

Husband Wanted

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Chapter One

The Purdue Girls

“I can’t believe she did this!” Leslie screamed. “After all I did for her; she pulls this load of crap. How dare she put stipulations on how we can receive our inheritance! *And*, she’s basing the conditions on whether or not we get married! Of all the manipulative things! She better be glad she waited until she was dead to do this because I would... *Ugh!*”

Sheila laughed. “Girl, shut up. You wouldn’t do anything, but run your mouth like you’re doing now. You could never stand up to Grandma Grace. I don’t see why you’re so upset. This is just like her. She had always tried to use her money to control us, and she always voiced her displeasure that none of us had a husband.”

Leslie smirked. Her older cousin always did know how to get under her skin. She didn’t ask for her opinion. “Yeah, you’re right. She wasn’t exactly happy that her only great-grandchild is illegitimate. How is the little bastard?” Leslie quipped, as she poured herself a glass of Cognac from the crystal vessel on the bar in their grandmother’s study.

Sheila grimaced. So, her cousin wanted to throw jabs. It bothered her when anyone referred to her son, Xavier, as illegitimate, as if her baby was inferior to other children because she wasn’t married to his father. Her son was the light of her life. He was handsome, smarter than most of the four-year-olds at his school, and was full of joy. He

was her joy. The frown on her face quickly turned into a smile while thinking about him, but she wasn't going to let her little cousin get away with that remark.

Sheila stood up and got in Leslie's face. "Grandma Grace loved Xavier and he loved her. He cried for days when she died. At least I gave her something other than a headache. All you ever did was worry her with all your wild ways. Do you think she didn't know about all your drinking, drugging, and partying? She probably wants you to get a husband to slow your fast tail down. You need to repent of your sinful ways before it's too late. You know Jesus is coming back. No man knows the day or the hour, but whenever it is, you'll probably be somewhere with your legs in the air!"

Leslie grew quite uncomfortable. Sheila was invading her personal space. She was the smallest of the three, but she would not back down. Not this time. "Get outta my face!" Leslie screamed. "At least I am smart enough to use birth control when I get mine." She thought her older cousin was overly religious and boring. She was almost sure DaQuan was probably the only man Sheila had slept with in her thirty-three years on earth. Since she found Jesus, she always tried to act as if she were better than everybody else.

"You have to. If you get pregnant, you wouldn't have any idea who the father is," Sheila snapped.

Regina was lazily snacking and relaxing on the chaise lounge, pondering their present predicament. She was counting on that money to open her own clothing boutique and now she would have to put that on hold. Their screaming was derailing her thoughts and she had witnessed enough of their shouting matches to know things were going to get ugly if she didn't intervene. The last

thing she wanted to do was spend her evening breaking up a fight. Grandma Grace had always been the peace-keeper and the disciplinarian in the house, but, unfortunately, she was no longer there. “Stop it, you two. Your bickering over open and closed legs won’t change the fact that there is a lucrative fortune that each of us may never see if we don’t get married to someone, we actually love, within nine months! That’s fifteen million for each of us just for saying, ‘I do.’”

Leslie wasn’t done. “Why does it matter if we’re in love? She’s dead. It’s not like she’ll be there to see how miserable we are if we’re not in love,” she wailed before plopping down on an antique velvet couch. She’d loved that couch since she was a child. Something about the texture of the fabric beckoned her to touch it. She ran her hand over the smooth velvet and watched the hue of it change from dark to light.

“It’s to make sure that we don’t marry someone just to get the money,” Regina clarified. “And, considering that if we stay married and together in the same home for at least five years we get more money; she probably wants to make sure that it’s not a miserable five years. You know Grandma Grace always wanted us to find what she had with Big Daddy.”

