

Her Riches 161

Chapter 161

At that moment, all eyes were on Maverick.

Maverick didn't panic at all as he joked with a playful smirk, "It's nothing. I just think Mr. Scott is a very impressive bootlicker."

He was subtly mocking Matthew for buttering him up and also expressed disdain for Charles.

Maverick and Charles stared at each other and sensed the obvious hostility in each other's eyes. Sparks flew, and the air was thick with tension as the two of them traded blows.

The atmosphere in the room was extremely tense, so much so that no one dared to make a sound.

Gwendolyn tapped on the table amidst the strained atmosphere and reminded, "Let's get down to business. My time is precious."

Both of the men instantly reined in their temper and returned their attention to the main issue at hand.

Charles took another look at the documents before looking at Shirley and Samantha. "Mrs. Lane, you should provide solid evidence since you're accusing Gwendolyn of being the mastermind. Otherwise, I'll have to let her go."

Shirley bit her lip.

All the evidence had been destroyed by Gwendolyn's bodyguards before they left yesterday. Apart from the injuries on Samantha and the testimonies of the housekeepers and bodyguards at home, Shirley had nothing to present.

I thought we could quietly pin the crime on Gwendolyn with the help of someone at Fairlake Police Station. Who would have thought that Charles would appear out of nowhere, leaving me with no other options?

Shirley couldn't accept the outcome, and all she could do was glare at Gwendolyn angrily. "Just because you have powerful backers doesn't mean that you can do whatever you want. If you overstep your bounds, sooner or later, you'll stumble!"

Gwendolyn appeared relaxed and carefree as she twirled her hair around her fingertips out of boredom.

She raised her eyebrows when she heard Shirley's words. "You're absolutely right, Mrs. Lane. However, I don't know when I'll stumble. The good days for the Lane family are coming to an end soon."

"You!" Shirley was enraged. The Lane Group was the result of generations of hard work by the Lane family. She gritted her teeth at the thought of that and asked, "Even if you don't admit to intentionally hurting my daughter or damaging our car, the fact remains that you stole our Fruit of Prosperity. If we search your place, we'll find it. Don't you dare claim otherwise!"

"Oh, about that." Gwendolyn thought for a moment and graciously admitted, "When you invited me to visit the Lane residence, I was captivated by the fresh orange tree, so I took it with me. If you're not happy about that, should I return it?"

Return it? What a load of cr*p! She's eaten all of our Fruit of Prosperity!

"Since you took it, pay for it!"

"Sure." Gwendolyn agreed without hesitation.

Shirley was momentarily taken aback because she hadn't anticipated Gwendolyn to be so straightforward. Then, she quickly added in a feisty manner, "I want cash!"

That tree was very expensive. I will multiply the price several times and rip this little girl off!

"As you wish, Mrs. Lane," Gwendolyn said with a casual smile as she texted William before looking at Matthew. "Mr. Scott, Mrs. Lane wants cash. I've asked the bodyguards to bring the cash. Make sure your subordinates let them through when they arrive."

Matthew keenly noticed the mention of “bodyguards.” How many people are coming?

However, pressured by Charles’ presence, he dared not ask and could only nod stiffly. “All right. Don’t worry.”

The interrogation room regained its’ tranquility in the few minutes it took for the bodyguard to show up.

Charles and Gwendolyn’s gazes met from afar, and Charles smiled gently. His deep blue, almond- shaped eyes seemed to possess a bewitching charm that captivated people’s hearts.

However, Gwendolyn was expressionless, and the look in her eyes remained indifferent.

Maverick keenly noticed the two of them exchanging glances.

Did something happen between them?

He discovered that Gwendolyn’s eyes held a hint of indescribable complexity every time she looked at Charles.

She didn’t have much of a reaction when Sherman was sent away, so... could it be that she likes Charles?

Maverick’s chest tightened slightly, and he coughed twice.

It was so loud and abrupt that even Shirley, Samantha, and Matthew noticed it.

However, Gwendolyn and Charles ignored him and continued to stare at each other until the door to the interrogation room opened.

William was the first to walk in with two large black cases in his hands.

Shirley was about to mock Gwendolyn for bringing too little money when she saw more men stepping in with black cases after William.

In the end, a total of twenty-five black-clad bodyguards stood in a neat row in front of the interrogation room, making for an intimidating scene.

Matthew was dumbfounded, while Shirley and Samantha were already used to it.

However, both women expressed strong dissatisfaction and disapproval toward Gwendolyn's flashy, attention-seeking behavior.

Maverick, who was standing next to Gwendolyn, keenly spotted Nico among the bodyguards.

I can't believe this rascal actually disobeyed my orders. Since when did he take the liberty of becoming Gwendolyn's bodyguard?

Sensing the sharp gaze of his own boss, Nico flashed Maverick a cheeky, silly grin while standing at the back of the entourage.

Now that everyone had arrived, Gwendolyn looked at Shirley with a playful smirk in her captivating eyes. "Mrs. Lane, I've brought the money. Make sure you hold onto it firmly."

Shirley could vaguely sense a threat in her words.

Gwendolyn waved her hand, and the bodyguards stepped forward and opened the suitcases one by one. They each contained a million in cash, neatly stacked in bundles. The bodyguards then proceeded to pour the money directly onto Shirley and Samantha's desks.

The sound of rustling paper bills filled the air.

The scene was picturesque.

Shirley and Samantha's table couldn't hold the cash, and a lot of paper bills spilled all over the place and even hit their legs and arms. Samantha's freshly bandaged wound began to bleed again after she was struck, which caused her to cry out in pain.

The Lane family's bodyguard was unable to enter the interrogation room, leaving Samantha without any assistance. Shirley had no choice but to step forward and shield her daughter herself.

The bodyguards were initially pouring the cash onto the table, but when the table could no longer hold the huge pile of cash that resembled a tiny hill, they started pouring it directly onto Shirley and Samantha.

Shirley and Samantha were quickly buried by cash.

All the police officers present in the interrogation room were astounded by the extravagant scene of money being dumped on people.

Matthew quickly noticed that despite Shirley's protection, Samantha's wounds still bled. He gave Charles a worried look. "Mr. Newton, don't you think it's a bit too much?"

The act of literally burying people with cash in the police station's interrogation room was truly a first in history!

It was simply shocking, outrageous, and utterly insane!

Charles was admiring Gwendolyn's wicked expression as she reveled in her revenge, and he felt slightly annoyed at being interrupted. "One asked for money, and the other provided. Yes, it's a lot of money, but there's nothing wrong with it."

Matthew couldn't do anything about it since even the person with the most authority insisted that there wasn't a problem.

A single case held one million, and each of the twenty-five bodyguards carried two suitcases, amounting to a whopping fifty million in cash poured directly onto them. This was definitely enough to bury them alive.

Such a ruthless act wasn't something anyone could do.

Matthew had to re-evaluate Gwendolyn.

The colossal amount of cash rendered Shirley and Samantha immobile as their bodies were completely submerged beneath all the bills with only their heads exposed. That was their first time experiencing what it was like to be surrounded by cash.

The interrogation room's floor was littered with plenty of loose change, but not a single police officer dared to bend down and sneak some into their pockets. However, their eyes were filled with envy as they looked at Shirley and Samantha.

A whopping fifty million! We'd be more than happy to be showered with that kind of money!

Gwendolyn was admiring the scene, wearing a mischievous and unrestrained grin on her face. She was completely unaware that two men were staring at her intently from the side.

After a while, she got up and walked toward Shirley and Samantha before casually picking up a wad of cash from the ground and gently placing it on Samantha's head.

Her actions were graceful and dignified, and her face exuded an icy, haughty charm.

That wad of cash became the last straw that crushed Samantha's sanity.

She screamed and sobbed when she could no longer tolerate the humiliation.

Gwendolyn shushed her before saying, "Hold onto my money carefully; I'll soon be taking it all back, principal and interest!"

Chapter 162

This meant that the money would not be given away just like that; it would be fully recovered eventually. They would only be temporarily keeping the money in their pockets for now.

Indeed, it was heart-wrenching.

The group of police officers, who had been indulging in fantasies of being showered with Gwendolyn's money, instantly snapped out of their daydreams.

What a ruthless woman. We cannot afford to mess with her!

Shirley had intended to demand an exorbitant price for the Fruit of Prosperity from Gwendolyn. However, at this moment, she was utterly drained and couldn't even recollect this matter.

Once she was done, Gwendolyn stretched out her hand and massaged her shoulder lazily.

Maverick noticed her movements and quickly stepped forward, carefully massaging her shoulders and neck with his slender hands.

Gwendolyn didn't refuse and enjoyed his service as she turned her head to look at Charles and Matthew.

"Mr. Newton, Mr. Scott, the money has been paid. Can we leave now?"

Gwendolyn referred to him as "Mr. Newton" but not Charles.

Matthew didn't hear Charles' response and unconsciously shot him a glance.

He noticed that Charles was staring at Maverick giving Gwendolyn a shoulder massage, his pupils deep and focused, without uttering a word.

Matthew could only answer himself, "Yes, you and Mr. Wright are free to leave whenever you desire."

Having received their permission, Gwendolyn left without looking back, with Maverick following closely behind her. The bodyguards also began to move after them.

That scene resembled a massive troop on the move.

As soon as they stepped out of the interrogation room, Shirley was heard shouting from behind. "Call an ambulance! Hurry!"

