

Wedded Bride 1071

Chapter 1071 Out Of Prison

"Miss Bai, take it easy. Let's find a place to sit and talk," Holley smiled. She didn't tell Rachel her identity, nor did she deny her question. She just looked at Rachel and smiled. After what had happened, Holley was more confident that she could make use of Rachel to get revenge on Sheryl. Rachel nodded, thinking that this woman was really tough when she taught those girls. If she could help her deal with Autumn, then it would be much easier for her to take revenge. "I remember years ago there was a nice cafe just there. We can talk there. I just don't know whether it still exists or not,"

Rachel said.

"If the cafe was good enough to impress you, it must be excellent. I don't think it would close within three years, not even after thirty years," Holley replied with flattery. In fact, Holley knew the cafe Rachel mentioned. Since it was located in the airport, it was always popular. "Please, Miss Bai," Holley said.

When they arrived at the cafe, they chose a table near the window. The waitress walked over to the table. "What can I get for you?" she asked the two.

"A latte for me, please. Miss Bai, how about you?" Holley turned to ask Rachel.

"Anything is okay," Rachel answered absentmindedly. She wasn't in a great mood. She had just landed

in her own country and right after she did, she was harassed by several girls. She had a feeling that this would happen more than once since she was going to be living here for a while.

"Then two lattes please," Holley told the waitresses. Holley knew that Rachel was distracted, so she ordered what she knew Rachel would like.

"Yes, Ma'am. They will be served soon." The waitress left.

"What's troubling you, Miss Bai?" Holley asked with feigned concern in her voice.

"Just those bitches just now. I'm still angry! They didn't even deserve to talk to me! I'm Rachel Bai, not some kind of ordinary woman for them to insult! Damn it!" When Rachel started venting, she felt more humiliated and upset. She took a look at Holley and added, "By the way, thanks for your help. I almost forgot to say."

"It's my pleasure. I didn't do much. Miss Bai, have you ever considered who caused all of that? You have suffered from so many hardships those years that other people couldn't imagine. Your own happy life was destroyed, and now you were even tramped by some strangers in the airport. Why? Who caused them?"

Holley's question reminded Rachel of her tragic life those years, and the only one she could blame was

Autumn!

If only Autumn hadn't taken away her Charles! She would have been the prominent wife of President

Lu, and all of those tragedies wouldn't have happened!

When she thought of Autumn, Rachel couldn't help feeling curious towards the woman in front of her.

She asked, "Who are you anyway? Why do you know everything about me?"

"My name is Holley Ye. Like you and Autumn are sworn enemies, Autumn and I are also sworn enemies.

I contacted you and helped you because I want to get revenge on Autumn. You also know what a bitch

she is. She doesn't deserve Mr. Lu! You and Mr. Lu are a perfect couple!" Holley smiled, satisfied at the

disdainful, even hateful expression on Rachel's face. "But..."

"But what?" Rachel asked urgently.

"But Autumn Ye has changed her name. Her name is Sheryl Xia now. Even though she changed her

name, Mr. Lu is still infatuated with her. It's time for us to end this bitch's happy life!" Holley cried,

viciousness creeping into her eyes.

"No matter what her name is, I will let her pay since she has left me in such a dreadful situation!"

Rachel swore angrily.

"Miss. Bai, I have an idea..." Holley leaned forward and whispered in Rachel's ear; since Rachel was angry enough, it was time that Holley took her plan to the next step.

When Rachel heard what Holley had to say, a grin spread across her face.

While Rachel and Holley were plotting, far away on the other side, Melissa was about to be released from prison.

"Aunt Melissa, congratulations! You will be set free soon!" Leila was holding onto Melissa's hands, and in her voice was so much sincerity; she was truly glad for Melissa's release.

But only God knew what Leila was planning.

"Leila, you are a good girl. I've known it after spending all this time with you. A good girl like you won't be here very long. You can rest assured," Melissa replied comfortingly. Although she was getting released and Leila was not, Melissa had already decided that she would help Leila get out of prison as well.

When Leila heard Melissa's words, she was overjoyed. After all, she tried her best to play with this old

witch, and she deserved what was to come. If Melissa was out, as she was willing to, she should be able to help Leila.

Since Melissa said this, it meant that she swallowed her bait. All she needed to do now was to polish and finish it. She must grasp the moment. In a soft, coy voice, she said, "Aunt Melissa, I know you are always kind to me. But since I made mistakes, even though I didn't intend to, I should receive the punishment. I don't have any other wishes now. I only hope that I can complete my sentence and be set free as soon as possible. Then I will find a guy who loves me and marry him."

Melissa looked at her beautiful but troubled face, and she felt that she really liked this girl. The idea was even stronger in her mind. "All right. Take care of yourself without me," Melissa said.

"I will, Aunt Melissa. Don't worry about me," Leila replied. She kept looking at Melissa with innocent eyes.

When they were talking, two prison guards came over. "Melissa Shen!" they called.

"Yes, sir!" After so many years, Melissa got used to the standard formal voice and body gestures that she and the other prisoners must use to address the guards.

As she answered the guard's call, she told herself that her time in prison was finally over! She was free!

Alas! Her son! Her son who she had been missing for fifteen years! She could finally see him again.

Her excitement was beyond imagination now.

Melissa followed the prison guards to the entrance and completed all of the paperwork. After she signed one document, a guard put her clothes in her hands and gave her one last order. "Observe the law and discipline yourself after you get out. Don't come back here."

"Thank you, sir!" Melissa bowed deeply. When she straightened again, the door was open in front of her.

She walked out slowly. It was an extremely beautiful day; the sky was bright and sunny— maybe a little too sunny, as Melissa became momentarily blinded by the sheer brightness of the sun. Suddenly, she was confused as to where she needed to go.

It was the iron gate of the prison that divided her life from the outside world for 15 years. For 15 years!

She lost all 15 years behind the gate. Beyond the gate always was her freedom and her son, whom she knew she owed those 15 years of her life.

While she was gone, there were undoubtedly people seeking to do him harm all around, and she

wasn't there to protect him from them. But now—now she was free and she could shield him from everyone and clear up the mess they would have caused to him! She would be like an angel swooping in and saving her son from the destruction of life.

Sheryl Xia?

No matter whether that bitch was Sheryl or Sherry, she wouldn't dream of staying with her son anymore.

Right now, there was only one problem: when she was sent to jail, no one in her family knew about it.

Everyone else assumed that she was dead, so she had to come up with a perfect disguise to go to

Dream Garden as to not shock a lot of people.

Otherwise, even her own son, Charles, might not believe and accept her.

Chapter 1072 Observation

After pondering for a while, Melissa decided to pay close attention to the situation of the Lu family.

Thinking about it to the point that she was even overthinking it, Melissa decided to, instead of going

back home, rather stay in a hotel that was close to Dream Garden.

Looking around the hotel, she quickly realized that it wasn't a luxurious hotel whatsoever. However, the

view from her window allowed her to see the gates of the Dream Garden. She also saw nearly half of

the yard, which formed a part of her view. She stood in front of the window and looked at the long-lost home, her mind starting to race once more.

When the weekend came around, the city was introduced to extremely good weather, which hadn't been seen for quite some time. Charles and Sheryl suddenly made the decision to take their two children to the amusement park.

"Charles, are you done yet? As their father, do you really think it's appropriate to make the kids wait for you for such a long time?" Sheryl teased him with a frown. She wasn't pleased with him at all. Tidying Clark's and Shirley's clothes, Sheryl addressed Charles in a fond tone in front of the children. Charles wasn't running late for the sake of an important reason. In fact, he was still struggling to choose what clothes to wear.

"Mom, stop tidying my clothes. It's perfectly fine. Besides, we've been doing this for such a long time now and still, Daddy hasn't even finished yet!" Clark grumbled, sounding as though he was a little adult as he pushed away Sheryl's hand politely.

"Stay calm. Daddy is nearly done. I would like to remind you that we are going to the amusement park.

There will be children your age everywhere. It's necessary for us to take some time to dress ourselves well. Once we arrive, your mommy and I will hold your and your sister's hands, and accompany you with big smiles on our faces. I'm sure that there will be a lot of children envious of you and Shirley for having such perfect-looking parents." Saying these words explained Charles' character quite perfectly.

He was used to displaying coldness among outsiders. Nevertheless, when he was at home, he was a totally different person. He was warm, loving and fun to be around.

