

The Unwanted Wife: Revenge After Divorce

Chapter 090

DAMIAN

The moment I closed my eyes, I found myself back in time to the neat living room of my father's mansion with the perpetual smell of pine air freshener. There are lights everywhere, too many to count, because of mother's fear of darkness.

In the room, with my favourite action figure tucked into my side pocket, I was joined by my mother, a tall, plump, kind-faced woman who spotted me and exclaimed, "Oh Damian, there you are! Did you go to play in the toolshed again? Remember how many times I have-"

"Mum!" I interrupted with a frown. "You promised that we would play. Can we play now? Please?"

Her plump face relaxed into a smile as she bent to ruffle my hair.

"Okay, kiddo," she said. "We'll play. How does hide and seek sound?"

"Yay!" I excitedly jumped up and down on my sneaked feet until she told me to hide so she could find me.

"Make sure you get a good hiding place," she called after me.

"And count to a hundred, mum!" I called back.

As I ran up the stairs, I heard her say twenty-five and then fifty-two.

"You're cheating!" I yelled, screeching with laughter.

I ran through the house, opening and shutting doors, looking for the best hiding spot. Finally, I settled on hiding in my parent's room. I started to slide under the bed, changed my mind at the last second and hid in the wardrobe instead. I pulled one of my mother's hats over my head and giggled at how silly I must look. Then, I sat very still as I listened to her approaching footsteps. The seconds ticked past as I waited, my heart thumping excitedly in my chest.

Minutes later, instead of hearing her voice yell, 'Ready or not? Here I come', I heard my father yelling loudly from somewhere in the house. He sounded angry and mean. I knew he was talking to my mother and they were about to have a fight. Again.

My expectant smile became a frown. I didn't want him to hurt her anymore. I was about to go to my room when I heard the door open.

"... Oh shut up!" My father's voice thundered and I flinched. "You never have anything worth hearing to say, so shut the hell up before I shut your pie hole."

"Keep it down!" From the little crack between the doors of the wardrobe, I saw my mother's eyes roving uneasily around. "Please. Damian is around here somewhere. You don't want him to hear us and get sad about it. He's just a child and we can resolve our differences quietly."

My father swelled with indignation. "You don't get to tell me what to do in my house, you bitch! And for the last time, shut up!"

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She went red in the face. "That's it. I've had enough of you for one da-"

She had started to leave when my father turned to her, his face contorted with so much anger that I shrunk back to the wardrobe. He dragged her back, and hit her across the face. Twice. She fell on the bed, her face slack with shock. Then she began to cry.

"Mummyeee," I screamed, dashing out of the wardrobe immediately. I was crying and blubbing and running up to her.

Suddenly, I was running on just air. It took me a second to realize that my father had lifted me bodily by one arm.

"You snotty brat!" he hissed, giving me a shake after every word. "Today, I'll teach you never to eavesdrop on your elders and betters."

"No," My mother cried, reaching for me while my tears became those of pain. My arm felt like it was on fire. "No please he was just hiding. We were playing a game."

My mother's tears and entreaties, my struggles and cries didn't move him one bit. When she almost got me out of his grip, he pushed her back savagely and she hit her lower back on the wooden frame of the bed. Our screams echoed in unison as he whipped me with his belt at that same instant, his fingers digging into my flesh to keep me steady. When he'd whipped me to his content, he pulled me through the doors of his room.

And then I found myself elsewhere, another dream, another door.

My other arm was being held in a viselike grip by my nanny, a fat, sturdy woman with wicked eyes, as she marched me through the door of her room. This time, I was in a shirt and my favourite Captain Power boxers. Tears and snot ran down my sweaty face.

"Please," I begged. "I don't want to do it. Please don't make me. Don't make me. Please. Just let me go and I'll be good. I won't tell anyone."

Her eyes flashed as she slammed the door closed.

"Shut up. Take off your clothes or I'll hurt you," she threatened. "I'll break your skinny little arms and no one will believe you if you tell them I did it."

Shaking from head to foot, I squeezed my eyes shut and began to take off my shirt.

And then, it was just another nightmare.

