

Becoming Strangers Again Chapter 91-100

Posted by Adminh, 108

Chapter 91

LILY

Who would have imagined that my trip to New York would thrust me into such situation? I arrived with the simple intention of supporting Ryan as he got out of jail, yet now I find myself confronting the very real possibility of a prolonged jail term.

"I should head back, I announced abruptly, my mind already racing with thoughts of the boys and their disrupted lives. "The boys have already missed two days of school, and I need to get them back on track."

Becky, who had been engrossed in her **laptop**, paused at my declaration, lifting her head to regard me with a silent gaze, "Yes, you should do that," she conceded quietly, her attention swiftly returning to her screen,

Intrigued by her prolonged focus on her laptop, I couldn't help but lean in for a closer look. Frowning, I took in the contents displayed on the screen, my brows furrowing in confusion. "What's this?" I asked.

Caught off guard by my inquiry. Becky hesitated for a moment before responding. "You need a good lawyer, she stated matter-of-factly."

My face hardened, **and** my lips pressed into a thin line. I refuse to entertain the idea of going to jail, I declared firmly, clinging to denial as a shield for my sons sake. It won't come to that

Becky paused, her full attention now fixed on me as she closed her laptop. "Ryan promised to handle the situation, and I want to believe him, she began, her voice filled with uncertainty "But this, she gestured towards her laptop, "this is a precautionary measure. The sooner we secure a good lawyer in case things escalate, the better for everyone involved

"It was a mistake," I mumbled, the weight of remorse heavy in my voice. "I never intended to harm her or cause her to lose her baby. It **was all** a regrettable error that I wish I could undo

"News **flash** honey, you can't undo what's been done," she stated firmly, her words a stark reminder of the irreversible nature of the situation. "All we can do now is play our cards wisely to avoid the worst-**case** scenario for the sake of your kids,"

Exhaling heavily, I sank **back** into my seat, feeling the weight of exhaustion settling over me. Closing my eyes, I couldn't help but wonder if fate harbored a vendetta against me, continually hurling obstacles in my path.

"Should I attempt to visit her at the hospital **again**?" I pondered aloud, seeking Becky's counsel in my moment of desperation

"What good would that do?" Becky countered, her attention already diverted back to her laptop.

Turning

to face her, I couldn't suppress a sense of **frustration** at her apparent indifference. "Maybe if she sees me humbling myself, if she witnesses the depth of my remorse, she might reconsider pursuing legal action against me or jeopardizing my professional license," I reasoned.

"I hate to deliver such bleak news, Lily, but no amount of pleading or self-flagellation will sway her," she declared with a somber shake of her head.

Her tongue darted out to moisten her lips as she pondered the situation, her gaze drifting **into** the empty space before returning to fix **on** me. "Consider it from her perspective, Lily, she began, her tone measured yet resolute. "That woman's long-held desire to start a family with Ryan never materialized. She watched as he moved on and found happiness with you. Then, just when she discovers she's pregnant—the one thing tying **her** to Ryan—her hopes of reuniting with him are shattered by none other than you, the woman he chose **over** her. Can you see why she's so hell-bent **on** seeing you suffer, no

matter wu

As **much** as I hated to admit it, Becky's assessment was painfully accurate. This **situation** was utterly dreadful.

"Have you reached out to Jake?" Becky inquired, breaking the heavy silence that enveloped us. I shook my head in response.

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"He's the least of my concerns right now, I confessed, my mind reoccupied with more pressing matters. Ever since our encounter here in New York and his altercation with Ryan, I'd avoided any contact with him. Despite his persistent calls, I had more important issues to contend with than his dubious presence,

“He’s a scam artist, Becky stated bluntly, stating the obvious. “But he might have some insight or resources that could be useful in this situation.”

I scoffed at the suggestion. I highly doubt someone who can’t even afford a Lamborghini would be of any help right now,” I retorted, my disdain for Jake’s opportunistic nature obvious. The thought of relying on him for assistance was utterly repugnant to me; I’d sooner endure imprisonment than owe hire any favors.

Becky chuckled softly, acknowledging the validity of my stance, “Fair point,” she conceded.

The doorbell rang, interrupting our conversation, and one of Berky’s household staff promptly answered it. In walked Ryan, carrying a plastic bag that undoubtedly contained take-out.

My heart skipped a beat as I watched him enter, my feet propelling me forward instinctively. Racing into his embrace, I buried my face in his chest, overcome with emotion at the sight of him. Why did the mere sight of him bring tears to my

eves!

Ryan’s arms enveloped me, his touch offering a sense of comfort and security. He pressed feather-light kisses against my neck, his breath warm against my skin as he murmured, “I missed you,” as though we hadn’t seen each other just yesterday.

“I miss you too,” I murmured in response, my words tinged with genuine longing. Pulling away slightly, he guided me back into the living room, where I settled down beside **him**.

“Hey, he greeted Becky warmly, depositing the bag of food on the table. “Have you ladies eaten?” he inquired, casting a glance in my direction. “I brought some food.”

None of us has the appetite, I am sure of it. “She’s been scouting for the best legal representation, just in case Stephanie decides to take this to court, I informed Ryan.

His expression darkened slightly at the mention of hiring a lawyer. “That won’t be necessary,” he interjected firmly, his tone brooking no **argument**.

Becky’s head snapped up, surprise evident in her eyes. “You’ve convinced her to change her mind already?” she inquired, her disbelief mirrored by my own

As Ryan nodded in confirmation, a nagging sense of unease gnawed at me. There had to be more **to** this than meets the eye. “What did she want in exchange for dropping the

case?" I pressed, my voice tinged with suspicion. It seemed unlikely that Stephanie would simply relent, especially given the tragic loss she had suffered.

Ryan's sigh was heavy as he mustered a forced smile in my direction. "She wants me," he admitted reluctantly.

Becky, who had been taking a sip of juice, choked on her drink at Ryan's revelation, her eyes widening in shock.

Blinking slowly. I struggled to comprehend Ryan's statement. "What do **you** mean by you?" I asked cautiously, the mere thought leaving a bitter taste in my throat. "She wants you both to start seeing each other again?"

Ryan cleared his throat uncomfortably, his grip tightening on my hand. I sensed there was more to his revelation **than** he was letting **on**. "She wants more than just us rekindling a relationship," he admitted reluctantly.

My heart sank as his words sank in. "What does she want, Ryan?" I whispered, dreading the answer.

"She wants us to get married," he confessed. "That's the only way she'll drop the case and pretend like none of this ever happened.

Suppressing the surge of pain and anger rising within me, I withdrew my hand from his grasp. "Do you **want** to marry her?" I asked quietly, my voice barely above a whisper.

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Ryan's frown deepened at my question, his reaction bordering on snapped, his tone filled with frustration. "The only woman I want is not anyone else."

"Then don't," I insisted firmly, my voice strained with emotion. "For my sake. I'll find the best lawyer to fight this."

Ryan shook his head, his expression grave. "The original CCTV is in her possession, and she'll undoubtedly manipulate it to her advantage."

My heart sank at the realization of the dire situation we were facing.

Ryan leaned in closer, his breath mingling with mine as he spoke, searching for something bigger than that video she's holding over

Uncase settled over me at his

apprehension. “For how long ds. “And how long do you plan
felt like a heavy burden to bear.

?” The thought of sacrificing

His grey eyes danced around my face nervously. “For as long as i

“And marriage?”

“it could happen Lily, but not for long. I am leaving her ass the n

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RYAN

Lily’s stisdain for the idea of ine getting married to Steph mirror my own sentiments I ha
d no desire to marry anyone other **than** Lily, but it seemed I
was paying the price for letting er slip away in the first place.

As Angelo guided the car into the hospital parking lot, he stole a glance at me through t
he rear–view mirror.

“I never imagined Tid witness you inoping like this over the prospect of marriage, he re
marked with a frown on his face.

Chuckling at his observation and expression, I shook my head amusement. “You’d think
it was you facing the possibility of being shackled to a woman who drives you up the w
all,” I joke, though the reality of the situation made me very upset.

Turning **to** face me with a solemn expression, Angelo chewed on his lower lip, his gaze
distant as if lost in contemplation. When you married Lily, as I stood at the doorway of th
e cluire watching her glide toward you in white, the first thought that crossed my mind w
as, lucky bastard,” he confessed quietly, told myself you were more than fortunate to ha
ve her

“Twas, I acknowledged with a nod, a pang
of gratitude swelling within me. “And I still consider myself that lucky bastard because I
had the **privilege** of **sharing** a life with her, no matter how brief.”

Gazing out of the window at the hospital building, I sighed. “Whatever **shain is** about to
happen between me and Stephanie.” 1 declared firmly, “ut will never last long. That muc
h, I can assure you.”

