

Sorry Sir I Don't Want You Back Chapter 41

Posted by **Admin-J**, 74 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

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While Hudson was having a troubling heart-to-heart in Keith's office, Neil handed Cherise her keys and everything else when they met at the lobby of the Regal Apartment.

"Neil, you are really efficient," Cherise praised. She really couldn't stop praising this assistant of hers... Or her brother's assistant, to be exact.

Not only did he give her all the keys and passes, but he also handed her the deeds to the apartment and even led Logan and herself up to the penthouse as he had surveyed it before they arrived, courtesy of

Julian's order.

"It is what I am paid to do, Miss Cherise," Neil responded in his usual professional attitude and words.

"Do you have any other words to reply other than those?" Cherise couldn't help but tease him.

Logan chuckled and ruffled Cherise's hair. "Stop teasing him, Cherry. Can't you see how red his ears

are?"

Cherise giggled while Neil quickly swiped the key card to the penthouse to hide his fluster. It was difficult to maintain his professional, stoic face in front of his new, beautiful, friendly, and teasing boss. God help him, he thought to himself.

When Cherise took a look at the penthouse, she squealed in delight, "Oh my God.

is gorgeous!"

Even though the penthouse was still empty of furniture, but the wall-to-ceiling windows allowed her to look at the city, and she knew it would be a sight to behold at night with the lights from the buildings and bustling streets.

The penthouse, of course, had an open plan floor, and there was already a granite kitchen island. The kitchen top was also made from granite, and the floor was covered by soft carpet. She could already envision how homey it would be once all the furniture was moved in.

She and Logan moved around the penthouse to see that it was actually a two-level penthouse. It was larger than she had imagined.

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There were two guest rooms on the first floor, and the upper floor was the main bedroom, complete with a vast ensuite wardrobe and bathroom with a large tub. She would be delighted to live here. Julian really knew her preference.

“Mr. Julian asked me to help you in choosing the furniture, Miss. Cherise,” Neil said once Logan and Cherise went back to what would be the living room.

Cherise thought about it for a while and smiled brightly at Neil, “I’ll let him decorate for me. He knows my preferences, and with your help, I can move here faster. I’ll tell him about it. You don’t need to do it.”

Neil nodded but had already made a mental note to let Julian know about Cherise’s choice.

“You are really a spoiled princess, aren’t you, Cherry?” Logan chuckled again and shook his head. “Asking your brother to do everything for you.”

“Oh, he loves it,” Cherise laughed. “And I know you’ll do anything for me too.”

“You are right about that,” Logan smiled gently at her. “You gave me life, and in return, my life is yours.”

“Drama queen.” Cherise rolled her eyes but she had a teasing smile on her face.

“Only for you,” Logan whispered and kissed her temple adoringly.

After they exited the penthouse, Logan frowned and looked at the opposite side of the apartment that housed the other penthouse.

“Who lives there?” he asked Neil.

the bridge of his nose. “The Regal

“No one so far,” Neil replied as he pushed up his glasses sitting on Apartment is still empty, except for a few tenants on some level downstairs, and they do not have access

to this floor.”

Cherise knew what Logan was worried about and wanted to say. She rolled her eyes and elbowed him lightly on his waist.

“Don’t ever think of putting bodyguards on the floor below this one,” she warned.

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She knew Julian and Logan might just buy the whole apartment room on the floor below her and let bodyguards live there to protect her.

“And don’t even think of moving also,” she added another warning. “You live in the Jennings Mansion, and Julian lives in the Alster Mansion. It is the best arrangement for now.”

Logan's forehead creased even more. He didn't like not knowing who would live across from Cherise and knew Julian wouldn't like it either. He should talk to Julian about it.

"Furthermore, you do realize I was once a Taekwondo Junior champion, right?" Cherise asked with sparkling eyes. "I still can knock guys easily."

"Oh yeah?" Logan asked with a raised brow. "It has been a long time, Cherry. And I'm sure you didn't practice during the last three years."

"You are doubting my ability?" Cherise gasped and raised her brows exaggeratedly. "Then let's spar tomorrow, and I'll show you my moves."

Logan was about to decline, but in the end, he agreed because he needed to see if Cherise could protect herself just like she said.

"Deal. I'll pick you up tomorrow," Logan said, and they left the apartment together.

When Cherise reached home, she found Julian sitting on the couch with a laptop on his lap, seemingly waiting for her.

She plopped down beside him and took a peek at his laptop screen to see what he was working on, which only brightened her eyes.

He had started buying furniture for her!

As usual, Cherise leaned against her brother and praised him, "You are the best, Julian!"

"I gather you like the penthouse?" Julian asked with a smile.

"Much more than I thought I would." Cherise nodded. "Can't believe Neil told you about the furniture picking, though."

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Julian laughed. "I'm his big boss, and you are his little boss. Of course, he would tell me everything."

“Then I have to be more careful about how I behave around him, or he’d go around telling you what I’ve done,” Cherise pretended to grumble.

“I’d be happy if you lived more carefreely,” Julian laughed.

“You are such a strange brother.” Cherise rolled her eyes. “Other brothers would not want their sister to get drunk or partying, but you will be happy if I do it.”

“You deserve it, especially after marrying a bastard,” Julian scowled. “But you have to have at least one bodyguard with you if you decide to go partying.”

“I always have Katherine, Paula, and Logan,” Cherise replied. “Don’t look down on three females, Julian. When people try to mess with us, we’ll get our claws out and scratch the hell out of them.”

Julian couldn’t help but bark out a laugh. “Such a female thing to do when fighting. But as long as Logan is with you, I’ll hold back on the bodyguards.”

Cherise let out a secret breath of relief. At least she wouldn’t have bodyguards following her. “Oh, I plan. to spar with Logan tomorrow. Wanna come with us?”

Julian’s brows knitted together. He knew how strong Logan was, and even if he did not mean to injure Cherise, it could happen during a spar.

“You also forgot I used to be a Taekwondo Junior Champion!” Cherise accused her

her.

“You want to show us that you can protect yourself,” Julian said, more of a statement than a question.

“You are right.” Cherise nodded.

“Alright, I’ll allow it,” Julian finally agreed. It was a good thing if his sister could protect herself. “But don’t forget to bring the balm for bruises. And if Logan hurts you too much, he’ll be dealing with me.”

Cherise’s mouth twitched. She was happy to have two protective brothers, but sometimes they were just too

much. She didn't doubt Julian would punch Logan if he hurt her, even if they were brothers.

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Wanting to change the subject, she fixed her eyes on his laptop screen and pointed to an expensive letter L couch in a soft yellow color. "I want this!"

Julian, knowing Cherise just wanted to get out of being over-protected and just let her be, and the siblings started choosing furniture for her new place.

The next day, big news splashed across Country B – Hudson Amery, the CEO of the Amery Group, was engaged to his first love. The announcement was made through the official Amery Group's website, and they had a press conference ready for it.

Hudson sighed as he looked down from his office toward the crowd of reporters below, ready for the press conference.

His mom didn't waste any time in announcing his engagement. It was all his mom's work, and truth be told, he hated it. He hated how his mother just made decisions for him without consulting him.

When he agreed to the engagement the day before, he didn't think it would be announced this soon, but there was nothing he could do now.

"Hudson, we should go down now," his mother bustled into his office with Emily, who was wearing a pretty soft pink dress with white fur draped across her shoulders, making her look extra gentle.

"And wipe that frown and sternness off your face," Dahlia scolded her son. "This is supposed to be a happy day. At least smile for the cameras."

Hudson ignored her and stepped toward the elevator. Everyone knew Hudson never cameras. He never even did any exclusive interviews.

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“Can’t

you at least hold Emely’s hand?” Dahlia hissed at him. She knew her son was as stiff as a block and didn’t care for her opinion, but shouldn’t he be happy th at he was finally engaged to Emely? She

knew he had been pining for her even when Emely was with Luis a long time ago.

And where did his gentleness toward Emely go? Why did it feel like he treated her differently now?

Emely, sensing the changes in Hudson’s attitude, took the first move. She link ed her fingers with Hudson’s, startling Hudson and making him look at their fingers together.

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He finally saw the big diamond ring around her ring finger, but it wasn’t what h e noticed. What he really noticed was how much different the feeling of Emely’s fingers was around him compared to Cherise’s.

It

just didn’t feel... right. Emely’s hand holding him didn’t feel right. And that ‘dia mond ring also didn’t look right. So he moved her hand to the crook of his arm instead.

Dahlia was too busy telling his son and Emely what to say during the press co nference that she didn’t notice Hudson’s gesture. Even if she did, she wouldn’t complain because it was still a gentlemanly act.

Emely, on the other hand, bit her lower lip. She could really feel Hudson dista ncing himself from her. Could it be because she was no longer pregnant that he wasn’t as gentle anymore? If that was the case, then she needed to ge t to his bed soon and, this time, get pregnant with his baby instead.

Hudson kept quiet during the whole elevator ride. He wondered when he changed. He wondered why

he didn't want to hold Emely's hand anymore while, just a few weeks ago, he was okay with it. He wondered why he couldn't seem to bother with this engagement. Was it because it was just a responsibility for the promise he made to Luis on his deathbed?

Suddenly, the image of the wedding rings Cherise had created for them flashed through his mind, as did his conversation with Keith the day before.

He knew now why he felt uncomfortable being with Emely. She was his brother's beloved. Just like Keith said, there were other ways for him to take care of her rather than marrying her. He thought, marrying her would ensure that he was keeping his promise to Luis, but he was wrong. It was wrong for him to marry his late brother's girlfriend.

They wouldn't share a bedroom together. They, for sure, would NOT have children together but everyone would expect it, just like Keith said. Why didn't he think of all these before? To think of sleeping with a woman his brother loved until his last dying breath was just... disgusting. He wouldn't stoop that low. He would never cross that line.

And there was also his feelings for Cherise... He really didn't know why he hated seeing her with other men. They had divorced, but he still felt possessive about her. Why? Why did he feel that way? Was Keith right? Was he jealous?

He felt like he was a mess right now, not knowing what to do. But what could he do now? His engagement had been announced, and as much as he felt it wrong to marry Emely, he tried to tell

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himself it was the right thing to do.

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They stepped onto the podium, especially placed in front of the Amery Group's building, and he let his mother do most of the talking while Emely played the shy bride-to-be.

Hudson himself was silent throughout the press conference, no matter how many questions were thrown at him, but the reporters were used to it.

What they didn't know was that his silence this time was not because of his aloofness but because his heart was empty, and his mind was picturing the two wedding rings he had placed in his bedroom's vault – a place where he placed everything dear to him.

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Cherise was sitting in Julian's living room between her two brothers as the news of Hudson and Emely's engagement was blown up by the media, and the press conference was broadcast on the TV.

Logan and Julian shared a look over her head before eyeing their beloved sister worriedly.

Cherise had her eyes fixed on the TV screen without blinking, making Logan and Julian unsure of what she was thinking about.

Was her heart still not healed yet, and this news opened up the **scars** again?

"Cherise..." Julian took one of her hands while Logan did the same to her other hand.

Hearing Julian's voice and the warmth of Logan and Julian's hands around hers made her blink her eyes and peel them off from the TV screen.

