

The Arrangement – Free Novelette by S. S. Sahoo

Prologue

“And where do you think you are going?” he asked as he stood right before me, blocking my way to the exit.

“Xavier, I have work to do...please move,” I said and tried to walk past him, but he had some other things in his mind as he took a step closer to me and looked into my eyes. My breath hitched by his close proximity. I looked down purposely trying to control my breaths, not wanting him to know he affected me.

“Wh-What are you doing?” I asked but cursed in my mind when I stuttered a little.

As if he heard my thoughts he chuckled and that made me look up at him. His eyes had this mischievous glint that made me nervous all of a sudden because I knew him...very well. He would go up to any extent to annoy me and there is no escape to his mischievous tricks. That is why what I want to avoid being caught up from his tricks.

Pursing my lips up I took a side step with the intention of walking past him but again he stood in front of me blocking my way. Avoiding his boyish grin, I clicked my tongue at his behavior and took another side step, but again he mimicked my movement and finally, after two further unsuccessful attempts, I gave up, in the end glaring at him while he grinned.

“Xavier, what do you think you are doing?” I asked and smiled at Lucas, my brother, who walked past my room.

“What am I doing?” he questioned, playing innocent.

“Really?,” I huffed at him and tried again but once again he blocked my way and this time he even chuckled at my effort.

“Xavier!” Crossing my arms across my chest and lifting my chin up, I tried my best to give him an annoyed and angry expression, but all he did in return was to shove his hands inside his pant pockets and gave me a shrug.

“I am not even touching you,” he said in a taunting manner, giving me a contagious smile.

“But you are blocking my way! Will you please move now?,” I asked as politely as I could.

“Oh, am I? I’m so sorry.” He shook his head and took a step to his side, giving me a space to walk out of the room. Him letting me pass so easily made me a little doubtful of his actions. He stood there smiling at me, but I shrugged the thoughts aside as I took a step forward. A squeal escaped my mouth when he encircled his hands around my torso and swept me up from the ground, pressing me to his body.

“Xavier!” I groaned as I tried to free myself from his grip.

“Angela,” he said. I stopped wiggling against him when he leaned closer and whispered into my ear, “In order to know me. . .” He chuckled deeply and a shiver ran down my spine when his warm breath fanned on the side of my cheek. “You have a long way to go. ” And with that he pecked my cheek and looked back at me, winking as he removed his arm, and with a satisfied grin, he walked out of the room.

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Chapter 1

Highly recommend, not to compare Galatea and Inkitt’s version.

Inkitt version is the real one, while Galatea is the “Adaptive” version. The story is also some percent same, characters inspired and my ideas and

approval are there in both the versions. The story is in a contract and can not be available to be read for free.

Found many pages posting the story, plagiarism, posting the details work for free without my knowledge. Please report it to me.

Galatea is more detailed, and the interactive version. I will recommend you to give it a read.

This book is rough work, contains lots of grammatical mistakes and English is not my first language, so please bear with me.

Angela

“Macey, where are you?” Macey was my one-year-old black Persian cat, who was now sitting on top of my wardrobe and staring down at me curiously.

“C’mon kitty, get down here and eat your food. ”

She meowed and jumped down into my arms as I headed towards the kitchen before serving her cat food to her so that I could get ready.

Living in Manhattan, New York wasn’t easy for me. Even with a Bachelors in engineering, I have still managed to remain jobless. But I was lucky enough to share an apartment with my childhood best friend, Emily Lockwood. Emily was somewhat of a legend is the only person to break down the walls of yours truly, Angela Carson.

Speaking of Emily, nowadays I often help her in her flower shop. Yup, a flower shop. I’ve been questioned on this since I have my degree in mechanics, but thanks to my overprotective and extremely possessive brothers, who don’t believe I should be working after what happened with me in my previous company, I find this impossibility. I’m not surprised since they’ve never allowed me to work, but then this incident had to happen to me.

