

Sorry Sir I Don't Want You Back Chapter 51

Posted by **Admin-J**, 62 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 51

Hudson sneered before he entered the elevator, seeing his ex-wife with a young-looking man draping his arm over her shoulder.

Cherise **ignored** him and focused her attention on Tristan, who was still clinging to her like a leech and chatting her ears off.

At least Tristan was here, she thought, or she would be suffocated with the mere presence of her ex-husband.

But what was he doing here? Could he also have moved into one of the units here?

She peeked at him and didn't see him swiping his card on the elevator's card reader, which would take him to his floor.

A sudden realization hit her, and she groaned inwardly. Of course, with him being the CEO of the Amery Group, he would buy the other available penthouse.

Cherise cursed inwardly. Was he going to shadow her everywhere? Why was it hard to meet him when they were married? But now that they were divorced, he seemed to be everywhere. Was fate playing a cruel joke on her?

Whatever, as long as they had minimal contact, it wouldn't matter if they were neighbors. She'd make sure they didn't cross paths when they left or arrived home. She still remembered his schedule—

what time he went to the office. He always worked overtime, never coming back straight after office hours, while she went home straight most of the time.

God, she hated how she still remembered, but she was also relieved because then they wouldn't cross paths or get **stuck** on **the** elevator with just the two of them. Who knew what he would do or what kind of degrading remarks he would say to her? **And** she didn't plan to find out about it.

Hudson took his phone from his suit pocket and mindlessly checked his emails as he secretly listened to their conversation.

The young man looked familiar to him until it struck him that he knew him. Tristan Hart was the most famous and popular actor/ model at present, and he used to be their model for La Jewel and Angelworld Jewelry's first collaboration.

How did Cherise know him? Because of Julian? Katherine? Logan? Because she was now the personal secretary of Angelworld CEO?

Based on how comfortable and too friendly they were toward each other, it didn't seem like it. The casual way Cherise leaned against him and Tristan whispered words to her made Hudson rage, like when he saw Cherise with Julian or Logan.

This was another piece of information he found out about Cherise. How did she know all with them before they got married?

influential figures? Were she friends

Hudson didn't want to believe it. He had checked her background before they got married, and the information he found matched her

story—she was an orphan and had nothing to do with upper society.

However, with the way Katherine stood up for her and proudly claimed to be her best friend made it look like they had been friends for a long time. Maybe he needed to dig further into his ex-**wife's** past.

He looked Tristan up and down and realized he was the guy who he had seen peppering Cherise with kisses outside the apartment building before.

That image made him clench his phone tighter until it nearly cracked. It seemed his ex-wife was used to being touched by men who

weren't her husband.

He wondered how many men had touched her before they were married, and that thought disgusted him. But then he comforted himself without even realizing it. He knew Cherise was still a virgin, and he was her first. And that brought out a smugness inside his heart.

Chapter 51

But still, he didn't like—no, hate was the more appropriate word—how she let just about any man touch her. And all three of whom he had seen were successful, influential, and handsome—the dream men of nearly every lady in three countries.

The elevator finally arrived at the topmost floor, and Hudson let Cherise and Tristan go out first before he followed them.

As there were only two units on that floor, each unit got half of the floor, with their doors facing each other.

Hudson ignored them but kept his eyes on Cherise as she placed her thumb on the biometric lock that he was sure Julian had installed for her while he opened his with a tap of his keycard on the card reader.

Once he saw that Cherise and Tristan had entered Cherise's penthouse, he made a quick move toward them.

He turned toward Cherise, and before the door could close behind them, he pushed it open, and Tristan, **too**, sending him tumbling forward and to his knees. He dragged Cherise toward his penthouse, closed the door behind them, and it locked by itself.

It all happened so fast that Cherise's mind didn't register what happened before it all sank in when Hudson forcefully sat her down on his plush couch.

Are you fucking kiddin

"Are

fucking kidding me, Hudson?!" she yelled **and** stood up, sending a murderous glare at her ex-husband.-

Hudson stood in front of her with his arms folded across his chest, his brows furrowed as he heard his used-to-be-meek ex-wife

curse at him.

"Language, Cherise," he said calmly.

“I don’t fucking care about my language when you have just kidnapped me!” she snapped at him. Never in her life had Cherise felt so mad.

She moved toward the door, only for Hudson to block her.

“What are you trying to do, Hudson?” She narrowed her eyes and seethed.

“Tristan Hart, huh? Two men weren’t enough, and now Tristan Hart? Are **you** collecting men?” Hudson **mocked**.

Cherise smirked and said, “Yeah. They are all good to me, and I’m happy with them.”

Hudson didn’t expect her to answer him with those words. A low growl sounded from deep within Hudson’s chest. He reached **out** his hand to grab her, but Cherise lifted her leg and sent a kick to the side of his head. She fr ky she was wearing trousers today

and not a skirt.

Hudson instinctively blocked her kick with his forearm, but then Cherise spun i n her spot and raised her other leg to kick him on the

other side.

As much as she was great at Taekwondo, Hudson **was** able to block her attacks. He was, after all, one of the heirs to the most. influential and powerful family in Country B and had also taken self–defense classes from the best teachers in each field.

Cherise kept attacking him with punches and kicks, which Hudson all blocked and dodged easily. She needed to hurt him. She

needed this to show him how much she loathed him.

“Too cowardly to attack back?” Cherise taunted, knowing Hudson was **a** gentleman and wouldn’t hit a woman.

“I don’t need to attack you,” Hudson sneered. He could just pin her down with his weight, and she wouldn’t be able to move.

“Coward,” Cherise mocked him, and it fueled Hudson’s anger.

N

1.40

Chapter 51

He then began attacking her back, still making sure he wouldn’t hurt her. His attacks were precise and only grazed her body. It helped that Cherise was agile and able to dodge his attacks, too.

Soon, Hudson’s living room was turned upside down by their fights. Broken vases littered the floor, paintings that used to hang nicely on the wall were crooked and slashed by Cherise’s heels, books were knocked down from the shelves, and furniture was shifted from its previous locations.

“Cherise! Cherise!” Tristan’s voice sounded from the other side of the door as he banged on it repeatedly and tried to open it. “I’ve called Julian, and he’s arriving any minute now! Hold on!”

Cherise turned toward the door and tried to bolt, but it was a wrong move for her to take.

Hudson

grabbed her shoulder and swiveled her around, slamming her to the wall with a force strong enough to make her gasp but not hurt her too much, and pinned her wrists above her head with his hands.

Cherise snarled and lifted her leg, intending to knee him on the groin again, but Hudson seemed to have predicted it and trapped her legs with his

“Let me go,” Cherise hissed at him. “This is getting old. Unhand **me**, Hudson!”

Hudson looked down **and saw** her flushed cheeks and the way her chest moved up and down, a little bit panting, no doubt feeling tired from their fight. Both of their clothes were in disarray, as did their hair from their fight.

His eyes then darted lower to her lips and felt the temptation to kiss her, a feeling he always felt whenever

she was in a vulnerable position against him, especially when their bodies were in close proximity like this.

Cherise looked at Hudson, who licked his own lip, and the way his eyes started to darken. Her eyes widened, knowing what would happen next, especially when he brought one of his hands to tuck her hair behind her ear **and** cup her jaw while the other still pinned her wrists above her head.

“Don’t you dare!” she hissed at him, but it looked like her words fell on deaf ears, and he lowered his lips to hers, devouring her with intense hunger.

Cherise struggled, but it was a futile attempt as Hudson was bigger and had more muscles than her—more powerful physically.

She bit his lips hard, but it didn’t stop him, just like what happened at the elevator at the Angelworld building. He only grunted in pain, and his kiss became even more vicious.

Hudson wanted to punish her for allowing other men to touch her, for hating him, for moving on, for cursing at him, for looking even happier after their divorce, and **for** all the **mockery** she had

fast, for choosing to divorce him,

ruled at him.

He kept his hand on her jaw to keep her from turning her face away from him, not realizing Cherise had stopped struggling against him until he felt warm liquid dripping on it, making him jerk back, releasing Cherise’s lips from his assault.

Posted by **Admin-J**, 53 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 52

When Hudson pulled back, he was stunned to see Cherise’s tears flowing from her eyes, staining her pinkened cheeks and how

vulnerable she looked..

Hudson felt his chest tighten at the sight, and the hand that had been pinning her wrist came down, as did the hand that had been cupping Cherise's jaw to stop her from moving her head when he was kissing her slackened.

"Don't cry, Cherise," he said in a gentle tone he didn't even realize he was using. His thumbs swept over Cherise's cheek to brush her tears away.

"Please don't cry," he tried to comfort her again, kissing her tears away when they didn't stop, but Cherise shoved him backward.

"Why Hudson?" Cherise's voice was small and trembling. "Why did you keep doing this?"

"1" Why did he keep kissing her? Why did he keep thinking about her? Why did he keep wanting to be near her? Hudson didn't know the answer himself.

"You said..." Cherise let out a soft sob. "You said Julian is toying with me, but what about you, Hudson?"

Hudson opened his mouth and closed it again. Was he toying with her?

"Hudson, I loved you for three years, and you only came to me when you needed sex. You never thought of my feelings at all," Cherise said through her sobs.

"I'm a human being. Hudson. I have feelings. I loved you, and you were my husband, so I was more than willing to let you use me to relish your desire when you needed it. But you broke me, Hudson." Cherise looked at him with pitiful eyes.

"You betrayed me, and we are **now** divorced. I don't love you anymore, so don't do this to me anymore. You have Emely now. Toying

with my feelings for three years is enough. It's enough, Hudson."

Hudson swallowed, his Adam's apple rolled up and down, guilt sinking into his stomach, and he did one thing he never thought he would do.

He pulled her gently and enveloped her in his embrace. "I never meant to toy with your feelings. I never... I just..."

He didn't know how to finish his sentence. He just... hated her? Could he say that to her in this circumstance?

"Yes, you did, and still do, Hudson. **You** hate me..." Cherise's voice was just barely a whisper she tried to push him away, but his

hold on her only tightened.

"**You** always thought I was a gold digger. I wasn't worthy to bear you an heir, but Emely did. So go to her, okay?" Cherise begged. "I'm with Julian now, and you are with Emely. Let me go, Hudson."

Let her go? Never! Hudson's mind shouted at him.

He opened his mouth to speak, but suddenly, the door to his penthouse swung open, and he was yanked back before **he** felt a sharp

pain hitting his **cheek**.

"Amery, you bastard!" Julian growled.

"Julian..." Cherise sobbed and threw herself at her brother, and he effortlessly picked her up in his arms, drawing her close to him.

"I swear to God, Amery, if you ever touch her again, I will let the whole world know every single bad thing you and your family did and

Chapter 52

said to Cherise for three years," Julian threatened him. "I dare you to do it again if you want the Amery family name and Group to crumble to the ground."

"I will post on my social media accounts what a shitty man you are," Tristan, who followed behind Julian, said. "And trust me, I can also bankrupt the Amery Group."

Well, he didn't know if he could or not, but as Ace, he could try to hack into the Amery Group's database and steal important information, right? Or maybe just jumbled up their entire IT system. Yeah, he could totally do that.

Without another glance at Hudson, Julian strode toward Cherise's penthouse, followed by Tristan, leaving Hudson with the building

manager.

The building manager gulped as he witnessed what had just happened. He knew he had just uncovered a big secret about two powerful CEOs, a young famous actor, and a lady **who** seemed to be... Julian's lover.

