

4 The Hidden Heiress.

Chapter Four- "The Hidden Heiress".

Isabella Montague.

"Miss Montague, we're arrived."

I icked the invitation card between my index and middle nger, my eyes lazily slanting in the direction of the window of the limousine, the incessant ash of camera blinding even from the other side of the tinted window.

The chauffeur came to the side of my door, and waited for a few seconds before he leaned down and pulled it open, exposing me to the numerous paparazzi cameras there. If I thought the lights were blinding earlier, then I'm going to need glasses at this rate or stop seeing entirely.

I didn't let it get to me though. Instead, I placed my hand in that of the chauffeur as he helped me out, and once I was on my feet steady, he went ahead to close the door behind me.

The red carpet was laid out, leading all the way to the inside of the grand hall set for the event, and outside were lines of paparazzi taking shoots of everything from every angle for the Karl & Rose Ball. The minute I stepped foot on the red carpet, I heard their questions come from all angles as they whispered amongst themselves.

"Who is she?"

"I've never seen her before."

"Woah. She looks rich."

"Is she an actress or something? I mean, look at that awless skin."

"Whoever she is, I'm sure she has a hellu inuence."

Well, they aren't wrong about that. But, I didn't let their words get to me, knowing better than to allow myself to be caught up in the fever of fame. Instead, I held my chin up, and strutted my way down the red carpet, my steps calculated and steady, never once faltering or making any indications of such.

I didn't pay any attention to the camera, knowing they've snapped more than enough to make up stories. And if they haven't, they'll be plenty of time because I'm certain the news headline of tomorrow will be epic enough and my face will be plastered all across it.

Upon entering the grand hall, I was instantly welcomed by the sound of sound of classic music in the background and light murmurs of the guests as they interacted. From the deep jewel tone palette to soaring ceiling with ornate moldings and decorative detailing—a crystal grand chandeliers hanging as a centerpiece, casting a warm and glittering glow throughout the room. Elaborate wall paneling ad pilasters with glided details added a touch of sophisticate to the place.

I took slower steps as I looked around the place, coming to stand by the steps where a man awaits, dressed in the attire of workers. Judging from his stance and look, I knew what he's there for, so I extended my hand with the card out to him.

"Thank you, Ma'am." He parted the card to see the name of the guest, so he can know who made it and whatsoever.

His calm composure upon collecting the card and all was discarded out the window upon seeing the name scribbled there. He looked up to stare at me, then shifted his attention back to the name as to make sure he's actually seeing the real owner of the name in esh.

His reaction nearly had me chuckling, keyword, nearly. I didn't though, for I had better things to do than stand and be amused by a worker stunned by my presence.

Instead, I turned around and gracefully made my way down the spiral stairs leading to the ballroom, leaving the stunned man there to do his work. The stairs were also lined by a red carpet that ended at the foot of the stairs.

I could feel people's eyes on me as I descended the stairs, which started with me catching the attention of one person, who tapped the person beside him and it continued that way.

My stiletto covered feet kissed the marble oors with intricate pattern as I stepped into the grandeur hall where the ball is taking place. Everyone else seemed to be with their partners or groups as they interacted, given they are all part of a small circle where everyone knows each other.

And then, there's me, the guest's no one knows, but I do know them all well enough. Their curious gazes and judging eyes meant nothing to me, as I made my way around the place, knowing it like the back of my hand as I navigated around in search of a particular someone, ignoring the curious looks.

The person found me before I did, or at least, the wrong person did.

"Am I seeing this clearly, or...is it really you?"

I halted in my steps, upon hearing a familiar voice. My spine straightened, my lips slanting downwards into a small frown. Turning around, I plastered a small smile on my face as my gaze met that of someone I haven't seen in a while.

"Mrs. Donnelly." I acknowledged my former mother-in-law with a fake smile. "It's been a while." I kept my voice calm and composed.

Ma, or Mrs. Donnelly as I'd prefer to call her now didn't bother to hide her distaste towards me as she offered me a onceover, her face scrunching up. "So, it really is you." Her eyes met mine, narrowed. "Who let a lowlife like you into this place? And where did you borrow this dress from?"

