

After Divorce, She Becomes the Billionaire Heiress

(Sylvia and Cyril) Chapter 51-60

Released on April 27, 2024

Chapter 51 Unacceptable

Cyril was a little shocked to see Karina there. His eyes involuntarily darted to the blanket – nothing wrong, nothing happened last night. That’s a relief.

Cyril’s movement was a bit abrupt, and it woke Karina up. She rubbed her eyes and sat up to

face him.

“Last night, I came to look for you and found you asleep at the bar, so I brought you up here,” Karina explained straight away, her tone casual as if recounting a simple fact. “I wanted to leave, but you kept holding onto me. I couldn’t do anything about it.”

Karina was actually quite frustrated. She had hoped for something to happen last night, but Cyril hadn’t given her the chance. However, there wasn’t much she could do about it now.

She needed to maintain some level of significance in Cyril’s life, so she had to find a way to make him think they had some kind of connection.

Feeling a tad embarrassed by Karina’s explanation, Cyril couldn’t believe he had clung to her. But the person he vividly remembered seeing last night was Sylvia, not Karina. Shaking his head, he decided not to dwell on it any further.

“Oh, I see,” Cyril said, trying to hide his awkwardness.

“I’ve got work to do, so I should head out. And you should head home too. Things have and mostly settled; still, you should consider going abroad. It’s a better fit for your career, staying here might give people the chance to hold things against you for the next couple of years.”

Deep down, Cyril knew the issues in his marriage to Sylvia were largely linked to Karina, something he hadn’t realized before. He wasn’t quite clear on his motives, but he guessed he just wanted some things to gradually get back on track.

Karina froze, feeling a sharp sting at his words. Was Cyril pushing her away? The decision seemed final and out of her hands. Grinding her teeth, she replied, “I can’t leave just yet. International pop star, Barker, is coming for a concert soon, and my

company wants me to be a guest star. It might give me a boost, whether I stay here or go abroad.”

“I need to wrap up my work here before I can consider leaving. If I don’t, I’ll owe the company a lot of money, and I don’t want to trouble you any further.”

Cyril paused, then, without rejecting her reasoning, he simply agreed, “Okay.”

Karina’s face could barely muster a smile. Cyril seemed heartless on one hand, but on the other, he was still looking out for her reputation. Yet if he really cared, he wouldn’t be

61

Cyril dressed and left, his clothes still reeking of last night’s drinks. He decided to go home, take a shower, and change before heading to work.

As for Karina, she had made the story up on the spot without much thought. The idea of her actually becoming Barker’s guest artist seemed daunting. Everyone knew Barker had a strong character, and the company couldn’t really control him due to the massive success he brought them.

Gritting her teeth, Karina realized since she had spoken, she must find a way to truly become a part of Barker’s concert, or else she truly would have to leave. Gaining Barker’s support would be ideal.

Karina immediately called her manager, who had been dealing with her mess. Upon hearing her voice, the manager was irate.

“Why are you calling me? Don’t you think you’ve caused enough trouble? Do you have any idea how much I’ve had to smooth things over because of you? From now on, you better behave. If you stir up one more problem, I don’t care who’s behind you, I’m done with you for good.”

Karina was stunned by her manager’s harsh words but was resolute in her request. “Can you get me on stage with Barker? If I pull that off, Cyril might continue to support me.”

The manager couldn’t help but burst into laughter. “Do you think you’re that important? Barker doesn’t need you! He controls the company and can boost any of the numerous talents under him. Why would he choose you, wrapped up in scandals?”

“And you think that simply performing with Barker will make Cyril divorce Sylvia? If you can pull it off, go ahead. But otherwise, don’t bother me with impossible favors.”

Karina was deeply uncomfortable with her manager's mocking tone but knew she had little choice. "You'd better find a way, or else I'll tell Cyril everything. Even if he's losing patience with me, he should know that you forced me into this, and you played a part too. Let's see if he lets you off the hook then." 1

The manager panicked at the thought of Cyril finding out. This risk could spell the end of his career. He gritted his teeth and said with finality, "Fine, you've pushed me far enough. This is the last time I'll help you. But even if it works, I'm not promising anything. This might be the end of our contract."

Released on April 28, 2024

Chapter 52 Just Anybody?

Katrina's agent really didn't want to help her. He was well aware of the trouble she had stirred up and that assisting her might tank his own career in the industry. But at the same time, he knew that most of the messes Katrina found herself in were actually orchestrated by the company and him. Katrina always had her eyes on the prize, clawing her way to the top was her main objective, and that's why she had gotten her hands dirty in the first place.

she was,

after

Bulk me after him that

all, just a fading starlet on the He wasn't really scared of Katrina herself brink of oblivion. It was her potential to spill the beans on Cyril and really worried him. And yet, if Katrina could team up with Bulk, maybe there was one last chance to exploit her fame... 1

While Bulk wasn't known for being a pushover, the agent couldn't shake the thought that maybe just maybe—it was worth a shot to try and negotiate something. Bulk was stubborn and set in his ways, after all. If he found out they wanted to pair him with Katrina, a non-professional singer, he surely wouldn't be thrilled.

