

79 More Suitable Options

Richard wiped his hot face with both hands and leaned against the back of the leather-covered chair in the conference room of the business center where he was having a business retreat with JFC shareholders and partners. 1

He had spent the entire day meeting with different people and discussing matters related to JFC Group, but regardless of the hours spent in discussions, the number of issues that needed to be addressed didn't seem to decrease.

It was exhausting, and it still was far from being over.

"Now that it is only the two of us, Mr. Clark, I think it is time we talked seriously and without beating around the bush."

Ian Shaw, a tall and overwhelming man in his late sixties, took a seat beside Richard and joined his hands on top of the long desk. He was one of the earliest partners of JFC Group and a good friend of Richard's late father; in fact, when Richard's parents passed away, Mr. Shaw was in charge of

the company while the young man was still studying.

It was Ian Shaw who taught Richard all the secrets of the ever-changing business world as well as showed him the true nature of the position that he inherited from his parents. Even if Richard didn't think of him as a father figure, he definitely trusted him as a business partner.

"The issue with JFC losing money lay in the fact that the company is continuing to divide from within," he continued and his words alerted Richard.

"What do you mean?"

Ian patted him on the shoulder and sighed.

"As you know, the circumstances of JFC are not very conventional. Essentially, it is a family business and a lot of people agree that it should remain as such. The majority of shares belong to you and Amelie which means you are the sole owners of the company which is absolutely fine.

However... If JFC is to remain united under your name, it is imperative that you and Amelie have a child as soon as possible. Whether it's a girl or a



boy, what the partners want to see is a legitimate heir. First or the only one... The family needs to be extended in order to keep control. I do not think I need to remind you what it means for your family and JFC if there is no heir to take over it after your retirement."

Richard pursed his lips, his fists clenching on top of his knees. Yes, he knew exactly what it meant for the company. Everybody did.

"If I don't have a child in the next ten years, the fate of JFC will be in the hands of the board of directors and it will be up to them to decide who will be the next president of his company.

Not only will it start a chaotic and messy battle as each member will push his candidate for this position, igniting a rivalry and dividing the company even more; but it will also take away my family's heritage from me. From me and from Amelie. This is the thing that bothers me the most.'

"Richard," Ian's voice softened as he noticed Richard's distressed expression. He knew that the topic was personal, unfortunately, not in the case where the entire conglomerate was put on

the line. "I suggest that you have a serious talk with Amelie and decide how you both would like to approach this matter. And if there are any problems..."

He looked Richard straight in the eyes and added in a serious tone, "You are the president of JFC Group. If you wish for your company to remain undivided, you might want to consider... Other, more suitable options."

Although it was something Richard was prepared for, hearing Ian utter these words made him feel lost.

There were only two "more suitable" options for him.

First, to divorce Amelie and marry someone else.

Second, to have a child with another woman and force Amelie to adopt it into their family.

And since he was already aware that Amelie was infertile, the choice was painfully obvious. 6

"So, did you manage?"

Amelie nodded at Anna as the latter approached her boss' desk in her hotel room. Anna handed Amelie a thin paper folder and started,

"Not many girls are willing to talk with the outsiders... for obvious reasons, but I managed to find someone who knew Samantha Blackwood pretty well and was open to accepting bribes."

"Good. What did she say?"

"She confirmed that Samantha indeed worked in that hostess bar as one of the "girls". After I offered her more money, she even stole a copy of her working profile which is kept off the records to avoid taxation issues. You can find it within the folder."

Amelie opened the folder and looked over the first page she saw. It was a standard job offer draft one could easily find on the Internet and it had both Samantha's full name and signature on it.

'It even has her photo attached... This is certainly enough proof of her identity.'

"Good job, Anna. This can be hardly called a part of your official responsibilities but you did a



marvelous job nonetheless. Thank you. You can take the rest of the day off."

Although the prospect of having half a day off was rather tempting, Anna was hesitant to leave. Amelie offered her a confused look and asked, "Is there something else?"

Anna nodded and stood closer to her boss as if to deliver something absolutely secretive.

"That girl told me something else which might be even more useful against that woman."

"Oh?" Amelie raised a curious brow, "what is it?"

"Apparently Miss Blackwood gave birth to a child and left it at the hostess bar when she ran away." 2

Now, this was a piece of information Amelie could have never envisioned receiving.

"A child? How old? Who is the father?"

Anna shook her head. "Unfortunately, the girl did not know the details, Mrs. Ashford. She said that she was certain that it was Samantha's child because she saw Miss Blackwood pregnant before; and as to who's the father... That girl believes it was one of the VIP clients and that is

exactly why Mr. Sanson chose to keep the baby around."

'So she already has a kid and now she is pregnant with my husband's child... How unoriginal.' 1

Amelie sighed and returned her tired eyes back to the folder that was still clutched in her hands while Anna continued, "Mrs. Ashford, I might be speaking out of turn but I think you should show this to Mr. Clark before that woman finds a way to cover this up." 1

Amelie opened the lower drawer of her desk and hid the folder inside the pile of other documents already placed there. She then offered her assistant a light smile and nodded.

"There is no chance at that now." 2