

## Read Novel Married To A Cruel Billionaire Chapter 4

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#### The Wedding

Walking down the hall, questions began popping in my head making me rethink going there. What if it never works out between us? What if he never likes me? What if it's all a conspiracy? What if I'm left unhappy forever? What if... Soon my head became a warzone of several 'what ifs', and the war slowly made its way through my mouth to my heart as my mouth felt dry, and my heart pounded against my ribcage like a mad prisoner ready to break free.

The door opened, and I stood there, my feet seemed to have frozen. A squeeze in my hand made me look up.

"Everything will be alright, princess," dad assured with a smile on his face.

Nodding, I stepped into the red carpet and walked through the aisle. There were few people present, sitting in the benches chattering. All heads turned towards me, men sending smiles while the women decided on glares. From between, the identical faces of my twin aunts stood out as they waved at me. Sending them a smile, I gulped the lump formed in my throat and diverted my gaze elsewhere. Being the center of attention was never my fantasy.

With another squeeze from dad, I focused on the fine architecture of the stupendous hall. The pristine white walls were decorated with the same golden patterns at the top, and fresh flowers adorned antique vases around every corner, golden chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

My eyes caught the sight of Mr. King sitting on the front row, a victorious tint laced on his face while accompanying him was his wife, Mrs. Juliana King, a fluffy white cat graced her lap as she patted its head and shot everyone judging looks. On his left sat the granny with her signature smile. They looked like a royal family in their elegant clothes and composed postures. I looked around to check if servants in white dresses came running with fruits in gold platters and fed them grapes like those in ancient Greek kingdoms.

But nah, no servant was around.

Shaking my head at the silly thought, I glanced up expecting to see the dark sea-green eyes of my soon-to-be husband, instead met a pair of warm brown ones.

A guy in a black tux and a dimpled smile approached us.

"May I?" He offered his hand.

Dad nodded, kissed my forehead and moved to where mom was sitting.

I took his hand, my brows knitting back as I scanned my eyes about, sighting no sign of the arrogant devil.

“Hi! I am Matthew Rainor, Hunter’s best friend.” His smile broadened.

“Hello! I am Ember.”

“You look gorgeous.”

“Thanks.” I returned his smile and halted as we reached the end of the aisle.

Ana and Beth stood behind me with bouquets in their hands, and matching frowns. Beth leaned in and whispered, “Is he the bride?”

I bit my lip, ominous thoughts swarming my mind. I neither told Ana nor Beth about the circumstances of this marriage in case they decided to venture on a killing rampage.

“Don’t worry! He will be here anytime now,” Matthew assured.

All eyes turned as the door opened once again revealing Hunter William King in a black custom made tuxedo. My heart beat raised, and I forgot what I was mad about.

As he came and stood before me, I couldn’t help staring. He looked even more gorgeous with his black hair styled into perfection, and those eyes, the same color as the ocean on a stormy day, seemed to pull everything in their maelstrom.

He raised his perfect eyebrow at me.

Fudgeballs! I was staring. I looked down biting my lip, my cheeks heating up. Excellent job, Ember! Now the whole room can witness how pale skin turns all tomatoey. I glanced up again to see him looking at me with an expression I couldn’t quite catch. Something glinted behind those dark eyes, something abysmal that made shivers run down my back, in a scary way.

Remind me again why I agreed to marry him?

“Hello,” he spoke, his rich, resonant voice as if casting me in a trance.

‘Weren’t you scared of him now?’ spoke a voice in the back of my head. Shut up!

Composing myself, I gave a nod of my head. “Hi.” There was no way in hell I’d let this man see the effect he imposed on me with a wee bit of action.

He turned away and started chatting with Matthew while all I did was steal glances of him from the corner of my eye, not caring if I was being rude.

At the gesture of the officiant, we stood facing each other, and he began, "Welcome, everyone. We have all gathered here to witness the union of Ember Collins and Hunter William King in marriage. We are also here to be a part of this new family. Family is one of the most important things in the world—it's nothing without love and relationship. With that said, I'm sure we're all very eager to proceed with the wedding ceremony that will join this new family. So without further ado, let my speech end here and let us carry on with the ceremony."

This was it. There was no turning back anymore but facing what fate had in-stored for me.

Taking deep breaths to calm my palpitating heart, I looked at the girls, and they flashed me reassuring smiles with their thumbs up. I repeated the vows in my head. I had been preparing this since last night.

The officiant glanced at the best man, Matthew. "Please, Bring forth the rings."

Approaching us, he uncovered the small, black velvety box and handed the rings to us, then went back to his place.

Licking my lips, I stretched my left hand, and he took a hold of it sliding the ring around my finger with a swift movement. I observed the shiny golden band. The Kings insisted on buying them both. Gazing up, I raised the other band and placed it around his long, slender finger.

Nodding at the officiant as he motioned me forward, I began, "Today I affirm my vow to share my life with you in everything, to respect and love you. I promise to grow with you and build with you a bette-"

A steely gaze from Hunter stopped me in the middle of my vows. He casted his eyes down at his wrist watch.

