

Wedded Bride 111

Chapter 111

She was clear about the fact that if she continued to make compromises, she would be at the mercy of others for the rest of her life. Even though she realized that she may never see her grandmother anymore.

But ever since she had gotten married to Charles, she was eager to live a sweet life with him in the future, which somehow gave her hope and encouragement. She had decided not to let fate determine her life anymore.

Wendy's voice was heard on the other side of the phone again. "I have discussed it with your Uncle Simon and we have decided to let Yvonne live with the Lu family for the time being, and you have to arrange this for her. Go and talk it out with Charles. Yvonne will go there tomorrow. "

"You must be insane, " said Autumn. Autumn had never expected Wendy to make such a request. "What do you want me to do? How can I talk about this with Charles? You'd better tell him directly that I am not Yvonne."

"No, I can't do that, " Wendy said firmly to Autumn. "It is not the right time to tell him the truth. We can't risk exposing both of your identities so early. I hope that Yvonne will get to spend some more time alone with Charles. During that period, you'd better be tactful and try to create some opportunities for them to get along with each other. When they end up falling in love with each other, I will allow you to meet your grandmother."

"That is impossible!" Autumn was very irritated. She sneered and went on, "Wendy, I am not your puppet anymore."

Suddenly, Autumn felt like she was armed to the teeth. She was no longer afraid of anyone, ever since she got married to Charles.

"Autumn, how dare you?" Wendy did not expect Autumn to decline her request and was irritated by her poor attitude and disobedience. "I can tell you that the doctor called me today and told me that if your grandmother doesn't have a surgery as soon as possible, she is not going to make it. So you'd better obey me and try not to offend me next time or you will lose your beloved grandma soon. It is all up to you. I am afraid to say this, but you will have to look before you leap, " Wendy said indignantly.

"Don't threaten me with my grandmother." Autumn laughed grimly as she understood that Wendy was an avaricious woman and she would never be contented. Therefore, Autumn gradually decided to decline her unreasonable requests. "Wendy, I will see my grandmother some day and as for the request you've just made....."

Autumn sneered and went on, "I am not going to do it, so you might as well forget about it."

Autumn was about to hang up after she finished speaking. Her words had somehow alarmed Wendy, who was starting to get hysterical. She repeated the words she had just said and continued to warn Autumn that Charles was supposed to be Yvonne's husband. Wendy thought that it was Autumn who stole Charles from Yvonne.

Unfortunately for Wendy, Autumn was determined not to make another compromise again. She had always made a concession for others, but now she refused to do that again.

Charles was her husband and she certainly would not betray him for anyone.

"Mom, this is the last time I call you Mom, you hear me? You'd better try to understand that Yvonne can never be a part of the Lu family!" Autumn was so infuriated, she hung up as soon as she finished talking.

Earlier yesterday, Autumn might have given in to Wendy's threats. But, now that she has already had sexual intercourse with Charles, she decided to make a stand for herself.

Autumn would not allow Yvonne to seduce Charles anymore.

When she hung up the phone, Autumn turned around and found Charles standing behind her expressionlessly, gazing at her.

"Was that your family on the phone?" He asked after for a long while.

"Yes, " replied Autumn. Autumn felt hesitant, as she was not sure as to how much Charles had heard from their conversation.

Charles sighed with relief. He had just gotten out of the bathroom the moment she answered the phone. He stood behind her silently because he did not want interrupt her. He felt very happy when he found out that Autumn had declined Wendy's unreasonable request.

However, he did not expect Autumn to still keep her real identity secret from him.

He stepped forward and then held her hands. The breeze at night was somewhat cool and her hands were also quite cold. Charles shut the windows and then sat her on the bed.

After a while, Autumn's body gradually stopped trembling and calmed down. Her cold hands had slowly started to get warmer.

He forced Autumn to look into his eyes and then asked, "Autumn, do you have something you want to tell me? What did Wendy say to you?"

"I..." Autumn was hesitant. Although she was determined to stand up for herself in the face of Wendy, she still was not sure if she should just tell him the truth.

She was afraid that Charles would misunderstand her, because their marriage, after all, was just an elaborate ploy.

"Autumn, do you still remember what the old monk in the temple said?" Charles gently guided her and continued, "We are a family now and no matter what happened in the past, I will share the responsibility with you. Do you understand that?"

Autumn repressed her lips into a thin line and kept silent. She was hesitant for a long while, but she didn't want to be Wendy's puppet anymore. So with the help of Charles's encouragement and support, she finally decided to speak.

"I..." But, as soon as she was about to confess, she realized that she didn't know where to start. So she kept quiet for a long time and then said firmly as she had made up her mind, "Charles, the truth is, I..... I am not Yvonne."

As soon as she said that, Charles did not show any signs of astonishment, instead he insisted calmly, "Go on."

Now that she had already started, Autumn decided to be completely frank with him. She confessed to the whole process of her identity swap with Yvonne and why she was forced to get married to him.

As she explained all this to Charles, Autumn stared at Charles nervously and added, "Charles, I am sorry. I know I shouldn't have agreed to this and I shouldn't have kept all of this from you for so long, but I....."

Before she could finish her words, Charles held her into his arms and then said, "Autumn, I am really happy."

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After a short pause, Charles continued, "So I asked David to investigate the whole thing and then found out your true identity."

"You mean... you knew that I was Autumn Ye the whole time?" Autumn swallowed hard as she couldn't believe her ears.

"I did." Charles nodded and said, "You and Yvonne Gu both worked at the Shining Company before. If I hadn't informed the HR manager first, you wouldn't have been employed so easily."

Autumn cursed herself in silence for having been so careless.

"You..." Embarrassed, Autumn thought to herself, 'If Charles knew that I was Autumn Ye from the very beginning, why did he sleep with me yesterday morning?'

