

Chapter 99

Are You Still Smoking?

Stella could not see the features of the baby in the man's arms, but she yearned to take a look. The child's mother was around the same age as her, and at the sight of the blissful young family, she couldn't help but feel slightly envious.

On the other hand, Miles followed her gaze and understood her feelings.

"If it was not for Zane, you could have become a mother by now," he said wistfully. At the painful reminder, her eyes dimmed in hurt and disappointment. If only she had known her aborted child could be as cute as the baby in the couple's arms, she would not have aborted it.

"Did you want an abortion for me when I got pregnant?" she asked him.

"No."

She lowered her head and, for the first time, felt a gut-wrenching pain for the unborn child. Turning her face away from him, she changed the topic and asked, "Are you still smoking?"

"Yeah."

"Well, then don't. I bought you an e-cigarette, didn't I?"

"I've been smoking for years. It's not easy to quit." He protested in a grumbling tone to express his frustration at her nagging.

Therefore, she promptly shut up after noticing his tone. Soon, she added, "I had wanted to transfer the 500,000 to you at the bank. But the crash happened, so I will only make the transfer a few days later." Last time, Miles had met up with her at Murdough to discuss the investment while on a business trip.

Despite his busy schedule, he had never turned her down when she requested to meet up. Every time, he'd 'drop by' with the convenient excuse of attending a meeting in Murdough. Even if she was usually slow to get the hint, she had sensed something unusual in his behavior.

His phone buzzed from Matthew's incoming message. 'Quick, you should buy her a car! I heard that she was driving the car that Zane bought her before the crash.'

Matthew knew this fact from his conversation with Stella's staff. However, in the middle of Stella's worrying emergency, he chose to omit the details and focus on the car crash. Now that Miles was in Murdough beside Stella, Matthew was finally in the right mood to reveal the specifics.

'And the reason is?' Miles replied swiftly, demanding the reason behind Zane's gift.

'That's too obvious. You don't need me to explain, do you?' Matthew answered.

At the same time, Stella cocked her head and stared at Miles, so he quickly put his phone away.

After a two-day stay at the hospital, Stella was discharged because the doctor concluded that her injuries were not severe and there were no observable signs of a concussion.

During her hospitalization, Miles had been attending meetings in Murdough and dropping by to visit her occasionally. On the second day after she was discharged, he made plans to drive home to Hollowcrest City, much to her surprise.

“It’s too tiring to drive home alone!” she exclaimed to him when they were in her store.

“I have no choice. No one’s going to drive me.” He rubbed his temples, looking exhausted.

She replayed the events in the past few days and understood his fatigue—he had been juggling business meetings and hospital visits. Occasionally, he had stayed until midnight to care for her.

“Why don’t you ask your secretary to book you a flight or a train ride?” Her furrowed brows exposed her concerns. In fact, he noticed her worry as well. Hmm... I guess this is oddly sexy in a way. And honestly, her caring words are akin to the warmth of a lovely spring day.

“There were no flights available, and the train trip will take a long time. I have to drive.” He

“But it’s too dangerous to drive home alone.” She expressed her worry. “If you don’t mind my bad driving, I can drive you home. The way you look now really worries me.”

In the past three days, she had done nothing else but slept at the hospital. Although she still had band-aids and bandages plastered across her face, it was not a big deal, and she was in good spirits.

The budding idea of driving him back had been gnawing at her. Therefore, she tentatively suggested it to him while preparing for his rejection due to her poor driving skills, for she was sure that he would reject her offer. Honestly, she was merely volunteering out of kindness because he was too tired to drive.

“Sure!” He unexpectedly agreed without much hesitation, and she was caught off-guard.

As expected, Miles owned a good car; it was a Jeep that he rarely used because it was parked at his office in Murdough. Around six in the evening, the two of them left in the Jeep with Stella at the wheel.

‘Miles, what time will you be back tonight?’ Matthew sent him a WhatsApp message.

‘Around nine,’ Miles replied.

‘Why are you still replying to me? Aren’t you on the plane?’

‘No, I’m traveling by car.’

‘I won’t distract you then. Drive safe.’ Somehow, Matthew seemed to have something to confess.

‘It’s fine. She’s driving.’

Matthew was taken aback by Miles’s reply. She? Why does it feel like he’s showing off when he told me that? I’m sure his driver is Stella.

In reality, Matthew felt sorry for Stella, but at that moment, he stood in front of the bay window and sent a joking text to Miles, ‘Not bad! Giving her driving practices before buying a car for her. I bet she wouldn’t see that coming!’

Even though Miles did not reply, Matthew’s joke was spot on.

During the journey, Miles had patiently given instructions to Stella: when to step on the clutch, when to brake and when to change lanes, to the point that Stella believed he was more strained and stressed than herself.

She looked at him with a puzzled look, and truth be told, he knew the question in her mind but did not bring up the topic for discussion.

