

After Divorce, She Becomes the Billionaire Heiress

(Sylvia and Cyril) Chapter 81-90

Released on May 4, 2024

Chapter 81 Effortless Grace

The dinner went smoothly, without much incident. It was just a meal meant to solidify their partnership, where work conversations were to be had only if they came up naturally. Once the meal was over, they each went their separate ways.

“You know, it’s kind of funny,” Cyril mused, a hint of annoyance in his voice. “I was just planning on having a simple dinner and maybe discussing some business matters. But with your meddling, I didn’t even feel comfortable bringing it up. I didn’t want to make her think I was only after her connections.”

Throughout the evening, Cyril had been as inconspicuous as could be, virtually blending into the background. This left Henry feeling a bit flustered, as not a single item on his carefully prepared agenda was discussed. He now had to find another time to meet for dinner, and after giving her that bouquet, he wasn’t even sure she’d accept.

“Why did you send her flowers in the first place?” Henry asked, still fixated on the floral incident, Sylvia had refused Cyril with such ease and grace; it made one wonder how many times before she’d had to turn someone down.

It struck Cyril that he’d never really noticed how much Sylvia attracted attention. Without any effort, she drew the eyes of those around her. The Sylvia he remembered had been plain, unremarkable, while the Sylvia of today seemed like a completely different person.

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Henry gave Cyril an incredulous look. “As far as I remember, you’ve interacted with her in the past too. Didn’t you meet at some event not too long ago? Don’t you know? Everyone thought she only got the vice president’s position by playing a certain angle. But as it turns out, she’s really got the chops. Take our recent collaboration, for instance. We were supposed to have a larger share of the profit, but do you know what? The terms she proposed, the negotiation tactics she used, someone without at least a decade of experience couldn’t have come up with that. If you’re treating her like some trophy wife, then you’re the

foolish,one.”

Cyril had never been aware of these details. In his eyes, Sylvia had always been a mere homemaker, not some business hotshot. Hearing Henry's account, he was somewhat in disbelief.

Every time he'd seen Sylvia, she seemed to transform completely. To Cyril, Sylvia was like a treasure wrapped in layers upon layers of silk, waiting to be unwrapped to reveal her true worth.

A wave of panic washed over Cyril. He began to fear, wondering if he would regret his past behavior once Sylvia's true capabilities were fully revealed.

But another thought struck him: why should he panic? This marriage was never on the right footing from the start. Ending up at this juncture was simply fate.

"I've got to dash, got a ton of things to attend to at the office. Oh, and she mentioned she's heading to the shipyard today. Aren't you shipping goods from your port as well? You two should have a chat; a partnership with her could be quite profitable. Take it from me, you won't lose out working with her."

And with that, Cyril left Henry to ponder the possibilities, eager to see what the future might bring for an unplanned collaboration with Sylvia.

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Logically speaking, Sylvia, being a newcomer to the workforce, had done an exceptional job handling her responsibilities, let alone negotiating multi-million dollar deals and earning praise from competitors and partners alike. This was a testament to Sylvia being an incredibly capable woman.

Cyril was intrigued. A spark of curiosity ignited within him, and he found himself wanting to dig deeper to find out who Sylvia really was.

After Henry left, Cyril noticed Sylvia speaking with a woman he had brought along, who didn't seem very pleasant, raising her voice at Sylvia. Juliet stepped in front of Sylvia to defend her and started arguing back. Cyril thought about interjecting, but seeing the situation, he felt it was not the right moment.

The curiosity Cyril had felt moments before to

ung and Sylvia

better dissipated then and there.

Observing her difficult interactions with a colleague, who needed a friend to intervene, didn't leave the best impression. After all, interpersonal skills are crucial no matter

where one stands. Cyril began to feel that Henry's understanding of Sylvia was rather one-sided and didn't reflect her true reality.

Cyril glanced over and then turned away, leaving the scene behind. Throughout it all, Sylvia remained unaware that Cyril had been watching, and his thoughts about her were far from flattering.

"Do you realize how important today was? Instead of discussing collaborations, you spent your time chatting about other things. You're supposed to be here making money and striking deals for the company, not expanding your social circle. Or is it that you can't resist flirting with every man you encounter? Do you always have to make the first move?" Ingrid was harsh and unforgiving in her comments, causing Sylvia no visible reaction. However, Jack and Juliet couldn't stand by any longer.

Jack knew Sylvia's true status and had willingly come to help her, aware of her competence. Juliet had long disliked Ingrid and had only held her tongue for Sylvia's sake, but that did not mean she was patient.

"If you spout any more nonsense, believe me, I'll shut you up right now. You speak without knowing anything—were you hired just to gossip?" Juliet snapped.

Sylvia's silence only infuriated Ingrid further, and Juliet's swift defense made Ingrid's disdain grow. She smirked at Juliet, who, like Sylvia, was attractive and had been somewhat of an outsider at the company. Despite Sylvia and Juliet earning their place through hard work and garnering much recognition within the company, not everyone was on board, including Ingrid.

"I might not have what you two have, but I've reached my position through my own merits. Let's see how long you can keep up your charade. If today's deal falls through, will you even have the face to stay in your

job?"

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Chapter 82 Concert Guest Appearance

Sylvia's phone lit up with a new message; it was from Bark, telling her that he had made the official announcement. The concert was set for the 12th of next month. Originally, there were plans for three shows, but Bark decided to perform just one. He had told his agent that, with his sister finally free from the chains of marriage, he wanted to spend time with her to help her heal her heart. And so, he wasn't

a show which, with Sylvia as a guest, finally got interested in working beyond that single performance scheduled.

Sylvia received Bark's message along with another one from her brother and his agent. He had no choice but to vent to her about Bark's approach.

"Are you even listening to me?" Ingrid complained, growing more exasperated. She had been speaking at length, and Sylvia hadn't said a word -instead, she was smiling over something on her phone. Why should she be so happy, especially when she had obtained her position through questionable means, as Ingrid believed? How could she possibly deserve to be here, being joyful?

Sylvia tucked her phone away and stared at Ingrid as though she were a clown throwing a fit.

