

After Divorce, She Becomes the Billionaire Heiress

(Sylvia and Cyril) Chapter 1-5

Chapter 1 Divorce

“Superstar actress Karina spotted at the airport with Cyril in intimate photos – their love seems so enviable!”

It was 8PM when Sylvia saw this headline, and though she thought her heart couldn't sink any lower, she still felt a stab of pain.

The couple in the photo looked blissfully happy together. If Sylvia didn't know the man was her own husband, she might even think they made an adorable pair.

Sylvia's expression soured. This wasn't the first time something like this had happened, but it was the first time that made her feel so heartbroken.

She had reminded Cyril that morning that today was her birthday. He had promised that he would be home tonight to have dinner with her.

Yet here he was, at the very hour he should have returned, going to pick up another woman instead.

And not just any woman – Karina held an extraordinary place in Cyril's heart. Sylvia had heard they were once engaged to be married until various circumstances got in the way.

In the end, it was Sylvia who ended up walking down the aisle with him.

She tossed her phone aside, her mood as heavy as the night outside.

The dining table was still laid out with the meal and cake she had carefully prepared, expecting to celebrate with her husband. Now she just felt like the butt of some joke.

Her phone lit up with another notification – a photo sent by Karina. It showed her snuggled up to Cyril, an amused yet affectionate smile playing about his lips.

No caption was needed. The image pierced Sylvia's heart.

She bit her lip as a storm of emotions churned inside – hurt, humiliation, resentment.

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She had given up her affluent background and loving family for this man she adored. Her friends had warned her too. But after three years of marriage where Cyril made her feel insignificant, she wondered if she had just been living in a fantasy.

Sylvia took a deep breath to steady herself. She was once admired and courted by so many suitors who would have done anything for her hand.

Yet she had spurned them all and rushed headlong into Cyril's embrace.

If only she had known this would be her fate, she never would have taken that first step.

With trembling hands, Sylvia opened her chat with Cyril and typed a simple sentence:

"I saw the photos and news. Let's get a divorce."

Cyril immediately called her back but she declined the call. As soon as she sent the message, it was as if a crushing weight had lifted from her chest.

When her phone rang again, Sylvia finally answered. Cyril launched straight into scolding her.

"What more do you want from me? I know it's your birthday but Karina is finally back in the country. You need to know your place and not meddle in things that don't concern you! And divorce? How many more tricks must you pull just to get my attention? I'm sick of these manipulative games!"

His words affirmed what Sylvia already knew deep down that his feelings for her were reluctant and forced. No matter how she tried to earn his affection, it was

always going to be a one-sided performance.

Heart shattered, Sylvia willed herself not to cry. Her voice turned icy cold.

"Have the paperwork ready first thing tomorrow morning. If you don't show up or can't finalize the divorce, I will expose the truth about Karina being your mistress all these years. I'm sure you wouldn't want your precious superstar girlfriend facing public scandal, especially when you've protected her reputation for so long."

Sylvia immediately ended the call before Cyril could retort. As she looked at the untouched dinner on the table, she tossed everything straight into the trash.

There was no point keeping up pretenses when no one cared anyway.

She had known for a long time about the other woman who occupied Cyril's heart. But as his lawfully wedded wife, Sylvia convinced herself she could make him fall for her instead, if she just devoted enough time and love.

So she kept lowering her self-respect, to the point everyone ridiculed her behind her back.

Too late, Sylvia realized the more she debased herself, the more Cyril felt entitled to hurt her. Their relationship was irreparably toxic.

Well, no more. After three bitter years, she refused to let him keep grinding her dignity into the dirt.

If Cyril wanted to be with Karina instead, so be it.

Sylvia gazed around the mansion that was meant to be their marital home. Cyril barely spent any nights here since their wedding. To him, this was just a convenient

Pit

Only she had nurtured hopes of building a home and life together, waiting in vain for her husband to return. The greater her expectations, the deeper the wounds.

Now, she was finally ready to walk away from the sham of their marriage.

After a sleepless night, Sylvia examined her haggard reflection in the mirror. She covered up as best she could with makeup.

