

### Chapter 313 When Happiness Ate Humble Pie

Rayan rolled his eyes at the boisterous crowd. Judging by the grumpy look on his face, it was obvious that he was a bit unhappy about their meddling.

"Why would I listen to any of you? She's my wife! I can be as lovey-dovey with her as much as I want! Caring others' opinions was polar opposite to Rayan's usual demeanor.

"Well, how about we kick off this evening's celebration by eating that wonderful cake?" Janessa wasn't really in the mood to eat. But since everyone put in a lot of effort to throw her an amazing birthday party, she definitely couldn't say no.

Her birthday this year was truly one of a kind. When she woke up today, she made three wishes. Amazingly, one of them had already been granted. After years of heartache, petty arguments, and crazy catastrophes, she was finally with the man she loved most, Rayan.

Also, she wished for Gordon to find his own happiness soon. But it seemed quite far-fetched. There was the last one.

But Janessa knew it was unlikely to happen.

"Come on, Janessa. Stop fussing around and making everybody wait! You know we can't cut the cake until the birthday girl makes a wish!" Rayan playfully bossed her around. A few seconds later, the room turned dark, leaving the birthday candles as the only source of light.

After closing her eyes, Janessa thought long and hard about what else she wanted. One of her long-standing wishes had already been granted. So to avoid being greedy, she just asked for something simple.

"Wherever she is, I hope Leona and her baby are living a safe and happy life. And if it isn't too much to ask, I hope I get to see her at least once this year.'

As with any birthday celebrations, she opened her eyes, took a deep breath, and enthusiastically blew out the candles. Everybody cheered in joy. However, Janessa got distracted when she noticed a familiar figure standing behind the crowd.

It was a curly-haired woman wearing a turtleneck sweater. When the lights turned back on, Janessa's jaw dropped.

"What? Is that? Leona?" Janessa mumbled in disbelief. At first, she thought she was just imagining things. But after rubbing her eyes, she couldn't deny it anymore. It really was her.

'But why would she be here?'

"Happy birthday, Janessa!" Leona greeted her with a warm smile while making her way through the crowd. When the two of them were finally standing face to face, Janessa couldn't utter a single word nor move an inch, as if she had turned to stone.

"What's wrong? It hasn't even been a year since we last saw each other. Don't tell me you've forgotten me already?"

"Leona! You're really back!" Finally, Janessa came to her senses and gave her dear friend a long-awaited hug.

Ever since Leona went into hiding, Janessa had been missing her so much. Unfortunately, she seldom contacted her. In that span, Leona only contacted her twice. One was to tell her that she safely arrived at her destination. The second was to tell Janessa that her baby had been born. After that, Janessa never heard from her ever again.

But despite all of that, Janessa never stopped believing that Leona was finally living the way she wanted. A life that wasn't the easiest, but free from all her past problems.

Janessa was so sure that no matter how hard life got for Leona and her baby, it would be a hundred times better than staying with that man.

"Yes, I'm back. But I won't be here for much longer if you keep hugging me to death," Leona replied with a slight giggle. But she was actually starting to have a hard time breathing.

Suddenly, a man with a frigid voice said, "Let her go." Before Janessa could even comprehend the man's words, he swooped in and pulled Leona out from her grasp.

"What? Nolan? What are you doing here?" It was already mind-boggling that Leona showed up at her birthday party. But seeing Nolan with her was utterly unbelievable.

'Did they come here together?'

"Calm down, Nolan. I'm fine. Janessa just got a little too excited. Don't worry about it. She's a dear friend." After appeasing him, Leona grabbed Janessa's hand and dragged her to a nearby table to chat.

"I can't believe that you're really here! How have you been? Where did you go?" Janessa bombarded her with questions right away. Meanwhile, Alana, who was just as surprised as Janessa about Leona's return, decided to join them and give Leona a piece of her mind. "Leona! Why did you leave without telling me? Am I not your friend as well?" Being left in the dark, especially by someone she considered as one of her closest friends, broke Alana's heart. To make matters worse, she only found out about the truth a few months ago. For so long, she couldn't help but think that the reason Leona left without telling her the truth was that she didn't see her as a friend.

But now that Leona was back, and seemingly eager to mend their friendship, Alana's anger quickly subsided.

