

The Alpha CEO's Unloved Wife Chapter 14

Highs and Lows

Baron and Angelique were domestically arranged around the small breakfast table in the parlour when Jane ran past on her way to the back entrance to the kitchen. She saw Baron look up from his paper as she ran past, his eyes tracking her through the glass until her progress put him behind her and out of her sight.

In the kitchen, Heathridge was not surprised by her arrival, and had a cup of black coffee ready for her.

"Thank you," she panted, taking it with her as she left the kitchen, crossing the hall to the stairs that led up to her wing and room.

Instinct had her looking over her shoulder as she reached the top of the stairs, and she saw that Baron stood in the doorway of the breakfast room, looking up at her, his hand on the door handle. She paused, her hand on the banister, their eyes locked, and then Angelique's voice came from behind him, and he stepped back, closing the door behind him.

Jane continued to her new room, finding that her possessions had been transferred as promised during her jog. She drank her coffee before showering and dressing for the day. The clothing she selected was chosen with another purpose in mind, the tailored shirt tucking into the tidy skirt. She pulled her hair back into a ponytail and pushed her feet into a pair of flat-heeled loafers, before scrutinizing herself in the mirror.

She looked, she thought, like the hundreds, or maybe thousands, of anonymous people that had, over the course of her life, set food and drinks on a table before her, handed clothing over the curtain of a change room, or rung up charges at the till. She looked, she decided, like someone capable of doing such things. Which was a lie. She was woefully under-qualified. But she had the opportunity to amend that.

She slunk through the entry hall like a criminal, and eased open the front door, startling Heathridge on the other side. For a moment they stared at each other, and then his eyes dropped, taking in her clothing and then returning to her face, his brows drawing together in confusion.

"Madam."

"I am just going shopping," she told him hastily.

"Of course, madam," he accepted it easily and opened the door. "Did you need a car?"

"I left one up the drive yesterday."

“That 4WD has been returned to the garage,” he informed her efficiently.

“Great, thanks,” she nodded, and hurried in that direction.

She drove into town and parked at the rear of the café. Humans, she thought with relief as she made her way through the customers to the front, not a werewolf to be seen.

“Hi” an opened faced man greeted her with a bright smile. “What can I get you?”

“A job?” She swallowed hard amazed that her voice sounded so much braver than she felt. “The sign said.”

“Oh,” his eyes scanned her top to toe.

“Do you have experience?”

“No,” she admitted. “But I work hard.”

He considered her. “It’s cash, no benefits, and a half a day trial, no pay.”

“Okay,” she agreed eagerly.

After he served the last customer in the queue, he took her behind the counter, placed an apron around her waist and told her: “Food comes from there,” he pointed to the kitchen window, behind which she could see three people moving with absolute focus on their tasks. “Check the table number on the docket, take the food to that table.”

“Okay,” she saw a plate on the shelf and went to it.

For three hours, that was what she did, smiling and apologising for mistakes, explaining that it was her first day when she got things wrong. The café shut at 3pm, and she removed the apron, her body and mind exhausted.

The man who had hired her, Patrick, smiled and passed her a wad of notes. Well done,” he said. “You’re hired.”

“Oh,” she was thrilled but baffled by the notes in her hand. “You said no pay.”

“I know.” his smile widened. “And you stayed anyway, which was audition number one. You’ve done well, the customers like you, you are polite, and you work hard. You pass. Take these home tonight and fill them out,” he handed her some folded papers. “And we’ll see you again tomorrow at eight?”

“Yes,” she was breathless with excitement, her cheeks aching with her smile. “Yes, thank you.”

She drove home, grinning, the music turned up and the windows open, and her excitement did not die until she showered and stepped out of the bathroom in the robe, to find her phone flashing with messages. Her brothers, her sister, her father, all angrily demanding what she had been up to, with photo attachments.

The photo was of her passed out on the bed with the sheets tangled around her not covering anything. Taken during her heat, her wrists still tied to the bed head. There was only one person who could have taken that photo she knew, the person who had bound her to that bed, and whose seed visibly slimed her thighs.

She felt her legs give and her hip hit the carpet a moment before her head did, the phone bouncing slightly before lying before her, the screen still showing her herself, in her vulnerable, wanton, blissed out slumber.

“Shit,” she heard Baron curse, she didn’t know how long later. “Jane,” he put his arm under her shoulders lifting her. “Jane.”

For a moment she did not know where she was or why she lay in such a way, and then she remembered and she fought her way free of him, clutching her towel to herself as she crawled across the floor to vomit into the toilet.

She felt him pull back her hair, holding it clear of the bowl, and his hand rubbing between her shoulder blades as she sobbed, wept and vomited.

*Jane,” he said quietly when, trembling, exhausted, and empty, she leaned her cheek against the porcelain. “I took the picture. It was on my phone. But I did not share it with anyone.”