

## Chapter 8 I Am Adrian Bolton Himself

Cathy was confused. Didn't Arius leave the house just minutes ago? So, who is this?

While Cathy mulled over the thought, Abner was already stuffing his face with food as if his life depended on it. She looked at him quizzically.

"You..." she started, taking a seat across the table, and stared him straight in the face, "you're not Arius, are you?"

The question paused his actions momentarily. He lifted his greasy face and exclaimed through a mouthful of food, "I am!"

Cathy didn't buy that for one second. She folded her arms across her chest and leaned back against the chair. "Are you his twin brother? Younger? Older?"

Her memory couldn't have been wrong. Sure, it may have failed her on several occasions and even at the best of times, but she was certain that the boy in front of her did not have a temperament like Arius'.

Seeing as he was completely cornered, Abner had no choice but to bite the bullet and come clean. He pursed his lips in defeat. "Okay fine, my name is Abner. Arius is my older twin, and Adrian is my father."

Cathy let out an audible gasp. "You and Arius...are both Adrian's sons?"

Picking up the largest shrimp he could find on the plate, Abner took a big bite out of it and mumbled a "yes" between munches.

Questions flooded Cathy's mind as she sank deeper in thought. Nobody had told her about Adrian's twins prior to her marriage into the family. Not to mention... With the way Adrian looks, it's a miracle his two sons turned out so handsome and cute!

She glanced back at Abner, who was now licking sauce off his fingertips. "If you and Arius are twins, why do you pretend to be him?"

It all made so much sense now, why Arius would have a drastic shift in personality each time he went up to his room and came back down. It was as if there were two different people, and that was because there were!

Abner didn't answer, only lowering his head apologetically as he pretended to mess with the food on his plate. He had frightened her so badly that night, and he wouldn't know what to do if she were to find out.

A long silence hung in the air when the front door suddenly clicked open, followed by light footsteps walking in. Arius had just gotten back from his jog when he was met with awkward tension from the pair.

"Exposed?" he asked matter-of-factly, not looking the slightest bit surprised as he walked over to take a seat. He gracefully held up a pair of chopsticks and helped himself to the food, not before eyeing his brother. "Told you you wouldn't last long."

Abner rolled his eyes, gobbling up the remaining food on his plate and hurried back upstairs into his room.

Cathy frowned. "That's all he's eating?"

"Don't worry, your cooking is delicious. He's just shy because his identity's been exposed," Arius explained, "he may be a child, but he still has pride."

Aren't you also a child? she thought.

"Starting tomorrow, my brother and I will try calling you Mommy instead." Arius looked up at her with bright eyes, "Congratulations, you now have yourself two handsome and adorable sons. Marry one and get two free; a pretty good deal, if I may say."

There was a hint of sincerity behind his eyes as he smiled through his next words. "You've earned it."

Except, she wasn't exactly sure why he said that. Marrying Adrian Bolton was but a means to an end when she hit rock bottom. Her boyfriend and best friend had betrayed her, and she was Cinderella to a manipulative family who gaslighted her into doing their bidding at any chance they got. What other choice did she have to escape that hellhole, but to marry herself off?

Still... she never would've expected to be a mother of twins!

Setting the dirty dishes into the sink, Cathy decided she would have a heart-to-heart talk with Adrian later. If there was one thing she learned tonight, it was of her own immaturity, and that perhaps someone like her would not be a good fit for the role of a mother.

"Master Adrian is a little busy today. But I also understand that as newly wedded lovebirds, you just can't stand being apart from each other." The butler gave her a teasing smile. "I'll call him and tell him to come home right away!"

"Wait, that's not..." But the butler had already begun walking—almost skipping—away in good spirits. She watched him disappear down the hallway. Did he... misunderstand something?

Well, not that it'd matter soon anyway. She plopped herself onto the couch and put on some comedy films while waiting for Adrian's return. The movie was immersive, and soon Cathy was completely engrossed, laughing away all her problems. Oh, how she could just remain in this state of euphoria for eternity. Without pain... Without worrie—

The door swung open to reveal the man from this morning, snapping Cathy out of her reverie. He invited himself in without a word, and Cathy's heart sank when she realized who it was.

"Why are you here again?" she questioned him in her best assertive tone, trying to fight away her racing thoughts. Adrian would be back soon, so what is he doing here at this time? And why does he have the key to the door?

In contrast to the obvious panic on Cathy's face, the man was very calm as he unbuttoned his suit elegantly, all while keeping his intimidating gaze on her. "Then let me ask you this: Whose house do you think this is, and what are you doing here?"