"If you're so capable, then why don't you go ahead and seal the deal yourself? Don't think I don't know why you came here today – you wanted to take the credit for my work. Now, I've given you the chance, why aren't you seizing it?" Sylvia's retort turned the tables on Ingrid, who was left open-mouthed and incapable of response as Sylvia left with Juliet and Jack in tow.

Sylvia's car sped off, leaving only a trail of exhaust behind. Ingrid choked on the fumes and spitefully spat on the ground as she watched Sylvia's car disappear.

"What's there to be smug about? Just you wait; I'll take over your position sooner or later. After all, you stole what was mine. We'll see how long you can stay pleased with yourself!" Ingrid always felt Sylvia had robbed her of her rightful place, never once considering her own shortcomings. But Sylvia simply didn't care about Ingrid's outrage enjoying her victory.

Once in the car, Sylvia and Juliet were immediately absorbed in the news on their phones.

"I thought your brother would wait a while longer before making the announcement. I'm surprised it was so soon. And we don't even know if the twins can make it back by then. Oh, and remind your brother to save me a ticket – I want one right in the center, where the interaction happens."

Sylvia couldn't help but laugh wryly at Juliet's list of demands. Bark could be stingy; getting tickets from him was already lucky enough, let alone tickets with audience interaction.

"Oh my god, your brother just posted a photo. Last time he did that, a lot of people started guessing about your identity. Now that you're announced as a concert guest, it's even more intriguing. What do you think the netizens will say? Might they suspect some improper relationship between you and your brother?" Juliet teased with a playful smirk.

Sylvia slapped the top of Juliet's head in mock annoyance.

“Don’t you know better than to spread such nonsense about me and my brother? Cut it out, or he really will get mad at you when he hears this,” Sylvia scolded.

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Juliet covered her head, feigning hurt from Sylvia’s tap. “All right, all right, I won’t say anymore, happy now?”

she said with a pout.

Sylvia shook her head in exasperation and returned to scrolling through the online comments. Everyone... was stunned by Bark’s announcement about the concert and the reveal that Sylvia would be a guest. No one in the entertainment world had ever heard of Sylvia before—it was as if she had popped up out of

nowhere.

Of course, people came to know of Sylvia because of the highly publicized divorce with Cyril. Additionally, there was the incident where she was falsely accused, and when the truth came out, it led to a twist where those who framed her ended up facing consequences. This sparked even more curiosity about whether Sylvia had some powerful backing—how else could she always emerge unscathed from every confrontation and even turn the tables on her adversaries? Though the outcome was satisfying, the process left people filled with wonder.

Beyond the curiosity about Sylvia’s identity, many were concerned about her appearance at the concert. Could she handle the spotlight? After all, Sylvia wasn’t known as a singer, and the thought of her sharing the stage with Bark worried his fans. They feared a potential disaster and flocking to the company’s social media pages, pleading for Sylvia to be dropped from the lineup, fearing she wasn’t suitable for the

event at the moment.

Sylvia scrolled through these comments with a mixture of amusement and disbelief. She wasn’t expecting Bark to be so flamboyant about it; she had thought her involvement would be revealed at the concert itself. Now, with the situation blown out of proportion, she half-expected a public outcry against

her.

Though Sylvia wasn’t worried about netizens discovering her true identity, the constant attention felt uncomfortably intrusive, like being under surveillance.

After browsing a while, her phone rang—it was Bark calling.

“Seen all that buzz online? What do you think? Pretty impressive of your brother to stir things up, right?” There was a hint of swagger in Bark’s voice; he wanted the whole world to know about his unique

relationship with Sylvia.

“Big bro, don’t you think today’s announcement was a bit too much? If you did all this just to declare our sibling relationship, that’s fine by me. But if not, I find it quite troubling,” Sylvia replied, her tone conveying

her discomfort.

“What’s there to be troubled about? I’m on your side, and I did all this to let everyone know you’re my sister. Prepare yourself, because at the concert, I’ll make sure everyone knows that fact. But for now, just bear with the aftermath a bit. You’ve dealt with things like this before, right?”

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Chapter 83 Identity Crisis

Sylvia was between laughter and exasperation—she had never been the center of such a public spectacle before. Her marriage to Cyril had hardly been in the limelight; being chased by the media was completely foreign to her. She didn’t see the need for any of this fuss.

“I called today just to let you know about this. And hey, you haven’t practiced in years, so warm up those vocal cords of yours. Don’t you dare embarrass me on the day of the concert. I won’t let you off easy if you do,” Bark warned.

He was a world–renowned superstar. If his sister, unpracticed, turned out to be dead weight, he wouldn’t mind, but it wouldn’t be fair to his fans. They were spending good money to see him perform, and Sylvia’s

unreliability wouldn’t sit well with anyone.

Feeling helplessly caught in the situation, Sylvia could only agree to her brother’s demands; there was nothing else she could do. Bark had already decided for her, so she’d have to comply.

For several days, curiosity about Sylvia’s identity surged online, and the digging into her background intensified. Some internet sleuths, despite not uncovering her full story, managed to find out where Sylvia

worked and her job title.

“The netizens are too much, aren’t they? You haven’t said a word, and they’ve already sniffed out your identity. Our company is going to be in the spotlight soon, and you might not be happy about that. You need to think about how to handle this situation,” Juliet put down her phone, eyeing Sylvia with sincerity. Dragging this issue out any longer could lead to further complications.

Sylvia was well aware of the murmurings within the company—many were dissatisfied with her since she hadn’t secured any significant projects. Without the ability to command respect with a notable achievement, she knew it was best to keep a low profile. However, Bark’s high-profile announcement had thrust her into the storm, causing her immense stress. Having such a brother was both a blessing and a headache.

“I’ll talk to Bark about it later. If it’s really necessary, we might just have to reveal our relationship openly, rather than let it impact the company,” Sylvia contemplated.

“But think it through. If the relationship between you and Bark is disclosed, it will affect the company even more. You’ll be overrun with interview requests about you two, and they might even want to market you as a new entertainment sensation,” Juliet pointed out with greater clarity.

