

# **Shrouded Affections: Winning Back My CEO Wife novel**

## **by Artic Loon**

### Chapter 1 Give Her Twenty Million

In the CEO's lounge at Apex Group.

Eileen Curtis rose from the bed, gathering the shirt and short skirt strewn across the floor, putting them on swiftly. As she dressed, a seductive charm lingered in her eyes, still fresh from her recent encounter with the man on the bed. Her gaze met his cold expression.

The man's name was Bryan Dawson, the CEO of Apex Group, her boss, and her benefactor.

Their secret relationship was confined to this very lounge. Beyond these walls, she was nothing more than his special assistant.

"Mr. Dawson, if there's nothing more, I'll return to my duties," Eileen said, offering a practiced smile.

As she spoke, she deftly arranged her long hair into a bun, her appearance swiftly transitioning from enticing to strictly professional.

It almost seemed like she hadn't just been intimate with him.

Bryan narrowed his eyes, his gaze lingering on her delicate face.

"Vivian is back."

Eileen had reached the door of the lounge, hand poised to open it, when Bryan's words stopped her in her tracks.

Her body stiffened, and the color drained from her face; even her breathing momentarily halted.

However, she quickly regained her composure and turned around, maintaining her well-measured smile.

"Understood, Mr. Dawson. I will not step into this room again," she said.

Bryan's first love, Vivian Warren, for whom he had waited for six years, had returned. In his life, she had been nothing more than a means to satisfy his needs.

Despite the fact that his presence had been her sole source of support over the past two years, she was acutely aware that she only truly had him to herself in those intimate moments.

Bryan rose from the bed, indifferent to his state of nakedness. He found his pants on the floor and put it on.

"What does this have to do with you?" he asked with a chuckle, handing her his shirt, which she began to help him into.

As she buttoned his shirt, his voice came from above. "Draft a divorce agreement for me."

Eileen paused, her gaze lifting to his face, taking in the sharp lines of his jaw and his thin lips.

"She has wasted six years of her life on me. It's time to put an end to it," he stated, handing her his tie, breaking her from her thoughts. "What do you think?"

Without a word, Eileen took the tie, her heart a tumult of emotions.

In fact, the wife Bryan had mentioned was her.

Besides being his assistant and lover, she held another role in Bryan's life—his wife.

Six years ago, her mother had been diagnosed with cancer and needed urgent, costly treatment. Newly graduated and financially incapable, she had been desperate until the Dawson family's donation had come to her aid, an act of kindness she would never forget.

Later, when Bryan's fiancée, Vivian, had left him and moved abroad, it had led to widespread gossip and ridicule.

At that time, Bryan had needed a wife to save face. His grandmother had found Eileen, who had agreed to marry Bryan to repay the favor.

Grateful for the Dawson family's help, Eileen had faithfully played her part as Bryan's wife, asking for nothing more.

After the marriage, needing to continue paying for her mother's treatment, she had left a small company and joined Apex Group, hoping for better opportunities.

It was only then that she discovered Apex Group's CEO was Bryan, her husband, whom she had met only once on their wedding day and who hadn't recognized her since.

Determined to secure funds for her mother's ongoing medical treatments, Eileen stayed with the company, avoiding Bryan as much as possible. Fate, however, had other plans, and she had found herself sleeping with a drunken Bryan one night. Following this unintended encounter, Bryan had unexpectedly promoted her to be his special assistant.

Satisfied with her company, Bryan had forced her to sleep with him multiple times, eventually making her his sex partner.

Whenever he summoned her, she would comply. At times, he would inquire if she needed anything, and during financially tough moments, she would ask for money openly.

But when she didn't require financial assistance, she would decline his advances, striving to preserve some semblance of dignity in their interactions, resisting the reduction of their relationship to mere transactions.

Eileen had considered ending this kind of relationship with Bryan many times, but the steep costs of her mother's treatment had forced her to set aside her pride.

Moreover, she had fallen in love with Bryan.

Feeling unworthy of Bryan, she concealed her feelings, dedicating herself to supporting him at work.

But now, Vivian had returned.

Whether as Bryan's assistant or his wife, Eileen knew she had to step aside.

The realization that neither of her roles could compete with his first love was truly saddening.

A bitter smile suddenly crossed Eileen's lips.

Noticing this, Bryan furrowed his brow in confusion. "Why are you smiling?" he asked.

Eileen adjusted his tie and stood on her toes to smooth out his collar.

"I'm simply happy for you, Mr. Dawson. The woman you cherish is finally back," she said.

Taking a deep breath, she stepped back and nodded slightly. "I'll go draft the divorce agreement now."

Bryan frowned, feeling a flicker of annoyance somehow. "You're such an exemplary assistant, Eileen," he remarked.

Her detachment made him question his charm.