If people knew how Hudson Amery **harassed** Julian Alster's lover while having a fiancée, everyone in Country B would look at him differently.

"Mr. Hudson, I'm sorry to have opened your door without permission, but Mr. Julian demanded it, saying you were holding his woman hostage and would call the police if I didn't comply," the manager explained, knowing his place.

Hudson, who had been rooted on his spot as his heart felt heavy when he saw Cherise throw herself at Julian as if he were her knight in shining armor, finally saw the building manager.

Hudson dismissed him with a wave of his hand, and the building manager retreated to close the door, but his voice stopped the building manager.

"If I hear any rumors about what happened here tonight, you'll be my first suspect, and you won't like it when it happens," Hudson threatened him softly.

The building manager nodded, knowing full well he shouldn't get himself involved with the upper society.

"Don't worry, Mr. Hudson," he said solemnly. "We **are** not allowed to meddle in **the** residents' issues. Nothing will escape from my lips."

Hudson nodded, and finally, he was alone in his trashed **living** room. He replayed what had happened and felt guilty once again.

Never

had Cherise shown her tears except for when he asked her to apologize to Emily in

Even then, those tears didn't fall from her eyes. They danced in her eyes while she tried han

But today...

spital.

to let them fall

Cherise showed her vulnerability to him, and she looked like the Cherise he married, but he wasn't sure he liked that side of her, especially because he was the reason for those tears.

He'd rather face the **fierce** and sarcastic woman she had become after their divorce.

Maybe he shouldn't have **done** that, but he knew in his heart that he wouldn't move from this penthouse. The need to be close to her was quite maddening for him.

And he for sure would not heed Julian or Tristan's warnings or threatening attempts because he knew he couldn't stay away from

her.

The Amery Group was quite solid. It would take more than Julian Alster **or** Tristan Hart to make it collapse and go bankrupt.

Chapter 52

He looked around the living room and sighed before finally calling Miles to replace the broken antiques and paintings in his **living** room, as well as asking him to come to rearrange the unbroken furniture.

Meanwhile, in Cherise's penthouse, Julian let her down on the plush couch, which was as comfortable as Hudson's.

"Cherise, are you okay?" Tristan bristled around her.

Julian opened his mouth, but he wasn't able to voice his question because Cherise spoke first.

"I'm fine." Cherise smirked, which caused Tristan and Julian to share a look and look back at Cherise, who already looked like her usual self and not the trembling and pitiful woman Julain carried away from Hudson's place.

"Cherise.." Tristan hesitated to ask, but in the end, he blurted out, "Did you bang your head, or did he strike you anywhere in the

head?"

Cherise rolled her eyes and said, "I was just pretending to be meek and cried, alright?"

Tristan gaped at her before asking. "Why did you pretend like that?"

"Because he seems to like that sort of woman," Cherise said offhandedly.

"You want him back?" Tristan asked, horrified at the thought.

(4)

Cherise groaned and replied, "**God**, no. I mean, **I** was betting **he** would let me go if I acted that way. He used to be disgusted with me

acting that way during our marriage."

"You didn't look like you succeeded," Tristan said dryly.

"Oh, I did," Cherise smirked. He stopped kissing me, she added in her mind. Too lazy to be questioned by Tristan, she ordered him to

start working on the assignments she had given him.

"Go to my study. There's an extra laptop you can use," she said

Tristan stood and begrudgingly went to do what she asked.

"Cherise..." Julian spoke after they were left alone in the **living** room. "Are **yo**
u really alright?"

"Yes, I am," she reassured him.

“What did he do to you?” Julian asked.

The usual,” Cherise replied and added when Julian raised an eyebrow, “he kissed me.”

Julian’s expression darkened before it softened again. “Are you sure you don’t harbor any more feelings for him?”

“Not you, too,” Cherise groaned. “Don’t worry, I was really only acting. Going hard against him didn’t work, so I went the other way.”

Julian looked at her long and hard before exhaling and said, “Don’t let him treat you that way again, alright? Tristan was frantic and panicking when he called me.”

Cherise could imagine it, and suddenly, she felt guilty. “I’m sorry to have worried you,” she **said**.

Julian shook his head and said, “You don’t have to apologize as long as you are alright.”

“I am more than alright,” Cherise replied and smirked again. “Did you see how I trashed his living room? All those antiques and

Chapter 52

paintings. It must have cost him a lot of money to replace them.”

Julian shook his head helplessly, and after making sure once again that **his** sister was alright, he left as he was in the middle of an important international conference meeting when Tristan called him, and they were waiting for him to return.

Cherise asked him to go back and take care of it. After he left, she went straight to the shower and made sure she scrubbed any traces of Hudson off her body—his scent, his touch, and **his** kiss.

She had goosebumps when she had to pretend to be meek and had to cry in front of Hudson. She knew Hudson would let her go if she pretended to be like that, but she thought he would be disgusted at her, just like when they were married. However, she didn’t realize he would be soft and gentle instead.

That gave her more goosebumps. This was the first time he was so gentle toward her, but it was already too late. She **didn't** have any

feelings for him anymore.

Hopefully, he wouldn't kiss her anymore because he saw the guilt in his eyes when she started crying. If he still did, she shuddered just at the thought of it. If it still happened, then he was even more bastardly than **she** thought.

After she finished showering and getting dressed, she went to join Tristan in her study. She had better things to do than think about

her ex-husband.

SEND GIFT

Posted by **Admin-J**, 57 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 53

"You still haven't finished all the jobs yet?" Cherise asked as she saw Tristan still typing furiously at the keyboard.

"You know some of these jobs you gave me are of your level, not mine. I've told you in your office," he groaned.

"And here I thought you have become better, Cherise teased him.

"Please, I can never surpass you or K. Tristan rolled his eyes. "Speaking of, why did you choose Q as your username?"

Cherise thought of it for a while before answering, "Q for Queen? I wanted to be the best hacker at that time, the Queen of all hackers."

"I knew it!" Tristan exclaimed with excitement. "That's why I chose the name Ace. Because I wanted to be in an exclusive group

up with you and K.

"You've always known Q is a **woman**?" Cherise raised an eyebrow at him.

"I had a feeling." He nodded. "When you and K appeared, I thought you guys were a couple—Queen and King—so I chose Ace."

Now, both Cherise's eyebrows shot up in surprise. K might be short for King. She never thought about it. Though she had a feeling K was a male, she never thought too **much** of it.

She couldn't find any information about him, and for once, she was excited to meet someone as powerful as her as a hacker.

So she didn't mind not knowing about his identity, just like she didn't want anyone

to

know of her as Q.

And since they have the same goal – to find information about the kidnapping when she was five, she was more than happy to work **with** him.

"Don't you find it weird that he also lost someone on that ship?" Tristan suddenly asked. "Do you think that big brother who saved you **was** his friend?"

Cherise also had the same thought as Tristan when K first asked her to help him find information about it, but then he said his friend

was a little boy around 5 or 6 years old.

"No." Cherise shook her head. "You know they were different people."

"Hmm..." Tristan stretched out like a

right?"

a lazy cat before looking at her again. "So we can conclude that kidnapping wasn't only about you,

"I'd like to think so, Cherise

she replied

with hesitation. "But. I only saw that big brother, and K didn't ask about anyone else."

"Maybe you guys were placed in different parts of the ship?" Tristan asked.

“Most probably,” Cherise replied at the same time her laptop and the spare laptop Tristan was using made a sound they were both familiar with..

They looked at each other, and Tristan exclaimed as he looked at his laptop, “K is online!”

Then his brows furrowed as he read something on the laptop screen.

“Cherise” Tristan said slowly.

Chapter 53

“What’s wrong?” Cherise went to sit in her chair and looked at her laptop screen, which showed the same message from K as what Tristan had read.

She also frowned when she read it.

“Why **is** K asking about you?” Tristan asked.

Cherise thought about not answering it, but she was curious about K’s purpose for researching about her

Q: Last name?

K: None. But here’s her picture [attached picture]

Q: Is she from a dangerous syndicate?

“Why are you asking him that?” Tristan asked curiously and also with confusion.

1. Not that I know of. One of my friends knows her. I just need to run a quick background check.

Q: Give me a minute.

K: Sure

“One of his friends?” Tristan asked.

Cherise sighed and could already guess who K’s friend was. She quickly sent him all **the** information she had fabricated before she married Hudson. It seemed he or his friends

had begun to be suspicious of her. She needed to talk to Julian and her grand pa about her revealing her identity.

“When did you become an orphan with no family members left?” Tristan asked .

“When I married Hudson back then, I made up some profiles,” she murmured.

K: Your findings matched mine.

Q: Are you hoping to find out something more about her? She seems like a simple woman from the countryside.

K: Yeah, I was hoping to find out more, but if you can’t find anything else, then all this information must be accurate.

Cherise, no wonder Hudson thought you were a gold digger,” Tristan laughed, gaining him

adly side—eye from Cherise.

Well...” he rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly. “You practically made up information that you were poor!”

Q: Any news about the kidnapping case?

“So?” she asked Tristan. “Don’t poor people deserve **love**?”

K: None at all. Now I’m thinking maybe they kidnapped those kids as a cover.

“No, no.” Tristan shook his head **furiously**. “Of course, everyone deserves to be **loved**. But you **know** our society.”

Q:What do you mean by that?

“It was a foolish mistake on my part to think he could love me for me and not my background,” Cherise said nonchalantly.

Chapter 53

“But your background is a part of you,” Tristan pointed out. “Now it looks like you were pretending to be someone else when **you** married him.”

That got Cherise thinking, but only for a few seconds. "Maybe you are right. I wanted to be the best wife for a CEO, so I had to pretend to be meek. **As** I said, it **was** a foolish mistake"

K: Maybe they just wanted to kidnap one particular child, but they had to make it like child trafficking for a **reason** still unknown to

Us.

"What do you think of K's theory?" Cherise glanced at Tristan.

Tristan read K's message and somehow agreed to it. "Because why would they just cease to exist? If they are really child traffickers, they would still operate until they got caught."

"Make sense," Cherise agreed with him.

Q: Since they've been dormant for so long, we can assume they've gotten the particular child they wanted?

K: Yes, that should be the case.

Q: But you won't let go. You'll still try to dig out information about them.

K: I know you'll be doing the same. Whether they really only wanted **to** kidnap a child or not, they still killed my friend and yours.

Q: For justice.

K: For justice. Thanks for the information about Cherise. Till next time, then.

And just like that, he went offline.

"K is even more mysterious than you," Tristan murmured. "Oh, who do you think is K's friend who asked for information about you?"

"Hudson," she said without hesitation before adding, "or maybe Keith."

"K is friends w

with them?" Tristan asked with widened eyes.

"Maybe," Cherise shrugged. "Maybe Hudson paid for his service."

“Yeah, **you** are right. K can’t be friends with an asshole like Hudson Amery.”

Cherise laughed. “Why not?”

“He is the King of the hacker world. His taste in friends should be better than that,” Tristan huffed.

“What’s with your obsession with Q and K?”

“You **and** K are who every hacker looks up to. He won’t have toxic friends,” Tristan defended K, which made Cherise smile and shake her head helplessly.

“So you

think K and I. We are not normal human beings?”

“Of course, you guys are, but **a more** developed human. Maybe you guys received an upgrade when being created by God, Tristan grinned.

Cherise’s lips twitched. The way this guy thought of things...

*XN

94% 11:47

Chapter 53

“Enough, chit–chatting.” Cherise said to stop him from saying more ridiculous things. “Keep working or get out. I need to check my emails and forward me the ones you couldn’t hack.”