"Daddy, you don't need to dress yourself up. You are the most handsome man in my heart." Staring at Charles, Shirley flatteringly pouted at her father.

"Oh, is that so?" Charles inquired. His face lit up instantly as he heard his daughter's sweet words.

"Of course, I mean it!" Shirley nodded her head with a rather serious look on her face.

Looking at her father, Shirley noticed that he had already changed into his third outfit and styled his hair in multiple ways. He walked over to his daughter and bent over confidently. "Shirley, tell me...am I more handsome with this suit than I was in the previous one?" Charles asked his daughter with a pleased smile on his face.

"Yes, Daddy. You look great."

"Well, alright then. I guess I'm done!" Charles stood up his feet and checked himself out in the mirror once more. He was convinced that he was indeed a handsome man. He nodded his head with a satisfied look on his face.

Sheryl was almost speechless.

"Now, Daddy, shall we leave?"

"Well, of course! Let's go, sweetheart."

"Great! We can finally go and have fun at the amusement park." The two kids cheered excitedly. They had been waiting for this very moment for far too long and were overwhelmed with excitement.

Parked in the yard, Charles' car was ready and waiting for the family. Seeing them step outside of the house, the driver quickly got out of the car, bowed to them and opened the door. From his polite manners, Charles had noticed that he was indeed a very skillful driver.

"Well, you can give me the car keys. I'll drive the car myself." Charles insisted and took over from the respectful driver, who stood by the door as the escort. "Shirley first, and then Clark. She is the last to follow," Charles suggested.

Watching them getting in the car and sitting down, Charles closed the door gently behind them and sat in the driver's seat.

Starting the ignition with a roar, leaving the driver behind in the wind, Charles felt pleased with himself.

Looking in the rear-view mirror, he thought that the driver looked somewhat pathetic being left alone.

Of course, the entire scenario had been witnessed by Melissa. She had an incredible grudge against

Sheryl. Her son, whom she was truly proud of, had now become her driver. Unexpectedly, Sheryl was

incredibly cool with that.

It seemed as though what Leila had said was right. She recognized that the woman was a scheming

bitch!

It took a rather long time for them to arrive at the amusement park. It was the weekend, and the city's

cars were all crowded into this road.

"Sher, you have to be the co-pilot when we drive back," Charles complained as they were about to get

out of the car.

"Why? What's the matter with you?" Sheryl inquired. Seeing the complaining stare in his eyes, Sheryl

could not help but smile.

"You and the children have been talking and laughing together behind me for the entire drive, leaving me to drive alone attentively. I dare say you must know what's the matter!" Charles complained.

"Mommy, Daddy is jealous because you didn't talk to him for the entire drive. Instead, you only talked to us," Clark said to Sheryl.

"Clark, what on earth do you know about jealousy?" Charles couldn't grasp that his three-year-old son could say something like this. He was shocked by Clark's words.

"How could I not know? Only a person who has a crush on another person would be as jealous as Daddy is now! I know, because kindergarten children like to be jealous," Clark gloated, without shying away from his "intelligence."

"Hahaha, I have never expected kindergarten children to be jealous. Nowadays the children are far too premature!" Sheryl could not help but laugh as she listened to Charles and Clark's conversation.

"Mommy, why haven't I ever seen any kids in kindergarten get jealous?" With a frown, Shirley was confused and inquired to her mother like an adult. She was obviously in the same kindergarten as her brother. So, she wondered why Clark had noticed the kindergarten children were jealous and why she

didn't.

"Well, Shirley, please don't take note of your brother's words. He was only joking," Sheryl responded, looking at Clark with uncertainty. Sheryl was confused and didn't know how to explain jealousy to a three-years-old child.

"Okay, everybody, get out of the car. Let's go have fun at the amusement park!" Being a perfectionist, Charles finally found the ideal parking space. He shouted to his three talkative passengers in the back seat after parking the car.

"What? We've finally arrived? Daddy, you are awesome!" Shirley's attention was successfully diverted by Charles, who had also given Sheryl a look of triumph.

In the amusement park, just as Charles had said before, their excellent appearances raised the attention of crowds around them. There were plenty of sharp-eyed people who had recognized the man that was chatting and laughing. It was Mr. Lu!

However, they were uncertain whether he was the same man who was compared to the one that had an exceptional hand in business. They couldn't fathom that, in spite of whom they knew him to be; he was just a kind and loving father.

Playing time always went by very fast, especially when spending with the family of four.

It was getting dark outside. Before long, Shirley and Clark hadn't enjoyed themselves very much. When they arrived, there were scores of people, but unfortunately, at least two-thirds had already gone home.

"I think it's about time for us to go home now. We'll come back here next weekend, okay?" Sheryl said patiently.

"Okay," the children responded together at the same time. Both of them were sensible children and well-behaved.

On the way back home, Sheryl took the passenger seat as Charles had requested before. The kids in the back seat were tired and sleeping soundly on their way to the Dream Garden. They were extremely tired after the long day.

"Charles, why don't we pull up at the door and carry them into the house, to their rooms to sleep. I really don't want to wake them."

"Okay, sure." Charles was absolutely okay with Sheryl's idea.

When they carried the kids into the room, Charles went back outside to pull in the car into the garage.

Sheryl followed him since she had nothing else to do. She stood in the yard and waited for Charles.

After parking the car, Charles walked over to Sheryl. "What now? Did you miss me? It hasn't been a

while," Charles teased with a smile. He couldn't help but give Sheryl a passionate kiss on the forehead.

"Ah! It's so dirty!" Sheryl scorned, with a displeasing look on her face. She tapped Charles' face

intentionally.

The intimate act of love between the young couple fell in the eyes of the woman not too far away, which

ignited a hatred within her heart.

Chapter 1073 Fifteen Years

In the next few days, Melissa spent her time standing by the windowsill gazing out at Dream Garden.

She had witnessed each and every move made by everyone in Lu family and everything had seemed

under control.

Melissa didn't like Sheryl very much. Maybe it was because Leila had spoken ill of Sheryl to her before,

which had really left a terrible impression on Melissa. Or maybe it was just because Melissa had a bad

gut feeling the first time she caught sight of her. But regardless of which reason it was, Melissa simply

disliked Sheryl and this feeling had become increasingly obvious.

After these days of observation in the shadows, Melissa had learned nearly all there was to know about Lu family. She planned to make her next move. If she were to fulfill her purpose, Melissa couldn't continue to just watch them; instead, she had to make her presence known in Dream Garden.

However, what made her feel unsure and confused was that despite seeing everyone in Lu family, she hadn't been able to get a single look at Gary.

She couldn't help but think to herself, 'Has Gary gone out? Where did he go? Why has he been away from Dream Garden for so long? Has he gone travelling abroad, or has he moved out to live somewhere else?'

Whatever was going on with Gary, to Melissa, it was causing a hiccup in her plan. If she failed to find Gary, she wouldn't be able to prove to anyone that she was the lost mother of Charles. Only Gary could prove her identity to Charles.

As Melissa troubled over this, a familiar figure suddenly came into her view. Her eyes lit up.

It was Gary. He was still in Dream Garden after all, but he had apparently been keeping himself in his own bedroom these days.

Gary was too old to move around and would only leave his bedroom when it was completely

necessary.

Seeing Gary in Dream Garden made Melissa's throat constrict. She could finally feel assured that her plan would be carried out on schedule. Swallowing hard, Melissa tried to concentrate on her breathing.

She needed to relax and compose herself if she wanted to seize such a rare opportunity that might never come again. This could be her only chance.

Realizing this, Melissa took a deep breath. While she was excited to finally take action, she was also slightly nervous. Not wanting to wait any longer, Melissa hurriedly got herself changed and then put on make-up. After looking in the mirror to make sure she looked okay, Melissa rushed downstairs.

Gary had, in fact, not intended to go outside that day, but he felt tired of staying indoors and needed some fresh air.

Wandering around the courtyard alone, he was clueless to the fact that there was someone waiting for him.

When he looked up and saw Melissa's familiar face, his eyebrows shot up in surprise. Not believing what he saw, Gary slowly walked closer to the woman, his eyes wide open. "Melissa? Is it you?" he

asked in amazement.

Gary's mind was racing. While he recognized the woman's face, he was still unsure as to who she was.

"Yes, Dad. It's me, Melissa," Melissa responded as she smiled fondly at the old man. The startled look

on Gary's face made her feel somewhat relieved because clearly, Gary still remembered who she was.

