

Mayor's Dutiful Wife

•Chapter 4• Sebastian Harding

"She died for you, Hannah. She knew I'll only do what was best for you. The

least you can do for her is listen to me" he said, getting close to my ear as

gut-wrenching sobs tore through my chest.

"You are the reason she committed suicide" he further added

"Please, dad. Please, stop!" I cried out. I couldn't take it anymore, my head

hurt, my entire body started to hurt.

"Hannie bear, you don't have an option. I'll destroy everything you have ever

wanted. I'll destroy your life if you don't do this" he said calmly.

Everything was just a joke to him. I was a joke to him. My life, my happiness didn't matter to him. Tears freely fell from my eyes as I shook my head unable to accept what he was doing to me.

"Now, freshen up. He will be here in an hour. So, you better look presentable for him" he said

"No, I won't" I shouted.

Anger and defiance were my last resort. He wouldn't listen to my pleading.

"Shut up!" he roared, making me flinch.

"He's the mayor of our town, you will treat him with respect. You will do

whatever he wants you to do. He has already signed the papers and that

makes him your husband. Learn to obey and respect your husband" he

shouted and I didn't know what to say or do. I sat there lifelessly listening to him.

I knew my father was a misogynistic male chauvinistic jerk but I never thought he hated me this much.

"I've already given instructions to my secretary, She will turn you into a pretty little wife for Mr. Mayor" he grabbed my arm and pulled me up from my seat.

He dragged me out of his office. His fingernails dug into my skin. I looked at my father with blurry vision as he dragged me out. I couldn't believe he was the same man as yesterday.

"Dad..." I whispered, my voice breaking as tears slid down.

He glanced at my face and sighed. He gestured for his secretary to come closer. "Make her presentable and come back to my office. You have forty-five minutes" he ordered coldly, the secretary nodded and led me away from there.

I couldn't believe that all this was actually happening. My brain froze as it all seemed like a bad dream. My whole life turned upside down within twentyfour hours. Yesterday, I was partying with my friends in New York and now here I am in Richmonte. Married to Sebastian Harding.

I stared at myself in the vanity mirror as a team of professionals worked on

my hair and face. They even covered my exposed shoulder with makeup. My waist-length brown hair straightened making them appear longer. I was dressed in a line halter satin black short dress, and my dress was paired with black high heels.

Tears threatened to fall from my eyes every two seconds but I kept them in.

I was sitting in my father's office waiting for his order, he was the one pulling my strings. My thoughts drifted to the day before. I thought about everything he said to make me leave with him from New York. Was it all a lie? Was he even sick?

Goosebumps rose on my skin as I thought about being in that odd

surveillance room. I couldn't even recognize my own father.

*If you try to leave, Hannah, I won't leave anything for you to get back to. No

C&W, no Luke Walker, no life at all*

Everything I worked so hard for and everything thing I have built was at stake.

It's just two years, it'll pass. I will go back to my old life, my good life in New

York City. I kept telling myself to calm my nerves.

But first, I have to face him. I have to see him again.

After all these years.

"Miss Clarke, you can come with me now," My dad's secretary said, I got

startled by her voice. I stood up with trembling legs and followed her. She

stopped outside of the door and gestured me to go on in.

"I am not allowed inside, Ma'am" She gave me a warm smile and walked away.

I took a deep breath and opened the door when a deep, smoky voice fell on my ears. It didn't belong to my dad that's for sure. I felt a jolt in my stomach hearing his voice after all these years.

"There she is!" Dad announced

I raised my eyes to see Sebastian and he looked my way at the same time.

Our eyes met and I inhaled sharply. His face was set in stone while his eyes told a different story. His gaze was weird, incredibly weird, he was staring at

me like he was disgusted by my presence. I frowned as I diverted my gaze. I

glanced at him again out of nervousness, and he smirked. He eyed me from

head to toe. His eyes trailed down from my face to my neck and then to my

breast then to my legs before settling down on my face again.

"Hannah, come here, darling," my dad said

I walked up to him and placed his hand on my back.

Dad leaned towards me

and whispered in my ear "Behave yourself and smile!"

I faked a broken smile and greeted Mr. and Mrs.

Harding, then I greeted

Sebastian, who didn't look the least bit interested in my presence.

"Hannah, you have turned out to be a fine young lady. You look so much like your mother" Mrs. Harding approached me and hugged me.

She has always been nice to me. She knew my mom. She was the wife of the richest man in Richmond and my mother was the wife of the mayor. So, they were bound to know one another. Mr. Harding nodded at me in acknowledgment.

George Harding looked at me then at Sebastian. "As they have both signed the marriage contract, we should start arranging for the ceremony," he said to no one in particular.

"Hannah, I wasn't sure if you would agree to it. You really surprised me"

Florence Harding smiled uneasily.

I looked at dad and then back at her. "I---"

Dad cut me off instantly. "Sebastian is a public figure and he is loved by our

people. The ceremony should be extravagant"

"I was thinking Richmonte Church, this Friday. I think people would appreciate

the traditional way more." George answered my dad.

"Hannah, what would you like?" Florence asked

I blanked... An hour ago I didn't even know I was about to be married. I didn't

know what to say. How do I want my marriage to be? I never thought that I'd

ever get married. I was not cut out for marriage... I didn't want to get married.

How do I tell them that? How do I tell them that I'm only here because my

father threatened me with my friends' lives? How do I tell them that I want to run away from here?

"Hannah?" Dad's voice brought me back to the present.

