

## The Enchanted Night by LEIGH COBBETT Chapter 8

The loud noise hushed down the argument, and the sudden silence in the living room was deafening. Cassandra rolled down the stairs, soon to hit bottom. The sight was so chilling that the people in the room stared, not knowing how to react.

The frightful scene had robbed them of speech.

It all happened too fast. One moment she had been hidden upstairs, eavesdropping on their conversation, and in the blink of an eye, she was rolling down towards them. The stairs creaked as she hit the floor, and everyone stared at her with their mouths agape. Cassandra landed with a thump. Only when she stopped rolling and lay still on the floor did the pain hit her hard. She grimaced at the sharp sting that settled in her muscle and bones. How could she have been so careless? Right, she had been distracted by a pair of eyes. If she hadn't been in agony, she would have laughed at herself. The Tang family fixed their eyes on her, all too shocked to move.

Suddenly, footsteps echoed in the giant room as someone walked in her direction. Cassandra curled up in a ball and moaned in a small voice. Her entire body hurt. She cursed inwardly at the humiliation of it all, feeling everybody's stares on her. Sensing that someone was near her, she slowly opened her eyes and looked up, her eyes focusing on the familiar face of the man she had slept with.

“Are you okay?”

Rufus, who was the first to react to Cassandra's fall, stood over her. He looked down at the silly woman who lay on the floor, groaning in pain. The corners of his mouth twitched in amusement, but he held back and

didn't laugh at her misery. This woman was rather interesting. But right now, she was clearly hurt, and she needed help.

The room was still quiet except for Rufus' words. No one made a sound. Even Lionel, who had been so angry before, stopped arguing and stepped aside, watching the scene in front of him with attentive eyes. He stared at Cassandra, an unreadable look coming over his face.

'What is this woman up to again?' he wondered as displeasure crept up on him.

What Rufus did next shocked everyone present in the room.

The man crouched down and picked Cassandra from the floor easily, as if helping out a stray cat stuck in a tree. He pulled her closer into his arms and all of a sudden the clean, fresh scent of mint filled her nostrils and drowned her senses, making her feel even dizzier.

Cassandra was in shock. Never in a million years would she have imagined Rufus would do something like this in front of the Tang family.

They were in the center of the Tang mansion, where Horace and Jill were both present, along with her so-called husband Lionel. Besides, there were the servants, who looked at them with unabashed interest. Rufus had actually picked her up from the floor in front of these many people. Everybody looked scandalized. Mortified, Cassandra hoped the ground would swallow her. Or at the very least,

she wished that it was all a dream. When she blinked her eyes, however, she found it to be true.

Rufus held Cassandra bridal style, their bodies in close contact. The heat radiating between them was palpable as they breathed each other in. As

their senses took over, the familiar awareness sent them back to the passionate night they had shared.

Perhaps Cassandra was too shocked, or maybe she was just intoxicated by Rufus' scent, but she was suddenly struck dumb. Her mouth parted in vain, and her brain seemed to have stopped functioning altogether. The pain in her body pulled her out of the trance. She closed her eyes tightly and settled into the arms that held her, dodging her family's appalled eyes.

"Prepare the car. She needs to get to the hospital immediately."

Rufus turned to the door with Cassandra in his arms. His voice was low but sharp — the kind that made everybody want to obey him. He scanned the shocked faces around him with lazy but dangerous eyes, daring them to defy his order.

Hearing Rufus' words, Horace finally came to his senses. He walked over to Rufus while simultaneously waving one hand to the butler, gesturing him to go outside and prepare the car Rufus just asked for.

"Cassandra, are you all right, dear?"

Horace asked, looking down at Cassandra with concern in his eyes. He didn't understand how she could have fallen down the stairs in the first place, but hoped she didn't hurt too much.

Cassandra didn't answer. Her eyes were shut tight as she whimpered in a pained voice, like she hurt too much to reply. She was positive that her body was injured, but she was in sound mind to talk to her father-in-law. She just didn't want to open her eyes and look at their faces.

Two small hands grabbed Rufus' clothes in a tight grip, both in warning and in a plea. All Cassandra knew was that she didn't want to open her

eyes. She could keep pretending she was seriously hurt if it meant that she didn't have to face the people in this room.

“Move out of the way! She's feeling faint. I am taking her to the hospital.”

The corner of Rufus' mouth lifted into a small, hidden smirk. He could tell that she was silently asking for his help.

Her bizarre actions made him want to laugh out loud. She was an interesting woman indeed. He couldn't wait to get to know her better.

And if she really needed his help that much, he would be glad to do it. It was not a big deal to him. Besides, he could always ask her to repay him in the future. She would owe him a favor, and he could think of a few imaginative ways to get what he wanted.

Just as Rufus lunged towards the door with Cassandra in his arms, another man stepped forward to block his path. Lionel, who had been the silent spectator all this while, stood in front of him, a clear challenge in his hard eyes. His cold smile was belittling.

“She is my wife. Why do you care about her so much?”