Hesitantly, Melissa took a step forward. When Gary didn't move away, she gathered enough courage to

walk all the way to Gary and say, "Dad, can we talk?"

"Okay," Gary nodded slowly. "Let's go to the tea house where Eugene used to stay. Charles will be

back soon." While his voice did not sound loud or bitter, Melissa could sense that there was an invisible

wall separating her from Lu Family.

This brief thought made Melissa nervous. It meant that Gary might not be able to forgive her for what

she had done back in the past.

Unsure of what she should do, Melissa took a deep breath to settle her nerves, and then she

responded awkwardly, "Well, it's been a while since I went there last time and I kind of miss it. I'd be

happy to go there with you." With a faint smile, Melissa gestured at Gary to lead the way.

The tea house was not far from Dream Garden, so they didn't need to take a car. Gary walked ahead

silently as Melissa followed him. It had been fifteen years since they had last seen each other, so they each had a lot to catch up on. Yet, instead of a heartfelt conversation, there was simply a stone cold silence. Gary didn't ask Melissa any questions or initiate any dialogue with her. Not knowing what Gary was thinking, Melissa felt incredibly uncomfortable, so she kept her mouth shut and didn't say a word.

When they arrived at the tea house, Gary finally asked her, "Now that I know you're alive, where did you go? It's been fifteen years and Charles is a grown-up now. Why haven't you come back before?"

Why now?"

Gary was struggling to figure out how he felt about seeing his daughter-in-law again. He couldn't forget what had happened in the past and held a strong grudge against her. If she hadn't picked that fight with his son, Eugene Lu, fifteen years ago, he wouldn't have driven off in the middle of the night and died in a car accident.

When Eugene Lu died, Melissa simply vanished. She had been missing ever since. During a period of time back then, Charles, who was too young to understand what had happened, would relentlessly ask Gary where his mother was.

Whenever Charles asked that question, Gary would be at a loss for words. His reply always ended up being the same, "Your mother has gone to heaven to look for your dad." While it was quite a cruel answer to the young boy's question, he hoped that it would allow Charles to forget his irresponsible and heartless mother and to live his life bravely.

The painful look on Charles' face when he heard of his mother's death was still imprinted in Gary's mind. His face crumpled and his eyes instantly filled with despair and fear. Every day, the memory of Charles' face had motivated Gary to love and care for him as much as possible and to help him cope with the trauma in his heart. Whenever his parents were mentioned accidentally, Charles would always react calmly and end up comforting Gary instead. With a smile, Charles would always say, "Grandpa, don't be upset! Although Mom and Dad are gone, you still have me. I will stay by your side and protect you for the rest of your life."

Having such a clever and cute grandson by his side, Gary felt blessed and truly relieved.

Many years later, whenever the memory of Charles' words would cross Gary's mind, he couldn't help but weep. Young Charles' thoughtfulness back then was touching.

However, as he grew up, it became increasingly harder for Charles to talk about his parents. In turn,

Gary would also try to avoid the topic.

And over the years they just got used to it.

But Gary would always wonder where Melissa had gone.

At the age when Charles needed his mother most, Melissa was nowhere to be found. Even if she had hated Eugene Lu and had had a fight with him, Eugene had died for it.

Was that not a good enough reason for her to return home? How she could be so ruthless to abandon

Charles after his father's death?

Gary had pondered these questions for fifteen years and had never found any answers.

He had even started believing that maybe Melissa had died.

If she wasn't dead, then why hadn't she come back to take a look at her own son?

However, now Melissa had turned up out of the blue. Seeing her in the courtyard had shocked Gary.

His mind was so bewildered that he had considered ignoring her and treating her just like a stranger.

But that was too difficult for him to do, especially at his age.

As he got older, he found it harder and harder to make tough decisions.

And, given that Charles was married and had his own children now, he must feel overwhelmed and desperate for help. Gary thought it might be a good idea to let him know that his mother was alive as she could help ease his burden. Gary was too old to help Charles, but Melissa wasn't and could even guide Charles when it came to parenting.

So, if Melissa wanted to talk to her son, then so be it. Besides, Gary desperately wanted to know exactly what had happened to her fifteen years ago.

He needed to finally have all his questions answered.

"Dad, I admit that the fight with Eugene was my fault, but you still don't understand what it was even about." Taking a deep breath, Melissa looked directly into her father's curious eyes. The truth that had been buried deep within her heart for fifteen years would finally be exposed.

Chapter 1074 Good Intentions

The afternoon sun cast a golden glow on half of Gary's serious face. Melissa had always wanted to talk to someone about it, even to someone who wasn't really involved or knew little about the matter.

After all, people were inclined to tell other people things if they had endured something tremendously tedious or horrible. Otherwise, the lack of an outlet for emotions would lead to depression.

"Things have been over for so many years. Of course, I didn't exactly know the cause then, and I

certainly don't know now," Gary said helplessly but honestly. His son died that year, and his daughter-in-law suddenly went missing. There wasn't anyone he could ask for help in dealing with those matters.

Melissa noticed that Gary's teacup was empty, so she got up to pour him some more. She served it with both hands to show her respect. "Dad, honestly the reason Eugene and I had a big fight that time wasn't because of emotional or marital problems, but because Shining Company's internal finances had severe problems," she said slowly.

"Shining Company's internal finances had severe problems that time? I had never heard about that. What was wrong then?" Gary asked curiously. The last thing that would ever cross his mind was that Shining Company had an internal finance issue.

"During that time, there was an issue regarding capital turnover. I thought I could help Eugene and suggested taking risks, but he didn't agree back then. I set aside his idea at first, but after dealing with so many customers, I realized that the pressing problem still couldn't be solved. Eugene felt the effects of the financial issue the most. He was extremely distressed, and thus, he was always drunk day and night. No one but I could feel his psychological pressure, and I felt terrible not being able to help him.

So, I thought as long as I could help him pull through, I would do whatever it took me to do. I would even sacrifice myself for him and for Shining Company," Melissa explained. A sigh escaped her lips, then it was silent for a while.

Gary felt pain grip him as he listened. He had no idea that his son was under such great pressure, a severe financial crisis when they lived in the same house back then. "So what happened after? How did Shining Company get through that problem?" Gary asked carefully.

"Dad, you know how terrible it was when Shining Company's capital was ruined. It was like walking on the edge of a dangerously high cliff. There couldn't be any mistakes. Back then, it would've been the end for the whole company if the outsiders had gotten a hint of what went wrong in it!" Melissa answered. "Therefore, I decided to set things right and ease Eugene's burdens using my way. For once, I had taken the risk! This time, I chose not to tell Eugene about it." As she narrated the story, Melissa couldn't help but feel somewhat moved by her own selflessness. If she had other options, she would've never risked the dangers that came with violations of laws. However, she admitted that while it was impulsive, she had no regrets.

It made her realize how cruel the world was. Even fate could turn its back on her. "After careful

consideration, I made sure that I could only take one shortcut. I committed a crime without hesitation. I

did commercial fraud, and used the money to help Shining Company solve its problems," she said.

"Eugene found out afterward, and we fought. That was when things went bad. He accused me of not

listening to him and violating the laws. He thought it was wrong that I committed a crime, regardless of

the outcome. I felt so insulted by him at that time. Everything I had done was for him and for Shining

Company. How could he judge me and not understand what I did? I was really upset!"

"I was so mad, we ended up fighting badly. I didn't care when he told me to turn myself in. Nor did I

listen to him when he said that he would wait for me when I was imprisoned. I refused to listen to him at

all. When he saw that he couldn't convince me, he slammed the door and left the house in anger,"

Melissa said and stopped to take a deep breath.

"After he went out, he got into a car accident. When I arrived at the accident scene, I saw his cold body

on the road, covered in blood. I instantly felt numb. Later, grief and remorse filled my heart. I rushed in

and held him in my arms, and cried bitterly. I cried for a long time and remembered what he told me. In

the end, I went to the police station and turned myself in."

Tears streamed down her face as she talked. The droplets stained her cheeks and the table. It had been so many years since the car accident happened, and she was aware that she was wrong.

If she could have a second chance, she would not have fought with Eugene, but turn herself into the police instead. That way, Eugene wouldn't have died in the accident!

Gary felt greatly shocked by Melissa's words as he listened. "So, you've been in prison all these years?" he asked.

