

Wedded Bride 281

Chapter 281

"What's wrong? Why are you apologizing to me?" Actually, Autumn knew why Chris was saying sorry, but this had nothing to do with Chris. There was no reason for her to apologize.

"I've heard all about Aunt Jane. I'm really sorry to have gotten you involved." Chris couldn't express her guilt enough. She had no idea it was going to be like this, and she didn't know what to do.

"Please don't feel guilty. You had nothing to do with it." Autumn smiled. "I just hope that it won't affect your relationship with Sam..."

"Autumn..." Chris was moved beyond words, her eyes gleaming with gratitude.

The next morning, after breakfast, Autumn went to work. All morning, the projects of the company kept her busy. Before lunch time, Sam called her. When she saw the caller ID, she hesitated and let it ring for a long time, but finally she picked up the phone. "Sam, is there something important that you had to call?" she asked directly to the point.

"Thank god you answered the phone." Sam was relieved to hear her voice. He was really afraid that Autumn was avoiding him.

"How could that be?" Autumn answered quietly.

"I'm downstairs in front of your office now. It's almost lunch time. Let's go to lunch together, " Sam suggested. Hearing this, Autumn looked perplexed.

"I don't think..." Autumn paused for a second, "that's a good idea." In this sensitive time, she did not want to have any contact with Sam at all, for fear of being misunderstood after being seen by others. She wanted to keep her distance from him as much as possible to avoid unnecessary trouble. And she actually wanted to end this phone call with him as soon as possible.

"Why? Tell me, " Sam persisted. Sam knew Autumn was still upset because of Jane's unreasonable behavior towards her. But that was why he was inviting her to lunch. He wanted to personally apologize to her.

"Whatever, I will wait for you at the restaurant two blocks from your office. Come over whenever you are ready. Or do you want me to come get you?" Sam declared in a decisive tone.

"Sam... " Autumn felt that she was thrown into a predicament. "You know, we shouldn't be seen together. What your mother did yesterday, wasn't your fault but we should really keep our distance. I don't want people to think that I'm your whore, okay?" It took a lot of courage for Autumn to blurt it out.

"Little Ye... " Sam gave a helpless sigh and went on, "I apologize for my mother's rudeness. I am so sorry. But given my relationship with Chris, there's no way that we can avoid each other. Are you going to hide from me for the rest of your life? We have a clear conscience. We are doing nothing wrong. Why do you care so much how others think? We should not do anything to avoid arousing suspicion at this time, because we have not done anything immoral." Sam replied resolutely.

"Er... " Autumn thought about what Sam said. He had a point. She was still hesitating when Sam's voice came over the phone again. "I'll be waiting for you at the Western Restaurant beside the Lotus coffee shop two blocks from here. Come by lunchtime."

"Well, all right." Autumn reluctantly agreed.

When lunch time came, Isla came and asked Autumn to have lunch with her. Autumn politely refused, "Sorry Isla, but I have an appointment for lunch."

"Oh okay, some other time, then." Isla replied. After Isla left, Autumn put on her coat and went to the Western Restaurant that Sam mentioned. And as soon as she entered the restaurant, she saw Sam sitting by the window waving to her.

"Hello, Sam." Autumn went to him with a greeting. Then she sat opposite him and said, "If you want to say something, say it briefly. My company is quite busy these days and I don't have much time for lunch."

"OK then." Sam smiled. "I've already ordered several dishes. No matter how busy you are, you shouldn't starve yourself, don't you think?"

Just then, the waiter came to serve what Sam ordered. Autumn looked at the dishes and saw that they were all her favorites. She did not expect that Sam would still remember her preferences after breaking up with her so many years ago.

However, Autumn was not moved by this. Instead, she felt uncomfortable and even pressured.

"Try this. I remember you like it the most, " Sam said and put some of it on Autumn's plate.

Autumn ate only a little. The dishes tasted good, but she really wasn't in the mood to enjoy them. She felt like a fish in hot water sitting there. "I'm full, Sam. Tell me what you want to say, " Autumn said, putting down her knife and fork.

Sam heaved a sigh. Knowing that Autumn was in no mood to eat, he too put down his knife and fork. "I came to see you today for two reasons. One is to apologize, and the other is... There's something I need your help with, " he said, looking seriously at Autumn.

"Again, you don't have to apologize. I know you. You had nothing to do with it. Come on, what is it, about the help?" Autumn replied, a bit impatiently.

"Here's the thing. You know about Chris and me, " Sam said after a pause. "It was not easy for us to get to this point. But anyway, it happened. I'm worried that the Lu family would have a problem with me. So, I want you to help me persuade the Lu family to meet mine. I want to personally apologize to them."

"Why don't you discuss that with Chris?" Autumn asked, a little confused.

Sam let out a heavy sigh at her question, and answered, "I want to discuss it with her. But since she learned that my mother went to your company yesterday and made a scene, she's been picking on me all over the place. Now she doesn't even answer my calls anymore. Before that she threatened to break up with me."

Sam looked at Autumn helplessly. "So, I can only ask you for help."

