



98 The Bennett Residence

Liam's car moved through the first gates of the Bennett residence and Amelie couldn't help but feel speechless. 1

The mansion was located just on the outskirts of the city, surrounded by a huge, well-kept garden with a lake. Although Amelie used to admire this building every time she saw its pictures in newspapers and magazines when she was younger, she had never had an opportunity to see it herself.

And now, she was more than simply amazed.

The white stone façade gave the mansion an air of timeless sophistication, while the tall, arched windows reflected the soft, golden glow of the setting sun. The meticulously arranged trees and bushes and pristine lawns framed the estate perfectly, enveloping it in an unexpected coziness.

A long, cobblestone driveway led to the grand entrance, where ornate iron gates stood as silent guardians. For the first time in her life, Amelie

felt intimidated not by a person but by a building.

"I am getting nervous now..." She whispered and locked her eyes with Liam who shook his head lightly, implying that there was no reason for that.

The first people to greet them were Liam's assistant Austin and the housekeeping staff who offered them a strangely synchronized nod and proceeded to take care of the things that Amelie brought with her to the mansion.

"Welcome to your new home Mrs. Ashford," Austin offered the woman a polite smile and pointed at the entrance which was ready to welcome them inside. 3

'Now I'm getting seriously anxious. I never had to go through something like this with Richard because I practically grew up in his house; this is an entirely new feeling for me. Perhaps, if the circumstances were different, I wouldn't be feeling as if every single person here is trying to drill halls in my body with their sharp eyes.'

Liam sensed his wife's distress and took her hand in his, taking the lead by making the first

steps into the house. Amelie could have had a chance to admire the inside of the mansion as well, had it not been for the growing trembling sensation inside her chest which she could no longer ignore.

Her husband leaned a little closer to her and whispered as they continued to walk through the first floor, "It's normal to be nervous, Lily; I understand that. But please, understand these people too. It will take a bit of time for them to get used to the idea of a new mistress of the house, but once they do, they will treat you like family too."

Surprisingly, his words worked like a charm and a smile of relief graced Amelie's lips. She nodded at her husband and squeezed his hand a little tighter when the two of them were greeted by a tall, rather seriously-looking woman in her late fifties with small round glasses on a high nose and short straight hair tucked neatly behind her ears.

The woman, too, offered the couple a reserved bow and spoke in a low but calm voice,

"Good evening. My name is Estelle Greene, I am

the housekeeper of the Bennett residence. I am overlooking every single member of the staff employed in this mansion, therefore, all the matters related to its operation are forwarded directly to me. Please feel free to discuss any house-related matters with me and I am looking forward to working with you, Mrs. Ashford." 1

The woman didn't show her any visible disrespect but it was obvious that she was far from being happy to see Amelie in this house.

'Liam told me that Mrs. Greene would be the last one to feel excited about my arrival. She used to be his nanny when he was a kid so I guess she can't help but feel protective of him.'

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Mrs. Greene, I am looking forward to working with you as well."

Amelie decided to still be careful and treat her with a proper level of respect in order to avoid any future conflicts.

Estelle moved her small green eyes to Liam and continued, "Mrs. Ashford's room is ready, Mr. Bennet. It's the guest room in the east wing of the mansion."

"Excuse me?" Liam raised his eyebrows, "Mrs. Greene, my wife cannot stay in a guest room. I have instructed the maids to prepare one of the master bedrooms for Amelie, so why are you directing her to the east wing?"

A slight frown appeared on the housekeeper's face. "I apologize, Mr. Bennett, but since Mrs. Ashford's arrival was rushed, we were not able to prepare the room accordingly. Unfortunately, only the guest rooms are available for moving in at this moment." 3

Amelie felt somewhat torn between two opposing forces. She had two choices: she could act just as authoritatively as she did at Richard's mansion and demand proper accommodation for her, or she could let it slide and show consideration by not letting the housekeeper see her as someone who took charge the moment they arrived to someone else's home.

Before she could finally arrive at a reasonable decision, Liam spoke to Mrs. Greene again.

"No, Amelie will stay in my bedroom then." 4

Amelie widened her eyes and felt her face growing a little hot; she didn't expect Liam to be

so straightforward right away.

Seeing how both his wife and his assistant were looking at him with confused expressions, he shook his hands in front of his chest and rushed to explain, "N-No! I meant that she could stay in my bedroom while I stayed in the guest room! Austin, stop staring at me like that!" 5

Both Amelie and Austin met his explanation with a hearty chuckle while the housekeeper cleared her throat with a somewhat annoyed groan and nodded.

"Very well, Mr. Bennett, I will see to it that everything is arranged accordingly."

She turned around and walked away, leaving a rather awkward silence behind her, which was quickly shattered by the series of loud and even excited barks followed by the sound of claws hitting the marble floor.

"Captain Pantaloons!"

Amelie crouched and greeted the corgi by scratching his head behind his floppy ears which the dog accepted with unconcealed happiness. She, however, didn't have much time to enjoy his

own greeting as an unfamiliar male voice reached her ears from above.

"I see you are already well-acquainted." 8

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