

Wedded Bride 1221

Chapter 1221 Don't Worry

Charles, Sheryl, and the kids spent a great time in the restaurant—they chatted, laughed, and had delicious food. The happy hour flew by quickly, and when they went back to Dream Garden, it was already past 11 in the evening. After Charles turned on the light, everyone changed their shoes in the hallway, feeling the tiredness wash over them.

"Charles, you're finally back."

Melissa's voice startled them—no one was expecting to see Melissa sitting quietly in the living room.

"Mom, I took the children out for pizza. Why aren't you asleep?" he asked with a puzzled expression on his face. It was rare for Melissa to stay up so late. Normally, she would have been fast asleep way before 11 p.m.

"I couldn't sleep, so I figured I'd sit here and wait for you," replied Melissa, her eyes locked on Charles.

Still turning a blind eye to Sheryl, she faced the children and teased, "You two naughty kids, don't you feel sleepy? You came back too late."

"We're not sleepy, Grandma," replied Shirley. The girl was frank with her answer, but it wasn't what

Melissa wanted.

"Be a good girl. You must go to bed early even if you're not sleepy. You have school tomorrow. You don't want to wake up late, do you?"

"Okay, Grandma. I'll go upstairs to sleep."

After a nod, Shirley turned to Sheryl. "Mom, let's go upstairs. I guess I am a little sleepy..."

"Okay, let's go," she agreed. Shirley's request gave her a good excuse to leave the uncomfortable position. After the good night out, all she wanted was to escape Melissa's presence—even looking at the woman was making her mad.

"Mom, Clark must be tired too. We'll go upstairs now," prompted Charles. It was clear to him what was on his wife's mind and he wanted to make her feel safe. Besides, it was already too late to make conversation, so it was entirely reasonable for all of them to head up to their rooms as soon as possible.

"Charles, I have something to talk to you about. Clark, be a good boy and go upstairs with your mother, won't you?" It was no surprise how Melissa was willing to frustrate Sheryl.

'It doesn't matter what I say to Charles. Sheryl and I are clearly never going to get along with each

other. If my son agrees to stay with me, it means that he supports me, ' thought Melissa.

'Sheryl knows that it was Charles who got Leila out of prison. She even had a fight with him about it.

If I can get Charles to agree tonight, I'll bring Leila to Dream Garden tomorrow.

I don't believe she can still act calm and composed when she sees Leila at Dream Garden again. She

will be very anxious and may even blame Charles.'

"Mom, whatever you want to talk about, can't it wait until tomorrow? It's too late. I'm really tired, so I'm

going upstairs. Try and go back to sleep." Melissa's thoughts were pushed back by Charles' reply.

It was a short but firm answer. After refusing his mother, he hugged Clark and headed upstairs,

following Sheryl without hesitation.

Although Melissa opened her mouth, she couldn't say anything. The shock from her son refusing her

kept her frozen in her spot. 'My son used to be so docile and filial toward me. How could he change so

much? It has gotten to be Sheryl. There's no doubt that she said something to him...'

The more she thought about it, the deeper she fell into a panic. 'In the face of crises, it's better to be

positive and take action, ' she told herself. 'Since Leila is out of prison, she'll be my ally. It's a good

chance to give Sheryl a lesson. When she has gotten Charles completely under her spell, he won't

listen to me, no matter what I say. I've gotten to do something before it's too late.

He even refused to talk to me tonight because of Sheryl. I won't let this happen again.'

Another thing she noticed was that while she remained seated in her spot when Charles bid her goodnight, he walked away without looking back at her once. His heavy steps seemed to echo in the quiet house and Melissa could hear Sheryl's laugh from upstairs when they were all settled in.

The laugh was like a knife cutting through her heart. Suddenly, she got more impatient and she couldn't wait to carry out her plan. Pulling out her phone, she sent several messages to Leila.

Since Leila happened to be online, her reply was quick. It read, 'Aunt Melissa, don't worry. I'll pay you a visit tomorrow morning and stay with you for a few days. We can discuss a better solution there.'

Leila's reply had Melissa sigh in relief. After taking a deep breath, she finally got off the sofa and headed to her own room, ready for a good sleep.

Her second attempt to sleep didn't go so well either. In her mind, Sheryl's voice resounded, shouting and blaming her for a disastrous situation. It was a terrible nightmare.

The next morning, Sheryl did everything as usual. When she was about to drive the kids off to school,

her cellphone rang—she wondered who would call her so early in the morning.

The screen showed that it was Nancy. Seeing the name touched Sheryl's heart—Nancy had helped her so much that she was glad to answer the call. In contrast to Melissa, this woman was a huge blessing in her life.

Before she could greet her, Sheryl heard a familiar, comforting voice. "Hello, Sher, is that you?"

"Yes, it's me. Nancy, how are you doing?"

It was still unclear why Nancy called her up so suddenly. 'Maybe she's finally recovering and called to tell me that she can come back for work,' she assumed.

"I'm great, really. I'm doing well now. Sher, you know I like working. I wonder...would you..." Nancy's

tone was hesitant as she felt rather embarrassed to ask for the job. After all, Clark and Shirley were

kidnapped while they were under her watch. Even when she heard that the criminals were caught and punished, she was worried that she lost her job due to her negligence.

"That's great, Nancy. Do you know how long I've been looking forward to hearing from you? Since

you're well, come back as soon as you can," replied Sheryl happily. It was good news to hear that

Nancy could come back since she was always helpful.

Sheryl's forgiving personality moved Nancy—she still felt guilty about the kidnapping incident. "Sher...

thank you. Thank you so much."

"You're most welcome, Nancy. I should thank you for offering to come back to work. You were seriously

injured. I really appreciate that you're willing to come back after recovering." Sheryl meant every word.

Of course, Sheryl never blamed Nancy for Clark and Shirley being kidnapped. In fact, she felt sorry for

the serious injury that Nancy had to suffer because of it.

The disaster almost cost Nancy her life.

After discussing some details, they ended the call. Nancy had promised to come back to work in Dream

Garden the following day.

The good news put Sheryl in a good mood.

When she headed out with the kids, a happy smile was stuck to her face.

However, she wasn't the only one who started out the day happily. Melissa was also in good spirits

after seeing Sheryl leave the house—she was clueless about Leila promising to visit them and it

brought Melissa great joy knowing that Sheryl had no idea what she was about to suffer.

With Charles off at work, Melissa was alone. Staring at the front door without even blinking, she waited for Leila eagerly. To her dismay, it was already nine o'clock and Leila hadn't arrived. Worried about what could have happened, Melissa called her up.

Chapter 1222 Come Over To See Me

"Aunt Melissa, I'm on my way to Dream Garden. I will be there in five minutes." Leila's polite voice came from the other end of the line. Instantly a smile broke on Melissa's face.

'Leila is such a polite and obedient girl. She is way better than Sheryl. Why did Charles fall in love with a bad woman like Sheryl? If it weren't for her, Charles and I would be much closer with each other, ' Melissa mused angrily.

Leila arrived at Dream Garden soon after Melissa hung up the phone. "I'm sorry for keeping you waiting, Aunt Melissa. I was stuck in traffic," Leila apologized with guilt written all over her face.

However, the truth was far from what she said. The reason behind Leila being late was not because of bad traffic. Rather it was because she wanted to avoid meeting Charles. She was aware of how much he hated her, so she waited for him to leave for work before she came to the Dream Garden. Clearly, she had no intention of infuriating him.

Leila knew it very well that being in the good books of Melissa would act as a foundation if she ever

wanted to win over Charles' trust once again. Besides, she was waiting for a good chance to change her image in Charles' eyes. And before that day came, she had to avoid him.

For the time being, the only way Leila thought she could please Charles was by keeping Melissa happy. The more Melissa enjoyed her company, the more would she sing her praises in front of Charles, thereby paving the way for her to clear her image in Charles' mind.

Having known Charles for several years, she knew something about him. He was a sentimental man; it was not difficult for her to assume that he cared for his mother and respected her.

