

The Enchanted Night – Chapter: 41 – 50

Bring A Mistress To The Party

The party was held at a five-star hotel in G City. It was no ordinary party. This one was the biggest celebration ever hosted by the hotel. Everyone present was either enjoying the free-flowing wine or busy having small chit-chats. The atmosphere in the hall was starting to get overwhelming. The night was still young, but the hall was already crowded with guests who were enjoying the soft music in the background. Dressed in designer clothes, everyone was flaunting themselves to meet new acquaintances.

The party was a celebration of the success of a recent project which had made a huge profit for the Tang Group. The big win was the reason behind the smiles of almost everyone attending the party.

Instrumental piano music echoed in the big hall as Rufus entered the hall. Looking great in his jet-black tailored suit, he had all the reason to be happy. He was the one in charge of the project and played a crucial role in gaining that huge profit.

His dramatic entrance made every head turn towards his direction. He always fancied the color black, for him it was elegant and mysterious at the same time. Wearing one this evening made him look bolder and superior. There was a serious look on his well-sculptured face that made every woman in the room swoon at his sight.

Since he became the CEO of the Tang Group, one could say that he became famous overnight. There was no doubt that the handsome and mysterious CEO had turned out to be the newest, sought-after, bachelor in G City.

‘Mr. Luo is really an excellent CEO. You must be proud as his father, Mr. Tang,’

One of the shareholders of the Tang Group said to Horace, congratulating him for having such a remarkable son.

Everybody knew that Rufus was Horace’s son out of wedlock. But no one dared to point it out. As shareholders, they were all wise enough to keep their mouths shut. Obviously, Horace wouldn’t be glad if they would call Rufus a bastard.

‘Rufus is still very young and has a lot to learn from you guys,’

Horace replied, but he just couldn’t hide his proud smile hearing the shareholder’s words. He was aware of how competent his son was, and extremely proud that Rufus made the cooperation plan worked. It was indeed a very smart idea to make him the CEO.

After exchanging a few more words with the shareholders, Horace looked around the hall. He seemed to be looking for someone. His eyes shone with excitement as soon as he spotted Rufus, who was sitting by the bar, drinking. He excused himself from the shareholders and made his way to his son.

‘There you are, Rufus, my son! What a successful cooperation plan. Thanks to you and Cassandra,’

Horace acclaimed when he stood beside his son, giving him a gentle pat on the back. In fact, he rarely had a chance to be alone with Rufus. He had two glasses of wine in his hands, and gestured for Rufus to take one.

Hearing his voice, Rufus raised his head and took the glass from Horace’s hand and politely took a sip.

‘It’s a good decision not to give the task to Lionel. He couldn’t have achieved it well as you did. I am really proud of you, Rufus.’

In the binge of being drunk, Horace was more talkative than usual. He had patted Rufus’ on the back for several times now and the smile on his face could never seem to cease.

Rufus was just silent all this time. In fact, he didn’t have anything to say to his father. He was still holding a grudge against him. Especially after his mother’s death, he felt nothing for his so-called father except hatred.

‘Where is Cassandra? I haven’t seen her around yet. She’s supposed to be here by now.’

Horace

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...

party, Rufus asked Victor to go and pick up Cassandra, who was stuck on the way, from the 8th avenue after hanging up the call. Hearing his words, Victor widened his eyes in shock, giving Rufus a surprised look. But he quickly nodded to signify that he was going.

As far as Victor concerned, he was Rufus' personal assistant - he only did things for Rufus and Rufus only, no one else. Picking up a woman stuck in the traffic jam had never happened during his working years with Rufus. Never in a million years would he imagine that one day, his boss would ask him to do something for a woman he only knew for a short time.

Not long after Victor took off, Lionel finally showed up in his magnanimous royal blue suit. Of course, he would be present at the party and wouldn't miss it for the world. Besides the party was hosted by the Tang Group, there would be no reason for him to skip it.

His presence didn't add up to the excitement of the night, because everyone was expecting him to be there. Entering the hall, everyone's head turned towards his direction. What made everyone gasp in surprise was the woman he brought with him and the way he held her by the waist.

The lady was none other than his girlfriend, Ivy.

She walked in wrapped in Lionel's arms. Her long red dress flaunting her sexy curves was a feast for eyes of men. There was an enticing smile on her pretty face as she walked with confidence, claiming as Lionel's significant other.

Horace's face hardened after seeing his son walking in with a mistress. He felt so humiliated. It was a celebration party, and Lionel was supposed to be with his wife. Instead, he came to show off his mistress.

'How could he be so rude and insensitive? He is a married man for God's sake!' Horace cursed under his breath. Everyone knew that he was married but only a few knew who his wife was.

Those in the Tang Group who knew that Cassandra was Lionel's wife stood still in surprise. All eyes were on him and his mistress. It was clear that they were looking forward to seeing more drama as the night commenced. The celebration party was getting more and more exciting.

At the far end of the hall, Rufus, who also saw Lionel and Ivy, narrowed his dark brown eyes. The corners of his thin lips lifted into a mocking smirk. A brilliant idea flashed through his mind, making his mysterious face look even more dangerous.

'Huh!' he snarled.

Amazing Beauty

'Lionel, where's that pretty wife of yours?'

asked Ivy. Holding onto Lionel's arm, she searched for her competitor in the busy crowd. She was smiling proudly at him, with her lips slightly parted and her face as enchanting as always.

She hoped that she could finally meet Cassandra for the first time - the last time in Lionel's office didn't count. All she knew about Cassandra was from the photograph, plus what Lionel had told her. She wasn't worried, however. No one can be a threat to a woman like Ivy.

'Is everything ready?' Lionel asked, shaking off her smile with a serious look.

The name Cassandra ignited his anger as always. He couldn't forget how that woman had insulted him by slapping him and stepping on his pride.

