

There's someone out there for everyone.

Friday – 8pm

She poured herself a glass of wine and looked out of the window. She didn't know why, she knew he wasn't coming; he had SAID he wouldn't be coming. Still, what he said and what he meant were two very different things. How long had this been going on now? Two years exactly, their second anniversary had been last week.

Deep down, she knew she deserved better than to be the other woman but, on the other hand he did seem to truly love her, when they were together, he made her feel that she was the only one that mattered, but was she? She had seen a photo of his wife before; prim and proper, no wonder he felt stifled. No good ever comes out of marrying before you're thirty she mused and he was approaching his thirtieth this year.

Suddenly, headlights shone through the window, she turned in surprise. Quickly, she went into the kitchen and returned with a second wine glass that she put on the table and waited, sure enough, she heard the key in the lock and stood up.

He stood before her, dark haired, unshaven and looking like something out of a Mills & Boon novel.

'I didn't think you were coming.'

'Neither did I.'

'Drink?'

'Thanks.'

'You look tired.'

'I am.'

'Frustrated?'

'Yes.'

'What's happened?'

There was a pause. '...It was negative.'

She froze and felt a wave of relief, not because she wanted children but because she could feel her rival's status rise even higher and felt the knife being twisted further. 'Oh...'

'So...'

'I'm sorry.'

'No you're not.'

'No I'm not.'

Sensing he wanted to say more, she turned and approached him slowly, she loosened his tie and began to kiss him. He shivered and slipped his arms around her waist, he was still hers, she could feel it.

Chapter

One

Saturday

Perdita smiled as she felt his thumb slowly stroke her nipple, she was pleased he was able to have a lie in as well, he was supposed to be on a “business trip” with his law firm. She stared into the distance, suddenly, she felt him stir behind her.

‘What time is it?’

She rolled over to face him. ‘Does it matter?’

He sighed, sat up and reached for his phone. ‘I’m supposed to be in a meeting.’

‘Well...You don’t normally have your phone switched on in meetings do you?’

‘No but-’

She smiled. ‘But what?’

He kissed her. ‘Nothing.’

‘How’s it going by the way?’

‘How’s what going?’

‘The big plans!’

‘Fine!’

‘The big three-O!’

‘Yes!’

‘Will she do the same for yours?’

‘No doubt!’

‘How sweet! You two, only a few months apart! I’m the baby! A whole *year!*’

‘Now! Now!’ He paused. ‘I might have to go in a minute.’

‘Am I invited?’

‘What do *you* think?’

‘Worth a try.’

‘Perdita...’

‘Oh no! Don’t you *dare!*’

He sighed. ‘Look, I’m just trying to be practical.’

‘You can be as practical as you want, it won’t change anything.’

‘Look Perdy...’

‘Hush!’ She began to kiss his neck and work her way downwards. ‘Just shut up and lie back.’

~

Jenny bit her lip and looked down at the guest list, she still wasn’t sure whether or not this party was going to be too big, she smiled, she knew what Benjamin would say, he’d say that there was no such thing as too big and that whatever she wanted, she should have. She smiled to herself, she was so lucky! She could remember the day they met and even now, she couldn’t believe how lucky she was. Suddenly, her phone went, she reached for it and her blood ran cold, quickly, she deleted the text and carried on.

‘Hello?’

‘In here darling!’

‘Oh there you are!’ He kissed her head.

‘You’re late!’

‘Yeah! Sorry!’

‘Oh no! It wasn’t a criticism!’

‘How’s the party list going?’

‘I think there’s too many people.’

‘Nonsense!’

‘There are!’

‘Darling, it’s your *birthday!* You have as many people as you like!’

‘Well, I don’t know if we’re going to have enough room!’

‘We’ll be fine!’

‘Well...if you’re sure...’

‘Yes! I’m sure...’

Suddenly the phone rang, Jenny tutted. ‘Oh god! Who’s that!’

‘I’ll get it!’

‘Oh you don’t have to...’

‘No! No! No problem!’ He felt himself begin to perspire as he dashed out into the hallway.

‘Hello?’

‘Hello darling!’

