

The Enchanted Night – Chapter: 111

You Will Never Be Alone Again

Dylon gaped at the two, his gaze flickering confusedly back and forth from Cassandra then to Rufus. He was struck speechless and had no idea what to say.

Rufus's face remained calm, his expression unwavering, and Dylon had the feeling that he should not remain here anymore. The man caught just now had something to do with Cassandra and the Tang Group. He was just an outsider. It would be best for him not to involve himself any longer. 'I should probably go now,' he thought to himself.

He cleared his throat and spoke, 'Then, Cassandra, since you'll be going back with Mr. Luo, I'll be on my way as well.'

Cassandra opened her mouth to speak, but Dylon had already turned on his heel and left.

She could feel Rufus's presence behind her. There was an awkwardness between them that seemed to grow with every passing second.

Rufus stayed silent. Without speaking a word, he took her hand and led her into his car. A car which he had already sent for was waiting for them.

He shut the door forcefully, and Cassandra flinched from the sudden motion.

'You requested for a divorce?' he asked. Cassandra didn't reply to his question and avoided his eyes. 'Why didn't you tell me before your

announcement?’ he pressed, his voice dropping and the words trailing off coldly.

His eyes were steely and his face was set in harsh lines.

‘It’s my business. Why would I need to tell you?’

Cassandra sensed his coldness and replied in an equally distant tone.

Rufus’s eyes darkened with shadows at her reply. Her business? This was very far from being just her business at all!

Horace was strongly opposed to her decision. From here on, it would be difficult to disentangle her from the complicated relationships in that household. Had she discussed it with him before her sudden announcement, things could have gone differently.

Rufus let out a sigh and said simply, ‘You’re too impulsive.’

Then he proceeded to start the car.

Cassandra settled herself in a long silence before speaking again.

‘I felt that it was the only chance,’ she confessed. ‘If I hadn’t said that then, I wasn’t sure if I could have said it later, or ever.’

Her voice trembled as she spoke the words, and Rufus felt a small pang of pain in his chest, interfering with his breath. She looked defeated with her shoulders slumped and her head hanging lowly.

Yes, Cassandra knew that it was not carefully thought through, but she did not regret what she did.

She was pulled from her thoughts when Rufus asked, 'Then, why don't you be even more impulsive and be my woman?'

He pushed hard on the brakes and Cassandra's breath was caught in her throat, more with his words than with the sudden halt of the car. He turned around and looked at Cassandra, his eyes holding hers warmly.

If Cassandra got divorced, there would be nothing standing in the way of him being her husband. She would no longer be tied down with the excuse that he was her brother-in-law.

But she shook her head, and Rufus felt his heart drop. 'No, Rufus.' She looked down and broke from his gaze. 'It would just complicate things even more.'

Cassandra thought of the roundness that was forming on Ivy's stomach, then of Lionel, and their strained relationship as husband and wife on paper. Despite the knowl

'You're my wife in name only, on paper only. My heart and love will never be yours.'

Edward made it clear to Daisy that she was nothing to him. They were both victims of family greed -- the marriage was arranged for them.

Six years passed. She remained quiet, gaining a reputation in the army as a tough-as-nails colonel. When she walked into his life again, Edward fell in love with this woman...

Vernon seemed withered and aged, as if he no longer had any spirit left in him.

He had lost so much weight, and his eyes were absent. Such was the image of a man who had been to hell once. He had changed and there was a different man in his body.

He was not enraged, nor did he revolt anymore. He changed so much, and it was all because of Cassandra's words to him when she visited him once.

'Father, I know how much you struggled all your life to keep our family's honor. I know you wanted to give us the best, but we have no need for prestige or glory. All we want is a family, a complete family with healthy parents, Cloris and I.'

Cassandra fought against her tears as her lips trembled. She reached out a hand and held his father's callused hand.

'Father, I will wait for you to come back. We need you.'

The old man could not help but weep. His elder daughter who he least favored was very different from him. But all these years, it was Cassandra who had been trying the most to save their family from the crisis.

Four years ago, she sacrificed the rest of her life and married into the Tang family to save the Qin family.

And now, here she was again, saving his family. She ran around, talking from one person to another, to save him from jail and protect his company from being sold.

She did not talk much since she was a little girl. She was introverted and didn't talk with him a lot, nor did she ask for attention.

She was so strong and independent that she hardly needed her parents' care. In truth, her self-reliance left him feeling unfulfilled as her father. That was one of the reasons why he was much closer to her younger sister, who was the opposite of her.

However, he knew that although she might not be forward with affection, she loved her family from the bottom of her heart.

With tears in his eyes, Vernon let himself drift to a time in the distant past—white curtains and walls, and a small baby girl born with thick, dark hair whose eyes looked up to him brightly.

His heart had stopped at the sight. At that moment, he had become a father. 'Cassandra,' he named her, hoping that she would grow to be a strong and honorable person.

Cassandra's Final Decision

Vernon's case was finalized at court; the judges finally gave him a ten-year jail sentence.

Edith wailed with agony, however, Cassandra seemed so indifferent that not even a hint of tears could be found on her face.

Since the responsibility of managing the Qin Group fell on her shoulders, she did not have the luxury of time to allow herself to fall into sadness. There was a more pressing need for her to immediately start devoting herself to the hectic work schedule ahead of her.

Accompanied by Cassandra and Cloris, Edith stepped out of the courtroom. The sky was clean and blue; the clouds looked pure and white.

Having made up her mind to disperse all the grief-stricken memories that had been afflicting her family, Cassandra felt the need to say to herself silently, 'I will try my best to support the family, to maintain and sustain all the things that we have been enjoying.'

Finally, the Union of Real Estate was soon to be established in G City. The election of the Director of the Union was rather imminent, and everyone was highly concerned about this event. People from all walks of life were enthusiastically guessing which group would be able to win over the other, the Tang Group or the Dawn Star Group.

