

After Divorce, She Becomes the Billionaire Heiress

(Sylvia and Cyril) Chapter 91-100

Released on May 6, 2024

Chapter 91 The Hot Project

The news of Louis returning to the states with his project spread like wildfire, as many had their eyes set on the prize. In an era driven by data and devices, everyone's betting that artificial intelligence and AI technology will carve out their own slice of the future. But to play ball in this league, you've gotta have killer tech skills and deep pockets.

Thing is, the stretch from research to ringing up sales is just too dang long for most. Business folks wanna see their cash stack up fast. Diving into development means pouring in serious coin without any promise of payback. And in the face of such high stakes, lots of them are more likely to place their bets elsewhere.

Or they might wait for reliable AI to hit the market before pouring dough into investments and partnerships—that's like earning money while snoozing.

So when Louis brought his hot-shot project home, everybody wanted a piece of the action. A whole bunch of businesses tried to buddy up to Louis in secret, but the guy wasn't spilling any beans. With more and more reaching out and none getting a clear signal, they started scratching their heads, wondering what Louis was really after.

"Everyone's scrambling to connect with Louis, and you seem way too chill. Didn't Bruce spill the beans to you?" Everyone's craving a slice of this lucrative pie. They're all hustling to get a word with Louis, but so far, Sylvia hasn't made a move. Juliet was puzzled by her friend's calm and a tad worried about it.

Sylvia, buried in her work, just chuckled at Juliet's concern.

"No need to rush. Look, everyone's buzzing around Louis, but the guy hasn't budged. That means they're not who he wants to jam with. Instead of getting worked up over Louis, let's tidy up this mess with Ingrid first. Ingrid's been feeling bold, keeping big stuff under wraps

from me.

Sylvia knew dealing with Ingrid should come first, aware that an unresolved situation internally could trip them up big time, even if a brighter partnership beckoned.

"You're making sense. I've been keeping tabs on Ingrid. Lately, he's been cozying up to some partners under the radar, hinting at going solo. But honestly, the guy hasn't got what it takes to strike out on his own. More like he's brewing some bad mojo."

Juliet could barely mask her disdain for Ingrid's sneaky ways. Slyly making the rounds with Sylvia's contacts, it was clear as day what he was planning.

"What's the word on the street at the company?" Sylvia wanted the scoop. Sitting at the top, she didn't always catch the chatter down the ranks.

"How else would they think? Some reckon you're not right for the throne. But hey, your recent wins have made a lot of folks happy, and they figure Ingrid's just biting off more than he can chew. But it all comes down to what you wanna do about Ingrid."

Juliet felt it was simple—if they decided to take on Ingrid, they'd dig up more than enough to deal with him, no sweat.

If someone's determined to find fault with you, then everything you do can be twisted into a mistake. Sylvia knew this all too well.

"Tonight, I'm discussing a partnership, and I've heard that this partner is pretty chummy with Ingrid's crew. Let's invite him to join us," Sylvia mused, addressing Juliet.

Juliet was taken aback, wondering if it really was a good idea to bring Ingrid so openly, especially alongside someone who was close to him.

"Along with talking business with Ingrid tonight, Louis will be there as well. Consider it a pre-meeting of sorts," Sylvia added with a smile, making sure Juliet understood the full picture.

Juliet burst into laughter, grasping the hidden meaning in Sylvia's words. "You're pretty sly, you know? How do you manage to think ahead so well? Don't worry, I'll handle this tonight. Ingrid won't even know what's coming."

Sylvia grinned, acknowledging the situation. Ingrid's antics were indeed irksome, yet he hadn't crossed any serious lines. Ultimately, he seemed to be looking out for the company, which was something the higher-ups would take into account. If she decided to make a move against Ingrid, it couldn't be for past trivialities. The ironclad stuff had to be current

and critical.

Like now, with the buzz around this hot project. If Ingrid slipped up here, it might give Sylvia the calm needed to deal with him, no hassle involved.

Juliet approached Ingrid's office, finding him on his phone, venting and rolling his eyes. about everything Sylvia was up to, almost literally.

"Who are we whispering secrets about?" Juliet's voice made Ingrid jump, and his phone clattered to the floor. The chat history was laid bare for Juliet's eyes.

With a slight squint and a smirk, Juliet scanned Ingrid's conversation. Caught red-handed, Ingrid's face couldn't hide his unease as he snatched up his phone.

"What are you, nuts? Why'd you come over and scare me like that?" he snapped.

"Oh, I didn't know I'd catch you smack-talking. You've got quite a bit to explain now. Tonight, we're meeting with Louis, and you're tagging along," Juliet said, her voice

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dripping with 1

Sarcasm.

Ingrid felt awkward, but the thought of meeting Louis excited him. However, he content help but wonder why Sylvia was inviting him. Could there be a cath?

Released on May 7, 2024

Chapter 92 The Ideal Partner

The banquet that evening was Louis's doing -a welcome back affair calling together a host of attendees. Ivan Group, of course, was included in the invitee list, but upon arrival, they found the crowd far exceeded their expectations.

"Did he really have to invite this many people? He's just an AI guy. Is he really that popular?" Ingrid grumbled as she and Sylvia walked in, surprised at the turnout. In her mind, AI was cool and all, but not enough to warrant such a crowd. Yet, it showed that everyone wanted a piece of the pie.

"Nowadays, we don't have proper AI over here. The mere fact that he's willing to bring his tech is a testament to its caliber. Why else would all these people show up? Besides, Louis isn't as simple as you think," Juliet quipped with a roll of her eyes, clearly not impressed by Ingrid's remark.

Sure, an AI developer might not typically pull such a crowd, but Louis wasn't just your average developer. His family's powerhouse legacy was well-known, even though he had broken away to avoid relying on their clout and to continue his AI research independently. However, he was still part of the family, and they all knew he'd come back to the fold someday. So, those rushing here were mainly angling to link up with Louis-collaboration or not, having a chance in the future was a pretty sweet deal.

Unaware of this backstory, Ingrid's face fell-her casual comment had brought on such censure.

