The Millionaire's Marriage Contract / Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Two Old Millionaires

The rooftop bar was full of hazy cigar smoke. A server in a short black dress walks over to two old men in suits and offers them more bourbon, which they take without a thank you as they puff on their expensive cigars and read newspapers.

They smoke and sip their bourbon in silence for a few more minutes until the man with a

The balding, shorter man looks up from his paper. "What's he done now Paul?

head full of thick white combed back hair grunts in frustration.

The man named Paul throws his paper down in frustration, pointing at the picture on the page facing up. "The damn i***t's went and got himself in the paper again. Another party, another gold-

digging socialite." He swigs the last of his bourbon and the server appears out of nowhere to rell his empty glass.

The balding man leans over with some diculty to look at the paper on the oor, squinting at it.

"I'm sure he'll settle down soon." "Like hell he will." Paul mumbles with his cigar still in his mouth, before taking it out for

another sip of his drink.

"Ah, don't get your blood pressure up Paul, he'll gure it out."

"He'll be the death of me, and then the death of my whole bloody business."

Paul shakes his head, his saggy jawline swinging. "He's a damn fool. Too busy chasing skirts and booze to run a business."

"Oh, we've all been there." The balding man chuckled. "When the time comes, he'll get his head on straight.

Paul shakes his head again. "I don't think so Art. At his age, we'd already started our rst company, made our rst million. Hell, I think at his age we were on our third company!" Art turns the page of his newspaper. "The times are different now, Paul. They settle down

later than we did." Paul grunts. "I was already on my second wife, at least!"

Art chuckles again. "Well, at least he isn't paying alimony to his socialites."

Paul grunts again, looking over at Art.

"How's Bree doing?"

Art smiles. "She's doing great. She has a real knack for the business world, she'll do well taking over the company."

"Oh, she doesn't even try. She's the rst one at the oce in the morning and the last one to

"She found herself a man yet?"

Paul chuckles too.

other out!"

Art looks doubtful.

"No no, listen."

Bree's POV

growls at me, I forgot to eat again.

constantly falling out of place.

about how she looks.

executives.

cigar smoke is disgusting.

reply's in my name.

voice.

Oh god.

two.

his body is sexy as hell.

inches taller than her.

God, is he still here?

to look at my menu.

I nod without looking up.

"Sure thing. See you around, Bree."

Gag.

"Here you are. Can I get you something to drink?"

The hostess comes back with my water and leaves.

I shake my head and look back at my phone.

top with a high neck, and hot pink pumps.

Her eyebrows disappear into her short blonde bangs.

"Boss man wants you to meet him up at Everly."

I take a sip of my fresh and delicious latte, closing my eyes briey.

"Fine. Could you look through my e-mails and try to sign off on..."

"Ha! My kid won't even show up at the oce and yours never leaves!" Paul slaps his knee. Art chuckles again. "What a pair they would be!"

leave." He shakes his head. "I worry she'll never have a life outside of there."

"Hey, Art. That's not a bad idea."

"I mean, the kids being a pair." "Paul..."

"No no, hear me out." Paul waves his cigar in front of him, ash falling onto the thick burgundy rug beneath them.

They go back to silently drinking their bourbon when Paul leans forward.

Art lowers the paper slightly to look questioningly at Paul.

"What if we play matchmaker?" "Ooh no. I couldn't do that to Bree..."

Art shakes his head. "I don't know about that Paul."

out on her actual life. You've told me several times!"

Paul seems undeterred, moving to the edge of his seat. "Listen, it's all coming to me. We are both ready to retire, but we hang on even though we are tired because we worry about our kids taking over. Yes yes, I know Bree is great in the

"But, you worry if you leave that she'll spend her entire life in that damn building and miss

business world." He waves his hands dismissively at Art who had opened his mouth.

"Why not?" Paul's booming voice is loud as he waves his arms enthusiastically. "Bree's

always been too uptight, Cranston has always been too wild, they would balance each

won't have to worry about our business's future, or our kids." "Paul, that seems a far stretch..."