“That’s true, but they don’t make men like Big Daddy anymore. All men want to do, these days, is take off your panties, and if you’re lucky, he’s got something good for you after he does it,” said Leslie. “I know Grandma Grace loved us and wanted us to have suitable mates, but she can’t force it on us. She is *so* wrong for doing this to us, especially me. I lived here with her and took care of her until her dying day. I think I deserve something just for putting up with her royal highness. ‘Leslie, will you get me

a glass of tea? Leslie will you help me with my bath? Leslie, will you dim the lights; it's too bright in here. Leslie, fix me a sandwich.' And then, when I brought it, 'Oh, never mind. You took so long I'm not hungry anymore,'" she said, imitating their grandmother. "Do you know what she looked like naked? I do, and it wasn't a pretty sight. Gravity was pulling on her breasts. They hung so low they almost reached her vagina and her vagina looked like—"

"Enough! I'm eating," Regina said, popping a cheese ball into her mouth. Some of the crumbs got on her new cashmere sweater. She brushed them off onto the couch and a few landed on the plush carpet. She didn't care. The maid could clean it up later. "That was Grandma Grace's way of making sure you earned your keep. It's not like you bought groceries, paid rent, or one bill while you were here. Quit your griping. Freeloader."

Sheila snickered.

Leslie shot her sister an angry look. "Oh no, you didn't. I seem to remember you having to move back home because Antonio was beating your behind."

"That only happened once," Regina snapped. "We were having problems, and I moved out because I thought we needed a break. Why are you bringing up old stuff? We've moved past that."

"You needed a break from his fist. Tell that lie to someone who believes you. I don't see how you could stay with a man who put his hands on you. If a man ever touched me he'd be six feet under," said Leslie.

Regina held her tongue, but she wanted to scream, *Men touch you all the time, whore!* Her sister didn't understand what it was like to love a man as much as you loved breathing. Antonio wasn't perfect, but he was a good man at heart. They would be fine. Right now, he was feeling

stressed. He was fired from his job and then the finance company repossessed his prized Corvette, but things were looking up. Antonio had an interview that day. She hoped he would get that job so they could get back to the way things used to be. Now, she had no worries. She knew as soon as she told him about her grandma's will, he would pop the question. The question she had been waiting to hear for the seven years they had been together. She would finally become Mrs. Antonio Dockers, and their relationship and money problems would be over. Two solutions in one. Sheila's voice interrupted her thoughts.

"But seriously, where are we supposed to find quality husbands in nine months? None of us have a man and it's not like we can just take an ad out in the paper or something."

"Excuse me, I have a man," Regina interjected.

"Correction, none of us has a *good* man that's worth marrying," said Leslie.

Now it was Regina's turn to shoot Leslie a dirty look. At least she had a man. Her sister seemed to be satisfied with screwing anything that moved, and her cousin thought her coochie was made for collecting cobwebs, while she waited on Jesus to send her a husband. Actually, Jesus would probably return before she got laid again. She was so self-righteous and uppity; no man in his right mind would want to deal with her. No wonder her baby daddy didn't want her. Regina had had enough.

"You know what? I'm leaving. This conversation doesn't pertain to me. You two heifers are the ones who have to find someone to marry your tired behinds. I have someone who can and will. So, I'll leave you two lonely birds to figure it out. I'm going home to cook dinner.

That's what those of us who have someone to go home to do, you know."

"Stop being so sensitive," Leslie advised Regina.

"You stop hating on my man. I don't understand why you two dislike him so much, but the good thing is I no longer care." Those were her parting words before she, along with her bag of cheese puffs, exited the study.

"She's right, you know," Sheila added. "We are the ones with no prospects."

"Speak for yourself. I have several. I just have to decide which one is worthy of putting a ring on this hand. I think I'll start my elimination process tonight. Which one should I call?" Regina said, scrolling through her iPhone with a well-manicured finger. "Why don't you go home and pray about it? Maybe some fine missionary will ring your doorbell and change your life."

Sheila didn't appreciate her cousin making fun of her religion. God had been good to her. "Shut up. What Grandma Grace is doing isn't even biblical. The Bible says '*He that findeth a wife findeth a good thing*'. We're not supposed to be out scouring the earth for a man. She's messing up the natural order of things. Men are the hunters, and we are the prey. This is ridiculous!" Sheila walked over to the bar and poured herself a glass of Cognac. She wasn't really a drinker, but at times like this, she needed something to calm her nerves. She had never had Cognac before. *How am I supposed to find a husband?* she thought. *I haven't had a date in three years.* She took a swig of her drink and spat it out. To her, it was as bad as her grandmother's plan to make them find a husband.

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