

Wedded Bride 1391

Chapter 1391 Gossips In The Office

Charles hesitated for a while before nodding in resignation.

"Well, I can't find a better idea for it. We can use this now. Please take action as soon as possible. It's better to do this now than later," Charles ordered.

"Got it," David answered back. He looked at Charles as if he had something to say, but he shook his head instead.

Charles raised an eyebrow at him.

"Mr. Lu, please don't worry. I'm sure Shirley is fine and she would be back soon," he said, trying his best to comfort Charles.

To David, Charles was a can-do superman who was able to do anything and everything he wanted.

However, he looked extremely vulnerable whenever his family was in danger, perhaps even more so than any ordinary man.

Sometimes, when he dropped by Charles' office to provide him with a report, he could see Charles look distantly outside with a sad look on his face. It looked like a drastically different man from the one he knew in the office, the energetic and cheerful man.

He had worked under Charles for several years. Charles was an excellent supervisor who always allowed an opportunity for his employees to showcase their skills and talents, and he also made sure that his employees were well taken care of.

David was immensely grateful for Charles. He was so thankful for him that it saddened him when Charles himself had something troubling his mind. He wanted to do everything he could to make sure that his boss would be reunited with his daughter. He wanted to comfort him as much as he could.

Charles nodded blankly and then dismissed him. Right before he could close the door, he saw Charles back in that remorseful and bitter expression. He sighed and felt defeated before shutting the door behind him.

As soon as David went back to his own office, several colleagues entered and asked him about Charles. Even though the news about Charles' wife and daughter was kept from the outside world, somehow, the entire office found out about it. It was also rare for Charles to skip work, which intrigued David's colleagues so much. They were both curious and concerned for their boss.

"What did Mr. Lu want to see you for?" one of the colleagues asked beside him while the others

listening intently.

"Nothing special, really," David answered flatly, not wanting to join in the gossip culture.

"Really? Well... Did Mr. Lu look all right? Someone said that Mr. Lu looked so tired and worn out when he saw him this morning,"

the colleague continued. David clicked his tongue impatiently, not wanting to be in the center of attention. Being surrounded by so many people, he couldn't start the work that Charles wanted him to do.

"Listen. Mr. Lu is okay. All of us should better put our time and energy on our work," David couldn't help but reply sarcastically. He knew that they were dying to know how their boss was, but it wasn't his place to talk about a broken man like that.

He stood up and walked out of his own office. He headed over to the rarely used stairwell. He called a contact who could force Jim to tell Shirley's whereabouts.

After his colleagues watched him leave his office, they grew irritated at his sudden arrogant behavior.

"Who the hell does he think he is? He's just an assistant! I'm so sick of his arrogant behavior!" the same colleague spat, somehow forgetting that it was also he who bothered David in the first place.

The other people agreed, however. They were always jealous of David because Charles thought highly of him. There was a small group in the office that despised David.

"David's just Mr. Lu's lapdog. Why should we listen to him?"

Someone more reasonable didn't say anything against him, but nonetheless, they shook their heads in disappointment before heading back to their own workspaces. They knew to be sensitive enough not to say such immature things in the workplace, because there was a chance that people could be listening to them.

David might soon find out that the immature workers kept backstabbing him like this. David had a point, even if they disagreed with him, gossip should not exist in the workplace.

They went back to their desks because they knew better and they didn't want to get in trouble.

Working in corporate was both complicated and competitive. People couldn't survive in the workplace if they were weak-willed and if they tended to complain. Everyone should be well-aware of their place. If they were not careful, it would be easy for them to be removed and replaced.

People, however, rarely looked at their own shortcomings and mistakes first. Most of them spoke

before thinking, even in such a prestigious company such as Shining Company.

Back in prison

Jim had a hard time the past few days. He had to work hard or else he was going to be punished. He never had such a miserable life such as this one, and he was beginning to be fed up with it. He wished he could wake up from such a horrible nightmare.

Jim would often grit his teeth whenever he thought of Leila. He absolutely loathed Leila that he regretted keeping his guard down. He wouldn't have been caught in her damn trap if he had been cautious.

For now, Jim could only comfort himself. 'Just you wait, Leila, ' he thought to himself. 'I'm going to obliterate you.'

Jim was confident about concealing Shirley's whereabouts. He was sure that Leila would never be able to find where he hid her. He was the only person in the entire world who knew where Shirley was.

As long as he could still hold Shirley hostage, the Lu family would be able to deduce that it was Leila who conspired with him to kidnap Shirley. He had nothing to fear.

He was sure that Leila would be even more miserable than him. Once they figured out that it was her

who was behind the kidnapping, she would have a harder time rotting in a prison cell than he ever would.

Jim snorted, delighted by the idea. He just had to wait and see. If there was an opportunity, he would make sure to make Leila's life a living hell.

He turned to look at the clock and noticed that it was yard time.

For Jim, prison life was boring. He saw the same people every day. He saw the same white walls every day. Only the short yard time outside provided him with a fresh, new entertainment each day.

Jim felt that he could relax a bit during yard time. He was going crazy from the long hours inside his jail cell.

Jim would often situate himself in a small corner of the yard to watch the others play basketball, or listen in on the prison gossip. When he got bored, he got up and went to the washroom. Just as he untied his uniform's waist band, a strong and loud kick to his head resonated in the small, dirty washroom.

Chapter 1392 A Tyrant In Jail

Toppling over, Jim fell on the ground. It happened so fast that he lost control of his body in an instant.

He didn't even see who pushed him. The only thing he did was cry out miserably.

Panicking inside, he recalled what he learned about life behind bars. Newcomers were bullied as soon as they arrived. He was afraid he would suffer the same. Just thinking of the possible worst things that might happen made him suffer mentally more than what he suffered physically.

He clenched and unclenched his palms to force himself to think quickly about his present situation. At the same time, he reminded himself to act courageously. He wanted to scare them right away to leave him alone once and for all. Otherwise, there would be darkness all around him. Then, he schooled his face with the deadliest expression he could muster, got up, and faced his attacker. Dirty words were at the tip of his tongue, ready to be lashed out, but he stopped himself as soon as he saw the face of the man.

His expression softened, from fury to relaxed, because it was Joey, inside the cell with him.

Ever since Jim got into prison, he witnessed how Joey fought the other prisoners and bullied those who were weak. He believed Joey had nothing to fear because he was one of the closest friends of the No. 1 tyrant in the facility, who could surely provide protection.

Whenever Joey threw his punches to someone, Jim just shrugged his shoulders and looked the other

way. He could still remember the first time when Joey beat up a fellow in front of him. Joey cast him a glance. He interpreted it as 'Joey's look, ' wondering if he would report it to the guards or not. But what he could do was turn his head to the opposite and walk away. He believed it was none of his business.

Now that he recalled it, he realized it was actually a testing from Joey, and he believed he gave him the best answer he could give.

Perhaps, Joey saw him as a desperado who was always ready to give up his life. But he knew more.

He knew which way the wind blew. Thus, they got along peacefully with each other as time passed by.

But right now, Jim could not think of anything why Joey attacked him. He racked his brain for anything, but nothing. So, he decided not to act against Joey.

Unfortunately, his silence did not bring him any luck. Joey launched at him again. This time, he was kicked right in his chest. He was thrown against the prison wall. There was too much pain. He couldn't help but groan.

Slowly, he stood up straight, and took a deep breath. He couldn't control the pain anymore and asked,

"Joey, what is this all about? Did I offend you? Please, let me know. I promise I will never ever do it

again!"

The answer Joey gave him was just a snort followed by a disdainful smile. Then, Joey turned and walked away, leaving him humiliated.

This was his first experience, his first humiliation. Before, it was always he who bullied others. If there had been no one to back Joey up, he would have kicked and beaten him up.

Every dog had its day. And, Jim realized, that day was coming for him soon.

