

Chapter 100

A Screenshot of the Money Transfer

“Miss Johansson, did you visit Miles at his mansion last night?” Adele sipped coffee from her cup and asked casually.

Well aware of Adele’s shrewdness, Stella frowned and waited for a little longer, for she wanted to see if Adele knew the truth or was trying to trick her into confessing.

“Why the silence? Do you think I’m tricking you?” Adele chuckled. Still, Stella did not give an answer.

“Last night, when I went to his place, I was initially relieved to find that there were no traces of women around. But when I was leaving, I noticed female footprints on the soil in his garden—the prints were not there when I first arrived. Today, I figure I’d have a casual chat over coffee with you. But after seeing those white round toe loafers of yours, I knew for sure that you had been to his place. Am I right, Miss Johansson?”

Stella almost inhaled sharply at Adele’s detective work. When she was gaping in shock, Adele added, “You’re in the fashion business, and you’re currently in a complicated relationship with your ex-husband. I heard that he gave you a car not long ago. You did not inform Miles about that, did you?”

Cornered, Stella shook her head. She had purposely hidden the fact from Miles because she did not want to complicate matters. She wanted to tell the truth out loud but ultimately decided against it. Since Adele never took a liking to her, no matter how hard she tried to explain, she could not make Adele like her.

“Last time, I had promised to transfer 500,000 to you, Miss Johansson. After I returned to Canada, it so happened that Miles’s dad fell sick, so I forgot about the entire thing. Now that I’m back, I’m reminded of my promise. This afternoon, I will transfer the money to your account. By the way, you know that Miles and Kevin’s daughter are childhood sweethearts, don’t you?” Adele brought up Jasmine out of the blue.

Stella frowned at the mention of another girl. Last time, Adele had used Gabriella to ruin her relationship with Miles. This round, Adele had a new weapon—Jasmine Moore. A strong sense of suspicion arose in Stella. If a man truly loves his girlfriend, why would he get involved with his childhood sweetheart?

Last night, she overheard something about Kevin Moore’s daughter. So, was Adele lying to me when she told me that Gabriella is Miles’s ex-girlfriend?

Ever since Stella learned about Gabriella, she had been flooded by envy to the point of despair.

However, Adele’s words raised suspicion, and Stella started to feel a glimmer of hope for getting back with Miles. It seems that Gabriella isn’t his true love!

When Stella was busy thinking, Adele mistook the silence as acceptance. Before leaving, she said to Stella haughtily, “Just sit back, relax, and wait for my transfer this afternoon.”

Left alone in the cafe, Stella received a WhatsApp message from Jane. ‘Stella, I heard that you’re in Hollowcrest! Do you have time to hang out?’

Stella had been worrying over something for a while because she was supposed to get her period, but it was delayed for a week. As her period cycle had always been accurate, she felt a little irritated and anxious about the irregularity. Faced with this issue, she had wanted to rush home to Muredough for a checkup. Yesterday, her trip to Hollowcrest City was too rushed, and she left her personal matters unattended, including the 500,000 transfer that she promised Miles.

In the afternoon, she went to Miles Conglomerate's building for a quick look. After all, that was her old workplace and his office. Standing under the towering building, she looked up at the imposing structure, standing high among the concrete jungle.

Suddenly, she felt a warm rush of liquid, and she gasped silently. Is Aunt Flo finally paying a visit?

Knowing that the public restroom on the first floor in Miles Conglomerate was always packed, she decided to go to the restroom in the hotel across from the office.

On her way to the hotel, she dropped by a convenience store and bought a pack of sanitary pads. In the restroom, she was tidying her shirt when her phone suddenly buzzed. Adele had transferred 500,000 in her account when she checked it, and her face burned in humiliation.

She exited the ladies' restroom and noticed a foreigner. He spotted her as well, and his eyes immediately widened in greed and lust, as though he had seen a bombshell.

He reached out boldly for her chin, and it was at that moment that she realized she had met this man before. Since they were in the hotel—a relatively safe environment with surveillance cameras—she was not afraid of him at all and slapped his hand away.

Feeling humiliated, he remarked scornfully, "Oh, this is a thorny rose."

Frowning deeply at him, she remained silent and looked around warily. In the afternoon, most hotel staff were on their lunch break, so no one passed by the restroom area. When she realized that the foreign man showed no intention to give up on her, she threatened him, "If you keep getting closer, I will scream for help!"

"Sure, go ahead and scream if you want to!" He sensed the panicked and angry look in her eyes, a sexy and seductive look that aroused him further. Before she could yell, she saw two men walking out of the restroom from the corner of her eye.

Quick-witted, she frowned and shouted, "Matthew, you're here!"

This was her first time addressing Matthew intimately in public. Both Miles and Matthew were slightly shocked by her unusual behavior; she acted as if she did not know Miles and refused to acknowledge his presence, an action that hurt him deeply.