"Yes. Otherwise I wouldn't leave Charles. I'm his mother, and I'm not cold-blooded! I suffered a lot—I couldn't see him, touch him, talk to him, and watch him grow up." Guilt filled Melissa's heart when she spoke of her son. She had chosen to take the risk because she wanted to help Eugene, and for their son's future. However, she had never imagined that a single mistake cost her everything—her husband and her son, who had nearly become an orphan because of it.

After Melissa finished talking about her life the past few years, Gary was greatly relieved. He had misunderstood many things before, and bore a grudge against his daughter-in-law because he thought she was to blame for the car accident and the whole thing. Now that he knew the whole story, he

suddenly felt that it was quite hard for Melissa to undergo those setbacks by herself all these years!

After all, the death of his son was caused by accident, and nobody wanted to see an accident happen,

including Melissa. "Why didn't you tell us about any of those things? We are still your family, your home

here," Gary said. "I just thought you were...gone forever."

When Melissa heard this, she was filled with hope again. It felt great for her to know that Gary saw her

as a member of the family.

Before, Gary had a hard time accepting her into the family when his son died.

"Dad, I didn't want Charles to be called a fraudster's son at that time. His life would be ruined if he

knew what I had done. He's such an excellent boy I just want him to grow up happy and healthy, so I

chose to keep it to myself and not let anyone know," Melissa said slowly as she wiped her tears. What

Melissa said was true, but she didn't deny the fact that she said it so she could add to her credit, and

gain more favor from Gary—she knew she had to have his permission before going back to Dream

Garden.

Besides, She needed Gary to talk to Charles about the matter, so he could understand and accept her

after she was gone for so many years.

"So, you've just gotten out of jail?" Gary asked.

"I was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment and came out last weekend," Melissa answered. She lowered her eyelids and didn't look at Gary's face as she spoke.

Gary opened his mouth to say something, but no words came out. Instead, he picked up the cup of tea his daughter-in-law had served and took a sip. It was cold already, but he didn't mind. After pondering over things for a while, he said, "You were thoughtful, and had good intentions for everyone in the family."

"Dad, the tea has gone cold. Let me refill it for you," Melissa said attentively. However, she didn't respond to Gary's comment about her. She just stood up, poured out the cold tea, washed the cup, and made a new batch. She humbly served it again to Gary with both hands.

Although Melissa hadn't touched a tea set for fifteen years, she was still familiar with making tea. When Eugene was still alive, he liked to study tea ceremonies and spent a lot of time learning it, and that was why Melissa also knew how to make tea.

Maybe it was the respect of his daughter-in-law, or his son's hobby of making tea that moved Gary, but

whatever the reason was, he was greatly touched by her earnestness. He also saw her in a new, empathic light. "Now that you are out of prison, why not live at home? As for Charles, I will go talk to him. It will be okay," Gary reassured her. Now, Melissa's wish came true.

After all, Gary was not a fool. He had guessed the reason his daughter-in-law came to him. It was why he didn't ask her where she was staying after she got out of jail, nor did he ask her if she had adjusted to the outside world after being imprisoned for fifteen years. They didn't need ceremonious preliminaries—he just went straight to the point and asked her to settle down at home.

It wasn't difficult to crack her thoughts. Although she had lost her husband, she still had a son in the Lu family, and that was the most important thing.

Chapter 1075 An Important Announcement

For Melissa, as long as she was with her son, she would still have a home.

"Oh, really, Dad? Thank you! Thank you so much. I..." Although she had expected it, she still couldn't hold back the ecstatic thrill at the sound of Gary's answer. On cloud nine, she gushed, "I promise that I will take good care of you, Dad."

"No, thanks. I am old, but I am in good health, and I can attend to myself. All I want is that you treat Charles, his wife, and children well," Gary stressed earnestly.

"Charles is my son. Of course, I will be kind and agreeable to him," Melissa responded promptly.

Pausing for a moment, she added, "And his children."

Gary didn't sense that she ignored Sheryl. But even if he had been able to catch on, he wouldn't give too much thought to it. They used to live together, and he knew Melissa.

Charles meant everything to her. And that was something he could never doubt.

"Well, that's it. If you don't have anything else, you can leave now. As for you moving in with us, I need to talk to Charles first. I am afraid that he might find it hard to take in that his mother appears out of nowhere," Gary proposed. Now that Melissa already got what she wanted, she might not want to stay here any longer, he thought.

"Yup. I gotta go. It's getting late, so please don't stay outside too late," Melissa replied thoughtfully.

Since things went on smoothly as expected, she decided to leave. She didn't have much to talk to her husband's father, after all.

After getting off duty, Charles drove straight to Cloud Advertising Company to pick Sheryl up.

Sheryl was a workaholic. Once she got much work to do, she would definitely lose track of time and

work for extended hours. Even though she was a CEO now, she still worked as hard as before.

Charles leisurely waited for Sheryl in his car. He watched as the staff from Cloud Advertising Company

leave one by one, and yet there was still no sign of his wife.

He was growing impatient, so he took out the phone and dialed Sheryl's number. Several minutes had passed, but no one answered the phone.

He wondered whether she had her hands full so that she didn't even try at least to pick up his call. As

he was about to hang up and go to the company to find Sheryl, a voice from the other end of the line

reached his ears. "Hello, Charles."

"Come on, honey, do you know what time it is now? It's time to get off work. No matter what you are

doing, stop it and collect your things. I am waiting for you outside your company," he instructed. He was

slightly upset at her for keeping him waiting for such a long time. But he was more concerned about her

health. He hated to see her caught up in her job and forget to take care of herself.

He didn't think that his wife needed not to work really, but Sheryl didn't share the same sentiments. She

wanted to have her own career, and he chose to respect her decision.

Despite that, he couldn't allow her to work her tail off.

"I am almost done here. See you in five minutes. Love you, honey." Sheryl rolled her eyes cheekily as she heard Charles complaining.

Deep inside, she wanted to snap back. 'Now that I have chosen to get a job, I will do my best.

Otherwise, I would just be a housewife and lead a comfortable life.'

However, she didn't have the guts to voice out her real thoughts. Because if she blurted it out, Charles would ask her to quit her job and to stay at home to be a Mrs. CEO.

"All right. Hurry up," Charles agreed in a mellow voice. Obviously, Sheryl had a knack for pleasing her husband. His anger vanished at the sound of her words.

It turned out that her words couldn't be trusted at all because ten minutes later, he was still waiting.

Losing his patience, he stormed upstairs and barged into her office. He saw her glued at her desk going through some profile on her desk.

Sensing someone staring at her, Sheryl lifted her head and saw her husband with a livid face. Sticking out her tongue, she grinned and hurried to gather her stuff. Charles made his way towards her as he grumbled his annoyance. Sheryl, who hastily grabbed her things, kept on apologizing to appease his

anger. The couple then silently left the building and headed into the car. On their way home, Charles didn't let it go. "Why are you so busy?" he inquired with a frown.

"We got a substantial order. The client is a meticulous perfectionist. Well, forget it. I already got off work. Let's not talk about it now," Sheryl replied. She was used to handling tough clients, so bothering her husband with her work never crossed her mind.

Though she had a hectic and exhausting day, she never felt tired when she was in her desk working.

But now she was being haunted by her sore eyes and stiff neck. She groaned as she massaged the part between her neck and shoulder. "I scheduled the preliminary planning scheme the day after tomorrow. Then we will present it to the client hopefully on the same day. Once they like it, things will be easier."

"Is your client some kind of a big shot? Why did you have to work on it yourself? Have you forgotten that you are the CEO now?" Charles asked in confusion. 'She must have met a captious client.

Otherwise, she would have let her subordinates handle it, ' he speculated.

"I don't know. The client chose to work with us, mainly because of my reputation as an excellent planner. Initially, I wanted to delegate this one to others as a chance to practice and hone their

capabilities, but the client specifically asked me to take charge of this case. It is our first collaboration,

so I agreed." As Charles didn't make any comments, she further explained, "They have insisted that I

should be responsible for it, but they also have promised to give a generous reward. Since our

company can get a handsome profit from this project, I have no reason to refuse to work with them."

'I can understand the client's concern. And I have earned my reputation in this circle. Since this

company never worked with us before, they just want the most competent one to do the project even

though they need to pay more money, ' she mused.

"Wow, looks like you have a point. Ms. Xia, how about I sell Shining Company and then I will look after

our children at home?" Charles said playfully. He even called her Ms. Xia.

"That sounds good. I will work outside to support our family. And you will stay at home and will do the

chores," she babbled giddily. Glancing at the expression on Charles' face, she couldn't help bursting

into laughter.

