

The Devil's Love For The Heiress by LiLhyz Chapter 75-78

Chapter 75: Who Stole The Designs?

"I swear, Kate, Mister Ronaldo, I did not do it! I was shocked when my assistant came to me with the designs!" Catrina was crying, after hearing that the designs in her hands were the ones that were stolen. "I did not even expect her to hand me the designs? What for?"

"Look at me? How many tubes are attached to me?" Catrina pointed out. "Do I really have the time to plot against the company? Six days ago, I was in a coma!"

Carlos and Kate looked at each other. Then, Kate answered, "Tell me, Catrina." Referring to Catrina's assistant, Kate asked, "When did Venice come to give you the designs?"

"Just two days ago," Catrina replied. "It's still in the drawer, right there, because I can't do anything about it! I did not even order her to bring it to me. Why would I need it here?"

Immediately, Catrina sobbed. She covered her face with her palms and questioned, "Why is this happening to me? First, I was food poisoned, and then this?"

"Can I ask you something, Catrina? How did you get poisoned? Wherever you got the food from, we should sue them," Carlos suggested. As he asked Catrina for more information, Kate excused herself, calling the security team on her mobile.

Catrina was wiping the tears from her face. She sniffed and stumbled in her words, "I asked Venice to buy me my usual dinner while I was working late. You and Kate were in London then, so the company was very busy. I always buy my food at the cafe across the street, so I don't know how I could have gotten poisoned -" 2

"I had the security team check the cameras again, including the logs. Venice brought out the designs five days ago." Kate said, returning to the hospital room. "So, what did she do with it in those three days if she came here only two days ago?"

"Then," Carlos concluded, "I think we may have just found the correct culprit. As Catrina's assistant, Venice had access to all her files, too."

While Carlos and Kate were talking to Catrina at the hospital, Channel 5, a local TV station, did a live interview with the new owner of SWEAT IT, Monet Williams. She was seated at her office, talking to a reporter about her current predicament.

"I received a demand letter from CSK Apparel. They claim our designs were theirs! The audacity! SWEAT IT has served Braeton for five years, and the city can attest to the quality of its products. Why would we do such a thing?" Monnet claimed.

"I'm sure you know by now that Carlos Ronaldo owns CSK Apparel, and while I admire him as a tennis player, clearly, he is not suited for business! Shame on you, Carlos!"

She looked at the cameras and challenged, "Carlos, if you have any proof, come out and show it to the entire Braeton! But I know you won't because there is no such thing! We stole nothing! You are the new company, and you have something to prove, not SWEAT IT!"

Later that day, Carlos and Kate learned of Monet's challenge. They replayed the interview from the CSK Apparel office.

Alexander hissed and said, "How are we going to deal with this?"

"Why do I feel like this is a personal vendetta against me?" Carlos asked. It was supposed to be his break from the tournaments, a chance to recharge and plan for the next Grand Slam. However, he experienced

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another problem again upon returning to Braeton. To think, he only had a week left before the US Open would start

Shaking his head, Carlos suggested, "I have this fucking feeling this is all Tyler. He was still upset with me after I beat him. He never recovered."

Of course, aside from that, while Tyler acted like a playboy, Carlos earnestly felt he always liked Kate. Otherwise, why did he collude with Hailey in the past? Then, at the same time as their return from London, Tyler showed up at their high school reunion. To Carlos, it was not a mere coincidence!

"Don't worry, Carlos. If someone other than Monet is behind this, we will find out who it is. For now, what's important is we fight back publicly," Kate replied. She said, "We will accept the challenge."

Kate called her brother and demanded, "Kyle, please arrange for a joint interview with Channel 5 and BNC Media. Let's invite Monnet and confront her with her claims."

"Will this really work?" Alexander asked. "Venice had not reported from work today. She has gone AWOL, and the police could not find her."

"Trust me, Alex, nothing slips through the fingers of the Wrights. They will find Venice," Carlos revealed.

"But to prove whether the designs were 'stolen, we do not need Venice," Kate said with a smirk on her face. "Those are my designs, after all."

It took two days for the interview to be arranged. It was held at SWEAT IT's main boutique. Two TV networks brought their crew to conduct a live meeting on both sides; CSK Apparel and SWEAT IT.

