

The Unwanted Wife: Revenge After Divorce

Chapter 033

DAMIAN

"Something important just came up, and we need to talk," I said as I entered the room and perched on the edge of Amelia's dresser.

She had been busily writing something that looked like supplies she would be getting for her store. From where I sat, I could make out the words 'flour' and 'sugar'.

"Okay. Give me just a second." She wrote something quickly, pushed the paper away, and gave me her full attention.

"Okay. So this is about Petra," I began.

"Petra?" Amelia blinked. The name obviously meant nothing to her.

It was a bit surprising to me, who liked to keep tabs on everyone remotely important. But Amelia wasn't like that. It seemed she hadn't bothered to learn more about the inner workings of the family she had married into.

"Yes, Petra. She is- sorry, was my late Uncle's wife. The uncle I'm referring to is-"

"The one who willed you his company?"

I nodded. "Yes, the very same. So, he was married to Petra for several god-awful years. Everyone except my uncle saw her for what she really was- a money-grubbing social and gold digger. My uncle was... blinded by love, I guess, at first. They got divorced, and the divorce settlement she got was a fortune. She left the country, and from what I gathered from the society papers she regularly features in, she has been touring the world, having the time of her life. And thrust, yesterday, I got a call from her. She told me that she was returning to the country, and then I knew that she wasn't done with the Donovan's yet."

"But if she's returning to the country, it doesn't necessarily mean that she's after... you. She could just have decided to settle back down here."

I gave a short, bitter laugh. "You don't know Petra. She's returning to the country for one reason only: to get her hands on the company my uncle bequeathed me. Maybe she's spent almost all her money and suddenly realized that the company is a potential gold mine."

"But- but she can't do that, can she? The company is yours now, and she can do nothing to change that fact."

"I would really love to say you're right, Amelia, but I have long since learnt not to underestimate Petra. She has a knack for sniffing out things people wish to keep hidden. She can spot weak links, which is why I needed to discuss her arrival with you. She is going to want to come here to see you for herself. Even if we somehow manage to keep her away from this house, she will manage to get herself invited to most of the functions we usually attend. She will be watching us closely."

"Why?"

Amelia had begun twisting the hem of her blouse, something she always did whenever she was nervous. I wanted to soothe her, calm her and tell her not to worry, but for both our sakes, I had to impress upon her how serious the issue with Petra was.

"Well, I don't know if my uncle had ever told her about his fixation for wanting to see me get married. I will assume the worst and suppose she knows my uncle handed over the company to me on the condition that I get married. If she knows that, she will want to scrutinize our marriage. This is the time for us to act like a real couple. Throughout Petra's stay, we must act as though we are head over heels in love with each other. We must not let her doubt our marriage at all, or I'll lose everything."

She nodded slowly. "I understand now."

"Yeah. Imagine if she got wind of the fact that ours is a contract marriage, she'll probably contest that my uncle's wishes were not really followed to the letter. Amelia, that company has grown so much since I've taken over. I would rather burn than see Petra get so much as a foothold in it. She isn't going to just come out of the blue and take away all I've laboured for, not if I can help it."

"It's okay, Damian. I told you that I understand. I'll do my best to keep your secret... our secret." She said. "I'm sure she won't find anything to use against you. Besides, who wouldn't believe we are in love?"

I shrugged. "Thank you for the assurance. I'll be in my room if you need me for anything." She nodded, and I strolled out.

I had already told Anton about Petra's return. That evening, he called to tell me he would have a free afternoon from work and would like to stop by the house. I told Amelia about his visit, and she went all out to cook him something.

He arrived at the time he had mentioned, and Amelia who was crossing the living room then, hurried over to open the door.

He greeted Amelia warmly as she ushered him in. They spoke for a while, and then he raised his voice slightly to ask where I was.

"Over here," I called from where I lay sprawled on the couch.

He came over. We talked while Amelia went to finish making dinner.

"Dinner is served," she informed us about ten minutes later.

Anton and Amelia carried on most of the conversation. I only spoke when they asked me a direct question. My head was filled with the implications of Petra's visit, and I still hadn't gotten over how Amelia and Anton had been all over each other the last time he had been here. This time, they thankfully did not refer to their earlier topic of discourse. Maybe it was because I had told Anton off the last time he had continued talking about Amelia.

"Can you pass the salt, please?" Amelia asked, her quiet voice bringing me back to the present.

I grabbed the salt shaker and handed it over to her. She said thank you and began telling Anton about her day at the bakery.

"Amelia-" I gestured to the soup bowl. "Can I have that?"

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"Of course," she said.

I took the soup bowl from her. The meal continued in relative silence until Anton flung his fork onto his plate with a clatter, making Amelia and I jump. I glanced at him and was surprised to see that he was frowning and shaking his head as though displeased about something.

"What? What is it?" I asked him.

"Just finish your food first," he said.

Amelia and I exchanged a look. I took a couple of more spoonfuls and pushed the plate away.

"What's wrong with you?" I asked again.

"It's you and your wife, Damian. I've been sitting here with you two for over an hour now, and even a blind man will notice that there is no... spark, no iota of romance in how you relate with each other. It was the same the last time I came here."

"Oh, come on, Anton, you're exaggerating," I said.

"I'm not." Anton jerked his head in Amelia's direction. "Ask Amelia. I know she has noticed it, too."

"Amelia, do you-"

I didn't complete my sentence. There was no need to. From the look on her face, it was evident that she agreed with him.

"You see? Even Amelia knows I'm telling the truth. You both are so painfully polite to each other that it makes my teeth ache. Can you pass the salt, please? Yes, thank you." He snorted. "Seriously? Your marriage is just a few months old, and you're still expected to be in the honeymoon phase. So where's the spark? Huh? Where's the attraction, the chemistry? Petra is going to see you both and wonder why you're both acting like strangers instead of newlyweds."

Amelia nearly choked on the water she had been sipping.

"Petra? You know about her?" she asked Anton.

"Yes, he knows about Petra," I said.

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"Damian, I think everything now lies with you. You have to infuse some romance into your relationship with Amelia. Now, we're all here, having dinner. Try to show Amelia some affection, and let's see. Go on."

I blinked, feeling a little out of my depth. "Er... so what exactly do I do?"

Anton grimaced and shook his head in exasperation. Amelia stifled a giggle.

"There are times, Damian, when you amaze me," Anton said in some amusement. "Okay. Let me give you some pointers. Start using endearments rather than calling Amelia by her name and then give her little, gentle touches from time to time. Pat her hand, stroke back her hair, you know, that sort of thing. Are you with me so far?"

"Yes. Endearments, touches, what else?"

"Next thing is-"

A knock on the door interrupted Anton.

"I'll see who it is," I said, pushing to my feet.

Standing right in front of my door was Lora. I froze for some seconds, trying to decide if I was imagining things or if Lora was really standing at my door. What the hell was happening?

"What are you doing here?" I hissed. I couldn't believe she was here. First, it was Petra, now her. It seemed the universe had conspired to bring back all the women I despised back into my life.

Lora beamed. "I've come to see you, of course, handsome."

Before I could stop her, she pushed past me into the house and went straight into the dining room. She stopped short at the sight of Anton and Amelia.

"Is she... Petra?" Amelia asked.

I sighed and gave Lora a distasteful look. "No. Amelia, this is Lora, my ex-girlfriend."