

Wedded Bride 1361

Chapter 1361 Concern

Sweat ran down Leila's face as she trembled uncontrollably. This kidnapping was too out of her control.

She had never expected Jim Liu to betray her. So much had changed in just two days.

Jim Liu! What an asshole! Leila regretted ever having trusted him from the beginning. He only cared about money, and she should have known it. If Charles found out the truth, she would be so screwed. It would be the end for her.

She nervously gripped the edge of the dresser with a shaking hand. She was so paranoid that she even broke a fingernail when she clutched the cabinet's wood.

Her face was drained of color, but she managed to take out her phone and call Jim Liu. She needed to know where he was now.

The other line rang continuously, but no one answered. Leila dialed nonstop until her phone ran out of battery, but Jim Liu never answered the calls. All she had heard was the busy tone, which drove her mad. Her shaking hand couldn't hold the phone anymore and out of anger, she threw the device and watched its screen crack.

After that, Leila simply sat in the bedroom for a long time, her brain muddled. She felt like she was

trapped in a noisy wet market right now where people were busy. It was noisy and chaotic, and she stood alone in the middle of it all with nowhere to hide.

Her mind almost blew up thinking about all of the possible consequences. Suddenly, she recalled the days she had spent in prison. Ever since she was released, she had never looked back on that memory, until now. Perhaps it was too painful for her, or she was too ashamed of that time.

However, the past seemed to have come back. She felt like she was in that dark and dirty cell again.

She thought about her life there filled with endless errands, fights every day, and when her sleep was disturbed by the guardian's flashlight from time to time. Those memories were still vivid, and their wounds still hurt.

Every gritty detail, the peeling exterior paint of the walls, the snores from her cellmates, the plain meals, the disgusting smell and grime...Leila felt them all again, and she couldn't escape.

A bitter smile formed on her lips and sadness filled her eyes. What if her plan was exposed? What if she had to go back to jail again?

But Leila didn't resign herself to this. Her plan wasn't like this. She never thought about hurting Shirley,

no matter how much she disliked the kid. She still had morals! All she wanted was to ruin Sheryl and

Charles' relationship. After all, she just wanted to pursue her true love. She didn't do anything wrong.

But even until now, Leila still hadn't realized her mistakes. While it was true that everyone had the right

to pursue love, she shouldn't have stepped in others' relationships, especially in a vicious manner.

A dull pain throbbed in Leila's head. Her mind was a mess.

All she did was think about the mess, and she didn't realize that it was already sunset until her

stomach growled.

The sky outside was painted a dull orange, which made it look sad. Leila stared blankly outside the

window. She couldn't just sit and wait to be caught. She was tired of being looked down by others, and

she would never live that life again. Thus, she had to take the initiative and change the situation, before

it was too late.

When Leila made up her mind, it was hard to talk her out of it. She was like a fierce and cruel lioness,

always ready to fight.

Soon enough, she got tired of staying in the room and stood up. She went downstairs and walked

outside. She decided to take a stroll to breathe in some fresh air, and also buy a new phone.

Down in the high street shops, Leila's eyes wandered from shop to shop, when a salesman's voice suddenly interrupted her train of thought. He was recommending a phone to a customer, which caught her attention.

"Sir, this is our latest product. It has a new function which can not only show you the zip code, but also track others' location when they call you. In that way, you can better know where your family is or where other important people are. You can check on them anytime."

Although the salesman tried his best to sell the phone, deep down, he didn't like the new function at all.

It might be wonderfully useful for those insecure lovers, but it was a scary thing for most people. After all, nobody wanted to be exposed so easily.

While the man wasn't excited about it, Leila was. She wanted to find Jim Liu. She was convinced that Jim Liu didn't disappear for life. He would eventually have to answer her phone, and as long as he did, Leila could track him down.

And so, Leila walked to the shop and bought the phone without hesitation.

It was already midnight when Leila had gone back to the Dream Garden. She was so sleepy that she

headed straight to the bedroom and drifted away.

The next morning, Leila's right eyelid twitched constantly when she woke up.

After a while, she went downstairs and sat down at the dining room. She noticed that Sheryl didn't come downstairs to have breakfast. She was still sick and asleep in her room, which brought Leila a bit of comfort.

Silence hung in the air while everyone ate. Shirley's disappearance was like a dark cloud that floated around, and made the house devoid of joy and laughter. Nothing was heard except for the clang of utensils during meals.

Suddenly, a loud ringtone broke the silence. Leila didn't realize that it was her phone until everyone's eyes were on her. She quickly took the phone out.

The unknown number on the screen confused her. She thought that it was a prank call, so she hung up. But it kept ringing, so she had no choice but to answer the phone in front of everyone.

"Honey, what took you so long?"

Leila was startled when she heard the voice from the other end of the line, and she almost dropped the phone in shock.

It was Jim Liu, who had kidnapped Shirley!

"Why are you so quiet? Honey..."

Jim Liu kept talking on the phone, but Leila's brain was blank and she had no idea what he was

babbling about, until she noticed Charles gaze on her. Charles wondered why Leila was suddenly

acting so strange.

Chapter 1362 Break The Plan

As Charles fixed his gaze on her, Leila felt as if she were sitting on thorns. With the atmosphere as cold

as death, she lost her appetite, and abruptly stood up to leave the dining hall. She kept walking until

she found a secluded corner before pulling out her phone and answering Jim.

"Where the hell have you been? Why haven't you been answering my calls? Are you out of your

mind?" she half-whispered, half-shouted furiously.

"Please calm down! Put your heart back in your chest, won't you? I'm not going anywhere. Just take it

easy," he replied all too casually as if he was playing with some naughty kitten. The tone made Leila so

insecure, and her instincts told her something was wrong.

"Okay, I'm serious! Where is Shirley? You need to bring her back to me now! Charles has his eye on

me. Things will get too complicated if he figures anything out. You'd better do exactly what I tell you to do!" Leila blurted out in one angry, restless breath.

Meanwhile, all Jim could think about as she rambled was how much he despised her—all he could do was wonder how much of an idiot she could be. Things had already gone so far, but she still had no idea what would happen. Never would Jim loosen the falcon until he saw the hare. Only when he got what he wanted would he bring Shirley back. Now that he had bet his happy and free life on her, Shirley was his ready source of money.

Even though Leila was too stupid to get a clue, he didn't give a damn what Charles would do to her.

The only thing on his mind was the ransom of 10 million. With that money in his account, he could get any woman he wanted, and Leila was a complete history to him at this point.

But, on the flip side, he thought not to waste such a perfect chance. He couldn't deny that he longed for Leila for quite a long time, and thinking of her delicate skin and pretty face made his blood go rushing.

"Since you care so much about that little girl, why don't you come over and take a look at her yourself?

I'll text you my location. We can talk about this when you're here. I'll be waiting for you," he said,

absentmindedly rubbing his chin with a vicious smile.

If he was standing in front of a mirror, he would see himself looking like a starved wolf.

His eyes were furious and deadly sharp, aiming at his target with greed and malice.

If Leila was around, she'd be scared to death by the expression he wore. Jim thought about how she would look as she hurled herself obliviously into the trap he set.

So eager to see how Shirley was doing, Leila let her guard down, thinking nothing of Jim's invitation.

"Okay, give me your location. I'll be there as soon as possible," she said in a haste.

"You need to keep in mind that Shirley's life is in your hands now," Jim threatened. "If I find that you're not alone when you arrive, I'll slit her throat without batting an eyelid. Do I make myself clear?"

His harsh tone took her aback and triggered something in Leila's head. Something felt off, but she couldn't tell exactly what it was. Weren't they pretending to kidnap Shirley to intimidate Charles? Why did Jim sound like he was making some pretense into a reality? That absolutely wasn't her plan.

