

## My Mommy Became A Billionaire After the Breakup Chapter 1 - 10

### Chapter 1 The Substitute

Athena Newton gasped for air, her body still buzzing from their passionate rendezvous in the secretary's lounge. Byron Crawford clung to her from behind, unwilling to release his grip.

They both indulged in the lingering euphoria, with Byron planting delicate kisses on Athena's neck, savoring the aftermath of their pleasure.

Byron had been on a 15-day business trip, and he had left

Athena, his personal secretary, behind. Surprisingly, she felt

relieved, thinking that perhaps he had grown tired of their 5-year long affair.

Truthfully, she couldn't help but feel a glimmer of joy about it....

It was five years ago when the debt collector came knocking, and her grandma, Romy Lewis, fell seriously ill, desperately in

need of money.

Just when all hope seemed lost, Byron came in. Word had it that Athena bore a striking resemblance to his one true love, Freya Bates,, who went abroad and married a renowned European aristocrat after Byron's accident left him in a coma.

It was difficult for him to move on when he recovered and

realized he had been cast aside.

And then, Athena came into his life. He helped her settle her family's debts and arranged for the best medical care for her

grandmother.

And so, she took on the role of Byron's secretary, while secretly becoming his lover.

For the past five years, she concealed her true self, molding herself into a mirror image of Freya. She played the part of a tolerant and submissive woman, doing everything in her power to please him.

But the constant act wore her down, and she longed for Byron to find someone to take her place.

To her surprise, when Byron returned from his business trip, instead of going home, he headed straight to the office.

Consumed by desire, he didn't bother waiting for her to finish work and roughly took his pleasure, leaving her utterly

drained.

After a brief rest, Athena softly reminded him, "Mr. Crawford, the shareholders are waiting for you in the conference room."

"Humph," he said, his voice suddenly monotone. He released

Athena and headed straight for the bathroom.

She let out a sigh of relief.

Ignoring the discomfort in her lower body, she made her way to the lounge to fetch Byron's spare suit.

After his shower, Byron changed into his suit, and Athena gently helped him put on his tie.

As he looked down at her, he couldn't help but notice how well-behaved and sensible she was. He was pleased.

"There's a check on the table. Twenty million dollars," he said

calmly. "And the villa in Lakin will be transferred to your name."

She stared blankly at Byron, stunned.

Was this some kind of compensation? A severance fee to leave her with?

“Mr. Crawford, why would you...”

Self-satisfaction flowed through him when he saw the confused look in her eyes. He touched her chin and said,

“Consider it a reward.”

A reward?

What had she done to deserve such a generous reward?

Twenty million dollars was a fortune, and the villa in Lakin alone was worth over five times more.

Though Byron had always been generous, he had never given her such a large amount all at once before.

He gently caressed Athena’s slightly swollen lips with his thumb and whispered coldly, “If you do as I say, there will be

more where that came from.”

Athena couldn’t believe it.

What did he mean?

Was he not planning to break up with her yet?

She averted her gaze, maintaining her sweet and graceful facade. She nodded and replied, “Yes, Mr. Crawford.”

She wasn’t sure if it was her imagination, but it seemed like Byron’s shoulders deflated with relief just a bit.

“Great,” Byron said. “There’s nothing else for you to do this

afternoon. You can go home.”

She nodded again. With that, Byron left out the door.

Athena frowned as she picked up the check on the table.

She thought that over the past six months, Byron had grown tired of her.

Not too long ago, she had even caught a glimpse of him. talking with a girl who looked remarkably like Freya.

“This can’t be...” She muttered to herself.

She suddenly heard a buzzing sound from under the bed, where her phone had fallen during their session. She reached for it, and instantly read the headline in her notifications.

[Breaking News: Imbe Group President to Marry Youngest Daughter of Ross Family, Forging Powerful Alliance]

Her heart skipped a beat as she looked between her phone and the check.

The president of Imbe Group was none other than Byron...

The lounge remained in disarray. Her skirt and Byron’s suit were scattered across the floor.

She couldn’t stop laughter from bubbling up inside her.

So, this was the reason why he had suddenly showered her with money and a house.

He wanted to buy her and keep her as his obedient lover, even while he was married.

She suddenly felt sick to her stomach, and rushed to the bathroom to vomit.

When she looked at herself in the mirror afterward, she appeared pale and miserable.

There was no one better at being despicable than Byron.

He was on the verge of getting married, yet he couldn't let go of Freya and refused to end things with Athena.

"Damn it! Does he think I enjoy being a replacement...?"

She curled her hands into tight fists.

"I quit!"

After getting dressed, she prepared her resignation letter and made her way to the President's Office just as Byron's meeting

was wrapping up.

She walked up to his door, just about to knock and enter, when she heard a loud, teasing voice coming from within. It was Gideon Hale, Byron's friend from a wealthy family in Hutchin City.

"Now that you're tying the knot, what's your deal with Athena?"

There was a moment of silence, before Byron responded coolly, "Nothing. I'm keeping her as usual."

"Is she up for being a mistress?" Gideon inquired.

"She's willing to do anything if I throw enough money her way,"

His tone dripped with mockery and disdain.

She stood frozen outside the door, her heart stinging with pain.

Their "relationship" was purely transactional after all...

After five years, she had become a mere product in his eyes, to be played with for the right price.

"Really?" Gideon's voice was excited now. "If I offer her a

higher price, will she accept my proposal?”

Before anyone could respond, Byron’s assistant, Liam Carson, spoke up from outside the door.

“Are you alright, Miss Newton?”

She quickly snapped out of her thoughts and nodded at him,

then knocked on Byron’s office door and entered,

Gideon’s face was slightly red with embarrassment.

After a moment, he greeted Athena with a smile, as if he hadn’t said anything inappropriate. “Hello, Miss Newton.”

Gideon’s words disgusted her, and she chose to ignore him.

She walked straight to Byron, who still had that same cold. expression on his face.

“Didn’t I tell you to go home?” He asked in a deep voice, obviously displeased.

“Mr. Crawford,” Athena replied, her usual gentleness absent now. She held out her resignation letter with determination. “I’m quitting.”

His face darkened instantly. “What do you mean?”

“When we were together, we agreed that I would never be your mistress and that I would leave once you married.”

Athena placed the letter on his desk. “I will wrap up my current tasks and unfinished projects as soon as possible. Sorry for interrupting your conversation with Mr. Hale.”

After that, Athena turned and walked away.

She paused as she passed Gideon, looking absolutely astonished.

She was tired of being patient and kind.

She glared fiercely at the lustful man, as if he were a piece of trash.

That one look gave Gideon a clear answer to his question.

She would never sell herself to be a homewrecker!

## Chapter 2 Break Up

By the time Gideon regained his composure, Athena had already left.

He stared at Byron in disbelief. “Did you see what I saw? Is that amazing girl your lovely secretary?”

Byron remained silent, his face gloomy.

Panic and confusion were evident in his eyes.

He remembered the agreement he had made with Athena long ago.

But he never thought she would actually leave just because he was getting married.

