

Wedded Bride 261

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Charles, Autumn and their coworkers returned to China the following day. Chris and Sam came to pick them up. On the way home, Autumn whispered to Chris, "How is everything going?"

"I have settled it with Edward." Chris obviously was not affected by the incident. What troubled her was that Sam never asked her to meet his parents since then. "By no means would I live with Rachel under the same roof. Edward cared about Rachel more than anyone else, so I haven't heard from him lately."

Chris replied with a gentle smile, "That's why I am glad that you are back."

The fact that Chris was no longer troubled and disturbed by her family background made Autumn happy.

At that moment, Autumn thought of the Zhao family. Chris mentioned that during her absence, Arthur came over to Dream Garden to check on Emily's condition. Now that she had come home, Autumn decided to face the Zhao Family.

Gary and Emily were waiting for them. Emily's eyes had gotten so weak that she was virtually blind. Autumn was overwhelmed at the sight of her grandma in front of the courtyard and couldn't stop the tears from her eyes.

"Hey, stop crying." Charles patted Autumn's shoulder and assured her, "We are all fated to die one day. Emily will be very happy to spend her remaining days with you. So do not make her worry."

"OK, I understand." Autumn dried her tears and approached Emily with a clear voice, "My grandma, I am back."

"It is good to be back." Emily's face lit up and reached out her hands to meet Autumn's, and caressed Autumn's face, "It seems that you have lost weight."

"I am not accustomed to the local food there, but now I am back, I feel much better. My dear grandma, you don't need to worry." Autumn did not mention the unpleasant encounter in Japan. As always, she did not want her grandma to worry.

They had a blissful time dining together as a family. Afterwards, Chris escorted Sam from Dream Garden while Autumn and Charles went upstairs.

The next day, Charles did not waste time getting back to work. He had doubled his efforts to make up for the failed cooperation with the Light House Company in the following weekend. Meanwhile, without any business to attend to, Autumn did not get up until noon.

"Autumn, can you go out with me and Sam? We need to choose a gift as a token of my respect to Sam's parents." Last night, on the point of departure, Sam suggested that they pay his parents a visit. This rendered Chris over-anxious and she did not sleep a wink.

"To buy a gift? Are you ready to meet Sam's parents?" Autumn blurted out, making Chris's face suffused with more anxiety and embarrassment. Autumn hit the nail.

"Please, Autumn...." Chris looked at Autumn in embarrassment.

Autumn couldn't resist and she gladly agreed.

As they were leaving, Arthur came to Dream Garden. Emily was happy to see him with a greeting. "Doctor Zhao, welcome to our home!"

"Thank you." Arthur replied and turned around to ask Autumn, "Are you going out?"

"Yes." Autumn murmured, feeling rather uneasy, "And.... When it is convenient, I would like to bring my grandma to your family for a visit."

"What... I wonder?" Arthur was overwhelmed with gladness as he looked at Autumn who felt embarrassed. "Any time is a convenient time, Autumn. How about.... tomorrow evening? I will tell Amy to prepare something that you like to eat."

"That sounds good." Autumn's heart swelled with happiness, knowing that she has a heart-warming family.

"Then it is set. Tomorrow evening it is." Autumn nodded gently. As she left Dream Garden, Autumn looked happier than she ever did. This worried Chris and made her rather upset. She expressed her envy to her sister-in-law, "Autumn, although you have reunited with your family, you should... try to contain your excitement."

"Chris, you do not understand Autumn's feelings." Sam caught a glimpse of Autumn by the rear-view mirror and explained to Chris while driving, "Without anyone to depend on, Little Ye had gone through a lot of hardships. You, on the other hand, grew up surrounded by the loving people, especially Charles and Gary. Therefore I am genuinely happy to see Autumn join her family."

Sam was a witness to Autumn's miserable childhood, how her fate had turned around and now she lived happily.

Chris thought of Wendy and how she treated Autumn, and stayed quiet.

She was so happy too see Autumn win back the care and love of her family.

Sam parked the car in the basement of the mall. Autumn asked Chris, "What do you want to buy?"

"I don't know yet." Chris was at a loss to choose the gift for Sam's parents though she had known Sam for a long time. She was rather nervous to pay her respects to Sam's parents, as Sam's girlfriend for the first time. Therefore Autumn was asked to serve as a shopping guide.

"Sam, I do remember your Mum had a penchant for various scarves. She used to change her scarf everyday. Is it true?" Autumn turned to Sam.

"Yes that is true!" Sam nodded gently.

With assurance, Autumn suggested, "You had better buy a scarf for Sam's Mum. This gift requires an elaborate style, though seemingly ordinary, will surely meet her expectations."

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But Autumn shook her head. In all fairness, the scarf could easily highlight one's character. It wouldn't be a shame to give it to any woman of Sam's mother's age, but..... . It's for Jane, Sam's mother.

"Isn't it nice?" Chris looked at Autumn, a bit confused. Then she looked at the scarf again. "I think it's quite pretty."

"Yes, it is. But Jane won't be fond of it." She remembered that Jane preferred things with bright and vibrant colors. She might not be interested in a scarf having subtle or dull colors.

Autumn went around the store to look for other scarves that Jane would like. But there were none that caught her eye. Autumn and Chris began to lose hope.

"I see that you are looking around for a scarf, ladies." A shopping guide came up to them and asked, "Could you please tell me what kind of scarf you prefer?"

"Do you have any silk scarves?" Autumn herself didn't know why she asked such a question. But thinking about it, Autumn thought that both the material and the color of a silk scarf would be a perfect match to Jane's temperament and character.

The shopping guide took out several silk scarves for Chris and Autumn to choose from. They found one that they immediately liked. It was made of real silk and had a bright color. "You have good taste, my ladies. This scarf was designed by our in-house designer. It is sold in a limited edition, so our store only has this one for sale."

"That's great. How about this one?" Chris gave a look at Autumn, and was ready to buy the silk scarf without asking how much it cost.

