

## Wedded Bride 161

### Chapter 161

Joanna urged the panic-stricken Becky, "Becky, answer me now."

Isla looked at Becky with contempt, not intending to help her.

'When Becky set it all up, she should have known that this day would come. No wall can stop the truth,' she thought.

Becky was in a state of alarm and didn't know what to do next. 'According to Isla, Aron has evidence of my false pregnancy. Even if I can fool Joanna now, my lie will be known to all once Aron shows the proof.'

After a bit of hesitation, Becky said to Joanna, "Grandma, I really love Aron. Please believe me."

"I trust you. But I only want to know the answer. Did you get pregnant at that time?" Joanna was serious, determined to find out the truth.

"Does this mean so much to you?" Becky looked at Joanna with a frown and went on, "You know that everything I do is for Aron and I love him wholeheartedly. Why do you obsess over this question?"

"Becky, it's a matter of principle." Now Joanna had guessed the answer. She felt heartbroken and couldn't accept it. She asked, "Becky, why did you do that? We approved of your being together. Why did you lie to us?"

"Your approval made no difference." Becky cried out hysterically, "Aron and I have been together for four long years. His tough heart should have already softened, touched by my sincere love. But see what happened? I have done so many things for him and what do I get? Aron still loves this bitch. It has been almost half a decade, but he still couldn't forget her. Why does he love her instead of me?"

It was hard for Becky to accept it. She was superior to Isla in everything. However, Isla had met the perfect man, and Becky was envious of that. That was why she had plotted to steal Aron away from Isla by all means.

Joanna looked at Becky with surprise and disappointment. She understood Becky's thoughts, but she could never agree to her ways.

Joanna said to Becky, looking heart broken, "Becky, you have changed."

Becky responded with a sneer and thought, 'It's all your fault. And you have the nerve to say that?'

"You have turned me into a wretched woman." Becky proceeded with a cold smile, "Grandma, I have loved and served Aron with all my heart and put his needs before my own. But Aron ignored all of these and only wanted to push me away. So don't blame me for what I am going to do."

"What are you going to do?" When Isla saw Becky walk up to Joanna, she dashed forward between Joanna and Becky. Isla stretched out her hand and advised her, "Becky, you're my cousin. I don't want to see you make more mistakes. Why not give up on something that doesn't belong to you?"

'No matter whom Aron will marry, Becky won't be that person, ' thought Isla to herself.

"Shut up!" Becky shouted at Isla in anger "Aron is mine and no one can take him away from me!"

A crazy thought had occurred to Becky. 'Aron won't believe me anymore, and Joanna knows that I lied to her. No one will be on my side. If... if Joanna has an accident, I could put the blame on Isla. Perhaps Aron would resent her and give me another chance.'

Once the seed of this mad thought grew in her mind, she couldn't get rid of it. She suddenly grabbed Isla's hands and pushed her hard. Isla slammed to one of the desks.

Before Isla could recover from the shock, Becky took Joanna by the arm and said, "Grandma, please forgive me. You have discovered my secret and I can't let you live."

Becky continued with a sniff, "I know that you have always been fond of me, and you must hope that I get married to Aron. Now help me, or Aron will leave me..."

"What are you doing?" Joanna asked, looking terrified. She was in poor health. As she watched Becky approaching, she felt her heart beat faster.

"Becky, let go of her!" Isla had been shoved to a desk after Becky pushed her. Although she felt great pain on her knee, she thought about Joanna's safety and ran to protect her.

Before Isla could reach Joanna, Becky pushed Joanna into the wall with so much strength. Joanna blacked out immediately, with the blood gushing from her head.

"Help! Is there anyone around? Please help me..." Becky cried out. "Isla, are you going to kill me too?" she howled out loud enough for those outside the office to hear.

Paula had been standing, not far from Isla's office. As soon as she heard the cries, she was the first one to rush into the office. When she came in, she saw Becky crying on the floor, with Joanna in her arms. Meanwhile, she was pointing at Isla accusing her of something horrible. She called out to Paula, "Please help me call an ambulance."

Paula was taken aback at the scene. She couldn't move. She didn't come to her senses until Becky asked her for help. She replied in panic, "Okay, I will!"

Paula took out her phone to call 120, and then called 110.

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"Isla, that is a downright dirty accusation. Grandma has been so kind to me. Why would I want to hurt her? What's more, I am sure everyone here knows what I am doing here today. Why would I do such a thing?" Becky asked furiously.

"It is because..." Isla was at a loss for words and she did not know how to explain it. Perhaps... Would they believe her if she explained it clearly?

"What is wrong? What is going on here?" When Aron arrived, he found many people gathering around. He squeezed through the crowd and found his grandmother on the floor with a lot of blood. Aron rushed toward Joanna and held her tight, "Grandma! Wake up! Hey! Grandma, wake up! What happened to her?" Aron asked, bewildered.

"Aron..." Becky cautiously stepped towards Aron and said in a low voice, "I have called the ambulance. Grandma will be fine. Don't worry."

"What happened to her? Tell me!" Aron's eyes turned red at what he saw. His grandparents were his only family left. And he was determined to take good care of them, but now... "Who brought her here? Who brought my grandma here?"

"It's me. I am sorry, Aron. I didn't mean to." Becky replied while lowering her head. She dared not look at Aron in the eye. "Grandma gave me a call this morning and she said that she wanted to meet my cousin, Isla. I also tried to convince her not to come here, but you know that grandma is so stubborn that I couldn't stop her. I had no choice but come with her. But I didn't expect that..."

Becky stopped a bit then continued, "I didn't expect Isla to have such a temper. And she had a fight with grandma. She pushed grandma during the fight and then..." Becky tried hard to explain.

"Aron, I..." Isla was in a panic. She was genuinely concerned about Aron's grandma and she was also worried about what Aron would think of her. She feared that Aron wouldn't understand and that he would never trust her.

"Aron, let's look into that later. We have to get grandma to the hospital now." Becky told Aron. But as she spoke those words, Becky hoped that Joanna would not wake up anymore.

