

The Arrangement – Free Novelette by S. S. Sahoo

Chapter 4

.... I stopped in my tracks and looked at his back, which was still facing me. This is the first time he spoke to me. And before I can reply anything he continued.

“I am not going to repeat this again, so listen very carefully. You are nothing to me, not now, not ever.” he said all this so simply.

My eyes widened and I couldn't register his words in my mind.

What?

“I was technically forced to marry you and I don't give a shit why you agreed to marry me, even after getting my letter. This only means one thing: you are nothing but a gold digging bitch who doesn't have any self-respect or dignity. ”

I couldn't stop the tears rolling down my cheeks.

“I may have married you, but you don't have any idea how much I hate you.” His words were filled with venom.. “Enjoy this as much as you want, but remember this—you are never going to be my wife. I hate you so much that I don't even want to see your face. So you better stay away from me else the consequences will be not good. From today onwards, you can do whatever, but don't dare to interfere in my life. I will be transferring money to your account every month and don't expect anything else apart from this. We will be husband wife to the world but not inside this house.” He took a step to leave but again stopped and said, “I'll be bringing my girlfriends here, and you can enjoy your own life, but don't let the world know about it.”

With this, he walked out of the room leaving my life all shattered, breaking me down in pieces.

I couldn't believe what I heard. Tears began to blind my eyes, leaving me devastated. I was furious, broken, and alone.

“What?” I muttered as I clamped a hand on my mouth.

I thought he Mr. Knights, his father had ensured me earlier that he had his consent. But what is this that I am hearing now? What am I going to do now?

My father... he has just started to recover. How am I going to tell him all this?

What should I do?

I promised Mr. Knights that I would take care of his son but then I used to think that like me he is ready negotiate with the situation.

“What will I do now?” I found myself in a situation where I was completely circled by problems.

I can't even divorce him because I remember signing a contract when his father handed me the cheque and it was clearly written that if I ever file a divorce from my side then I would've to pay back the double amount of what he had lend me.

What will I do now?

My legs began to tremble and my hands were shaking. I fell down to the floor.

This is like a nightmare, the worst dream I ever had. .

Wait, he said that I married him after I got his letter. Which letter was he talking about? I never got any letter..

I felt a hand on my shoulder, which made to quickly wipe my tears and looked behind to find a middle-aged woman looking sympathetically at me.

“Madame, come here let me take you to your room.” she said, holding my hands and pulling me up.

I nodded and followed her to where she took. Soon we were standing before a closed door, which she opened using a key.

“Madam, your luggage has been set in the closet and everything is already unpacked and if you need anything then please call me. ”

I nodded, not finding my voice to speak.

“My name is Lucy. I’m the housekeeper as well as the caretaker. ”

“Angela, my name is Angela. ”

She smiled and said, “I think you should certainly take rest. .”

“Shall I bring dinner to your room, Ma’am ?”

“No, I’m not hungry. ”

She nodded.“I understand,” she said and left, closing the door behind her and leaving me all alone.

I went to the bed and curled into a ball still in my wedding dress. I took the pillow and put my face against it, crying and sobbing.

I didn’t even realize when sleep overtook me and I slipped into darkness.

~

I woke up to the glare of the sun which was falling on my face through the windows.

I sat up in the bed and yawned, rubbing my eyes. Last night’s incident played on my mind and I remembered everything that was not supposed to happen.

I looked around at the big room. Everything was white. This helped me to calm down a little because I loved white.

There was an LED TV right before my eyes and a shelf full of books was under it. A big lamp at the bed side, a big window with curtains opened and two sofas.

I was still wearing my wedding dress, which was completely ruined. I got off the bed and went towards the bathroom.

I looked at myself in the mirror to find a girl who looked tired, her golden locks were falling messily on her shoulder while her makeup was all smudged. Her blue

eyes held sadness and pain and were puffy because of crying the whole night. That girl was me, Angela Carson. Or should I say Angela Knights. ...

I got out of my dress and took a long warm shower to relax myself. Afterwards I washed my make-up and brushed my teeth. Wearing the bathrobe, I came out of the bathroom and went to the closet. I selected a brown baggy tee-shirt with long sleeves and and black slacks. I dried my hair, which was still wet, and went to sit on the sofa beside the window.

I began thinking about last night's incident. He said that he sent me a letter.

I didn't receive any letter.

I remembered the quote, "The greatest difference between two people is misunderstanding. "

. . So I quickly got up from the sofa and went out of my room.. I was walking down the hallways when I saw Lucy. Her face looked flushed and she looked quite frightened. She was holding a jug full of water and when she saw me her eyes widened and she quickly approached me.