He leaned against the wall and groaned. As he pitied himself in his current state, he blamed Leila for everything. He couldn't wait to put his hands on her throat. If she hadn't set him up, he would have been living abroad with 10 million bucks. He would never have worked for the rest of his life. He would have been driving the fanciest car and living in the most comfortable house. He could have bought everything his heart desired. What was more, he could have been dating the prettiest ladies in town.

His miserable days would have ended, and he would have lived in peace with wealth.

But all of his dreams disappeared like bubbles because of that bitch. In his anger, he punched the wall, imagining it as Leila. His eyes were full of anger, and his insides trembled. His fellow prisoners passing by the cell shuddered in fear when they saw the coldness in his eyes and the blood on his knuckles. He

looked like the devil incarnate.

He thought that what happened between Joey and him was a one-time thing only, but he was greatly mistaken. It was just the beginning.

The following morning, he was woken up by a terrible pain in his head.

Opening his eyes widely, he saw a fist punching him. Very surprised, he wasn't able to move away. He received several punches nonstop. In between the punches, he saw it was Joey. AGAIN!

"Stop! Joey, please stop!"

He curled himself into a ball, protecting his head with his hands. His mind was blank as a paper. He had no idea why things turned out like that.

Ignoring the plead, Joey continued punching him until his fist hurt and bled. He stopped and motioned for another prisoner to step forward and take over for him.

"You! Come forward! Punch this son of a bitch for me! I don't want to see you holding back. If you show mercy, you'll be next! Remember, I am watching!" Joey commanded. Without looking at Joey, the prisoner repeatedly nodded at his instructions. He approached Jim steadily and started punching him in

his stomach.

In the beginning, he didn't punch with all his strength. He remembered that he used to be one of the bullied boys for quite some time. But now, he realized, he was the one hurting other people. And, he didn't like it. However, Joey caught him right away.

"I said no holding back! Are you deaf? Man up! Start doing the job correctly, or else, you will see your bloody body lying right next to him!"

Joey shouted at the top of his lungs. To mean what he said, he showed him his fist.

Threatened by Joey, the prisoner started punching harder. Totally getting into his brutal actions, the prisoner gave his all.

It was only then that Jim realized Joey's real intention. What happened the day before was not an accident. JOEY WAS IN FOR THE KILL! Jim looked around trying to find some help. But, just like him before, the other prisoners looked at the opposite direction. For them, what was happening to Jim was just a daily routine. No one dared to take a step forward to defend Jim and to offend Joey. In short, they did not interfere to avoid getting into troubles themselves.

Jim was totally in despair now. In the beginning, he tried to fight back hoping that the prisoner would be

discouraged to continue. But, it only made the situation go from bad to worse. Soon, he gave up and lay motionless like a dead man. Still, they didn't work. Instead, the punches kept coming like raindrops.

On the opposite bed sat Joey, watching Jim with interest. No screaming, no cursing...Nothing was heard from Jim while the others used him as a punching bag. He was so unlike the other prisoners who got terrified even just for hearing someone scream.

One by one, the prisoners joined in punching Jim just to please Joey. They were hoping that he would leave them alone in the future. Not long after, Jim was black and blue all over. He almost lost consciousness. He looked like a dying dog on the floor. Only his weak breathing proved that he was still alive.

Clearing his throat, Joey instructed them to stop. He knew the right day was coming for Jim. Thus, he called it a day. The next moment, the cell was filled with Joey's snores.

Crawling, Jim moved towards the entrance. He felt his bones broken, as if he was run over by a car. He couldn't feel any part of himself. Even breathing was painful and it was killing him.

Closing his eyes in desperation, he felt his tears running down his cheeks. If he had just known that

Joey would do this to him, he would have killed him on their first meeting. Joey was like a rabid dog.

But the question was: why did he make his life so difficult?

When he managed to open his eyes again, he didn't know what time it was. His eyes reflected hatred.

He cursed both Leila and Joey to go to hell. He groaned and shut his eyes again. He dreamed that,

one day, he would make them suffer a thousand times more than his suffering.

But first, he needed to get out of there. He would pay any price just to be free. And, he would hunt Leila

down. He would torture her day and night! He would make sure that she would go through all his

sufferings. THREE THOUSAND TIMES MORE!

Chapter 1393 Visiting The Prison

At dinnertime, as Jim raised his hand hard to take some food, Joey passed by and knocked his hand

scattering the food all over the floor.

"Ah, it seems as if your arm is broken, so you can't take the food for your dinner. How about not eating?

Or it will hurt. Ha-ha."

Joey's voice was dripping in sarcasm as he kept making snide remarks about him.

Jim missed breakfast. Not of his own volition, but mainly due to the fact that his arm had sustained

heavy damage when he got beaten up this morning. He felt so dizzy and hungry that he didn't mind

kneeling down and begging Joey for some respite from the suffering.

"Sir, I'm wrong. Please forgive me. Please let me go." Groveling on his knees, Jim tugged at the bottom of Joey's trousers.

"Oh, what now? You want me let you go? Well, that depends on my mood." Joey curled his lips and looked down at Jim, with a scornful expression.

He wouldn't allow Jim even the slightest bit of peace, because his employer had emphasized the fact that Jim needed to be taught a lesson. They would force him to tell them where Shirley was when he'd fall apart mentally. Joey felt as though he hadn't tested Jim's limits yet, so he wanted to play a game of cat-and-mouse with him.

Then, Joey had a self-satisfied smirk on his face. He was sentenced into the prison because he had committed a big crime. This time, the violence deep in his heart was totally aroused. He wanted to give Jim a good lesson.

The blithe indifference in Joey's facial expression was an indication to Jim that he was never going to taste peace again. His already weakened body, failing to hold on, suddenly gave up on him and went

out of consciousness.

Joey immediately knelt down and stretched out his hand to check Jim's pulse. He breathed a sigh of relief when he found a steady pulse.

Without a word or warning, he stood up and kicked Jim in the stomach a few times before leaving him there to suffer on his own.

This followed for a couple of more days, on repeat. One day, as Jim simply walked past Joey, he suddenly turned around and yelled at Jim for disrespecting him and used it as an excuse to beat him to a pulp.

One day, after having been subjected to relentless physical and mental abuse, Jim finally broke down.

He threw himself at Joey's feet and bowed his head.

"Sir, please, please, stop. I'll do whatever you want me to do. Please let me go. Please!" Jim was a strong man, about 5 ft 9 in tall. Watching a man like that burst into tears out of sheer desperation was not a common occurrence. Although the other prisoners were hard as nails, it was a rare sight for them to witness something like that and they even felt pity for him.

Joey narrowed his eyes at him and said, "I can let you go, but you need to tell me where Shirley is right

now. I'm sure you know who I am talking about. The girl you kidnapped! Telling me the truth is your one-way-ticket out of here. So, what will it be?"

All this time, Jim had no idea that Joey had been treating him like a dog for this reason. He nodded to show his agreement without any hesitation or resistance.

"Okay, okay. I'll talk. She is in a wooden cabin in the north of the suburbs in Maple Town. It's the only cabin with a big chimney. It should be fairly easy to recognize."

As he spoke, his snot and tears dripped down his face. Joey pursed his lips up and cast a thoroughly disgusted glance at him. He wanted to torture Jim more, but unfortunately, Jim didn't have the fortitude to put up a fight.

"Telling the truth was the first smart thing you've ever done in your life," said Joey, tapping his foot against Jim's chin.

"I've told you everything that you wanted to know. Will you let me be in peace from now on?" Jim asked cautiously, with his eyes filled with hope and anticipation.

"Don't worry, I don't enjoy dealing with a coward like you. Now that you have told me what I wanted to

know, if you can manage to keep your head down around here, I won't get you into trouble." Joey smirked.

Jim felt utterly humiliated after being called a coward, but he didn't dare to show any dissatisfaction.

Putting on a flattering smile, he said, "Thank you. I'll stay out of your way, and you can bet on that."