"You're still the same as ever." I commented drily. "Good to know."

"It's only been what? Two months since you got divorced, and look at you." She scoffed, taking a step towards me. "Are you here to lobby up to James so he can take you back?"

I quirked a brow. Is this woman for real? She thinks I came all the way here just for her son? Oh please.

She extended her hand to ick a strand of her hair behind her ear, her lips curling upwards into a smug grin. "Oh, honey. He's way ahead of you now. Piece of advice, you better leave while you can still save your face." She then dropped her voice, whispering. "You can return this rental dress in one piece to save you the extra cost as well."

I wasn't offended by her words. I've spent three years enduring such treatment, this is nothing. Besides, I had predicted this situation, and I came prepared for it. However, when I looked over her shoulder, and my eyes fell on the family that I've left, with a certain blonde I'm familiar with in the arms of the said man, I found myself doing something impulsive out of the plan.

I shifted my gaze to Mrs. Donnelly. "If you'd excuse me. I need to go back to my ancée." I put on a smile on my face, though I was freaking internally. What ancée? Where did that come from?

Her face contorted into that of surprise, then she cackled mockingly. "I see you're already w****g around. Tell me, who did you snag? A dying old millionaire."

My smile didn't falter. I took a step closer to her, dropping my voice so only she could hear. "It's an insult to associate myself with someone as mere as a millionaire. Keep that in mind." I offered her a smile, because her son is one, and I know she'll take it to heart. "Now if you'll excuse me, I've got a ancée waiting."

I turned around, and walked away, overly aware of her attention on me. I know she's waiting to see whom I'd go back to, and after everything I've said, I cannot just walk away and lose face like that. I just put on a show about a ancée that doesn't exist.

Shit. Now I got to nd someone to pretend with. But, who?

A passing waiter came with a tray of champagne. I reached out my hand and took it, my eyes taking a quick survey around the males there to see which one is more betting.

There are quite a lot and each has this aura that doesn't sit right with me.

Until I saw him. He was talking to another man, but something about him drew me to him. So, bringing the champagne ute to my lips, I took a huge gulp from it as I covered the distance between us.

Upon reaching where he stood, I placed a hand on his arms and turned him around. He did so easily, no doubt wanting to see who it is. I did a quick survey of his face, deeming him worthy enough to at least make out with.

His eyes held a questioning look. I whispered lowly, "Play along, please." I didn't give him a chance to react as I reached up and pecked his lips. I could see the surprise written across his face almost instantly when I pulled away, so I found myself whispering in a small voice. "Sorry, I have an ex watching."

His eyes moved over my shoulder for a split second, and as if seeing who I'm referring to, he met my gaze, his lips curling into a ghost smile. "Well, in that case, that's too small." I quirked a brow in question, but I felt his hand wrap around my waist and with one tug, he pulls me towards him.

Before I could comprehend what's going on, I felt his warm lips on mine, capturing me for a deep kiss that left my inside in jumbles. My feet curled as I remained frozen for a while. But, with his lips moving against mine, I slowly recovered and wrapped an arm around his neck, kissing him back.

I have no doubt how long it lasted, but at one point, he pulled back, not without a gentle graze of my bottom lip with his teeth. I was breathless, and so was he but he offered me a lopsided grin that had my stomach in knots.

Fuck, for a second, I was in a haze, too caught up in trying to recover from what just happened. However, one thing did well to snap me from whatever I was stuck in. An announcement I had been waiting for.

"Tonight with us, we have a very important guest making a public appearance for the rst time. The heir to trillionaire and aristocrat, Duke of Westminster, Edward Montague; his daughter and heiress, Lady Isabella Vivien Montague."

Then, the spotlight was set on me, for the grand appearance I was preparing for. Only, I'm now in the arms of a man I have no idea who he is, with a million eyes set on us.

Shit, this isn't what I prepared for. What I didn't know though, was that my old plan was about to become bigger, and even better. Because regardless of the situation I found myself in, when I sneaked a glance at the Donnelly family and saw the looks on their faces, I was hellu satished.

Karma is a b***h, and I'm about to serve it hot.