

## **Wedded Bride 381**

### Chapter 381 Hesitancy To Have Another Child

On their way back home, Rachel tried to get something out from Edward, "You seem to be very agitated after talking to Charles. I suppose he doubted your claim and intention behind slandering his wife, right?"

"Doubtful? Ah what can I say...." Edward laughed sarcastically as he added, "Apart from doubting me, Charles rejected my advice. I should have just kept it a secret rather than warn him about Autumn's betrayal."

Edward expressed his disdain, "I would have let Charles be a fool, it feels like he deserves to be cheated on."

"Charles is actually a victim and he will remain one as long as he chooses ignorance." Rachel sighed and explained to Edward, "Autumn remained unperturbed when being spotted by us in the western restaurant and invited us to join them for dinner. I suppose.. she informed Charles of her real plans. As a result, Charles blamed you for unnecessarily bringing this up."

"Anyway, I would have liked to know this in advance so as not to have let my kind attempt to save a marriage get wasted and insulted in such a manner, " Edward expressed his disappointment.

Rachel was too realized that it was her mistake that led to Edward's vulnerability before Charles.

In a bid to change the topic, Rachel decided to touch the subject of starting a family with Edward again, as when it came to the reference in Lu family, Edward felt quite uneasy. Now the atmosphere in the car was suitable for that subject especially in the absence of Chris.

"Edward, don't you.. like children?" Rachel put forth her question artfully and carefully fearing Edward's temper.

Edward frowned upon hearing what she said. "It is amazing for me to be questioned like this over and over again..."

"The idea which Chris mentioned seems perfect to me." Rachel smiled as she spoke to Edward in an attempt to change his mind, "I am so young and once I married you I began to knit dreams of having a child of my own, my blood that I would raise, love and support. I always thought if I give birth to a boy, I will train him to be a good basketball player who will have admirable followers from the opposite sex; if it is a girl, I may..."

"I don't want to hear anymore of this yammering!" Rachel's dreamy talk was interrupted by Edward's

displeasure as he clutched the steering wheel, blue veins on his temple evidently popping out.

Edward let out a highly-pitched scream, which terrified Rachel, who tightened her safety belt and in a soft voice asked him, "What.. is wrong? Did I say something wrong?"

Edward calmed down and pacified Rachel in a gesture purely motivated by guilt. "Not at all. Please do not mention this ever again."

"Why then?" Rachel did not relent. "I am too young to be deprived of the right of maternity. We never discussed this before getting married and now I am left hanging."

"It is not your fault at all. This is simply my problem." Edward added to his refusal, irrespective of Rachel's feeling, "Chris is my sole daughter and she is enough to brighten up my life. If after knowing how strongly I feel about this, you still want a child of our own... I will not blame you to part ways with me. In fact I urge you to mull over this matter."

"What do you mean by saying this?" Rachel was taken aback, looking at Edward in shock. and added,

"It would be unjustifiable for you to divorce me due to my strong desire to have a child. I just want a baby. Am I wrong?"

"I admit my inability to have a child with you." Edward was indifferent to how Rachel would feel and

think about this matter anymore. He just wanted to come on some conclusion and end this matter.

Rachel was shocked to learn of Edward's strong indifference towards having a baby, even though he was quite old.

'Edward seems.. to have developed a strong dislike towards the entire thought of having another child, '

Rachel thought to herself.

"Rachel." Edward sighed and parked his car along the road before he started to explain the situation to

Rachel, "Your desire to have a child of your own is perfectly understandable. And it is fair for you to

have such expectations from me as well. But I am too old to help produce a child. I hope you can spare

a second thought and understand my predicament."

Edward looked at Rachel with guilt and continued, "You can rest assured. I will make up to you for this

shortcoming. But this matter... should be as good as dismissed and only if you agree on my terms. Do

you understand?"

"I understand." Rachel was still confused and was convinced there was some other reason behind

Edward's rejection. But... she was determined to give birth to a baby while she was still young which

would put her in a position to acquire Edward's estate. In such a situation, Edward would have no choice but to accept her pregnancy and treat her child right.

Edward nodded in content mood. Once they reached back home, they made love. Edward then as usual drank a cup of milk to fall into deep slumber. Once he slept, Rachel dressed up and sneaked out to meet Roger.

Roger also was too sleepy to talk to Rachel with sense and reason, as Rachel had not made a call beforehand to inform him. "What brings you here at such an ungodly hour? You should have called me in advance for me to be prepared."

"So what? Are you trying to say I am not welcome here?" Rachel pushed the door open and rushed in.

She then searched around to check if there was any other woman. "Are you afraid of getting caught sleeping around with another woman?"

"What a nonsense are you uttering." Roger sensed Rachel's absurd and paranoid mindset as he sat beside her. "You are always on my mind, and I won't risk what I have to sleep around with another woman."

"You are such a smooth talker that it is easy to fall for your honey dripping words." Rachel replied with a

cold smile, "I found you dining and laughing with Autumn and it looked like you were falling in love with her."

"No more of this nonsense talk!" Roger pretended to be angry and expressed his displeasure, "What ever I was doing with Autumn, was a part of our plot. But I am glad you stormed in here like this because now I know how much you distrust me...Since it is so, I will give up our plan."

"Do not take my jokes so seriously." Rachel tried to appease Roger, who was of use to her not anymore at least, "I am not in a good mood today so as to indulge in any more of this drama. Please do not take my careless words to heart. I did not mean it."

Roger could sense the melancholy on Rachel's face and wondered, 'Did something unpleasant happen to her?'

Chapter 382 Pay A Visit To Leila

"I am just fine. Please don't worry about me." As Rachel leaned slowly into Roger's arms, she said in a soft and defeated tone, "I feel relaxed and at peace only when I'm with you. I really don't know how to spend the days which are yet to come with Edward. I wish things were not as complicated as they are."

"What is wrong with you? Please tell me what has happened. Unburden your heart." With increasing

concern and confusion, Roger asked Rachel since he felt weird hearing her speak so tenderly with him.

"Why did you say that? Rachel, tell me what happened and perhaps I will be able help you."

Rachel stared at Roger and hesitated for a moment before she responded, "Do you remember that I said that at some point in the near future I want to have a baby? Well... I mentioned it to Edward today, and expected him to share my enthusiasm but he just got very agitated when he heard my proposal.

He said he never wanted to have another child and I could leave if I couldn't accept this fact, so now I don't have any idea what to do."

"How is this even possible?" Roger furrowed his eye brows and went on, "Edward has reached his middle age. He should be happy if he could have a baby at this age. I don't understand why this would agitate him instead?"

"I don't know. I am also confused about it too. I did expect this in my worst nightmares, " said Rachel, as she sighed heavily. She also couldn't figure out why he was so adamant in his refusal to have a baby with her.

"Don't worry right now, maybe things will change in your favor soon, " Roger said with a sly smile.

Slowly, Roger carried Rachel onto the bed. "I am here for you at any time if you really want to have a

baby, " Roger offered with a grin.

"What are you talking about? I can't understand. What could you possibly have to offer in this situation?" Rachel, who actually clearly understood what he was trying to convey, pretended not understand. Though she pretended so to prevent Roger's next movement, Rachel did strike an pattern of almost declining and accepting to have sex with him to avoid disappointing him.

However, things went down differently in the Lu family house.

Soon after Edward and Rachel abruptly left, Chris went back to her room. Charles and Autumn too were just about to go back to their bedroom when Nancy rushed over with a glass of milk. "Mrs. Lu, I have prepared the milk for you as you like it, " said Nancy.

"Thank you, but I don't want to drink it tonight, " Autumn declined politely. She felt even better than before since she stopped drinking milk these days, though Autumn was not sure if it was true or was an intuition. Moreover, she did not want to fall asleep when Nancy took the milk for her, and that was really

why she declined Nancy's offer.

"But you have to drink it, Mrs. Lu." Nancy looked a little bit nervous, and she immediately tried to



explain her pressing request as she sensed the confusion in Charles' eyes. "Mrs. Lu, you have to take care of yourself. You have lost a lot of weight because you were sick these past couple of days. And it is for your welfare that you must consume a glass of milk every night. Mr. Lu asked me to prepare it for you every day without fail. Please just take a sip of it at the very least."