Pondering the situation gave the agent a headache, but eventually, he decided he had no choice but to dial up Bulk's rep and test the waters. Agents had each other's numbers, so reaching Bulk's agent, Mike, wasn't unusual. Everyone knew that partnering with Bulk required the man's own approval, and without it, any dealings were dead in the water.

"Hello, what's up?" Mike answered, his tone far from inviting.

Since joining the business, Mike had forged a path from obscurity to a top-tier agent, always at Bulk's side, climbing to a rank where he was second to none.

—

she's eyeing "I'm sorry to bother you, Mr. Mike. It's about Katrina's concert appearances Bulk's upcoming show. Given her clout in the showbiz, I'm sure you realize a collaboration could be beneficial for both..."

Mike cut him off before he could finish.

"Hold your horses. You seem to be misunderstanding something. If Bulk is to collaborate, it's got to be with another singer. You think we're just waiting for anyone from showbiz to waltz into Bulk's concert like some sort of charity case?"

—

Back in the day, stars from all corners especially film and TV – wanted to hop on the Bulk express, and it grated on him. Bulk had a rule: only real singers allowed on his stage. Otherwise, were they coming to collaborate, or were they coming to mess things up?

The agent, sensing the growing awkwardness, tried to play it off, "Well, you see, before moving to TV, Katrina actually started out as a singer. It's just that she realized her talents

were more suited for acting..."

"Cut the crap," Mike snapped, "She just found out she can't sing. If that's all you've got, then I don't see a point in talking further."

With that, Mike hung up. Who did they think they were, thinking they could work with Bulk without even fulfilling the basic criteria? It was a joke.

After the call ended abruptly, Mike, fuming, threw his phone on the ground. The name Katrina rang a bell. He seemed to remember someone mentioning it to him before.

Curious, he searched Katrina's name online, and what he found

"ade his stomach turn.

she must've been at her wit's end.

No wonder she wanted a collaboration so desperately – she

was happily writing songs, apparently sailing

Mike didn't waste any time finding Bulk, who away from his troubles. Mike knew Bulk's family background, and so when he heard that Bulk's sister had gotten a divorce, he

wasn't just surprised; he was pleased. Why should such an amazing woman stay with a lousy guy?

"Someone called about a collab at your upcoming concert," Mike relayed.

Bulk, in a good mood, glanced over, "Who's looking to team up? You know my rule – they gotta be a singer first."

"It's Katrina."

"Any Tom, Dick, or Harry wants to work with me now? Who is this Katrina?..."

Bulk was about to lose temper, but then the name clicked. Seeing Mike's expectant look, Bulk knew why. Fiercely protective of his sister, how could he just let it slide when she had been wronged?

"Ah, it's her. Let her come. I want to see who's bold enough to have messed with my sister."

A sinister smile spread across Bulk's face, and seeing his reaction, Mike knew Katrina was in for trouble. He actually relished informing Bulk, knowing it would spell disaster for her.

"So, it's settled? I'll make the arrangements for her guest appearance. Anything else you need me to prepare?"

With a nod, Bulk gave the go-ahead, "Get my brother to dig up some dirt on that woman. I want solid proof. If she dared to mess with my sister, she's about to learn what it feels like to be called out in public."

Bulk's laugh was cold as ice. Anyone who crossed him learned that the hard way. If it weren't for Sylvia's stubbornness, he'd have acted sooner.

Chapter 52 Just Anybody?

3/3

Mike left to make the preparations, dialing up Bruce to get the ball rolling. Katrina's storm was just starting to brew.

Released on April 28, 2024

Chapter 53 Bruce's Arrangement

Sylvia had been nailing it at work lately, despite the fact that her efforts to outdo Cyril in business were making her workload skyrocket. Yet, she couldn't help but revel in the

whole affair; giving Cyril a taste of his discomfort after years of her own was oddly satisfying.

—

Stepping out of a meeting, Sylvia received a call from Bulk – she hadn't spoken to him since her chat with Bruce about attending Bulk's concert. It seemed neither had reached out since their last encounter, and considering they hadn't communicated in over three years Sylvia decided to get married it felt odd receiving a sudden call from her brother. Sylvia's heart raced with anxiety, unsure whether to answer or ignore the call.

Juliet strolled by just then, finding Sylvia's panic-straight face. "What's up? You look so tense. Something wrong?"

Sylvia handed Juliet her phone, completely at a loss, "What should I do? Should I answer or not? What if he yells at me?"

