

C 711

Billionaire's Regret: Finding Her

“Oh my god, did we walk in at the wrong time?” Caitlin gasped.

“Let’s go!” Sebastian quickly pulled her toward the door.

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Molly and Simon sprang apart at the sound of voices. Realizing it was her brother and sister-in-law, Molly’s face turned crimson. “Hey, wait! Don’t go!”

They stopped and turned back. Simon scratched his head awkwardly, trying to smile. “Sorry, when did you get here?”

“Just now. Looks like we interrupted something,” Sebastian teased with a grin.

“No, no, you’re right on time. Molly’s already packed.”

Simon invited them inside, and as Caitlin walked in, she glanced around at the cozy room and couldn't help smiling. "This looks familiar somehow."

Sebastian chuckled. "Doesn't it? The last time my sister was hospitalized, she turned her ward into a home. Looks like it's the same this time. You two might as well just get married right here in the hospital."

His joke made both Molly and Simon blush.

Molly sat on the edge of the bed, cheeks flushed pink. "That's not a bad idea. Seb's suggestion sounds perfect. Why not today?"

"What? No way! That's too sudden!"

Simon nearly choked. He was still in his white doctor's coat, technically on duty, and had no idea how to respond.

"Haha, relax," Caitlin said, laughing. "They're teasing you."

Simon exhaled in relief. He was ready to marry Molly, but he didn't want their wedding to be rushed or plain. He wanted to give her something memorable and meaningful.

Molly took Caitlin's hand, her eyes full of curiosity. "I heard you two just got back from Country D. Everything go smoothly?"

"More or less. A few close calls, but we made it back fine."

Caitlin glanced at the luggage neatly arranged by the table. "So, all packed up? If you're ready, we can go now."

"All set. I can't wait to get out of here. If I stay any longer, I'll start growing mold."

She had been hospitalized twice this year already and was thoroughly sick of it. "I hope I don't have to see another hospital for at least ten years."

Caitlin laughed. "You sure? What about when you and Simon get married and have a baby? You'll have to

come to the hospital then."

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“Oh right!” Molly’s eyes lit up as she said it with complete seriousness. “I should hurry up and make that happen. I want to give Simon a baby as soon as possible.”

Simon nearly choked again. He coughed, clearly flustered, and changed the topic. “Since you’re finally back, why don’t you all come to my place tonight? My mom and sister are gone, so it’s just me at home. I’ll cook for everyone.”

“Sounds great!”

They left the ward together, the men carrying the bags behind them.

Walking ahead, Molly linked her arm through Caitlin’s and whispered conspiratorially, “I’ve decided. Starting tonight, I’m moving into Simon’s place. I’m going to live with him.”

Caitlin gave her a sideways look. “Don’t tell me you two still haven’t... you know.”

“Nope. Simon’s too proper. He insists we wait until after the wedding. But I’m done waiting. I’m going to take the initiative tonight. There are so many young nurses and pretty doctors around him every day, I’m losing my sense of security.”

Caitlin burst out laughing. “Then I wish you good luck. May you succeed gloriously.”

“I will!” Molly clenched her fist with determination, then shot Caitlin a mischievous look. “You and the others better help me tonight.”

“Understood.”

After picking Molly up, Simon signed her discharge papers and drove her back to the Vanderbilt residence.

Everyone at the Vanderbilt family home already knew Molly was coming back. Eliza and Raymond were waiting at the door. [Read full story at](#)

“She’s back!”

Hazel spotted the car first and shouted.

“Molly’s home!”

Eliza rushed forward, smiling with joy. “Molly...”

“Mom!”

Molly’s eyes filled with tears of happiness. She ran into her mother’s arms, hugging her tightly.

Eliza hugged her back, crying tears of relief. When they finally let go, she whispered, “We told your grandmother you and Simon went on a trip abroad. Don’t say anything to give it away.”

“Got it, Mom.”

“Grandma! I missed you so much!”

Molly ran to the elderly woman and threw her arms around her. It was a heartfelt reunion.

“I missed you too, dear. Did you have fun overseas?”

“So much fun! It was amazing!”

Molly helped her grandmother sit down, chatting animatedly.

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Her grandmother studied her for a moment. “That’s strange. People usually come back from traveling abroad with a tan. How come you look even fairer?”

“Ah, Grandma, that’s because I used a ton of sunscreen! I hardly went out during the day. It was so hot, I only went sightseeing at night, so I didn’t get tanned. Want to hear about all the places I visited?”

Molly’s made-up story flowed smoothly, full of cheerful detail. She spoke as if she really had gone abroad, and her grandmother listened with rapt attention.

Behind them, Caitlin, Sebastian, and Simon entered the house, hearing Molly’s lively “travel story.” She made it sound so real that even they almost believed it.

When she finished, Simon smoothly stepped in and handed the old lady a wrapped gift. “This is a little something Molly brought back for you.”

“Oh my, you even thought to bring me a gift!”

It was a beautiful silk scarf in her favorite color. The old woman beamed with delight.

Molly gave Simon a look of admiration. Trust him to think ahead. He’d prepared thoughtful gifts for everyone, while she’d completely forgotten about that part.

Simon had indeed planned carefully. He’d bought something for Eliza and the other ladies too, and even small souvenirs for the men.

To celebrate Molly and Simon's return, the Vanderbilt family prepared a lavish lunch.

After the meal, Simon had to return to the hospital for his shift. He said his goodbyes and reminded everyone about the dinner gathering at his house that night.

Originally, Caitlin and Sebastian had planned to meet an ancient manuscript restorer that afternoon. But just as they were about to leave, Sebastian received an urgent call from the corporate office.

Before heading off, he scribbled an address and a name on a note and handed it to Caitlin. "I need to go back to the company. You go ahead and meet him first. I'll join you later so we can discuss everything together."

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Following the address and name Sebastian had given her, Caitlin arrived at the home of his friend who specialized in ancient manuscript restoration. Read complete version only at [find\(n\)ovel.net](http://find(n)ovel.net)

She knocked on the door and waited for a moment before hearing a gruff voice from inside. "Who is it?"

“Excuse me, is this Mr. Hawthorne’s residence?”

The door creaked open to reveal a man in his sixties. His hair was streaked with gray, his glasses slightly crooked, and he was dressed in a black robe that gave him a strange, eccentric air.

“You’re Sebastian’s wife?” he asked, squinting at her.

“Uh, yes.”

“Not the brightest-looking one,” Reginald muttered under his breath before turning around and walking back inside.

Caitlin stood there speechless. Zinnia, who had accompanied her, couldn’t hold back her irritation. “What’s wrong with this old man? Did he just call you not too smart? What kind of attitude is that? I’m going to tell him off!”

“Forget it,” Caitlin said, stopping her.

She knew from Sebastian that Reginald was a recluse who rarely interacted with the outside world. He spent his life buried in ancient texts, but his skills were exceptional. Genius and eccentricity often came hand in hand, and Caitlin could live with that.

They stepped into Reginald's home, which looked more like a library than a residence. Shelves were packed with antique books and manuscripts, and the table was covered with old scrolls and parchment, some mid-restoration.

As Caitlin glanced around, Reginald returned to his desk and asked, "So, what do you want this old man to help you with?"

"My husband and I found some ancient writing we can't decipher."

"What kind of writing? Show me."

Caitlin handed him the copy she had made of the symbols that appeared on the map.

Reginald studied the sheet carefully, his brows furrowing. Without saying a word, he carried it to his study desk and began examining it under the light, flipping through his reference materials.

Caitlin waited quietly by his side. After a while, he finally looked up. "These symbols resemble the lost script of Atlantis."

Caitlin's eyes lit up. "That's exactly what they are! You know about the Atlantis script?"

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Reginald nodded. "I've studied a few lost languages in my time. I came across some mentions of Atlantis in old literature."

"Do you know where this civilization was located?"

"That I don't. What I know is that the kingdom once flourished, then vanished completely for reasons no one has ever been able to confirm. But these characters you've brought—they're fascinating. I even took notes on them years ago when I did some related research."

