

The Reign of Zane Gardner Chapter 1

The End of a Unfortunate Union

The warm sun beamed down on Zane's face, bringing a smile to his lips as he walked towards the grand estate of the Amber family. Today was a special day - his second wedding anniversary with the woman he loved and cherished - Nora Amber.

Zane was deeply appreciative of Mr. Ronald Amber, Nora's grandfather, and leader of the prestigious Amber family, for taking him in and giving him a chance at a better life. After years of hardship and poverty, Zane had found himself betrothed to the love of his life, Nora - something that still felt like a distant dream.

It wasn't the luxurious lifestyle that came with being part of the Amber family that made Zane happy. It was the love and acceptance they showed him. Growing up without knowing his family background left an emptiness in Zane's heart, but becoming part of the respected and esteemed Amber family filled that void.

As he approached the grand mansion where Nora was waiting for him, Zane thought about all the changes his life had undergone since he met her and became part of her family. He was truly blessed and he will always be thankful for this second chance at happiness and love.

But just a few short months ago, the patriarch of the Amber family, Mr. Ronald Amber

himself, passed away. The news was met with heavy hearts and tearful eyes, especially for Zane, who owed so much to the man. Ever since then, there has been a palpable sense of gloom lingering in the once-vibrant halls of the grand house. Zane noticed that his wife, Nora, seemed to retreat into her own world more often now. And even his parents-in-law, usually warm and welcoming, now appeared distant and cold. It was as if the passing of Mr. Ronald Amber had taken a piece of their souls with him. Determined to bring some joy back into their lives, Zane left work early today with a thoughtful surprise in tow - a variety of decadent cakes to celebrate their wedding anniversary. He hoped that this small gesture would put a smile on Nora's face and bring 'warmth back into their home once again. After all, she was his everything, and he would do anything to make her happy. After a day of work, Zane trudged home on foot. He refused to rely too heavily on the Amber family's fortune and insisted on taking public transportation. His job at the family-owned company was nothing glamorous — just another ordinary employee in a sea of suits. But he didn't mind. He wanted to make it on his own merits.

As he approached the grandiose house, something caught his eye. A sleek blue sports car was parked in front — a vehicle he had never seen before.

Curiosity piqued, Zane hurried inside, hoping to catch a glimpse of his in-laws' mysterious guests. The main room was deserted except for a faint lingering smell of breakfast cooking. It seemed like everyone was still asleep despite the sun shining high in the sky.

Zane ascended the stairs, his heart racing with excitement to see his beloved Nora waiting for him in their shared room. But as he neared the doorway, a sense of unease began to gnaw at him. The door was slightly ajar, and there was a faint sound coming from inside. Zane paused, hesitant to enter.

"Nora," he whispered, "what are you doing?"

He slowly pushed open the door and was met with a sight that made his blood run cold.

There, on their bed, was Nora entwined with another man. They were both bare and tangled in white sheets, their bodies pressed together in a way that left no doubt about what had taken place. Zane couldn't believe his eyes. His mind reeled with questions - Who was this man? How long has this been going on?

His grip on the cake box tightened as he struggled to control his emotions. He had wanted to surprise Nora with her favorite dessert, but instead, he found himself caught in a nightmare.

"Who is he?" Zane managed to choke out through gritted teeth.

Nora's face paled as she realized she had been caught in the act. Guilt and shame washed over her features as she stammered out an explanation. But it was too late. Zane's heart had already shattered into a million pieces, and nothing she could say could put it back together again.

Zane's voice boomed through the room, his frustration and anger evident in every word.

Nora shifted uncomfortably on the bed, hastily pulling a blanket over her body as she tried to come up with an explanation for the man lying next to her.

But before she could speak, the man spoke up, his voice laced with disbelief and betrayal.

"Nora, you said he was at work. Why is he here?"

Nora's mind raced as she tried to piece together a plausible story. "Morel... He must have left

‘work early. I didn't expect him to come home so soon."

Zane's fists clenched at his sides, his eyes burning with rage towards the man in bed with his wife. "How dare you," he growled, ready to lash out physically.

Nora stepped between them, her emotions boiling up to the surface.

“Enough! Zane, it's all over now. Grandfather has passed away, and this sham of a marriage is no longer valid. What's more, I have no motivation to keep being your wife when I've already found the one I truly wanted all along. He is wealthy and has a bright future.”

Zane could hardly believe his ears. His expression contorted with rage and disbelief.

“Are you serious? You cheated on me and you're not even sorry?” His voice wavered with indignation.

Nora faced him unyieldingly, her rage overpowering any fear or guilt she felt.
“Why should I
be sorry?”

She continued loudly, "I have never felt any love for you, Zane. You come from nothing and
you have no future either. You are so worthless. You have been nothing but a
parasite, living
off our family all these years. The money you give me each month is nothing, not
nearly
enough to sustain you."

Her words pierced Zane's heart like daggers.

So far, Zane has been working in a small position to help manage Amber's family business.

However, he still gave his best effort to make Nora happy, providing most of his salary to
her, and only keeping a small portion for himself. He also took on the
responsibility of the
household chores, a way of expressing his gratitude to Amber's grandfather for
accepting
him as a son-in-law and providing a job, for otherwise he would've been left to
starve on the
streets.

Zane stayed silent, his hands clenched tightly, as he listened to Nora talk, feeling
powerless
to do anything
“Nora, I have always tried to make you happy. We have been together for two
years.”

