

Wedded Bride 1271

Chapter 1271 Visit Miranda

Early the next morning, Bernard and Rachel made their way to the police station. The sun shone brightly as they stepped out of the car. After yesterday's near-death experience, Rachel felt thankful for this brand new day.

The police station was a busy place. A lot of police officers came and went as they sat in the waiting area. A few minutes later, a policewoman finally approached them. "Good morning. This way ma'am," she said as she led them to her desk for questioning.

Rachel reported the evidences she collected to the police, which included the evidence of Miranda killing Lance and the matter of Miranda and Danny transferring the property illegally. She also charged Miranda of kidnapping and attempted murder.

The police checked the evidences she presented and told her that they would deal with the case as soon as possible.

On the way back from the police station, Rachel was absent-minded. She was thinking that after coming back, Holley would be assigned to solving the problem of the business partners withdrawing capital. As the deadline approached, if the company couldn't get any investments, they would have no

choice but to shut it down.

Bernard suddenly broke the silence.

"About my question yesterday, you said you would think about it," he started. "Have you come up with a

decision?" Perhaps because it was different from the hazy night yesterday, under the bright sunshine,

Bernard looked nervous and awkward obviously.

Rachel faltered, "I have thought about it for a long time. I don't think we know each other enough, so

we... We might not be the best for each other. I am sorry, Bernard."

Bernard felt depressed when he heard it, though it was the answer he expected. He always thought

that Rachel was out of his league. In the past, he could only see her onscreen, and now, even if she

was beside him, he could feel the long distance between them.

Looking at the disappointment in Bernard's eyes, Rachel wanted to take back what she said for a

second, but she was clear that he was not the one she had been looking for. Even with his strong

feelings for her, he was unable to give her the lifestyle that she wanted. She felt sorry for him but she

couldn't be his girlfriend.

Rachel made her way to her office as soon as she arrived Tarsan Corporation. Her assistant told her that Holley arrived half an hour earlier and was already waiting for her.

Holley was finally released from prison and today she came back to Tarsan Corporation. Rachel hugged her warmly and stated, "Welcome back, Holley. You have suffered much." Facing Rachel, Holley smiled sweetly but she had only one thought. She had won the bet fortunately. No matter what happened during this time, at least Rachel didn't let her down.

Thinking back on the days she was in prison, Holley counted every day as if it was a year long. She couldn't stand it. There was a lot of times that she thought about retracting her testimony, but fortunately, she had persisted and endured the hardship. At last, she was finally free. Nothing would stop her in doing what she wanted.

Now the key point was to use Rachel's appreciation and trust, and to slowly grab the company from under Rachel's nose. Holley couldn't let herself suffer for nothing.

A slight knock broke their silence as the assistant walked inside Rachel's office, who told Rachel and Holley that the companies made their decision to withdraw the capital after careful consideration and

they needed Rachel's immediate confirmation.

Upon hearing the news, Rachel turned to Holley immediately. "I know that you have just come back, so

I shouldn't disturb you with these things, but now the company is in great danger. If there is no

investment, it might even face a crisis of bankruptcy. All these companies planning to withdraw their

capital only trust you. So I hope you can deal with this issue as soon as possible. Can you, Holley?"

Rachel asked.

Holley just nodded. Listening to how Rachel explained it, she realized how serious the issue was. So

she came back to her office immediately and started to contact those companies to work out a solution.

Although she was exhausted, thinking that her final purpose was the Tarsan Corporation, she still had

to cheer up and fight head on. If the corporation went bankrupt, she would have nothing.

Holley was fully consumed by her task that she made phone calls the entire morning. She had a spark

in her throat, but at last, she managed to make their business partners backtrack their decision to

withdraw the capital.

She sighed with relief and finally announced the good news to Rachel.

"Don't worry, Ms. Bai. Those companies initially planning to withdraw the capital have decided to stay.

Our company can operate normally. No need to worry about the capital chain."

Although Rachel knew that Holley was capable, she had never thought that Holley could solve the problem smoothly this fast. Rachel felt surprised, and at the same time, frightened on how

indispensable Holley had become to the company. She even started to become anxious that Holley would be more and more significant to the company and would later surpass her.

But at this time, Holley had helped the company get through a great difficulty, so Rachel still felt happy.

She decided to shake off all negative thoughts she had.

"Holley, I appreciate all that you have done for me. If it weren't for you, I might have suffered in prison and the company might have shut down. I have decided to give you a 5 percent stock share to thank you for what you did for me and the company," Rachel announced.

Holley showed a pleasant and surprised expression and responded, "Thank you, Ms. Bai. I won't disappoint you. In the future, I will surely make more contributions to the company to repay you."

But how could Holley be satisfied with only 5 percent stock share? She swore to herself that it was just the beginning.

Rachel appeared to be generous when she gave out the stock, but in reality, she was heartbroken. She even desired to go back on her promise, but what had been said couldn't be taken back. There was no use crying over spilled milk.

The day flew by swiftly as they were all occupied by work. Just as Rachel was about to go off work, she received a message from the police. Miranda and Danny had been arrested successfully. The two almost went abroad but were caught at the last gasp.

Rachel was initially prepared to head home after work, but after getting the news, she decided to take a detour and went to the police station instead.

In the reception room of the police station, Rachel finally saw Miranda again. In fact, at the first glance of the murderer, she felt scared involuntarily. Rachel would inevitably think back that this devil almost killed her that night.

But soon after, she realized that now, Miranda was just a prisoner and was unable to threaten her anymore.

"Mrs. Zhan, do you feel surprised to see me today? I have told you before that you will be punished in the end. Now that day has come, right?" Seeing that Miranda, who was sitting opposite to her, looked

downcast, Rachel felt she had avenged herself.

"My only regret is that I didn't get to successfully kill you." Miranda still acted tough in front of Rachel.

And that was truly what Miranda thought. Every time she thought back of that day, she regretted

deeply. She had played it over and over in her head and thought that if she would have only taken

action earlier, she wouldn't end up this way.

"Unfortunately, there is no 'if' in this world. And I am bound to be living happily after surviving that

disaster. I wish you happiness in prison," Rachel sneered.

"Rachel, get out! I don't want to see you." Miranda restrained herself the entire time but still got furious

in the end.

"If not for my kindness, I would have not come to visit you, Mrs. Zhan. You are such an ungrateful

person." Rachel just came to add insult to injury and spoke with sarcasm.

Chapter 1272 Another Day

Rachel left the police station in high spirits after seeing Miranda's tragic fate. She was already on the

road when a phone call came in relentlessly. Rachel caught a glimpse of the caller ID and a familiar

name was showing. She cursed in a low breath as she continued to ignore the call.

After sleeping with Alan that day, she often received his phone calls. Every time she tried to refuse him, she did not realize that he kept calling more often. Moreover, she could not avoid him forever. Rachel got upset when she thought how annoying it was becoming.

Finally, she decided to take the call. "Hello, Mr. Zhao. What can I do for you?" Rachel tried to set aside her irritation and forced herself to sound more natural.

"Ms. Bai, are you free today? I've always wanted to meet you. Would you like to hang out?"

"Of course I would like to see you again," she answered in a heartbeat. "However, we have a lot going on in the company recently and I hardly have time to take a leave. I'll let you know when I have the time." Rachel assured him.

"Don't get yourself too worked out, Ms. Bai. Well then, I'll wait for your notice. Don't let me down." Alan sounded optimistic.

Rachel didn't answer. She was still upset when she hung up the phone. When she remembered what happened to her with Alan at the hotel last time, she thought the man was really disgusting. She recalled the nausea that lingered when his hot breath sprayed on her face. She couldn't imagine herself spending another night with him.

Back in her office, Holley's high tension relaxed after she dealt with the company's affairs.

It had been a while since she last worked, and today was so far, her most productive day in the office. It

was only after she had a short rest that her cell phone broke the silence in the room.

Staring at the caller ID, she suddenly felt unhappy as she read the name.

It was Lanny Huang calling.

Lanny Huang was no stranger to her. A few months ago, Rachel forced her to persuade him to

investment in their company. Tempting him was an exhausting work for her.

If Lanny Huang was handsome and graceful, it wouldn't be a big deal. But he was not only fat, but also

a pervert. He played a lot of perverted games every time they got dealings.

During the period of coaxing Lanny Huang to sign the contract, Holley had to meet with him a lot. And

although she hated it the most, she was left with no other options. Every time she slept with this man,

Holley would run to the bathroom and spit out for ten minutes. She would also wash her body more

than ten times, rubbing her skin clean until it turned pink.

So now she could not help feeling disgusting whenever she answered his phone calls.

Despite this, she decided to take the call. After all, Lanny Huang was one of their biggest clients. She didn't want to lose his business just after she came out of prison.

She counted to three and then greeted cheerfully, "Hello, Mr. Huang!" Holley deliberately softened her voice to sound charming enough.

"Beauty, what are you doing now?" Lanny Huang's disgusting voice rang in her ear. It was deep and hoarse.

"Nothing. I was just about to call you. What a coincidence," Holley said with a smile. Lanny Huang felt the warmth in her voice and never doubted she was faking it.

"Were you? I miss you too. That's right. Come out and meet me tonight."

Holley was shocked. She just got out of prison. All she wanted was to rest at home. Who knew she was remembered by the lecher.

