



198 Cherry On Top

"So you are saying that this is the real thing, huh?" 1

Liam studied the papers repeatedly and was now convinced that he had already memorized their contents by now. Amelie nodded in response.

"Yes, it must be. After all, this is not what I was shown when I was signing the marriage contract."

Liam let out a long sigh, rubbing his throbbing forehead as he started reading individual passages from the will.

"In agreement with my best friend and life-long partner, Mr. Christopher Clark, the company's shares are to be divided evenly between my children. In case of my sudden passing, my daughters, Julia and Amelie Ashford are to receive one hundred percent of JFC Group's shares that are in my possession and divide them evenly or in agreement with each other.

In case of the occurrence of a beneficial contract marriage between two families... The shares are to remain in possession of the spouses with their right to freely withdraw and use ten



percent of their part to invest in other businesses.

In case of divorce... The division of the assets is to be done in the agreement of both parties; in case of divorce, this document overrules any other legal agreement including any potential marriage contracts." 2

Liam paused and looked back at his wife, whose eyes were empty and unfocused.

"He lied to me... They all did..." she whispered quietly, clenching her fists on top of her knees. "To go this far just to take over the entire company... To try and leave both Julia and me with absolutely nothing... to tie me up to Richard like that." 1

Tears welled up in her eyes, but somehow, her body refused to cry. She felt as if both her body and soul were frozen, suspended in time; as if all of this were not happening to her.

"Lily," Liam gently covered the woman's hand with his, "I am so sorry you have to go through all this. When it seems we are finally able to move away from that horrible family, their clutches on you still manage to remain tight."

He wiped Amelie's eyes with his free hand,



offering her a loving smile, and she felt a little better looking at her husband's beautiful face.

"You are right," she tried to steady her trembling voice, taking a deep breath in, "but this needs to end once and for all. The Clarks have stolen so much from me that I can no longer remain kind."

Liam nodded, still smiling. "Whatever you decide, I will do whatever it takes to help you. So... how do you want to tackle this?"

Amelle let out a long sigh, taking the documents in her hands once again. "Well, for starters... We need to authorize my father's will with an attorney. Tomorrow, I will contact Mr. West's son's office and ask him to deal with this as soon as possible."

She then looked at Kyle, whose expression indicated that he was more than ready to participate in her grand schemes as well.

"Mr. Marshall, has the transfer of shares from Samantha been finalized?"

The man shook his head. "Not yet, but I can try and speed up the process. Mr. Clark's personal assistant offered his help so I guess it is time I finally used it."



"Good," Amelie continued in a calculative tone, "Take whatever Ron is willing to offer you and make sure the shares are in your possession before Christmas."

Amelie tapped her fingers on the surface of the desk, her eyes narrowing as she tried to think of her next moves.

"Johnathan Radcliffe and Elizabeth are going to use our evidence to set off the information bomb at a proper time. I will ask them to release everything at once, thus sending a lethal blow to both Richard's and Sam's reputations. Angelina Castillo will use her connections to involve as many gossipers as possible too."

"And as for the cherry on top..." she looked at a small stack of unused invitations for the Christmas benefit and added. "People want entertainment even when they attend such meaningful events as fundraisers. I guess this year, I will give them some. Or quite a lot. My Christmas gift for high society will be rather generous this year."

"Are you feeling alright?" Amelie sat on the bed next to Daphne, frowning at her tired face.



"Tonight must have been rather challenging for you."

"It was not something I expected to be doing while on vacation, no," the girl laughed, turning to her side. "Are you alright, though, Mrs. B? Have you decided how to punish all of them?"

The word **punish** made Amelie's lips curl up, she could not help but let out a soft chuckle, nodding. "You can say so. This year's Christmas Benefit will be a lot more interesting than I have anticipated it to be."

"Oh, so you are going to go all out, huh? A calm and reserved Mrs. Amelie Bennett no more. I like that!"

"I guess seeing you act so bravely made me realize that I can be gutsy too."

"You are brave, Mrs. B, nobody has simply told you so before. I just... hope you will be happy now... With Mr. Bennett... and your new life..."

Exhaustion finally took Daphne in its heavy embrace and she was now falling asleep, her mind still trying to keep up the conversation.

With another warm smile, Amelie patted the girl gently on the head and turned off the lights,



leaving the guestroom as quietly as she could.

She then entered her own bedroom and saw that Liam was already fast asleep as well. The night was truly tiring for everyone.

Tiptoeing her way to the bathroom, Amelle carefully locked the door and walked up to the vanity cabinet, opening its door and pulling out a small pink box with a picture of a pregnancy test on it. 3

'I thought that Christmas would be the perfect time to announce it, but I guess it can wait a little more. New Year's Eve does not sound so bad either.'