

Wedded Bride 211

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"Anyway, I will never allow them to further use the money that my late mother had saved up. Otherwise, it would be shameful to meet her in the netherworld." Aron said coldly.

Simon furrowed his eyebrows. "Aron, it was I who failed you and your mother. However, so much time has already passed. You should have treated Wendy with more kindness as she has been with us for so many years. Anyway, we are one family bound to mutual trust and love."

Every word Simon uttered was in favor of Wendy and Yvonne. After all, Simon had his affection for the two of them because they have been together for a long time.

Simon had prepared a big sum of money for them to live comfortably for the rest of their lives. As for Aron, he intended to let him run the dying family company.

"One family? My grandparents are my family. I will be in trouble unless they find out what they have to be warned. It is well advised that you prepare this sum of money as soon as possible, otherwise, we will properly settle it in court." Aron said with contempt.

"I was going to take a walk, but now I have lost any desire to do so. Goodbye." Aron hurried away, paying no attention to Simon's pleading.

Simon stared at Aron's receding figure, with a growing sense of bewilderment about his son's character, which was quite different from when he was little.

Aron used to be timid, easily cowed and introverted, keeping his distance from Simon, who favored Yvonne more. This was why Yvonne grew up spoiled.

However, at that moment, with pride and confidence, Aron was no longer that child.

"Simon, what took you so long!" Wendy welcomed Simon, holding his hand, "By no means should you entrust the family company to Aron, otherwise...."

"What? Are you going to leave me?" Simon replied with a sarcastic laugh. "Wendy, I should have seen through your evil ways early!"

"You... What are you talking about?" Wendy dared not make eye contact: "That's a serious accusation you are making right now. I have devoted myself to running this company and this family!"

"Enough with your double dealing and self-serving intentions." Simon rebuked. "I listened to every advice of yours, only for this company to get stuck in this dire situation it is in now. Moreover, our daughter has turned into a useless waste of a woman. How could you defend yourself before me?"

"She....." Mandy had planned to hide Yvonne's pregnancy from Simon as she was sure that he would lose his mind if he found out. But little did she expect that Aron would divulge this to Simon.

"Simon, it was not Yvonne's fault at all. It was unexpected that Yvonne would lose her baby. Nobody wanted that to happen." Wendy tried to explain it with Simon in a tone of shame.

"So on whom should I put blame? On you?" Simon challenged Wendy, "Enough with you fantasies of running this company. I won't leave it to you. Now send for Yvonne. I need to talk to my daughter."

"She....." Wendy wanted to answer back but bit her tongue. "Ok, I will call her."

After Aron left, Yvonne's was in a good mood. She returned to her room and rested in bed. As long as no one was contending with her for the family estate, she was happy. When Wendy came over, Yvonne was lying in bed eating snacks. She asked with a frown, "What Mom? Is there some more drama?"

"How could you have snacks in such a good mood?" Wendy sighed, "Your Dad is waiting for you downstairs for an explanation of the miscarriage you just had."

"What other explanation is needed?" Yvonne expressed her displeasure, "It was an accident."

"You had better not talk to your father this way." Wendy sighed, fully aware of the trouble Aron brought.

"Your father is already unhappy about your unexpected pregnancy which got worse with your miscarriage. If you keep contradicting him, we may be left with nothing. We need to come up with a plan...." Wendy suggested. "First and foremost, you had better prove yourself innocent."

"Mom, your fear is often greater than the actual danger!" Yvonne was worried but she tried to hide it. "After all, I am his daughter, and I deserve a share of the company."

"Ah my child, you know nothing." Wendy couldn't keep still. "Now your Dad is shaking with anger. So you had better not provoke him anymore. Aron is his only son and out of guilt he intends to leave him everything. When that happens, we would be left with nothing!"

Wendy's anxiety started to rub off on Yvonne "OK, in that case, what do you have in mind? If Dad pressed with this matter, what should I do...."

"Regain your composure first. You are still the apple of his eyes, and he won't abandon you anyway." She whispered to Yvonne, "We may try the battered-body trick. You should...."

Meanwhile, Simon got tired waiting and decided to go upstairs to talk to Yvonne. Then Wendy hurried downstairs, forgetting to put on one slipper.

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"Oh my. You are such a silly girl, aren't you? Why did you have to take things too hard?" Simon Gu said, fear written all over his face. He immediately sent Yvonne to the hospital upon picking her up from the bed. A huge sense of relief washed over him when the nurses started to lead her to the emergency room.

At the end of the day, Yvonne Gu was still a part of the family despite everything she had done. As her father, he was responsible for the well-being of his daughter. It disturbed him that she could go as far as committing suicide just because of their misunderstanding. What's worse, he didn't even have a chance to say a word.

"Look at what you've done. If it weren't for you, this wouldn't have happened! How can you do this?! If something bad happened to Yvonne, I'll make sure you'll regret what you did, " Wendy exclaimed, pointing her fingers towards Simon. "Are you even aware of what you did? You slapped her in the face! I could never do that! Yvonne is my daughter and she is very special to me. How can you accuse me of such a thing?! You will definitely regret all of this if something bad happens to her."

"Enough!" he yelled, extremely upset. He didn't think he had the strength to hear any more painful words coming from Wendy. "If you have really taken good care of her, how can this happen? If she was in really good hands, she wouldn't even think about doing such a thing! This is entirely your fault!"

He yelled even more loudly. "Don't pass the blame on me! You're the one who's been hounding us ever since you've had a son!" Wendy said, trying to sound reasonable.

"That's not fair. You're not making any sense!" Simon Gu was about to argue further when a nurse interrupted them. "Why are you guys fighting in here? This is a hospital. People don't go here to scream at each other. Can't you see you're disturbing our patients? Better go home if you don't have the decency to act like civilized people."