Ever since our mom died when I was 15, they've kept me securely under their wings, pampering and spoiling me. Nowadays they pay my rent as well as give me a monthly allowance, much to my annoyance. Our father runs his own restaurant in Chicago, and they went into business with him when they finished school. They just couldn't leave him on his own after Mom died. With Lucas being twenty-six and Danny being twenty-five, they were old enough to take over from our father, Matthew Carson.

Living in Chicago all my life, I needed a breath of fresh air. So when Em decided to move to the Big Apple, I joined her, much to their disapproval. I needed my independence, but the only way to appease them was if I agreed to work not as an employee and instead with Em in her flower shop. That was a lie of course—I have started my job hunt and I am pretty sure I will get a job in no time.

Yes, one could say this is a unique choice to make, but I can ensure that I'll not be working with Em for the rest of my life. Yes, I do have priorities. Heck, everyone has priorities in their lives. And in order to be more independent I have decided to finally go against my family's absurd choice of not wanting me to work just because of a silly incident.

The sound of my phone ringing snapped me back to reality and I checked my phone to see five missed calls from Emily. I inhaled seeing her message asking me to be there by ten. I checked the time to find it's already nine-thirty in the morning. So, not bothering to waste any more time, I hurried myself to get ready and reach her before the time.

I threw on my white floral knee-length dress before slipping on my gladiators. I had enough time to quickly do a braid, letting it fall to the side leaving no time for me to do my makeup. I took my phone and locked my apartment but not before checking on my cat. I saw her jumping onto my mattress and snuggling into the pillow. A small smile appeared on my face and I hurried to lock my apartment door before racing down the street to Emily's shop. Taking long strides, I tried to walk as quickly as I could to her shop. I saw George sitting with his black Labrador reading the newspaper on the bench. He was an old man who would come every day in the morning

with his black Labrador for a walk and since I walk every day to Em's shop I meet him daily and I wave at him to which he replied by smiling and waving back at me while his dog barked swinging its tail happily seeing me.

Finally, I reached the shop and found her working the shop's accounts. She was completely submerged into her work she didn't notice me.

"You are late," she said without sparing me a glance.

"I know and I'm sorry," I said, sagging my shoulders with resignation at being caught.

She exhaled loudly and looked at me.

"Angie, how many times have I told you not to worry so much and just relax?," she asked, throwing me a smile.

I gave her a simple smile as a reply.

Moving towards one of the shelves, I heard Emily call out to me, "Angie, will you arrange those white lilies? They're on that shelf in the corner and if you need more the gardens full."

I nodded as I began to arrange them.

As I reached out for the bunch I was stopped by a hand wearing a Rolex reaching for the flowers at the same time as I was. I looked at the owner of the hand and saw a mid-50-year-old man wearing a business suit with blonde hair and warm green eyes. He was still handsome for his age and even with his 6'2" height he still had this kind aura around him. As I retreated back, I noticed the warm smile that sat on his face, trying desperately to mask the depression in his eyes. The sadness that bore out of them made me want to console him and ask him the reason for his sadness.

“Excuse me, young lady, can I have those lilies? I really want them for someone special. I fear those are the last in the shop.” His soft warm voice was tinged with kindness.

Shock overtook me for a moment as I realized he thought I was a customer. I smiled and cleared his misunderstanding about me being a customer before bringing them up. I then neatly bunched them together before tying some tissue paper and ribbon around them and handing them back.

He smiled widely at this before taking the flowers from me. As he was leaving he unexpectedly turned back to me and said, “Not only are you beautiful but you’re also a kind-hearted soul that I hope to meet again soon.”

With this, he smiled at me one last time before paying for the flowers and quickly nodding goodbye. Then he was gone, leaving me completely and utterly confused.

“Who was he?” Em asked me curiously from the counter.

I just shrugged my shoulders in reply and headed out to the garden for more lilies with Emily following me.

“What was he saying?” she asked as I squatted down and began to pluck the lilies and some white roses.

