Longtime Affair - Vocabulary

Welcome to this lesson. Let's get started.

The letter begins with the headline- Longtime Affair appears set to last for a long time to come.

An affair has a couple meanings. In this case, affair means a relationship outside of marriage. It means sex outside of marriage. So it means you're married but you have sex with another person. It sometimes can mean, if you have a boyfriend/girlfriend and sometimes you have sex with another person, we call that an affair (noun).

This letter is from a woman who's having an affair. She's having sex with another man, not her husband. It says set to last. Set means prepared or ready to last… for a long time, it means it's going to continue for a long time. To last, using to last as a verb.

You know the word last, first, second, third and then last… but here we're using it as a verb saying to last, which means to continue. It gives the idea of how much time something continues. If you say the movie lasted two hours, that means the movie was two hours long. The movie continued for two hours. So to last is a verb that means time period, how long something continues, to continue for some time.

Then, she says I'm married, he's married we're in love and have been for eight years. We've tried breaking it off several times. To break something off means to stop doing it or it means to get away from something, to escape from something. So, if you have an affair and you're having sex with another person, and if you try to break off the affair, that means to stop doing it, escape or get away from it, so to break something off. There's a direct meaning. It can mean you really do break something, but in this case, to break off means to stop doing something, to not continue doing it.

It can also mean to escape or get away from.

She says, a force bigger than both of us keeps bringing us back together. A force, means some power, I'm not sure what she's talking about but some kind of natural feeling, some strong power inside them or maybe outside them, like God or something, whatever, some big power keeps bringing them together again. They try to stop but then they get back together again.

She says before this she never believed in soul mates or true love. A soul mate (noun), it is your perfect partner. It's the perfect match for you in the world, in the universe. So if you say she is my soul mate, it means she is my perfect match. She's the perfect person for me. It's more than just love. It's more than just a boyfriend or girlfriend. It's even more than just husband or wife. It's the idea that it's your life partner, someone with a very deep connection. So this man is her soul mate.

She says our love is deep and unconditional. Unconditional means without conditions. A condition is a rule or a circumstance or situation. Without conditions means without rules. What does that mean, unconditional love? We use this phrase a lot. Unconditional love means love without rules. It means you love somebody in any situation, it doesn't matter what happens, you will always love them and nothing can change that. If they kill your brother you will still love them. If they steal your money you will still love them. If they hit you in the face and kick you in the stomach you will still love them. That is unconditional love. It means in any condition or situation, anything happens it doesn't matter, you will still love them.

She's saying with this man she has unconditional love, nothing can change it, even if something bad happens or they have some problems, they still love each other the same.

She says our roots are intertwined. First, intertwined… inter means between and twined means tied together. So tied together, in between, it means wrapped around each other. You can imagine if I take some string and then take another piece of string and wrap them together, tie them together many times, we say that's intertwined, the two strings are intertwined because they're wrapped together many times.

Roots, you can imagine this. The roots of a plant or of a tree. The roots grow down and then another tree is next to it and those roots also grow down and then they mix together. The roots of each tree mix together and they go around each other and then they become connected. We say those roots are intertwined, they're wrapped around each other or go around each other and they're connected very strongly.

What does she mean by our roots are intertwined? I don't know exactly, but I think she means roots, meaning their deep emotions. Their deep thoughts or feelings are connected very strongly. They're around each other. They're connected and intertwined. So their roots are intertwined and their deep feelings are intertwined.

She says it's a shame that it happened late in life. It's a shame means too bad. It's a shame means it's a bad situation or it's unfortunate, that's probably the best meaning I can provide you with. Some people say it's a pity. I hear students saying that often, but in fact, it's a pity isn't so common in normal speech. Tamoa says it's a pity all the time, it's cute, but what we really say is it's a shame as the more common phrase.

So she's saying I wish I'd met him when I was younger. It's a shame that we met later in life. It's okay, she says he always treats me like a queen. To treat someone means that's how you behave. It's how you act towards them. So, if you say he treats me like a queen it means he's very nice to me, to her. He imagines or pretends that she is this great queen, this wonderful person and he serves her and is always so kind to her. He treats her like a queen.

We have another phrase in English which is, he treats me like a dog. That's the opposite and means that he is very cruel, mean and bad, not respectful or kind. He treats me like a dog means he yells at you, gives you bad food and is very unkind. It's how you act or behave towards another person or with another person.

Then she says neither of us is leaving our spouses or family. They aren't going to leave their spouses. A spouse is a husband or a wife. So they aren't going to leave their husband or wife.

She says she's going to continue seeing this man, continue with the affair because it's magical and they love each other unconditionally.

In the last paragraph she asks Abby, is it wrong? Do we go on until something changes? To go on means to continue, to keep doing what you're doing. Should they go on with the affair? Should they continue the affair? Should they keep doing it? So to go on means to continue, to keep going, keep doing it.

She says or, should we try again to break away? Here we have break away, which is similar to break it off. Break away means escape, to get away, to leave some situation. So to break away is to leave a situation, to get away from a situation.

Finally, she says an affair, no matter how you slice it, will never be accepted. No matter how you slice it is a slang phrase in American English. No matter how you slice it means in any situation. It means however you look at the situation, whether you're a man or a woman, rich or poor it doesn't matter, everyone will agree with the same opinion. So no matter how you slice it means, no matter how you look at it, no matter who you are it doesn't matter; everybody agrees that an affair is unacceptable, it will never be accepted.

She says an affair, no matter how you slice it, which means any opinion, it doesn't matter everybody agrees, an affair will never be accepted in the eyes of traditional society. Now she's saying who can't accept it. In the eyes of, means in the opinion of. So in the eyes of traditional society cannot accept it. In the eyes of, in their opinion, traditional society cannot accept it.

So maybe in the eyes of other people, someone else, maybe it's okay in their eyes. In the eyes of this woman the affair is okay, but in the eyes of traditional society, old society the affair is not okay. So in the eyes of means in the opinion of, whose opinion.

She says finally, it will be perceived as unacceptable. To perceive means to see something, but it really has a deeper meaning than just seeing, what it really means is how you judge what you see. For example, a man runs out of a building and he's screaming. Everybody sees the man. Everybody hears the man screaming, but everyone will have a different opinion about what is happening.

One person says he's angry, this man is very angry. You may ask another person who says oh no, he's not angry he's afraid. This man is very afraid. You can ask a third person and they say, oh no, he's hurt. This man is hurt. He feels pain, something is wrong. It's the same situation where everyone sees the same thing and hear the same thing, yet they perceive something different. So perceive is really what you see plus what you think. What you see, hear or feel, plus what you think. Those together is to perceive (verb)

So she's saying people will perceive the affair as unacceptable. They will see it and they will think or decide it's not good. Is it really unacceptable or bad? We don't know and in that case we would use the verb is and say the fair is unacceptable which means that's correct, everybody agrees it's unacceptable, but if we use the verb perceive, it means that's what people think, that's their opinion but it might be wrong. Perceive has the idea of opinion, it's what you see and hear plus your opinion.

Finally, she signs it bewitched, bothered and bewildered in New York.

Bewitched is like magic. It means a witch has put a spell on you, that you're under the affect of magic. She's saying she feels some kind of magical feeling she's bewitched, because of this great man.

Bothered means upset or annoyed. So she also feels annoyed and bothered because it's a difficult situation.

Bewildered which means confused. So this woman feels bothered, being a little annoyed and upset, but she's also bewildered, confused and doesn't know what she should do.

That is the end of this lesson. Listen to it a few times and then move on to the mini-story.

Bye-bye.