Samantha had passed out from the pain.

Gwendolyn curled her lips contentedly and walked away briskly.

After coming out of the police station, Gwendolyn dismissed the large group of bodyguards, leaving only William and Nico behind.

The crowd had just dispersed when Charles, clad in a dark green military coat, emerged from the police station. His captivating voice rang out. "Gwendolyn, it has been many years since we last met. How about having lunch together to catch up on old times?"

Before Gwendolyn could answer, Maverick furrowed his brows, his dark eyes filled with gloom, and said, "She's not available!"

Gwendolyn cast an annoyed glance at him.

Maverick's cold expression from a second ago instantly transformed into an aggrieved one the moment he noticed her glance toward him.

His long eyelashes quivered gently.

His pale complexion gave him the appearance of a pitiful little child longing for someone to care for him.

He gently bit his thin lips as he quietly rolled up his sleeves, revealing the swollen blood marks on his wrist. "Gwendolyn, I want to go back to the villa. How about I make you lunch when we arrive there?"

William had long witnessed his Academy Award for Best Actor-worthy techniques in changing his expressions, so he was no longer surprised and simply rolled his eyes.

This was, however, the first time Nico had ever witnessed his own boss acting like this. He was so shocked that his jaw almost dropped.

Charles was frowning as well as he sized up Maverick.

Gwendolyn, who was the center of attention, was also observing him.

You b*stard, are you trying to act pitiful again?

She clenched her teeth secretly. Her eyes curved with a smile as she reached out gently toward Maverick's face.

Maverick's heart fluttered slightly when he saw that. Delighted, he lowered his head and brought his face closer instinctively, anticipating her gentle caress.

However, the moment she touched his cheek, her smile froze and her expression instantly turned cold.

Gwendolyn gripped his cheek firmly with her fair fingers and twisted it harshly, giving him a stern lesson. "Another act again? How is it that you are so shameless? Seems like you need my help to manually thin out that thick skin of yours, huh?"

Maverick gasped in pain, his facial features contorted, but he didn't dodge from her grasp. He allowed her to vent on him without any resistance.

Beside him, William wore a gloating expression.

Nico also grimaced, drawing in a sharp breath.

Charles pursed his lips tightly together, his deep blue orbs growing darker and darker.

Under the watchful eyes of the onlookers, Gwendolyn finally let go angrily.

Having been bullied and realizing that his hope of being caressed by Gwendolyn was crushed, Maverick, whose dark eyes welled up with tears, looked both innocent and heartbroken.

Since his original complexion was already pale enough, the pinched red spot on his left cheek was particularly noticeable. The poor man looked miserable.

He stared at Gwendolyn, accusing her silently.

Gwendolyn's expression was cold and indifferent. Instead of looking at Maverick, she glanced at Nico beside her. "Send him back to the villa."

And then, she headed straight toward Charles.

Charles' face instantly lit up with a smile when he saw her walking toward him. "Let's go. What would you like to eat? I'll have someone make a reservation right away."

Upon witnessing this scene, Maverick suddenly felt suffocated in his chest, making it difficult for him to breathe. He even experienced a sense of dizziness. Whether it was his face, wrists, or heart, his entire body seemed to be in pain.

He forced himself to push through despite the discomfort and followed behind Gwendolyn. "If you insist on having a meal with him, I suppose it's not impossible either. I'm hungry too, and I believe Mr. Newton won't mind," Maverick said.

Charles didn't respond, but his expression clearly showed his displeasure.

"I mind." Gwendolyn turned around and glared at him coldly. "Since you insist on continuing with the employment agreement, you must obey the arrangements and return to the villa."

Maverick was left speechless.

Under the sunlight, his face was so pale that it was almost transparent.

Gwendolyn paid no attention to him whatsoever. She left with Charles without looking back, with William's and Charles' subordinates following closely behind the pair.

Even after they had walked far away, Maverick remained in the same spot, dumbfounded.

He clutched his chest, breathing heavily. Feeling light-headed, he stumbled backward.

Nico hurriedly stepped forward to help him.

"Boss, why do I feel like your actions right now bear so much resemblance to... vying for favor?"

Maverick felt even more frustrated.

He vied for her favor, but he still couldn't win back her heart, which desired to have lunch with Charles.

She really was extremely heartless toward him.

Nico noticed his boss' expression was getting worse and quickly tried to reassure him, "Boss, don't worry. Ms. Shalders isn't a superficial woman. Although Mr. Newton does have a nice physique and a good temperament, and the main thing is his face, which is indeed very attractive..."

It would have been better if he hadn't tried to comfort Maverick. The more he spoke, the paler Maverick's face became, and his whole body started to feel weak and dizzy.

Nico was terrified. "No, no! Boss, what I meant was, you're not bad either. No! You're even better than Charles."

"Which part of me is better than him?"

Nico fell silent for a moment, scratching his head in thought.

Maverick wasn't in a hurry either and waited patiently for his response.

After pondering for a long time until Maverick's pale face gradually turned dark, Nico finally suggested hesitantly, "What if, Boss... our advantages are not enough, and we use an alternate way? You pretend to reveal your identity accidentally, letting Ms. Shalders realize how capable you actually are?"

"Get lost."

Maverick gritted his teeth. If he hadn't been injected with the 023 special drug, he would have reached out and given the idiot in front of him a powerful smack and knock him out.

His identity was related to a crucial mission, and it cannot be easily exposed.

Moreover, Gwendolyn had never been the type of woman to treat people differently based on their social status.

He pinched his own abs through his shirt, feeling aggrieved.

Once again, he thought of Charles' wickedly charming face, with those rare and deep blue eyes carved in it. He, however, didn't have those eyes.

Nico noticed that he seemed a bit disheartened and continued to comfort him, “Boss, don’t be discouraged. When it comes to pursuing a wife, no one is more shameless than you. In that aspect, Charles is no match for you!”

Chapter 163 Better To Rise As A Queen Than Be A Caged Pet

Maverick clutched his chest tightly, feeling uncomfortable because of the tightness in his chest.

Nico’s words really hurt his heart!

“You’ve been getting more and more unruly lately, acting on your own without my orders, and it sounds like you have a favorable opinion of Charles?”

His whole body exuded a strong hostile aura as he coldly pushed Nico away and weakly pulled himself forward.

Nico’s face turned pale with fear, and he remorsefully slapped his own mouth twice for not being able to express himself well.

It was all because he had never been in a relationship before and didn’t know how to comfort people. He hurriedly trotted forward, continuing to hold Maverick steady while explaining himself, “Boss, it’s a misunderstanding! I came here with William because I was worried about you. Besides, Mr. Newton— No! I mean Charles! How could I possibly think highly of him? Of course, I have higher hopes for you, Boss.”

He leaned in close to Maverick’s ear and whispered, “Although Ms. Shalders was always picking on you, as the saying goes, ‘sometimes harsh words or deeds can demonstrate one’s love.’ After all, she treats you differently than the others. Who knows, maybe one day you’ll win her over?”

At last, he finally said something pleasant to the ear.

Maverick felt much more at ease.

Nico chuckled obsequiously, then caught a glimpse of the deep red pinch mark on Maverick's left cheek and winced slightly. "However, Ms. Shalders... she really didn't hold back with her pinch."

Maverick rubbed his face subconsciously, still feeling a lingering pain.

Again, he thought about Gwendolyn and Charles having a meal together and couldn't help but wonder what they would talk about. He remained displeased about this matter, and his expression quickly turned somber.

"Send two people to follow them and find out what they're talking about."

Nico's face wore a horrified look, and he was on the verge of tears. "Boss, please spare me! No matter what, Charles is still the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. His subordinates around him have top-notch techniques in preventing eavesdropping and stalking."

Maverick showed no expression.

At that, Nico pouted his lips and continued to persuade Maverick, "If we get caught, Ms. Shalders will find out, and it won't be easy for us to explain. Aren't you afraid she'll misunderstand you again? Wouldn't it be better for us to return to the villa and wait for her quietly?"

He let out a quiet sigh.

My boss is too stubborn. He acts like a complete fool, especially when it comes to his love life. What should I do?

After pondering for a moment, Maverick eventually compromised and asked, "Among the boys, is there anyone with a rich relationship experience?"

Nico contemplated earnestly for a while.

"It seems that only Swain has been in a relationship before. However, he's not in Fairlake; he's in Salinsburgh."

"Swain?" Maverick was stunned for a moment, his eyebrows slightly furrowed. "He's the youngest, but he's the first to be in a relationship?"

Nico grinned sheepishly.

"Boss, you don't understand. Despite his young age, he has high emotional intelligence and plenty of mischief in his head. From what I've heard, his girl is completely smitten with him."

Maverick fell silent for a moment, his deep black orbs narrowing slightly. "Once he's done with his tasks over there, ask him to meet me in Fairlake privately."

"Yes, Boss."

Charles had arranged for a well-furnished French restaurant, where he displayed his gentlemanly manners by pulling out the chair for Gwendolyn and assisting her in ordering the dishes.

Gwendolyn's expression remained indifferent as she elegantly sipped her water.

The man fixed his stare intently on her, his dark blue eyes sparkling with specks of light. "I remember that you prefer a quiet dining environment, and I remember your taste preferences too. If there's anything I haven't taken into account, just let me know."