Chapter 282

The timeline was very tight. Every one in the planning team was working overtime for the project. It took two days to complete something worth presenting. After that, someone suggested to go to a bar and celebrate it, but Autumn turned it down.

"We can celebrate it wherever you want but only after our presentation is carried out smoothly. Today..... I suggest we go home and have a rest since we have been working on it for a long time and didn't get a chance to have a breather. Tomorrow, let's regroup to discuss the plan with fresh eyes and see if there's anything that needs modification." As Autumn said that, all of them became disappointed, which amused her.

When Autumn got on the elevator she asked Isla, "Isla, how are you going home tonight?" Isla smiled, "Someone is coming to pick me up."

"Who is he?" Autumn smiled curiously and tried to guess, "Is it Aron?"

"Autumn." As Isla heard his name, she couldn't help frowning. "I don't want to talk about that jerk. Please don't even say his name or it will worsen my already stressful day."

Autumn went black as she didn't expect Isla to be so sensitive to this name. Indeterminately, Autumn said, "Isla, do you have some spare time? I want to talk to you."

Autumn wanted to talk to Isla about Aron. If she happened to be free, now would be appropriate.

"If you want to talk about Aron, then I'm always busy." Isla grinned and said to Autumn, "I really have no time today. I had a blind date the other day. The guy I met is good in every aspect. So I want to see him again and see if I can get along with him. He is going to pick me up to watch a movie."

"You..... have already been with him?" Autumn asked Isla.

Isla nodded slightly, but then shook her head. She said to Autumn, "Not yet, but I'll try to get along with him. We both felt great the last time."

"It can't be....." Autumn wanted to say something more, but the door of the elevator opened. They walked out of the door, and there waiting outside was a plain looking man. The man seemed quite honest and reliable. He greeted Isla as soon as he saw her. The man said to Isla, "You look exhausted. How about dinner first?"

He naturally took Isla's bag. "It's up to you, didn't you say we're going to the theater?" Isla replied.

"The movie is at 8 p.m. We have time for a quick bite." The man gave a smile.

All this time Autumn was watching them. Seeing Isla and the guy together and talking, Autumn didn't think they were a good match. They actually looked weird together despite the guy looking decent..

"Oh I'm so sorry, I forgot to introduce you two." Isla stood next to Autumn with a gleaming smile and said, "This is Autumn, my boss and my good friend."

"Hello." The man was quite shy. Isla then introduced the man to Autumn, "This is Stephen, my friend."

"Hello, Stephen." Autumn was poised. She drew Isla aside and muttered, "Do you really want to live your whole life with this man?"

"I just want to start off with him and see how it goes in the long term." Isla didn't care much about it. But Autumn knew that she was already taking it seriously. Otherwise she wouldn't have introduced this man to her.

"We should leave now. See you tomorrow." Isla was about to leave, but someone called after her, "Hey, Isla."

Isla turned around with a full smile. But her smile disappeared into a frown when she saw who was coming.

"What's wrong?" It was an old woman who called Isla. Stephen looked at the old woman before he turned to Isla. He asked her, "Who is she?"

Isla said nothing. The old woman slowly approached Isla and said to her, "Can I have a word with you?"

"Grandma Joanna, I....." It was Aron's grandmother. It was the first time Isla saw Joanna after that horrible incident with Becky. As she remembered it, she suddenly fell into a stiff and gloomy mood. She spoke in a tough voice, "Why... What brought you here?"

"I'm here for you." Joanna grinned and said to Isla, "Have you got a minute? I want to talk to you."

"But....." Isla was in a dilemma. She could not help but frown. But the mere thought of such an old woman coming far away from home could not be brushed aside and snubbed. "There is a coffee shop nearby, let's talk there."

She turned around and said to Stephen, "We won't take long. She wants to have a word with me."

Stephen grimaced, "But we are going to see the movie, aren't we?"

His irritation made Isla feel very uncomfortable. At any rate it was an elder requiring her attention. Stephen didn't show any respect for that elder at all.

"It won't take too long. Besides, the movie is at 8 p.m. So we've got enough time. I'm sure we can catch it." Isla couldn't hide her displeasure.

Chapter 283

"I came here looking for you for two reasons. One is to personally apologize to you." Joanna looked at Isla with sincerity, and said, "I feel sorry for what I did to you before. I was misled by Becky, and made you suffer so much. I am here to make a sincere apology to you."

"Grandma Joanna, please don't do that." Isla had waited for this "apology" for such a long time, but now that it was really happening, she felt weird and uncomfortable. It never felt like how she thought it would be. She replied, "You were also kept in the dark from the beginning to the end. How could I blame you?"

Joanna could now see that Isla was a considerate girl. Why did she use to think of her as a scheming bitch?"

"Isla, I am such a thoughtless old woman. I am. How should I believe Becky's words full of lies and loopholes." Joanna gave her a bitter smile. It was because Becky's "perfect" acting led her to make such a mistake.

"It's not your fault, Grandma Joanna." Isla smiled with tenderness, and continued to ask, "Today you come here ... only to apologize to me? If so, it's really unnecessary. I have actually forgotten about it."