"I'm fine," she smiled. In fact, when she was silently watching her ex-husband's press conference, she was searching for something in her heart – pain, loss, hate.

But there was nothing—nothing except maybe hate for Emely and Dahlia. She was also annoyed when she thought of how Hudson kept pestering

g her, cornering her, questioning her, and trying to kiss her whenever they met

.

It really

wasn't like him at all, but then maybe he couldn't have sex with Emely since s
he had just had a miscarriage, and he cared a lot about her health, which mad
e him even more disg

eyes.

in Cherise's

She wasn't his toy and, as she had told him, would never be one. Maybe she
used to be so dutiful and catered to his every need that he still felt he could stil
I treat her the same way. There was no way she would let him get his way aga
in!

Suddenly, her phone vibrated, and she swiped the screen to see that
Katherine and Paula had bombarded her with questions about her feelings in t
he group chat they had created for the three of

them.

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Paula even cursed Hudson using every unimaginable word Cherise could thin
k of, while Katherine just asked about her feelings and told her to forget that b
astard.

Cherise couldn't help but smile as she saw the texts. She had two best friends
and two brothers who loved her. This was her world. A world full of love, and
she loved it.

Then, another message popped onto her screen, and she burst out laughing.

Julian and Logan frowned, and Cherise shook her head **as** she read the text o
ut loud.

"That son of a

bitch! I will destroy him and his whole company and root out his family from thi

s world! He had just divorced you not long ago, and now he is engaged to a trash? Say the word, and Grandpa will destroy him!”

Logan and Julian couldn't help but laugh, too. The three of them knew their grandfather couldn't have texted it himself, as his eyes weren't as focused as when he was younger, so it must have been his butler

who helped to type it.

The image of the butler shaking and sweating while texting those words dictated by their grandpa made the three of them laugh even harder.

“Poor Winston,” Logan chuckled.

“He must be shaking now,” Julian added. “He got to face Grandpa's wrath alone.”

“Lucky we are not there,” Cherise laughed again. “Well, enough of this. Are you ready, Logan?”

Today, they were going to go to an exclusive member-only gym that has the most complete equipment and everything else, including a shooting range, boxing ring, and nearly everything they could think of.

Logan was there to pick Cherise up when they saw the news, but as the brothers saw she was fine, they each let out a breath of relief.

“You sure you don't want to come with us, Julian?” Logan asked as he picked up Cherise's duffel bag.

“No,” Julian replied. “I'm going to the penthouse to monitor the furniture being moved in.”

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Cherise couldn't help but smile widely and threw her arms around Julian. “Thank you. I'll have my own place now,” she said gleefully.

The two brothers chuckled and ruffled her hair at the same time, causing Cherise to complain loudly.

“Why are you mad?” Julian teased. “You are going to tie up your hair later any way.”

This caused Cherise to stop complaining, but she still huffed. Julian and Logan still treated her like

a child.

“Alright, alright, let’s go.” Logan took her hand and pulled her along with him. “I don’t want to rile her up more, or I’ll suffer later on,” he laughed.

“It’ll be good for her to release any pent-up anger,” Julian smiled at Logan but then turned to Cherise. “Have you brought everything you need?”

Cherise thought about it, and yes, she had packed what she needed: her uniform, towel, toiletries to shower, and a change of clothes.

“I have,” she confirmed.

“The balm for bruises?” Julian asked.

Cherise rolled her eyes but still answered, “Yes, and also bandaids and other meds in case Logan

decided to go rough on me.”

Julian sharpened her gaze at Logan. “You hurt her, and I’ll break your legs.”

“I’d like to see you try.” Logan laughed. Julian was as strong as him, but Logan was wilder when fighting, just like a beast. “But you know I won’t hurt her, EVER,” he said seriously.

Julian nodded, knowing how important Cherise was to Logan. “Then off you go, and come to the apartment after you’ve finished.”

Cherise kissed Julian’s cheek, and Julian and Logan did that manly hug while Julian whispered a

warning for him not to hurt Cherise again and to take care of her afterward.

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When Cherise and Logan arrived at the gym center, they quickly changed into their Taekwondo

uniforms.

“I can’t believe I get to wear this again,” Cherise muttered to herself, and a sense of melancholy passed through her heart. How many things had she missed while being married to Hudson? Too many to

count, it seemed.

She shook her head to let go of the thought and stepped out of the changing room, seeing Logan was already waiting for her in a similar uniform, both wearing black belts they had earned through their youth training.

“You still look good wearing the uniform,” Logan smiled at her. He had removed his glasses and now looked different from his usual gentle self. Still gentle, but the dangerous glint in his eyes could be seen

clearer.

“As do you,” Cherise winked, and Logan quickly found a spot for them to spar. Luckily for them, there

weren’t many patrons at the gym.

They both got into their stance and without warning, Cherise delivered a speedy high kick that missed Logan just a hairbreadth away from his cheek.

“Starting off strong,

Cherry?” Logan chuckled.

“You were doubting my ability,” Cherise smiled smugly when her kick landed where she wanted it to land and caught Logan by surprise. It seemed she hadn’t lost her moves at all.

“Then let’s get serious,” Logan smiled, showing his perfectly white teeth.

When Logan said 'Let's get serious, he meant it. He punched Cherise on the side of her cheek, just like she had kicked him before, and she dodged it successfully just because of her instinct and muscle

memory.

Their attacks and defenses were swift and speedy. And the more time passed, the more pumped up

Cherise felt.

She loved sparring with Logan because he didn't hold back on her. Okay, he held back a little bit so as not to injure her too much, but he used at least 80% of his move, strength, and speed.

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easily.

As they were enjoying their sparring, they didn't know two people were watching them as they boxed,

"Hey, isn't that Cherise and Logan Jennings?" Finley was the first to see them.

Keith turned his head to where Finley pointed and was surprised to see the black belt Cherise was wearing. It didn't surprise him to see Logan wearing one, but Cherise? The **meek**, timid, and shy ex-wife of Hudson had a black belt in Taekwondo?

"Damn, she's wearing a black belt," Finley said as they stopped boxing and just watched the show. "And looked at her movement. She could take down Logan easily."

They didn't know Cherise was a Junior Champion during her youth. None might remember her because she only participated once before Julian and her grandpa asked her to stop, afraid she would draw too much attention to herself and their enemies might recognize her.

“When did she learn Taekwondo?” Finley wondered and asked Keith. “Do you think Hudson knows about this part of her?”

“I’m sure he doesn’t,” Keith replied. He knew Taekwondo moves, and Cherise was really good at it. Her attacks were able to hit the opponent’s weak points and strong enough to send Logan a few steps back, and all her movements were fluid. Why didn’t she show this side of hers when she was married to Hudson? Hudson wasn’t the only one who was intrigued by her now.

“Shit, she’s good,” Finley said with admiration. “I don’t think I can win against her that black belt. We need to tell Hudson about this. Bet he’ll be as surprised as us.

She really earned

After nearly two hours of sparring, Cherise finally sat on the ground, her breathing uneven while Logan still looked his usual calm self.

“You did good, Cherry,” he said as he pulled her up and led her to the nearest bench. “But your stamina has declined by a lot.”

the three years

Cherise knew about it. She realized it herself. During she spent married to Hudson, she never exercised at all. No jogging, no nothing except for doing household chores. It seemed she needed

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to start exercising again.

Logan passed her a water bottle, and she gulped down everything like she had been lost in a desert and had just found a source of water. When he saw she still hadn’t had enough, he passed her his water bottle, which she gratefully took..

Next, Logan took her towel and carefully wiped the sweat from her face.

“God, my whole body is sore,” Cherise groaned as she stood up and stretched. “How are you not affected by my attacks?” she asked Logan with narrowed eyes.

Logan laughed, rolled his sleeves, and parted his uniform, showing his abs and arms that were full of bruises from Cherise’s attacks.

“Oh, so I did do some damage to you,” Cherise said smugly, which made Logan laugh harder.

“You should pity me instead of getting smug,” he said helplessly.

“Just showed that I can still protect myself,” Cherise said with sparkling eyes.

“Alright,” Logan just agreed with her, knowing it was futile to disagree. “Take a shower now. Julian is waiting for us.”

Cherise took her duffle bag and relished in the warm water of the gym shower. She didn’t take long in the shower because she preferred to soak in the bathtub of her new penthouse.

Logan stepped out of the men’s locker room at the same time as Cherise, looking self again with his shirt, pants, and glasses. Today, Cherise wore a sleeveless dress Logan remembered what Julian told him to do.

“Sit and take off your coat,” he ordered Cherise, pointing to the bench again.

Cherise obeyed him, knowing what he was going to do.

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1 a nick coat, and

Logan unzipped Cherise’s duffle bag and rummaged around until he found the balm for bruises. He carefully massaged all the bruises on Cherise’s arms. It was impossible not to get any bruises when they were sparring, and Julian was fine with it as long as Logan took care of his sister afterward.

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All the while, Finley and Keith were watching them.

“I think Hudson is right,” Finley suddenly said. “I think Cherise is with Logan. Look at how gentle he is with her. But he said she’s with Julian, too. This is so confusing.”

“Let’s not get into their affair,” Keith reminded the nosy Finley. He noticed Finley had changed his attitude toward Cherise after seeing how great she was when fighting Logan.

“How

can I not?” Finley gasped. “Quick, let’s take a shower and go to Hudson’s office. We need to tell him what we just saw.”

After thinking about it, he agreed with Finley. He actually had been conflicted after Hudson told him of his guilt. He didn’t know whether to keep pushing Hudson to realize his feelings for Cherise or just let him get married to Emely.

But then he always knew Emely was cunning while Cherise was nice. He’d rather Hudson end up with Cherise than Emely. His best friend didn’t need to have another snake in his family.

His mother was enough for him; even Polly was a bully. If Emely really became his wife, Hudson would suffer, and he didn’t want his best friend to suffer.

Engagement could still be broken. As he told Hudson the night before, there were other ways to fulfill Luis’ last wish. And as his best friend, when he watched the press conference, he knew Hudson didn’t love Emely anymore. It looked even like he didn’t want to be engaged with her. It was just a responsibility he felt toward Luis’ last wish and Emely.

He needed to save his friend from future suffering. If he didn’t end up with Cherise able to avoid another woman like his mother.

would at least be

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Logan drove Cherise to her new apartment, and they chatted happily on the way there. When they arrived, they saw a moving truck and knew Julian had kept his promise of filling her apartment that

day.

But when did he ever break his promise to his beloved sister? Never. With Neil by his side, Julian's tall and muscular body was a sight to behold. Even Cherise thought her brother was handsome, especially when he was bossing Neil around, and asked him to properly place each piece of furniture the way Cherise liked it.

Logan parked the car on the side of the road, just behind the moving truck. Cherise quickly unbuckled her seatbelt to go to Julian, and Logan chuckled behind her as he saw her enthusiasm.

"Julian!" Cherise called her brother as she ran toward him.

Julian looked up from his iPad and looked at Cherise whose cheeks were flushed and looked happier. It seemed the sparring did a great thing for her.

