

Wedded Bride 521

Chapter 521 Leila Is Back

"Come on, David. I know this is not the case." Charles smiled and added, "You just said you and Alice still had time to spend together, but actually it's been a long time since your last date with her. Am I right? You've been serving as my assistant for so many years, and I do care about your personal life."

David stood in front of Charles with his head hung downwards. He was speechless out of embarrassment.

Charles heaved a sigh and said, "She has been through a tough time. She is badly in need of help. She has to take care of a three-year-old boy and she needs this job to provide her some income to support both of them."

"What?" David was completely taken aback when Charles said that Leila had a son. He asked, "Do you mean that Leila got married?"

"I don't know whether she got married or not." Charles added, "All I know is that she has a three-year-old son. And no company is ready to give her an opportunity because she has a son to look after.

Companies usually take this as a liability to appoint a single mother who has no support system. As an old employee of this company, I felt it is my responsibility to help her out. Moreover, she had been very

efficient in her work. So it would be good for the company to have her back."

David could not believe that Charles was ready to forget her misconducts in the past. "But... Have you forgotten how she treated Mrs. Lu in such a devious way. How can you forgive her?" David arched his brow as he asked Charles.

It was true that Charles hated her for what she did to Autumn several years ago. But he had thought about it and after much consideration decided to forgive her. It had been over three years since Autumn had disappeared. Charles felt it was time to let the bygone be bygone and start afresh.

After Autumn disappeared, Charles had very little interest in his own life. Maybe if he could help anybody who was in need, he could ease a bit of his own pain.

"To be honest, I hated her when I came to know about what she had done to Autumn." Charles smiled and explained to David, "But it all happened in the past, so many years ago. Autumn has disappeared for several years and I think it's time I should let go of the hatred."

Charles looked at David who was patiently listening to him and said, "All you need to do is to take her as a common colleague. And after so many years in between, who knows, she might have changed for

good. What is the harm of giving her a second chance? Don't you think so?"

David nodded his head in approval to Charles' words. He felt Charles was justified in being considerate towards Leila's son. Hence, he decided to do according to Charles' request, not so much for Leila but for her poor son.

"Okay then. As you please. Now I need to go back to work if there is nothing I can do here," David heaved a sigh and said to Charles.

The moment David came back to his work station, Alice walked up to him and asked him, "What happened? What did Mr. Lu tell you?"

"Nothing special." David's eyes automatically roved over Leila who was busy working. Somehow, he could not trust her. Even though Charles had told him that she had changed over the years, it sounded too good to be true for someone like Leila.

Upon seeing Alice's eyes full of concern, he pacified her and said, "Don't worry. Mr. Lu didn't blame me."

Alice heaved a sigh and felt reassured upon hearing his words.

Soon later, Leila came for David with a file. She said politely, "David, there are two terms that I don't understand. Can you explain them for me?"

"What are they?" David scanned the file and began explaining them to Leila. Leila nodded her head

frequently and exclaimed to David, "I have never expected the terms about our industry have changed so much during the three years of my absence."

David smiled and said, "Yes, it changes rapidly and you have a lot to learn."

"Thank you." Leila could sense the sarcasm in David's voice. There was in fact, hardly anyone in the

office who had respect for Leila. But this time she was here with a completely different motive that

needed her to be focused on it. So she ignored any harsh words uttered by David and pretended to be

completely sincere. "I know I did many things wrong in the past so you disliked me. But I have changed

a lot in the past three years and I only want to work hard now. I hope you can forgive me. Let's rebuild

our relationship and start afresh. I will prove to you that I am a changed person now."

"You don't need to prove anything to me." David sounded indifferent as he spoke to Leila.

"No, I should do that." Leila sounded repentant about her past misconducts. Leila gave a bitter smile

and said, "I feel so sorry for what I did before. I owe you an apology for the trouble I caused to you."

"Fine. Never mind," David said promptly to just stop talking with Leila as fast as he could. David hated

Leila from the core of his heart. Therefore, no matter what she said or did now, he knew that she was simply faking it. However since she was displaying so much of repentance, David thought it would be appropriate to give her a piece of advice. He frowned and said to Leila, "I learnt that you are a mother now. So no matter what you do in future, please consider it clearly. I just hope you set up a good example for your son to follow."

Leila didn't expect David to distrust her even after she said so much to him. Her face became dark.

She almost lost her cool but refrained her emotion finally. She had worked very hard to come back to this office. This was the first hurdle that she had just crossed. She still had a long way to go before she reached her goal. She couldn't be bogged down with trivial people like David.

She would not spare him after she became Charles's wife.

"I will." She gulped the lump in her throat as she spoke. She gave a fake smile and said, "I need to go back to work now."

"Okay," David said indifferently. Now that he couldn't drive her out of the company, he could only watch over her carefully to see what her real intention was.

At noon, David and Alice went out for lunch together. Alice asked him curiously, "I just heard you say

that Leila has a son now. Is that true?"

"Yes, it's true." David's eyes narrowed down and he frowned slightly as he said, "Mr. Lu told me that her son is three years old now, but I don't know who is the boy's father."

"Hum... Maybe he is Mr. Lu's son?" Alice just uttered the words impulsively but then contemplated on the likeliness of her wild guess being true. David on the other hand was completely taken aback by her statement and could not help but give her a slap on her shoulder.

He completely negated the idea as he arched his brow and said to Alice, "What nonsense are you talking? How could it be possible for Mr. Lu to be the kid's father?" He asked in a rather scolding manner as if to shun the very thought of it.

"I was just guessing randomly." Alice touched her shoulder and caressed the area that was slapped by David. Then she continued in a serious voice, "Let's think about it clearly. The kid is three years now and that means Leila was pregnant before she was fired from Shining Company. I even remember that she had no boyfriend back then..."

Alice's analysis sounded reasonable and it sent a chill down David's spine. He shuddered by the

thought of it.

"Okay, enough. Stop guessing! Let's have lunch now." David didn't want to think more about this issue

and decided to put an end to the topic for the time being.

Leila was sitting alone in the secretary's office of Shining Company. When Alice and David were going

to have lunch, Alice invited her to join them, but she cast a glimpse at the closed door of Charles' office

and rejected with a smile, "No, thanks. I don't want to be the third wheel when you are dating. I have

some unfinished task and I will go once I finish it."

Leila just needed to be left alone in Charles's office. The excuse of work was just to avoid Alice's

invitation. Hence, she decided to stay back because Charles hadn't left his office and waited for him on

purpose. Every moment in this office was important for her. More so when Charles was in the office.

She had a long way to go. She had to win back his confidence... her real unfinished work! She really

needed to focus!

Chapter 522 Are You Free Tonight

After Alice and David left for lunch, Leila sat in the secretarial room alone. She was typing something in

her computer. She pretended to focus on work while all her attention was towards Charles's room. She

could see the door from the corner of her eyes and eagerly waited for it to open. The door did not open

until half an hour later.

Leila straightened her spine with the sound of the door. She hastened her fingers on the keyboard and dug her eyes into the screen to make herself look busy. She did not ever look up at Charles as he walked out of his room.

The secretarial room had a transparent glass that separated it from Charles's room so he could see that Leila was working diligently. When he saw her sitting alone in her cubicle, he asked, "Why didn't you go with them for lunch?"

"Mr. Lu," a shocked Leila stood up abruptly as she heard from Charles. Charles could not help observing the striking change in Leila's attitude. The fiery and desperate girl had sobered down to be a responsible mother. Rather reserved, Leila looked at Charles and replied, "They are all busy with their work through out the day and seldom get any time to date. I don't want to come in between them. More

importantly, I still have some documents to read. As the proverb goes, 'a slow sparrow has to make an early start.' I am just trying to catch up."

Leila was more optimistic than before. She could already see empathy for her in Charles's eyes. Hence

she curbed her aggressive nature and pretended to be genuine. For her, just a small step back for a giant leap she was planning to take. She had learned to make concessions in order to gain advantages from Charles. In this way, she believed that he would take the initiative to get close to her sooner or later.

"It is difficult to work with an empty belly. You have to eat," Charles said with a frown. He stared at her and said, "Let's go and eat something. Even I am hungry."

As he finished his words, he asked her to get up from her seat and stepped ahead before she could react. Leila got up from her seat obediently and followed him as he walked out of the office. Though Leila couldn't help but chuckled herself inwardly, she did not let her excitement come on her face.

Charles walked her to a nearby restaurant that he had visited often with Autumn. After Autumn's disappearance, Charles became a frequent visitor of this restaurant. It was not only the dishes in this restaurant that suited Charles's taste and platter. He had some priceless memories with Autumn in this restaurant. Whenever he came here, he felt as if Autumn had never left. She was still there right beside him.

After a long time Charles visited this restaurant with someone else. Usually, he ordered for himself so he ordered his preferred menu. Today, as they sat down, he handed over the menu card to Leila going by the ladies first etiquette. He said to her, "Look it through. You can order any dishes you want."

Leila smiled softly and obliged by ordering two dishes. "Is this your girlfriend?" blurted the banquet manager all of a sudden. The manager looked at Charles with speculative eyes and smiled as he asked. Leila was surprised to see how an outsider asked such a personal question to Charles.

Even Charles could not help but express his awkwardness with a frown. The banquet manager knew him very well since he was a frequent visitor of his restaurant. He came here often for dinner and ordered the same dish.

He knew that Charles visited this restaurant to miss his wife. The manager was really moved by this gesture. He could not believe how a man could be so much in love with his wife who went missing. He was amazed to see that such love existed even to this day!

The manager thought Charles had decided to let it go and move forward as he saw Leila was here with him today. Secretly, even he was happy by the thought that Charles was considering moving ahead with another woman.

Upon hearing the words, Charles showed his displeasure with a knitted eye brow as he stared back at the manager. Leila tried to cover up the embarrassment and explained promptly, "No, no. You have misunderstood. I am not his girlfriend but just one of his subordinates."

