

Wedded Bride 851

Chapter 851 The Same Office As Before

"Where are we going?" At first, Sheryl was unsure where Isla would take her at the outset. A little while later, Isla stopped abruptly. Now Sheryl's eyes glittered at the unexpected familiarity of the place they had just arrived. Without further thought, she deduced Isla's intention.

"Isla, I..." Sheryl's voice trailed off as she was a little scared. She was standing right in front of the office. Somehow she couldn't muster the courage to open the door.

"Open the door!" Standing behind Sheryl, Isla tried to encourage her.

"I think I'd refrain from doing that. Perhaps, that's what's right for me." Somehow, Sheryl's courage vanished into thin air in a moment's notice. All she felt was grief-stricken while she stood in front of her own office. She whispered hesitantly, "Isla, I have been here for a long time. I guess... it's time for me to take my leave."

"Sheryl!" Isla felt faintly annoyed as she noticed Sheryl's skittish behavior. She raised her eyebrows to an exquisite furrow and asked, "What on earth are you scared of?"

"I don't know. I really don't." Sheryl flashed a wry smile toward Isla and blurted, "It seems as if my gut is asking me not to open that door."

Sheryl didn't budge her eyes from Isla and continued, "Isla, maybe I'm just... not ready yet."

"Not ready? What is that supposed to mean?" Isla shot a rage filled glance at Sheryl and continued to speak, "This is your own company. You needn't worry about anything. You belong here."

Sheryl chose to remain silent as Isla went on, "To be frank, I wasn't ready to take this up out of the blue when you went missing three years ago. I learned to outgrow my fear. You too should do the same."

"Isla..." Sheryl looked at Isla and frowned. "I know you did that out of kindness. But... I'm not ready to take over the company yet. It's not so easy. I don't think I can do it."

The real reason behind her hesitation to push open the door to her own office had just been exposed by her.

"I understand." Isla nodded helplessly and said, "Sher, I won't force you to take over the company if you're not comfortable with it. But be assured that I will always keep your office vacant and wait for you.

I'm eagerly expecting your return."

Suddenly Isla opened the door before Sheryl realized what was happening. Not knowing what to do,

Sheryl looked inside. Upon seeing the familiar scene, Sheryl felt all her fear and worry vanish.

"Come in and have a look." Sheryl eventually stepped into the office as a result of being persuaded by

Isla. It had been maintained in the exact manner as it used to be when it had been last occupied.

The scindapsus aureus beside the window had grown thicker than three years ago. The desk and the furniture looked spotlessly clean. Clearly, someone had taken an enormous effort to tidy up this room.

Sheryl was astonished at this gesture. Despite being unaware of her existence throughout these years,

Isla had taken good care of her office.

"The office has been vacant ever since you left. The rest of the offices were redesigned two years ago.

In fact, the designer suggested decorating your office too, but I refused immediately." Isla looked into

Sheryl's eyes and said, "I was worried whether you would feel unaccustomed and alienated to see your

office redecorated hence I decided to maintain status quo. Sher, now that you are here, you may

decide how to decorate your office."

"Isla..." Sheryl frowned slightly and said, "I know you have dedicated a lot of time for this company. I

really appreciate what you have done for me."

Sheryl gave a weak smile and added, "But I really can't return here as of now. You very well know that

I've signed a contract with BM Corporation. Hence, I can't leave now. I can't afford to pay the enormous penalty if I break the contract."

"Sher..." Isla frowned slightly.

"I know you have my benefit at your heart. But I don't want to depend on Charles. You know I always refused to accept his money. It felt like charity to me even when we were together several years ago," finished Sheryl with a tone of finality.

"Sher, you misunderstand." Isla smiled and asked Sheryl, "Have you forgotten? You are still the boss of this company."

Bewildered, Sheryl looked at Isla curiously, wondering what Isla meant.

"The company developed rapidly in the recent years and I have been keeping aside your salary for the position of our boss. It may total to about ten million right now. If you want to leave BM Corporation, you

don't have to ask Charles for help. The money I've saved for you will be more than enough." Isla looked at Sheryl, with a ray of hope. "Whether you leave the company or not is now entirely your decision."

Sheryl was visibly shocked. She had never expected the company to have scaled giant heights in a

matter of few years. Moreover, she had become a millionaire unknowingly because of it.

"Sher..." Isla gripped Sheryl's hand gently before speaking. "I am quite aware that many things are

disturbing the peace of your mind. But you should remember that you are Autumn right now, not Sheryl.

Do you really want to be a mere model for eternity?"

Isla glimpsed at Sheryl and continued, "I remember that you were joyful and content when all that you

had to do was to write the program schedules. But needless to say, I'm not able to locate that joy in you

when you walk down the aisle to earn your bread."

Isla paused for a while and gave a bitter smile. "I know you are not in a position to make a decision

now. Give it some time, I don't mind. All I want to let you know is that no hurdle exists between you and

your previous work."

"I know, thank you," Sheryl said with a smile. "Isla, give me some more time to think about it. I will make

a decision soon."

"Okay, I shall wait for your reply." Isla knew it wouldn't be right to force someone to go against their

decisions and push them off their comfort zone. She just hoped Sheryl would make the right decision

and return to her abode sooner than later.

"It's gotten late. I should go home now."

Sheryl bid goodbye to Isla. Sue had come home unusually early today. Sue was still concerned about

Anthony's desire to come here and wished to consult Sheryl about it.

She hesitated for a long time because she didn't know if it would be advisable for her to initiate the

conversation. Eventually, she cooked up a question nervously, "Sher, where did you go today?"

"Why do you ask? You want to know why Anthony came today, right?" Sheryl exposed her rather

easily.

Sue felt a little embarrassed and avoided Sheryl's eyes immediately. In an attempt to defend herself,

she said, "No no, I don't care about him, not at all."

"Oh, really?"

"Ye... Yes."

"Fine then," Sheryl said and nodded her head. "I am tired. I am going to rest now." It was indeed an

exhaustive day for her. Only fate knew what it had in its bag for her tomorrow.

Chapter 852 Just Give Up

Sue grasped Sheryl's arm and said, "Sher, I'm so sorry. It's all my fault. I just wanted to know why he

came to see me."

Sheryl looked at Sue. "Just look at you, I really don't understand. I'm confused by what you really want.

You said firmly that you didn't want to see him any more, but here you are trying to find out why he

came to you. What on earth do you want to do with him? Do you really want to forget about him or

not?"

Sue gave her a pitiful smile. "Forgetting about him? It's much easier said than done. Maybe I need

some more time."

Sheryl couldn't stand to see her upset. "Do you really want to know what he wanted? It's no big deal.

He just came to ask me if you were okay and wanted to make up with you. That's it."

Sue scoffed, "Make up with me?"

I don't need that. Does he really think that he can make up with me so easily?"

Sheryl took her hand and said affectionately, "Mimi, I've thought about it a lot these days and I'm okay

with it if you don't want to be with Anthony. It would be kind of a relief for you. Besides, neither of you

would be happy together. He's not worthy of your love.

I'm not saying that Anthony is a bad guy. The problem is that he doesn't love you. No matter how much you love him, he can't accept it and give it back. So all you get is nothing but pain in return. If I were you I would rather stay away from him than suffer in a loveless relationship."

There was no denying that Sue was still hoping for some love from Anthony, but she lost all hope after that. Sheryl was clear that she could never be the one. Thinking about that made her feel down in the dumps. But, despite how she felt, she gave Sheryl a smile. "Thank you, Sher. I know what to do. Don't worry about me."

Sue turned and walked away. Sheryl didn't go after her, because she knew that Sue needed time to cool off. She would go and comfort later when she had calmed down a bit.

After all, no one could help her but herself.

In the Xiao family house

Since the quarrel with Carson, things had been fairly tame with Laura, but that was all about to change.

Laura wanted to question Anthony about Sue since she hadn't seen her in days.

She waited until after dinner.

"Anthony, wait, let's talk." She paused for a moment to gather her thoughts.

Anthony was already highly strung. A whole day had passed since he had asked his people to look for Sue and there was still no news of her whereabouts. He was at a loss with what to do. He frowned when Laura stopped him. "What do you want to talk to me about?"

Laura smiled warmly and replied, "Nothing serious. It's just that I haven't seen Sue for a long time. I just want to know if she's okay. Has she been too busy working these days?"

Anthony was in no mood to be questioned. "She's fine," he replied flatly. Laura seemed relieved but continued to prod, "Well, since she's fine, why don't you invite her to dinner? I've haven't seen her for a long time."

"Mom, I already told you that she's fine. Why do you want to see her? What is it that you want?" asked Anthony irritated.

Laura could tell that he was trying to avoid the topic. "It's just because she hasn't been here for a long time. I'm afraid that something has happened between you and her and you don't want to tell me about it. So is everything okay?"

Anthony frowned. "Mom, we're fine. You don't have to worry about us. Anyway, it's my business, I know

what to do."

Laura wasn't happy with his answer. "You know what to do? I don't doubt that for a minute," she said sarcastically. "You wouldn't be with that Sheryl, if you really knew what you should do."

"Mom, enough!" Anthony frowned and interrupted his mother.

Laura waved her hand. "All right, all right. I won't intervene. You can do whatever you want. But I'm telling you that Sue is a good woman. Tell her that I would like to see her and have dinner. Will you do that?"