Charles was rendered speechless, and rolled his eyes at her.

Soon, the two reached home. They entered the house with their arms linked and headed directly into

the dining room. Dinner was already served on the table while Clark and Shirley seemed to be waiting for them at their seats. The two kids, who fixed their gaze at the door, simultaneously grumbled noticing their parents coming in, "Dad, Mom, you are finally back. We are starving."

"Wow, are we having a celebration for something? What a bountiful meal!" Charles exclaimed with glee, fixing his eyes on the dishes on the table. His stomach started to growl.

"Charles, Sher, please wash your hands and join us. I have an important announcement to make,"

Gary began amiably. Taking a sit, he shifted his gaze on his grandchildren and said, "Shirley, Clark, you can eat first if you feel hungry. Your parents will join us soon."

"No, Great-grandpa. I will wait for Dad and Mom," Clark replied obediently.

"Me too," Shirley followed.

"You are good kids," Gary praised. Transfixing his eyes on the two obedient kids, he was overwhelmed with contentment.

Sheryl and Charles came back and took their seats. The latter beamed, "What are you going to announce, Grandpa? You even prepared a feast."

"Yes, Grandpa, what is it?" Sheryl asked curiously.

"Let's eat first," Gary suggested as he picked up his chopsticks and began to eat.

Charles opened his mouth and intended to ask. But he controlled his curiosity when he took note of Gary's expression. He raised his head and glanced at Sheryl. The latter also had no idea what the old man was up to. With a casual look, she rested her eyes on her children and urged, "Didn't you say you were hungry? You can eat now."

Reminded by what Sheryl had said, Charles realized that Gary would announce the news after they had dinner.

Chapter 1076 Where Is She

There was no denying that Nancy was really good at cooking. Clark and Shirley ate her food with eagerness. Charles and Sheryl had been tired after working, and they also ate a lot.

However, Gary's mind started to wander when he saw the others enjoying the food.

"Grandpa, today's food is so delicious, you should eat more." Sheryl turned to Gary.

"I'm full." Just as Sheryl spoke, Gary put down his chopsticks. "Charles, come inside with me," he said.

"What's wrong? Why so mysterious? If you have anything to say, you can say it here." Charles was confused. He thought that Gary had nothing he couldn't say in front of Sheryl.

Gary didn't respond.

"Charles, I want to eat more, and Shirley and Clark are enjoying their food. I think you can go to the study room with Grandpa first. After we finish eating, we will go to see you," Sheryl proposed to Charles, bringing him out of his embarrassment.

As Sheryl was speaking, Gary had already gotten up and gone upstairs. His footsteps were not heavy, but when his foot fell on the white marble floor, it sounded quite clear, echoing off of the floor and the walls.

This sound made Charles uneasy. He didn't know where the uneasiness came from, but he had a feeling that Gary would tell him something serious.

'What happened? Why is Grandpa so mysterious?' Charles thought.

At last, he rose and followed Gary up the stairs and into the study room. As he closed the door behind him, he looked over at Gary. "It's just you and me now. You can tell me now, what happened? What's wrong?" Charles asked, staying by the door to the study room.

"Don't worry, Charles. First, sit down." Gary smiled at him, but his smile told Charles that there was something bothering the elder man.

Charles frowned, more confused than before.

Gary was not one to hesitate much, and he also didn't like pretending to be mysterious. What happened today?

"Charles, how are you doing these days?" Gary asked. Although lots of thoughts buzzed around in his head, what came out of his mouth was relatively trivial.

"Pretty good. Sher is back. Shirley and Clark are also with me. I am very satisfied now." Charles's answer was direct but very true. Indeed, he was truly satisfied beyond imagination with his life at the moment.

"That's good." Gary smiled, taking a pause. "When you were younger, I often thought and wondered about the type of woman you would end up with. I wanted you to find someone who'd stick with you and fight with you, and also help you out in whatever business you would end up with. Now I see that you've found the perfect woman. I'm also very satisfied. I'm happy. I remember when you were younger...we lived together...those hard days... Luckily, we're fine now..."

"Grandpa, we are all happy now. Why do you mention these unhappy things? Just say what you want

to say. There is no point beating about the bush. You're making me feel very uneasy. Did Sher do something that makes you unhappy? If she did, let me know. I'll make her apologize to you." Charles was misunderstanding Gary's words, thinking that the reason why Gary talked to him alone and asked him these questions was because of Sheryl.

"No, Sher is a good girl. She wouldn't make me unhappy. I want to talk with you alone, not because of Sher, but because of your mother," Gary said, finally getting to his main point.

"My mother? Grandpa, I admit that when I was a child, I often thought of her and my father, especially when I watched other people with their parents. But it has been 15 years. I'm all grown up now. So you don't need to worry about me, I won't be sad about that anymore. From now on, Sher and I are your family, and you will be happy every day..." Charles took on a comforting tone, as he Misunderstood that Gary missed his dead parents.

But he was interrupted by Gary. "No, Charles, listen to me.

I am not going talking about this. What I want to say is that your mother...she is not dead!"

"What? Grandpa, it's been fifteen years and now you tell me that my mother is still alive?" Charles stood and stared at Gary incredulously, hoping that the old man was joking. But the look on Gary's face

said that he wasn't kidding.

Charles laughed at himself. He was so stupid! Why would Gary joke about something like this?

"Charles, as a matter of fact, I also found out recently. Your mother didn't die that year," Gary

continued.

"So if she's not dead, where is she? Where has she been for all this time? Why not come to see... us?"

When Charles was younger, all he ever wanted was to have a father and a mother like all his friends,

peers and strangers he would see. He wanted parents to accompany him in all his moments. 15

years...And he had learned to not let this scar him any longer. He was grown up now, married, and with

his own family. Why would his mother choose to appear now? Why?

"Listen to me...We've misunderstood your mother all these years. Her life also has been very hard..."

Gary continued on to tell Charles everything that Melissa had told him. After hearing this, Charles burst

into tears.

"Oh, my...my mother must have led a really hard life all these years. She must have suffered a lot in

jail..." Blood is thicker than water. When Charles found out the truth, all the anger, confusion, and even

hatred that he had accumulated in his heart towards his mother seemed to turn to ash!

"Charles, I know Sher is your wife. I also know that she is considerate. But I don't know whether I

should tell her about this or not, so I want to talk with you alone. As for whether you want to tell her, it is

your business," Gary said.

"I see, Grandpa. Now that my mother has gotten out of jail, where is she now? Why doesn't she return

to Dream Garden?" Charles had not seen his mother for fifteen years. All these years, the memory of

Melissa in his mind had become more and more blurred. Even in his dreams, Melissa didn't appear.

"She naturally wants to come back. After all, you are her only son. You're the person she's the most

concerned about. She is afraid that if she suddenly appears, you will find it difficult to adapt. It has been

fifteen years; she's not sure whether she could come back to Dream Garden. Anyway, your father's

traffic accident that year..." Gary had said everything in an objective tone, as if he did not have anything

to do with any of it. He didn't want to present a bias to Charles; he was grown up now. Gary knew that

Charles was capable of coming to his own judgment on the situation.

Chapter 1077 Let Her Come Back

"Grandpa, please. Let Mom come back."

Charles had chosen to forgive Melissa, as she was his mother after all. He had an obscure memory of her from his childhood, but he remembered that she loved him with all her heart.

"I asked you because I wanted to know your opinion. I'll tell her later that you want her to come back,"

Gary said with a nod. He already knew what Charles was going to say, but this conversation was still necessary to clear things up.

"Grandpa, may I tell her myself?" Charles asked excitedly. "I haven't seen my mother for so long. I want to invite her back myself."

"Alright, she's your mother, after all. You've been separated for so many years, so now it's time for you two to rebuild your relationship. I think I shouldn't meddle in this matter."

After having thought about it for a while, Gary took out his phone from his pocket. "I called her that day, and luckily I got a record of her number, or else we'll have to wait for her to message us. Here it is. Go see her," Gary said.

"Thank you, Grandpa, I promise to get everything ready. I'll tell Sher. She knows how to deal with it.

She won't tell this to others considering the Lu family's fame."

Charles knew why Gary didn't tell Sheryl. Gary wasn't sure if Sheryl would spread this news to others

and cause damage to Shining Company.

"Okay then. Well that was all I wanted to say," Gary replied. Charles had figured out what worried his grandfather, so reassured him.