Tonight was his revenge. He was bringing Ivy to the celebration banquet, knowing that it would humiliate Cassandra.

‘Lionel, have I ever let you down?’ the woman assured him. ‘I am very close with the owner of the hotel. Trust me, everything will go to plan.’

Ivy’s alluring tone and eyes hypnotized Lionel, subduing his anger. He was delighted to hear her assurance, and in a sudden rush of jubilation, kissed her right then in front of everyone.

The other members of the Tang family stiffened in surprise and displeasure. It was such an immoral act from a married man, as if he didn’t care at all about disgracing his family. Horace’s face creased with anger, and he stepped toward his son.

‘Horace, just leave him be. It is too elegant an occasion for us to quarrel in public. He’s still young and it’s natural for young man to fall for many women.’

Jill stepped out in front of her husband to pacify his anger. Lionel was her precious son, and she had always wanted him to have anything his heart desired. This time was no different.

‘I can’t believe he brought his mistress here, to such a formal occasion! How am I supposed to explain this to the rest of the family? And what about Cassandra? She will lose face!’

Horace disdained his wife’s constant coddling of their son. Because of her, Lionel was weak, incompetent, and spoiled. Horace’s eyes burned with fury at the fact that his son had failed to meet expectations yet again.

Jill tried again to calm him, ‘So what, Horace? You can yell at him now, but do you really want to make a scene here for others to see? Will you

expose our family to ridicule? In any case, nobody else knows that Cassandra is Lionel's wife. We can settle this better at home later.'

Jill couldn't care less about how Cassandra would feel. She had disliked her daughter-in-law since the moment Cassandra had married to her son. As time elapsed, this dislike had only grown - Lionel had told his mother about all the not-so-secret flirtations between Cassandra and Rufus. In fact, Jill wouldn't mind seeing Cassandra get a taste of her own medicine - to see Lionel flaunting his mistress. She wanted to see where this would lead.

Despite her cruel intentions, her words did make some sense. Horace took a deep breath and sighed in frustration. They could not make a scene out here. Losing face for Horace or Lionel meant losing face for the entire Tang group. ***

'Are you Mr. Luo's secret guard? I know his assistant, Leo...You know, I even feel like I've seen you before...and now you're the person that Mr. Luo assigned to pick us up! That is very kind of you, to offer your service like that. If not for your help, Cassandra and I would certainly be late,'

Stella chattered to Victor as they approached the

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.

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cere tone and smile, and even more at the woman staring at her smugly from over his shoulder.

Ivy looked her rival up and down, and was surprised at the other woman's lack of envy at the sight of her presence as the mistress. Either Cassandra truly felt nothing for Lionel, or her power of deception was to rival even Ivy's own.

Either way, Ivy suspected that there was more to the tiny woman than met the eye.

'Thank you, Mr. Tang.'

Cassandra matched her husband's false politeness.

'Come, a toast to Manager Qin!'

Lionel lifted his glass, indicating for Cassandra to drink. His eyes sparkled with malice.

Cassandra's smile froze. She knew that she had an unnatural intolerance to alcohol, and would be tipsy after a few sips. Last time she drank was the night in Rome, and it didn't take much to get her completely drunk.

There was no way she was letting that happen again, not here, not now.

'Thank you.'

She smiled. She raised the glass to her mouth, careful not to let any of the wine actually touch her lips. But this didn't shake off Lionel, as she had hoped that it would.

Ivy, meanwhile, was growing indignant at Cassandra's lack of interest in her. The other woman had barely given her a glance, treating her as no more than a puff of smoke.

Ivy's pride could not allow her to be ignored like this, and she tightened her grip on Lionel's hand.

'Manager Qin, this is quite unfair. I have finished my glass, yet you have barely touched yours. Am I not good enough to have a drink with you?'

Lionel tried to provoke her. He was increasingly frustrated, not only at the fact that she wouldn't drink, but also at how unbothered she seemed by seeing her husband flaunting his mistress so publicly.

He once again thought of the relationship between Cassandra and Rufus. His suspicions were driving him crazy.

'I'm sorry, Mr. Tang. I don't drink,'

Cassandra refused firmly. She was determined not to give in to Lionel's pressuring.

Lionel's face soon turned bleak. Before he could say another word to intimidate her, he was cut off by a familiar voice, 'I'm her boss. If Manager Qin cannot drink, then I shall drink for her stead.'

Rufus slipped in softly from out of nowhere. He took the glass from Cassandra's hand and - to the surprise of everyone around him - emptied it with a swig.

The air suddenly seemed to freeze, and Lionel's face had turned grim. After Rufus finished his wine, he glimpsed at the couple in front of them casually, before turning to give Cassandra a reassuring grin.

Cassandra was touched. Warmth began to rise in her heart. As she gazed at the man who stood beside her, her eyes couldn't help but turn watery.

No one had ever protected her like Rufus. No matter how desperate the situation was, the man seemed to materialize out of nowhere to defend her. She felt so safe around him.

'Mr. Luo, it looks like you care a lot about your subordinates. How magnanimous of you,'

Ivy spoke ironically, breaking the awkward silence among them, while casting a meaningful glance at both Cassandra and Rufus.

'Rufus, you've gone too far!'

Lionel said out loud, unable to keep calm any longer. This man had, once again, shown too much concern for his wife. Not once, not twice, but many times now. Though who else could he blame, except for himself? It was he who had always pushed his own wife away.

'Well... She already stated that she couldn't drink. Why was it so important for you to press her into submission, just because you're her superior?'

Rufus questioned, his voice dripping with contempt. To him, Lionel's actions were simply childish and naive. He already brought his lover along to publicly humiliate Cassandra. Now, he was even trying to get her drunk. It pissed Rufus off completely.

The words rendered Lionel speechless. How could he argue with that? He fumed silently, unable to get another word out. All he could do was to glare at his wife fiercely.

