

Dump One Loser, Gain Six Husbands.

Chapter 1

Anja's eyes snapped open.

A spike of pain, sharp and blinding, shot through her skull. It felt like her brain being split in two. She gasped, a ragged sound in the dead quiet of the room, her hand flying to her forehead as if she could physically hold the pieces of her mind together.

The bed was wrong.

It was too soft, the sheets like cool silk against her skin. A low hum vibrated through the mattress, a subtle, calming frequency. Her bedroom in her tiny off-campus apartment had a lumpy mattress and scratchy polyester sheets.

Memories, not her own, crashed into her consciousness. The Commonwealth. A sprawling interstellar empire. Genetic corruption. Psionic abilities. The ratio of females to males was one to one hundred thousand. Females were rare, precious assets, revered wherever they went. A society where matrimonial contracts were brokered by a central authority dedicated to finding males worthy of their scarce females.

And a name. Kenny Mcdaniel. Her fiancé.

Before she could fully process any of it, a voice rang out from the doorway. "Even if I die, even if I get exiled to a barren mining planet, I will never form a bond with you!"

The door to the bedroom slammed open, the sound cracking through the silence like a gunshot.

A man strode in. He was tall, with sandy blond hair and a suit that was trying too hard to look expensive. It was tailored just a little too tight across the shoulders, the fabric a synthetic blend that caught the light with a cheap sheen. He carried himself with an unearned arrogance, his chin tilted up as he looked down his nose at her.

Kenny Mcdaniel.

The name clicked into place with a fresh wave of nausea.

He sneered, a curl of his lip that was meant to be disdainful but only made him look petulant. "Finally awake, are we? Don't bother putting on a show. I'm not here to play games."

Anja just stared at him, her mind a whirlwind of two lives colliding. One was a college student from Earth, drowning in student loans and surviving on instant noodles. The other was Anja Compton, heiress to a minor noble house, betrothed to this... this peacock. And from the memories of the original Anja, she could see the woman had been utterly blind. She had cried over him,

pleaded for his attention, and rearranged her entire life to please him. For what? For a male of thoroughly average looks-decent, but nothing special-whose only remarkable feature was his physique, which was standard issue for any male who had completed the mandatory academy training. He had been handed a priceless gem on a silver platter and somehow convinced himself he deserved better. What a joke.

"I'm here to make things perfectly clear," Kenny continued, pacing in front of her bed like a lawyer in a courtroom drama. "This political arrangement our families cooked up? It's over. I've found someone I actually love. Someone who understands me. I will not sacrifice my happiness for some dusty old family alliance."

He punctuated his speech by slapping a thin, transparent data slate onto the polished wood of the nightstand. The clack was sharp and final. An electronic contract glowed on its surface: Agreement for Matrimonial Annulment.

"So you can take your pathetic, clingy affections and find someone else to bother," he spat, his voice rising with theatrical fervor. "I'm telling you now, Anja. Even if I die, even if I get exiled to a barren mining planet, I will never form a bond with you!"

Anja slowly pushed herself up, the silk sheets pooling around her waist. The headache was receding, replaced by a strange, icy calm. The Anja from Earth thought he was a joke. A weak, insecure man puffing up his chest to feel powerful in front of a woman he perceived as weaker. It was pathetic. And frankly, hilarious.

She let a slow, deliberate gaze travel from his cheap shoes up to his self-satisfied face. Then she met his eyes.

"Are you done?" she asked. Her voice was quiet, devoid of the hysteria he was clearly expecting.

Kenny froze mid-stride. The triumphant look on his face faltered, replaced by a flicker of confusion. "What?"

"Your performance," Anja clarified, leaning back against the plush headboard. She crossed her arms. "The big, dramatic speech. Was that the grand finale, or is there an encore?"

He stared at her, his mouth opening and closing silently. This wasn't how it was supposed to go. She was supposed to cry. To beg. To make a scene that would validate his decision and allow him to storm out as the wronged, romantic hero.

"You think this is a joke?" he stammered, his voice losing its confident edge. He puffed his chest out again, a desperate attempt to regain control. "I'm serious, Anja! I'm leaving you!"

