

His 'True Love' Shows Up Unaware She's Become The Ultimate Joke Chapter 03

In the days that followed, Brandon never mentioned a word about divorce. Everything seemed normal—except he started coming home a bit later than usual. I asked him about it, and he said an old friend wanted to start a new project and was looking for investors. He was still considering it.

I asked him to send over the details. Sure enough, when I opened the file, Claire Emerson was listed as one of the founders. And after looking through the pitiful revenue and chaotic financials, I just shook my head. Here she was, trying to get investors for this disaster of a company, in an economy where everyone else was tightening their belts. She had some nerve.

“What do you think?” Brandon asked. I hadn’t let on yet that Claire had already come to see me.

We’d been married for years now, and we already had a son. We were even considering trying for a girl. A nice, balanced family. But here comes Claire, dropping back into our lives, just as my mother would call it—a disruption to what was really a business alliance between our families. Childhood friends, families with deeply interwoven ties—it was complicated. So complicated that a single change could pull everything apart.

I just couldn’t believe Brandon would cheat, let alone get a divorce.

“I think it’s best to be cautious,” I replied. “Since you’re more familiar with this field, you should handle it.” Relieved, I handed him a bowl of special soup I’d made for his stomach issues. He took it with a smile, not needing to ask what it was.

The next day, I came to the office with a fully prepared proposal. I’d hardly been in the office recently, with us trying for another child, so the long-time employees looked at me with surprise, clearly curious. The newer employees didn’t even know who I was.

Just as I reached Brandon’s office, I heard Claire’s familiar voice, pleading, “Brandon, please, you’ve got to help me. This is my dream!”

Brandon didn’t reply. I knocked and opened the door. Claire was sitting next to him on the sofa, casually leaning close. Her low-cut dress practically invited the world to see her bra. I ignored her, calmly setting my papers on the desk. “Hope I’m not interrupting anything?”

“Not at all, babe! This is Claire, the one I told you about,” Brandon replied quickly, standing up like he’d been shocked and moving to my side.

I caught the flash of irritation in Claire’s eyes as she looked innocently at Brandon. “Jazz, you’re gorgeous! I’m surprised he never mentioned you.”

Right. As if my existence was something she had to be “informed” about. After all, she managed to walk right in, didn’t she?

Brandon looked uncomfortable, and I smirked. “Since when do people talk about their families with strangers?” I handed him a thermos. “I heard you have a drinking event tonight, so I made this for you. I’ve got plans to meet Mrs. Young for tea later.” He smiled gratefully; he didn’t even need to open it to know what was inside.

But Claire didn’t let it go. “Oh, I’ll be at that dinner too! Jazz, what’s in the thermos? Could I try some?”

Brandon frowned, setting the thermos aside. “This isn’t something just anyone should drink, Claire.”

“Is it some kind of miracle hangover remedy?” She laughed lightly, pouting, “I thought all those housewives making home remedies was a soap opera trope, but I guess it’s real after all...”

Neither of us laughed, and the room grew tense. Brandon’s grandmother, after all, was a well-known herbalist, and she’d created that particular recipe just for his stomach. Obviously, Claire had no idea.

I sighed, realizing that this woman didn’t seem to have much upstairs. Nothing about her added up, and she wasn’t at all the type I’d imagine Brandon would like. With anyone else, he’d probably have already blown up at them. But for Claire, his patience seemed endless.

After an uncomfortable silence, he looked at her with an unreadable expression. “Jazz knows a lot about the food industry, Claire. If you really want to go forward with this, why don’t you talk it over with her?”

Huh?

I was surprised. I could see why he wouldn’t want to reject her outright, but what was this about food? According to the file, her company was all about couples’ apps, nothing to do with the restaurant industry.

But Claire missed my surprise and went on, oblivious. “Brandon, do you really think that someone who spends all her time having lunches and afternoon teas has industry knowledge? This is different. Plus, I’m opening a cat café targeting young professionals and students...”

She looked at me with a challenging gleam in her eye. “You and I can handle the business discussions, Jazz. I wouldn’t want to interrupt your busy schedule of lunch dates.”

I almost laughed. Was she serious? She couldn’t have done any real research if she thought she could look down on me like this. I, Jasmine Eastwood, eldest of the Eastwood Family and a Harvard economics PhD, “just” did lunches and teas? Did she have any idea how much a class taught by me would cost?

I stared at her, amused by her smugness, even as I saw a hint of irritation in Brandon’s face. Why was he holding back? Was it because of his lingering feelings for her?

He glanced at me apologetically. “I have a meeting soon, Claire. Talk to Jazz about it, as I suggested.” With that, he answered his phone and hurried out, leaving just the two of us.

Claire dropped her act, sneering at me. “You really are something else, putting on this whole act to get his sympathy, showing up with soup and your pretty face. But Brandon and I are in this together. You? You can cook him soup. A housekeeper could do the same. Aside from spending his money, what else can you do?”

“Talk business with you, obviously,” I said dryly, nodding toward the documents on the desk. “Brandon’s orders.”

“Oh, come on,” she scoffed, her voice dripping with contempt. “He’s just being polite, letting you save face so you don’t accuse him of transferring your assets to me. You think he respects you? He’s just afraid you’ll embarrass him and drag the company down.”

I stared at her, hardly believing her arrogance. The fact that she felt so comfortable speaking about “transferring assets” showed me she really didn’t know much.

My silence made her bolder. “Brandon is so good to me, and not just with this. Tonight, at that big event, he’s taking me with him. Did you know I’m the first woman he’s brought along? It shows I’m the one he truly loves. You’re just sad, really. Married to him all these years and he’s never invited you. Poor thing...”

She looked at me triumphantly. “It must be humiliating, huh? Go ahead, cry if you want to. Failed love, a failed marriage—it’s not the end of the world. You’re still pretty enough, and even if your family background’s not as great, Brandon would still give you a decent payout. Just let go. If you make a scene, you might not even get alimony.”

I couldn’t help myself; I burst out laughing. I wasn’t just amused by her ridiculous logic but by her complete inability to understand what mattered to me. Love, feelings—those were trivial. What I cared about was control, and I had plenty of it. My career, my finances, my status—and yes, even my marriage. I had a child with Brandon, after all. And the fate of her so-called project was entirely in my hands.

I looked at her blandly. “Stop dreaming. That glitch-riddled app or your cat café? Neither is getting any funding from us.”

But Claire smiled, undeterred. “Jazz, don’t kid yourself. If I’m here, and if Brandon’s letting me ask in front of you, then it’s important to him. He’ll say yes.”

I watched her saunter out and opened the window, letting the strong scent of her perfume blow away. With it went any uncertainty I might have

I watched her saunter out and opened the window, letting the strong scent of her perfume blow away. With it went any uncertainty I might have felt.

That night, I waited for Brandon to come home. At four in the morning, he stumbled in, reeking of alcohol and perfume—Dior J’adore, which I’d never worn. Our housekeeper, Mrs. Williams, shook her head in disapproval as she helped him into the bedroom.

“I’ll make some sobering soup for him, Jazz,” she offered, seeing my expression.

“Sweetheart,” he mumbled, trying to pull me into a hug.

“Sit down. We need to talk,” I said, brushing him off.

Claire had already confronted me, hinting at a romance and asking me to divorce him. His arm went stiff, but all he did was slur, “I love you, babe,” before passing out. I sighed. You can’t wake someone who’s faking sleep.

The next morning, he’d already left for a sudden business trip to Seattle. But things took a turn when Mrs. Williams came to me, looking worried.

“Jazz, I think Evan has a fever.”