His eyes gleamed with interest. He had always been obsessed with ancient civilizations. In his younger days, he'd even gone on expeditions searching for traces of Atlantis, though he'd found nothing substantial.

"To be honest," Caitlin said. "Sebastian and I found a map of Atlantis. These symbols were copied directly from it. If you can translate them, we might be able to locate the ruins."

"You have a map?" Reginald's eyes widened in disbelief, then filled with excitement.

Yes."

"Well then! Once I decipher these, we'll be one step closer to finding Atlantis. When you go, you must take me along. I need to see it for myself."

Amused by his enthusiasm, Caitlin smiled. "Of course."

Later that afternoon, Sebastian finished his business at the company and drove over to meet her.

In the study, he found Caitlin sitting beside Reginald, who was still buried in his notes. "Reginald!"

The old man looked up, his expression instantly turning stern. "You've got some nerve showing up here, boy!"

"Reginald's comparing notes right now," Caitlin explained quickly. "It might take a while before he can translate anything."

Reginald grumbled without looking up. "Give me time. It's not instant work. I can't even remember where I put my old research notes."

He had taken detailed notes years ago, but time had buried them somewhere among his piles of books. For now, he could only rely on memory until he found the records again.

"That's fine," Sebastian said. "We'll wait for your results. Contact us when you've made progress."

He reached for Caitlin's hand. "Let's go home."

"Alright, alright," Reginald said absently, already lost again in his study of the symbols. "I'll call when I've got

it.”

Since it was still early in the afternoon, Caitlin and Sebastian decided to stop by Club No. 8 to see Benjamin.

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They went to a private room they had reserved ahead of time. Inside, Yates and Nolan were already there, while Benjamin slouched on the couch, an empty bottle clutched in his arms.

He looked like a man who had given up on life.

When he heard Sebastian had arrived, he stirred, tossing aside the bottle and stumbling to his feet.

“You’re finally back...”

The stench of alcohol hit them immediately. He swayed toward Sebastian but veered slightly and almost fell into Caitlin instead.

Sebastian caught him and pushed him gently back onto the sofa. “Look at you. What the hell have you turned yourself into?”

“What do you mean what? I’m fine,” Benjamin slurred, though his eyes were dull and empty. His voice carried the kind of exhaustion that came from heartbreak and hopelessness.

“Ben, stop it,” Sebastian said sharply.

Benjamin just gave a bitter laugh. “Stop what? For what? What’s the point of trying? Who am I doing *it* for?”

He still hadn’t recovered from Wendy’s rejection. Every time he thought of it, it tore at him all over again.

Caitlin couldn’t bear to see him like that. “Benjamin, I heard you cut ties with your mother. What happened?”

“What do you think happened?” His tone was bitter. “She wouldn’t let me be with Wendy. If it weren’t for her, Wendy wouldn’t have left me.”

Yates sighed. “He really did it. He’s been holed up here for days now, won’t talk to anyone, just drinks himself half to death.”

Caitlin frowned, wondering what to do, but Sebastian spoke first. “If that’s how it is, I’ll put you in the training camp. Work yourself to the bone, and you’ll forget all this pain.”

“Training? You think that’ll make me forget?” Benjamin asked skeptically.

He would soon find out that in the high-intensity regimen Sebastian had in mind, there would be no time left to think of heartbreak-only exhaustion.

“Fine. I’ll try it,” Benjamin muttered.

He wanted something that could numb him completely. Alcohol wasn’t working anymore. It dulled the pain for a moment, but when he sobered up, it only hurt worse.

“Good,” Sebastian said. “You need a change of environment. It’s time you left New York for a while.”

“I agree,” Caitlin added. “The sooner, the better.”

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That afternoon, everyone gathered together to chat and, in the process, tried to talk some sense into Benjamin. NEW NOVEL CHAPTERS ARE PUBLISHED ON find—novel.net

During the conversation, Nolan brought up his sister Jillian and made a point to thank Caitlin for helping her find a job.

“I really have to thank you, Caitlin. You gave my sister such an amazing opportunity. She’s so motivated now, it’s like she’s finally found her purpose. Every time she calls me, she’s full of energy and excitement.”

Caitlin smiled. “It’s nothing worth mentioning. I just thought Jillian has real talent, and she shouldn’t be overlooked. Fragrance & Dye Studio is running smoothly now, and with her there, I feel completely at ease.”

Nolan nodded enthusiastically. “Yeah, ever since the domestic and international accounts for Fragrance & Dye Studio went live, my sister’s practically become an influencer. My parents are thrilled, watching everyone online praise her work. They keep saying their daughter’s finally made something of herself.”

He spoke from the heart. “They also told me I have to invite you and Sebastian over to our place. They want to thank you in person.”

“No need for that,” Caitlin said.

“We insist,” Nolan replied. “You solved a huge problem for us. Now my sister not only has a career, but also a boyfriend. You’re basically her matchmaker!”

Nolan already knew about Jillian’s new relationship, and he was sincerely grateful. Caitlin laughed lightly. “I didn’t really do much. It was fate that brought them together.”

At that word—fate—Benjamin suddenly grew quiet, his eyes dimming. Then he laughed bitterly.

“Don’t talk to me about fate. I don’t believe in that crap anymore. It’s all lies.”

He was still drunk, the bitterness in his voice impossible to miss.

Caitlin sighed. “Alright, get Benjamin upstairs to rest. We should all head out.”

Nolan and the others helped Benjamin to his room while Caitlin and Sebastian left Club No. S. They went to the Vanderbilt house to pick up Molly, then drove together to visit the Smith family.

They brought along several gifts, and when they arrived at LL Villa, Simon—who had come home early from work—answered the door wearing an apron.

Seeing the gifts, he smiled. “You really didn’t have to bring anything. You’re my guests, not clients.”

“Can’t come empty-handed,” Sebastian said with a grin, holding up the wine he brought.

Caitlin looked Simon up and down. “I’ve seen you in a white coat plenty of times, but never an apron. **Gotta** say, it suits you. Molly’s a lucky woman.”

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Molly beamed proudly, slipping her arm around Simon’s. “Of course he’s good. He’s a master with a scalpel and a kitchen knife.”

Simon chuckled. “Come in, everyone. Dinner’s almost ready. I hope you don’t mind a home-cooked meal.”

He ushered them into the living room, then went back to the kitchen to finish up. “It’ll just be a few more minutes. Make yourselves comfortable.”

Molly lasted all of two minutes before getting up. “I’m going to supervise. Can’t let Dr. Smith slack off!” she teased as she headed toward the kitchen.

Inside, Simon was focused on the stove, sleeves rolled up, preparing an impressive spread of ingredients. His white shirt was crisp, his movements smooth and precise. To Molly, watching him cook was like watching him perform surgery—every cut and motion meticulous.

“Need any help?” she asked, peeking from behind his shoulder.

“No, just relax,” he said firmly.

Simon never let her lift a finger. Even after they married, he planned to spoil her like a princess.

Molly grinned mischievously and slipped her arms around his waist, pressing her cheek against his back.

Simon froze mid-motion, a knife in hand. “Hey, how am I supposed to cook like this?”

“Keep cooking,” she said with a playful giggle. “I’m not in your way.”

She clung to him like a koala, making it impossible for him to move.

Finally, Simon set down the knife, turned around in her embrace, and looked down at her flushed face. He knew her well enough to understand that if he didn't give her what she wanted, she'd just keep pestering him.

So he bent his head and kissed her.

The kiss deepened until Molly was breathless, and when he finally pulled back, her face was red as a rose.

"Alright, be good," Simon murmured. "Go wait with the others. Dinner's almost ready."

"Fine," she said sweetly. "But honestly, I'd rather eat you, Smith."

She walked out grinning, leaving Simon shaking his head with a helpless smile.

After a while, they heard Simon's voice call from the dining room. "Everyone, dinner's ready! Wash your hands and come eat."

"The doctor has spoken! Wash up first!" Molly announced, hopping to her feet.

"Looks like we're in for a treat tonight," Sebastian said, heading toward the sink with Caitlin.

