

# CAN'T WIN ME BACK

## Chapter 1821



Javier's tight security was clearly a silent competition with Jasper. They were more like archenemies than father and son.

"What do you want to do, Lyse?" Jasper asked softly.

"I want to draw Betty's blood for DNA testing."

Both Jasper and Xavier were taken aback.

"Betty's malice seems like a genetic mutation in your family. I'm curious to see if she truly belongs in your family."

Recently, Alyssa had become increasingly suspicious. When she compared photos of Javier and Betty, she saw no resemblance between them. Lauren's features at least shared some similarities with Javier.

What was more perplexing was that Betty didn't even resemble Sophia. This didn't make sense.

"It doesn't matter if we can't get close to her right now," Alyssa said with a cold smile.

"She'll have to go to the hospital for a checkup sooner or later. When she's abroad, obtaining a blood sample from her will be easy."

"Lyse, you seem very confident." Jasper sensed from her cunning and sly gaze that things weren't as simple as they seemed.

"AIDS has an 80 percent transmission rate during high-risk sexual behavior. We'll see if Betty is one of the lucky 20 percent."

Crossing her arms, Alyssa said coldly, "Besides, I've seen the medical report of the man she had sex with. He has more than one illness. Betty will have to go to the hospital."

Suddenly, silence filled the air.

Jasper's eyes widened, and his lips slightly parted in shock. He remained speechless for a moment.

His woman was an angel when she was kind, but when she turned evil, even the devil would surrender.

Even Xavier, at the end of the phone, fell silent. He pondered the idea of writing a note to slip into Jasper's wallet, a reminder that read, "Never provoke Madam."

Alyssa had already eaten, but Jasper was still hungry after a busy day. So she personally cooked a flavorful meatloaf for him. To balance the meal, she also served some pickles, showing great consideration.

Jasper put a big piece of meatloaf in his mouth and occasionally munched on the pickles, savoring the delicious flavors.

"These pickles are so refreshing and crunchy. Where did you buy them?" After finishing his meal, he suddenly remembered his gentlemanly manners and quickly straightened up, using his hands to elegantly wipe his lips with a napkin.

"I made them myself," Alyssa replied, bringing a glass of warm water to him.

Jasper's eyes widened as he captured her hand. "You made them?"

"Yeah, when I was at Grandpa's house to keep Lauren company. Since I had nothing to do, I asked Mr. Gorham to buy ingredients and pickled a lot. They're all stored in the fridge."

Alyssa pressed her lips together. "Don't think I made them for you. They're for Grandpa. He loves pickles. He can't enjoy his meals without them."

Jasper's heart warmed. He squeezed her waist with his hands and lifted her onto his thigh. His Adam's apple bobbed. "Who's got such a considerate and sensible wife?"

"I wonder." Alyssa pretended to be dumb. She lightly traced her fingertips along his jawline, admiring her reflection in his captivating eyes.

"Mine, mine. You're mine."

Jasper's soft murmurs struck a chord with her. He brushed his warm lips against her neck, sending shivers down her spine. Her delicate skin responded with a blush of cute allure, looking endearing and enticing.

"Do you have something on your mind?" Alyssa gently stroked his brow.

## Chapter 1822



"If Grandpa hadn't revealed it in a fit of anger, I wouldn't have known that Grandma was deaf in her left ear."

Feeling guilty, Jasper chuckled bitterly. "Isn't it ridiculous? As the grandson of this family, I spent the most time with Grandpa and Grandma, yet I never noticed her abnormality. What kind of grandson am I?"

"I knew about that. Grandpa told me about it during that Christmas when I went to visit Grandma with him..."

Alyssa stopped abruptly when she inadvertently mentioned Christmas. She dared not continue.

It would be Christmas in less than two months.

The Taylors loved festivities. Every year, they would set up a grand and magnificent Christmas tree in the living room. Jonah would personally prepare gifts for all family members and give the helpers in the house bonuses out of his own pocket.

But because of the child she lost, Alyssa no longer dared to celebrate Christmas. She wouldn't even return home on Christmas Day.

However, that was in the past.

Now, she avoided mentioning it because she feared it would bring up unhappy memories for Jasper. She was afraid of upsetting him.

