

67 Farewell

"I am really sorry, Mr. Ingvarsson," Amelie offered the man an apologetic look to which Einar responded with his usual subtle smile. 1

It had been already several days since the incident in Amelie's office and the man's face was finally turning to its normal, handsome state. The bruises and scratches were healing nicely thanks to the hospital treatment fully paid for by persuasive Austin Hall on behalf of his boss, and only his left eyebrow still had a small white bandaid plastered across its curving shape to cover up the stitches that he received that day.

"To be fair," Einar walked closer to Amelie and she immediately felt a strong smell of tobacco emanating from his clothes. She hated smokers but there was something unexpectedly soothing in the blend the man liked to smoke. Einar continued. "If Mr. Clark hadn't broken off the deal first, I would have done it myself instead. This whole thing... has turned into nothing but a mere mess. And I do not like to deal with messy

people." 1

Amelie couldn't help but feel guilty. "Mr. Ingvarsson, I--"

The man interrupted her by pressing his index finger against her lips.

"It is not your fault, Mrs. Ashford. You are but a convict of your circumstances and I pity your situation. Like I have said before, if you were the one leading this negotiation, I would have been more open to signing the agreement sooner. Unfortunately, I am not that lucky." 1

Amelie felt really bad about the entire situation. Many people were relying on this partnership including herself and the fact that Richard could toss this all away on a whim was utterly upsetting. 3

She had to admit to being selfish. Yes, she regretted spending so much time working hard on this project and eating herself alive for making even the smallest mistakes; but why shouldn't she? Perhaps it was that easy for Richard simply because he didn't care as much as she did, to begin with, because if he did, then he was but an utter idiot.



Amelie knew she was not at fault for such an unfavorable conclusion to this deal but she still wanted to show Einar that her heart was in the right place.

"I am really sorry you had to waste so much time here, Mr. Ingvarsson. I hope you will be able to find a very good partner to close the deal. I truly like your business idea and if I can do anything to help--"

This time, Einar interrupted her by covering her lips with his. 3

Amelie's eyes were round with astonishment while the man's lips slowly but gently moved over the soft skin of hers, desperately seeking a positive response.

She felt as if her body no longer belonged to her mind; she lost all control of it and could only remain silent and motionless, hoping that her senses would find their way back to her once more.

And once they finally did, Amelie placed her hands on top of Einar's shoulders to try and push him away but he withdrew himself first and locked his bright blue eyes on hers.



"Mr. Ingvarsson..." She tried to compose herself by faking a serious tone. "What... what is the meaning of this?"

Einar remained silent for a quite while, his eyes glued to the woman's blushing face, slowly scanning her for the reaction he still hoped was about to erupt.

In the end, he didn't find it, and a bitter, sad smile appeared on his lips as he finally said.

"Stundum missir astin sig í bakgrunni merkingar orðanna. Stundum... Til að fá svarið sitt, þarf maður að spyrja með líkamanum frekar en með röddinni. Og svarið sem ég fékk var

"nei!" [Sometimes love gets lost behind the meaning of words. Sometimes... In order to get his answer, one needs to ask with his body instead of his voice. And the answer I received was "no".]

Although Amelie understood every single word he said, she felt absolutely lost and couldn't form a single comprehensive response to his masked confession. Once again, Einar didn't need to hear her voice to know what to do next.

Tucking a loose strand of her soft hair behind

her ear, he said in a bleak voice, "Farewell, Mrs. Ashford. I really hope that we will meet again."

Amelie felt her neck growing numb as she realized that she had been sitting in the same position for almost an hour.

With her legs tucked to her chest, her chin was resting on her knees and although her body was desperate for a change in this sitting arrangement, she had no strength to move even a single muscle.

Liam's phone was tightly jammed inside her palm like a stress relief toy, her thumb lightly moved over the bulging buttons. The phone had been silent for days.

'Mr. Ingvarsson left today too... in the last week, it seems like all everyone was doing was leaving me.'

Amelie moved the phone closer to her eyes and pressed the big button right under its small screen. Every time she did that, she felt disappointed -- there was no blue envelope to indicate a new unread message.



'I have sent him many messages but he has not replied to any of them... I guess his brother's illness got a lot more serious. Poor Mr. Bennett, such a tragedy once again.'

She closed her eyes and tried to think back about the times they spent together. Every walk, every conversation, every encounter they had together was still fresh in her memory and she felt like she could flip through them like through the pages of a photo album.

And yet, she couldn't help but admit that even though it had barely been a week, all of it was already turning into the memories of the distant past, bound to be erased stroke by stroke with each passing day.

Amelie was exhausted. Slowly, her entire body was beginning to get heavier, and when she felt like she could finally fall asleep, the phone in her hand vibrated, jolting her back to her senses.

It was an incoming call.