

The Enchanted Night – Chapter: 171

Going Home With A Man

For Cassandra, Rufus's accusation of her was akin to standing naked in the middle of a freezing winter.

Dylon opened his mouth to explain but Cassandra chimed in right away. She had a huge smile on her face as she reached out and took his arm.

'Well, didn't you disappear after taking a call from some woman? Isn't that the same?'

Cassandra questioned Rufus and looked straight into his eyes boldly. It seemed like she was trying to provoke him but deep inside, she felt nothing but sadness.

Was he implying she couldn't wait to throw herself into another man's arms? Did Rufus see her as a slut?

All of the sweet words Rufus had once whispered in her ear meant nothing to her now.

Dylon was frozen because so many things had happened in the last few days from people assuming he was Lyndsy's boyfriend to being used by Cassandra as a shield.

Rufus narrowed his eyes and looked back into Cassandra's eyes. She was glaring at him.

Cassandra felt her legs weaken but she didn't give in—she managed to power through as she stared Rufus down.

In her heart, Cassandra tried to make herself feel better by cheering herself on, 'No one can defeat you, Cassandra! Don't give in now!'

She felt a lump in her throat. How she wished she could cry it all out but she held her tears back. She raised her chin and glared at Rufus.

'It's not what you think,'

Rufus said and looked at Cassandra, knowing very well she was just being stubborn and defiant. He didn't have much patience left.

While it was true that Amanda had called him, Rufus had refused Amanda and he only left to see Charlie. He simply chose not to tell Cassandra for fear that she might get upset.

He preferred Cassandra to know nothing. As long as she stayed beside him, she would be happy and satisfied, wouldn't she?

'So what's it like? I believe what I see; and what I saw was you went out after you answered the phone,'

Cassandra grimaced. Actions spoke louder than words, right?

'What about what I just saw now? Is there any truth to that?'

Rufus found Cassandra's smile unpleasant. His heart prickled as if a dagger was stabbing it.

'Yes, Rufus, what you just saw is the truth. Since you're lying to me, I don't see any reason why we should still be talking. Now if you'll excuse us, there's something I need to discuss with Dylan.'

Then Cassandra took Dylan's arm, looped hers around it and walked past Rufus.

Everyone was bewildered. Lyndsy was so surprised that she almost dropped her sunglasses.

How could Cassandra humiliate Rufus in public like that!

Rufus clenched his fists. The veins on his temples bulged. Jasper was filled with apprehension how Rufus would respond, so he led Rufus out of the club to avoid more conflicts.

‘Let’s go, Rufus. We should go now!’

Rufu

It all starts on that fateful night.

When Ella, who is the dear sister of Samuel’s best buddy, sneaks into the hotel where the drunken Samuel resides and gets pregnant...

‘I don’t want a divorce!’

‘I don’t want a divorce!’

‘I did no such thing!’

Ella jumped on the bed and cried out. ‘I don’t want a scheming woman as my wife. Just sign the paper...

d Cassandra rode with Dylan. The two cars left the club.

However, a Range Rover was trailing them behind.

Rufus had been waiting outside for a long time. The night was cool which helped to cool both his body and his mind.

His heart ached when he thought of the hurt look on Cassandra’s face.

He knew he went too far by embarrassing her like that. He accused her of something he knew to be false. He understood completely why Cassandra would act that way.

Therefore, Rufus decided to open up and tell Cassandra about everything when they got home. He would tell her that Amanda was his first love but it was all in the past now and she didn't need to worry about her.

He knew he could convince Cassandra by using reason and not force.

Rufus heaved a sigh of relief when he saw their cars separate at the crossroad. Dylan's car was driving in the direction of Garden Villa.

Would Cassandra be pleasantly surprised when she saw he was back?

Would she believe him if he was honest to her about everything?

However, Rufus's smile disappeared when he saw the car turning at a corner. 'This isn't the way to Garden Villa. Where are they going?'

Dylan's car pulled over in front of an apartment building. Both Cassandra and Dylan got off the car and went inside the building.

Rufus and Jasper had seen Cassandra here before. She was only cleaning herself up then because Cloris slopped her pigment all over her and stained her clothes. But tonight, she had no reason to be here.

Rufus lit a cigarette. He raised his head and looked at the floor where Dylan's apartment was on. The light was turned on and Rufus could see the shadows moving behind the curtains.

There was a cold look on his face; and he didn't even noticed when his cigarette burned out.

'Cassandra, how could you stay in another man's apartment at this ungodly hour?'

Horace Being Hospitalized

Rufus fixed his eyes on the figures behind the curtain. He couldn't make anything out from the vague shadows beneath the cloth.

He could do nothing but guess what they could be doing. As a man who wanted complete control over things, he hated not knowing what was happening inside the room.

As he was restlessly trying to peek past the curtain, his cellphone rang. Victor's name popped up on the screen. 'What is it?' Rufus asked.

'Mr. Luo, Mr. Tang was just sent to the hospital. He had an asthma attack,' Victor said anxiously.

There was static and noise over Victor's end, and Rufus could hear Jill's worried voice in the background.

'Shit. Okay. I'll be there in a bit. Have someone here to watch over Cassandra. I'll text you the location,' Rufus said in an upset voice. It had been an awful day.

Rufus threw his cigarette on the ground and extinguished it with his foot fiercely. He glanced back at the window again, but the light had already been turned off.

His eyes darkened just as his jaw started to clench. Rufus gripped his phone and quickly texted Victor the location before shoving it back into his pocket. Then he rushed towards the hospital.

Once he reached the hospital, most of the Tang family members were seen waiting outside the emergency room.

Jill was sitting by the bench, trying her hardest to wipe her tears away. Ivy was dotting on her, patting her on the back to calm her down. Lionel was pacing the hallway, struggling to keep himself steady.

Rufus approached the family and walked up to Lionel. When their eyes met, Lionel stopped pacing and kept himself still.

‘What happened? How is father?’

Rufus’s face now looked solemnly grim, which, Lionel falsely thought, was due to his worry for Horace.

‘Mother and father were fighting, and that was what triggered the attack,’ Lionel answered quickly.