"Oh, really?" The manager spoke as his face turned red with embarrassment. He took a quick glimpse at Charles and apologized, "I am extremely sorry. I shouldn't have misunderstood you. Well, I will go and place the order for you. The dishes will be served soon and please wait for a moment."

"Okay. Thank you," Leila returned politely with a smile. The manager vanished out of their sight as fast as he could. It amused Leila to see how he fled to cover up the awkwardness. She thought to her mind, 'Thank you for your misunderstanding Mr. Manager. These are the small things that will make Mr. Lu to consider taking me as a wife.' However, on the face, she carried an innocent smile and said to Charles, "Mr. Lu, I am sure the manager was startled by your serious expression just now. Look how he just stumbled away."

Leila chuckled as she spoke.

Charles maintained the same frown on his face and replied, "Leila, in fact there is no need for you to

explain it to him..."

Smiling at Charles, Leila responded as if she was an understanding woman, "I thought it was appropriate to explain it to the manager. After all you are just my superior. And I know that you don't like to be misunderstood."

The somber expression on Charles's face did not change even after Leila explained to him. He became silent and said nothing. Leila was right. He did not like to be misunderstood by anyone, but he still felt that there was no need to give an explanation to a manager of a restaurant.

Charles was truly sympathetic towards Leila for her present situation. No matter what she might have done before, he could not deny the fact that she was an able employee. He was genuinely concerned for her. He was just afraid that Leila would be too exhausted because of the long hours at work, and that was why he invited her to dine together. As he kept thinking about all this he became quiet and remained like that for a very a long time. His prolonged silence made the moment awkward.

Anxious yet embarrassed, Leila was eager to strike a conversation with Charles, but she was unable to speak. They sat facing each other without exchanging a single word. Charles was completely lost in his thoughts.

Fortunately, the banquet manager happened to step in once again. He served them the dishes and even gave them a complimentary dish which provided a chance for him to start the conversation to Charles. "This is also one of the specialty dishes of our restaurant and it is complimentary for you. I am sorry to have misunderstood you. I hope you don't mind. Enjoy your meal," said the banquet manager politely and walked away.

Leila took a bite of the food and exclaimed, "Wow, it tastes good."

Leila looked around and checked the ambiance of the restaurant. Indeed, this was not a luxury restaurant. Rather it looked very ordinary like just a run off the mill snack bar. Leila grinned and said, "I didn't expect that you would like to eat in such an ordinary restaurant though the food here is really good."

"Isn't it a good place?" Charles asked. He smiled as he recalled the days when he dined out with Autumn. They would just stop by any roadside stall and savor new dishes. The very thought about the good old days spent with Autumn brought a smile on his face. Indeed if you were in a good company, the ambiance of the place did not matter as much. So many priceless moments flashed through his

mind.

He continued to smile as he recalled the past. Leila watched him smiling and understood that he must be missing Autumn. She interrupted him and asked, "Mr. Lu, you look so happy. What make you so cheerful?"

"Oh, it's nothing. I just remembered something from the past." His face changed as he walked back from his trance to the reality. And slowly the smile on his face faded away. Leila noticed how his world started and ended with Autumn even after she did not physically present with him. The years of separation had only made the love to grow in his heart. Now it had become a cocoon for him that he was so very happy to be in.

Strangely for Charles, he did not savor the food as much as he did when he ate alone. Perhaps it was because he did not order the usual stuff that he was used to. He just ended up after taking a few bites.

"Mr. Lu, how come you are eating so less? It looks like you are already done." Leila looked at Charles's eyes and waited for his response. Charles had never been a scanty eater as far as she remembered. She was minutely noticing the changes in him.

"Yes, I am full. Never mind. You can enjoy your meal," Charles replied indifferently but politely.

"Mr. Lu..." Leila remained silent for a while and asked, "Did you often come here with Autumn before?"

With a lot of hesitation, Leila brought up Autumn. Perhaps it was not the right time yet. But she had to get to the depth of the matter. She needed to figure out the reason why he loved Autumn so much.

"Yes, I always dined with her in this restaurant." Charles nodded his head and continued, "Autumn liked to eat at these small restaurants. Though these places look ordinary, but surprisingly, the food in these restaurants tastes very good. I often came here with her before since it is close to my company." One of rarest qualities that Autumn had was to find out something special out of ordinary things. This quality of hers made her so different from the rest.

If it weren't for Autumn, Charles would have never dined at such a small place. And that of course meant that he would have missed lots of delicacies that he happened to explore during his dining encounters with Autumn.

In this respect, Autumn played an important role in bringing about many changes in his life.

In these years since she disappeared, Charles explored many such roadside food joints that offered delicious food at a very low cost. He loved to dine in these places. He had decided that he would take

Autumn to dine at these places if he could see her again someday. The very mention of Autumn and assuming her possible presence in his life gave Charles the impetus to get along with his life even if it came with an 'ever-again' tag.

"It sounds so romantic. I really didn't expect you to condescend to eat in such an inconspicuous place," Leila replied diplomatically. Her eyes narrowed down with jealousy. She realized that even if she achieved her goal to get married to Charles, she would never be able to take Autumn's place in his heart. And the very thought of it stung deep into her heart like a needle. Leila felt the overpowering shadow of Autumn over her head even though she was not physically present. It only made her go green with jealousy.

"You just said the food at these places always tastes good. Mr. Lu, I have a presumptuous request," said Leila with a smile. Charles looked up at Leila and was quite surprised to find her staring at him motionlessly.

"What is it?" Charles asked sounding rather confused and skeptical about what could be in her mind.

"Don't be so anxious, Mr. Lu." Leila looked into his anxious eyes and gave a reassuring smile. She then continued, "Mr. Lu, do you remember you promised me to dine out with me when I left your company

several years back?"

"Yes, I still remember it," said Charles while nodding his head slightly. He could remember his promise, but after that so many things happened one after another, no one took the initiative to mention it and it was left unsettled. "Why do you mention it now?" asked Charles.

"Mr. Lu..." Leila hesitated for a while and then spoke in a soft voice, "Are you free tonight?" She finally spoke her heart out to Charles. He stared at him with a very hopeful expression in her eyes. However, to her disappointment, Charles shook his head slightly and declined her invitation politely, "Thank you, but I am occupied tonight."

Chapter 523 The BM Corporation

Leila didn't mind that Charles had made an appointment with Aron and his wife; she knew she still had enough time to achieve her plan.

Charles allowed his employees to get off early from work that night. That was good news for David and Alice, as they could really use some quality time together. Their plans were already set: have dinner early and watch a good comedy movie.

Leila, on the other hand, didn't care much for the time off. She gave Charles an appreciating smile and

continued on with her work. As David went to start off his car, Alice had cleared up her desk and was getting ready to leave, when she saw Leila still in her chair. Surprised, Alice sat her coat down, and approached Leila inquiring, "How come you're still here?"

"I have a few more tasks left to finish, but I won't be much longer either," answered Leila politely. "You go ahead; don't worry about me." She then forced a quick smile and went back to handling her files.

"Do you need help?" asked Alice slightly concerned. She remembered there was a kid waiting for Leila at home. Perhaps if she could help her finish her work faster, Leila could go home sooner to be with her son.

Leila, however, wasn't too keen on getting any help. She smiled at Alice once more and then replied, "That's ok. I can handle them. This is a good opportunity for you and David to spend a relaxing evening together; don't waste your time here with me. I've got this."

"But don't you have your kid at home waiting?" wondered Alice, now even more surprised by her refusal. She was genuine in her offer to help and couldn't understand why Leila wouldn't take her up on it. So she insisted, "Your son is very young, right? You should go home early and take care of him. I can help you; it's no problem for me."

As if awoken from a trance, Leila immediately raised her eyes towards the wall clock and

exclaimed, "Oh, no! I have to go pick him up from school. I'll just take these files home."

"Okay, then," replied Alice relieved. She was quite glad that Leila wasn't going to spend more time at

the office. "Bring your son here some day; I'd like to meet him," she added encouragingly.

"Okay, I will," replied Leila with half a smile. As soon as Alice left, she started packing up the folders

that she needed to bring home with her.

If it weren't for the kid, she wouldn't leave work until after Charles did. But she didn't want to be too late

to pick up Charlie.

A sudden feeling of guilt started to overcome her since she had only been doing the strictly necessary

at work. Leila wasn't giving it her all those days and Charles deserved more. Interrupting her thoughts,

Charles opened up his office door all ready to leave.

He was impressed to see Leila there. "Are you still working?" he asked on a pleasantly surprised tone.

"I just had a few tasks left. I would have stayed and finished them, but I'm going to be late to pick up my

son. I will sort out all the files you need for tomorrow's meeting, though. No worries." Her answer was

confident. She was going to do as promised no matter what it took.

Charles nodded lightly and then asked her, "How about I give you a lift?"

"No need... thank you," she replied gratefully. As much as she would have liked to get a ride with

Charles, she didn't think it was appropriate to do so at that hour. "I can take the subway; it's really

convenient," she continued explaining herself.

"Ok. Be careful on your way there though. I'm going to go now. See you tomorrow!" It was almost time

for his dinner with Aron and Isla; he didn't want to be late, so he left right away.

Isla had made the dinner reservation much in advance. This was something they did every year. She

and Aron were really close to Charles. Not only did his firm often collaborate with Lighten House

Company, but also Isla had been managing Cloud Advertising Company for Charles as well.

It was an extremely hot July day; even after dawn, the heat was permeating the air. As soon as he got

inside the car, Charles loosened his collar and turned on the air conditioner to the max. Fortunately, his

car was powerful enough and the temperature cooled off quickly.

The ventilation system at the restaurant, however, was having a hard time cooling the locale off to a

comfortable temperature; so everyone there was a bit irritated. The cold drink orders were pouring in, but even those didn't feel cold enough.

Isla and Aron had arrived there early and were wiping off their sweat from their foreheads when

Charles got inside. As soon as he stepped foot through the door, his leg was captured and hugged tightly by a tiny little being.