"You'd better keep that in mind. Okay, now get out of my sight. Your face annoys me." Joey waved at

Jim gesturing for him to go away as he didn't want to see his mucus covered face.

Jim's smile froze on the corner of his mouth. He lowered his head and took a few hurried steps to get away from Joey. He crouched silently in a corner lest he should attract Joey's attention again.

Jim never thought that the Lu family would come at him like that. All he wanted was the money but now he was going to rot away in prison. He shouldn't have listened to Leila and kidnapped Shirley in the first place.

In fact, he was so afraid of the Lu family, and he no longer wanted the ten million dollars.

He sighed in utter defeat and his face darkened. The only thought that could cheer him up was the thought of having his revenge on Leila as soon as he'd get out.

During the visiting hour of the next day

"Someone's here to see you. Come with me!" the prison guard said to Joey, as he opened the door to his cell.

The guard felt it strange because nobody had ever come to visit Joey before. He thought he had no family or friends, since nobody ever visited him, until now.

What felt even more strange was that there were people visiting him more often now.

The prison guard put handcuffs on him and pushed him into the room.

Joey sat down and looked up to see David sat opposite him.

"How is it going? Did you find out where Shirley is yet?" David asked as soon as Joey sat down.

Even for a simple assistant, he dressed sharp and carried himself with a dignified look. Perhaps after many years of working under Charles, a bit of his boss had rubbed off on him.

Joey was slumped over the chair but as soon as he saw David's imposing disposition, he sat up straight immediately.

"Jim told me everything. Shirley is in a wooden cabin in the north of the suburbs in Maple Town.

Apparently, it is the only cabin with a big chimney. And there is a man guarding her in the cabin." Joey

told him all the details Jim had given him.

David noted everything on paper and took out his mobile phone to send the location to Charles.

Chapter 1394 Location

"Then... What about the one million you promised to give my family for my service?"

Joey stared at David anxiously, afraid that he would outright refuse to pay him.

"Don't worry. The money will be transferred to your family's bank account tomorrow. Of course, what

you say must be true, or else...We will take it back if we don't find Shirley in that place." David spoke

with great solemnity.

Joey's heart leapt with joy, as she thought, 'Jim wouldn't dare to lie to me.'

"The girl must be there!" Joey hesitated for a second, then nodded at the assistant with confidence.

Having reached the end of their discussion, David secretly slipped Joey a pack of cigarettes and

walked out of the room without uttering another word. He hastened back to the Shinning Company.

"Mr. Lu, may I come in?" The sudden knock on the door drew Charles' attention. With his permission,

David entered the room as Charles put away the files and grabbed his jacket from the hanger.

"Oh, you're here. I was just about to ask you if the location of Shirley was accurate." Charles looked

like he was in a hurry to leave as he rolled up his sleeves.

"Yes. The information came from Jim himself, so there no chance for it to be inaccurate."

"Okay, I'm heading there now to find Shirley. You take care of the company affairs while I'm gone. Just send me a message if something goes wrong."

Charles grabbed his mobile phone from his desk on his way out as soon as he finished talking.

"Mr. Lu, you should bring some people to accompany you. I worry about your safety, especially since there is a man watching Shirley. We don't know anything about him. He could be armed." David wanted to make sure Charles wasn't walking into a trap all by himself.

"I don't have time. I have to go there right now. You arrange something and send them over as soon as possible." Charles went into the elevator that was going to take him to the parking lot.

Charles wanted David to inform Sheryl of the news to ease and comfort her, but he was worried that it would only make things worse if he didn't find Shirley there.

After carefully mulling it over, he decided against informing her just to until he was certain.

The elevator beeped and the doors slide open to the parking lot. After setting the GPS to the location

Jim had given them, he drove out of there as fast as he could.

'My dear Shirley, please hold on. Dad is on the way to bring you home.'

Charles' heart was overwhelmed with excitement. 'Shirley has been gone for many days. I wonder how she is doing. God, I hope that she's okay!' The more he thought about these things, the more his heart ached to see her. Now that he knew where Shirley was, he didn't want to waste even a second. He would fly to her if he could.

In a deserted cabin in the suburbs

A man was seated anxiously on a chair, with a tattoo of an eagle's head on his arm. Under his feet laid cigarette butts scattered all over the floor. The air was filled with smoke.

Not too far from him was a girl sitting on the floor with her hands tied behind her back. No matter how hard the girl struggled, it was all in vain.

The girl was none other than Shirley, whom her parents were missing day in and day out.

The first few days after Shirley got kidnapped was very difficult for her. She couldn't stop crying and crying out for help, but she seemed to have calmed down now. Although deep down she was still just a scared little girl, she held her tears back because she firmly believed that her parents would find her and take her home soon.

Having lived through such a traumatic experience, Shirley seemed to have aged a decade in just a few nights. Her clothes were in tatters, her dimples were fading away, her cheeks were hollow and her face carried a tint of yellow due to lack of nutrition. However, even in the darkness, her eyes still shone brightly with the same fire and resilience she always had.

On the other hand, her captor, was an anxious man whose hands couldn't stop fidgeting when they weren't hold a cigarette or his mobile phone. And when he had his phone in his hands, he couldn't stop staring at the screen, constantly locking and unlocking it again and again.

Ever since he found out that Jim was in prison, he had been waiting for Charles' call. He was still expecting the ten millions dollars in ransom. He was even more excited by the thought of not having to share a single penny with Jim.

However, since the day the police caught Jim, there was no response from the Lu family.

Patience was not a virtue he was blessed with and every minute he spent there wore him down mentally and physically.

He constantly thought about how to deal with the little girl he was in charge of. According to Jim, if the

Lu family hadn't paid him the money in time, he would have to kill her and dump her body there.

However, regardless of how tough his tattoo made him look, the man had never killed another human being before. He didn't have it in him to kill that girl. In the past few days, he noticed how red her eyes had gotten from holding back her tears. It filled his heart with pity.

But what else could he do? Although he didn't want to kill her, he couldn't just wait here and do nothing for the rest of his life, either. He was desperate and he needed to come up with a plan very soon.

"Uncle, may I have some water? I'm very thirsty." Shirley stared at him with eyes filled with hope.

Faced with her gaze, he couldn't help but take out a bottle of water. He opened the cap with a quick twist and poured water into her mouth.

"Ahem..."

Shirley gulped down as much as she could and coughed out the rest. Water ran down from her mouth and wet her dirty clothes.

The man stopped at once and let out a heavy sigh.

'This little girl is troublesome, like a delicate flower. I have to feed her with water carefully.' That man looked up into the ceiling helplessly and went back to his thoughts again.

Suddenly, he heard the sound of a car engine outside.

'What? Have the Lu family already found us? This is a remote area in the middle of nowhere. People wouldn't be here unless they had a purpose. They must have come to save the girl.'

Chapter 1395 An Empty Room

The tattooed man was too anxious to stay put, as he watched several men in the distance marching towards the cabin. His heart started to palpitate and fear clutched at him. At this point, he didn't have much time to hesitate. He had to escape as quickly as possible; or else, his identity would be exposed, or even worse, he would be caught red-handed. Time was of the essence and he didn't have much of it in his hands. In the end, he decided not to kill Shirley as Jim had instructed him. He knew that he wouldn't make it out of there if he had to carry her with him, so he rushed toward the back door, kicked it open and made a run for it.

The sound of heavy footsteps drew closer and closer. By then, Shirley had assumed that her parents must have found her location and now were coming to rescue her. The tattooed man's behavior explained a lot, which helped prove her assumption. Even in the face of fear and uncertainty, she tried to remain calm. She sensed, by her captor's desperate fidgeting, that he was too busy looking for a

way out to pay attention to her. So she tried not to draw too much attention to herself and risk her own safety.