"Cherise," he called her back and beckoned for her to come closer. "What do you think of the arrangement?" he asked as he showed her his iPad, which looked like something from an architecture

company.

"You did all these?" Cherise asked with wide eyes. He had only one day to buy the penthouse furniture,

and he also drew architectural sketches showing where each piece of furniture should go, complete

with color, so she could already see what her apartment would look like.

She knew her brother was competent, but this was wow. This was another level of competency.

"I have to do the best for my sister, don't I?" Julian asked with a broad smile, making him even more

handsome. If she weren't his sister, she would have melted into a puddle.

Logan joined them and hummed out his appreciation. “Anything I can help you with?” he asked Julian.

“Neil has the same iPad and sketch. You can go up first to make sure he places everything perfectly.”

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“Alright,” Logan chuckled. His older adopted brother was bossy, but it was all for Cherise, so he didn’t mind. “I’ll go up first. See you guys upstairs,” he said as he took Cherise’s duffle bag with him, knowing she would want to soak in the bathtub after their grueling workout.

Cherise took the iPad from Julian and checked everything. It was perfect. She couldn’t wait until she went to the penthouse to see how it would turn out.

“Julian, I wish I was as competent as you,” she sighed.

Julian laughed and pulled her into his arms. “You are competent but lazy,” he teased.

Cherise punched his biceps, and he let out an ‘ouch’ before laughing again.

“A great cook, a great fashion designer if you proceed with it, a very competent businesswoman, Angel,

Miss. X, Taekwondo Junior Champion,” Julian started listing Cherise’s strengths and alter egos.

Cherise’s eyes widened, and she looked up from burying her face in his chest. “You know I’m Miss. X?”

Miss. X was Cherise’s alter ego when she was dancing Salsa. A couple of years ago, she saw a man dancing alone in a competition – tall, broad shoulders, narrow waist, perfectly muscular body with pecs peeking from his half-unbuttoned shirt, and he won that championship despite dancing alone.

It was too bad he was wearing a **mask**, so no one knew what he looked like, but Cherise had a feeling he

must be handsome. He called himself Xav.

That man was the reason Cherise learned Salsa. She wanted to become his partner, but too bad he only danced once. When she participated in the competition the following year, he was just there **as a** judge.

Just like him, she danced alone and also wore a mask, so no one knew who she was.

name Miss. X to match his first initial.

she chose the

Even though she couldn't partner up with him, she knew he was staring at her intensely during her dance because she could feel his deep gaze with each one of her movements, nearly making her flustered.

Fortunately, she was used to being the center of attention, and just like during the Taekwondo tournaments, she won the championship, too.

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Unlike in Taekwondo, where she had to stop participating, she didn't stop dancing, **as** she always **wore a** mask. Now Miss. X was widely known as the best, seductive, and sexiest Salsa dancer in the world. But she had never thought Julian would know that Miss. X was her!

Julian chuckled and pinched her cheek. "How can I not know my own sister? Even Logan and Grandpa know it, too."

"Grandpa knows?!" Cherise nearly shrieked in horror. Her choreographies were... as people said, seductive, and her costumes were always sexy, showing too much skin. She couldn't imagine what her grandpa must have thought about that part of her life.

Julian laughed, looking at Cherise's horrified expression. "Don't worry, Grandpa doesn't mind it. He grumbled, but I know he's actually proud of you, which is why he hasn't asked you to stop, has **he**?"

Cherise let out a breath of relief. Despite initially wanting to be Xav's partner, she actually fell in love

with Salsa dancing and wanted to continue doing it. She missed being Miss. X

Maybe she should start sorting through her emails and see if some dance companies wanted her to perform because she used to be in high demand, and the tickets to her performances always sold out.

Julian drew Cherise closer to him and placed his chin at the top of her head. He felt somewhat sad

about Cherise's words about her not being as competent as him. She used to be so confident. Actually,

she was better than him. She could learn everything easily and quickly.

It seemed that her time with the Amerys had broken her more than he had thought. **Yes**, she appeared confident now, but not nearly as much as before. He swore he would make sure her confidence level

returned to the way it used to be.

He was thankful Logan, Paula, and Katherine would also be there for her and help in gaining her

confidence back.

Speaking of Katherine, maybe it was high time for him to meet her and gauge her out, but he needed

Cherise to settle down first before he could ask to meet that one friend of hers he hadn't met.

As Cherise snuggled in her brother's arms on the sidewalk, Finley and Keith drove by them. As Keith was the one driving, Finley was the one who noticed them.

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“Damn, Cherise is hugging Julian in front of everyone to see,” Finley exclaimed as he pressed his face against the car window as if he could see them clearly by doing so.

“Logan Jennings and Julian Alster on the same day? She’s impressive!” Finley said with a huge smile.

Being a playboy himself, he had this twisted idea in his mind. He seemed to appreciate anyone who could manage to juggle more than one relationship at a time, as long as all parties involved were

singles.

“So you don’t think she’s a gold digger and slut anymore?” Keith gave him a side eye and asked sarcastically.

“Well...” Finley rubbed the back of his neck and said sheepishly, “You and Hudson told me she didn’t ask anything for the divorce, neither did she take anything. And after watching her doing that Taekwondo shit, I’m impressed by her.”

Keith chuckled upon hearing that. At long last, Finley had a change of heart about Cherise. Maybe he could use him to help make Hudson jealous and realize his feelings for her.

“And you, being a playboy, also appreciate her being able to get both the most influential CEOs of Country A and C in the palm of her hand. She might even be better than you in that regard.”

Finley snorted and crossed his arms across his chest. “No one is better at being a player than me,” he said as if it was something to be proud of.

Keith shook his head helplessly. He wondered what kind of woman would bring this best friend of his to

his knees.

“It takes a playboy to appreciate someone similar, huh?” Keith asked, just to make Finley feel smug about himself. He would never think of Cherise as a playgirl, but he knew there must be some kind of deeper relationship between Logan, Cherise, and Julian.

“You are damn right about it,” Finley said with a smug smile but then turned curious. “Did you see the moving truck? Do you think she’s moving in with him? And Regal Apartment is new and so damn expensive, right? She wouldn’t be able to afford it.”

“Mind your own business,” Keith said simply, making Finley roll his eyes. He didn’t know how he had

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survived being best friends with two serious men who didn’t like to gossip like himself.

Not long after, they arrived at the Amery Group building, and Keith parked his car in the underground parking lot Hudson had reserved for him whenever he wanted to visit.

They went up the elevator and greeted the receptionist, who, of course, knew who they were. She let them take Hudson’s personal elevator, which went straight to his office floor.

Finley barged into Hudson’s office without knocking while Keith just followed him calmly.

Hudson, who was lost in thought as he caressed the wedding rings Cherise had designed for them, quickly placed the box inside his desk drawer, but not before Keith’s observant eyes saw it.

“Don’t you know how to knock?” Hudson glowered at Finley, who just went straight to the couch and slumped on it like he owned the place.

Keith shook his head and calmly lowered himself onto another couch opposite Finley.

“Hudson, you might not believe the things we learned about Cherise today,” Finley said excitedly. This made Hudson raise an eyebrow and look at Keith for an answer, but Keith just shrugged his shoulders.

He had never seen Finley getting this excited when talking about his ex-wife, and he wondered what they saw. It couldn't be good, he thought.

"We were at the boxing ring, right, and we saw Cherise and Logan there," Finley began his story.

At the mention of Cherise and Logan, Hudson's body stiffened.

"And guess what?" Finley bounced on his seat like a child asking his parents about something exciting

that had happened at school.

"What?" Hudson asked with annoyance. Couldn't Finley just finish telling him whatever it was he

wanted to say?

They were doing Taekwondo, and both of them wore black belts!"

Hudson's eyebrows raised so high, and he looked at Keith, who nodded in admission.

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Cherise was an expert at Taekwondo? How did he not know about this? Why did Hudson feel like he knew nothing about his ex-wife? But it explained the way she expertly attacked him during the few

times she did.

"And damn, she was so good at it. She landed kicks and punches at Logan, and her defense was great, too," Finley kept telling Hudson what they saw, including how Cherise and Logan pinned each other. down and rolled around the ground.

When Hudson pictured them pinning each other down, the three of them suddenly heard a loud crack, and Hudson looked down to see he had snapped the pen he held in his hand into two.

Keith, as usual, had a faint smile on his face. He knew Finley's gossipy mouth would be able to make Hudson jealous.

"You okay?" Finley frowned when he saw the snapped pen.

"Julian bought Cherise one of the penthouses at Regal Apartment," Keith said lazily before Hudson could answer Finley's question.

Finley gaped at him and accused, "You knew and didn't say anything while I asked you in the car?"

Keith shrugged again but saw Hudson's jaw tensing and his fists clenching tightly on the table.

Although Keith was only a doctor, he was also kinda an informant, although he wasn't a great hacker.

Hudson knew he had some special forces working for him, so if he said Julian bought a penthouse for

Cherise, then it must be true.

Hudson didn't want to hear anything about Cherise anymore because it somehow "de his chest hurt.

He suddenly stood up and told his two best friends, "I'm going home. Stay if you want to."

Then he took his suit jacket and left his office without even saying goodbye or giving another backward glance at Finley and Keith.

"What's wrong with him?" Finley huffed.

"Stressed out," Keith half-lied. "You know he has difficulty sleeping. It worsens the mood."

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“Oh yeah, you are right.” Finley nodded as if he were just remembering how Hudson had nightmares when he slept. “Have you been able to make it better?” he asked Keith.

“A little bit,” Keith said. They then talked about Hudson’s health as they left the building, too.

Hudson asked Miles to drive him back home because he didn’t believe he could concentrate on the road while his thoughts were filled with Cherise, their wedding rings, Logan pinning her down, and Julian buying her a penthouse in the most expensive apartment complex.

“Sir, we have arrived,” suddenly, Miles’ voice broke his train of thought. He didn’t know how long they had arrived at his home as he had always been absent-minded lately.

He opened the car door and froze when he saw a moving truck in front of his mansion. The many staff members were moving inside and outside his house, with Emely standing in the middle of his living room and giving instructions as she looked ready to be Hudson’s wife.

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

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Hudson frowned as he stood still outside his car until he saw all the furniture on the lawn.

Emely, finally realizing Hudson was home, beamed at him and waved at him, wanting to rush out to welcome him home but faltered when she saw Hudson striding toward her with one hand in his pants pockets and had that faint smile on his lips the smile that could make everyone froze or broke into cold sweats because even though it made him look even more handsome, there was a threatening air under that smile.

“H—
Hudson...” Emely stuttered when her fiance stopped in front of her and pinched her chin lightly, tilting her head back so she could look at **him**.

Emely was a petite woman, even shorter than Cherise, and with the close proximity between them, she had to really crane her neck back to be able to see into Hudson's eyes, and it hurt her nape.

"Who asked you to move and replace the furniture in my place?" Hudson's voice was low and gentle, his faint smile still in place, but Emely shivered because she knew that gesture so well.

She swallowed hard, her heart pounding in her chest, and opened her mouth to reply, "Your mom... She said since I'm about to be your wife, we should move in together."

"Did she, now?" Hudson's eyes moved from her left eye to right as if to see if she was lying, but Dahlia was really the one who said that.

