

Beyond the Divorce

Chapter 36

Chapter 36 A Change In Representative

Tanum Corporation was likely the smallest of the six companies shortlisted. This meant that we were, also the least competitive.

Truth be told, I didn't expect success. I was only here to divert Matthew's attention.

Companies that wanted to bid on the project gathered in a large conference room. They were waiting for

the ATL Empire's project lead.

The goal of the meeting was to clarify the project. Each company would also highlight their skills and make an impression.

After five minutes, there was still no sign of the project lead. Whispers began to echo around the room.

Suddenly, the door to the conference room opened, and everyone turned to look.

A young man walked in. He wore a white shirt, black pants, and a black tie. Not only was he tall and poised, but he was also handsome. It was hard to tell his age, though.

Behind him came a secretary and several project staff. Everyone's eyes followed him as he walked to the head of the table and sat down. Then, he scanned the people in the room.

He began, I'm sorry for the wait. Mr. Wright had some urgent matters to attend to, so he asked me to

chair this meeting. I'm Atlas Pierce, and it's a pleasure to meet you."

He was succinct and wasted no time. He settled into his seat with an air of authority, but his demeanor was cold.

There was a silent exchange of glances. Many wondered why the project lead, Nick Wright, was absent from the meeting..

The fact that he sent a newbie in his place upset the other representatives, particularly those from the two esteemed companies.

Atlas didn't give them time to voice their concerns. He declared, "Without further ado, let's begin!"

He started calling out the name of the first company to present. When he got to Tanum Corporation, he finally looked up and fixed his indifferent eyes on me. He seemed to know I would be the final speaker.

This was a manageable challenge. I was known for my eloquence back in college, and years of seclusion

hadn't dulled that skill. After all, I was the one who founded Tanum Corporation.

I chose a different approach than the other five companies. After all, we couldn't compete with them teamwork and our best new products.

Being the last person to talk gave me a chance to add to what the others had said. es my presentation."

His eyes stayed on me, waiting. I gave him an awkward nod and said, "That concludes my

Only then did he shift his gaze. He gave a summary before gathering our materials for further review.

Atlas adjourned the meeting. He gave everyone a slight nod before exiting the conference room. The

other representatives looked puzzled.

A more experienced representative spoke up. "Isn't he too hasty? Who is this young man, and what does he do? It looks like they found a last-minute substitute. Given his age, he's probably just a manager. I

don't like how ATL Empire handled something as important as this!"

The older rep left with confidence. The others followed suit, each displaying murky facial expressions.

I didn't share their dissatisfaction. My assistant and I calmly left the building and returned to our company building.

After all, I didn't leave the meeting empty-handed. I recalled key information from the speeches and gained insight into our competitors. These gatherings were the best way to understand them.

Fortunately, Tanum Corporation made it to the top six construction companies in Foswood. I was also sure that more chances would come along in the future. This newfound optimism gave me an idea.

I gathered all the possible information on ATL Empire's project when I reached my office.

Just then, a call came in from my hometown. My father had a stroke, and I was told to return home quickly.

Chapter 37

Chapter 37 An Urgent Call from Home

The call shook me to the core. I hadn't visited my hometown in two years due to Ava's age and Matthew's packed schedule. He wasn't comfortable with me traveling alone with Ava, which was why I hadn't been back for so long.

I held the phone, feeling dazed. A wave of guilt washed over me.

Although I was the only daughter, I grew apart from my parents after college. I turned to them only in tough times, but I had neglected them in the past couple of years.

Assuming my parents were healthy, I cared for Matthew's parents more than my own. However, the word "stroke" changed everything.

I felt panic, realizing what a terrible daughter I had been. They raised me, but I had done nothing for them.

My parents had waited for me without complaint. How could I tell them that my marriage was crumbling

and that the family I had devoted myself to was falling apart?

There was no time to dwell. I rushed to Matthew's office, almost in tears, and blurted out, "Honey, please

book me a flight. I need to go home."

