

Wedded Bride 771

Chapter 771 The Kids Were Lost

Sheryl kept probing about Charlie. She thought she could get some clue to resolve her dream that had been giving her sleepless nights for last three years. "Yes, Leila told me that he is four years old. It seems like his fourth birthday just passed. What happened? Why do you ask about this all of a sudden?" asked Charles.

"Nothing," Sheryl replied as she looked down quietly and kicked the stones beneath. "It was just a random question."

"Charlie." Charles stopped and ordered Charlie, "Take Shirley to play around. I need to have a chat with Sher for a short while."

Charlie nodded and walked away holding Shirley's hands. There was an amusement park nearby equipped with just the basic facilities, but still it attracted a number of kids. Charlie was not interested in them, so he took up the responsibility of taking care of Shirley.

After the kids had walked up to a distance where they could not hear them, Charles sat down on the bench, took Sheryl's hands in his and asked, "Sher, what is it that you want to say? I've been noticing you for the last few days. You've been quite weird recently. Is there anything that you want to tell but

you are not being able to tell me?"

"No, I..." Sheryl stammered. Sheryl frowned and looked downwards. She could not understand how to say something that was so bizarre and unbelievable. She had no idea that what she was considering to be unbelievable was actually the truth that could put her world back together. It was the one missing chord that could complete her family.

She heaved a deep sigh and there was restlessness all over her face. She could not find the right words to speak them out to Charles. Charles could feel her dilemma and said, "Sher, we haven't met each other for these three years, but I've always felt your presence around myself. Everybody said that you were dead, but only I had a very strong intuition about you being alive. And see, today, you are right here with me. I don't wish to see any gap between us now. I don't like to see you hesitating to speak out about anything with me. Feel free to talk to me. Please."

Seeing Charles turning anxious, Sheryl forced a smile and replied, "It's not that I don't want to share with you. I just feel that it's too strange. Maybe it's just a figment of my imagination."

"What exactly is that?" Charles was getting increasingly impatient.

Sheryl looked into his eyes and realized that now she had to tell everything to him. Then she started to talk about her dream, in which she remembered so clearly that there was a birthmark on the boy's wrist which was exactly the same as the one on Charlie's wrist.

"Though I've lost all my memories during that period, I've always been worrying for the other kid. I also don't know why I had such a weird dream. It was as if..." Sheryl paused and swallowed before she continued, "As if the kid that came to my dream was Charlie, but... but how is that even possible?"

Set age aside first, Charlie was Leila's son. Also how could it be possible that Leila and Ferry become allied!

With a wry smile, Sheryl continued, "I've been bothered by this thought for several days, so I just wanted to ask."

Charles became silent as he heard Sheryl's words. He fell into a deep thought.

He started back calculating each and every event that took place since the time Leila appeared with

Charlie. There was no doubt about the fact that Charlie was his son. But the vibes Charlie shared with

Leila always made him unsure about the mother-son relationship. Leila being Charlie's mother — was it

worth a second thought?

"Even I have no idea why I have such funny thoughts. Just take it as a pinch of salt," Sheryl added with embarrassment.

"No, your thoughts are not funny at all. You were pregnant with twins. Who knows Charlie could be our son," Charles continued as he held Sheryl's hands. "I've always been looking for the kid. Maybe that's exactly why I can't find him. I have never thought of the possibility that he is just under our noses.

Right?"

Charles sprang up from the bench and pulled up Sheryl. His voice was filled with excitement as he said, "Come on, let's go. Let's take Charlie to the hospital to test whether he is our child or not."

"Now?" Startled, Sheryl asked, "What do you mean? Why do you want to do this?"

Charles gave no answer to her questions, just dragged her to look for the kids.

But as they looked for the kids, they could not find them. Both of them got panicked and combed each and every corner of the nearby park and the area around the park as well, but couldn't see a trace of the kids.

"Char... Charles, where are the kids?" Sheryl trembled in fear. All this while she had her eyes on the

kids. Her eyes didn't leave the kids for even one second. How could the kids disappear within just a blink?

Sheryl could barely support herself and Charles couldn't gather his thoughts either. Charles patted her on her shoulder and said, "Don't worry. We will find them." He took out his hand phone to call Charlie.

He purposely bought Charlie a phone so that he could get in touch with Charlie in case anything happened. As soon as the call was picked up, Charles heard "Daddy" from the other side. He heaved a sigh of relief and gave a reassuring glance towards Sheryl.

And the next moment as he began to speak, the phone was suddenly taken away from Charlie and he heard a hysterical scream from Leila, "Who are you calling?"

After this the call was ended, Charles tried to call again, only to find that the phone was switched off.

A frown appeared on his face.

"What happened?" Sheryl asked anxiously, "Where are the kids? Where is Shirley? My little girl has been through a lot. If anything happens to her, how will I survive the guilt!"

Sheryl was getting crazy at this point of time. She started to cry profusely. Even though Charles himself was also extremely anxious, he still hugged Sheryl and consoled her gently, "Don't worry. Everything is

going to be alright. I'm certain it's going to be alright."

As he consoled Sheryl, he kept telling himself, "I will definitely find the kids. I will find them very soon."

But that didn't help with their panic. Charles called someone to look for Leila. Sheryl was so anxious that she lost her mind. She held Charles' hands and asked, "Charles, what does Leila want? Why did she kidnap my Shirley? Call her and tell her that I will give her whatever she wants. I just want my Shirley safely back."

Sheryl kept weeping uncontrollably to the point that she almost fainted. Trying to give her some solace, Charles promised firmly, "Don't worry, Sher. I won't let anything happen to Shirley. I won't let any of you to get hurt even a tiny bit!"

Taking Sheryl into the car, Charles planned to ask for help from the police to see if there was any clue from the CCTV. On his way, his phone rang. Andy was on the other side.

After his confession to the Zhao family, Andy felt much more relieved. It was as if a heavy weight had gone off his chest. After much consideration, he decided to tell Charles about what had happened with Charlie. That was the reason why he had called.

Such a vital piece of information reached Charles at a point when both Charlie and Shirley were in

Leila's grasp all over again. Hardly able to sustain his patience, Charles burst into anger as soon as

Andy finished speaking. "Andy, what's the use of telling me now! Just if you told me earlier!"

If Andy told him earlier, he would have been more cautious with Leila. Then she would not have gotten

a chance to take the kids away.

Charles did not want to disclose it all to Sheryl at this point of time. Hence, he brought down his volume

and almost whispered into the phone, "I'm not going to talk about this right now. Andy, I will look for

you."

Then he ended the call. Andy didn't expect the reaction from Charles as he thought that Charles would

be very happy to hear that. He felt that something was not right.

Abby had been with Andy all the time. As soon as the call ended, she hurried to ask, "How was it?

What did he say? Did he blame you?"

Andy didn't reply. After pondering for a while, Andy made several calls with people from his past

associations. Charles did call them, and it seemed that the kids went missing.

Andy froze into a stone.

Chapter 772 To Atone For What He Had Done

"What! What's going on? What on earth are you saying?" Abby inquired in a shocked and disbelieving voice. She completely froze where she was standing when she heard Andy's news. Apparently, Shirley and Charlie were missing.

"Both of them? Missing? How? Why? Did they search for them everywhere?" She couldn't believe her ears and found it hard to accept the news. She fell on the sofa in fear on seeing Andy nod his head.

She was frightened out of her wits and her body and mind were not cooperating with her. Dumbly she asked, "What... what should we do now? Shall we go to Sheryl. Oh my god, she must be mad with worry."

"Abby, you just stay at home. I'll go and help them look for the kids," Andy took charge and replied in a forceful tone. He had wronged Abby and her family earlier. Now it was time for him to make up for his past behavior.

Abby wanted to go with him. But he didn't allow her to do so. There were two old persons in the house who needed her care. It was already very late and he did not want the two elders to worry.

Abby was upset at this arrangement and said sarcastically, "If you really cared so much about them,

you would not have dared commit all your past misdeeds."

"I know. I accept it. I am at fault," he admitted and smiled wryly. He was left with no choice but say gently, "What has happened is over and done with. Please don't make me feel more guilty. I am already miserable about it. I am leaving now. You sleep on time and don't wait up for me."

Although Abby went to bed, she just could not fall asleep. She kept tossing and turning as a million negative thoughts kept racing through her head. She waited anxiously for Andy to return. It was nearly dawn when he finally came back home.

She hastily went over to him and asked, "Have the children been found?"

Andy helplessly shook his head. With a tired look he replied, "Leila has taken them away. So far there is no trace of them. Nobody has found them."

"What about Sher? How is she holding up?" Abby hurriedly asked.

Andy shook his head slightly. "She is not good."

Shirley's autism had already left Sheryl heartbroken. Now with Shirley's missing, Sheryl had completely broken down. He had seen Charles so worried that his eyes were red with unshed tears, while Sheryl cried herself hoarse.

After midnight Sheryl was so overcome by despair that she fell unconscious.

Poor Charles had to rush her to the hospital. He also could not call off the search for both the children.

Everybody was worried for Charles now. It was not sure how Charles would get through this tough time.

"How could you come back? Why didn't you stay there and help?" Abby was angry at Andy. She pointed her finger at Andy and scolded, "It is all happening because of you. How can I face Sheryl without any guilt in the future? I will be too ashamed to look her in the face again."

