

## Chapter 38

### Are You Addicted to This?

Kevin and Stella were standing on the wooden steps at the back door. Although the ringing of the phone wasn't that loud, it was audible from outside. When Stella turned to check on it, Kevin fished out a bunch of keys from his pocket. "Open the door and go pick up the call."

Frowning, she asked, "Why do you have the house keys?"

"This is President Grant's house. He gave them to me."

Stella's eyes went wide in astonishment. Ah, I'm such a fool for not realizing sooner. She never saw Kevin in such a good mood while working on any of his past projects. Besides, the lavish mansion had made it apparent that the owner was a wealthy person, and there weren't a lot of people with as much wealth in all of Hollowcrest City.

In the meantime, Kevin picked out the key for the glass door from the bunch of keys. "Here you go. He has so many doors in the house, so there are a lot of keys, too."

With that, Stella jogged into the house after agreeing to his request. A woman's voice came through when she picked up the call. "Miles?"

Startled, Stella answered, "Um, I'm not President Grant. Who might you be?"

"I'm his girlfriend. Who are you?" A lively voice came through with a pointed question.

All at once, Stella was baffled. Who is she? She deemed herself as someone who was easily moved. From the looks of it, Miles latched himself to her because of her status as a married woman. It was safer to have an affair with a married woman, as a married woman wouldn't need him to provide for her financially, nor would she want to marry him. The realization stunned Stella for a few moments.

"Hello—" The woman on the other end of the line pressed for a reply.

"Oh, I'm a staff member in charge of designing the yard in his house. He isn't in at the moment," Stella replied.

"He's not in the house? How disappointing! He didn't pick up either when I called his cell phone!" The women cried coquettishly, sounding like a happy-go-lucky woman who was both stubborn yet naive.

After that, Stella placed the handset down slowly, her heart swelling up with negative emotions. She had to pass by a room when she went back out through the back door. Since the door was open, she couldn't help but take a peek into it, only to see that it was a bedroom. People who lived in mansions would normally have their bedrooms on the upper floors, so she didn't expect Miles to have a bedroom on the ground floor.

It had a huge bed that spanned roughly 220 centimeters in length, while Stella's own bed was only 180. The 40 centimeter difference was easy to spot, which made his bed look a few sizes larger than hers. Judging from the plain-colored bed sheets and duvet cover that he laid out on the bed neatly, she supposed that the owner was a clean freak.

A clean freak, just like Zane. Stella allowed her thoughts to wander, observing the room with her head tilted to the side. However, she didn't notice that Miles had walked up to her before turning to check on the direction that she was looking at. Since Kevin had taken his keys, he had no keys to open the door, so he could only enter from the back door.

It took a long while before Stella noticed that Miles was gazing at her. "Are you addicted to this?" he asked.

She didn't get his question, which she noticed was something that happened quite frequently. "Addicted to what?"

"Addicted to getting into someone else's bed, of course," he finally said.

Mortified, Stella fled the scene to go back to doing measurements with Kevin. She wasn't sure why Miles was back, as it was an odd time to come back home. The call from that other woman was also distracting her from her job. After taking the measurements of the yard and drawing some sketches, Kevin went to Miles' room to play chess with him. Although Stella was planning to leave alone, she couldn't possibly leave Miles' mansion on foot. Therefore, she could only wait when Kevin chose to stay.

When Miles and Kevin were playing chess, Stella spaced out while reclining on the sofa beside them. Seeing that Yulia was better than her in all aspects other than her looks, she figured that the only reason Miles turned Yulia down was because he didn't want to be responsible for another woman.

When she was engrossed in her own thoughts, Miles asked, "Do you know how to play chess?"

"No." Stella snapped back to her senses.

"What about poker?"

"Nope."

"UNO?"

"Nope."

After that, Miles stared at her in silence, while she scanned her surroundings, only to see that Kevin had already left the room to answer a call. He seemed to have been at it for quite some time, which was why an impatient Miles tried to get Stella to stand in.

"I never knew you were such a model student. Was studying all you did back then?" Miles held between his fingers a black chess piece while wondering where to put it next.

"Well, I'm different from a player like you," Stella bit back, being the only one aware of the underlying meaning in her words.

Miles chuckled at her sharp words, oblivious to the fact that she just got a call from that woman. After some time, Kevin told Miles when he was finally back, "I'm sorry, President Grant. That forty-minute call was my wife doing a spot check since she knew I won't be in the office today."

"That's just how women are. They're afraid that their husband might cheat on them. I was thinking of having Miss Johansson take your place if you took any longer." Miles moved his chess piece.

Miss Johansson? Why the sudden honorific? Stella thought.

"I'm sure you'll also soon be faced with such a predicament. Will Miss North be back soon?" Kevin asked.