Matthew was in a meeting with a few other managers and looked surprised. He asked, "What's wrong, honey?"

He gestured for the others to leave and then hugged me. "Calm down and tell me what happened."

"My mom called. Dad's sick, and she's asking me to return quickly."

Tears fell from my face. I did not realize how much I needed a shoulder to lean on.

Matthew gave me a comforting pat on the back. "Don't worry. Everything will be fine. I'll make all the arrangements. You go ahead while I handle things at work before heading over. My parents can take care of Ava. Please don't cry."

Nestled against him, I felt safe. I wish I could have a refuge like this forever.

Matthew told his secretary, Jack, to book a flight for me.

Then he reassured me again, "I'll take you home now. Bring a few more clothes and necessities if you

have to stay longer. Stop crying, all right?"

I remembered I needed to head home and pack. I wiped away my tears, grabbed my bag, and left the building with Matthew.

It was overcast, and the forecast predicted a hurricane. My unease increased as a storm seemed imminent.

Once I sorted my luggage, Matthew drove me to the airport. His phone kept ringing, and he answered it.

Then he turned to me and said, "I have an appointment to meet Mr. Scott from Modern Metals."

“Go ahead. I’ll be fine.” I assured Matthew. I didn’t want to get in the company’s way.

“I’ll wait until you clear security,” he insisted, holding me close. “I want to go with you, but I have to take

care of things at work. You should head there first. Take care of yourself, and make sure to rest.”

His words warmed my heart, and I wished he hadn’t cheated on me.

“Go on with your work. If my dad’s condition worsens, I’ll let you know.”

“I promise! We haven’t done enough for your parents because we’ve been busy. Spend more time with

them. Once I’ve settled things at work, I’ll visit them too.” Matthew’s words were heartfelt and hit a nerve.

I admit that at that moment, I was moved.

“I’ll have the finance department transfer you some money. Don’t worry about expenses. It’s our job to

take care of them.” Matthew wiped a tear from the corner of my eye. “Go on, I’ll watch you go.”

I sniffled and turned back several times to see Matthew standing in the crowd. Leaving him was hard,

and my emotions were a mess.

When I got to the gate and turned around, he had vanished into the crowd. I started to feel scared when I looked around and could not find him. At that moment, I was rudely woken up from a beautiful dream.

Chapter 38

Chapter 38 Canceled Flight

Feeling disheartened, I entered the gate and walked to the boarding area. In times like this, I wanted a partner to go home with me, as did my parents.

I tried to console myself that the urgent phone call was why he had to leave. I called Ivanna to let her

know where I was. Then I settled into the airport lounge while waiting for boarding.

Matthew had only been to my hometown three times. The first time was the year we graduated. He came

to meet my parents after our relationship became official.

The second time, we wanted to start a business but did not have enough capital to get started. We went to them for help.

The third time was when we mortgaged my parents' house to get a loan. After it was approved, he insisted on taking me home to thank my parents.

We did not return home together after that. The reason was always the same—he was busy.

My parents were always understanding, knowing the challenges of starting a company. They said it

required dedication and hard work. The first two years were hectic, working tirelessly.

It started with the two of us and grew. We persevered for four years, then I became pregnant.

I only visited home once, and my parents came to Foswood after I had Ava. We rarely got together,

making one excuse after another.

This time, I'm going back because of a stroke. I felt bad because I had not been a good daughter. I should

have cared for my parents the way they cared for me. What have I done for them?

With each passing minute, I became more overwhelmed. My anxiety level rose, but the flight was repeatedly delayed.

The airport grew more crowded, and the sky grew darker. It was already 8 p.m.

Despite my flight being only four hours long, I had waited seven hours and still hadn't boarded the plane.

Finally, at 10.40 p.m., the airport made an announcement. They had suspended all flights because of the

impending hurricane.

Upon hearing the announcement, I froze. How could this be?