"With so many folks here, it looks like his ideal partner could be in the crowd. Let's go mingle," Sylvia suggested as they forged ahead. It wasn't just about making a

connection with Louis—there were plenty of fish in the sea, and anyone here could become a future ally. The goal for tonight was clear: don't end up on the losing end.

Juliet didn't have much to add, following Sylvia closely. Ingrid, on the other hand, was getting impatient. She didn't want to trail behind Sylvia; after all, any potential deals they came across wouldn't be hers alone. Besides, she and Sylvia were at odds, competing for the

same prize.

Ingrid veered off, and Sylvia and Juliet didn't mind. They weren't interested in tagging along with her, anyway. Besides, Ingrid was representing the whole Ivan Group; as long as she didn't embarrass herself tonight, it was all good.

"I kind of expected your brother to come with you tonight. Surprised it's just you here," Juliet casually mentioned, and Sylvia's eyebrow twitched slightly. She remembered Juliet had her sights set on her brother but had never voiced it, so Sylvia avoided bursting that

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bubble.

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Sylvia teased with a twinkle in her eye, "Are you asking if my brother didn't come to talk business, or if you're disappointed he isn't here at all? If you're so eager to see him, I could just ring him up this instant.

"Oh, stop talking nonsense. I just thought... with such a big deal on the table, your brother would personally be involved. I didn't expect everything to be left to you," Juliet deflected.

"Aha, I get it now. You don't trust my expertise. Fine, let me call him up. Given how much you're missing him, he might even be willing to come over and see you."

Seeing Sylvia about to pull out her phone, Juliet panicked and quickly grabbed Sylvia's hand to stop her. No way could she let this happen; calling him now would be mortifying.

"Stop, you can't do this! If you go any further, I'll really get mad at you. Don't go over the line!" Juliet's face turned red with urgency, prompting a laugh from Sylvia. Even trying to hide her feelings like this, Sylvia's clever brother, sly as a fox, would have easily seen through Juliet's affections. What on earth was stopping them from taking the next step?

“Don’t worry, alright? I might be his little sister, but I’m your sis too. So right now, I’ve got your back. I’ll have a good chat with him later and figure out what’s up. I’ll make sure you two get a chance to be together,” Sylvia assured her.

Juliet’s face burned even redder. What was Sylvia rambling on about?

“Quit it already; I don’t have those thoughts!” Juliet protested.

“Oh, is that so? Then forget I said anything. I was just about to give you a hand, but seems like you don’t need any help,” Sylvia teased, leaving Juliet speechless. Juliet opened her mouth to argue, but couldn’t find the words—it felt like any comebacks were pointless.

Juliet glared at Sylvia. It wasn’t all her fault; she wouldn’t be in this mess if Sylvia hadn’t started this conversation.

Sylvia covered her mouth and giggled, and after their banter, they didn’t forget the night’s main event, starting to circulate around the venue.

Since Sylvia had taken charge, there were plenty who doubted him. But after nailing several projects, it turned out he wasn’t just for show; the guy had real chops. So when people spotted Sylvia at the banquet, they lined up to greet him, and he exchanged pleasantries

with a smile.

That’s when Sylvia spotted a familiar blond man ahead—it was definitely Louis, whose photo he’d seen before. Louis was deep in conversation with Cyril, looking like old buddies. Observing this, Sylvia paused to consider and then decided to walk in the opposite direction.

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“What’s up? Not planning to head over?” Juliet inquired, puzzled. Weren’t they there to meet Louis? Why walk away upon sighting him?

“Didn’t you see the guy with Louis? His demeanor tells you everything—this is the partner he’s been hoping for.”

Released on May 7, 2024

Chapter 93 Prejudice

Sylvia wasn't naïve. When she spotted Cyril mingling there, she knew there was more to the story. Louis and Cyril were laughing and chatting like old friends amidst the crowd. Clearly, their acquaintance wasn't just from today; it had history.

This realization dawned on Sylvia–Louis's return was likely aimed at collaborating with Cyril.

Juliet was caught off guard by Sylvia's observation. She hadn't noticed earlier who Louis was speaking with. Looking back, she indeed saw Cyril standing across from Louis.

"So, this grand gesture might just be to pave the way for his future plans, huh? I wonder if he's planning to rejoin his family. But then again, I haven't heard about the Walker family announcing any heir."

"The Walkers may not be revealing an heir, but Louis has no intention of returning to them. When he left, he never planned to go back. So today, he's probably just widening his network, scouting out potential partners for the future. If he ever competes with the Walkers, it'll be with the allies he makes now."

Juliet understood from Sylvia's explanation. While Louis might be the destined heir of the Walker family, he wasn't inclined to take on the entire legacy. If he already had his own business endeavor, then the goal was growth–growth strong enough to eventually stand up to the entire Walker corporation.

"Well, he sure knows how to pick 'em. He's got Cyril, who built his empire from scratch and isn't far behind the Ivans now." 1

Setting aside previous interactions with Cyril, you've got to respect what he's achieved business–wise. Not just anyone can be as formidable as Cyril has been.

Sylvia nodded, acknowledging Cyril's success without dismissing his questionable success in relationship matters. Recognizing their chance of partnering with Louis was slim, they decided to scout for other potential deals at the gathering. After all, the Ivan family had been mulling over an AI project for some time. Given the current circumstances, maybe it was time to push that forward. Sylvia vaguely remembered a subsidiary of the Ivan's that was dabbling in AI years back. She'd need to check on its progress when she got the chance.

"I've heard Ivan Group has a new Vice President–must be you. Your name reached my ears a while back. Wanted to drop by and say hi earlier, but got caught up. It's good to finally

catch a moment."

Sylvia didn't intend to engage Louis, but he took the initiative, approaching her.

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Sylvie was mildly taken aback by his forthrightness. In the cutthroat world of business, she had expected a more diplomatic approach, not such a direct rejection.

Sylvia's smile didn't alter in the least, which seemed to unsettle Louis. He had spoken his mind, so why wasn't this woman getting angry? Her composure made it seem like his words

were a mere joke to her.