"It is you, who I love." Charles looked into her eyes and stated seriously, "Whoever you are, Autumn Ye or Yvonne Gu, I love you, the person in front of me right now. Got it?"

Autumn blushed with shyness as she felt embarrassed by Charles's confession of love. She looked so pretty under the yellow light.

Although Charles was not some teenager who had just lost his virginity, Autumn was so irresistible to him that he couldn't bear it anymore. He pulled her into his arms and kissed her on the lips.

"What are you doing..." Autumn mumbled, trying to push him away. Charles, of course, was unwilling to stop. He grabbed both of her hands with one hand, and gently cupped her breast with the other. Ashamed, Autumn scolded him. Charles was not angry at all, but teased, "You fit in my hand perfectly, Autumn. "

He leaned down, his hands on either side of her head. "I want you, " he murmured and made love to her gently.

Autumn was a bit shy in the beginning, but after thinking about his sincere confession, she got over her shyness and accepted him whole-heartedly. Her body shivered as she felt so full.

That night, Charles and Autumn had sex again and again. He didn't stop until he heard Autumn beg. When Autumn woke up the next morning, Charles was gone. She looked at the clock to find that it was already noon.

Autumn cleaned herself up and walked downstairs to have breakfast. Gary was reading the newspaper on the sofa. When he saw her, Gary greeted, "Good morning."

Autumn had a dry cough and she blushed with shyness.

She felt embarrassed as she woke up so late. She assumed that Gary may have taken her to be a lazy person. "Grandpa, good morning, " she responded.

"Charles said that you were exhausted last night and asked us not to wake you up. So I didn't ask you to have breakfast earlier." Autumn's face became even redder at what Gary had said. Charles had been talking to everyone about what they did last night.

Damn!

"What would you like to eat? I'll ask Nancy to make it for you, " Gary asked. Autumn's face was as red as a ripe tomato. She immediately answered, "That's not necessary, Grandpa. I'll make it myself."

Autumn went to the kitchen and found Nancy there. The moment she saw Autumn, she stepped aside in silence as she refused to talk to her.

Autumn didn't mind that at all. She made some noodles for herself. After having the noodles, she went upstairs to send her applications.

She had been sending applications since yesterday, but no one had contacted her yet. She then assumed that there must have been something wrong, so she called a good friend who was in the same industry, for some advice.

"Isla, I remember hearing that the Dark Blue Company has been looking for a planner, right? I sent applications yesterday, but no one called me. Have you already hired someone?" Autumn had met Isla Zhao when she was working at Cloud Advertising Company. They had many things in common and had become good friends, despite working in different companies. They got together from time to time.

She had no other choice but to call Isla.

"Ye, I was planning to call you." Isla had heard some news and was about to call Autumn. She asked, "I'm busy right now. Are you available this afternoon? Shall we have an afternoon tea?"

"Okay! See you in the same place."

After she hung up, Autumn sent several more applications, but had received no response.

When Autumn arrived at the cafe, Isla was already there with two cups of coffee on the table. She waved at Autumn and greeted, "Ye, right here."

"Have you offended anyone lately?" Autumn had hardly sat down when Isla stated with a frown, "Recently, our industry is agog about the rumors surrounding you. When I first heard about the rumors,

I thought they were talking about someone who is just your namesake. Later I found out that they were actually gossiping about you. Ye, what's going on with you?"

"What?" Autumn remained quiet for a long time. Everything seemed to have changed after she came back from travelling.

"You don't know anything about that?" Isla looked at Autumn in astonishment. The rumors had been spreading for a couple of days, but Autumn had no idea at all. How negligent she was!

Isla sighed and explained, "Rumor has it that Cloud Advertising Company fired you because you have cribbed from others and accepted kickbacks from the client. You could have easily found a job with your capabilities and expertise, but now most companies believe that it was unethical for you to harm the interests of the company you had worked for. You said you sent applications but nobody called. Well, that's not surprising!"

"I have cribbed and accepted kickbacks?" Who cooked up the story?

"Ye, I know you very well and I know that you couldn't have done those things. So I paid special attention to where the rumor had started and found out that it was someone in Cloud Advertising Company who first mentioned it. Did you offend someone in the company?" Autumn frowned at Isla's question. If these rumors came from Cloud Advertising Company, then she already knew who was behind them.

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Because Isla insisted on asking her about her love affairs, Autumn told her the truth about having gotten married just recently.

"What?

You got married? Who is your husband?

Is he handsome?" Isla asked her too many questions in one go. Autumn smiled and asked Isla, "Which question do you want me to answer first?"

"I don't care. You must answer my questions honestly. Tell me why did you get married secretly, without even inviting me. Don't try to lie to me, otherwise I'll beat you!" Isla said with dissatisfaction.

Isla was from another city, so she had no close friends other than Autumn in Y City. Isla and Autumn had promised each other that when either one of them got married, the other would be her bridesmaid. But now, Isla was a little annoyed at the fact that Autumn had gotten married without even informing Isla.

"Isla, don't be angry. I didn't do it on purpose. Forgive me, please." Autumn sighed. Then she told Isla everything. Isla got indignant when she learned that Wendy had compelled Autumn to marry a complete stranger.

"Wendy is so evil! She had never given you her love. I once hoped that when you'd become an independent woman, you would be able to get rid of her from your life, but now it feels like she has taken away any chance of happiness you could ever have in your whole life. She disgusts me!"

Although Autumn had told her story in a calm manner, Isla imagined how desperate she must have been when she was compelled by her mother to marry a man she didn't love. She felt sorry for Autumn.

"Don't worry." Autumn patted Isla's hand and consoled her, "Look at me. I'm fine, really. Don't be worried."

"I just feel so sorry for you, " Isla said. Isla knew clearly that for Autumn, her grandma was the most important person in the world, but it was her own mother that had threatened her with her grandma's well-being. Her mother was a vile person! "Ye, why didn't you call me or ask me for help? I..."