Aron lifted his grandma and rushed her to the hospital without taking a glance at Isla. Becky went with him.

As soon as they left, the police arrived and took Isla away after hearing Paula's exaggerated testimony. It seemed that Isla had lost her mind and instead of defending herself, she didn't utter a single word.

Meanwhile, Joanna was rushed to surgery at the hospital. Neither Aron nor Becky told his grandfather about it, but Becky still made a call to Mandy. She was in such a daze that she didn't know whether she was doing the right thing or not. She badly needed someone with a clear perspective.

Obviously, Mandy was the best person to help her.

"What is going on, Becky? Why was Joanna sent to the hospital, all of a sudden?" Mandy rushed to the hospital after hearing the news. When he got to Becky, he asked her. "What did you do in the morning? She was still fine this morning. Tell me what happened, Becky."

"Mom..." Becky burst into tears and fell into Mandy's arms while Mandy patted her back gently to console her.

"Don't cry, Becky. I am here and I will help you handle this. What happened to her?" Mandy held Becky's hand while asking in a soft voice what happened.

"It is Isla. It is her. She pushed grandma down to the floor." Becky insisted that it was Isla who hurt Aron's grandma, but she never mentioned the details of the accident.

Aron was terribly upset at that time, and he couldn't help roaring at Becky. "That's enough. Get away from here and stop crying. My grandma is not dead yet. Why do you keep crying here?"

"Aron, mind your manners. Why are you yelling at my daughter? It is not her fault! Let's be clear about that!" Unwilling to appear weak, Mandy stood up to Becky. "It's Isla. She did this to your grandma. Why don't you yell at her?"

"Mom, forget it." Becky pulled Mandy away. "Aron must be worried and upset about his grandma. Let's go and talk somewhere else." she said.

Becky walked to the staircase with her mother, overcome with emotions. Trembling, she took Mandy's hands and begged her, "Mom, I really need your help now. Please help me."

"Tell me the truth. Becky, what did you do? What happened this morning?" Even though Mandy didn't like Isla, she knew well that Isla would never hurt Joanna. On the other hand, Mandy knew her own daughter's temperament and Becky must have done something wrong. She must have had something to do with Joanna's accident.

"I..." Becky mumbled, not knowing how to explain it to her mother. But Mandy was a little bit impatient and then asked her, "Why are you hesitating? Tell me what you did! How can I help you if you don't tell me the whole story."

Upon hearing this, Becky started off to say, "Mom, Aron has found out that I was never pregnant. He had been abroad for so long but he figured it out. And now even Joanna knows. I really had no idea what to do, so..."

Becky stopped. She dared not tell Mandy what she did. She took Mandy's hands and went on, "Mom, if grandma doesn't wake up anymore and I insist it was Isla who did this to her, no one would suspect a thing. And Aron would have no evidence even if he suspects that I did it. But if Joanna can make it through this time, I..."

"Focus! Don't be so flurried," said Mandy who remained calm. She was much more composed than Becky. "Joanna's operation is not yet finished and she wasn't really in good health before. I am afraid that it is hard for her to wake up. Now... Now we can't do anything but to wait and see. It's a gamble"

"How?" Becky had no idea.

"Though Aron's grandpa is old, he is the head of his family. And he loves Joanna deeply. If he gets to know that it was Isla who hurt Joanna, what do you think he is going to do?" It was impossible for Becky to change Aron's mind and perhaps he would even defend Isla because he loved her so much.

But he dared not do that if his grandpa was there.

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Aron asked, looking concerned, "Doctor, is my grandma all right?"

The doctor took off his mask and replied, "You must be the patient's family. The patient was in poor health, and she hit her head. She is now out of danger, but..."

When Becky heard the doctor saying that Joanna's life was out of danger, she almost collapsed to the ground. She could barely stand as she held on to the wall.

However, with what the doctor said next, she felt relieved, "But the patient might be in a coma indefinitely..."

Aron grabbed the doctor's hand and asked, "What did you say? What did you mean that she might be in a coma indefinitely? When will she wake up?"

Becky came forward, took Aron's hand and advised, "Aron, you are frightening the doctor. Let go of his hand!"

"The doctor has tried his best. No matter what becomes of grandma, I'll take good care of her." Becky decided to take this opportunity to attack Isla. She continued, "Grandma has treated me so well. I won't spare that bitch- Isla."

Aron yelled at her, "Enough! Don't call her a bitch. She is your cousin. It is not certain that she's the one who did this. Don't talk rubbish here."

Becky fixed her eyes at Aron and said with a sad look, "Why are you still trying to defend her? "People at the company are the witnesses. Isla did this because she was envious of grandma's being on my side. Why do you still love this vicious woman?"

"This is a serious matter. We must investigate further..." Aron believed that this wasn't Isla's doing because he knew her very well.

Before Aron could finish his words, Mike's grave voice came from the end of the corridor. "There is no need for further investigation." He strode towards Aron and said, "The evidence is certain. What other proof do you need? Will you believe in it when your grandma never wakes up again?"

"Grandpa, you misunderstood. This is not what you think..." Aron continued to explain with a frown, "Isla..."

"That's enough!" Mike thundered with a serious look, "I don't care what's going on between you and that woman. I don't want to see her face again. Besides... I won't forgive her for what she has done to your grandma."

"Grandpa, don't get angry." Becky came forward and held Mike's hand. She said, "Grandma is in bed now. You should take care of yourself. If anything happens to you..."

"Becky, don't worry. As long as I am alive, he can marry no one but you." Just this morning, Mike had decided to let Aron choose his wife on his own. But now things had changed. If Aron intended to wed Isla, he wouldn't give his consent.

"Grandpa, grandma is still in a coma... I only want to look after grandma well. At present... I have no other intentions," Becky responded. Mike was satisfied and calmed down after hearing Becky's words.

Aron watched Becky escort Mike to Joanna's ward. Instead of following them, he gave a call to a doctor he knew abroad and asked him to come and check on his grandma. Then, he went to the police station to bail Isla out.

The procedures were done quickly. Aron stood at the gate of the police station, waiting for Isla. She was terrified as she was detained. When she walked out of the police station, she saw Aron and she couldn't hold back her tears.