Laura couldn't stand the thought of Anthony being with Sheryl again, so she dropped not so subtle hints about who she would prefer her son to be with.

Anthony finally gave in to her persistence. "I'm afraid I can't do that, Mom! It's not that I don't want to make the call, it's because she has some relatives coming to visit her and we'd best not bother her. I can invite her over when her relatives are gone."

Laura wasn't buying his story. She was afraid that Anthony was just stalling so he could be with Sheryl again. She thought if she could somehow keep Sue around and convince Anthony to marry her, then Sheryl would be out of the picture for good.

Although Sue wasn't the ideal choice according to Laura's taste, she couldn't find anyone else more suitable than her for now.

Laura looked at Anthony putting on an innocent face. "Relatives? That's even better. Why don't you invite them as well? Look, you've been with Sue for a while and both of you are not young. So it's better to invite Sue's family to our home; we can meet them and discuss your wedding plans.

As far as I know Sue's family isn't wealthy. They are simple and unadorned. I'm okay with that.

Well, you have to find a good restaurant. This is the first time for the two families to meet, we have to be polite and welcoming."

Anthony rolled his eyes and frowned. "Mom, do you remember when you said that you wouldn't intervene in my life?

It's not a good time for me and Sue to talk about marriage. I'll see to it when it's the right time. Could you please allow me to take care of my own affairs?"

Laura sighed, beaten. "Oh, my son. Why can't you understand my love for you? I have made all the arrangements for you, but you're not grateful at all. How can I not be sad? I think that you don't want

have any responsibilities, do you? I'm telling you, I won't allow it."

Anthony frowned again. "Mom, would you please leave me be for a while? Don't talk to me about Sue or Sheryl or a wedding, I don't want to hear anything about it, okay?"

Laura was surprised at how anxious he was; she didn't expect him to be so angry. She was curious as to why his reaction was so intense, so she probed further, "Anthony, what has happened? Why are you being so jittery? Tell me about it, okay? Does it have anything to do with that Sheryl? Did she come to bother you again?"

Chapter 853 Disappointment

"That's enough! Can you just shut your mouth now?" Anthony stood up and glared at Laura with his wrath-filled eyes. Unable to take it anymore, he shouted at Laura angrily, "For once, can you stop gossiping? Why should everything have to be about Sheryl? I inform you one last time, I have nothing to do with her now. Our breakup happened a long time ago. Besides, the issue I have with Sue is not something you need to know. Don't try to intervene. It's our own business, not relevant to you at all.

Today, I have set a clear boundary for you. If you ever cross this line, knowingly or unknowingly, I won't be able to forgive you."

"I am your mother, I know very well what is good for you and what is not. Why don't you ever listen to

me? Everything I say is for your own good, not mine," explained Laura trying to calm him down. But

Anthony was not in a mood to be "educated" by his mother. These words had no impact on him. He

liked to live his life with his own values and beliefs. Moreover, he believed himself capable of making

right judgments. Therefore, he saw no need for him to sacrifice his own life to please anyone else, not

even his own mother. He felt that Laura had tested his patience today so he left the room. The idea of

speaking to her more magnified his anger. Meanwhile, Carlson entered the room right after the

unpleasant conversation had taken place. On entry, He wondered what was the reason behind this

hostile atmosphere. "What happened?" he inquired glancing at Laura.

"No... Nothing." Laura shut her mouth immediately. There was no way she would spill out this incident

to Carlson. In order to divert Carlson's attention, she decided to bring up a different topic. "You must be

hungry now, aren't you? Do you want something to eat?"

"No, it's okay. I am not hungry. I don't feel like eating now." Carlson had been feeling down recently. He

went out every day and stayed there from dawn to dusk without informing anyone what kept him busy.

Laura did not ask him about it. She was aware her questioning would annoy him.

Without saying anything, Carlson walked away and started going upstairs. Laura was left alone. He didn't bother giving her any explanation.

On the other side, Anthony was walking when his phone started to ring. After giving it a quick glance, he continued walking. On the outside, he looked nonplussed but anxiety was eating him inside. In a calm manner, he shut the door tightly. Now he was alone and had no reason to stay composed. His compelling eagerness could no longer be hidden so he swiftly picked up the call. "How is it? Did you make any progress? Is there any clue that you found?" he asked, sounding out of breath.

"I found it," the person on the other end replied in an indifferent tone. "I have all the materials ready. I have emailed it to you. Do check your email."

"Alright, thank you so much," replied Anthony drily. "I will pay you the remaining sum after I check the material you have sent."

When the phone call ended, his excitement reached a new level. Quickly, he rushed to his computer in order to check the files he received. Just a brief scan through the document was enough to bring his fury. The more he read, the angrier he got.

"These people are so inhumane!" he murmured to himself. Finally, he found an explanation for the

things that he found inexplicable and strange in the past. This was the missing piece that he was looking for and now the story was complete. He thought to himself, 'No wonder Sheryl was so angry with me today. I have always promised that I would compensate for Sue. Yet it was ridiculous to say such a thing without having a slightest idea of how Sue really suffered! What a fool I am!'

With those thoughts in mind, he had a sudden urge to call and apologize to Sue. He took his phone and dialed her number only to find out that her phone was switched off. Having no other choice, he rang Sheryl for help.

Luckily Sheryl's phone was not off. But nobody picked it up. Anthony knew that Sheryl didn't want to talk to him yet he was determined so he called her repeatedly. Deep down he hoped that Sheryl would press the answer button out of annoyance. In the end, Sheryl could not stand having Anthony's calls repeatedly. With rage, she picked it up and stormed at him, "What on earth do you want?"

"Sher, I know you don't want to talk to me, but... right now, I am here to ask for forgiveness." Anthony forced a smile and said, "The reason I called you is because I am eager to know how Sue is at this moment. I can ask no one else but you."

After speaking, Anthony gave Sheryl sufficient time to respond before he continued, "She refused to pick up the phone call. I know that she does not want to talk to me. In this case, I just want you to do me a small favor. Please let her know that I am always here for her. If ever she needs any form of help, I will try my best to support her."

"Okay, I know what you mean. But Anthony, what do you think you can help her with?" mocked Sheryl.

This line must have injured Anthony's pride. As a result, he fell into an awkward silence. He couldn't find an appropriate answer to her question.

Sheryl continued, "So, what do you think you can provide her with? Money? Social network? If these are the things that you are talking about then I want you to be aware that these are the things that I can provide her with as well. Even if she needs me to help her with something that is beyond my ability then Charles will certainly help us with it. So is there something you can do which we can't?"

Anthony frowned, but he was not willing to give up, so he continued to persuade Sheryl, "I understand that you will not listen to me right now. But Sheryl, trust me, trust me that I am really giving my heart to her this time. I don't care what it takes, I will do my best. I just want to compensate for her and will do whatever it takes."

"I know," replied Sheryl flatly. "I have never ever doubted your good will to help her out. But Anthony, my point is, she does not need you.

If you can provide her with food, shelter, or anything else, I can do the same. The only thing I am unable to provide is the care and companionship on your behalf." Sheryl sneered in a rather sarcastic way. She continued, "You have always been saying that you are willing to make her life better. But have you ever thought about what she really lacks? Is she looking for these superficial assistance? If you really understand what I mean, you should know what to do. But before that, please don't bother her anymore. Also, stop disturbing me as well. I have my own life to think about."

"Sher, I didn't really have an affection for her, and you know it well." Anthony continued with a frown, "I admit what I did was wrong. I should not have been with her when I still couldn't forget about you and our memories. I know it was an irrevocable mistake. I know it now. I should not have done all these sins. At this moment, what I am trying to do is to make amends to my faults. The scar has been made. But I want to heal it as much as possible. I really wish to make up for my awful past."

"Can you just shut up? I don't want to hear any of it!" screamed Sheryl unable to take his words. She

continued with determination, "A mistake is a mistake. You can't sugar coat it and there is no turning back. No matter how hard you try, it will not disappear. So don't bother trying to correct it. I hope you will be tortured by your own guilt. I hope you spend the rest of your life in sorrow. Mostly importantly, I hope you will be unable to forget any of it. This is what I wish for you."

Then she hung up the phone. She felt no regret about being so rude. Moreover, she felt some sort of relief. Before she could return back to her original state, Sue appeared in front of her. She asked Sue clumsily, "Did you... hear everything that I said?"

"Yes, I heard it all." Sue gave her a brief and gentle nod.

"Alright, Sue, now listen to me..." Sheryl held Sue's hand softly and explained, "I promise you, I will make sure that he will never get a chance to intrude in your life. I am going to ensure he will stop annoying you with his phone calls as well. Just throw him away from your mind and concentrate in your life. I truly believe that there is someone good for you. Be patient and you will find him."

"It's okay, I'm not affected by his words," Sue replied with a forced smile. "I am kind of used to it by now. You don't have to worry because I'm really fine."

After all, Sue wasn't compelled by anyone to be in a relationship with Anthony. It was a foolish choice

which she made so she took full responsibility of it. Sheryl, on the other hand, wished nothing but the best for her.

In the end, she believed this was the price she needed to pay for being an idiot.

"Sher..." sighed Sue, trying to assure Sheryl. Taking a deep breath, she continued, "I know this drama

is getting to you. You have important things to worry about. From now on, just don't pick up the phone if

he calls you. I don't want you to bear all this for my sake. You don't have to be pestered by this

annoying man. I will just move on with life."

"But you know, the thing is..."