Had it not been for Charles' deep love and respect for his mother, he would not have helped Leila get out of prison.

Now that Charles was respectful to his mother, Leila believed that Melissa was an important person in his life. That was why she had decided to suck up to Melissa.

"It's okay. I just got up," Melissa responded with a cordial smile. Now Melissa thought highly of Leila. In her eyes, Leila was a good girl. Besides, she had bought her many clothes, so Melissa didn't mind her being slightly late for their appointment.

"I see. I bet you haven't had breakfast yet. What do you want to eat? I will make it for you," Leila proposed gallantly. Leila was an extremely contriving and shrewd woman. She knew exactly how to make her way back into Dream Garden. Evidently, her friendship with Melissa was the most important thing for her at the moment. She would do anything to keep Melissa happy. And offering to make breakfast for her was just one of her tactics to please her.

"No, thanks. I already had my breakfast. What about you?" Melissa sighed inside, 'She is such a good woman. Besides, she took care of Clark for several years and treated him like her own son.'

"Me too. I came here to keep you company. I just want to see you happy. Nothing more than that." Leila continued bombarding Melissa with sweet words, feigning a selfless smile

"I'm fine. What upsets me the most is that I have to see Sheryl's face every day. But I have absolutely no idea about how to kick her out of Dream Garden. I get a headache when I think of that woman,"

Melissa said in low spirits, rubbing her temples. She was telling the truth. Sheryl's presence in Dream Garden was becoming intolerable for her with every passing day. She could not bear the sight of her.

Her mind was always at work to come up with some idea to make Sheryl leave her son. So much so that she could neither sleep nor eat well. Melissa thought very high of Leila. She was impressed by her

polite and respectful behavior. Little did she know how contriving Leila could be! She had no idea that Leila's sugar-coated words and politeness had some vested interest behind it all. Had Melissa known that Leila was fooling her, she wouldn't rack her brain to throw Sheryl out of the Lu family.

In fact, Melissa was not exactly a bad person. All she did was for her son's own good. She wanted to find Charles a better wife. And somehow she felt that Sheryl was not that person.

Melissa had completely misunderstood Sheryl for a crafty, evil woman who married her son for his money.

As the saying goes, a man with a hammer will try to find a nail wherever he goes. The same thing had happened to Melissa. Just because of her wrong impression on Sheryl, she ended up resorting to extreme means to handle Sheryl. So much so that she did not even realize that she had slowly turned into a mean person who ill-treated her own daughter-in-law.

And even if she was aware of the fact that she was harsh towards Sheryl, she would not change her ways because she believed that whatever she was doing was just for her own son's sake. She did not mind being labeled as a mean and bad woman as long as she could get a kind-hearted, sensible wife

for her son.

In Melissa's eyes, Leila was that perfect woman who could make a suitable life partner for Charles and an obedient daughter-in-law for her as well. Leila was so considerate and kind. But somehow, it was so difficult for her to accept Sheryl despite the cruel fact that she was Charles' wife.

"Aunt Melissa, we need to give it further thought. At the moment, Sheryl has complete control over your

son. No matter what our plan is, we must keep him from getting hurt," Leila said with an earnest look on her face. Once again she managed to make herself a sensible woman. This had the desired impact on Melissa's mind and made her more convinced that Leila was the ideal soul mate for her son. Leila had a very slow and steady rhythm to cast her trap over her prey. And she was playing her game very skillfully. Melissa was completely unaware of it. As she marveled at Leila's true and selfless love towards her son, Leila was planning way ahead of what Melissa could even think of in her wildest dream.

What Leila said melted Melissa's heart. Her face broke into a beaming smile as she touched Leila's chin tenderly and said, "Leila, you're right. We need to think over about how to handle Sheryl. You have

no idea how much I hope that you can get married to Charles as soon as it can happen. To tell you the truth, I couldn't be happier if you and Charles get married tomorrow."

"I'm flattered, Aunt Melissa. Be honest with you, I will not think twice to say yes as long as Mr. Lu is willing to marry me," Leila replied looking shy. "Since I took care of Clark, I have always thought of Charles to be my husband..." Leila's voice trailed off as unpleasant memories flashed back her mind.

Ever since she had fallen in love with Charles, she had only experienced the heartbreak of being rejected by him at every point. Besides that, she had only met with sufferings. Even if she shared those bad experiences with Melissa, she wouldn't feel better. So she swallowed what she had almost blurted out.

For each and every moment of misery and despair that Leila had to undergo, she put the blame entirely on Sheryl. She swore to herself that she would make Sheryl pay for what she had done to her.

"Leila, whenever you are free, you come over to see me. I feel so bored staying alone at home. If Sheryl sees you here, she will get angry. I'm really unhappy with that bitch!" Melissa said through gritted teeth.

Leila smiled inwardly as she consented to her request. It was true that she tried to evade Charles, but if

Melissa invited her here, she wouldn't be afraid as she knew that he wouldn't hurt her for his mother's sake.

"Okay, Aunt Melissa. I will come by to see you whenever I am free. I don't have a job since I just got released. I stay at home all day. And the boredom is killing me. Even I can get rid of my loneliness if I keep you company," Leila agreed gladly. She just shot another dart by mentioning about her joblessness deliberately in front of Melissa.

'Melissa might not ask Charles to offer a job to me. But what if she does? Then I can work in Charles' company, ' she brooded.

"Oh, I almost forgot that you don't have a job. It is Charles' fault. How about..." And there Melissa stopped and drew a sigh.

Chapter 1223 You're Not Helping

"What are you talking about, Aunt Melissa? It wasn't your son's fault. Sheryl is the one to blame. If she hadn't made up stories to set me up, he wouldn't have treated me that way. He was fooled by Sheryl!" Leila said.

"You're right, Leila. Would you like to return to work at Shining Company?" Melissa echoed

immediately. She had forgotten that Leila didn't have a job. However, since Leila brought it up, it dawned on her that Leila could work at Charles' company. That way, Leila would get more chances to be near her son.

Although she wasn't sure whether Charles would agree to this, she was willing to give it a shot for his future happiness.

In fact, it wasn't a big deal. The worst result would be Charles refusing her request.

Hearing Melissa's question, Leila knew her wish would be fulfilled soon. And she needed to act well in front of Charles' mother. Fixing a pitiful look on her face, Leila wanted to arouse Melissa's sympathy so that she would go to great lengths to talk her son into offering her a job. "Really, Aunt Melissa? Do you think I could work at Shining Company again?" Leila gushed, her eyes sparkling as she took hold of Melissa's hand.

"You have no idea how much I want to go back to work there. I was just afraid that Mr. Lu wouldn't hire me, so I..."

"Don't worry, I'll take care of this. I'll persuade Charles to offer you a position. Rest assured," Melissa declared firmly.

"Thank you, Aunt Melissa. You're the best," Leila said calmly, trying to contain her excitement.

She immediately started brainstorming ways to win Charles' heart once she started working with him again.

Meanwhile in Tarsan Corporation, Rachel and Holley had serious problems.

No company was willing to work with them. Out of options, Rachel called Lance, but he didn't answer the phone.

"What is Lance thinking? Isn't he afraid I might expose those videos to the public?" Rachel yelled in an irritated tone. Simmering with rage, she didn't know how to vent.

"What's your plan, Ms. Bai?" Holley inquired. She had no idea what game Lance was playing.

"I have no clue. What about you? Didn't you say you'd always help me? What should we do? Why can't you give me some good advice at this critical moment? What's wrong with you?" Rachel raised her voice, glaring at Holley. Holley's tricks never worked, and this enraged Rachel.

In Holley's eyes, Rachel was a short-tempered and timid perfectionist. Once something didn't go as she expected, she would flare up and become unreasonable. Looking at the angry woman, Holley shook

her head in frustration. 'She looks like a shrew, ' she thought.

"You're seriously asking what my plan is? My plan has already started and is still on," Holley responded

in a composed manner as she took a seat opposite her boss.

"What do you mean? I hate guessing. What's your plan? Just tell me right now," Rachel demanded

testily.