"Y-Yes." Emely was afraid of **this** side of Hudson. Smiling yet cold.

Hudson let go of her **chin** and patted her head. "You don't have to do that. We

can't stay together for now, and we are not going to stay here after we get married."

: married yet, so we

Emely's heart jumped **in** her chest, whether from excitement or jealousy. She didn't know because this was Hudson's place, the one he had lived in for so long, even before she married Cherise. He had let

Cherise stay here but not her.

But she tried to shrug it off and instead thought positively. Maybe Hudson didn't want to taint her reputation and didn't want to stay in the place where there were remnants of that country bumpkin

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anymore and instead wanted to move somewhere else to have a new life with her.

She wrapped her hands around his waist and rested her cheek on his chest, not noticing how Hudson's body became slightly rigid. For him, she felt wrong wrapped around him like this.

"I'm sorry, Hudson," Emely apologized softly and said in understanding, "I didn't realize you don't want to stay in this place anymore, and thank you for thinking of my reputation."

Hudson didn't correct her but just hugged her back for a split second because, once more, she felt wrong in his arms. She was too short and didn't have all the curves he loved in all the right places. Everything about her felt wrong. But this was a good sign because he was only there to take care of her, not to make her his wife in every sense.

He then stepped back and turned around to look at the moving staff and Miles, who all had stopped moving, unsure of what to do. The couple looked like they loved each other, but it seemed like Hudson Amery didn't want her to move in with him, while she wanted to change every piece of furniture in the house.

"Miles, make sure all the old furniture is back to where they were before," he commanded. "As for the new furniture, store them someplace else until Emely finds a suitable place she likes."

Emely clenched her dress tightly as she heard the underlying meaning of Hudson's words—a place where she would like to live, not a place for them to live after marriage. Did he not plan for them to stay together after marriage?

No, it couldn't be. Hudson loved her—he had loved her for so long and even proposed to her. She knew **her** innocent act could always make men want her, and she would use it against him.

No matter what, they were going to wed, and they would need to stay together.

if they were married but lived separately?

I would people say

Dahlia had purposely asked her to replace all the furniture in this house to make it hers and Hudson's,

but it seemed Hudson still loved all the old furniture, and she knew they were chosen by Cherise

because of the color.

The mansion had a homey feeling instead of Hudson's usual cold palette.

2/7

'Cherise, I won't let you take Hudson away!' Emely shouted in her mind. But without staying together, how was she able to get into his bed? She really needed to create an opportunity for it.

"Right away, sir," Miles replied, busily instructing the moving staff to return the old furniture to its original location. The moving staff knew who to obey, so they began working again, moving the furniture that had been placed on the lawn back to its original place.

Emely stood awkwardly and felt humiliated as she had bossed around the moving staff before like she was the mistress of the house, but now the situation had been turned around.

To make herself less awkward, she glanced around and saw the kitchen. Suddenly, she had an idea to cook for Hudson. Luis had always loved her cooking and Hudson too, whenever he visited.

"Hudson, I'm going to cook for you just like I used to," she said in a not-so-soft voice so everyone heard

her and knew they were close and in love with each other.

Hudson just nodded and sat on the couch where it had been placed back in the living room. He rested his head on the headrest and thought about why he didn't want anyone to change the furniture in this

house, but he already knew the reason in **his** heart—because of Cherise.

Cherise was the one who changed all the furniture in this house, even down to the drapes and bedding.

All the furniture used to be minimalist, with gray, dark blue, or anything in a cold tone, but she changed. She managed to convince him to make this house homey with feminine touches here and there. She even displayed their wedding photo in their bedroom.

The only wedding photo they had ever taken where she looked radiant, and he looked his usual self- cold, aloof, looking bored at the camera like he wanted it to be over as quickly as possible.

At first, he was irked every time she asked for his opinion, but it became a regular thing that he just pointed to any of the choices she placed in front of him. And each time their place became more homey,

he had a bright smile on her face.

But now, that bright smile was no longer reserved for him anymore. Now, every time she saw him, all he could see was disdain and hatred in her eyes. All the loving words she used to tell him were replaced by

cutting words and sarcastic remarks.

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Once again, his chest felt like being pierced by a knife, and he needed to rub it over his shirt. He should pay a visit to Keith again and have a check-up because he felt like he was going to have a heart attack.

soon.

Soon, Emely finished cooking all of Hudson's favorite meals and asked him to join her at the dining

table.

Hudson looked at the food and sighed inwardly. Maybe it was a good thing to marry Emely. She should also be a 'great wife' since she has known him for so long. She knew his habits, his favorite meals, and everything else, and she was gentle.

He could take care of her this way, and they would only need to pretend to be husband and wife outside of their house. He didn't even need to pretend since being gentle with her was a part of him to ensure

that she was being taken care of him perfectly.

But where should they move? He didn't want to move out of the place that Cherise had tried hard to change and realized he had turned to love.

He certainly wouldn't want Emely to stay here and replace everything, which he knew she would.

No woman, or even man, would want to stay in a place where there were traces of their partners' exes, even though Emely wouldn't exactly be his 'wife'.

This was his and Cherise's place. He didn't want any other woman entering it, and he was even mad when he saw Emely standing in the living room without his permission. His house was his sanctuary, a place for him to relax, but he knew it wasn't true. He didn't treat it that way when he was with Cherise only coming back at night to have sex with her or sleep beside her.

Ever since she left, though, it had really become his sanctuary. Even his mother and Polly needed permission to enter. Finley, too, while Keith was a different matter because Hudson still had nightmares. He would allow Keith to come and go anytime he wanted, especially now that the house **was** quiet without Cherise's constant chattering about his day.

It seemed he needed to talk with Emely about their standing. He needed to make sure they were on the same page—

that he was only marrying her to fulfill his promise to Luis and that nothing would ever happen between them. He would only treat her like a sister or sister-in-law.

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Emely frowned when she saw Hudson not moving to pick up any of the dishes. Had his taste changed? It was impossible. The last time he visited her and Luis, he still loved her cooking.

So, she picked his favorite dish—braised pork and placed it on his plate. “I cooked your favorite,” she said with a gentle smile, already looking like his wife in front of Miles and the moving staff.

Hudson finally looked at his plate, picked up the pork and some rice with his chopsticks, and started chewing and swallowing.

Looking at him eating what she cooked, Emely heaved in relief and started putting more food onto his plate.

What she didn’t know was that Hudson didn’t enjoy her cooking any more. Everything tasted off—the taste, the texture, and everything else.

Once he couldn’t take it anymore, he placed his utensils down and wiped his mouth. “I’m sorry, but I have an important international conference meeting now.”

Then he left the dining room to go to his study, leaving Emely stupidly on her seat. She started tasting her own cooking and felt everything had stayed the same.

Miles, who overheard his boss and Emely’s conversation but pretended not to, was puzzled. His boss didn’t have any conference calls on schedule. Was he escaping from his own fiancée?

A thought occurred to him, and he became excited. Did his boss finally miss their previous Madam? It

would be epic if they could get back together. All their maids, including Miles himself, would be happy, but he kept his expression flat as he saw Emely looking his way.

He kept instructing the moving staff to move the furniture until he heard Emely’s name.

“Miles, does Hudson really have an international conference call right now?” Emely’s gut told her

Hudson was lying to her, so she wanted to make sure he wasn’t.

“Yes, Miss. Emely, he does.” Miles lied for his boss. “And he had already had lunch before coming back

home.”

“Oh.” Emely nodded. She guessed her gut feeling was wrong. “Well... I better tell him I’m going now,

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then,” she said, turning to search for Hudson’s office in the house.

“Wait, Miss. Emely.” Miles stopped her. “Mr. Hudson does not like to be interrupted during conference calls. I’ll tell him later after he’s finished with it.”

“But I’m his fiancée.” Emely still wished to check if Hudson was lying.

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Miles smiled at her and tried to reassure her as best as he could, “It is because you are his fiancée that I’m

sure he will understand.”

As expected, Emely smiled back. It was great that Hudson’s PA had called her as Hudson’s fiancée.

“Alright, then. Please let him know that I’m going back to Dahlia’s place.”

“I will, Miss. Emely,” Miles replied politely and added just to stroke her ego, “Do you need me to drive you back? I’m sure Mr. Hudson wouldn’t want anything to happen to you on the way back.”

Emely waved him off. “Dahlia’s driver drove me here, but thank you for the offer, Miles.” She tried to be friendly to him so she could get him on her side.

“Anytime, Miss. Emely,” Miles replied like a professional PA that he was.

Once

Emely was gone, he saw the mess she had made in the kitchen and the leftov

er food. He shook his head in disapproval. He also didn't like how she didn't believe in his boss' words even though technically he was lying to her.

Madam Cherise would never do this. She always made sure the house was spot-clean so his boss would always feel comfortable in his own home. She also trusted her husband uncon-

to be her downfall since, in the end, his boss had a mistress.

ally, which seemed

Miles had no choice but to call the maids and ask them to clean the mess Emely had made. He wanted to go to his boss's study, but decided against it as he felt his boss needed some alone time.

As Miles had thought, Hudson was smoking in his study, looking out the floor-to-ceiling window to see Emely left. He didn't even feel guilty leaving her in the dining room just now.

He was confused. He didn't know why he didn't like Emely's cooking anymore, even though he used to

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love it until a few months ago. How could one's taste change in just a few months? But even as he saw Emely busying herself in the kitchen just now, all he saw was Cherise's shadow.

Ever since she left, all he could think about was her, and he was frustrated because of it. He didn't want to think of her, but his mind couldn't help but always wander back to her. Without thinking, his hands reached into his pocket and caressed the box he had always carried now.

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Posted by **Admin-J**, 68 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 45

A few mornings later, Cherise woke up feeling excited. She would finally move to her new place! She didn't need to pack anything, not even her toiletries, makeup, or perfume, because Julian had already purchased everything for her, even buying the brands she used from all over the world.

Her clothes, shoes, bags, and jewelry had already been packed and moved to the penthouse over the last few days.

"Ready to move?" Julian asked as they were having breakfast.

"So ready." Cherise grinned at him.

"I should feel offended that you are so eager to stay away from me," Julian teased, but he knew Cherise loved her independence and wouldn't restrict her by keeping her to his side no matter how much he wanted to.

Cherise laughed and said, "You can always visit me. You have programmed your fingerprint on that biometric lock you've installed on my door."

"You are right." Julian nodded. He had ensured all the tightest security measures for his sister while she was living alone. He wouldn't risk her safety.

"Let's go!" Cherise jumped excitedly from her seat and **ran** toward the main door, leaving Julian laughing at the excitement.

When Cherise went out of the door, her eyes widened, and she looked back at Julian.

"For you." Julian dangled a car key in front of her, and Cherise looked at it before looking back at the

soft pink sports car again and squealed happily.

"You bought this for me?" she asked, her eyes shining with unreserved happiness.

That car was only produced in a total of five units in the world, and Julian knew Cherise's love for pretty things and high-speed sports cars.

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He needed to custom-paint, which was hella expensive, but his sister deserved it, and what was a little money compared to his sister's happiness? Even though it would bring people's attention to her, he didn't mind because he and their grandpa had talked about introducing Cherise as the heiress of the Alster family.

