

An Understated Dominance by Marina Vittori Chapter 1

Chapter 1

“Dustin, here is the divorce agreement prepared by Ms. Nicholson. All you need to do is sign them.”

In the president’s office of the Quine Group, the secretary, Lyra Blaine, placed a piece of A4 paper on the table. A man sat opposite her, dressed in plain clothing.

“Divorce? What do you mean?”

Dustin Rhys was taken aback.

“Do you not understand what I’m saying? Your marriage with Ms. Nicholson is over. You’re not even on the same level anymore. Your existence is nothing but a smear on the president’s reputation!”

Lyra pulled no punches as she spoke.

“A smear on her reputation?” Dustin frowned. “Is that how she thinks of me?”

Back when they first got married, the Nicholson family was in ruinous debt. He was the one who helped them when they were at their lowest point. Now that they were rich, Dahlia Nicholson was ready to just kick him out.

“Something like that.” Lyra jerked her chin toward the magazine on the table. A photo of a beautiful woman was printed on the front page. “Look at the headline on this magazine, Dustin. Ms. Nicholson’s net worth has hit one billion in the course of just three years, a feat no short of a miracle. She’s now the most desired woman in Swinton! With all this, she’s destined for greatness. But you, you’re just a regular joe. You don’t deserve her at all. I hope that you’ll see some sense and do the right thing.”

When Dustin remained silent, Lyra frowned.

“I know you’re not happy with this, but this is reality,” she continued. “You might have helped Ms. Nicholson when she was in trouble, but she has repaid you for everything you’ve done for her over the last three years. In fact, you’re the one who owes her now!”

“Is our marriage just a business deal to her, then?” Dustin took a deep breath to suppress the emotions within. “If she wants to divorce me, let her speak to me herself.”

“Ms. Nicholson is very busy. She doesn’t need to trouble herself with such trifling matters.”

“Trifling matters?” Dustin was stunned. Then he laughed bitterly. “Is that so? Is divorce a trifling matter to her? She can’t even find the time to speak to me. Truly, she’s that unattainable now!”

“Dustin, don’t delay this any longer.” Lyra pushed the divorce agreement toward him again. “Just sign here and you’ll get a car and a house as compensation. On top of that, you’ll also get eight million dollars. This is more than what you’ll be able to earn in your lifetime!”

“Eight million dollars is a lot, but...I don’t need it. I will sign the divorce papers if she comes personally. Otherwise, I won’t sign anything,” Dustin said coldly.

“Don’t go too far, Dustin!” Lyra slammed her hand on the table. “Don’t say I didn’t warn you. With all her power and resources, Ms. Nicholson can divorce you easily. It’s only because she appreciates her past relationship with you that she’s allowing you to keep your dignity intact. Don’t provoke her!”

“My dignity?” Dustin was a little amused by that. She didn’t even want to speak to him directly to divorce him. What kind of dignity was that? Moreover, if she really did appreciate their relationship, then why was she threatening him now?

“I don’t think we have anything else to talk about, then.”

Unwilling to argue, Dustin stood up and made to leave.

“Dustin Rhys! You—”

Just as Lyra was about to lose her cool, a curvy woman in a long black dress walked in. Her skin was as white as snow, and her features were delicate. Her lofty aura and curvaceous figure made her look like a goddess right out of a painting.

“You’re finally here.”

Dustin felt complicated emotions when he saw the beautiful woman. They had been married for three years, during which they treated each other with care and respect. But this was how it ended. He still didn't know what he had done wrong.

"I'm sorry for being late, I was caught up with something else."

Dahlia Nicholson sat down. Her expression was as impassive as ever.

"You certainly are busy, if you need your secretary to help you deal with your divorce," Dustin said.

Hearing this, Dahlia frowned slightly. However, she did not explain herself. Instead, she said, "Since you're here, let's get straight to the point. Let's end this on a pleasant note. I'm sorry I have to do this to you, so you can have the car and the house, plus eight million dollars as alimony. How does that sound?"

At that, she placed a card on the table.

"Do you really think our relationship can be measured by money?" Dustin asked.

"Too little? That's alright. Let me know what you want. I'll give you anything within my power," Dahlia said placidly.

"I don't think you understood me. Let me rephrase my question. Are money and power that important to you?" Dustin was truly bewildered.

Dahlia went over to the windows and looked out over the city. There was determination in her eyes when she said, "To me, yes, they're very important."

"You've earned enough to feed yourself for the rest of your life. Why do this?"

"Dustin, that's where you and I diverge in philosophy. You'll never understand what I really want." Dahlia shook her head in disappointment.

They weren't just incompatible in status and power; they were also incompatible in their principles. Most importantly, she did not see any hope for the future in him.

“You’re right. How would I know what you’re thinking?” Dustin laughed bitterly. “All I know is to cook for you when you’re hungry, prepare your coat when it’s cold out, and carry you to the hospital when you’re sick.”

“There’s no point in going into this now.” Dahlia’s expression held complicated emotions, but it was soon covered up by determination.

“You’re right.” Dustin nodded without any emotion. “I heard that you’ve been close with the heir of the Nolan family. Is it because of him?”

Dahlia was about to deny it when she gave it a second thought. In the end, she nodded.

“You can say that.”

“Okay. I hope you’re happy with him.” Dustin smiled and signed the divorce agreement without any more hesitation. All he felt now was disappointment. Ironically, today was also their wedding anniversary. There was cruel humor in divorcing him on the day they had gotten married.

“I don’t want the money, I just want that crystal necklace back. My mother left it to me before she died so that I can give it to my wife.”

“Okay.”

Dahlia nodded and gave him the crystal necklace.

“From today onward, we will have nothing to do with each other!”

Dustin put on the necklace and left. He had no more gentleness in his expression; all that was left was distant aloofness.

“Did I do the right thing, Lyra?” Dahlia asked hesitantly.

Even though she was the one who asked for the divorce, she didn’t feel happy at all when it was finalized.

“Of course you did!” Lyra nodded. “You have the right to pursue happiness. Dustin does not deserve you at all. He’ll only bring you down with him. You’re destined to be the most powerful woman in Swinton!”

Dahlia did not answer her. As she watched Dustin leave, she felt as if she was losing something precious.

