

Wedded Bride 201

Chapter 201

'To avoid arousing Mike's suspicion, I have to pretend to look after Joanna wholeheartedly. It's annoying!' Becky complained to herself.

"An expert from abroad happened to be stationed at the hospital, recently. Both grandpa and I wanted to see grandma wake up, so I agreed to have the expert perform surgery on her," Aron replied. He caught a bit of anxiety flash through her face.

"Then... how is she doing now? When will she wake up?" Becky asked, looking uneasy, secretly clenching her fists.

"I don't know," Aron shook his head. "We decided to let her undergo the operation, hoping that she could wake up afterwards. But now she is still in a coma, and we don't know when she will wake up," he added.

"God will bless her. She will wake up one day." Becky was relieved when she heard his words. 'Everything will be okay as long as she doesn't wake up before the wedding. I don't think that old woman will ask Aron to divorce with me after we get married, ' Becky thought to herself.

"But, Aron..." she said, lifting her eyebrow. "Why didn't you tell me about her surgery? If I hadn't come here today, I still wouldn't know anything about it."

"Grandpa and I decided that we didn't want you to worry about grandma. Besides, the surgery did not promise 100% success. I didn't want to disappoint you after giving you some hope. I meant to surprise you when she wakes up, but I didn't expect you to come today," Aron explained calmly. Aron's words made sense. Becky couldn't think of any reason to get mad at him.

She tried to find something suspicious on him, but failed.

"I hope that you won't keep me in the dark again. If something bad happened to grandma..."
'Fortunately for me, she is still in coma. Otherwise, I will be as good as dead.' she thought in relief.

"I will." Aron nodded. 'All I need to do is not to arouse her suspicion.' he told himself.

Aron parked the car near the wedding shop. Becky couldn't wait to give Isla a call. "Hello, Isla. Aron and I have arrived. Where are you now?"

Hearing that Aron was there, Isla wanted to cancel but changed her mind. 'I have agreed to be Becky's bridesmaid. Moreover, I can use this chance to numb myself and entirely forget about him. Why should I avoid him?'

"I'm almost there. You go on ahead and don't wait for me." Isla replied coolly.

"Isla is almost here. We can wait inside." Becky said with a bright smile on her face, holding Aron's arm.

"Fine." Aron responded with a little nod. When they walked inside the shop, they were taken to the second floor. Becky had invested a lot in the wedding. She had invited a famous designer to make a wedding dress for her.

Luckily, her wedding dress was ready.

"Miss Zhang, your wedding dress is ready. Would you like to try it on now?" A shop assistant asked.

"Oh, yes I do!" Becky replied excitedly. 'I have waited so long for this day and now it has finally come.' she thought. "Just wait a minute. I'm going to try on the wedding dress. You can see it later." she turned to Aron.

"Okay," Aron responded. Since they entered the shop, Aron had been inattentive. He frequently looked towards the staircase, as if he was looking for someone.

Becky was slightly annoyed by his indifference, but she didn't complain. Instead, she went to a fitting room to try on the dress. Like other girls, she had chosen a strapless dress with a high-low skirt highlighting her long, slim legs. The ivory skirt was cut into countless wrinkled skirts, and a layer of gauze softly cast a mist on the pleats.

Every girl fancied lace, and so did Becky. The strapless sweetheart neckline came with side lace. The dotted white rose, decent workmanship and puffy train made her look like an elegant and gorgeous princess.

When she walked out of the fitting room, the shop assistants came forward and smoothed her hemline. Several medieval-style royal dressing mirrors were placed in the shop. When she stood between the mirrors, all the light focused on her.

"What do you think of this one? Does it look good on me?" she asked, standing in front of Aron.

She was quite satisfied with this wedding dress. All girls longed to receive compliments from their beloved one, and so did Becky. She looked at Aron with expectation in her eyes, hoping to hear his praises.

"Pretty good," he replied coldly, giving her a momentary glance.

"Stay focused..." Becky complained, raising her eyebrow. Like other girls, she yearned for a dreamy and memorable wedding ceremony. She wanted to look good in the eyes of her co-workers. At least at her wedding, she longed to be the world's most beautiful woman.

Aron raised his head to look at her. "You really look pretty," he nodded.

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"Try it on, quickly." Isla wasn't as excited to serve as a bridesmaid. It was just another task to get done and be over with.

"OK, before you try yours on, my cousin, first tell me if my wedding dress looks gorgeous." Becky tugged Isla's dress. "This wedding dress, by a famous designer, is customized. There won't be anything else like it."

"Dazzling, indeed!" Isla told the truth. It wasn't to flattered Becky. The wedding dress was truly breathtaking.

"I am so happy to hear that." Becky was all smiles. "My cousin, you always have good judgement and I love the way you are appreciative of this dress."

"My cousin, help me hold your bridesmaid dress and my husband's suit. Try on your dress while I take off mine." Becky said, smiling.

With the bridesmaid dress in hand, Isla was about to change in a fitting room. The curtain wasn't drawn but suddenly Aron came in. He had been calling Isla but she wasn't picking up the phone. He had wanted to explain himself and now it was his chance.

"What are you doing here?" Isla tried to scramble and hide but Aron just stood there motionless. "Are you mad? What do you think you're doing?"

"Yes, maybe I am mad." Slowly, Aron forced Isla into a corner. "Why didn't answer any of my calls? Give me a reason right now!"

"How dare you ask for a reason?" Isla reacted to Aron's challenge with a sarcastic laugh "You should have been ashamed in asking me!"

"Isla, I am marrying Becky out of necessity. Please give me a chance to explain...." Aron really wanted to tell her, but Isla stopped him. "Enough of your terrible lies. I get hurt and humiliated every time you open your mouth."

Isla cast a sharp and painful look at Aron. "Don't forget that you are Becky's fiance and my brother-in-law. She is trying her dress on nearby, but here you are like a lovesick mad dog. You are making a fool of yourself and of us! ... or do you harbor some evil motive?"