Cherise began checking her emails again, and when she logged into her Miss. X’s email, she saw thousands **of** emails.

She scrolled down, checking one by one, but they were mostly parents who wanted her to be their children’s dance tutor.

There were invitations from many countries for her to perform, but the dates have all passed. She checked the junk mail, and her eyes lit up when she saw an invitation to perform in two weeks in Country B’s largest auditorium.

She checked the list of performers and saw Emely’s name. Cherise didn’t know Emely was also a s

also dancer and the champion of Country D's competition a few times a few years back.

Country D... The country where Hudson kept going every month before their **divorce**. The country where he kept his mistress away from her until he brought her back to Country B.

Cherise thought she would still feel sad, heartbroken, or even angry when she thought about it, but she felt nothing now, to her relief.

It was a great feeling. Free of the shackles called Hudson Amery.

Cherise quickly searched for Emely's dancing career and found out her dancing ability was actually all right **but** still far below her level.

She had a permanent partner, someone who was actually from Country A. It was a pity for him to dance with Emely because Cherise knew his potential after watching him dance.

But whatever. It wasn't her problem. If he couldn't see that Emely was holding him back, then that was his problem.

Cherise scanned the list of participants again and felt disheartened when she didn't see the name she wished to see. Guessed Xav had retired from dancing because no one had seen him dance anymore.

She still wished to partner up with him, but it seemed impossible now.

A thought crossed her mind, and her heart lightened up a bit. Maybe he would be in the audience. It would be enough for Cherise for him to see her dance if they couldn't partner up even once.

Now, her mind began thinking of songs and moves. She needed to start training again starting tomorrow. Choreographing a dance routine was relatively easy for her, but her body might not be as limber, or her movements might not be as fluid as they used to be since it had been so long since she last danced.

Two weeks... She couldn't **get** more excited now. Finally, she would be able to do something she enjoyed again.

As for today... She glanced at Tristan and asked him to forward those jobs he couldn't do again, and she began concentrating on those tasks together with him.

They also tried to find out more about her kidnapping again since K might have given her a new lead. **She** wouldn't rest until she knew the real reason behind it. The new lead meant they needed to hack into the police database to check for any missing children reports for that particular year

Posted by **Admin-J**, 56 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 54

Two weeks passed, and Cherise was now getting ready at a special waiting room the National Dance Academy had assigned for her.

Paula was there with her, fitting her costume at the last minute, which was, of course, one of her customized designs.

Julian **was** already sitting amongst the audience while Katherine and Logan, unfortunately, not attend.

"There, you are all ready," Paula patted her back after she was done with all the adjustments. "And damn if you don't look good, Cherise." She looked at Cherise within arm's length and grinned.

Cherise turned around to check her reflection in the full length mirror and smiled, satisfied with Paula's work on her dance costume

"You are always an artist. Paula," she grinned at her best friend.

The day after she opened the invitation, she quickly called Paula and told her about the performance and the color of the costume she wanted – yellow, orange, red, and gold – the color of Phoenix.

"You know I am." Paula winked at her. She was really creative, and able to design anything as long as it was clothes, be it dance costumes, formal gowns, casual clothes, business

suits, or even masks. And with her connections, shoes, and any kind of accessories that would match her designs.

Right now, Cherise was wearing red shoes matching the red color of her dress.

“Emely and Hudson are here too, though.” She wrinkled her nose, disgusted by the mere presence of the cheater and his mistress.

“She was the champion of Country D for several years; the dance company would have to invite her, Cherise said as she applied her lipstick

“You are not bothered by them anymore?” Paula asked, to which Cherise shrugged.

What was there to get bothered by them anymore? They were divorced, and the cheater was now engaged to the love of his life.

It would be stupid for her to wallow in grief and not move forward in her life. She had suffered for three years, and now she was free. Why not make the most of it?

“Alright, it’s about to start. I’d better return to my seat,” she said. “Julian will be lonely without me.”

Cherise laughed. Paula, as per her character, loved to tease Julian. Fortunately, her brot!

even humored her.

“See you out there. Thanks for **the** costume, shoes, and mask.” Cherise winked and hugged her.

n’t bothered by it and sometimes

“Crush them out there,” Paula reminded her with a huge smile, not that Cherise needed it. They both knew she was the best.

Cherise couldn’t help but laugh. “Oh, I will.”

Paula then left her room, and Cherise sank to the couch. The National Dance Company had given her a huge waiting room, complete with a huge TV, so she could watch the other performers until it was her turn.

Cherise sat back and rubbed the space between her brows. To be honest, she wasn't feeling quite well.

For the past two weeks, she had been swamped with work, although it doesn't make her tired because Julian makes sure of it through Neil. She always had time to take her meals on time **and** had breaks in between meetings.

Chapter 54

But with her working on her dance choreography and the late-night hacking she and Tristan did, it might have taken a toll on her body, and she should have known it.

One of the organizers appeared on the stage, gave a speech, and the performance officially began.

Cherise watched each performance quietly in her room while sipping a glass of orange juice. She smirked when she saw Emely make a mistake, which her partner was fortunately able to correct, so the mistake was not so obvious.

Not so great, after all, Cherise thought to herself.

Maybe she should talk to Emely's partner and tell him her thoughts. It really would be a waste to see a talented dancer being held back by someone like Emely.

The rest of the dancers, who all had partners, weren't so bad. Some even surprised her with their perfect techniques and choreographies.

When the last couple started dancing. Cherise stood up and nearly fell **back** down when she felt the room spin.

She stilled and took a deep breath. She couldn't quit now just because of some dizziness, which she was sure would not matter once she was on the stage, in her own little world, and immersed in her dance.

When she heard the clapping of the audience **as** the last couple finished their performance, she picked up her mask, put it on, squared her shoulders, stepped out of the room, which was guarded by two bodyguards, and went toward the side of the stage.

On the way, many of the dancers were whispering and looking at her in awe, but none were brave enough to approach her.

She smiled at some of them and met the organizer, who had just announced to the audience that they had an exceptional performer as the last dancer for the day.

“Are you ready?” the organizer, who was a kind-looking middle-aged lady and Cherise sure was once a dancer, asked with a soft smile.

“As ready as I can be,” Cherise smiled, and the lady gestured for her to go to the stage.

Cherise took another deep breath and stepped onto the middle of the stage. She posed and waited for the curtain to open.

When it finally opened and the music started playing, Cherise forgot about everything else and began showing everyone a Salsa dance like none other.

Her movements started slow **and** then became more seductive and powerful, showing it strong, like a phoenix rising from the ashes.

transformation of a shy girl into someone

But she apparently had made a mistake in thinking her dizziness would not affect her performance because it did.

The more she danced and twirled, the more dizzy and sore her whole body felt. She gritted her teeth **and** kept her smile in place as she pushed herself to keep dancing. She was a professional. She could hold on no matter what.

The audience was ooh-ing and ahh-ing since the curtain was parted. Most of them were dance enthusiasts and knew she was Miss.

Hudson, who was sitting alone in the audience, was mesmerized by her. He was there because he needed to keep his act with Emely and to support her, but he was surprised to see the famous Miss. X on the stage.

The way her body swayed, the glittered dance costume that twinkled under the light, and her expression that matched every movement....

But he had a strange feeling that he had met this seductive woman before. There was a familiarity about her besides that she was Miss. X.

place **where** this feeling came from because he was sure he didn't know who the woman behind the mask was. Hudson frowned as he saw her smile seem to falter. She appeared to make some subtle mistakes in her f managed to turn those movements into part of her choreography.

footwork, but she somehow

None might not realize it, but he was Hudson Amery. He had eyes to spot mistakes, even just tiny bits. It looked like either Miss. X was injured, or she wasn't feeling well.

Cherise, who was still dancing on the stage and felt like her body was getting heavier, suddenly felt a hand take hers, and she nearly stumbled when she saw a man there matching her dance moves.

Her eyes went wide, but the man wearing a mask stepped nearer to her and whispered **so** softly, "Keep dancing. I'll support you." Cherise couldn't believe that at Xav was here and dancing with her. Even though it was ironic that he appeared to make sure she wouldn't fall, just like she thought Emely's partner was too great for her, but still, she was over the moon.

She couldn't believe how Xav could match her choreography, turning it from a solo into a couple dance without her needing to change anything or him trying to lead.

It was no wonder he was the best male Salsa dancer out there. With him supporting her weight when she felt the dizziness strike **her** again, no one would know how she nearly messed up her dance.

Paula

was

surprised when she saw a male dancer joining her best friend on the stage.

“I thought Cherise was supposed to dance alone?” she asked Julian, who was frowning. “**Why** is Xav there with her? Does he want to dance with her?”

Julian watched them dance for **a** while before he replied to Paula’s inquiries, “No. There’s something wrong with Cherise.”

He knew his sister well and had seen her dance many times to realize how, at that moment,

t, her dance wasn’t as powerful as usual.

“Let’s go backstage,” he said and stood up. If he was right, Cherise must not be feeling well right now,

Paula didn’t hesitate to

By the time her dance, or more like their dance, ended, Cherise was out of breath more than usual **and** felt like she could pass out at any moment.

She could barely hear the audience’s roar of clapping as she bowed as a thank you. Once the curtain was drawn shut, Xav quickly ushered her back to her room while the rest of the dancers, who had watched their performance backstage, clapped for them,

When they reached Cherise’s room, she turned to look at him and finally saw that he wasn’t wearing any costume but a white shirt, black suit pants, and leather shoes—not even dancing shoes.

From his clothes, it looked like he **was** really just here **as an** audience member, and he was wearing a suit, just like the rest of the male audience. He must have removed his suit jacket and tie and unbuttoned his shirt so it wouldn’t restrict his movements too much.

“Thank you, Xav,” Cherise **said** with sincerity. She was grateful he had saved her. “If not for **you**, I might not be able to finish my dance.”

Cherise saw Xav frown and **move** his lips **as he** said something, but she couldn’t hear him. **She** was too tired, and suddenly, she felt

the dizziness hit her in full blast before everything around her turned black.

Xav moved fast and caught her before Cherise's body hit the floor.

"Shit!" He cursed and lifted her before placing her on the couch and took off her mask without thinking to feel her forehead.

He froze when he saw the face under the mask, and his lips curled into a bitter smile. No wonder he felt a familiarity when he saw her, and that feeling deepened when he danced with her, touching parts of her body.

He placed a hand on her forehead, and just like he had suspected when he touched her hands during their dance, she had a very high fever. She wasn't lying when she said she might not be able to finish her dance if he wasn't there to support her.

He needed to get her to the hospital, Her room was at the back of the building and close to the back exit leading to the parking lot. The organizer did a great deal to make sure no one could see who Miss. X really was by placing her here.

He took off his mask **and** placed his arms under her back and knees to lift her when suddenly the door opened behind him.

He looked back to see the visitors, and time stood still when Julian, Paula, and he looked at each other.

"Get the hell away from her!" Julian broke the silence, strode forward, and pushed him away from Cherise.

Posted by **Admin-J**, 62 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 55

Hudson straightened himself and pursed his lips. "She's feverish. I was going to bring her to the hospital."

Julian took a deep breath, crouched down beside the couch to feel Cherise's forehead, and found Hudson's words to be true. Cherise was burning up. He needed to bring her to the hospital as soon as possible, especially now she was unconscious.

He carefully lifted his sister in his arms and turned toward Hudson.

