

Wedded Bride 1331

Chapter 1331 Open The Door

Nancy knew what her absence would do to Sheryl once she left the Lu family. Melissa would surely bully Sheryl, who couldn't even find anymore a friend whom she could share her personal dilemmas with.

Just by thinking about this, Nancy couldn't help feeling sorry for Sheryl. So after a moment's silence, she didn't protest anymore. Instead, she started sweeping the floor.

For Melissa, she was glad to see Nancy not contradicting her any more. It made her feel as if Sheryl was groveling before her.

Putting down her teacup, Leila took Melissa's hand and examined it. She saw there was no swelling, but only a little red spot on the skin.

"Aunt Melissa, save your breath. She's not worth it. Instead, let's run your burn under the cold water in the washroom. Then, I'll apply burn ointment. I don't want to see your burn untreated. It might turn worse!" When Leila raised her head to look at Melissa, her eyes were red, tears ready to flow. She looked as if she wished she had been burnt instead of Melissa.

In the washroom, Leila did first aid on Melissa's burnt hand. She ran it under the cold water and applied

the ointment. She even blew her breath on the affected area as she treated it so that Melissa wouldn't feel the pain it caused.

Looking at Leila attending to her, Melissa felt her heart warm and light, like there was a breeze. She felt so comfortable and moved, like being on the clouds.

"Aunt Melissa, are you feeling better?" Leila asked.

"Thank you, dear. I feel much better now. You're so sweet!" Melissa looked at Leila with satisfaction.

'She's such a nice lady! Oh, I don't understand why my son doesn't like her and insists on being with Sheryl. What does Sheryl have that Leila doesn't have?' With each passing day, Melissa grew fonder of Leila. She couldn't help sighing inwardly as she thought of the situation.

She gently removed her hand from Leila's touch and said, "Thank you, Leila. Wait here for a moment.

I'll go upstairs to check why Charles hasn't come down yet."

Melissa was trying so hard to manipulate the situation, preventing Sheryl from finding a chance to win Charles back.

Top on Melissa's list was to keep Charles and Sheryl from being alone together and add the conflict

between the two of them and the presence of Leila as spices. She believed that the lesser time Charles and Sheryl had for each other, the better chance of separating them. And, rating her efforts in putting her plans into action, she could say that she was highly successful. All she was waiting for was for Charles to eventually shift his attention to Leila.

Returning from her reverie, Melissa left Leila and went upstairs.

Leila's eyes were sparkling. She was as determined as Melissa.

All she had to do was always be in the good side of Melissa. She knew once Melissa succeeded in breaking Charles and Sheryl apart, she would land the spot in the Lu family. She could see herself as the future wife of Charles under the support of Melissa.

Meanwhile, moans filled the room at the other side of the door. Sheryl and Charles were making out in the bedroom when someone suddenly knocked on the door.

The knock made Sheryl froze. Her face turned bright red. It woke her up from the dreamy reality. Then, she tried to push Charles away, but her efforts were wasted.

For Charles, the moment was so amazing. He was enjoying every bit of the moment that made him so reluctant to stop whatever he was doing to the soft body underneath him. He definitely heard the knock

but decided to turn a deaf ear. Seeing his expression, Sheryl knew that he wouldn't stop unless being forced to.

"Charles! Stop! There's someone outside!"

Starting to get nervous, Sheryl worried that they could be heard by the person outside.

"I don't care. Just let the person wait outside.

I'm busy anyway. With you..."

Charles mumbled as he trailed feathery kisses along Sheryl's neck.

Outside, Melissa was determined to get Charles downstairs. This time, she knocked harder.

Still, the door wasn't opened yet. When she thought that Sheryl was inside pestering her son again, her impatience suddenly turned to rage.

"Charles! Open the door!" Making sure Charles would hear her, Melissa shouted as she pounded on the door harder.

When Sheryl heard Melissa's voice, her face darkened. She turned her head away as Charles was about to kiss her. Then, she pushed Charles off her with all her might. She stood up, picked up her

dress and put it on.

Also annoyed by the knocks, Charles looked at the door and cursed silently. To soothe Sheryl, he

kissed her on the hair. He quickly stood up, picked up his clothes which were scattered on the floor and

put them on.

Several minutes had passed. Melissa was now sure that Charles and Sheryl were making out, not

talking about business.

'She's really a bitch! How dare she seduce Charles! Just wait until I get my hands on you, bitch!'

Melissa furiously thought. Trying to control her anger, she clenched and unclenched her hands. The

marks on her palms left by her fingers were already black and blue. Couldn't wait any longer, she

placed her ear on the door and tried to listen hard.

Just then, the door opened! Melissa was so surprised she was caught in the act! She took a step back

and straightened her posture. Not looking Charles in the eye, she cast her look everywhere around

them. It was so improper for a lady to be caught eavesdropping.

In a foul mood, Charles stared at his mother. He remained standing by the doorway, blocking the

entrance, while holding the door. It was obvious he didn't want Melissa to enter the room.

Meanwhile, Melissa became nervous when she saw her son's poker face. But being his mother, she knew that Charles wouldn't do anything bad to her. So she kept up her arrogant facade.

"What is it, Mom?" Charles asked briefly. Looking at his mother, he knew that Melissa would not speak first especially after he caught her. Moreover, he wished that whatever agenda Melissa had would be finished soon. He wanted her to leave as soon as possible.

Not detecting any impatience in Charles' voice, Melissa still felt that Charles was questioning her.

"What is that supposed to mean?! I am your mother. Don't I have any right to call on you even if there's nothing special?" counter-attacked Melissa. This time, she stared at Charles. She was looking on his face for clues to confirm her suspicions.

"Mom, what exactly do you want from me?" After hearing his mother's excuse, Charles felt suddenly tired. He chose to ignore her question, and asked her what she wanted instead.

"I... I..."

Not knowing what to reply, she stammered. She couldn't tell him the truth—that she came up to check if

he was making out with Sheryl.

"I just want to check if you are finished with your business engagement. And, I am inviting you to join me downstairs for some snacks. If you're not done yet, at least have a quick bite before you continue with your business."

Melissa invited Charles pretending that she came up because she was concerned for his well-being.

Chapter 1332 An Awkward Situation

"Thank you, Mom. But I don't want to eat right now," Charles said, going to shut the door. Melissa shot her hand out to prevent the door from closing on her.

Charles sighed with exasperation and looked at his mother. "What's wrong now?" Charles had almost run out of patience; the one thing he wanted more than anything else right now was to be alone with Sheryl where no one could disturb them.

"I... There is one more thing. I didn't want to tell you because you'd be worried." Melissa paused and

Charles raised an eyebrow, curious.

To Melissa's delight, Charles asked in a worried voice, "Mom, what happened? Is everything alright?

Are you feeling unwell?" Charles was thinking that Melissa's shoulder might still be hurting.

Melissa nodded. "Yes, my headaches are making me feel dizzy." She pressed her fingers against her

temples and rubbed them in demonstration.

"Okay, Mom. I'll call a doctor to come." Charles turned to go back to his bedroom, intending to call the doctor from there.

But Melissa reached over to grab his arm. She didn't want the doctor to come because she didn't want her pretense to be discovered. Then her plan would be ruined.

She couldn't let that happen.

"Charles, no need to call a doctor. I'll be fine after some rest," she told him.

Charles looked at her, then shook her hand off his arm, resuming on his way to the bedroom. "Mom, I'd better call a doctor. What if your headaches get worse?"

Charles eventually found his phone; he dialed the number of the family doctor, but then he stopped and paused. Then he hung up and walked over to the bathroom door. Sheryl was inside. "Sher, Mom's not feeling well. Let's go down and take care of her together."

He thought that because his mother had a bad impression of Sheryl, it would be best if he gave Sheryl a chance to prove herself to her, so that Melissa would like her more.

Sheryl looked from the mirror to him. "What?" she asked worriedly. "Mom is sick? I'll be there in just a

minute."

"Okay, I'll take her to her room," Charles said. Then he returned to Melissa and helped her to her room.

"Okay, Mom. Rest a bit."

"Charles, I felt dizzy downstairs. Then Nancy gave me a cup of hot tea and it spilled on my hand. It hurt so badly, but luckily Leila applied some medicine on the burn." She held up her hand to show him the wound as soon as she laid on the bed.

"Mom, I don't think Nancy did it on purpose. It was just an accident."