He held her up immediately and asked in a soft tone, "Did you miss me?"

"Yes, I did!" she replied eagerly. She had indeed missed him. She stretched out her hand, and, counting each finger, she said, "Yesterday, the day before yesterday and the day before that... I've missed you for so many days!"

Charles smiled tenderly at the innocent expression on the little girl's face. He had missed her too.

"Amanda, give Charles some space to breathe. It's already really hot in here," said Isla assertively to her daughter. Amanda was only two years old and quite a handful. She had gotten very close to

Charles but, at the same time, unusually cold towards her father. Aron was struggling with that. He had tried his best to win his daughter's heart by doing whatever she wanted, but his efforts still remained highly unappreciated.

"No!" stated Amanda loud and clear in response to her mom's request. Isla gave her a serious look and was about to argue with her, when Amanda's face suddenly turned sad. She sniffed and pretended to start crying. In response, Charles intervened by saying, "It's all right. I want to hold her for a while."

Charles absolutely loved his sworn daughter. He always bought her lots of toys every time he would meet her, and this time was no exception.

Excited to show her the new toy, Charles sat on the ground with Amanda in his lap, while emptying out his bag. Seeing that, Isla got teary-eyed.

"Why are you crying?" Aron asked her. It was mostly a rhetorical question, as he knew what was in her heart. Autumn was her best friend, and Isla wished she was there with Charles and Amanda. The thought of her death had left a void in her heart.

"I'm fine," she attempted to divert his question while rubbing her eyes. However, too many tears had accumulated and Isla was having a hard time hiding her sadness. She knew Charles was still hurting, too.

If Autumn was still there, Charles would have a family now. The way he laughed and played with

Amanda showed he would have been a good father. Amanda could have had a playmate, too.

"Darling, stop crying," Aron said trying to comfort her. He pulled her close and continued cheering her up, "He is happy with Amanda. Let them play together."

Perhaps when Charles was with Amanda, he could forget about his sadness and satisfy his longing to be a father. So Aron and Isla didn't want to disturb him.

"Daddy, look..." expressed Amanda excitedly while showing him a trick.

Isla smiled at the scene. She had picked the name Amanda for her because she knew Autumn liked that name. Unfortunately, Autumn left them before she knew Isla was pregnant. What wouldn't she give for her to see Amanda now! Amanda had been her main consolation after the sad news about Autumn. Her cute, little smile made any worry a bit more tolerable. Every time she looked at her, she somehow found faith that Autumn was ok wherever she was.

'Maybe God sent Amanda to us so that she could fill in the void that Autumn left,' Isla thought.

"What's the matter?" asked Charles after noticing Amanda's serious face. Leaning in close, he looked at her attentively in the eyes with a reassuring smile.

Pouting, Amanda replied, "Mom told me that I can only get married when I grow up. Daddy, can you tell

me when I will grow up?"

Charles couldn't help but laugh. Though, he didn't want her to be embarrassed by his laughter; so he quickly settled for a large smile saying, "And why are you thinking about that now? You want to get married? Tell me, which boy have you fallen in love with?"

"Stop talking nonsense, Amanda," stated her father angrily. Aron didn't like hearing her talk like that.

She was too young to think about marriage, and he felt it was inappropriate for Amanda to say that in front of Charles, especially after what she had told them at home.

Amanda tilted her head slightly to the left, attempting to soften her dad's heart with her cute look, and then said, "I didn't say anything wrong."

Her words made Aron even more embarrassed and slightly annoyed. Confused and frowning by this point, Charles attempted to clarify, "What's wrong with you?"

"Let me tell you," intervened Isla. She then sighed and continued in an embarrassed tone as well, "The last time she saw you, Amanda told me that when she grew up, she wanted to marry you. Aron then asked her why, and guess what she answered?"

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Isla broke the suspense and relieved Charles from the guessing game as she revealed the answer.

"She said you were handsome. Aron got absolutely green with jealousy when he heard this," she said cheekily.

Then the three adults burst into laughter. Although Amanda had no idea why they were laughing, she giggled innocently. Isla quickly picked her up and tickled her to get some more of her giggles. Truly, there is nothing so pure as a baby's laughter.

Soon the waitress served the food on their plates. Isla helped her daughter with the food while the two men started talking about their business. "I heard BM Corporation is planning a grand show for the Spring. They have hired models from abroad to walk the ramp. Those wealthy and influential figures in Y City are invited to be a part of the show."

"Yes, even I have heard about it." Charles nodded as he savored the food. "The news about their upcoming show has been widely broadcasted all across the Y City. I have even heard that BM Corporation's sales figures have gone up majorly after the news of their show being covered by the leading media houses."

"It needs to be taken seriously, Charles. Otherwise, it might affect the Autumn Fashion show that your

company has organized." Aron said with a concerned look. Both Aron and Charles were seasoned

businessmen of the current generation in Y City. They had a very strong grip on the market. BM

Corporation was a new entrant in the business. Yet they came with a lot of freshness and spark that

even the established players could not deny.

It was truly a concern for Charles. He looked up at Aron and said, "Yeah, it has some influence. But BM

Corporation is just a newbie here, after all. And I still have many old clients. But..." With a frown, he

continued, "If the reports on their show continue to spread like a wildfire, our company might lose some

big clients. And it's certainly not good news for my company."

"I tried to investigate about this company, but could not find much information about it," Aron said,

furrowing his brows.

"Speaking of this BM Corporation, I learned something significant about them..." Isla cut in abruptly. Isla

spoke while she fed her daughter. Then as she cast her glance on Aron and Charles, the two men were

staring at her with curious eyes expecting her to give the complete information. Quickly she finished

feeding Amanda and continued, "People from BM Corporation approached me a few days ago and

invited me to help them organize their upcoming Spring Show.

Later..." She continued as the two men listened to her intently,"Later, even their boss came to me personally. He is a young handsome lad. He was not even well versed in Chinese. As far as I know, he is from Korea and he learned Chinese for his girlfriend."

Charles fell into a deep thought for a while. Isla's words raised a lot doubts in his mind. 'He is from Korean? Then why did he come to Y City suddenly?' he wondered with his eyebrows knitted into a frown.

"I saw his girlfriend," Isla continued. "She has an exquisite appearance as if she has gone through a plastic surgery. But I have to admit that she is hot. She told me she was a native in Y City. So I guess that's why this young man extended his business to Y City." Isla became silent for a moment as she spoke of that lady. There was a weird uncanny feeling that she experienced while interacting with her.

'That woman cast me an inexplicable glance before she left, as if she knew me.

But I'm sure that I never met her before, ' she thought.

"Oh! Well, I almost forgot about it," Aron spoke abruptly, as he turned towards Charles. "The show will be held on the same day when Autumn disappeared three years ago. The BM Corporation sent me an

invitation. It seems their show will be a grand one."

"Yes, I know," said Charles. "Even I have received an invitation from them." However, there was no way that he could attend the show on that day. Neither did he have any intention to do so.

In the past three years, he had spent the day visiting the warehouse where he found Autumn's blood.

This year, there would be no exception.

Isla actually treated Charles to a meal today for this matter. She proposed to go that depot with him together this year.

Charles visited the spot where Autumn disappeared every year. It was a place that he wanted to visit all by himself perhaps with a hope that he would find his love back from the same place. It was one of those several places that helped him to feel the presence of his estranged wife that he never wanted anyone else to be a part of. However, when Isla insisted, he could not say no to it. After a hesitation, Charles nodded in agreement.

In the United States

The preparation for the Spring and Summer Fashion show was on full swing at the BM Corporation. It

was their first ever mega event in Y City and they just had to make a mark. Although there was over half a month left before the show, the models were summoned for practicing on a daily basis.

This was particularly unusual for any company requiring the models to prepare so much ahead of time for a show. This resulted in dissatisfaction among the models as they had to turn down all the shows they had signed.

BM Corporation had a very clear aim of getting the best out of each and every model. They were not ready to leave a stone unturned in order to make their show the biggest ever in Y City. The CEO of BM Corporation knew just how to take care of all the complaints of the models. He gave them some extra allowance that helped to manage their aspirations very effectively. Soon their dissatisfactions vanished and they were all back on the job.

"Sher, did you hear about the BM Corporation? Since I started my career in the show business, I have never met a boss who is as generous as him," Sue said to Sheryl after they walked out of BM Corporation. It was indeed unusual for any company in the fashion event industry to be so liberal with money.

"I have no idea. Even I'm confused," Sheryl replied. However, she didn't have the luxury to think and

analyze the strategies adopted by the BM Corporation. All she knew was that they offered a good salary. "We're leaving tomorrow, so we need to go home and pack our stuff," she changed the topic and said to Sue.

"What are you going to do with Shirley?" Sue asked with a lot of concern in her voice.

"I'll send her to Anthony's apartment for the time being," Sheryl replied. When Sheryl reached home, she saw Anthony cooking in the kitchen. He greeted her with a warm smile as she entered the house.

"You're back? Go wash your hands. Dinner is ready," he said to her lovingly.

"Got it," Sheryl replied with a little nod as she proceeded to freshen up. After finishing dinner, she told Anthony about BM Corporation's plan to leave for Y City the very next day. It was definitely not good news for Anthony who just chose to remain silent with knitted brows.

Sheryl mapped his face and grew uneasy seeing the grim expression on his face. It took her a lot of efforts to make Anthony agree to let her travel to Y city. 'What if Anthony changed his mind?' His silence made her feel anxious.

"What's up? Don't you have anything to tell me?" Sheryl asked nervously.

"Nothing. I was just a little surprised," Anthony spoke maintaining the same grimness. He arched his eyebrows, and exclaimed, "What's going on? I never heard you mention this before. Like, this is just all of a sudden."

It was surprising for Sheryl as well. Moreover, the BM Corporation did not give any explanation to the models for this. "I don't know. Even the company told us that they made this decision recently. I have even received some allowance for this. After this show, I can rest for a long time," she replied cheekily.

