

## Beneath His Ugly Wife's Mask: Her Revenge Was Her Brilliance

### Chapter: 1

"Elliana, remember what I told you. Until you turn twenty, never show your beauty or your talents."

For fifteen years, Elliana Marsh lived by her mother's final words. She made herself look plain and acted like she knew nothing-just to blend into the background.

But today was her twentieth birthday. And she was ready to let go of the old Elliana and showcase her true self.

She filled the tub with warm water, added some bath salts, and set her makeup remover nearby. Just as she started undressing for a long, relaxing soak to wash off the ugly makeup, a loud knock ruined the peace.

Irritated, she threw on a robe and opened the door.

Melody Ahmed, the maid, stood there, nose in the air as usual. "Elliana, what are you sneaking around in here for? It's Miss Jones's wedding day. If you don't show up, people will start whispering and potentially tarnish the Jones family's image. Go to the front hall, now!"

Elliana smirked derisively. This maid had never been polite to her. Saying she sneaked around was hardly accurate. Truthfully, she had been pushed into that back room for fifteen years since her mother's death. After her mother's passing, her stepmother, Kiara Jones, and her father and Kiara's illegitimate daughter, Paige Jones, wasted no time joining the Jones family and took over everything.

The worst part? Not even Elliana's father, Darin Jones, treated her the way she deserved.

"I'LL go change," Elliana said calmly.

Melody scoffed. "What's the point? With that ugly face of yours, no dress can save you. Move it! The Evans family's already here. The City Hall staff members are on-site to collect the materials to register the marriage between Mr. Evans and Miss Jones. Mrs.

Jones wants everyone present for the big moment."

Elliana's lips curled into a cold smile.

The Evans family was the most powerful in Ublento. Cole Evans, their heir, was a business genius. Paige was the city's favorite socialite. Of course, their engagement was all over the news. People called them a perfect couple. A match made in heaven. Every compliment in the book was used to describe them. Social media was going wild. Everyone was waiting for their grand wedding.

Kiara made it sound proper and grand, but Elliana knew the truth-she was simply dragged out to watch Paige shine.

Elliana got changed and followed Melody to the front hall.

The Jones family's residence looked like a palace, dressed in over-the-top Luxury to celebrate Paige's big day.

Everyone in the room wore elegant outfits, except Elliana. She stood out like a sore thumb in a cheap white T-shirt, ripped jeans, and hideous makeup. She didn't just clash with the scene-she crashed it.

Kiara was chatting with Cole's grandfather, Ruben Evans, when Elliana walked in. Kiara paused and then put on her usual fake smile. "Elliana, I got you a beautiful new dress. Why didn't you wear it?"

Elliana inwardly rolled her eyes. As if Kiara ever did. She used to fake being clueless and play along with Kiara's charade, but now she was done with these games. She didn't bother replying to Kiara. Instead, she turned to Ruben and gave a polite nod. "Hello, Mr. Evans."

Ruben chuckled. "Well, Elliana, you've certainly got your own style these days."

Elliana ran a hand through her messy wig. She hadn't expected him to be so tolerant. At least he wasn't calling her a disaster.

Her eyes naturally drifted to the man beside Ruben. She'd noticed him the moment she stepped in. From his posture and presence, she could tell-this had to be Cole, the mysterious heir rarely seen in public. Seeing him up close was something else. Tall, sharp, and ridiculously handsome. He looked like he'd stepped straight out of a

romance novel. She couldn't help staring just a little too long.

"Look at Elliana," Melody sneered, voice loud on purpose. "Ugly as hell, yet she dares to drool over Paige's fiancé. What a joke. With that face, even looking at Mr. Evans is a crime."

Melody was clearly complying with Kiara's silent orders.

Paige leaned closer to Cole, clinging to his arm like she was claiming her prize. "It's fine. Cole's amazing. It's only natural that other women like him."

