



210 Side Story: Family Matters

The winter date arranged by Liam indeed lasted all day long. 1

After the sled slide, they had a snow fight like two little kids, laughing and jumping around, completely lost in the moment.

Then, they cooked a meal together, or rather, Liam cooked it while Amelie admired his grill skills. She could not help but wonder how he was so good at cooking, having grown up the same way she did with private chefs and maids making his meals for him.

"I took a series of cooking classes several years ago," he shocked her with that confession. "I was feeling stagnated and lost, it was around that time when I kept dropping out of universities, so... I decided that I'd try multiple things to see if there was something I was actually good at. Turns out, cooking was one of them."

Amelie was impressed by her husband's culinary talents; the meal he had prepared was so delicious that it took quite a lot of effort to refrain from asking him to cook her something else too.



'I need to be able to do something for him as well,' she thought to herself as they were washing the dishes together. 'Maybe I should take a few classes myself? I sponsor so many educational and cultural programs for others but I've never tried anything...'

It was strangely intimidating. The more Amelie learned about Liam, the more she felt like she was lacking, and even though she knew it was not necessarily true and Liam would never admit that either, somehow, she still could not help but feel like she could not keep up.

And the most infuriating thing of all was... that she could not keep up with him in bed. 1

"I am always the first one to give up," she complained to Elizabeth as the two of them met for their usual Sunday brunch. "Do young men all have such stamina?"

Elizabeth giggled understandingly. "I think it's a natural thing; you have just never had such an experience before... or maybe he really just can't get enough of you?"

She laughed again and Amelie blushed like a teenage girl. It was true that she had never



experienced such an intense passion before in her life, and no matter how many times they had already done it, she still had a difficult time adjusting to her husband's insatiable nature.

"Try exercising," Elizabeth pulled her friend out of her trance with that unexpected suggestion. "Physical endurance is very important in these matters and since you never go beyond your usual walks, some advanced exercising might actually help."

'Advanced physical exercising...'

Amelie kept repeating her friend's words all the way back to her mansion and for quite some time afterward too.

Indeed, when was the last time she actually did something more than walking for sports?

'But I have no idea how to even start... Liam exercises regularly, but I really don't want to work out together with him; I want to do it in secret and surprise him later on.'

It was a cunning thought, but she really wanted to impress her husband too.

Luckily, there was still someone who could help her achieve that goal.



"Let's start by warming up our bodies," Julia instructed as she led her sister to the home gym inside the annex building. "We will start light just to see how much you can endure, and then will gradually increase the intensity and length of your workouts. Does it sound okay?"

Amelie nodded, feeling a little shy. It was almost as if she were back in school and Julia was her stern gym teacher.

"By the terrified look in your eyes, I assume you are expecting something horrible to happen to you here," Julia smirked, tying her hair up into a tall ponytail. "Don't worry, despite what my subordinates might tell you about me, I am not at all ruthless."

Amelie let out a sigh of relief, but her sister's words did strike a nerve. What were her subordinates saying about her?

As promised, however, despite Amelie's fear of being destroyed on the treadmill, Julia's training was indeed mild and considerate, and by the end of their session, Amelie felt nothing but strangely energized and even a little excited.

"I must confess," she said, accepting a bottle of



water from her sister's hands, "I kind of expected you to be harsh and controlling, but just like always... so many people continue to surprise me."

Julia chuckled and took a sip from her own bottle. "I might look intimidating when I am with my subordinates at work, but I am kind and gentle when it comes to people I love."

Hearing the word "love" from her sister's lips made Amelie feel a little sad. Clearing her throat with a series of awkward coughs, she continued. "Speaking of which... I never knew you were into women. And that you were a marrying kind too. Every time our parents mentioned marriage, it almost made you gag."

Julia laughed again, but this time, there was a hint of a hidden emotion behind that laugh.

"There are many things you don't know about me, Lily," she did not mean anything serious by those words but they did have an upsetting effect on her sister. Arching her eyebrows, Julia rushed to fix that. "It's not your fault though! If anything, I am the one in the wrong here. I left you alone when you needed me the most and continued to shut you out every time you tried to reach out to me first. I am definitely not proud

of it... especially since it made you feel as if it were something you've done."

Amelie offered her a light smile but she still could not help but feel a little upset.

There had always been many "what ifs" in their almost non-existent relationship.

What if Julia had never left?

What if Amelie had tried a little harder to make her come back?

What if Julia, too, was not afraid to "ruin" her sister's "perfect life" and made the first step in her direction?

Indeed, there were just too many things that could have gone differently had they both had a little more courage to face each other in the past and resolve their differences. But it had always been better late than never, right?

Seeing how her sister had been quiet for quite some time, Julia patted her gently on the head, offering Amelie a warm smile. "Regretting won't change anything. We are here now, together, as intended. So... would you like to know more about your estranged older sister?"

Without a hint of hesitation, Amelie nodded



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enthusiastically, smiling like a child, and Julia could not help smiling too as she saw the same little Lily she remembered from when they both were younger.

"Oh, where do I even start..."

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