

## The Enchanted Night – Chapter: 30 – 40

### She Missed Him

Cassandra's mind went blank. She blinked in confusion at the sudden hug. The young woman let go of her, her eyes shining with excitement.

'Don't you remember me? I'm Stella Mu. We went to high school together, remember?'

The woman's tone rose as she explained upon seeing Cassandra's bewildered expression.

Cassandra frowned and racked her brain for the name. Soon, a girl with pigtails who wore black-rimmed glasses materialized in her mind. Whenever that little girl grinned, her braces made an appearance.

'You are Stella Mu?'

Cassandra asked with hesitation. This young lady standing in front of her was so beautiful that it was hard to connect her to the girl with braces from her memory.

Stella beamed at her words, thrilled to hear that her friend remembered her. She reached out and touched Cassandra's hand ecstatically.

'Yeah, I'm Stella! Glad you remembered me! I didn't expect to meet you here at Tang Group. Gosh, we haven't seen each other for years. I haven't seen you since we graduated from high school. Where have you been?'

Stella talked on and on as if she never planned to stop. Cassandra realized that she hadn't changed a bit. Her friend was still as lively and talkative as before.

She was still surprised at meeting a childhood friend. 'I went to Rome to study. Came back not so long ago. You are so beautiful, Stella.'

Cassandra smiled at Stella, sighing pleasantly at the change in her friend.

'Oh,' Stella blushed. 'of course, you went abroad! I should have guessed. Why didn't you keep in touch? Have I ever told you that you were my idol in high school? You were so beautiful and scored so well in exams. I admired and envied you.'

Stella's excitement at meeting an acquaintance from years ago still hadn't dimmed. She wanted to catch up on everything they had been up to in the past several years.

Cassandra was a bit embarrassed. She gave Stella a smile and lowered her head. Time is cruel and strange. She had gotten engaged that year when she finished high school. Then, she went to Rome after getting married, without telling anyone.

Time in Rome had seemed to slow down. Her days were not as smooth as she had hoped for. She had endured a lot of loneliness in the foreign land. But eventually, she had made friends, and now she had left her social circle in the country behind.

Stella Mu was the first friend she had met after coming back to G City.

The two old friends soon got caught up in their conversation. They chatted for a long time. Cassandra learned that Stella was a fresh graduate and working in the marketing department of Tang Group. They

might not be in the same division, but at least now they were in the same company.

Cassandra and Stella became good friends in only a matter of days. Stella

It all starts on that fateful night.

When Ella, who is the dear sister of Samuel's best buddy, sneaks into the hotel where the drunken Samuel resides and gets pregnant...

'I don't want a divorce!'

'I don't want a divorce!'

'I did no such thing!'

Ella jumped on the bed and cried out. 'I don't want a scheming woman as my wife. Just sign the paper...

e she didn't exist. Something was different about him. A sense of strangeness engulfed her as she mulled over the possibilities.

There was a heated discussion going on before Rufus's arrival. However, once he showed up, the voices in the room hushed down. He walked over to the center of the table and sunk in the CEO's seat, looking around with distant eyes as he waved one hand to the assistant standing behind him.

The assistant understood his signal and turned on the projector in the conference room. Details of Tang Group's largest project, that they had signed this year, appeared on the large screen.

A few people in the room paled at the sight. Not one of them had suspected that Rufus had called the urgent meeting because of this.

Cassandra did not understand the intricate details of the project, but she sensed the atmosphere in the room turning for the worse. A deafening silence ensued.

‘For those who are responsible for this project,’ Rufus’s loud voice reverberated the hall, ‘you all can go to the finance department and draw this month’s salary. Then make your exit from this building. You are fired.’

His words were dispassionate but decisive. Nothing but coldness could be seen in his dark brown eyes.

In an instant, the relevant personnel all stood up from their seats, panic in their voices as they begged for forgiveness. Even Lionel’s face betrayed the horror he felt.

Others in the meeting room exchanged glances. Everyone knew that those were Lionel’s men. How could Rufus dismiss them without a second thought?

‘Get out right now!’

Rufus turned a deaf ear to their pleas. His eyes were narrowed to slits. The tension in the air was so thick that everyone found it difficult to breathe.

It’s said that a new broom sweeps clean. Was Rufus the new broom? Was this the start of his fight against Lionel?

‘They carried out all the work under my approval. I’m the one responsible. Mr. Luo. If you’re going to fire everyone involved in this case, am I included?’

