

The Alpha CEO's Unloved Wife Chapter 10

Broken

On Tuesday morning, Jane woke beneath Baron, his body over and within her, as all their brief periods of sleep through-out her heat had been spent, and found that, in her sleep, she had put her arms around him, her palms against the skin of his back, holding him tightly to her, and her face was turned in to his, her cheek against his and her lips against the point at which shoulder met neck.

She stayed still, her eyes closed, luxuriating in the feel of him against her. This was, she thought, how lovers and mates lay, wrapped, and tangled in each other, skin to skin, body to body, cheek to cheek.

His phone began to chime, and after a moment he groaned, and reached out over her towards the bedside table without moving his body. She reached up and pulled it down to where he could reach it.

"Thank you," he said against her neck, before answering it. "Yes?"

"Sorry to disturb you, Mr Western," the woman on the other side of the phone apologised.

He sighed heavily. "Yes, Judith?"

"The paperwork on the purchase of the brewery has arrived and is ready for signing, the jeweller has sent through an estimate on that piece you ordered, the Gleasons have asked to reschedule for tomorrow, the architect has plans on the extension ready for review, an invitation has arrived for a masquerade ball at the Adairs, and the bank called about the..."

Baron inhaled and groaned as he pushed himself up. He rolled over onto his back. "I can come into the office in approximately two hours," he decided.

"Thank you, Mr Western."

He disconnected and rolled to face Jane. "Your heat has broken," he told her.

"Yes," she agreed.

His eyes searched her face for a long moment and then he nodded, and rolled away, out of the bed. He pulled on his trousers, shoved his feet into his loafers, and pulled on his shirt as he left the room.

She sat in the bed, holding the sheets against her chest, and fought back tears.

In her blue bedroom, the window had been fitted with new glass and the bedroom cleaned, the bed remade with fresh sheets. She showered and viewed the contents of her closet with frustrated disgust. Plain Jane, she thought. She certainly dressed that way, every item seemed designed to avert the eye from her.

She pulled on a simple black dress and heels, before catching up her bag. She would go shopping, she decided. It was not as if she had anything better to do with her day, anyway. In the weeks since marrying Baron, her days had become echoingly empty of activity and people. At least, whilst she had been on heat, she thought, she'd had Baron for company, but now, his return to work made the emptiness of the day before her seem more so.

She took the sensible 4WD from the garage and waved at the guards at the gate as she pulled out of the property into the suburban street. She drove into the city and parked her car in a secured car park before walking down and onto the street. She browsed through the designer shops, buying little, mostly because she seemed to be invisible to the store clerks.

By whatever customer valuation system the store clerks used, she thought, she did not register as a serious shopper. Inevitably they would zero in on someone who arrived after her and ignore her completely.

In one window, a dress caught her eyes, not because it was something she would normally buy or wear, but because she could see Angelique in it. She set her shoulders, bit back on her teeth, and marched in, finding her size and took it through to the dressing rooms.

The store clerk was busy with the woman in the next store, a thick pile of clothing passing in and out, and a hanger already devoted either to purchases or rejects, Jane did not know, as she closed the curtains into her change room behind her, feeling foolish clutching the one dress.

She slid the dress on and stared at her reflection in shock, a smile slowly creeping across her face. Not such a plain Jane in the right dress, she thought turning to see her reflection at different angles, her hands stroking the dress down her thighs. It fit like a second skin, the sheer lace overlay intricately walking a line between underwear and evening wear, the cut-out panels across her torso revealing the skin below.

"I don't know how you can stand it, a woman said. "Knowing that he has been in her bed for the last three days."

"The sooner he knocks her up the better," Angelique replied, and Jane froze. The other change room, she realised, that was keeping the store clerk so busy, held her husband's mistress and one of her friends. "And it's not as if he is actually attracted to the pathetic creature, or loves her, he just needs the social position and alliance that

marrying her provides. It's fine. He can make her fat with his children all he wants; everyone knows that I am his wife in every other way."

"I'd still be tempted to poison her morning coffee."

"Hmm," Angelique paused. "You don't have this in red?"

"I am sorry madam, it only comes in the one colour, the black lace."

"I mean, she's going to be there your entire life," Angelique's friend said. "The official wife, mother of his children, and you..."

"He'll divorce her eventually, when the connection is no longer important," Angelique told her. "And then I'll be the official wife. It's just a matter of patience. Alright, let's pay and go." There was a great deal of movement as they and the store clerk moved out into the main store.

Jane stood, staring at her reflection in the sexy black lace dress, her hand against her heart and tears running down her face.

"Madam?" The clerk had returned to the change room. "Do you need anything?"

Jane drew in a deep breath. "No, thank you." She removed the dress and hung it carefully on the hanger. She dressed back into her plain Jane dress and picked up her purse. She wiped the tears from her face and walked out of the shop.