Although the two parties had their own strengths, it seemed that the Tang Group had a higher chance of winning the game. Recently, the Tang Group was exhibiting an overall enthusiastic aura. As the manager of their architectural design department, Cassandra was granted a resounding award thanks to her outstanding performance in an American architectural design competition. Meanwhile, the Tang Group had already invested in some projects in G City, such as the construction of Nursing Home Project and the Amusement Park Plan, which had all won the group a positive reputation as a strong foundation.

While the Dawn Star Group had undertaken just the same amount of projects as the Tang Group, due to these projects being of smaller scale, it was difficult for the company to broaden their sphere of influence in the city. Although the company did have a great number of business counterparts, it was highly likely that it would be at a disadvantage when it came to the scale factor. Given this, it was difficult to say whether or not Dawn Star Group could seize the votes of their partners.

Right at this critical juncture, a piece of rather heavy news was just disclosed by the insiders, which could possibly reverse the situation.

Vernon, who had just been sentenced to jail for bribing an official, was found to be related by marriage to Horace Tang, the Chairman of the Tang Group.

Even more shocking was the news that Cassandra was Vernon's biological daughter.

As the information was bombarded throughout the people in G City, the companies of real estate experienced much turmoil.

As Vernon was found to be guilty of his crime, the people turned cautious as to avoid any signs of connection with him. To the everyone's surprise, the Tang Group had quite a close relationship with the Qin Group.

The residents could barely stop their imagination from running wild. Since the Tang Group was so closely tied to the Qin Group, how could it be as clean and uncorrupted as it appeared to be on the surface? The inner workings were probably not much better than those of the Qin Group. They could be all tarred with the same brush.

For example, the largest private hospital in G City had planned to build a hospital branch recently. Such a crucial project ended up being taken over by the Tang Group. Although Jenks and Horace did share a friendly relationship, with someone spreading the news entangled with rumors, many still chose to believe that it was not as simple as it seemed to be—the Tang Group must have done something behind the scenes to get such an opportunity.

The discussions inevitably reached Horace's ears, who could do nothing but foamed with anger.

When her sister ran away from the wedding, Autumn was forced to marry Charles.

His name had been linked to innumerable ladies.

He had different girlfriends for every day of a year.

Autumn had never thought that she would fall in love with him.

ife in front of other people or follow him wherever he went. Her acting skill was not even comparable to that of Lyndsy, and she could barely hide her true feelings as well as Ivy could.

It turned out that Cassandra's explanation didn't do well for Stella, as she didn't buy it. Though she knew that Cassandra must have had her reasons, she wasn't so eager to find them out. All she knew was that she felt cheated—how could she not be the first to know of it?

Having heard the news from someone other than Cassandra was unacceptable to her.

'Then, what do you plan on doing next? Are you going to take over your dad's company?'

Quickly, she pushed aside her negative feelings and let her concern for Cassandra surface.

'I'll take over, of course. That's my dad's only asset in his entire life. I've tried so hard to save it and I'll guard it for as long as I'm able to.'

Her tone was determined and firm.

'What is this nonsense?' Lionel shouted in anger.

The blogs and posts online only ignited his burning fury and almost drove him to throw his computer against the wall to vent out the fury.

'Mistress of Lionel Tang Forced His Wife Away!'

‘A Playful Man and a Forbearing Woman, How Can the Able Woman Win the Game?’

The article titles that drew the eyes of the public portrayed Lionel as some kind of bastard Casanova of his era.

While Lionel was deeply irritated by the public judgment, Ivy, being one of the protagonists, was unconcerned by the offensive remarks online, for all she cared about was how to beat Cassandra. She had a vague feeling that by breaking the news, it would become harder for Cassandra to stay in the Tang family.

It was Cassandra who was under the most stress, being pressed by the Qin and the Tang families at the same time.

The Tang Group was eager to explore the market and expand themselves, while the Qin Group, under accusation, was on the brink of collapsing.

Being right in the middle of these two matters, Cassandra had no way to stay balanced.

If she supported the Tang Group, it would definitely doom the Qin Group; and if she decided to support the Qin group, Horace would be disappointed.

It was a tough situation. ‘Which side will you choose, Cassandra? What will you do to break out of the predicament?’

‘Which side will you tilt the balance to? Are you going to be trusted by the Tang Group as you were before?’ Ivy asked silently.

As if she were the evil witch who saw Snow White with the poisonous apple in her hand, Ivy’s mouth twisted into a wicked smile. She wanted to know how Snow White would make her final decision.

The next morning, Cassandra was about to head to work after finishing her breakfast when Horace stopped her.

‘Cassandra, how is the reconstruction project of the amusement park going?’

Horace asked. He sounded happy today. It was rare for him to be this enthusiastic about a project of Tang Group.

‘I’ve already taken the case. We are about to start the design work soon,’

she replied as a smile spread across her face. The thought that she would design her favorite Ferris wheel herself made her feel very lucky.

This was something that she had wanted to do for such a long time. Now, she was determined to build a unique and beautiful Ferris wheel.

‘You seem to have lost a lot of weight recently. I heard you cough a lot during breakfast. Please take care,’ Horace said.

Cassandra felt moved by his care.

Horace had been rather aloof ever since she requested for a divorce. He had not been treating her affably these days because of that. Sometimes he would totally ignore her during the meals; and the most he did was a nod when Cassandra greeted him in the hall. This was the first time he had started a conversation with her and asked about her work after that day.

‘Maybe this is the first step to reducing the tension between us,’ thought Cassandra.

She went back to the dining table and sat down beside Horace to describe her new idea.

