

***Trial of Marriage***  
***Second Edition***

***R. Lynn Archie***

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To learn more about author R. Lynn Archie, visit her website at [www.rlynnarchie.com](http://www.rlynnarchie.com)

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## Chapter 1

Angelique Moretti blinked and sighed as the piercing shrill of the alarm clock broke into her slumber. She rolled away from the blinding morning sun, peered at her husband Trey and then at the clock. The message it gave out filtered through to her fuddled brain—8 a.m. They had to move fast.

“Trey ... Trey,” Angelique repeated, shaking him with increasing urgency, “time we were up and moving. You know what ...”

“Yeah, yeah, I know, we have to be at the airport to meet my folks. Just give me a second,” he moaned, struggling to open his eyes. “Where did this week go? I’ve hardly had a chance to do anything here, damned workload has been that heavy.” He sighed, and propped himself on an elbow, eyelids barely parted. “Ang, do you think we’ve covered all the bases? I want the house to be perfect for my parents’ visit this week.”

Angelique rolled her eyes. She wanted to speak her mind, but opted for a less controversial start to the day. “Well, if you don’t get yourself into gear, we’ll have fallen at first base. Your folk don’t like being kept waiting.” Slipping out of the comfort of her bed, she headed for the shower, soaked a towel and flung it in his direction. She heard his groan, allowed herself a faint smile and returned to the bathroom. Self-examination in the mirror revealed just the faint traces of lines around the eyes, but Angelique Moretti considered herself a pretty girl, with chocolate silky skin and shoulder length hair, petite and curvaceous for her 5’3” frame.

Down in the kitchen now, breakfast on the go, Angelique could hear the gushing of the shower upstairs. Well at least Trey had made it that far. “Please don’t let this week seem like an eternity,” she mumbled. *I’m the one who does everything in this house. I can’t believe he even had the audacity to ask if we covered all the bases. There’s no ‘we’ in anything that gets done around here anymore. If I don’t take care of it, nothing gets done.* Standing over the stove, she scrambled the eggs with a little more venom than was her norm.

When Trey and Angelique met, she was 21 years old and worked as an administrative assistant at a non-profit foundation. Trey, on the other hand, was a successful lawyer at the youthful age of 26. It took Trey five years to make partner, which was also how long he courted Angelique. The same day he received his happy news, he proposed. The fact that he was Spanish/Italian and she was African American was no barrier at all, his parents simply loved Angelique. It was no surprise to anyone that they married six months later. Now, only two years into their marriage, at the ripe age of 28, Angelique was already starting to feel like a rundown wife.

She shook herself back to the present, the spatula was wafting like a wand in her hand. *Snap out of it, don’t dwell on anything – today of all days. The sooner breakfast is done with, the sooner we’ll be on the move.* She’d barely laid the table before Trey walked into the kitchen, she could feel his breath on her neck, his fleeting touch around her waist. “Wow, breakfast sure smells good,” he said sounding chipper. But was it her imagination, or did even that minute touch feel cold?

“Thank you,” she managed a brief smile before she turned away. Somehow the enthusiasm wasn’t there for anything more. She’d leave him to his breakfast and busy herself with getting dressed. “It shouldn’t take me long to get ready,” she called back. “I already have my clothes laid

out. Oh, by the way, the new tie you asked me to pick up is lying on top of the dresser. Did you see it?"

"Ah, yeah, I did." There was something in the way he said 'I did' that made her stop, backtrack, cross her arms and prop herself against the kitchen's arched frame. "So, what's up?"

Trey took a mouthful of bacon, chewed it before he spoke. "Do you think next time after buying a new tie you could run the iron over it with a little starch? It's not as crisp as I like."

"Sure," she said, trying not to sound too irritated by his request, but she was losing the battle with her temperament. "Or if you like, one day when you're not so busy, perhaps you'd like a little lesson in ironing? Well, I'd better go get ready," she added before he'd a chance to react. "When you're done, please, rinse your plate off before you put it in the dishwasher. I'll clean up the kitchen before we leave for the airport." He didn't reply, probably chewing over what she'd said as much as the bacon, and the only thing she got was a low grumble acknowledging that he'd heard her. She swung on her heels and left the kitchen to get dressed.

She could blame herself, she supposed. Their courtship had been such a fairytale that he'd literally taken her breath away from day one. Trey pampered her to death, and she let him do it, and it seemed the love they felt for one another was magnetic. He bequeathed everything upon her. When he suggested that she give up her job and let him take care of her, it was extremely easy for Angelique to say yes. Too easy, she was beginning to think. Trey had inherited his old-fashioned ways from his father, Frank Moretti. Frank worshipped Terri, Trey's mother. The only thing his dad ever asked of Terri was that she always took care of him, their home, and their kids. Unfortunately, after Trey's birth they were unable to conceive any further children, not that they lacked the effort in trying. Angelique envisioned Trey wished her to be more of a homemaker and wife like his mother. This always put a smile on her face because Terri was a sex fanatic, not that Frank ever complained of his wife's obsession. Angelique was more than happy to take care of the man who loved her more than life itself. However, somewhere within the short course of their marriage, something had changed. It mystified her because she wasn't even sure when it happened, what she did know, was that her submissiveness was beginning to dissolve as a result.

Trey finished his breakfast and went upstairs to get ready. When he returned he found Angelique on the sofa in the family room with her eyes closed. She didn't appear to have heard him when he entered the room. "Are you OK?"