"You are right, Sher." Looking at Sheryl attentively, Sue went on, "I have a strong feeling that one day, a

man who knows me better, who treats me better and who loves me will come to my life. It is this hope

that makes me move on. This small hope is what makes me want to forget about him. I now want to

make new friends. The most important thing to me now is to settle the matter with Peggy and Allen.

That is number one on my priority list. As for all other things, I have no mood for them right now."

Sheryl took a deep sigh. Listening to Sue's words, she believed she meant what she said. This brought

immense happiness in her heart. 'Sue is ready to move on in life without Anthony. She gave him her heart and soul, so it is not going to be easy. But I am glad she is trying, ' I thought Sheryl happily.

"Alright, I won't say anything now. But please remember, no matter what happens, you will come to me if there is a difficulty. I will always be there for you." Then Sheryl bid Sue her goodbye. "It's already very late. Go back and have a good rest now."

"Okay," Sue replied and nodded her head.

Meanwhile, Anthony was sitting with worry brimming inside his heart. He was so anxious about Sue that he couldn't stop pacing back and forth. Nothing could distract him from his guilt-filled thoughts. 'I didn't know her family mistreated her so brutally. If I knew this, I definitely would not have been nice to them this morning. Sue must be very hurt now, ' Anthony thought remorsefully.

Chapter 854 How Long Are You Going To Stay

Anthony didn't know how to help Sue out of this awkward situation, but he wanted to try his best. Since Sue refused to meet him, he decided to meet her family first and see whether he could figure out a solution.

Early in the next morning, he prepared a lot of gifts for the visit. He knew that Sue wasn't at home so

that he could visit her family without any worries. Soon enough he arrived at her home and knocked at the door.

"Who are you?" asked Allen when he opened the door and saw a stranger standing there.

"Hello! You must be Sue's brother, right? She always talks about you." Anthony smiled. Then he asked politely, "Where is Sue? Is she at home? I need to speak to her about something."

"No, she's not home," Allen replied impatiently as he stood in the doorway with no intention of inviting him in. Seeing that Anthony wasn't about to leave, he then asked, "What did you want to tell her? I can pass the message on to her."

"I see," Anthony replied with a smile. "I'm a friend of hers. I heard that her family came to visit her recently. So I just wanted to pay a visit and get to meet you all. I brought some gifts."

"Oh! You are her friend." Allen's attitude softened when he heard that Anthony had gifts for them. He glanced at the bags with gifts and then to Anthony. "Thank you so much, Sir. It's very kind of you," he said trying to regain some manners.

"You're welcome." Anthony smiled and bid him farewell, "Please take them. I'm Sue's friend and you're her family. I hope you like the gifts. Please give her my regards and tell her I will visit her next time.

Goodbye."

When Anthony was about to take his leave, suddenly a voice came from inside, "Allen, who are you talking to?"

"He says he is Sue's friend," Allen replied plainly. 'I wonder which friend comes to visit her home?'

Doris thought.

Shortly after, they heard the sound of hurried footsteps and then Doris rushed out. When she saw that it was Anthony at the front door, she asked in surprise, "It's you. Why are you here?"

"Do you know him?" Allen asked in surprise.

"No," said Doris shaking her head. "But yesterday, when your mom and I went to Sue's company I saw him there."

"I see." Allen was about to close the door when he suddenly realized that Anthony was still standing there. He asked, "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"No. I'm going to leave soon," Anthony replied politely. "Yesterday I was in such a hurry that I didn't have time to talk with you. I'm sorry. It was very rude of me."

"Never mind, working always keeps people running off their feet," Doris answered with a smile. The more she spoke with him, the more she took a liking to him. He was a real gentlemen, well-mannered and fine-looking. Allen was nothing like him. If only her lover was more like him, she thought, envious. Doris sighed in her heart, but didn't show anything. "What are you doing? You Idiot! Why didn't you invite our guest inside? You are so rude!" she scorned Allen angrily.

"I... I just forgot, I didn't mean it," said Allen embarrassed.

Doris shoved him aside and invited Anthony in eagerly. "Please come in. He is such a stupid boy.

You're our guest. Come in and have some tea."

"Thanks. But I had better go now. I see you are pregnant. Take care of yourself. I shouldn't disturb you," he said declining.

"I insist. Please come in, Sir!" Doris dragged him in and served him a cup of tea. She then asked him curiously, "You came here today to meet us?"

"Right." Anthony smiled. He looked around and asked, "Where is Sue's mother? She's not home either?"

"She's gone out to buy food," Doris replied. "She'll be back soon. Why don't you stay and have lunch

with us?"

"Thank you so much, you are most hospitable," Anthony said, accepting the invitation immediately. He could use this opportunity to figure out the whole story, to help him work out how to solve the problem.

This was the whole purpose of today's visit.

"You are Sue's friend. We are glad to have you as our guest," Doris replied with a smile. She wasn't just being polite to him. She was planning something. Anthony looked like a rich guy, and she wanted to find out what the relationship was between Sue and him. If they were a couple then she might be able to get a sum of money from him.

It would be unimaginable for her to stay with Allen for her whole life. All she wanted was money. If she got enough money, she would leave him without hesitation.

Shortly afterwards Peggy had returned. She was also startled when she saw Anthony there. But

Anthony was socially-skilled and knew how to please her. As expected, after some small talk and appreciation for the gifts, she was smiling from ear to ear, totally forgetting about what had happened yesterday.

"By the way, Mrs. Wang, where is Sue?" Anthony asked on purpose. His question led to an awkward silence among them, especially Doris.

Smiles froze on their faces and nobody replied. Finally Doris broke the ice and said, "It seems that you haven't heard about it yet. She didn't tell you, that she has moved out? She doesn't live here anymore."

"Doesn't live here anymore?" Anthony pretended to be surprised. "Then where is she living now?"

Anthony asked frowning. He then turned to Peggy and said, "This apartment is arranged for Sue as a dormitory by the company. You know it's not easy for a girl to make a living in Y City. She couldn't afford a house here. I really don't know where she could possibly live besides this apartment. Could you tell me?"

"Sue is really a good girl," Peggy said forcing a bitter smile. "As her mother, I'm not wealthy enough to give her much. On the contrary, she gives our whole family too much! Oh, my dearest daughter!"

"What do you mean?" asked Anthony.

"I'll tell you the whole story." Peggy thought fast in her mind and soon came up with a believable story.

"The house is too small to hold the whole family. My son and his girlfriend wanted to stay at a hotel, but Sue didn't allow them to. She said Doris is pregnant and she should stay in the house for the sake of

the baby. So she left the house to us and moved out. Now she lives in her friend's home,"

Peggy said smiling quite satisfied with this explanation. "Don't worry about her, she's fine now. I was also worried about her when she moved out, so I paid a visit to her friend's house. It is a huge villa! It is so big! They don't mind sharing their house with Sue."

"Mrs. Wang..." Anthony frowned after hearing Peggy's story. "No matter how big the villa is, it is after all their home and not Sue's home. She wouldn't be comfortable there. What's more, she can't live like that forever. Don't you agree?"

"You are right," Peggy sighed. "But you have to understand us. We don't have a choice either, Sir."

Peggy put on a bitter smile. "I'm a bad mother! I can't buy a big house for my own daughter. She suffers a lot for the whole family, poor girl!"

"But..." Anthony frowned. Her shameless lie rendered him speechless. Finally he asked, "Mrs. Wang, I have one last question. How long are you going to live in this house?"

"We..." Peggy paused and looked up at Anthony with embarrassment. She didn't know how to answer that question.

Her real plan was to live there until her son's wedding. But she couldn't say it in front of Doris because,

Doris was convinced that the house would be hers.

Chapter 855 We Are Not Leaving

The light in the living room was too bright for the afternoon. The cream upholstered sofa dipped from the weight of the three grown adults sitting on it. Doris, who sat on the edge, spoke first, "We have made the decision to stay." Her voice was firm but still polite. Her eyes darted slowly to the two other people beside her, and she then added, "As we have discussed about it, we find that life in the countryside is much worse than our current state of life. So then, Allen and I have made up our mind to stay in Y City. We are not going back anymore." The room remained silent for a little while.

From her seat, Peggy fidgeted a bit in awkwardness. Her eyes briefly cast a glance at Doris from her peripheral vision. To show her support to what Doris said, she spoke, "That's true. Remember the saying which reads 'Water without control flows to lower places in nature whereas men struggle to move to high positions'? It teaches us that we can't live in that poor place for the rest of our life.

Instead, we should make use of each and every chance we have to live a better life. Now that we have that chance, then we should stay in this big city."

She sighed deeply, and then continued, "Y City is so huge. There are many more chances here than in

the countryside. When they get married, Allen will go out and find a job. After that, we can become real 'people of Y City' as well. I can't wait to see that day coming." After she finished her words, Anthony's eyebrows shot up to his forehead.

Did he hear that right? "Wait, so you are going to stay in this house for a long period of time?" he asked, but he spoke in a curt voice to mask his contempt. 'The people in this family, except Sue, are so shameless, ' he thought. If they weren't in front of him, he would have slapped his hand on his forehead in exasperation by now.

Peggy responded, "It is not like we have another choice. We also don't want to do this to Sue." She sighed, as if she really felt sorry for Sue under all that fake sympathy. She hoped that her eyes reflected sadness with her tirades. However, she continued with her acting and added, "As it turns out now, Sue has to make her sacrifice. I feel so sorry for my girl."