‘What are you doing calling here?’ He wasn’t even going to bother to ask how she got hold of his home number – he knew how.

‘I just fancied a chat!’

‘No you didn’t you’re just being spiteful!’

‘That’s not true!’

‘Right! So yes! That sounds fine!’

What? Oh! *She* must have come in ‘I’ll speak later then.’

‘Yes! Yes we’ll cross the T’s and dot the I’s so to speak. Bye!’

‘I love you!’

‘Yes! Yes! Bye!’ He hung up and allowed himself to breathe out slowly.

‘Everything alright?’

‘Sorry?’

His wife smiled. ‘Is everything alright?’

‘Yes! Fine! Just discussing this document, have to dot the I’s and cross the T’s.’

‘Oh of course!’

‘Now! Where were we?’

She grinned and kissed him. ‘My party – drink?’

‘Why not?’

Sunday

Sunday, for the majority of people was a day of rest, Benjamin opened his eyes and immediately felt a head ache coming on. He loved his wife, he truly did it was just that with Perdita he felt...he felt alive again, he couldn't really explain it. Still, he had to make sure that things didn't get out of hand. He had his wife's birthday to think about and he knew that he had to concentrate on that. He loved his wife and always would, but, it was just that, at times, he felt a bit claustrophobic. When he met Perdita, she had been flirtatious, attractive and a breath of fresh air, she had helped him relax and had given him a chance to escape. Of course, he knew that it had been wrong and he had tried to end it. Yet, he found that, no matter how hard he tried, he always went back to her. He was addicted, still, he couldn't think about that now. The big day was in two weeks' time and he had the perfect gift in mind, she had often said about a specific bracelet and necklace set, he had ordered it on line for her and had arranged to collect it on Monday. He loved his wife and wanted her to have everything, he had no intention, at the moment, of leaving her.

That evening, they were settled in the living room together when Jenny went out into the kitchen and came back with two plates.

'Cake?'

He smiled as a plate of sponge cake appeared in front of him. 'Thank you darling!'

'Are you alright?'

'Fine! You?'

'Yeah!'

'Looking forward to your birthday?'

'Absolutely!'

'Well, you'll see, the big three-O's not that bad.'

She grinned. 'Yes...I'm looking forward to yours!'

'Oh God! Don't!'

‘Oh you can get bladdered and you won’t notice a thing.’

‘Thanks.’

‘So...Is that business all sorted out now?’

He smiled. ‘Completely! All I want to do now is concentrate on spoiling you my love!’

‘What did you get me?’

‘Oh I couldn’t tell you that!’

‘Why not?’

‘Oh please!’

‘What?’

‘Well! It’s like talking to a child!’

‘Ah ha! Now you know what it’s like!’

‘Very funny!’

She smiled. ‘I don’t really mind, I just want everyone to enjoy themselves!’

‘You are too good my darling!’

‘Well...’

‘No, I mean it, I-I don’t deserve you!’

She went over to him and snuggled into his side. ‘Maybe I don’t deserve *you!*’

‘Rubbish.’

They began to kiss.

~

Perdita smiled as she lay alone in her bed, jealousy was still twisting her gut but then she decided to relax, jealousy was, after all, for stupid little girls, she decided to just go with it...it was then that she had an idea...an amusing, if not cruel, idea.

Chapter

Two

Monday

Looking out of the window, Perdita smiled as the sun shone through and pushed herself away from the computer, she glanced at her watch and saw that she only had a few minutes to go until lunchtime, deciding to 'live on the edge' for once, she grabbed her coat and her mood lightened considerably as she rushed outside. The sun was bright and there was a slight breeze which was chilly but not cold, she happily did up her coat and headed to the nearby Café where she treated herself to a sandwich, coffee and muffin. She dug out her electronic organiser and was just scheduling appointments for her clients when a shadow suddenly fell over her.

'Excuse me, may I sit here?'

She glanced up and saw an attractive thin woman smiling down at her. 'Oh of course! Please!'

'Thank you!'

Suddenly, as she sat down, Perdita froze, she suddenly remembered seeing her in photos; this was the wife! Her sudden instinct was to smugly inquire after her husband but then a more devious plan came into her mind.