Eileen merely offered a smile, dismissing the underlying message in his compliment. "Thank you for acknowledging my work, Mr. Dawson."

As she turned to leave, Bryan's voice halted her once more. "Give her twenty million," he said.

Eileen paused for a moment and then said, "But the agreement was quite clear that she would leave with nothing upon the divorce—"

Bryan interjected, "After all, that's six years of her life. And she seemed to be having a difficult time back then. Just go and get it done soon."

After issuing his instructions, Bryan left the lounge.

Seated at his desk, he reminisced about the timid young woman he had met six years ago at the entrance to City Hall.

At that time, he had felt a deep resentment towards his family for forcing him into marriage and had borne no affection towards the woman they had selected to be his wife. As a result, he had never met her again after marriage.

To his surprise, during the ensuing six years, his wife had never once asked him or the Dawson family for anything.

In this aspect, she reminded him of Eileen.

Consequently, his perception of his wife had significantly improved, leading him to want to give her a divorce settlement of twenty million dollars.

Eileen soon finished preparing the divorce agreement and sent it over to Bryan. With his approval, she printed it out.

Later, Bryan and Eileen headed to the airport to pick up Vivian.

At the bustling airport, young folks were clinging to their moments together, while travelers in pairs radiated excitement for the journeys ahead.

Amidst the crowd, Bryan and Eileen stood out.

Bryan, dressed in an exquisitely tailored suit, possessed sharply defined features and a presence that commanded attention.

His lips were slightly pressed together, and his deep eyes displayed a touch of impatience as he watched the arrival gate.

Standing next to him, Eileen, appeared delicate and poised. Her long hair fell loosely around her shoulders, and a light application of makeup enhanced her features. She had dressed up with care, knowing he would want her company to the airport.

Not knowing why and understanding it might be pointless, she had made the effort nonetheless.

The look of surprise in Bryan's eyes upon seeing her earlier had been worth it, especially when he had casually remarked, "You look better than in your work attire."

It had significantly lifted her spirits.

Suddenly, a large group of people emerged from the arrival gate. Eileen's gaze darted among the crowd, scrutinizing every woman.

A woman in a floral dress, her long hair dyed a light shade of purple and styled in waves, came into view wearing sunglasses. She pushed her suitcase while walking.

Eileen sensed the woman's gaze, even behind those lenses, fixed on Bryan.

True to Eileen's intuition, the woman rushed towards Bryan the next moment, her suitcase getting flung aside as she threw herself into his arms.

Vivian, unbothered by her suitcase, clung to Bryan, her voice soft and sweet. "Bryan, I'm back. I'm sorry..."

Eileen, witnessing their embrace, felt her mood, previously great, plummet in an instant.

She turned to retrieve Vivian's suitcase, taking a deep breath to compose herself.

The suitcase had traveled a considerable distance, necessitating her to navigate through the bustling crowd, which left her looking slightly awkward.

Once she retrieved the suitcase and returned, she paused a few steps away from Bryan and Vivian, uncertain whether to approach.

Bryan's hand was on Vivian's waist as Vivian clung to him, her demeanor suggesting he was her entire world.

The longing and affection that enveloped Vivian made it increasingly difficult for Eileen to maintain her composure.

The realization that the man she had been intimate with just in the morning was now embracing another woman felt suffocating.

The lipstick she had intentionally applied hid her paleness, concealing her overwhelming desolation.

"Bryan, I've missed you so much. Did you miss me?" Vivian loosened her grip from around Bryan's neck but kept her hands on his shoulders, their intimacy undeniable.

Compared to Vivian, Eileen's earlier presence beside Bryan seemed less fitting.

Her own attire was a stark contrast to Vivian's, and she could never be this affectionate with someone in public.

"I did," Bryan uttered softly. His eyes briefly met Eileen's, who stood not too far away.

She seemed less poised than usual, though he couldn't quite discern what was amiss. He frowned slightly.

Vivian's eyes reddened as she gazed at Bryan, her voice laden with remorse. "Bryan, I will make it up to you now that I'm back."

"It's getting late. Let's head back," Bryan said, his eyes mirroring her regret and self-blame.

Eileen had mentally prepared herself for a while, now wearing a professional smile.

"Mr. Dawson, Miss Warren, this way, please," she said.

Bryan led the way, saying, "Let's go." Eileen, suitcase in hand, trailed behind him, her stride over the years having adjusted to his quick pace.

She was able to keep up with Bryan, but Vivian struggled, her high heels clacking as she hurried to keep pace with Eileen.

"Are you Bryan's assistant?" Vivian asked, slightly breathless.

Eileen gave a slight nod. "Yes."

"Then you must be very capable. We seem to be about the same age. Let's be friends. I'll add you on WhatsApp later," Vivian said.