

Wedded Bride 81

Chapter 81

"Ye, Charles is right. Nancy must apologize to you." While Autumn was standing awkwardly beside Nancy, she heard Gary's voice emerging from behind the crowd.

Suddenly everyone started looking in his direction. They parted away and made way for him as he walked over to Nancy. "Nancy, you have served our family for more than twenty years, and I have always thought of you as a dutiful servant who knows her place." He said, "Ye is not only Charles's wife and my granddaughter-in-law, but also the hostess of this family. I hope you can respect her the way you respect me and Charles. Is that clear?"

"Mr. Lu, in fact..."

"Enough. I have been watching it from upstairs for quite a while now, and have a clear idea of what has happened here. Now, either you apologize to Ye, or you pack your bags and go back to the countryside. Just make your decision." Gary was very disappointed with Nancy. She had served the Lu Family for a long time, and yet paid no attention to basic manners.

"Hurry up, Nancy. Charles and Ye have to go to work. They don't have time to waste on you." urged Gary.

Nancy stood there for a long time, and hesitated. This was a well-paying job. If she lost it, there would be no way left to support her good-for-nothing son and daughter-in-law. What's more, her grandson had just been accepted by a university, hence she was in need of money. She just couldn't lose the job now.

The Lu Family had been treating her well, anyway. After weighing the pros and cons, Nancy decided to apologize. She said to Autumn, "Mrs. Lu, I am sorry for what happened today. Please be assured that things like this won't happen in the future. Please be gracious and forgive me."

Listening to her apology, Autumn let out an embarrassed smile. Certainly she knew that Nancy's apology was halfhearted. However, she had no choice but to accept it. "We are family, please don't mention it."

After Nancy's apology, Gary addressed the people around, "Let me make it clear today. Anyone who dares to show Mrs. Lu disrespect in the future, will be banished from this house."

Gary then patted Charles on the shoulder and said, "It is running late, you two should leave for work."

"Yes, grandpa." replied Charles. He took Autumn along and they got into the car. On their way to work, Charles still found her upset. He asked, "What's wrong? Still thinking about what just happened?"

"Yeah." Autumn nodded lightly, "I just can't understand why Nancy is so hostile towards me."

She sighed, "I am afraid that the way you treated her today will only make her hate me all the more. We share the same house, seeing each other is unavoidable. It will be hard for me to get along with her in days ahead."

"I did it on purpose, so as to set an example for other servants. They need to keep in mind that you are my wife, if they cherish their jobs here, they will have to obey and respect you." Charles smiled and said, "Well, just take your mind off it. Let's go and have some breakfast."

"Breakfast? Didn't you just have it at home? And we are running out of time by the way. What if we get late for work?" Autumn asked in confusion.

"There is no hurry." Charles drove the car and stopped at a Hong Kong-style restaurant. They had some Cantonese morning tea before driving back to Shining Company.

As always, they went upstairs separately. During Charles's stay in hospital, the company affairs were taken care of by David. At the same time, Linda had been on pins and needles the whole week. She turned pale after hearing about Charles's return.

When Autumn walked into the Secretary Department, David was the first one to greet her, "Welcome back, Mrs. Lu." he said.

"Hmm." Autumn simply nodded and said, "Thank you for putting in so much hard work these days."

"It's my pleasure." David smiled then asked, "How is Mr. Lu? Has he recovered?"

"Almost. We only have to change the wound dressing from time to time." Autumn smiled, "Please continue with your work then. "

"Yes, Mrs. Lu. There happens to be a document for Mr. Lu to sign." David said and went out with the document. Autumn returned to her seat, and glanced at Linda on her way. Linda kept her head bowed low and avoided any eye contact with Autumn.

Although Charles had been away from work these days, David had kept him informed about Linda's each and every move. After the incident that night, David had specially warned her to keep Autumn's identity a secret. Of course she dared not tell anyone. But the past one week was an anxious time for her, until the couple returned back to work.

She had no idea how Charles would deal with her. But she just didn't feel like sitting back and waiting.

Her job in Shining Company was currently a "gold rice bowl" for her. 'If I get fired by Shining Company, who will hire me?'

After a long hesitation, she stood up and walked over to Autumn's desk.

Autumn had just cleaned her desk up. She got startled at Linda's sudden appearance. "What's up?" she asked.

"Ye...eh... Mrs. Lu, can you spare me five minutes?" Linda gathered the courage and asked.

Autumn paused. She hesitated for a while before replying, "I don't see the necessity of it."

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Autumn said angrily, "If I was not Mrs. Lu and didn't know Sam, then I wouldn't have been able to escape from Mr. Song that night, right?"

"Well....." Linda kept silent. "Of course, I would not let you go if you were not Mrs. Lu." Linda thought.

"Why are you silent? Don't you have your answer?" Autumn went on with a sneer, "I have nothing to talk with you, you vicious woman. I have a lot of work to do. Please move aside."

With a pile of documents in hand, Autumn stood up and walked out. She stepped inside Charles's office and knocked the door.

"Come in." Charles's voice came from inside. Picking up the signed papers, David turned to Charles and said, "Mr. Lu, I'll be right outside."

"Okay. Go ahead." Charles put the pen cap back and asked Autumn standing in front of him, "What brings you here?"

"I have something to talk to you about." Sensing her seriousness, Charles nodded. He made her sit down beside him and asked, "What's wrong?"

Autumn hesitated for a second and then continued, "Charles, you asked me to work here because you want me to help you. But after working here the whole day, I can't do anything else for you. So after giving it a lot of thought, I have decided to resign. And I hope that you can agree with me."

"Resign? But why?" Charles was shocked by her words. He thought that she came here to talk about Linda and he was even prepared to comfort her. "Can you tell me your reason? Are you not satisfied with your salary?"

"No. I have said this earlier also that I am not fit to work here." Her work was simple, but things were more complicated than she expected. It was not easy to be his secretary at all.

Take Linda for example. Though she was not of good moral standing, she was a capable secretary. She was good at closing contracts and she also knew how to cope with business engagements.

But things were different for Autumn. What were her capabilities?