Once the tattooed man had disappeared without a trace, Shirley's face conveyed a spectrum of ambivalent emotions, mostly fear and excitement. Tears of joy welled up in her eyes and this time she allowed them to escape and roll down her cheeks.

When several men broke into the cabin, they saw a poor little girl in tears, sitting alone on the floor with her hands tied behind her back with a rope. Her face was covered in grime and her eyes were red and swollen.

Shirley watched as the men surrounded her, but none of them resembled her father. They were all donning identical black suits and came across as robots—expressionless and somewhat mechanical in their demeanor. The little girl didn't know what to make of them and their sudden arrival brought her no sense of safety.

She found it difficult to face the truth. A moment ago, she had assumed that this terrible episode of her life would soon come to an end when she heard multiple footsteps. She had already pictured herself in her mother's loving arms, but now it seemed to her as though it was all just a sad delusional fantasy in

her head. The men in black that stood before her looked even more terrifying than the tattooed man.

Shirley's body trembled with fear and she cast a frightened look towards them. She felt like a helpless

gazelle who was separated from its mother, and now was trapped by a group of hungry lions. The

negative thoughts kept coming in like waves on rocks. Cold sweat covered her entire body and she felt

like her heart was going to explode.

One of the men, boorish and tall, attempted to approach her in a very cautious manner. His name was

Benjamin, the man in charge of the group. Judging from the way Shirley looked at him, he understood

that the little girl was still in shock so he decided to ease her mind before making any sudden attempts

to approach her. The others observed every nook and cranny of the room, trying to find the traces left

behind by the kidnapper.

However, fright consumed every cell in Shirley's body, swelling them with terror, when she saw a

stranger walking over to her. The past few days had been both mentally and physically taxing her as

she was always on edge waiting for the next bad thing to happen.

Despite her best efforts to control her emotions, she still could not resist bursting into tears. Her

gasping wails echoed and made everyone in the room feel distressed.

The moment Benjamin heard her cry, he stopped in his tracks and looked back to his partners. Their faces were blank as they seemed at a loss. They exchanged gazes and the confusion in their eyes was undeniable. They were worried that their aggressive actions might cause a trauma inside such a poor girl's heart.

After a moment's hesitation, Benjamin decided to approach Shirley again, but he put on a mild smiling face, and walked more slowly. Once he approached Shirley, he didn't talk to her at once. He slowly untied her hands at first. Realizing that doing that didn't stop the girl's crying, he gave her a gentle pat on the head. "Little girl, don't be scared. We are not the bad guys. We all are your parents' friends. There is nothing to worry about. Let us help you get out of here and you will soon see your parents again."

Shirley raised her head and looked at the man with beady eyes, her mind reeling in disbelief. Slightly reassured by this, she sniffled and wiped her tears away with the back of her hand. "Really? Are you... being honest?" Shirley's mental defenses doubted the man's credibility. And she was a smart girl. She kept her eyes on Benjamin's face, trying to find out whether he was lying or not.

At the same time, nauseating spurts of adrenaline coursed through her veins. Now that her hands were unbound, she was prepared to struggle and make a run for it if she detected any inconsistency from the man's face.

As a father, Benjamin's eyes were dripping with pity. He was reminded of his own daughter. Despite being almost the same age, they had experienced completely different lives and seen different perspectives of the world. Sensing the panic inside Shirley's heart, the man could not imagine how his daughter would look if this tragedy had happened to his own daughter. He couldn't bear to think of it. 'It would definitely leave an irreparable trauma in any child's heart. I just hope this will never happen to my innocent girl.'

This little girl was too young to go through one of the most darkest and traumatic experiences of this world. In his view, Shirley was supposed to live a carefree life, protected by her parents. But now, all she was feeling was the absolute lack of safety!

If it were his daughter in her place, he would have lost his mind. It was such a pity that this girl had to go through something so harrowing and soul-crushing. He wondered if she would ever be the same as

she was before this.

Benjamin shook his head in disappointment, furrowing his eyebrows and sighed. 'Look at you, poor little girl. You look as thin as a lath! You must have suffered a lot.' The dark purple bruises around her wrists were obvious indications that the rope had been tied too tightly and for too long. Such a scene added more anger to Benjamin's mind. And he couldn't stand to curse silently, 'Such ruthless bastards! How could they do this to a child?'

Soon after, the man smiled at Shirley, and his eyes were full of love and warmth. "We are not the bad guys. We have come to save you. Your hands are bruised. Please allow me and my friends take you to the hospital for having a check-up. After that, we will take you home, back to your parents. What do you say?"

Shirley hesitated for a while before she nodded her head with agreement. She was so exhausted and drained of energy that she was not able to think too much. The only thing her brain registered was the fact that she would be going home to be with her parents. Everything else was just details that no longer mattered to her. For the first time in days, relief and happiness took over replacing all doubts and trepidation.

However, her mood fluctuated so steeply that her mind was not able to adjust. As a result, Shirley fell unconscious in front of everyone.

Fearing that Shirley might lose her life, everyone got nervous, especially Benjamin. While the others were at a loss for actions, Benjamin reacted immediately to carry Shirley over his shoulder and rush outside to the car. His speed was as fast as a strong wind, zooming past his partners in a flash.

"Hurry up! We should follow Benjamin!"

As the other man yelled out to his suited colleagues, all of them left the cabin and rushed after Benjamin.

When the driver saw Benjamin running towards him, he promptly started the engine and drove over to him.

"Benjamin, is she okay?"

the driver asked.

As the head of the group, Benjamin had been asked by Leila to intercept Shirley before Charles' arrival.

He cast an impatient glance to the driver, and then put his hand over Shirley's forehead to detect her

temperature. He still wasn't able to pull himself out of panic. He feared that Shirley might just pass out forever and that was a scenario he couldn't afford to face. Besides, even if Shirley's life wasn't in danger, in Leila's eyes, he might still be responsible for any wounds or injuries Shirley incurred. All things considered, all he wanted was what was the best for this girl.

Luckily, judging by her temperature he concluded that Shirley must have been suffering from a fever.

'Perhaps she fell unconscious due to exhaustion. That shouldn't be a big deal, ' Benjamin thought, wishfully. He then breathed a deep sigh of relief and answered, "Nothing serious. She just has a slight fever. Let's take her to hospital first."

The driver nodded his head and didn't ask anymore. As soon as Benjamin and his men all got in, the driver didn't waste another second to turn the car around before speeding off to the nearest hospital.

"By the way, since we are going to the hospital, we might need to show our ID cards and hers as well.

That might expose us, so what should we do about that?" a man blurted out from the back seat.

"That's fine. We'll just say that we're her family. The doctor won't ask too much. Don't worry!"

Everyone fell silent, assured by the word of their leader. Meanwhile, Shirley shifted uneasily and sometimes let out a discomforted whimper.

Ten minutes later

Outside the cabin, the sound of brakes screeching rang out. A car pulled over and immediately,

Charles jumped out and rushed inside the cabin.

On his way there, Charles drove his car as fast as he could, without pause. He had lost count of how

many times he had to overtake other cars and run a red light. He knew the risks and he took his

chances anyway. After all, his daughter's life was at stake.

Charles kicked the door open once he approached the doorway. He thought he would finally see his

dear daughter, but to his disappointment, when he looked inside, he found nothing but an empty room.

On the FLOOR, there were a pile of ashes and cigarette butts. When he moved his eyes around, he

found pieces of ripped rope laid in a mess.

Chapter 1396 Is She Flying A Kite

Charles was shocked. All his hopes were quashed, and he felt empty. He couldn't help but worry again.

"Has the kidnapper killed Shirley? Or he has moved her to another place?"

Charles' mind was in a state of chaos. His face became ashen, and his hands trembled. The life

seemed to have drained from him, and he nearly collapsed in a heap.

He couldn't accept that his daughter was killed. 'Where are you, Shirley?' he thought in desperation while looking up at the ceiling of the room.