"I saw who your ideal partner is already, so your words aren't surprising to me," Sylvia calmly retorted. "But I find it quite astonishing since I haven't even spoken a word to you

coming here. To be honest, before today, I thought there might be a chance for us to collaborate. Now, it's clear you're not my ideal partner either."

Sylvia sensed the bias Louis held against her, and his premeditated words. Why should she show him any kindness if he harbored such prejudice? He didn't want to work with her, and the feeling was mutual—they were both not what the other was looking for.

"It seems what I've heard is true. They say the new Vice President of Ivan Group has sharp wits—just a few sentences is all it takes to get under someone's skin. Has your way of doing things made enemies within your own clan?"

Sylvia didn't miss the underlying skepticism in his voice about her capabilities, partly due to her gender. If there was a better partner here besides Cyril, it had to be her. But Louis's remarks, one after another, were targeted at her, so naturally, Sylvia didn't hesitate to poke at his sore spots.

“Internal matters of our clan aren’t your concern. As for someone who doesn’t even want to return to his own family, giving me advice feels rather meaningless.”

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Sylvia nodded to him. Something about his tone struck her as odd, as if it carried a hint of

blas.

“Hello, I’m Louis.”

“Sylvia.”

After a brisk handshake, they released their grip.

“So many people here seem quite taken with your AI tech. Found your perfect partner among them, Mr. Louis?”

Louis simply grinned, knowing he had indeed found a fitting ally. Yet, seeing Sylvia here, he figured she must also be intrigued by the collaboration opportunity.

“I’ve found a great partner indeed. However, I don’t think there’s room for us to work together. You are not my ideal collaborator,” Louis stated plainly.

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Louis’s expression tightened. He hadn’t expected Sylvia to confront him like this.

“So, what if I haven’t returned to my family? Everything that I have…”

“You’re not going to claim that everything you have is the result of your own hard work, are you?” Sylvia cut him off. “Don’t forget, though you may go by Louis, your last name is Walker. Without that name above your head, do you think you would have had such a smooth ride? Even if you’ve had nonstop investment, success wouldn’t have come so easily.”

Those born into great families might venture out on their own, but they often carry the influence of their dynasty with them. His low profile couldn’t hide the advantages of his lineage—didn’t others notice?

Louis struggled to maintain his composure. He always believed his achievements were disconnected from his family background, yet Sylvia had just thrown that in his face, as if all his efforts over the years were nothing more than a joke.

“So you’re suggesting that everything I own is thanks to my family, is that it?”

Released on May 7, 2024

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Sylvia simply smiled without affirming or denying Louis’s point. She knew well that someone as arrogant as Louis would never admit to having family help.

“Your journey to where you are now—do you genuinely believe it was unsupported? How are you any different from me?” Louis retorted.

Sylvia feigned surprise: "I've never claimed that I reached my position without my family's support, but unlike you..."

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She firmly believed in acknowledging the family's contribution to her success. Enjoying the privileges of family meant taking on its duties and responsibilities as well. What was so strange about that?

Louis found himself speechless, his face darkening like the bottom of a pan. Juliet, who had been quietly observing the spirited exchange, couldn't help but let out a laugh at the sight of Louis's growing displeasure.

"Relying on your family isn't shameful, but you're trying to cast aside your family and claim all the glory for yourself. Aren't you overrating your accomplishments?" Juliet's family prestige wasn't far behind the Walkers, so she spoke without fear.

Louis huffed, frustrated by the confrontation that hadn't gone his way, and stormed off. He

had aimed to intimidate them and make a statement that collaboration was out of the question. Instead, he ended up being the one provoked.

As Louis left in anger, Sylvia and Juliet shared a look and chuckled.

"It's for the best that you weren't aiming to collaborate with him. With his ego, definitely wouldn't make for a good partner," Juliet commented.

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Sylvia shrugged it off: "He's very smart, a former prodigy even. However, he's too obsessed with proving he's self-made, which just isn't possible."

No one can entirely escape their family's influence, especially those from eminent dynasties

like theirs. 1

Juliet nodded, and they rested for a while. Their conversations with others that evening revealed that several promising collaboration opportunities awaited them. They could reconvene later to plan further.

Meanwhile, after his heated exchange with Sylvia, Louis returned to his initial spot. Cyril had been watching Louis approach Sylvia, only to see Louis's face grow increasingly grim while Sylvia remained unfazed.

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“What did you say to her?” Cyril asked, curious about the interaction.

Louis snorted, “What could I have said? I merely told her that her current status is founded on her family’s influence, as if her business deals were nothing remarkable. Then she accused me of the very same—using our family for my own gains. Don’t I know better than anyone if our years of research relied on the Walkers’ help? The team I’ve assembled—it’s the result of my own efforts!”

Desperate to validate his independence from his family, Louis continued, only to notice that Cyril’s expression seemed oddly off-kilter.

Louis’s expression changed in an instant.

“You’re not implying that the people I’ve attracted are actually connected to my family, are you?”

“What else could it be?” Cyril responded calmly. “Those individuals are accomplished in their own fields. Why would they abandon their current jobs to follow you? It’s not just because you’re offering better terms. There have to be additional benefits enticing enough for them to move. Even if you deny it, you must acknowledge that the Walker family has supported you in the background. Even without a public declaration, if someone wants to, they can easily uncover the connection between you and the Walkers.”

Louis was internally unsettled by these revelations. He had never heard such things before- not from anyone, not even from Cyril.

“Then why haven’t you mentioned this before? Was your investment in me also because of my family ties?”

“It wasn’t,” Cyril said. “I invested because I found your technology intriguing and untouched by me, which is why I wanted to see how far you’d take it. However, it was only after my investment that I learned of your connection to the Walkers. In other words, it was knowing your family ties that solidified my decision to continue investing in you.”

Cyril didn’t deny his initial interest in the technology, but the ongoing investment was indeed influenced by the Walker family name. Even if their relationship seemed amicable, it was partly facilitated by the intermediation of the Walkers.

Rendered speechless, Louis listened.

“The reason you want to collaborate with me is that we have a mutual foundation for partnership,” Cyril continued. “But beyond that, if you’re looking to establish a solid presence here, I suggest you consider partnering with the Ivan family. Drop your subjective biases; the Ivans are indeed a valuable company for collaboration.”

