



## 83 Then Marry Me, Mr. Bennett

"What do you mean, Miss Ashford? What's wrong?" 1

Liam watched as Amelie's cheeks glistened with tears, each drop tugging at his heart. Her distress was a knife to his soul, and he couldn't bear to see her in pain. "Miss Ashford, please talk to me," he said gently, stepping closer.

Amelie took a deep breath, her chest rising and falling with a mix of hesitation and doubt. Regardless of her efforts, her voice remained a trembling whisper.

"Mr. Bennett, when you said you wanted me as your wife... were you serious?" 5

Without a second thought, Liam reached out, cupping her face in his big hands. Her skin felt warm and soft beneath his touch. He lifted her chin, ensuring their eyes met, and tenderly wiped away her tears with his thumbs.

"As serious as a heart attack, Miss Ashford. I don't think I can be more transparent about being in love," he confessed, his voice





unwavering. 2

Amelie's lips trembled again as her mind absorbed his words. If he was serious, then she was ready to put her fate in his hands. 1

"Then marry me, Mr. Bennett. I will become your wife, just like you wanted." 2

Liam's expression darkened momentarily, his gaze dropping as if burdened by a sudden, heavy thought. He turned his face away from hers and his tightly pursed lips curled down for a moment.

Amelie's heart sank; she was afraid that she made him upset, believing she was making light of his genuine feelings. But then, just as swiftly, his face suddenly broke into a wide smile again while his gaze shone with excitement.

"I was dying to hear these words, Miss Ashford. Marrying you will make me the happiest man in the world."

As she looked into his joyful face, a pang of guilt stabbed at her momentarily.

If Liam truly harbored serious feelings for her,

then her motives were horribly misguided—she had agreed to this marriage just to spite Richard; to save herself and her own pride. However, the thought of Richard marrying Samantha and taking everything that belonged to her fueled her resolve once again. She was entitled to this, she convinced herself.

Even if she was going to use this man for her own selfish reasons, the least she could do was to try and be useful to him as well.

"Mr. Bennett... Regardless of our circumstances, I will do my best to assist you with the company and promise to never interfere with your personal life."

Liam's face tightened at her words, a flicker of offense passing through his eyes. Perhaps, he finally guessed what was really happening with Amelie.

"No matter what your reason for doing this is, I won't let you go back on your words," he declared firmly.

Before Amelie could say anything else, Liam's phone rang and he immediately glanced at the screen. "It's Austin," he muttered. "I snuck out



while we were having lunch, he must be looking for me. I... have to go."

He offered Amelie one last regretful smile and nodded. "I will contact you later, Miss Ashford."

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Liam sat in his car, his fingers tapping nervously on the car seat's leather as Austin scolded him for abandoning him at the restaurant with one of his partners.

His hands were trembling, his mind a whirl of tangled thoughts. *'I didn't know I would meet her there today,'* he mused, thinking back to the moment he saw Amelie in the gardens behind her hotel. *'I thought she'd be at JFC headquarters, I heard she has been busy these days. But not only did I see her, she told me she would marry me...'*

He clenched his fists, trying to steady his trembling hands.

*'What is going on? Did that bastard finally decide to divorce her? But why so soon? Did something happen? She was crying...'* Shaking his head, he resolved to make the most of this opportunity,

even though he was worried that Amelie was hurt. *'No matter what it is, I'll prove to her that she will be better off with me instead of that moron. Even if this, too, is only a marriage of convenience, at least with me, she will be loved.'* 2

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Amelie lay on her bed, staring at the flawlessly white ceiling of her penthouse suite and replaying the afternoon's events in her mind. Meeting Liam today was a fateful encounter but it left her with something heavy lodged between her lungs.

She knew she was being selfish, and Liam was getting the short end of the deal. Amelie couldn't reciprocate his feelings and, instead of helping him redeem his image in the eyes of the public, this marriage might only bring more scandal into his already hectic life. After all, she was an older woman who had been married before and discarded for a mistress. 1

What would people think about that? 1

*'But I am experienced,'* she thought, desperately trying to justify her actions. *'I know a lot about managing large businesses. Now that I am going*



*to lose my charity and my... hotel,' she sighed heavily, 'I am going to do my best to help him manage the company too. At least people will see him as a competent manager.'* 1

Her mind raced with ideas. "Iceland!" she exclaimed, sitting up on the bed. "Mr. Ingvarsson said he would be happy to work with me again if I were the one to lead the project. If I ask him to make the deal with Liam's company instead, maybe this time, it will finally come through!" 3

She was getting ahead of herself, she knew, but the excitement of having a plan that could help Liam redeem his image gave her hope. Deciding to sleep on it and wait until Liam contacted her again, she tried to calm her racing thoughts, nestling under the warm blanket with her head on the soft pillow.

Just as she began to drift off, a sudden realization jolted her awake. She jumped from her bed, her mind spinning with a mixture of worry and dread. 1