Throughout the years, she had always been obedient and never refused any of his demands.

He couldn’t believe she would defy him this time.

“How dare she!”

Byron stood up, ignoring Gideon’s chattering, and angrily stormed out.

After submitting her resignation, Amelia was ready to hand over her work immediately.

But as she returned to the secretary’s room, Byron followed her inside.

“Is there something else you want to say, Mr. Crawford?” Athena looked at him, devoid of her usual tenderness from before.

Her attitude only darkened Byron’s frown.

“Am I not good enough for you? Why would you make a scene

like that?" He approached Athena slowly.

Her face paled with each of his steps.

She tried to step back, but he grabbed her wrist and pulled her towards him.

"Mr. Crawford, I have to leave once you're married. That's what we agreed on," she said softly.

He sneered, "So, the villa and all that money aren't enough for you, huh?"

She froze, recalling his words from earlier. He truly believed she would do anything for money.

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struggled to break free from this man who had humiliated her. "Let go of me!"

"Don't test me, Athena. I don't have time for games. Just tell me your price." He tightened his grip on her wrist, so tight he might break it.

Even now, he still thought she wanted to end things because he hadn't given her enough money. He couldn't comprehend any other reason. He believed she wouldn't truly leave him if he gave her more.

Athena frowned and stared silently at him. She always knew she was just a replacement for the past five years. All of Byron's affection was meant for someone else. If she allowed herself to be ensnared by that affection, it would only lead to heartbreak.

"Byron, I can't!" she declared. "My mother died because of a mistress. I refuse to become one too!"

The room fell silent.

Only their breathing could be heard.



Through all his confusion, it finally seemed to reach Byron: she truly wanted to end things with him.

“It’s been a while since you last visited your grandma, hasn’t it?” His tone has softened, his anger suppressed. “I’ll give you a month off. Take your time to think about things.”

With the mention of her grandmother, her whole body stiffened.

His words only made her more determined and resolute.

“I don’t need a month. I’ve made up my mind.”

“Athena!”

He could no longer control his temper.

“I’ve kept you around for five years after Freya left. Do you really expect me to just find a replacement anywhere?”

Athena refused to hear his reasons.

He could easily find other girls to take her place, but he simply didn’t want to waste time adjusting.

“Mr. Crawford, I know my place. I’m just a nobody,” she coldly replied.

“...Fine.”

Byron released his grip on her wrist, then scowled.

“You may not be the most like Freya, but you are the most obedient. That was the only thing you had going for you,” he looked at her, returning to his usual cold demeanor.

“Now, you’ve lost your only advantage. Since you’ve already made up your mind, I’ll grant your wish.”

Athena suppressed the mixed emotions swelling inside her and calmly replied, “Thank you... I’ll hand over all my work and

won't cause you any trouble.”

“A new secretary will be coming. Just make sure to train her well before you leave.”

Then, Byron walked away without looking back.

Coming from a wealthy family, he was born with a natural sense of superiority and arrogance.

He chose Athena before because she looked almost identical to Freya and did everything he asked.

But now, she refused to listen to him. It looked like he had finally lost his patience, and wouldn't bother her anymore.

Athena glanced at the bruise on her wrist and finally felt free for the first time in five years.

After leaving the building, she made her way to Byron's house.

Whenever he wanted to have sex, they would either be at the residence he provided for her or in the lounge of the secretary's office.

Since she occasionally stayed at his place, there wasn't much for her to pack. Just one suitcase was enough.

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She packed carefully, making sure she didn't leave anything behind.

Once she finished, she returned to her own place and began sorting through her work notes and tasks that needed to be

handed over to the next secretary.

It was pretty straightforward. She had two sets of work notes

that contained all the necessary information.

The real challenge was dealing with the major infrastructure project she'd been managing since last year.

It was her first time being in charge of such a large project, and she put in a lot of hard work. If she were to quit now, she worried how much it would impact the project's progress.

While pondering over this, her phone rang. It was a call from the hospital.

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A few days ago, Athena's best friend, Evie Cross, returned from studying abroad and took her for a health examination when she noticed Athena had become very thin.

Athena answered the call.

"Miss Newton, this is Rosen Medical Center."

"I know. Please send the physical examination report to my email. Thank you," she quickly replied.

She was about to end the call, but the person on the other end said, "Miss Newton, wait! You're pregnant!"

"...What?"

"Congratulations! You're eight weeks pregnant!" The person sounded very cheerful.

But Athena was dumbfounded.

How was this possible...?

She and Byron had always used protection!

"Miss Newton, we have the top private obstetrics department in the country and a luxurious post-delivery center for you and your baby..." The person continued to promote their services over the phone.

But Athena was stuck in a daze and couldn't hear them at all.

“I understand. I’ll contact you if I need anything.” Athena responded numbly and hastily ended the call.

She gazed at the drizzling rain outside the window, deep in thought.

After a while, she gradually regained her composure and quickly weighed the pros and cons in her mind.

Placing her hand on her flat stomach, she realized she couldn’t keep this child.

### Chapter 3 The New Secretary

She spent the entire night wide awake, and in the morning she decided to take two days off work.

She quickly got ready and went to the hospital for another check-up. The results confirmed once again that she was eight weeks pregnant.

She vaguely recalled having unprotected sex with Byron on his birthday two months ago. It was only once, but she ended up pregnant.

Athena shook her head, unable to accept this. The doctor, noticing her dejected expression, kindly said, “Madam, it’s not easy for you to conceive given your condition. I suggest you consider keeping the child.”

Given how easy it was to get pregnant, she wasn’t sure if she was lucky or unlucky.

“I will think about it,” she replied before leaving the hospital.

Standing in the chilly autumn wind, Athena paused for a moment before deciding to buy a plane ticket back to her

hometown.

Once she arrived in Greeli City, she purchased a bouquet of roses and purple daisies, along with two bottles of wine. She hailed a taxi and headed towards Colwi Cemetery.

started to drizzle as soon as she arrived. The security guard spotted Athena from a distance and hurried over with an

umbrella.

“Athena! I didn’t expect you today!”

“I just wanted to pay a visit,” she explained.

After a brief chat, she left a bottle of wine as a token of appreciation for the guard.

With an umbrella in hand, she walked alone into the depths of the cemetery.

The guard, holding his wine, gazed at her slender figure and sighed with sympathy.

“What’s the matter? Do you know her?” a janitor leaned in and asked.

The guard shook his head and sighed again, “Poor girl. She was just a little kid when she laid her mother to rest here. Then at the age of ten, she bid farewell to her grandfather, and just six months ago... her grandmother passed away. At her grandmother’s funeral, she stayed by her grave all day

e Tombstone.

Her grandparents lay side by side, with her mother nearby.

The roses were for her grandma. When her grandfather was alive, he would bring a rose for her every single day.

The purple daisy was for her mother, her favorite flower.

Finally, Athena poured a glass of wine for her grandfather.

“Grandma, Grandpa, and Mom. I have something to share with you...”

She was silent for a few moments.

“I’m pregnant. I know I probably shouldn’t keep this child,  
but...”

She hesitated.