When I saw the airport personnel leaving, I shakily called my mother. I told her that flights had been stopped while trying to hold back my choking voice.

"Chlo, do not worry," my mother comforted me. "Your dad is doing much better. According to the doctor,

there's no major concern. Prompt treatment saved him. Don't worry, he's recovering. Wait until flights start again."

"Should I take a train instead? I'm worried about you," I said to my mom.

"Absolutely not. Things are terrible right now because of the pandemic. If your dad gets better in the

morning, you don't have to hurry back. Let's wait for the weather to ease up. Plus, you need to take care of Ava, too!"

"Mom..." My voice choked, and I said, "I've been a bad daughter!"

"That's enough. I understand," Her voice was firm, "Listen to me. Go home quickly and wait for my call."

After hanging up, I crouched on the ground, embracing myself as I cried helplessly. I truly regret not staying closer to my parents.

The airport was full of stranded travelers. I could not get a cab because of the airport's last-minute announcement. More people were taking buses, leading to long lines.

I called Matthew, but his phone was off. It was probably out of battery. He asked me to call him once!

safely landed, so he would not have turned it off.

I stood blankly in the crowd, waiting for it to thin out before leaving. I didn't want to be constantly bothering Ivanna.

The crowd was eager to leave the airport, so I went with the flow, feeling lost. A few teens bumped into

me recklessly, causing me to fall and drop my bags.

I steadied myself and tried to ignore the pain from the collision. Then I went to pick up my fallen luggage.

As I bent down, a man with a massive suitcase rushed in my direction. When I realized it, it was too late to get out of his way.

Chapter 39

Chapter 39 The Encounter at the Airport

I gasped and closed my eyes while bracing for the impact. But the next second, I felt my body embraced and almost drifting.

I could hear gasps and applause while I trembled. When I opened my eyes, I found myself in the arms of a

tall man, wrapped in his firm, masculine presence.

He wore a black mask and was staring at me intensely. Something about his eyes seemed familiar. I held on to his arm as I stared back at him.

He put me down and steadied me without saying a word. His eyes shifted to my hands on his arm, I

quickly pulled it away and smiled awkwardly. "I'm sorry! Thank you!"

Another person had picked up my luggage and brought it to me, saying, "You should be careful! That was

a close call. Thankfully, this gentleman was quick!"

I nodded at the man. "Thank you so much!"

"Where are you headed?" His voice sounded husky.

I looked at him, puzzled. His voice sounded oddly familiar, too, I observed the composed man with his deep, mysterious eyes.

He sensed my confusion and pulled down his mask to reveal a charmingly defined face. I chuckled in

surprise when I recognized him. "Mr. Pierce!"

I was relieved to discover why his eyes were familiar. After all, I had just met him. He was the one who

represented Mr. Wright at this morning's meeting at ATL Empire.

He adjusted his mask. "It's late. Let's go together."

Atlas was quick and decisive. Though I did not know his position at ATL Empire, he must be an

exceptional employee.

"Wouldn't it be inconvenient for you?" I hesitated as I glanced at the crowded airport exit. After all, I wasn't very familiar with him.

"Do you have another way to leave?" He retorted. "If not, let's just go together."

He walked away without waiting for my response, leaving me shocked.

I quickly grabbed my luggage and jogged to catch up. I thought it was best not to be stubborn. Riding with

him to the city would make it easier for me to find a cab. If I waited until the crowd left the airport, it I followed him all the way to the car that was waiting for him. Finally, I exhaled a sigh of relief—I could go home!

"Thank you, Mr. Pierce!" I said again, but he didn't respond.

During the drive, he made a phone call to report that his departure was delayed.

We didn't talk the entire trip, and the atmosphere was heavy. I had hoped that I'd be able to know him better, which would help with future projects.

I was getting ahead of myself,

Upon arriving in the city, I said, "Mr. Pierce, you can drop me off on the side of the road. I take a cab here."