While he spoke, his peripheral vision glanced at Jill, who couldn’t stop her tears from streaming down.

Rufus held a cold expression and looked towards the direction. Jill seemed to notice the gaze, so she raised her head and met Rufus’s eyes.

She hated how he looked at her. She stood up quickly, eyes all red and puffy.

‘What are you giving me that look for? Don’t think that you’re not to blame for this! We wouldn’t even be fighting if it weren’t for you! It was all your fault! Your father is now in an emergency condition because of you!’ the woman yelled hysterically.

Jill heaved, suddenly realizing how exhausted she was from crying and worrying. She gasped for air to catch her breath before plopping back

down on the bench. She couldn't help but let the tears fall once again. Ivy, worried that the situation would worsen, immediately stood in front of her and let Jill cry without Rufus's antagonizing gaze.

Rufus sneered angrily, 'This is so ridiculous! Horace is an idiot for choosing her over my mom. She's rude and bland.'

The emergency room suddenly opened. Horace was lying on the emergency bed as the nurses pushed him out through the door. Once Jill saw Horace, she quickly threw herself over to the bed and wailed, 'Horace! Please don't do that again! How can Lionel and I live without you? No one would ever be able to protect us! Tang Group will be taken away quickly without you! We're just as good as dead without you!'

Lionel tried to interrupt his mother to tell her to stop. She was making a scene and everyone could hear her.

'Mom, please. People are watching.'

Jill suddenly realized how inappropriate she was and quickly raised herself up to stand beside the

'Do you still want to run away after what happened last night?'

Their relationship changes overnight. She tries to keep her distance from him, while he comes closer and closer.

Spoiling her, he gives her everything she desires. His only wish is to keep her around. The whole world is envious of what she has.

'Never rush in a relationship,' she says calmly.

he spat at Jill, 'I have given you the power to manage Tang family. How many servants have you fired within the few years with such a privilege?'

You think firing a hundred employees is ethical? Don't you think that's a little too much? You are scornful, Jill. None of the employees could say anything good about you when I went to talk to them. Don't you think you should reflect on your actions? Since the day I allowed you into this family, you have ruined our connections to the family's relatives and peers. Have you ever heard me complain?'

Horace turned, face contorted irritably as he coughed to gather his breath.

Jill scoffed, 'Wow. I'm actually surprised that you're mad at me now. It all makes sense! You couldn't have gotten mad at me before because you needed money from my family. My money's the only thing that's important to you, isn't it? But now that the Xie family is not as well-off as it was, you begin to pick on me. You have started to confront and defy me. If you really don't like me, then you should have just married Hellen! Divorce me and marry her instead! Then you can kick me and Lionel out of the family and live your happy life with Hellen and Rufus. I can promise you, that everything in this family will go according to your wish!'

Jill turned even more agitated and was speaking outrageously. She even mentioned Hellen Luo, Rufus's mother, whose name had remained forgotten for years.

'Hellen has passed away. How dare you... You are insufferable! How dare you even mention her! If she were here, she would definitely be much better than you ever will be!'

His chest was heaving as he angrily pointed at Jill. He grabbed his chest with his other hand as he started to cough harder.

'It's a shame then that the bitch is dead. I just wish that her son had died along with her. After leaving for so long, he just comes back one day to

Tang Family? You're blind, Horace! That damn child is after something! I have devoted myself to Tang family for years, but now my worth is not even as much as a dead person. I might as well be dead, too!

As she threw her temper, Jill pretended that she was going to bang her head against the wall. Ivy, who had kept quiet throughout their quarrel, hurried to pull Jill back and console her.

However, before he could do anything about it, Horace collapsed to the ground with a hand over his chest.

Heading For A City

Rufus's face remained emotionless even after the maid had told him all the details.

Was Jill merely behaving this way because she thought of Horace as a grumpy, old, arrogant man? It couldn't be denied, though, that Horace's health had deteriorated day after day—he was getting old and therefore, grumpy and arrogant as many men had come to be.

Rufus had no other thought in his mind but to make sure he executed his plan right away. Horace was, after all, old enough now—he might die before experiencing what it was like to be betrayed by his own son and at the same time, lose his own company. Horace deserved no less after all he'd done to Rufus and his mother. He did not deserve to die a peaceful death.

Meanwhile, in the ward, Jill still hadn't stopped sobbing and Lionel was starting to become impatient. He kept bugging the nurse, asking what time his father was going to wake up. In fact, he did it so much that the nurse had started to avoid him.

Rufus waited outside the ward the whole night. Before dawn, Horace finally woke up.

‘Horace, Horace, how are you feeling now?’

Jill rushed towards Horace the moment he opened his eyes.

Rufus was also wide awake and alert outside the ward—he was calm and so sure of what he was going to do.

The doctor came in to check all of Horace’s vitals and was seemingly satisfied. He spoke in a cool tone, ‘Everything looks good here. He doesn’t need as many people to stay with him—one is enough. The rest of you can go home and rest. Mr. Tang needs quiet too.’

The ward was so crowded that the doctor advised them to leave in order to give Horace some peace and quiet.

Rufus scanned the room with his eyes before he offered to stay, ‘I will stay here and look after him. You can all go home first and come relieve me later.’

Rufus’s tone was calm and somewhat matter-of-fact. Jill glanced at him from the side and murmured, ‘Such a hypocrite,’ before yawning and leaving the room with Ivy.

‘Father, I have to go and attend to a few appointments. I’ll be right back after I’m done,’

Lionel said as a goodbye to his father. When he left, only Rufus and Horace were in the room.

Although he had already woken up from his coma, Horace still looked pallid and weak.

He tilted his head as he looked at Rufus with a confused look on his face, as if his mind was buzzing about something.

Rufus didn't make a sound, instead he just gazed blankly back at his father.

'Rufus, I had a dream. I dreamt of your mother,'

Horace said in a weak but yearning tone.

'She stopped talking to me. I'd lost all contact with her for years. I had no other way to find out you were my son,' he continued.

Horace pressed his eye lids together as if he was deep in thought.

Rufus remained silent and stoic but inside, he was raging.

After a while, Horace fell back into a deep sleep. Rufus took this chance to

'Let's go and register our marriage on your birthday!'

