

Wedded Bride 241

Chapter 241

Wendy clasped Autumn's hands and expressed her anxiety. "Autumn, things are not what you think they are...."

"Enough Wendy, stop making up things!" Autumn let go of Wendy's hands and expressed her contempt, "I have learned a lot from your tricks and they are no longer going to work on me. From now on, we are no longer family. Consider me dead and never let that get off your mind."

"Autumn..." Arthur stopped Autumn, "I don't want to be this harsh. However... if this is the only way to show you my pure intentions and that your grandmother and I really want to make up for everything."

"I know." Autumn nodded gently and said to Arthur, "But I can't decide right now, not like this. I need to think things through."

Autumn was already willing to meet Arthur and talk to him and she was trying her best to accept the truth, but this is too much information to process all at the same time.

After Autumn left, Wendy did not hide her displeasure at Arthur. "Arthur, you already ruined my life two decades ago. Now you are still here meddling with my business. There is no justification for you to bear such a grudge against me!"

"Sit down and let's talk." Arthur replied with a sarcastic laugh. Since the fake mask of friendliness had been ripped off, they might need to settle everything, once and for all.

"What on earth do you want?" Wendy was confident that her mask of good manners was necessary to please the Zhao family to whom she was to become a part of. However she couldn't figure out why Arthur hated her so much.

"Wendy, my son Bowen passed away because of you. But that was all in the past now. I came here only to remind you of the fact that Autumn is my granddaughter. If you still do something bad to her, expect a world of pain from me." Arthur would be powerless to deal with the situation had Charles not made it better for Autumn.

"And you think you can scare me like this?" Wendy let off a sarcastic laugh. In the past, she had to seek Arthur's approval, in all obedience. However, as time passed, she felt it less and less necessary to be meek and submissive in front of him, "I dare tell you that Autumn bears an inexorable bond with me. She should treat me with care and support that befits a daughter. It is my inherent right to expect that from her in the future."

"It seems that you are still bound to your delusion. You know well that this whole situation is to your disadvantage." Wendy was making a fool of herself and Arthur was rubbing it in. "If in the past you could do whatever you want to hurt Autumn, now I suggest that you think twice.... Autumn is Charles's wife and my granddaughter. You will get nowhere if you keep troubling Autumn. She now have the backing of two influential families." Arthur did tell the truth and his words carried weight.

"You... You are going to stand up for Autumn then?" This agitated Wendy.

"And why not?" Arthur replied with a cold smile, "She is my granddaughter who deserves my unwavering support and care!"

"Do not forget that I will, by all means, be hard on you if you trouble her again." Although Wendy is Autumn's mother, Arthur will not be considerate about it. After all.... Wendy was to blame for the untimely death of his son.

From the coffee shop, Autumn went straight to Cloud Advertising Company. She intended to work to get her mind off the complicated situation that she is suddenly a part of. Autumn ran into Isla at the entrance, busy on a call. "Listen here! It is none of your business. I have more important matters to deal with. Do not call me unless it is a matter of life and death. Do you understand?"

Isla hung up the call, rolled her eyes to the ceiling and let out a silent scream. After she had let off some steam, she saw Autumn coming in her direction. "Autumn, I thought you were staying home. Why are you here?"

"Too bored to stay home and do nothing. I thought I should check on the proposal. How is that going, by the way?" Autumn asked.

"Nearly completed. Autumn, I am so sorry but I have to leave and go on another blind date that my mother set up. I really hate it. But I have to go. See you later." Isla looked at her watch anxiously.

"Another blind date? You just had one! How did that go?" Autumn was somewhat against such aimless blind dates. Since Joanna's recovery, Isla had been occupied with her job and blind dates.

Isla replied, "Thanks for reminding me! From the previous one, the guy was handsome and from a prominent family. But during our conversation, he had annoying references to his mothers. I couldn't stand it."

Isla looked at her watch again "Anyway I have to go. I will discuss with you on the proposal when I come back in the afternoon."

"Ok." Autumn nodded gently. She went straight to her office and was about to check some reports when her phone rang. It was Charles. "Arthur told me you left the coffee shop. I thought maybe you went straight home and called there, only to learn that you weren't. So where are you now?"

"I am at work." Autumn felt at ease listening to Charles's voice over the phone, "I have to live up to your expectations, so I should be working hard."

Charles smiled by himself. "My original intention was to divert you rather than to tire you."

"I am fine. You do not need to worry about me." Autumn smiled gently, "I have to get back to work, goodbye for now."

Right after the call, Autumn tried her best to deal with the overload of tasks, however she was also laden with anxiety. Then Isla knocked on the door. She was back from her blind date. Time does fly really fast when you are preoccupied by so many things.

"I know that you forget to eat when you work. I brought you a meal, come and eat a little." Isla opened the food box with a smile and motioned for Autumn to join her.

Autumn massaged her head to refresh herself. She has not taken a good rest because of too many annoying things to deal with.

"So, how did it go. Did you meet your Mr. Right today?" Autumn tried to stir gossip while eating.

"You are gossiping even during a meal."

Chapter 242

It's hard to deny that every company was eager to make money, but Autumn still hoped to finish this project despite the company being unable to make any profit from it. The reason was that this project could save Cloud Advertising Company from its bottleneck.

As long as she could finish this project, it was sure for Cloud Advertising Company to be well-known quickly. Autumn didn't hope all the effort of her employee would be cast to the winds, after all they had worked several nights to figure out the solutions.

'I need time alone to think things through, and to try and figure out a way to cut the cost effectively.' Autumn thought to herself.

"Okay, I get it. Don't worry. I will take care of it. You can go back to your work now, " said Autumn with a smile. She consoled Isla with a grin.

Autumn spent the whole afternoon worrying about the cost. When she was about to get off work, she received a call from Cindy. Hesitant, she finally answered the phone.

"Hello, Cindy! What's wrong?" Slowly yet softly, Autumn asked her, "Why are you calling me today?"

"Sister, I haven't seen you for many days. I miss you so much." said Cindy with a sad voice. Autumn could tell from her voice that she was upset. "My mom told me that you won't come to play with me anymore. Why? Don't you like me anymore?"

