

THE BILLIONAIRE'S ACCIDENTAL BRIDE

"SUSPICIOUS MINDS"

Written by

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INT. ERIC'S HOME - FOYER - NIGHT

ERIC (40s) steps through the front door of the sprawling mansion, setting down his briefcase.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Eric had just walked in the door to his home, feeling more ease than he had in weeks. The scandals that plagued his media empire had taken a toll, but tonight, a rare calm lingered in the air.

Eric looks around the house, loosening his tie.

INT./EXT. MONTAGE - VARIOUS

Tabloid headlines, courtroom sketches, Eric in heated phone calls...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It had all started with the death of his son-in-law, Augustine, in a violent car wreck. Before the family could even grieve, an anonymous blackmailer sent evidence of Eric's long-forgotten affair. The rumors of an illegitimate child, the lawsuits... all of it had turned his world upside down.

INT. LIVING - ERIC'S HOME

Eric enters the living room and stops in his tracks. EMMA (40s) sits on the couch, calm and composed, beside a SMALL CHEST on the coffee table.

ERIC

What's all this?

Emma slowly lifts a golden skeleton key, holding it up for Eric to see.

EMMA

Let's play a game.

Eric hesitates, his brow furrowed. He steps closer.

ERIC

A game?

Emma nods, inserting the key into the chest. With a click, the lid opens. Eric peers inside to find a contraption...

Two leather handcuffs, connected by a wire, a remote control and a stack of cards.

ERIC (CONT'D)

What is this? Some kind of...?

EMMA

It's a game for couples like us. One cuff for me, one for you. The remote tightens them when you lie... and loosens when you tell the truth.

Eric stares at the device, stunned.

ERIC

Where did you even get this?

Emma ignores the question, pulling out the cards.

EMMA

The game ends when my truth sets you free, and your truth sets me free. Shall we begin?

Eric hesitates, then relents. He removes his jacket and sits across from her.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Eric needed to show he had nothing to hide.

ERIC

Alright. Let's do it.

Emma secures the cuffs around both their wrists. She flips the remote, and the cuffs tighten slightly. Eric winces.

ERIC (CONT'D)

A little snug.

Emma picks up the first card.

EMMA

Do you think your childhood self would be proud of you for landing the partner you did?

Eric considers for a beat.

ERIC
I think that little boy would be
proud to see me with you. Yes.

The cuff around Emma's wrist LOOSENS. She smiles faintly.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Your turn.

EMMA
Of course.

Eric's cuff loosens. He picks a card and reads aloud.

ERIC
If your life were a book, would you
let me read every word?

Emma looks away thoughtfully before answering.

EMMA
Yes. If you had the patience, I'd
let you know everything... You?

ERIC
The second half, sure. The first...
maybe one day, we can read it
together.

Emma's cuff loosens. Eric sighs in relief. Emma picks up
another card.

EMMA
Do you love me more than you
respect me... or vice versa?

ERIC
I love you just as much as I
respect you. You're the strongest,
noblest, most loving person I know.
I simply can't help but respect
you, and with you being as
beautiful and motherly as you are--

Emma winces. Her cuff's TIGHTENED.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Wait! That wasn't a lie.

EMMA
Your turn.

She picks another card.

ERIC
But Emma, believe me! The machine's
broken or something!

EMMA
Have you lied to your partner about
anything recently?

Eric freezes, taking in the question.

ERIC
Is that what the card says?

A steely gaze from Emma for a beat.

EMMA
Yes.

Eric's cuff tightens sharply. He reaches for the remote.

ERIC
Enough of this.

Emma blocks his hand, keeping the remote out of reach.

EMMA
One more question and we're done.

Eric reluctantly nods.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Do you have a child I don't know
about?

Eric SNATCHES the remote.

ERIC
I thought this was going to be fun.

He switches off the device. The cuffs fall away. Emma looks down, defeated. Eric stands and leaves the room without another word.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Some games bring people closer.
Others reveal how far apart they've
become.

CUT TO BLACK