Marrying Daniel should have been her best birthday gift, but everything was ruined the moment when she caught him sleeping with another woman on the day before her birthday.

'He's going to marry that woman! She... was my best friend!'

r not. I didn't even get much sleep last night because I was up late worrying about them. I have no choice but to go. I've already made up my mind,'

the girl wiped her tears away as she spoke.

Cassandra glanced at her name plate—Maggie from the Design Department. She also took part in Mr. Wang’s project—she was a very valuable and hardworking employee to have.

Suddenly, Cassandra thought of something a bit crazy.

‘Well, if you insist, I guess I’ll have to come with you!’

Cassandra walked to Maggie and placed a hand on her arm as a gesture of support and care.

‘Ma... Manager Qin...’

Maggie hadn’t expected this at all. She couldn’t believe her ears—her boss was going with her? Did she hear that correctly?

‘I don’t have much on my plate right now and I can hand over the rest of the work to others. We’ll leave in the afternoon,’

Cassandra said in a resolute tone. She met with some of the department heads to hand over her work. Then she asked her assistant to gas up her car.

Cassandra never used the company car if it wasn’t for work. She was a strict follower of the company rules because she wanted to set an example to her employees. In fact, she was a stickler for the rules that she would take a taxi to work everyday.

But today, she decided to use the car just so she could go with Maggie to A City and everyone was buzzing about it

‘Wow, Manager Qin is such a good boss. Where else will you hear a boss accompanying her employee for a family visit?’

‘Well, it’s not really a family visit but more like a family search! I hope Maggie finds her aunt and uncle though. God bless her!’

Cassandra quickly dropped by the Garden Villa to pack up some clothes.

Victor updated Rufus right away.

‘Miss Qin has just left the Garden Villa holding a suitcase full of clothes.’

Rufus felt his heart skip a beat when he heard this. What on earth was his little woman up to?

What Are You Up To Here

Cassandra and Maggie left the company and drove to the A City together.

While inside the car, Maggie kept on trying to call her uncle. In spite of several tries, she kept on getting the busy signal. This left her frustrated and irritated. Cassandra noticed the worry on Maggie’s face.

‘Don’t look so troubled. The cell is not turned off at least, be glad. This could be due to the poor signal. It is normal since A city has been severely affected by the earthquake. They must still be working on restoring signals,’

Cassandra tried to soothe her.

‘Thank you for coming with me, Manager Qin!’

Gratitude was evident in Maggie’s eyes. She had no idea what would have happened if Cassandra hadn’t been kind to her. This wonderful

woman granted her the permission to leave work midway and then also drove her to the A City. It wasn't easy to find such a helpful and understanding boss hence Maggie was completely touched.

'If you really want to thank me then just take a good rest at the back. Then you will have enough energy to find your uncle when we get there, alright?'

Cassandra replied, smiling. She looked at Maggie's reflection in the rear-view mirror to check whether she was resting.

Listening to her words, Maggie finally leaned back in the seat. Cassandra breathed a sigh of relief and retrieved her eyes from Maggie.

The closer they reached to the A City, the more congested it became.

Cassandra noticed that the road was cluttered with several vehicles moving here and there. Some were delivering relief goods; some were rescue teams of volunteers; and some were here also in search of people like Cassandra and Maggie.

It usually took a six-hour drive to reach A City but today it took longer because of the commotion.

It was already pitch dark when Cassandra finally stopped the car. She parked the car and observed the surroundings. She noticed that it was a small township, and there was no inn here. Due to this, they decided they had to spend the night inside the car. When silence was about to fall, Maggie began to speak.

'My uncle loves me as much as a birth father would love his child. He would make it a point to bring me everything that he gets for his kid, my cousin. In fact, he never ever made me feel left out.'

Speaking of her uncle, Maggie had a lump in her throat.

‘Hey Maggie, don’t get sentimental. Your uncle is going to be alright!’

Cassandra comforted her. At this point, Vernon flashed through her mind. She thought about the treatment she received from him. In spite of being her birth father, Vernon couldn’t even give her the love that Maggie’s uncle showered her with. ‘Or is it because there is something wrong with me?’ Cassandra couldn’t help thinking.

Her thoughts went back to the summer vacation when she was in the second year of junior school. She remembered the day so vividly like it was yesterday.

Cassandra was fully prepared for that day for it was Vernon’s Birthday. Etched in her mind was an idea to make a birthday cake, thanks to her culinary class in school. She had bought all the ingredients in advance, hoping to surprise her father.

As all the family members were taking a nap at noon, she tiptoed into the kitchen and began to fly about in order to work on her surprise cake.

Cream, flour, milk... Cassandra followed the

When her sister ran away from the wedding, Autumn was forced to marry Charles.

His name had been linked to innumerable ladies.

He had different girlfriends for every day of a year.

Autumn had never thought that she would fall in love with him.

e enter the kitchen until she studied abroad. Slowly, she tried to forget it and began to cook food items that interested her.

Yet she never cooked anything for her parents anymore. She lost the desire to please them.

Even after several attempts, sleep wouldn't come to Cassandra. Thinking about the past had left her feeling suffocated. She badly needed to get off the car in order to breathe.

As the town was the only way to go to the A City, she noticed that there were lots of cars parked by the road. People sat in groups and had a chitchat while they smoked.

All of them looked uneasy. They were all heading for the A City, but they were skeptical whether they could squeeze their way there.

After all, the government rescue team had to pass smoothly hence they heard news that the road had been blocked for private vehicles. They might be sent back and their effort might end up being futile.

Leaning against her car, Cassandra gazed at the starry sky meditatively.

She prayed that everything would go well tomorrow. She sincerely hoped Maggie would be united with her uncle. Therefore, Maggie's filial piety and her thousands of miles' drive wouldn't be an utter waste.

After two hours of rest, they resumed the journey. Soon Cassandra realized the highroad to the A City was indeed blocked. It was under the traffic police's scrutiny and no private vehicle was getting the permission to pass.

'Please, my friend's uncle has been out of touch. Let us pass through, please, we are really anxious,'

Cassandra pleaded, but the police seemed indifferent to her pleas.

