

## **Wedded Bride 711**

### Chapter 711 Is There Anything Wrong

Sheryl reluctantly accepted Laura's order. She was exhausted from carrying two large suitcases for Laura, but Laura tried to give her more to carry. "Junia, come here. Give your suitcase to Miss Xia. She will carry it for you," she told Junia.

Junia nodded in agreement and said to Sheryl, "Thank you, Miss Xia."

Looking at the three suitcases, Sheryl didn't know how to deal with them.

Waiting beside the car with Laura, Anthony frowned slightly as he noticed Sheryl was in trouble. "Mom, wait a minute. I'll help Sher," he said to his mother.

"No, you can't go!" Laura commanded him seriously. "If you dare help her, I will not like it!" she warned.

Anthony arched a brow in puzzlement. "Mom, why do you treat her like this? How can she carry so many suitcases by herself? She has done nothing wrong, so why are you punishing her in this way?

Clearly, you are just... troubling her on purpose," he said.

"I am troubling her? Really!" Laura gave a cold smile and told Anthony, "Yes, you are right. I am causing trouble for her, so what?"

Then she glanced swiftly at Anthony and said, "She is just a shameful single mother. Her child was

born out of wedlock and she has stolen my son. So why should I be friendly with her?"

"Don't say such harsh words, mom." Anthony said with a frown, "She is not the kind of woman you think her to be. You will know it after you get to know her better."

"Okay. I will try to know more about her." Laura sneered and said to Anthony, "I want to see what kind of a person she is. I caused trouble for her only to test her obedience and patience with me. If you help her at this point, the test will become invalid and a failure."

"Mom, what do you mean? You are doing all this just to test her?" Anthony asked his mother in surprise.

"Of course." Laura flashed a cool look at Anthony and said, "What did you think my intention was? Did you really think I was troubling her just for the sake of it. How could you think of me, your mother, in this way?"

"No, I didn't mean that," he explained. Anthony felt reassured as he heard Laura's words. He requested Laura, "Mom, please don't go too far with your test. Show some mercy."

"Okay. Don't worry. I know my limits," Laura promised him. Laura glanced at Anthony and said, "I know

how to deal with her. I will stop when I see what I have achieved."

At the same time, Sheryl was struggling with the three suitcases and wondering how to reach the car.

She knew Laura was testing her and trying to teach her a lesson. But she was an elder and Anthony's mother after all, so Sheryl would bear it for his sake. As she finally dragged all the suitcases to the car, Anthony tried to help her load them in the trunk but was held back by Laura. "Anthony, just leave all that to Miss Xia. I believe she can handle them easily by herself," she said.

Sheryl was rendered speechless. She quietly did as Laura said.

So Laura, Junia and Anthony just watched Sheryl load all the suitcases into the trunk by herself. She had to use all her strength and was totally exhausted after that.

Sheryl thought that she would be spared further trouble now and was ready to get in the car. But Laura was not done with her. She created a new trouble immediately.

She glanced at Sheryl and said, "Miss Xia, can Junia sit on the front passenger seat? She has motion sickness and feels dizzy if she sits at the back."

Normally, the front passenger's seat is meant to be occupied by someone close to the driver. Sheryl

didn't care about all that. She was perfectly happy to sit on the back seat.

"Mom..." Anthony was unhappy. He dragged Laura to a corner and said to her, "You promised me that all this is just a test. But what you did just now goes too far. Sher is my girlfriend. Rightfully, she should sit beside me. Why did you tell Junia to sit beside me?"

"Is there anything wrong in that?" Laura asked in an innocent manner, "I don't think it matters who sits where. I asked Junia to sit in the front because it would help reduce her motion sickness and also... It's more convenient for me to chat with Miss Xia if she is sitting beside me."

"Really? That's sweet of you Mom." Anthony was convinced by Laura's words.

Laura sneered and answered, "Have I ever lied to you? Of course, I want to use this time to get to know your girlfriend."

"Of course not. You would never lie to me, I am sure." Anthony was delighted. He agreed to have Junia sit in the front while Sheryl and Laura in back. But nobody uttered a single word to each other on the drive. They all sat in a stiff silence.

As they reached Hong Fu Restaurant, Anthony consoled Sheryl, "Sher, just be a little patient with my mother, please. She told me she is doing all this just to test you. I know it is humiliating but please, for

my sake..."

"What are you doing, Anthony? Where are you?" Laura deliberately broke up their conversation. She called out to him, "Come here now! Junia and I don't know the way inside."

"Okay." Anthony nodded and quickly said to Sheryl, "Sher, please remember what I told you."

Sheryl nodded slightly. She noticed a familiar figure as she entered the restaurant, but it disappeared when she tried to check it out.

Anthony had reserved a big private room. It looked very empty with only four people seated in it.

Sheryl found that Laura and Junia had seated themselves on either side of Anthony. She was left with no choice but to sit alone on the opposite side of them. She just took her seat in a calm manner.

She felt a little weird as she sat down. She found the three of them were sitting together as one unit, while she sat alone like an outsider and stranger.

She felt like a lamb waiting to be slaughtered. Or a criminal waiting to be sentenced.

But it was impossible to change her seat now. It was the only choice she had. So she just tried to keep easy and calm.

'It's just a meal. I can tolerate it, ' she convinced herself.

Laura kept Anthony engaged in conversation on random topics. Meanwhile, Junia carefully inspected

Sheryl and found Sheryl to be very beautiful without any signs of being a mother.

Laura had caused so much trouble for her and humiliated her deliberately, but she didn't show any

discontent. Junia could tell that Sheryl was a kind woman and very tolerant also.

'No wonder Anthony loves her so much, ' Junia thought.

Sheryl could sense that someone was closely scrutinizing her. She looked up and met Junia's eyes

inspecting her.

Junia flashed a smile at her and she also smiled back out of politeness. Both of them kept silent.

Sheryl guessed that this girl was here for a purpose.

"Mom, let's start our dinner now. I will order the waiter to serve our food. I am starving!" Anthony

suggested.

"Okay," Laura replied. She gave him a smile and said, "Place the order and tell the waiter to serve the

meal swiftly. I'm hungry now."

"Sure Mom. Please eat as much as you like and relish the food," Anthony said with a smile. "This

restaurant is famous in Y City for its fantastic cuisine. It is difficult to get a table here. The bookings get full very soon."

"Oh, really. I'm going to enjoy myself then. I love to try new dishes and restaurants." Laura gave a fake smile.

She didn't care about the food or the restaurant. Her only purpose of coming here was to tear Anthony and Sheryl apart and to cause tension between them.

Chapter 712 Laura Is Hard To Please

She had been giving Sheryl hard times, yet Sheryl had always endured everything with a smile and dealt with her patiently. She was a tough woman so she can bear any hardships. No wonder Anthony was so crazy about her.

Thus, Laura felt that since Sheryl was very tactful, she would be a very big challenge for her.

Meanwhile, Charles had also arrived at the restaurant with Judith. As they entered, he caught sight of

Sheryl. Since he was afraid that Sheryl might see him, he did his best to hide himself.

Charles observed Sheryl very well. When he saw which private room she went in, he immediately

cancelled the private room that Judith reserved and requested to have a table along the lobby which

was opposite to Sheryl's private room.

This way, he could easily know what was happening in there.

"Charles, try these braised shrimps. They're really good," Judith urged him. She shelled some shrimps and put them into his bowl. Then she started to complain, "Why did you have to cancel the room I reserved for us and exchanged it for this table? We can't even have a good talk in this open space."

Charles just frowned. He put the bowl of shelled shrimps away and just ignored Judith.

However, Judith was not affected by his rudeness at all. She just didn't mind him and continued,

"Actually, there is an important reason why I invited you for a dinner tonight. I talked to my dad and we both agreed that it's best to hold our engagement party during the Mid-Autumn Festival next month. It's perfect because it's also a Sunday. I also want to have it here in this restaurant. Hong Fu Restaurant has been operating for decades now and has earned a very good reputation." "By the way, I need the list of your guests so dad and I can prepare the invitations," she added.