‘I’m planning to focus on the Ferris wheel in the amusement park. It’s large and will take up lots of space. What’s more, there will be LED lights installed in it. It will beautifully light up the night sky. It is going to be the centerpiece to all the other parts of the new amusement park. Also, there’s a small river inside the park that I am planning to widen so it will be another attraction. With the Ferris wheel beside the bridge...’

Cassandra could talk all day about her design. She was in her element. Her eyes brightened with excitement.

‘Why don’t you suspend the case and hand it over to someone else?’

Horace suddenly interrupted, still with a smile resting on his face.

‘Wh... Why?’

Cassandra was bewildered. The amusement park was her main project. The government was going to create a huge landscape to increase the number of tourists in the city and the amusement park would be located in that area. This was why both Tang Group and the government were investing a lot of resources into the reconstruction.

Rufus frequently went on business trips to visit cities with similar projects to conduct surveys and gather insights. He wanted this to be perfect. Therefore he had barely come home lately.

Work aside, the project was very special to Cassandra. It was where she and Rufus went on their ‘first date.’ Althou

Drugged one night by her ex-boyfriend, a mysterious man took advantage of her in an ecstatic night filled with sex. To take her revenge, she married the man, and used him. ‘As long as I’m alive, I’m still his

legal wife, while all of you are just his mistresses.' She remained adamant even when he was involved in scandals with other women...

how narrow-minded she must have been. Horace must have known everything she had been doing to help her family, but he did not want to hurt her pride.

What he said kept repeating inside her head: 'I know you've been living a hard life recently.' Cassandra felt a lump in her throat.

'Thank you, father,'

Cassandra said, feeling guilty for judging him so early. It was not that he did not care for her, he just showed it differently.

After Cassandra left, Jill, who had been eating breakfast in the background, wiped the area around her mouth with the corner of a napkin.

'Really? You got her a car? We have so many in the garage, why didn't you just get one from there?'

Jill said disdainfully. A part of her felt resentful that Horace did not consult his decision with her first.

'Oh, Jill. Sometimes you can be so dull. She's going through a lot. A new car would mean much for her. Besides, it did not cost me a lot and I could get what I want,' he said.

Horace thought about his wife's terrible business acumen. It was evident that she was raised in privilege, ignorant about how to create her own wealth.

‘Get you what you want? What can she possibly give you? Vernon is in jail and Edith is a simple housewife. Cloris successfully earned a scholarship and intends to go abroad for study so she’s probably someone who could be useful. But her scholarship turned to be part of Vernon’s penalty. So what on earth can Cassandra give you? Even her managerial position was a gift from you!’

Jill grew angrier as she spoke. The way she saw it, Cassandra brought nothing to the Tang family but troubles, despite of a few business cases she earned. In a way, she was a burden to the Tangs!

‘Indeed, she does not have much. But right now, she has Vernon’s company,’ Horace answered darkly.

A Terrible Presentiment

Horace’s eyes glinted and a faint smile signifying triumph crept up his lips.

‘Vernon is an incapable businessman. After keeping his company running for so many years, he failed to sustain it and resorted to fraud. Now he’s in prison and has no way out of it. He’s just lucky he has a capable daughter willing to go to such lengths to save his company,’ Horace remarked.

Narrowing his eyes, he gazed at the door from which Cassandra had left. ‘She’s such an innocent woman. As a young person, she had the audacity to spare no effort to protect her father’s hard work,’ he thought to himself.

However, Horace had everything well planned.

Though the Qin Group was on the brink of collapsing, it still had a chance of things turning to their favor, if managed properly.

Four years ago, he infused the much-needed investment into the Qin Group, which paid him back soon with a great deal of interest.

Because Vernon treated his employees well, his people were loyal to the company. From what Horace knew, currently, all the managers of the company were still struggling to keep it alive, refusing to leave for better opportunities.

That was, perhaps, Vernon's greatest asset of his lifetime. It was just that, he would unfortunately have no more chance to utilize it.

At this point, Cassandra had no one to back her up except for the Tang family. The only thing Horace had to do was gain her trust. By then, if he offered to help her run the company, he would probably obtain her consent. After that, he could then acquire Qin Group by the name of 'helping' at an unfairly low price. That would be an almost no-risk business deal.

After reading the confidence and victory on Horace's face, Jill finally realized what was on his mind. Her smile turned cunning.

'Well, it seems that I should be nice to her for the time being!'

As she grinned, Jill calculated what she could do to earn Cassandra's trust quickly.

'Don't be so suspicious. Act like your normal self. If you abruptly change your attitude towards her, she'll be skeptical.'

With a wave of his hand, Horace made sure to explain to her not to make a rash act.

A clearer plan began fermenting in his head. Instead of pressing Cassandra directly, he would slowly take control over her with little tricks.

On the way to the Tang Group, Cassandra was driving her new car under the beaming morning sun. It was late winter, after which, early spring would arrive, just as her state of mind. However, she didn't notice that some dark clouds were approaching the seemingly peaceful city.

'Manager Qin, the Chairman told us that the amusement park project was transferred to another architect...'

'Manager Qin, the Chairman said that you would only need to work on the small cases of our regular clients. The other cases have been disseminated to other architects of the department...'

'Manager Qin, the Chairman...'

When she asked for things to be done, these were the responses she received. It was strange that just within a few days, the cases she was supposed to be in charge of were all assigned to various designers while she was left with the rather unimportant and trivial ones.

Horace indeed told her to rest, but surely not to the point that she had almost nothing to do.

Finally, Cassandra couldn't bear with her idle status in the company and requested Horace for some work to

'Do you still want to run away after what happened last night?'

Their relationship changes overnight. She tries to keep her distance from him, while he comes closer and closer.

Spoiling her, he gives her everything she desires. His only wish is to keep her around. The whole world is envious of what she has.

‘Never rush in a relationship,’ she says calmly.

questioned.

The assistant had just handed him a proposal which made his brows furrow in confusion.

