

Chapter 211 Is It Children's Day

Janessa threw the pellets into the pond bit by bit, amused as the fishes swam in a frenzy over the food.

"I didn't expect you could be so quiet," Rylan remarked as he handed her more of the fish food. Earlier today, it had occurred to him randomly that she still owed him a free meal.

Once a plan had formed in his mind, he immediately thought of this place.

It was the perfect blend of the forest, the lake, and good food—an ideal place to kick back and relax.

And although he had to book the whole place just for some time alone with the woman he liked, Rylan felt that it was certainly worth every cent.

"I don't know," Janessa said, a gleam in her eyes. "Maybe it's because this place is too magical!" She threw the rest of the pellets into the water and wiped her hands clean before leaning leisurely against the railing.

She had been quarreling with Rayan too many times as of late, so she was understandably exhausted—both mentally and physically.

This new environment was a much-welcome respite from the chaos of her professional life. She had needed this kind of break for quite a while now.

"Let's go. The dinner is ready."

The pair walked side by side, their pace unhurried, to the pavilion sitting in the middle of the lake.

It was decorated in similar fashion to the ancient pavilions, which melded harmoniously with the overall ambience of the place. Even the dinnerware were designed like the ones that were often featured in ancient period dramas, and the dishes were specialty recipes from those times as well.

It rather felt like they had walked into a living painting.

The manager had even told them that they had ancient costumes available to customers who were eager to heighten their experience in the establishment. When he had offered this to them, he had been met with Janessa's vehement refusal.

"Let's eat before the food gets cold," Rylan suggested.

Janessa nodded with a smile and eagerly picked up the chopsticks set on the table in front of her.

She liked fish, so she first tried a piece of the braised fish dish. "It's really delicious! How did you even find such an excellent venue?"

The scenery was gorgeous, the atmosphere was peaceful, and the food was brilliant. But then, it made her wonder—given all these commendable amenities, how come the farmhouse didn't have other customers?

If one had asked her, Janessa would have expected the place to be crowded with a steady stream of guests and tourists. Why was it so quiet tonight?

"My friend recommended it to me. You're not disappointed, are you?"

"Oh, I see," she teased. "You really have good taste when it comes to these things. Of course, you would pick such an expensive place after asking me to treat you to dinner." His message had come out of the blue that evening. She had been about to get off work when he had suddenly asked her for a free meal, invoking her previous promise.

Truth be told, Janessa had thought that Rylan had forgotten about it entirely. It turned out that not only had he remembered, he even went overboard with the whole thing.

She had originally wanted to meet up with him during the weekend, but his response was immediate: "Why not today?"

And here they were now.

"How about I just handle the bill for this meal, and you marry me in exchange?" Rylan quipped. He liked sneaking these double entendres at every chance he could.

Janessa's lips twitched. "Never mind," she said coldly. "I can afford a meal, at least."

Then they stared at each other across the table and burst out laughing simultaneously.

This was the scene that greeted Rayan when he stepped into the pavilion—Rylan and Janessa laughing happily with each other. The air around them felt cozy and warm for some reason.

"Rayan, isn't that your assistant? The one who sent out the invitations to us last time!" Understanding was finally dawning on Leonard.

He had definitely sensed that there was something strange going on between Rayan and Janessa; he just couldn't tell exactly what it was.

It turned out that Rayan had fallen in love with this woman.

But the more he thought about it, the more convinced he was that his bullheaded friend had yet to realize his own feelings.

'Should I just tell him outright?'

"Waiter, serve all your specialty dishes," Rayan barked, breaking through his thoughts. "Leonard, let's sit over there." He was pointing at the table right next to the one where Janessa and Rylan were sitting, and didn't even wait for a response before he strode over.

When Rayan passed the other pair, he pretended not to see anything unusual.

Left with no choice, Leonard meekly trailed behind Rayan and took the chair opposite him.

The manager looked at Rylan awkwardly. Although he didn't let Rayan in for money, he had promised Rylan before that the whole restaurant was booked for them, and now someone else came in. As the man in charge, he was very embarrassed.

As for Rylan, it only took him one glance to assess everything and know that the manager was unable to stop Rayan despite his efforts.

"You're a special one, aren't you, Mr. Lu?" he drawled out. "Do you find that the food tastes better when you stalk other people during their meals?" He took the initiative to fire the first shot because though this wasn't the first time that Rayan had messed with their outing, the man had absolutely gone too far tonight.

Rylan had already offered to pay twice the price to book the whole farmhouse for the day, so having Rayan here meant that he had paid an even greater amount of money.

He obviously wanted to keep an eye on Janessa, though Rylan couldn't tell for sure if it was because she was his employee or his ex-wife. Either way, Rayan had repeatedly tried to insert himself into their affairs.

It was becoming much too troublesome.

"What, are you the only one who knows all the good spots in the city?" Rayan retorted. "I wanted dinner, and I found this restaurant. Am I not allowed to be here?" It was clear that he had no plans to admit that he had indeed followed them to the farmhouse.

Of course, Rayan would never do such a thing. In any case, Rylan Feng couldn't do anything to him in public.

Not unless he no longer wanted for their collaboration to push through.

But if that were the case, then Rylan should have already done something at this point.

Leonard glanced back and forth between the two brooding men, then at the woman who was calmly enjoying her meal. He decided there and then not to get involved in this matter. Lowering his head to the dishes that had been silently brought to their table, he dedicated the next few minutes extracting the crayfish from their shells. And when he was done with that, he proceeded to put them back together again.

"Be that as it may, the manager and I had an agreement, and he let me book this place for the entire day. Seeing as how you and your friend managed to get inside despite our arrangements, then that means the deal is off, and I won't be paying the rest of the booking fee. Also, this meal will be paid for using the deposit I sent earlier." As he finished speaking, Rylan looked pointedly at the manager, who had been standing nearby all this time.

He hadn't really wanted to say anything more about this fiasco, but Rayan's arrogance had pushed him over the edge.

"Mr. Feng... This..." The poor manager already had tears welling in his eyes. He was merely running the establishment; why did things go down like this? He not only couldn't get the money they should pay, but he himself also had to pay for their meal now.

His life had turned miserable in less than an hour.

Meanwhile, Janessa paused her eating. She finally realized why she hadn't seen anyone else in the farmhouse besides Rylan and herself. So he had booked the whole place... But stranger than that was the fact that Rayan had burned just as much money, if not more, to gain entry as well.

'Can't these two think of a better use for their wealth?' she muttered to herself.

"It's a matter of course to pay for your food. Don't act like that, lest others look down on you for your attitude." Rayan's tone was sarcastic, and he was openly hostile.

Janessa couldn't take it anymore. She had already lost her appetite, listening to the men's bickering.

"Are you two done yet? Why can't we eat in peace? Are you both children or what? Did you think this is Children's Day for you to be acting so immature?" She slammed her chopsticks on the table and glared at Rayan first, and then at Rylan, and finally got up from her seat to leave.

Janessa didn't know what to make of her current dynamic with Rayan. He normally couldn't be bothered to even speak to her, yet he had been appearing practically everywhere she and Rylan went to spend some time together.

He was like a ghost, appearing with neither warning nor invitation.

Given the frequency and the randomness of these meetings, it must be no easy feat to pull.

So why was Rayan doing it in the first place?

"Janessa, wait." Rylan had run after her, wanting to explain himself. In the end, however, he couldn't say anything.

So, Janessa did it for him instead. "You have no intention of letting me keep my promise, do you? You only wanted an excuse to have dinner with me."