“Amery, I thank you for supporting her on the stage, but you should have come to me instead of taking her by yourself,” Julian said with sharp eyes. I know you saw me in the audience. She’s my responsibility now as Emely is your responsibility. Please do not come close to Cherise anymore.”

After warning Hudson, Julian walked toward the door.

“Paula, call the driver and ask him to meet us at the back exit,” he said to Paula and left.

Paula stood in the room, looked at Hudson’s mask, then at him.

“You are Xav,” she said.

Hudson kept quiet as it **was** apparent Paula was making **a** statement and not questioning him.

“What game are you playing, Hudson?” she asked with narrowed eyes. “You let her suffer for three years, cheated behind her back, and told her she didn’t deserve to bear your child while that scheming evil mistress deserves it.”

Hudson clenched his fists, trying to control the surge of emotions he felt.

“You chose your mistress over Cherise,” Paula stressed the words out. “She has suffered enough. Just let her go. She’s happy now, and you should be happy too, as you are finally going to marry your mistress. Be a gentleman and stop playing whatever twisted game you are playing.”

Seeing Hudson keeping quiet, Paula turned to leave.

“Oh, we are not going to tell her you are Xav,” Paula said with her back facing Hudson. “She started dancing because she idolized Xav. We are not going to taint her thoughts of **Xav**.”

With that, she left the room and called the driver.

Hudson, now alone in Cherise’s waiting room, slumped onto the couch and ran his hands through his hair.

Cherise was Miss. X. He remembered the first time he saw her dancing in the competition when he was, invited to be one of the judges.

At that time, he couldn't take his eyes off the young woman with the mask. Not only was her dancing technique and choreography

the best he had seen, but the emotions she put into her dance were just spot on. Everything **about** her was mesmerizing

It would be a lie to say he didn't have the desire to at least partner up with her once, but he had only danced **once**, and it was because he lost a stupid bet with Luis, and he dared him to be the champion of a Salsa dance competition.

A bitter laugh escaped Hudson's lips. The one woman he had been hating turned out to be the only female dancer he had ever admired and wanted to partner up with.

"Cherise. Why didn't you show me the real **you** when we were married?" Hudson whispered to the empty room.

Chapter 55

Suddenly, he saw the organizer peeking into the room, and her eyes widened as she saw his abandoned mask and attire

"Don't tell anyone," he said coldly as he stood up, and the organizer nodded, understanding how the CEO of the Amery Group didn't

wit tell want his identity as Xav to be known to anyone

"Mr. Amery, your fiance has been looking for you," the lady said instead.

Hudson nodded at her, and she left him alone.

He buttoned up and smoothed out his shirt. He didn't know why he felt so tired and not because he just danced after a long time of

not doing it.

It wasn't a physical thing. He had great stamina, and he was just supporting Cherise in her dance, not when leading her

It was more of an emotional thing.

For the last two weeks, he had shown up in public with Emely and felt it was tiring.

He shouldn't feel this way. Being with Emely used to be easy and comfortable. He didn't need to act to be gentle with her, and it used

to come easily

But now...

He felt like being gentle with her was an act he needed to do, and it was his promise to Luis

as getting tiring. Was his decision to marry her wrong? But this

Hudson sighed again before leaving the room to get his suit jacket and meet Emely, who looked worried.

"Where have you been, Hudson? Emely was shifting on her feet with worry

"Just wandering around looking for Miss X" he shrugged. "I know you are her fan and have always wanted to meet her. I thought I could make it happen," he

A bright smile immediately replaced the worry on Emily's face, and she hugged his waist. "You are so good to me, Hudson"

Hudson patted her back instead of hugging her back and stepped out of her arms.

"Did you get to meet her?" Emely asked with hope shining in her eyes

"No" Hudson shook his head. Her room was guarded by bodyguards, and he wasn't allowed to meet her

“it’s understandable” Emely nodded in understanding “She doesn’t want her identity to be exposed.”

“Yeah” Hudson replied. Although he knew who Miss X was and was lying about it to Emely, he didn’t feel any guilt.

“Did you meet Xav?” Emely asked “I can’t believe we could see the best Salsa dancers partnering up. I always thought they were both Solo dancers. But their dance was just perfection”

“You did well yourself” he lied again just to make her talk about something else than about his dance with Cherise

“Thank you, Hudson” Emely replied shyly She didn’t tell him she made mistakes because Hudson didn’t know Salsa dance, and she didn’t want him to think she didn’t deserve the championship titles she had won before

But she didn’t know

JJMM M

Chapter 55

93% **11:48**

“Hudson, since we are getting married. I’m thinking of retiring from dancing and telling my partner be someone else’s partner,” Emely

informed him.

Hudson nearly blurted out Thank God because, just like Cherise, he also thought Emely was holding her partner back.

“Is that really what you want?” Hudson asked her instead. “Don’t you love dancing?”

“I do” Emely nodded. “But being your wife is more important. There will be responsibilities after I become your wife, and I don’t think I will have the time to practice dancing, compete, or even perform.”

Hudson nodded, going along with her. "It'll be good for your legs too. Dancing is not good for legs that have broken before."

Emely froze for a split second but quickly regained her composure.

"Have you ever checked your leg again?" Hudson asked.

Emely saved him when they were young. He was nearly hit by a car, but she pushed him away and got hit instead, resulting in a broken leg that almost made her disabled.

But he found the best doctors for her, and fortunately, her legs could be saved. After many operations and many months of therapy.

her leg was as good as new

Emely felt flustered when Hudson mentioned her leg. He couldn't and shouldn't know what really happened. His guilt about it, plus

his guilt about Luis, were her two weapons to get him to marry her.

"You know my leg has healed fully, Hudson." She waved her hand to hide her fluster. "The doctor said I didn't need to check it except if I feel any pain, which I **don't**."

*Just make sure you go to the doctor if you feel any pain," Hudson said.

"I will," Emely replied while nodding her head, and a smile graced her face. "Thank you for worrying about me."

"It's what I should do," Hudson replied, taking her hand and placing it on his arm. Time to act again...

Emely felt uncomfortable hearing Hudson's tone when he said it was what he should do. It felt like she was a burden to him.

Maybe she was since his guilt was what made him decide to marry her, but she kind of became Mrs. Amery, the envy of all the upper-class ladies.

are about it as long as she could

“Let me drive you home,” he said as he walked toward the lobby where Miles had been waiting for them.

Drive her home?

“Don’t we **have** a dinner booked?” she asked as she slid into the back passenger seat, followed by Hudson.

“I just remember I have something to do.” Hudson murmured without explaining anything further.

“Oh.” Emely was disappointed because the restaurant they were going to was the most expensive restaurant in the city, and she wanted those socialites who frequented the restaurant and **used** to look down on her to envy her **now**.

“Alright, then,” Emely pretended to be understanding. “I can cook for myself, and we can change the booking to tomorrow.”

Miles, who was driving, nearly couldn’t stop himself **from** rolling her eyes. Wasn’t Emely supposed to know everything about the upper society? Why didn’t she know that it was impossible to just change a booking willy-nilly at the most expensive restaurant in the city?

dd MM M

Chapter 55

RN

93% 11:48

They have very strict rules and treat all their patrons equally. Even someone as influential as Hudson couldn’t demand a private room

within a day.

If it were fully booked, which it usually was, they wouldn’t make any concessions for anyone. It seemed Emely was just a fake- a fake in knowing everything about the upper class.

Miles disliked her and couldn’t help but compare her with Cherise, who was always genuine and warm toward everyone.

He felt that his boss was blind for cheating on a perfect wife. But he was only an employee and couldn't voice his opinion on his boss' private affair

After they dropped Emely off, Miles asked Hudson where he should drive him because he knew his boss was lying when he told Emely he had something to do.

It was dinner time, and he had no meetings or anything else scheduled except that dinner with Emely, which he canceled.

"Go to Keith's hospital," Hudson ordered Miles.

Hudson wanted to talk to Keith about what he was feeling and maybe did some checkups, but his main reason was that he knew Julian would have brought her to the best hospital, which was Keith's.

He couldn't stop worrying about her. He had never seen Cherise fainted before, and when it happened in front of his eyes, his heart nearly stopped beating.

He took his phone and texted Keith to let him know he was coming over and would arrive in less than 10 minutes.

When he reached the hospital, he went straight to Keith's office, where Keith faced him with a raised brow.

"Tell me Cherise's room number," Hudson immediately blurted out.

Posted by **Admin-J**, ? Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 56

Keith raised his other eyebrow and regarded Hudson with his lazy and gentle gaze.

"Her room number," Hudson growled, getting impatient with his best friend's silence.

"You sure?" Keith stretched languidly on his seat while still eyeing his best friend. "Julian is with her."

Hudson strode toward the couch and sank down, muttering a curse under his breath.

"You seem to curse more now," Keith observed. "Can't seem to get a grip on yourself."

"Tell me something I don't know." Hudson glared at him. Couldn't his friend point out something less obvious?

Even Hudson himself knew he had changed from a cold man to someone whose feelings now were like waves in the ocean – an uncontrollable fluctuation of ups and downs.

And damn if he didn't hate it. He was always in control of himself... or used to be. But everything changed after his divorce from Cherise.

"Want to talk about it?" Keith asked, already knowing full well the reason behind Hudson's change of character.

Hudson rubbed his face before glancing at Keith, but the moment his mouth opened to answer, Keith's office door was opened unceremoniously, and their other best friend appeared.

"Yo, what's up, my man?" Finley plopped onto the couch opposite Hudson and grinned at Keith before turning to Hudson with his brows knitted together.

"What are you doing here? Aren't **you** supposed to be with Emely?" he asked, earning him wary looks from both Hudson and Keith.

Hudson gave Keith a look, silently asking him why Finley was here, and Keith shrugged, not knowing why Finley was even visiting

him.

Finley was Finley. He always did whatever **he** wanted without thinking of the consequences. He was a cocky playboy who was only good at flirting and wasting his dad's money, and looking down at those beneath him.

He wasn't as

as emotionally intelligent as Keith unless he was told straight to his face what then, he might not even understand why they would feel that way.

er people were feeling, and even

And right at that moment, of course, he couldn't read the tension in the room.

"Ohh. Did you ditch Emely to sneak **out** with that Miss X? Finley wiggled his eyebrows at Hudson. "I **didn't** think you were a playboy

like me, too, Hudson."

"How did you know about me and Miss X?" Hudson eyed him suspiciously.

Finley rolled his eyes. "Oh please, I was there in the audience too. However, I don't know why you joined her on stage. Making one of

your dreams come true?" he asked with a teasing gaze.

Keith and Finley **knew** about Hudson's identity **as** Xav, how he admired Miss X, and how he wished to partner with her even once. But since her real identity was super secretive, as was Hudson's **as** Xav, it was kind of difficult for them to dance **together**—until today, at least.

"Hudson danced with Miss X?" Keith asked in surprise. He couldn't attend the dance performance, so he wasn't in the loop yet.

dd MM M

Chapter 56

EN

93% 11:48

"Yeah, and they were oh—so—good. Like they were made to be partners all along." Finley grinned and gushed. "Must feel like heaven, huh, to finally be able to dance with her?" he teased Hudson again.

Were they made to be partners all along? Hudson felt bitterness inside his heart. He was more than a partner to her; he was married to her, and he blew his **chance**.

"I wasn't planning to dance with her," he grumbled. "I saw her having difficulties and just went up to support her. I found out she had a high fever. It was a miracle she could finish her dance."

