

THE SCANDAL OF THE ABSENT-MINDED VICE PRESIDENT

by

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INT. IMPRESSIVE OFFICE IN A GOVERNMENT BUILDING - EVENING

Manfred, a man in his early 50's, sits at his desk. Piles of loose papers cover the desk, a table, shelves, and most of the chairs in the office. He leans forward with his elbows on the desk and his hands covering his face. There is a quick knock at the door, and a second later the door flies open and Geoffrey leaps into the office. He is in his late 20's or early 30's.

GEOFFREY

(breathless)

Did you hear what he did now?

(pause while he notices
Manfred's posture)

Oh. I guess you already have.

Manfred takes his hands away from his face, sits back and looks at Geoffrey.

MANFRED

Yes. I did

(Pause)

Unless he's done something new in
the last half hour.

Geoffrey looks for a place to sit, while he talks.

GEOFFREY

I'm talking about the French
diplomat.

MANFRED

I heard about that. But I am more
concerned about his defense
proposal.

GEOFFREY

I hadn't heard about that.

MANFRED

You'll be happier not knowing about
it.

Geoffrey picks a chair and carefully moves the papers to another chair.

GEOFFREY

Can't we do something about him?

MANFRED

Not as long as the #1 supports him.

Manfred rubs his chin. Geoffrey stays quiet and waits.

MANFRED

We can't do anything constructive
as long as #1 supports him.

GEOFFREY

I agree, but we can't change that.

Manfred shrugs. Geoffrey looks dejected.

GEOFFREY

Why does #1 support him anyway?

MANFRED

I used to think he liked to have
someone he could blame.

(pause)

Now, I'm not so sure.

Manfred leans forward.

MANFRED

We need to find out why he wants an
absent-minded vice president, if we
have any hope.

GEOFFREY

I guess we can't just ask him.

Manfred shakes his head and frowns.

MANFRED

Not unless we want an instant
retirement. And we'd still fail to
find out.

The two men are quiet as they think.

GEOFFREY

Maybe we can find someone else who
can find out.

(pause)

From what you just told me, there
ought to be someone in defense who
will be motivated now.

Manfred smiles.

MANFRED

I think you're on to something.
After what he said, it would be
hard to find anyone there who
wasn't motivated.

(pause)

I'm afraid there isn't any of my contacts over there who I'd feel comfortable approaching with this kind of request. How about you?

GEOFFREY

I know CARRUTHERS in the Intelligence section.

MANFRED

Someone in Intelligence would be ideal. That is, if you can trust him.

GEOFFREY

Her, not him. We're old friends from school. I did her a lot of favors back then.

MANFRED

What kind of favors?

GEOFFREY

Um. I promised not to tell anyone.

MANFRED

That's even better.

Geoffrey looks uncomfortable but then smiles.

GEOFFREY

Now that I think of it, you are right.

Geoffrey stands up and starts to move toward the door.

GEOFFREY

You know, I haven't talked with her for a while. This might be a suitable time for a little reunion.

MANFRED

Good Luck,

(pause)

And, be diplomatic.

Geoffrey smiles and nods as he leaves the office. Manfred sits back in his chair and smiles.