Isla continued. "It dawns on me that your old playboy habits die hard. You want each foot in two relationships. What, do you want to have two wives?"

"You completely misunderstand me....." Aron was stupefied at Isla's tirades. Isla pushed Aron out of the fitting room.

The attendants who witnessed everything looked at each other in amazement, unable to say a word.

"Aron, why are you standing here? Be quick to try on your suit." Coming out of the fitting room, Becky found her fiance sitting in the sofa.

She helped Aron to his feet, placed the suit in his hands and pushed him into the fitting room.

Shortly after, Isla came out of her fitting room. The bridesmaid dress Becky chose for Isla was plain and common with no special features. The deep purple color made Isla's skin look dull and her straight and slender legs were hid. Becky made sure that Isla would not be able to steal her thunder.

"My cousin, you are very good-looking in that dress....." Becky managed to contain her laughter at the sight of Isla and pretended to like it. Isla knew what Becky' was doing, but said nothing. Looking at herself in the mirror and then casting a glance over at Becky, "It suits me well. I gonna go if there is nothing else for me to do here. Please do not bother me anymore unless it is really important."

"I am afraid I will have to." Becky reminded Isla, "My cousin, you are the bridesmaid. You are supposed to help me manage all the wedding affairs. It will also prepare you for your own wedding someday."

Becky was rubbing it in Isla's face. She was very pleased at Isla's less than flattering appearance. She has finally emerged victorious after several years' struggle and sacrifice.

"It all depends on my schedule." Isla said faintly, she went straight to the fitting room and changed her clothes. She did not agree to Becky's suggestion but did not refuse either. Anyway, the two knew clearly that she would not go.

Aron, a handsome gentleman with a height of 185cm, looked great in the suit. It was reminiscent of the time when Isla and Aron tried their respective clothes for their own planned wedding four years ago.

However, he was now with someone else.

Becky did not relent, holding Aron's hands in front of Isla. She asked Isla with a beaming smile, "My cousin, do you think Aron is handsome in this suit? I chose well. This handsome man will truly be mine in a few days."

"Definitely, you are better than many." Isla replied with great composure, fully aware that Becky was showing off. However, Becky did tell the truth.

"Since all is done, I have to take my leave." Isla said calmly. Aron stopped her "Wait for a while, and I will drive you back."

"There is no need for that." Isla declined with a cold smile, "You had better take care of your fiancée. I can go back by myself."

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After leaving Becky, Aron intended to go to Isla and tell her his whole plan. However, he received a call from the hospital. He changed his mind and hurried there instead.

He panicked when he saw Mike crying silently on the bench outside the ward. "Mike, what happened?" he asked, dashing to Mike.

"Aron..." Mike looked up, grabbing Aron's hand immediately. "Your grandmother..." she..."

"What's wrong with her? Tell me now!" Aron urged anxiously.

"She has woken up, " Mike replied. Aron was relieved when he heard this. "Isn't it good news?" he asked

"Yes, it is. I just didn't expect her to wake up today." Mike answered, wiping his tears. "I am weeping with joy."

"Is she alright?" Aron asked with concern.

"The doctor is doing some tests on her inside. This time, we need to show our gratitude to Arthur, " Mike said, still holding his hand. He now felt extremely grateful that Aron pushed for this surgery.

As soon as Arthur walked out of the ward, Aron came forward. "Doctor Zhao, how is she doing? Is she alright?"

"Don't worry. She is fine, " Arthur said, taking off his mask. "But she is weak now. She needs good rest without being interrupted. Otherwise, she will be in danger again." he continued.

"You can go inside now."

Aron and Mike hurried inside. When Aron walked past Arthur, he said "Thank you!".

When they entered the room, they saw Joanna lying on the bed with her eyes open. Mike walked up to her and took her hand. "Anna, you finally woke up."

Mike seldom called her by her nickname. When he saw Joanna now up and conscious, he couldn't hide his happiness.

"You have lost so much weight, " Joanna said, reaching her hand to touch Mike's face. "I'm sorry. You must have been terrified these days."

"What are you talking about? You've woken up and it's the best news for me, " Mike responded, with tears trickling down his cheek. "Are you hungry? How about I go get you something to eat?" Mike asked as he dried his tears.

"I'm not hungry." Joanna answered. Tired as she was, she lay on the bed looking pale. Noticing this, Aron poured a cup of water for her immediately. "Here, drink some water, grandma, " he said.

"Grandma just woke up. How about we leave to let her have some more rest?" he advised, turning to Mike.

"Well, you are right. Have a good rest. You must fully recover so you can have the energy to attend Aron's wedding. You have looked forward to this day. Now you can witness his getting married to

Becky." Joanna almost choked on her water. She put the cup on the table and looked at Aron with confusion.

"Slow down." Aron said, wiping her face.

"He is right. Be careful." Mike agreed smiling. Mike was in a good mood for Joanna had woken up.

"Aron, are you really going to marry Becky?" Joanna looked terrified, gripping Aron by his hand.

She had been satisfied with Becky before. But since the accident, she couldn't even look at her anymore. She now understood why Aron had been so reluctant to marry Becky.

Before she had lost her consciousness, she felt glad that Aron insisted on not getting married to her. Otherwise, she would have to face a wretched woman at home every day.

"Joanna, have a good sleep now. Don't think too much. We will talk about it later." As Joanna had just woken up, he didn't want to displease her. That was why he changed the subject.

"No, you must tell me now. Didn't you refuse to marry her? Why did you suddenly change your mind?" Joanna asked, eyes wide and bewildered. She couldn't fathom out why Aron was suddenly in a different position about Becky.

"I..." Aron frowned, not knowing how to explain.

