

192 Strange Locket

Samantha's thumbnail cracked loudly under the nervous pressure of her teeth. She winced and pulled the hand away, momentarily assessing the damage done to her nail. 1

Stressing over the pressing important tasks at hand, she had not had her nails done in a while and now it seemed that she would have no choice but to schedule an emergency appointment.

That thought, however, was quickly pushed aside to the back of her head as something more important was weighing on Samantha's mind.

'I have turned over the entire mansion, so it's definitely not here!'

She banged her palm on the desk, ignoring the brief painful sensation that spread all over it.

Once she got rid of Jason Sanson and his constant blackmailing, she was set on getting rid of Daphne who had been acting more and more suspicious with each passing day, but her mind kept returning to something else each time: her employee contract at the hostess bar.



'That old moron would have given it to me when I showed him those pictures; he would not have dared to risk it. It only proved that he really did not have it. Then who does?'

For quite a while, she was convinced that her contract was in Richard's possession, however, once she pressured his assistant Ron to tell her the truth, the man confessed that Richard, too, was still looking for it, and his search remained fruitless.

'This leaves me with only one possible candidate... Amelie Bennett. Either it's her or her husband, the two of them are on the same side anyway. It must be with them... Most likely in their house.'

It really made sense now. Amelie had been keeping a close watch over her ever since Samantha appeared and although she barely used everything she knew about her marriage rival against her, who was to say that she simply wasn't preparing for something surprisingly huge to drop on Sam?

'I can't get rid of her but I need to get the contract. How do I do that? How do I get into her house naturally?'



At that moment, she heard a rather timid knock on the study door which made her furrow her brow in annoyance.

"What is it? Come in!"

The door opened almost inaudibly and a small, neat-looking maid stepped in, offering Samantha a short bow. "I apologize, Mrs. Clark, but a delivery man just stopped by with an invitation."

"Invitation?" Sam repeated that last word, arching her eyebrows. "I was not expecting anything."

She then motioned for the maid to approach, spitting harshly. "Do you need specific instructions for every move? Give it to me!"

The maid nodded several times and almost ran toward Samantha's desk, carefully placing the long white envelope with pale trembling hands.

Samantha grabbed the envelope and tore it open, her eyes widening as she read big cursive letters on a glistening piece of glossy paper.

'I guess I should pray to some gods for giving me so much luck!'

Stretching her lips into a big grin, she tapped her nails on the surface of the shiny invitation that



read "25th Annual Christmas Benefit opens the doors of the Bennett mansion for the invited guests."

"What are you doing here wandering around like a ghost?" Samantha frowned as she saw Daphne walk through the hallway of the mansion's second floor. She spent the entire evening plotting her actions during the Christmas Benefit at the Bennett residence and had completely ignored the lateness of the hour.

Daphne adjusted the loose shirt of her pajamas and cleared her throat, briefly brushing her fingers over her chest. "Why do you care? I am not a prisoner here; I can walk around if I want to."

Samantha ignored her rude response because her attention was now focused on something else.

"That's the same necklace she was wearing back at the beach!"

Indeed, hanging from Daphne's elegant neck was a thin gold chain with a heart-shaped locket that glimmered under the dimmed lights of the hallway lamps.



'It looks expensive... How come someone like her has such an exquisite piece of jewelry? She is an orphan and even if she has been working for some theatres as a ballerina, there is no way she could have earned money that she can spend so lavishly.'

But it was not only the estimated price of the locket that attracted Samantha's curiosity. Something about it just did not seem quite right.

"What is that in the middle of it..?"

She squinted her eyes slightly to try and discern a strange darkened shape in the middle of the golden heart when Daphne, alerted by the woman's behavior and prolonged silence, covered it with her hand, offering Samantha a questioning look.

"What the hell are you staring at?"

Samantha grinned, folding her arms at her chest. "Just like you can walk around whenever you want, in my house, I can stare at whatever I want. Where did you get that trinket?"

Daphne snorted with irritation. "That does not concern you."

"It does, though," the woman scowled, "what if

you stole it from someone I know? Surely, a poor orphan cannot afford something this expensive!"

"Stole? I am not sure about you, but I have never stolen anything in my entire life! Just because I am an orphan, does not mean I am willing to stoop so low!"

Suddenly, Samantha felt a sharp stab of unpleasant nostalgia deep in her chest. She recalled saying the exact same words once; lying as she was defending herself before Richard when she had indeed stolen something from his wife.

She felt strangely enraged.

'Does it look like something I would have?'
Samantha looked back at Daphne's clenched hand, trying to remember what the locket looked like. *'Could it be that she has stolen it from Amelie's room and is now parading it in front of me?'*

That irritating thought continued to race through her mind, leaving her utterly restless, however, she could not let that girl see her in that state.

Clearing her throat, she faked a brief smile, and finally said, "Go to your room. I don't like it when

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strangers creep around my house at night."

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