

161 Weaknesses You Can Exploit

"I apologize, Mr. Ingvarsson," Amelie began, blinking her fatigue away as she tried to straighten her posture. "Did we have a meeting scheduled for today? I must have fallen asleep, and my other assistant is handling things at the hotel right now..." 1

Einar stood across from her, his eyes narrowing slightly as he observed the woman's appearance.

He clenched his fists at his sides, struggling to contain his irritation. Seeing Amelie in this state, looking so drained and ghostly, stirred something fierce within him.

He had known that Oscar Bennett's passing would take a toll on Liam, but seeing how it had affected Amelie as well only deepened his frustration. Every flaw Liam had, every mistake he made, seemed magnified in Einar's mind, and now, as he looked at Amelie, his blood boiled at the thought of how Liam had allowed her to reach this breaking point.

Without a word, Einar placed a large white paper



bag on the desk before her. His frown deepened as he said, "Your housekeeper was worried about you, so she packed you a home-cooked dinner. I told her I was going to see you, so I am your food delivery service today."

Amelie's eyebrows arched in surprise as her hands automatically reached into the bag, pulling out several lunch boxes filled with dishes that were still warm. The aroma of the food instantly filled the room, and a wave of bittersweet nostalgia washed over her.

Mrs. Gellar had done this many times before, always so attentive and caring, and it made Amelie's heart clench with a familiar ache.

"Thank you, Mr. Ingvarsson," she said softly and looked at the food, ready to stuff her mouth with it as her stomach vibrated with hunger.

Then, she remembered that she had already sent Austin out to get dinner. A thought crossed her mind—perhaps it wasn't too late to call him and ask him not to buy anything since this meal was more than enough for both of them.

Amelie then looked up at Einar, a faint smile tugging at the corners of her lips. "Would you

like to join us? There's plenty here."

The man shook his head, denying her generous offer. "Thank you, but I am not hungry, and I need to be going now."

Amelie's smile faded slightly as she nodded.

"That's a shame," she murmured, then something dawned on her, and she looked at him with widened eyes. "Did you really come here just to deliver me food, Mr. Ingvarsson?"

Einar hesitated, his bright blue gaze flickering while he considered his response. Finally, he sighed, and shook his head again.

"Not really," he admitted. "With the sudden passing of Mr. Oscar Bennett, my associates have started pressuring me to renegotiate the deal. I reassured them that it would definitely happen this time, but now... I am not sure whether I really came here today because of that or something else."

"Something else?" Amelie raised her brows in confusion, but Einar dismissed her curiosity with another shake of his head. "Let's discuss it when Mr. Bennett is feeling better. Having both of you present would be a lot more efficient."

Vanessa sat alone in the darkened living room of the Bennett mansion, a half-empty glass of wine cradled in her hand.

The clock on the mantel quietly chimed midnight, but she barely registered the passage of time. This was not her first drink of the evening, and the alcohol had already started to take effect, dulling the sharp edges of her thoughts but doing little to soothe the bitterness soaring inside her.

She replayed the unpleasant conversation she had had with Samantha at Edward Harriss' party, the younger woman's words still ringing in her ears as if she was standing right beside her.

"Why are you still staying at the Bennett residence when you have a whole villa abroad that belongs solely to you?" Samantha asked her back then. "Surely, with a new Mrs. Bennett there, you must be feeling very uncomfortable."

Vanessa clicked her tongue in annoyance, her grip tightening around the wine glass. *'Leaving this mansion means losing,'* she thought bitterly. *'I didn't play the role of a perfect wife for Noah,*

who had been bedridden and helpless for the last year, just so that I would be tossed aside after his death like I was his nurse instead of a legitimate member of this family!"

The thought of how easily she could be discarded, how little she truly mattered in the grand scheme of things, made her blood boil.

Even now, with Oscar Bennett gone, it was Amelie who had taken charge, who had managed everything as if Vanessa was nothing more than an afterthought. And now, Amelie was even handling the entire company in Liam's stead...

Vanessa groaned in frustration and pushed herself up from the couch, her movements unsteady with the alcohol mixed in her blood. She needed to clear her head, to sober up and think of a way to regain control—of her life, of her place in this family.

As she walked through the dimly lit hallway, her thoughts racing, she suddenly caught sight of a figure standing near the guest room. Startled, she stopped in her tracks, squinting to make out who it was. "Liam?"

But Liam didn't respond. He stood there,

unmoving, his eyes glazed over as he stared at nothing. Vanessa took a cautious step closer, calling his name again, and it suddenly dawned on her—he was sleepwalking.

'It's been a while since I saw him like this, I thought he had finally overcome it...'

Instantly, Samantha's words echoed in her mind again: "I understand how you feel, Mrs. Bennett. Amelie tried to drive me away too, but you, unlike me, have a great advantage in this game. You know Mr. Bennett's weaknesses. Surely there is something you can exploit, right?"

A slow, calculating smile crept across Vanessa's lips.

She gently placed her hands on Liam's shoulders, her touch light and reassuring. Leaning in close, she whispered in his ear, "Liam, you're going to get hurt if you keep wandering around like this. Come with me, and I'll take care of you." 5