"What?" Charles suddenly exclaimed. Finally, Judith had said something that could make him react.

"What did you say?" he repeated.

"Why? What's the problem?" Seeing his look turn stern, Judith got lost at once. "We'll get engaged



anyway. It won't hurt if we make it earlier, right?" she said. "Alright, it's our fault to pick the date without

consulting to you but..." Judith looked at him in the eyes. Then she continued, "I only want our special day to be perfect. I hope you understand."

"Do you have delusional disorder?" Charles sneered. "When did I tell you that we will get engaged?

People are sometimes really self-centered and imaginative."

"Charles, what's the matter with you?" Judith asked in puzzlement. Charles' behavior was confusing her. She looked into his face and asked, "We've already settled everything. Why would you..."

"What made you think that we've already settled everything?" Charles interrupted her. He smiled sarcastically and added, "You are truly like your father. You are both presumptuous."

"So you mean, this is not yet settled?" Judith's face got pale. She had loved Charles all her life and marrying him had always been her dream. She couldn't believe that Charles didn't take their engagement seriously. She looked at him again and said, "When you mentioned that you were going to acquire Eagle Group, Dad promised that he will transfer his shares to me as soon as we get married.

Then I will be the biggest shareholder which is also beneficial to you. You agreed to it, didn't you?"

"Who said I agreed?" Again, he sneered. He actually didn't take their so-called "beneficial conditions" seriously. He didn't even respond to them at all. But the father and daughter took him wrong and were like crazy people who went around to announce their soon-to-be engagement. Charles had no choice but to do something to make them stop.

He gave her a cold glance. Then he said, "The truth is, Archer was the biggest shareholder. I said 'was' because currently, he is not the biggest shareholder anymore." "What do you mean?"

Judith was so shocked. Charles' words were clear enough but she still couldn't absorb it.

Seeing the puzzled look on her face, Charles impatiently started to explain, "I bought some broken lots from Eagle Group which made me own about forty percent of all the shares. So, obviously, I'm the boss of Eagle Group now." He sneered and continued, "Go and tell Archer. He can never beat me even if he will join forces with Anthony. So, I advise him to give up now."

In recent years, Anthony had truly been doing good and even had started his own company. However, Charles was still way more experienced and astute when it came to business. It was unlikely for him to win over Charles.

Yet, Charles was really annoyed by all the troubles that Anthony got him in. So he got to do something to get back at him before people would think that he was a coward.

"You would rather buy those broken lots than marry me?" Judith was so upset. She gave Charles a hurtful look. She really didn't know what she had done wrong to make Charles seemed to be so sick of her.

"Yes," Charles answered shortly while slightly nodding his head. Then he added flatly, "Your father has probably been keeping his secret trade with Anthony from you. I'm not the one you should blame. Go ask your father."

"You jerk!" Judith stood up and raised her arm, about to give Charles a slap. However, Charles nimbly grasped her hand.

His tone was cold with anger. "Don't bark up the wrong tree. I never gave you any commitments. You better go home and ask your father what kind of evil deal he has made with Anthony that he even sacrificed his own daughter."

"You bastard! You will pay for all of these!" Judith gritted her teeth. Since her hand was still held by Charles, she couldn't do anything but vent out her anger through harsh words. She thought she finally

got him. She was so happy and waited for that special day expectantly. She had even told all her close friends and relatives about the engagement party. However, she didn't expect that Charles would only give her a slap in the face. How humiliating it was!

With such humiliation, how was she going to face all the laughing and teasing that would follow?

Judith was left with rage. On the other hand, Charles became quiet. He focused his attention to the private room opposite their table. His eyes were fixed on the door while suppressing the urge to break in and drag Sheryl out.

However, inside the room, Laura kept on ignoring Sheryl. She didn't even say a word to her. Anthony got a little upset when he noticed it. So after the waitress finished taking their orders, he patted his mother's hand and said in a low voice, "Mom, please be nice please. Say something."

"Be patient!" Laura replied with a sneer. She also knew that it was inappropriate to remain silent in this situation. However, she was just waiting for the right timing.

After a while, she turned to Sheryl and commented, "Sheryl, you seem to be very quiet. Is the food okay with you?"

"Yes," Sheryl replied, stunned. She didn't expect that Laura would talk to her so she was taken aback.

But when she came back to her senses, she hurriedly added, "Yes, the food is good. Don't worry about me. I hope you enjoy it, too."

"Well, I'm glad to hear that. Yes, I'm enjoying the food as well." Laura smiled at Sheryl before she asked, "Anthony told me you already have a daughter. Is that true?"

"Yes, that's right," she nodded slightly. She thought that Laura only deserved to know the truth.

Besides, it was something that she should not be ashamed of. So she added, "She is three years old now."

Chapter 713 Who Is Your Child's Father

"Oh?" Laura exclaimed. Then she asked again with a smile, "Where is your child's father?"

When they heard Laura's offensive question, both Anthony and Sheryl's faces hardened. With knitted brows, Anthony said to Laura in an upset voice, "What's wrong with you? How could you ask her such a question?"

"What's up?" Laura innocently asked. "Can't I ask her about the child's father?" Laura smiled ironically and said to Anthony bitterly, "I am your mother. Since you have already decided on your own to be with this woman, am I not allowed to know what kind of person she is and why she wants to be with you?"

She stared at Anthony and continued, "What's more, now that she agrees to be with you, she should already prepare herself to meet such kind of question from other people one day. She should also not mind it, right?"

Then she turned to Sheryl's direction and asked her, "Sheryl, you won't mind, will you?"

"No, Aunt Laura, I don't mind," Sheryl replied helplessly. Sheryl knew inside that Laura was deliberately provoking her. After all, Laura didn't really want her to be with Anthony. Although on the surface Laura came here to see her, the fact was, Laura merely wanted to humiliate her to the point that she would give up on Anthony.

As everyone knew, she was a single mother. How could she be worthy of Anthony?

"Mom..." Anthony furrowed his brows. He didn't mind Laura's previous questions. However, this time her question was very humiliating. Even a fool would understand her ulterior motive. He narrowed his eyes and said, "I don't think it's necessary for you to ask such question. I've already told you everything you want to know before. What do you really want to imply by asking this?"

"Anthony!" Laura's face went red and her voice trembled. She glanced grimly at Anthony and said

indignantly, "If you still want me to allow your relationship with Sheryl, you better shut up your mouth from now on."

"I..." Anthony wanted to say something. However, Sheryl stopped him, "Anthony, it's okay."

From the first time she saw Junia, Sheryl already knew that Laura would never agree to her relationship with Anthony. It was obviously not as easy as what Anthony said.

"Aunt Laura has the right to ask me about this thing. I am fine," Sheryl reassured Anthony in a calm voice. What Laura had asked was all from her past. She didn't consider her past disgraceful so she could tell her all about it.

She knew that Anthony was only worried that she might feel uncomfortable with Laura's question.

However, Laura was right. She had to face such question sooner or later.

She would even feel completely strange if Laura didn't ask her about this matter.

"But..." Anthony frowned a little and still wanted to stop Laura from continuing her question. Laura smiled and interrupted Anthony's words, "See? Now that she has already agreed, you just sit there silently."

Anthony was left with no choice but to unwillingly sit in silence. He kept on glancing at Sheryl, checking

if she already felt uncomfortable.

"Sheryl, please forgive me for speaking in an inconsiderate manner," Laura said to Sheryl. She heaved a sigh before she continued, "After all, Anthony is my son. Although you have been with Anthony for quite a long time, I still can't agree to your relationship that easy. Anthony has been trying to persuade me again and again so I promised him that I would see you. Originally, I have already decided not to accept you. You know, our family might not be as noble as the others but we are also an honorable family in the world of medicine. We can't just accept someone easily, let alone a single mother."

"Mom, it is really too much of you..." Anthony said with knitted brows. He really couldn't afford to remain

silent. But Laura just ignored his complaint.

"If not for Anthony's strong determination to be with you, I wouldn't compromise to come here and see you." Laura heaved a long sigh and continued her words, "But... But I still want to have some words with you. I want to know more about you. So I truly hope that you could understand a mother's feeling."

