

EXCLUSIVE

BONUS

Epilogue

FOR

The
Billionaire's
Contract Bride

Some vows
are written.
Others are
chosen.
Love makes
them real.



ALISON REID

Exclusive Bonus Epilogue

The Billionaire's Contract Bride

by Alison Reid

Two Years Later...

Grayson had never been particularly sentimental about dates.

Birthdays were remembered. Anniversaries were acknowledged. Important occasions were handled properly.

But remembered?

Felt?

That had never been the point. Until Teagan. Now, there wasn't a date on the calendar he didn't associate with her. The first time he had really noticed her. The first time he had understood what she meant to him.

The day her father had walked into his office and offered him a marriage that had been presented as a transaction. The day Teagan had agreed. The day they had stood across from each other and promised something neither of them had fully understood yet.

And today.

Their second wedding anniversary.

Grayson stood at the window of the private dining room, looking out over London as the last of the daylight faded between the buildings. The room was exactly as he had wanted it.

Quiet.

Private.

Nothing elaborate.

A table for two near the windows. Candles. Champagne already chilled. Dinner arranged without either of them needing to see a menu. He had considered taking her somewhere. Then he'd decided against it. He didn't want a room full of people.

He wanted her.

He heard the door open behind him. He turned. And stopped. Teagan stood in the doorway. For a moment, he simply looked at her. She was wearing a dark silk dress that fell softly against her figure, her hair loose over one shoulder. She wasn't dressed for an event.

She was dressed for him. And the look she gave him told him she knew exactly what he was thinking.

"You're staring."

Grayson smiled.

"I've been accused of that before."

"Frequently."

"Then you should be used to it."

She crossed the room towards him, smiling.

"You said this was dinner."

"It is."

"You made it sound very casual."

"It is."

She glanced around the room.

"Candles?"

"Casual candles."

She laughed. He loved that sound. More than he could explain. When she reached him, his hand settled instinctively at her waist. He leaned down and kissed her.

Slowly.

Not because he needed to remind himself what she felt like. Because after two years, he still wanted to. When he pulled back, her hands remained against his chest.

“Happy anniversary,” she whispered.

“Happy anniversary.”

She smiled.

“Two years.”

“Two years.”

“And you’re still staring.”

“I’m considering stopping.”

“You won’t.”

“No.”

Her smile widened.

“I didn’t think so.”

He brushed his thumb lightly over her cheek.

“You look beautiful.”

“So do you.”

He raised an eyebrow.

“That’s not usually how that works.”

“I don’t care.”

“You’re supposed to say thank you.”

“Thank you.”

She smiled.

“Better?”

“Much.”

He kissed her again, briefly this time, before taking her hand and leading her towards the table. She looked at the place settings. Then at him.

“You planned all this.”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

He pulled out her chair.

“Because it’s our anniversary.”

“That doesn’t answer the question.”

He waited until she was seated before taking the chair opposite her.

“Because I wanted tonight to be about us.”

Her expression softened.

“It always is.”

He looked at her.

“Yes.”

The answer came without hesitation.

* * * * *

Dinner passed easily.

They talked about their son, who was now old enough to have opinions about everything and no hesitation about expressing them. They laughed over something he had done that morning. Teagan told him about a conversation she’d had earlier that day.

Ordinary things. Small things. The kind of things Grayson had once considered interruptions to a life that needed to be managed. Now they were the life.

At some point, Teagan reached across the table and took his hand. Her fingers slipped between his. He looked down at them. Then back at her.

“What?”

“Nothing.”

“You’re thinking again.”

He smiled.

“I do that.”

“About our anniversary?”

“Partly.”

She waited. Grayson turned his hand beneath hers, holding it properly.

“I was thinking about our wedding.”

Her expression changed.

“What about it?”

“How little I knew.”

Teagan smiled faintly.

“I thought you knew everything.”

“I thought I did.”

“You certainly acted like it.”

“I was trying to.”

She laughed softly. His gaze stayed on her.

“I knew I loved you.”

The smile faded from her face, replaced by something warmer.

“I know.”

“I knew before we married.”

“I know that too.”

“But I didn’t know what it would feel like to actually have you.”

Her fingers tightened around his.

“What did it feel like?”

He considered the question.

“Like I had spent years standing outside a door I wasn’t sure I was allowed to open.”

Her eyes softened.

“And then?”

“You opened it.”

She looked down for a moment.

“I was terrified.”

“So was I.”

That made her look back at him.

“You?”

“Yes.”

“You never looked terrified.”

“I was very good at hiding it.”

“I noticed.”

He smiled.

“I imagine you did.”

A quiet pause settled between them. Not uncomfortable. Never uncomfortable anymore. Teagan’s thumb moved slowly across his knuckles.

“I remember thinking I was making a deal.”

“You were.”

She gave him a look.

“Grayson.”

He smiled.

“You were.”