'Looks hectic!'

Perdita looked down at her organiser and laughed. 'Oh don't! Please! I only get an hour of escapism!'

'What do you do?'

'Events' organiser.'

'Sounds interesting!'

'Well...it has its moments.'

'I wonder if I should tell my husband about you.'

Perdita's eyebrows raised. 'Oh? Why's that?'

'Oh, it's- it's my birthday in two weeks' time.'

'Oh great! Is it a big one?'

‘Thirty!’

‘No! You don’t look it!’

‘Now you’re starting to sound like my husband!’

‘Well! I never would have guessed!’

‘Well, thank you.’

‘Anyway, I’m sure your husband has everything in hand, if they love you enough, they’ll make the extra effort.’

‘Is that what you tell your clients?’

‘Of course not! I’m running a business!’

They both laughed.

‘Well...thank you!’

‘My pleasure!’

She looked at the card. ‘I don’t know...I like the idea of having royal treatment.’

‘None other than you deserve!’

‘Yes but it’s only two weeks away.’

‘That’s plenty of time! I’m a fast worker! Beside I’m sure it would only be a little bit of background work, I’m sure you’ve thought of everything.’

‘Well...yes, but it would still sort of be great to have a professional opinion...’

‘Well...you could always discuss it with your husband and let me know – my mobile’s on the card.’

‘Thank you!’

‘My pleasure!’

‘Nice meeting you...’

‘Perdita...’ She pulled a face. ‘Like one hundred and one Dalmatians. Unfortunately all the kids at my school had seen the film!’

‘Oh dear! Um...I’m Jenny.’

‘Please to meet you!’

~

‘Hello?’

Jenny smiled. ‘Hiya!’

Benjamin came out. ‘Hey! How was your birthday shopping spree?’

‘Fine! Thank you!’ She kissed him. ‘You *are* good to me!’

‘Hey! It’s no less than you deserve!’

‘...And I made a new friend...’

‘Look at you! So...who is it? Should I be jealous?’

‘No! The friend is a she!’

‘Oh!’

‘There’s something else as well!’

‘Oh?’

She sat down next to him. ‘This woman I met, she’s an events organiser!’

‘Right...’

‘I just thought it would be nice to well...have an expert opinion...’

He smiled. ‘You do fine darling!’

‘No, I know, I just thought it would be nice that’s all...just-just for fun-’

He laughed. ‘Oh darling! You don’t have to justify yourself! If that’s what you want!’

‘Thank you!’

‘So...is this someone you actually met or did you look in the yellow pages?’

‘Ha! Ha! No! This is an actual person. Her name’s...oh! Hang on!’

‘Does she exist?!’

‘Oh shut up!’ He laughed as she dug out her card. ‘Here! Told you!’

‘Give it here! Let’s have a look!’

‘Her name’s Perdita Bride.’

Just as she handed the card to him, he heard the name and his heart stopped and he felt his blood run cold. ‘Perdita Bride?’

‘Yes!’

‘Right.’

‘What is it?’

‘No! Nothing! Just thinking...unusual name that’s all!’

‘Yes! I thought that!’

‘Um...listen...are you sure that you want this?’

‘Why not?’

‘Well...I was just thinking you do a wonderful job anyway!’

‘Yes but- well, I was just thinking how nice it would be to work with someone who actually does this for a living! Get some real insight and it’ll help for future reference.’

He smiled. ‘You really want to do this don’t you?’

‘Yes!’

‘Oh...alright! Yes! Go on!’

‘Thank you darling! I’ll contact her.’

Tuesday evening

Perdita took her time, she had decided to go with the faint make-up, she put on pale pink blusher and mulberry lipstick. She was to meet them at their place, at the moment; her feelings were ambivalent on the matter although she did allow herself a small smile as she imagined the look on his face.

She pulled up outside the house and looked at the homely warm glow behind the front door, despite their affair, she had never been there, it was their own little world, it didn't bode well to mix the moral and amoral. After taking one final look in the mirror, she grabbed the folders she had brought with her and marched up to the door; she rang the bell and waited. She bit her lip, thinking, would he answer the door and tell her to get lost? Probably, but he'd need a good excuse for that.