Sylvia felt cornered, as every option brought its own set of headaches. It was a difficult decision to make, but for now, she would just take it one step at a time. If there was a way to resolve the issue, she would find it; if not, it was Bark’s mess to clean up. After all, he was the one who stirred it up. If the situation escalated further, it could end up upsetting both Bruce and their father.

The next morning, Sylvia knew she was thinking too simple about how Bruce and dad will react—The cries that echoed from downstairs made her heart jump, and she bolted from the second floor to the scene below

There was her brother Bark, kneeling on the floor while their eldest brother, Bruce, lashed him with a whip.

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Despite Bark’s regular exercise as part of his singer lifestyle, mostly spent in recording studios, this physical punishment from Bruce was clearly too much for him.

“You damned fool, do you realize the trouble you’ve caused your sister with your antics?” their father, Stanford, said with a grimace that made it clear he was far from pleased.

That morning, Stanford had learned from his secretary that Sylvia was trending on social media. Curious masses were speculating about her cloaked identity, some even

planning to visit the company to dig deeper. Worse still, there were derogatory rumors and so-called “evidence” making rounds online, questioning Sylvia’s integrity.

As a doting father, there was no way Stanford would swallow such slander. He dragged Bark out of bed early to teach him a lesson he wouldn’t soon forget.

“You can’t put all the blame on me! If only he had listened to me in the first place, I wouldn’t have had to take such measures. Besides, revealing our relationship will just clear things up, won’t it? It’s not that complicated,” Bark protested from the floor, his pride clashing with the reality of his recklessness.

Bruce’s face turned darker, his patience clearly worn thin. “Do you not understand that revealing Sylvia’s identity could significantly disrupt her life? Think of how many fans you have. Have you considered the consequences of your actions at all?”

Bark countered, looking at Bruce unwaveringly, “If we don’t make it public, who will protect Sylvia? Cyril did all those things, yet I didn’t see any of you taking action. You’ve always just wanted to keep her identity under wraps. I know you’re trying to protect her, but my identity is not out in the open either. What’s wrong with letting the world know she’s my sister? At least it’ll make anyone think twice before they try anything.”

Though Bark had Sylvia’s best interest at heart, his approach wasn’t sitting well with the other two men in

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the family. If they had wanted Sylvia’s identity exposed, they would have done so from her birth. Until

now, the world only knew the Ivans had a daughter, but her true remained a mystery.

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“Stop it, Dad, Big Bro. Bark did this for me, and I knew about it. I agreed to it,” Sylvia interjected, descending the stairs to defend Bark.

At her words, the stern looks on Bruce’s and Stanford’s faces softened to warmth—a shift so swift it nearly gave Bark whiplash. They’d been so harsh on him, yet became gentle in a heartbeat when facing Sylvia. There was no doubt about it: the little sister sat at the top of the family’s food chain.

“Don’t make excuses for him. He did it on purpose,” Bruce insisted.

Sylvia countered, “It’s not like that. If not for the events three years ago, I would already be accompanying Bark at his concerts. The plans from three years ago just carried over to now. There’s no difference.”

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Chapter 84 Masquerade Ball

Duncan and Miranda, fraternal twins who had spent several years abroad, had finally returned home. They'd built careers in their respective fields of physics and chemistry, and with the family's comfortable financial situation, they were keen to throw a party upon their return.

Sylvia and Kelly weren't too excited about the idea, but Juliet and Catherine were over the moon, especially Catherine, who seemed as if she couldn't wait for the party to happen.

"Why aren't you two excited? These past few months have been so stressful for me," Catherine exclaimed, "I'm a public figure now, and I can't just go anywhere I please without careful consideration.

Now that we're all together, I want to go out and have fun!"

While everyone understood Catherine's desire for some freedom, they also knew attending such a gathering could complicate matters. "Do you really think attending this kind of party won't reveal your identity? And if people recognize you, can you imagine the online chatter?" Kelly yawned, voicing her thoughts to Catherine.

Catherine paused, as if finally grasping the implications. A party would likely include many acquainted and unfamiliar faces, and her identity could easily be exposed, leading to unwanted attention on social media. Though it seemed trivial to her, waking up to news about herself every day was becoming

tiresome.

Miranda, seeing the concern on their faces, reached into her bag and pulled out a mask, placing it in front of the group. "What's the big deal? We'll just have a masquerade ball. No one will know who anyone is, and we can enjoy ourselves to the fullest."

Her suggestion sparked hope in Catherine, who hadn't considered the anonymity a masquerade could offer. "That's actually a great idea, sis. Sylvia, why don't we join in? I just saw..."

Before she could finish, Sylvia's phone rang with a call from the office. She excused herself from the group and stepped aside to take the call.

Watching Sylvia move away to answer her phone, Duncan's heart sank. He hadn't even begun to express his thoughts, and already Sylvia was preoccupied with other matters.

"If only I hadn't hesitated three years ago, maybe things wouldn't have turned out this way," Duncan mused, feeling a pang of regret. He had originally decided not to study abroad, intent on pursuing Sylvia when he knew she harbored feelings for someone else. He wanted to fight for a chance.

But that chance never came. Sylvia married another man before he could make his move. Heartbroken, Duncan had chosen to study abroad, hoping to mend his wounded heart. He had believed Sylvia's marriage would bring her happiness, only to be shocked upon learning of her divorce.

"Who is this man who couldn't cherish such a wonderful girl like her? I went abroad for love once, and now, I must stay for love!" Duncan resolved, his heart set on not letting Sylvia slip away a second time.

Everyone knew Duncan had his heart set on Sylvia and now, more than ever, his intentions seemed blatantly obvious; they had simply gone unnoticed before due to Sylvia's infatuation with Cyril. With those emotions now in the past, Sylvia saw situations more clearly than ever. However, her feelings for Duncan

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hadn't evolved beyond friendship, and her position was unlikely to change.

Miranda rolled her eyes, her cynicism barely veiled: "You really do think highly of yourself, don't you? Have you considered what you actually have to offer Sylvia? Besides your face, what else? I've seen the photos of the man Sylvia liked, and he is far more handsome than you. How do you even compare?"