"Mr. Huang, that's the case, I still have something to deal with today. Maybe.. another day?" Holley asked tentatively.

"Another day?" he repeated unconvinced. "All right then." After Lanny Huang agreed, Holley sighed in relief. Just as she was about to hang up after a few more polite responses, Lanny Huang reminded her.

"Beauty, I think I should also consider the contract for the second half of the year. I may be very busy

then. If you can't make an appointment with me, it will be best to put it on hold."

'Damn it!' Holley thought.

She could not help but scold the damn man in her head. Whenever she thought she had caught his

weakness, he always threatened her with the contract. She hated how he was trying to outwit her.

Holley reminded herself that one day, she would tread these people under her feet! Her time would come.

However, even with that thought, she did not dare to neglect him now. "Oh, Mr. Huang, you may have

misunderstood me. I don't mean that. By the way, why don't we talk later? I'll call you when I finish my

work at noon tomorrow. Shall we make an appointment then?" she offered in a sweet voice.

Lanny Huang seemed satisfied, so he flirted with her again, and then reluctantly hung up the phone.

Holley's face was gloomy after the phone conversation. She remained seated in her chair in a daze.

She was reluctant to see the lecher, but she was left with no choice.

Suddenly, her face lit up with a crazy idea.

Since Rachel had pushed her to sleep with him before, this would be payback time. She would turn the tables around and had her do the same.

She clearly remembered that Lanny Huang had taken a fancy on Rachel, but at that time she was in a high position and disdained to deal with such people. Because of that Holley was forced to take over the job.

'Brilliant!' Holley exclaimed to herself.

After giving it another thought, she decided to call Rachel. It took two rings before she picked up.

"Hello, Ms. Bai! Are you free tomorrow evening?" Holley asked but never let Rachel answered. She immediately continued, "I'd like to invite you to dinner. It's mostly to thank you for finding the evidence to rescue me and for giving me such valuable share in the company."

Holley's voice was full of gratitude.

"Tomorrow?" Rachel confirmed. "Sure, but you really don't have to thank me. You deserve it." Although

Rachel said it was not a big deal, there was a distinct sense of savior's superiority in her heart.

Holley explained, "Tomorrow we will have dinner together with Lanny Huang, one of our biggest clients.

I think we can take this opportunity to maintain a good cooperative relationship with him. Do you

mind?"

"Of course I don't mind. It's a good thing. It will also make our customers feel our sincerity."

Tomorrow's lunch was soon decided, and Holley smiled with great satisfaction as she ended their phone conversation.

Sure enough, Rachel probably never imagined what her real intention was.

At this time, Holley was complacent about her brilliant idea of killing two birds with one stone.

Every time she dealt with this lecher, she ended up exhausted. Now it was Rachel's turn to do it.

She knew that Lanny Huang always enjoyed the pleasure of conquering powerful women in the workplace. He would also be interested with Rachel tomorrow and he should be able to divert his hunting target because of the feeling of freshness.

In this way, she could not only get rid of the dignified lecher, but also use Rachel to maintain this big customer. Why not?

As for Rachel's thinking, whether she wanted to or not, she could not care less. But she thought Rachel was willing to do it.

After all, Rachel always knew how to use her body to her advantage. Maybe she was still enjoying it,

Holley thought with a slight irony in her heart.

As expected, Lanny Huang made reservations at one of the city's finest restaurants the next day. He

was initially just expecting Holley, so the moment he saw Rachel with her, he was unable to hide his

excitement and began to flirt with her.

Holley looked at Lanny Huang coldly because he now behaved the same way he did when he first saw

her. She knew that her goal was basically achieved, but she remained silent.

Rachel, on the other hand, didn't think much about it. She just thought Lanny Huang thought she was

beautiful. Holley's intention did not even cross her mind.

"I have long heard of your name, Ms. Bai. I'm glad to finally meet you today. I didn't expect you to be so

young and beautiful." Lanny Huang complimented her, narrowing his eyes slightly.

Chapter 1273 Bright Future

As Rachel listened to Lanny's extravagant compliments, she couldn't help feeling proud in her heart.

"Thank you for your kind words, Mr. Huang. I'd like to propose a toast to you. Your support means a lot

to my company," Rachel said as she raised up her wine glass.

Holley also followed her action. "Mr. Huang, I'd like to propose a toast to you, too. We are looking

forward to a bright future as both our companies work together." Holley drank off the wine.

They all had a good mood after a few drinks. Lanny squinted at Rachel's sexy boobs. He sat closer to her, putting his hand on her shoulder.

Rachel didn't resist his offensive behavior. But since Holley was also there, she couldn't feel at ease.

Holley was smart enough to take this as her cue. She sneered in her mind and then pretended to be drunk so that she could take the opportunity away.

"Mr. Huang, Ms. Bai, I'm so sorry. I'm a little tipsy so I have to go to the washroom. Please excuse me,"

Holley said before she took her leave. When she went out, she closed the door for the two.

As soon as Holley left, Lanny didn't waste time and pulled Rachel into his arms. He didn't move further though, as he was not sure about Rachel's attitude yet.

However, Rachel only struggled slightly in the beginning. Since Lanny didn't let go of her, she leaned on him obediently. He took this as a green light, and a wide grin came across his face.

Lanny's hands fumbled about her body. Soon he touched her soft and plump breasts, massaging them with his hands which made her groan. Lanny was so excited that he rubbed them vigorously. He felt

her nipples went hard as he flicked on them, which made Rachel scream and tremble.

Lanny pressed the back of Rachel's head towards him and kissed her lips. She did not resist, which pleased him even more.

He pushed her down on the sofa. His weight pressed over her as he locked her in his arms. Rachel closed her eyes and let Lanny's tongue explore in her mouth.

Lanny's kiss was impetuous and rude. He was clearly taking advantage of her. Rachel frowned and tolerated his wild behavior. However, she couldn't help feeling bitter in her heart.

If only the man on top of her was Charles! The thought of it made her excited. She returned his kisses, and held him closer.

Some time later, Holley knocked on the door.

Rachel was startled, she immediately pushed Lanny away from her body in panic. She sat up and sorted herself out. She took out a small cosmetic mirror to put on some makeup. When Holley finally came in, she was sitting elegantly as if nothing happened.

Lanny was unprepared when Rachel pushed him away. He felt quite annoyed but he managed to restrain himself since Holley was back. However, he still didn't give up on harassing Rachel. His hand

crawled on her thighs and rubbed her skin under the table.

Since none of them had the mood to continue talking about work, after some time, they called it a day.

When they departed in front of the restaurant, Lanny insisted on driving both of them home.

The two ladies had no choice but to ride with him on his car. He sent Holley back first and then drove

Rachel home. Soon they arrived at the building of Rachel's apartment.

"Mr. Huang, thank you for driving me home. See you next time. Goodbye!" Rachel said after she

stepped out of his car.

"Ms. Bai, aren't you going to invite me into your cozy home?"

Lanny didn't want to let her go so easily. Rachel understood what he meant, but she pretended to be

perplexed by his request and replied, "I haven't cleaned my house for a long time. It's a mess now. I'm

afraid you'll feel uncomfortable in it. Today's been a long day too. I'm a little tired now. How about I'll

invite you to be my guest next time?"

Lanny got her point. Even though he was disappointed, he didn't want to force her to sleep with him

tonight. After all, they had cooperation in the future. He would get her sooner or later. He also bid her

farewell. "Till next time then."

Rachel smiled and turned around into the building. She walked away without looking back.

After Rachel was out of sight, Lanny decided to find another woman to relax with since he was quite excited now.

The next day after work, while Holley drove back home, she kept thinking on how to get rid of Rachel from the company. How ridiculous! Rachel even thought that 5% company share was enough to reward her for her contribution! She even expected her to be grateful for her generosity! Dream it!

She had music loudly playing in her car. Holley felt joyful as she sang her heart out. Right now she was confident enough to defeat Rachel and replace her position soon.

Holley had to admit that she secretly envied Rachel. She was never Rachel's friend. She had always seen her as a competitor. Rachel didn't deserve the highest position in the company, nor did she deserve to love Charles.

Every time that they were confronted by problems, she ended up as the person to save Rachel's ass.

Without her, Rachel couldn't achieve anything. She would only screw things up one by one. If there was anyone who should be thankful, that should be Rachel.

Moreover, Rachel's love towards Charles was a humiliation to her. Charles should've been her lover!

He was her prince charming. How could this dirty bitch dare to think of having him instead?

She hated Rachel! Rachel could freely announce her love to Charles in public. She loved him passionately.

What hurt her most was that they had even been together in the past. Rachel and Charles had spent days and nights with each other a long time ago, while she didn't even dare to imagine having Charles for a single day!

Holley had already found a solution when she got home.

There was only one thing to do to sabotage Rachel's position in the company, and that was to earn more share than her. If her stocks surpassed Rachel's, then she could easily kick Rachel out.

It was a breakthrough. Holley knew what she needed to do next. Now all she needed was to take actions.

With the plan carefully crafted in her mind, she did not waste any of her precious time. She even forgot to take off her shoes before she started making phone calls to the other shareholders. She invited them

to dinner tomorrow night.

Holley had always been a sociable person, so she managed to maintain a good relationship with the other shareholders. When she invited them, all of them agreed to attend the dinner. After all the calls, Holley was even more convinced about her upcoming victory.