When they gathered at the table, Simon had set up a hotpot with a barbecue grill in the middle. Plates of meat, vegetables, and sauces surrounded it, filling the air with delicious aromas.

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“Sorry,” Simon said, placing the dipping sauces down. “It’s just barbecue tonight. It’s the easiest to make.”

“It’s perfect,” Caitlin said, smiling. “We’ve all been craving this anyway.”

“Exactly!” Molly added. “I told him this is what I wanted first thing after getting out of the hospital. I’ve been dreaming of skewers and cold beer!”

“No alcohol. No spicy food,” Simon cut in firmly.

“What? No alcohol, no spice? Then what’s the point?” she pouted.

“You listened to the doctors in the hospital. Now you listen to me,” he replied evenly.

“So I’m just supposed to listen to you all the time, huh?”

She grumbled, but her tone was affectionate. Deep down, she loved the way Simon took charge—it made her feel cared for and protected.

Sebastian laughed. “He’s right. Listening to the doctor is always the safe bet.”

“Of course he’s right,” Molly said quickly, leaning her head on Simon’s shoulder. “I’m his most obedient patient.”

Caitlin laughed at their closeness. “Are we here for barbecue, or just to watch the two of you feed each other?”

Molly laughed so hard she clutched her side. “You two fed me enough dog food before. Now it’s payback time! Eat up, don’t be shy.”

Sebastian raised his glass. “Cheers to that! Let’s drink.”

He hadn’t forgotten Caitlin’s plan—to get Simon drunk tonight, for Molly’s sake.

They ate, laughed, and drank, the room full of warmth. The conversation eventually turned to Simon’s mother, Rebecca, and his sister, Wendy.

Simon explained that he had personally taken them to stay with a friend after things settled down and had only returned once they were safe.

When Wendy's name came up, everyone naturally thought of Benjamin again.

"It's a shame about those two," Nolan said. "Benjamin waited for her at Rainbow Park until nearly midnight. He passed out from exhaustion and had to be rushed to the hospital."

Simon sighed. "Actually, my sister did go looking for him that night. But she must have gone late. She didn't wake anyone, so I only found out in the morning when I saw her wet footprints by the door. I think she didn't find him, or she wouldn't have cried herself to sleep like that."

Caitlin's heart ached. "So they just missed each other."

Now everything made sense—the misunderstanding, the timing, the pain on both sides. But knowing Wendy had gone to find Benjamin gave Caitlin hope.

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She smiled slightly, already forming a plan in her mind. She knew exactly how to fix this.

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Dinner went perfectly well. Simon was attentive, grilling the meat for everyone, while Molly ate **with** boundless appetite.

Sebastian and Simon drank together, matching each other glass for glass until both began to feel lightheaded.

“I can’t drink anymore,” Simon said, blinking hard as his vision started to blur. He couldn’t afford to get too drunk. If anything urgent happened, he needed to be sober enough to handle it.

“Same here,” Sebastian agreed, setting down his glass. His arm had only recently healed, and he knew better than to push his limits.

The two men had reached their limit—just drunk enough to loosen up but not so much that they’d regret it later.

“Alright,” Caitlin said, smiling. “We’ve all had plenty. Let’s call it a night.”

She turned to Molly. “What about you? Coming back with us?”

Molly shook her head quickly, already forming her excuse. “No, I’ll stay and take care of Simon. He drank too much. Someone needs to make sure he’s alright. You guys go ahead, I’ll walk you out.”

Caitlin and Molly exchanged a knowing look but said nothing. Molly saw them to the door, smiling sweetly. “Drive safe!”

Once the door closed behind them, she turned back toward the house, a small triumphant smile curling at her lips.

When she returned to the dining area, Simon was gathering up the dishes. She rushed forward and caught his hand. “Leave those. You’re drunk, you need to rest.”

She tugged him gently toward the stairs. “Come on, I’m taking you to bed.”

With his arm draped over her shoulders, Simon followed her, smiling faintly. “You sure you shouldn’t go home?”

“Of course I’m sure. I’m a grown woman. I can stay wherever I want.”

Molly had made up her mind tonight. She wasn't leaving.

Once they reached the bedroom, she helped him sit on the bed. "You okay?" she asked softly.

"I'm fine..." he murmured.

"Good. Then you rest a bit while I take a shower. Wait for me."

She grabbed her bag—packed in advance with a set of lacy nightwear—and practically skipped into the bathroom. After a long, hot shower that left her smelling like **roses**, she came out, ready to make her move.

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Only to find Simon fast asleep.

"Simon..."

She called his name a few times, but he didn't stir. The rightful source is [find•novel.net](http://find-novel.net)

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Her shoulders slumped. Wasn't alcohol supposed to make people more enthusiastic? How could he fall asleep now of all times?

She sighed. Being with a man this proper was.... well, frustrating.

Still, she couldn't stay mad. She crawled under the blanket beside him and nestled into his arms. Whether or not anything happened, she was going to sleep with him in her arms tonight. One step at a time.

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Across town, Sebastian didn't take Caitlin back to the Vanderbilt house. Instead, he drove her to their seaside villa.

The moment they stepped through the door, he swept her off her feet and carried her upstairs.

"Hey! Your arm's not completely healed yet. Put me down!" Caitlin protested, hitting his shoulder lightly.

“It’s healed enough,” he said with a smirk. “Doesn’t stop me from carrying my wife.”

He carried her straight into the bathroom, kicked the door closed behind them, and said, “Let’s take a shower.”

But Sebastian’s idea of a “simple shower” turned out to be anything but simple.

Soon, the frosted glass was fogged with steam, their silhouettes entwined within it.

By the time he wrapped her in a towel and carried her back to bed, Caitlin was half-asleep from exhaustion. He dried her hair carefully before lying down beside her, drawing her into his arms.

They drifted off together, heartbeats steady and close.

When Caitlin woke up the next morning, sunlight filtered softly through the curtains. Sebastian was already awake, watching her.

“You’ve been up long?” she asked sleepily.

“Just a little while,” he murmured, propped on one elbow, gazing down at her.

Her long hair spread across the white pillow like waves of silk, her skin glowing against the soft light. She looked like a painting—beautiful, serene, and real.

Caitlin smiled faintly. “I wonder how things went with Molly and Simon last night. You think she got what she

wanted?”

Sebastian chuckled. “Hard to say. Knowing Simon, my guess is your sister was enthusiastic, and he was...

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disciplined. He wouldn't do anything reckless while **she's still** recovering.”

“Hopefully, they're even closer now,” Caitlin said.

Sebastian's **lips** curved. “I'd like us to be closer too.”

Before she could reply, he leaned in and kissed her deeply.

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Their fingers intertwined, and the kiss grew more intense, carrying all the heat and tenderness of his love.

He loved her—completely, desperately, down to the bone.

Caitlin melted under his touch, her heart pounding as his strength and warmth surrounded her.

Meanwhile, at LL Villa, morning light streamed through the curtains.

Simon woke first, his mind clearing slowly. He remembered lying down to rest for a moment—and then nothing.

He turned his head and froze. Molly was curled up against him, still asleep, her face relaxed and peaceful in his arms.

Relief washed over him. She was still there.

Then came the guilt. She had gone to take a shower, told him to wait, and he had just fallen asleep. She must have been so disappointed.

Feeling a pang in his chest, Simon bent his head and gently kissed her cheek.

Molly stirred, her eyelashes fluttering. She blinked sleepily up at him, catching his gaze.

For a long moment, neither spoke. The air between them grew thick and warm.

“Did you just kiss me?” she asked, cheeks pink.

“I... sorry,” he said softly. “I fell asleep last night.”

“It’s fine. You’re awake now, aren’t you?”

Her tone was teasing, but her meaning was clear. She’d been waiting all night, and now that he was awake...

“I’m awake,” Simon said, smiling faintly. “Should we get up? I’ll make you breakfast.”

“I’m not hungry for breakfast,” she said, her voice low.

He looked amused. “Then what are you hungry for?”

“You know,” she said, meeting his eyes with a heated gaze.