On the other hand, Doris decided to go completely off-topic and didn't wait for their conversation to end,

and interjected. She turned to Anthony who sat on the side sofa and talked to him, "Mr. Xiao, I didn't get a chance to ask you about something."

"What is it?" Anthony looked at her dubiously.

"What is there between you and Sue?" Doris asked in a skeptical tone. It was her turn to have her eyebrows raised.

"I..." he stammered in his seat. He couldn't find the right words to answer her question. He did not expect for Doris to ask such a question in quite the straightforward manner.

At this, Doris continued, "If you two are merely normal friends, then what does our family matter have to do with you? Why do you care about her family issues? Don't you think that this is beyond what an ordinary friend should care about?" She said in a seemingly jeering voice. She knew that she had hit a spot by asking the right question. She added, "So my conclusion is that you have an abnormal relationship with her. That is why you are here, and you are trying to do something for her in order to impress her, am I right?"

At this point, Anthony tried to give rather safe answers to her blunt questions. He asked, "What are you implying?" Though it was quite clear what Doris was referring to, at least to Doris, Anthony still asked in doubt.

"Mr. Xiao, You have feelings for Sue, don't you?" Once again, Doris asked straightforwardly. She continued, "You will answer me first, or else I won't explain what I mean."

"I have no feelings for her," Anthony firmly asserted. "We are just friends. I did not come to blame you or to do anything so I could please her. I simply feel that it may not be appropriate for you to make Sue live elsewhere. Indeed she does have a decent job and earn decent salaries, but still she is a young girl. It is going to be very hard for her. How long do you think she will be able to sustain living outside of her house on her own?" he added further.

However, Doris begged to differ. "Mr. Xiao, you are lying," she argued just as firmly. She then said, "If you have no feelings for Sue, why are you so eager to help and support her?"

"I..." Again, Anthony was rendered speechless. Doris sure was the blunt woman. After a short lapse of silence, he found some excuses to defend himself and said, "Any friend who sees Sue being mistreated by her family will do the same to protect her."

"Well, your story may fool others, but not me, not you." The tone of Doris' voice held a slight mirth as she laughed softly. She was a clever girl, and it was crystal clear to her that Anthony kept dodging her questions and finding excuses. She thought that was hilarious and ridiculous. She added, "Your words

can lie, but your eyes can't. Just look at yourself, look at your own eyes. You can't hide the sincere care and overwhelming worry emitting from them. If this is not called affection, then I don't know what else is.

If what you said is true, the only explanation I can find for you is that you don't even know your own feelings."

When she finished, Doris' words struck the deepest part of Anthony's heart, where he was indeed hiding what he truly felt for Sue. Until now, he was clueless, or rather reluctant to figure out how he truly

felt for Sue. He inwardly started to ask himself what it was that he was trying to cover up so badly.

"Mr. Xiao." The voice of Peggy broke Anthony from his deep train of thought, and pulled him back to reality. Peggy was suspicious of their relationship as well. Even from the first time that she met

Anthony, she felt that something was up. Their conversations today only further validated her suspicion.

However, to be honest, she was actually happy to see that a man of some power and wealth had fallen for her daughter. Sue had already been exploited to the fullest for the family's benefit, but now this worthless daughter of hers became a valuable asset once again. Now, to her, Anthony only meant

money, so she would do everything she could to make sure that he would marry Sue.

At that thought, her eyes gazed at Anthony as she tried to give him her valuable advice as a caring parent, "Mr. Xiao, if you really like my daughter, you should be proactive and act bravely. I know my daughter very well. She is a person who usually hides her true feelings and tends to compromise herself for the benefit of others. So then, you should always ask her so you would know what she thinks and what she wants. I trust that you can do a good job. If she can find a responsible and mature man like you, I will be very happy to see that."

Anthony was again unsure of what to say. "Mrs. Wang, I..."

"Alright," her voice cut him off again. She further continued, "No matter what happens between you two

in the future, I can assure you that I'm not going to say 'no' to your relationship. I'm not going to meddle in it. You are free to make your own decisions."

To assure Anthony that she did welcome him, she turned to Allen who remained quiet the whole time and instructed him to call Sue. She said, "Allen, give Sue a call and tell her to come back to eat. Tell her that I'm waiting for her."

However, Anthony did not think the same. "Please don't," he hurriedly said to try to stop Peggy from calling Sue. He was afraid that she might be unhappy to see him there. He said, "I know that Sue has been busy with her work recently, so I don't wish to trouble her to return home. That would cut her precious working time."

The woman turned her attention back to him and assured him, "Don't worry, Mr. Xiao." And then she added, "Please stay here. I promise it won't take long, I will just cook a nice meal for you now. I'm sure that you will enjoy my cooking."

She got up from her seat and proceeded to the kitchen. Allen rose up as well and went to his room to call Sue. The living room was now empty, saving for Doris and Anthony. After a short while of rather awkward silence, Anthony decided to interrupt the quietness and said, "What do you mean by what you said just now?"

However, Doris was having none of that. "Mr. Xiao, I believe that you are a man of wit. How can you not understand such a simple thing?" She replied, a grin plastered from ear to ear on her face.

Anthony still asked dubiously, "What is it that you are referring to?"

"I can tell that there is something between you and Sue." Her lips formed into a smile and she continued, "If I'm not mistaken, you two are planning to marry in the future. Sue, being a girl, is going to marry someone anyway and live with her husband, as all girls do, so she is not in dire need of the house. But Allen is different. He is a man, so..."

She stopped there and didn't finish her sentence, but anyone with a common sense could figure out what she implied. After a short pause, she continued, "Mr. Xiao, though it may be improper for me to say so at this point in time, it is what the entire society expects, so I hope you can understand."

At her words, Anthony sneered inwardly to himself. 'After beating around the bush for so long, she finally came to the point. What she wants is the ownership of the house and she is afraid that my presence as Sue's future husband would pose a threat to her, ' he thought. 'Everyone in this family has no sense of shame. Never have I seen such a blatantly audacious family.'

Meanwhile in the bedroom, on the other end of Allen's call, Sue was extremely baffled when he told her that Peggy wanted her to come back home for a meal together. She found it quite strange. 'Why is she so nice to me today?' she wondered. When she couldn't think of an answer, she decided to still go and see what would happen.

She first thought of discussing it with Sheryl to see first if they could come up with an explanation for Peggy's actions, but the girl was not in the office today. She needed to accompany Shirley whose first day of school just started.

So then, Sue had nobody to consult with and just went back home anyway. 'It is useless to keep worrying, ' she told herself.

She immediately gathered her things and rushed back home. Upon arrival, she was shocked to see Anthony sitting on the living room couch. She was unprepared for that and was rather annoyed. Her irritation was obvious as she asked with a frown, "Why are you here?"

However, her tone made it seem more like a statement rather than a question. It definitely showed how impatient she was.

"Mind your tone, Sue. Is this how we should talk to our guest?" The chiding tone of Peggy scolded her from the kitchen. She said, "Mr. Xiao has come to visit me. Is there anything wrong with that?"

"Mom, you..." The frown on Sue's face became deeper as she walked to the kitchen. Her apparent displeasure heightened.

All she wanted was to stay away from Anthony, but now...

"Alright then Sue, host our guest well. He is not a guest who visits us regularly. Be nice and spend some good time to chat with him." Even until now, Peggy's voice still held that motherly tone when she spoke. However, it suddenly turned harsh and she hissed, "Mind your language. If I ever come to know that you... You will see what I will do to you."

Sue's eyes were downcast as she left the kitchen. It was evident from her tone of voice that Peggy was indisputably confident that she didn't have to state everything outright in order for her warning to effect.

After making sure that Sue would do as she said, she turned to Doris who was still in the living room and said in a soft, gentle tone that was a complete opposite of her voice to Sue, "Doris, you can go back to your room and take a rest for now. I will call you when the meal is ready."

In turn, Doris was smart enough to decipher her words -- Peggy wanted to create some space for them to have a private conversation, so she just nodded in agreement and returned to her room.

After that, only Sue and Anthony were left in the room.

She was quite annoyed and questioned Anthony straight to his face, "What do you want to do here?"

In return, Anthony carefully replied, "Sue, I am just worried for you.

I want to know if you are fine." His lips forced a bitter smile on his face. Who else should he blame but himself? He didn't appreciate the love Sue had shown to him and took everything she gave for granted, because he held on to the stupid idea that Sue wouldn't leave him no matter what. Now it was a completely different story. Sue didn't even give him a chance to talk to her. The tables were turned and now, it was he who needed to beg her to stay by his side. How lowly he had made himself!

Chapter 856 The Tides Pushing Away The Shore

"Worried?" Sue scorned at Anthony with disdain. "Why would you worry about me? Why should you?"

She was not growing any more patient over the speechlessness of Anthony when she finally realized something big that could answer all of her questions at once. "Are you worried that I'm going to commit suicide?"

Sue had tried so many times to avoid that topic that she was now explicitly putting on the table to discuss. Anthony might not have been the one to mention it, but he was the one who led their conversation to this trail.

Since this was the case, Sue finally expressed her feelings bluntly before Anthony, "You don't have to worry about me. I am not stupid, weak, or small like you perceive me to be to just give up on myself

and live in perpetual misery and remorse just because a man does not and cannot love me. If I know I can live a full life, then I will move forward and that's exactly what I'm doing -- if he's not going to be a part of my life, then so be it. I'll be a part of my life."