"Aunt Laura, don't worry. I am also a mother so I truly understand your feelings," Sheryl said in a calm voice. She had been calm since she came to this private room.



Even though it was not yet clear whether Laura would agree to her relationship with Anthony or not, she still remained extremely calm.

"I remembered Anthony telling me before that you already have a daughter before he met you," Laura continued.

"I hope you don't mind but... may I ask who the child's father is? Why did he desert you and your child?" Laura then tried to explain to Sheryl, "Please don't misunderstand me. I didn't ask you this question to scare you. I just want to know because if ever you marry Anthony someday, I don't want any problems to arise in case the father of your child shows up. So I hope you can answer my question with all honesty."

Instead of Sheryl, it was Anthony who answered, "Mom, Sheryl knows only a little than I do. If you really want to know the truth, it's me you should ask." Before Sheryl could open her mouth, Anthony continued, "I've already made a vow that since I chose Sheryl, I will also treat Shirley as my own daughter. I will never let anyone hurt them. Not even her biological father. I promise you, her father will never disturb us."

"I am asking Sheryl, not you!" Laura said grumpily. "You can promise? What can you use to make such a promise to me?"

"I..." Anthony was at a loss for words. He suddenly thought of Charles who was still pursuing Sheryl.

Right, what could he use to make such a promise?

"Aunt Laura, I am sorry that I couldn't give you an exact answer about the father of my child because I really forgot everything." Sheryl cast a glance at Laura and continued, "I lost all my memories three years ago so I really can't remember who is my daughter's father. I can't even remember anything that happened three years ago.

As for your question whether my daughter's father will show up or not, I also don't know the answer. I honestly haven't seen him for three years. Since the first day that I lost my memory, it has been Anthony who accompanied me. That's why for Shirley and me, Anthony is a very special person."

'Even if Anthony will not become my husband, he will still be my closest friend, ' Sheryl thought to herself.

Hearing Sheryl's words, Anthony smiled delightedly. He felt satisfied that all the efforts he made for Sheryl were worthwhile.

"Oh really?" Laura smiled sarcastically. "Based on your words, do you also think the same way with

Anthony? Are you also willing to take Anthony as your daughter's father?"

Sheryl furrowed her brows slightly and said to Laura, "Aunt Laura, what do you mean by that?"

"Nothing. I am just curious." Laura intently looked at Sheryl. Sheryl looked pretty and fair. She was also

always respectful to others. It seemed that she was born in a decent family. She must also be well-

educated. But what upset Laura was her stubbornness which could also be seen from her eyes.

Laura had given birth to Anthony so she knew what was best for him. Anthony should find a sensible

woman. Not someone like Sheryl who was definitely not fit to her son.

Chapter 714 A Bully Kiss

Laura glanced at Sheryl who was sitting in front of her and continued, "In my opinion, being accepted

into our family is enough for you. If you and Anthony really want to have a future together, I hope you

agree to send your child away. You and Anthony will have your own children in the future. I do not

want..."

"Mom!" When Anthony heard Laura's words, he was furious. He stood up and angrily glared at Laura.

He said, "How can you say such a thing. Don't you think you are going too far and expecting too

much?"

"Too much?" Laura sneered and said, "What do you know about too much? What I have done is all for you! You chose such a woman to be your life partner. What will you do when you have your babies? All that I have done is to think about your future happiness. Why could you not fall in love with an innocent and pure girl?"

"Mom, Shirley is a daughter to both Sheryl and me. Whatever Sheryl says, I will not agree to send her away under any circumstances." Anthony knew very well that Shirley was Sheryl's life. Laura suggesting to send Shirley away would surely drive Sheryl crazy.

"I can clearly see you are out of your mind. This woman has bewitched you completely," Laura said with a sneer. "Shirley is Sheryl's child from another man. How can she be your daughter? When you and Sheryl have your own babies, will you treat Shirley as your own child? It's better to clear things now itself, so as to avoid bitterness in the future."

"Mom, you are not trying to solve problems, but to create further problems," Anthony said with a sneer.

Laura sat stone faced and said to Anthony, "What are you talking about? Is this how you talk to your elders?"

"Sorry," Anthony muttered. Sheryl felt uncomfortable when she heard Laura's words. She found the atmosphere there extremely depressing. She felt she was likely to explode if she stayed there any longer. She just wanted to escape and leave the place.

Sheryl stood up and told them, "I am going to the restroom. Excuse me."

"Sheryl, Wait!" Anthony called out. He wanted to comfort her. Laura grasped him by the hand and said,

"She is going to the bathroom. What are you stopping her for? Sit down."

"Mom, you are going too far today!" Anthony watched Sheryl leave, and then turned to scold Laura for her behaviors.

"You will understand some day in the future, why I did so." Laura winked at Junia sitting beside her.

This was all planned by them. One coaxes, the other coerces.

Junia said nothing. It was not suitable for her to step in as this was between mother and son. More

importantly, if she did so, Anthony would get more angry.

Looking at the two unhappy people, Junia poured a cup of water for Anthony. She pushed the cup

towards him and urged, "Anthony, please calm down and drink some water."

She wanted to play a virtuous person and gain some favour in his eyes.

Anthony lifted the cup and drank it up in one big gulp. He felt that he had come to the wrong dinner today and things were going from bad to worse.

Charles saw Sheryl as soon as she came out of the dining room. He noticed her red eyes and the grim expression on her face. He hesitated a little, and then followed her quickly.

Sheryl was very disturbed. She had come to meet Laura because she was an elderly woman and also she owed it to Anthony. She had been dating him for so long that she could not let him down.

But she never imagined that Laura would say such harsh words and be so cruel.

Shirley was her life. She would prefer to give up her relationship with Anthony than be torn apart from her darling daughter.

Sheryl felt extremely suffocated at that moment. She felt she would definitely go mad if she had stayed there further.

Sheryl just walked on with her head down and did not see Charles following her. In the next second, someone grabbed her wrists with a strong hand and trapped her against the wall.

She thought it was Anthony and struggled. When she saw it was Charles, Sheryl felt relieved

immediately. She glanced at him in surprise and asked, "What are you doing here?"

Sheryl felt relaxed and felt lighter in Charles' company.

Charles remained cold faced. The thought that his woman was meeting another man's parents and

talking about marriage with the other man, had Charles' heart jumping wildly. He felt many

uncomfortable emotions running through him.

Sheryl looked at Charles. She could sense his dangerous and pulsing mood.

Suddenly she was bound in a strong embrace. Charles pulled her face towards his. Before she could

react he kissed her on the lips and his cold tongue slipped into her mouth. She gasped and drew in her

breath as he greedily began exploring her mouth in the deep kiss.

Charles' hot breath was on Sheryl's nose and tickled the sides of her face.

Sheryl, though shocked initially, found herself responding to him.

Charles stopped as suddenly as he had started.

He tightened his hand behind her head and clenched her against him. His hands cupped her head so

as to keep her close to him. Sheryl's knees were weak from his kiss and her eyes widened. She felt a

tingling sensation running through her body. It felt like the waves of the sea were constantly washing over her back.

It was a short, deep and thoroughly sensational kiss.

Sheryl was stunned. Charles ended the kiss before she could push him away. Looking at Sheryl who had a high colour, Charles felt better all of the sudden.

"Are you crazy?" Sheryl wiped her lips that now tasted of Charles with the back of her hands. She was experiencing many sensations which just flooded through her being and left her feeling euphoric and confused.

She should have been angry, but somehow she just wasn't.

Charles watched Sheryl keenly and said, "So you meet another man's parents without my knowing about it?"

"Charles, you bastard! How dare you!" Before Sheryl could reply, Anthony's voice came from behind her. He rushed to Charles and punched him hard.

He had come out to check if she was fine. Little did he think that he would see her and Charles kissing passionately.



Honestly, he didn't dare to come forward until the kiss was over. The heat of their passion had scorched him from afar.

