

Knocked Up by the CEO/

Chapter 3

An hour later, Kimberly finally made her way back to Landon's hospital room. The soft beeping of the machines felt like background noise now—steady, constant, almost like a reminder that this was her reality. She pulled the chair closer to his bed and set her bag down, quietly brushing his hair back before opening her folder.

She started going through her papers, sorting through resumes, cover letters and anything else that might help tomorrow. She had three companies lined up—small offices, lower pay, barely hanging on the map, but right now, she'd take anything. Price didn't matter. Titles didn't matter. All that mattered was getting something. Anything. She needed this to work. For Landon. For herself. She double-checked each document, making sure nothing was missing until her stomach dropped. Her CV was gone

Kimberly froze, flipping through the folder again like maybe just maybe, she'd missed it. But it wasn't there. She checked the floor around her chair, dug through every corner of her bag, even checked inside Landon's blanket folds like it could've slipped out somehow. Still nothing

Her heart started racing again, not from panic this time but from that bone-deep exhaustion that hits when the smallest thing becomes too much. She leaned back in her chair and stared at the ceiling, willing herself not to cry again.

She must have lost it when she ran into that man in the morning or... could it have slipped during the elevator shake?

She sat forward, rubbing her temples. "I'll just print another one," she muttered, mostly to herself. "I'll wake up early, find a print shop, get it done."

She pulled her phone closer and added it to tomorrow's list, along with the bus routes, interview addresses and notes about each company. Every step has to be perfect. No more late arrivals. No more accidents. No more pity

Kimberly looked at Landon. "I'm not giving up," she whispered. "No matter what."

She reached out and took his hand in hers, grounding herself in that small warmth. Tomorrow had to be better. It just had to be

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Marshall walked into the family house and found his mother standing by the tall living room window, arms crossed, staring blankly outside.

“Mom,” he said gently, “you need to rest.”

Eleanor didn’t turn. “Do I, Marshall?”

He walked closer. “Mom, I know how shocking today was for you. It’s the same for me, but I’m not giving up on you. If I have to fly across the oceans to find the best specialists or build a research lab from scratch, I’ll do it. I’ll do whatever it takes to keep you alive.”

Eleanor finally turned to face him. “Why not just concentrate on what you can control?”

Marshall’s jaw tightened. He knew exactly where this conversation was heading. “Mom, please don’t start.”

“Are you gay, Marshall?” She asked, searching his face intently. “I can take it if you are. Be honest with me. Are you?”

“I’m not gay, Mom.”

“Then why haven’t I seen you with any woman? Ever?” Her voice rose slightly with frustration. “Everyone around you is a man—your executive assistant, your business partners, your golf buddies, your drinking companions. Where are the women, Marshall?”

He leaned back, arms crossed. “I don’t even have an assistant right now,” he said, half-laughing. “You scared the last one off, remember?”

“Then hire a woman this time. And don’t think I didn’t notice how you actually dodged the actual point.”

Marshall dragged a hand over his face. “Jesus, Mom... I don’t know what my assistant’s gender or who I grab drinks with has to do with who I am.”

“It has everything to do with, Marshall,” she snapped. “Because I’m your mother and I know when something isn’t sitting right. You keep everyone at arm’s length. You’ve been doing it for years.”

“There’s nothing wrong with me,” he said, his voice flat. “I’m just... busy. Building the company. Taking care of things. That’s all.”

Eleanor softened, stepping closer. “You think building an empire matters if there’s no one to share it with?” She looked at him like she was searching his face for a crack. “Marshall, you’ve made room for everything except your own damn life.”

He didn’t respond.

She let out a breath. “All I ever wanted was to see you happy, and I can’t even tell if you know what that looks like anymore.”

Eleanor let the silence stretch for a beat before speaking again. “You know who’d make a good match for you?”

Marshall narrowed his eyes. “Don’t say it.”

“Anna.”

He scoffed, turned away. “Hell no.”

“She’s from one of the most prominent families in the city,” Eleanor pressed. “She’s educated, beautiful, and she comes from good breeding. She’s the perfect choice.”

“Anna is a spoiled brat with the emotional maturity of a teenager. I can’t deal with that level of entitlement and drama.”

Eleanor waved her hand dismissively. “You’re not going to be her father, Marshall. You’d be her husband. There’s a difference. Men have been taming women for centuries.”

“I would rather find my own wife, thank you very much.”

“That’s what you’ve been saying for the past five years and I haven’t seen you bring home a single woman, not even one with questionable looks or doubtful character references!”

Marshall looked at her incredulously and she caught herself, sighing deeply.

“Fine,” she said, her tone becoming more reasonable. “Here’s what we’ll do. Date Anna for one month. Give her a real chance. No cold shoulders, no trying to sabotage it before it even starts.”

Marshall raised a brow. “A whole month.”

“Yes. Thirty days. And if after that you still think she’s unbearable, I’ll back off. I won’t bring her up again, I swear. Then you can find someone else on your own terms.”

Marshall exhaled and dragged his hands down his face, clearly exhausted.

“But let’s not kid ourselves,” she added. “You won’t. You never do. And we don’t have the luxury of time anymore,” she said quietly. “If we’re talking about children, Marshall, pregnancy takes nine months. Sometimes ten. And that’s assuming everything goes well from the start. We need to move fast.”

He didn’t say anything for a long moment.

“One month,” she repeated gently. “What’s the worst that could happen?”

He sighed, defeated. “You’ve already called her, haven’t you?”

She smiled, unapologetically. “She’s expecting dinner.”

Marshall gave a tired shake of his head. “As you wish. Come on, let’s get you inside so you can rest.”

Eleanor wrapped her arm around his waist as they walked into the room.