"But I really don't want to drink it tonight. Please let it be for one night. This will barely make any difference," Autumn replied her as her forehead wrinkled with a frown.

"I am so truly worried about your health condition. Please try to drink a little bit while it is still warm. It is good for your health." Nancy was persistent in her attempts to persuade her.

"But I..." As she was feeling awkward, Autumn looked at Charles. Soon Charles understood what she tried to convey from her eyes, so he turned to Nancy and said, "Nancy, hand it to me. I will drink it now that Autumn does not want to drink it tonight. That way your efforts of preparing it will not be in vain."

"Mr. Lu, but it is prepared especially for Mrs. Lu." Nancy replied as she shivered a little with growing nervousness.

"So how does that matter? It is just milk. Can't you just hand the glass over?" Confused, Charles asked

Nancy and felt weird by her reaction.

"No, no. That is not what I meant." Nancy let out an embarrassed smile explained, "I am just worried about Mrs. Lu's deteriorating health, so I really wanted her to consume it. But now that she doesn't want to drink it tonight, then you can drink it, Mr. Lu."

As she finished speaking, Nancy extended her hand to pass over the glass to Charles. However, right before Charles could even grasp it, Nancy loosened her grip all of a sudden. The glass fell down with a thud and crashed into small pieces while the milk spilled all over the black marble floor.

"I am sorry, Mr. Lu. I am really so sorry. I don't mean to drop it like that. I felt like you had held it, but I guess I was confused." Nancy hastily apologized to Charles in a shaky voice. "It's okay. But Nancy what's wrong with you? Somethings seems to be wrong. You have been acting so weird today, "

Charles said with suspicion as he could feel that something was wrong with Nancy.

"Mr. Lu, I am fine. I have just been feeling a little tired, so I loosed my grip on the glass. I am so sorry.

Let me go and fetch you another glass of milk, " replied Nancy, with her head lowered. She still looked a little flurried in a nerve wrecking state.

"No, thanks. There is no need for you to do so. Please just go and rest, " Charles said indifferently.

After thinking for a few seconds, Charles added. "Clean this mess up and then go to bed early and ensure you have a good rest to avoid such a hassle, Nancy."

"Okay, I will clean this up immediately." Nancy nodded slightly and without saying anything else moved out of the room in haste. However, as soon as they left, a look of hatred reflected in Nancy's eyes.

"Charles, do you think Nancy was acting a little strange today? It seems like something is wrong with her." As they headed to the bedroom, Autumn opened up about her doubts to Charles.

"Didn't you hear what she just said? Perhaps she was too exhausted after all she managed all the chores at home, " replied Charles calmly. He paused for a while but then seemed to recall something, so he asked, "Did Roger create any trouble for you today?"

"No, he didn't. Don't worry. He would dare not do anything inappropriate around me, " Autumn replied with an assuring smile. "Well, it is late. Let's go to sleep now. You still have to work tomorrow, " she added to put an end to this topic.

"Okay. But I need to take a shower first so you go ahead. I will join you in a bit." Charles nodded and then walked to the bathroom. When he walked back to get into bed, he saw that Autumn had already

fallen asleep.

The next morning, Charles just as usual drove Autumn to her company first and then headed to his own company. David was very busy these days since Leila had taken a leave recently since she was injured. David just put the papers in order when Charles reached the office. "Mr. Lu, please sign these important papers," David said while handing it to him.

"Leave it on my desk. I will sign them later after going through them," replied Charles without even looking up at him. But soon he recalled the five-year contract with Leo, so then he looked at David and asked, "What is the progress with Mr. Xu's contract?"

"Alice is handling that cooperation. And as per what I heard it has already been signed. Mr. Lu, don't worry. All our affairs are in order," replied David politely. However, he still was hesitant of speaking as he recalled what Alice said to him. Charles then said to him again, "David, thank you. Leila is not here for the next few days and so you must have much work to do."

"Mr. Lu, it is my duty. I will handle it all with utmost care and attention." He paused for a few seconds and then hesitantly said, "But..."

"What is the matter?" Charles asked him with confusion.

Staring at Charles, David was unable to utter the words he kept planning to say out loud. After

hesitating further, he mustered the courage and then went on, "Nothing. It's just that our colleagues all

heard about what happened with Leila. She was hurt because of official business, so we plan to pay

her a visit after work hours. Would you like to join us, Mr. Lu?"

Upon hearing this, Charles was reluctant but then he nodded his head in approval thinking about how

Leila had devoted herself for his company, so the least he could do was to pay her a visit.

"Buy some fruits and flowers for her. I'll sponsor it, " Charles said indifferently.

In fact, David just asked him casually just to keep him in the room and to be polite, but he least

expected Charles to actually accept the offer and join them. It seemed as though Alice was right.

Whether Charles had an ambiguous relationship with Leila, she was different from an ordinary

employee in Charles' eyes, or else he would not have agreed to visit her.

"Okay. Sure, I will buy it later." David replied calmly and was determined to keep observing for a bit and

then decided whether to tell Charles those words or not.

When it was time to get off work, Charles left at the same time with other people which was quite

unusual for him. However, once he reached Leila's block, David and other employees still had not reached since they were caught up with buying the fruit basket and flowers.

#### Chapter 383 A Light Bulb Moment

Charles rang the buzzer then heard Leila's voice calling out, "Coming!"

He did not tell Leila beforehand that he would be coming to visit. So when Leila opened the door and saw Charles in her doorstep, she was surprised.

"I thought you were the electrician who is coming to change a broken light bulb. What brings you here?"

While confused as to why he came, Leila could hardly contain her excitement. His arrival was certainly a pleasant surprise because she never expected Charles to visit her at home.

"Change your broken light bulb?" a slightly confused Charles inquired.

Frowning, he added, "You have a broken light bulb?"

Leila sighed, "Yes, the bathroom light gave out a few days ago. I have been calling the building manager to send someone over to fix it but so far, no one has come." Leila pouted in frustration.

Charles quickly volunteered.

"I can change it for you, " he offered.

"Oh, no. I can't ask you to do that, " she replied.

"I will wait for the repairman that the building manager will send over. It is too much hassle for you."

Charles assured her, "Look, it's no big deal."

He scanned Leila's home from the doorway and confirmed that she lived alone. Charles was aware how inconvenient a dark bathroom could be for a lady. And it was this concern that prompted him to volunteer fixing the problem.

Before she could refuse again, he took off his suit jacket, draped it on the sofa, and asked for directions to the bathroom. "Can you show me where it is?"

Leila saw how determined Charles was to help so she gave up refusing his offer. The truth was she was thrilled that he volunteered to help out with a domestic problem. It would allow her a chance to ask him to stay longer. Leila led him to the bathroom then handed him a stool to stand on.

"Please be care, Mr. Lu, " she said.

Charles gave her a confident smile. "Don't worry, " he assured Leila. Changing a light bulb was a piece of cake. As he climbed the stool, he requested, "Please hold the stool steady."

Leila nodded and did as he asked.

Pleased with the situation, she imagined they were a real couple, doing normal things that couples did.

She would take care of domestic chores while Charles would handle repairs. Leila thought, 'If only I can

freeze this moment!'

It took Charles less than three minutes to complete the task. After replacing the broken light bulb, he

declared, "Done! Please try switching it on."

Light flooded the bathroom the moment Leila flipped the switch. She cried out in glee, "It's working now.

Thank you very much!"

Leila could not contain her ecstatic feeling over something so simple.

As Charles stepped down from the stool, he told Leila, "Next time you need help for minor repairs, don't

hesitate to call me."

She blushed at the offer and said, "But it's not proper."

She lowered her head, hoping to conceal her blushing. "If Autumn finds out about this, she will not like

it. She may even misunderstand our relationship." Leila thought she was playing coy, but Charles was



oblivious and thought there was nothing wrong helping a female employee with small repairs.

But he quickly realized what Leila was saying and changed his tune. "Well then, David can come and help you next time. I know how inconvenient it can be for a woman to live alone."

Leila's face fell. "I'll be fine, " she quickly said. The two became silent, then let the awkwardness pass.

Just then, Leila heard a knock on her door. And Charles went back to the bathroom. The faces of her co-workers greeted her when she opened the door and she was completely surprised.

"What are you guys doing here?" she cried out. She felt even more disappointed.