Gwendolyn nodded. "You are quite thoughtful."

He softened his voice and continued, "Gwen, ever since my family arranged for me to join the Central Intelligence Agency, seven years passed by in a flash, and we haven't met since then. This time, I happened to be in Fairlake, and Treyton told me you were at the police station. I rushed over immediately and, sure enough, I found you. It's great to see you again. I... I've missed you so much."

Gwendolyn looked up and locked eyes with him, evoking a long-forgotten memory within her.

She smiled. "Indeed, it's been seven years. You've even reached the position of the Central Intelligence Agency's director and are still standing strong. Congratulations, Mr. Newton."

Charles turned pale.

Instead of "Charles," she referred to him as "Mr. Newton" again.

"Gwen, have we grown distant?"

A faint smile remained on Gwendolyn's face as she continued, "Mr. Newton, you must be joking. We've never been that close."

Charles' eyes trembled, and he instinctively tried to grab her thin hand, but she noticed and dodged away.

"You won't even let me touch you? I know you still hold a grudge against me for what happened in the past, but I was so young back then, and I didn't have a choice..."

"Mr. Newton," Gwendolyn interrupted him, her expression turning grim when he brought up the past. "If you invited me out today just to talk about these things, then this meal is completely unnecessary."

"All right. Let's not talk about these things."

Charles sensibly kept quiet immediately.

Right then, the waiter arrived with the dishes, conveniently easing the tense atmosphere between the two.

Except for the sound of their knives and forks clattering, they remained very quiet.

It was Charles who broke the silence once again. "This time, I plan to stay in Fairlake for a while more. I heard from Treyton that you've been gathering evidence lately. Don't worry, I'll help you out."

"All right."

Gwendolyn was not pretentious either.

This was a different matter. He had volunteered to help, and she had no reason to refuse.

Upon noticing her quick response, Charles was very happy.

Those deep, brilliant sapphire eyes were mesmerizing when they smiled.

As Charles elegantly cut a piece of beef, he casually asked, "I also heard that the man today is your ex-husband. Did you sign an employment agreement with him and turned him into your butler?"

"Yes." Gwendolyn spoke candidly.

Charles hesitated for a moment before asking, "Do you still have any feelings for..."

Gwendolyn raised her eyes, her expression instantly turning cold. "This is my personal matter."

"All right, I won't ask any more questions. In any case, now that I'm here, I won't let anyone bully you."

Gwendolyn's eyes revealed a hint of complexity as she glanced at the half-eaten beef on her plate. She smiled and said, "People change. It's been seven years, and you still remember my taste, but you don't realize that my taste has already changed a long time ago. Do you understand what I mean?"

Charles' face stiffened.

How could he possibly not understand what she meant? Yet, he was unwilling to accept it.

It was just a mere seven years that has passed. Weren't they reunited again?

Gwendolyn ate nonchalantly as she continued, "But you, on the other hand, haven't changed at all. You were always domineering, making decisions on my behalf, and you're still the same today. However, I'm no longer that naive little girl who used to follow you around and knew nothing."

"Isn't it desirable to be a bit domineering? Snuggling up in the arms of a strong man, being a pampered little woman—isn't that the happiness many girls in this world are pursuing?"

Gwendolyn simply smiled and didn't refute.

Perhaps many girls were indeed like this.

However, she had never cared to be a man's caged pet; she preferred to be her own queen.

As for men and such, as long as she had the money, she was willing to keep a few men as her caged birds.

Throughout the meal, Gwendolyn found her food to be bland and tasteless.

Upon leaving the restaurant, the weather outside had changed. The strong wind blew, bringing a cool sensation to their faces.

Charles took off his military coat, ready to drape it over her shoulders.

Gwendolyn declined and said, "There's no need for that. I'm not cold."

Charles curved his lips into a smile and still draped the dark green fur coat over her shoulders, enveloping her petite frame.

Gwendolyn's eyebrows slightly furrowed, showing her displeasure.

It seems that he still doesn't understand what I told him during the meal.

As she was about to speak again, Elisha suddenly approached and whispered in her ear, "Ms. Shalders, Mr. Harris sent me to reach out to you. As you guessed, in these past few days, they've already sent three groups to hunt down the released assassin. Unfortunately, one of them died during the escape, but we managed to save the other one. He said he wants to meet you."

Chapter 164 She Gives Names Casually

"All right, let's go."

She was about to leave with Elisha when Charles called out to her, "Gwen, do you want me to come with you?"

Without hesitation, Gwendolyn said, "It's okay. You must have your own business to attend to in Fairlake. Please excuse me first."

She had just taken two steps when she remembered that she was still wearing Charles' coat. So, she took it off, folded it, and walked back to return it to him.

Charles didn't take the coat and instead gazed at her with warmth and tenderness. "It's getting colder. You should keep it."

Gwendolyn handed the coat to the subordinate behind him. The subordinate glanced at Charles, shook his head in fear, and dared not take it.

Annoyed, she ended up hanging the coat on the flower stand by the entrance of the restaurant before striding off after Elisha without so much as a glance over her shoulder.

Charles looked in the direction where she disappeared before glancing at the coat she left on the flower stand. He furrowed his brows as a dark look swirled in his eyes.

Seemingly reminded of something, Charles turned to his subordinate while wearing a grim expression. "Send two people to keep an eye on that Maverick. Report any movements immediately, and make sure to stay hidden. His subordinate isn't easy to deal with, too. Also, look into his identity and background."

"Understood, Mr. Newton."

Charles' subordinate helped him take the coat off the flower stand and wanted to put it on him.

Glaring viciously at his subordinate, Charles growled, "How dare you touch something that's filthy? Throw it away!"

Gwendolyn hurried to Treyton's residence. The patient was accommodated in the private medical room that was previously used to treat Natasha.

Upon entering the room, she saw the injured person lying in bed, receiving an IV drip.

Upon seeing Gwendolyn enter the room, he slowly sat up.

Gwendolyn sat down on a chair two meters away from him, smiling. "I never expected you to be the one to survive out of forty people. That day, you were the only one who answered my question. You have the softest heart, and you're also the luckiest. What is it that you wanted to talk to me about?"

The person pondered for a moment, then looked at her sincerely, "I originally thought that if I kept quiet, the organization would let me off the hook. I didn't expect them to be even more ruthless than I imagined. I know that you were the one who sent people to save me these past few times. I am willing to reveal all the information I know."

“Oh?” Gwendolyn exclaimed in surprise. He’s figured it out already?

She asked, “How much money do you want as a reward?”

The man shook his head, “I don’t want any money. They won’t let me go. I’m weak and powerless, and sooner or later, I’ll die at their hands. But I don’t want to die yet.”

“Do you want my protection?”

The man stared into her eyes and laughed, “I love conversing with smart people like you. In exchange, I want to be your bodyguard. You have many powerful big shots around you, and only by doing this can I survive.”

So he really wants to work for me?

Gwendolyn’s frown was barely noticeable as she held her head high gracefully, exuding an aloof charm.

“Just so you know, I won’t just accept anyone to work for me. First, tell me what information you have. If it’s all trivial stuff, then I’m afraid I can’t help you.”

The man gazed at her face, somewhat captivated.

She was breathtakingly pretty, had a fiery personality, and was ruthless and decisive. All those traits set her apart from ordinary women.

The mere sight of such an outstanding woman like her was worth everything for him.

He gathered his thoughts and began to explain.

“I saw the person who hired us to kill you as I was right there when he was talking to the boss. He’s a tall man, probably close to two hundred meters in height, and he seemed solemn and formidable.”

The man tried hard to recall and continued, "Although he was wearing sunglasses that day, I noticed a black birthmark the size of a thumb on his temple. During their conversation, I vaguely heard him mention his master. If we can find him, he should know all the details about this matter."

Gwendolyn narrowed her eyes slightly.

Black birthmark? His master?

"Aside from the birthmark, do you remember his facial features? The shape of his face and lips, or his overall appearance?"

The person nodded but seemed a bit troubled. "I remember his face but I can't draw well."

Gwendolyn waved at Elisha, gesturing for him to come over.

Elisha approached with a sketchbook and, based on the man's description, drew a fairly clear portrait of a man.

Gwendolyn took a careful look and was sure she didn't recognize the man.

"Besides this, is there any other information you can provide?"

The person pondered for a moment. "Yes, I remember that the day before your accident, we had a meeting point..."

Although he didn't provide much information, it was still considered useful.

Gwendolyn stood up and walked over to the man before bending down to observe his face. "Not bad. Although your face is injured and your skin is quite dark, you have handsome features. So, from today onward, you'll be known as Justin."

“Huh?”

The man froze for a moment. “But I already have a name...”

Gwendolyn chuckled nonchalantly. “I don’t need to know your real name. I wouldn’t remember it anyway. So, Justin will be your code name, the name you’ll use as my bodyguard.”

Justin was taken aback.

So that’s how she came up with the names of her bodyguards? Well, that’s kind of... casual.

Gwendolyn said, “Come and report to me once you recover. Understand?”

“Yes.”

After resolving Justin’s issue, Gwendolyn stepped out of the private medical room.

Treyton was waiting for her in the living room downstairs with a solemn expression. “Kiddo, he’s one of them. Aren’t you afraid that he’s just pretending to be friendly, trying to lower your guard on purpose?”

