## Chapter 002

## AMELIA'S POV

I didn't know how long I remained sitting and crying in front of the massive gates of what used to be my home. I tried to get Noah's attention by banging on the gate several times but he wouldn't come out.

"Noah, please!" I cried out loud. "I'll do anything to give you children. Please don't leave me here."

But all I received was silence from him.

I could hear him and Lucy laughing inside and my heart churned with the thought of them eating the meal I prepared.

After an unknown length of time, I got to my feet and had walked for a few paces before I realized I had forgotten all my belongings, contained in the suitcases. I went back for them, and wheeled them as I walked. I walked for an hour before it registered that I actually had no destination.

"Doesn't matter," I muttered to myself, feeling completely drained and exhausted. It felt like a huge weight had fallen on me and it was crushing me with each passing second.

Some passers-by shot me curious looks, whispered to themselves and hurried on. They probably thought I was crazy. Looking down at myself, I supposed I did look crazy. I was wearing a long sundress I usually wore at home. The hem of the gown and my flip-flops were dirty, stained brown. I must have stepped into a puddle. The tears continuously ran down my cheeks without stopping.

I wondered idly where I would spend the night and realized that I didn't want to wake up if I ever slept.

I looked around, and caught sight of a pharmacy across the street. I ought to have some money in one of my handbags- if Noah had packed them. It would be easy to go into the pharmacy, wrangle some sleeping pills from the pharmacist, go to another pharmacy and another till I had enough pills to overdose on. Then I could lie down somewhere, look up at the sky, and wait for the sleep I would never wake up from.

I felt someone hit me from behind, jolting me from my thoughts.

"Watch where you going," a man said irritably as he walked past me. "You don't want to get robbed out here."

I kept moving, knowing that I didn't have the courage to end things just yet. My aimless wandering took me to a park miles away from my house. The park was deserted, and that was just what I needed.

My body was all aches and pains as I slowly lowered myself onto the park bench. I sobbed as I gave way to my grief. Who would have thought that my perfect life could fall to pieces in just one day?

During our two years of marriage, I had done everything to please Noah, to make him happy. And Lucy... she was more like a sister to me. Oh, but I was stupid, so stupid not to have suspected what was going on right under my nose.

She and Noah had become more close lately but I assumed it was just because we were friends. I also ignored Noah's late night calls, secretive attitude and absence from home some days. I was too naïve to acknowledge everything.

I quickly raised my head and wiped my eyes when I heard the roar of several vehicles, rapidly getting closer. A fleet of Escalades soon came into view. Instead of speeding past as I expected, one by one, they pulled up in front of me.

A heavily built man hopped down from the vehicle in front and opened the passenger door.

Out came a tall, well built man with a wealth of curly dark hair. He had deep grey eyes that would pull anyone in. His jaw was molded with perfection and his lips was curved into a small smile. The only thing that marred his otherwise handsome face was the scar running across his eyebrow. To my surprise, he pinned me with his piercing steel grey eyes and came towards me, moving with the easy, unconscious arrogance of the very rich.

"Hello," he said, coming to a stop by the bench and smiling down at me.

I gawked at him, looked around. There was no one else in sight.

"Are you- Were you talking to me?" I asked.

"Yes. May I sit?" He sat without waiting for a reply. "You are wondering who I am. Well, I won't keep you wondering for long." He put out his hand. "I'm Damian Donovan." His name sounded vaguely familiar but I couldn't tell where I'd heard it from.

When I didn't shake his hand, he put it back at his side and shrugged.

"You've had a pretty rough day. I understand, Amelia."

I looked at him sharply. "How- how do you know my name?"

He gave me a half smile. "I know a lot of things... a lot. I especially know a lot of things about you. I even know you were going to be here, so far from home."

I blinked in confusion.

"You're hurt and angry," he continued. "I assure you that I have a solution to your problem and pain."

I eyed him warily. "What solution?"

"Marry me, Amelia."

I gasped, scrambled to my feet. "Is this some sort of joke, Mr Dan-"

"Damien," he corrected, getting to his feet as well. Was he out of his mind?