Aron walked up to her and tightly held her to his chest. He comforted her, "My little girl, why are you crying? Don't be afraid anymore. I will help you get through this."

He took Isla by her hand and said, "I will drive you to your house."

When he was about to go to his car, Isla said in a low voice, "Aron... How is your grandma?"

"She is out of danger now." Aron observed that Isla was very much relieved. She continued, "When will she wake up?"

'When she wakes up, she can prove my innocence,' thought Isla to herself.

"She..." Aron replied with a frown, "She might be in a coma forever. The doctor said that she would likely be a vegetable for the rest of her life."



"Wh... What?" she asked in shock. 'If Joanna doesn't wake up, who could prove that I am innocent?' she wondered, slightly panicked.

Aron comforted her, as if he heard her thoughts. "Don't worry about it. I will prove that you are innocent."

Isla laughed bitterly. 'It's not fair. God is always on Becky's side. He helped her four years ago, and so he does now.' She asked Aron with a sad expression, "Aron, do you really believe that I have nothing to do with your grandma's accident? Perhaps... perhaps the truth is as Becky said. I hurt Joanna because I got angry for her cursing words."

"You won't." Aron said resolutely, "Isla, I believe that you're not that kind of person. Give me some time and I will prove that you are innocent."

Isla cried harder. 'If I had believed Aron four years ago, Joanna wouldn't have gotten hurt like this, ' she blamed herself.

"You may have a hard time in the following days." Aron said, "But I promise that it won't last long."

Isla didn't sleep well in the next few days. Every time she closed her eyes, the scene where Joanna was lying in her own blood crept into her mind.

She had lost much weight in those few days. When she walked into the company, all the people around her whispered to one another. Little noise would cause her panic.

Then Autumn came back to the company. When they saw Autumn, they shut up immediately. No one dared to speak ill of Isla in front of Autumn.

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"What's wrong?" Paula stood in front of Autumn with an ounce of care and asked her in a cold tone. Now that Paula had been transferred to the logistics department, she did her work in a perfunctory and detached manner. Paula would definitely not pin her hope and aspirations on her present job as she was merely a cleaner in the company now. Would she realize her value and potential through this job? Of course she would not.

She harbored ill thoughts and hatred not only for Autumn but also for Isla, because in her opinion, they both stood in the same position and were responsible for her current condition in the company.

"What are you going to do now? You asked me to come here but you have just been silent. What is your intention?" Paula furrowed her eye brows impatiently while shooting her questions. She was enraged by Autumn's bad attitude towards her.

"Paula, we have been colleagues for over three years, right? And I have known you for three years already. In all those years, I have never done anything wrong to you, This has just left me confused as to why you detest me so much?" Autumn was curious about what sparked the controversy in the first place. She really wanted to know why Paula always had a strong feeling of despise and hatred towards her.

However, upon hearing this, Paula laughed slyly and replied sarcastically, "I am afraid you have misunderstood me through those years. I never said that I hate you. Who told you this?" Obviously, Paula was not going to be honest with her. She would not tell Autumn that she disliked her simply because she was envious of her and the life she was leading.

Autumn gave an all-knowing smile and decided not to waste anymore of her time dwelling upon this matter. She asked Paula to come to her cabin because she wanted to figure out what happened in the office during her leave.

"Nothing special happened here. You were off for only a few days. What could possibly happen in such a short span of time?" In fact, what Autumn specifically wanted to know was what had happened to Isla. Autumn knew that Paula would pour out all details she knew without reservation as she despised Isla very much. "Paula I mean what happened to Isla?"

"Well, that is really a good question. But I am afraid that you have to ask your bestie for more details after all she is the person concerned." Paula burst into sneer as she still couldn't help telling Autumn the whole story. "You know what? They..."

Paula exaggerated what happened in the company that day and narrated the story down to every minor detail. After hearing it all, Autumn scowled and clenched her hand into a fist.

She knew for certain that Isla was a kind girl and she would never hurt people. But Autumn was still worried about Isla at such a critical time after all Aron's grandma was seriously injured.

Autumn was still a little absent-minded when she went off work that day while Charles took her to a dress shop. He asked her to pick up a beautiful robe.

"Charles, there is no need to buy it. I don't wear such an outfit in daily life, so it is rather unnecessary to buy one as it will serve no purpose." Autumn said with a frown.

"This is not a dress for your daily life, Autumn!" Charles looked at her and said, "Do you forget what are we going to do tomorrow? It is Rachel's birthday. Do you want to go there with your current boring clothes?"

"I..." Autumn was so occupied with the things that happened these days that she almost forgot that Rachel's birthday was coming. Of course Autumn did not want to lose face to her as Rachel was her rival in love earlier. At the thought of this, Autumn began to pay more attention on picking a robe for the birthday party. But she was a little bit upset because she couldn't find a desirable one after spending so much time at the store.

"What is wrong? Why do you look a little sad? You can't find a dress that you like?" Charles took Autumn's hand and asked her gently.

"Yeah, I can't find a desirable dress for the party." All of the dresses in the store looked very beautiful and she could tell that they were expensive. Irrespective of that, she could hardly pick out a dress she was inclined towards.

It was because none of them suited her taste.

Hearing this, Charles turned back to the shopping assistant behind them and asked, "Are there any other dresses here beyond those on display?"

"Em... Yes, there are a few more." The shopping assistant nodded slightly and replied with hesitance. "But Mr. Lu I remember you said earlier that we should show Miss Bai all the latest dresses first and we

sent the picture of the new robe in the second stair to her. She said that she liked it very much and would come to try it later today, so..."

The shopping assistant didn't finish her sentence and stopped mid-sentence. She took a glance at Autumn discretely and thought to herself that though she was pretty, Miss Bai was even more beautiful than her. Obviously, the shopping assistant regarded Autumn as Charles' new sweetheart.

Instead of explaining her identity, Autumn just smiled sweetly and grabbed Charles' hand. "Charles, let's take a look at other dress shops."

