

The Unwanted Wife: Revenge After Divorce

Chapter 010

AMELIA

I drove Damian back home, and my mind was conflicted with thoughts. Did he fight Noah because he insulted me? Initially, I believed it was because of a business deal or something. But the anger in Damian's eyes when he told me what caused the misunderstanding couldn't be ignored.

I wanted to pretend that it didn't mean anything to me. That defending me in front of Noah was just his usual job as my fake husband. But it was more than that. He'd put his reputation on the line because of me. He'd dropped his usual unbothered act to defend me, which meant a lot to me.

"I'm sorry you had to get into that fight with Noah," I said as we walked into the sitting room. He didn't look bad, unlike Noah. But he was fuming. "I thought you fought him because of a business deal. He deserved what he got."

"I would never stoop so low to confront him over a business deal. I'm far superior to him, and I would never lose an offer to him."

"That's true," I sighed, feeling completely awkward. I was torn between supporting my fake husband and my ex-husband. "Should I serve you lunch? I made..."

"No." He cut me off abruptly. "I won't have anything, and stay away from my room." He rose to his feet and strolled away before I could even reply. The hard bang of his door told me everything I needed to know: to stay away from him till he cooled off.

I was skimming the contents of a book when a door came on my door. Before I could stand up, Damian came in. With his briefcase in his hand, he was set to go to work. He had not spoken to me for hours, and I didn't bother to disturb him.

I had left him dinner on the dining table, hoping he would leave his room to eat, but he didn't. Whatever happened between him and Noah really pissed him off.

"Are you planning on sitting here all day?" he asked.

"Possibly," I replied. "You've refused to speak to me. What else should I do?"

"You have been doing this for quite a while now, being cooped up in the house. I recall telling you this is certainly not the way to go. I gave you a suggestion, or didn't I say something of that sort?"

He had, and I remembered it all too well. But if our marriage was all about silent treatment for hours, I was not interested in spending a dime of his money.

"I have no interest in spending your money, Damian. The main reason I agreed to marry you was to get my revenge on Noah. The money... your money was just a secondary consideration."

"And why should it be? I've told you before that money is not my problem. You can find several expensive amusements to help you pass the time."

I shook my head. "I'm not interested. Doing that doesn't appeal to me."

"But it has to." I frowned and moved impatiently. "Now, let me put it this way. Because of my success, I'm always in the public eye. That means you, as my wife, are also in the public eye. Now, don't you think it will raise many eyebrows if my wife doesn't at least make a show of spending my money? People might guess that our union is just a sham. I'm guessing you wouldn't want that, would you?"

When I put it in that light, I had to admit he was right. Some lucky, nosy reporter might get wind of the fact that we had a contract marriage, and our plan would blow up in our faces.

"Think about it," Damian said quietly just before he left.

I thought about it all through that long morning. Several ideas came, but I discarded them all. The one I felt that I could perhaps pull off was hosting a small house party. With the help of the internet, I made a list of all the things I would need. After my list, I called the caterers, florists, decorators, and the rest. Keeping Damian's suggestion in mind, I ordered the most expensive items while making sure that they fit the picture of what I needed.

I was pleasantly surprised that the evening time had flown by so quickly, and I was not even done with all the arrangements.

"Decided on something to do?" Damian asked after he returned from work as he passed the living room where I was sitting and resting.

"Yes. I'm hosting a small house party," I replied.

"Good for you," he returned, not pausing on his way up the stairs.

Early the following day, I was up. I showered, ate, dressed, and left the house, first for the florists. I wanted to see firsthand what I was paying for with my money. Well, technically, with Damien's money. After the florists, I went to several other places. The arrangements for the house party took about a week. The man in charge of the decorations recommended a classy boutique, and it was there I fell in love with a strapless dinner gown, outrageously expensive, but which I paid for without batting an eye.

The day of the house party came, and I was pretty nervous. I had invited Damian's closest business associates, and he, in turn, had invited a handful of wealthy nosey parkers who he said had to be present so that they would come, witness, and spread the impression of a closely knit couple that Damian and I were trying to give.

There were just over twenty invitees.

Everything was in order a couple of hours before the party. I saw that. The dining table groaned under the weight of several delicious dishes. The servers flitted here and there, getting ready to carry out their functions for the evening.

And then the doorbell rang. I frowned and checked my watch. The party was due to start at 7 p. m., a full hour before the time. For what felt like the umpteenth time, I smoothed out my dress and went to get the door.

