

Chapter 2 Unfaithful

The next morning, Aria was woken by a knock on her door. She slowly opened her eyes but panicked when she found a heavy hand around her, holding her tightly against a hard body. She recognized the touch of her husband but was still confused as to why he held her closer when he despised her so deeply. Was he so drunk last night that he forgot his hatred for her?

She slightly shifted and carefully peeked at her sleeping husband. She was still stunned by how a man so dangerous and powerful could look so gorgeous. Her eyes drank in the sight of her mafia husband’s broad, powerful shoulders and strong, muscular, tattooed arms wrapped around her like a python.

His hard, well-sculpted chest pressed against her back, and she could still feel every groove and ridge of his eight-pack abs. His thick, muscular thighs were entangled between her legs, and his hard morning wood poked her, seducing her to succumb to the temptation.

She sighed, looking at his calm face and closed eyes. His blue, enchanting eyes were his most alluring feature. However, his broad forehead, pointed nose, full natural red lips, and sharp jawline could even defeat a Greek god.

She still remembered her wedding day when she saw him for the first time and fell in love with him instantly. But then she realized slowly she had given her heart to a heartless devil who didn’t know how to cherish her love.

Right now, she was terrified that if his sleep was disturbed, his mood would be worse than ever. After spending three years with him, she knew him very well. She understood his needs and wants without him even speaking. It wasn't a regular habit, but a result of her selfless and unconditional love for him. She married him when she was eighteen, falling in love with him at first sight. After marrying him, she lived with the hope that one day her love and devotion would make him fall in love with her.

But slowly, her hope shattered as every day she saw photos of her husband with a new woman in his arms in every newspaper and tabloid. She realized she was living in false hope and that her wish for a happy marriage was never going to be fulfilled. Swallowing the lump in her throat, she slowly removed his hands from her waist and carefully got up without making a noise. She was still naked, so she swiftly put on her clothes as the sound of knocking grew louder and went to open the door. The sides of the door slid apart, revealing her mother-in-law looking at her with a pitiful smile.

It was no secret how Alessandro treated his wife, and Aria was accustomed to those pitiful glances and sometimes mocking looks at her miserable status as the wife of the strongest and most powerful man in the country.

"Is Alessandro awake?" her mother-in-law, Maria, asked Aria. Maria was Alessandro's stepmother, but she was always kind to Aria and the only person who felt empathy for her. She had managed Alessandro’s father and Alessandro after his mother ran away with her lover, betraying his father. Alessandro was fourteen years old then, and since that day, he had hated women and never trusted any except his stepmother, Maria.

“No, he is still asleep,” Aria replied softly.

“Oh dear, he will be mad if he is late for his office. Never mind, I will wake him up. You go and prepare his breakfast. You know how terrible his mood gets when he doesn't get everything on time,” Maria suggested, holding Aria’s hand with concern. Aria nodded and quickly scurried downstairs to the kitchen to prepare Alessandro’s favorite breakfast.

Maria entered the room and closed the door behind her, a cunning grin playing on her lips as she looked at the sleeping Alessandro. She knew exactly what she had to do to spoil his day. As she slowly walked toward Alessandro's bed, something caught her foot, causing her to look down. There, on the floor, lay the shredded panties of Aria.

Her happy mood turned sour, and she gritted her teeth in anger. Maria never wanted her stepson to have a happy married life and constantly created misunderstandings between Alessandro and Aria. Alessandro, blinded by his trust in his stepmother, believed everything she said.

With hatred, Maria kicked the shredded panties, sending them sliding under the bed. Plastering on her fake sweet smile again, she approached the bed and tenderly caressed Alessandro's head, waiting for him to wake up.

But Alessandro slapped her hand away on instinct, making Maria yelp in pain. Alessandro opened his eyes and looked at Maria's pained face, confusion and irritation mingling in his sleepy gaze.

"I am sorry, Mother. I didn't know it was you," he muttered, but his voice remained cold. He had forgotten how to speak softly. So much bitterness filled his heart that he was unable to feel love or affection.

When his mother ran away with her lover, Alessandro’s father, Antonio—who was the mafia lord of western Italy at the time—caught them and killed both his wife and her lover in front of Alessandro. A small boy's heart couldn't bear the trauma of witnessing his mother's murder, unable to do anything to stop it. To shield himself, he instinctively began to believe that every woman was unfaithful and untrustworthy.

After Antonio married Maria and brought her home with her son, Alessandro was forced to call her "Mother." Maria showed him more love than she did her own son. Slowly, young Alessandro began to believe she was his well-wisher and trusted everything she said. Even now, as a twenty-eight-year-old grown man, believing his stepmother had become a habit for him.

"Good morning, Alessandro. It's late, and I thought to check on you. I was worried since you never sleep in so late," Maria murmured in a concerned voice.

"I came in late last night and I don't have a meeting until the afternoon. So, I didn't have to go to work early. Don't worry, I am fine," Alessandro said, getting out of bed and pulling a T-shirt over his head.

“Oh, silly me,” Maria laughed playfully, slapping her forehead. “And I thought you would be upset because Aria spent two million on shopping yesterday,” she said in a trembling voice. It was all part of her act to get Alessandro to believe her. “Please, don’t be mad at her. She’s young and naive.”

“Why would I be mad at her for spending my money? She’s my wife and can spend as much as she wants,” Alessandro said carelessly. Maria burned with jealousy, but she put on a meek smile. It was she who spent two million on shopping using the black card Alessandro had given to his wife with an unlimited limit. Maria always used Aria's card but blamed Aria for being a gold digger and using Alessandro's money without care.

“Oh, Alessandro, you are such a kind husband, my son. I don’t know why Aria feels the need to flirt with other men,” she whispered slowly but loud enough for Alessandro to hear.

“What did she do?” Alessandro’s eyes burned with anger as he glared at his stepmother.

"I am sorry, I shouldn't have blurted it out. I... I should leave," Maria muttered, her voice trembling with worry. She began to back away, knowing what was likely to happen next. It was her everyday act.

"No, stop," Alessandro ordered furiously. "Tell me what Aria did."

Maria sighed, pretending to be hesitant. In a falsely dull voice, she said, "Yesterday, when we went shopping, she met a young and handsome salesman. She flirted with him. I tried to warn her, but as you know, she never listens to me."

Alessandro didn't wait to hear more. He stormed out of the room, his mind set on finding his wife. Burning with anger and jealousy, he needed to make Aria realize who she belonged to.