He was only away for a few days, and all of Cassandra’s major projects had been transferred to other architects. Even the amusement park project, which he had promised to give her so firmly, was also assigned to someone else.

‘Yes, Mr. Luo. the Chairman said that Manager Qin had been over-burdened these days, so he wanted to give her workload to other designers,’ the assistant duly reported.

Though he stated Horace’s order with a polite smile, he could feel the chill in his chest as he sensed the grave anger of the man in front of him.

In truth, the entire company knew how important Manager Qin was deemed by the CEO. Now that Cassandra’s true identity of Rufus’s sister-in-law was uncovered, they had no more doubt about Rufus’s special treatment towards her. They were family, after all. It was expected that he would provide his sister-in-law with the best resources.

Still... Why would the Chairman transfer so many projects away from Manager Qin ?

Being a skilled architect, Cassandra had just won third place in an international architectural design competition and practically served as

the walking advertisement of the company. Why would her cases be taken away from her at such a crucial time ?

Knowing what a calculative businessman Horace was, Rufus was certain that he wouldn't make such a decision unless the profit was worth the risk it bore. For quite some time, he hadn't been getting involved in the Tang Group's business, so there must have been hidden intentions behind his abrupt intervention.

'You can go now. Just leave the documents on my desk,' Rufus ordered with a cold face, the creases on his forehead deepening.

After the assistant left, Rufus made a call.

'Find out all of Lionel Tang's recent routines. I want to know if he has been staying with Ivy at home for this period. I want to know who he's been contacting!' Rufus strongly demanded.

After the call, a terrible presentiment started surfacing from his heart.

Just like a drop of ink in clear water, the presentiment diffused slowly through his blood, to his chest, his limbs, his brain, until it finally engulfed his entire body...

A Lunch

Cassandra had always convinced herself that as long as she indulged herself in working hard, things would become better.

For her not to be a person who couldn't earn her living and be dependent on others, she went to Rome to study architecture and design.

While some of her classmates were shopping, dating and partying, Cassandra stayed in the library, studying piles of thick books about architecture.

Cassandra, as one of the few Asians in college, consistently scored higher than her classmates and won the full scholarship. She was studying at one of the prestigious schools in Rome without spending a penny.

In one instance, she had beaten some famous designers and won a prize in a design competition when she was still a college student.

When she was employed by the Tang Group, no one really trusted and respected her. She was so young and inexperienced. Everyone wondered how she could be the manager of the design department of the Tang Group. Cassandra ignored all those criticisms. She had just kept her mouth shut while busy signing contracts one after another.

There was a two-hour lunch break in Tang Group. During the break, everyone in the office would gather together and get out to grab some food. Cassandra, however, would always take a snap, order something to takeout and then get back to work right after lunch.

She was never late or got off work early for no reasons. Instead, she always worked late, determined to give her clients a perfect design.

She worked very hard these past years, thinking that her life was getting better and better gradually. However, now she felt exhausted. She didn't know whether she could carry on with her way of life.

'Cassandra, some senior executives of your father's company came to our house today. They asked me about my plans. They said if the business volume couldn't recover, they might resign,'

Edith called Cassandra during the lunch break. She sounded so nervous on the other end of the phone that Cassandra could even imagine her anxiety without seeing her.

‘I see, mother. I will go to dad’s company tomorrow and talk to them. Please don’t worry.’

When she hung up the phone, Cassandra bent over the desk and sighed, helpless.

She felt stressed and drained.

Cassandra thought the prize she won in the competition could support herself for a while. However, Horace gave all her cases to the other designers and she couldn’t even fight for that. Otherwise, people would think her as a self-centered and arrogant manager who would take all the credits and didn’t give opportunities to others.

She was so annoyed.

Suddenly, the door opened. Victor walked into her office, with a food container in his hand.

‘Good afternoon, Manager Qin. Mr. Luo asked me to bring you this.’

Victor walked towards her desk and put down the food container and left. Victor’s timing was just perfect. Cassandra was hungry and she was glad that someone sent her some food.

She opened the container, the meat dishes and vegetables all looked tasty and smelled better than the takeout she used to order.

Fried potatoes with green pepper, stewed pork trotters...everything looked mouthwatering.

Cassandra could see that Rufus had put a lot of

Falling from nobility, Zen Luo became a humble slave and served as a human punchbag for his former cousins. Inadvertently, he found a way to refine himself into a weapon and a legend started because of that. With a strong belief in never surrender, he strove for revenges and pursued big dreams. Warriors from various clans contended for hegemony and the world was stirred. Relying on the body that was comparable to a powerful weapon, Zen beat his numerous enemies on his way to the immortality. Would he succeed eventually?

a talkative person and he hadn't quite recovered from the embarrassment that he had made a silly mistake just now. Stella scared him and he didn't know what to say.

He opened his mouth, but nothing came out. It made Stella suspicious.

She took a glance at the dustbin and saw the food container. Strangely, questions on her mind were beginning to form.

'Is it broken? Why did Victor throw it away?'

Stella wondered. But she didn't show her suspicion.

'Let's go. Let's go for a walk. It's good to walk after lunch, isn't it?'

Stella had a talent in engaging people naturally. Although she and Victor were not that close, she knew that he was a nice person. He was just introversive and looked cold. He was the kind of person who was serious in manner and speech.

Stella held his arms and slowly walked back to the company with him.

'What did you have for lunch?'

She looked at Victor and asked indifferently. She wanted to find some clue from his face.

‘Just takeouts.’

Victor stiffened since Stella was holding his arms. He looked extremely unnatural.

Stella, however, didn’t believe him at all.

’Takeouts? I’ve never seen a takeout in such a large nice food container. What a waste just throwing it away!’

Stella kept on thinking about this on her way back to the company. Glancing at her wristwatch, she realized that she still had ample time for the office hours hadn’t begun yet. She decided to go find Cassandra.