Gwendolyn sat down on the couch next to him and flashed a lazy smile. “What’s there to be afraid of? I’ll find an opportunity to sound him out. Even if he really is a spy trying to win our favor, we should keep him close so that it’s easier for us to discover their intentions and know all their plans.”

Treyton fell silent.

Although it made sense logically, doesn’t she know that by doing so, she would put herself in danger?

He sighed as Gwendolyn handed him the sketchbook with the portrait. "Asher is quite familiar with all the employees working for the Harris family. Could you please ask him to check the profile of this person?"

Treyton took the sketchbook and said, "All right."

In the evening, at Bay Villa, Maverick was in the kitchen preparing dinner when he suddenly heard a familiar bird call. It was Nico.

He turned and exited the kitchen. As soon as he opened the door, he saw Nico swaggering through the garden and walking toward him.

William went out with Gwendolyn but Quinton was still at the villa.

Nico noticed his boss' icy glare and quickly waved his hands in denial. "Boss, don't get me wrong. I didn't beat anyone up and barge in here. I just walked in like any normal person this time."

Maverick chuckled lightly. "You beat him up the last time, and now the two of you are already acting all lovey-dovey with each other?"

Nico, the social butterfly, chuckled cheekily.

However, his expression froze all of a sudden when he quickly realized something wrong with Maverick's words.

"Boss, what are you talking about? I'm a straight guy. What do you mean by acting all lovey-dovey?"

Maverick changed the subject. "Let's get straight to the point."

Nico instantly put on a serious expression and leaned over, whispering softly into his ear, "After you sent Neville to follow Natasha, he sent a message back saying that Natasha has been moved to two different

places in the past few days. She has not been moved after that, and no one has come by to check on her. It seems like... they've given up on Natasha?"

There's no way they would give up so easily.

"Since we've found her location and there's no one around her..."

Maverick's voice trailed off as he glanced down at his watch. There were still forty minutes left until Gwendolyn got off work. "Let's go take a look," he said.

Chapter 165

The two of them quickly left the villa.

While they were en route to the suburbs, Maverick, feeling weary, closed his eyes for a brief respite, only to unexpectedly drift off into a deep sleep.

He didn't sleep well and had a very strange dream.

In his dream, he found himself in a small, empty, and modest cabin.

Bang!

Suddenly, a deafening gunshot rang out from outside the door.

He felt a sharp pain in his chest, and as he looked down, he discovered that his heart had been pierced by a bullet.

Instantly, his entire body became drenched in crimson, as blood spread and stained him in vivid hues of red.

Agonizing pain emanated from his heart, surging through his limbs and coursing through every inch of his body.

He turned around in shock.

In the dim light, Gwendolyn stood by the door, aiming a gun at him.

Her face was as frigid and lifeless as death, devoid of any warmth. Her once warm eyes now gleamed with a chilling cruelty and ruthless detachment.

W-Why...

His eyes reddened. He wanted to approach her to seek an answer to his predicament.

As he took two steps forward, his vision suddenly blurred, and everything before his eyes became drenched in a deep crimson hue. Eventually, he could no longer discern the figure standing before him.

“Boss? Boss!”

As Nico called out twice, Maverick gradually regained consciousness.

“Boss, we’ve arrived. There’s a small path up ahead. To avoid being noticed by Natasha, we need to walk.”

Maverick blinked his tired, dark eyes, instinctively casting a downward gaze toward his heart.

Beneath the suit and shirt, it was pulsating with life and vigor.

However, the intense pain in the dream just now felt all too real.

It was so realistic that he could hardly distinguish between the present and the past, wondering which one was actually an illusion.

Gwendolyn's ruthless expression flashed before his eyes, causing a sudden sharp pain in his heart.

Nico felt that something was off with Maverick as the latter's face was pale. He used the back of his hand to feel Maverick's forehead.

It felt refreshingly cool. There was no sign of a fever.

"Boss, what's wrong? Are you feeling unwell? Boss!"

Nico's unceasing voice roused Maverick from the memory of the bizarre nightmare.

His complexion gradually returned to its normal hue, and he gracefully stepped out of the car with his long legs. "I'm fine. Let's go."

As soon as the duo left Bay Villa to the suburbs, someone reported the news to Charles.

Upon discovering Maverick's presence in the suburbs, Charles narrowed his deep blue eyes. "What is he doing there?"

The person who came to deliver the message replied with his head lowered, "It seems like he went to meet a woman."

A woman?

Charles' lips curled into a slight smile as he recalled Maverick's deliberate attempts to gain Gwendolyn's attention at the police station, and the way he had playfully acted pitiful and helpless at the entrance of the station.

During that moment, his eyes were brimming with profound affection, as if his heart and gaze were solely dedicated to Gwendolyn, unable to encompass anyone else.

Yet, he now went behind Gwendolyn's back to secretly meet another woman.

How interesting!

"Go and gather information about who he met and thoroughly investigate the entire situation. I want to have all the details as quickly as possible."

"Yes."

Charles' deep blue eyes narrowed with amusement as he stood up and headed to Angle Corporation.

Right then, Gwendolyn was sitting in the CEO's office, tidying up the desk and preparing to leave work.

Having previously declared herself as the boss of Angle, Gwendolyn capitalized on her recent free time and requested Treyton to vacate the CEO's office. In response, Treyton returned to oversee his own industrial company located in Fairlake.

She had just finished tidying up the desk when Joanne knocked on the door and came in.

"Ms. Shalders, there's a man in military uniform outside who wants to see you. He says his name is Newton."

What is Charles coming over for?

"All right. Let him in."

"Okay then," Joanne responded cheerfully and took two steps before turning her head back to look at Gwendolyn again.

She then whispered with a hint of infatuation, "This Mr. Newton is really good-looking, Ms. Shalders, you are truly... something!"

She gave a thumbs up, looking at Gwendolyn with an admiring expression.

Gwendolyn showed no expression, gently waved her hand, and signaled for her to leave.

When Charles entered the room, Gwendolyn was already seated on the small guest couch. She had courteously poured a cup of coffee for him.

"I'm just about to get off work. Is there something you need?"

Charles accepted the teacup with a smile, taking a delicate sip before speaking, "It's nothing serious. I'm simply curious as to why you refused my pursuit earlier. Could it be because of that manservant in your villa?"

Gwendolyn poured herself a cup of coffee as well, her expression turning serious. "The reason I refused you is because I am well aware that you and I are cut from the same cloth. Therefore, it is destined to be impossible between us."

The Charles she knew was domineering and paranoid. He also seemed to have an obsession with cleanliness and a strong sense of possessiveness.

But to what extent his possessiveness go, she wasn't sure.

"So, in that case, it has nothing to do with your manservant?"

Gwendolyn thought for a moment.

In order to completely eradicate any thoughts he might have of pursuing her, she needed to find an uncontrollable factor that would sever his thoughts entirely.

“Well, I won’t say it has completely nothing to do with him. As you can see, for me, he’s like a beautiful pet that I keep in my villa.”

Upon hearing this, Charles frowned. “Am I not better looking than him?”

Gwendolyn didn’t respond. Instead, she picked up the coffee cup and drank the beverage in one gulp. Charles thought of something, and the smile in his eyes grew broader. “It seems you don’t know your pet very well, unaware of what he does behind your back.”

“What do you mean?”

Charles stood up, gracefully adjusting the collar of his military uniform.

“Come on, let me show you what he does behind your back.”

In the tranquil suburban cottage, the golden hues of the setting sun bathed the surroundings in a warm glow.

The worn wooden door creaked open.

As Nico concealed himself in the shadows, Maverick, bathed in the warm glow of the setting sun, entered the house.

Natasha was sitting on the small bed, lost in thought. Upon hearing the sound, she turned around and saw him. In that instant, her eyes filled with tears of joy.

She struggled to get out of bed, and in her haste, she stumbled and fell to the ground. She scrambled up and clumsily made her way toward Maverick.

“Mave! I was wrong, Mave! I shouldn’t have believed Samantha that day, and I shouldn’t have allowed her bodyguard to attempt to harm you! I still love you deeply. They have left me here, abandoned and vulnerable. Only you can save me now!”

Maverick stood tall and rigid; his gaze fixed on her without a hint of emotion.

“I’m not here to save you. However, if you can provide me with a full explanation of everything you know, I can ensure your safety in prison. You will be protected from any further mistreatment, and you will have the chance to live out the remainder of your life in relative peace.”

When she heard this, Natasha’s tears fell heavily onto the floor.

“Mave, you’re so heartless! Even if you disregard my attempt on saving your life, we were once childhood friends. How can you condemn me to return to that hellish existence?”

Maverick’s indifferent expression remained unchanged. “Sending you back to prison and allowing you to live a peaceful life is the best outcome. It’s also an exchange for your confession. Isn’t living better

than dying?”

Natasha’s face was stained with tears.

She never imagined that she would end up in such a situation. If she hadn’t returned to the country and fought for the title of Mrs. Wright, she would probably still be living a carefree life abroad.

The more she thought about it, the more upset she became, and she cried out with all her strength.

Maverick stood there quietly, his gaze unwavering and completely unfazed.

Meanwhile, outside the cabin, Charles had his subordinates cunningly lure Nico away, who had been secretly protecting Maverick.

Then, standing far away from the cabin with Gwendolyn, they peered through the small window to observe the situation inside the house.