## **Chapter: 2**

Paige didn't see Elliana as a threat at all. In fact, she wanted Elliana to chase after him. It made her feel even more superior—like she had already won.

Darin's face twisted in anger as he snarled at Elliana, "What a disgrace. Get out of here!"

Elliana dragged over a chair with one leg and dropped into it casually, right across from Cole.

Cole didn't flinch. His face stayed blank, cold as stone.

Ruben cleared his throat awkwardly and turned to the City Hall staff members. "Let's check if we missed any documents for the marriage registration."

"Of course." The City Hall members opened their laptops and checked if any crucial materials were missing. A moment later, one of them froze and gazed at Cole hesitantly. "Mr. Evans.. The system says you're already married. Your wife is listed as Ms. Elliana Marsh.."

"Wait, what?" Gasps filled the room.

Elliana's eyes went wide. Shock hit her like a slap. She was married? And to Cole Evans, no less? But she had no idea how.

Kiara rose to her feet in a flash. "How can this even be happening?"

Darin looked equally rattled. "This can't be right. There's got to be an error."

Back in the day, the Jones family thrived off Elliana's biological mother Rita Marsh's brilliance—her medical genius and those rare formulas put them on the map. But after

Rita's passing, the legacy began to wither. Tying themselves to the Evans family was their last safety net. They needed this marriage to work like their lives depended on it.

Sure, Elliana was also a daughter of the Jones family, but her marriage didn't carry the same weight as Paige's. Paige was the one they genuinely held dear.

Paige tried to play it cool, but her fists were tight enough to crack bone. Still, ever the performer, she put on her poised expression. "This doesn't make any sense. There has to be a mistake here."

"But the system shows Mr. Evans' marital status clearly," the City Hall staff member said firmly.

The crowd surged toward the laptop. Sure enough, the system displayed Cole and Elliana listed as husband and wife. The date went back two years, in another nation—Podgend, when Elliana was eighteen.

Darin and Kiara stood frozen.

Paige's polished mask cracked right then and there. She was at a loss, her elegant facade gone in an instant.

The room turned its focus on Cole. Ruben narrowed his eyes and asked sharply, "Care to explain, Cole?"

Cole maintained his poker face. "I'm just as confused as you are." "Confused?" Ruben echoed, his voice climbing with fury, his mustache nearly twitching with rage. "You're standing there saying you signed off on a marriage and somehow have no idea how it happened?"

Cole's head slowly turned toward Elliana, his stare sharp enough to cut glass. She hadn't moved—still caught in disbelief.

The coldness in his eyes pulled everyone else's gaze to Elliana. Now she was the center of a storm she didn't see coming.

Elliana gave a slow blink, shrugged innocently, and said, "Beats me. I don't know either."

No one had any real reason to doubt her. She'd grown up invisible—tucked away in the back corner of the house, scraping through grade school, stuck in a storeroom no

bigger than a closet, and constantly ridiculed for how she looked. The idea that she could've snuck off to Podgend and married Cole in secret sounded impossible.

"There's no way this is real! Someone had to mess with the registry!" Grinding her teeth in frustration, Kiara instructed, "Sort out the truth later. For now, divorce immediately and get Cole married to Paige today."

### **Chapter: 3**

"Right, right, getting Cole and Paige married takes priority!" Darin chimed in.

"I'm afraid Cole couldn't marry Paige." Ruben exhaled slowly. "The Evans family has strict traditions. A man can only remarry if his wife has passed away. Divorce isn't even an option. The one walking down the aisle today has to be Elliana."

"You can't be serious!" Paige couldn't take it anymore. She jumped up, her composure crumbling, eyes glistening with rage. "Everyone in Ublento knows I'm the one meant to marry into the Evans family! And now you're swapping me out for Elliana like it's nothing? How am I supposed to show my face after this?"

