

Chapter 268 In Love With Her

"Gracie, let go of me." Even though she had betrayed him with another man, Rayan couldn't bring himself to be particularly harsh to her.

He could never forgive her, of course. In truth, he wasn't sure how to face the woman he had once loved the most in the world.

"No, I won't! Why didn't you come to see me? Did you really forget what yesterday was?" Gracie sobbed. She had cooked Rayan a full-course meal the day before, and had stayed home waiting for his return.

But he hadn't responded to any of the messages she sent him. Her calls hadn't gone through, either, which made Gracie realize that he must have blocked her number.

In the end, Gracie had decided that she wouldn't mope around and wait for him any longer. If she wanted to see him, then she would just have to come to him.

"I said, let go of me. We can't be together again, Gracie." Rayan tried to pry her hands off him, despite the dull ache in his heart. He still couldn't believe that the innocent girl who had always followed him around had grown up to be such a vicious woman. The things she had done to his stillborn child...

Even now, just thinking about it sent a shiver down his spine. He couldn't begin to imagine how Janessa must have felt at the time.

Nor did he dare to imagine all the horrid things Gracie might do in the future.

"No! I know you still love me! You do, don't you? Otherwise, you wouldn't have let me stay in the villa. You even bid your servants to take care of me! I made a mistake, okay? I know I was wrong, I really do. I won't do it again. I'll behave from now on. We can forget about everything and just go back to the way we used to be, all right?" Gracie was now desperate and scared out of her wits. She had worked hard all these years just to be able to stay by Rayan's side. So she had made one small mistake this time, so what? Since he loved her so much, he would certainly forgive her just this once.

Of course, he would. He should.

In the past, all she had to do was cry, and Rayan would gently coax her and give her anything she wanted. There had never been a single exception.

Gracie began to weep earnestly, her tears soaking Rayan's shirt.

Though her tears were hot against his body, all he could feel was an icy dread coming over him.

Rayan stayed very still. His hands, however, were trembling ever so slightly inside his trouser pockets.

He was all too familiar with Gracie's tears. Normally, they would send him into reckless abandon as he attempted to stop her from crying, offering her anything and everything under the sun.

But things were different now. This time, he could barely endure the touch of her skin.

"Don't you love me anymore? Why aren't you concerned when I'm bawling my eyes out in front of you?" Gracie loosened her arms and pulled back to look at Rayan. Her eyes were a little cold.

"Gracie, everything is over. You... Just let it go." With that, Rayan turned around and sat back on his chair.

"No, this must be because of Janessa. I've known that you feel differently for her than you let on. I've known it since I came back. Even now that you're divorced, you're still keeping your feelings for her, aren't you? You've really changed. You weren't like this before." An image of the Rayan she used to know appeared in Gracie's mind. Indeed, it was nothing like the Rayan that was before her now. She couldn't even connect them to each other, as if they were two entirely separate persons.

"How can you expect me to still want to be with you after what you've done?" Rayan bit out. He couldn't stand the knowledge that his woman had bedded another man, and had even carried the bastard's child.

No sane man ever could.

"But you did the same, didn't you? While I was abroad, you got married to Janessa and even gave her a child." Gracie would never forget how hard she had toiled in order to become a suitable match for Rayan. She didn't want him to suffer criticisms because of her identity and lack of status.

Yet, despite her efforts, she had come back to the city to find him with someone else.

Why was he so mad that she had had sex with another man when he had gone and married another woman?

"That's not the same at all. You broke up with me and left without saying goodbye. I haven't heard any news of you since. I married her only after that. You, on the other hand... You slept to another man while you were in a relationship with me. Do you really think these two scenarios are worthy of being compared to each other?" As he spoke the words, it suddenly dawned on Rayan that she might never be able to understand.

Gracie simply had a different view in life than most ordinary people.

"Just admit that you've fallen in love with Janessa. I won't take it against you. Why do you keep trying to pretend that you haven't?" Though Gracie's words were sharp and biting, her stance somehow made him want to give her a hug.

She looked so small and weak. Janessa had never been like this.

The gap between the two women as just a massive, gaping hole.

Rayan had another epiphany then. Gracie was always gentle and meek, while Janessa was strong and fiery. By all rights, Janessa was better suited for the position of Mrs. Lu. His woman had to be someone who could stand up to him and stand with him when he fought his battles, not some frail girl who always needed his protection without offering anything in return.

"This is the end for us, Gracie. We can't be friends, but I'll be glad to help you if you need anything. I'm drawing the line here." Rayan stood and turned off his computer, then grabbed his suit jacket and walked out of his office.

This was the only way he could think of to make Gracie leave the premises once and for all.

He didn't leave the building, however, and headed to the rooftop instead. He sat there, staring at the open sky and looking back on his three years of marriage.

He had had to marry Janessa because of their respective familial circumstances, but his heart had always refused to acknowledge the union. In the end, he had taken out his bitter frustration on her.

Janessa had done a very good job enduring his horrible behavior, but every time she had stood fast, he would only double down with his insults. She was like a stubborn wild grass; no matter how much he trampled on her, she would always stay rooted to the spot.

Perhaps it was time he admitted it to himself.

He did have feelings for Janessa. That was why he had been in a constant state of crisis when Rylan had appeared in the picture.

The more he thought about it, the more he realized that he had been in love with her for quite some time.

"I won't allow you to be with anyone else, Janessa," Rayan muttered under his breath. "You are my wife, and you will be my wife for the rest of our lives." He stayed up on the rooftop for a good while, thinking everything through and weighing his options. No matter what, Janessa must never be with another man.

Miles away, Janessa was on a small boat wading through a placid lake in Y Country. She was admiring the scenery around her when she suddenly sneezed.

"Did you catch a cold?" Rylan asked, taking off his suit jacket and draping it over her shoulders.

"No, I don't think so. Maybe some loose dust accidentally flew into my nose." Deep down, however, Janessa suspected someone was talking about her behind her back. Maybe Alana was grumbling back at home, saying something like she had better receive some excellent souvenirs.

Janessa decided to give her friend a call when they returned to the hotel later.

She shrugged under Rylan's jacket and began to take it off, but he immediately put up a hand to stop her.

"The wind is strong in the middle of the lake. Just wear it for now."

Casting a brief, helpless glance at his handsome face, Janessa could only sigh inwardly and look back at the scenery.