Packing her essential documents, she prepared to head out just as her mother-in-law called,

Cyril's mother was a narrow-minded, caustic woman who cared only about status and wealth. She vehemently opposed his marriage to Sylvia instead of some well-connected socialite who could be useful to the family business.

Over their years of marriage however, his family had always treated Sylvia as an unwelcome intruder. Her mother-in-law even bossed her around like a servant.

Hearing that grating voice again, Sylvia realized that if Cyril valued her even half as much as he did Karina, he would never have allowed his mother to belittle her so.

In the end, it all boiled down to his lack of love for her. If she and Karina swapped places, there's no way he would have let Karina endure the same disrespect.

“Where are you right now?! I already told you to be here by 8AM sharp. It’s 10 and our guests will be arriving any minute. Are you deliberately trying to embarrass me? Don’t forget, you stole your way into this family. My son could have married someone far better than the likes of you. Maybe it’s better if you two just hurry up and divorce already.”

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Chapter 2 Can never have what I want

Sylvia had heard similar criticisms countless times over the past three years. Back then, she would always blame herself, thinking she must have done something wrong.

Her love led her to lower her self-respect and cater to his family’s every whim, no matter how demeaning it felt.

But now, having made the decision to walk away for good, it was time to put an end to all those foolish things she once did.

“You’re right, I have decided to divorce your son,” Sylvia stated bluntly before hanging up.

She gathered her belongings and documents and headed out the door.

Sylvia shot Cyril a message giving him two hours to meet her there. Otherwise, she would release all the evidence she had gathered over the years proving Karina was his mistress. The superstar’s reputation would be ripped to shreds.

Sure enough, Cyril showed up under the two hour mark, his expression thunderous. He had never been threatened like this before, least of all by his wife.

But Sylvia remained composed, not bothering to soothe his ruffled temper like she used to. The past was dead to her.

“Do you have the paperwork?” she asked.

“Must you make such a scene?” Cyril demanded. “I already told you when we married – no one can shake your position. But you must understand there are certain things I can never give you, no matter what you sacrificed back then to become my wife. Can’t you just tolerate it?”

His mocking tone cut through Sylvia even as she kept her face impassive.

Their marriage did have extenuating circumstances that she had tried explaining countless times over the years. But Cyril stubbornly believed only his version of events.

Sylvia decided not to waste her breath. “Spare me the excuses. Like I said, if we don’t finalize this divorce today, I will ruin Karina’s career for good. I’m not joking around.”

Cyril scoffed, unable to believe Sylvia actually had any leverage over someone like Karina.

“Since you clearly don’t believe me, maybe these will convince you otherwise.”

Sylvia took out a stack of photos from her bag. Cyril’s gut clenched with apprehension as he flipped through them.

The candid shots were taken from intrusive angles that clearly showed Karina’s face along with Cyril in compromising intimacy. If leaked, they would undoubtedly ignite scandal.

“I have plenty more where that came from. Still think I don’t have enough to force this divorce through?” Sylvia challenged.

Cyril crumpled the photos, glaring venomously. “Where did you get these? I can’t believe you would actually stoop so low just to smear Karina’s name and keep your status!”

Just as she expected. Sylvia didn’t even bother reacting as she headed straight into the administrative office.

Cyril chased angrily after her. “At least tell me where the hell you got those photos!”

But Sylvia had no more energy left to waste on him. She just wanted this sham of a relationship severed for good.

Karina herself had sent Sylvia all those photos over the years, never including a single word. But the images told a thousand heartbreaking tales.

Sylvia only had to stand in Cyril’s shadow while Karina basked under the spotlight. That told the whole story – she was the one forever abandoned and looked down upon.

Left with no choice, Cyril signed the divorce paperwork. He was convinced Sylvia

would regret this, but he would never give her the chance to come crawling back.

In this world, opportunities only came once. Miss it, and there were no second chances.

With the last legal tie between them dissolved, a dazzling smile lit up Sylvia's face the brightest she had smiled in years.

"I won't wish you happiness. I'll just wish that you never get what you truly want in life.

The venom in her words made Cyril grit his teeth in hatred. Clearly he had underestimated the depths of Sylvia's loathing for him now.

