

The Suggestion

When Leila first met Owen, she admired his confidence. He always knew where to go, what to eat, what to say. At first, she appreciated it—it meant fewer decisions for her.

But something began to feel off. She remembered agreeing to cancel a weekend trip she'd been looking forward to. She had said yes so quickly. Had he really convinced her, or had she simply forgotten how much she wanted it?

She stopped going to her favorite coffee shop, too. Owen said it was always too crowded.

"You *wanted* to stop going there, remember?" he said.

Did she?

One evening, she overheard Owen on the phone.

"I just nudge her a little," he said, laughing. "You plant the idea, and eventually she thinks it's her own."

Leila froze. So he had been pulling the strings all along.

She decided to take a step back and observe. For a while, she played along, agreeing with his suggestions, watching how often her preferences disappeared.

Then, one evening, he suggested they watch a new thriller.

"No," she said calmly. "I've decided to rewatch a romantic comedy."

Owen blinked.

She remembered wanting to laugh again.

And that was *her* choice.

A. Answer the following:

1. What started to make Leila question her choices?

2. What did Owen say about the coffee shop?

3. What does the phone call reveal about Owen's behavior?

4. How does the phrase *pulling the strings* describe Owen's role?

5. What did Leila do once she realized what was happening?

6. What is the significance of Leila's final decision?

VOCABULARY: Idioms & Phrases

B. Match the idioms to their meanings:

Idiom / Phrase	Meaning
1. Pull the strings	A. Do what others expect, even if you disagree
2. Nudge someone	B. Control events or people behind the scenes
3. Play along	C. Slightly push someone toward an idea or action
4. Take a step back	D. Stop and look at the situation from a distance
5. Plant an idea	E. Introduce a thought indirectly or subtly

Answers:

- 1 → ____
2 → ____
3 → ____
4 → ____
5 → ____

GRAMMAR FOCUS: Gerund vs. Infinitive – with Change in Meaning

 Some verbs can be followed by both a gerund or infinitive — but the meaning changes!

Verb	+ GERUND (doing)	+ INFINITIVE (to do)
remember	Recall a past action (you did it)	Remember to do it (you haven't yet)
stop	Quit an activity	Pause one thing to do another
try	Experiment with an option	Make an effort to do something
forget	Forget a memory	Forget to do a task
regret	Be sorry about a past action	Be sorry to inform/announce something
mean	Involve, result in	Intend or plan to do something

Examples:

- I remember **locking** the door. (I did it.)
- Remember **to lock** the door. (Don't forget!)
- She stopped **talking**. (She quit.)
- She stopped **to talk**. (She paused something else to talk.)

GRAMMAR PRACTICE

C. Choose the correct option

1. She remembered (*locking* / *to lock*) the door before she left.
2. Don't forget (*calling* / *to call*) your grandmother.
3. I regret (*saying* / *to say*) that your request has been denied.
4. He stopped (*smoking* / *to smoke*) years ago.
5. He stopped (*working* / *to work*) and took a break.
6. I tried (*to call* / *calling*) him, but there was no answer.
7. I'll never forget (*meeting* / *to meet*) you for the first time.
8. She meant (*to hurt* / *hurting*) you.
9. Try (*restarting* / *to restart*) the computer.
10. I forgot (*locking* / *to lock*) the door and had to go back.

D. Rewrite the sentences, changing the verb to the other form and adjusting the meaning. What do each of them mean?

Example:

I remember turning off the lights. → I remembered to turn off the lights.

1. I stopped to rest. → _____
 2. She remembered writing the note. → _____
 3. I tried emailing him. → _____
 4. Don't forget to bring your ID. → _____
 5. He regretted saying that. → _____
 6. I forgot to send the email. → _____
 7. She stopped talking. → _____
 8. I remember meeting him at the party. → _____
 9. We tried to solve the problem. → _____
 10. I regret to inform you... → _____
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