Lionel probed provocatively as he sat up with his two hands on the conference table. His gloomy eyes stared coldly at Rufus, who was occupying the center seat.

With an insignificant smile on his face, Rufus raised his head slowly and tapped the table with his index finger.

‘The company had lost a large amount of money because of this case. They screwed it up. The solution they’ve provided was ineffective and only worsened the situation. I didn’t know that the staff at such a big company like Tang Group could be so incompetent!’ Rufus emphasized, creating an apprehensive atmosphere in the room. ‘However, it was not just about competence. Worst still, there are people attempting to take advantage of preferential treatments and fill their own pockets with the company’s money,’

Rufus added gravely without giving much attention to Lionel. His voice was low but stern and steady. He intended to present his ideas logically. Thus, everyone present could clearly understand his point and no one dared to say anything to oppose him.

Discerning Rufus’ words, Lionel’s face grew darker. Lionel narrowed his eyes at the few staff members, who had just been fired. They lowered their heads to avoid the furious eyes of their superior.

Until then Lionel realized that these people had been feathering their own nests. It infuriated him to think that he had no idea of what they had done. Realizing that he was somewhat in the wrong, Lionel sat down silently with a baffled expression.

‘So I guess we should call it a day. That’s all for today’s meeting. As for you guys, what you have done has violated the laws. The legal department will decide what to do with you. I hope that everyone in the company could learn a lesson from them. Anyone who will dare to make the same mistakes in the future will be punished severely,’

Rufus emphasized, with a demanding voice. He wore a light smile on his face and his brown eyes looked less drained. His aura bore an air of authority, which no one dared to challenge.

It was like beating the dog before the lion. Lionel, as the vice president of Tang Group could say nothing to argue with Rufus.

Casting a resentful glance at Rufus, Lionel stood up and took the lead in leaving the meeting room.

He knew that Rufus was trying to use this incident as a pretext to crack down on him. But he was not a man that could be easily defeated.

Then everybody left the room in succession. Rufus sat still in his seat. Cassandra, on the other hand, slowly gathered the papers on

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...

t sure whether she understood Leo right. But before she could think about confirming the information, Leo was already gone. She picked up the

ticket on the desk and frowned at what she saw. It was indeed true that she had to leave for a business trip with Rufus.

Imagining Rufus' face, she became nervous. She convinced herself that they were just going for work, but that couldn't relieve her tension.

On the other hand, Lionel had just returned to his office. He furiously shoved all the items off the desk, littering them on the floor.

'Shit!' he cursed loudly.

His secretary was too scared to move and just stood by silently. Lionel's face turned red out of anger. He was so furious of his subordinates. They did something against the law and dragged his name through mud. Rufus found out about it and took advantage of the situation to push him down the ladder of the company's totem pole. That was a solid slap on his face.

The slap in return taught him a lesson.

'Keep a close watch on our staffs. Tell them that if anyone dared to misbehave behind my back, they would have the worst days of their lives. I'll make them suffer!'

Lionel shouted at his secretary as he kicked over the bonsai to the ground.

'Yes, Mr. Tang. I'll assure you such case will never happen again,'

the secretary nodded, hesitant to say something more.

'What are you waiting for! Get out!'

Lionel shouted again. His anger was once more triggered by the secretary. But the secretary stayed and slowly said something. Her words were stammering.

‘Mr. Luo has taken over the case. He will take the flight tonight to meet with the partner. And, and, and Manager Qin will go with him...‘

The secretary closed her eyes, not daring to see the towering rage brewing on Lionel’s face.

An Unexpected Kiss

When his secretary finished, Lionel squinted his eyes, moping.

His secretary knew the relationship between Cassandra and Lionel. Lionel, who had stamped with rage, now suddenly became quiet. He stood there, pulling his vexed expression together. He didn’t say a word because he seemed to have something on his mind.

‘When, exactly?’ he asked.

Lionel barely made it to the sofa by the French window, then plopped his tired body onto it. It was impossible to guess how he was feeling because his voice had gone soft.

‘8 o’clock tonight,’

the secretary replied. Now she finally had the courage to lift her head to look at Lionel, but cautiously with fear.

Lionel asked no more. He stretched his arms to both sides of the sofa. He seemed to think deeply about something or even be contriving some sort of plot.



The night was especially dark. But as a white Bentley drove to the airport, neon lights lit up the roadways, and the whole city sparkled and dazzled with life.