The peaceful smile on her face as she said 'rest for a long time' tugged at Anthony's heart string and his stern look disappeared into a loving smile. Both of them seemed to agree finally.

"Well, then how about I introduce you to my parents after this show?" Anthony suggested. He never tried to rush her into this relationship. He was extremely patient. He had planned to wait for her to accept him wholeheartedly. But since she was going to Y City, he became insecure with the fear to lose her. Hence, he planned to quicken his plan of action as well.

Upon hearing this, Sheryl blushed like a red rose. With a look at Anthony, she asked coyly, "Did your parents agree to meet me?"

"Yes, they did," Anthony replied maintaining a matter-of-fact expression on his face. The fact was just

the opposite of what he just said. He had mentioned about bringing Sheryl home to his parents during

his call, but his parents strongly opposed his decision and even scolded him for this.

However, given the situation, Anthony could not afford to waste any more time. He thought that his

parents would accept Sheryl sooner or later.

"Well, then I'll go with you and visit your parents..." Sheryl said bashfully. 'Sue is right. Anthony is a

good man and I am truly lucky to have him as a boyfriend. We have dated for long, and now, it's time to

move on, ' she told herself.

In the last three years Sheryl was completely accustomed with having Anthony around all the time. He

was there for her at every point of time. Perhaps she just didn't know if she really loved this man.

"Well, then I'll go get my stuff ready," Sheryl said and returned to her room. Little Shirley followed her

mother into the room. Looking at Sheryl busy packing her belongings, she tilted her head and asked

curiously, "Where are you going, mom?"

Sheryl lifted up her little cherub and gave her a loving nudge on cheeks and then explained to her, "I

need to go for a business trip for a few days. You will stay with Tony till I come back and I'll bring you

beautiful dresses. Okay?" Sheryl looked at her daughter's face lovingly. Shirley stared at her face as she spoke the words. Her face grew from a bleak smile when her mother spoke about being away to a bright smile at the mention of new dresses.

"Okay," Shirley exclaimed with delight. She was a blessing for Sheryl. You hardly found any kid of her age to be so sensitive and obedient. Unlike other kids, she never wailed when her mother left her for work. So accommodating she was even at such a tender age! This really helped and assured Sheryl to a great extent during her days of struggle.

Chapter 525 Trapped in Circumstances

The following day, Anthony and Shirley went to see Sheryl off at the airport. Sue was already waiting for her by the gate. Sheryl wasn't eager to leave. So Anthony tried to encourage her, "We will see each other soon; don't worry."

However, his words were no match for her deflated mood; she didn't want to leave them. Even after passing the security check, Sheryl still wouldn't let them leave her sight. She kept waving goodbye but was not taking any steps towards her gate. So Sue decided to pull her away and teasingly said, "If you're so hesitant to leave, just go back and marry him."

Sheryl smiled but said nothing in return.

On a different note, she had heard that BM Corporation's owner was on the same flight with them, but she hadn't seen him yet... perhaps on landing she would. However, after landing everyone was rushed into a bus and taken promptly to the hotel. Sue and Sheryl were given one suite together. As soon as they got inside the room they both collapsed on the bed, exhausted.

Dinner time had arrived, and all meals are provided throughout the residential course. However, Sue had other plans. Being that it was their first time together in Y City, she convinced Sheryl to go eat out with her.

"You know," Sue began sharing nostalgically, "before I went to the US, I was here once before. I

remember there are mountains and rivers around; I really liked it here. At that time, I've actually thought

about buying a house in this place, once I had enough money, and spending the rest of my life here."

That thought amused Sheryl. Her mind hadn't gotten that far; so she commented, "Come on, don't you agree it's a little bit early for you to think about that?" Sue turned around and looked at Sheryl, taken aback by her reaction.

After a short pause, she asked, "Too early?" She obviously didn't agree. "I don't think it is early at all.

Time passes so fast, and we only live once; I don't ever want to do anything that I may regret in the future."

Sheryl was speechless for a moment. She didn't understand where Sue was coming from. She wanted to dig for answers but didn't quite know where to begin.

"Hey, Sher, what about this one?" asked Sue excitedly, pointing at a hot-pot restaurant. One of the first things that Chinese people would do while abroad was finding and eating at a hot-pot restaurant.

Those meals made them feel most at home. Now that they were in China, Sue decided to eat hot-pot.

So, not surprisingly, Sheryl agreed, "Okay, hot-pot it is!" Excited about their find, and the delicious food there, they ordered a lot of dishes. Therefore, by the end of their meal, they were so stuffed that they could barely move.

"If I weren't so full, I'd show you around more. But now, I'm not even sure I can walk back to the hotel," said Sue in between huffs. Sheryl was also too full to explore the area.

Laughing at Sue's comment, she agreed "I'm totally there with you." They both continued giggling at their condition for a while; however, after thinking about it a bit longer, they realized it was still too early

to sleep.

Determined to overcome their lethargy and fight off the jet lag, the two decided to take a stroll around the area. This would also help them digest quickly and get some good sleep.

That day, Charles had also gone out for dinner with some guests. After taking a guest back to his hotel, he caught sight of a vaguely familiar figure. It couldn't have been... no way; it was Autumn indeed. A rush of adrenaline overtook him, and he shouted at his driver to pull over.

After all that time! He thought of her day in and day out, throughout all those years; so he wasn't going to miss that opportunity.

However, the driver was reluctant to do as he said. According to him, it would have been illegal to pull over right then and there. So he politely inquired if he could do it at a more appropriate spot.

Furious about the delay and the driver's perceived insolence, Charles shouted at him again, "I said pull over; are you deaf?"

Alas, the driver had to pull over in spite of his better judgment. Charles got out of the car immediately, and ran to the spot where he saw the figure. But by the time he got there, he found no one.

So he started laughing... a bitter, sarcastic laugh. In fact, it felt like life was laughing at him. What a prank his mind had pulled! She couldn't have been there. He would have known that had he thought about it more.

His desolation was too much to bear. Alcohol was the only answer at that moment. So he drank, and drank, and kept drinking the night away. Once back at the house, Chris greeted him at the door. His clothes stank of alcohol, and he was barely standing straight. His sister was mad and worried, at the same time. She didn't like seeing him in that condition, and she had to have a word about it with Leila.

It didn't matter the time; she picked up the phone and gave her a call.

As soon as she answered, Chris demanded an explanation, "Leila, tell me... how come, after all this time, you are still not together? How come he is wondering around the bars all alone?" She felt as if it was Leila's duty to be by his side. All groggy-eyed, Leila was at a loss for words.

Looking at the clock, she said in her own defense, "Miss Lu, have you any idea what time it is? How can you call me at this late hour?" Her impoliteness was stemming from her tiredness and confusion. Leila wasn't being her usual self.

Chris cleared her throat contemptuously and proceeded to address Leila through the phone, "It will be a

few days away when Autumn disappeared on the same day three years ago. For the past three years, my brother has been consistently breaking down on this day. He needs someone to be there for him and replace Autumn. So I'm hoping you're going to try harder; otherwise, you will lose him once and for all. I trust that you understand what I'm saying."

Even though displeased with Chris' tone, Leila calmly vouched, "I do, and I know exactly what to do."

On the upcoming weekday, Leila arrived at work as usual. The gloomy, depressing atmosphere in the office was accentuated by Charles' ill-looking appearance.

"Mr. Lu, here are the documents you asked for," said Leila stepping cautiously in his office. "I have arranged them for you." She then waited patiently near Charles, watching him look over the documents. Raising the folder in a victorious manner, Charles nodded at her stating. "Great job! I didn't expect you to re-adapt so quickly to the work here at Shining Company; after all, you've just gotten back."

"It was all David's work, not mine," clarified Leila humbly. Then, she planted an appreciative smile on her face and thanked him, "Mr. Lu, if it were not for you, I couldn't have come back to work here. So it's I

who should be most thankful, and because of that, I was wondering if you would do me the honor to buy you dinner tonight. I've been meaning to do this for a while; so please don't say no."

It wasn't Leila's preferred way of winning him over. She had planned to get inside his heart slowly, but

Chris was right. Autumn's memory was in her way, even after all those years; so she had to speed up her game if she wanted to stand a chance against his past.

"Well, since you're asking so nicely, sure I'll go," agreed the unsuspecting man. He wasn't that keen on going out with her, but he kept recalling the other night's events and the trick his brain had pulled on him. He had to at least try to cheer up.

Besides, he did feel lonely at times. Even at work, he was mostly listening to the complaints and issues of his subordinates. It would be nice to have a decent conversation with a nice lady over dinner, for a change.

Leila was definitely excited about his immediate confirmation. She was expecting him to take some time in deciding, but this had turned out even better. She suggested the same hotel that Sheryl lived in.

Charles agreed, and that same evening they both went there together for their dinner.

Once at the restaurant though, Charles began talking about the one thing that pained him the most:

Autumn. He recalled their days together, and the heartbreak he felt after she was gone. Leila wasn't too thrilled about the conversation but he didn't seem to want to change the topic. So she kept her cool and allowed him to release all the negative emotions he had been keeping inside. However, his memories of Autumn became too much for him to handle, so he began drinking shot after shot of tequila, no less. Leila didn't try to stop him either; in the end, she figured that would be a good opportunity for her to make her way into his bed faster.

The alcohol began revealing all his secrets, including the story about him perhaps seeing Autumn's figure outside, the night before. It was obvious that in reality he hadn't convinced himself that it was just an illusion. He looked at Leila with a hopeful expression and said, "Tell me, Leila. Tell me that she's still alive. She must still be alive, right?"

Leila knew that Charles was already too drunk, so she suggested to end the dinner. She helped him up from the chair explaining, "Mr. Lu, you drank too much; let me take you to your room."

Resting part of his weight on her shoulders, Leila took Charles to the hotel room she had booked the previous day. Chris' words had influenced her drastically, and she was now excited to make the next

move.