Charles flashed a wicked grin and whispered, "Gwen, behold your clever little pet. Not only did he find his long-lost lover, but he also clandestinely met with her in the suburbs. He's two-faced, putting on a facade in front of you while acting differently behind your back. You can't keep such a pet around."

Chapter 166 Cruel Little Game

Gwendolyn pursed her lips and fixed her cold eyes on Maverick inside the cabin, but she remained silent.

Following her gaze, Charles looked into the cabin. His deep blue eyes narrowed slightly, and a wicked smile played at the corners of his mouth.

"Gwen, how about we play an interesting game?"

"What?"

Gwendolyn turned to look at him. When she saw his expression, her heart was filled with a sense of foreboding.

Without saying anything, Charles gently raised his hand.

His subordinates understood immediately and quickly approached the cabin.

Inside, Natasha was crying her heart out with deep regret.

"Mave, I don't want to die here, and I certainly don't want to go back to prison. Can you help me? I'm willing to cooperate and tell you everything I know. In return, I only ask for enough money for a comfortable life and assistance in leaving the country. I promise that once I'm gone, I'll never return to Chanaea and trouble you again."

Maverick fell silent for a moment before he spoke in a cold tone. "That depends on how much you know and whether it's worth the money I'm paying."

"All right. I'll tell you everything you want to know!"

Natasha propped herself up with her hands, struggling to stand. As she straightened her body, a faint sound of wind reached her ears.

Following that, she felt a slight sting on the side of her neck. She instinctively reached out to touch the source of the sensation and discovered something foreign embedded in her skin.

Upon removing the object from her neck, she noticed that it was a syringe thinner than a pinky finger.

Natasha was baffled.

At the sight of the empty syringe in her hand, Maverick furrowed his brows and swiftly whipped his head around to look out the window. In that split second, he caught a glimpse of a swift figure flashing by.

"Nico."

He called out, but there was no response from outside the cabin.

Natasha's expression gradually turned numb. Blood vessels emerged in her pupils as a fleeting expression of pain crossed her face.

Immediately after, she lifted her crimson eyes and glared at Maverick with intense hatred. "Do you really think I would tell you? In your dreams! If I can't have it easy, neither can you and Gwendolyn, that b*tch! I'll send you to your death first, and she'll soon join you!" she snarled, her voice laced with venom.

Her face contorted ferociously, and with a piercing scream and her teeth bared, she lunged toward Maverick at an astonishing speed.

It was as if the dormant beast within Natasha had been unleashed. Lethal intent brimmed in her eyes, which emanated an unwavering resolve to rend him apart right then and there.

Maverick skillfully dodged to the side, making sure Natasha didn't even touch a single piece of his clothing.

The house descended into sudden chaos.

Seeing Natasha's condition, Gwendolyn shot Charles a glare.

"What did you do?"

Charles laughed. "Recently, a new drug called 545 special drug was developed. It can enhance the evilness within a person and turn them into a wild beast. Their attack power increases dramatically, and they desire to see blood. If they can't vent their aggression in time, their hearts will give out, and they will die. This drug has only been experimented on animals thus far. But Natasha, being a fugitive, will face a torturous experience once she is sent back to prison. Why not make use of her as an experiment subject instead, and let her meet a fitting end?"

Gwendolyn stared at Charles in disbelief.

After seven years apart, he was far more ruthless and vicious than she had ever imagined.

Beneath his handsome, ethereal appearance was now a twisted soul. She couldn't help wondering what exactly he had experienced over the past seven years.

"This is outrageous. You're no longer the Charles I once knew."

Charles' expression was indifferent, but as he looked straight into her eyes, his blue pupils held a glimmer of intense possessiveness.

He hooked his lips into a faint smile, took out a revolver from the back of his waistband, swiftly loaded a bullet, and handed it to Gwendolyn.

When Gwendolyn looked down, her expression turned serious. "What is the meaning of this?"

"Gwen, given your pet's physical strength, he won't last more than five minutes against this woman. I'll give you choices. You can stand by and watch as she brutally tortures him to death, which would serve as a fitting punishment for him."

He paused briefly before continuing, "Alternatively, you can use this revolver, loaded with just one bullet, to end the life of the woman inside. Or, you can take matters into your own hands and personally eliminate your disobedient pet, giving him a swift and decisive end. What do you think?"

Gwendolyn's eyes widened as she stared at him incredulously. "You must be crazy!"

Charles chuckled, his eyes gleaming with a sinister light. "Inside that room, there's only a fugitive and your servant. He's just a little pet. You can easily find a replacement since he disobeyed you," he said nonchalantly.

Gwendolyn gritted her teeth and stared at Charles coldly. "He belongs to me, and you have no right in deciding what will happen to him."

With an innocent expression, Charles moved the gun in his hand closer to Gwendolyn. "Of course. That's why the choice is yours."

Gwendolyn's expression turned stern as she observed the situation inside the room. Maverick was skillfully evading Natasha's attacks, determined not to let her lay a finger on him.

However, Nico had been lured away by Charles' people, leaving Maverick isolated and helpless. If the situation persisted, there would be no way for the latter to escape.

Gwendolyn frowned. "I choose neither!"

Once her words fell, she made a move to rush into the cabin. Charles, with his quick reflexes, grabbed her arm and blocked her path.

Gwendolyn's eyes burned with fury. The next moment, she swung her hand back and slapped Charles across the face.

Charles stood his ground, facing her anger head-on with a smile still adorning his face. "Feel free to slap me if it brings you satisfaction, but I won't allow you to enter. Those who have taken the 545 special drug go berserk and lose control. It's too risky, and I cannot jeopardize your safety. Your only option is to use a gun to end her life."

Gwendolyn stared daggers at him. "I don't know how to use a gun."

"You can do it. I personally taught you how to shoot back then. Come on, let me see if your shooting skills have regressed or not."

Once again, Charles moved the revolver closer to her. "If you hesitate any longer, your little pet won't be able to hold on."

Pupils quivering, Gwendolyn looked toward the cabin.

Maverick was gradually beginning to feel the strain on his body, and he struggled to keep up with the relentless assault.

In contrast, Natasha appeared to be fueled by the injected substance, her movements becoming more frenzied and her thirst for blood intensifying.

Maverick quickly scanned the room and looked for any handy tools. When his eyes caught sight of a bowl on the wooden table, he darted over and knocked the bowl against the edge of the table.

The bowl shattered in an instant.

While he was doing this, Natasha screamed and rushed toward him at lightning speed.

He instinctively tried to evade her, but his weakened physical state hindered his speed. Just a split second too slow, and Natasha's fingernails tore through his suit jacket.

Maverick's gaze briefly flickered with disdain as he observed the tear on the fabric before his chest. Without hesitation, he removed his suit and tossed it toward Natasha's face.

Natasha's eyes burned with an insatiable bloodlust, her thirst for violence palpable in the air. As if unable to find an outlet to vent her pain, she viciously tore apart the suit and lunged at him once again.

Maverick was forced to retreat. Suddenly, he heard a loud sound reverberating through the air—the door of the locked wooden cabin had been kicked open.

Upon turning around, he saw Gwendolyn.

Her eyebrows were furrowed, her expression solemn. The revolver in her hand was aimed straight at him.

This scene caused a sharp pain in Maverick's heart.

The nightmare he had on the car was still vividly etched in his mind, and he couldn't believe it had actually come true.

"Gwendolyn, please don't..." Maverick called out softly, his voice trembling and carrying a hint of pleading.

However, Gwendolyn's hand holding the gun remained steady. All of a sudden, her eyes hardened, and she decisively pulled the trigger at him.

With a self-mocking smirk on his thin lips, Maverick stood still and closed his eyes in resignation.

Bang!

A deafening boom erupted.

Chapter 167

A sudden sharp pain coursed through Maverick's body as a gunshot sounded.

The pain didn't come from his chest, but from his right arm.

His eyes shot open, and he looked down to see a streak of blood on his white shirt. A bullet had grazed his arm.

All of a sudden, the clamor behind him ceased.

He glanced back and saw Natasha still in the same aggressive stance, ready to attack. Her expression gradually turned from ferocious to numb as a bullet had pierced through her chest.

Blood bloomed like a vibrant poppy flower and stained her dress crimson.

Natasha paused for a moment. At the sight of blood on her chest, she turned deathly pale. Her eyes rolled back, and she collapsed and fell unconscious.

Slow, loud claps could be heard from the doorway just then.

Charles looked at Gwendolyn with admiration shining in his eyes. "You're too modest, Gwen. You still have such accurate aim even though you haven't touched a gun in years. You truly are my student," he praised.

Gwendolyn tossed the revolver in her hand aside. Her expression was stone cold under the dim light of the kerosene lamp, and she didn't respond to Charles at all.

Maverick remained in the same spot and met Charles' gaze.

Charles laughed sarcastically, but it was unclear whether he was laughing at Maverick or himself. "You win. We just played a game where Gwen had to choose between you and this woman. Even after you

came to the suburbs this late to meet your ex-lover behind her back, she still chose you. It's making me envious," he remarked.

"A game?" Maverick repeated, feeling a chill run down his spine.

He pursed his thin lips and scrunched his brows as he looked at Gwendolyn.

She didn't look at him but instead stared at Natasha, who had fallen to the ground. "Is this what you wanted to see? Is it fun?" Gwendolyn asked Charles.