"I'm going downstairs then." Charles bid him goodbye and went on his way. For Charles' competitors in business, he was a fierce and cunning businessman, but for Gary, he was just a filial child.

He would surely be kind to his mother as he was to his grandpa.

'Everything will get better, ' Gary thought.

Meanwhile, Sheryl and their children were almost done eating when Charles arrived downstairs. The children immediately ran to Charles and asked, "Dad, what did Great-Grandpa tell you?"

"Well, he told me there you will have a nice grandma to play with you. Would you like that?"

He had expected to meet his mother after they were separated for fifteen years. He was especially moved when Gary told him that his mother missed him so much.

"Grandma? That's great!" Shirley nodded happily. However, Clark was a little skeptical. He curiously asked, "What kind of Grandma?"

I must see her first to see if I would like her or not." Charles chuckled at his son's response.

"Haha! What a smart boy! Okay, you can see her when she arrives; then you can tell me if you like her or not," he said. A boisterous laugh escaped his lips and he ruffled his son's hair.

"Charles, who is this 'Grandma'? What did Grandpa tell you?" Sheryl asked. She was confused at Charles' weird words. In turn, Charles sat beside Sheryl at the dining table and told her everything.

"Sher...let me tell you about it..."

When he finished his story, Sheryl also supported his decision. "It's time to let Mom come back," she said.

"Yes, and Grandpa gave me her phone number. I'm going to see her and ask her to live in Dream Garden. What do you think?" Charles asked Sheryl. Sheryl was the most important person to Charles, so he definitely had to get her approval on this matter.

"It's okay. Mom already suffered a lot in prison, so she deserves to spend the rest of her life in peace and happiness. Let me go with you Charles, I've never met her before, so I'd like to show her some respect."

Her husband thought that it was quite nice of her to offer that.

"Oh, it's really nice of you!" Charles beamed. He was really happy with Sheryl's response. He thought that his mother would be very happy to see his wife go with him.

However, he was also worried about Sheryl. "You have really busy work in Cloud Advertising Company, right? Will this affect your work?" he asked.

"Don't worry. I can finish my work at night. The most important thing now is the meeting with Mom," Sheryl reassured him. She was such a kind woman that she was willing to please everyone, even if it often caused her trouble.

"Sher, although the meeting with Mom is important, you shouldn't do it at the expense of your rest day. If you can't finish your work alone, you should ask your employees' help. As a boss, you should make the final review before giving the scheme to the clients," Charles advised. As an experienced boss, Charles knew if Sher did everything by herself, it would be harmful to her and the company in the long run.

"I also want to give the work to other designers, but the client requested me to do it this time. Don't worry, I will only be busy for several days. When the work is finished, I will rest at home to accompany

Mom," Sheryl explained. Finally, Charles relented with a nod.

"Okay. You can do as you like this time but you must rest well later. I won't allow my wife to work so hard to earn money," he said. He was already satisfied with Sheryl's answer, so he didn't push her to change her decision.

"Yes, Mr. Lu, I promise to do as you ordered!" Sheryl teased. Before Charles could retort back, she had already gone to the children.

"Clark and Shirley, let's have a bath and then go to bed!"

Although she had been busy with work recently, Sheryl was in a good mood. Charles couldn't help but smile widely as he watched the happy scene in front of him.

He felt so happy to have Sheryl with him. He believed that when his mother came back, their family would be perfect.

Later at night, Charles couldn't fall asleep because he kept thinking about his mother, who hadn't seen him for about 15 years. He wondered how she looked like after a lot of time had passed.

His desire to see her was so strong that he couldn't rest. He couldn't help but imagine his mother's face, and he was so ecstatic to regain his mother's love.

Minutes passed, and it was over one o'clock already. Sheryl slept soundly in the bed. She got too tired often recently and fell asleep quickly when her body hit the bed. Charles didn't want to bother her, so he closed his eyes and tried to sleep.

He sighed deeply and tried to force himself to doze off. 'Sleep well. You will see your mother tomorrow. You've waited for fifteen years. Just bear this one last night and then you'll be reunited with her!' he internally persuaded himself.

The next morning was peaceful, and Charles had already finished washing before Sheryl woke up. She checked her phone on the nightstand and saw that it was only seven o'clock.

She turned to Charles, who was getting clothes from the closet. "Charles, why did you get up so early?" she asked.

Chapter 1078 A Reunion

"Honey, sleep as long as you want. I want you to have a good rest. Recently, you have been exhausted. Don't worry with the kids. I'll drive Clark and Shirley to the kindergarten. As for your breakfast, Nancy prepared it already. Just remember to eat it when you get up. I told Nancy to warm it as soon as you go down. Oh, and don't leave. Wait for me here. When I return, we'll pick Mom up."

Charles told these things to Sheryl without stopping. He did not even look at her. His gaze was fixed on the mirror to make sure his tie was perfectly tied.

Sheryl was still in the bed savoring the precious moments. Upon hearing his litany, she answered lazily,

"Hmm...So, I will just give myself a break and go back to sleep. When you return, let's pick Mom up. I will go to the company in the afternoon."

"Great! It's good to be on the same page. Go back to sleep now. I will check if Shirley and Clark are all ready. They should be finished with breakfast by now," Charles replied. Charles approached Sheryl, leaned down and kissed her lovingly on her forehead. Then, he went out of the room and down to the dining room.

His kisses, just like this one, were the support Sheryl had in all the difficulties she faced and would face in the future. Those made her strong and fearless enough to face everything in life.

After a couple of minutes, Sheryl heard the car start and drive away. Then she fell asleep.

What made Sheryl exhausted lately? The case she was working on was too tiresome. It demanded lots of effort. Because of her reputation of being strict and rigorous, a client personally requested her to handle it. Therefore, she needed to work hard. And since she did not go to the office this morning, she

knew she had to work until midnight to make up for the time she missed. Otherwise she would fail to give her client a perfect business plan on time.

Since they were picking Charles' mother later this morning, she might as well take the advantage to sleep later than usual. Anyway, this opportunity rarely came and she was very fortunate to have this moment at the right time.

It was already past 8 in the morning when she woke up again. Charles was already by her bedside looking at her. She smiled, "Why didn't you wake me up upon your return?"

"I don't have the heart, honey. You were sleeping like a baby. And you needed it. We're not in a hurry.

Any time to pick Mom is okay," Charles responded, smiling. The room was filled with sunshine, and it reflected on Charles' hair making it golden. It also made him look like an angel with the golden rays behind him. Sheryl felt like she was the happiest wife in the world for having a husband so loving and beautiful inside and out.

Remembering her mother-in-law, she asked, "Have you called her already?"

"Not yet. I was thinking about giving her a call. But when I already held the phone, I started to worry

what I would tell her. After all, we haven't seen nor contacted each other for so many years. I don't even know how to start a conversation with her," Charles explained. He looked pretty distressed. Then he continued, "I decided to wait for you to wake up. Any suggestion?"

Sheryl totally understood Charles' worries. People changed a lot in just a short period of time, more so in fifteen years. Fifteen years of separation was literally long. Honestly speaking, they could be considered as strangers to each other. It would be getting-to-know-each-other stage for the mother and son.

"Don't worry too much. If you don't know what to tell her, don't make the call yet. There's plenty of time for that later."

Sheryl got up and sat beside him. She put her hands around his waist. She placed her chin on his shoulder, her mouth near his ear. In a soft voice, she continued comfortingly, "Later, when you call her and she answers, simply ask her where she lives. From there, you can make small talk. You can ask her about other things when she's here already. You have years ahead of you to get to know one another."

Charles felt relieved after listening to Sheryl. There was wisdom in her words. Though he thought exactly the same, he didn't feel confident enough to decide what was best to do. He needed Sheryl whom he trusted and loved to reassure and encourage him.

It was very rare nowadays to find couples who knew what the other thought and felt, who would give each other the support and encouragement needed, who would share the joys and bear the burdens with, who would understand each other. Luckily, Sheryl and Charles were one of those rare couples.

Though they had gone through so many hardships before, they knew that there would be more ahead of them. They believed and were confident enough that they would overcome these difficulties as long as they were together.

As soon as she finished her bath, she readied herself. She chose a simple yet classy dress that emphasized her long legs. She put on her make-up and brushed her hair. Since she would be meeting her mother-in-law for the first time, she wanted to impress her somehow. First impressions lasted, as the saying went. After giving herself a last look at the mirror, she went down for breakfast.

