

The Unwanted Wife: Revenge After Divorce

Chapter 053

NOAH

"Uncle Noah! Uncle Noah!"

Louise's shrill urgent voice made me take my eyes off the road for a second. She had been really quiet during the ride because she had been so engrossed in looking at places and people we passed. Now she was bouncing excitedly up and down in the car seat as she pointed at something.

"Yes, sweetheart?" I said.

"That way! Let's go that way," she cried.

I looked closely now and realized that she was pointing to the right side of the road, and I was just about to turn left.

"But honey, the candy store I want to take you to isn't in that direction. If we go my way, we'll be there in to time."

Louise shook her head, her blonde pigtails swinging from side to side.

"No, Uncle Noah. I don't want to go there. There's a nice store this way. It's called Candyland." Candyland. I had heard of the store a couple of times. "I went there with mummy once and all my friends at school love it. They've got-" She quickly dropped the popsicle she had been chewing on to tick items off her fingers. "-candy, cakes, ice-cream, muffins and- and everything. Can we go there, please? Can we? Can we?"

I hesitated, then shrugged. "Okay. Fine then. I promised you a treat after all."

She squealed excitedly.

"Yay!" she cried, waving her arms up and down.

My niece's excitement was infectious. I found myself grinning. I too couldn't wait to see this place that had got Louise so pumped up. I turned right and Louise began giving me directions to the place.

After we had been driving for about fifteen minutes, I turned to Louise half teasingly and said, "You know, your mom will have my head if I manage to get us lost, but then I'll tell her it was your fault."

I didn't tell her I had already keyed in the name of the store in my car's GPS. Louise looked away from the window to grin at me.

"I know the place so we won't get lost," she chirped. "Mummy says I'm a big five year old."

"Spoken like a true five year old," I said with a grin.

Five minutes later, another of Louise's squeals told me we had arrived at the place.

"Wow," I sighed as I pulled into the parking lot and circled to find parking space.

"See? I knew you would like it too," said Louise triumphantly.

The big store was built and designed like it was really made of candy. I could almost fancy that the dark brown roof was made was made of actual creamy chocolate. It was a little hard finding parking space because there were cars everywhere. I looked around while Louise skipped beside me, pulling me by the hand. When I got into the store, I could clearly understand Louise's fascination with the place. Cookies, candy, cakes and other yummy looking snacks were lined several wall to wall display cases. Kids were not even the only ones drooling over these treats. I spied another room, just off the showroom where kids were running around, playing with bouncing castles and the like while being watched over by indulgent parents. Louise looked at the kids for a moment, but was distracted by a case of ice cream in different flavours. There was another section of the store which catered to the adult clientele. Louise squeezed my hand, asking me a silent question.

"Knock yourself out, kiddo," I said. "Choose whatever you want, but just don't wander off, okay?"

Louise's head bobbed up and down. She ran towards a group of children who were milling around the place, trying to decide on what exactly to buy since there was so much to choose from. With the shop's strategic location in the heart of the city and it's excellent decor, the place would be making a killing. It would be an ideal place to invest in if the owner needed a partner. If I only knew who the owner was...

"... Yes. As soon as I came to the grand opening, I knew that this place was going to be a success," a squat, bald man to my left said to his friend, or was it his brother?

Both men looked very alike. I walked closer to them and tapped the speaker on the shoulder. I noticed that he had two plastic bags laden with slices of cake.

"Excuse me," I said. I nodded politely to the other man. "I couldn't help overhearing your conversation. Do you happen to know who owns this place?"

The squat man grinned knowingly and nudged his friend. "Didn't I tell you? This place grows on you. You like it here already, don't you, Mister?" I admitted I did. "The owner is a Mrs Donovan. I was just telling my friend here that I knew this store was going to be a smashing success the moment I came to the grand opening.

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I gulped, struggled not to show my shock. I was being silly. There had to be more than a hundred women in this city whose last names were 'Donovan'. The man's beady eyes stared at something over my shoulder. With a jerk of his chin, he invited me to look.

"There she is now, talking to the little girl," he said.

Sure enough, the woman was Amelia, a smiling Amelia dressed in a colourful t-shirt emblazoned with the name of the store, and what was worse was that she was talking to Louise. As though she had heard me think her name, Louise turned. Our eyes met and she beckoned me imperiously foward. There was nothing for it but to approach them.

"Uncle Noah, the nice lady said I should try the chocolate chip cookies," said Louise. "Oh and the vanilla ice-cream too."

"Did she now?" I smiled at Louise, deliberately postponing the moment when I would have to look Amelia full in the face.

With a sigh, I finally straightened and gave Amelia a forced smile.

"Hello Amelia," I murmured.

Amelia's answering smile was warm. She was all politeness as she attended to us. Watching her, I was once again struck by the foolishness of my decision to divorce her. Sometimes, I wished I could kick myself for throwing her over for Lucy.

Even Louise was completely charmed by her when Amelia handed her an ice-cream cone and said with a wink, "I added an extra scoop for you just for being a pretty little girl."

With a happily chattering Louise who was smearing ice-cream all over her face, I drove to my sister's place in low spirits, cussing myself for being such a fool as to let Amelia go.

AMELIA

"Hello?" I said into the phone again.

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Someone had just called me, but all I could hear from the other end was deep, heavy breathing.

"Amelia? Can you hear me, dear?"

My eyes widened in surprise as I sank into a chair.

"Mum? Is that you?" I asked.

It was a pretty irrelevant question. Her voice was loud, high pitched as though she couldn't decide if I could hear her, but I would know that voice anywhere. I had not spoken to her in how long? Her next words drove the calculations of when last we had spoken right out of my mind.

"I just heard you're remarried," she said stiffly.

"Er- mum. I er-"

I shut my mouth with a snap because really what could I possibly say to make the situation better? Lie? Say I forgot to tell her?

It was surprising that my mother hadn't heard about my marriage to Damian before now. On a second thought, it was actually not that surprising. My mother had lived almost all her life in a small one-horse town. Electricity was the only modern improvement she had in her house, and then there was the old gramophone she used to play records when she felt like listening to some music. She had no television, no phone, not even a radio. 'Useless modern contraptions' she would call them whenever I tried to talk her into fitting in with the times.

"How could you keep something that important away from me, your mother?" she said. "Do you have any idea how foolish I felt about Mrs McCarthy knowing about my own daughter's marriage before I did? Mrs McCarthy, my new neighbor, told Ellen when she saw it in the newspapers and then they came over to the house and told me. I had to look at the pictures in the papers carefully to confirm that I was really you. I was so surprised that you could have knocked me over with a feather. Why did you keep it from me?" she asked again.

"I don't. I didn't... I'm sorry, mum," I finished lamely.

"You don't even have a good enough explanation, do you? Anyway I'm coming to see you and that husband of yours... Damian, isn't it?"

"Yes," I said mechanically.

"I'll be over soon," she said and the line went dead. I put my phone down and swore under my breath.