Charles was exasperated at how his mother was acting—she had been acting this way since she got

out from the hospital. He didn't understand why she was acting this way, but due to her behavior, he felt

like he didn't need to care about her as much.

"She did do it on purpose," Melissa insisted. "Leila and I both saw what happened with our own eyes! I saw the smug look on Nancy's face when the tea spilled and burned my hand!"

"Mom, you must be mistaken. Nancy's a nice person. I think you're reading her all wrong."

"Stop defending her, Charles. She's really a mean-spirited person. You should fire her immediately."

"Mom. Forget about it. Now go and have some rest, and I'll call a doctor here for you," Charles said, cutting his mother off. Knowing how gentle and kind Nancy was, he didn't believe one bit what his mother was accusing her of doing.

Melissa was about to say something else, but Charles got up and left the room before she could. She sighed and was resigned into silence.

Not wanting to hear his mother complain and badmouth Nancy any longer, he walked over to the window to make his call.

"Hello, is this Ricky?" Charles asked into the receiver.

"Yes, what's the matter?" Ricky answered him politely.

"Ricky, can you come over to Dream Garden now? My mother isn't feeling well, and she has a headache. Can you check up on her and see how she's doing?" Charles asked.

"Okay. I'll head over right now," Ricky said and then hung up.

Charles hung up as well, and as he did, the door opened and Sheryl entered with a glass of water in her hand.

"Mom, have some water," she said as she carried the glass of water over to Melissa's bed and set it on the bedside table.

Melissa turned her head away from Sheryl, showing her unwillingness to have any sort of interaction with her, blatantly ignoring her.

Sheryl tried so hard not to roll her eyes. She knew that Melissa would act like that. She breathed a sigh and then stepped forward to right the pillow behind Melissa. "There. Keep your pillow straight like this and it'll help your dizziness," she told her.

Then she stepped back silently to stand beside Charles.

None of them spoke for a long time. Sheryl didn't know what to say. Charles was too tired to speak.

And Melissa was reluctant to talk in the presence of Sheryl.

It wasn't long before Leila heard that Melissa was sick; she entered the room quickly.

"Aunt Melissa, what's the matter? Are you feeling alright?" she asked worriedly, rushing to kneel beside the bed.

"Don't worry, Leila. Charles called the doctor. I'll be fine." Melissa motioned for Leila to sit on the bed, which she did. There was a very big and noticeable difference between the way she treated Leila and

the way she treated Sheryl.

Although she had gotten used to it, Sheryl could not help but feel sad whenever she observed the way

Melissa would treat Leila. Even after she'd cooked all morning for Melissa, Sheryl still got the cold

shoulder from her.

Seeing Sheryl getting frustrated, Charles leaned over to pat her shoulder consolingly with one hand

while he snaked his free arm around her waist.

Silence once again overtook the room.

Melissa started to think about how she would handle the doctor when he arrived. She just pretended to

be uncomfortable in front of Charles. What could she do if the doctor found out her ruse?

After a while, she gave up thinking and decided that she would keep up with her pretense. If the doctor

couldn't figure out what was wrong with her, he wouldn't be a good doctor. Melissa was a good liar and

she could spin stories that everyone would believe. She was good at this.

Leila had guessed already that Melissa was pretending to be sick when she heard that Melissa was not

comfortable, and seeing her like this only proved it. She could see that Melissa was a proficient liar,

and that her lying and manipulation skills helped her out a lot, in all sorts of situations.

Then she noticed the way Charles was consoling Sheryl and felt a little pang of jealousy. She wished

she was the woman in his arms instead of Sheryl, and that Charles was consoling her not Sheryl.

Charles, Melissa, Leila, and Sheryl were all in their own thoughts; silence continued to loom over them,

and the room was deadly still.

Chapter 1333 Doctor Ricky Checked On Melissa

Finally, Nancy broke the silence.

She asked, "Mr. Lu, the doctor is waiting for you downstairs. May I bring him up for you to see now?"

"Sure, you can go and bring him to us."

"Okay, great!"

Shortly after, Nancy returned with Ricky. Instead of putting down his medical kit first, Ricky walked over

to Melissa briskly. He cast a courteous smile towards Melissa, which was just his way of showing his

professional politeness. The doctor then started to size up her complexion.

"Doctor, can you please take a close look at my mother's physical health? She's been feeling rather

uncomfortable these last couple of days. I hope you can find out what's wrong," Charles added.

"Okay, there's no need to be worried. I will give her a checkup."

After an unusually long while of waiting, Ricky finally finished his checkup. However, before he concluded her diagnosis, he hesitated to speak for a moment. In fact, he didn't find anything wrong with Melissa whatsoever. In his many years of medical experience, he found that Melissa was in a very good physical condition, but to his recollection, he remembered when he received the phone call from the Lu family, which was why he initially thought that he might have a tricky task.

Besides, while he was performing his check up on Melissa, she kept complaining about pain in many different parts of her body. Even until he finished checking her, she still looked as though she was sick, which had him worried.

Since Ricky always had a responsible attitude towards his profession, he decided to conduct a brief, yet effective full-body check yet again. Still, however, he failed to find anything wrong with her health.

Melissa's body functioned as well as any other regular person.

Frowning, Ricky got frustrated and wondered, 'This is so weird. She looks well to me. Even her face is glowing brightly. She doesn't have any signs of illness whatsoever. Were my checkups incomplete? Did I miss anything?

No, that's not possible at all!' Ricky was 100% confident about his medical expertise. If he wasn't, he wouldn't have become famous enough to be hired as a private doctor by many blue-blooded families, particularly the Lu family.

Suddenly, a stupid thought flashed in his mind. 'Could it be that she is just pretending to be ill?' Ricky thought as he found it absurd to believe otherwise. Nevertheless, he still couldn't discourage himself from this crazy idea. Even though Melissa complained about her unbearable pains, he noticed that she wasn't really being specific about it at all.

Thus, with a suspicious look in his eyes, Ricky probed carefully, "Mrs. Lu, could you tell me when exactly the pain started to discomfort you? I need you to tell me exactly where you are experiencing pain. Can you be more specific?"

Hearing the doctor's question, Melissa got extremely alert. Suddenly, doubt filled her mind. 'What on earth is wrong now? Why is this doctor asking me these kinds of questions? He's even observing me strangely. How am I supposed to respond to his questions now?'

The more she thought about it, the more she tensed up at Ricky's questions. Finally, her mind went completely blank. Acting on reflex, she answered blandly without even thinking carefully, "Oh, regarding

the time, I don't have any clue. It must have started just after lunchtime! Since then, I started to feel rather uncomfortable and then it proceeded to get worse and worse."

Melissa purposefully made her descriptions as ambiguous as possible, which aroused Ricky's suspicion even more. Still, even before he could get any hard evidence to prove his assumption, he didn't want to upset her by jumping to any bold conclusions. After all, no one in their right mind would make attempts and pretend to be sick. What could any given person gain from that? The slightest thought of it could be considered only stupid!

As the clock kept on moving and struck 2 o'clock in the morning, everyone had developed black circles around their eyelids. Their drowsy eyes betrayed their attempts to hide the fact that they were tired.

Even Melissa got too tired to perform her play as well as she did before. However, Ricky was still full of energy and vigorous to solve her medical mystery.

Still, Ricky felt torn. One part of him wanted to be straightforward and tell everyone in the room that Melissa was indeed not sick at all objectively; the other part was telling him that it wasn't a good idea to tell the truth. Although the truth could resolve Charles' anxiety, it might be offensive to Melissa. Thinking

about it, Ricky didn't know whether she was intentionally behaving unwell or not.

Finally, Ricky spoke to Charles, with a serious look. "Mr. Lu, about the result of your mother's checkup, I think it's best to speak to you in private."

Melissa had an extremely guilty conscience, and even though she was tired, she remained alert. The moment Ricky's words spread into her ears, her mind turned into a complete mess. Instantly, horror exploded like a firework inside her mind. Her drowsiness immediately disappeared at once. She then thought in a paranoid state, 'Did he notice that I was pretending to be sick after all? Is that why he's attempting to tell Charles about my health in private?' She couldn't help but tremble at the thought.

In quick response, she said nervously, "Doctor, why don't you just say what the results are right here so that everyone can hear it together. Besides, don't forget that I am the patient after all. I need to be informed of what is the matter with my body first." Despite her abnormal nervousness, from Charles' understating, he simply considered that his mom was possibly too scared to accept Ricky's suggestion.