Andy grimaced and tried to defend himself, "Abby, I knew that you would be extremely anxious to know what was happening. I came back to inform you the current situation. I promise you, I will try my best to help find them. Don't worry."

"Then why don't you just go and find them quickly? Stop stalling, go, go, go." Abby tried to push him out. She yelled as he was about to leave, "If you fail to find them, you don't need to come back. And we are also done."

This was the first time that Abby had voiced anything like this. She had never threatened to break up at

any point in their marriage. Andy was taken aback at her words. Abby also regretted her words as they escaped her mouth.

Andy flared up and began to fight with Abby. Neither of them noticed Arthur standing in the doorway.

He looked at them and asked coldly, "Why are both of you quarreling? What do you mean they are missing? Who are missing?"

Both Andy and Abby were stunned to hear Arthur's voice.

Andy had no choice but to tell him about the missing children. Arthur's expression turned hard as he heard the full story. He glanced at Andy and asked, "You said the police have been informed. What are the police saying?"

"They had a look at the CCTV camera footage and found that it was Leila who took them away. They did not find anything beyond that." Andy replied honestly. He sighed heavily before he continued, "Dad, don't worry. I will fulfill my responsibility in this matter. I will help Charles find his children."

"That's good." Arthur nodded his head slightly. "Andy, this is not the time to argue about who should take responsibility. The most important thing now is that the two kids come back safe and sound. We can't just sit and wait. The more time we waste, the more danger the kids will be in," Arthur added with

a hard expression.

"Yes, that is why I rushed to their help," Andy glanced meaningfully at Arthur and replied. Although Charles did not want to see his face at all, he was sincerely hoping to make amends for his past wrongdoings.

"Sheryl has fainted and is in the hospital. They have given her sedatives to calm her mind. Charles can't look for the kids and look after Sheryl at the same time. I think it will be a good idea if mom can take care of Sheryl. Then Charles can focus his full attention on searching the kids. However, I'm afraid that mom will...", Andy's voice trailed. He was worried that this incident would be difficult for Amy to deal with. He feared she would be overwhelmed by the bad news.

"I will break this news to Amy. You just go there and help. Notify us as soon as there is any progress,"

Arthur cut in and told him firmly.

Andy left on hearing Arthur's words. Arthur drew in a deep breath and went to inform Amy of this sad news.

Amy was at a loss for words and started crying. It was a while before she calmed down. Then she went

to the kitchen and began to make some soup for Sheryl. Immediately after she left for the hospital with Arthur and Abby.

At the hospital, Sheryl had regained consciousness. Charles stood beside her bed silently. Both of them looked miserable.

Sheryl looked out of the window with hollow eyes. A breakfast tray was by her side untouched.

"Sher, please be strong and have faith. We will find the kids soon. They will be safe. You need your strength so please eat a little at least," Charles pleaded with her in a tearful voice. Charles was extremely emotional. He blamed himself for letting Leila find an opportunity to kidnap both his children.

This was beyond terrible.

Sheryl replied in a weary voice, "Just take the tray away. I have no appetite. The smell of that food is nauseating."

She was really not hungry. The thought that Shirley had to experience so much trauma at such a young age left her torn with grief.

She agonized that she was definitely an unfit mother.

"You need to eat something..." Charles continued to persuade her to eat. But Sheryl just ignored his

words. The door opened. Abby, Arthur and Amy came in. Charles moved aside awkwardly to let them come to Sheryl's bedside.

"Grandma, Grandpa!" Upon seeing her family, she couldn't hold back her tears. Amy put an arm around Sheryl and hugged as she also cried. Arthur finally intervened and said, "That's enough. Stop crying both of you."

He stared at Amy and said, "You came here to take care of Sher and be her strength, so get a grip on yourself."

Abby also reasoned with her, "Mom, Sher has regained consciousness. If she continues crying, she will faint again."

Amy, with some effort, stopped crying and reassured Sheryl, "Sher, don't cry dear. All will be fine. I have bought some hot chicken soup for you. Just have a little bit. Only if you are healthy, you will have enough energy to look after Shirley when she is back, right?"

Amy's gentle coaxing and nagging induced Sheryl to eat some of the soup.

Charles' expression softened when he saw Sheryl eat.

Arthur walked over to Charles and said, "Charles, I want to talk to you. Can we step outside?"

Charles looked lovingly at Sheryl and then followed Arthur out.

They headed for a secluded corner. Charles instantly said, "Grandpa, I promise you I will find the children and bring them back."

"I know you will," Arthur nodded. "I want to know what exactly happened. How on earth could someone just kidnap two small children so easily?"

Chapter 773 Charles Takes Revenge On Leila

Charles told Arthur about Shirley and Charlie going missing. He was confused about how everything went down, but he continued his story anyway. "I've been looking for the other kid and waiting for any news about him. I never thought Leila would work with Ferry. By the time that I realized that Charlie may be the kid I've been looking for and started planning for him and Sheryl to get their DNA tested, Charlie and Shirley went missing."

Charles breathed deeply, running his hand over his face. "Sher isn't feeling well. She shouldn't be alone right now."

"Don't worry about it. We can take care of Sheryl for you." Arthur patted him on the shoulder, offering comfort. "For now, just focus on looking for the kids. That's what's most important right now," he

instructed.

His face dimmed in worry as he continued, "If what you've said is all true, the kids will be in great danger. We should focus all our resources into finding them. Don't worry about Sher. We're here for her."

"Okay." Charles felt a little better and nodded. "I feel more reassured knowing that you and Grandma will take care of her."

"I'll just say goodbye to Sher," Charles said as he stood up and walked towards Sheryl's room.

Abby was keeping Sheryl company. When the door opened, she looked at Charles with regretful eyes.

She was filled with regret, thinking that this never would have happened if her husband didn't keep a secret for Anthony.

Charles was oblivious of Abby's guilt. All he saw was Sheryl, tucked into bed, refusing to look at him.

He walked towards her and whispered, "Sher, just get some rest, okay? I promise, I'll find the kids and bring them home."

Sheryl remained still, refusing to face Charles. To be honest, she felt so reluctant to talk to him.

She knew he wasn't responsible for what happened. But they were there when the kids went missing, and they weren't able to do anything. No matter how she saw it, she couldn't help but blame herself and Charles.

Thinking that Sheryl was angry at him for what happened, Charles figured that it'd be best to leave. He faced Amy instead and bid goodbye. "Grandma, please take care of Sheryl. I should get going."

Amy nodded. "Of course." Amy looked at him with sympathy as he left the room.

In the past, she was never fond of Charles. She had always blamed him when Sheryl went missing. But now, she realized that Charles was wronged, and it was Anthony and Andy's fault all this time.

If anything, she felt nothing but sympathy for Charles. His pain must be greater than anybody else's when Sheryl went missing.

Charles tried to find anyone who could help him, from his friends from the government and the streets.

All he wanted to do now was to save the kids, no matter how.

As for Leila, he wouldn't waste his time with her.

He already loathed her for cheating on him, and now this.

His first stop was to the police station. After that, he went to Hugo, a notorious gang leader.

Unexpectedly, he found Andy with Hugo.

Little did he know, Andy was there to make amends for his mistakes, but Charles was filled with rage upon seeing him. His eyes blazed as he held Andy by his shirt collar and roared, "What are you doing here?"

You're trying to cause more trouble for me, aren't you?"

Andy was struggling to breathe, grasping at Charles' unmoving grip on his collar. "Charles, calm down," he sputtered. Charles tightened his hold but didn't say anything. Andy took his chance and explained, "It's only a waste of time if you beat me up. We should be spending each second trying to find the kids."

Andy was trying to pacify the situation and continued, "I know you hate me, and you would like nothing more than hit me. But you should know it is not the time. We have to look for the kids. Punch me as much as you want, but after we find them."

Seeing the tension, Hugo chose that moment to speak up. "Andy's right, Charles. He's made mistakes, but now's not the time to punish him for them. We should try our best to look for the kids. If you hate him, then please, at least listen to me. Let him go," he said.

Charles saw the sincerity in Hugo's eyes, and surprisingly in Andy's eyes as well. Reluctantly, he loosened his grip on Andy but stared at him with anger. "Fine. I'll let this slide now. But know that if I don't find my kids, you're mine," he threatened.

Charles had spent a long time trying to find Sheryl back then. And when he did, he thought they'd finally be happy and be with their children. But now, they were missing and it broke his heart.

Hugo let out a sigh of relief as soon as Charles let Andy go. Once the tension lessened, he spoke again, "I searched the east side of the city but didn't find them. I checked some CCTV records, and Leila most likely went to the south with the kids, but..."

"But what?" Charles asked with a frown.

"If she did go south and hid there with the kids, it'll be much more difficult for us. Most areas in the south appear just as mountains and vast lands in maps. It'll be very hard to track them down there."

Charles looked at Hugo, his eyes unwavering, and said firmly, "Hugo, I don't care how hard it is. We have to find them. I'll pay you and your men. I don't care how much it costs."

Hugo shook his head. "For Andy, I will spare nothing to help you. Keep your money." Charles looked at him in confusion, prompting Hugo to explain. He patted Andy's shoulder and said, "He saved my life

once. I owe him. This is my payment."

Hugo instructed his men to go to the south of the city. They were to find Leila at all cost.