Autumn felt tears well up in her eyes as she heard this from the lovely, little girl. The sorrows surged up from the depths of her heart. It was no wonder why Cindy was intimate with Autumn when they met for the first time. Now it turned out that they were family and Cindy was actually her younger cousin.

"Cindy, listen to me. That is not true. I am just occupied by so much work recently, so I don't have time to see you. Be a good and obedient girl, okay? I promise that I will see you after I finish work, " said

Autumn patiently since she didn't want to hurt her feelings. Autumn tried to comfort Cindy but she failed. "No. I want to see you now. I miss you so much. I want to play with you." Cindy insisted.

Cindy was her charming and adorable little self on the other end of the phone. When Autumn was about to say something, She heard Abby's voice in the background, "Cindy, who are you talking to?"

"Mom, I am talking to Autumn, " replied Cindy. The next second, Abby's voice was heard again, "Cindy, you..."

Abby heaved a sigh and then took the phone from Cindy. She then said to Autumn, "I am so sorry, Autumn. I hope she didn't bother you."

"No, she didn't. That's okay." Autumn felt it weird to hear Abby's voice now that she knew the relationship between them. "Is Cindy okay? She is not crying, is she?" Autumn asked.

"She is fine. Don't worry. She just asks me everyday to take her to you." Saying this, Abby smiled and went on, "Autumn, I..."

Hesitant, Abby paused. "Well, I will hang up if it's all right." Autumn was about to hang up the phone when Abby said all of a sudden, "Wait, please. Autumn, are you available today?"

I actually want to meet and talk with you, " said Abby with hesitation. Autumn thought it over for a short while, then she agreed, but with some reluctance. "I am still not off work yet. How about meeting at seven o'clock at Collodi Restaurant?"

Autumn knew that Cindy liked eating the children's meal at Collodi Restaurant, so she decided to meet up there. Seeing the lovely girl made her happy.

"Okay. Your call. See you later then." Abby agreed and hung up the phone. Cindy asked eagerly, "Mom, when could I meet Sister Autumn again?" She asked while looking at Abby with expectant eyes.

"We will be meeting her later, Cindy. You must be happy with this news." said Abby cheerfully. "Hurry up. Change your clothes and we will meet her soon."

After dressing up in a hurry, Abby took Cindy to the Collodi Restaurant. They arrived first so they sat to wait for Autumn there. Cindy was unable to hold herself back knowing that she could meet Autumn soon. She asked continuously when Autumn would arrive and it annoyed Abby somehow.

"Well, Cindy, be patient and stop asking me endlessly. She will be here soon. We just need to wait for her for a while. Eat something first, " said Abby. Abby pushed the food to Cindy to try and calm her down.

Autumn arrived at around seven o'clock while Abby waved to greet her with a smile. As soon as Autumn got in, Cindy got off from her chair and rushed up to her excitedly. "Sister Autumn, you are here!"

"Cindy! I also missed you so much." Autumn held Cindy into her arms tightly. A bright smile came across her lips seeing that Cindy was so happy to see her.

"Autumn, please sit down." Abby greeted her and said apologetically, "I am really sorry. I know you are busy. But I didn't expect that Cindy would miss you so much. I..." Embarrassed, Abby tried to explain to her.

"It's okay. I also missed her, " said Autumn calmly. Cindy soon cooled down in her arms, eating quietly while sitting on her leg.

"What do you want to eat?" Abby handed the menu to Autumn while she ordered two dishes. After that, Autumn then looked at Abby, asking in a very polite manner, "Mrs. Zhao, why did you ask me to meet you here today?"

"Autumn, I... I just want to have a talk with you, " said Abby with a bitter smile. She paused for a while, but then added, "I know that you must need some time to accept it. But I have something to talk to you about."

Staring at Abby, Autumn said nothing but waited for her to continue.

"When I was still a child, I could remember that your father always cared about me and was kind to me since I am his younger sister. Even if he ran away from home, he would send me birthday gifts.

Therefore, though he didn't live with us at home, I was still very appreciative of what he had done for me." Saying this, Abby paused for a while and then went on, "My parents also loved him so deeply. He had been in poor health since his childhood, but my parents still kept letting him learn the piano since they knew it was his only passion. If he hadn't met Wendy, perhaps my brother would be a well-known pianist by now."

Chapter 243

They paused their conversation a bit when the waitress came to serve the dishes. Hearing what Autumn said, Abby began to feel much better. She believed in what Autumn said.

"That's great! Grandma has been expecting your return." Afraid that Autumn would be overwhelmed, Abby changed the topic. They talked about other things. During dinner, Autumn hung out with Cindy and played games with her for a long time. When she got back home, she found that Charles was packing his bags.

"Are you going somewhere?" Autumn looked at Charles, quite surprised.

"Yes." Charles stopped and held Autumn in his arms. He asked, "Where have you been? You came back so late."

"I met up with Cindy and played games with her. Abby came of course." Autumn answered, smiling, "How many days will you be gone? Let me help you with your packing."

Charles hugged Autumn saying, "I'm going to Japan and will be there for about a week. During my absence, you need to look after yourself well."

"Japan?" Autumn asked with astonishment. If she remembered the correct date, the proposal would also be dealt with during these days. Autumn smiled at Charles, but didn't tell him about the proposal.

"Yeah. There will be an exchange meeting for industries in Japan. Is there anything wrong?" Charles asked curiously.

"Nothing. Not at all." Autumn smiled and continued. "It's supposed to be chilly there in Japan. Here, let me help put extra thick clothes in your suitcase. Though your work matters a lot, you should have meals regularly."

"Are you worried about me?" As Charles embraced Autumn with a smile, he said. "Since you like Cindy so much, how about tonight " we start preparing for a baby?"

"What? Oh, knock it off!" Autumn quickly slid away from Charles's arms and started tidying up his things, but Charles caught her and fell on her.

They both lock in an embrace as Autumn lay in his arms. "Charles, what do you think? Should I really accept the Zhao family?"

"Why not? They are your family." Charles hugged her tight and said, "No matter what kind of decisions you will make, I will always be by your side, at least, from my point of view They won't harm you."

"You have known Mrs. Zhao and her husband for a long time, so you should be quite familiar with the way they act." Charles said.