It was clear that Jim was leading Leila by the nose now. If he had shown her before that he was a wolf in sheep's clothing, she would be paying enough attention. Forgetting they were on the phone, she nodded hastily before agreeing with a stammer.

Immediately after the call, she received a text containing only the location, and nothing else. Something about this felt ominous.

Jim had always been careful about being found out. Learning from him, Leila realized that she needed

to take early measures in case anything happened. With that in mind, she opened up the automatic

tracking software on her new phone, only to find out that Jim had thought of it before her. The phone he

used must have been thrown away because it wasn't moving at all, according to the map on Leila's

phone. A moment later, any trace of it was lost, and Leila guessed Jim already destroyed it.

Heaving a long, deep sigh, Leila returned to the dining hall in low spirits.

"Leila, take a seat and have some more! You barely ate," Melissa invited hospitably, afraid that Leila

wasn't eating too much.

"Thank you, Aunt Melissa. You're too kind. But I've had enough. I need to go now. My friend called me,

and something urgent came up, so he needs my help. I'm sorry. I really have to go. Please take your

time eating. See you, Charles," Leila explained rather hurriedly as to not arouse any suspicion.

With that, she turned to the door again, not waiting for them to reply. In her haste, she almost walked

into the door frame before she left, leaving Melissa and Charles puzzled.

"Leila! Watch where you're stepping!" Melissa shouted, wondering why Leila was suddenly acting as though a pack of wolves was chasing after her.

But Leila kept heading for the gate like an unstoppable wind. It seemed as though she was too distracted to even hear Melissa call out to her.

What she still didn't know was that, just like the previous day, Leila was being followed the moment she walked out of Dream Garden. The man was a professional, capable of following soon after Leila, soundless as if he was her own shadow.

Soon after she left, Leila managed to hail a taxi to the place Jim texted her.

Surprisingly, it was located at the suburbia. Because it was rather out of the way to anything, it took

Leila quite some time to find it. When she got out of the taxi, she found herself standing in front of a

single-story house. Alone in the cold air, she hesitated for a while before going in. Somehow, the house

looked like a monster that could come to life and swallow her at any minute. It made her regret coming alone in her desperation.

As she stood there, not even a single person walked by. All she could hear was a dog barking

occasionally in the distance and a flock of birds flying above her, doing nothing to put her at ease in the scary atmosphere. All she could do was close her eyes until it was quiet again.

About ten minutes later, she worked herself up enough to bite the bullet and step towards the door to push it open.

As it slowly creaked open, Leila positioned her arm to cover both her throat and heart. The first thing she saw was Jim, sitting in front of a table under a dim lamp. His face looked rather hideous with a malicious smile, giving Leila an urge to vomit right then and there. The entire scene looked like it came out of an awful horror movie. It took her everything not to turn around and run away.

His gaze on her made her heart miss a beat. Her only comfort was that she could deliberately leave the door open, thinking that she could flee in case something bad happened.

But before she could say anything, Jim stood up, walked to the door, and closed it with a heavy bang. It was as if he knew exactly what she was thinking. The noise made her jump in her shoes, and a chill ran up her spine when she heard him lock it behind her.

All the while, Leila stood rooted in her spot, not daring to look back at him. Taking a deep breath, she

tried to pull herself together.

In her mind, she tried to rationalize the situation, thinking that it would be ridiculous of him to do something to her in such a place. Collecting her thoughts, she dispelled the fear hanging over her head since she stepped out of the taxi. Then, she turned to Jim with a fierce look, though still faint at heart.

"Didn't we already reach an agreement? The plan was to take her away and let her go once I called you. What's going on? Are you going to break your word? Are you turning against our plan? Tell me!" she demanded.

Although she managed to raise her voice quite a good amount, she was scared to death inside, scared that Jim had turned the situation into a real kidnapping.

Meanwhile, right outside the door, the man who followed her under Charles' command had just heard every word she said.

The walls were practically paper-thin, and the door could be broken open in a single push. It wasn't hard for the man to hear her frantic voice from outside.

The news was quite a shock, and he reported it to Charles without delay. Back at the house, Charles was so pissed that he was grabbing at his hair, wishing he could take Leila by the throat right at that

moment.

Knowing that they dared put their hands on his daughter, he would do everything in his power to make them wish they were dead. A cold smile surfaced on his expression.

"I got it. Keep them in your sight and call me when you find out where they're hiding Shirley," Charles said into the headset. Hearing Charles' instructions, the man kept dead still and leaned his ear against the wall to hear more clearly.

Inside the shabby house, Jim suddenly broke into laughter as if he heard the biggest joke in his life.

Gazing at the woman playfully, he smiled even wider as he realized how truly naive and stupid she was.

Chapter 1363 Growing Hatred

"What do you mean I didn't keep my word? Leila, how can you say that to me? Everyone loves money.

One can never have too much money, right? It is a great opportunity for me to get rich. Only the dumbest fool in the world would pass up on the opportunity!" Jim said to Leila, intimidating her with his larger frame.

Leila felt small against his frightening and scrutinizing gaze. His gaze held a mixture of greed and

heavy desire; Leila could feel incredibly vulnerable and naked.

Leila was beginning to feel uneasy. She tried to take a step back away from him, but Jim was faster.

He grabbed her wrist quickly, tightening his hold until it started to hurt Leila. She tried to shake her wrist

away but his grip was too tight. Jim kept his eyes on her, frightening Leila even more.

He yanked Leila closer to him, keeping her body against his. He held her waist tight, locking her there

with a predatory smirk on his lips.

Leila was beginning to realize what Jim was planning to do to her. She tried to push back more

forcefully, but she couldn't move from his strong arms. Jim had practically pinned her on the spot.

Seeing Leila try to resist him was both enticing and annoying. She was really making it work for him.

He slapped Leila across the face, the young woman moaning in pain. He threw her on the bed when

she stopped moving to ease the pain.

It wasn't long before Leila's screams got louder and desperate. The room was filled with noise of

clothes being torn and skin slapping against skin. Jim had begun to torture the young, helpless woman,

who continued to scream until her voice weakened. A few minutes later, Leila was knocked

unconscious; unsure if it was from the pain Jim inflicted, or her body failing to survive the torture.

Once Jim was finished, he pushed Leila aside before standing up. He fished out his phone from his pants, opening the camera to take several nude photos of the unconscious woman.

A few hours later, Leila started to regain consciousness. Her vision was blurry and she felt lightheaded from the fresh, stinging pain. She could see Jim watching her from the lounge chair near the bed. Leila gathered all her strength to get up, but at her current state, her body simply rolled on the floor. She staggered to get on her knees to lean on the wall, while Jim chuckled to himself as he kept watching her.

"Where do you think you're going, Leila? I'm not yet done with you. In fact, I have something to show you. You should take a look," he said in a low voice. He got up and walked over to her kneeling frame.

He pulled on her hair, dragging her back towards the lounge chair. He sat down first and forced her to sit above his lap. When she began to thrash around again, Jim held her with his arm before putting his phone in front of Leila's contorted face. It was then that Leila saw the nude photos that Jim took of her.

"Argh!" Leila exclaimed, shoving herself off of his lap as she saw the nude photos. It was late before she realized that she had to take the phone away to delete them. She tried to reach for the phone, but

Jim laughed at her and pulled it out of her reach.

"Pathetic." Jim laughed at her, kicking her away. He put his phone back in his pocket before standing up to walk closer towards the beaten-down woman.

He laughed wickedly at her intense glare.

"Oh, dear Leila, tell me. What will you do when these pictures go public? Now everyone will know how sweet your body is." Jim laughed again and looked at her with equal intensity.

Leila didn't know what to do if that happened. She didn't know what Charles would think of her if he saw them. She bit her lower lip angrily, shaking her head in disbelief.

She tugged on Jim's clothed leg, looking at him with pleading eyes.