Cassandra didn’t have any projects to do lately. Stella was afraid that she might not get used to it.

She pushed the door and walked into the office quietly. Cassandra was still sleeping at the desk. She seemed to be in deep sleep.

Indeed... Cassandra really had nothing to do!

Stella walked closer to her and noticed a white card paper.

She peeked at the card and read it, ‘Enjoy your meal and take some rest.’

The creases of wrinkles on Stella’s forehead increased in confusion. The handwriting was good and neat. She knew for sure that it was a woman’s handwriting for she had some training on chirography.

'Who is this woman that has written the note to Cassandra?' she wondered.

What s Her Name

This was perhaps the first time that Cassandra was dreaming during an afternoon nap. She'd fallen asleep in a distorted position in the office chair.

Time flew fast in her dream. Seasons changed in seconds. One second it was summer; then, autumn; next instance, winter. As she stood there looking at the leaves and light change around her, a shadow accompanied her. She recognized it to be Rufus, standing next to her, through the tumultuous changes.

The spring flowers were beautiful and so were the fallen autumn leaves. The winter snow glistened so beautifully it stunned her.

She looked at Rufus through flying hair in front of her eyes, grabbed his hand and walked in the snow. Their heads were covered in gently falling snow, making it look like they had grey hair. It looked like they were a couple grown old together. Dreams often, were considered to a method of wish fulfilment.

Cassandra always believed the idea of two people in love growing together was the most beautiful and romantic thing in the world. She had always imagined to be with someone who she could share this with. Before she could enjoy that imagined reality in her dream, Stella entered the office.

Cassandra opened her eyes, perturbed by the slight sound of the door closing behind Stella. She had always been a light sleeper and woke up very easily. She raised her head and saw Stella looking down at her.

‘Oh... Stella. What’s the matter?’

On finding it was her best friend who had entered the room, Cassandra let down her guard, slid back in her chair and rested her head on the desk again. She was still sleepy.

‘Whose is this from?’

Stella asked, waving a white paper card at her, confused.

Cassandra got alert the moment she saw the card. Her eyes widened in surprise and panic took hold of her for a second.

‘Oh, I have no idea. Maybe someone dropped it unintentionally,’

Cassandra said, taking the card from her and throwing it in the trash bin under her desk. There was still a slight hint of panic on her face.

Stella had always been a careless person. But Cassandra’s unnatural behavior was so obvious that even she found it strange. She could tell when her friend was nervous or trying to hide something.

As Stella glanced around the office, her eyes landed on a round trace of water on Cassandra’s desk, It looked like something had been placed on the desk, which left some water behind.

The size of the circle looked quite familiar. It looked exactly like the size of the container Stella had seen in the trash can!

Stella furrowed her eyebrows, recalling how nervous Victor was when she ran into him and how Cassandra had a similar reaction. Something was surely going on between those two. Or was it a mere coincidence?

Stella had always sensed Victor treated Cassandra specially. One time, he would even put lumps of sugar in her coffee himself.

And today, as per Stella's instinct, he'd bought lunch for Cassandra.

What was even more surprising was he had even tried to destroy the evidence by throwing the container away, to keep this a secret.

Something truly was fishy. Could it be that Victor had feelings for Cassandra?

To add to Stella's wonderment and suspicion was the white paper card. Perhaps, it was from Victor, which was why Cassandra got all nervous about it? Was she trying to keep this whole episode with Victor a secret from Stella, her best friend?

Honestly, Stella didn't think a sturdy and intimidating man like Victor would have such beautiful handwriting. It looked so elegant, like a girl's. She hadn't expected that but then again there really was no point dwelling on it.

She hesitated for a short while, staring at Cassandra with squinting, complicated eyes. She couldn't resist asking anymore. Finally, she let it

'Let's go and register our marriage on your birthday!'

Marrying Daniel should have been her best birthday gift, but everything was ruined the moment when she caught him sleeping with another woman on the day before her birthday.

'He's going to marry that woman! She... was my best friend!'

tella? I can hardly think of anything! To be honest, I didn't expect you to know him so well! I never thought he was your type!

Cassandra chuckled, teasing her, no more afraid of her secret being out.

'He... He is not my type at all!'

Stella denied, almost too quickly. Despite that, a gorgeous blush took over her face. Any person with eyes could tell she was lying.

'Uh huh. Don't you lie to me! A little bird has told me you even cried on his shoulder at the concert!'

Cassandra smirked. It looked like she didn't plan to let this go so easily. It was such a rare sight to see a blunt, out-going person like Stella to blush like that! She really enjoyed to see this side of her friend.

'That... That was because the concert was so moving. The pianist was just so good, I got emotional,'

Stella tried to explain, but that only made it look like she was overcompensating. Cassandra could see how her eyes lit up as she dwelt on a thought in her mind.

'By the way, the pianist is famous around the world! She is so young and talented. Besides, she is very beautiful and stylish. Her personality is so appealing, you can't even imagine! You know, I didn't even want to go to the concert at first. I just went to finish that task. I didn't expect I would cry by the end. She was just that good, I tell you! At least, now I know good music can really touch one's soul and be overwhelming. Never will I ever complain about people who get touched by music.'

Stella's eyes shone with excitement as she told Cassandra about that concert. Cassandra could tell from the look on her face how much she had loved it!

'Really? She's so good she taught you to appreciate music? She must possess some magical powers! I remember you saying you'd rather just listen to some pop songs on your phone than go to a concert,'

Cassandra kept teasing her, with a wholesome smile on her face. It really was surprising the concert made Stella change her mind about Classical music.

'No kidding, Cassandra. If you get the chance, do go to her concert. She is stunning, like an angel! Watching her play is like admiring a beautiful painting. You cannot help but hold your breath!'