When they were nearing Grant Mansion, Stella went over the burning question in mind. Where do I stay the night? It's impossible to book a room immediately, but staying at his place is way too risky.

In the middle of her internal debate, she suddenly noticed two figures standing at the entrance of Grant Mansion—they were Kevin Moore and Adele Evans.

Immediately, she lifted her foot away from the accelerator, and the car slowed into a crawl. Feeling scared, she wondered about the reason behind Adele's presence. Why is she with Kevin?

Before this, Miles had considered switching Kevin's role in the company. However, if that happened, Kevin would receive a pay cut, and his daughter would lose the healthcare treatment benefits, which might provoke him to put up a fight. If Miles gave away any hint of the transition too early, he would only wake the sleeping dog. Therefore, Miles left Kevin alone for the time being but kept his guard up.

Due to the bright lights at the entrance of Grant Mansion, Stella could see the two guests even from afar. Thankfully, the streets were dark, and the two were talking to each other, so they did not notice Miles's Jeep coming.

Suddenly, the Jeep sputtered as its engine was turned off.

"I want to leave the car!" She told Miles anxiously.

Miles knew about the past exchange between Stella and Adele, so he understood Stella's concern. She probably would not like to see Mom, especially after her breakup with me. Frankly, she had no interest in meeting with Kevin as well.

"If you leave the car, you will be stuck halfway on a winding uphill road. It's not easy to hail a cab here. Don't worry, those two won't stay over at my place. Move over to the passenger seat and duck. They can't see you from the outside," he immediately gave her instructions.

"But—" She was plagued by worries.

"Just listen to me!" Soon, he left the car and stole a glance at the entrance; Adele and Kevin were in the middle of a discussion and did not notice the slight movements around the car.

She climbed over to the passenger seat and pushed the seat back to make space for hiding. Since the Jeep was spacious and the window protection film was thick, it was unlikely that Kevin and Adele would notice her.

When she had settled down, Miles drove the Jeep into his residence. After that, he went down to ask Kevin and Adele about their purpose of visit.

At that time, the Jeep had been safely parked in the garage, and Miles rolled down the car window slightly for air circulation because he could not estimate how long his guests would stay on.

“Miles, Kevin’s daughter is very sick. Have you visited her?” Adele asked Miles. Through the opened window, Stella could hear the conversation.

Does Kevin have a daughter?

Hearing the question, Miles stopped in his tracks. He had only learned about Kevin’s daughter lately, but it seemed that Adele had known about it too. So, the two of them came to his place.

A few days ago, before he departed for Murdough, Gabriella had met with him. Was she trying to warn me about Mom’s upcoming visit to Hollowcrest City?

Nevertheless, Miles knew what was going on, and he was prepared to face it. Soon, the three went into the living room, and he invited them to take a seat. “Do you want me to visit Jasmine? Sure, I can do that tomorrow. Just tell me her room number.”

All along, Kevin kept his head low. “President Grant, I’m very sorry to trouble you. Jasmine has always wanted to know about where I work and who my boss is. That’s why....”

Pfft, that’s only an excuse. Miles had had an idea of Jasmine’s situation. Plus, he knew that Jasmine would never reveal his previous hospital visits to her dad. Had that not been the case, she would not have helped Miles last time.

“Mom, how about you? Why are you home?” Miles asked her. “Aren’t you living the good life in Canada?”

“I miss you. Can’t I come home to visit my own son?” Adele stood up and wandered around to check out his house.

Miles knew that she was looking for traces of a girlfriend, but he feigned ignorance. Soon, she returned and sat down without a comment.

“Jasmine has been transferred to another hospital because her condition has worsened,” Kevin replied as tears rolled down his face. “I know you’re a busy man, but I’m begging you to visit her!”

Suddenly, Miles was overcome by a feeling of annoyance, after which he frowned in utter displeasure. “Enough. I got it.”

“President Grant, I’m happy to hear that. At first, I wanted to call you to discuss this, but I felt that would be inappropriate. That’s why I...” Kevin wanted to explain further.

His explanation is an attempt at covering up. Miles knew very well that Adele wanted to pay a visit to check his place for hints of women. More specifically, she wants to know if I’m living with Stella, and I can’t believe she even dragged Kevin along.

A while later, Kevin and Adele prepared to leave the Grant Mansion. She had a room at a hotel downtown, and Kevin was driving her.

After sending away his guests, Miles hurried over to the garage and opened the door to find Stella missing. She had escaped during his short meeting.

I wonder if she is dodging Mom or me.

In his eyes, Stella seemed very squirmish whenever she arrived at his place.

Earlier, after Stella left the grounds of Grant Mansion, a cab happened to drop off a passenger near the mansion. She hurried over and took the cab to the hotel downtown.

When Stella was about to leave Hollowcrest City the next day, Adele came looking for her again, much to her dismay. It was Adele who reached out by phone, leaving Stella confused. How does she know that I'm in Hollowcrest?

In the end, the two decided to meet at a cafe.