

Beg For My Love, Cold-Hearted CEO
novel by Rowan

Noreen Evans and Caiden Evans

Chapter 1 Aren't You Worried Noreen Will Be Upset

When the clock struck eight, shadows thickened across the streets, and the cold crept in with relentless bite.

Noreen Evans sat alone at the dining table, idly scrolling through her phone. The untouched dishes in front of her had gone stone cold, their glossy surfaces dulled and uninviting.

Greta Johnson, the housekeeper, approached with quiet caution. "Mrs. Evans," she called out. "Today's your wedding anniversary. I'm sure Mr. Evans will be home tonight. He's probably just caught up with something. Let me warm the food for you."

Noreen gave a faint shake of her head. "Don't bother. He's already had dinner somewhere else."

The bluntness of her reply made Greta falter for a moment before understanding flickered in her eyes.

In three years of marriage, Noreen and Caiden Evans had lived more like polite strangers than husband and wife. The sweetness of their first year had long faded, replaced by rare visits and colder silences.

Leaving the dining table behind, Noreen went upstairs and lay on the bed. Her phone buzzed relentlessly, and a flood of new messages filled a group chat.

Curious, she lightly tapped one open.

The photo that opened showed Caiden sprawled carelessly across a wide leather sofa. His collar hung open, exposing the clean line of his collarbones, and his sleeves were rolled carelessly to his elbows. The casual ease in his posture carried an almost dangerous kind of allure.

Even the tilt of his head and the heavy-lidded look spoke of lazy indulgence.

In the corner of the shot, a delicate hand extended toward him, a wineglass poised midair. The gesture was intimate, as if toasting him in private.

Noreen's breath caught when her gaze slid down to the wrist. The slender hand was unmistakably feminine, and the emerald bracelet it wore shimmered under the light-a piece she knew too well.

That heirloom had once been promised to her, an Evans family treasure. Now, it encircled another woman's wrist.

Her fingers tightened around the phone as a fresh message arrived. This time, it was a video.

She tapped it without hesitation.

A soft voice spilled out through the speaker-gentle, sweet, and tinged with a teasing lilt. "You came straight from the airport just to celebrate my birthday. Aren't you worried Noreen will be upset when she finds out? Why not invite her too?"

With a look of mild disdain, Caiden let a crooked smirk slip. "Aren't you worried she'll ruin the mood?"

Laughter rippled through the group. Someone snorted derisively, "She's never quite belonged with us anyway. It's probably best she doesn't come."

Another chimed in with a teasing lilt, "Caiden, when was the last time you even saw Noreen? You'd probably walk right past her without recognizing her on the street."

Caiden swirled the deep red wine in his glass, his tone light and detached. "See her? We're not exactly close enough to keep up."

A voice cut through the chatter. "Come on now, aren't you two a married couple?"

A low, derisive chuckle rumbled from Caiden, as if he couldn't believe the absurdity of what he'd just heard. "That marriage is like a bottle of spoiled wine-better tossed out."

Jessica Dale's soft voice followed, laced with a hint of apology. "Alright... then we won't invite her this time. I'll make it up to her next time."

Noreen lowered her phone, bitterness tightening somewhere deep inside her.

What a petty little stunt! They were all sitting together in a private room, yet they'd chosen to chat in the group thread-just to make sure she saw it.

Most of the people in that group were part of Caiden's social circle. Jessica was one of the few women there.

The only reason Noreen had even been added was that Jessica had pulled her in.

She hardly ever spoke in the chat, but every new update about Caiden landed in her feed anyway. Wherever he went, Jessica was never far behind.

Hours later, with the house steeped in silence, Noreen lay sprawled on her bed, idly twisting her wedding ring around her finger.

The cold metal leached into her skin, sinking deeper, until the chill reached the softest part of her heart.

A weight settled in her chest, not quite pain, but heavy enough to make every breath drag.

An unexpected urge to cry rose in her throat, and her lashes trembled softly in the darkness.

Two years of icy indifference had numbed her, yet a quiet pang of sorrow unfurled from somewhere hidden, blooming wide until it filled every corner of her heart.

Rolling onto her side, she buried her face deep in the pillow.

The ring brushed against her cheek, its frigid touch echoing the distant coolness of Caiden's body-calm, detached, like winter moonlight pouring through a window.

The room held its breath with her, and even the seconds seemed to crawl.

With her eyes shut, she listened to the steady thud of her own heartbeat, each beat stark against the silence.

She and Caiden had been entwined in each other's lives since childhood, their paths crossing long before they understood the weight of the bond.

Back when she was fourteen, everything she'd known collapsed in an instant. Her parents had died in a brutal car accident, leaving behind a child with a fortune attached to her name. The adults who were supposed to protect her turned into vultures overnight.

At the funeral, her relatives didn't mourn-they fought. Voices rose to shrieks, then fists flew, and the brawl ended with flashing police lights and blood smeared on black mourning clothes.

She had stood off to the side, a small figure swallowed by the chaos, eyes wide and glistening with unshed tears. The helplessness had clung to her like a second skin.

Cheryl Evans, Caiden's grandmother, had stepped in then. Pity softening her stern features, she opened her arms to the frightened girl.

No documents were signed, no formal adoption arranged-Noreen was simply folded into the Evans family like a fragile guest who never quite belonged.

Those early years had left their mark. She grew into a quiet, cautious child, forever aware she lived on borrowed kindness.

At school, whispers followed her down the halls. Cruel, childish voices loved to remind her what she already knew too well-she was the orphan girl.

Caiden had been the one to step in back then, chasing off the bullies without hesitation and standing firmly at her side.

Under his quiet protection, the fractures in her fragile heart began to knit together, slowly but surely.

Somewhere along the way, her feelings for him deepened until they grew beyond her ability to control.

Aware of the distance between their worlds, she tucked those feelings away, hiding them where no one would see.

Three years earlier, Cheryl had fallen gravely ill. She'd confessed that her greatest worry was Noreen's future, and despite the family's objections, she arranged for Noreen to marry Caiden.

Back then, Noreen had been overwhelmed with joy.

Her youth had always revolved around Caiden-he had been gentle, brilliant, radiant, and endlessly kind to her. How could she not be moved? How could she not love him?

After they got married, his tenderness toward her had only grown deeper.

He whisked her away to a famous fjord, where they stood together at dawn, wrapped in silence as the morning mist drifted over the water like a soft veil. They journeyed to highlands in another country to watch the heather bloom, wandering for hours through the vast, windswept moorlands painted in violet.

When rain began to fall at dusk, he lifted his windbreaker over her head, letting the drizzle soak his shoulders instead.

Back at the inn, the hearth crackled to life. He knelt before the fire, carefully wiping the mud from her shoes while the golden light flickered across his profile, glowing and dimming with the flames.

That first year had felt almost dreamlike-so tender, so impossibly warm-that whenever Noreen thought of it now, the memory cut deep, making the present all the more unbearable.

Before she ever became Mrs. Evans, she'd overheard whispers about the Dale family arranging a marriage alliance with the Evans family. Jessica had practically lived at the Evans family's estate back then, spending entire days in Caiden's room without anyone batting an eye.

Then, as if fate had shifted course, Jessica went abroad, and the arranged marriage vanished from conversation as though it had never existed.

The memory tugged a wry, bitter smile from Noreen's lips.

Everything began to unravel after Cheryl's death. Caiden changed overnight, his warmth vanishing without a trace, and the two of them drifted apart until they felt like strangers living under the same roof.