Art sighs. He'd known Paul for years and knew Paul wouldn't stop until he heard out his

multi-millionaires by their 20's, and their fortunes only grew from there. He had a way of

plan. The thing is, Paul has crazy ideas sometimes, but it's what helped them both become

"Cranston has the knowledge to run the business, but he can't seem to stop living his life

outside of work. If we could force them together, they could rub off on each other and we

making his crazy ideas come true and actually work. "Ok Paul. Tell me your plan." "I think it's time we joined our companies again Art, and the kids are going to help."

I'm up to my eyeballs in e-mails. With our new product about to be released, the marketing

I've been at my desk responding to e-mails since 6:00 AM. It's now 2:00 and my stomach

I push my loose hairs around my face back. I always try to pull all my hair back, but I unconsciously run my hands through my pulled back hair while I work, and strands are

I look up at a soft knock at my oce door. It's my assistant Erica. She's a young plump

wearing a aring skirt with what looks to be different types of dogs on it and a white ruy

"What is it Erica?" My voice sounds exhausted even to myself, so I try a smile at her.

woman, barely out of college, with a unique fashion style and pink tipped hair. Today she's

department needs constant approval before sending to press or posting online.

"Have you even taken a break today? You look burnt out!" "I'm ne. Just a lot of e-mails about the new product release." I push myself back from my desk. "What's up?" Erica walks into the oce and sets a fresh French vanilla latte on my desk. I reach for it

gratefully, she really is the best assistant ever, I don't care how much my dad complains

"Apparently you don't respond to all of your e-mails." She gives me a reprimanding look.

"Yeah, I saw his e-mail. I don't have time today." "Uh-uh!" Erica comes behind me and starts pushing my chair away from my desk. "Boss's orders! Besides, you could use a break." I sigh and glance at my computer.

will still be here for you to bury yourself in afterwards." I stand up. Food does sound good. I make my way to the door. "Don't forget your shoes!" Erica comes running up to me with my black heels in one hand and my black purse in the other, shaking her head, and taking my half drank coffee.

"Oh! Thanks." I give her a grateful smile. "I really don't know what I would do without you."

"Go to lunch barefoot apparently." Eric laughs and waves me out the door.

"Yes, yes! I know how to do my job. Go get some food and talk with boss man. Your work

I have my phone out before the elevator door closes, checking e-mails. When the door opens with a ping, I drop my phone back into my purse and look around.

I hope my dad has a table in the non-smoking side. I hate going into the lounge, all that

A hostess in a mid-length black pencil skirt and white button up blouse comes up to me.

I hold back an eye roll. Of course, he isn't here yet. Why would he be? I dig out my phone as

I follow the hostess and scroll through sent e-mails, making sure Erica sends the right

"Hello Ms. Leely, follow me. Your father isn't here yet, but he will be in shortly."

I slide on my designer heels and make my way to the executive elevator and push the

large, silver button for Everly, the entire oor that is a swanky restaurant that is only for

"Just water please." She takes off and I take my seat next to the huge oor to ceiling windows.

I'm typing out an e-mail to correct a typo on a social campaign when I hear a familiar

I look up and there's Cranston Whittington. He's got huge, dark sunglasses on, a casual,

semi-tted black tee, dark jeans, and a bleach blonde bimbo in a skin-tight strapless

leather mini dress hanging on his arm. They laugh as they stumble out of the elevator,

looking like they are literally still partying from last night, and it's 2:00 in the afternoon.

"Hey! It's Bree Leely!" With an inward groan I look back up.

As he gets closer, I try not to gag at the overwhelmingly stench of alcohol coming off the

I let my eyes roam up and down, from his messy slightly too long dark brown wavy hair to

his white converse sneakers. Even though he is a drunken mess, there is no denying that

"What are you doing here Cranston?" I sigh, bringing my eyes back to his covered ones.

"Old pops asked me to come in, wants to talk to me about something." He shrugs and the

bimbo giggles as he grins down at her. Even in her ridiculously tall heels, he still is several

I look closer at the bimbo. She's pretty, but her make-up is smudged under her eyes, a fake

Cranston is grinning as he and the bimbo make their way over to me.