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Cyril was speaking from a perspective of both fairness and business acumen. Dynamics between him and Sylvia were trivial compared to corporate potential, Sylvia had demonstrated her abilities by securing major projects swiftly within the Ivan comp

which spoke volumes—she was no mere figurehead.

Though stung by Cyril’s blunt truths, Louis was a man open to sound advice. His recent resistance was fueled by the realization that Cyril’s words differed significantly from Sylvia’s. If Cyril suggested cooperation, it somehow seemed more acceptable.

“How can we collaborate? I’ve just had a falling out with Sylvia,” Louis noted, acutely aware that most would abandon all talks of collaboration after such an argument.

“If you’re open to it, I can help you,” Cyril offered, lifting his wine glass and gently swirling it as he addressed Louis.

Indeed, Louis was tempted. Before returning, he had been eager to collaborate with the Ivan family. After all, who wouldn’t want to forge ties with such a prominent company?

Released on May 7, 2024

Chapter 95 What’s This All About?

“Most folks who came here today want to partner up with you and if not with you, then with someone else,” Cyril said, giving a friendly pat on Louis’s shoulder. “You bang right I’ll go have a quick word with Sylvia.” He picked up his drink and soled toward where Sylvia was.

Deep down, even Cyril couldn’t quite pin down why he felt compelled to be with Louis. It wasn’t just about giving Louis a leg up, he wanted to lend a hand to Sylvie too. She needed solid projects to keep her footing as the vice president, especially since that was her position from the get-go.

Reflecting on their marriage, Cyril did feel a twinge of guilt towards Sylvia. He saw this as a chance to make it up to her.

Sylvia finished up a conversation just as Cyril approached her. She had been laughing with Juliet but her smile vanished instantly when she turned to face Cyril.

“What can I do for you, Mr. Cyril?” Sylvia asked, maintaining her composure and a polite smile, even though they were in a public setting where too much interaction was the last thing she wanted. Especially when the whole room had eyes on them, curious to witness this unexpected chat.

Conversations like this one, filled with gossip and spectacle, made Sylvia downright uncomfortable.

“I just had a chat with Louis. He seems pretty keen to work with you and would like to apologize if you’re willing,” Cyril said.

Sylvia paused, taken aback. Did an apology really matter? She didn’t think Louis had said anything out of line.

“People make snap judgments without knowing the whole picture; it’s just human nature. But why did you send him to apologize? Do you think he did something wrong earlier?” Sylvia said, cutting to the chase. She didn’t see Louis as a good partnership candidate to begin with—if they clashed from the start, there was bound to be trouble down the line.

As for Sylvia, she liked her life hassle-free. If partnering up meant inviting trouble, she’d rather not start at all. Besides, it’s not like she was short on partners.

Cyril began to defend himself, “You might have gotten the wrong idea; what I mean is—”

“I don’t care what you meant,” Sylvia interrupted. “Beyond what he said, I don’t think we’re a good fit for collaboration. And clearly, he’s more interested in a partnership with you-

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"I don't care what you meant," Sylvia interrupted. "Beyond what he said, I don't think we're a good fit for collaboration. And clearly, he's more interested in a partnership with you—

everyone can see that."

At this point, it was clear to Cyril.

Sylvia had considered a partnership but after getting a glimpse into Louis's true intentions, she quickly changed her mind.

"Alright, let's drop it then," Cyril conceded. "Originally, I thought this might be an opportunity to make amends for my part in our marriage mishaps. I've come to realize I've made some missteps."

Sylvia was momentarily taken aback. Had Cyril actually started to reflect on their marriage?

"No need for that," Sylvia replied icily. "If you're talking about our marriage, then I think I was just too impulsive back then. We both made that decision without really thinking it through. And as for you admitting you haven't been at your best, well, you might be mistaken. Because from start to finish, you've been nothing but a mess in this marriage. If you want to make it right, the best way to do that is to stay far away from me and never

show

your face again." Her words were chilling.

Trying to brush off years of issues with a simple 'I haven't been at my best?? Even strangers

shouldn't be treated that way, let alone a husband and wife.

Sylvia's smile was one of finality as she turned to leave, but Cyril stopped her with an unexpected question. "Wait a second, did you go to the southern beach five years ago? Did you save someone?"

Sylvia's heart skipped a beat. Did Cyril remember something?

"I'm sorry, I don't really follow what you're saying," she said, confused.

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"That day, five years ago, I nearly died in the sea when my boat capsized. Someone saved and I've always thought they looked a lot like you," Cyril explained, his voice tinged with urgency. Ever since the dream, he'd wanted to ask Sylvia, and now he had the chance, he looked at her, eager for an answer.

"What are you saying? If it was me who saved you back then, does that make you want to make amends with me now? And if that's true, what does that make all of this?"
Sylvia's

expression darkened.

“Are you trying to gross me out here? Forget whatever happened five years ago—it has nothing to do with me. But even if it did, if you only now remember it and think you owe me a life debt, don’t you see how disgusting that is?” she accused, her voice sharp with disdain.

Why only now? What had he been doing all this time, knocking her down without mercy and treating her invisibly, ignoring her existence?

Chapter 95 What’s This All About?

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Taking a deep breath, Sylvia stepped closer to Cyril. “Don’t delude yourself here. I’m sure someone must have told you, if it really was me who saved you, I’d have told you without hesitation. After all, in your eyes—and everyone else’s—I’m nothing but a scheming woman,

With that, Sylvia walked away with Juliet, leaving Cyril standing alone, his spirits sinking, What did her words mean? Scheming? He had never really thought of Sylvia that way... or had he? Sure, they married because Sylvia supposedly played games, but why did his heart feel so heavy now?

Released on May 7, 2024

Chapter 96 On a Date

Lately, Sylvia felt like her luck had turned south; she bumped into Cyril no matter where she went, and couldn’t shake him off, much like a stubborn bit of gum stuck to her shoe.