Sure enough, his eyes reddened instantly. He hugged her tightly and hesitated for a long while before finally speaking, "Thank you, Lyse. Thank you for everything you've done for Grandpa and me over the years..."

He couldn't continue his words anymore.

"Since you know how much I've done, you'll have to treat me well for the rest of our lives," Alyssa said with a bright and cheerful smile as she patted his trembling back.

"Can I stay at your house for Christmas this year?" Jasper's gaze was intense. His long lashes were trembling as though they were restraining his surging emotions. "I heard the Taylors have a big Christmas tree. I'd like to see it."

Alyssa nestled against his heaving chest. "Going there means you'll have to help out."

"Sure," Jasper replied warmly.

They tacitly avoided delving into their heartaches, yet they still understood the deep affection and remorse in each other's eyes, showcasing their profound love to the fullest.

No words were necessary after years of love.

"Mr. Jasper, Madam."

Ben hurried in. Seeing the affectionate scene, he quickly covered his eyes to avoid intruding.

Jasper remained calm, but Alyssa felt embarrassed. Blushing, she jumped down from him.

"Ahem... Mr. Cyrus is here. He's in the living room."

The couple walked out hand in hand to welcome Cyrus.

"Cyrus!" Alyssa greeted her brother with a radiant smile.

"Lyse." Cyrus sat on the couch, smiling.

He was dressed in a sharply tailored black coat over a black shirt with the collar casually unbuttoned. Despite his relaxed style, his naturally noble presence still shone through.

"Cyrus," Jasper greeted him as well.

"Hi," Cyrus responded briefly. Yet his gaze unintentionally wandered elsewhere, as if searching for something.

Alyssa noticed and smiled faintly. "Hungry? If you haven't eaten, stay and have a meal. I'll cook for you."

"No, thanks. Let me get straight to the point."

Cyrus frowned, his expression serious. "Lyse, I went all the way to headquarters to investigate the person you mentioned, but there's no background information on him. There are no DNA or fingerprint samples in the system.

"This means two possibilities—either he's never committed any crimes in the country, or he's not a citizen here."

## Chapter 1823



Alyssa's and Jasper's expressions turned solemn after listening.

"If not, it could be that he cleans up the scene thoroughly every time he commits a crime, leaving no trace behind. But that doesn't quite fit the modus operandi of an outlaw or top-tier assassin."

Cyrus traced his jawline with his finger as he calmly analyzed the situation.

"So, I'm inclined to believe he's a hired assassin from abroad."

"If that's the case, it'll be even more difficult to investigate him. Once this job is done, he'll disappear immediately. He'd probably use a false identity to flee the country." Jasper's gaze darkened gradually.

"Didn't Ms. Angelina see his face? She can come to our station tomorrow and describe his face based on her memory. I can arrange for a top-notch profiler from our city to come and draw a portrait of that assassin."

Cyrus' eyes flashed with determination. "Having a sketch might provide more clues. We can't delay too long. People's memories fade, and the likeness of the portrait can become distorted. The most accurate portrait will be drawn while the memory is fresh."

Alyssa and Jasper exchanged looks. Just as they were about to speak, a sweet and composed voice spoke from behind.

"I remember his face."

Cyrus swiftly lifted his gaze.

Seeing Lauren descend the stairs gracefully, he felt his heart throb in his chest. He hurriedly stood up from the couch.

The hot blood that once flowed calmly through his veins now seemed to stir restlessly.

Jasper suddenly remembered. "Right, Lauren had contact with that man too."

Pressing her lips together, Alyssa walked over to Lauren and gently wrapped her arm around her shoulder. "Lauren, we'll contact Angelina tomorrow and have her assist with this. You don't need to do anything or think about it. The most important thing is to focus on getting well."

She knew that although Lauren seemed fine on the outside, her soul was suffering from the trauma of her episodes and the torment of her breakup with Landon.

Alyssa wished she could find the time to arrange modified electroconvulsive therapy for Lauren, hoping it would help her completely forget that painful day.

She couldn't bear to see Lauren forced to relive that trauma, especially during such a critical time, which would only compound her suffering.