"Please, please don't. I beg you," Leila pleaded desperately.

"What? Are you begging now? You gotta show me your sincerity, then," Jim teased, reaching for her chin. Her skin was soft against his calloused fingers, exciting him once again.

Leila could sense what he wanted. She succumbed to it, knowing she had to be sincere towards him.

She fixed herself and knelt beside him, waiting for him to give an order.

She was abhorrently filled with desperation and shame, but she couldn't do anything about it. If she

hadn't kidnapped Shirley in the first place, she could have avoided this disgusting turn of events.

She couldn't reverse time, however. No matter how much she might regret it, it was impossible to get out of the trap she willingly went into.

"You're delectable. I'm happy that I've got a new toy to play with. Make yourself always readily available for me, and I might consider deleting your photos. If you refuse me, or if you tell anyone about this, I'll make sure to expose these photos. Everyone will know how cheap and lewd you are," Jim whispered threateningly towards the small, weak woman.

His words were filled with venomous threats that Leila was sure to be terrified by.

Jim could feel himself growing aroused again from Leila's obedient and complacent behavior. He pulled her hair and threw her on the bed again before unbuckling his pants. Once he was finished satisfying himself with his new toy, he sighed happily before pushing her aside once again. He dressed up fairly quickly, chuckling when he turned back to see her sad and desperate look. He closed the door and left her alone in the room.

Tears kept falling down her cheeks, and Leila made no effort to wipe them dry because they kept falling

back anyway. Her hair was disheveled. Her face and eyes had reddened from soreness. Her body was beginning to sprout with bruises all over, and she could still feel the stinging pain. When she finally felt comfortable enough, she began to laugh hysterically whilst crying. She couldn't believe what she had just gone through.

Her eyes were brimming with hatred. She punched the bed and yelled to the pillows as loud and as hard as she could, anger reaching its boiling point. She hated Sheryl even more now.

It was all Sheryl's fault. It was that damn bitch! If it weren't for her involvement, Leila never would have experienced such a monstrous circumstance! Leila couldn't help but shift her anger and rage towards Sheryl, because she knew she started everything.

There were so many other men in this world, why would Sheryl have to take her beloved Charles away from her? Why would Charles choose Sheryl over her? The more Leila thought about them, the more she hated Sheryl. She was quaking with anger, blinded by madness. She didn't realize how ridiculous it was to blame Sheryl for everything.

Leila swore then and there that she would never let Sheryl get away that easily again. One day, she would take revenge on her when she least expected it. She would make sure that she would pay a

thousand times worse than what Sheryl did to her.

Leila took today as the beginning of her hatred, not as a lesson for her previous mistakes. She was going to make sure that Sheryl would pay. She swore by it.

Leila stayed in the small little cabin for a while longer until her tears had dried up. She staggered towards the bathroom to wash herself, the cold water hitting harshly against her bruised skin.

There wasn't any soap for her to wash her body with, so she scrubbed as hard as she could with only water. She kept scrubbing to clean away the taint that Jim left, but even as her skin reddened and bursted with newer wounds, she still felt dirty.

All she knew was that she had to clean her body. She had to remove as much of Jim as she could.

"I'm so dirty," Leila mumbled to herself as she cleaned. Her tears mixed with her bath water as she scrubbed her hands against her legs and stomach.

It took longer than expected for Leila to calm back down. She returned to the bedroom, picking up her tattered clothes from the floor. As she dressed, she grazed her fingers against the tears and holes in her clothes, willing herself to leave this hell hole.

As she reached the door to leave, she turned around to look at the room for the last time. She wanted to remember what this room of torture and suffering looked like.

It was Leila's duty to never forget this day. Her hatred had grown strong enough that she could drive herself forward to make Sheryl pay. "My sacrifice shall not be in vain," Leila thought to herself, swearing her life to the promise to hold Sheryl accountable.

Chapter 1364 I'm Not Sick

At the Dream Garden

In a trance, Leila returned to Dream Garden weakly. Her mind was chaotic, and she felt drained as if she was from a nightmare. A good rest was what she craved right now, not wanting to recall the incident today. Fatigue consumed her and she didn't even notice Melissa's presence.

"Oh, you're here! Why did you come back so late? Wait, are you sick? You look pale." Melissa stopped Leila as she passed by her bedroom.

"Aunt Melissa, I'm a little tired. I will be fine after sleeping for a while," she answered softly. Leila was taken aback by Melissa's appearance while walking forward in a daze. Sleep was the only thing she thought to forget all of the mess earlier.

Looking at her ashen face and lifeless expression, Melissa didn't believe that there was nothing wrong

with Leila. Thinking about that Sheryl who had a cold in these days, she guessed Sheryl infected Leila.

"Leila, are you sure you are okay? You are going to collapse at this rate," she asked worriedly and walked closer to Leila.

Leila was afraid that Melissa would find out her secret because of too many questions. Her ashen face became even paler as Melissa moved closer towards her. Her sensitive nerves quivered, as she recalled what happened to her today. The incident became fresh to her again, which made her anxiety worse.

"No. I'm not sick!"

Leila suddenly shouted. After a short moment, she realized that it was Melissa who was standing before her. She then lowered her voice, trying to calm down as soon as possible.

Melissa was shocked. However, she didn't get mad. It made her convinced that something unpleasant happened to Leila, so she tried to comfort her.

"Aunt Melissa, I'm okay. I didn't sleep well last night and I walked a little long today, so I'm a little tired.

Don't worry."

Leila squeezed a fatigue smile to confirm her words.

Melissa was still a little worried. She wanted to ask more, but was interrupted by Leila. "Aunt Melissa, I want to have rest. You don't have to worry about me."

With that, Leila walked into her room. Melissa's mind was full of doubts and curiosity, but seeing Leila walk to her room, she had no choice but to go back to hers.

At the general manager's office of Shining Company

Bang! Bang! Bang! Someone was knocking at the door of Charles' office. Stopping his work, he took a glance at the door and said, "Come in!"

"Mr. Lu." David came in, greeting him respectfully. Charles diverted his attention to him who seemed to have something important to report.

"Take a seat,"

Charles said, raising his head.

Charles' eyes were bloodshot, and his face was covered with stubble, as he hadn't slept well and shaved for days, worrying about Shirley's safety and Sheryl's health. It was a far cry from his usual appearance of a professional elite.

'Anyone who encountered this kind of situation would be exhausted. Moreover, Mr. Lu is a man who loves his family so much, ' David thought sympathetically.

"Mr. Lu, I want to report to you what I have learned after following Leila today."

He paused for a while, thinking how to describe what he had seen clearly. However, the news should not be delayed anymore because of his hesitance.

"We confirmed that Leila was the mastermind of the kidnapping incident. The kidnapper's name is Jim Liu, and he's Leila's accomplice. But Leila didn't expect that Jim would have changed his mind to hide Shirley to blackmail your family."

David didn't continue to report. Charles looked at him and found he looked a little weird. His lips twitched several times as if he had something to say, but it was hard to say it.

"What's wrong? Just tell me what you know," Charles said with encouragement.

David heaved a sigh and said, "Leila went to Jim today, but she was... raped by him and was taken nude photos. Jim threatened her with these photos."

The office became silent. Charles never thought that the kidnapper would have been so shameless.

But Leila deserved it, as she instigated kidnapping her daughter to mess his family. He shouldn't show sympathy for such a woman!

"After Jim had left, I sent many people to follow him. I guess it won't take long for us to find Shirley.

Since we have known who is the kidnapper, shall we call the police?" David politely asked.

"No, don't disturb him. We haven't found Shirley yet. Once we annoy him, he might hurt Shirley on an impulse. That would be extremely bad. Currently, the most important thing is to find Shirley," Charles said.

"As you wish, Mr. Lu. I will execute your orders now."

