

Wedded Bride 371

Chapter 371 The Dining Party (Part One)

"Mrs.Lu, what brings you here today?" David was busy at that time, but he was stunned to see Autumn there. So he stopped for a minute and approached her. "The president is not here right now."

"Where is Leila?" Autumn asked subtly.

"Leila is out with the president; there is a dining party planned for this evening. Why are you here at this odd time?" David seemed to be out of favor these days; Charles took Leila with him no matter where he went. David knew that Leila helped Charles sign several big orders, which no doubt indicated of her strong ability to handle work professionally. So David could understand why Charles thought so highly of Leila.

David was not bitter, but it did not mean that Autumn was not angry about it, either. She frowned as she

further asked, "David, in the past didn't you always accompany him on such occasions? Since when has it become Leila and why?"

David was stunned, as he realized Autumn was jealous, so without wasting a second he explained,

"Please don't misunderstand the situation. Leila has helped Mr. Lu bag several big orders recently. The

partners in today's dining party were all received by Leila, and she was able to handle them. That's reason why Mr. Lu took her along. Don't think too much."

"Is this absolutely true?" Autumn was confused and frowned, as she felt things were not that simple.

They could not be so black and white especially with Leila involved.

"It's true. You really don't have to worry about it." David said in a soft tone, "How about... I drive you home now? it is quite late. Mr. Lu could be late tonight, as a few days back he left a dozen partners without saying a word after learning that you were sick. Leila stayed here all night working and finally the partners chose not to leave the company. So Mr. Lu is going to apologize and set things right."

"No, but thank you for the offer." Autumn was so happy to hear that Charles left the partners immediately and ran to the hospital to see her. Maybe... she was really too suspicious over nothing.

"I drove myself here, so I'll go home by myself." Autumn handed the food she packed over to David and said, "It's the food I brought for you. Have a good meal!"

"Thank you so very much, Mrs. Lu." David smiled and said, as he worked overtime with Alice in the company until now and would love to share the meal with her. They just felt hungry so they grabbed a table in the cafeteria as they began to eat the food Autumn brought them. Alice said, "Although Mrs. Lu

left the company by the time I joined, I really feel that... Mr. Lu is so lucky to have married such a beautiful and composed woman like Mrs. Lu."

"Yes, he is." David sighed and went on, "Mrs. Lu has always been incredibly nice, and she treated us like family while she was still working here. It seems impossible to behave so humbly had it been any one else."

"David..." Alice meditated for a moment and then said anyway, "It's not surprising that Mrs. Lu overthinks so much. As a bystander, even I think that the relationship between Mr. Lu and Leila is not that simple as it may appear on the surface. I mean, they go in and out together every day. Rumors are already doing rounds in the company."

"That is utter bullshit." David said coldly, "Mr. Lu only cares about Mrs. Lu. How could he possibly share an inappropriate relation with Leila?"

"You have no idea about that." Alice frowned. "Leila has always been making excuses to take the private elevator with Mr. Lu these days, and they also engaged in social activities together. Anyway, it's spreading downstairs now. But we are in the secretarial office and too close to Mr. Lu, so the rumor mill

has not reached us."

Alice frowned and said, "We know they go out for work, but people who don't know... would

immediately assume they are having an affair."

"Enough, we should not... even have such inappropriate talk about the president. Don't say that in front

of me again, and especially be careful not to be caught by Mr. Lu having such a lewd conversation."

David frowned tightly. Alice was not the kind of person who liked to gossip. She had always engrossed

in doing her job perfectly since she got in Shining Company's secretarial office, and she was not willing

to interfere in other's business.

David could see that Alice was much more capable than Leila at work, but she would just not like to get

in all this.

But what was wrong with her today? Why would she start gossiping about trivial matters that do not

concern her?

"David..." Alice frowned. "I would not have said that usually and I'm sorry to have said it in the first

place."

The bigger the company is, the more conflicts there would be. Alice knew that apart from doing her own

job well, she shouldn't meddle in other people's business. That was why she could see it clearly, the rumors were spread from the secretary office. Except for her and David, only Leila would do that herself.

Leila had exhausted all efforts to get close to Charles, and ultimately spread the rumor herself. What a devious woman she was!

Alice could not bear to see Leila to do that. "David, I'm not gossiping with you, it's just that... the rumors started from the secretary office. You should know what that means."

David frowned. Of course, he knew what that meant. He had already warned Leila, but she was still incorrigible, that's why it happened.

Alice looked at David who was sitting across her, and she said, "Mrs. Lu is such a good person. We should help her as much as we can. If Leila ever gets a hold of that position, do you think... we would still be here?"

David did not say anything, but he knew that if Leila got in that position, she would definitely not let him go.

"David, you have been following everything after all, and Mr. Lu would listen to you, so I think... you should express all of this to Mr. Lu." After Alice finished speaking, David nodded and said, "Well, I understand. I will... find a chance to talk to Mr. Lu about this pressing matter."

After hearing David said that, Alice embraced silence. After all, what she should do and what she wanted to do had been done.

Meanwhile, in Royal Hotel, Charles and Leila were negotiating with one of the companies. The reason he took Leila there was because she was familiar with these partners. And she knew how to communicate with them, and another reason was that... Leila was a girl, a beautiful one at that.

Although he hated to admit it, beautiful girls did hold some advantages while dealing with business.

Charles was bound to get the company's order, that's why he was so nervous and even attended the party by himself.

Mr. Xu sat beside Charles; the businessman always preferred to talk about business at the wine table.

If they talked happily, no, actually drank happily, then the business was a done deal.

Chapter 372 The Dining Party (Part Two)

Leila was sitting next to Charles. During the gap between two courses being served, Charles would talk to Mr. Xu, and occasionally Leila would also join in and bring up the cooperation between the two

companies. The atmosphere was warm and optimistic, but only Charles knew that Mr. Xu was avoiding the substantive issues. He was like an old fox who would not lose sight of the falcon until he saw the hare.

As the wine was being poured, Mr. Xu declined the offer as he said he could not drink wine unexpected, which made Charles anxious. Charles had read the information of Mr. Xu. He had a strange habit. If he disliked a partner, he would definitely not consume alcohol. But if he would join them for a drink, then... the deal would be in their favor.

So he must get Mr. Xu to drink his wine.

"Mr. Xu, I really appreciate that you have come from so far to join the party. There are some misunderstandings between us, and I'd like to take this opportunity to clear them. I'll drink three glasses of wine first." Charles gulped down three glasses of liquor, and then said to Mr. Xu, "You see how sincere I am, and now it's your turn. How about doing me a favor and taking a sip?"

Mr. Xu maintained a cool composure as he said to Charles, "Mr. Lu, it's not my intention to let you down, but..."

He sighed and added, "I've struggling with poor health and high blood pressure for years now, so my wife doesn't like me drinking at all. You can afford to ignore others, but you still have to listen to your wife, am I right?"

Leila Looked at Mr. Xu, as she thought that this old fox was just looking for an excuse to avoid drinking with them.

Leila then looked at Charles, who looked so embarrassed for struggling so much for striking a deal.

Leila knew he was very enthusiastic to work with Mr. Xu's company, so she also made her mind upon recalling his interest and said to the waiter, "I need the glass with the maximum capacity, please."

Leila could not hold a drink, but during her employment at the Shining Company, she had learned to socialize with the partners from time to time doing whatever the situation called for. Now she developed

a stronger capacity for liquor, so today... In order to show their sincerity to Mr. Xu, she would take the challenge. However, the liquor Charles had ordered.... was very strong and would make even the strong hearts weak in their knees.

Leila even wanted to cry at the idea of chugging that beverage, but when she thought of Charles, her

spirit rose to fight the apprehensions away. Anyway, she had to let Charles realize that she was an indispensable asset to him and would always help him with every one of her endeavors.

All the people started to look in her direction once they heard what she said. Charles could not help frowning ever so slightly, thinking how she would manage herself, when he saw her holding a large glass of red wine.

He resisted the impulse to stop her, as this was her job, and also the reason why he brought her here in this first place.