Oh... I swallowed, blood rushing to my cheeks as my heart felt a pang. The nerve of this man...

Impeding the urge to tutor him with a piece of my mind, I turned to the officiant. "I apologise, sir, I will rather skip the vows and get married."

The officiant nodded. "Do you Hunter William King, son of Bryan William King, take Ember Collins as your wife?"

"I do," his answer was curt and impassive.

“Do you Ember Collins, daughter of Joseph Collins take Hunter William King as your husband?”

I swallowed. Do I? We haven't even gotten married yet, and he is already acting up his reputation. I'm not even sure if he will give me the respect I deserve as his wife. Am I ready to marry such a man? My eyes moved to Mr. King who sent an encouraging smirk my way throwing a look at my dad.

“I do.”

“Congratulations! I, hereby, announce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride.”

My eyes widened. He leaned in, no sign of hesitation on his face, and soft, warm lips pressed against mine. I froze. It felt like even the blood flowing through my veins froze but only for a second or two, then he pulled out. I took a sharp inhale feeling like he sucked all the oxygen out of my lungs.

Everyone congratulated us, and I thanked them while Hunter stood there silent, like a rock. A handsome rock though.

Mr. King introduced me to Mrs. Julia King, makeup caking her face made her look like one of the plastics from Mean girls, only older. She kept giving me looks like I had cooties, even the little feline in her lap hissed at me. Weren't they charming?

I glanced beside me, and Hunter wasn't there anymore. I regarded the crowd, and there was no sign of him yet again. In the middle of the room, I spotted Matthew who introduced himself as Hunter's best friend earlier. Marching to him, I lifted my hand to tap when from the corner of my eye I caught movement on my right and turned my eyes to the direction. A dark lean figure was retreating through a door.

Hunter?

My feet started moving, and soon I found myself in a dark hallway, the lights were all turned off. The figure was moving forward in swift strides. I hastened my steps, the tail of my veil fluttering behind as the chattering of people faded replaced with the clicking of my heels. He stopped, causing me to come into an abrupt halt. In a slow manner, he turned around facing me. From somewhere a ray of light shone on his eyes, blazing the sea-green they possessed. Darkness roofed his physiognomy, but those eyes I would recognize from anywhere.

“Hunter?” I called, but it came out more as a whisper. My breath was heavy.

He didn't speak, neither moved.

For a moment, we stood like that, staring at each other.

A tap on my shoulder emanated a squeak from my mouth, and I swirled around.

“Whoa, whoa! Easy there, it’s me, Matthew.”

“Matthew! You scared me!”

I turned back and met with an empty space. He was gone.

“I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to. I saw you coming here, and I... What were you doing here?”  
Lines appeared on his forehead.

“Where is Hunter?”

“Um... Hunter had to leave for some business purpose,” he said, scratching the back of his head.

“What?” The shock passed as fast as it came, and I looked down, sighing. What else could be expected from him?

“Yeah, Sorry.” Matthew smiled, the skin on his forehead creased instead of the ones around his eyes. “He told me to take you to the Kings Mansion,” he added.

Sending a glare down the way he left, I nodded, wishing the day would end already, the weight of my decision beginning to set on my shoulders and trap my soul in-between. What did I get myself into? This was nothing like the dream I had in the morning.

Guess dreams are there to remind people how harsh reality is.

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“I thought you said he has consented to this matrimony.”

“Of course, he has.”

“Then why did he act like he was forced into this too?” After standing alone for twenty minutes in the reception ceremony and dodging the questions and dubious glances of my family, friends and relatives, I wormed my way out on the deserted corner and confronted Mr. King. I was getting frustrated with my own questions in my head.

He sighed. “You see, Ember, this is the reason. Hunter is a tough man to get along with. That’s why I wanted him to have a wife he needs, not one who will destroy him even more.” His features hardened at the end of the sentence.

Destroy him even more? What did he mean by that? Who destroyed him before? “Wha-  
“

“Ember?” Dad’s voice cut me off, and my eyes widened. I turned my attention to the direction of dad’s approach, his brows were knitted in the middle as his concerned eyes darted from me to Mr. King. “Mr. King... Is everything alright?”

I pursed my mouth, unsure of what to say when Mr. King spoke, “Joseph, no worries. Don’t forget your daughter is not just your daughter anymore. She’s the new bride of the Kings.”

Dad nodded, the frown lingering on his forehead. “Of course, Mr. King. I was just...”

“We were discussing how unfortunate it is that Hunter had to leave for business on such an important day. But your daughter here is very understanding.” He smiled, pointing to me.

I nodded, imitating his expression. I couldn’t let dad find out the truth.

“It is indeed unfortunate.” The tone dad used clearly announced his displeasure at the situation.

“Alright. I’ll leave you two now.” Mr. King eyed me. “Hurry up, dear. The cars are waiting.” Then he walked away.

Facing me, dad touched my cheek, peering intensely. “Ember, always remember, if you ever need, your mom and I, we will always be there waiting for you.”

That was it. The strings at my heart were pulled like someone played violin in them, and I threw my hands around him, burying my face in his chest. “I know, dad. I know...”