"Wait a moment." The shopping guide was quite happy and she was ready to pack the silk scarf for Chris when there came a familiar voice. A voice that they wished they'd never hear again. "That scarf looks so nice. I will take it."

Both Autumn and Chris rolled their eyes and turned around and there was Rachel. Chris did not hide her displeasure. She shot a hostile look toward Rachel and complained, "How unlucky are we to see you everywhere. What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be preparing your dream wedding at home?"

"I'm here to buy some things." Rachel snatched the silk scarf from the hands of Chris. She actually had no interest in the scarf. She wanted it only because she saw that Chris was ready to buy it and wanted to give her a hard time. "As you know, I am going to get married and I will be extremely busy. As for you two, one of you is unmarried, and the other got married in place of someone else. Neither of you know how it is to be in my shoes, don't you agree?"

Rachel put on a fake smile. Playing with the silk scarf in her hand, she said to Chris, "This scarf feels good indeed. I can buy it for my maid at home. She deserves it. If she hadn't helped me with these insane wedding preparations, I may have gone crazy myself and would have left everything in a mess."

"You....." It took Chris a long time to select a suitable scarf, but Rachel came out of nowhere and snatched it away. "Rachel, you are just doing this on purpose to spite me!" Chris retorted.

"Yes, you are right. And what are you going to do about it?" Rachel challenged. After coming back home from Dream Garden, Edward had never mentioned anything about reuniting with Chris. Rachel has brought it up several times but Edward fiercely told her to drop it.

Rachel actually already knew that Edward was avoiding the subject so as not to accidentally say something that should not be said. The more Rachel insisted, the more upset Edward became.

It would be nice, anyway. At least, after she got married to Edward, she wouldn't need to endure having to live with Chris.

She was now engaged to Edward, which Chris could do nothing about. This is why Rachel could act complacent and arrogant. She continued, "I really like this scarf. Since I am getting married soon, could you give this scarf up and let me have it? And I will also make a compromise. Um....., how about letting me pay for anything else that you fancy around here? As compensation for the damage I'm making today. What do you two think?"

"You are going too far! Just who the hell do you think you are?" Chris wanted to slap Rachel in the face. But she held back as she didn't want to say anything about her relations with Edward. It was something that she had to accept. Now, Rachel provoking her by using Edward's money was just too much.

"How can I go too far?" Rachel sneered. "Oh my sweet, dear Chris, you will be calling me MOM in a few days. Don't you even know how to respect a woman who is senior to you? Now I'd like to buy this scarf, so you should give it to me and let the salesgirl pack it for me."

Rachel turned to the shopping guide with a cold face. The shopping guide was stumped. She frowned and mumbled, "This is....."

"This is what? Do you think that I cannot afford it?" Rachel asked with her eyebrows raised.

"No, no, that's not what I meant, ma'am." The shopping guide denied it promptly. The shopping guide could easily recognize Rachel as a super star despite her dull appearance today. So, of course, what she worried about was not whether Rachel could afford to pay, but

"It's this lady who has already chosen this scarf before you. She is now ready to pay for it, so" "The shopping guide looked at Rachel with her head low. Rachel cast a fierce glance at the shopping guide, which scared her half to death.

"Yes, she took a fancy to it before me. So what? She hasn't paid for it yet, has she?" Rachel waved her off and said, "Go and pack it for me."

She casually took out a bank card from her purse.

"You....." Chris was seething mad. She tried her best to select a proper gift, but now, that bitch, Rachel came to ruin everything. Chris let out a scream and rushed to claw out at her but was grabbed in time by Sam who had just entered the shop.

"What are you doing this for? If a mad dog bites you, will you bite it back? If you do, that will make you just as mad and despicable." As soon as Sam finished his small lecture, Autumn burst into laughter.

Autumn knew what Sam meant. It may have sounded like he was scolding Chris on the surface, but in fact, it was Rachel whom he was calling a mad dog. Hearing what Sam said to Chris, Rachel looked embarrassed but defiant.

"Sam, could you repeat what you have said just now?" Rachel asked, sounding sinister.

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Chris turned around and walked towards Rachel. She gave a smile and said, "Since you like this scarf very much, I would give it to you as your... wedding gift."

Chris added, "You'd better straighten up and watch your attitude. You'd hate living with me, right? If you dare irritate me again, I will ask my father to let me live with him and we both know what's going to happen. He will be very happy to comply."

"Are you crazy?" Rachel's face dimmed, "Don't forget that living with Edward means living with me as well. So are you ready to have a hard time with me everyday under one roof?"

"Oohh, Yes, I am. I'm almost scared to death." Chris said sarcastically. Then she sneered and continued, "But I think you are the one who should be scared more. Like I said, from now on, be careful with your behavior. I won't let it go, if you make trouble for me again."

Rachel pursed her lips in annoyance. She knew inside that she couldn't bear living together with Chris. That would be torture for her.

Rachel just wanted to make trouble for Autumn but now she had offended Chris and this worried her.

Chris turned around without saying goodbye, leaving Rachel alone. She was quite satisfied with what she said because it had successfully ruined Rachel's mood.

The shop assistant had already packed up the scarf. She approached Rachel and said hesitantly, "Miss Bai, your scarf has been packed, but..."

The card Rachel used to pay for the scarf required a PIN so the shop assistant had to ask her to punch the PIN herself.

Rachel paid for the scarf reluctantly. She didn't like it at all. She actually hated it. She thought about it for a moment and decided to send it to Dream Garden.

She would try and show Chris that she had no intention to be her enemy and she also hoped that Chris could stop going against her.

But she wasn't sure whether Chris would accept her gift and her apology or not.

Chris still felt a little annoyed after they left the shop. She calmed down only when Autumn and Sam consoled her. "Please give me a moment. I need to use the bathroom now, " Chris said.

Sam and Autumn stood together. Their good looks drew many people's attention. Sam looked at Autumn and asked, "How is it going for you these days?"

"Pretty good." Autumn gave a smile. It was a little awkward to be with him.