Cassandra had been notified to get into Rufus's car when she got done with work. She got in and sat in the back seat with him. She didn't have time to change out of her business suit into something more casual.

On her lap was a mess of business files. She read them, straining her eyes, using the lights outside the car to help her read. She squinted a lot to catch key words. Rufus had fired the relevant staff. Since she was not involved in this project, she now had to fit herself in and get familiar with the case.

Rufus relaxed beside her, looking dashing as always. He fixed his gaze on Cassandra, who was quietly absorbed in the documents. He didn't disturb her. He just sat there, watching her quietly.

She seemed to sense his burning gaze, so she lifted her head. When their eyes met, she felt an immediate, irresistible palpitation of her heart.

To break the uncomfortable gaze, she darted her eyes to view the scenery outside the window. 'Why can't I focus when Rufus is sitting next to me?' she thought.

'Are you afraid to be with me on a business trip?' Rufus blurted out.

He couldn't help but inch his body closer to her. His low, magnetic voice lingered in her mind, making her heart beat faster.

'Not at all. It's just a business trip,' she answered.

She tried desperately to erase the panic from her face, to make herself look fearless. Subconsciously, she started to rub her hands on the documents in the files.

‘Don’t waste your time reading those. Just ask me anything you want to

‘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...

turned sour, though. A burst of indignant hatred always rushed into his body whenever he thought of his mother. He had loved his mother more than anything or anyone in the world. He nearly died emotionally and spiritually when her life was stolen from this earth far too soon. As long as he was alive, he would never let anyone involved off the hook.

‘...Ouch.’

Rufus left his evil thoughts at the sound of a soft voice. Cassandra had just awoken. Oops! Rufus realized that he had pressed against Cassandra’s hair accidentally when he was ruminating about his mother.

As Cassandra awoke and found her head against Rufus’ shoulder, she immediately sat upright on her side of the seat, coughing mildly for a quick distraction. She was too embarrassed to look in Rufus’s direction.

‘Cassandra,’

She probably expected a response to the awkward situation they'd found themselves in, so he finally called her name.

With coy surprise on her face, she slowly turned to look at Rufus with her bright blinking eyelashes.

She could suddenly feel the evil emanating from the man next to her. Rufus now looked different. His eyes grew fierce, evil but passionate.

When she realized he wasn't going to talk anymore, Cassandra broke the silence. She asked him with long eyelashes blinking, concern apparent in her tone, 'What's happening?'

Rufus's eyes grew wide, as if holding in a great secret. In a blink, he lifted her chin gently, bringing her lips to the edge of his, biting slightly. Then his tongue dove in as he gave her the most fierce kiss of her life. The moment disoriented her a bit. How could she regain her composure after such an unexpected kiss?

**In The Bathroom**

As the night grew freezing cold, Cassandra and Rufus shared a kiss that burned passionately.

Cassandra blanked out by the overwhelming passion she felt. She could feel nothing but the burning desire of the ardent man. With her eyes wide open, she gave him no resistance and just let him do whatever he wished.

His mouth covered the fullness of hers and they were biting and exploring each other's lips. Cassandra didn't want that to stop. Rufus,

however, let her go for he could no longer catch his breath. He looked at her so intensely that he was still biting his lips savoring the taste of the lady. The woman was left bewildered. The kiss felt so long and so pleasing up to the point that she couldn't remember what she was doing.

'We're here,'

the man whispered in her ears. Their bodies were pressed against each other. They were so intimate that when the man spoke with a low and charismatic voice, the woman felt totally elated. Looking at her eyes, he couldn't hide the mirth and pleasure he felt deep inside.

It was then that Cassandra realized what had just happened. Feeling the intense heat and the intimate position they were in, she gave him a gentle push and cursed in a cute voice, 'Bastard!'

Her voice was mixed with anger and shame. Even though she was cursing him, deep inside she knew she enjoyed the feeling. Despite the fact that it was too embarrassing for her to admit, she loved the way Rufus kissed her. She hated the idea that she liked the kiss and wanted more of it.

'Why did I even let the kiss happen?' she asked herself.

Escaping from the strange thoughts, she quickly got off the car and rushed into the hotel, totally ignoring him who was just following her closely. Her lips were quivering as an aftermath of the torrid kiss.

'Cassandra, what have you done?' The question kept on bugling her mind.

Rufus who was just walking behind Cassandra, casually with his hand inside his pockets. He couldn't help smiling at the sight of her murmuring to herself.