Now that she couldn't find a favorable dress here the alternative was to visit other stores. It didn't mean that the more expensive the dress was, the more suitable it was for her.

"Wait a second please." Charles stopped Autumn who was about to waltz out of the door and said, "The robes in this store are the best in Y City. If you can't find a desirable one here, it will definitely be hard for you to find one somewhere else in the city!"

After finishing his sentence, he turned to the shopping assistant and said, "Fetch that robe for my wife. She would like to try it."

"What? Wife?" The shopping assistant was shocked after hearing Charles' words and she couldn't help mumbling. Though she heard before that Charles had gotten married, this did not help his reputation get better. Charles was still trapped in rumors that he had an ex-girlfriend who was a famous star and that there were still many other women who accompanied him every day. Therefore, it was natural that the shopping assistant would take Autumn as Charles' mistress. They would have never thought that she was his wife by law.

"Yes, she is my wife. Is there any problem with that?" Charles said indifferently, and a moment later he added, "You have to show the latest dresses for my wife first from now on, and if my wife likes it, you have to deliver it to her personally. And I can assure you, that the price will definitely be the most favorable one."

Charles was trying to tell all of them that he had broken up with Rachel and had nothing to do with her anymore. And if Rachel came here to try the dress in his name, they had no reason to listen to her.

"Yes. I will go to fetch the robe now. Please wait for a brief moment, Mr. Lu and Mrs. Lu." Charles was one of the big customers of this store, so they did not care much about who he brought here with him as long as they could have his business.

Autumn was completely attracted to the next robe the shopping assistant brought.

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As Charles fixed his eyes on Autumn, she stroked her hair gently. She stammered as her cheeks flushed to pink, "Umm... isn't it looking good on me?"

"Yes, you look simply stunning!" In Charles's eyes Autumn was pretty. But he had never imagined that she would be transformed into such an enthralling beauty after getting dressed up. Autumn always went out with a natural look. She never applied any make-up or even wore jewelry. After she put on this magnificent dress she looked totally different.

"This dress please. Get it wrapped up!" She was his wife so he wanted to give her nothing less than the best.

"Okay sir!" The shopping assistant stood aside as she was struck by Autumn's understated beauty. After briefly comparing Autumn with Rachel they finally understood why Charles had chosen Autumn. Rachel was pretty but she lacked demure and elegance which Autumn possessed.

The shopping assistants present were beyond overjoyed when Charles decided to buy the dress without even asking for the price. In that way they could reward themselves a handsome bonus this month.

"Lily, where is the robe that I asked you to keep aside for me?" Rachel's voice reached their ears from outside the fitting room. At this time, Charles had left to pay for the dress. After recognizing her voice, the shopping assistant frowned and said to Autumn with an awkward look, "Mrs. Lu, how about you go inside to change into your clothes? Till then I can get your new dress wrapped up."

Autumn politely responded, "Okay." Her pace was slowed down by half because of the full-skirted dress. Before Autumn entered a fitting room, Rachel walked in, with a bright smile on her face.

It seemed that she was in a good mood. But her smile froze immediately at the sight of the dress on someone else. At that time, she didn't recognize Autumn as she was walking with her back towards

Rachel. She turned to Lily and slapped her abruptly, "You know that I never wear the clothes that others have tried on. I have been your client for a long time, how could you make a mistake like that?"

"I..." Lily almost burst into tears, as she held her face with her hand. She explained to Rachel, "Miss Bai, this robe..."

"I chose this robe yesterday and told you that I would try it on today. But now you let someone else try it on. Why did you do that? Do you think that she can afford this costly robe?" Rachel shouted at Lily contemptuously. Autumn couldn't stand Rachel putting Lily in an awkward situation, so she turned around with a frown and said to Rachel, "Miss Bai, long time no see!"

"I see." Rachel observed Autumn with disdain and continued, "It has been a long time. It really is good for you to get married to a rich man, right? You've never visited such luxury shops before, have you? So what brings you here? You must be choosing your evening dress... How much money did Charles give you to spend?"

Rachel realized that Autumn must have come to buy an evening dress for her birthday party. Once she looked at Autumn in that robe, she was shocked by her beauty. 'If Autumn comes to my party in this dress, she will become the focus of attention from everyone,' Rachel thought to herself.

"Miss Bai, you're quite funny. I think it's none of your business. I can spend my husband's money as and where I please. I'm not you who likes to spend the money of a married man." Autumn went on abruptly, "I almost forgot that Charles had cut off all your bank cards. I wonder if Miss Bai can still actually afford such a dear expense."

"Shut up right now!" With her face turning red with anger, Rachel cried out, "Do you think that I will not defend my honor and tarnish your image because you are married to Charles? Someday I will steal Charles away from you."

When she was in a relationship with Charles, he never accompanied her to go shopping. Instead, he would give her money and asked her to buy what she wanted. With that train of thought, Rachel assumed that Autumn had come here alone.

She continued with a sneer, "I advise you to leave Charles or I won't spare you."

Charles had just paid the dress. As he was striding back to his wife, he saw Rachel bullying Autumn with a contemptuous expression. He asked authoritatively, "Will you now? How are you going to give her a hard time, please do elaborate?" He proceeded with a sneer, "I am curious. What are you going to do with my wife?"

"Char... Charles..." she stammered and struggled to say his name. After realizing that Charles didn't want to see her Rachel had been dodging him all these days. She knew that Charles might get bored of her if she kept coming to meet him. Besides, she intended to adjust her condition so as to let Charles notice the change during her party.

As Charles had told her, in the past, he loved her as she was a sensible woman; she had resolved to pretend to be the one that Charles had loved all along.

However, she never expected that all her planning would be washed away by an evening dress.

Rachel responded as her face turned pale, "What are you doing here? "

Charles walked up to Autumn and sternly replied, "I, of course, came here to help my wife with shopping. Is something wrong?"

"I..." Rachel was extremely jealous of Autumn but she didn't let it reflect on her face. She smiled and said to Charles, "I'm simply joking with Mrs. Lu. Are you here to buy an evening dress?"

