

The Unwanted Matrimonial –

Chapter 1: Notification

Layla's POV

I groaned loudly as the sun rays hit my eyes cruelly. Someone must have opened the curtains. I rolled on the bed to face away from such brutality so early in the morning.

“Baby cakes”, a voice cooed. “It's time to get up”, my Dad sat beside me as he shook me gently.

“Noooo”, I whined as I covered myself with a pillow and groaned again. “Ten more minutes”

“Breakfast is almost ready, see you downstairs in a bit”, I felt the bed undip next to me and a few seconds the door closed softly. I got up to sit up straight, rubbed the sleep off my eyes and let out a lazy yawn.

I looked like the walking dead in the morning, from my messed up hair and looking like I was almost hit by a train and got into a street fight. The mirror on the wall certainly proved me right. I got up from my bed stretching my arms and I pulled a muscle.

Yeah. I should really go back to jogging in the mornings, maybe from next week. I knew I was lying to myself because I was really good at procrastinating, but I had a bit of faith in myself.

I walked to the bathroom for a quick shower. I tied my hair in a messy bun, after it took me aged to even dry it. I wore a pair of navy blue jeans and a white tank top and my white sneakers. I wasn't a fan of make-up that much for I just put a little touch of mascara on my already long eyelashes, and I was good to go.

I walked downstairs to be welcomed by an amazing coffee aroma, it smelt heavenly. Man! I love coffee

Dad was already dishing up for us and I noticed there was a third plate on the table. Normally it would just be the two of us. My mother died when I was eight years old. She was diagnosed with leukemia and unfortunately, after battling with the illness for four years, she passed away. It was the hardest time for our family, especially to my Dad, her passing really struck him hard. My mother meant the world to us, she bought that warm feeling to the house, making it a home. Her absence really left a void in our hearts, and it was clearly noticed.

“Morning”, I kissed Dad on the cheek, and he smiled as he continued dishing up. Toast, bacon, scrambled eggs and sliced tomatoes

"Baby cakes", he grinned, and I rolled my eyes

"When are you going to stop calling me by that name?", I protested, folding my arms. He chuckled softly, I knew he thought I was just being plain ridiculous.

"Uhm, let me see", he posed to think for a second. "When I'm dead", he began laughing. I sighed heavily.

"I'm too old for that name now. I'm 22 now Dad", I continued with my protests. Not that I was getting to him or anything. He had that, and *what's your point exactly?* look on his face.

"I don't care", he shrugged. "To me you'll always be my Baby cakes", he smirked at me. "And my little girl for as long as I'm still breathing". I opened my mouth to say something, but he interrupted me.

"Coffee?", he offered me a cup and well I couldn't say no to that. He knew how to shut me up.

"Mhm", I hummed in response as I accepted the cup from him and took a sip. "But this is not over yet", I warned, and he chuckled softly.

"It never is", I heard him mumble to himself as he smiled. It was always great to see him smile.

"It feels good to be back home"

"It's good to have you back", he nodded in agreement

"Is someone coming to join us?", I pointed to the other plate on the table

"Your grandfather is coming to join us. He has something important to discuss with us ", he said as we sat down.

"Anything else?", Elsa, our helper asked with a warm smile as she stood next to us

"No. Thank you, Elsa", Dad spoke again, and she nodded before heading to the lounge to tidy up.

We heard the front door opening and closing and saw my grandfather make his way towards us

"Grandad!", I screamed excitedly as I stood up from my seat to embrace him in a bone crushing bear hug

"There she is", he was quite smitten as he opened his arms wide for me and locked me in his warm embrace

"I missed you", I whispered against his ear and he kissed my temple

"You grow up to look like your mother each day", we broke from the hug, and he spun me around. "You're so beautiful", he remarked, and I smiled warmly at him.

"It's always great to see you Grandpa", I kissed his cheek before we took our seats

We continued talking and laughing throughout breakfast before they brought up memories of when I was a baby and I mentally facepalmed. They couldn't have a conversation without bringing me into it and by memories, I meant those embarrassing ones that I wished I could just *Ctrl + Alt + Del* from my childhood. I never heard the end of it so to excuse myself, I decided to clear the table, so that I could then tip toe to my room so that I could leave them to catch up on their own.

"Layla...", Grandad grabbed my hand as I stacked their plates on top of mine. "Before you do that, we need to talk about something quite urgent", he spoke sternly, and I set the plates down and paid attention to him.

What could it be?

He took a deep breath. "Well, you know starting the family company required loads of funding because I had to start it from scratch", he started, and I nodded my head in agreement

"Yes, I'm aware of that"

"A good friend of mine lend me money as start up capital for my business as he was successfully running his own. He encouraged me to do the same and said I could pay him back whenever I can", he continued, and I nodded once more.

"Well a few months ago he changed the payment agreement", he sighed heavily

"Did he up the commission?", I asked, and he shook his head. "So what's the new payment agreement then?", I asked curiously and the two men exchanged looks.

"That his grandson marries my granddaughter", he breathed out

Oh...his grandson marries your granddaughter

But wait,

I'm his only granddaughter

Reality hit in and soon panic took over. "You mean me?", I asked puzzled, and he slowly nodded his head.

"You're kidding right?", I started laughing, hoping he'll just burst out into laughter and tell me it's some kind of April fool's joke or something. I know it's October, but still. He shook his head. He was dead serious

"I just graduated a few weeks ago. I still have my whole life in front of me. I'm not ready for marriage", I stood up from my seat and paced to-and-fro.

"You don't have to do this if you don't want to baby cakes", my father added calmly

"So does this mean I'm some sort of sacrifice? That you're selling me off?", tears pricked my eyes and they both rose to stand next to me.

"No, no, no. It's not like that at all. We're not going to force you into doing something you don't want to, most especially marriage", my Dad turned to look at my Grandad. "Tell Dylan we'll settle for selling the company to him", he ordered and my grandad's face dropped in disappointment.

"Wait, what are you talking about?", I questioned as I looked at the two of them simultaneously

"It's either you marry his grandson or I sell him my company", Grandad spoke as he sat down, like he's lost all hope of everything

"But you can't. You worked hard for that company. He surely can't expect you to sell it to him just because he invested in it", I sat down next to him.

"I'll never forgive myself knowing that I forced you to do something against your will Layla. If selling the company is the only option we have, so be it", Grandad said again as he sighed heavily again.

"Let's say, figuratively speaking that I agree to this marriage, what then?", I asked curiously and my Dad tried to say something but my grandfather chipped in

"It would mean that we get to keep the company in our name and all the investments. It's still going to be a legacy for future generations to come. We will no longer be indebted to Dylan", he exchanged looks with my father, who was giving him disapproving looks, like he was warning him not to give me ideas to actually consider this marriage proposal thing. I drew a breath.

"Okay, I'll do it", I announced and my father looked in my direction in surprise

"What?", they asked in union

“If it means keeping the company in our name and the family legacy then I’ll do it”, I said with a reassuring smile on my face

“Baby cakes, this is a huge deal. You can’t just-”, my Dad was clearly trying to change my mind, but I interrupted him by patting his hand softly.

“I have to Dad. It’s the only way”, I took his hand in mine and smiled at him. He hesitated for a while before he gave a brief nod, and he kissed me on the forehead.

“So, who’s the unlucky guy?”, I joked trying to lift their spirits with a smile plastered on my face. Dad sighed before growling,

“Damon Kingsley”