

Husband With Benefits Chapter 1 - The D- Day

"You are the most beautiful bride, Nora! Today is going to be awesome!"

1

As Nora's maid of honour quickly gathered her skirt to walk down the aisle after whispering the encouraging words, Nora could not help but feel happy. Today was indeed going to be awesome. The weather seemed in agreement with her today as well, with the sky being clear and the sun casting a warm glow over the church.

1

The gentle breeze played with her veil as she stood just outside the grand entrance, her heart pounding with anticipation and excitement. Everything was just perfect, just like she had always hoped and dreamt of. The church was decorated to her liking, the dress was perfectly fitted. She'd heard so many horror stories of things going wrong that she could hardly believe that her wedding was going so smoothly.

Her best friend and maid of honour winked at her once before entering the church and Nora could not help but grin. Soon, she heard the bridal march begin to play and knew it was time for her grand entrance. Drawing a deep breath, she began to walk forward, her elegant white gown flowing behind her. Her heart raced, and she tried to catch Antonio's eye, eager to see his reaction to her, but he seemed lost in his thoughts, staring at the ground.

Suddenly, she felt a pang of concern, her already slow steps slowed further. Instead of the joy and expectation she had hoped to see, his face was a mask of tenseness and consideration. Pushing aside her growing feel of dread, she smiled at him tremulously and was relieved when he smiled back at her. He was probably nervous and overwhelmed. After all, she had been away on work this past month so he may be having some doubts...

Antonio stepped forward and held out his hand when Nora reached him and instantly felt calm. She must be imagining things.

2

Soon, the minister started to speak about the importance of marriage, love, commitment, and the journey that lay ahead for the couple.

As Nora and the others listened intently, the priest finally wound down her sermon and questioned the people, "If anyone has any objections to their union then please speak now or forever hold your peace."

Nora suppressed the urge to look at all the guests, in case someone would indeed object. Her parents and sister were not happy after all...But as the silence continued, she almost breathed a sigh of relief. However, her relief was short-lived as the groom spoke in a slow but clear voice, "I object."

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The guests gasped in surprise, and Nora's eyes widened in shock.

Antonio held her hands tightly and spoke with regret, "Nora. I am sorry. I cannot marry you."

"What is going on, Antonio? Are you having cold feet? We can delay the ceremony..."

"No! Nora, I do not love you! That is the reason I cannot marry you. I am in love with someone else."

4

As the guest started to chatter among themselves, Nora's mind whirled. She turned sharply to look at her sister who was sobbing quietly in the front pew. Her sister did not love her enough that she would cry for her. Nora turned back to look at Antonio's pained gaze also on her sister's face and her expression tightened.

3

Stepping away from the man, Nora straightened her back and implored quietly as tears escaped her eyes, "What do you mean, Antonio? We've been together for the last three years? We were going to be each other's forever love, weren't we? Then why do you suddenly say that you do not love me?"

As her voice broke down on the last words, the guests all felt a pang of sympathy for the young bride. The bride was only nineteen years old. At an

age when modern girls all wanted to test their freedom, Nora Williams had been willing to give up all that for her love. And yet, that love was abandoning her at the altar.

"I do love you, Nora," Antonio spoke in a pained voice.

Nora looked at him in confusion, failing to understand what the problem was. It was the priest who interceded, "Young man, marriage is a lifelong commitment and so is love. What are you confused about?"

Antonio sighed and looked from the priest to Nora to the girl sitting at the back, "Nora, when we started dating, I was attracted to you and believed myself in love. Our relationship was truly magical. Slowly, even though I grew to love you more, I did not realise that I had stopped seeing you as a future lover and more like a companion. When you went away for your vacation, I started to realise that I was in love with someone else."

"And that someone else just happened to be my sister? Did she take care of you well in my absence?" Nora sneered, as she threw aside her veil. Once again the guests were left askance at the direct question and the insinuation.

"Nora! There is no need to be rude. And it most certainly is not her fault. All these are my feelings alone. Neither of us planned for this to happen." Antonio protested angrily.

4

Tears streaming in her eyes at the way her fiance jumped to defend her sister, Nora turned to the woman in question. "And do you also love my fiance Sara? Is that why you wore white on my wedding day? Because you were silently hoping to be the bride."

"Nora!" Sara sobbed loudly as she shook her head and protested, "I... Please believe me I did not want to ruin your special day. I have already surrendered Antonio to you. I wore the dress because I too dreamt of being his bride... Please forgive me, Nora. I promise that I never planned to interfere in your relationship..."

As the guests all watched the drama unfold before them, they could not help but inadvertently take sides. While some sympathized with Nora for being jilted so publically, others blamed Sara for coveting her sister's fiance.

Before anyone could say anything, their mother stood up and spoke harshly, "Nora, you cannot blame her for her feelings. She is young and impressionable. If anyone is responsible for this mess then it is you! Why would you leave the country right before your wedding? When Antonio needed help and support, Sara was there for her so it is only natural that he would fall for her."

6

Nora wiped her tears delicately as she looked at Antonio. She should have expected this from her mother. After all her mother had never liked her. But there was a time when Antonio would have rushed to her to drive away the tears and bring a smile to her face. But Sara had taken that from her.

Feeling faint, Nora felt herself sway and would have keeled over if not for her best friend Isabella who had rushed forward to support her.

Holding her friend's hand, Nora quietly looked at Antonio and questioned him, "Antonio, do you love Sara enough to marry her?"

The man who had been about to marry her a few moments ago immediately nodded without hesitation. Nora then turned to Sara and questioned her, "And you? Do you want to marry Antonio?"

With a light of mixture and hope in her eyes, Sara nodded eagerly.

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"I want you to be happy, Antonio and if Sara is your happiness then so be it. Marry her now."

4

CREATORS' THOUGHTS

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Hello, my dear readers! Welcome to yet another love story that is fraught with romance and action.