I was slowly pulling off the white, gauzy cloth draped over my father's corpse the way I had on the day he was laid to rest.

Only this time, when I pulled the cloth down, his eyes were wide open, filled with awareness and staring right at me. I tried to scream in horror, tried to back away but I couldn't move, couldn't make a sound, couldn't even look away.

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"You will end up like me," he said, his voice hoarse from disuse and whatever chemical the mortician had used to embalm him. "You can't escape it. You will end up like me, son."

I jerked awake, heart pounding, sweat pouring from my body despite the fact that it was a chilly night. I pressed my hands to my eyes to blot out the horrible images.

"It was just a dream. Just a dream," I muttered to myself.

I kept on saying that until I had myself under some semblance of control. Then I turned to look at the clock. It was just a few minutes past 5 a. m. I knew I would not be able to sleep even though I tried so I lay awake.

I tried to stop my body from visibly shaking, but the torment of the dream was too much to bear. Why were they back? I'd tried so hard to get rid of them in the past and it had worked. Why could I see still see the horrid face of my father?

I slammed a pillow over my face, hoping it would blur the images floating in my mind. But it did nothing. They were everywhere, tormenting my mind for several minutes.

At about 6 a. m, my ears picked up the sound of some commotion outside the house. It was finally bright enough for me to get busy with myself instead of wallowing in anger and sadness. I left my room immediately to check out the source of the sound.

Outside the house, Amelia who was clutching a suitcase, was trying unsuccessfully to shove her way through three of my bodyguards.

"Just get out of my way," she screeched.

"I'm sorry, madam, but we can't let you leave," One of them told her respectfully.

"Out of-"

"What is going on?"

Four pairs of eyes turned towards me. Three pairs were relieved. One- Amelia's- was furious.

"Tell them to let me pass," Amelia said angrily. "I'm leaving."

I heaved a sigh. "You can't go on your own. You don't know the terrain well. You won't get far in the desert. It would only take hours and you'll die."

"Then I'll sleep in the desert! I'll rather die than remain here. I want to be anywhere but here. Your coldness is- is-" She made a wildly impatient gesture. "It's suffocating me! I can't stay with you or around you. I demand to leave. Now!"

I saw and recognised the stubborn look in her eyes and knew that she couldn't be persuaded to stay.

"Okay," I said. "You'll leave. Just give me an hour at least to contact my pilot who will fly us home."

She considered this for a full minute.

"Fine," she bit off. "An hour. No more."

She dragged her suitcase to the steps of the palace. She didn't set foot in it again until we were ready to leave. Throughout the flight home, we didn't say a word to each other. With her arms crossed across her chest, she stared resolutely out the window. Several times I wanted to talk to her but I didn't know what to say.

Finally, I cleared my throat, "Amelia, I wish the vacation had turned out better. I had it planned especially for you."

She snorted, and shot me a glare. "You expect me to believe that? I know you planned it all for yourself just so you could get what you wanted." She started to stare out the window again but stopped. "I really thought about why you couldn't love anyone and I believe I now know why."

"Amelia-"

"It's because you are too damn selfish. You believe that marriage will diminish you, that it will take away your fortune which is the only thing you care about in this world."

"You are reading the situation wrongly-"

"Oh. Am I?"

"Yes," I sat forcefully. "I'm a realist. That doesn't make me selfish or as cold blooded as you're making me out to be. All you need to do is just try to see things from my point of view for once and you'll know I'm right. I-"

She held up a hand. "Save it, Damian. I have watched you for the past six months of this sham of a marriage. I've realized that every single promise you have ever made ensured only your success, not mine or anyone else's. That's how scheming and manipulative you can be."

"I-"

"There is no point in discussing this further," she said firmly. I fell silent. There was nothing to say anyway. Amelia was convinced that I was simply cold-hearted and scheming. There was no way I could convince her otherwise except by loving her which I could never do. "I have decided to continue fulfilling my duties to you as a wife but once the year is over, I'll leave immediately. It's ridiculous to think that I wanted to stay, to help you. But you can't even help yourself. After a year, we are done and never crossing paths with each other."

Sadly, I nodded.

"If that is what you want, then I agree."