Finley whistled and praised Miss X, “The best damn professional female dancer if you asked me. Pushing through all her discomfort to finish her choreography.”

Keith furrowed his brows, and something clicked in his **mind**. Miss X was feverish, and Hudson came to ask about Cherise’s room number. This was going to be interesting.

“So, what happened to her?” Finley asked.

“She fainted and was brought here,” Hudson replied begrudgingly at the thought of Julian cradling her against his chest.

“Oh, **you** are such a gentleman, Hudson,” Finley winked at him.

“I wasn’t the one who brought her here,” Hudson snapped.

“Julian was,” Keith quipped.

“Julian knows Miss X?” Finley’s eyebrows shot up high enough to reach his hairline.

“Miss X is Cherise, Keith explained with a small smile.

The room plunged into pin-drop silence before Finley laughed out loud and moved to sit beside Hudson, draping an arm around his shoulder.

“You think this is funny?” Hudson glared at him.

“My friend, **how** do you feel, knowing that THE Miss X you have **always** admired is actually your **ex**—wife, who you always looked down on?” Finley’s smile widened **as** if enjoying the irony of the situation.

Keith bit his lip to stop his laughter from spilling out of his lips. Give it to Finley to be brave questions like this. Sometimes, Keith thanked God that t

this friend of his had no filter or sha

he to ask Hudson important

"This is no laughing matter," Hudson growled and elbowed him hard right on his chest, shoving Finley away from him.

"Ouch!" Finley rubbed his chest but kept grinning. "It's funny, alright. Oh, the irony of this," he said exaggeratedly.

"You on her side now?" Hudson sneered while giving him a side-eye.

"Well..." Finley rubbed the back of his neck and added sheepishly. "She's a great fighter and dancer. I might have judged her too unfairly before."

"What's so good about a woman who can fight?" Hudson grumbled under his breath again.

Finley **rolled** his eyes at Hudson. "A woman who can fight is hot, alright? And it's not like she fights **like a** woman—biting, scratching, and pulling hair." He wrinkled his nose as if disgusted by the thought of it but then added, "Cherise actually has techniques Taekwondo techniques and a black belt."

* UN

193% 11:48

Chapter 56

This time, Hudson rolled his eyes. Wait until you become the recipient of those 'techniques' and see if you'd still praise her, he thought to himself,

She trashed his apartment, and the only things she broke beyond repair were all those antiques and paintings. Stuff that he loved and had collected painstakingly over the years.

Strangely, he wasn't mad at her about it. Yes, he lost a lot from that one fight, and not only in terms of stuff. He seemed to have lost Cherise forever, too, and the feeling choked him more than losing everything else.

He rubbed his chest as he felt another dull ache in his heart.

"You okay, Hudson?" Keith, who was always observant, did not miss Hudson's small gesture.

“Just “Hudson rubbed his chest again, then shook his head and shrugged.

Keith cocked his head to one side and nodded, understanding that Hudson wasn’t ready to talk about it, or maybe he didn’t want to open his heart in front of Finley because that playboy was a gossip monger. He couldn’t keep a secret if his life depended on it.

“Hey, you guys sure Cherise is just a country bumpkin?” Finley asked his two best friends. “I mean, to get a black belt in Taekwondo and learn to dance and be the best... That would mean taking lessons, and lessons mean quite a lot of money, right?”

Keith raised an eyebrow and thought Finley wasn’t as stupid as he thought after all.

“And to be that good, she must have been training for a long time,” Finley added. “Maybe Cherise has a hidden background?”

“I’ve checked but couldn’t find anything,” Keith replied. “How about you, Hudson?” He eyed his best friend.

“Couldn’t find anything except what she had told me and Grandma.” Hudson was frustrated. He felt cheated by Cherise.

“Dammit!” he slammed his fists on his thighs, channeling his frustration. “Why didn’t she tell me she has a black belt in Taekwondo and that she’s Miss X?”

Finley looked at him as if he was crazy, and it unsettled Hudson.

“What’s that look for?” He glared at Finley.

*Just... You wouldn’t believe her if she’d told you anyway.” Finley shrugged, and the truth pur

Hudson straight in his gut.

“He’s right, you know,” Keith said lazily. “You never wanted to hear anything that came out of

mouth.”

“Yeah.” Finley nodded vigorously and went to Keith. “If she told you she’s Miss X, I’m sure this was what you’d do.”

Finley pinched Keith's chin and said with a faint smile, mimicking Hudson whenever he wanted to make Cherise feel small.

like you?

"You are Miss X? Is this a way for you to make me like sneered. "Your desperation and lies disgust me."

Don't be delusional, Cherise." He pushed Keith's chin back abruptly and Keith couldn't help but bark out a laugh. Finley's acting was spot-on.

"That's what you'd do to her." Finley grinned at his own stellar performance and went back to sit on the couch.

Hudson frowned when he realized that was how he had always treated Cherise. Seeing it from an outsider's perspective, he understood why Cherise wouldn't want to tell him.

He was an asshole of a husband who hated her. Why should she even try to open up to him? But she did, didn't she? She used to.

CS SMMM

Chapter 56

When they first started living together.

* X

93% 11:48

But he always told her to shut up in a way, not even bothering to listen to her, until she became more quiet around him.

"**God.**" He covered his face with his hands.

"Don't overthink it, Hudson," Finley said. "She is your past. You are going to get engaged to the love of your life in a week. Don't let

Cherise affect you."

Hudson froze and let out a bitter chuckle. Finley was right. He had to take care of Emely now.

Julian's words echoed in his mind – Cherise was now Julian's responsibility, and Emely was his.

And yet,

he still felt the need to see Cherise. He wanted to know if she was alright..

He looked at Keith and said, "Keith, help me check if Julian is gone."

Keith shrugged and stood **up**, knowing his friend wouldn't stop asking if he didn't do what he wanted him to do.

Finley looked at Hudson suspiciously and asked, "Hudson.... Do you regret **divorcing** Cherise?

Regret? Did he regret it? He didn't know. He didn't fucking know his own feelings.

Finley took his silence as a 'yes' and said hesitantly, "But... You've been in love with Emely all this time, right? You impregnated her, for God's sake, and chose to divorce Cherise to be with Emely. Surely you are not regretting it now,"

"What is love?" Hudson asked, more to himself rather than Finley.

"Love is when you always think about that person all the time, wanting always to be close to her, hate it when she's close to other men, and believe it **or not**, that one person you love will be able to affect your mood like a bitch, Finley laughed. "**But** it's all worth it because you guys will solve problems together, and at the end of the **day**, she'll still be yours."

Hudson frowned again. He did think of Emely all the time when they were young, but he didn't have a problem when she had other male friends or chose **Luis** over him. He was hurt, but it didn't last long. Maybe more disappointed rather than hurt, but he was happy

for them, just like he had told Emely.

And Emely never could affect his mood. He was happy when she was around him, but now the happiness of being around a friend.

e thought about it, it felt more like

But he was never angry with her, not that she ever tried to make him angry. So he was always gentle.

Finley's explanation didn't make him understand what love was. Instead, it made him even **more** confused.

Finley, who was watching Hudson, saw the confusion in his best friend's eyes, and his own eyes widened in disbelief.

"Hudson... Don't tell me," he began saying, wanting to ask Hudson of his suspicion, but at that time, Keith came back to the office, interrupting him.

"The **special** VVIP room. She's alone," Keith told Hudson. He then **went** to sit in his chair and began working again after delivering the

news.

"Thanks," Hudson mumbled, left, and walked toward the VVIP room.

When he **opened** the door and slipped inside, he felt his heart squeezed painfully in his chest. He had never seen Cherise looking

sick with an IV drip connected to her hand.

Chapter 56

MMM

937

Π

In his mind, Cherise was always **healthy** and smiling, even when

Posted by **Admin-J**, 61 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter **57**

"Cherise..." Hudson whispered her name as his thumb drew a circle on the back of her hand.

“1-

” His mouth clamped shut the next second. So many things to say but at the same time not knowing what to say.

So instead of trying to voice out anything, he looked at her face and for the first time since they knew each other, he reached out and traced her face with his fingertip as if memorizing every inch of her beautiful face. A face he had always looked at but had never

truly seen.

He frowned when he saw a very faint scar near her hairline and a memory emerged in his mind – the time when Polly deliberately dropped a glass and asked her to pick out the shattered pieces but shoved her as Cherise bent down and her forehead hit the kitchen island.

At that time, Hudson saw the blood–soaked tissue Cherise was holding against the wound as she asked him to drive her to the hospital, but instead of indulging her, he **sneered**, told her her act to make him pity her wouldn’t work and she was weak to want to go to the hospital because of such a small wound.

Hudson remembered the flash of disappointment in her eyes, but as usual, Cherise just smiled at **him** and said he was right. The wound was nothing and she didn’t need to go to the hospital.

Looking at the scar now, it seemed she still ended up going and getting it stitched.

Did she go to the hospital alone? Did she endure being stitched alone? He knew she was afraid of needles or anything sharp. She

must have been afraid then. As her husband, he mocked her instead of being her strength.

God, the things he did to her... The things he let his mother and sister do to her... He might be the worst husband in the world. He let his family bully her physically while he bullied her mentally and emotionally.

No wonder she hated him so much now. He even felt sick of himself.

rd Keith's

He leaned down and placed a gentle kiss on the scar when he heard Keith's voice from the door.

"If you care about her, why didn't you tell her the truth about Emely and the baby?" Keith asked as he leaned against the door with his

hands tucked inside the pocket of his pants.

Hudson pulled back and sat back down, still holding onto Cherise's hand.

"Because

you've just realized you care about her now or because you still want to fulfill your purpose because of the latter, I've told **you** there are other ways to take care of Emely other than marrying her."

to Luis?" Keith asked. "If it was

Hudson pursed his lips before answering, "Cherise killed Luis' baby." He still couldn't forgive her for that, but he couldn't **get** himself to stay away from her too.

Keith sighed and pushed himself off the doorway, taking a look at Cherise's chart.

"Actually, Hudson..." Keith hesitated to say what he had suspected all along.

"Spill it." Hudson hated it when people hesitated. For him, it was just a waste of time.

Keith placed Cherise's chart back in its place before taking a deep breath. "A simple slip and fall during the first trimester of pregnancy is highly unlikely to cause a miscarriage."

"What do you mean by that?"

that?" Hudson frowned. "I saw the blood seeping from Emely's lower body, and when

we came here, the

Chapter 57

doctor said she had lost her baby.”

“I’m just saying Cherise might not be the one who caused Emely’s miscarriage,” Keith shrugged, “And that you, were blinded by your hatred toward Cherise and believed **what** Emely wanted you to see.”

“Are you saying Emely lied to me?” Hudson narrowed his eyes at Keith.

“Did you ask Cherise what happened?” Keith looked at Hudson straight into his eyes. “Or you, who usually always investigated everything thoroughly, just jumped to conclusions because of Emely’s words and tears?”

Hudson’s brows knitted together again.
He never asked Cherise but he knew what he saw... or did he?

“I’m just saying during the first trimester, a fall most likely could not harm the baby because of how the female’s body is designed,” Keith sighed then added, “but it might not mean it can’t happen too.”

“Miles said it was self-defense,” Hudson murmured. “He saw it. He said Emely hurt Cherise first.”

Keith didn’t reply, but placed his head on Hudson’s shoulder and gave him a little squeeze. “Cherise is alright. It seems she was **just** tired and overworked herself.”