Sofa couches were settled at the center of the store, and samples of SWEAT IT's new products were on display, especially the ones that Kate and Raffa had designed.

Kate could see how Monet turned the interview into a chance to promote the store, but she was confident about what she was about to reveal. SWEAT IT would go down anytime soon, and Monet would have to pay them off for damages.

The interviews finally began, and both reporters from the TV stations managed the flow. It was Monet who first spoke, representing SWEAT IT. She asserted that they stole no one's design. She challenged Kate and Carlos to prove it, saying, "They can't find any proof because there isn't one."

SWEAT IT's designer joined in the interview. He brought out sample sketches of the recent designs, and he even showed the camera how he had his signature on it.

When it was CSK's turn, Carlos first introduced himself as the owner of CSK Apparel. He said, "This company is owned by myself, my girlfriend, Kate Wright, Alexander Jenkins, and lastly, Kate's brother, Kyle Wright. Thus, this company represents not only me, but the four of us."

Learning of this, Monet's eyes widened. She certainly did not expect to be going against Kyle Wright. However, she felt she and her partner had a solid plan. The only witness to all this was Venice, the assistant of Catrina, and her partner assured her he took care of Venice. She wasn't popping out of nowhere. No, not anytime soon.

Thus, their timetable to put down Carlos Ronaldo went on, and the best way to do it was to go live on TV. It was quick and efficient. Whereas going through court would take months.

"So, Mister Ronaldo, how can you prove that SWEAT IT?" The reporter from Channel 5 asked.

Kate brought out the patent filings and said, "We had registered the designs for patent ownership. These were filed two weeks before SWEAT IT claimed it as theirs!"

Monet's eyes rounded. As far as she knew, it wasn't necessary to register for a patent unless the design

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was unique to the company. She faked a scoff, pretending to be calm, and turned to the sports jerseys, compression shorts, and pants on display, but she just found them ordinary with several prints.

Feeling courageous, Monet quickly returned her attention to Kate, saying, "I can't believe you! So you have stolen our designs and tried to claim them as yours! Just because we did not register them for a patent, that does not make you the real owner!"

"If this design is important to you, why didn't you register it? Don't you know that whoever registers it first is legally the owner?" Kate reminded her.

"How dare you?" Monet questioned. "We can counter your claims because we have already opened our designs to the public!"

"Let's not make this any longer," Carlos suggested. He got up, walked to one jersey worn by a mannequin, and said, "We don't want to waste any more time. So, we will prove our point."

Turning to his girlfriend, he suggested, "Kate, do the honors."

Monet's gaze shifted from the cameras to Kate. She acted fearless, but deep inside, she was already worried. 'What is Kate trying to prove?' No matter how much she studied the products, she could find nothing that was unique.

Kate walked over to the first jersey. She touched the design on the lower part of it and said, "I love spirals. You can keep a secret code in it without being noticed, which was how I came up with this."

The first jersey had square spirals as its print. It was climbing from the bottom to the upper side of the jersey. Kate's fingers traced the spiral from one square until it revealed that it formed into a C. Kate said,

C.”

Her fingers climbed up to the second box spiral, and while the letter did not curve, one could now tell that it had an S. Kate said, “S.”

On the box spiral above, Kate found the last one, saying, “K.”

The reporters and cameramen gasped at the revelation. Before they could utter a word, Kate went to the subsequent sports garments, pointing out where the CSKs were. They were hidden between the spirals, whether squares, rounds, or waves, but after Kate pointed it out, everyone realized it meant to spell CSK, only that the letters were spread out.

“Moreover, we have also trademarked these designs as part of our logos,” Kate declared, and then Carlos also showed a copy of the trademark filing of various spiral designs showing CSK on it.

Murmurs quickly filled the air as they eyed Monet, judging her and the SWEAT IT designer.

“Oh, my god! Why would SWEAT IT print CSK on their own clothing design?”

“How stupid? They copied everything, including the brand logo of CSK?”

“And lastly, these were part of my old designs, which I have sketched. I just added CSK to them, hiding them in between spirals,” Kate revealed. “You can study my sketches, and you can see the aging in the paper, too. I also had some posted on my social media years back.”

