

## **Her Riches 171**

### **Chapter 171**

Gwendolyn had known Maverick for so long. Although he had put on the pitiful act a few times before, this was the first time Gwendolyn had seen him sniffing like an actual child.

Is he genuinely sad?

She sighed helplessly, her tone softening a bit. "We agreed to put on a show. Did you get emotionally involved?"

Maverick remained silent with his eyes lowered. Within those dark pupils, there was a hint of vulnerability.

He was indeed emotionally involved, deeply immersed, and completely captivated.

In the end, he was left battered and bruised by the harsh reality, his heart aching intensely.

Gwendolyn didn't have much to say; she knew that staying alert from beginning to end was the only way to avoid losing her rationality.

Acting was just acting; the fake could never become real. She had always been able to distinguish between the two clearly.

He wants me to coax him? Impossible.

Moreover, Gwendolyn couldn't come up with any comforting words to say.

She turned around to leave decisively. Her tone regained its coldness as she urged, "Hurry up and get to work. I'm going to sleep."

Just as she took a step forward, Maverick gripped her wrist from behind.

With a weary expression on her face, she said, "Let go. I'm tired." She just wanted to sleep.

However, Maverick did not budge, his reddened eyes gazing at her with immense grievance.

"Gwendolyn... Can you occasionally show some concern and consider my feelings too? After all, a wounded heart will eventually ache."

There was a touch of imploration in his deep, quivering voice. His Adam's apple moved gently, and he held her wrist with force.

Gwendolyn's back stiffened as she stood still.

Of course, a wounded heart would ache, but these words felt strange coming from Maverick's mouth.

She retorted, "How ridiculous. It's natural for someone to choose to let go after feeling totally heartbroken and utterly disappointed. I've experienced that pain before, too. If it hurts so much, you should let go sooner. The words I said to Charles today were also for you."

As soon as she finished speaking, she pried Maverick's hand off and entered the villa without looking back.

But this time, she didn't close the door. Maverick watched her figure as she climbed up to the third floor, eventually disappearing around the corner.

Gwendolyn was right. Once upon a time, she too had her sincere feelings hurt by him.

Now, he was merely experiencing the pain she once endured.

He deserved it.

Maverick didn't waste any more time. He went to the backyard, grabbed a broom, and carefully swept up all the fallen leaves in the garden.

The late autumn night was bitingly cold.

Maverick wore only a thin white shirt, his face pale. Even when he was holding a wooden broom and doing a mundane task, he exuded an air of nobility and dignity.

In the room on the third floor, Gwendolyn did not turn on the lights.

She stood quietly behind the window and watched him with icy eyes, seemingly lost in thought.

After a few minutes, she indifferently withdrew her gaze and went to sleep.

Maverick continued sweeping until two in the morning and finally cleaned the yard thoroughly.

As expected, after being exposed to the cold wind for several hours, wearing only a thin layer of clothing, he caught a cold the next day.

Gwendolyn woke up to the sound of coughing coming from downstairs.

After freshening up and putting on her makeup, she went downstairs and immediately saw a tall figure bustling in and out of the kitchen. On the table was a spread of freshly-made breakfast.

Knowing that it was time for Gwendolyn to wake up, Maverick covered his lips with his fist every time he coughed, trying to keep it as quiet as possible.

Gwendolyn stood in the stairwell for a while and watched his every little move. She pressed her red lips together and, without a word, quietly descended the stairs.

Upon hearing footsteps, Maverick turned around and saw Gwendolyn in a black velvet long-sleeved top and a snowy white tulle skirt. Her thin shoulders appeared quite delicate.

He hurriedly grabbed the trench coat from the coat rack by the door and helped her put it on.

"The weather has turned chilly, so even when you're indoors, make sure to keep warm. You have a great figure, so you'll still look good with an extra layer of clothes on you," he said.

Gwendolyn did not refuse. Instead, she lifted her head to observe Maverick.

He was carefully helping her put on the trench coat. In spite of the calm look in his dark eyes, he looked visibly sick, and his handsome face and lips lacked color.

"If you're sick, take a day off and rest. There's no need to force yourself to go to Wright Construction Group."

Maverick stopped adjusting her collar. Following a second of hesitation, he responded, "All right."

After putting on her coat, he pulled out a chair for her. Gwendolyn walked straight over and sat down, silently eating her breakfast.

She was halfway through her meal when the yard outside became lively. It was the sound of laughter from a few bodyguards.