David looked back at Charles while walking out of the office. He witnessed the persistent determination in Charles' eyes, but he looked sad and weary. David couldn't help but think that even the most strong-willed person had his weak side. Once being hit where it hurt, he would be painful and sad.

After David exited his office, Charles thought for quite a while. There was only a step away from saving Shirley, but he felt more uneasy, fearing of anything unexpected would happen. Their guards must be even more alert as they were going closer to the finish line.

However, he wondered if Shirley ever cried again, if the kidnapper had beaten or cursed her or if she

got sick or not. Thinking about this, Charles couldn't stay calm anymore. Upon seeing the kidnapper in person, he would surely go berserk.

Although he had asked his assistant to wait and see, he really wanted to rushed toward the kidnapper and break his head.

At the hospital

With her eyes glued to the screen of her cell phone, Cassie was staring for about fifteen minutes already, though there were only limited words on it.

"I have some trouble to deal with. It will be some time before I can return to China."

It was the message that Nick had sent to her yesterday, and she was re-reading it. It was a long time since they had met each other. Since then, Nick seemed to have disappeared from the world with every excuse.

At the thought of Nick's recent action, Cassie was in a bad mood. It wasn't easy for her to fall in love with a man, but here she was, waiting for him idiotically. She didn't know why he was so indifferent to her recently while before, they had got well with each other.

Staring at the message on the screen, Cassie felt wronged. Tears streamed down her face.

"Hi, Cassie! I was wondering where you were just now..."

While Cassie was sobbing, Cora's jovial voice rang out behind her.

Being surprised, Cassie immediately wiped her tears off before turning around to see Cora.

Even though Cassie had wiped her tears, her face showed proof of her grievances, making Cora look

at her in shock. Her friend walked over and asked with concern, "Are you crying? Why?"

A best friend was Cora's treatment for Cassie already. If possible, she would love Cassie to be her

sister-in-law. That would be the best thing that could happen for the both of them. However, from the

attitude Cassie towards her elder brother, she could tell that there was still a long way to go for her

brother to marry Cassie.

Cassie squeezed a smile and answered reluctantly, "Nothing happened. The sand got into my eyes,

and I felt pain, so I rubbed them. It was so painful that I was crying earlier, but I'm fine now."

Chapter 1365 Nancy's Resentment

Without thinking about it too much, Cora turned a blind eye to Cassie's swollen eyes. Grabbing her

waist, she beamed and suggested, "Come on, let's have dinner together! It's on me."

"Dinner?" Cassie murmured, looking confused. A silhouette flashed in the back of her mind. Suddenly,

it made her hesitate and she tried to analyze Cora's intentions. Pulling herself back to her senses, she

wondered, "Why do you want to buy me dinner so suddenly?"

Understanding Cassie's thought, Cora couldn't help but laugh at her inwardly. 'Ha, look how anxious

she is. She must be worried that it was Jordan's idea to invite her to dinner.'

"Take it easy! My brother won't be there. It'll just be you and me," Cora explained, keeping up her

beaming smile.

With that, Cassie could sigh in relief. Though she wasn't very fond of Jordan, she had trouble refusing

his hospitality toward her. Her impression of him wasn't very nice—his gaze struck her as rather

aggressive. When Cassie was under his stare, she could never feel comfortable. As a woman, the way

he looked at her felt threatening.

Assured that he wouldn't be at dinner, Cassie gladly went along with her friend's invitation.

"Okay, let's do that. Where should we eat?" she asked with a pleased smile.

"How about that old restaurant we used to go to?"

"It's not the finest in the area but we are always satisfied after eating there, aren't we?" Cora suggested.

"Sounds good. We can go there after work," Cassie agreed with a nod.

At the hospital, when her shift was over, Cassie headed straight to the changing room to get ready to meet Cora. Before she got the chance to pull out her phone and dial Cora's number, someone called her.

Thinking it was Cora calling her, the name she saw on the screen was quite a surprise. "Gamora?"

"Cassie, where are you?"

Gamora's voice sounded rather urgent.

"I'm at the hospital. Just got off work. What's wrong?" Cassie asked with a frown.

It had been the second time she received such a sudden call. Remembering what had happened back then at Seven Nights, she had to be alert. Since then, she pegged Gamora as someone not as simple as she once thought. It was better to keep someone like her at a distance.

"Cassie, you should be more careful these days. Remember to go home as soon as you get off work.

Don't go hanging out until late," Gamora warned after a pause.

Clueless, Cassie had no idea where this was coming from. Before she could ask about it, Gamora hung up without saying goodbye.

"Gamora? Are you still there?" she talked louder into the phone, gripping the phone tighter—there was only silence.

"What's wrong, Cassie? Why are you staring at your phone?"

Cora asked her in confusion.

"Nothing! It was just a college classmate," Cassie replied with a faint smile as she stuffed her phone back into her pocket.

"Really? A random phone call from a college classmate?" After a moment, she teased, "My dear

Cassie is truly an attractive woman. Tell me, how many men have fallen to their knees to beg for your love? Let me count, Nick, my brother, and now even someone from college! Cassie, how lucky you are!"

"Oh, shut up!" Cassie rolled her eyes. Cora's teasing left Cassie's cheeks red with embarrassment.

"For your information, my classmate isn't a boy," she added in reaction.

"A girl? So disappointing! Okay, come on, let's go to dinner now!"

After making a face, Cora readily grabbed Cassie's arm and pulled her out of the hospital.

Leaving in quite a rush, Cassie had to remember to pick up her handbag. It seemed as though Cora was really excited about having dinner with her friend that night, being a tad chattier than usual. But Cassie just looked rather absent.

Gamora's strange call haunted her.

Meanwhile, in Dream Garden, Charles arrived home and went straight to the bedroom. In the doorway, he caught Nancy just leaving the room with one hand still holding the lock on the door. Charles almost running into her made her take a step back.

"Nancy, how is Sheryl feeling?" Charles asked, out of breath.

"Not well. She's still suffering from a bad fever, and she hasn't woken up," she replied with a gloomy face, throwing him a reproachful look.

Even as she observed Charles' anxiety and concern, she couldn't forget what he had done to Sheryl—the way he treated his wife was unbecoming of a husband. In Nancy's eyes, it was too unacceptable. Giving Charles another look, she heaved a deep sigh. Without another word, she walked past Charles and into the kitchen.

Since Sheryl had been unconscious in bed for a whole day already, Nancy was afraid that the infusion

alone wouldn't be helpful enough.

Still standing in front of the door, Charles felt helpless. His frown deepening, he thought to himself, 'Still in a coma? Sheryl's illness has already gone to such an extent? Did I underestimate her condition that much? This is far worse than I imagined!'

His anxiety began to rise, making him fall into a panic. Before Nancy reached the kitchen, he grabbed her abruptly and eagerly asked, "Nancy, what did the doctor say? Did he give us any explanation? Why has she been in a coma for so long?" It took him everything to make his words sound less emotional—he didn't want to break down in front of Nancy.

"The doctor said Sheryl was too tired. She needs to rest. He told us to give her more time to sleep.

Once she wakes up, everything will be okay," answered Nancy in a cold tone, making evident her disappointment in Charles and his irresponsibility as a husband. With that, she quickened her steps without turning back.

The wrinkles on her face deepened with her angry expression. Never could Nancy have felt more disappointed. Charles' lack of care for his wife made Nancy resent him. In her eyes, he wasn't nearly

worthy enough of Sheryl—he left her alone when she was at her worst and desperately needed his help. He blatantly turned his back on Sheryl's imploring signals, always taking her for granted. Charles' negligence earned no kindness from Nancy's heart.

Though he could sense Nancy's disappointment, he didn't attempt to make any excuse. Having guessed what was on her mind, he couldn't blame her. Instead, he turned his head away from her and gazed at the door. Before heading inside, he had to shut his eyes and gather his thoughts for a moment. Trying to dispel the concern and panic in his heart, he took a step inside.