"And the other reason is" Joanna was hesitant whether to continue. Joanna glanced at Isla with a guilty conscience. She seemed too embarrassed to mention it. After a while, she continued, "Is that your boyfriend?"

"Oh, are you talking about Stephen?" Isla was a little amazed at Joanna's question, and she shook her head at once, "No, he is not..... yet. I'm not young any longer, so my parents are pressuring me to get married. I have been going on blind dates these days, and the boy you see is my blind date today. "

Isla smiled but with a bit of embarrassment to Joanna. She added, "He is kind to me, and I also like it when he is around. But I want to make friends with him first."

After hearing Isla's explanation, Joanna felt a little awkward. Isla has begun to move on and look for a new life that totally belonged to her. Unfortunately, Aron was still immersed in the last relationship, failing to free himself.

Aron got completely drunk last night. She hadn't seen Aron lose himself drinking during the years when they lived together. She was the one who made everything into a mess. As a result, Joanna thought it was a must for her to visit Isla so that she could make up for her mistakes.

No matter what difficulties there would be, she should try her best to overcome them.

"Grandma Joanna, if you have some words to speak to me, just go ahead." Isla noticed Joanna appearing embarrassed, so she asked Joanna on her own.

On hearing that, Joanna simply dropped all her shyness. She raised up her head, saying, "Isla, in fact, it is hard for me to tell you the second reason why I come here for you. But for my grandson who has failed me and his happiness, I have to have a word with you."

As soon as Isla heard what Joanna said, she knew that the following words that come from her mouth would have something to do with Aron. Considering this, Isla couldn't help her heart beating loud. But she still pretended to be composed, and replied, "Yes? What's the matter?"

"Before I came here today, I have well organized the words that I planned to tell you. But now, as I really sit in front you, I have no idea what to say." Joanna smiled with bitterness. After some hesitation, she eventually decided to talk to Isla, "I previously didn't know how your relationship with Aron was going, but last night, I thought I began to understand Aron's feelings."

"Isla, Aron is truly fond of you. After he came to see you yesterday, he didn't come back until this morning. He came back, drunk. He was muttering something to himself. And it was your name he was muttering after I carefully made it out." Joanna glanced at Isla, adding, "I must pay the price for the mistakes that I made previously, rather than to win your sympathy. You love Aron, too, as I know, or you won't remain single after you broke up with him. Without any involvement from me, you two should have rekindled your relationship when Aron came back from abroad."

Isla took a spoon to stir the coffee slowly, trying to ease her discomfort. After a while, she raised her head and said, "Grandma Joanna, you are right. I used to really like Aron a lot before, but"

"But what?" Joanna asked.

"But I have ended my relationship with him. There is no one to blame. What I can only say is that perhaps we are not destined to be together." Isla smiled bitterly, and told her real feelings to the elderly woman.

"But, Isla, you still love him, don't you?" Joanna felt the heat go across her face. She continued, "At that time, you were forced to break up with each other due to my meddling. I really feel so sorry. I give you my sincere apologies. Could you please reunite with him? For us? For my sake?"

"Grandma Joanna" Isla had no choice but to look at Mrs. Joanna. She explained, "It's not your fault at all. I just think it will be too exhausting if I choose to continue my relationship with Aron."

"Are you so resolute?" Joanna looked at Isla, frowning. "Aron has suffered so much for you. Do you really have the heart to let him go this way?"

"Grandma, don't worry about him. It won't take long before he gets better." Isla smiled calmly, "It's been four years since I broke up with Aron. I admit that I have never forgotten him. But as you can see, I am taking an active part in blind dates because I want to move on with my life. I don't want to be a slave to what happened four years ago. Aron will realize this sooner or later."

Isla stood up and said with politeness, "Grandma Joanna, if you have nothing else to say, I think it's time for me to leave now. I have to deal with other affairs."

Taking her handbag, Isla was about to leave. She had only taken a few steps when Joanna started crying behind her, "Isla, Aron is now in the hospital. Don't you still care about him?"

Chapter 284

"You can call him if you're really worried about him." Joanna could tell that Isla hadn't totally forgotten Aron yet. Isla still cared about him. She was just afraid of getting hurt again, so she tried to protect herself by suppressing her emotions for him.

Isla was so worried about Aron that she forgot what the movie was about. It must have been a comedy because the audience would occasionally burst into laughter. But Isla couldn't concentrate on the movie. She felt like an idiot sitting there with a stranger.

"We still have much time now, so how about finding somewhere quiet to have a talk?" Stephen suggested when the movie ended. Evidently, Isla was not in mood, so she apologized to Stephen. "I'm sorry. I'm too tired today. I want to go home and rest."

"Tired?" Stephen felt a little disappointed. Then he did some thinking for a moment and got excited immediately. "My house is not far away and I live alone, so you can have a rest there." he told Isla with a sinister smile.

Isla saw through his evil intention. She thought he was a good person before, but now she found that she was wrong.