Logan was initially against it, but it seemed it was the only way to draw their enemies out. In the end, he reluctantly agreed, but only if Cherise agreed to it as well.

They planned to talk about it as soon as their grandpa could travel to Country B, where all of them now seemed to reside permanently because Cherise was living there.

"You are the best!" Cherise threw herself to Julian, making Julian laugh, and kissed her forehead.

"I can't accompany you as I have a meeting, but drive safely, alright?" He knew his sister's driving capability, but as the forever overprotective brother, he still needed to remind her seriously.

Cherise nodded furiously, and with one final kiss on the cheek, she hopped into the car and started the engine.

Once she was ready, she waved to Julian and pressed her foot on the gas pedal, sending the car flying and she laughed in giddiness.

God, how she had missed driving. The roar of the engine, the wind blowing against her hair....

Luckily, there weren't many cars, so she could enjoy a little speed.

When she reached the Regal Apartment, she was too lazy to go to her basement parking spot, so she gave her key to the valet. It was one of the perks of living at the Regal Apartment

But when she was about to step into the lobby, she felt two arms hugging her neck from behind and a man's sing-

song voice calling her. This gave her goosebumps all over her body because she knew who this voice belonged to.

Cherise's mouth twitched, and she turned around to see a man in all black, wearing a baseball cap and mask over the lower half of his face.

"Tristan," Cherise greeted him with a broad smile and hugged him back. Even though he was kind of

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annoying, always following her around like a happy puppy, she was still glad to see an old friend.

Tristan squealed like a girl and lowered his mask, peppering Cherise's face with kisses. "You still

remember me!"

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Cherise pushed him slightly and wiped her face, glowering at him. "You haven't changed a bit," she said.

disdainfully.

Tristan

rolled his eyes and pulled back his mask. "How have I not changed? I've become the most

popular actor and model!" he said, his eyes shining with pride. Cherise knew he must be smiling

underneath his mask.

Cherise chuckled, feeling proud and happy for him, too. "You do have changed. I still remember how spoiled you were when we first met," she teased him.

"God, please don't remind me of it." Tristan groaned and leaned down, hiding his face in Cherise's crook of neck, feeling embarrassed every time he was reminded of their first meeting.

At that time, he was still only 17 years old, a newcomer as an actor, but he acted all high and mighty because he was the young master of the Hart family, one of the upper-class families in Country C.

He was used to having his way – arrogant, always arriving late on sets, and not wanting to follow directions, but as his family was the investor in his movie, no one dared to scold him for his bad

behavior.

That was until Cherise curiously wanted to see a movie set, so Logan took her to Tristan's particular set.

When Cherise saw Tristan behaving arrogantly, she became mad and scolded him in front of everyone,

telling him he did not appreciate everyone else's time and effort.

She even told him that he would never become a successful actor because he would only waste everyone's time, and none of his movies would succeed.

Tristan, who had never been humiliated in front of everyone, felt like he was being challenged by a little girl who was three years younger than him.

He pointed at her right then and there, saying he would be successful, and she would need to take her

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words back by then.

Cherise, the arrogant princess of the Alster family herself, rolled her eyes, snorted, and tugged Logan away, leaving a determined young Tristan to prove her wrong.

Since then, he began changing, taking his roles more seriously, and as he had promised Cherise, he quickly rose to fame, thanks to his good looks and great acting.

The next time they met was when Tristan received his first-ever award two years later. He arrogantly showed it to Cherise, but instead of apologizing, Cherise smirked at him and congratulated him, telling him she knew he could make it and that she was proud of him.

From then on, Tristan worshiped Cherise. If not for her, he wouldn't have changed his ways and become a successful star.

"Yeah, someone was so arrogant last time," Cherise couldn't help teasing him about it every time they met. "But I'm so proud of you right now." She squeezed him and let go.

Tristan looked up and nearly cried. Only Cherise could make him feel this way .

"I love you, Cherise." He pouted his lips underneath his mask and closed his eyes, pretending to want to kiss her.

"Ewww." Cherise pushed his face away.

"Why can't I ever get a kiss from you?" Tristan whined and clung to her.

"Cause you know we are not that kind of friends. And stop being clingy. If they won't believe you are THE Tristan Hart." Cherise rolled her eyes and said matte. Tristan laugh.

You like +

people

actly, making

He knew they weren't that kind of friends. He loved Cherise but wasn't in love with her.

So, why are you here, and how did you find my new address?" Cherise asked him thoughtfully. No one should've known her new address except for her family and best friends.

"I'm here to be the model of Angelworld Jewelry's collection with you!" Tristan said excitedly, reminding

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Cherise of Katherine's ideas for the campaign.

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"Katherine told you of my new address?" she asked, looking around for her best friend. Katherine would

better be here and not leave her with this puppy of a star to take care of.

"Oh, she's already inside seducing one of the tenants, I guess," Tristan shrugged, and Cherise elbowed

his waist.

"Be serious," she scolded.

"She wanted to see the interior and said she couldn't stand the wind anymore."
"

"Let's not let her wait longer then," Cherise said, and Tristan draped **his** arm casually around Cherise's shoulder as they walked into the lobby.

Not far from them, a black car was parked, and a pair of black eyes were watching their interactions

intensely.

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Posted by **Admin-J**, 66 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 46

A while ago, while Hudson was in his car going to his office with Miles as his driver, a soft pink limited-edition car flew past him, and he saw Cherise as the driver.

Without thinking, he asked Miles to park the car so that he could watch her.

That was a five-in-the-world limited edition car, and he recognized the model even though the color was custom-made.

He looked up at the apartment and the car and sneered inwardly, thinking Julian was really spoiling his ex-wife.

Hudson thought he could also spoil Cherise that much, or even more if they had stayed married until he realized what he was thinking.

He shook his head to let go of the thought. What the hell was he thinking? He had never loved her, so why would he spoil her?

But with the way Julian spoiled her, was he really in love with her, then? The thought of them getting married sent rage coursing through his body. Had they slept together? That thought even made him more furious until he couldn't help but punch the front passenger headrest.

Miles, who was confused about why his boss asked him to park the car, suddenly jumped on his seat when he heard his boss punching the seat in front of him.

He braced himself to look into the rearview mirror, saw the rage in his boss' eyes, and shuddered to

he soon-be-be-lost think whoever caused his boss to be this angry would be dead, and he prayed soul.

He looked around their surroundings to see what could have caused his boss to be that angry, and he saw his previous Madam.

Was she the cause? But why? Didn't his boss prefer her to Emely after what he saw at the mansion? No matter what the reason was, Miles prayed for Cherise's life in his heart.

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At the same time Miles saw a man in dark clothing hugging Cherise, Hudson saw it as well, and Miles swore he could hear his boss growling low as if he wanted to tear those two people away.

He began praying even harder for Cherise and whoever the man was. He didn't want his boss to ask him to find an assassin to kill Cherise. He wouldn't be able to do it.

Hudson's hawk eyes saw the man, and he knew instantly that he wasn't Logan or Julian. This man was

shorter and had a leaner body.

He saw how that mysterious man kissed Cherise's face so many times and clung to her like a child. It

looked like he was really close to her.

Hudson's finger, which had now always caressed the ring box, suddenly tightened around it, nearly crushing it from the force.

Julian, Logan, and now another man...

He didn't know his ex-wife was seeing many men. Logan and Julian were enough to enrage him, and

now another man appeared. He didn't want to think of Cherise as a whore, but she **had** been acting like

one.

"Cherise," he growled low as if it was a threat and warning, but Miles heard the possessiveness in his

boss' voice.

He wanted to tell his boss if he still wanted to be with his ex-wife, then he should pursue her, but he

knew his boss might kill him, so he kept that thought to himself.

his phone rang

Hudson was about to open the car door and grab Cherise, dragging her to his car asking her why

she would let any man touch her or if she didn't care about her reputation, but before he could do any of those things,

He looked at the screen and swiped to answer it.

"Mother," he answered without even bothering to hide his irritation.

"Is this how you should greet your mother?" Dahlia responded with the same annoyance.

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Hudson ignored her question and answered with his own question while his eyes were still fixed on

Cherise and whoever that man was.

"What do you want?" he asked his mother, too lazy to bother with small talk with her.

"Your engagement party with Emely will be held a month from now," Dahlia informed.

Hudson didn't reply, as his thoughts were more focused on Cherise and the way she didn't push that man away from her.

"Hudson, did you hear what I say?" Dahlia was getting more annoyed with her son's lack of response.

“Whatever,” Hudson replied and hung up the phone, not caring about his engagement or even bothering to argue because he wanted nothing to do with his mother. Yes, he hated his mother that

much.

His hand went to the car handle to open it, but he was a step too late. Then he saw the man place an arm around Cherise’s shoulder, and they entered the building.

“Damn it!” he cursed and punched the front passenger seat again. He knew the security of the Regal Apartment would not let him in because he wasn’t a resident there, and he couldn’t follow Cherise

inside.

He tightened his grip on the ring box and rolled down the car window, his rage pushing him to throw the box away. But when he wanted to swing his arm to throw the box, it stopped moving.

“Fuck!” he cursed again, irritation and frustration built in his heart. He couldn’t do it. Why couldn’t he throw the ring box? Why did he pocket it everywhere he went now?

He hated it.

He hated how a box of rings could make him indecisive.

He hated how his ex-wife now seemed to be able to influence his emotions.

He was Hudson Amery, the mighty CEO of the Amery Group. He should be cold and aloof, never losing his temper, especially for someone like Cherise.

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Chapter 46

All through their marriage, he was able to intimidate her, just like he was able to intimidate everyone else with just his presence.

Even though Cherise used to annoy him throughout their marriage, he never lost his temper because he could shut her up with just his cold smile and a pinch on the chin.

So now, why did everything about her infuriate him until he felt like he wanted to kill people? To kill all

the men around her and even strangle her?

He ran his hand through his hair in vexation. Maybe he should pay more attention to Emely, just like he had promised his brother. Then maybe, just maybe, he could stop thinking about his ex-wife.

“Drive,” he commanded Miles, who had been sitting stiffly behind the wheel, afraid his boss would lash out at him to release his anger.

When he heard the command, he let out a secret breath of relief and began driving. At least he was

saved from his boss' wrath this time.

Meanwhile, Cherise, Tristan, and Katherine entered Cherise's penthouse, and Cherise gave them a tour

of it.

“You have extra rooms. Maybe I should crash with you,” Tristan said, looking around happily and poking his head into the guest rooms as if to decide which room he wanted to use.

“You want to be scolded by your agent?” Cherise asked.

“You want Cherise to be bullied by your fans?” Katherine asked at the same time.

“Why are you guys no fun?” Tristan whined, went back to the living room, and pouted.

He fell onto one of the

“If your fans know you are living with Cherise, she will be bullied,” Katherine pointed out.

That is because I'm too famous," Tristan whined again.

Oh, please stop whining with such a smug sentence." Cherise rolled her eyes as she brought a bottle of wine and three glasses for them.