Nora replied with a laugh, “Hahaha, Zane, what kind of nonsense is that? Listen to me. He is

Morel Luxe, one of the wealthy businessmen in the City, his company is set to receive investment funds from the Scott family.”

She paused for a moment before continuing, “You know what? The Scott family is one of the ‘wealthiest families in this City, and Morel is also one of the wealthiest individuals in our country. That is an impressive accomplishment.”

“Nora,” Morel chuckled, “doesn't he sound silly? I don't think he would be able to comprehend that, so it would be a waste of time to explain it. Ha ha ha.”

Nora walked back to Morel and hugged him affectionately and said coldly, "So, Zane. I will marry Morel and live with him from now on."

"So he already knows about your relationship with Morel, Nora?" Mrs. Amber's shrill voice broke the tense silence as she asked, she was Nora's mother. Zane swiveled his head, and there his parents-in-law stood right in front of him. The contempt in their gazes was unmistakable. They had obviously discovered her affair with Morel.

"So you know about this?" Zane asked desperately. "Did you know that Nora was cheating on me?"

Mrs. Amber spat out her reply like poison, "Yes. I think your marriage with Nora should be resolved immediately. Morel is the right one for Nora; he is far more suited for her than you."

Zane felt a surge of anger rush through him, but he suppressed it, recognizing that this would only make the situation worse.

"The biggest mistake we ever made," Mr. Amber said with a tone of disgust, "was marrying Nora to you." He threw the file of divorce papers at Zane's feet.

"It's time for you to let go of this foolish dream, and return to your own pointless life, far away from our family." His words were like a slap in Zane's face. Zane felt defeated and worthless. He had been taken advantage of by Nora's family from the very beginning, and now they were discarding him like rubbish.

"Sign the divorce papers, Zane," Nora said in an icy, emotionless voice as she offered them to him.

Zane's fists clenched in rage as he glared at Nora. How could she just terminate their marriage like that?

Morel sneered from his place beside Nora. "Yeah, sign it quickly, Zane. I'm eager to make this lovely woman my bride." His tone was cynical and filled with contempt. Zane had reached his breaking point. He scooped up the documents from the floor and signed them decisively. His silent surrender was evidence of his fury, and he silently vowed to take revenge on those who had wronged him.

Nora's face lit up with triumph as she watched Zane sign the papers. "Now it's time for you to leave this house," she exclaimed, her joy at finally being liberated from it, evident in her voice. "You can leave with nothing, just like when you first came into our lives."

Morel threatened sternly, "If you even think of appearing in front of me or Nora ever again, I swear I will give you a beating that you won't be able to forget, you scoundrel!"

As Zane walked out of the house that had once been his home, he felt a deep sense of betrayal and heartache. But he also felt a burning desire for retribution against those who had treated him with such callousness. He would make sure they paid for their sins against him and fight tooth and nail to reclaim what was rightfully his.

As Zane stepped out of the dilapidated house, a deafening clap of thunder echoed through the air. The sky opened up, and rain poured down in sheets, soaking him to the bone. He knew he was no longer welcome here, so he gathered his meager belongings and set off into the storm.

‘With each step, memories flooded his mind. Memories of better days when this house was filled with laughter and love. But those days were long gone, now tainted by regret and

Heartache.

As Zane trudged along the deserted streets, his determination started to waver. He had some money saved, but it wouldn't last long. He needed to find a new job and start over...again.

Zane's brisk footsteps came to a halt when a sleek black car pulled up in front of him, blocking his path. His heart raced, and he walked away, but then a man, who appeared to be around fifty years old, emerged from the vehicle. He was dressed in a smart black suit and

held a dark-colored umbrella.

The stranger smiled warmly at Zane and stepped forward, shielding him from the rain with

the umbrella. "Master," he said in a rich voice, "according to your grandfather's instructions, now is the time for me to reveal his legacy to you."

Zane's brow furrowed in confusion. He had never known his grandfather, nor did he know

‘why this man was referring to him as "Master."

"I'm sorry, but who are you?" Zane asked tentatively.

"I am Alfred," the man replied with a slight bow. "Your grandfather and father have kept you

isolated, hiding your true identity. I will explain everything in greater detail later on. But for

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now, I must tell you that you possess great wealth and power beyond human limits. It is your

birthright, and I am here to guide you to your rightful home."

"Is this some kind of prank?" he asked, eyeing the old butler warily.

Alfred's face was unreadable as he pulled a tattered photograph from his pocket.

Zane

hesitantly stretched out his hand and took it from Alfred. His other hand felt the cold metal

of a locket around his neck.

He realized the piece of the photo in his locket completed the damaged part of the photo

from Alfred. As he looked at the image, an unexpected feeling of recognition swept over

him. In the picture were two men. One-third of the photo had been ripped away. At that

moment, he understood that the missing part of the image was the one he wore around his

neck.

"How...how did you get this?" Zane stammered, his voice trembling with emotion.

"I have been your family's loyal servant for many years, Master," Alfred replied solemnly.

"The ones in this photo are your grandfather and your father," Alfred continued.

Zane's mind reeled with this sudden revelation. He couldn't believe what he was hearing.

‘Who was this mysterious grandfather? And what secrets had been kept from him all these years? With hesitation and curiosity gripping his heart, Zane followed Alfred into the waiting car.