"What do you mean?" Isla asked him to make sure she didn't misunderstand his intention.

"Come on. We are both adults. It is something that we need to try before we get married. There is nothing to be worried about. Let's just do it like a couple." Stephen looked at Isla impatiently.

Isla sneered, then she said, "Sorry I don't understand what you mean. Can you make it clear?"

"What?" Stephen couldn't believe she didn't get what he meant. She is a woman who is not young any more. Should he spell it out for her? "I mean that we can have sex... Let's try it before we get married. If you are not satisfied with my skill in bed, we can just stop seeing each other and not waste each other's time."

Isla couldn't believe what she was hearing. Where did this pig come from? But she tried her best to refrain from making a scene and told him, "I'm sorry but I think you must have mistaken me for someone else. I'm not that kind of woman. Our relationship is not solid as you think it is. You must be imagining things. And based on today, I think we have no need to go further."

Isla was disappointed with Stephen. She felt like an idiot to have believed that he was a trustworthy man.

"Ohhh, are you pretending to be an innocent girl? Come on, I can see it in your eyes. You want to make love with me." Then he grabbed her hand and said, "Let's go and have a try. I promise you will feel things that you have never felt in your life. And you will fall in love with me."

"Let me go!" Isla pushed him away and warned him, "You son of a bitch, it is over between us. If you so much as look at me in a dirty way, I promise that I'll have you locked in jail. So don't try to harass me again. Am I understood?"

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" Stephen held her hand with all his strength to stop her from leaving. Isla tried to get rid of his hands but failed. Then Stephen dragged her into his car.

Isla was in a panic for his violent behavior.

"I've spent so much money for you, so I can't just let you go without getting anything in return." He panted heavily. "You have no choice but to sleep with me tonight if you want me to release you." Stephen pressed her into the seat of the car while cursing her. Isla was so scared and couldn't help crying. She had gotten overwhelmed that her strength drained from her body. She felt very helpless.

At this moment, the door of the car was opened violently by someone else. A man appeared out of nowhere and struck Stephen to the ground. Aron had come.

She was so afraid that she even had no time to think about why Aron came before. She got out of the car and hid behind him instinctively.

"Are you all right?" Aron asked her with concern.

"I'm fine." She tried to be calm but couldn't help crying as she saw Aron's face. She was really freaking out.

"Don't cry, " Aron consoled her with a tender voice. He wiped the tears on her face. Later on, Stephen stood up and asked him, "Who are you? What the hell do you want, stopping me from punishing my girlfriend?"

Aron sheltered Isla with his body, then he quietly looked at Stephen with cold eyes.

"Fine. I know who you are." Stephen sneered and added to Isla, "No wonder you wouldn't go home with me. Is this man sexing you well?"

Stephen used more harsh words, "You are so shameless. You go on a date with me while maintaining an affair with another man. And you pretend to be innocent and pure, bitch?"

"Pay attention to your words!" Isla warned him with tears on her face.

"No. You pay attention to your behavior. You have been cheating on me, remember? To tell you the truth, I am dating you just because you have a good-looking face. You are just an old woman and nobody will love you." Stephen was pulling on all the stops to humiliate Isla.

Chapter 285

"This is my last warning, Stephen. Get out or you will regret it, "

Isla said, pointing her fingers as she stopped Aron from moving closer to Stephen.

"What are you waiting for? Go on. I'm not afraid of you."

Riled up from hearing her words, Stephen responded with a biting remark. "Here's the thing. You can throw yourself at me all you want but I would never like a woman like you. Stay away from me or else I will destroy you."

Stephen hurriedly left right after, clearly afraid of Aron.

With a sigh of relief, Isla loosened her grip on Aron as she watched Stephen leave. Aron, on the other hand, couldn't help but feel upset. "Why did you have to do that? You should not have stopped me from beating him up. That scumbag deserved it!" Aron said, furious that Stephen treated Isla with such disrespect.

"You're acting like a kid! Fighting doesn't solve anything. Always remember that, "

Isla said, scolding him for saying such a thing.

But deep inside, she'd never forgotten about what Joanna had said. She's well-aware of Aron's poor health. She couldn't let him engage in a fistfight out of fear that his condition would only get worse.

"Don't tell me you're not mad at what he said, " Aron said, still seething in rage.

"Stop that. There's no use in getting angry, " she said as she watched Aron closely, noticing his pale face.

"Anger wouldn't solve anything. I'd rather just stay away from him now that we've known who he truly is. Isn't that enough?"

"But..."

Aron stammered, unable to find the right words.

She was filled with dread when she saw that his face had turned very pale. "Wake up, don't scare me like this," she cried, her eyes brimming with tears.

A stranger who happened to be passing by saw them and came to lend a hand. The stranger helped Isla get Aron into a taxi. She couldn't help but sob, seeing how limp he was.

Bringing Aron to the hospital was pure torture for Isla. Try as she might, she couldn't help but cry even more when the doctor informed her that Aron was suffering from a perforated stomach caused by his excessive drinking.