When he found nothing to say, Ivy pounced on the opportunity. 'Mr. Luo, do you have some sort of affection for Manager Qin? Is that why you are protecting her? I wouldn't find it surprising. Manager Qin is young and beautiful. It's quite natural for you to fall for her, isn't it?'

Ivy thought she was being clever, but she was only adding fuel to the fire. Lionel's entire body became tense at her words. He wondered how Rufus would respond to what she said.

'Perhaps,' he thought, 'keeping my marriage to Cassandra a secret from the Tang Group employees has been a mistake.' He opened his mouth and was about to say something when Cassandra beat him to it. She had been silent for some time, but now she glanced at Ivy disdainfully and jeered, 'Would you mind reminding me of who you are?'

Cassandra smiled at her disparagingly. The arrogant woman had been provoking her and Rufus thr

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...

ctive lips curled up in glee and she whispered in his ear in a playful tone, 'Hon, the show has begun.'

He raised his eyebrows at her and gazed at the huge screen on stage. Perhaps today, he hoped, he would finally defeat his adversary, Rufus,

and his annoying wife, Cassandra. He could already envision his imminent triumph.

The applause began to fade as the audience fixed their eyes on the screen. The first few minutes of the video detailed general information on Tang Group. When the office building of Tang Group was shown, the screen suddenly turned pitch black before jumping to another picture.

Puzzled, the attendees exchanged curious glances, hoping that someone would offer an explanation. The crowd was unsettled and the whispers grew.

The picture on the screen resurfaced and stunned everybody in the room. It was obviously a scene from a hotel room, with a huge canopied bed covered in rose red sheets.

A man and a woman were on the bed, their faces reconstructed into digital mosaics that rendered them beyond recognition. The obscene sounds they made echoed in the entire hall.

Their faces had been concealed on purpose. However, the voices of the pair sounded familiar.

Cassandra's pupil contracted and her mouth opened wide with astonishment. She was stunned. Blinking her eyes repeatedly, she twisted her head to look at Rufus, who had an indifferent look on his face.

Their eyes met again and she read on his face that what she suspected was true. Suddenly, she felt like she was frozen all over and unable to move. Rufus had shown her the video before. The two protagonists in this scandalous video were none other than Lionel and Ivy...

Obscene moans could be heard continually from the video on the screen. Some of the employees blushed with embarrassment and the whispers in the crowd grew heated, resulting in an increased commotion.

When the words 'Lionel Tang' showed up on the screen, each one of them turned to look at Lionel, who was sitting in the front of the room.

Lionel had turned pale the moment he saw the video. Now, seeing his name on it, he jumped out of his chair. Rushing to the stage, he plucked the remote out of the hands of the stunned emcee.

Pointing it at the screen, he turned off the video and furiously looked around.

'Who is responsible for this prank? And what are you people looking at? Close your eyes, goddammit, all of you!'

Lionel's eyes flashed with rage like flames of fire. Ivy's face had gone white. She was completely dumbfounded at what just happened. How did the video get switched to this?

She had arranged the video in the playlist, the one of Rufus and Cassandra entering and leaving the hotel room in H City. How did it get swapped for the footage of her and Lionel in bed?

The erotic video spoiled the celebration banquet. Everyone had been having a great time until now, an awkward tension lingered in the air. Horace was trembling. He wanted to go up on the stage and slap his disappointing son.

'What a shame! How disgraceful!'

Jill put an arm around Horace and patted him on the chest in consolation. She was red with embarrassment too.

People were whispering once again. Cassandra blinked and looked around, not sure what to do next. She gulped hard, feeling like she had lost the ability to speak.

‘Did you do that?’

she somehow asked Rufus, who stood next to her. His face had been expressionless ever since the video began. He didn’t let out so much as a gasp. Unlike others, he wasn’t shocked or scandalized.

He was always calm in the face of all kinds of situations, no matter how startling they were. But why today? Why did he decide to play the video in front of all employees in the Tang Group at the victory banquet? It was quite a real blow to Lionel.

‘I’m just reciprocating an act of kindness.’

Rufus sneered, not answering her directly. The curl of his lips sent a chill down her spine.

His words dripped with insinuation and it puzzled Cassandra. What was he playing at? The very air around him was daunting.

‘Isn’t...this a bit too much?’

After a long pause, Cassandra mustered up her courage and asked him the question, wringing her hands.

‘Is it, though? You think I crossed a line?’

Rufus asked her pointedly without look

‘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...

the problems between the two brothers. He seemed to have aged tonight, as if the episode at the banquet had taken a toll on him.

Rufus cast Cassandra a look, still peeved about the displeasure she had expressed about the leaked video.

‘Cassandra, Lionel...we’re sorry. You did a lot to help us with the project. What do you want as a prize? No matter what it is, I promise I will make it happen for you,’

Horace said, forcing a small smile on his face. Her arrival had lightened up his mood.

Cassandra had not thought about what she truly needed. However, there was one thing she had been wanting to do for ages. She had been too busy to do it before.

‘Dad, can I go home and visit my mother?’

Home. The word was both strange and familiar to Cassandra. If it wasn’t for her mother, she probably wouldn’t have wanted to go back again.

‘Sure. You can go whenever you want. I will ask the butler to buy a present for your mother. But I’m afraid Lionel cannot accompany you,’

Horace said yes to her request without hesitation. He failed to hide the disappointment in his eyes at the mention of his son's name.

‘That’s fine. I can go by myself...’

Cassandra beamed, an exciting little smile spreading over her face. Before she could finish, however, Rufus interrupted her with a husky voice.

‘I can accompany Cassandra. I heard that the Qin family is quite far away from here. It wouldn’t be safe for a woman to go alone...’

Cassandra’s head jerked up at his words. Their eyes met and something sparked between them. Her heart hammered in her chest and her brain seemed to turn foggy. The way he made her feel was beyond words.