“What do you have to say about this Monet? Why did you steal CSK Apparel’s designs?” The reporter from the BNC media sought.

Monet gulped, her eyes finding the door. She replied, “I – 1.”

‘No! This is his fault! He made me do this! I can’t – I can’t -’ Monet ran out of the store and headed for the parking lot. She did not dare look back!

Chapter 76: Stalker

Two days passed.

At the Longhills and Hogans Associates law firm, Monet finally confronted Carlos, Kate, and Alexander.

“Look, the truth is.” Monet sniffed her tears away. “My family is going bankrupt. SWEAT IT was supposed to be our last hope.”

“But with the arrival of CSK Apparel, we were threatened... I mean, how can we compete with RonaldoPlus? Carlos is so famous!” She continued to cry while saying, “Then, someone -” She stopped, reflecting on her words before changing her train of thought. “No. I can’t say more. I admit to everything, just don’t make me pay.”

“But you have to pay, Monet? How can you not? We have already produced all the first line of our clothing apparel. We had a major loss because of what you did!” Carlos pointed out.

It was because SWEAT IT’s designer admitted how it was all Monet’s idea and that he was forced to connive with her. Monet had threatened to fire the designer from the company. The designer was scared of his reputation and confessed outright, all while Carlos and Kate were still at the store.

“You were about to say something. What is it?” Carlos demanded.

Kate also caught how Monet said about someone.’ She frowned and suggested, “Come to think of it, Monet, I don’t think you are smart enough to devise this whole thing. Did you have some help you?”

Monet turned to her lawyers. They whispered to each other, and then her attorney said, “Our client reserves her right to remain silent.”

Anger flashed through Alexander’s face. He yelled, “But we have proof and witnesses who will confirm your scheme!”

The parties went back and forth, trying to get more information out of Monet, but she did not speak in the end. She and her lawyer merely whispered to each other. The discussion went on for hours. The room inside the law firm was boiling!

Carlos' party was already enraged. However, since Monet kept silent, the lead council from Carlos' side suggested, "Then, this is what my client wants as a settlement. We want to buy out SWEAT IT for half the price to compensate for the damages -"

"What? Are you kidding me?!" Monet reacted in exasperation.

"Alternately, we can go to court and battle it out. I can promise you, gentlemen, it will be bloody for you, and Miss Williams will lose a lot of money!" Carlos' counsel advised.

Monet had to make a few phone calls outside the conference room, but after an hour, she and her lawyers returned with a decision. Monet's lawyers confirmed, "We will accept the settlement."

Papers were drawn, and formalities were made. It was almost midnight when both parties ended their meeting. Despite how Monet had given up, Carlos was still not satisfied. When Monet took the lift going down, he excused himself and followed her.

In the parking area, Carlos caught up with Monet and her lawyers. He called, "Monet! Monet! Please! Please tell me! Did you work with Tyler?"

In a whisper this time, he sought, "Please. We are out of the law firm. It's just going to be between you and me. And what about Venice? Where is she?"

Monet sucked in a breath. She appeared to be apologetic at that point and said, "Look, Carlos. I don't

know where Venice is. Maybe she ran away. She got paid, and that was probably good enough for her. I'm sorry. I got greedy. You won't hear from me again, I promise." Looking down, she claimed, "It was all my idea. It was all mine."

Carlos felt defeated, but he would not stop there. He had an inkling. It wasn't just Monet. When he returned to the law firm, he told Kate, "I'll have Monet followed. I have a strange feeling she had some help."

"I agree," Kate nodded.

Meanwhile, inside her car, Monet received a phone call. She trembled as she answered the phone. Faintly, she asked, "Yes?"

"Did you give my name?" The man asked.

"No. I dared not to. You said you would compensate me?" She reminded.

"You failed miserably. Have you realized that? But for not giving out my name, I will give the money I promised," said the man.

"What are you going to do now? Looks like Carlos will now convert SWEAT IT to his brand." She scoffed and said, "Now, he will dominate the sports apparel brand in Braeton. Unlike how you had hoped, it looks like he will succeed with Kate around him."

Dead air fell upon them. Soon the man replied, "I'm going to... break them apart. You'll see."

