

81 Everything But Love

"Does this mean you are not going to confront Miss Blackwood about this?" 1

Ron was called to Richard's office the moment the latter returned, thus, he was hoping that his boss would talk to him about Anna's findings about Samantha, and yet, to his great shock, the man had an opposite agenda in mind.

Richard placed his elbows on top of his desk, joined his hands together, and rested his chin on top of them, a deep wrinkle between his thick eyebrows as he replied, "No... A more serious issue came up during my business trip and Samantha might be my key to resolving it."

"What does it mean?"

"I need an heir, Ron. The sooner, the better. Samantha is already pregnant with my child." 1

Ron's eyes widened in shock once again. "She is?! But, Mr. Clark, I am sorry for saying this, but she is just an orphan; a woman with no family and nothing attached to her. She will bring no value to this situation even if she gives birth to

your child. Moreover, Mrs. Ashford can get pregnant--"

"She can't," Richard cut him off and let out an annoyed sigh. "Amelie is infertile. The fertility tests confirmed it, I just never told anyone about that."

"Then..." Ron was still reluctant to accept the situation, "Does it mean you will marry Miss Blackwood instead?"

"I only have two options: to keep Samantha's pregnancy a secret and then convince Amelie to adopt her child once he or she is born, or..." 2

"Mrs. Ashford would never agree to that, Mr. Clark. You have seen what happened to Mr. Harris' family; women of her standing could never stoop so low." 1

Richard groaned and pushed a stack of documents off his desk in frustration.

"What are my other choices then? I will have to divorce Amelie and marry Samantha instead. At least this way, I will finally be together with the woman I love." 2



On the other side of the door, Amelie stood frozen in place, her right hand was pressed tightly against her cold, dry lips.

'He wants to divorce me? Why? Because that woman is pregnant?' 1

Amelie's mind refused to form comprehensive thoughts. Her knees turned weak and she made a rushed decision to leave that place before she could attract attention to herself by falling down right before her husband's office.

Her legs seemed to be moving on their own. She didn't know whether she was walking or running but before her head finally cleared out, Amelie found herself back behind the closed door of her own office.

Her whole body was trembling while her brain seemed to be on fire. The drumming sound of her heart shattered the silence of the room, and all of a sudden, Amelie forgot how to breathe.

Divorce.

For Richard, it was only a word; a simple process that would barely affect his current life. But what did it mean for Amelie?

Money, connections, her charity work... And most importantly, the only family she had. The only thing she knew how to do. The only role she was raised to perform. 1

Her entire life.

Everything.

Everything could be replaced with one single word. **Divorce.** 1

'What am I supposed to do now?' Amelie could barely make her way to the couch and practically melted into it as her body touched its soft surface. 'My assets, my company shares, my inheritance, my hotel... I wasn't ready; I haven't done anything to save any of it...' 3

Once again, her body moved on its own and she rushed to one of the shelves behind her desk. Her hands pulled out several thick folders which she instantly dropped to the floor as her trembling fingers could not hold onto them properly.

Amelie didn't care about that.

Folding her legs, she sat down on the cold

surface of the marble floor and opened the first folder that caught her eye, flipping through the pages in search of the information she needed.

The legal proof of her ownership of JFC Group.

'It's no use...' After moving from one folder to another and carefully scanning each letter of the documents, the verdict always remained the same. 'Married... I have to be married to Richard in order to remain as an equal owner of the company.' ¹

She had to stay married to him to remain who she was brought up to be.

'What did I do to deserve this? Is it because she loves him and I don't? But this is what it means to be in an arranged marriage -- it's a business deal. I sacrificed everything for him. I worked hard to be the perfect wife and perfect business partner. Was it still not enough?

I closed my eyes on him having a lover, I could understand that. Everybody wants to be loved, I get it. But to toss me away because of that... To take everything from me because of that...'

Amelie's chest shook as the hot tears ran down

her cheeks. Love was something she wanted too but she was never greedy as she was contented with the life she was bred to lead. She had enough; she could never be greedy, but Richard... He had almost everything because of her; everything but love.

And now, even without Amelie, he could finally have it all.

While she would be left with nothing.

"Mrs. Ashford? Mrs. Ashford, are you alright?" Anna's worried voice broke through the heavy shield of slumber and Amelie slowly opened her eyelids.

Seeing how she was still sitting on the same spot on the floor of her office, she realized that she had spent the entire night there, mulling over her options until she finally fell asleep.

Anna carefully helped her get back up and led her to the couch, where she offered her boss a bottle of water, her eyes still filled with worry as she looked the woman up and down.

"Mrs. Ashford, are you hurt? Did you faint?
Should I call a doctor?"

Amelie emptied the bottle almost instantly and
wiped her lips with the napkin she received from
her assistant, her red, stinging eyes fixed
absent-mindedly on the space before her.

"No, Anna, I'm fine. Please get the car ready. I am
going to visit Sophie Fisher at the hospital."

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