For him, the night became more charming and interesting because of this woman.

Inside the deluxe room of the hotel, sprinkles of hot water from the shower trickled down onto the floor.

Cassandra immersed herself in the hot water, letting the water flow from her head, to her face, down to her breasts, her waist, and her legs. The water was way hotter than the normal bathing temperature but she didn't seem to mind. She felt numb and careless.

She was merely standing there staring blankly at the floor. Her mind was preoccupied with the earlier kiss and the emotions

'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!'

Mr. Luo, I have knocked at the door of Miss Qin's room for several minutes and there was no response.'

Upon hearing the bad news, the panic that he managed to contain engulfed him. His face turning bleak, he hurried back to her room.

As he knocked at the door incessantly, he ordered the waiter to get the spare access card from the reception.

'Cassandra, are you inside?' he shouted out loud. 'Open the door!'

Now his impatience and worry heightened, and his knocks on the door grew stronger and louder. However, the response from inside the room was still dead silence.

It didn't take long for the waiter to retrieve the access card. Narrowing his eyes, he soon opened the door and entered the room in a swift motion.

Cassandra wasn't in her bedroom.

Standing in her empty room, he was swallowed by his anxiety and worry.

The vague sound of flowing water reminded him of something. Hastily, he rushed to the bathroom and knocked at the door.

'Cassandra, are you inside?' he shouted.

There was again, no response.

The man felt something was wrong. Forgetting about the possibility that she could still be showering, his anxiety compelled him to open the door without her consent.

Blows of hot steam surged out, making him frown. Amidst the water vapor, the woman was nowhere to be found.

His face turned grimmer, and heat was spreading across the room. His calm composure was gone and was replaced by a nervous panic.

'Hmm, it's so hot. So hot...'

His visions were clouded by the steam so he hadn't noticed that someone was lying on the floor. It was her voice, weak and vulnerable; he knew it

was her. Hearing her voice made him assume that she was safe and wiped all his worries away.

Revive the Old Romance

The windows of the bathroom were misted up with condensation. With his eyebrows scrunched up, Rufus looked at the sight in front of him. He picked up the bath towel hanging on the rack and took a step forward.

When he saw that Cassandra was about to fall asleep on the floor, his face blackened, hiding concern in its depths. He bent down and covered Cassandra's body with the towel in his hands, before lifting her up from the floor and into his arms.

Still in a daze, Cassandra felt her body leave the floor. She realized that someone was cradling her in a warm embrace. An intoxicating scent penetrated her nostrils.

She subconsciously clutched the man's shirt in her grip and unconsciously shook her head. Her mouth parted and the words that came out were vague and fragmented, making minimal sense. Rufus couldn't figure out what she was saying.

Looking at her state, Rufus guessed that she had suffered from anoxia while taking the shower. The temperature in the bathroom had been far too high. He felt suffocated even as he had e

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She was in a trance, but she could still tell that the man here was Rufus.

She felt a flash of fear, but relaxed instantly. She was utterly secure in his presence.

Given her identity and her relationship with Rufus, she could hardly admit to it. Nominally, she was his sister-in-law. Last time in Rome, she hadn’t known who he was. How could she make the same mistake again now, when his true identity had been made clear to her?

‘Do you want this or not?’

Rufus was smart enough to know where this was going. Words weren’t required for what was going to happen next.

But he would still respect her choice, so he waited for an answer. His eyes were still locked on hers...

Bleeding Red

Cassandra lay in bed and looked into Rufus’s eyes. He hovered over her as his husky voice called out her name, the emotion in it evident.



‘Cassandra.’

Rufus lowered his head further, still gazing into her eyes.

She bit her lower lip softly and frowned.

Rufus saw her lips twist in pain and lifted the quilt that covered her body. A scarlet stain marred the sheets.

His eyes shifted once again to the woman in bed who groaned out in pain. Instantly, he knew what the problem was – she was on her period. The desire in him was snuffed out like the flame of a candle.

‘My belly hurts.’

Cassandra lay huddled up on the sheets, still feeling hot. She couldn’t control the reactions in her body as her abdomen squeezed in pain once again, and the heavy period leakage made the already scarlet stain even deeper. Rufus’s face darkened as he gritted his teeth in frustration.

It had been the beginning of a wonderful night. Of course, her period decided to make an entrance and interrupt them at a most crucial moment.

