

Wedded Bride 271

Chapter 271

"Stop sitting there. Come here and join us." Abby said to Arthur. Today, Arthur was also a little different. He was quieter than usual. He stared at Emily with caring eyes, and secretly glanced at Autumn from time to time.

Abby sensed it and was worried that the serious atmosphere would make Autumn feel uncomfortable, so she called them to the table to eat. "Aunt Emily, here, let me help you up."

She came to Emily's side. Although the departure of Emily and Bowen wasn't that big an impression for her, she knew that Emily was the most reliable person to her eldest brother. Now as it turned out, she was the closest person to Autumn as well. Therefore, she had great respect for Emily.

Hearing the voice of Abby, Emily held out her hands, asking, "Are you Miss Abby?"

"Yes, I am, Aunt Emily." Abby took Emily's hands and replied, "It's me, Abby."

"Oh dear! You were about five or six years old when I left. And now you have grown up. How time really flies!" That's how it is with elder people. When faced with those who they haven't seen in a long time, they tend to recall the past affairs easily in their familiar surroundings. It's as if time was on pause and it had just started running again.

Very much so with Emily.

Abby helped Emily to sit at the table and said with a bright smile on her face, "I knew that you were coming to visit today, so I especially prepared your favorite dish, sweet and sour spareribs. I remember that you liked it before, but now I have no idea whether it still suits your taste. You can have a try shortly."

"Great. Great. Great." Emily said "Great" three times in a row. She was really having the time of her life, getting this chance to come and see the Zhao family before she died. They have always regarded her as a member of their family, not a servant who should keep herself at a distance.

"Autumn, please come and sit as well." After Abby helped Emily to the table, she also called Autumn over. Amy looked quite sentimental today. She went out to wipe her tears several times and Abby noticed. Abby knew that she was happy to have Emily come today.

Abby and Autumn sat at either side of Emily. Emily was in such a good mood that she ate heartily.

Seeing more smiles on her grandma's face than usual, Autumn was happy to have made a good decision to come today.

"Aunt Emily, here, have a taste of this." Abby kept putting food on Emily's plate. She really took good care of Emily that night. Cindy was also well-behaved that she could eat up a bowl of rice by herself without anyone else's help.

Autumn felt like crying all of a sudden, but she managed to hold back her tears.

"Emily, these are all your favorite dishes. Tell me what you think. Are my cooking skills still good?" Amy was caring for Emily, too. Although Emily hadn't been in the Zhao family house for a long time, everyone regarded her as part of the family. She was even regarded as the benefactor to the Zhao family.

"Mrs. Zhao, your cooking skills are as superb as before. You haven't let your skills decline." Emily replied with a smile.

Autumn really felt the love and care of this family for her grandma Emily. And that night, no one brought up the issue of her identity. Instead, they looked after Emily and entertained her well. Emily was the most important person to her and this made her happy. As the saying goes, 'love me, love my dog.'

Emily was all smiles the whole night. After dinner, all of them gathered in the living room to catch up. Abby sliced some fruits and put them on a plate. She passed the plate to Autumn, saying, "Autumn, here you go. Have some fruit."

"Thanks a lot." Autumn replied as she took the plate. Everyone's face was lit with laughter and Autumn started to enjoy every minute of it.

"Aunt Emily is very delighted today." Abby spoke to Autumn as she sat next to her. Autumn nodded her head slightly, and answered, "Grandma hasn't been so happy like this in a long time."

"You can bring her here as often as you'd like." Abby smiled and said, "My mom and dad have a lot to talk about with her. she could live here and my father could observe her and check on her condition all the time. And aunt Emily herself would also love it here. A bright and joyful atmosphere can be beneficial to her health. Don't you think so?"

Autumn pondered on what Abby said. Abby was right. It would be good for Emily to live in the Zhao family house. Nonetheless, it seemed a bit inappropriate.

"I know why you are hesitant." Abby easily understood what Autumn was worried about. She continued to explain to her, "I'm just thinking of what's best for Aunt Emily. Both you and Charles are busy with your rising business. Apparently, there is no one in your home who's always available to take care of her. If she lived here, my parents could help attend to her. You can come to visit her at any time, every day."

Abby shortly paused and went on, "Autumn, you need to understand that I never force you to make any decision. You are married now, so no one will complain if you forget to come."

"I see." Autumn sighed and told Abby her feelings, "I just think that it will..... It will be too much of a burden for you and your parents."

"How can it be a burden?" Abby said to Autumn in a calm voice, "Emily is our family. And we are all more than willing to look after her. How can it be a burden?"

"Autumn." Andy interrupted the two ladies before Autumn could say a word. "The proposal has been passed. There is another company similar and comparable to Cloud Advertising Company. To be fair, the company decided to reschedule the proposal after high-level discussions and will only allow Cloud Advertising Company and that counterpart to take part. And during this period, I'm afraid that you will have to work hard."

"That's to be expected. It's part of my job." Autumn answered politely. Autumn had heard of something of that sort from Isla before, so she had made full preparations for it. Having lost Light House Company last time, she had to win the proposal this time.

Hearing the exchange between Autumn and Andy, Amy seized the chance to give some advise, "Look, Autumn is so busy with her work. Emily, why not live here with us? With the help of Arthur, your illness will be well under control, and Autumn can focus on her work instead of worrying about you all the time. What do you think?" Amy put forward the same suggestion as Abby's. For one thing, Emily's illness can be cured. For another, Autumn could devote herself to her work without any worries at the back of her mind.

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Autumn stood up and then sat beside Emily. "Grandma, " she said softly.

Emily put Autumn's hand into Amy's. Then she said, "I have decided to stay and live here with the Zhao Family from now on. You and Charles are at height of your careers and are too busy, so I don't want to cause any more trouble for you. I'm too old to adapt to a new living environment. I once was a member of this family and I don't want to leave them again."

Although everybody in Charles's home was very friendly to her, Emily couldn't feel at home as much as she did with the Zhaos.