Benjamin was well aware that she had arrived but he was trying to ignore the headlights that had just drawn up.

‘Darling?’

‘Yes?’

‘Could you get the door for me?’

At that, he heard the doorbell and stiffened, taking a deep breath, he put on a fake smile and opened the door, there she stood, although he was infuriated, he couldn't help noticing how gorgeous she looked as well.

‘Hi!’ She held out her hand.

He took it. ‘Hello! You must be Perdita!’

‘...And you must be Benjamin!’

‘Please, come in!’

‘Thanks!’ She stepped inside. ‘You have a lovely home!’

‘Thanks! Come through.’

‘Love to!’

‘Yeah alright! Don’t overdo it!’ He muttered as she removed her coat.

‘What? I’m just being civil.’ She muttered back.

Jenny smiled and was so accommodating that Perdita almost felt guilty - almost.

‘Perdita! Hi!’

‘Hi!’

‘I see you’ve met my husband.’

‘Yes!’

‘Glass of wine?’

‘Oh white please!’

‘Benjamin? Would you?’

‘Err... yes!’ Still feeling like he was in a nightmare, he walked into the kitchen and opened the bottle; his palms were beginning to sweat as he poured out the two glasses. When he came back in, he could hear laughing which, he had to admit was better than screaming. He struggled to remain calm and headed back inside.

‘Here you are!’

‘Oh thank you darling!’

‘I heard laughing, what’s so funny?’

‘Oh I was just telling Perdita about when you proposed.’

‘Oh *that!*’

‘Yes!’ Perdita laughed. ‘Not very romantic saying that you had nothing else to do!’

‘What I actually *said* was, I didn’t want to wait until we just did it out of boredom! I wanted us to get married while I was still very much in love with her!’

‘Awww! That’s so sweet darling!’

Perdita watched them kiss and felt a pang of jealousy.

‘What about you Perdita?’

‘Me?’

‘Yes! Anyone special?’

‘Oh...well...I’m so busy-’

‘Oh there must be someone surely! As pretty as you!’

‘Darling! Don’t pry! If she doesn’t want to tell us!’

‘I’m just asking!’

‘Well...there *is* someone but it’s complicated.’

‘Oh? In what way?’

‘Oh...well...’

‘Darling! It’s none of our-’

‘It’s-it’s just that he keeps blowing hot and cold.’

‘Oh! Any particular reason why?’

‘Not a clue!’

‘Oh well, it could be shyness or else he’s not worth bothering with!’

‘Yeah! Probably!’ She finished her drink. ‘Thanks.’

The evening passed amicably and soon she was saying. ‘As I said, any thoughts or worries, you can always ask me.’

‘Thanks, can I get you anything else? A coffee, tea, juice?’

‘Oh no! I best be getting back.’

‘Oh of course! Goodness is that the time?’

‘Yeah! Time flies!’

‘Well...it was really nice meeting you!’

‘You too.’

‘And thank you so much!’

‘Hey! Thank *you* for increasing the amount in my bank account!’

They both laughed suddenly, a mobile rang. ‘Oh sorry!’ Jenny reached for her handbag. ‘That’s mine! Ben would you?’

‘Of course!’

Jenny watched them and then headed towards the kitchen, her blood ran cold as she spotted the number, quickly; she pressed the green button.

‘Yes! I know it’s you! What do you think you’re playing at? ...I don’t care! It was a *mistake!* Just leave me alone!’ She viciously pressed the red button and rested her head on the stairs; she could feel her heart beating.

Chapter

Three

Saturday

The sun greeted Perdita as she awoke the following morning; she smiled, it faded slightly as she saw the amount of paperwork that had to be done. Suddenly, she had an idea, it was a glorious day and it was lovely and warm. She decided to pack a picnic and take it to the park. Grabbing her portfolio, she raced out into the sun and headed to the park.

The weather was glorious, parents with their kids walked in the sunshine and their kids had a good romp, laughing and shouting. Feeling up beat, she opened her portfolio and reached for the mini quiche she had brought with her. The breeze was cool but not cold and the warm sun was glorious. Reaching for a Perrier, she unscrewed it and lay back in the sun. Suddenly, she heard footsteps.