Florence smiled. "We should give them a little time to talk about this in private"

"That isn't necessary, Mum" Sebastian deadpanned

"Yes, it is!" She snapped and eyed Sebastian.

Sebastian immediately smiled at her. Florence held onto her husband's arm

taking him out of the room with her.

"Make him happy" My father whispered in my ear before walking out.

We both stood there for a second when Sebastian strode towards the couch

in the corner, sat down, and poured himself a drink.

I slowly stepped towards him and sat down on the other side of the couch.

He twirled the drink before drinking it in one go. I took a deep breath and decided to break the ice.

"Sebastian" My voice was barely a whisper but he heard it because he stiffened.

"Mr. Harding," he said plainly

I furrowed my eyebrows. "What?"

"It is Mr. Harding or Mayor for you, Ms. Clarke"

I was taken aback by his response. "I--- um---"

"We don't need to have this conversation," he said and poured himself another glass of scotch.

"You are forced into this marriage too?" I asked

He raised an eyebrow. "You really think I'd marry you willingly?"

"Then why did you do it?" I asked, "Why did you sign?"

"Why did you?" He asked

"I had no choice. I would have never---"

He turned his head towards me with such force that I think I heard a

whiplash. His eyes dangerously narrowed and he had predatory look on his face.

"This is a contract between our families nothing more nothing less, a business deal. As your father is the former mayor and I am the present, it is beneficial

for us in business and politics" He explained coldly.

"I---" I was about to say something when he cut me off.

"I am not done talking yet" he snapped. "Don't talk until I allow you to. Keep

that in your pea-sized brain for the next two years!"

I stared at him, astonished. I never expected him to talk to me in this manner.

"This is a business deal. A Harding and a Clarke make a power couple for the people of my town. You are just an insignificant pawn in our game. We just needed someone with the last name Clarke. They loved your father and now they love me and with you by my side acting like a wife will only help us expand more. I'm only doing this to advance my career."

"What are you even saying---"

"Don't even think for one second that we are husband and wife. I will live my life just as I was living before signing this contract and you can do whatever

you want, I don't care. Just stay away from the public eye, if you want to date someone"

"Seb---" I stopped myself and said. "Mr. Harding, you could marry anyone you want! Why me?"

He ignored what I said and went on saying. "Your father wants me to handle your family business because he thinks you are incompetent and unfit to handle such an empire. It was your father's idea to get us married, don't even think that I specifically asked for you. Don't give yourself too much credit, Ms. Clarke"

"You could have said no..."

He stared at me like I have grown two heads. "Are you slow? Didn't you

understand what I just said? After this so-called wedding, I will get all of Clarke's business in my name. Then after two years, we can say that you cheated on me and we will get a divorce. You can run back to New York. No one will care about you. I have no wish to spend the rest of my life with you, Ms. Clarke"

"I don't want this... Please..."

He exhaled loudly in a bored manner. He stood up and buttoned his suit jacket. "Now, if you'll excuse me. I have more important work to do than be here in your unnecessary presence" he spat the last words with venom in his voice and strode out.

I have been in my room since we came back. I didn't say anything to my dad or anyone. I felt numb. My stomach grumbled as I haven't eaten anything since the morning.

I strolled down the stairwell to get something to eat. Distant shouting fell on my ears, I followed the voice and heard Eva yelling at my dad. My ears perked up as she mentioned my name.

"Why her, Mason? Nancy is so much better than her. Sebastian also likes Nancy, but no you brought her here and made her marry my daughter's man.

Nancy is heartbroken"

Nancy and Sebastian? I thought he hated Nancy.

"Are you forgetting that Nancy is your daughter, not mine! She is an Adams,

not a Clarke!" he answered

"You could have given her your name, you are the only father she has ever known" she continued yelling.

"She is not my blood, I am only keeping them here is because I feel pity for you and your children. Hannah is my biological daughter and always will be. If I were to die tomorrow, she is the one who gets everything in my name, not you or your pathetic children"

"Mason, what do you mean she gets everything?"

Eva asked stunned as I peeked from the half-opened door.

Dad scoffed. "You couldn't even give me a son and you think I'll give you my money? I made you sign a prenuptial agreement before getting married,

don't you remember?"

Eva's eyes went wide in horror. "Mason, you can't do this to me and my

children. No, this can't happen!" She talked to herself in shock. "I could have

given you a son if you had tried! I COULD HAVE

GIVEN YOU A SON IF YOU

WEREN'T SO HUNG UP ON YOUR PSYCHO

DEAD WIFE!" She shrieked.

Suddenly, she was pushed against a wall. I gasped and stepped back afraid.

Dad gripped her neck with both of his hands and started to choke her. She

tried to take his hands off but he didn't budge.

"Yes, I can, and I will! After Hannah is publicly declared married to Sebastian

Harding, all of my assets will go to him. He is like the son I've never had" he

smiled proudly

"If I had a son, I would want him to be just like him.

Now, he will be my son-in-

law. And the child that will be born out of Hannah

and Sebastian will be

my heir. A pure Clarke and Harding inheriting

powerful genes. My daughter

will give me an heir." My dad explained with pride.

He finally let her go. She fell on the floor coughing

severely and taking in as

much air as she could.

"What if she only gave birth to girls like her mother?"

She croaked out her

voice rough from all the coughing.

Dad looked down at her and had a menacing smile

on his face. "Then I'll

make sure that they die in her womb, just like I did to

her mother"

I whimper left my lips. I covered my mouth with both of my hands as I ran back to my bedroom. I closed the door and fell to the floor as my legs gave out. Tears flowed down my face like a river.

And all I could think about was my poor mother.