In the days that followed, news about the merger of SWEAT IT and CSK Apparel was reported on TV. SWEAT IT products will eventually be branded as RonaldoPlus.

With this development, Kate was busier than ever. Catrina was still recovering. Thus, most of the responsibilities fell into Kate's hands. Ultimately, the couple decided that Kate would only follow Carlos during the finals of the US Open.

Two days before Carlos would leave for the US Open, the couple had dinner with their old friend, Nolan Stoll. They were chatting and laughing in the main restaurant of the First Diamond Hotel.

“I wished you guys would have been my business partner,” Nolan sighed, his head shaking in dismay. “If not for Monet, you would have ventured into the pharma business.”

Kate and Carlos looked at each other. Then, Carlos answered, “We regret not being partners with you, Nolan, but since we took over SWEAT IT, we have so much in our hands now. We decided to just focus on the apparel business. It’s what Kate wants, after all.”

“No worries,” Nolan smiled and said, “I am eying the Hendersons. They also have a track record for distributing pharmaceutical products. And by the way, guess where our office will be at? I’ll be renting the three floors of the building across CSK Apparel! Looks like, when I am in Braeton, I’ll see both of you very often.”

“Wow! That’s great!” Kate exclaimed.

“I guess I’ll see more of you, Nolan,” Carlos remarked.

The three of them continued to chat. When they ended their dinner, they simultaneously walked up to the hotel driveway. All their vehicles were at the front, their drivers ready to take them to their homes, when out of nowhere, Nolan narrowed his eyes from a distance. He said, “Tyler? Tyler!” Turning to Kate, he claimed, “I just saw Tyler.”

Kate snapped her head in the same direction. She admitted seeing a blond man, but he was turning his

back. Moreover, the exact figure retreated in the dark, nearly a block away from the hotel.

“He won’t come here,” Kate stated. Turning to Nolan, “Are you sure?”

“Positive. He was watching you, Kate,” Nolan suggested, his head shaking. “I did not like the way he looked at you. I never thought Tyler was that creepy. He is a stalker now.”

Carlos gritted his teeth. He put an arm around Kate and said, "Well, just to be sure, let's request a restraining order against him. I mean, he did try to kiss you. And now, he is stalking you."

A hiss left his lips. Carlos told Kate, "Now, I don't feel comfortable leaving you behind."

"Well, Carlos. If it makes you feel better. I'll still be here for another week. I can help look after Kate," Nolan suggested while giving off an amiable smile. "After all, I'll be at the building, right across from you."

"Thanks, Nolan, but Kate has a lot of bodyguards around her. You don't have to worry. Nonetheless, your offer makes me feel at ease," Carlos responded.

Kate, on the other hand, pouted. She declared, "Tomorrow, I'm going to the military camp to practice my shooting aim. I will post it on social media, and Tyler will think twice, seeing me."

"Wow," Nolan remarked. "Somehow, that scared me a little too." He chuckled and added, "Just a little."

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Kate was sleeping in Carlos' arms when she noticed her phone vibrating. She frowned but answered it. "Hello?"

There was no reply. All Kate could hear was a man's deep breathing. She could tell the phone was very close to the man's nose. Kate dropped the call, thinking it was a mistake, but the same number quickly called again. Still the same, she heard a man's breathing, and with the way he was chasing his breath, Kate's skin crawled.

"What the -" Kate ended the call and blocked the number. She thought it was odd because she was very selective about the people she gave her number to. With a frown, she asked herself, "Who was that? If it's Tyler. How did he get my number?"

Chapter 77: Best Person For Kate The National Tennis Center Complex, New York.

US Open, First Round of The Tournaments.

Carlos and Alexander went through the first round with ease. They chatted about their matches in the locker rooms while changing their clothes. "You ended the entire match in ten minutes? Why didn't you give the guy a chance?" Carlos asked his friend. "Are you kidding me? For the first time, I'm doing good for myself, and I'm on fire," Alexander retorted. He sighed and admitted, "Besides, I'm planning to see Kendra today at the local prison. You know, ask her if she ever drugged me." "I doubt she would admit it, though," Carlos suggested. "Perhaps, but I'll try to trick her into talking. Hopefully, that will work," Alexander revealed. "Then, I need to deal with the broker who had my penthouse leased."