Duncan, unfazed by Miranda's remarks, retorted, "It doesn't matter if you think Cyril is more attractive. In the end, he hurt Sylvia. Rather than her being with someone like that, she should be with me. I'm different; I would treat Sylvia well for a lifetime."

His conviction left no room for doubt among those present; Duncan was sincere in his sentiments.

"Alright, we believe you," the group acknowledged, accepting Duncan's earnestness.

Sylvia rejoined the group after her phone call, noticing the secretive huddle.

"It's been years since we've been together like this. Is there anyone in particular you'd want to invite to the party? When it comes to it, we can ask them to join us," Duncan suggested, indicating he might have someone special in mind, but the rest of the group remained silent out of curiosity to see what Duncan had up his sleeve.

"I don't have anyone specific to invite. It's great just us, but if you want to bring others, it's up to you and how big you want the party to be," Sylvia responded.

The twins, always eager for a grand event, would likely make the party grandiose by inviting a slew of both acquaintances and strangers

There

44no need for the others to extend their invitations since on the

day, most attendees would probably be friends of the twins anyway.

Duncan, who had been planning all along, announced after hearing the indifferent responses of the others, “Since no one else has someone to invite, I’ll take care of the invitations according to my list. Remember, everyone, get ready for next week. We can’t afford any slip-ups. Our first party back home must be grand and high-class!”

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Chapter 85 The Belle of the Bali

No one present doubted Duncan’s sincerity; it was well-known he was the kind of man who spoke from

the heart.

A week later, when the masquerade ball kicked off, Sylvia’s brothers and father were visibly excited about her participation. What was merely a small gathering of friends turned into an opportunity for the men in her family to shower her with extravagant gifts.

“Little sis, how about this mask? It cost a fortune,” Bark said, showcasing an ornate piece.

“And this dress? As the youngest daughter of the Ivan family, you must stand out. Your big brother had it custom-made just for you. Don’t worry about the cost; wear it once, and we’ll get you another. I’ve had a bunch made,” Bruce smiled, his pride obvious.

“Our father spared no expense to provide you with a unique car for tonight, a one-of-a-kind vehicle. Use it with confidence,” Stanford chimed in, handing her the keys.

Surrounded by these generous offerings, Sylvia wasn’t sure whether to laugh or cry, especially at Bark’s unexpected generosity. Not long ago, she had thought he would remain angry with her, but the mask he presented, adorned with diamonds and precious stones, was exquisite and expensive.

Unable to favor one gift over another, Sylvia graciously accepted all three, knowing that their intentions were to make her feel loved and special.

“Thank you, Dad, Bruce, Bark. I’ll go get ready now,” she said with sincere gratitude.

As Sylvia went to prepare, the three men beamed with pride, each secretly believing his gift outshone the

others.

“Weren’t you holding a grudge against our sister recently? How come you’ve changed your tune?” Stanford remarked, looking over at Bark.

“There’s nothing to be upset about. I see all the changes in her; I want our sister to have the best. Besides, those twins are back. I know Duncan’s got his eye on her, and if it’s right, it could be considered,” Bark said nonchalantly, completely unfazed by his superstar status.

Stanford’s eyes widened in shock. “What? That boy is interested in my daughter? No, no, I don’t approve. He’s immature and irresponsible!”

Stanford’s disapproval was expected, as Bruce and Bark shared his sentiment. Yet, there was no real urgency; things had not progressed to that point, and there was still room for negotiation. After all, there was no indication Sylvia had those kinds of feelings for Duncan. If she had, she wouldn’t have ended up

with Cyril in the first place.

As they continued their discussion, Sylvia descended the stairs, having changed into her outfit and revealing her stunning transformation. Her polish and elegance captivated them—she was indeed the Ivan family’s star, capable of shining even in the humblest garb.

“Little sis will surely be the most dazzling presence tonight!”

Chapter 33 The Belle of the Ball

The twins were excited about the party they had organized to celebrate their return home. Despite its intention as a welcome back celebration for them, they were accustomed to Sylvia stealing the limelight. It was just as well. After all, they knew even in rags, Sylvia had the power to command everyone’s

attention.

Sylvia, amused by the care put into the event preparations, was driven to the venue by a chauffeur. Upon her arrival, it was clear that Duncan and Miranda had invited a considerable crowd to the masquerade

ball.

Stepping out of the car, Sylvia recognized another vehicle parked nearby—it unmistakably belonged to Cyril. She knew no one would have invited Cyril intentionally; his appearance must have been a mischievous idea conjured up by the group. Feeling somewhat helpless and not expecting them to do such a thing, she decided to act as if she hadn't seen the car and walked inside with Juliet.

The estate revealed the true scale of the event—with at least five to six hundred guests, the party was a massively organized affair.

“These two have really outdone themselves, inviting so many people. Who exactly have they invited?” Catherine mused, a little surprised at the crowd size even though she was accustomed to grand events. She initially thought the party was meant to conceal its patrons' true identities; however, the presence of so many familiar faces made her wonder what the point of that was.

Sylvia, also feeling uneasy, wished she had known about the throng of attendees beforehand. She might have reconsidered coming.

“By the way, I heard they invited Cyril and his brother Jonathan too,” Kelly whispered to Sylvia, lightly nudging her arm. “Do you think you'll bump into them? With so many people, it's probably unlikely.”

Sylvia didn't mention seeing Cyril's car earlier and continued the conversation, using Kelly's words as a

segue.

Unbeknownst to Sylvia, as Cyril and Jonathan stepped into the venue, Cyril spotted her amidst the crowd almost immediately. He was astonished at himself for being able to identify Sylvia so quickly, especially considering the multitude of heavily adorned or masked faces, which should have made it impossible. But there she was; all other attendees dissolved around her, leaving only Sylvia in focus, as if all other voices had also been muted.

“What are you looking at?” Jonathan asked curiously, following Cyril's gaze across the room. From his perspective, he saw only a regal gathering of guests in conversation—exactly the sort of scene expected at a masquerade ball, with all kinds of costumes and elaborate disguises.

