



Chapter 2 Masochism

Alicia snapped out of her daze as soon as she met the icy gaze of Joshua, her so-called husband.

His expression remained unchanged, cold and indifferent as ever, as though he was looking at a stranger.

The only thing out of place was the love bite on his lips.

Was the kiss he shared with someone else so intense?

A wave of disgust washed over her, and it was all she could do not to gag. Her fingers tightened around her phone as she turned it off with a soft sigh. "It's nothing."

Without waiting for a response, she started to walk inside.

Joshua frowned, his hand shooting out to grab her wrist. "Alicia, what's with the attitude?"

He seemed quite unhappy with her this time, which was a rare thing, considering how little he bothered to come home.


Normally, Alicia would have welcomed him back with open arms, a flicker of joy lighting up her tired features, but today she looked drained, almost hollow.

She didn't resist his grip, meeting his gaze with a calmness that unnerved him. "Haven't I always been like this? Obedient, sensible, making sure the house is in order, ensuring you're comfortable, ready to give your best at work."

A small, bitter smile tugged at her lips. "Isn't that what you like most about me? It makes things easier for you, doesn't it? Frees up time for your other... 'special someone'."

Joshua's eyes darkened at the veiled accusation.



Denial hovered on his lips, but he didn't bother. Why should he? He dropped her hand and said gruffly, "Actually, that's why I'm here. We need to talk." 

Alicia vigorously rubbed her wrist, as though she was trying to erase his touch.

"So, are you planning to finally go public with her?"

Joshua's expression twisted instantly, his calm facade cracking. "What do you know? Did you have me stalked by a private investigator or something?"

Alicia let out a soft, humorless laugh. "Is that necessary? Last night, you spared no expense to make her happy. Even a blind person could tell you're mad about her."

He stared at her, unsettled by her icy tone.

It was still her voice, still Alicia, but there was something different about her... For some reason, he felt inexplicably hurt, like a thorn pricking his heart.

Perhaps it was the way she looked at him now—her eyes, once warm and filled with love for him, were now completely empty.

There was no anger, no pain, just... nothing. It was a stark contrast to the woman who used to look at him as if he were her entire world.

For reasons he couldn't explain, the sight of her like this stirred something in him, an unfamiliar dissatisfaction. Annoyed by his own reaction, Joshua decided to hit back, his voice harder now. "She's pregnant. It's a delicate pregnancy, so I bought her a little something to lift her spirits."

Alicia's fists clenched before she could stop them.

Pregnant?

So, the nights she had stayed up waiting for him to come home, he'd been with another woman, working diligently to start a new family?

Seeing Alicia wince a little, Joshua felt a flicker of satisfaction. "It's not



that I don't want to sleep with you," he said, voice dripping with condescension. "You're just about as thrilling as watching paint dry. No man would want that."

His cruel words pierced through Alicia like a jagged blade, yet she managed to remain composed on the surface.

It wasn't that she avoided intimacy; she just wasn't the one to initiate it. Did that make her so undesirable? Was it a sin not to be seductive enough?

Taking a slow, steady breath, Alicia willed herself to stay calm.

"Fine," she replied quietly. "Let's get a divorce then. You can give her the title she wants."

The word "divorce" made Joshua's eyelid twitch involuntarily.

He scoffed, eyes narrowing with suspicion. "Is this another one of your games?"

Convinced he was right, his voice grew colder, more biting. "Alicia, for two years, you've pulled every childish stunt, begging for my attention. Aren't you tired yet? Because I sure as hell am."

He paused, letting his disdain sink in. "You claim to love me so much. Could you really walk away from me?"

Alicia couldn't help the bitter laugh that escaped her.

Love him? Did he even understand what that meant?

When Joshua's business had crumbled, leaving him with nothing but debt and shattered dreams, it had been Alicia who emptied her savings to pull him from the wreckage.

Out of gratitude—or maybe obligation—he had married her.

For two long years, she had been the dutiful wife, supporting him as he clawed his way to success.

And what had Alicia gotten in return? She had been cast aside like a useless relic, while another woman carried his child.



Her love, her loyalty, had been ground into the dirt beneath his feet. To care for this man any longer would be masochism.

Her voice steady, Alicia said, "Draft the divorce agreement. I'll agree to whatever terms you want."

And with that, she turned and disappeared through the door, leaving Joshua standing alone in the hallway.

For a moment, he stared after her angrily, but then a cold, mocking smile tugged at his lips.

Fine, she can play the martyr.

He doubted she could keep it up for long.

Storming out of the house, Joshua headed straight to the apartment where his lover, Lilliana Green, awaited him.

"Well, that was fast," she teased upon hearing Joshua was getting a divorce, raising a brow. "Seems she wasn't as tough to deal with as you claimed."

Joshua pulled her into his arms, his fingers gripping her waist possessively. "She's cunning," he muttered, the edge of suspicion creeping into his voice. "I don't know if she's actually agreeing to the divorce or just playing me."

Lilliana perched herself on his lap, her arms draping lazily around his neck, her gaze smoldering with seductive mischief. "Relax, Joshua," she purred, her lips brushing his ear. "Even if she changes her mind, it's too late."

Joshua's brow furrowed. "What do you mean?"