"Whatever. Look, I don't know what you're up to, how you know the things you know or who sent you, but I won't be made fun of. If you don't leave now, I'll I'll..."

I wasn't really sure what I would do when I looked over his shoulder and spotted his bodyguards; tall, dark, silent, watchful. The smallest of them was almost twice my size.

"I apologize," Damian said quietly. "It wasn't my intention to insult you. I'm just a man who is used to getting his way without having to mince words. Perhaps it was unwise of me to spring marriage on you so suddenly. You have questions. I have answers, but we can't talk here. Come with me to my office and I promise that I will explain everything."

"I can't just... go with you," I said. But at the same, I was curious to know who he was and why he wanted to marry me.

He pointedly eyed my stained suitcases. "Did you have any particular place you were headed?"

After a moment's hesitation, I rose to my feet slowly and walked to his car. Damian got in and we were off. All through the ride, Damien kept taking one call after the other. He was obviously a very busy man.

The building which the car stopped in front of was impressive. It was a sleek, gleaming structure that seemed to pierce the clouds.

"Please, come," Damian ordered and I followed him into the building, past an enormous lobby, up the elevators to the topmost floor, and finally to a vast, imposing office with glass windows and walls which commanded a view of the city. He waved me into a chair.

He pulled some documents to him, then asked, almost as an afterthought. "Do you want something to drink?" I shook my head, anxious to get my answers. "Good. Let's get down to business then. My name, as I have said before is Damian Donovan. I know this is not the best time but you may know me as Mr. Carter's biggest rival." He cocked his head to one side, regarded me. "Perhaps he has mentioned me..."

At that moment, the memories flitted into my head. I remembered Noah yelling his name angrily over the phone and fuming with rage whenever he lost a business deal to him. Noah despised him greatly and as I stole a glance at him, I wondered if it was a coincidence that he was interested in marrying me right after my divorce.

"Noah spoke of a competitor. Yes," I agreed, pretending like I didn't much about him.

"Good. Now let me put some facts to you. My uncle just died. He had a company just as successful as my own. My uncle was kind, but firm, and his heart's cry was to see me hitched before he died. He didn't get his wish, but he'll still get it... in a way. He left me the company on the sole condition that I get a wife." He frowned, looked slightly irritated at the very idea. "I need to merge my company with his. When I do that, I'll be the most renowned, most successful billionaire... in the world perhaps. I can't let a little difficulty like having a wife stop me, so that is where you come in, Amelia."

"How?" I asked, though I was beginning to get an idea of where he was going with this.

"I'm offering you a contract marriage. You see, I've been keeping a very close eye on Noah. I knew that he had been cheating on you with your best friend, and that he was planning to divorce you." The reminder of what Noah had done had me clenching my fist. "He didn't really keep his infidelity a secret but I was shocked to know he pulled the divorce papers today."

I chuckled bitterly, pain and anger coursing through my body. "I guess that makes two of us. I actually made a reservation for a dinner date tomorrow."

"I didn't mean to call up painful memories," he continued. "But I'm a practical man and I hope you are a practical woman too. My proposal is this. Divorce Noah, marry me and get your revenge on him. He'll be half out of his mind when he finds out that you married me. Our union will help crush him. When we get married, I'll let you live your life, and I'll live mine. We won't get in each other's way. We just have to stay married for only a year. And to top it all up, I'll give you fifty million dollars as compensation for helping me get the company. So what do you say, Amelia? Are you in?"

Into my mind came a picture of Noah's and Lucy's cruel faces. I thought about all the sacrifices I made in my marriage with Noah. I thought about everything I'd done for Lucy as my best friend and how they choose to repay me. They both deserved to be punished, to feel the heart wrenching pain I felt because of their betrayal.

I slowly turned to Damian, tears streaming down my eyes and a cold smile forming on my lips. I exhaled and wiped my tears. "I'll marry you," I said, then added. "But on one

condition."

Damian leaned back in his seat. "What?"

"You'll destroy everything Noah has built and take every penny from him."

He leaned forward and extended his hand. "Deal."