

95 Reunion

Amelie sat quietly in her room, the silence only broken by the soft ticking of the clock on her nightstand. Her thoughts were a whirlpool of memories and emotions, all centered around the painful divorce she was enduring. 1

She still couldn't believe that Richard dared to keep her locked in the mansion even after insulting her by initiating the process without even talking to her first, but none of that was really important anymore. 2

Suddenly, a knock at her door startled her. The lock clicked open and a tall, sturdy man dressed as one of the security guards stepped inside, offering her a reserved nod. 1

"Mrs. Ashford, you need to come with me. There's someone you need to meet," he said politely.

Amelie's heart sank. *Is this about the divorce again?* she wondered, but she agreed and followed him anyway.

The car ride to the meeting spot was a blur of

anxious thoughts. Amelie wasn't nervous anymore but she didn't appreciate being kept continuously oblivious about the things that concerned her directly.

When the car finally stopped, Amelie finally looked out the window and was utterly surprised to see the familiar façade of the Emerald Hotel. Confusion and curiosity mingled in her mind as the guard helped her get out of the car and escorted her inside.

"The person you need to meet is waiting for you in the lobby," he informed her, bowed his head, and left.

As she stepped into the lobby, her eyes fell on a figure standing by the window, looking out at the city. When he turned around, following the sound of her heels, Amelie's breath caught in her throat. 1

It was Liam. 2

His warm smile reached Amelie's eyes, and for a moment, all her worries faded away. She felt a strange, unexpected happiness blossoming inside her and couldn't help but smile back.

Liam's cheeks flushed slightly; he opened his arms, inviting her into his shy embrace. Without a second thought, she found herself running to him, nuzzling herself inside his strong arms. 4

As she pressed her face against his chest, tears streamed down her cheeks, releasing the pent-up emotions she had been holding inside for so long.

Liam's heart raced with a dozen horses and for a moment, he was afraid that he would go deaf from the loud pounding sound that was ringing in his ears. He gently patted Amelie's head, his voice a soothing balm as he whispered, "It's good to see you again, Miss Ashford. I really missed you." 1

Returning to the penthouse suite that served her as a new, temporary home through these past few months, felt unexpectedly soothing and relaxing.

In the past, Amelie couldn't help but feel that this room was her shelter; somewhere she could hide while running away from pressing reality. Now, however, it truly felt like coming home.

"What happened, Mr. Bennett?" she finally asked, "How did you manage to get me out of the mansion?" 4

Liam turned to her, his eyes softening as they met hers. "It wasn't that difficult, Miss Ashford. Your husband made a grave mistake and I bartered your freedom for my letting it slide," he said, stepping closer. "You're free from that man now, Miss Ashford. You can go anywhere you want. But most importantly, you can now come to my mansion. With me. You don't have to stay trapped anymore."

Amelie felt a flutter of nerves in her stomach at the thought of moving in with Liam right away. She was still not ready to be met by entirely new groups of people who would most likely view her as an intruder rather than as a new addition to their household.

"I... I feel a little nervous about that," she admitted, looking down at her hands.

Liam reached out, gently lifting her chin so she would meet his gaze again. "It's going to be alright," he reassured her, his voice calm and steady. "You have no idea how eager everyone is

to finally meet you." 2

Taking a deep breath, Amelie asked, "Is it okay if I stay in a hotel until the divorce is finalized? I want to enter your house properly, not while I'm still married to someone else."

Liam pouted slightly, but then he nodded, respecting her wishes. "Of course, Miss Ashford. Whatever makes you comfortable."

She gave him a small, grateful smile. "I don't have my things with me, though. I'll need some money to get a room at another hotel if you don't mind."

Liam's expression softened into a tender smile. "That won't be necessary," he said. "As the owner of this hotel, you don't need to pay for anything here."

Amelie blinked in surprise, not fully understanding his words. "Owner? What do you mean?" 1

He took her hands in his, his eyes sparkling with emotion. "It would have been more romantic under different circumstances, but I managed to acquire this hotel for you. It's a wedding gift, Miss Ashford. I hope you like it." 7

Her eyes widened, and she felt her heart catch in her throat.

Of all the things she had ever owned, this hotel was her most treasured possession. It was the only thing she had left to remind her of her late mother and it broke her heart when she learned that she would lose it after divorcing Richard.

But Liam saved it; he saved her; he saved the memories that could never be replaced. Not only did he give her back a cherished place, he gave her back a piece of her past. He gave her back a piece of her heart.

She had no words to describe her emotions.

Understanding how she felt, Liam smiled again and nodded reassuringly. "It's yours again, Miss Ashford. From now on, I will make sure you will never lose it again."

Tears welled up in Amelie's eyes as she threw her arms around the man, holding him tightly while her voice trembled. "Thank you, Mr. Bennett. This means more to me than you could ever know."

He held her just as tightly, his hand gently

stroking her hair. "You don't need to thank me, Miss Ashford. Just being with you is enough, really."

She pulled back slightly, looking up at him with tear-filled eyes. "How can I ever repay you for this?" 2

Liam cupped her face in his hands, wiping away her tears with his thumbs. "You don't need to repay me, Miss Ashford. Just stay by my side. That's all I'll ever need." 4

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