When Sylvia was gone, Cyril glanced at the divorce settlement. She hadn't taken a single penny of the assets she was entitled to over their marriage.

He scoffed disdainfully. So she was just a vain social climber after all, to discard everything that tied her to his wealthy family.

If only Cyril knew the truth—in their three years of marriage, he had never once gifted Sylvia anything meaningful.

He allotted her a monthly allowance, but she refused to touch that credit card, always using her own money instead. Other than the decor and clothes she bought herself for the house, this marriage had not enriched her whatsoever.

But Sylvia never expected anything from him in the first place. Marrying Cyril was not about gaining his wealth.

As Sylvia returned to the mansion she once called home, she heard laughter coming from inside. She recognized the voices of her mother-in-law and Karina..

"This morning when I called her, she said she's divorcing my son! As if that greedy woman would actually let go of this family's wealth!"

"It was all just an unfortunate misunderstanding back then. If only you two had a bit more time, the truth would have come out and you'd be our daughter-in-law by now instead of Sylvia!"

"Oh don't say that, auntie. Sylvia and Cyril seem very well-matched and so loving. even after all these years of marriage."

Sylvia nearly gagged hearing Karina's words. Loving? Which eyes did she use to observe their so-called blissful marriage?

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Chapter 3 Dispute

Hearing the front door open, the two women chatting on the couch fell silent.

Sylvia let out a derisive laugh as she strode inside the lavishly decorated mansion that represented years of her painstaking efforts – soon to be foolishly squandered by these two interlopers. This would be her last glimpse of a home that could have been.

“So the prodigal daughter returns. Where exactly have you been wandering about? Didn't I tell you this morning to be back here by 8AM sharp to help with the guests? Or did you really think you could land someone better than my son after the divorce? Don't kid yourself -a vain social climber like you will always be looked down on wherever you go. Now hurry up and start cooking. Don't you dare embarrass me when my friends get here later. If you even think of causing me to lose face, just you watch how I'll punish you!”

Cyril was self-made, having built his business empire from nothing. So his mother was an avaricious woman determined to marry her son to someone useful to expand the family connections and wealth. Naturally she had always looked down on Sylvia's supposed commoner background, even though that wasn't truly the case.

Glancing at the bustling kitchen, Sylvia guessed there would be at least 10 guests today – the number her mother-in-law regularly invited specifically to overwork and demean her. Whenever there was a dinner party, not a single servant would be allowed to help. Sylvia was the sole worker expected to cater to everyone's demands without complaint or retaliation. Her mother-in-law was quick to interpret any objections as unwillingness to continue the marriage.

Before Sylvia could respond, Karina jumped in with a smile. “Auntie, isn't that too much work for Sylvia to handle alone? Let me give her a hand. We wouldn't want your friends later thinking I don't know how to cook!” She made to stand up and help.

But her mother-in-law quickly yanked Karina back onto the sofa. Not without first shooting Sylvia a look of pure contempt.

“How could you compare yourself to the likes of her? She was born to serve, so of course these menial tasks suit her. But you – you're an international superstar! You

should relax here while we wait on you.

But Auntie, I'm your guest. It wouldn't be right for me to just sit by while everyone else works," Karina protested.

"Guest? Once you and my son get married, then she'll be the guest – no, she won't even qualify to be a guest! At best, she'll just be a stranger passing through."

Standing silently to the side, Sylvia listened to the duo's chorus with growing exasperation.

Karina didn't utter a single unkind word and kept up the pretense of defending her. But they were empty placations that only fueled her mother-in-law's vitriol towards Sylvia.

As their farcical mother-daughter bond strengthened, Sylvia couldn't resist laughing. Are you two quite done with your theatrics?"

Her mother-in-law bristled at the interruption. "What nerve you have! Can't you see we're in the middle of a conversation? Hurry up and get cooking!"

"In case you've forgotten, your dear son and I already finalized our divorce. You seem so thrilled to welcome your dreamed-of daughter-in-law. Why don't you get her to demonstrate her cooking skills instead?" Sylvia smiled sweetly at Karina, not missing the flash of delight in her eyes.