Isla decided to not call Joanna to tell her what happened. Instead, she stayed up all night at the hospital looking after Aron. The next morning, Aron woke up feeling extremely weak.

Isla was the first person that he saw upon opening his eyes. She had fallen asleep at the edge of his bed, lying closely next to him. Aron's heart almost burst with happiness at the sight, grateful that she stayed with him. He reached for her slowly, gently stroking her hair.

The gesture jolted Isla awake in surprise.

"Aron!" she screamed as she saw him lean against the bed the moment she opened her eyes, looking at her with a playful smile. She was immediately flooded with relief at the sight of him awake.

"How are you?"

"Are you feeling any better?"

Isla asked, her voice hitching as tears started to fall from her eyes.

"Don't cry. I'm fine now, " Aron smiled as he looked at her.

"I'm feeling better. Don't worry about me, " he said, trying to offer some reassurance.

"How can I not worry?

You have no idea how scared I was when you fainted yesterday. I was afraid you'd never wake up..." Isla said, wiping her tears.

Chapter 286

When Isla returned after buying breakfast, Mike and Joanna were in Aron's ward. Through the small glass window of the door she saw them sitting beside Aron, wiping tears from their eyes. "Why throw your life away like that, Aron?" they cried. "Why would you go out when you knew you were in poor health? What are we going to do if you had an accident?"

They knew that Aron had always been mature and composed. He had mastered his emotions and his mind was ruled by logic and reason. When he steered away from that, it was only because of Isla.

"Sorry, grandma, I won't do such a thing again, " Aron promised, looking at his grandparents apologetically. Yesterday, when he learned that Isla had gone on another blind date, he cut off the drip in the IV infusion attached to his arm. This terrified his grandparents, causing them to stay awake all night.

Although Aron called them as soon as he woke up to reassure them, they did not breathe a sigh of relief until they saw that Aron was safe and sound. "Why didn't you think about our feelings when you left the hospital without permission? Didn't you know what would happen?"

Listening in to their conversation, Isla clenched her hands that she almost dropped the breakfast bag she was holding. She felt partly responsible for the ordeal that Mike and Joanna had to go through.

When Joanna went to see her yesterday, hoping that she and Aron would get back together, she told her that she would never have anything to do with Aron again. Hours later, Aron fainted because of her. Isla didn't know how to explain it to them.

"Grandma, I'm fine. Don't worry, " Aron consoled them. "I know myself. If I don't get Isla back, I'll regret it for the rest of my life."

Hearing this, his grandparents fell into silence. They knew that he liked Isla, but neither of them expected her to be that important to Aron.

Leila was really unhappy to see Paula downstairs at Shining Company. When they both were at Cloud Advertising Company, they hated each other because of their respective positions.

"I want to have a talk with you, " Paula answered with a broad smile. "I promise you, it won't take too much of your time. Most important of all... What I am going to tell you will definitely intrigue you. You are gonna love it, " she said with a sinister smile.

"I don't think we have anything to talk about." Leila gave Paula a mocking sneer. She thought that she and Paula were from different worlds, and they had absolutely nothing in common.

Leila turned to leave, but Paula stopped her, grabbing her arm. "Don't you want to be with Charles?" Paula asked.

"What do you mean?" Leila thought no one knew about her feelings for Charles, least of all Paula.

"Do you think you hide your feelings well?" Paula said with one brow up. "I've always known that you liked Charles. Ohh wait.. the right word is loooooove, " she mocked.

"What do you want?" Leila asked, ready to punch Paula. The sooner she got rid of this bitch, the better.

"As I said, I just wanted to have a talk with you. Do you have time now?" Paula sneered. With that, Leila hesitated but reluctantly agreed. Paula laughed at her naivete.

Chapter 287

"Honesty is the most important thing in a cooperation, " Leila said, looking at Paula. "If you can't even tell me your real motive, I don't think I will ever cooperate with you."

"Since the first day Autumn entered the company, I have disliked her. The way she always pretended to be superior and innocent ticks me off. After she was fired, she found a rich husband and became the General Manager of Cloud Advertising Company. It's unfair. Why is she always favored by fortune?" Paula lamented after a long hesitation.

"That's why I'm reaching out to you and join forces. You can take away her lover, while I... steal her career. We are going to destroy her life bit by bit, " she continued with a cold smile.

Leila liked what she heard. 'I don't care about her career, but I yearn for... a romantic love, ' she sighed, dreaming of Charles.

"Then... I hope this works. We have to cooperate well." Leila agreed, offering her hand first.

"I hope so." Paula gave a complacent laugh. "Leila, I need you to do me a favor today."

"Already? Ok, what do you want me to do?" Leila responded, brows raised. 'As we are now partners, I will try my best to back her, ' Leila thought excitedly.

"Weren't you on good terms with Autumn before she was dismissed from Cloud Advertising Company? I need you to steal the proposal plan and execution details for the Giant Promise Company project that she is working on, " Paula whispered to Leila.

"Why do you need that?" Leila asked in confusion.

"Autumn has been infamous in this circle for plagiarism. Tomorrow, my company and Cloud Advertising Company are going to bid for an event. What do you think... will become of her if my company shows her event proposal first?" Paula couldn't help but snicker at the thought of that happening.