Alcohol is often the first resort when a man is sad or depressed. However, it also turns him into an easy prey. Charles had drank too much that night and was slowly fading out of consciousness.

The next morning, he woke up hungover, with an unbearable headache. Once he opened his eyes wide, the white ceiling with the huge chandelier indicated that he wasn't at home.

Confused, he struggled to sit up, but as soon as he turned his face towards the window, he saw Leila lying beside him naked. In shock, he jumped out of the bed, trying to piece together the events of the previous night.

There was no point in trying, though. What had transpired was obvious. Leila's underwear, heels and the white dress she was wearing the night before, were all on the ground.

Chapter 526 Dwelling On The Aftermath

An overwhelming feeling of anguish washed over him. His heart started racing a hundred miles an hour at the sight of Leila's naked back.

Dazzled by the bright sunlight, he couldn't even focus. He needed to recall what had happened the night before. How did he end up in bed with his employee?

In spite of all his efforts, his memory was completely blurry. Flashes of shots going down his throat and

the moment when Leila mentioned Autumn's name were all he could remember.

Charles felt weak, ashamed and most of all, guilty. He had not touched another woman for all these past years up until last night. Not sure how to react to it all, he decided to run away.

He moved across the room quietly as to not wake Leila up, picked up his clothes from the ground and put them on with trembling hands. His shirt buttons kept slipping in between his fingers, so he decided to button just enough of them leaving the top three open. He then grabbed his crumpled suit jacket, tiptoed to the door and immediately fled the room without hesitation.

Leila had been awake throughout the entire time. As soon as he shut the door, she sat straight up pondering on the consequences of last night's events. She didn't feel ready for a conversation about it, so she pretended to sleep. Charles wasn't in the best condition to talk about it either. She knew they'd have to discuss it at some point but it would be best to wait for the right moment.

They both needed enough space and time for things to sink in first.

Looking at the empty room, she ran her hands over her face overpowered by doubt. 'Did I scare him away? But if I hadn't done this, I would have never stood a chance against Autumn's memory, ' she

thought pathetically.

It hadn't been the first time she had gotten so close to Charles, but it was the first time she had to stage something like this on him. It was all new territory for her as well.

Leila was just about to call Chris and inform her that the plan had gone smoothly, when Chris' own call popped up on her screen. As soon as she answered, the voice on the other end felt as if it had pierced through her eardrum, "My brother didn't come home last night. Was he with you?"

"Yes, he was," Leila replied but without any excitement in her voice. "He just woke up, and as soon as he saw me lying down beside him, he ran away..."

With a slightly apologetic tone, Chris chuckled and reassured Leila, "Charles loved Autumn deeply. He hasn't dated anyone after her. If I were in his shoes, I'd feel panicked too. It's a lot to take in all at once.

But don't worry. Now that you were intimate, I don't think there will be any problems in winning his heart. Besides, you also have his son, Charlie. My brother will not want to leave his side once he finds out."

"Really?" Leila responded half-heartedly. Though, there was one thing that neither Chris nor her brother knew. In reality, nothing had happened between Charles and Leila that night. He had been way

too drunk to function in any capacity, so he fell asleep as soon as his head hit the pillow. Leila simply

took off his clothes and staged a scene that would lead him to believe they had had sex.

Chris continued with her instructions, "Now that you're already halfway to success, the next step is to

have Charles meet Charlie. I'm telling you, my brother loves kids, and he will especially love his own

son. If he realizes that marrying you would also mean living together with him, he'll be more likely to

consider it."

In fact, that was part of Chris and Leila's plan all along. They intended to manipulate her way into his

heart by using Charlie, in case Charles wasn't going to fall for her alone. If Charles knew that Charlie

was his son, he would feel some responsibility towards the child and perhaps gratitude towards Leila

for having raised him. Eventually, those reasons would be enough for him to marry her.

He was a good man, after all. Chris and Leila knew that.

"I hope you're right," stated Leila. She had to be right. Otherwise it would have all been in vain, and she

would have to deal with the awkwardness of seeing him at work too.

Refusing to think about it, Leila immediately convinced herself that it was all going to go perfectly from

now on! It had to! Plus, Charles' panicked expression from a few minutes earlier was starting to look really funny in her mind. Straightening herself up, she began getting dressed. She got out of bed, took a shower and left for her rented apartment.

While all of that had been going on, Charles was getting into one trouble after another. As soon as he left the hotel room, he rushed down the stairs and towards the exit door dizzy and confused. His goal was to leave as soon as possible before Leila woke up or anyone else saw him.

At the same time, Sue was getting Sheryl some breakfast, since it was that time of the month for her; she felt too uncomfortable to walk down herself. As soon as Sue turned the corner, with hands full of food, Charles knocked right into her sending her plates sailing through the air.

Her soybean milk, the steamed, stuffed buns, and the soft, ripen fruits were all sprawled along the dining hall entryway.

Looking at that wasted food, Sue immediately lost her temper. What made it even worse was watching

Charles turn around, intending to simply walk away from the scene he had just caused. Enraged, she pulled him by the collar and started scolding him in front of everyone, "What the hell are you doing?!

Don't you look where you walk? And where do you think you're going?"

"I'm sorry," Charles replied in a low voice. He was trying his best not to draw any more attention towards him, in fear that Leila would hear it and come down. Their hotel room wasn't too far; he had only walked down one very short flight of stairs. So she could easily hear the commotion. Nervous, he swallowed loudly casting frequent glances towards the room. Due to his hangover, no good excuse or explanation would come out of his mouth. All he could do was apologize to Sue, "I'm really sorry. I... I can't. I've got something important to deal with. I must go." "Oh, as for your breakfast... how much do I owe you?" he offered politely while reaching for his wallet.

Unfortunately though, he had no cash left in there and paying by card would be too much of a hassle.

So he slid his wallet back in his pocket, and with an embarrassed look he apologized again, "I'm really sorry. I didn't bring cash today. How about I pay you later?"

The breakfast was on behalf of the hotel. So Sue didn't care about the money. She was simply irritated by his attitude.

'Does he think money can solve everything?' she wondered full of anger.

That was why she decided to teach him a lesson in front of everyone. "What's the matter? Why the

rush? Did you cheat on your wife and fear that the woman you slept with last night might ask you to take responsibility for your actions? Because you obviously know so much about that!"

In addition to her words, she also fired him a judgmental look accompanied by an aggressive step forward. In her mind she was assuming only the worse about Charles, 'This irresponsible individual couldn't even take the time to dress up properly. Look at him, his jacket in his hand, the top of his shirt unbuttoned... It's obvious he cheated on his poor wife.'

Sue's disgust towards him was becoming stronger by the second, and she wasn't even hiding it.

Caught off guard by Sue's sarcastic remark, Charles panicked. He bit his lips staring silently at her for a few moments, and then quickly uttered, "Sorry, I've got to go now."

That only made Sue even more furious.

'I HAVE to get out of here... where is the damn exit? I'm losing my mind, ' he thought to himself while leaving Sue behind.

However, when it rains, it pours. As soon as Charles finally found the hotel exit door, he caught sight of Eric. It suddenly dawned on him that his friend owned that hotel. Of course he would risk running into him!

His first instinct was to ignore Eric and walk in the opposite direction. However, his friend had already

seen him and ran over to him excitedly. "Charles," he yelled leaving Charles no option but to stop.

"How could you be like this, man? Every time I ask you out, you refuse saying you're busy. And today

here you are!

What are you doing here at this hour by the way? Don't tell me you slept here last night?" Eric's

questions seemed endless. Charles just wanted him to stop, but Eric was just getting started. With a sly

smile on his face, he continued questioning, "Oh! Were you here with someone? Did you have a date

behind my back?"

"Stop talking nonsense," retaliated Charles in frustration. He had gotten fed up of Eric's comments. In

general, he wouldn't mind them but Eric touched upon a soft spot just then. Whatever had happened

the night before was not a date! How dare he think that about him!

Looking at Charles' serious expression, Eric knew that he still couldn't let Autumn go. Even though it

had been three years of living without her, her memory was still alive in his heart and mind.

His friend was stuck in the past.

Chapter 527 Round-faced Girl

"As for Autumn's tragic accident, I can't help but feel sorry for you buddy. Three years have passed

Charles. It's about time that you move on," Eric empathically said as he tapped Charles' right shoulder.

Charles gloomily replied, "It's easy for you to say that Eric. You're not the one who lost someone...

someone whom you loved more than yourself. You have no idea how deeply hurt I am. Autumn is

everything to me. Now, I really don't know what to fight for. I feel so lost."

Charles always believed that his love for his wife, Autumn, was unwavering. However, what happened

last night made him feel guilty and sorry for Autumn. It consumed him.

"Enough already, stop thinking about sad memories," Eric said cheerfully after seeing the persistent

sorrow swept across Charles' face. In an effort to change the mood, Eric excitedly grabbed Charles' left

arm, and then chuckled, "We haven't seen each other for quite a long time. How about we have some

fun, yeah? There's a great place I know. I'm pretty sure you will like it. A bit later, I'll be meeting some

friends there. Don't worry, they are our common friends, so you absolutely know all of them."

Eric was a typical and adventurous second generation wealthy heir. He was known among their family

circle and acquaintances for being recklessly extravagant. Although, he was already thirty years old, he

had never thought about getting married or starting his own business.

For him, marriage meant the end of love. He would only consider getting married over his dead body.

That was the reason why Eric only kept on fooling around and just tagged along with his happy go

lucky friends. Very much unlike him, his best friend Charles stopped hanging out with their group since

he got married.

When Autumn was still alive, Charles strongly turned down Eric's invitations to go out and paint the

town red. But today, agitation and guilt overpowered him. Charles used drinking as one of the needed

outlets to vent his feelings out.

So, without hesitation, he agreed immediately.