Meanwhile, Charles finally gathered enough courage to dial the number his grandfather gave him. 'This is it!' he thought as he heard the ringing of the phone at the other end. When a woman answered,

remembering Sheryl's suggestion, he made the call as simple as he could.

On the other line, the woman introduced herself as Melissa. Inside, she was happy to learn that the caller was her son. After a few exchanges, she gave Charles her hotel's address.

Melissa couldn't contain her excitement after the call. She had been waiting for a call from any of her relatives. When the phone rang, she wished it would be the call she was waiting for. She even thought it might be Gary calling. Oh God! This was her lucky day! She was granted her wish! Much, much more actually... The caller turned out to be her son!

Even though they didn't talk long enough, Melissa could tell that her son still cared for her just by listening to his voice. She wondered how he looked in person. Though she saw his pictures in the business sections of the newspapers once in a while, she knew it would still be different up close and personal.

The hotel where Melissa was staying was close to Dream Garden. Soon, Charles and Sheryl arrived.

As they approached the elevator, Sheryl felt that Charles was a little bit nervous. She looked at him and squeezed his hand. Charles felt grateful for her support. Inside, he pulled Sheryl towards him and gave

her a peck on the lips.

When the door bell rang, Melissa stood up and checked herself one more time in the mirror. Then she said, "Coming!" Taking a deep breath, she walked towards the door to open it.

She saw a young couple standing in her doorway. She looked at the woman. Apparently, she was surprised to see Sheryl. Then, she moved her gaze to the young man. Melissa looked him up and down, seeing her son for the first time in fifteen years. Then, she suddenly burst into tears. She cried, "Charles?! My son..."

"Yes Mom, it's me!" Charles' eyes turned red. Except for some strands of white hair and more wrinkles, Melissa hadn't changed much from fifteen years ago.

The signs of aging...

Melissa was just fifty. She knew she looked older than her age. What could she do? It was impossible for her to take care of her appearance. It was so hard in prison for fifteen years, but she endured it all.

Still, anyone who saw her could tell that she was a beauty in her younger years. Oh, and the elegance was still there, visible in her poise and movement.

The grace of a person had nothing to do with their clothes, make-up or age. It was part of the inner

beauty. It radiated from within.

After the exchange between mother and son, Sheryl thought it would be okay to introduce herself.

"Mom, nice to meet you. I'm Sheryl Xia, Charles' wife," Sheryl greeted her politely. She wanted Melissa to have a good impression of her on their first day of meeting up. She believed that there was nothing wrong in introducing oneself first as long as it was in a polite and respectful manner.

However good an intention was, there would always be instances that it would be misinterpreted especially by a malicious soul. For Charles, Sheryl's behavior was respectful. And it was just right for the young ones to take the initiative to greet the elderlies. But for Melissa, it was an offense. She thought that Sheryl was a cunning girl trying to gain her attention.

Melissa simply gave her a nod, and once again turned her attention to Charles. She took his hand, saying apologetically, "Oh! Look at me! I even forgot to invite you in. I'm sorry for letting you stand here for so long. Let's talk inside. Come in! Come in!"

"Okay Mom," Charles replied. Then, he was pulled by Melissa inside. Sheryl was left alone at the doorway.

Melissa ignored her as if she didn't exist. All her attention was focused only on Charles. She invited

Charles to sit down. Then busied herself to serve Charles tea and snacks. Melissa smilingly said,

"Charles, have a seat. You must try this tea. This is your father's favorite." After seeing Charles taking a

sip of the tea, she asked, "Do you like it?"

Sheryl felt an outsider as she looked at them. It was a perfect picture! As an excuse to ease her

discomfort, she just thought that Melissa was so happy to see Charles after fifteen long years. That it

was normal for a mother to behave like that.

Therefore, she invited herself silently and walked in. She tried her best to continue smiling. She

remained standing at the side watching the happy Melissa.

Charles noticed how awkward the situation was. He wanted his mother to reciprocate the respect his

wife showed her. He put down the tea cup on the table. Then, he stood up, walked to Sheryl, and put

an arm around her shoulders. "Mom, this is my wife, Sher, your daughter-in-law. We have been married

for several years now."

Charles and Sheryl exchanged brief glances. It was Sheryl's turn to be grateful to Charles. She thought

Charles forgot her. Once again, Sheryl introduced herself. "Mom, my name is..." But she didn't finish

her introduction.

Melissa interrupted her rudely, "Yes! Yes! I know who you are!" Facing her son, she said, "I see her already. And I know you are old enough to get married. It's not really surprising. I should be rather worried if you weren't married at this age!" But she didn't stop. Looking again at Sheryl, Melissa continued her tirade. "Moreover, my son is an outstanding young man to marry any girl of his desire. It's her honor to marry you, Charles! She should have realized that by now!"

Melissa trampled on Sheryl's worth and feelings.

"Mom! What are you talking about?!" Charles asked his mother in disbelief. For a brief encounter, Charles saw through his mother for what she really was. And he would not tolerate her, even if she was his mother! Hugging Sheryl, he knew how heartbroken she was now. Disappointed, he looked at his mother. "You know," he started explaining, "you should not have judged her without knowing her. Sheryl is an exceptional lady. It's actually my honor to marry her!"

Chapter 1079 Embarrass Me

Noticing that Charles had gotten slightly upset, Melissa realized that she should be a bit more patient.

'Sheryl must have some sort of special skill. Otherwise my son wouldn't be so good to her. Looks like

it's gonna take a while to kick her out of my family, ' she mulled. To break the tense atmosphere, she started to explain, "Charles, I didn't mean it. I had been stuck in prison for years. It might take a while for me to get used to chatting with other people comfortably." Turning to Sheryl, she asked gruffly, "Are you mad at me, Sheryl?"

"Of course she isn't, Mom. She is a sensible woman. You will understand that once you get to know her well," Charles promptly replied on Sheryl's behalf.

"Yes, you don't have to worry about that, Mom. How could I get angry at you?" Sheryl asked meekly. She had been slightly miffed when Melissa had said those offensive words. But after she heard her apology, her anger disappeared.

'She is right. Anyone who had spent fifteen years in prison would find it hard to fit in right after getting out, ' she thought, but did not say that out loud.

"Come with me, Charles. Drink some of this tea. It's gonna get cold," Melissa beamed, as she tried to pull her son to the seat. She completely ignored Sheryl.

But Charles shook her hand away lightly and refused her offer. "Mom, I don't like tea. Let's go home.

You have been gone for years; you must miss our home so badly." Walking to Sheryl's side, he said

tenderly, "Let's help Mom pack her stuff, Sher."

"Okay," Sheryl replied in a hesitant voice. She knew that Charles had done that deliberately because he thought that she might feel awkward being neglected.

Charles' behavior displeased Melissa. She attributed this to Sheryl. "I don't have any luggage. Since you don't like tea, there's no point in staying here any longer. Let's go," Melissa said, showing no expression on her face.

She took the lead and stepped out of the room quickly.

"Charles! Look what you have done!" Sheryl said in a reproachful tone when Melissa was out of earshot.

"Did I do something wrong?" Charles retorted with a hurtful look. 'I did that for Sheryl, ' he thought, confused.

"You have been separated from your mom for years. And when she asked you to drink the tea, you should have just drunk it. Why did you have to say that you didn't like tea?" Sheryl spelled it out for him.

She guessed that Melissa was mad about his refusal.

She hadn't expected that her husband's mother would hate her so much from their very first meeting.

"But, that's the truth. I don't like tea!" Charles argued. As far as he was concerned, he hadn't done anything wrong. "Fine, whatever. Let's go back home."

By the time the three of them arrived at Dream Garden, Nancy had already served a variety of delicious dishes on the table. The front door was pushed open. At the sight of the stranger, Nancy inferred that she was Charles' mother. In a befitting way, the old maid greeted, "Welcome home, Mrs. Lu."

Melissa spared a glance at Nancy and walked inside. Charles and Sheryl followed her in.

"Mom, I have asked Nancy to prepare the master bedroom on the second floor for you. It is really spacious and it faces south. I'm sure you'll love it. Please make yourselves at home," Sheryl said respectfully, as they entered the living room together.

Sheryl wanted to act thoughtfully. The old lady was Charles' mother, and she had been in prison for so many years. She imagined that she should make her feel welcomed.

But Melissa was too blind to see the purity of her actions. She spat aggressively, "Are you looking down on me because I was a prisoner? You are making it very clear that you are the mistress of the house by picking a room of your choice for me. And I presume that I have no say in it."