‘It is not that we thwart you from passing by, but there is an alarm of landslide on the highway ahead. It is at the foot of the mountains. It’s too dangerous and we can’t let you go. We are here for your safety, please try to understand,’

The policeman explained helplessly. Maggie was so anxious that she was close to tears.

‘Cassandra, what are you doing here?’ someone called her.

Cassandra turned around and found Dylan getting off the bus, with a look of surprise.

‘Aren’t you supposed to be in the G City? What are you doing here? Go back immediately. At the moment, it is quite dangerous over here!’

I sll Go With Her

Cassandra was the person Dylan least expected to see here. The situation had been so dangerous, with aftershocks seizing the location every other minute. It boggled him how Cassandra managed to drive up here despite the risk.

‘I can’t go back now. I need to find Maggie’s uncle and his family!’

Cassandra said stubbornly.

Dylan looked at Maggie whose eyes were red and swollen. Her hand was being held by Cassandra tightly. He frowned slightly before answering, ‘Park the car at the town hall nearby and get on the ambulance with us!’

Dylon pointed at the vehicle he just got out of.

Cassandra smiled at him, grateful with his offer.

‘Thank you so much, Dylon!’ she exclaimed as she hurried over to the car and drove towards the town hall.

Once she was done, she and Maggie ran to the ambulance and rode with Dylon on the way to A City. Everything was in ruins. The roads were all destroyed, and buildings kept crumbling apart.

‘My team was dispatched to the site near the home of Maggie’s uncle. You two can come with us. But you must follow me closely,’

Dylon explained to Cassandra and Maggie. They had started to formulate a plan just to ensure all their safeties.

Maggie’s uncle lived near the school, where he and his wife worked as teachers.

The house was crumbling and bound to fall any time soon. It was just a good thing that her uncle and his family weren’t there. However, some necessities in the house were gone.

Cassandra noted that the towels and quilt were gone. ‘Your uncle must’ve come back to take them out somewhere else. Don’t worry, Maggie. They probably went to an emergency shelter nearby,’

Cassandra reassured. Maggie’s face softened upon hearing her manager’s words.

‘Thank you, Manager Qin. I’ll go and search around in a bit. I saw some tents by the playground when we passed,’

Maggie said excitedly, trying to look for a few supplies before heading out herself. Cassandra followed suit.

The playground was crowded with people. Maggie searched around several times but failed to see her uncle and his family.

Cassandra, however, was determined to find him. She took Maggie to the broadcast station and asked the broadcaster to page Maggie's uncle for them over the loudspeaker.

It only took a few minutes until a middle-aged man peered out of one of the tents. Maggie immediately recognized him and ran towards the tent. The man smiled as she rushed over to him.

'Maggie! What are you doing here?'

The man's eyes were watering from happiness. He never would have expected for Maggie to appear in A City.

'Uncle!'

Maggie immediately ran into her uncle's arms and wailed. She was so happy to see him!

Cassandra stood aside and felt a lump in her throat. It was so precious to see this family reunion. She revelled in the comforting feeling of bringing the family together, trying to dispel the ache in her heart because she knew that this would never happen to her.

Neither her father, Vernon, nor her mother, Edith, was the type to hug her that way.

Maggie's voice rang her out of her thoughts. 'Uncle, this is Manager Qin. She came with me all the way to A City to search for you!'

Maggie beamed at Cassandra gleefully.

Maggie's uncle was a stout old man who had a kind face and a gentle stature. He wore a pair of glasses to frame his face, whi

The Mighty Soldier King is back!

With the original intention to protect his beautiful boss, he accidentally gets involved in dangerous adventures and trouble.

Will our Mighty Soldier King be defeated? Or will he sweep away all obstacles?

tal rods that protruded out of the building. Her face was flushed with excitement.

'So, you know how it's designed?'

Dylon asked, slowly catching up with Cassandra's gleeful insights. His hopes seemed to grow higher upon hearing her confident explanation.

'Yes! Yes I do! I was still studying in Rome then. My professor used it as an example during one of his lectures. His grandfather designed it himself!'

Cassandra clapped her hands and shoved Dylon away from sheer zest as she revelled in her memories.

'Could you go talk to the team! Let me go with them. I can lead them to the security office safely,'

Cassandra said, not really waiting for Dylon's response as she started to walk towards the men. Dylon, however, caught her wrist with his hand and tugged at her hand to make her stay.

‘No. You are not going inside. It’s too dangerous!’

Cassandra narrowed her eyes at him, bewildered. She was their best chance to get in and out safely, and Dylan didn’t want to risk it.

‘Time is of the essence, Dylan! The longer we wait out here, the more dangerous it’ll be inside. I need to go with them! I swear I know this building. It will not collapse. I trust the architect and the construction quality!’

Cassandra asserted. She was confident enough that she could make or break the mission, but it was the quickest way to get the rescue team to the trapped security personnel at the quickest time possible.

‘No. I can’t risk that. I’ll call the rescuers instead and just so you can explain the building layout to them. I cannot authorize you to go in there,’

Dylan sent a doctor nearby to call some of the rescuers. Two of the rescuers quickly ran towards Cassandra and Dylan.

‘You don’t understand. It’s a complex building that is difficult to maneuver and explain. Just let me go inside! The situation may be more complex because of the tremendous shock. They wouldn’t know it. Like I said, the longer we stay out here arguing about this, the more dangerous it’ll become, Dylan!’

Cassandra was slowly getting angrier as Dylan kept turning her down. He looked at her once, and back at the building. When he was being hesitant, he and Cassandra heard a man’s voice.

‘I will go with her!’

Hearing the very familiar voice from behind, Cassandra couldn't believe her ears.

The voice was low yet sweet, the sexy laziness on it was so persistent that it lingered through Cassandra's senses. It was the voice that would melt her heart every time she heard it.

Longing to see the face that bore the voice, Cassandra slowly turned around and saw Rufus standing behind her. Her eyes betrayed the mix of emotions she felt upon seeing him, she suddenly felt excited and wanted to wrap him around her arms.

'Ru... Rufus... Why are you here?'

Cassandra could hear her voice trembled as she asked Rufus. He was so unpredictable and she was not expecting him to be here, thus she didn't know what to say or how to react.