"It was my doing. He still can't forget Isla. But I couldn't allow him to marry that vicious woman. Besides, Becky has kept him company for four years. We shouldn't fail her..." Mike spoke.

"You liked Becky so much. I thought that you might wake up with sheer joy knowing that they will get married. So I forced him to marry Becky. Now the date of their wedding has been fixed and invitations have been sent out. So you have to get your strength back so you can attend their wedding."

"No, they can't get married." Joanna strongly objected. "Aron can't get married to Becky!"

Chapter 204

"You two need to stop quarrelling right now. Don't make a scene here, " Aron said to his grandparents calmly, who were arguing with each other. "Grandma, you don't have to worry about anything. I assure you that I won't marry Becky."

Joanna was relieved by Aron's words. 'If Aron marries Becky because of me, I will have to carry the guilt for the rest of my life. Even after death, I won't find solace, ' thought Joanna.

"Aron, what do you mean? I am totally confused, " asked his grandpa. Mike frowned, and asked him, "Haven't you already given your consent to marry Becky? Now you're telling me that you are not going to go through with it. Don't you know that your wedding invitations have already been sent out. Do you want to make a laughingstock of me?" Mike felt anxious and irritated at Aron.

"Are you muddle-headed? You are only thinking of your prestige and social status but you're not taking Aron's happiness into consideration. Have you considered the consequences of Aron marrying a woman he does not love? How do you expect him to spend the rest of his life together with such a person? Do you think he will be happy?" Joanna scolded Mike.

Mike was puzzled and confused at what was going on. Angrily, Mike asked Joanna, "Are you being serious Joanna? Aron is still young, so I can understand that he may be bewildered sometimes, but you are experienced enough. What excuse do you have for acting the same way as him? Do you really hope for Aron to get married to Isla?"

"I think Isla is a good girl. What's wrong with her?" Joanna replied calmly. Mike was completely shocked to hear this come from Joanna, since she had an abrupt about-turn over Isla in such a short span of time.

Joanna hated Isla very much at first, but now she said that Isla was a good girl. 'What happened to her?' Mike wondered.

"Grandma..." Aron furrowed his eye-brows. Hearing what Joanna had said, gave him the answer to what he was looking for. He believed that his conjecture on the matter was accurate.

"It was Becky who pushed you down, right?" Aron asked directly. He would have waited until Joanna had rested before talking about it, but now that she had mentioned it, Aron wanted to get to the bottom of the matter, sooner rather than later.

He knew Isla well enough. Although Mandy said that they weren't going to press any charges against Isla, Aron understood that Isla must have been upset for being treated unjustly. Isla must be unhappy, because she was innocent of the false accusations made against her.

The more Aron thought about it, the more guilty he felt for Isla. But now it was time for him to prove her innocence to the public.

"Don't talk nonsense here! I can see that you've been brainwashed by that woman. But how can you be so thoughtless? Have you gone mad?" Mike scolded Aron harshly. "How would a girl like Becky hurt your grandmother?" Mike asked furiously.

"Why are you asking me this?" Joanna didn't reply to him directly but asked him for justifications since she wanted to know Aron's opinion on this.

Actually, she was still reluctant to ferret out the truth, after all Becky had taken care of them for a long time. It was an undeniable fact.

If Aron trusted Isla unconditionally, Joanna was determined to hide this truth from him.

"Grandma, I believe that Isla would not hurt you. It doesn't matter whether you like her or not; she is the only woman I love in this world. I had been with her for a long time and even though she found me in bed with Becky, she just left silently, without saying anything. If she really was a heartless person, she wouldn't have waited four years to exact her revenge on me. Grandma, please try to remember. Did Becky ask you to find Isla that day?"

Joanna tried to recall the scenes from that day. She furrowed her brows as soon as she came to a sudden realization. Although, Becky didn't directly encourage her to find Isla, she had already planned on tricking Joanna into looking for Isla, before she picked her up for lunch.

Joanna frowned at the thought of this, while Aron read the expression on her face and figured out what had happened that day in Isla's office.

"To be frank, I have never suspected Isla since the day you were in the hospital, unconscious. Dr. Zhao, the doctor who performed the operation on you, is an acquaintance of Isla's friend. He is a highly sought after doctor and it would have been beyond my capabilities to have him undertake your operation, if not for Isla. Do you think she would help me find Dr. Zhao, if she didn't care about you? Mike had found himself at a loss for words, as Aron's justifications now started to sound reasonable.

He furrowed his brows into a crease, because he still couldn't accept the truth. How could Becky hurt Joanna so deliberately? "How could it be possible? Becky has been here to take care of your grandma ever since the accident. She has always been so kind and considerate. How could she do such a thing?" Mike tried to speak for Becky.

"Grandpa, I know that Becky is always here to take care of grandma, but it is not because she cares about her health. The real reason is that she is afraid that grandma will expose her lies once she wakes up, " Aron explained, with a bitter smile on his face.

Mike frowned silently and reluctantly, as he found it difficult to swallow the bitter truth.

"Aron... Are you sure? You are not kidding me, right?" Joanna looked serious and solemn as well.

"Grandma, when you were unconscious, Becky insisted that it was Isla who hurt you that day and absolved herself from any responsibility. But what makes me even more angry is that she pretends to be magnanimous and said that she wouldn't press any charges against Isla. Moreover, she even disrespected Isla by asking her to be her bridesmaid. Do you still think she is a kind person? What a vicious woman! I've asked grandpa not to tell Becky that you are awake, because I am afraid that she will cook up some new problems once she gets the news." Both Joanna and Mike turned silent from the shock of what they had just heard from Aron.

"But... But your wedding invitations have been sent out to our relatives and friends. If you are going to cancel this wedding..." Mike stopped mid-sentence. He was still skeptical about the whole situation because he believed that Becky would never do such a thing.