Both of them did not respond. Charles turned to Autumn and said in a gentle voice, "Go change your clothes. I will take you to have a delicious meal."

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To Rachel's surprise, Charles smiled and said, "They say money can't always buy what you want. My wife has been here for several hours to check the collection, and is lucky enough to pick one dress that meets her expectations. As her husband, I should buy her the dress at all costs. Otherwise, I might as well be a good-for-nothing husband for her. So Miss Bai, could you please look for another one? And just so you know, whichever dress you pick today is on me. Feel free to take it as a birthday gift from us."

He didn't wait for Rachel's answer nor did he care about what she thought. He gently took Autumn's hand in his and walked her to the fitting room. "Go and change your clothes. I will be waiting for you," he said with a warm smile.

Rachel was red with anger. However, she could do nothing but to watch them walk away. After coming to her senses she remembered what he said about the gift. So in an attempt to get back at him, she picked out a dozen of the most expensive dresses, thinking that she could always find occasions to wear them in the future.

But she wasn't expecting to see embarrassed look on Lily's face at the checkout counter. "Miss Bai..." Lily stuttered as she recalled the slap, "You still need to pay 1.87 million."

"Didn't you hear? Charles said that all of these dresses would be on him. Pack them up quickly. I've got a very busy schedule today and don't have anymore time to waste on you." Rachel said while casually fiddling with her freshly manicured nails. She was going to the spa with some friends later today. As tomorrow was her birthday, she had to ensure that she looked her best at the party.

"But..." Lily hesitated for a moment before gathering her courage and said, "Mr. Lu also said that he is married now. And since his wife will keep an eye on the household budgets, he has to cut down on unnecessary spending, so... please choose your favourite dress as he will not pay for the rest of them."

"What?" Rachel was furious. Charles had always been generous towards her and would spare no expense for things that she wanted. But everything seemed to have changed after he married Autumn. However, Charles' indifference had only increased her resentment against Autumn. She believed that he would have never treated her in this manner if not for that woman.

Finally, Rachel managed to hold back her anger and reluctantly picked out her favorite dress from the bunch she ambitiously selected. She still put it on Charles' bill. After all, her career was on a downward spiral at the time being and she was no longer financially abundant. She then left with a feeling of exasperation.

After Rachel left the premise, the other people in the store all approached Lily and comforted her. There was a red mark left behind on her cheek from the slap. "Are you fine, Lily? I saw Rachel raising her hand on you. How could she slap you so hard? This is too much!" one of the staff said.



"You are right. She has always been an arrogant woman. We tried to put up with her bad temper when Charles was around to watch her back. After all, we could earn all that money from her back then. But now she's nothing without Charles. How dare she smack you in the face like that?" another colleague echoed her sentiments.

Lily's face was still burning but she shook her head regardless of the swelling pain and said, "Never mind. At least we sold the dress and we can expect quite a handsome bonus this month from just these two sales alone."

"Well...that is true. As I see it, Mrs. Lu definitely leaves Rachel in the dust. No wonder she was able to conquer the heart of a playboy like Charles."

"Absolutely..."

Autumn would never imagine that she would be able to make such a lasting impression in other people's eyes.

After they left the dress shop, Autumn thought again of Isla. She was living in Y City alone and had very few friends here apart from Autumn. So Autumn was really worried about her.

"What is the matter honey? Are you still annoyed by the thought of Rachel?" Seeing her pulling a long and sullen face, Charles thought that Autumn was still in a bad mood because of Rachel, so he comforted her, "You see I again carried my heart on my sleeve today. You really are the only one in my heart now. There is no doubt about that fact!"

"..." Not knowing what to say, Autumn simply blushed. She realized that ever since she was steady with Charles, he had become loquacious and would express his love for her on every possible occasion. She never expected him to be so honey-lipped and allured by her.

"Actually, I'm worried about Isla." Autumn sighed and told Charles everything that happened while she was away from work. Charles simply frowned after hearing the entire narration.

"If this is the case... it is safe to assume that Isla is really in big trouble." Charles then asked, still frowning, "Well...I was wondering is the Becky you just mentioned...is she the daughter of Mr. Zhang from TM Company?"

"I think so." Now that Autumn came to think about it, she recalled that Isla had told her so. "Why? What have you heard?"

Charles with a worried expression continued, "I heard that Mr. Zhang is currently preparing for his daughter's wedding these days. If we are talking about the same person here then I'm afraid that Isla..."

Autumn was even more worried than before. Poor Isla got framed and betrayed at the same time. Autumn feared that she might fall apart hearing this dreadful news.

"Let's keep it to ourselves for the moment. Please don't tell Isla now. I fear that this will completely break her down." Autumn muttered to herself with a gloomy face, "This is all my fault. There has been nothing I can do to help her so far."

"Don't worry, honey. I know a doctor who is a leading brain expert. I will call him for help, the first thing after our plans. If he manages to come, there is a great chance that the old lady may recover." Charles said gently. He thought that as long as she could come to herself, Isla would be cleared of suspicion in one way or another. As for the emotional entanglement, they could only wish that Isla and Aron would be able to sort it out themselves.

"Really?" asked Autumn, her eyes widening with hope after hearing his words. It was a great relief to hear this as it restored her hope and faith.

Charles called the doctor that night. It turned out that the doctor, Arthur Zhao, was quite willing to help. He took an early flight the next day and rushed from America. Without a single moment of rest he went straight to the hospital upon his arrival.

Of course, they all acted under the radar to avoid Becky's finding out all about it. Charles wanted to let the sleeping dog lie and avoid extra trouble.

So they arranged for Arthur to make a round of the wards along with other doctors. Becky had been staying in the ward to keep a close watch on Joanna. She was on alert once she saw a strange face. "Who is this?" she asked with a frown.

"This is our new chief, Dr. Zhao. Don't worry, he's just making the usual rounds."

Chapter 167

Becky flushed, her eyes twinkling with joy. "Grandpa, I don't think Aron wants to get married. I'm afraid he might have lost his feelings for me. He'll just be more reluctant if you ask him to marry me, " she said as soon as she calmed down.

