

Mr. Chairman's Devious Wife by Brey Mitchylle

Chapter 3-5

A Family Affair

"I have yet to make up my mind," Sofia said, her eyes narrowing her eyes at him. Did he come because of his proposition?

The enticing aroma of freshly baked croissants wafted through the air, causing her stomach to growl involuntarily.

She stole a glance at the tempting spread, attempting to feign indifference to both the food and the audible protest of her hungry stomach. It was a futile effort.

"Is there a need for such pretense?" Alexander's inquiry cut through the air, devoid of sympathy. "Eat your fill. I only came to make sure that you did not murder anyone. My plans would not succeed when you are in prison."

Blunt, Sofia acknowledged inwardly, her attention reluctantly shifting from the tantalizing croissants to the man seated across from her. She picked up her fork and began to mechanically spear a piece of brunch, attempting to divert her focus away from Alexander's words.

"LH Group will hold its annual shareholder's meeting, and in this meeting, your stepfather will blame you for the mishaps. Not directly, of course."

"W— What?" The cup of coffee in her hand trembled, threatening to spill. His words demanded her full attention, taking all the heaviness and headache from her hangover.

LH Design was the subsidiary of LH Group. Currently, she is the Head Designer of LH Design and its acting CEO. Before she could continue thinking about this, Alexander pushed another document her way. She opened it without asking any more questions.

"This— "

"A plagiarism scandal ready to explode," Alexander interrupted, delivering the revelation with a cool matter-of-factness.

“I made those designs...” Sofia’s voice wavered. How could it be plagiarism? She spent countless nights drawing them, choosing the materials carefully for the upcoming collection.

He didn’t answer. He studied her appearance, his eyes confident yet something about it contained cruelty that made her uncomfortable.

“A rich heiress who grew up with a silver spoon against a working woman who struggled to make ends meet. Who do you think the media will believe?” he asked, his voice cutting through her like a sharp knife.

“What are you trying to say? Why would my father— “

“Stepfather,” he corrected her.

Sofia’s lips trembled. She steadied herself. Her mother married her stepfather when she was just two years old. Her biological father died when her mother was pregnant, and the only father that she knew was her stepfather, Lawrence Miles, who later changed his surname to Lockhart when he married Sofia’s mother Eunice Lockhart.

Charlotte was Lawrence’s daughter from his first marriage. She was only a few months older than Sofia. Because of this, the two always treated each other like sisters.

“You should already know what I was talking about, no?” he asked. This time, Sofia did not answer. She only stared at the document as she thought of what she heard last night.

Her 26th birthday was coming. This meant that her trust fund and inheritance from her late grandfather would belong to her. Shares, stocks, bonds, properties, and at least three hundred million dollars. The inheritance was something that every Lockhart would get once they came of age.

However, to get this inheritance, some conditions must be met. She did not tell Daniel about these conditions, as this had been kept a secret by the Lockhart Family. She did not intend to tell him anything about this matter either.

However, after what she witnessed last night, she was convinced that Daniel knew about the conditions, and that was why he wanted to keep her around despite sleeping with Sofia’s sister.

“The shares...” she mumbled. There can only be one reason why her stepfather would create a scandal like this. It was to taint her name. He wanted to show the board that the heiress of LH Group is a plagiarizing ass. This would surely affect how they view Sofia.

“Smart,” he smirked.

“My father— Lawrence would never do something like this.” She said. However, a part of her already doubted her own words. She grew up with Lawrence, and he treated her like family all this time.

“Just like how your sister would never betray your trust?” he asked.

That hurt. Must he add fuel to the fire? She was not sure if he was making fun of her. The funny thing was, that he was only stating facts. She swallowed in response. What happened last night was enough of a wake-up call for Sofia.

She had been too lenient.

No. That was not leniency. It was stupidity.

How did she not notice that Daniel had been cheating on her? How did she not notice that every time Daniel has a conference or a business meeting, Charlotte would magically have a photoshoot or a film too?