"Charles, I know you asked me to work here for my own good, but I have taken careful consideration. It is not a good idea for me to work here. I am not used to this job. And I am sure you also know that I can't handle it. So after much consideration, I have decided to resign." Autumn smiled and added, "Do you remember? That one time when I told you that I wanted to take a break? Well, I have selected a good place for myself. It's Z City. I will find a job when I come back. As for Linda....."

Autumn hesitated for a while at the thought of Linda. Though she really hated her annoying conduct, Autumn had to admit that she was competent at work. Autumn knew that Charles would be busy with his work after her resignation, so she wanted to persuade Charles not to fire Linda.

"Even though Linda went too far that day, fortunately she didn't go further to make serious mistakes. And I am sure that David would be busy after my resignation, so you'd better not to fire Linda. She is a capable woman and she can help you with your work. Or you can think about firing her after you find the right person to replace her. What do you think?" Autumn asked for Charles's opinion.

Charles was stunned by her words. 'Why doesn't she care how others treated her?

Like Nancy and Linda.' Charles thought and felt surprised.

"Ye, don't you feel angry about her behavior?" Charles asked her.

"Of course I am angry." Autumn nodded and then explained, "But I have taken everything into careful consideration. You will be very busy with your work. And since David is the only one who can help with your work, don't fire Linda immediately. But you have to be very careful about her, because I am afraid that....."

"Ye, you are really very considerate." Charles embraced her while talking. In fact, bearing the same misgivings as Autumn, he was not going to fire Linda immediately. And he thought that perhaps Autumn would not accept this news. But he never expected that Autumn persuade him not to fire Linda. He was really touched by her.

Charles understood that it was because Autumn was worried about him.

"Are you moved?" Autumn joked with him and smiled. "If you are really touched, then sign my letter of resignation. I am going on a vacation."

"Naughty girl!" Charles stared at Autumn fondly but still signed on her letter of resignation.

"Though I have agreed with your resignation, you can't leave immediately because I still have to recruit the right person to help me. Can you help me look for some good candidates from the Internet in the afternoon?" Charles asked Autumn.

"Okay. I will do it." Autumn nodded and then said, "Well, then I've got go now."

Linda got a call from Charles after Autumn left his office. Linda was extremely nervous since she thought that she would definitely get fired.

However, she didn't expect at all that Charles would only scold her for a while. And finally tell her that he would not fire her this time. He even told her that it was Autumn who pleaded his mercy for her. Of course, Charles also warned her that he would not let her off if this happened again next time.

Linda felt so grateful that she went to Autumn's office immediately. Though she felt awkward, Linda finally said, "Autumn, I have to thank you for what you did for me. If it was not for you, I would have been fired today."

Being a lucky survivor from getting unemployed, her eyes filled with tears.

"There is no need for you to thank me." Autumn said indifferently to Linda. "I know you are capable enough, and I just did you a favor at little cost. But if you make such a mistake again, then I promise you that I won't be sympathetic next time." Autumn added.

"I won't. I promise I won't do it again." Linda shed tears of gratitude and then returned to her seat after extending her appreciation. She dared not to cook up any evil ideas anymore.

After Linda left, Autumn began to look for some good candidates for the position of Charles's secretary on a professional job-hunting website of Y City. Unexpectedly, Autumn happened to find Leila's resume.

She hesitated for a while, but finally made a call to Leila. When the phone got through, it was Leila's voice on the other side. She cheerfully said, "Ye, I didn't expect that you would call me."

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Leila came over for an interview in the afternoon. Autumn wanted to give her a chance. She couldn't forget how much Leila helped her when she was employed by Cloud Advertising Company. Moreover, it was because of Autumn that Leila lost her job.

If Autumn remembered correctly, Leila was a graduate from a very prestigious university. Moreover, she was professionally competent and hard working. The opportunity was right in front of Leila. The only question was whether she would be smart enough to seize it or not.

If Leila didn't do well in the interview, there was nothing more that Autumn could do for her.

After the interview got over, Leila called Autumn cheerfully. She told Autumn that she had passed the interview and had to start to work next week. Autumn congratulated her with a big smile.

"Ye, you are being so nice to me! Can I treat you with dinner tonight?" Leila was so excited that she would be working as Charles's secretary in Shining Company.

"No, Leila. It is not important" Autumn said no in the sweetest way possible. She further added, "Remember, work hard! Shining Company, unlike Cloud Advertising Company, is a very big company. You should work more and talk less."

"I get it." Leila said yes in a serious tone.

However till this moment, Autumn didn't realize that the story of "the Farmer and the Snake" existed in the real world too.

Autumn selected some other alternatives. But when she was about to go off duty, Yvonne broke in and dashed into Charles's office.

"Miss Ye, the boss is busy right now. You can't go in now..." David blocked Yvonne's path. When Charles was in hospital, she used to come here every day. Even David could tell her intention. Charles was finally back to work now.

Yvonne stared coldly at David and commanded, "Get out of my way! I'm Charles's sister-in-law. How dare you stand in my way?"

"Miss Ye, you are giving me a hard time. Don't take it personally. Even if Mrs. Lu were here, I wouldn't have let her in." David stated calmly and thought to himself, 'Mrs. Lu is not as willful as you are.'

"You..." Yvonne went mad. It took a long time for her to calm down. She then ran to Autumn. The moment Autumn saw Yvonne, she felt sick, "Why are you here again?"

"I booked a table at the Red Rose Restaurant tonight. Tell Charles to come there alone!" Yvonne was not sure whether Charles would come or not. But with Autumn's help, she could be certain that Charles would come.

"No!" Autumn replied with curt finality. She added, "Charles hasn't yet recovered from his wound. So, he's definitely not up for meaningless socializing."

"Oh, cut the crap! Don't you dare forget that Charles was hurt because of you! If it weren't for you, he wouldn't have been injured in the first place." Yvonne sneered, "I'm warning you, if I don't see him at the restaurant tonight, you would never be able to see your grandma again. "

"By the way, " Yvonne walked to the door, but suddenly turned around and spoke to Autumn, "Mom said she would arrange your meeting with your grandma. But if you..."

