

Marrying My Ex's Powerful Billionaire Uncle novel Chapter 4 - Anissa Roy and Harding Snow -

Inside the main hall, hundreds of Upper East Side elites whispered furiously. The buzzing sound of gossip almost drowned out the organ.

Lorraine sat in the front row. Her face was pale and tight. She leaned over to her husband, Harold, frantically whispering about how to handle the PR nightmare.

Ashlee sat next to them. She held a tissue to her face, pretending to cry, but the corners of her mouth twitched upward in a victorious smile.

The reporters from Vanity Fair and Page Six had their telephoto lenses aimed at the altar. They were hungry for the shot of the abandoned, weeping bride.

Suddenly, the twelve massive LED screens lining the church walls went pitch black. A collective gasp echoed through the pews.

Three seconds later, the screens flared back to life. The scrolling gold letters that read Connor & Anissa were gone. In their place, massive, bold text read: Harding & Anissa.

Near the altar, the million-dollar custom ice sculpture had been altered. Harding's crisis team had swiftly draped a velvet cloth over the original piece and wheeled out a pre-prepared, sleek silver plaque that perfectly covered the old base, displaying a sharp, immaculate H.

A guest in the third row read the screens and let out a piercing scream of disbelief.

Lorraine's head snapped up. She stared at the LED screen. All the blood drained from her face. She blinked rapidly, convinced she was having a stroke.

Harold's phone began to vibrate violently. Wall Street board members were spamming him, demanding to know if a hostile takeover of the Snow empire was happening.

The main doors groaned open. The blinding backlight framed two tall silhouettes standing shoulder to shoulder.

The flashes exploded like a violent thunderstorm. The shutter clicks sounded like machine-gun fire.

As the cameras focused, the entire church stopped breathing. A dead, horrifying silence crashed over the room.

The man walking Anissa down the aisle was not a groomsman. It was Harding Snow. The phantom emperor of Wall Street, a man who despised public appearances.

He wore a bespoke Tom Ford suit that fit his broad shoulders perfectly. His presence was so suffocatingly powerful that the front-row guests instinctively shrank back in their seats.

Anissa wore a diamond tiara. Her chin was high. There was no grief in her eyes. She looked down at the crowd with absolute disdain.

Ashlee jumped to her feet. Her ankle rolled in her high heels, and she nearly collapsed into the aisle. Her mouth hung open in pure shock.

As Harding and Anissa walked down the red carpet, the guests began to stand up. It wasn't out of respect for the wedding. It was pure, instinctual fear of Harding's power.

Lorraine lunged forward, trying to run into the aisle to stop them. Harold grabbed her wrist and yanked her down, hissing at her not to provoke Harding.

They reached the altar. The priest was sweating profusely. His hands shook so badly he nearly dropped his Bible.

He stammered, looking at Harding in terror, completely unsure of which script to read.

Harding shot the priest a freezing glare. "Skip to the core."

The priest swallowed hard. He raised his voice, though it cracked. "Do you, Harding Snow, take Anissa Roy to be your lawfully wedded wife?"

The crowd leaned in. Everyone assumed Harding was just standing in to save his nephew's face. A fake ceremony.

He leaned toward the microphone. "I do. This vow is legally and personally binding, effective immediately and without exception."

The vow dropped like a bomb. The media section lost their minds. The shutter noise became deafening.

The priest turned to Anissa. Before he could finish the sentence, Anissa looked straight into Harding's eyes. "I do."

Harding reached out. His assistant handed him a velvet box. Harding pulled out a ring. It was a massive, flawless blue and pink diamond heirloom.

He took Anissa's left hand. He slid the ring—the ultimate symbol of the Snowfamily matriarch—onto her ring finger.

Harding stepped closer. He lowered his head, and right through the thin tulle of her veil, he pressed his lips against hers in a deeply possessive, claiming kiss.