

Chapter 254 I Will Drink Up

Rayan held Janessa tight against his chest, his hands clutching her by the waist. He had spun them around a couple of times before he had managed to regain balance, and now they were smack dab at the center of the hall.

"Why are you here?" Janessa asked in a low voice. Grateful as she was to him for saving her fall, people might get the wrong idea if they stuck to each other like this. Everyone knew that they were already divorced; now they might think that they were rekindling their relationship.

Heck, if Gracie had been here, she would no doubt fly into a rage.

"You would have fallen flat on your face if I wasn't here," Rayan whispered in her ear, his breath gently caressing the graceful length of her neck.

It was the lightest gust of breeze there was, yet it left her skin tingling.

"You..." Janessa pressed her lips together and rolled her eyes.

This wasn't the time to be arguing over trivial matters. She quietly took his hands off her waist.

A few feet away, Jewell watched them, her face flushed with a mix of embarrassment and annoyance. She had already arranged for someone to drag Rayan away, so what was he doing here? What was she supposed to do now?

Meanwhile, Rayan took Janessa's hand and ushered her to a nearby chair. He didn't even spare a Jewell a glance, though his words were clearly meant for her.

"Did you trip her up just now?"

Jewell swallowed. How could she admit what she had done when he was obviously protecting Janessa?

"It was an accident," she said after a while, "but I suppose it as my fault. I was right beside Miss Qiu, but I wasn't quick enough to help her. Fortunately, she was good at thinking on her feet. She managed to compose herself and think of a plausible explanation in no time.

As for Janessa, she had already been certain that Jewell was making trouble for her on purpose. However, she couldn't deny that her dress was a tad too long, as was Jewell's, so she couldn't really prove that she had been tripped.

Janessa opened her mouth to offer up her thoughts on the matter, but Rayan instantly squeezed her hand, silently telling her to keep quiet.

Though confused, she didn't exactly mind his interference, so she let him be. She leaned back on her chair and stayed silent as he wanted her to be.

"Who are you?" he asked out of the blue.

No one could tell what he was thinking as he spoke, let alone his mood. Jewell answered carefully, knowing that she was treading on potentially thin ice. "My name is Jewell. I've heard about you, Mr. Lu. You're one of the most promising young entrepreneurs in the city."

Janessa almost snorted in laughter then. It was such a droll and incredibly pretentious thing to say.

But she held herself back and continued to watch in silence. She wouldn't dream of interrupting Rayan when things were getting exciting.

"I heard you wanted to apologize to her. Drink that glass of water then, and the matter will be settled." Rayan pointed at the waiter, who was still carrying his tray of drinks from before the accident.

Jewell glanced at the glass in question, fear slowly creeping up her spine.

Rayan was an important figure in A City. No one would dare say no to him.

But that glass of water...

Jewell squared her shoulders and turned in the direction of the waiter. She was a sophisticated woman, anyway, so she would surely be able to pull this off. She plucked one of the glasses and raised it toward Janessa. "Mr. Lu, Miss Qiu, please forgive me if I have offended you."

With that, she downed the glass of wine in one go.

When she was done, her eyes sought out Rayan.

His cold gaze was fixed on the untouched glass of water sitting on the tray. He pointed at it again and said, "I was talking about that glass."

He was more than a little irked at the woman now, especially after her blatant act of picking up the wrong glass "by mistake."

"I see. Then please let me propose another toast to Miss Qiu. I offer my sincerest apologies." Jewell wiped her lips with the back of her hand, looking helpless and timid.

She was very pretty to begin with, and the grievance in her eyes only served to win her the sympathy of most of the guests. They might be too afraid to speak up against Rayan, but they were certainly siding with Jewell, albeit in silence.

Jewell turned and picked up another wine glass from the tray, then waved the waiter over to Janessa to offer her the glass of water.

"I shall drink the wine, Miss Qiu. You can have the water. If you still refuse to drink it, then I would take it to mean that you do not want to forgive me." Without waiting for a response, she tilted her head and drank the second glass of wine.

She had drunk a total of three glasses at this point. It would be unreasonable and churlish of Janessa if she still didn't drink anything.

But both women knew that the water had been tampered with. How could she deal with this without arousing suspicion or judgment?

Imani had set her up, and although she couldn't see any lecherous man close by, Rayan was still there. She couldn't let her guard down around him, either.

"Well, why isn't she drinking yet? It's just water, anyway. How rude of her."

As soon as someone voiced out their opinion, others soon followed suit. The crowd began to whisper among themselves.

The people were now talking badly of Janessa, blaming her and calling her names, but not a word was spoken about Rayan.

Janessa heard them, of course, as they were intentionally loud with their remarks. She looked at the glass of water again, then took it and carefully inspected its contents.

Perhaps Jewell wouldn't drug her in front of an audience. But then again, her only goal was to make Janessa take the drug. The rest of their scheme would follow later.

Janessa hesitated, cursing herself for not finding Rayan earlier. What was the use of learning Imani's plan when she couldn't warn him about it?

What the hell should she do now?

Just as she was about to resign herself to her fate and drink the water, Rayan snatched the glass from her hand and downed it himself.

"Is there anything else?" he barked impatiently at Jewell.

"No, Mr. Lu. I won't bother you any further." Jewell slinked away, feeling somewhat helpless at the unexpected development, yet also quite satisfied with it. It didn't matter who took the drug first, they would suffer the same consequences in the end. She just needed to find an opportunity to make Janessa take the drug later, and everything would be back in place. She still had time.

Janessa pulled Rayan to his feet and dragged him through the crowd and out of the hall. When they got to the bathroom, she pulled him inside and locked the door behind her.

"Why did you take me to the women's bathroom?" he asked with surprise. "Are you planning to do something racy with me here?" He really couldn't understand the way she had been acting throughout the party.

"Hurry and throw up everything you drank. Now!" Janessa had never wanted this man to get drugged, let alone for her sake. She couldn't afford to pay him back for his unknowing sacrifice.

When he didn't move, she pulled Rayan over to the sink and began patting his back forcefully. He didn't feel like throwing up, though.

"Why don't you try putting a finger down your throat? I heard that always does the trick. Hurry up and give it a go!" Despite her desperation, Janessa knew she couldn't very well stick her finger into his mouth. That would be horribly inappropriate. She had no choice but to relay the instructions to him.

"Well..." Before he could even do as she said, Rayan felt an uncomfortable tightness on his skin. He immediately realized what was in the water. Without a second thought, he heaved and threw up on the sink.

But the drug's effects were quick and potent. Even after spitting out everything he had had during the evening, Rayan's body was rapidly burning up.

He straightened and took a deep breath, pretending to be fine.

"Are you okay?" Janessa asked worriedly. Rayan's pallid color was alarming.

"I'm fine. Everything's fine. Come on; let's go out." He stumbled to the door and opened it.