Cassandra was fully awake at this point. The sharp pain in her belly overrode the desire she had been feeling previously. From the corner of her eyes, she saw Rufus still standing and watching her by the bedside. Pissed off at the motionless man, she grabbed hold of a pillow next to her and slammed it in his face.

‘Oh god, why are you still standing there? Go and get me a sanitary napkin immediately!’

Rufus blanched at her audacious request. She must be kidding. It was atrocious of her to demand that he buy her a sanitary pad!

‘Fine,’ he said in a low voice, not revealing his true thoughts.

Even if it was ridiculous, Rufus had no option but to go out and get the pad. It would be even more irresponsible to keep her bleeding on the bed like that, without offering any help.

The entire episode had discomposed him.

Rufus grabbed his jacket and left the room, glancing at her with a dark expression on his face.

After he left, Cassandra got up from the bed slowly. She wrapped herself in the thin blanket and walked into the bathroom, almost doubling over in pain.

After a while,

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...

ink lip gloss and glided it across her lips carefully. Suddenly, her hand trembled, making the lip gloss slide to the outside of her lips. Cassandra stared at the pink stain with a frown. It reminded her of last night.

Rufus had moved her into a new room, but It was clear to her what was about to happen last night - they nearly had sex again. Fortunately, her period came right on time and prevented it from happening.

Cassandra felt ashamed when she remembered her response to Rufus's desire. It was quite mortifying to get a period right when they were about to have sex. He was probably shocked to see the messy scene. She winced at the prospect of seeing him again.

She slept with Rufus in Rome, but had been embarrassing herself in front of him ever since they met again.

Cassandra decided that she ought to restrain herself.

It was difficult to be composed around Rufus, but she could behave herself. She twirled the lip gloss in her fingers and stared at her reflection in the mirror absent mindedly.

A sudden knock on the door interrupted her self-reproachful musings.

‘Cassandra, it is time to go. Please get ready.’

It was Rufus! She was shocked to hear his voice and rose up from the dressing chair in panic.

Although Cassandra had butterflies in her stomach, she had no option but to pretend to be composed. Taking in a deep breath, she straightened her clothes and walked up to the door.

*From A Girl To A Young Woman*

In the five-star ballroom, among the lively chatter, Cassandra, with her superb insights and ideas, unexpectedly closed a deal that few had expected would go through.

Even Rufus started to admire Cassandra. After coming out of the hotel, the woman still felt embarrassed about last night's fling. However, Instead of talking about it, they drove straight to the party.

'Miss Qin, you're indeed the most unique designer I have ever seen, and your ideas are refreshing. I had already given up the collaboration with Tang Group, but your insights have rekindled my desire to work with them,'

holding a glass of wine in his hand, the boss from the collaborating company did not hesitate to praise Cassandra and said.

Cassandra lowered her eyes, her face showing a light but sweet smile. She was not good at handling the elation of such an occasion.

'I'm flattered. Thank you for giving Tang Group another chance,' she answered in her natural courteous manner. 'I will do my best to carry through it.'

With the echo of colliding wine glasses, the rising sound of a piano started to play in the ballroom. Turning away, Cassandra immediately met Rufus's gaze.

The throbbing of their hearts in that moment of glory was synchronized. They had finally completed a major task together.

Standing next to her, Rufus's face beamed with a satisfied smile, his eyes lighting up with appreciation.

This woman always looked confused in a lovely way. However, in the workplace, she looked calm, mature and intelligent, which surprised Rufus a lot.

‘Mr. Luo, we look forward to a successful collaboration. Miss Qin is a really gifted, intelligent woman. I think you two are a match made in heaven,’

The boss again joked. In the process, he took note of Rufus and Cassandra’s moment of interlocking gazes upon each other.

‘Mr. Wang, we are not...’

Being praised like that made Cassandra somewhat uneasy. But before she could explain their relationships, Rufus interrupted, ‘Thank you, Mr. Wang, we also look forward to working with you.’

Then slowly, he raised the rim of the glass to his thin lips and guzzled down the red wine in large gulps. When he spoke, unmistakable joy crowned his husky, confident voice. A smile formed at the corners of his mouth and his deep eyes were set on Cassandra, with a hint of playfulness that made her blush.

‘Since our work here is done, can we return to G City?’

After the party, Rufus and Cassandra sat inside the moving black Lincoln Contin

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...

e you confidential information about our customers. That's against the company policy,' the receptionist explained to Lionel at the front desk. Eventually, Lionel had rushed to H City, and quickly arrived at the hotel where Rufus and Cassandra stayed.

