

## Chapter 406 A Cunning Fox

Janessa lowered her head and continued to eat in silence. Now and then, she would glance up and take a peek at Rayan. Maybe he hadn't heard the servants' conversation, after all.

It would be better that way, so that the servants wouldn't be punished for simple gossip.

While the Lu family never raised a hand against their employees, they certainly knew how to penalize them in a way that hurt the most.

The staff's salary was higher than what most other estates offered, but in return, they were obligated to pay heavy fines for every mistake they made on the job. These people were working hard to support their respective families. And as servants to the elite upper class, it wasn't easy for them to land a good and stable job, let alone keep it.

Janessa was so deep in thought that she accidentally knocked over a bowl to the floor. The bowl broke into pieces as it smashed against the marble, its contents spewing in all directions.

"Ah!" Janessa exclaimed before she could stop herself.

The porridge had been hot, and some of it had splashed onto her legs. Her skin immediately turned red where the porridge had made contact.

Rayan came to her side in an instant. He carefully checked her legs and wiped bits of the porridge off. After seeing that she had been scalded, he wordlessly picked her up in his arms.

"What are you doing? Put me down. I can walk." Janessa's eyes darted to the broken bowl on the floor, then to her stinging legs. She was mortified, thinking that she couldn't even have breakfast without causing some trouble. She bit her lip, having no excuse for her clumsiness.

"Shut up and stay still," Rayan barked. "Willie, find an ointment for burns and bring it upstairs." Then, without waiting for the butler's response, Rayan carried Janessa to the master bedroom.

Rayan took her straight to the bathroom and set her down on the edge of the tub. He instructed her to stretch her legs out before pulling the showerhead and spraying her burns with warm water.

"Ouch..." Janessa cried out at the sudden contact. She eventually gritted her teeth and let out a hiss to keep herself from screaming.

Rayan had initially thought she wouldn't feel any discomfort, but he tried to be more gentle when he heard her whimper.

"Are you..." Janessa started, intending to ask if he was worried about her. After mulling it over briefly, however, she decided to forgo her question. "It's okay," she murmured instead. "I'm fine."

"Of course, you are. I know just how thick-skinned you are," Rayan quipped. Although his brows were furrowed, there was laughter in his eyes. He was teasing her.

"You are so childish," Janessa scoffed, despite being amused at his antics. Pretty soon, the warm water began to bother her. She reached for the faucet and was about to run some cold water when Rayan stopped her.

"You're pregnant. You shouldn't be using cold water." He had grabbed her hands and held them in place.

"Well, this warm water isn't helping at all! I got burned, you know." Pregnant or not, she found it unreasonable to run her burns under anything but a cool tap.

Realizing her point, Rayan quickly wiped her legs and carried her over to the bed.

Just then, Willie came into the room with the ointment and an ice bag.

"Mr. Lu, here is some ice for Mrs. Lu's burns. Cover the bag with a small towel before pressing it against her skin. You can administer the ointment after that." Janessa turned to the butler, alarmed at his words.

How could he just order Rayan around like that?

She glanced at Rayan then, but found no sign of anger or irritation on his face.

He simply rushed back to the bathroom to fetch a towel and promptly followed Willie's words. A while later, the butler had left, and Rayan was in the middle of applying the ointment on Janessa's burns.

"Aren't you mad?" she asked timidly.

The title of Mrs. Lu should belong to Gracie now, shouldn't it? Rayan must have been offended when Willie had used it to address Janessa instead.

But Rayan only looked confused. "Why would I be mad?" Didn't this woman understand that he wanted to make up with her and rekindle their relationship? She was the only woman who was worthy to be called Mrs. Lu.

Why was she even asking this question? He thought he had been making his intentions clear enough already.

"It's nothing. Never mind. You—" Janessa was interrupted by the ringing of Rayan's phone.

He stood and went to the balcony to take the call, making sure to close the sliding door behind him.

As such, Janessa couldn't overhear what he was saying, but she had a perfect view of Rayan's face. He looked serious, and he would scowl from time to time as the conversation went on.

For some reason, he gave her a long look before hanging up and getting back inside.

"You can rest here for now. You may return to your room once your legs get better." Afraid that she might protest, Rayan turned away and made quick work of changing his clothes. And then he was leaving the villa.

Sure enough, Janessa was unable to get a word in before he was out the door.

Moments later, the kitchen maid knocked on the door and came in with a new breakfast tray.

"Mrs. Lu, Mr. Lu said that I need to wait and make sure you finish breakfast."

"What a fussy man," Janessa complained under her breath. "I'm not a child. I don't need this much attention." Despite saying that, she still ate every last morsel of food.

It wasn't like she had been forced into obedience, anyway. She was only doing this for the sake of her baby. When it came to the child's welfare, Janessa was willing to suffer through anything.

As expected, she was dozing off as soon as she finished eating, and ended up falling asleep.

Rayan drove to the company at full speed. Corbin and Caspian were already waiting for him when he arrived at his office.

"Boss, you're finally here," Corbin said, casting Rayan a worried look. "I'm afraid the situation has become very difficult."

Caspian stood aside and said nothing, but his expression was dark and foreboding.

"What have you got? Tell me everything." In truth, Rayan had been anticipating most of what they were about to report. Hence, he wasn't all too surprised at the information they gave him.

"Have a look at these first." Corbin handed a folder each to Rayan and Caspian.

"I've been trailing Zeke these last few days. We now know for a fact that the person who has been buying out the Lu Group's shares is Larry, the president of Chen Group. Just yesterday, he and Zeke met up in secret. They looked very familiar with each other, chatting like old buddies. It appears that they've known each other for a long time. I must say, I am worried over the possibility that Zeke has already transferred his shares to Larry, albeit in private." Corbin had been utterly floored when he had first learned of all of this.

On the surface, Zeke was very kind to Rayan and the company's employees. Corbin couldn't even begin to imagine his possible reasons for betraying the Lu Group.

"There's still a chance he didn't sell out his shares," Rayan ventured. "He might only hold seven percent in total, but they still generate a lot of dividends. The company has a secure footing in the industry, too, and projections have never shown any loss in the future. I doubt Zeke would risk losing his financial security by conniving with Larry." Rayan knew what kind of person Zeke was. He was certain the man wouldn't give up his future profits for any temporary gratification, no matter how great it was.

"But what if Larry promises him better prospects, bigger returns?" Caspian cut in coldly. "If he promises Zeke things that you can't offer, then Zeke will definitely choose to conspire with Larry." His words hit them like the final nail in a coffin.

"That is possible," Corbin said carefully. "In fact, I discovered a large, inexplicable sum of money sitting in Zeke's account. When I checked the transaction history, it showed that several transfers have been made at different times, which is probably why the bank did not raise an alarm for suspicious deposits. Given what we know now, this money may very well be Larry's bribe in return for Zeke's cooperation." It hadn't taken Corbin long to piece two and two together. He had been mulling over this scenario since early this morning.

"That cunning fox. He's been pretending all this time, acting like a loyal and righteous man," Caspian said, turning to look at Rayan. "The thing is, we can't say for sure whether he is going to take any further action or not."