"Mike, why are you still concerned about your social standing right now? Isn't Aron's happiness more important to you?" Joanna tried to persuade Mike to be clear-headed. "No matter who Aron decides to get married to, it won't be Becky."

Joanna recalled the scenes that took place in Isla's office that day. Becky was so ashamed and humiliated at what Isla had said to her that she lost control of herself in anger and pushed down Joanna abruptly.

Chapter 205

"My four years' investigation has paid off. I was informed that Becky bribed a doctor into falsifying her pregnancy, so... Becky was never expecting my child; I don't owe her anything." Aron felt quite relieved after disclosing the whole plot.

"A shocking story... indeed!" Mike was terrified after what he had just heard. He didn't expect Becky to be such a big liar.

Behind Becky's good manners were countless hidden agendas. Mike was overwhelmed by the horrible reality.

"So Becky's pregnancy was just a ruse?" Mike asked Aron in amazement.

"Exactly!" Aron nodded gently, "At the time, I didn't have sufficient evidence at hand to disprove her pregnancy, so I decided not to tell you, because I was afraid that you'd worry about it too much. When I tried to talk to you about it later, grandma went into a coma, unexpectedly. Fortunately, now that she is awake, I finally have the chance to explain the entire situation and myself to you."

"Dear grandparents, I must acknowledge my error in promising to marry Becky, but I did so to prevent Becky from acting out of desperation. The last thing I would want to do is to marry a treacherous and deceptive woman like Becky. I would rather remain single all my life, than be married to her."

After Aron clarified his thoughts on the matter, Joanna voiced her opinion: "Aron, previously I was left in the dark about the whole thing and so I ended up forcing you to marry Becky. Luckily still, you chose to act on your own rather than to follow our advice. Now you are free to marry whomever you love. As for Isla..."

Joanna paused and continued, "I will try to get along with her if you really love her, but I am not making any promises. Do I make myself clear?"

Aron smiled subtly at his grandma's words. Although Isla was a bit aloof, she was also kind at heart. Aron believed that sooner or later, his grandparents would grow to like her.

Aron turned to Mike and wondered what was on his mind.

Mike was still solemn and numb from hearing the shocking truth. Snapping out from his trance, he said to Aron, "I'll have to think it over. If... if Becky turns out to be the kind of woman that you say she is, I won't force the marriage on you. But you will have to put an end to it in a reasonable way."

"Ok, I will do as you say." Aron nodded gently, "My grandma, you should get some rest now. I've hired a private nurse to take care of your needs. Additionally, grandpa and I will take turns to look after you and to prevent Becky from hurting you again."

"That sounds good." Joanna nodded gently, as she quickly fell asleep. Aron and Mike walked out of the sickroom and then closed the door behind them. Mike was a bit annoyed, "Why didn't you tell me about Becky's dirty tricks earlier?"

"Because I didn't expect you to believe me without any credible evidence." Aron replied calmly, "Grandpa, I may not have suspected Becky's bad character if I was not a victim of her plot. So I can understand how you and grandma are feeling right now."

"But..." Mike had mixed feelings. He thought that it was Isla who had harmed Joanna, unbeknownst to him that it was actually Becky's doing instead. However, in trying to be kind to Becky, he had made an utter fool of himself.

"Grandpa, please don't worry" Aron assured Mike with a gentle smile, "I will do whatever is necessary, to put this matter to rest."

"Let it be then..." Mike heaved a heavy sigh, "I leave it to you. You can do it as you see fit."

Mike, all of sudden, felt that he was perhaps too old, as he was deceived by a little girl like Becky.

Aron felt a sense of relief at the sight of Mike's receding figure.

Aron spent a sleepless night at the hospital fearing that Becky might come to harm Joanna. He didn't rest until the nursing worker came to take his place, in the morning.

Aron gave the nursing worker his important instructions and then went to express his thanks to Authur, whom Aron offered a big red envelope.

"Doctor Zhao, I know that this money as a gesture of kindness, will not suffice to express my gratitude towards you, but I hope that you will not decline it. It is very kind of you to take care of my grandma," said Aron, gratefully.

"Well... I may have to refuse that." Authur thrust aside the red envelope and said to Aron, "If I accept your money, it would be a discredit to me and my work. If you really wish to thank me, you shall handle the task I had entrusted to you before."

"But..." Aron furrowed his eye-brows, he felt greatly indebted to Authur for what he had done for this family.

"Ok, then that is settled." Authur concluded the conversation with a smile, "Your grandma will be discharged from the hospital after her full recovery, but by no means can she be troubled or disturbed. You have to keep that in mind."

"Of course! Thanks for your advice." Aron nodded, "You can rest assured. I will take care of that thing you've entrusted me with."

After coming out of Authur's office, Aron received a call from an unknown number, indicating a number from Y City. He hesitated for a few seconds and then decided to answer the call.

"Who is this?"

It was Simon who spoke to Aron sternly, "Why haven't you called me to let me know that you've returned to Y City? Don't you have the slightest bit of respect for me?"

"My dear son, I beg you to come back home." Simon didn't really know how to get along with Aron; That was the main reason behind their failed relationship.

"I have missed you, during your long absence from home. You should cast your displeasure to the wind. I have asked Mandy to prepare your favorite dishes. Why don't you come home tonight?" Simon pleaded to Aron on phone, "We'd better talk it over at home."

Aron's silence made Simon more anxious, "It has been so many years, have you still not forgiven me?"

"Let bygones be bygones. There is no point in asking me for my forgiveness, " Aron replied with great composure, "But I think... there's also no need for us to see each other again. We should just treat each other like strangers."

"My dear son!" Simon lost his self-control at Aron's indifference and cried out to him, "Now I've realized my mistake in having failed your mother, and being overwhelmed by the growing sense of guilt. Besides, I have also failed to care for you after your mother's death, and I left you in a state of helplessness. It was all my fault."