I reached for the door handle, pushing it open and striding purposefully into the hospital building,

As I entered the room, I found Stephanie engrossed in a movie on her tablet. She appeared noticeably improved from the last time I had seen her, looking healthier and more composed

Approaching her bedside, Stephanie set the tablet down with deliberate care as I drew nearer. "If you've come to plead on her behalf **and** make a mockery of me," she began with a **venomous** edge to her tone, "I suggest **you** leave. I'm in a good mood, and I'd rather not have it ruined"

Brushing off her barbed comment, I took a seat on the vacant sofa nearby. "Let's get married," I stated plainly. Stephanie froze, her eyes widening in surprise. Despite her apparent shock her expression only served to irritate me further. "Why are you pretending to be surprised, Steph? Isn't that what you requested?"

Her lips parted, and she licked them nervously, her eyes blinking rapidly in surprise. "I know I asked for it, but I never expected you to actually agree, she confessed, her voice trembling slightly with disbelief. With a sudden burst of emotion, she rushed towards me, clearly intending to envelop me in a hug.

However, I instinctively shot **out** an arm, creating a barrier between us. "What the hell do **you** think you're doing?" I hissed, my tone sharp with rebuke.

Caught off guard by my reaction, Stephanie froze in her tracks, puzzled frown creasing her brow. "I was just trying to embrace my fiancé in celebration of such good news, she explained softly, a tentative **smile** flickering across her features. "Getting married to you means everything to me, **Ryan**. You have no idea how much I've longed for this."

"However, I interjected, my voice devoid of emotion, our impending **marriage** also serves **as a** constant reminder of my love for another woman" I deadpanned, holding her gaze steadily, "It symbolizes my willingness to sacrifice my own happiness for the sake of the **woman** I truly love. That's the harsh reality you'll have to face every morning for the **duration** of our marriage:

"You don't **have to** be so cruel, Stephanie snapped back, her tone tinged with resentment. "I understand that you love **that** woman more than you love me, but there's no need to rub it in my face

Ignoring her protest, I pressed on. "This marriage will exist only on paper," I reiterated, dismissing her earlier remark. That

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means there will be rules that cannot be broken, and lines that will never be crossed”

A sinister glint entered Stephanie’s eyes as she retaliated, her voice dripping with menace. “You do realize I could use **that** video to manipulate you into submission, right?” she threatened

With a steely gaze, I stood up from the sofa, facing her head—
on And you should know that I’ve been contemplating murder since last **night**,” I shot back, my voice cold. I’ve entertained countless scenarios in my mind, all leading to your disappearance from this world. Because only then will my life be free of this torment.”

Her confidence faltering, Stephanie scoffed dismissively. “You aren’t capable of murdering someone,” she scoffed, her words breathing in an element of doubt.

“Don’t be so sure, I cautioned her, my tone laced with a chilling edge. “I don’t think anyone has pushed me to the brink quite like you have. Adjusting my suit with precision, I leveled her with a steely glare. “Don’t expect a lavish ceremony, because that’s not happening.”

Stephanie’s lip curled in disdain. “You want to marry me in secret?” she spat out contemptuously.

“If it were up to me, I’d keep you as my dirty little secret, I retorted bluntly. Turning on my heel, I strode purposefully towards the door.

Pausing at the threshold, I glanced back at her over my shoulder. If you want me to grace your wedding with my presence send me a copy of that video via WhatsApp, I demanded coldly. With that, I swung the door open and exited slamming it shut behind me with a resounding thud.

the room,

As I settled into the car, Angelo wasted no time in pulling out of the parking lot, his eyes darting to the rear-view mirror at intervals, silently observing my demeanor.

“You have something you want to say?” I snapped at him, irritated by his constant gaze. “Keeping your focus on the road will contribute in making sure we don’t make it to our destination in a body bag.”

He chuckled. “I am sorry, but I can’t help but wonder how it went in there.”

Is that the reason he wants **to** send me to the afterlife? “How do you think it went?” Pincching my brows, I tried to get rid of the creeping headache. “of course she is glad that we might be getting married.” Just the thought of my conversation with her is getting me pissed off. “Let’s not talk about this please.”

“Yes sir.” He returned his attention to the road and drove me home..

Later that evening, as I prepared to meet with some old clients after work to keep them satisfied, my phone rang, and I saw i was my father calling. Pausing by the wine bar in t he living room, I poured myself a drink before answering his call.

“Congratulations, son, my father’s voice came through, filled with satisfaction. His happi ness only served to irritate me further. “I knew you’d make the right decision.

“Congratulations, Ryan!” my mother chimed in from the background. “You should call your sister and let her know about the wedding”

Downing my drink in one gulp. I slammed the glass on the table in frustration.

“**Have** you picked a date yet?” my mother continued, her voice still audible in the backgr ound. “I think a spring **wedding** would be perfect

Let them handle the details, any father interjected, sounding slightly annoyed. “I just call ed to let you **know** that I am-

Ending the call with a decisive tap, I slipped my phone into my pocket **and** strode out of the building, Sliding **into** the waiting car with Angelo behind the wheel, his expression u nreadable.

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Without a word, Angelo pulled out of the compound and merge into traffic. As the city lig hts blurred past, I formulated a plan in my mind.

“I want you to dig into ‘Mr. Waper’s law **firm**, I instructed Angelo tersely. “Find any dirt y ou can **on** them, something substantial.” It was the only way I could see out of this unwa nted marriage and also protect Lily. “They’ll bury it deep, but I need you to keep searching, even if it takes time.”

“Understood, sir,” Angelo replied crisply, his eyes focused on the road ahead.

I knew I’d need to assign someone else to assist in the investigation. I was determined t o expose the flaws of the Waper family, to drag their name through the mud and ensure they paid for thinking they could blackmail me. It was the only way to regain control of m y life and protect the ones I cared about.

Stephanie's persistent presence in my life has become an unwelcome burden, a constant reminder of the chaos she brings with her. Despite my efforts to keep her at arm's length, she always finds a way back into my world, leaving destruction in

her wake.

But this time, I refuse to play by her rules. If she wants to engage in this twisted dance, then I'll be more than willing to step onto the dance floor.

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Posted by Adminh, ?

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Ryan told me that it was okay to return to **Canada**, that he has the situation with Stephanie under control. I told him that I needed to see her, so Iran apologize sesin for the damage I have caused and he told me that it was fine, that I do not owe Stephanie an apology anymore.

I hate the fact that I am pushing him into a marriage with Stephanie, and I hope and pray with everything in me that it doesn't get to than point I pray everything is resolved before the get to the alter

The cas pulled over to the gate and I watched my kids as they slept. If Ryan didn't make that sacrifice, they would have been separated from me and I am sure Ryan parents would have gladly taken them and raised them in the doctrine and pattern they believe a Williams should have.

I had to mouse the boys from their slumber, ensuring they had a shower and dinner before indulging in a movie night in the living room. Taking a moment to compose myself, I reached for my phone and sent Ryan a text.

"TAM REALLY SORRY FOR EVERYTHING"

Almost immediately, Ryan's response popped up, as though he had been eagerly awaiting my message.

"YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE FOR ANYTHING LILY. ALL THESE WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED

NOT FOR

His words, though comforting, did little to ease my guilt.

“THAT DOESN’T MAKE ME FEEL ANY BETTER IN THE SLIGHTEST YOU WON’T BE GETTING MARRIED TO HER IF NOT FOR ME”

In response, Ryan sent a smiling emoji, his usual way of lightening the mood.

“IF YOU ARE REALLY SORRY, MAKE ME DINNER WHEN I COME BACK TO CANADA”

His mention of returning caught me off guard. Wasn’t he supposed to be marrying her?

7 WILL COOK YOU A WHOLE FEAST WHEN YOU COME BACK

He didn’t respond and I thought he has returned to what he is doing but another text followed, one that made my heartbeat quicken.

I LOVE YOU

My finger hovered on the keyboard as I struggled with my response. There is no doubt that I still have feelings for him, but telling that I love him, doesn’t seem like the best thing to the moment.

My phone vibrated as **Jake’s** name flashed on my screen. With a loud hiss, I disconnected the call. Liam looked up at me. “Are you **okay** mummy?”

I forced a smile for him. “Yes, mummy is **fine**.”

My phone vibrated again and I disconnected but it rang again and I angrily swiped the receive button. “**When** someone isn’t taking your call, it means that the person doesn’t want to talk to you!” I yelled before disconnecting the call again.

“Rose!” I called out to the **nanny** who showed up instantly. “I am going to take a nap, keep an eye on the kids.”

“Yes ma’am.”

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I walked up the stairs and disappeared into my room, hoping that a nap will make me feel better about all of this.

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The next day, I decided to drop off **the** kids myself and just as I drove past the gate. I saw Jake standing outside the gate. For a moment. Helt the urge to **run** him over.

Pulling over, I told the boys who were excited to see unele Jake after a long time to stay put in the car.

I got off the car and approached him. "Didn't I tell you to stay away from my kids until I am ready to involve them in your life again."

"Tim sorry," he murmured softly, his tone tinged with contrition as he shifted uncomfortably under my gaze. "I've attempted to reach out to you, but it seemed as though you **we re** avoiding my calls. So, I thought perhaps showing up here might won't be a bad idea

Arching a skeptical eyebrow, I maintained my defensive stance, crossing my arms in front of me. And do you honestly believe that just appearing here will suddenly compel me to engage in conversation with **you**?"