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Tristan took off his cap and mask, showing his handsome face. He had shoulder-

length dark hair and green eyes, and his face had just the right combination of the wildness of a bad boy and the gentleness of a prince charming. This was especially true since he was still in his 20s and looked young, unlike Logan, Julian, or Hudson, who all looked mature.

Cherise and Katherine couldn't help but stare at him and appreciate his beauty.

"Are you guys falling in love with me?" Tristan grinned, knowing how his look could affect women.

"Julian is much more handsome than you," Cherise deadpanned.

"Why can't you stroke my ego a little bit?" Tristan whined again.

"Quit whining," Cherise scolded him and added, "or maybe I should just record the way you behave when you are around me and post it on the internet for everyone to see."

Katherine laughed and waved her phone. "I've done it."

"No!" Tristan was aghast and tried to take Katherine's phone away from her.

"It won't matter if you delete it from my phone," Katherine laughed and winked at him, teasing him, "It's been saved to my cloud."

"So you better stop acting like a whiny puppy," Cherise joined Katherine in teasing him.

"Okay, okay," Tristan, finally feeling defeated, slumped onto the couch. "I don't know why I even bothered to go against you two," he grumbled.

“You seem to forget Paula,” Katherine winked again,

“Oh God,” Tristan groaned. “Not her. I can’t win against her alone.”

His words made Katherine and Cherise laugh. No one could win against Paula; for someone like Tristan, Paula could just eat him alive.

‘Alright, let’s get down to business while we enjoy Cherise’s expensive wine,’ Katherine smiled.

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Chapter 46

“Okay, okay,” Tristan nodded furiously, excited to hear about how he would work with Cherise,

“It’ll be a Cinderella–type of thing,” Katherine told Tristan. “You will be the Prince Charming while Cherise will be the poor girl who turned into a princess for one night.”

“We are really going to go with that idea?” Cherise asked in surprise,

“Of course,” Katherine confirmed. “We’ll start with the scene where you are crying because you **are** locked up in your room, unable to attend the ball. Then a fairy Godmother appears and does her magic

on you.”

“Cherise will be my princess?” Tristan asked, bouncing on his seat in excitement.

“Hush, this isn’t about you,” Cherise told him. “This will be about the jewelry collection – True Love,”

“Yes,” Katherine said and explained. ‘You will be wearing a ballgown, a mask, and jewelry from the True

Love collection.”

“Why does she need to wear a mask?” Tristan frowned. For him, Cherise was beautiful, and she should

show her face. She might even become a star because of it.

“Because Cinderella needs to keep her identity a secret from her stepmom and stepsisters,” Katherine

reminded him.

“Oh yeah, you are right.” Tristan nodded,

he is still grabbing

gle, and the clasp

“And when the clock strikes midnight, Cherise will flee from the ball, but at that time, she was dancing with you,” Katherine looked at Tristan and then at Cherise. “When you are leaving onto your hand, and instead of leaving a shoe, Tristan accidentally pulled you.

opens up.”

“Ohh... So then I’ll be looking for the girl whose wrist fits the bangle,” Tristan said, understanding the

idea of the campaign,

“You are right,” Katherine said. “Paula will be designing both of your clothes, so we’ll meet her soon. Are you fine with the idea, Cherise?”

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Cherise nodded. She thought it would be great, especially with Tristan being the Prince Charming. The Cinderella story might bring up fond memories to those whose childhood read about the book. With this campaign, they could attract older and younger generations.

“I love the idea.” She smiled at Katherine. “And what about...”

The three of them spent the rest of the day discussing the campaign and making suggestions **to**

improve it.

During lunchtime, Emely, trying to appear like a caring fiancée, appeared in Hudson's office, bringing him a lunchbox. She wanted all the employees to begin respecting her as Hudson's wife, and also she was

there to talk about the engagement party.

"Hudson," she said softly as she pushed open the door to his office.

Hudson, who never liked to be disturbed without notice, looked up sharply at her, making Emely shrink in fear. When he realized it was Emely, he softened his gaze and motioned for her to sit.

"Please tell Miles the next time you come here, Emely," he informed her. "I don't like anyone entering

my office without any notice."

"But I'm your fiancée, Hudson," Emely responded softly.

Hudson looked at her for a long time without saying a word, making Emely shift in her seat uncomfortably. Was it wrong for her to do so? Everyone knew she was his fiancée. What would people think if she needed permission to enter his office?

As he silently watched her, Hudson thought that this was the right time to tell her about his feelings for

her and discuss about their living arrangement.

"Emely..." he began saying.

Posted by **Admin-J**, 68 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

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"Emely..." Hudson knew he needed to thread around this carefully and made sure Emely would be in agreement with this.

He didn't want his mother to suspect anything. If she knew **about** the truth, she wouldn't let him marry Emely, especially now that she

was no longer pregnant.

The premise of Dahlia allowing him to marry Emely was based on her assumption that he got her pregnant. Hudson was sure of it.

If she knew Hudson wasn't the father of Emely's child, and even if Luis was, it wouldn't matter anymore for Dahlia since Luis is gone

now.

She would gladly send Emely as far away as they could since she didn't like Emely, and if that happened, Hudson wouldn't be able to fulfill his promise to Luis.

Emely felt flustered when she looked at Hudson's serious expression. She knew that look. It couldn't be something good.

"Hudson, you should **eat** first." She began taking the lunchbox out of the bag and slid it toward him, placing the utensils along. She needed to distract him from saying what he wanted to say.

"Emely," Hudson's voice took on a more stern tone this time, making Emely unable to do anything other than look at him. She clenched her skirt, bracing herself for whatever he was about to say.

Hudson tapped his pen against the desk before putting it down, looked straight into Emely's eyes, and said slowly, "You are my sister-in-law

Emely's heart started pounding hard, and she could feel her panicking.

What did he mean by that? She wasn't even married to Luis or engaged to him before. How had she suddenly become Hudson's sister in **law**?

Despite that, she remained calm outwardly, still looking like the timid and meek lady she pretended to be.

"What do you mean, Hudson?" she looked at him in confusion. "I mean, yes, I loved Luis, but in her eyes. "He was gone before we could get married."

she choked, letting tears wet

That's what I mean, Emely. Luis

Hudson watched her silently, feeling suffocated himself, but he cleared his throat and continued to love you until his last dying breath. For him, you are his one and only. Thus, that makes you my sister-in-law in a way, even if not lawfully.”

“Are you... Emely swallowed. “Are you planning to cancel our engagement?”

Hudson shook his head, and Emely relaxed slightly.

“I will still marry you

“I will still marry you,” Hudson said seriously. “It’s for Luis’. But Emely, we wouldn’t be a real couple.

Emely clenched her skirt tighter. Wouldn’t be a real couple?

“We will stay together in the same house after we get married, but we won’t sleep in the same bedroom,” Hudson explained.

“In public, we will act like a married couple, but in private, we won’t,” he added .

“Why, Hudson?” Emely asked. She thought everything would go according to her plan, but what brought about this sudden decision

of his?

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195% 11:46

“Don’t **you** love me? Luis has passed away,” Emely kept her voice soft, but in truth, she was coercing him to be a real couple with her.

Hudson exhaled heavily and leaned back against his chair. “I did, Emely. I did. I loved you a long time ago, but you chose Luis over

me.”

Emely looked down and bit her lip before looking at Hudson again and whispered, “But he’s not here anymore.”

“He’s not, but I can’t do this to him, Emely,” Hudson’s voice turned gentle. “I can’t love his woman.”

Emely still wanted to argue, but Hudson continued with his explanation.

“To be honest, when you left without a word, you broke my heart for the second time,” he said. “And over time, seeing how happy Luis and you were, my love for you changed.”

“Changed?” She came back here because she thought Hudson was still in love with her.

“I think of you now as... As I’ve said before, my sister-in-law or maybe my sister,” Hudson replied. “I will take care of you; you don’t have to worry about that. I hope you understand all these, Emely.”

Still pretending to be the gentlewoman, she nodded and said, “Of course, I understand, Hudson. To be honest, it is kind of weird if we are to be a real couple.”

She laughed softly as if she had been thinking about it herself. “I loved Luis and will always love him. Thank you for making this easier for me.”

Forget it, she thought. As long as they were married, she could make him fall in love with her again, and she would have many chances to get into his bed.

Hudson heaved a sigh of relief and felt like one of his burdens had been lifted from his shoulders. He thought Emely would fight him over it, but it seemed she was really lovely, and his grandma and everyone who thought poorly of her was wrong.

“Thank you for

“Thank you for understanding and thinking the same way, Emely,” Hudson said gratefully to her.

“Oh, please don’t let my mother and sister know of our arrangement,” Hudson added. “You know how they felt about you before, and I don’t want them to feel that way again, or I won’t be able to take care of you.”

“Of course.” Emely nodded in understanding, but her mind had already cooked up plans to use D entirely hers.

and Polly to make Hudson

“And if any of our acts in public ever make you feel uncomfortable, please let me know.” Hudson, after all, was a gentleman. He didn’t want this brother’s beloved to feel uncomfortable around him.

“I won’t,” Emely shook her head. “I know you won’t cross any line we shouldn’t have.”

“Alright,” Hudson nodded **his** head. “Thank you for your trust in me.

“Well...” Emely stood up. “I’m glad we have this conversation.” Then she frowned. “But we do have to act like a couple in love as we are to be engaged. Will you be okay with it?”

“I will” Hudson knew he would most probably only treat her gently like he used to be. **Just** showing her gentleness was nothing hard to do for him.

He stood up and round the table, reaching out to hug her. This time, he felt slightly more comfortable than the **time** at the mansion because now he knew Emely’s thinking was in line with him.

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“Thank you,” he said softly.

“I should be the one thanking you.” Emely hugged him back but secretly smiled triumphantly. She was confident of her seducing techniques. Hudson wouldn’t be able to escape her clutch now.

She let him go and stepped back, smiling her gentle smile at him. “I’d better get **going**. I’m sure you have many important things to

do.”

"I do." Hudson nodded and went back to his seat. "Thank you for the lunch. I'll ask Miles to take you back."

"Oh, I know you sometimes skip meals when you are swamped with work, so I just made something for you. We need to keep up **our** act, don't we?" Emely laughed softly. "And don't worry about Miles; I can find my way back."

"Thank you again, Emely." Hudson was very grateful for her.

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"I'll leave now," Emely said, and Hudson nodded.

Once outside his office, Emely's gentle **face** contorted into an ugly frown, but she inhaled and turned gentle again. She needed to act **well** to trap Hudson.

Then suddenly, she thought of Cherise and Hudson's inability to take his eyes off her. She wouldn't let Cherise get in her way, and her smile turned slightly evil **as** she thought of the first step to humiliate her.

Days passed, and Country B buzzed with the news of Hudson and Emely's engagement party. Many wondered why the party was being held so rushed, but Polly and Dahlia assured everyone that it was because the couple had been in love for so long. Since Hudson was already divorced, there was nothing to hold them back from being together as soon as possible.

With the rumors of Emely being Hudson's first love spread, everyone forgets the thought of Emely being a mistress.

That made every lady sigh dreamily. To have someone as handsome and rich as Hudson Amery fell in love to the point of couldn't wait to spend the rest of their lives together was every woman's dream.

