

The Unwanted Wife: Revenge After Divorce

Chapter 024

AMELIA

"We are almost done, madam. Would you like to see it now?"

"Of course."

As I left my office, I gestured for the man to lead the way.

"Please, watch your step," he advised as we moved around the bakery.

I was already doing so. I moved slowly, carefully stepping around the bits and pieces of paper, paint, glue, and tools littering some parts of the floor. Workers moved around the place, hard at work on the alterations I wanted. I nodded in satisfaction when I saw the wallpaper they had put up in the showroom. The place looked warmer and more inviting, exactly how I wanted it to be.

I never imagined that Damian would buy me a bakery. I didn't think he paid any attention to what I liked, but he surprised me.

"Everything is perfect," I told the worker. "Oh, and... have you moved those equipment to the positions I want them placed?"

He nodded. "Yes, they have been moved."

"Excuse me, ma'am," the security guard murmured apologetically to me while sidestepping a man carrying a stepladder.

"Yes? What is it?" I asked.

"The people for the interview are here."

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Ah. The interview. I was preoccupied with putting the finishing touches on the place, so I almost forgot that I had fixed interviews for the day. I checked my watch. The interviewees were right on time.

"Show them into my office in a few minutes," I told him.

The security guard nodded and left. I was in my office already waiting when the first interviewee, a petite woman, walked in in an open, pleasant manner. As soon as I saw her and we got talking, I knew we would get along. She had previously worked at a bakery in another city, which was an added advantage. She came with excellent references, and I gave her the job- no surprises there. It was not so easy to select the rest of my staff from the other interviewees. Some of them, drawn to the structure of the place, were just there to make quick money because they had guessed, and rightly so, that a bakery this big and grand would pay well. But thanks to my stint at the small cafe and my friendly relationship with its owner, I had a little experience in selecting workers that would actually add value to the place.

"Don't forget. Work starts tomorrow," I said to the last man I had interviewed as we shook hands.

"Sure thing, ma'am," he said.

When the door closed behind him, I settled to study the dossier on everyone I had employed closely. I cross-checked their references.

"Jeez! Where did the time go?" I said to myself when next I glanced at my watch.

It was already late in the evening. When I left home, I had no idea I would be here this late. I quickly gathered up my things. A few steps to the door made me realize how totally exhausted I was. It had been a grueling day; tomorrow, the bakery's opening day, would even be more so.

I tried not to dwell on that as I drove home. All I wanted was a long, cold shower and then bed, but first, I would talk to Damian. My lips curved in a smile at the prospect of telling him all about my stressful but productive day. He would no doubt be pleased at what I had accomplished today.

"I'm home," I called out loudly as soon as I stepped through the front door.

He wasn't in the living room, though. I took off my shoes, plopped down on the sofa, and massaged my poor feet, which had been smarting a little all day. I finally got up and went upstairs. The door to Damian's bedroom was ajar. He was inside, idly scrolling through his phone, when I slowed down on my way past his room. A certain sudden tenseness in his attitude told me he was aware of my presence, but he didn't look my way. A little disappointed, I went to my room, and minutes later, when I passed by his room to get something downstairs, he had firmly closed his door. He was not yet asleep, though. I was sure of that much because I could hear him moving around in there.

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All of a sudden, I didn't feel so good anymore. I retraced my steps, returned to my room, took a cold shower, and crawled into bed.

Maybe he would talk to me tomorrow because he was exhausted from work today, I told myself as I drifted off to sleep.

The alarm had hardly blared its first shrill notes before I was up. It took me a second to recall why I was so excited. It was my first day as the owner of a bakery! I was finally living my dream. I felt a huge grin split my face.

Humming a tune, I slid out of bed, slipped on a robe over my nightie, and went in search of Damian. I had purposely set my alarm an hour earlier than usual to catch Damian before he went off to work. My grin slowly died when I saw the housekeeper coming out of his room with her hands laden with the bedsheets and pillowcases. She smiled and mumbled a greeting.

"My husband... Damian. Is he in the house?" I asked her, already knowing the answer.

"No, he's not. He left for work very early this morning," was the reply.

I nodded curtly, turned away, and stomped to my room before she could see the hurt look on my face. Damian was avoiding me. There was no other explanation for him leaving before the time he usually did. Anger warred with hurt at his attitude. Would it kill him to at least feign interest in me? I thought we had gotten past the phase where he pretended I wasn't living in his house. The man was maddening. Whenever I felt we were making any headway, at being friendly acquaintances at least, Damian would again retreat into his shell.

A little deflated now, I showered. I had a hard time choosing what to wear. I finally decided on some tight jeans and a fitted blouse. I managed to gulp down some breakfast and headed out. In the car, while on my way to work, I put on some soothing music and did my best to snap out of the mood Damian's coldness had put me in. I didn't want to jinx my first day.

I was there before everyone, except for the security. Again, I moved around the place. It was squeaky clean. The cleaning crew had done an excellent job before they left. Some minutes later, my staff started trooping in. They got right to work. Soon, the aroma of freshly baked bread filled the place. With nothing to do in my office, I went into the kitchen to bake some muffins with my special recipe while supervising the others. A couple of hours later, I told the bakers to stop, as I felt we had enough baked goods for the day. When their activities stopped, it gave me time to realize that the queasy feeling I had in my stomach all day was anxiety. I was freaking nervous.

"Are you okay, madam?" one of the workers asked me.

I nodded numbly. I went into my office and shut myself in. A hundred questions went through my head, and the more insistent one was- Why on earth had I agreed to own a bakery instead of just working in one? I didn't know anything about managing a business. What if this idea flopped? What if no one came to buy anything? What if-

A knock sounded on the door.

"Come in," I called a little irritably.

I had barely said the words before Ashley, the petite woman I had taken a liking to, came in. Her eyes were alight with excitement.

"We have our first customers," she announced with a toothy grin.

I got up at once, excitement unfurling in my belly. "That's... that's great."

Her head bobbed up and down. "Yes. There are about fifteen people out there."

"Fifteen!" I grinned. Fifteen customers weren't such a bad start at 9 a. m.

I went to the showroom and was surprised to see that almost all the baked goods we had made that morning were sold out. As I watched, the door opened, admitting a lot more people. I soon lost count of how many as they crowded the counter, demanding service. The last of the pastries soon disappeared.

"We need more bread and pastries at double production speed," I said loudly when I hurried to the kitchen.

"We are already on it, ma'am," someone called.

The customers bought the goods almost as fast as we could make them, and I even had to pitch in to help to keep up with the rush. I realized then that I had to hire more workers.