Seeing Anthony get ready to punch Charles again, Sheryl was startled. She instinctively stood in front of Charles and said to him, "Anthony, don't be so rash and impulsive. Things are not what they seem like to you."

"What are they like then? Should I not believe my own eyes?" Anthony sneered and asked coldly. His heart was broken. Seeing her standing in front of Charles confirmed his worst fears.

Chapter 715 Sheryl's Unusual Relationship With Charles

"Sheryl, have you secretly fallen in love with this man?" Anthony inquired of Sheryl with anger.

Sheryl got restless as she heard Anthony's words. She didn't know her own true feelings for Charles either.

"Anthony, calm down. I can explain to you..." Sheryl tried her best to pacify Anthony, but he was overcome by rage and refused to listen to her.

He flashed her a cold smile and said, "Sheryl, move aside. If you still consider me your boyfriend, you will do as I say."

Anthony was very jealous when he saw Sheryl stand in front of Charles to protect him.

"Sher, move aside," Charles said in a soft tone. He wiped the blood on his mouth with the back of his hand. He was radiating controlled anger, though his voice and actions were calm.

Sheryl turned to Charles and snapped at him, "You better leave right now. Don't cause more trouble."

Charles felt pleased because he realized that Sheryl was worried about him and protecting him from being hurt.

He smiled and assured Sheryl, "Don't worry. Nothing will happen to me. I won't get injured."

With his arms around her shoulder he took her aside and told her, "Just stay here and don't move. This is a matter between Anthony and me. It's time to resolve it now."

The two men had fought each other for Sheryl countless times. Now they again began fighting violently.

Both of them were strong and used their fists to land blows on each other. Sheryl was worried about Charles when she saw Anthony hit him hard on the back.

Although Charles had told her to stay out of this, she couldn't just stand and watch them fighting. She shouted at them, "Stop! Stop! Both of you!"

Her words fell on deaf ears and made no impact. Their hatred for each other was at its peak and

manifesting in the fight.

Anthony warned Charles, "Charles Lu, you better stay away from Sheryl, otherwise I will beat you up so badly that you will not recognize your own face!"

"I have already told you that Sheryl is mine. I will never leave her for you," Charles replied. Charles glanced casually at Anthony and said, "But I never expected you to ally with Archer to defeat me. It is a dangerous game you are playing and getting involved in. You might lose both Sheryl and your money by doing this."

Anthony was taken aback as he heard Charles' words. He didn't expect his secret to come to Charles' knowledge so quickly. He sneered and said, "Don't worry. What you received was just a 'gift' from me. I will give you more in the future. You will definitely taste defeat one day."

"I will never be defeated by you, no matter whatever silly tricks you choose to play on me." Charles smiled coldly at Anthony. "Both Sheryl and the company are mine forever."

"Oh, really?" Anthony got infuriated. The visual of the kiss between Sheryl and Charles again came to his mind. He punched Charles viciously with all his strength.

Charles punched him in return with the same ferocity.

In a short while, both their faces got black and blue.

Sheryl was so nervous and yelled at them, "If you go on fighting, I promise I won't see either of you anymore."

Sheryl felt her throat go hoarse as she screamed out these words.

Suddenly, the two men stopped fighting. Her words had finally registered and worked.

Sheryl heaved a deep sigh and scolded, "Why do you both always fight when you meet each other?

Why can't you just be calm and behave like adults?"

"What has happened here?" Laura asked as she came out and saw the tense scene in front of her. She came out of the room as the fight was over and missed the action but could sense instantly that something was amiss.

Waiting in the room for a long time, Laura had become worried about her son. She had come out looking for him.

She was shocked to see Anthony fighting a stranger. She glanced at Sheryl and asked in a perplexed voice, "What the hell is going on? Why is Anthony fighting with that man?"

Sheryl looked at Laura with embarrassed eyes and said, "Aunt Laura, it was all my fault. This is

Charles Lu, my boss. Just now he..."

"You don't have to explain anything to her!" Charles gripped her hand and added, "She has no right to

know who I am. It is none of her business."

"Stop talking nonsense, Charles," Sheryl commanded with a frown. Sheryl was a little unhappy at

Charles' rude attitude towards an elder. So she urged Charles, "You leave right now! I can handle the

matter here."

"No, you should go with me." Gripping Sheryl's wrist tightly, Charles wouldn't let Sheryl go.

Anthony was irritated by the scene. He walked up and gripped Sheryl's other hand in anger. Then he

told Charles in a defiant tone, "Why? Why should she go with you? She is my girlfriend and will leave

with me."

"You don't have to know why. It is a matter that does not concern you but remains between Sheryl and

me." Charles turned to Sheryl and asked her in a serious voice, "Sher, think it over. Do you really want

to spend the rest of your life with Anthony?"

He could tell that she had enjoyed the kiss and even reciprocated, so it meant that she must have feelings for him.

Anthony got anxious as he saw Sheryl considering Charles' words. He walked up to Sheryl and said,

"Sher, don't listen to him. We have been together for so many years and I believe you know how much I love you. We have gone through so many hardships together. Finally now we can get married soon. If you choose to go with him now, I will take that as a signal of our fading relationship."

Then he looked into Sheryl's eyes with affection and added, "Sher, I know my mother has said many offensive words to you. But you know they do not represent my opinion about you. So please, don't listen to Charles' words."

With the two men gripping either hand, she was caught in a dilemma. She didn't want to make a choice between them. She just wished to go home right now, fall asleep and forget everything that had happened today.

At this moment, Laura walked up and slapped Sheryl on her cheek.

Laura had observed them silently all this time. She was sophisticated and wise enough to understand that Sheryl's relationship with Charles was unusual. This could be the only reason to cause her

obedient son to fight in a public place.

Laura was angry with Sheryl. She thought that Sheryl was lucky enough to have Anthony's love. That she should be involved with another man, was too shameful.

So she slapped Sheryl with all her strength. Sheryl's face became red and started swelling immediately.

"Bitch! You are seducing other men when you are in a relationship with my son. How can you to be so shameless and cheat on my son?" Laura scolded Sheryl in a cold tone.

Chapter 716 Don't Go Too Far

Sheryl was taken aback by Laura's sudden appearance and snarky remarks. Her mind suddenly went blank. She was glued to the spot. It made Charles' heart ache to see Sheryl suffer. He gathered her

into his arms in the twinkling of an eye to protect her. His only focus was to shield Sheryl at that time.

He accidentally brushed against Laura while moving towards Sheryl. Also as Laura had slapped Sheryl with too much force, she lost her own balance and fell down.

"Oh my God..." Laura howled in pain in an exaggerated way to draw Anthony's attention. When he saw his mother on the floor, Anthony rushed forward to help her to her feet. Though Sheryl was also slapped hard on the face, he was more concerned about Laura's health. Laura had high blood pressure

and a tumble like this could threaten her life. Anthony chose to help Laura at that moment.

"Are you all right, Mom?" Anthony asked in a worried voice as he helped Laura stand on her feet.

Meanwhile, Charles held Sheryl protectively in his arms. Charles gazed at her red and swollen face

and asked lovingly and tenderly, "Does it hurt very badly, Sheryl?"

"It's fine, not too bad." Sheryl shook her head slightly. She had been through a very rough day. She had

too much on her plate and she was unable to think straight at the moment. Everything that happened

today went against her wishes.

After she regained her balance, Laura shot a venomous look at Sheryl. Then she took Anthony's hand

and complained at the top of her voice, "Son, do you really want to marry this woman? You are truly

blinded by love. She has a daughter out of wedlock. Even worse than that, she flirts with other men.

Now one of her lovers even dared to push me. Did you see that? Just remember, you can only marry

her over my dead body."

Laura's angry words caught people's attention. A large crowd gathered around to see what was going

on. Although they didn't know the actual story, they put two and two together and made five. They

assumed that Sheryl was promiscuous. They pointed at her with one hand and whispered comments



about her behind the other. They murmured she was a shameless temptress. Their words were so shaming that Sheryl couldn't bear them any more.

Her face turned crimson and her head was filled with the hum of people's voices. Charles put his hands over her ears to block out the sound after he noticed her stupefied expression. He said gently to her, "Ignore them."