"Cool down. I copied those videos and gave them to a person who can get to Lance's wife. If Lance

backed out and stopped working with us, his wife would get those videos," Holley explained.

"Have you lost your mind, Holley? Why did you give those videos to others?" Rachel went ballistic.

'I took Holley's advice to threaten Lance with those videos, and that upset him, ' she thought.

"How could you say that? I was trying to help," Holley snapped. She couldn't stand it when Rachel was

unreasonable. 'I did nothing wrong. Why do I have to endure this?' she thought, miffed.

"Shut up! You're not helping. You were trying to destroy me!" Rachel seethed.

"Ms. Bai, I don't know why you said that. I was doing this for you, for your company!" Holley reasoned.

"Is that so? Do you never use your brain? Are you sure you can trust this person who can get to

Lance's wife? What if that person gives the videos to Lance's wife for money?" Rachel blurted out her

biggest concern.

She didn't know whom Holley gave the videos to, and that was why she had no faith in that person.

'What if Lance's wife bribes that person with money?' she thought.

Holley trusted the person she hired, so she assured Rachel, "That's not gonna happen..." However,

Rachel didn't give her the chance to finish.

"How do you know? Can you explain to me what is going on? Why did Lance suddenly cut us off? We

didn't do anything to offend him," Rachel retorted in a reproachful tone. 'Lance's wife must have

watched those videos and had a big fight with him. Now those videos are not a threat to him anymore,

so he doesn't want to have anything to do with us, ' she speculated.

Holley was left speechless. 'She is a stubborn woman. I don't think I can change her mind, ' she

thought.

"Get lost, Holley. I'm fed up with you!" Rachel bellowed at Holley hysterically. At this point, she was

furious and regretful. She couldn't believe that Holley was such an incompetent person. Had she

known about this earlier, she wouldn't have returned from abroad.

She had expected Holley to help her, but it turned out that she was wrong.

"Fine. If you don't want to see me, I'll leave," Holley replied nonchalantly. She threw the documents on Rachel's desk before storming out of the office.

Staring at Holley's retreating figure, Rachel got even more upset. Realizing that she could rely on no one else but herself, she drew in a deep breath and resolved to give it one last shot.

Dialling Lance's number with a new caller ID, she thought to herself, 'I want to see if he'll answer the phone now.'

A few seconds later, Lance picked up the phone. "Hello?"

"Mr. Zhan, it's Rachel," she replied with joy in her voice, seemingly clutching at straws. "Last time you said..."

"How could you be so shameless, Rachel Bai? I didn't take your call. Isn't that clear enough to you?"

"How dare you keep bugging me? You're so rude, you know that?" Lance shouted in contempt. The

harsh tone in his voice made Rachel furious. But since she had to turn to him for help, she couldn't

afford to mess around.

"What's going on with you, Mr. Zhan? I'm so sad. How could you be so horrible to me?" she said

coquettishly, after composing herself.

Chapter 1224 The Corporation Revived

"Enough, Rachel Bai! Don't pretend to be innocent anymore. I know you don't love me—you just use me as a tool for your vengeance. Take it easy, now. I haven't wronged you. I hope you understand that I won't spare you the moment you try to threaten me."

On a high from his revenge being achieved, Lance seemed excited as he spoke.

From his tone, Rachel couldn't find any sign of his wife knowing about their affair.

"Well, Mr. Zhan, seems like you don't work with me anymore. Are you not afraid that I will release those photos and videos?" Realizing that sweet words would no longer work on him, Rachel let her real self surface.

"Ha! You think I didn't know about your little ploy? If you had any common sense, you'd know I wouldn't be talking to you like this if I thought you still had something over me," Lance said as he grinned. In his eyes, Rachel was far too young and naive to be any real threat.

"What are you saying?"

Living up to Lance's expectations, Rachel was left shocked by his mocking. It was a hard blow to her—

if he refused to help her any longer, she would have no way to push through with her plan.

"It's simple. What you have in your hands right now isn't a threat to me at all. Rachel Bai...you're really not cute. If you had been with me wholeheartedly, I wouldn't even hesitate to help you. But all this time, you've only cared for Charles Lu. Since it's him you're in love with, why are you asking me for help?"

Compared to the sweet words she was used to hearing from him, his current words were truly harsh to her ears, like a knife stabbing her in the back.

"Fine. Since you couldn't care less about this now, we can end this conversation. You want me to publish your secrets so you can grow even more famous, don't you? I'll do it as you will, then," probed

Rachel. With the way he acted, Rachel assumed that Lance actually wanted her to give him those things and his harsh words were just to keep up his carefree attitude.

If Lance was truly concerned about it, though, he wouldn't have had to pretend at all.

"Ha! Do as you like. Let's see what consequences you'll have to face." With a huge grin, Lance hung up.

The warm and happy days they spent together in Silver Corporation were still fresh in Rachel's mind, but it seemed as though Lance had completely erased them from his memory in a blink.

The more she thought about it, the more Rachel felt disappointed.

There was no time for her to get stuck in disappointment, though. Her priority had to be publishing the photos in her hand—since Lance deprived her of her chance to lead a happy life, she would destroy his life too.

Since he told her to do as she liked, nothing was stopping her anymore.

If Lance wasn't afraid, she wasn't worried either. It wasn't her first time to get involved in such scandals after all.

To her surprise, though, when she began calling various media and reporters, nobody responded.

Whenever someone picked up the phone, as soon as they found out it was Rachel, they hung up immediately.

It left Rachel confused until she recalled Lance's confidence from the earlier conversation.

'Lance...he must have arranged everything. He definitely paid off the media to ignore my calls.'

Smart as she was, even she never expected Lance's attitude toward her to do a complete one-eighty.

Suddenly, she despised him for his cold heart and craftiness—they just slept together a few days ago

and he was capable of treating her so differently soon after. Regret washed over her for not having taken initiative earlier and publishing the video to humiliate the jerk.

Now, no one would publish her material and she was no longer any threat to Lance. What could she do to turn the situation around?

'Damn it! That liar!' she cursed in her mind. Having driven even Holley away, she had no one by her side to ask for help from.

Feeling so desperate and cold, she couldn't stop shaking. After a long while, an idea finally came to her. Since she had enough time, she decided to wait. As long as she was still alive, she decided she would find a way to get her revenge on Lance.

Meanwhile, Holley had already picked up all her personal belongings in the office and left Tarsan Corporation.

As she sat in the cab, she got even angrier the more she thought about what happened to her.

Even though she helped Rachel earnestly, the latter never appreciated her efforts. With that in mind, she finally decided that there was no longer any reason for her to stay and endure Rachel's torment any longer.

All she wanted to do now was see what results Rachel would achieve without her help.

Stuck in that thought, Holley pulled out her phone and dialed a number.

"Bernard, call off the plan," she commanded.

As the man on the other end of the line agreed, a mischievous grin appeared on Holley's face—she had made up her mind about what to do next.

Rachel's ego sparked Holley's hate for her.

Even when Rachel was at fault for others' troubles, she always found a way to blame someone else. It seemed as though she considered herself a queen, but Holley was tired of flattering her.

The only reason why she had endured Rachel's bad temper was that the latter served useful for her.

However, now, she had made the decision to keep her distance and spectate the fate of Tarsan Corporation.

In the hospital

After being taken care of by Cassie for a couple of days, Nick finally realized her feelings for him. Even so, he couldn't promise to marry her and he worried that what she held in her heart for him would soon

turn to pain.

Lying in bed with his eyes closed, Nick couldn't fall asleep with all the thoughts running through his

head. Right when the program was about to succeed, he fell ill and had to put all of his work on pause.

Although Bob had taken part in the program, he hadn't taken on important tasks, leaving him unfamiliar

with the important details. Since he couldn't leave the rest of the work to Bob, Nick's only choice was to

deal with the program himself after getting discharged.

Ever the workaholic, Nick was already carefully going through all the things he had to prepare for in his

mind. For each task, he had a clear plan about how to operate and what kind of resources he required.