Hiding her annoyance over the unannounced visit, she muttered, "I rarely get to have time alone with Charles. Now, everyone is here to disturb us."

One of her co-workers spoke up, "Hey, what's wrong? Are we not welcome here?"

She looked at the eager and concerned faces, still unable to speak.

Leila heard one of them say, "When we heard you were injured, we came as soon as we can. We just wanted to know how you are doing now."

Another co-worker inquired, "What happened to your face?"

Carol managed to scratch Leila's face leaving her with two extensive injuries. The doctor said she would have permanent scars even after they healed. However, Leila felt her injuries were a small price to pay for a huge contract she bagged. If necessary, she was willing to do anything to help Charles with the business.

Leila schooled herself to be polite. "I'm fine, " she told her visitors. "Please come in and have a seat."

The invitation was issued with a forced smile. When everyone was seated, she inquired, "Have you all eaten?" Hospitality won over annoyance. "I can cook for you, if you have not had dinner." Still, it was a struggle to be polite. She was thinking, 'If they didn't arrive to disturb my moment with Charles, something really exciting might have happened.'

But David was quick to show concern and prevented Leila from walking to the kitchen.

"No, no! We came because we're concerned about you. How can we ask someone injured to cook dinner for us? Besides, we won't be staying long. We just want to know how you are then we'll leave, "

David said.

David was surprised to spot Charles' suit jacket draped on the sofa. He was not expecting his boss to visit Leila at home.

"Ah, Leila..." he began as their friend went to get water for her guests.

"Is Mr. Lu here? Where is he?"

Just then Charles declared, "I'm here!"

He emerged from the hallway. Charles had just finishing washing his hands inside the bathroom. He

had heard the group arrive but was in no hurry to make his presence known.

Leila plastered a broad grin on her face then declared, "Mr. Lu, I really appreciate what you've done."

However, she refrained from telling the others that Charles had only changed a broken light bulb in her

bathroom. Leila was hoping her co-workers would think she was having an affair with Charles. The

vagueness of her words would fuel more speculation at work. Then she threw in, "If you hadn't come

here, I would have felt depressed and helpless."

"It's no big deal, really, " Charles replied. "Don't mention it."

As he talked, Charles picked up his suit jacket and put it on. To Leila's guests, he said, "Since you're all

here anyway, why not stay longer to keep Leila company? I need to handle some business and will go

ahead."

Leila needed to think quickly. "Wait Mr. Lu..."

When he stopped and turned to her, she made a gracious suggestion.

"Since you and my co-workers are already here, why don't you all stay and I cook for all of you. I'm a good cook, you know, " She was disappointed that Charles only stayed for a while.

But Charles shook his head to refuse the offer. "I'm sorry, but I have something that I need to take care of."

Then showing concern for Leila's health, he added, "Besides, you're injured and not feeling well. Why not just rest and forget cooking?"

"Are you sure you don't want to stay for dinner?" Leila pushed.

In her mind she was thinking, 'If Charles has dinner with me, he would likely be surprised to discover I am a very good cook.' But her attempts to get him to stay were again refused. Charles explained, "I learned your co-workers were coming to visit you today. That's why I came, too. And since I've seen how you are, I will now leave. Autumn is waiting for me at home."

Leila angrily thought, 'Autumn... it's always Autumn! That disgusting woman!'

David quickly stood up and said, "Mr. Lu, can I leave with you?"

He added, "Would you mind giving me a ride? I will get off somewhere along the way."

"Okay. Let's go then."

Charles agreed but his expression was unreadable.

Charles and David's departure depressed Leila, and she was no longer in the mood to cook. She and her co-workers then decided to have dinner out.

David struggled with discomfort as he got into Charles' car. He was taken aback when Charles declared, "Go ahead. Say whatever it is on your mind. I noticed you've been struggling the whole day.

Rather than to let it worry the hell out of you, it would be better to just to say it."

David cleared his throat. "You know I have something to say?"

It was scary to learn Charles could read him clearly even when he tried to hide his true thoughts. 'How can my boss know about my intentions?' he mused.

"Of course, I do, " Charles laughed.

"While still in the office, you were about to say something. A while ago, you lied to me and asked me for a ride. So, I'm thinking you have something to tell me, right? And please say it before I get home."

David took a deep breath. "Mr. Lu, I mean no offense. But...

Is there anything going on between you and Leila?"

There, he'd said it. He was quite nervous, but was more curious than afraid.

Charles froze at the question. Getting over the shock, he thought the question was funny. He answered

with a smile, "I am her boss, she is my secretary. What other relations would there be between us?"

Chapter 384 The Truth About Lies

"And that's all it is?" David asked, looking at Charles.

He still couldn't believe everything Charles told him. "But in her house, why did you have to take off

your suit jacket?" David inquired.

'It wasn't so hot, ' he thought, but afraid to voice out his opinion.

"When she said her bathroom light needed changing, I simply offered to do it for her. So, I had to take

off my coat. Is there anything wrong with that?"

Charles was baffled at David's persistent questioning.

"So you mean to say there was nothing to it?" David continued, a little stunned. When Charles was

leaving Leila's house, she said something that sounded ambiguous which David took to mean as a

hidden relationship between the two. Apparently, he was wrong and the truth was Leila was taking

advantage of Charles to deliberately mislead David and everyone else. David shook his head in disbelief.

"Of course, that's all the truth, " Charles stressed. "What were you thinking?"

What David was suggesting made him uncomfortable.

The man had been working for him for years and never had he said anything out of line, to Charles' recollection. But this line of questioning now caught him off-guard. "What are you trying to say?"

Charles insisted.

"Just say it!" he barked at David. "Well... recently, there's been a rumor going around the office that you and Leila..."

David paused, gathering the courage to continue. "I know it's not very proper for me to say these things, Mr. Lu, but rumor has it that you're having an illicit relationship with Leila. And after what we witnessed at Leila's house today..."

Those rumors will surely get worse, " he looked worriedly at his boss.

"People are saying Leila and I have an affair?" Charles said, his tone incredulous.

He sat in silence absorbing what he heard. He obviously had no idea how such rumor started. Charles always thought he had maintained a strictly professional relationship with Leila, he as boss and her a subordinate. And he couldn't remember ever doing or saying anything inappropriate. So he tried to think of what started the unpleasant talk.

"That's right, Mr. Lu, " David affirmed, looking at Charles.

It became clear to him that the man knew nothing about the rumors. He was clueless about the fact that there was already talk in Shining Company that if such affair went on, Leila would soon be replacing Autumn. That was why certain people were already trying to suck up to Leila.

He sighed, and with a heavy heart said, "Mr. Lu, I've been working for you for many years now. And you and Mrs. Lu, I know how you got here.

I just want to remind you to pay more attention to what's going on around you, and to distance yourself from Leila. What's more, in the end, it doesn't matter what people say." He paused, then emphasized,

"What matters is what Mrs. Lu thinks about it."

Charles pondered David's words. "I see."

It suddenly became clear to him about Autumn's behavior recently. 'No wonder Autumn was angry at



me for no reason. It really seems that I don't notice a lot of things.' He clapped David on the shoulder.

"Thank you for telling me all these. I will start paying more attention."

"That's good, Mr. Lu. Ah, can you please drop me off at the corner?" David requested.

Getting off the car, he felt relieved that he was able to talk to Charles. Now, he had to take a taxi back to Leila's house because he left his car there.

Meanwhile, Leila was no longer in the mood to cook after Charles left. She was considering going out to dinner with her co-workers who came to visit. The woman had a very good idea that everyone who saw Charles with his coat off in her house no longer had doubts about their rumored affair. And they all wanted to get on Leila's good side.

"Let's go to that new restaurant nearby, Leila, " one of them suggested. "I heard the food there is quite good."

Another one quipped, "What's good about that restaurant? I think we should try out the place which specializes in boiled fish with pickled cabbage and chili. It's been there for more than a decade, so it must have an excellent menu."

"Oh don't argue, you two!" Leila admonished them. She did not want to hear any argument. "Look, you know my face is hurting now so I can't eat spicy food, let alone soy sauce. Why don't you guys just go out and have whatever you want."

Then she quickly added. "And I... will stay home and cook noodles for myself. But I promise to treat you all to a hearty meal once my face is healed. How's that?"