Although she couldn't make out what Charles said, she was comforted by his act. She looked up at his face and felt emboldened all of a sudden. She pleaded in an undertone, "Charles, please take me away from this hellhole."

She didn't want to stay here any longer. Everything about the present situation was driving her crazy.

Her head was within an inch of exploding.

"You got it. Let's leave." Charles nodded his approval. Then he immediately held her hand and tried to leave.

Laura clicked her tongue in contempt and stopped Sheryl. She deliberately raised her voice for everyone to hear, "Are you trying to run away? Too ashamed to stay, huh? I warn you, if you step out of

this restaurant, do not come and bother Anthony any more. A woman of easy virtue like you can never become my daughter-in-law."

"Mom, what are you talking about..." Assured that Laura was all right and back to her authoritative self,

Anthony shifted his attention to Sheryl. He wanted to move forward and ask how was her face. But he saw her standing close to Charles and holding his hands tightly. Judging from that, he knew her choice between him and Charles was crystal clear. His heart sank.

Anthony smiled bitterly. Despite all his efforts to take Sheryl to the US to have her all to himself, she eventually united with Charles.

"Sheryl, so is this your decision? You choose Charles? Are you sure?" Although he had already known the answer by lunchtime, Anthony asked in a last-ditch attempt to make her stay. He felt a lump in his throat, but he managed to sound normal.

Sheryl suddenly stood bolt upright. She didn't know the exact answer to Anthony's question. Her brain was completely frozen and had stopped working. The only thought that was clear in her mind was that she wanted to run away from this place right now.

Then Sheryl motioned Charles to loosen his hold on her hand. He released her and watched from the

sidelines to let her handle the situation. She turned her head to face Laura and gave her a deep bow.

"Aunt Laura, I know you don't like me. If my presence gets on your nerves, I will leave now."

"What do you mean by that?" Sheryl's words ruffled her feathers. "You flirt with other men and embarrass Anthony. Can't I give you a piece of my mind? Don't act like I am the one who is forcing you to leave."

"No, I am leaving out of my own will," Sheryl said with a bitter smile. After a pause she continued,

"Shirley is all I have. If I have to give up Shirley to marry Anthony, then that is definitely not acceptable to me at any rate. I meant to tell you that during dinner. I'm afraid Anthony is out of my reach because of this."

She then glanced at Anthony and spoke to him calmly, "Anthony, I think our relationship comes to an end. Shirley is my life line. You know that. I won't let any person lay a finger on her, even though they may wish to do so. You will meet many other beautiful girls in your life. You deserve better. My sincere and best wishes to you."

Anthony cried out in frustration, "Sheryl, don't act like a saint. Speak your mind. Tell me the true reason.

You want to be with Charles after you get rid of me, don't you?"

"You can say whatever you like and think whatever you want." Sheryl didn't want to waste her breath to refute him. She did not yet figure out her exact feelings towards Charles. At this moment Charles was nothing but a straw to clutch on and prevent her drowning.

"Let's go," Sheryl wheeled around to address Charles.

Charles gazed at Sheryl affectionately. Although he didn't know what Laura had said over dinner, he could guess it by piecing together what he had just heard. He understood that Sheryl must feel deeply wronged by all the untrue and acid allegations.

When they were about to leave, Laura stopped Charles. She said in exasperation, "Sir, Sheryl is a shameless whore. If you insist on being with her, you will come to a sticky end like Anthony. You'd better break up with her as soon as possible. She will make you a cuckold if you marry her. Listen to me. It will be too late to regret in the future."

At sound of her mean words, Sheryl couldn't tolerate her further. Since Laura was Anthony's mother, Sheryl wanted to be respectful to her. Earlier, no matter what she said or did, she had respectfully tolerated it. But Laura seemed to treat her worse than a doormat. She had gone too far with her words.

Sheryl decided not to pay any further respect to her.

Sheryl's eyes bore into Laura and said to her determinedly, "Aunt Laura, you are Anthony's mother so I respect you and have avoided fighting or arguing with you. You can say anything you like, but that won't change who I am. You deliberately demean me because you want Anthony to break up with me. But I also have feelings. If you keep on slandering me, you'll suffer the consequences."

"Anthony, look! Listen to this bitch! Did you see that?" Laura was pleased to see Sheryl boiling with anger. Her lips curved upwards into a wicked grin. She yanked at Anthony's arm and said to him, "She reveals her true colors in a few minutes. Anthony, take a close look at her. Do you still love her? I had a problem with your relationship because I have seen through her. She thinks you are beneath her and considers you as a back-up boyfriend. Haven't you realized that?"

Laura smiled coldly and continued, "She says she doesn't remember her past. I don't think so. She is just trying to mislead everybody. It's very likely that she had a promiscuous lifestyle so she doesn't want her shameful past to be revealed. A woman with a child born out of wedlock wants to be my daughter-in-law? That's hilarious."

"Aunt Laura, don't go too far. You are dragging my daughter into all this ugliness." Sheryl gnashed her teeth. She was really pissed off. She would never forgive Laura for labelling Shirley as an illegitimate child.

Chapter 717 Keep Me As A Mistress

"Are my words wrong?" Laura said with a sarcastic smile, "If you could do such a shameful thing, you deserve my terrible words."

Through it all, Anthony merely stood by the side without saying a word.

He knew that Laura was wrong in this matter. He was the one who knew best why Sheryl had lost her memory.

But he didn't know why he did not feel like supporting Sheryl.

Sheryl smiled wryly and was about to say something. But Charles suddenly seized Sheryl's arm and stopped her words.

Charles smiled gently and stepped forward in front of Sheryl. Staring at his broad and firm back, Sheryl was overwhelmed by a sense of security.

This security was what Anthony never gave her.

"Please don't meddle in the affairs between me and Sheryl." Charles told Laura grimly, "I know best

what kind of person Sheryl is. Your son couldn't hold onto her, because he is useless. You shouldn't blame anyone."

"Mr. Lu, please don't say such things any more." Sheryl was extremely shocked by Charles' words and paused for a long time. Then she hastily tugged Charles' coat tail and said helplessly, "Let us just go, please."

"Just wait for a few minutes more, Sheryl." Charles held his head high. This was the woman he loved most. How could he allow her to be humiliated to such an extent?

Charles had to get justice for her.

"Today I want you all to know that I love Sheryl. I would like to take care of her for the rest of my life. If I hear any of you speak ill of her, I will teach you all a lesson you will never forget. I give you my word."

Charles cast a cold glance at Laura and continued, "Sheryl treats you with the respect because you are her elder, but I will do nothing of that sort. You also remember my words. If I hear you defame Shirley again, I will make sure you are never able to leave Y City."

Shirley was his and Sheryl's child. Charles would not tolerate Laura talking disparagingly about his

daughter.

"Are you threatening me?" Laura smiled sardonically and said to Charles, "You think I will be scared by you? I don't believe your words at all. Do you really have such immense power?"

"You can test it if you don't believe me." Charles said sarcastically, "What's more..."

He turned towards Anthony and said to him, "You have warned me many times in the past. Today I return the same warnings to you. If you are so incapable of protecting Sheryl, please just keep away from her from today. It does not matter if your bride is Miss Sun or anyone else, it has nothing to do with us."

Charles looked menacingly at the other people who gathered there. Even Laura couldn't help giving a violent shudder.

A kind of coldness was spreading through her whole body. She finally believed that Charles was serious and he was not joking with them.

"Let's go." Charles held Sheryl's hand and strode out of the restaurant.

He didn't let go her hand even after going out of the restaurant. He was still furious that Laura had humiliated Sheryl to such an extent.



Sheryl wanted to pull away her hand and told Charles timidly, "Can you release my hand now?"

Although Sheryl had said all she wanted to say to Anthony, she still knew that this was not the end. She couldn't start a new relationship now, so she had to keep away from Charles.

Charles continued to hold her hand. He refused to release her. "No way. I will not let it go."