'I don't need any information from you. You just need to tell me if they stayed in the same room last night!'

The mission was to track them down here and catch them in bed. Lionel seethed with anger while his assistant standing next to him had been calling Cassandra.

'I am sorry, we can't provide this either,'

A young lady at the front desk told him uneasily. She didn't recognize Lionel. Although she was somewhat apprehensive of his status, he made such unreasonable demands that she really could not do it.

'So where are they now?'

Turned down by the receptionist, Lionel sought to escalate the issue directly to the manager. This hotel was owned by a colleague and friend of his, so he had thought he could get whatever information he wanted from the receptionist using the connection.

By all means, he needed evidence and witnesses, proving that Rufus and Cassandra were really together last night. 'Once I get my hands on those information, I could easily get rid of Rufus and Cassandra, ' he thought in hubris.

But why did he feel so uncomfortable and angry when he thought about the affair between Cassandra and Rufus?

'Mr. Tang, the call went through.'

At this time, Harry, who had been making the call, handed the phone to Lionel. Blinking in surprise, Lionel quickly took the phone, from which came Cassandra's familiar voice.

'Hello, this is Cassandra. Who's calling?'

Behind Lionel's Back

In the VIP Reception Room of the Hotel

When Cassandra and Rufus entered the reception room, they saw Lionel already sitting there. He had been waiting impatiently, and the anger in his eyes was obvious.

After that call, Lionel discovered that his wife didn't even have his phone number saved. It greatly wounded his pride.

'What are you doing here?'

Cassandra stared at Lionel, her face puzzled. Rufus and she came here for the project. Why was Lionel here in H City?

A teasing smile hung on Rufus's thin lips. He was wearing an air of nonchalance, with elusive expression in his dark brown eyes.

Cassandra's words added fuel to the fire that already blazed in Lionel's heart. Fury flashed in his eyes. Lionel stood up from the sofa. A vicious sneer curled the corners of his mouth.

He glanced at Rufus who remained silent beside Cassandra before walking up to his wife. What he did next was unexpected.

Lionel slowly reached out and pulled Cassandra in his arms, right under Rufus's nose. Cassandra yelped with astonishment as she was slammed against his chest. She pushed against him furiously.

'You are my wife. Do I need a reason to come and see you, huh?'

Lionel whispered in her ear as he held her. His voice was low and gentle, and every word seemed to indicate his endless affection for her.

Cassandra knew he had something up his sleeve. 'Lionel, what are you doing? Let go of me!'

A mild blush appeared on Cassandra's cheeks. Embarrassed, she stole a glance at Rufus. For some reason, she felt guilty that he had to witness this and she tried hard to wriggle free from Lionel's hold.

'Come on, hon! We've been married for years now. You are so feisty in bed with me. I want to show off our for each other. Why do you feel shy in front of our brother?'

When Cassandra showed no signs of yielding, Lionel tightened his grip. Shaken and winded by his strength, she stopped struggling.

'Was this man neurotic? What was he talking about? Since when I was feisty and passionate in bed with him!? We've never even had sex before.'

'It's funny. If you're such a passionate couple, why is Cassandra resisting you?'



Rufus, the silent spectator so far, drawled lazily. Feigning indifference, he narrowed his eyes at them. Cassandra still looked uncomfortable in his arms. Lionel's deliberate provocation was ridiculous.

His eyes zeroed in on the hands t

Jean Wen sacrificed herself for family interests. Before her husband divorced her, she made every effort to please him.

'You are inexperienced in bed,' he said coldly.

'You! Give that land to my family, or I won't agree to divorce,' Jean replied furiously.

'Fine. It is exactly what I am thinking about,' he sneered.

ddenly, Lionel threw himself at Cassandra like a wild beast.

His wrath was unmatched. It almost turned his eyes blood red, and he extended one hand as if to slap the woman who had offended him again and again.

Cassandra simply closed her eyes, unafraid of what Lionel would do to her.

Rufus had been leaning against the wall and staring with his mouth agape at the scene in front of him. He rushed like a gust of wind to protect Cassandra. Flinging out his fist, he hit Lionel hard in the face.

Lionel was knocked down to the floor. Blood oozed from the corners of his mouth, and the metallic taste of it made him want to vomit.

Cassandra's eyes opened as if in a trance, and they immediately widened at the sight. Her eyes flicked towards the man standing protectively in

front of her. Her heart, that had long been frozen, began to thaw in the presence of his warmth.