"Isn't that kind of normal for your older brother, especially about your marriage? You know how much he disapproved," Juliet countered.

Sylvia opened her mouth but had no comeback. What Juliet said was kind of like a punch in the gut, but not entirely incorrect. With a heavy sigh, Sylvia answered just before it went to voicemail.

Bulk's voice came through, laced with sarcasm: "Whoa, playing hard to get? Someone might mistake you for some high and mighty heiress."

Knowing her brother was still peeved, probably at her for answering late, Sylvia scrambled, "I'm sorry, okay? I messed up. Just tell me what you need."

Taking a deep breath and lowering her guard, Sylvia went into apology mode. Push-back was not an option unless she wanted to suffer the fallout.

"All right, let's cut to the chase. I heard about the divorce. Now that you've improved your judgment, I've set you up on a blind date. He's already on his way, and you better not stand him up or I'll deal with you. Remember the mess from three years back? That's still not settled," Bulk's ultimatum left Sylvia's head spinning.

"Bro, can we talk this through? That was my bad, but you can't keep hanging it over my head," Sylvia tried to reason. She had just escaped one matrimonial disaster only to be ushered towards another blind date by her brother?

"I don't think your plan is appropriate," she finally mustered the courage to say, practically

risking her life by defying him.

Bulk's voice gained a playful edge, "Too bad, I've already invited him over, and if you bail, Dad will find out. He'll make you go anyway. Your move."

"You're serious?" Sylvia stared wide-eyed at her phone. Inviting the guy home complicated

things – implications? It would practically hand her father just what

did Bulk not realize the he wanted, someone to marry her off to at the earliest.

Bulk laughed. "So, are you in or out? If you're not going, be my guest and explain to Dad yourself."

Sylvia clenched her teeth, "Fine, I'll go. But can you at least call him off? If Dad's up because of you, that's on you to fix."

gets wound

"I was just bluffing! He's not at the house. The location's set; I'll text you the address. Go and have a decent chat, got it?"

What choice did Sylvia have? Bulk had spoken, and he was clearly out for a little sibling revenge for past grievances.

Reluctantly, Sylvia agreed. But shock hit her when she saw who she was meeting – none other than Mike, Bulk's right-hand man, looking as awkward as ever. She knew precisely why – Bulk was playing matchmaker with his own motives in mind.

Sylvia could hardly contain her annoyance. "Really? He sends his own right-hand man to meet with me? This is too much. And does your being here mean he'll be showing up too?"

Mike didn't play coy, "Yeah, he's on his way. Maybe even home already. As for why I'm here... I'm sure you can guess."

KR

Sylvia exhaled in resignation. It was just like Bulk to pull something like this a classic revenge move.

"I'm so mad. What's he trying to pull now? What's next on his agenda?" Sylvia demanded, knowing full well her brother had more than just this meet-up planned.

Sometimes, big brother's arrangements were more troublesome than the problems they

were meant to solve.

Released on April 28, 2024

Chapter 54 The Same Old Refrain

Bulk knew his sister well enough to orchestrate this meeting, but not to set her up on a blind date. After one bad marriage, he had no desire to push her into another. Instead, he felt she should remain safe at home, inheriting the family company. With their brothers to protect her, she could live a blissful

life.

Mike recalled Bulk's words before leaving the house that day and felt a headache coming on. "Here's the deal: Bulk didn't arrange any business for you. He just mentioned that he'll be starting his concert tour next month and wants you there. He's got you a front-row seat.

And well, that night your identity might be revealed Bulk's been lately, a bit... hesitant, you know."

that you're his sister. You know how

Although Bulk had insisted on privacy at the beginning of his career, not wanting his sister caught in the limelight, that incident three years back had really set him off, driving him to want to pull her into his fold more than ever.

Sylvia couldn't help but chuckle at the absurdity – there was nothing much to fuss about, her identity would come out eventually.

"Okay, I got it. Is there anything else?"

After pausing, Mike decided to give Sylvia a heads-up even though he hadn't planned on telling her. "There's another thing. Yesterday, Katrina's agent called me, hoping to set her up as a guest at the concert. I initially refused, but Bulk agreed. It seems he's doing this to vent your anger toward her."

1

Mike didn't mention that Bulk had already collected all sorts of dirt on Katrina, intent on bringing her down. It was all to shield Sylvia; she didn't need to know the details, just that Bulk had been harboring a grudge against Katrina for a long time.

Sylvia blinked in disbelief. She hadn't expected her brother to go to such lengths.

“Katrina attending Bulk’s concert as a guest? Doesn’t she know her limits? Barely managing acting, now she wants to show up at a concert?”

Regardless of her confusion, Bulk had made his decision. And the purpose of this concert wasn’t to mingle with the likes of Katrina.