The feeling of living with them was different. She had worked for this family for many years so she also took it as her own.

Moreover, it would be a good chance for Autumn to get closer to the Zhao Family when she came to visit her.

"I don't think it's okay, grandma." Autumn frowned. She tried to pull her hand away but Amy was grabbing it tightly. Seeing Amy's happy and hopeful expression, she gave up the attempt.

She understood what Amy was thinking because she could imagine the ordeal Amy had gone through when separated from Emily before.

"It's okay, trust me." Emily said gently, "The people here are all your family. If you miss me, you can just come here and visit me as often as you'd like."

"Grandma, I..." Autumn felt reluctant to agree with her but her grandma had made up her mind. She had no choice but to comply. "Okay, I'll bring you back here tomorrow, " she conceded.

"No, you need not do that. I am staying here from now on. You can just bring all my things." Emily had firmly made her decision.

"Grandma..." Arthur said, "Don't worry. Just let Emily live here so that she could have more time to chat with Amy."

"That's right. Please let Aunt Emily stay here. My mom has no friends here so Aunt Emily is the perfect company for her." Abby consoled her sincerely and Autumn had to agree.

"Okay. Grandma, I'll bring your things here tomorrow. If you feel uncomfortable, just call me at any time." Autumn said to her.

"OK, " Emily said with a smile.

"Doctor Zhao." Autumn wanted to say something to Arthur but Emily interrupted her. She did not like what Autumn said, "What did you call him just now?"

"I..." Autumn felt awkward. She didn't know how to reply to her grandma.

"It's Okay." Arthur said with a smile. Then he said to Emily, "It's Okay to call me Doctor Zhao for now. She still needs time to get more familiar with us."

Arthur felt lucky enough to have Autumn take Emily back to his household so he was willing to wait until she could call him "grandpa".

"No, it's not Okay, " Emily insisted. Emily did not have much time to live so she wanted Autumn to get reunited with her real family as soon as possible.

"Autumn, I know you are unwilling to do so yet and I know that you are a very respectful girl. No matter what happened in the past, they are your real family so it is my wish and my order that you change how you address them, starting now." It was the first time Emily had been so stern on Autumn. It was also the only way to help Autumn move on.

"Emily, Don't compel her like that." Amy felt sorry to see Autumn in a dilemma and said, "She can just address us as she likes. I don't mind it at all."

"No, she can't." Emily was a little impatient and said, "All I wish is to give Autumn back to you. Now that she is finally reunited with you I..." she felt too sad to continue.

Autumn understood what Emily was thinking but she just couldn't completely consider them as her family yet. It was too hard and embarrassing for her.

"Give her more time, Emily." Amy consoled Emily and said, "Autumn is a good girl. Just give her more time, she will accept us one day."

"But I may not be around to see that day!" Emily voiced out her worry. The room got quiet immediately. Emily smiled bitterly and said, "I want to give Autumn more time, but... who can give me more time?"

"Grandma..."

Autumn held Emily's hand. She felt sorry for Emily but she didn't know how to console her this time.

"Autumn." Emily grabbed her hand and said, "Please help me fulfill my wish."

Autumn couldn't bear to refuse her any more.

Everybody was speechless, waiting for Autumn to speak. After a while, Autumn said in a very low voice, "Grandpa and grandma."

As the room was very quiet, Arthur, Amy and Emily heard it clearly. It was like music to their ears. Tears of joy flowed down their cheeks.

"My good girl." Amy patted Autumn's hand slightly. Autumn fell into silence and felt a little gloomy somehow.

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"Autumn, please take it." Charles told her coolly. He knew that Autumn did not care about these things. It wasn't about the value of the bracelet. It was more about the sentiment surrounding it. That was the real reason why Autumn was so hesitant to accept it.

Autumn turned around at Charles with an embarrassed look.

Abby walked over to Autumn, took the bracelet and put it on Autumn's wrist, "Take it. Cindy has the other one."

Since it is already around her wrist, Autumn was too embarrassed to take it off. The only thing left for her to say was, "Thank you."

Emily was happy with what she had witnessed with a little help from Amy who told her what just happened. "I'm a little tired and want to go rest."

Abby helped Emily stand up, "Aunt Emily, let me help you. Your room has been readied and mother had also prepared the laundry for you."

"Thank you so much, my child." Emily smiled and spoke to Autumn and Charles, "It is late. You should go home to also have some rest. I know that you have a lot of work ahead of you tomorrow."

"Alright, grandma." Autumn agreed as she helped Emily get together with Abby. She also apologized to Arthur, "Grandpa..... Grandpa, please take care of grandma Emily for me and call me anytime if you need me."

"You have nothing to worry about." Arthur smiled. "Your grandma Emily is in very good hands."

"Your grandpa is right, Autumn." Amy also stood up, "You can come over and see her whenever you want."

Arthur and Amy watched Autumn and Charles as they left, never looking away as their silhouettes grew smaller and the car turned around the corner. When Autumn could not see them in the rear-view mirror any more, she turned into her seat and sat in silence, looking straight ahead.

She rubbed her bracelet while deep in thought.

"What are you thinking about?" Charles asked.

Autumn forced a smile and said to Charles, "I don't know why, but I feel so empty in my heart right now. It's like I just lost something very important. And I feel very uncomfortable."

"Is it because grandma did not come back with us? Grandma is now with your family and she will be very well taken care of, especially by Doctor Zhao. If you ask me, this is the best arrangement for her right now. You have nothing to worry about."

"No, it's not what I mean." Autumn changed to a more comfortable sitting position and turned to Charles. "I know that they are my family, I..... just could not get used to the idea."

"You just need time to take it all in. Things will be better, I promise." Charles understood what Autumn was feeling.

The next morning, when Autumn arrived at the office, Isla came up to her, "Autumn, have you heard about Giant Promise Company? Ryan had taken the documents away again. I'm....."

"OK, Listen here..." Autumn sneered a little. She had been too nice to everyone that they sometimes acted way out of line. This time she was determined to put a stop to it. "I will take a look, you call all the planners for me and we will have a meeting as soon as possible."