'How could it be possible? Hasn't he been staying in G City all this time? Is he supposed to be mad with me after assuming that Dylon and I had an intimate relationship?'

Haven't we already broke up by the misunderstanding? Are we in a cold war because neither of us would speak first? Why did he suddenly show up?' These questions baffled Cassandra. She wanted to ask Rufus for answers so as to clear her heavy head, however, looking at his face, she deemed it wise to just stay silent.

Driving on her way to A City, whenever she saw a miserable scene caused by the tragic earthquake, Cassandra was relieved to think that Rufus was not with her to witness all of these.

For some reasons, she didn't want Rufus to see such incidents because it would break Rufus's heart seeing so many innocent people suffering. Cassandra knew that despite his strong personality Rufus had a soft spot for victims of calamities like this.

There were too many casualties reported around the earthquake-affected region. People were gnashing and weeping along the streets, mourning for the loss of their loved ones. When one saw too many deaths, he would be miserable at first but would become gradually insensitive in the end. Cassandra could take it all but she didn't want Rufus to withstand any of it, not at all.

Cassandra knew that Rufus was a much deeper person compared to her. She didn't want him to see any scene of suffering, anything miserable.

'You don't have to go in. You can stay outside and give us instructions on what to do with the help of the real-time cameras.'

The rescuers immediately handed the communication devices to Cassandra when they heard that Cassandra could help them rescue the survivors.

'This is the headset. This one is the walkie-talkie. And with this, you can view our exploration in real time on the screen. You can tell us the way through the walkie-talkie until we find the survivors trapped inside the building.'

The rescuer talked a-mile-a-minute in giving instructions to Cassandra and looked at her with a stern face when he finished. He assumed that she followed him along the way.

'Did you get it? Again, we thank you and appreciate your help! It really matters to the people here.'

With that, the rescuers turned around and walked inside the building. Cassandra looked down at the devices on her hand. She put on the headset, checked on the walkie-talkie and wiped off the dusty screen of the hand-held monitor.

‘Walk to the left. There is a weak spot on the right. It will collapse easily. The path to the left will take you a little longer but it is safer.

This is a corridor. The security room should be on the edge of the corridor. Go straight!’

Cassandr

It all starts on that fateful night.

When Ella, who is the dear sister of Samuel’s best buddy, sneaks into the hotel where the drunken Samuel resides and gets pregnant...

‘I don’t want a divorce!’

‘I don’t want a divorce!’

‘I did no such thing!’

Ella jumped on the bed and cried out. ‘I don’t want a scheming woman as my wife. Just sign the paper...

was as same as hers—resolution.

‘We’ll share cold spells, storms, and thunder.

We’ll share mists, hazes, and rainbows.

Seemingly always apart, but also forever interdependent.

Only this can be a great love.

The loyalty is here:

I love not only your strapping stature, but also your firm stand, the earth beneath you...‘

Cassandra slowly and endearingly recited the poem 'To the Oak Tree' to Rufus. 'Did you remember that too, Rufus?' she asked.

'To love you, I won't only love you but also the things you insist. My dear Cassandra,' Rufus adding, beaming with softness.

Cassandra felt relieved. This moment was so romantic and her happiness was so genuine; she couldn't help tears of joy from falling down her eyes.

The conflicts between them, no matter they were misunderstandings or truths, were now wiped out. Maybe that was how it was when you truly loved someone.

All they knew this time was they trusted each other, they protected each other, they stared at each other, and most especially they were made for each other.

Ambulances and emergency convoys around them came and left. Cries were everywhere.

Cassandra took a deep breath and turned around to continue helping the rescuers. Rufus stayed beside her.

'Hello. My name is Cassandra Qin. I am an architectural designer. Since I learned much about the buildings, I hope I could be a volunteer to help you here!'

Cassandra looked at the rescuers with a firm and persistent face, eager to help them out.

‘Okay, go with Dr. Tong and work with us. Welcome to the team and thank you for being a volunteer.’

They just witnessed and recognized the professional performance of Cassandra. They were thankful to welcome her when they heard that she would stay to help.

Cassandra turned around and showed Rufus an ‘OK’ gesture. Rufus smiled at her with his hands in the pockets.

Amidst the land of disturbance, the clouds of dust, the cries surrounding them, Rufus’s smile was like a beam of sunlight that lightened up everything for Cassandra.

‘Oh, Rufus, you’re my Apollo. You’re the sunshine of my life. You are my hero!’ Cassandra mused herself.

Both of them were staring at each other in the midst of the turmoil and chaos. They gave each other the firmest belief and the truest heart.

Never Lost Her Again

In spite of the situation being so chaotic, Cassandra couldn’t turn a blind eye to Rufus’s charm. She stood spellbound as she observed the dust stick to his carved face.

Soon she realized this was not the right time or the right place to be captivated by Rufus’s look. In order to peel her eyes off from his handsomeness, Cassandra turned around and began to follow the rescue

team to the next disaster site. On the other hand, Rufus was swiftly unloading the boxes of water and instant noodles from the car.

This experience meant a great deal to Cassandra and Rufus. They were beyond happy to be working together for a good cause. Somehow doing it together seemed like taking their relationship to the next level. It was like they had been through thick and thin together.

Rufus squinted and looked at another building not far away from him. Cassandra was analyzing the situation along with the rescue team in front of the building. She seemed very engaged and was pointing her fingers to the building while talking to other rescue team members.

‘Cassandra, don’t you dare think of leaving me again!’

Rufus murmured to himself.

When he first heard that Cassandra was gone, he was beyond worried. Panic had engulfed Rufus from every corner. Victor informed him that Cassandra had packed her luggage and left the Garden Villa. He was also informed where she was headed. His first reaction was fury which was soon replaced by worry. Rufus realized he couldn’t stand a second without knowing if Cassandra was safe.

Horace had been still resting in the hospital ward. It was his responsibility to care for him until Lionel would show up there. He repressed his urge to find Cassandra for the time being.

