

## A Shotgun Marriage Chapter 3

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"If you don't mind that this will be my second marriage and the fact that I won't have a lot of time to be with you, I don't mind registering our marriage immediately. Unfortunately, I'm afraid tomorrow won't do. My work requires my full attention at the moment, and I'll have to notify my family—I'm from a different city, by the way. After taking the marriage procedures and whatnot into account, it'll have to be about a month later," Lewis explained after taking a sip of his tea. On the other hand, Tia looked into his eyes, making sure he was just as deadly serious. "Why did you and your ex-wife divorce? Was it because of abuse?" As half-arsed as she was about marriage, she didn't want an abusive guy for a husband. What was more, this man was towering and ripped. It seemed like he was a regular at the gym, so if things got physical, she wouldn't even be able to retaliate. "I have no disposition toward acts of violence," Lewis reassured her. "My ex-wife asked for a divorce because I couldn't spend much time with her." Tia nodded in response. The situation was better than she had expected, for his lack of commitment to her was exactly what she was looking for. "It's fine as long as you're not prone to violence. I don't mind that you've had a marriage before this, or that you don't have a lot of time to be with me." "It's a yes, then?" Lewis asked. Tia nodded with affirmation. "I don't see a reason to refuse." She wanted a marriage minus the relationship part, and it was the same for him. Thus, it was only natural for Tia to seize this rare opportunity when she finally found the perfect match after eight failed dates. Meanwhile, Lewis nodded in agreement. He suddenly seemed to have thought of something as he looked at the woman and asked, "Do you have any demands for this marriage?" At that, Tia mulled over it before asking, "Will you cheat and ask for a divorce?" It'd be too troublesome if they were to marry and divorce later. Lewis frowned upon hearing her question. He said gravely, "No, I will do all a husband should apart from being by your side all the time." His availability to spend time with her was the least of her worries, and perhaps it was even a good thing that she didn't have to face a stranger all the time. Tia nodded at that, indicating she understood. "In that case, I'm all good. Do you have any demands?" she asked in return. "As long as you don't have any qualms about it, I'm fine." Lewis shook his head. Following that, they talked a bit to understand each other better. Apart from learning his name, Tia learned that Lewis was a chief research officer in a national research institute. As for the specifics of his job, it was classified information. He was thirty-three this year, and both his parents were still around. However, they weren't staying in Arington, so she didn't have to worry about in-law relationships after marrying him. He had come to Arington because it was where his work needed him to be. Also, he owned a residence here, and it was located near the heart of the city. After hearing all that, Tia thought she had bagged a fine guy, in a good way in this instance. With that, she also mentioned her current situation. Her only request after marriage was that she could continue taking care of her grandmother, and Lewis had no problems with this. As for the wedding, the two tacitly agreed to keep it simple. They wanted both families to meet over a meal after they got their marriage certificate. After the two agreed on everything, they left the cafe together. Lewis had come in a high-end Jeep, so he asked out of courtesy if he could give Tia a lift to wherever she was heading. She wanted to refuse at first, but since she had found the one and that they'd be marrying the following month, it wouldn't be a bad idea to have her grandmother meet him. Thus, she nodded and told him the address. On their journey, Tia told Lewis her idea of introducing him to her grandmother, to which he nodded in agreement after giving it some thought. While passing by a grocery store outside her apartment complex, he mentioned how he should get a fruit basket for Elizabeth as a gift. Tia stopped him since she felt that it wasn't necessary. However, he insisted, saying he had to do it out of courtesy. Hence, Elizabeth was flabbergasted when the two arrived at the apartment with the fruit basket. She didn't think that her granddaughter, who had just left for the date not too long ago, would be able to bring the man home like she had brought home a stray puppy. However, as shocked as Elizabeth was, after coming to her senses, she was also glad to see such a situation after years of praying for a grandson-in-law. Thus, she put the pouch down and enthusiastically offered to make him some noodles. Lewis refused out of courtesy, but Elizabeth insisted no matter what. In the end, Tia offered to do it, not wanting her grandmother to wear herself out. Meanwhile, Lewis kept Elizabeth company in the living room as she told him many things about Tia. Lastly, before Tia came out of the kitchen, she held Lewis' hand and patted it while saying, "Tia's a poor child, so please take good care of her." When Lewis left shortly after, Tia walked him to his car. Though the two were getting married next month, they had just met that very night. Hence, the journey down the staircase was rather silent and awkward. In the end, it was Lewis who broke the awkwardness as he tried making small talk. "You make good noodles." She glanced at him and asked with a chuckle, "You didn't have dinner, did you?" Lewis nodded at that, smiling awkwardly. When they got to the Jeep, Lewis asked for her phone and pressed a few keys on it. A couple of seconds later, a ringtone came from his pocket, and he handed Tia's phone back to her. "This is my number. You can call me if anything." Tia nodded in response. Then, she watched as he got into the car and drove away. Later on, Tia returned to her unit to find Elizabeth sitting in the living room, holding a twenty-plus-year-old photo with misty eyes. The picture was of a woman in a white blouse and a long black dress, looking a lot like Tia. In fact, she was Tia's mother. When she saw that, Tia went up and took the photo away, then wrapped her arms around her grandmother as she sat down. "Don't look at it anymore." Elizabeth wiped the corner of her eyes and said with a smile, "I was just telling your mom that you've found a decent guy and that you'd be marrying him soon." Tia, on the other hand, hugged her grandmother tighter instead of saying anything. That night, Tia once again dreamed about her mother stabbing her father to death with a kitchen knife before slicing her own neck with it while laughing hysterically. Following that, her parents lay bloodily on the floor right before her eyes just like that. Tia shot right awake in horror. While her entire body shook, her forehead was covered in a layer of cold sweat. At that, she switched on her bedside lamp to illuminate the dark room. Then, she sat up and hugged her knees while biting down on her lip. Ever since that tragedy, she would constantly dream the same dream, waking up with a fright every time. In fact, it seemed like she might not be able to get over the trauma her whole life. In the beginning, her parents were very much in love, and her father even eloped with her mother despite his family's opposition. Soon after that, they had her. However, the love the couple had for each other had been polished off by what was known as reality. When the deep affection had been overwhelmed by the trivial things in life, and life as a family got so mundane that there was not a spark left, her father began seeking thrills from other women. After her mother discovered her father's disloyalty, she did the extreme and murdered her husband before ending her own life, for she couldn't accept the fact that the man she loved so deeply would treat her like that. Worst of all, all of that happened right in front of Tia's eyes. Thus, love became a ludicrous tragedy, and she was the product of that misfortune. After letting out a long sigh, she habitually grabbed her phone and called Shannon, who was leading a unit overseas.