In the hospital, an unexpected visitor came to Sheryl's ward.

Sheryl was surprised to see Holley. She struggled to get up, managing to sit on the bed. "Miss Ye, what brings you here?"

Holley walked up to her, gently helping her to lie down. "Just lie down. You need to rest," she said.

Sheryl was still very weak so she succumbed. "What are you doing here?" she repeated.

Holley smiled and answered, "I heard what happened to you. I came to see if you were alright."

She placed the fruit basket she bought for Sheryl on the bedside drawer. She sighed deeply before speaking, "I heard what happened. I'm so sorry."

Sheryl tried to keep a strong face, but as soon as the words were out of Holley's mouth, she began to

cry. Tears streamed down her cheeks at an endless moment, when she thought about what dangers

Shirley might be facing. She thought about Charlie as well. They were both just kids.

Chapter 774 Sheryl's Boss

"Oh, are you crying? I am sorry it was just a slip of tongue. Charlie and Shirley have been kidnapped

and you must be worried. Oh, I shouldn't talk about that at all. I am really sorry! Please forgive me,"

Holley apologized sincerely as she drew a tissue paper out of the tissue box and handed it to Sheryl.

She pretended to be compassionate toward Charlie's and Shirley's terrible suffering. On the other

hand, in her heart, never had she felt so happy before. Sheryl's pain had always made her happy. She

thought, 'Well done Leila! I am so happy that you kidnapped Charlie and Shirley. Charlie is probably

safe, but I am sure Shirley won't be treated kindly at all. My dear sister, I will also do my best to torment

you. You will pay the price for what I have suffered. My life has been ruined and thus, you won't even

live a happy life either.'

"It really doesn't matter. I am anxious and worried about Charlie and Shirley. I never thought such bad

things would ever happen to them. Miss Ye, I am sorry I haven't been more welcoming to you," Sheryl

replied as she shook her head to show she didn't mind Holley's words at all. She knew her boss was

just showing solicitude to her employee. Although she was not clear why Holley had treated her much

better than her other colleagues, she was grateful especially when she was in terrible suffering.

Holley's visit made her feel much better. Her stress surely needed to be shared. She was indeed, in

need of a shoulder to cry on.

"Don't say that! I came here to visit you, not for a warm welcome. Just lie down and rest. Only after you recover, you can look for your daughter. You agree with what I am saying, don't you?" Holley stopped Sheryl who was trying to sit and said solemnly. However, this time she wasn't pretending. She really hoped Sheryl, would get better soon to suffer more pain.

"Alright." Sheryl nodded and laid down on the bed. After a short consideration, she asked curiously, "But Miss Ye, where did you get the news from?" She was not a fool. 'It's impossible for Charles to tell my colleagues especially my boss about our kids' kidnapping. But, Holley knew that news. Why? It's weird, ' thought Sheryl.

As Holley heard the question, her face became pale. Since Leila called to inform her that she had taken Charlie and Shirley away, a feeling of ecstasy stopped Holley from thinking clearly. She came to the hospital in which Sheryl was staying before she knew what she was doing. She was stoked to see Sheryl's appearance.

As expected, Sheryl was stricken with anxiety and immersed in grief. This scene was rejoicing for Holley.

As the saying went, extreme joy begot sorrow. She wasn't expecting being asked about the source of the news. There was no time to think out a perfect explanation. She stammered after a short hesitation,

"The whole company is yapping about it. It is not a secret." She knew the words were not convincing,

but there were no other words that sounded better. It was hard for her to think of a better explanation in

such a short time span.

"The whole company knows about that?" Sheryl retorted. She didn't believe a word Holley said. She

thought, 'Charles won't tell my colleagues about that. Why does my boss know this news?' She never

suspected Leila would tell her boss about what she had done. After all, they were thought to be

strangers. The truth was that Holley was a co-conspirator herself.

"Of course," Holley replied stiffly. To defuse the tension, she changed another topic and said tenderly,

"Sher, I came here for two reasons. First, I want to make sure you are okay. Second, if you need my

help, don't hesitate to call me. I will always be ready to give you my hand." She had been making very

friendly gestures. Her words sounded sincere, while in fact she wouldn't give Sheryl any practical help.

Stabbing Sheryl in the back was the only thing that she would always love to do.

"No, thank you," Sheryl said with bitter smile. She thought, 'No one can help me. My only hope is Leila's call. I hope she can call me as early as possible.

Since Leila kidnapped Charlie and Shirley, she will ask for something or call me or Charles to tell us her demands. Why doesn't she called yet? If Shirley talks to me even a word, I won't get so worried about her.'

Every time she thought of Shirley, she had to fight back tears. When she realized Holley was still here, she forced a smile and said, "No one can help me."

"Don't worry. It's worthless. You'd better take good care of yourself and recover as soon as possible.

Mr. Lu will find the children," Holley acknowledged and said encouragingly. She stared at Sheryl's pale face and was enjoying every second of this. Although She didn't know where the children were, she was sure they were not having a good time. Whether they could come back to Sheryl depended solely on Leila's attitude.

"I hope so," Sheryl replied, smiling sorrowfully.

Before they continued their embarrassing conversation, the door was pushed open. It was Amy. She hadn't seen Holley before, so she asked, looking at Sheryl, "Who is this lady?"

"Grandma, nice to meet you. My name is Holley Ye. Sheryl and I work in the same company," Holley

said politely, wearing a sweet smile. She stood beside the bed looking at Amy with all due respect.

Beautiful as she was, she looked lovelier when she smiled. She tried to make Amy feel good about her.

After all, Amy had seen her before when she was Yvonne. She thought, 'I hope Amy won't recognize

me. Or my revenge will fail. Lucky for Sheryl to be born in Zhao family. Her family is rich and everyone

cares about her. Without her family, I would surely, have been the winner in the competition for Charles'

love.'

Her hate towards Zhao family was not less than that towards Sheryl. She blamed for all the painful

experiences she faced to both Sheryl and Zhao family. Never would she learn to ponder her own

mistakes.

"Grandma, this is my boss. She came to visit me," Sheryl said to Amy, pointing at Holley.

"Your boss?" Amy stared at Holley and echoed Sheryl's words. She thought, 'She looks so familiar. But

when and where did we meet?' It was hard for her to prove her guess, so she gave up. Amy took a

stool from the corner and said flatly, "Just take a seat and go on with the conversation."

"No, thank you. I am here to make sure Sheryl is getting better. I am leaving for some business," Holley

waved her hand and refused. Her goal had been achieved. She witnessed Sheryl's pain and was

satisfied with it. There was no need for her to stay. Besides Sheryl had been alert to her kindness and

her question about the children's kidnapping was difficult to answer. So, Holley felt it would be better for

her to keep a certain distance from Sheryl.

Holley turned her gaze at Sheryl who was on the bed and said softly, "Sher, the most immediate and

important thing is your health. Just take some rest and regain your health. Don't worry about your work.

Am I clear to you?"

"Thank you, Miss Ye," Sheryl replied and was lost in thought when Holley left the ward.

'After I came to Y City, I met Holley. She is my boss' girlfriend. We didn't know each other before. Why

did she treat me better than others? She has been kind to me. But I suspect she has a hidden motive.'

Sheryl didn't accept gratuitous kindness. That was why she had been cautious about Holley's

approach.

Amy had been looking for Holley's face in her memory, but she failed. It seemed she had never seen

Holley before. She asked with uncertainty, "Sher, who is she? She looks familiar to me."

"Familiar?" Brow furrowed, Sheryl repeated Amy's word and thought for a while. 'Holley looks like no one that I know, ' she thought. She said, looking up at Amy, "Maybe she had plastic surgery. Plastic faces are nearly identical all the time. Maybe that's why she looks familiar to you." After all Holley had stayed in Korea for a long time. It was likely for her to have a plastic surgery so that she could become more beautiful.

"Maybe," Amy said with hesitation. She stood beside the door looking at Holley's figure until she turned right at the end of the passage. 'Sheryl's boss was suspicious. Maybe I should investigate about her background. The real story may not be as simple as it appears. I hope she won't do anything to hurt my granddaughter. She has already suffered a lot, ' thought Amy. But, little did she expected that Sheryl's boss was Yvonne, Sheryl's own sister.

Holley left Sheryl's ward and walked downstairs to the parking lot. As soon as she entered her car, she dialed Leila's phone number. The line was connected. Leila said anxiously, "What's the matter? What should I do next?" She had been frightened to be caught by the police or Charles these days. It was

hard for her to make a detailed plan about what to do next. Holley's call was in time for her. She was desperate to ask her for advice.

"Calm down. You need to calm down first. This is important. You got two hostages. Why are you so afraid?" Holley said slowly but persuasively. Leila was a good help on her way to take revenge from Sheryl. Helping Leila meant helping accomplish her own goal.

"Why don't you understand?" Leila twisted her lips and said. She had regretted her behavior the moment she took the kids away. But it was too late because she had already committed a mistake! She said, looking for comfort, "I regret having kidnapped the children. If I continue down this road, the results will be lethal. Charles will send me to jail as soon as he finds me."

"Why are you so scared?" Holley sneered. She encouraged Leila, "You have two winning cards. There is no need to be scared of Charles."