"It's not fun, because I've upset you," Charles replied.

His eyes revealed a touch of desolation, and his voice softened slightly. "Gwen, you're still young, so it's understandable that you want a plaything. But I can also play with you for as long as you want. The bond we've had for so many years, isn't it deeper than your relationship with this man?"

Maverick's brow furrowed even more when Charles mentioned his long-time bond with Gwendolyn.

Both men's gazes were fixed on Gwendolyn.

She stared straight ahead, not looking at any of them. As she turned to leave the cabin, she said, "It's getting late, and I'm tired. Mr. Newton, since you requested this game, I'll leave you to deal with Natasha."

Gwendolyn took a few steps forward before noticing Maverick wasn't following her. "Are you coming? Or do you want to walk back on your own?" she called.

Maverick scrambled to catch up.

When he passed by Charles, their gazes clashed, sparks flying from the intensity. Their disdain for each other was obvious.

The atmosphere was extremely tense on the way back to Bay Villa. No one took the initiative to break the silence.

Maverick carefully turned his head to glance at Gwendolyn.

She was watching the passing scenery outside the window with a blank expression and cold eyes. It was unclear what she was thinking.

The streetlight cast a warm halo on her profile, etching her breathtakingly beautiful face into his heart.

Earlier, when Maverick realized that Gwendolyn was aiming for Natasha and not him, he felt a sense of relief.

However, the pressure in the car was too much at the moment as it was evident that Gwendolyn was in a bad mood. William, who was driving, didn't even dare to move.

Maverick tentatively reached out, crossing the invisible boundary between them, and gently tugged on her sleeve.

Gwendolyn showed no reaction, still staring out the car window and lost in thought.

In an attempt to catch her attention, he let out light coughs and complained, "Gwendolyn, I'm injured..."

Still, he was met with silence.

“You’re the cause of the injury,” he tried again.

The air remained serene and quiet.

Maverick looked at the wound on his right arm dejectedly. It wasn’t a big issue, just a minor scratch.

Yet it seemed like Gwendolyn was still angry.

The tension was so thick that William felt he could cut through it.

Oddly enough, Maverick was completely unaware of it and began to speak honestly. “After the charity gala last time, I had Neville keep an eye on her. Tonight, I followed Natasha’s trail. I didn’t go there to have a date with her; there’s nothing between us. I just wanted to get some clues from her to find out who harmed you last time.”

Gwendolyn narrowed her eyes but continued to purse her lips without a word.

She was actually thinking about Charles.

She had admired him and always followed him around as a child.

However, some unpleasantness occurred between them later on. Charles then joined the Central Intelligence Agency for training, while she was met with misfortune the following year and ended up in Fairlake.

Charles seems so unfamiliar this time... There’s something strange about him.

While Gwendolyn was deep in thought, Maverick quietly watched her from the side.

They soon arrived at the villa. Gwendolyn promptly opened the car door and walked to the front door. Suddenly, she remembered something and turned back to Maverick.

“If you’re mostly recovered, return to work at Wright Construction Group. The deadline of the oath you made has not yet passed,” she instructed.

“Understood.”

Maverick followed closely behind her. The moment he returned to his room, his expression gradually turned cold.

That Charles has got some guts.

It was evident from the events from earlier that Charles had sent someone to follow him, messing up his plans at a crucial moment.

Maverick would not be able to quell his anger if this grudge was left unaddressed.

Since Gwendolyn had previously lifted the surveillance on him, he sent a command to Nico through his phone.

Everything was calm and peaceful for the next few days.

After having breakfast, Gwendolyn headed to Wright Construction Group. Maverick also left after he was done washing the dishes.

With Natasha’s situation settled, Gwendolyn set her next target on Lane Group.

Her money had been with the Lane family for too long. It was time for her to take it back.

Lane Group was also involved in the real estate and construction industry. Although its reputation and market value were incomparable to that of Wright Construction Group, it was still considered a leading figure in Fairlake's industry.

Furthermore, the eight point eight billion from Gwendolyn's previous acquisition of Wright Construction Group's shares went into Samantha's pocket. As a result, Lane Group didn't suffer significant damage during this period. To revise their plans, Gwendolyn called Yulia over.

Meanwhile, Maverick quietly slipped away from Linderson Constructions' worksite and went to the private room he had booked to meet Charles.

Charles had already changed out of his military uniform into a casual black shirt. His top two buttons were undone, revealing his enticing collarbone and chest muscles.

When Maverick entered the room, Charles was lounging on the couch, leisurely sipping red wine.

Without further ado, Maverick picked up the bottle of wine from the table, poured himself a glass, and downed it in one gulp.

"That hits the spot," he remarked.

Charles clapped his hands lightly. He lifted his eyes to meet Maverick's gaze and spoke without reservation. "I've liked Gwendolyn since we were children. We might already be married if it weren't for those years I spent at the Central Intelligence Agency. I know you like her too, but you two are already divorced. She's just using you as a pet for her revenge now. Are you really okay with that?"

Maverick remained silent, his dark eyes resembling a dark abyss.

"I looked into your background but couldn't find anything. There's clearly more to your identity than just being a member of the Wright family from Fairlake. Who exactly are you?" Charles questioned.

Charles lay on the couch with a half-smile, gazing at Maverick with his deep blue eyes.

With his lazy posture, he oozed an aura of mischief.

Charles had looked into the people around Maverick and found that they were no ordinary people. As for Maverick's background, it was too clean that he could not help but feel suspicious.

"I'm just Maverick, that's all. Nothing more."

Maverick's dark eyes became serious as he took a step forward, his long legs carrying him to the couch next to Charles. Then, Maverick sat down, his posture straight and proper.

With a casual glance, he first noticed Charles' exposed, perfectly sculpted chest muscles and collarbones beneath the black shirt. Paired with those deep, blue eyes, Charles looked absolutely enchanting like a fairy.

Even I, as a man, found him attractive. Gwendolyn probably finds him pleasing to the eye as well, right?

Maverick suddenly thought of Charles mentioning his long-time bond with Gwendolyn, as well as the complex look in Gwendolyn's eyes when she saw Charles at the police station.

Gwendolyn... She did like him, didn't she?

When Charles noticed Maverick staring at his body, a wicked smile played on his lips. "I'm the kind of person who insists on having what's mine. If anyone dares to lay a finger on it, I'll chop them down and take back what belongs to me. Do you understand what I mean?"

Hearing that, Maverick laughed.

Does Charles think he can chop me down?

He poured himself another glass of wine and elegantly drank it.

With a tone of provocation, he began, "You can give it a try, and I'll play along. But..."

Maverick paused for a moment, his expression serious and cautious. He then added, "Gwendolyn is not anyone's personal possession. I learned this a long time ago. She has always been independent and full of ideas, and her decisions cannot be influenced by others."

"Of course, but I can guide her in making choices, just like last night."

When the incident from the night before was mentioned, Maverick's dark eyes narrowed. As he exuded a fierce aura, the surrounding atmosphere chilled.

Charles sat up and looked him in the eye. "I taught her how to shoot. She's very smart and learns quickly. Last night, I was right behind her and saw her every move clearly."

Maverick realized what Charles wanted to say and suddenly furrowed his brows.

Charles went on, "If she didn't want to hurt you, she had the ability to keep you unharmed. So, she must have been angry with you and even harbored murderous intentions. To her, you are just a pet. She rewards you when you obey and punishes you when you don't. She stopped loving you a long time ago. Think back to the expression on her face when she first saw me. I have a place in her heart. Once the misunderstanding between us is cleared up, she will no longer need her pet. Do you understand?"

Maverick's thin lips tightened as his deep and cold eyes quivered slightly.

Charles admired his expression and laughed with arrogance.

In the next moment, Maverick also burst into chuckles.

“No wonder you’re the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. You’re skilled at sowing discord, manipulating emotions, and exploiting people’s vulnerabilities. You can tear apart and crush people’s fragile hearts, leaving them utterly devastated.”

Upon hearing this, Charles narrowed his eyes and gazed at Maverick warily.

Charles had only said a few sentences, yet Maverick already figured out what he was up to. This revealed that the latter did not look as simple as he appeared.

Maverick continued, “You didn’t meet me secretly today just for something casual, right?”

Charles resumed his light-hearted smile at that.

He voiced, “Don’t you want to find out how much you truly mean to her? When faced with life and death, who will she care about more? Is it you or me?”

The two men stared at each other.

One had a look of cold and profound depth, while the other had a charming and unrestrained gaze.

Gwendolyn and Yulia were in the middle of a meeting when suddenly, a commotion erupted in the hallway outside.

It was very noisy.

After exchanging glances, Gwendolyn and Yulia stood up and opened the door to investigate.

Outside the door, a man in a suit was arguing with the female assistant.

“What’s wrong?” Gwendolyn asked.

The assistant hurried over and said, "Ms. Shalders, I told this gentleman that you cannot meet visitors as you are in a meeting with Ms. Sullivan, but he insisted on barging in. I could barely stop him!"

Turning around, the man nodded respectfully to Gwendolyn. "Ms. Shalders."

Gwendolyn studied his face and found him familiar-looking. "Are you Charles' subordinate?"

The man was visibly pleased to be recognized.

He answered, "Yes, I am Mr. Newton's subordinate. I apologize for the intrusion, but this matter is quite urgent. You see, Mr. Newton and Mr. Wright are about to engage in a life-or-death game."