Her eyes sprung open, as if startled by his voice. "Yes, as fine as I'm going to be. I didn't sleep that well last night, so I'm a little tired."

Trey gave her a long, searching look, one that Angelique didn't respond to. She was usually a sound sleeper, and for her to be so weary this morning was something that never happened. Although he did have a feeling that something was wrong, he determined that now was not the time to get into it.

"Come on let's go." He reached out, helping her up. She took his hand without comment, then waved him away. "Go on ahead, I'm going to grab a bagel to eat on the way. I'll be out in a second."

As they drove out to the airport in silence, jazz music played on the car radio. Trey enjoyed the tunes. Angelique, on the other hand, was oblivious to the music or anything else. She had other things on her mind. It took an hour for them to reach their destination due to the morning rush of

traffic. After parking, and with minutes to spare, they were able to catch a ride on the parking lot shuttle bus, taking them to the main entrance of the airport.

“Which is their exit gate?” he asked Angelique, since she took care of the arrangements.

“Gate B and ...” she paused for a moment, listening to the loud, echoed announcement on the speaker. His parents’ flight had landed, and passengers were starting to empty out of the plane. “This way Trey, follow me.” As they waited, Angelique decided to broach the subject that had been on her mind since leaving, to try and persuade him to take extra time off from work. “Trey, before we greet your parents, maybe it would be a good idea for you to take the whole week off instead of just the two days for Thanksgiving. It would be nice to spend some family time together, especially since Mom and Dad haven’t visited in a while.”

Okay, it was a selfish act on her part, and guilt should have hung over her like a cloud. Stooping to use his parents as an excuse was lame, but she wanted more quality time spent together. And therein lay part of the problem as she saw it. Since partnering with the firm, Trey’s work hours had extended late into the evening. And his constant traveling for his high profiled clients had caused something of a rift between them. Simply more than anything, Angelique was afraid of spending too much alone time with her in-laws for they would surely sense a problem brewing.

He sighed, and a single glance at his expression made her temperature creep up a notch. “Ang, you know things are busy in the office. I lucked out even getting the day off after Thanksgiving. I’ll go in a little earlier each day this week so that I’ll be home in time for dinner. I’m sorry, but it’s the best I can do,” he said, leaning down as he kissed Angelique on her forehead.

The temperature just took another step up its internal elevator. *Why does he always try to appease me? Make me feel like a schoolgirl?* Angelique wasn’t about to let him get away with it this time, but before she could respond her in-laws emerged.

“Trey, come over here and give your Mom a hug!” Terri shouted, extending out her arms to give him a giant bear hug. When she had her feel of him, her arms swiftly wrapped around Angelique as she gave her the same.

“We’re so glad you both were able to come, and Mom, we don’t expect you to lift a finger while you’re here! You and Dad are to put your feet up and relax!” Trey ordered lightly slapping his dad on the back. “This week we cater to you folk.”

*Not you Trey, me,* Angelique thought, silently looking at her husband, the pleasant smile she had afforded her in-laws fading. Her attention spanned back to them. *It’s not their fault, and I do want to make their visit as comfortable as possible. Why is it that each day my husband distances himself more and more from everything that we share? Even his parents’ sex life is more heated than ours,* she thought. *We’re down to once a week, and if I’m lucky enough to catch him in a good mood, maybe twice a week. It’s a miracle that I ...*

Frank interrupted her thinking. “Kids, let’s stop somewhere nice and have brunch, our treat, what do ya say? The food on the flight was God awful, and Mom and I are starving, isn’t that right sweets?”

“That’s right huny, so let’s go find that restaurant,” Terri replied, followed by a flirty wink.

They stopped at a nice Italian restaurant not far from the house. After the meal, Trey made an announcement. “Mom, Dad, I’m sorry to throw a monkey wrench into our day, but after I drop everyone off at the house, I’m going to have to head to the office for a few hours.”

If looks could kill, Trey would surely be dead by now. The look Angelique shot at him was lethal. Failing miserably, she tried to control the anger in her voice. “Trey, I thought you had the day off?”

“I do, however, there is a large shitload of paperwork at home on my desk that I should have submitted yesterday to the partners. It’s no big deal babe. I’ll get what I need finished, and I’ll be back by dinnertime,” he explained patting the back of her hands that sat on the table.

“Now Angelique, don’t you go giving your husband a hard time, we’ll manage just fine in his absence,” Frank stated in his soothing fatherly tone.

“That’s right dear, we have a lot of catching up to do anyway,” Terri added leaning over to hug Angelique. Angelique smiled sweetly, but inside uncharitable thoughts were forming. *Okay, you’re off the hook, buddy, but not for long.*

“Okay folks, as soon as the waiter returns, I’ll pay our bill, then we can hit the road.” Trey made a stand to pay the bill, but Frank held out a hand. “No Son, let me take care of the bill. Y’all head out, I’ll meet you outside.”

The restaurant was only three blocks away, but to Angelique it felt like a mile, and she was extremely tired and tense, being that she had practically tossed and turned all night. When they arrived back home, Trey and Angelique helped the parents settle into the guest room. The senior Morettis claimed they were in need of a short nap before dinner. Not even halfway out the door, Angelique and Trey heard the sound of Frank smacking his wife on her ass. Terri roared out a seductive laugh as Trey shut the door. Looking over at Angelique, a large smirk spread across his face.

“Well, I guess sleep isn’t on their agenda after all,” he slyly stated. He went downstairs to collect his papers and briefcase while Angelique changed into something more comfortable, trying to quell her rapidly rising temper.

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