

Five Years of Marriage to Mr. Bradford

Novel - Chapter 3

Chapter 3

The exaggerated performance fueled even more laughter. Catherine, seated beside Vance, collapsed onto his shoulder in hysterics. The man remained silent. Aiden turned, still grinning. "Vance, is it like..." His words died as he caught sight of Rebecca standing in the doorway. His smile faltered, and his tongue twisted. "R-Rebecca?" The others followed him to look over, all freezing. Catherine got up from Vance's shoulder, grinning. "Oh, this must be the legendary Mrs. Bradford. Come on in. I'm Catherine Welch, Vance's friend." Rebecca scanned the room, her blood running cold.

Finally, Vance stood up and walked over to her. "Rebecca? What are you doing here? They were just joking. Don't take it to heart." She stared at him, feeling utterly alienated. For the first time, he seemed a stranger. In the face of mockery toward his wife, he sided with them. Aiden put down his glass, apologizing, "Y-Yeah, it was a joke. I'm sorry, Rebecca. Please don't be mad." Vance moved closer, attempting to embrace her. "Rebecca." But Rebecca recalled Catherine leaning on him earlier, his masturbation in the bathroom, and the name he uttered in the climax.

That hand, the one reaching for her now, felt utterly filthy. She quickly stepped back, avoiding him. "Rebecca?" Vance stared at his empty hand in confusion, then sighed. "I apologize on their behalf. Don't be upset, okay? I'll get a gift to make up for you. Anything you want." Catherine shot Aiden a playful glare. "This is your fault, Aiden. Apologize properly. Not everyone's like me, clumsy and thick-skinned, laughing off your jokes." Rebecca sneered at her cheeky speech, but these men didn't even sense the manipulation. Aiden grumbled, "I already did! Didn't know she'd show up."

It was just a joke." "A joke is only funny if the target laughs," Rebecca retorted, her voice shaking with newfound courage. For five years, this curse of her unworthiness of Vance had confined her. Mocking glances made her shrink, retreating like a quail to lick her wounds alone. Aiden winced, "But I already apologized." "I-I don't accept it!" Rebecca trembled harder, defying mockery for the first time. Aiden mumbled, "Then what do you want?" Rebecca shook her head, having no answer. She just rejected their ridicule and Vance's alignment with them.

"Enough, everyone." Vance intervened, positioning himself between her and Aiden. He was the leader of the group, his words carrying authority. After graduation, his business savvy had built their empire. The room fell silent, and he nodded, turning back to Rebecca. "Hey," he said evenly, his gaze as detached as ever, unlike the warmth in Catherine's video. "These are my longtime friends. They didn't mean to hurt your feelings. No malice, just banter. Forgive them this once. I'll have the driver take you home." "Rebecca," Catherine pouted, sidling up to Vance.

"If you have to blame someone, blame me. This gathering is for my return. Vance, invite her to stay. I'll toast her with an apology." Her phony tone only disgusted Rebecca further and drove her to squint at Vance with resentment. It was his very indulgence that fed Catherine's boldness. "I'm fine," she said, holding back her bitterness. "I don't drink, especially not sour alcohol." "Vance, is she insulting me? I..." Catherine wrinkled her nose, choking back her tears. "She misunderstood me, but it's fine. Don't blame her." Vance's jaw tightened. "Catherine meant well.

Why are you being sarcastic?" "Meant well?" Rebecca snorted. Only a fool would think those words were spoken with good intentions, but Vance wasn't foolish. He simply showed bias, siding with whom he favored rather than who was right. That side was always the one closest to his heart. Rebecca eyed the pair and their friends, feeling as though an insurmountable chasm lay between them. They formed a solid unit, while she was an intruder in their world. She was forever extraneous. Even lingering on the periphery felt out of place.

She swallowed her bitterness, gave a cold laugh, and turned to leave. Behind her, Catherine's voice rang out. "Vance, she..." "It's fine. I'll talk to her when I get back," Vance said, waving it off. "Let's continue." Secretly, he glanced at the retreating figure, texting the driver to escort her. Rebecca yearned to walk gracefully, but every step she took felt more unstable. Agitation only worsened her limp, her frantic exit mirroring Aiden's mockery. That would definitely make them laugh even harder. She wiped her tears with a trembling hand, hastening and wobbling more.

The driver chased after her, but she was nowhere to be found outside the restaurant. The driver reported it to Vance, who frowned and called her. Rebecca rejected it and turned off her phone at the next one. Aiden was irked. "Her temper is just too short. You spoil her too much, man. With your status and looks, any wife would worship you. Yet she sulks? You're too soft." Vance stayed silent, but the others piled on. "Aiden is right. You sacrifice too much for her and the family, working tirelessly. She doesn't appreciate or support you. Throwing a tantrum over the smallest things.

Worth it?" "Marrying her was charity. Who else wants a cripple? Without you, she'd wed another disabled person." Continue to read this book for free

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