Elven's and Ezra's knife wounds had almost healed, so they were discharged from the hospital that day. As for Justin, the newcomer, he had also recovered aside from some remaining bruises on his face.

When Gwendolyn let them in, the three of them stood in the empty space of the living room.

They had similar height, with well-built physiques, long legs, and narrow waists. Justin, in particular, had slightly tanner skin than the other two. In general, they were quite pleasing to the eye.

Gwendolyn took a sip of oatmeal and smiled contentedly. "This is great. Everyone's back here, so it's going to be lively from now on."

Maverick stood silently to the side, carefully sizing up the bodyguards one by one before his gaze paused on Justin's face.

He furrowed his brows and asked, "Who are you?"

With his head lowered, Justin calmly replied, "Mr. Wright, I am Ms. Shalders' new bodyguard, Justin Harris."

Maverick still had some impression of the incident that day on Crane Bridge. He couldn't help but stare at Justin's face cautiously as he found it familiar.

Upon finishing her meal, Gwendolyn gracefully wiped her mouth with a napkin and calmly stated the day's schedule. "Ezra and Justin will come with me to the company, while the other three will stay behind to guard the villa."

"Yes, Ms. Shalders," they responded in unison.

With that, Gwendolyn left for Wright Construction Group. Maverick, on the other hand, did not idle around even though he was given a day off.

Just because he didn't have to go to the office didn't mean he didn't have to do the housework.

He took two pills of cold medicine and busied himself. During mid-afternoon, he suddenly heard two crisp bird calls that carried a distinct secret code.

It was Nico again.

Maverick walked downstairs to the living room. As soon as he opened the door, he saw Nico swaggering over from the yard once again. Behind Nico was Swain, who had just arrived from Salinsburgh.

Maverick looked at Nico helplessly.

How come he's treating Bay Villa as if it's his own home, freely coming and going as he pleases? How did he get so close to the Harris family's bodyguards in such a short time?

As Maverick was deep in thought, Nico approached him with a grin. The moment Nico noticed the former's pale and weak appearance, his expression turned serious. "Boss, it's only been a few days since we last met. How come you look so sickly and frail?"

Maverick's eyes darkened, and he ground his back teeth together. "I'm doing just fine," he asserted.

Realizing he had misspoken, Nico quickly hit his mouth twice and apologized with a smile. "I brought Swain over. Boss, why don't you have a chat with him? I'll deal with those bodyguards from the Harris family. I promise they won't eavesdrop or pass on any messages."

Hearing that, Maverick shot him a warning glance.

Nico understood immediately and raised his right hand. "I promise not to use force. I'll talk it out with them nicely."

It was only then that Maverick looked away and led Swain to the room on the second floor. After closing the window, he sat down on the armchair beside the bed with an icy demeanor.

Swain obediently stood upright in front of Maverick. Noting the latter's solemn countenance, he quickly asked, "Boss, is there something important that requires me to go on a mission?"

Maverick gently touched his wristwatch. The words were at the tip of his tongue, but he could not bring himself to speak them out loud. His eyes were dark, and a troubled look marred his face.

Seeing that, Swain couldn't help but put on a stern expression as well.

The next second, Maverick inquired, "How did you... win over your wife before?"

"Huh?" Swain's eyes momentarily widened.

What kind of strange question is this?

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Is it because Boss got a divorce and all this talk about love hurt his feelings?

He instantly felt weak in his knees. He cried out, "Boss, I was wrong! I won't secretly date again. Please spare me this time... or at least go easy on the punishment!"

"Who said you're going to be punished?"

Huh?

Swain had been halfway through bending his knee, striking an awkward pose. His expression clearly showed that he hadn't recovered yet, making him look somewhat comical.

Maverick was expressionless, but there was seriousness in his eyes. "I've recently encountered a similar problem, so I called you to Fairlake to ask for your advice."

Upon hearing his words, Swain felt a wave of apprehension. He observed him for a moment and, noticing that he didn't seem angry, cautiously spoke up.

"My girl has a good temper and is gentle, but you must not cross her bottom line, or she will get angry. As for making a girl happy, it's all about small gifts and attitude. Be a little sweeter with your words, and when she needs you, be able to step up decisively."

Maverick lowered his gaze in contemplation for a moment, his expression growing increasingly solemn. "Gwendolyn is a wealthy woman herself; she doesn't lack money. She can buy any gift she wants, and she doesn't care for even the most expensive or rare items. This approach won't work."