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Chapter 86 Dance Partners in the Dark

When Cyril heard Jonathan's voice, he averted his gaze. He sneaked another look at Sylvia, reminding himself that he had no ties to her anymore. The reason he could spot her in a crowd was simply because they'd once been husband and wife.

“It’s nothing, let’s go. Seems like a full house at the party tonight.”

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Cyril hadn’t planned on coming, but Jonathan was keen on attending, especially since he had heard that Duncan and Miranda were the hosts. So, after receiving a personal invitation, Cyril felt obliged to show up, if just for appearances’ sake. The guests were supposed to greet the hosts, but given the wild costumes around, picking Duncan and Miranda out of the crowd was no small task.

They soon settled in, having been to similar parties before. Mixing into the throng, everyone talked freely, hidden behind masks, enjoying the anonymity.

Suddenly, the lights dimmed, causing a stir till a spotlight hit center stage. Duncan and Miranda stepped up, and the chattering crowd hushed in anticipation.

“Welcome, everyone, to our masquerade ball! Tonight is about fun and games. We’re all here to let loose, but since it is a ball, we’ve got something special planned.

Soon, we’ll turn off the lights. I want you all to find yourselves a dance partner, no matter who they are. When the lights come back on, whomever you’re with is your partner for the opening dance. Ready to kick off the party!”

The crowd buzzed with excitement at the prospect. They rose, stretching and prepping to ensure they wouldn’t be lost when the lights went out.

Jonathan turned excitedly to Cyril, only to find him heading towards a corner of the room. He paused, then shrugged it off, figuring Cyril was seeking a quiet spot, what with his dislike for commotion.

As everyone began moving around, Duncan and Miranda decided it was time and switched off the lights.

“Remember to be quiet, folks! The calmer it is, the easier it’ll be to find the one you want to

dance with!”

Their advice was taken, and an eerie silence fell. It wasn’t pitch black, though; a couple of emergency lights were on, giving just enough glow to make out shapes.

Sylvia had slipped away to a corner early on, preferring to hide than seek a partner. But before she could melt into the shadows, someone grabbed her. Trying to wiggle free, she

recognized Miranda’s voice.

“Why are you running off? You’re here to have fun at the party, remember? So what if you’ve been married and divorced? It doesn’t make you any less worthy of enjoyment. We invited you so you could lighten up and live a little!”

Sylvia wasn’t born yesterday; she caught the hint. Miranda was obviously playing cupid for her and Duncan.

“Alright, I get it. Maybe I’ll just find a different spot, then,” Sylvia replied, her voice carrying a touch of surrender.

Sylvia had no other choice but to mix into the crowd. She figured her luck couldn’t be that bad; she could dodge people for a bit and then sneak to the side to hide.

But things didn’t go as smoothly as she hoped.

As she made her way through the throng, her hand accidentally brushed against someone. That person quickly grabbed hold of her hand in response. Sylvia was startled—it was that easy to find a dance partner?

“I... um...”

Before Sylvia could refuse, the lights turned on, eliminating any hope of escape. Blinded momentarily, she shut her eyes, only opening them once they adjusted to the brightness. The lively tango music started playing, and with a partner already in hand, Sylvia realized she had no choice but to dance.

As she cautiously began to move with the rhythm, she couldn’t shake the feeling that her partner’s eyes looked familiar. It took her a moment, but the shock hit when she realized who it was—Cyril.

For Cyril, of all the possible partners, he didn’t necessarily have to dance with Sylvia. But when he saw her, he felt compelled to approach. He knew her bumping into him was unintentional, but the second their hands touched, his heart skipped a beat. Without hesitation, he held on to her.

Both knew who the other was, but neither spoke.

“The music’s started. Let’s dance, or we’ll really stand out just standing here,” Cyril finally

broke the silence.

Sylvia, having preferred to avoid this dance with Cyril, found herself with no other option. As he said, just standing there would draw attention. It would be less conspicuous to join in

-moving with the crowd would keep their interaction from appearing awkward.

As they began to tango, Cyril worried Sylvia might not know the steps. But to his

Chapter 86 Dance

amazement, she was not only proficient; she danced exquisitely. Like a vivacious butterfly fluttering among the partygoers, Sylvia drew everyone's eyes to her, making it impossible to look away.

In that moment, even if Cyril wanted to dismiss her as just another ex, the truth was undeniable – Sylvia was mesmerizing. What he once underestimated, he now recognized: she was indeed a captivating woman.

And now, with the music guiding them, Sylvia danced with a freedom she'd always kept suppressed. As Cyril came back to his senses and matched her pace, it was then, in their first dance together, that a sense of regret started to dissolve inside her as they were beginning to mend what had been lost between them.

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Chapter 87 Dream

In truth, when Sylvia had decided to divorce Cyril, she cast aside not only their regrets but also the painful memories. Now, as some of those regrets were being reconciled, she could feel herself gradually letting go of her feelings for him.

It's often said that it's hard to let go because one clings too tightly to the past, but once that fixation fades, you realize your feelings for the person weren't as intense as you thought. Sylvia felt that was precisely where she stood now.

After the dance ended, Sylvia and Cyril immediately parted ways.

"I never thought you could dance," Cyril remarked,

"There's a lot you never figured out because you never really knew me. Let's just act like strangers from now on," Sylvia replied, eager to avoid any drama. She knew her friends had grown weary of Cyril, and she feared they might deliberately complicate matters if they realized he was there.

Cyril could tell she was determined to distance herself from him, and it irked him. Weren't they still connected in some way through their past marriage, he pondered silently. His lips pressed together—it wasn't how he wished things to be.

"Let's just enjoy the night separately. This party is for my friends, and I don't want any unpleasantness," Sylvia said plainly, and with that, she disappeared into the crowd.

As she melded into the sea of people, Cyril followed her with his gaze until she was obscured by the multitude milling about. Eventually, he lost sight of her altogether.

When Sylvia found her friends, she spotted Duncan lounging on a couch, looking reproachfully in her direction.