Her meaning couldn't have been more obvious. In her head, she **was** screaming, **If you keep** pretending not **to** get it, I'll start thinking something's wrong with you!

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Of course Simon understood. But he was a doctor, and she was still recovering. He couldn't ignore that.

“I know what you want,” he said gently. “But you're **still** healing. You need to rest.”

“I'm already fine,” Molly pouted, biting her lip. Couldn't he see how beautiful she looked? What was she even wearing this for?

Simon's restraint was starting to crumble. Her soft body pressed against him, her scent filling the air—it was

torture.

His voice grew husky. “You do know what happens when you tease a man like this in the morning, don't you?”

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“I know. But I’m not afraid.”

She rose on her toes and brushed her lips lightly against his.

“You’re asking for this.”

Simon had once planned to wait until their wedding night, to save that first time for something perfect and sacred. But now, with her looking at him like that, he knew he couldn’t wait any longer.

“That’s right.” Molly smiled, her eyes bright and steady. “So tell me—do you love me or not?”

She had prepared so much for this moment. There was no turning back now. In her heart, there was only one thought—to be his woman.

“I love you, Molly.”

His voice was low, unwavering. How much he loved her, perhaps only he himself truly knew. From the first indifferent encounter, to the storms they had endured together, he had fallen for her completely, hopelessly, and beyond redemption.

All he wanted in this life was to be with her, to protect her from every hurt in the world.

His words burned through her like fire. Molly’s heart raced so fast she could barely breathe. In the next instant, he pulled her close, and their lips met in a long, fervent kiss, one that carried all the feelings they had kept locked away for too long.

At last, Molly felt his love, raw and undeniable. Her chest swelled with joy and heat, so much that she wanted to laugh and cry at the same time.

Men had pursued her before, but none had ever moved her. With people she didn’t love, even a touch felt unbearable.

But Simon was different. From the moment she met him, she had been lost.

She had chased him shamelessly, fearlessly, until she finally won him. Looking back now, she felt both proud and overwhelmed by how far she had come.

Their first taste of love was clumsy and intense. Simon was gentle, careful, as though she might break under

his touch.

Molly gave herself completely, melting into his tenderness, letting him in, body and soul. And in that moment, she crossed the line from girl to woman.

She had no regrets. She loved Simon and wanted to spend the rest of her life by his side.

At the seaside villa, Caitlin and Sebastian had shared a night of warmth and passion.

The next morning, after breakfast—one Sebastian had cooked himself—the butler came to report that an elderly man claiming to be Sebastian's friend was waiting for them in the manor's sitting room.

"It must be Reginald."

They exchanged a look and drove straight back to Vanderbilt Manor.

When they entered, Lucy was already waiting. On the sofa sat Reginald, disheveled and pale, his face drawn with exhaustion.

“Reginald.”

They hurried forward. The old man lifted his head weakly, his voice rasping. “You’re finally here...”

“Did you finish the translation?” Caitlin asked anxiously.

Reginald nodded and shakily pulled a stack of papers from his coat. He handed them to her. The pages were stained with fresh blood, every ancient symbol carefully annotated in his handwriting.

“Reginald, what happened-”

“Don’t interrupt me!” he gasped, though his eyes still gleamed with excitement. “I’ve figured it out... It’s not the Shard of Life. It’s Seradulf. That was the name of Atlantis’s king. The Codex- it carries his message.”

He spoke haltingly, his breath uneven, but his tone burned with discovery.

“To preserve the kingdom’s glory, the High Priest performed a forbidden ritual and angered the gods. The skies changed, the earth quaked, and the seas turned violent. The fall of Atlantis was inevitable.

General Yarbrough fled with Seradulf’s son, Thalren, to another continent. If the descendants of the Yuncey bloodline can read The Codex, it means they have inherited the knowledge of the royal garments. Once a Yuncey heir dons the royal attire and reaches the location marked on the map,

the spirit of Atlantis will answer them. The gateway to the royal treasury will reveal itself, and within lies enough wealth to rebuild the kingdom from its ashes..."

"Reginald, stop! Please!" Caitlin cried, rushing to steady him. "Call an ambulance, now!"

"It's... no use," the old man whispered, a faint smile trembling on his lips as blood welled at the corner of his mouth. "To have... deciphered The Codex... I die content... my dear wife..."

His voice faded, and his hand slipped from hers.

The room went silent.

Lucy gasped, her voice shaking. "Madam... I don't know what happened. He arrived early this morning, asking for you. We didn't notice anything strange outside, so we brought him in. Then suddenly—this..."

Sebastian's face darkened, fury tightening every muscle in his jaw. "Whoever did this will pay."

Caitlin's chest ached. Reginald had been eccentric, but kind—and now he was gone, because of something that began with her.

She looked down at the bloodstained papers in her hands, her heart twisting painfully.

Sebastian placed a hand on her shoulder. "I'll take care of this. You need to stay calm and think about our next

move."

Caitlin stood still for a long moment. Her gaze drifted over the blurred red ink and ancient words, her mind turning. Then, slowly, her eyes hardened with resolve.

"I want to see Cecilia," she said at last.

Now that she knew the truth hidden in The Codex, she held the power in her hands. It was time to face the woman at the center of it all.

Since Cecilia's true identity had been exposed, Caitlin had kept her under private guard.

Servants brought her meals three times a day, and she never resisted, never caused trouble. She seemed to be waiting quietly, as if she had known this moment would come. Original content can be found at Find~Novel.net

The sharp sound of heels echoed down the corridor. Cecilia set aside her brush and straightened, her expression calm.

Later than expected, but finally, she had come.

Caitlin stopped before the door and signaled for the guard to open it.

When the door swung open, Caitlin stepped inside.

Her gaze lingered on the woman who so eerily resembled her mother. “Cecilia,” she said evenly, “are you comfortable here?”

“Quite comfortable,” Cecilia replied, her tone calm. “You’re here because you’ve deciphered the map, haven’t you? When do we leave?”

“I did spend some effort, but yes—I found the map, and I translated the text in The Codex.”

Caitlin pulled out the bloodstained pages and unfolded them. “This is what everyone has been searching for -the true story of Atlantis.”

“Let me see it.”

Cecilia reached out, but Caitlin drew the papers back, turning away slightly.

“Even with all this information,” she said slowly, “I’ve changed my mind.”

Cecilia's eyes narrowed. "What do you mean?"

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"My meaning is simple. I don't want to search for Atlantis anymore."

Caitlin's calm statement made Cecilia freeze in disbelief. "What? Why? Why now? We already agreed!"

"I don't need it," Caitlin replied quietly. "My brother's cured. There's no reason to keep risking lives."

Her voice was steady, but Cecilia's composure shattered. "Caitlin, you can't just back out! You gave your word!"

She tried to reason with her, growing desperate. "Even if you don't want to take the risk, what about your mother? Don't you want to find her?"

"I do," Caitlin said evenly. "But I'll find her on my own. I don't need you."

Cecilia stared at her, stunned. It couldn't end like this. Not when she was so close.

She laughed bitterly. “Ha... Caitlin, you think you’re clever, but without me, you’ll never find

your

mother.”

Caitlin’s lips curved in a faint, cold smile. “Who said I have to?”

“You... you mean you’re giving up?”

“That’s right.”

“I’ve thought it through,” Caitlin said, her tone calm but resolute. “There’s no point in chasing something that has no answer. Every tragedy since I came back home started because of this search for my mother. If I had go from the beginning, maybe so many people wouldn’t have died. I won’t keep dragging innocent lives into this. I’m letting go.”

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Her words were simple, but each one landed with the weight of conviction.

“No, no! Caitlin, you can’t just abandon her like that. That’s unfilial!” Cecilia’s voice trembled, her thoughts unraveling.

“Don’t try to guilt-trip me!” Caitlin snapped. “If I keep chasing after my mother, more people die. If I stop, more people live. One life for many—it’s worth it. As far as I’m concerned, my mother’s been dead for four years already.”

As Caitlin turned to leave, Cecilia rushed to block her path. “Then can you at least think about others, if not for yourself?”