Autumn turned and found a comfortable position in Charles's arms. She went on, "Exactly, I know them well, but But I still don't know why I have some reservations."

"Is there something that causes you to feel that way?" Charles smiled. As he touched Autumn's hair, he said, "To be honest, there is one thing that I need to confess to you."

"What's the matter?" Autumn raised her head towards him.

"Chris is" After a short pause, Charles continued, "Chris is not my sister by blood. To be exact" She is actually my aunt."

"What?" Autumn was shocked at what she heard. She sat up and asked, "What on earth are you talking about?"

"Do you still remember Edward Lu who visited us two days ago? He is my great uncle, my grandfather's brother. At the same time, he is also Chris's father. As you can see, now, I should refer to her as my aunt." Charles told her the real identity of Chris. This completely astonished Autumn.

"Autumn, the reason why I am telling you about this is because I want you to know that everyone gets helpless at some point in his life. We hid Chris's identity to protect her. Edward Lu is not unwilling to admit that she is his daughter, just He just doesn't know the truth, either." Charles said, patiently.

"Well, my flight is tomorrow morning and I need to sleep early. In short, no matter what decision you are going to make, I will always be with you." Charles turned off the light in the room and fell asleep embracing his wife.

That night, Autumn had a dream. In the dream she met Bowen Zhao. Bowen said to her, "Autumn, no matter what happened, they are your grandpa and grandma. Nothing can change that. I feel so sorry for them. Will you please help look after them for me?"

Autumn jumped up from bed, terrified and drenched in cold sweat. When she came to her senses, Charles was already putting on his clothes.

"You woke up so early." Charles was amazed to see Autumn up. He had planned to go quietly to catch his flight. He didn't want Autumn to get up early and see him off, but to his surprise, Autumn woke up early too.

Noticing the sweat on Autumn's forehead, Charles asked with concern, "What's wrong? Did you just have a nightmare?"

"I'm all right. You are leaving now?" Autumn turned over and got out of the bed. She said to Charles, "Wait a moment. Let me see you off at the airport."

"It's ok. You can go back to bed." Charles immediately refused, but Autumn insisted. "I will be ready in a minute."

At the airport, Autumn came to know that apart from David, Leila would also be in this business trip with Charles. Remembering what had happened at Chris's birthday party, Autumn frowned slightly.

"Are you OK?" Charles asked gently when he saw Autumn frown. Autumn was staring at Leila, Charles explained, "It is Leila who helped arrange this trip, so I also take her there."

"No worries. I'm OK." Autumn smiled and answered, "I'm not with you in the following days. So remember to take care of yourself."

Autumn's words made David laugh. He said, "Don't worry, Mrs. Lu, I will help look after Mr. Lu in your absence."

At first, Leila was excited to go on a business trip with Charles, but she felt discontented at the sight of Autumn. Considering Charles was around, Leila didn't dare to be presumptuous.

She came to Autumn and said to her, "Autumn, I am sorry that day I..."

Chapter 244

"I am afraid...." Autumn was fully aware of Abby's kindness and desire to relieve her company from its distressed situation, but.... she thought of declining out of pride.

"You do not need to feel guilty. We chose you based on your company's credibility." Abby smiled at Autumn. "Andy's company has entrusted this proposal to some eligible partners, however, upon my strong recommendation, he decided to give Cloud Advertising Company a chance. So..... you must spare no effort to make it. Do not let me down."

"Thanks very much." Autumn felt relieved after Abby's explanation, "You can rest assured. I am bound to put this proposal into fruition."

"That is all I came for. Now I have to go." Abby rose from her chair, "Relevant information has been sent to your E-mail. Autumn, the other eligible companies invested with their respective groundwork three days ago. They have had a head start so you will have to work around the clock."

"I am fully aware of the urgency." Autumn nodded gently and then accompanied Abby to the elevator. After Abby had left, Autumn immediately called for a meeting. She gave a detailed account of the proposal from Andy's company. "I fully understand the efforts all of you have invested in the proposal from our Japanese client, but.. this new proposal is of equal importance. You are kindly requested to work overtime to accomplish it and right after, be handsomely rewarded."

"Autumn, but the Japanese case... must be done quickly. I doubt our capacity to handle both of them within the deadline!" Isla expressed her concern.

"I will handle the Japanese project while all of you work on the new project." Autumn replied with great composure, "That is all. You are all dismissed."

Autumn worked extra hard to ensure the perfection of the Japanese project, when Charles made his call, "It is too late. You had better drop your work and go home for a good rest."

"How do you know?" Autumn instinctively turned around, expecting Charles's arrival, however, on second thought, she realized that Charles must have called home to learn of her absence, "You should take a rest too."

"Yes, thanks for your concern." Charles continued, "After dining with a Japanese client, I just returned to my hotel for a refreshing shower."

"Go to sleep early then." Autumn expressed her care for Charles.

"What are you doing tonight?" Charles found himself satisfied talking to Autumn over the phone. He was dying to hold Autumn in his arms despite being away for only a day.

"I am working on a proposal. By the way, today... Abby paid me a visit at the office." Autumn moved away from the computer and chatted away with Charles, "She entrusted me with a proposal from Andy's company."

"Great, did you accept it?" Charles switched to a comfortable position lying on the bed as he asked Autumn.

"Yes, I accepted it gladly." Abby was kind enough to give Autumn's company an opportunity. It was not justifiable for her to decline it.

Moreover, Autumn was fully aware of the qualifications to be involved in such a proposal it. "At times, I find myself guilty of bearing a grudge against the Zhao Family, but.... after deep reflection, the Zhao Family should treat me with the due care after being absent from my life for such a long time."

Autumn sighed and continued their conversation. "Last night I dreamed of my late father who requested me to take good care of my grandparents as he failed to do so. Charles, could you accompany me to the Zhao Family house after your return from Japan?"

"I'd be happy to." Charles was happy to hear of Autumn's acceptance of the Zhao Family. Out of nowhere, a knock on the door broke off their blissful moment.

"What's the matter?" Autumn wondered.

"Hold on. I have to see who is knocking on my door." Charles did not hang up his call, put his phone on the bed, and opened the door to see Leila looking attractive in her pajamas.