Sheryl lay faint in bed, her pale face looking like that of a ghost's. Even in an unconscious state, her face remained twisted as if the great pain she was under wouldn't leave her alone. All Charles could do was stand by the side of the bed and stare at her in silence with eyes full of affection. Taking her hand in his, he put it up to his cheek, gently kissing the inside of her palm.

His heart sank as he fell deeper into his thoughts. 'Why didn't I believe her when she first told me it was Leila who took Shirley away? Why didn't I take her words seriously?' A string of remorse and guilt ran through him. If he could only go back in time, he would slap himself and listen to Sheryl's every word.

Coming back to his senses, he put a gentle hand on Sheryl's forehead, smoothening her frown, hoping

to alleviate the distress in her heart.

In agony, Charles prayed inwardly, 'God, please, help her...and help me!'

Perhaps his prayer was heard because soon after, Sheryl began mumbling something in her sleep.

"Shirley...my Shirley...Give her back!" she groaned, eyes still closed. It sounded like she was dealing

with some kind of nightmare, with words from her heart beginning to spill out.

Tears began rolling down her cheeks, staining the pillow she rested her head against.

As she cried, Charles could see her opening up her heart to him. Every word fell on him like a heavy

weight on his shoulders.

"Why... Why is Charles so indifferent? I hate him! I'm so hurt! I can't stand to stay with him anymore!"

she began yelling out, leaving Charles stunned in disbelief.

His heartbeat quickened almost chaotically. Feeling at a loss for what to do, he took her hand and held

it tight—he couldn't lose her. After a moment, he snapped back into his senses and began reflecting on

himself.

Sheryl's words made a strong feeling of desperation in his surface. Regret overcame him for being too

late to realize Sheryl's despair, and his eyes turned glassy.

Charles couldn't help but reproach himself in his heart. 'Sher, no one could ever take your place in my

heart! I can't deny I've been trying to be indifferent toward you, but I truly regret it. It doesn't mean that I

don't love you. I've always held you dearest and above anything in my heart! Even as the seas run dry

and the stones decay, my love for you will never change...' so eager to convey how much he loved her,

he almost lost all control and cried out loud.

Chapter 1366 Sidewalk Snack Booth

It sounded like a true cliché. Charles, like any other man, wanted to spend every waking day with the

woman he loved. That was why, whenever Sheryl felt upset, Charles would feel even worse. Why on

earth would Sheryl ever think that Charles didn't love her?

Sheryl just told Charles how much she hated him. She told him that she didn't want to be with him any

longer. It pierced through him like a knife. He felt like he couldn't breathe.

What Sheryl told him made Charles' face pale. It hurt him so much inside. He could not only feel her

pain, but he could also feel his own from being pushed away so much.

He knew that what he did in the past two days had hurt Sheryl immensely, but she had to know that he

didn't mean to do that. He merely did what he had to do to protect Shirley. However, he acknowledged that what was done was done, and there was nothing he could do to change what he did.

Charles carefully caressed Sheryl's cheek. "Sher, I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. I know it's been a tough few days for you, but you know that I only did that to save Shirley. Why would you ever think that I didn't love you? I made a vow to you. I love you and I always will; nothing will ever change that. Please, could you find it in your heart to forgive me?" Charles pleaded, kissing Sheryl's forehead.

He knew that she was asleep and wouldn't be able to hear him anyway, but it was the only time he could apologize to her without her pushing him away. He hoped that Sheryl would hear his apology and accept it.

Charles was exhausted from working the entire day, drifting off to sleep fairly quickly. He moved further away from Sheryl, respecting her space just in case she didn't want to wake up and see that he was touching her.

A few hours later, Sheryl woke up in the middle of the night. She stirred, her arm grazing against Charles'.

She opened her eyes to see Charles' face. His face was relaxed but he looked incredibly tired and

worn out. His thick eyebrows, stern expression, and masculine jawline made her heart flutter. He still looked just as attractive and charming to her. She stared at his face. He looked tired, but he was still charming and attractive to her. As her eyes trailed down his face towards his lips, she suddenly remembered how heartless and unfaithful he had been.

Sheryl's eyes welled up with tears. She was growing desperate. She didn't know if she should give Charles another chance. Should she reconsider? Maybe he wasn't really unfaithful. It was just that he didn't love her anymore.

It was because he didn't love her, that whatever she did was wrong in his eyes.

Sheryl now knew how much it hurt to be heartbroken.

In her bitterness, Sheryl put a coat on and got out of the bed. She quietly made her way to the bathroom on her bare feet.

Sheryl lowered her head to find her bare toes twitching beneath her. Charles used to blame her for not taking better care of herself, because she never wore slippers. He would always bring her the fluffy pair of slippers that he bought her.

Thinking about the past, Sheryl slowly descended to the floor and cried again. She buried her face in her hands, wiping her tears away and forcing herself to calm down so he wouldn't hear her. She tried to catch her breath, hating the way her breath kept hitching in her throat. Her tears slipped from her hands and onto the cold, tiled floor.

Charles never would have known that Sheryl broke down that evening. He never would have known each teardrop she shed in the darkness.

How much did Sheryl really love Charles? No matter how much Charles hurt her, she would never hurt him back. Even when she wept because of him, she made a point to hide herself to cry in silence. She loved him so much that she didn't want him to worry about her. However, she was also afraid of the idea that he might no longer care if he saw her cry.

In the sidewalk snack booth, Cassie and Cora ordered a whole table-worth of food that cost next to nothing. This booth prided itself for having such delicious food at low prices.

"Cassie! Let's toast!" Cora called, raising her bottle of beer as she grinned ear to ear.

Cassie immediately let her fish skewer down and swung her bottle up. "Cheers, Cora! It's been a while since we were this relaxed. Let's party tonight!"

"Sure!" Cora's grin grew wider and brighter before they downed their drinks.

As Cassie continued to eat, Cora glanced towards her friend. Suddenly, Cora called her again. "Cassie.

Be honest with me. What do you think of my brother? Be honest!"

Cassie, in the middle of chewing her chicken leg, was surprised by the sudden question. She choked

on her food, coughing a few times before swallowing. "A little warning next time, please!" Cassie said,

grabbing her bottle again to ease her painful throat.

"I told you already, Cora. I like Nick," Cassie sighed, finally relieved.

"I know you told me that. But where is Nick now? You and Nick haven't gone to another date after the

first time. There's not even a visit or a call," Cora said bluntly. Cassie was still trying to get used to

Cora's outspoken personality.

However, Cassie knew that Cora was speaking the truth. It was honestly her biggest concern, too.

Nick had been vague about his feelings for her. Cassie had always been the one to take initiative. She

was the one who always called him, who always thought and cared about him. He had never done

such a thing to her. She didn't know what he felt about her. Did Nick even like her?

Cassie couldn't answer the question herself. Deep down, she worried about her relationship with Nick.

Cora noticed Cassie suddenly so deep in thought. She stretched her hand out to take Cassie's hand over the table. "Cassie," Cora called sincerely. "I only said that because you're my friend. I don't think Nick's serious with you and your relationship. It's easy for me as an outsider to see that you pay more attention to him than he does with you."

Cassie was startled by what Cora said. It was as if she was enlightened. Outsiders had the best observing seats. They saw the bigger picture. What if it was just all in her head?

As Cassie pondered more on Cora's observations, she barely missed her phone ring.

When she peered at the screen, she saw that Jordan was calling her.

Cassie hesitated in her seat. Cora leaned forward to check what was on Cassie's phone, smirking when she saw the name on the screen. "See? My brother's better for you. He always has time for you.

Can't you see that? He's even more concerned for you than he is for me! And I'm his sister!"

Cora laughed, while Cassie rolled her eyes and answered the phone, though she was not having anything to really say to him.