"What could you have done even if I called you for help?" Autumn interrupted her. Autumn gave a wry smile and said, "My grandma's life was in her hands, so the only thing I could do was to follow her orders obediently. Besides, I felt too embarrassed to tell anyone about it."

If she had told Isla, Isla would have tried her best to stop the wedding. Then the people of Lu Family would feel humiliated, and they would have blamed everything on Isla.

Isla was speechless. She realized that it would make no difference even if she had known the truth. She could only curse Autumn's mother and sympathize with her. She couldn't have done anything to solve her problems, instead, she might have even brought more problems to Autumn.

"It's OK. I'm fine. Don't be worried." Autumn consoled Isla, "I have adapted to my present life very well. I get along nicely with Charles and he cares about me. I am very lucky to have him."

"Charles? The man you're referring to... Is that Charles of the Shining Company? Isla asked Autumn as her eyes broadened with amazement. All of a sudden, her loud voice quickly drew the attention of the people in the coffee house.

"Keep your voice down!" Autumn reminded her. Then Autumn blushed red and answered, "Yes, he is."

"God! Ye, you're so lucky!" Isla was ecstatic for Autumn, because she was very pleased to know that Autumn had married an excellent man like Charles.

Autumn was at a loss for words but still she smiled. When Isla calmed down, she began to worry about Autumn once again. "Autumn, although Charles looks like the perfect man, he once had a love affair with Rachel. When our company collaborated with Rachel, she told my colleague that one day she would marry Charles. So did she cause you any trouble after you got married to Charles?"

Autumn nodded her head. Rachel did cause many troubles but Charles had dealt with them for her. Now the only person who was bothering her was Yvonne.

She gave a reluctant smile and said, "Rachel won't make trouble for me. The one I'm afraid of is... Yvonne."

After rejecting Wendy's demands yesterday, she had blocked all her phone calls. But she knew that Wendy and Yvonne wouldn't let her go so easily.

She wasn't afraid of losing Charles but she felt exhausted while dealing with them.

Hearing that Yvonne was still trying to be with Charles, Isla couldn't help but abuse her, "Yvonne is a bitch! How could she be so shameless? What is she thinking? Don't be afraid, Autumn. If she dares to steal your husband, I'll punish her for you!"

"Don't worry. I can handle it." Autumn smiled gently. Now that Charles had known all her secrets, she had nothing to fear.

"Autumn, does he... really care about you?" Isla asked her. There was a huge wealth gap between Autumn and Charles. She wondered whether such a difference would affect her marriage with Charles in any way.

"Actually, I was also worried about this at the beginning of our marriage." Remembering what Charles had told her last night, Autumn felt happy. Then she said, "But he has promised me last night. I trust him."

"Well then." Sometimes a person's happiness could be shown through his or her expressions. Autumn's smile was from her heart so Isla believed that she had a happy life with Charles. Isla was delighted for her and teased her, "Fine. But you owe me a dinner."

"I'll invite you to dinner." Autumn said with a smile, "We'll have dinner together with Charles after a few days."

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Autumn was about to turn around and leave when she heard a familiar voice come from behind her. "Ye, why don't you come upstairs?"

"I was just passing by." Autumn smiled at Leila who was standing behind her. Several days passed and Leila had changed completely.

Leila had behaved and dressed in an innocent manner before, but now, she looked different. Now, she was more like Yvonne.

Besides, the expression in her eyes was different.

"Why're you here?" asked Autumn indifferently. "I don't think you're off duty at this time of a day."

"Mr. Lu said he would be working late tonight, so he asked me to buy some food for him." Leila gave Autumn a big smile. "Mr. Lu doesn't know how to take good care of himself. He asked me to buy some bread, but he needs real food. Am I right, Ye?"

Autumn remained silent. She frowned when noticed Leila talking about Charles, glowing with happiness, just like Yvonne.

"Ye, are you with me?" Leila patted Autumn on her shoulder. "What's wrong? Are you all right?" asked Leila.

"I'm fine, " said Autumn, shaking her head. "Aren't you gonna buy food for Mr. Lu? Go ahead."

Autumn felt convoluted. She felt uncomfortable when women talked about Charles like that.

"I almost forgot that, " said Leila. She checked time on her wristwatch and said, "I should be leaving. I heard that a new restaurant nearby had just recently opened, offering some really delicious porridge. I might have to wait in line if I'm late. See you later."

Before she went too far, Leila looked back and shouted, "Ye, I haven't expressed my thanks to you for helping me with my work. When I have time, let's grab dinner together."

Autumn felt a strange sense of alienation and disappointment as she watched Leila disappear into the distance.

In the past, those matters wouldn't have affected her, because she knew that she would leave Charles sooner or later. Now that they had established a more intimate relationship, she wanted to see herself standing beside him more openly in the eyes of the public.

She hated the fact that Charles's assistant was the one to buy food for him.

When she got back home, she found that Chris was already there. Nancy had cooked dinner for Gary and Chris only. She frowned when she saw Autumn coming home, but she still greeted Autumn respectfully. "My lady, since you haven't told me that you would be coming home for dinner, so I..."

"Never mind, I'm not hungry." Although Autumn felt uncomfortable about Nancy treating her like that, she still forced a smile on her face and greeted Gary and Chris politely. Then, she went upstairs.

Chris blocked her way upstairs. "Yvonne, can we have dinner outside? I want to ask you something, " asked Chris sincerely.

"Alright, " answered Autumn. She agreed hesitantly.

Chris chose a hot pot restaurant for them. Due to the high temperature indoors, Autumn took off her coat and scarf. Chris smiled wryly at sight of the marks on her neck.

Autumn shot an embarrassed glance at Chris sitting opposite to her. In her mind, she blamed Charles for his recklessness.

After they ordered the food, Autumn poured a glass of orange juice for Chris and asked, "Why are we here? Tell me what you want to know."