After some time, Sheryl began to struggle to release her hand and said angrily, "Charles, come on. Just let go my hand. It is enough now and I have to go back home. "

But suddenly, Charles put his arm tightly around Sheryl. He hugged Sheryl close to him and lay his head over hers.

Then he said softly, "Sheryl, I will never ever let go your hand. Wherever you go, I will go there for you and find you."

"That's enough." Hearing Charles' words, Sheryl felt annoyed. She got out of his arms and said weakly,

"I am very tired and merely want to go home and rest."

Charles nodded his head. Then he drove Sheryl to her apartment.

When Sheryl was just about to get off, Charles said gently to her, "Sher, I meant what I said in the

hotel."

"What?" Sheryl paused in disbelief.

Charles just expressed himself in a straightforward manner, "I am truly in love with you. I understand that you must be feeling overwhelmed right now. I probably shouldn't confess my love to you at this time. But I fear that you will misunderstand me if I don't express myself clearly."

He stared at Sheryl lovingly and continued his words, "I truly hope that you can be my girlfriend. I hope you consider it seriously. I am not pushing you to make a decision right now. But please do not avoid me later on? Please don't ignore me and give me a chance to pursue you."

"You... This is not a good time for you to profess your love. Why are you so insistent to say it?" Sheryl smiled wryly and heaved a deep sigh. Was there any man that she could trust? Were all men the same?

Earlier Anthony had promised her that he would be kind to her his whole life. But in the end he just stood mutely aside and witnessed her being humiliated.

Maybe Charles would be no better than Anthony in the future.

An eligible bachelor like him could choose any girl he wanted. Could he be loyal and faithful only to

her?

She thought of the gossip Rita had shared with her and said with a wry smile, "Charles, are you still treating me like a naive girl who can be easily swayed? Am I a silly girl who can still be charmed with honeyed words?"

"All I said to you is true." Charles eagerly promised Sheryl, "I swear, I will protect you forever."

"Come on, Charles." She smiled sarcastically and continued, "Everyone knows that you will get married to Judith Jiang. So what would you do with me? Will you buy a house for me and keep me in it as your mistress? I am sorry, I am not that kind of woman."

"Are you envious of Judith?" On seeing Sheryl's angry expression, Charles smiled charmingly and said,

"I promise you, I won't get married to anyone but you. In my heart there is place only for you."

He looked keenly at Sheryl and continued his confession, "I will not force you to give me an answer now. I just want to tell you that no matter what decision you make, I will always be there for you. What's more, whether you agree or disagree, I will not give up pursuing you."

He gulped and licked his lips after finishing his long speech. Instantly Sheryl's face turned red.

She thought of the kiss between them. It was different from the one in the mountain resort.

As she had gone through so many things in the past one day, she had not found the time to think about it carefully. Now, the thought flashed through her mind again and she realized that she didn't hate his love but liked it and looked forward to it.

Chapter 718 I Will Not Meet Her

She couldn't wrap her head around it. Why would that even invade her thoughts? Was it because she hadn't been intimate with a man in too long? 'It was just a little slip, ' she tried to tell herself.

Without even looking at the man's face, she could feel his taunting gaze on her.

"God, you're despicable," she threw the remark at him in exasperation as she got off the car.

His mocking laughter rang in her ears as she hurriedly walked away.

After eating at Hong Fu Restaurant, Anthony led Laura and Junia back to the hotel.

He let Laura's ramblings about Sheryl's condition enter one ear and leave the other. He was sick of it.

Sheryl's face just couldn't escape his mind.

There was no doubt that Anthony had hurt her. He kept silent when he could have pulled her out of that predicament. He knew within himself that it was far too late to do anything more about it.

His mother's voice had almost faded to mere white noise to him, but it was relentless. "I told you, didn't

!" Her resentful words cut through his little trance. "The woman has an affair with some other man and has the nerve to bring him to us. You can't possibly be with such a woman without getting hurt, or you will be caught up in some mess."

Charles' sudden appearance, of course, brought but joy to the Laura. She would be nothing short of cunning when it came to breaking Sheryl and Anthony up.

"It's shameful, Anthony. You can't keep this up. Think about what it would do to your family," she added carefully but eagerly. Her eyebrows were furrowed in deliberate concern as she grabbed at his hands.

"You're lucky your father wasn't here today or he would be livid."

He shook her off, the frustration taking over his demeanor. "That's enough," shouted Anthony. His mother could hear the anger in his voice. "What more do you have to say, Mom? You came here to tear us apart. That is clear."

Laura's eyes widened at her son's tone. "How dare you! You'd better listen to your mother, Anthony. Just look at her! How much shameless could she be? How can you expect me to let you marry her?"

Anthony slowed in his steps. "I know her." His voice went cold. "I know her but you don't. You even

refuse to know her," he said with a sneer. "I've been with her for years and I know what kind of woman she is. You can't just barge into my life like this and tell me to leave her. You only want to humiliate her, Mom. You had the gall to ask her to send her own daughter away. How could you?" He was shaking his head in disbelief, staggering on resentment.

"What..." Laura was so taken aback that her scolding was stuck in her throat. But the piercing look she was giving her son spoke well enough.

"Anthony," Junia's soft voice tried to cut into the tension. With a gentle tone, she tried to calm the boy down. "I cannot truly speak for this woman, because I don't know her. But even I can't deny how overly familiar she looked with the man. You may think Laura has crossed a line there, but she's still your mother. It may be hard to accept, but what she's saying is for your own good. You should try to listen to her."

"God, just stop!" Anthony's voice raised a few decibels. Junia went silent, and her gaze dropped to her feet. Anthony sighed as his hands found their way to his temples. "This is a private affair — it's my life for goodness' sake. Please just stay out of it."

It baffled the two women. Sheryl had left with Charles, but Anthony continued to defend her.

They couldn't understand.

Calming down now, Laura put her hand on her son's. "I know you love her. But you're a smart boy, please don't let your feelings keep you blind. She left with the man, Anthony. Would she do that if she cares for you as much as you care for her?" She put her hand under his chin and made him look at her.

"Break up with Sheryl, Anthony."

Laura gestured to the girl then. "Look at Junia. A lovely girl from a good family. You have a good girl right here, Anthony. You're well matched. I can't say the same for you and Sheryl. You're too good for her."

A soft smile almost made its way to Laura's face, but Anthony's face twisted with disgust. "Stop daydreaming!"

You won't make me marry Junia, mother. That's what you want, just you. Give it up."

It was turmoil inside him. If only he had chosen Sheryl instead of his mother in the restaurant, when it really mattered, she perhaps wouldn't have left with the other man.

If he had even tried to stop her, things might have been different.

He was ready to leave the two alone when his mother fell to the ground.

He was too slow to turn around and too slow to see the wink Laura tipped at Junia before she fell.

Junia tried to hide her relief as she rushed to help the woman. Anthony's mother would stop at nothing.

"Aunt Laura! What happened? Wake up!" Junia was crying out convincingly. "Anthony, what's wrong with her?"

He stood frozen for a second. 'I shouldn't have shouted at her, ' the thought was ringing in his head. He rushed to them and sent his mother to the hospital.

It was a bit of a blur. Anthony could only feel anxiety.

Once the commotion was over, he sighed in deep relief when the doctor told him there was nothing to worry about.

Meanwhile, Laura was lying in a hospital bed with Junia sitting beside her. "Aunt Laura, you really scared me there. I can't believe you fainted just like that." Anthony heard Junia's worried voice as he entered the room.

"I'm fine, child. Don't worry about me." She smiled faintly as she saw her son walk in. "Thank you,

Junia."



"Anthony was so anxious, Aunt Laura," Junia played along. "You musn't get stressed or agitated. The doctor said it's awful for your health."

With a calculated soft smile, Laura put her hand on Junia's. It was quite the scene the two were putting on. "I will try," she said gently.

The guilt was evident on Anthony's face, as the two ladies expected. He stood awkwardly by the entrance for a while before finally asking, "Mom, are you feeling better now?"

Her face went deliberately sour at hearing his voice. "Well unfortunately for you, I'm not dead yet. Are you still going to the cheating bitch?" There was such disdain in her voice. "Mom."

