

THREE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

ARIEL COLES

"I'm working late again; do not wait for me,"

"Again!?"

"Yeah. I have to go now." He says and hangs up so quickly that he doesn't have to hear what I say next.

That was a phone call conversation with my husband of three years, Chase Coles. He has been working very late often, and although he comes back in the morning, I only see him when he comes into our room to change into clean clothes before he leaves again.

We don't even converse with each other.

Sigh.

I'm alone again for the umpteenth time in our penthouse with all the dinner cooked and set on the dining table. It is what I have been doing for three whole years for my husband, and he would eat my food and leave the plate clean. Cooking is something that I am naturally good at, so I wouldn't see the reason why my husband cannot at least come home to a home cooked meal.

But anyway, tomorrow is exactly our third year anniversary, so I am planning a day away with him. I have already called his PA to cancel his schedule for the day so that we can celebrate our wedding anniversary.

I was a twenty-year-old virgin when we got married. We got married, not out of love, but out of pressure. Our families arranged our marriage to form a business relationship between us so that we and our future children could become the sole successors of the family business.

I didn't mind at all getting married to Chase. Although we were not in love when we got married, I believed that we were going to fall in love with each other in our marriage.

Three years later, I am head over heels with Chase. I have fallen so much in love with him, and I can't see myself living apart from him, but Chase, Chase is indifferent in our marriage. I feel like I'm still a stranger to him, despite how long we have been together. He is cold, hardly smiles in my presence, or looks at me in a way that I feel appreciated.

The most expected of him is the least that he does for me. He doesn't even touch me unless we are having s*x, but that's just it. He wouldn't cuddle with me, let alone, kiss me.

Well, the little that I receive from him puts me at ease. As long as he is with me. I know that he will see me differently someday and will love me the way I deserve to be loved.

I get up from the dinner table and leave everything as it is before I head upstairs to take out the clothes that Chase and I will wear tomorrow. I always choose his outfits for the day every day anyway.

I want us to match, so I choose the beige and white colour for the day, and for the evening, it'll obviously be an evening wear. I'll be wearing a red elegant dress, and he'll wear a black tailored suit for a romantic dinner. I had it all planned out this year.

I'm so excited. Hopefully, it'll bring us closer.

Could I have overslept, or did my husband come home earlier than he normally would? I can hear movements in our room and shudding, forcing me to wake up.

I open my eyes, sit up on the bed, and stretch my arms.

"Chase?" I call out, getting out of the bed and heading to the walk-in closet where I find him putting his shoes on.

He got up and faced me. Chase stood tall and proud, his broad shoulders giving him an imposing presence. His features were strong and sharp, with deep blue-set eyes that rarely smiled. His jaw was square and firm, his lips set in a straight line. His demeanour was serious and focused, giving the impression that he was always in control. He was the type of man who commanded respect and rarely gave it in return. This is the feature of Chase I got from him for three years in our marriage.

"Why are you wearing that outfit when I chose this one for you, Chase?"

He stands up, wearing black pants, a black shirt, and a black jacket.

"It's our anniversary today. I planned our day together," I declare.

"I have work to do,"

"But I asked your PA to clear your schedule for the day,"

"That's the thing. You made plans behind my back without talking to me about it, Ariel," He then walks past me and walks out of the closet.

"I thought I was doing something nice for you – for us at least. You have always worked so hard, so at least take this day off with me. We never got to celebrate our wedding anniversary," I rebuke.

He decides not to say anything. He opens his bag on the couch facing our bed and takes out a white A4 envelope, tossing it on the little table in the middle of our room.

"Is it so hard for you to read the room all the time? How would you celebrate a wedding anniversary when there is no love between us? Are you not tired of all this pretence because I am!" He chastises. "That's for you. Sign it so that we can get it over and done with," With that said, he puts on his black sunglasses and walks out of the room.

Only then do I breathe out the air I didn't even know I was holding. I'm confused and, most of all, hurt. I didn't see this coming.

I drop my eyes on the envelope with bold printed letters of the name of the law firm our lawyer works at.

I know what the is in there. But why is he doing this? I know our marriage is a work-in-progress, but I thought we were making progress.

No, I'm not letting him have what he wants without him explaining why.

I put on my slippers and not even bother to change from my pyjamas.

I run downstairs as tears stream down my cheeks, not caring about the servants in our house.

"Chase!" I scream out, heading outside.

He is already in the elevator, and it closed before I even managed to get to him. I turn back to the house and look for car keys.

"Car keys... where are my car keys!?" I yell.

"Here, Ma'am," One servant came running to me and slightly bowed to hand me the keys. I grabbed them and turned around. "Ma'am, you forgot to take off your..."

Before she could even finish talking, I'm already halfway to the elevator. I tap my foot in anticipation as I impatiently wait for it to reach the ground. As soon as the doors open, I run to my car in the basement parking, and just then, I see Chase driving out. I start my car and follow him. Today, I have to see what it is that made him decide to do what he did to me. He can not just throw a bomb like that on me without any explanation. I refuse!

I refuse to believe that there is no love between us. It is there, I can feel it. Something is just there in front of him stopping him from pursuing the love.

"This is not the way to work, Chase. Where are you going?" I say to myself, following him as he gets on the left highway instead of right.

Fifteen minutes later, he stops at a seven star hotel, which is part of Coles Group. I halt my car a little further and watch him as he gets off. Just then, a woman calls his name and waves her hand, running to him.

For the first time, I see something on Chase that he never revealed to me. A gentle smile, he looked at the woman with soulful eyes and held her waist with his hands with so passionately that the two leaned to kiss.

I feel a hot burning sensation on my chest and tears welling in my eyes.

If it is because of another woman that my husband can't love me. At first, it did cross my mind, but I did not want to think about it because I didn't have proof, and I didn't bother to even search his privacy. I wanted to trust him and make him trust me so that we could make our marriage work.

I was so stupid and naïve to think that Chase would ever love me. Only if I had a way of saving my father's company three years ago, I probably would have never agreed to marry Chase and best could have avoided this heartache.

My father's company was facing bankruptcy as he was hacked, and the hacker wiped the company's bank accounts clean. Chase's father and my father were very close, so he requested that I get married to Chase and he would invest in my father's company if I agreed. Of course, I did it for my father, and now his company is not where it was before, but it is doing good.

I had a tough time accepting the proposal, but I did it anyway.

Fuck it, I'm going there! He can't get a happy ending on our anniversary!

I get out of the car and walk down the street to them. People are looking at me like I'm some sort of a crazy woman. Maybe I was too good, and everyone took that for granted. I was always dependent on the Coles' family and let my guard down, forgetting my worth and limits for a man who can't even grin at me. I tried, I f*****g tried and I want him to know that today. I'm hurt!

"Chase!" I shout his name before I get to them.

Chase hears his head, and the beautiful smile he had on his handsome face erases. It can't hurt more, can it?

No, it does. That smile and calm face was not meant for me.

The woman turns around and notices me.

It can't be! He can't have gone back to his ex!

As I get closer, he holds his mistress's hand and moves her behind him as if to protect her from being attacked by me.

I stand no chance with him. He is protecting her with his body. If anything, he would save her first before me.