Leila was very unhappy when she saw that Charles turned away to avoid looking at her, but refocused her priorities only to realize that if only landed the contract, Charles would definitely think highly of her.

With that thought, she realized all would be well as long as she took it slow.

"Mr. Xu..." She laid focus on his name as she said it aloud and walked towards Mr. Xu delicately yet seductively and said, "You said you didn't drink. What a coincident that I don't drink, either. But today... in order to show you my sincerity, I am making an exception especially for you as I drink this glass of wine. So why don't you drink yours if you are pleased by my dedication?"

"Really? So what kind of liquor do you like to consume?" Mr. Xu was amused by her, as he took a

glance at Leila's empty glass. Leila picked up the liquor bottle which was resting on the table and

poured an entire glass. She then said to Mr. Xu, "Mr. Xu, this is what my sincerity looks like."

Leila lifted the glass soon after finishing her sentence and chased it down like a hero going towards her

death. As the liquor went down her throat and into her stomach the burning sensation like fire

intensified but that did not stop her till the very last drop. After finishing it, Leila stumbled a bit and then

Mr. Xu grabbed her and said, "Look at you, a beautiful young lady indeed, but don't drink too much if

you cannot handle it. What if you get uncomfortable later?"

Mr. Xu said that as he pinched Leila's waist. Her skin was fair, as she got drunk on the wine, her face
novelbin

turned crimson immediately. She looked even more tempting to him. He could not help having dirty

thoughts.

Leila then fell into Mr. Xu's arm without him making any extra efforts. She then smiled and said, "I have

to show my sincerity at its best since you are here, Mr. Xu. If I get drunk... you will right here with me

right? I hope you won't leave me alone in such a condition."

"That's certainly right, I will not leave you. How could anyone in their right minds possibly leave such a

beautiful girl here?" Mr. Xu laughed aloud, as he wrapped his arms around Leila's slender waist with no intention to loosen the grip or even move away.

Mr. Xu was taking full advantage of her condition, and she said, "Mr. Xu, you see how very sincere I am, anyway... you have to have your drink now. Join me in all the fun!"

Mr. Xu laughed manipulatively. "Oh silly girl, I'm too old to drink this strong liquor. How about this, I will let my assistant accompany you for a drink on my behalf."

Mr. Xu's assistant was also a beautiful young lady. She was displeased when she saw Leila getting all cozy with Mr. Xu. Leila felt as though she had suffered a blow as she thought of drinking with Mr. Xu's assistant.

Of course she rejected the offer, coqueting in Mr. Xu's arms, " Mr. Xu, you see that you have come all the way. I feel dizzy after drinking just this one glass..."

Mr. Xu laughed as he strengthened his grip on Leila and said, "Are you dizzy? Where exactly are you feeling uncomfortable? Let me check it out for you..."

Mr. Xu smiled slyly and said to Leila. Even though Leila had exhausted all her ideas to get him to drink,

he did not cooperate at all. Leila mentioned several times about the cooperative matters, which too were blocked by Mr. Xu subtly. "Leila, I know your company's advantages. But I have been in Y City for long, and I have to compare yours with other companies. I believe that there will be a result very soon."

Leila hated him so much. Because of Mr. Xu's weird habit which got her so drunk, they chose to talk about cooperation at the dining party. But if he did not drink for a bit all this long, then Leila would be the first one who got drunk.

Then she would hope not to embarrass herself rather than continue talking about the cooperation.

Leila made up her mind and then sat on Mr. Xu's thighs. She wore a short skirt today, which distracted Mr. Xu as he could not help gawking at her long legs.

"Look at me, I am drunk already. I'm so drunk, Mr. Xu. Sorry, I'm getting up immediately." Even though

Leila pretended like it was a drunk mistake, she then rubbed against Mr. Xu's arms on purpose. She could feel Mr. Xu's erection, and his assistant looked enraged.

Leila also knew that the relationship between this assistant and Mr. Xu also was not simple, but today in order to get the deal, she was ready to risk everything. He then grabbed Leila again and she said,

"Mr. Xu, Since you don't drink, I won't force you. Let's have something to eat instead."

Leila laughed and helped him with some food, as she let his hands slide over her legs. Realizing that he was going to lean towards the bottom of her skirt, Leila rushed to stand, the wine poured on his clothes.

Chapter 373 The Dining Party (Part Three)

Upon noticing Mr. Xu's scowling face, Leila grabbed several tissues and tried to clean up his shirts in a hurry as she panicked. "Mr. Xu, I'm so sorry. How about... we head to the rest room? There I will be able to help clean your clothes properly, " she suggested in an apologetic tone.

"Fine, " Mr. Xu replied, as he got back up.. As soon as they entered the bathroom, Mr. Xu closed the door deliberately. Leila took some tissues from the counter, opened the tap and soaked the tissues.

"I'm really sorry for getting you into such a mess with my clumsy actions, " she apologized as she rigorously kept wiping his shirts with tissues.

"It's fine, " Mr. Xu responded with a sly yet content smile. Leila's hands lingered around his chest for quite a while, which turned Mr. Xu on.

"Leila, " Mr. Xu called out her name, as he grabbed her hand and pressed her against the basin. "You are so beautiful, " he continued, as he stared at her with obsessive eyes.

"Am I?" Leila responded calmly, as she smiled at him. "Do you think that I am prettier than your assistant?"

Mr. Xu was shocked as he realized that Leila had found out about their relationship. "How did you know?" he asked, looking confused and curious.

"Her expressions showed how she felt about you very evidently, " Leila answered confidently. "When we were in the compartment, you didn't see her expressions. It looked like she was trying to kill me with her furious eyes. I am a woman, so I am sensitive and aware of these matters. I don't think she was so hostile towards me simply because I am more attractive than her. The only explanation for her hostility is you!" she explained as she perched herself on the edge of the basin.

"You are a good observer. There is nothing to hide really. Yes, she is my mistress indeed. But..." Mr. Xu said frankly, as he began to laugh.

"But what?" Leila asked as she continued to smile.

"But I am more interested in you now. How much does Mr. Lu pay you? I will pay double as long as you are willing to come work with me at my company. What do you think of my offer?" Mr. Xu offered as he pulled her into a tight embrace.

"Mr. Xu..." Leila said in a sweet tone, as she pulled his collar playfully. "You haven't answered my question yet. Who is more lovely, your secretary or me?"

"You, of course you. There is no doubt about it, " Mr. Xu replied without even hesitating for a second.

Mr. Xu then pounced on Leila in an attempt to kiss her. All of a sudden, someone kicked the door open.

"Leo, dare you to repeat this again?" his assistant shouted, as she strode to him.

"Carol, I can explain this..." Leo said, flustered. Leo immediately panicked at the sight of Carol standing at the door. Leila could not understand why he would fear his assistant like this especially considering what all he said.

"Explain? I first saw you flirting with this woman all night and now this, " Carol yelled at him, as she glanced at Leila with disgust and fury. Leila jumped down from the basin, and then smoothed out her clothes. Carol came inside blazing with anger when she saw Leila's gloating expression. "You're such a bitch. I know that you were trying to covet Leo all night long. I will teach you a lesson and let you know the consequence of seducing someone's beloved, " Carol scolded, with an intention to raise her hand to hit Leila who was standing across her.

"Carol, please calm down. This is not what you imagined. It is just a misunderstanding, " Leo explained, as he put his hands around her waist in a bid to stop her.

"Leo, if you don't let me go now, I will tell this to my cousin. I'm sure that she will fix you, " Carol warned him with an ultimatum. Upon hearing this, Leo withdraw his hands almost immediately. "Carol, you can't always use your cousin to threaten me. You know her temper. If she finds out about this, she will give me a hard time over nothing. Can you bear the thought of her beating me to death?" he said, with a rather upset look.

Not until now could Leila figure out their real relationship. 'Carol is not only his secretary but his wife's cousin. Two cousins serve one man. It's crazy, ' she thought.