Simon and Wendy were rendered speechless. They stood aside as the nurse passed, too embarrassed by the scene they had caused. They realized how ridiculous it was to fight while Yvonne was still in the emergency room, hovering between life and death.

Wendy couldn't help but silently cry. She felt extremely ashamed after being reprimanded in such a way that she couldn't do anything but bitterly wipe away her tears. Meanwhile, Simon was still anxious about Yvonne's current condition. But seeing Wendy cry flooded him with guilt. "There's no need to cry. I'm sure Yvonne will be fine, " he said as he patted her lightly on the back, trying to offer some comfort.

"Is there anything that we can do?" she asked, choking back her tears. "Yvonne is my only daughter. I don't want something bad to happen to her. I don't think I could take it..." Wendy said as he leaned in Simon's arms, taking advantage of his efforts to console her.

"There's no need to cry, " he said in response, trying to offer some comfort. "I'm sure everything will be all right."

He looked at the operating room, worry still visible in his eyes. He didn't even trust his own words but he had no choice but to hope for the best. After waiting for an hour and a half, the operating room finally opened. "Doc, what happened? How's our daughter?" they asked as soon as they entered inside.

"The patient is stable now. However, she is still very emotional. Taking her to see a psychiatrist would be very beneficial. I highly suggest that you monitor her condition closely, " the doctor explained to both of them.

"Why did you even bring me to the hospital? Get me out of here!" Yvonne shouted at the distance, knowing full well that Wendy and Simon are in close proximity.

"It's okay, dear. I'm here, " Wendy said, approaching Yvonne's bedside table. "You silly girl. Why did you try to kill yourself? What were you even thinking?!"

"Mom, leave me alone. I don't have any more to say to you. Let me just end my life, " Yvonne cried out, not wanting to see her mother. "Why can't you just let me die? Can't you see that I don't want to be saved? Death is my only reprieve seeing as I'm not important to this family and to anyone else."

"Can you stop talking about such nonsense?!" Wendy exclaimed, frowning. "Your Dad and I love you very much. How can you say such a thing?!"

Yvonne stared blankly, oblivious to her words. She immediately calmed down upon seeing Wendy bring her father towards her. "Dad..." she said, her voice weak.

"What are you waiting for? Talk to your daughter, " Wendy said, shoving Simon in an attempt to make him talk.

"Yvonne..." he said, trying to complete his sentence but finding it hard to do so. Staring at her pale face, he knew he needed to say something.

"Cheer up. Crying doesn't do you any good." He couldn't bear to scold her given her current condition. "Tell me. Have I ever treated you badly?" he asked as he sat beside her bed. "You are creating false scenarios inside your head."

"But..." she said, trying to find the right words to say. "It may be true that you've never treated me badly ever since I was a child. But everything changed when my brother returned. First, you handed over the company. And you know what's worse? You even slapped me in the face! You've never done that before."

"I didn't do that because of your brother. I did that out of shock when I discovered that you got pregnant without even getting married, " he said, trying to explain. Up until now, he still couldn't understand why did she let that happen.

"We should put the past behind us, " Wendy said, interrupting their conversation. "No more of that nonsense. From now on, you should remember what happened so you can avoid doing the same thing in the future, " she continued, trying to ease the situation.

"You are my daughter. Handing over the company to Aron doesn't mean that I don't love you. But I need to be considerate, " Simon said. He's still unable to accept her daughter's affair but he decided to let it go.

"You know nothing about the business since you grew up under your mother's protection. Aron, on the other hand, has a broad work experience and he has already managed his own company abroad. I also made sure to confirm his reputation before making my decision, " he further explained. "As you can see, our family is struggling as of the moment. The only way to survive this is to hand over the company to someone capable."

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"Why are you asking such a question, Dad?" she asked, a frown visible on her face. Yvonne and Wendy stared at each other, both of them feeling embarrassed.

"It's just a hunch. I may have been abroad with your mother during this time but I know that you've been living together with Charles. You two might have a close relationship but if he's proven to be the father of the child, we have to seek justice for you, " Simon said. He was not willing to let Yvonne escape from the marriage. But he couldn't seem to think of other ways to make a difference. As Yvonne was his only daughter, he wanted what's best for her. He hoped she'd end up having a happy married life. And he believed that Charles was undoubtedly the ideal partner for Yvonne.

"I initially didn't want to let Autumn get married but now that it's all said and done, we can't do anything about it. It's not like we can change what already happened. But if you are able to prove that Charles is the biological father of your child, I will do everything to make sure that you will get all of the support you need, "

Simon said, facing Yvonne.

Hearing this made Yvonne and Wendy extremely happy. They badly wanted Simon to get involved. Though Charles has nothing to do with the baby, getting Simon's favor would definitely make it easier to get what they want.

Clearly anxious about the current situation, Wendy started to continue talking despite her hesitation. "Simon, just like what I've talked about earlier- Let's talk about it later." Wendy said.

"But why?! I know that Autumn is now married to Charles and you may be delighted to accept it. But don't forget that you have two daughters. You need to treat them equally, " he said. "Yvonne had to abort the baby because of Charles! How can she get married to someone after what happened!?"

"Dad, it's not true..."

"Of course I felt upset when she told me about it. Who wouldn't? Can you imagine how much suffering she must have gone through?!" Wendy exclaimed.

"Yvonne didn't want to tell Charles about it for fear of getting shamed! He didn't know the baby at all. Yvonne was just overwhelmed by guilt!" she continued.

"I think we should stop talking about this until she gets fully recovered. All this talk must be quite annoying to Yvonne. Right, dear?" she said, smiling naughtily as she turned to embrace Yvonne.

Frowning, Simon agreed to let it go even though he wanted to talk about it. "Alright, have a good rest now. But we need to be able to talk more about this once you're in good condition."