“I mean, using his concert to drag Katrina down... Isn’t that a bit much? Bulk’s a global superstar; he doesn’t need to stoop so low.”

Despite feeling it might not be worth the fallout, Sylvia considered whether she should try

Chapter 54 The Same Old Refrain

2/3

convincing Bulk otherwise. But considering how he hadn’t calmed down since that incident three years ago, would he even listen?

“You know how hardheaded your brother is. Once he’s decided, there’s no changing his mind. He’s already confirmed with them, probably going to officially announce it next week or just before the concert. I don’t know why Katrina is doing this, but Bulk will not let this I chance to teach her a lesson slip by. He has always been willful. This isn’t the first time he’s

stirred the pot.”

Her friend’s words rang true.

“Sylvia, what are you doing?”

In the midst of her thoughts about Bulk’s plans, Sylvia was interrupted by an angry voice behind her. Turning, she saw Cyril approaching with Jonathan trailing behind, wearing a look of eager anticipation to see Sylvia’s misfortune.

G

Sylvia was at a loss for words why did she bump into Cyril and Jonathan everywhere she went? And every time, Cyril seemed to forget that they no longer had anything to do with

each other.

“What are you doing? Do you know who this is? You’re here dining with him, are you that desperate to associate with anyone?”

Cyril could hardly contain his fury. Even though he knew Sylvia's presence here could merely be a friend's meetup or something of that sort, the sight of her with another man ignited a possessive rage as if something precious was being snatched away.

"Are you crazy? Who I associate with is none of your business. We have nothing to do with each other anymore. Let's get this straight – we're divorced. I am free to socialize or befriend whoever I want. If you can't handle it, I wouldn't mind teaching you a lesson, in

case Jonathan's teachable moments weren't clear enough."

Sylvia wondered if Cyril was just unbearable with a free schedule after she snagged that project from him. Why else would he be so obsessed with her?

Cyril paled, confronted again with the reality that they had no relationship. Yet, when she repeated those words, it still unsettled him; they didn't have to be foes.

"You're doing this on purpose, aren't you? Just because you can't stand what Jonathan is doing. He's apologized. If there's anything you're unsatisfied with, I'm sure we can..."

"What can you do, compensate me? If I was after your money, why did I leave without taking a dime in the divorce? You know all I wanted was to escape our relationship, and

Chapter 54 The Same Old Refrain

nothing more."

Sylvia laid out her stance with a steely glare. Did Cyril honestly think she was in need of money? Not likely. If there was anything Sylvia wasn't lacking, it was bucks.

Released on April 28, 2024

Chapter 55 The Offer to Stay

After their confrontation, Cy aivo

abruptly realized Sylvia might truly be penniless since her and even after their divorce, she hadn't asked for a single penny from him. In fact, his family's near brawl over the compensation they assumed they owed to Sylvia was laughable, considering she had left empty-handed, taking nothing with her. Compared to his family's behavior, it seemed almost ridiculous, and Cyril didn't know how to face Sylvia anymore, knowing he might not have done anything wrong.

time

on

me, maybe

“You can’t even articulate a response,” Sylvia sneered, “Stop talking and just stay home, will you? There’s nothing between us anymore. Instead of wasting your me, you should figure out your own issues.”

“Instead of bothering me, why not help Katrina? I hear she’s practically crawling to get on Bulk’s concert lineup. After all she’s done for you, you’re wasting energy hassling me? Seems a bit heartless, doesn’t it?” Sylvia’s comments caught Cyril off guard. He wasn’t aware that news of Bulk’s concert had reached her.

Cyril, who didn’t know Mike or his relationship with Bulk, mistakenly thought Sylvia had gotten the scoop from Katrina herself. He’d inadvertently discovered the messages Katrina kept sending to Sylvia over the years, and the photos led him to believe there was something more between them, though there wasn’t. Frustrated and unable to stand the situation any longer, Cyril walked away, and Jonathan hastily followed, without uttering a word and leaving much unsaid.

As Sylvia and Mike sat back in the peacefulness of the restaurant, Mike mused about something he’d heard: Katrina was planning to move abroad. “This must be Cyril’s way of giving her an out. Perhaps he’ll use this opportunity to negotiate terms with her. She’s staying put, after all. It sounds to me like she’s burned too many bridges domestically and her agency’s ready to drop her.”

Mike thought about Katrina’s infamy and how the agency had a notorious reputation for pressuring their talent into unsavory acts. Mike dared not share this with Sylvia for fear of how Bulk might react.

“That’s interesting,” Sylvia mused. “If she wants to stick around, let them be together. They can stay out of other people’s business.”

Once Sylvia returned home, she found Bulk lounging, far from his superstar persona. As she dropped her bag and faced him, Bulk, avoiding eye contact, turned his back to her, signalling his desire to remain silent.