They boarded Eric's flashy SUV, a black Bentley Bentayga. Eric drove speedily to the rendezvous. Eric

went inside the flower-covered, arch entrance. Charles saw the dimly-lit facade of the place and

surmised that the place was a private club.

The perfectly hidden club was a place where affluent clienteles were provided with exceptional

entertainment of all sorts. Eric stopped the car in front of the valet and handed over the key, got off and

walked towards the bulky bouncer beside the club's closed door. "He is with me," Eric announced as he

pointed to Charles. The bouncer immediately recognized Eric and respectfully greeted him. He then opened the door to let them in. The lobby's dimmed, purple lights showed a mixture of millennial and middle-aged, seemingly successful men and provocatively dressed young women. The soothing sound of jazz music and expensive smell of perfume exuded a sophisticated and glamorous ambiance. In that kind of place, as long as you have money, you could enjoy all kinds of services, including taking the one that you fancy on.

Eric, being a VIP member of the club, had booked a large private room in advance. Guided by the club's manager, they went directly to the room. When the door was opened, all their easy going friends stood up and rushed to greet them. Charles' presence took all of them with a great surprise. After all, he had long quit these kind of places.

"Hey everyone, look who's here? Hello, Mr. Charles Lu, long time no see! What's up with you my dear friend?" one bellowed in a playful tone.

Another wryly chimed in, "Come on man, why bother to ask? Mr. Lu is very busy expanding his business empire. Of course, he no longer has time to join us."

Charles and his friends were in good terms before. They used to hang out together before Charles got

married. They usually made fun of each other and got away with it with no hurt feelings. However, the relentless banter that night visibly annoyed Charles.

As soon as they entered the private room, Eric was already observing Charles' expressions. As he promptly noticed the sullen irritation registered in his friend's eyes, Eric intervened and turned to his excited friends. "Enough guys! Tonight, I successfully managed to bring Charles here to enjoy with us.

Don't dare ruin it for him by being stupid or I'll send you all out!"

"No worries Eric! We will never do that. Besides, we kind of missed him also," the group replied in unison. For Eric's sake, the rest of the young prodigals kept quiet and walked to their seats.

The moment they sat, an enthusiastic one proposed to Eric cheekily, "Eric, I heard that the food here is quite delicious. But, this place is also most famous for hot women. I was wondering if we would have the honor to enjoy their services?"

"How could I not know, you horny guys? Don't worry, it's all taken care of!" Eric answered back, laughing heartily.

While waiting for the ordered food, they all chatted with one another cheerfully except Charles. Soon

enough, a dozen of seductively clad, hot women entered the room and served each dish with engaging yet courteous smile. They uniformly wore a fitted cheongsam with thigh-high slit. Their fair and glowing skin could be seen from the opened slits each time they took a step. Apart from Charles and Eric, the rest of the guys focused their lustful eyes on the attractive girls. Their mouths were widely open.

After serving the food, the alluring hostesses sat down with the group. They were really professionals and well-trained in providing personalized services. They carefully poured wine, attentively helped the guests with their meals and... "entertained" them. They always allowed the precarious movements of the guests. They didn't mind being touched nor being kissed. The club had a very strict set of rules.

Taking the girls out required considerable extra charges. And, the guests needed to acquire the girls' permissions.

At this private club, the girls had the final say on offers to take them out.

Eric totally didn't expect that Charles would join him. He discreetly added another cute hostess. She was dressed in the same high-slit cheongsam. The girl had a fresh, round face and looked very young. She seemed a little coy and awkward. She moved to approach Charles.

The round-faced girl seemed like she had just started working in the club.

Catching the unsure movements of the girl, Eric slightly motioned her to approach Charles. The young girl scanned the room and abruptly noticed that Eric's friends had their own partners already, except for one aloof-looking man.

In her mind, the round-faced girl assumed, 'Perhaps, this guy is not interested with the beautiful hostesses. He is only here to drink.'

Charles knew that too much wine would cause him serious trouble. But, he couldn't think of any other way to remove the perplexities in his mind. He thought for that moment, only drinking would make him forget what happened yesterday.

His thoughts were interrupted by a nervous voice. "Please let me help you, Sir," the round-faced girl offered shyly, as Charles was about to pour wine in his empty glass of wine.

Charles nonchalantly raised his head, took a quick yet sharp glance at the girl standing beside him and coldly exclaimed, "Get out of my sight!" Extremely harsh words uttered by a bitter man's lips.

Terrified by Charles' reaction, the reluctant hostess froze with fear. Tears suddenly rolled down from her expressive eyes to her blushed cheeks. A startled friend who was sitting just beside Charles couldn't

bear to see such a lovely girl crying in humiliation. He stood up to welcome her and put his right hand around her neck. "My little darling, please don't cry! Allow me to serve you with some food and drink," the guy said playfully.

The guy's words made the rest burst into laughter. Again, with the exception of Eric and Charles.

Eric initially intended to bring Charles with him to relax. But, from what he saw, Charles was actually having the opposite. He didn't show interest even with the most flirtatious women in the room.

The round-faced girl, slowly recovering from the shock, remained stiffly standing close to Charles. Not knowing what to do, she glanced at Eric as if waiting for his instruction.

With his raised eyebrows, Eric spoke to Charles, "Come on man, she is just a little girl. Don't be so mean and just let her serve you a drink."

"I can take care of myself. I don't need anyone messing with my drink," Charles answered dismissively.

When the girl heard Charles' condescending words, the girl's round face turned pale with embarrassment. But she quickly shifted to a controlled contempt of Charles.

She gazed at Charles while saying, "If I weren't born in a poor family and needed to send tuition fees for my younger siblings, I wouldn't be working here. Perhaps, I'll be like those women later." "Sir, today is

my first working day here. I'm still pure you know," she proudly added, trying to entice Charles.

One of the guys overheard what she said and blurted, "Did you fellas hear that? She's still a virgin!"

One of the guys, exploded with his wry comment, "Charles, come on, stop being so rude." The rest of

Eric's friends started to laugh obnoxiously.

Another guy followed up with a nasty joke, "I know your wife is long dead. I think, this girl is damn good.

If you're attracted to her, you can take her home. It has been three years since your wife died. I don't

believe you haven't touched even a single woman for three years."

A big laughter again filled out the room. Charles tightened his grip around his wine glass as he tried his

best not to burst out with anger.

"Perhaps you're all wrong," another man brashly yelled, giving a weird laugh. After a paused, he

said, "Unless Charles already lost his sex drive. Otherwise, I don't believe he could still do THAT."

Eric realized that Charles would soon lose his temper just by seeing Charles' vein-laced hands.

Pointing his right forefinger at the two drunk guys, he shouted angrily, "Stop it! If you'll continue with all

these bullshit, you'd better get the hell out of here. Both of you!"

The two lowered their heads and remained silent. Both of them didn't dare to oppose Eric. The two rather unruly guys were not exactly Eric's true friends. They only befriended him either because of his money or his influential family.

Eric then turned to the perplexed, round-faced girl and indifferently commanded, "You can leave now."

Obviously with all the shenanigans, Charles didn't enjoy his meal. Very concerned, Eric gazed at

Charles who continued drinking alone.

Chapter 528 Sheryl Was In Period

The dim light of the restaurant, the smokes, booze and the girls serving the customers with an all giving attitude - it was a perfect scene out of a third grade x rated movie. After dinner, almost everyone got out

of the room with a girl he liked. Charles still kept sitting at the bar counter. Eric watched him for a while from a distance.

Then he approached to Charles. Somehow, Charles wanted to get drunk so he poured himself a fresh peg and poured it down his throat in just one go. Then another and then one more. Eric sat next to him and watched him pour alcohol down his throat incessantly one after the other. It seemed that he was just trying to find a hideout where nobody could find him. And he felt that alcohol could help him to find

it.

"Charles, what's wrong with you?" Eric asked him in a speculative voice. Eric could not believe Charles

did not make love for three years. Charles looked up at him with annoyance. "Don't misunderstand. I

didn't mean anything," he explained. "I just find it to be unbelievable. Do you always satisfy your needs

with your hands? That's hard to believe..."

"Shut up!" Charles interrupted him abruptly while still looking at his unfinished drink. If Eric were not his

friend, he would have taken him down on the ground. Charles cast a glare at Eric and said, "Why are

you still a spoiled brat? Even your so-called friends are utterly disgusting."

Eric sneered back and said, "They are not my true friends. I know that."

He tried to change his topic to Charles' sexual need and said to Charles, "I don't think it works in this

way. Actually, I think the girl just served you is pretty good. Moreover, she is a virgin. How about you

have sex with her?"

Charles' face turned red and he shouted at Eric, "Just keep your mouth shut before I lose my temper."

Charles used to hang around often with his bad friends before he married Autumn. But he had never

seen these friends after getting married.

Autumn was just like an emblem of purity. She always looked clean and tidy. She didn't like makeup or perfume and the only fragrance in her body was that of the body shampoo she used. After having stayed with her, Charles had developed aversion towards strong smell of perfumes. All these girls and the ambiance around him made him feel suffocated. He had just come here to drink his heart out so that he could get some sleep.

Eric realized that he couldn't convince Charles and had to ask someone to escort him home.

In the hotel, Sheryl had been waiting for Sue for a long time.

Sue brought breakfast to the table and sat down beside Sheryl. For some reasons, she was fuming.

She kept muttering under her breath. Sheryl stared at her perplexed for a while and asked, "What happened? Why are you so angry?"

Sue answered, "I just met a freak. It all happened because of him."

"What did he do?" Sheryl asked Sue with concern.

Sue stammered as she spoke. She couldn't help blaming Charles, "I should have come back earlier but that freak tipped over the breakfast I prepared for you and I had to return and get a new one."

"A freak?" Sheryl was still confused as she asked. Ever since they have come to Y City, every moment had been a new experience for them. Throughout the day they would remain busy practicing for the show and get very less time to unwind. Sheryl thought Sue got a little burnt out.