She hummed a happy tune as she went into the kitchen. She stopped to look at her reflection from the glass window. The girl was beautiful, young and competent.

She had suffered so much during those years. She had tossed and turned every single night because of her fear of the unknown risks in the future. Tonight she decided to finally take a rest and make a delicious dinner for herself.

At the same time, Rachel was also thinking of the 5% share she had given to Holley. She regretted that she was too kind to Holley. But on second thought, by doing this she could get her loyalty in return. She was convinced that it was indeed a great deal. Any way, it was not much. Even if Holley got 5% company share, she wouldn't be able to make any difference in the company.

The next day when they met in the company, they greeted each other as usual. Neither of them knew that each was dreaming different dreams. Dreams that would shatter each other in the process.

Their peace got disturbed as a conflict between them arose later that afternoon. Apparently, they each had totally opposite opinions regarding a project, and both insisted that they were right.

Rachel wanted to invest all their cash flow in a project in the west city region. Since the company was struggling for survival now, she thought that they might be able to make great profit from this project even though it would require a lot of investment. This project was promising, and they shouldn't miss it.

Chapter 1274 You Have To Pay For That

Rachel's proposal was wonderful. That was true. But she had underestimated the risks involved.

Holley's, on the contrary, was conservative. According to her, the future of this project was still uncertain. What was more, the lack of funds was a real headache for them. Even if they had decided to move the project forward, they would not be able to manage it.

Given such considerations, Holley could only try to persuade Rachel to change her mind and give up on the project. She couldn't let Rachel put the whole company into trouble because of her recklessness. She wouldn't just sit and watch as everything went down the drain.

But Rachel was always used to getting her own way. She turned a deaf ear to any advice. Besides, the one who disagreed with her was Holley!

'How dare she work against me!' sneered Rachel silently. 'Did she forget that it was me who helped her get out prison?

How ungrateful!' Rachel felt disgust.

Ignoring Rachel's anger, Holley kept explaining her ideas. She laid her points with clarity. She knew that Rachel refused to listen to her advice. But she had to be firm, because one wrong move could ruin the whole company. She wouldn't allow her to put all their hard work to waste.

Rachel looked fierce. She was at her breaking point. She rose and strode towards Holley. She bridled at Holley's offensive remarks.

"Holley Ye, you should learn to walk away from things that don't concern you. Do I need to remind you on who the boss is? It's me. I am the general manager of this company. Who do you think you are to contradict me? Please excuse me for being blunt. But you are nothing but a dog and I am your master!"

Holley's face was ashen. Rachel's words cut her to the quick. She suddenly felt lightheaded, and her heart began to palpitate. For a moment, she almost forgot how to breathe.

Holley was silent for a moment. She quickly adjusted her expression and managed to put on a smile.

She hid all her resentment and unwillingness. She just took a step back and tolerated Rachel's insult.

Revenge is a dish that could be eaten cold. She would surely get back at Rachel one day. Since

Rachel believed she was her dog, she would let her live a life worse than that of a dog someday.

"Sorry, Ms. Bai. It was my fault. I knew I had overstepped my bounds. But I always had the best

interests of the company at heart. That's why I was so anxious. But I beg you not to take such a hasty

decision and consider it carefully first. How about calling a board meeting regarding this matter? I think

we should have a cautious analysis and reappraisal. Also, the shareholders have the right to know."

Deep inside, Holley was sneering at Rachel's ignorant and stupidity. But on the surface, she had to be

polite and compromise.

"So you are still not convinced," Rachel said coldly. "Alright then. We'll call a board meeting. Just wait

and see!"

Rachel shrugged her shoulders and laughed with disdain. 'Who does she think she is?' she thought,

rolling her eyes. 'Does she think she could influence all the shareholders' decisions? Or is she

expecting to change my mind this way? Oh yeah. Dream on!'

Instead of ending in agreement, their talk ended up in acrimony.

Holley couldn't concentrate on her work the whole afternoon. She sat in front of her computer and stared blankly at the screen.

Rachel's vicious words still rang in her head. She gnashed her teeth and pressed the mouse hard, as she replayed the day in her mind.

'Enough is enough. I can't bear it any more!' Holley took a deep breath and thought. 'It's time to take actions. She has bossed me around enough. I'll tear her mask and drag her down from that position.

She'll have to grovel and cry for mercy.'

After work, Holley took her handbag and left the office in a hurry. She made advance reservations for a room in a posh restaurant and invited the shareholders to join her for dinner. She arrived half an hour earlier and waited there.

As the night fell, the guests started to arrive one after another.

Holley welcomed and greeted each of them with hospitality. She didn't sit down at the table until everyone had been seated. The guests chatted about their work before the table was set.

Holley personally poured every guest a glass of red wine and then proposed a toast. After that, she told them about her purpose. She asked them to contact her first if they were considering to sell their

stocks. She wanted to become the major shareholder. Of course, she would offer them a satisfying price.

Those men were all experienced businessmen. So they understood what she really wanted.

Astonished by her ambition, they remained silent for a while.

"Well, I can't give you a promise now. But if I decide to sell my share, I'll consider your offer." Someone broke the silence. After a pause, the others echoed back his words.

Without being discouraged by their vague answers, Holley put on a confident smile. She knew that it would take time and effort to break their barriers and she had everything planned. Today, she just wanted to hear them out and this was only the first step.

The shareholders did not refuse her bluntly. She took it as a good sign. 'Well begun is half done,' she encouraged herself.

She was determined to take over the company by buying more shares.

An hour after, they finished the dinner in a good mood.

Of course, recreational activities after dinner were necessary. Holley announced that she had prepared

wonderful after-dinner activities for the guests. So she took them to the biggest club in Y City,

Succubus Club, which was also the famous money-squandering den.

Shortly after they went into the room, Holley clapped her hands and a group of strippers glided in

gracefully. They were wearing hollow-out lace dresses decorated with diamonds, which made their skin

looked so delicate and fair. When they swung their hips, they could clearly see the white and tender

skin of their thighs.

The men pounced on the girls. They pretended to be all gentlemen at day time. But now they looked

like beasts running to catch their prey, eyes filled with desire.

Holley took out her phone, pretending to be reading news. But she secretly photographed the scene in

the room. She made sure that the faces of these shareholders and what they were doing could be seen

clearly.

Most of the employees had already gone home, but the room at the end of the hallway was still well lit.

It was the office of the CEO of Lansh Technology.

Shutting down his laptop, Nick finally stretched his arms and leaned back on his chair. It was getting

late and he could already see the street lights outside as they flickered on from his window. A day's

work tired him down. He passed a hand wearily over his eyes.

Suddenly, the phone rang. The call was from the lobby.

Nick immediately picked up the receiver.

"Mr. Ge, you have a visitor," the receptionist announced.

Nick was surprised. Who would visit him at this time? Almost everyone in the office had already left.

"Who is it?" he asked.

Hardly had Nick's voice faded away when a woman laughed at the other side of the telephone. "Nick!

It's me, Isla! It's only been a few days since I last saw you, and you've already forgotten me?" she

joked.

"Isla!" Nick replied after a pause. "What a surprise! Please come to my office," he invited. He then

asked the receptionist to lead her to him.

After several minutes, his door opened and Isla stepped in. She greeted him with a smile.

Nick stood up and welcomed her with great hospitality. As she sat down, he poured her a cup of hot

tea.

Chapter 1275 For A Woman

"What brings you here, Isla? It's so late now. Did you drive here all by yourself?" Nick asked in a worried tone as he put the teapot on the table.

Seeing that Nick was as gentle as a girl, Isla couldn't help laughing and said, "It's only been a few days since we last met, but you've become so wordy!"

Embarrassed, Nick lowered his head. Although she was right about the fact that he was changed by a woman, he was unwilling to tell Isla about it.

Recently, Cassie had been making daily trips to his house to bring him delicious soup. She was also considerate enough to often do house cleaning.

Every morning before he headed for work, Nick would always look around his house. His house suddenly made him feel he was in a strange place. Although each of the furnishings here was very familiar to him, he always had a strange feeling when he looked at them as a whole.

After spending a lot of time with Cassie, Nick found himself unconsciously influenced by her. He was now more caring and considerate of others. And now that he was facing Isla, who was more like part of his family, he naturally behaved like a gentleman.

Isla stared at Nick, his cheeks now pink, as he avoided her eyes. Seeing Nick look embarrassed, Isla

decided to stop teasing him anymore. Then, at the thought of something unpleasant, she couldn't help sighing.

"What's wrong? Why the sudden cloud in your eyes?" Nick asked in surprise, raising his head. His earlier expression had now been replaced by a worried look.

"It's because of Sher. She's been in trouble lately," Isla explained.

Anxious, Nick asked, "What's the matter? She never mentioned anything."

"Do you still not know her personality by now? She is not someone who complains about others. She would rather swallow her anger whenever someone does her wrong. Even if Sher and I work in the same company, she has never opened up to me. She won't tell me what has happened to her. But as you know, other people talk. And so I've heard that she's been in big trouble lately..."

"What exactly is the problem?" Nick immediately asked, his forehead creased with worry.

Seeing that Nick was so concerned, Isla felt that she made the right decision to come to him. She knew that Sheryl was likely to keep the secret from her. After all, two women were mutually exclusive.

