

Chapter 52

Affair

The flight was scheduled to lift off at nine. When Stella had rushed to the airport, Miles was already waiting. He was looking at his watch. Stella could see that he was upset, since he had to wait for his own subordinate.

They stayed in a five-star hotel in America, but to her surprise, Miles reserved two rooms. That made her ease up a little. So he's not controlled by lust. At least he knows how to tone it down. Buoyed by her good mood, she performed well at the presentation the next day. She only almost got into a small trouble.

The negotiations happened in a business hotel. Stella and Miles sat at one end of the table, while the clients sat at the other end. Aside from being the designer, Stella came as a translator. She didn't need to translate the clients' documents because Miles knew English, but she had to translate whatever he said into English because the foreigners didn't know Mandarin. That perplexed her. If he can listen, then he can speak, can't he? Why must I translate it? What is he doing?

Miles said, "Invite their staff to come to Solaria for an on-site visit."

Stella forgot how to translate 'on-site visit,' and the conversation went dead for a moment. She wanted to use a replacement phrase, but it wasn't a rehearsal; it was the real deal. The more nervous she was, the more she couldn't remember, and she started to sweat.

Miles crossed his arms, leaning back against the chair. At this moment, everyone was looking at her, and she wanted to just find a place to hide.

Subsequently, Miles calmly translated that into English, emphasizing on the word 'site.' The clients nodded. His voice was deep, his pronunciation perfect, as if he had lived overseas for many years.

If he's this proficient, why'd he have to ask me to do it? she thought. From then on, the word 'site' was engraved within her mind. It left a deep impression on her, for Miles taught her this word.

Upon wrapping up the negotiations, they went to have a meal. Since she performed badly that day, Stella was crestfallen. She kept eating and didn't look at Miles. "Why didn't you get a professional? You know, in case something like that happened again," she asked, still staring at her plate.

"A professional translator knows nothing about design. Different specialties, different professionals."

"But you're proficient in English, so why didn't you speak in English in the first place?"

"If I did that, there'd be no reason for you to come."

Yeah, that's what I think, too. She gave him a look of complaint, blaming him for unnecessarily asking her to come.

Once the negotiations were done, they just needed to stay there for a night, then they could go home. Miles didn't go to her room that night, and she could finally feel at ease. Why is he so capricious? I could never understand him.

Since she had no emotional baggage, Stella was delighted on the flight home, while Miles looked at her coldly. Unbeknownst to her, she had to make a record of the negotiations when she came back. Kevin told her about that once she returned. "You'll also have to report on what you've learned from the negotiations."

"Why didn't you say so earlier? I would've taken some notes during the negotiation then. Now I've forgotten all of it."

"President Grant just told me that too. And once you're done with the meeting minute, you'll have to write about how you feel about the negotiations, and in detail please. We'll have to spread it to the whole department." Kevin thought it was a ridiculous order, since they never had to do that before. Even if he was Stella's backer, asking her to do that as a way to improve was too harsh.

Since Stella hadn't prepared for it, she had to think long and hard about every detail. Sometimes when she couldn't remember what Miles had said, she wanted to text him, but it wouldn't work. He would say, "If I remember what I said back then, then what use do I have of you?" Stella knew that was what he would say no matter what. No choice but to rely on myself, then.

Two days later, a six-page, dual-language Excel form and Word report was made, and Stella emphasized on the word 'site' in her report. She reminded herself and everyone that they had to work on their jargon, or they might fail when it came to it. She made the report with heart, and had sent it to her design department colleague. Once she was done with it, she heaved a sigh of relief.

Then, Kevin told her to send it to Miles.

Send it to him? What does he mean by that? Stella was shocked. Isn't an email enough?

"President Grant said to send him the physical copy," Kevin said.

Stella's face fell. She feared going to Miles' office, but she had to. Left with no choice, she took the printed and folded copy to the office and knocked on the door. Incidentally, Matthew was there, too. "It's done, President Grant," she said.

Miles looked up and went to take the report. A desk separated them, and he brushed past her hand when he reached out for the report—whether on purpose or by accident remained a mystery. Stella pulled her hand back, feeling electrified. Since Matthew was beside them, she knew he had seen it.

"I see," Miles said.

She kept thinking about the matter between her and Miles on the way down. Stella had the feeling Miles was playing her, like how those old gits would fool around with the women in the company. He's just filling his void. And I'm a young married woman. He must get the thrills from it. The idea of that made her feel pathetic.

She thought about it and texted him, 'President Grant, we're in the company. This is where people work. I think we should end our affair here. It burdens me heavily.'

Once she sent it, Stella tried to calm her racing heart down. Lizbeth's warning and Zane were time bombs for her. If the affair with Miles went too far and she couldn't stop herself, everything might go up in flames. Then, a message notification buzzed.

'So you want to go public? And what do you mean 'affair'? Is this because I didn't take you to bed when we're in America?'

Stella was infuriated. Why is he twisting my words? I'm ending this, not going public with it. But then she realized that they shared no relationship aside from the few times of sex, and Miles only brushed her hand just now. Am I being oversensitive?

He's just a capitalist pig. Maybe he's just worried having sex with me would ruin the negotiations. Even so, she had decided to never have sex with him anymore no matter what. Every time they had sex, either he initiated it, or she would fall for him. She missed the man in the bed. While she stared at her phone, it buzzed again. For a moment, she thought it was Miles, but no. It was Lisa.

'Seems like he's going to make you a star.'

Stella was being stupid again, and she didn't understand what Lisa was getting at. Who's 'he'? 'What are you talking about?' she asked.

'Look at the brief you wrote. It's perfectly detailed, and you're Mr. Moore's disciple. You're obviously so much better than us with just this report alone.' That was all Lisa wrote. Stella didn't ask, nor did Lisa elaborate further.

Stella's eyes gleamed. So that's what he's getting at? I didn't notice it. Or is Lisa reading into it too much? She was deep in her thoughts when Kevin told her the design for Miles' house had been finalized, and the renovation workers would work on the installation in a couple of days. He wanted her to be on site.

She frowned, but Stella didn't refuse. After all, Kevin and her worked on the project together. Someone like Kevin wouldn't supervise the installation, so only she could.

She then went with the renovation workers. When she contacted Miles before this, he said there would be someone there, and she didn't think much about it then, but she missed a point. Miles was the only resident of his house, so who else was there?

The front gate was open, but the front door wasn't. She didn't see anyone there, but since the renovation only took place in the yard and not indoors, Stella and the workers started working.

Renovation was hard work. After spending the whole afternoon standing there, Stella was cold and tired. She wanted to take a break at the man-made hill.

When she went to the hill, she saw smoke billowing, and she thought, Sh*t. Fire. When she went there in a hurry, she saw Miles smoking in leisure, much to her shock. "Why are you here? You scared me."

"This is my house. Why can't I be here?" Then he pulled her into his arms.

Stella thought about a question she had. "How did Matthew know I spent New Year's Eve at your place?" she interrogated. Stella hated telling her private issue to any other man, especially that kind of private issue.

"He guessed it."

"Bull. He left hours ago," she snapped.

“The looks we shared, what we did, and the smell of us... It’s not that hard to guess.”

Stella was at a loss for words. Well, he is Miles’ friend alright. He could even guess that. The more people who knew what happened, the more dangerous she would be, but Stella thought Matthew didn’t seem like the guy who would spread secrets.

She wondered how Matthew managed to see through them though. Did Miles’ smell rub off on me? They were in the public, and the workers were working on renovations. Even though the hill covered them, it didn’t stop the workers from coming over after hearing the commotion.