

Chapter 305 Long-Overdue Conversation

"What have you two been up to behind my back?" Alana asked after Rylan left, her hands folded over her chest. She shot Janessa a stern look, as if she wasn't going to hand over the dinner unless her friend spilled the beans.

"It's nothing. It's just..." Janessa, on the other hand, deliberately stopped half-way, waiting for Alana to pry further into it.

"No, come on. Tell me, what is it?" Alana insisted, expecting the other woman to speak up anytime soon.

But Janessa only bit her lips. She made it seem like even if she wanted to say it, she wasn't sure how.

At this point, Alana pounced on her and earnestly grabbed her hand. "What is it?"

"We... We made arrangements for a blind date for you. I was planning to marry you off once and for all." No sooner had she said this than Janessa burst into laughter. Her little prank had worked.

"How dare you lead me on like that? That's it, no dinner for you." At first, Alana was of a mind to retaliate against Janessa.

But the revenge wouldn't be worth the effort. She might as well just take away the food. Janessa would surely buckle immediately.

As expected, her friend quickly apologized and cajoled her.

The bowl of porridge was a long-forgotten thing, and Janessa was now starving.

She conceded immediately.

"I was wrong, Miss Shen. You may punish me as you see fit, but please don't let me go hungry. I beg you." Janessa reached out and kneaded Alana's shoulders in an attempt to coax her.

She looked and sounded rather pitiful.

And while Alana would like to savor the sense of power a little longer, a part of her was slightly scared that Janessa might truly get mad at her later.

She cleared her throat. "Well, seeing how sincere you are with your apology, I suppose I have no choice but to grant you mercy. Sit back and let's eat." As soon as Alana raised her hand like a queen, Janessa held it obsequiously and helped Alana to settle down on the sofa.

"When can I leave the hospital?" Janessa asked after a while. "I don't have a fever anymore. I'm getting better." She hadn't wanted to be hospitalized in the first place, but the doctor had been adamant.

"Your back injury still hasn't fully healed. You could risk another infection if you get out of here so soon. Just stay here and get some peace and quiet. Once the doctor clears you of everything, then we can leave." Alana sounded firm even through all the food she was eating.

"But I don't want to stay here, Alana. Are you really going to make me spend the Spring Festival in the hospital?" Janessa gave her another pleading look. Her freedom was effectively in Alana's hands, and she must persuade her friend as soon as possible.

In truth, Alana didn't want to force her to stay in the hospital, either. Unfortunately, Janessa was far too stubborn and restless for her own good. If she hadn't been admitted, she would no doubt be back at Lu Group, working her ass off. This was the only way Alana could think of to keep her friend still.

She couldn't help but sigh. "All right, fine. But you have to stay for at least a week. You can get discharged after your wound starts to heal." Alana then said a silent prayer that Janessa would be able to sit tight in the time she had given her.

"One week? That's too long." Janessa slumped back in bed helplessly. Still, a week was much shorter than a month.

In the end, she had no choice but to accept Alana's offer.

There were a few sedatives in her meds, so Janessa fell fast asleep shortly after their meal.

Alana tucked her carefully under the sheets before slipping quietly out of the ward.

She walked to the end of the corridor, glancing back at the door she had just gone through before taking out her phone and dialing a number.

The call connected, and a deep, male voice came from the other end.

"Hello, who is this?"

Alana rolled her eyes. If it weren't for the fact that he had religiously taken care of Janessa before, she would have snapped at him there and then.

Instead, Alana, reined in her anger and took a calming breath. "Please meet me outside the hospital. I have something I want to talk to you about."

"What is it?" The man's voice had turned cold, his displeasure obvious.

"It's about Janessa. I'm sure you'll come now that I've told you that. I'll text you the address." Alana ended the call and typed out the location of a nearby cafe.

Then she went back to the ward to take a last peek of Janessa. Satisfied with the patient's state, she headed out, asking a nurse on duty to keep an eye on her friend.

The cafe had few patrons, including Alana. She had chosen a corner table, where she now sat, stirring her coffee with elegance as she looked out the window.

The bell at the door rang as another guest arrived, and a tall man strode into the establishment.

He brought a chilly air with him, instantly dampening the mood inside the otherwise cozy cafe.

The waitress shivered and rubbed her arms.

The man scoured the tables, stopping only when his eyes landed on the woman sitting in the corner.

"Can I get you anything, Sir?" the waitress asked cautiously. This customer was very handsome, but she still had a job to do.

"A cup of coffee, please." With that, he made a beeline for his target.

He shed his coat and draped it at the back of a chair before plopping down and crossing his legs. He looked like a king who had just settled down on his throne.

"What do you want?"

"I want to know, Rayan—are you serious about Janessa?" Alana had wanted to ask this question for a long time, but too many things had held her back. Now seemed like the perfect opportunity to finally let it out.

Not once had she seen Janessa happy in her three years of marriage with Rayan. And it hadn't been easy to finally escape his clutches. Alana just didn't want her friend to make the mistake of submitting herself to the same old misery.

If her best friend was not happy, then Alana would not be happy, either.

"What if I say that I don't know?" Rayan countered frankly. His reply was so quick, it almost seemed like he was talking about something mundane, like the weather.

This, of course, infuriated Alana.

He had done so much already, yet he still didn't know whether he loved Janessa or not?

"Don't get cocky with me. I'm not trying to pick a fight with you. As Janessa's friend, I've been wanting to have this conversation with you for a while now. I can let bygones be bygones, for I know people can change. But now that you've come to this point, you should give it some serious thought and decide whether you actually love her or not. I don't want you hurting her all over again."

Despite her cutting words, Alana was nowhere near satisfied. Her rage was yet to be spent. She glared at Rayan with blatant hostility.

"Janessa is very lucky to have you as a friend," he said slowly, his sentiments genuine. Rayan used to think that Janessa didn't have many friends, but it appeared that she made up for it for the quality of friends she did have.

"Listen, I'm not messing around here, okay? I'm willing to help you out, but only because I don't know how Janessa truly feels about you. You've both gone through so much in Y Country. If you really love each other, then of course I want you to be together." Alana peered at Rayan. For a brief second, she thought she saw some telltale signs of love in his eyes.

But it could have easily been just an illusion, too.