Shaking his **head**, he sighed. "I understand, Lily. I truly am sorry: Is this all stemming from our encounter in New York?"

"Isn't it understandable that I would be upset with you, Jake? You not only publicly humiliated me, but you also questioned my choices

Admitting defeat, he nodded, his admission tinged with vulnerability. "I'll be honest, Lily. I was consumed by jealousy, Seeing you in New York with him—it caught me off guard."

A flash of anger surged within me as I recalled the hurtful words he had uttered. "You branded him a murderer, I stated bluntly, the memory still fresh and painful. You directly accused the father of my children of such a heinous act. Tell me, Jake, did you witness him committing murder!"

"It was all over the news," he insisted, his tone defensive. And honestly, I didn't mean what I said. It was just... out of anger.

"I don't care about your reasons," I snapped, feeling the **weight** of exhaustion settling in. "Besides, the news also made it clear that he was falsely accused."

Running a hand down my face, I let out a weary sigh. "You know what, Jake? I think it's time we put an end to this." With everything else going on, dealing with him was the last thing I needed. "I've tried, but this isn't working out"

Jake's frown deepened. "You got back together with him, didn't you?"

Rolling my **eyes** at the question, I turned to head back to my car, but he grabbed my for arm. Stopping in my **tracks**, I shot him a glare as his hand tightened around my **arm**.

“My kids are watching from the window, I warned through clenched teeth, feeling a surge of anger rising within me. “So, I suggest you take your hands off me.”

He glanced towards the window, then reluctantly released my arm. It can't end like this, Lily, he murmured hoarsely, his voice filled with desperation. “**Not** until I say it's over, and I'm certain I've said this before

“You've lost your mind, I spat, my patience wearing thin. “Don't you ever dare test my patience again.” With that, I swiftly stepped into the car and **drove** away, leaving Jake behind.

Glancing at Liam and Ethan through the rearview mirror, I couldn't **shake** the guilt of having that **confrontation** in their presence. “Do you boys have something you want to ask mummy? I prompted gently, wanting to address any concerns they

might have.

Is Uncle Jake still your friend? Liam's innocent question pierced through the tension.

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Finding a safe spot to pull—over, I unfastened my seatbelt and turned to face them. “Jake isn't your uncle anymore, and he's no longer mummy's friend, I explained. “So, if you see him, don't go near him.” I berated myself for ever introducing them. to Jake in the first place.

“Why?” Noah's voice was barely a whisper, his curiosity piqued despite his usual focus on his drawing book.

I hadn't realized he was paying attention to the conversation, given how absorbed he seemed in his artwork. “He lied to mummy,” I replied, opting for the simplest explanation. “And anyone who lies to mummy isn't mummy's friend.”

Liam tilted his head, his brow furrowed in contemplation. “I've lied to you before,” he confessed quietly, his admission catching me off guard. “Does that mean I'm not your friend anymore?”

Surprised by his confession, I inquired, "What did you lie about? I've never given you a reason to lie to me."

"He was the one who broke the cup last time," Ethan interjected with a chuckle, pointing to Liam.

I

I shifted my gaze from Ethan **to** Noah, a frown creasing my brow. "Then why did you say it was Noah who broke it?"

"He caused the accident, Liam explained matter-of-factly. "So I blamed him."

"That doesn't excuse it, I reprimanded firmly. "Always own up to your actions."

He nodded earnestly. "Yes, mum" Liam peeked up at me, his eyes searching for reassurance. "So, I'm still your friend?"

Reaching out, I gently tousled his hair. "Of course you are, sweetheart

So, you want us to avoid Uncle Jake?" Ethan chimed in, seeking clarification

I nodded decisively. "Yes, you need to stay away from him. He's not your uncle anymore." Their safety was my priority **above** all else.

"We promise to stay away from Uncle Jake, they chorused in unison.

"Perfect, I replied, relieved that they understood the importance of their promise.

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Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 94

RYAN

After **a** long **day** at the office, I finally made it home, only to be interrupted by the doorbell ringing. Trusting my **staff** to handle it, I headed upstairs to unwind.

Despite the possibility of a visitor waiting downstairs, I indulged in **a** leisurely shower, taking my time to relax. Once refreshed and changed into something more comfortable, I descended the stairs to investigate the earlier disturbance.

Upon entering the living room, I was met with a surprising sight: an array of suitcases scattered about. There was no need to inquire about their owner, as the familiar voices of Stephanie and my mother drifted from the kitchen.

As if coordinated, they emerged from the kitchen, each carrying a bottle of water. Stephanie's face lit up with a wide smile upon seeing me. "Hello, husband," she greeted warmly.

Hearing Stephanie refer to me as "husband" made me inwardly cringe. "What are both of you doing here?" I questioned, disregarding her greeting and gesturing to the scattered boxes around. "and what's with the ridiculous boxes everywhere?"

"I'm moving in **soon**," Stephanie declared, her tone matter-of-fact.

Turning my gaze from her to my mother, I sought an explanation. "Stephanie's a fashion icon, which means she has a lot of belongings. It's best for her to start moving her things in **gradually** to avoid any hassle after the wedding," my mother offered in justification.

I

Frustration bubbling within me, I directed my ire at my mother. "You haven't addressed me yet," I snapped, feeling my patience wearing thin. Fixing my gaze back on Stephanie, I repeated my question with more force. "What is all of this?"

Rolling her **eyes**, Stephanie brushed past me. "Your mother already explained," she retorted, making her way to the sofa and taking a seat. "Since you don't want a big wedding, I suggest we get married by next weekend."

"Wait!" My mother's voice cut through the tension as she hurried over to where Stephanie was seated. "What do you mean by you aren't **having** a big wedding?"

Stephanie shrugged casually. "It's your **son's** decision, **not** mine," she replied nonchalantly.

My mother turned her gaze towards me, likely intending to repeat her question which she just directed to Stephanie, but a sharp glare from me silenced her. "I will **have** my lawyer draw up a prenuptial agreement, I declared firmly.

Stephanie raised an eyebrow in response. "We're signing that?" she questioned incredulously. When I didn't immediately respond, she scoffed. "Do you honestly believe that I'm after your money?"

"I wouldn't put it past you," I retorted tersely.

My mother, sensing the tension, finally voiced her **concerns**. “Why are you only having a legal wedding, Ryan?”

I met Stephanie’s gaze. “Do you want to pretend that you don’t know I don’t want to make her my wife?” I replied coldly, then turned away, heading towards the bar. “On your way out, take all these boxes with you, I added, dismissing them both with a wave of my hand.

“Are you referring to me or her?” My mother asked.

“Both of you, I replied thatly, my frustration evident.

Stephanie bristled at my remark. “Why should I take my box?” she snapped defensively. “What wrong did I do by bringing some of my belongings to my future husband’s house? Her accusatory gaze bore into me. “Unless you’re hiding something.” Her eyes darted towards the stairs. “Is that blich here?”

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Is to believe you’ve not geferring to Lily, I stated firmly, trying to maintain control of the escalating situation..

Stephanie’s defiance was written all over her as she jutted out her chin. “You know I am,” she retorted,

Feeling my temper boiling over, I slammed the scotch bottle on the counter and began to approach Stephanie with hurried,

acing step. But before could reach her, my mother intervened, pushing me back slightly.

“**What** is wrong with you. Ryan’t she exclaimed, her voice tinged with disbelief **and** disappointment. “Is that how I raised **You**? You seriously want to hit a woman!”

Feeling a surge of frustration, I clenched my fists, wanting to slap some sense into Stephanie. I turned to my mother, locking eyes with her. “You did **not** raise me,” I stated fly, my tone laced with bitterness. “My father and the internet did. With a rough exhale. I retreated to the bar. “We aren’t living here after **farrriage!**

Stephanie eyed me warily. “And why is that?” she inquired, her voice filled with curiosity and perhaps a hint of defiance.

won't disrespect Lily like **that**," I replied bluntly, my patience wearing thin. Fed up with the conversation. I grabbed the bottle and made my way up the stairs. "I don't want to see both of **you** here when I get down."

I didn't descend the stairs again that night. The next morning, to my relief, neither my mother, Stephanie, nor the boxes cluttered the living room.

"Somebody leaked that you're getting married to Stephanie next week, Angelo announced abruptly as he barged into my office. His steps faltered as he caught sight of me, accompanied by a detective from the station. "Apologies, I had no idea you had **a** visitor," he added, a hint of surprise coloring his tone.

"More reason you should pay attention to my secretary, I deadpanned, shooting Angelo a pointed look. "We will discuss what you just said after he leaves." Redirecting my attention to the detective, I urged him **to** continue.

He glanced at Angelo skeptically, but I reassured him. "It's **fine**. You can say whatever you want to say before him."

"So far, we **were** able to find out that Sophia's parents contacted her and informed her that you were on your way to find her after you left, the detective revealed.

