

## Billionaire Ex-wife: I Can't Live Without You novel by Lewie Parenti

### Chapter 1 I Want A Divorce

It was late at night.

Lucinda Ross was tossing and turning in her sleep.

She felt a man on top of her, his weight pressing on her, making it hard for her to breathe properly.

She could hear him panting and feel his hot breath against her cheek.

And then, without warning, she felt a sharp pain in between her legs.

When she finally realized what was going on, her eyes flew open in horror. She squinted in the dark at the man above her.

"Nathaniel... Is that you, Nathaniel?"

He only grunted in response, and the pungent smell of alcohol assaulted her senses. He made no further sound, just kept pounding her like his life depended on it.

Lucinda allowed herself a sigh of relief after recognizing his voice. At this point, she could do nothing but to give in to his amorous onslaught, though she would let out a groan of pain here and there.

His movements became more frantic, and she had to grit her teeth to get through the strange mix of pain and pleasure. Still, she couldn't help but feel elated at this unexpected turn of events.

They had been married for three years, but her husband—Nathaniel Roberts—had never touched her. He didn't want to.

His grandfather, Logan, had forced him into this marriage, so Nathaniel had always resented her and treated her coldly.

Right now, Lucinda didn't care what had made him change his mind.

She was simply more than happy to surrender herself to him.

After a couple of hours, Nathaniel let out one final grunt and slumped over her in exhaustion. A sliver of moonlight cut through the window, outlining his profile like a perfect work of art.

Lucinda listened as his heartbeat gradually slowed its pace. The whole thing felt surreal that a tiny part of her suspected she was only dreaming.

If it really was a dream, then she never wanted to wake from it.

She wrapped her arms around his neck. "Nathaniel," she crooned with all the affection she harbored toward him. "Nathaniel, I—"

She was about to tell him that she loved him, but she heard him mutter in his drunken stupor before she could even get the words out.

"Ellie..."

Lucinda froze, feeling like a bucket of cold water had just been dumped on her head.

Her heart ached at the realization that Nathaniel had simply mistaken her for another woman.

The woman in Nathaniel's heart was Eleanor Turner. She was his first love. Yet because Logan didn't approve this relationship, she was forced to stay abroad all these years.

But Eleanor had just returned to the country.

And she had wasted no time sending a message to Lucinda, one that was obviously meant to provoke her.

"I'm back. Soon enough, there will no longer be any place for you in the Roberts family.

You may have married Nate, but he and I grew up together. Did you really think you could replace me? Know your place and crawl back to the orphanage where you came from. That's where you belong.

I'm sure you know how much he loves me. Even if he lies naked in your bed, I assure you that it will be my name he calls out. Do you understand, Lucinda? To Nate, you will only ever be my substitute."

Her substitute...

Lucinda was the woman Logan had chosen to be Nathaniel's wife! She was no one's substitute.

She was pulled back to the present by the sound of Nathaniel's voice. Her husband was still murmuring another woman's name.

Eleanor's taunts kept playing repeatedly in Lucinda's head. As things stood, she couldn't keep deluding herself. She had to face the reality that Nathaniel didn't love her, and he never would.

Her eyes welled with tears, her hands balling into fists. Lucinda trembled from the sorrow and outrage that were coursing through her body.

She had been docile and submissive to Nathaniel all this time, and had even quit her job so that she could devote herself to being a good wife and taking care of her husband.

Lucinda had endured abuse and humiliation in the hands of her husband's snobbish and condescending family. His mother and sister made no effort to hide their disdain for her poor background, and went to great lengths to make her life difficult. Lucinda didn't want to bother Nathaniel with these matters. He would probably just dismiss them as trifles, anyway, so she swallowed her grief and soldiered on.

She had humbled herself beyond imagination in a bid to win his heart, but it looked like her efforts weren't enough.

Why did he have to trample on her heart and strip her of the last bit of dignity and self-respect she had left?

The rest of the night felt like ages.

Lucinda's eyes remained wide open, and sleep refused to visit her.

The next morning, Nathaniel was woken up by the blinding light streaming through the window.

He rubbed his temples and opened his eyes to the sight of Lucinda sitting in front of the dresser with her back to him.

Memories of the previous night came back to him in a rush, and his body went cold at the realization of what he had done. He locked his eyes on her, his lips curling into a sneer.

Although Lucinda wasn't facing him, she could feel the rage emanating from Nathaniel.

She remained composed and continued applying her skin care regimen. The next thing she knew, her wrist was grabbed in a vice-like grip, and she was forcefully pulled to her feet.

The small pot of cream slipped from her hand and smashed on the floor, spilling its contents.

Lucinda raised her head and glared at Nathaniel. As mad as she was, however, she couldn't help the pang in her heart when she met his eyes.

"Do you think you can force me into acknowledging you by drugging me so that I would sleep with you?"

His fingers around her wrist tightened even more as he spat out the words.

He looked absolutely terrifying at that moment.

But wait... Drugging him?

Lucinda flashed him a bitter smile. "Do you honestly see me as the kind of woman who would use such vile methods?"

Nathaniel snorted in disgust. "You manipulated my grandfather into trusting you so that you could marry me. So stop acting like you're some innocent girl. I won't buy it. A shameless opportunist like you can never compare to Ellie!"

An opportunist? Tricked his grandfather?

So, this was how he truly thought of her all along.

If she had wanted to drug him, she would have done it long ago. Why would she wait until now and suffer through three years of bullying from his mother and sister?

Clearly, Nathaniel didn't know her at all.

Lucinda saw now just how ridiculous she had been in the past. She had bent over backwards and more, all in an attempt to please him and get even just a moment of his attention.

Well, if this was how he saw her, then there was no need for her to stay here with him any longer.

Lucinda gritted her teeth and shook off his hold.

Then, she lifted her chin and spoke in a voice ringing with resolve.

"Nathaniel, I want a divorce."