"It is easy for you to say. Keep yourself in my shoe for once lady. Do you think I can escape from Charles? He is powerful and rich. I guess he will find me soon," Leila said with contempt. Her kidnapping the children was kind of a spur-of-the-moment thing. Now she had been worried about the serious consequences. But she could do nothing to make it right now. There was so much going on in

her head right now. She was eager to know Holley's advice instead of her useless comfort.

"That's none of my business. Leila, if I were you, I would call Charles and tell him my demands. You have two children as your hostages. What are you worried about?" Holley said with a sneer. She thought, 'Leila is really a fool. Charles and Sheryl care about their children, so they will promise anything to get their children back.'

Leila narrowed her forehead and asked with hesitation, "Do you think that will work?" She was not sure if her demand would be fulfilled or not. In fact, she didn't even know what to ask for.

"Just try and you will get the answer, won't you? I went to visit Sheryl just now. She has been looking forward to your call. Leila, you have her daughter now. She has been admitted to the hospital. If you work harder, you may..." Holley said patiently. Her sentence wasn't finished; she knew Leila could comprehend the hidden meaning. She thought, 'Leila has been dreaming of being Mrs. Lu. If she is not too fool, she will surely grasp this opportunity. If she can have an affair with Charles and marry him, Sheryl will be pissed. That's what I wish to see.'

"I see," Leila replied happily. 'Sheryl is in the hospital. That's great. I have been trying my best to make

Sheryl suffer. Now my goal has been partly achieved, 'I thought she. An evil smile got on Leila's lips.

"Yvonne, we are on the same team. If I got punished for what I have done, you wouldn't run away from

it. Is any of this sinking in?" Leila threatened. After a pause, she added, "I have kidnapped the children.

If Charles don't let me go unpunished, I will give all the information about you as well. I will tell him you

are behind the kidnapping too. Moreover, I will tell him you are Yvonne. Just think about what he would

do to you then." She knew Holley was worthy of trusting because they had the same enemy, Sheryl.

Regardless, she threatened Holley to assure her safety.

"If I were you, I wouldn't do that," Holley said without any emotions. After a second, she added, "I have

told you, I am Holley, not Yvonne." She had told Leila she was Yvonne to win her trust. Although she

was threatened by Leila, she was sure it was just a serious warning and would cause no harm.

Chapter 775 Don't Be Afraid

"Don't assume that no one will recognize you since you have a different face." Leila sneered, "You are

Yvonne. No matter how many faces you change, you are still Yvonne. Charles will never fall in love with

you."

"Just shut up!" After she came back, it was the first time that Holley had been driven insane like that.

She took a deep breath and said, "Leila, don't forget! We are on the same boat. If you really drive me

into the corner and choose to betray me, have you ever thought about what is going to happen next?"

Leila didn't respond, pondering on what Holley said.

Holley sneered with coldness and said to Leila on the other side of the phone, "If Charles gets to know

I am Yvonne, definitely, he won't spare me. And then? Have you even thought about what is going to

happen next? After all this, Charles will live happily with Sheryl. We will both end up suffering and will

have to face a lot of disgrace. Is this what you want?"

Hearing Holley's words, Leila scowled and questioned Holley, "What exactly do you want now?"

"If I were in your situation, I wouldn't say anything to Charles, nor sell you out," Holley said calmly.

Leila sneered, "Don't be alarmist here. You're afraid that I will sell you out, aren't you? Yvonne, if you

don't want to get trapped with me, you'd better give me a hand. You will need to help me in case

Charles doesn't let me off."

"Leila, why are you not understanding it yet?" Holley said with a wry smile, "If you don't sell me out,

then at least I can take the revenge for you after you get into the jail. If not, we all are over. Could you

really bear watching Sheryl and Charles living a happy life ever after?"

Leila gave no answer to this. Holley sneered, "Take it into consideration. If you really want to sell me out, I have no choice but to accept it."

Holley was actually staking the hatred in Leila's heart for Sheryl.

After hanging up the phone, Leila pondered for a long time but didn't come up with any possible answer.

Honestly, she could not really accept watching Charles living a prosperous life with Sheryl.

She kept pacing in the room, wondering about what she should do to prevent Sheryl and Charles from being together. Probably, it was time to have a discussion with Charles.

She immediately shoved out her cell phone and gave a call to Charles. At that time, Charles was checking the monitor in the police station. Receiving the phone call from Leila, he became so furious.

As long as Leila called him herself, he could definitely find a way to catch her.

The police started to monitor the phone call once Charles picked it up. Charles said straight into the phone, "Leila, what exactly do you want?"

Leila smirked, "What do I want? You do know obviously what I want, don't you?"

Charles frowned slightly, and said, "How are the kids? Are they fine?"

"Don't worry. They're totally fine." Leila sneered, "Charles, you are worried about the kids now, aren't you?"

"Charlie is your son as well. I believe that you won't harm him at all. Tell me, what exactly do you want?" Charles said patiently on the phone.

Leila started to laugh, "I have never thought that the prideful Mr. Lu would surrender to me one day like this."

She sneered, and said to Charles, "I haven't decided yet. When I make up my mind, I will let you know about what I want exactly."

Leila hung up the phone immediately after this. Charles called her back but she rejected the calls.

He rushed to the policeman in front of him and inquired, "Did it work? Have you found her location?"

Where is she right now?"

"Nope." The policeman shook his head slightly and said to Charles, "The duration of the call is too short to get her location."

Charles tried to hide his impatience and asked, "What should we do now? Could you please tell me

what I should do now?"

It took a long time to get the anticipated phone call from Leila, but they missed the chance and got no useful clue, which made Charles angry and helpless at the same time.

"Calm down, please." The policeman said to Charles, "What we can do now is to wait for the next chance. Didn't she just mention that she would call you back to let you know what she wants? If she calls you, then you need to try your best to buy us time so that we can get her location right way, okay?"

Charles gradually calmed down. He knew this was the only option he was left with.

After hanging up the phone, Leila was in a very excited state. She opened the door, looking at Shirley who was shivering in the corner. The smile on her face became more frightful.

She approached Shirley step by step, and Charlie, who was on the side, suddenly stood in front of Shirley. He looked at Leila straight into her eyes and warned, "Don't you dare touch her!"

Leila slightly frowned, and shouted at Charlie, "Get out of the way, or I will sort you out too."

Charlie stood still in front of Leila, and said to her, "If you dare to touch her, I will not spare you, neither will my father."

"Your father?" Leila's face suddenly became very pale. She grabbed Charlie's hand and said, "Don't forget! I'm still your mother. Don't try to rile me up, or I won't let you off."

"You are not my mother!" Charlie sneered, "I don't have such a wicked mother like you."

"You..." Missing a beat in heart, Leila didn't know why she suddenly felt guilty. She glanced at Charlie and suddenly flinched. She felt as if Charlie's words pierced through her heart and she got numb the very moment.

"Well, we'll see. I have something to do now, and I will see you when I come back." Leila took a parting shot and left the room in an attempt to hide her emotions.

Charlie came close to Shirley, as amiable as a big brother to ask if she was alright. He checked to assure that there were almost no wounds on Shirley's body. Charlie heaved a sigh of relief, and said,

"Don't be afraid! I am with you, and I will not let you get hurt in any case."

Shirley sobbed and then burst into tears. Facing this situation, Charlie suddenly didn't know what to do.

He smiled to Shirley and consoled her, "Don't cry. My little Shirley. I am here with you, and I won't let anything happen to my precious sister."

"I... I miss my mom so much." It was her first sentence in so many days, but unfortunately, Sheryl was not there to hear these words of her daughter.

Charlie kept Shirley in his arms to protect her, and said, "Don't worry. We will be out of here soon."

Due to the comfort of Charlie's arm, Shirley calmed down gradually. And, after a little while, she fell asleep in his arms as she felt safe.

It gradually got dark outside. Nearly at dinner time, Leila came in with two bowls in her hands.

Chapter 776 Have A Face-To-Face Talk

Leila narrowed her eyes as she glanced at Charlie. After all he was brought up by her. So she was still soft towards him. She paused for a second and said, "Charlie, as long as you still take me as your mother and promise that you'll take my side, I'll let you go. We will stay together like before. What do you think of it?"

Hearing her offer, Shirley held Charlie's hand tightly out of fear. Being a sensitive child, she could sense the danger looming over her head. She was afraid that she would be left alone.

Charlie held Shirley's hand and patted on the back of her hand to make her feel comfortable.

Leila saw Charlie's reactions and understood his choice. So she got slightly annoyed and said impatiently, "Have you decided it? I tell you, you have just one chance. If you choose the wrong side,

you'll lose it all."

"Stop daydreaming," Charlie said with a sarcastic smile on his face. He added, "I'll never take your side. I'll be here with Shirley."

"You..." Leila sneered at him as she got enraged by his attitude. Charlie had always been defiant towards her. Then she looked into his eyes and the anger on her face broke into a wicked smile. "Fine. Just remember what you said. I hope you will never get remorseful for today's choice," she spoke to warn him.

She then took a very close look at Shirley. Although she was just a kid at the moment, it couldn't be denied that she already had an attractive face and a striking similarity with Sheryl. Indisputably, she was Sheryl's own daughter. That was to say Sheryl was pregnant with twins three years ago. Hence after Leila took away the son from her, she must have delivered this girl.