'When I catch her damn kidnapper, I'll cut him into pieces!' If the kidnapper dared to lay so much as a finger on Shirley, Charles would get back at him in the most brutal possible way. Charles' eyes turned red at the thought of what he was going to do to the kidnapper.

He clenched his fists, and the veins on the back of his hand popped out. Then suddenly out of anger and frustration, he punched the wall with his fist. The blood oozed out through his fingers, but he didn't seem to care about his injury. He was numb to the pain.

Charles cared about nothing except for Shirley's safety.

"You don't have to come. Shirley isn't here. The kidnapper took her away before I got here," Charles told David in a hoarse voice. Then he hung up.

Charles walked around the cabin and looked for any clues along the way, but failed to find any. It seemed that the kidnapper was very thorough and had left no trace.

Finally, he went to the wooden stake. Bending down before it, he examined the broken ropes on the floor and felt heartbroken at the thought of Shirley being tied up by them.

Shirley's skin was tender, and the coarse rope would surely leave black and blue marks. 'Did Shirley get injured being tied with these ropes?' His chest tightened at the thought of how she must be suffering. Charles wished more than anything that he could tear the kidnapper apart with his bare hands and hold his beloved daughter in his arms again.

He sat silently for quite a while in the cabin. It was dusk by the time he came back from his trance.

Charles wiped the tears from his cheeks and managed to build his courage up again.

Although he lost the lead, he couldn't give up looking for Shirley. He firmly believed that his daughter was waiting for him to save her and that she wasn't far away. So he had to pull himself together for Shirley's sake.

Thinking about this, he strode out of the cabin and then left.

At Dream Garden

"Leila, let's go to the hospital and see Sheryl this afternoon. She's been in the hospital for a few days.

We should visit to see if she has recovered,"

Melissa suddenly proposed while Leila was watching TV.

Leila was confused. She shifted her eyes from the television to Melissa, looking at her in disbelief.

'Has Melissa changed her mind? Why does she suddenly care about Sheryl's health? That's

impossible! She was angry at me because I failed to kill Sheryl a few days ago. She must be playing

tricks!' Leila thought.

Charles was already suspicious of her, so Leila didn't want to rock the boat and join Melissa. She

worried that Charles might retaliate against her if she helped Melissa to hurt Sheryl again. After all,

Melissa was Charles' mother. Whatever she did, he wouldn't be too hard on her.

Leila hesitated for a while and then said, "Aunt Melissa, Charles doesn't allow us to leave Dream

Garden before he finds out who the murderer is. Don't you remember? I'm afraid that he'll get mad if

we don't do as he says."

"I don't think so. We're only going to the hospital to see Sheryl. It's not like we're running away." Melissa

was so confident that her son wouldn't blame them. She put her hand to her heart to assure Leila.

Leila still hesitated a little. She didn't want to provoke Charles, especially at such a sensitive time.

Otherwise, his bad impression of her would be more difficult to reverse.

However, Melissa seemed to have made up her mind to go to the hospital today. Leila dared not to defy

her wishes. Moreover, she was a little curious about Sheryl's current condition.

"Leila, you've kidnapped and almost killed! What are you hesitating about now? It's not a big deal to go out!" Melissa snorted. She didn't seem to take Charles' warning seriously.

Leila nearly had a heart attack when she heard how candidly Melissa spoke and she was about to cover Melissa's mouth. She looked around in panic. Fortunately, there was nobody else around in the living room. Charles would kill her if he heard that.

Leila seethed at Melissa for her recklessness and blatant regard for her secret.

Seeing Leila so nervous, Melissa shot her a glare. She looked at Leila with contempt in her eyes, as if to laugh at her cowardice.

"Come on! Don't worry too much! If Charles is annoyed, I'll tell him I made you go with me." Melissa was becoming impatient with Leila's indecision.

Leila's face turned pale when she heard what Melissa said. "Aunt Melissa, I didn't mean that. I think, maybe we should tell Charles before leaving Dream Garden and visiting Sheryl at the hospital," she explained.

"It's unnecessary to bother Charles. We won't be there for long." Melissa waved her hand.

"Okay. Aunt Melissa, please give me a moment. I'll go upstairs to freshen up. Then we can set off."

Since Melissa insisted on Leila going with her, Leila had to agree.

Once she was back at her room, Leila carefully applied her makeup so that it was flawless. Since she would meet Sheryl, she must show her perfection before that woman. Sheryl had been sick for a long time, so Leila was sure that Sheryl wasn't as beautiful as she was.

Before leaving, she pressed her lips together to make the lipstick smudge and give a more natural appearance. She looked in the mirror and smiled with satisfaction.

"Aunt Melissa, let's go!" Leila naturally took Melissa by the arm and then they walked out of the Dream Garden.

In the taxi

"Leila, tell me the truth. Do you still want to remove Sheryl from the picture and become my daughter-in-law?" Melissa looked at her and asked.

Leila's heart thumped faster, and she was a little panicked. She wondered why Melissa asked her such a question. She thought she had disguised herself well in front of Melissa, and Leila was sure that she

didn't do anything that would have made Melissa suspect anything. So until now, Melissa still thought that she was innocent.

In saying that, then Melissa wasn't flying a kite by asking her such a question.

Chapter 1397 The Evil Mother-in-law

"Aunt Melissa, Charles is the only man I love. It's my lifelong dream to be his wife. Please don't laugh at me," Leila blurted out and lowered her head, looking at her fingers bashfully.

Meanwhile, Melissa said nothing. She only smiled contently, hearing exactly what she expected she would hear.

But what Melissa said left Leila scratching her head—she was dying to know what exactly Melissa was implying. But when she lifted her head, she found that she had her eyes closed, wearing a self-satisfied expression of joy. All Leila could do was bite her lips and swallow down her curiosity.

On the way to the hospital, Leila looked at the passing views to try and distract her from obsessing over her own thoughts, thinking hard about what Melissa was going to do.

Even though she didn't have any clue at the moment, Leila figured that Melissa must've had certain intentions.

Sensing that her utmost goal was once again out of her reach, Leila felt her heart sink into her stomach. Although Melissa wasn't the perfect ally, a little bit of support was better than nothing.

If Melissa could teach Sheryl a lesson, then Leila wouldn't have to lift a single finger. And if Charles was pissed off, Melissa would take the heat—Leila would get off easy. All she needed to do was wait and see.

Heaving a sigh of relief, Leila went over her plan again. The more she thought about it, the harder it was to hide her excitement.

Stealing a glance at Melissa, she hoped that she could lend her a real hand this time and push her closer to her life's dream.

There wasn't anything Leila wouldn't give to get the chance to marry into the Lu family. After waiting for such a long time, it killed her to even see Charles, unable to do a thing.

The same question plagued her heart every time, 'Will I ever get a chance to marry him?'

All she could do was answer her own question.

'Yes, he will!'

Clenching her fists alarmingly tight, she had to stop herself from screaming out loud.

Meanwhile, in her ward, Sheryl was lying in the bed and staring at the ceiling.

In the passing days, she couldn't sleep well, no matter how much the doctors urged her to rest well for her recovery. Before the day her dear daughter came back home with her, it became impossible for her to have a good night's sleep. The thought that Shirley could be suffering alone somewhere out there could keep Sheryl up forever.

Every night, as she lay awake in her bed, her daughter's sweet, lovely face would appear before her eyes. Her sweet smile, her warm hugs...Sheryl missed everything about her.

One night, she was too frustrated to stay in bed and had to get up so she could pace around the room.

The idea that Shirley could be tortured or starved scared Sheryl to death. Her impulse was to knock Leila down, bite off her flesh and drink up her blood. She swore to God that she would make that bitch pay with interest one day.

It was no coincidence. Because she couldn't sleep at night, she caught Leila slipping into her room.

That gave her the chance to pretend to have lapsed into a coma and tug Leila around.

Everything depended on how Sheryl played along for the show.

