

The Billionaire's Baby Bargain Chapter 10

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Chapter 10 Identity Crisis

Almara

She is still hesitating. "I don't know."

Arthur held back a growl. Why was she being so difficult? "Either you quit your job at the restaurant and work at the gallery or you don't work at all. Your choice."

Almara's eyes narrowed and it was like she had lit a fire inside of him. He wouldn't admit it, but he wanted her to fight back. He wanted the challenge. She would lose, but then he could punish her. And oh did he want to punish her.

"Fine. I'll quit tomorrow morning. Now, are you going to take me home?" She asked and Arthur gave her his trademark smirk.

"You already are home."

The next morning, Arthur escorted me to the restaurant and then disappeared. I didn't even see where he went. It was like he just vanished into thin air.

I had to admit that I was disappointed. I didn't really want to face my boss by myself. I didn't like letting people down. I couldn't even give the courtesy of a two week notice.

I took a deep breath and began to walk toward the back of the restaurant to his office. Anxiety made my stomach twist and turn. A second later bile rose into my throat.

I took a quick detour to the bathroom and threw up everything that I had eaten for dinner last night. When I was finished, I dabbed a wet paper towel to my forehead. I hated confrontation and it most definitely hated me.

It didn't help the situation that the boss didn't particularly like me. I had never figured out why.

"Derek, could I talk to you for a minute?" I asked as soon as I reached his office. He was sitting behind his desk, watching something on his phone. He glanced up and sighed, setting his phone down.

"What are you doing here, Almara? Your shift doesn't start until tonight. And if you're here to try and get out of it, don't bother. You have to come in."

I grimaced. This was not going to go over well. "Actually, I was coming to tell you that I'm resigning. Effective immediately."

"Are you fucking kidding me? You can't be serious," he snarled and I flinched. Derek was known to have a temper and his girlfriends had come in with a couple of unexplained bruises in the past. Things could get ugly fast.

"I'm sorry, Derek. But I already have another job lined up at an art gallery. I have to take it. It's my dream," I said as calmly as possible.

Derek rose out of his chair and everything about him seemed threatening. The look in his eye, the way he carried himself, the way he stepped around his desk and stalked toward me.

"Your dream? You're nobody, Almara and you're going nowhere. You're going to be stuck in this town and at this job until the day you die," Derek growled, pushing me up against the wall. He raised his fist and I closed my eyes, waiting for the hit...

...but it never came. I slowly opened my eyes and watched in shock as Arthur twisted Derek's arm behind his back.

"If you're smart, you will submit," Arthur said and he wasn't even straining. Derek was struggling, but Arthur was immovable.

"Fuck you!" Derek spat and Arthur gave him a cold smile.

"Submit!" Arthur growled and broke his arm. Derek cried out and slumped down. Arthur released him and Derek showed his neck.

"I submit," Derek whimpered, cradling his broken arm. Arthur smoothed out his suit jacket and came to stand beside me.

"Are you okay?" he whispered, trailing his fingers down my cheek in a feather-soft touch.

"Yeah," I said breathily and it wasn't just from the display of violence either. Arthur's touch did something to me. But I slammed a mental shield down on those feelings. They couldn't exist.

Arthur nodded and turned back to Derek, who had reset his arm before it could heal badly.

"Do you know who I am?"

Derek looked at him, pain written all over his features. "Alpha Arthur," he choked out.

"That is correct. And the woman you just tried to assault is my fiance," he said and Derek's mouth dropped open. He closed it quickly but I could see the fear in his eyes. I didn't even have to look at the black cloud above his head to know that it was real.

"I'm sorry, Alpha. I didn't know. However, you can't just steal my employee. She's under contract," Derek said and I had to give him credit for his bravery. Or stupidity.

"She's not a real employee. She was only here to experience the common life to get more inspiration for her paintings. She's quitting. Or are you going to continue to question an alpha?" Arthur asked and took a menacing step forward. Derek shrank back and shook his head. Arthur smiled cruelly.

"That's what I thought. Oh, by the way, I'm reserving this entire restaurant for lunch. See to it that no one disturbs us."

And with that he wrapped an arm around my shoulder and ushered me out of the office. He led me to one of the booths and sat us down, snapping his fingers.

A waitress I wasn't too familiar with came and took our order. Arthur also demanded that the band start playing even though we were the only two in the restaurant.

"Don't you think that's a bit much?" I asked, uncomfortable with all the kowtowing that people were doing to us.

"No. And you had better get used to it. You're going to be the guest of honor at my family's banquet tonight. I'll officially be announcing our engagement there," Arthur told me and I just gaped at him. Why was this all happening so fast? Where were the brakes?

When our food arrived, so did Dana. She slid into the bench across from us and handed me a tablet. On it was my picture and a whole slew of information, written out like a resume, that wasn't true.

It said that I was attending the most prestigious art school in the world as a senior graduate student. It also said that I had a history of painting for exhibitions.

"What is this?" I demanded, handing the tablet back to Dana.

"It's your new identity. You can't be attached to Alpha Arthur the way you are now. Our pack would never accept you as their Luna," Dana explained, raising an eyebrow at Arthur. They were having some form of silent communication, but my head was spiraling.

"I'm just a hobby painter. I've never studied painting. And I've never been to an art school, much less one as fancy as that one. Nobody is going to believe this," I said, waving my hand at the tablet.

Arthur turned to face me and gripped my chin in his hand. He pulled my face toward his and stared deeply into my eyes.

"Almara, you have been to this school," he murmured and I could feel myself getting pulled in. Flashes of my days at school appeared in my mind. Being in the art room, laughing with my peers, painting. But none of this was real. I had never been that happy.

I wrenched myself out of his grip and put as much distance between us as I could. "Don't. Don't use your Alpha manipulation on me. I'm sorry, but if I have to lie in order to be worthy of you, this isn't going to work. That's not who I am."

Arthur stared at me for a beat, like he couldn't quite understand why he hadn't been able to control me. If I didn't know any better, I'd say that I had surprised him.

"Very well. I admire your tenacity. In that case, please pay me what you owe me immediately"

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