"Charles will be there." Autumn immediately made a promise. The moment she heard about the possible meeting with her grandma, she couldn't help but accept the deal.

Autumn hadn't seen her grandma for over a month. She was naturally very worried about her. "Don't tell your mom. I will ask Charles to be there."

Autumn shouted back at Yvonne. She was too anxious to keep a low pitch. After all, Linda had already gone off duty, so she didn't have to worry about being heard by anyone else.

Yvonne smiled with satisfaction. Soon after Yvonne left, Charles walked out of his office. Seeing Autumn waiting for him at the door, he couldn't help but smile, "Let's go to the market."

Before he knew Autumn, he'd never thought that he could enjoy something as boring as going to the market and buying vegetables. He felt a certain degree of warmth, a homely feeling, when he would see Autumn selecting the daily necessities. While Autumn would do that, he would walk hand in hand with her.

"Charles..." Autumn hesitated. She grabbed Charles's hand and said, "I have something to tell you..."

"What's the matter?" Charles gave Autumn a confused look. Autumn paused for a long time. Thinking about her grandma, she gathered some courage and said, "Charles, my sister Autumn said that she booked a table at the Red Rose Restaurant. She wanted to invite..."

"No!" Charles interrupted Autumn.

"Charles, she wants to thank you." Autumn was saying all of this against her own will. She didn't want Charles to go there, but she had no other choice.

"She invited you to dinner last time, but you couldn't go because of that accident. She waited for more than three hours at the restaurant, just to thank you. Could you please go and oblige her this time?" Autumn put in a good word for Yvonne, but she felt pretty awful on the inside.

"Why do you want me to go there so badly?" Charles asked with a frown.

"It's just a dinner..." Autumn muttered.

Charles fixated his eyes on Autumn and saw her struggling expression. He realized that Autumn was threatened again, so he nodded, "Fine, I'll go there. But... you are coming with me."

"No! She only invited you..." Autumn was anxious, but Charles put his foot down.

"Why do you always listen to her?" Charles frowned, "I'm your husband. Do you think it's appropriate for me to have dinner with my sister-in-law alone? What if people see us? What will they think? Anyway, if you are not coming with me today, I won't have dinner with her."

"But..."

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"Good evening." Charles greeted Yvonne indifferently, "You look beautiful."

It was just social etiquette for Charles, but Yvonne got it all wrong. 'I knew Charles is fond of me. After all, I'm such a beauty!' She thought in her head.

Blushing, Yvonne nodded her head and smiled. 'Autumn Ye is a real eyesore!' she thought to herself. She pondered hard for a moment before she held Autumn's arm intimately and said, "Charles, please have a seat and read the menu. We need to use the restroom."

After finishing her sentence, Yvonne forced Autumn to come with her to the restroom. As soon as Charles disappeared from their sight, Yvonne's tone of voice changed. She said, "I told you to ask Charles to come over alone! You don't want to see your grandma, huh?"

"You are getting me wrong..." Autumn frowned, "I didn't want to come. But Charles was clear that he wouldn't come here if I didn't come along with him. I practically had no choice."

Autumn tried to make Yvonne understand and said, "Please calm down. I'll take another table. I won't bother you..."

"You better not!" Yvonne stared at Autumn in disdain and sneered, "If you dare do anything to destroy our date, I swear, you will never ever see your grandma again!"

Yvonne was about to leave after warning Autumn, but Autumn stopped her, "Yvonne, I know you detest me, and I will stay away from you today. But... Charles hasn't got his stitches removed yet. It is important to watch what he eats. He should avoid certain food items, such as shrimp.."

"Enough!" Yvonne shook off Autumn's hand discontentedly and said, "I will take care of Charles! Don't flatter yourself as the real Mrs. Lu! This is none of your concern!"

Yvonne walked out of the restroom. She sat down in front of Charles and asked in a soft voice, "Charles, have you ordered?"

"Not yet. You order the dishes." While handing Yvonne the menu, Charles looked back in search of Autumn. Yvonne smiled and asked, "Charles, are you looking for my sister?"

"Yes. I guess she went to the restroom with you. Why didn't she come back?" Charles asked in a cold voice.

"My sister was afraid that I might feel uncomfortable if she was around, so she took another table. Charles, I invited you to dinner to thank you for giving me the job." Yvonne asked with a friendly smile, "Would you like... a beefsteak?"

"Okay." Charles answered nonchalantly. He had no appetite left now that he had to eat alone with Yvonne. The dinner was just a formality for him. In reality, he wanted to find out Yvonne's intention.

"You don't have to thank me." Charles took a sip from the lemonade in front of him and continued. "You are Yvonne's sister. It is no big deal for me to give you this job. You didn't have to treat me with dinner for such a trivial matter."

Charles smiled and added, "Besides, we are a family now. Don't be so formal."

"Charles, I know you don't care about the formalities. I asked you out for dinner today because I admire you so much. You are handsome and have a successful career. You are being so nice to my sister. I wish I could also get married to someone like you!" Yvonne lowered her head shyly. She made an obscure statement, but Charles got her point.

"Charles, I am really jealous of my sister, you know? When my aunt told her to get married to you, she was not ready. She even wanted to flee from the wedding. I don't know why! You are exceptionally

handsome and rich! What more did she want?" Yvonne was filled with jealousy, "If she didn't agree to marry you, I would have married you certainly."

"Flee from the wedding? Is it true?" Charles gave a scornful smile. If he didn't know the truth of the substitute bride, he would have been fooled by Yvonne.

But now, he was just amused by Yvonne's acting.

"Of course..." Yvonne had no idea that Charles was aware of her true identity. She continued with her lies and added, "Charles, I like you very much. When my sister fled from the wedding, I was so happy. Had I been married to you, I would have been so nice to you, unlike Yvonne..."

"Really?" Charles snorted, "Your sister is my wife now. Since she is married to me, I'll be nice to her for the rest of my life. This is what a man should do."

"Right..." Yvonne gave an awkward smile. She hated Autumn even more now. If it weren't for Autumn, Charles would have easily fallen in love with her by now. "Charles, you are being so nice to my sister. But she hasn't completely devoted herself to you. Leave her fleeing aside, now..."