"Chris told me that your company is in a bit of trouble. Do you need any help?" Sam considered her as his sister, wanting nothing but a happy life for her.

"Thank you, but I think I can handle it." Autumn smiled bitterly. She once thought she could deal with any challenge by herself. But that had changed since she got married to Charles. It seemed that he could deal with everything for her so she had no need to make too much of an effort on anything.

She had the confidence to handle the issues in the company, but Andy and Sam had both offered to help, worrying about her. She began to doubt whether she was really capable to manage a company.

"Autumn, no matter what happens, I'll always consider you as my sister. If you have any problems, please tell me." Sam already knew that Autumn was a tough woman. She could bear all hardships without complaining to anyone.

"I will. Thanks." Autumn felt quite comfortable after hearing Sam's words, her embarrassment has melted away.

From now on, Sam was just Chris's boyfriend. For Autumn, he was just an old friend whom she grew up together with.

"Be careful!" A speeding truck passed by and nearly hit Autumn.

Autumn had no time to realize what happened but Sam had already pulled her towards his chest to keep her from any harm. As the truck sped away, Sam helped her stand steadily, then he released her immediately.

This all happened in a matter of seconds. She said to Sam, "Thank you."

"You're welcome. Please be careful next time." Sam said in a gentle tone.

However, as this happened, two women was staring maliciously at Autumn.

"Mrs. Lin, did you see that? Now you can see that I didn't lie to you. Your son is having an affair with Autumn!" The woman who was speaking to Mrs. Lin was Wendy. She went abroad to visit Mrs. Lin and urge her to return and teach Autumn a lesson. Now she was back in China.

Wendy heard that Sam had recently got a girlfriend and was ready to take her to visit his parents. This would render her plans useless.

She had already put a lot of time and efforts into her plan. She wouldn't let go of Autumn this time.

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"That's none of your concern, " Mrs. Lin responded coldly. In fact, she didn't know what to do next. Wendy kept bombarding her with questions, which annoyed her.

When Wendy told her that Sam went back to find Autumn again, she didn't believe it. Without HKind Group's assistance, Gu Group couldn't have survived. Therefore, Wendy didn't dare offend Mrs. Lin.

"Mrs. Lin, let me know if I can be of any help, " Wendy quickly changed the subject, as she noticed Jane's impatience.

Jane lost her interest in shopping at what she saw. She said farewell to Wendy and returned home directly. When Wendy arrived home, she found Yvonne lying around on the sofa, watching TV. Yvonne was eating snacks and dressed in her pajamas with her uncombed hair. She hadn't washed her hair for several days. "Look at yourself now. Are you still my daughter?" Wendy reprimanded angrily, looking at Yvonne who seemed to have abandoned life outside.

"What are you doing?" Yvonne cried out when Wendy turned off the television. "I have lost Charles. What else can I do now? Are you still expecting me to find a rich son-in-law for you? Stop daydreaming!" Yvonne continued with a sneer.

She walked up to Wendy and grabbed the remote control from Wendy's hand, turned the TV back on and continued to watch.

Since the news of her miscarriage had spread, Yvonne had become discouraged. She had been cooped up in the house, afraid of facing other people's scornful and judgmental eyes. Now her only amusement was watching TV, helping her forget all unpleasant things.

"Mom, just leave me alone. I am rubbish now and no one will like me. Just let me be, " Yvonne said as she was downhearted. Upon hearing this, Wendy felt sorry for her daughter.

"You're my little girl. In my eyes, you are always my perfect child, " Wendy said, sitting beside Yvonne. "I know that lately many things have happened and you are going through a lot. But I promise you that from now on I will help you get back everything you lost bit by bit, including Charles, " Wendy assured."

"Stop making empty promises." Yvonne said bitterly. "Mom, you know what kind of person I am. Charles knows it better. Now he wants me to stay out of his life so that he can lead a happy life with Autumn."

"You have my words, " Wendy reassured Yvonne confidently. "But Yvonne, you can't punish yourself like this anymore. Look at you. You didn't even comb your hair or change your clothes. If Charles came here and saw you, do you think he would like you?"

"Come on. Charles will never step into this house, " Yvonne responded, continuously looking at the TV.

"He will. Trust me, " Wendy said firmly. "Listen to me now. Cheer up and tidy yourself. Wherever you go, you must maintain a good image. Can you do that?"

"Mom, do you really have an idea to make Charles fall in love with me?" Yvonne asked, a bit doubtful.

"Of course, I do, " Wendy replied with full confidence. "I will help you steal away everything that Autumn has."

Yvonne's eyes brightened when she heard her mother's words. She merrily ran upstairs, took a shower, and got herself dressed. As she stood in front of a dressing mirror, she gave a bright and satisfied smile.

'I am pretty. My beauty can even be equal to Autumn's. As long as mom finds a way for me to approach Charles, I can make him like me again.' she thought to herself.

"Mom, what do you think? Am I looking good?" Yvonne asked, as she saw Wendy entering her room. "Of course you are. I think you are the most beautiful girl in the world, " Wendy praised her daughter, looking at her with affection.

"Yvonne, " Wendy continued, taking Yvonne's hand. They walked to the bed and sat at the edge of it. "I know that you must feel bored, being stuck in the house like this. But I did this for your sake. After you had the miscarriage, I asked you to stay home for two reasons. One was to let you have good rest, and the other was to give you time to reflect on yourself. You have a bad temper, and Charles doesn't like ill-tempered girls, " Wendy advised.

"I am telling you these because I hope that you can change your attitude and turn into a more amiable girl. Look at Autumn. She always looks fragile and delicate. Men are always drawn to delicate women. Do you understand?" Wendy explained, noticing the displeasure on Yvonne's face.

"But..." Yvonne responded with a little frown. "Fine. I got it. I will try to control my emotions more." she conceded after some consideration.

"That's my good girl, " Wendy nodded. 'Although Yvonne is my daughter, she didn't inherit my excellent emotional intelligence. I have to instruct her slowly and patiently, ' Wendy thought.