The way Ricky had chosen to share her results, in other people's opinions, seemed to insinuate that something serious was wrong with Melissa.

However, Melissa tensed up at that moment. She wasn't about to allow her plot to be exposed to Charles.

Hesitating for a while, Ricky learned what her act was all about. Not wanting to offend Melissa, he said in front of everyone, "Alright then, here is what I have found. I ran the physical examination on her twice and tried my best, however, I found that nothing is wrong with her. I think that her health status is normal. As for the pain, I really don't have a clue, but it may be caused by factors other than her physical health. Still, we can't be too cautious. I suggest that you take her to the hospital for a more extensive examination, just to be reassured."

"Okay, but Doctor, why do I still feel weak? I don't have any strength, so how can I not be ill? Besides, I have this feeling of a hammer that keeps punching in my head. It gives me a headache," Melissa whined. To justify her words as true, Melissa even turned her face and yelled out a mourn.

Ricky was at a loss for words. With an awkward smile, he turned his head towards Charles, waiting for him to respond. Charles didn't think any progress could be made, even if he had asked Ricky to run a full checkup on Melissa once more. So, he then thanked Ricky and let him leave after Ricky prescribed some pain-killers for her.

The setting left everyone sinking into their deep thoughts. A long silence lingered in the room.

After a long while, Charles comforted her with a faint smile, "Mom, the doctor prescribed you some drugs to relieve the pain, for the time being. I will, however, find some time to take you to the hospital for a full checkup next time." Despite Charles' attempt to show that he was serious and attentive, concerns had already started to run off his mind at Ricky's report. Since Ricky was well known in the medical community, his words seemed more worthy than Melissa's claims could ever be. That was why, no matter how Melissa thought she felt, Ricky's report displayed that she had no signs of being ill whatsoever.

Charles thought, 'Well, perhaps it's because Mom just left the hospital, and she still hasn't completely recovered yet. Besides, she has been exposed to air-conditioning for the entire afternoon. The low temperature may have been the reason for making her feel ill.' He thought about his conclusion and considered the thought that Melissa just needed a little time to get better.

He then said, "Mom, it's too late now. It's best that you go to sleep. Besides, we also need some sleep.

So, good night and rest well."

Charles instructed Nancy to call several servants to work a shift and take care of Melissa. He then left the room with Sheryl.

Sheryl felt exhausted. She stayed in Melissa's room all night, just to look after Melissa with Charles, only to now find out that there was indeed nothing wrong with Melissa. She couldn't help but doubt her mother-in-law and think that she was acting as before.

The more she thought about it, Sheryl was convinced that there might have been a plot in Melissa's mind. It was the only thing that made sense. Otherwise, why could she claim to be ill when she clearly wasn't? However, she was unsure about how Melissa thought she'd benefit from acting sick this time around. For Sheryl, it was a headache every time Melissa got sick.

Although she really wanted to tell Charles about her suspicion, she quickly retracted the idea from her mind. She told herself, 'He has been very protective towards his mom all of this time. There's no way that he would take my words seriously. Once I tell him about my suspicion, he may consider that I am stupid or paranoid. He will surely only side with his mom, as always.'

Dangling with her thoughts and conspiracies, she decided not to share her thoughts with Charles.

Instead, Sheryl felt exhausted and had a broken heart. She then decided to call it a night.

The following morning, Charles and Sheryl got up early. He immediately called up Nancy to ask how his mother was doing. Making sure that no major problems occurred during the night, he exhaled a deep breath of relief.

Sheryl went to the children's room and woke Shirley and Clark up from their sound sleep with her gentle voice.

"Alright, my lovely babies, it's time to get up now. There is a wonderful breakfast waiting for you!"

Sheryl cheered, as soon as she swung the door open.

Hearing their mom's announcement, both of them woke up and rubbed their beady eyes. Seeing them sit up slowly and awkwardly, she felt like they were two adorable-looking sheep. This left her heart-melting instantly on the spot.

"Good morning, Mom!" Shirley and Clark greeted their mother together. The two of them then rushed towards their mom. Shirley ran into Sheryl's arms and brushed against her with their tender red cheeks.

With a big smile, Sheryl caressed both of their heads and kissed them gently on their foreheads one by one. She then said, "You should get dressed! After breakfast, you will go to school as per usual, and

meet your school friends!"

Shirley and Clark were both incredibly obedient children, so much so, that they acted quickly on their mother's words. Sheryl stood beside them and waited for them to dress themselves. However, she was ready to reach out whenever they might need help. After the twins got ready, Sheryl took them to go downstairs hand in hand, for breakfast.

"Good morning! Breakfast is ready now. You'd better get started before it gets cold," Nancy turned towards the children and greeted with delight.

"Okay, thanks, Nancy!" Sheryl appreciated.

Charles was ready at the table, too. However, he didn't raise his chopsticks to start eating yet, as he was patiently waiting for Melissa.

The kids were in big a hurry to get to school on time, hence why Sheryl didn't wait for Charles. She took a pair of chopsticks and began to feed her children. She thought that Melissa would come soon.

However, to her amazement, even when the kids were finished eating, Melissa still hadn't shown up for breakfast.

Nevertheless, Charles still didn't eat breakfast. He decided to wait for Melissa. Observing his mom's

illness last night, he couldn't possibly leave her alone.

Even though Sheryl observed Charles' intentions closely, she was focused on the kids. Before putting

the kids in the driver's car, she didn't waste any time. Watching the car drive away in the distance, she

returned back to the table and waited with Charles.

Chapter 1334 Tell Me Your Sufferings

"Bye, Mom and Dad."

"Bye, Clark and Shirley. Have a nice day in school."

"Okay." Shirley blew her parents a lovely kiss as she got into the car. At the same time, Clark ran to his

parents wearing a shy expression as he hugged them before he silently got in.

Sheryl momentarily felt lost since she was unable to send her children to school today. That was one

thing she loved the most being a mother to these two beautiful kids.

That morning, Charles and Sheryl were waiting patiently in the dining room. It had been a long time

before Melissa and Leila came into view. Their pace was unusually slow as they came in with their

arms linked together.

Melissa seemed to be not aware that she was late, completely ignoring Sheryl and Charles. And

without uttering any apologies, she uncaringly went straight to sit down and start eating her breakfast.

Seeing Melissa acting in such a way, Sheryl felt upset. She was too disappointed in missing her chance

to send her children to school just because she wanted to have breakfast with Melissa. Regret filled her

when it turned out that Charles' mother completely ignored her presence. It made her feel unhappy as

if a thorn was stuck in her throat.

Across her, Melissa was chatting happily with Leila while eating, not even sparing her a glance.

"Aunt Melissa, how was your sleep last night?" asked Leila.

"Not bad. Thank you for your concern. This vanilla cake tastes good. Have a try."

Melissa then cheerfully offered the cake to Leila, still completely ignoring the rest.

Sheryl started to be noticeably discomfited by Melissa's behavior, which made her feel like a stranger.

She had the urge to leave, but she decided to finish her breakfast first. So she resorted to gobble her

food as quickly as possible.

Charles was not oblivious to the scene unfolding before him, as he quietly held Sheryl's hand under the

table. He could sense how this made Sheryl feel awkward and upset. He squeezed her hand and gave

her an assuring look. Just right at the moment when Sheryl raised her eyes to look at Charles with

curiosity, she heard him speak.

"Mom, Sher and I, have been waiting for you the entire morning to have breakfast. If you get up late in the future, you can have it in your room and save us from waiting for you. We're so hungry right now,"

Charles expressed in a light tone, looking straight at Melissa.

Melissa didn't expect that her son would embarrass her in public in such a rude manner. She couldn't take it. She just got up a little bit late. What was the big deal? Why did he make a fuss out of it?

No matter how angry Melissa got, she wouldn't dare to show it to Charles.

Though he was her son, she sometimes feared for his coldness, just like now.

Sheryl turned a deaf ear to everything Charles just said. He was right anyway, and she tacitly agreed with him. Melissa was too selfish after all as she never considered other people's feelings.

"Charles, don't blame your mother. She didn't get up late intentionally. The truth was, she was ill yesterday, so she slept very late. She had no idea you were waiting for her downstairs. If she knew, she would get up early no matter how tired she was," Leila interjected, coming to the rescue.