"Good morning, Ma'am," she greeted hesitantly.

"Good morning, Lucy ,"

"You must be hungry. Come, I'll make you breakfast. "

"No, Lucy, it's fine. I'll make my own breakfast. Can you tell me where Mr.. Knights room is?"

Her eyes widened and she looked towards the floor.

I noticed her expressions become sad and she looked sympathetically towards me.

"Madame, I think you shouldn't go to his room now," she replied in one breath.

"Why? Is he busy or something?," I asked, growing impatient.

"Yes, he is... No, I mean he is not. "

“Lucy, are you alright? What are you saying?”

“Madame... take a left from this corridor and the second room to the right is his room,” she replied quickly and ran away.

But I didn't miss her eyes looking watery.

Was she crying? Why? I hope I didn't hurt her or something.

I took the path as she instructed and soon reached the room. I took a deep breath and thought about how to start a conversation and clear his misunderstanding. Last night, I made up my mind that I would tell him everything and clear his misunderstanding. Judging from the way he reacted it was clear that he didn't have a single idea about me and I intended to let him know on what situation I agreed to marry and also about the contract that I had signed.

I was ready to knock when I heard some noises coming out of his room.

What is this noise?

I tried to hear more clearly and heard what I shouldn't hear—the sounds of someone moaning.

Tears threatened to fall from my eyes.

It can't be possible.

Gaining courage, I held the door knob and turned it to open and only to find my husband and a red haired girl wrapped in sheets on the bed kissing each other hungrily.

I silently closed the door, not wanting to disturb their inhumane conversation, and simply walked towards my room.

From the corner of my eyes, I saw Lucy hiding behind the wall and was watching me with tears in her eyes.

At least someone was aware of my pain.

So this was the reason for her behavior before.

I closed the door of my room and went towards the bathroom.

I filled the tub with water and went inside it and switched on the shower.

The water was running down my face, and my clothes were completely soaked.

I couldn't control my emotions any longer because there was no one who would help me deal with the situation and I felt lonely.

~

It's been two days since that incident happened and I have been having nightmares about it. Mr. Knights never spoke to me or even tried to know about my conditions.

I have been told by Lucy that he joined his company and will be remaining busy. But I knew the other part of the story very well.

It is very hard for me to register everything that happened to me, but life isn't all chocolate and cakes. I can't just sit in this room, locking myself from the whole world till my life ends.

What will I get crying for something that was not meant for me from the beginning?

Life is all about giving yourself a chance.

So I wiped my tears that seemed to be flowing continuously from my eyes since the wedding night and went to the bathroom to clean myself up.

I looked like a mess.

I cleaned myself, dressed properly and went out of my room to find Lucy. I found her cleaning in the kitchen room, when she saw me her eyes beamed with happiness and she smiled.

Perhaps it was because I locked myself in my room for two days and denied to let anyone in or myself out.

“Ma’am are you alright?,” she asked me worriedly.

“Please, Lucy, call me Angela. I’ll be fine. ,” I gave her a half-hearted smile. “Lucy, what are you doing?”

“Mad—I mean, Angela, I’m going to make lunch, do you want something?”

“Oh, no, I’m here to say that I’m going outside for a walk, is it okay?,” I asked nervously.

“Oh, yes sweetie, my bad, haha—I called you sweetie, my apologies,,” she said nervously.

I reached for her hand and gave a soft squeeze. “Lucy, you can call me sweetie. ”

She smiled and said me to return back before evening. I nodded and went outside.

I need a walk to calm myself. It reminds me that I haven’t gone out for running this whole week. I should start it tomorrow. It’ll be a great distraction.

As I was walking lost in my thoughts I spotted a lovely café. I decided to give it a visit. Walking inside the cafe to be greeted by the ring of the bell sound that was attached by the door and the aroma of coffee.

I ordered myself a chocolate cupcake and a latte and went to take a seat beside the window.

I was thinking...how my life has changed just in a month. I didn’t even notice when someone pulled the chair in front of me and sat on it.

I got out of my little world when someone cleared their throat.

I looked up to find a guy that my age but may be older than me by two to three years, smiling at me.

I kept my face stoic and simply stared at him. He was quite tall with brown eyes and had dirty blonde hair. He was attractive and was wearing a white shirt and I couldn’t quite see what he was wearing in his bottom part since it was hidden under the table away from my view.

