

44 Don't Believe Everything He Says

Amelie's remark made Kyle feel even more embarrassed. "So you too know who I am? Wow, I'm flattered! And extremely embarrassed now. That was too much for this young man's heart."

Amelie was immune to his charms and only offered him a polite smile in response. The man continued. "Were you having a business lunch here? Good food, I like this place a lot, very suitable for important gatherings. Speaking of which..." He stood a little closer to her and added, "I have just finished an important gathering of my own and I heard something which you might find very interesting."

Mrs. Ashford was doubtful that someone like Kyle Marshall could know something that would be of any importance to her, yet she still wanted to hear him out. "Really? So what did you hear, Mr. Marshall?"

Kyle leaned over, getting even closer to Amelie's face, and whispered, "Someone started quite a

rumor about Mrs. Elizabeth Gilmore. If I remember correctly, she is your friend, am I right?"

Amelie felt her blood run cold. "What kind of rumor?"

Kyle grinned. "A nasty rumor claiming that Mrs. Gilmore gave birth to someone else's child while being married and left it with the man who is the child's real father. Have you ever heard a rumor like that before? If I were into filmmaking, I would use that as a plot for a blood-boiling melodrama. Well, my old man is in the entertainment business, so..."

Amelie was rendered utterly speechless and could no longer hear anything the man was saying. She recalled her conversation with Samantha and that mere thought made her incredibly angry. If that was indeed her who started it, then she had finally crossed the line.

"Who started the rumor?"

Kyle only shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know who started it, but I do know that everyone in my social circle is already aware of it."

A deep crease etched between Mrs. Ashford's eyebrows. She tried to think about the kind of circles Kyle was in and whether the information he learned there was in any way credible, but decided that it was not important right now.

What was important, however, was the fact that the rumor was out there already and something had to be done to make sure it wouldn't blow out of proportion.

Having noticed Amelie's distressed face, Kyle offered her a reassuring smile. "Mrs. Ashford, you look much too concerned; don't worry, something tells me you and I are mingling in different social circles regardless of our status." He paused for a moment as if to come up with another comforting thought before continuing, "That reminds me... do you know that Liam Bennett and I are good friends?"

Amelie didn't understand what that had to do with their current conversation but decided to answer anyway. "Yes, I am aware of that."

"Then I'm sure he has warned you about me already." His response was accompanied by a strange smile.

The woman had to disagree. "No? In fact, your person has never appeared in our conversations so far."

Something about Kyle was too suspicious. He knew who she was and he definitely knew that her relationship with Liam was far more advanced than that of mere acquaintances.

'Considering they are good friends, I guess Liam told him about me. Still... Something about him makes me feel a little uneasy.'

Mr. Marshall let out a somewhat disappointed sigh and brushed his fair hair backward, his light-green gaze averted as he spoke again, "In any case, do not believe everything he says. He acts all kind and sweet but he is a hypocrite just like everybody else. And you know," he finally looked back at her and added, "All of this was a part of his schemes too." 2

"Pardon?" Amelie's concern was only growing, but the man didn't have a chance to reply.

"Kyle! The cars are ready, let's go!"

One of Kyle's friends called for him and Mr. Marshall waved at the tall girl waiting for him at

the entrance. He offered Amelie a faint smile and said, "Enjoy the rest of your day, Mrs. Ashford. It was really nice to finally meet you."

Amelie watched as he exited the restaurant, a lingering feeling of tension gripping her heart. "What was all that about?"

The veil of the evening covered the city somewhat unexpectedly. Amelie looked out of the window of her penthouse suite and watched as the street lamps began to slowly turn orange with the round glow of their lightbulbs.

She brought a wine glass closer to her lips and took a small sip, her mind drifting back to her meeting with Kyle Marshall earlier today.

'I have my reasons to suspect Samantha of spreading rumors about Lizzy but if I confront her without solid evidence, I will only ridicule myself. I tasked Anna with looking into it but I don't think how successful it will be. Rumors are like a virus - it is easier to simply try and cure it than get to the patient zero.'

The train of thought then naturally led her to

what Kyle said about Liam Bennett.

"All of this was a part of his scheme," she repeated his words quietly and took another sip from her glass.

She flinched and was instantly jolted back to her senses when she heard an assertive knock on her door.

"Miss Ashford, are you there? I am going to walk the dog in the gardens, would you like to join me? The evening air is so refreshing!"

Amelie set her glass on the coffee table and looked at the door. There was no reason to disagree. This way, she would have a chance to talk to him.

The two of them must have gone through the bigger half of the garden before the heavy silence between them was finally disrupted by Amelie.

"I met Kyle Marshall today. Quite an interesting young man."

She didn't look at Liam when she said those

words but at the corner of her eye, she knew that he was taken aback and got a little nervous.

"Oh?" He tried to mask the tremble of his voice with an awkward smile, "Did he say anything out of the line? Did he try to flirt with you?!" He emphasized the second question harder which made Amelie laugh. She shook her head, "No, he didn't, we just had a little chat."

Liam exhaled in relief. "Good. Don't believe everything he says, he is such a fox!"

Amelie finally looked at him and said in a serious tone, "That's funny, he said exactly the same thing about you."

Liam let out a nervous chuckle and tried to explain, "Oh... Well... you know how it is between friends, we like to joke around behind each other's backs." 3

Amelie found the lack of confidence in his answer suspicious. She decided to finally ask the question that had been bothering her so much, "He also told me that all of this is a part of your scheme. What did he mean by that?"

Her question made him wince with his entire

body and Mrs. Ashford noticed that too. He walked silently for a bit, then spread his lips into a smirk and said, "What can you do, Miss Ashford... I guess you can either trust both of us or neither." 2

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