The warrior of a woman caught her breath from all the explaining she had to do before proceeding and finishing after her thoughts, "Now that you know what you wanted to know about me, can you please leave me alone?"

Anthony understood all that Sue had said but was not having it; he was just as stubborn as a man would be, not taking a woman's final word for it. "You've changed a lot," he said with a subtle frown, looking at Sue with a complexion that is unreadable. "You would never talk to me like this back then."

Sue scoffed at Anthony's remark, thinking that he must really think she was stupid enough to reduce the standards of her life to his convenience. She shrugged and replied, "People are supposed to change, Anthony." She continued coldly, "How do you want me to talk to you? Did you prefer a sweeter words? Did you want me to be more considerate? You must be out of your mind, Anthony."

Sue thought to herself for a while before proceeding to speak her entire mind without filter to the man

who was delusional enough to think that she would succumb to him. "You know what, I was a fool for you even when I knew how I was not the woman fit for your 'ideals', and to this day I carry the burden of that mistake that I no longer have time to be pestered, even by you who caused all the crap I have to live with. Why won't you leave me alone?"

The burdened woman was now a bit vexed, but she did not plan to stop any time soon; she had waited so long to be able to get all these things off her chest that she wasn't about to just let some man to dictate her feelings. "You said I've changed a lot, and I'm glad I did. What did you expect? That I'd be stupid forever? Is that the kind of life you want me to lead? Did you want me to still be head over heels for you? Did you really think I'd have a heart so big that I'd shrink my mind small for you?" Anthony was beginning to feel her words sting, but whatever he felt would never amount to what torment he once made Sue feel. When the guilt built up inside of him, he began to gather his words, "Sue, I know how much I've hurt you, but...

Can we talk like two decent people pouring their hearts out? Could we slow down so our words don't get ahead of us? I know you're hurt, but you have to know that I can feel hurt, too." Sue was frustrated that Anthony still had the last say, but it was not like she could say anything that would get through the

man's head so all she could really say was his name with undertones of devastation.

"Anthony," she let out a long sigh so that she could calm herself down. She put her chin up as far as she could so that she could look the man before her in the eyes and said, "Since we're here now, I want to make it clear one more time, please, remember this: whatever was between you and me is over, and that will never change. I want to cut all my ties with you and want to have no form of interaction with you. Here's how it is and how it will always be: we don't owe each other anything and we are total strangers. If you think you owe me anything more than an apology, forget about it; I don't need anything from you. Your guilt is the last thing I want to hear about, so you shouldn't feel guilty. I'm not asking anything more from you, Anthony. Just that you don't do anything. That, I'll sincerely appreciate."

Sue was very clear with her terms, but for some reason, Anthony took no regard for any of it and said,

"I know that's not what you really feel and I know that's not what you really want to tell me." He looked into her eyes and gently explained, "Yesterday, after Sheryl and I talked, I asked someone to go over the things that have happened to you; to go over the things in your life and now I know all the cruel

things that were done to you. I know you're afraid to get me involved and that you intentionally chose words that would hurt me in order to drive me away -- that was your plan, wasn't it?"

The woman before Anthony had felt every beat of her heart turn into thuds. She never thought that the man she loved would investigate the whole issue, and for a brief moment she felt glad and relieved.

However, it didn't take long before she pulled herself together and kept her integrity; she wasn't about to sabotage herself so she toughened up and said, "You regard yourself too highly, Anthony. I may have changed, but you surely haven't. You are nobody to me, and I feel like you have to know to what extent. So, listen, and listen real carefully to the words I'm about to say. Anthony, you are dead to me."

she turned to Anthony with a smirk plastered onto her face.

"I broke up with you because I no longer wanted to waste time on you. You are not worthy of it. I couldn't invest any more of my resource on you. I know you think I'm some angel, but you thought wrong!"

Sue lowered her gaze and added, "As for my family, it's none of your business because we are in no way related; you have no right to intervene with my own personal affairs."

Anthony, whose heart was shattered into pieces, felt disdained. However, he still wasn't having any of

her words no matter how convincing they sounded. Hearing her words might have hurt him, but they weren't about to let him accept his unrighteous defeat. "Sue," he said, "please, stop being stubborn. You know, it is completely okay to accept other people's help -- you can trust me. I just want to help you; no more and no less."

Sue, who was trying her best not to let her walls come crumbling down around her, responded, "You're wrong." She stared at Anthony with a cold look on her face and said, "I've always been like this. No matter what happens, I can only do things on my own because that's how I've always been. I never had anyone but myself. There was no one there for me but myself, so I couldn't afford to fail. This is the life I'm used to. So, Anthony, I'm begging you to make this easy for me. Please, leave me alone and get out of my life. Please do not bother me anymore."

She looked at Anthony for a second and then quickly looked away, saying, "Please, don't bother Sheryl either. If you really want to make it up to me, just stay away from us."

The helpless man was beginning to feel like he was losing her. "Sue..."

"Go at this instant," the heartbroken woman demanded, "go!" Sue closed her eyes doing her best not to

have any memory of Anthony leaving her. She was afraid that she would never be able to get over the pain after he left.

Anthony went from hopeful to depressed. He sighed, looked up, and said, "I know you, Sue. I know what you're saying, and I know what you actually want to say. For some reason, you always keep the truth from me, but I'm not a fool to believe any of the lies you tell me. Whatever our relationship will come to in the future, I will always be here, and I will definitely get you out of the prison cell of a life that you have."

"You..." Sue began with her brows furrowed. "My life has nothing to do with you. How many times am I going to tell you that? Why do you care about me so much that you have to get involved with everything?"

Sue was beginning to have thoughts on how Anthony was going to help her as she, for all the years she was trying to, had not once resolved her own problems.

"It's because..." Anthony looked into Sue's eyes without hesitation and said, "I can't watch them do this to you. I don't know, but whenever I see them hurting you like this, I get so upset to the point that I just

won't accept it. I would also want to pretend that nothing happened, but I really can't do that, Sue. I..."

He smiled bitterly and continued, "Sue, I think I'm really out of my mind!"

After hearing what the man had to say, Sue felt strange. She reflected his smile and said, "Anthony,

you have no idea what you're saying, do you?"

"Of course, I do," he replied calmly, glad to finally be having a real conversation with her. "I've thought a

lot about this. I'm not going to lie to you anymore. I thought the only reason I was ever with you was

because of sex, but... I never stopped missing you. I felt empty and wrong without you; I kept thinking I

should have never let you go."

Sue scoffed, "You really are going insane." Standing up, she looked at Anthony and said, "Please, don't

ever say these things to me again. They don't make sense. We..."

"Dinner is served. Come over here so we can all eat together." Just when Sue was going to ask

Anthony to leave for the last time, Peggy interrupted her with a meal. Feeling the awkward ambiance in

the room, Peggy frowned and asked Sue, "What were the two of you talking about?"

"Nothing," Sue lied. "Mom, we'll have dinner by ourselves. Anthony is very busy and he can't stay for

dinner."

"Nonsense! What are you talking about?" Peggy said, displeased with Sue's words. The mother was still in the middle of planning on how she would flatter Anthony. How could she let him leave now?

"Anthony said he'd have dinner here. How can he go no---"

"If you don't believe me, just ask him yourself," Sue said, not letting her mother finish. She gave

Anthony a threatening look, but Anthony pretended not to see her and smiled at Peggy. "Of course, I'm staying, Aunt Peggy. Sue is just kidding you. Just now, we were having a little tiff, so she was trying to get me out of here."

He laughed and carried on, "Rest assured, I'm not going anywhere. Especially because I never had the opportunity to taste the meals you cook. Since you've prepared such a delicious dinner, how can I leave now? I can't help it!"

Peggy, relieved at Anthony's confirmation, smiled and said, "That's what I thought; that's good to know, Anthony." The mother laughed with Anthony while she gave Sue a sour look and said, "Don't be so rude to Anthony. I didn't raise you to become impolite to guests. If you do this again next time, you will have a difficult situation living here."

"Are you leaving or not?" Sue asked, completely shutting off her mother's threatening words.

"Sue," Anthony said with a frown, "it's just a meal. Relax."

"Alright. If you won't leave, then I will!" The relentless woman stood up and coldly said, "You can stay

here and enjoy the sumptuous dinner, but I'll leave. I hope that's okay with you."

Chapter 857 Tantrum

"Stay where you are!" Peggy roared angrily at Sue. Sue was about to leave when she heard Peggy's

loud voice stopping her in her tracks and demanding her to stay. Peggy then said, "Look at yourself.

What are you doing now? Is this how we should treat our guest?"

"Guest? I mean, 'our guest'? Have I heard it right?" Sue immediately countered in a jeering manner.

Then in a mocking tone, Sue continued to refute, "Mom, don't you remember? Well, let me remind you

of something. The people residing in this house now, are you and Allen, not me. You just said that

Anthony has come to visit you. What have I got to do with it? I am neither the host nor the person that

this man wants to meet. He is your guest, not mine. I have no time to waste here."

"You really are rude, you..." Peggy stammered as her voice trailed off. Now she was utterly

embarrassed. She knew, she could not rebut the fact that she had forcefully taken over the house

which was owned by Sue. This was precisely the reason behind those words Sue deliberately said.