“But with all of you gone... I have no family left in this world.

This baby will be my only family.”

Athena took a deep breath, as if she had made a momentous decision. “The doctor said it would be difficult for me to conceive, so... I’ve decided to keep the baby!”

After a pause, she smiled and continued, “You will love her. Please look out for her!”

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In Girard City, the President’s Office at Imbe Group was abuzz with gossip today.

News of Athena’s resignation had spread like wildfire.

Everyone knew that only Athena could handle the difficult president.

As suspicions grew, the new secretary arrived early this morning, led by Liam straight into Athena’s old office.

The arrival of the new secretary, Ruby Holland, caused quite a stir in the company.

She bore a striking resemblance to Athena.

Rumors about the relationship between Byron and Athena had been circulating in the company.

With Athena resigning and someone so similar to her  
appearing out of nowhere, wild speculations began to fly.

Byron had a morning meeting with the overseas project department. By the time the  
meeting ended, it was already  
noon.

Upon returning to the President's Office, Ruby approached him, looking upset.  
didn't see her at all today."

He furrowed his brows and glanced at Liam. "Where is  
Athena?"

As soon as Liam heard Ruby's words, he realized the game she was playing.

"Mr. Crawford, Miss Newton had some personal issues and  
requested time off," He quickly explained. "I apologize for forgetting to inform you. I  
was busy preparing for the meeting this morning."

"She has personal issues? Hmm, she left so abruptly without  
telling Byron. It must be serious," she feigned concern for Athena and tried to approach  
Byron.

He distanced himself immediately. "If she's not here to train you, you can go now. Come  
back when she returns to work."

Ruby instantly sensed Byron's foul mood. She was always good at reading people.

So, after exchanging a few sweet words, she promptly left, shooting an annoyed glance at  
the secretary's room on her  
way out.

for her.

She didn't buy the excuse that she had something urgent to attend to; she thought it was a deliberate attempt to teach.

her a lesson.

"Just you wait! You started this. I'll get back at you someday!"

Liam began reporting Byron's schedule. "Mr. Crawford, you have a golf game with Mr. Franco, the president of Colas Construction, at three o'clock this afternoon..."

From the corner of his eye, he could see that Byron's eyes were getting darker by the second.

After taking a sip of his coffee, his expression grew even more grim.

"Call Athena and tell her to come back immediately!"

With her gone, the office staff couldn't even make a decent cup of coffee anymore!

"Yes sir!" Liam quickly grabbed his phone to make the call.

Byron's frustration intensified as he glanced at Liam.

Since she had left so abruptly, Byron assumed her grandmother was unwell.

Athena hadn't visited her grandma for over six months.

"Forget it." Byron impatiently pushed away his coffee, grabbed a document, and stared at it with a brooding expression.

Liam held his phone tightly, afraid to utter a word.

He quietly stepped aside and sent Athena a WhatsApp message: [Athena, Mr. Crawford has been in a terrible mood all morning. Finish up and come back to save us!]



After visiting the cemetery, Athena had nowhere else to go.

When she received Liam's message, she realized it would be best to complete the handover quickly and leave.

Byron must never find out about the baby.

He would never allow someone like her to give birth to a child connected to him. So, it was safest for her to distance herself from Byron and Imbe Group after leaving.

She wasted no time and bought a flight ticket back to Girard City.

The next morning, the people in the President's Office were thrilled to see her.

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you?"

re we going to do without

"That's right! Mr. Crawford is terrifying when he's angry. I was too scared to even breathe yesterday!"

"Miss Newton, please don't leave. We can't handle Mr. Crawford without you!"

As they chatted, the president's elevator lit up.

They immediately straightened up and stood neatly at the elevator entrance.

A moment later, the doors opened.

Byron, dressed in a black designer suit, stepped out with Ruby by his side.

“Good morning, Mr. Crawford,” everyone greeted in unison, including Athena, who was standing at the back.

She was still wearing her usual work attire, with her long hair cascading down her shoulders.

She no longer looked timid and submissive, but indifferent.

Byron led Ruby towards her.

“This is my new secretary, Ruby Holland,” His voice was ice-cold, devoid of any emotion. “Show her the ropes and fill her in on all your responsibilities.”

#### Chapter 4 Her True Colors

Athena raised her gaze and locked eyes with Ruby. She couldn't help but notice that Ruby resembled Freya, even more than herself.

“I will,” Athena nodded in agreement.

“Thank you, Athena. I'll put in my best effort to learn quickly!” Ruby's voice dripped with sweetness.

“You're welcome,” she replied politely, as she always did. Byron couldn't detect any signs of displeasure or jealousy from her.

“She doesn’t care because she’s not jealous...” These words  
echoed in Byron’s mind, irritating him.

“I need coffee,” he grumbled, storming into his office.

Later, in the break room, Ruby and Athena were finally alone...

“Miss Holland, Mr. Crawford is quite particular about his  
coffee’s taste, so-”

“Athena, I suggest you avoid being around Byron in the future. Whenever he sees you, it  
puts him in a bad mood. He is my man now, and I don’t want him to be unhappy,” Ruby

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Interrupted, crossing her arms and staring at Athena with  
arrogance, as if she were Byron’s girlfriend, not his secretary.

“Miss Holland, if you want me to leave quickly, you might want to stop talking and focus  
on learning,” Athena calmly responded, grinding the coffee beans.

Ruby had said those words to provoke Athena, hoping to  
trigger her anger and make Byron hate her even more. But Athena didn’t take her words  
to heart at all. Ruby gnashed her  
teeth in frustration.

The truth was, Ruby was sent to Byron’s side several months  
ago.

Athena blocked Ruby's path, capturing his attention first. She believed Athena must have used some underhanded tactics to gain his favor, even though Ruby resembled his love Freya more.

So far, Byron hadn't shown any interest in Ruby whatsoever. Aside from occasionally zoning out while staring at her, he rarely smiled.

She glared at Athena with resentment.

"You're just a loser who got dumped by Byron. What are you so proud of?!" Ruby sneered.

her inner thoughts. "Today is our first meeting, right? Why do you hate me so much?"

Ruby was caught off guard and instinctively retorted, "I-I don't!"

"Is it because you haven't slept with Byron yet?" Athena teased.

"D-Don't be ridiculous!" Ruby was clearly frustrated at being exposed.

“On the desk in the secretary’s room, there are two sets of notes,” Athena plainly explained. “One is Byron’s secretary handbook, and the other is his lover’s handbook, which

contains all his preferences.”

“What do you mean?” Suspicion was evident in her voice. She couldn’t believe Athena was being so helpful.

“I’m just handing over my work. What do you think I mean?” Athena added with a smile.

“Miss Holland, I don’t care

about Byron as much as you think. It’s just a job. I’ve always been professional when it comes to work, and I’ll teach you everything I know. But how much you can learn and whether

you can please Byron... that’s up to you.”

er skeptically.

She still couldn’t fully trust Athena.

After a moment, Ruby finally said, “You better do as you say!”

