

Madly Yours

Chapter 1

"Edmond, did you really bring your adopted sister back into the country? Aren't you afraid Nora will be pissed?"

Deaf for a year, Nora Reed had finally regained her hearing. She stood outside the private club room, the smile freezing on her face as she rooted to the spot.

Juliette Sterling was back?

"As long as none of you say anything, she won't find out..." Edmond Sterling's voice was cool, stripped of any emotion. "Besides, it's been over a year. Juliette was homesick..."

"I don't think she was homesick. I think she missed you."

A chorus of knowing laughter erupted in the room.

"What kind of nonsense is that? I only see her as a sister."

"Edmond, I just saw Juliette kiss you. Tsk, tsk... What kind of sister is that? More like your sweetheart!"

Edmond frowned. "She caught me off guard and leaned in. I didn't have time to pull away... She's just young and naive. I can't hold it against her."

He paused, issuing a warning. "Keep this to yourselves. When Nora gets here, not a word. Don't let anything slip!"

Someone cleared their throat, sobering up. "Edmond, seriously. Are you really letting it go? What Juliette did—hiring someone to run Nora down? Nora almost died, and she still can't hear a damn thing."

Edmond's tone remained indifferent. "Juliette was only nineteen. She was just being rebellious. She's suffered abroad for a year now, and she's grown up. There's no need to hold a grudge."

Rebellious... just being rebellious?

Nora felt a bomb go off in her head. A suffocating wave of despair crashed over her, threatening to pull her under.

A year ago, Juliette's obsessive pursuit of Edmond had failed, so she hired a driver to run Nora down, leaving her completely deaf.

Furious, Edmond had nearly beaten the girl to a pulp before Juliette's parents intervened, hastily shipping her overseas.

Over the past year, Edmond had spared no expense, dragging her to specialists all over the world. He had even dropped all his work just to accompany her to rehab.

The treatment had been grueling. Every time she broke down, Edmond would hold her, his eyes red, swearing he wanted to kill Juliette.

Nora wasn't without her own hatred, but seeing Edmond exhaust himself to find a cure, staying by her side day and night, had softened the blow. At least, she thought, she had found a man who loved her to the bone.

Her fingers brushed the velvet box in her pocket. Inside was a custom-made men's ring she had secretly ordered.

Because of the tragedy, their wedding had been delayed time and again.

Now that her hearing had returned, she thought she could finally marry Edmond. She never expected...

Edmond hadn't just let Juliette come back; he had effortlessly forgiven her.

It was... pathetic.

Just as a chill settled in Nora's chest, her phone buzzed.

It took her a long moment to pull it out and glance at the screen. It was a long text from her mother, Penelope Reed, begging her to return to San Francisco and take her stepsister's place in an arranged marriage with the notorious Mr. Lancaster.

An hour ago, they had spoken on the phone.

The Reeds and the Lancasters had arranged a union, but Nora's stepsister, Jade Reed, had somehow run away from the wedding.

The Lancaster family held massive power in San Francisco, especially the groom—Hudson Lancaster. Rumor had it he was ruthless and predatory.

If he found out the Reeds dared to humiliate him by backing out, the entire family would be wiped off the map.

Desperate, Penelope had no choice but to beg Nora for help.

"Nora, Marcus and I are completely out of options. Please, come back and help us."

It was the first time her mother had pleaded with her since bringing her into the Reed family.

Her stepfather had always treated them well, but Nora knew how hard her mother had worked to secure her place, pouring all her energy into Marcus and Jade.

So, Nora had always been obedient, never causing trouble.

The only two times she had rebelled were for Edmond...

Once, when she left San Francisco for him.

And just an hour ago, when she refused the arranged marriage for him.

A bitter smile touched Nora's lips. What had she told her mother?

She had said her hearing was back, that Edmond loved her, and they were getting married soon...

She had said she believed Edmond would help the Reeds out of their mess...