Cassandra's interest piqued manifold. Stella had never obsessed over any other female celebrity before. Usually, she would be the one judging them. Yet, here she was fangirling! It truly was surprising. The artist had to be amazing to trigger a response like this out of Stella!

'The pianist, what's her name?' Cassandra asked, curious.

You Are Part Of Tang Family

'I forgot...'

Stella closed her eyes trying to remember the name of the pianist. Unfortunately, despite her best efforts, nothing came to mind.

'You are so unreliable,' Cassandra teased her.

She wanted to laugh and cry at the same time.

But whenever she thought about the support that Stella had given her about her divorce with Lionel, Cassandra found herself instantly being filled with courage and determination.

A marriage for financial reasons instead of love was ridiculous, hilarious and tragic. It was imperative to save herself from the trap that she walked into.

Cassandra rose early the next day and prepared to travel to her father's company situated in the North District.

It was now being run by an old friend of Vernon's, Kevin Wang. However, he was unable to help as much as he would like to by this point.

As she was walking out to the garage, Cassandra saw Rufus.

He wore a relaxing smile on his face, welcoming her.

'How did you know that I am leaving?' Cassandra asked suspiciously.

She was sure that she did not share her plan with him.

'I can read your mind,' teased Rufus.

He was clearly not telling the truth, but still holding the door open for Cassandra, anyway.

Cassandra just shrugged with a smile. It did not make sense to reject a free driver, a free ride and the company of a more experienced business manager. She was actually quite nervous about her visit to the Qin Group, but with Rufus on her side, she felt more at ease.

He always seemed to appear when she most needed him even without her asking. The idea that there was someone looking out for her without her knowledge made her feel safe and grateful.

They drove for long hours and it was almost noon when they arrived at the Qin Group. Cassandra quickly got off the car and walked towards the office building, hoping that she could still catch Kevin Wang. Just as she entered the building, Kevin was on his way out.

Smiling, Cassandra was about to greet him when she was taken aback by the man that followed after him.

The man was tall and looked somewhat familiar. When she finally managed to make out who it was, she was astonished to find that it was Lionel!

She froze. Kevin also spotted Cassandra and stopped on his tracks. He seemed to look nervous.

'Why is Lionel here?' Cassandra thought.

Lionel, however, acted as if there was nothing unusual happening. He bypassed Kevin, who seemed to be currently glued to the floor, and walked right up to Cassandra. Casually putting his arm around her shoulder, he said affectionately, 'Cassandra, there you are! I have more or less sorted everything out with Uncle Kevin.'

He beamed at her with tender eyes. His expression convinced everyone else that they were a sweet couple. Cassandra was the only one left angered.

Unfazed, she asked, 'What is it that you have sorted out with Uncle Kevin?'

She intentionally continued to walk forward to subtly get rid of him.

When her boyfriend betrayed her, all light and joy was gone from Cherry's life. Deserted, bereft of hope, she married a man that she had barely met, but she had never expected him to be her ex-boyfriend's uncle.

Cherry thought that she had finally found her happiness, but she had no idea about the dark secrets that were bound to unfold and haunt her forever...

able. He even gave me a car as a gift! Now I know why, ' Cassandra thought. She finally saw the ulterior motive behind Horace's kindness.

It was obviously to let her guard down and remove her suspicions.

When Vernon was arrested, Edith approached Horace for help. He told her that his position would not allow him to help her directly, but he promised that he would ask his friends from the government to aid her and her family. Oddly, they were not able to offer much help when Cassandra approached the officials.

Cassandra did not allow herself to resort to begging the Tang family for their help because of her pride. Still, being a naturally kind and understanding woman, she assumed that Horace meant well. She bought his excuse about how his stature prevented him from doing things. It was only now that she realized how weak that rationale was.

If he were really sincere about helping Vernon, he could have just helped Cassandra with the money for her father's fine.

Instead, he gave her a car to give her the impression that he cared about her well-being.

Putting the puzzle pieces together, she saw how it all came down to Horace's plan to acquire the Qin Group.

'Well, Uncle Kevin, if you really want the best for Qin Group, you shouldn't hand it to an outsider. My father built this company throughout his life, it was everything to him. I am certain that he will dispute the decision to have his beloved brand changed from Qin to Tang,' Cassandra scoffed at Kevin.

She thought of everything that her father sacrificed for the company, and then looked at Kevin. It pained her so much.

'You shouldn't say that Cassandra. You might have forgotten that you are part of Tang family too,'

Lionel argued back, with his eyebrows creased.

Cassandra's words gave him a huge sense of loss. He did not want to admit it but with what he heard, it looked like Cassandra never saw herself as part of their family. The realization pained him gravely.

The Palace

Cassandra's sorrow turned to flaming rage after hearing what Lionel said to her.

She sacrificed a lot for Lionel and Ivy's benefit, even to the point of annoying Horace by telling him that she wanted a divorce. Then Lionel went ahead and said this? Was this what she got in return?

On one hand he showed consistently how much he fell for Ivy to win her sympathy; but on the other darker hand, he was poaching key business from Vernon's company.

'I have always seen you as family. What about you, though? Is this what I get for being so nice to you? Did you ever see me as family? You hide behind shadows and did everything in secret. You were careful enough not to let me know because you knew I would disagree. I was none the wiser on your dirty tricks. You bought the majority shares so dirtily. Do you want to devour the whole Qin Group? Well, you better listen then. As long as I am here living and breathing, you will never succeed!'

Cassandra radiated fury—a stark contrast from her usual self, which was peaceful and cautious.

She wouldn't hurt anyone else unless they tried to hurt her. 'I won't go easy on them. I will have to protect father's company,' thought Cassandra.