The foreigner turned around to take a look at Matthew. During the distraction, she rushed toward Matthew and hugged his arm, looking relieved to have a protector. Miles, on the other hand, stared at her intently with a disturbed look on his face.

The foreigner shot another look at Matthew before leaving with a scornful expression. Minutes later, Miles scoffed and left the scene as well. At Stella's most crucial and fragile moment, she chose to grab Matthew's arm, and her instinctive action crushed Miles's ego.

Seeing Miles leaving with an unhappy look, she sighed to herself. Why didn't you wait for my explanation? Matthew admitted that her intimate act had momentarily tempted him, but he also knew that Miles had misunderstood the situation.

"Why are you here?" When the threat was gone, she swiftly let go of Matthew's arm, like she had been jolted.

"Oh. The American representatives are here, and my ex-wife is one of them. I'm bringing my son to meet his mom; he's upstairs now. Stella, could you explain your action just now? Miles is going to give me trouble over this misunderstanding!" Matthew's face contorted in panic.

She flashed a bitter smile at him. Although her action just now might look bizarre, she clung to Matthew for a good reason.

"Never mind. He will understand sooner or later. I am heading back to Murdough today. I don't want to get home late, so I have to rush," she brushed off the incident and strode out of the hotel.

"Stella!" She heard Matthew calling from behind.

"Yeah?" She spun around.

"In the future, you must be vigilant because you live alone in Murdough. Remember to give me a call if something happens. Don't worry about bothering me," he advised her earnestly.

His words indeed gave her a bit of warmth. Smiling, she nodded as a sign of agreement.

After she boarded the plane to Murdough, she was still bothered by the 500,000 transfer from Adele. Once she was back in Murdough, she immediately went to the bank to transfer the money back to Miles.

During her trip, she also registered her bank card on her mobile payment app to ease any mobile transactions in the future and to avoid Miles's judgment.

The following day, the American representatives went into Miles Conglomerate for a negotiation. When Miles saw the pesky and perverted foreigner from the hotel among the representatives, he was beyond shocked.

Not only that, the man was the leader of the American team, who remained largely unknown before this because he preferred to keep a low profile. Despite his lowkey behavior, he could be brutal and mean in running his business, including bagging contracts of companies with unethical methods to hinder his competitors.

Has Stella known this man before?

If Miles guessed correctly, Stella's behavior from yesterday could be perfectly explained. She pretended not to know me because she had known that the foreigner was here for a business negotiation with my team. To avoid any personal conflict, she acted as if she was more intimate with Matthew to confuse the harasser, leading him to think it was Matthew who had saved her and sparing me from getting involved.

His chest felt stuffed when he realized that she had carried out the calculative move to protect him. More than that, he was frustrated at himself for misunderstanding her and felt terrible for not giving her

a chance to explain herself. Worse, he had even felt envious of Matthew for a brief moment, which was an utterly ridiculous sentiment.

Although the foreigner had only taken a brief look at Miles yesterday, he instantly recognized Miles's face.

However, since the two men did not run into a conflict, there was no animosity between the two. Not only that, in front of Miles, the passive observer of yesterday's event, the foreigner felt a surge of guilt and embarrassment for his morally wrong behavior toward Stella.

One could easily tell who was more powerful between them. Had Miles fought with the man yesterday, today's dynamics would have been totally different; instead of feeling guilty, the man would have fought Miles over the grudge.

Even so, Miles smirked at the man and rejected any form of cooperation with his team. "I will never collaborate with people who have questionable ethics." With that, he left the scene, leaving the senior management staring at each other in bewilderment and confusion.

During the negotiation just now, Miles held the advantageous position. Had he gotten into a conflict with the team leader over the harassment, today's meeting would have been awkward and tense. Now, the foreigner was the embarrassed party, and Miles felt nothing but guilt toward Stella.

Back at his office, he hurriedly sent her a WhatsApp message. 'How did you recognize that man from yesterday?'

At the moment, she was busy working in her store but found the time to reply to him. 'When I went to America with you on the business trip, you were busy negotiating with the Americans, and I spaced out. That was when I saw the man walking past the company entrance. This time, I was shocked to find him in the hotel across from your office. You and Matthew happened to come down from the top floor in the hotel, but I guessed you must have never met the man before. Even if he is not part of the representative team, he must be connected to them somehow. As you know, the business landscape changes swiftly, and I didn't want you to get into arguments before your business meeting. Anyway, did you successfully negotiate with them today? How did it go?'

Bingo! Her explanation matched his assumption. He immediately replied, 'I have no reason to negotiate deals with a scum like him. The meeting ended before it even started.'

Sighing, Stella wrote back. 'This is all my fault.'

He quickly corrected her. 'No, you gave me the opportunity to see him for what he is before I get professionally involved with him.'

Right after he sent out the message to Stella, he received a message from Adele with a screenshot attached. The screenshot displayed the 500,000 that Adele had transferred to Stella the day before.