"Mr. Lu, this is the document you want. I have sorted it out with marks pending review. Any questions or instructions are welcome." Leila felt deeply attracted with Charles at that moment, a godsend, indeed.

However the sight of the wedding ring that Charles wore dampened Leila's enthusiasm.

"Ok, I got it." Charles took the document and spoke, "It is late. You had better rest. We will discuss it tomorrow."

"Mr. Lu....." Leila did not relent. She knew "step by step, slowly and surely" was the best policy to win the love and trust of Charles, but.... she was overwhelmed by a growing sense of frustration at Charles's lack of reaction to her sexy clothes.

"Anything else?" Charles frowned at Leila's presence, being eager to resume his phone chat with Autumn.

"Mr. Lu, tonight it was very kind of you to drink for me. Are you ok?" Leila asked with a tone of concern.

"I'm fine." Charles replied calmly.

"Excessive drinking is harmful to your stomach. Mr. Lu, this is my well prepared honey to dispel the effects of alcohol. You had better have some before sleeping." Leila expressed her concern for Charles.

Charles frowned at Leila's affection. There was more aversion than warmth in it.

"Anything else?" Charles was already giving her the cold shoulder.

Leila felt like complete idiot before Charles and left, crawling with shame. "Nothing... nothing more. Mr. Lu, good night."

The moment the door was closed, Leila's resentment grew. Charles picked up the phone again. Autumn could not help but make fun of Charles. "Your female secretary is over-zealous to care for you."

"Are you jealous?" Charles asked. There was a element of jealousy in Autumn's joke.

Chapter 245

The next morning Emily got out of bed earlier than her usual time. She had begun to lose her sight so she didn't see Autumn walk up to her.

Earlier in the night, Autumn had received a call from Arthur. Upon noticing Emily's receding eyesight, he gave her an advance notice. When she went across the room to Emily, she greeted her, "Grandma, good morning." She wanted to cry but she held back her tears and pretended not to notice Emily's poor vision.

"Autumn..." Emily responded with a smile as she held Autumn's hand, "Chris said you came back late last night. Even if you are busy working, you should pay attention to your health."

"I see, " Autumn comforted Emily as she stroked her hand, "Grandma, I can take good care of myself. As long as you live a comfortable and healthy life I will be happy."

"I am too old to give you company any longer. After I leave the world you still need to live an active and happy life. This is the circle of life, my journey with you is about to end but you need to continue on yours with all the best. Please do take care of yourself, " Emily laughed, "Your breakfast is ready."

Autumn planned to look after Emily but her offer was rejected politely. As Autumn opened the door to leave for work, she saw Sam.

"You are coming to pick up Chris, aren't you?" Autumn asked joyfully. She was so happy at just the thought of Sam and Chris falling in love with each other.

Sam nodded and explained, "My parents are arriving today and I would love to introduce Chris to them."

"I am leaving. Chris will come downstairs in a moment or two. Please have a seat and make yourself comfortable while you wait for her." As soon as Autumn arrived at her office she got a call from Hoad Masahiro. He said, "Miss Ye, I have made the flight reservation for you. It's scheduled for tomorrow."

"So soon?" Autumn asked in surprise, "Isn't the plan to be presented three days later?"

"Yes but I was hoping that you could come here in advance to get an idea of the arena and conditions and prepare accordingly. After all it is an important plan. I am worried that you may embarrass me if you are not fully prepared."

On the other end of the line, Masahiro continued as he knocked on the table, "Last time we met, I also promised to be your guide when you come to Japan. This is a good opportunity for me to show you around."

Autumn was not interested in sightseeing and gallivanting with Masahiro, but... She thought of Charles in Japan and instinctively wanted to surprise him there.

"Okay, " Autumn finally agreed as she nodded and hung up. Then she asked Isla to come to her office and said, "Isla, I am going to Japan tomorrow. The company... I trust you and only you. Please handle and take care of the affairs as you deem fit."

"You are leaving tomorrow?" Isla was shocked. She added as she absorbed what she had just heard, "Why are you in such a hurry?"

"Masahiro booked my tickets. When I leave please take over the plan made for the Giant Promise Company." Autumn worried about the company's operation but she had no choice. The plan to be presented in Japan was her only chance to change the inferior situation. If she succeeded, it would be a big turning point for her company's future.

"I understand. Please don't worry. The company is in safe hands." Isla's confident tone was a comfort to Autumn. In the afternoon, Autumn went back home to pack up and prepare for the sudden trip. Ryan became the Deputy General Manager when Charles bought the Cloud Advertising Company for Autumn. However, he was in charge of nothing important, so it made no difference whether he was on duty or not. In other words, he had become an irrelevant person in the company.

Soon after Autumn left, Ryan began to create trouble. He stole all the documents about Andy's company when Isla was not in her office.

Once Isla heard about it, she went directly to Ryan's office and interrogated, "Mr. Zhou, you took the documents of Giant Promise Company from my office, didn't you?"

"Yes. Do we have a problem here?" Ryan put down the documents he was holding and authoritatively said, "Since Miss Ye is away, I am the head in this company. I took these documents to help with the plan. Do you have any complaints?"

Isla did not have the slightest idea that she would be suppressed by Ryan the moment Autumn left. But she had to admit that Ryan was senior to her in the company. So in a polite tone she responded, "Mr. Zhou, although you are my leader, Manager Ye has assigned the plan made for the Giant Promise Company to me..."

Ryan stood up as he interrupted her, "I know Miss Ye and you are friends. But now I am in charge of the company. You don't need to worry about the plan. Someone else will handle it." As a tall man he stared down at Isla to intimidate her.

"You..." Isla was burning with fury. But as an educated lady, she didn't swear. Before she thought of an idea to take the documents back, Ryan opened his mouth.

"Did you not understand a word of what I said? Get out of my office right away, will you?" Ryan yelled at Isla who froze in anger.

Isla had no choice but to call Autumn, "Autumn, I can't make a plan for the Giant Promise Company. Ryan took all the documents the second he got a chance. I don't know his intentions."

Autumn didn't tell her how to handle with Ryan, instead she asked Abby to send another copy to Isla so that she could move ahead and work on her plan.

Before Autumn left, something big happened in the Lu family.

Sam had intended to take Chris to meet his parents but before they left the house, Rachel was there. She was an unannounced guest. Chris looked at her and asked, "Why are you here?"