Somehow, her heart just couldn’t help but look forward to going home with Rufus...

Cassandra Is Back

A white Bentley sped on the road, its tires gliding smoothly over the pavement. The woman in the front passenger seat rolled down the window and closed her eyes, a blissful expression on her face. She breathed in deeply, a big smile lighting up her features. She was filled with anticipation, and her heart pounded rhythmically in her chest as the engine hummed.

‘Someone’s in a good mood,’

Rufus said lightly, his eyes crinkling as he sat behind the wheel. He glanced at the woman beside him, and then turned his attention back to the road.

Cassandra's smile grew wider at his remark. She turned to him, her face almost gleaming with joy.

'Of course. Finally, I'm on my way home. It's been a long time,' she replied cheerfully and drew a long breath. 'I can hardly wait.'

Since her return from Rome, she had only seen her mother, Edith, once. After four years of separation, it was nowhere near enough. She hadn't gone back to visit her family for many years, and even if that place held no good memories, a significant part of her past stayed there, in the house where she grew up.

The smile on Rufus' lips vanished as he listened to her. He gripped the steering wheel and drove on, falling back on instinct as thoughts swirled inside his head. Home. What an obscure concept. To the likes of him, home was a luxury.

'No, it was once a luxury, ' he corrected himself silently, fighting off the bitter taste the word left in his mouth. Now he didn't need it at all.

He had no need for it after the only person he could call his family was already gone. When his mother died, she took with her all the warmth he had ever known in his life. Now, he was truly orphaned. Alone, and homeless.

'You don't look well. Are you all right?' He was pulled back from his gloomy musings by Cassandra's voice.

She kept staring at him, concern written all over her face, as if she was waiting for an answer from him. After the party, the two seemed to have an unspoken understanding, as if they had known each other better.

Cassandra's heart beat faster at the thought. Rufus found himself unable to break off from the deep pools of Cassandra's eyes. Holding her gaze, he caught a glimpse of the red light and hurriedly slammed the brakes to stop the car in time.

He let out a relieved breath. Cassandra was surprised at the jolt. Her concern grew as she wondered whether Rufus was alright.

'Brother, is everything okay?'

Cassandra asked again, moving close to Rufus. Rufus's profile filled her eyes as she turned to him. He was breathing a little harshly, and then he turned his head to meet her gaze and brought his hand to her cheek.

Cassandra was a little startled at the touch of his fingers. 'What are you doing, brother? Are you sure eve

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.

nd gave him a long gaze.

'What?'

Lionel jumped up from the sofa at Jill's words. With the uncalculated movement, he banged his knee painfully against the tea table, knocking off the bowl of hot soup from the table. The sound of porcelain as it hit the floor was harsh and stinging. Almost half of the ginseng soup fell on Lionel's legs.

'Ouch!' Lionel winced as a stabbing pain fell on his leg. Jill turned pale with fear and hurriedly asked the servants to sweep away the shards.

'Son, are you all right? Do you get burnt? Let me see,'

she asked him hurriedly. Lionel said nothing to her and ignored the burning sensation on his skin as he glared threateningly at Horace.

'Was it you who allowed Rufus to take Cassandra back?'

he asked through gritted teeth.

'And what of it?'

Horace snapped back, challenging him. Lionel was too proud to see logic. The Qin family lived far away from the Tang family, and it was not safe for Cassandra to go back home alone. What was more, Lionel never spared a glance for Cassandra. He wouldn't have gone to visit the Qin family with her anyway, so why was he acting like a neglected husband now?

'You old fool! I am Cassandra's husband!'

Lionel bellowed in fury, the pain in his leg forgotten. He glared at his father with reproachful eyes, and then rushed out without waiting for Horace's answer. Jill called pleadingly after him, but her cries fell on deaf ears.

After several hours' drive, Rufus and Cassandra finally arrived in the northernmost part of G City, where Cassandra's family lived.

People from the Qin family had been eagerly awaiting her arrival. They stood at the gate with watchful eyes, ready to greet her with open arms.

As the white Bentley approached, Edith standing on the side, finally let out a relieved smile.

Cassandra was finally back...

I Am Here

Cassandra's heart pounded as she saw the silhouette of people waiting for her, their features becoming more and more distinct as the car came near the entrance. Her eyes found her mother's, and she almost leapt out of the car as soon as it came to a halt. She ran to Edith and wrapped her in her arms. 'Mother,' she said in an almost choked voice. Her joy was unexplainable as she felt her mother's own arms gather her. She took a deep breath, letting the familiar scent lull her.

It was a very warm reunion. The other members of the Qin family had gathered together to welcome Cassandra, their delight for her return was evident on the bright smiles on their faces. Vernon, however, stood silently on one side as if it was nothing special, even if he hadn't seen his own daughter for so many years.

Standing next to Vernon was a woman who had a face that was strikingly similar to Cassandra's. They had the same bright eyes and high nose, but she wore her hair in a chin-length bob, giving her a doll-like look.

That was Cloris, who was a spitting image of her older sister. However, her attention was pulled away from Cassandra to the handsome stranger who came with her.

He was standing silently behind her, tall, and handsome. It was impossible not to notice him, despite his quietness. And although Cloris wasn't familiar with her brother-in-law, she knew that the man behind Cassandra was not him.

Turning to her sister, she greeted her warmly and took her hand. 'Cassandra, you came home. Finally! We have all missed you so much. Who is the handsome man behind you?'

she asked enthusiastically.

Cassandra nodded her head at her father and greeted him politely. Cloris and she did not grow up together, as they lived in different places, but she was glad for her warm welcome. As if in response to her question, she turned around and met Rufus' eyes. It was as if the world stopped for a split-second as they smiled at each other at the same time. Before she could speak, Vernon said with his heavy voice, 'Alright, let's go inside.'

