

149 A Certain Status

Samantha curled her lips upward and took a sip of her fragrant herbal tea, the delicate porcelain teacup resting lightly in her manicured hand as she watched her guests unwrap the gifts she had meticulously chosen for them. The quiet harp music that had been previously filling the tea room, was now drowned in the sounds of torn paper and foil.

The light filtering through the tall windows bathed the room in a warm glow, casting a halo around the women gathered there. Samantha couldn't resist the smile that tugged at her lips, a smile tinged with triumph as she observed their reactions—surprised, forced gratitude, with a hint of discomfort hidden behind polite expressions.

It had been Kyle's idea, of course. After that humiliating realization that none of the wedding gifts had been meant for her, only for Richard, Samantha had been furious. The mere gall of these women, to so blatantly disregard her position as Richard Clark's wife, was infuriating.



to say the least. But Kyle, the man whose schemes were on par with hers, had suggested a different approach rather than simply remain sulky—an opportunity to turn the tables. 2

"Book a room at the Indian Tea House," he had said, his voice brimming with confidence. "Invite the wives of Richard's friends and associates, and make sure they know exactly where they stand." 2

Samantha had agreed, and with Kyle's assistance, she had organized the entire event with the precision of a general preparing for battle. Yes, she could no longer remain defensive; it was time to take some action too.

She had spared no expense in selecting gifts for each woman, gifts that were perfectly tailored to their tastes and preferences. Kyle had done the groundwork, discreetly gathering information from each woman's personal assistants and shoppers. The result was a collection of extravagant presents that were impossible to criticize—at least not openly.

As the ladies unwrapped their gifts, murmuring their thanks as if scared to show their hostess



any sort of genuine emotion, Samantha could see the unease in their eyes.

She knew they had likely gathered today expecting to look down on her, perhaps to gossip about her behind her back. But she had turned the tables on them, and now they were the ones who felt awkward, unsure of how to handle her generosity. It was deliciously satisfying. 1

"Thank you, Mrs. Clark," one of the women said, her voice a touch too high-pitched, her lips stretched into a tight smile. "This is truly thoughtful of you."

"Yes, you really shouldn't have," another added, her tone betraying the slightest edge of discomfort.

Samantha grinned, allowing her smile to widen just enough to convey innocence. "Oh, it was nothing," she replied in an airy manner. "I just wanted to show my appreciation for your kindness. After all, you've all been so supportive of my marriage to Richard and your wedding gifts were so amazing!"

The women exchanged uncomfortable and

somewhat guilty glances, their polite smiles faltering for just a moment. 1

Samantha felt a surge of power at the sight, a sense of victory coursing through her veins. She had effectively rubbed their noses in their arrogance, forcing them to confront the fact that while they may have been bitter or silently protesting against her marrying Richard, she was now the one in control. And all the while, she was pretending to be nothing more than a naive, kind-hearted woman grateful for their forced friendship.

Samantha had made a conscious decision to fully embrace her role as Richard Clark's wife, to wield the influence that came with the title. 1

Though she was younger than Amelie, she had started imitating the way Amelie used to dress, wearing similar clothes and styling her hair in the same sophisticated manner. She even adopted Amelie's way of speaking and holding herself, but with a twist—she maintained an air of naive charm, a defenseless demeanor that only added to her allure. 5

Kyle had been right when he told her that

business treasures loyalty. "Even if these women want to side with Amelie, their husbands won't let them," he had said. "Not unless you treat them the way they want to be treated. They want to feel important, and you can make that happen."

Samantha had taken those words to heart. These women were powerful in their own right, but they were also deeply invested in their husbands' business relationships. By showering them with attention and an illusion of power, Samantha was securing her position, ensuring that their respect and support remained firmly with her.

'So what if they respect Amelie for what she has done? I will make them fear me. I will squeeze that respect out of them if needed.' 3

Shelly Grant, the second wife of Edward Harris, who had hosted a baby shower that Samantha had attended not so long ago, turned to her with a bright smile on her plumped lips. "So, Mrs. Clark—"

"Samantha, please," Sam interrupted, "There's no need for formalities among us girls."

Shelly nodded, her smile widening as she shot a

glance at the other women, a look that held a hint of something secretive. "You are positively glowing, Samantha. I noticed it during the wedding, but now—perhaps it has something to do with the way you're dressed, or your makeup—but you are stunningly radiant!"

The other women nodded in agreement, their smiles now genuine, though Samantha could sense a hint of reserve beneath their compliments.

"Thank you," she responded graciously, placing a hand on her rounded stomach. "It's so nice of you to say that! As I'm about to become a mother, I figured I should start by looking accordingly. I know I'm young to be wearing these clothes or wear my hair this way, but I still have a certain status to uphold."

The women exchanged knowing looks, murmuring their agreement. Samantha smiled sweetly, but her mind was already calculating, assessing each of their reactions, noting who seemed sincere and who was merely putting on a show.

One of the women, whose name Samantha



couldn't quite recall, hid her lips behind her porcelain cup of tea and muttered under her breath, "A certain status, she says... You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." 3

The words were soft, barely audible, but Samantha heard them clearly. Her smile faltered for a brief moment as she clenched her fists beneath the table, her nails digging into her palms. She kept her expression neutral, but inside, her anger flared.

"What the hell is her problem?" 1

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