The two women who started to argue looked at each other at a loss for words. Everyone agreed with Leila's suggestion to go out and eat. More than the food, what they really wanted to do was to talk more about Charles and Leila's supposed relationship. They hesitated, and tried asking Leila again.

"Please join us, " one girl pleaded. They felt there was no point going out to dinner if Leila didn't join them.

Still, Leila refused, "Sorry to disappoint you all. But this bruise on my face is not only painful, it might scare someone who sees it. Besides, I'm already a little tired and would rather get some rest."

Liz, who was closest to Leila, decided it was best to leave her alone. "Leila's tired, guys. So, let's not force her." She proposed, "Let's just have dinner together once Leila recovers and returns to work. For now, let's allow her to get some rest."

The others looked contrite. "You're right. We should let Leila rest."

Everyone nodded in agreement and prepared to leave.

Leila then pulled Liz aside and whispered, "About what I asked you to do..."

How are things going?"

"It's going very well, actually. Don't you believe in my ability?" Liz replied quietly. Then she laughed.

"Now that it has gone viral in the company, everyone believes it to be true. And Leila, you better not forget what I did when you become the new Mrs. Lu."

Leila joined in the laughter. "Of course I won't forget!"

Then she added, "Rest assured your efforts will be rewarded."

In a conspiratorial tone she reminded Liz, "Please spread the word about what you saw in my house today. But just be subtle. Don't say everything but leave something to the imagination."

She then gave a sly smile.

Liz nodded and gave a small wink.

"No problem. Now we have to leave so you can rest."

Her co-workers bade Leila goodbye.

After they left, Leila saw David coming back. She hesitated, then went out to greet him. "Hi, David! I

thought you left with Mr. Lu?" She wondered why he returned. "Why did you come back?"

Voice lacking emotion, David explained, "I finished what I had to do and I've come to pick up the car."

Then remembering why they visited in the first place, he told Leila, "I hope you get well soon. I've got to go now. Goodbye."

"Wait!" Leila suddenly caught David and asked, "You didn't say anything to Mr. Lu... that you shouldn't, did you?"

"I'm sorry. I don't understand what you mean. What exactly are those things I shouldn't be saying?"

Leila drew her brows together in annoyance. She knew David was not in favor of her wily approaches towards Charles. So the woman imagined that if she did finally get Charles, the first thing she would do was fire David.

But until then, she had to bear with him.

She calmed herself with a deep breath and said, "You are my senior, David. You joined the company way ahead of me. And I know Mr. Lu thinks very highly of you. I know there is so much more that I

need to improve on, and I hope to learn a lot from you. Now, if I do something wrong, I would

appreciate being told about it to my face. I am willing to correct my mistakes. As to those that can't be

corrected... I'd appreciate you to..."

Chapter 385 Making Amends

Leila paused, then decided to sound less threatening. "I would definitely be displeased if you

complained about me in front of Mr. Lu. We're co-workers so I don't think there's a need for you to do

that. Besides, it's better to keep a harmonious working relationship, don't you think so?"

David nodded. "Yes, I agree with some of the things you said. And you're right, we are colleagues.

But... I am not comfortable knowing someone wants to take something that belongs to another.

I just can't bear that thought." Then he dared Leila, "Why, have I done something wrong?"

He sneered, then warned, "Leila, do you really think I am stupid? That I don't know who has been

spreading those nasty rumors in the office? Here is some unsolicited advice: You better know your

place in this company. Otherwise, you're not getting off the hook if I find out you do it again."

She straightened her shoulders and put on a desperate look. "What nonsense are you talking about? I

am not the one spreading rumors that Mr. Lu is having an affair with me. And I have no idea who did

this. Besides, why would I spread such gossip when it is my reputation that is being ruined?"

Leila stared at David, frowning when he burst into laughter.

In between laughter, David declared, "You have not been to work for several days. And I don't recall telling you what rumor is being spread around. So, how come you seem to know about this?"

Leila stammered, "I...I..." as she realized she had given herself away.

Thinking quickly, she gave an explanation. "Look David, you got it wrong. It was Liz who mentioned it to me just before she left. And I feel just as helpless about it. You do know Mrs. Lu is my benefactor so I would never do anything to betray or hurt her. If she finds out about this, I am certain we will no longer be friends."

David raised an eyebrow. "Really?"

With a grim smile, he continued, "If you really aren't responsible for spreading the rumor, why are you worried about me saying anything to Mr. Lu?"

The fury on Leila's face pleased David. He said, "Leila, you do know that fire cannot be wrapped up in paper, right? If you really care about Mrs. Lu then you know the right thing to do is to stay away from Mr. Lu, who is not your husband." He continued to mock Leila. "And let's suppose you do become Mrs.

Lu someday, the fact remains that you were first a mistress."

Leila sputtered in anger. "You!" But she could say nothing more.

As David drove off, her flushed face turned pale as she pondered his words.

She suddenly became agitated. Her plans to become closer to Charles were already paying off with tremendous effort on her part. But she knew the moment David said something he was not supposed to tell Charles, all her efforts would be in vain.

She sat slumped in a chair, wondering for a long time. "What should I do?" she groaned.

Meanwhile, Charles sat in his car for several minutes thinking instead of going inside the house. His conversation earlier with David made him realize that Autumn had reason to be mad each time they would quarrel because of Leila. Not only that, his reactions during such confrontations made matters worse.

He lit a cigarette and took a drag out of it. When he walked in, he saw Autumn preparing noodles in the kitchen. Charles moved towards his wife and wrapped his arms around her waist from behind. "Wow, that smells delicious, " he said appreciatively.

Autumn turned around and said, "You're home early today."

Her lips broke into a smile as she looked at her husband, and then asked, "Have you had dinner yet?"

She became a bit embarrassed because it was already eight o'clock and she still didn't have dinner.

Charles had concerns of his own as he looked at the time. "Why are you having dinner so late?"

Autumn quietly admitted, "I wasn't very hungry."

Then thinking her husband would be famished, she asked, "Would you like some noodles?"

Charles smiled then nodded. "That would be great!"

He suddenly missed Autumn's cooking, which he had not tasted in a long time.

Autumn was just as delighted to be sharing a meal with her husband, because they had not eaten

together in a long time. She moved quickly to prepare a bowl of noodles with vegetables, and also

cooked eggs for him. Then she apologized, "Charles, I know you are picky about food, but it's too late

to cook something else. I promise to prepare something better next time."

He put an arm around her shoulders and assured his wife. "I like noodles just fine, Autumn. Stop

worrying."

After a long day at work, the noodles with green vegetables and the omelette looked very appetizing to



Charles. Autumn giggled while he was eating. She teased, "Why are you eating so fast? No one is going to take the food away from you."

She then pushed her bowl of noodles towards Charles and remarked, "I'm not hungry so you can have my share."

Charles groaned in satisfaction. "But I'm so full already. Go on. Eat your noodles. And after you finish, we can take a walk."

When they were newly married, Charles would take Autumn for a walk everyday. But as he became busier with work, the walks stopped. And it had been a long time since they done it.

Autumn stared at her husband. She noticed he was quite gentle and very considerate today and she was not used to it. "You're behaving differently today, Charles. What's wrong with you?"

"Has anything happened?" she inquired.

"What are you thinking about?" Charles asked, amused by her words.

Charles then remained quiet as Autumn fired her questions. Then he stroked her hair affectionately and replied, "I realize I've taken you for granted the last several weeks because I'm always so occupied

with business. But don't worry, Autumn, I promise it won't happen again. It's time to take good care of my wife."

He also remembered that Wendy and Yvonne would no longer be causing Autumn any more trouble, so it would be less stress for his wife. He sighed contentedly knowing their lives would be more peaceful.

Autumn absorbed all that was happening. Then she reached out to touch Charles' hand.

Looking at her husband, she quietly said, "Charles, I'm also guilty of something. And I want to apologize."

Autumn knew she shouldn't have been suspicious and ill-tempered.

"So many things have happened recently and we've been under so much pressure. Hopefully, it is over.

Oh Charles, it's like my life is suddenly filled with sunshine. And it feels very good," Autumn gushed.

Smiling broadly, she reached for both his hands and held them tightly.

Seeing how happy his wife was, Charles declared, "I want to take you to visit and pay respects to my parents before we go abroad."