Carlos nodded. Alexander has decided to move to Braeton. Alexander had asked Kate to put him on the waitlist for the Penthouses at the First Diamond Hotel. The second it would become available, he would move out from the shelter of Carlos' mansion.

As for Carlos' penthouse in New York, he had turned his home in New York into temporary accommodation during US open events, or any tennis exhibition, or for when he would take Kate for a trip to the Big Apple.

Making their way outside the tennis complex, Carlos said to Alexander, "Good luck with Kendra." "Say hello to Kate for me." Alexander waved goodbye. They rode in different cars, driven by their own security team. Carlos had hopped into the car with Lemuel. Another bodyguard took the steering wheel. While on the road, he noticed how Kate had called him twice, but since he and Lemuel were covering his activities in the next few days, he decided to call Kate in a few minutes.

Suddenly, Carlos received a picture message. Instantly, he frowned. It was Tyler, smirking in front of a figure he was undoubtedly familiar with. Under his breath, he muttered, "Kate."

His blood was boiling, realizing Tyler had gone to see Kate again! 'Wasn't he afraid of the restraining order we have requested from the courthouse?'

Carlos groaned! He cut off Lemuel from speaking, calling Kate immediately. When Kate took the call, he sought, "Kate, why were you with Tyler - 'How did you know Tyler came to see me?'" Kate asked immediately. "I received a picture message of Tyler and you!" Carlos answered.

“What? Who would send that?” Kate reacted. “It’s true, though; he was at the office building. He approached me after I had lunch with Oliver. He insisted on wanting to talk to me. I was ready to kick his balls when Nolan appeared out of nowhere and talked to him. Nolan warned him to stay away from me.” “Though he did not have to, Nolan even punched Tyler in the face! He had his security drag him blocks away from the office building.” Kate revealed. “I mean, I could have done it myself or my bodyguards. Poor Nolan. I’m with him now because his fist is wounded.” j

Kate appeared to be walking, then she whispered, “I think Nolan is not used to punching things, or people, for that matter. He easily got bruised and cut. So he is in our office, and I asked our nurse to help him.”

With a frown, Carlos suggested, “Well, I guess thanks to Nolan, he was there to teach Tyler a lesson. Tyler should just stay away from you. He probably was the one who sent me the picture message.” “Most likely,” Kate agreed. “Yes, well, I think Nolan made him understand the consequences,” Kate revealed on the other line. “Oh, the nurse is done. I better get back to Nolan, Carlos. I’ll call you later?”

“Sure, Kate. I have a tennis clubs to take care of too. Don’t forget to pack for the finals. Bring something nice to wear during the finals,” Carlos suggested. His smile reached his ears. “Something tells me your US Open championship is special to me,” Kate signified, and Carlos merely chuckled. “We’ll see,” Carlos teased. “Call you later, my Kate. I miss you already. I love

you.”

“I love you,” Kate replied. “And I miss you like crazy.”

While Carlos went on his busy day during the US Open tournament, Kate had the chance to give Nolan a quick tour around CSK Apparel. In the hallway, she explained, “We are waiting for the floor above us to be vacant. Since we have taken over SWEAT IT, we will bring in their employees and want them in the

same building with us.”

“This is good. You and Carlos did a great job starting this company,” Nolan suggested, and then he hissed while looking at his hand. “Damn, I did not think punching someone hurts this bad.” Kate laughed thoroughly. She remarked, “You should try training in the military grounds.”

“Maybe you can take me one day,” Nolan said, his eyes gleaming as the words left his lips. He was trying to look very charming in front of Kate. With a smile, Kate replied, “Maybe, but for now, Nolan, I am swamped. And I’m

sorry, I don’t mean to push you away, but my hands are full right now... Is it okay if I ask Oliver to walk you out?”

“I understand. I am also very busy.” Shaking his head, he remarked, “Tyler just took two hours of my precious time.”

With a sneer, Kate remarked, “Sorry about that.” “It’s fine, but it looks like you owe me, though,” Nolan suggested. “You should treat me for dinner before I leave for Washington.”