As she brainstormed for her own plans, urgent knocks on the door interrupted her. Frowning at the sudden interruption, she wondered who it could be. It couldn't be Charles or Nancy or the doctor because they wouldn't startle her like that. Figuring that it was some uninvited guest, Sheryl sneered. Instead of telling whoever it was to come in, she let them wait outside to see what they would do.

Just as she expected, the visitors stepped inside without permission.

Sheryl's face twisted more tightly when she saw who her guests were. Impatient to get the interaction over with, she didn't bother to greet them.

"Why didn't you tell us to come in? You're perfectly fine. Didn't you hear us knock? Don't tell me your illness is making you deaf!" The moment she saw her, Melissa blew up at Sheryl with a frenzy of rage, broad enough to cover her whole face, completely forgetting that she was there to visit a hospital patient.

"Mom, I was taking a nap just now. The doctor told me to take as much rest as possible. I wasn't expecting anyone to visit at this time. I thought someone was knocking on the wrong door. It was so loud that it almost gave me a heart attack." Sheryl decided to take her time and give a disguised response to imply Melissa was an unwelcome disturbance.

"What?" Melissa shouted even louder, baffled at the response. The sarcasm in Sheryl's words was clear and Melissa could barely hold back her anger, but Leila stopped her before she could utter another word. After giving Melissa a reassuring smile, she turned to Sheryl.

"Sheryl, you misunderstand. Melissa came all the way here with good intentions. Maybe we were a little too loud, but it's just because we were so eager to see you. We didn't know you were taking a nap," she said, trying to sound reasonable.

The words only made Sheryl give them a flat look. She was well aware of what the two women were really. Sneering at them, she didn't even think it worth the trouble to try being polite. Instead, she said impatiently, "I don't feel very well today. I just want to go back to bed. Now that you've seen me, please leave. I'm not well enough to deal with you."

With that, Sheryl merely turned her back at them, making them glare at her from behind, burning holes into her head.

It wasn't anything new. Melissa never had any kindness for Sheryl. The reason she came to visit was simply out of curiosity, and maybe for the chance to amuse herself by seeing Sheryl in such a weak

state. It wasn't often for Sheryl looked so helpless.

But much to her dismay, Melissa didn't get what she was expecting. Sheryl looked nothing like the weak, pathetic patient Melissa thought she would be. In fact, adding fuel to the fire, she talked with her nose high in the air, like she knew just how much better she was than them. With that, Melissa's rage toward her daughter-in-law went past the ceiling.

"Sheryl, is that the way you should be speaking to your mother-in-law? How dare you be so rude to me!

I came all this way to show my concern for you!" she roared back, pointing a trembling figure at

Sheryl's back. The longer she was in Melissa's sight, the angrier she got. Any ounce of decency she

had faded away and Melissa couldn't stop pouring out all the striking words she had been piling up for

the woman.

"I'm so disappointed in you! God! Why did Charles have to marry such a shameless woman? Does he

ever think about his poor mother? Sheryl, don't you dare forget what kind of family you married into!
We

won't tolerate you!"

This time, Leila didn't stop her. On the one hand, Melissa was too angry to reason with anyway, and

Leila had no intention of being cannon fodder. On the other hand, it rather delighted her to see how much Melissa hated Sheryl.

Instead of drawing fire upon herself, Leila merely took a seat and enjoyed the show. Smirking at the scene, she tried hard not to clap and cheer.

"I shouldn't be the one to tell you this. But you deserve to lie here in the hospital! I've never met such a shameless woman in my life. Everyone will be better off if you rot here for the rest of your pitiful existence! Save us the trouble!" At this point, Melissa was just letting words slip from her mouth without

thinking. With her hands on her hips, and her face twisted, she looked like a furious gargoyle glaring down at Sheryl.

While the whole episode unraveled, none of them noticed a figure stepping through the doorway. A coldness came at them, harsh enough to freeze time.

"Mom, leave her alone! There couldn't be a worse time for you to lash out and say whatever you want like this. Get out!" Charles thundered from behind them. While he was already suppressing the anger in his voice, his tone was already frightening enough to stun Melissa silent.

He was already in an awful mood, not having found his daughter yet. Too frustrated and impatient to do anything else, he went to visit Sheryl in the hopes of finding a moment of relief. Nothing could've displeased him more than to find what he had just witnessed, his own mother hurling insults at the woman he loved most. Feeling so exhausted, he had the impulse to drag his mother outside by the collar himself.

Chapter 1398 An Apology

Melissa approached slowly and reluctantly to the door of the ward. Even though she felt humiliated that Charles had yelled at her in public because of Sheryl, his stern look made her feel afraid.

Charles didn't want to ruin Sheryl's feelings and mood by speaking in front of her, so he followed

Melissa out and closed the door quietly behind. Leila felt awkward being alone with Sheryl, so she left

the room right after Charles. When she stepped out of the room, she heard Charles scolding Melissa in the corridor.

"Mom! Did you forget what I told you? You and Leila cannot to leave Dream Garden before I find out who wanted to kill Sheryl. Why don't you listen to me? Don't you regard my words seriously?" Charles said harshly, staring at Melissa with a stern look on his face.

Melissa didn't dare look Charles in the eye. She turned away from Charles' tongue-lashing and knew

that she was out of line for shouting at Sheryl just now.

"I...I'm here to see how Sheryl is doing! What's wrong with that? I'm just trying to be nice," Melissa explained, stammering.

"You? Being nice? Have you already forgotten that you shouted at Sher just a few moments ago?

Mom, Sher is really sick now. She needs as much peace as possible and to rest. You would never have shouted at her if you were genuinely trying to be nice to her!" Charles said furiously.

His heart was full of anger, and he shouted at Melissa, unleashing all of his anger and frustration out on her.

"Mom, I warn you, for the last time. If I catch you disturbing Sher again, I assure you that I'll kick you out of Dream Garden and never see you again!" Charles was so disappointed in Melissa, so he made himself very clear that this was her last chance.

Melissa froze, feeling shocked and startled by what Charles had just threatened her with. It was as if she had been struck by lightning.

After a while, she finally opened her mouth and said meekly, "Charles, I won't do it again. I did only

come here to see how Sheryl was doing. However, she didn't greet me nicely, and that's why I lost my temper. I didn't mean any of it."

She grabbed Charles by the sleeve pleading with him. Melissa was afraid that he would kick her out of Dream Garden.

She knew her son very well. If he had made a decision, he would see it through. If Melissa didn't admit that she was wrong, she might end up being kicked out and left on the streets.

Melissa regretted having yelled at Sheryl. She didn't expect that Charles would have heard what she said and care so much about Sheryl. Melissa misjudged him and never thought that Charles would dare to kick her out just because of Sheryl.

Again, she begged anxiously, "Charles, I'm sorry. I know what I did was wrong. I'll apologize to Sheryl immediately." With that, she rushed to Sheryl's room so fast that Charles didn't have the chance to stop her.

Even though Melissa was his mother, and he respected her, she had crossed the line so many times that Charles had to warn her for the last time. If she kept hurting Sheryl's feelings, then he was left with no other choice but to kick her out.

Charles was overwhelmed with stress. He didn't know where Shirley was, and Sheryl was in the

hospital because someone had tried to kill her. Meanwhile, the mastermind behind it all remained still at

large. However, his mother didn't seem to understand the severity of the situation. Instead of being

supportive and helpful, she seemed to keep stirring up trouble. Charles didn't have the stamina to deal

with it any longer.

He felt disappointed in her. Realizing that she was going to go into Sheryl's room to talk to her again,

he wanted to stop her, but Melissa ran so fast that he failed to do so.

Thus, he followed Melissa into the room in case she quarreled with Sheryl again.

Sheryl sat up straight when she heard the door open. She watched as Melissa barged into her room.

Only this time, Sheryl looked her straight in the eye.