“I thought we agreed to have lunch together today, and here you are, not paying any attention to me! That’s a bit much, don’t you think?” Duncan grumbled.

It took Duncan nearly half a month to finally get Sylvia to agree to a date, and the hook was his family’s new restaurant opening. Since everyone else was busy, he wanted Sylvia to accompany him to check it out, see if there was anything that needed improvement. Despite her packed schedule, Sylvia carved out a bit of her lunchtime to stroll with him, expecting an easy outing. Instead, the moment they entered, Sylvia seemed disconnected, critiquing the decor and the guests, giving judgment on every waiter that passed by. In short, she saw everyone except for the guy right in front of her.

Duncan felt like a failure. He had this rare chance to spend time alone with Sylvia, and it was fizzling out before his eyes.

Finally, Sylvia's gaze landed on him. "Didn't you ask for my advice? That's exactly what I'm doing," she said, resigned. If it wasn't for Duncan making a big fuss that even her family found out about, she wouldn't be here.

"Hey... can you at least show some respect for the meal in front of us?" Though Duncan was aware that the tactics he used to get her out weren't exactly honorable, it felt necessary. Besides, he had paid for this lunch with a good pummeling from Sylvia's older brother, Balk.

Balk could be extreme, aiming his punches where clothes would hide the bruises. Thinking about how much he hurt even when he twitched, Duncan sighed.

"I am being respectful," Sylvia retorted with a blink.

Duncan opened his mouth to respond but found himself wordless.

"Fine, you can't sit still, can you? What is it, seeing Cyril here makes you not want to dine with me that

urgency. He wasn't badly? Don't tell me you still have feelings for him!" Duncan's voice carried a note of urgency. He wasn't usually worried about competing with others, but when it came to Sylvia, his nerves frayed easily.

They'd grown up together, but Sylvia had only ever had eyes for one man—Cyril. Duncan couldn't help but regret—if only he had met her earlier, maybe they could have avoided all this drama.

The question made Sylvia pause, pressing her lips together tightly.

"We're divorced," she reminded him.

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"Divorce doesn't mean feelings are gone. You haven't denied it; do you, still carry a torch for him?" Duncan pushed, his anxiety evident. When Sylvia started to show signs of standing up to leave, he let out a sigh of

resignation.

"Duncan, I've had feelings for him for many years. Those feelings don't just vanish; they're not something I can just pretend never existed. Even if it was just a dog, affection develops, and letting go takes time,"

Chapie 96 On a date

Sylvia explained earnestly.

She wasn't kidding. She didn't deny still having feelings for Cyril. Years of accumulated disappointments had slowly eroded her love, and she knew moving on entirely would require time too.

Duncan fell quiet, realizing his impatience.

"I understand. Should we go say hello?" he suggested tentatively.

His question caught Sylvia by surprise, but before she could reply, he was pulling her along to greet Cyril and his company.

Cyril, Jonathan, and Louis had arrived at the restaurant earlier than Sylvia and Duncan and were already deep in conversation when the pair walked in. It was plain to see that the three men knew each other well.

Sylvia had her own agenda today and hadn't planned on acknowledging Cyril, so after a glance his way, she turned her attention to earnestly giving Duncan her opinions on the restaurant. She hadn't expected Duncan to boldly approach Cyril's table. What was he thinking?

"We're dining here today. The food's pretty good, right? But don't you think just the three of you is a bit dull?" Duncan began with a taunt. "Unlike me, I'm out here openly on a date with the girl I like. That's something you can't match."

Cyril's face darkened at Duncan's words, and seeing this gave Duncan a surge of satisfaction. After all, Cyril hadn't cherished Sylvia during their marriage and had even mistreated her. Now, it was Duncan's turn to take a jab.

Sylvia understood that Duncan's real reason for coming over was to provoke Cyril, but it still put her in an awkward spot. She didn't want any ties to Cyril, yet Duncan's actions had just made things uncomfortable.

"Unlike you who's always hitting on married women!" Jonathan rebutted as he stood up Cyril. But as he spoke, everyone could sense Cyril's mood growing even more sour.

defensively for

Duncan couldn't help but feel triumphant that 'Cyril's own friend had accidentally turned on him. "See? It's not just me who's saying it; even your buddy here thinks you two are still an em," Duncan taunted. "Also, if you were so against marrying Sylvia in the first place, why can't you let go now that you're divorced?"

Duncan had managed to turn the tables on but instead gave Jonathan a sharp glare.

who was so taken aback he couldn't utter a single word

Louis was so shocked by this revelation that his utensils clattered onto the table. He had known about Cyril's marriage and divorce, but not that the woman was none other than Sylvia. Had he known, he would never have spoken so carelessly that day.

And now, it all clicked for Louis. No wonder Cyril had been speaking favorably about Sylvia—it was for this

reason.

“No one's holding on to anything. This is a restaurant; am I not allowed to have a meal here?” Cyril finally spoke up, feeling cornered by the trio and compelled to defend himself against Jonathan's mishap.

“Of course you can have a meal, but why are you staring so intently at the person I'm with? She's got

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nothing to do with you now,” Duncan retorted, relishing the moment. He couldn't understand why Cyril refused to even look Sylvia's way when they were married, yet now he seemed so fixated on her after

their divorce.

Sylvia gave a light tug on Duncan's shirt, signaling that enough was enough; the spectacle was drawing

too much attention, and she had never felt so embarrassed. However, this subtle gesture was misinterpreted by Cyril and Duncan, further complicating the matter.

Released on May 8, 2024

Chapter 97 Bad Luck

Duncan was feeling a touch of annoyance. What did this mean? Was Sylvia still taking Cyril's side? Hadn't go of Cyril crossed the line? Of course. Duncan knew it—even though they were divorced, Sylvia hadn't let Cyril, and she wasn't ready to admit it.

As for Cyril, he was nearly at his limit for keeping a composed face. Although he was well aware that they were divorced and there was no relationship left, he couldn't help feeling uncomfortable seeing Sylvia defend Duncan. Why was she protecting him?

“There are so many eyes on us, let's just finish our meal and leave. I've got work this afternoon,” Sylvia said, her patience diminishing. She only had the lunch slot to spare and refused to waste it on Cyril.