Sylvia laughed, frustrated. “Hey, listen, you don’t get to just ignore me. If you have

Chapter 55 The Offer to Stay

something to do with me, why send Mike? Why can’t you speak to me yourself?”

2/2

Bulk, visibly annoyed, finally turned around. “And you, who do you think you are? After your marriage, you cut ties with me. What makes you think you’re important enough to talk to me now?”

The tense atmosphere took them back to the argument they had three years prior, making Sylvia nearly lose it.

“Still hung up on that, are you? Yes, I messed up, but do you really have to keep bringing it up? It’s making me think my decision back then was incredibly foolish.” Her expressions shifted, eliciting a chuckle from Bulk.

—

“Oh, now even you can’t stand the things you did back then. Look, I’m not holding it against you I’ll pin it all on Katrina. At the concert, make sure you perform well. Don’t just go off with any man who sweet-talks you. Remember, you’re the youngest daughter and the heir to the Ivans. Don’t act foolish and get lost in flattery, alright?”

Struggling with her pride, Sylvia had to admit she was in no position to argue, not with the actions of the past years under scrutiny.

“I was wrong, okay?” Sylvia said, exasperated, knowing Bulk wouldn’t let her off the hook easily once he returned.

“Sure, admitting your fault is a start. Just follow my arrangement at the concert, and I’ll forgive you. You’ll join me for a song. If you don’t show up, all bets are off.”

Sylvia’s heart sank hearing Bulk’s proposition. Singing on stage with Bulk? She’d never survive being swamped by his fans.

Released on April 29, 2024

Chapter 56 The New Song

Bulk was fully prepared for his upcoming concert, for which he had composed two new songs. These songs

celebrated his sister Sylvia’s newly found freedom from her troubled marriage. When Mike saw the lyrics, he couldn’t help but frown.

“Although I know you wrote these songs to celebrate your sister’s divorce, don’t you think the lyrics are a bit too pointed? Calling her ex-husband a beast seems a bit much, no?” Mike questioned.

Bulk glanced at Mike and huffed, “Whose side are you on, anyway? If you’re with me, then don’t question it. I wrote these songs to rub it in his face. If you have a problem, keep it shut.

家里

Mike knew all too well about his boss's stubbornness. Bulk wouldn't listen to anyone else,

and seeing the controversial lyrics had Mike worried.

"What about the music? How are you planning to write it, or are you bringing in someone

else?"

Bulk revealed his plans smoothly, "I'll have Sylvia do it. The first songs she wrote were great, so why not let her compose the music for these two? Is there an issue with that?"

Mike was taken aback. Writing a song that implied criticism about her ex-husband was one thing, but having her compose the music was quite another, and seemed overly simplistic in its cruelty.

Two days later, Mike received a call from Sylvia.

"You're sure my brother doesn't want any changes to these lyrics?" she asked, baffled that their severed relationship warranted songs with such content.

Mike grimaced, realizing just how raw the lyrics were when faced with Sylvia's questioning.

"If you can get your brother to change his mind, I'd be grateful," he confessed. "I think the lyrics are too harsh, but you know Bulk won't listen to me. It's best if you try talking to him."

Sylvia sighed, knowing full well the futility of such an endeavor, but decided to accept the songs as they were. If it meant releasing Bulk's lingering resentment and moving on, so be it.

The songs came together quickly with Sylvia focused on composing the music. She spent two full days perfecting the melodies.

Juliet laughed about the situation, "I about died when I heard you were tasked with composing these songs! Who would've thought Bulk could strong-arm you like this?"

Kelly hadn't seen the lyrics, but she knew Bulk well enough to expect nothing ordinary from

this concert.

"Aren't you gonna try convincing him?" Juliet prodded.

“If I could, I would,” Sylvia replied resignedly, “but let’s be honest, the lyrics basically speak the truth.”

With the conversation shifting, Kelly reminded Sylvia about an upcoming party Miranda and Duncan were throwing, to which Sylvia nodded, aware that their return after years abroad was a source of both excitement and trepidation.

Juliet eagerly looked forward to their return, “They left so abruptly, refusing even a goodbye, and now they’re finally returning. When do they get back? We should go pick them up at the airport!”

The backstory was that Duncan and Miranda, twins, were part of Sylvia’s childhood. Duncan, in particular, had hidden feelings for Sylvia, and his decision to study abroad was partially in a bid to escape his unrequited love. Now, with Sylvia’s divorce news, perhaps Duncan saw a

second chance.

Juliet teased Sylvia about Duncan’s past affections, which Sylvia quickly dismissed, striving to maintain their friendship without complicating it further.

With her business to run and the weight of her family’s legacy on her shoulders, Sylvia knew romance was a distraction she couldn’t afford. Kelly and Juliet could only sigh in agreement. For now, stability was Sylvia’s priority.