The more Leila thought about all this, she grew more and more envious of Sheryl. Why had she not killed Sheryl three years ago?

As she glanced at both the kids, her heart was getting filled with hatred for Sheryl. Both these kids

reminded her of the strong bond between Charles and Sheryl that could not be shaken. "Stop looking at me like that," Leila said as she put on a sarcastic smile on her face. She looked at Shirley in a vicious manner and said, "You should blame your mom for all this. You know what your mom is..." "Enough!" Charlie cut her in impatiently and stepped forward in front of Shirley. Shirley had started shivering out of fear. The recently developed autism symptom, plus being detained here, had nearly scared Shirley out of her wits. If Leila continued to threaten her, Shirley was at a risk of being stimulated, leading her psychological conditions to be triggered all over again.

Charlie covered Shirley to avoid her from being exposed to Leila's atrocities. He then gave a stern and indifferent look at her and said in a cold voice, "If you have finished speaking what you wanted to say, just get out."

There was something about Charlie's attitude that was intimidating for Leila. She didn't know why, but she always had a tinge of fear toward Charlie. Maybe this boy got the sternness from his father.

So she just put down the meals and said ruthlessly, "Just eat your food now. I don't want you to starve to death over here."

Then she just turned around and slammed the door before she left. Charlie lifted the bowl and fed

Shirley clumsily before he began to eat.

Shirley felt assured to have Charlie by her side. But she became restless and nervous. She held

Charlie's hand with her trembling hands and asked in tearful voice, "Charlie, when could we leave from

here? I... I miss my mom and Uncle Charles."

"Soon," Charlie replied briefly with a stiff frown set on his face. In the beginning, Leila had just

kidnapped Shirley. But she had been spotted by Charlie. He had stopped her without hesitation. Hence

she had had no choice but to take Charlie away as well. Now he was glad that he had been kidnapped

as well. Otherwise, Shirley would face the terrible situation all by herself.

He tried to ease Shirley's fear and said softly, "We'll get out here soon, trust me."

He believed Charles would be able to find them out very soon. But he couldn't just sit there and wait.

He had to do something, so that they could leave the place as quickly as possible.

As Leila walked out of the room, her heart was filled with remorse and anger. Charlie's indifference

towards her made her feel bitter and angry every time she thought about it. She couldn't understand

why Charlie had never been kind to her.

She really treated Charlie like her own son all the time. But unfortunately Charlie had always been hostile towards her.

She sat on the sofa and kept thinking why on earth she had kidnapped Shirley. Was it merely because she disliked Sheryl?

But if so, why didn't she turn happy at all when she heard that Sheryl was in the hospital?

Or maybe she just wanted to threaten Charles in this way. After all she could not even forgive Charles for not reciprocating her love.

However, heart of heart, she knew better than anyone else that she would not be able to harass

Charles in any way. The more she thought, the more remorseful she became. Suddenly as the thought of Charles, a fear gripped her mind.

All of a sudden, she became worried about whether she would be able to come out of the situation peacefully. She knew that Charles would not spare her life this time.

She grew more and more restless and started shaking her legs out of nervousness. At this point of time, she realized the preciousness of being alive.

After a long moment of pause, Leila composed herself. She took a few deep breathes and called

Charles up. Although it was late night, Charles answered the phone promptly and yelled over the phone, "What do you really want?"

Charles' storming voice came as a thunder strike on Leila. However, she somehow managed to hide the anxiety in her voice from Charles. "It's easy. I just want money," Leila replied in a very calm and composed voice. She was regretting her decision to have refused the compensation Charles offered to her earlier. If she had accepted that money, she wouldn't have been trapped in such a terrible situation now. She did not want to repeat the same mistake all over again.

"No problem. Tell me how much you want?" Charles gasped as he inquired over the phone. Then he took a few deep breathes to calm himself down. This was a bargain he could handle. He added in a calm voice, "As long as the two kids are safe and sound, I will pay whatever you ask for."

"50 million," Leila blurted even without thinking. After saying that she smiled as she thought of the exorbitant price she asked for. But then she paused for a while and added, "And apart from this, you must prepare two tickets for me. I'll take Charlie abroad and start my life with him afresh."

She let out a sarcastically laugh and said, "I care a damn about you, Sheryl or Shirley. But Charlie is

my son. I will take him with me."

"Stop daydreaming, Leila," Charles replied with an ironic smile. "Both Charlie and Shirley are all my kids. No one can take them away from me. I am ready to give the money you have demanded but you have to return both the kids safely." Charles refused her second requirement right away.

"It seems that we can't make a deal," Leila replied. "Fine, take your time. Let me know when you have truly considered it clearly. We will have a talk about it again at that time," Leila smiled ironically as she spoke. Then she was about to hang up.

As Charles felt that she was ending the conversation, his eyes fell on the call tracers who clearly showed that they didn't catch her position yet. The call tracers signalled him to prolong their conversation. So Charles hastily called out to Leila, "Hold on. Just give me a moment."

"So, are you changing your mind now?" Leila continued in the same sarcastic tone. She felt a little confident when she heard Charles' voice tremble as he spoke. She felt that he could give in to her demands. "Charles, you already have Sheryl and Shirley with you. You shouldn't be too greedy. You can't have it all. You better behave like a grown up. Sooner you can make up your mind, the quicker you can see your kid," Leila added.

"Leila, I want to have a face-to-face talk with you," Charles spoke in a faint voice. The mellowed voice of Charles made Leila more confident. She gave a winning smile as she took the phone from one side to another. "It's not a piece of cake we are talking about. We'd better meet each other and talk about it,"

Charles added as he tried his best to lure her out of her hole where she was hiding.

"Do you think I'm a fool?" she spoke with a sarcastic smile. "If I agree to see you, I won't get anything and will also face the risk of getting caught."

Charles furrowed his brows and said, "I promise, I'll come alone. You have two kids with you. You have nothing to worry about. You'll be safe."

Hearing what Charles said, Leila hesitated for a second before she replied, "You give me a few minutes for considering it."

Then she hung up. Charles hurriedly went over to the call tracers and asked, "Did you spot her location?"

Chapter 777 Let Me Hear Him

"I found it." The policeman had gotten some clue. "The target that we are looking for is located at a small housing settlement built by the government in the south. However, the layout of the place can be

complicated to navigate. Then, to make our job a bit more tricky, there are many children and old people living the compound. If we want to force our way in, it may be very difficult."

"Then what do we do now? Do you mean we are just supposed to wait here and do nothing?" said

Charles, with a confrontational tone.

"You have to calm down first," the policeman said. "I think your previous idea might work. You can try to lure Leila out first. Then we enter the room to get the kids out. What do you think?"

Though Charles was not fully convinced, his overwhelming concern for all the things that could possibly take place, compelled him to agree.

The second day, Leila brought some food for the kids to have for breakfast, but Charlie still stared at her with caution. Leila sighed, "Stop giving me that look. This is not I want either. Do you think I would have gotten this if I had been given another choice?"

Looking straight into Charlie's eyes, she said, "Charlie, don't worry. You are my son. Are you willing to go with me?"

"No! I will not go with you," Charlie replied firmly. "I will stay here to take care of Shirley. I don't care

where you go. I will not follow you anywhere."

Angered by Charlie's words, she stormed at him, "It is not up to you. You really believe that woman is going to be nice to you? I am sure that you will regret that decision one day!"

Charlie quietened down. The day before, he surveyed his surroundings carefully. It was on the ground floor. Because it was a room for rent, there was no anti-theft structures in place. Therefore, the windows did not have bars on them. Once the window was open, he could clearly see the courtyard.

However, the window was too high for them to reach and escape.

After what he felt was way too long, Charles still couldn't find them. Hence he stopped merely waiting for help, and decided he had no other choice but to try and find his own way to escape.

After Leila went out of the room, Charlie fed Shirley, as usual, but he was prepared to escape if he saw that there was any chance that he would succeed.

Leila was furious with Charlie. Thinking about the invitation that had been extended by Charles, she called him for the meet-up.

To confirm that the kids were with Leila, Charles requested, "I need to speak to Charlie. Unless I am completely assured that they are safe and unharmed, I will not meet you."

"Charles, do you really think I care what you want?" Leila sneered.

Charles softened his tone and replied, "Calm down. I just want to hear his voice. Only after I confirm that the kids are safe and sound, then, and only then... will I give you what you want. Otherwise, you will never get it."

"No problem," Leila agreed as she pushed the door open. Shirley was so scared that she hid behind Charlie. With eyes ablaze with loathing and resentment, Charlie stared at Leila and questioned, "What do you want this time?"

Leila did not answer Charlie, instead she replied into the phone, "Do you hear it now? Safe and sound, strong and energetic, they are perfectly fine."

"Wait just a second," Charles requested again. "I only hear Charlie. What about Shirley?"

Leila frowned and threw the question back, "You know your daughter right? She hasn't spoken a word for a long time. How do you want me to make her speak?"

Hearing that, Charlie being as clever as he was, then discovered that the person on the phone with

Leila was Charles, so he calmed down and organized his thoughts. He took a glance at Leila, and then

shouted to the phone, "Dad, Shirley is with me! She is fine!"

"You hear that?" scoffed Leila.

Charles then relaxed himself and replied, "Alright. Let's meet. You give me the time and place, and I will be there. It's completely up to you."