Her frown deepened.

"This is Master Adrian's home, and I am his newly wedded wife. So, of course I'll be here." She returned his stern gaze. "What about you? Who are you?"

His suit jacket slid off with ease at the shrug of his shoulders, and the man hung it casually on the coat rack like he owned the place. Finally, he turned to her with an impassive face. "What a coincidence, I am Adrian Bolton himself."

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The room fell quiet instantly, but the same couldn't be said about her heartbeat drumming in her ears. If Cathy hadn't known before how loud silence could be, then she definitely did now. Eyes wide and mouth agape, she stared at this handsome man, who claimed himself to be Adrian, in shock.

He's Adrian? Impossible. She had seen him clearly just the other night, morphing into something so horrifying it could barely be considered human anymore, just like in the rumors.

Probably seeing through the woman's thoughts, Adrian approached the living room in just a few, graceful strides. "What you saw that night was Abner's prank."

That was Abner?

Her gaze is filled with awe now. In the morning, she had been too flustered to take a proper look at his face. But now, with him just a few feet apart, she could see his beautiful, defined features that looked like they had been personally handcrafted by God. It's no wonder Arius and Abner looked so handsome; they clearly got it from him.

"So..." There was a slight tremble in the woman's voice as she spoke, still recovering from the shock. "Did you not disfigure your face in a fire five years ago?"

It was widely rumored among the upper class of Ryzan that the third young master of the Bolton family suffered a fire disaster, after which he was horribly disfigured, and ever since became ruthless. There was even word on the street that he had tortured two of his fiancées to death.

But the cold and arrogant man standing before her now was unlike anything the rumors had described.

Seeing the woman gawking at him, his brows knitted into a small frown. "Abner said you prepared dinner for me?"

In fact, Adrian wasn't even supposed to be home this early. He would've been out for a business dinner tonight were it not for the two little rascals of the family who've completely disrupted his plans.

Arius had hacked into his computer and cancelled the dinner plans he had with his partner over an email under Adrian's name. On the other hand, Abner called up Adrian's old man and complained to him about how Adrian wasn't treating his new daughter-in-law right.

To make things worse, the butler decided to join in the tirade. Thus, he and the old man took turns nagging at Adrian, saying that his new wife had lovingly prepared a whole meal for him and that he should head home immediately.

So, here he was at home, albeit reluctantly. But the woman who was supposedly waiting for his return didn't even know he was her husband.

"Dinner?" Cathy was taken aback for a moment, then she got up and headed into the kitchen. "You haven't had anything to eat yet?"

Unfortunately, there were no more leftovers as it had all been fed to Abner by his brother. Opening the fridge, she quickly scanned through the ingredients in it before turning back to him. "Would you like some noodles?"

The man raised a brow. "Haven't you already prepared a meal for me?" he questioned, a hint of displeasure resonating through his voice.

Cathy bit her lip at the thought of how incompetent she must seem to him right now. Not wanting to waste another second, she swiftly grabbed all the ingredients she needed from the fridge and began cooking, all while trying to placate him, "I didn't know when you'll be back, and I didn't want you eating leftovers. So, I thought I'd make a separate serving for you."

She shifted her gaze from the stove to cast the man a smile, her hands never once stopping their skillful work in the pan. "You have a special place in my heart, after all."

The way she smiled, with both her eyes lighting up into the shape of crescent moons, was somehow extremely endearing to Adrian. His heart unwittingly skipped a beat.

Could this woman really be fated to be with his two kids? To be with him?

Her smile reminded him of Abner, bright and dazzling like the sun piercing through heaps of clouds on a gloomy day. It was slowly picking through his icy cold heart, even if he would never admit it.

Still, seeing her like this, the man could no longer bring himself to be hostile with her. He turned around without another word and returned to the couch, turning off the TV before diving into work on his phone.

In the kitchen, Cathy breathed out a sigh of relief. Crisis averted, she thought. From now on, she'd have to ensure Adrian's meals were included in her schedule and highlighted in red for emphasis.

A while later, a steaming bowl of egg noodles was ready to be served. "Master Adrian, dinner is ready."

Adrian did not respond immediately, leaving Cathy awkwardly waiting for a good five minutes before walking from his seat to the dining table.

Even while eating, his movements bore enough elegance to put even the most graceful ballerina to shame. Cathy had never seen such a mundane action of chewing be done with so much nobility that she couldn't help but stare.

"Enjoying the view?" A deep voice resonated through her ears, snapping her out of her trance. It continued speaking in a languid tone. "You can stare all you want, I don't mind."