

The Unwanted Wife: Revenge After Divorce

Chapter 055

AMELIA

My mother and I regarded each other for a moment. Then I leaned forward for a hug. She let me hold her. When I pulled away, she was smiling a little, and I knew I was on my way to being forgiven, though I wasn't there yet.

"I can't say that you don't look good," she said grudgingly.

"Welcome, mom and-"

I felt a strong arm curve briefly around my waist.

"You must be Mrs Dorothy. I have heard so much about you from Amelia," Damian lied smoothly.

Damian took her hand, kissed it as my mother gave me a reproachful look.

"You have? Well, my daughter has not told me anything at all about you."

Damian turned the full force of his smile on her. She blinked. It was eerie how he was so good at this.

"There will be time to get to know me, I'm sure. Please, come in. No don't worry. I'll carry your luggage."

He allowed us precede him into the house while he carried her suitcase. He took it into the room we had prepared for her while I showed her into the living room and got her something to drink. Then Damian returned and we sat with my mother, and filled her in about the details of our wedding.

The task of acting like a happily married couple only got more gruelling the next day. Damian and I had fixed schedules, certain modes of behaviour that we were already used to. It took effort for us to keep the illusion of being a happily married couple going. It was doubly hard on me because I felt so guilty about keeping the secret from my mother. The very next day, after I came back from work, my mother came to my room. One look at her face and I knew she had a lot to say to me. What I wasn't sure of was if I wanted to hear it.

"Hi, mum," I said. "Did you want something?"

"Sit down. I want to talk to you. I have been wanting to talk to you since I came but it's been so hard to get you alone."

I kept my expression deadpan. In truth, I had been sort of avoiding her.

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I perched on the edge of my bed. "What did you want to talk about?"

"You and Damian," she said promptly. "You have been married for months now. Are you two trying for a baby?"

"A baby?" I echoed and tried to think of what else to say.

"Yes, Amelia. A baby. Married people need to have one or two. Which one do you want to have first? A boy or a girl? I think it will be better if you had a boy first."

"Er-"

"I read a book once. I can't remember the name, but I think I could find it if I asked Ellen. I think I borrowed it from her. Anyway, the book was about choosing the gender of your baby. With all the gadgets you young people have, I'm sure you know how to do all that. So are you and Damian using the right sexual positions to get a boy?"

I gaped at her. "Ewww, mum. I am so not discussing my sex life with you."

"Why not? It's obviously something we should discuss since you aren't pregnant yet. Or are you pregnant already?"

"No, mum. Can we please not talk about this? It's awkward."

Thankfully, my phone rang at that moment and I was able to escape having that conversation. Though knowing her, she would definitely find a way to bring it up again. Anton came to visit the very next day. My mother was watching a movie when he arrived. I got the door and returned with him. He was chatting about a party he had been to last night.

"... You've been keeping Damian all to yourself since you got married," he joked. "There were really lots of pretty girls I could have introduced him to if-" Anton broke off as soon as he saw my mother. Too late, I realized that I ought to have stopped him from going on and on about the party when my mother was within earshot. Now, my mother was looking very disapproving. She gave him a once over. Her gaze lingered on his artfully ripped jeans, jeans which had several large pieces of material missing. Most of his thigh was visible. I groaned inwardly. Why did Anton have to pick today to wear the most fashion-forward jeans he owed. One could tell that my mother's puritan sensibilities were offended. Anton flushed but recovered himself rather quickly. "Oh. You must be Amelia's mother. She has told me- us so many wonderful things about you."

Which was a lie. Damian had merely told him that my mother was around and that was all. Anton's winning smile bounced off my mother.

"Good evening," she said stiffly and proceeded to stare at the television with fixed concentration.

"Way to go, Anton," Damian mouthed at his friend.

He grinned when Anton proceeded to glower at him. Damain looked a lot happier than I had seen him lately, probably because Anton was at the receiving end of my mother's periodic stares. She obviously disapproved of Anton, but still seemed to find him curious. Damian had mostly been under my mother's radar, and he had confessed to me that she made him uncomfortable for some reason he couldn't place, even though she was always very friendly towards him. I put it down to his guilt at pretending, and most times lying to her about romantic moments we had never shared.

Damian did most of the talking that evening, while Anton seemed to be brooding over something. Suddenly, he visibly brightened and turned to my mother.

"Ma'am," he said after regarding her for some seconds. "Your sweater... is it handknitted?"

She reluctantly dragged her eyes away from the Old Western on the big screen to say, "Yes."

"Ah. I could tell."

Interest flickered in her eyes. "You can?"

Anton nodded, put out his hand, gestured to the cuff of her sweater. "May I?" She nodded. He ran his fingers repeatedly over the material. "Beautiful."

"I made it myself," my mother said with a hint of pride.

Anton's blue eyes widened. "You don't say! The stitching is exquisite. I once made something like this myself. Hand stitched sweaters like this are the best."

"You make clothes?"

Anton's smile resurfaced. "Oh yes, I do."

Damian and I watched, bemused as they began to talk about clothes. They moved on to talking about the town my mother lived in. She regaled him with stories of what old Mr McCarthy had done, the mischief the grocer's daughter had gotten up to, details of the fundraising event she was planning. Anton in turn talked to her of his trips around the world. At the end of an hour, he had completely charmed my mother. No one could argue that fact after she had insisted Anton call her Dorothy.

Anton became a regular visitor at the house, particularly after my mother had taken to regularly asking when 'that nice young man was coming to visit again.'

Anton came visiting one Sunday morning when Damian and I were having a late breakfast.

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"You have a knack of always showing up whenever there's food," Damian teased.

Anton laughed and promptly began to heap his plate with food. "You're right," he said. "And I'll keep showing up as long as Amelia is not complaining."

We were halfway through the meal when my mother came into the dining room. She was fully dressed in a smart skirt suit with a fashionable hat perched on top of her head.

"What are you all doing?" she asked, giving us all a puzzled look.

"Eating, mum," I said. "Do you want to join us?"

"Are you going somewhere?" Damian asked.

"Of course I'm going somewhere. The same place you all should be heading to. It's a Sunday morning, isn't it. Church!" she said impatiently when we all continued to look blank.

I nodded my head slowly. "Oh! Church."

"Right!"

She narrowed her eyes suspiciously. "You lot sound like you've never set foot in church before." She fixed her gaze on Anton, who coughed self-consciously. "Are any of you going to work today?"

"No," Damian said quickly, too quickly.

"Alright then. Up you all get. You're coming with me to church."

We protested but Damian's earlier confirmation that we didn't have to go to work made her keep insisting. In the end, we surrendered, got dressed and followed her there. Damian and I had a good laugh in the pew behind my mother's at Anton who looked like a fish out of water.

Having my mother around had its advantages too. One evening, when I came back from work, she offered to do Damian's laundry which I had spoken of sorting out the previous day. I was thinking how nice it was to have her help me with chores, but that was until she marched into the living room minutes later and held something out to me.

"Amelia, explain why on earth your husband has a stash of condoms in his stocking drawer," she said.

The blood drained out of my face and my mind go completely blank as I stared at the packets of condoms in her hand.