"I know, Alana. But didn't it make for a wonderful surprise? Anyway, I just came back yesterday." Even though Leona still managed to joke around, Janessa and Alana could easily tell that she was guilt-ridden about leaving.

That said, Janessa couldn't help but ask the burning question in her mind.

"Hey, Leona. Is Nolan— Are you two—?"

"Yup! We're getting married soon. I even have his family's blessing. So yes, we're a couple now." Leona answered with a smile on her face.

If a person was genuinely happy, their smile could easily show it.

And as Janessa hoped, Leona's smile seemed like it came from the bottom of her heart. So much so that it became hard not to smile with her.

"All right, enough chit-chat. How about we start enjoying this party?" Janessa energetically got up and dragged her friends to the mini bar.

With a glass of fine wine in her hand, she started looking around to admire the crowd.

Not only was the room filled with wonderful people. She also finally had her best friend back. And most importantly, she was finally with the man she loved most. There was absolutely nothing else she could ask for.

"Everyone, may I please have your attention. I would just like to thank all of you from the bottom of my heart. I'm so grateful that you all went out of your way to give me one of the most memorable birthday celebrations of my life. I knew birthdays were special, but I didn't expect it to be the day that would make me the happiest. I'd like to propose a toast to you—"

Janessa abruptly stopped. It seemed like she completely forgot what she was about to say. Probably because she was overwhelmed by everyone's effort.

"All right, Janessa. That's enough. I already know you're just going to say how much you love me, ha-ha! How about we sing the birthday girl a happy birthday song?" Rayan cheerfully exclaimed.

When the crowd started singing, Janessa walked towards Rayan and buried herself in his arms. They slowly swayed side to side, cherishing the moment to its fullest. And when the song came to an end, Janessa looked up, stared deeply into Rayan's eyes, and went in for a kiss.

The crowd cheered them on at first. But when it seemed like they weren't going to stop anytime soon, they all decided to leave the room.

It wasn't that they couldn't stand the couple, they just wanted to give them some time alone.

A few minutes later, Janessa finally realized that she was all alone with Rayan, leaving her puzzled.

"What's wrong? Are you worried about being left alone with me?" Rayan asked casually. But deep down, he didn't know whether he should feel amused or disappointed. They were finally a couple, but Janessa was still acting like a frightened little bird around him.

For so many years, the person who'd done nothing but stand fiercely against him couldn't even look him in the eye now.

It was such a drastic change that Rayan knew he was going to need a lot of time to get used to it.

"Afraid of you? Tsk! That's impossible! I just don't know what to say right now."

"Then stop using words! Show me what you really want through other ways!"

"What?"

Before Janessa could even think about what Rayan had meant, he pulled her towards him and went in for another kiss.

But unlike earlier, he kissed her with much more passion and vigor.

"Rayan! Wait! I need—!" Janessa tried getting away, but her body wouldn't listen to her. Deep down, she wanted nothing more but to kiss him back. So instead of fighting back, she gave in to her urges and even took the lead at some point.

A few minutes later, when their passionate exchange was at its boiling point, Rayan suddenly backed away.

It might seem petty, but he really didn't want their first intimate moment after getting back together to be inside a Karaoke room. Call him old-fashioned, but he wanted someplace special but private as well.

"I'm sorry. But don't you think it's a little tacky to do it here? Ha-ha. Anyway, I've been meaning to tell you something. And this might be the only chance I get tonight. So I'm just going to say it. I love you so much, Janessa. I promise I'll never leave you again." After pledging his undying love for her, Rayan grabbed Janessa's hand and placed it to his chest.

"Stop it, Rayan. You don't have to do that. Didn't I promise you that I'll believe whatever you say from now on?"

It seemed like Janessa spoke too soon. Because after saying such a thing, somebody's phone rang.

Just like before, they both knew their tranquil moment together had to come to an end. But before checking whose phone it was, they stared longingly into each other's eyes one more time.

When they were satisfied, the two of them checked their phones. Much to their disappointment, Rayan's phone was the one ringing. As soon as Janessa saw the caller ID, the look on her face turned bleak.

'Is this really the price for happiness? Were we going too fast?' she gloomily asked herself.

"Go on, answer it. What if it's something important?" said Janessa. Despite having an ominous feeling, she still managed to put a smile on her face. Janessa's thoughtfulness really knew no bounds.