'The party who makes the presentation first will have the advantage. If Autumn makes the exact same presentation as the previous one, she would be accused of copying it. But if she backs out right on the spot, she will have to drop her bid.'

Paula would be glad to see either case.

"But... I'm not sure whether I can get it, " Leila responded, wrinkling her nose. 'Autumn is wary of me. If I suddenly try to get close to her, she will be suspicious of my intention, ' thought Leila to herself.

"Anyway, just do your best, " Paula replied, not looking disappointed. She knew that Leila would spare no effort to get the scheme if she really wanted to get Charles. That's why she didn't push Leila too hard.

"Well, I will take this afternoon off." Leila nodded. When she returned to work, she headed straight to Charles's office. "What's up? Do you have anything for me?" Charles asked, as Leila stood in front of him not saying a word.

"Mr. Lu, may I ask to take the afternoon off?" Leila asked cautiously.

"You don't need to come to me for this trivial matter. Just go to the HR Department, " Charles responded, without even raising his head.

"I..." Leila stammered. She had intended to see Charles's response after she asked for a leave. However, it turned out that Charles did not care one bit. "I came to tell you that I have organized all the documents you needed. Alice will turn them in later."

"I see, " Charles responded with a little nod. "You don't look well. Are you okay?" he asked, lifting his head and noticing Leila's pale look.

"Yes, I'm fine, " Leila replied, pretending to cough. "I seem to have caught a cold."

"Keep warm and have a good rest then, " Charles replied and went back to work. Upon hearing this, Leila became ecstatic. She was willing to do anything to get Charles.

"Mr. Lu, I am leaving now, " she said in a sweet voice and a matching bright smile.

"Ok. See you tomorrow, " Charles returned. Charles's words not only flung Leila into excitement, but made her more determined to win his affection.

After finishing the leave procedures, Leila headed for Cloud Advertising Company immediately.

Without Isla, Autumn had been busier than usual. She asked someone to find her the previous plan they had worked out for Giant Promise Company to see if she could find anything good to apply to her current scheme.

When Leila arrived at Autumn's office, she was reading that plan. When she heard someone knocking at her office door, she raised her head and said, "Come in."

"Autumn." Leila smiled at Autumn, as she pushed the door open.

"What are you doing here?" Autumn asked. Autumn's face darkened with displeasure at the sight of Leila.

"I came to see you, " Leila replied, standing at the door. "May... I come in?" she asked timidly.

"Sure." 'Whatever reason she came for, it's improper to keep her standing at the door, ' Autumn thought. They both took a seat near the window.

"Why did you come here today?" Autumn asked, raising her eyebrow.

"I..." Leila muttered. "Autumn, I know that you're upset with me. I came here to resolve this misunderstanding, " she continued after a long pause.

Chapter 288

"My main purpose is..." Leila decided to get down to business, "Autumn, my present career owes much to your strong recommendation for my admission into Shining Company. I have long been thinking of a chance to repay your kindness, so.... I would like to invite you to dine together. I hope you do not decline it....."

"You should be at work today." Autumn wondered why Leila had time to pay her a visit at that moment.

Leila was somewhat challenged by Autumn and explained, "Today I caught a cold and I was allowed to take the afternoon off. It was approved by Mr. Lu."

"Really?" Autumn expressed her doubt, "Then you had better go home for a good rest. You were recommended on your merits. So long as you keep working hard, I will be gratified. Such treat is deemed as unnecessary."

"However it is a chance to express my gratitude. Please don't turn me down." Leila did not relent.

"Thanks a lot. I am not sure if I can accept it...." But all the same, Autumn decided to give in to Leila's offer as she was somehow overcome by Leila's persistence. 'What the heck. The sooner this is over, the better,' she mused.

But Autumn remained doubtful of Leila's intentions, because Leila had never been so nice.

"Well, let me choose the place, okay? But...."

Autumn paused and continued, "I wonder what you can do while you wait for me. I do have to finish all these tasks on my table."

"It doesn't matter." Leila replied quickly, "Don't worry about me. I can entertain myself in the meantime."

Leila expressed her willingness to wait until Autumn's business matters were all taken care of.

"Ok, you can wait here." Autumn being overburdened by her work paid little attention to Leila in the room.

As Autumn buried herself with work typing endlessly on her computer, Leila spent her boring hours in Autumn's office, waiting for a chance to execute her plan.

From time to time Autumn diverted herself from business and talked to Leila, "You could entertain yourself with tea and snacks or chat with your previous colleagues if you want."

"Sure..." Leila nodded her head. "Thank you. But don't mind me at all. I'm doing fine here."

"Okay, " Autumn replied. Although she was curious about what Leila was up to, the proposal at hand was given the top priority.

"Boss Ye, someone is here to see you." A chance long anticipated finally came as a relief to Leila at 3:00 p.m.

Autumn gently looked up to ask the receptionist, "Who is it?"

"It is....." the receptionist managed to reply, "It is the same woman who came the day before yesterday."