"Yeah."

While sitting on the sofa, Stella bit on her bottom lip so hard that she nearly drew blood. She wanted to suppress all of her fantasies, burying them deep down within her in order to pretend that Miles never got to her either physically or emotionally.

In the afternoon, she returned to the company with Kevin. He told her that Miles' girlfriend was Yvonne North. She was a surgeon in Hollowcrest City Medical School who was sent to America for a three month training program. He informed her, "Only a few people in the company know that the president has a girlfriend. He figured that Miss North wouldn't be harassed if their relationship was kept as private as possible, which should help keep her safe."

Is that so? Stella couldn't help but let out a chuckle. Seeing how considerate Miles was toward Yvonne, she was almost tempted to meet her. Judging from how he doted on Yvonne, Stella wondered what kind of woman she was. Unlike herself, Zane already knew of her affair with Miles, so she figured that her father would also soon catch wind of it, which would eventually make it into the tabloids.

Glancing out of the car window, Stella pouted while feeling that she was acting uncharacteristically childish. Since then, Stella stopped looking after the plants in Miles' office again, nor did she get to drink the chicken and vegetable soup anymore. Since he would no longer persecute her father, she decided she could now safely ignore Zane.

Soon, it was Stella's birthday, which was on the 16th of December. Normally, she would treat it as if it were any other day. The closest thing she had as a celebration was to have some noodles with poached eggs, as nobody other than her mother remembered her birthday. However, she received a huge bouquet of flowers that consisted of ninety-nine roses that day. Even the delivery man had a broad smile on his face, seemingly in a good mood due to the flowers.

While her colleagues in the design department cast her glances of admiration, she was in fact feeling perplexed. She gazed at the flowers with a frown on her face while trying to figure out who was the sender. Unexpectedly, a huge diamond ring fell out of the bouquet of flowers, which seemed to be similar to the one that Ximena showed off in front of her.

Frowning, she already had an inkling as to who was the sender. She flipped the card attached to it over, only to see written on it the following text: 'Darling, I wish you a happy birthday not only for this year, but also for the years that are to come. I already missed out on your previous birthdays, but I promise to spend them with you from now on.' Signed at the bottom of the card was Zane's name.

She wasn't sure what Zane was up to. All she knew was that he was feeling especially down after witnessing her affair with Miles last night. Incidentally, Yulia had come for her, since it was her birthday after all. They used to dine together during the occasion, enjoying a few drinks over a meal in a small restaurant.

After clocking out, Stella went downstairs with Yulia while holding onto the bouquet of flowers. Noticing that Yulia's eyes were darting around to check her surroundings, Stella knew who she was expecting. Miles was in the elevator when they entered it. His office was located above Stella's department, so seeing him there wasn't actually out of the ordinary.

Blushing profusely, Yulia's eyes lit up as soon as she saw him. Then, she began chatting with Stella. "Did Zane send you this as a present?"

Stella nodded while stealing a glance at Miles, but he seemed unaffected by their conversation.

"Are you planning to forgive him?" Yulia asked.

Neither of them struck up a conversation with Miles. Yulia had conflicted feelings toward Miles, so she was a little embarrassed to talk to him. Stella, on the other hand, wasn't quite sure how she felt about him. "Perhaps, since he gave me such a huge diamond ring!"

The ring Zane sent wasn't put in a box. Instead, it was tucked within one of the roses just like that. Having put it in the pocket of her coat, she managed to put it on after stirring her hands in her pocket for a bit. Nobody noticed her movements, as it was normal for people to tuck their hands into their pockets during winter.

"What a huge diamond! This is the second time that Zane spent a huge fortune like this!" The expression that Yulia wore was similar to that which her colleagues wore. Other than that, she also recalled the first instance that Yulia was referring to, during which he bought her a mink jacket.

"You're so lucky! I hope I can be as happy in the future!" Although Yulia was talking to Stella, she was in fact stealing glances at the man behind them, who had been keeping mum all this while. Wearing a bitter smile, Stella realized Yulia only knew a single facet of her married life.

After some thought, Stella told her about the fact that Miles already had a girlfriend. She also informed her that he doted on his girlfriend, as well as the fact that he kept their relationship under wraps. Deep down within her, she hoped Yulia could pluck her head out of the clouds and stop chasing after something nonsensical. After that, Yulia hung her head low while eating dinner—she had fallen hard for Miles, after all.

They parted ways after dinner.

For the first time ever, Zane showed her a side of him that was well-mannered when Stella got back home, which didn't seem like how one would treat a wife who had committed adultery. While she was still puzzled by his attitude, unable to wrap her head around the situation, he presented her with a birthday cake, and she blew the candle lit on it. It had been a long time since she last enjoyed such exclusive treatment.