"Thanks, Dad, "

Yvonne replied with a smile.

Simon left after deciding that it would be best if Wendy would stay with Yvonne to look after her. "Mom, you cannot imagine how painful it is to cut myself. I was so afraid, I thought I was gonna die!" Yvonne confessed, swearing not to cut herself again.

"It seems like Aron came back to get the company. Don't you think so? We must be careful or else we might lose it, " Wendy said in response, ignoring her daughter's complaints.

"You might have suffered a lot. But our efforts paid off because we are able to gain back your father's trust! It would now be easier for us, " she continued.

"Mom, I mean to talk to you about something...." Yvonne said. "Dad clearly doesn't know about what happened. But how about you? Don't you know? Charles is not the father of my baby. He might not be able to understand because you told him a lie, " she sighed, worry clouding her mind.

"It's all part of our plan. Don't worry about it, "

Wendy replied, laughing to herself. "Do you want to give up that easily?"

"No, of course not!" Yvonne said, expressing her disagreement.

"Autumn is such a bitch. I will not let her bring me down. Charles will be mine eventually. She just has to wait and see."

"That's the spirit, " Wendy said with a contemptuous smile, encouraging her daughter.

"Autumn and Charles have been trying to get rid of us. It's getting harder to get close to them now that they regard us as their enemy. This is why we need your father on our side.

Your Dad has so many acquaintances because of his connections. That would help us reach out to Charles, " she explained.

"Since we've successfully sold our lie, we must be able to stick by what we've said. It has proven to gain us some advantage. Don't you think so?" she asked, turning to her daughter. Yvonne didn't know how to respond.

"Alright, don't think about it. The only thing that's important right now is for you to be able to take some rest, " Wendy said, dropping the conversation.

Yvonne was still fast asleep when the second day arrived. Casually smoking in the balcony, Wendy saw Aron walking towards the hospital in a distance. She immediately approached him and said, "Why are you here again?"

She was relieved that she didn't need to fake kindness because Simon was not around. "You're so persistent, aren't you? Why can't you just completely disappear? You've ruined our family! Leave us alone!" she exclaimed angrily.

"Stop wasting your words. I don't have time to talk to someone like you, " Aron replied as he walked past her.

He had brought breakfast early in the morning with Joanna in mind. He wanted to be able to feed her while it's still freshly made.

"Stop!" Wendy said, getting in his way to stop him.

"Why can't you just leave us alone? You are the bane of our existence! I regret not getting rid of you years ago. Don't you dare try to get a hold of our business or else I will make you regret it!" she continued as she stubbed the cigarette butt in her hand.

"Why would you make me regret it?" Aron asked, frowning angrily.

"Let me make this clear for you, Wendy. If you don't mention what has happened, I would do the same. But if you keep acting like that, I will make sure that I will get even sooner or later, "

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"I'm warning you. You'd better leave now. If you don't, I will call the police and make sure that you end up behind bars." Mike pushed her away. Never in his wildest imagination did he think that Becky would do something so horrible to Joanna, a kind soul who already treated her as part of the family.

"Grandpa, grandma. I know that I made a terrible mistake. I am begging for your forgiveness, " Becky pleaded. She was doing her best, but she knew that it was too late for them to forgive her. She could only hope and pray that Joanna could see her sincerity and trust her again. "Grandma, I really like Aron. As for that accident of that day... I was out of my mind. I never really meant to hurt you, " she explained.

"Enough with your lies! Stop acting like an innocent lamb. Keep it in that evil brain of yours, we will never, ever trust you or want to see you ever again, " Mike ignored her pleas. "Leave here now. You are no longer welcome here."

"Grandma, grandma..." Becky cried. "Please give me a chance. Please! Listen to me. I can explain everything."

"There is no need for that. You heard my grandfather." Aron said, walking towards Joanna. He even didn't give Becky a glance as he walked past her. "Don't waste your time here. If I were you, I wouldn't even have the face to come here. In case it isn't clear to you yet, the wedding is off. As for the engagement gifts... You can keep them. After all, you have taken care of my grandparents for four years. What you did was attempted murder. You tried to kill my grandmother! But now that she has regained consciousness, we will not press charges. You are now dead to us. If you ever come near my grandparents again, I won't be as kind and I will come at you."

'Whether it was for show or not, Becky have indeed looked after my grandparents well. Even so, I can't force myself to forgive her now.' Aron thought to himself.

"Aron, I..." Becky was at a loss, as if her world had collapsed. "Grandma, please help me. I really can't live without Aron. I am nothing without him." Becky turned to Joanna.

Joanna looked away saying nothing. Desperate, Becky went down on her knees before her. Joanna was the only one who could help her change Aron's mind. Aron must marry her.

"Grandma, I am begging you. I can't lose him..." Becky wailed, planting her face in Joanna's hand. As Joanna had just come out of a coma after a long surgery, she was too weak to shake off Becky's hands.

Aron came forward and removed Becky's hands from Joanna. "What are you doing? We want you to leave now! Look around you. No one wants you here!" Aron shouted, throwing her hard to the ground.

Becky ignored him. She didn't notice the bruise on her elbow and her makeup all messed up by her tears. She only knew that she would lose Aron forever if she didn't defend herself now.

"Forgive me, Aron. Please forgive me. It was a mistake. I didn't hurt grandma on purpose, " she sobbed, grasping Aron's hand. "When I went to Isla's office that day, she said many unkind words to me. As a result, I lost my temper and pushed grandma into the wall by accident. Aron, our wedding preparations have been finalized and the invitations have been sent out. You can't cancel our wedding. I will suffer unbearable shame if you do so. Please don't abandon me. I promise that I will serve you and your grandparents very well after we get married. Just give me one more chance."

