

## Chapter 261 Why Are You Here

Janessa headed over to Corbin and made arrangements to designate her work to the other assistants while she was on leave. She was quick and efficient, and before long, she was ready to go.

Corbin stopped her before she even reached the door.

"Wait, Janessa! You and Mr. Lu..." He wanted to ask her something, but he changed his mind at the last minute. After all, it wasn't right to gossip about the boss. Even so, a part of him insisted that he ask out of concern.

Janessa paused and looked at Corbin curiously, noting his hesitation. She wasn't sure why he was trying to ask about her and Rayan, but she went ahead and answered his unspoken question.

"Nothing happened between us. I'm just exhausted and want to take a few days off." She didn't want to talk about all that had happened yesterday. There was no point in bringing it up anyway; it would only make people think she was frivolous and easy.

"But," Corbin started again, only to shut his mouth after seeing the look in Janessa's eyes.

"It's really nothing. Don't worry about it. I'll come back to work when I'm done with my business. It's not like I'm leaving you forever to suffer alone in this hellhole." Deep down, however, Janessa was increasingly becoming uneasy.

Judging by Rayan's attitude back in his office, she couldn't help but think that she might not be able to continue working in Lu Group for much longer.

But she couldn't say this to Corbin, especially when she needed his permission to take a leave of absence.

"All right. If you need any help, don't hesitate to contact me. I have friends all over the country." In his own way, Corbin wanted to offer his support to Janessa.

At first, he had only seen her as an arrogant young lady from a wealthy family. After working with her for some time, though, he had discovered the woman's good qualities and commendable skills.

She was hardworking, and could almost always succeed in whatever she put her mind to. And she never complained, even in days when she had to work overtime all the way until midnight.

Corbin was in no way willing to lose such a good friend and a valuable colleague.

"Thanks. I'll be sure to bring you a gift from my trip. I'll be leaving now." With that, Janessa walked out of the offices with a spring in her step.

As soon as she disappeared from the floor, Corbin's direct line rang. It was Rayan.

"Look into Janessa's trip. Who is she leaving with? Where is her destination? How many days will she be staying there? I want you to find out everything there is to know." After firing off his commands, Rayan ended the call without waiting for Corbin to speak.

The poor assistant could only look helplessly at the receiver in his hand, then looked up toward Rayan's door. The boss must have heard his chat with Janessa.

Alas! If Rayan liked Janessa after all, then why was he always mean to her? He should just confess his feelings instead of quarreling with her day by day, or they might never get together in the end. No matter how smart a girl was, she wouldn't be with such a fool in love.

Corbin was a Pisces, which made him a romantic by nature. However, since witnessing Rayan commit blunder after blunder, Corbin began to question his idealistic view of love.

Muttering under his breath, he proceeded to do as the boss had ordered. First, he checked for flights booked under Janessa's name, but found that there weren't any.

She hadn't bought a plane ticket. Either that, or she was using a different mode of transportation.

Corbin went on to check with the ferries and trains, but he still came up with nothing.

He paused what he was doing and contemplated the possibilities. Maybe Janessa was planning to book her ticket on the day of her trip itself.

The moment Janessa stepped out of the building, she immediately felt light and relaxed. Ever since her mother's passing, she had been living her life according to other people's expectations, and not for her own sake.

This was the first time in a long time that she had made a decision for herself.

This would certainly be a nice trip.

Janessa cheerfully called up Alana to ask her to go shopping together, but her friend had to decline.

Janessa realized then that she hadn't been to Alana's bakery in a while. It was nearby, anyway, so she made a split-second decision to drop by and check in on Alana.

She hadn't even entered the shop when she spotted the queue of customers. They almost reached the door! It was a rather frightening sight.

It was no wonder Alana was quick to say no to her invitation. She didn't have time to spare at all.

Janessa went inside and spotted her friend puttering around behind the counter. Alana was obviously very busy, but she was still kind and courteous to her customers.

"Here is your cake, I hope you enjoy it. Please come visit us again." Alana smiled as she handed a box of pastry to a waiting customer, then did a double take when she noticed Janessa standing just a little to the side of the line.

"Wait for me over there!" she said hurriedly, nodding to an empty table in the corner.

Before Janessa could even reply, Alana was already at the cash register, printing out the receipt for her most recent sale. Fortunately, Janessa had come to help at the bakery when it had first opened, so she was quite familiar with the store's operations.

Since she was free for the rest of the day, she might as well assist Alana.

"Let me help you!" Janessa said, making a beeline to another checkout counter to open the cash register and start taking customers.

"Thank you!" Alana exclaimed. It was all she could say at the moment. Not that they needed any formalities between them, given how close they were to each other.

As the saying went, two pairs of hands was better than one. They shaved off the queue in no time, and all the customers were gone in a matter of thirty minutes.

"Oh, I haven't done this in a long time. I'm a little rusty. Or maybe I'm just getting old." Janessa sighed. In the past, she could deal with a full house by herself, and had even juggled two registers at the same time.

She was getting rusty, indeed.

"Oh, please. If it weren't for you, I would have been busy long after the sun went down." Alana leaned back, satisfied with how things turned out. She considered herself blessed to have a friend like Janessa.

"Who are you kidding? I know that you leave as soon as the store closes. You don't even allow your staff to work overtime. There's no way you would let yourself hustle into the night." The two of them knew each other so well that they could understand each other instantly whatever the other said.

"But I'm telling the truth! Look, I still have so many cakes in display. If I don't sell them before the day closes, my store is going to suffer a loss."

Just then, a girl ran out of the kitchen, looking all flustered and anxious. "Alana! Alex ruined one of the cake orders, and the customer is coming to pick it up soon. What are we going to do?" She ended on a choked sob. The poor girl looked like she was about to cry.

"Don't worry. I'll go and take a look." Alana patted the girl's shoulder to reassure her, then they both disappeared into the kitchen.

Janessa watched her friend go, a proud little smile dancing on her lips.

If it had been the old Alana, she would definitely panic at the mere thought of a botched order. Something similar had happened before, and she had promptly burst into tears. Now, she was already able to reassure her colleagues on top of solving the problem.

"It's so good to see her change for the better," Janessa mused out loud.

Only a few people were in the store now, so the work at the register was pretty easy.

Janessa began to hum a song and was enjoying the idle life of a shopkeeper when someone walked in.

"Welcome to our bakery," she called out without raising her head. "Everything is 30% off for today."

She didn't receive a reply from the new customer, aside from the loud click-clack of their heels. It was a grating sound in the otherwise austere store.

"Is this how you treat your customers? You're not even looking up to greet me?"

Janessa recognized the voice right away. Sure enough, she looked up to see that familiar, hateful face.

"Why are you here?"