When Melissa saw that Sheryl had sat up and stared her down, she was furious. When she came

earlier, Sheryl had turned away and refused to talk to her. Melissa thought that Sheryl was such a bitch,

and she always pretended to be innocent in front of Charles.

Anger boiled in her heart, and there were daggers in her eyes when she glared at Sheryl. However, she

quickly put on a sweet smile on her face when she remembered that Charles was standing right behind her. Though she didn't fool Sheryl this time, Sheryl could see through her facade and thought she was such a hypocrite.

"Sheryl, I'm so sorry that I acted on impulse. I didn't mean any of what I said. I hope you don't take it to heart. I'm here to make an apology to you. Please forgive me. I won't do it next time. I promise,"

Melissa said gently. Even though Melissa hated Sheryl with every fiber of her being, she hid her feelings by bowing her head. She did this deliberately to show her son that she was sincerely sorry.

She hated Sheryl for always finding a way to humiliate her and that Charles seemed to be under her spell. Every time they got into an argument, Charles forever took Sheryl's side.

Though Melissa was apologizing, Sheryl noticed the reluctance and impatience in her tone. Melissa's pretentiousness sickened her. However, since Melissa wanted to play this game, then Sheryl decided that she would too.

"Mom, don't say that. I would never blame you. I was wrong too," said Sheryl, holding Melissa's hand and looking at her sincerely. Their acting was so seamless that anyone would believe that they had

already managed to patch things up.

Leila, who was standing behind Melissa, couldn't help thinking that Sheryl had put in a classy performance. Curling her lips slightly, she continued to observe what was going to happen next.

It was Charles that interrupted their peaceful harmony. "Mom, Sheryl is a very generous and kind woman, so she forgave you this time. However, let me be clear. If you stir any trouble for her in the future, I won't forgive you, and I'll disown you," Charles said coldly.

Charles would never have believed that his mother could behave so mean to Sheryl until he saw it himself. When he overheard what his mother had said and done to Sheryl, it shocked him and made her look like an uneducated ill-mannered woman.

Melissa's face froze for a few seconds at Charles' solemn words. She was his biological mother, but it seemed that he didn't care about her at all now.

She was the woman that gave birth to him and brought him up. She felt so upset that he had blamed her just because of a woman like Sheryl.

Melissa didn't believe for one second that Sheryl was the nice woman that Charles had described. She wondered what Charles could see in Sheryl to marry her. 'Sheryl never treats me nice! Never Ever!'

Melissa shouted to herself.

At that moment, her resentment towards Sheryl began eating her up. Anger burned in her fiery eyes.

The fury inside her was like a balloon growing bigger and bigger, and it would explode at any minute with a bang.

Swallowing the anger, Melissa clenched her teeth and cleared her throat. "Yes, Charles is right. Sheryl is such a nice woman. I'll never cause any trouble for her in the future. I was terribly wrong. I'm so sorry, Sheryl. I hope you can forgive me and we can get along with each other from now on," Melissa said in a low voice.

Sheryl felt some satisfaction seeing Melissa finally bow her head to her. However, she didn't care about these small things and how Melissa treated her. The most important thing for her to do now was force Leila to hand over Shirley.

Chapter 1399 Determined

Sheryl was tired of wrangling with Melissa. She turned to Charles. "Charles, stop blaming everything on Mom," she said to her husband in a loud voice. "She didn't mean it. Besides, I am to blame as well. If I weren't so impulsive, then Mom wouldn't have become angry. "

"Mom." Sheryl turned to Melissa. "I'm not angry with you, and I owe you an apology. I was so tired and in a fret. I'm sorry. Please forgive me."

Then, she took both Melissa and Charles' hands and held them together. "Let's all forget the unhappiness. We're family. We should work together to bring Shirley back. So we can reunite."

When she mentioned Shirley, her precious daughter, her eyes reddened and soon filled with tears.

Leila, who was standing aside, was more than embarrassed. She wasn't a member of the family and felt like she was intruding. 'Should I stay or leave?' thought Leila, restlessly.

She stepped forward. "Aunt Melissa." Leila cleared her throat and said, "Sheryl mentioned that she was tired. Why don't we go home and let her have a rest? She hasn't fully recovered yet."

Melissa had had enough of Sheryl, and she wanted to get out of here. However, Charles was there, and she couldn't just leave. Leila had given her an out, so she nodded to agree with her.

"Yes, you're right, Leila. We should go. Charles, please take good care of Sheryl. And Sheryl, I do hope you can forgive me. There should be no misunderstanding between us."

Charles made no reaction. He stood beside Sheryl's bed in silence, putting Melissa in an embarrassing position.

Melissa smiled awkwardly before taking a deep breath. "Well then, we're leaving. Sheryl, I hope you get well soon."

"Sheryl, sorry that we have bothered you. Please have some rest. We'll come and see you when you're better. Please don't hesitate to let me know if there's anything I can do for you," said Leila simpering.

To her surprise, Sheryl suddenly huddled herself up and cowered in the corner of the bed. Her eyes were filled with panic and terror. She leaned against the wall and tried to keep at a distance from Leila as if she had seen something extremely horrible.

Charles was shocked when he saw how Sheryl had reacted. Leila didn't say anything upsetting, but Sheryl responded so violently. Charles tried to ask her what had happened, but Sheryl shook her head and called out, "Leave me alone! Get out! Get out! Now!"

While covering her ears tightly, she lowered her head helplessly. She seemed to be directing it all at Leila.

Leila stood gaping, at a loss as to why Sheryl had become so nervous and afraid of her. She hadn't done anything to provoke her today. When Melissa was making a scene, Leila just stood by and kept

silent. She was only saying goodbye to Sheryl. That wasn't a reason to behave like that.

Or...could it be that Sheryl had noticed something?

Leila became restless at the idea. 'What if Sheryl remembers what I have done? What if she tells

Charles about it?' thought Leila, as if on pins and needles. She stared at Sheryl nervously biting her

lips.

Charles was also confused, although he knew that Sheryl was a sensible person and wouldn't create a

scene out of nothing. She must have done it out of some reason. Besides, she hadn't fully recovered

yet, and the emotional fluctuation wasn't good for her health. So he decided to send Melissa and Leila

away lest their presence irritated her again.

"Mom, Leila, perhaps you should leave now. Sheryl doesn't feel well," he said impatiently. "By the way,

since I still haven't found out the criminal who attempted to kill Sheryl, you'd better stay in Dream

Garden."

Leila nodded awkwardly, forcing a smile. Sheryl had targeted her, which had made her exposed in front

of Charles. Leila took a deep breath. Her eyes were filled with hatred and resentment. No matter how

much she hated Sheryl, she would have to endure this indignity for the moment.

"All right, we'll go home. Goodbye, Sheryl, take care."

Leila held Melissa's arm and walked out, though she was still anxious about Sheryl's reaction and didn't want to leave. Leila worried that Sheryl would say something against her to Charles. So she decided to eavesdrop outside the room.

When she stepped out of the door, she noticed that Sheryl was casting a strange look at her, which made her heartbeat race.

Once she closed the door behind them, she grabbed Melissa's arm and stopped her in her tracks.

"Shush!" She pressed a finger against her lips and gave her a hint with her eyes blinking.

Melissa was also curious about Sheryl's reaction. So she agreed with Leila's decision. She joined Leila by bending down and pressing her ear against the door to eavesdrop.

Charles knew that something had caused Sheryl to act that way and was eager to find out what it was.

After Melissa and Leila had left, he asked Sheryl in a gentle voice, "Sher, what happened? Are you feeling unwell? You look so pale. What had Leila done that made you so afraid?"

Sheryl didn't answer. She just shook her head violently and became a bundle of nerves, jumping at the

slightest sound, which distressed Charles deeply to see her like that.

"Sheryl, please tell me. What's wrong? Let me help you. Don't be afraid. I'm always by your side. I won't let anybody hurt you. So can you tell me what happened just now?"