"Don't lose heart, " Mike said with a frown, loudly interrupting her.

"I will always be on your side.

Don't worry. I'll make sure that the marriage is going to happen whether he likes it or not, " he said, full of conviction.

"But I..." Becky trailed off mid-sentence.

"Don't you want to make grandma happy?"

She has always hoped that you and Aron will get married. Who knows? She might even wake up out of sheer joy knowing that you two get married, " Mike continued, trying to persuade her.

'If Joanna knew that I married Aron, she would be furious, ' Becky thought to herself.

"I guess I have no choice but to follow grandpa's arrangement, " she replied with a sly smile on her face.

"Good girl, " Mike said, clearly satisfied.

"You should go home and rest."

Becky pretended to refuse Mike's proposal. But he was so insistent it made her reluctantly agree. She laid down into the sofa as soon as she got home. "Mom, get me something to eat. Attending to that old fool for two whole days has made me so hungry and exhausted, " she whined, unwilling to move.

"What are you talking about? Be careful or someone might hear you, " Mandy said, reprimanding her daughter.

"Patience is key. Once your marriage with Aron is settled, you can do whatever you want." she continued, patting Becky's shoulder.

Sighing, she said, "I know. I'm really trying my best to be patient."

Becky got up and perched on the back of the sofa, leaning her head on her hands. "Mom, but how about my wedding ceremony?" she asked.

"I'm going to take care of it so there's no need to worry. I'll make sure that everything is ready when the time comes, " Mandy replied, reassuring her daughter.

Joanna's accident proved to be beneficial. Mike consented to all of Mandy's proposal no matter how unreasonable they were. He had only one condition. And that was for Becky and Aron to get married as soon as possible.

"We're running out of time. Your wedding ceremony is scheduled to be held early next month. Mike said he wouldn't want the wedding ceremony to be delayed. He wants it to be rushed regardless of the expenses, "

She continued.

Becky sighed, wondering if it was all happening too suddenly.

She had always longed to be Aron's bride for the past four years. Finally hearing all of this in real life felt unreal.

"Isn't this what you have wanted for so long?" she asked Becky, knowing her answer fully well.

"When you have the time, don't forget to give me the list of your friends so that I can prepare the wedding invitations, " Mandy reminded her.

Becky smiled in return, a vicious thought coming to her mind. "Mom, you must prepare an invitation for Isla and then hand it to her yourself, " Becky said menacingly.

"I will, "

Mandy said as if knowing the request beforehand.

Many of Mandy's relatives looked down on their family when Becky and Aron got together. Though they hadn't mentioned it in front of them, they thought that Becky and Mandy had stolen someone's happiness.

Now, she wanted to let her relatives know that Aron would marry her daughter soon.

Becky went to the hospital the following morning. Meanwhile, Mandy went straight to Isla's house, knowing where she lived.

Isla had little strength to get up when someone knocked on the door. Feeling unwell, she had stayed at home for several days without even eating, drinking, or sleeping.

When Mandy got inside, she noticed that all of the curtains were closed so well that even air could not enter inside.

"What happened?"

She asked as she pulled the curtains up, making way for the sunlight to enter the house.

Having been used to the darkness, Isla immediately raised her hand to shield herself from the sunlight.  
"Why did you come here?"

She asked out of suspicion, having been previously disappointed with Mandy and Becky.

Mandy would have already lost her temper, if she hadn't been in a good mood today. She didn't want to mind her words now.

"I came here to give you this..." Mandy said cheerfully as she took out the invitation from her bag.

"You are invited to Becky's wedding ceremony. It will be held next month, " she said as she handed the invitation to Isla.

Isla opened the invitation upon taking it. Her heart sank when seeing Aron's phone number on it.

"Is Aron going to marry Becky...?" she asked, clearly surprised.

"Yes, " Mandy replied, laughing with pleasure.

"They have been dating for four years! It's about time for them to get married. Besides, you'll be happy for them, won't you?"

"Of course, " Isla replied coldly.

Even when Aron left her without a word four years ago, she hadn't been as heartbroken as she was now. She felt like as if her heart was ripped out from her chest. Despite this, Becky still had the gall to throw it on the ground and step on it.

Chapter 168

Isla stood up and grabbed Mandy by the throat: "Mandy, my father sacrificed everything he had to support your education. But what an ingrate you turn out to be."

"Let go!" With all her strength, Mandy removed Isla's hands from her, "Let me tell you, it was his business to support me, not yours. You can't do anything about it"

Isla did not show any weakness and faced Mandy. "I will, by no means admit doing anything dishonorable. Your pathetic attempts to defame me will take you nowhere. Get the hell out for you are not welcome here!"

"Fine! I will leave. But this is not over!" Mandy quickly left Isla's home with much resentment. Not long after, Isla felt weak and collapsed to the floor.

No matter how tough Isla pretended to be in front of Mandy, Isla was just a helpless girl who easily succumbed to sadness and disappointment.

She drew the curtains and curled up in the darkness, feeling secured from a cruel world.

At that time, the phone rang. It was Isla's Mom. "My sweet daughter, are you Ok?"

"Nothing serious." Isla murmured: "Mom, why are you calling?"

"I just want to ask if you are coming home. Your father and I have received Becky's wedding invitation. I know that this is hard for you to bear. We will not be attending the wedding. We will only send a cash gift as a token of our presence at the ceremony. We are planning to take a family trip to avoid this unpleasant scene." Isla's Mom, though in a high voice, did express her concern towards her daughter, every word and phrase filled with love.

Isla could no longer contain her grief, giving in to a flood of tears. Her mother impatiently asked, "My dear daughter, what is the matter? Just tell me. I will take care of this!"

Isla's Dad, on hearing his daughter break into tears, grabbed the phone and said, "My daughter, stay there. Your Mom and I are on our way."

A daughter is the apple of her father's eyes and Isla's Dad could not stand his sister insulting and belittling her daughter. He had always showered Isla with love but he contained his anger at the scandal that happened four years ago.

But not this time.