After that, Keith left Hudson alone in Cherise’s room while his mind thought of what really happened to cause Emely’s miscarriage. He really didn’t like Emely. Scheming and shameless,

Who would happily jump from brother to brother even though one of them had died? That was gross. A lady with dignity would never

do that.

Keith was sure if it happened to Cherise, she would rather the other brother would take care of her in another way. Maybe just help with child support, but not marry him.

While Keith was thinking of it, Hudson was mulling over the same thing.

Keith, a doctor, was suspicious of the incident. Could he be wrong? Was it all really Emely's doing? But why? Was she scared he wouldn't fulfill his promise to take care of her and her child because he had a wife?

Everything was so confusing right now. How should he investigate it now? It had been quite long since it happened, any evidence would've been scrubbed clean. Except... There was the doctor who handled her.

Hudson leaned forward again and without thinking placed a gentle kiss on Cherise's forehead **b**

leading toward Keith's office.

He wasn't surprised to see Finley still lounging there. Sometimes when he didn't feel like party

loved spending time here.

Hudson walked briskly toward Keith who seemed to **have** been waiting for Hudson.

"You are not going back home?" Finley asked Hudson in surprise.

Hudson ignored Finley **and** looked at Keith. "Do you have Emely's medical file?"

Keith, knowing Hudson might ask for it, was ready for it. He nodded, opened his drawer, and took out a file.

Hudson took the file and flipped through it but couldn't find anything wrong with the results. But he couldn't shake the feelings there was something more behind Emely's miscarriage, especially after Keith was suspicious **of** it **too**.

He placed the file back onto Keith's table and drummed his fingers.

"What about the doctor?" Hudson asked. "Did you ask the doctor?"

d MM M

Chapter 57

Keith looked at Hudson and replied calmly. "He resigned after Emely was discharged."

Hudson was surprised and a look of similar realization was shared between him and Keith.

"Hey, what are you guys talking about?" Finley felt offended he wasn't included. "What's all this talk about Emely?"

93% 11:49

45

Both Hudson and Keith ignored him. It would be best not to tell Finley until they have the answer. They didn't want Finley to tell Emely or any of his friends when he was blubbering during one of his drunken stupors since their suspicion might be wrong.

"His name." Hudson tapped his finger on Keith's **table** again.

Keith scribbled a name on a piece of paper and gave it to Hudson which earned him a 'thank you' from his best friend.

"I'll look into him as well," Keith said.

Hudson nodded his thanks again as he pocketed the piece of paper.

"I'm going back to check on Cherise," Hudson said and left Keith's office again.

Finley, who could only watch the brief exchange, huh?"

change between his two best friends.

Keith and Finley both huffed in irritation. "You guys now have secrets from

Keith just shrugged and Finley knew he wouldn't get any answer, so he asked another question.

“Hudson seems to o worry about Cherise. Do you think he’s changed the way he thinks about her?”

“In what way?” Keith asked.

“That she might not be a **gold** digger but someone who used to truly love him regardless of his wealth or family status?”

“**Ahh...** You mean like you,” Keith said with a faint smile.

Finley couldn’t help feeling his cheeks getting hot. “I’ve admitted I might have j udged her unfairly before.”

“Why do you think Emely is Hudson’s true love?” Keith diverted the topic, knowing at least now Finley had changed his opinion about Cherise’s too, and that was good.

“He always carries Emely’s photo in his wallet and didn’t delete the one on his phone,” Finley an on Cherise with her.”

1 confidently. “And he cheated

*But did you ever see him looking at her photos?” Keith glanced at him. “Maybe he has forgotten about it being in his wallet.”

Finley frowned. He never actually saw Hudson checking the pictures again. “ Maybe he did it behind our back. Or maybe he didn’t. need to because he managed to see her behind our backs, didn’t he? And he even impregnated her.”

“Maybe it was an accident?” Keith asked.

“You n

mean a one–night stand gone wrong?” Finley asked with raised brows.

Keith just shrugged since he knew the truth.

“Even if it

was a mistake, Hudson still wants to marry her after she lost her baby. Finley pointed out. “If he doesn’t love her, he wouldn’t do it.”

While his friends were gossiping about him, Hudson reached Cherise's ward just in time to see

the nurse changing Cherise's IV drip

Chapter 57

to a new one.

"How many does she need?" Hudson asked as he watched the nurse doing her duty.

"Maybe four," the nurse said professionally. "Until she gets better. Until she's not feverish anymore."

192% 11:49

"Is it normal to be feverish for this long?" Hudson frowned. He has never taken care of a sick person before, so he knew nothing

about it.

Usually when he wasn't feeling well, he just asked Keith to check on him and he gave him meds. There was one time he was feverish, but he came out of it in a day due to Cherise taking care of him,

"It is normal," the nurse smiled at him. "But her boyfriend asked for a blood test too, and we'll know the results tomorrow."

"Boyfriend?" Julian asked through gritted teeth.

"**Yes.**" The nurse nodded. "He seems to care about her a lot. Such a **loving** gentleman."

She then excused herself after her task was finished, leaving Hudson contemplating whether to stay or leave..

He has to remind himself over and over again

Should he stay or leave?

that

she had Julian **now**, and he might come back to watch over her.

Posted by **Admin-J**, 64 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 58

The debate in his mind and heart on whether to stay or leave didn't last long as his feet moved forward and dragged him to sit back down on the chair beside Cherise's bed.

Just like before, he gingerly took her hand and placed another on her forehead to check her temperature, which caused him to frown as he still found it quite hot.

Hudson didn't like the feeling. He wanted Cherise's temperature to drop back to normal as fast as possible. But what could he do?

Then he remembered the time he had a fever and how Cherise had tended to him. He fished out his phone and called Keith.

"Anything important?" Keith was both amused and annoyed at Hudson's constant Interrupting his work.

He thought he would have time to get some work done by asking Finley to get some food for them and getting rid of him for at least an hour, but his other best friend seemed just as adamant about not letting him finish his work for the night.

"I need a washcloth and a basin," Hudson replied with a clipped tone.

Keith's both brows shot up in surprise. Was Hudson going to...

"Are you trying to bring Cherise's fever down?" Keith asked in amusement.

"Your doctors are incompetent." Keith could hear the scowl in Hudson's voice and his lips twitched.

Did Hudson ever think fever could last for a few days? Apparently not since now he blamed the doctors for Cherise still having a fever.

"You could just press the button on Cherise's bed to call the nurse, you know" Keith teased him.

What's th

the use of you if I can ask the nurse?" Hudson snorted. "Bring it fast." Then the line went dead.

Unbelievable, Keith thought to himself. He was the head of the hospital. His 'use' just like Hudson had stated, **was** not to bring him a washcloth and a basin, that was for sure.

But **the** thought of seeing Hudson Amery, the mighty CEO of the Amery Group wringing a washcloth and taking care of someone else was a temptation he couldn't resist.

Sighing, Keith walked toward Cherise's ward for the third time in a span of an hour and asked

se to bring what Hudson wanted.

When he arrived at the ward, Hudson was nowhere to be seen until he saw him emerging from the bathroom with a basin.

Keith watched his best friend bypass him without even acknowledging him as he concentrated on the basin clutched in his arms.

This should be interesting, Keith thought and pulled out his phone to record Hudson.

This moment needed to be documented as it might be the first and last time he could witness Hudson taking care of someone sick, and the irony of that someone being his ex-wife whom he used to hate and neglect.

Keith directed his camera phone toward Hudson **and** he bit back a chuckle when he saw Hudson frowning, looking unsure of what to do with the washcloth next.

Hudson seemed to know the answer as he finally reached into the basin and started folding the washcloth.

JJ M MM

Chapter 58

But Keith had to stop filming and nearly ran as he said, “Hudson, are you trying to make her face **and** pillow wet?”

Hudson’s hand stopped and he looked at the washcloth in his hand and the water in the basin.

“I’m going to place the washcloth on her forehead, not dunk the whole water in the basin.” He looked at Keith as if Keith was a five-year-old who knew nothing.

Keith looked at his best **friend** helplessly. Hudson was really clueless but acted as if he was the one who didn’t know what to do.

He snatched the washcloth from Hudson’s hand, which thankfully was still lingering above the basin, and began twisting and

wringing it.

“This,” he said as he demonstrated. Is how you should do it. Wring the washcloth until no more water is dripping from it.”

“How is that going to help her?” Hudson glowered at him. “Isn’t the cold water the one that will help to bring down her fever?”

God, clueless and arrogant **as** always, Keith thought in his mind.

“When Cherise used this method on you, did you feel water dripping along your face?” Keith asked him, trying to point out that he was right and Hudson was wrong. “Or that the pillow around your head was wet?”

Hudson frowned **as** he thought about it, then snatched the washcloth away from Keith and continued to wring the water off it.

“I got it from here,” Hudson mumbled and Keith looked at his best friend, chuckling softly as he saw how red the tips of Hudson’s

ears were.

Embarrassed to be proven wrong yet didn’t want to admit it. That was how Hudson Amery was, Keith thought to himself again and

let out another chuckle.

He supervised as Hudson carefully placed the nearly-dried washcloth on Cherise's forehead and couldn't help but smile when he saw the smug look on Hudson's face.

Sometimes Hudson was just like a child who just discovered something new to do and became smug when he did it right.

\$5 was repl

But then that smugness

replaced by a very rare genuine gentle gaze which he had only seen whenever Luis or Agatha was around when they were all younger.

Hudson himself might not have realized it, but Keith saw it clearly. That gaze was reserved for

had never received it.

ople he truly loved. Even Emely

Granted, he always looked at Emely gently or used to, but it was still different. Keith didn't know how to explain it but as a keen observer, he saw the subtle difference.

He wondered how much longer it would take Hudson until he realized he had fallen in love with his ex-wife. Hopefully, before he got

married to Emely.

Making him realize it before the engagement seemed impossible as it was only a week from now.

Speaking of the engagement, maybe he could stop it if he found out the truth behind Emely's miscarriage because the situation smelled fishy, especially how the doctor assigned to her just upped and quit without prior notice.

"Alright, you look like you got it," Keith said to Hudson. "**You** need to keep repeating what you've

e **done** whenever the washcloth becomes too dry and loses the coolness of the water.”

Hudson nodded without taking his eyes away from Cherise.

Chapter 58

“I’ll be in my office,” Keith told him just in case he needed anything.

Hudson mumbled his thanks with his eyes still glued to his ex-wife and his hand checked the washcloth.

Keith shook his head helplessly. It seemed his friend was more paranoid than he thought. It wouldn’t be strange for Hudson to wet and wring the washcloth dry every two minutes because he was afraid it was too dry to help bring Cherise’s fever dry.

Keith left the ward silently, walked back toward his office, and began calling his subordinates to locate the doctor.

Meanwhile, Emely arrived at the hospital because she was worried about Hudson. She had called and texted Hudson many but he didn’t pick up, nor did he reply to any of her texts, which was a rare occurrence.

In the end, she had no choice but to call Miles and found out that Hudson was at Keith’s hospital. Filled with worry, she hung without asking if Hudson was alright or not and took a taxi there.

times.

When she arrived and was about to go to the nurse station to ask if Hudson was admitted, she heard someone calling her name. She turned around and faked a gentle smile as she saw Finley waving at her.

“Emely!” Finley fastened his steps and reached her in no time. “What are you doing here? Are you okay?”

“I’m just worried about Hudson,” Emely replied. “I heard from Miles that he dropped Hudson here. Is he alright?”

