

# The Unwanted Wife: Revenge After Divorce

## Chapter 054

AMELIA

"We need to talk," I said glumly.

"Sounds serious?" said Damian, arching his brow.

I gestured impatiently for him to seat and sank into a chair myself. I had come home straight from the bakery. There had been no point in me staying there. I wasn't able to concentrate anyway.

"What is going on?" he prompted.

"It's my mother. She called."

"Oh..."

Even in this situation, I couldn't help but see the humour. Damian and I had never really talked about our respective families. He had told me just what was necessary to know about his family in case someone, maybe a reporter, started asking me questions about him that I was supposed to know. The subject of my mother had never come up. All Damian knew about her was that she was alive.

"And you're amused because..."

I arranged my face into an expression of seriousness. I had not even realised I had been smiling a little.

"Nothing," I said. "I've just been thinking about how we are going to handle this."

"You seem to have forgotten that you haven't told me what the problem is yet," Damian said slowly. "All I know is that it has something to do with your mother."

"Oh. Right." I clapped a hand to my head. "Sorry. I have been so distracted. My mind has been going a mile a minute. What happened is this. My mother called today. She found out that I had gotten married to you. I kept that away from her for obvious reasons."

"Er- but why has it taken so long for her to find that out?" Damain asked. I went on to explain about how my mother was very behind the times. He nodded. "Well, that explains a lot, but I fail to see what the problem is unless she's really mad at you for not telling her earlier about our marriage."

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"The problem is that she's coming over to see us."

"But she can't!" he exclaimed, suddenly sitting up.

"That was exactly what I said... Or what I would have said if she hadn't hung up almost immediately."

"Shit! This is almost like having Petra here all over again. No offense to your mother," he added quickly.

"None taken." I meant it.

My mother was nowhere near as bad as Petra, but having her around would put Damian and I under the spotlight again.

"But how long is she going to stay? Do you know? Maybe she's going to stay for only a few hours... maybe..."

I shook my head regretfully. There was hope in Damian's voice but I had no such hopes.

"The town my mum lives in is really, really far away from here," I explained. "She won't be able to make the journey here and back to her home on the same day. And even if she's only coming to visit for a day, which I doubt very much, she won't want to stay at a hotel. I'll probably be forgiven for keeping the news of our marriage from her, but suggesting she puts up at a hotel instead of this house..."

I shook my head again. That would be a offense too many.

Damian ran his fingers through his hair, tousling it. "Damn! This is sure going to be complicated. We just have to keep acting like we are in love until she leaves and then we should be fine. "

"Acting? No, Damian. I- I can't. This is my mother we are talking about here. I may be able to keep things from everyone else, but I don't ever keep things from her. I'm sorry, but I will have to tell her that what we have going on here is a contract marriage."

"Think about this, Amelia," he said after a pause.

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"I have."

"No. No, I don't think you have. Now just listen and picture this. Your mother, who had no idea until today that you were married, comes here and then you tell her that you married me for certain reasons and that you, her daughter, will be divorced in less than a year. Think about it for a moment. How do you think she will take it? How sure are you that she won't overreact? I mean... you almost overreacted when I approached you with the proposal."

I opened my mouth to tell him I would tell my mother anyway, but I bit my lip instead. Damian was right. What if she didn't take it well? What if she overreacted and maybe told her friends? Her friends would tell others. Our secret would get out and then where would we be?

"I honestly don't know how to handle this," I said nervously.

"I don't either, but we will just have to try. Did you get a particular time for her arrival?"

I shook my head. "She hung up before I could ask her anything else." He glanced at the wall clock. "I guess it's pretty late to expect her to show up today. By tomorrow we should get on with setting the stage before she arrives."

I did not sleep well that night. My mother featured in all my dreams. In one of them that felt so real, she found a copy of our contract in one of Damian's drawers. She marched up to my room to confront me, found my door locked and then she was banging on the door, hammering on it, asking to be let in so I could explain why on earth I agreed to a contract marriage.

As I struggled towards wakefulness, I actually thought the pounding on my bedroom door was real, but then the sound resolved into the shrill beeping of my alarm clock. I opened my eyes, relieved that it was just a dream and that my secret was still safe. While turning off the alarm, I rolled out of bed. Sleep was impossible for me now. I had to 'set the stage' as Damain had put it. After a quick shower, I headed to the living room. Damain turned at the sound of my footsteps and beckoned me over.

"Good. You're here," he said. "I was deciding to come wake you up. Which of these do you feel can hang here?"

He pointed to a spot on the wall which he had marked with a tiny x. On the floor in front of him was a big cardboard box filled with portraits of us at our wedding and during some events we had attended together. I recognized most of the pictures. In the early days of our marriage, the portraits had been made, but had been gathering dust somewhere. I took a portrait Damian had set aside. It showed me, in my wedding gown, looking up to Dimitri, and laughing.

"This will do," I said.

"I thought so too. There, let me-"

"I'll put it up," I said. "Just keep sorting pictures. We have to spread the pictures out in the corridors too."

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He grunted and set to work. About half an hour later, I squeaked and nearly dropped a heavy portrait on my foot.

"What?" Damian asked tersely as he looked around for what had disturbed me. "What is it?"

"I just remembered... I haven't even moved my things into your room yet. Imagine after putting all these up, and she found out that we have been sleeping in separate rooms. It will undo all this work."

"Well, get going then," Damian said through a mouthful of nails.

I lugged my suitcases to Damian's room, arranged my clothes in the wardrobe, got a couple of portraits and put them up there. By the time I returned to the living room, Damian was done. We went around the house, inspecting our handiwork. I was satisfied. It looked like a happy couple lived here.

"We will probably have to go on dates sometimes, or I'll have to make efforts to be home more often so she can see that we're spending time together," Damian said gloomily as we returned to the sitting room.

"What? No. I'm very busy, Damian. I have lots of work to do at the bakery-"

"You have employees, don't you?"

"Look, I just can't spare the time for all that. She will have ample time to see that we're happy whenever we manage to make it home."

"Hey! I am trying to come up with something here and you are just shooting down my suggestions. Do you want this to work or not?"

"Of course, I-"

We looked at each other as the doorbell rang. This was it. It had to be her. I looked around quickly.

"Dorothy," I whispered to Damian "Don't forget. Her name is Dorothy." Damian nodded, fiddled with the collar of his t-shirt which I imagined he thought was a tie. "I'll get the door."

When I opened the door, sure enough, my mother was standing there with a large suitcase at her feet.

"Hi mum," I said, forcing a smile and bracing myself to implement the first stage in our deception.