After the call, he and his wife packed some clothes and left for Y City. They arrived at around 3:00 pm. That time, Isla hadn't eaten anything. Upon entering the door and seeing their daughter, they were aghast at the sight of their daughter utterly wasted. "My dear, what happened? How could you have lost so much weight?"

"Mum...." Isla threw herself into her Mom's arms and broke into tears. After a while, she regained her composure. Her Dad helped the two of them into the room and prepared a bowl of egg noodles with what remained in the kitchen. He said: "Here my daughter, have a bowl of egg noodles. We have enough time to discuss matters."

Isla was not better than when she and Aron split up four years ago. During that period, Isla lost four kilograms within a week. She had lost all appetite for any drink or food and confined herself to her room. Isla's Dad was also heart-broken seeing his daughter like that. Little did he know that such torment would turn up again four years later.

"Thanks, Dad." Isla could hardly control her emotions but managed to take the bowl of egg noodles. She quietly ate with tears still in her face.

"My silly daughter, there is no point of your tears!" Isla's Mom offered a cup of water: "You should take good care of yourself at this age."

As Isla consumed the bowl of egg noodles in silence, her Dad inquired, "My dear daughter, tell me the truth. Do you still love Aron?"

"Absolutely not, Dad..." Even if she did love Aron deep in her heart, Isla wouldn't admit it. Aron, after all, would become Becky's husband when they got married next month. Another problem for Isla would be the incident with Joanna, Aron's grandmother.



Isla's Mom knitted her eyebrows at the sight of another wedding invitation card lying around. Her daughter had not yet married so there was no reason to have another card there.

"My daughter, have Becky been here? What did she say to you?" Isla's Mom frowned. Becky had been a nice girl since childhood. It was only until the scandal that she created four years ago that Isla's mom lost her good opinion of her. She hated Becky from then on. Isla's Mom knew that it was none other than Becky who sent the card.

"It was not Becky..." Isla shook her head gently, "It was her mother."

"Mandy?" Isla's Mom frowned again, "She is going too far with this! Did she come here to gloat? And rub salt on your wound?"

"You and your Mom stay here. I'm gonna argue with her." Isla's Dad was going to express his displeasure with her sister. Anyone trying to hurt his daughter would be dealt with. His own sister was no exception.

He was about to leave when Isla stopped him and told him what happened to Joanna. "Dad, it would be self-defeating to argue with Mandy."

#### Chapter 169

Aron found out that Mandy had sent out an invitation to Isla, but he did not make a fuss about it. He wanted his grandpa as well as Becky to be complacent during this period as he needed time to find out the real cause of his grandma's coma.

Rachel's birthday party was held in a five star hotel in the downtown area. The hotel was decorated in complete luxury, perfect for such a celebrity like Rachel.

Rachel had arrived early and was waiting for Yvonne there.

Instead of nagging Charles to drive her to the party, Yvonne went alone. With three hours before the birthday party, Yvonne called a taxi and went straight to the hotel.

After several years of struggling in show business, Rachel was able to snatch a wide range of contacts and got acquainted to many different people. And these people expected at this party were the rich and famous. It was an exclusive party and not everyone was in the guest list. It was strictly by invitation only.

Yvonne showed her invitation to the bodyguards and then went straight to Rachel's dressing room. Rachel was finally relieved to see Yvonne. "I have been waiting for you for a long time. Thank God! You are finally here!"

"Miss Bai, you look so pretty today." Yvonne quickly gave her a compliment. Rachel was dressed in a white gown adorned with many small pearls. Her long brown hair was curled and highlighted by a lily-shaped hairpin. The crystal high heels showed off her slender legs. She looked like an enchanting rose in full bloom.

Yvonne thought Rachel would be glad to hear such a compliment. However, Rachel just burst into a sneer after hearing that.

It was Charles who bought the white dress for her, but Rachel still felt furious since her favorite dress was taken away by Autumn. At the thought of this, resentment rose from her chest, making her indignant towards Yvonne's ill-timed compliment. Smiling grimly, she said to Yvonne, "Well, your flattery is not necessary. It doesn't work on me."

Yvonne felt awkward and embarrassed upon hearing this, but quickly recovered and said, "Fine. Miss Bai, I have prepared everything you asked me to. And have you selected the best man for this job?"

Rachel grimaced and hesitated. The best person for this job was Sam, but he had gone abroad, so it still remained a challenge.

Rachel kept sneering and replied, "You don't have to worry about it. Many famous stars will be present today, so it will be natural for her to fall in love with one of them. I am sure Charles wouldn't suspect anything."

"Okay. That sounds good.." Yvonne also laughed scornfully and was relieved.

Approaching the birthday party, Becky walked in with Aron hand in hand. She was dressed in a long golden dress. The skirt which was made with smooth silk, had a wave-like shape and glittered in the light. This well-made dress was perfect for her slender figure. Her hair was braided into a gorgeous and complicated long plaque, mixed with golden silk which was quite eye-catching.

The media had gotten to know of their coming wedding, so as soon as they entered the banquet hall, reporters and camera men all rushed and gathered around them. Under the colorful spotlights, Becky shone with her quiet smile while Aron stood beside her without emotion. If not for the smile on Becky's face, the reporters would suspect that something was going on between them.

"Try to smile, Aron. Don't be expressionless, okay?" Becky got close to Aron and then whispered to him, but it gave the reporters an illusion that they were very intimate with each other, and they were actually pretty convinced.

However, Aron just stared with great dissatisfaction and still remained cold faced.

"Mr. Gu and Miss Zhang, I heard that your wedding is coming soon. Is Miss Zhang pregnant?" Many people thought that Becky was pregnant since their wedding was to be held in such short notice. The reporters took advantage of Rachel's birthday event and asked them directly.

Becky clapped her hands over her mouth and couldn't help smiling. She then explained with a soft voice. "No, I am not pregnant now. You know that we have been with each other for four years and it is time for us to get married now. What's more, an accident occurred to Aron's grandma last week and she is still in a coma. No one knows when she will wake up, but she has always wanted us to get married, and we have to fulfill her wishes."