"Sure." Isla nodded slightly, her confidence was coming back with Autumn's return. She could relax a bit and leave some things for Autumn to deal with.

Autumn went straight into Ryan's office. She did not even knock on the door.

"I remember that I said not to disturb me if it wasn't an emergency. Why was that so difficult to understand?" Ryan did not raise his head, scolding whoever was at the door, "Didn't your teacher teach you to knock before entering someone's room?"

"What's with the bad-temper?" Autumn countered.

"Manager Ye." Ryan almost fell off his chair. He struggled to stand up, knocking off a pile of papers on his desk. "When did you come back? You could have told me so that I could pick you up."

Looking at his former subordinate standing in front of him, Ryan was very upset, but still managed to be respectful and submissive.

"If I had told you, how could I have seen you being so bossy when I'm not around?" Autumn said, raising her eyebrows.

"Haha. That's funny. I didn't know you were good with jokes." Ryan stood in front of Autumn, obviously much taller than her. However, he did not look just as strong. "You were not here, so I had to take the responsibility as the deputy general manager of this company in order to deal with everything. You should not listen to gossip around here."

"Is that so?" Autumn laughed and said to Ryan, "In that case, please give an account of the Giant Promise Company project. Is there anything you think that should be improved?"

"I'm....." Ryan frowned slightly and looked at Autumn, he couldn't remember when he felt himself much weaker than her. "Sure, Manager Ye. Here is the plan....."

"Mr. Zhou." Autumn did not feel like listening to Ryan's nonsense. "You were my boss in the past. I finished the tasks you gave me every time. Now it's a different situation. I'm your boss now, and I pay your salary. I don't need you doing anything without my knowledge. If you want stay in the company for a long time, don't make any trouble around here. Will that be hard for you?"

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Autumn left some words to the HR department and then entered the meeting room. When she walked in, she found that everyone was there. As soon as Autumn sat down, someone hurried to ask her, "Manager Ye, how is our proposal for the Light House Company going?"

"I want to inform all of you of the progress of that proposal." Autumn took her seat, looked around and announced, "We did not win the Light House project."

"How can it be?" All the planners looked at each other in astonishment. They could hardly believe that they lost the project after being just one step away from successfully getting the job. They had worked hard for it for such a long a time.

The whole company expected that they would bring about an upswing. But now..... They had come to a dead end.

"How can things go like that?" There was a loud chatter in the room. Everyone was arguing about the result, trying to mask their disbelief at the loss.

Isla was informed of this by Autumn ahead of time, so she remained calm. She said to her colleagues, "Don't worry now. Why not hear Manager Ye out?"

Following Isla's advice, the staff stopped talking and the room fell silent. Everyone looked attentively at Autumn. One of them asked respectfully, "Manager Ye, we are very curious why we failed to win the project."

Autumn sighed and answered, "I am to blame for this failure."

Autumn didn't tell them the reasons in detail except for the low budget. She said, "I know that everyone wants to complete and perfect this proposal. You have even worked overtime and exerted a lot of efforts. In return for your hard work, I have decided that"

The door was violently opened before Autumn could finish her words. "Where is Autumn Ye? Where are you, Autumn Ye? Show her to me."

"What's going on?"

"Yeah, what happened?"

The staff started whispering to each other again. Autumn raised her head and saw Jane Lin standing at the door of the meeting room, standing aggressively. Autumn hadn't seen Jane for many years. She was still as beautiful and young looking as before. And as bitterly hostile as before.

"Manager Ye, I'm so sorry but I couldn't " The receptionist apologized with a bow and said to Autumn, "I couldn't stop her."

"Never mind, just go back to your desk." Autumn dismissed the receptionist and then said to Isla, "Tell them the meeting is dismissed."

"OK." Isla answered. She motioned for the staff to leave the room. "You can leave now."

They looked at each other in confusion but finally went out with Isla. They began to guess who Jane was. Jane sneered and stopped them. Then, she taunted Autumn, "What are you doing? Why are you letting them out? Are you afraid that you would be humiliated in front of your subordinates when they find out about the things you did secretly?"

"Autumn Ye, you dare be a home wrecker, but you can't handle the humiliation?" Autumn was suddenly sure that Jane came to make trouble. Her son, Sam was now in a relationship with Chris, and it is Jane's duty to help Chris remove all the potential barriers on her way. She would never allow Autumn to get back together with Sam.

No sooner had Jane finished her words than the employees burst into an uproar. Autumn deeply frowned. She directly looked at Jane and said, "Aunt Jane, everyone should take responsibility for his words. That is a serious accusation that you are throwing at me. Could you please tell me when I did such things?"

"What? Since what's done is done, you have no courage to admit it?!" Jane stared at Autumn fiercely, saying, "Autumn, my son Sam already has a girlfriend. I warn you. You had better remain in your proper sphere, otherwise you will bring disgrace to yourself and your family."

Autumn's employees looked at Autumn with speculation and disdain but she didn't have time to deal with it. She looked at Jane, and said, "I have no idea where you have heard that about me, but I have to clarify my name. I definitely did not do any of those things. I have a clear conscience."

Autumn came closer to Jane and said, "Aunt Jane, we can talk face to face if there is some misunderstanding between us. We are at my company. It's not proper for you..... to stir up trouble here."

"Why is it improper? You started seducing my son even before you were mature enough to be an adult. After I stopped your plans with my son, you did not relent. If you really have a clear conscience, why do you want to talk to me alone?" Jane didn't care whoever was standing around listening. But she tried to blow it into a major issue today. Evidently, she wanted to embarrass Autumn in front of as many people as possible to teach her a lesson and give up her inordinate ambitions on her son.

"Aunt Jane, I think your words are excessive." Isla had guessed out who Aunt Jane was. Isla had just come back after giving Charles a phone call. That's when she heard Jane berating Autumn. Isla couldn't help stepping in to defend Autumn, "Madam, as far as I am concerned, it was your son who had feelings for Autumn. And that was years ago. They had been apart for such a long time. And just in case you haven't heard yet, Autumn has gotten married. And if you ask me, her husband is more successful than your son. I'm sorry but you may have embarrassed yourself saying those inappropriate words to Autumn."