"Now what?" Charles finally understood Yvonne's intention now. She was here to create misunderstandings between Autumn and him.

Charles was not a fool. He wouldn't believe the hearsay, unless he saw it all with his own eyes.

The longer Charles stayed with Autumn, the more he fell in love with her. He knew she was pure and kindhearted. Yvonne on the other hand, was only making him uncomfortable with her presence.

"Charles, do you know a man named Sam Lin? He just came back from abroad." Yvonne planned to use Sam to create a rift between Autumn and Charles.

She had already dug sufficient information about Sam. Sam was Chris's boss now, so Charles definitely knew him.

Chapter 85

"Don't worry. I'm confident about myself. If she chooses Sam over me, it means he is superior to me." Charles said humbly, as if to suggest that if Autumn chose him over Sam, it would be a great honor for him. This got Yvonne more angry and jealous.

"You don't have to belittle yourself, Charles. I think you're much better than Sam. I..." Yvonne got so excited that she held Charles's hand but Charles frowned a little.

"What are you doing?" Charles withdrew his hand from her and demanded, "Don't you dare forget who you are. I came here to see you only for your sister's sake. If you do anything that is out of line again, you cannot blame me for being rude!"

"I am serious, Charles. I really..." Yvonne didn't think Charles could be so cruel to her, so she went ahead and continued trying to sway his mind.

After all, nobody ever rejected her.

"Enough!" Charles interrupted and shouted at her. "I'm only going to say this one more time. I know what you're thinking, but I'm telling you loud and clear that even if I happen to break up with your sister, God forbid for any reason, I won't ever date you. You're just not my type. Am I clear?"

With a sneer, he added, "As you are Yvonne's sister, our paths will cross again. But remember, for me, you are only her sister. If you say those ridiculous words again, I promise I won't go easy on you anymore."

"..." It didn't occur to Yvonne that Charles would say such unkind words to her. She was terrified.

While the mood was a little awkward, the waiter came to serve. Yvonne bowed her head slightly and apologized, "Forgive me for being so abrupt, Charles. Let's hurry up and eat."

Charles maintained a straight face, and ignored her. He made his feelings clear to her and was also aware of her intentions now. After two bites of steak, he stood up and said, "I'm full. You take your time but I think I should leave."

"Charles!" Yvonne had just cut her steak and was about to eat it when Charles announced that he was leaving. Seeing that Charles was leaving, she requested him to stay a little longer.

"Can't you just stay here a little longer with me? I haven't finished my meal yet." She looked at Charles pitifully, but he was not ready to change his mind. "Sorry, my wife hasn't eaten yet. I came here because of her. Now that I've had my meal and made myself clear to you, it's time for me to go. I have to have dinner with my wife."

"Charles! Charles! Charles Lu!" No matter what Yvonne called him, Charles didn't look back. Autumn who was sitting close to the door hadn't order anything. As she looked up, she saw Charles walking towards her.

She paused for a moment before asking, "Aren't you eating with my sister? How did you finish so quickly?"

Charles finished his meal before she had started to order?

"I came out as soon as I finished my meal in case that is what you want to know. Let's go home. Come on." Charles said, smiling as he pulled up Autumn from her seat.

"But..." Autumn knitted her brows, worried that something was amiss.

"Come on. I'd like to eat some egg noodles cooked by you. Let's go back. Will you cook it for me?" Charles acted in a pettishly charming manner, and Autumn just nodded helplessly.

Walking out of the Red Rose Restaurant, Autumn kept asking Charles about his conversation with Yvonne. "Didn't you have dinner with Autumn? How did you come out so quickly? Did she say something out of line?"

"Yes." Charles smiled at her and answered, "She said she likes me. She even asked me to dump you and go out with her. What do you think about that?"

It took Autumn a long time to react. She swallowed nervously, and replied, "She... she really said those words?"

Charles nodded. He was curious to know her answer. "What do you think about that?" he asked again.

"She is crazy!" Autumn replied, frowning. 'Yvonne, even if you were desperate to separate me and Charles, you shouldn't have done that. You're calling trouble for yourself.' she criticized Yvonne in her head.

"Then... What did you say to her?" She asked him nervously after a long pause.

"Take a guess?" Charles did not answer directly.

Autumn had no idea what he would have told Yvonne. Moreover, she thought she wasn't good enough for Charles and always let him down. To be fair, Yvonne was very good looking. If Yvonne asked him out, why would he even say no?

"You... You haven't said yes to her, have you?" Autumn asked him nervously.

"You really have no confidence in me." After a sigh, Charles continued, "Of course, I gave her a firm refusal. And I told her I loved you very much. Moreover, I told her, if you don't decide to divorce me, I would want to spend the rest of my life with you."

When Charles expressed his feelings, Autumn blushed a little.

"Is that what you told her?" Autumn asked.

"Yes, that's what I told her." Charles nodded and said, "Did I say anything wrong?"

Autumn was so happy with his answer that she added two extra eggs to his egg noodles when she made dinner for him that day.

Leila started her work in Shining Company, and Linda was her immediate boss. When she saw Autumn on the first day at work, her eyes widened in surprise. "Why are you here, Ye?" she asked.

Chapter 86

Linda took Leila to the same restaurant where she went with Autumn before. She asked Leila while looking through the menu. "Leila, what would you like to have?"

"Anything works with me." Leila replied. Leila looked at Linda with a smile and said, "Linda, I am not picky when it comes to food. Can you recommend the best cuisine of this restaurant? But let me clear you one thing in advance. I will pay the bill for this meal. It is my first day at work here and you are my senior. I am certain that I'll need your support and guidance in the future, so this is my way of extending my thanks and appreciation for you in advance."

"No. No. No." At the thought of what happened with Autumn, Linda was trembling with fear in the office but now she was all chatty with Leila. She replied, "I am your senior, so it will be completely unreasonable for me to let a newcomer treat me."

"Linda, don't be formal with me." Leila smiled and said, "We are colleagues now, so we must get along with each other today and in the days to come. You can take me to dinner later. But this time, it is my treat."

On hearing this, Linda didn't insist further.