Kiara didn't bother with the niceties anymore. Her voice turned sharp and poisonous. "Paige is meant to be Cole's rightful wife! That pathetic brat Elliana doesn't belong anywhere near him!"

Watching Kiara and Paige's meltdown was priceless. Elliana could barely hide her amusement—it was better than anything she could've planned. She had daydreamed about stealing Cole just to piss them off. But fate? It had gone further. It dropped the marriage in her lap without her lifting a finger. Ridiculous or not, she wasn't giving it up.

With a sugar-sweet smile, Elliana looked up at Cole and said, "Darling, sorry about all this drama."

This was like a slap to Paige's pride. "You bitch! He's mine! How dare you call him that!" she screamed, charging at Elliana in a blind fury.

Quick on her feet, Elliana ducked behind Cole and clutched his shoulders like a shield. With a teasing glint in her eye, she leaned to the side and said sweetly, "Take a breath, Paige. Where are those polished manners you take pride in?"

Paige stumbled past Elliana, fists clenched and trembling, ready for round two—until Elliana's words froze her mid-step.

Everything Paige had built—her pristine reputation, her status on Ublento's social scene—was slipping through her fingers. She'd clawed her way to the top, and one chaotic scene was going to ruin her years-long effort.

Everyone stared as Paige, who moments ago had been screaming like someone unhinged, suddenly slipped back into her gentle, wide-eyed act. "Cole, you can't leave me. No one loves you more than I do..."

Darin and Kiara turned to Cole, silently begging him to say something—anything—that could change the course of this disaster. Ruben's reputation was unshakable—he never bent the rules. Convincing him was a lost cause. If anything was going to change, it had to come from Cole.

Standing dead center in the storm of voices and tension, Cole looked like a statue—emotionless and untouchable.

After casting a glance over his shoulder at Elliana, still quietly holding onto him, Cole looked forward again. His voice cut through the air, steady and firm. "As an Evans, I'm expected to uphold my family's traditions. I won't be the one to tear them down."

The words hit like a thunderclap. Both Kiara and Paige paled, as if the floor had dropped beneath them.

Darin's gaze shot to Ruben, panic bubbling beneath the surface. "Ruben, surely there's—"

Elliana's overdone makeup earned a glance, but Ruben's focus lingered on Cole—steady, composed, unshaken. He exhaled, long and heavy.

"This is unfair to you, Cole. But our family's traditions leave no room for exceptions," Ruben muttered to himself.

Ruben stared directly at Darin. "Darin, I made a promise to your father, which is the only reason I agreed to this marriage alliance in the first place. But the engagement never stated exactly which of your daughters would be marrying into my family. Now that Elliana is Cole's wife, the deal still stands. Don't push me to go against the traditions my family has followed for generations!"

While Darin was reluctant to accept this, he didn't dare voice it since crossing Ruben wasn't an option. Swallowing his fury, he gave a stiff nod.

And with that, the switch in brides was sealed for good. Elliana stepped forward without hesitation, slipping into the gown that had been meant for Paige...

Nothing about Cole's wedding whispered subtlety-it shouted luxury from every corner, drenched in diamonds and power.

A hundred million-dollar gown, laced with over 400, 000 diamonds and pearls, was the crown jewel of the ceremony. Paige had fantasized about walking down the aisle in it for as long as she could remember.

Aware of the enormous difference between the Jones family and the Evans family, Kiara and Darin had gone to great lengths to maintain appearances. They'd put together five hundred million dollars as a wedding gift, aiming to marry Paige off in a grand spectacle that would leave the entire city in awe. But in the end, every bit of it went to Elliana.

#### **Chapter: 4**

The wedding dress, air-shipped straight from a well-known gown brand overseas, now rested on Elliana's body. Kiara, Darin, and Paige could only watch as everything they'd sacrificed for sparkled on the wrong girl-rage nearly knocked them off their feet.