“I don’t know. First, he mistook for me as a customer, but as I handed him the flowers he said I am kind and he hopes we meet soon,” I replied as I stood up, the flowers in my hand, and I walked back into the shop.

“Strange man,” I heard her laughing a little.

“But didn’t you find his face a little familiar?” she asked .

Raising an eyebrow, I turned around to face her... “Hmm?”

“I don’t know why, but... oh, will you please place them on there?” She pointed the bouquet of flowers near me. I nodded and placed the bouquet on the top shelf.

“Sometimes I am really envious of your height,,” she muttered.

I looked back at her, chuckling. .“Really?,” I laughed. .

“Ever thought of a modeling career?,” she asked and, pursing my lips, I shook my head.

“Modeling is just not my forte. ,” I went back to the counter and sat on the small chair while she stood before me rolling ribbons on the roses.

“Oh, c’mon, you have the height, the looks... I’m positive you will be successful if you try. ”She wiggled her eyebrows at me and I just shrugged my shoulders and gave her a lopsided grin.

“I have a job interview tomorrow. ,” I grinned.

She stopped her work and turned back towards me.“Really?” All of a sudden she looked excited.

“Why are you excited? Are you in a hurry to get rid of me?”

“Oh, shut up, Angie. You know that’s not the case. I am actually happy that you are finally moving on from that incident,” she said and I nodded, smiling at her.

“If it wasn’t for that pervert of a boss you would have still been working and perhaps you would’ve been somewhere else enjoying your life,” she said as memories of my former boss came flooding back to my mind.

I was forced to place my resignation on his table because I was tired of the harassment I faced in his company. Even though he was married and had a kid, he still had his eye on me and harassed me sexually at times, like touching my

but whenever I was alone, sending me inappropriate text messages, trying to invade my personal space and once he even dared to kiss me forcibly until I slapped him and decided it was enough for me to tolerate any further and decided to resign. But Emily being Emily, she told my family and even forwarded his perverted text messages to his wife.

It was then when my family decided that I don't need to work any longer. In fact, they wanted me to join them in our family business. But I couldn't. I was keen on starting a fresh. So after that I worked in a garage with my friend until Emily called me to her to Manhattan.

“What is the name of the company anyway?,” she asked, breaking my thoughts.

“It's Dox Aerospace. ”

“Woah, that's a big one. Best of luck. I know you will get it through with your interview. ”

“Thanks. ,” I

“And maybe you will find your prince charming there. ”

“Em, please,” I mumbled embarrassed. At the age of twenty-four I was still single. It was only because of me being a tomboy in my school that none of the guys showed interest, and then it was because I was a workaholic. I concentrated more into my studies and believed that I would always end up in troubles if I had any relationship...it was what my brothers and my dad taught me.

“Want me to set you up on a blind date?” She wiggled her eyebrows.

“Welcome Ma'am,” I greeted the middle-aged woman who just nodded and smiled in return.

“White roses please,” she said and I nodded, gesturing Emily to bring her the bouquet she was already holding.

The lady smiled in appreciation.

. “They say white roses are a fitting way to honor a friend or loved one in recognition of a new beginning or a farewell,” I said, and the woman nodded in agreement.

“It’s for my daughter. She has a job interview today. It’s for luck,” she said as she handed me the money.

“Have a good day,” we both said in unison as the lady walked out of the shop with the flowers in her hand.

Looking her love for her daughter reminded me of my mother. I believe if she was alive she would have been my strength and she would’ve definitely helped me to get back on my feet, unlike my brothers who had covered me with their wings in the name of protection and tied down mine, disabling me from flying. Sometimes it was hard for me not to think of how my life would’ve been if Mom was here. I miss her.

“Here is a rose for your luck.” Emily presented a white rose before me, breaking our silence.

“I know and I believe in you. You will definitely get that job.”

I took the rose from her and inhaled its scent. The sad emotions that were climbing up me a few minutes ago disappeared and were replaced with light and happy ones.

“You are the best.” I opened my arms to hug her and, chuckling, she hugged me.

“I know.”

