

THE UNDERCOVER FURNITURE WAR

Written by

sylvester edwin

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

HILDA, floral tee, bright look, sits at the conference table. To her sides are JOSEPH, earth tones, and FRED, light goth look. All three of them have nametags. Hilda's reads, 'Hilda, Living Room Expert'. Joseph's reads 'Kitchen Expert'. Fred's reads 'Bathroom Expert'. Over Hilda, there's a banner that states, 'Singapore Furniture Group'.

HILDA

I assume both of you know why this meeting is being held?

JOSEPH

It's those damn moguls, right?!

FRED

The Business Moguls of Singapore...

HILDA

That's right. We already know that they control most of Singapore's businesses and economy. But we've always had control on the furniture market.

FRED

Customers love us. We're involved in every part of the process, from initial designs to the handing it over to the customer.

HILDA

Yes, but recently, the BMS have opened up furniture departments-

JOSEPH

Those bastards!

HILDA

(nods)

I've cracked the numbers and- in a few weeks, their sales will beat ours.

The room is silent. Joseph slams the table.

JOSEPH

Damn it! You work your whole life to become one of the best furniture makers... make every piece by hand, spend countless hours making sure it's perfect... all of that just to end up like this!

FRED

The worst part is that we have no idea why it's working. The furniture looks cheap and simple. I don't know why customers are going for it.

JOSEPH

But there must be some reason why it's working...

HILDA

Exactly. They have something we don't know about. And if we want to survive- if we want to make sure we can still be furniture makers that customers trust, we'll have to find out.

(beat)

That's why I'm going to become a spy.

CUT TO:

2 INT. OFFICE - DAY

Hilda, gray suit, is sitting across from TIM, similar gray suit, name tag that reads, 'BMS MANAGER'. Tim shuffles through some papers.

TIM

Okay... everything looks good.

HILDA

Thank you. Does that mean I got the job?

TIM

Yeah I think we can say so. Oh! Hold on, what was your previous job, again?

HILDA

Furni- Furni...shing. Finishing... Food. I was a competitive eater.

TIM

Ah, got it. Perfect for a floor manager of a furniture store.

(beat)

Well, congratulations, you've got the job. Can you start today?

HILDA  
Yes, that's no problem.

TIM  
Good. For today, you'll shadow me.  
Sound good?

HILDA  
Sounds awesome.

3 INT. FURNITURE OUTLET - MOMENTS LATER

Tim leads Hilda through the the back of the outlet. They stop at one section. A worker is hammering a chair.

TIM  
This is where we assemble the chairs.

HILDA  
Oh, this is the bestselling chair, right? Is it the oak, do you think?

TIM  
Oak?

HILDA  
...Oak, like the wood in that chair?

TIM  
Oh, haha. I don't know anything about oak but I know why it sells. Now, come on.

They walk towards another station and stop.

HILDA  
So, why does it sell?

TIM  
(points)  
With the wonders of marketing.

The station is brochures, posters, and general marketing material.

HILDA  
Wow.

TIM  
Yep, it doesn't matter what we sell.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

As long as we put it beside a fancy font and shove it, and I mean *really* shove it down their throats, customers will eat it all up.

HILDA

...Graphic.

TIM

Haha, just the truth. Anyways, that's not to say we'll sell our customers anything.

Tim leads Hilda to the next section.

TIM

We make sure to base all our products on SFG blueprints.

The section is full of SFG blueprints, plans, furniture mockups. Hilda is shocked.

HILDA

You steal from us?!

TIM

What was that?

HILDA

I said- What if they steal from us?

TIM

Oh, I wouldn't worry about that. Those blockheads have a hard time thinking.

(laughs)

But, hey, leave the furniture making to the experts. We take their blueprints and dumb them down so that it's easy to make *and* easy to break. That way, the customers keep coming back.

HILDA

...But- Don't you want to give the customer something reliable they won't have to buy again.

TIM

(laughs)

You crack me up, newbie. Why would we do that? The more they come back, the more money we make.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)  
 (beat)  
 Now, let's check out the  
 storefront.

Hilda, distraught. They go the storefront. It's busy.

TIM  
 And I don't see any customers  
 complaining!

HILDA  
 ...Yeah.

Hilda watches the customers. Still distraught, but she picks up on something. Scans through all the customers quickly and makes a realisation, eyes widen. Tim is beside her going through his clipboard.

TIM  
 I think that's about all I need to  
 show you today. I'll-

HILDA  
 Okay, bye!

Hilda runs out of the store.

TIM  
 ...Bye.

4 INT. BOARD ROOM - NIGHT

Hilda, Fred and Joseph sit by the conference table.

HILDA  
 ...That's about it.

FRED  
 No way...

JOSEPH  
 So that's how they did it, huh?  
 They spied on us?! We need to find  
 the rat.

FRED  
 There's no point, the damage has  
 been done. We can't copy their  
 methods, and we don't have that  
 kind of marketing budget... We're  
 doomed.

JOSEPH

There's nothing we can do? We're going to lose all our customers like that?

HILDA

Well, there's one thing I haven't told you guys.

(beat)

When I was looking at all their customers- I didn't see any I recognised.

FRED

What do you mean?

HILDA

I mean, have either of you actually lost any of your regular customers?

They both shake their heads.

HILDA

Me neither.

JOSEPH

So, what? Does that matter when they'll have hundreds more customers than us?

HILDA

Yes, I think it does. It sucks that BMS stole from us and we will stop them- but even then. Our customers haven't left us, and I don't think they will.

(beat)

I think they can tell. That we're furniture makers that want to make the best products for them, for us. They can tell we care.

(beat)

So, let's keep doing that.

THE END.