"What she does to you is none of my business, " Carol snapped back. "Why can't you just change your nature as you always promise you will? And if that was not enough, you hit on such a low woman like her. Are you blind?" she said scornfully totally ignoring the fact that Leila was still standing there.

"Yes, you're right. This is all my fault. Please don't be mad at me any longer, " Leo said drawing out a smile, trying to calm her down. "Let's go now. There are so many people staring at us. We should stop embarrassing one another by creating such a debacle, " he continued in a persuasive tone.

"I am surprised, you do feel embarrassed and ashamed on some level. You should have been prepared for this the moment you decided to flirt with another woman, " Carol replied in contempt. "I'm telling you that I must kick her ass today, " she added furiously.

"Bitch, how dare you seduce Leo in such a filthy manner? I am going to disfigure you so that you can't tempt him or any man anymore, " Carol said as she pulled her hands in a fist, and dashed towards Leila.

Carol pulled Leila's hair immediately. Leila wasn't a delicate woman who would let others bully her in such a harsh manner. As Carol made the move first, it was safe to strike back in defense. They two then began to fiercely fight with moments. With no intention of stopping they kept attacking one another.

After hearing Carol's warning, Leo didn't dare to move forward to stop them and pull them apart. As they were still in a fight, he had no choice but to approach Charles for help, after all Leila was his secretary. "Mr. Lu, Leila is fighting with my assistant. If you could please help me solve this matter, I will sign an one-year contract with you... no actually, make it a five-year contract, " he said to Charles as he

pleaded for help.

Charles was stunned, and then agreed to the proposition. Just as he reached the rest room, dozens of people had gathered outside whispering to one another. "Knock it off!" he howled authoritatively, right from the entrance.

Leila froze immediately when she heard Charles' voice call out to them. "Mr. Lu, she struck me first, I only defended myself, " she clarified to Charles.

"She is right. I started the fight. So what?" Carol responded, staring at Leila with rage knowing her reasons were legitimate. "You shameless woman. I wouldn't feel guilty even if I beat you to death, " she continued cursing at her as she crossed her arms.

"You..." Leila stammered, irritated by her words. She didn't curse back as Charles was around and she wanted to look decent.

"Well, the fight is over. It was just a misunderstanding. Go back to minding your own business, " Leo said to the lookers-on. As the crowd dispersed, he walked up to Carol and said, "Well, you have already taught her a lesson that she will definitely not forget for a long time to come. Just let it go. Let's leave here now..."

"I'm not leaving, " Carol refused with conviction. "I did nothing wrong. This indecent woman should feel lucky that she is still alive."

"Mr. Xu, " Charles began to address him as he looked at Leo with discontent. "I can see that Leila is hurt pretty badly. If you don't leave now, I will call the police. I can't allow my subordinate to be bullied like this even if it means calling off our deal, " he warned.

"We're leaving now, " Leo returned with a smile. Leo was a man for whom reputation meant a great deal. 'If Charles called the police, I would be a laughingstock in the business circle, ' he thought. He grabbed Carol by her hand, and they walked out of the restaurant.

Carol felt much better and relieved when she saw Leila's awkward expression. That's why she went with Leo obediently without uttering a single word.

"Are you fine?" Charles asked Leila, as they walked away.

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"Oh it's nothing. I am just fine, " Leila responded as she shook her head slightly. The very next second, tears suddenly started to trickle down her flushed cheeks and then she was unable to hold it. She had worked so hard and tried especially hoping that Charles would pay special regard to her if she bagged

the deal. But now her hope had shattered into small pieces. Everything was so messed up beyond repair which meant that all of her efforts were in vain.

"Are you in pain?" Charles asked softly, looking at Leila who was injured. "I will take you straight away to the hospital, " he added.

Her face was scratched while there were many bruises across her body. Her clothes were nearly torn.

Upon seeing this, Charles took off his coat, and draped it around Leila. "Please put it on and wait here while I clear the bill. After that I will take you to the hospital."

After he paid the bill for the meal, he drove Leila to a hospital. On the way to get there, both of them sat in silence and did not utter a word to each other. Once they reached, the doctor began with cleaning her wounds with alcohol while Charles waited outside for her. Fortunately, it was not serious at all and she just had to apply some ointment over the bruises every day. Charles was relieved upon hearing the doctor say that she would recover very soon.

"Let me take you back." Charles insisted on dropping her back. As they arrived around her house block, she did not get off the car immediately. Slowly, she turned to Charles and said, "Mr. Lu, I am so very sorry and embarrassed for how things unfolded today. And I really appreciate what you did for me

with all my heart. Thank you so very much!"

"Why are you apologizing to me? You don't have to say sorry to me without any reason, " Charles replied with confusion and honesty.

"I really did consider and plan to sign the contract with Mr. Xu today. But now I have screwed it up. And we even lost the chance to cooperate with Mr. Xu. It is all my fault. You lost face and business because of me today. I am really sorry, " Leila explained in an apologetic and sincere tone.

"Is that all?" Charles, instead of getting angry, burst into a hearty laughter.

Leila felt so guilty for what happened as she had worked hard for a long time to get the project from Mr.

Xu successfully. In this way, Leila thought Charles would get impressed by her.

However, as she learned that Charles did not seem to care about it, Leila felt a little shocked and yet anxious. "Mr. Lu, why are you not worried about it?"

"Mr. Xu called me just a moment earlier and he asked me to sign a five-year contract with him

tomorrow, " explained Charles. Charles received the call when they were in the hospital, but he forgot to tell Leila the good news.

"Oh my god, is that so?" Upon hearing this news, Leila was stunned and her eyes were shining with joy. She looked at Charles with expectant eyes as she asked, "Did Mr. Xu promise to sign the contract with us?"

"Yes, he did. I am going to sign a contract with him tomorrow. Please rest assured." Saying this, Charles paused for a while and added, "So you don't have to feel guilty for this. In fact, I have to thank you or things would not have develop so smoothly even though you had such a rough night."

"Smoothly, what do you mean?" Leila smiled bitterly as she was reminded of what happened. "It was not smooth at all. I lost my standing before so many people. It was so embarrassing."

Leila was hesitant as she stared at Charles. "Mr. Lu, would you think that..." she muttered.

"What, I didn't catch that?" Charles was confused by what she said.

"I literally sold myself in order to bag the contract with Mr. Xu. Do you think I am a shameless woman to have acted in such a manner? Do you look down upon me?" After hesitating and considering this for a while, she went ahead and finally asked him.

Shocked by the veracity of her questions, Charles was unable to respond immediately since he never considered this before or even looked at in that light.

His previous secretary would have acted in the same way as Leila so as to get the contract from their cooperative partners. No matter what route they took to reach the destination, Charles only cared about

the result, the full and final result.

Therefore, he never really cared or thought about what his secretaries did.

But upon second thought, he did look down upon them a little since Charles never once forced them or even urged them to adopt the honey-trap method. It was their own choice and no one asked them to do that yet it was their preferred method.

Therefore, bearing this thought, Charles let out a warm smile and replied, "Of course I won't judge you.

I can understand where such actions come from and I appreciate it because all what you did is in the best interest of our company.

Just don't make blind and disorderly conjectures. Take some good rest at home. And please join work only once you have recovered and feel better." He tried assured her in a soft tone.

"Mr. Lu, thank you so much for your kind words and concern." Leila nodded slightly. She did sense the hesitation in his eyes when he answered her question, so she was clear that actually he did despise

her behavior but cared enough to conceal it.

So she was determined to take some steps so as to let Charles know that she could also be a good wife.

"Please do have a safe journey to go home. Thank you for what you did for me today again, Mr. Lu. I really appreciate it." Leila got off the car and headed upstairs once she saw his car vanish from her view.

It was pretty late when Charles reached home as it took him a lot of time to drop Leila home after the hospital trip because of the incident at dinner. However, he didn't expect Autumn to still be awake.

The light was still on in their bedroom. As he walked into the room, he found that Autumn was wide awake, reading magazines in bed. "Autumn, it is quite late. Why haven't you slept?" he asked gently.

"I was waiting for you. I also did not expect it would take you so long to return..." As she put down the magazine, Autumn smiled and then asked, "So, why are you so late today?"