After hearing this, Duncan huffed and nodded, following Sylvia back to their table. The brief confrontation had made it all too clear that it was a deliberate dig at Cyril, an unnecessary flaunting of their closeness in the face of Sylvia's ex-husband.

Back at their table, Duncan casually draped his arm over Sylvia's shoulder. She felt like saying something about it, but seeing his smug look, she held back. After all, today was about finding Cyril and unsettling him; if she made Duncan drop his arm now, he might just kick up a fuss.

Though Cyril didn't speak up, his darkened expression and the chill in the air around him were clear indicators of his foul mood to those at the table.

"I don't quite get it. Sylvia is attractive and has done some impressive work lately. For someone who parachuted into a VP role and secured so many partnerships, she must be quite capable. Why did you think of divorcing her?" Louis turned the conversation to Cyril.

"And why didn't you partner up with her then?" Cyril lobbed the question back at Louis, who now felt quite uncomfortable. He had initially thought Sylvia was just a pretty face and wasn't pleased with the idea of working with someone he perceived as a vase.

If he had known her true capabilities back then, he would have definitely acted differently. After all, in business, if partnering up could earn a profit, who you work with doesn't particularly matter, and working with Sylvia might even mean a bigger slice of the profit pie.

"It's not like that; I just mean, Sylvia seems like a decent person. Don't you regret divorcing her? If you two could get back together, it'd be good, right? A merger of two powerful companies would put you both at the top," Louis suggested, not fully aware of the dynamics within their previous marriage. In his mind, a reunion between two powerhouses was a winning scenario.

"I'll never marry her again, not in this lifetime. If you think she's a decent person, then consider partnering with her. Don't worry about my stance. When I talked to you about her, it was with the hope that you'd consider a partnership. As for why I'm doing this, it's simply to make reparations. When we divorced, she walked away with nothing," Cyril said, not denying his reasons for helping Sylvia.

Louis and Jonathan fell silent after Cyril's admission.

Everyone had assumed Cyril only wanted to help Sylvia because there was profit to be made. They didn't expect he harbored any desire to make amends. If he felt this way now, what had he been doing all along?

Chapte 97 Bad Luck

“To put it bluntly, running into us here probably made them feel unlucky, but trying to make amends with her now, isn’t that a bit late? If you wanted to make amends, you could’ve done so earlier, yet you didn’t. It’s really too late now. And she’s the VP of the Ivan family’s business, which pays generously. Her salary is hardly modest,” Louis commented, not really wanting to undermine Cyril but feeling compelled to point out the folly of his friend’s ways.

When they had worked together all these years, Louis really felt like asking Cyril what had been running through his mind. Why did he want to make amends with Sylvia? Looking at her today, did she seem like someone needing compensation? She seemed quite carefree post-divorce.

Cyril was well aware of how freely Sylvia had been living since their divorce. Every time he saw her, he witnessed a different side of her—a side not seen in their years of marriage, as if she had been hiding her true self. Only after the divorce did Cyril realize Sylvia was quite a different person.

But those realizations came too late and were utterly useless now. They were divorced, and up to this point, Cyril felt guilty but not regretful about the marriage. He had a hunch that if they’d stayed married, his entire life would have continued much like those monotonous three years.

He preferred divorce over a lifetime of the same dreariness.

“I didn’t consider partnering with her initially mainly because the Ivan family had an edge in AI development and were ahead of us. They didn’t seem to focus on it over the years, so I wasn’t too informed about their department’s salary details. Now that I’ve returned, they might shift their focus to internal development. Partnering with them might lead to being swallowed up,” Cyril explained.

Despite the technicalities being on par with his company, when it came to connections and financial resources, even with Cyril’s help and years of accumulation, it would still fall short against the entirety of the Ivan family. It would be too disgraceful to cash in on the help from his family’s Walker empire for the venture he started independently.

After a moment of realization, Jonathan exclaimed, “Got it, so you deliberately stirred things with Sylvia, huh? But aren’t you afraid of Sylvia striking first if you’ve riled her up?”

Released on May 8, 2024

Chapter 98 Rivalry and Resentment

Louis had never before considered Sylvia to be a problem. But now, right after his arrival, he realized she was a formidable and complicated issue.

“We’ll see about that in the future. For now, there are no conflicts between me and Sylvia; I just need to stabilize my position,” Louis mused. If he indeed offended Sylvia, and she mobilized her family against him, he might have no choice but to return to the Walker family fold.

“And you?” Louis prodded Cyril. “Even though you started from scratch, your family background isn’t exactly modest. Haven’t you ever thought about competing with Sylvia?” Louis was well aware of Cyril’s past; his family had almost gone bankrupt before Cyril single-handedly pulled them through. Cyril then forged his own path to success, bringing his business back to its peak.

Cyril looked at Louis strangely. He had divorced Sylvia, not become her sworn enemy. Why would he want to compete with her? In business, there were no perpetual friends or enemies, only aligning interests that made partnerships.

“So far, there are no conflicts of interest between me and Sylvia, and even if there were, it would come down to strength and capability,” Cyril maintained. He was confident that with his ability, he could handle any challenge.

Louis fell silent, acknowledging that Cyril seemed to have a broader perspective than he had anticipated.

Meanwhile, as Sylvia and Duncan finished their meal, they stood up to head out. Cyril had a sense of reluctance but couldn’t protest. He no longer had any right to, and as Sylvia walked away, she didn’t once

look back at him.

Just as they were about to leave, Sylvia ran into a couple of familiar faces: Katrina and Cyril’s sister, Bonnie. Seeing them together wasn’t surprising considering their soon-to-be familial ties, but their presence was still startling to Sylvia.

Duncan, spotting Bonnie, promptly placed his hand back on Sylvia’s shoulder, and this time Sylvia didn’t shrug it off, allowing him to guide her out.

“Sylvia, You’re shameless! You flung yourself at the president of the Ivan family, and now you’re going after another man? My brother wasted his years on you and it disgusts me!” Bonnie spewed, her disdain for Sylvia well-documented. She had tormented Sylvia throughout the marriage and hadn’t let up even from abroad. Now, seeing Sylvia seemingly prosperous and with a handsome man by her side, Bonnie was boiling with resentment.