“And you?”

“I knew better.”

Her expression stilled.

“What do you mean?”

He held her gaze.

“I knew I wasn’t agreeing to a deal.” Her breath caught slightly. “I was agreeing to a life with you.”

The words were quiet. Certain. And after two years, they still had the power to move something deep inside her.

“You loved me that much?”

“I loved you more than that.”

Her eyes filled slightly. Grayson reached across the table and brushed his thumb beneath one eye before the tear could fall.

“Don’t.”

She smiled through it.

“You’re making me cry on our anniversary.”

“I’ll make it up to you.”

“How?”

He stood. She looked up at him.

“What are you doing?”

“Come with me.”

“Where?”

“You’ll see.”

He held out his hand. She took it. He led her from the dining room and into the adjoining terrace. The night air was cool, the city spread beneath them in a thousand lights.

Teagan stepped closer to the railing.

“It’s beautiful.”

Grayson wasn’t looking at the view.

“Yes.”

She turned.

“You’re doing it again.”

“I know.”

“You’re supposed to be looking at London.”

“I’ve seen London.”

He stepped closer.

“I haven’t seen anything I’d rather look at.”

She shook her head, smiling.

“You’ve become very good at this.”

“At what?”

“Being romantic.”

“I’ve had a good teacher.”

Her smile softened. She stepped into him, her hands resting lightly against his chest. For a moment, they simply stood there. Then Grayson reached into his jacket. Teagan’s brows lifted.

“What?”

He took out a small box. Her eyes widened.

“Grayson.”

“Before you object—”

“I wasn’t going to.”

“I know.”

He opened the box. Inside was a delicate bracelet. Not extravagant. Not something chosen to impress. Something simple, elegant, with a small sapphire set into the centre. Teagan stared at it.

“It reminded me of you.”

Her eyes lifted to his.

“Your eyes?”

“Yes.”

She smiled.

“You’ve used that one before.”

“I know.”

“And you still think it works?”

“Apparently.”

He took the bracelet from the box.

“May I.”

She lifted her hand. He fastened it around her wrist, his fingers lingering briefly against her skin. When she turned back, he took her hand and looked at the bracelet.

“It’s beautiful.”

“I wanted you to have something that was yours.”

She looked at him.

“You gave me everything.”

“No.” His gaze held hers. “You built this with me.” Something in her expression softened completely. He lifted her hand and kissed the inside of her wrist. “There’s a difference.”

She stepped closer.

“I love you.”

“I know.”

She smiled.

“You’re supposed to say it back.”

“I love you.”

“Better.”

He smiled. Then his expression changed. More serious. More vulnerable.

“I’d marry you again.”

Her breath caught.

“Grayson...”

“I mean it.”

His hand came to her cheek.

“If I had to do it all over again—everything. The arrangement. Your father’s deal. The wedding. Every mistake. Every difficult part.” He paused. “I would still choose you.”

Her eyes filled.

“Even knowing what happened?”

“Especially knowing.”

She reached up and touched his face.

“You’d really do it again?”

He didn’t hesitate.

“Tomorrow.”

A laugh escaped her through the tears.

“Tomorrow?”

“If you’d have me.”

She stared at him.

“After two years?”

“After two years.”

“You’re sure?”

“Completely.”

She smiled.

“Then yes.”

His brow lifted.

“That quickly?”

“I’ve had two years to think about it.”

“And?”

“And I think I made the right decision.”

He pulled her closer.

“You did.”

She laughed softly.

“You’re very certain of yourself.”

“About you?” His arms tightened around her. “Always.”

She kissed him. Slowly at first. Then deeper. There was no uncertainty in it anymore. No question. No fear of what came next. Only the familiar warmth of the man she had once believed she had lost.

Her husband.

Her home.

The man who had loved her long before she had understood what that love meant. When they finally drew apart, Grayson rested his forehead against hers.

“I love you,” he whispered.

“I love you too.”

“Still?”

She smiled.

“More.”

His eyes closed briefly. He kissed her again. And when he pulled her against him, there was nothing left of the careful distance that had once defined them. No arrangement. No bargain. No conditions. Just love.

The kind that had survived misunderstanding. The kind that had survived fear. The kind that had grown stronger because neither of them had been willing to let it go.

Two years after they had stood at an altar and promised to remain together, Grayson held his wife beneath the London night sky and knew with absolute certainty that he would choose her again.

And again.

And again.

For the rest of his life. Teagan looked up at him.

“What are you thinking?”

He smiled.

“That I got very lucky.”

She shook her head.

“No.”

He frowned slightly.

“No?”

She rose onto her toes and kissed him softly.

“You got me.”

His arms tightened around her.

“Yes.” A smile touched his mouth. “I did.”

And for the first time in his life, Grayson understood that some things didn’t need to be controlled to be certain. Some things simply were.

This.

Her.

Them.

Forever.

— The End —

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