"Lauren, don't force yourself," Cyrus said as he looked at her deeply. His voice was slightly hoarse. "Your health and well-being are more important than anything else."

"Alyssa, Cyrus, it's okay." Lauren gently shook her head, and her eyes showed determination.

"I'm fine now. I just want to help you all as much as I can. And I also want to catch that person to uncover the terrifying conspiracy behind it. I want to know who is manipulating the Harpers, using me, and hurting Landon."

Alyssa's and Jasper's hearts clenched with a bitter ache.

In the past few days, they hadn't told her much. Yet Lauren, clever as she was, had pieced together the sequence of events from their scattered words.

Staring into Lauren's reddened eyes, he sensed her deep affection when she mentioned Landon.

She loved him deeply, and he could see that. She loved him so deeply that there was no room for another person in her heart.

Jasper looked surprised. "Lauren, you still love—"

"I just want to do something more for him." Lauren interrupted him immediately with a smile.

"He's always taken care of me, accommodated me, and sacrificed for me. I want to do everything I can before officially leaving him."

Leaving?

Cyrus stared at her wide-eyed, and his heart pounded intensely.

But he didn't have the intention to take advantage of the situation, nor did he feel any joy in this opportunity. He was only worried about whether she could handle it.

Alyssa lowered her gaze to hide her red-rimmed eyes.

Sensing her emotional fluctuations, Jasper took her hand and pressed it against his chest, silently comforting her.



At this moment, Cyrus approached Lauren. His tall and robust figure, leaning toward her, exuded strength and authority, yet his gaze toward her was filled with gentleness.

## Chapter 1824



"Cyrus." Lauren lifted her pretty face.

"Lauren, thank you for agreeing to help. I'll wait for you at the station tomorrow. Jasper and Lyse will take you there." Cyrus' heart melted. His hand itched to reach out and gently pat her head.

But ultimately, he restrained himself by clenching his hands tightly.

Just then, Lauren parted her lips and said, "There's no need for that. I can draw it."

"What? You can draw it?" The three of them were shocked.

"That man left a deep impression on me. I won't forget his face, no matter how much time has passed."

Lauren took a deep breath to steady herself. "I'm quite good at drawing portraits. I think instead of describing his features, I can draw him myself for a more accurate representation."

To focus without external distractions, Lauren went upstairs alone to work on her drawing while the other three patiently waited in the living room.

After some hesitation, Cyrus finally couldn't help but ask, "Lyse, did Lauren and Mr. Landon break up?"

"It was Lauren's decision." Alyssa sighed, and her beautiful eyes were clouded with concern. "But I think Landon won't let go. He loves Lauren deeply."

Cyrus tightened his grip on his cup. His voice carried a hint of melancholy as he said, "And Lauren loves him deeply too."

"With Landon's personality, it's inevitable that there will be another heart-wrenching entanglement," Jasper expressed his concern.

Losing Lauren, Landon might spiral into a hysterical frenzy. He wouldn't let any Harpers who harmed Lauren off the hook. He wouldn't spare himself either.

Alyssa could tell Cyrus' feelings for Lauren. After thinking for a moment, she spoke calmly, as if she had reached a decision.

"Cyrus, if you're not too busy, why not take a few days off and join us to spend time with Lauren? With an extra person around to liven things up, she might feel better."

Jasper glanced at her discreetly, knowing her intentions.

"I'll definitely be there if Lauren needs me." Cyrus' lashes fluttered as he tried to restrain himself. "But right now, she needs you and Landon more than she needs me."

Alyssa fell silent.

She wasn't deliberately trying to matchmake Cyrus and Lauren. She just wanted everyone around her to be happy. She couldn't bear to see her brother suppress his emotions and suffer from lovesickness.

Time ticked by.

After what seemed like an eternity, Lauren returned to the living room with a sheet of paper. She handed over her portrait to the three of them.

They gathered eagerly and flipped the paper over.

On the pristine white paper, the man's gaze was as cold as a blade, his eyebrows sharp, and his facial contours strikingly handsome.

The drawing was extremely vivid.

Jasper stared at the portrait and couldn't help but marvel inwardly that it was indeed an impressively striking face.