"Well go on then," she didn't let him continue. "Junia is here. She'll take care of me since it seems to be so inconvenient for my own son to consider his mother." Anthony didn't know what to say.

Junia, sensing Laura's wishes, decided to stand up then. "Come, Anthony. Talk to your mother. I'll get some water for you."

Junia left the room, and the air went still.

Chapter 719 Her Chance

Laura knew that if Anthony went to see Sheryl, she would be likely to forgive him. She had to prevent

that at all cost. Therefore, she decided to look and act like her condition was getting worse.

Seeing Laura's pained expression, Anthony sat beside her and asked, "What's the matter? Are you not feeling well?"

"You don't need to act like you're concerned," commented Laura. She knew that guilt-tripping would work with him, so she continued complaining, "There's no more room for your mother in your heart.

Your entire attention is just for that bitch, isn't it?"

"Mom, that's not true. Please don't say such a thing," Anthony requested. With a defeated look, he mentioned, "Now that you've burned your bridges with Sheryl, I will not go see her again."

"Really?" exclaimed Laura excitedly. Her eyes were gleaming with joy at Anthony's words and all of a sudden, she was no longer showing any pain. Pleading innocent, she tried to solidify her point of view,

"My son, please don't blame me for my actions. I did so for your sake. You should know... Sheryl doesn't deserve you. You would only suffer by being with her."

"I know that," muttered Anthony staring at a fixed point on the floor. He lifted his head to look at Laura in the eyes and forced one corner of his mouth into a half-smile.

She felt his indecisiveness and reiterated, "Remember what I told you. She isn't right for you. You can't

see her anymore, okay? You promised me." Anthony turned his face, unable to keep listening to her.

He stared into the void, tuning his mother out. Seeing that he wasn't responding, Laura decided to push

the matter onto him, "My love, you should know that everything I do is for you. I wouldn't do anything to

harm you. However, when it comes to those other women, they don't have your best interest at heart.

They only care about themselves."

Laura grabbed Anthony's hand and continued, "I know you are sad now. But trust me, before long, you

will forget about her and realize that what I'm saying is true. You have also seen what kind of person

that woman is. Better to end it sooner rather than later..."

Irritated, Anthony interrupted her words, "Mom, I got it." He slipped his hand out of her grip and stood

up abruptly. He paused for a second, and then told Laura, "I'll be right back. I'm just going out for a

cigarette."

Just as Anthony left the room, Junia came back with some water for Laura. Seeing that Anthony was

absent, she inquired, "Aunt Laura, where did Anthony go?"

"He went for a cigarette just now," replied Laura with a triumphant look on her face. She then widened

her eyes, staring right at Junia, and mentioned enthusiastically, "Junia, this is your opportunity now.

Anthony is feeling down and willing to stop seeing Sheryl. You must step in and be there for him. I

know you are a shy girl, but do it for me and Anthony; be proactive."

"Aunt Laura..." Junia began saying. Her timidity was impeding her from being as straightforward as her aunt. Seeing Junia's reaction, Laura chuckled.

After a brief moment of hesitation, Junia expressed her concern, "Aunt Laura, Anthony might not want to see Sheryl now, but later on, he might change his mind."

"Don't you worry," Laura advised her. With an arrogant smile, she argued, "I know the kind of person Sheryl is. A proud woman like her won't close her eyes to my humiliations. If anything, she will realize that being with Anthony is not a walk in the park, and will not want to continue dating him. Even if Anthony goes to see her, he would only be finding rejection."

Apprehensively, Junia began saying, "Aunt Laura, I think that in spite of everything, Sheryl is a good person. If we were not competing for Anthony's heart, I would probably get along with her easily."

Touched by Junia's confession, Laura had to state her observation, "You have such a big heart, Junia."

She then sighed heavily and added, "However, you must remember that she is not your friend. In other circumstances, perhaps you could be, but right now you are not on the same team. You can't forget this. Do you understand?"

"Don't worry, Aunt Laura. I won't forget," affirmed Junia. She smiled and went on contemplating her next move.

A few minutes later, Anthony came back reeking like tobacco and looking all disheartened. Laura took a quick look at him and immediately urged him, "It's late. Anthony, could you please take Junia back to the hotel?"

"Don't worry about it, Aunt Laura," insisted Junia. She didn't want to bother Anthony, so she added, "I can keep you company in the hospital tonight. Anthony needs to rest, so he should go straight home. He had a long day."

"No, no, no," Laura instantly disagreed. She believed that it was a good chance for them to be together. So she was determined to make it happen. "Why stay here when you can be resting at home? My son is already here and besides, I will not feel comfortable seeing you uncomfortable. I care about you, and you're like family to me. Perhaps you will even be my daughter-in-law one day, who knows? But for

now..."

"Aunt Laura!" replied Junia with completely blushed cheeks. However, Anthony was not paying much attention to their conversation. He was sitting farther away, lost in his thoughts.

Laura smiled and changed the subject, "Okay, okay. I won't say it out loud anymore."

When she realized Anthony hadn't heard anything, she addressed him directly, "Anthony, can you just drive Junia back for me? It's late and she is not familiar with the streets here. I will feel extremely worried if she goes home alone."

"Sure." Anthony nodded in agreement. He then proceeded to say his temporary goodbyes to Laura,

"Okay then, you just rest. I will come back here and keep you company after I take her back home."

"Okay, go ahead," Laura replied happily. She was quite satisfied that her plan was finally working.

Anthony went out of the room first before Junia was ready. Laura winked at Junia, signaling her to grasp the opportunity.

Realizing her intention, Junia nodded and rushed out to catch up with Anthony. Once she got in the car, he began driving right away and kept silent throughout the entire ride. When they were approaching the

hotel, she couldn't keep quiet any longer and asked, "Anthony, are you okay?"

"What?" Anthony replied as if awakening from a reverie. His mind was rummaging over Sheryl and the day's incidents. However, Junia's words brought him back to the present.

Seeing he hadn't heard her, she rephrased, "I am asking... Since today has been a rough day for you, are you feeling okay?" Anthony found it too hard to explain the multitude of feelings that were taking over him. So he just shook his head lightly and answered shortly, "I am fine."

"Okay, if you say so..." Junia replied. It was obvious he was not well but she didn't know how to comfort him. Eventually, though, she decided to try, "Today Aunt Laura may have crossed the line. Although I know it is not my business, but her words really hurt Sheryl. In spite of that, she has held her temper, choosing not to make things worse. To be frank, I respect her for that."

"Do you also think my mom was going too far?" Anthony wondered after a short pause. He was surprised that Junia was not taking Laura's side. He thought she would rejoice at the thought of him and Sheryl breaking up.

However, if that was the case, her comments didn't make any sense.

Seeing Anthony's surprised look, Junia knew she had made the right move.

So she continued explaining, "Of course I do. I am a woman, too. In Sheryl's place, I may not have held it in as well as her. Perhaps I may have said some mean words back. But Sheryl has excellent manners; or maybe she respects you too much to say anything." Junia spoke calmly, pondering upon each word.

She knew that speaking ill of Sheryl would really upset Anthony. He might even turn against her.

So she chose not to blame Sheryl, but just told Anthony exactly what he wanted to hear. Even though it seemed like she was defending Sheryl, she was actually trying to gain Anthony's favor by demonstrating her kindness.

#### Chapter 720 An Apology

Anthony laughed bitterly. Though his eyes were seething with anger and resentment, he still spoke in a low voice, "Yes, you're right. I wasn't man enough to defend her! At that time, I knew she needed me the most, but what did I do? I let her down. I should've said something. She was terribly hurt, and she looked helpless." He shook his head in total disgust, feeling dejected.

"I broke her heart. And I think she would absolutely hate me now," he added. Anthony was regretful.

His voice was cracking with emotions. He despised himself for having been such a coward.



"Anthony, please don't be so hard on yourself." Junia gingerly reached out her hand to pat him consolingly on the shoulder. It took her time to utter those words; she feared that he might detect the underlying concern behind them. "Under that awkward situation, Sheryl also had to regard Aunt Laura's feelings, considering that the things between you and Sheryl were so complicated. And I didn't see anything wrong in the way you acted. It's only natural for you, as a son, to also care about how your mother would feel," Junia continued.

