

Mr. Chairman's Devious Wife by Brey Mitchylle

Chapter 1

A Marriage of Convenience

Sofia's lips trembled before she clasped the pictures in her hand.

The menu before her seemed to blur, the words dancing on the paper like elusive shadows. The soft hum of conversation inside the hushed ambiance of the Japanese restaurant enveloped Sofia like a cocoon. For a few minutes, the room felt almost suffocating.

"Where did you get these?" she asked, her gaze landing once again on the images of her boyfriend and elder sister together on the balcony of a hotel, kissing each other. A part of her was certain these were photoshopped.

After all, her sister Charlotte Lockhart had been very good to her, supporting her in everything. Why would she betray her trust? Moreover, Sofia's boyfriend Daniel Beaumont had been with her for four years. Why would he suddenly betray the trust she gave him? This didn't make sense.

"You can check the dates, time, and location behind each photo," the man across from her answered. She quickly turned the photos around, and just like he said, the information she was looking for was indeed scribbled behind each image.

"Mr. Beaumont, you must understand that this information is..." Her lips trembled as her gaze landed on Mr. Alexander Beaumont, Daniel's older brother and the current CEO of Beaumont Empire. "Too much to handle."

She felt a tightness in her throat and a drumming in her temples.

"Having doubts despite all the evidence is normal," Alexander's lips quirked up as he mused. "I would understand it if you have the photos checked for authenticity." Amusement flashed in his dark brown eyes.

She nodded. Again, her eyes landed on the photos. Without saying another word, she placed the photos back in the brown envelope and carefully stowed them inside her bag.

"Then may I know what Mr. Beaumont wants?" Sofia said. This made her confused as she had actually only met Mr. Beaumont once, and that was

during a Christmas dinner two years ago. Despite being Daniel's older brother, Alexander Beaumont buried himself in work. This man had been a well-known workaholic who missed his younger brother's birthday for four consecutive years. Yet, out of nowhere, he would suddenly meet her. Why? Was it simply because he wanted to tell her about the photos?

Without saying a word, Mr. Beaumont signaled his secretary, who was standing behind him. The secretary then handed another folder to Sofia. She opened it without asking questions. She understood that Mr. Beaumont was a man of few words.

She quickly read the documents inside the folder, and almost immediately, her expression changed. "M— Marriage of Convenience?" She almost could not believe what she was reading. Mr. Beaumont wanted to marry her?

"Read the rest..."

Sofia bit her lower lip as her green eyes glazed over the entire document until she finally reached the last part that informed her this was but a temporary arrangement.

"Mr. Beaumont, I am your brother's woman," she uttered as her heart raced against her chest. What was this man doing?

"Cheating brother," he added.

"I have yet to confirm this," she steadied her voice as she slowly comforted herself. There is still a high chance that Mr. Beaumont was lying and that the images were photoshopped. She convinced herself that this might just be another scheme.

Again, without saying a word, he pushed what looked like a black card her way. She stared at it and realized it was a hotel key card.

"What is this?"

"It would take time to confirm the photos so Mr. Beaumont arranged for you, Miss Lockhart, to confirm the matters with your own eyes. This is the flight that Mr. Beaumont arranged for Miss Lockhart, as well as the accommodation and transportation. You will be checking into the same hotel as Mr. Daniel and Miss Charlotte are staying."

Sofia could not contain her emotion as she accepted the things that Mr. Beaumont's secretary handed. Daniel was currently not in Springfield; he was at a conference in LA. Meanwhile, Charlotte should be somewhere in Texas, wrapping up her taping for her current film.

"Let us have this conversation again once Miss Lockhart has confirmed everything," Mr. Beaumont got up. "If you want to change a few things in the contract, please feel free to call my personal number."

He placed another card on the table between them and then started walking away.

"Why me?" she asked as he took his first step away. Mr. Beaumont could marry anyone. Literally, anyone. Yet, he would suddenly choose to propose a marriage of convenience to his younger brother's girlfriend? Why?

He turned around, and without an iota of emotion on his face, he stared at her for a few seconds before he said, "Business."

Then he turned around and left the restaurant.

Once again, her gaze trembled. She wanted to ask more questions, but her mind could not seem to think straight. The next thing Sofia knew, she was already on the first-class flight to LA.

It was already the dead of night when she arrived at Long Beach Airport. With just her bag, she quickly boarded the transportation that Mr. Beaumont set up for her. At this point, Sofia did not even know what she was doing a thousand miles away from home. A part of her wanted to know the truth. She knew the truth would devastate her, but she had to know what had been going on behind her back.

Not long after, she arrived at the Ritz and proceeded to check into a suite room that Mr. Beaumont arranged. Apparently, this room is located just next to where Daniel and Charlotte were staying. The weight of uncertainty pressed down on her as she stepped into the lavish suite.

Sitting on the large King-size bed inside the room, Sofia immediately sent a text to Daniel, asking him about his day. Just as she expected, there was no response even after thirty minutes.

Unable to stop herself, she got up and got out of her room. Then she turned on the video on her phone and used the hotel key card that Mr. Beaumont gave her earlier to access the room.

The door seamlessly opened. For a while, Sofia stood in front of the door, wondering what she was doing.

Then she straightened her back and walked inside the room. She chose not to turn the lights on and instead used a small flashlight that she bought from the airport.

Quickly, Sofia realized that no one was inside. After a quick tour, Sofia concluded that a couple was inside this room. However, a part of her was still doubtful, hoping that the evidence was all planted, arranged in advance for her.

The other part was, of course, devastated.

However, she steeled herself. There was no point in backing down. She came here for the truth, and she was prepared to find out what it was. Just as she thought of checking the luggage stored on the luggage rack, she heard a hiss. Then all the lights inside the room turned on.

Whoever it was that was occupying this room... just arrived.