Just as he raised his gaze, he noticed Alyssa and Cyrus staring at the portrait in astonishment. Their expressions mirrored each other's.

There was shock, surprise, and disbelief on their faces.

"Lyse, Cyrus, what's wrong?" Jasper couldn't help but worry.

Alyssa's hand trembled uncontrollably as she held the portrait. Her eyes suddenly reddened. "Lauren, are you sure this is what he looks like? Are you sure?"

## Chapter 1825



"I'm sure." Lauren nodded firmly.

In an unusual departure from his usual composure, Cyrus fixated on the portrait, his usually steady demeanor giving way to a tense stillness, his eyes tinged with red.

Concerned, Lauren approached him, noting the uncharacteristic reaction.

"Cyrus, are you alright?"

Cyrus responded hoarsely, "I'm sorry. I need to go to the restroom. Where is it?"

Jasper raised his hand, indicating the direction. Cyrus immediately left with purposeful strides.

"Lyse, do you recognize him?" Jasper hugged Alyssa by the waist and asked with anxious urgency.

Alyssa took a deep breath, striving to quell her tumultuous emotions. "He bears a striking resemblance to my late brother, Damien, who perished in a plane crash."

Jasper and Lauren widened their eyes in disbelief.

Damien's untimely demise had left an enduring wound in the Taylor family's collective heart. Tears welled in Alyssa's eyes as she reflected on the painful memory.

"Our family refrained from discussing Damien ever since his passing, especially in the presence of Mandy and Cyrus. Not out of forgetfulness, but because his memory was too painful to confront."

Alyssa closed her eyes, inundated by memories. The ache of loss resurfaced, threatening to overwhelm her. "I can still vividly recall the day of Damien's passing. Clad in his pilot uniform and a piece of luggage in hand, he stood in the sunlit courtyard, waving goodbye with such vitality.

"We never imagined it would be our final farewell.

A fleeting goodbye transformed into an eternal parting.

Jasper's grip on Alyssa tightened, a heavy sadness settling upon him like an oppressive weight, suffocating in its intensity.

He wanted to offer solace, yet any words seemed feeble in the shadow of such profound loss.

Lauren's sudden realization jolted her, her gaze following Cyrus' departure with concern etched on her features.

"The person in the portrait doesn't only look like Damien; he is the spitting image of him!"

Alyssa's trembling fingertips tightened around the paper. "But the authorities confirmed there were no survivors from Damien's flight. It's inconceivable..."

"This is unbelievable."

Jasper gently caressed Alyssa's shoulder. His voice was slightly hoarse as he said, "Even if you didn't see his body, the chances of surviving such a plane crash are nearly zero."

"Plus, if Damien miraculously survived the crash, why didn't he reach out to the family?"

"Could it just be a coincidence?"

As Cyrus returned, his attempt to conceal his emotions faltered, his reddened eyes betraying his inner turmoil. "Could this person be Damien's double? How else could they resemble each other so strikingly?"

"It's a possibility," Jasper murmured.

"After the plane crash, Winston and Mandy never lost hope. They tirelessly searched for Damien, leveraging every connection they had."

"Mandy's refusal to accept his loss, fueled by the absence of definitive proof, kept her clinging to the belief that her son might still be out there."

"Damien's supposed death anniversary was never recognized by her; instead, she celebrated his birthdays, holding onto the hope that he'd return from what seemed like an extended journey."

Alyssa felt a sharp pang in her chest. "I can't fathom how Mandy would react if she encountered this person. She'd be driven to find him, even if just to catch a glimpse."

Cyrus studied the man's face intently. "He bears resemblance to Damien, yet his eyes lack Damien's warmth. Damien's gaze was like a tranquil waterfall, but this man's eyes seemed devoid of emotion, like a cold blade."

A heavy silence descended, thick with unspoken thoughts.

Jasper's jaw tightened as a realization dawned on him.

"Speak your mind, Jasper. It's alright," Alyssa urged, sensing his turmoil.

"Lyse, remember the woman who looked exactly like you? The one that Jameson kept by his side."

"You mean Amber? I remember."

"Jameson used her to deceive me, making me believe she was you. It was a trap."