"Let go of my hand!" When you faced someone you didn't love or care about, you wouldn't pity her. It wouldn't matter whether she was a good person or a wretched person. Looking at Becky's pitiful, sad face, Aron thought of nothing but Isla's helpless expression when Becky set her up and put her on the spot.

"If you don't want to be in a more embarrassing situation, you'd better call off our wedding immediately. As sure as the sun and moon are in the sky, I will never show up at the wedding." Aron promised.

Aron was ready to drag Becky out of the ward when Joanna stopped him. "Aron, let me have a talk with her. Just a few minutes."

"Grandma..." Aron was surprised. "You don't have to..."

"It's fine, " Joanna reassured him. "I have a few things that I need to say to her. You can wait by the door, " she added.

"But..." Leaving Joanna alone with Becky in the ward didn't sound like a good idea. "Just let your grandma speak to her alone. We can wait outside the door, " Mike broke in, pulling Aron by his hand.

'As we are going to wait outside the ward, I don't think Becky would dare hurt Joanna again, ' Mike thought.

"Becky, you'd better not lay hands on my grandmother again. I will not repeat my self twice." Aron warned, staring at Becky up and down.

"Grandma, grandpa and I will stand outside the ward. Call out to us at any time, " he said in a gentle voice.

"I will, " Joanna nodded. When Aron and Mike left the ward, Becky stood by the bed anxiously. Looking at Joanna's kind eyes, she somehow dared not get closer to her.

"Becky, take a seat, " Joanna said to her calmly. Becky hesitated. She was more afraid to approach her. When she had given Joanna a push that day, she did intend to kill her.

"Grandma, I..." Becky muttered, standing by the far end of Joanna's bed. When she saw Joanna's eyes, she lowered her head out of guilt. "Grandma, I'm sorry, " she continued in a low voice.

"Come here, " Joanna motioned for her to come closer. "Becky, it has been long since we had a chat like this."

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"Grandma...." Becky held Joanna's hands, "Aron listens to you. You can surely talk him back into marrying me."

"Becky, I wanted to talk to you so I could apologize and acknowledge your efforts in caring for me and my husband. In return, I did treat you with the due love that befits a granddaughter-in-law. But with what happened..... It is quite another story...."

Becky slowly let go of her hands, losing almost all hope.

Joanna would have considered forgiving Becky despite her faking pregnancy and even pushing her into a coma. But Joanna could not overlook Becky shifting the blame onto Isla who almost got thrown into prison because of it. She could not possibly give Becky another chance now.

"Becky, I have to remind you. Even though Aron grew up under my love and care, he is now a grown man with his own thinking and disposition. Anyone, I am sure, would be furious at your treachery."

Joanna let out a heavy sigh, "I had long assumed that Aron had a prejudice against you. Now, Aron should be able to choose whom to marry at his own discretion. He knows what kind of girl is right for him. My husband and I will no longer interfere with his decisions."

"It being the case, there is no point of my staying here!" Becky quickly changed her tone, dropping her act. With all possible hope lost, there was no need to talk to Joanna with respect. She let out a sinister smile, "Don't you know? I can't wait to see you dead. After your death, Aron will be mine forever."

Becky screamed out to Joanna. "You are as good as dead to me!"

Joanna remained well poised at Becky's sudden change of character, for there was no point of getting mad at her.

Joanna grinned, "You have lost your mind. I dare say if you killed me, Aron would send you to jail, much less marry you." Joanna continued, "Although Mike and I trusted you wholeheartedly, Aron kept searching for evidence to prove your faked pregnancy during his four years abroad. Now that he has them all, he has the power to deal with you and give you what you deserve. Pestering us this way will get you nowhere."

Becky's countenance turned pale. So Aron had never believed in her. That explained why Aron had developed a lukewarm attitude towards her, and had refused to acknowledge their relationship.

Joanna continued, "Becky, Mike and I would have forced your marriage on him had we not learned of your evildoing. What a pity.... You are still an amateur. You should have been more careful with the steps you took until the completion of your plot."

Becky was overwhelmed with regret and futility at the realization of the loss of Joanna's trust and support.

"Grandma...." Becky grasped Joanna's hands, and again started to plead. But Joanna was no longer in the mood to continue this conversation "Becky, we are willing to turn a blind eye to what you have done. But if you still have some sanity, you and Aron should discuss a way to call off the wedding. Besides that..... I really don't know what else I can do for you. "

Joanna intentionally closed her eyes, paying no heed to what Becky would say.

It was getting difficult for her to withstand the growing sense of disappointment in Becky who failed to live up to her expectations.

Becky wanted to plead further, hoping that she could change Joanna's mind. But she realized that there was nothing she could do to reverse the situation. Helpless, hopeless and shamed, she walked out of the ward. Aron saw her step out so he went into the ward to find Joanna lying on the bed quiet and relaxed. "Grandma, I'm gonna heat your breakfast, it's getting cold."

"Don't bother." Joanna said, "I don't mind if it's cold. About Becky, she needs to talk to you about something important. You had better talk it over with her now....."

"My grandma, thanks for your concern! I know how to deal with it." Aron nodded gently in obedience to Joanna. Aron, had indeed grown into a young man with confidence and assertiveness, no longer his previous self who easily bowed to others' instructions.

Aron walked out of the room and headed to the staircase, followed by Becky. Mike was left in the ward to attend to Joanna.

Aron fumbled around in his trouser pocket and took out a pack of cigarettes. He smoked a piece without uttering a word. Aron used to keep himself away from smoking. However due to social pressure, he found it hard to quit.

Becky looked at Aron in shame, at a loss on how to start a conversation with him, putting up with his continuous smoking.

"You have something to talk to me about?" Aron finally broke the ice, not wanting to waste any more time with Becky.