As soon as his duty was over, Rufus dashed for the A City. On his way, he noticed the road was filled with vehicles carrying the patients. It wasn’t easy for him to reach his destination. On top of that, he could see the casualty rates had amplified. The radio in his car confirmed all his worries. He realized how bad the situation actually was and sped his car

to get there faster. Sweating with anxiety, he prayed for the well-being of the woman he was in love with.

'Why is she so damn reckless! Before bringing the staffs to A City, why didn't she consider talking to me?' his mind uttered with frustration. Inside his mind, Rufus swore he would teach her a lesson once he found her.

But what was buried behind his anger was anguish. In truth he had no idea if she was alive. In order to get this thought out of his mind, he was covering it up with anger. He had been using anger as his defense mechanism.

When he noticed that her car was parked near the city hall, Rufus thought he had finally found her. But on further inquiry he was told that she had indeed gone to A City.

This piece of information heightened his concern. For a split second he had wished that Cassandra wouldn't be inside the city.

With a heavy heart, he made his way to the disaster area. It was done very quickly as he had no difficulty getting inside. Without wasting any time, Rufus inquired about Cassandra but nobody seemed to have the details that could enlighten him. As he was passing by a school playground, a voice reverberated from the radio and made his heart beat faster. 'She was here!' he thought with resolution. She was looking for her friend Maggie's uncle. This was a pure stroke of luck and he internally celebrated.

He expectantly stood in front of the school gate and waited for Cassandra's arrival. Once he saw her, his heart finally relaxed. Instead of addressing her right away, he decided to follow her.

As he tailed behind Cassandra, Rufus overheard her conversation with Dylan. When he heard the whole story, he was overcome with mixed emotions.

He wondered how the woman he loved so dearly could have been so brash. 'Why did she insist on accompanying the rescue team? Is she not aware how dangerous it is?

What about the people she cares about? If something happened to her, what would h

'Do you still want to run away after what happened last night?'

Their relationship changes overnight. She tries to keep her distance from him, while he comes closer and closer.

Spoiling her, he gives her everything she desires. His only wish is to keep her around. The whole world is envious of what she has.

'Never rush in a relationship,' she says calmly.

was tortured Cassandra. She bit her lips and hoped they would find his family as soon as possible.

Just when she was praying, the rescue dog barked. They began digging the ground below them. The rescue team grabbed their equipments and ran to the area where the dog stood. The light flashed and the equipments beeped, showing signs of life.

Knowing she had to be quick, Cassandra immediately gave her commands. She told the team how to dig, what direction to focus and what direction to avoid. In a matter of minutes, she carefully filled them with her plan.

This building was at great risk of collapsing so she advised them to be very careful.

The team started their work and the concrete foundation brackets were exposed in the air soon.

It was a corner in the bathroom, a safe place to cover oneself during an earthquake. The man's wife seemed to have some common sense and this knowledge relieved Cassandra.

The team moved the bricks and a figure came to their view.

'There she is! There she is!'

The man was delighted to see his wife. He wanted to step forward but he was held back by the team.

They looked at the woman, standing. She bowed and squatted on the ground. Her head was hit by a stone. As a result, the whole area was drenched in blood.

The wound on her head had turned into a scab. It looked like she had remained in that position for long. Her wound was intense and everyone knew she had very little chance to survive.

Everyone present on the scene held their breath in anticipation. They were anxious and worried. A member in the rescue team brought his equipment and walked toward the woman. He put his index finger under her nose and felt her breath. Shaking his head, he looked back at the others.

After receiving this sad news, everyone remained silent. Earlier there was hope, but now the atmosphere became mournful. Cassandra lost her balance and almost fell onto the ground, but Rufus held her.

Today she was full of hope since she watched five people survive. But this woman's death changed it all.

While he was about to move her body, the rescue man observed her hands were tightly bound over something. He squatted and tried to see what it was. As he removed her hands, he let out a scream, 'I've got the baby!'

The baby was in deep sleep. His face was bereft of any wound. He was tucked safely in his mother's arms.

The sight sent shivers down Cassandra's spine. She couldn't fathom it.

After standing agape for a few minutes, she finally comprehended what had happened. 'The woman sacrificed her life to save her baby,' her mind perceived. Cassandra felt a tenderness towards this woman and her motherly love.

Secret Investor

Cassandra was startled, as were all the people around her.

The baby slept soundly, as if nothing had happened, oblivious to the act of motherhood by which he was saved. Somehow, the mother had squatted with him in her arms, protecting him against the falling boulders with her own body.

Cassandra's mouth fell open in horror, surprise, gratefulness. All at once, these emotions were so hard to process that her hands started to tremble.

Something seemed to cross her mind abruptly but only for an instant. She couldn't hold on to it no matter how hard she tried.

The mother had protected her baby, keeping all the dangers at bay. This truly, was the power of love and love alone.

Dylon snapped to his senses, still recovering from the shock of what had just happened. He sprung forward to test the blood pressure and pulse of the baby, then carried him to the ambulance which had just arrived at the scene. Standing by the ambulance, he saw the father of the baby, wailing helplessly, knelt down on his knees.

Cassandra didn't know what to look at, the destruction or the distancing of loved ones. She felt solemn, stirred and numbed by the misery around her.

Naturally, the night was disturbing. Cassandra lay in Rufus's arms, snuggling against his chest. Her eyes were stuck to the wall, as if it was a canvas on which was playing all images from the events of the day that she couldn't get out of her head. She didn't realize but she was now mumbling. Rufus arched his neck to hear her better but he couldn't make out any proper words.

Soon, thereafter, she fell asleep. Sleep was equally appalling. She dreamed of a strange woman, holding a baby in her arms, crying in horror, looking right into her eyes.

'Don't come closer!' Cassandra yelled, alarmed. 'Stop!' Louder, this time.

She could not make out their faces. They might as well have been made out of sand sifting through the wind.

All Cassandra saw was the woman clutching her baby, as if she was holding the most valuable treasure that ever existed. The most disturbing thing was the hostility and hatred with which she stared at Cassandra.

Cassandra felt tremendously sad and helpless. The sadness hit her oddly, making her desperate to ask for an explanation. Why did the woman hate her so much? She wanted to ask, yell, shriek but no sound came out of her wide open mouth.

The dream tortured her the entire night, coming and going in flashes, like memory left behind by terrible things. She was grateful to have been woken up by some noises in the morning.

