

## Chapter 50

### Still Shy

Miles was driving fast, and Stella's sudden request made him stop. Then, he looked at her. "What's wrong?"

At that, Stella frowned. "I've thought about it, Mr. Grant, and I can't do this. I can't do anything I want just because he's jailed. It's not right. As long as the certificate is there, the marriage is still there." She squinted in ponderance, her eyes unfocused.

Miles stared at her, as if he was reevaluating Stella. A short while later, he said, "It seems I have underestimated you."

Stella didn't know what he meant by that, but she had already hailed a ride on Uber. It could come any minute, and she wanted to go home; her home. Then, Miles held her lower lip. "You really want to go home? Why don't I give you a ride?"

"I'm scared." Stella wasn't a courageous woman; the night before already had her feeling restless. The depravity of cheating on her husband made her feel like a sinner. When her ride came, she told Miles, "Goodbye, Mr. Grant." With that, she got out of his car.

Meanwhile, Miles saw her off, her long coat making her look tall and slim.

She wore a white shirt and short skirt inside. Even though Miles couldn't see it from where he was, he remembered it. He could see the calf that was covered in black leggings and a pair of leather boots. Her hair was straightened, flowing down on her shoulders. Also, there was a bag in her hand. She was a lady, and she was elegant when she walked.

After she got into the car, she didn't look back, but she knew he was looking at her. Just like that, she left, and Miles smiled. She's cruel, he thought before driving away. This holiday is going to be boring.

When Stella came home, she thought she would be greeted by nothing but loneliness, but unfortunately, Lizbeth came. Hence, she remained standing outside, refusing to go in. Still, Stella knew the meeting would happen the moment they came across her on Roland Street. Therefore, she took the keys and opened the door.

"No need for that. I don't want to know if there's someone in there I shouldn't see. Just standing here is fine." Lizbeth's face was dark.

At that, Stella pursed her lips. She knew she was in the wrong, so she stared downward, looking like a student who was admonished by her teacher. Indeed, Zane was jailed because of her. Eight months wasn't long, but it was not something to be proud of, and Lizbeth did catch her and Miles in the same car. Even though Lizbeth knew Zane and Stella's marriage was failing, she wouldn't let Stella off the hook that easily.

At that moment, a Toyota Prado stopped in front of her house, and out came Matthew. "Oh, you're here, Stella. Here's the budget list you made when you went to the Grant Residence earlier." Matthew was panting, looking like he was in a hurry.

Stella was perplexed. I didn't make any budget list, but that's a budget list in his hand alright. She thought about it for a long time, then she realized Matthew was helping her. "Oh, thank you. I was so busy that I forgot about it." Stella looked awkward. "I hope this hasn't troubled Mr. Grant."

"Ah, it didn't," Matthew said. "New Year's been rough on Miles and me because of this. But thanks to you, everything's fine now."

Initially, Lizbeth was there to interrogate Stella, but Matthew's arrival threw a wrench in her plan. She thought Stella went on a date with Miles, but it didn't seem so after seeing the budget list. Hence, Lizbeth looked awkward. Matthew left a moment later, and so did Lizbeth, but not before she glanced at Stella. "I wonder if that's a real budget list," she mocked.

Now that she was finally alone, Stella heaved a sigh of relief. She went into her house and texted Matthew. They exchanged numbers the day before, since they were friends. Matthew said his wife was always away, so he might ask Stella to look after his son frequently. 'Thank you for today. I wouldn't know what to tell her otherwise,' she texted.

'Don't thank me. Miles asked me to do it. He knows you might run into trouble.'

Stella was stunned. No wonder he knows the exact time of my return and why I'd bump into Lizbeth. Only Miles knows about those.

'Luckily your mother-in-law bumped into you today. You'd be in deep trouble if she knew you were also absent last night.' Matthew added a smile emoji. From his tone, Stella knew he wasn't mocking her, and she felt glad.