And this was also that same reason which angered Sue. Peggy could find no words to defend herself;

she was at a loss.

"Sue, it is not right for you to say that," Doris interjected defending Peggy. Doris, being a person who was good at twisting stories around, took side with Peggy. She said, "Though you don't live here, this is where your family currently stays. Yes, Anthony said that he has come to visit us, but that doesn't mean he is definitely here to see us. The reason he went here is to see you. He would not be here if he doesn't know you, am I right? In other words, you are a host at this place and he is your guest. Now, you are going to leave us alone to attend to your visitor. Don't you think it's too much? It is quite improper for you to do so, isn't it?"

Moreover..." Doris took a pause and then hurled taunting remarks at Sue, "Anyone who is not blind can see his affection for you. Sue, do you think you are still young? If I were you, I would wait no more to get married to a man who cares so much for me so that my mother does not have to worry about me all the time. Does that make sense?"

"Let me see who is barking here?" Sue scoffed at Doris as her eyes were burning fiercely with loathing

and hatred. She knew that all this going on in her life started with Doris. It was because of Doris that Allen and Peggy eagerly came to Y City to stake a claim over her house, so Sue showed no remorse in flaunting her anger and disgust towards Doris.

Then she continued to goad Doris on contemptuously, "Don't forget you are not part of the family yet.

Who are you to say all these? What has the business of our family got to do with you?"

"You..." Doris was stunned and rendered speechless. Propriety was not on her side, either, so she was also defeated, just like Peggy. She then resorted to the last person on their side, Allen, and said in a whining tone of voice, "Allen, you see... I was only trying to speak for your Mom. How can she say that to me? Why is she being so mean to me?"

Feeling provoked, Doris threatened Allen, "Alright, since I am not part of the family, it must be certainly inappropriate for me to continue my stay here, so, I'll take my leave right away then."

"Doris, my dear, please don't be angry. Think about our baby. You have to be careful. Don't stress yourself, okay?" Allen hurriedly stepped over to immediately pacify his dear Doris. He was too scared that the baby would get hurt by her angry emotions.

"Now, all you care about is the baby," Doris stated vehemently. She was looking at Allen with a

sorrowful expression on her face and continued whining, "You promised me that I would be the most important person to you. We aren't even married yet, but you are already showing that you care more about the baby than me. Do you know that it hurts? Are you going to hurt me more even after our marriage? I think it is better for me to reconsider the marriage now."

"Doris..." Allen frowned and tried again to calm her down, "Please stop your tantrum. I am just..."

"Tantrum?" Doris' voice was brimming with disbelief as she glared at Allen. He had never spoken anything harsh to her. But hearing him dare to use the word "tantrum" on her, she was shocked. "Allen, did you just say 'tantrum'?" she asked in a fit of rage.

"I... I didn't mean that..." Allen stammered. He could barely gather some words to ease his way out of the trap that he had set for himself.

"Very well Allen, now, you have become a real man, haven't you?" Doris continued to speak in a scornful manner, "I was only trying to help in solving the issue and persuading Sue to treat our guest nicely. But what did I get out of it? She mocked and blamed me. And you, instead of giving me your sympathy and standing by my side, even hurt me more. Now, I can see how important I am to you.

Thank you really for showing me that. I will take my leave now."

"Doris," Peggy instantly called on her to stop her in her tracks. It was supposed to be a nice family meal together, as she had planned, but it turned into a nonsense bickering instead. Darting a glare at Sue who had caused all the trouble for her, Peggy ordered, "You stay here. I will talk to you later."

As the matriarch, she wanted to exercise her power in the family by scolding the person who disobeyed her and who kept on making a mess for her to clean up. At that moment, Peggy knew that her priority was Doris and not Anthony and Sue. She was more than willing to do anything to make Doris stay so that she could see her long-awaited grandson. Afraid that Doris would leave the house, she coaxingly pulled Doris into the room to soothe her and Allen followed suit, who was aware that his words had turned Doris' fury a notch higher. He did not dare say a word; he remained silent.

Peggy looked at Doris affectionately as she held Doris' hands and in a soothing voice, she stated,

"Doris, I know that you mean well. Of course, you are! You are such a nice and kind girl. I know Allen is a man who doesn't even know how to express his love or to say anything nice to hear. But he always tries his best to care for you, am I right? His actions speak much louder than his words. I believe his love for you. Please forgive him for what he just said. He didn't mean it."

"That's right, Doris," Allen interjected. After Peggy set the play up, Allen instinctively felt it was his turn now, so he said, "I was just... feeling that it is not worth it for you to be distressed, which is going to harm your body. That was why..."

Peggy felt annoyed at him and yelled, interrupting him, "Shut your mouth up!" Peggy reprimanded him, "You are very aware that Doris is now pregnant, yet you still had the audacity to talk with her in such an uncaring manner. Don't you have a brain? Don't you know that what you said would hurt Doris more?"

Allen just sheepishly stood aside without uttering a word.

Peggy then turned to Doris and spoke in a motherly tone, "Doris, I do understand you. And I know Sue was not nice to you at all. I also like to chase that woman out." Pausing for a moment, she then concluded, "But I didn't, because I want a better life for you two. I'm sure that you have noticed, that Anthony looks like he is somebody. If Sue can be married to him, we could possibly benefit from this and have a better life if he 'helps' us a little bit."

There was no response from Doris, but Peggy could make out, based on her knowledge about Doris, that she agreed with what she had said. Feeling contented and assured Peggy said, "Alright if you are

unwilling to see her face, then I won't force you. You can stay here and take a good rest. I will cook some nice dishes for you and bring them into your room. How about that?"

"Okay, then." Doris nodded with a sigh, and she reminded Peggy, "Aunt Peggy, I seriously think that there is something between Sue and that Anthony. You should better..."

"Rest assured. I know what to do," Peggy promptly assured Doris. Then she turned to Allen with a darkened face and demanded, "Did you hear that? Stay here and be good to Doris. I'll come back with the food later."

"Okay! Okay!" Allen nodded in defeat.

Meanwhile, Anthony frowned at Sue and asked, "Sue, do you really have to do this to me? We can't even have a chance to have a meal together?"

Sue just looked down and refused to say anything. She stood there, silently.

"I know you hate me." Anthony forced a wry smile and continued, "But what I do not know, is that your hatred for me is way too much beyond my expectation."

Honestly, Anthony felt deeply hurt by Sue's reaction. But he knew that he was being blamed and that he had it coming. It was entirely his fault after all.

He glanced at Sue dejectedly. Heaving a deep sigh, he weakly said, "I see. You really hate me. I fully understand that. All right, I'll disappear from you."

Sue's heart suddenly tightened in her chest when she heard the disappointment in Anthony's words.

She wanted to say something but said nothing in the end. She steeled herself to endure the pain because she must -- there was no other way.

Just as Anthony stood up to leave, Peggy finished pacifying her future daughter-in-law. Seeing that the person who might be her future source of money was ready to leave, she turned anxious and asked,

"What happened? Anthony, are you leaving now?"

"Yeah, Aunt Peggy," replied Anthony. He smiled warmly to her and said, "I am sorry that I just remembered I still have some work to do now. Aunt Peggy, thank you so much for your invitation. We can eat together next time, my treat."

"Please stay for a while," Peggy said as she dragged Anthony back. She was not letting her future money bag go. She insisted, "The dishes are now ready. Let's not wait for the next time. I am aware that you are such a busy man and you have a lot of work to do, but you must eat first, right? You must

take good care of your body. Listen to me. Just stay here and dine with us. Just have a few bites."

"Aunt Peggy, thank you but I really have to leave now," Anthony gracefully declined.

Annoyed by Peggy's repeated invitation, Sue stared hard at her and inquired, "Don't you hear his

words? He said he needs to go. I didn't know you are deaf. Why are you not letting him go?"

Chapter 858 I Want An Answer From You

Peggy glared at Sue furiously. "You wicked girl! What did you do? Are you driving our guest out from

the door?"

"Mom! What are you talking about? I can't make him do anything!" Sue replied defending herself.

Seeing that Sue was getting angry, Anthony turned to Peggy and explained quickly, "Please don't be

mistaken. Sue has nothing to do with it. I have something urgent to deal with, so I really must leave

now anyway."

"Anthony, there's no need to make excuses for her," Peggy answered with a bitter smile and sighed.

"She's my daughter and I know her well. She must have said something to you, to make you want to

leave?"

"No. Sue didn't say anything, I promise!" Anthony tried to defend her.

Peggy stared at Anthony and then waved her hand dismissively. "Ignore her. You are my guest today,

not hers. Have a seat and enjoy your meal. Come on!"

Peggy virtually dragged him to his seat and then glared at Sue, commanding her to sit down as well.

Sue had no choice but to listen. She couldn't leave Anthony alone with them. Who knew what could happen?

She knew that Peggy was planning something, but couldn't quite figure out what it was just yet.

"Anthony, try this." Peggy plonked a piece of sweet and sour spare rib onto Anthony's plate, showing off proudly, "I'm not bragging but the rib is my signature dish and it happens to be Sue's favorite one as well."

"Really? Sue's favorite dish?" Anthony smiled and looked up at Sue. He noticed that strangely he was especially mindful whenever he heard of Sue's likes and hobbies. "Then I must try it."