"Life-or-death game?"

Gwendolyn narrowed her eyes slightly. "What is Charles up to now?"

"They are currently in a private room at Realm Bar. Please come with me to persuade them, or someone might actually die!"

Gwendolyn's face darkened almost instantly.

She turned around and told Yulia, "You can go ahead and do your work. We'll continue the meeting tomorrow."

After giving the instructions, she quickly headed to Realm Bar.

Once she opened the door to the private room, she saw the two men seated across from each other on a circular leather couch.

Neatly arranged gun parts were displayed on the coffee table in between them.

Their strong desire to win was evident in their eyes.

Noticing Gwendolyn's arrival, Maverick, who was near the door, quickly stood up and blocked her line of sight.

Gwendolyn's expression was frosty. With an unfriendly tone, she demanded, "What are you doing?"

Maverick glanced behind him and said to Charles, "Fix your clothes."

Charles raised an eyebrow and leisurely fastened the two loose buttons before his chest.

It was only then that Maverick moved to the side, allowing Gwendolyn to take a seat on the couch.

Gwendolyn took a seat right in the center. Folding her hands authoritatively, she cast a cold glance at the array of gun parts laid out on the coffee table.

A cold smile appeared on her red lips. "Is this an assembling game, where the loser gets shot in the head? Whose idea was this?"

The two men stayed quiet.

Gwendolyn glanced sideways, first looking at Maverick. "He's the director of the Central Intelligence Agency who's been handling these things since he was a kid, yet you agreed to compete with him in assembling? Do you even know guns?"

She was testing him.

Maverick's dark eyes held a faint smile. "I've had the fortune to use them a few times before. Although I'm not very familiar with guns, he provoked me first. I'm a man, so of course, I have to give it a shot."

“Gwen, this is a game between us men,” Charles chimed in.

Gwendolyn let out a cold snort. With her arms still crossed, she leaned against the back of the couch with an icy countenance.

“Since you don’t care about your lives, I won’t stop you. Go ahead. Let’s see who will get shot in the head first,” she uttered heartlessly.

Charles’ subordinate from earlier was dumbfounded to hear that.

“Ms. Shalders, I thought you’re here to persuade them?” he protested.

Gwendolyn’s expression remained indifferent as if she was just there to watch the show.

Charles glanced at his subordinates and ordered, “Get out. No matter what you hear and no matter what happens later, do not come in.”

“Understood.”

As soon as Charles’ people left and closed the door, the atmosphere inside the room turned extremely tense.

Charles looked at Maverick with a grin. “We’ve signed an agreement to waive the liabilities. Whoever finishes assembling first can shoot the other. There will be no regrets. Are you really willing to gamble?”

Maverick had a light and carefree smile on his face as he responded, “I’ll play with you till the end.”

Gwendolyn tightened her fists, her breath slightly heavy.

Charles was more ruthless than Maverick. If the former won, he would definitely pull the trigger.

However, since Maverick dared to gamble, it must mean that he was prepared.

Firearms were strictly controlled in Chanaea. Even in the case of wealthy families, not many members had ever handled them. Yet, Maverick claimed to have used them a few times.

She was quite curious to see Maverick's understanding of firearms and how fast his hands were.

Just as she was deep in thought, the men on both sides of the coffee table sat up straight, an intense aura of murderous intent surrounding them.

Charles started with the countdown.

Then, the game began.

Chapter 169

The two men quickly got to work, efficiently and without fuss. Their speeds were at par as their hands moved in a flurry of rapid movements.

Gwendolyn knew nothing about assembling guns, so it left her feeling dizzy and confused.

However, her gaze remained fixed on Maverick.

He was too calm. Even though he claimed to have only tried guns a few times, his skillful movements were clearly muscle memory.

Moreover, he was able to assemble a gun without falling behind Charles in the slightest. It was impossible to achieve this without years of handling firearms.

As Gwendolyn stared at Maverick intently, her expression grew increasingly serious.

Across from her, Charles keenly sensed that her focus had been on Maverick the entire time. She did not even spare a second to look at him.

When Charles reached the final step, he deliberately paused for half a second.

In that split second, Maverick finished assembling the gun. He coldly raised it, aiming at Charles' forehead with murderous eyes.

His well-defined hand was poised to pull the trigger.

Gwendolyn noticed Maverick's actions and almost instantly exclaimed, "Maverick, no!"

Maverick was taken aback. His dark eyes quivered uncontrollably, but he did not move.

"Put it down. That's an order!"

Across him, Charles' eyes were filled with provocation.

Maverick bit his lower lip hard, his heart trembling from the order yelled at him. At that moment, his entire body felt painful as if thousands of needles were pricking it.

After struggling for two seconds, he finally put down the gun with a pale and dispirited face.

On the contrary, Charles laughed heartily. "Congratulations. You won the game but lost her. I told you. You're just a pet that has to obey its master. Now, it's time for you to quit."

Maverick looked down. His dark eyes were empty and lifeless, and even his hands and feet felt ice cold.

Meanwhile, Charles turned his gaze back to Gwendolyn. With a delighted tone, he said, "Gwen, I knew it. Even though you refuse to accept me verbally, you do care about me deep down. From now on, let's be good to each other and stop all the arguments. All right?"

Gwendolyn glanced at Maverick, then at the last part that Charles never managed to assemble.

In an instant, it occurred to her that Charles had just employed a little trick.

She looked at him and said coldly, "You're wrong. I just didn't want to see blood. If you had loaded the gun first, I would have stopped you from killing him just the same."

Charles' expression gradually froze.

Gwendolyn continued, "If I had to choose between you and him, I would choose Maverick."

When the one-year employment contract was over, she would not have any further involvement with Maverick. He had personally guaranteed it, and she even had the recording on her phone.

However, Charles was different.

If he was unable to completely cut off his strong possessiveness and longing for her, it would only bring her a lot of trouble in the future.

Charles was more troublesome than Maverick.

"Gwen, I know you're still mad at me—"

Gwendolyn interrupted, "The issue between us happened many years ago, and I'm already over it. Besides, you and I could never be together."

Then, she looked at Maverick with a sultry and inviting smile and beckoned at him with her slender fingers. "Come, sit on my lap."

Both men were stunned in unison.

Under the spell of Gwendolyn's enchanting eyes, Maverick found himself getting up and walking toward her.

Gwendolyn gently pulled him into her embrace, allowing him to sit on her lap.

Despite her smaller stature compared to the two men, her aura was powerful and not inferior to theirs.

The playful glint in her eyes made her seem more like a playboy than them.

Maverick's body was rigid as his mind went blank and his heart pounded wildly. He was utterly confused about what Gwendolyn was trying to do.

Did she actually make me sit on her lap?

Gwendolyn looked into his puzzled eyes, gently ruffled his short hair, and smiled with her eyes crinkled. When she spoke, her voice was soft and alluring, captivating him completely.

"Hug me."

Maverick's fingers stiffened. It took him two seconds before he tentatively wrapped his arms around her waist.

As he leaned close to her, Gwendolyn whispered softly into his ear at a volume only the two of them could hear. "Put on a show with me."

Maverick frowned and stayed still, his head being forcibly pressed onto her shoulder.

From Charles' perspective, Maverick was hunched over and nestled in Gwendolyn's arms.

Gwendolyn, on the other hand, looked calm as if she were already accustomed to it.

The scene was particularly glaring. Charles' eyes narrowed, and he spoke with difficulty. "Gwen, are you trying to provoke me on purpose?"

Gwendolyn lazily shrugged her shoulders. "Charles, you like a woman who can snuggle in your arms coquettishly. However, I have money and power. Why should I be a submissive woman? I also want to spoil a man and love him. You see, this is why we are not destined for each other."

She went on, "Also, I remember you're a clean freak. After I put your coat on the flower stand that day, you never wore it again. You didn't like me putting your coat there, and you don't like your things being touched. But you should know that I never belonged to you. I belong to myself, so I will do what I want and touch other men."

Charles gritted his teeth. "You enjoy roleplaying because you're still young. Well, I can play with you for as long as you want. Everyone does crazy and reckless things when they're young! I don't care about your past at all. All I want is you."

Once I find an opportunity to kill Maverick, she will belong to me again.

Gwendolyn sighed quietly to herself.

He's quite stubborn. It seems like the impact isn't enough.

At that thought, she gently patted Maverick's back and signaled him to straddle her and face her.

Without a word, Maverick followed her command.

Gwendolyn stroked his handsome face, a hint of laziness in her teasing voice. "Maverick, you two may be done with your games, but I'm exhausted from all the commotion you guys caused. Don't you think it's time to do something about it?"

Maverick stared into her eyes with his dark orbs. He did not quite understand what she meant, but he did not stop her either.

No matter what Gwendolyn wanted to do, he would always unconditionally support and obey her.

Even though he knew her gentle smile at that moment was just an act, it was still enough.

When he snuggled in her arms and wrapped his arms around her slim waist just now, his nostrils were filled with her pleasant fragrance. It felt just like a dream.

If this were a dream, I'm willing to drown in it.

Noticing his distraction, Gwendolyn pinched his chin with an arched brow and reminded him, "Give me your belt."

Without hesitation, Maverick deftly unfastened the metal buckle, pulled out his belt, and handed it to her.