“What are you trying to say?”

Caitlin’s patience was wearing thin, but she could tell Cecilia was leading up to something.

“Save the Yarbrough family. Please.”

Cecilia suddenly dropped to her knees, her eyes brimming with despair.

“**The** Yarbrough family?” Caitlin frowned, looking down at her. “What do you mean, save you?”

Cecilia let out a long, trembling sigh before speaking again.

“The Yarbroughs are descendants of Atlantis. We were born of royal blood. Centuries ago, our kingdom fell to

rebellion.

“Your grandmother, from the Yuncey family, was Atlantean too. The Yunceys were sworn protectors of the royal line. The royal family entrusted them with the kingdom’s map before their deaths, believing they would one day restore Atlantis.

“But the Yunceys grew powerful, and that promise faded into history. Meanwhile, we Yarbroughs lived in hiding, barely surviving. Then something changed. A curse, maybe. One by one, our people fell ill—strange, incurable sicknesses.

“I became a doctor to save them, but my skills weren’t enough. Our ancestors left behind a legend—a cure said to exist in Atlantis, the Shard of Life. I begged your grandmother and your mother to help me, but they refused. They didn’t believe me.”

Tears streamed down Cecilia’s face as she spoke.

Caitlin stood silent, her thoughts racing. The pieces clicked together in her mind, forming a picture that was both impossible and horrifying.

Cecilia was a descendant of General Yarbrough? And her pursuit of the Shard of Life had all been for her people?

Caitlin looked at her and recited slowly, word by word, the translation Reginald had left behind.

“Cecilia, did you hear that? You’re still searching for the Shard of Life?”

Cecilia froze, her eyes wide as the truth sank in. “No... that can’t be. The Shard of Life... was a person? The King of Atlantis, Seradulf?”

“And the Yarbroughs... we were his guardians? We fled to protect his heir? Then that means the true royal bloodline—the real descendants—are the Yunceys?”

Her voice broke. The world she had believed in her entire life collapsed around her.

For years, she had believed she was born of Atlantis. That her destiny was to restore the kingdom. That the Shard of Life was a divine relic.

But now, all of it—every story passed down by her ancestors—had turned to dust. Centuries of myth, twisted through time, had rewritten the truth. The Yunceys were the royal heirs, not her family.

Her life’s purpose had been built on a lie.

History, she realized, was cruel. And heavier than she could ever bear.

Caitlin's voice trembled with fury. "I suspected you all along. You and Zorro—there had to be a connection. How else would the queen of S country end up poisoned by your Scentbane? Tell me! What's your

relationship with him? He knows about Atlantis. You told him, didn't you?"

"Yes," Cecilia said, her voice breaking. "I once believed I was a descendant of Atlantis. I wanted to restore the kingdom, but I needed allies. So I made a deal with Zorro and the Shadow Moon Pavilion."

Caitlin pressed harder. "And what about The Seventh Door in D country? The Silent Order? Were they your doing too? Did you tell them you could give them the Shard of Life in exchange for their help?"

Cecilia nodded weakly.

Caitlin's rage flared. "So all of it—these years of chaos, the lives lost, the wars—were your doing! You built this network, didn't you? You're the one behind everything!"

Even though she'd suspected it, Caitlin had always thought Cecilia was just a pawn, not the hand controlling it

all.

But now, she understood. One woman, driven by her belief and desperation, had manipulated entire nations.

The others in the room stared at Cecilia in shock and disgust.

Caitlin's anger boiled over. She struck Cecilia hard across the face. "Do you have any idea how many died because of you? How many innocent lives you destroyed with your selfish dream?"

Cecilia's tears fell freely now. She finally understood how wrong she'd been.

"I'm sorry, Caitlin," she whispered hoarsely. "I wanted to save my people. I thought I was doing what was right. But I see it now—my obsession caused all this. If you want to hate me, hit me, I deserve it."

Caitlin grabbed her by the collar, eyes blazing. "Killing you won't fix anything. You want to make amends? Then find Zorro and tell him yourself—the Shard of Life isn't a cure or an elixir. It's a lie. Tell him to stop chasing ghosts. Do you hear me?"

"I'm sorry." Cecilia whispered again, and a moment later, blood spilled from her lips. She swayed, her body trembling. "Please... save my people..."

"Cecilia, what's happening? Stay with me!" Caitlin knelt beside her. "You promised to tell me—where's my mother? Tell me where she is!"

“Maxwell...” Cecilia’s voice was barely a breath.

“What?” Caitlin leaned closer, pressing her ear near Cecilia’s lips. “Say it again...”

But Cecilia’s hand fell limp, her head slumping to one side.

“Cecilia! Cecilia!”

Caitlin shouted, shaking her, but the woman didn’t respond.

Caitlin pressed her fingers under Cecilia’s nose, then exhaled shakily. “She’s gone.”

Gone.

Just like that, Cecilia was dead.

For her, death brought peace. She had finally uncovered the truth she’d spent a lifetime chasing. In her last moments, she had done one thing right—offering redemption to the Yuncey family.

And above all, she had revealed something priceless—Caitlin’s mother’s whereabouts.

The room was heavy with grief. Caitlin’s eyes shimmered with tears.

No one noticed the faint red glow beneath Cecilia’s skin, just behind her ear, slowly fading until it vanished completely.

Sebastian broke the silence. “When you asked about your mother... did she say anything?”

“She did.”

Caitlin stood up, her voice low but steady. “Maxwell. She said... Maxwell.” Official source is find{n}ovel.net

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Sebastian’s expression darkened. “You mean your mother is in Maxwell’s hands?”

The **name sent** a chill through the room. Not everyone knew who Maxwell was, but those who did immediately thought **of** the Minister of Justice of Country A.

Caitlin's anger surged like a rising tide. She pictured Maxwell's cold, deceitful face, and hatred burned deeper

in her chest.

From this moment on, everything related to the Yun's Aromatic Codex, everything about the search for Atlantis, had officially come to an end.

They would no longer exhaust themselves chasing after the so-called Shard of Life, no matter what fortune it promised.

Caitlin, Sebastian, and the others decided to take a few days to rest before heading to Country A.

Now that she knew her mother's whereabouts, she was no longer in a rush. Instead, she needed time to plan- to figure out how to deal with Maxwell.

Three days later, inside the royal palace.

Queen Heather, ignoring her son Magnus's protests, had invited the Harrington family to the palace. She was determined to arrange his engagement, despite his strong refusal.

"Mother, I truly don't want to marry so soon. Please take back your order."

Magnus was always respectful, but on this matter, his stance was firm.

Heather didn't care whether the two even liked each other. What mattered to her was securing the royal bloodline's power within her family—she wouldn't allow the throne to fall into outsiders' hands.

“But I don't love Pamela. I don't want to hurt her.” Magnus's tone was calm but unyielding.

Pamela stood nearby, hearing him reject her so bluntly. Her heart sank, tears welling in her eyes, though she fought to hold them back.

The Harrington elders looked uncomfortable. The Queen had told them Magnus was obedient, yet now he was defying her in front of everyone.

“Your Majesty,” Pamela's father said carefully, “if the prince is unwilling, perhaps we should call off this arrangement.”

“I disagree,” Heather said coldly. “This engagement will proceed as planned.”

She turned to her son. “Magnus, this is final. I will not hear another word about it.”

“Mother...” Magnus's patience broke. “I already have someone I love. I don't want to be engaged to Pamela.”

His words stunned everyone. Heather's eyes widened. "You have someone? Who is she?"

The Harringtons were equally curious, exchanging glances.

No matter how much Heather pressed, Magnus refused to speak. He couldn't reveal her name—wouldn't risk exposing her.

"Is she one of our country's noblewomen? A daughter of a powerful family?" Heather asked sharply.

Magnus shook his head. "No. Neither. Please don't ask anymore."

Heather's temper flared. "Nonsense! Absolute nonsense! Don't tell me you've fallen for some commoner. Do you even understand how shameful that would be? You are the future of this kingdom, not some reckless boy."