Luckily, she had Rufus on her side.

Lionel was furious. He lifted himself up from the ground and raised a fist at Rufus. Rufus dodged him nimbly and grasped his hand, twisting it behind his back. Lionel howled in pain.

‘A gentleman must use reason rather than resort to force. You actually want to slap a woman. How could you still call yourself a man?’

Rufus lifted an eyebrow and bent one knee, kicking Lionel swiftly in the leg. ‘Ah!’ Lionel lost his balance and knelt in front of Cassandra. Beads of sweat were beginning to form on his forehead due to the sharp pain he felt.

‘Apologize!’

Rufus scowled, his voice resonating with quiet fury. He left no room for Lionel to disobey his command.

A Clown Being Watched

It is said that a man has gold under his knees – he should never show his weakness by kneeling before another person. Yet here Lionel found himself kneeling to Cassandra, but of course that was because Rufus had made him. He collapsed in a heap, rocking back and forth, trying to find a way to get up off the floor.

Lionel felt absolutely humiliated. He had never kneeled to anyone in his life. The awkward gesture rendered Cassandra startled. She gasped as she covered her mouth with her tiny hands, her eyes filled with surprise.

‘Rufus, forget it. I didn’t get hurt anyway. Let him go.’

Cassandra was afraid that the spectators would make mountains out of molehills. She wanted everything to be copacetic, for everyone to get along. She hated drama. At her words, Lionel broke free from Rufus.

But Lionel was furious and ready for a rematch. Between his impetuosity and Rufus’s machismo, they were poised to go at each other again. Fortunately, someone had called hotel security. Security guards arrived just in time to wrestle the two away from each other.

‘Rufus, this is not over! Don’t even think we are done. I’ll get you back for this someday, when you least expect it! And I swear it’ll hurt far worse than your weak-ass kick.’

Lionel glared at Rufus like a cat gone feral, aching to sink his teeth into some blood and flesh. He gnashed his teeth and pointed two fingers at Rufus as he turned to leave the hotel. Rufus, for his part, kept it cool as Lionel bolted his way out of the door.

Lionel caught one last look at Cassandra as he left. His foul mood had been brewing and demanded that he had to leave now, before his ego took anymore damage. So he looked away quickly and sped up his pace to get the hell out of there.

A sudden and unexpected farce had come to an end. After Lionel left, there was a worried look on Cassandra’s face and her eyebrows furrowed. She bit her lips subconsciously. Lionel wouldn’t give up easily this time.

He wouldn't stop until he ferreted out the truth. The man was on a crusade.

If Lionel didn't stop at this incident – if he didn't let go of Rufus during their scuffle and tracked down the clues – sooner or later, he would find out what had happened between Cassandra and Rufus that night in Rome. And if that actually happened, it would be a disaster.

‘Don't worry. I'm here with you,‘

Rufus said to Cassandra, hoping to bring her a bit of comfort. He could feel her anxiety and worry. Rufus gazed at Cassandra lovingly as he glided toward her. His gentle voice was magical, easing her fears.

Cassandra raised her eyes to meet

The Mighty Soldier King is back!

With the original intention to protect his beautiful boss, he accidentally gets involved in dangerous adventures and trouble.

Will our Mighty Soldier King be defeated? Or will he sweep away all obstacles?

my mother again, no matter who it is, he or she will pay for it!‘

He sounded oddly indifferent yet calm. But his voice was as scary and threatening as usual. Then Rufus looked at Cassandra and said to Horace, ‘When you accuse someone of screwing others over, you need to show some evidence. Clearly, Jill has no proof. What are you going to do with her? She just slapped Cassandra.‘

Rufus was smart. He didn't forget about Cassandra and placed the onus on Horace to deal with Jill's behavior.

Horace was embarrassed to look at Cassandra. But when he mustered the courage, he saw her with both hands on her face. Tears had welled up in her eyes, and Horace could see she was trying mightily to hold them back.

‘Cassandra, Lionel confided those things to Jill. Please don’t be mad at her. After all, she’s just concerned about the health of your marriage. Let me apolo...‘

Before Horace could finish the word, Cassandra stopped him, ‘Dad, I’m okay. There’s no need to apologize,’

Cassandra said slowly and forced a smile. She was tired of being stared at by the onlookers to the fight, so she walked to the stairs. Somehow, she had become a butt of the proverbial joke.