“Hudson?” Finley asked and waved his free hand. “Oh, he’s okay. He’s just here to check on Cherise. She was admitted because of high fever.”

Emely's whole body turned rigid and even her **voice** sounded strained when she asked, "Cherise?"

Realizing his mistake, Finley quickly tried to redeem the situation. "We were supposed to meet Keith together to discuss something important, and heard about Cherise, so he went to see her. I'm going to check on her too, but I needed to buy food for the three of us." He lifted his other hand, showing Emely the plastic bag containing **food** containers he had bought.

He didn't know his words only made matters worse.

Finley was going to check **on** Cherise too? Didn't he used to hate Cherise so much that he couldn't stand the sight of her? Emely heard it from Polly. Had they now changed and liked Cherise?

"Anyway, you don't have to worry about Hudson. I'm sure he's too busy talking business with Keith."

"I understand." Emely tried to sound understanding **and** gentle with much difficulty. "I'm glad that"

Wouldn't want to interrupt your meeting."

Right now, Finley said awkwardly.

That's okay. I better get back then.

"Okay." Finley nodded and swallowed nervously. "Be safe on the road. I'm going back to Keith's office again. See you."

Finley turned around and practically fled toward Keith's office, knowing he had screwed things up.

Emely stood still as she looked at Finley's departing back and thought about his words.

Going back to Keith's office again... Didn't he say he was supposed to meet with Keith together with Hudson but was delayed because he needed to buy food for them?

The words 'again' and 'I'm going to check on Cherise too' showed that he'd been here before but then left to buy the **food**.

Emely wasn't stupid to connect the dots **and** knew that Hudson was most probably

She quickly

went to

bly still in Cherise's ward alone with her.

to ask the nurse for Cherise's ward number but was told she couldn't visit her since she was in the special VVIP

ward and only certain people were allowed to visit.

Emely sneered inwardly. Was Cherise trying to win Hudson back? She could just dream on. Hudson was going to get engaged with her soon. Cherise better not be a coward and not appear at their engagement party because she needed to humiliate her.

With rage boiling in her heart and a twisted determination, Emely turned around and left the hospital.

When Finley arrived at Keith's office, he quickly placed the plastic bag on the table and plopped onto the couch.

Keith looked at Finley who appeared a bit breathless yet somewhat pale at the same time, and couldn't help but ask, "What happened to you? You look like you've just seen a ghost and ran away from it."

Finley turned to look at Keith and swallowed before replying nervously, "I think Hudson is going to kill me."

Posted by **Admin-J**, ? Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 59

Hudson, who was the subject of his best friend's conversation, was unaware of what was happening as he sat beside Cheris's still

unconscious form.

„Just like Keith had predicted, he kept wetting and wringing dry the washcloth even though it was still cool enough to help in bringing Cherise's fever down.

He was afraid the cool washcloth was not enough since it was his first time taking care of someone sick.

Cherise, who felt uncomfortable because of her fever, moaned in restlessness and Hudson quickly rubbed circles on Cherise's back

of her hand

His other hand went to cup her cheek, his thumb caressing it gently while still balancing the basin of water on his lap

Don't be afraid. Cherise. You'll be fine soon, he whispered softly "I'm here with you"

Cherise seemed to sense a soothing presence and her moan of pain quietened down. She even nuzzles her cheek against Hudson's palm, and something stirred within Hudson's heart.

It was an unfamiliar feeling. Not like a punch in the gut, a dull ache, or something stabbing his heart. But a warm feeling that confusing for him, but he still welcomed it as it felt... good. Nothing like he had ever felt before.

was

Why hadn't he felt this way before? A self-deprecating smile graced his lips. He knew the answer to his question. Of course, he knew

it

It wasn't the first time Cherise had nuzzles against him. When they were married and he woke up in the middle of sleep to find Cherise's warm body draped against him and her nuzzling his neck, he would always push her away because he was disgusted by

A gold digger didn't deserve to nuzzle against him, that was he thought. What a fool he was. And a selfish bastard since he loved to

spoon her and inhale her scent because just like Keith had said before, she seemed to calm him down.

He could do it to her, but he wouldn't let her do it to him. His mind wandered to **the** day when he asked Cherise to apologize to Emely

or divorce him.

If he hadn't been too rash or irrational if he had investigated properly just like everyone asked him would everything be different now?

Sure some things would be different. He would still be married to her, but the rest would still be the same.

He would still think she was a lowly gold digger like his mother. He would still hate her. He would let his mom and Polly bully her. He would just be with her for her body. He would still take care of Emely and be gentler with her, which would hurt Cherise even **more** and he might even derive pleasure from seeing her hurt.

He felt sick. Hudson Amery who was always confident and never let anyone affect his emotions, much less his self-worth, now felt disgusted by himself. He was a monster.

But regret always came too late, didn't it? Cherise didn't love him anymore. Now the table had turned. When he was starting to be intrigued by her and see the good in her, she was disgusted by him, and she should.

Julian, **who** left to pack some clothes for Cherise as he wanted her to stay longer in the hospital until she became all healthy again. to ensure she would have enough rest and no work at all, had arrived back at Cherise's ward and frowned when he saw Hudson being all gentle with his sister.

Chapter 59

Z

92%

He couldn't quite believe what he was seeing. Why would Hudson be this gentle toward Cherise?

"Amery" he greeted Hudson in a terse voice as he strode into the ward and placed a small suitcase in the living room. Since it was a VVIP ward, there was a living room, kitchen, and even an extra bed.

“What are you doing here?” Julian eyed Hudson, not missing the way he was holding Cherise’s hand, the basin of water on his lap. and the washcloth on Cherise’s forehead.

Had Hudson been taking care of his sister while he was away?

“Paula told me what she said to you after Cherise fainted,” Julian spoke again since Hudson wasn’t responding to his question. “And I have the same thoughts as her”

This time, Hudson finally gave a reaction Julian saw his hand stop moving and his body tensed up. Then he turned to look at Julian.

“She was alone,” Hudson spoke, but with none of the hostility he usually directed toward Juliari.

“And you thought you had the right to be here with her?” Julian asked with a raised brow.

Hudson could only purse his lips. He knew he had no rights, but he couldn’t stay away, especially when he saw Cherise lying there

sick and alone.

“Hudson, why are you doing this now?” Julian asked. “Just because you finally know how capable she is? That she is Miss X and is great at business? Because now you know she is not a gold digger?”

Hudson had no idea how to respond to Julian’s inquiries. If he said yes, then it showed how shallow and wrong he was. If he said no.

then it would be a lie

*Just like Paula said, no one is interested in whatever games you are playing now,” Julian looked him straight into his eyes, showing the seriousness of his words. “And I’m sure Cherise wouldn’t care about it either. She might even- No, no might. She would hate you for it.”

“I have warned you to stay away from her time and time again, and I wasn’t the only one,” Julian continued. “Cherise now has many people who love her, unlike the time she was married to you **when** all she received was hate, disgust, distrust, disrespect, and bullying.”

Hudson's jaw ticked, and he nearly clenched his fist until he remembered that he was holding Cherise's hand.

"If, by chance, you now care about her, then let her go and let her be happy," Julian said. "If you even attempt to continue because we will protect her to make sure she won't make the same mis

playing with her... Do not

twice."

"Because it's too late, Hudson. You've hurt her. Too much. She loved you with all her heart, but you hurt her. You didn't deserve her and still don't deserve her now."

Hudson closed his eyes and felt his body shudder as the ache in his heart returned. He was a mistake. Cherise thought he was a mistake. And Julian was right. He didn't deserve her after all the things he had done to her.

Finally, he let go of Cherise's hand and placed the basin on the nearest table.

Julian watched him closely as Hudson turned to leave the ward.

Before he stepped out, he stopped in his tracks, and with his back facing Julian, he asked, "Do you love her?"

"I do," Julian said with no hesitation. "I've l

loved her since the first moment I laid my eyes on her."

124

Chapter 59

n

Technically he wasn't lying. When he saw his baby sister being brought home, he loved her as a brother loved a sister. He vowed to protect her at all times, and had failed twice so far once when she was kidnapped, another when she decided to marry Hudson.

This time, he wouldn't let Hudson or his family, or anyone else hurt her anymore.

Hudson's heart squeezed and he felt he couldn't breathe. He thought might pass out there and then from hearing Julian's confession.

He always thought, maybe even hoped that Julian was only playing with her, or that Cherise was only but hearing the seriousness in Julian's voice, there was no doubt in how much he loved Cherise

"Did you guys..." Hudson swallowed. "Were you... Were you together with her before our divorce?"

"Do you think she's that type of woman, Hudson?" Julian's tone turned sharp. "If you think she's that type of woman, then you really are blind and Cherise was as really stupid to have given her all to you"

Hudson should feel **relieved** that Cherise didn't cheat on him, but all he felt was heaviness. "Take care of her," he **said** stiffly.

"You don't have to tell me that," Julian replied. "As I've said, I love her and will give her anything in this world to see her smile."

Hudson shuddered again because that was how he **should** have treated Cherise, but he had lost his chance now.

He nodded and forced his feet to move, to step far away from Cherise and Julian who obviously truly loved her.

Julian sighed and sat on the chair that was occupied by Hudson before. He was surprised by the change in Hudson.

Not only did he become gentle toward Cherise, but he didn't even sneer, mock, or fight against any of Julian's words.

Had he finally felt remorseful? But was there a use for that? Yes, Julian once thought as long as Cherise was happy and wanted to go back with Hudson, and Hudson could prove himself, then he would allow it.

But he didn't cancel his engagement with his mistress, did he? And however much he changed, it couldn't erase the fact that he cheated behind Cherise's back and impregnated his mistress, which in Julian's eyes was the most disgusting thing someone could do to their spouses.

He hated cheating. That was one thing he couldn't forgive from a partner. If he ever had a partner and she cheated on him, **he** would make sure she suffered. Oh yes, he was as ruthless as Hudson in certain situations.

As he was pondering about Hudson, Cherise stirred and her eyes fluttered open.

She looked around slowly to take in her surroundings and realized she was in the hospital.

Did I faint?" she asked weakly when her eyes **landed** on Julian and tried **to** sit up.

Here, let me help you." Julian took the washcloth away from her forehead and pressed a button so her bed slowly inclined upward.

Thank you for staying with me," Cherise smiled weakly.

"You could feel me?" Julian asked as he offered Cherise a glass of water with a straw, not knowing whether to tell the truth or not.

"Yes." Cherise nodded and took a sip through the straw. "I can feel the warmth of your hands. Who else can be gentle with me other

than my brother?"

Julian felt conflicted but in the end, chose not to tell her it was Hudson who provided her that warmth and gentleness.

92% 11.47

Chapter 59

He actually didn't believe Cherise had totally moved on from Hudson. She loved him deeply for three years, and that strong feelings couldn't just disappear like that even if she hated him now

If Hudson showed tenderness, she might fall back in love with him and it would hurt her again since Hudson was going to marry

another woman.

"You know no one loves you more than your own brother, Julian winked, trying to act as naturally as possible.

Cherise laughed and teased, "I'll tell Grandpa **you** think he loves me less than you."

Julian smiled. "Good to see you feeling better."

"Being in the hospital and having you take care of me will of course make me feel better, Cherise grinned. "I bet I can be discharged

by tomorrow."

"No." Julian shook his head.

Cherise frowned. "What do you mean by no? I'm sure my fever has gone down by now"

"It means.." Julian touched her forehead and was relieved to find her temperature had nearly gone back to normal. "You will stay

here for a few days to rest."

