

My Bully Thought I Only Spoke Spanish Until I Saved a \$40 Million Deal Chapter 15

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The plane took off.

I stared at the clouds outside the window.

Eight languages, \$6 million inheritance, three years of silence.

I didn't know where this journey would take me.

But I was finally moving.

Dubai's sunlight was completely different from home.

Dry, intense, as if burning through shadows.

The documentary team had fifteen people. The director was Arthur Ward, a man in his fifties who had spent his life making documentaries.

"You're Elara? The one who speaks eight languages?"

"Yes."

"Translate this for me, quick test."

He handed me an Arabic interview outline.

I read it for ten seconds, then interpreted fluently into English.

Arthur listened, then turned to Elena. "That's her. Better than all three firms combined."

The first stop was the old antique souk in Dubai.

The documentary focused on merchant stories along the Silk Road.

There was a 40-year-old Persian rug shop, run by a third-generation Iranian merchant.

I provided simultaneous Arabic-to-English interpretation.

Before the interview, the merchant said in Arabic: "You're American? Your Arabic sounds like you learned it in Cairo."

“Yes. I lived there as a child.”

“Cairo Arabic smells like the Nile.” He smiled. “Beautiful.”

The interview lasted two hours.

The merchant told many Silk Road stories—how his grandfather traveled from Isfahan to Dubai with a single rug, and the European antiques, silverware, oil paintings and spices on the Maritime Silk Road.

As I translated, I suddenly thought of my dad.

During our year in Cairo, he often took me to the old markets. He would kneel and laugh with Arab spice sellers in broken Arabic.

I learned Arabic in those markets.

Not classroom-standard pronunciation, but the warm, living accent of daily life.

After the interview, Arthur clapped my shoulder.

“Great work. Tomorrow Abu Dhabi, interview an Emirati investor in English. Then Istanbul, French interview with a French archaeologist. Ready?”

“Ready.”

That night, the team ate dinner at the hotel.

As I was eating, Eliot sent a message.

[Mr. Rainer asks if your day went well.]

I replied: [It went fine. Don't worry about me.]

Eliot: [Mr. Rainer says he has an office on the 58th floor of the Burj Khalifa. Let him know if you need anything.]

I didn't reply.

My phone rang again, this time Kael himself.

“Have you eaten?”

“Eating now.”

“Dubai food isn’t great for American palates. If you want comfort food, there’s a Western restaurant on Jumeirah Beach—”

“Mr. Rainer, why are you telling me this?”

“Checking on you.”

“I don’t need checking on, thank you.”

“Fine. I won’t. Good night.”

He hung up.

I stared at my phone in a daze.

The photographer next to me leaned over.

“Who was that? Boyfriend?”

“No. Client.”

“Clients ask if you’ve eaten?”

“Overly involved client.”

He snickered.

For the next two weeks, I traveled with the documentary team from Dubai to Abu Dhabi, then from Abu Dhabi to Istanbul.

In Istanbul, I interviewed a French archaeologist working at the Troy site in French.

He said. “The Silk Road wasn’t a road. It was a conversation. People of different languages sat together and traded trust with goods.”

My voice softened as I translated.

My dad had said almost exactly the same thing.

Arthur gave me an OK signal from behind the camera.

On the flight from Istanbul to Berlin, I received an email.

[Sender: Briar Hale.]

[Subject: No subject.]

[Message: Only one line—After you left, the company laid off the French and Spanish teams. Julian said you alone are enough. Seven people lost their jobs because of you. Happy now?]

I read the email and deleted it.

Jessa's text arrived seconds later.

[Don't listen to Briar! French and Spanish teams were cut for low performance! It has NOTHING to do with you! She's just trying to hurt you!]

"I know."

"You okay?"

"I'm fine."

[Mochi's great. Gotten so fat I can't keep up. Hurry home.]

I smiled faintly.