Released on April 29, 2024

Chapter 57 Talent Scout

They popped into their favorite little lounge bar with the live house band setting up to play. The trio were regulars here, so the owner gave them a friendly nod as they slumped into a cozy booth in the main hall instead of opting for a private room.

Heads turned as the stunning trio walked in; they were used to the attention and shrugged it off with ease.

“So, what do you think?” Juliet pondered, remembering something important, “When your brother’s back in town and his concert’s all set, we should totally snag some tickets.”

“When have I ever let you down with tickets? Don’t worry, you’ll get them,” was the reassuring reply.

Their eyes drifted to the band warming up. Juliet pointed at the lead singer, "If I remember correctly, wasn't that guy on the keyboard before? What's he doing as the lead now? Did the old singer leave?"

Kelly, familiar with the scene, quipped, "Yeah, their former lead took off with another group last month, leaving them shorthanded. This guy's got the best chops of the bunch, so he stepped up to the mic."

Juliet turned to Sylvia, "Hey, how about you give it a shot? With your brother being who he is, I bet he'll want more than just a new song from you. You might end up singing a duet."

Sylvia's eyes widened in utter disbelief. Juliet chuckled, caught off guard by her own guess which turned out startlingly accurate. "Wanna give it a try first?"

Sylvia mulled it over but dismissed the idea. "Nah, my brother's the main act, not me. I've had my share of the spotlight," she reasoned.

"But come on, perform a couple of songs for them. Notice how their eyes are practically glued to you? You used to help them out with a song or two back in the day," Juliet nudged.

Back when they used to hang out here more frequently, they had watched the band for years. Sylvia occasionally got the itch to perform, and whenever she did, the place would make a killing.

While Juliet and Sylvia were talking, Kelly noticed something off about the band members on stage, a single glance screaming untold stories. They weren't running a charity here; patience for problems wasn't in abundant supply.

But because they knew each other, Kelly mentioned it. Catching the eye of the lead singer, a connection was made, and Sylvia felt a sudden urge to stand.

As she approached the stage, the excitement among the band was palpable—they had thought Sylvia wouldn't bother with them anymore, not after so many years. But here she was, ready to step up.

Once on stage, Sylvia took the mic, and the regular lead humbly returned to his keys. The crowd was always here for a good time, not particularly fussed with who was performing. But swapping in a more glamorous lead singer definitely captured their attention.

It's a lounge bar, a classy joint. Nothing outrageous would happen here, everyone was just getting their dose of surprise entertainment.

Sylvia figured singing someone else's songs could be complicated and decided to perform her brother's hits instead. The band, having backed her up countless times, knew exactly what to expect and played along perfectly. As the music started, the crowd ignited in anticipation of Bulk's famed tracks.

Bulk, a global megastar, had a massive fan following. And right here in this lounge bar, they could feel the magnitude of his stardom through just a song's intro. As Sylvia began to sing, her exquisite voice filled the room. The song, one she had crafted for Bulk, resonated perfectly with the audience, fans or not, stirring excitement all around.

"Wow, that's Bulk's pull for you—electrifying every room, like we're at his concert or something!" someone marveled as Sylvia single-handedly took the lounge's vibe to new heights.

The owner, recognizing the familiar voice, hurried out from his office. Seeing Sylvia on stage, he nodded in understanding—no wonder it's become so lively all of a sudden.

After blessing the bar with two of Bulk's songs, Sylvia stepped down to a ripple of questions, confirming to the curious that indeed, she was a devoted fan. Within half an hour, she'd exchanged contacts with at least twenty new friends, all bonded by their love for Bulk.

Cornered by the crowd, Kelly and Juliet watched, amused at Sylvia's newfound popularity.

Finally, when the last of the excited fans dissipated, Sylvia, just about to quench her thirst, was approached by a gentleman with glasses.

"Hello, ma'am, I'm Harold, a talent scout. I saw your performance—that was something special. Ever thought about breaking into the entertainment industry? With your talent, I can assure you could make waves in the music world—your success could match even Bulk's,

he proposed, seeing star potential in Sylvia's casual showcase.

Released on April 29, 2024

Chapter 58 Once a Street Punk

After hearing Harold's words, Sylvia and the other two sat in silence. This was new territory for them – Sylvia just came here to have fun, a break from the daily grind. She couldn't help but laugh at the idea. If she didn't have a job, maybe, just maybe, she'd consider such an enticing offer.

"Sir, I think you got one thing wrong," Sylvia finally spoke. "Outshining Bulk isn't a walk in the park. First off, matching his talent is a tall order, and don't even get me started on

his looks – he’s got universal appeal. Plus, each of his songs has its own composer, and you know the legend he works with. So, to match Bulk’s achievements, you’ll need a team even stronger than his. Do you have that?”