"Tonight. Ten o'clock. At the restaurant in the south," Leila said flatly. "I have to warn you. Come alone.

Otherwise I promise that you will never want to see what will happen to your cute daughter."

Leila hung up the phone and turned to Charlie. "Rest assured. Everything will end tonight. Then..."

She ended her statement abruptly, never actually completing it.

Coming out of the room, she called Holley and gave her a rundown of everything that had happened.

Though everything seemed to be fine, Holley still felt somewhat uneasy and unsettled. She sensed that something was not right, though she could not tell exactly why.

Holley didn't dig into every detail, instead she asked, "Are you sure you want to do this?"

"Not really," Leila replied as she shook her head. "To be honest, I really don't know what I'm supposed to do now. Maybe I'll just wing it and figure it out as I go."

Holley wanted to try to convince her to give up, but clearly, to do so would be a waste of time. She

already knew Leila wouldn't listen to her, so she decided not to speak.

Yet that was not the only reason for her silence. Other than that, she was scared that Leila would notice how nervous she really was if she were to speak one more word.

As Leila was about to end the call, Holley stopped her and gently reminded her, "No matter what happens, please be careful."

"Okay, okay, I get it," Leila replied in her cold voice and then ended the conversation.

Holley sat still on the sofa while George was showering. After his shower, George sat beside Holley and asked with a caring tone, "What happened to you? You don't seem quite like yourself."

"I'm fine," Holley replied, trying hard to feign a smile. She suddenly thought of Donna and Sula. She hadn't seen them for a while, so she asked, "George, did Donna and Sula go back home?"

"Why do you mention them all of a sudden?" George replied impatiently as he was annoyed by the question.

With a gentle smile, Holley said softly, "Well, she is your mother, after all. Whatever she did to me, she only wanted the best for you. I like to believe that she meant well."

Lying her head on his shoulder, Holley continued, "I know you quarreled with her because of me. If it weren't for me, there wouldn't be such a huge wedge between you two. But I really don't want you and her to continue going on like this."

Staring at George, she continued, "If she chooses to live in Y City, it will be impossible for you to hide from her for the rest of your life."

"Stop it. I know what I'm doing. Just leave it alone!" replied George. The bugging vein in his forehead signaled his aggravation with the whole conversation.

Ignoring his obvious cues for her to leave the subject alone, Holley continued, "Perhaps... I can invite her for lunch and we can settle everything face to face. What do you think?" Then she looked at him with a sly grin that told him she wasn't going to give up on this.

George sneered at her and replied, "Do you really think you can settle everything?"

He paused for a moment before continuing, "You want to be nice to her, but she may not want to be nice to you. I think, it is better for us to stay away from her instead of giving her another chance to attack us."

"But..." Holley wasn't ready to give up just yet. "Then the problem will never get solved? Do you think

we can set the problem aside forever? What about us? Don't you want to marry me?"

Chapter 778 Tightening The Reins

Holley had no idea why she would suddenly mention their wedding. Perhaps her phone call with Leila

left her a bit concerned. The more she thought about it, the more worried she got.

Anything could happen. She really couldn't predict Donna's next move, so she wanted to get married to

George as soon as possible.

"Why are you bringing up marriage right now?" George wondered. He couldn't hide his confusion.

Holley's comment had come out of nowhere.

"Don't you want to marry me?" she replied. Before he even had a chance to answer that, Holley

continued, "George, I am not a young girl anymore. I want to settle down and have a family. Don't you

want to do that with me?"

"Don't be silly," George said while grabbing her hand. "It has been my dream to marry you since I met

you. Why would you doubt that?"

With eyes full of excitement, Holley cautiously began saying, "Well then, how about we go get our

marriage license tomorrow?" Looking George in the eyes, she pleaded, "Darling, I can't wait any

longer. Whether your mother agrees or not, I don't care anymore. Being with you is all I want."

"Tomorrow?" George asked. The rush made him hold back. He had to give her an answer, however, so

he came up with an excuse, "Dear, I have to go on a business trip tomorrow. Can we do that once I

come back from my trip?"

Hearing George agree to marry her soon, Holley felt relieved. She then rested her head on his shoulder

and expressed her feelings out loud, "That's all I need to hear."

George smiled and planted a long kiss on her forehead.

Holley could not stop worrying that Donna might try to spoil her plan, so she had to figure out a way to

get married to George as soon as possible.

After Leila hung up the phone with Holley, she started cooking dinner for Shirley and Charlie. She

actually never intended to harm the kids, only to make Sheryl nervous.

Many thoughts were cruising through her mind, but one, in particular, was becoming more prominent.

She began realizing that Holley had been the one pushing her to take all the wrong steps from the

beginning. She had allowed Holley to influence her to such an extent, that she could not say "no" to her

requests anymore.

However, in the end, she would always come out losing and regret listening to her.

Leila brought dinner to the kids' room and decided to stay for a little while. She watched them play and noticed how patient and kind Charlie was being towards Shirley. The little girl felt safe and comfortable around him, and that only made Leila more envious.

She couldn't get it; after staying with Charlie for three years, he never treated her the same way. Even if Shirley was his sister, they hadn't had any contact for three years. Why did Charlie act as if they'd never been apart before?

'Is this all because of their blood bond? That can't be!' Leila kept wondering while staring at the kids.

Eventually, her intense looks began to make Shirley uncomfortable. She was worried that Leila might take Charlie away, so she kept a close eye on her, ready to intervene.

Charlie didn't eat until Shirley finished eating. Noticing that, Leila inquired, "Why do you treat her so kindly?"

"Do we need a reason to be kind to anyone?" replied Charlie all confused. His serious face aggravated Leila.

"Of course!" she asserted. Perplexed that he didn't see things the same way, she began justifying,

"Why should we be kind to others if they don't do us any good?"

Charlie was speechless for a few seconds, and then continued, "You and I are different. Everything you do is for some reason. I don't know how you can live like that."

Those words kept playing in her mind as she tried to come up with a reply. She couldn't say anything because he was right.

Indeed, whatever she had done was for a specific reason. Even raising Charlie was so that she could be with Charles.

However, all those years of upbringing still did not manage to develop a strong relationship between them.

Annoyed by his words, Leila asked, "Do you really think that if you act kindly towards Sheryl's daughter, she will do the same towards you? Ha, keep dreaming boy!"

With a cold, jealous look she warned him, "If I learned anything from mothering you is that kidnapping a child makes a parent not think straight any longer. Sheryl won't take kindly to any involvement you may have in this. So, if you were to live with her, she would never appreciate you. Instead, she will hate you

for what I have done to her daughter."

Seeing that Charlie kept silent, she continued persuading him, "Think about it. Have you ever heard in any fairy tale of a kind stepmother? Never!"

"Have you said enough?" asked Charlie calmly, completely ignoring her words. With an indifferent stare, he added, "If you have, then you can get out. Shirley needs to get some sleep now."

Realizing her words were not working, Leila gave up. She then checked the clock and saw it was time to meet with Charles. Quickly, she put on some bold makeup and her most sophisticated dress, and took off at 9 pm sharp.

Arriving at the destination one hour earlier than their appointment, she decided to hide nearby and wait for Charles, just to make sure he was alone.

Charles showed up alone indeed. He then waited there for a little while, looking around the restaurants in the area to see if he could spot Leila. With no sign of her, he took out his phone. But before he could dial any digit, Leila came up to him.

"Always punctual, Mr. Lu," she remarked. Her tone was serious, unfriendly. That took Charles a bit by

surprise.

He looked at her, unimpressed by her efforts to seem more attractive. With an extended arm pointing down the street, he proceeded to suggest, "Let's find a place to sit down and talk."

That was not the reaction Leila was hoping for, so she replied in an offended tone, "Fine!" She then looked around and picked a restaurant filled with guests. "Let's go there."

After they both got seated, an awkward silence settled in. In an effort to snap out of the moment, Leila broke the ice, "It's been a while. How are you?"

Charles, however, was not in the mood for pleasantries. "I will be fine as long as you give me back my kids. What is it that you want from me? I won't let you take Charlie away. You'd better give that up right now."

"How funny!" Leila commented laughing. Turning serious again, she addressed, "Charlie is my child.

You are the one trying to take him away from me!

Look, Charles, I am here today... not to get you back. I'm done doing that."

She paused to gather her thoughts and then continued, "If you really loved your son, you should have chosen me instead of Sheryl. You can't be with her and expect me to give up my son just like that.

What am I left with?

You can't have everything, you know? You want your son? Okay, then marry me. That's your solution."

In spite of her feelings, Leila's tone was cold and nonchalant.

Charles frowned as he heard her. "Even after everything, you are still daydreaming.

I'm telling you once and for all that I will never marry you! You have to let it go."

His reply was exactly what Leila expected to hear, though. So instead of getting angry, she gave him an

affectionate smile and went on saying, "Don't worry. I'm done waiting for you.

I have thought it over, and decided to give you another option." Leila paused before explaining,

"Nowadays, nothing is more useful and reliable than money. People will fail you but money can do

anything. So if you want your son, come back with a good offer next time."

She finished her thoughts as she stood up. "I guess we don't have anything else to talk about today, so

it's time to end this meeting. Take some time and think about how much having your son is worth to

you, then we can talk more."