Magnus said nothing, which everyone took as silent confirmation.

Heather's anger rose to a boil. "I don't care who she is. You'll end it now. The engagement with Pamela will be settled today."

"I won't," Magnus said firmly.

“This isn’t about what you want. You don’t have a choice.”

Her words struck like a verdict.

At that moment, the King, Leif VI, entered the hall in his wheelchair, his voice calm yet stern. “If Magnus refuses this marriage, why must you force him?”

“Father...” Magnus exhaled in relief. His eyes met the King’s, who gave a subtle nod, silently assuring him of his support.

“Your Majesty,” the Harringtons quickly greeted, rising from their seats.

Heather stood as well. “Leif, this isn’t about forcing him. We discussed this long ago. I only meant to finalize it today.”

“I don’t find this engagement appropriate,” Leif replied evenly. “Mr. Harrington is your brother-in-law, and everyone knows Pamela is your niece. That makes her and Magnus first cousins. If you push this marriage through, do you know what people will say about the royal family? Do you really want to make our son a national laughingstock?”

The room fell silent. The Harringtons exchanged uneasy looks before Pamela’s father finally said, “Perhaps we should postpone this discussion, Your Majesty, Your Grace. We’ll take Pamela home for now and revisit this later.”

The family quickly left. Pamela cast one last wistful glance at Magnus, but he never looked her way.

Once the guests were gone, Heather slammed her palm against the table. "You're his father. Instead of helping

me, you undermine me at every turn. What position does that leave me in?"

Leif sighed. "I'm helping him by letting him choose his own path. If you truly cared for him, you wouldn't force him into something he despises."

Heather's face twisted with fury. "You don't even know the kind of woman he's fallen for—a commoner!"

"So what if she's a commoner?" Leif said. "A commoner or a royal, they are all our people."

"You and I will never agree on this," Heather snapped.

"Then let's not argue," Leif said, turning his wheelchair. "Magnus, come with me. It's time for my therapy."

"Yes, Father."

The two men left together, leaving Heather seething. She swept the tablecloth off in rage, sending dishes crashing to the floor.

Her eyes turned cold. She would find out who that woman was—the one who had bewitched her son. And when she did, she wouldn't show mercy.

Inside the training hall, Magnus knelt beside his father's wheelchair. "Thank you, Father, for standing up for

me." This update is available on [FindNovel.net](https://www.findnovel.net)

"As long as I'm alive, you'll always have my support. Do what your heart tells you."

Magnus smiled faintly. "I understand."

After helping with his father's rehabilitation, Magnus's phone rang. Seeing the caller ID, he brightened. "Father, it's Caitlin."

"Oh?" Leif asked, concerned. "Is she alright?"

Magnus answered quickly. On the other end, Caitlin's voice was calm but urgent. She told him she had arrived in Country A and needed to meet him.

Magnus didn't hesitate. "Of course. Wait for me—I'll come to you right away."

After hanging up, he told his father, "Caitlin's here in A country. She wants to see me."

"Truly?" Leif's eyes lit up, though anxiety crept into his tone. "I'm still not fully recovered..."

Magnus understood. "Don't worry, Father. Take your time. I'll see what she needs and report back."

"Alright. Go, then."

As Magnus left, Leif turned back to his exercises, pushing himself harder than ever. His desire to walk again had never been stronger.

But Heather wasn't done. She quietly instructed her trusted aide to follow Magnus. "Find out who that commoner woman is. And if necessary... eliminate her."

If she wanted to protect her family's power, Heather knew she had to be ruthless.

On the road, Magnus's driver frowned. "Your Highness, I think we're being followed."

“When aren’t we?” Magnus replied dryly. He wasn’t as naïve as his mother believed.

He had already planned his escape. He first stopped by the government building, changed into civilian clothes, and left through a restricted passage.

While the tailing car still waited outside, Magnus had already slipped away through an underground exit, driving off in an unmarked vehicle.

Following the location Caitlin had sent, he arrived at a park in Sanctis.

Looking around, he didn’t see her. He pulled out his phone to call—and realized she was standing just behind him.

She had disguised herself completely; he almost didn’t recognize her. They had even passed each other a few minutes earlier without noticing.

“I figured I should blend in,” she said with a faint smile.

“I did the same.”

Their shared laughter broke the tension. Then Magnus grew serious. “Caitlin, why did you come here so suddenly? Did something happen?”

Caitlin hesitated before answering. “Magnus, I think this has to do with Maxwell.”

“Maxwell?” He frowned. “What do you mean?”

“It’s complicated,” she admitted. “As a civilian, I can’t get close to him. Investigating him is nearly impossible. That’s why I need your help. You can reach him easily.”

She took a deep breath. “My mother... I think she’s in his hands.”

“What?” Magnus’s face went pale.

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Magnus froze. “Wait—you mean your mother hasn’t actually been found?”

Caitlin sighed. “It’s complicated. The woman we found before wasn’t my mother. She was an impostor.”

“**I see.**”

Magnus could already tell from a few sentences that the situation was tangled and messy. Still, he could understand her urgency.

He thought for a moment, then said, “My uncle’s temper is... volatile. Most people can’t get near him. But he doesn’t guard himself against me. Here’s what I’m thinking—I could arrange for you to enter the palace.”

“Enter the palace?” Caitlin repeated cautiously.

“Yes,” Magnus nodded. “You can stay in the palace for a few days under an assumed identity. Once the time is right, I’ll take you to my uncle’s residence myself.”

He also thought this might be the perfect chance to let his father and Caitlin meet face-to-face.

Caitlin considered it, then nodded. “That could work.”

She knew Magnus was right. Charging straight at Maxwell would be reckless; she needed a way in first, a

transition.

Magnus added, “Give me a little time. Once everything’s ready, I’ll send you the details and documents. You’ll disguise yourself according to the identity I prepare.”

“Alright,” Caitlin agreed.

With Magnus’s help, the anxiety that had been pressing on her chest eased. For the first time in days, she could see a glimmer of hope.

After his meeting with Caitlin, Magnus hurried back to the government building and went straight to his office. He wrapped up his official work before stepping outside.

In the car parked across the street, a man sat waiting. When he saw Magnus emerge, he straightened immediately.

Magnus climbed into his car and left. The tail followed discreetly.

His car drove straight through the gates of the royal palace. Watching from a distance, the shadow picked up his phone and reported, “Your Majesty, the prince has finished his duties and returned to the palace.”

“Good. Keep watching. Any time he leaves the palace, I want to know immediately.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

Magnus went directly to find his father.

Leif VI had finished his therapy and was now reading documents in his study. When Magnus entered, he **set** his pen down and asked, “Back so soon?”

Magnus glanced toward the door. He knew his mother’s servants often lingered outside. He didn’t want anyone overhearing. IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE CHAPTERS, PLEASE VISIT [find\[N\]ovel.net](http://find[N]ovel.net)

“Father,” he said quietly, “why don’t I take you for a walk in the garden?”

“Alright.”

Father and son left the study together. Heather’s spies hesitated to follow them too closely once they reached the gardens, forced instead to observe from afar.

“You met her?” Leif asked.

“Yes,” Magnus replied. “She came to Country A to deal with a lot of things. It’s complicated.”

He told his father everything Caitlin had shared. When Leif VI heard that the woman Caitlin had found was a fake, his hands gripped the arms of his wheelchair.

“What? A fake?”

Magnus nodded. “She and her people went through hell, only to find an impostor. You can imagine how devastated she is.”

Leif’s expression darkened. Not just Caitlin—he was distraught as well.

“If that woman was fake,” he murmured, “then where is the real Kelly?”

Magnus glanced around, then crouched beside his father’s wheelchair and lowered his voice. “Caitlin thinks her mother might be in my uncle’s hands.”

“What... Maxwell?” Leif’s voice trembled. “That’s impossible...”

But even as he said it, his chest tightened. His mind reeled at the thought.

“Father, please don’t get too worked up. We don’t have all the facts yet,” Magnus said quickly. “It’s more complicated than it sounds.”