She thought it was a perfect explanation, which not only disclosed to Charles, that Melissa was ill last

night but also might seek Charles attention and concern. Most importantly, it explained why Melissa was late for breakfast.

"Aunt Melissa, don't be angry. Charles means nothing with it. He is just too anxious."

But neither of them gave a response to Leila. What was more, Charles seemed not to listen to a single word she uttered. He was unaffected as he was enjoying his breakfast at leisure. Leila let out a smile in embarrassment and awkwardly lowered her head.

Leila's comforting words failed in calming Melissa down. She threw a glare at Sheryl as if she was complaining that everything happened was Sheryl's fault.

Sensing Melissa's vicious glare, Sheryl sat straighter subconsciously. And to her surprise, she now felt much more pleased. When she saw that Melissa had to suppress her anger, the upsetting feeling she was harboring against the unhappy event of that entire morning seemed to vanish in no time.

Soon after breakfast, Charles rushed to Shining Company. He was late because of his mother.

After Charles left, Sheryl didn't want to stay at home with Leila.

So she prepared herself and hurriedly left to go to her company too.

"Hello, Ms. Xia." The security greeted her when she just showed up at the entrance of the Cloud

Advertising Company. This familiar voice made her feel at ease. She felt the company was warmer than a family should be.

Sheryl smiled and nodded at the security before she stepped in.

All of the security personnel had a good impression of Sheryl because she always smiled at them politely. She was gentle and harmless, not to mention that she was tall, slim, and beautiful.

They had seen too many people. Some were too busy for their lives, and didn't have time to cast a look at them—people meant nothing for them. Some who felt superior looked down upon them. But Sheryl was an exception. She always treated them as her colleagues and generally was nice to them.

"Sher, you're finally here! I'm so exhausted. The customers are too hard to deal with. They almost drove me crazy. Come on. Give me some comfort."

As soon as Sheryl stood at her door, she already heard Isla's voice. It was as if Isla was expecting her.

She decided not to tease her looking at how frantic her friend look that moment. She watched her walking towards her hurriedly as her heels roared like a thunderbolt against the floor.

"All right. I know it already. Come to sit and take a good rest." Sheryl closed the office door and pushed

Isla into the office.

Isla failed to see Sheryl's face clearly because she was too far away. And now that she was so close to her, Sheryl's dark eye circles frightened her. "Sher, you didn't sleep last night? Take a mirror and look at yourself. You have that dark eye circles which are way darker than that of a panda!"

Sheryl rubbed her eyes and managed to force a reply. "Tell me about it. I'm so depressed to death!"

Something had happened! Isla knew that it must be about Charles again, whenever she saw Sheryl looked helpless. Did he hurt her again?

"Sher, what happened?" Isla probed at her carefully while she was observing Sheryl's reaction.

Suddenly, Sheryl leaned her head against her shoulder, seeming like to draw some strength from her.

She rarely saw Sheryl as fragile as now.

"Isla, I'm tired," Sheryl murmured, rubbing her head on Isla's shoulder.

Isla held Sheryl, waiting for her to continue silently. If she would like to pour her heart out, Isla would be the best listener. But if Sheryl didn't want to say anything, Isla would comfortably hug her.

The best friendship between two women would be like this. When Sheryl needed her, she would be there for her, listening to whatever she said. She would be with her all the time.

Chapter 1335 Fight Back

"It's Charles' mother, Melissa. As you already know, she never likes me. Since we met, she has always been making it difficult for me. I compromise again and again to maintain the harmony between us, but she never stops. Now, she even lets Leila live in Dream Garden. Who knows what she is planning next? I really don't know what I have done wrong to make her hate me so much!"

Sheryl complained sulkily, looking upset. Isla looked at her frustrated face and couldn't help feeling sorry for her. She patted Sheryl's head, trying to comfort her.

"Sometimes I really feel exhausted with this life. I even start to doubt whether marrying Charles is a mistake or not. Should we divorce now and cut the loss in time?" Sheryl sounded rather indignant.

Isla looked at her with sympathetic eyes. She knew that Sheryl didn't really mean to divorce Charles.

Her words were merely to vent out her anger. After all, she loved Charles so much, and she would never choose to leave him.

She could feel how sad and disappointed Sheryl was. Isla was also angry that she was treated wrongly.

If this situation continued, Sheryl's wounds would only be deeper. It was heartbreaking to know that as long as Melissa was around, Sheryl had to tolerate this kind of life.

They must take actions to turn the tables around.

"Sheryl, in my opinion, they dare to bully you because you have been too kind and forgiving. You must be tough, and give them a warning so they won't think you're a pushover,"

Isla said in a serious tone as she touched Sheryl's shoulders.

Sheryl looked at Isla confused. "But what can I do? Nothing will change the fact that Melissa is Charles' mother. Even if she has already driven a wedge between me and Charles by framing me up, Charles will never forgive me if something bad happens to her."

Isla sighed. She thought that Sheryl was so simple and naive. How she wanted to wake her up and shake Charles off from her head. Sheryl needed someone to tell her that Charles wasn't the only thing to her, and she shouldn't compromise her life for him all the time.

"Hear me out, Sheryl. You don't need to do anything to Melissa. We need to think about another way to have her suffer," Isla suggested. "Since Leila is her partner, you can punish her instead. It's like hitting two birds in one stone. Once they know that you are not subject to their humiliation, none of them will dare to mistreat you at will."

"Are you sure it will work?" Sheryl had never thought of targeting Leila. But Isla's plan sounded

promising.

"It's not like you have any other choice. You can try that now and see if it works. Otherwise Melissa will always be an obstacle in your relationship with Charles. I will not be surprised if she ends up breaking you apart one day."

Sheryl nodded. What Isla said made sense. So far, Melissa had caused so many misunderstandings and quarrels between her and Charles. If she let Melissa run her life, she would end up destroying her.

There was nothing left to do but to take the initiative to stop her.

"All right. I agree with you. I would rather find a solution to end it than bear her endless insult myself," she said resolutely.

Lost in thought, Sheryl stayed in her office after Isla left. She must fight back! She was so preoccupied that she didn't even notice how time elapsed. The stars started to appear as the darkness enveloped everything in sight. When Sheryl finally found a solution, it was already at night.

Sheryl stroke her forehead. Just thinking about going home gave her a headache. Her home became a place of torture now. Luckily, her two little angels, Clark and Shirley, could give her some comfort.

She arrived at Dream Garden some time later.

"Kids, I'm back!" Sheryl called out happily as she opened the door. After she changed to her slippers,

Clark and Shirley came rushing towards her cheerfully.

"Mom! You're finally back! Why are you so late? I miss you so much!" Sheryl hugged them both, one

kid in each arm. She was deeply touched by their innocent words. She had not seen them the entire

day, but it seemed to be a whole year for the kids.

"I miss both of you. How were you doing at school? Did you both behave yourselves?" Sheryl stood up

and led the kids to the living room.

"Sheryl, you are back! Dinner is ready. Take a seat, please," Nancy invited when she caught sight of

Sheryl and the kids. She just came out of the kitchen with a bowl of soup.

"Thanks, Nancy. Is Charles back already?"

"No, he isn't back yet," Nancy replied. She put the soup bowl on the table. Since all the dishes were

served, she was ready to ask Melissa and Leila for dinner.

Sheryl didn't know whether Charles would join them or not, so she decided to call him and check. She

dialed his number, and his phone started ringing. It took a while before he finally picked up.

"Charles, will you be home for dinner?" she asked as soon as he accepted the call.

She initially heard noises in the background, but she couldn't hear Charles clearly. A few seconds later, it became quieter. Maybe Charles went to a quiet corner to speak with her.

"Sheryl, I'm sorry but I won't be back to have dinner with you tonight. I need to attend a dinner party now. I'll be coming home pretty late. Don't wait for me," Charles answered.

Sheryl vaguely heard someone calling Charles. She knew that he must be in the middle of a conversation, so she ended their talk quickly.

Sheryl walked towards the table, which Nancy had already set well. She also filled some rice and dishes for Clark and Shirley, and then led them to the small table next to theirs.

"Go ahead and eat, Sheryl. I'll take care of Clark and Shirley. You must be hungry by now. Enjoy your meal," Nancy said. She wanted to help Sheryl as much as possible. And what better way to do it than by helping her to feed the kids.