'Cassandra, calm down, will you? Why are you even angry? Just because the Qin Group was going to be acquired and merged, doesn't mean you lose it all. I want to remind you that you still have 40% of the shares! You'll still benefit from the company as long as it runs well. Why are you so stubborn?'

Lionel frowned and walked from side to side. He tried to convince Cassandra who right now resembled a startled kitten.

'Have you ever run risk assessments for the Qin Group? If it goes under, the damages could cause irreparable damages to the Tang Group,'

Rufus reminded in a icy tone after being silent in the sidelines.

He had a gut feeling that something was off about Lionel and secretly did some digging. Turned out he was right, Lionel had been in touch with the board of directors of the Qin group for quite some time now. That was when Rufus realized that Lionel wanted to take over the whole company.

Normally, Horace would have discussed the merger with Rufus before hand, since he was in charge of the Tang group now. But he didn't, which meant the father didn't have a shred of trust on his son after all. Instead, Horace had given the case to Lionel directly.

Rufus squinted his cold dark eyes. It seemed that Horace didn't have much confidence in him.

What Horace asked of him was to solve the current crisis in which the company was trapped in. Rufus succeeded in doing just that. Not only that, he did so well that he managed to convince the board to expand new markets as well.

But despite proving his capability, Horace still kept him away from key businesses of the Tang Group, such as this merger.

'Risk assessment? High risks come with high rewards. I had hoped you would understand such a simple rule.'

Lionel despised Rufus so much since he was always with Cassandra. One would thi

'Who does she think she is? I won't marry her even if she is the last woman on earth,' said Hiram Rong.

'Marry into a family with tens of billions of assets? How lucky I am! I won't be so foolish as to break off the engagement. At worst, I can receive money as part of the divorce settlement,' said Rachel Ruan.

Their great-grandfathers made a pact about their engagement a hundred years ago...

Her shares, that would save the company and there would be no need to let her mother know.

Cloris lay on the nearby sofa and fiddled with her phone. She was smiling and giggling every once in a while. It seemed like she was chatting with someone who made her happy.

‘Cloris, do you have a boyfriend?’

Cassandra asked after she observed Cloris’s sweet smile, the kind of smile you only see on girls who’re in love.

‘Nope. Just texting with a friend,’

Cloris answered coldly. It was obvious she didn’t want to breach the topic.

At that moment, her phone lit up after receiving a message.

‘Let’s hang out tonight, I will meet you up in the Northern District,’ it said.

Cloris’s heart fluttered with elation. She replied, ‘Okay.’ She even added a heart emoji.

Arthur snorted contemptuously as he received Cloris’s reply.

‘Women are so gullible. It’s easy to win their trust if you give them just the right amount of attention.’

Cloris, this isn't personal. Blame your sister for what's about to happen to you, ' Arthur thought in the deep recesses of his mind.

Cassandra arrived in Norway, three days later.

Mrs. Zheng resided in a castle of antiquity. It was located in the center of a lush, thriving forest. The place was shrouded with mystery, looking abandoned and forgotten.

Cassandra took a deep breath before she rang the doorbell near the massive door. Moments later, a butler came out.

'Miss Qin, my lady knows you are here. Please, come in. She is waiting for you in the hall,'

the butler bowed respectfully. It's was obvious he was a professional.

He led Cassandra inside. She was taken aback and swept with awe as she saw the interior.

This wasn't just someone's home. It was a full-blown palace!

The hall was adorned with priceless antiques. The paintings were of the classical style and the furniture looked like they could be traced back to the time period of Renaissance.

Amidst all the grandeur, a woman was sitting at center of the great hall.

The woman had bushy eyebrows and pink, plump lips. Her raven black hair cascaded down her shoulders. With her hands, she was stroking a Persian cat.

The cat had white luscious fur and a pair of large, clear odd eyes—one yellow; the other, blue. It purred as it curled on the woman's knees.

The woman looked at Cassandra with indifferent eyes, then stood up and walked to the stairs. Meanwhile, a middle-aged woman wearing a pair of glasses was coming down the winding staircase.

She was the wife of Mr. Gary Zheng, Whitney Qiu.

Whitney Qiu was somewhere in her forties. She had a very fair complexion. She was living proof that a comfortable life tended to make one age well.

Knowing that this must be the woman she was looking for, Cassandra immediately approached to introduce herself.

'Mrs. Zheng, nice to meet you. I'm Cassandra Qin, the eldest daughter of Vernon Qin,'

she said, beaming. She was doing a great job hiding her nerves. For some reason, she felt odd being in the castle.

'I know who you are. Mr. Li has told me that you were coming. It was clever to have him put a good word for you. Otherwise, I would not even consider seeing you,'

Whitney Qiu replied. Cassandra was confused. 'Who's Mr. Li?' she thought. It took her a second to realize that Mr. Li must be the mediator Rufus hired.

'This mediator must be very reputable to have this kind of influence, ' she thought.

Whitney looked down at Cassandra from the second step of the stairway. She had a way of making people feel so severely inadequate.

Coming to her senses, Cassandra recollected herself and managed a smile.

'Mrs. Zheng, has Mr. Li told you about the current situation of Qin Group? Right now, I am...'

She gestured Cassandra to stop before she could finish talking.

'Hold on. I do not want to hear about the shares my husband left. I assigned someone else to handle it. I am a woman who is not interested in business,'

she imposed. This made Cassandra feel very disappointed. Deep inside, she knew that Whitney Qiu only refused to cooperate because she was aware of the current situation of the company.

Still, a part of her did not want to believe that she came all the way to Norway for nothing.

'With all due respect, Mrs. Zheng, you seem to have misunderstood. I came to tell you news about my family, not really the company. It has been a while since we last met, I almost feel like I should call you 'Auntie'. Would it be okay for me to talk to you about my family, Auntie Whitney?'

