

Chapter 45

Not Necessarily With Her

Not long after she went back to her seat, a young, smart, cheeky boy came up to her. "Are you Miss Johansson? You'll be looking after me this afternoon," he told Stella.

Huh? What's he talking about? That's odd. Stella said slowly, "Can you tell me who your parents are, and why do you know my name is Johansson? Why are you telling me to look after you?"

"My dad sent me here, but Mr. Grant doesn't have time for me. He asked me to come to you. My name is Zachariah Xenon, but you can call me Zack. You can go on with your work, miss. I'll just do my own stuff. I won't disturb you." Zachariah didn't give her a chance to talk.

I have work to do. But if the boy can just do his own stuff, he'll be easy to look after, so why isn't Miles doing it himself? Annoyed, Stella texted Miles, 'I have work this afternoon, and the office is packed. What do you expect me to tell them when they see me looking after a boy?' She didn't even greet Miles properly, and her words were rather accusative.

'I'll be distracted if he's here. Leave your work for tomorrow. His father is my good friend. He and his wife are too busy at the moment for him, so they sent their son to me. I have no one else to ask for help, so that only leaves you. His father will pick him up later in the afternoon.'

That was the first time Miles texted her a message that long. Usually, he would only give her curt answers. If he could answer her in two words, there would never be a third. Well, he was a man of few words after all. This is funny. Just because he can't get anyone to help him, he asks for my help? Stella was vexed. 'I've never looked after a kid. I don't know how to do it.'

'Then learn,' he answered curtly, but Stella knew there were no grounds for negotiations left. Looks like I have to take care of him this afternoon.

Zachariah noticed her annoyed look. "You don't want to look after me, Miss Johansson?"

Having been seen through by the boy, Stella felt rather awkward. Children were the future of the nation, and the light in his eyes made her heart melt. "Do whatever you will, but stay in my sight."

Zachariah grunted.

However, Zachariah's appearance distracted Stella from her work. Even though he said nothing to her, she couldn't work at all. She knew Miles must have looked after the boy before, or he wouldn't have known Zachariah would distract him.

Since Miles said she could put work off for the day, she stopped working and spent some time with the boy. They sat in front of her desk and whispered to each other. Good thing Mr. Moore isn't here.

"How do you know me?" Stella was curious why the boy came right for her.

"Mr. Grant gave me your photo. He told me you're the prettiest among the designers, so I came." Zachariah was squatting on the ground, fiddling with Stella's stapler.

Stella was stunned. Does he have my photo? I don't think so? Oh, he said I'm the prettiest designer around. I'm flattered. Flattery or not, Zachariah still came to her based on that statement, which meant she was indeed the prettiest among the designers. In the meantime, she sat in her chair, looking down at the boy.

Zachariah kept talking to her, asking childish yet adorable questions. Before this, Stella never thought that children saw the world in such colors, so his questions made her chuckle. She didn't do anything that afternoon, but she was happy.

At five, Miles sent her a message. 'Zack's dad's here. He wants to treat you to dinner as thanks for taking care of his boy.'

'It's fine. I have business to settle today.' Stella declined the offer.

'Don't tell me that. You'll have to tell him yourself. He's at my office,' Miles replied.

Stella frowned. So he's not going to help me out. Left with no choice, she took her bag and held Zachariah's hand as they went to Miles' office. Zachariah's hand was warm, and it was as soft as a bun. The sensation of it made Stella feel like nibbling on his hand, and she smiled all the way to Miles' office.

Meanwhile, Miles was in his chair, and Zack's father was facing them. Miles didn't make any introductions, as if it was Stella's business to know someone new.

"I'm Matthew Xenon, Zachariah's father." The polite man extended his hand.

In response, Stella shook his hand. "Stella Johansson."

"Thank you for taking care of my son for the whole afternoon, Miss Johansson, and it was during working hours too. I should treat you to dinner as thanks," Matthew said politely.

"Oh, it was fine. Zack's an adorable child. You don't have to treat me to dinner." Stella observed that man for a while; he was tall, handsome, and maybe just a few years older than Miles, but they had completely different vibes. Miles had an arrogant air, and he seemed to be wilder, whereas Matthew was calmer and more mature, maybe because he was married. Nonetheless, he was still handsome.