Jane? What brought her here?

Autumn frowned and instructed the receptionist, "Okay, thank you. Now you should take her to the meeting room."

"Ok, Boss Ye." The receptionist closed the office door. Distracted, Autumn spoke to Leila, "Leila, now I have to deal with something. You can stay and hang around here. Excuse my absence."

"Ok." Leila tried hard to contain her delight and spoke to Autumn, "I will be fine."

Autumn's suspicions that Leila was up to something were strong, but at that moment she had to prioritize another encounter with Jane.

Autumn went straight to the meeting room, while Leila darted towards Autumn's computer as soon as the office door closed.

Autumn was too careless to encrypt her computer. As a result, Leila got access to the proposal involving Giant Promise Company right there on the screen.

Leila immediately copied the proposal into her USB flash disk effortlessly and in just a matter of seconds.

After successfully stealing the information, Leila immediately notified Paula over the phone. Paula showered Leila with compliments, "I knew you were the perfect person, indeed..."

"Ooh, stop such compliments." Leila let off a cold smile. "Since I have completed the matter you entrusted to me.... you have to honor your promise. And I will send the files to you when I get home in the evening."

"You can put your mind to rest. I will spare no effort to help you so long as the chance shows itself, " Paula replied, smiling to herself.

After the call, Leila left Autumn's office. Out in the hall, many employees gathered around to gossip about Jane being "interviewed" right at that moment. Some were even spying on the interview itself. Leila asked a familiar colleague, "What is going on? Why are you all listening in to the interview."

Chapter 289

Easier said than done. Although Leila lectured her former colleague to mind her own business, she couldn't resist her own curiosity. She couldn't help but fix her eyes on the glass door of the meeting room, eager to know what was happening inside.

She expected to see some fight and hear some yelling. But to her disappointment, the conference room was quiet.

Autumn sat twirling her ball-point pen between her fingers, while Jane sitting opposite her wore an embarrassed expression.

Both of them kept silent.

Autumn didn't know what to say, and she even regretted letting Jane enter the company premises. Jane didn't know how to apologize to Autumn.

When she came home from Autumn's company the other day, Sam had big fight with her. "Mom, why do you insist that Little Ye and I have a thing? Did anyone say anything to you?" Sam couldn't help raising his voice at his own mother.

Not until at that time did she realize that she might have really misunderstood Autumn.

After reflecting on what had happened, she recalled that it was Wendy who fed her the news that Autumn and Sam got together again.

She believed Wendy as she was Autumn's mother.

"Miss... Ye, " Jane opened her mouth after hesitating for quite a while. "I'm sorry for what I had done to you the other day."

In Autumn's eyes, Jane was a proud woman. It was impossible for her to make an apology. Therefore, when Autumn heard her words, she was stunned. She couldn't believe her ears. "Pardon... me?" she asked dumbfounded.

"I apologize for my rudeness and lack of class, " Jane explained. "Don't look at me with your amazed eyes. No one is perfect and I make mistakes too. Now that I know I misjudged you, I should acknowledge it. Is there anything wrong about that?" Jane chuckled, as she caught sight of Autumn's surprised look.

"Of course not, " Autumn answered, withdrawing her eyes from Jane. And just like that, she found herself looking at that gentle Jane who had treated her well when she was a little girl. Thinking of what had happened between them, Autumn felt slightly sad. "It's the first time that you have acted like this since I met you, " Autumn said in a soft tone.

"Hmm, that's true, " Jane smiled in agreement. "I have been proud and arrogant my whole life and I was never expected to bow to others."

"Is that why you came to me?" Autumn asked. "There is no need for you to come to apologize to me. I didn't give much thought to that."

'Mothers all want their children to find a suitable bride or groom. As I failed to live up to Jane's expectation, it's natural for her to oppose our relationship. I don't blame her at all.

Now I live a happy life and I have already let it go.' thought Autumn to herself.

Jane stared at Autumn in surprise. She had thought that Autumn must be mad at her. She could even give her a hard time after what she had done to her that day.

Before coming here, she had prepared to be treated with hostility. However, Autumn just said now that she didn't blame her and understood her.

"You don't really blame me?" Jane asked, a bit confused. Jane thought that she had gone much too far that day, so she had come here to give her sincere apology.

"Yes...I mean, no I don't blame you at all, " Autumn nodded. "I can understand where you are coming from. If my son brought home a girl I disliked and asked for my blessing to marry her, perhaps I will do the same..."

Autumn stuck her tongue out and winked.

"Autumn, you... are really a kind and beautiful person." Jane slightly giggled. 'I had an aversion to Autumn because I believed Wendy's poisonous and manipulative words. If I had been wiser, I wouldn't have parted her from Sam and Sam wouldn't have missed such a good girl, ' Jane was now overcome with regret.

"Aunt Jane, if there is nothing else, you don't have to spend too much time here. I have no ill feelings towards you. You can count on that." Autumn was up, meaning to open the door for Jane. "One more thing..." Jane said to Autumn after some hesitation.