Harold beamed, “Of course, our boss is Bulk himself!”

This revelation threw the three women into deeper silence.

Seeing their confusion, Harold was puzzled until Sylvia burst into laughter.

“If you work for Bulk, then any collaboration between us is even less likely. First, Bulk would never let me enter showbiz. And second, maybe you should get to know his family tree a bit better.”

Harold was lost. “I’m sorry, I’ve only been on the job for a week. I don’t understand what you mean. Could you explain?”

Sylvia smiled. “You might want to ask your seniors at the company. I’m sure they’d love to

on.” clear things up for you. Thanks for the chat today, but I’ve got my own career to focus on.

As the party disbanded, each went their separate ways. Sylvia, who used to rock through all- nighters with ease, felt dizzy heading to work after just one late night.

“Why am I so tired after getting home before ten? I can’t seem to find the energy,” Sylvia pondered out loud.

Juliet, feeling sluggish herself, replied, “Right? But hey, we got a partnership to talk about today. You ready?”

Sylvia nodded with surety, “Don’t sweat it. We’ll land this deal. The CEO and I he’ll do me this solid. Plus, we’re their best bet.”

go way back

This new company they planned to partner with was just getting off the ground, and folks were wary due to the CEO’s shady past. So the alliance was a shocker. Juliet kept asking why, but Sylvia played coy, telling her to wait until they met him.

Arriving at the conference room, the CEO from the new company was already waiting. Their past hiccups in business meant trust was low, and survival was at stake. Just keeping the company afloat was a struggle, let alone managing a staff dependent on their paychecks.

After an anxious hour, Sylvia strolled in, apologizing for the delay caused by a road accident. Her tardiness signaled how much they valued this partnership.

“No worries at all,” their counterparts assured. “Now, shall we dive into the partnership details?”

Settling down opposite them, Ward from the new company suddenly recognized Sylvia. Shocked, he recalled how she used to be a little street punk, and now here she was, engaging in corporate dealings.

Sylvia noticed Ward’s realization and chuckled, “Long time, huh? You went from street punk to CEO. I believe in your company’s potential, which is why I’m here. But we need better terms if you want to make this contract happen.”

Ward, staking his fortune on this, pleaded his case. He promised meticulous work nobody else could match, vowing only top-tier products, given his own family’s background.

He looked at Sylvia earnestly, all cards on the table, in this high-stakes corporate gamble.

Released on April 29, 2024

Chapter 59 Fair Competition... Yeah Right

Sylvia understood why Ward was so insistent. His parents had died in a house collapse due to shoddy construction, so now that he was in charge, he’d never allow such a tragedy to happen again. Sylvia trusted him completely.

“I trust you to handle this, and I’m willing to give you this chance. Just don’t let me down,” Sylvia said with a smile. Ward let out a sigh of relief but then Sylvia posed another question.

“I heard you were approached by another new company yesterday morning. They’re not in construction, but tech—more aligned with what our company might be interested in for the future. If we were to enter tech development, who would you choose to partner with?”

Sylvia knew about this because Cyril’s company, notorious for their astuteness, was the one wanting to collaborate with Ward. Now she was curious – under these circumstances, who would Ward choose?

Ward caught the hidden meaning in Sylvia’s question – was there a hint of competition, even a whiff of hostility? In front of everyone, Ward knew he couldn’t be explicit, so he stayed vague.

“Even though we’re small, I believe in fair competition. If the Ivans can offer more, no one would refuse a partnership with them.”

But honestly, Ward thought, was there any real choice? There was no genuine competition – his loyalty was squarely with Sylvia.

Sylvia grinned, thrilled by Ward’s answer. “Good, I hope we have more chances to collaborate. Don’t disappoint. A decision that could revive your company isn’t a bad one at

all.”

Relieved, Ward was glad Sylvia wasn’t fixating on the potential conflict of interest.

With that, Ward’s team left and Sylvia headed off with Juliet. Midway, Juliet received a call from an unfamiliar number—it was Cyril’s assistant.

“What’s this about?” Juliet asked.

“We’d like to discuss a partnership. Your company is moving into autonomous driving technology, and we have mature solutions in that domain. If we team up, both sides stand to gain,” the assistant proposed.

Juliet couldn’t help but laugh. Their company indeed planned to venture into autonomous driving, but who’s to say they needed Cyril’s team? Still, in business, direct refusal wasn’t always wise, so she kept her response open.

Chapter 59 Fair Competition... Yeah Right

2/2

“I’ll pass

this on to my boss. If you’re serious about collaborating, I expect you’ll be prepared,” Juliet said before ending the call.

“What’s up?” Sylvia inquired.

“It’s Cyril’s lot. They want to partner on driverless tech, but I’m puzzled—didn’t Cyril’s company already start a project and secure a partner? Why suddenly propose collaboration with us?” Juliet wondered.