"I am here to talk to you, " said Rachel. Once she learned that Chris was Edward's biological daughter she was thinking of ways to smooth out their relationship. She wanted to show Edward her sincerity, so she didn't mind pretending to flatter Chris. After careful consideration, she thought she should pay a visit to Chris.

"You are here looking for me?" Chris sneered, "I am sorry I am leaving. And I just ran out of time to waste on a small talk."

Chapter 246

"It seems like you are not aware of the truth, " Rachel sneered. "We are not the ones who will move in with you, but... you will live with us. Don't you know that you're not Charles's sister? You are his aunt."

Chris felt her heart beating so fast that she could faint. All of a sudden she began to hyperventilate as she was panicking.

"I don't know what you are talking about, " Chris responded. Chris attempted to leave the spot but Rachel stopped her. "What I am trying to tell you here is that Edward is your birth father so you're going to live with us. I hope that's clear to you?"

"Just shut up." Chris yelled out with anger. She kept telling herself that Rachel was lying. At the moment, Gary showed up and said to Rachel, "Miss Bai, this is our family affair. It seems... to be out of your business."

"Gary I am going to marry Edward next month. As your future sister-in-law and Chris's stepmother, I have come here for Chris's sake, " Rachel responded with a warm smile which seemed insincere coming from her.

Gary's face turned pale with anger. He didn't think that Edward would still be persistent about marrying Rachel especially after knowing about Chris's identity. Nor did he expect that Edward would ask Rachel to come here with this piece of information.

Gary was so furious that he almost blacked out. Pondering upon Gary's response, Chris could guess whether Rachel was telling the truth. However, she still couldn't believe it. She had lived in the Lu family for years but now she was told that she was Edward's daughter.

"Grandpa, is she... telling the truth?" Chris asked Gary as she wanted to hear it from him.

"Of course I am. Do you think that I would lie to you about such an important matter?" Rachel snapped after noticing Gary's hesitation.

Chris had been waiting for Gary's reply, but Gary ignored her question. "Did he send you here?" he turned to Rachel.

"No, he did not, " Rachel replied. "Edward told me Chris's real relation with him after he went home. He hopes that I can get on well with Chris, so I've come here to make amends. I really just want to get to know her better, " Rachel continued with a smile on her face.

Upon hearing their conversation unfold, Chris dashed towards the gate as she couldn't endure this blow. Sam had been waiting for her outside. When he saw Chris with tear-filled eyes running out of the house, he strode to her immediately. However, Chris acted as if she hadn't seen him and walked right past him. Sam bombarded her with questions, but she did not utter a word. Before Sam could find out what was going on, Chris had shaken off his hands and run away.

Sam hurried to start his car and followed Chris.

Meanwhile, Rachel was still talking to Gary. "Well, you must be curious why Edward trusts me so much, " Rachel smiled with contempt.

"Rachel, what do you want from us?" Gary asked, frowning. He didn't understand why this woman kept harassing his family. At first, she had come for Charles and now Edward.

"Are you scared now?" Rachel asked as she sank down to the sofa. "When I was with Charles, you opposed to us being together even before you had met me. Well, I endured that. But then you forced Charles to marry another woman, and later he deserted me. I am a well-known super star. Why should I have to be treated like that?"

"To be honest, I don't like Edward at all. I chose to be with him because of his wealth and status. It is also my attempt to retaliate against you. Now that I failed to get Charles, I chose another man to take revenge on you. From now on, I will frequently visit you. Don't try to use any low means to separate us. Edward trusts me very much. Whatever methods you implement, he won't give up on me, " she continued with a smug smile on her face.

"Well, since I got what I wanted today, I shall leave for now." Rachel said with a sly smile as she patted her clothes. "I will be pleased if you can attend our wedding, " she added, before leaving the Lu family's house.

Rachel knew that Chris was unwilling to live with her and that's exactly what she wanted.

Edward planned to let Chris accept him slowly, but Chris didn't seem to share the same thought. She paid this visit bearing two motives in mind. One was to tell Chris her real identity as she was unaware, and the other was to simply piss off Gary deliberately.

Rachel was aware that Edward would blame her when he learned her doing. However, she didn't care about it as long as she got what she wanted.

Rachel had driven Gary crazy. As he saw Rachel leave, he gave Edward a call. "The moment I told you Chris's identity, you ran to Rachel and told her. Did you do this on purpose to enrage me? Well, Chris

knows this now. If something happens to her, I wonder if you will feel even an ounce of guilt." Gary scolded him over the phone.

"What is going on? What's the matter with Chris?" Edward asked anxiously. He tried to understand what had happened, but Gary ended the conversation abruptly after giving him a piece of his mind. Although Sam was with Chris, Gary was still worried about her.

He had called Chris many times, but she didn't answer the phone.

Once Autumn reached home, she saw that Gary sitting on the lounge as he was taking medication. "Grandpa, what's wrong? Are you all right?" Autumn asked Gary with concern. Rachel's visit had led to an elevation in Gary's blood pressure.

Chapter 247

Sam picked up his phone, answering the call immediately.

"How is she doing? Is she okay?" Autumn asked, worry etched on her face.

"She's fine, " he said, trying to alleviate her anxiety.

Chris had a tendency to use alcohol as a coping mechanism, often drinking her problems away. Despite this, Sam knew she was an innocent girl. "Don't worry. I'll look after her."

"Thank God, " Autumn sighed, relieved to know that Chris was in a good condition. She knew how hard it must have been for her, having gone through the same thing before. But Autumn had already moved on. Chris, on the other hand, found it hard to do so. Given the situation, she decided to call Charles to ask for some advice.

"Hey, Autumn. What's up?" Leila said, answering the phone.

Autumn was taken aback, shocked to hear Leila's voice on the other line.

"Where is Charles?! Why do you have his phone?!"

She exclaimed, still finding it hard to trust Leila.

"Unfortunately, Mr. Lu is busy right now. But don't worry. If you have anything you want to say to him, I'll make sure to pass it on, " she lied, knowing fully well that Charles was just using the bathroom. She was never allowed to touch anything and was only ever asked to look after his belongings. But she couldn't help answering the call after seeing the name on the screen.