My disappointment **was** evident as I pressed for more information. "**And?** That can't be all they found after all this time."

The detective hesitated before responding. "For them to **have** reached out to her and for her to have responded, that meant she had a phone with her."

"And Have your department found the **phone** yet?" I inquired impatiently, eager for any lead **that** could bring me closer to finding who murdered Sophia.

"Not yet, we are still searching the place and the environment, the detective informed me, observing my frustration evident in the furrowing of my brow. Even he must realize that the information he's sharing isn't enough of a clue to find the

murderer.

"Your men arrived just two minutes after the murder, which means whoever killed her hurried out of **that** place, he continued, offering some insight. "And the signal from the line she used to contact her parents was active twenty-four hours after her death, and in the apartment where she died. It seems she hid it properly, **and** all we have to do is find it."

I nodded, absorbing the information. "When you do, do not hesitate to inform me."

He rose to his feet, adjusting his jacket. "I sure will," he assured me with **an annoying** smile. "Please do not forget the promise you made to me"

"I won't," I assured the detective as he left my office. Once he was gone, Angelo **took** a seat on **the** sofa he had just vacated, dropping his tablet on the table. I picked it up, eager to investigate further.

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Chapter 94

"Which blogger carried the news first?" I inquired, already anticipating the answer.

I

"HomeGist." Angelo replied promptly.

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My eyes quickly scanned the article about my impending marriage to Stephanie, noting the time and location mentioned. "Give the CEO a call and tell him that I am withdrawing my sponsorship," I instructed firmly. It was outrageous for them to accept my money and publish such information without my consent.

"You know Stephanie did this, right? Or could it be your mother Angelo suggested cautiously.

my desk.

"We will find out after you make that call," I replied, rising from the sofa to return to my seat behind Angelo made the call as instructed, and a few minutes later, my phone rang with Weng's name on the screen. I knew he was calling to explain.

Swiping to accept the call and putting it on speaker, I cut to the chase. "What do you want, Weng? I thought Angelo already told you all that you need to know?"

"I swear on my life, sir, I had no idea my staff published this, Weng pleaded desperately. "I will have it taken down ASAP"

"And of what good is that to me when other bloggers have already published the news?" I countered sharply, frustration evident in my voice.

"It was Ms. Stephanie; she claimed you were aware of it, Weng explained quickly.

"Then go to Ms. Stephanie for sponsorship," I retorted bitterly, ending the call before he could respond.

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 95

RYAN

My lawyer finally drafted the prenuptial agreement along with the terms to be followed during our marriage. I instructed my secretary to call Stephanie and inform her to show up at my office by 1 pm.

She arrived promptly **at** 12:30, thirty minutes before the appointed time, confidently striding into my office as if she owned the place. Taking a seat on the sofa, **she** crossed her legs and looked at me expectantly.

Weng *like* that?"

"Was it really necessary to treat Weng like that?" she asked casually, catching me off guard.

I turned my head to face her slowly. "Next time, if **you** feel like being all over the internet, leave my **name** out of it," I replied tersely, making my **stance** clear.

She chuckled, seemingly amused by my irritation. "What's wrong with announcing the fact that we're getting married to the public? she pressed. "When we got back together in the past, it was announced to the public. When we got engaged, it was announced to the public. When we broke up, it was announced to the public. So what's wrong with announcing to the public that we're about to get married?"

"Do not associate my name with yours in public, or every blogger will face the same fate **as** Weng, I warned sternly, not willing **to** entertain any arguments.

Rolling her eyes, she retrieved **a** brown envelope from her bag and walked over to my desk to place it down. "You don't have control over all bloggers, Ryan. You don't sponsor them all she retorted defiantly.

"But I definitely know someone who knows someone who does sponsor them. You better not test my patience," I shot back, making it clear that I meant business.

Glancing down at the envelope, I reluctantly picked it up, my eyebrows furrowing in disbelief as I read the heading of the document. "Your rules for our marriage?" I asked incredulously, my voice laced with skepticism. I couldn't help but throw my

head back in a humorless laugh because, truth be told, there was nothing amusing about this situation. "What makes you think you have the right to do that?"

Instead of returning to her position on the sofa, she confidently occupied the single chair facing me, crossing her legs with a hint of defiance. There's a copy of the CCTV footage in that envelope. After watching it, maybe you'll understand why I **have** you by the balls," she retorted.

Digging my hand into the envelope, I retrieved the flash drive and inserted it into my laptop, expecting to see the contents appear on the screen. However, to my dismay, nothing showed up. "Are you serious right now?" I questioned, my frustration mounting with each passing moment

She smiled knowingly, her expression **hinting** at the satisfaction of holding the upper hand. "That's the point, Ryan. You'll be left to speculate about what might be in that video, she explained, her voice laced with amusement and defiance. Leaning forward, she added, "Since you're not going to give me the satisfaction of your love and respect, I'm not going to give you the satisfaction of finding out what's in that video"

Her words stoked the flames of my anger, and I fixated my deadly glare on her, picturing various ways to make her regret her actions. "You're going to regret this, I growled, my voice dripping with menace,

anger.

Her amusement only seemed to intensify at **my** threat. "Well, I'm going to enjoy it while it lasts, she replied, unfazed by my

Shifting my attention to the document, I quickly skimmed through it, my eyebrows shooting up in disbelief. "I'm not allowed to have an affair? I asked incredulously, a chuckle escaping me at the absurdity of the clause. "You expect me to be celibate throughout our marriage?"

"I don't expect you to be celibate, she retorted. "**It's a** choice you made yourself. You have a beautiful, functional wife who is more than willing to keep you warm any day Her smile slowly faded, "But you won't be with Lily while we're married"

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I shook my head, shoving her statement. Cheating had never been part of my nature, and I refused to disrespect Lily by making her a mistress. "Don't let this clause stop you from being with other men," I replied casually, moving on to the next clause without missing a beat

Her eyebrows shot up in surprise. “You honestly don’t mind me deeping with other men while we’re married?” she asked, incredulous

I glanced up from the sheet, meeting her gaze head-on. I could come back home and find you with another man on my sofs and proceed to **make** dinner for him. That’s how much I care. I stated matter-of-factly

*** you she spat, her anger flaring.

I chuckled mockingly, unfazed by her **outburst**

“Til pass” I remarked dryly, scanning the next clause with a hint of amusement. “You want more than half of my property if we divorce on the grounds of me having an affair?” I chuckled again, incredulous.

“I need to keep you in check,” she argued defensively

I met her gaze with a deadpan expression. “That video is keeping me in check.” I counted firmly. “No matter how I think about it, Steph, it feels as though you’re after my money?”

“Are

you insane?” **she** shot back, her tone tinged **with** frustration.

“You know I don’t love you or want to be in a marriage with you, and yet you marry me. That means you shouldn’t have a basis for divorce. But seeing that you’ve established one, with the repercussion being the division of my properties, I’m inclined to think that’s what you want.” I reasoned.

Stephanie rolled her eyes, her dismissive gesture only adding fuel to the simmering tension between us. “You can think whatever you want,” she retorted coolly. “If you don’t cheat, I won’t have any reason to file for divorce or stake a claim on your properties.”

I raised an eyebrow, knowing all too well the answer to my next question. “**And** what are my grounds for divorce?” I inquired. It seemed the only way out of this blackmail was through more **blackmail**.

She shrugged nonchalantly. “I guess you’re stuck with me for life, she stated matter-of-factly, a hint of satisfaction evident in her tone.

The intercom buzzed, signaling the arrival of my lawyer. Instructing my secretary to let him in. I prepared to get over this.

Mr. Greystone entered the room, offering a polite greeting to Stephanie, who blatantly ignored him. Undeterred, he took a seat next to her and placed the drafted agreement in front of her, "Pass it to her, I instructed

Stephanie slid the document across the table, her eyes scanning the clauses meticulously

1. Party A and B **will** sleep in different rooms, and Party B has no business whatsoever being in Party **A's** room.
2. Not to be seen in public together for any rea

any reason.

1. Not to be nosy in the **affairs** of Party A
2. In the event of divorce, Party B is left with no entitlement to the properties of Party A.

Stephanie paused, her brow furrowing in contemplation. "This needs to be amended to 'on the grounds of cheating,'" she

insisted.

I nodded in agreement, silently acknowledging the validity of her suggestion, and she continued reading.

1. In **a situation** where Party A loses his life during the duration of the marriage or is rendered immobile and unable to

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handle business affairs, his business, properties, and money should be transferred to his son and their legal guardian.

Stephanie scoffed indignantly, her frustration evident in her tone. "This is absolutely ridiculous!" she spat, her voice laced with anger. "Why should Lily and her children take all our money and property when she made me lose mine?"

Unmoved by her outburst, I maintained my composure, crossing my arms as I listened to her objections. "You shouldn't be worried about that, not unless you want me dead," I replied coolly, refusing to entertain her argument.

Undeterred, she continued reading.