Sue opened her mouth in shock. "Mom, are you kidding me? My favorite dish? The person who loves eating the ribs is your son, Allen Wang! As for me, I don't even know the taste of the meat that you cook, because I have never had the honor of trying it. So how can the ribs be my favorite dish? How ridiculous!" There was sorrow and anger in her tone.

"Don't mind what she said. Just ignore her," Peggy explained to Anthony with an embarrassed smile.

"She is a spoiled child. It's my fault."

"I don't think so. I think she's very nice." Anthony smiled, defending Sue in a firm tone.

"Really?" Peggy said slyly. Then her face lit up and she glanced at Anthony and Sue. "Well, then you must have feelings for my daughter, Sue?"

"Mom! What rubbish are you talking about? Just stop it!" Sue was becoming more and more agitated by the minute. She stood up and turned to Peggy. "Anthony and I are just friends. There is nothing between us. He cares for Sheryl. Don't meddle in our affairs!"

"Sheryl?" Peggy murmured in surprise and then glanced at Anthony. "Are you Sheryl's husband?"

"No, I'm not," Anthony replied, trying to hide his irritation with a smile. "Sheryl and I were lovers, once."

"So you are no longer with her?" Peggy openly breathed a sigh of relief. If Anthony was married, then her effort to bring Sue and him together would be in vain. Thank goodness he was still single.

"Yes." Anthony nodded slightly.

"Then, what about her two kids?"

"They aren't mine," Anthony replied.

"Good! That's good!" Peggy commented as if she was very satisfied with his answer.

"What's good? Mom?" Sue raised her voice at Peggy impatiently. "I have already told you that we are just friends. What you're trying to do now is nonsense!"

"It was just small talk. What are you getting so worked up about?" Peggy thought it might be easier to find out more if Sue wasn't there. "Didn't you say, that you were going to leave? What are you waiting for? Nobody's stopping you!"

"You..." Sue was too angry to say anything back to her. After how her mother was acting towards Anthony, she was even more convinced that she needed to stay with Anthony.

Peggy noticed Sue's unusual reaction and she was even more suspicious about their relationship.

'They can't be just friends, ' she thought and smiled. Then she turned to Anthony. "I have met Sheryl before. She is a good girl, beautiful and sweet. But Anthony, I have to be honest. I don't think that she is a good choice for you."

Peggy paused, knowing that her frank comment would displease Anthony. "She has two children already and if you were to marry her, you would become the father of her two kids and have

responsibilities towards them. If I were your mother, I would never agree to this marriage."

"You are right about my mom." Anthony forced a bitter smile on his face. "She was firmly against us being together. That was the reason why we broke up."

"I can understand her totally. No parent in the world would want their son to marry a divorced woman with kids!" she cruelly stated.

"Yes," Anthony replied coldly, feeling hurt that Peggy judged Sheryl like that.

Peggy watched Anthony's reaction and finally turned the topic to Sue. "I'm not putting my daughter on a pedestal but honestly, Sue is a good girl from every aspect. Although, she can be a little stubborn sometimes."

Peggy looked at Anthony and added, "Anthony, I know you are a good man. To be honest, I think you and my daughter could be a good match for each other. What do you think?"

"Mom! Could you just stop it?" Sue was flushed with embarrassment.

"You should shut up!" Peggy shouted at her angrily. "In our village, girls at your age are already married and have children. Look at you! You don't even have a boyfriend! You have no idea how much I worry about you. How can I leave you alone like that?"

"So what?" Sue shrugged her shoulders angrily. "Who says women have to get married and have children? I say, it's just fine to live alone and be single!"

"Rubbish! What are you talking about?" Peggy frowned. She was shocked by her daughter's remarks.

"You stupid girl! Have you considered your future? When you get old, lying in bed, no one will take care of you except for your own children! Or are you going to die alone without a family by your side?" spat Peggy.

"That's my business. It has nothing to do with you!" Sue answered angrily, unwilling to continue the conversation.

"I'm your mother! Your business is also my business! How dare you say it has nothing to do with me?"

Peggy shouted out in fury. Seeing that Sue was unwilling to talk, she turned to Anthony again.

"Anthony! I need an answer from you today. You have to tell me the truth! What do you feel for my daughter?"

"I..." Anthony hesitated. There was a strange feeling in Anthony when he thought about the answer. He glanced at Sue and could read Sue's loving eyes filled with hope and expectation even though her face

remained expressionless.

Anthony didn't know how to respond as he was put on the spot.

"I don't know how I feel either." Anthony smiled awkwardly. He looked at Peggy and said diplomatically,

"Sue is a good girl. She will surely have a good husband in the future."

Peggy was confused. She didn't expect that sort of response from Anthony. She couldn't help but

question her own sharp judgement. 'Am I wrong this time?

It can't be! I am sure that I notice the way he looks at her.'

She was unwilling to accept it and frowned. "Anthony, what do you mean by saying that?

"Aunt Peggy." Anthony looked at her anxious face and decided to confess frankly. "Sue and I are just

friends. Please don't get the wrong idea."

"Even though you are only friends now, you can be something more in the future," Peggy continued to

persuade him. "Sue is a good girl! She will make a good wife, I'm sure."

"Maybe," Anthony replied with a polite smile. "Nobody can be sure about the things in the future. All we

can be sure about is what is here and now. We can only be friends."

Chapter 859 Enrollment

Sue was seething. She couldn't believe the expectation that she felt in her heart when Peggy asked

Anthony how he felt about her. She laughed at herself how foolish she was to have such a ridiculous assumption.

Sue knew very well that it was impossible for Anthony to be with her. However, when Peggy asked the question, Sue's heart beat fast, and she felt that her heart was about to jump out of her chest.

Peggy frowned slightly. She couldn't tell why Anthony answered her that way. She thought he had a thing for Sue and would give her a positive answer.

Anthony didn't know why he said that. He thought, probably because he didn't want Sue to hold certain expectations before he made his decision.

Anthony smiled and said to Peggy, "Aunt Peggy, please rest assured. I will always be her friend. No matter what happens to Sue, I will be there to help her."

Peggy first looked at Anthony and then at Sue feeling even more confused.

Peggy didn't believe that Anthony and Sue could not be together, so she asked Anthony in front of her,

"Is it... really that impossible?"

"Aunt Peggy," Anthony smiled and continued, "as I said, nobody knows what will happen in the future,

but... at least for now, it's not possible."

After listening to their conversation, Sue felt very disappointed inside. She then looked at Peggy and

said, "Did you hear that? You flatter yourself too much."

Sue glanced at Anthony who was in front of her and said, "I'm busy, I have to go now. Would you like to

leave now?"

"Yeah, sure, I'll come with you," Anthony said in a hurry. The reason why he came today was to help

Sue but he found that he didn't play a very positive role.

Anthony looked at Peggy beside him and said, "Aunt Peggy, I'm leaving now. I'll see you next time."

"All right," Peggy said nodding awkwardly and escorted him out.

After saying goodbye, Anthony quickly caught up with Sue and said, "You're walking so fast. Wait up."

Sue didn't say a word to Anthony. When the elevator door opened, she walked in alone and Anthony

followed.

In the elevator, Anthony looked at Sue beside him and said, "Sue, what I said just now..."

"I know." Sue smiled bitterly and continued, "Thank you for letting me know how you feel. You can rest

assured that I will never bother you again."

"No, you don't understand," Anthony said in a hurry. "Please let me explain. Actually, I don't know how I feel in my heart, so I just said that because..."

Sue interrupted him, "Anthony, please stop! I hope that's the end. I wish I never met you. I'm really tired of it. Please don't bother me any more."

"Bother you?" Anthony asked stunned. "Do you think I'm bothering you?"

"Don't you?" Sue stared at Anthony and said, "I was working, but my family called me to come back because of you and now I have to go back to the company and finish my work. Does that qualify as being bothered by you?"

"You..." With a wry smile, Anthony said, "It seems that I'm really humiliating myself. I shouldn't have gone to your house. I shouldn't have had the idea of trying to help you."

"Staying away from me is the greatest help that you could give." As soon as she finished the elevator door opened and Sue stepped out without hesitation.

Sue heard Anthony's voice coming from behind. "Sue, I will remember what you said and I will never care about you again. I brought this shame upon myself, damn it,"

said Anthony. Sue's attitude hurt Anthony deeply, which made him angry and depressed.

It was Shirley's and Clark's first day of school. Charles asked for a day off and came to the school with

Sheryl to sign up for the children.

Every member of the family was very good-looking, which naturally attracted many people's attention.

Even the head teacher couldn't help staring at them while they were signing up.

"Hi, Mr. Lu." A woman's voice came from behind. Sheryl looked around and found a beautiful girl

appeared in front of them.

"Director He, Nice to meet you." Charles turned and politely greeted the girl.

Sheryl was shocked by the way Charles addressed the girl, who was just about her age and was

already the head of the kindergarten.

"I just heard that you took the children to sign up. I came to see if there's anything I can do to help you,"

Pamela said with a smile.

"Thank you very much, but I have already enrolled the children and later the children will be in your

care," Charles said with a slight smile.

"Of course, it's my duty," Pamela said and laughed. Sheryl felt that Pamela had a special affinity, which

made people want to be close. This affinity was probably due to Pamela's engagement in early childhood education. In Sheryl's impression, people engaged in early childhood education were always friendly and amicable.

"I'm afraid Clark won't stay here long. I've arranged an intelligence test for him. If it goes well, he will skip a grade," Pamela said.