"Hey!" Cranston grins down at me. "Long time, no see. Looking good!"

eyelash stuck to her cheek, her hair, which was probably smooth and straight at some point last night, is frizzy. She is looking at Cranston like she is the luckiest girl in the world to be under his arm.

"Well, enjoy." I say as I grab the menu in front of me and hold it up, pretending to look at it

"Uh, sure...I'm really busy with work, but you can have your assistant call mine." I continue

even though I've ordered the same thing for the past ten years.

"Mr. Whittington? Your father is waiting for you, if you would follow me."

"We should get together sometime! It's been too long."

coming around, thankfully. It's about the time our dad's split the companies and we stopped vacationing together, partly because Cranston's dad divorced his mom and found a quick new and much younger one, who my mother was NOT a fan of.

Cranston always was a fan of all play and no work, not showing an interest in his father's

business, but enjoying the perks of the company jet and all the attention it gave him from

women. I used to see him in newspapers and socialites blogs all the time, back when I

He constantly is on the top 100 most eligible bachelors list in the city as well, with every

"Bree." I look up and smile as my dad walks over to the table with his arms spread wide.

I stand and give him a hug and smell the cigar smoke and bourbon. He must be coming

actually had time to read something other than my e-mails.

socialite and their mother trying to snag him up.

"Oh, you know, new product being released."

conversation seems almost rehearsed.

more than usual, what's going on with him?

"Ok..." I say slowly, not sure what else to say.

"Yes, and...and I have some stipulations moving forward."

This makes absolutely no sense to me whatsoever.

Stipulations? What the f**k!

party boy! What is dad thinking?

"Dad..."

his eyebrows furrowed at me.

every class.

from the lounge side.

That guy has been a pain in my side since we were kids. Our father's use to do business

together forever until they branched out on their own, staying close friends, vacationing

together, and even working in the same building, but no longer sharing their companies.

He's a few years older than me and would always torment me, pull my hair, knock over my

sand castles, tease me about my braces...then he got to teenage years and he always had

a gang of friends with him, soon followed by gangs of girls, and then he just stopped

assistant to help you with that?" "I do, but I like to be hand's on."

"Psst. You can't be hands on everything, you'll never have a life!" My dad chuckles and his

I don't reply as the server comes over and takes our order. I order my favorite, lobster mac

It's not unusual for him to have a bourbon at lunch, but he seems like he's had quite a bit

"Where were we? Oh, yes! Bree, I'm worried about you." He leans forward across the table,

voice is louder than usual. I get a weird feeling that he is working up to something, this

and cheese, and look over at my dad, whose face is slightly ushed.

He rubs his hands together after the server takes our menus.

"Yes, I know." He waves his hand dismissively across the table. "Don't you have an

"I hear you are working way too hard." He says as he sits slowly in his chair.

"Wha- why?" I half laugh. "All you do is work. It's all you've ever done. I'm worried your life is going to pass you by and you'll regret it!"

I stare at him. Where is this going? It's not the rst time he's said something like this to

me. Both he and my mom tried to get me to loosen up in high school and college when I

stayed home every night studying, refusing to go out because I needed to be the top in

have a partner like I did to help you run the company." "What?" I'm shocked. Why would they remerge their companies together? This doesn't make sense.

"I want to help you." He leans even further over the table. "So, I've decided that I'm going to

lighten your load, I'm merging my company with Whittington Corporation, that way, you will

"Paul and I...well...we want to retire." He nods his head rmly, as if he's just convinced himself of what he is saying. "With your mother no longer with us, and Paul's divorce nalized from his last wife, we want to go stay on the islands and enjoy some sun."

"So, we want to leave the entire companies, or I should say company, to you and Cranston." My mouth drops open. There is absolutely NO WAY I can run a business with that loser

together.

"There are conditions, like I said." His eyes swivel back and forth as he rubs his hands "You and Cranston will inherit the company...if you get married...to each other."