Besides, they knew each other too well because they saw each other very often. On the contrary,

Sheryl regarded Nick as her own brother. So Isla thought it was okay if she would pour out her heart to him.

With this taken into consideration, Isla did not waste time and quickly told Nick everything she had heard about Sheryl.

She first started with a disclaimer that the information she had was not directly coming from Sheryl, but a collection of other people's accounts. "That's how it happened. Leila tried to frame Sher and she was so unlucky that she fell right into her trap. The bitch clearly fooled everyone around her. She pretended to be filial and warm-hearted in front of Melissa. She also staged an innocent girl in front of Charles.

She schemed to make Sher her scapegoat. Unfortunately, Melissa discovered Sher's weakness because of her negligence. If only Melissa hadn't fallen down the stairs, things would have not been so bad. Alas! Even if Charles is not close to his mother, it is impossible for him to completely disregard her since they are related by blood. After all, Melissa is his biological mother."

Upon hearing Isla's story, Nick finally understood what was wrong with Sheryl recently. He was sullen, frowning. He tried calling Sheryl yesterday but she never answered his calls. That just proved that she was in a bad mood at that time.

After hesitating for a moment, he finally asked, "What can I do, Isla? Sher doesn't want us to get involved so there's nothing that we can do."

"There must be something you can do for her," Isla insisted. Her eyes fixed on Nick's puzzled face. She began to explain, "Sher has always regarded you as her own brother. If she has something on her mind, she will tell you more or less, but you'll need to ask her. Once she opens up to you, just pretend that you've just heard about it and take that as an opportunity to comfort her. If it makes her feel better,

that's great. If she is still depressed, then there's nothing more that we can do to help her." Isla waited as Nick seemed to take it in.

"If you'd ask me, the hardest nuts to crack now are Leila and Sher's mother-in-law, Melissa. If we are able to expose their plot, Charles will be reconciled with Sher," Nick suggested persuasively.

"I hope it's as easy as you say it is. Melissa has always regarded Sher as an eyesore. Since she has discovered Sher's secret, I don't think she would easily give up torturing her. What's more important, Leila finds Charles young and attractive. She has her eyes fixed on him ever since they met, and has been taking all opportunities to seduce him. Until the cause of Leila's poisoning has been investigated,

Charles will continue to put the blame on Sher. So, the crux of the matter is Charles' attitude towards Sher," Isla concluded.

After hearing Isla's thoughts, Nick suddenly seemed to understand something. "I've got an idea. In fact, isn't it just right that we should first let Charles know that Sher was innocent, and that it was all a trap designed by his mother and Leila?"

Isla nodded in agreement. "Yes, you're right. But it'll be harder to do that. Charles was made to believe that his mother had fallen down the stairs because of Sher. Moreover, Melissa insisted that it was Sher's fault, so she didn't want to see her until now. It's almost an insoluble problem," Isla said, frowning. Their discussion seemed to be leading nowhere and she hated how helpless they were.

However, Nick thought otherwise. He thought that the first thing to do was find Sheryl and ask her what she thought. Then he wanted to work things out with her.

The room was smokey. The lights were dimmed while a few colorful strobe lights were rotating from corners of the room. The sexy music was blaring. Looking at the intimacy between the shareholders and the flirtatious women, Holley expected that the next scene would be even worse. With a serious

look on her face, she got up and called everyone's attention. "Excuse me, I have something urgent to do and I must leave now. I've already settled the bill, so you can just continue to enjoy yourselves. If you don't feel convenient, you can also go to find another place to continue. As for the shares, please consider my offer again. I'm waiting for your good news."

Upon hearing that she was leaving, the shareholders all began to smile, a lewd look on their faces.

Nodding absentmindedly, they continued flirting with the women in their arms. Instantly, the room was filled with an erotic atmosphere. It seemed like the monsters in them had just been freed as they continued with their shameless and lustful acts.

As soon as Holley left, the men became more brazen. They started teasing the women lewdly while saying nasty things ceaselessly. A few minutes later, they all tacitly took away the women in their arms and took them to a nearby hotel.

After everyone else had walked out, the only one left was a calm young man who had been sitting in a corner.

His name was Black Hu, the current general manager of the Hu Group. As the only son of the president of the Hu Group, he was destined to succeed his father sooner or later and acquire a higher status.

According to news, this handsome young man became the general manager of the Hu Group as soon as he had returned from abroad. Undoubtedly, the current leader of the Hu Group was very satisfied with how he had been performing.

At the moment, an enigmatic smile crept on Black Hu's face. Indifferent to the earlier lascivious scene in the room, he was sitting calmly in the corner.

In his eyes, the vulgar scene earlier in the room was so disgusting.

In fact, he also came here tonight just for a woman.

And that woman was Holley!

Chapter 1276 I Can Give You A Ride

Black had heard so much about Holley from his elders ever since he had been abroad. They said that this woman had outstanding and remarkable talent in the business area. They mentioned how much she contributed to Tarsan Corporation, and that if it weren't for her, Rachel's company would have gone bankrupt.

He looked around, sweeping his gaze throughout the crowd inside the booth. As soon as his eyes landed on Holley, his gaze stayed on her. Truth be told, he had been stealing her glances every now

and then. In those times he did, he was able to observe that Holley was taking pictures of those men who were flirting and having fun with the hot girls in their arms.

Not long after, those people exited the booth, leaving Holley and Black alone.

Holley looked at her shots when she felt another presence in the booth. As a matter of fact for her as well, she had been observing Black discreetly, glancing only at him when he turned his eyes away. She concluded that he was the unpredictable kind of man. He was young and charming, yes, but Holley knew that outside appearances could be deceiving if not real. This time, however, she felt him staring at her.

Then again, it was her principle not to go near or associate herself with people beyond her control, and she never failed to follow it no matter how tempting it was to get to know him.

Before standing up from her seat and heading straight towards the exit, she turned to look at him. As soon as she caught his eyes, she flashed a subtle smile at the man.

As for Black, the smile caught him off guard, leaving him falling for that enchanting beam. His mind took him elsewhere, and when he finally came back to his senses not a moment longer, Holley was nowhere to be seen. Panicking, he jumped to his feet and hurried out of the booth, hoping that he

would still be able to catch up to Holley.

Meanwhile, Holley hailed a taxi just right outside at the entrance of the hotel.

The vehicle stopped in front of her, and as she was about to get into it, a loud voice reached her ears, calling out her name.

"Miss Ye! Wait!"

Holley turned around and immediately caught sight of Black, running towards her.

Her eyes fell on the handsome Black and stuck like glue, making her heart race. Finally, Black reached her. He was standing tall in front of her, his shadow casting a long shade on the ground. As she stared at his well-structured face, her mind started to fly elsewhere.

Deep inside, Holley was convinced that Charles was the only one she loved. She never fooled around with other men unless she had to.

She knew that this rapid heartbeat wasn't because she fell for Black. All she wanted from him was to get his shares in Tarsan Corporation. Moreover, there was no doubt that this promising, rich man admiring her made her feel good inside, because it was something she didn't get from anyone else.

Rachel claimed that she was in love with Charles, but she never refused to have intimate relationships with other men, making Holley think that her boss did not truly love Charles. That was one of the reasons she despised Rachel, and she always had been. It even infuriated her, because her claim to love Charles felt like an insult to him.

As for Holley, she thought that she was different from Rachel, and she believed that no one could ever top her love for Charles. She was convinced that her love for him was pure to the point that she was unwilling to make love with other men. She promised herself that she would wait for the day that she was going to be good enough for him. When that time came, she would give herself to him wholeheartedly and would treat him right, letting him fall in love with her more and more.

Holley's train of thought was interrupted when she felt like Black had just spoken. She turned to him and asked, "What?"

Black looked at her and chuckled before repeating his words, "I asked where you were headed to. I can give you a ride." Under the bright lights of the hotel's exterior, Black gazed at Holley intently with deep affection evident in his eyes. With a face and eyes like that, no one could have the heart to turn down such an attractive man's offer.

"Oh...Well, I... I just felt...suffocated inside the booth, so I just left without thinking of any place to go.

How about you?" As she spoke, she lowered her head shyly, not wanting to meet his eyes for hers might betray herself, which made her look slightly awkward.

Black's eyes widened a little as he caught the underlying meaning between her words. 'After all, she is a girl. Watching those men having fun with those women most probably made her uncomfortable, ' he speculated.

"Well, I don't want to stay there, either. Would you like to take a walk with me? The night is still quite young," he replied, taking a quick glance at the night sky filled with stars as he tried to hide the nervousness in his voice.

Since he was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, it was unavoidable meeting a lot of women who tried to throw themselves at him, most clearly just for convenience. Thus, it was so long before that he couldn't even remember the last time he felt serious about a woman and desired to be in a long-term relationship with her as he did for the time being. He wondered if it was perhaps when he was about sixteen years old.

Being with Holley made him wonder as well what was truly wrong with him or if these feelings were anyway. He could point out just by the look in her eyes that she was an ambitious woman, someone who would do anything to get what she wanted. Even then, he still could not help but fall in love with her at first sight to the point that there was that desire to have her burning inside him once more.

He knew that he was slightly at a loss for obsessing her, but despite that, he felt more thrilled.

Finally, Holley agreed before apologizing to the taxi driver. Soon after, the two had walked a great amount of distance along the street and stood beside each other with only a fist-length distance between their shoulders.