Athena brewed the coffee, pushed it towards Ruby, and

flashed a gentle smile. ” Since you’ve been talkin’ so much, I’ll

give you a heads up too. I’ll let it go this time. Just go on and do whatever pleases Byron, and steer clear of me. Don’t mess

with me, or I can’t promise what might go down.”

Under her piercing gaze, Ruby felt a shiver run down her spine.

She never expected Athena to fire back, considering everyone always said she was forgiving and non-confrontational.

But right now, she seemed completely different.

Just then, there was a knock on the door.

“Athena, the head of the sales team 1 is looking for you!”

“Coming!” Athena lightly tapped the table and said, “Why are you still standing there? Take the coffee to Mr. Crawford.”

With that, Athena left the break room.

‘Athena!

As soon as she left, the director of the sales department rushed in.

“No wonder you screwed up so badly. Looks like you’re on the verge of quitting! If we hadn’t scheduled a meeting to go over the plan ahead of time, you would’ve bailed ages ago! I bet you took some cash from our rivals and deliberately sabotaged our agreement so we would lose this partnership!”

Eric Lane, the sales department director and leader of the first team, was known for being blunt and hot-tempered. He had

been working closely with Athena in the past few days.

“Mr. Lane, can you please calm down? What’s going on?”

Athena asked.

“The contract data and the list from Maxwell Electronics were provided by you, right?” Eric replied angrily.

“Yes,” she nodded. “I carefully checked all the data and handed them over to your sales department after making sure there were no issues.”

“Nonsense!” Eric shouted.

This order was crucial for his team. Losing this order meant losing out on significant commissions, and the company’s resource priority for the next quarter would be given to other teams!

“Take a look at your massive screw-up! This order is worth billions. Do you even have a clue about the blood, sweat, and tears our team’s poured into this?”

Eric slammed a stack of documents onto the table in front of her.

She picked them up and examined them closely.

The problematic sections were marked with a red pen.

There were a total of six errors, all of which were difficult to spot, and two of them involved numbers. This wasn't right...

"This isn't the one I gave you," Athena stated firmly.

"So what, you're saying our sales department created this to set you up, at the cost of giving up our big commission?" Eric slammed his hand on the desk.

"What's all the commotion about?" Byron emerged from his office at that moment.

"Mr. Crawford!" Eric rushed over and angrily explained the situation to him.

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Beside Byron, Ruby put a surprised expression. She gave

Athena a quick glance and said, "Mr. Lane, it seems like

Athena's got some family stuff going on lately. Maybe that's why she's not herself and messed up. You should go easy on her. You'll get another order. It's not worth getting yourself worked up!"



Athena stared at her angrily.

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It seemed like Ruby wasn't taking her warning seriously...

"Miss Holland, I didn't mess anything up. Are you accusing me without any proof?" she asked sternly.

"Athena, you've got me all wrong! I'm just trying to lend you a hand... Byron, I'm just trying to clear things up for Athena! She's being so rude!"

He looked at Athena with narrowed eyes, and thought to himself.

Athena had finally shown her true colors.

## Chapter 5 Captivated

"I see." Byron said to Ruby.

She quickly hid behind him, pretending to be terrified. Athena was at a loss for words.

"If Ruby can't blame you, then what about me?" His words felt like a sharp knife stabbing her heart.

For a moment, she froze, her eyes slightly turning red. Byron didn't believe her...

He took out a few pages from the file and handed them to

Athena. “Even if someone else manipulated the data, the

signature on these pages is yours, isn’t it?”

“...Yes,” Athena replied.

“Then you need to take responsibility,” he said coldly, shifting all the blame to her. “I’ll give you three days to resolve this issue. Otherwise, our company will follow the proper procedures and involve the police.”

Athena glanced at him, her jaw to the floor.

She felt something like betrayal swirl inside her, but she quickly suppressed Teeling.

She wasn’t surprised; she knew Byron was petty and would make things difficult for her.

He must be mad since she decided to quit being his secretary and lover and firmly rejected his attempts to change her

mind. At least he was kind enough not to kill her.

But she wasn’t the one to blame for the mistake with the data.

She had to find who did this!

“Okay...” Athena said quietly.

Byron’s eyes suddenly darkened.

He was getting irritated by her recent stubbornness.

He didn't say a word more and returned to his office.

Before Ruby followed him, she turned to Athena with a victorious grin.

Soon, rumors of Athena betraying the company spread throughout the building.

Athena took her computer and went to the company's library.

She had been in charge of Eric's project during the whole process, and she was flawless in every respect.

Moreover, she had done in-advance research in Maxwell Electronics.

If there were no problems with the data, Maxwell Electronics would have accepted it as expected.

She let out a heavy sigh.

At noon, Athena bought a sandwich and found a secluded place to be alone. She messaged Evie while eating, telling her what happened.

As soon as she read the message, she immediately called.

"We have to find that bastard! No matter what it takes!" Evie

was boiling with rage.

“What do we do after we find them?” Athena asked.

“Clear your name!” Evie replied, “And skin that asshole alive!”

“But we just lost this huge order,” she grumbled in frustration. “So many people put in months of hard work. It shouldn’t have ended like this.”

“Got any plans brewing in that head of yours?” her friend inquired.

“I’m gonna track down the person that did this and retrieve my original order!” Athena declared with determination.

She may be forgiving, but she wouldn’t stand for being treated unfairly.

“Anything I can do to help?” Evie offered.

“There’s gonna be a fancy cruise ship party tomorrow night. Brad Maxwell, the big boss of Maxwell Electronics, is gonna be there too. I’ll need to meet with him and show him my plan.”

“Oh, I heard about that shindig. I should be able to score an invite letter, but... I heard my step-dad talking about Brad before. The guy is notorious for being a hard-ass. And if your date was sabotaged...”

Evie trailed off, hesitating to tell Athena that he might not give her another chance.

“How will I know if I don’t give it a shot?”

“Okay! I got your back.”

“After I finish this, I’ll treat you to the nicest restaurant in town!” Athena laughed.

“Of course!” Evie said excitedly, “By the way, the dress code for the party is very formal. I’ll pick you up now and we can go shopping!”

Then, Evie couldn’t take it anymore and complained about Athena’s plain clothing.

“Sweetie, you’ve got a killer body with the fashion of an old lady. You can’t dress like usual tonight, okay?”

Athena responded with a giggle, gathering her things to walk out front and wait for her friend., “Alright.”

She didn’t need to pretend to be a sweet and delicate lady anymore.

Up on the third floor of the library, Byron stood tall in front of a large window, his eyes fixated on Athena, who was standing outside, smiling while on the phone.

She had never smiled at him like that before...

He started sulking again without even knowing it.

“Byron, don’t you think you’re taking this too far? You know Athena best, right? She never makes rookie mistakes,” Gideon appealed to him. “I mean, look at the poor girl out there in the

cold!

But he remained cold, always keeping people at a distance.

“She insisted on leaving my protection. Why should I feel sorry for her?” Byron said, “She brought this on herself.”

Gideon stayed silent. Arguing with Byron was pointless.

At that moment, a sleek black Mercedes pulled over on the side of the road..