"More successful? Haha!" Jane snorted. How could anyone be more successful than her son? She continued to attack Autumn, "Well, then somebody here really has no sense of shame! A married woman, still seduces a man who already has a girlfriend. Autumn Ye, I'm warning you. I stopped Sam from marrying a slut like you several years ago, I can do it again. Stop your illusions and fantasies about my son!"

"How dare you, Aunt Jane, that's too much. You have gone too far!" As Autumn looked at Jane being aggressive, it occurred to her that Jane made unwarranted accusations and false stories about her to force her to leave Sam.

That scene suddenly re-emerged from memory like an old movie showing in the cinema.

It took her a long time to make adjustments to herself so that she could manage to forget Sam. But now, everything has turned upside down due to Jane's presence.

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"Shut up!" Isla yelled, frustrated at the people around them. Autumn continued to be the subject of much gossip, reminding Isla of the time when her friend had been maligned. "I can't believe all of you!

How can you slander her name without even knowing what really happened?" she exclaimed, disappointed to hear people spread rumors about Autumn without even knowing the truth.

Gossip continues to fill the atmosphere as Isla's words fell into deaf ears.

"I've once heard that there's something wrong with her. It turned out to be true. I wonder why a wealthy man such as Mr. Lu continue to stay with her, " someone murmured.

"You're absolutely right. I think Mr. Lu would be extremely angry if he knew that his wife has been having an affair, " another person responded in return.

A rumor had been spreading that Autumn had been cheating on her husband behind his back. They speculated that Charles would have already dumped her if he knew what was going on.

Autumn felt extremely defeated with what she heard.

"You know what? Your manager is good for nothing except when it comes to seducing someone. My son, who was at a very young age at that time, even became a victim himself! Who knows what she might have done if we hadn't moved overseas? Look at her now. She still hasn't stopped pining over him after so many years, " Jane said, accusing her of misconduct.

"Tell us, what would it take for you to finally stop this nonsense? Why can't you just leave us alone?!"

Autumn tried her best to defend herself even while dumbfounded. "Aunt Jane, you should know that those are all lies. How many times should I tell you that I haven't done any of that?"

Despite being true to her words, Jane refused to hear anything that she had to say. How could she bring herself to believe Autumn when even Wendy, her own mother, accused her of having a love affair with her son? She even saw with her very own eyes that Sam hugged Autumn just a few days ago.

"You keep saying that Autumn seduced your son. Well, why don't you prove it?"

If you fail to give any evidence, I'll make sure to call the police to arrest you, "

Isla said in an attempt to threaten her.

Jane burst into laughter upon hearing this.

"Do you want the evidence? You're looking at her right now!" she exclaimed.

"I saw her hug my son as they went shopping just a few days ago! If that's the evidence you're asking for?" Jane said. She turned her back as soon as she saw Autumn frown, seemingly thinking about what she just said.

With her conviction, Isla almost believed her words until she saw her friend's sour expression.

'Jane was definitely talking about the day Chris and I went to buy the scarf.' Autumn thought to herself, recalling the time when Sam accidentally pulled her into him so she can avoid the speeding truck. Chris was using the bathroom at that time so she wasn't able to witness anything. She couldn't believe such a simple event had become the cause of their misunderstanding.

"Aunt Jane, I swear it is not how it looks --" Autumn said, trying to explain herself only to be interrupted. "Just answer my question. Is it true that you hugged my son?"

"Yes, but..." she said, not even planning to deny the fact that such gesture really happened.

She desperately wanted to explain the context behind that hug. Unfortunately, Jane was too angry to listen to anything that she has to say.

"See? She said it herself!" Jane excitedly exclaimed, glad that she was able to make her confess.

"I thought you were really worthy of respect. I shouldn't have given you my trust. You really are a home wrecker, aren't you? You even slept with a man to get your promotion!"

Dissatisfied with being dismissed by Autumn, Ryan couldn't help but sneer at Autumn. "I knew it! I shouldn't have sold the company! Why don't you all resign and look for another job? We don't want you to be a part of our company anymore." he said, clearly annoyed.

"Who are you? Are you saying you're the owner of the company?"

Jane asked, looking at Ryan as if he's a messiah who will fix all of their problems.

"I'll let you handle this matter since she's your employee. In case you need my help, just tell me anything I have to do and I promise I'll do it," she said, holding his hand firmly.

Ryan coughed, unsure how to respond.

"Madam, I want to apologize in advance. But Autumn has been a good employee as far as I'm concerned.

I can't just outright interfere her with her private life. I would have discharged her in the past, but now....."

"What do you mean? Are you saying you can't fire her?!" Jane paused, collecting her thoughts.

"What's the use of being her boss if you can't do such a thing? You're just as useless!" she exclaimed in disbelief.

"What did you just say?!"

Ryan yelled as the words of Jane making his blood boil. This eventually led him to yell at Autumn, "I've told you before. You will not have a good ending." Unable to suppress his rage any longer, Ryan had no choice but to leave.

Autumn couldn't help but sigh after seeing what happened. Thinking that this was the best time, she decided to confront Jane. "Aunt, I know that you've always looked down on me. You even thought I

wasn't a suitable candidate to be Sam's wife. But you know what? I haven't been with Sam. In fact, I have neither no intention to be with him nor will I ever. Please remember that."

"Easy for you to say that, " Jane said in return, laughing grimly.

"Dear, action speaks louder than words. I've seen it with my own eyes and you've admitted it yourself. So who are you kidding here?" she asked as she further continued.

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Charles crinkled his eyebrows into a frown when he saw Autumn. It was the first time he had seen her so angry and helpless at the same time, since they got married.

As soon as Charles showed up, everybody focused their eyes on him. Isla let off a sigh of relief at the sight of Charles.