"There is 500, 000 in it. You can buy some clothes and make more friends. Remember to act as if nothing happened, " Wendy advised, handing a bank card to Yvonne. Wendy wanted Yvonne to go out and clear the rumors about herself -- to show others that she was fine and nothing had happened.

"Do you mean... that I can go hang out with friends?" Yvonne asked doubtfully but her eyes glistened with excitement. She had been locked up at home for a long time. When she heard what Wendy said, she couldn't believe her ears.

"Yes, you can go outside now. But bear in mind and make sure that you don't lose your temper, whatever you hear from other people. If someone asks about your miscarriage, you just tell them that it wasn't true. Are you clear?" Wendy answered with a smile.

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Her three "friends" looked very embarrassed, as Yvonne's reputation had gone so bad that no one wanted to hang out with her, much less be seen in public with her.

"Are you unwilling to talk to me?" Yvonne challenged the three with a sneer, "I think I treated all of you generously in the past, only to be rejected this like! Give me a reason now!"

"Thanks for your past generosity!" A girl whose name was Debbie rose up to answer Yvonne, "However I would confine myself to my house, if I were you. Now your presence is definitely a comedy."

"What the hell did you just say?" Yvonne stared the girl down, "I dare you to say it again."

"I am telling the truth!" The girl sneered and pressed her challenge, "Yvonne, you are more ill-reputed than ever! It is expected that we stay away from you because we do not want to be seen with you, especially in public."

"Speak ill of me like that some more and I will make you suffer for it!" Yvonne was furious.

"Debbie, there is no point of arguing with her!" The other two girls tried to pull Debbie back to her seat, staring at Yvonne with contempt. "It is a buzzkill to run into her here. Let us go somewhere else and have fun."

"How dare all of you leave impolitely like this? Stop!" No matter how Yvonne screamed, she was powerless to stop them, which made her all the madder.

After the unpleasant encounter, Yvonne drowned her unhappiness in the pub alone.

She had decided to be less visible in public to avoid other people's contempt. However, it was beyond what she could handle when she went out of the house.

"Hi, Miss Gu. It's been a long time!" Yvonne, in a state of stupor, heard a familiar voice teasing from behind her. It was Joe.

Joe came with a young girl wearing a cheap dress, holding Joe's arm tightly and looking at Yvonne with resentment.

The girl shook Joe's arm and asked, "Joe, who is she?"

The girl looked at Joe with admiration and then stared at Yvonne with contempt.

"Your presence is indeed a nuisance!" Yvonne cast a cold glance over Joe impatiently.

Yvonne was already having a bad time and meeting Joe almost drove her mad, "Get out of here quickly!"

Joe got accustomed to the arrogance and aggressiveness of Yvonne. He knew that she was nothing but a self-serving woman.

Meanwhile the girl who came with Joe was unable to contain her anger, "How dare you talk to him like that?"

"It doesn't matter." Joe calmed her down by patting her hand, "Do you want to know who she is?"

"There is no harm in knowing her, I suppose." The girl was overwhelmed by Yvonne's presence, because Yvonne was good-looking and well dressed.

"She was my ex-girlfriend who came from a wealthy family. As you can see, she naturally has a short temper." Joe applied his sarcastic remarks and description on Yvonne, which made her feel rather uneasy.

The girl's resentment and hostility against Yvonne deepened as Joe continued to describe her.

"That's enough!" Yvonne got more and more annoyed at the two who just did not want to leave. "Out of my sight quickly!"

"Calm down." Joe and the girl sat beside Yvonne brazen-faced, "I think we should have a nice chat after parting for a long time. I heard of your miscarriage. Who was responsible for that? He should have given you the due care and love."

Joe's words were followed by a loud crash. Yvonne threw a cup on to the floor and it broke to pieces. This terrified the girl who clutched Joe's hand.

However Joe was unperturbed, "How could you? How could you vent your anger at me like that?"

Although Joe was granted compensation when Yvonne broke up with him, he still had resentment against her. Now, Joe took delight in Yvonne's distress.

Joe let off a cold smile, leaning against the booth as if everything had been under his sway, "Yvonne, you should have foreseen your current misery, when you got rid of me after I became useless to you."

"It is the retribution for your abandoning me in the past. that you were, in turn, abandoned by the man who got you pregnant!" Joe kept throwing insults at Yvonne beyond measure. She had forgotten what Wendy told her previously and looked at Joe in a state of stupor, "Shut the hell up!"

Joe stood in front of Yvonne, smiling grimly. "Do you think I haven't changed? Do you still regard me as a worthless man? That's where you're wrong, " he said with a hint of arrogance.

"I'm not the man who I used to be. You, on the other hand, has become a woman of loose morals! You are a woman with no virtue!"

Instead of being carried away by her emotions, Yvonne suppressed her anger as she tried to sound stern. "You know what? I don't have any problem with other people talking to me like that except you. You don't have any right to talk to me that way, "

She exclaimed, trying to keep her composure.

The girl beside Joe came into view, interrupting their conversation.

"Stop trying to make a scene. I am Joe's girlfriend now, so whatever relationship you've had with him before doesn't matter anymore. Do you honestly think he'll regard you with pity if you just continue looking miserable? You wish, " she scoffed.

Yvonne couldn't help but laugh upon hearing her words. She stared at Joe, finding herself at a loss. Ignoring what the girl said, she debated whether or not she should tell him the truth. She felt incredibly hurt for receiving such a hostile treatment, so deciding what to do was incredibly hard. After a few moments of hesitation, she finally said, "Do you want to know who's the father of my baby?"

With her head lowered, she continued what she had to say. "You don't need to look any further, because the person I'm referring to is right before your very eyes."

She was desperate to know his reaction after her revelation, curious to see if he would behave differently upon knowing that he's the father of her child. She wanted him to console her so bad. She wanted him to feel guilty for what he had done, even expecting him to give her an apology.