Simon sighed and continued pleading, "Aron, you are my only son. After my death, you will inherit our family estate, and you will be entrusted with the important duty of running the family company. At least, come back home, even just to save my face."

Aron sniffled at his father's offer. In truth, Aron was hesitant to take over his father's distressed company. But he had already promised Authur he would handle the task he was entrusted with.

Simon continued his appeal regardless of Aron's silence, "Anyway, I will wait for your return. Our home address is still the same."

"Ok, but I'll have to check my schedule, " Aron replied. He hung up the call, and then went straight to the company where Isla worked. It was worth mentioning that Isla worked overtime with Autumn to implement the proposal from Mr. Hoad, without respite.

Isla was at a meeting when Aron arrived there. Aron decided to wait outside the conference room. The first to come out was Autumn, who looked at Aron in amazement and said, "Surprised to see you here. Have you come to talk to Isla?"

"Yes." Aron stood up with a gentle smile, "May I ask you a favor... Can you give Isla a break for just a few minutes? I have something important to tell her."

"No worries... You are free to do so." As soon as Autumn finished talking, Isla gave her the cold shoulder, "There is nothing to talk about between us!"

"Isla..." Autumn tugged Isla's dress and persuaded her, "You might as well settle things with Aron, since he has come here at his own accord to show his sincerity. I can give you a short break for that."

"There's no need!" "I'd rather go to your office to discuss the new ideas I have regarding the proposal, which I couldn't bring forth earlier due to time constraints."

Isla was unwilling to speak with Aron and had deliberately ignored him. Aron managed to pull Isla into his arms and lift her up just as she was about to enter Autumn's office. Isla was too agitated to remain composed, "Aron, what are you doing? Let go of me!"

"I will let go of you only if you are willing to listen to me." Aron held on to Isla firmly, who had noticed the onlooker's gathering around and desperately resorted to Autumn's help, "Autumn! Please help me..."

Although Autumn completely understood Aron's sentiments, she found his behavior inappropriate. Autumn furrowed her eye-brows and said, "Mr. Gu, why don't we... settle this in the office?"

If she had not resolved the issue on the spot, the other employees may have turned it into the latest hot topic for office gossip.

Aron hesitated and then gently let go of Isla. Immediately Isla hid behind Autumn, "Autumn, quick! You must have him removed from here. I don't want to see him again!"

"Take it easy, Isla." Autumn assured Isla by caressing her hand, and then turned to speak to Aron, "Mr. Gu, since Isla does not want to speak with you alone... it would be best if I served as an onlooker while the both of you chat in the office. What do you think?"

Autumn sensed Isla's unwillingness to talk to Aron without her presence, so she suggested a proposition which could clear away the misunderstanding between Isla and Aron.

"A good suggestion, indeed!" Aron's views accorded with Autumn's.

Autumn gently pushed open Isla's office door, when Isla whispered to Autumn with a look of aversion, "Autumn, why are you doing this..."

"May be, Mr. Gu has something very important to tell you. There is no harm in hearing him out, " Autumn comforted Isla.

Isla went silent, as Autumn shut the door after Aron had entered the room and said, "Mr. Gu, you are free to speak to Isla. I am just a bystander now."

Autumn stood by Isla, who furrowed her eye-brows and cried out to Aron impatiently, "Go on then, talk! We haven't got all day!"

"Isla, why must you talk to me in this way?" Aron was heavy-hearted, "I know that I've hurt you, but you must know that I was acting against my will."

"You mean you acted out of necessity?" Isla replied with a sarcastic laugh, "Aron, I am sick of your excuses. Becky would not have kept pestering you, had you not done something questionable."

Isla glared at Aron with contempt, "Enough with your double-dealing! I have learned from all the pain you've inflicted upon me. I won't believe you anymore."

Chapter 207

The news of Aron's grandma waking up gave Isla mixed feelings as she smiled faintly at Autumn. She was like a drowning man clutching at straws. All of a sudden, the tears from her eyes streamed down her

face. Autumn quickly stepped forward to comfort her, "Don't cry, Isla. This is good news. Soon everything will be cleared up. You are innocent. You have nothing to worry about."

"I know. I know, " replied Isla, in a shaky voice. Isla nodded slightly while the tears trickled down her cheeks. She was unable to control her feelings of relief after being treated unjustly for so long. "Autumn, thank you. I am really grateful to you."

"You don't have to thank me. None of this would have been possible without Mr. Gu's help, " said Autumn. She smiled and then continued, "Mr. Gu has taken great pains over this matter. In order to prevent further unnecessary ramifications and to keep it from Becky, he had to hide the truth from you as well. Don't blame him for that, Isla. He had no other options."

Autumn tried to speak on behalf of Aron, after all, she had witnessed all the effort Aron had put in, to overcome all the hardships.

After hearing this, Isla just kept silent, as her lips pressed into a thin line. She never thought that there would be more to this story. "I don't think so. I find it all to be a little too good to be true. You came to me today because your grandma is awake now and you finally found out that I didn't push her down. Aron, if you really believed me then, why didn't you come to explain yourself earlier? Why did you wait until your grandma woke up? Do you take me for a fool? Do you think I am still as stupid as I was before?"

Aron didn't expect Isla to react in that way. He looked at Isla helplessly as he tried to make her understand, "Isla, I really didn't expect you to have such a wrong impression on me. But I still have to tell you that I've trusted you from the very beginning and I knew that you wouldn't hurt my grandma. But I had no chance to say that to you. I called you many times, but you never answered my calls. You always avoided me. I didn't dare to come to you until today, when my grandma finally woke up, but I swear that I've always believed in you, Isla."

"That is enough! Stop talking to me!" Agitated, Isla used both of her hands to close her ears in order to block out what Aron was saying. She sneered and said to him, "Aron, no matter what you say, I won't be foolish enough to trust you anymore. I am happy to hear that your grandma is awake and well and I'm glad that you've already found out who pushed your grandma. But as long as I am proven to be innocent, I am contented. I won't ask for anything else."