Once again, Black stole glances at Holley from time to time. The moonlight embraced her face with such elegance that made her pretty face turn fairer. He felt her releasing a tender aura around, finding her even more lovely and appealing.

He talked to her and asked her about random things, to which she responded absentmindedly, because she was busy thinking about how to ingratiate herself with him and trick him into transferring his shares to her.

It was after many topics that Black sensed that Holley's mind was elsewhere and preoccupied. He

guessed that she was tired, so he offered to drive her home. She nodded in agreement. The drive was quiet but oddly comfortable for the two of them. Soon, they arrived at her apartment. Black hurried to open the door for Holley. She appreciated the gesture and thanked him. Before she could say goodbye, Black spoke.

"Holley, do you have free time after work tomorrow? If you don't mind, I want to go watch a movie with you. There is a new movie that I want to watch ever since it got released two days ago, but I got no one to come with me. So would you like to go watch it with me? I would really appreciate if you do."

When it came to a relationship, Black was always direct and aggressive. That was why he never faltered or even hesitated when he invited her to go to watch a movie with him.

Holley gave a sweet smile, bewitching Black again. With fake interest, she replied sweetly, "Sure, I love watching movies. We can go to the cinema tomorrow."

This was her strategy to fulfill her plans of getting to Black's heart, slowly but surely. She wouldn't push him away; at the same time she would let him know that she wasn't just any loose woman he could easily play with.

Black smiled back at her. Before he could say anything more, Holley spoke again. "Well, it's getting late, and you should head home now. Thank you once again for taking me home. Good night and have a safe trip home." Holley smiled at him once more before turning her back at him, and got inside her house without even looking back.

As Black watched Holley close the door behind her, he couldn't help but feel slightly upset. He felt like something was missing in him.

'I won't deny that I like this woman. In the past years, I have dated many women, but she is for sure the most special one I have met, and I will make sure to have her, ' he resolved before getting back into his car and drove home with a determined look on his face.

Meanwhile, the next morning, Sheryl drove with the kids in her back seat. Not long after, she stopped the car as soon as they arrived at Eton Kindergarten. Before she let them go, she helped them put on their bags on their backs.

Sheryl watched her two kids walk towards the gate where their teachers were greeting the children.

Clark and Shirley waved at her as they entered the gate.

"Mom, look! The weather is good. Have a good day!" Clark cried out before he walked any further

inside.

These caring words touched Sheryl's heart. She managed to give out a slight smile, nodding back at her son.

As soon as the kids were inside the building and out of her sight, Sheryl looked up at the vast, blue sky.

'The weather really is good. The sky is crystal blue with white fluffy clouds, floating way over our heads.

Indeed, it is beautiful, ' she remarked, completely entranced by the fascinating scene of nature. She closed her eyes and heaved a deep sigh, taking in the fresh air around her.

Suddenly, the sound of a loud horn broke her reverie.

Her eyes immediately opened, and her eyebrows arched. 'How rude of someone to honk near a kindergarten!' she wondered. She followed the direction where the noise came from, spotting a car just a few blocks away from the school. She narrowed her eyes to see Nick, who was smiling just inside the car.

"Sher!" Nick shouted, waving at her.

His appearance took Sheryl by surprise. As she came back to her senses, she headed straight towards

him.

It had been such a long while since Sheryl saw Nick, and she thought perhaps, talking with him again

might make her feel better and ease her mood up even just a little.

Chapter 1277 Mrs. Huang

"Nick, why are you here?" Sheryl asked in surprise as she walked up to Nick.

A tinge of clear awkwardness flashed across his face. Putting on a smile, he answered, "I had

something going on and just happened to pass by here. I saw you near the school so I thought I'd stop

and say hi."

Heaving a sigh of relief in his heart, he felt lucky he prepared an explanation before he arrived—he

wanted to make sure that when Sheryl asked, he would sound natural enough.

It would seem that he succeeded as Sheryl didn't even give it a second thought. After all, she had no

reason to think that Nick was doing anything wrong.

"How's the company been? How are you? You're not overworking yourself, are you? Remember, you

should take care of your health first."

As if on instinct, her care for Nick started surfacing.

Her concern for him was rather touching. "There has been some progress with regard to the project.

Sher, you don't have to worry about my health. How about you? You seem a bit tired. Did you get enough sleep last night?"

Upon hearing his words, Sheryl fell into sudden silence. Dolefulness crept onto her face. Her lips mildly parted, but eventually, she didn't say her true feelings out. Suppressing her sorrow, she answered, "I'm fine. I just had a late night. Oh, right, you said you had something going on, didn't you? You should get back to that. I have to go home now." Not wanting to talk about what really happened, she quickly switched the topic.

Still, Nick could sense that she was hiding something. Although he had no intention of prying anything out of her, he wanted to keep her company. "Sher, it's been a long time since we last saw each other.

Shall we get some breakfast together? I haven't had any yet. I think I'm feeling a little light with my empty stomach now, so I should grab a bite."

With exaggeration, he furrowed his eyebrows to feign a stomachache.

That was enough for Sheryl—when it came to his health, she was always a worrier. With a nod, she agreed to go with him and let her driver know where she was going before hopping into Nick's car.

Before long, the car stopped at a restaurant.

It was a popular breakfast spot so they arrived at a busy time. The place was full of people eating and chatting away.

Even though it was an ideal atmosphere for breakfast, Nick found it rather unfortunate. What he really wanted was a quiet place where he could have a nice, intimate chat with Sheryl about what she was going through. As it turned out, the restaurant wasn't the best choice for that.

Unsatisfied about the place, he turned to Sheryl and asked, "There are too many people here. There doesn't seem to be a vacancy. Shall we move to another place?"

Wanting a less crowded place herself, she nodded.

It didn't take them very long to find a smaller, less busy restaurant. Even with less variety on the menu, it was a comfortable place for a good chat.

Finally contented, Nick led Sheryl inside and ordered her dishes he knew she loved.

After graciously filling her cup with tea, he casually asked, "Sher, are you okay?"

After a moment of feeling dazed, she put on a rather unnatural smile. "Of course. Why do you ask?"

"Have you heard anything?" After he invited her to a meal, she had a feeling that Nick had already

heard something about her situation—it was likely the reason he went to the kindergarten to find her.

With her question, Nick realized that it was a poor idea to pretend that he had just happened to pass by her at the school. After a sigh, he confessed, "Actually, I did hear something recently. You..."

Before continuing his sentence, he felt the need to pause and mentally grasp for the proper words to say. Somehow, he couldn't seem to phrase things to lessen his embarrassment.

Given his behavior, Sheryl understood his dilemma, figuring that he probably knew quite a bit about what happened to her. It wasn't just "something" as he described, after all. It was a huge deal, almost everything. Otherwise, he wouldn't have hesitated for so long.

"Alright, it seems that I really can't hide it anymore. I do feel troubled," she said with a sigh. "I don't know how to feel lucky in my position. What can I even do about it? It's just becoming more and more complicated..."

Afterward, she described to him in full detail the entire incident.

Listening attentively, he took careful note of what she said and also posed questions to further clarify any details.

After laying everything out, Sheryl felt like some weight was lifted off her shoulders. Even though she wasn't expecting anything from Nick as talking to him about it certainly wouldn't solve the issue, she did feel like some negativity escaped her with the words she expressed.

"So...that's more or less what happened. I didn't really intend to tell you. I don't want to bother you..."

The way she said it sounded like a sigh.

Suddenly, Nick had a thought—he held onto her hand and solaced her, "Sher, please don't say that.

What matters to you also matters to me. I feel honored to get to listen to you. At the very least, I can sympathize with you."

Smiling appreciatively, she answered in gratitude, "Nick, thank you."

"Please, you don't have to thank me. I can't even really do anything to help you."

Embarrassed, he scratched his head with his free hand.

Indulging in her own emotions, Sheryl forgot that her hand was still in Nick's.

At that moment, there were only a few guests in the restaurant. Even as they spoke rather softly, there was a single person trying to listen in on their conversation.

A middle-aged woman sat at a table nearby. It just so happened that she was Melissa's best mahjong

mate, Irina—they played together after she was released from jail.

Irina's husband, Mr. Huang, was the manager of a listed company. One could say that they were part of the middle-class. As much as she wanted to make friends with people in the high-class circle, she lacked quite a bit, both in terms of wealth and of power. Moreover, she wasn't the type of person that had a natural sense of fashion. Even as she tried to dress herself up and try all kinds of delicate makeup, she still failed to get close to the kind of social clique she desired to join.

The only person she could truly rely on was Melissa. In spite of the fact that the Lu family was one of the wealthiest in the city, Melissa didn't have a strong relationship with the other women in the elite social circle because of her history of jail-time—the others didn't want their reputations to be tainted. A woman as arrogant as Melissa didn't want to bother lowering herself to establish good relationships with others. But with Irina, she managed to downgrade a little bit to make friends.

The moment Sheryl stepped into the restaurant, Irina took notice of her. Having been involved with the Lu family a number of times, she could easily identify Sheryl. Finding it strange that Sheryl was having breakfast with an unfamiliar man, she paid extra attention to the pair.