“Because their chosen partner was flagged for dishonesty, and their deal fell through. Now Cyril needs to find a replacement quickly and the Ivans are venturing into the same

tech. Hence, the call to us. But something doesn't feel right, I'll have to check with my brother," Sylvia explained, aware of the morning's fresh news.

"Surely you don't think your brother's behind this?" Juliet expressed disbelief. Bruce always fought fair and square in business.

Sylvia chuckled. "If you don't believe it, then you might not really know my brother. Behind his shiny facade lie maneuvers not meant for daylight. It's likely his doing, so please check with him."

Juliet shook her head, trusting Bruce wouldn't stoop to such levels.

Sylvia almost laughed out loud at her naivety. "Okay, have it your way. But don't come crying to me when you find out you've been played by the big bad wolf!"

Released on April 29, 2024

Chapter 60 It's You

Sylvia led a surprise visit to Ward's company with her team in tow. Ward was caught off-guard, in the midst of a meeting about securing the partnership, when he was told Sylvia and her entourage had come to assess the place. The stakes were clear: pass the inspection and the partnership would proceed; fail, and it was all over.

Ward was anxious, having no idea what Sylvia planned to inspect. He trailed behind her, watching nervously as she examined everything scrupulously, even plucking leaves from the potted plants they passed. Once they settled in the office, Sylvia didn't press about the partnership. Instead, she casually inquired about how things had been and what they had been discussing earlier.

Ward explained everything candidly. There was a time when, as a street punk, he had run into Sylvia's brothers and endured a heavy reprimand from them. Since then, he'd known Sylvia wasn't someone to be taken lightly.

"Can you give it to me straight? If there's something about what we do that you're not impressed with, you can tell me. I can handle it," Ward finally said, bordering on desperation.

Sylvia paused, then laughed softly. "Calm down. The partnership will continue. I'm here to see for myself what's going on. Frankly, compared to other companies the Ivans work with, you're small. But I'm willing to give you a chance. The plan you submitted impressed me, and that's why I'm here. Now, you need to convince not just me, but the critics I've brought along. And let me warn you—they're excellent at finding faults. If you can handle them, consider our partnership secure.

Ward knew his company wasn't the usual caliber Sylvia partnered with, but her willingness to give them this chance spurred him on. He was ready to give it his all.

After the meeting, as Ward busied himself addressing the feedback, Sylvia stepped out to make a call to Bruce. They'd received news this morning that Cyril wanted to partner with Ward, and Sylvia was determined not to let Cyril secure the deal without a fight. Besides, why should Cyril get first dibs on working with Ward?

Perhaps there was a hint of retaliation in her actions; after all, the past three years hadn't been easy. It wouldn't sit right with her to just let bygones be bygones without making things at least a bit difficult for Cyril.

Sylvia's next stop was to check out the rest of the company. Despite its modest size, the overall vibe was promising.

Juliet arrived late, carrying a stack of documents which she handed to Sylvia. "This is from your brother. There's an inspection at the mall this afternoon, and he wants you to oversee it," Juliet explained. The files detailed a promotional event featuring Sylvia's second brother, aiming to make a splash with this year's concert by starting with today's showcase.

Realizing that this meant her brother was expecting a large turnout, Sylvia couldn't help but dread the chaos that might ensue. No wonder Bruce wanted her to be there.

As Sylvia and Juliet approached the mall, they didn't announce themselves, choosing to blend in as ordinary shoppers. On a usual day, the mall wouldn't be this crowded – but today, Brock's presence transformed it into a bustling hub.

Having attended several of Brock's concerts before, they expected the energy, but the sheer scale of the excitement still startled them as they arrived.

"Goodness, imagine if this was at a bigger venue like a stadium; the fans would swarm your brother!" Juliet whispered, loudly enough for Sylvia to hear despite the din.

Sylvia smiled ruefully; she'd always known her brother was a favorite, but this outpouring of affection still amazed her.

"No wonder Bruce wanted me to come. He probably didn't want to deal with this crowd. Let's head to the central hall. I heard that's where the event is," she suggested.

As they edged through the throngs, a bright-eyed girl with golden hair rushed up and grabbed Sylvia's hand. "It's you, I know you!"

Sylvia was taken aback—she'd never seen this girl before.

“Last time at the lounge, I saw you sing. You performed Brock’s songs, remember? I wanted your contact then, but you were swamped. Can I get it now? It’s fate, meeting you here again.

Delighted, Linda was overjoyed to run into Sylvia after missing an opportunity to connect

before.

Sylvia chuckled, took out her phone, and willingly exchanged numbers.

“Are you here for the signing event? You might be late; they could be gone. But there’s a good spot over there for pictures—you’ll get a clear shot of his face.”