"Hand."

Does she want to vent her anger by giving me a good beating?

Maverick extended his left hand with his palm facing upward and spread it flat.

"Both hands."

Maverick did as he was told compliantly.

The next second, Gwendolyn skillfully wrapped the belt around his wrists, quickly bounding them together by tightening the buckle.

She then raised his hands so that they were lifted high above his head before pulling his white shirt from his pant's waistband and bringing it to his thin lips.

"Bite it."

Maverick immediately held the fabric with his teeth like a docile pet.

With his shirt lifted, his skin revealed a sickly pale hue under the dim light of the private room. It was the effect of the special drug.

His sculpted abs were in full view, their intricate lines exquisitely defined.

Needless to say, the scene was exceptionally pleasing to the eyes.

Gwendolyn gently caressed Maverick's abs with her icy cool fingertips, savoring the sensation and taking her time to relish every moment as if she were enjoying a delicious delicacy.

All this time, there was a mischievous smile on her face.

"Do you like it?"

Maverick was tingling with desire because of her teasing. Unintentionally, he let out a soft whimper.

As Charles watched from the side, he clenched his jaw so tightly that his teeth ached.

The scene before him intensely provoked his nerves.

With reddened eyes, he uttered, "Gwen..."

Gwendolyn ignored him.

She still felt that the impact was not enough.

Chapter 170

Charles was truly on the verge of exploding.

He suppressed the fury in his heart and spoke with a gentler tone.

"Gwen, I can do all those things too, and I'm better looking than him. Wouldn't that make you happier?"

Gwendolyn once again lifted Maverick's chin, examining his facial features.

"You are good-looking, but he is handsome. It's not the same," she retorted.

Charles had gentle and delicate features, with a pair of deep blue eyes that added a touch of color and made him look more beautiful than a gorgeous woman.

On the contrary, Maverick's eyes were dark and deep, and his facial features were extraordinarily handsome.

When he was not smiling, he would exude a cold aura.

But when he softened the look in his eyes, feigning innocence and playing the victim, he gave off the vibe of a wolf in sheep's clothing, which made Gwendolyn want to punish him.

His face was, above all, strikingly attractive.

This time around, with his thin lips gently holding his shirt and his hands bound, he was the embodiment of desire and submission.

This gave her a strong urge to tease him relentlessly.

Gwendolyn's words fell softly into Maverick's ears, sounding especially pleasant and soothing.

He obediently held his hands up high and kept the shirt in his mouth without moving an inch. Under Gwendolyn's teasing, his face turned slightly red.

"Such a good boy."

Gwendolyn was quite pleased with Maverick's performance. She picked up the glass of red wine on the table and brought it to his lips, saying, "This is your reward."

Maverick parted his lips, and his shirt slipped off.

With Gwendolyn feeding him, he drained the glass of red wine in one gulp.

As the wine entered his throat smoothly, a sweet and intoxicating aroma filled his senses. It was the most delicious wine in the world.

For a moment, Maverick was completely immersed in the sweet aroma of the wine.

Upon seeing the dark red wine dripping from the corner of his mouth, Gwendolyn gently wiped it away with her index finger.

The drop of wine was transferred to her fingertip. She glanced at it, then brought her finger to Maverick's lips. "It's yours. Lick it clean."

Maverick's cheeks flushed. He gently extended his tongue, carefully licking the wine off her finger and sending a tingling sensation through it.

Seeing him in this extremely obsequious manner delighted Gwendolyn.

Throughout their three years of marriage, he always remained aloof, condescending, and full of sarcasm.

Whenever she saw him, his face was cold, stern, and filled with arrogance. He had treated her as if she owed him money.

Yet now, the man sat on her lap, cautiously and attentively doing everything he could to please her. He was much like a big dog intoxicated by affection and waiting for its owner's loving touch.

Such a scene was something she could never have imagined before.

Feeling extremely satisfied, Gwendolyn let out a series of hearty laughter.

While Maverick took in her bright expression, he began to please her with his tongue more enthusiastically.

Gwendolyn could not help but giggle.

Meanwhile, Charles' eyes were red with anger as he glared at Maverick furiously.

There was a strong urge within him as he wished that he was the one sitting on top of Gwendolyn and making her laugh so happily.

He found it hard to accept the reality. "Gwen, do you dare to say you've never had feelings for me? Were all those years of affection just my wishful thinking?"

Gwendolyn withdrew her finger. Then, she lifted Maverick's shirt and brought it back to his lips.

Maverick, knowing better, bit down gently, while Gwendolyn's caresses over his body continued.

As she played with Maverick, she responded to Charles' words.

"Charles, I won't lie to you—I did like you once. But you stepped back when I needed you the most. From that moment on, it was destined that we could never be together in this lifetime. Now, my fondness for you has completely disappeared."

Charles looked dejected, unable to utter a single word for quite some time.

Gwendolyn added, "As you can see, I'm doing quite well now. If you truly feel that you owe me something, you should stay far away from me and never disrupt my life again."

Pain brimmed in Charles' eyes as he stared at her blankly.

He eagerly anticipated Gwendolyn to turn around, look at him, and reveal even the slightest hint of reluctance in her expression.

Unfortunately, she did not.

She was too busy teasing Maverick with a beaming smile.

Maverick was growing increasingly restless due to Gwendolyn's actions. As his breathing became rapid, the frequency of his whimpers escalated.

Gwendolyn saw his struggle to hold himself back and gently asked, "Do you want it?"

Maverick bit down on his shirt, his lips trembling slightly. With his brows furrowed, he unconsciously let out a soft groan in affirmation.

Gwendolyn appeared extremely patient and smiled indulgently. "Okay. This isn't the right place, so I'll satisfy you when we go home."

She gently patted Maverick's waist, signaling him to stand up, and then untied the belt that bound his hands. After that, she returned the belt to him.

"Put it on and straighten your clothes."

There were red marks on Maverick's wrists from the tight grip of the belt, but they were like a trophy to Charles' eyes.

As the red marks moved around in Charles' vision, he felt his eyes sting. Not only that, his heart hurt even more.

After Maverick tidied himself up, Gwendolyn gently took his large, well-defined hand in her small one. Her beautiful eyes were filled with warmth as she said, "Let's go back home."

The entire time, she did not glance at Charles on the couch even once.

Soon, Gwendolyn and Maverick left Realm Bar hand in hand.

They got into the car to head back to Bay Villa, and it was then that Gwendolyn finally withdrew her hand with a cold demeanor.

It was particularly tiring to put on that show. While she gently closed her eyes to rest, her face regained its previous coldness, and her aura became solemn.

The sudden change left Maverick a bit overwhelmed.

In the private room of Realm Bar just now, he had heard the most beautiful words from Gwendolyn.

If I had to choose between you and him, I would choose Maverick.

You are good-looking, but he is handsome. It's not the same.

Maverick's ears were still tinted red. Hesitantly, he reached out his hand, wanting to ask if there was even the slightest bit of sincerity in those words she had uttered.

"Gwendolyn..."

Before he could touch her sleeve, Gwendolyn frowned in disgust and instinctively moved her arm away.

Her face displayed the epitome of indifference.

At least she had the patience to explain things to Charles. But when it comes to me, she can't even be bothered to say an extra word.

This indifference served as a reminder to Maverick that what had just happened was merely an act, that everything was fake, and that he should stop deceiving himself.

She simply had a disagreement with Charles, and she did all those only to provoke him. To her, I mean nothing at all. I'm just a disposable tool that can be easily discarded once used.

Maverick endured the dull pain in his chest, remaining silent as he followed her out of the car.

When they approached the entrance of the villa, Gwendolyn stopped in her tracks and turned around to give him an emotionless stare.

"Don't think that I'll let you off so easily for skipping work to meet Charles today. Sweep the yard thoroughly. You may only go to sleep after you're done."

After she finished speaking, she coldly withdrew her gaze and entered the villa first.

The door slammed shut with a loud bang.

It was like a barrier between them that was impossible to overcome.

All of a sudden, Maverick recalled Charles' words from earlier. To her, you are just a pet. She rewards you when you obey and punishes you when you don't. She stopped loving you a long time ago.

Maverick's heart ached so much that his chest was stuffy.

He felt as if he had woken up from the dream.

The realization was very painful.

The flicker of hope that had just been ignited was mercilessly doused, causing heartache and disappointment far heavier than when there was no hope at all. The feeling was suffocating.

Maverick clenched his chest tightly, leaning against the wall and trying to endure the intense pain in his chest.

As he did that, the image of Gwendolyn's ultimate tenderness at Realm Bar kept flashing in his mind.

Even though he knew it was all just an act, he could not help but fall into it. In the end, he was the one who lost.

"What's taking so long?"

A chilly voice suddenly questioned from behind.

Gwendolyn had opened the door and was standing beside it, watching Maverick.

He sniffled sadly, then turned to face her with his head hung low. In a muffled voice, he said, "I'll sweep the yard right now."

Gwendolyn, with her keen perception, noticed that something was off with Maverick. She approached him and gently lifted his chin.

The light at the entrance of the villa fully exposed his face to her eyes.

His eyes were rimmed with red, and his long, curled eyelashes trembled slightly, dotted with tiny droplets of moisture. The sadness in his gaze was too overwhelming to conceal.

Gwendolyn sneered with amusement.

Did he... cry?