Mentally listing down all the things he needed brought a smile to his face and finally, he fell asleep.

His dream was an image of himself standing on a huge stage, ready to accept an award. Finally, his

program was completed—it won him the biggest prize in his field. Winning the award merited him

several entrepreneurs who invested in his program while the government provided abundant funding

for him as well.

With that, his corporation was revived beyond expectations.

Chapter 1225 Nick's Dream

Still deeply asleep, Nick savored what he had just achieved in his dream. In all his life, he had never

been so proud of himself. The excitement and satisfaction in his heart were too much to contain. Taking his phone out of his pocket, he was eager to share his joy. Right when he was about to dial up Sheryl and Isla, a figure of a woman came into his view.

The sight startled him and he struggled to see her clearly. The woman walked toward him with a gentle smile on her face—the smile was so sweet that it made him too dizzy to even recognize her. For some reason, he felt like he had to turn his eyes away. When he was about to try and shake himself out of her spell, the woman quickly took a step forward to stop him. Standing before him with her hands on her hips, she surprised Nick with the aggressive action.

Dumbfounded by the gesture, Nick stayed frozen where he was, gulping out of nervousness. Slowly, she began to move closer to him again, the charming smile never leaving her face.

Eventually, the two were so close that Nick could clearly observe every little detail of her face. Her light skin radiated beauty, youth, and vigor, so much that her prolonged presence made Nick feel more and more ashamed. Before he could pull his eyes away, the woman's lips met his. Her lips felt so soft and warm as if they would soon melt and flow into his mouth like chocolate. The surreal kiss drove away all

his anxieties.

Suddenly, the woman drew her head back and smiled at him. After Nick came back to his senses, he lifted his eyes and met her gaze, finally face to face with the woman who had just claimed his lips.

Their proximity made him turn bashful. Nick could feel his blood rushing up to his head, making him unable to move with his heart going a mile a minute.

"Do you love me?" asked the woman. Her voice was as gentle and velvety as the way she kissed.

Without the sweet smile leaving her face, she retreated a couple of steps. Nick had to pause for a moment after hearing what she said.

"Yes..." he replied, at last. "I love you." His voice seemed rather vague and his cheeks emitted a soft red glow.

"Well, that's good to hear."

In an instant, her sweet smile disappeared. In place of gentle eyes was an angry glare as she asked,

"But do you deserve me? Do you really think a man like you deserves a woman like me?"

The sudden switch in her aura made Nick uneasy. What he had been anxious about all along finally surfaced in his subconscious, even if he had been trying so hard to avoid it. At the thought, his heart

sunk.

Used to being afraid of getting hurt by the one he loved, he had learned to be very careful to not fall in love with another woman. In fact, he had built quite a sturdy barrier for himself to keep a good distance from women. In his dreams, he still had to face it.

At the very least, he was different from whom he used to be. The current Nick was a wealthy, successful businessman who took on numerous wide-scale projects—his dream had come true. With such a great deal of wealth, he had the means to pursue anyone he fell in love with. Now that he loved the woman in front of him, he wanted nothing more than to marry her.

"Cassie, marry me! I will make you happy, I promise!" he cried out abruptly. As he exclaimed, he had his arms stretched out, just waiting to wrap them around someone. But his eyes remained shut.

"What... What did you just say?"

A familiar voice suddenly pulled Nick out of his dream.

'What? Where am I?

White walls...a strong smell of disinfectant...I'm...

I'm in a hospital?'

His train of thought faded as he was left dumbstruck by his surroundings. Shortly after he woke up, he was overcome with embarrassment.

The image in his dream was still clear in his mind. What was worse, the woman in his dream was right there, standing by his bed, looking at him with a bashful face.

'Did she... hear everything? Did I say everything out loud? Oh, no...'

At that moment, all he wanted to do was find himself a hole in the ground and jump right in.

'These days, Cassie has been staying by my side, looking after me. I must've gotten so used to it and started thinking that she's been taking care of me out of love. That's the only reason why she appeared in my dream and kissed me.'

In reality, he was wrong. Even though he was extremely wealthy and powerful in his dream, Cassie still looked down upon him, mocking him, and telling him that he didn't deserve her.

The actual situation he faced was far worse.

His company was nearly bankrupt and he fell ill at a crucial time where only his new project could possibly turn things around for him—everything was put on hold.

Without work and money, he was practically a useless man. How could he have the right to love a woman?

How could he even wish for true love? From his perspective, the harsh truth of reality could easily change one's mind and heart. True love could be twisted into something fake.

Without fortune and power, he was unable to protect anything, especially himself. At that point, he felt so weak and feeble that he lacked the confidence to endure another failure in love—he had nothing but doubt. In his own eyes, he was nothing but trash.

While Nick's mind was spiraling down into a complete mess, Cassie was sitting by his bed, her eyes shy and bashful.

"Nick...what did you just say? Could you repeat that?"

Her voice remained gentle and soft.

Her kind demeanor did nothing to tame Nick's nerves. He paused for a long while before calming himself down and finally raising his head to look her properly in the eye. Putting on an indifferent facade, he said, "I had a dream about a huge serpent chasing me until you saved me. Thanks, Cassie."

"That's it? That's all?"

Hearing what the dream was about, Cassie couldn't help but express disappointment. Clearly, she could tell that Nick wasn't giving her the truth. Something in the back of her head tugged at her, giving her a good sense of what Nick was really thinking. This got her determined to check if Nick meant what he said right before he woke up and would reveal his true feelings about her.

After all, Cassie wasn't one of those who gave up easily. Her gaze lingered for a moment on his face, in search of an answer using a woman's instincts. To her disappointment, what she was eagerly looking for in Nick's expression had somehow disappeared without a trace. All she could do was try to keep the sadness growing in her heart to herself.

The man must have hidden himself away again—deep down; there was a shell he had built up since a long time ago to protect himself. Every time he felt exposed and vulnerable, he would slide back into that shell without letting anyone know. As long as he stayed in it, he thought that no one would be able to reach and hurt him—his weaknesses were never to be exposed.

But Cassie knew. The woman who loved him so deeply had come to know him well.

In the time they spent together, she observed every smile and every frown he made. After all that, how

could she not tell what was on his mind? Still, she couldn't force him. As a woman, she didn't want to force him to say that he loved her.

'No matter how much I care for him, my feelings won't get across to him. Even if I take every chance I get to be by his side, he'll probably just take it for granted. In his eyes, I'm no more than a nurse who takes care of him out of her duty.'

Suddenly, Cassie felt the need to stop asking further. She knew that the more hope she put into him, the more disappointed she would be in the end.

"You must be hungry. What would you like for lunch? If you don't like the hospital meals, I can grab you some food from outside." Cassie was quick to change the topic.

The shift in the air made Nick quietly sigh in relief. Without really thinking about it, he said, "It's not necessary.

Honestly, I don't think the hospital meals are bad at all."

At his pretense, Cassie couldn't help but laugh.

'Who was it that almost vomited as soon as he took his first mouthful of hospital food?'

Cassie's smile made him feel ashamed—he knew she was mocking him.

For some reason, he felt obliged to explain and he raised his eyes to meet hers. Before he got to say anything, though, her sweet smile had him captivated. For a moment, his eyes stayed glued to her face before he lowered his gaze to her whole body—it was like he had forgotten how to speak.

Since Cassie was on leave that day, she wasn't in her nurse's uniform like Nick was used to seeing her in. Instead, she wore a blue skirt that reminded him of water. The shade made her fair skin look even brighter. Her neckline exposed most of the snow-white skin on her torso, putting on display her two sharp and charming collarbones.

In her everyday life, Cassie was often wearing a skirt, but it wasn't until that day when Nick paid any attention. Seeing her in something other than her uniform's skirt, Nick found her very attractive and a part of him felt like he couldn't have enough of her.

Nick's dumbstruck face made Cassie feel a little nervous. To try and snap him out of the little trance, she waved her hand in front of his face.

"Are you feeling okay? Nick? Are you thinking about what to eat? Please tell me."