Athena ran over with excitement.

Gideon was shocked. He had never seen Athena so full of life.

He glanced at the car and then back at Byron, teasingly asking, “Does Athena have a new beau? Is that why she’s so determined to dump you?”

Byron just turned around and walked away without saying a word.

The next evening, Athena prepared herself for the party.

A fancy cruise ship was docked at the pier as the sun was setting.

Wealthy and influential people from all walks of life, even some well-known celebrities, were boarding the ship one after another, dressed to the nines.

ship

earlier, but instead of having invitation letters, they were holding staff cards.

“Sorry, all the high-profile individuals in Girard City wanted

to attend this party. The best I could do was get us some

staff cards instead of formal invitations,” Evie explained apologetically.

“It’s okay. We got on the ship anyway!” Athena replied. She double-checked her plan, making sure everything was in

order.

“Once the reception starts, change into your dress and go find

Brad,” Evie advised, patting the bag that contained Athena’s

dress. “You’ll look stunning. I’m sure you’ll turn heads. And who knows, maybe we can take down Brad and find ourselves a

wealthy man along the way!”

She chuckled at her friend’s words and shook her head.

Those wealthy men wouldn’t want a woman who had a child. After a short while, the reception began.

Athena changed into a formal dress and climbed through a

low window.

Just as she slipped on her high heels, she heard laughter behind her.

It was a handsome guy with a charming smile and short curly hair. He held a champagne glass and stared at her.

“Sir? Can I help you?” Athena hesitated for a moment before mustering the courage to ask.

“You...” The man glanced at the small window, then back at Athena.

She had been caught the moment she stepped out!

Just as Athena was about to come up with an excuse, the man said, “You’re gorgeous, like a princess out of a fairy tale!”

She was taken aback by his response.

But really, it wasn’t surprising. She was wearing a tight golden dress, her wavy hair cascading down to her waist. With her fair complexion, her makeup was delicate and highlighted her

natural beauty. Evie said she almost looked like a mermaid.

In the moonlit night, as she turned around, a gentle breeze tousled her long locks.



Her otherworldly beauty captivated the handsome man beyond belief.

## Chapter 6 Degrading Herself

“Sorry, I’ve got something else going on. I’ll catch your story another time.”

Athena didn’t bother saying more to the man and walked away without a word.

“Hey, hold on! I don’t even know your name!” He snapped out of his daze and rushed after her.

Suddenly, a bunch of suited bodyguards came running from behind. When they saw the man safe, they all breathed a sigh of relief and hurried over.

“Mr. Chambers, the party’s already started. Your parents are looking everywhere for you!”

He panicked, looking in the direction Athena had gone, ready to chase after her. “Hold on, I’m actually looking for...”

Before he could even finish, the bodyguards exchanged glances and grabbed his arms, dragging him away!

When Athena appeared on the main floor of the party, she didn’t have to do anything. She stood there, with her tall, slim body and beautiful dress looking like an angel, and instantly

wwwwww

you

“Who’s she? Never seen her before.”

“Maybe she’s some new star trying to climb the social ladder and snag a rich dude!”

“Just look at all those guys ogling her. If they could strip her with their eyes, she’d be naked!”

“Maybe she’s even into that sort of thing.”

The wealthy ladies whispered and giggled amongst themselves, covering their mouths, their eyes filled with jealousy and spite.

Athena grabbed a glass of champagne from a passing waiter. She didn’t pay attention to the people around her, focused solely on finding Brad.

Tonight was the 20th birthday party of the young master of a famous luxury jewelry brand. All the important people in Mailand were invited and it was a highly anticipated event.

Gideon’s parents were away on a project abroad and couldn’t

make it back. So, Gideon was there to represent his family at the party, his parents being abroad and unable to attend

“Byron... you’ve never brought Athena to a fancy event like this

before,” Gideon said, sitting on a couch with his legs crossed. He glanced over at Ruby, who was taking pictures nearby. “Ruby might look more like Miss Bates, but she doesn’t compare to Athena when it comes to charm.”

Byron didn’t spare a second glance at her.

“You’ve mentioned Athena a lot lately. Have you taken a liking to her?”

“Would you mind?” Gideon’s eyes opened wider. He stared at Byron and asked.

Byron looked at Gideon and warned coldly, “Careful.”

“Alright! Alright!” Gideon raised his hands and chuckled awkwardly.

Byron had been like this since he was a child. Once he was tired of his toys and didn’t want them anymore, he would rather destroy them than give them to others.

He seemed to have that same attitude towards women.

“Byron!”

Ruby yelled and ran to Byron in a panic.

Gideon caught a trace of disgust on Byron’s face.

She said anxiously, “I saw Athena! She’s here!”

Byron finally glanced up at her, his eyebrows furrowing slightly. “What’s she doing here?”

They all turned their heads and noticed her immediately. She stood out in the crowd, like a swan among ugly ducklings.

Just as Byron caught sight of her, he noticed a middle-aged man with a large belly blocking her path and attempting to

hand her a business card.

She immediately engaged in enthusiastic conversation with him, a subtle smile gracing her beautiful face.

He narrowed his eyes at her, trying to contain his inner rage.

Seeing his expression, Ruby hurriedly put on an exaggerated and anxious look and said, “Byron, Mr. Hale, I just heard that...

Athena is only here to hook up with wealthy men.”

She stomped her feet like a child and added, “Byron, even if

you broke up with her, you gave her so much money over the years. You’ve set her up for life. How could she hook up with

other men and humiliate you like this?!”

“Byron has already moved on and started a new relationship.

So why can’t Athena look for a new boyfriend too?” Gideon

argued as slipped one hand into his pocket and casually swung his glass with the other.

He glanced at Ruby with a faint smile.

Although his tone and gesture seemed gentle, she sensed a

hint of coldness in his words.

“I just can’t help but feel sorry for Byron,” she said, leaning closer to the president.

“Don’t worry about it. Just enjoy the party,” Byron replied curtly, avoiding Ruby’s hand.

She paused for a moment, a bit hurt. “Alright then.”

Before she left, she stole another glance at Athena.

To her, Athena seemed plain in comparison to everyone else at the company. Ruby had seen her old photos, too. Normally,

she didn’t wear much makeup and dressed casually.

But tonight was different. She looked elegant and charming, her dress accentuating her curvaceous figure. It was like she

was a totally different person!

Ruby knew that her own pretty and soft appearance couldn’t compete with Athena’s stunning looks and sexy figure.

Luckily, Byron wasn’t into women who wore heavy makeup!

She looked away, trying to distract herself. The more she

thought of it, the angrier she grew. How could Athena look so amazing tonight?!

An idea suddenly popped into her head, and she held back an

excited giggle. She immediately went downstairs.

ww

Just as Ruby left, Gideon and Byron noticed Athena accepting a business card from the middle-aged man and tucking it into her handbag.

The man left with a satisfied expression on his face.

Byron was a bit far from Athena; he didn't see the sigh of relief she secretly let out.

Athena scanned the surroundings and finally spotted her target for the night.