Becky acted in an elegant manner before the media and even lied without hesitation. "And as for the wedding, we have been planning this for a long time, it is not being done in a hurry. I want it to be perfect. After all, we can only have one wedding in our lifetime."

"I will go in first. Come over and find me later, " said Aron. He felt disgusted to hear those hypocritical words, so he loosened Becky's hands and left.

Though Becky was displeased with his poor attitude, she had to pretend to be understanding. "Ok, I will come to find you later." Becky called after him, trying very hard to be gentle.

After Aron left, the reporters continued to ask, "Miss Zhang, I heard that the injury of Mr. Gu's grandmother has something to do with your cousin. Is that true?"

"I..." Becky knitted her brow and said ambiguously, "It was just an accident and no one wanted it to happen. Though my cousin did something she shouldn't have done, I am not going to blame her," replied Becky.

"But it looks like Mr. Gu is not so cheerful about your wedding and it is said that there is a conflict between the two of you. Is that true?"

The questions were getting more and more tricky. Becky's face started to wear some anger but she just smiled and replied, "Of course it is not true. Aron is not a talkative person. Okay, let's wrap this up and go inside. It is Rachel's birthday party so let's focus on that. Please do not pay us much attention tonight. And I will send the wedding invitations soon. I hope you will all be there. Thanks a lot!"

"Well, then, congratulations, Miss Zhang."

Becky nodded with a smile and then turned to leave. But as she did, she looked angry.

Though Aron had agreed to have the wedding, he still remained indifferent to her. She could tell from his demeanor that he didn't want to have anything to do with her.

Becky blamed Isla for all this. If it weren't for her, Aron would not treat her like this and she could live a sweet life with him.

## Chapter 170

"Look here, Mr. Lu." The reporters greeted Charles warmly. This was the first time for Autumn to attend such an event. She grabbed Charles' hand, unsure of what to do.

"Take it easy. Don't be so nervous." Charles soothed her as he patted her hand.

Autumn grew calmer and more composed with his encouragement. They stared at each other, eyes full of affection.

"What a beauty Mrs. Lu is!"

"Exactly! Mr. Lu has an eye for beauty." Autumn blushed at the compliments. Charles was elated at the comments and smiled in satisfaction.

In the crowd, a lady stared coldly at them with eyes that spat venom. It was Yvonne. Autumn and Charles were a perfect match. This made her clench her fists and a shiver ran along her spine.

'I should be the one standing beside Charles now.' Yvonne thought to herself.

"Here comes the birthday girl." Someone in the crowd shouted.

The reporters rushed in swarms to take photos of Rachel who was walking down the stairs.

The highlight of Rachel's outfit was the crown on her head. It was said that she borrowed it from a museum at a heavy price. Since she lost out to Autumn's evening dress, she wanted to... beat Autumn in other ways.

Rachel had seen Charles and Autumn from the top of the stairs. She gave a tiny smile as she thought, 'Autumn Ye, your name will live in infamy after this evening.'

While the cameras were zooming in and clicking on Rachel, Autumn suddenly sprained her ankle. Luckily, Charles helped her to her feet and said in a soft voice, "Be careful, babe."

"Sure." Autumn gave him a sweet smile.

They saw nobody but each other, which drove Rachel crazy. Rachel's face almost contorted with rage, but she immediately concealed it.

Rachel went down the stairs and came up to Autumn in full view of the crowd. She grabbed Autumn's hands intimately as if they were good friends. "Mrs. Lu, I thought you weren't coming. I'm so glad that you are here."

Charles' wife and ex-girlfriend stood facing each other. People fixed their eyes at the scene. They had thought that it would be a stressful occasion, but it turned out to be harmonious.

"Miss Bai, since you invited us, Charles and I will of course do you this favor."

Autumn said politely with the implication that she and Charles were a family while Rachel was an outsider.

Rachel remained calm. "Thank you for coming. I was afraid that you and Charles wouldn't indulge me this time, then I would feel embarrassed.

By the way, Charles, " Rachel gave him a playful wink and continued, "A lot of our friends are here. You can make some small talk with them if you are bored. Let me do the honors and take care of your wife, okay?"

"Miss Bai, thank you for your kindness. But my wife is not used to these kinds of gatherings. I don't feel comfortable leaving her alone." Charles gave a courteous smile and continued, "You are the birthday girl. You must be very preoccupied, aren't you?"

"Not at all, " Rachel smiled and said, "I haven't seen Mrs. Lu for a long time. I would like to have a chat with her. Come on, Mr. Lu, it's a girl thing."

Charles stared coldly at Rachel, saying nothing. Rachel felt a bit embarrassed. Luckily, Autumn saved her from further awkwardness. "It's okay, Charles. You can hang out with your friends. Today is Miss Bai's birthday, and she is the mistress of the night."

Charles was a man of a few words in front of Rachel, but when speaking with Autumn, his face softened. Every lady present would be envious of Autumn to have such an exceptionally loving husband.

It looked like he was using his eyes and gestures to say, "In my eyes, you are the most beautiful rose in this earthly world."

"Take good care of yourself. I'll be back in a short while." Charles said as he adjusted Autumn's hair. She nodded, smiling.

Rachel ground her teeth in anger, but she immediately calmed down and gave a sweet smile when Charles gave her a warning look.

Since Charles made a clear show of his affection to Autumn, he also made a clear break from Rachel. And Autumn trusted him because of it. She knew that Charles would be impossible to cheat on her, despite Rachel's various schemes.

There was a special group of guests in Rachel's birthday party. They were neither celebrities nor the rich or influential people. They were just the normal everyday folks. These guests were Rachel's loyal fans who treated Rachel as their queen. It was a privilege for them to be invited to their idol's birthday party.

They knew Rachel had once dated Charles, and they considered him as her future husband. They had rejoiced that their idol had such an outstanding boyfriend. However, the good times did not last long. Charles had married someone else and even brought his wife to Rachel's birthday party. Why? Was he trying to humiliate Rachel?

Rachel was sad, but she had to pretend to be happy. This made her fans feel sorry for her.

Rachel was such a kindhearted girl and they hated her ex's new wife.