"Cassie. I just went to the hospital. They told me you got off work early. Where are you?" Jordan asked

kindly, voice low and husky. Cassie was trying to swat Cora who was busy giggling and stifling her laughter.

A few seconds later, Cora waved at Cassie, signaling her.

Cora didn't want her brother to know that she was out drinking. Cassie nodded and tried to come up with something to say.

"Jordan, I'm at home right now. What's up?" Cassie asked, wondering about the unexpected call.

"Oh, I see. Can I see you now? I've got a present for you," Jordan replied.

"What? A present? Jordan, that's so kind of you. But it's too late in the evening, don't you think? I'm a little tired after working all day," Cassie lied.

"That's all right. It won't take long, I promise! I happen to be nearby. I'll be there in twenty minutes! See you later," Jordan answered, about to hang up the phone.

Chapter 1367 Those Dangerous Men

Cassie was agitated and shouted out without a second thought. "I am dining with Cora. Really! You don't need to come."

"Cassie!" Cora called her name and glared at her with her eyes wide.

However, it was too late. Jordan had heard every word loud and clear.

"Cassie, where are you now? I'll come over," Jordan asked again.

Cassie regretted saying that; she didn't want to tell Jordan where she was. She mumbled something perfunctory and hung up.

When she hung up, Cora was about to ask if Jordan was coming or not and then her mobile phone rang.

Cora and Cassie looked at each other, and both thought, 'How unfortunate we are!'

The phone kept ringing persistently. Cora felt helpless and looked at the number. It was Jordan's.

Cora was upset and didn't want to answer the call, but she knew that if she didn't, then he would go directly to her home tomorrow. It would be more difficult to get rid of him then.

Besides, her money was in Jordan's pocket. She had no choice but to answer the call.

"Cora!" Cassie shook her head at Cora in a hurry, gesturing for Cora not to tell Jordan where she was.

Cora wore a bitter smile.

'Cassie, I'm sorry this time, ' Cora thought.

"Jordan!" Cora said, finally answering the phone. She pretended that nothing had happened.

"Cora, where are you and Cassie right now?" Jordan didn't beat around the bush and asked directly.

"Jordan, what's up? It's late now. We will be home for a while." Cora avoided the question and said something unrelated.

Jordan was unhappy and asked coldly, "What? Are you trying to lie to me? You know damn well that I fall in love with Cassie. Even if you don't want to help me, you shouldn't drag me back."

The last words were hurtful for Cora. She froze and thought for a moment about what he said. 'Am I a bad sister if I don't cooperate with him?'

As Cora muttered secretly, Jordan asked impatiently again, "Come on! Tell me, where are you now?"

Cora curled her lips and thought, 'He is my brother. He's always asking in an imperative tone.' It was a pity that she was the weaker one of the two.

She glanced helplessly at Cassie and then told her brother where they were.

After Cora finished the call, Cassie stood up quickly and said, "Cora, I have to go at once. I'll pay for the meal." She took out her purse to pay, but Cora stopped Cassie by holding onto her. With a sad expression, she said, "Cassie, my dear. Please help me out this time. When my brother comes and

finds you not here, he'll kill me."

Cassie was in a dilemma. She didn't want to face Jordan, but she felt terrible to refuse Cora.

Cora saw that Cassie was hesitating and she tugged on her sleeve. "Cassie, please, please help me!

I'll make your meals and wash your plates every day. Deal?"

After a few seconds, Cassie nodded to agree.

"Wonderful! Thank you very much, my dear Cassie." Cora jumped to her feet and hugged Cassie

happily.

Cassie burst out laughing while shaking her head.

They sat back down again to talk and eat. After less than twenty minutes, Jordan arrived.

Cassie happened to be gazing out of the window when she noticed Jordan getting out of his car and at

the same time, some men dressed in black rushing in her direction.

Cassie felt shocked and knew they were coming for her.

Suddenly Gamora's words replayed in her mind.

"Go home earlier after work. Be careful these days. Don't wander around."

'Did Gamora know something? So she called to warn me?' Cassie thought as her chest tightened with

fear.

As she wanted to tell Cora, she saw Jordan walking toward her and waving his hand excitedly.

There was no time to explain it to Cora now. Cassie was so agitated that she grabbed Cora's hand and ran in the opposite direction in spite of Cora's shocked gaze.

"Cassie, why are you running away now? My brother won't kill you," Cora shouted because she still thought that Cassie was running away from Jordan.

"Quickly. I'll tell you later," Cassie said with urgency while running as fast as she could go.

Cora turned back and noticed the unhappy look on Jordan's face as he ran after them.

Cora felt terrible, because she had betrayed her brother. 'If Jordan catches me, he'll kill me. What's wrong with Cassie? Why is she running away from my brother as if he was a demon? She won't even explain it to me.'

The two girls had only been running for a short time, but they had to stop when several men in black jumped out in front of them blocking their way.

"What the...?" Cora cried out in fear. She thought that it was only her brother who was chasing them,

but now she saw those men.

Cassie let Cora's hand go. These men were here for her, and she didn't want to get Cora involved.

"What are you going to do?" Cassie pretended to ask calmly but was frightened in her heart.

It was dark, and there were only a few dim lights, but it was enough for her to see the cold and frightening expressions on the men's faces.

"Shut up! Come with us!" the leader of the men yelled.

Cora pulled Cassie's arm and gave her a side glance asking, "Cassie, they...Do you know them?" Cora was so frightened that she was stuttering.

Cassie suddenly caught sight of Jordan out of the corner of her eye. He stopped a short distance behind her and took his phone out to make a call.

Cassie felt relieved and was glad that Jordan was clever enough to notice that something was wrong and call the police. All she had to do now was stall them until the police arrived.

"Hey, guys. You all look so handsome dressed in black. How about having a drink and some food with me? The food is very yummy here! Let's have some together!" Cassie suddenly said with an alluring smile.

Chapter 1368 Stomachache

Cassie's words shocked Cora. 'Is Cassie out of her mind? These people aren't our friends. Why would she invite them to have some food?' she wondered.

The men dressed in black were puzzled by Cassie's reaction. Their leader scratched his head in confusion and displayed a more friendlier expression on his face. "You seem like a clever girl. I think you already know that we've been sent here to bring you with us. If you co-operate without any resistance, we will be sure to be polite to you."

Cassie immediately realized that they couldn't be persuaded to change their minds, so she needed to buy some time. All of a sudden, she pressed her hands against her belly and winced as a look of abject pain contorted her delicate features.

Cora's eyes widened in horror and she asked, "Cassie, are you feeling okay? Do you have a stomachache?"

Cassie nodded her head with great desperation. "Perhaps I ate something bad. I don't think I can eat anymore. My stomach hurts so much. I feel terrible."

"Do you want to go to the toilet?" asked Cora, expressing concern.

Cassie gave her the thumbs-up even though she knew that Cora was less likely to understand what she really meant.

"Oh my god! I can't take it anymore. Where is the toilet? Quickly, where?" Cassie looked at those men with a wide-eyed grimace.

They all froze at her critical behavior, fearing the worst.

They were hired to take her away from there even without her consent, if need be. Since she was just a delicate woman, their numbers assured them that it wouldn't take much effort on their part to catch her if she tried something fishy. With that in mind, the leader began to eye her from head to toe and finally concluded that apart from losing a bit of time, they really didn't have to worry about this woman at all.

"Okay, there's the toilet. You can go, but you have to leave your bag with us," said the man pointing his finger at her handbag.

Cassie was glad to see that they had fallen for her trap and gladly handed over her bag to them without hesitation.

"Cora, wait here for me. Don't go anywhere and don't try anything reckless," Cassie whispered to Cora.

Cora nodded her head slightly to indicate that she understood her.