"I....." Becky started, her embarrassment taking over her. "Since you have discovered my whole scheme, There is nothing I can say to make things better, is there?"

Aron replied with a sarcastic laugh "Well, let us forget the past. I have decided to hold a press conference tomorrow where I will make the official statement and cancel our wedding. If you want, you can tell the public it is your decision. Are you ok with that?"

Aron's decision was, indeed, in favor of Becky to save her face. However, clasping Aron's hands instead, Becky pleaded, "Aron, is there not a tiny chance to fix our relationship? To part with you will be the death of me. I acknowledge my mistake but please give me a chance to redeem myself, I will....."

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"Then let's wait and see." Aron put out his cigarette and walked away. Left alone, Becky could not control herself any longer. She sank to the floor and gathered her arms to hug herself. The crushing defeat was too much to bear and she had no idea how to start over after this.

Becky left the hospital with puffy eyes, not knowing that Wendy had been following her. Wendy saw what just happened between Aron and Becky and she knew that she could use Becky for her next plan. She followed her secretly, just a few steps behind Becky. They should not be seen together. Wendy had a small opportunity to catch up with Becky when she got out of the hospital, but a familiar figure suddenly came out of nowhere. Stunned, she just froze where she was standing.

With Joanna's surgery done, Arthur was ready to leave the hospital. He came early in the morning to pay the Chief doctor a courtesy visit and wanted to leave quietly, but all the doctors who knew him came to see him off.

"Doctor Zhao, I do not know who to consult on complicated medical issues after you leave."

"Exactly, Doctor Zhao's leaving is so sudden, we still have a lot to learn from you."

"All right, ha ha." Arthur laughed. After Joanna's surgery, he still had his personal matters to handle. The whole family was going to move back to the city, so he had to look for a nice house. He had also, finally talked to Autumn. "If there's something you don't understand, just call me, and I will tell you all I know in a heartbeat." Arthur replied to the other doctors with a smile, "I will come back to visit some time, and maybe it would be your turn to give me checkups."

"You are healthy, and you will live a long life." A nurse said.

"Yes....." Wendy replied meekly to Arthur, " We have not met since I left home with Bowen, in which case..... it has been almost 25 years. I didn't expect to see you here, and you are....."

Back then, Wendy had long known that the whole Zhao family was moving abroad. She was so sure that they were going to abandon Bowen. With no promise of a comfortable life, she decided to leave him and went with Simon.

But she never dreamed that she would see Arthur back home again.

"There's a patient in the hospital who required a complicated surgery, so they asked me to come and perform it. I've been back for some time, but I didn't expect to see you here. You're about to..." Arthur had not heard the news that Yvonne was hospitalized. He had never thought that he would meet Wendy there, but here they were.

"My daughter is sick." Fearing that Arthur would misunderstand, she explained hastily to him, "No, I'm not talking about Bowen's child, but..... my younger daughter. The older girl, Autumn she..... is doing well."

She was telling the truth.

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"Rea..... really?" Wendy smiled awkwardly. She didn't know why, but she felt that life in Y City, which wasn't tranquil in the first place..... was about to become more complicated.

"Living abroad would be good, wouldn't it? Why did you come back?" Wendy smiled calmly, "I've also talked to my husband about leaving the children by themselves and moving overseas. It would be great to finally have our own life."

"Chinese people are very traditional, always wanting to go back home. Besides, I also want to see how Bowen's child is doing. After all, she is my flesh and blood." Replied Arthur.

"You mean....." Wendy keenly felt it, but she seemed to be missing something. "Do you mean you want to meet and acknowledge Autumn?"

Wendy couldn't hide her intense frown. This would be too much. She had been wanting Yvonne and Charles to get together. But if Autumn was recognized and acknowledged as a member of the Zhao family, she would have their support. It would be more difficult to destroy Autumn, not to mention, she already has Charles's full support.

But then again, wasn't she doing so many things for money? If Autumn returned to the Zhao family, she would have her own property from the Zhaos. Wendy would rather have Yvonne be that child. When that happened, she would have a life without worrying about anything.

'Taking into account the bad relationship between Autumn and I, if she returns to the Zhao family, Yvonne and I will be doomed.'

"Kind of." Arthur said calmly, "But it depends on what kind of person she is. After all, the Zhao family does not just freely let anyone in. What do you think?"

Arthur fixed his eyes on Wendy as he was talking. It reminded her of the day she and Bowen visited his family for the first time. She knew that Arthur was talking about her, but she acted like she knew nothing, playing cool but subtly tried to speak ill of Autumn. "Bowen died early, and I remarried, so she was brought up by Emily. She was a good girl. But when Autumn did something wrong, Emily was reluctant to punish her. That's why she turned into an arrogant and spoiled girl....."

"Really?" Arthur kept staring at Wendy. If he hadn't known it previously, he would have been stunned by her words. But he already knew Autumn. Although she grew up with Emily, she was filial and mature. She had the characteristics of the Zhao family in her.

He can imagine how Wendy had abused Autumn, simply by the way she spoke ill of her own daughter.

"Absolutely!" Wendy smiled calmly and said to Arthur, "Autumn grew up with Emily, but that old woman didn't know how to raise a child, but I..... also had my difficulties, so Autumn had a strange personality. After all, she is the only child of Bowen. If you do want her back, please help me discipline her."

As Wendy said it lightly, Arthur laughed grimly. "OK, don't worry."

Wendy was smug with it but didn't know that Arthur already knew the truth. She calmly said to Arthur, "Mr. Zhao, if there's nothing else, I would like to go home. My other daughter is waiting for me."

"Alright." Arthur smiled, "It's nice to run into you. Maybe we will see each other often."