“Goodness, I knew you wouldn’t want to dance. I didn’t dance either because I was looking for you everywhere, and when I finally found you, you were dancing with someone else. Clearly, there’s no room for me in your heart,” Duncan half-joked, half-serious.

Sylvia rubbed her temples. How had she forgotten about Duncan?

“Cut it out,” she said. “You were never in that space to begin with. You were just insistent. And tonight you’re the star. You can’t just ignore all the guests. Go and tend to your party.

Get up

and go. Aren’t you tired of sitting?”

Luckily, Juliet intervened just in time, saving Sylvia from an awkward situation. Grateful, Sylvia smiled and appreciated her friend’s help. She was relieved, for if she truly felt cornered, she wouldn’t have known how to respond to Duncan.

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She had never thought much of Duncan’s intentions before, but now, realizing he had more than friendship on his mind, she found herself unsure how to face him.

“Fine, fine, I throw this grand party, and you all dismiss me like this,” Duncan huffed, pretending to be offended before making a move to leave. However, he shot Sylvia a lingering look—one that revealed he had seen her dancing with Cyril.

He had been ready to confront Sylvia about why she was dancing with Cyril, given they were divorced. But at the last moment, he checked himself. Regardless of their past relationship, they were divorced now, and Sylvia was free to do as she pleased. It wasn’t

question her actions.

place to

With a bitter taste in his mouth, Duncan understood he was just a little too late. Everything seemed out of reach, as if time kept slipping away from him. But there was

some solace; a second chance had presented itself. Sylvia was single again, and that meant Duncan finally had an opportunity.

As Duncan walked away, Sylvia let out a sigh of relief and slumped into the couch with a sense of release. Her friends couldn't help but laugh at her display of what they saw as a lack of backbone.

"I've just climbed out of the grave of marriage, and I'm in no rush to dabble in romance again. If you guys are interested, be my guest," Sylvia said, watching her friends take playful jabs at her.

"We sure don't want that," Kelly and Juliet both crossed their arms over their chests, vehemently opposed to the idea of marrying, particularly after seeing the turmoil Sylvia had endured in hers.

The party looked set to rage through the night. Cyril, feeling a bit worn out, was thankful that the hosts had prepared a resting room upstairs, complete with beds for anyone needing

a break.

Despite not planning to stay at the party, Cyril was surprised to encounter Sylvia there. Later, an urgent business matter called him away to the upstairs resting room. By the time he'd wrapped up his work, it was the early hours of the morning.

The festivities downstairs were still in full swing, but he found no energy to rejoin. Exhausted, Cyril leaned back on the sofa, closed his eyes to rest, and unintentionally drifted into sleep—and into a dream.

In his dream, he was back at the seaside where a life-changing incident had taken place five years prior. He had gone there with a business partner to explore development opportunities when they inadvertently stumbled upon armed fugitives. Suddenly confronted and

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threatened at gunpoint, Cyril found himself facing dire straits. As the criminals fled from pursuing law enforcement, they decided to take a hostage—Cyril.

Just as he was contemplating an escape, Sylvia appeared in his dream, looking as she did at the party, dressed to the nines, but this time wielding a gun. Without hesitation, she took aim and fired at the kidnappers.

While the reality of the past event was different from his dream, what struck Cyril was the unexpected presence of Sylvia. In his mind's eye, she was approaching him, step by step, reaching out to clutch his suit jacket.

Forced to look down, Cyril watched as Sylvia came ever closer, their lips almost meeting in a kiss. At that precise moment, Cyril's eyes snapped open, and he gasped for air, hands pressed to his forehead, bewildered by the surreal dream he'd just experienced.

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Chapter 88 Well-Matched

"Did you not get a good night's sleep? You look especially worn out," Jonathan remarked as he walked in and caught sight of Cyril's weary expression.

Indeed, last night's party had dragged on a bit too late, prompting everyone to stay over at the estate for rest. However, Cyril had been one of the earliest to retreat for the night, so logically, he shouldn't have appeared so tired.

Cyril lifted his head to respond when Jonathan suddenly leaned in close, his eyes wide with an eager gleam for gossip.

"By the way,

I saw you dancing with a lady last night. Boy, could she dance! Looked like a pro to me. And someone who can show up at that kind of party must be someone of status. Ah, you've got it good, Cyril. You step away from a bad marriage, and you seem to land on your feet wherever you go."

There was a hint of envy in Jonathan's voice. He too had danced with someone last night, but his luck hadn't been as good; he ended up with another man as a dance partner, which made for a rather awkward situation. So he couldn't help but keep an eye on Cyril's much more appealing circumstances.

"Do you

think she was well-matched with me?" Cyril asked, somewhat surprised by Jonathan's comment, as this wasn't something he'd typically say.

Jonathan nodded, genuinely believing they were a good match. Even behind a mask, she was evidently graceful and had an impressive poise. "You've built a successful business over the years, and even if it's not quite at the scale of the Evans Corporation, you're still doing exceptionally well. So yeah, I think you two are compatible. What's so strange about that? She might not even be in your league."

After hearing this, Cyril shook his head with a smile, "You wouldn't say that if who she was."

you knew

This piqued Jonathan's competitive side. How could they possibly be ill-suited? He was eager to find out exactly who Cyril had been dancing with.

"It was Sylvia," Cyril revealed. Other than himself, it seemed no one at the party had recognized that the woman he was dancing with was Sylvia. That explained why Jonathan had come straight to him to chat about the previous evening's events.

Jonathan's face momentarily crumpled with disbelief. He thought the pair were perfectly matched, and now he was told the woman in question was Sylvia? The realization made him doubt his own judgment.

"You're not pulling my leg, are you? The woman you danced with was Sylvia?" Jonathan asked, taken aback.

Cyril nodded. "Didn't you recognize her?"

Jonathan's eyes widened in disbelief. How could anyone have recognized the guests under such heavy disguises last night? With everyone so thoroughly masked, even their true faces obscured, how could he possibly distinguish who was who?

And Cyril, he was nothing short of supernatural to have identified the amidst the crowd.