"Mom, you're misunderstanding Sher. She only wants you to be comfortable here," Charles defended Sheryl. He was getting a little irritated that she was giving Sheryl a hard time right after coming back home.

"Sher?!" Melissa repeated her name in disdain. "This is a vicious woman and she is trying to put me down!" She wouldn't have gotten angry if her son hadn't spoken for Sheryl. However, he had the nerve to side with his wife and this triggered her even more. Melissa couldn't stand the thought that her son was completely ignoring her. 'I've just come back home and Sheryl has already embarrassed me enough. What's worse, she has my son wrapped around her finger.

Unbelievable! What a crafty woman!' she screamed in her mind.

"Mom, you've got it wrong. I only wanted the best for you and that's why I chose that room. But if you aren't satisfied with that room, please go ahead and choose the one you like," Sheryl expounded. She didn't fully understand why Melissa would go ballistic about a room.

'I prepared the best for her. If I hadn't, would she have gotten mad for that too?' she thought speechlessly.

Although Sheryl wondered why Melissa was making a big deal out of nothing, she didn't show any displeasure on her face. She was Charles' mother, after all. Considering that she had been through a tough time for all these years, Sheryl decided to be more inclusive.

"That's funny. Do you think I'm incapable of finding a room I like?" Melissa snapped at her in an irritated tone.

"Mom, that's not what I meant. I truly hope that you can live comfortably here. If you'd like to choose one yourself, why don't you take a look around? I am totally okay with that," Sheryl explained swiftly.

"Nancy!" Melissa turned to the maid. She paid no heed to Sheryl's kind words.

"What can I do for you, Mrs. Lu?" Nancy asked, bowing humbly.

"Lead me upstairs. I'd like to have a tour of the house!" Melissa ordered in an arrogant tone.

"Yes, Mrs. Lu," Nancy replied obediently.

"What's going on here?" A low, steady voice reverberated throughout the living room. Melissa trembled slightly at the voice.

"Dad! You're home. I haven't been here in years. So, I just wanted to look around and choose a room to stay in," Melissa replied meekly. Her arrogance faded in front of Gary.

"Didn't Sher prepare one for you? You don't like it?" Gary asked.

"Um...Dad..." Melissa stammered as she met the old man's stern eyes. Since she was just back, she didn't have the nerve to displease Gary at the moment. With a hesitant look, she blurted out, "I was planning to use the room in which Charles' dad and I used to stay."

But that room belonged to Sheryl and Charles now.

Gary knew how deep his son and Melissa's love was, and he was also aware of her guilt towards his son. He was at a loss for words. Finally he uttered, "I see. You should discuss that matter with them."

Saying that, he returned to his room.

Sheryl had no idea which room Melissa was referring to, but Charles knew. Although his mother hadn't been home in fifteen years, he remembered his parents' room very well. He said gently, "Mom, let's have lunch first. You can choose a room you want later. As for the one you mentioned, Sher and I are staying there now."

Chapter 1080 Be A Laughingstock

"I don't mean that you can't use that room. If you really want it, you can have it after Sher and I move out. However, she has been very busy recently. She needs to go to the office this afternoon to continue

working on her project. So..." Charles explained carefully as he looked at Melissa. He didn't want his mother to feel uncomfortable.

"I see. Turns out it's your bedroom now. That's okay. I don't want to trouble you and Sheryl. Since you seem to like that room, you can just continue to use it," Melissa beamed like a good mother. Since Charles had already settled there, she thought that he'd be inconvenienced if she insisted on getting that room back.

Capturing a hint of fleeting disappointment in her eyes, Charles felt bad for his mother. So he suggested, "If you really want that room, how about moving in there after Sher gets back from work? We will pack our stuff when she gets back, and move to the room next to it."

"Charles, there is no need. I don't mind which room I stay. I yearn for nothing as long as you are good. I only wanted to stay in that room because of your father. He..." She feigned to refuse Charles' offer. She knew pretending to be weak could arouse his sympathy. She had to rack her brains for a plan to get him to side with her.

Charles stared at his mother who seemed to be lost in thoughts. He was hesitant to give in until she mentioned his father. Now he made up his mind to give that room to his mother. With an attentive look,

he said earnestly, "Mom, I know you and Dad had many remarkable memories in that room. So let me handle everything. Let's eat first."

"Fine. I am so glad to hear that. Now that you said so, how can I refuse?" Melissa responded in a doting manner.

"Umm. The food is getting cold. Please eat,"

Charles said as he smiled in relief.

'Mom just got out, so it's going to take a while before she fits in. I need to be patient and spend more time so we can get to know each other. Things will be better, ' he told himself.

After he had persuaded Melissa, he looked at Sheryl. She was quietly eating while they were discussing. Knowing what was on his mind when their eyes met, Sheryl shook her head with a smile, quietly telling him that she was okay with his arrangement.

However, somehow she had a vibe that Charles' mother was hostile towards her. She even doubted herself and thought she was just being paranoid. But her instincts told her that something was wrong with her mother-in-law.

Even though she suspected Melissa, she didn't have much time to speculate what the latter was up to.

Since she needed to go to the office to work out that project, she decided to finish her meal quickly.

It could not be counted as a pleasant meal. As far as Sheryl was concerned, the atmosphere was embarrassing during the lunch.

The years of separation between Charles and Melissa had them grow apart, so they didn't have much to talk about.

They had their own thoughts. As they were reserved, they barely chatted with one another. As a result, a tensed and awkward air enveloped the whole dining room the entire time.

After lunch, Sheryl stood up to leave and head to her office. Charles immediately offered to drive her there, but she refused. "Stay at home and keep Mom company, honey. I can handle myself."

Charles eyed Melissa sitting next to him and didn't insist anymore.

Melissa was oblivious of her son's feelings. She was deeply engaged in her thoughts. 'How can I get them to sleep in separate bedrooms without displeasing my son?' It was one of her plans to turn the couple against each other.

If this scheme failed, she would need to go for another idea.

She decided to wait and watch until tonight.

Meanwhile, Sheryl arrived at Cloud Advertising Company. As she emerged into her office, she found

Isla pacing back and forth anxiously. "What's up, Isla?" she asked as she walked across the room.

"Sher, you are finally here!" Isla exclaimed, focusing her keen gaze on her boss as if she had seen the

last straw. "What happened? Why do you look so serious?" Sheryl queried.

"One of our big clients was here. I believe you are working on their case. The man in charge from that

company came here and said he wanted to know the progress of your job..." she replied.

"Seriously? What's going on? I thought we agreed to show the preliminary presentation to them the day

after tomorrow. Why did they come here today?" Sheryl threw several questions in one breath, her

mouth agape. She had never met such a client before. 'They sent people to see the scheme before the

agreed time. What a speechless situation!' she wondered.

"I was surprised as well, but they are our client. Besides, they traveled a long way just to check on your

progress so I had no choice but to show him your first draft. Guess what he said after he read it?" Isla

raised her voice intentionally when she came to the end.

"What did he say?" Sheryl asked curiously. "He said it was the worst scheme he ever saw.

He even said he didn't know how you fooled others and obtained your reputation," Isla replied frankly.

She initially decided to keep this feedback from Sheryl. But after some consideration, she thought

Sheryl should know it.

That company first appointed Sheryl to do the planning, but they criticized her work. She suspected

their intention.

Thinking of that, Isla got uneasy. "Did you mess with anyone recently, Sheryl? Did they do this to put

you down deliberately?" Isla blurted out her concerns.

As soon as she spoke about it, she ruled out this possibility. It was widely known that Sheryl was the

wife of Charles, the CEO of Shining Company.

She didn't think anyone had the guts to cross Charles.

"How could he say that my plan sucks?" Sheryl snapped furiously. She worked overtime these days for

the scheme. She had put much effort in this case. Even though she couldn't brag that her scheme was

perfect, she couldn't allow others to criticize her work like that.

"What else did he say before he left?" she asked as she composed herself.

"He said he wanted to terminate our partnership and they would work with another company," Isla answered with a dejected expression.

"Find out the phone number of that person in charge of this case. I will meet him in person. I will ask him why he was dissatisfied with my plan and why he rejected my plan before I even finished it."

Sheryl never messed with others unless she was provoked. This time, that company humiliated her company in public. That was unacceptable.

If she just let it go, Cloud Advertising Company would be a laughingstock in the industry.