"Are you saying that I'm the father of your baby? That's ridiculous!" Joe said, not believing anything that he just heard. "Do you really think I'll believe you after everything you've done? Who knows how many men you've slept with?" he exclaimed further.

"You really have no shame, don't you? Stop dragging my name into this!"

Filled with anger and envy, the girl standing beside Joe echoed the same sentiment. "Wow, she's really out of her mind. Is there anything special about this girl? I can't believe you've dated her before!"

Paralyzed by their insulting stares, Yvonne found it hard to find a place to hide. She just wanted to know how he'd react once she told him the truth, not expecting that he'd respond in such a way. Mortified by what happened, she berated herself for even hoping that he'd show her any mercy.

"Joe, before we broke up, I had been with you for many years. You should know that I don't have to lie about such things. The baby has died because of a miscarriage. How can you think that I made up such a story?" Joe sneered in response, feeling dismissive. Noticing Yvonne's sorrowful expression, he started to consider if there was any truth behind her words. As he recalled the days they spent together, he remembered that they didn't use any contraceptive every time they had sex, which led him to think that it might be possible that she really got pregnant.

However, now that he knew that Yvonne had an abortion accidentally, he refused to be taken advantage of.

"How do I know if you're saying the truth?" Joe asked, pausing for a while to carefully think about what he's going to say.

"You can say anything you want since the baby is gone. But how am I gonna be able to confirm this? Do you have any evidence?" he insisted, demanding proof.

"You..." Yvonne found it hard to finish her sentence, too angry to utter a single word.

The girl beside Joe looked at her unpleasantly. But she decided that she still wanted to give it a try.

"You're right. I might not have any evidence because the baby is gone. You don't need to worry because you don't have to be responsible for it now. But I still want to know, what would you do if I didn't have any miscarriage?" she asked, face bathed in sweat.

"Why do you keep on insisting that Joe is the baby's father? You shouldn't be saying such a thing if you don't have any evidence.

Stop talking about such nonsense!" the girl said, her words filled with caution.

She gazed at Yvonne, looking at her impatiently as if she was afraid that she would steal Joe away from her.

Aside from being beautiful, Yvonne also came from a notable family. This diminished the girl's confidence, giving her little sense of security.

"Shut up. I wasn't talking to you. Get yourself out of here, " Yvonne said furiously.

She waited impatiently, anticipating what the girl will say in return.

"I..."

The girl was rendered speechless, shocked by Yvonne's words. This made her step back subconsciously.

Filled with contempt, Joe laughed upon hearing their conversation. "Watch your words, Yvonne. She's my girlfriend. Stop talking to her that way! As far as I can see, she hasn't done anything wrong. You might be forgetting that you're just a stranger to me now, so try your best to be polite, " he said, holding her girlfriend's hands.

"I am asking you. Why can't you answer me?" she asked in response, ignoring what he just said. Still nourishing a glimmer of hope, Yvonne insisted to know the answer.

She couldn't help but wonder what will happen once she got the answer from him.

What would he say? Would she forgive him? Would she still want to be with him?

Despite being the one who broke up with Joe, she still couldn't stand seeing him with another woman. Since she's not doing well recently, she also felt a little bit envious to see him in a relationship.

She waited as she continued to demand an answer, wanting to know if he still loved her.

"Yvonne, I don't know why you keep on asking me the question. You've had a miscarriage and I'm not even sure if I'm the baby's father, so you better stop making trouble. To tell you the truth, I'm not willing to get back to you even if the baby is alive. I have a girlfriend and we're living a happy life. So can you please show some respect?

Why can't you see that I'm happier with her than I am when I was with you?"

Joe said with a grim smile, disdain visible in his eyes.

"How could you say that?" Yvonne asked, feeling helpless as this was her first time to feel incredibly upset. Refusing to accept such an answer, she continued to ask him. "Why? Is she better than me?"

She wondered how he could stay unaffected despite their break-up. She never expected that he would be able to move on without her and live such a happy life.

"Did you just ask if she's better than you?" Joe asked, trying to stifle his laugh upon hearing what she said. "What an absurd question."

He couldn't believe Yvonne would ask about it.

"Yes, you might be beautiful and you might come from a notable family. You might even think that my girlfriend has nothing compared to you. But I don't care about anything that you might have. My girlfriend is kind and understanding. She's not as ill-tempered as you. She makes me feel at ease and important. Do you understand what I'm trying to say?"

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Wendy received a call from Debbie's mother at home. She taunted her from across the line and told her to ensure Yvonne behaved herself and to stop her from appearing and embarrassing herself in public. Wendy quivered with anger from the insulting remarks. To make matters worse, she could not think of one single argument to retort.

In a result of the conversation, she intended to hurl questions at Yvonne the moment she got home, only to find her look like a drowned mouse.

"Mom..." Wendy felt a pang of pain as she saw Yvonne so drunk. Then she helped Yvonne sit down on the sofa. "Just look at yourself, if you can't hold the liquor, then take it easy, okay?" Wendy advised with concern.

"Mom..." Yvonne looked at Wendy with a miserable expression and said, "I'm a loose woman of no character. No one wants to be associated with me. Mom, I just feel awful here."

Yvonne poured her heart out and kept repeating that she felt miserable.

Wendy and Simon had been protecting her since she was a child, so she had never been bullied or faced so much pressure.

Recently, all bad things were occurring one after another, which made it hard for her to stand tall.

"What's the matter? Tell me what happened, Yvonne. I will take care of you and help you through it," Wendy said as she hugged Yvonne lovingly.

"No, mom," Yvonne declined Wendy's request. After meeting Joe, Yvonne felt that one thing was finally clear: no one would wait for her forever. If she did not work hard, sooner or later, she would be abandoned by the society.

"Don't worry. I just had a few realizations. I'll listen to you from now on, mom. I will do what you ask me to do and will never disobey you," Yvonne promised solemnly. "I just want to separate Autumn and Charles as soon as possible. Only I can be... Mrs. Lu," she added with a glimmer of hope in her eyes.