Since getting married, the couple have not been to the cemetery to visit his parents. Charles decided it

was time to introduce Autumn to his mother and father. "My parents must be looking forward to meeting

their daughter-in-law, " he said.

Autumn was pleased and said, "Okay. We will go when you're free."

With the Giant Promise Company's press conference scheduled on Sunday, Charles decided to visit

his parents on Saturday. They went early in the morning and bought chrysanthemums before heading to the cemetery.

It was located in the countryside, surrounded by a picturesque scenery. It took them nearly half-an-hour to climb the mountain where the tombs were situated. They finally reached their destination with both gasping for air due to the uphill trek.

Charles was very concerned about Autumn.

"Are you all right?" he asked.

Autumn touched his arm in assurance. "Don't worry, I am fine."

Satisfied that she was okay, Charles casually cleaned the surroundings, picking at the weeds

surrounding his parents' tombs. Then Autumn laid the flowers they brought. He spoke, "Dad, Mom, I

want you to meet my wife. Her name is Autumn Zhao. Isn't she beautiful?"

Autumn smiled at his words and then teased him, "Charles, have you heard the old saying that every peddler praises his own needle?"

He looked at her, baffled. "What? Why are you saying that?"

Charles went on, "I'm just stating a fact. You are beautiful."

He paused to think, 'If my parents were still alive today. I'm sure they would be very happy that I married not only a beautiful woman but one who is also very respectable.'

Charles' words made Autumn think of her own father, Bowen. If he were still alive, he would be just as happy that his daughter married a brilliant man.

Autumn kneeled in front of the tomb then gently brushed away the dust covering the gravestone. Softly, she said, "Mom, Dad, don't worry. You can rest in peace because I will take good care of Charles for you."

Charles felt a pang of sadness at Autumn's words, but echoed it just the same. "Yes, Dad, Mom...

Autumn will take care of me. You can rest in peace now. I assure you I have a happy life with her now."

Then he lightened up. "Perhaps when we come to visit you next year, we will be introducing your grandson."

Autumn glared at him jokingly, "And what makes you so sure we will have a son, but not a daughter?"

Charles replied, "I just have this feeling it will be a boy."

"But I want a daughter, " Autumn pretended to whine.

Charles pondered this for a moment. "Well, we could have twins. That way, we will have a son and a daughter. What do you think?"

Chapter 386 Something Bad Happened

Giant Promise Company was gearing up to hold a new product launch the next day. Autumn and Isla had been preparing for this event since a long time ago. Earlier that morning Autumn went to the site to inspect everything one last time to ensure nothing went wrong.

This was the first and most important launch event for her since she took over Cloud Advertising Company. She was doing everything in her capacity to ensure that the event turned out perfect.

"What's the matter, Autumn? Are you not feeling okay?" Upon seeing Autumn's frown, Isla came up to her and inquired with concern.

"No, don't worry about it. I am absolutely fine, " answered Autumn in a soft tone. The moment she

woke up this morning, her eyelids started to flutter and would keep doing so every now and then almost like a warning about something bad that was about to happen.

"Well, I am relieved to hear that. I will get on with my work then. Let me know if you don't feel well, "

said Isla gently. And soon after she was called to help. Autumn took a big gulp of water as she tried to calm herself down. As soon as she looked up, she spotted a familiar figure lurking in the backstage.

If she was not wrong, it was Paula. She had disappeared ever since she stole Autumn's scheme and

lost her competition with Autumn. Upon spotting her, Autumn had no idea what Paula was doing here, which seemed rather ominous to her.

She immediately put down the bottle of mineral water and rushed backstage, as she yelled out for all

the staff's attention, "Everybody, may I please have your attention for a moment? Please run through

your designated responsibilities carefully. Should you find something wrong or even confusing, please

do approach me at the earliest. Thank you!"

"What's going on?" asked Isla with eyebrows raised with confusion. Everyone was already terribly busy

with their assigned chores. And now that Autumn asked them to re-check their work, it was just adding

to their work load and stress which would increase the chances of making a mistake. Therefore, no one was really willing to spare moments to follow her instruction through.

However, Isla knew and understood very well that Autumn was not a troublemaker and had no intentions to increase the workload, and she must have a genuine reason for making such a sudden request.

Autumn's brows also furrowed as she replied in an attempt to voice her concerns, "I don't know. I just feel like something bad is going to happen. My eyelids have been fluttering since I woke up. Oh, by the way, I also think I just saw Paula. She ran away from the backstage. I'm really worried as to what could go wrong and that is why I ordered this check."

Isla pondered for a bit, and suddenly realized that the most important thing were the new products. This was the first and yet the most significant step for Giant Promise Company to transform itself into a clothing company, so no mistakes were allowed in such a dire circumstance. "Please come with me, " she requested Autumn.

She then led Autumn to the room where the clothes, which were going to be showcased at the launch event, were carefully stored. But as they reached there, they were appalled to see that the door was

wide open and all the clothes were missing from the racks. Autumn's fears had come true.

"It was her, I am sure of it now!" Autumn's blood ran cold as she turned pale at the sight of the empty room. Apart from how important the event was to her, she also did not want to ruin Giant Promise Company's reputation. It was a big burden.

What was more, it was a personal feud between Paula and her, and Giant Promise Company could not be involved.

"God, what will we do now? Isla, what am I going to do to rectify this situation?" Autumn was totally freaking out, she could not think clearly as her mind started to spin. It was Giant Promise Company's new product launch, and now these new products themselves were stolen, from right under their noses, just when event was scheduled to start.

"The only thing to do right now is to approach Mr. Xu with the truth and ask him if they have extra clothes to spare, " Isla responded as she maintained her calm. "If you find it difficult, I'll go and talk to him."

Isla knew how much pressure Giant Promise Company was under to cooperate with Cloud Advertising



Company. If there was no new product, Giant Promise Company would become a laughingstock, no matter how grand the event arrangements were. So at any cost, they must get other new products before the show time.

"No, I'll manage it. This is my mess to clean." Autumn gritted her teeth, in a bid to appear composed.

She had to face the situation. "You check here to ensure there are no more problems. I'm going to speak with Mr. Xu about this situation."

Autumn walked out of the backstage in a brave stride to look for Andy. He was talking to his friends when she found him. Autumn had to bite the bullet and addressed him. "Excuse me, Mr. Xu, may I have a word with you? This is rather urgent." She interrupted their conversation rather abruptly in an embarrassed tone.

"Okay then I will see you in just a bit, " Andy said to his friends after he gave Autumn a nod. As his friends walked away, he turned to Autumn, "How many times did I tell you not to call me Mr. Xu. We are a family, and that sounds strange coming from you."

"No, not to me, at least not while we are working, I think it's better if I stick to calling you Mr. Xu, "

Autumn persisted.

Andy shook his head and stopped requesting her. "What do you want to talk about in such a rush?"

"I am sorry but something terribly bad has happened, Mr. Xu. All of the new products lined up for the launch event are missing. Now the models have arrived, but there are no clothes... " Autumn plucked up her courage to tell Andy the awful news. As the organizer of the event, she felt ashamed to have made such a stupid mistake.

"What, how could such a thing happen?" Andy stared at Autumn in shock. "Who did it and why?"

"This is not the time to discuss who is to blame. Mr. Xu, I want to know if you have another batch of clothes from this collection we have to unveil today. We can't afford to cancel the show now..." When she said this, she was so nervous that her hands were sweaty.

Andy frowned slightly, and responded, "There are only two sets of clothes made from this very collection. One has been misplaced as you mentioned and the other one... is still in the display window of my company, but... "

He raised his hand to look at the time on his watch and continued, "The launch event is just about to start, and my office is quite far from here. About that if you encounter a traffic jam, you will not be able

to get back in time even if you do pick up those clothes. Oh, my god, what are we gonna do now?"

"Anyway, Mr. Xu, please inform your staff about the current situation and I'll go fetch the clothes right

away." Autumn decided in the nick of time. "Don't worry! Now that you have chosen to cooperate with

Cloud Advertising Company, I will certainly not put you in a difficult position like this again. I'm sure I will

bring all those clothes before the show time. Trust me!"