They all felt envious of Emely. Hudson even divorced his wife for her. How could they not feel jealous?

Julian, Logan, and Cherise were gathering at Cherise's office when suddenly Neil knocked on the door and entered.

"Mr. Julian, Miss. Cherise, Mr. Logan," he greeted them respectfully. "The Amery has sent you inv Emely's engagement party"

a to Mr. Hudson and Miss.

SEND GIFT

Posted by **Admin-J**, 63 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 48

As Neil entered the office and delivered the news, he placed three similar-looking envelopes on the desk before the three powerful

CEOS.

Cherise, Julian, and Logan shared a look before Julian dismissed his personal assistant, or rather, Cherise's **now**.

The office was quiet until Cherise reached out to take an envelope bearing her name.

She traced the gold embossed initials 'HE' intertwined in the middle of the envelope and smirked when she saw the handwriting of

her name.

"How did they know you are working here?" Julian asked.

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"I think Dahlia is snooping around for information on Katherine and tumbled up on **Cherise's** information," Logan replied with a frown.

He didn't like anyone searching for information about Cherise. It could endanger her life, and that wasn't something he'd want to

happen

"Katherine?" Julian was still confused. How did Katherine play a part in this?

"Oh, Dahlia must want to apologize to her," Cherise replied off-handedly, like it didn't matter much. "You know how **she** likes to suck up to influential people."

"Explain, Julian

Julian demanded and reached for his invitation, and Logan did the same.

Cherise recounted what had happened at the Angelworld Jewelry store before, how Dahlia and Polly didn't know who Katherine was,

and insulted the two of them.

Knowing Dahlia, she must want to apologize once she knew who Katherine was.

"And she wants you there so she could show off." Cherise shrugged. "Who wouldn't want the most influential CEO of Countries A and B to grace their banquet?"

Julian frowned, not liking the idea of being used like that, especially how they had invited Cherise.

"I don't think we should go." Logan flicked his wrist, sending his invitation gliding back to the table.

"I think we should," Cherise replied, taking the invitation from the envelope. The invitation itself **was** simple and sophisticated, just like the envelope white with gold lettering.

Julian and Logan frowned when they heard her words.

"That's not a **good** idea, Cherise. Who knows what evil plans they have in mind if you appear there?" Julian pointed out.

"I agree with Julian." Logan stretched out his long legs and folded his arms across his broad chest.

Cherise rolled her eyes at the over-protectiveness of her **two** brothers.

*Do you think I'm

I'm still the same Cherise as they knew?" she asked them with a raised brow, challenging them to answer.

"Of course you are not," Julian replied. "But-

"And you will be there **with** me," Cherise interrupted, looking at Julian, her eyes twinkling with mischievousness.

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95% 11:46

Seeing those twinkle in his sister's eyes, Julian knew better than to persuade her further.

"You have a plan?" he asked, his eyes cocking to one side.

Cherise laughed and shook her head. "No, not yet. But appearing there with you, as your... partner, would be enough to rile them up."

"You little rascal," Julian chuckled and ruffled her hair. "You are going to use **y our** own brother? Are you not afraid they'll think we are an item?"

"Why should I be afraid when they will know the truth about us sooner or later?" Cherise smirked. "Let them think all they want. The more they gossip, the more they will be slapped in the face when Grandpa announces my identity."

"True." Julian chuckled again.

"But they will know you have a sister complex with how you treat me," Cherise teased him.

"And that is wrong because...?" Julian raised his eyebrow again. He loved his sister, and there was nothing wrong with spoiling her or showing everyone how protective he was of her.

"It might hinder you from getting a girlfriend." Cherise rolled her **eyes**. If the ladies saw how Julian was spoiling her, they would either line up to be spoiled by Julian, too, or they would be put off. She'd rather it be the first, not the latter.

"I'm not thinking of finding a girlfriend yet Julian replied lightly. He had so much to do that he didn't have time to think of a girlfriend.

“And we are not having this conversation again,” he added when he saw Cherise open her mouth to protest. “You’d better bug Logan about it. He’s been single his whole life, too.”

“I don’t have time for a girlfriend either,” Logan said in a clipped tone. He had decided to dedicate his life to Cherise, and he didn’t need a girlfriend. No one had ever attracted him either.

“You guys are no fun,” Cherise groaned, noting that her two handsome brothers were against the idea of having a girlfriend.

“So if you are going with Julian, I suppose I’ll go too,” Logan stirred their conversation back to their previous and more important topic.

“Uh–huh.” Cherise nodded. “We should just give them what they want.”

At that moment, Cherise’s phone rang, and she didn’t hesitate to answer.

“Katherine,” she greeted with a smile.

“Darling-

“Katherine’s seductive **voice** sounded from the other end of the phone. “I received an invitation to the shameless couple’s engagement banquet. Should I **go**?”

Cherise laughed. Just as she had expected, Dahlia would try to

had a close relationship with THE Katherine Sterling.

suck up to Katherine and at the same time show everyone that she

*Julian and Logan got one each, too, don’t they?” Katherine asked.

“I got **one**, too, Cherise **replied** with a wide smile.

“Ohhh... This should be **good**,” Katherine said excitedly. “Dahlia should want to embarrass you and apologize to me. Let’s make a good show out of this.”

“You read my mind,” Cherise couldn’t help but laugh.

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95% 11:40

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“Of course, darling. I’m your best friend,” Katherine said with a hint of smugness.

“It’s three weeks from now. Can Paula create something for us?” Cherise asked.

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“What can’t we do for you?” Katherine asked with a soft laugh. “She’ll be happy to dress you up, and you know she’ll make sure you’ll be the center of the banquet instead of the shameless couple.”

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“I’ll count her on that” Cherise smiled. “Oh, I’ll go with Julian and you with Logan.”

“Anything for you, darling,” Katherine replied. “And I’ll finally meet your brother.”

“Yes, you will,” Cherise smiled brightly at Julian, making him confused. “All right, we’ll talk more later. Julian and Logan are here with me.”

The two best friends exchanged goodbyes, and Cherise turned to look at Logan as she ended the call,

“You’ll be Katherine’s partner,” she said, and Logan just nodded in agreement. They had been best friends for many years, and it wasn’t a big deal to partner up with Katherine. She could ward off all the unwanted female attention for him.

“And you, brother...” She turned to Julian. “You will finally be able to meet Katherine!”

“Is that what you were so excited about?” Julian asked with amusement.

“Of course,” Cherise’s smile widened. “She’s my only best friend whom you’ve never met. You know how I want all my friends to know you and for us to be close to each other.”

“If you say so.” Julian smiled, and the three of them returned to talking **about** the businesses they were discussing before Neil interrupted them.

“Sir, it’s time to go home,” Miles reminded Hudson, who had been working overtime.

Hudson rubbed his tired eyes and looked at the time. It was way past midnight, and he had been working nonstop to distract himself from thinking about Cherise.

He stood up, took his suit jacket, and walked out of his office, settling on the backseat of his car **as** Miles **drove** him home.

When they reached home, Hudson opened the door, and a sense of loneliness swept through him.

Somehow, he could imagine Cherise dozing off on the couch, which had nearly been replaced up even if she was still groggy from her sleep when she realized he was home.

ing for him, and **how** her face lit

This was the reason why Hudson stayed up late at the office. Sometimes, he didn’t even feel like going home because it was too dark. No lamp was switched on, and no one was waiting for him.

He strode to the couch and just slumped on it, rubbing his temples with his long fingers.

Suddenly, the mansion was filled with lights, and he heard a sound from the kitchen, and his heartbeat raced. He looked up, expecting to see the figure that had been haunting his mind, but only to see his butler looking at him.

“Would you like something to eat, sir?” the butler asked.

“No.” Hudson closed his eyes, and bitterness filled his heart. Why **did** he still expect someone who had divorced and hated him to be

here?

Posted by **Admin-J**, 55 Views, Released on April 19, 2024

Chapter 49

Empty.

For once in his life, Hudson Amery, the mighty and unemotional CEO of the Amery Group, felt empty inside his heart.

could feel

He glanced around and stood up, going from room to room, where he usually could

there now.

Cherise's presence, but there was no one

With no room left to wander into, Hudson went back to the master bedroom, and a silhouette of Cherise lying on their bed crossed his mind, but it disappeared a split second later.

Not wanting to linger on that image, he went straight to his bathroom and showed up before lying down on the bed to get ready to sleep. But the clock kept ticking, and sleep eluded him.

He sighed and sat against the headboard, Subconsciously, his gaze eyed the ring box on his bedside table, and his hand reached out to take it and open it. His thumb grazed each ring, and a bitter laugh escaped his thin lips.

What the hell was he doing? He had never missed her presence before, so why now? Why was it getting harder and harder to be in this house without her with each passing day instead of getting easier?

He never loved her. Shouldn't he be happy that he got rid of her? Then why the emptiness?

Then Hudson's mind wandered to the day he brought Emely back to this house the day after Luis' funeral—

the beginning of all these, the day he asked Cherise to choose between apologizing or divorcing him.

Was he too harsh at that time? Should he never ask her to make a choice? If he didn't, would she still be here?

No. She killed Luis' baby. She should apologize.

But then...

Could he be wrong?

Everyone seemed to think it wasn't Cherise's fault, that she, being Cherise, would not hesitate to apologize if it **was** truly her fault.

Hudson shook his head to clear his mind. Even if he had doubts, even if those questions kept going into his **mind**, even if Emely slipped and indirectly caused her own miscarriage, Cherise was still the one who pushed he

g her to slip.

And those who thought it wasn't Cherise's fault were all her friends. And his grandmother, who loved Emely to her core and loved Cherise like she was her own biological granddaughter.

Hudson groaned when he realized he hadn't told his grandma about his so-called engagement with Emely.

The news had spread wildly, yet his grandma v

went radio silence. She must be uber mad at him for not even trying to talk him out of

1. it.

Hudson rubbed his face with his palms and groaned again. God, he felt like he was failing his grandmother now. He should reach out to her soon. He hated disappointing his grandma.

She was the one who truly loved him since he was small. She was his grandmother **and** also a mother figure for him since Dahlia

only saw him as an ATM Machine.

With a heavy heart, he set down the ring box on his bedside table and slid down the bed, turning sideways, his hand reaching out for

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the figure who used to curl up against him, only for him to freeze when he realized she wasn't there anymore.

A sort of maniacal laugh escaped his lips. He couldn't believe what he just did.

Was Keith right? Did he get used to her presence after three years of marriage?

Dammit! He didn't want to believe it, nor did he want to admit it.

94% 11:46

Hudson knew it would be a **sleepless** night tonight, so he slid off his bed and walked toward his study. There was no point in staying in bed now. It'd be better if he did whatever work he could to take his mind off that damned woman,

Yet, an hour later, he could only stare blankly at the document before him. His mind kept wandering to Cherise and the emptiness inside his heart.

Against his better judgment, Hudson picked up his phone and sent a message to Miles, asking him to purchase the other penthouse

at the Regal Apartment.

He didn't want to leave this house, yet he couldn't help himself from gravitating toward Cherise and wanting to see for himself if

Julian had moved in with her or not or if she even liked to bring other men to her apartment.