Leila remained silent for a while and then said. "Linda, to be frank, I have to thank Ye. She is the one who introduced me to this job. If she didn't tell me about the job, I would still be helplessly hunting for a job. But I felt really weird when I found out that you and Ye aren't very cordial. Is there any problem going on? Did you both fight over something?"

Linda felt awkward when she heard Leila mentioning Autumn to her. David had forbidden her from disclosing Autumn's real identity to anyone, so she just smiled to avoid giving away any details to Leila. She said, "Of course not. I even dined with her in this restaurant on the first day of her work. Coincidentally, she was sitting on the seat where you are sitting now. But Shining Company is big and complicated, so we usually talk less and work more in the office. Of course we talk to each other whenever we have to discuss anything related to work but that's just about it."

Linda smiled and continued, "It is natural for you to be confused about the entire equation, but I have to remind you that Shining Company is different from other companies. In case you are not good at your job, there is a fair chance of you being fired sooner or later. "

"I definitely understand what you are trying to say. Moreover, now that I have decided to work here, I am ready for everything." Leila grinned and said to Linda. "But I still want to thank you for giving me a reality check, Linda. Don't worry. I won't let you down."

"Well, I'm sure, you won't." Linda laughed merrily. Just then, the waiter arrived and served the dishes for them. Linda pointed at the chicken and said, "Try this. It tastes really good."

Leila immediately tried the chicken and was amazed by its taste. She said, "Wow, it is indeed a good restaurant and the food here is lip smacking."

"Well, Linda....." Leila hesitated for a second but finally said, "I want to ask you something that I am a little confused about."

"Go ahead." Linda replied while eating.

Leila was hesitant for a while, but then she finally asked, "When I was working at Cloud Advertising Company with Ye, I noticed that Mr. Lu always took good care of her. I think there is an unusual relationship between them. I even asked Ye about it many times but she simply denied and said that Mr. Lu is nothing but a colleague and a good friend."

Leila then stopped for a while and then continued, "But I feel it is quite strange that Mr. Lu even canceled his cooperation with Cloud Advertising Company after Ye's resignation. Not too long after, Ye became a secretary of Mr. Lu and she even introduced me to this job. So what do you think? Is there something going on between the two of them? "

"Why are you asking me about this? Linda looked at Leila vigilantly. On David's instructions, she had buried the secret about Autumn's identity deep in her heart. And she had no intention to share this secret with anyone.

"Nothing. It's weird and I am just curious about it. " Leila looked at Linda confidentially and added, "Do you think..... Do you think Ye could be Mr. Lu's mistress? Since Mr. Lu is married, it is really wrong on Ye's part to do that. It would be unfair to Mrs. Lu if Ye maintains such an ambiguous relationship with Mr. Lu."

"That's enough. " Leila's words reminded Linda of her own foolishness. She also thought of Ye as Mr. Lu's mistress before. In reality, nobody could think of Ye as Mrs. Lu in the first instance. "It is none of your business." Linda replied.

"Don't take it seriously. I just asked casually." Leila replied with a passive smile. She didn't push further since she understood that she couldn't dig any gossip from Linda on this matter.

Another girl named Alice joined Shinning Company the following day. Alice was a petite and pretty girl. She was extremely talented and had just returned from abroad after completing her studies. In comparison to Leila, Alice seemed to be a more suitable choice for this position.

The thing about Alice was that she was only dedicated to her work. She did nothing to please the people around her in the company. This was the reason why Autumn was really fond of her. On the other hand, Linda and Leila totally detested her.

However, Autumn had an idea that Alice was not as innocent as she looked. She could always find ways to escape troubles. But none the less, she was very competent at her job.

Now that Leila and Alice got efficient at their work, it was time for Autumn to leave.

But when Autumn decided to discuss this matter with Charles, she got a call from Wendy. After hesitating for a while, she finally answered the phone. As soon as the phone was connected, she heard Wendy's voice from the other end of the phone, "Bring Charles home for dinner tonight. I will wait for you."

"Charles already has plans for tonight, so....." Autumn said. However, before she could decline her request, Wendy raised her voice, "It's none of my business. It is your job to convince him. I want to see you both at dinner today at any darn cost."

Wendy hung up the phone before Autumn could say anything further. She took a sigh and then knocked the door of Charles's office.

"Come in." Charles was in a good mood since he had just finished a video call with a client.

"Is your meeting over?" Before entering Charles' cabin, Autumn called him at his desk but Charles asked her to wait since he was in a meeting.

Charles nodded and then asked, "Do you have any documents for me to sign?"

As far as Charles was concerned, Autumn would not come to him without any reason in the office. Charles also adapted to their professional relationship while in the office. Therefore, he would only talk business with her in the company.

Chapter 87

She opened the envelope and saw a plane ticket inside. The travel date was in three days, and its destination was... Z City. She had always wanted to go there.

'Every time I brought up any plans to travel, Charles always kept silent about it. But now he himself, bought me a ticket.' Autumn thought to herself. She was so moved that she didn't know what to say.

'I have been dying to go on a trip, but I had to give it up for many reasons. First, it was work and then grandma was ill and it would be hard to leave her by herself. Now, Charles bought me a ticket. I am still worried about my grandma but I should go.' she mused.

Autumn asked Charles. "Why... Why did you do this?"

"Don't you like it?"

"Of course I do. I just... never expected something like this." Autumn said with a smile, "Thank you!"

"You can thank me later. I have a bigger surprise for you." Charles smiled and handed her another envelope. He said, "There's a travel guide on Z City inside the envelope. I have also booked the hotel for

you. All the information is right there on the travel guide. Oh, one more thing. There is a bank card inside. You can use it to pay for your travel expenses. You can buy whatever you like during your trip. "

When she looked at the hand-written travel guide, Autumn was exceedingly touched. She asked, "Did you prepare... all of these by yourself?"

"How could I do that?" Charles touched his nose bashfully, and said, "I won't waste my time on these boring, trivial matters. David did all of these."

Charles thought to himself. 'If I tell her that I collected all this travel information while she was asleep every night, she might make fun of me.'

Charles instinctively said that David prepared all of it.

Autumn couldn't help but laugh. "Obviously this is Charles's handwriting. He looked so cute... lying like that." she mused.