"You are really my good daughter, Yvonne." Wendy looked at Yvonne with relief and happiness as she said, "Rest assured. I will arrange everything for you as soon as possible."

She was pleased to see Yvonne suddenly willing to listen to her.

Autumn and Chris spent the entire day shopping in the mall. Chris bought a set of skin care products for Sam's mother, two bottles of some good wine and tea for his father, and some health care products and fruit. Finally, Sam sent them back home.

After they got off at Dream Garden, Sam rolled down the window and said to Chris gently, "Chris, I'll pick you up tomorrow morning."

Chris nodded as she blushed and said, "Drive carefully."

"Okay, I know," Sam replied in a soft and obliging tone. Chris felt like a deflated balloon as all her energy drained away when Sam drove off. She turned to Autumn and said, "Autumn, I always feel a little uneasy."

"What's wrong? Are you nervous?" Autumn asked with a smile. She didn't go through this courtship period when she married Charles, so she couldn't offer Chris any constructive advice.

"No, I am not." Chris shook her head. She knew she wasn't feeling nervous. After all, she had met Sam's parents so many times. "I don't feel quite sure about all of this. I feel as though I have not prepared enough," she said in a bid to voice her racing heart.

Chris felt sick to her stomach just thinking about it, 'If Rachel, that bitch had not mess up... '

"Are you still thinking about that scarf?" Autumn asked in an attempt to understand her thoughts. "Jane is actually a very easy-going person. I am sure she will like you the moment she meets you, and she won't have a problem with you because you didn't buy that scarf, okay?" Autumn comforted Chris.

"I know that, but I..." Before Chris finished her sentence, they had entered the house and saw a bag left on the table.

They exchanged confused glances as they walked towards it. Chris immediately opened the package to check it. Inside, as she guessed, was the scarf that she had laid her eyes on. "Nancy, where does this scarf come from?" she inquired at once as her curiosity was building.

Upon hearing Chris's question, Nancy hurried out of the kitchen. "It was delivered by a man in the afternoon. He only said it was for you but didn't tell me who it was from. What's the matter? Is something wrong with it?" Nancy answered after glancing at the the bag.

"No, " Chris replied, frowning. She then put the bag down and whispered to Autumn, "What do you think Rachel means by sending this scarf in such a manner? She vied with me for this scarf in the store and got it. And now she just gives it to me with no strings attached. What could be her motive behind this?"

Autumn knitted her brows in confusion. After a long pause she answered, "Well, in my mind, she is simply trying to please you. Your threat has worked in a way you would have hoped. She was worried that you will go back to live with Edward to get even with her for this, so she sent this scarf to ingratiate herself with you."

"Hmmm!" Chris let out a sigh and said, "Even if she wants me to go back and live with them, I will not. All I said in the store was to frighten her. I didn't actually expect her to believe it."

The two of them then beamed at each other. "Now the real dilemma is what should I do with this scarf?" Chris asked Autumn as she stared at the bag on the table.

"Since she sent the scarf home, it would be ungracious not to accept her gift. Just accept it, " Autumn said with a sly smile. "Don't let her attempts go down in vain, " she added.

"You're right. She did spend Edward's hard earned money anyway. I'll accept it." Thus, Chris put the scarf away and felt a little relieved.

The next morning, Chris got up early feeling bright and chirpy to freshen up. She wore a light yellow sweater with slim jeans and a beige overcoat, which flattered her near, prim and precise dressing. After that, she put on some light make-up and tied her hair in a ponytail.

With all the prep done, she went into the living room to wait for Sam to pick her up, and chatted with Gary.

Jane grew extremely nervous as she heard some noise coming from outside. But soon she saw Sam with a bright smile walking inside with parcels in his hands.

"Mom, I'd like to introduce someone to you, " Sam said to Jane as he put the bags aside gently and pushed Chris to the fore. "This is my girlfriend -- Chris. You have met her before."

"Nice to meet you, Jane, " Chris greeted as her cheeks flushed pink.

Jane let off a sigh of relief at the sight of Chris. "Let me have a good look at you. We haven't seen each other for months, am I right?" she turned to Chris as she gripped her hands warmly.

"Yes, it has indeed been several months, " Chris answered bashfully. "Jane, this is for you. I hope you like it, " Chris continued as she handed the scarf to Jane.

"You don't have to bother buying me gifts, dear. I am happy just to see you here." "Chris, you are such a considerate, kind and loving girl. Unlike you, Sam hasn't given me any presents yet. What is the point of giving birth to a son?" Jane went on as she giggled with her eyes simmering with joy. She then opened the package and found the scarf to her liking.

"Mom, are you sure?" Sam jumped in with a playful smile. Noticing Jane's immediate affection and liking towards Chris, he was much relieved.

"Let us forget him for now. Please do have a seat there and make yourself comfortable, " Jane said to Chris while taking her by the hand enthusiastically, and they sat down on the sofa. "Even when we lived abroad, I was very fond of you and I thought Sam and you would make a wonderful match. At that time, I tried to persuade him several times to try to see you, but he refused. Now, you two finally get together. I really just feel so happy seeing the both of you!"

Jane kept chatting with Chris holding her hand. She was very clearly satisfied and overjoyed with Chris.

Chris was a beautiful girl from a respected family. In other's eyes, Sam and her was a perfect couple. It was only natural that Jane admired her.

Technically, as long as Sam didn't date Autumn, she would be fine.

"Your hands feel so cold, child. Are you okay?" Jane asked with concern.

"I'm fine, " Chris responded as she shook her head.

"Sam, turn on the air conditioner please, " Jane turned to Sam. "It's my fault. I should have turned the conditioner on in advance as the weather has become colder these days."

"It's okay. I'm not cold at all..." Chris reassured Jane as she gave Sam a momentary glance.

Before coming, she was constantly worried that Jane might dislike her. But now she was at a loss by Jane's excessive warmth. She couldn't even ask Jane not to be so civil to herself.