Cassie ran to the toilet with her hands on her belly. On her way she saw Jordan hanging up the phone

which led her to believe that the police would soon arrive in no time.

All she had to do was wait patiently inside the toilet until the police came.

After watching Cassie get inside the toilet, Cora pretended to be frightened, whipping her head around

to look for her brother, Jordan.

Meanwhile, Jordan deliberately didn't make eye contact with her even though it was obvious that she

was afraid. He turned around and started walking in the opposite direction towards the kebab vendor.

Cora didn't understand why her brother behaved like this, but she hoped that he wouldn't take any

unnecessary risks. It was not like she doubted his abilities, but rather the fact that they were vastly

outnumbered by these suits.

Cora sat there anxiously biting her nails. She knew that Cassie went to the toilet to stall them, but there

was only one exit in the toilet. Where would she go?

Time passed slowly. Not only was Cora anxious now, but also those men were starting to lose their

patience as well.

"Why is that woman taking so long? Is something wrong with her? What will we say to Shawn?" a man asked in a low voice.

The leader stood there pensively for a moment and said, "You! Go over there and check up on her."

His subordinate followed his orders and walked towards the toilet.

Her heart leaping into her throat, Cora crossed her fingers behind her back, while Jordan froze in his place, nervously looking at them with anticipation.

Suddenly, the loud sound of sirens wailed across and the men looked at each other blankly.

The leader clenched his fists and yelled, "Damn it!"

"What should we do? Here comes the police!"

"Go!"

He no longer cared about Cora or his job as he dropped her bag to the floor and fled hastily.

After a few minutes, when the police arrived, they picked up the bag and handed it over to Cassie.

"Miss Wang, please check to see whether something is lost."

Cassie looked at the bag, checked it thoroughly and then shook her head.

"Sir, they weren't looking to rob my friend. It's not that simple. We want to find out the truth," said

Jordan.

The policeman nodded courteously and said, "Of course. Please come with us to the police station.

After taking your statements, we will file an official case."

Finally, Cassie and Cora breathed a sigh of relief.

Outside the gate of the police station

Cassie and Cora walked out shoulder to shoulder while Jordan followed behind them.

Cora patted her chest and sighed, "Brother, you are so smart. I am glad you called the police in

advance. If it weren't for you, Cassie and I would be in a lot of trouble."

Hearing this, Jordan looked at Cassie with a serious expression and said, "Have you offended

someone lately?"

Cassie felt embarrassed. The first person who came into her mind was Gamora's boyfriend. He was

the only one she might have offended.

"Don't worry about it now. It could be an isolated incident. Just keep a low profile for a few days."

Cassie gave him a half-hearted smile.

Jordan, however, didn't believe her words. He stared at her deeply and said, "But I don't think that this was an isolated incident. It can't be that simple. Cassie, if you're in trouble, you can tell me. I'll help you."

His words moved Cassie. In truth, she did feel lonely and helpless and the person she needed the most wasn't even there to accompany her.

'Nick, where are you now?' she wondered.

Cassie's helpless expression aroused Jordan's desire to protect her.

"Cassie!" Jordan stretched out his arms to give her a hug without a conscious thought. Smelling the fragrance from Cassie, Jordan couldn't help but take a deep breath. As he opened his mouth to say something, Cassie pushed him away.

"You... Let me go!" Cassie was in Jordan's arms and her heartbeat increased by the second.

Cora was so shocked by his brother's actions that she didn't know how to react.

"No!" Jordan asserted and hugged her more tightly.

In truth, Cassie found comfort and warmth in Jordan's embrace. However, there was an obstacle in Cassie's heart. She was Nick's girlfriend now. How could she be with another man in the absence of

Nick?

Chapter 1369 False Impression

Even though Cassie wanted to have someone who cared about her and to rely on, she knew that

Jordan wasn't the right one.

When the thought of Nick entered her mind, she pushed Jordan away at once. Jordan's angular face darkened.

"Jordan, please behave yourself," Cassie said coldly.

Cora freaked out when she heard Cassie. She was becoming anxious that Cassie might push Jordan over the edge with her reckless action and blunt reply. She was also afraid if Jordan got angry at Cassie's constant rejection, he might force Cassie into doing something that she didn't want to do.

Cora knew her brother very well. He was willing to do anything to get what he wanted. For that very persistence, Jordan became the leader in his department at such a young age. He went to great lengths to achieve his goals.

Noticing Jordan's livid face, Cora interrupted at once, "Cassie, it's getting really late. What if the bad guys come back again? Why don't you let my brother drive you home?"

Lowering her head, Cassie didn't say a word. It seemed that she had accepted Cora's suggestion reluctantly.

Jordan's face softened.

"Let's go, Cassie. Let me drive you home," he said. Then he turned around and began to walk to his car without saying anything else.

"Let's go," Cora urged, sighing with relief. Holding Cassie's arm, she led her to catch up with Jordan.

After a while, they reached the gate of Cassie's residence.

Jordan slowly pulled over and looked at the sky through the car window. It was past midnight already, and the neighborhood was tranquil.

"Thank you," Cassie said quietly. Then she opened the car door and was about to get out of the car.

"Wait!" Jordan shouted all of a sudden.

Cassie was surprised when she heard Jordan. Before she could say anything, he already got out of the car and held the car door for her. "It's really late. Let me walk you to your house."

Cora was surprised at Jordan's consideration and gesture. She had never seen Jordan so thoughtful before. The way he treated Cassie was even better than the way he treated her.

Cassie felt a little uncomfortable about Jordan's suggestion, and she was about to turn him down.

However, seeing Jordan's determined eyes, she knew that he wouldn't let her go so easily, so she finally agreed. "Thank you for your consideration."

After reminding Cora not to go anywhere, Jordan walked Cassie to the building block.

Once they both got into the elevator, Jordan looked at her and said in a serious tone, "Cassie, what happened tonight wasn't a coincidence. You have to be more careful in the future."

Cassie knew Jordan only said that because he cared about her safety, so she didn't get annoyed with him for bringing up the subject again.

"Thank you for reminding me. I'll be careful," Cassie said with a faint smile.

At the sight of the smile on Cassie's face, Jordan's eyes became passionate.

"Cassie..." he said, reaching out and trying to hold her hand. He gazed at her and was about to say something. Cassie was a little nervous about what Jordan was going to say and do. There was no space in the elevator so she couldn't get away from Jordan if he tried to come on to her.

Just then, the elevator arrived at her floor. "Ding!" The door of the elevator opened.

"Jordan, thank you for walking me home," Cassie said in a hurry, and lowered her head as she walked out of the elevator immediately.

As Jordan withdrew his hand, he felt a little awkward. He noticed the embarrassed look on Cassie's face as she left. All that he could do was let out a sigh.

He loved Cassie very much, but she had never shown any interest in him. He had never loved someone so deeply before. 'What on earth can I do to be with her?' he wondered.

He thought about that with mixed emotions.

Jordan stood in the elevator with the door still open, watching Cassie walking to her apartment. When she had nearly reached her apartment, she turned back and smiled at him. "Jordan, drive home safely. Goodnight."

Then she continued walking to her apartment without looking back.

In the elevator, Jordan slowly reached out and pushed the button to go back down.

Even though Cassie had already entered her apartment, Jordan stared at the spot where she was standing just a few moments ago before the elevator doors had finally closed. He was captivated with her.

At Dream Garden

The next morning, Sheryl was still too weak to go downstairs to have breakfast, so Nancy brought a bowl of porridge up to her room.

"Sher, Charles asked me about your condition as soon as he got home yesterday. I can tell that he cares a lot about you," Nancy said, as she placed the bowl down. Nancy didn't want to speak for Charles. She was still furious at him for ignoring Sheryl before, but she didn't want to see Sheryl feel sad because of him.

Nancy thought what she had said might help to cheer Sheryl up a little. At least Sheryl wouldn't feel so dejected and disappointed in Charles.