The secret Cassandra had been keeping to herself haunted her, torturing her constantly. She felt on the verge of collapsing. She was having trouble catching her breath. But then, she pulled herself together because she hated feeling this way: trapped in a secret she absolutely had to keep.

She wished this was all just a nightmare and eventually she would wake up happy. As she passed Rufus, he saw the tears in her eyes.

His heart sank, because he could feel her sadness and loneliness. He wanted desperately to be the one to erase her despair.

The night unveiled a dirty story. Lionel and Ivy were planning something.

‘I can’t believe that you actually went to H City,’

Ivy said, feigning indifference. But as Lionel watched her reactions, a fleeting hint of jealousy and her shortness of breath betrayed her.

‘What about it? Are you jealous? I only went there to get a scoop on Rufus, so that I can kick him out of the Tang Group more easily,’ responded Lionel.

The whole night, he appeared a little absent-minded. Every time he replayed the humiliating scenes of Rufus forcing him to kneel before Cassandra and kicking him out afterward, Lionel’s anger against his brother kept on boiling.

At heart, he swore that he would have Rufus paid the price!

‘So, did you find anything?’

Ivy’s question was tongue-in-cheek. She didn’t take Lionel’s words seriously.

In response to her teasing, he simply sneered, turned over in bed, and snuggled closer to her.

Wearing a sensuous shade of red lipstick, Ivy whispered into his ears, ‘Lionel. I’ll soon get the evidence.’

It was very late. The darkness was gathering outside, just like Lionel’s moods. It was time to hit the sack, hoping that tomorrow would be a better day. For the fretful day it had been, Lionel had feared he would

turn and toss for the better part of the night. But by some stroke of luck, he went out like a light and slept quite peacefully.

Early in the morning as the first rays of sunlight lit the horizon, Lionel convinced himself that the bright day would banish his melancholy and he would lift up his head again.

The eminent landmark of G City, the Tang Group towers, with its classy blue finish sparkled in the morning light.

In good time, Cassandra arrived at the offices and headed straight to her own department. The few staff members who had made it earlier welcomed her with congratulatory messages for her feat in sealing the multi-million dollar deal for the company.

‘Manager Qin, that was incredible! I can’t believe you made the deal, quick and easy. Someone is going to get a promotion,’ enthused one colleague.

‘Yeah, I’ve always believed Manager Qin’s credentials. With charisma, brains and go-getting attitude, Manager Qin deserves the position,’ chipped in another.

‘We feel privileged working under you. You have a lot for us to learn. Together we will make a difference to our company.’ added yet another.

...

The compliments were endless, overwhelming. By now, a small crowd had formed around her, among which were some unfamiliar faces. For a moment, she just stood there, not sure how to react. It began to feel awkward.

Thank goodness, someone intervened. ‘Ladies a

‘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...

perfect on you.’

When Cassandra hesitated, Stella picked up a long strapless white dress and asked her to try it on.

But Cassandra frowned. It was a low cut dress that would expose a little too much cleavage. That was not Cassandra’s sense of fashion, not to mention her marital status. Even with the problems she had been through, she still leaned somewhat on the conservative side. Besides, Horace and Jill would be at the banquet too. It would be more appropriate to carry herself with decorum.

‘Why are you hesitant, Cassandra? Go to the dressing room and try it on. We haven’t done our hair yet. You’d better hurry up.’

Seeing how much Cassandra was reluctant, she handed her the dress and nudged her anxiously.

At long last, Cassandra was literally pushed into the dressing room. Feeling embarrassed, she played along, to avoid unnecessary drama.

A few minutes later, she emerged from the dressing room. The floor-length gown looked stunning on her.



She was perfect, combining the dress, her minimalist make-up, and her shoulder-length hair. She could easily steal the show tonight.

‘Is it bad?’

she asked when she realized all eyes around were fixed on her.

The question brought Stella back to attention. Blinking, she came over and put a hairpin on Cassandra.

‘You know what, Cassandra? You’re gonna rock tonight, girl,’ she praised.

Then holding hands, she led Cassandra to the full-length mirror.

Perfectly, the dress accentuated Cassandra’s curvy shape.

‘Well...I’m not sure. Don’t you think it’s a little...sexy?’ she asked softly.

Through all the compliments, Cassandra still felt worried. What if she dressed like this and saw Rufus on the banquet...

Wait, what? What was she doing? Why was she thinking about Rufus?