Gideon shifted his gaze to Byron and remarked, "You've been hogging this beauty hidden to yourself all these years!"

Athena was a good-looking woman, but before, Gideon always thought her to be quite dull.

Most of the time, she seemed like a lifeless robot doing whatever Byron ordered her to do. And no matter how unreasonable he acted, she never refused or lost her temper.

Gideon vividly remembered a time during Freya's winter birthday when Byron suddenly craved a cake from a renowned bakery.

Unfortunately, that bakery already closed down years before.

Gideon had no idea what Athena did, but she managed to buy the cake Byron wanted and brought it to his house at three in the morning.

When she arrived, Byron refused to eat it and even called it ugly, throwing it away.

Gideon happened to be present at Byron's house that day.

Athena's hair was soaked from the melted snow, her slim.

figure shivering uncontrollably from the cold. Her hands were red from how cold it was.

He thought Byron had gone too far that day.

But he didn't anticipate Athena's reaction. She remained calm, showing no signs of anger or resentment. She simply put the cake in a garbage bag and left.

This kind of thing happened many times in the past few years.

However, tonight, Athena appeared, looking like a supermodel. Gideon felt like things were about to get

interesting...

Byron only stared coldly at his former lover

"She's degrading herself by sending

Write your comment

Chapter 7 No Invitation

Gideon smirked. Byron might be putting on a tough front, but his angry eyes gave him away!

But... Was Athena really here to find a man?

Gideon watched Athena as she moved through the crowd, clearly heading towards a specific destination.

He followed her gaze to the end of the deck, where a classical band was playing.

"Isn't that Brad, the owner of Maxwell Electronics?" Gideon asked.

Byron glanced over, seemingly unsurprised.

Gideon widened his eyes. “Oh!! You said you wouldn’t come to this party, and yet here you are! You knew Brad would be here! You’re here to talk to him for Athena’s project, right?”

Byron stared at him, his gaze as icy as a winter breeze, sending a chill down Gideon’s spine on this summer evening.

“You think she deserves my efforts? She’s just a substitute I dumped.”

wwwwwwme

Gideon was speechless.

“I came here because Ruby wanted to come,” Byron added.

Gideon smiled awkwardly. Byron was usually not much of a talker. The more he tried to explain, the more guilty he seemed.

Obviously, Byron also became aware of this. His face was filled with annoyance.

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Spotting Brad was easy, but approaching him proved to be difficult.

As Athena walked towards Brad, a bodyguard stopped her.

“Miss, that area is off-limits,” the guard said.

“Excuse me. I want to see Mr. Maxwell.”

The guard remained cold, “You can schedule an appointment. Mr. Maxwell will not have any business meeting tonight.”

Just then, Brad glanced over. Unlike most men, when he saw Athena, he showed no interest and even frowned in apparent

disgust.

Athena had already done her research on Brad.

He had a technical background, was known for his integrity, and had a very good relationship with his late wife.

Two years ago, when his wife passed away, Brad was devastated and spent nearly half a year in the hospital.

Brad wasn't interested in any other women and even disliked those who tried to get close to him.

Athena was stunningly beautiful and didn't seem like someone who could get things done. He must have misunderstood her intentions, thinking she was here to seduce him.

Athena overheard Brad regretfully saying to his companions, "That harp looks very nice. It's a shame they didn't hire a harpist and are just using it as a display."

Athena's gaze locked onto the golden harp on the music stand. Her eyes lit up.

Her grandmother used to be a famous harpist, and Athena had learned from her since young.

Although she hadn't practiced much in recent years, whenever she visited her grandmother, she would play the harp for her. While her skill might not compare to a master's, it

www

was still pleasing to the ear.

As Brad walked away, his guards followed suit. Athena walked directly to the harp and sat down.

Taking a deep breath, her delicate fingers gently plucked the



strings.

Brad, who was about to enter the banquet hall, stopped in his tracks and turned back.

Athena's long hair cascaded, concealing her lowered gaze.

Her fingertips played the music beautifully.

People were drawn by the enchanting melody and gathered around.

Brad also hurried back to listen as he felt an indescribable familiarity.

This woman seemed simply seductive to him just moments ago, but now as she played the harp, she looked serene and elegant.

As Brad watched Athena, he lost in his thoughts, reminiscing about the afternoon he first met his wife forty years ago.

Gideon and Byron also noticed Athena's performance.

www

"Athena can play the harp?!" Gideon exclaimed in surprise.

Byron didn't answer because he also didn't know.

Athena's calm and composed demeanor made him feel

unfamiliar; it was as if she wasn't the same person who had been with him for the past five years.

This thought deepened Byron's gloom. He had been deceived by Athena for five long years!

Meanwhile, Gabe Chambers, the man Athena met before,  
was escorted back to his parents by bodyguards.

Today was his birthday, and he had planned to spend his  
vacation at Black Beach in Iceland.

Yet his parents insisted on throwing a birthday party for him, just so he could get to know  
more influential people he would need to deal with in the future when inheriting the  
family  
business.

Listening to his mother and the guests talk about business,  
Gabe felt utterly bored.

Just then, he heard melodious music from behind and turned  
to look.

Finally, his eyes lit up once more.

As the music ended, Gabe let out a content sigh.

Perfect, not a single wrong note!

After a brief silence, applause erupted from the surroundings.

Athena stood up gracefully and acknowledged with a bow.

From the corner of her eye, she could see Brad walking  
towards her.

But just then...

“May I see your invitation, Miss?” Two crew members approached Athena with stern  
expressions.

Not far away, Ruby watched gleefully.

‘How dare this bitch steal the spotlight and grab everyone’s attention!’ she cursed in her mind, ‘Now everyone’s gonna see how shameless she is, sneaking in here to flirt with guys!’

Athena felt like luck had been really against her lately. But then, amidst the crowd, she spotted Ruby. And as soon as Ruby caught Athena’s eye, she wore the most smug expression ever. It was practically written all over her face, “I did it!”

Athena’s expression darkened.

But if Ruby was here, then Byron...

As Athena looked around, some people started to gossip.

“Unbelievable! Coming here to seduce men and not even willing to buy an invitation? Trying to get something for nothing?”

“She’s really here for business, haha.”

“I KNEW something was off about her!”

“The Chambers’ security is lacking! How could they let someone without an invitation get on board...”

The crew member raised his voice, “Miss, let us see your invitation!”

Ruby watched Athena’s awkward situation and felt extremely pleased. However, her joy didn’t last long because she noticed Byron was no longer on the second floor.

Looking around, Byron and Gideon had already come down and were walking towards here.

Byron must be coming to help Athena out!

“Sorry...” Athena said helplessly.

A voice sounded from behind the crowd. “She doesn’t need an invitation.”

Everyone turned to look at the source of the voice, and so did Athena.

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Ty...” Athena said helplessly.

A voice sounded from behind the crowd. “She doesn’t need an invitation.”

Everyone turned to look at the source of the voice, and so did Athena.

But when she saw who it was, she was dumbfounded.

Chapter 8 You Taught Me Well

“Mr. Chambers?” The crew members who were interrogating Athena were shocked when they saw the young man walking over.

