hero ain't that good
 at looking out for you.

JAMAL
 Jameson didn't know. Exactly.

Lucious smirks but Cookie shoos them all out of the booth.

INT. LYON DYNASTY MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

The song continues on in the background.

COOKIE
 Is my son out of jail yet?

Lucious looks towards the door and Andre walks in, still in his funeral suit, tired but unharmed. Cookie hugs him.

ANDRE
 It's okay mom. I'm okay. I don't
 know what sort of deal dad made...

Cookie eyes Lucious suspiciously over Andre's shoulder.

LUCIOUS
 Andre and I have an understanding
 about his new role back at Empire.

Cookie releases Andre and Jamal steps in.

Hakeem walks in and man-hugs Andre.

HAKEEM
 Andre, you're back! What is
 everyone doing here?

In the recording booth, Laura sees Hakeem and puts the headphones down.

COOKIE
 You can't be here, Hakeem

HAKEEM
 This is my company too.

LUCIOUS
 Not anymore.

Laura comes out of the booth and stands in front of Hakeem.

HAKEEM

I'm sorry--

She slaps him. Cookie shrugs and his brothers laugh.

LUCIOUS

Seems you got women pushing you
around everywhere.

Porsha taps Cookie on the shoulder.

COOKIE

You better have a good reason for
touching me like that.

PORSHA

(offers phone)
It's from the prison.

Cookie grabs the phone.

COOKIE

Jezzy?

WARDEN MYERS(O.S)

No. It's Warden Myers.

Andre paces nearby, his cell in his hand.

Hakeem, Laura and Lucious argue while Cookie walks into a
corner, one finger pressed against her ear. She freezes.

COOKIE

Please Lord no! Not Jezzy. No!

Cookie bends over and lets out a huge SCREAM of anguish.

Jamal rushes to her but she runs into the bathroom.

INT. LYON DYNASTY BATHROOM - DAY

She locks the door and muffles her wails with a towel.
KNOCKING on the door.

JAMAL (O.S)

Are you okay, Ma? Ma?

She slides down the wall and curls into a ball.

INT. LYON DYNASTY MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hakeem, Lucious and Laura continue to bicker.

JAMAL
Can you all just give it a rest?

ANDRE
I have to go to the hospital.
Something's wrong with Rhonda.

JAMAL
I'll come with you.

INT. LYON DYNASTY BATHROOM - DAY

Cookie squeezes her eyes shut and pushes herself off the floor. She grips the sink and looks herself in the mirror.

COOKIE
You did this to her. You did this.

INT. LYON DYNASTY MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

HAKEEM
I'll come too.

ANDRE
Someone has to stay for Ma.

Cookie stands at the bathroom entrance. Her eyes are red but her face is determined.

COOKIE
We'll all go.

JAMAL
Ma, we got this.

HAKEEM
I'll take care of things here.

COOKIE
Hakeem baby, you know I love you?

HAKEEM
Yeah.

COOKIE
You took Empire. But this company
is now mine and mine alone. Get
used to it.

Cookie grabs her handbag.

HAKEEM

Ma, you can't.

LUCIOUS

How does it feel to have you
company taken from you?

Lucious buttons his jacket and smirks as he leaves.

COOKIE

Laura, finish that song you hear
me? Jezzy deserved that much.

INT. LYON DYNASTY FOYER - DAY

Cookie stops as a SOCIAL WORKER stands with Letitia,
clutching a rag doll.

SOCIAL WORKER

Are you Cookie Lyon?

Cookie nods, her eyes never leaving Letitia's.

SOCIAL WORKER (cont'd)

Her mother's last wishes were for
you to take care of her. Are you
willing to do that?

Cookie looks at her stunned.

INT. RHONDA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The Doctor and NURSE shake their heads as Andre shoves them
away in his rush to see Rhonda.

ANDRE

What happened? What's wrong?

DOCTOR

We came to find her with the
ventilator out, the machines off.

Rhonda lies in bed motionless. Andre grabs her shoulders.

ANDRE

Rhonda? Rhonda?

He gasps but then he sees her chest rise and fall.

END OF EPISODE