Upon that, Edith grabbed her daughter's hand and walked inside. Bright voices filled the air as the family laughed and talked on the way back to the mansion.

Everyone settled in the living room with some hot tea and biscuits on the table. Amidst the conversations, Vernon stared at Rufus who was sitting across from him.

'I have heard a lot of things about you, Mr. Luo. We are very much impressed by your achievements in the Tang Group... Thank you for accompanying Cassandra here today.'

The courtesy Vernon showed in his words was devoid of any warmth, as if he was keeping a distance between them.

‘My pleasure, Mr. Qin. Besides, it was my father who asked me to do so,’

Rufus replied, choosing his words wisely. He understood the cause of Vernon’s actions, and picked up on the silent question that belied his uncharacteristic civility, as everyone else in the room might be thinking the same thing. For it was he, not Lionel, Cassandra’s husband, who was with her today.

‘Father, Rufus takes care of me a lot, whether it is in the company, or at home. Therefore...’

Cassandra found herself explaining, but hesitantly her words trailed off. She caught a weird feeling and decided against elaborating their connection.

‘Lionel must be very busy lately,’

Vernon said after a pause. He coughed looking meaningfully at Cassandra.

‘Well...I guess so.’

In fact, Cassandra knew nothing about Lionel’s work, not to mention whether he was busy or not.

‘I see. Now I understand why he didn’t come home with you and asked Mr. Luo instead. That’s alright.’

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...

her daughter flee from the room, her head bowed.

Evening came. Moonlight washed over the Qin mansion, lending it an ethereal silvery light reflected on the wall. 'Would my family be able to own and live in this mansion if I didn't marry Lionel?' Cassandra thought to herself as she took in the sight. Despite the glimmer, she found none of the wonder that would have come over anyone else at such a grand sight.

She was walking alone in the backyard of the mansion. It felt both foreign and familiar. After all, she did not live in this place long enough to be able to call it home.

Her childhood days were spent with her grandmother. She lived in the countryside - with verdant grass sprawling like an endless carpet under her feet, the smell of the fields in harvest season, and the stars that shone like distant lamps in the sky. Those times were probably the happiest in her life. She didn't move into this mansion until her grandmother passed away. Back then, the floor was made of concrete, the halls echoed empty, and the glaring lights of the chandelier were poor substitutes for her stars.

Then, as if to make things even worse, Vernon traded her for his business, marrying her to the Tang family. Any remaining happiness or hope that she had deserted her when her own family offered her like they would any other merchandise. And yet, not once did she complain. She chose to save them from the suffering and claimed the entirety of the burden. Hot

tears flowed as she thought of all the things she wanted to fling at them. She thought, they would at least be understanding, but she was wrong.

She placed a hand over her mouth as she sobbed, not wanting her sobs to reach the ears of the people inside the house. Even now, she had to contain her grief alone, in the place that was supposed to be her home. She sucked in deep breaths and her shoulders heaved as she wrapped an arm around herself to contain her quivers.

‘Cassandra,’

a familiar voice called from behind her. Cassandra turned around to the silhouette of a man, her tears falling down from her face.

All at once, she was enveloped in strong and steady arms. Before she could say anything, Rufus pulled her to his chest, murmuring softly in her ears, ‘It’s alright. I’m here.’

At his words, Cassandra felt the full weight of her sorrow crash upon her shoulders and she finally let the storm of her emotions go in Rufus’ arms.

Delicateness

Night spread over the small space like a dark canopy as tears clouded Cassandra’s vision and made everything dimmer. Her tears, flowing like waterfalls, traced wet paths down her cheeks.

Cassandra surrendered to her sorrows as Rufus held her in his arms. She had reached the end of her tether, and it was as if her past was catching up to her, along with everything she tried so desperately to bury and leave behind. Letting herself be lulled in his embrace, she closed her eyes and clung to the comfort he was giving her like it was air. She knew that

she shouldn't let him hug her like this - she was a married woman and he was her brother-in-law. However, she just couldn't prevent herself from reaching out to him as sobs wracked her frame and shivering from the coldness that sprang from her chest.

Rufus felt her shivers and wrapped his arms tighter around her, stroking her hair gently. His chest constricted at the sight of Cassandra's tear-stained face. Another tremor shook her shoulders. At that moment, if he could take away her pain or somehow find a way to free her from it and claim it for himself, he would not have hesitated. He remembered her smiles as they drove on the road here, and wanted so desperately to bring it back, the image of her face almost gleaming against the light of day.

The tremors eased and he felt her shoulders relax as she continued to breathe deeply. 'Why are you crying?' he finally asked. 'Aren't you happy that you are back home?'

He looked down and Cassandra raised her head slowly to meet his eyes, not speaking a word. Rufus looked into her eyes, and he found himself unable to tear his gaze away from the pain in her eyes, as if it was speaking to him. He watched once again as tears filled her eyes to the brim, flowing down her face in wet trails.

'Silly girl,' Rufus sighed and gave her a fond smile.

He did not know why he had done this - taking her in his arms and comforting her as the emotions raged inside her. All he knew was that even before he could comprehend it, his feet were headed to her, and arms reached out holding her to him. He didn't understand it himself, but it seemed that when it came to this woman, he dropped all his guards. Slowly and carefully, he raised his hand and held her face. His touch was careful, as if he was touching delicate glass. Cassandra felt his warm fingers wipe her tears as his eyes never left hers.

At once, more tears flowed out, as a sudden wave of sorrow washed over her. It was as if that small touch released more of her sadness. ‘Rufus...‘

She called him, her voice shaking.

She didn’t know where to begin and what to tell him. Her head was a whirlwind because her pain had wrung her chest, squeezing out whatever was left of her.

Rufus didn’t say a word and just looked at her, patiently waiting, until she could find the words to start.