The moment she opened her eyes, she saw Rufus lying next to her, looking straight at her. There were concerns and a sweet sense of care in his eyes.

‘Did you have a nightmare last night? I know you didn’t sleep well.’

Rufus initiated an exchange, hoping she would release some of her stress and anxiety. He brushed his hand across her cheek, then held her by her bare shoulder.

‘It’s nothing. It’s just...because of whatever happened yesterday.’

The imagery of the dream was still fresh in her mind. She didn’t know what it meant or whether it was a premonition for something. She didn’t want to talk about it. One, describing it would mean reliving the horror of it; and two, she didn’t want Rufus to worry about her.

‘Ummhmm...See, your body is really weak right now. You won’t be able to make it. Just go home and rest, okay?’

Rufus constantly worried about her health. He wished she would leave as soon as possible a

‘Do you know what you did wrong? It’s alright if you just wanted to own me. But you should not have helped Molly leave me!’

When Brian learns the truth, there is no chance for Hannah to win his heart.

Molly, who wants to run away from Brian, seems to be the only one to blame for Hannah's misfortune...

he edge all the time.

'Father, don't be so worried. You're the chairman of Tang Group. Arthur is still scared of you and he would never drive away or exterminate us. We still have some projects of the industrial district,' Lionel said, trying to comfort Horace.

His intention was good but he didn't realize the severity of the situation. He didn't think it was necessary to worry about such competition as long as Tang Group had projects to do.

Horace was done trying to make him understand with his shortsighted vision. He simply waved his hand at Lionel, signalling him to leave the room. He needed time to think of immediate countermeasures.

Horace paced up and down in his study. After a while, he finally dialed the phone number that was burnt in his memory.

The voice on the other end was as hoarse as he remembered it used to be.

'Mr. Tang, needless to say, you are in some big trouble... Do you seek help from me?'

The person seemed unsurprised, casual and calm, as if there was nothing unusual happening.

'Yes...Tang Group needs huge investments to stay afloat. I'd like to know how things are going. Have you made a decision yet?'

Horace trod with extreme care, choosing his words carefully before he spoke. It was crucial that he kept this man on his side.

‘Well, Mr. Tang, I think I already told you. We will offer you anything you want the day your beloved son Rufus and Amanda get engaged. Surely, you haven’t forgotten that. The illness couldn’t have been that bad.’

The tone didn’t change. The way he talked didn’t convey any chance of concession. It startled Horace.

He really seemed to be after Rufus and Amanda’s marriage. Horace didn’t understand why. What would it mean to him ?

‘Mr. Tang, don’t worry. There will be no harm inflicted upon Rufus if he is engaged to Amanda. The only thing I want is for Rufus to settle down and have a happy family. After that, he can serve Tang Group as he’s been doing all these years. This is the only way we can reach any conclusion and ensure a safe investment.’

This man sounded so sure. He had pointed out exactly what Horace was doubtful of and already given a justification for it.

Now Horace had come to a realization. They seemed to trust Rufus too but weren’t satisfied about the way he operated, which was too reserved.

Mr. CEO

‘Please rest assured that I will personally settle the matter between Rufus and Amanda as soon as possible,’

Horace spoke in a respectful tone. It was rather strange that the owner of Tang Group, the most powerful real estate company in G City, presented himself in such a manner.

‘Then we will have the money prepared and look forward to your good news,’

a raspy voice replied. Then, a loud beep sounded as he hung up the call.

Horace rubbed his forehead to analyze the information he had just received.

During the concert, Amanda proposed that the Tang Group would be taking over the construction of the new piano academy. She even invited Rufus to sign the contract already. This was somewhat peculiar as it showed that the two had some sort of past and could have been more than just friends.

Horace did not have much background information on Amanda. But based on what he deduced, as a female pianist who had been acknowledged internationally, she would have very powerful supporters.

It was highly possible that this group of investors were closely related to her.

It could be further concluded, from the ambiguous attitude of Amanda towards Rufus during the concert the other night, that the person she mentioned about to make her stay in G City was none other than Rufus himself.

With that in his mind, Horace knew that if he wanted the investment from their group to strengthen his own company, he should do everything in his power so that these two would marry each other.

Meanwhile, in Amanda's new studio in G City, there was an internal call for her coming from her assistant.

'Miss Ke, the Chairman of Tang Group is coming in for a visit, but he does not have any appointment set for today.'

Amanda was actually browsing the news on the internet when she heard the call and it startled her a bit.

'The Chairman of Tang Group, Horace Tang is here? Isn't he out of our dealings with the Tang Group? Why would he come here?' she wondered.

'Ask him to come in!' Amanda ordered.

This was Rufus's father coming in and she was not ready for him. Amanda stood up and straightened her clothes as best as she could before her guest arrived in her office.

Just a few seconds later, Horace was led into the office by her assistant.

He was wearing a conservative dark business suit and looked spirited despite his old age. With an amiable smile, he greeted Amanda, 'Miss Ke, I would like to apologize for visiting you without any prior arrangement.'

Horace held a warm smile as he spoke. He seemed very friendly and for some reason she felt at ease to converse with him.

But, Amanda knew that he was the head of the Tang Group. No matter how harmless or amiable he appeared on the surface, she knew that nothing was as simple as it seemed.

'Mr. Tang, you do not have to apologize for anything. Tang Group is my biggest partner in G City. It is my honor to have you here!'

Amanda replied and smiled politely.

‘Speaking of partnership, I have come to discuss our business today. May I know if the timeline for the construction is ready?’

Horace asked with a smile as well.

During the concert, Lionel was the one who went up the stage and signed the contract on behalf of the Tang Group. Rufus then reminded Horace that Amanda might not have the proper legal documents signed by the government, so the Tang Group had not started any discussion ab

When her boyfriend betrayed her, all light and joy was gone from Cherry’s life. Deserted, bereft of hope, she married a man that she had barely met, but she had never expected him to be her ex-boyfriend’s uncle.

Cherry thought that she had finally found her happiness, but she had no idea about the dark secrets that were bound to unfold and haunt her forever...

rs, so she tried to probe deeper, ‘May I know whether your company is going to support the rebuilding work afterwards?’

