

88 What Is This Charade?

"Any news?" 1

Richard emptied the cup of coffee brought by the maid, wincing at its bitter taste enhanced by the fact that it had already grown cold. Samantha had to leave when Miss Smith brought in his beverage and now he was back at handling business as his assistant was standing before his desk wearing a disappointed expression.

Richard fixed his brown eyes on Ron, impatient to hear a reassuring reply but the man only shook his head and sighed.

"I'm afraid no, Mr. Clark. No matter what we tried, we couldn't find it."

Richard leaned in on his elbows and wiped his face with both hands in frustration. It was disappointing.

'I took the copy of Samantha's employee contract from Amelie but I still haven't got the original one. I know there is only one copy left and it was supposed to be with Jason Sanson, but nobody can get a hold of him now. It's like he



just suddenly disappeared into thin air.'

"Alright," he finally replied out loud, "Keep your eye on Jason Sanson's surroundings and let me know as soon as something important comes up."

"Of course, Mr. Clark."

"Now," Richard continued, "We need to talk about the plans we have been discussing for the last couple of weeks. Is the paperwork ready?"

Ron placed a thin black folder on the desk in front of his boss and explained, "These were drafted by the lawyer I outsourced; it doesn't look like there are going to be any issues unless someone knows what to look for. As long as no one questions the financial reports, the plan will be executed flawlessly."

Richards skimmed over the papers while his assistant was talking, then hid them back inside the folder, and nodded. "Good job. Keep it all under the covers and make sure no one from the company finds out about this. The selling date is almost here; then, I will disclose it to the others."



Amelie pushed a long light-green curtain aside and looked outside her window. The door to the balcony was locked and so were all the windows; Richard was indeed prepared for her visit three days ago. The security guards were positioned outside and all around the mansion, especially in her part of the house to ensure that Amelie wouldn't run away.

She felt ridiculously stupid and helpless at the same time. 1

"This is insane. I can't believe this is actually happening to me. To lock me inside his house like a punished teenager. Like a princess in a tower guarded by an evil monster. Madness." 1

Amelie couldn't get even a moment's rest. She slept for quite some time after she fainted the other day but then, her mind was not able to find peace.

'How do I get out of here? The security men do not allow me to go past my quarters and all the windows are locked. If I break the glass, the alarm will go off right away. How long is he planning on keeping me here anyway? Is he actually scheming something behind my back



while I'm unable to do anything?' 2

A rhythmic knock on the door pulled Amelie out of her contemplations. A tall middle-aged maid entered her bedroom for just a few moments, left a tray with several dishes and drinks on the coffee table, offered Amelie a reserved nod, and left, just as silently as she appeared.

Amelie looked at the assorted freshly cooked dishes and sighed.

'New maids, new chef... I guess she has already replaced the entire staff in this house.' 1

She fell helplessly onto the armchair next to the window and looked outside once again.

'Why is he worried whether I'm talking to Liam or not? He is about to divorce me and toss me out anyway, what is this charade?' 2

Another sigh escaped her lips and Amelie felt a slight pang deep inside her chest.

'I wonder if Liam tried to contact me already... I hope he is not worried.'



"What?! She is so sick that no one is allowed to see her?!"

Liam jumped to his feet, the force of his movement pushing his desk chair back until it hit the wall with a loud thud. Austin rushed over to check if anything was broken, then sighed in relief and guided his boss to the couch, hoping to calm him down and continue their conversation.

"This is what I was told by Mrs. Ashford's assistant, Anna. Truth be told, neither she nor I believe this is the case. Miss Hayden wasn't allowed to visit her either. She said Mrs. Ashford is staying at the Clark residence, which already looks more than suspicious to me."

Liam's face turned serious and cold.

"I have been calling her all morning but the phone seemed to be turned off. I guess she has no way to contact anyone there, otherwise, her assistant would have helped."

"Why would he lock her in the mansion?" Austin couldn't comprehend the motives behind Richard's actions but Liam seemed to have cracked them right away.

'Did he somehow find out that Amelie will become my wife after the divorce? But this just doesn't make any sense, he can't keep her locked there forever. Is it because of the copy of that woman's employee contract that she got? I guess he wants to keep Amelie away from his business while he is still working on his plans... Petty. And pathetic.'

"So what are we going to do now?" Seeing how Liam remained silent, Austin decided to push for any possibility that could help in this situation.

Liam sighed and leaned against the back of the couch. "We can't really do anything drastic right now; it's not like we can call the police on him or anything. He will be able to cover this up anyway. But I do need to be able to talk to her in the meantime. She must be scared and confused..."

Leaving his seat, Liam walked to his desk, opened a drawer, and retrieved a newly bought smartphone in an unwrapped box. He then opened the box, inserted a SIM card, and handed it to his assistant.

"Give this to Kyle and ask him to find a way to

deliver it to Amelie. Since Samantha is already in his pocket, he should be able to manage this." 1

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