‘What the hell do you think you’re playing at?’

She smiled and didn’t open her eyes. ‘Nice to see you too!’

‘I mean it Perdita!’

‘Oh stop being so uptight and sit down!’

Benjamin shook his head and threw himself down on the grass. ‘You’re not funny you know!’

‘I never said I was!’

‘I’m warning you! You stay away or else...’

She sat up and looked him straight in the eyes. ‘...Or else what?’

Benjamin shook his head and felt his resolve slowly ebb away. ‘What’s going on?’

‘Nothing! I swear! Look, your wife and I just got chatting casually and she discovered I was an events planner and one thing led to another!’

‘You expect me to believe that?’

‘Oh what you *really* think I planned to break up your cosy, family life? What do you take me for?’

‘You really want me to answer that?’

‘Please! I may be some things but I’m not desperate!’

He shook his head. 'I can't do this Perdita!'

'Do what?'

'This!'

'Why do you keep coming back for more then?'

'I-'

'Mmm?' She slowly pushed him back and began toying with the buttons on his shirt.

'Look, Perdy, this has to stop and I want you to stay away from my wife.'

'What excuse can I possibly give her? We're becoming quite good friends-'

'And I want you to quit as party organiser.'

'What?!'

'You heard!'

'Right...' Perdita replaced the lid on her Perrier. '...And you don't think that may look a bit suspicious? Your wife *asked* me! I didn't *offer*!'

'Oh Christ!'

She watched him push a hand through his hair and bite his lip, she put a hand on his shoulder. 'Look...may-maybe I could say that I'm double booked-'

'No...you've said you'll do it now and she'll think it strange that a professional isn't better organised – you could lose work too.'

'Well...I don't mind.' Perdita was touched that he was thinking of her reputation.

'No...how's that going to look?' He stood up. 'I have to go, look, you keep your head down and just get on with the job.'

'And after?'

He didn't reply, truth be told, he hadn't really thought that far ahead.

'Alright! Fine! Have it your way! I'll finish the party and then I'll be out of your life for good.'

This startled him slightly. ‘...Well...good! Glad we’ve got that sorted!’

‘Good!’

‘Fine!’

‘Why do you always have to ruin things? I was having a lovely picnic!’

‘Look I just-’

‘Just what?’

‘I-I’m just trying not to hurt her.’

‘Little late for that!’

‘Look-’

‘Look, let’s just leave things as they are otherwise she’ll get suspicious. Alright?’

Monday

Popping out for her lunch break, Perdita had so much on her mind that she barely noticed someone call her name.

‘Oh my god...Perdita?’

She whipped round and saw herself face-to-face with an ex-class mate.

‘*Gregory!*’

Her ex-classmate, tall and thin stood before her and grinned. ‘Long time no see!’ He ran a hand through his dark hair.

‘Yes! How *are* you?’

‘Oh well...I’m a chef now.’

‘Wow! Where?’

‘Oh Georgio’s.’

‘Oh my god! That really expensive restaurant on the corner?’

‘Yes!’

‘Wow! Well done you!’

‘What about you?’

‘Oh I’m an event’s organiser.’

‘Party planner?’

‘If you want to lower the tone, yes!’

The both laughed. ‘Sorry! So who is your latest client?’

‘Oh it’s a birthday party, I’m being hired as a treat by the husband!’

‘Nice! Does she know?’

‘Well...yes, I think it’s best to meet with the actual person, plan it together sort of thing, saves disappointments.’

‘Yes! Oh how lovely!’

‘Look, it’s been great to see you again.’

‘Yes!’

‘Maybe we should meet up another time, have a proper catch up.’

She smiled. ‘Like a date?’

He blushed slightly. ‘Well...no, just as friends.’

‘Yeah! Yeah I’d really like that.’

‘Alright! Well...I’ll call you!’

‘Why not?!

That evening, she got in and kicked off her shoes, feeling considerably better than she had all day, he was a good laugh, she remembered him from school, always joking and larking around. After everything, she needed some light relief.