Charles caressed her hair gently and said in a low and tender voice, trying to comfort her. Sheryl's hair was very soft. He had heard a saying that people with soft hair had soft hearts. He agreed with that because Sheryl was a good example. She was a kind and soft-hearted woman. She would never hurt anyone even when she was hurt herself.

As her husband, Charles wouldn't let anyone bully her. He had made an oath to protect her all his life, but Sheryl had been attacked many times under his nose. He wouldn't let it happen anymore.

So he had to find out what had happened and get to the root of the matter. He had to dissipate her fears. Charles wanted to get rid of any possibilities that might hurt the woman that he loved.

Sheryl gazed into his eyes, and tears slowly ran down her cheeks. She bit her lips contemplating whether to tell him the truth.

Charles could see the slight distrust in Sheryl's eyes, which broke his heart. He couldn't say a word, as if something had blocked his throat.

After a long silence, Sheryl made her mind up to tell him. "Charles." She looked up at him with teary eyes. "When I saw Leila just now, I had an overwhelming feeling. I felt that the one who entered my room and tried to strangle me was none other than her, Leila!"

Chapter 1400 I Trust You

Sheryl paused for a while and then continued hesitantly, "The way she talked to me brought me back to that scary night. I didn't know how to face her. I couldn't stop myself from shivering when I saw her."

With Sheryl's words, Charles didn't feel surprised. After all, he knew her well, and his assumption was right. What he didn't anticipate was the fact that Sheryl was traumatized, which upset him a lot.

With no words, he hugged Sheryl tightly in his arms. The concern and anxiety of Sheryl were so strong that Charles could feel it. He said softly, in an attempt to comfort her, "Don't be afraid, Sher. I am always with you. You don't need to worry about anything. Whether it is Leila or not, I promise that I will try my best to find out the truth and bring the murderer to justice."

Feeling relaxed, Sheryl leaned her head on Charles' shoulder, and finally stopped shivering. She gradually calmed herself down, as if she didn't panic just now.

"I trust you, Charles. Thank you for being with me all the time," Sheryl said softly, feeling fervor

because of her husband's words.

"It's no big deal, Sher. Come on! We're husband and wife. We are supposed to help and support each other. Before I catch the murderer, I will never let her show up in front of you," Charles said with assurance.

"Thank you, Charles," she said sincerely. Right now, Sheryl was like a meek kitty, lying in his arms, and feeling his warmth.

Meanwhile, Leila, who was eavesdropping outside the ward, was dumbstruck. The paleness of her face was apparent that she couldn't hide her anger and shock.

The pale expression caught Melissa as she took a glance at her. No comment came from Melissa with Charles' statement, a sign that she was turning her back at Leila for real. Nevertheless, it was Leila who caused all the trouble, and Melissa had nothing to do with it. If Charles made up his mind to discover the truth, there was nothing Melissa could do to stop him. She just felt sorry for Leila, who was feeling pressured and terrified now.

Silently, Leila was mind blown. She almost lost her balance and fell on the floor if Melissa wasn't holding her.

Leila regretted not having killed Sheryl. If Sheryl had died already, it would be more satisfying to see than having this situation now. At least, she didn't need to feel scared. As she clenched her fist so hard, her fingernails pierced into her palm inevitably.

In the canteen of the hospital, feeling perplexed, Cassie just stared at her lunch and didn't take a bite.

She didn't have any appetite.

However, instead of making a fuss, Cora got used to Cassie being absent-minded and upset.

"Cassie, what's bothering you? You didn't even take a bite. How can you go back to work without eating anything?"

Cora said to Cassie. She didn't want to see Cassie like this anymore.

What Cassie could do was shake her head and reply indifferently, "I don't feel like eating. I don't know why. I have no appetite recently."

"You should think about your health, Cassie. Your face is so pale. Shouldn't you see a doctor?" she asked, worried about Cassie. What friend could not worry about Cassie's condition? It was natural for Cora to be concerned for her.

Cassie burst into laughter. "Cora, I can tell whether I am sick or not myself. I am like a doctor, right?"

Cassie playfully said and giggled.

Cassie's words amused Cora. They finished their lunch, and there was still some time remaining for their break. However, as they walked out of the canteen, they heard people gossiping.

"How strange! Isn't Sheryl Mr. Lu's wife? Why does Mr. Lu's mother care about Leila more than she does to Sheryl?"

"Yeah, I noticed that too. No matter where Mr. Lu's mother goes, there is always Leila. I heard that they two had a fight and made a scene in Sheryl's ward yesterday."

"If Mr. Lu didn't show up in time, what could have happened? Well, I don't know that a classy family like them will have so much drama. If I were Sheryl, I might need to reconsider whether I would marry Charles or not."

"Well, you should take your time then. There are a lot of women out there who want to marry Charles and become part of the Lu family. You hesitate, you lose the chance."

People kept gossiping and giggling, not caring whoever was around.

Feeling outraged, Cassie couldn't hear this anymore. Her heart tightened when she heard the gossip of

the people. No one told her that Sheryl was sick and she was staying in the hospital where she worked.

What was worse, she knew nothing about it.

It turned out that Sheryl had a tough time. Although they didn't meet each other many times and they

knew each other through Nick, Cassie knew Sheryl well. She knew Sheryl was pretty, kind, and

independent that made her a perfect wife wished by every man.

'A person like Sheryl doesn't deserve to be so unfairly treated!' Cassie thought.

All of a sudden, Cassie felt like she needed to check on Sheryl right now.

Grudgingly, she then excused herself to Cora and ran to the counter. She asked the receptionist which

room Sheryl was staying in and rushed to her ward.

In the meantime, Sheryl just finished her lunch and was going to take a nap. But the moment she

closed her eyes, all she could see was Shirley's smiley face. Her daughter was smiling at her. She was

so innocent and cute. But the next second, her face started to fade. The little girl started to walk away

from Sheryl, and it was getting harder for her to see the little girl.

"Don't, don't leave Mommy, Shirley!" she pleaded. Sheryl stretched out her hand instinctively, wanting

to grab Shirley's hands. But all she got was air.

With tears in her eye, Sheryl woke up from her dream. She realized that she was staying in the hospital. Shirley wasn't here.

Feeling frightened, Sheryl struggled to sit up and leaned her back against headrest of the bed. Her eyes closed with bitterness. At this moment, her grief and sorrow were eternal. The dream caused her to miss Shirley so much that she almost lost control. Feeling suffocated, she wanted to go outside her ward to breathe in some fresh air. If she stayed alone, she might go crazy.

"Sher! There you are!" a feminine voice shrieked. Sheryl almost fell upon hearing a familiar sound. Who could have called her with such anxiety?

With curiosity, she turned around and saw Cassie smiling at her.

"Cassie?" she called out in surprise. Sheryl didn't remember that Cassie worked at this hospital until now. How could she forget it?

"Sher, I hear that you are staying in the hospital. How could you not tell me? I can come and visit you."

Cassie hurriedly walked to Sheryl and held her arms. They walked towards a table and sat down.

Seeing Sheryl's pale face made Cassie worried more, so she asked anxiously, "Sher, what happened?"

Why are you staying in the hospital? Who did this to you?"

To lessen Cassie's uneasiness, Sheryl smiled and said, "I am fine, Cassie. I am recovering, though I'm not quite alright about mental state. A lot of things are bothering me lately."

With a deep sigh, Cassie asked, "Now, tell me what exactly happened. Sher, are you receiving a wicked treatment from the Lu family?"

Remembering about the gossip in the canteen, she felt angry again. She could have helped Sheryl if she knew her situation already.

Yes, Sheryl wasn't Cassie's relative, and they didn't see each other very often. They were just friends like others. But because of Nick, Sheryl had been taking care of Cassie, and she tried to set them up.

Therefore, Cassie respected and cared about Sheryl.