Everyone present in the room began to whisper amongst themselves. "Autumn, " Charles called out in a composed manner, standing close to her like he hadn't noticed the people whispering.

"Um, " Autumn responded without looking up at Charles. She feared that Charles would distrust her as the others did.

"Look at me, " Charles said with a frown. 'It feels as if she's turned into the person she was when we first got married; constantly on guard, unwilling to open herself to others and lacking the confidence to trust anyone, ' he thought to himself.

"Tell me, what happened?" he inquired in a gentle voice, as he raised her face to look at her.

"Are you her husband?" Jane turned to Charles with a sneer. "I would advise you to keep an eye on your wife and don't let her seduce other men. Otherwise I..."

"Shut up!" Charles screamed, as he turned around and gave Jane a piercing glance. Jane was so frightened that she didn't dare to utter another word.

"So tell me, what's the matter?" he asked again in a soft tone, as he turned himself to look at Autumn.

Charles believed Autumn. 'If Autumn still had feelings for Sam, she would have gotten back with him. Moreover, she wouldn't have insisted on bringing Sam and Chris together. Now I just want her to open her heart and have more faith in me, '

"I..." Autumn muttered. However, the moment she saw Charles's eyes looking back at hers with sincerity, she failed to find the words to explain herself to him.

"Don't be afraid. I trust you. No matter what happens, I will always believe your words instead of others. Just say what's on your mind. I will believe whatever you say, " Charles reassured Autumn, staring at her with his earnest and affectionate eyes. When he noticed that Autumn was moved by his words, his frown dissipated in an instant.

Autumn was relieved and touched by Charles's encouragement. She remembered the time when Charles had comforted her just as he did now, when they had just gotten married.

'Since Charles trusts me entirely, I don't see why I shouldn't trust him too!' Autumn encouraged herself.

"Two days ago, Chris came to me looking for help because she didn't know what gift to get for Sam's mother before she went to visit his parents, so I accompanied her to the shopping mall, together with Sam. When Chris was in the lady's room, a fully-loaded cart came at me out of nowhere. Fortunately, Sam saved me from getting hit by pulling me towards him, where I landed on his chest. Coincidentally, Jane saw that and now she's come here to blame me for seducing Sam. I..." she took a deep breath and explained the situation.

Autumn felt extremely upset for being misunderstood, but with Charles by her side, she finally plucked up courage to defend herself.

"Have you heard her?" Isla gave Jane a dissatisfied glance. "This was all just a misunderstanding. You've got it all wrong. Autumn isn't the one to blame. Are you clear now?"

Jane was stunned for quite some time. She felt strange when she heard Chris's name from Autumn's mouth.

"How... how do you know Chris?" Jane asked Autumn, disregarding Isla's provocation.

"Mrs. Lin, Autumn is my wife. I believe that she has made that clear to you. I know that she and Sam had a history, but that's all in the past. Now she is Mrs. Lu and I think you owe my wife an apology, " Charles said to Jane coldly, as he put his arm around Autumn's shoulder.

The crowd was silenced the moment they saw Charles defend his wife. "Perhaps I misunderstood her that day, but that doesn't mean that she didn't try to tempt my son. Maybe she wants to use Sam to retaliate against me for splitting them up before. I urge you not to have so much faith in her. Otherwise you might come to regret it dearly, " Jane replied to Charles, glancing at Autumn.

"Aunt Jane, there's no need for you to push me so hard, " Autumn retorted. 'I did nothing wrong to her, but her actions... are disgusting, ' Autumn thought to herself.

"I may have offended you in the past, but I was very young at the time. I was done with Sam when he left. We've both moved on since then. Now I'm married to Charles and Sam is with Chris. You're the only one who is still stuck in the past and worrying that I will come back to take Sam away. Aren't you tired of living like this?" continued Autumn.

"My husband and I are very happy together. I sincerely hope that you won't disrupt our peaceful lives again. The only person my heart belongs to, is Charles, not Sam. Why would you assume that I would betray him over Sam?"

Autumn poured her heart out in front of everyone, especially Charles. She didn't want the past to affect her relationship with her husband. Meanwhile, she also showed her affection towards Charles. He gave a satisfied smile, when he noticed that Autumn had come back.

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Jane didn't stop cursing at Autumn even when she was being taken away by the security. Although her mood was ruined by Jane's words, her spirits were lifted when she turned around and found Charles by her side. "How did you know?" she asked him.

"Isla called me and told me what happened. I happened to be around the area dealing with some business, so I came here as soon as I got Isla's call." Charles patted her head gently and said, "You

shouldn't be so kind to everybody unless you want to be pushed around by people. Do you understand me?"

Although Charles blamed her, he did so in an affectionate tone. Autumn scratched her head and stuck her tongue out to him like a child.

"Why don't we get something to eat?" Charles suggested as he checked the time.

"Wait for a moment. Let me finish the meeting." Autumn felt extremely disappointed that the meeting had to be stopped because of Jane's intrusion.

She felt like she was always burdening Charles with her problems. Whether it was when they were in Japan or now, she realized that she couldn't solve her problems without his help.

Thus, she really wanted to excel at her work to show Charles all the progress she had made by herself.

"I'll wait for you then." Charles sat beside Autumn while the rest of the participants prepared for the meeting. Isla was amazed to see Charles in the meeting room after she returned from escorting Jane out of the company with the help of the security guards.

"You can carry on. I'm just an onlooker." Charles smiled at Isla.

Autumn didn't think it was inappropriate to have Charles attend the meeting as he was the main shareholder of the company; he could stay there everyday if he wanted to.

"I apologize that our meeting was abruptly interrupted just now." Then she continued, "It's wise of us to give up the project of Light House Company but... we have all put so much work and time on it, I won't let our efforts go to waste. I promise to give you your deserved bonuses, in return, I urge you to put your heart and soul into the project of Giant Promise Company from now on. I also hope that you can place your trust on me as well, I won't let you down."

"Manager Ye, are you really going to give us bonuses?" Some of the employees were doubtful of what she said, since the project had failed.