How? Was she truly that stupid?

She flipped through the document in her hand as if her stomach hadn't just growled earlier. To her surprise, there were other things included in the document. Again, there were images. However, unlike the images that he gave her earlier, this one was that of her stepfather.

“This woman...”

“Lawrence Miles's ex and Charlotte Lockhart's mother, Lianne Ramirez.”

As far as Sofia knew, Lianne abandoned Charlotte right after giving birth. She left and never came back. Lawrence quickly assumed all the responsibility and became a single father. Was it all a lie?

She swallowed. Over the years, Sofia started calling Lawrence, father. There was once a time that Lawrence wanted to legally adopt her, but Sofia's

grandmother declined, as one needed to be a Lockhart to be able to have her inheritance. To Sofia's grandmother, Lawrence is not a Lockhart.

Because of this, Sofia's relationship with her grandmother soured.

She flipped through the images and soon found something even more concerning. It was Lianne, Lawrence with someone wearing large shades that covered her beautiful face— It was Charlotte!

So Charlotte was already seeing her biological mother? She turned the card and saw the dates. This was a year ago! Did Charlotte know about Lianne and Lawrence's relationship since a year ago?

The next photos answered her questions.

The images were of three talking and even vacationing in a tropical country.

"What about my mother?" she mumbled. If Lawrence and Charlotte had been acting like this for a while now then... what about her mother who was currently staying in a medical facility because of some personal issues?

"Are you seeing everything now?" he asked. Then he leaned forward. "Everything has been planned. It was a deliberate scheme."

Sofia opened her mouth; she wanted to argue, perhaps ask for more evidence, but the more she thought about the proof in front of her, the colder she got. In the end, she closed her mouth without saying another word.

"Unfortunately, I cannot prove that what happened to your mother was deliberate. Whoever did it covered their tracks very well." Alexander leaned back, a languid smile on his face.

She nodded. She cannot exactly let him do everything. "So you wanted to marry me to get my shares of Beaumont Empire?" she asked. Alexander Beaumont was a well-known bachelor. There had been rumors of him having various kinds of relationships, but all would disappear in a day or two.

"It is not a bad deal, isn't it?" he asked.

She wet her lips. Daniel wanted to marry her because he wanted her eight percent shares of the Beaumont Empire. Their reasons for marrying were almost the same, except that Alexander was using a rather direct approach.

“Marrying me would not only devastate Daniel but... would solidify your position as the heiress of LH Group. It’s a win—win.” He said as he reached out to his cup and slowly enjoyed his coffee.

“A marriage of convenience, huh...” Sofia said.

“The perfect one,” he responded, the side of his lips quirking up into another smirk.

The Nail in the Coffin

Sofia sank into her personally customized white ornate chair, her attention fixed on the wisps of steam dancing above the coffee resting on the table before her.

Despite her role as the creative director of a fashion company, Sofia’s office radiated simplicity that bordered on plainness. The color scheme was stark—black and white, meticulously organized to maintain a sense of order. It was intentional, reflecting her desire for clarity and focus in her workspace.

However, she was far from her usually focused self at the moment. Her brows furrowed as she pondered the proposition from Mr. Beaumont. It had been two days since she saw him— two days since she saw the betrayal.

She closed her eyes, exhaustion was gnawing on her soul. In the past two days, she had mostly spent her time crying and being miserable. When is the pain going to ease?

A knock on her door interrupted her thoughts. She lifted her gaze and met her secretary, Miss Amores, with a smiling face. “Is there something?” Sofia asked.

“Mr. Lawrence Lockhart is here with the COO Mr. Oh.”

The mention of her stepfather’s name made her gaze tremble. She was quickly reminded of what Alexander told her. For a moment, she wondered what she would do when she saw Lawrence again. “Let them in,” she cleared her throat.

This would be the first time she would see her stepfather since that conversation with Alexander. She got up, forcing a smile on her face. She cannot falter now.