Chris hesitated for a moment before she opened her mouth and asked, "Yvonne, I apologize for misunderstanding you. I'm really sorry."

"Don't mention it. We're a family and we should look after each other, " said Autumn, with a soft smile on her face. "Besides, I know why you did that in the first place. No girl would like it if her lover had another woman in his heart."

Chris put on a bitter smile and said in a soft voice, "Yvonne, do you know that I fell in love with Sam at first sight? I wanted to see him, so I tried to approach him in every possible way. When he got sick, I took good care of him. Besides, I even went as far as playing up to his mother. My naivety caused me the belief that one day he would realize that I was there for him, always."

She stopped for a moment and continued, "But later I came to realize that he was in love with another woman, a woman whom he would never forget or let go, no matter how long it took." Chris smiled wryly. She had never expected Sam to be in love with her sister-in-law. Due to this reason, she couldn't be mad at neither Sam nor Autumn.

"Chris, my conscience is clean. I have nothing to do with Sam, " said Autumn hastily, trying to explain herself. "Sam's a good guy, and I actually think that you both have a lot in common. If you love him, please don't give up on him under any circumstances."

She smiled and added, "As for his infatuation with me, it will be gone sooner or later. Trust me on that."

"I believed that before, " said Chris, disappointed. "But unfortunately, I have tried hard and failed. From now on, I might have to give up on him. I no longer want to delude myself with thinking that he will love me."

After the small chat with Autumn last night, for the first time, Chris realized that she was deeply in love with Sam. Now that the woman Sam loved was married, she was willing to give him another chance.

So she bared her heart to Sam. However, she was refused by him ruthlessly and conscientiously.

She thought she would be utterly disappointed. On the contrary, she was relieved from the burden of love.

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"Thank you, Ye." Chris smiled. "Well, I shall entrust my marriage to you."

"No problem." Autumn smiled back.

They both had a good time with their chafing dishes. Chris had opened her heart to Autumn and shared a lot with her. Being in love with Sam was exhausting. Too tired to go on, she was on the verge of giving up.

Then Chris started drinking and got drunk. She cried and laughed. Autumn knew that she was hurting and needed an outlet to release the pain, so she didn't stop her. She knew that she would feel much better afterwards.

Chris was too drunk to walk, so Autumn had to support her by the arm. Just as they had walked out of the door, someone called Autumn. "Miss Ye, it's really you."

It was Mr. Yi, a former client. He once tried to bribe Autumn in private, hoping that she would save him some money by doing a project, but Autumn turned him down.

He had been holding a grudge against her ever since. Learning that Autumn had been fired and was having a hard time, he enjoyed gloating over her misfortune.

"Mr. Yi." Autumn was busy taking care of Chris, so she greeted him simply and intended to turn away. However, Mr. Yi wasn't going to let her pass so easily. He stood in her way and said to her with a frivolous smile, "Not so fast. It's been a long time since we last met. Let's find a place to talk."

Autumn was furious, but upon hearing Chris' words, she couldn't help but smile. She decided to take her to the hospital. However, Mr. Yi still insisted, "Miss Ye, have you made your decision yet? To be honest, I appreciate you, so I want to give you this opportunity. But just this once. I hope you don't miss it."

"What if I say no?" This time Autumn answered his question directly, "Mr. Yi, last year I met your wife, who is a delicate and tender person. I heard that your success was based on your wife's connections and family background. I also heard that you are afraid of her. Now you're telling me that you want to use her money to support me? Do you have no sense of shame at all?"

Hearing Autumn mention his wife, Mr. Yi got flustered, but he collected himself quickly. "Miss Ye, this is between you and me. As long as you and I agree, it doesn't have to concern anybody else."

"I'm afraid I have to disappoint you," Autumn said with a faint smile. "I actually admire Mrs. Yi very much and I'm going shopping with her in a couple of days. If I do something to hurt her, I'll be too ashamed to see her ever again." "

I'm sorry, Mr. Yi. My friend is injured. I have to take her to the hospital. Please excuse me, " Autumn said politely to Mr. Yi. She helped Chris stand up and left. Mr. Yi's shame turned into anger. Watching her walk away, he called out, "Wait and see! You will regret rejecting me sooner or later!"

Autumn heard it but she didn't care. She took Chris to the hospital and the doctor said that the injury wasn't serious. When they got home, Charles was waiting for them at the door.

Autumn couldn't help but make fun of him, "How long have you been waiting? You look very eager for us to come home. I'm worried that if you had waited any longer, you might have turned into a stone statue."

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"Charles, I am a grown woman. Do you think it's appropriate for you to barge into my room without knocking?" Chris protested.

"So you know you're a grown up now, huh?" Charles scolded, expressionless, "Why didn't you just grow up and stop being so stupid last night?"

"You..." Chris frowned as she got exasperated at his accusation. She asked in resignation, "So you are here to blame me for last night?"

Charles didn't answer, but asked, "What did you do with my wife last night?"

"We just ate hotpot and did nothing else." Chris pondered hard for a long time, but failed to remember what had happened last night. She asked in confusion, "Charles, why are you asking me this?"

"She's been in a bad mood. I wanted to figure out if you had bullied her." Before he could finish, Chris jumped off the bed and shouted angrily, "Charles, you are getting way out of line! How could you think that I bullied her?"

"Well, you better not." Charles continued, expressionless, "It's time to go to work. You won't... go to work like this, will you?"

"I..." Chris lowered her head and looked at herself. Autumn had helped her change her clothes, but her body still smelled of wine. On second thought, she wasn't in the mood to see Sam yet. She sighed and said, "I'll be staying at home today."

After hearing that, Charles turned around and was about to leave. But Chris stopped him as she saw her swollen leg. "Charles, wait."

"Anything else?" Charles turned and asked.

