

## The Enchanted Night by LEIGH COBBETT Chapter 14

Inside the Tang mansion, the rooms were lit up brilliantly.

When Rufus and Cassandra returned home, they saw Horace and Jill casually drinking tea in the living room.

The older pair looked up. As soon as Horace spotted Rufus, he greeted him with a splendid smile and open arms.

“Rufus! Good to see you. Have you had your dinner already? Would you like to eat something?”

However, his enthusiasm was not well received. Rufus remained aloof and nodded briefly at the question. Cassandra, who had been hiding behind him, stepped out timidly, facing her in-laws with a forced smile on her face.

“Hi Dad. Hi Mom.”

Her voice came out timid. Seeing her, Jill shot up from the sofa, looking positively resentful.

“How is it that you two have come home together?”

Surprised to see them standing so close that their shoulders almost touched, Jill lashed out at Cassandra. Her blatant stare made Cassandra quiver with unease.

She had to look away in order to avoid further questions. Acting composedly was the only way to avoid exposing the truth.

“Well, I was hanging out with some friends tonight. I happened to come across Rufus at the pub’s exit. So we came home together. It’s no big deal.”

Her guiltless stance and smooth words amused Rufus greatly. A corner of his mouth curled up in a lop-sided grin as he realized that she had no qualms about lying to the faces of her in-laws. She was quite a skilled actress. However, he had no intention of staying back with Horace and wasting time, so he fixed his father with an indifferent look, simply announcing, “I am going upstairs.”

As he walked to the staircase, he cast a profound look in Cassandra’s direction. Then, without further delay, he bolted straight to his room upstairs.

Watching Rufus leave the room, Cassandra sniffed silently, deciding to retire to her room as well. However, Horace’s words stopped her in her tracks.

“Cassandra, it has been quite some time since you came home from abroad. I think it would be ideal that you go to work with Rufus tomorrow. You might need some time to understand how the company operates. I know you topped in your classes abroad. I believe you would make a difference to the company and its future.”

His words surprised her. She widened her eyes and stared back at her father-in-law wordlessly, wondering if she had heard him right. Horace seemed to have a sincere look in his eyes. She knew she couldn’t refuse his offer, as it was out of good intentions. She had no idea what would be in store, but she had to accept it anyway.

“Sure, Dad.”

Her acquiescence pleased him and he nodded at her in appreciation. On the other hand, Jill did not look happy at all. She stared at Cassandra with open hostility in her eyes, as if prying her daughter-in-law's mind to see if she was hiding something. She did not trust Cassandra.

“Well, good for you, Cassandra. Rufus just came to our family not so long ago. But you seem to be getting along with him rather well!”

Jill uttered the words from between her teeth. Her voice was not loud, but it had a hint of steel beneath it, and Cassandra successfully captured the warning in her tone. She lifted her chin and looked at Jill with her pretty eyes, not saying anything in return. She was not a fool. She knew what Jill was trying to imply. Jill looked suspicious and resentful. Cassandra secretly clenched her fists.

“So what is the harm in that? He has only just come here. There are a lot of things he needs to learn. Cassandra is his sister-in-law, of course she has a responsibility to show him around and teach him about our family business. Cassandra, please don't feel shy to help Rufus as much as you can.”

Horace threw Jill a stern look, finding her reaction over the top. It was good that Cassandra wanted to help Rufus feel more welcomed. Jill was sniffing for trouble where there was none.

“Nonsense. Cassandra came back not long ago herself. She is new to the business too. She doesn't know much about the company,”

Jill gri

tted her teeth and snapped back. As a woman, she was intuitive about these things. Cassandra gulped and lowered her head demurely.

“I don’t know my brother-in-law well. I just happened to run into him today. I think I’ll go upstairs now. It has been a long day. Good night, have a good rest.”

Cassandra sounded quite sure of herself, despite the fact that her palms were sweating under Jill’s gaze. Jill just rolled her eyes and snorted with derision. Then, she clutched Horace’s arm and sauntered to their room with him. Once they left, Cassandra exhaled softly. How long would she be able to hold on to her pathetic lie? Jill had her breaking out in a cold sweat just now. Cassandra shook her head as she marched upstairs. The overwhelming guilt in her heart would eat her up one day.

Cassandra put one hand on her chest, still shaken by Jill’s sharp misgivings. Taking a deep breath, she slowly pushed the bedroom door open. The room was shrouded in darkness. As she was about to switch on the lights, she felt the air in front of her shift as someone stepped in front of her. A powerful hand reached out and encircled her waist tightly. In the darkness, she heard a familiar voice snigger quietly.

“You never fail to surprise me. We have been so intimate with each other. Yet you dare to claim you don’t know me well?”

His voice gave her the shivers. She could feel sweat start to form on her smooth forehead, but she didn’t reach to wipe it off. In the pitch darkness, she heard the loud pounding of her heart ringing in her ears. Why was he in her room? What did he want? Did he actually get a kick out of giving her a hard time? Was that it? The way he kept pestering her was so uncalled for. She wished he would just leave her alone.

“Rufus, could you please go? Why can’t you just back off?”

Despite being fed up, she kept her voice low in order not to attract unnecessary attention in the mansion. On a silent night like this, even a

tiny sound could raise hackles. The last thing Cassandra wanted was for someone to find out they were alone in a dark room.

“Really? It seems to me that you are the one taking initiative here...”

He had hardly finished speaking before the room suddenly lit up. Rufus had switched on the lights. His eyes flashed triumphantly and he studied her face, patiently waiting for a response.

The sudden light almost blinded her. Cassandra had to blink a few times to adjust to it. When her eyes finally focused on her surroundings, she let out a gasp. It was not her room at all. She had totally made a fool out of herself by accidentally walking into Rufus’s room!

Deeply mortified, Cassandra opened and closed her mouth like a fish – not knowing what to say next. The tension in the room grew by the second. She wished she could just slip out this very instant. However, her feet seemed to no longer belong to herself. She scratched her temple and said, “Rufus, I think I walked into your room by accident. Sorry to bother you. I am leaving now.”

Cassandra gave him a trembling smile and tried to move back. She knew it was her fault this time. His overwhelming presence was making her increasingly uneasy. Carefully, she reached for his hand around her waist and tried to wriggle out of his grip.

She peeped at him from the corner of her eyes and was surprised to find a wide grin on his face. He was so strange. He was clearly not sleeping, but why did he turn off all the lights in his room while he was inside?

As if he could read her mind, Rufus sniggered softly and loosened his grip. This time, he decided to be kind and not tease her further.

As soon as she was released from his capture, Cassandra dashed to the door. She wrenched it open. However, just as she was about to step out, she saw Lionel walking in her direction. He hadn't seen her yet. Almost instantly, she made a decision.

She stepped backward and closed the door in haste. Her face had turned pale, as if she had seen a ghost. Swirling around, she bumped right into a hard chest.