"I had a social gathering tonight. Please don't wait up for me next time. You need to take rest and take care of your health." Charles, moved by Autumn, asked her with worried eyes, "Are you feeling better

now? I am free tomorrow. I will take you to the hospital to have a physical examination."

"No. There is no need for that at all. I feel much better now." As she leaned on his chest, Autumn

asked, "Do you still remember the tickets you gave me on my birthday?"

"Yes, of course I remember, " he replied with a wide smile. "It is next Wednesday, " added Charles.

He fiddled with Autumn's hair and as he continued, "I know we have to go out next Wednesday, so in

preparation I have to work overtime these days, to ensure that I finish my work before we leave."

Saying this, Charles kissed her gently and then assured her, "Don't worry. I remember what I promised

you and I will keep up my side of the bargain at any cost."

Autumn, assured and warmed by his words, felt the urge to cry. She was hospitalized twice these past

days, but her bad temperament had disappeared once she was discharged from the hospital. What's

more, she was no longer suspicious about Leila since she fully believed in Charles now.

"Please sleep now. It is getting late, " said Charles. He held tightly Autumn in his arms.

The next day morning, Charles sent Autumn to her company and then went to work. The preparation

for the press conference of Giant Promise Company was almost finished as it was going to be held on

Sunday. Therefore, all staff in the company were busy making final touches on their respective work for

the event. However, they did not expect that Roger would come again.

"Why are you here again? What do you plan to do this time? I will call the police if you stay here and obstruct our work flow," Isla said angrily. Isla was busy discussing some crucial details of the press conference with Autumn when the foreground lady took Roger in abruptly. Isla was furious when Roger showed up in front of her.

Roger had not come here since his relationship with Rachel was disclosed. However, Rachel forced him to come here today, because the shooting for the film was about to begin. Roger had no other options but to come here since he was afraid that he would displease Rachel.

"Isla, don't get so angry. Would you mind coming out for a moment? I am going to have a chat with him,

" Autumn said calmly to Isla.

"No," replied Isla firmly without hesitating for even a second. "Autumn, he is dangerous. I can't let you stay alone with him under any circumstance."

"Don't worry, Isla. I am sure he will not dare to stir any sort of trouble here with all these people around,

" Autumn assured her since she too was growing eager and anxious to know why he kept badgering

her.

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Isla put her arm around Autumn and assured her friend. "I will be right outside. If he dares to hurt you, just shout and I'll come in, " she said before stepping out.

Autumn watched as her friend left, grateful for the support.

She then turned to Roger and said, "Have a seat."

Taken aback by her calmness, Roger sat opposite Autumn and thought to himself, 'This is weird. Why isn't she driving me away?'

Eyebrows raised, Autumn started, "So what brings you here? Have you come to apologize again?"

Roger tried not to squirm in his seat as the woman stared at him.

She already caught him off-guard with her calm exterior.

"Yes... yes, " he stammered.

Roger was surprised that Autumn got straight to the point, not even expecting her to ask about his reason for coming.

Composing himself, he continued, "I am truly sorry for what happened between us before. Miss Ye, I really wish you would accept my deepest apology."

Eyes flat, Autumn remarked, "I remember you attended my birthday party. So that means you're aware

I am no longer Miss Ye. Please address me as Miss Zhao."

She paused, making Roger even more uncomfortable. "I already told you the last time we met that I've

already put all of that behind me. Yet you're still here, persistent on following me to apologize for that,

twice or thrice already? It's totally unnecessary, " she said, indifferent.

Leaning forward a little, she then added, "I'm beginning to think you're just looking for excuses to get

close to me. But let me tell you now, I know exactly what you're up to, Roger. And I hate your scheme."

The truth was he was harassing Autumn on orders of Rachel. Since she was close to a few directors,

Roger thought doing her bidding would increase his chances of getting more movie roles. With Rachel

repeatedly telling him to seduce Autumn, he had no choice but to create opportunities for them to meet

in order for him to carry out his plan. He had already told Rachel that Autumn had romantic feelings for

him. But today's confrontation with her was likely going to spoil his plan.

Roger needed to think fast. In his rush to see Autumn, he hadn't carefully thought of what to say to her.

Apologizing several times wasn't going to work.

"Well?" Autumn prompted. "You've run out of excuses?" she asked him while he said nothing in return.

Heaving a deep sigh, she told Roger, "If you have nothing to say, please leave. There's a lot of work to do with the New Year coming and I just don't have the time to listen to such nonsense."

Her words spurred Roger to action. "No! I have something to say."

He kept thinking about Rachel's promise to introduce him to her director friends so he had to do something before Autumn drove him away. Besides, he knew Rachel was watching from across the street. If Roger ended the meeting quickly, it meant he did not accomplish his mission.

"Okay, let's hear it," Autumn said as she leaned back on her seat. She tapped her fingers on the table, showing her impatience.

Uncertain whether Autumn truly knew what he was planning, he decided to throw her off with his statement.

With perfect composure, he declared, "Miss Zhao... I'm in love with you."

Roger realized apologizing would get him nowhere with Autumn. So he changed his tactics and pretended to be obsessed with her. Roger knew it sounded silly, but he had already run out of ideas.

Autumn, however, did not even blink at the declaration. Her face remained impassive. And she did not

utter a word.

Roger scrambled for something to say. "You probably don't believe in what I'm going to say. But I really mean it. I fell in love with you at first sight. Remember I asked for your phone number, the first time we met? And it really was a shock for me to learn that you were married. I was humiliated and that was why I behaved badly. Forgive me, please?" he pleaded. Mustering all he could to convince her of his sincerity, he drew on his acting skills to appear earnest and apologetic while explaining himself to Autumn. Roger would do everything to win her trust.

"I had no plans to ruin your marriage. So I repeatedly told myself to stop pursuing you. And believe me, I've been trying my best to stay away from you. But I just couldn't get you out of my mind! So I thought seeing you on the pretext of apologizing would be a good idea, " he told Autumn.

"It was the only excuse I could think of to meet you, " Roger confessed.

He held her gaze, hoping to convince Autumn of his sincerity.

Finally, Autumn lifted her left hand and showed him the ring on her fourth finger. Then she said, "I am married so you know what you're saying is totally inappropriate."

Roger paused, thinking of a response.

"I know you're married, " he said. "But I still can't get you out of my mind. I don't know how!"

Roger tried to hold Autumn's hand but was brushed off impatiently. Still leaning comfortably in her chair,

Autumn continued to watch Roger's acting.

"Really?" Autumn laughed with undisguised contempt.

"And what do you want me to do?" she challenged. "Divorce my husband, then marry you?"

Roger froze at Autumn's words, sweat beading in his forehead.

He would never dare to instigate a divorce between Autumn and her husband. After all, Charles had already taught him a hard lesson. That's why he planned on meeting her while Charles wasn't around.

Roger was certain that once Charles learned of him being entangled with his wife again, he could kiss his acting career goodbye.

Roger thought, 'I have to be discreet so he never finds out about us.' He admitted though that Autumn's proposition came as a complete surprise, and was at a loss for words. Autumn's voice broke into his thoughts. "Perhaps you don't want me to get divorced, but rather to keep seeing you while I'm still

married. Let me see... we can go out to eat or have tea when we're free. Or if there's an opportunity to travel together, that would be great! Is that your plan?" Autumn jeered.

Roger ran everything she said in his mind, then asked, "Isn't that a good plan?"

Actually thinking that the plan was brilliant, he continued. "That way, your marriage won't be compromised. And our relationship wouldn't be embarrassing. That should solve the problem, and there isn't a better way, right?"

"There isn't a better way?" Autumn said incredulously.

"You were actually thinking that everything I said was going to work out?" She wanted to laugh at the absurdity of the conversation.

But Roger kept at it. "I think it's a perfect idea. Why don't you think so?"

"Your husband Charles is a rich and handsome man that every woman in the Y City dreams of marrying. And you're already married to the man, so giving him up is definitely out of the question," he pointed out eagerly.