"Yes, I am." Autumn nodded her head and assured them, "I promise I won't let your efforts go unrewarded. Although we lost that contract, I will compensate for your efforts with my own money. Moving on, I hope you can help me get the project of Giant Promise Company."

"Rest assured, we will work hard for it!" The employees who were previously skeptical of Autumn, now felt differently after getting assurances from her.

"Moreover, " Charles began speaking abruptly, "If you can complete the project of Giant Promise Company, I will give everybody several days of paid leave. You can go anywhere you want to and I'll pay all the costs."

Everyone got excited when they heard the good news. Charles tried to encourage the employees to work hard so that Autumn could carry out her plan easily.

"Then I think we should... thank Mr. Lu for his support." Isla called for the rest of the employees to give Charles a round of applause.

Autumn checked the time and said, "It's time for our lunch break. Let's take a break, and then we can continue to discuss about the details of the project in the afternoon."

"Isla." Autumn called Isla after all the other employees had left the room. "Let's have lunch together, " Autumn insisted.

"Sorry, I can't go with you." Isla rejected with a smile. Then she added, "I don't want to ruin your romantic date. You can take this chance to enjoy some time together and I'll eat lunch together with our colleagues."

"Isla..." Autumn tried to hold her back but she ran away quickly. Autumn then turned to Charles and said, "Let's go grab a lunch."

"Okay." Charles nodded his head. Autumn picked a small restaurant nearby to bring Charles along. Charles frowned when he saw how dirty the place was, but he didn't say anything to Autumn because she wanted to eat there.

"What? Don't you like this restaurant?" she asked him. Autumn wiped the table and quickly cleaned the tableware for Charles.

Charles wasn't a picky person, generally speaking, but this restaurant... looked really dirty. "Why do you choose this restaurant?"

Autumn smiled and answered, "During the three years that I worked for Cloud Advertising Company, I often came here for lunch. It looks dirty and shabby on the outside but the food here is great. I promise you that you will love it as soon as you have a taste."

Autumn was willing to take Charles to a small restaurant because she had already regarded him as her husband rather than her boss. She was more open to share all her past secrets with him now.

"I am sure there are many other restaurants in the area with delicious food. Why not choose one that's a little cleaner?" Charles felt a little uncomfortable to dine at that restaurant.

Autumn burst into laughter as she looked into Charles's eyes.

Nobody would believe that such a handsome man in an expensive suit would eat lunch in this restaurant. Autumn was amused to see him sitting there.

"Why are you laughing?" Charles asked her out of confusion.

"I don't know." Autumn shook her hands and said, "Charles, I know you've never been to any shabby places like this restaurant before, but I used to live around here. I want to open my heart and share my past with you. It's an excellent restaurant even though it looks a little messy, so I want you to have a try."

The owner of the restaurant approached them while they were talking. She greeted Autumn with a smile, "Hi, so nice to see you again and this is?"

Charles ate a lot since he was in a very good mood, even though he kept complaining about feeling bloated afterwards. Autumn was amused by his words. She laughed at him and said, "Why did you eat so much then? Your stomach must be aching, right? Charles, you can be very funny sometimes."

Charles smiled back at her, but said nothing. They walked downstairs to the company as Autumn was about to go back to her office. "I am afraid that I won't have time to see my grandmother today because of my workload, but if you have some time, please visit her and keep her company. I will have to work an extra shift in the office today," said Autumn.

She paused for a while and went on to add, "If I can manage to get off work earlier, I will meet up with you, so we can pay her a visit together. Is that all right with you?"

"Sure. As you like it," Charles nodded with a soft smile. Autumn spent the whole afternoon working while her employees were all inspired by the meeting in the morning. They worked diligently and soon completed planning the general structure of the proposal. Autumn was pleased by their hard work and devotion so she decided to give everyone the rest of the day off. Autumn was in a good mood and she looked forward to meeting Charles. When she went to the parking lot, she found Aron's car parked there. She figured that Aron was probably waiting for Isla.

Autumn felt happy for Isla; seeing Aron's car there. She felt relieved knowing that Aron cared about Isla so much. "Hey, Aron." Autumn stepped forward and asked, "Are you waiting for Isla here?"

"Hello, Autumn. Yes, I am waiting for her." However, instead of being cheerful, Aron looked upset. He'd come here almost everyday to see Isla after she got off work, but she'd always avoid meeting him. To add salt to his wound, he found out that she had been seeing other people and going on blind dates.

Autumn was quick to notice the sadness in his eyes. "What's up? You look sad," Autumn asked him curiously.

"It is difficult to put it all in a nutshell," replied Aron. Aron took Autumn into his confidence since they had been through a lot of hardships together during their childhood. Thus, when Autumn showed her concern for him, he began to pour out his grievances to her. "Autumn, Isla is still mad at me. She is still reluctant to talk to me, even though I have already apologized to her sincerely, many times. I am so worried; I don't know what to do, I am at a loss here."

"What? She is still angry with you?" She assumed that they had cleared the air and that everything in the past was just water under the bridge, but she did not expect to find that things between them were still unresolved.

Turns out Isla was being very stubborn and perhaps it was because she felt greatly wronged this time.

"Why are you here? I have told you not to come here again." Isla's voice chimed in abruptly as they were talking. She kept a straight face, and spoke with an impatient tone when she saw Aron. She rushed up to him angrily and asked, "Why won't you listen to me? I have told you this before."

"Isla, please don't talk like that, " persuaded Autumn. She reached out, grabbed Isla's sleeve and tried to calm her down. Autumn felt guilty since she helped Aron to keep the truth from Isla, she felt that she should also be held responsible for that. "Calm down, Isla. Just talk to him."

"Autumn, I know that you care about me, but I can handle this on my own. Don't worry about me, " Isla said while keeping a straight face. She turned to Aron, her eyes filled with apathy, and said "Aron, this is the last time I will warn you. Don't ever come to see me again. I don't ever want to see you either. Do you understand me now?"