He kept wiping her tears away. There was a desire inside calling him to protect her, keep her safe, and hide her away forever from anything that could have hurt her. It was an alien feeling, one that he had never experienced before, and yet unmistakable, like a mark brandishing itself in his mind.

The Cassandra he knew was strong and stubborn, but now looking at the woman in his arms, she was so fragile and hurting. He wanted nothing more at that instant than to be the one to protect her.

Nothing could have prepared him for what happened next. His mind stopped for a moment when he felt her soft and warm lips on his own. Cassandra was standing on her tiptoes and wrapping her arms around Rufus’ neck when she pressed her lips on his, pulling him closer desperately.

It was as if ever

‘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...

till hasn't come back.' Cassandra felt as if a bomb had detonated in her mind at hearing her sister's question. She struggled to keep herself calm and said, 'Um. I don't know. I haven't seen him.'

The mention of his name brought back the guilt that she felt about what she had done. She didn't dare to make eyecontact with Cloris, afraid that her eyes would betray her. Her cheeks warmed and she licked her lips, subconsciously. She could almost feel his lips on hers again. Even as she felt herself wanting to crumble in shame, in one corner of her heart, there was an emotion that had evaded her for so long: happiness. It was as if the warmth in his arms reached her heart, thawing the cold pain held captive for so long.

Cloris continued to chatter as they made their way to the three in the living room, but her words couldn't register on her sister's mind. When Cassandra's eyes met with Lionel's, she caught a very strange sight. He was sitting on the sofa, with a gentle smile that she had never seen before.

Despite her surprise, her expression did not change. She had already known from Cloris earlier that he would be here, and so she had been able to brace herself for the encounter. She just hoped that he could play nice and not embarrass her in front of her family.

She greeted her parents as she always did, as if nothing was unusual. Then she walked towards Lionel and sat down on the sofa beside him, carefully keeping some distance between them.

Lionel turned to her, his eyes shining. He almost seemed happy to see his wife as he gave her an affectionate smile. Cassandra felt him move closer and erase the distance between them on the sofa.

‘Sorry I’m late, honey,’

he said softly. Saying that she was shocked was an understatement. An unreadable look appeared on Cassandra’s face as she struggled to make sense of what was happening. Did she hear him right? Lionel really called her ‘honey’? She wasn’t dreaming, was she? Besides, what was wrong with him? When did he ever use such a gentle tone to talk to her? What was he trying to do?

Questions poured into Cassandra’s head, making her turn her head to look at the man who was sitting beside her. She wore a normal expression but surprise was evident in her eyes. Lionel looked at her with tender eyes, still smiling softly. But as soon as his gaze moved down to her swollen lips, the smile on his face withered, and his eyes turned into cold steel.

Leaving Cassandra With Lionel Alone

With Lionel’s eyes pierced at her, Cassandra felt uneasy as if she was sitting on thorns. Her eyebrows crossed as she averted her eyes away from him, pretending that he wasn’t there.

‘Since this was Lionel’s first time to visit our home, why don’t you show him around, Cassandra?’ Vernon suggested.

He noticed the distant look and the uneasy treatment between his daughter and her husband. Suggesting something for them to do and let them spend some time together might make things different.

‘Father, it’s late. It’s been a long day and I need to go to sleep now,’ Cassandra rejected without a second thought.

It was pitch dark outside and she didn’t think it was a good idea to play as a tourist guide and give Lionel a tour around the house.

‘Please don’t bother. We would be staying here for long. I believe that Cassandra must be very tired and she needs to take a rest. It was rude of me to come over untimely. Please go back to sleep. I’m fine,’ Lionel said sincerely.

He sounded like a polite gentleman, which made Vernon nod repeatedly to show his agreement.

‘All right, take care of your husband for us, my dear daughter. Good night!’ Vernon didn’t insist.

He stood up and smiled at Edith, and she knew what he meant. It seemed that they had a language that only the two of them could understand. They went back to their bedroom without any more words.

They thought that it would be better to leave the young couple alone.

Edith winked an eye at Cloris, implying her to go to her room too before she closed the door of their room. Lionel and Cassandra were left alone in the living room.

The moment his in-laws were out of sight, Lionel loosened the collar of his shirt and put on the expression that Cassandra dreaded the most. He

extended his arms and suddenly grabbed her chin to force her to look into his eyes. His face was ablaze with rage and pure hatred.

‘Tell me! What’s wrong with your lips? Did someone bit you?’ he asked in a low voice.

Cassandra felt suddenly cold and tiny shivers were running down her spine making her quiver. He fixed his eyes on her like a lion clenching his prey under his claws, ready to devour at any moment.

Cassandra’s eyes dimmed and she bit her lips out of her instincts. Doing that, she managed to calm herself. The panic and tension in her eyes slowly developed into overpowering confidence.

She responded calmly, ‘Why did you take the trouble to come here at such a time? Knowing you? I don’t think you’re kind enough to put on a show in front of my parents. Seriously, I don’t need it. I’m pretty sure you know what I mean!’

She felt awkward with any kind of body contact between them, despite the fact that they were married, but she was unable to get rid of his hold. All she could do was turn her face away from him, avoiding his fierce eyes.

‘Is that so? Then can you just tell me how it feels to bring Rufus here? Tell me! Just tell me, my lovely wife! What was it like to cheat on your husband in your parents’ house?’ Lionel asked coldly.

He sounded a little sour, but the grinding of his teeth betrayed his temper. Cassandra knew that he was about to explode.

‘A kiss is nothing compared to your sex video! Am I not right, Lionel?’ she asked contradicting his accusations.

Lionel could see the rising anger on her face. Although she tilted her head away from him, the disgust and sarcasm in her watery eyes were clearly evident.

Her words didn't deny that fact tha

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...

ad planned to teach Cassandra how to respect her husband when they would be left alone in the room. However, he couldn't find any excuse to refuse his sister-in-law.