"Ah...what was that?" Finally, Nick came back to reality, feeling the shame of having his earlier

thoughts overcome him. Quickly, he responded, "Anything is good. I'm not picky when it comes to food."

"I know you're not picky about food. It's only the cook you're particular about." In spite of the situation, Cassie couldn't help but grin again, so amused by his reactions. After a moment, she added, "How about this? I'll get you some steamed food with a bowl soup. That should help settle your stomach since it'll be easy to digest."

Chapter 1226 We're Friends Now

"Fine. Thank you," Nick responded promptly as he wanted to end this topic as soon as possible.

"Well, I'm going home to prepare lunch for you. Have a good rest. I'll be back soon." As she reached the door, Cassie turned around and reminded him, "If anything happens, call me anytime."

"I will. You don't need to worry about me," Nick replied with a slight smile. He was moved by how much Cassie cared about him. Soon after she closed the door, he was left alone in the ward to rest.

Time passed quickly, but the days at the ward had never been boring for both the patient and his aid. At last, the day when Nick finally would be discharged from the hospital came.

It was another quiet morning. Nick sat on his bed eating the red bean porridge Cassie had made for

him, while Cassie stood aside watching him silently. She looked pleased as he seemed to like it.

Suddenly, there was a sudden knock on the door.

Cassie smiled at him and said, "I will get it."

She went to open the door and was surprised to find the doctor, Ricky, and two other nurses with him.

Seeing Cassie, Ricky didn't even look surprised. Smiling, he asked, "You knew that I would come today, didn't you?" Meeting her baffled gaze, he explained, "Two days have passed. I'm here to check on my patient's recovery."

Having looked after him in these past few days, Cassie was more fond of Nick. She couldn't bear the thought of leaving him alone. She knew that once the doctors had him discharged from the hospital, it would be difficult for her to see him again. As desperate as it sounded, she had been praying that Nick would slowly recover so she could spend more time with him.

However, there was no way to stop that day from coming, and now it was finally here. A strong sense of frustration engulfed Cassie.

"Please come on in, Ricky!" Cassie's voice echoed from inside the room. She stuck out her tongue at the doctor mischievously and moved aside to let them in.

Ricky nodded at her and walked pass her quietly, while the two nurses followed at his tail. He made his way to Nick's bed and examined his patient thoroughly. Time stopped for Cassie as she watched the doctor and the nurses do their routine.

Several minutes later, the physician smiled at Nick and finally said, "You're getting better. I believe you can go home now."

"Thank you, sir!" Nick couldn't help but sound so excited when he heard the good news. He held his hand out to Rick, and willingly shook it to express his infinite gratitude.

Looking at the young man, the doctor added, "Although you're young, you should always take care of your own health. Don't push yourself too hard. Too much work can kill you."

Nick thanked Ricky again. The doctor gave him some advice before he exited the ward with the nurses.

On the other hand, Cassie was overwhelmed with sadness at the thought of being apart from Nick.

'Nick is leaving here sooner or later. It's just a matter of time. Right now, I still have a chance to go near him, ' she comforted herself.

Nick was still looking at the door where the doctor had gone out when Cassie broke the silence. Giving

the patient a bright smile, she offered, "Would you like me to start collecting your stuff now?"

"No, thanks. I can handle it myself," Nick refused instantly. He slipped out of bed hurriedly and packed up his belongings.

Now that he was getting better, he didn't want to bother Cassie with things that he could do himself.

Cassie put the bowls and spoon into the thermos food container, and set it aside.

As Nick put all his stuff inside the small suitcase, he pulled out his mobile phone from his pocket. He scrolled through its phonebook and looked for Bob's number. A few seconds after, he gave him a call.

The second Bob saw the caller ID on the screen, he immediately picked up the phone. "Hello, Mr. Ge!" he greeted respectfully.

Since he had been busy dealing with business at the office lately, he hadn't had time to pay his boss a visit. Besides, he had been asked not to come over to the hospital. As a result, he didn't know that Nick would be discharged from the hospital today.

"Please come and pick me up at the hospital now, and go through the discharge formalities," Nick ordered him calmly.

"Mr. Ge, you're being discharged today?" Bob murmured, stunned by the news. This was not what he

was expecting to hear, but he couldn't help but feel thrilled to know that his boss was finally released from the hospital today.

Work had been pretty busy these past few days since he had to take care of all the business alone.

Before Nick was admitted to the hospital, he had less work to deal with. However, during his boss' absence from the company, his workload got doubled. He needed to go into the office earlier than usual.

"I got it. I'm on my way," Bob replied quickly.

"Hmm," Nick replied before ending the call.

After Bob had entrusted some urgent business matters to his underlying, he drove out of the company.

He was trying to get to the hospital at the earliest possible time, so he drove at a full speed. Since it wasn't rush hour, the traffic was extremely light.

The sun was shining brightly when he reached the hospital. It was only nine o'clock in the morning.

There were a few people in the hallways and most of them were either nurses or doctors. He hurriedly walked past the counter only to realize he was instructed to settle the discharge formalities. He stepped

back and stopped in front of the counter with an intension to pay for Nick's medical expenses. To his surprise, he was told that a lady had already settled the medical bills.

Bob was left confused upon hearing the news. Rubbing his chin, he wondered who was so kind to pay for Nick's medical expenses. Eager to check on his boss, he just shook his head and ran towards the ward.

When he pushed the door open, he was taken aback by the scene that unfold.

Apart from Nick, there was a young pretty girl inside the room. It took him a while to recognize that she was the nurse named Cassie who had attended to his boss the other night.

Bob didn't dare to gossip at the moment. As he sensed the awkward atmosphere inside the ward, he greeted Cassie politely. The girl bowed slightly to acknowledge Bob's presence.

"Let's go, Mr. Ge. I planned to pay for your medical bills but the nurse told me that a girl has settled it already," Bob said. He had so much to ask his boss before entering the ward, but he had swallowed them all at the sight of Cassie.

"Thank you for taking care of my boss," he told Cassie as he picked up Nick's suitcase.

When Nick heard this, he thought that Sheryl was the one who had paid for his medical expenses. 'I

have already caused so much trouble to Sheryl. And now I owe her more. I should find a chance to return her kindness later, ' he thought.

"I see. I think I know who paid the medical bills for me. Let's get out of here." Nick headed straight for the door.

Upon hearing his comment, Cassie withdrew her gaze from Nick. She didn't want him to know that she had paid the medical expenses for him. Most importantly, she didn't want him to be obliged to hang out with her out of gratitude.

She was extremely upset that Nick was leaving the hospital today.

"Thank you for attending to me these past few days, Cassie." Nick turned around to tell her how thankful he was. In fact, he also felt sad.

Tears started to build up in Cassie's eyes, but she tried her best to hold them back.

"Nick, you will not forget me, will you?" Cassie asked tenderly. It took her a lot of courage to even put it into words.

Nick's heart skipped a beat. He didn't expect her to put forward such a question. It was too bold for her

to ask. But having spent a couple of days with her, he was aware that his feelings for Cassie grew every day. It would be a lie if he refused to admit that he would miss the nurse the moment he stepped out of the hospital.

But he hesitated on whether he should let her know of his feelings towards her. He didn't want to complicate things. He eventually decided to keep it to himself. Taking a deep breath, he lifted his head and forced himself to look straight into her eyes. Despite his burning cheeks and quick heartbeat, he tried his best to sound as calm as possible.

"We're friends now, Cassie. Perhaps we'll meet again someday," Nick responded casually.

And that was how it ended. It was not a direct answer to Cassie's question, neither did he refuse her directly.

Cassie heaved a sigh of relief when she heard it.

'I'm friends with him. It's enough for now, ' she thought.

"Goodbye, Nick!" With a smiling face, Cassie looked up at Nick with determination evident in her eyes.

Nick smiled back at her but immediately looked elsewhere, careful not to meet her gaze.

'I will never forget him no matter if he leaves me behind or not. I don't think I will get over him, even if

he starts to hang out with another woman, ' she said to herself silently.