Isla glared at Aron with cold eyes and went on, "As for the matter regarding you and Becky, it has nothing to do with me. I don't care about that and I also don't want to hear another word about it from you. So If you're done talking, you may leave now."

"Isla, you..." Autumn also didn't expect that Isla would be so harsh and reluctant to give Aron a chance to explain himself. Just as Autumn was about to speak on behalf of Aron, Isla silenced her immediately.

"Autumn, I am your friend. I really appreciate what you've done to help me get out of trouble this time. But... But if you continue to speak for him, I will have no choice but to turn my back on our friendship."

Isla looked at Autumn solemnly. She was not afraid that most people would side with Aron. But Autumn was her friend, so Isla still hoped that, at the very least, Autumn would stand up for her.

"I..." Autumn furrowed her eye-brows slightly, but eventually, stepped up and stood next to Isla.

'Isla is right. No matter what she has decided, I should support her, and not act as a go-between in my own way, ' Autumn thought.

This was her concern; only she could understand how she felt about it, and what she needed to do.

"Mr. Gu, I have to thank you for clearing Isla of any suspicions. Unfortunately, no matter how things develop in the future with Isla, at least for now, she is unwilling to see you. So I will kindly have to ask you to leave here now." Aron realized that Isla wasn't going to change her mind, as she stood in front of the huge floor-to-ceiling windows, with her back turned to him.

Aron thought it would be best to give her some time to calm down, so he nodded and said, "Okay, I will leave, but I hope that some day you will find it in your heart to forgive me, Isla." "Anyway, you can call me if you ever need anything. I won't come to bother you anymore."

After that, Aron turned to Autumn and asked, "Miss Ye, could you see me out?"

"What? Me?" Autumn was a bit dazed by his words. She stood there, stunned, for a moment and then nodded gently, "Okay, this way please."

When Autumn opened the door to get out, the onlookers standing outside Isla's office, all suddenly dispersed, pretending to be busy with their work immediately. Autumn had noticed them, but she decided not to say anything and walked out to the elevator with Aron. While they waited for the elevator, Autumn asked, "Do you want to talk to me about Isla? To be honest, I also didn't expect her to be so stubborn. But don't worry, I will try to persuade her again once she cools down, " said Autumn.

"No, I am not going to talk about Isla with you. Instead, I need to speak with you about Yvonne." Aron looked at Autumn, who closely resembled Wendy, but looked purer and left others with a sense of refreshment. It was no wonder that she looked so familiar to Aron, when he saw her for the first time.

"Yvonne? What's wrong with her?" Autumn's eye-brows furrowed slightly at the mentioning of her name, "What happened to her this time?"

Autumn felt speechless every time she heard Yvonne's name. If possible, she hoped that she would never meet Yvonne and Wendy, or hear their names ever again.

"I am the half-brother of Yvonne, which means I am your half-brother too. We met many years ago when we were still little kids." The sight of Autumn somehow comforted Aron's thoughts. If Autumn was his half-sister, then perhaps he could aspire to be a kind brother. "I was the little boy with a runny nose, " said Aron.

"Aron! Is that really you?" Autumn was utterly surprised at Aron's words, which reminded her of the little boy she had met in the Gu family residence when she lodged there. Although Aron never changed his name, Autumn never expected, that the man now standing in front of her, would be the toothless boy whom she met in her childhood. Autumn didn't recognize him because he looked so different from how he did when he was just a child.

Aron, however, didn't know Autumn's name since his childhood. It wasn't until Dr. Zhao's occasional reminders, that helped Aron to recall her.

Chapter 208

After he left Isla Zhao's office, Aron Gu received a phone call from Becky Zhang, who somehow received word that he was here. "Aron, I was told that you were in Isla Zhao's office. Why the hell did you go there? Did she say anything bad about me?"

Becky arranged an informant outside Isla's office because she was concerned about the relationship between Aron and Isla. When she got word from her informant, she couldn't wait to call Aron and ask him about what happened.

"I am telling you, my cousin is very jealous of the fact that we are getting married, so she's desperately trying to slander me. Please don't believe a word of what she says." Becky was very nervous to clear her relationship, while Aron remained silent all the while.

Becky waited for a long while and when she didn't hear a word from Aron, she asked carefully, "Aron? What's wrong with you? Why aren't you talking to me?"

"Becky, did you ask someone to spy on me?" The mere thought of it gave him a panic attack. If Becky did send someone to spy on him, there was a chance she might have found out what had happened to Joanna.

'No, it can't be. If Becky had known about it, she wouldn't have made this phone call, ' Aron thought to himself.

"No..." Becky hurried to explain herself and said, "I trust you, Aron. I don't need to send anyone to spy on you." I just have a friend in Isla's office. She saw you there and told me about it. Please don't think otherwise."

Aron didn't want to continue with the conversation. He said to Becky, "I am busy right now. Got to hang up."

For the time being, Aron had no intention of revealing Becky's lies. He decided to wait until Joanna got better.

Aron went home to take a shower and change his clothes. During this time, he missed a number of phone calls from Simon Gu. Simon had been waiting for him at the house for quite some time and was getting a little concerned about Aron's whereabouts.

"Simon, come over and have a seat, " said Wendy Ye. She was annoyed at the way Simon was acting. Aron Gu had been away from his family for a very long time. During his absence, it was Wendy and

Yvonne who stayed and took care of Simon. She thought that Yvonne and herself were the most important people in the world to Simon, but unfortunately, it seemed that in Simon's heart, his son meant more.

From the day Simon found out that Aron had come back, he seemed to be a little reserved with Wendy. Every word coming out of his mouth was about Aron.

Although Wendy was filled with anger, she didn't dare to say anything.