“Sofia,” a middle-aged man greeted her the moment he walked in. This man was none other than the man whom Sofia had been calling father. Lawrence Miles— Lockhart.

“Father,” Sofia greeted back. “I thought you were with Mr. Oh?”

“He is currently in Mrs. Phelps’s office.”

Sofia’s eyebrow lifted. Mrs. Phelps was their Production manager. “I hope there is no problem?” Sofia asked while helping the man out of his coat.

“Of course not... Mr. Oh is currently checking all the production in our subsidiaries for the annual meeting. I apologize for not telling you in advance.”

“No problem,” Sofia said, though she suspected this was intentional, especially after her conversation with Alexander.

“Coffee?”

“Please...” her father gave a warm smile as he sat on the plush couch inside Sofia’s office. He eyed the large painting in front of the couch and smiled. “I am glad that you still like this painting after so many years...”

This was a painting that Lawrence personally made for Sofia, a gift during her graduation.

“I quite liked it...” Sofia said after asking her secretary to make some coffee for them. Sofia’s earlier coffee had gotten cold, so she asked for a new one. “Still two sugar and no cream?” she asked.

“Yes...” Lawrence said. “You know me too well.”

Sofia chuckled, sitting on the one-seater by the side of the large couch. “How was the preparation for the Annual meeting?” she asked.

“It is going well. Everything has been prepared. However... I am not here to talk about such matters.”

Sofia’s gaze lingered on her stepfather’s face. Lawrence Miles wasn’t exceptionally good-looking, but there was a simple charm in his light gray eyes. Overall, his features looked calming and trustworthy. His voice was always calm and soft. Now, a part of her wonder if there is any truth about the man’s personality.

“Please don’t tell me you are not here to encourage me to marry someone...” Sofia chortled while dramatically rolling her eyes.

“What is wrong with marrying at the age of twenty-six? Your mother and I are old enough. Don’t you think it is time that you give us some grandchildren?” he asked. This was a conversation they’d had many times.

“Charlotte is even older than me. If anything, she should be the one getting married first.”

“Charlotte is an actress. She had high ambitions in Hollywood. I have encouraged her to at least find someone but...” he sighed. “All of it ended up with us fighting. You know your sister very well.”

Sofia chuckled. Did she truly know Charlotte at all? She’d heard this conversation repeatedly in recent months. On the surface, it sounded like he was encouraging her to marry for the sake of her sick mother. However, after that conversation with Alexander, she wondered if it was because she was about to have her shares in the company.

She only smiled in response, using the disguise of

drinking her coffee to hide her expression. Her mother, Eunice Lockhart, had been in a medical facility for two years now. The thought worsened her mood.

“Never mind... you are young and brilliant. I am certain that it would not take Daniel too long to propose. When the time comes... you should accept it. Settle down and give us grandchildren. In this way, I could leave this world in peace.”

“...” Sofia did not know how to react. In the past, she would have comforted him immediately, telling him that he was only in his fifties, young and able. However, after everything, she couldn’t seem to come up with a way to deal with this dramatic situation.

“Ah, this is why I told you not to overwork yourself,” Sofia said. “Let the others do their work or you can simply wait for my next birthday. Once I have the voting rights and the right to work in the main office, I will be there to lessen your burden.”

As expected, a glimmer of an unknown emotion flashed in Lawrence's eyes. It vanished before Sofia could recognize what it was. Seeing this, she lowered her head, her expression sinking.

"Ah, look at that, it seems that Mr. Oh just finished with his business." Her stepfather got up. She immediately got up and once again helped him with his coat.

"You should visit your mother in the hospital," Lawrence said, his tone solemn. "The doctors said there have been some improvements lately."

"They said that two months ago..." Sofia answered before letting out a sigh. "I will visit Mom today." Seeing her mood turn sour, Lawrence smiled then he gave her a hug before leaving her office.