Junia paused for a moment and gazed at Anthony's face, still etched with worry. "I believe Sheryl is an understanding and a reasonable person. You can talk with her later about this. Trust me, she will understand and forgive you," she added.

"Really?" Anthony had managed to croak after some time. He sounded still skeptical, but he seemed to have found hope from Junia's words. He tilted his head to cast a glance at Junia as if seeing her for the first time. He studied her, and he suddenly realized that she was less disturbing than how she used to be. Soon, his heart felt better. He was at ease. The corners of his mouth then slightly turned up, he raised his eyebrows and tentatively asked her, "You really believe that she will forgive me?"

Junia was openly staring at him that she was able to catch up on the eager expression spreading

slowly on his face. She suddenly felt uncomfortable. She immediately calmed herself. She gave him a gentle smile and said, "Of course I do. I'm sure she will forgive you."

When Anthony heard Junia's reassuring words, the trace of bitterness in his face had disappeared. And it was immediately replaced with relief. He was feeling better now. He continued to look at her in a different light. He may find it inexplicable, but he was truly grateful for her.

Junia hesitated for a moment, unsure of what to say. Then a sudden thought occurred in her mind. 'He just got a better impression about me, I should grab this chance.' Then Junia added softly, "But, Anthony, there's something I need to remind you."

"What is it?" he replied instinctively, snapping out of his musings. Anthony couldn't hide his annoyance and he slightly frowned after hearing the underlying tone of warning. He immediately straightened himself up in his seat as if he was bracing himself to take the blow. Cursing himself mentally, he tried to calm down the feeling of restlessness that was slowly gripping his heart again. He then threw her a questioning look prodding her to go on.

Junia deliberately put on a knowing smile which eased up his mood. "I'm also a girl, and I can fully

understand how Miss Xia might be feeling right now. I just want to warn you that with all these unspeakable things that happened, getting through will be hard for her. She might need some time to be alone. So, if you will see her right now, it will not be very helpful for her. I mean, why don't you just..."

Junia paused for a moment. "Why don't you wait for some time before you apologize? Besides, Aunt Laura is still in the hospital. She will be disappointed if she learns about it. You better wait for the right opportunity to reach out and to apologize to Miss Xia."

"I see. Alright!" Anthony nodded. He seemed to be detached and thinking of something when he said,

"Thank you, Junia."

"What for?" she responded casually. Junia smiled tenderly and said, "Look, I didn't do anything, so there's no need to thank me. Our families were close and we practically grew up together. You don't have to keep your distance from me. I'm just doing what I should do as a close friend."

Then she looked sheepishly at Anthony. "I just gave you some pieces of advice which couldn't be said to be very helpful at all."

"No, your words are very helpful." Anthony laughed. He found her amusing. Finally, they arrived at the

hotel where Junia was staying. Anthony parked the car near the entrance but he didn't step off. Sighing deeply, he closed his eyes momentarily and began weighing the thoughts running in his mind. Feeling a little embarrassed, he opened his mouth and said, "To be honest, at first, I thought you were..."

"You originally thought I was here to cause some troubles. You didn't know that I would help you?"

Junia blurted out cutting his words off. Seeing Anthony nodding his head apologetically, Junia showed an exasperated look and said, "Are you serious, Anthony? In your eyes, I'm just nothing but a jealous and bad woman like that?"

"No! I didn't mean it that way." Anthony was so regretful. He looked at Junia awkwardly. Shame and guilt were clearly evident on his face and he said gently, "I was not nice to you before. My mother wanted to pair us up because she thought we'll make a perfect match. And I didn't want her to decide for me. But honestly, I was surprised that at this low moment of my life, you came and reached out for me. I just can't help thinking about it in that way."

Junia glanced at Anthony. "So, you are now seeing me on the lighter side? That I'm not here to give you troubles."

"I apologize. I have gotten the wrong impression," Anthony said ruefully.

"It's all right. If I were you, I might have also misconstrued myself." Junia burst into laughter and continued speaking, "Because I really did love you before and I shamelessly asked you out for a movie."

Her last sentence hit him hard. Suddenly remembering the incident, Anthony felt more guilty. He was so embarrassed with the way he had behaved at the time. And he deeply regretted that he made a fool of her. "Junia, about that movie," he countered apologetically, "I was out of line. I was wrong, and I shouldn't have done that. I'm so sorry about the whole thing. Please forgive me."

"Don't worry, it's all right." Junia laughed. "It was Uncle Carlson who asked me to come this time. I'm not here to blame you for anything."

"My father?" he asked in disbelief. Anthony was puzzled.

"Yes, your father," Junia confirmed as she nodded her head lightly. "You know about Aunt Laura's temper, and so does Uncle Carlson. He was worried about her and asked me to come here with her. Coincidentally, I also wanted to pay a visit to Y City. So, here I am. It is such a good thing though, that nothing serious happened, or else I don't know how am I supposed to break the news to Uncle

Carlson."

"It would be so much bothered for you to do all these things for us." Anthony believed her. Then after a brief moment, he asked her hesitantly, "It occurs to me that you haven't had the chance to look around and explore Y City, have you?"

"No, I haven't yet," Junia answered in a small voice as she shrugged her shoulders. "All of these events happened right after I arrived. And I felt like I have so much in my plate that I didn't even have a slight chance to relax. Besides, I don't know this place that much and I'm not sure where to visit the best scenic spots around the area. I am certainly clueless. I should have made my own research before coming over. But I was too excited to even think about it," she admitted helplessly.

"How about you let me be your tourist guide?" he suggested inquisitively. Anthony wanted to make it up for her and he wouldn't take no for an answer. He stared at her searching her face for affirmation.

"You? As my tourist guide?" she retorted back in disbelief. Junia was overwhelmed with the happiness and excitement swelling within her. She could feel her heart racing in delight. But she was adept in concealing her emotions; she maintained her composure. She remained calm and collected. "Can you be a responsible tourist guide?" she teased while slightly raising her brow.

"Hey, don't look down upon me." Anthony started laughing and he was looking very pleased with himself. "I've worked here for a quite some time three years ago. And I know Y City very well. You don't have to worry at all. I am quite familiar with every nook and cranny of this city and that makes me eligible to be your perfect guide."

"Wouldn't it bother you?" Junia seemed to be reluctant.

"Not at all," Anthony answered. "I plan to take my mother for a visit in Y city after she gets out of hospital tomorrow. You can just come along. So, it's settled then. I'll pick you up tomorrow."

"All right, then." Junia smiled. "Let me give you my thanks in advance."

He watched Junia closely as she alighted herself from his car. And after seeing her retreating figure

enter the hotel, Anthony drove away. He initially wanted to go back to the hospital, but for some reason,

he drove directly to Sheryl's place. The light of her apartment was still on. Anthony silently stayed in the

car, wrapped in his own thoughts. When the lights went off, he then hastily put out the last cigarette on

his hand. Only then did he notice, that he had almost smoked a couple of packs of his cigarettes. He

started his car and drove back to the hospital.

As soon as he stepped into the room, he heard Laura saying, "What took you so long? I've called Junia, and she said she arrived at the hotel a few hours ago. Why did you come back so late?" she snorted.

Realizing that Anthony refused to respond, Laura frowned and said, "Did you go to that bitch's place again?"

"Mom, aren't you tired?" he said dismissively as he approached her. Anthony ignored her questioning glare and in a weary tone, he prompted, "Please go to bed early. We will go out tomorrow."

Laura kept nagging, hoping she could extract an answer. But after noticing the slight annoyance in Anthony's gentle face, she refrained herself.

Anthony quickly made his way towards the side of the room and lay on the couch, wanting to get some sleep. Restless as he was, he didn't get a night of decent sleep the whole night.

On the following morning, Anthony showered and changed his clothes. He decided to buy breakfast for his mother. Heading towards the door, he saw Junia standing at the doorway.