Autumn couldn't believe what she was hearing as Roger tried to convince her further. "If you divorce him, I am the only person he will blame. And his outrage will certainly destroy both your company and

my acting career. Is that what you want to happen?"

She retorted, "Of course not!"

Autumn was enraged that some part of Roger's argument, however silly, did make sense.

"So, why not go ahead with the plan?" he said.

Grinning, Roger remarked, "So you see, we save both of our careers by maintaining a friendship

without getting into a serious relationship. Wouldn't it be great to go out on dates occasionally?"

Fed up, Autumn blurted out, "I cannot believe you! What kind of a person are you to think of such things!"

Roger's ideas were so absurd that she looked him in the eye to make sure he would listen carefully to

what she was going to say. "Hear this... a woman usually cheats on her husband for three reasons.

First, because the man treats her badly. Second, because the husband has a mistress. And the third?"

she paused, looking him straight in the eye.

"Because her husband cannot satisfy her sexual needs. Other than these, she will never commit

infidelity!" Hoping to get a rise out of Roger, Autumn mocked, "And just suppose I am stupid enough to

choose you as my lover, which reason do you think applies to me?"

Roger's face finally turned dark with embarrassment. He didn't know what to say. The man had gloated when Autumn outlined the idea. He was so confident she would be impressed if he agreed with everything she said.

Then it dawned on him that Autumn would never choose him as a lover, even if she entertained such thoughts. Compared to Charles, there was nothing he could brag about.

Yet defeat was not in Roger's vocabulary. It suddenly hit him what his edge was over Charles. "At least I'm younger than your husband, right? And because I am, I bet my sexual prowess will surely give you more satisfaction," Roger said smugly.

Chapter 376 Rachel's Schemes

"Not necessarily."

Looking him straight in the eye, Autumn sneered, "My husband is more mature and well-rounded than you. You're nothing compared to him. Have you even looked at yourself? There's nothing you could be proud of."

Hearing Autumn's words left Roger baffled.

He realized he had been too confident all along.

And now he was going to meet his inevitable end.

"As for the other points you confidently raised, I found nothing that can change my mind. Betraying my husband is the last thing that I would ever want to do, " Autumn said, relentlessly undermining Roger.

After all of what had been said, Roger felt like a fool by Autumn's words.

"You need to wake up, Roger.

Even if Rachel has a stellar career, she is a substandard play-writer, " she continued further.

"I don't understand what you mean, " Roger said, pretending to be confused.

He felt more uneasy at the mention of Rachel. He wondered how Autumn came to know about their relationship. But he had no choice but to deny it at all cause.

"Don't you know about Rachel?" Autumn asked, pouncing another question to Roger with full confidence.

"Rachel is easily one of the most powerful personalities in the world of show business!"

"I am well-aware of that.

But it's actually the other way around, " he said in response.

On that point, Roger already wanted to leave. "Miss Zhao, I think I should go now. This conversation isn't going anywhere and I am clearly taking away a lot of your time, " he said.

"But if you find yourself at the other end of the fence, feel free to reach out to me, " said Roger, giving his parting words.

"Wait! Give me more time, " Autumn called, stopping Roger in his tracks.

"I actually have something important to discuss with you."

She assisted Roger to go back to his seat and heartlessly said, "I can remove the quarrel between Rachel and you because you decline any knowledge of her. However...

I want another agreement to make."

"And that is?"

Remorse ran over Roger now as he looked at her with intuition after discovering Autumn's strength and power, gambling to play her game.

"You don't have to worry about anything as you will be rewarded well if you decide to engage into the service because I have my husband to render whatever you like. Now, let me ask you.

What do you fancy above all?"

Autumn asked Roger with great composure.

"What do you mean by saying so? Do you want to win me over?"

Roger was somewhat moved because of Autumn's reputation, which was tied with Charles and Zhao

family. Rachel, on the other hand, only relied on Edward.

Roger believed he could get whatever he wanted from Autumn, but....

He had to know whether he could meet Autumn's end.

"Win you over? It is more of a collaboration than a bribery, " said Autumn, letting off a cold smile.

Autumn looked at Roger with disdain and continued, "I understand that you find it hard to disclose what

you and Rachel have evolved. But you must understand that it's just an easy job for me to uncover

what you have with Rachel. But don't worry, I won't spill the beans yet.

I am still waiting for you to admit it

As a gesture of mutual willingness for our collaboration."

Autumn registered another heartless look. "You must go to decide wisely on my offer, as this

opportunity will only come once."

After thoroughly thinking about the offer, Roger uttered, "Alright, I am willing to serve you at your novelbin

command!"

Expecting the favorable answer from Roger to her irresistible deal, Autumn approached him in joy.

"First things first, kindly tell me what you want in return."

"I want..."

Roger managed to give Autumn his answer, "to be more popular than Rachel within the half year."

"Alright, that's a deal for us."

Autumn nodded to show her approval. "Now.....

Tell me, what did Rachel ask you to do?"

Roger was not hesitant to spill everything to Autumn. "I would be engaged with Rachel if I managed to

meet all the deeds she entrusted me to do. I would loose everything if I failed her.

"So you mean there was... an illicit relationship between you and Rachel." Autumn challenged Roger

with a question.

Roger was sheepish and disgraced at Autumn's question. "Yes, I had that type of relationship with

Rachel because it is important for my survival in Y City. To your knowledge, she is married with a middle-aged man named Edward Lu and she found him unsatisfied in bed. So Rachel depended on me regarding her pregnancy to acquire his husband's estate from Chris."

Autumn was shocked at the realization of Rachel's plan to win Edward's heart through her pregnancy. If

Rachel succeeded with her plans, Chris wouldn't be viable to inherit Edward's wealth.

"Let me clarify. Did Rachel ask you to stay with me while shooting my nude photos?"

Autumn curiously asked, "Why? What would it benefit her?"

Chapter 377 Let The Show Begin

Roger shrugged his shoulders with resignation. "I don't know what good it will do her," he said.

"She just told me what to do, but not once did she say why," he told Autumn. "I'm thinking she really hates you, so you better watch your back."

"I know," Autumn nodded in agreement. She stepped aside to make a phone call that would introduce Roger to TV production teams. Turning to Roger, she said, "Thank you for warning me about Rachel's ploy. To show my appreciation, I have hooked you up with two TV crews, for starters."

"Thank you very much, Miss Zhao!" Roger cried out in joy.

The directors of these two teams were quite well known. And Roger bagging a role in any of their

productions might just be the breakthrough he needed to become famous. So he could not thank

Autumn enough for the opportunity.

In a clipped tone, she said, "Call me Mrs. Lu."

Roger was slightly embarrassed about his behavior, seeing Autumn's serious demeanor.

But he quickly recovered, putting on a smile. "So Mrs. Lu, what do you want me to do next?" Roger

knew he owed Autumn a big favor and was determined to pay her back.

He suggested, "Do you want me to break up with Rachel and show her how mean I can be?"

"No, don't do that, " she replied. "It's more important now to get along with Rachel. Say yes to whatever

she asks of you. But remember, you must report all these to me. If you need my help, just let me know."

Then Autumn issued a warning. "You better not be playing games with me because I promise, you

won't like the consequences."

Roger was quick to assure Autumn that he would stick to his part of the bargain.

"We both know that a man being used cannot be suspected, in the same way a suspected man cannot

be used. Mrs. Lu, now that you have decided to cooperate with me, please believe I will not let you

down. Besides, how can I forget what you did? You introduced me to excellent TV crews!"

Flashing a smile, Roger continued, "By the way, I'll probably need your help tonight with some acting."

Curious, Autumn arched her brow.

"And what do you need me to do?" she asked.

Roger laid out the scenario.

"I've made Rachel believe you're interested in me romantically. So, she demanded that I asked you out to dinner tonight, " he began.

"She's been pushing me to do it, and I think if I fail to do that tonight, she'll drop me as her pawn."

Autumn thought about this for a moment then decided to go along with Roger's plan. "All right then.

Since I happen to be free this evening, you can make reservations for dinner."

