The Unwanted Wife: Revenge After Divorce Chapter 048

AMELIA

"And you know Lucy, of course," Betty said. "What's wrong, dear?" Betty asked,, finally noticing my mood.

"Nothing," I said quickly. "I er- didn't know Lucy would be coming."

"I'm a fashion designer, you know, a fact that I mentioned when we had dinner at the mayor's. Betty wants me here for my expert advice."

I nodded. Lucy extended her hand in greeting. It had barely touched mine before she pulled it away like she had touched something infectious. The next moment, a handkerchief had materialized in her hand. She began scrubbing at the fingers that had touched me. I heartily wished now that I hadn't come.

"We were just starting," said Betty and I was glad of an excuse to turn away from Lucy. I got the distinct impression that Betty's three other friends didn't like me very much. They seemed to be sizing me up. "This is my favourite place to shop. They literally have everything here. Well, not everything but you get my drift. Have you been here before, dear?"

"No, I haven't-"

"She hasn't, Betty, "said Lucy with a wide smile. "Amelia doesn't frequent these kinds of places. She has rather.... simple tastes."

"Oh. Yes. Yes," Betty said a little distractedly. She was looking at a rack of dresses and wasn't really paying attention. "Let's get started, ladies. There's this dinner gown I saw on display a couple of days ago... so beautiful... hope they haven't sold it yet."

Betty led the way down the clothing aisle and we all followed.

"I don't think I approve of simple tastes," said a tall horsey looking woman, Sonia, to the others, but so quietly that Betty couldn't hear. "Do you, ladies?"

The other women tittered. Sonia smirked at me. She hadn't bothered to keep her voice down for my benefit. Lucy kept giggling even when the others had stopped. I went to walk beside Betty, leaving the others to follow behind. A moment later, Betty squealed in delight. She had seen the dress she had been looking for.

"It's still here," she trilled as she took it off the hanger and ran her fingers through the fabric. "What do you think?"

Lucy quickly stepped forward. "It's exquisite as you said. I always knew you had good taste, Betty."

"It matches the colour of your eyes,"said Sonia.

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"I completely agree. You have to buy it," said Claire, the other woman.

"Let's go see another-" Lucy began.

"What do you think of it, Amelia?" asked Betty.

"I think it's a really beautiful dress. I'm sure you'll look gorgeous in it," I said.

Betty smiled. "Good. Then I'm buying it."

Lucy looked as though she had tasted something bitter. Betty selected some more clothes. So did the others. When Betty had gotten the ones she liked, she excused herself to go into the changing room in order to try them on. The last thing I wanted was to be those three. I started after Betty.

"I can come with you and help-"

"Oh no, dear," she called over her shoulder. "Don't worry. The assistants will help me. Check and see if there's something here that you'll like."

As soon as she left, Lucy and the other women began whispering among themselves. Judging by the looks Lucy was shooting in my direction, they were talking about me again. I moved away from them to fingered some clothes which I really wasn't interested in. Perhaps I could just grab some clothes and then follow Betty into the changing rooms.

"What are you doing with that?" Lucy said from beside me, looking pointedly at the blouse I had just taken off the hanger.

I started. How had she gotten here to fast? Sonia and Claire flanked her on either side.

"You can't have that." Lucy whisked the blouse out of my hands.

"Hey! Give that back," I snapped.

"Why? This blouse is obviously too good for you. You should probably try the thrift section. There, I'm you'll find more... suitable clothes for

you... Oh! I forgot. This place has no thrift clothing section."

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Sonia tittered again.

Claire said, "Now. Now. Lucy. Take it easy with her with her. Betty thought she belongs here and that's why she decided to bring her to come shop with us."

I was not deceived by this false display of kindness from Claire. She didn't like me either. I could see it in the way her eyes eagerly roved over my face as though hoping she would see a stray tear.

Lucy sniffed and gave me a once over. "Betty is too kind. She wants to see the good in people even when there's no good in them... just like this one here. I know her or should I say I knew her, rather intimately at one time-"

"Shut your mouth, Lucy," I said. "I swear I won't take any insults-"

Lucy's voice drowned out mine. "-And trust me ladies when I say she has no class. She married into money, but-"

"Marrying into money doesn't give one class. That's what my mother always says," said Claire with a superior look.

Lucy smiled at her. "I couldn't have put it better myself."

"What I can't get over is why she decided to come here," Sonia said with an offended sniff. She had turned her back on me and seemed not to want to address me directly. "Can't she see that this place and the pleasure of our company is not for the likes of her? Betty was being kind I'm sure, but inviting riffraff to shop with us? Really, that's the limit. I'll have to have a word with her."

"Don't you dare talk about me as if I'm not here," I yelled.

Claire winced and looked around. "Now, you're shouting. I hope no one heard that... And we're with her. Oh dear!"

Sonia slowly turned to face me and talked directly for the first time. "And if I talk to you how I want, what are you going to do about it?"

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"Oh my goodness!" Lucy exclaimed. "Are you going to cry? You look like you want to."

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Claire and Sonia giggled. Lucy looked positively gleeful at the prospect. Her lips stretched and kept stretching into a wide, triumphant smile. To my horror, I felt my eyes prickle with tears. Quickly, I turned my back on them. More by luck than by sight, I eventually found myself in the bathroom. I dashed into a stall, shot the bolt and cried my heart out. A while later- it could have been minutes, hours- I eventually left the stall, made my way to the sink. I bathed my face with cold water, dried it. I got to my car and drove home fast. All the way home, I kept wiping away stray tears. The moment I got into the house, I went on another crying jag. I couldn't help myself. Lucy had hit me where it

hurt. Someone pounded on my door. Before I could compose myself, Anton came striding into the room. At the sight of my face, he stopped in his tracks.

"Good lord, Amelia!" he exclaimed. "What happened?"

"Nothing," I mumbled, but a sob belied my words.

"It's obviously not nothing." He came to sit beside me. "I'll keep bugging you until you tell me everything."

And so I told him about Betty's invitation and what Lucy, Claire and Sonia had said to me. Anton called them several unprintable names which had me snorting laughter in spite of myself.

"I was on my way somewhere. Come with me," he said after a while.

"Where?"

He got to his feet and pulled me up. "You'll see."

He took me to a party at a club. He ordered a few drinks. On my third glass of wine, I found myself loosening up. Anton had me in stitches as he kept pointing out people and making the wildest speculations about them.

"Your turn," he said. He pointed to tall, muscled, tattooed man with an aggressive beard. "Tell me about that one."

I smirked. "Oh that's easy. He's a vet."

Anton stared. "A vet? Like he treats animals? I nodded. "Him?"

"Yes. And that's not all. He also works part time in a flower shop."

Anton slapped his thigh, laughing so hard he sprayed wine down the front of his shirt.

"Damn! Amelia," he said in between snorts of laughter. "I must say you're much more fun to hang with than Damain. We should hang out more often."

What happened next happened so fast. There were suddenly a few isolated screams, barely heard over the music. There were shouts of 'Police'. The crowd was still for a moment and then everyone began to run in different directions just as I caught sight of a couple of policemen. One of them came straight at me. He grabbed me just as my muscles unlocked and I made an attempt to run. As I screamed for him to let me go, I registered that Anton had run away.