Autumn took the bank card from the envelope and gave it to Charles. She said in a serious tone, "I accept the travel guide and the ticket, but ... I can't take this."

She paused for a while, and then continued, "I got a sum of money from Cloud Advertising Company when I left. With that, I can afford my travel expenses so I don't need your card."

"Ye, why don't you take my card anyway?" Charles said with a displeasing look, "You're my wife now, so you are supposed to use my money."

"I know. But..." After hesitating, Autumn continued, "I can afford things myself now. I don't need to spend your money. If I run out of money one day, I will use yours. I promise."

Charles realized that Autumn had made up her mind and took back the card. He said, "If anything goes wrong on your trip, don't forget to call me."

Autumn nodded and said, "I will. One more thing. Today, mom called and asked us to come home to dine with them. I know that you have an important appointment tonight, so..."

Charles nodded, "It's okay. I will go." He added, "You go first after you get off work. Tell mom that I will be a bit late."

Autumn also nodded in agreement and said, "You don't need to force yourself to go if you do not have the time. I will explain it to mom."

Charles took her hand and said, "Don't worry about it." "You can get off work earlier today. After all, you have already quitted you job. Go home to the Gu family early."

"I will." Autumn didn't refuse anymore. She wanted to know what trick Wendy was playing this time.

After she left Charles's office, she started to pack her stuff. Leila was amazed to see that, so she asked, "Ye, what are you doing?"

Autumn replied plainly, "I'm packing up my stuff." She added, "Is there anything wrong?"

Leila said, "I know you're packing up your things. I mean... Why are you doing it?"

"I quit my job." Nobody had any idea about her resignation except David. Even Linda was stunned.

Since the incident, Linda had been embarrassed to face Autumn. Now hearing that Autumn had quitted, Linda was rather surprised.

Autumn smiled and told Leila, "I won't be coming to work tomorrow. I hope you do a good job here."

It didn't take long for Autumn to finish her packing as she had worked in Shining Company just for a few days. When she walked out of the company, she bought some presents in case Charles was in a hurry and forgot to bring any. She didn't want to give Wendy any chance to look down upon Charles.

Now Yvonne was supposed to be at work. But when Autumn arrived at the Gu family house, she was surprised to see Yvonne home.

Autumn put the presents on the table, and greeted plainly, "Mom..."

Before Autumn arrived, her mother and Yvonne had been chatting with each other on the couch, about how, with the help of Charles, Simon had solved the crisis that his company faced. Now, they had continued to lead a well-off life that common people admired.

Autumn's arrival broke the merry atmosphere.

Autumn was raised by her grandma. Although she had been told that Wendy lived here at the Gu house, she seldom came. Therefore, she had no attachment to the Gu family, let alone Simon.

Autumn greeted Wendy coldly, and then sat on the couch. If Yvonne hadn't escaped before her wedding ceremony, she wouldn't have had anything to do with this family.

Chapter 88

Wendy frowned. She said no such thing. She looked questioningly at Yvonne who was beside her. Yvonne burst with anger and shame as she was caught lying. She pointed a finger at Autumn, "Autumn Ye, how dare you? I said 'Tell Charles to come alone'. But what did you do? Why did you go to the restaurant with Charles? By the way, speaking of the dinner, Charles only took one bite of the beefsteak and left me all alone. How can you ask me to keep my promise? You are dreaming?"

Autumn snapped back, "Yvonne Gu, if I didn't come, you wouldn't even get to have dinner with him. Besides, even though I tagged along, I didn't even sit at the same table with you and your beloved Charles. You are not attractive enough to keep his attention. Why put the blame on me?"

"You..." Autumn's unreserved revelation of what happened humiliated Yvonne. Yvonne yelled, "I don't care! if it weren't for you, I wouldn't have been humiliated like that. If it weren't for you, Charles would have already fallen in love with me."

Autumn sneered, "Yvonne Gu, you always put the blame on others? Why don't you reflect on your own actions? Stop putting it on me."

"Enough!" Simon, who had been silent all this time, interrupted Autumn, "Autumn, I know you have been wronged deeply, getting married to Charles like that. Now that the crisis at my company has passed we'd better get everything back on track. After all, Charles really wanted to marry Yvonne first. Now Yvonne has changed her mind and wants to be Charles's wife. You are Yvonne's elder sister. You should be helping her instead of hurting her."

Autumn gave a scornful smile and thought to herself, 'What a ridiculous family! When Yvonne fled from the wedding, they forced me to marry Charles. Now they want me to give it all up because Yvonne changed her mind?'

"Uncle Simon, you are right. As the elder sister, I should help my younger sister." Autumn stressed the word "help" as she sneered and continued, "How about this? I call Charles now and tell him I am Autumn Ye. I was forced to get married to him. Now the real Yvonne Gu regrets having fled from their wedding and now wants to be his wife. What do you think of that?"

"You..." Simon pointed exasperatedly at Autumn. Autumn had always been weak. Why was she behaving so aggressively today?

It was no surprise that Autumn had become so aggressive. She had been fooled by Wendy and Yvonne so many times. They even threatened Autumn with her grandma again and again. Yvonne always forced Autumn to pair herself with Charles. Autumn was finally fed up.

"Enough! Stop arguing!" Wendy said coldly. She had a mind of her own and had defeated countless ladies to be Simon's wife. She didn't know why her daughter Yvonne was so brainless.

Anyway, Yvonne was still Wendy's loving daughter.

Wendy stared at Autumn and said, "Stop mocking Simon and Yvonne! Let's make a deal. If you help Yvonne win Charles's love, you'll get a healthy grandma back. Does that sound good for you?"

"I won't do anything for you anymore." Autumn answered blatantly, "Wendy Ye, don't use my grandma to threaten me ever again. From now on, as long as I don't see my grandma, I will never do anything for you."

Yvonne and Simon's faces darkened. If Autumn refused to help them in the future, what should they do?

"Autumn Ye, how dare you?" Yvonne spluttered.

"You can have a try, " Autumn sneered, "If I don't see my grandma, I wouldn't do anything for you. I might even let something slip in a moment of weakness one day. Don't blame me for that."