1. Party B should on **no** account take out a loan using the influence and name of Party A.

“What’s the point of marrying you then?” she retorted, her frustration bubbling over.

“If you want money, I countered, cutting straight to the heart of the matter, “tell me, Stephanie, so I can give it to you and we can put an end to this madness.”

Her gaze bore into mine for a long moment before she let out a resigned sigh. “You do realize that you made my life miserable, Ryan, you and that witch, she accused, her words dripping with venom. With a deliberate motion, she picked up a pen from my table and signed the document. I might as well make your life miserable too, she added.

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 96

STEPHANIE

Finally, the day had arrived when I would take on the name **Mrs.** Williams. Who would have thought that after Lily came back into Ryan’s life, such a milestone would be attainable?

Although this wasn’t the grand wedding I had envisioned, what did it matter? At the end of the day, I was getting what I wanted, which was Ryan

Walking into the venue for the event, adorned in a simple yet stunning white dress that accentuated my features, I **was** accompanied by my father, who acted as my legal representative. Taking my place next to Ryan, I couldn’t help but notice his indifference towards me, his attention seemingly elsewhere.

As the lawyer presiding over the event went through the formalities, I found myself lost in my thoughts, paying little attention to the proceedings. When it came time for me to sign the documents, I inscribed my signature without hesitation, watching as Ryan did the same. The prenuptial agreement was handed to me, and without hesitation, I added my signature, sealing the deal.

After all the formalities were **said** and done, the lawyer rose to his feet, extending his hand for a congratulatory handshake. “Congratulations, Mrs. **Williams**,” he greeted, to which I accepted his handshake with a **wide** smile.

He then turned to Ryan, extending his hand once more. “Congratulations, Mr. Williams,” he said with a polite nod.

However, Ryan left the lawyer's hand hanging, grabbed his jacket, and briskly walked out of the office without a word. I offered the lawyer an apologetic smile before hurrying to catch up with Ryan.

"Don't you think we should ride back home together?" I called out to Ryan as he attempted to get into his **car**.

"I'm heading to the office," he replied curtly, his tone leaving no room for argument.

Frowning, I quickened my pace and grabbed his arm, stopping him from entering the car. "We just moved to a new place that I've only been to yesterday, and today we just got married, and you're leaving for the office?" I exclaimed, my frustration bubbling. "Who is supposed to spend time with me in that house? I can't possibly be by myself there."

"Why should I go home and rest after a business deal?" Ryan retorted coldly, his tone cutting through the air like ice. My lips tightened in frustration, but he only chuckled in response. "What's the matter, Stephanie? Are **you** angry? Isn't that what this is? A business deal?"

Feeling a surge of **day**."

of indignation, I insisted, "At least have Angelo drive me home. I can't possibly drive myself on my wedding

"He's not your chauffeur, Ryan deadpanned before getting into the car. Angelo shot me a disapproving glare before taking **his** place behind the wheel. I stood there, wide-eyed, watching them drive away, a knot of disappointment and frustration forming in the pit of my stomach

Finally arriving at the house, I made my way to the master bedroom where I had packed my clothes the day before. However, upon stepping inside, I noticed that my toiletries were nowhere to be found.

Assuming that

the staff had simply forgotten **to** unpack them, I headed **to** the closet to **retrieve** them from my suitcase, only to discover that my suitcases were missing as well. "What the hell!" I muttered incredulously.

Stepping out of the master

bedroom, I sought out one of the staff members. "What happened to my boxes in the master's bedroom?" I inquired, my frustration evident in my tone.

"Mr. Williams instructed us to move them to the guestroom," she replied matter-of-factly.

Chapter

A frka surge of agri rising within me. If Ryan didn't want to share a room with me, then h e should be the one to leave, not ine. Tri going to take a shower, with his toiletries By the time come out. I expect to see my belongings back in the master's b edroom With that, I turned on my heel and stomped back upstairs to freshen up.

After taking my shower, having lunch, and indulging in a short ap. I woke up to find that Ryan was still nowhere to be seen.

tried calling him multiple times, but my calls went unanswerel

Sighing in frustration, I dropped my phone face— flat on the bed. However, it immediately began to ring and I quickly snatched it up, hopin g it was Ryan. But when I saw the annoying number flashing on the screen, I couldn't help but hiss in

imitation

Deciding to ignore the persistent caller, I reluctantly swiped the answer button as the calls persisted. "What the hell is your problem? 1 snapped into the phone, my fru stration evident in my voice. "Do you realize that I just got married today?"

"I'm surprised you are," came the deadpan response: "This is important, Stephanie

Rolling my eyes, I lifted my hands, inspecting my artificial nails with a bored expron. "Yo u have five minutes." I stated curtly, my patience wearing thin.

My tone seemed to infuriate him, and he scoffed in response. "Don't talk to me like that, Stephanie. We're in this together." Unable to contain my amusement, I let out a loud lau gh. "And who exactly does the 'we' entail? I retorted, feeling a surge of frustration at his audacity. When has this bastard ever been useful to me? "What do you want, Jake?"

ily broke up with me," he revealed, his tone betraying a hint of vulnerability.

"And I got married to Ryan, Lreplied defiantly, refusing to let his frustration affect me. "Your **loss** and my gain." It wasn't my responsibility if she broke up with him; i t wasn't the first time, after all "What am I supposed to do with that info?"

"I don't know," he snapped, his frustration obvious. "Think of something. Stephanie! Thin k of how I can get her back! I need her, Steph

I scoffed. "What else do **you** want me to do?" I retorted, my patience wearing thin. Tve c onstantly given you money to woo her, I even offered to pay for the Lamborghini you gift

ed her. I made you come off as rich and classy just so you could get her to walk down the aisle to you, yet you failed miserably

“I wouldn’t have failed if that bastard **hadn’t** returned to her life again, he argued, his frustration boiling over. “You should have kept your man away from her.”

Shaking my head in disappointment, I clicked my tongue. “I don’t **think** Ryan is the main issue in your relationship with Lily I countered, refusing **to** sugarcoat the truth. “Look, I got married to him, and yet she isn’t with you.”

There was a moment of silence before Jake let out a heavy sigh. I could almost picture him running his hands down his face in frustration. “Fine, I admit that I messed up, Stephen, he confessed, his voice laden with defeat. “But you have to help me. I can’t **walk** away after all these months with nothing. They’ll come after me, and you know it.”

“You got yourself into debt, Jake, I reminded him bluntly, feeling no sympathy for his predicament. Rolling over to face the cream-colored sofa, I held my ground. “Whatever you’re facing now and whatever you’ll face after this sounds like a you problem. I fail to see how your debt affects me

I will snitch if you don’t help me,” he threatened, his tone laced with desperation. “I don’t think your beloved husband will want to stay married to you if he finds out that you planted me in Lily’s life **with** the promise to pay off my debt after you got married to him,” he spat bitterly. “What do you think he would say when he finds out you equally got married to him because of **his** money?”

I couldn’t help but **scoff** at his feeble attempt to intimidate me. Is that supposed to scare me?” I retorted, my laughter tinged with mockery, “You think he married me because he loves me? **Or** because he wants **to**?” I added, the bitter truth of my own

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situation stinging. “I literally, purchased my wedding ring myself I continued, my voice dripping with sarcasm. “And you **think** sharing such petty information will make him file for a divorce?”

Gradually, the sly smile on my lips morphed into an angry frown. Who did Jake think he was, to threaten me like this? “Should I share a secret with you, Jake?” I seethed, my voice low and dangerous. “My husband cannot divorce me for any reason. I am the only one who can divorce him. You, however, can be charged with theft and impersonation, and I will personally see to it that you end up behind bars.”

“What the hell did you do to him? Jake demanded, his voice filled with fear and curiosity .

“Something you should have done,” I replied icily.

“Which is?” he pressed, his desperation evident.

“Using something Lily loves the most to hold her down. It could be those three tiny bastards,” I stated matter-of-factly, a chilling edge to my words.

He exhaled shakily. T’m sorry for threatening you, Steph, but you have to help me, please...”

“What?” I scoffed, my contempt for him apparent in my tone. “You’re suddenly apologetic because you realize you can’t threaten **me**? Get lost.” With that, I disconnected the call and tossed the phone onto the bed, releasing a loud, deranged laughter that echoed throughout the room.

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 97

RYAN

I had been a week since I entered into that sham of a marriage with Stephanie, and not once had I stepped foot in the n house I acquired Instead, I found myself spending every night at the manor that I once shared with Lily during our marriage.

Tapping away on my phone’s screen, I dialed Lily’s number. After a few rings, she picked up, her voice sounding tired and worn. “Hey,” she greeted softly, her appearance reflecting the fatigue evident in her voice. “I was just trying to fix some so

for Noah.”

Concern creased my brow as I noticed the dark circles under her eyes. “Is everything okay?” I inquired, my worry for her growing with each **passing** moment.

Lily sighed wearily. “Noah has been running a fever all night, and I’ve been trying to calm it down,” she explained, her voice tinged with exhaustion.