"Wait!" Charles shouted angrily as she was about to leave. He stood up as well, looking furious.

Leila turned around halfway initially, but noticing his stand, she faced him and asked sarcastically,

"What? What are you going to do? Beat me right here?"

With an insolent smile, she reiterated, "Don't forget. Your kids are still in my hands. If you dare hurt me,

you will never see them again."

Chapter 779 Shirley's Hesitation

"I'm not an idiot." Charles goaded her on while hurling her with a cold and hard stare. His voice was

heavy with sarcasm. Leila was panic-stricken as she couldn't get hold of her nervousness. She felt a

sudden gripping fear crawling tightly in her chest, while she looked at Charles' livid expression. Her

instinct told her that there was something off.

She was mentally convincing herself that she had securely hidden the kids in a secret place. Finding

them would be so futile and next to impossible. Charles should have a hard time figuring out the

whereabouts of the children.

Leila prevented herself from averting her eyes from Charles. She thought that by keeping eye contact

with him, he wouldn't notice the turmoil rising within her. That behind her serene and composed self,

she was already trembling inside. Then she cautiously asked, "What do you mean?"

Charles, who seemed to be scrutinizing her face and was trying to gauge her reaction earlier, glanced

briefly at his wristwatch and spoke in a slow and consciously unhurried manner, "I mean, the police are out in force today. By this time, they have broken into your house and rescued the two kids. So do you think there is still a possibility that you can go back safely?" Charles said while flaunting a wry and humorless smile.

"No! That's impossible!" Leila shrieked in total disbelief. Her mental rejection was too strong that she stood rigidly frozen. Never did she expect that Charles could be this cunning, leaving her defenseless. He met up with her here, only to create a chance for the police to save the kids.

Coming to her senses, Leila felt infuriated and screamed at him, "Charles Lu! You're such a jerk! How can you deceive me? How dare you?"

"How dare I? Of course, I dare! The lives of the children are on the line." Charles retorted in a mocking tone while shaking his head in great disapproval and added, "Leila, don't overestimate your ability."

As he watched her closely, Leila looking shattered and defeated didn't escape Charles' notice. He then asked, "Do you want to go alone or be with one of my men?"

Suddenly, several men in suits appeared behind Leila. One of them stepped near Charles and urged

him, "Mr. Lu, we need to hurry up. The police are coming."

"Then go and take her away. I'll deal with the police," Charles uttered nonchalantly. His face exuded calmness.

Leila was taken away by these men. And as soon as their retreating figures were out of his sight,

Charles closed his eyes momentarily and let out a sigh of relief.

Sooner than expected, the policemen arrived with Shirley. Charles became restless when he didn't see

his son, Charlie. He was apprehensive when he asked the policeman, "Where is the boy?"

"Don't worry. He is alright," the policeman said grinning. "When we arrived at the scene, the boy was trying to take the girl out of the room. She was wrapped in a bed sheet. He broke his arm by accident when he fell down. Probably, he was startled by the loud crashing sound when we broke in. But the doctor said it wasn't severe," the policeman genially concluded.

"His arm was broken?" Charles instinctively asked, arching a brow. He then approached Shirley and carefully examined her. After making sure that she was all right, a rush of relief washed over him. He turned back his attention to the policeman and said, "Thank you, Sir. I'm going to see Charlie now."

"Hold on!" the officer said in a commanding tone. He suddenly remembered Leila. Charles halted on

his tracks when he heard the policeman ordered him to wait and asked him, "Where is Leila? I have asked you to spare more effort than necessary to keep her, right?"

"She..." Charles stammered. Charles paused for a moment as he was mentally considering a plausible explanation. A slight frown was visibly creasing on his forehead. And he said, "I'm sorry. I've tried my best to retain her. But she's supremely devious and way too scheming that she ran away."

"What? She ran away?" the policeman countered expressing wariness. In a stare-down with Charles, he initially set aside his extremely dubious assumptions. He thoroughly scanned Charles' face trying to figure out whether he was lying or not, but he couldn't find anything.

Charles was relatively calm and composed to show any hint.

"Mr. Lu, it's such a piece of bad news for you. Unfortunately, Leila is still at large, posing a great threat to your children's safety."

"I know," Charles acknowledged and nodded slightly. Then he added, "I will be more vigilant in protecting my kids. As for Leila, I believe you can catch her one day. I'm more than positive that she will soon be apprehended."

Charles glanced at the policeman with anticipation and asked, "Can I see my son now?"

"Sure," the policeman relented. Then he made way for Charles.

Charles came with Shirley in his arms. Seeing that the doctor was still preoccupied dealing with

Charlie's arm, he decided to watch his son. Charlie stood up right off as his gaze landed on them. He

was about to walk towards their way. But he was immediately pulled back to the seat. The doctor

helplessly asked, "Sit here! Don't you want your arm?"

Charlie had no choice but to sit back and keenly inspected Shirley with concern. "Dad, is Shirley

alright?" he asked worriedly.

"Don't worry, she's okay." Charles couldn't help letting out a chuckle seeing his son's face fretting. Then

he bent down to look at Charlie squarely and teased, "Silly boy, why did you try to escape from the

window with your sister? Did you want to die?"

Charlie threw a contemptuous glance at his father and quickly said, "That's all because you're too late.

It's all your fault."

"You..." Charles couldn't speak for a while. He was taken aback by the cutting remarks of his son. He

was slightly annoyed. But he couldn't blame his son for doing such act of bravery. Charles was very

pleased as he thought of the fact that both of his kids were sound and safe.

Recalling that he hadn't given Sheryl a call, he promptly dialed her number. He informed her that Shirley was safe. He heard Sheryl gasping on the other line and she sounded like she couldn't stop crying.

Isla was in Sheryl's company when the phone rang. While looking at the gamut of emotions in Sheryl's face, she handed her a piece of tissue. "It's okay, baby. Shirley is safe now. You should stop crying. She's all right," she consoled Sheryl.

"I..." Sheryl managed to croak after some time as she breathed deeply. "I am just so happy to hear that news," she continued as she struggled through a hiccup. "I'm so happy, really!" she added with excitement lacing her tone.

"So why are you still sobbing?" Isla gently asked with utmost concern. "Stop crying. Charles and Shirley must think I have bullied you when they come back and see your tears," Isla added teasing Sheryl.

Sheryl heaved a sigh of relief. She wiped out the tears that kept on spilling out and replied weakly at

Isla, "You can't imagine how I spent these days. And I wouldn't be able to forgive myself if Shirley got killed by Leila. If that happened, I'd rather die. I couldn't bear it to live without her. She's everything to me. She's my life."

"I can understand your feelings," Isla said softly. Isla patted Sheryl's hand to coax her and said, "If Amanda met the same situation, I would do the same things as you did. But Sher, you know Charles worked hard in rescuing the children. He exhibited exceptional skill in handling it. And that proved that he is such a capable man. So why not be with him once again? Give your relationship a chance."

Isla was kind of insistent in persuading Sheryl. She seemed like recounting a tale when she said, "In the past, during the years that you were not around, I witnessed the hardships he had gone through. Every single day he lived in regret. He was in deep pain. But there was nothing I could do to make him feel better. I felt sorry for him. He is a good and kindhearted man. And he loves you so much. So please forgive him."

"Isla..." Sheryl cut in gently as she gave her a knowing stare. Sheryl found herself got into such a predicament. She was confused. Her mixed up emotions made her mind even more a total mess. "I don't want to think about this matter right now. Please give me some more time," she concluded in a

soft voice that sounded like she was asking for a bit more of patience.

She knew how painful it was for Charles then. But now, many things had changed. She lacked the confidence to be with Charles again. She was in self-doubt and she couldn't trust herself.

"Okay, I won't push you," Isla said with a grin. She then quickly glanced at her hand and carried on with peeling the apple for Sheryl. Then she said, "I know it's your own business. And the decision is yours to make. I want to give you a suggestion though because I don't want to see you two break up knowing that you love each other so much."

Sheryl kept mute the whole time as she listened to Isla's insights. She knew that Isla was genuinely concerned about her. But she didn't want to think about this matter at this moment. She was not ready yet to put the whole thing into consideration.

Charles knew how devastated Sheryl had been about Shirley's disappearance. So after they arrived at the hospital, he hurriedly sent Charlie to another doctor for further treatment. Then he held Shirley's small hand and led her to Sheryl's ward.

The door of her ward burst opened and Shirley showed up at the doorway. Sheryl, who had just calmed

down, felt her tears began to well up in her eyes as she saw her daughter's silhouette. She helplessly started weeping again.

When Shirley saw her mother crying, she felt hesitant. She stood in a daze. Then she raised her head and looked at Charles.

Chapter 780 Confess To Sheryl

Having the whole family together was something that Charles could not even think of a few hours back.

He could only be thankful and grateful for this moment. He looked at Shirley as she held his hands. He put on a gentle smile and said softly to Shirley, "What's up?" He then bent down and patted her head.

"You just said that you want to see your mom, didn't you? See, your mom is over there," he said pointing out to Sheryl's direction.

So Shirley gathered her courage and walked over to the bed. A timid voice escaped her mouth as she called, "Mom."

Hearing Shirley's voice, Sheryl could not control her tears. She touched Shirley's cheeks, tears streaming down her cheeks.

She then reached for her and took her in a deep embrace as if she were holding a recovered treasure.

