

## A Shotgun Marriage Chapter 1

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# Chapter 1

"You're Miss Tia Carter?" A man around his thirties asked while sitting at a table near the window of the cafe. "Isn't it a little rude to be this late for your blind date? However, since you're so... beautiful, I'll forgive you." Tia had arrived five minutes late, and the man already came at her with his snarky remarks, which only he found funny. At that, she tucked her hair behind her ear while feeling awkward. She then explained with decency, "Sorry, I had to rush some stuff before getting off work." "No worries. After we marry, I'll be responsible for taking good care of your livelihood. My family may not be affluent, but we are rather strict. Something like being late isn't usually allowed. If you continue showing up late when I take you to see my family, my mother might disapprove of you being her daughter-in-law." Tia felt even more awkward after hearing that, unsure of the expression she should wear, for this was only their first time meeting each other. The man's name was Vincent Chamberlain, and he was a thirty-one-year-old high school teacher. She came to know him online and they had only exchanged a few words as well as each other's pictures before they immediately planned for a rendezvous. Vincent looked rather different from his picture. He was a bespectacled man and his gaunt cheeks made him look older than his age. More than that, he was so scrawny that he looked feeble, and he wasn't even standing at five foot seven as described in his profile. Judging from the height of their shoulders, he was at most Tia's height, who was five foot five and wearing flats at that. Despite Vincent being far from the description she read, Tia still tried her best to smile out of courtesy, nodding. "It's still a little early for that, Mr. Chamberlain. We should get to know each other first before anything else." She didn't need a hot guy; she only wanted someone honest whom she could marry. Vincent, who had a strange sense of superiority, fixed his gaze on Tia for a long while before suggesting, "Would you like anything to drink? My treat." Tia choked upon hearing his words, but she didn't act overly courteous and accepted his offer, for she hadn't had a bite of food since getting off work. On the other hand, Vincent grew nervous and gulped when his gaze landed on the prices on the menu. She naturally sensed his abnormality, and she took a glance at him before closing the menu. "Why don't you order instead? I just want a cup of milk tea," she answered while handing the booklet to him. Vincent seemed to have relaxed after hearing her words, whereupon he pressed the call bell immediately. "A cup of hot milk tea." At that, he turned to Tia for confirmation. "Hot, right?" She nodded in response. "That's right." Meanwhile, the server nodded as she noted down the order before looking back up at Vincent. However, Vincent said nothing else after that, staring at Tia instead of the waiter. His gaunt face made him look haggard even though he was smiling. The man's behavior stumped Tia, and she looked at him with bafflement before glancing at the server. After not getting another order from Vincent despite waiting for a while, the server finally spoke up in awkwardness, "Is there anything else you'd like to order, sir?" Only then did Vincent take a glance at the server. "A glass of water, please. That'll be all. Thank you." A stumped Tia couldn't put a word to how she was feeling right then. The server was flabbergasted, and she asked Vincent again unyieldingly, "Pardon, sir, but do you only want one cup of hot milk tea?" "And a glass of water," Vincent repeated with a frown. The server twitched the corner of her lips in response and could only nod awkwardly in the end, telling them to wait for a while. As she was about to leave, she looked at Tia with what looked like pity in her gaze. Though as shocking as Tia found his behavior to be, she still tried her best to smile. Meanwhile, Vincent seemed to be having a good impression of her. "What do you do for a living, Miss Carter?" "I'm just a regular office employee," Tia answered with a smile, not planning to elaborate any further. "How much do you earn in a month?" "Not much, just enough to get by." "Well, my salary—including all the whatnots—comes up to five or six thousand each month. Yeah, women don't need to earn money at all; just leave the work to us men." He nodded before he began rambling about himself. "I'm sure you can tell what I've got to offer. Many women want their hands on men with a stable income like me. I don't have many family members, so I only have to support my parents. You should quit your job after we marry. My income is more than sufficient to support you—you just have to take care of our entire family and get the house chores done. By the way, my family has already bought me a matrimonial home. Your name can't be added to the property, but if you can give me a son, his name can be added to it." Vincent's words gave Tia a headache and she was dumbfounded. This was her first blind date, and she never had any expectations of marriage in the first place. If it weren't for her grandmother, she wouldn't have married herself off in such a hurry. However, this man's actions and behavior seriously baffled her. At that, she frowned and went straight to the point. "Do you mind if we register our marriage at the Civil Affairs Bureau tomorrow?" Vincent was drinking in the meantime, and upon hearing her request, he choked on it. "Are you out of your mind, Miss Carter?" he asked while wiping his mouth with his hand. "Do you want to marry me so quickly?" Her frown deepened, and she dismissed his actions as she repeated her question. "Do you mind if we register our marriage at the Civil Affairs Bureau tomorrow?" She didn't want any nuisance. Since her goal was just marriage and absolutely nothing else, the only thing to do was to get their marriage registered. "I'll have to think it over." It was Vincent's turn to be baffled. He scratched his head while answering, "I'll have to discuss this with my mother. However, do you have a disorder or something? Are you unable to bear a child? Why do you want to marry so badly? I'm the only son in my family. If you can't give birth, my mother will definitely not let us marry." Tia didn't want to stay another second longer after hearing his answer, and with that, she grabbed her bag while getting ready to leave. "I'm sorry, Mr. Chamberlain, but I don't think we're good for each other." Vincent stood up reflexively, somewhat reluctant to let a beautiful woman like Tia leave just like that. "Wait, you're leaving just like this?" At that, Tia stopped in her tracks and looked over her shoulder, gazing coldly at him. "Why? Have you changed your mind about marrying me, a woman who can't bear a child, Mr. Chamberlain?" Vincent pursed his lips awkwardly in response. "The milk tea is fifteen bucks. Since this blind date is a failure, you should pay for your own drink, no?"