"Yes, he is," Sue continued. Sheryl gave her a patient hearing as Sue started to give her a full account of what had happened. "I think that man came here to have a gala time with his mistress. Sher, I promise, if I ever meet him again, I will beat him up for his wife."

"Oh! Maybe he was hurried to do something important. Why are you so sure that he was here for having an extra marital affair?" Sheryl looked at Sue with amusement. Then she flinched her face grabbing her tummy. It was that time of the month for Sheryl and she had been nursing a lingering abdominal pain since morning. Sue got her some warm soybean milk which gave her a temporary relief. But now, the pain seemed to be coming back.

Sue continued, "Sher, you are too innocent. That man looked absolutely unscrupulous to me. His dress was in a mess and for some reason he was panicked. It seemed as if he got freaked out when he found that the woman with him was not his wife when he woke up. Moreover, he even kept looking back as if he was being chased by that woman. That is when he bumped on me and spilled all the food

that I was carrying. Even while apologizing to me, he kept looking back. I am sure he had a one night stand after getting drunk."

Sheryl took a spoon full of warm porridge when she listened to Sue. Sue added, "Apart from his muffled look, he seemed to be a decent man and the clothes he wore also looked quiet expensive. How could he be so shameless?"

"Even though your guess might be right, how can you be certain that the man was married?" Sheryl asked looking puzzled at Sue's confidence in her verdict on a man who was a complete stranger.

"You are too stupid, Sher." Sue heaved a sigh and exclaimed, "There was a wedding band on his finger. I can't believe it! He is bold enough to wear it while dating with another woman."

Sheryl could see Sue got a little carried away with this sudden encounter with a stranger who happened to drop her breakfast. Nevertheless, she gave her a patient hearing. Sue continued with her banter. When she was done with blaming the man, she shifted her focus on the woman. "Men will be men. But just think of the woman. How shameless she is to have sex with a married man. How could such a woman exist in this world?" Sue said with indignation.

She was still fuming and muttering under her breath, "Mark my words Sher, the two of them will have a tragic end!"

"Okay, enough now. I believe you, Miss Wang." Sheryl looked at Sue and added, "All you said is right."

"How are you feeling now, Sher?" After purging out all that was there in her mind about the morning encounter, Sue was suddenly reminded of Sheryl's stomach ache. Sue began to show concern about Sheryl's condition and asked, "Can you take part in the rehearsal in the afternoon?"

"Yes, I can," Sheryl smiled and answered. Then she added in a meek voice, "But I want to take some rest. Please wake me up when it's my turn."

"Are you sure you are okay?" Sue looked at Sheryl with concern and said, "If you feel uncomfortable, I can ask for a leave for you and you can rest for the whole day in your room."

"I'm fine. Really," Sheryl said in an affirmative tone. Sheryl didn't allow such trivial issues to come in the way of her work. Besides, she couldn't take risk with her new job. She had worked really hard to reach to this level. And now, she could not let all her hard work go down the drain just because of her monthly cycle.

Asking for a leave at this stage could earn her the reputation of being laid back among her boss and

colleagues.

"Okay, then." Sue frowned slightly and pulled the quilt on Sheryl and said, "Take a good rest and I'll call you when you need to show up."

Sue was in complete knowledge and understanding about what this show meant to Sheryl. There was no way that she could be pulled back from taking part in the rehearsals. Hence, Sue stopped persuading her further.

When Sue woke Sheryl up for the rehearsal in the afternoon, Sheryl was still looking very pale.

Sheryl pulled herself up from her pillow. As she tried to stand up, she could literally feel her lower back pulling her down. In the last few years, she had been through very painful pre-menstrual syndrome that was way beyond her tolerance level.

Sheryl tried to sit up and tried to cheer up. She had to put a confident face on the stage.

The hotel reserved a big room for their rehearsal. Soon it was Sheryl's turn to walk the ramp. Bugged down with severe stomach ache, she almost pulled herself on the stage. Her pace was slow and she could not even stand straight. Immediately, it was pointed out by the director who did not spare a

moment to reprimand her in front of the whole team.

"Who did allow her to pass the interview? How could she debut with such poor performance?" The

director's voice echoed through the hall and suddenly there was a pin drop silence among the models.

Sheryl felt so guilty that she got off the stage immediately. However, the director had lost his temper

with the staff.

One of the staff went close to the director and whispered something into his ears that pacified his anger

for the time being. Yet he still spoke in a stern voice with a brow arched, "I don't care whether your boss

decided to employ her or not. I don't allow her to take part in my show with such poor performance. Tell

your boss that I can only give her three days. If she can't meet my requirement and if your boss doesn't

fire her, then, you can count me out of the show."

"Director Ang... Director Ang!" That man kept crying and following him as the director walked out of the

hall fuming in anger. All his measures to persuade him fell flat on the face. Finally he had to call the

boss and tell everything to him honestly.

Chapter 529 Holley Ye

Sheryl felt extremely dejected as she came to the back stage. Sue rushed towards her and

comforted, "Sher, don't think too much. It's not your fault..."

Sue could understand how Sheryl must be feeling. She tried her best to cheer her up and motivate her.

Sheryl tried to stop crying and remained silent for a while. She lowered her head with a gloomy face.

Sue kept patting her back to pep her up but of no avail. After a long time, she lifted her head slowly and

turned to Sue downheartedly. "Of course it's my problem. Indeed, I had a terrible performance today,"

she spoke at last.

It was a tough fight for her to justify herself in the modeling business with such intense competition.

Sheryl's age was not by her side. And on the top of that she almost messed up the rehearsal just now.

When she looked at the furious Director Ang, a chill ran down her. She almost felt her modeling career

to be over.

"Come on, Sher!" Sue encouraged, as she tried to help her friend get over it. No matter how much

comforting words Sue spoke, it was difficult to bring her out of the depression. At last, Sheryl looked at

Sue and requested, "Mimi, I'd like to stay alone for a while."

"Well... Okay, then." Sue nodded at her hesitantly as she stood up to leave. Looking at Sheryl's

scowling face, she continued with concern, "Then I'll go back to the rehearsal. Call me if you need

anything."

"Sure, I will," Sheryl replied. As she watched Sue walk back to the stage, she rose up, took a deep breath and decided to go for a walk.

As she took her steps forward to walk out of the venue, once again, the onstage debacle that took place during the rehearsal came crowding her mind. How just a stupid stomach ache made her so limp that she could not maintain her grace on the stage! She just lost control on her limbs and expression...

She just could not hold back the pain. It made her so helpless.

She felt terrible for this mistake. She felt repented the moment again and again. Now, it would cost her a heavy price for this mistake. Being out of the show at this moment meant...

She shuddered at the very thought of the repercussions this debacle could bring upon her career and financial condition. Absorbed in her thoughts, she didn't even notice the steps. As a result, she missed a step and collapsed to the ground. Fortunately she just hurt her ankle slightly.

"What a bad day!" Sheryl grumbled. As she tried to stand up, she realized that the apparently "slight" looking injury was not really so nominal after all. She seemed to have sprained her ankle. She struggled to stand up but failed. She rolled her eyes up and cursed her stars. 'Why is everything just

going against her at the eleventh hour?' She felt miserable. All of a sudden, a tender voice reached her ear, "Are you okay?"

Complete broken and bruised, Sheryl was unable to get up. She looked up to see where the voice came from. The woman's voice was as pleasing and soft as the warm breeze in the Spring.

As she raised her head, she was greeted by an exquisite looking woman. She had absolutely perfect features - slim arched eyebrows followed by long pushy eyelashes, big and beautiful eyes that were rather scary. As she sat there marveling at the perfect features of the woman, she wondered at her jaw dropping beauty. After a while, Sheryl shook herself up and thought to herself, 'She is absolutely no natural beauty. I'm sure she went through a plastic surgery.'

Sheryl was taken aback at the sudden display of concern from a stranger and replied awkwardly, "I'm... I'm fine."

"How are you feeling? Can you walk now?" the girl asked. With furrowed brows, she offered, "Let me help you."

The girl helped Sheryl to stand up and supported her to enter the hotel hall slowly. She sat Sheryl down

and walked away hastily. Then she came back with medicine and a basin of hot water. She approached to treat Sheryl's feet and said, "You should not ignore the injury. Let me apply the medicine oil for you."

Sheryl felt extremely embarrassed at her warm gesture and said, "No, thank you..." "You've helped me a lot. I can't bother you anymore," she refused politely while trying to pull her feet back but in vain.

"Well, okay," the girl noticed her uneasiness and stopped insisting. With a look at Sheryl's ankle, she continued with a smile, "Your injury isn't serious. You'll recover after taking rest at home for a couple of days."

"Rest?" Sheryl mumbled to herself with a pale smile, "How could it be possible?"

'I came to Y City for work, ' she thought. It was her work that preoccupied her mind. She came here all geared up for work. She wanted to make her mark on the ramp and gather accolades for her work.

Then she would go back to her daughter and give her all the happiness and love. But all this was only possible if she could just get up and work. Not being able to be with her colleagues at the rehearsal made her feel miserable. On top of that if anyone even spoke of taking rest or a break from work,

Sheryl felt like screaming, 'Stop saying that word! I need to work! I am here to work!'

Looking at the tension on Sheryl's face, the girl said, "What's wrong? Do you have any problem? You

can tell me. Perhaps I can help you solve your problem."

"That's so nice of you. Thank you. But I think I can handle it myself," Sheryl refused politely. "Oh, I don't know your name yet. I'll treat you to a meal in return," she added.

"It's not a big deal. You don't need to do that," the girl replied with a courteous smile. "I'm Holley Ye."

"Well, Miss Ye..." Sheryl said smiling, "I'm Sheryl Xia. You can call me Sher."

"Sher..." Holley Ye called out. She commented with an admiring smile, "It's a very nice name."

"Holley..." The growing acquaintance between two women was halted by a sudden intervention by a male voice right behind them. Both the women got startled and looked back to see where the voice came from. To her surprise, Sheryl saw that it was the man who had interviewed her.