"Ever since he was a little boy Aron has been very considerate. He will show up for sure, since he made that promise to you. You standing there waiting for him, isn't going to help." Wendy said gently to Simon, "It's quite windy outside. Come on, let's go inside the house."

"I am fine." Simon completely ignored what Wendy had said as he stared into the distance through the door, and told her, "I'll just wait here. You should go inside and start preparing the food. I want dinner to be ready when Aron gets home."

"Dad, why are you so concerned about him? He is nothing but a thief. He doesn't deserve your attention at all, " Yvonne leaned against the door and complained to Simon.

"Yvonne, stop your nonsense!" Wendy said to Yvonne with a cold face, "He is your brother. Watch your manners and apologize to your father now."

"Mom..." Yvonne frowned and said. She didn't understand why Wendy had put on such a loving act when she had no love for Aron at all.

"Apologize, now!" said Wendy, as she winked at Yvonne. Yvonne reluctantly apologized to Simon, "Dad, I am sorry."

Simon looked angry and irritated the whole time and only took comfort once Yvonne apologized. He said to Wendy, "See how you have spoiled our daughter. Where are her manners?"

"Yes, yes, it's all my fault." Wendy quickly answered, "I'll talk to her afterwards."

It's been more than half an hour since Simon had been expecting Aron. However, there was still no sign of Aron. Wendy was secretly glad to see this, but she remained calm and said to her husband, "Simon, let's go inside and wait. It's getting dark and windy. Aron won't be happy if he sees you catch a cold."

"You go ahead, I'll wait a little while, " Simon refused. He had been waiting for Aron to come back for more than ten years; he didn't mind waiting a little bit longer.

An hour passed by. Simon thought that Aron wasn't going to show up, until he saw Aron's car pulling over in the driveway. His face lit up with a big smile.

Simon rushed forward, "Let me take a good look at you, Aron." He grabbed Aron's hands and said, "You look taller, and thinner."

After so many years, Simon finally saw his own son standing in front of him. He couldn't help complaining to Aron, "I haven't heard a word from you for so many years. If I hadn't called you, would you still remember me, your father?"

"Father?" Aron said with a cold smile, "When did you ever treat me like a son?"

Wendy stood by, embarrassed. She managed to put on a smile and said to the both of them, "Simon, please show Aron in first. Let's continue our conversation inside. Aron must be hungry by now."

"Yes, you're right. Get inside, son." Simon quickly agreed with her. He was just happy to see his son back in the house.

Yvonne silently stood aside with a cold face. When Aron passed by, she sneered and said to him, "Hey, I thought you were never coming back."

"Will you please drop it!" Wendy patted Yvonne on her back and said to her, "We should all be grateful that your brother has finally come back home. Leave us alone and get out of the house if you have any problems with it. Just don't make trouble with your father and your brother."

Immediately, Yvonne stopped talking, as her face turned grey.

Chapter 209

"Why have you come back? This isn't your home anymore. Can't you see that you're not welcome here?" asked Yvonne. She couldn't control her anger towards Aron at the thought of how he had helped Autumn with setting her up.

Simon slapped Yvonne across her face. The sound of the slap echoed throughout the living room. Yvonne looked at Simon with surprise. 'He has even never raised his voice to me, ever since I was a child, but now he has raised his hand against me for Aron's sake.' She couldn't accept this.

"You hit me?" Yvonne said, as she covered her face with one hand.

Simon instantly regretted slapping Yvonne. He didn't slap Yvonne because he disliked her. On the contrary, he was proud to have a daughter like her, and always doted on her. However, Yvonne had gone too far this time. He simply lost his temper...

Simon felt deep regret after slapping her. 'Yvonne shouldn't have spoken to her brother Aron in that manner. After all, he is my son as well as my only successor.'

"What are you doing? Why did you raise your hand to her instead of reasoning with her?" Wendy came in, seeking to use this opportunity to stop Aron from coming back. "Yvonne shouldn't have treated Aron in such a rude manner. Nevertheless, you shouldn't have slapped her because of that. You have never raised your voice to her before, but now you've slapped her because of your son. Now that we're unwelcome in this house, we shall leave at once."

"Why?" Yvonne asked, her eyes filled with tears. She was heart-broken. She had never imagined that Simon would hit her. "Father, why should we be the ones to leave this house? Mom has served you, both loyally and wholeheartedly; She does not deserve this. What about him? What did he ever do for you? He is the one who should leave, not us, " Yvonne continued, pointing her finger towards Aron.

Aron stood still, watching Wendy and Yvonne silently.

"Yvonne, don't you see? We're no longer welcome in this house. Your dad expects his son to take care of him when he gets old, and to take over the family business, " said Wendy, resting her hands on Yvonne's shoulders.

Yvonne finally understood why Simon had insisted on asking Aron to come home. 'He is an old-fashioned man who thinks that only his son is qualified to inherit his business.'

"Dad, do you really think so?" Yvonne asked, staring at Simon. "Mom and I have done so much for the Gu Group. Without our sacrifices, the Gu Group wouldn't be as successful as it is today. Now you are just going to hand this company over to Aron because he is your son?" Yvonne said aggressively, pointing at Aron.

"All these years, he had never tried to contact you, not even once, and now you intend to let him take over the company. Do you think that's fair to me?" Yvonne raised her voice.

"Yvonne, you've misunderstood me, " Simon tried to explain. Simon blamed himself for hitting Yvonne. He felt even more sorry for Yvonne, when he heard her cry foul. "Your mother and I have been managing the Gu Group for a long time, but... it was Aron's mother who provided the initial funding for the company. Besides, she supported the company when it was just founded. I have already wronged his late mother, I can't do the same to Aron...

But I promise you that I will get you and your mom well settled after I leave the company to Aron." he went on, as he had noticed the rage on Yvonne's face.