"Never mind. I'll just call him later, " Autumn replied coldly.

"He has pressing matters to attend to so he has been really busy lately. He rarely gets enough rest as he has to work almost 20 hours a day. To tell you the truth, he even nearly fell asleep in the meeting today, "

Leila said even before Autumn had the chance to end the call.

"He clearly needs more time for himself or else his work will be extremely affected. You're his wife. Don't you think you should give him more consideration?"

She continued, sounding like a relentless boss.

Leila, being the only woman by the side of Charles at the moment, thought the situation worked in her advantage.

"What are you trying to say?" Autumn asked, stunned that she would speak in such manner. The situation couldn't be any more ridiculous. She was the one responsible for Leila's recommendation to work as Charles's secretary. If she had knew Leila would eventually talk to her this way she wouldn't have even helped her out of kindness. She was the wife of Charles after all, she shouldn't be treated like that.

"Well..." Leila started, pausing for a moment.

"I'm just voicing out my concern. It's just alarming to see Mr. Lu in such a state. Do you want to see him exhausted every day?" she explained further.

Afraid to be seen by Charles, Leila pressed the end call button, hanging up the phone quickly. This left Autumn no chance to respond.

Not knowing Charles's password, Leila tried to delete the call record but to no avail.

On the other hand, Autumn was surprised that she would receive such hostile treatment from Leila. She decided to bring this up to Charles the moment they got the chance to talk.

Visiting Dream Garden proved to be worthwhile for Rachel. Feeling happy more than ever, she went to go shopping by herself. Upon arriving at the house, she saw Edward sitting on the sofa with a serious expression. She realized he had already known where she went today without her even saying anything.

Pretending that nothing had happened, she smiled at him and said, "You know what I discovered today? There are actually some great wedding studios in the city! I have visited them and I'm so glad for what I've found. Look, what do you think about this one?"

She continued, offering the brochure to him. "This studio has excellent photographers, " she said, pointing at the cover. "I was even able to talk to one of them and they're really professional. I definitely think you should try to visit and see for yourself."

"Where exactly have you been?" Edward asked with annoyance, ignoring what she told him.

"Me?" Rachel asked, pointing at herself.

"I just went shopping for a bit. The wedding preparation has been really stressing me out so I thought it'd be nice to treat myself even just a little."

Rachel desperately hoped that he would just let the matter go.

"What did you do before you went shopping?

Did you go anywhere else?"

Edward asked as he stared at her coldly, his tone clearly revealing his anger.

Feeling a little frightened, Rachel answered in a low voice, "I didn't go anywhere."

Unconvinced, Edward decided to ask her the question again.

"Are you sure? This is your last chance. Don't lie to me, " he told her with furrowed eyebrows.

There was tension in the atmosphere as they looked at each other, waiting for someone to talk. After a few moments of silence, Rachel decided to confess. "I went to Dream Garden-"

A slap suddenly stung Rachel's cheek, making her gasp.

She went to touch her face, feeling his hand hit her skin.

"You know what? I thought you would stick to your words and help me solve my problem. I was incredibly moved when you offered help so I decided to trust you. Clearly, I was wrong, " Edward said, expressing his disappointment. "You went as far as visiting the Lu family just so you can see Chris and drill words inside her head. What the hell for?" he exclaimed.

Edward, aware that Rachel can very much use him as revenge against Charles, has always been extremely suspicious of her motives.

"Did Gary tell you this?"

Rachel asked, not even half upset for being slapped because she already expected it.

"It's none of your business. You don't need to know who relayed that information. But you need to tell me why did you go to visit the Lu family, "

Chapter 248

Rachel forced a smile as she spoke to Edward, "Trust me when I say I totally understand your repressed guilt of being absent from Chris's life and your eagerness to make up to her. It is beyond reproach that I tried to settle this matter up in Dream Garden. I just handled it on your behalf. There's a blood tie between Chris and you, no matter she accepts it or not."

Rachel looked at Edward with a concerned expression. "Edward, you should consider the fact that my relationship with Chris is a constant downward spiral. It is only getting worse. How can I possibly live with her with these never-ending quarrels and misunderstanding after our wedding next month?"

"With our wedding in sight, it is in my sincerest hope that before our married days... I can patch up my relationship with Chris so as to spare you the drama. You should not have blamed me for all of that!"

Edward instantly felt a pang of guilt for slapping Rachel across her face. He then pacified Rachel with assuring words, "Rachel, you... you should have dealt with this matter more patiently than usual. After all you did spoil my entire plan of approaching Chris in an amiable manner. Did you know that? I had it all down to the wire."

"I knew it, but all my actions were a deliberate attempt to help you." Rachel moved towards Edward, "Edward, I admit that I was being over-zealous to handle the situation, and...."

"I just have to let you know that I am so very sorry...." Rachel lowered her head gently and slowly as an apologetic gesture, "I really didn't expect it to make the situation worse."

"If this is the case, there is absolutely no point of you nurturing guilt in your heart. I appreciate the intention behind your action." Edward gave an affectionate and warm hug to Rachel, resigning himself to Rachel's disguised manipulative nature.

"Do you really forgive me?" With tears rolling down her cheeks, Rachel looked up to see Edward, "After careful consideration, I have a suggestion. As Chris now has a vague knowledge of her family background, why don't.... we pay a visit to Lu Family tomorrow to clear the matter with her. Maybe we can bring her home. Edward, what do you think?"

"This is our last resort to make up to Chris...." Edward sighed, "Now I pray for Chris's safety and health, otherwise, I would never forgive myself."

Rachel snuggled up to Edward, with hopes of Chris disappearing forever bubbling in her mind, however, in the presence of Edward, she tried to put up a disguise of concern: "You do not need to worry about Chris. I am sure she will be safe and sound."

Sam closely followed Chris since her escape from Dream Garden. He was still unaware of what had happened. As Chris parked her car along the road, Sam came closer to her in a bid to express his concern.

"What's going on, Chris?"

"Sam, I am ok, I..... I just need some space to calm down and catch a breath. Please leave me alone." Even though Chris was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, she tried to compose herself and talked to Sam with sense and reason, "Sorry, today.. I am afraid I will not be able to meet your parents and pay my respects to them."