Kate reluctantly smiled. She really was busy and could not commit to another time with Nolan, especially since he didn’t have to punch Tyler. Kate felt she could have done a better job at it. She weakly replied, “I’m sorry, Nolan. I’ll try, but I can’t promise.”

“It’s okay. I’ll see you around then,” Nolan said before nodding at Oliver.

“Here is your money,” a man handed a thick envelope, saying, “Your work is done here.”

Another man with blond hair smirked. He asked, “Are you sure you don’t need my service anymore?”

“No,” replied the man. “Kate trusts me. I can sense it. I don’t need you anymore.”

It was Nolan and Tyler, talking inside a private vehicle from an underground parking lot, two blocks away from the office building of CSK Apparel.

Tyler had that smirk on his face, counting the money. He declared, “It’s good to do business with you, Nolan, though I don’t understand why you are even trying.” He chuckled and added, “You don’t know how long I tried to keep those two apart. Trust me when I say you might just die in vain -” 1

“I will succeed!” Nolan barked, his eyes bulging at Tyler. “Whose side are you on,

anyway?” “I guess... yours,” Tyler reluctantly replied. “Carlos does not deserve Kate. I do,” Nolan represented, and Tyler was on the verge of rolling his eyes.

“I get it. Kate is friendly, and she saved you from the bullies back in high school. She was the popular girl who took notice of a geek like you. She treated you as a friend, and so you are madly in love with her, but just to point one thing out, Nolan, Kate was friendly with most of the population at school,” Tyler said.

“Yes, but can’t you see how Carlos is wrong for Kate? His history with Hailey, his involvement with the police over the French Gang – he only brought danger to Kate! He dragged her into it! When I learned that Hailey was kidnapped because of Carlos – because they thought she was his girlfriend, I knew that Carlos was no good for Kate. Last, what is Carlos good at, other than tennis? Trust me, without tennis, he is just... a nobody,” Nolan suggested before taking a deep breath. “Kate only likes him now because he is famous. When his fame is gone, Kate will leave him for me.” Nolan shut his eyes and took a moment to reflect on his words. After some time, he smiled, saying, “I am the best person for Kate. I am richer than Carlos, and I can give her a peaceful life.” “I worked hard. I made my father’s company into a billion-dollar company so Kate would be proud of me. I waited this long to return to Braeton, and I won’t stop at nothing until she is mine.” “One day, Kate will see me.”

Chapter 78: Unexpected Match “I can’t believe it. How is it they matched you with Ivan Connors?” Alexander asked, shaking his head at the dining table. “It’s still the quarter-finals. Ivan is most likely to be your competitor in the finals!”

Carlos shook his head. He answered, “I swear, I don’t know what the tennis association is thinking.” He paused, frowning at the idea of going against the world’s fifth-best tennis player. Since Erik took a break, Carlos’ potential final opponent would have been Ivan. “Something is not right.”

“Better ask around.” Nearly a week had passed into the US Open, and both Alexander and Carlos went through the qualifying rounds. Tomorrow would be the quarterfinals. “I definitely will,” Carlos confirmed.

“Though, I would not mind going against you into the finals,” Alexander suggested, and both he and Carlos laughed it out. “With what the tennis association did, that will probably happen. You are going to beat Lambert, and I am going to beat Ivan!” Carlos claimed his win. “Then, I’m going to beat you!” In the past, the tennis associations avoided pairing Alexander and Carlos, but perhaps it was time for two good old friends to compete.

The practice partners continued to laugh at the possibility, all while having dinner at Carlos’ penthouse. They covered how the company was doing under Kate’s management until such time Carlos sought, “You never told me about your visit to Kendra.”

Suddenly, Alexander paled. He lost his appetite altogether. He set his utensils

how she drugged me in the past.” Alexander gulped and added, “So when I went to see her in prison, I was already scolding her.” There was silence between them. After nearly a minute, Carlos asked what had happened next. “Then?”

“She laughed. She fucking laughed at me. She said she had to so she could fuel money out of me, to keep living in a penthouse while having the great sex of her life!” A look of disdain became painted on Alexander’s face before he resumed. “I did not have to ask for the details. I saw how she was serious.” “She said it was so easy to drug me – I’m so fucking upset, man. No wonder my dick was always up for her,” Alexander admitted. “I feel so stupid – I felt...