“What happened?” Gabe frowned as he stood next to Athena.

“One of our guests informed us that this lady has no invitation, so we came to verify.”

“She doesn’t have one because I invited her!” Gabe said

sternly, “If you have any questions, just ask me!”

“I’m sorry, Mr. Chambers!” The crew member immediately apologized to Athena. “Miss, we didn’t know you were Mr. Chambers’ guest. Please forgive us.”

“It’s okay, don’t worry about it.” Athena shook her head.

“You two may leave now,” Gabe waved his hand, still visibly annoyed. It was unusual for Gabe to be harsh like this as he was usually very nice.

The two crew members left with livid faces, thinking the woman from earlier had fooled them.

Ruby immediately hid in the crowd. She was afraid that those two would recognize her and embarrass her in public.

She heard people whispering around her.

“That woman actually knows Mr. Chambers?!”

“He got angry for her, you saw that? She might be his girlfriend!”

“No way!!”

Ruby’s face turned pale.

Athena had been with Byron for five freaking years. And the moment Byron ditched her, she hooked up with Gabe?!

That bitch didn't deserve such a loaded young dude!

Athena was also stunned. She didn't expect the man she met earlier to be the young master of the Chambers family, the star of this party. And he just came to her rescue!

"Are you all right?" Gabe looked at Athena in concern.

"I'm fine, Mr. Chambers. Thank you for helping me." Athena was a little embarrassed.

After all, she sneaked onto the cruise. But she remembered something more important.

Athena hurriedly looked around for Brad.

"What's wrong? Did you lose something?" Confused, Gabe followed Athena's gaze and looked around.

Before Athena could say anything, a sweet voice called out her name.

Knowing Ruby was behind the scene just now, Athena looked toward the source of the voice with anger in her eyes. But what she saw made her tremble.

Ruby had her arm linked with Byron's, giving the appearance of a happy couple.

“Mr. Crawford.” Athena acknowledged Byron with a cold nod, while Gideon greeted her cheerfully, but she ignored him.

Gideon felt embarrassed. It turned out that Athena had her temper. She still didn’t forgive him for his nonsense in Byron’s office the other day.

Byron approached Athena, his gaze shifting to Gabe before he sneered at her, “You’re good.”

Athena’s heart skipped a beat, but she managed a half-smile. “Thanks. You taught me well.”

Byron’s expression turned gloomy. Athena believed he didn’t lash out at her only because they were in public.

“Hello, Mr. Crawford!” Gabe greeted politely.

Byron, from a noble family, had always been courteous.

However, he ignored Gabe’s greeting and walked to the banquet hall with Ruby.

Gideon observed the scene with amusement. Athena’s reply to Byron impressed him, and he almost laughed.

Athena had really become amazing after she broke up with Byron!

After Byron with Ruby, Gideon followed with a smirk, which annoyed Athena even more.

Athena thought Byron was an absolute idiot. She came here, trying to recover the company’s losses, yet he brought his new

sweetheart to cause trouble!

“Athena.” Gabe’s warm voice interrupted Athena’s thoughts as he called her.

She looked up, and Gabe’s light blue eyes beamed with gentle smiles.

like your name!” Gabe said seriously, making Athena laugh.

“Yeah? Thank you.”

“My name is Gabe! Remember it!”

Athena chuckled and gradually calmed down. She knew she still had a chance to meet Brad before the party was over.

“But you did sneak in here, right? Why?” Gabe asked.

“Yeah... Sorry about that. I came here hoping to meet someone, but I missed my chance earlier,” Athena admitted.

“Who? Let me introduce you!” Gabe proposed.

However, Athena was reluctant, knowing everything came with its price. She shook her head and tried to decline, saying,

“Mr. Chambers...”

“Just call me Gabe!”

Athena smiled helplessly. Just then, Brad’s bodyguard approached.

“Miss, my boss wants to see you.”

Athena was surprised but immediately nodded, “Okay, I’ll be there.”

Gabe became vigilant, “Your boss? Who is your boss?”

Athena whispered, “He works for the person I’m trying to meet. Gabe, thank you. I have to go. I’ll treat you to dinner some day!”

Athena followed the bodyguard and came to a luxury suite on the cruise.

Before Athena could say a word of greeting, Brad turned to glance at her, and asked straight to the point, “Which company are you from?”

“Imbe Group, Mr. Maxwell,” Athena replied.

After a moment’s pause, Brad frowned, “You play the harp very well. I am pleased to hear it. But Imbe Group is not professional enough. I won’t choose to cooperate with an unprofessional team, so...”

“Mr. Maxwell, I suppose you have seen quite a few proposals from top companies in the industry recently,” Athena spoke in

a gentle tone, devoid of any aggressiveness.

Listening to her, one would instinctively lower their guard.

Brad nodded, “That includes your company too. Imbe has really disappointed me.”

ely

apologize,” Athena explained, “However, Mr. Maxwell, I’m sure you haven’t had the chance to review our company’s complete proposal.”

## Chapter 9 The Bet

“Oh? You sound confident.” Brad became interested.

“If you have seen our company’s complete proposal, sir, even with concerns about the flaws in the data, I believe you will be impressed enough to work with us,” Athena stated firmly.

Brad, having years of experience running the company from a technologist to becoming the president, had seen countless projects.

He had never seen someone so confident with their work.

Brad approached Athena slowly, “If you say so, let’s make a bet. I will give you another chance, but if your company’s proposal fails to impress me, I will never cooperate with Imbe Group in the future.”

Athena felt the heavy pressure, but she thought, ‘Well, I’m

only responsible for this contract. As for the rest and whether you’re willing to cooperate with Imbe Group, that’s none of my business! I’m leaving anyway!’

She nodded, “Deal!”

A familiar voice echoed at the door. “I want to see Mr.

Athena immediately turned around, finding Byron standing



there.

“Sorry, sir, but Mr. Maxwell has company,” the guard said.

“Let him in,” Brad ordered. He then turned to Athena, saying, “Your boss is here. Let him be a witness to this bet!”

Athena forced a smile, feeling uneasy under Byron’s gaze.

“Mr. Maxwell,” Byron greeted Brad. Athena avoided eye contact but could still feel a burning gaze on her.

“Mr. Crawford,” Brad smiled, “Miss Newton here just made a bet with me.” He proceeded to explain the details of the bet to

Byron.

“Miss Newton is my secretary. She has always been able to make such decisions on my behalf.”

Byron stepped closer behind Athena, draping his suit jacket

over her shoulders. She felt the warmth enveloping her, as if she was wrapped in his breath.

Her body trembled, wanting to step away from him, but

Byron’s firm hold on her shoulders prevented it. “Isn’t that right, Miss Newton?” he said with a forceful tone.

“Miss Newton is your secretary?” Brad was surprised.

“Yes, she’s been working for me for several years,” Byron confirmed, still gripping Athena’s shoulders tightly, almost as if he wanted to crush them.

Athena cursed in her heart, ‘Bastard! Weren’t you enjoying the party with your sweetheart? What’s with this tantrum now?’