Jasper's expression darkened with doubt. "This man's resemblance to Damien seems too convenient. It's intertwined with Landon and Lauren's situation. Could Jameson have a hand in Preston and Zoe's affairs?"

#### Chapter 1826



Jasper's words snapped Alyssa out of her somber reverie.

Their minds couldn't help but gravitate toward that possibility, and the more they considered it, the more plausible and concerning it seemed.

"We've discussed this before. Preston and Zoe lack the capability to find such a skilled accomplice on their own. There must be someone behind the scenes aiding them."

Jasper's eyes gleamed with insight as he methodically analyzed, "What if it's Jameson seeking revenge? It's conceivable. Moreover, Cyrus mentioned earlier that the killer is likely a foreigner. Jameson has been in Kontina for years; it wouldn't be difficult for him to recruit assistance for Harper and Zoe."

"Revenge? If Jamiper wanted revenge, it should be directed at us. What does it have to do with Landon and Lauren?" Alyssa's frustration bubbled to the surface. "Does he have nothing better to do than meddle in the Harper Group's affairs?"

"Lauren is my sister, and Landon is like a brother to me," Jasper replied, his voice tinged with suppressed anger and loathing. "Now, do you understand, Lyse?"

Aware of Lauren's presence, he tempered his words, though his emotions simmered beneath the surface.

Jameson was a deceitful manipulator, a predator masquerading as a friend, and a malevolent force lurking in the shadows. It seemed plausible that he would seek revenge on those close to Jasper, since he couldn't directly target him.

Jameson was acutely aware that Lauren held the highest place in Landon's heart. Deliberately, he entrusted the knife to the Harpers, intending to wield it as a weapon to shatter the bond between

Landon and Lauren. He wanted Jasper's loved ones to experience the pain of losing someone dear.

This pain undoubtedly felt like using a blunt knife on Jasper's heart.

Alyssa's breath slowed as she pondered deeply. "Your analysis holds merit, Jasper, but these are distinct circumstances. Does Jamiper need to employ the same tactic twice?"

"He orchestrated the manipulation of a woman resembling me to undermine you, clouding your judgment. Why dispatch an assassin resembling Damien? It seems superfluous.

"Moreover, Jameson was known for his meticulous nature. Wouldn't we connect the dots and discern his involvement if he repeated the same scheme? Would he be so careless as to leave a trail for us?"

"Jasper's analysis holds some merit," Cyrus said, his eyes serious and piercing. He had returned to his former glory as a man of the force. "Jameson has a motive to use the Harper Group and Landon, but Lyse is right too. He doesn't need a Damien lookalike. If this man appears, it could cause more trouble than necessary."

Lauren, who had been silent, suddenly spoke. Her nervous gaze flickered to Cyrus' serious face. "Cyrus, are you saying the Schmidt guy might not be the one who hurt Landon? There could be someone else?"

Alyssa and Jasper were taken aback.

In the past, Lauren was a cautious and unassuming person. She seemed naive and innocent. Landon treated her like a delicate flower. However, she was perceptive and knew more than she let on.

"Yes, Lauren. You're smart," Cyrus said, meeting her gaze with a gentle smile, though his heart ached. "It has something to do with Jameson, but the killer might not be connected to him. Someone else could be aiding him."

Lauren's concern and vigilance stemmed from the impact on her beloved.

"Someone else lurks behind Jameson," Jasper and Alyssa concurred simultaneously.



The web of connections grew more intricate, suggesting the imminent emergence of a new player. Was this a harbinger of the enigmatic figure's appearance?

Was it mere coincidence that Damien's doppelganger entangled himself with their circle?

Jameson posed a formidable adversary. Who else wielded such terrifying influence over him?

After a serious discussion, Cyrus prepared to take his leave.

Jasper and Alyssa bid him farewell, but suddenly, Lauren dashed over, her coat forgotten. "C-Cyrus, wait!"

Cyrus turned to see Lauren rushing toward him, a pang of concern gripping his heart. "What if you catch a cold? Go back inside!"

"I'm not cold. Don't worry."

Lauren's cheeks flushed as she spoke earnestly. "Cyrus, I finished the teddy bear cake you gave me last time. It smelled delightful."

"Oh, it's no trouble. I'm glad you enjoyed it." Cyrus's smile was warm.