Weary of their act, Sylvia headed back towards the bedroom to gather her minimal belongings. She had no intention of keeping any of the clothes and possessions here that held nothing but bitter memories now.

Just as she reached the door, her mother-in-law blocked her path. "So you're set on ending this marriage for good, I see."

"We already signed the divorce papers. What more is there to say?" Sylvia brushed past her and swung open the door, only to come face-to-face with Cyril himself.

After leaving Sylvia at the courthouse, Cyril had received a call from Karina about his mother inviting her over to his marital home. Worried that she might run into his freshly-divorced ex-wife and get upset, Cyril immediately rushed back.

His dark scowl deepened at seeing Sylvia on the verge of walking out. He shoved her aside and made a beeline for Karina, looking her up and down anxiously.

"Are you alright?"

Stumbling from his shove, Sylvia's back slammed painfully against the corner

cabinet. But that paled in comparison to the casual tenderness in Cyril's question towards Karina – while she was the one injured right in front of him.

*Just what have you done now?" Cyril snarled, glaring at Sylvia as if she had committed some unforgivable sin.

His hypocrisy left Sylvia seeing red. "Are your eyes only good for occasional glaring? Can't you see with your own two eyes that Karina is perfectly fine standing right there in front of you? If that mouth of yours can't speak sense, maybe you should donate it to someone who actually needs it!"

Cyril held up his phone to show her an article. "Don't try and talk your way out of this. The expose online – isn't this your doing?"

Sylvia glanced at the phone screen and froze. The photos and caption did seem vaguely familiar even though she wasn't involved... Still, she couldn't deny feeling a spark of vicious satisfaction seeing Karina's stricken expression.

"Is there a single false word written there? Wasn't it that drama that first shot her to fame? Does the report state any untruths?" Sylvia challenged, eyes narrowing at Karina.

"I'll walk out that door right now and let there's a single lie.

uself get bit ba car if

printed. If every word there is true, then it's your turn to get smashed under a tire!"

Karina paled, helplessly seeking out Cyril. He patted her shoulder reassuringly before rounding on Sylvia once more.

"If you're so eager to die, then go kill yourself! Don't drag an innocent person into your vendetta! This is obviously your petty attempt at revenge even after the divorce!"

With tremendous effort, Sylvia reined in her temper. "I think your brain must be in your neck purely to increase your height," she stated acidly before sweeping past them.

Love blinded the wisest of people. She was the living proof for the past three years.. Now it was Cyril's turn to wallow in blindness – likely for a long time coming.

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Chapter 4 Proof

Watching the man she had loved for years reveal his utter stupidity left Sylvia questioning her own terrible judgement all this time.

She had no interest in watching their antics further and turned to leave, belongings in hand. But Karina's voice stopped her once more.

"I would never admit something I didn't actually do! Why won't you believe me? Do you think just because I supposedly destroyed your marriage, you want revenge against me? But I've barely shown my face around you two all these years. I'm only back now to film a movie. Why must you target me like this?"

Though Karina addressed the room, every word was meant for Sylvia. With a spark of dark amusement, Sylvia realized this family was rather entertaining in their dysfunction.

One blindly besotted fool. Another conniving social climber ruthlessly furthering her own ends. And Cyril practically salivating to take a bite out of Sylvia in his hatred.

She surveyed them all dispassionately as Cyril spat, "So if you didn't pull this stunt, who could have? No one else would be so malicious towards Karina besides you!"

Sylvia sighed, beyond exhausted. She turned to Karina instead. "Since you're so convinced the culprit is me, where's your proof? Otherwise I could sue you for

slander.

All eyes swung to Karina. Even her mother-in-law felt the first prickles of doubt. She wasn't the sharpest tool. A few well-aimed words could easily turn her loyalties.

While the drama scandal meant nothing to her, Sylvia did raise a valid point – what would gamble with their own life so casually just for revenge?

Tears brimmed in Karina's eyes as she realized she was losing ground. Her only lifeline was Cyril – the final authority in this family. As long as he stood firm in her corner, nothing else mattered.