My heart sank at the news. “Noah is **sick**? Why didn’t **you** tell me I asked, regretting not being there for my son during h

time of need.

She offered me a small smile as she attempted to fix her disheveled **hair**. “You already have enough on your plate,” she murmured softly. “And I didn’t want to bother **you** with t his. Besides, he’s all better now.”

“I want to be there,” I whispered, feeling a pang of guilt for not being able to provide the support my son needed. The wei of my responsibilities at the office seemed unbearable in that moment, and I longed to be by Noah’s side.

Lily paused, her expression turning somber as she sighed and let her shoulders droop. “I’m really sorry about everything,” she apologized, her voice heavy with regret. “How is Stephanie?”

The mention of Stephanie’s name brought a surge of resentment. “I don’t know. I haven’t seen her in **a** week, I admitted, r tone tinged with indifference. The truth was, I had little interest in her well-being

Lily blinked slowly, her gaze thoughtful. “Even though I hate to say this, Ryan, but that **woman** needs you or someone she trusts by her side,” she said gently. “She literally lost her baby and needs someone by her side.”

“That baby was mine too, Lily, and I’m equally hurt that I didn’t get to meet it,” I replied, my voice tinged with bitterness. “But when I say that woman has moved on from her loss, she has moved on. It leaves me wondering sometimes if she really cared for the baby or was just pretending to care.”

Lily’s expression softened, her plea heartfelt. “You should still check up on her, Ryan,” she pleaded earnestly. “Please, if not for your sake or hers, then for the sake of my sanity. If that woman were to harm herself in the future, I would feel guilty for the rest of **my** life.”

With a frustrated sigh, I relented. “Fine, I conceded. You’ll drop by in the **evening**

Before I **could** dwell further on the matter, there was a **knock** on my door, followed by Angelo’s entrance. “I just received **a** call from your father,” he informed me, his tone serious. “And he’s livid that you aren’t taking his calls.”

I couldn’t help but feel annoyed at my father’s interference. If he wanted to **discuss** business matters, he could find his way to my office. **But** if this was about Stephanie and our living arrangement, he’d better stay off my back. “Do you want to say hello to Lily?” I deflected, choosing to ignore his earlier statement.

Angelo’s face relaxed, a smile creeping onto his lips. He waved as soon as I turned the screen to him. “Hello, Lily, he greeted warmly. “How have **you** been?”

Lily returned the smile. "I've been doing fine, Angelo," she replied "And how have you been?"

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"Trying to stop father and son from killing each other, he quipped, eliciting a chuckle from Lily. I felt a surge of gratitude towards him for lightening the mood. How are the Imps?" he asked wistfully. "I've missed them dearly?"

I doubt they remember his name, but it's best not to burst his bubble

"They miss you Stephanie chimed in, her voice laced with insincerity. Her eyes betrayed her lie, twitching ever so slightly.

"My regards to them, Angelo responded politely before shifting his gaze back to me. "Give your father a call, sir. You know how much that man scares me when he's upset, especially towards you"

"Then stop taking his calls, I deadpanned, growing tired of Angelo's fear of my father. "It's not like he can fire you or anything. You don't work for him"

Angelo scoffed and excused himself, muttering about finding something to eat in the kitchen before leaving the room.

After speaking with Lily and the boys, I decided to stop by the new house and check on Stephanie. As I pulled into the driveway, I noticed her car **parked** next to the other black SUV.

Stepping into the living **room**, I found Stephanie seated with a bowl of ice cream. She paused, spoon hovering near her mouth, as she caught sight of me walking in "Where the heck have you been?" she snapped, her tone sharp with frustration.

I hesitated near the door, considering whether to turn around and leave now **that** I had confirmed **she** was still alive. "You haven't been home in one week, Ryan, One whole damn week, she continued, her voice tinged with accusation. "I have been home," I replied flatly, unmoved by her outburst and unapologetic of the thoughts going through my head. Stephanie gestured wildly with her hands. "What do **you** mean you've been home? Are you trying to tell me you've been in this house for a week, and I **haven't** noticed you?" she questioned incredulously.

Opting for a drink to soothe my nerves, I walked further into the house. "I said I've been home, Stephanie. But home isn't with you, and most definitely isn't this house," I clarified.

Her eyes widened with a mixture of disbelief and hurt, the redness betraying her unspoken emotions. "Have you been with Lily?" she questioned, her voice barely above a whisper.

I'm glad you realize that Lily and **the** kids are who I consider home," I **replied calmly**, refusing to engage in her attempt to provoke me. Moving into the kitchen, I grabbed a bottle of water before returning to face her. "Lily is in Canada, and I've been swamped with work to travel

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darted around suspiciously. "So you've been at the old villa?" she pressed, her tone accusatory. "Doing what exactly! Masturbating to the thought of her?" she spat out bitterly.

I couldn't help but smile at her attempt to rile me up. "How did you guess that correctly?" I replied sarcastically, refusing to let her get under my skin.

After a moment **of** silence, she shook her head and returned to her ice cream. "So why are you here? Change of clothes?"

If she was observant, she would have **noticed** that none of my clothes are **here**. The truth was, I only slept here for one night before the wedding because the villa felt saturated with Lily's presence, and getting married to Stephanie felt like a betrayal to her memory. So, I had grabbed a change of clothes and toiletries and headed down here to spend the night,

"I'm here because Lily was worried about you," I replied, emphasizing that my presence wasn't motivated by any sentiment towards Stephanie.

"She wanted me to make sure you're okay for her **peace** of mind.

Angered to her limit, Stephanie jumped to her feet and flung the ice cream bowl in my direction. It stopped midway, but some of its contents splattered onto the tip of my shoe. "Are you saying I should be grateful to her for sending my husband home?" she retorted, her voice dripping with sarcasm and bitterness.

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“It would be refreshing if you were sensible enough to do that,”

Her fury only seemed to escalate as she yelled, “I forbid you from

Shaking my head with a chuckle, I made my way to the front door dryly as I grabbed the door handle. “I see that you’re fine and alive and closed it firmly behind me.

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 98

RYAN

“It’s on sale,” Angelo announced loudly, barging into my office, a behavior that seemed to be becoming a habit.

Though my gaze remained fixed on him, my attention was still on the phone call. “Thank **you**, Mr. Godizalla. I replied tersely, shooting Angelo a **glare** for his disruptive entrance. “I will ensure yours is among the goods sent to Italy in two days

“**Thank** you, Mr. Williams. I look forward to more deals in the future, Godizalla responded respectfully.

“Likewise. Have a lovely afternoon,” I said, ending the call before turning my full attention to Angelo. “Let this be the last time you rush into my office screaming like that. Rising from my desk, I moved to join him on the sofa. “Whatever you have

say will have to wait until you **are** properly seated in my office

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“I am sorry, sir,” Angelo quickly apologized.

“As you should be.” I responded with a hint of exasperation, realizing the potential consequences of Angelo’s **impulsive** behavior. The thought crossed my mind that he could inadvertently share sensitive information with someone who shouldn’t **have** access to it, just because he didn’t have the patience to fully enter my office thereby potentially causing irreparable damage. “What’s on sale?” I asked, attempting to steer the conversation back to the matter at hand.

“Laly’s Lambo,” Angelo declared, casually dropping his phone onto the table. “I happened to snap a picture of the Lambo along with its plate number before it was returned, and now it seems to be up for sale.”

Surprised by the revelation, I reached for the phone and examined the picture closely. Indeed, it was unmistakably her car. “But I thought someone had agreed to cover the costs if Jake failed to do **so**?”

Angelo nodded in confirmation. “I did reach out to that woman, and she assured me that the car has indeed been fully paid

for

“Then why put the car up for sale?” I questioned rhetorically, though I **couldn’t** help but ponder the reasoning behind such a decision. However, before I could even finish my thought, Angelo provided an explanation

“To recover the money spent on the payment,” Angelo replied matter-of-factly, meeting my gaze as he explained. “Whoever paid for that car is the one selling it. It’s being auctioned, which means the individual wants to recoup their investment in full-

His explanation made sense, and I nodded in acknowledgment. And how did you come by all this information?” I inquired, genuinely curious.

He chuckled confidently, a smug look crossing his face. “I happen to know someone who knows someone **that** has a penchant for acquiring **cars** through less-than-legal means.”

The notion of selling a car acquired legally but under questionable circumstances puzzled me. “I want to attend that auction,” I informed Angelo firmly. “If I end up buying the car, when I will meet the seller”

Angelo shifted nervously on his feet, a hint of concern evident in his **expression**. That place is notorious for attracting gamblers, and it wouldn’t do your public image any favors if you were seen there, he cautioned.

Leaning back comfortably, I crossed my legs, mulling **over** our options. “So, what exactly are you suggesting we do? Would you prefer to handle this personally or delegate the task to someone else?” I inquired, casting a thoughtful glance in Angelo’s direction.

“It would be wiser to assign someone else, Angelo suggested, his tone reflecting a sense of **caution**. “If I were to be spotted there, it might **raise** suspicions **that** you were involved.”