"Isla..." ?Aron grew sadder upon hearing Isla. Every time he stepped closer to her, she would step back, to keep a certain distance between them. Aron had no choice but to stop, then he said to her in a gentle voice, "Okay, stop. I won't come closer to you, but Isla, you've been angry with me for so many days, when can we sit down and have a real talk? Give me a chance to explain myself to you, " Aron implored, sincerely.

"I think we don't need to have a talk at all. There is nothing for us to talk about. I have somewhere I need to be right now. I've gotta go, " said Isla coldly. Isla forced herself to be impolite to him, but, as a matter of fact, she also felt very frustrated.

She had suffered for a long time because of him, thus, she decided not to get close to him, because she didn't want to get hurt by him again.

It's a basic part of human nature to avoid disadvantages, that have caused them to suffer a traumatic experience. So when they expect something similar, they immediately choose to circumvent it rather than confront it head on.

"Are you going on a blind date today?" Aron asked in a sad voice while his eye brows furrowed.

"That is none of your business. You don't need to worry about me." Isla responded in a cold voice. "You are just a stranger to me now, " added Isla.

"Isla, you..." Autumn hastily stopped Aron who came close to breaking down and said, "Aron, calm down."

Isla glowered at Aron, and then turned around to leave when Aron shook off Autumn's hands and said, "Autumn, why are you trying to stop me? Look at her! She's going on a date with another man."

"Aron, you need to relax. Isla is still mad at you. She will only get angrier if you keep on pestering her right now." Autumn was starting to get worried about the both of them. She figured it would be best to have a talk with Isla and try to come up with a possible solution. Autumn persuaded Aron patiently, "Aron, I will speak with Isla. You don't have to be so upset. Go back home first, I will help you persuade her."

Aron was not in a good mood, so he agreed with Autumn and left without saying a word. After he left, Autumn went to Shining Company. Everyone there greeted her warmly, ever since Charles disclosed their relationship.

She even felt a little embarrassed when somebody pushed the elevator button for her.

She ran into David outside Charles's office. Nonetheless, David was shocked to see Autumn there. "Mrs. Lu, are you here to see Mr. Lu?"

"Hello, David. Yes, you are right. I also bought some snacks on the way here. Please, have some, it's really good." Autumn handed the snacks to David. She was not trying to win his support, but instead, she was just showing her appreciation to him for helping Charles at work.

"Mrs. Lu, you are so kind. Thank you very much." David felt her kindness as he took the snacks from Autumn, happily.

"Where is Charles? Is he still working inside?" Autumn asked while pointing at his office.

"He is inside, " replied David while nodding his head slightly. While they were talking, Alice, who was recruited by Autumn, walked up to them. She greeted Autumn courteously with a smile; she did not act in an adulatory manner which made Autumn appreciate her even more.

Her good manners put Autumn's mind at ease. Autumn could tell that Alice was a kind and honest girl, just by her manners.

"David, please sign this document. Thanks." Alice handed the file to David. Autumn noticed that they were busy with work so she left them and walked towards Charles's office. She stood in front of his office and knocked the door.

"Come in, " said Charles.

Chapter 279

"Long time no see, " Autumn returned coolly, but without a hint of joy on her face.

"You may go out now, " Charles told Leila as he turned around.

"But Mr. Lu, this document..." Leila was reluctant to leave.

"Yes you may leave. I will sign it later after checking it." Charles said, sounding a bit irritated. He didn't like repeating himself.

Leila was taken aback. "Well, Ok then I will leave now. Let me know if I can be of any more help, " she nodded, looking disappointed.

Before leaving the office, Leila cast Autumn a dissatisfied look.

"What brought you here so early today?" Charles asked Autumn after Leila had left. "Things with the event plan went smoothly today, so I came here early. How about you? When will you be done with work?" Autumn asked.

"I need a bit more time." Charles replied. "We can leave as soon as I'm done." Charles continued, looking at his watch.

"Okay." Autumn agreed. Charles returned to his desk to focus on his work, lifting his head to look at Autumn's face now and then. "There are some refreshments on the table. Just help yourself if you feel hungry." he added.

Autumn nodded, and let him get on with his job.

She grabbed a magazine from the table, intending to read it. But at the thought that Rachel's wedding with Edward had been the headlines these days, she put the magazine back immediately not wanting to see anything that could annoy her. She just sat there, looking around an already familiar room, idly killing time.

All of a sudden, "Let's go, " Charles said to Autumn, getting his suit hanging from an adjacent chair.

"Are you done?" Autumn sighed with relief. How long had she been sitting there? It was so dull there that she almost fell asleep.

"Yeah." Charles answered. "Mr. Lu, are you done with work?" Leila stood up from her desk, as she saw Charles and Autumn walking out of his office hand in hand.

"Yes I am." Charles said impatiently. "David, we are leaving now. Call me only if it is really important."

"Got it, boss." David responded. "Mr. Lu, are you leaving now? I still have these documents for you to sign..." Leila said while running after to Charles, seeing him almost at the door with his wife.

"I will handle those tomorrow." Charles called out, not looking back. "Mr. Lu, but I..." Leila insisted, gripping Charles's sleeves as she caught up with them.

"Leila, " David called, as he strode to her. "Mr. Lu said that he would deal with these tomorrow. What did you not understand?" he continued, removing her hand from Charles.

"Mr. Lu, see you tomorrow." Alice came forward. Leila had been increasingly crossing her bounds.

Leila watched Charles and Autumn leave hand in hand. Although she didn't utter a word, her resentment towards Autumn was evident.

After they left, David let go of Leila's hand. "Leila, what are you doing? Can't you just mind your own business? Mr. Lu won't always tolerate your interference. If you can't control your emotions, you may not need to work here. Mr. Lu will be happy to accept your resignation."

David had gotten fed up. Leila never stopped throwing herself at Charles. He had to do something about it. Leila had gotten intolerable.