Wendy cast a stern glance at Autumn, "What a disrespectful daughter you are! Shame on you!"

"I have become what you made me." Autumn sneered, "After all, like mother, like daughter."

"Well, I guess you don't want to see your grandma anymore." Hearing Wendy mention her grandma, Autumn frowned and asked, "What do you mean by that?"

"I have a video of your grandma. She will have surgery soon and has no time to see you. If you don't want to watch this video, then... I'll just delete it." Wendy said with a cold smile.

"Is that true?" Autumn was feeling like a roller coaster. It took a while to calm herself down.

"Of course it is. Have a look." Wendy handed Autumn her cell phone. Wendy knew that if she didn't let Autumn know what happened to her grandmother, Autumn would definitely turn her coat. Therefore, Wendy had threatened the old woman that if she didn't do as she was told, Wendy would harm Autumn.

Autumn's grandma didn't want Autumn to worry about her, so she took the video as Wendy instructed.

Autumn played the video. The moment she saw her grandma, she felt tears well up in her eyes.

"Grandma..." She murmured as she reached out to her grandma's face, but she could only touch the cold screen.

At the beginning of the video, Autumn's grandma lay in a hospital bed coughing. She had lost much weight and looked as if the wind could easily blow her away.

She looked rather pale. But she gave a kind smile before the camera. "Do I start now? Autumn, I'm feeling good now. Your mother has found me a doctor and I'll have surgery soon. Don't worry about me. Take good care of yourself. I'll come to see you when I recover."

Hearing her grandma's voice, Autumn couldn't hold back the tears as they streamed down her cheeks.

Autumn watched the video many times. Finally, she wiped away the tears and raised her head asking, "How is my grandma? I haven't seen her in a month. Why does she look so thin?"

Wendy took back her phone and answered, "Your grandma is ill and it's normal for her to lose weight. I have hired a nurse for her. You can see her after the operation."

Chapter 89

It was Sam who showed up at the door. Seeing him there, Autumn was struck by how quickly Wendy had been working on her plan.

She couldn't believe that Wendy, while forcing her to push Charles away to create opportunities for Yvonne, was also using Sam to get between her and her husband.

This woman had a good strategy, and what a sophisticated plan!

"Simon, Wendy, thanks for having me." Sam greeted. Like Autumn, he had brought many gifts. Seeing Autumn sitting on the sofa, he nodded lightly at her. As for Wendy and Simon, his opinion of them had been low, which was evident in the cold greeting he gave them.

"Here you are at last! I've been expecting you." Beaming with delight, Wendy took Sam's hand and sat him down beside Autumn. "There is no need to bring so many gifts. This is so kind of you, really!" she exclaimed.

She was grinning from ear to ear, but Sam responded dryly to her excessive enthusiasm and said, "You are welcome."

Wendy was a bit embarrassed hearing his words. She then glared at Autumn and snapped, "Sam is our guest. Why don't you have some manners and get him a glass of water?"

She turned back to Sam, put her smile back on and said, "You and Autumn grew up together. She's been rather too free with you and has put all the courtesies behind. Don't be too surprised about that."

Serving the guests had been the duty of the servants. Since when did Autumn have to do it?

Superficially, Wendy was scolding Autumn for her misbehavior. But in truth, she was trying to show everyone the close relationship between Autumn and Sam. Fortunately Charles wasn't there. Otherwise, one wouldn't be able to draw his sour face, hearing all this.

Wendy continued playing matchmaker. She smiled and said, "Speaking of which, I bet you two haven't seen each other for many years. Autumn has been living with her grandma since childhood. Fortunately, you were around to take care of her. I had always thought that... you two would be destined for each other."

Wendy's laughter rang throughout the living room. But Autumn and Sam were not a bit amused. Casting Autumn a glance, Sam knew that she wouldn't be able to defend herself, so he spoke up for her.

"You misunderstand. Autumn and I... have been close, only like brother and sister. He then sneered and continued, "We all know that you remarried soon after her father's death, leaving her alone with her grandmother, and they had no one but each other for support. The neighbors took pity on them and helped them out once in a while. I lived nearby, so it was only natural for us to develop a close relationship. I think that was how the gossip started."

He paused before saying, "Wendy, you have already done wrong to Autumn when she was a child. She is married now and it is inappropriate to be talking like this. People might think of you as an unfit mother."

Wendy was totally speechless.

Autumn really wanted to clap her hands if not for Wendy.

Wendy let out an embarrassed smile and said to Sam, "You are absolutely right. It was all my fault back then. But it is now a thing of the past. Autumn, why not show Sam around the house, it's his first time here. "

Autumn did not refuse. She had been waiting for an opportunity to ask Sam why he came today.

"Come with me, Sam, " she said with a faint smile.

Autumn did not even have her own room in this house, only a temporary one prepared for the wedding not too long ago. As for how well she knew the Gu Family, well... She had visited this house for merely a few more times than Sam.

If anything, the little garden in the backyard might be the place she was most familiar with. It was both open and secluded, a good place to have a talk without the risk of being overheard.

"Little Ye..." Sam called Autumn softly while following her. He had been back from abroad for quite a while, but hadn't had the chance to talk with her privately until now. "How have you been?" he asked.

"Not bad, " she replied casually for she had something else on her mind. "Sam, what brings you here?"

"Didn't you know?" Sam looked at her with surprise. "Wendy called me and said you've asked for me to come..."

It was just as Autumn had expected.

She smirked. It was clear that Wendy would go to any extent to have Yvonne marry into the Lu Family.

"Autumn... I've been meaning to ask you something, but I just never had the chance." He frowned lightly, hesitated for a while before asking, "I had a chat with Chris the other day, and we talked about you. She called you Yvonne, why is that?"

"Well..." Autumn sighed. She knew that this secret would be out in the open, some time or other, but she never expected that Sam would be the first person to find out.

She frowned and said nothing at all. But Sam could somehow tell by her grim expression. He then asked hesitantly, "Don't tell me... that you married Charles under the name of Yvonne."

This was the only sensible explanation that Sam could think of, but it was also the most unacceptable one for him.