"Oh, Nancy, that's not necessary. They are both big enough to eat by themselves," Sheryl smiled. She was a mother but she would never spoil her children. Moreover, Clark and Shirley were very

independent and smart. She raised them to be independent at a young age, teaching them how to dress and eat on their own.

At that time, Melissa and Leila appeared from nowhere. They went down leisurely and came straight to the dining hall. Sheryl didn't feel like talking, so she just ignored them. She watched the kids with loving eyes as they started eating.

When Melissa saw that Sheryl dared to ignore her, she flared up immediately. Her face suddenly became sullen. She was about to reproach Sheryl for her impoliteness when Leila's loud voice broke the silence.

"Why are these dishes so oily? Aunt Melissa has just been discharged from the hospital. Don't you know that light diet is best for her recovery?" Leila creased her eyebrows as she checked out each of the dishes, deeply concerned.

As if on cue, Melissa took a glance at the dishes, and then echoed, "Exactly! I left the hospital not so long ago. How can you cook oily foods? Did you do this on purpose? Nancy, you are such a vicious woman! Was it Sheryl who asked you to do this? Tell me the truth, or I won't spare you!"

Melissa thought it a great chance to set up Sheryl again. So she connected it to her on purpose.

Nancy was totally confused by these accusations. All the dishes were as light as they could be. When

Nancy was about to explain, Sheryl tugged at her sleeves to stop her.

Chapter 1336 Making Things Hard For Her

As a result, Nancy decided to shut her mouth and listen as Melissa continued with her complaints.

"Aunt Melissa, please don't be mad with a servant," Leila interrupted. Melissa immediately stopped to

hear her out. "Let me go to the kitchen and cook a new dish for you. All these dishes are too oily and

are not good for your health." Leila turned to walk towards the kitchen but Melissa grabbed her hand to

stop her.

"Leila, I appreciate what you're wanting to do. But you don't have to do that. It has been a while since

my daughter-in-law prepared something for me. I would like to ask Sheryl to cook for me today

instead."

Melissa turned to look at Sheryl coldly. Knowing that she wouldn't refuse her request, Melissa

intentionally said that to exhaust Sheryl.

As a matter of fact, Melissa really didn't care about dinner. She just enjoyed bossing Sheryl around and

finding ways to infuriate her because she wasn't the reactive type. Sheryl just remained silent and bore

all her unfair treatments.

"Sheryl, would you like to cook for me tonight?" Melissa stared at Sheryl, waiting for her answer.

Her question not only surprised Sheryl, but also Nancy.

Everyone in the room knew that Melissa was stirring up trouble again.

At last, Nancy confirmed that both Melissa and Leila were finding excuses to make things hard for

Sheryl. She felt enraged with Melissa and Leila, and sorry for Sheryl. Nancy stepped forward, wanting

to argue with Melissa.

"Mrs. Lu..." Before Nancy could finish her words, Sheryl grabbed her hand and pulled her back. Nancy

looked at her in confusion.

In turn, Sheryl gave Nancy a look. She shook her head, gesturing for Nancy to stay out of this fight.

"Nancy, can you help me take care of Clark and Shirley? They are very picky." Sheryl called out to

Nancy. Seeing the anger in her face, Sheryl was worried that Nancy would be scolded by Melissa

which could aggravate to a fight.

Sheryl could see the satisfaction in Melissa's and Leila's eyes and she knew that they were trying to get

her into trouble. Still she calmed herself down and tried not to look affected. On the contrary, she was

looking for a chance. She came up with a plan to mess with Melissa this afternoon and was wondering how she could carry it out. Now she found the perfect opportunity.

Sheryl said to Melissa indifferently, "Since you've requested, I'll love to cook for you. It will be my pleasure. I will go to the kitchen now. Please give me a few minutes. Dinner will be ready soon."

She ignored the confused expression on Melissa's face and walked straight to the kitchen, a devilish smile creeping onto her face. She remained calm as she walked slowly and steadily.

This made Melissa frustrated. She wanted to see her in panic if not angry. But she found her composure in a snap. Anyway, she had many plans in store to piss Sheryl off.

Leila and Melissa exchanged gaze. They both saw the excitement in each other's eyes as they waited for Sheryl to return with her dishes.

"Aunt Melissa, are you sure you don't want me to go to the kitchen and help Sheryl? I am worried she might use some tricks. After all, she is weirdly obedient." Leila knew that Melissa held some grudges against Sheryl and what she just said poured oil into the flames. She did it on purpose because she looked forward to the fight between Melissa and Sheryl.

Melissa sneered, "She better not pull any stunts. If she dares to do something, I swear I will make her pay."

Melissa's response made Leila more excited. It sounded like Melissa was going to make a scene, so she added, "I don't think that Sheryl would really listen to you and do what you ask her to do. You'd better teach her a lesson later in order to let her know who is in charge in this house. Otherwise, she will never take you seriously and just continue to oppose you."

Hearing Leila, Melissa became more determined to take her chance to teach Sheryl a real lesson.

During this time, Nancy was taking care of kids and feeding them. From time to time, she would glance at Melissa and Leila.

Nancy was anxious and worried about Sheryl all the time because even a fool could tell that Melissa was messing up with her. She couldn't understand why Sheryl would listen to Melissa, acting like it was no big deal.

Nancy decided that she would call Charles if Melissa continued to make trouble for Sheryl. Nothing bad would happen under this roof if Charles was back home.

That thought put Nancy's mind at ease. But still, she kept an eye on Melissa and Leila.

From the living room, Nancy watched as Melissa and Leila talked to each other. Soon, Sheryl returned from the kitchen with a plate of dish in her hand. She placed it on the table and then walked towards Clark and Shirley.

Melissa held back the words she wanted to say.

"Clark, Shirley, go back to your bedroom and finish your homework after dinner, okay?" Sheryl reminded them.

The kids nodded their heads and then race to their bedrooms.

Sheryl walked back to the dining table. Since Melissa was going to get her into trouble, Sheryl didn't expect her to appreciate her work or give her any compliments. Rather, she expected Melissa to say something harsh to her and make a scene.

Sheryl really didn't care about that. But she didn't want her kids to see how irrational Melissa could be.

After all, she was still their grandmother. She didn't want to scare her kids.

Melissa stared at the two dishes but she didn't dare to take a bite.

All of a sudden, Leila pulled Melissa's sleeve and whispered in her ear, "Aunt Melissa, you'd better ask

Sheryl to taste first."

Melissa listened to Leila and nodded. Actually, she was thinking about the same thing. Knowing that she deliberately made things hard for Sheryl, Melissa dared not to take a bite since she was worried she added something on it.

When Sheryl sat down to join them at the dining table, Melissa glared at her.

Sheryl glanced at the dishes out of instinct. "Mom, what happened? Don't you like it?"

Melissa pointed her finger at one of the dishes served and said coldly, "Would you take a bite first?"

Sheryl understood what Melissa meant, so she took a bite without saying a word. She tasted one dish after another.

Finishing her last bite, Sheryl lifted her head to look at Melissa and asked calmly, "Are we done now?"

"Fine," Melissa replied and started to get food with her chopsticks. But the next second, she spit it out to the trash can. She moaned. It was so loud that everyone in the room could hear her.

Sheryl smiled coldly. 'So this is your plan, ' she thought. Melissa was starting to play her tricks to embarrass her now.

"Sheryl, what are you thinking? This is so salty. How am I supposed to eat that? Did you do that on

purpose to torture me? May I remind you that I am still recovering." Melissa's harsh voice echoed in the entire living room.

But Sheryl just glanced at her. She continued to have dinner, completely ignoring Melissa.

Sheryl's indifference pissed Melissa off.

Melissa tasted another dish. Without even chewing on it, she complained again, "And this is so plain. It tastes like nothing but water. Sheryl, why are you doing this to me? When Charles gets home, I like to ask him whether he has seen such an incompetent daughter-in-law like you!" Melissa commented, stressing on Charles' name.

"Sheryl, Aunt Melissa is your senior, how could you do such thing to her? She only wants a nice dinner.

Why is it too hard for you to satisfy her?" Leila, sitting next to Melissa, crossed her arms in Melissa's defense. She seemed so angry that she almost pointed her finger at Sheryl to give her a lecture.

Chapter 1337 Put Sheryl On The Spot

Noticing that Leila was on her side, Melissa became more impolite. She purposely knocked two dishes that were on the counter cooked by Sheryl. Clink! Clank! Upon hitting the floor, the platters broke into pieces, sounding like a strident alarm which made everyone in the living room feel nervous.

