

58 No Regrets ¹

Amelie accepted the visitor's pass from one of the tall and slender police officers at the precinct and followed the guard to the prison cell where Johnathan Radcliffe had been held captive for the last couple of days. ¹

"Here you are, Mrs. Ashford. You have half an hour."

The tall and rather wide man in the police uniform pointed at the man Amelie was looking for with his finger and nodded, walking away with almost inaudible steps.

Mrs. Ashford approached the cell and greeted the man behind the bars.

"Mr. Radcliffe? You must be surprised. My name is Amelie Ashford, I am--"

Johnathan interrupted her. "I know who you are, Mrs. Ashford. You are quite a famous socialite and Elizabeth has told me a lot about you too."

Amelie couldn't help but smile. Although it was not the time or the place, she felt somewhat

happy that Lizzy talked about her to someone as important as the man she was in love with.

John left his cold bench and walked toward the thick metal bars, his heavy steps echoing through the empty cell he was confined in. He fixed his sharp brown eyes on the woman on the other side of his cell and sighed.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Ashford, I really am. I didn't mean for you to get caught in this mess too."

Amelie shook her head. "It's alright, I didn't come here today to blame you for anything. I'm here to talk."

The man offered her a surprised expression.

"Talk? What about?"

"Elizabeth said you were the one who found out about Samantha Blackwood's connection to Jason Sanson."

Her mentioning Elizabeth's name, made Johnathan flinch and grab the metal bars with both hands, his voice was trembling as he asked. "Elizabeth? How is she? God, my mind has been all over the place ever since the incident... Is she alright? I couldn't reach her lately..."



Amelie nodded and replied with a light but reassuring smile.

"Lizzy is fine. She was the one who asked me to come and talk to you today. She is desperate to help you, Mr. Radcliffe."

"Thank God..." Was the man's only response and Amelie continued. "Mr. Radcliffe, tell me everything you have found out about the rumors. Do not spare any detail."

John shook his head as if he was still not sure about his findings himself.

"Most of the people I talked to before, had no idea how the rumor started. To be honest, after some time, I was ready to give up on discovering the truth until one night, when I was a guest at a party in one of the marketing agencies that used to promote my book, I started talking to an advertising manager who got drunk and blurted out that he heard that rumor in a hostess bar uptown.

The name of that bar was burning a hole in my brain so I finally got courageous enough and went there, eager to uncover the truth.



I booked a room and got one of the girls serving me really drunk and started asking all the questions I thought would prompt her to start talking. Luckily, she didn't really need much incentive and told me everything right away.

And all the dots got connected. The person who started the rumor was none other than Jason Sanson, the owner of the hostess bar himself."

John finished the story and looked away as if he were embarrassed to meet Amelie's eyes while Mrs. Ashford was already confused by her own thoughts.

She had been right all this time -- Samantha was behind the rumors and she probably paid Jason Sanson off to spread the rumors using his connections.

There was still one thing that made almost zero sense to her -- why would Mr. Sanson agree to that in the first place? The connection the two of them shared was more than just suspicious.

Johnathan got a little nervous as Amelie didn't say anything after he finished his story so he decided to speak again.

"Mrs. Ashford... I am ready to face the consequences. I am prepared to go to court and to get clocked up in jail after that. Lizzy shouldn't have gone through all this because of some filthy wench. I will shoulder all the blame if needed to make sure she stays out of it."

Amelie was impressed by his resolve but she also had to agree that it had a tinge of immature foolishness in it. Yes, that was the man in love; stupid in love. And that was precisely what made him so admirable.

Amelie felt a little jealous but it was not the right time to let her true emotions get in the way of the more important goal at hand.

"Mr. Radcliffe... I came here today because I want you to avoid all this unnecessary trouble. Do you have any evidence that it was Jason Sanson who spread the rumor? Anything that could prove it?"

John nodded in confirmation. "Yes, I have a recording of my conversation with the girl in Mr. Sanson's bar! It's on my phone, but they took it away when I got arrested."

"I see." Mrs. Ashford tried to think about the people she had met today at the precinct and

nodded at John. "Thank you, Mr. Radcliffe, I'll see what I can do."

She put the handles of her purse over her shoulders prepared to leave when the man called out to her again. "Mrs. Ashford!"

Amelie paused and turned around. "Yes?"

"Can you... can you tell Lizzy that I don't blame her for anything? I am sure she must be blaming herself for all of this but I want her to know that I still feel the same. And if this situation were to repeat itself a million times in the future, I would still do the same. I have no regrets."

'No regrets...' Amelie repeated those words silently and smiled.

"Yes, Mr. Radcliffe. I will make sure Lizzy knows how you feel."