Arthur's words frightened Wendy and made her eyelids quiver. But she smiled calmly and acted like nothing happened, "If there's anything I can do, just let me know. I'll help as much as I can."

As Wendy called the waiter for the check, Arthur said lightly, "Let me do it, it doesn't make sense to let ladies pick up the tab."

"Mr. Zhao, there is no need for that." Wendy said timidly, "I can still afford it, and it also doesn't make sense to let elders pay the bill."

As she walked out of the coffee shop, she almost fainted. Her legs were still shaking and her lips were pale. It took her a long time to recover.

She didn't know why, but she felt a sense of doom because of Arthur's presence. Maybe..... something terrible would happen soon.

Arthur sat in front of the French window, watching Wendy stumble her way out. He squinted his eyes.

Absentminded, Wendy went from the coffee shop to the ward of Yvonne. Simon was in there. As she came in, Yvonne frowned intensely and said, "Mom, you said you were going to buy some food for me. Where is it? What take you so long? Why haven't you bought anything?"

Wendy lowered her head and didn't say a word, she was thinking about her conversation with Arthur. 'Why did he come back? What for? Was it really as simple as that?'

"Mom, what are you thinking about?" Yvonne saw Wendy staring into nothing and not saying a word. She could not help but asked with a frown, "Where is my breakfast?"

Seeing Wendy was so distracted, Simon became concerned. He knew Wendy for so many years. She used to be calm and self-sufficient. Whenever he was stuck in a dilemma, Wendy always analysed the situation calmly and gave her constructive opinion. It was the first time he saw Wendy in such a state, as if she had lost her mind completely.

Chapter 218

"What's wrong, mom?" After Simon left, Yvonne came closer. Her mother has never acted weird like this before.

"Nothing." Wendy still didn't want to say anything. She was thinking whether she should talk to Autumn.

After going back and forth for a while, she decided to pay her a visit. She got rid of Yvonne by convincing her to take a good rest, then drove herself to where Autumn lived. As soon as she arrived, one of the servants blocked her at the entrance, not allowing her to come in.

"What is going on here? I'm Autumn's mother! Why don't you let me inside?"

Wendy asked angrily. It was unacceptable for her that it was Autumn calling the shots and having that kind of power.

"The young master has said that from now on, you no longer have any relationship with anyone in this house. I am under strict instructions to not allow you inside this property." Nancy, the house servant said indifferently to Wendy.

Wendy was white with fury. She took out her phone and dialed impatiently. When Autumn picked up, "Autumn! This is your mother! Where are you? I'm at the door. Come here this instant!"

Startled, Autumn held the phone to her ear. She had been shopping with Chris. She got anxious and confused when she received the call from Wendy. "Something wrong?"

Autumn didn't care much about Wendy, which made her face pale. When she thought about why she came to the house, she got more upset. She calmed herself and asked in a kind tone, "Where are you now?" I have something very important to say. Tell me where you are and I'll come over."

This was the first time for Autumn to hear Wendy talk to her in such a mild tone. She hesitated for a moment. She was just about to tell Wendy her location, when suddenly Chris grabbed the phone and roared at Wendy. "What kind of human being are you? Don't you have any shame left? My brother's money has already been transferred to your account. Why are you still bothering my sister-in-law? Such audacity you have!"

"Miss Chris, this is between me and your sister-in-law. Anyway, I am her mother. This has nothing to do with you. Please stay out of it." Wendy said coldly.

"She is now my family. There's no longer any relationship between you and her! Why can't I say something?" Chris sneered. "We are out shopping. If you want to wait, you can wait at the door. But I cannot guarantee when will we be back."

As soon as she finished talking, she hung up the phone and gave it back to Autumn, who was just staring at her with her mouth wide open and her eyes about to pop out. "Oh... What if she really did have something important to say?"

"She will call you again if it's really urgent. Don't worry." Chris held Autumn's arm and laid her head on Autumn's shoulder as they walked side by side. "Hey, you are accompanying me to go shopping today. This is girls bonding day. You can't leave me halfway through."

"Never will I do that." Autumn didn't think too much of it. In another ten days, it would be Chris's 22nd birthday. So Autumn came out especially to buy clothes and gifts with her. It would be really inappropriate if she left Chris behind to do the shopping by herself. She smiled and said, "You can rest assured that you have me all day, today."

Autumn accompanied Chris into the shops one by one. One time, Chris fancied a bracelet, which was priced around tens of thousands of yuan. She was hesitant for a moment and decided to skip it. Autumn then secretly paid for the bracelet.

But Chris saw what she did. "Why are you paying for that? Is that for me, sister?" Chris frowned. "I just want you to shop with me. How can I let you buy things for me?"

"It's okay." Autumn happily let the sales girl put the bracelet in a box and wrap it. She said to Chris, "It'll be your birthday soon."

I cannot give you something that's too expensive. Please don't mind this small gift."

Chris's forehead furrowed. If Autumn paid for it with Charles's card, then she wouldn't have any objections. However, she knew that Autumn was spending her own money -- money that she may have been saving little by little. She really could not accept this.

"Sister, it's too generous of you..." Chris didn't know how to thank her.

"It's okay. As long as you like it, then I am happy. This gift is from me and your brother definitely will give you another one." Autumn smiled and held up the nicely packaged gift.

"Let's go. You said you wanted to try on some new dresses." Autumn and Chris left the jewelry store and walked down the street. Chris was still not comfortable receiving the bracelet. She also wanted to give something to Autumn. Then she thought of buying her a coat. It would be perfect as the weather had been getting colder recently.

"Sister, do you like this one? It looks good on you."

Chris took a coat from the shelf and showed it to Autumn.

"I don't need to buy new clothes. Just look for the ones you like for yourself." Autumn refused at once. She had already spent too much money today and she wouldn't allow herself to buy such expensive clothes.