Elliana could barely hold back her laughter, but with Cole standing right next to her, she bit it back and kept her expression neutral. There was no mistaking Cole's reputation - dangerous, decisive, and impossible to predict. She knew better than to get careless. She still had no clue how she became his wife, but she needed answers, and fast.

A swarm of reporters buzzed outside the Jones family's mansion, hungry for any crack in the story. Instead of feeding the frenzy, Cole avoided the car altogether and flew off with Elliana in a private helicopter.

Tears streamed down Paige's face as the helicopter disappeared into the clouds. "Mom, is my dream of becoming the wife of the wealthiest man truly gone?"

"Absolutely not!" Kiara's voice dripped with venom as she said, "Cole won't tolerate being trapped like this. Elliana was shoved into his life. Who knows? She might not even make it through tonight."

A spark flickered behind Paige's tears. "You think he'd actually get rid of her?"

Kiara gave a cold smile. "Once Elliana's no longer in the picture, Cole will definitely come back to you. Just hold on to your place as Ublento's top socialite. You'll be his wife

eventually."

Since even those two morons, Kiara and Paige, had imagined Cole might arrange a widower scenario, Elliana, with her sharp mind, had certainly considered that possibility.

Even though Elliana had never seen Cole in person until today, she'd heard every tale. People described him as cold -blooded, even cruel. He was the kind of man who crushed anyone who dared stand in his way. Those who did either vanished or ended up wishing they had never tried. She had no plans to test a man like that.

Elliana kept her head down the entire ceremony. Once they stepped into the bedroom, Elliana sank onto the edge of the bed and stayed silent.

Across the room, Cole slipped off his jacket and dropped onto the couch. His eyes locked on her—intense, clinical, like he could read her thoughts with one glance.

Hours ago, she looked like a wreck—smudged eyeliner, tangled hair, makeup that aged her ten years. But now, beneath the soft veil concealing her face, she looked ethereal in the glittering gown. Her skin glowed, her figure delicate and composed. She was stunning.

Elliana had her own legend, dark and twisted. At five, they said, she had lit the fire that killed her mother and melted her own face. Some called her cursed. Others called her a murderer. Either way, no one saw innocence when they looked at her.

They had labeled her dumb and called her ugly, but Cole saw none of that. Her eyes—sharp, sly, and full of light—gave her away. She wasn't clueless. She was shrewd. Whatever her game was, she played it well. When Paige lunged at her earlier, Elliana had slipped behind him with uncanny ease. Others might've dismissed it as instinct, but he caught the control in her footwork. That kind of precision didn't come from fear—it came from training.

But all that finesse meant nothing to him compared to the one thing that did matter—how his name got locked in with hers in a marriage. Someone had pulled strings behind the curtain. Why? What did they stand to gain? And was Elliana really as innocent as she played?

"You had no trouble talking earlier. Why so quiet now?" Cole's tone sliced through the quiet like glass.



Elliana stiffened, a chill rushing up her spine before she could stop it. "It's not like I planned to marry up... I just can't shake this bit of unease."

Living under the Evans family household came with rules, and Elliana understood that fast. A gentle smile here, the right words there-it could be the difference between survival and disaster.

A dry chuckle slipped past Cole's lips. She was putting on a show, and he wasn't buying a second of it. Earlier, she'd called him "darling" in front of Paige like it was the most natural thing in the world. There hadn't been a hint of unease in her voice. He would just wait to see how long she could keep up the charade.

Elliana knew he didn't believe her. She didn't expect him to. She just needed to avoid giving him a reason to strike.

She was still running through her next move in her head when Cole rose without warning and crossed the room with unhurried, deliberate steps.

Without a word, he leaned down and swept her into his arms before she had the chance to flinch.

Being swept into his arms like a bride out of a fairytale made her heart Lurch. "Mr. Evans, what... What are you doing?"

Cole glanced down at her, a sly smile playing at the corners of his mouth. "Tell me-what do you suppose newlyweds ought to be doing on their wedding night?"