The dishes together with the shattered platters were scattered on the floor in a mess. Though the food looked rather sumptuous, and they looked fine and delicate just now, but they were mixed up on the floor, making people who set their eyes upon them lost their appetite.

"Sheryl, are you sure your dishes are not prepared for pigs? Cook for me again!" With a scolded expression on her face, Melissa commanded Sheryl carelessly and rolled her eyes at her.

Upon hearing this, Sheryl just frowned instead of hastening her way to do what she had just ordered her to do. Then she took her time and continued eating as if nothing had happened. It seemed that Melissa's words didn't work with her at all.

Seeing her reaction, Melissa had never expected that Sheryl would totally ignore her. She was completely irritated, and Sheryl hadn't noticed that she was having a hard time breathing.

Upon seeing Melissa's chest fluctuating violently, Leila stood up in haste and walked over to pat her back, trying to help her calm down. 'Sheryl looks sarcastic today. Why doesn't she just leave after being scolded by Melissa? Does she have any other intentions?' Leila frowned and thought in her mind.

Knowing her, Melissa believed Sheryl just embarrassed her on purpose. She wouldn't let that happen, and to gain her face back, she stared at Sheryl angrily and continued, "Sheryl, can't you hear me? Are

you deaf?"

Echoing across the room, Melissa's voice was harsh in the open living room.

Still being relaxed, Sheryl answered without raising her head, "I heard you. So what?" From the way

she answered her question, both Melissa and Leila could tell that she was out of patience.

Being discredited again, Melissa rushed to Sheryl and shoved the plate where she was eating. The

plate went to the floor along with the food and condiments, shattered and scattered.

By doing that, she believed she could displease Sheryl this time. It was hard for anyone to stay cool on

such an occasion. Once Sheryl blamed her with all the mess, she could confidently tattle on her to

Charles, and he would definitely flush her out.

Upon hearing the sound of the plate being smashed, Nancy rushed out and pulled Sheryl behind her.

Looking at Nancy who stood before to protect her, Sheryl felt warm deep in her heart. 'Alas, there is

someone who treats me well in this house.'

Noticing that Nancy was about to retort Melissa, Sheryl tugged on her clothes from behind to hint her

that she was okay and there was nothing to worry about.

Used to all her maltreatments, Sheryl still didn't bother about Melissa seriously. She walked to the kitchen without saying a word, filling another plate with rice and some viands by the counter and returned to the table.

As she was about to sit and eat as if nothing had happened, Melissa suddenly swung her arm wide and slapped her across the face. The slap was so harsh that Sheryl's face became red and started swelling immediately.

Even Leila, who stood beside Melissa, didn't expect that. In her mind, she thought that something worse was about to happen after the harsh slap.

'She has lost her patience. She will displease Charles after leaving such an obvious bruise on her face.

Sheryl can also gain Charles' sympathy with this bruise. Clever as she is, she will not let this chance go, ' Leila thought anxiously.

Though Sheryl already knew that Melissa wanted to teach her a lesson, because she was arrogant all the time, still she didn't care. She already noticed that Melissa raised her arms, but she didn't want to dodge her slap this time.

Knowing how war-freak she was, she knew clearly that if she dodged this time, Melissa would not let

her go next time. So she decided to put up with this slap to show Charles Melissa's insolence.

"Well, Sheryl, now you dare to fight back!" With her hands shivering tremendously out of anger, Melissa shouted and pointed at Sheryl furiously. She almost stabbed her finger on Sheryl's forehead.

"Madam, please behave yourself. You are a family. Since Sheryl didn't do anything wrong, you couldn't hurt her unreasonably." Pleading her to stop, Nancy persuaded Melissa rationally.

"Get off! This is nothing to do with you! So shut your mouth up!" Shifting her attention towards Nancy this time, Melissa was still mad. She glanced at Nancy angrily and pushed her away.

Being shoved off, Nancy was worried to death. She couldn't do anything to stop Melissa from hurting Sheryl because she was too mad to be persuaded. 'What if Melissa slaps Sheryl again? I have to do something!'

With the idea in mind, Nancy left and hid in a corner to call Charles as Melissa continued to insult Sheryl.

Beep! Beep! Beep! Hearing that the line was ringing, Nancy prayed that Charles could pick up the phone as soon as possible.

"Mr. Lu!" The moment the line was connected, Nancy almost lost her mind.

"Nancy? Why do you call me at this time? Is there something important you want to tell me?"

"Mr. Lu, please come home quickly. Something is happening now...." Unable to finish her words, Nancy

heard an angry sound from the living room as she was about to tell Charles what happened. Fearing

that Melissa wanted to hurt Sheryl so badly, she immediately hung up the phone and rushed over to

protect her.

On the other end of the line, Charles still had a lot to ask, but the call was cut short, and he could only

hear the busy tone.

Thinking about what Nancy had said, Charles had a bad feeling that there must be something

happening at home, or Nancy wouldn't call him anxiously. 'Mom must have trouble with Sheryl again.'

That was the only reason he could think of as it was the most probable thing to happen.

Deciding that he had to come home, Charles put the phone in his pocket and turned back to face his

clients. He said to all his clients politely, "I'm afraid I have to leave now. There is something happened

in my home, and I have to go back to handle it personally. Please continue to enjoy yourself with the

food."

"Mr. Lu, You disappoint us. How can you leave before we finish our dinner? A family dispute is no big deal. It will be the same if you go back later."

Considering what his client implied, still Charles was worried and didn't want to waste his time anymore. "I'm really sorry. I have to leave now. It will be my treat next time."

However, a hand stopped him as he was about to leave. "Mr. Lu, you should drink three glasses of wine as a punishment, or we won't let you go."

Everyone could tell that Charles' face was all drawn with impatience. He pushed the hand away and walked forward. The man who stopped him felt threatened by Charles' strong character.

He made way for Charles as his hand started to sweat. He stopped and embarrassed him because he couldn't stand Charles' arrogance. But now, looking at Charles' sullen face, the man began to regret it and stopped at what he was about to do.

Chapter 1338 Not Know How To Do

Now Charles glared at him with sharp eyes, and he squirmed with embarrassment, not knowing how to deal with this situation. He was hoping that other people here could break the silence and move on to the next topic.

However, to his disappointment, everyone else had no intention of helping him out of it. They just stood aside and watched. They would by no means ruin this chance to see some fun.

But it surprised them that Charles didn't say anything more, but picked up the wine glass on the table and filled it with wine. Then with one gulp, he emptied the glass before slapping it down on the table.

"It's my bad. That's my apology." After saying that, Charles left the room immediately and didn't even bother to look back.

Everyone left at the room whispered to one another after Charles left. The man who had challenged Charles wiped the sweats off his forehead and sat down in fear. He collected himself for a while before joining the party again. From that moment on, he thought it was a bad idea challenging Charles like that and never in his entire life would he dare do that again.

The driver hadn't expected that Charles would come back so soon. But before he could even make a reaction or even greet him at that, Charles had opened the back door and got in.

"Mr. Lu?" The driver looked back at Charles who was tensely seated in the back seat and didn't know why he came back ahead of the schedule. Thus, he had no idea where he should go.

"Go home now," Charles said and closed his eyes to have some rest. He was so exhausted and he felt

a little dizzy and had a headache after drinking the glass of wine all in one go.

On their way home, while the car moved steadily on the road, Charles' mind was occupied as to what might have happened way back home.

At the Dream Garden, where everything looked fine and calm at the outside, Melissa was still swearing at Sheryl and Leila joined her from time to time. She too was cursing and cussing at Sheryl whenever Melissa stopped. On the contrary, Sheryl kept her head down, making people feel curious about what she was thinking now.

"You little bitch. Stop seducing my son! I don't want to see you at my house. Leave now!" As Melissa shooed her away like she was a wild animal, Sheryl tried her best to keep her composure. Seeing that Sheryl was not responding to her, Melissa got more irritated and kept unleashing her anger on her.

With all the insults and blasphemous words, Sheryl lifted her head suddenly and looked at Melissa coldly.

Being stared by Sheryl in such a cold way, Melissa felt uncomfortable and said, "Stop looking at me like that. Who do you think you are? Leave my house now!"

With their chins lifted in proud scorn, Leila looked at Sheryl up and down in a condescending way, making no effort to hide her smug smile.