"After we left the hotpot restaurant yesterday, we ran into a fat man. He pushed me down to the ground, and that's how I sprained my ankle." It vexed Chris to think of the fat man. She added, "The man also teased Yvonne. He said that she had a bad reputation in their industry. Charles, may be that is why she is not happy."

"Got it." Charles answered with a frown and left Chris's room.

When Charles arrived at the company, Leila came to him and greeted, "Good morning, Mr. Lu."

"Good morning." Charles greeted coldly with a frown as Leila had a gust of strong perfume. He went into his office and sat down. Leila also came in.

"Mr. Lu, here is a document that needs your signature." Charles was pleased with Leila as she was good at serving as his secretary.

He took over the document and asked naturally, "Do I have any appointments for this evening? If yes, please cancel it."

"I'm afraid I can't." Leila answered with a frown, "Mr. Lu, you are having dinner with one of our suppliers this evening to talk about lowering the costs. The supplier will be going abroad tomorrow. If we miss this chance, we would have to wait for another month to rearrange a meeting. So..."

"Then tomorrow. Whatever plans I have tomorrow, just cancel it." Charles demanded coldly.

"Yes, Mr. Lu." Leila smiled and wrote it down on her notebook. She continued, "Mr. Lu, do you want Linda or me to accompany you there this evening?"

"Linda isn't available?" Normally it was Linda who went on such meetings with him.

"I don't know, but she looks ill today. I guess she is not feeling well." Leila hesitated and told him.

"Fine. You will come with me." Charles answered without hesitation.

Leila got lost in excitement. Charles raised his head and asked her in confusion, "Anything else?"

"No." Leila shook her head. She brought him a sandwich and said, "Mr. Lu, I guess you haven't eaten yet. I bought a sandwich for you downstairs. Please have it."

Leila put the sandwich on the desk and left the office. She said, "Mr. Lu, I'll leave you be."

"Wait." Charles stopped her and demanded, "Call David over."

"Sure." Leila returned to the office and asked David to go to the CEO's office. Then she walked to Linda and said, "Linda, please give me Mr. Fang's company profile."

"Mr. Fang's company profile?" Linda went blank for a moment and asked, "I should be the one responsible for it. Why should I give that to you?"

Leila looked shy and hesitant for a moment before she finally said, "Linda, Mr. Lu just asked me to come with him this evening. I've never handled Mr. Fang's case before, so I'd like to have a look at the company profile..."

Linda's face soured at her words. Leila immediately explained, "Linda, please don't get me wrong. It was Mr. Lu's decision. I..."

"Enough!" Linda was infuriated, but she did not dare to question Charles, because she had already offended his wife before. She had to give the documents to Leila unwillingly.

Leila was an individual of high professional competence. Although she had only been in the company for two weeks, she was already popular amongst her colleagues. Even David was completely impressed by her. Linda felt a sense of crisis.

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But Leila was no longer the old, nice Leila. When she had just started her work in the Secretary Department, she was unfamiliar with anyone, and had to rely on Linda. But now, she had become independent and strong, and didn't need to suck up to Linda. When the time was ripe, she would overtake Linda, bit by bit until she would replace Linda, and become a capable assistant to Charles.

With that swirling in her mind, Leila let out a scornful chuckle. It was not the right time yet. For now, she would let Linda have her day for a while longer.

At the same time, Charles had asked David to come to his office, intending to ask him to investigate the rumors about Autumn. Out of Charles's expectation, David frowned and said, "Mr. Lu, I have heard the rumors about Mrs. Lu, and I am wondering whether I should tell you about it."

"Tell me what's going on." Charles said with a slight frown.

"Cloud Advertising Company was the one that planned our annual celebration before you cancelled our cooperation with them. Then yesterday when I visited Cloud to pay our bills, as I walked out of their finance office, I heard several staff talking about Mrs. Lu. I then lurked in the corridor for a while and listened. What they said about Mrs. Lu was outrageous." At that time, David was furious, but all he could do was listen and report it to his boss, "Do you remember someone we have met before named Paula? She was the one who started the rumors, and fabricated many stories to ruin Mrs. Lu. "

Since Autumn left the company, Paula was always reprimanded by Ryan. She hated Autumn more because of that. As far as she was concerned, Autumn was the root cause of all her troubles. Driven by hatred, Paula started to speak ill of her. And Ryan, because he was turned down by Autumn, allowed Paula to do that.

"So now word is getting out that Mrs. Lu is a treacherous copycat. And no company wants to employ her." David looked at Charles who have fallen silent with a sour look on his face. Obviously, it was him that had caused Autumn lots of trouble.

"Speaking of which, how is Cloud doing now?" After a long pause, Charles asked calmly.

"Cloud's accounts have been in trouble. And since we have severed all ties with them, the company is at a dead end. Right now, Ryan is like an ant on a hot pan, but can't do anything to save his company, except scratch his head."

"Can we buy the company?" Charles thought out loudly, fingertips tapping on the table. If no company wanted to take Autumn in, he would purchase them all and reshape the business circle for her. With him owning the Cloud, Autumn would have to undertake Shining Company's PR job. That would be perfect.

"Yes, I think so." David answered. He had worked for Charles for many years, and knew exactly how his mind worked. Because the Cloud had treated Autumn badly, the company would never get away with it. Being purchased by Charles would be the best thing to happen to it.

And he had known it from the start. Before he reported the matter to Charles, David had studied the company's financial situation. Its bankruptcy would only be a matter of time.

"Do it then. Make the purchase and transfer as soon as possible." Charles ordered.

David nodded and left. When he walked out of Charles's office and returned to the Secretary Department, he spotted the office zone empty with only Leila in her seat. With a slight frown, David asked, "Leila, where is Linda?"

"She's out. She said she needed to take care of something." With a smile on her face, Leila answered. She continued, "Mr. Fan, is there anything I can help with?"

"No, thank you. I was just checking on her." Said David calmly with a slight nod. Acquiring a company wasn't a small matter. He would rather trust the experienced Linda on such an important endeavor.