The fixed smile on my face slipped a little when I saw the unfamiliar trio at the doorstep. Long before the party, I had noted the faces and memorized all my guests' names, but I didn't know who these people were.

"Hello. Good evening..." I paused, unsure of how to address the trio. Thankfully, Damian came to my rescue at that moment.

"Good evening, Ken, Matt, Elle," he said smoothly, nodding to each of the men in turn, shaking them. He kissed the woman's hand. She simpered and batted her lashes even though she had to be sixty at least. "Come right in."

Keeping a hand on the small of my back, Damian threw the door open with the other.

"You're welcome to our home," I said, taking Damian's cue.

"Thank you, dear," the men chorused.

The woman merely regarded me with a critical eye.

Damian smoothly made the introductions.

"Pleased to meet you finally," said Matt, who seemed to be a friendly sort. "A little bird told me- us of the party, and we decided to crash the party. I hope you won't send us on our way."

"Not at all." I laughed. "You are more than welcome to stay."

"Thanks."

I moved to shut the door.

"I'll advise you to leave it," he said. "I suspect that lots of other gatecrashers are going to come rushing through that door soon enough."

I smiled. "Rushing? Oh, I don't think so. No one will go through trouble just to attend my little party."

"I'm going to see if the food is any good," said Elle, and she promptly marched off haughtily with her nose in the air.

"Don't mind the old crone. She wants to see if you're worthy of the money you married into," said Matt, tipping me a conspirational wink.

I flushed at his indiscretion.

"Matt!" Ken exclaimed and elbowed him in the ribs.

Beside me, Damian chuckled.

Matt grinned unashamedly, "I hope I didn't embarrass you, Amelia." He started to walk away, then stopped. "Oh, and er- the stuff I said about our dear Elle, you won't say anything to her about it, right?"

I assumed a stern expression and leaned close. Something like worry flickered across Matt's face.

Then I winked and whispered, "I won't tell if you don't."

Matt stared. He and Ken burst into laughter.

"I like your wife, Damian. She's really something," said Matt, still chuckling.

"I like her too," Damian said quietly with a glance at me.

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Ken and Matt drifted away to join Elle. I signaled to Damian to follow me. I stopped in the corridor, out of earshot of everyone, and turned to face him.

"Did you invite them?" I asked, pitching my voice low.

Damian shook his head. "No. I certainly didn't. I'm as surprised as you are that they showed up here. Anyway, those three are really big in the oil industry... some will say the biggest."

My anxiety went up a notch. Entertaining oil magnates? I certainly hoped I had done everything right. The doorbell rang again, and I hurried off to get it. It was some of our actual guests.

At a few minutes to 7, Matt's prediction came through. A lot of people not on the guest list showed up. They were all very important people in the city.

I was surprised at how quickly I adjusted to the fact that I was entertaining a lot more people than I had expected. I promptly arranged for more food and drinks, which arrived soon enough.

I circulated among the guests, talking, chatting, laughing, and drifting away graciously when the talk became too personal. Matt, who I seemed to have charmed, insisted on reintroducing me to everyone.

He seemed to be liked and respected by all, and when it became evident that he approved of me, everyone else seemed to do so. The ladies present loved my dress, and for a pleasant half hour, we talked about clothes and designers. It was almost midnight when the last guests left somewhat reluctantly. A tipsy Elle was among this group.

I was surprised when she drew me aside as Damian, and I saw them off. She clasped my hand warmly.

"You do know how to throw a party, dear," she said with a smile. "I can't remember the last time I had so much fun. Do invite me to the next party you throw."

With a friendly wave, she left in her limo, and I went in, pleased and surprised at how I had successfully pulled this off.

"You were amazing tonight," Damian said immediately after we were alone. I blushed, happy that he was impressed with the party. "Good night." His lips curved into a small smile before he went to his room.

"You're a genius," I muttered, a broad smile drawn across my lips.

I groaned as I heard a constant knock on my door. My eyes fluttered open, and I glanced at the clock. It was past 10 am, but it felt like it was still 4 am. The party had utterly drained me of my energy.

"Come in," I said with a yawn.

Damian walked in, for the first time, looking happy about something.

"Read this," he said, handing a newspaper to me. I blinked rapidly as I tried to read the pages with blurry eyes.

Splashed across the front page was my picture and a write-up about my housewarming party's success.

"You are all over the TV, magazines, blogs, you name it. The whole country is talking about you and your exquisite taste," Damian said. "Congratulations, Amelia."