Leif’s breath grew shallow. The pain in his heart was almost unbearable. For so many years, he had failed to protect Kelly and their children, leaving them to suffer the consequences of his choices.

He blinked back tears. “Magnus, listen to me. Help her. Do everything in your power to assist Caitlin and

resolve this.”

“I will, Father,” Magnus promised. “I’ve already arranged to bring her into the palace.”

Leif’s eyes widened. “Into the palace? That’s too dangerous.”

“Don’t worry,” Magnus said. “If **we** coordinate perfectly, no one will suspect a thing—not Mother, not Maxwell. Besides...” His **gaze** softened. “It’s a chance for you to finally see her.”

The words hit Leif like a thunderclap. The idea of seeing his daughter again made his heart pound with anticipation.

Magnus squeezed his father’s trembling hand. “I’ve already planned everything out. Here’s how we’ll do it...”

As Magnus explained the details, Leif listened intently, his expression softening from shock to determination. Finally, he nodded. “Alright. Let’s do it. Thank you, Magnus.”

Leif looked at the young man before him and felt a wave of pride. All these years of raising him hadn’t been

in vain.

When their discussion ended, Magnus pushed his father back to the royal quarters. He then called for the servants to attend to him.

As a maid brought tea, Leif deliberately pretended to fumble. The cup slipped, spilling hot tea across his hand and leg.

“Useless girl! Are you trying to burn me alive?” he roared, smashing the cup against the floor.

The maid dropped to her knees, trembling. “Forgive me, Your Majesty! I didn’t mean to! I’ll bring another at

once-”

“Another? You think I need your pity? You all look down on me because I’m crippled, don’t you?” Leif shouted again, his voice echoing down the corridor.

The poor maid wept and shook her head. “No, Your Majesty, I swear I don’t—”

Heather arrived just in time to see the chaos. “Leif, what’s going on here? Why are you so angry?”

Leif’s tone remained sharp. “Get them out of here. All of them. They’re useless! Clumsy, insolent—parading around like they own the place. I don’t want to see their faces again.”

Heather realized the servants he was dismissing were her own people—the ones she had placed near him. She quickly waved for them to withdraw, then called for a towel to clean up the mess herself.

“Calm down, Leif,” she said gently. “If these maids aren’t good enough, I’ll have the chief housekeeper bring

in new ones.”

Leif wiped his hand with the towel, his face still tight with anger. “Fine. Replace them all. But this time, make sure they’re plain. I don’t want a bunch of silly, pretty girls who can’t do their jobs.”

“I understand,” Heather said.

After leaving his chamber, she summoned the head housekeeper and gave clear instructions. “When you recruit new servants, don’t choose based on appearance. The less attractive, the better. But they must be efficient. Bring me the candidates first.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

Recruiting palace servants wasn’t a simple public hire. The royal household had its own domestic service bureau responsible for vetting and training candidates.

The next day, the head housekeeper went to the royal bureau to make her selections.

The candidates stood in neat rows, waiting anxiously for inspection. Among them, disguised and unrecognizable, was Caitlin—Magnus had already arranged for her to be included in the group.

Each woman tried to present herself as competent and capable, hoping to be chosen. For many, working in the palace meant the chance to change their fate—or even catch the attention of the King or the Prince.

Caitlin stood silently among them, her face altered beyond recognition. She had no idea if she'd make it through.

As the head housekeeper slowly walked past, inspecting each face, Caitlin's heart pounded harder with every

step.

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The head housekeeper made a slow round through the room, flipping through everyone's files before speaking. "All single women, step forward."

Those who were unmarried looked thrilled as they took a step ahead. They thought being single would **make** them the most desirable choice. But the next words out of the housekeeper's mouth crushed that hope. "You're all dismissed. Step back."

The single women froze for a moment, then walked out, faces pale with disappointment. Only a dozen women remained, all of them married.

The housekeeper walked past them, stopping to point at a few. "You, you, and you. Step forward."

The chosen women looked respectable and well-kept. Even with age, their features hinted at the beauty they once had. But they, too, were dismissed.

One woman dared to ask why. The housekeeper gave her a cold look. "You may be married, but you reek of perfume and powder. The royal family doesn't need women who only know how *to* dress up."

After two rounds of elimination, only five women remained. Caitlin stood quietly among them, thankful that she'd listed herself as married and wore no perfume.

The housekeeper checked the remaining profiles and selected two names. "Agnes, Margaret. Step forward."

"Agnes" was Caitlin's disguised identity. Hearing her alias, she and another woman named Margaret stepped out of the line.

The housekeeper studied Agnes's sallow face with approval. "Your file says you're skilled in international cuisine?"

"Yes."

"And you're also trained in massage therapy and nursing?"

"Yes," Caitlin replied, nodding slightly.

The housekeeper turned to Margaret with a few questions before giving a satisfied nod. "Good. You both fit our requirements. Agnes and Margaret, you'll come back to the palace with me."

Caitlin's heart leapt with quiet joy. Magnus's idea for her to disguise herself as plain-looking had clearly worked.

Once inside the palace, the housekeeper led the two women to meet the queen.

Since Caitlin had once impersonated Esme and met Heather before, she altered her voice carefully so Heather wouldn't recognize her.

"These two will do," Heather said after a quick glance. She studied the women's modest postures and ordinary faces, feeling reassured.

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“Agnes, Margaret,” the housekeeper said, “you should know it’s Her Majesty who gave you this opportunity. From now on, you will serve the queen faithfully. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

“If His Majesty is pleased with you, you will serve him as well. You’ll also report the king’s daily routines to the queen every day. Is that clear?”

“Clear.”

Caitlin understood then—Heather’s influence spread through every corner of the palace. Every servant here was one of her eyes and ears.

Heather reclined lazily on her chaise and waved a hand. “Go. Take them to see the king. Let’s see if he approves.”

Leif VI had been waiting. His heart was a storm of anxiety and hope. The secretary stepped in. “Your Majesty, the housekeeper has chosen two new maids. Would you like to meet them now?”

“Yes.”

The doors to the study opened. The housekeeper entered with two women in tow. “Your Majesty, these are the maids I personally selected today. If you’re not satisfied, I can find replacements.”

Leif VI said nothing at first, his gaze fixed on the two women before him. He knew his daughter was one of them—Magnus had told him that Caitlin’s disguised identity was Agnes.

Suppressing his emotions, he asked, “What are your names? Look up.”

Both women raised their heads slowly.

“Your Majesty, my name is Margaret.”

“Your Majesty, I’m Agnes.”

Leif VI’s eyes locked on Agnes. The sight of her pale, deliberately plain face made his chest tighten with

emotion.

It was her. His daughter. After all these years, she was standing right in front of him.

But he couldn't reveal himself. He forced his emotions down and nodded slightly. "You may both stay."

The housekeeper relaxed. "Very well, Your Majesty. I'll have them settled in and return once they're ready to attend you."

Caitlin and Margaret curtsied before leaving the room.

As the door closed, Leif VI told the secretary to step out. Alone at last, he let the tears fall freely.

His daughter was here, within reach. For the first time in years, the hollow ache in his heart began to ease.

He had already dispatched men to secretly search for Kelly. If she truly was in Maxwell's hands, he **would** not forgive the man.

At a lavish estate, Maxwell was at home that day, waiting for news.

Kira came up from behind and wrapped her arms around him, trying to be playful. He pulled her hands away impatiently. "Didn't I tell you to lay low? Why are you still here?"

"I couldn't bear to leave you."

Kira tried every trick to tempt him, but Maxwell wasn't in the mood. His mind was elsewhere.

"Enough. Leave. Go abroad and stay out of sight for now."

He pushed her off sharply, and she stumbled onto the couch.

"I know. It's because that woman is here, isn't it? You can't even look at me. Maxwell, what does she have that I don't?"

Kira was a proud, ambitious woman—and one of Maxwell's most capable partners. For years, she had believed she was his only woman. But now everything had changed.

The woman who had shaken her place in his life was Caitlin.

What Kira didn't know was that Maxwell had once loved another—Kelly.

When he and Leif VI were studying in France, they had both fallen for the same woman, the radiant Kelly.