It was time to show Rachel that Autumn was also a good actress. She would cooperate with Roger and wait for Rachel's reaction.

As Roger was about to leave, Autumn called out, "Wait! There's something else. Will you please let me know if she is really pregnant?"

Roger shrugged and replied, "I will do that."

Remembering their plan, he added, "I will send you a message by phone when and where dinner will be later. Shall I pick you up?"

"There's no need for you to do that. I'll go there myself, but thank you, " she politely refused.

She then escorted Roger to the elevator.

Isla was waiting when Autumn suddenly stepped in her office. She immediately got up, wasting no time in asking her friend about Roger. "What is wrong with you, Autumn?" she demanded. "You know very well that Roger is one of Rachel's people. And you do know that he has an axe to the grind with you, which is why he keeps coming on to you. Why do you keep entertaining him?!"

Next to her parents and Aron, Autumn was the most important person in Isla's life. She had to deal with Aron, who just lost his father and now had problems with his uncle. But she was also concerned about Autumn and didn't want her friend to get into trouble.

Seeing Isla's concern, Autumn assured her. "Take it easy."

Smiling a bit, she said, "I know what I'm doing, so don't worry. Okay?"

Still, Isla frowned at her friend.

"Seriously, Autumn, what are you planning?"

"Well, I've already told Roger I am aware of his relationship with Rachel. And I threatened, then tempted him, to help me. He agreed."

She patted Isla's arm. "I would rather get Roger on my side than have to keep an eye on Rachel all the time. This way, I will know immediately whatever she's up to."

Isla wanted to object.

But she admitted Autumn's plan made sense. Still, she remained distrustful of Roger.

"You know Roger. Can you trust someone like him?" Isla asked worriedly.

"Ahhh... but you don't know Roger, " Autumn told her friend.

After meeting the man several times, Autumn was finally able to read Roger clearly. Behind the glib and slick facade was a very ambitious man. And his goal was very clear: to be famous. This also happened to be his weakness.

Once a person's weakness was discovered, it became easy to control him. Roger was smart and shrewd and looked for people to help him achieve his goal. Knowing this, Autumn was not the slightest bit worried that Roger would betray her.

"Roger is shrewd. He's realized that it's not Rachel, but I, who can make him famous in just a short amount of time. That's why he will not deceive me, " she said confidently. "Besides, it's better to trust someone who is closest to the enemy."

Autumn added, "Now that I've decided to cooperate with him, I need to trust him. I think no one is better

equipped to help me deal with Rachel than Roger."

Isla let out a heavy sigh.

Despite being worried, she did support what Autumn was doing. "Just be careful and let me know if you need any help."

"Okay, stop worrying. It will be fine, " Autumn assured her friend.

She smiled at the thought that she was blessed to have a close friend who cared so much about her.

Shen then suddenly remembered and asked, "By the way, Isla, how is Aron these days?"

She mentally kicked herself for being too self-absorbed.

"Is he in a better mood?" Autumn knew the man had been problematic lately.

Isla shook her head. "No, he's still the same.

His father's death is quite a blow to him. He hasn't talked much lately. And he's often losing his temper.

I think it's a good thing his uncle's family is back. Maybe their presence would distract him a bit from his loss."

Isla tried to muster a smile. "But I know he'll be back to normal sooner or later. So there's nothing to worry about."

Autumn kept quiet for a moment, thinking about what Isla said.

Then she switched the topic and asked, "Has there been a verdict in Wendy and Yvonne's case?"

Isla replied, "No, not yet.

You have got to stop thinking about them, Autumn. It would be better to just concentrate on doing your job well and building a new life. Think of it this way, from now on they will no longer bother you."

Autumn sighed. "Yes, you're right, Isla."

Ever since she fainted which landed her in the hospital, Autumn had been trying to ignore the case, which caused a big stir in Y City. She would block discussions about the case. And she kept reminding herself that it was Wendy who killed her father, so she had to stop caring about the situation she was

in.

Still, Wendy was her mother and it was painful to witness the horrible things happening without being able to do anything. As a result, the ambivalent feelings were causing her nightmares.

Before leaving the office, Autumn called Charles to say she would not be having dinner at home. Then she drove to the restaurant where Roger made reservations. The place was nice, the surroundings pleasant, the decor very western. Roger had been waiting for a while when Autumn arrived. The moment he saw her, he stood up, gently pulled up a chair and sat her down. Handing her the menu, he said, "Order whatever you like."

Chapter 378 Causing Trouble

"You should order, " Autumn said in an uninteresting manner.

She then looked back to see if Rachel was there. Unable to find her, she looked at Roger and asked him quietly, "Where is Rachel?"

"She said she would come to have dinner with Edward.

Maybe she's just late." Roger shrugged. "She'll be here soon."

As soon as he finished talking, Rachel came in with Edward in tow, with their hands tightly intertwined.

Rachel felt particularly special as she walked in, more so when she spotted Autumn and Roger. With a

sly smile, she patted Edward's hand, feigned surprise and said, "Look! Charles' wife is over there!"

Upon hearing this, Edward turned to the direction where Autumn was. He could not see Roger's face,

who was sitting opposite to Autumn. Unsure whether the man with Autumn was Charles, he asked

calmly, "Why is she here?"

"Maybe she's having dinner with Charles. Let's greet them."

Rachel said softly while holding Edward's arm.

"It's totally unnecessary, " Edward protested coldly, his eyebrows slightly furrowed.

Even though his spat with Chris had already been resolved, there was still tension between him and

Charles. As such, he didn't think there was any reason to greet them, but Rachel still insisted.

"Edward, I know what you are thinking. Remember that Charles is Chris' brother. He has taken care of

her for many years and we should be thankful to him for doing that. It will be awkward if they see us

here without greeting them. Don't you think so?" she asked.

"Plus, we don't usually see him in Y City. Come on now, it won't take long. We'll leave right after

greeting them, " Rachel ushered, persuading Edward further.

"Well... Alright. As you wish, " Edward replied.

He felt Rachel's argument was reasonable enough so he walked with her over to meet Autumn.

However, upon reaching her, he realized that the man with her was not Charles.

"Miss Bai, what brings you here?"

Autumn asked Rachel, feigning surprise.

Autumn stood up and greeted her, "What a coincidence! Are you here for dinner?"

"Yes."

Smiling at Autumn, she then continued, "Edward and I are going to have dinner and I did not expect that I could meet you here. We come here to greet you because I thought you're with Charles. But.."

Rachel stopped speaking, glancing at Roger slyly.

'Roger must be a resourceful man. I didn't expect him to bring Autumn here successfully. Now that I am closer to my goal, I will completely destroy Autumn's life, ' Rachel thought to herself.

"Oh, I almost forgot to introduce you to Roger, " Autumn innocently said, even though she knew of

Rachel's plan.

"This is my friend Roger. He is a well-known star but not as popular as you, " Autumn said.

"Hello!"

Roger greeted them with a smile while reaching out his hand. "Wow! I did not expect that you two knew each other. I am actually your fan, " Roger said, acting as if Rachel was a stranger.

"Wow, really?"

Rachel replied casually while shaking Roger's hand. The three of them were clearly playing their part, as they all had their own plans.

Edward, however, felt it necessary to ask where Charles was. Glancing at Autumn, he asked, "Where is Charles? I haven't seen him."

Apparently, he misunderstood the nature of Rachel and Roger's relationship. Edward in any case still treated Charles as a family member, and could not bear to know Autumn might be cheating on him.

"Charles is very busy in his work recently. I called him a moment ago but he is still working overtime, "

Autumn replied calmly. She paused for a while and turned to Rachel. "Miss Bai, now that both of you are here to have dinner too, why don't you join us?"

Autumn invited them with excitement and a soft smile on her face, but Rachel declined her invitation.

Since she already accomplished her goal, she did not see any reason to stay. She only wanted Edward to think Autumn was cheating on Charles with Roger after all.

"We would love to but we have to go, " Rachel replied with a smile.

"Besides, we don't want to disturb you. Just enjoy your meal, " she added.