“Let’s get started, then,” Brad smiled, “Let’s see if you can impress me, Miss Newton.”

In the suite, there was a high-definition projection screen where Athena could demonstrate the slides she had

prepared.

She carefully focused on highlighting the aspects of the project that matched Brad’s real needs during her

presentation.

As Brad listened, his seriousness intensified, and he began raising more and more questions.

To his surprise, Athena was able to provide thorough and satisfying answers to all of them.

Byron sat nearby, observing Athena with a cold gaze. He didn’t know her capability in explaining the project could

Surpass even some of the directors in the sales department.

Until now, Byron had always seen Athena as fragile, relying on him for protection and guidance.

However, this presentation revealed a completely different side of her confident, knowledgeable, and capable.

...

He was wrong after all.

Finally, Athena concluded her presentation with a smile, maintaining her gentle tone. “That would be all, Mr. Maxwell. If we decide to cooperate, our companies can further discuss and optimize the details. The decision is now yours.”

Brad stood up, his gaze fixed on Athena. He sighed, “Honestly, I didn’t want you to win, but I must admit, this proposal is exactly what I’ve been looking for. Congratulations, Miss Newton. Send someone to my company tomorrow, and we’ll discuss the contract.”

Athena’s happiness was evident as she smiled, saying, “Thank you, Mr. Maxwell.”

Brad chuckled and turned to Byron, “You have a brilliant secretary, Mr. Crawford, very capable!”

Byron stood up as well, nodding, “Thank you, Mr. Maxwell. It’s getting late. Please excuse us.”

Brad nodded, his mind still on the inspirational proposal that Athena had just presented.

As Athena walked out, she spotted Gabe leaning against the wall.

“Gabe? Why are you here?” she asked in surprise.

“I’m waiting for you!” Gabe beamed and straightened up.

Athena took off the suit jacket and handed it back to Byron.

“I have already settled the contract matter. As for those who tampered with the data, I will hand them over to you tomorrow.”

Byron looked indifferent and didn’t take the jacket.

“My friend’s been waiting for me, so…” Athena took matters into her own hands, gently placing the jacket on Byron’s arm before stepping back. “Bye, Mr. Crawford.”

“Let’s go! You haven’t eaten, right? I have prepared a lot of food for you!” Gabe said, completely oblivious to the tension between Athena and Byron. He was simply delighted as he heard Athena say he was her friend.

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Thend replied, leaving with Gabe, who

draped a cashmere shawl over her shoulders.

“It’s getting chilly, put this on!”

“Thanks.”

Byron was left standing alone, watching Athena walk away

with another man. For a moment, he almost wanted to rush over and pull her back.

But...

There was a chill in Byron's eyes.

Athena was just a substitute he had dumped. She didn't deserve to make him lose control.

He had grown accustomed to her presence, mistaking her for Freya for too long.

His anger and jealousy at this moment were because of Freya,  
not Athena.

That must be it.

Yet, despite this realization, Athena's presence became more and more annoying to him.  
She made him feel angry every  
time he saw her.

Byron glanced at the jacket on his arm and tossed it into a  
nearby trash can.

Without looking back, he walked away in the opposite  
direction.

## Chapter 10 Come to My Room

The cruise ship was set to dock the following day, as the birthday party would last all night.

Gabe, being the host, couldn't stay with Athena for long. He arranged a guest room for her to rest.

Athena finally had a moment to herself and took the

opportunity to call Evie and report her work.

After that, she laid down on the bed, placing her hands gently. on her belly.

“Baby, I haven’t been able to take care of you much these days, but I promise I will once I’m done with this job.”

Just then, her phone rang. It was the exclusive ringtone she had set for Byron.

Athena got up immediately and answered the call out of habit.

Damn habit!

“Come to Room 1899,” Byron commanded, his tone chilly even over the phone.

“I have a headache,” Byron replied. He had a chronic issue of headaches, said to be an after-effect of the car accident.

“Is Miss Holland there? Please put her on the phone, and I can...” Athena started to suggest.

“Come here and teach her,” Byron interrupted. Athena couldn’t say anything else.

It was indeed part of her responsibilities to hand over her duties to Ruby.

She reassured herself, thinking that since Ruby was present, Byron wouldn't do anything too over the line.

“Byron, is Athena really dating Mr. Chambers? I heard many people talking about it tonight. She's quite impressive to find another wealthy man so soon after leaving you... Unlike me, so clumsy, I can't even help you feel comfortable...”

Byron had loosened his tie and undone two buttons of his shirt. He was half lying on the sofa, his face pale.

Listening to Ruby's words, he felt his headache worsening.

“Did I not tell you to leave her alone?” Byron asked coldly.

Ruby was taken aback. “Wha-... I didn't do anything, I... Did I say something wrong?”

“Don't try to play games with me, Ruby.” Byron opened his eyes and stared at her, giving a cold warning. “Or you can be replaced as well.”

Ruby shivered slightly, not daring to argue. “I understand...”

Byron closed his eyes again. Shortly after, the doorbell rang, and Ruby went to open the door.

She felt a surge of disgust upon seeing Athena, but in Byron's presence, she held back from causing any trouble.

“Athena, you're finally here!” Ruby greeted.

Ignoring her, Athena walked straight in. Observing Byron's pale face, she frowned.

"Come here," Byron demanded.

Athena approached him. "Didn't you bring your medication, Mr. Crawford?"

"No. Give me a massage," Byron's voice was weaker than Athena sighed, and Byron naturally rested his head on her lap. They appeared so intimate, sparking anger in Ruby's eyes.

"Miss Holland, Mr. Crawford has a chronic issue with headaches. You must always carry medicine with you when you're out with him," Athena said, massaging Byron's head with her slender fingers. "If the medicine doesn't work, you'll need to..."

"Shut up! I want some quiet," Byron interrupted irritably.

Athena remained patient, "Mr. Crawford, you asked me to come here and teach Miss Holland."

Byron opened his eyes, but Athena didn't look at him, continuing to gently massage his temples.



In the next instant, Byron grabbed Athena's wrist and sat up, pushing her down on the sofa.

"You just can't wait to finish this handover, huh? Found the next man already? The mine boss? Or Gabe? Or Brad?"

"Byron, stop it! What nonsense are you talking about? Let go!" Athena struggled.

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single, but he's much younger than you. And his family will surely arrange a business marriage for him! So I can't get married, but you're happy to become another man's sidepiece, huh?"

"Byron!" Athena was furious, feeling insulted and hurt by his accusations.

Byron grabbed her wrists and pinned them above her head, pressing his knees against her legs.

"That's how you see me?" Athena's eyes welled up with tears, her voice trembling. "I sold myself to you to save my grandma, but I'm not cheap!"

The word 'cheap' struck Byron like a hammer to the heart.

"I saw you receiving the mine boss's card. I also saw you and Gabe..."

In a fit of rage, Byron lowered his head and kissed Athena forcefully, as if punishing her.

The kiss was intense and rough. Athena felt overwhelmed and her mind going crazy.

Ruby was still in the room! Did Byron even realize what he was doing?!