"Just how did you recognize Sylvia in that situation last night? Why couldn't I see it? And I heard many familiar faces were at the party, but when I went in, I couldn't identify a single person," Jonathan questioned, perplexed.

Cyril paused, struck by the question. Indeed, why was he able to spot Sylvia so easily in the crowd? It would be impossible unless you knew someone to a certain depth.

He was on the brink of understanding something, just a bit more thought and he would decipher why, but his train of thought was abruptly interrupted by Jonathan.

"Never mind all that. The real reason I came today was to talk about something else. Someone wants to invite us to lunch. Are you interested?" Jonathan was eager to change the subject, feeling somewhat defeated by his failure to recognize anyone the previous night.

The prospect of discussing the invitation seemed to intrigue him, and he gave Cyril a nudge

and a wink.

Cyril's reflections were disrupted, and he brushed off Jonathan's antics, turning his attention back to his own matters.

“Don’t ignore me, man. I’ve really got something to say, and it’s important. They’re asking us out to lunch for business reasons.”

“All I ever hear from you is goofing around, not “business,”” Cyril retorted with a tinge of skepticism.

Jonathan, momentarily lost for words, felt his reliability was being questioned. He might appear a bit frivolous at times, but he considered himself quite dependable. Why couldn’t Cyril trust him?

“Never mind. Forget it. By the way, you left early last night. Did you sort out everything with the company?” Jonathan shifted the topic.

Cyril had indeed got some rest, although the dream had not allowed for a peaceful sleep, leaving him feeling particularly weary. The memory of the dream from the previous night

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made him hesitant, but Jonathan's curious expression and knowledge of the incident five years ago made him reconsider sharing his experience.

"Do you still remember the accident I had at sea five years ago?" Cyril brought up, seemingly out of the blue.

Jonathan's mind needed a moment to adjust to the sudden shift in conversation before nodding, he certainly remembered the events from five years prior.

"I remember. What about it?"

ment of silence.

Cyril decided to recount his dream from last night to Jonathan after. Once he had finished, Jonathan's face took on a peculiar expression as if he wanted to say something but found himself unable to find the words.

"You usually have no problems speaking your mind around me. What's stopping you today? Is there something wrong with the dream?"

“Of course, there’s a problem. First of all, the dream isn’t real—you know that yourself, right? Five years ago, you had trouble at sea because there was an issue with your boat, and you were nearly lost. The rescue team made several attempts, and then you say you dreamt of Sylvia. I’d find it acceptable if you dreamt about anyone else, but dreaming of Sylvia... that’s just impossible.” Jonathan said.

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“Anyway, it could be anything, but it absolutely couldn’t be related to Sylvia. That’s just impossible,” Jonathan stated emphatically.

“Why do you think it can’t be connected to Sylvia? What if it was in fact her who saved me all those years ago?” Cyril countered, throwing a hypothetical that seemed to boggle Jonathan’s mind.

nt happened. You got married because she cornered you into it three years ago, and you know this well. Do you think it’s possible for her to wear that glamorous party dress to the beach? That whole scenario is just unreal—maybe you were just dazzled by her last night... Wait, why would you be dazzled by her?” Jonathan suddenly caught himself. It wasn’t like Cyril to be captivated by Sylvia, considering their history.

“What are you even thinking? You didn’t even know Sylvia when the

Jonathan pondered Cyril’s odd position, almost failing to conceal his disbelief. “You can’t be serious. And besides, wasn’t it Carina who saved you back then?”

Jonathan vaguely remembered the incident five years prior. When Cyril’s boat accident occurred, rescue teams searched tirelessly without success, and all had feared the worst. Then, unexpectedly, a call came from Cyril a month later, informing them that he had been rescued by locals and was sent to a hospital where he’d been in a coma for a month.

They rushed to him, and when asked about his rescuer, Cyril mentioned it might have been Carina. They had inquired with Carina later, who did not deny it.

“Just because Carina didn’t deny it doesn’t mean it’s true. After all she’s done behind my back over the years, aren’t you aware?” Cyril said, wryly noting the contrast between statement and action.

Jonathan internally agreed as he was acutely aware of the schemes Carina had concocted against Sylvia. Some of those schemes, he had even aided a bit. Yet he couldn’t blatantly admit this to Cyril, as it felt improper to do so.

“This isn’t what I’m getting at. Why can’t you see what I’m trying to tell you?” Jonathan sighed, exasperated.

He wanted to make it clear to Cyril that anyone could have been his rescuer, but it definitely wasn’t Sylvia.

“If it really had been Sylvia who saved you, do you think she’d keep it a secret? Think about all these years of marriage. Wasn’t there anything that stirred, even slightly, she would tell you about, desperately trying to impress and garner your attention?”

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Jonathan began analyzing the events earnestly with Cyril. “Just last year, when there was a plumbing issue in your marital home, didn’t Sylvia make a big deal out of telling you about the repair? Was that trivial matter even worth mentioning to you? And if you think that’s negligible, then think back on each event over the years—how often has she bothered you with the minutest details?”

In Jonathan’s view, such inconsequential matters didn’t merit bothering Cyril about, yet Sylvia did so anyway.

frapped Cyril into

Furthermore, if Sylvia had been devoid of cunning, she would nev marriage by exploiting opportunities that had come their way. All of these actions were calculated.

If Sylvia had indeed been Cyril’s savior, she would certainly have preserved the evidence and used it to display her virtue, ingratiating herself to Cyril and securing his gratitude.

Jonathan’s analysis seemed to hold some weight, yet Cyril felt that something was amiss. His memories of the time when he was comatose were hazy, and he couldn’t be certain whether it had been Carina who saved him. Everyone insisted it was Carina, but for some reason, Cyril found it hard to believe and never confirmed it.

“It was just a passing thought. Why shouldn’t these matters be shared with me? The marital home is mine, shouldn’t I be involved in any issue? Besides, why am I not aware of the things you’ve mentioned?” Cyril shifted away from dwelling on the past. It might actually be that he had simply been caught off guard by Sylvia’s stunning appearance the night before, which could explain her presence in his dream.