'Now that I came here, I must clear all my doubts, ' Jane thought.

"Yes, please go on, " Autumn responded. Autumn paused to allow Jane to continue.

"I prevented you from seeing Sam because of what someone told me. I want to know if that is true."
Jane spoke.

Autumn raised her eyebrow as she had guessed who had told Jane. "Is that person... Wendy?" Autumn asked, expecting Jane to confirm it.

"Yes, it is, " Jane replied, nodding at Autumn.

Although Autumn had expected it, she still felt aggrieved. 'How could Wendy... treat me like that?'

"Are you alright?" Jane asked with concern, as she noticed Autumn's pale look.

Chapter 290

"I'm good." Autumn was actually depressed, not because of the these harsh words, but because they came from her own mother. She did not expect that she would even think of destroying her like this. Autumn knew that Wendy disliked her but this was just pure hatred.

After Autumn regained control of her emotions, she said, "Aunt Jane, I was sent to the hospital because Yvonne pushed me down the stairs and broke my bones when I was 15 years old. I spent a whole week in the hospital, but my mother didn't even visit me at all. I didn't expect that she would make an issue about it now and use it to spread lies about me..."

Autumn was so heart broken and did not know what else to say.

Jane felt so sorry for Autumn after hearing this story. Had she known the truth earlier, she would not have hurt Autumn, now matter how much she disliked her.

She actually liked Autumn before those things happened.

"Sorry, I....." Jane did not know what to say to comfort Autumn.

"I'm fine." Autumn now felt the pressing matter was to break off any relationship she had with Wendy.

"Autumn, is..... your husband still angry about what I did?" Jane came here after realizing her mistake, but most importantly, for Chris.

She heard from Sam that Chris no longer wanted to talk to her, much less to see her. Jane would not forgive herself if she lost her future daughter-in-law. That's why Jane decided to come.

Autumn glanced at Jane slightly and said, "Relax. I don't think it will make any impact on Charles or Chris.

"That's good, that would be good." Jane was so relieved as she took Autumn's hand and said, "I always know that you are a good considerate child. What had happened was all my fault, please..... Please let Chris know how bad I feel for my behavior the other day. I hope she could also forgive me."

"Yes of course. I will, Aunt Jane." Autumn had no special feelings for Jane, so she didn't mind how Jane treated her. Moreover, Autumn sincerely hoped that Chris and Sam could be together.

"Autumn, please come for a visit when you get the chance. Well for now..... I'll take my leave and go home." Jane laughed faintly. She knew that she had already done what she came to do. There was no reason for her to stay any longer.

"Take care." Autumn walked Jane to the door and told her, "Go safely, Aunt Jane."

"Thanks, I will!" Jane smiled and waved to Autumn, "Don't worry about me, I could take care of myself. Sorry for taking too much of your time. You can now resume what you were doing."

Everyone in the office stood, unable to utter a word as they watched the two ladies walk out of the room as if they were mother and daughter.

When she came two days ago, she almost overturned the whole office. But today... Was this the same woman? What happened inside the conference room?

The office workers looked like they were busy with work but they were about to burst with curiosity; it made them mad.

Leila, looking at this peaceful situation, couldn't help pouting her lips with disappointment. She thought she could witness some drama good enough for TV. But it was as boring as a rock.

She saw Autumn coming over and hurriedly greeted her. She asked Autumn, "Autumn, who is that woman? Why did she come for you?"

"It's nothing." Autumn lightly glanced at Leila and asked, " Why did you come out?"

"Well..." Now that she had got what she wanted, Leila felt that she had no need to stay any longer. She did not really want to stay and have dinner with Autumn.

She wasn't in the mood, so she prepared to say goodbye.

"My family just called. They said that there was some kind of emergency. So I think I have to go home now. I'm afraid I will have to take a rain check on that dinner with you." Leila looked apologetically at Autumn and said, "But you can rest assured Autumn, I owe you this and I'll make up for it later."

Autumn looked at Leila coldly. She did not really care about the dinner at all. What she could not understand was why Leila came today. But since she was leaving, Autumn could get rid of her and get a break.

"Well, then you should go now, " Autumn said.

After leaving Autumn's office, Leila went straight home and sent the files to Paula who immediately looked at them. When they made the plan proposal, Paula had no idea that Andy had already reviewed the proposal because they had proposed separately last time. Moreover, she was in Japan that time and it was impossible for her to know that. She was overjoyed when she got it. She knew that Autumn's plan would not be ordinary.

Although she hated Autumn, there was no denying that Autumn's working ability was good.

If Autumn knew it, she would not know whether she should laugh or cry.

"Autumn, let's wait and see who will win this battle at the end." Paula sneered inwardly.

Early the next morning, at the Giant Promise Company's conference room, Autumn and Isla saw Paula dressed up differently. Isla frowned and whispered to Autumn, "Why is she here?"

"She left Cloud Advertising Company to work for Dark Blue Company. As I know she is their chief planner. I'm not surprised to see her here, " Autumn whispered back. Isla was amazed. "I didn't expect that she would have skills for that."