Even though she couldn't hear what they were talking about, she could clearly see that the man was holding Sheryl's hand—astonishingly, Sheryl didn't even show any discontent. Instead, she seemed to be moved by the gesture. The picture struck Irina in shock.

Suddenly, her eyes lit up in intrigue. It took her everything not to get closer to the two and eavesdrop on their conversation. With that information, she could surely gain Melissa's approval.

The exact cause was still unknown, but Irina had heard about Melissa's accident of falling down the stairs and being hospitalized. Although she was planning to visit her friend, she heard that Melissa wasn't in a very stable emotional state. It wasn't surprising, though, as she was aware that Melissa was bad-tempered at this time—she was still venting her anger toward her daughter-in-law, Sheryl.

Now with a huge secret at her disposal, she couldn't wait to see Melissa and tell her what she had just discovered.

As Irina got up from her seat, ready to leave, Nick made sure to console Sheryl and put her at ease. It was then when Sheryl realized that she shouldn't keep troubling Nick. Coming to her senses, she got up to pay the bill before getting ready to leave as well. Right at this moment, Irina came into view.

Chapter 1278 Here Comes Your Chance

Sheryl furrowed her eyebrows and muttered under her breath, "Mrs. Huang?" Sheryl was confident she

knew this woman. She and Melissa had always played mahjong back at home, so she recognized her immediately. Sheryl then started to walk towards her and greet her.

However, startled by hearing Sheryl's voice, Irina stood up and stiffened for a moment. She was frozen on her spot, unable to decide what to do. Finally, before Sheryl could ever go near her, she pretended like she didn't hear anything and walked away as fast as she could without even turning around to look at Sheryl.

Apparently, Irina couldn't handle her guilty conscience and decided it was easier to avoid and escape any confrontation.

If only she didn't panic, she could have greeted Sheryl back in a normal and calm way, so Sheryl wouldn't feel odd, but Irina's over-reaction made Sheryl suspect her.

Nick's eyes opened wide in surprise when he saw a panic-stricken Irina walking away hurriedly. He turned to Sheryl, who had a frown on her face, and asked, "Sher, do you know that woman?"

Feeling strange and surprised, Sheryl stood frozen on her spot. She wondered why Irina behaved so weird. She was sure that Irina heard her and knew she was there. So, why did she run away from her?

'Maybe, Melissa has spoken ill of me to Irina. That's why she was so unwilling to talk to me.' Sheryl

heaved out a deep sigh. Whatever the reason was, she couldn't figure it out.

She shook away these thoughts before she turned to Nick and replied, "Yes, I am pretty sure that she

is one of my mother-in-law's friends. I haven't really associated with her, so maybe she just didn't

recognize me. After all, we are just casual acquaintances."

Nick nodded and didn't ask any further for Sheryl didn't explain more, but he had a feeling that

something was not right. Maybe, there was something they both neglected. In the end, they both

shrugged it off and stopped thinking too much about the situation.

Nick and Sheryl exchanged goodbyes. After departing from each other, Nick decided not to drive

straight home, but went directly to the hospital. As soon as his car was parked right near the front of the

hospital building, he got his phone out and dialed Cassie's number.

Cassie's phone vibrated on her pocket, startling her during work. She took a look on the caller ID, and

after learning it was Nick, she smiled and looked around to find a place to hide from her colleagues. It

was a risk to take, since she was on duty. But it was Nick calling, so she just had to take it. She cleared

her throat and answered, "Hello, Nick. What's up? How should I return the pleasure of this phone call?"

It was seldom for Nick to call her first. Usually, she made the call proactively, just so she didn't miss his call. That was why Cassie just had to take this call.

The corner of Nick's lips rose from ear to ear at Cassie's bright and sweet voice. He cleared his throat as well and asked, "By any chance, are you available right now? I want to meet you. I'm in the lobby."

"Right now?" Cassie's eyes widened and she immediately blurted out in surprise. She covered her mouth and looked around only to find that all her colleagues were up to their necks. It was one of the busy times in the hospital, because it was flu season. There were more patients than usual. With the limited number of doctors and medical staff in the hospital, everyone had to take double shifts for they had to help the doctors check on the patients and monitor their vital signs.

Hearing Cassie's hesitation, Nick immediately understood that Cassie must be very busy, so he added,

"Oh, you must be very busy, Cassie. If you don't have the time now, we can just meet tonight after your shift."

Cassie smiled sweetly and nodded even though Nick couldn't see this gesture. She sighed and hoped that time could fly faster, so that she could meet him right away. They had seen each other this morning

and had only been separated for a few hours, but for Cassie, it felt like it had been a year.

Biting her lower lip, Cassie answered shyly, "All right. I'll see you tonight then."

Cassie's smile stuck on her face, and when she was about to hang up the phone, Nick stopped her hastily. "Wait!"

Cassie's eyebrows furrowed into confusion and she asked, "What is it?"

"Well, there's another thing. Can you do this favor for me, please? You see, Sher is in trouble, and I really want to help her. After all, she has helped me a lot. Maybe you can help her out, since the person causing trouble to her is a patient in your hospital. Her name is Leila Zhang."

Nick then continued to explain to Cassie the whole story as brief and as concise as possible. Once he was finished, Cassie felt nothing but angry for Sheryl. She felt like Sheryl didn't deserve this treatment, so she agreed to help immediately.

When Nick was about to tell Cassie what he wanted her to do, someone called her out for help. It was time for her to go now, so she hurriedly said, "Nick, I really have to go now. Just text me what you want me to do, and I will do my best. I'm sorry. I'll see you tonight. Bye!"

After the call, Nick stayed in the lobby and pondered for a moment how he was going to word out his

idea. He thought that it would be a useful approach if Cassie could get acquainted with Leila, get closer to her and then get some information that might be necessary to help in Sheryl's case. He texted this to Cassie, and after hitting send, he tapped his foot as he waited for her reply.

It was less than five minutes later when Cassie replied. "I can do that. Don't worry too much, okay?

Wait and expect for my updates!"

Nick's face showed a bright smile before he texted her back, "Thank you, Cassie. See you tonight."

After he hit the send button, Nick placed his phone back inside his pocket and leaned back on the chair in the lobby. He heaved a deep sigh, feeling a little relieved now.

He thought that it would be great if Cassie would be able to get some useful information from Leila. But if she couldn't, then he would just have to find another way. Finally, he stood up, walked out of the building, and decided to head home and prepare for tonight.

Meanwhile, back at the Tarsan Corporation, Holley was worried about the board meeting that was right around the corner. It was close now, and yet the shares she had right now were far less than she had planned.

She only had 10% of the company shares, while Rachel had a swooping 35%, which had been 45% before she sold out some to save the company from going down when Holley was gone.

Thinking and worrying about all this stressed Holley out. Her eyebrows creased into a frown on her forehead as she tried to think of a way to save herself before the board meeting. Suddenly, as if a light bulb lit above her head, someone popped into her mind—Black. She remembered the look on his face when he was staring at her. It was clear how much Black was infatuated with her. She knew she could make use of him to defeat Rachel. After all, Black had 25% of the shares. If she managed to get all of his shares and use some money to buy more from the other shareholders, then she would be able to take control of the company. She wouldn't be able to drive Rachel away immediately, but it was a good start.

Before she could do any of that, the first thing she needed was to rope Black in from the pond. She must use his affection for her to make him follow her and obey her.

Holley's frown faded on her face, replaced by a mischievous smile. She couldn't wait as she imagined Rachel's desperate and shocked expression after knowing what Holley had in stall for her in the board meeting. Thinking about this now thrilled Holley.

Not wanting to waste precious time any longer, Holley made the first move and invited Black to a movie after work. He agreed, and as the time ticked by closer towards the agreed time, Holley went to the rest room to retouch her make up and get changed into a fresh, beautiful dress.

She had prepared this beautiful dress in the morning when she had left home, feeling like she needed it any time of the day this week. She just hadn't realized that she would need it sooner. She took off her dull office uniform and changed into the peach dress. It wasn't too grand or boring, just enough to make her look casual but still slim and sexy, complementing her charm completely. She used light make-up to match it, making sure that she didn't stain the dress. She smiled as she looked at herself in her pocket mirror. The pink eye shadow definitely highlighted her pure eyes and was sure to attract Black more.

She was satisfied more after looking as innocent as a baby animal, so no one could suspect any other motive from her. 'If this look won't be able to touch Black's heart, then I don't know what is, ' she wondered, smiling back at her reflection.

Holley finished and started to sort her things out inside her bag. Before she could go out of the cubicle, she heard voices from a few staff coming in the rest room. They were gossiping and complaining about

the capricious temperament of Rachel. Holley decided not to go out yet and listen in.

"Don't you all feel annoyed? Recently, Ms. Bai always gets angry without even any reason. She even

fired Marcelo for what? For speaking up for everyone else? Oh, and did you notice how the

atmosphere in the company became tensed after Marcelo got fired? Plus, a few days ago, Holley had a

row with her, and I heard that when her secretary was called inside, the tea pot was smashed by Ms.

Bai," one said. There was no doubt that there was annoyance in her tone.

"Well, I say, she is just a useless butterfly. I felt relieved when Holley returned and even saved the

company. It is fortunate for all of us, and you could really say that Holley is much better than her. She

knows how to handle the workings of a company, and at least, we won't go bankrupt. Because of her,

we are still employed," another said.