"It's alright. Just give the driver the address." He left no room for debate, so I gave in and gave the driver my home address.

The driver drove me all the way to the entrance to my neighborhood. I thanked them profusely and got out of the car. With a quick turn, I entered my house.

It was after 1 a.m., so I was surprised to see the bedroom dimly lit. Just as I was about to call Matthew's name, I heard something strange coming from the room—it sounded like moaning.

I immediately knew what was going on. My ears buzzed, and my mind went blank. I moved like a puppet toward the bedroom door, which was slightly ajar. There were unbearable sounds, and I saw two

gleaming bodies tangled together. !

Seeing the two people's faces in the bedroom's dim light was harder to accept. I couldn't believe that it was her

Chapter 40

Chapter 40 The Truth Unfolds

Shocked by what I was seeing, I retreated, overcome by a fear I had never felt before.

My eyes grew wide, and I wished I was dreaming. However, their faces were unmistakable—it was

Matthew and Melanie.

I nearly screamed. Although I knew Matthew was cheating on me, I never imagined it would be with his

own sister.

I was unable to move, as if struck by lightning. Anyone else would have stormed in, but I stood there like a

fool, arms and legs as heavy as lead. The noise in the room was so loud that my ears buzzed, and my

eyes got as big as they could go.

I snapped out of my daze. Before leaving, I took a few photos and a video with shaky hands.

A wave of nausea hit me as I covered my mouth and ran downstairs. I vomited uncontrollably.

Then, I ran aimlessly through the dark streets. I had no plan, no destination, just a never-ending sprint.

All I could think about was how vile they were.

I ran along Bayview Street until I reached the riverside, which was still brightly lit. The burning fire in my

chest consumed my body and mind, and everything became painfully clear.

He had slept with his sister. That was why Melanie always opposed me, yet Matthew still adored her. He

allowed her to be arrogant and disrespectful to me, and he even neglected our daughter.

She could openly pose as his wife at Galar Tower, That was why Johnson said he had never seen

Matthew bring his mistress anywhere. She could go on business trips with him, and the place he bought

was in her name. Everything suddenly made sense.

“Ahh!” I screamed at the roaring river.

Why? Why did it have to be like this? It was all so disgusting! Feeling filthy, I charged down the riverbank. I threw myself into the water, desperate to cleanse myself...

The icy river water engulfed me, and I quickly came to my senses. But it was too late to turn back. I

couldn't do anything because of the raging current. In my panic, I struggled and fell into the water, making

a splash.

Soon after, a hand grabbed my arm and pulled me toward the shore, I was then thrown to the ground. I lay

there coughing and gasping for air.

+15 BONUS

A towering man stood before me, silhouetted against the light, water beads cascading from his head. His face appeared stern and fearsome in the soft glow.

The man who saved me was Atlas.

A wave of humiliation and anger hit me. I howled and cried like a child.

Atlas didn't stop me or pull me up. He simply let me wail until I was drained, He stood next to me, his eyes cold and alert, as if to keep me from jumping back into the water,

My cries stopped, and I struggled to get up. I was completely soaked and could not stop shivering, but I managed to stand.

"Thank you for saving me." My voice was hoarse, and I trembled from the cold.

He walked over to me, removed his wet coat, and put it on m

retained his body heat, keeping me warm and comforted.

shoulders. Though it was damp, the coat

“Don’t do that again. Your parents gave you life to cherish, not waste.” His voice was low and hoarse. He pulled his coat tighter around me, wrapping me snugly.

He did not ask why I did it, or embarrass me. Aside from gratitude, I could not find words to express how I felt.

“You’re the only one who can overcome whatever happens.” His soothing words made my throat tighten again as his warm breath washed over me. It felt like my heart was being ripped apart.

His eyes had softened noticeably. “Let me take you home.”

I forced a bitter smile. “I don’t have a home anymore.”

He paused, then tightened his grip on me, surprising me with his gentle arms.