Bob opened the door for his boss. Nick and Cassie went out quietly. Cassie walked Nick to the gate of the hospital. She watched as he got in the car. He didn't even look at her as he closed the door. Soon the car roared away.

Eyes already teeming with tears, she waved at the car as it disappeared in the distance.

'He can't live in the hospital forever. But I will meet him again someday. You can't get away from me, Nick!' Her thoughts came screaming.

Chapter 1227 Out of The Hospital

Inside the car, Bob turned around to look at his boss. Catching his attention from the corner of his eye, he saw the shadow of a figure lingering behind the car for a while.

Looking at his boss, Bob was about to inform him about the person behind their car. However, he didn't and only managed to glance at his boss with a worried look on his face. What he was concerned about most was his Nick's health condition. Regardless of the fact that the doctor had cleared him to leave the hospital, he still remained worried.

"Mr. Ge, given that you've just been released from the hospital, I will drive you home immediately. I

don't think that now is the right time to discuss work," Bob said with a frown. He felt extremely anxious, as he didn't know whether his boss would listen to him or not.

"That's fine, thank you. Bob, please drive me home." Nick understood exactly what Bob was worried about and nodded with a smile.

Nick's words put Bob's mind at ease.

Bob drove the car at a steady speed, as he was still worried about Nick's condition.

After driving for an hour, they finally reached Nick's house.

Dropping Nick off at his house, Bob reminded Nick to call him whenever he needed assistance.

Nick felt sorry for Bob, as he had to work over time in the past days. Hence, he asked him to return to work and get off work on time.

When Bob left, Nick was sitting alone in the living room.

His mind was full and he was very upset.

He continued to think about everything that happened, particularly about the incident when he risked his life to complete his project and fulfill his dream. He sat down, acknowledging his stupidity for a

while.

If there was one thing he learned from his mistakes, however, it was that he had to cherish his time spent alive and healthy more than before. His health was his top priority.

His wandering thoughts were interrupted by the ringing sound of his phone. Looking at the caller ID, he saw that it was Sheryl calling.

Nick picked up the phone. An intrigued smile appeared on his face.

"Sher, why are you calling me at this hour?" Nick thought Sheryl called him for business, as neither Sheryl nor Isla was informed about him being released from the hospital.

"Nick, when are you leaving the hospital? Please let me know. Isla and I will come and pick you up,"

Sheryl said over the phone with a slight giggle.

Nick felt moved by her concern towards him. He answered, "That's okay. It's not necessary. You are really busy Sheryl. I don't want to bother you anymore. I was released from the hospital today."

"What?" Sheryl sounded surprised. "Why didn't you inform us?"

"Well, the truth is, I'm nearly all recovered. I can even go back to work tomorrow. Well, once I settle my business, of course, I'd like to invite you and Isla to dinner."

"Really? Well, we'd love to. However, you've just left the hospital. You need to take care of yourself first before diving back into your work," Sheryl kindly reminded Nick on the phone.

"Yes, I know. You can rest assured. I will."

Nick hung up the phone. Nick's mind continued to race with thoughts as he held the phone in his hand.

He headed towards the bathroom slowly, hoping to clear his mind and sober up after taking a hot shower. Perhaps he could calm down before tackling his workload.

Immersing himself in the water, Nick couldn't help but think of Sheryl. Strangely enough, he was aware that he was acting strange. He reminded himself that Sheryl had a husband and children. She treated him no more than a friend. How could he have a thing for her?

He picked up the shower head, turned on the hot water, and closed his eyes, while water graced his face. The warmth of the water released his tension. His entire world became silent.

Both Nick's and Holley's minds were filled with thoughts.

After leaving Tarsan Corporation, Holley was angry. She even ordered Bernard to cancel the plan, and derived a new approach.

After calming down, she still thought that there was a better way to solve the issue at hand.

Considering the immense effort she'd made, along with her own position as the general manager of Tarsan Corporation, she couldn't risk engaging in a quarrel with Rachel.

Life must go on after all.

The one thing she wasn't sure about, however, was how Rachel was coping. She believed that Rachel would come to her to find help when she experienced hardship. After all, she had no other choice.

Thinking of it, Holley dialed Bernard's number once more and said, "Everything is going just as we planned. Remember not to take action without my consent."

Upon hearing this, Bernard frowned, but nodded quickly, "Copy that, Miss Ye."

Confused by Holley's change of mind, he reminded himself that it was his duty to get things done after being paid. He was not allowed to ask any questions.

Hearing Bernard's answer, Holley felt relieved.

'Rachel, you don't know what's coming!' Holley exclaimed in her mind.

Currently, Rachel was stuck in a hopeless situation indeed. She was in a hurry. Suddenly, she thought of Zhang Group's Dustin. She had no choice but to ask him for help.

Apart from sleeping with Lance, she reminded herself that Dustin was also quite experienced in such affairs. Should Dustin stand out, there might be a chance to reverse the status quo. Taking this into account, Rachel immediately called Dustin.

The phone rang for a while and then connected.

"Hello, Mr. Zhang. It's Rachel..." Rachel felt disgusted talking to Dustin.

"Rachel? Rachel who?" At first, Dustin didn't realize who he was speaking to, but after a few minutes, he recalled who she was. "Oh, well hello, Ms. Bai. How can I help you?"

Even though Dustin addressed her as Ms. Bai, he despised her. It was perfectly well known that

Charles had declared a war against Tarsan Corporation. At this point, even Lance was hiding from

Rachel.

'No one wants to mess with Charles Lu, ' Dustin thought.

"Mr. Zhan, I have something to talk to you. I'd like to invite you to dinner. We haven't met for a long

time." Rachel knew that this could be her last chance to save her company. That was why she acted

humbly toward him.

"Dinner? I'm sorry, but I really don't have time. Ms. Bai, if you don't have any other business to discuss,

I am hanging up. I have to attend a meeting now." Dustin didn't want to be connected with Rachel, which was why he wanted to end the call.

However, since Tarsan Corporation was a massive company, he didn't want to ruin their relationship either. Besides, perhaps one day, Zhang Group could make use of Tarsan Corporation. That was when Rachel managed to succeed.

"Wait. Hang on for a second, Mr. Zhang. I really do have something important to tell you." Rachel wasn't about to let him hang up the phone.

Chapter 1228 Are You Threatening Me

"I really have to go to a meeting now. All my colleagues are already waiting for me!" Dustin said impatiently and terminated the call immediately.

He wouldn't want to give Rachel any chance to disturb him. Otherwise, it would cost him a lot of energy to get rid of this trouble.

Rachel still had a lot to say, but the call was cut short.

"Damn it! This fatso! You are too insolent!" Rachel was infuriated, but she couldn't do anything to change the situation.

Luckily, despite Dustin's efforts to avoid her, he didn't tell her any harsh words over the phone. So she thought, maybe she could still have a try.

She had no time to think about it carefully. She had to take actions as soon as possible and tried her best to reduce the loss of Tarsan Corporation.

She dressed herself hastily and left the office with the car keys. Her employees who came for her signature got mute as they saw her cold face.

As Rachel picked up the set of keys on her desk, the girl holding the files in front of her couldn't help but just bow towards her and watch her leave the company without a word.

"Do you think Ms. Bai can find a way to resolve the crisis of the company this time?" As soon as the employees were sure that Rachel had already left the room, they began talking about the bad situation their company was facing.

"It's hard to say. Although Tarsan Corporation is a prosperous enterprise abroad, it can't easily overcome its problem here. As you've known, here in Y City, Charles Lu is the leading figure in business. With great conflict with Charles, how can our company exist in this city?"

"I'm really curious about the reason why our boss set up our company in Y City."

"Oh! I know it!" A man from the next desk who happened to know the reason stood up excitedly and crossed his arms against his chest proudly. His eyes were sparkling as if he held the key to it all.