"You...you believe me too, don't you? We've known each other for so long and were nearly family once. You saw me work myself to the bone all these years. How could you think me capable of something like this?" Karina pleaded desperately.

That past regret still throbbed like an unhealed wound in Cyril's heart. His lingering affection for Karina stemmed not so much from longing, but an inability to get over what happened between them.

And thus he indulged her more than he should, at the expense of wounding Sylvia far deeper than he comprehended.

“I know you couldn’t be responsible for this mess. But to resolve it, we need hard proof of your innocence that day. Do you recall what you were doing then?” Cyril

asked in a more rational tone.

Coming up with such exonerating evidence wasn’t necessarily straightforward though.

At his lukewarm defense, Karina burst into tears. “So you still doubt me after all! Just because Sylvia said something, now you believe her over me? Fine – you want proof, I’ll die right here to prove myself if that’s what it takes for you to believe me!”

Her hysterical threat made Cyril frown in disbelief. How could anyone treat their own life as joke?

Just as he opened his mouth to retort, Karina suddenly lunged straight for the sharp stone corner cabinet. At that speed, a head collision would undoubtedly be fatal.

Cyril’s face drained of color. Even his mother screamed out in horror.

Only Sylvia remained unmoved, having expected this histrionic reaction from Karina. That woman valued her own skin far too much to actually harm herself – as proven by her earlier refusal to swear any oaths on her life.

In a few quick strides, Cyril seized Karina’s wrist though not before her head still cracked against the cabinet edge. Fortunately his grip prevented full impact.

Blood streamed down her face from the torn gash. Karina trembled uncontrollably, clearly terrified at her near brush with death. If Cyril had been just a second late...

“Karina, are you alright? How could you be so foolish?” Cyril held her in a crushing embrace, sick with panic.

Voice quavering, Karina murmured, “Now you must believe me...right?”

How could Cyril not believe in her innocence when she had resorted to such extremes just to prove herself? He nodded vigorously.

Observing their nauseating theatrics, Sylvia barely resisted the urge to slow clap sarcastically. What a performance indeed!

But the show was over and her role in it long ended. No need to overstay her welcome.

Except the players here seemed intent on detaining her a while longer for further torment. Each time Sylvia moved to leave, someone would call her back.

“I said, stay where you are!” Cyril bellowed.

The command tested the last shreds of Sylvia’s patience. Biting back a scathing retort, she asked flatly, “What more do you want?”

“You’ve pushed her to such desperate lengths. Don’t you have anything to say or do about it?” Cyril accused.

Sylvia’s eyebrows shot up incredulously. “Pushed her? Have you lost your mind? Anyone can see I had nothing to do with that unhinged stunt. Did I make her try to smash her own skull open? She chose that herself. So how is her botched suicide attempt suddenly my fault? If she had succeeded, would you call me a murderer next?”

“I’m saying this one last time – go get your head examined by a doctor since it’s clearly not working right. As for your claims that I harmed her, where’s your proof? If you have none, then at most I’ll do my civic duty and call an ambulance.”

That was the full extent of what Sylvia would contribute to this three–ring circus sideshow.

She took out her phone as if to dial emergency services while Cyril and his mother looked on.

“It’s an hour’s drive to the nearest hospital. By the time any doctor finally gets here after two hours total, she could already be dead!” Cyril argued frantically.

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Chapter 5 Homecoming

Sylvia gritted her teeth in sheer frustration. Nothing she suggested was good enough apparently.

“Then what the hell do you want from me?” she bit out.

“You drive!” Cyril barked as he gently lifted Karina and made for the door at top speed.

Sylvia stood frozen for a moment before his mother shoved her from behind.

“What are you still standing around for? If anything happens, I’d like to see you explain yourself!” she hissed spitefully. “It’s just awful luck whenever you’re involved.”

Studying her sour expression, Sylvia deduced his dear mother didn’t actually care much for Karina at all to be cursing her misfortune right now. Why else make such tactless remarks when the woman was injured?

Morbidly curious to see how this drama would unfold, Sylvia snatched up the car keys and slid into the driver’s seat.