"Autumn..." Andy wanted to say something else, but Autumn had turned around to leave. After taking

her car keys, she headed straight for Giant Promise Company. On the way, she called Isla, "Hey, this is

Autumn. I'm on my way to Giant Promise Company to fetch the clothes now. I'm afraid I might be late.

Please buy me some time by all possible means!"

"Got it, I'll do my best," answered Isla. "Hurry back and have a safe drive."

Once Isla hung up, she suddenly caught sight of Paula from the corner of her eye. She wanted to go

after her, but it was time for the launch event, and as the host... she had to go on the stage and engage

the guests.

At this point, a sudden rush of anxiety washed over her. After all, she knew there were no clothes for

the show stored backstage. In addition... she was a member of Cloud Advertising Company, which took

over the job with the reputation of plagiarism, and she was afraid that she could not bear the pressure.

Chapter 387 Better Late than Never

Isla held the microphone as she shivered and trembled with fear, given the huge responsibility to shore up Cloud Advertising Company with redoubled efforts that warranted the general recognition, as she was completely aware that the assembly would not give the organizer, Cloud Advertising Company a just consideration.

The society was full of snobs and despicable people who delighted at the sight of other's misfortune and fall.

Isla took a deep breath and conducted the press conference in the manner that Autumn would approve of: leaders address; the speech from designers.... and finally Andy's keynote presentation.

Over forty-five minutes had passed since Autumn's departure, now even Andy's presentation had concluded. But Isla had no choice but to rely on Andy stretching his presentation as long as he possibly could.

Andy sensed Isla's anxiety and tried to speak slowly and yet in an engaging tone. He maintained the slow pace right till the 'Thank you!' he concluded his speech draft. At that moment, Isla thought the

crisis was past being averted and there was nothing else she could do.

Isla had to face the challenge head on and while suppressing her anger towards Paula who was shamelessly standing amidst the assembly.

However, right when Paula least expected that Isla's confidence received a boost. She cleared her throat, and cast a glance across the vast assembly. Andy was gripped by severe fear that the press conference would be ruined, as Autumn had just told him over the phone that she would need at least another ten minutes to return, however the hiatus would be of great difficulty to smooth over.

Isla mustered up her courage, well poised, to address the assembly with the utmost sincerity, slowness and clarity almost like an edited film scene.

"Distinguished guests: my name is Isla Zhao, you all know me as the planner and the host of today's event."? Isla's words and expressions laced with humour made the assembly burst into laughter.

"I think most of you came to hear about me because of the company I previously worked for. The fact that I transferred my allegiance to Cloud Advertising Company which was earlier ill-reputed and not well-staffed as its general manager... being blamed for plagiarism gave rise to a series of misunderstandings."

Isla smiled gently with a calm expression, "Autumn is my close friend who would not steal the work of a lesser known planner after staking her reputation. I decided to lend her my complete support and faith to help her survive the most difficult hours.... and we made it."

"Today's event, I acknowledge, is far from being perfect, but the fact that we try to establish Cloud Advertising Company in the field of fashion with its enterprising members is well manifested."

Isla was relieved to see Autumn as she smiled, "Giant Promise Company, with tremendous achievements in other fields, has now turned to seek fortune and prosperity in the field of fashion, where many other dissenting voices currently prevail... in relentless pursuit of excellence and fame. I hope it is the time for our company to take stage."

Isla's eloquent presentation started a wave of thunderous applause of the assembly which all started with Andy's loud claps.

The press conference was conducted smoothly despite the bumps.

Moreover, the reality behind the proposal scandal and plagiarization were proved and exposed. Isla tried her best to reap the harvest that she desired and worked hard to achieve.

Isla, with her head held high, addressed the distinguished guests, "The winter fashion of Giant Promise Company is coming...."

The catwalk show went as well as expected. Isla, who looked poised in an evening dress, was given a coat from Autumn as she walked off the platform. Autumn said in an appreciative yet proud tone, "Isla, thank you for your efforts."

"Autumn, we really made it!" Isla could not contain her excitement, "We carried out the day smoothly without any hiccup!"

"That is true!?" Autumn was also amazed as she accepted the reality of the success her efforts warranted despite all doubts.

The thunderous applause gave Isla goosebumps and also happiness.

"Autumn, enjoy this moment of appreciation we receive for all our hard work." It was a big recognition for Isla who thought her efforts and time were recognized and were not wasted.

The press conference was concluded perfectly with Isla's ending presentation reposted and it was liked by several hundred thousand followers. Autumn spoke to Isla humorously, "Isla, as you see, now you are an online star inspiring and motivating others."

"Please do not tease me like this." Isla had overcome her gripping fear and she explained the situation to Autumn, "But for the exigency, I would not have addressed the assembly like that. Aron would come to tease me should he watch the live."

"There was more pride than fear in your voice." Autumn smiled to Isla. "Aron will be happy and proud to see that."

"Autumn..." Andy's voice interrupted their joviality and returned their thoughts to the matter of the missing clothes.

They were rendered speechless and nonplussed.

"Mr. Xu..." Autumn looked at Andy in shame. "The scandal will be investigated soon with joint responsibility on my part. I take the liberty to request more time in dealing with this matter."

"I'm not here for that." Andy replied with great composure, "Autumn, today's event ended up in success owing much to your teamwork and hard work. So I have decided to add a bonus of 10% on the previously agreed price to reward your company."

This favor left the assembly consumed by their jealousy. However Autumn seemed to be worried. "Mr.



Xu, this may be against the usual practice."

Isla thought this offer over and echoed her disapproval, as they found it shameful to accept Andy's

favor simply due to the event's crisis.

"Mr. Xu, it feels like that we found ourselves in the vulnerable spot of this crisis owing to our neglect

and mistake and we... should not be granted this generous offer for such a mistake!" Isla spoke to Andy

with embarrassment.

"Believe me when I say you deserve this bonus!" Andy looked at them in gratitude. "Today's event was

a paragon of the like. Our model clothes are well known all owing to Isla's splendid presentation which

justifies my reputation!"

Chapter 388 A Celebratory Dinner

Andy stared at Autumn seeking a positive response. "Moreover, the launch event was a success. If

Father and Mother find out that I didn't give you any bonus, they will scold me quite harshly. So please

just honor me to do something for you simply based on your merits."

Autumn blushed pink. After all, Paula did go out her way to ensure the launch event was ruined. She

said awkwardly, "Uncle Andy, Paula had a problem with me. She stole all the merchandise as an act of

revenge."

"Don't worry about that. You saved the day and that is all that matters now, " Andy comforted her,

"Once you informed me about the missing clothes, I immediately called the police. By now, I am sure the police must have arrived and will take her away for further questioning after conducting preliminary investigation."

Andy thought to himself, 'A person as foul as Paula deserves what she gets. Autumn used to tolerate her while being generous towards her. But her kindness was repaid with ingratitude. So this time, I swear not to let her go unpunished.'

Autumn was the reason Paula became so notorious. Paula would seize every chance to embarrass Autumn and put her down. She knew that today was Giant Promise Company's launch event. After managing to sneak backstage without anyone noticing, she stole the samples from the mannequins which Giant Promise Company delicately prepared and hid them in a corner. She hoped that Autumn would land in trouble.

She was so confident that she would not get caught. Instead of leaving at once, she kept lurking on the premise to witness Autumn's despair. If the launch event turned out to be a failure, it was unlikely for

anyone to cooperate with Autumn. To her astonishment, the launch event had turned around and was a complete triumph. What's more, Isla's humble words earned a good reputation for Cloud Advertising Company.

The more Paula thought about it, the angrier she felt. Today's scheme failed, but she would not give up on the pursuit of bringing Autumn down.

She glared at the stage as she was about to leave, when a group of policemen in uniforms blocked her way. Her instinctive reaction was to turn around and run. But a tall police officer lifted her up from the group easily almost like she was a child.

"You..." What are you doing?" Paula asked the policeman with a rather guilty expression all over her face, "Why did you stop me, Officer?"

"Well, for start, why don't you tell me why you were running away?" The policeman queried, "Is your name Paula Pan?"

"Yes, " answered Paula in low spirits. She realized she could not escape her fate of getting caught.

The policeman said with scorn as he noticed her expression, "It seems like you already know the reason why we are looking for you. Let's go. Please follow us to the police office."