Cassandra said sweetly. She decided to change her approach to address Whitney's avers

When her boyfriend betrayed her, all light and joy was gone from Cherry's life. Deserted, bereft of hope, she married a man that she had barely met, but she had never expected him to be her ex-boyfriend's uncle.

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eat bonuses.

Whitney was smart but chose to distance herself from people. Nevertheless, she began to feel at ease with Cassandra because of the memories she brought with her.

'In my memory, Courtney didn't like furry animals,'

Cassandra recalled. Her memories were a blur, faint and vague.

Most of them were from the small town where she grew up in. But she said this naturally.

'Strange. Why do I know what Courtney doesn't like? I don't remember her ever saying this to me. Did someone else say it?' she said, perplexed at her sudden recollection. She barely had memories of Courtney. How could she suddenly remember her very specific preference?

'She began to like cats after...'

the lady began, but could not seem to complete her story. She suddenly turned very desolate.

Occupied with her own thoughts, Cassandra failed to notice the sudden change in Whitney Qin's mood.

‘Mrs. Zheng, dinner is ready. Will your guest stay for dinner?’

the butler asked politely.

‘Yes, I will have dinner with Cassandra. Please bring Courtney’s dinner up to her chamber,’

Whitney said as she stood up. Then, she turned to Cassandra, ‘Try the food my cook prepared. He used to cook for the Royal Family and I spent an arm and a leg on hiring him.’

Cassandra was astonished. ‘A chef for the Royal Family?’

‘What is he doing here at dinner time? Shouldn’t he be cooking for them?’ she thought.

Finally piecing the information together, Cassandra began to notice clues that point to royalty in the Qiu’s castle-like mansion. With all the decor and paintings on the wall, the place would pass as a movie set.

‘This is interesting. Auntie Whitney seems to be a fan of the Royal Family!’ Cassandra was truly amazed.

The Person Sitting On Her Bed

The dining room was luxurious. It made Cassandra feel as if she were back in the Middle Ages.

The steak was perfect. Cassandra was so impressed and she had to express it.

‘Auntie, the chef you hired is incredible. This is the best steak I’ve ever tasted!’

she said before taking another bite.

Whitney couldn’t help but smile when she saw that Cassandra enjoyed her meal so much.

‘Courtney will not eat food cooked by anyone else,’ Whitney said.

This surprised Cassandra. She did not expect Courtney to be so picky. Then again, a picture of her cold face came back to her and Cassandra realized that it was, indeed, highly likely.

‘Is Courtney sick? She didn’t come down for dinner,’

Cassandra asked. To be honest, it would have made her feel better if she found out that the girl were just feeling unwell.

‘Courtney... likes to eat in her bedroom,’

Whitney replied with sorrow in her eyes. Talking about her daughter seemed to bring her pain. Cassandra felt as if she wanted to tell her many things, but was working hard not to.

A part of Cassandra wanted to bring up the business deal—the initial reason for she visit.

After much thought, she decided that it was best not to ruin the trust that Whitney had given her by bringing up something she explicitly said she did not want to talk about.

She would have to be patient. Besides, she doubted that the Tang Group knew where Whitney’s place was. As of now, she had an advantage.

Cassandra bid Whitney goodbye after dinner and waited for her ride back to the hotel. Suddenly, she received a call that the driver would not be able to come and get her.

‘Stay the night. I’ll ask the servant to prepare a room for you,’

Whitney offered. Then, she asked one of her helpers to clean the guestroom.

A stranger to Norway, Cassandra accepted the offer. She did not really have much alternatives.

She stayed in a room on the third floor, in the middle of a corridor.

Upon opening the door, she gasped, covering her mouth with her hands.

It looked like the princess bedroom every little girl dreamed of having.

The bed was European style with a frame carved with delicate patterns. The dresser next to it was decorated with flowers. It was so nice to look at. Even more so, to sleep in.

‘Do all the guest rooms here look like this?’

Cassandra asked the butler in disbelief. She could not believe what she was seeing.

‘Yes, they are all designed to look like rooms for princesses, but they all look different from each other,’

the butler replied.

‘Oh, may I peek at the other rooms?’

Cassandra asked the butler. She was so curious. These guest roo

‘Do you know what you did wrong? It’s alright if you just wanted to own me. But you should not have helped Molly leave me!’

When Brian learns the truth, there is no chance for Hannah to win his heart.

Molly, who wants to run away from Brian, seems to be the only one to blame for Hannah’s misfortune...

other coin. But again, she got nothing.

Beads of sweat began to form on her nose. She was determined to get the doll.

She opened her bag and took out all the coins. She inserted them into the machine one by one. However, no matter how many coins she inserted and how hard she tried, she ended up failing again and again.

Finally, she reached her last coin.

Little Cassandra looked at it in her palm. It was a little wet because of her sweat. After a little moment of hesitation, she finally inserted it.

The manipulator began to move. She aimed at her target doll and pressed the button.

The manipulator sunk, opened and caught the pony! Unfortunately, it fell again.

Cassandra felt very upset seeing her dream doll lying in the corner again. She took a last glance at her and turned around, ready to leave.

Suddenly, an older boy who looked like a high school student, walked towards the machine and inserted a coin.

The manipulator moved towards the white pony. It sunk and caught the doll.

Then it dropped the cute doll to the exit door of the machine.

The boy took out the pony and gave it to Cassandra. He said gently, 'There you go. Here is your unicorn. You don't know how to catch a doll. Next time try not to play this game. It will only disappoint you. Disappointment isn't a good thing.'

From what he said, Little Cassandra learned that the pony with a horn was called a unicorn.

She watched him disappear on the other end of the street as she held her new doll in her arms—her first doll in her life.

While she was having her sweet dream, Cassandra felt her bed sink.

She woke up immediately.

She opened her eyes. It took her a while to adjust to the darkness. Then, she realized that someone was sitting on her bed!