Almost immediately, her expression changed when Lawrence left. She immediately ran towards her laptop and turned it on. Earlier, she managed to slip a small voice recorder on the lapel of Lawrence's coat. It was something that Alexander generously provided to help her make up her mind—something that she found rather abominable yet quite useful.

He thought it would be quite useful and it seems that he was right.

Sadly, the recorder would not last that long. It was small and did not have the capability to charge itself. Apparently, Beaumont Empire was working on creating a better version of this recorder.

Sofia could only sigh as she started listening to Lawrence's conversation with Mr. Oh as the two descended in the elevator.

"How was it?" Lawrence asked. At this time, the two were already in the car.

"Everything has been prepared... I have acquired some sketches." Mr. Oh said. One could easily hear the chuckle that followed his words. "And her?" he asked.

"Still clueless..." Lawrence responded. "Daniel already agreed to propose to her on her birthday. Convincing her not to sign any prenup should be easy for him. When the time comes..." Lawrence did not continue his words, but Sofia heard a clinking sound on the other side.

Were they toasting to their future success?

Sofia's lips trembled inwardly. The sadness that she felt earlier seemed to vanish. What replaced it was pure rage and hatred.

"You should call Doctor Mulach and tell him to increase the dosage," Lawrence's voice echoed inside Sofia's head like a bell tolling over and over again. "She cannot wake up now."

"Understood..." Mr. Oh answered. Once again, Sofia heard a chuckle.

Unable to continue listening to their conversation, Sofia got up and stared at the view from the floor-to-ceiling windows of her office. Doctor Mulach is currently the head doctor in charge of her mother's well-being. Since Eunice lost consciousness two years ago, Doctor Mulach had been the one in charge of her treatment.

Sofia had trusted him as he was a well-known doctor both abroad and in the US. Who would have thought that he was harming her very own mother instead of healing her?

Who would have thought that Sofia would be so stupid to believe everyone around her?

She clenched her jaw, her gaze narrowed at the cars that she could see from where she was standing. Her heart raced against her chest as she forced herself to calm down. Closing her eyes, Sofia was not able to stop a single tear from falling into her cheeks.

Indeed. Being betrayed by the people that she trusted the most was worse than being stabbed by an enemy.

A chuckle escaped her lips as she took her phone and dialed a number.

"What took you so long?" Mr. Beaumont's deep and sexy voice answered just after a ring. Sofia closed her eyes, she then bit her lower lip. Then she said. "Let's get married."

Chapter 5

Smooth jazz tunes danced through the air, creating a mellow atmosphere in the dining room of the Beaumont Mansion. The gentle hum of the nearby man-made lake and the sounds of birds outside the mansion added to the tranquil setting.

However, this did not ease the tension that wrapped around Mrs. Beaumont as she feigned a smile toward the beautiful woman with her blond hair across from her. "I never expected that you would still remember the perfume that I like, Zoe. I truly appreciate it," Mrs. Teresa Beaumont said.

Her gaze drifted toward Alexander, who was sitting next to Zoe, silently sipping his tea. Seeing his lack of interest in the current conversation, she quickly added, "How was your trip to Paris?" She took a sip of her tea, her gaze again darting towards Alexander.

Zoe smiled in response, her dimples showing. "It was perfect. Sadly, I did not visit Paris for a vacation. I barely had any sleep," Zoe Smith said. "The fashion week was brutal as always."

"Ah... look, I believe your favorite cookies are done. Let me get the chefs..." Teresa got up and quickly rushed towards the kitchen without waiting for them to say another word.

Seeing his stepmother gone, Alexander immediately stood up.

"Alex... where are you going?" Zoe asked, her innocent blue eyes meeting his brown icy ones. For a few seconds, she froze, unable to cope with the coldness of his eyes.

"I have a meeting in five..." Alex said.

"But I just I just arrived and-"
"She looked at the box on the table. "You have yet to open the gift that I bought."