Lauren bit her lip and handed him a rolled-up piece of paper. "T-This is for you. Thank you for getting me the cake."

Cyrus was taken aback as he accepted the gift and carefully unrolled it. It was a portrait of him—a charming caricature capturing his essence. It was lively and endearing, and he cherished it.

"Wow... It's uncanny, Cyrus!" Alyssa exclaimed, peering at it in wonder.

Jasper nodded. "It does look like you."





"I made this artwork too hastily. It's rather rough. It could have been more intricate." Lauren felt embarrassed, thinking her art was too ugly to be given.

"No way! It's really good." Cyrus tried to maintain his composure, but he was so excited that his voice wavered slightly. "Thank you, Lauren. I love it... Oh, by the way..."

He reached into the car and retrieved a neatly packaged candy apple, his ears turning red with embarrassment. "I saw a candy apple stand on the way here and couldn't resist. I haven't eaten it. Let me give it to you."

Alyssa narrowed her eyes in confusion.

Knowing Cyrus' love for food, it seemed unlikely that he would still have the candy apple if he'd been craving it so much. It was clear he had bought it for Lauren but was too shy to admit it.

"A candy apple?" A spark lit up Lauren's eyes.

It was hard to believe that a wealthy girl like her had never experienced this common street snack.

Javier and Sophia had kept her sheltered at home due to her illness. She had a driver for school, rarely venturing out with friends like other girls would.

Moreover, Javier had a disdain for street food, so while she had seen candy apples before, she had never tasted one.

Cyrus opened the packaging and handed the candy apple to Lauren. He asked lightly, "Want to give it a try?"

Initially shy, Lauren couldn't resist the temptation. She stuck her tongue out like a curious kitten and took a lick. "Oh, it's sweet!"

Cyrus felt a surge of joy welling up within him. A genuine smile, born from the depths of his heart, crept into the corners of his eyes. Lauren's innocent expression was like the candy apple on a stick, slowly melting away under his intense gaze.

A genuine smile, born from the depths of his heart, crept into the corners of his eyes. Lauren's innocent expression was like the candy apple on a stick, slowly melting away under his intense gaze.

If he could, he would buy her candy apples all the time from now on.

Cyrus repeated his silent confession a thousand times in his heart. Yet, bit by bit, he pushed the thought aside—his confession dissipated into the breeze with his gentle smile.

As night descended, Jasper and Alyssa shared a shower together. Alyssa sat before the mirror, a towel enveloping her body, while Jasper assisted in blow-drying her thick, dark hair.

Her hair was thick, so it was hard to dry. Yet, Jasper displayed unwavering patience, meticulously tending to it with each session.

Once her hair was tended to, Jasper encircled her shoulders with both hands. He placed gentle kisses on her shoulder, marking her as his own.

Alyssa felt a lustful desire and couldn't help but raise her head to search for his lips.

Their kiss ignited a blaze of passion.

After their lovemaking, Jasper carried Alyssa to the bathroom. He settled her into the bathtub using the shower head to rinse her off.

"Jasper," Alyssa called out to him softly.

"Hmm?" Jasper continued rinsing her body, leaning in for a kiss.

"Do you think... Landon or Cyrus would be better for Lauren?"

Alyssa traced his lips with her fingertips. "I want your unbiased opinion."

Jasper's gaze darkened. "Lyse, are you trying to get Lauren and Cyrus together?"

"Not really." Alyssa shook her head. "I just want Lauren to be happy."

"Landon is passionate, while Cyrus is laid-back. They're equally matched in looks, ability, and background. Either could be a good fit for Lauren."

Jasper held her waist, drawing closer until their lips met in a charged atmosphere. "But I think my sister has a romantic spirit. She should choose whomever she's drawn to. That's what matters most."

Alyssa pursed her lips, nodding in agreement.

No matter how fitting the match might seem, Lauren's feelings were paramount. Yet, Alyssa couldn't shake her fear that the Harpers might once again cause harm to the innocent Lauren.

As they returned to the room, Jasper's phone buzzed just as they prepared to rest.

"Who is it?" Alyssa yawned.

Jasper's eyes widened. "It's Landon!"