"He's right, Leila. You shouldn't have blocked Mr. Lu's way like that." Alice seconded. Although she never interfered with other people's matters, she agreed that Leila had gone too far. "Don't forget who you are around here. If you continue to do those inappropriate things to your own boss, you will end up on the street one of these days." she pointed out.

Leila wrinkled her brows. 'I know that I shouldn't have acted in such manner, but I just can't help myself. Each time I see the chemistry between those two, I get really crazy jealous of Autumn that I even wish to be her.

"I'm sorry, it won't happen again." Leila lowered her head. David and Alice's voices got stuck in her head. 'If I continue to act like this, Mr. Lu will fire me. Then I won't be able to see him every day. No more moments alone with him when that damn Autumn is not around. I must control myself.' she told herself and took a deep breath.

"You always say that. Can you, really?" David responded doubtfully.

Leila returned to her desk silently without any retorts. She continued to sort out the files which she needed to turn in to Charles the next day.

'At least I have to show Charles that I'm competent in my job, ' she thought.

After getting into the car, Autumn kept thinking about Leila's words and expressions in Charles's office, which dampened her spirits.

"What's wrong? You look unhappy. You've been like that since we left the office." Charles looked concerned, noticing Autumn's displeasure.

"What do you think of Leila?" Autumn asked with a bit of sarcasm.

"She is an excellent secretary who can finish all the work I give her perfectly, " Charles said, matter-of-factly, oblivious to what Autumn was feeling.

Upon hearing his praises to Leila, Autumn felt more angry.

"What I'm asking is, how do you like her look?" she asked with a stern face.

"Well..." Not until now did Charles realize what Autumn really meant. "Ohhh, honey, are you jealous?" Charles asked, feeling delighted.

Chapter 280

Arthur was excited. "I knew you would come." It was a cold day in November, but Arthur insisted on waiting for them by the door.

Autumn felt a little bit guilty when she saw Arthur's sincere smile but his face a bit frozen.

"Why didn't you just wait inside?" Charles asked. Arthur rubbed his hands and sheepishly said, "I was looking forward to seeing Autumn. So were your two grandmothers."

Autumn was touched when she heard that. She walked up to Arthur, held his hands and said, "Promise me that you'll never do this again. It's too cold for you, I wouldn't forgive myself if you got sick."

"Okay, I promise." Arthur was always a serious man, but at that time he was moved by what Autumn just said.

"Come on in, please." He asked Charles and Autumn to get inside. Abby stood by with little Cindy in her arms, and she said, "Father said that you would certainly come and he insisted on waiting for you by the door. Thank God you came, or he would be disappointed indeed."

"Come on, Abby, stop it." Arthur was a little bit embarrassed.

"Dinner is ready, just come and sit." Emily asked them to have dinner, "This is what your grandma has attentively cooked for you, "

It would be perfect to eat something hot on such a cold day.

"Grandma Emily, are you feeling better now?" Autumn walked over to Emily stroking her forehead.

"I'm fine, don't worry about me. Here, come sit beside me and eat something, " Emily said. Amy did not say a word as she kept bringing steaming dishes to the table.

Autumn was so touched, looking at all the dishes that started piling on the table.

"Thank you, grandma." Amy paused and her eyes turned red. She said, "Silly girl, you don't need to say thank you to your grandma."

Autumn took a sip of the chicken soup. She felt warm in her heart and throughout her whole body.

All the dishes were personally prepared for them by Amy. After Abby and her daughter were done eating. Abby thought of something and said, "Charles, it's time for Cindy to start going to school, but I'm not familiar with the schools around Y city. Do you have any schools to recommend?"

Charles thought about it for a while and said, "Well, I need to check with one of my friends. I remember there's a good bilingual kindergarten around here. I'll have him call you."

"That will be great. Thank you so much." Abby was pleased.

When Autumn and Charles were done with their meal, they wanted to have a talk with Emily. But Emily felt a bit tired and wanted to go for a rest.

Actually she made that excuse to give a chance for Arthur and Amy to be alone with Autumn.

"Autumn, I have something... to discuss with you." Arthur said with a bit of hesitation.

"Sure, please go ahead." Amy brought some fruits for Autumn and sat by her.

Arthur paused and said, "Emily said that it will be your birthday next month. Your grandmother Amy and I plan to announce to all that you are our granddaughter, and your family name is Zhao. We want to ask you if you are okay with that.

You don't have to say yes, it's up to you to decide." Arthur tried to tell Autumn gently so that she wouldn't feel overwhelmed.

Abby joined them and said, "Autumn, we just want to know how you feel about it. You are my brother's daughter, my niece. You are a part of this family, and eventually, when you are ready, you should change your family name too."

"I... I need to think about it." Autumn couldn't say yes immediately. She had always been Autumn Ye, but all of a sudden she had become Autumn Zhao. It wasn't really easy for her to take all of it in at the same time.

"That's all right." Amy agreed, letting out a faint but nervous laugh. "That's okay dear if you don't want to change it. We wouldn't care if you're Autumn Ye or Autumn Zhao, you're just our granddaughter Autumn, and that's enough, right?"

"Yes, but..." The family name wasn't really that important for them. The real reason that they asked Autumn to change her family name was to cut off her ties with Wendy.

"No BUTs, let her be, okay?" Amy patted Arthur's back.

"How can I do that?" He said helplessly.

"Grandpa, grandma, YES." Autumn made up her mind to change her family name to Zhao seeing that Grandma Amy cared about her so much.

"What?" "What did you say?" Arthur and Amy couldn't believe what they just heard and asked again.

"Yes, I said yes!" Autumn clapped her hands together with a big smile.

"Great, it is settled then." Abby was happy with Autumn's decision. Autumn was beginning to warm up to them and treat them as her own. She was now more willing to open her heart to them.

"Well, we had a great time here tonight. But it's getting late, and we must go." Autumn stood up and said with a big grin, "Dinner was great as well. But please don't cook so many dishes next time."

"Will you come again tomorrow?" Amy looked at Autumn and eagerly asked. She would be happy if she could see Autumn everyday.