"C'mon sister, don't turn me down. Try it on." Chris pulled Autumn into the fitting room, and said, "Don't worry about the money. This one is on me.... Well, I'll pay for it with my brother's card."

They both laughed. Autumn could not refuse anymore. She tried on the coat along with a dress. When she walked out of the fitting room, Chris and the shop assistant were all smiles. The dress and the coat looked perfect on her.

"Sister, you are so beautiful in them! You always wear black and white like my brother. But this color is much more suitable for you." Chris gazed at Autumn and said, "If I had the same skin tone and figure as yours, never will I wear anything dull ever again."

Chapter 219

It was Leila who spoke to her. From her appearance to even her aura everything seemed to have changed drastically from the way she used to be.

"Leila? So it is you! What a coincidence!" Autumn greeted her with a faint smile. 'Now that I meet her here, it is innocuous to greet her.' Autumn thought to herself.

"Ye, you have come here after such a long time. It feels like I have not seen you in forever, " replied Leila. Leila was a lovely and elegant woman earlier but now she had somehow transformed her usual style with an air of superiority as a sexy woman laced with strong perfume. Autumn was shocked about her change as she had not met her in a long time.

"How have you been doing recently? How is work treating you?" Autumn inquired politely as she thought that it was required of her to extend warm greetings to Leila, her former colleague.

Leila made all efforts to look like a million dollars simply because she was Charles's assistant. The role of playing second fiddle to him went straight to her head leading her to become highly conceited.

Leila always hoped to meet Mrs. Lu someday but as she was drowning in heaps of work in the past few days she did not even pause to think about it.

While bearing in mind that it was Autumn who introduced her in the company for this specific role, she remained kind and courteous to her. "I have to thank you Ye. If it weren't for you I wouldn't have gotten the opportunity to get this job in Shining Company and contribute in the capacity I have. And in a small bid to extend my gratitude, I would love to take you out for a meal, " Leila responded with a big warm smile.

"There is absolutely no need to thank me, Leila. Just work hard and prove your worth." Autumn said while maintaining her calm and dignified tone with a faint smile. She didn't want to waste any more of her time to exchange warm greetings with Leila, as Chris, who was accompanying her, was left waiting. Without thinking more, Autumn smiled and said in a bid to end their conversation. "What are you doing here Leila?"

"Oh there has been a lot of work piling up these days. Mr. Lu seems to handle the biggest load of work. It may even appear like he has lost his appetite over the increasing burden at work. I asked David about it and he told me that Mr. Lu likes to eat food from this particular restaurant. So I came here to buy some food for him. I was worried that he may develop some health problems if he maintains this poor diet, " replied Leila.

"I see..." A slight frown appeared on Autumn's face as she heard Leila voice her concern. She was immensely worried but she also felt a pinch of discomfort and embarrassment upon hearing her words.

Reflecting upon her tone, Autumn felt like Leila was trying to covet something that belonged to her. Charles was her husband then why should Leila develop such concern and care for his health?

"Well I am going to leave now. Do enjoy your meal, Ye. I will definitely call you later." Her hips swayed as she turned around and walked away. The moment Leila left, Chris asked with a disdainful look, "Autumn, is she an employee in my brother's company?"

"Yes, she is your brother's assistant." Autumn nodded while responding.

"What? You must be joking!" Chris widened her eyes with astonishment and disapproval. "Autumn, how could you possibly be so negligent? How could you allow such a coquettish woman to be Charles's secretary?", " quizzed Chris.

"What's wrong? I don't seem to understand what the problem is with her?" Despite being surprised, Autumn looked at Chris and replied calmly. "She was my colleague in Cloud Advertising Company. She is not just a pretty face and she is very capable. Keeping that in mind, I introduced her to work at your brother's company. I heard from Charles that she is an efficient employee. I am glad that she is able to help your brother."

"But it is obvious that she is attracted to my brother. I am afraid that you are creating troubles for yourself. I don't want you to nurture a snake in your bosom." Chris kindly warned her but then broke into a smile as she continued, "But there is no need for you to worry about it much. My brother has changed quite a lot since you came into his life. No matter what any woman plans to do, my brother will not even glance at her. He loves you so very much."

After hearing this assurance, Autumn blushed away with embarrassment.

Upon finishing their meal, Autumn and Chris went shopping for a while. They lost track of time shopping in stores which displayed an array of the latest fashion. It was only until they received a call from Gary who asked them return for dinner did they realize they had spent almost an entire day gallivanting. With some reluctance, they finally decided to go back for dinner.

However, when their car was pulling up at the gate of Lu Family's residence, they didn't expect to be greeted by Wendy, who rushed over rather abruptly. They were startled to see her.

"You have finally returned! I was waiting for you here the entire day." Wendy waited outside the Lu house for the whole day as she was determined to meet Autumn, who simply didn't share the same enthusiasm to meet her.

"Why are you still here?" Chris furrowed her brows the second she spotted Wendy there. In that instant, she regretted their decision to come back so early. Had she known that Wendy was still there, Chris would not have come back for dinner.

Autumn was taken aback as she stared at Wendy, who had never shown such excitement to meet her. With a worried frown she asked Wendy in her attempt to decode her intention, "What are you doing here? What plans do you bear in mind this time?"

"I..." Wendy hesitated for a moment before she finally gathered her words, "I have to discuss an important matter with you. I sincerely request you not to avoid me. Could you please spare some time to talk with me?"

"No. There is absolutely no way she could waste more time with you!" Before Autumn could respond, Chris interrupted Wendy. She knew Wendy was a vicious woman and there was no way Chris would allow Autumn to have a conversation with her alone if Wendy did not uncover her intentions.

Looking at Wendy, her brows furrowed tightly, Chris interjected, "You can talk with her here in my presence. And please don't waste our time and hurry it up! It's almost time for dinner and our family is expecting us to be home any minute now."