Clearly, the girls were newly hired, because they were not cautious enough to gossip carelessly about

their boss in a public place. They didn't even check if there was anyone else in the rest room. Luckily, it

wasn't Rachel, who was eavesdropping right now.

It was also until then that Holley noticed the change of personnel, since she had been busy catching up

recently as soon as she came back. Thinking about it now made her realize that a few managers had

left or were fired as well besides Marcelo.

Moreover, Holley didn't expect that Rachel would have created such a general turmoil during that span of time she was away. She knew very well now what made the company different, and it was all messed up. Then again, the odds were turning to her favor now. Thanks to her efforts that Rachel had given to her willingly without doing anything, Holley was now able to challenge her even more.

At the thought of this, Holley could not stop but feel elated. She felt more and more confident that she would be able to get what she wanted.

After the staff had left, Holley took this her cue to come out of the cubicle. She took her time to look at her beautiful reflection in the huge mirror and smiled.

With a dazzling grin on her face, she muttered to herself, "Holley Ye, here comes your chance."

Chapter 1279 What Is It

Holley took her time walking out of the main entrance of the Tarsan Corporation. She didn't want any sweat to ruin her make-up, so she kept her grace.

As soon as the rolling doors closed behind her, she caught sight of Black, leaning against his car. He

was wearing a plain, blue sleeves that was folded right before his elbows and a simple pair of dark blue, almost black denim pants, which made him look dashing. Holley ignored this thought and continued to walk towards him.

As soon as Black saw Holley, he stood up straight, his eyes lighting up and sparkling. There was an obvious sense of admiration written all over his face as he felt his heart start to race faster, but he ignored it and started to make his way towards her in haste.

"Holley, hey!" Black called out affectionately, his eyes still stuck on her like glue.

Holley lowered her head and smiled shyly as she met him halfway in her four-inch high heels. She flashed him a timid smile before saying, "Did I keep you waiting for so long? I'm really sorry. I just got off work."

"No, no, it's all right. I just arrived here really. Are you hungry? Let's go and eat first before the movie. I already made a reservation at a restaurant that I figured you might love," he replied nervously. It wasn't the first time that they had spent time together, and yet he was still anxious and jittery around Holley. It was not until she was close to him that he truly noticed how Holley looked. She had dressed in a way that Black felt she gave much importance to their date like he did. Because of that, his smile reached

from ear to ear, and his mood was raised up once more.

Black came back to his senses and said, "I'm sorry. I just can't help but stare at you. You look beautiful, Holley. I hope you know that."

After hearing his compliment, Holley lowered her head down and bashfully tucked loose hair behind her ear. A smile made way out on her face. She then looked away to avoid meeting his keen eyes on purpose. It worked, because Black thought that she was as nervous as he was, making him think that she was also interested in him.

Black then escorted Holley towards the car and opened the door for her. As soon as both of them were settled, Black drove to a high building, of which a fancy revolving restaurant was perched on the highest floor. Their table was by the French window, so that they could overlook the mesmerizing scene of the city below them.

Black stared at Holley, who was smiling shyly back at him. There was a few candles flickering on the table, and a man wearing a tuxedo was playing the violin just near them. It wasn't long until the romantic atmosphere had completely enveloped the two of them.

After a waiter poured wine in their glasses and left, Black raised his glass and proposed a toast to

Holley. "A toast for the beautiful night, Holley."

"A toast for the wonderful candlelit dinner," Holley followed with a smile before clinking her glass with his.

Their eyes met, and as if they were the only ones in this world, their gaze locked on each other and they immersed themselves with the atmosphere that lingered between them.

After taking a sip of each of their wine, they placed their glasses down on the table gently, filling in the great taste of expensive wine. Holley decided to play coy and kept her hand on her wine glass, staring at the flavorful liquid. Black kept his stare at the bashful maiden, and without any hesitation, he reached his hand out slowly and caught hers on the table. At this moment, the violinist near them and the other people who took a glance at them could see the good chemistry between the couple.

Holley just gave Black a quick glance after this gesture and smiled bashfully with her eyes avoiding to meet his. It was not long after that Holley finally held his hand back. Black could feel his cheeks warm, and seeing the shy and warm look in her eyes, Black was certain that he could hear his rapid heartbeat.

After the satisfying and lovely dinner, the two didn't spend much time at the restaurant any longer. They headed straight to the cinema. There weren't many people at this cinema, since it was the last day of showing for this movie. Black smiled at Holley, while she smiled back at him. As soon as the lights slowly faded away, the movie started to play on the big screen. However, none of the two paid any attention to the movie. Both of their minds were off elsewhere. Black felt this and plucked up the courage to reach out and pull Holley into his arms.

Surprised at this bold move, Holley looked up and saw Black lowering his head towards hers.

She knew what was coming, so she immediately closed her eyes, and the moment she did, she felt his soft lips press on hers. Black started to kiss her gently, but as soon as Holley kissed him back, the pace of their kiss became passionate, and there were more emotions in that kiss than any part of their date tonight.

They felt nothing but desire for each other the whole time that they didn't even spare some time to look at the screen. Not until the lights were back on did they realize that the movie was finished. For a moment, both of them felt disappointed that it was over. Hand in hand, they followed the crowd and

walked towards the exit. When they heard people talking about what happened in the movie and their opinions about it, they exchanged looks and broke into a soft chuckle.

'Why should I waste time on that stupid movie when I was with a pretty girl?' Black thought with a huge grin on his face.

Like all other couples on a date, Black and Holley left the cinema holding hands and with sweet smiles plastered on their faces.

Since it was still about eight in the evening, and the night was still young, the two decided to spend some time in the mall. Black offered to buy Holley anything that she wanted. At first, she refused and told him that it was okay, but he was stubborn. So in the end, Holley gave in. Black even volunteered to help Holley with a few shopping bags. As they were done shopping, Black and Holley were on their way to Holley's apartment. Black had kissed her good night before he watched Holley go inside.

As soon as Holley closed the door of her apartment behind her, she dropped the bags on the floor with a smile on her face.

At the hospital, a nurse checked on Melissa and noted down her vital signs.

After the necessary procedures, the nurse started to collect her stuff from the edge of the bed and

accidentally touched the patient's hand. She was startled when Melissa suddenly removed her hand away.

"What are you doing? Is there something wrong with you? Do you even know who I am? My son invested so much money in this hospital, and here I am wondering why they hired reckless staff like you. Do your job properly, you stupid girl!" Melissa's eyebrows were furrowed into a frown as she cursed at the nurse furiously.

The nurse lowered her head and kept her head bowed down as she apologized gingerly. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Lu. It won't happen again. Please, forgive me."

Melissa narrowed her eyes at the nurse with such contempt and aversion in her eyes. Recently, she had been feeling upset and disappointed, since things weren't going as she had planned.

She had expected that Charles would have divorced his wife after she had blamed Sheryl for Leila's poisoning and her falling off the stairs. To her dismay, so many days had already passed that she was so close to recovering, but Charles still didn't mention or bring up anything in front of her about divorcing Sheryl even after she had so many arguments with him to the point that she had threatened

him with her life ever since she woke up.

Melissa was starting to become really impatient, and all she wanted was for Sheryl to be kicked out of the house and to never step foot inside of it ever again, not even a second longer. Unfortunately, his son was already all grown up, and she couldn't make the decision for him anymore. That was why her anger just kept accumulating inside of her. She couldn't snap all these frustration out on her son, so she took it out on other people.

As for the nurse, she made a small, accidental mistake at the wrong time and became the victim of Melissa's wrath. 'Oh, what a day! If only I had known about this lady's bad temper, I would have asked others to cover for me, so that I could have avoided being insulted by this difficult, old woman, ' the nurse whined deep inside.

Since Melissa kept hurling endless harsh remarks to her, she decided to hurriedly leave the room while continuously bowing her head and apologizing. As soon as she was out of the room, she bumped into someone.

"I...I'm sorry!" With a rattled expression, the nurse apologized once more and bowed down in front of the person, not daring to raise her head and meet that person's eyes.

She trembled, afraid that the person she just bumped into was a tough person like Melissa and that she would have to endure another roll of insults.

Meanwhile, Irina looked down at the nurse, who just bumped into her. She intended to throw a fit at the girl, but after noticing how sincere her apology was, she decided to let it go. Moreover, she was anxious to see Melissa, and she didn't want to have that frustration build inside of her before she got inside Melissa's room. Irina raised her hand and made a waving gesture in the air before she replied, "It's fine."

The nurse gave a sigh of relief and bowed her head again out of gratitude. Without looking up at Irina, she started to walk away from the ward, but her arm was grabbed, making her stop to turn towards Irina. She looked up subconsciously with a surprised and confused look on her face. The first thing that popped in her head was that this woman wasn't going to let her go easily as she thought.

Without wasting any more time, Irina asked, "Is this Melissa Shen's ward?"

Stunned at how she guessed wrong, the nurse nodded in confirmation, feeling relief flooding her whole body once more. Without another word, Irina let go of her and entered the room.

As soon as she closed the door behind her, Irina put on a sad and concerned look on her face before she cried out, "Mrs. Lu!" Before Melissa could look closely at her face, she walked towards her and continued, "My dear friend, Mrs. Lu, I am so sorry about what happened to you."