“Any **specific** individual in mind?” I pressed, curious to hear his thoughts on potential candidates.

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He nodded decisively. “That someone in mind, an old friend from our school days. He’s capable of handling this sort of task, although he likely expects some form of compensation.”

“Let him keep the Lambo,” I stated with a casual shrug. “I’m not particularly attached to it. All I need is the name of the car.”

Angelo nodded in agreement, acknowledging the terms of our arrangement. “I’ll reach out to him without delay.” Pushing myself off the sofa, I returned to the comfort of my desk chair. “When is the auction scheduled to take place?” I inquired.

“Tomorrow night,” Angelo replied promptly.

I nodded, absorbing the information. Ensure he becomes the highest bidder. I instructed firmly, my mind already shifting gears to the next task at hand. Sitting down at my desk, I gazed at the newly framed pictures of Lily and the boys that I had recently acquired from the internet.

“See your way out, please inform my secretary to clear my schedule for tomorrow, I directed, my attention briefly diverted. Pausing by the door, Angelo turned back to face me. “And what’s happening tomorrow?” he inquired curiously.

Lily’s birthday tomorrow, and I intend to spend it with her, I informed him, a **hint** of anticipation in my voice, making his head in concern, he rushed back to my desk. “Not to intrude, but remember, do not do anything funny with Lily because that would grant Stephanie access to half of your assets.”

Following my eyes at his caution. I returned my focus to the laptop screen. “I’m simply being there for her birthday and to spend time with my kids. Let’s not be ridiculous, I dismissed his concerns.

My acknowledgment. Angelo turned and made his way towards the door. “I’ll inform my friend about the deal and”

“get back to you” he assured before stepping out and closing the door behind him.

Letting out a heavy sigh, I leaned forward, reaching for the framed pictures of Lily and the boys. Tracing my finger along the faces, a pang of guilt washed over me. This, I realized, was the price I had to pay for my transgressions—

the inability to spend time with my family, to be present in their lives, all as a consequence of betraying Lily.

A few minutes later, my phone chimed with a text from Angelo, confirming **that** his friend was on board.

After wrapping up work for the day. I made my way to the store to collect the customized jewelry I had ordered for Lily. However, the persistent presence of paparazzi made the task more challenging. They kept snapping pictures of me and bombarding me with questions, insinuating if the jewelry was intended for Stephanie. Ignoring their prying inquiries, I

picked up my order and made my way back home.

Pulling into my parking spot, I noticed Stephanie's car parked nearby and frowned, realizing my instructions to my staff about her access had been ignored. It seemed they assumed that as my spouse, she **now** had free rein to enter the premises.

Entering the house, I discovered her in the living room, her expression twisted with anger. "Welcome home, husband," she **spar**, her tone dripping with sarcasm. "Since you've made it clear you won't come home, I decided to pay **you** a visit. And now when she advanced towards me, her demeanor hostile. **Tdiscovered** you weren't here, and the news informed me that you were out jewelry shopping Her gaze shifted to the bag in my hand. "Since you're not handing **that** over to me, I'm

gating is not for me"

Awry chuckle escaped her lips as she halted a few feet away. "Heaven forbid **you** actually get me a gift," she sneered. "I mean, I practically had to buy my own wedding ring"

her a particularly stressful day, I had little patience for Stephanie's presence. "What are you doing here, Stephanie?" I demanded, my tone reflecting my irritation

Ting her head defiantly, her Eats clenched at her sides. "Do I look **like** a joke to you? Does this marriage seem like a **joke** to

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Chapter 98

3+ by%

you?" she shot back, her **voice** laced with bitterness.

“Yes,” I replied bluntly, my tone devoid of humor. “You do look like a joke to me, and this marriage is undoubtedly a joke.” I blinked slowly, locking eyes with her. “I won’t ask you again, Stejihanie. What are you doing here?”

“What does it look like I’m doing here?” she retorted angrily. “Since you’ve chosen to avoid your wife and treat her like a disease, I decided to seek **you** out instead.

My gaze hardened as I processed her words. “And **what** exactly is that supposed to mean?” I pressed, my patience wearing

thin

“It means that since you seem to enjoy spending all your nights here, I’m moving in,” Stephanie declared defiantly, her tone

resolute.

“Don’t embarrass yourself, I retorted sharply, brushing past her. I quickly reached into my pocket and sent a text to one of the security personnel stationed outside, instructing them to escort her off the premises.

Pausing at the foot of the stairs, I turned to face her. “Someone is on their way to escort you out, so I suggest you leave voluntarily before **you** embarrass yourself any further,” I warned sternly.

Ignoring her protests and threats, I ascended the stairs, shutting out the sound of her voice as I made my way to my room and slammed the door behind me. Leaning against it, I let out a frustrated sigh.

I couldn’t help but wonder why it was taking Angelo so long to uncover something incriminating about Stephanie and her family, I longed for this ordeal to be over, yearning for the day when I could finally put this bullshit behind me.

#

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 99

RYAN

The next day. I made a quirk or what was suppose to be a quickarop to pick up my final gift for Lily—a stunning oil portrait of her. Trained with pure **gol** However, upon

my arrival, I discovered that there had been some errors in the production process, resulting in the portrait not being ready as scheduled. Adjusting my plans accordingly, I rescheduled my trip to

since that the portrait would be completed by the time I departed.

Thankfully, upon my return, the portrait was ready, and the team at the studio apologized profusely for the delay. To make amends, they offered me a complimentary portrait, a gesture that I graciously accepted without hesitation.

By the time I arrived in Canada, evening had already descended. Making a quick detour at the cake shop, I selected a delectable cake for Lily before making my way to her place

Upon reaching the gate, it swung open wide to welcome me, and I drove through without hesitation. Coming to a stop, I was pleasantly surprised when the front door of the house swung open, and the boys came rushing out to greet me. With a smile, I left the cake safely in the car to prevent it from being damaged and to give myself the freedom to lift the boys into

Ethan was the first to reach me, and I lifted him up, showering his face with affectionate kisses. Liam followed, though he seemed less enthusiastic about the display of affection, playfully pushing my face **away**. Lastly, Noah approached, and I had to set down the other two boys to lift him up into my arms.

He wrapped his tiny arms around my neck, and my heart swelled with emotion as he whispered. "I missed you, Dad." The pain in his voice tugged at my heartstrings, and I fought to keep my emotions in check as I held **him** close.

"I missed you too, big man," I replied affectionately, kissing Noah's neck before setting him down and turning to embrace Lily as she approached. She melted into my arms, and I held her close, whispering softly. "I missed you, love," while planting a gentle kiss on her neck

"I missed you too," she murmured, pulling back slightly to meet my gaze.

Grinning with excitement, I stepped back from the embrace and retrieved the cake from the car. "Happy birthday, love," I declared, presenting the cake to her with a warm smile.

Her eyes welled up with tears of joy. "You remembered," she whispered, clearly moved by the gesture.

It'd be a fool not to, I replied earnestly, my heart swelling with affection for her. Reaching into the back seat, I retrieved the portrait and presented it to her. I wanted to add my face to it, but then I realized that today is all about you"

Lily chuckled through her tears, her expression radiant with happiness. "Thank you so much, I love it, she exclaimed.

"Come on, let's go in." I suggested, gesturing towards the house.

Picking up my jacket from the backseat, we made our way inside, with me carrying the portrait and Lily carrying the cake. "We were just about to have an early dinner, so you're welcome to join us." Lily offered, her voice tinged with surprise. "I honestly didn't expect you to show up today"

"I wouldn't miss this for anything, I reassured her, a genuine smile gracing my lips..

As Lily dropped the cake off in the dining room, she headed to the kitchen to retrieve an **extra** plate for me, while the boys returned to their unfinished meal. Following her into the kitchen, I held out the diamond jewelry set I had purchased for

her

"You don't have to help me," she protested the moment she spotted me. "I can handle this myself"

Ignoring her protest, I wrapped my **arm** around her waist and planted a kiss on her neck. "I **have** another gift for you," I

III

Gageing salty, Lily traced her hand along my neck. "What do you have for me?" she whispered, unable **to** contain her

she cared at the oil bag

lightly. I presented the gift bag to her, dangling it before her expectant eyes. With curiosity sparkling in her vepted the bag and eagerly began to unwrap it. As she revealed the contents, her words trailed off, and her expression shifted to one of awe. "Are these real. she began, only to trast oft again as she realized the gift was customized.

This is breathtaking" she exclaimed, lifting her head to meet my gare. "I love this"

Tim glad you do repbest sincerely, feeling a swell of happiness at her reaction. When she leaned in **for** a kiss, I turned my sock to her, causing her to kiss my check instead Seeing the slight frown that creased her brow, I reached out to gently touch her jaw, turning her to face me. "Tm sorry, I shouldn't have done that."

You had every reason to do that” I whispered softly, my voice filled with tenderness. I’m the one who isn’t worthy of you right now, Lib, not until I’ve cleared up my mess with Stephanie

Clearing her throat. Lily offered me a tight smile. “Thank you so much; I really love the gift.