In Bonnie’s world, Sylvia was supposed to be weeping and regretting her divorce from Cyril. Instead, Sylvia’s life seemed only to flourish, much to Bonnie’s confusion and irritation.

Sylvia and Duncan paused in their tracks, giving Bonnie a strange look. They couldn't help but wonder which door had hit her in the head for her to speak such nonsense.

"Don't delude yourself into thinking that clinging to this man will bring you success. I'm telling you, one day you'll be down on your luck," Bonnie snarled, implying that Sylvia could only ascend the ladder through unscrupulous means. She thought that once Sylvia reached the top, she would soon understand

Chapter 98 Rivalry and Resentment

the consequences.

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Sylvia just laughed it off, "I'm really sorry to disappoint, but compared to your companion, I don't think my approach to success looks bad at all. What does it matter if I got a leg up via a shortcut?"

Katrina remained silent throughout the exchange, not wanting to ruin the impression she hoped to leave on Cyril, who was still dining inside the restaurant. She wasn't about to make the same mistakes again and let Sylvia draw her into a heated debate.

Bonnie was almost fuming with rage at Sylvia's response. She glared viciously, but before she could retort, she caught sight of Cyril dining in the irritation she had felt toward her brother.

restaurant, and her focus shifted completely, forgetting the

Seeing that Bonnie had stopped talking, Sylvia deduced that she must have noticed Cyril and his friends. Letting the siblings have their reunion, Sylvia chose not to linger any longer.

As Sylvia and Duncan walked out, Duncan mentioned having to return to work, and although he wanted to stick around Sylvia, hoping to learn from her, she firmly denied the request. Moreover, she suggested that if he was so eager to be of help, he should take it up with Bruce. But Duncan knew all too well that Bruce would never consent to him shadowing Sylvia after what Balk had done to him, which also served Bruce's

interests.

Just a few steps out of the restaurant, they were momentarily blinded by a flash from a camera. Sylvia glanced sideways, mulling over the implications, while Duncan rubbed his eyes incredulously.

"Are you kidding me? We can't even have a meal without someone snapping photos, thinking there's something going on between us?" he exclaimed, careful not to escalate

the situation, especially if it meant losing the approval of Sylvia's family. Without their blessing, Sylvia's marriage prospects could be imperiled.

"Keep an eye on the news these next few days, and let me know if anything comes up. Deal with what you can. I don't want to see anything related to me online unless it's positive," Sylvia instructed. She had been too visible lately and hoped to keep a lower profile given her future role within the company. High visibility now could complicate things later.

Duncan felt a sting at her words; she was clearly concerned about how their public perception might be

misconstrued.

"I understand. Don't worry, I won't let any problems come your way," he assured her, masking the

bitterness of acceptance.

Released on May 8, 2024

Chapter 99 How many are there?

if he promised something, she knew he

Sylvia had full confidence in Duncan's assurance would deliver, so she had no concerns about his ability to take care of the situation. Even if Duncan couldn't manage, she was sure her older brothers could handle it for her, leaving her without any worry or need to rush.

That afternoon at work, Juliet approached Sylvia with secret excitement, teasing her with gestures. Sylvia, puzzled by her behavior and thinking Juliet might just have something in her eye, saw Juliet take out her phone and show her something.

"You can't fool me, that kid works fast. I thought he'd wait for a better chance to make a move on you, but there it is. What do you think? I mean, we've known you for years, and he's a couple of years younger, but he's a decent guy. Not to mention he plays the naive, sweet boy in front of you, but we all know he's sly like a fox," Juliet said, her eyes lighting up. Duncan's intentions towards Sylvia couldn't have been more transparent to them, yet Sylvia clearly didn't take it seriously.

Sylvia sighed and gave Juliet a helpless look. Why was she so excited about it when Sylvia herself wasn't?

"You're not excited because you don't take it seriously. Listen, he's been into you since forever, we all see it. It's just you being oblivious, always chasing after Cyril. And where

did that get you? Heartbroken and harmed,” Juliet lamented. She genuinely liked Duncan for

Sylvia—he may be a bit

be a bit younger, but what did that matter when he was genuinely devoted to her?

“If you came just to show me this, save it. Besides, didn’t he invite you all to his restaurant for a meal? None of you showed up, so I went. No, actually, he said everyone would be there that’s why I went. And my family told me to get out more and not just focus on work. Do you think the media would get their hands on this otherwise?” Sylvia countered. She knew from a glance that this was a deliberate leak, and it definitely wasn’t Duncan’s doing.

Bonnie and Katrina must have engineered this to tarnish her reputation. Upon hearing Sylvia’s explanation, Juliet looked utterly confused: “No, I had no idea you were going out to eat with him... Don’t blame this on me. I came to ask how you plan to handle this mess, not

this.”

After some thought, Sylvia replied assertively, “If they think my position isn’t justified, then I’ll just ensure that it is. I hadn’t planned on hiding my true identity forever, and with this kind of exposure, it would’ve come out one way or another.”

Just the previous night, her father had gathered his children to discuss whether to go public

with Sydrhasadentity. He had abnurrent her stirnaby success an the company, knowing it ww just a matter of time before ver te status would be revuln Syta ad preferred to keep breidresat sæder wraps a bit longer, but imed that option was a long available.

* your plan is to only reveall your karmnaz

Jallet deciphered Sylvia’s intent.

Sylvia coded in agreement but decided to give the media something to chew on first. That very night, the media captured images of Sylvia arm–in–arm with two influential mem: the párt of the twan Group on one side and the popular music king, Balk, on the other.