Turning back to Edward, Rachel softly said, "Edward, let's sit over there instead."

Edward acknowledged Rachel and then pointedly warned Autumn, "Whether your surname is Zhao or Ye, remember that your husband is Charles. I would not let you go once I find out that you have done something wrong to him."

"I called Charles before I went here so you don't have to worry, uncle Edward. Our relationship is going strong and I would never forget that I am his wife. There is really nothing to worry about. I guess you should just mind your own business, "

Autumn replied with confidence.

Edward smirked, walking away in disbelief. "What the hell is Charles doing? He should be watching over his wife!" Edward exclaimed while holding the menu on his hand.

"Edward, this is none of our business. Let it be, " Rachel said, acting indifferent while browsing the

menu.

"I told Charles before when he wanted to marry Autumn that she seemed suspicious. See? It turns out that what I thought about her is right! She is even dating another man now, " Rachel maliciously implied.

"Actually, I know Roger very well. He is a known gigolo in the entertainment circle. I was surprised to see her dating him despite his involvement in someone else's marriage. And to think, Autumn and Charles just got married recently!" Rachel further added.

"Do you think they are really having an affair?"

Rachel pointedly asked Edward.

Edward, however, felt unsure how to answer.

"They must be. Right?" Rachel calmly claimed.

"Edward, Charles is your nephew and the Lu family has a notable reputation. Do not let your family's name suffer a scandal, " she said.

"I think you'd better warn Charles or else this woman will bring shame to his entire family."

"I understand. I know what to do, " Edward said solemnly.

"Don't worry. I will definitely talk to him."

When Rachel and Edward left, Roger remained puzzled and surprised at the same time. "Mrs. Lu, I did not expect Rachel to be deceived by you since she herself is a cunning woman, " he told Autumn.

"You know that I have no choice, " Autumn said defensively.

"Well, we should leave now that we have completed this task, " she added.

"I am afraid not. There is still one more thing to do, " Roger said.

Looking annoyed, he told Autumn, "Rachel just sent me a message and asked me to send you back."

"That's ridiculous!"

Hearing this, Autumn frowned and asked, "Why would she do that? I drove here myself."

"I have no idea, "

Roger replied, embarrassed. "If she is asking me to do that, this must mean she is determined to falsely accuse you, so..." he surmised.

"Oh, I understand what she's trying to do. Well then, please send me back, " Autumn replied with a smirk.

She could not wait to find out what Rachel had planned.

Chapter 379 An Affectionate Daughter

Moments after Roger and Autumn left, Rachel sent Charles a message telling him to keep close watch

on Autumn, only to be rebuked. Rachel, then burning with rage and hatred, made a suggestion to

Edward, "You have not met Chris in a long time, I suppose. So I am wondering why we don't go to see

her right after dinner. I do miss her during this long absence."

"This sounds like a good plan to me." Edward nodded in approval after hesitating for a moment. He

wanted to check if Chris was fine by taking the advantage of telling Charles something about Autumn.

As Roger could not sense anything strange waiting for them at the entrance of Dream Garden when he

escorted Autumn back, he expressed his doubt, "I expected Rachel to ask Mr. Lu to wait here

anticipating your arrival. I wonder what she is planning if not this..."

"That move is way too obvious. I told Charles all about our scheme including this dinner with you this

evening. It is a waste of Rachel's time for her to warn Charles. This explains why Charles would not be

here waiting for me." Autumn gave Roger a reassuring smile and said, "It is kind of you to play your

role today in this charade. I must go home now but please do bear our plan in your mind."

"Mrs. Lu, I extend you my complete support and cooperation in this well devised plan." Roger pledged, standing outside her house, with sincerity, "It would be pointless for Rachel to challenge you, as I know how powerful and resolute you are. I would not ever consider getting myself tangled in a mess with you at any cost."

Autumn immediately turned complacent. As she entered home, Autumn found Chris sitting in the cozy sofa and casually eating a plate of fruit. At the sight of Autumn, Chris motioned her to share the fruit in a friendly manner, "Autumn, please enjoy these cherries which are so very sweet. They have arrived fresh via air parcel from America. It is all thanks to Sam's kindness."

"Sam, it appears, is trying to impress, pamper and woo you at every level." Autumn laughed, but Chris blushed with embarrassment. "Autumn, please do not tease me like this."

"I am simply telling you the truth as I see it!" Autumn added as she observed Chris' shy face flush pink,

"Well, I will spare you this time only because you requested so nicely."

"Autumn, where is my elder brother? I have not seen him all day." Chris frowned at absence of Charles.

"I have not seen him in a while too. I wonder where he is caught up..."

"Charles is busy running his company affairs right now and wants to complete some projects as soon

as possible. We have decided to leave for vacation next week irrespective of anything else." Autumn could not hide her happiness just at the thought of her birthday gift, a trip with Charles. Chris too sensed her satisfaction. "My elder brother should have given you a surprise honeymoon in the beginning of your marriage itself, but better late than never, right?"

Autumn replied with a warm and optimistic smile. All of a sudden, Autumn, recalled the matter Roger brought to her attention, and with that she expressed her concern, "Chris, how is the matter.. I brought to your attention now?"

Autumn began to talk with Chris about the matter carefully in soft whispers as she feared the servants would overhear and learn about the entire thing.

"What is it?" Chris asked rather casually despite noticing Autumn's soft tone.

"It is..." Autumn whispered to Chris, "Earlier I had suggested you should ask Edward to transfer a portion of his properties to you. How is that going?"

Chris finally realized what Autumn was referring to in such hushed tones and replied to Autumn, "I have not done that yet."

Chris spat a core and explained to Autumn, "Actually I have no interest in acquiring his properties irrespective of the reason. Moreover, he did make an official statement confirming my share in his properties. With that said it is rather unnecessary for me to press this matter. Autumn, is anything going on that I should be aware of?"

"In my opinion... You had better get on this quickly and finish it." Autumn continued in a calm tone, "So here's the truth, Rachel is trying to get pregnant in order to win Edward's trust, love and attention, all in bid to possess Edward's whole estate. You will lose the gamble, if you decide to just wait and watch your life unfurl."

"Autumn, this is simply impossible!" Chris expressed her disbelief, "Edward is just too old to get Rachel pregnant!"

"Maybe... Rachel would not care even if it is a bastard." Autumn tried to hint at Rachel's ploy to Chris, who then realized her intentions...

"It is obscene for her to even think of doing such a thing. Autumn, how did you learn about Rachel's plan?" Chris asked Autumn in bewilderment.

"You can rest assured as I support you unsparingly." Autumn found it unnecessary to tell Chris all about

her collaboration with Roger, to avoid disclosure.

"I believe you." Chris announced her trust on Autumn. 'After learning of her devious plans, Rachel..

Rachel..is more treacherous and cunning than I could possibly ever imagine, ' Chris thought to herself

as she worried for Edward.

She found it to be her responsibility to thwart Rachel's evil plans from taking form.

Chris then immediately called up Edward, "Dad, where are you? I hope to see you right now."

"What is going on? I was hoping to meet you too, as it has been too long since our parting." Edward

was amazed at telepathy between Chris and him, and he felt like they were finally connecting.

"Well, I wait gladly for your arrival." Chris hung up and became anxious. "Autumn, please tell me how I

should talk this over with Edward."

Autumn tried to conceive of a perfect plan but in vain. She then reassured Chris, "Please go with a

calm and composed mind, and just act as you see fit in the moment."

They had to act according to what the circumstance called for.

Within a few minutes, the arrival of Edward and Rachel was announced. Rachel showered Chris with

courtesies, "Long time no see. I have brought you some fruits and cakes. I hope you will like them."

"Thank you!" Chris dismissed Rachel's zealous front with a contemptuous glance. She then held

Edward's hands affectionately and said, "Dad, I missed you so much."

Edward's heart melted upon hearing Chris's lovely voice. He considered it a blessing to have such a

loving daughter. He felt a gush of gratitude wash over him.

"I lost no time in coming here to see you, my beloved daughter." Edward doted on Chris, though he

was a bad lot by nature.