"Mom, where is dad?" Sam tried to change the subject, as soon as he saw Chris's embarrassed expression. "When is a good time to have lunch?"

"I almost forgot, " Jane responded. "This morning your dad said that he had some urgent matters to handle in the company and he would join us directly for lunch. He should have been home by now."

"Sam, you stay here and chat with her. I will just take a quick round in the kitchen and check on everything." Chris heaved a sigh of relief as she saw Jane leave.

"My mother is such an easy-going person. She treats you in such a passionate manner simply because she adores you, " Sam said to Chris. "I see. But her over enthusiasm is making me nervous, " Chris nodded.

Upon hearing this, Sam burst into a laughter. He also least expected Jane to receive Chris in such an excessive way.

"Dad, " Sam stood up, as he saw his father Jamie stepping inside the house.

"Hello uncle, " Chris greeted Sam's father in a sweet tone, as she got up and stood beside Sam.

"Chris?" Jamie was stunned. Knowing that Sam would bring his girlfriend home, Jamie especially spared time to come home for lunch. But to his surprise, he saw Chris. "What brings you here?" he asked Chris.

"Dad, let me introduce her to you again, " Sam said to Jamie. "She is my girlfriend, Chris."

"What did you say?" Jamie looked at Sam and Chris in utter shock. Apparently he was overcome with confusion.

When they lived abroad, Chris often visited them at home. But Jamie didn't expect that Chris would ever date Sam.

"What's going on?" Jamie asked, raising his eyebrow. He felt strange about the whole scene that Chris suddenly became Sam's girlfriend. But it didn't mean that he was discontent with her.

"What do you want to know?" Jane broke in, noticing Jamie's serious expression. "Although Sam was not seeing Chris in the past, it does not mean that they would never get together. Look at your grave expression. I will not forgive you if you scare Chris away."

"I..." Jamie stammered, looking at Jane. He would not dare to displease Jane.

"Just ignore him, " Jane turned towards Chris, as she took her by her hand yet again. "The dishes are on the table. Follow me!"

Jamie didn't ask any questions and simply followed the command. Jane took a seat beside Chris, and kept piling food onto her plate, which made Chris very anxious.

"Chris, eat more. You're too thin, " Jane kept talking to Chris while adding more and more food onto her plate.

Chris sat beside Jane uncomfortably. Meanwhile, Jamie walked towards Sam and asked in a serious tone, "Are you serious this time?"

"Yes, I most definitely am." Sam nodded. "Or else I would not have brought her home to meet you both."

"If you are serious about this relationship, treat her well. Chris seems like a very good girl." Jamie patted Sam on his shoulder, then added, "Remember to visit her family and talk about engagement. It's about time you decide now."

"I know." Sam nodded in sync with his thoughts.

With a strong feeling that Chris was the right one for her son, Jane became more and more happy about Chris, who sat across her. Though Chris was feeling uncomfortable about her fixed gaze. Finally she asked Jane, "What is it that you wanted to discuss?"

Upon hearing her question, Jane came back to earth and with an embarrassed look asked Chris, "Does Sam treat you well when you are with him?"

"Yes, he treats me quite well actually." Chris suddenly blushed pink, as she stole a glimpse of Sam, who was sitting beside her, and smiled. "He is good to me. He is even willing to buy me everything I want no matter how unreasonable I may be."

"My son actually has a low EQ." Jane signed. "Earlier I thought he was a gay. So now you can understand my extreme happiness to see him bring you home."

Jane composed her thoughts for a second and then went on, "You should know that when you were abroad, I liked you so much. I really think Sam and you make a perfect match. As you two are around the age to get married, when do you think is the proper time to hold the wedding?"

Chris was baffled when she heard Jane said that. Although she wanted to be with Sam, they had not discussed marriage just as yet. After all, they had just gotten together. How could she think in this direction so soon?

"Aunt, I..." Chris silently deliberated as she didn't know how to respond to this question.

However, Jane didn't pay heed to her reaction. She smiled and said to them, "I guess you haven't discussed about this, have you now?"

"Yes..." Chris said hesitantly. "Now we've just gotten together, we haven't thought so far into our future."

"You must consider this now." Jane said to her, "The point of being in a relationship is ultimately to get married for companionship. It will not make any difference if you two get married sooner or later. When your uncle and I were your age, we had already given birth to Sam."

Chris lowered her head, not knowing what to say.

"Chris, I'm not pressuring you into getting married." Jane signed, then added, "You should know that Sam hasn't decided to settle down in any particular place. As you two now are in a relationship and he's brought you home to see us, I think it's good to decide on marriage soon. This is also a responsibility. What do you think?"

"Emmm..." Chris showed an expression of hesitation, sensing that Jane asked her, "Huh? Do you not want to marry him?"

"No, that's not true..." Chris hurriedly waved her hand. Seeing Jane's smile, she thought she was being duped by her. But then, in order to comfort Jane, she said in a unconvinced tone, "I'll follow your arrangement, aunt...."

"Now that's a good girl." Jane was content with the answer. All she wanted was to stop Autumn from thinking of her son. In her eyes, Autumn was a shameless woman who would still hook up with her son even after getting married.

As long as Sam and Chris got married, how could Autumn still have the guts to seduce her son?

"That's it. I will visit your parents with Sam soon to discuss your engagement. This is the most important thing. Do you two agree?" Jane held her hand with satisfaction, making Chris felt a little embarrassed.

Jane wanted to treat Chris with a dinner this night. However, Chris made excuses to leave. Before leaving, Jane held her hands tightly and said, "Don't forget what we spoke about. Go discuss it with your parents. Then remember to call me."

"Don't worry, aunt. I will talk to them." Chris smiled reluctantly. She felt relieved as Sam drove away from his home.

Sam peeked at her face and asked her curiously, "What is wrong? Are you feeling tired, sweetie?"

"Does it look like I am tired from my face?!" Chris couldn't bear it anymore. She poured out all about her discomfort. "I've never felt your mother was so over zealous towards me. All of that really overwhelmed me and made me uncomfortable."