Still not saying anything and pretending that they were just invisible, Sheryl returned to her bedroom calmly. She thought she had already had her full of their maltreatments and there was no need to stay there and be tortured by Melissa and Leila.

"Leila, look at her. How dare she have no respect for me! I'm so unfortunate to have her as my daughter-in-law." Not letting her out of it, Melissa continued to nag at Sheryl even if had returned to her bedroom.

That was what Charles saw when he pushed open the door.

Though surprised at his sudden arrival, Melissa walked quickly to Charles when she saw him and started to complain to him about Sheryl.

"Charles. I'm so glad you are home now. Sheryl has gone too far! The meals she cooked today were too greasy for me to eat, so I asked her to cook another food. But she responded reluctantly. The taste was so awful. No one can stand it. I just complained a little bit. Then she yelled at me."

While letting it all out, Melissa even made gestures and slapped her thighs to express how she felt. She

was so really good at acting.

"I am an elder after all. How could Sheryl treat me like that? I'm sick of her and can't stand being challenged by her anymore. If you don't kick her out of our house, I will leave!"

Bearing with her incessant complains, Charles had been harassed by Melissa since he stepped in the house, and his head was about to crack.

Worst was, Leila dramatized the situation. Though her opinion was not asked, she stepped forward and blurted out, "Aunt Melissa is old and weak now. Sheryl has no respect for her and swore at her. I won't say a word even though Sheryl bullies me. But I can't let her treat Aunt Melissa like that and do nothing."

Subconsciously minding what they were saying, Charles looked around but didn't see Sheryl. He was worried that Sheryl was feeling upset, so he ignored Melissa and Leila and went upstairs directly to his bedroom.

Knowing her all these years, Charles knew clearly that Melissa was selfish and unreasonable. He didn't buy a single word from Melissa nor even Leila regarding the matter. He was afraid that Sheryl would be

frustrated and leave the house. So he anxiously sped his way up.

However, when he entered their bedroom and didn't see Sheryl, he was caught by fear. He thought

Sheryl had already left the house.

But he forced himself to calm down the next moment. He went to the children's bedroom where he

thought Sheryl might be.

In the children's bedroom, surrounded by cute little dolls and toys, there she was calm and composed

as usual.

While holding a big book in her hand, Sheryl told bedtime stories and sang a lullaby to get the two kids

to fall asleep. She kissed Clark and Shirley on their cheeks gently.

Not knowing that Charles was at the door, she stared at their cute sleeping faces and felt free to reveal

her sorrow and desolation.

When she was sworn and slapped by Melissa downstairs, she had felt aggrieved. But she had to

tolerate it. Because that was the only way for Charles to realize the problems in this house and make

the situation better.

Bearing all the pain, Sheryl believed that the injustice she had suffered today was worthy as long as

this family was at peace.

She loved Charles and strived to give Clark and Shirley a complete and happy family. She had to be strong so that she would be able to deal with Melissa and Leila and fight back when the time was right.

Looking at the sweet sleeping angelic faces of Clark and Shirley, Sheryl felt herself swell with courage and energy. She was willing to confront Melissa to safeguard the happiness of her family.

'Charles, don't let me down this time, ' Sheryl prayed silently. If Charles didn't understand or trust her when she was fighting for this family, what was the point of her efforts?

When tears were about to fall from her eyes, Sheryl looked back to the doorway when she heard a scurry of footsteps.

"Sher..." Charles said in a quivery voice, showing his worry and uneasiness as she felt sorry for his wife.

Not wanting him to look at her that way, Sheryl took on a cold expression at the sight of Charles. She stood up and walked past him, not saying anything.

Surprised by her aloofness, Charles followed Sheryl carefully. Sheryl's gloomy face showed the bad

mood she was in now, and he didn't know how to start a conversation.

Determined not to talk to him, Sheryl made herself busy and paid no attention to Charles. She took some ice cubes, wrapped them inside a clean cloth and pressed it against her swollen face. Her face, as red and swollen as a ripe tomato, was painful.

The keen pain brought tears to Sheryl's eyes all of a sudden.

Chapter 1339 Reluctance

Charles didn't notice anything strange with Sheryl's face until he saw her reaction. He grew anxious, however, when he realized that she was intentionally lowering her head to avert his gaze.

"Sher, what happened to your face? What happened tonight? Will you please talk to me?" Charles squatted down and gently asked Sheryl, who was sitting on the bed, twiddling her thumbs.

No matter how many times Charles asked or what he said to her, Sheryl just kept her head down and her mouth shut.

Having run out of patience with Sheryl, Charles came downstairs. When Melissa saw Charles, she tried to grab his hand for a chat, but he just ignored her. He waved at Nancy and she walked to him.

"Nancy, what happened tonight? Please tell me everything in details." Charles' voice was low and stern. It sounded like he was trying his best to suppress his anger.

Melissa recognized the timbre of Charles' voice and feelings of anxiety and apprehension arose within her. She was afraid of what would happen once Charles insisted on getting to the bottom of the matter.

As if that weren't bad enough, Melissa knew that Nancy wouldn't have anything nice to say about her since she was on Sheryl's side. Anger took over Charles' face as he went upstairs. Melissa gritted her teeth in displeasure, almost certain that Sheryl must have gone behind her back.

"Yes, Mr. Lu." Every word Nancy said struck fear in Melissa's heart and made Charles angrier.

"At tonight's dinner, Miss Zhang complained that the dishes were too oily, so Mrs. Lu asked Sher to cook for her. Mrs. Lu was very picky and she scolded Sher, but she didn't say anything back. She just listened and remained silent. Then out of the blue, Mrs. Lu lost her temper and threw the dishes to the floor and slapped Sher."

Nancy reported everything to Charles, sparing no details. Judging by Nancy's words, Charles could feel her resentment towards Melissa and her sympathy for Sheryl in her voice.

As Charles listened to Nancy, his eyebrows furrowed and slowly a grimace spread over his face.

When Charles had heard enough, he cast a vicious glance at Melissa and said, "Mom, is that true?"

Melissa hemmed and hawed, deliberately avoiding Charles' eyes. "It's... it's not like that. Sheryl was the one who started it."

Unfortunately for Melissa, Charles knew her too well. As outrageous as it sounded from Nancy's mouth, he knew that she did not exaggerate a single word. Otherwise, Melissa wouldn't have hesitated to give Nancy an earful.

"Then why does Sher's face look like that? Did you slap her?" Charles squinted his eyes as if he was trying to read the information from her face.

"I... It was an accident. But that's because..." Charles snapped, his eyes filled with fiery anger and he didn't even bother to listen to Melissa's words.

"Mom, you can't just abuse Sheryl whenever you feel like it. Let me remind you that she is my wife. No one has the right to hurt her like that. Let's be clear, if you continue this nonsense then I am afraid that I will have to ask you to leave. It won't be difficult for me to find you another place to stay. But I can promise you, it won't be as comfortable as the Dream Garden."

Charles would not condone his mother's abusive behavior, especially not towards his wife. He felt mad at Melissa and sorry for Sheryl, both at the same time.

Needless to say, Melissa was dumbfounded by the harshness of Charles' words.

Her mind went back and forth in between two feelings. On one hand, she couldn't believe that her son would even consider kicking his own mother out of his house. And on the other hand, if indeed Charles kicked her out, what was she supposed to do?

Living away from Charles, without his care, would be difficult for her. Not to mention the rumors! What would people say about her? Even her own son, her flesh and blood, refused to live with her? The people who already hated her would have a field day, defaming her again. After all, there was nothing snarky people loved more than adding insult to injury.

Melissa had no intentions of returning to that life. No!

Melissa shook her head, without a conscious thought, struggling to find the right words to defend herself with.

At this moment, even Leila, who was standing next to Melissa, felt intimidated by Charles' facial expression. In an attempt to hide herself, she took a step back.

In spite of everything, deep down, Melissa felt angry and aggrieved. Why was she being treated

unjustly? Why did Charles value Sheryl over his own mother? Melissa was jealous of the way Charles treated Sheryl because even as his mother, she never received treatment of such kindness and generosity from him.

However, Melissa allowed none of that anger to seep through her expression. Her priority was to secure her residency in this house and the fastest way to do that was to calm Charles down.

After hesitating for a moment, Melissa broke down, shedding crocodile tears. "Charles, I didn't do that on purpose. I promise I won't do it again. Would you please forgive me?"

Charles stared at Melissa flatly, and finally he made a concession.