But then, she realized something. Matthew left before I did last night. How did he know I spent the night at Miles' place? However, she didn't ask him, in case it turned awkward. Still, she had a question though. Did Miles tell him about it?

As if by coincidence, or the machinations of fate, Miles and Stella didn't contact each other for the rest of the holiday; not even a phone call or a text. It was as if they were strangers after that night of passion. In her mind, Stella sneered. So he only sees me as a friend with benefits.

For the rest of the week, Stella spent her time shopping or having fun. Lisa asked her out one day for a cup of coffee, and that was when Lisa blurted, "Are you planning to go on this way?"

Stella didn't realize what Lisa was referring to in specific, but it must be something related to Miles. At that realization, Stella could feel her hands trembling. "I don't know."

The week of holiday flew by, and Stella went back to work. Nobody was in the mood for work on the first day, including Stella. To her surprise, Miles came to give everyone red envelopes. Curious, Stella asked her colleague, "Why is he doing this himself? Can't he just send it in the group chat?"

"Not everyone is in the group, and not everyone can get the money if it's sent in the group. Goes against the motto of 'the more you do, the more you get', you see. Also, he does this every year for the whole company. Very nice of him." The lady winked at Stella.

When she heard that, Stella thought the lady had a point, and her heart started to flutter after listening to her colleague. She was waiting for that man's arrival; it had been days since she last saw him.

A minor commotion broke out in the department, and Miles finally came with everyone surrounding him; he bedazzled like the new light on a new year.

He's here. Stella's heart almost leaped out of her chest. Not daring to look up at him, she stared down at her design, only standing up when Miles was beside her.

Miles was wearing a dark gray wool coat, and he was looking at Stella, but she couldn't look back at him. At the same time, there were a lot of people behind him. When he noticed her awkward situation, he asked, "Seems like you're still shy despite having joined us for months already, Miss Johansson?"

He smiled at her like how a boss would at their subordinates, but Stella didn't know how to answer after noticing that smile. How can he switch so easily between being a partner in bed and my boss?

Meanwhile, the people behind him smiled along.

After that, Miles took a red envelope that had Stella's name on it and handed it to her.

Stella was a new employee, so she didn't receive as much money as the others, but she wasn't obsessed about money, so she put it in her drawer right away. When Miles went past her, she smelled the scent of winter on him, and it rejuvenated her. Then, she sat down.

After going around the department, he left when he was done. Stella thought she saw him looking at her before he left, but she wasn't sure.

That afternoon, Yulia came to see Stella. She was feeling down after failing to get Miles, and they shared dinner that night. Even after New Year, Yulia was still crestfallen, and she came to have a heart to heart with Stella, but then they started talking about Miles and Yvonne.

They had dinner in a clean ramen restaurant. There weren't many people in the hot and steamy restaurant save for the ladies. At the mention of Yvonne, Stella stopped eating.

"I saw Yvonne previously." Yulia made an offhand remark.

Stella's hand trembled again. Once again, she was flustered by someone she had never met. "Is she beautiful?" That was the first thing she was concerned about.

Of course, Yulia was jealous about Yvonne, and she answered nasally, "Nobody's prettier than you in Hollowcrest, including her. But she has this vibe, you know. A very attractive vibe."

Stella kept eating her ramen, her hand still shaking. All the while, she was wondering what 'a very attractive vibe' meant.

Later, Yulia said she saw Yvonne and Miles coming out of a mall when she was going shopping during the holiday, and Yvonne went into Miles' car.

To that, Stella replied, "Miles is not someone people like us can date. He's too good for us, so just eat your ramen. And you've never even talked to her, so how did you know it was Yvonne?"

"Instinct. That's what every woman has, especially when we like the same man." Yulia was irked. "You're married, so you don't have to fight for him, but me? I don't even stand a chance." As she spoke, Yulia had a look of passion and jealousy within her eyes.

