

CEO's Unwanted Wife

Chapter 3

After the entire day of working and replaying the images in her mind, Emma slipped out of the office, avoiding any chance of running into Alex. Her mind was a fog of hurt as she hailed a taxi outside the towering building.

"Crystal Bay Apartments, please," she told the driver, her voice hollow as she settled into the backseat.

"Rough day?" the driver asked, glancing at her through the rearview mirror.

"You could say that," she replied, staring out the window as the city lights blurred through unshed tears. "Just... get me home."

Emma stood by the window of her Crystal Bay apartment, a small apartment which she had bought with her own money, before marrying Alex.

Her arms wrapped around herself as if that could hold her together. The city lights flickered in the distance, but all she could see was that photograph burned into her memory—Alex, hand in hand with Vicky, both framed like a royal couple under the glow of paparazzi flash.

The images captured every detail—the way Vicky's elegant red dress shimmered under the streetlights, the casual confidence in Alex's smirk as he guided her through the crowd of flashing cameras.

Each headline screamed about suspecting a newfound relation, while the comments below buzzed with speculation and admiration, twisting the knife deeper as she scrolled.

"How could you? How could you do this when we were still married?" She whispered under her breath, eyes locked on the image, the betrayal burning deep.

"Two years, Alex. Two years of hiding, of hoping... for what?" she said to herself, "You've never loved me, have you?"

The silence answered her, heavy with the truth of a marriage built on his grandfather's promise, not affection.

She turned away, the ache deepening in her chest like a hollow pit expanding with every breath. It was a familiar pain, sharp yet dull, as if her heart were clenching around a memory she couldn't release.

Her shoulders slumped under the weight of it, and for a moment, she felt the sting of tears threatening to spill, but she blinked them back, unwilling to let them fall. The world outside her window blurred, muted by a silent reminder of what she'd lost—or perhaps, what she'd never truly had.

To distract herself, she sat by the window, hoping the night air might offer some comfort. Her eyes wandered to the quiet paths below, dimly lit by the streetlights. A couple strolled hand in hand, their laughter rising faintly through the evening hush.

The man tilted his head toward the woman, his eyes crinkling with warmth, while she threw her head back in a carefree giggle. Their hands remained tightly clasped, fingers laced with a kind of stubborn affection, as if neither of them had ever considered letting go.

Emma watched them from above, the glass between her and that moment of joy only intensifying her sense of distance. The world seemed to shrink around the couple, cocooned in their own universe. That kind of closeness—so natural, so easy—felt painfully foreign.

"That'll never be us," she whispered to herself, her voice barely audible. "Just a wish... a stupid, impossible wish."

The couple turned the corner and disappeared from sight, leaving behind an emptiness she couldn't explain. She sat there longer, letting the cold from the glass seep into her skin, her heart heavier than before.

It was well past midnight when she finally stood to close the curtains. Just as she reached out, her eyes caught movement near the building entrance. Her breath hitched.

Alex was there, standing outside her apartment block. His sleeves were rolled up, shirt half-unbuttoned, his usual composure replaced by a raw, unsettled energy. Even from up here, she could see the anger burning in his eyes.

Emma froze.

Moments later, a knock echoed at her apartment door. She hesitated before opening it.

"Where the hell have you been?" he demanded, stepping closer, his voice rough. "I've been looking everywhere for you. I called your cell ten times."

"Is that so?" Emma asked while opening the door, meeting his eyes with cold resolve. "I didn't know you cared."

"What is that supposed to mean?" Alex's brows furrowed as he asked, and Emma entered, casting a quick glance his way.

"We should just end this, Alex. Let's be strangers again." She said tentatively.

His expression shifted to disbelief, a muscle ticking in his jaw. "Strangers? You think it's that easy? Emma, it's not something you just walk away from."

"And you don't get to keep me caged!" she said with slow frustration leaking into her words, her chest heaving. "I'm tired, Alex. Tired of being invisible while you parade around with her."

"Parade around?" he growled, stepping even closer, the tension crackling between them. "You have no idea what you're talking about."

"I saw the photos!" she cried, her voice breaking. "You and Vicky, hand in hand, like I don't even exist. Do you know how that feels?"

Alex's eyes darkened, his tone sharp. "You're my wife, Emma, whether the world knows it or not. That's not something I take lightly."

"Your wife?" she laughed, the sound hollow. "I'm a secret, Alex. A shadow. And I'm done living like this."

He stared at her, the air thick with unspoken words, his authority as CEO and husband looming over her subordinate role, the power imbalance a silent storm between them.

Emma's resolve crumbled under the weight of her words, tears streaming down her face as she turned away. "Just go. You don't even know what they say, what they call me."

"Emma," Alex said, his voice softer now, the anger fading as he watched her break. "Look at me."

She shook her head, sobs shaking her shoulders. "No. I can't—"

Before she could finish, he stepped forward, pulling her into a tight embrace. The warmth of his body clashed with the cold pain in her heart, a surge of longing and tension pulsing through her.

"Don't believe those photos," he murmured, his voice low and firm against her ear. "I honor my grandfather's words. I'd never betray you like that."

"How can I trust you?" she whispered, her hands gripping his shirt, torn between the comfort of his touch and the sting of doubt. "I saw you with her." her heart racing, the years of hidden desire and emotional ache mixing with the unresolved hurt, their complex dynamic intensifying in the quiet of her apartment.

As the embrace lingered, Alex's gaze dropped to her face, noticing the pallor of her skin and exhaustion etched into her features. "You look like you're about to collapse. What's wrong?"

"I'm fine," Emma said quickly, stepping back, her voice trembling as she guarded her secret. "Just tired."

"Tired doesn't look like this," he countered, his tone firm, concern flickering in his eyes. "We're going to the hospital. Now."

"No!" she protested, panic rising as she shook her head. "I don't need a doctor. I just need rest."

"You're not arguing with me on this," Alex said, his voice brooking no dissent. "You're coming with me, whether you like it or not."

"Alex, please," she pleaded, her hands fidgeting nervously. "I hate hospitals. I'll be okay after some sleep."

"Enough," he cut her off, stepping forward and scooping her up into his arms before she could resist. "You're not okay, and I'm not taking chances. You're swaying on your feet."

"Put me down!" she gasped, pushing weakly against his chest, her vulnerability clashing with his control. "I can walk!"

"Not happening," he replied, his grip unyielding as he carried her toward the elevator. "You're too stubborn for your own good."

"And you're too controlling!" she said, frustration and fear mingling in her voice. "Why can't you just listen to me?"