Melissa had sulked alone and still ranted about the nurse, who was rude for leaving without being dismissed. But her mood eased immediately after she caught sight of her visitor. And meanwhile, joy and surprise spread across her face.

"Oh, Irina, what brings you here?" Melissa inquired in a surprised tone. She then proceeded to invite her friend to have a seat on the chair beside her bed and offered her some sliced fruits warmly.

Irina moved towards the bed and ignored the chair, perching herself on the edge of the bed while observing Melissa's attitude right now in secret. After concluding that her friend was in her right state of mind, she was very much relieved.

Irina grabbed a piece of fruit with a skewer out of courtesy, and when she was satisfied, she spoke. "I came here to see you after hearing about your accident. How are you feeling, Mrs. Lu? I'm more at ease now seeing you obviously recovering."

Melissa knew what was on Irina's mind immediately. They had played mahjong together frequently, so

Melissa knew how much Irina was big about gossiping. 'Irina must have learned about my fight with

Sheryl, so she came here not to check up on me but to figure out what was really going on, ' the patient

speculated. Deep inside, Melissa scoffed at the face of this woman. Then again, Irina was still her

friend.

"Oh, I'm fine now, and I can also walk again. In fact, I was told that I can already be sent home, but

Charles insisted that I should stay here until I fully recovered. Well, basically, that's it," Melissa replied

with a casual shrug. Besides letting her know about her condition, she also wanted to let Irina know

how much her son cared about her.

"Oh, I'm so envious of you. Even though Mr. Lu has lots of work to do, he still has time to take care of

you. You have such a good son, my dear friend, but..." Irina replied and paused.

She stopped in purpose, so Melissa could urge her on curiously. "But what? Go ahead," Melissa said.

"But, it's about your son's wife, Sheryl Xia. Let me guess. She hasn't visited you lately, has she?" Irina

led to the topic to the reason for her visit while placing the fruit down back on the plate.

Upon hearing Sheryl's name, Melissa felt her anger rise inside her once more. But since Irina was

around, she made sure her face didn't betray her true feelings. With a scoff, she said, "What do you expect? Although she is my daughter-in-law, she clearly doesn't care about me at all. Even my friend treats me better than she does." Melissa rolled her eyes after she said this.

As for Irina, she had known long before that Melissa detested her daughter-in-law. If her friend was fond of her son's wife, she wouldn't have bothered to come here and snitch on Sheryl. She then put on a troubled look on her face before she started, "Well, Mrs. Lu, there is something that I am still not sure of if I should let you know..."

Irina's expression and the tone of her voice perked the interest of Melissa. She was already losing hope about her son divorcing Sheryl, now if Irina had something on Sheryl that she might use against her, she was very much willing to listen to whatever this gossipier was going to say. Without letting Irina finish, Melissa asked impatiently, "Tell me. What is it?"

Chapter 1280 Mischief Making

Instead of speaking directly, Irina beat around the bush, annoying Melissa even further than she already was.

Noticing the other's impatience, Irina leaned in close to say, "Earlier this morning, I saw Sheryl with a

young man I've never seen before. They looked rather intimate. They were sitting very close to each other—whispering things. I couldn't hear them clearly, but I vaguely heard them mentioning Charles.

And that's not all—before they parted, the man grabbed Sheryl's hands. They looked at each other as if...

as if they were lovers! I think—"

"What?! What did you just say?" Melissa abruptly interrupted her. Anger consumed her. How could Sheryl do that behind Charles' back? 'We haven't even completely driven her away from the Lu family, yet she just couldn't wait to cheat on her husband? Shameless cunt!' Melissa cursed her strongly in her heart.

The news left Melissa feeling utterly anxious and irritated. If Sheryl had been more discreet, they could probably turn a blind eye to it. But she didn't expect her to be so shameless as to flaunt her affair out in public. Worst of all, Irina saw them—she always had a big mouth. Who knew what she would say to other people? There was no question that Sheryl disgraced the whole Lu family.

"Mrs. Huang, regarding this issue..."

Suddenly, Melissa hesitated as she considered how to convince Irina to keep her mouth shut about the

scandal.

Meanwhile, Irina gloated inside as she witnessed Melissa's flustered expression. She was an arrogant woman in front of her, someone who was used to always bossing people around, and Irina finally got the upper hand. After revealing the information she had, Melissa would owe her a favor for keeping the scandal secret.

"Don't worry, Mrs. Lu. You're the only other one who knows about it. I promise I won't tell anybody else.

I came here today to tell you about it because we're friends. I suggest you be prepared for it...Just in case anything happens, of course. Don't you agree?"

"Yes, you're right, Mrs. Huang. Thank you so much!" Melissa exclaimed.

"But frankly speaking, a woman like Sheryl doesn't deserve your son at all. Does he know of her affair?

What will he think of her now? Mrs. Lu, you must protect your family's name. You can't let Sheryl get away with this! I say—"

"I will handle the matters regarding my wife, Mrs. Huang. You don't need to worry about us." Before

Irina could finish her statement, a man's voice interrupted her.

The two exchanged startled looks at each other—they didn't realize that Charles had been standing in the doorway.

That left Irina embarrassed. After all, she only dared to speak ill of Sheryl in front of Melissa because she knew that the woman hated her. Charles' arrival was completely unexpected—she began to panic.

The man was known to love his wife more than anything else, including his own mother. Having slandering against his wife behind his back, Irina knew that he would hate her for sure.

Still, she wasn't certain about how much he had heard.

Both Irina and Melissa wondered about how long he had been standing there, listening to their conversation. In Melissa's case, she hoped that Charles was there all along so that she wouldn't have to repeat herself. Since Melissa wasn't the one telling the story, she thought that the news would surely sound more credible to him.

Taking a careful look at Charles, Irina shied away from his cold stare and stood up abruptly before mumbling, "Mr. Lu, Mrs. Lu...I need to go now. Goodbye!"

"Mrs. Huang, wait—" Wanting to get more proof for the story, Melissa hoped she would stay longer.

Clearly, her next move was to urge Charles to drive Sheryl away from the family once and for all.

"Bye." As Irina rushed out, Charles even opened the door for her.

After she left, Charles' demeanor turned colder than it already was. "Mom, I don't ever want to hear anyone speak ill of Sheryl."

"What do you mean?" As he defended his wife, Melissa's anger flared up even more, and her face turned red in fury. "You heard it yourself. I wasn't the one talking trash about her. Irina saw Sheryl with her own eyes. Your wife is cheating on you! She humiliated my family in public. Are you still going to turn a blind eye to this?"

A hint of sadness flashed across Charles' eyes but he replied resolutely, "This conversation is over. As for Mrs. Huang, I will tell her husband to keep her mouth shut about this whole thing. Don't mention it ever again."

"You..." Even as Melissa sat there, angry as ever, Charles turned around the moment she started talking back at him.

Unable to do anything as she watched Charles' figure walk away, Melissa couldn't help throwing a pillow onto the floor in frustration.

Meanwhile, outside Holley's apartment, Black held Holley's shoulders intimately close. Unlike the last time they were there, he was now her boyfriend. Although Holley was more than ready to go home and tuck herself in, Black seemed unwilling to let go of her just yet.

Holley's bare skin was soft and delicate under the touch of his palm. It felt like a piece of silk that he couldn't help rubbing over and over again.

Even though Holley was no longer considered a young girl, she still managed to look too young and beautiful for her age, having put great efforts into her skincare and fitness. With her slim figure and fair, delicate skin, she practically glowed under the light.

After he spent a day with her, Black's feelings for Holley grew stronger. By the time they reached her door, he was already obsessed—he wanted to have all of her. With Holley enveloped in his arms, he let himself imagine her beautiful body beneath him in bed.

However, Holley wanted to go home. He couldn't just keep her standing outside with him any longer.

"Bye, have a safe trip home." It was rather a struggle as Holley squirmed out of his hold before waving goodbye.

Still, Black was unwilling to give up. So he went ahead and suggested, "Holley, aren't you going to

invite me into your home? I'd love to take a look at your place."

It took all everything for Holley to keep her sneer in her head. This was a man's nature, after all.

Acting like a maiden, she smiled bashfully and lowered her head. "Black, I don't want things to go so

fast. Please give me some time, won't you?"

Luckily, Black was smart enough to understand what she really meant. Not wanting to push her too

much, he resigned and nodded with a smile.

With that, Holley turned around and finally entered the building. As soon as she left, Black began to

plan for their next date.

Even if they hadn't officially talked about it, Black considered them to be in a proper relationship. A

girlfriend like Holley was more than he could ever imagine—she was both beautiful and capable, and

the mere thought of her made him smile.

Unfortunately for Black, Holley never truly saw him as a boyfriend. The entire thing was merely one of

her tactics, and he swallowed the bait too easily. While he considered their date to be the beginning of

their loving relationship, Holley simply put on a good show.

The next day, Holley had to stay at work until very late. It suddenly occurred to her that she hadn't yet paid Bernard for his services. Thanks to the evidence he procured, she got out of jail time. Feeling grateful to him once again, she called Bernard to meet.

In the afternoon, when Holley met him, his expression was as solemn and serious as usual.

Without any small talk or niceties, Holley directly transferred the payment to him without telling him that

she put in a little extra more than she initially promised.

"Bernard, thank you for the evidence. Without it, I would probably still be in prison," Holley said.

Without a word, he merely nodded.