"I would feel indebted if you don't go, Miss Johansson." Matthew smiled nicely. "I always pay my debts, no matter how trivial they may look."

Stella knew it would be rude of her if she refused again. After all, Matthew didn't seem to be inviting her over to dinner out of mere courtesy. I think it's genuine. Hence, she agreed to go, and Miles went with her too. Miles gave her a ride, but then Stella only looked at the scenery outside, not talking to him.

"How do you feel taking care of a kid for the whole afternoon?" Miles asked.

"Exhausting. But not the physical type. I don't think I have what it takes to talk to a kid." Stella stared down in embarrassment. Good thing it was just an afternoon. I'd be out of things to talk if it went any longer. "You have a big office, so why didn't you let him in there?" She fiddled with her fingers as she spoke.

"I want to let you know how it feels," Miles said.

Stella's heart skipped a beat. When she heard that, she wondered what Miles wanted her to feel, and she had a feeling that Miles was someone who knew how to take care of a child. Stella had a feeling children would be happy with him around.

They came to the hotel room not long after. Now, Stella had a slight headache after taking care of the child for a whole afternoon. Hence, her face was slightly flushed, and she felt woozy when the lights shone on her. Even so, she sat down. I'll go home right after dinner.

"Dad, Mr. Grant doesn't take care of me today. He wants Miss Johansson to do it. I think he doesn't like me," Zachariah grumbled during dinner.

Immediately, Stella understood what he was saying. Miles never complained when he took care of Zachariah, so that must be the first time he asked someone else to do it.

Matthew patted his head. "Miles doesn't have his own child yet. Once he does, he'll love children."

Of course, Matthew didn't mean anything with that, but Stella thought of something else, and the teacup in her hand trembled. When she heard it, she was upset, for Miles used to have a baby, but it was already gone.

Hence, she stole a glance at Miles. He was pouring a glass of wine for himself, his gaze filled with cold disappointment. He's probably reminded of the fact Zane made me abort his kid. Or maybe that's how he usually looks. Stella couldn't see through him.

"When are you having a baby, Mr. Grant?" Zachariah asked.

"Why? You want a brother so fast?" Miles replied.

"Of course," Zachariah shot back.

"Is Dr. North not back yet?" Matthew asked.

Matthew and Miles were great friends, so he knew top secret info like Yvonne North.

"No." Miles smiled, his expression distant, but also sad. "Besides, even if I want a baby, it doesn't have to be with her."

Ever since Matthew mentioned Yvonne, Stella had been clenching her fists under the table, but she went on with dinner calmly, as if the topic had nothing to do with her.

But in reality, it had nothing to do with her. She knew nothing about Miles and Yvonne's relationship, nor did she know about their future. All the time, she focused on her dinner, missing Miles' glance.

Matthew smiled. "Well, love takes first place after all. Have to choose who you like, huh?"

Miles said nothing, and they discussed no further on the topic. After that, Zachariah took it from there, telling them about the things he came across in his kindergarten. Stella listened with a smile, for she had never come across a child's life.

After dinner, Miles sent her home. Stella was feeling woozy and sleepy on the way back.

Furthermore, the heater in Miles' car warmed up the air, making Stella even sleepier. Miles drove in silence, as if he was bogged down by something. When they came to a red light, he leaned back on his seat, his arm on the window. When Stella woke up again, she was already back at her home.

Miles knew Zane wasn't home, so he stopped the car below the complex like nobody's business.

After she came back from Murdough, Stella wanted to rent another place, but she was worried someone might call her a sl*t if she moved out before the divorce.

"Are you going home now?" Stella asked after she got out of the car.

"You don't say." Miles seemed rather down, but he then smiled. "Why do you ask? Do you want to invite me into your place?"

At that, Stella hastily waved her hand. "That's not what I mean. You're imagining it."

Of course, Miles was just kidding, but when he heard her response, he smiled bitterly and turned back before driving away.

The lights came on the moment Stella came in, much to her shock. She looked around, and to her horror, she saw her mother-in-law, who was on the sofa. She was the one who had turned on the lights with the remote earlier.