"It doesn't matter. I have already told them about your absence over a call." Sam smiled as he comforted her, "Chris, you should know that I am your boyfriend who is there to share your sorrows and woes. You know what they say shared sorrow is half while shared joy is doubled with the right company!"

"Sam...." Chris forced a weak smile, "I appreciate your kindness, but.... my problem is beyond your understanding."

With Chris consistently choosing to keep her worries to herself, Sam decided to take her to a pub hoping she would release her pent-up feelings, "You are free to drink away your sorrows in my presence."

"Thanks I think I will appreciate that..." Chris looked at Sam with gratitude. All she needed was to drown her sorrows and troubles in pitchers of alcohol.

Nearing midnight, Chris who was drunk beyond recognition was being escorted home by Sam. Autumn who was long anticipating Chris's return hastened downstairs at the sound of Chris's groaning.

"How could Chris hit the bottle like this?" Autumn was overwhelmed by stench of booze as she helped Chris retire into her room with Sam.

Gary felt relieved upon seeing Chris return after a long period of apprehension.

"Sam, how much did Chris drink?" Autumn asked in a worried tone.

"Please don't worry and think much about it. Chris had a very low capacity for alcohol." Sam put the quilt over Chris, closed the door and expressed his doubt to Autumn, "Autumn, what on earth happened to Chris. She was unwilling to tell me what happened despite me urging her!"

"She...." Autumn sighed as she recalled the entire account of what happened to him, "Sam, do not worry about Chris. She is overburdened by the thought of her problem. And I truly believe she will be fine once I talk it over with her tomorrow."

"Ok, now I must take my leave. I will come over to see her tomorrow."

Autumn planned to leave by air tomorrow afternoon, so on the morrow, she prepared a cup of honey water for Chris as soon as she woke up. Autumn knocked on the door and entered the room without waiting for Chris's consent with the cup of honey water in her hand.

"Autumn." Chris had a throbbing headache owing to the hangover, she looked terrible and utterly wasted, "What's up?"

"I bring you a cup of honey water. Please drink a little to refresh yourself." Autumn handed the cup to Chris and asked affectionately, "Do you feel better now? "

"I am fine." Chris forced a faint smile. As she was more alert, the entire scene with her newly found family background began to crowd her mind.

"Your situation... I have been made aware of." Autumn edged toward Chris and spoke in a comforting tone, "Actually.... it is not that horrible. We will surely find a way out. "

Chapter 249

"That's right, I feel exactly the same way." Autumn nodded slowly, "I was like you, I thought grandma was the only family I had, there was no reason for me to accept them. And if I did this, I felt it would be like betraying Grandma. But then I realized that even grandma wished for me to accept them, she hoped someone would be there to take care of me once she left this world.

"I spoke to your elder brother, he said he would support me no matter what decision I made. But he also gave me a different perspective. He said that I denied the Zhao family's feelings for me without giving them the opportunity to explain themselves. And that would be quite unfair to them." Autumn looked at Chris who was sitting right across her and continued, "So I came today to tell you this, no matter what decision you make, Charles and I will always support you, as you are our sister, but..... the least you can do is give him a chance, a chance to explain the things and then once you have heard everything you can make up your mind."

"This is different." Chris sighed, "Autumn, your family do have a good reputation, but what about mine? He has been to prison once, and now he wants to marry a woman I despise from the core of my heart. The only thing I want to do is to disappear from the world, then I would not have to worry about these issues."

"Chris, he loves you as every father loves his daughter. No matter what he did in the past, he gave you life after all." Autumn patted Chris at her shoulder, "There must be a cloud of confusion burdening your mind, it doesn't matter. Think it over carefully. When I come back from Japan with your elder brother, we'll face all of it with you."

"You are going to Japan, too?" She acted surprised as she hadn't heard anyone mention Autumn going abroad.

"Yes." Autumn nodded, "My flight leaves this afternoon. After drinking the honey water, you should hurry up and go downstairs. Grandpa has been worried sick, don't disappoint him."

There was a trace of guilt on Chris's face when she heard Autumn mention Grandpa. Sometimes it was really shameful to think that he was so old and still was worried about her, she could not help thinking herself unfilial.

So Chris got up and cleaned up. She pushed the door open and walked downstairs while Gary was sitting in the dinning room. After a moment of hesitation, she called, "Grandpa....."

"You are up, come and sit here." Gary put down the newspaper from his hands, said to Chris, "Do you still have a headache?"

Chris shook her head. Not knowing what happened, her eyes turned red as she heard Gary's concern for her.

"Sily girl, it's a beautiful bright morning, why are you crying?" He smiled and said as if nothing had happened, "Well, Nancy has prepared a hearty breakfast for you, you were so drunk last night. Now you should get something to eat, otherwise you will get a stomachache."

"Okay, grandpa I'll go eat right away." Chris wiped away her tears and stood up. Right that instant, she suddenly realized something.

Whether Edward was her father or not, no one could replace Gary in her heart ever.

Sam came at noon. After he arrived home late last night and found Jane waiting him for all the time to ask why his girlfriend changed her mind suddenly.

Reluctantly, Sam tried every possible way to persuade her, which was why he got up so late.

"Grandpa. Chris. I have to go now." Autumn pushed a few mouthfuls of rice into her mouth as she prepared to say goodbye. Chris pushed Sam aside and said, "Sam, could you take Autumn to the airport?"

"No, I'm fine." There were so many problems occurring all at once that Autumn could be relieved to have Sam at home, so she quickly refused, "I've already called for a cab, please take your time. And help me with the things at home, Sam."

Sam was also worried about Chris, so he did not insist. He walked Autumn to the cab, and when he was ready to go back, he saw Rachel and Edward show up yet again.

Because Sam knew Edward's story, he stopped. He knew that Chris didn't want to see them at this time, so he stopped them, "Mr. Lu and Miss Bai, I'm afraid that Chris is not in the mood to see you right now, I think..... it will be better if you come back later."

"Who do you think you are?" Rachel looked at Sam scornfully and said, "Let me make something clear here, Edward is Chris's father, why would he need to ask for your permission to see his own daughter?"

"Of course he doesn't need to." Sam spoke in a low tone, "But as I said a few moments back, Chris still cannot accept the fact, and if you do care about your daughter, please give her a little time and space to think about it."