"Mr. Han?" Sheryl muttered in shock. She realized that Holley Ye knew George Han. She even had a sudden intuition that they might be in an intimate relationship.

"Miss Xia, shouldn't you be rehearsing? What are you doing here?" asked the young man. Both Holley Ye and George Han complimented each other in their looks. Both of them were extremely good looking and refined in all aspects. He had just received a call from his employee and learned that Director Ang

got angry with the woman in front of him. In fact, he had intended to discuss this matter with Holley Ye.

But unexpectedly he ran into Sheryl here.

"Sher sprained her ankle," Holley Ye explained before Sheryl could open her mouth. She smiled

indulgently at George Han and said, "Mr. Han, do you really have the heart to force Sher to rehearse

even after knowing that she got injured?"

"Sher?" George looked surprised as he repeated after Holley. 'When did she become so close with

Sheryl?' he wondered.

"Is there any problem?" Holley Ye said to George Han as she noticed a bewildered expression on his

face. She smiled and went on to explain to George, "I just met her here and we had a talk. I like her.

Now she is my friend."

Sheryl was taken aback at the sudden claim of friendship by Holley. She felt a bit uncomfortable with

her shrill yet tender voice. Although she was grateful to Holley Ye, it was too early to acknowledge her

as a friend.

Holley Ye's plastic beauty just like a doll. Her voice and the sudden friendly gesture made Sheryl feel

really weird and uncomfortable. 'She seems to appear out of nowhere and I don't even know her

properly, ' she thought.

"Let me introduce him to you," Holley Ye smiled at Sheryl, as she pointed at George Han. "This is my fiancé, George Han."

"As it turned out, you are my boss's future wife," Sheryl remarked with a diplomatic smile. "Please forgive me for not being able to recognize you," she apologized in a humble manner.

"Sher, why are you being so formal with me?" Holley Ye pouted, looking a little displeased. "I don't have an acquaintance here. I thought you regarded me as your friend," she complained with a hurt look.

Abashed as she was, Sheryl spoke at last, "It's my honor to be your friend, Miss Ye."

Holley Ye gave a bright and satisfied smile. She turned to her fiancée, took his hand, and

pleaded, "George, you see, Sher sprained her ankle. Just let her take two days off. She need some rest."

With an affectionate look at his fiancée, George responded lovingly, "It's all your call."

He then turned to Sheryl and said, "Miss Xia, now that you got your ankle injured, you can take rest in the hotel till the time you recover completely. After that you can get back to work."

"Mr. Han, I'm fine. I can handle my work," Sheryl said to George Han.

Chapter 530 Nightmare

Noticing how anxious she was, Holley tried to reassure her. "Just take a rest in the hotel," she said.

"Don't worry too much about work, and take a good rest," she further added.

Sheryl stood still as Holley patted her shoulder gently and bid, "Farewell, I'll visit you another day."

After finishing these words, the girl calmly turned her back and walked away with George. Stunned,

Sheryl fixed her gaze on the woman's back as her shadow slowly faded.

Although she treated Sheryl in an ardent manner, it seemed as if she approached her with other

intentions in mind.

'I've never met her before. What does she want to get from me? What's her motive?' she wondered

with a frown.

"Autumn? Is that you? It's me, Eric," a man's confused voice reached her ears. Turning around to see if

somebody else was there beside her, she found a man who was staring heavily at her.

Upon meeting her gaze, the man was dumbfounded by what he saw. "Perhaps, are you talking to me?"

she asked. Stunned in confusion, she tried to examine the man from his head down to the shoes he

was wearing. He wasn't familiar at all.

"It's you. It's really you!" Eric exclaimed, ignoring her question. "Where have you been all these years?"

he started. "Do you know that Charles have looked everywhere for you, to the point that he almost lost his mind?" the man asked in one breath. Eric was standing behind her all this time from the moment he stole a glance at this woman who was emitting some familiar and elegant aura. As she stood there, Eric was captivated by her.

Soon enough, he realized that not only was she familiar but he knew her very well. The woman's name was Autumn. She was the same Autumn he knew very well, but he didn't dare to speak to her in doubt.

A person who had gone missing for three years showed up out of nowhere in his hotel. He couldn't believe that such coincidence would happen.

After hesitating, Eric finally took his courage to step closer and raised that question to the woman.

When he saw her face, he knew right then that his assumption was correct.

The woman whom Charles had been looking for a long time was now right standing in front of him.

"Excuse me, but I think you got the wrong person," Sheryl replied, perplexed. "My name is not

Autumn," she further added, hoping that the man would leave her be. Staring at Eric warily, she

ended,"I don't know you. So please excuse me."

"It's not funny at all, Autumn. We might not have met frequently, but you could at least remember my face," the man explained. Noticing how baffled the expression of the woman's face was, he knew right then that something must've happened to her.

"I truly apologize, but I really don't know a guy called Eric. I just came back from abroad. You really got the wrong person, sir," Sheryl responded while staring at him with her furrowed brows. "I'm not the one you're looking for," she said as she tried to squeeze a courteous smile.

"I'm sorry. You look just like someone I know," Eric said courteously. Apologizing, Eric added while scratching his head,"You two look exactly alike." Focusing his gaze on Sheryl, he made sure that his cover wasn't blown. He pretended not to know her so he could ease the tension between them.

Eric didn't see any suspicious signs on her face.

"If there isn't anything else I can help you with, I should better take my leave now. Enjoy the rest of time, sir," Sheryl said, feeling uncomfortable under a stranger's gaze. Sheryl was anxious all the while.

Knowing she once lived in Y City, she assumed that the man must've known her or the father of her daughter.

No matter how curious she was of her past, she resisted her impulse. Fearing that she must've had a lot of bad memories in the city, she chose to run away from the possible truth.

"Please wait a minute," Eric exclaimed as she was about to leave. "Perhaps, did you book a room in this hotel?" he asked.

"Yes, I did," Sheryl nodded. In fear of what the man would further ask, she turned around and walked away.

Staring at Sheryl quickening her pace away from him, he felt overjoyed.

Charles could now finally reunite with his wife, he thought to himself. All he could think of doing right then was to inform his friend.

Eric couldn't stop himself from the excitement he was feeling. He quickly grabbed his phone from his pocket. As he was about to hit the call button, he thought about Charles' indifferent attitude towards him

and slowly placed his phone back to his pocket.

'I'll tell you this good news a bit later. It's just a small punishment for your attitude towards me, ' he thought, with a wicked smile on his face.

Since he owned the hotel, he was able to get a hold of Sheryl's information. He found out about her present name and learned that she was currently working as a model.

'Once Charles knows about this, he will definitely jump off his feet, ' he giggled inside.

'But..' Eric knitted his brows when he recalled Sheryl's flustered look.

'It seems like she doesn't have any hint of her past. If she really did lose her memory, then this explains why she never came back after the accident in the past, ' he thought to himself, trying to understand why Sheryl was acting indifferent towards him.

Preoccupied, Sheryl returned to her room. Her uneasiness grew after she met Eric. Initially, she just wanted to finish the fashion show successfully. But ever since coming to Y Ciy, she felt that things didn't go as expected. She felt that something was definitely going to happen, something that would disturb her present life.

While trying hard to recall what happened to her before she lost her memory, she fell asleep instead.

She woke up screaming from her nightmare, with sweat dripping down her forehead.

Suddenly, the lights went on. Startled, Sue rubbed her hazy eyes and still managed to ask, "What

happened, Sher? Had a nightmare?" "Are you feeling fine now?" she continued.

"I'm fine now. Sorry for waking you up," Sheryl replied while wiping the sweat off her forehead. 'I have to keep this to myself and bear it alone. I should not make others worry about me, ' she thought to herself despite the uneasiness she was feeling.

'If I told Sue about this, she would definitely relay this to Anthony. I can't allow that, ' she reminded herself.

Sheryl didn't get any sleep after her nightmare. George already informed the team who was in charge of the fashion show that Sheryl didn't need to rehearse for the following days. This way, she could take a rest. Since she had nothing to do in her hotel room, she decided to go out and have a look around.

Knowing that Sheryl was a guest in his hotel, Eric came over frequently. He even gave special instructions to his hotel staff to take good care of her.

Learning about Sheryl's plan of going out, Eric immediately asked to prepare a car for her and waited outside. As she stepped out of the hotel, she saw him standing beside the car.

Seeing her baffled expression, he explained that the car was one of the hotel's free services. Upon hearing his words, she didn't dub his intention and hopped on the car.

"Miss Xia, if there's a place you wish to go to, please feel free to tell the driver and he'll bring you there," Eric said to her attentively, as he stooped and looked at her. With the days passing by, Eric remained silent about Sheryl's presence and hadn't told Charles about such good news. To lessen Charles' possible anger towards him, he decided to treat Autumn well. This way, his friend would stop being mad at him sooner.

While looking around the city, Sheryl felt unfamiliar to almost every sight. Despite knowing that she lived in this city for a long time, she felt like it never happened at all. One of her intentions in coming to Y City was to see if she could remember anything while being around the area.

As the car drove pass a kindergarten, she asked the driver to pull over. As a mother, she became interested in such places.

With Shirley growing up, she was now considering looking for a good school to send her to.

Although schools in the United States provided a better study environment for children, she thought it would be better to let Shirley study in Y City as she didn't want her daughter to be a stranger to her country and hometown.

As she came to the kindergarten, she wanted to go inside and have a look. But she wasn't allowed to enter the school.

"Hello," a boy's low voice sounded, but Sheryl didn't hear it. Sheryl tiptoed in front of the school, and peeped through the gate's holes. She saw well-decorated buildings and newly-built drill ground. She saw a plate above the gate that drew her attention. She thought to herself, 'This is a bilingual preschool. Hmm, this place looks neat and conducive for Shirley's learning.' She then nodded approvingly. She finally found a good school for her daughter.