Maybe he was a masochist to put himself in that situation, but he couldn't stop himself from doing it, especially now that the house he used to love to live in felt empty.

Two days

later, when Cherise stepped out of her apartment, she saw people moving furniture and boxes into the unit next door.

She didn't think too much of it, just hoping her new neighbor wasn't the type who would be nosy. Knowing this was the Regal Apartment and how much the penthouse cost, she was sure her neighbor would be someone civilized.

After driving to her office and parking her car in her specific spot, she went straight to her office using her personal elevator and was greeted by Neil, who was ready to go through the business for the day with her.

With someone as efficient as Neil, her work had become much easier. Everything could be done perfectly and right on time. Sometimes, she even had time for an extended break; today was one of those days.

With nothing urgent to attend to, Neil left her in her office, and Cherise decided to **check** her emails, which she had not used during the three years she had been married to Hudson.

Those emails were mainly for her secret identities, **such** as Q and Miss. X.

She opened her Q's emails and saw many offering her jobs for large sums of money. Scrolling through each one, she decided to give

some of the jobs to Ace.

Just as she was about to send the information to him, Tristan appeared in her office with a bright smile.

"Speaks of the Devil, and he appears, Cherise groaned inwardly.

"What are **you** doing here? Don't you have any job?" Cherise asked him.

"Nah." He shook his head, his long black hair swinging with each turn, and locks of it draped over his eyes when he settled down.

He casually ran his fingers through his hair, combing them back so they wouldn't hinder his eyesight.

Cherise watched him silently and sighed. Why couldn't she fall in love with someone charming like Tristan instead of with someone cold like Hudson?

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Oh well, she knew the reason for it. Hudson's aloofness was what made her fall in love with him in the first place—she and every lady who laid eyes on him, apparently.

“Are you falling in love with me?” Tristan, noticing her stare, smiled flirtatiously at her. That smile would have made his fans scream and maybe faint, but it only **gave** Cherise goosebumps.

“You wish,” she snorted and repeated her question. “So, what are you doing here?”

“I have nothing better to do, so I thought I'd just see your workplace,” Tristan replied, as if popping into someone's office uninvited was a natural thing to do.

Cherise rolled her eyes at him. “You are lucky I'm having a long break now, or you'll be stuck here alone.”

“I came here because I knew you were having a break,” he replied with a blinding smile and wink. “I asked Neil before coming here.”

“Neil told you my schedule?” Cherise asked **with** a raised brow. Neil might not be as professional as she thought if he could give out

her schedule so easily.

“I wish it were that easy,” Tristan huffed. “He needed Julian's permission before he could tell me.”

“Okay.” It seemed Neil was a professional, after all.

“You come at the right time, actually,” Cherise told him. “I’m going to give you some jobs.”

Jobs?” Tristan gasped exaggeratedly, then whined. “Can’t I just relax here with you? It’s my day off, too, and I **don’t** want to work.”

“Stop being a baby.” Cherise shook her head. Really, if his fans knew he was such a baby, it would shatter their image of him being a bad boy or prince charming. But then they might think him cute, and he would become a golden retriever boyfriend instead.

Gosh, this guy was made to be a star, no matter what

Shaking her head to clear her thoughts, she pointedly looked at him and said, “You are a hacker, right?”

That question made Tristan freeze on his seat instantly.

SEND GIFT

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“What... What do you mean, Cherise?” he gulped. His identity as Ace was top secret. He wasn’t ashamed of it, but when he started hacking, he was pretty naughty and hacked into some government databases, even though he helped strengthen their security after

that.

He didn’t want his fans or anyone else to know about it, as it would ruin everything he had worked out until now.

Cherise crossed her arms across her body and raised an eyebrow calmly. “You seem to forget my background. It’s easy for an Alster to find **out** who Ace is.”

Tristan gulped again. There was no use denying it anymore, then.

“Fine.” He threw his hand up in exasperation after being forced to reveal his secret identity. “But don’t tell anyone about this, okay?” He showed her his puppy dog’s eyes.

Cherise rolled her eyes at him and asked, “Why are you afraid for people to know you are Ace? Everyone knows you are like the third- best hacker in the entire world.”

“You remember what I did when I first started...” his voice getting smaller toward the end, and his cheeks pinked from embarrassment.

“Yeah, you were reckless” Cherise smirked.

“Gosh, don’t remind me, Tristan groaned and turned serious. “But Cherise, promise me not to divulge my identity as Ace. I’m working, on a very important mission. They might kill me if they know I’m Ace and that I’ve been snooping for their information.”

Cherise just regarded him silently. Of course, she wouldn’t tell anyone That Tristan was Ace. She didn’t want to put his life on the line.

“Even if I tell anyone you are Ace, no one would believe me,” Cherise smirked again, teasing him.

“Hey, you are hurting my feelings, Tristan gasped exaggeratedly, placing a hand over his heart.

“Dramatic, Cherise snickered.

“That’s what makes me a top star.” Tristan winked at her.

Cherise smiled and shook her head helplessly before saying, “So, do you want these jobs? Bu

ave to split the money with me.”

“God, why are you like Q?” Tristan **groaned** again. “She also used to give me jobs, and I had to the money I got with her.”

“It’s business,” Cherise shrugged.

“Okay, okay,” Tristan huffed, defeated. “Send me the details.”

“Sending now,” Cherise clicked on her mouse and forwarded the jobs she had selected for him.

Tristan’s phone pinged with email notifications, **and** he read each assignment Cherise had sent him. “How did **you** get these types of jobs?” He glanced at her in between reading. “Don’t tell me you are a hacker too.”

Cherise didn’t deny or confirm and just let Tristan begin working on the ones he could with just his phone.

“By the way,

Cherise. If you can easily find out that I’m Ace, you should **know** who Q and K are, **right?**” he asked without looking at

her.

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Cherise bit her lip to stop herself from laughing at him. How could he be so naive as to believe that the Alster family could find Information about the three top-rank hackers?

“You know that Q is my boss, right?” he kept asking her without stopping his fingers from tapping his phone’s keyboard. “Let me tell **you** a secret about her. She disappeared three years ago, but now she’s back!”

“Oh yeah?” Cherise asked calmly as she saw Tristan’s fingers working **so** fast. It seemed his ability had improved.

“Yeah.” He nodded. “And get this. She was actually married, but thank God she is **divorced** now. Her husband must be an ass to

divorce the top hacker.”

“Uh–huh,” Cherise agreed with

him. Hudson was an ass, why shouldn’t she agree

with

Tristan?

“She’s just like you,” Tristan said as he kept concentrating on his tasks. “You also disappeared for three years and suddenly said you are now divorced.”

Cherise’s lips twitched as she heard Tristan’s **words**.

“God, this one might be above my capability,” he suddenly groaned. “I might need to contact Q about this one.”

*Seriously, Cherise, how did you **find** such jobs?” He glanced at her. “People would usually only contact Q-”

Then his eyes widened as he looked at her, at the jobs she had forwarded to him, and at her again.

“Oh my God!” he shrieked as he stood up. His tone was so high it nearly bled Cherise’s eardrums, but Cherise just quirked an eyebrow at him.

“You–You–You...” he stuttered, then squealed as realization hit him. “Cherise... You are Q!”

Cherise just deadpanned, not giving out anything, but Tristan **was** already striding to her side, throwing his arms around her, and

rubbing his cheek against her,

“Cherise, I can’t believe you are Q!” He looked at her with admiration and peppered her cheek with kisses. “**You** are like a hero, no, no, a heroine of mine!”

*Keep it down,” Cherise hissed, pushing his face away. Tristan was really like a puppy who was slobbering her face with his saliva.

“You **know no** one should know I’m Q.” She kept pushing him away but gave up

because Triste

too excited and wouldn’t let her

1. go.

“Okay, okay.” He nodded happily. “Of course, I will keep it a secret.”

that he

“Go finish up whatever you can,” Cherise said sternly, feeling that he was smothering her, and she threatened **him**, “Or I won’t work with you anymore.”

Tristan let out a whining sound and reluctantly went back to the couch.

F

“Cherise, why did you tell me you are **Q**?” Tristan asked curiously,

“I thought you wouldn’t realize it, with you being not so smart,” Cherise shrugged.

“Hey, if I’m not smart, I won’t be able to be one of the top three hackers in the world, okay? Tristan complained.

Cherise smiled. He was just so easy to tease

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“I think it will be easier for us to discuss the organization,” Cherise said thoughtfully. “Any new information?” She had been too busy actually to gather new information by herself.

“Nah.” Tristan shook his head and thought for a moment. “Maybe it wasn’t a child trafficker organization? Maybe they just wanted

you?

“But what about the other boy?” Cherise swallowed and closed her eyes as the painful memory rushed back to her mind.

“How could they just disappear like that?” Cherise opened her eyes, blinking away her tears. I mean... There should be traces of them, but there was nothing?”

“Cherise, I have a theory.” Tristan said as he went to her and pulled her into his arms, this time comforting her instead of being the silly goose he usually was

“What’s your theory?” Cherise sniffled in his arms.

“I think... They are backed by someone powerful, Tristan said slowly, and Cherise nearly choked in disbelief and laughter.

“I’ve thought about it, but it’s impossible,” she said.

“Why not?” Tristan pulled back to see her face, and his brows furrowed in confusion.

“Because Tristan, you, me, and K can hack into every organization, even powerful mafias or governments, but we didn’t find anything.” she explained.

“Hmm... But there are some we couldn’t get information on,” he replied.

“Such as?” Cherise asked.

“The royalties?” Tristan said, making Cherise stunned before she giggled.

“Why would a royalty kidnap me? Cherise couldn’t stop her giggle because it was such a silly thought. “They don’t need me. They are much wealthier and more influential than the Alster Group.”

“Just a thought since I can’t think of anyone else behind this,” Tristan’s lips curved up when he knew he sounded silly for thinking

about it, too.

“And that boy... Cherise sighed again. “There is no reason for royalties to kidnap children. Wh Making us into an experiment? That sounds ridiculous.”

re they g

going to do with us?

“Hmm...” Tristan thought about it again because Cherise was right. There was no point in royalties kidnapping children. “Well, **we’ll** just need to keep searching for more information then.”

Cherise sighed and nodded. Why was it so hard to find out about what actually happened when she was kidnapped?

Suddenly, the door was knocked, and Neil entered, not even batting an eyelash as he saw Tristan hugging Cherise. He knew from Julian that they were close.

Tristan pulled back from Cherise and plopped down on the couch as Neil placed some documents Cherise needed to sign.

They worked silently until Cherise finished signing the documents. Like a puppy, Tristan wanted to follow her to her apartment, begging to taste her cooking.

Cherise sighed and allowed him to come with her. It had been a while since she had cooked, and she didn't really like to cook for herself, so she allowed Tristan to follow her.

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When they arrived at the underground parking lot, Cherise went straight to the elevator with Tristan's arm draped around her shoulder.

As the elevator was about to close, a hand stopped it, and Cherise looked at the person who appeared in front of her and froze

"Oh, God. What is he doing here?" she groaned inwardly as her eyes locked with a pair of dark orbs **she** wished never to be in close proximity again.

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