"Tell us why. We are really curious about it. Actually, the previous city where our company was situated is better than Y City. So why did Ms. Bai choose to return to Y City? Although Y City is her hometown, the scandal and gossip about her have destroyed her fame. If I were her, I would have stayed away from Y City. So why did she insist on coming back?"

"Evidently, she wanted to rebuild her fame or accomplish what she once desired."

"What do you mean by what she once desired? Do you know what it is?" an employee asked with great curiosity.

"Do you really want to know what it is?"

"Of course! Just tell us what it is! We can't wait to know!" People were always curious about the things they didn't know. For these employees, it was a good chance to know more secrets about their boss.

"You should just wait. The truth will be revealed in time." This absurd answer disappointed everyone.

Their curiosity vanished as fast as it had been piqued.

"Huh! I bet you don't know it either, do you?"

"I agree. You just arouse our interest, but in reality, you also know nothing about it."

"Enough! Today is not the proper time to talk about it. What we should be thinking about now is if we should be staying at Tarsan Corporation or not." Someone decided to divert everyone's attention by starting a new topic.

"The one who asked such question must be an idiot," a woman said abruptly.

"What? Did you call me an idiot just now? You are the idiot!" the man who started the topic responded angrily.

"Let me explain to you, then you will know I was right. Tarsan Corporation is an international enterprise after all, so you don't have to worry too much. Even though it can't stay in Y City because of its poor management, it won't go bankrupt. On worst case scenario, we will be assigned back to work abroad, but its condition is as easy and comfortable as here."

Everyone in the office began talking about it warmly. They all had to admit, that woman's words made sense. As long as Tarsan Corporation didn't go bankrupt, they had no reason to worry about their future being at risk.

At the same time, Rachel was in a hurry to go to Dustin's corporation. She had no chance to hear her employees' discussion about her and the company, not that she cared about it at all. Traffic was light so it didn't take her long to get there.

"Hello, I come to see Mr. Zhang." Rachel greeted the receptionist at the gate of Dustin's company.

"Excuse me, miss. Do you have an appointment with Mr. Zhang?" the receptionist asked in a polite manner. This question embarrassed Rachel. Of course she didn't have an appointment with Dustin.

Even if she really tried to make an appointment with him, he would surely try his best to avoid her.

But Rachel had already made up her mind, she would see him today and no one could stop her. She considered for a while and got an idea. "I am Lance's secretary from Silver Corporation. He is expecting me, so if you can just tell Mr. Zhang, I'm sure he will let me in," she explained.

Dustin had always wanted to be friends with Lance. If he learned that his visitor was from Lance's company, he would allow her to see him even without an appointment.

"Okay, wait a moment please," the receptionist advised politely. She didn't doubt Rachel's identity at all.

Working in this field for many years, the receptionist knew about Dustin's relationship with Silver

Corporation, so she must be polite with the woman from Silver Corporation.

The receptionist called her boss's extension and inquired his opinion about the visitor in a respectful tone over the phone. After a few minutes, she hung up and returned to Rachel who was patiently waiting. "Please follow me, miss. Mr. Zhang is waiting for you in his office."

Rachel's scheme worked, but she couldn't feel any pleasure from it. She felt relieved as soon as the receptionist turned her back on her and started walking to lead the way. She must see Dustin

immediately. They walked along a narrow hallway and stopped in front of the fourth door to the left. The

receptionist knocked gently and then opened the door so she could come in.

Dustin was busy reading the newspaper when he heard the knocks. He stopped and decided to fold it so he could focus on his visitor. As Rachel stepped into his office, the smile on Dustin's face vanished.

"Rachel, what brings you here?"

"Mr. Zhang, is that how you welcome me?" she asked in a sweet and alluring voice. With a seductive smile on her face, she slowly stepped towards Dustin. She placed one of her hands on her waist while the other was toying on the pendant of her necklace.

"Rachel, please behave yourself! You know that I'm a serious man. I won't be seduced so easily," he warned her. Dustin was just a common man, so he almost couldn't refrain himself when being seduced by such a beauty like Rachel. But he knew he should resist Rachel's enchantment and bear not having sex with her. Otherwise, he would regret it for the rest of his life.

"Usually, you are serious when you are not in bed. Do I need to remind you of what kind of beast you are in bed? Mr. Zhang, have you forgotten all the amazing and happy time we used to spend together?" Without any other way out, Rachel had to threaten and seduce Dustin this way.

She didn't care whether the way she took was too clumsy or not. She was left with no other choice. So she must use the only card that she had.

"What do you mean by that, Rachel? Are you threatening me?" Dustin asked with a sneer.

"Of course not. I dare not threaten you, Dustin. We've made history together and you know for a fact that you will forever hold a place in my heart. So please don't get me wrong. The only reason why I came here today is to rebuild our relationship!"

Chapter 1229 Asked Dustin For Help

Dustin was not to be considered a fool. He didn't think Rachel would visit him without reason.

"Ms. Bai, I really appreciate that you could spare time and drop by here. I know you're busy running a

big company, but I got something to do, so..." Clearly, he only thought of cutting Rachel off. And that was the least he could do to keep his company as well as himself from getting in a lot of trouble.

"Mr. Zhang, can't you help me out this time? We are a team now!" Rachel implored. She had realized that Dustin didn't want to have anything to do with her. But she didn't want to give up her plan so easily considering she was with him. She firmly decided to give it a shot and see if Dustin would agree to work with her company.

"What exactly do you mean by that? When did I team up with you?" he asked with a frown.

He never regarded himself as being involved with her, except for their sexual encounters that had happened several times.

But as far as he knew, Rachel and Holley had whored themselves out to other men to save Tarsan Corporation, and he was just one of them. So he got nothing to fear even if Rachel threatened him with what had transpired between them.

"Before I went straight here, I met with Lance and said something to him. Now, he thinks that you've taken my side. Even if you don't give me a hand, Lance will still find a way to put you down. We both

know your company is smaller than Silver Corporation, so why don't you work with me? Perhaps your company can survive," Rachel expressed in a composed manner.

She had fabricated the lie for she was already out of options. And she knew the consequences of this.

If she successfully tricked Dustin into working with her, her company would be able to survive in this city, or else she would end up in a helpless situation.

Now that Lance had cut her off, and that she had kicked Holley out of her company, she couldn't

imagine how herself and Tarsan Company were going to get through this if Dustin refused to help her out.

"You're so smart, Rachel Bai!" Dustin uttered through his gritted teeth as he panicked inside. 'If Rachel didn't tell Lance her relationship with me, I would ignore her and ask her to leave. But this vicious woman is setting me up and trying to get my company in big trouble.

If she is telling the truth, I can't work with her at this point. Otherwise, Lance would be convinced that I am against him. I am not silly.

Everyone knows that Rachel had tried to suck up to other big enterprises after Charles made it clear that he didn't want any company to be involved with hers. She turned to Lance for help but ended up

offending him, so he instructed all the media houses to stay away from her. Perhaps she is lying.'

After weighing the pros and cons, Dustin pulled out his phone in a bid to call up Lance.

"Who are you calling up?" Rachel asked, feeling rattled within. She initially thought that Dustin would

help her company survive this time after he heard her words. But it had never crossed her mind that he

would call Lance in her presence.

"I'm calling Lance. I'd like to see if you're telling the truth," Dustin coldly replied as he dialed Lance's

number.

"No, you can't..." Rachel tried to take away his phone from his hand but failed. Once Dustin talked to

Lance, her lie would be exposed. And that was the last thing she wanted.

A few seconds later, someone on the other end of the line picked up the phone.

"Hello, Lance, I'm Dustin. Rachel is at my office, asking me to help Tarsan Corporation out. She said

you misunderstood me, so I am calling to know if she was telling the truth," Dustin said respectfully.

Rachel stood there, keeping herself in check. Though she couldn't hear what Lance said, she detected

that Dustin looked relieved.

"I see. You're intelligent. I know that you're not to be fooled easily by a woman. I have been loyal to you in the past years, after all!" Dustin praised in a flattering tone, smiling. His fear dissipated.