Isla and Autumn saw Paula getting arrested as they walked out of the greenroom. Autumn sighed,

"Why is she always competing against me? I mean what is it that she wants to prove so desperately?"

"Who knows?" Isla responded with a shrug, "Now it's hopefully over. She will bear the punishments of her ill motivated actions. I guess she will be sentenced to more than one year in prison for such a spiteful act."

"It's none of our business, " Autumn responded happily. The event ended up successfully with everyone lauding their efforts. Her mood was lifted and she simply did not care even when Paula shot her a glance with intense hatred.

"The event we planned has been successful. Why don't we head out and celebrate this happy moment?" Autumn advised Isla, "What about having hotpot?"

"Great. Wait for a moment. I will call them out, " Isla agreed. Other employees were inside winding up everything. She said with a wide smile as she spotted them, "Everyone, can I have your attention please? Dinner is Manager Ye's treat. Please feel free to order anything you like to celebrate our success tonight."

Everyone was happy about the good news because their enduring efforts finally got a reward. When

Autumn saw the excited faces, a grin spread slowly across her face.

In an authentic Chongqing hotpot restaurant, tens of people were sitting around a table. Isla said,

smiling at Autumn next to her, "Autumn, I won't stand on ceremony."

"Be quick and order away. Stop talking nonsense." Autumn smiled.

Isla too was in good spirits, so she without thinking twice ordered a box of beer. Since Autumn was not

interested in drinking, she sat in a corner drinking some hot and soothing tea. Today's event was a big

success, which made all employees feel proud and elated.

After going through rounds of drinks, Yoyo was already quite drunk. She gathered her courage as she

took a seat beside Autumn and said, "Manager Ye, I have to apologize to you."

"What happened? Why are you apologizing to me?" Autumn asked in surprise. She thought, 'I am

under the impression that Yoyo is an honest girl. No matter what she has been asked to do, she always

does the work perfectly. Moreover, she is also easy to get along with. Although I have very little

personal contact with her, I know everyone in the company is fond of her. Isla is particularly close to

her.'

"I want to come clean about something," Yoyo forced a smile and explained, "Manager Ye, I mistook your disposition. Now I finally realized I was too naive and immature. I shouldn't believe the rumors and assume the worst in you without seeing things for myself."

Autumn knew what Yoyo was referring to. It was true that everyone initially judged Autumn rather harshly. She also knew it, but didn't care much about it. Time reveals a person's heart and intentions. She was confident that her employees would learn about what kind of person she was sooner or later. So Autumn didn't blame Yoyo. Instead, Autumn patted her shoulder and comforted her, "That's all in the past. Just forget it and move on."

"No, just let me finish what I was saying," Yoyo insisted. She had consumed a lot of wine. On one hand, she was happy about the successful event. On the other hand, she was ashamed to have misunderstood Autumn. The truth was she was good and upright.

Therefore, she took the chance to talk about this frankly while she felt the buzz of alcohol.

She burped loudly and the smell of wine pervaded the private room. There wasn't any disgust on

Autumn's face. She poured some water for Yoyo. "Drink some water."

Yoyo continued as she took a sip, "Manager Ye, Paula told us about the details of your act of plagiarism. We believed that. When Mr. Lu bought Cloud Advertising Company for you, we felt sort of jealous. Someone guessed you had an affair with him, or you were Mr. Lu's mistress. We said many bad things about you."

Yoyo added with an awkward smile, "There are two reasons for that. The first reason is that we envied you. The second is we underestimated your ability. Later, you were involved with Sam, which further tarnished your image. Many colleagues wanted to quit, including me. Isla persuaded us not to leave."

Yoyo stared at Autumn and went on her speech, "Isla told me to stay for another month or two till I see the real you. To tell you the truth, I didn't believe her but I stayed because of my respect for her. But a series of things that happened changed our thoughts.

You are Mrs. Lu, but you don't pull rank on us. Besides, Sam's mother came to apologize for her rude behavior and misunderstanding. What's more, without your timely return with the clothes, today's launch event would have fallen through."

Chapter 389 Rachel Is Pregnant

"I'm so sorry for how I acted and how I believed everyone without any questions, Manager Ye. I hope you find it in your heart to forgive me, " Yoyo begged.

Autumn smiled and said in a humble tone, "Okay, what ever has happened is all in the past now.

Actually I also am responsible for what I suffered. So let us learn from it and move past it."

Then she said in a painful tone, "I really hate to get into trouble and the negative energy so I didn't spare any effort to explain myself when all of you misunderstood me. It was my fault. I should have cleared the air and laid the truth in front of you."

"From now on, let's open our hearts to each other and avoid any misunderstanding between one another, " she optimistically added.

"Wow, you are very kind, easygoing and humble, just the same as what Isla told me!" Yoyo sighed and regretted having cause so much unnecessary drama for Autumn.

"Let's forget all the unhappiness in the past and restart a new chapter together, one of joy and faith!"

Autumn cast a grateful glimpse at Isla who was drinking with others. Autumn really appreciated Isla for all her help, support and silence.

Without Isla, Autumn wouldn't have been able to accomplish what she did today.

With that Autumn felt lucky and blessed to have found such a faithful and loving friend.



As dinner was almost over, Isla who was drunk passed out in Aron's arms. Both of them and Autumn were the last to leave the venue. Aron asked Autumn, "Do you need I to escort you home?"

"No, thank you. I will be just fine." Autumn nodded and said, "Charles is on his way to pick me up. You can carry on now because Isla is drunk and is in desperate need of rest."

"Okay, goodbye." Isla was smashed so he had to rush her home.

All of their colleagues too had left now. Some left by taxi, while others were picked up by their friends or family members. Standing at the gate of the restaurant, Autumn was waiting for Charles eagerly.

Autumn then called Charles and asked him when he would arrive. Charles told her to wait for another couple of minutes.

It was starting to get cloudy and Autumn too felt a little gloomy somehow despite how her day went.

Autumn waited for a long time before Charles finally reached. He walked up to her, holding an umbrella and said gently, "Have you been waiting for a long time? I'm sorry. I was in a party in the west end of the city when you called me."

Usually, it would take forty minutes for someone to drive from where he was but Charles reached in thirty minutes today so he must have driven very fast in order to pick her up as soon as possible.

Autumn was moved and but she blamed him in an affectionate tone, "Why didn't you tell me that? I could have gone home by taxi."

"Oh no harm done. I wanted to go home with you." Charles smiled and said, "It was just a boring party for business. You are more important than any of that."

Charles walked to her side of the car and fastened her seat belt, then he said, "Andy told me the event you held today was a huge success. Really?"

"Yes, indeed it was, " Autumn said proudly. Even though some accidents did make it hard, it was finished successfully.

She told Charles all about what happened today with great zeal, looking forward to his praise almost like a child.

"Charles, I feel great sense of achievement and pride after finishing this by myself!" Autumn exclaimed with a smile and added, "Now I feel so relaxed that the event concluded well and now we can proceed to our trip without anything hindrance."

Charles was extremely happy for her as he said, "You can stay home tomorrow and pack up our

luggage for the trip. If you need anything else, I'll ask Chris to buy it with you."

Autumn's body was still a little weak so Charles did not feel safe for her to go without someone's company. Autumn understood his kindness and agreed with his suggestion.

They were scheduled to leave on Wednesday. It was raining the whole day on Monday and the bad weather boggled Chris' mood down. She looked at the rain trickling down the window and asked

Autumn, "When will this rain stop?

Will you leave with my brother day after tomorrow?" Autumn nodded her head to answer. Then Chris' phone rang before Autumn began speaking. Chris frowned as she saw the name on the screen.

Evidently, she didn't want to answer it at all.

Chris cut the call but it rang once again after a few seconds. Soon after, Autumn's phone also rang and she found out this recurring calls were from Roger. She moved aside and received it.

"Hello, what's up?" Autumn asked indifferently. They hadn't spoken to each other in a long time so she just assumed something bad must happened.

Roger was anxious and said in a whispering tone, "Mrs. Lu, I'm in the hospital with Rachel right now.

She is talking on the phone so I have the chance to tell you the news. She is pregnant just like she

planned!"

Now Autumn realized the one who kept on calling Chris must have been Rachel. Unexpectedly, Rachel really got pregnant, but nobody knew if the baby's father was Edward or Roger.