Sam understood what happened with her and laughed happily. Then he thought of something. When he dropped Chris to the door of Dream Garden, he asked her, "Chris, even though we haven't been in a relationship for too long, we've known each other for quite a long time. I want to ask you a question: Would you give me the pleasure of marrying me?"

Chris was stunned. After a long time, she returned to reality. "Are you proposing?"

"Emmm, no." Sam shook his head and explained, "I just want to ask for your permission. If you agree, we can go ahead and arrange a dinner for our parents and decide the perfect time for our wedding."

Chris could not utter a word after she heard him speak about their "wedding". She could only laugh out, while nodding her head. Even when she came back home, she was still dazed.

"Why you are laughing sitting by yourself on the sofa, Chris?" Autumn asked her. Autumn had made an appointment with Charles. They decided to visit the Zhao family. Now it's not the time. When she went downstairs, she noticed Chris was giggling like a teenager on the sofa. She softly patted Chris.

"Autumn." Chris smiled shyly and blushed as she turned to look at Autumn.

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"What are you talking about?" Charles asked as he took off his coat. "It's nothing... Just some girl thing." Chris replied before Autumn could open her mouth, casting a knowing look at Autumn.

Autumn immediately understood what Chris was telling her just by looking, so she did not say anything about Chris's visiting the Lin family house. "And why are you home so early?" she asked Charles, as she took his coat.

"Aren't we going to have dinner with the Zhao family? That's why I have come home earlier than usual." Charles replied. "Have you gotten the presents ready?" he continued.

"Yes, I have, " Autumn answered. Autumn had bought presents for everyone at the Zhao household that morning. "Wait a moment. I will check on grandma, " she said to Charles.

Autumn hung the coat and then went to Emily's room. As soon as she walked in, she saw that Emily had already gotten up. "Grandma, what are you doing?" Autumn asked with concern, striding to her. Emily was going through the clothes in her wardrobe one by one.

"Autumn, I need your help to choose the right clothes for me. Which one do you think will make me look more energetic?" Emily had left the Zhao family for many years. She had been looking forward to this day when Autumn was reunited with them.

"This one looks good." Autumn advised, pointing to a red cotton-padded jacket. Since Emily moved in with the Lu family, Autumn had bought many clothes for her. Although Emily loved those clothes, she had never worn them. But today was a big day, going to the Zhao family residence, so she wanted to look good.

"OK, let me try it on." Emily said, taking the red jacket. "What do you think?" Emily asked with a bright smile, after she put it on.

She could no longer see, so she had to ask for Autumn's opinion.

"You look very beautiful, grandma." Autumn said, getting emotional. Although Emily lost her eyesight, she still noticed the quiver in Autumn's voice.

"My little girl, don't cry. You won't look pretty if your eyes get puffy from crying." Emily comforted Autumn, holding her hand.

"Grandma, I'm not crying, " Autumn lied, as her eyes got red.

"You silly little girl, don't be sad for me. It's common for aged people to lose their eyesight, " Emily consoled her. "Grandma, I'm fine. Let's go, " Autumn reassured Emily, wiping away her tears.

By the time Autumn escorted Emily to the hall, Charles had already changed his clothes and was ready to go. "Grandma, you look gorgeous, " Chris, standing beside Charles, said to Emily with a smile.

"Really?" Emily laughed with delight. After helping Emily to the back of the car, Autumn sat beside her. She noticed Emily looking anxious. "Grandma, don't worry! We will arrive soon." said Autumn calmly.

"I'm not worried." Emily responded, stroking the back of Autumn's hand. "I'm a bit thrilled. After leaving them for years, I don't know how they are doing."

"You'll meet them shortly." Autumn said smiling.

As they rounded the corner, Autumn caught sight of the Zhao family standing outside the gate. Even Cindy was there, waiting for them, cuddled in Abby's arms. Autumn felt sorry to keep them waiting. Charles parked the car in front of the gate.

She took Emily by the hand and they got out of the car. "My pretty sister!" Cindy shrieked with excitement, running towards Autumn.

"Cindy, come with me, " Abby said to Cindy before Autumn could say anything. She picked up her and held her to her chest. "Emily..." Amy spoke with her reddened eyes. She took Emily by the hand as soon as she got to her.

Upon hearing Amy calling her name, Emily couldn't help but burst into tears. "Mrs. Zhao..." Emily cried, reaching out to Amy.

Emily collapsed to her knees but Autumn and Amy stopped her. "What are you doing? No, please don't do that..." Amy exclaimed.

"Mrs. Zhao, please forgive me!" Emily wept, overpowered by emotion. "If I hadn't left the house with the young master, he wouldn't have died and Autumn wouldn't have led such a tough life all these years. It's all my fault..."

"Ohhh, those are all in the past. And that was not your fault at all!" Amy responded. "It was Bowen's own decision. How could I blame you for it?" she continued, taking Emily's hand.

"But..." Emily had been convinced that she was the one to blame for Bowen's death.

"Don't think too much of it anymore." Amy stopped her, stroking the back of Emily's hand. "If you weren't there with him, Bowen would have lived a harder life and Wendy would have given my granddaughter hell. In fact, you're our savior. How can I blame you?"

"Mom, let's get inside. It's very windy here. Aunt Emily might catch a cold." Abby advised.

"You're right. I was so excited that I've forgotten about that. Let's get inside." Amy held Emily's hand guiding her through the path in front of her. Autumn stood on Emily's other side.

The two senior ladies looked just like old friends who hadn't seen each other for years. They kept talking as if they would never get tired of talking to each other. Autumn couldn't find a way to cut into their conversation.

"Are you alright?" Charles asked Autumn, as he noticed Autumn's frown.

"I'm fine, " Autumn replied, wiping away her tears with the back of her hand. "I am just worried about grandma's health."

"Grandma is overjoyed today. Just let them talk longer, " Charles reassured her, holding her hand.