"Let mother open it," Alexander said. He turned around, but just as he

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started walking, he felt someone grab his arm.

"Are you planning to avoid me forever?" Zoe asked softly.

Alexander turned and stared at the woman wearing a beige frilly dress. "I would appreciate it if Miss Smith stopped touching me. I believe it would not be ap

appropriate if the media took a single picture of this. It would ruin Miss Smith's reputation."

"Alex, look..."

"Call me Mr. Beaumont," Alexander said. While his voice was not loud, it was icy, devoid of any expression. Almost immediately, Zoe's eyes reddened.

"It's been five years..." Zoe said, almost meekly. "I know I hurt you. Please-

"If I had known that Miss Smith would visit today, I would not have come," Alexander said. "I would prefer it if Miss Smith kept her distance from me. There is nothing between us. I do not want the media to misunderstand anything."

"Alexander, I was your fiancée..."

"Was..." Alexander snorted as he corrected her. "Was is a complete

sentence." With that, he shook his arm, prompting her to let go of his suit. However, Zoe was far from being done.

"Can you at least... treat me like a friend?" Zoe's words echoed inside the mansion. "I— I know I made a mistake, but that was in the past. Can— Can we start over?"

Alexander pursed his lips. Just as he was about to answer, his phone suddenly rang. He opened it, and his icy gaze immediately vanished. "What took you so long?" he smirked. There was a brief silence on the other line before he heard a sigh. "Let's get married."

He chuckled at that. "Send me your address. I will send Josef for you." Then he ended the call and started walking away, his strides long and fast.

This time, Zoe did not stop him from walking outside the mansion. What surprised Alexander was seeing his younger brother, Daniel Beaumont, about to walk inside.

"Alex..." Daniel greeted. "You didn't tell me you would be visiting Mother today"

“Hmmm...” Alex simply nodded. “Tell your mother to stop involving herself in my affairs.”

“What? What did she-” Daniel sighed. “Was it Zoe again?”

Alexander walked past him without saying a word.

“Look, Mother just wanted you to settle down. Father and she are-

“How was your trip, Daniel?” Alexander interrupted him. “How was the conference?”

“I— ”

“It seems that you are too free lately. You even have the time to talk about my affairs.”

“What? That is not-

“There is a new project in Asia. I am going to send you to supervise it.” Alexander started walking towards his car. Hearing his words, Daniel immediately ran after him.

“Alex wait, what are you talking about? I thought you were sending me to Europe? How about France?”

“France is too easy... you need something more challenging. Something that would take a lot of your time.”

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“France is challenging. I think you need to reconsider. 1— ”

“Tell your mother this is but a warning. Next time she does something like this, I am kicking you out of the company.” Alexander smirked. “You know very well how I keep my word.”

Daniel stood there, frozen when he heard his brother’s words. As the CEO and acting Chairman of Beaumont Empire, Alexander had all the power to do all these thi

ngs. However, Daniel could only glare at his brother's tall back as he watched him drive away from the mansion.

The moment his brother left, his face immediately turned ugly. He, too, was a Beaumont. However, he was treated as if he were a rat. Always. currying favors, running around to simply maintain his position in the company! Sadly, even their father could not do anything about this

matter.

He gritted his teeth as he walked towards the mansion, his gaze complicated. Instead of wallowing in jealousy and anger, he should do something about his current situation. Almost immediately, his thoughts. turned to—Sofia Lockhart.

Her shares would solidify his position in the Beaumont Empire. Her name alone would help Daniel have a steady position in the company. Surely, Alexander would not do anything to someone who would soon lead the LH Group, right?

He sighed as he walked inside. Just as he expected, he saw Alexander's ex- fiancée and Teresa on the couch. Zoe was crying in his mother's arms.

If this were in the past, Daniel would have comforted Zoe and told her to be more patient with his brother. However, he was not in the mood for any of this. He glared at his mother before turning towards his room to

call Sofia.

She was the only thing that could change his status!