'Please, Lionel, please! I promise I won't disturb you later! Just let me have my sister for one night!' Cloris kept on pleading.

She had seen the expression on Lionel's face, making her pout her lips and plead for Lionel repeatedly.

Lionel was left with no choice but to give in. He didn't say anything but just nodded his head to her.

There would be a long way ahead for him and Cassandra. The days were long to count for him to deal with her. 'Her wife-lessons would be best taught later,' Lionel presumed. He needed to make her realize who her husband was by making love to her, for he had never touched that woman before. It would be a more memorable and one of kind lovemaking.

'Cloris, listen, it's too late to play chess. Why don't we just go to bed now? I believe that Rufus is tired too,' she tried to persuade Cloris.

Saying those words, she glanced at Rufus with the corner of her eyes, with the expectation that she could go now.

'All right! Rufus, let's play another time,' Cloris agreed without any hesitation.

The night was deep and Lionel gave Cassandra a fierce stare. She might get away today, but not tomorrow. He had come a long way to her parents' house, determined to get her in bed by hook or by crook.

There were no love and passion involved when he married Cassandra. He did not expect that Cassandra would adore him or honor him as her husband, but he just couldn't let Rufus win over him.

Things were getting more and more complicated as Lionel joined the game played by two. The game that Rufus and Cassandra were enjoying to play. Cassandra felt a growing sense of despair in her heart, desperation on the fact that she couldn't tell what Lionel was planning. For she knew that it would be something horrible.

However, her heart was softened when memories of the way Rufus kissed her, touched her, caressed her, pulled her and gave her a warm embrace flashed back her mind. She felt reassured with the thought that Rufus had her back.

'Would it be ridiculous to fall in love with Rufus, my brother-in-law?' she pondered. But on her mind lingered another question, 'Does Rufus love me too?'

I Have Something To Tell You

Cassandra hadn't slept in her princess bed in a long time, but the sheets still smelled of her lost childhood. She looked around her former room. Nothing had changed. The teddy bear at the foot of the bed, the wind chime twinkling above the windowsill, the numerous photographs on the wall that captured her adolescence...Everything remained the same. She stood dully, reminiscing on her past. She had so many memories attached to this bedroom and her house.

Just then, there was a sharp knock on the door.

'Cassandra, I'm done taking my bath. Can I come in?' Cloris exclaimed, interrupting Cassandra's long-lost memories.

Cassandra snapped back to reality and turned around to open the door. Cloris came in wearing a bathrobe, her face breaking into a wide grin. Once inside, she changed into her pajamas.

She was pretty and had a perfect hour-glass figure that obviously attracted attention. People, including most women, simply couldn't tear their eyes off her when she walked into a room.

Her smooth, creamy white skin contrasted sharply against her black PJs, giving a strong visual effect. Cassandra made a sound halfway between a gasp and a sigh as she stared at her little sister. Cloris had grown up to be quite a stunner. She was as beautiful and graceful as a swan.

‘Cloris, you are just so lovely. Nobody can take their eyes off you.’

Cassandra’s praise came from the bottom of her heart, and her sister gave her a soft smile in return. Cloris moved closer to Cassandra and embraced her, breathing in deeply. She leaned back and looked at her.

‘Cassandra, may I ask you a question?’

Cloris asked. A mild blush stained her cheeks. Cassandra’s heart jolted. She already knew what Cloris was going to ask, but she smiled and nodded anyway, ‘Sure.’

Cloris pulled her sister’s arm shyly and the two of them sat on the bed. She opened and shut her mouth repeatedly, too nervous to say anything. After a moment’s silence, she finally blurted, ‘Does Rufus have a girlfriend?’

Just as Cassandra had expected, Cloris was curious about Rufus. She had seen her sneaking glances at him downstairs. Cassandra’s heart sank to the bottom of her stomach and she swallowed visibly. Her throat had turned dry.

‘I don’t know. Probably not. I haven’t heard that he has one,’

Cassandra answered softly and lowered her eyes, avoiding her sister’s inquiring gaze.

‘Really? That’s awesome.’

Cloris grinned widely, clearly overjoyed. She hugged Cassandra around the neck and then kissed her on the cheek, unable to contain her excitement.

Cassandra stared at her lovely sister, wondering if Rufus liked simple and innocent girls like Cloris. Perh

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?

gentle breeze flew in through the window, making her hair dance. She saw a tall and handsome man standing under the street lamp below. The golden light elongated his shadow and cast his figure in stark relief. Rufus stood alone on the street, holding the phone in his hand as he raised his head. His obsidian eyes were locked on Cassandra who stood two floors above, looking down at him.

Cassandra's heartbeat pounded in her ears. She inhaled deeply and opened her mouth, but said nothing.

'Come down,'

Rufus said through the phone in a gentle voice. It felt like they had been looking at each other forever. His voice lured her in like magic.

'What did you just say?'

Cassandra blinked. She felt like she was in a dream. What game was he playing?

'Cassandra, come down,'

Rufus raised his voice, still looking at her intensely. The voice stirred up something deep in her. What was he doing ?

‘It’s late,’

Cassandra repeated firmly, her heart racing uncontrollably even as she listened to the voice of reason in her head. This was her parents’ house, and she was married. She couldn’t do anything improper.

‘I have something to tell you. Come down.’

Rufus ignored her reluctance and hung up the phone. He put his hands in the pockets of his trousers and leaned against the lamp pole, waiting for her patiently. His eyes were deep pools of black, looking at Cassandra with desire and tempting her.

Cassandra closed the window and turned her back to it as she took a deep, shaky breath. Why was she so nervous ? Why was her heart racing a mile a minute ? Her hand that held the phone had sweat running down it.

‘I have something to tell you.’

The words echoed in Cassandra’s ears. She shut her eyes, uncertain whether she should go down or not...