"Autumn." Wendy called out in a trembling tone. Wendy resented Chris for all that she said but forced herself to calm down. She caught a glimpse of Autumn with a morose look and slowly said, "Irrespective of that has happened in the past, I am still your mother and nothing in the future can change that. I know that you don't like me, but I..."

However, she again lost her turn to speak, as Chris silenced her almost immediately. "Please don't even try to manipulate us by trying to victimize yourself here. I can assure you that irrespective of whatever you say, we will not show you any mercy and will not be fooled by you again, " said Chris with a grin.

Autumn remained silent through the entire exchange of heated words but internally she was in a dilemma. Even though she was determined to turn a deaf ear to Wendy, Autumn still felt bad for her as she saw the pathetic and helpless look all over Wendy's face.

After keeping silent for a few more moments, Autumn then turned to Chris, "I am going to talk to her for a bit, Chris. Don't worry about it. I will come inside soon."

Chapter 220

"My family background?" Autumn turned pale with confusion as she somehow sensed the trouble Wendy was about to unfurl at this point, "What do you mean? What is the matter?"

"Okay, so the events unfolded in this manner....." Wendy hesitated to narrate the events as she pulled together and said, "Your Dad was from a wealthy family when I was dating him. As his family wasn't enthusiastic about his relationship with me, he decided to elope with me. Unfortunately, we had to part ways later because of our failed relationship."

"Just enough with your hypocrisy and story telling! You are nothing but a selfish and greedy woman by nature. I simply will not trust you again." Autumn interrupted and yelled out to Wendy, "Do not waste any more of our time and get right to the point!"

Wendy was overwhelmed by a growing sense of guilt and embarrassment at Autumn's contempt, "Autumn, I acknowledge my mistake by leaving you in dark all alone and helpless. As a result, your grudge and anger towards me is reasonable. But I..... do have my reasons."

"Really?" Autumn responded with a smirk. Autumn thought Wendy had exhausted all her conniving planning and tricks so now she was down to the last straw, making a fool of herself to beg for forgiveness.

"I can understand why it may be hard to believe me after all these years, but please do spare a minute to ponder about the fact that you are named after me and not your dad, Bowen." Autumn immediately plunged into a mode of retrospection as she was always baffled by her surname.

"What on earth are you trying to convey?" Autumn asked in a sharp tone.

"Autumn, the reason why I treated you the way I did and abandoned you all these years was just my attempt to keep you safe from the danger of Zhao Family, as your Dad had warned me to do so." Wendy forced a warm smile as she continued, "Only our alienation will help ensure that the Zhao Family will be out of your tracks. When I made you a substitute bride for Charles, it was only temporary. I intended to relieve you upon Yvonne's return, but little did I expect that you would fall in love with Charles. This..."

Wendy sighed and added, "Earlier, Zhao Family did bow down to the level of threatening me during my pregnancy. And I always lived in a state of constant fear. Soon after giving birth to you, I escaped to end those days where I was basking in my misery. But...."

"Just jump to the point now!" Autumn clenched her fists as she dealt with confusion and anger upon hearing Wendy's reasons. She would rather be denied of such knowledge than be tortured by the truth, "What is the logic behind your argument?"

"I...." Wendy grabbed Autumn's hands, unable to contain herself and said, "Autumn, I would rather keep you in the dark than see you unhappy upon learning the truth. But now the time has come that I must warn you of the possible danger as I have met someone from Zhao Family today."

Wendy strengthened her grip on Autumn's hands and continued, "They are bound to bring trouble upon you. Please bear my warning in your mind and be vigilant and take good care."

Baffled by the overload of information, which could change the dynamics of her relationship with Wendy, Autumn reacted with a frown as she still did not know if she should trust Wendy.

"Autumn, are you listening to me carefully? You should mark my words." Wendy chuckled to herself on seeing Autumn's bewildered expression, which might mean that she was believing the plot. She took the advantage of Autumn's silence to continue speaking.

"Your father and I wish nothing but your lifelong peace and happiness but.... no matter what Zhao Family will say to you, I hope you will not place your blind faith upon them. As for your reunion with them...."

"It all depends on your judgment." Wendy smiled gently and caressed Autumn's hair, "I came here simply to warn you about this. Now I should take my leave, and it has been a long and hard day. Please do take care of yourself."

Just when Wendy was about to leave, Autumn briskly moved to stop her. "Wait a minute, tell me why these relatives started to look for me after all these years?"

"That is simply a mystery even to me." Wendy addressed Autumn calmly, "I only just found out about their abhorrence of our presence. I simply came to remind you about it."

"And.... My grandma....." Autumn was in a fix at that moment, and somewhat moved by Wendy's expression. Autumn felt guilty of believing Wendy because of what Wendy had done through the years.

Wendy immediately responded to clear the air: "She is not your biological grandmother. She was simply your dad's devoted maid. She still deserves all of your high regard, respect and love."

Autumn embraced silence as she was exceptionally shocked.

"Well, please don't overthink this on my account. For all you know, they might not even come to trouble you as I warned." Wendy smiled and continued, "Now let us put an end to this conversation. You better go back quickly to prevent yourself from catching a cold in the gust of wind."

Wendy took her leave soon after that, leaving Autumn disturbed with the overload of information until her receding figure was lost in sight.

Autumn returned to Dream Garden with distracted state of mind. Her grandma warmly welcomed Autumn with great concern: "Autumn, are you fine? Chris notified me of Wendy's visit. Did that woman hurt you in any way?"

"I am okay. My grandma, you do not need to worry about me." Autumn assured her grandma but was overwhelmed by a sense of strangeness. She did not know what to make of it. Was she to believe Wendy after all these years?