"Dad, I always have you in my mind," Chris said with a girlish charm to Edward.

Edward pinched Chris' nose playfully and requested, "Why don't you stay with me for a few days to

dispel my loneliness and brighten up my days?"

"How could you possibly feel so lonely in my company?" Rachel protested playfully to join the

conversation, as she smiled.

"I prefer and cherish Chris' company more than yours." Edward replied with a smile, "As the saying

goes, 'A daughter is thought to be her father's first love.'"

Chapter 380 Misunderstood A Good Intention

Rachel put all efforts to ensure her expressions defy her emotions and thoughts. Internally, she was

dying of jealousy, but she could not afford letting her anger reflect on her face let alone her actions.

After all, Chris was Edward's biological daughter. If Rachel expressed animosity towards Chris, Edward might blatantly favor and defend Chris. If she lost Edward's trust and lost his favor, she wouldn't be able to get any money from him.

Chris was sitting right next to Edward when she suddenly heaved a heavy sigh. Edward anxiously asked her, "What's the matter? Everything is okay, isn't it? Your sigh has scared me."

"I am particularly worried..." Chris took a big breath before she explained, "I have a stepmother now. If she gives birth to some babies, will you still cherish and love me with the same veracity as now? After all I am only your daughter. Your son might grow to be more important. Besides, I am not living with you. It's only natural for you to ignore me in the future. You will provide for that child, watch him grow and guide him. How could you not love him more?"

Edward's face darkened as he heard Chris' concern, he had not considered this scenario earlier.

Rachel laughed and tried to jump in again, "Chris, thank you for your gentle reminder. Edward, why don't we have a child? He will be cute and handsome. He will also have Chris as his elder sister to

guide him..."

"Just shut your trap!" Edward snapped at Rachel furiously, as he frowned in contemplation, "I am too old to have a baby. If you want a child, then go and have a baby all by yourself. I do not share dreams of such a future with you!"

Edward's ruthless refusal astounded Rachel. It took her quite a while to gulp her pride and get past the shock. The moment she returned to reality, the words escaped her mouth before she realized what she was saying, "Why are you so angry at me all the time? I was just thinking about it and expressed it aloud."

Edward looked at Rachel with a cold stare to intimidate her and warned, "Don't even think about it anymore..."

Upon seeing Rachel's gloomy expression, Chris felt excited and proud of what she had accomplished. But she was confused by Edward's attitude and reaction. She did not expect him to act so harshly and treat her with such rudeness. 'They are newlyweds. Shouldn't he be happy if Rachel gives birth to a son? Why... is he so unwilling to even consider it let alone talking about it?'

Before Chris could try to figure out the reason for Edward's abnormal hostility, Edward started to

console her, "Don't worry. You will be my only child all my life. I can't bear to share the love I have for you with anyone else..."

"Thank you for your warm assurance, Father." Chris replied as she flung herself into Edward's arms.

Rachel looked utterly bewildered by Edward's reaction. She pondered over the matter, 'Even though Edward clearly said he did not want a baby, I am sure he will be excited if I get pregnant.'

"Good girl! If you have time, please come to my house and stay for a couple of days. I really hope you could spend some time with me, " Edward said with an optimistic smile. Chris answered awkwardly, "I am afraid I can't do so."

"But why?" inquired Edward.

"Grandpa and I have some plans. Tomorrow we will be officially signing some paperwork. He is transferring his shares of the Shining Company over to me, so ... I will be as busy as a bee over the next few days. I will definitely take you up on your offer once my schedule frees up a little." Chris sincerely apologized.

Upon hearing how much his brother cared and loved his daughter, Edward felt it was time for him to

shower some love on Chris as well. He then eagerly said, "I will also call my lawyer and ask him to prepare documents at the earliest so that I can transfer my property in your name. It will be done soon.

You will marry with a mammoth dowry which will safeguard and cement your future."

"Father, there is no need for such a huge gesture, " Chris refused repeatedly, but Edward insisted nonetheless. Chris was pretending and was internally happy simply because she didn't want her father to be cheated by Rachel.

Right at this moment, Rachel began to regret her suggestion to visit with Edward.

She glanced at Autumn who was sitting nearby and pulled Edward by the sleeve. "Edward, don't forget the other purpose of our visit, " she reminded Edward gently.

"What purpose is she referring to?" Chris asked curiously.

Edward couldn't see Charles in the lobby or in the vicinity, so he asked with wrinkled forehead,

"Nothing. Chris, where is your brother?"

"He has not come back yet." Literally seconds after her response did the door open. It was Charles.

After a short pause upon seeing all the people in the lobby, he asked, "Why are you here?"

"You've come exactly at the right moment. I have something important to discuss with you." Edward

rose to his feet and in a secretive tone said, "Let's go out for a small talk."

"Okay, let us go someplace else, " Charles didn't know what had happened and what Edward wanted to talk about, but he nodded after a moment's consideration and followed Edward out. It was freezing and windy outside. Charles lit a cigarette and asked, "Go ahead. What is this concerning?"

"You ... Why did you come back so late today?" Edward didn't get to the point directly. Instead he asked about Charles' quitting time. He decided to beat around the bush before jumping to the point.

Charles sneered, "There are a lot of things to handle with. I have been working overtime these days.

It's cold outside. Why don't we cut right to it?"

Edward stopped the polite conversation and jumped the gun, "I am warning you, don't forget to show care and love for your wife. If she cheats on you, you will lose face in the society."

"You are not making any sense. What are you trying to get at?" Charles suddenly recalled the message he received from Rachel, so he explained unhappily, "Did Rachel tell you about this? Don't believe everything you hear and especially rumors. Autumn and I are close to each other and very much in love."

"I am warning you only for your welfare." Edward scowled at him and tried to substantiate on his advice. "I saw her having supper with a cute guy with my own eyes."

"So, how does that matter?" Charles responded with confidence. It was luck that Autumn had told him about the meeting earlier itself, or else maybe he would have suspected her over nothing. He thought to himself, 'Damn Rachel! You are always trying to stir up trouble for us! You also married Edward, then why can't you move forward and stay away from Autumn and me.' Charles didn't want Edward to question Autumn's character, so he explained patiently, "I know that man. Before Autumn went out for dinner, she asked for my permission. Is there any problem?"

"Why are you so stubborn and blind towards what is happening around you?" Edward was getting annoyed with Charles' naive foolishness. He shouted, "If she has an affair with that man, will she let you know?"

"Did you see them holding hands or kissing or engaging in any inappropriate behavior? Why are so eager to make me think she is adulterous." Charles rejected his suggestions solemnly, "She is my wife. Why would I marry her if I didn't trust her?"

Charles added with a poker face, "Since you clearly have a lot of time on your hands, pay more

attention on your relationship with Rachel. Stop meddling in my domestic affairs. I know how to make my relationship work."

"You ..." Charles' obstinacy was really ticking Edward off. "You, ungrateful man! I will change my family name if I say anything about your family anymore, " said Edward, shaking with rage.

"That's exactly what I expected!" Charles responded with a sneer.

The moment Charles and Edward entered the house back, Edward yelled at Rachel from the corner,

"Let's go right now. We are not welcome here, never were."

"What happened?" Rachel asked him with a frown. She thought, 'I set a trap so that Edward would see

Autumn having supper with Roger. After all, Charles would rather trust Edward's words over mine. It

seems Charles wasn't convinced even by him. Edward looked furious, so he must be enraged by

Charles's reaction.'

"Stop asking questions and just hurry up! We are leaving right this instant, " Edward said and walked

towards the door, holding Rachel's hand. When they passed Chris, Edward restrained his anger and

said, "Chris, I am leaving. When you are free, do come and visit me."

He swore that he would never set foot into the Dream Garden in future.

In his opinion, Charles misunderstood his intentions, so there was no need to come here out of his way to protect his honor and embarrass himself.

"Father, why don't take some rest and have a chat with me?" Chris tried to stop Edward, but he shook novelbin

her hand off. Edward said, "No. I am leaving. I will pay you a visit some other time and place."