U.S.E.D.”

Dead air fell upon them. Carlos had to suck in a breath before suggesting, “You couldn’t have known. How did you meet her again?”

“At a party. I was invited to the tennis club’s VIP celebration. The tennis club owner introduced her.” Alexander groaned, saying, “And yes, I’m pretty sure she got me some drinks. You know how she always offered drinks. She was like that.”

Another awkward silence fell upon them before Carlos pointed out, “I’m just glad you got out of it, Alex. It could have been worse; an overdose, got her pregnant, or she could have tricked you into making her the beneficiary of your investments.” After reflecting on Carlos’ words, Alexander sighed, saying, “You are right. It could have been worse.”

“You, at least, gave her the best sex of her life,” Carlos remarked before chuckling. “I hate you, man,” Alexander groaned, but Carlos only laughed in response.

Hours later.

“Hey, sorry. Did I wake you up?” Kate asked, hearing Carlos’ sleepy voice on the phone. “No, it’s okay. I have time for my Kate,” Carlos said on the other line. “It’s two in the morning, Kate! Did you just arrive from the company?” With a sigh, Kate answered, “It was really busy at the office, but on the bright side, we got some jerseys posted on our social media pages. Our VIP members have already placed their orders.”

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“I’m sorry I missed your calls, but you knew where I was, right?”

“Yes, Oliver told me you locked your office doors to focus on work,” Carlos answered. “I’m sorry you had to bear this on your own. After the US Open, I’ll take a break to help you with the company.” “No. It’s okay. You do what you need to do. Tennis is you, and tennis is your love – aside from me, of course,” Kate giggled and added, “I will never take that away from you, but yeah, I think you need to take a

break. I know you are tired, and I know you just want to break records by being one of a few to take all Grand Slam titles in one year.”

“I just want this Kate; to take all the titles in a year, and then, I promise, I’ll take breaks now and then,” Carlos assured.

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“Your dreams are mine, too,” Kate said in a whisper. She yawned and said, “Good luck tomorrow.”

“Thank you, my Kate. Five more days and I’ll see you?” Carlos reminded Kate. “Yes, that’s why I am trying to finish everything before I go.” Carlos could sense the smile in her voice when she said, “I’m excited about the finals.”

“Me too,” Carlos answered, feeling the elation in Kate’s tone. “The US Open finals is the championship I have been waiting for this year.”

“Something special might happen,” Kate suggested.

Carlos chuckled and replied, “Perhaps.” ;

The next day, Carlos arrived early at the tennis stadium. He went straight to the locker rooms to get changed. Just as he was about to leave for his quarterfinals match, he slipped on a wet floor, hurting his left ankle! “Ahh! Fuck! Where did this water come from?” Carlos groaned. He swore the floors were dry when he arrived. Carlos had to get Lemuel’s help. His head of security was the one who placed support around his ankle right before heading off to the hard court. Standing across from The Devil, Ivan Connors was smirking at Carlos. He was lightly hopping in place, and his arms were restless. Carlos earnestly thought Ivan seemed not himself. Still, it was not in his place to ask. Carlos merely got

ready.

Thanks to his ankle brace, he did not feel the pain of having slipped from the locker room earlier. He was still conditioned for the match, and not a simple ankle strain could take away his championship. He nodded his head at Ivan, saying, "I'm sorry we had to face off this early, Ivan."

Ivan laughed. He claimed, "No, Devil. I'm sorry you have to face me this early on. Looks like you will not win the US Open this year."

Back in Braeton City, Kate took a break from work to watch Carlos' live match. She was in the pantry, watching the TV with Arman and Oliver. Halfway into the match, Kate was flustered. She absolutely did not feel comfortable with how Ivan was playing. Ivan appeared to be so full of energy. He was so confident looking and strangely more assertive than how everyone supposed him to be. Lastly, he kept volleying the ball to the left side of Carlos'

court on purpose.

The next thing she saw was Carlos running after the ball, his left foot failing to step flat on the pavement, and he fell sideways. "Oh, my – Carlos!" Kate paled. All of her hair stood up in shock.