Though the question had become a bit awkward, she wasn’t ready to give up just yet.

‘Sure,’ answered Rufus.

Again, his answer was short. The reporter realized that there was nothing much she could obtain from this man, so she withdrew the microphone in quiet embarrassment.

This was one of the top videos for the day, just because of Rufus's stern way of answering and the reporter's silly way of asking. While everyone else were laughing at the interview, Amanda gritted her teeth, and her eyes were blazing with fire and jealousy.

'Cassandra is helping out in the disaster-struck A City with Rufus? No wonder I can't find him anywhere in this city!

I thought he was overseas to resolve certain issues for TY Group, but I couldn't have imagined that he actually went to A City with Cassandra doing volunteer work!' she exclaimed to herself.

As she searched related news, Amanda found out some hot comments.

'This handsome guy is the CEO of Tang Group, the largest real estate company of G City. He is cute, wealthy and most important of all, single!' 'Don't miss out the chance to be the female lead in the story—Mr. CEO Falling in Love with Me. Girls, volunteer in A City. Quick!'

'He is sweet, handsome, and rich! Please take me, Mr. CEO!'

'Oh honey, you are so cute! I love you already!'

'This is a rich guy! He is so unique. I can't believe such a person ever exists around us!'

...

Rufus became an overnight sensation after his clips of volunteering in A City were shown all over the country. The fervent crowd then started to research more about this young CEO which spiked the number of searches for the Tang Group.

From what Amanda knew of Rufus, he wouldn't be bothered by these kind of rumors. However... Sometimes, the bias of the rumors can be a subtle thing, which she decided to make use of.

A sly grin crept up her cheeks. She randomly created a web account and typed away.

After she sent out her message online, Amanda picked up her phone to make a call.

'Is this Business Newspaper? You know that Mr. CEO being talked about lately? I have a great piece of information for you about him!'

A Fight With Lionel

Things at work seemed to be picking up just when Cassandra returned to the company.

Mr. Wang brought several friends to Qin Group and recommended Cassandra to take on a few projects for them.

'Mr. Wang spoke highly of Manager Qin's working ethic and recommended your company to us. Don't let us down!' a client remarked as he signed the contract with Cassandra.

She was on a roll. It almost seemed like she was already used to getting such demands.

'Rest assured that we will do our best to satisfy every client!'

Cassandra replied confidently, which made the client smile with content.

With this momentum and word-of-mouth among clients, Qin Group should be able to move past its current financial predicament pretty soon.

Right after the client left, someone else came knocking on the door, looking for trouble instead of business.

‘Cassandra, come out here!’

Cassandra knitted her eyebrows when she heard the familiar voice obnoxiously shouting from the cubicle outside the office.

‘Manager Qin, there’s a man out there causing trouble. Should we ask security to kick him out?’

the assistant asked her through the slightly opened door, looking distraught.

‘No, it’s someone I know. Send him in,’

Cassandra replied as she calmly put away her papers.

Lionel kicked open the door of her office, stormed in and stood in front of her desk.

‘You have some nerve snatching away clients from Tang Group. Who gave you the right to do that, huh? Are you out of your mind?’

Lionel glared, his face full of indignation.

As it turned out, Mr. Wang and the other clients who recently signed their contracts with Cassandra were Lionel’s old clients. When he found out that their most recent works were signed with Cassandra, he fumed with anger thinking that Cassandra was deliberately trying to sabotage him.

Stunned, Cassandra looked at the angry Lionel who almost looked like a rabid monster.

‘Lionel, you don’t have proof to back up that accusation,’ she answered.

She wasn’t intimidated by Lionel. She kept her head up while staring at him, unfazed.

‘Proof? You need proof? The clients you signed were all Tang Group’s and I was the one who personally signed them before. We have been working together for a long time. Why else would they end their contracts with Tang Group when you left and turn to Qin Group immediately? Isn’t that good enough proof?’

Lionel boomed as he pounded the desk with his fist.

Cassandra sneered at his attempt to blame her for his own failure.

‘If your clients ran away, you should look yourself in the mirror first instead of yelling in front of me. Don’t you feel embarrassed? As the Vice President of Tang Group, isn’t it degrading for you to come here and accuse our little company of doing you wrong? If you really believe that I have something illegal

Jean Wen sacrificed herself for family interests. Before her husband divorced her, she made every effort to please him.

‘You are inexperienced in bed,’ he said coldly.

‘You! Give that land to my family, or I won’t agree to divorce,’ Jean replied furiously.

‘Fine. It is exactly what I am thinking about,’ he sneered.

suit with an amiable smile on his face.

‘Manager Qin, right? Hello, I’m David, assistant to Tom. I’m here to represent him,’

he said as he ushered Cassandra into the room. There seemed to be no one else in the two-bedroom suite.

‘Is Tom not coming?’

Cassandra felt a little confused because she had previously signed an agreement with Tom.

‘Tom has already returned home because of other business, and I’ve been tasked to check the design draft for him,’

David replied, smiling infectiously. He led Cassandra to the sofa and poured her a glass of water.

‘Mr. Wang bridged our company to yours and our design team has been working day and night on this project. I have reviewed everything and there is no problem with it. I think Tom will be satisfied,’

Cassandra said as she handed the design draft to David. She picked up the glass of water and drank.

A satisfied glimmer of light flashed across David’s eyes, but he still looked through the design with a smile on his face.

‘It is not easy to run a company alone. You are such a strong woman,’

David remarked as he absent-mindedly scanned through the pages. It was obvious that he was looking for something to talk about with Cassandra.

Meeting David for the first time, Cassandra did not know how to react to his comment. She gave him an awkward smile in response.

‘I am managing it on behalf of my father. When my sister graduates, she will join me in running the company,’

she shared as she drank another mouthful of water and wondered why David kept talking to her about unrelated things instead of inspecting the draft.

Suddenly, Cassandra felt dizzy. She shook her head slightly, thinking it was an illusion.

‘Is something wrong, Manager Qin?’

David asked with concern.

Cassandra looked at him and found that her vision began to blur. A feeling of despair enveloped her whole body!