Maxwell, bound by his lower status, could never openly compete with the prince. He buried his obsession deep within.

But not being able to have Kelly had twisted something inside him. He had developed an intimate dysfunction—he could no longer perform as a man. Rumor had it that the Shard of Life could cure any illness, and he wanted to trade Kelly for that miracle.

Once he regained his strength, he thought he wouldn't need her anymore. What he wanted now was someone younger, more beautiful—a woman like Caitlin.

Just thinking of her ignited a dangerous fire within him.

He would call for Kira, use her body, and pretend she was Caitlin, trying to quell the desire that tormented

him.

But even that failed. Nothing worked. Perhaps only the real Caitlin—once she found the Shard—could make him whole again.

“Don't ask what you shouldn't. And don't compare yourself to her. There is no comparison,” Maxwell said coldly.

Kira's eyes flashed with hurt and fury, but before she could protest, he pulled her into his arms.

“I meant you’re the only one, my woman. Caitlin is just a tool, nothing more. Once I have what I want and rule this country, I’ll make you my queen.”

Kira melted under his words. “I understand. I’ll leave tomorrow. I won’t cause you any trouble.”

“Good. Come back when things calm down.”

As she walked out, Maxwell’s eyes turned cold.

He had already received word—Caitlin was on her way to A Country.

The thought of finally seeing her sent a surge of dark excitement through his veins.

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Billionaire's Regret: Finding Her

That evening, Caitlin prepared several classic dishes for dinner.

In the royal dining hall, the king was already seated, with Magnus beside him. Servants carried in the dishes one by one. The rich aromas filled the air, and Magnus’s eyes lit up as he looked at the food—especially the ones Caitlin had cooked.

“Father, you must try these. They’re truly special.”

Leif VI tasted each dish in turn. With every bite, his expression softened, his eyes brightening. “Excellent,” he said quietly. “Truly excellent.”

It wasn’t just the flavor—it was the feeling. The warmth, the familiarity—it took him back to years ago, when Kelly would cook for him. The taste, the care, the memory of that time. It all came rushing back.

His throat tightened. For a moment, his vision blurred. He had never dared hope for such a thing—to eat his daughter’s cooking, even under disguise. He felt blessed beyond measure.

Just then, the dining hall doors opened. Heather entered with her attendants, her face set in irritation. Seeing her husband and son already dining without her made her blood boil.

“You’ve already started dinner? Why wasn’t I informed?” she demanded.

Leif VI remained silent. Magnus, still angry with her, hadn’t wanted her there at all. But since she came in, he replied coolly, “I didn’t dare inform you. I was afraid you’d take the chance to push that engagement on me again.”

Heather shot him a sharp look and sat down at the far end of the table. “Ungrateful child. Everything I do is for your own good. You used to be so obedient—when did you become so defiant?”

Leif VI cut her off. “Enough. Can’t you let Magnus eat his dinner in peace?”

“You’re too indulgent with him,” Heather snapped. “If this continues, what will become of him?”

“Magnus is my son,” the king said calmly. “He will inherit the throne—that is his destiny. What he needs now is to learn how to lead this nation, not to rush into marriage. Once he becomes king, do you really think he’ll have trouble finding a woman? Every woman in this country will be at his feet.”

Heather started to protest, but Leif VI raised his hand. “That’s enough. Eat.”

Their values were worlds apart. Even basic conversation between them had become impossible.

Magnus relaxed a little under his father’s protection. As long as his father was around, his mother couldn’t force him into marriage.

Heather swallowed her anger and looked down at the food. Her expression twisted slightly. “What are these dishes? They don’t even look appetizing.”

From her corner, Caitlin quietly observed the family. It was clear now—the royal couple was far from harmonious. Their marriage was brittle, hostile beneath the surface. And Magnus stood firmly on his father’s

side.

Heather, unloved by her husband and now estranged from her son, had nowhere left to turn. Her resentment showed in every glance, every clipped word.

When the meal ended, Leif VI wiped his mouth with a napkin and gave Caitlin a brief, approving look. "Very good. You've done well."

"Thank you, Your Majesty."

After dinner, Magnus wheeled his father back toward his chambers. Before leaving, he turned to Caitlin. "Agnes, bring two cups of tea to the king's study later."

"Yes, Your Highness."

Not long after, Caitlin brought the tea as instructed. As she reached the door, she overheard Leif VI's voice.

"Do

you understand? Shane will coordinate with you."

She stepped inside, served the tea, and turned to leave, but Magnus called softly, "Thank you. My father hasn't enjoyed a meal this much in years."

The next morning.

“Mother, enjoy your breakfast. I’m off to work.”

Magnus rose from the table and left the palace with his guards.

Heather sat motionless, her heart restless and uneasy. At last, she decided to leave the palace for a while.

At the lakeside villa on Lihu Island, Heather arrived shortly before another black sedan pulled up outside. Maxwell stepped out and entered the villa to meet her.

“What’s so urgent?” he asked.

Heather sighed. “Lately I can’t rest. Maybe I’ll only find peace when Magnus officially takes the throne.”

“I’ll speak to him soon,” Maxwell said. “For now, stay here and relax. I’ve arranged for someone to help you recover your strength.”

Heather said nothing. Maxwell gestured toward the door, and moments later, one of his men brought in a tall, muscular young man.

The man's body was toned and athletic—clearly a professional trainer. Heather looked him over, and her lips curved slightly.

“Besides health therapy, what else can you do?” she asked.

“Your Majesty, I'm skilled in massage, Thai therapy, and spa treatments,” the man replied respectfully.

Heather nodded, visibly pleased. She rose and headed upstairs. At Maxwell's subtle nod, the young man followed her without hesitation.

Maxwell didn't stay. He left the villa, giving his sister her privacy.

Minutes later, another identical sedan—same make, same color—emerged from the wooded path near the lake, followed by several vehicles. The convoy approached the villa quietly.

The guards and attendants at the entrance assumed Maxwell had returned. But when the car door opened and Magnus stepped out, their faces went pale.

“Your... Your Highness-”

Before they could react, Magnus's guards had drawn their weapons. “Silence, if you want to live.”

Within seconds, everyone at the entrance was restrained. No one dared make a sound.

Magnus's face was hard as stone as he pushed open the villa doors, followed by the king's secretary, Shane, and several armed men.

A loud crash sounded as they kicked open the bedroom door upstairs. The sound inside froze everyone in place—heavy breathing, low gasps, unmistakably indecent.

They entered the room. The scene before them made Magnus's blood boil. His mother, the queen, was tangled on the bed with a man barely older than himself, utterly lost in pleasure, oblivious to their intrusion.

Shane raised his camera and clicked. The shutter's sharp snap broke through the haze.

“Ah!”

The young man looked up first, terror flashing across his face. He scrambled off Heather and tumbled to the floor.

Heather shrieked, grabbing the sheets to cover herself. When she looked toward the doorway and saw who stood there, her voice cracked in panic.

“Magnus! What are you doing here?”

Magnus’s eyes burned red, fists clenched at his sides. He didn’t answer. His voice came out low and cold. “Take this man and teach him a lesson.”

The guards moved instantly. They grabbed the young man and beat him mercilessly.

“Your Highness—mercy! Please! Your Majesty, help me!” he screamed, but Heather could barely protect herself, let alone him.

When it was done, the guards dragged the naked man out of the room. Shane, holding the damning photos, stepped aside.

Magnus’s gaze fell back on his mother, cold and full of fury.

“Magnus, listen—I can explain—” [Read full story at FindNovel.net](#)

“Explain what?” he snapped. “You’re the queen of this nation. How could you do something so filthy behind my father’s back? Do you any idea how much you’ve shamed him?”

have

Magnus's voice shook with rage. "You disgust me. Go explain yourself to Father."

Without another word, he turned and strode out.

Heather called after him, panic rising. "Magnus! Magnus, come back!"

But he didn't stop.

For the first time, fear truly gripped her. She was losing everything—her son, her power, her place.

And she knew there would be no escape from what was coming next.

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