"I heard you the first time," she said, her tone bored. "You want to end the engagement. Great. Let's do it."

She didn't even glance at the data slate he had thrown down. She simply looked towards the empty air near the door.

"Unit 01," she commanded.

A soft, synthesized voice replied instantly from an unseen speaker. "Yes, Mistress Anja."

"Access the Federal Marriage Center," she ordered. "Project the annulment agreement and initiate the signing protocol."

"At once."

A holographic panel of brilliant blue light materialized in the air beside the bed, displaying the contract in crisp, clear text. At the bottom, a glowing box waited for a biometric signature.

Kenny's face went slack with shock. "What are you doing? That's not-you can't just-"

Anja ignored him. She reached out, her fingers steady, and pressed her thumb against the glowing box. The system chimed, a clear, pleasant tone that echoed in the tense silence.

BIOMETRIC SIGNATURE VERIFIED. ANJA COMPTON HAS UNILATERALLY DISSOLVED THE MATRIMONIAL CONTRACT. STATUS: FINALIZED.

The words burned in the air for a moment before the holographic panel dissolved.

Almost immediately, a series of chimes sounded from the room's speaker system. A new, distinctly official synthesized voice read out three consecutive messages:

"Message from the Federal Marriage Center: Esteemed Lady Anja, your matrimonial contract has been successfully dissolved. You are now returned to single status."

"Message from the Federal Marriage Center: Esteemed Lady Anja, there are hundreds of millions of males in the Commonwealth. If one lacks vision, there will always be another. Please do not let a male with poor taste affect your mood."

"Message from the Federal Marriage Center: Esteemed Lady Anja, should you desire, the Federal Marriage Center is ready at any moment to match you with new husbands."

Kenny stared at the empty space where the contract had been, then back at her. His expression was a comical mix of disbelief and panic. He had come here for a fight, for drama, for a validation of his own importance. He had not, under any circumstances, expected this easy, dismissive acceptance.

"You... you just signed it?" he said, his voice a weak squeak. "Just like that? This is a trick. Some kind of game to make me feel guilty."

Anja gave him a small, pitying smile. "There's no game, Kenny. You wanted out. You're out. Congratulations. The door is over there. Get out of my house."

The shift was instantaneous. The moment she finished speaking, the AI's synthesized voice spoke again, its tone now stripped of all warmth.

"Warning," Unit 01 announced. "Kenny Mcdaniel, your security clearance for this property has been revoked. You are now classified as an unauthorized intruder. You have ten seconds to vacate the premises before defensive measures are deployed."

A cold, red light began to sweep across the room, originating from a sensor near the ceiling.

Kenny paled. "Your... your security? You can't-"

He was cut off by a heavy, mechanical whirring sound. Two panels in the ceiling slid open, and a pair of sleek, gunmetal-gray security drones descended. Their optical sensors glowed with the same menacing red light, and the barrels of their plasma weapons swiveled to lock directly onto his chest.

Fear, primal and undignified, washed over Kenny's face. All his practiced arrogance vanished. He threw his hands up in a gesture of surrender.

"Okay! Okay! I'm going!" he yelped, stumbling backward.

The drones advanced on him silently, their movements perfectly synchronized, herding him towards the door. He tripped over the edge of an expensive rug, catching himself on the doorframe. He looked back at her, his eyes wide with a mixture of terror and wounded pride, as if he wanted to say one last thing to salvage his dignity.

Anja didn't give him the chance.

"Unit 01," she said, her voice dripping with finality. "Close the door."

The heavy, soundproofed metal door slid shut with a deafening thud, cutting off his last pathetic look.

Silence returned to the room.

Anja fell back against the pillows, the silk cool against her neck. A long, slow breath escaped her lips. She felt a profound sense of release, of lightness. The headache was gone. The confusion was gone. She thought about the Federal Marriage Center's final message-match her with new husbands. And the words "no upper limit" echoed in her memory from the original Anja's knowledge of the law. A villa this large, five stories and hundreds of square meters per floor... it would be a shame to live in it alone, wouldn't it? She wasn't admitting anything. She was just curious.