

My Bully Thought I Only Spoke Spanish Until I Saved a \$40 Million Deal Chapter 17

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Kael stood behind me, saying nothing.

After a long while, he handed me a handkerchief.

“Your father was an extraordinary man.”

I took the handkerchief.

“I know.”

“Then you should be an extraordinary person too.”

I looked up at him.

“Instead of hiding at a desk job that pays \$80,000 a year.”

That night, I called Ms. Bennett.

“Ms. Bennett, I’ll handle the inheritance.”

“Ms. Voss! You finally—”

“The Zurich account and real estate, donate them as planned. But the antique collection in Berlin—I’m keeping it.”

“Understood! Wonderful, I’ll arrange it right away—”

“One more thing.”

“Go ahead.”

“Did my father leave any letters or documents for me? Not legal ones, personal ones.”

Ms. Bennett fell silent for a moment.

“There is a letter. He specified it should be given to you when you claim the antiques.”

My hand tightened around the phone.

“Mail it to me.”

Ms. Bennett sent the letter to my hotel in Berlin.

A plain white envelope, with my father’s handwriting: [For Elara.]

I sat in my hotel room for ten minutes before opening it.

The letter was not long.

[Elara,]

If you’re reading this, you’ve finally opened what I left for you.

I know you’ve been running away.

After your mother and I were gone, you probably locked away those languages too. Because every language connects to us—one word of German makes you think of Berlin ice cream, one word of Arabic makes you think of Cairo stars.

But Elara, language is not a cage. Language is wings.

Your mother built bridges her whole life. I planted seeds my whole life. You are the bridge, and you are the seed.

Don’t shrink yourself into the dark.

Shine.

Then do what you are meant to do.

Love forever,

Dad

There was a water stain on the letter.

I didn’t know if it was from when he wrote it, or from my tears just now.

The documentary filming continued.

From Berlin to Paris, from Paris to Madrid.

In Paris, I interviewed three people in French.

A bookseller by the Seine, a curator at the Louvre, an American businessman who built his career in Europe.

His story touched me the most.

“I came to Paris at twenty-five, not a word of French. On my first day someone yelled at me—I couldn’t understand, so I smiled.”

“What happened then?”

“Then I spent ten years learning French, and another ten years making everyone on that street call me Mister. Language isn’t for translating. It’s for making people respect you.”

I translated this passage for Arthur Ward.

Arthur said, “Keep this, original audio with subtitles. Elara, your French translation made me cry.”

In Madrid, I interviewed a flamenco dancer in Spanish.

One line she said I wrote in my translation notes. “Every language is a rhythm. Once your body remembers the rhythm, you’ll never forget.”

The final stop of filming was Moscow.

I finished the last three interviews in Russian.

On the night of the wrap, Arthur treated the whole crew to dinner.

“Elara, you did the work of five translation teams. I’ve been filming documentaries for thirty years, I’ve never met anyone like you.”

“I’m flattered.”

“It’s not flattery. Without you, this documentary would have cost at least \$2 million more for translation teams.”

Elena raised her glass.

“To Elara.”

Everyone raised their glasses.

I took a sip of wine.

From Dubai to Moscow, two months, five countries, eight languages.

My father was right.

Language is not a cage.

It's wings.