Divorce And Be Mine

With her back against the wall of the bathroom, Cassandra’s heart thumped inside her chest. Her breath quickened and she felt nervous but also secretly pleased that Rufus had decided to call her. She didn’t know what was happening right now or why she felt this way. She just knew that she was happy that Rufus wanted to see her. At the same time, she

also felt a tinge of guilt because she had no idea where this would lead them. She knew she shouldn't do this but she just couldn't help herself. It was as if Rufus was a magnet and she was a helpless ferrous damsel that was being drawn towards him.

After a few moments, she opened her eyes and gently bit down on her lower lip in an effort to make up her mind. She resolutely walked out of the bathroom into the bedroom that she shared with Cloris. Cloris looked up and saw the nervousness on her sister's face and broke into a knowing smile. She assumed that the call had been from her brother-in-law. 'They really were a sweet couple, ' she mused innocently.

'Sis, did he ask you to go and meet him? I am really sorry that I've interrupted you two,'

Cloris teased her sister. In spite of being young, Cloris was not ignorant about the ways between husband and wife. It was normal for couples to want to be with each other all the time. Though she herself was not in a relationship right now, she could understand the feeling. Cassandra's face burnt in embarrassment when she heard her sister's words. She lowered her head and touched her flaming face then murmured shyly, 'Cloris, I am going out for a while. Go to sleep. Don't wait for me, please.'

Cloris nodded then waved at Cassandra urging her to go out and have fun. The teasing smile remained on her face the whole time.

'I know, I know. Don't worry about me. Just go have 'FUN' with my brother-in-law!'

Cloris stressed the word 'fun' with a smirk, making Cassandra's face burn even hotter. She panicked momentarily but said nothing in the end. She just nodded her head and hurriedly walked out the door, clutching her phone tightly in her hand.

Only when she had walked out and closed the door behind her could Cassandra breathe in relief. She didn't like lying to her family, especially about something so overwhelming. At the moment, she just couldn't care less. Her steps became lighter and her paces quickened. She didn't know why but she felt so happy all of a sudden. She had been wanting to see Rufus too.

The gentle fragrance of the yellow flowers blooming in the small backyard made her want to know the name of the flower. Frankly, she had never even noticed them before. Perhaps it was because she was in such high spirits that even the smallest thing delighted her. She was in love. This was something that she had never thought would happen to her because she had already accepted her fate when she got married four years ago. Her heart had awakened and suddenly, she felt the bittersweet taste of love.

Under the dim streetlight stood a tall man. The light shone down on him, forming a halo around his shoulders. He looked pure and graceful like an angel. Clearly, he was waiting for someone. And one could tell that he had been waiting for a good while.

Cassandra quickened her steps and stopped in front of him. She had rushed all the way here so she was a little out of breath. Their eyes locked and it seemed as if time had suddenly stopped around the two of them.

Neither of them opened their mouths to talk at first. Instantly, Rufus walked up to her and before she could say anything, he put his lips on hers, swallowing the words she wanted to say.

It felt like both of them had been waiting for this moment for too long.

Cassandra closed her eyes because of his sudden move. But slowly, she opened her eyes and looked at Rufus' face. He was really handsome and

made her heart beat faster whenever their eyes met. Her heart was enmeshed in a warm feeling. A sudden realization struck her hard.

She was aware that she liked the man who was standing in front of her. Maybe she was even in love with him.

‘Cassandra, be my woman,’

after the kiss, Rufus sighed and whispered in her ears. His words made Cassandra’s eyes widen in shock. She couldn’t believe he

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...

, maybe I would have married you instead of him!’

Cassandra tried to contain her emotions even as the cruel words left her lips. She suppressed her tears while saying this, a perfect smile hung on her face.

‘What do you mean?’

Rufus narrowed his eyes, his gaze on her. ‘What did this woman say just now? Since when had she become this bold?’ Cassandra could almost feel the temperature drop because of him. He was really unhappy. It seemed that her words had really made him furious.

‘Does she mean that in her eyes, all men are the same? That I am exactly like Lionel? There’s no difference between us?’ Rufus raged quietly.

‘If the man I met in Rome wasn’t you, I might have made the same mistake. You are not special, Rufus. Don’t flatter yourself. You just happened to be in my life. Let’s stop this ridiculous thing between us. I am tired of it already. You are too serious about this. Don’t you know that it was just a fling? Don’t tell me that you really love me. That’s just funny,’

Cassandra said with a smile on her face. The light shone down on her pretty little face, making her look even more beautiful than usual. But right now, all Rufus wanted was to shut her up.

Her words infuriated Rufus, making him angrier and angrier. She made it sound like what they had shared in Rome was casual and meaningless. And that she would have slept with any other man had it not been him.

It was clear what she had meant.

Rufus was not special in her heart. What they had shared was just a coincidence.

‘Ha, you really are something else, Cassandra,’ Rufus thought to himself. For the first time, Rufus felt stupid and humiliated. He, who had always been a successful and powerful man, had been fooled by a little woman!

What Cassandra didn’t know was Rufus never easily give up. Once he set his mind on something, he would surely get it. He was never the one to lose.

‘Cassandra, you will love me one day,’

he rumbled, the frown disappeared from his face. Suddenly Rufus dropped his hand, letting go of Cassandra. It seemed that he was no longer angry. He was back to his lazy and carefree self.

Seeing Rufus' attitude change, Cassandra's heart throbbed. She knew that she had successfully hurt him. Even she hurt for him, she couldn't show it. She remained calm and collected as if what Rufus had said didn't matter at all.

'Yeah, you know, it's easy for me to love a man. If a man helps me, protects me and gives me what I want, I will surely love him. What's not to love, right?'

she said mimicking his carefree tone. The two were truly a match made in heaven.

Cassandra balled her hands into tight fists. Hearing her frivolous words, a flicker of anger flashed through Rufus's eyes but it quickly disappeared. He immediately changed back into his casual attitude.