

Chapter 400 Intimate Dinner

"Money? Janessa asked, bewildered.

"What money?"

"Did Rayan really just say that he gave the Shen family some money? Wasn't he against the idea of helping them all this time?"

Did he change his mind because of me?

But why didn't Alana tell me anything?

Janessa had always been worried about the Shen family's situation, so of course, she was glad to learn that the matter had been settled. However, she couldn't help feeling disappointed for not having been told about it.

More importantly, she still couldn't say for certain that Rayan had really done this for her.

"Didn't Alana tell you? She helped me find you, so I helped her family in return for the favor." Rayan's eyes flashed with meaning as he said this.

Alana might have thought better of telling Janessa about their arrangement, but Rayan wasn't of the same opinion. If anything, he meant to butter Janessa up by letting her know everything. It just might persuade her to stay.

Even if it was only for a short period of time, he hoped that she would rest assured and tend to their unborn child comfortably.

"Well, it's good that the Shen family is doing fine." Janessa's gaze lingered on him, though she said nothing more. Regardless of how it came about, there was no way she could leave now. She could only take comfort in the knowledge that the Shen family had received the help they needed.

Rayan leaned back and hummed with obvious satisfaction.

He could tell that Janessa had a lot of resentment that bordered on hostility, even for him. If he wanted to get closer to her, he needed to be careful with how he went about it.

Willie began serving dinner shortly, and Janessa couldn't help but glance at herself and Rayan awkwardly.

"You had better let me go, Mr. Lu. This is highly inappropriate. I don't think I'm the right one for you." There were so many servants in the house, and the last thing Janessa wanted was for them to see her in Rayan's arms. She was no longer his wife, nor his girlfriend.

With the matter between them so vague and unresolved, she couldn't afford to run into any more trouble when she should be taking care of herself and her baby.

As it was, she thought that Rayan's unrestrained familiarity with her was simply out of order.

"You're right about that," he answered softly. But he wanted to hold her. No matter what their score was, he just needed to feel her next to him.

Janessa had this inexplicable effect on Rayan. She could just sit there and not speak to him, and he would be content with the certainty that she was within his reach.

He didn't let go of her, of course. Instead, he worked around her and took a bowl of food before diligently filling a spoon and holding it up for Janessa to eat.

She froze, taken aback by his gesture.

Even in their most intimate moments, he had never behaved like this, except, perhaps, when they had been badly beaten up and had to stay at a hospital abroad.

The situation then had prompted his actions. Now, however, things were different.

Thinking how intimate they looked now, Janessa felt her face flush with embarrassment.

"Mr. Lu—Rayan. I can eat by myself." She had been uncomfortable enough with the mere prospect of having to share a table with him, and he went on and did something so... silly. What was more, she had a lot of fruit in the afternoon, so she didn't feel like eating.

If Rayan insisted on having their meal like this, then she might as well have eaten by herself in her room.

"You're far too thin for a pregnant woman," Rayan remarked coldly. "It can't be good for the baby." His sharp tone made his purpose clear.

Janessa could almost hear him say that he was only doing this for his child, and she should not make a big deal out of it.

Janessa looked at the spoonful of food and mustered a bitter smile. She took a deep breath and devoured it in one bite, despite her loathing for broccoli.

The food tasted like sawdust.

Rayan was relentless, though. He took the bowl with one hand and the spoon with the other, and stubbornly fed her bite by bite.

Someone of his position shouldn't be doing something so ridiculous.

Still, Janessa told herself that his efforts were all for the baby. She reminded herself, too, that she was nothing more to him than a woman who lied and drove the mistress he had been keeping.

It wouldn't even surprise her if Rayan told her one day that she was the bane of his existence.

For a brief second, Janessa felt the urge to explain herself and her past actions, but she quickly realized that it was unnecessary. It would likely serve no purpose, anyway.

They finished their meal in this manner, with Rayan eating in between the spoonfuls he was feeding her. After dinner, Janessa went to the yard for a stroll. She had been doing this every day, since it was said to help with digestion.

As she wandered through the bushes and the flower beds, her mind drifted back to Rayan's unexpected behavior when they had dinner.

She had felt his warm chest right next to her, had felt the strong beating of his heart.

"My baby," she whispered, stroking her belly. "Your father actually loves us, doesn't he?"

Even as she said this, she knew that they were empty, desperate words that meant nothing. She was deluding herself, holding on to a false hope that Rayan still cared for her. In reality, all his love and attention already belonged to Gracie.

By the time Janessa went back inside the villa, Rayan wasn't in the dining room anymore.

"Please excuse me, Miss Qiu," Willie called out to her eagerly. "I have something I wanted to tell you." He dismissed the other servants in the kitchen and walked up to her.

Janessa took one look at his expression and instantly knew what was coming.

"Willie, I know what you are about to say, but things between Rayan and I are different now." She forced a smile in an effort to assure the man. Willie had been here to see everything since the beginning, so she understood where he was coming from. Be that as it might, her relationship with Rayan had never been a simple matter. So much had happened between them behind closed doors, away from prying eyes. It wasn't something that could be easily explained, either.

"No, please. I have no intention of meddling with your personal business. I understand that you don't have much time to spare, but I wanted you to know that the Lu Group is currently experiencing immense pressure from all sides. And so is Mr. Lu. And yet, in spite of his hectic schedule, he makes a point of having breakfast with you every morning. He also makes sure to leave the office on time so that you could have dinner together. You may be unaware, but he sometimes works until well over midnight just to make up for the lost time. He may seem like it most of the time, but Mr. Lu is not a robot. He is human. It wouldn't be long before he breaks under his burdens if everything continues like that. I was hoping that you won't make things more difficult for him, if only for old times' sake. Give him some comfort, or if not that, then provide him with a comfortable environment. One where he could rest and be at ease."

Willie didn't mince his words and got straight to the point. He had never been the type to stir up trouble out of nothing. If he went out of his way to plead with Janessa, then he must be telling the truth.

But what had happened to the Lu Group, exactly? Was there really something wrong with Zeke's shares?

If so, then Rayan would definitely struggle to protect his company.

"I see." Janessa paused and considered. "Is he in the study now?" She bit her lower lip and looked at the door to the room in question.

Willie was relieved to see that Janessa had understood his intentions perfectly.

"Yes, Mr. Lu went to the study right after dinner." He lowered his head to hide the smug smile that danced on his lips.

"Please prepare some fruits and milk," Janessa instructed, only to be stunned for the second time that evening.

She had barely finished her words when Willie produced a tray out of nowhere. He placed it on the table, revealing all the items she had just requested.

"You're well-prepared, aren't you? You already knew I would go to him."

Janessa clicked her tongue and rolled her eyes at the cunning butler.