Sam said this to Edward, he knew Edward was the person who made decisions about this and would see some sense. Rachel, however, would absolutely not care about the feelings of Chris.

"Whether she can take it or not, it's another matter. And we're here today hoping to make it clear, to clear the knots in her heart, what does that mean if you don't even let us in now?" Rachel frowned and said.

"That's enough, Rachel." Edward looked at Sam carefully, "Are you Chris's boyfriend?"

"Yes, I am." Sam answered confidently, he was very calm on this matter, even if Edward was Chris's father, he would never falter.

"Please take good care of Chris for me. I'll come back to her in a couple of days." Edward knew he was being too impatient after meditation, so he decided he should give Chris some time to calm down and process everything.

Chapter 250

"Let's go." Edward sighed as he moved forward and took Rachel by her hand. They were just about to leave when they heard Chris shout from behind them.

"Wait a moment." Chris was waiting for quite a while for Sam, but he didn't show up in the end. As she was worried about him, Chris came out of the room to see what was holding him up. But unexpectedly, she saw Edward and Rachel as they were leaving.

In fact, she hesitated and considered whether it was a good idea to call Edward back or not. But within a moment of reflection she knew she should do so, especially because what Autumn said in the morning seemed to have given her abundance of hope and courage. Autumn was right. No matter what had happened, she should give Edward a chance to give a clear explanation so that she could make a balanced decision for everyone.

"Chris" As soon as Edward turned around and saw Chris, his eye turned red as they filled with tears. Chris also felt hurt to see Edward like that, but she still maintained a cold expression towards them as she said, "I'd like to have a word with you."

"That's it." Rachel gave a brittle smile. She said to Chris before she could say anything more, "I made it abundantly clear earlier when we spoke that in the near future you will live with us. Keeping that in mind, I think you better clear the air so as to avoid unnecessary trouble in the future."

"OK, I promise you. But what do you want to talk about with me anyway?" Edward looked at Chris with happiness. For Edward, just the fact that Chris was willing to chat with him really made his day.

"Why don't we find some other place to have this chat? That way Gary won't be bothered." Rachel didn't dare to go into the room, as she feared that Gary would most likely bring up the events of what exactly happened yesterday. So Rachel suggested that they take the conversation outside. Edward turned his head and asked for Chris's advice. But Chris shook her head in disapproval and said, "Let's just talk at home. Anyway, I have only a few words to say so it shouldn't take much of your time."

Chris turned around to lead them inside, and Edward followed her. On seeing Edward coming in, Gary grunted with anger said to him, "What are you coming back for now?"

"Big brother, I" Gary had helped in raising his daughter for so many years. Edward felt guilty about this, so when he stood in front of Gary, not knowing what to do, his head lowered in embarrassment. Upon seeing Rachel walk in behind Edward, Gary became more angry, "I don't want to say anything to you. Since you are still going to marry her, just go ahead and do whatever the hell you like. But I must inform you that you shouldn't expect me to show up at your wedding. From now on, you don't have any relation with me!"

Gary had made up his mind. He was old enough to let go of everything. Now who he only cared about was Charles and Chris. As long as they lived a good life, he could not care enough to get involved in anything else.

"Grandpa, don't get angry." Chris poured a cup of water for her grandpa, and then said, "Grandpa, how about going inside and take some rest? I will... I will have a quick chat with him."

Upon hearing what Chris said, Gary was taken aback. It seemed that the girl, who stood before him, had suddenly matured into a woman. Gary nodded his head slowly, and said, "Please do what you think is fit. You have my complete support, child."

"Thank you, grandpa." After sending Gary to his room, Chris came back to Edward and said, "Let's talk in the study."

"OK." Edward nodded his head. But Chris frowned as she noticed that Rachel too wanted to join in their private conversation, so Chris blatantly said to her, "Miss Bai, you are not married to Edward yet. My conversations concerns him rather than you. I don't want a stranger to be privy to our talk."

"What do you mean? How can I be a stranger?" Rachel asked with anger. She gripped Edward's hands firmly and said, "Edward, now you see how bad the situation is? She says that I am a stranger. I....."

"Don't pay heed to it. She doesn't mean it." Edward patted Rachel's hands, and comforted her, "I am just going to have a quick chat with her. You wait outside for me please, won't you?"

"But....." Rachel didn't respond. She feared that it might be unfavorable if Edward and Chris talked without her.

But Edward didn't give her the chance to even respond. He said, "Well, just wait outside."

Sam was standing beside Chris. On seeing her going upstairs, he said in a low tone, "I'm waiting you here. Call me if anything unexpected happens."

"OK. Thank you." Chris looked at him with grateful eyes as she went upstairs.

Only Sam and Rachel were left in the living room. Rachel kept glancing in the study's direction, feeling anxious.

"You are curious about what they are talking, aren't you?" Sam poured himself a cup of tea, as he addressed Rachel who sat across him, "You are scared that Chris will expose what you have done before, which may stop your brilliant plan of making a fortune. Am I right?"

"Don't talk nonsense here." Rachel forced herself to calm down. As she composed herself she said to Sam, "Edward and I love each other, and he knows my sincerity better than anyone else. Unlike you, you got close to Chris only because you are in love with her? Or, you actually mean to approach Autumn Ye by using Chris?"

A cold smile drew on Sam's face, as he grew reluctant to bicker with Rachel. And Rachel was also preoccupied with other matters, so too she was unwilling to argue with Sam.

"Chris, I..." As soon as they entered the study, Edward was excited to hold Chris's hands and prepared to say something, but Chris quickly interrupted him in his tracks. Chris pulled her hands back coldly, and said to Edward, "Well, sit down please."

Edward looked at his empty hands, and pulled together a broken smile, "I know you hate me, but..... I have been unaware of our blood tie all these years. Please do not blame me."

"My grandpa has told me the entire history, so there is no need for you to repeat it. The reason why I called you upstairs today is because I wanted to ask you if you are really going to marry Rachel?" Edward was surprised this was the last thing he thought Chris would ask him about. He went blank and it took him a few moments to return to the conversation. As he looked at Chris again, he felt a little awkward, "Why do you ask me about this?"