

122 Tea Room

Samantha still couldn't believe her eyes; all these numbers didn't make any sense to her. 1

'I already have my own account that Richard set up for me, but this... She left me years worth of money to handle--decades even. It's like... her entire inheritance, perhaps?'

The more she looked over the papers, the more obvious it became--Amelie Ashford was a selfless saint who spared no money to those who were born without it. She spent her personal wealth on others, hiding behind the name of JFC and her husband but that was the only thing that Samantha couldn't readily accept.

'Everybody was aware of her philanthropic work so people gave her credit that was due. I guess no one really knew that the money was coming out of her own pocket.'

She placed the papers back into the box and turned on the laptop, her lips curling slightly.

'I can't be that reckless, though. If I start handing out money in JFC's name, people will naturally

assume that I am using Richard's money instead. However, if I make all the necessary transfers in my personal name and make public donations with this account... Then everyone will know that the money belongs to me. 3

Who cares whether they will question it or not? Who cares about taxes too? I am sure Richard will find a way to deal with it the same way he dealt with the benefit donation.' 2

Samantha saw this plan as a perfect one. Since Amelie no longer had access to this money and it was now legally in Samantha's name, she could use it to elevate her public image even more.

And that was precisely what she was about to do. 1

"Congratulations once again, Miss Blackwood! It's a rather unorthodox occurrence but a happy one, still."

Jennifer Mariano, the president of the Daughters of Dignified Standing, snapped her fingers at one of the waiters in the tea room and offered Samantha a polite and clearly forced smile.

Once Amelie got divorced from Richard and lost her family inheritance, she was automatically removed from all the organizations that held importance and pride in one's lineage. 1

The Daughters of Dignified Standing was one of them.

And now that Samantha had replaced her opponent in marriage, she realized that she could do that in other aspects of Richard's life as well.

She accepted a fresh cup of tea from the young waiter and reciprocated the same polite smile.

"Thank you, Mrs. Mariano. It is really an honor to be accepted to such a prestigious group. Of course, I cannot simply overlook the fact that you probably had to overcome a lot of opposition while trying to get me in, but I can assure you that my gratitude will not make itself wait. I will work hard for the sake of DDS, that is a promise."

Jennifer looked at the other members present at the tea party and the women showered Samantha with wide smiles and seemingly sincere compliments.



Samantha had to admit: working on her manners and speech was an effort worth making and since she was perfectly aware that the snobby high society wanted her to be simply a copy of Amelie Ashford, pretending and acting were the easiest things she could do around those people.

It was an easy win.

Once the women were done with all the formalities, the conversation switched to the meeting's agenda and Samantha quickly lost interest in it.

'Another fundraising party... Do they really need to go through all this trouble just to gather some money from the rich snobs like themselves? Sure, they need to show it off, they need others to be aware that they are doing something. God, how annoying.'

Although now one of them, Sam was still having a difficult time understanding the intricacies of the high society's internal politics. Sure, she, too, wanted to be seen and heard when spending money, yet somehow, it annoyed her that others wanted to do the same. 1

Her silent irritation was disrupted when a tea room host came into the room and announced that there was someone wanting to speak with the group.

All the women turned around to face the host while Jennifer adjusted her round glasses and nodded at him.

"Well, we are not expecting anyone else but I guess there will be no issue in seeing who this person is. Please let them in."

The man nodded too and disappeared behind the door. A few seconds later, Penelope Sanson entered the room with a tall, rather old-looking man standing beside her.

"Miss Penelope," one of the women exclaimed, setting her teacup down on the table. "What brings you here uninvited? I hope you realize that interrupting a closed meeting is one of the rudest things a young lady could do!" 1

Penelope offered the woman an apologetic smile, then shifted her eyes to Samantha and replaced that smile with a sly smirk.

"Excuse me, ladies, but this gentleman here was



looking for Miss Samantha Blackwood, and seeing how desperate he was, I couldn't simply let him wander around."

"Me?!" Samantha almost shouted but had to compose herself as the other ladies immediately shot her their warning glares.

Penelope stepped inside, gesturing for the man to follow her, and added, "Why are you so surprised, Miss Blackwood? Don't you recognize this man?"

Truthfully, Samantha did not recognize the man standing before her but she could not show her confusion to others just in case it would end up turning into humiliation. Penelope reveled in the woman's lost expression, then let out a loud sigh, and shook her head in a disappointed manner.

"Well, Miss Blackwood. I guess such an unexpected encounter can indeed leave one rather perplexed. This man is Donald Blackwood. He claims to be your father. You know, the one who made that generous investment to JFC Group, remember?"

All the members of DDS gasped in unison while

Samantha widened her eyes at Penelope.

It was not possible; he couldn't be the man. After all, if he really was the man hired by Richard, he would have told her if he wanted to meet her. No, this was clearly one of the games played by Jason, and Samantha couldn't afford to lose it.

Thus, spreading her lips into a nervous smile, she walked up to the man and said through her gritted teeth, "Good afternoon... father. I am glad you were able to find me."

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