However, Sheryl didn't react. It was as if she didn't hear what Nancy had said at all. She just quietly ate the porridge.

Nancy couldn't figure out what Sheryl was thinking. She wondered if Sheryl was completely disappointed at Charles or she was just hiding her sad feelings.

"Nancy, your porridge is delicious," Sheryl said. She had noticed the concerned look on Nancy's face,

so she tried to start a conversation with her.

"I'm glad you like it. Would you like some more? I can get you another bowl. Oh...but the doctor said

since you hadn't eaten much for the past few days, you shouldn't overeat at once. Sorry, I almost

forgot," Nancy said, patting her head lightly.

Sheryl chuckled when she saw Nancy's action.

It had been such a long time since Sheryl had laughed and Nancy felt a little relief to hear it. Nancy felt

sorry for Sheryl, and all that she hoped for was they found Shirley soon, so Sheryl could smile and

laugh once again like she used to.

Sheryl looked really pretty and sweet when she smiled. Nancy thought that nothing could bear

comparison with that smile.

Leila was sitting alone in the dining room downstairs.

She had tossed and turned the whole night with nightmares. She dreamed that she was pressed under

Jim's body in the shabby old house and that something terrible had happened to Shirley, which put her

into jail.

Leila had been sweating and couldn't sleep well all night. When she awoke from her sleep in a cold

sweat, she felt like she had been to hell and back.

When Charles came downstairs, he noticed that Leila looked terrible as if something horrible had happened to her. Her face was ashen, and she had a bewildered look on her face.

He knew exactly what had been bothering her because Charles was aware that Leila had been forced to have sex with Jim. Even with the best psychologists' help, no one could put something like that behind them after one night. However, Charles didn't feel sorry for Leila at all. She had made her own bed, and now she had to lie in it. What Leila had done was so evil that she had to be punished in the end. Even this punishment wasn't anywhere near enough.

Pretending to care about her, he asked, "Leila, what's wrong? Did you get into any trouble? If you did, just tell me. I'll do my best to help you."

He stared at her so intensely that he gave Leila a false impression that he was looking at her passionately.

Sheryl had warned him before that he could never look at another woman with his passionate eyes, or she would be furious at him.

However, in this particular case, Charles did just that, deliberately. He wanted to build Leila's hopes up and mislead her, so, later on, it would be much more painful for her when she learned the truth.

It wasn't the decent thing to do, but he was furious about what Leila had done to them all, and he didn't care about the repercussions that Leila would suffer later.

Chapter 1370 The Hidden Problem

Leila was so moved by Charles' concern for her. Meanwhile, she felt guilty. On the other hand, he regarded his daughter as the apple of his eye, but she had put Shirley in danger. On the other hand,

Jim had raped her, and she thought it was a kind of betrayal of Charles

It made her hate Jim more.

"Charles, I'm fine. Thank you!" Leila said sweetly, batting her eyes at him in appreciation. Charles, however, was already sick of her affections.

"Good. You should take some rest now. You got bags under your eyes." Leila wanted to slap herself.

She knew she should have spent more time on her makeup that morning.

"Ah, really? I never noticed," she said, trying to laugh it off.

"Anyway, you're looking a little tired, too. You should pay more attention to your health first. Shirley wouldn't want you like this."

Charles' face darkened after he heard her say that. Leila, noticing the sudden change in his demeanor, felt distressed.

Charles merely nodded, but disregarded the comment anyway. He grabbed a quick bite before leaving for work. Leila's heart hurt for him.

Charles' concern for her made her feel guilty. He was very upset because of Shirley's disappearance.

This only made Leila's hatred for Jim worsen.

'I should kill that bastard!' Leila thought angrily before suddenly figuring out a new idea.

It was a long shot, but it could be the only way. She tried to calm herself down, but only felt her anxiety rushing in quickly. She took a few deep breaths before she fished out her phone from her pocket and looked for Jim's phone number, the same one he had called her the day before.

Her palms were sweating as she waited for Jim to answer the phone. Each ring that went unanswered sent a shiver down her spine as her heart beat faster. The run-down, dirty cabin room was never lost in her thoughts. She could feel her stomach churn from her anxiety.

Finally, Jim picked up the phone. "Leila," he said huskily and it almost sounded like a whisper. "It has

only been a few hours. Are you missing me again?" he said teasingly. He didn't think that Leila would willingly come to him considering that she hated him.

Jim had never expected that Leila would have called him. Even more, it was just a few hours after they separated. He wondered if Leila was beginning to like being forced to have sex with him.

Jim thought of himself proudly. However, it only made him despise Leila more. Ill-behaved men never valued an "easy catch" anyway.

What Jim said disgusted Leila. 'He thinks I miss him? What an asshole!' Leila thought, infuriated.

"You're right. I do miss you. Are you free today? I want to see you again." Although Jim disgusted her so much, she had to admit that she needed him. She also knew it was better to treat him nicer, and if she acted bad, it would just provoke him more.

"Oh, of course. I'll always have time for you," Jim said seductively, breathing against the phone.

Leila laughed quickly, saying, "I'll meet you at the Aegean Hotel later at eight. Is that all right?"

"Very well, princess. I hope evening comes soon." She heard him laugh huskily. His laugh made her stomach turn.

She hung up hurriedly after saying goodbye. Afterwards, she sighed in relief.

Without even hesitating, she moved almost immediately. She went out to town, looking for things she might need that evening.

Leila had a very busy afternoon. First, she went to her old friend and finally got an electric baton from him.

"Electric batons are prohibited items. I had a hard time trying to get you one. Please be careful. Don't let anyone know you have it," Leila's friend cautiously reminded her. It was heavily forbidden to possess electric batons in the country. If the police ever found it on her, not only would she be arrested for illegal possession, but her friend would also be taken away.

"Don't worry. It's to defend myself. I'm always on edge when I'm outside late at night. I think I'll rest easier with this," Leila explained as calmly as she could.

Her friend never noticed that she wasn't being truthful. He handed the electric baton to her.

"Thank you," Leila said with gratitude. "I owe you one. Let me know when you'll be free for dinner,"

Leila added, chuckling softly. She beamed at her friend elegantly, without a single trace of gloom or anger on her face.

She then asked the same friend to buy her a bottle of pepper spray. Her friend was less hesitant to provide her with one, as pepper sprays were legal and more common to have. It was also easier to use in defending one's self.

After saying goodbye to him, Leila stood by the sidewalk, still feeling uneasy. 'What else can I do if the electric baton and the pepper spray don't work on him? I need to make sure he won't overpower me, or else, it might provoke him more. I'll be done for if I let that happen, '

Leila thought, frowning. She had to plan this carefully. One wrong move, and she could lose it all.

She already learned a valuable lesson from Shirley's kidnapping. She had no room for mistakes this time around.

She walked along the street, pondering on what else to get, before she thought about getting poison as well, just in case. The poison was odorless, tasteless and water-soluble that would be hard to detect.

'I hope I'll never have to use it. If I get caught, I'm dead.' Leila was anxious. She knew how dangerous it was to use poison. She thought about how she could get herself out of the case if she ended up poisoning him.

Being thrown into prison wasn't new to her. She now knew that she had to be more careful or else she

would get caught again.

Killing Jim, however, was more important to her than avoiding more prison time. He deserved to die.

The world had no place for men like him.

She lost sleep every night. The moment her eyes shut, she could immediately feel Jim's hands and body on her. It choked her up until she was forced to open her eyes again out of fear. It made her restless, and she tossed and turned every night.

She knew that Charles was a smart and powerful man. It wouldn't be hard for him to find out that she was the mastermind of the kidnapping, and Jim helped her do it.

Leila then realized that Jim was her hidden problem. She had to get rid of him, fast, before he even began to injure Shirley.