1

Come on I said, taking the plate from her and intertwining our fingers. I’m sure the kids are waiting for us.” It was evident that that **was** particularly eager to dive into the cake.

Together, we made our way back to the dining room and enjoyed dinner with the kids. Afterward, we indulged in the cake settling in to watch a movie. However, I found myself distracted, my attention drifting to my phone throughout the

“Is everything okay?” Lily’s voice broke through my thoughts, drawing my attention back to her. “You’ve been staring at your phone”

Realizing that my preoccupation with my phone had not gone unnoticed. I decided to offer her an explanation before she could come up with her own conclusions. “I sent Angelo on a mission, and he’s giving me updates, I explained. Hoping to alleviate any concerns she might have had

Her mouth formed a small “O” “Is it something I should know about?” she inquired, her expression filled with curiosity and a

hint of concern

Deciding there was no need to keep her in **the** dark. I nodded. “The Lamborghini you returned to Jake is being auctioned tonight, and Angelo is going to find out who the seller is.”

A furrow formed on her forehead. “Isn’t Jake the seller?” she questioned, puzzled by the situation.

I shook my head. “Someone else already paid for it, and the person who paid for the car is the one setting it up for auction. They’re also the one assisting Jake, and this is our opportunity to find out more.

She nodded thoughtfully, understanding the significance of the situation. “Please keep me updated on whatever you find out” she requested

Reaching out, I took her hand and squeezed it gently. “Of course, I will,” I assured her, wanting to ease any worries she might have. As she returned her attention to the television

ion, I seized the opportunity to shift the conversation. "Have you heard from Jake since you returned to Canada**

She nodded, confirming, "I met him outside my gate and I broke up **with** him."

A wide grin spread across my face. For real?" I asked, unable to contain my excitement at the **news**.

She nodded again, her smile matching mine. "For real"

Thank you. I murmured gratefully. She was giving me a chance, giving **us a** chance, and I could see it **in** her eyes.

13+ 69%—

4:20 wed, JUL 24

Chapter 99

Scooting closer to her, I enveloped her in a warm embrace, wrapping my arm around her shoulder **as** we settled in to watch the rest of the **movie** together,

By the time the movie had ended, the boys were already fast asleep, so I assisted Lily in tucking them in. I leaned down to kiss each of them goodnight on their foreheads before quietly exiting their respective bedrooms.

"I noticed you didn't bring a sleepover bag, which means you'll have to use my toiletries for a shower," Lily remarked, tilting her head slightly. "I can't help you with a change of clothes, though."

I cursed inwardly. She seemed to think I was planning to spend the night.

"I did bring my suitcase, I muttered, feeling a pang of guilt, "but **it's** at my apartment."

"Oh, she replied, her voice tinged with surprise. "I didn't realize you weren't staying the night."

Circling my arm around her waist, I drew her closer to me. "I want to, Lily, but I can't, I confessed softly. "There's no way I could spend the whole night with you and resist the temptation, hot when I've missed you so much."

Her smile softened, understanding flickering in her eyes.

I

"I'm leaving because I can't trust myself around you, I continued my voice heavy with regret. "And I can't risk crossing that line, not while I'm still married to that woman

Becoming Strangers Again

Posted by Adminh, ?

Chapter 100

RYAN

As I settled into my car, a profound sense of loneliness washed over me. It was incredibly difficult to tear myself away from Lily and the boys after spending such precious time with them.

With a heavy sigh, I inserted the key into the ignition, glancing over at Lily, who was still standing by the window. I offered her a small smile and silently mouthed "I love you" before pulling away.

I didn't expect her to say it back, and part of me didn't want her to— not yet, anyway. If she did, I feared I wouldn't be able to

control myself any longer.

Instead of heading straight home, I decided to make a pit stop as nearby bar to grab a few drinks before heading home. However, as I glanced in my rearview mirror, I noticed something peculiar the same yellow cab had been following me for

quite some time

Glancing in my rearview mirror, I furrowed my brow as the car behind me seemed to pick up speed when I did. Letting out a scoff of annoyance, I decided to pull over at a bustling bar, confident that my security team would take note of the suspicious vehicle and handle it accordingly.

Stepping into the bar, I made my way to the counter and took a seat, signaling the bartender over, I ordered a bottle of Irish whiskey, which he promptly placed in front of me before returning to his duties, wiping down the counter.

A few minutes later, I sensed a familiar presence beside me and turned to find the source of my annoyance. Sure enough, the man from the yellow taxi had taken a seat next to me. I couldn't help but scoff inwardly—

the pieces were finally falling into place. Of course, he couldn't afford his own car ; that's why he was resorting to trailing me in a taxi.

"Are you going to pretend you haven't noticed jne sitting beside you?" he snapped, his tone laced with irritation.

I glanced at him momentarily, feeling a surge of irritation at his persistence. "I have no reason to acknowledge you, Jake, I replied firmly, the truth of my words echoing between us.

"Aren't you married?" he shot back snappishly, his tone tinged with bitterness.

Relaxing back in my seat, I tilted my head and regarded him lazily, "Are you here to congratulate me?" I asked, unable to resist a hint of mockery in my tone,

His jaw clenched in frustration. "Then why were you at Lily's?" he demanded, his voice rising with agitation. Do you even understand how this will affect her if the public gets wind of the fact that she's entertaining a married man?"

Slowly, the smug expression on my face melted away, replaced by a simmering anger—not because I cared about public perception, but because something else was gnawing at me.

"How did you know I was coming from her place?" I asked sharply, my tone edged with suspicion. "What were you doing around her house?" I demanded, a surge of protectiveness for Lily coursing through me. Lily lived in a secluded area with no neighbors nearby, leaving me puzzled as to why Jake would be lurking around her premises.

"That's not the point," he spat back angrily. "The point is that you should focus on your wife and leave Lily the hell alone."

I felt my blood boil at his words. "The fact is, I need to get a restraining order against you, I growled, my voice low and dangerous. "This is slowly turning into an obsession." I emphasized, my frustration bubbling to the surface. "Lily broke up with you again," I stressed, my tone firm, so you have no reason whatsoever to be lurking around her house."

He rose to his feet, closing in on me with an intensity that made my muscles tense. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed my security team rising to their feet, ready to intervene. But I shook my head at them, silently signaling for them to stand down I could handle this fool on my own.

“Stay away from Lily now that Tui being nice about it,” he warned, his voice dripping with menace “Because if I lose my mind, neither of you will like it

That Lily would be getting a restraining order against him test thing tomorrow, and I would ensure my security team kept a close watch on her. Their instructions would be clear shoe to injure if they found him anywhere near her.

Leave Thelloerd at Jake, my voice echoing through the bar. “Oll beat the living daylight out of you right here and now. and have you locked up for good

He glanced around, undoubtedly noticing my security team’s focused attention on us. Chuckling bitterly, he shook his head. “Your money can’t always save you, Mr. Williams,” he sneered. Consider yourself warned”

With a tual disdainful glance, he turned on his heel and strode out of the bar, leaving me seething with anger and frustrations. I lost all appetite for my drink, losing a handful of dish onto the counter before storming out.

Shipping into my car, I dialed Lily’s number, relieved when she answered almost immediately. “Are you home? She asked. Not yet,” I replied, my voice tinged with frustration. “I made a stop at the bar to grab a drink, and I ran into Jake.”

There was a moment of silence on the other end of the line before Lily spoke again. “What did he say?” she asked, concern

evident in her voice.

“Crary, disturbing things, I muttered, the memory of our encounter still fresh in my mind. “We’re filing for a restraining order against him tomorrow, Lily, and that isn’t up for debate.

Thankfully, she agreed without hesitation, “Sure,” she replied. “Please call me when you get home or send me a text. I need to know you got home safely

“Sure, I’ll do that,” I assured her before disconnecting the call. With a heavy sigh, I started the engine and drove myself

home.

As soon as I stepped into my house, I followed Lily’s request and called her to let her know I was home safely. Afterward, I headed straight to the shower, hoping to wash away the stress of the day.

As I finished my shower, I grabbed my phone to find Angelo’s call waiting. “Do we know who the seller is?” I asked as I towel-dried my hair.

“Not yet he replied, his voice tinged with urgency. “But he’s closed the deal, and I’m about to wire him the money.

i nodded to myself, considering the implications. “How much are we talking about?” I inquired as I made my way to the

closet

“A little over six hundred thousand dollars, Angelo informed ine

make sure you

“That’s a hefty sum,” I mused, mentally calculating our finances. Alright, but friend doesn’t take possession of the car until we know who they are?

“Yes, sir,” Angelo affirmed before we ended the call.

After completing my skincare routine and changing into my night clothes, I settled into bed, hoping to catch some rest. However, just as I was about to drift off, a message from Angelo Bashed on my phone screen.

THE SELLER IS MR. WAPER. STEPHANIE’S FATHER IS THE FUCKING SELLER.