“Like what you see, sweetheart?” he asked.

I don’t know why, but his behavior looked funny to me and I tried not to smile, giving him a fake glare.

I think he fell for it and sighed. “I think I can never do this,” he said in a monotone to which I only gave him a questioning look.

“Look miss, I’m gay” he suddenly blurted out, my eyes widened and I was sure my eyes were of the size of a saucer. “Can you see that group of people behind me?”

I averted my gaze behind him to find a group of people trying to secretly look at us. Some were peeking through their cell phones while some were trying to act like they were having a casual conversation.

I nodded at the guy sitting in front of me. “They’re my friends and they challenged me to have a conversation with you and get your phone number. ”

I found this very amusing but I didn’t show him that.

Before he could continue, I said, “And you are doing this because you don’t want them to know that you are gay, hmm?”

He looked surprised but murmured, “Smart lady. ”

I smiled at him and he laughed nervously, asking for my number.

I looked at him seriously and he again looked nervous.

I couldn’t hold it anymore so I laughed so hard that everyone present in the cafe was looking at me. Oddly enough I didn’t even had any idea why I was laughing. Was the situation really that funny or was it because I had no purpose to smile when I’m in that house.

I stopped laughing and said a quite sorry. He visibly relaxed before me and said giving me his hand to shake. “Hi, I’m Dustin Sterling. ”

“Hi, I’m Angela Ca-Knights.” He looked at my fingers and gave me a surprised look. “You are married?”

“Yeah, since two days. ’ Memories flooded back to my mind and tried to cover it with a smile.

“Ooh, Congrats. I can see that we are going to be...good...friends, what do you think?” he sang and amused by his behavior I gave him a small nod.

We talked for a little longer and exchanged numbers. Then he left saying that he would call soon.

After I finished, I came out of the cafe only to find a bookstore beside the cafe.

I went inside it and brought myself some novels and magazines because I knew I had plenty of time read it.

I was walking back with my hands full of books when I saw an expensive car parked beside the road.

I saw that the hood of the car was open .I guess something was wrong with that car.

I stopped and looked around to find nobody. So I kept my books in a bench nearby and went to look at the engine.

I checked the engine and soon found the problem.

Oh, so the carburetor is the problem.

I think the engine of this car has been not started from a long time and that’s why the fuel of the carburetor started to break down.

I saw the tool box beside the tire and I quickly took out what I needed: Phillips screwdriver, flat screwdriver, needle nose pliers, wire brush and socket set.

I took off the carburetor and turned off the fuel valve off on the tank and began my work. Shortly I had to remove the throttle slide from the cable and soon my work

was done. Using the carb and choke cleaner that surprisingly present there I cleaned and fixed the carburetor in its place.

I guess the owner also knew that the problem was in the carburetor.

I had to check if the engine worked or not so I again looked to find no one around, so I looked inside the car to find the keys still attached to the ignition.

I started it and the car came to live roaring loudly.

I cleaned my hand using my handkerchief and turned to leave when somebody shouted.

“Hey, what are you doing there? I’m talking to you...Hey, wait!”

I didn’t turn back to look who it was but the voice sounded familiar.

Very familiar. ..

I didn’t quite remember whose voice it was because I took my books and ran.

Reaching my house, I went directly towards my room.

I took a shower to clean my sweat fuelled hands and wore my new fresh clothes and went down when it was time for dinner.

I saw Lucy setting plates on the table and I helped while ranting about the things I did today.

She just smiled and listened to me eagerly when I told her I fixed somebody’s car. She was surprised to know I could do that.

I ate my Dinner and was just leaving for my room when Mr. Knights walked in.

Don’t show me your face.

You don’t have any Idea How much I hate you.

Never interfere in my life.

His words came barging into my mind and before I could anger him I got myself under the staircase where he couldn't see me.

He went to his room and got out off my hidden place and when I was in the middle of the staircase I heard sound of heels clicking behind me.

I turned back to look at a girl with raven hairs wearing high heels and in short pink dress running towards me more like Mr. Knights.

“Wait up Honey,” she screeched.

When she went past me she just gave me a questioning look and I don't know why but also added a jealous look and ran clicking her heels to Mr. Knights' room.

I kept standing there for what seems like an hour and soon I heard some sounds of a girl giggling and moaning loudly.

I looked down the stairs to find Lucy watching me with her sad eyes.

I forced a smile on my face and dashed towards my bed room.

I switched off the lights and plunged an earphone and stuffed my face into the pillow trying to forget what I heard and what I saw.