En route to the hospital, Cyril was on the phone arranging for the best doctors to prioritize Karina’s care.

Sylvia had to bite back an incredulous laugh. Such VIP treatment for that tiny wound? If they had arrived any later, it would likely have healed on its own already.

But she held her sarcastic comments and soon pulled up at the hospital. Clearly forewarned, medical staff immediately swarmed their vehicle with a stretcher to whisk Karina straight into emergency surgery as if her life hung by a thread.

Seeing them steer towards the operating rooms made Sylvia raise a brow. My my, they were certainly going all out with the theatrics!

In under two hours, Karina emerged...with the doctor looking rather awkward.

Fretting only over her condition, Cyril didn’t notice his odd expression at all. “How is she, doctor? Will she fully recover?”

The doctor’s eye twitched slightly but he maintained a professional bedside manner. “The wounds were not actually that grievous. I believe you panicked unnecessarily.

We have stitched up the gashes and are running scans for possible concussion. results will be out within three hours so please be patient. As a precaution, she should remain under observation for now.”

Sylvia had to smother her snort of dark amusement. Just as she expected. If they had brought Karina in even later, her scratch likely would have already closed up on

its own.

Clearly the medical staff also had no idea how to face Cyril with such a minor injury after two hours of emergency surgery. So they deliberately dragged out the procedure instead.

Profoundly relieved, Cyril hurried after Karina's stretcher towards the ward without so much as a glance back at Sylvia.

Though she couldn't deny the jagged pain from being disregarded by the man she had loved for years, Sylvia remained silent as she watched them leave. Her grief threatened to overwhelm her.

Just then her phone rang, the caller ID making her breath catch in turmoil.

The call eventually went to voicemail as Sylvia struggled internally on whether to answer it. When it immediately rang again, she took a deep breath and picked up.

"Big brother..." she whispered hoarsely.

"It's time for you to come home," his long unheard voice echoed firmly.

At the sound of her beloved brother reaching out after three bitter years of

estrangement from her family, tears flooded Sylvia's eyes. She had assumed that divide could never be bridged.

But blood bonds ran deeper than anything else in this world. Hearing her brother's voice left Sylvia choking back emotions.

"Okay..." she managed tremulously.

Cyril kept vigil outside Karina's room until she finally stirred awake.

The first thing Karina did was ask about Sylvia's whereabouts.

"This clearly had nothing to do with Sylvia. Please talk to her properly? I swear wasn't involved.

Cyril bristled in annoyance. "Even now you're still defending her? What nonsense has she filled your head with? If she's really innocent, why did she run off right after your accident?"

His temper worsened when Sylvia was reported to have already left the premises while he was preoccupied with Karina's injuries.

More damning scandal surrounding Karina popped up on his phone then. The relentless media leaks seemed aimed at destroying her hard won career.

There was no way Cyril could stand by and let that happen. In his mind, the culprit behind Karina's downfall could only be Sylvia. But now he had no idea where to even find her.

Karina gazed beseechingly at Cyril. "I still believe Sylvia had nothing to do with this. But even if she was responsible, I'm willing to forgive her. This is really all because of me – if I had kept my distance from you, none of this would have happened. We're both women after all. It's only natural she would be unhappy to see me appearing in your life again."

Cyril shook his head obstinately. "Stop making excuses for her. She's clearly in the wrong here."

He refused to listen to anything that might absolve Sylvia of guilt in his eyes.

Karina opened her mouth but said nothing more, secretly delighted at this outcome. Seeing her downcast expression, Cyril gentled his voice. "Just focus on resting for now. The doctor wants you under observation for any potential complications. I'll handle everything else so don't you worry. I definitely won't let your career take this kind of hit."

Karina's eyes lit up at his reassurance, mingled with unmistakable love.

But Cyril looked away, unable to directly meet her gaze. Some matters were better left unspoken.

Murmuring some excuse about urgent business, he quickly took his leave.

The moment he was gone, Karina's facade of weakness vanished, replaced by a Mclous glint.

Thinking of those online scandals, fury simmered within her. If Cyril ever discovered her Involvement, she would be finished. Her only recourse was to find some way to clear her own name from this mess.