"No, I don't think it's a good idea." Sheryl frowned slightly and continued, "Clark is only three years old.

I don't know what kind of person Clark will be when he grows up, but for now I think we should give him a normal happy childhood. Let's wait until he is older for an intelligence test. I don't want him to compete with others at such a young age. I'm afraid..."

"I'm sorry, who is this lady?" Pamela didn't know Sheryl, so she asked Charles curiously.

"This is Clark's mother," Charles answered. Then he frowned and asked Sheryl, "Sher, I know you love Clark, but you know he's different from other children."

"I know what you mean." Sheryl gave a wry smile and said, "Please think carefully, Clark is still so young, but you let him study with children who are much older than him, I am really afraid for him..."

"I have an idea," Pamela said with a smile. After having both of their attention, she continued, "We can still conduct the intelligence test as originally planned. But when the results come out, we can let Clark decide what he wants to do, whether to skip a grade or stay here."

"Do you think that's a good idea?" Charles looked at Clark with a slight frown and then said, "How can he make such an important decision when he is so young?"

"Didn't you just say that he's different from other children?" Sheryl couldn't help laughing and said, "I think Director He's suggestion is good, so let Clark decide for himself."

"All right then." Charles nodded helplessly.

Pamela said with a smile, "I still have something to deal with, so I have to go now. It was nice to have met you Sheryl. Bye Charles."

"All right. Bye." Charles nodded slightly and watched Pamela walk away. Then he left with Sheryl and the children.

Chapter 860 Where Was Sue

On their way back, Sheryl couldn't help but probe Clark. She was curious to know how he felt about the decision to skip a grade. Was he looking forward to that or was he reluctant to do so? Looking into

Clark's eyes, she asked in an inquisitive tone, "Clark, have you thought about what you are going to do

after the IQ test? Do you plan to stay here or to skip a grade?"

"It's such an easy choice," replied Charles on behalf of his son. Even though he was driving, he still

listened to the conversation behind him attentively. Feeling so proud of his smart son, Charles boasted,

"Clark is my son. I know he is different from the other kids. He is so smart. Clark, don't worry. For you to

skip a grade is no big deal."

"Mom, do you want me to skip a grade?" Clark ignored his dad's words, but turned to ask the opinion of

his mom.

"Me?" Sheryl was startled. She thought Clark would at least respond to Charles first but didn't expect

Clark to ask her instead. She knew that the best decision for him would be to skip a grade. That would

help with his further studies as he didn't need to waste his time on schoolwork that was too easy for

him. Meanwhile, as a mother she was also worried about whether Clark would be able to cope with the

higher demands for schoolwork. With the conflicting ideas in her mind, she decided not to influence

Clark's decision and replied, "Clark, you have to make your own decision. No one can decide for you,

including us."

"I know that. I just want to know what your views are. Of course, I will not just take what you say. In the end, I will make my own decision after considering every factor." Clark gave Sheryl a determined look.

There was a fleeting moment where she saw Charles in Clark. Just as the famous saying said, "A wild goose never lays a tame egg." It was very true.

She smiled warmly back to him. She realized that she had to tell him how she felt, so she replied, "Well if you ask me, my answer would be, no. I think you are too young for grade skipping. I'm not fully convinced about this idea. Maybe wait until you are a bit older, then I will have complete confidence in you."

Sheryl felt that she might have been too harsh and may have made him feel a bit discouraged. "But anyway, I don't want you to feel any pressure from what I said. It's just my suggestion. You have to be the one who will decide in the end," she said trying to cheer him up.

"Shirley, how about you?" Clark asked to hear his little sister's opinion, "Do you want me to stay?"

"Where are you going, Clark?" asked the little girl worried. She was still too small to make any sense of what he was asking her. She felt panicked when her brother asked her if she wanted him to stay. She thought that her brother was going to go away.

"Clark might be leaving kindergarten and going on to primary school," explained Sheryl patiently. "If he skips a grade, he will have to go to another school, and then he can't go to kindergarten with Shirley everyday."

"I don't want Clark to go. I want to go to school with Clark," cried Shirley. When she heard that Clark might go to another school without her, she held his hands tightly and didn't want to let go.

Clark felt sad to see Shirley crying and wanting him to stay with her at the same school. He was so overwhelmed by his love for his little sister that his desire to skip a grade was overthrown because of it.

"Don't worry Shirley. I'm not going anywhere. I have decided that I'm going to stay with Shirley," confirmed Clark.

It was rather strange that this pair of twins who shared the same blood were so different in terms of personality. The brother was so mature while the sister was so innocent.

Charles knew that Clark meant what he said. Stealing a glance at Clark from the rear view mirror, he confirmed with his son, "Clark, so this is your final decision?"

"Yes," Clark replied firmly. "Since both mom and Shirley want me to stay, then I'll stay here for some

time. I'll make my decision later after Shirley gets used to the life in kindergarten and is independent enough to go to school alone."

"Since this is what you want to do, I respect your decision," Charles said nodding. Though he was a small kid, Clark doted on Shirley. He was caring and willing to do anything to make Shirley happy, even it meant his own sacrifice. Clark was extremely protective of his little sister and his father sometimes felt that Clark was even more protective of her than he was as her dad.

"Charles," Sheryl called out. Although Shirley, still didn't fully understand the significance behind the talk, she was content that Clark would still be with her and that was all she cared about. However, Sheryl still worried. She knew that the decision Clark had made wasn't for himself but for Shirley. She wasn't satisfied with leaving it at that. "Charles, I think we should get a home tutor. That way, Shirley can still be with him and he can still advance his learning."

"Okay, that's a good idea," Charles agreed with a nod.

After they had dinner, Charles unwillingly drove Sheryl back to the Zhao family house. His eyes were filled with longing and sorrow. "How long do I have to wait until you come back to live with me?"

"That will depend on how fast your action would take," Sheryl smiled and answered.

Looking deeply into his eyes, she softened her voice and said, "Alright, it's time for you to go now. Don't worry about me."

After seeing Charles off, Sheryl went inside the house. She was surprised to find that Sue wasn't home.

Thinking that Sue would return shortly, she waited on the sofa. However, even after 10 pm, which was already late for her, Sue was still not home.

Concerned that it was getting very late, Sheryl picked up her cell phone to call Sue. She rang several times and each time there was no answer, so she became extremely anxious. Finally, at around 11 pm her phone rang, and she answered instantly and was relieved to find that it was Sue. "Hello, Sue.

Where are you? Is everything all right? Do you know how late it is? Why aren't you home yet?"

Sheryl bombarded Sue with a chain of questions. "Sher..." The voice from the other side only appeared after a long belch. It was slurred and mixed with both laughing and crying. "Can you tell me, what I have done wrong? Why doesn't he like me?"

"You're drunk!" Sheryl's anxiety was reignited after she noticed that Sue was drunk. "Where are you now?"

"I'm at..." Sue suddenly chuckled awkwardly and then started asking herself, "Where am I? I... I also have no idea where I am."

Sheryl realized that Sue was too drunk to organize her thoughts. Luckily a staff member from the bar kindly took Sue's phone and answered, "Hello, I suppose you are a friend of this lady. Your friend seems to be drunk and has been out of control for the whole night here. Could you please come and take her home?"

The staff then gave Sheryl the address of the bar, which also happened to be rather close to Anthony's house. 'It was all because of Anthony, ' she thought. Even though it was very late, she called Anthony anyway and raged to him, "Anthony, what the hell do you want? What do we have to do, so that you can leave Sue alone?"

"Sher, what are you talking about?" Anthony was perplexed. Indeed the visit to Sue's family today was a total disaster, but he made up his mind to stay clear of Sue from then on. Since Sue wouldn't change her mind anyway, his self-esteem didn't allow him to keep begging her. He even vowed in his heart that he would not offer her any help even she came to implore him.

"There is nothing between me and Sue," he claimed. "We talked it through today. From now on, I will

not meddle with her affairs. It's none of my business."

"Oh really?" Sheryl ridiculed with obvious contempt. "You have been waiting so eagerly for this day to come. Haven't you? Do you know that Sue still hasn't come home yet? Aren't you worried about her at all?"

"What did you say?" Anthony was suddenly engulfed by his anxiety for Sue when he heard that Sue was not back home. He forgot about everything he had just stated. He was so firm just a few minutes ago, but now he was contradicting everything that he had said. Holding on to his phone tightly, he asked with so much care and concern, "What happened to Sue? Where is she right now?"

"She is drunk in a bar," replied Sheryl flatly. "It is the bar that is close to your house. I would like to get her, but it will take me at least half an hour to get there. Anthony, if you have at least some decency, please go and check on her. I am worried about her."

"Alright, I'll go now." Anthony rushed out of his house the moment he hung up the call. 'Sue, please stay where you are. I am coming for you now, ' he thought as he ran.

He had never run at such a speed in his entire life. In less than five minutes, he had arrived at the bar.

He rarely ever went to bars, as he found the atmosphere to be suffocating and disgusting. He hated the singing, the lighting, the dancing and basically everything that a bar represented. But now, he had no other choice but to dig Sue out from this vulgar place.

Sue had been drinking since around 8 pm up until now, which was already 11 pm. For three hours she drank and drank. Only by indulging herself in alcohol was she able to numb the painful memories and temporarily escape from reality. Sue thought she was able to deceive herself that she was actually happy.

But she failed. The more she drank, the deeper the name Anthony was engraved in her heart.