Rachel remained standing, trying to catch something from the conversation. Alas! She couldn't hear what Lance said, but she could tell from Dustin's expression that her plan failed.

'I can't believe that Dustin would risk calling up Lance after what I said. What if it was not a lie? Wasn't he afraid that his call would infuriate Lance?' she mused angrily.

"I know what to do. Rest assured, I will not let you down. I'll take care of this," Dustin said deferentially, and he ended the call.

"Do you really think I am an idiot, Rachel Bai? How dare you fool me this way?" Dustin whined. But there was more of a triumphant joy on his face rather than anger.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Zhang. I don't know what to do. I'm out of options. Please do me a favor, and help my company get through this!" Rachel pleaded. Since she had no chip to negotiate with Dustin, she had to swallow her pride and beg him to help her out even though the chance was slim. She had no other choice, after all.

Dustin let out a scornful laugh. Looking smug, he responded triumphantly, "What a surprise! I never

expected our arrogant Ms. Bai would apologize to me. Well done! I'm impressed." The longer he stared at Rachel, the more his expression grew unreadable.

"Mr. Zhang, I'm begging you..."

"Please, please don't do that. Have you forgotten how you threatened me? I was so scared," Dustin quipped while he roared in laughter.

"Mr. Zhang, I was wrong. I didn't have other choices. I..." Rachel explained with a rattled expression.

She felt so regretful that she wanted to slap herself for her stupid idea. 'I'm such an idiot. Why would I make such an unwise decision? What am I going to do?' she thought anxiously.

"Rachel Bai, to be honest with you, no one is going to help you. You better give up this early. You have messed up with the big shots in the business circle in this city. Do you think you can still do business here? Wake up. That's not gonna happen," Dustin stated with a dismissive look at her. He knew that her company was unlikely to survive.

"I..." Rachel tried to snap back, but Dustin stopped her.

"I'm not done yet. I am in a good mood, so I don't mind telling you something. Do you know why all the

media houses refused to expose what you asked them to?" Dustin was in high spirits. Realizing he didn't have any appointments today, he decided to teach her a lesson.

'I feel so good to see her get upset like this, ' he pondered.

Chapter 1230 Contact Holley

"All people in the business circle don't dare mess with Charles, while in the media circle, Lance is the boss. Since you were a celebrity of Silver Corporation, I am sure you know that." After a pause, Dustin carried on to say, "Now that Lance is the boss in the media circle, it would be a piece of cake for him to cover his box news. You're so stupid. How would you try to put Lance down by releasing the videos to the media?"

Dustin quizzed and then burst into laughter.

"So you're not going to help me, are you?" Rachel asked weakly. She felt her legs turn limp, but she gathered all her strength to keep herself from collapsing.

"Ms. Bai, please leave now. Stop making a fool of yourself here," Dustin returned and then gave another laugh full of contempt. The sheer amount of contempt in his laughter made Rachel feel sick; she could feel her whole face turning color.

However, as upset as she was, she had no choice other than to leave the office as he had

commanded.

When she plodded out of the Zhang Group building, it was dusk and the sky was yellow. She started to walk down the street aimlessly like the walking dead, no destination in mind. She just walked. All of a sudden, there was a flash of lightening and thunder rolled; it was the sign of rain.

Since it was the monsoon season, the weather in Y City was unpredictable.

One minute it was fine and the next minute, it would rain cats and dogs. She continued roaming the streets without much concern for the rain, almost as if she didn't notice it, and because she didn't have an umbrella, her clothes got soaked.

Even so, she didn't want to seek shelter or walk any faster; she just wanted and needed to calm down.

Irritated and humiliated as she was, she couldn't do anything to take revenge.

'If Holley had been around, she might have given me some advice. But I kicked her out of my company.

Who else can help me?' she thought.

The moment she thought of Holley, her eyes flashed with hope. 'Perhaps Holley can help me out. Didn't she say that she had a plan? Although I don't know what her plan is or whether it will work, I should

contact her instead of doing nothing!' She pondered some more.

Slowly, her mood started to lift. She quickened her pace and changed her course, going straight to a mall. Ignoring her soaking clothes and ruined make-up, she whipped out her cell phone and dialed Holley's number.

Holley had waited for her call for a long time. When she thought that Rachel wouldn't contact her, her phone rang.

However, she wasn't in a hurry to pick up the phone knowing that Rachel was calling for help. She wanted to let her realize that she couldn't treat her that way.

A few minutes had passed, but Holley didn't answer the phone. Running out of patience, Rachel was miffed but she had no intention of giving up, as the only one who might help her change her situation was Holley. When the call dropped, Rachel dialed Holley's number again.

As her phone rang again, a victorious smile tugged at the corner of Holley's mouth. 'She still needs me. I can still work at Tarsan Corporation, ' she snickered.

At the Lansh Technology

Nick was feeling much better after staying at home the day before, so he decided to go to work.

At this point, even when he was staring at the computer screen with all the different codes, he was overwhelmed with mixed emotions and his mind would often wander.

He was a genius in the IT industry. Since he was young, he had been obsessed with computers, coding, and information technology. Many people said that he was incredibly intelligent but that he knew nothing about romance.

In the past, he had never paid attention to girls, but like all people, he changed and as he replayed what happened recently in his head, he found it hard to focus on his work.

The image of a pretty girl in white popped into his head. With a pair of finely trimmed, arched eyebrows, she had rosy cheeks and a pair of big and twinkling eyes. She looked incredibly intriguing; even the thought of her took his breath away.

Nick shook his head, trying to get her out of his mind but it was no use. Instead, he kept seeing the image of that girl. As he thought more about her, his heart skipped a beat.

'What's wrong with me?' he wondered.

All of a sudden, fear consumed him. 'Why have I acted so strange lately? I can't continue doing this. I

must make myself busy so that I would not have time to fantasize, ' he told himself.

Nick picked up his telephone and called his assistant. "Come to my office, Bob!" he instructed.

Soon, his door opened and Bob entered his office.

"You wanted to see me, Mr. Ge?" Bob stood as if he was attending to a royal or a noble.

"Do I have any appointments today?" Nick asked with a serious look on his face.

The assistant glanced at his boss and furrowed his brows slightly. After hesitating for a moment, he

replied honestly, "Mr. Ge, the president of Amtel Company, Wilson, wants to see you, but..."

"Go ahead," Nick urged, looking up at his assistant.

Bob paused again and then continued, "He wants to meet you at a KTV and have a drink with you."

Nick's facial expression didn't change.

He was accustomed to such occasions. He used to not be able to drink, but now he could drink a lot.

'The only problem is...' he thought to himself, but then Bob interrupted his thoughts.

"Mr. Ge, you've just been released from the hospital. Drinking is bad for your health. Wilson is a drinker.

How about you let Mr. Gao and me go on your behalf?" Bob suggested.

Mr. Gao was the general of the business department, and he was usually responsible for dealing with

clients.

Nick hesitated. 'No. Now that Wilson wants to talk to me, I have to go. It's a big deal. If I ask them to discuss with him, we might lose this deal, ' he pondered.

"When is the appointment, Bob?" he asked in a low, thoughtful voice.

At his question, Bob knew what his boss was thinking. As worried as he was about Nick, he couldn't lie to him. "At 2:00 this afternoon," he answered.

"I see. Remind me to attend that appointment. You can leave now," Nick said coolly.

Since he couldn't meddle with his boss's decision, Bob sighed internally, turned, and exited the office.

At Cassie's house

Cassie had the day shift, but one of her colleagues asked her to cover for her, so on this particular day, she was on night shift.

She was lying in the bed attempting to clear up her mind, but it didn't go the way she wanted. Instead, she was in a daze.

In her mind's eye, she saw a slender figure that belonged to a man; he was turning around to face her

slowly. He had a thin face and his eyes were stunning.

Out of the blue, Cassie felt her face burning.

She sat up quickly.

'Oh, geez! Why would I think of Nick? Wake up!' she cried.

Burying her face in her hands, she sat on the bed lost in thought. Suddenly her phone rang, pulling her

back from her thoughts.