He knew that Melissa was a difficult person to deal with, but seeing her crying and begging softened his heart.

"Charles, please forgive Aunt Melissa. She made a mistake. I'm sure she didn't mean to hurt Sheryl."

Leila held Melissa, to keep her from falling to the floor. Leila was a wolf in sheep's clothing. With two simple sentences she shifted the entire blame on Melissa. She sounded like she had nothing to do with it, as if she wasn't the one to add fuel to the fire.

Charles lowered his head, seemingly lost in thought. He looked as though he was carefully mulling over

whether to believe Leila or not. All of a sudden, an awkward silence permeated the room.

Melissa stole a few side glances at Charles, driven more anxious by his silence. A deathly pallor took over her face and she pursed her lips.

"Charles, don't you believe your own mother? Tell me!" Melissa sobbed unceasingly, hands clutching at his shirt. She put on a remorseful expression on her face, hoping to move Charles with her display of weakness.

Nancy, all the while, didn't feel an ounce of sympathy for Melissa at all. Melissa got what she deserved, nothing more, nothing less. After all the troubles she had caused, Melissa had to pay her dues on way or the other. Nancy hoped that Charles could understand what kind of person Melissa truly was so he wouldn't be fooled by her again. Otherwise, there would be no end to Sheryl's hardships.

After brief deliberation, Charles finally opened his mouth, "I don't care whether you are telling the truth or not. If this kind of thing happens again, you won't be allowed to stay in this house any more, I promise that. As for what happened today, I want you to apologize to Sher and tell her that you will never ever do that again."

'Me? Apologize to Sheryl? Are you out of your mind? I will never apologize to Sheryl. Who does she think she is?'

Melissa's face darkened with a mirthless glare. The fact that Charles wanted her to apologize to Sheryl was a bit over-the-top, even by his standards.

Charles continued, "Mom, if you have done something wrong, you need to fix it. You're not a child. I expect you to act according to your age."

Melissa and Leila had never seen this side of Charles before. It was as if he was engulfed in a ball of anger. Even his breath was cold and frightening. They wouldn't dare to get close to him, let alone cross him.

Finding no respite, Melissa had no choice but to agree to Charles' condition even though the reluctance on her face was obvious.

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"Fine, I will apologize to her! I will apologize to Sheryl, if it means so much to you." Melissa had to force the words out of her gritted teeth and even Charles could sense the reluctance in her voice. But he didn't care. As long as Melissa was willing to make amends, he didn't bother with the details.

After he felt convinced by Melissa's promise, he turned around and walked out of the living room. Leila

finally came out of hiding and patted Melissa's back to comfort her.

"Aunt Melissa, please don't be upset. Sheryl managed to frame us and fool Charles at the same time.

Charles was clearly speaking out of anger. I don't think he meant to be so hard on you. After all, you are his mother," Leila said softly, comforting Melissa, but her mind was mulling over another matter.

Leila had underestimated Sheryl. What a nice trick! By remaining silent, Sheryl made concessions in order to gain advantage. She successfully won Charles' sympathy by showing her weakness and vulnerability. Melissa, on the other hand, was so impulsive. She was more brave than wise. She couldn't even convince her own son to take her side. Instead, she ended up angering Charles. Leila really needed to reconsider whether she should continue with Melissa as her ally.

Fortunately for her, Leila managed to stay out of this incident. If not, she would have had to apologize to Sheryl too. Leila felt disappointed at Melissa for failing to get the simplest things right. Melissa was stupid enough to let her emotions dictate her actions. Leila realized that the only person she could count on to win Charles' heart was herself.

Yet in spite of her disappointment, Leila feigned concern towards Melissa. Although she had already

made up her mind about no longer co-operating with Melissa, it would be foolish to burn her bridges so soon as Melissa still could turn out to be a valuable friend at some point. Besides, it was better to have a friend than an enemy.

Melissa wiped the tears off her face as she tried to get a hold on her emotions. The remorse and sadness that inhabited her face was gone now. All that could be seen on her face now was anger and disdain.

"Leila, you don't need to worry about me. I swear, one day, Sheryl is going to pay for everything."

Melissa spoke with determination, with one hand waving her fist in the air and the other gripping Leila's hand.

When Charles went back to bedroom, Sheryl was already curled up in bed. She looked pitiful. Charles wondered whether she was asleep as her eyes were shut tight.

Charles looked at the bruise on Sheryl's face and his heart wept for her. He took out a medical kit from the wardrobe and carefully applied some ointment on her face with a cotton swab. When he walked over to her with the medical kit a few moments ago, he failed to notice that her eyelashes were trembling.

"Sher, I'm so sorry that I wasn't there to protect you. I promise you that this won't ever happen again."

Charles lowered his voice, almost as if he was murmuring. He leaned over and kissed on Sheryl's face softly before he turned off the lights and went to sleep.

Nothing but the sound of breathing could be heard in the bedroom. After a while, Sheryl opened her eyes to the darkness that surrounded her and squinted her eyes at the chest in front of her. It wasn't until midnight when she finally managed to catch some sleep.

The next morning, Charles and Sheryl woke up almost at the same time. A beacon of light pierced through the mullioned panes of glass, bathing the black and white tile floor in a crisscross of iridescent color, illuminating the darkened room.

"Morning!"

"Good morning!"

"Sher... Listen, about what happened yesterday, it was Mom's fault. But she promised me that she would apologize to you and that it would never happen again." Charles caressed Sheryl's face.

The red welt on her face had faded, barely visible under the naked eye. But if one were to look

carefully, they could still see the mark.

It made Charles upset because it reminded him of his failure to take care of his family and to solve disputes properly without his wife getting humiliated and hurt.

Sheryl rested her chin on Charles' shoulder and said, "I don't need Mom's apology. I already forgave her. What I need is for our family to get along. I want this house to be filled with harmony and happiness. I am sure this will be easy to achieve as long as Mom stops her nonsense."

Although Sheryl was very straight-forward, Charles could sense the sadness in her voice. He wrapped her in his loving embrace and made up to her.

Sheryl was so considerate and tolerant that it moved Charles and made him feel bad at the same time.

He knew that Melissa was a selfish person and yet he didn't warn Sheryl. If anything, he blamed himself as well.

Charles stroke Sheryl's hair and planted soft kisses on her face. The bright light from the sun reflected on Sheryl's hair leaving behind a glow that made her look like an angel. Love and joy filled their room.

"Sher, thank you for being so understanding. I promise you that our family will live a happy life from now on."

Sheryl breathed a deep sigh of relief. Yesterday, she was right to remain silent, even though she was humiliated by Melissa. As long as Charles could understand her and there were no more fights in this family, it was all worth it.

After half an hour, Charles and Sheryl brought the two kids downstairs. They walked to the dining table and sat down. Nancy had already prepared a wonderful breakfast spread for them. The dishes on the table looked delicious.

Today, they didn't wait for Melissa and Leila.

"Clark and Shirley, please drink some milk so that you can grow up to be tall people. You can't be too picky, it isn't good for your health." The kids never liked milk ever since they were little babies. Every time they saw milk, they would complain tirelessly.

Well, they were kids. They didn't know how to hide their feelings, especially Clark. The way his face contorted at the mere sight of milk amused Sheryl. But this was essential for their growth. How could they avoid the nutritious benefits they could gain from drinking milk?

"Mommy, will I be as tall as Daddy if I drink milk?"

In Shirley's eyes, her dad was the tallest person she knew.

Charles and Sheryl burst into laughter at Shirley's words. Charles rubbed Shirley's nose and smiled,

"Do you want be as tall as me when you grow up?"

Shirley nodded her head at Charles, while Clark, sitting next to Shirley, pouted his lips. He thought it would be odd if his sister grew up to be as tall as his father.

"Then you should drink milk every day." Charles passed a glass of milk to Shirley. As he had expected,

Shirley furrowed her brows immediately and covered her mouth with her hands.

Suddenly, the sound of high heels tapping on the stairs caught their attention. The sharp and ear-piercing footsteps interrupted the harmony in the dining hall. Out of curiosity, Clark and Shirley turned their heads and looked to the stairs in anticipation.

"Grandma, Aunt Leila, good morning." The children greeted Melissa and Leila politely.

Finally, Melissa and Leila were ready to join them for breakfast. Charles shifted his sight to Sheryl without a conscious thought. The woman was cutting her bread silently, showing no emotions on her face.