He had spent many years overseas for her sake. He had always wanted to win her back. But then he returned, only to find out that she had married. How could he accept it if her marriage to Charles was all Wendy's doing? How could he get over her if she was forced into all this?

"Yes, that's true!" After a long period of silence, Autumn nodded her head affirmatively, "Sam, it's complicated. I hope you can keep it a secret for me..."

Chapter 90

"You were forced to marry Charles. How could you spend your whole life with him as his wife? You don't love him, do you?" The fact that she was forced into marriage made Sam's heart ache. He said, "Listen, I am serious. Why don't you divorce him? Don't worry I will find your grandmother. We will take her abroad and live a happy life where Charles and your parents can never find us. What do you think?"

"Stop joking, Sam." Even if Autumn didn't marry Charles, she wouldn't have agreed to Sam's suggestion. When Sam left with his mother years ago, she was heart-broken and her affection for Sam has gone. So it was no surprise when she replied, "Sam, I know you that you are a good person, but ..." Autumn took a seat in the pavilion. It was at dusk and a cool breeze blew gently. Autumn hesitated for a moment. When she finally opened her mouth, "Sam, Wendy invited you to come here with a purpose. If Charles saw us, he would misunderstand that something is going on between us. Sam, I know it'll be hard to believe this, but you must know, I... I have fallen in love with Charles."

She thought to herself, 'I promised Wendy to distance myself from Charles and I will do as she wishes. But I am not Wendy's pawn. Besides I don't want Charles to think that Sam and I are lovers.'

She turned to Sam, "Yvonne has realized that Charles is a good husband, so now she regrets having me take her place as his wife. She wants my place now. But they do not know how to turn this situation

around, so they invited you over today. I am asking you not to reveal my real identity when Charles arrives." 'My grandmother is being held captive. I have no choice.'

"Why do you sacrifice your own happiness?" Sam didn't believe that Autumn had fallen in love with Charles. He couldn't understand why Autumn insisted on maintaining the status quo. He thought that if Autumn and Yvonne went back to being themselves, Autumn would feel happy. So he asked, "If she wants to be Charles's wife, why don't you let her be?"

"Sam!" Autumn yelled as she turned gloomy. Then she looked at Sam, "I have my own plan. If you don't help me, then don't get in my way."

Autumn didn't want Charles to think that she had a relationship with Sam. If they broke up because of Sam, she would be devastated.

'If my parents and my sister are determined to have Charles and me separated, I prefer that it happen in a gentler manner. I don't want Charles to get hurt too much.'

Sam stared at Autumn unblinking for a while. When he was sure that she was serious, he replied, "Okay. I promise."

Autumn was relieved to hear this. But Sam continued, "Little Ye, I thought you and Charles married because you loved each other. I didn't want to be a home wrecker, so I stayed away. But now... I know that you were forced to marry Charles, so I won't give up. I will fight for your love. You will realize that I am the one meant for you."

"Sam, you don't need to do that." She thought to herself, 'You don't understand. I love Charles.' She tried to use another way to persuade Sam. "Chris is a good girl. You are perfect for each other. Although she seems unconcerned, she loves you much. Besides, she is good-looking and from a rich family, so you..."

Sam interrupted her, "I know you hate me for abandoning you years ago." Sam thought with brows wrinkled, 'My mother broke us up. She said the gap between you and I was insurmountable. It was ridiculous. I loved my mother, so I obeyed. But our love has nothing to do with status and property. I love everything about you.'

I know exactly that Chris is the type of girl my mother likes but I love Autumn.'

Sam pondered for a while, then he declared, "I respect your decision. But you must also respect mine. Until you find your real happiness, I will not give up."

Autumn said nothing. She felt a little bothered by Sam's persistence.

While they were talking, Charles arrives at the Gu's family house. Although he didn't like Autumn's family, he brought presents anyway. He had asked David to buy some health supplements.

"Father, Mother, " He greeted Simon and Wendy as soon as he saw them. But Yvonne was the first to welcome him, "Charles, you are here!"

She took the presents that Charles was holding and she said smiling, "This is your home too. There is no need bringing presents every time you come."

"It's my duty as a devoted son-in-law, " Charles nodded at Simon as he said, "Yvonne and I seldom come here. We just buy these presents to show our devotion."

"Take a seat. We have been waiting for you. Supper will be ready soon." Wendy laughed and then added, "Autumn, why are you just standing there? Have a seat and chat with your brother-in-law."

Wendy wanted to create a chance for Yvonne to get close to Charles and Yvonne knew it. She leaned towards Charles and whispered in a sweet tone, "Brother-in-law, come and have a seat."

"No, not yet. Where is your sister?" Charles asked frowning at Yvonne. He couldn't see Autumn in the room.

"She..." Yvonne was insulted that Charles asked her that way. 'What did he mean by that?

He has just arrived and he is already looking for Autumn.'

"She is in the backyard." Wendy pointed in the direction of the backyard, saying, "She is talking with Sam." "

Sam?" Charles was surprised to know that Sam was also there. He thought, 'Why is he here? I thought this was a family dinner?'

"It's time for supper. Please tell the others, " Wendy said flatly.

As soon as Charles left, Yvonne complained, "Mother, what are you doing? He seldom comes here. Why did you ask him to go look for Autumn? What about me? I need time to talk with him." Yvonne was impetuous, which is her biggest flaw.

"You, you are so stupid!" Wendy sighed and she explained, "Imagine what Charles would think if he saw his wife happily chatting with Sam."

"He..." Yvonne wrinkled her brows and thought for a long time then soon realized why her mother asked Charles to look for Autumn.

"But Mother... What if Sam told Charles about Autumn and our real names? 'Now is not the right time to reveal the truth. I was going to tell Charles my real name when he falls in love me. If he knows the truth now, the situation will be out of control.'

"Don't worry. He won't, " Wendy comforted Yvonne in a firm tone. In her mind, 'A person as slow-witted as Yvonne can only think of the possible problem. But Autumn will surely do something to prevent it from happening. I gave Autumn and Sam time to talk so that Autumn can persuade Sam to stay quiet.

For Autumn's own good, Sam will keep it a secret.'