

## The Enchanted Night by LEIGH COBBETT Chapter 5

Neon lights blazed in the most bustling street in the metropolis. The night looked seductive with its endless stream of people and rushing traffic.

A high-end restaurant was located on the street, where Horace had booked a box to celebrate Cassandra's return to the city.

On the way to the restaurant, Lionel didn't utter a word to Cassandra. She too kept her mouth shut, having nothing to say.

Horace kept glancing at the pair with worry. What was going on between his son and his daughter-in-law? There was no love between them, but Horace had assumed good feelings would foster with time.

Cassandra just came home from abroad. It was the appropriate time for his son to take the next step in their relationship. If Cassandra could bless him with kids, it would prove to be great for the relations between the Tang and the Qin Families.

Cassandra took her seat once they entered the restaurant. Lionel quickly side-stepped her and sat next to his mother, Jill, without looking at his wife even once.

Cassandra was quite accustomed to this. She wore a neutral expression on her face, unmoved by Lionel's actions. She knew how to play the role of the obedient daughter-in-law in this family, and in her mind, that was enough. Anything more on her part was unwarranted.

"Since everyone is here, I'd like to make an announcement on this good occasion."

The dishes were being served up one by one. Horace cleared his throat. There was a look of dignity on his face even though he felt dejected deep down.

“What’s the matter?”

Jill asked, the only person in the room paying attention. Cassandra had no interest in anything that occurred in this family, but she gave a look of faint curiosity anyway.

From the opposite side of the table, Lionel observed the look of false solicitude on Cassandra’s face, a shadow of a cold smile playing upon his lips. He clicked his tongue silently. After so many years, the woman’s acting was still sharp.

“Rufus will be back tomorrow. I hope each one of you treats him like family.”

Horace exhaled in relief once the words were finally out. He had hardly finished speaking when Jill’s glass of red wine crashed to the floor with a loud noise.

At the sound of broken glass, Cassandra froze. Jill rose up from her chair, her exquisitely made-up face full of vehement anger.

“There is no way that’s happening. I won’t allow it! Why didn’t you discuss this with me first? I don’t want him to come back. Absolutely not!”

Jill yelled at Horace in a shrill voice, forgetting where she was. Horace gazed at her coldly, disheartened but not surprised at her reaction.

“You think you have the right to say no?”

His words were authoritative and sent a shiver down Jill's spine. She halted in her actions, his deep-set eyes quietening her immediately. Jill stumbled a bit and went back to her seat, sniveling a bit at her grievance.

The sudden, explosive argument didn't affect Lionel in the least, who still sat wearing a not-in-my-back-yard expression on his face. The air around the table turned grave. Cassandra didn't know the man Horace mentioned, though she felt the name a bit familiar. She wondered who he was, and how he could make Jill, a most arrogant and domineering woman, panic like this.

"Lionel, take Cassandra home."

Horace's voice cut through the tense silence as his eyes swept to his son. Lionel was already sick of being in this place, so the minute his father finished speaking, he was on his feet and walking toward the door of the restaurant.

Cassandra shot up, gave her in-laws a forced smile and followed after Lionel as fast as she could.

It looked like Horace and Jill needed some privacy to deal with their issues. Cassandra sighed in relief as soon as

she stepped out of the restaurant. It had been suffocating in there.

As Lionel pressed open the car with his remote keys, he still didn't look at her. Despite his indifference, Cassandra bit the bullet and pulled open the back door to get inside. She didn't have any money on her, so she couldn't call a taxi. Besides, it was a long way home from here.

She sat in the car, cautious to maintain a distance from her husband. Lionel got into the driver's seat and looked at Cassandra through the

rear-view mirror. He saw the wariness on her delicate face, the defensive stance she exuded and gave out a light, mocking chuckle.

“Did I give you permission to get in my car?”

Lionel said in a husky but ruthless voice, still staring at her image. Cassandra instantly raised her head as a fleeting look of disbelief flashed in her eyes.

“Even after so many years, Cassandra, you still know how to act. It’s commendable. Now get off!”

Lionel’s handsome face twisted into a sneer as he issued the command.

Cassandra inhaled deeply. She couldn’t believe her ears. This man was unimaginably cruel. How could she have married him?

“Dad asked you to take me home. I don’t have my purse with me. If you give me some money, I can call a taxi,”

Cassandra said unemotionally, sitting very still. The timidness in her expression would have roused pity in any other man, but Lionel thought it was ridiculous.

This woman was actually asking for his money to take a taxi back home? Lionel had always hated her, so he found it easy to look for faults in anything she said or did.

Cassandra looked like she was deep in thought. Before Lionel could refuse her request, she jerked up her head and looked at him curiously, her mouth forming a question.

“Hey, who is Rufus? The man Dad was talking about just now?”

Lionel's face morphed into a strange expression as soon as the name of this controversial man popped up. Instantly, he turned around to look at her, studying her impatiently with his keen eyes.

“Why? What are you planning? Cassandra, you better know who you are. You're a married woman now, even though I haven't laid a finger on you yet!”

Lionel scoffed in a way that suggested he was mocking her. But for Cassandra, his behavior was a common occurrence.

She had long stopped caring.

“Fine. Just give me the money. I want to go home and sleep.”

Cassandra looked at him with innocent eyes, reaching out her tiny hands for the taxi fare. She had just thrown a casual question at him. Why did he have to react so violently to it?

She didn't respond to his veiled accusation. Cassandra promised herself not to react at all, no matter how hurtful his words were. The lack of reaction to his words frustrated him. Senseless anger swelled in his chest as he glared at her.

Reaching into his pocket for his wallet, he took out a hundred dollar note and threw it at her unceremoniously, saying in a deep and inexplicably furious voice, “Get off my car right now! I don't want to look at your infuriating face.”

Cassandra picked up the money and opened the car door. Her feet hit gravel and she glared at him through the rolled-up, tinted windows. Who wanted to stay with him in his car anyway? She detested breathing the same air as him.

He didn't want to look at her face? Well, she felt like punching him whenever she saw his!

Cassandra walked to the footpath and began waving to hail a cab. Lionel sat frozen in his car, hands clenched around the steering wheel. His furious eyes held equal parts of amusement and contempt in them as his cold smile slowly began to fade away.

It seemed to him that this woman had changed a lot since coming back from Rome, although he never really knew Cassandra that well...