

Chapter 226 An Understanding

Janessa continued to travel back and forth between her office and the Lu family villa every day. For over half a month, her fear of driving disappeared.

It seemed like her phobia had completely gone.

She still wasn't sure if this was a blessing or a curse, however.

Since that incident at Rayan's study on that first day, Janessa had made a point of not entering that room again.

Instead, she would hand over the documents at the doorway, and she would stand and wait until he finished his business and gave her back the papers.

As long as they kept their distance from each other, nothing embarrassing or catastrophic would happen.

As for Rayan, he seemed to be more restrained as well. Since that incident, he barely spoke to Janessa unless it was absolutely necessary.

The two of them had practically been walking on eggshells around each other for weeks.

Of course, Gracie had been diligently observing their interactions from the sidelines. They still met every single day, after all. Regardless, it was clear that Rayan's attitude toward Janessa was neither amiable nor considerate. They only talked in short, clipped sentences, if at all.

And Janessa had never stayed in the villa for more than ten minutes.

Obviously, whatever time they spent together was only for business matters.

Gracie felt much relieved over this turn of events. She didn't have to send someone to check on Rayan and Janessa anymore. At first, she had devised a plan to send a maid under the pretext of bringing them tea or food, but there was no need for that now.

On this particular day, Rayan was having lunch with Gracie in the dining hall. "Are you feeling any better? Do you still throw up a lot?"

Gracie had been suffering severe morning sickness recently. No matter what she ate, she would puke the food out. Rayan couldn't help but pity her condition.

"I'm much better now. I think the dishes were too greasy these last two days. The baby doesn't seem to like it." She touched her belly as she said this, her face beaming with pride and satisfaction.

"Well, I'm sorry for that. Since you're doing better today, you should eat more. These dishes are good for pregnant women. I checked it online myself." Rayan was the epitome of a good and devoted husband. Every morning, he would research on the diet and regimen recommended for pregnant women, and he would relay the instructions to the kitchen staff.

Needless to say, Gracie was very content with her current life. But there was still one more thing that kept nagging at the back of her mind. She pondered the matter as she sipped on a spoonful of soup. "How do I make Rayan bring up the subject himself?"

A few moments later, Janessa came into the dining room bearing two folders. She headed straight for Rayan and held them up. "These papers need your signature as soon as possible."

The thing about this man was, though he didn't care much about love and relationships, he was utterly committed to his work.

In fact, he was notorious for ignoring everything and everyone else around him once he was absorbed in his business affairs.

Including a very pregnant Gracie.

"Don't work while you're eating," she chided him. "You can look that over once you're done with your meal." Gracie plucked a piece of braised pork rib—Rayan's favorite—and put it on his plate.

But his eyes were still scouring through the files, and he didn't reply.

Gracie's chopsticks hung in the air awkwardly as she waited for him to resume eating. After a couple of seconds, she withdrew her hand and continued to eat in silence.

"Done," Rayan finally said. "Take it back and make sure the plans are executed right away. Tell Corbin that I'll be at the company to attend the meeting this afternoon; he should prepare for it accordingly. I'll text him the details." He handed back the folders to Janessa and answered her follow-up questions to his instructions. They conversed as though they were the only ones in the room, and Gracie took affront.

"Will that be all, Mr. Lu?" Janessa asked after a while as she scribbled the last of Rayan's reminders on a small notebook. Without even looking, she could feel a beam of hatred being directed at her.

Well, within this villa, there was only one person who would harbor such ill intent toward her.

"There's nothing else," Rayan replied curtly before turning to Gracie. "What's wrong? Do you want to throw up again?" His tone and attitude was a stark contrast to the cold and methodical manner he had used with Janessa.

She struggled not to roll her eyes. His gentle and tender expression would probably melt any woman and lull them into indulgence, but not her.

No matter what he did or said now, he would never be able to melt Janessa's frozen heart.

"In that case, I'll be taking my leave now." Janessa was just about to walk away when Gracie's voice stopped her.

With a smile, the woman took Rayan's hand and said in a singsong voice, "I'm sure Miss Qiu has been busy running around all morning. Why don't we let her stay for lunch? Since she is familiar with the villa, she won't have any reason to feel awkward or embarrassed to sit down for a meal, right?"

"Did she really have to say that?" Janessa thought furiously. The reason why she said so was to remind Rayan of the marriage he had.

Both women knew that Gracie hated Janessa with a vengeance, so why was she inviting her to stay for lunch?

What was she up to this time?

"I don't think that would be a good idea, Mr. Lu. I'm afraid I'm too inferior to be dining under this roof." With that, Janessa strode out of the villa without a backward glance. It wouldn't do her any good to stay there any longer.

As she walked to her car, she spotted a familiar figure standing a few feet away.

"Miss Qiu, Mrs. Lu is inviting you over to meet her."

Janessa returned to the company first and sorted out everything that needed attention. Then, she got into the car that the Lu elders had sent for her, and soon she was back at the main house of the Lu family.

Unfortunately, she had been in such a hurry that she came empty-handed. Mrs. Lu didn't mind it, though.

"Mom, Dad, why did you call for me?" Janessa inquired, her tone full of respect. She still acted formal toward Donald, even though she was more relaxed and casual with Sarah.

"Janessa, we know you've been working hard these past few days. You've been running back and forth to take care of the Lu Group's business affairs. Actually, I've been telling Rayan this entire time to reconcile with you and reinstate your marriage as soon as possible, but he..." Sarah drifted off as she realized something. Even so, Janessa understood what her former mother-in-law did not say.

The Lu family needed heirs. She had been married to Rayan for three years, but she had never borne him a child. It was only when they were facing divorce that she had finally conceived, but even that had to be taken away from her.

It didn't take a genius to figure out that the Lu elders were only after Gracie's baby. As things stood, they would probably send her away once the child was born. These were all true, but then the couple had underestimated their son's tenacity.

Janessa could hazard a guess as to how the conversation had gone. Rayan had probably said something along the lines of: "If Gracie doesn't become my wife, then the child will not belong to the Lu family."

And though Mr. and Mrs. Lu were very fond of Janessa, everyone knew whom they would choose between their son and their former daughter-in-law.

"Please don't worry," Janessa smiled. "You don't have to explain anything to me. I already know these things. I already resigned myself to reality when I divorced Rayan. There's nothing for you to be sorry about. I know that Miss Mo isn't your ideal daughter-in-law, but she was able to conceive a grandchild for you. And I was never meant to be with Rayan; this much is a fact we've long been aware of."

"It's good that you understand," Donald said. "I've been worried that you might not be able to bear this insult." He had kept from speaking until he was certain of Janessa's thoughts.

"Dad," Janessa started, then quickly caught herself. "I mean, Uncle Donald, Aunt Sarah. Don't worry about me. I won't do anything to hurt the children of the Lu family. I'm just an ordinary employee of the Lu Group now. Whatever problems we had in the past are just between us. There's no need to involve anyone else." Janessa made sure her sincerity was conveyed through her words. It was important that the elders of the Lu family were reassured.