There was a spark of hatred in Leila's eyes. But she covered it up quickly, and grinned, "Okay, Mr. Fan. If you ever need any help, just tell me."

"I will." David nodded to her, and started to prepare for the acquisition.

Unwilling to stay in the office, Linda had gone downstairs earlier to Yvonne's department. She had learned that Yvonne was Mrs. Lu's younger sister, and also sensed her feelings towards Charles.

Seeing through that, she decided to use Yvonne against Leila. She would deliberately reveal Leila's plans to Yvonne, and like the old saying goes, 'let the fisherman struggle with the clam.' And when the two women were fighting this hopeless war, she would harvest the fruits.

"Miss Zhao? What has brought you here? Is it not a busy day?" A girl greeted her as Linda went by. In their eyes, Linda was still Charles's favorite secretary, and winning her favor would be as good as winning Charles's. There had always been a constant stream of flatterers wherever she went.

"Miss Zhao! Have a seat!" Another girl called. Yvonne's department was not very busy at that time. Everyone in here had some connection with the owners of the company. So everyday, their main task was to eat, nap and gossip. With such an atmosphere, Yvonne found it easy fit in.

But she wouldn't join her colleagues when they butter someone up. When she saw Linda walk in, she just remained at her seat and occupied herself with the fashion magazine she had been reading.

After all, she had her own standards and self-pride, and would not allow herself to sink so low.

"What happened, Miss Zhao? Why do you look worried?" A girl led Linda to the tea room, and offered her own snack to her when they took a seat together, "Is Mr. Lu unsatisfied with your work?"

"That's not going to happen." Linda breathed out a sigh, and said, "It would be great if he is unsatisfied with my work, but he will not be. Right now, his full attention is drawn by the newcomer. How can he have time to check my work?"

The girls knew exactly who she meant by it. Along with Leila, there was also a newly recruited girl named Alice. But Alice was sent to a business trip, so the only newcomer in the Secretary Department would be Leila.

Leila was much smarter than Alice, though. Alice knew only how to focus on work, but Leila was much more social. She was good at making friends, and knew how to take advantage of people without them knowing. The girls in the company had actually grown fond of her. So when they heard what Linda said, some girls spoke up for Leila. One of them said, "Miss Zhao, there must have been a misunderstanding. She is a good girl. There is no way she would plan to replace you..."

"I don't think she's planning for anything, but..." Linda hastily waved to the girls, and put on a worried look.

Chapter 118

Linda was enraged by what Yvonne said in a causal tone. She sneered, "Is it true? I saw her take breakfast for Mr. Lu and enter his office this morning. When she came out, she said Mr. Lu asked her to accompany him at tonight's banquet. I'm not good at kissing Mr. Lu's ass. After all, I am his secretary and not his caretaker. Mrs. Lu is the one who should take care of him. I won't exceed my duties."

"You must be kidding..." All the women in the office desired Mr. Lu. After he got married, a sensible lady would have to give up her unrealistic dreams. But an unconscionable one who has been obsessed with Mr. Lu would be angry to hear that someone else was pleasing him. "How could Leila do that!"

"What did you say?" Yvonne sat not far away from them. When she heard their conversation, she put down the fashion magazine and asked, "Is that true?"

"Of course." Linda nodded as she replied, "I saw her enter Mr. Lu's office. She bought breakfast for him. Also, last night Mr. Lu worked overtime and she stayed late and bought supper for him. Autumn, I heard you are Mrs. Lu's sister. When you go back home, you'd better tell Mrs. Lu to watch her husband."

The first day Yvonne started work, everyone knew she was Mrs. Lu's sister. However, no one talked to Yvonne actively because of their jealousy of Mrs. Lu.

Leila had heard of Yvonne's background and she intentionally tried to get close to Yvonne. As a saying goes, "Knowing the enemy and yourself, you can fight a hundred battles and win them all."

She wanted to know more about "Mrs. Lu."

Leila intended to use Yvonne. So did Yvonne, the other way around.

She entered Shining Company in order to get close to Charles. But she failed to be his secretary. Now she had no choice but know more about Charles through Leila.

She never thought Leila had feelings for Charles.

Yvonne felt betrayed. She walked out of the office without speaking a word, and took out her cellphone to call Wendy, "Mother, have you persuaded Autumn to help me move into the Lu family house?"

Yvonne put forward this proposal so as to get close to Charles. She knew that because they held Autumn's grandmother, Autumn dared not to refuse. She had waited for several days but she hadn't heard any good news from Wendy.

Hearing of what Linda said, Yvonne felt worried and more eager to speed up her action to get to Charles.

"Mother, I am asking you, what's going on?" Wendy didn't reply for quite a long time. Yvonne pressed, "What did that damned Autumn say?"

Wendy signed and replied, "Yvonne, don't worry. I need more time to persuade her."

"More time?" "Mother, Charles has Autumn. I can bear it. After all, she is his wife. But don't forget that famous star Rachel. Now there is a cheeky secretary also seducing him. What about me? I have to wait like a lump. I am telling you I won't wait. I have decided to take the initiative and make my move."

'There are so many women casting greedy eyes on Charles. If I do nothing but wait, how long will it take for me to catch Charles's attention?

Wendy knew she couldn't hide it for long, so she told the truth, "Yvonne, I wanted to help you, but Autumn, that little bitch..."

Thinking of that skanky Autumn, she said through gritted teeth, "I called Autumn, but she refused to have you move into the Lu family house. I threatened her with her grandmother's life again but it didn't work. Don't worry, I will think other ways."

"No need." Yvonne sneered, "I will move into the Lu family house without her help. Wait and see, I will be Charles's wife."

Yvonne hung up. She thought to herself, 'There are indeed many women around Charles. It doesn't matter because I will deal with them one by one.'

