

169 How Long Before He Doesn't Love You Too?

Amelie drifted off to sleep in Liam's arms, the comfort of his embrace lulling her into a deep, dream-filled slumber. 1

In her dream, she was suddenly fifteen again. It was Christmas, and she was hiding in the living room of Richard's parents' home, crouched behind the couch, her heart fluttering with anticipation.

The soft flickering of the Christmas tree lights cast a warm, magical glow over the room, and she could hear the gentle crackle of the fireplace. Amelie held her hands against her mouth, trying to stifle her giggles as she watched Richard carefully place a beautifully wrapped gift under the tree.

Her heart soared at the sight. The thought of Richard thinking about her, of him choosing a gift just for her, filled her with a joy so pure and overwhelming that she felt like she might burst. She hugged her knees to her chest, her cheeks

aching from the smile that refused to leave her face.

The scene suddenly shifted, and now she was standing at her high school graduation ceremony.

The sun was shining brightly, and the air was filled with the sounds of laughter and applause. She wore her cap and gown, the tassel brushing against her cheek as she moved.

Amelie had just been announced as the valedictorian, graduating at the top of her class. As she descended the staircase in the grand hall of the private school, she saw him waiting for her at the bottom, a huge bouquet of flowers in his hands.

"Congratulations, Lily," he said, smiling, while he handed her the flowers. The way he looked at her, with such pride and admiration, made her heart swell with happiness. She had worked so hard, and his approval, his acknowledgment, made it all worth it.

The scene shifted again, this time to a cold winter night during her freshman year of university.



Amelie found herself outside a lively bar, the sounds of laughter and music spilling out into the street. She was drunk, her cheeks flushed from the alcohol, and she was greedily inhaling the refreshingly cold air, trying to sober up. Her head spun, and she leaned against the brick wall of the building, closing her eyes to steady herself.

Richard came out from the bar, his coat slung over his arm. He saw her and immediately wrapped his coat around her shoulders, pulling her into a comforting hug. "Are you alright? Do you want to go back to the hotel and rest?"

Amelie nodded, her head heavy on his shoulder, and Richard gently guided her to a waiting taxi.

She felt safe with him, protected, and as they arrived at the hotel, he led her to his room. They sat on the edge of the bed, and Richard turned to her, his gaze soft and tender. He leaned in and kissed her on the lips, and that very first kiss they shared sent shivers down her spine.

"I love you, Amelie."

But then the dream shifted again, and Amelie found herself standing in a beautiful church. It



was Richard's wedding day, but she wasn't just a guest this time—she was the bride.

She looked down and saw that she was wearing her mother's wedding dress, the delicate lace and satin fabric flowing around her. Her hands then instinctively moved to her swollen belly, and she realized with a start that she was pregnant.

Confusion and panic washed over her in an instant.

This wasn't right. She wasn't supposed to be the bride, wasn't supposed to be the one standing next to Richard at the altar. She looked around frantically, her heart racing, and then she saw Richard approaching her, a serene smile on his face.

"Look at you, Lily," he said softly, using the pet name he'd always called her. "Wasn't this something you always wanted? A beautiful wedding in Paris, me as your loving groom, and you... pregnant with our first child. I love you, Lily. How could you throw it all away?" 1

Amelie widened her eyes in shock, her voice trembling as she replied, "*I* was the one who

threw it away? How dare you? You made a joke out of our relationship, made me look like a fool! You discarded me at the first convenient opportunity like I meant nothing to you, and now you're trying to gaslight me into thinking it was my fault?"

Richard stepped closer to her, but Amelie took a step back, shaking her head. "You have no right to make me feel this way, Richard. Perhaps I never loved you more than as a friend, but you once said that you did. And now look what came of your love."

Tears streamed down Richard's cheeks as he pleaded, "So how can you be so sure the same thing won't happen with Liam? How long before he doesn't love you too?"

Amelie felt tears welling up in her eyes as well, but she wiped them away, staring straight into Richard's eyes.

She opened her mouth to speak, but the words caught in her throat. Her thoughts swirled in her mind like a storm.

'How long, I wonder too...' she thought. 'I was always trying to be perfect, but in the end, it



only made me boring and dull. What kind of person am I? What do I really have to offer apart from my experience and knowledge? I don't have exciting hobbies; I don't know how to spend my free time having fun. All I know is my work, my charity, my books in different languages... Was that what made Richard turn away from me and look at someone else instead? No matter how ridiculously bad Samantha is, she still managed to make Richard fall for her so hard he was willing to ruin everything.'

Then, Amelie narrowed her eyes, finally finding the strength to speak, her voice cold and firm.

"It won't happen with Liam. And you know why? Because when you cast me aside because I still wasn't perfect enough for you, Liam fell in love with all my imperfections instead. While I kept giving you everything I had, you could only take and demand more. While I spent hundreds of sleepless nights trying to think of ways to be a better wife for you, your mind was filled with thoughts of someone else.

Liam loves me for everything you took from me because he doesn't need any of that. With him, I feel like I'm becoming whole again. With him, I



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Liam loves me for everything you took from me because he doesn't need any of that. With him, I feel like I'm becoming whole again. With him, I



am not just a wife, I am a woman too. I can finally love as well as be loved.

So stop torturing me, Richard. Look at the love you have with another woman and ask yourself what exactly is messing up your mind that you are so scared of me being loved by someone else." 2

At that moment, the dream completely faded, and Amelie opened her eyes to find herself back in her bedroom, with Liam sleeping soundly beside her.

She reached out, brushing a strand of hair away from his face, her touch light and tender. As her fingers brushed against her own wrist, she noticed red marks decorating her skin like bracelets.

A soft smile curled up her lips.

'I always hated wearing things on my wrists... But I don't hate wearing this.' 3