

Chapter 20 The Scammer

In front of the crowd stood a young girl with golden hair casually flowing down, wearing a knee-length white chiffon dress and a long-sleeved jacket zipped up to the neck. Despite the casual attire, her face radiated a pure beauty that was impossible to ignore. A few young men nearby were eyeing her with interest.

It was Sylvia!

She actually dared to come?

Was she seeking her own downfall?

As Bella met her gaze, Sylvia smiled faintly, a clear challenge in her calm demeanor.

Bella's breath caught, and she clenched her teeth in silent fury.

Oblivious, Richard continued, "Aren't you happy to see her?"

Happy? More like furious. Bella could barely maintain her smile, forcing out a weak "Mm-hmm."

"I had almost given up hope, but she still came. It shows she still cares about us," Richard said cheerfully, squeezing Bella's hand. "Come on, didn't you have a lot to ask her? Let's go."

"Wait," Bella pulled Richard back, frowning slightly. "Richard, your father called me. He said your project isn't finished yet. He wants you to focus on that, not just play around."

Richard's face darkened instantly. Being the third son, he was already not highly regarded in his family, and his father was never satisfied with his efforts.

"Look, you've already danced with me. I've reserved a suite here for you. Why don't you go take care of your work first? Send it to your father once you're done and then come back," Bella said, holding onto him.

"But this project could take more than two hours," Richard glanced over in Sylvia's direction, "Today is your birthday, and it's rare for all three of us to meet..."

"Do you want to disappoint your father? He'll think I'm a bad influence on you," Bella said, lowering her eyes and speaking softly.

"Bella..."

"Go on. I'll make sure your Sylvia doesn't leave," Bella said, pouting slightly.

"She's not 'my' Sylvia; that's all in the past," Richard relented, trying to reassure her. "Fine, I'll take care of the work first and come back as soon as I'm done."

Bella immediately smiled, "Great, go ahead. I'll talk to Sylvia."

"Okay, ask her why she doesn't use her real name. Maybe there's a reason." Richard said, casting another glance at Sylvia before turning to leave.

As soon as he was gone, Bella called over a waiter, "Follow Richard. If he tries to leave the suite, stop him. Don't let him come back to the party."

She had plans for Sylvia.

"Yes, miss," the waiter obediently followed Richard out.

Watching Richard leave, Bella's gaze turned cold as she looked at Sylvia.

Sylvia stood where she was, surrounded by a few young men asking for her number.

What a flirt! She was like this at eighteen and still the same at twenty-one!

Bella walked over to her friend Maggie and said, "Maggie, do you see that girl?"

Men always notice pretty women first.

Maggie had already noticed Sylvia and said jealously, "I saw her. Richard brought her in. Is she your friend? She's so disrespectful to you, not even wearing proper attire. That jacket is so tacky."

Since Maggie was jealous of Sylvia, things would be easier.

Bella smirked and whispered, "I heard Richard might be pursuing her. I'm giving you a chance here. I've sent Richard away, and this woman... she doesn't even have an invitation to my party."

Maggie's eyes lit up, "You mean... but it's your birthday, I don't want to ruin it."

"Every party follows the same routine. A little drama can be entertaining," Bella smiled, encouraging her.

"Alright!" With Bella's approval, Maggie and her friends approached Sylvia.

Sylvia was at the buffet, enjoying the food, while a few rich young men hovered around her like flies.

"Hey, beautiful, why haven't we seen you around before? Which family are you from?"

"Hi, here's my card. My family..."

"..."

Sylvia wasn't interested in chatting with them. She picked up a delicate cake from a plate on the buffet table.

Suddenly, a sharp female voice interrupted, "Who is this lovely lady I've never seen before?"

The young men turned around at the sound.

Maggie, in a champagne-colored off-the-shoulder evening gown, walked over and stared at Sylvia challengingly.

Sylvia stood there lazily, not even bothering to look up.

Maggie stood in front of her, looking haughty. "I've met all of Bella's friends, but I've never seen you before. Sorry, can you show me your invitation?"

Sylvia shook her head and said calmly, "I don't have an invitation. Miss Bella's boyfriend, Mr. Richard, brought me in."

"Miss Bella's boyfriend?" Maggie sneered. "Now people don't even bother to do their homework before scamming for free food? Richard just danced the first dance with Bella; he's not her boyfriend. What nonsense are you spouting?"

"Scamming for free food?"

The nearby rich kids immediately changed their attitudes towards Sylvia. They thought she was from a similar background, but if she was just a gatecrasher, they didn't want to be associated with her.

Sylvia noticed their glances but remained unfazed. She calmly took a bite of her cake.

"Wow, you've got some nerve," Maggie said, "Still eating after being exposed?"

Sylvia finished her cake, put her hands in her coat pockets, and looked directly at Maggie. "And who are you to say I'm scamming for free food?"

"Still pretending?" Maggie scoffed. "Fine, you claim to be Bella's friend, let's go find Bella!"

Maggie grabbed Sylvia's hand and started pulling her away.

"I can walk myself," Sylvia said, shaking off Maggie's hand and following her with a composed stride.

A few rich kids followed them, and the commotion drew everyone's attention, causing more people to gather and follow Maggie toward the venue entrance.

Bella was standing near the entrance, holding a glass of champagne, chatting with someone, but she kept an eye on the situation.

"Bella!" Maggie called out.

Bella turned around, feigning surprise. "What's going on? Why are there so many people?"

Maggie pushed Sylvia into the bright light at the entrance, raising her voice, "Bella, this person claims to be your friend. Who is she?"

Bella held her champagne glass elegantly and looked at Sylvia with an unfamiliar expression. "Miss, I don't think we know each other, do we?"

The crowd immediately erupted in boos.

The rich kids who had been talking to Sylvia wished they could disappear.

"Got caught, huh?" Maggie said triumphantly.

Caught my ass! Sylvia thought, rolling her eyes with her hands still in her pockets.

"What happened?" Bella asked, pretending to be confused.

A friend quickly explained, "Bella, this person sneaked into Summer Hotel and crashed your birthday party, trying to freeload. It's hilarious!"

"Yeah, and she kept eating even after we exposed her. Doesn't she have any shame?" Maggie added mockingly.

"How did someone like this even get into Summer Hotel?"

"Totally ruins the mood. I bet she touched all the food. I'm not eating any of it now."

Everyone started chiming in.

Sylvia stood at the center of the gossip, her face calm, quietly watching Bella's performance.

Bella waited until everyone had said enough, then she apologized, "Alright, alright, today is my birthday party. I'm sorry for letting everyone down. Waiters, please replace all the food with fresh ones."

"What about this scammer?" Maggie asked, "How should we deal with her?"