Seeing Yvonne leave, Linda knew her goal was achieved. So she walked back to the Secretary Department sneering. When she arrived at the office, Leila put down the document she was reading and came to Linda, "Linda, there are something in the document I don't understand. Could you... Could you explain them to me?"

"You are smart. Read again and again and I am sure you will understand them. I have confidence in your talent, " Linda said with a smile as she patted Leila on the shoulder.

Leila froze with shock and tears in her eyes. David who was also there felt sorry for Leila and scolded Linda, "Linda, what's wrong with you? She just came here days ago. It's common for her to consult you, her senior. You used to be a good mentor and taught new comers, helping them without reserve. Why did you embarrass Leila like that?"

"This is between the two of us. Stay out of it, " Linda didn't mind letting things get ugly, "Leila, I advise you to focus on your work. I am sure that you will get higher position here at Shining Company sooner or later. Don't entertain any thoughts of becoming Mr. Lu's partner though, or you'll suffer without even knowing it."

Linda had seen Autumn and knew how much Charles loved her. She believed he would love no one else whole-heartedly except Autumn.

As for Leila? Linda said nothing. Because the truth was, Leila didn't know her ass from a hole in the ground.

But Leila knew what Linda meant. Since they were already in this situation, she spoke more directly in a voice that was scarcely heard, "Linda, you are not me. How could you know Mr. Lu had no interest in me? I heard that you tried to seduce Mr. Lu, but you failed. Don't worry I will learn from your mistakes and won't fail like you."

"What are you talking about?" Linda shouted as she raised her hand to slap Leila with rage. Before her palm slapped Leila across the face, there came Charles's voice, "What the hell is going on here?"

"Mr. Lu!"

Chapter 119

"Why?" Charles frowned. It was already settled. Why did she suddenly change her mind?

"I..." Leila sadly looked at Charles then lowered her head in silence. "This is Linda's job. There are still many things I am not clear about..."

"Get to the point. Don't waste my time." Charles interrupted. He didn't want to listen to her beating around the bush.

Leila still kept her head down and replied, "Mr. Lu, I noticed that Linda did not feel well this morning and I took the initiative to ask to go with you to the dinner party. But she seemed to have issues with this. She was reluctant to help me when I asked her about the plan of the case. I don't want our relationship to go sour because of this. So..."

Charles frowned and said lightly, "It's all decided and there is no need to change. If there is anything unclear about the work, you can ask David."

As soon as Charles finished, he hurriedly walked away. Leila had planned to find an excuse to keep him from leaving, but watching Charles disappear with quickened steps, she couldn't help stomping her feet in anger.

Linda was relieved when she saw that Leila's plan had failed. She looked at Leila and smirked, "Did you see? Mr. Lu only has his wife in his heart. You can't win."

"It's my own business and not your concern." Leila left, feeling furious. If it was not for David's presence, she would have thrown a tantrum. But she knew she couldn't.

She had just gained some footing at the Shining Company and she didn't want others to know her character and true intentions.

When Charles arrived home, Autumn was still looking for a job on the internet. Since she received no news from any company that would be interested in her resume, she decided to personally drop by a company this afternoon to try her luck. She was going to convince the people there of her abilities and qualifications, even if she got refused.

Charles pushed the door open. Autumn turned her head at the sound, surprised to see Charles in front of her. "Shouldn't you still be at work? Why are you home so early?"

"I will be busy in the next few days. And there is a dinner party I have to attend tonight. So I decided to come back and have lunch with you." He sat on the bed and lifted her up. "Get up now, we have reservations at a good restaurant."

"Only the two of us?" Autumn asked as she picked some clothes to wear in the wardrobe. When she got a positive answer, she frowned and said, "If it's only the two of us, why taking the trouble to eat out? We can do that here at home."

"Everything is ready, let's go!" As soon as Autumn got dressed, Charles took Autumn directly to the restaurant. It was just the two of them, but he had reserved a big box.

"Did you get rich overnight?" The box was big enough for more than ten people. Autumn was speechless when she saw the table full of dishes and the luxurious decorations in the box.

Charles laughed and said, "Are you doubting your husband's financial capacity?"

Autumn stuck out her tongue in embarrassment. He was Mr. Lu, the CEO of Shining Company. Of course, he had always been rich.

"Sit down, please." Charles made her sit on the main seat. Right before her eyes, Charles got down on one knee and took out a small box. He opened the red suede lid. In it was a diamond ring.

Autumn became uneasy. She wanted to lift Charles to his feet. But he seemed persistent. "Get up quickly. What are you doing? It's embarrassing to be seen like this."

"Please let me finish." Charles lifted the ring box and looked at Autumn in the eyes. "Autumn, we met and knew each other through a beautiful misunderstanding. But during the days we spent together, I was gradually attracted to you. And from the moment I had feelings for you till I really fell in love with you, it all went so fast."

Charles smiled. He never thought that he would be willing to jump into a commitment like this because of Autumn.

"I thought you were Yvonne when we first got married. I know I owe you so much. So, Autumn, could you marry me again? This time, as yourself?" The wedding they had before was grand, but it was specially prepared for Yvonne. The woman he loved now was Autumn. So he hoped that Autumn would marry him as the real her.

"What are you doing? Another wedding? That would be embarrassing." Autumn had actually said "Yes" thousands of times in her heart. She was so uneasy with Charles kneeling down in front of her. "Stand up!"

"If you don't say yes, I won't stand up." Charles's hand holding the ring box was getting sore. "Autumn, for some reasons, I can't announce your identity to the whole world now. But please believe me, you are the only woman in my heart."

"I know, I know." Tears welled up in her eyes. "Yes! Could you please stand up now? I say yes!"

She married him before as a substitute, but from that moment, she fell in love with him and was willing to give all her heart to him. She had already firmly believed that he was her prince charming.

She didn't care about the rituals of marriage. She only wanted to be with him.