"I can rest at home," Cherise said defensively.

I want you to rest, which means not doing any work at all," Julian explained.

"But I'll be bored," Cherise pouted.

Paula and Logan can accompany you," Julian said.

Cherise could **only** roll her eyes and shut her mouth. There was no fighting Julian when it concerned her health. He was stubborn in that aspect.

Oh!" Cherise suddenly exclaimed, startling Julian and making him think she felt sick again.

But before he could ask what was wrong, Cherise grabbed Julian's hand and asked him excitedly, "Did you **meet Xav**? You must have met him, right?"

SEND GIFT

Posted by **Admin-J**, ? Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 60

A sliver of confliction flashed across **Julian's** eyes for a split second for Cherise to notice.

"Yes, I met him and thanked him, too," Julian replied.

"Did you see his face?" Cherise asked, her eyes still shining with excitement. "Is he handsome? Is he someone you know? Did he give you his information? A phone number?"

This was what Julian was afraid would happen – the barrage of questions. He had talked to Paula about Hudson's identity as Xav

While he thought telling Cherise that her idol was her ex-husband would be fine, that she could take it, Paula's reasoning about shattering Xav's image or the thought of Cherise might change her mind about Hudson made more sense.

He didn't want his beloved sister to feel any confliction about Hudson.

"Whoa, whoa, hold off with the many questions," Julian tried to make this light.

Cherise rolled her eyes but shook his arm again. "Come on, tell me."

"Hmm... Is he handsome?" Julian pretended to think about it and shrugged. "I'm a man. I can't judge whether another man is handsome or not."

"Oh, please," Cherise rolled her eyes again. "You think Logan is handsome."

"He's our brother. Julian smiled.

I

Cherise groaned but didn't give up. "Come on, Julian. I know you can appraise a man's appearance."

"He's not **as** handsome as me," he joked.

"I knowwww" Cherise muttered with a smile. "**You** are the most handsome man on this planet, and no one can compare to my

brothers.”

Julian laughed **and** decided just to give her an honest answer. “Yes, he is handsome”

No one with eyes, women or men, would say Hudson Amery was not handsome.

“Is he someone you know?” Cherise repeated one of her questions from before. “Do I know him?”

“No,” Julian **lied** and felt kind of guilty when he saw the disappointment in Cherise’s face.

But that expression turned into anxiousness the next moment. “Did he... Did he see my face?”

Julian eyed her, and since he had lied about not knowing him, it was alright for him to tell her the truth now.

“He did.” He nodded and reassured her. “But he didn’t know who you were either. And I think, since he didn’t tell us anything about himself, he wouldn’t say anything about your face to anyone. He knew the importance of keeping your identity a secret.”

You didn’t want to know her but

“Oh.” Cherise felt relieved yet kind of disappointed that as Julian said, they both knew how important

it was to **cover** their identities.

“Alright, enough talking.” Julian said. “Are you hungry? I can ask Neil to buy you food.”

Chapter 60

MM M

“No.” Cherise shook her head. “I still want to sleep”

Her fever had gone down, but it didn't mean it was gone, and she still felt weak.

92% 11:50

(+5)

Julian helped her settle the bed back until she was comfortable and waited until she drifted off to sleep before going to the living room and texting Paula what had happened.

He needed to make sure they got their story straight just in case Cherise asked her. As for Logan, they decided not to tell him who Xav really was. The fewer people who knew, the better it would be for Cherise and Hudson. They were divorced. They didn't need to **have** any connections between them.

In Keith's office, Finley was fidgeting in his seat. When Hudson returned from Cherise's ward and sat on the couch, he quickly apologized for blurting out to Emely, that Hudson was there to check on Cherise.

It had been more than ten minutes, but Hudson had yet to say anything in response. He didn't even spare Finley or Keith. That made Finley feel anxious. Even though they were best friends, he was still scared of Hudson.

He looked at Keith for help, but Keith seemed unconcerned **about** the fact that Hudson was ignoring them. He looked focused on looking through the documents on his table, which were seemingly a never-ending work.

"H-Hudson." He stuttered and gulped hard. "Are you angry with me?"

Finally, Hudson looked at him and frowned.

"A—

Are you angry that I told Emely you are here to see Cherise?" Finley **asked timidly**.

Hudson frowned even harder. Emely? Had Finley been talking about Emely? His mind had been fixated with Cherise that he hadn't

noticed anything else.

“No,” Hudson replied. He and Emely had an agreement. She wouldn’t be angry or jealous of Cherise since she was still in love with Luis and didn’t love Hudson **in** that way, as they had discussed before.

Finley let out a breath of relief. Thank God, he thought to himself.

“Well... I’m off then. It’s getting late,” he said and **stood** up.

Keith waved his hand without taking his eyes off from whatever document he was reading while Hudson only nodded, and Finley nearly ran out of the room, wanting to flee as fast as possible in case Hudson changed his mind.

Once Finley left, Keith leaned back against his seat, crossed his arms, and asked Hudson, “Well?”

He noticed Hudson had been absent-minded ever since he returned from Cherise’s ward. Something must have happened.

Hudson let out a deep breath and looked at the ceiling. “It seems I’m wrong.”

Keith raised his eyebrows. “About?”

“Cherise,” Hudson mumbled.

“**You** are not the only one who thought wrongly about her,” Keith pointed out.

Hudson chuckled, but it sounded sad and bitter. “You are right. And I didn’t stop them from thinking that way. I let them and even encourage them to think badly of her... indirectly.”

Keith looked at his best friend. Had he finally realized his feelings?

JJMM M

Chapter 60

“I regret divorcing her. I should’ve tried to get to know her more rather than thinking she was a lowly gold digger.”

There it was... The confession he had been waiting for.

N

92% 11:5€

"If I have a mother like yours, I might have thought about Cherise the same way as you do," Keith tried to comfort his best friend.

Hudson shook his head. "No, you won't. You've never thought badly about Cherise. You were always friendly toward her."

Keith sighed. What could he say? That he could see the way Cherise looked at Hudson as if he were the sun and moon? That he could **see** how much Cherise was in love with Hudson? Would there be a point in telling him anything about it now?

"You can still salvage the situation." That was the only advice he could tell Hudson at the moment.

m

Hudson knew what Keith meant. He could try and ask Cherise to remarry him. But...

He drew in a deep breath before replying, "I can't. Julian is in her room now, and he is serious about her."

This time, Keith was the one who let out a deep breath. Maybe they were not meant to be.

"Then it's time to let her go," Keith said. "She has Julian, you have Emely. You made a wrong choice this time and just have to live

with it."

Hudson gave him a sidelong glance and chuckled. "Such a good friend you are."

Keith shrugged and said, "As your friend, I have tried to tell you many times to treat her better, but you never listened."

"Yeah..." Hudson c

losed his eyes, and for a while, the room was silent.

“You didn’t seem surprised to hear I regret divorcing her,” Hudson muttered.

“I have suspicions that you have feelings for her, and I kinda hoped you would realize it sooner.”

Hudson’s eyes flew open, and he eyed Keith in disbelief.

Keith smiled at him. “You know I’m observant, and as an outsider, it is kinda obvious. Especially after you guys got divorced and you couldn’t leave her alone. I think Finley is starting to notice, too. He was going to ask you about it before, but he was easily distracted and might have forgotten about it already.”

“When did you start having your suspicions?” He only started feeling jealous and possessive after their divorce, but Keith seemed to

have realized it sooner.

Keith tapped his index finger against his chin as if thinking about it. “Are you sure you want to know?”

Hudson nodded without hesitation. He was curious about it.

“Around the time you let Cherise redecorate the villa,” Keith said, and once again, Hudson stared at him in disbelief,

Cherise started redecorating the villa after their first wedding anniversary. Had he been blind about **his** own feelings for over two

years?

“We were in a shareholder meeting, and you couldn’t stop looking at your phone,” Keith explained. “I got a glimpse at what you were looking at, and they were pictures of curtains.”

“So?” Hudson was confused **about** how Keith could see that he had feelings for Cherise from that one act. “I’d like my house to still look good.”

92% 11:50

Chapter 60

Π

Keith couldn't stop the chuckle that threatened to escape from his lips. "Yes, but those curtains are certainly not your colors, yet you still let her redecorate the villa however she wanted to. God knows you wouldn't let anyone else do it. And that wasn't the only tell,"

Hudson frowned. What more did Keith see?

"You always ignored any calls or texts during meetings, but you never ignored her calls or texts."

Did he? Hudson realized he did. He was always annoyed every time Cherise called or texted him, but he always replied, even if only to tell her that she was disturbing him and she should stop doing it

And that was what she did—obeyed him. He received fewer and fewer calls and texts from her until they were nearly non-existence.

"And you saved every picture she had ever sent you," Keith kept pointing out things he had seen Hudson do only for Cherise, "Usually, you never save pictures except those from Luis. You didn't even save any that Emely had sent you."

"You checked my phone?" Hudson narrowed his eyes. That was a breach of his privacy.

Keith laughed, and his eyes shone with mirth. "No. You showed them to me when you were drunk. **You** kept complaining about her and those pictures, but you never deleted them."

Hudson seldom checked his phone photo gallery, so to make sure Keith was right, he pulled out his phone and scrolled through it, not surprised to find it filled with pictures he never took

"But I wasn't a hundred percent sure because I know you still have Emely's pictures in your wallet and phone, too," Keith said, making Hudson frown again.

He kept scrolling and found a picture of Emely. He didn't even remember saving it to his gallery. Maybe it was from Luis, and he forgot to delete it. This time, he didn't hesitate to delete the picture, but he didn't have the heart Cherise.

tany images sent **by**

He set his phone down on the table and took his wallet from his suit pocket. Opening it, he saw a picture of him and Luis from their younger days.

Hudson fished out the photos behind it and saw the picture that Keith had talked about – Emely from their younger days.

—

In all honesty, he had forgotten he had it in his wallet. It had been so long since he had changed wallets as the wallets being produced now seldom had a photo slot, and all he remembered was only the photo of him and Luis.

After everything that had happened, he didn't feel right having Emely's photo in his wallet. He should give it back to her when they

meet next time.

"Do you think Cherise knew about Emely before I brought her back?" Hudson asked.

"With Finley kept running his mouth trying to make her feel small the few times she accompanied you, there is no doubt in her knowing about Emely's existence," Keith confirmed.

"And she misunderstood," Hudson said with a mix of guilt and regret.

"Not like you considered her feelings." Keith shrugged. "There are many other tells, but you let your hatred rule the way you treated

her."

"And you **made** it worse by bringing her back and letting everyone think Emely was having your baby, Keith added.

"I was such a bad husband." Guilt and regret kept hitting Hudson like tidal waves, and he felt like he was drowning and **couldn't** breathe.

Chapter 60

192% 11:58

"You were," Keith sighed. "Let it be a lesson for you. Never judge a book by its cover."

Keith was right, Hudson thought in his mind. He judged Cherise because of her poor background and hated her because of his own poor judgment of her.

"Since there is nothing you can do about this, I assume you'll still marry Emely?" Keith asked to make sure of his best friend's decision

"Yeah, under the condition I've told you before," Hudson replied with a heavy heart.

He regretted blurting out about marrying her and thinking it was the best way to fulfill what he promised Luis.

If he didn't blurt it out, he might still have a chance of pursuing Cherise.

"So, since you are going to marry her, is there a need for us to investigate her miscarriage?" Keith asked, breaking Hudson's chain of thoughts.