"Mrs. Lu, did you hear what I just said?" Roger asked her.

"Yes, I did, " Autumn answered as she was still accepting what she just heard.

"Rachel told me that she was coming to the hospital for a physical check in the morning. I never expected it was because she was pregnant. The first thing she did after learning this news was to call Miss Lu to show off. I hope to tell you this in advance so you can handle the situation." Autumn heard Rachel's impatient voice echoing from the background as Roger finished his speaking, "Who you are calling? I have one more check to do, come here!"

Roger then blurted out abruptly in fear, "Sorry, I have no time to speak more. Bye!"

Roger hung up the call in a hurry. Autumn returned to the living room and found Chris sitting in the sofa restlessly. She sat down beside Chris and asked her, "What happened?"

"Autumn, Rachel... is pregnant." Chris said with a shocked expression. She never expected Rachel to

get pregnant in such a short time after marrying Edward especially not after the way Edward reacted the last time about having a child.

Chapter 390 You Really Refuse To Do Me Such A Little Favor

"After all, she is a young woman. It is quite easy and normal for her to get pregnant." Autumn tried to console Chris after she heard this shocking piece of information. Meanwhile, she wondered why

Rachel had not informed Edward about her pregnancy in the first place, but instead called Chris to rub it in her face. This all seemed rather strange to her.

"What else did she tell you on this abrupt call?" Autumn asked curiously.

"She... asked me to come to a cafe in an hour to meet her. She said she had something rather important to discuss with me," Chris answered honestly, seeking some guidance. "Autumn, what do you think her intentions are for this sudden invitation? Should I go to meet her or not? Please advise me as I am just shocked beyond words..."

"Of course you have to go and meet her. I mean why would you not?" said Autumn in a high-pitched, excited voice. She was too eager to find out what happened. "In fact, if you want, I will come along with you!"

She really wanted to know what Rachel was up to next, so she encouraged Chris to meet her and

listen to what she had to say now.

"Are you sure I should meet her? I mean after knowing what kind of a woman she is..." asked Chris again seeking assurance, as she was a little bogged down.

"Yes, I suppose so, " replied Autumn, as she looked into Chris's eyes.

As Chris went upstairs to change her clothes and get ready, Gary came up to Autumn and asked,

"What were you two talking about right now? Did I hear it right, Rachel's pregnant?"

"Oh, yeah, at least that's what Rachel told Chris on the call, " answered Autumn. She then noticed

Gary's face turning pale upon getting the confirmation on what he thought he heard. "What's the matter,

grandpa?" she inquired with concern almost immediately.

"But that's impossible..." Gary frowned and muttered vaguely. "How could she possibly get pregnant?"

"Hmph?" Autumn could not understand what was making Gary so nervous and stressed. "What,

grandpa, what makes you say that? I mean why do you think she cannot conceive?"

"Oh, never mind." Gary's expression slowly returned to that of being calm and peaceful. "I was just

wondering why she got pregnant so early into their marriage. I mean after all you know, Edward is old,

and they got married not long ago, " he explained his reasoning.

"You have a point, but who knows what goes on between a couple..." replied Autumn softly with a shrug.

While they were speaking, Chris came downstairs in a different dress, all ready to push off for coffee.

"Are you heading out now?" Gary asked.

Autumn nodded and replied, "Yes, I am going to travel with Charles for a few days, and I have to buy some things for my trip."

Just to avoid getting Gary worried, Autumn did not tell him what they were going to do. "Grandpa, we're leaving, bye now."

"Bye, please drive safely."

They then drove to the cafe Rachel had mentioned. And upon reaching the destination, they spotted her. There was a pot of rose tea steeping on her table, and she sat by the window quietly. It looked like she was listening to the rain trickling down on the window.

At the sight of them, Rachel immediately plastered on a beaming smile, while in stark contrast, Autumn

and Chris appeared rather dull on account of the bad weather.

"You are here." As they sat down opposite her, she pushed the menu to them and asked them to order.

"Since I'm pregnant, I have to maintain a strict diet now, and even my tea must be carefully chosen. I

hope you don't mind that I ordered before you came, did you?"

Autumn and Chris actually thought it was impolite of her to do so, and they knew this was her subtle

way of reminding them of her pregnancy.

Chris' hand had an itching desire to slap Rachel across her smug face, but instead she just addressed

her in a disgusted tone. "I'm in no mood to sit here and have tea with you in a civil manner. Just get

right to the point and tell me what you want from me, or we'll leave right now. I cannot afford to waste

anymore time on this."

Rachel turned a deaf ear to her negative remarks, as she stroked her tummy and smiled at Autumn.

"Charles and you have been married for quite a long time now. So the real question is why aren't you

pregnant yet?"

Sensing the sarcasm in her tone, Autumn snapped back with a smile, "Charles and I are in no hurry to

have children. After all, we're both young and we want to enjoy a few years of being together before we



start a family. But your situation is different. You had to have a baby soon so that the father can spend more time with the baby."

Clearly, Autumn was mocking Rachel for marrying an older man.

Even then Rachel didn't express any anger as she remained calm. "Well, one should do what they should at a certain age. I am the right age to be a mother. And now that I'm married, I see no reason not to naturally conceive a child so that I can have someone to stand by me when I grow old. Don't you agree, Miss Zhao?" she continued to taunt Autumn.

She then laughed coldly and said, "Charles told me he wanted a baby earlier. I think you should pay more attention to what your husband thinks."

"Autumn is different from you. It is time you realize that." Chris sneered, and pointed out sharply, "You have to let nature take its course when it comes to such an amazing chapter such as pregnancy. But you, huh, just in a bid to claim my share of my dad's property, you were in such a hurry to have a baby despite his evident reluctance... "

Although Chris brought her trick to light, Rachel still kept smiling. "Chris, the baby in my tummy is also

Edward's child. It is your blood, and you're stuck with it as well whether you like it or not. Even if your dad gives the child all the property, you have no choice but to accept it."

"Stop gloating about your wild ambition now?" Chris went on in a sarcastic tone. "I was wondering how long you would keep it a secret and play along this farce. I didn't expect you would be so excited to reveal your evil intentions. Aren't you afraid to lose the baby?"

"You..." Rachel grew nervous upon hearing her words and immediately covered her tummy with her hands insecurely. This child was her only bargaining chip and now she had to protect by all means possible.

And she finally was enraged as she lashed out on Chris, "How could you even think of saying such wicked things? After all it is your little brother or sister we are talking about. How dare you curse it to death! You are so insensitive and crude..."

"That's not what I meant, " Chris sniffed in defence realizing what she had just said. "Your understanding and thoughts are impure, you see everything from a negative lens. So please now don't take it out on me."

Rachel frowned and recalled her purpose for inviting Chris to meet over tea. She then took a glance at

her and said, "Chris, I have a favor to ask of you."

"Oh, now after all of this you find it appropriate to ask a favor from me? Are you kidding me?" Chris

gave her a cold glance as she continued, "I don't think we know each other well enough for me to help

you in any way possible. So no, I refuse to extend any form of assistance or help to you!"

"There is no need for you to be so abrupt and mean." Rachel frowned. "I'm your stepmother, and that

cannot be challenged. With that said, I just want you to do me a little favor. Are you really going to be

so heartless?"

Chris remained quiet with a straight face, and Rachel went on, "Chris, please listen to me. I once told

your dad that I wanted to have a child, but he... had reacted rather harshly to the entire suggestion. He

insisted that he wanted you to be his only child in his life. I'm afraid... if I tell him now that I'm pregnant

and he doesn't want the baby, I will have to... "

She lowered her head as she choked on her tears and words. "Now you are the person your dad loves

and cares about the most. He will definitely listen to what you say. So, I want you to... persuade him to

keep this baby. It has a life and I really... don't want to lose it. I cannot even think of aborting this life

that grows inside of me."

"You are the mother. No one can stop you from keeping it, " replied Chris. "What's more, this is a matter between you and my dad whether to keep the baby or not. As an outsider, I have no business getting involved in this. It is better if you deal with it yourself."

"You really refuse to do me such a small favor?" Rachel cried with a look of despair.

"Yes, handle it yourself, I am not doing you any favor!" Chris insisted indifferently.

She then left with Autumn, leaving Rachel alone there as they found her.