"Then we will go and get the marriage license this afternoon, okay?" When they first got married, he hadn't thought of getting the marriage license because it was troublesome. But now, it was the right time.

"To get the marriage license?" Autumn had already forgotten about such a thing. Looking at Charles's expecting eyes, she nodded firmly and said, "Okay."

Charles joyfully pulled Autumn into his arms. He knew she would say yes. But he was very nervous, waiting for her reply. What if she refused?

Chapter 120

Autumn remembered her grandmother's concern when she was still living with her. She would always say, "Autumn, I'm already old. I can proudly say that I have no regrets about my own life. But it would be a huge pity if I can't see you walking down the aisle in my remaining years."

Every time she heard those words being uttered, she would rush into her grandmother's arms and tell her that she wouldn't get married and that she would always be with her for the rest of her life.

"You silly girl, " her grandmother would always reply with a doting smile on her face.

Now that she was married to the man she loved most in the world standing right beside her, it is so unfortunate that she doesn't have the chance to personally tell her grandmother.

"Sweetheart, why are you crying?" asked Charles, smiling as he wiped the tears from her face. "There are so many reasons to be happy. Don't cry, my love."

Autumn nodded, trying her best to hold back her tears. "Can I ask you a favor?" she asked.

"Of course. What is it?" replied Charles with kindness in his voice.

Autumn, hesitating for a while, finally said, "Now that we're officially married, I want to find my grandmother and let her live with us. I have tried my best to look for her in every hospital in Y City but I can't seem to find her. I don't know what to do."

Autumn thought to herself, 'My grandmother is my only relative who truly cares about me. I must find her no matter what. I need to find her.'

"Don't worry. I have already sent people to look for her. It won't take long before we get some news, " said Charles, patting Autumn's shoulder. "Shall I drive you home now?"

"No, thank you, " she replied. Relief washed over her after hearing Charles' words. "Drop me off there, " Autumn said, pointing to the intersection in front.

"Okay, " Charles obliged. Knowing how worried she was about her work, he stopped himself from asking anything. Instead, he just told her to take care and go home early.

Autumn printed out several copies of her resume and went to the Dark Blue Company where Isla was working. She called Isla as soon as she arrived downstairs.

Isla immediately hung up the phone and went downstairs to meet her. "Autumn, my boss is busy at the moment. I want you to know how incredibly difficult it is to get you the interview. Remember to show him your best planning case. Make sure you'll impress him with your talent and capability so he'll come to realize how stupid he's been for refusing to give you a chance at the very beginning."

Autumn couldn't help but laugh. "How could you say that your boss is stupid?" she asked curiously.

"He deserves to be called stupid because he refused to acknowledge your talent from the very beginning." Suddenly, Isla noticed the diamond ring on Autumn's finger. "What's this? I didn't see you wearing that yesterday, " Isla said, pointing at her ring excitedly.

"I..." Autumn blushed, stopping mid-sentence. "I just got the marriage license with Charles."

"Really?" asked Isla, extremely surprised. She was so excited that she couldn't stop herself from asking more. "Wow, Mr. Lu is so thoughtful and romantic. I can't wait to get married as well."

Autumn couldn't help bursting into laughter. "I remember you believing that marriage ruins love. You said you're content with enjoying the sweetness that love brings. You even told me that you'll never get married to anyone!"

"Hmph! I still think the same. I haven't changed my mind yet, " Isla replied, waving her hand.

"After all, a good man like Mr. Lu is very rare to find in this day and age. I don't think I'll be lucky enough to meet someone as good as him so I wouldn't even bother. But..."

Isla stared at Autumn with a knowing look in her eyes. "You've married someone who comes from a wealthy family. Don't you think you should also take care of your best friend's happiness? If there's any decent man around Mr. Lu who might be my Mr. Right, don't forget to introduce him to me."

"What about the handsome guy you met last time?"

Autumn asked curiously with a frown on her face.

"I've already said goodbye to him, " she replied in an indifferent tone.

Autumn always knew that Isla did not take love and relationships seriously because she had been badly hurt before.

"Isla, what happened to you happened so long ago. Let bygones be bygones. You have to learn to let it go, " Autumn finally said after hesitating for a moment.

"Where did you get the idea that I haven't moved on yet?" said Isla, smiling.

"I'm doing really well. I enjoy the life that I live right now. There's no need for you to worry.

Would you look at that? Time is almost up! I'll go ahead and check if my boss is already available, "

Isla said, avoiding eye contact as she headed back to her boss' office. She came back a few moments later, asking Autumn to follow her. "There's no need to be nervous. I know you're going to do well. My boss might be stupid sometimes, but he's still a good boss who cares about talent."

"It seems like you're more nervous than I am, " teased Autumn.

"Don't worry. Everything will be okay, " she added, reassuring her.

Autumn was surprised as she ran across Mr. Yi who was just coming out of the manager's office. He sneered as he stared at her quietly, obviously surprised to see Autumn as well.

"Are you Isla's friend?" the manager said, breaking the silence.

"Yes, " Autumn replied, nodding her head.

"This is my resume, " she said, handing over the paper to the manager.

"Come in and wait here for a moment. I'll just walk Mr. Yi out and I'll be back, " he said.

He continued their conversation as he turned back to Mr. Yi, respect apparent in his tone. "I'd like to congratulate us in advance on our successful partnership. Let me walk you out."

"Hold on, " Mr. Yi said, standing still as he stared at Autumn in front of him.

"Mr. Zhang, are you going to recruit new talent?"

"Yes yes, " he replied attentively.

"You have given me such a great opportunity and I am trying my best to perform well. I want to recruit more talent so that we can finish the project more efficiently, " he added.

"I have no problem with you recruiting more employees, " said Mr. Yi.

'I've already told her that I'm going to make her regret what she has done, ' he thought coldly.

"However, if you recruit a person with poor moral character, I might think twice about our partnership."

"What..."