

The Unwanted Wife: Revenge After Divorce

Chapter 022

NOAH

I stared disbelieving at the email on my phone. My eyes kept going back to the last line.

... regret to inform you that you weren't selected for the contract..

That baldheaded asshole of a mayor! After all the effort I had put into landing this contract, he threw me over for Damian. Yes. I was pretty sure it was Damian. Who else in this godforsaken city would dare to undermine me? Who else would challenge me and get away with it?

To be sure, I decided to call one of my contacts at the city council to confirm who had been awarded the contract. Before I could dial his number, a notification popped up on my phone that said something about the city project. I tapped on it, and sure enough, there was a close-up picture of Damian, smiling his stupid, self-satisfied smile. Above his image was the headline 'BILLIONAIRE, DAMIAN DONOVAN LANDS CONTRACT TO BUILD BULLET TRAIN RAILWAY.'

My fingers clenched around my phone as I struggled not to hurl it against the wall. Rage, as I had never known it before, pulsed through me. That son of a bitch was out to destroy me, and for some reason, he was succeeding. I didn't even know when I began to pace. Losing the money that would have come to my company for executing the contract was terrible enough, but I didn't mind that at all. My company had been surviving just fine without the mayor's contracts. What made me royally pissed was that it was Damian who had gotten it. Why hadn't the damned mayor given it to someone out of town? After a while, I found myself in my bedroom. Lucy was sitting in front of the mirror, brushing her hair.

"You look... angry, honey. What's wrong?" she asked as she laid down her hairbrush and turned to face me.

"What's wrong?" I snarled. "You mean you haven't heard the news? I'm sure it's the juiciest bit of news today and will be on the front pages for a long, long time--"

"What are you talking about?"

"--And yet you don't know what's happened. Don't you ever do anything more productive than sitting your ass in front of a mirror, brushing your hair, and putting on pretty clothes? No wonder they say blondes are dumb."

"Noah!" Lucy flushed angrily.

"Aha!" I spotted a rolled-up newspaper at the corner of the dresser, grabbed it, and flung it at her. It landed in her lap. "I bet you haven't even glanced at the papers if you ever do. Check it. The damned story must have made the headlines."

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I stomped over to the window and heard the rustle of the paper. Lucy gasped.

"What?" Her voice cracked. "What on earth made the mayor decide to do such a thing? This is terrible."

"Oh. You're damn right it is. It's unfair. It's terrible. I deserved to get that contract. Me! I'm better, wealthier, and more efficient than that upstart, Damian. I'm sure he's somehow bribed his way into getting the contract. There is nothing I wouldn't put past him. He knows all the underhanded ways of getting whatever he wants."

"I'm sorry about this, Noah, but please, don't get too worked up. Calm down--"

"Don't you dare tell me to calm down," I shouted. "You have no idea what is at stake here. Don't you realize what this will do to my reputation in this city? Everyone will think Damian is better than me, that his company is better than mine. That is the message the news of this contract is going to send. And to think that this is all your fault."

"My fault?"

"Yes, it is." I marched over to her. "It's your fault. I'm sure the mayor called for the dinner party to see which of us was more fit for the job. The mayor and his wife were all over Amelia like a rash until dinner ended."

"And what did I have to do with that? What did you expect me to do about that?"

"While Amelia ingratiated himself with that fat cow of a mayor's wife, you just sat there, doing nothing, just stuffing your face with food."

"But what did you expect me to do, Noah? I didn't think things would take that turn. When Amelia started arguing with the mayor, I could see from the expression on your face that even you thought she had ruined Damian's chances of getting the contract. Besides, you saw when I tried to steer the conversation away from Amelia, and I succeeded, but then--"

"But then you let her outshine you," I yelled, cutting her short. "Can't you see that Damian bringing Amelia there was a tactical move on his part? I wish I hadn't taken you along with me. It would have served me better if I had taken a dumb dummy there. You're more than useless to me."

Lucy hit me across the face so hard that my head snapped back. How dare she?

The pain fueled the rage in me. Without thinking, I stepped towards her with my fist raised to strike.

"Go on. Hit me, you coward! Hit me," Lucy screamed.

With supreme effort, I controlled myself, rushed to the wall, and punched it repeatedly, trying to eliminate some of my rage. Lucy didn't help matters. She kept hurling insults at me until I felt as though my head would split open at any second. Frantically, I looked around the room, spotted one of my car keys, and made for the door.

Lucy hurried to the door and called after me. "And where do you think you're scurrying off to? Well, I don't care. You can get the hell out and don't come back."

Certainly, I wouldn't, I thought as I got into my car--at least, not this night. I drove fast, headed for a bar as far from home as possible. I touched my cheek, which still stung from Lucy's slap. My other hand clenched around the steering wheel. It was lucky for Lucy that she was a woman. If she were a guy... I wouldn't have been able to answer for my actions.

I pulled quickly into the parking lot of the bar. I didn't bother parking properly. I quickly got out and threw open the door of the bar.

"Drinks. Beer. Now," I growled at the bartender on my way to a table where no one was.

Just as I was about to pound on the table to demand service again, a waiter arrived with the drinks.

"Get me more," I said.

I downed bottle after bottle almost as fast as the waiter served it. Now, I had to admit that I regretted my decision to divorce Amelia. That regret had been lurking at the back of my mind for a while, but now it had come to the fore. What had even possessed me to do such a crazy thing and divorce her in the first place? Maybe it was because she was usually so colorless, mousy, and such a pushover. And she had not been able to give me a child, of course.

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I never imagined that she could become so opinionated and successful. Oh. But I was a blind fool to throw aside a woman I still had feelings for. And for what? Lucy? I wasn't as happy with her as I had thought I would be.

"Sir, we are about to close."

The waiter's words brought me out of my reverie. When I glanced at my watch, I was surprised to see that I had been at the bar for four solid hours and was virtually the only customer there.

"What sort of stupid place is this anyway, where you can't stay open until morning?" I said to the waiter as I settled my bill.

He pursed his lips but wisely said nothing. Half drunk, I staggered to my car. Going home that night was not an option for me at all. There was an all-night casino around the corner, and I went there. The croupier's eyes widened when I told him how much I wanted to play for.

"I'm Noah Carter. You must know me," I told him when he hesitated. "So, am I in the right place or not?"

"You are, sir," he said quietly.

For a while, I watched a wealthy-looking man play. The ladies hanging around him were all smiles as he kept winning. I suddenly felt lucky and made my way to a roulette table. I lost the very first time.

"I want to go again," I said to the croupier as I glared at the table.

I just had to win. There was no way in hell I would leave the casino with my tail between my legs. I had lost the contract to Damian. There was no way I was losing here too. I ended up gambling several times, and each time, I lost. By the end of the night, I had lost a fortune.