What Cyril found more intriguing, however, was why Jonathan knew things that he was not aware of. In his recollection, Sylvia’s calls were mostly to ask when he’d be home or if he’d come back for dinner. Jonathan seemed to be lost for words, clearly awkward.

“Yeah, remember all those times we were together for gatherings? Sometimes when Sylvia would call and you weren’t around, one of us brothers would answer and just happened to hear your stuff. Don’t worry, we gave Sylvia a good lecture on the phone, telling her not to daydream, to not think about stuff she shouldn’t. We’re firmly on your side,” Jonathan stammered his justification.

Cyril frowned, visibly displeased, causing Jonathan to shiver. Had he done something wrong by not informing Cyril about the calls?

“You answer my calls without my knowledge and now you’ve grown bold,” Cyril said with a touch of annoyance.

Jonathan became even more nervous, having meant to protect Cyril from needless upset,

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but he seemed to have caused the opposite. What was he supposed to do now that the situation had taken such a turn?

“I’ve got.... other things... I need to do, so I’ll leave you to it,” Jonathan stammered, sensing trouble as he saw Cyril’s anger. He headed for the door quickly, leaving his unfinished business with Cyril unspoken.

Once Jonathan had left, Cyril was alone in his office, left to ponder over the past. The more he thought, the stranger things seemed. Everyone appeared to believe Sylvia was at fault, yet he didn’t feel that way.

Sitting there calmly, he began to sort through the recent revelations, feeling a complexity that was hard to articulate. The relationship with Sylvia had always been distant; this was no secret. Jonathan despised Sylvia, and Cyril knew it well. If Jonathan truly had answered those calls, the exchanges were likely not as harmless as he had conveyed.

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Chapter 90 Lewis Returns Home

Sylvia’s work was going relatively smoothly, apart from the occasional trouble caused by Ingrid, there wasn’t much that was a headache. That morning, she noticed that Bark was nowhere to be seen and learned that he had gone to the final dress rehearsal, gearing up for his concert next month.

Stanford and Bruce were both in the dining room, and the family of three sat down for

't Sylvia's phone was breakfast together. They didn't usually talk about work at the table incessantly ringing since she woke up, leaving no chance for it to stop.

"Can't you put your work aside for a moment in the early morning? Must it interfere at this hour? Is the day not long enough for work? You used to not be so committed to your job, but look at you now," Stanford grumbled, feeling slightly frustrated. He rarely had the chance to have a meal with his daughter, and when he did, she was preoccupied with work.

Sylvia tried to laugh off her father's comment and put her phone down to eat her breakfast. Although she wasn't replying to any messages, her phone continued to ring persistently until she had no choice but to mute it. Stanford looked pleased with her decision.

Stanford suddenly remembered something, "Next week, Lewis is coming back to the country. His artificial intelligence project is doing very well, and he's at the forefront with AI technology. What are your thoughts?"

another Sylvia was momentarily freed from work concerns, only for Bruce to bring up business matter, much to Stanford's visible disappointment. He just wanted to have a normal breakfast with his children, without any talk of work. He didn't recall them ever being so work-obsessed before.

Sylvia looked up at Bruce in surprise. Why hadn't she heard of Lewis's return?

"I had Ingrid inform you about this. Did she not tell you?" Bruce replied, taken aback by Sylvia's clueless expression.

The fact that it involved Ingrid explained Sylvia's ignorance of the news. Given Ingrid's dissatisfaction with Sylvia and her longing for Sylvia's position, it was no surprise she hadn't passed the message along.

"I wasn't informed, but it doesn't matter now that I know. Are you sure about Lewis coming back? He's been abroad for years, focusing on AI lately, which he only began preparing in recent years. Getting involved now might be too late for us," Sylvia analyzed thoughtfully. She was aware of Lewis's leading AI company and its impressive progress. His venture hadn't lacked funds since its creation, which contributed to its success.

"I remember recently he announced a concept aiming for fully autonomous driving, but reliable AI is essential for that. The technology isn't mature yet, so most industry experts are skeptical about his approach," Sylvia shared, her mind racing. She understood the immaturity of AI technology. If they decided to invest or collaborate at this point, there was certainly money to be made.

Bruce nodded in agreement. “You’re spot on. AI isn’t fully ripe yet, and there’s a whole bunch of folks eyeing that slice. Now that I’m back, I’ve decided to start hunting for partnerships. After all, AI has made some sweet strides, and I’m ready to push it forward while researching new AI tricks.”

Researching two big things at once means shelling out a mountain of cash. Even if Louis was swimming in money before, he’s probably got to think about the finance game now.

Sylvia got the picture loud and clear.

“So, big bro, you want me to reach out to Louis, see if we can team up or something?” Sylvia asked.

Bruce cracked a smile and nodded, “There’s no rush, because after the news broke, lots of folks tried to get in touch with Louis already. No word yet. Guess he’s not keen on the

attention.’

“Who knew Louis had such a backbone, huh? There’s not much gossip about him, and I don’t know him well. But turning down so many people? That’s pretty cool. Maybe worth a

closer look.’

If he hasn’t given a peep after all this time, it means he’s either not impressed with the crowd or he’s still picking his team.

“But let’s circle back to this later. He’s flying under the radar right now, nobody knows what he’s up to. We’ll talk when we hear something. For now, you should take care of things on Ingrid’s end. Better sort it out soon, or you’ll be caught in a tight spot.”

Bruce was always keyed into Sylvia’s progress and knew Ingrid kept stirring up trouble behind the scenes. He didn’t step in because he trusted Sylvia to handle it.

Sylvia nodded—it was time to sort out Ingrid for good.

After they wrapped up the big talk, the siblings dropped the business chatter.

Seeing they finally paused, Stanford huffed loudly, clattering his utensils onto his plate.

“I thought you two only had work on the brain, totally forgetting to eat. You’ve been talking forever. Can we please just eat our meal now?”

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At Stanford's playful scolding, the brother and sister couldn't help but give a sheepish laugh, promising to drop the topic for real this time.