Seeing the happy scene, Isla sneaked out of the room. She felt it would be better to leave Charles and

Sheryl alone. She patted on Charles' shoulder meaningfully before she left.

After watching Sheryl's attitude just now, she realized that Charles still had a long way to go. All she could do at the moment was to pray for them so that they could be just like before very soon.

Charles walked beside the bed and kept his hand on Shirley's head. He caressed her soft hair and said, "Sher, I promised to you that I'd bring back Shirley to you absolutely safe and sound. See, I kept my word."

Shirley clung to her mom's chest and wiped the tears from her face. Sheryl felt a kind of solace that she could never express through words. Having Shirley close to her felt like a soothing balm to her anxious mind. She glanced at Charles and said in a soft, yet sincere voice, "Thank you so much."

Charles was taken aback as she expressed her gratitude to him in this way. He frowned as he replied, "Sher, there is no need of a thank you between us."

"No, I should say thanks to you," Sheryl replied with gratitude. She then lifted her head and glanced at Charles. All these days, she had only been anxious about Shirley. Now as Shirley was in front, she became concerned about Charles who stood strong at this hour of despair. She said in a concerned

voice, "I know you haven't got a proper sleep in these days. You have spent every minute to search for Shirley. You must be exhausted. Right?"

"I'm fine," Charles shook his head slightly and spoke with a smile. He looked tired but happy. There were dark circles around his eyes but the wide smile on his face made his state of mind to be absolutely clear. He was contented at heart. He was happier than anyone else that both his kids were safe and sound. So all his efforts were worthwhile.

"Oh, where is Charlie?" Sheryl spoke as she looked around to find him. It suddenly occurred to her that she could not see Charlie anywhere around her and that made her anxious once again. Not having Charlie in front of her eyes made her miss a beat of her heart. He had been taken away together with Shirley. Shirley was back. But Charlie was nowhere to be seen. How could it be that he had come back and had not come to meet her? Where was he?

"He is right here. He got injured. And the doctor is treating him now," Charles spoke in a calm voice. The moment the news of Charlie getting injured reached Sheryl's ears, she almost sprang up from her bed. She asked anxiously grasping Charles' hand, "What's wrong with Charlie? How did he get injured? Is it something serious?"

So many questions shot at one go left Charles with no time to reply to her. But Shirley, who had buried

herself in Sheryl's arms, opened her mouth, "Charlie got injured while he was trying to save me."

Sheryl turned towards Shirley with a surprised face as she realized that Shirley had started talking just

like before. At one moment she heaved a sigh of relief and at the next moment she again became

anxious about Charlie.

This was not the time to be happy for Shirley's recovery. She stroked Shirley's cheeks and asked,

"Shirley, could you explain to mom what you mean by that?"

Shirley looked at her mom and started telling the entire thing that had happened after they had been

kidnapped. Both Sheryl and Charles looked intensely at her as she spoke. Charlie had already gotten

out through the window. But Shirley didn't have enough strength so she was about to fall from the

window. Charlie immediately stood under her and supported her with his arms. But because of the

impact, both of them fell on the ground and Charlie even broke his arm.

Sheryl kissed her daughter as she felt excited and delighted to see that Shirley could talk freely like

before.

This entire kidnapping episode turned out to be a blessing in disguise which eventually helped Shirley to recover from her autism.

"Mom, I want to see Charlie," Shirley looked at Sheryl and said in a meek voice. Sheryl looked at her lovingly and nodded her head. "That's fine. I'll go with you," she said as she put her down and tried to get up from the bed. Sheryl felt much light and the spring in her steps was back. Charles held her in order to support her but she could stand straight without a support.

Both the mother and daughter stared at Charles, wanting him to show them the way. Charles guided them out of Sheryl's ward and took them to see Charlie.

By the time they arrived, the doctor had already tied a bandage on Charlie's arm. Shirley rushed to Charlie and touched his arm softly. Then she asked in a heartbroken voice, "Charlie, are you feeling the pain now?"

"No, I'm fine," Charlie replied with a warm smile. Charles looked at his son proudly. Both his kids were so incredibly sensitive and caring towards each other. Charlie lifted his head and saw Sheryl standing at the door. He looked into her eyes with a smile and said nothing. Sheryl stood at the doorway watching him with her eyes swelling with tears.

Then she slowly walked toward Charlie and took his hands into hers to express her gratitude. "Charlie, thank you, thank you very much," she said in a choked voice. Charlie came as a blessing to her at this moment. She could do nothing else but only keep saying thank you.

Charlie was so timid that he just smiled as a response. He looked at Charles and Shirley who were standing just next to him and smiled, saying no words.

Sheryl stared at Charlie lovingly and continued, "Thanks you Charlie. Without you, Shirley couldn't be recovered so fast. What do you want me to do for you to show my gratitude?"

Charlie frowned as he replied, "Sher, don't even mention it. I just did what I should have done."

He then looked at Shirley and said in a happy voice, "Shirley is my sister. It's my responsibility to protect her. After all I'm a man." Hearing such responsible words from a little boy, both Charles and Sheryl broke into a smile.

As he was speaking, he accidentally touched his injured arm and felt a pain from it. He couldn't help but give a choked cry. Sheryl became nervous about his injury and asked in a concerned voice, "How are you feeling? Is that very painful?"

"I'm fine. Don't worry," Charlie shook his head and rested his head back on the pillow. Sheryl rested his plastered arm gently by his side and stroked his hair to make him feel better. Then she turned to Charles and said, "You should take him home now. Have you spoken to the doctor? What does he have to say about his recovery? How long will the plaster be there?"

As Charlie's arm needed to be plastered, Charles wanted to stay in the hospital to accompany Sheryl. But Sheryl was in no mind to do so. She urged Charles to take them back home. He need a rest after having such a long day. In fact, they all needed to get some good nights sleep.

Charles stared at Sheryl with utmost concern and asked, "Are you feeling alright yourself?" Are you fine on your own?"

"Don't worry, I'm just fine." Sheryl wore a reassuring smile on her face as she spoke. "I'm not a child any more. Don't worry about me. You just take them back home as soon as possible. You all need a good rest now. You all had a very long and tiring day. I will be fine in the hospital. Don't worry about me."

As all the discords got solved successfully, Sheryl felt much lighter. She was half recovered as she saw the kids back. The last few days seemed just like a nightmare. Next day as Arthur came to see her, she

begged him to complete her discharge formalities. But Arthur refused and persuaded her, "Although the kids are all safe and sound now, you still need to stay in the hospital and recover. It's still a matter of concern that you have developed a propensity to faint whenever something urgent happens. You'd better stay here and improve your health before you leave."

"Grandpa, I feel much better now. Just allow me to go home. I promise, I will be fine," Sheryl pleaded with knitted brows. "Look at me, grandpa. I am perfectly alright. There is absolutely no point to prolong my stay in the hospital. It is time for me to get discharged," Sheryl asserted her opinion.

"You don't have the final say on whether you can be discharged or not. Only the doctor can decide whether you need to stay here or be released to go home," Arthur stuck to his opinion. He added with a neutral expression, "And even I'm a doctor. I know it very well when you can leave the hospital."

"Grandpa..." Sheryl furrowed her brows and tried to get his consent. She continued, "I'm really worried to leave Shirley and Charlie alone in the home. Please discharge me. I just want to be with the kids."

Sheryl kept reasoning with Arthur until he agreed to give in and gave his consent for her to be released.

"But you have to promise that you will come to the hospital for regular check-ups," he warned her in a

concerned voice.

As she walked out of the hospital, Abby was already waiting for her outside the gates. She received

Sheryl with a smile and said, "Get in to the car. I'll drive you to Dream Garden."

Sheryl didn't want to bother her and declined politely, "Don't worry, Abby. I can go there on my own."

But Abby rested her hand on her shoulder and insisted, "It doesn't matter. And I want to have a talk

with you." Saying this, she gestured towards the car and gently led Sheryl towards it.

Sheryl could not ignore Abby's words. She became curious about what Abby had to tell her. Hence,

she had no choice but to accept her offer. She boarded the car and seated herself on the front seat as

Abby started to drive. Sheryl waited for Abby to speak but she kept driving silently with a rather stern

expression on her face. Sheryl grew increasingly anxious and broke the silence, "Aunt Abby, you just

said that you want to talk to me? What's the matter?"

"Yes," Abby said curving her lips in a half-smile. But she didn't know how to say it. Sheryl could see that

she was in a dilemma and planned to wait for her to open up.

After a long moment of hesitation, she finally said to Sheryl, "Today, I wanted to meet you because I... I

want to apologize to you."

"Apologize?" Sheryl repeated the word with utter surprise. That was the last word she could expect

from Abby. She stared at her with a startled look and paused for a second before she spoke, "What do you mean by that? Why do you need to apologize to me?"

"I..." Abby remembered what Andy had done to Sheryl and her face got filled with remorse. She found it difficult to make an eye contact with Sheryl. But she had to do this no matter how difficult it was. She thought it would be better for her to confess to Sheryl herself rather than Sheryl finding it out herself one day.

"Sher, we know we have done something terribly wrong. I can understand if you'll blame us. But..."

Abby continued with a wry smile, "Mom and dad are very old. They have no idea about what Andy has done. I hope you won't blame them."