When Wendy realized that Yvonne's words had failed to change Simon's mind, she pretended to be aggrieved to win Simon's sympathy. "Simon, are you really going to treat us like this?" Wendy turned to Simon, with her eyes filled to the brim with tears. "Simon, I know that I am a shameless woman. I admit that I seduced you and stole you away from Aron's mother, which eventually led to her death. It was all my fault. So, is this how you intend to punish me?"

"Wendy, it's not like what you think..." Simon was caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, he felt sorry for Aron and thought that he should be the one to inherit the company. On the other, he could not simply cast aside Wendy's notable efforts for the betterment of the company...

"Then what do you mean?" Wendy asked, smiling bitterly. "It's true that Aron's mother provided the initial capital for the company. But have you forgotten the years of my irrefutable devotion to help with the company business? I've even worked overtime to ensure the benefit of the company's reputation. To save the Gu Group from bankruptcy, I sacrificed my own daughter's happiness and married her off to a man she didn't love. Is this how you intend to pay me back?"

"No, I..." Simon stammered, as his forehead wrinkled into a frown. He was at a loss for words.

"Enough! After all these years we've been together, I think I know you too well now. You're just trying to coax me into seeing your way, " Wendy interrupted. "Now your son has come home, so you don't need us anymore. We will leave and we won't stop you from reuniting with your son and living a happy life."

"Wendy, Yvonne, are you done?" Aron asked impatiently. "Is this why you've asked me to come home? Just so I can see how you quarrel over a company, " he turned to Simon.

"You should give up on it if you think it's too troublesome, " Yvonne sneered and continued, "No one forced you to come home."

Chapter 210

He looked at Yvonne, but found her face pale, looking horrible. He couldn't help but ask, "What do you mean? She almost became a mother?"

"You didn't know that? Aron was surprised that Simon never knew. "She had a miscarriage. Actually she has just been discharged from the hospital a few days ago. Yvonne is your daughter too. Didn't Wendy say anything about it?"

Simon was baffled. It took him a long while to process what Aron had just said. How could it be possible?

Turning to Yvonne, Simon asked, "Is this true?" Yvonne lowered her head, unable to look her father in the eye. Simon took her silence as a yes.

Simon's face went red with rage. Though he always cared about his only daughter, he was a man with a strong traditional disposition. Premarital pregnancy was something he could not tolerate.

"Simon, don't get angry. Please listen to me and I will explain everything to you." Wendy desperately tried to appease her husband but he was too mad to listen. "Shut the hell up! I am asking if Aron is telling the truth? Answer me! Now!"

"Yes." Wendy weakly replied.

"You..." Simon was too angry to say anything else. He tried to storm out but Aron quickly stopped him. After all, Simon was his father. Simon cared about Aron and was always considerate of him before he married Wendy. Aron felt sorry for his father who had been deceived by Wendy.

Then Aron calmly said to Simon, "I am going to leave now. You have to handle this on your own. But I still have to remind you, if you want Gu's Group back, then you'd better prepare enough money."

"Aron, you are pushing us over the edge." Wendy looked at Aron with irritation. "Aron, we are all family. Yes, your mother invested much money to Gu's Group, but she did it out of her own free will. And yes we know that it was her dowry. But through many years, your father and I also devoted ourselves to Gu's Group. Now you ask for tens of millions. Do you want the company to go bankrupt?"

"You are also the part of this family. Aron, think twice about what you are asking from us."

Aron burst into a sneer. "Wendy, how ridiculous you sound. So you knew that it was my mother's dowry. Then why should it be used to support my father's mistress and her useless daughter? I am the only son of my mother. As the rightful heir, it is justifiable that I take the money back. After all I am not asking for the interest. Just the full amount." said Aron with full conviction.

"What do you mean, a mistress? Me? A mistress?" Wendy was furious. "I am the legal wife of your father. How dare you say that I am his mistress? It is because your mom decided to invest in Gu's Group, so the money now belongs to this family. Who are you to take it back?"

"Because he is also part of this family. That reason is enough." Simon, who had been silent, spoke in a cold tone. "Wendy, why don't you discipline Yvonne? There is no need for you to worry about other things. Do you understand me?"

It was the first time for Simon to talk to Wendy with such a harsh tone and it startled her somehow. "I understand you. But have I not been here for this family too?." said Wendy. "The Gu's Group has been in bad management for a long time, and it could have gone under if not for Charles. We all know that the company has been suffering a huge deficit." Wendy said with a loud voice.

"Enough! Are you finished?" I have said long ago that Gu's Group will be inherited by Aron. No one is more suitable for the job than him. I have made up my mind. Even if it goes bankrupt." said Simon, his eyes not moving away from Wendy.

"What about me? What about us? Don't forget that Yvonne is also your daughter. Half the company belongs to her." said Wendy indignantly.

"Yvonne?" Simon smiled sarcastically "She should first tell me who got her pregnant. When I know the whole truth, maybe I will consider it."

Wendy was furious after she heard this, her eyes filled with resentment. "Look at this. Are you happy now, Aron? You brought chaos to this family as soon as you came back. Are you pleased to see us fighting like this?" Wendy couldn't contain her rage.

"Blame me all you want, Wendy. There is no need for me to defend myself. I have returned to take back what rightfully belongs to me, " said Aron indifferently. He then took a glance at Simon and said coldly, "I will leave now. My presence here is no longer required, " added Aron.

"I will see you out, " said Simon. He walked out alongside Aron, leaving Wendy and Yvonne behind.

As they walked out, Simon turned to Aron. "You haven't been back for so many years. Could you..." Could you take a walk with me?" Simon said with a hopeful voice.

"As you wish, " replied Aron. "I haven't been back to the hill in a long time, " He continued.

The Gu family house was a place surrounded with beautiful scenery with a small hill behind it. It was Aron's favorite place when he was a small kid. He agreed to walk with his father since he had also missed his childhood sanctuary. He also wanted to know what Simon was going to talk to him about.