When the media and paparazzi caught the photos, they were ecstatic, eagerly following Sylvia into the hotel where they saw her be an older man as if they were very close The paparazzi were started just how many men were there in Sylvia’s life? she seemed to have companions of all sorts and ages,

The whole family know about syba's plan to reveal her identity, and despite the statweccessary Lantistatus, they were reluctantly cooperative

"You have to smule a big spectacle out of announcing your kűmnesty?" tulle grumbină, by exposing huy khentary, theirs would inevitably be sevented as well. Despite his exlactance, Sylvia was his shelley, how could the sensed So here he was, caught as the whirlwind of expounds. The identity they had huhim for so many years could no longer her comersliež

" just want to thank out whom's trying to hurt me Som behind the women, in's exhausting to the constantly watched," Sylua reglament While he grint madr sme, the eres tes her family was a bit gut aut by this method of allowing her manu

They were a family of tout-two of them high profile and as they sat around the table dining and chatting, the pupincasat's caminas nearly owncheated from mapping so many photos thaw could they all! siti together, getting dűng so well without a fight? wow sybeta's

charms that captivating?

Also oversight, Sylvia's limity Seccome the falls of the towns,, a everyone was curious about how she managed such good relations with several prominent man,

This news shed up the trending chats, stocking royone while Sylla's shensory was loomes to same, seeing her in such close relations with varinis people was all cate brighting. The came emptied with ertadams at Syla, feeling she was out of the for entangling herself with both a father and son, and even inonding a top-level singer like

Sylvia, unaware of the uproar, decided to take the day off after the events of the previou night, expecting a deluge of news to follow the chose to stay at home, playing the role of an

Bah while Beuce took care of everything at the company

Chapter 99 How many are there?

While Sylvia enjoyed a restful day alone at home, Balk's phone rang incessantly with inquiries about the nature of his relationship with Sylvia.

Spin to Claim Your Surprise Reward!

Released on May 8, 2024

Chapter 100 Birthday Banquet

Sylvia lounged on the sofa, savoring the bre

the kitchen staff had carefully prepared

for her, while Balk was the picture of frustration, his face crumpled with irritation. Call after call came in, and not a moment of peace seemed within reach. The contrast between Sylvia's leisure and Balk's agitation was stark.

They both knew very well why Balk was so busy today. But Sylvia's relaxation seemed a tad excessive given that the trouble was of her own making, and now the men of the house were left to shoulder the blame.

Finally, Balk couldn't take it anymore. He stormed over to Sylvia after hanging up another call, snatching a piece of fruit from her hand just as she was about to eat it.

"I know you're upset, but there's no need to vent your anger on the fruit," Sylvia said, looking at her now empty hand, well aware of her brother's inability to curb his temper.

Balk almost laughed in irritation. Wasn't all this mess caused by Sylvia? If not for her, would he be swamped with these problems? He couldn't help but ruffle Sylvia's hair, which she protested with a startled yelp.

"What are you doing?" Sylvia protested, her hair now in disarray.

Balk's grim smile faded as he reached to ruffle her hair again, but Sylvia dodged it this time.

"What can I do? This mess is all to help you, yet you dragged me down with you. Do you have any idea how many years of reputation you've destroyed for me? Do you know what people are saying about us? All sorts of nasty stuff!"

Sylvia blinked, surprised. Hadn't they all prepared for such outcomes when they initially decided on this course of action? Why was Balk making such a fuss?

"If you think this isn't a good idea, we can always cancel," Sylvia offered casually, which only infuriated Balk more. It wasn't just about messing up Sylvia's hair anymore; he tapped her head lightly, which didn't actually hurt her, but she felt somewhat helpless dealing with her brother.

"How can you casually suggest that? Do you have any idea how long everyone has been preparing for your birthday banquet? It's happening next week. If you tell me now to cancel it, do you think our father and our eldest brother won't be mad?"

The entire family adored their little sister Sylvia, and Balk knew it. But he dreaded to think of the reaction this news would spark from his siblings.

“If you find fault with every solution, what do you suggest we do? If you come up with a good solution, I won’t say another word,” Sylvia reasoned. She understood that Balk was simply overwhelmed by the media and had come to vent to her. She wasn’t angry but decided to continue the conversation based on what he had said.

Balk felt near-exploding with frustration after...ng Sylvia’s response.

“The birthday feast must go on, and it’s time to officially announce your identity. Otherwise, you’ll keep attracting all these bothersome people. By the way, I picked up a massive gem at the auction the other day; thought you might like it.” Balk pulled Sylvia away from her breakfast and led her upstairs to his room, where he placed a large box in

front of her.

“How big is the gemstone you bought?” Sylvia asked, unsure what to expect.

Balk gestured for her to open the box and see for herself. With some hesitation, Sylvia lifted the lid and immediately burst into laughter upon seeing a gemstone-studded tiara. Balk had obtained it thinking it was just a fancy stone.

“What do you think? Perfect for your birthday banquet, right? It suits your status. If you think it’s not worthy of you, we can always find something else,” Balk offered. His financial success over the years meant he didn’t need family money to buy something that Sylvia

would like.

“It is quite beautiful,” Sylvia admitted, given that the tiara looked stunning no matter how one looked at it. She placed it on her head, feeling its fit was just right, though she couldn’t

see herself without a mirror.

Balk’s gaze softened, and he nodded with approval.

“My sister makes it beautiful.”

Sylvia smiled and carefully returned the tiara to its box. “Then you’ll help me wear it at the banquet?”

“Of course,” Balk said, tapping the box with pride, prepared to place the tiara on Sylvia’s head himself when the time came.

The Ivan family's sudden decision to host a grand birthday banquet for their seldom-seen daughter sent ripples through high society. There had been many rumors surrounding the reclusive Miss Ivan – everything from poor health to unfortunate looks. Yet, throughout the years, the Ivan family never stepped forward to clarify these wild speculations.

Instead of providing explanations now, the Ivan family announced a birthday celebration for their daughter, inviting nearly the entire elite society to the event. When Cyril received

his invitation, he was surprised, particularly because it made him recall Sylvia's recent scandal. He always saw her in a different light, not as someone to get involved with too many men. But to associate Sylvia with the Ivan family's mysterious daughter seemed far-fetched.

"My heavens, what could the Ivan family be thinking? After all these years of keeping her hidden, why reveal her now? What's really going on here?" Jonathan couldn't help but wonder, completely befuddled by the unexpected turn of events.