Uh...

Does this mean that he's going to pursue Ms. Shalders?

Swain found himself in a difficult situation.

He had previously heard from Nico that Maverick had been suffering quite a bit at the hands of Gwendolyn recently, and suffering was an understatement.

The woman had a tough temperament and showed no mercy.

Simply speaking, Maverick trying to win her back was even harder than plucking stars from the sky.

Swain scratched his head, his face full of misery. "Does Ms. Shalders have anything she wants to accomplish lately? You could secretly help her, then pretend to be exposed, letting her know you helped her, so she'll be grateful to you."

Maverick thought about it seriously.

Gwendolyn has been planning to bankrupt Lane Group. I could indeed give it a push from behind, but...

"I'll help her, but there's no need to let her know. She doesn't like being indebted to others, and it won't change her perspective much."

"In that case, the significance of you accomplishing this task wouldn't be that great..."

The two men fell silent at the same time.

The room fell into a brief silence.



Swain had a sudden thought, and he ventured, "Considering the current situation and Ms. Shalders' temperament, the chances of you reconciling with her are almost zero. Have you ever thought about facing her with your true identity?"

Maverick remained silent, his dark eyes gloomy.

Swain continued, "You know what Mrs. Wright and Ms. Wright did to her before, and how tense the relationship between these three women is. Even if all the previous debts have been settled, there will always be a barrier in their hearts. As long as they are around, Ms. Shalders will never consider remarrying."

"You have a new idea?"

Maverick looked up and met his gaze. Swain quickly approached him and continued in a low voice, "I think you can take a chance with your life."

"Life?"

"Yes. Some people are stubborn and only realize their true feelings after a complete loss. But this situation can't be staged or faked. Ms. Shalders is very astute, and it would take a genuine life-threatening situation to move her. But it's too dangerous, and if things go wrong, there might be no coming back..." He paused for a moment, then suddenly knelt down and pleaded, "Whether you consider this plan or not, please don't throw me out! I'm getting married to my sweetheart next month, Boss, I don't want to die yet!"

Maverick glanced at his pathetic appearance.

"It has nothing to do with you. It's my own decision, and I'll think about it some more."

Swain finally breathed a sigh of relief and got up from the ground.

The two of them discussed the plan for a while longer before finally leaving the room.

The villa was peaceful and quiet, as Nico had brought the Harris family's bodyguards with him to some unknown place.

Maverick and Swain searched around and finally, in a corner of the backyard, they saw four men sitting on small stools, completely engrossed in playing poker cards.

They were so engrossed in their game that they didn't even notice when Maverick and Swain walked over.

Quinton declared, "A pair of Queens!"

Nico slammed down two cards with great enthusiasm. "I've got a pair of Aces. Bet you didn't see that coming. Hahaha!"

Quinton was furious. "Damn it! You still had this trick up your sleeve!"

Maverick and Swain stared at them speechlessly.

They couldn't find neither hide nor hair of these people, and it turned out that they were holed up here playing poker cards. If Gwendolyn found out about this, there was no doubt that she would dock their pay.

Swain, on the other hand, didn't think about that at all. He quickly ran over with an eager expression on his face. "How can four people play poker cards? Are you still short of players? Count me in!"

"Nico, come out!" Maverick called out and immediately walked toward the trees in the front yard.

Swain's eyes sparkled with excitement as he waited for Nico to step aside and make way for him.

Nico had no choice but to hand over the cards in his hand to Swain for him to continue before hastily following after Maverick.

They made sure they were far away enough that the card-playing group couldn't hear them.

Meverick's face darkened and he asked quietly, "How did you do with the task I assigned you last time?"

Nico habitually scanned the surroundings before leaning in close to whisper in his ear. "Don't worry, Boss. I've caused some trouble for the Central Intelligence Agency using your name. I estimate that within three days, Charles will definitely leave Fairleke and won't return for a while."

"All right."

Meverick nodded, then remembered the new bodyguard who had just arrived today. "Look into that Justin guy," he said. "I have a feeling I've seen him before, like on the day at Crene Bridge. If that's true, we need to be cautious around him." Recalling that Gwendolyn had taken Justin out today, he quickly added, "I need the information as soon as possible."

"Yes, Boss."

At the CEO's office of Wright Construction Group, Gwendolyn received a call from Charles after finishing a meeting with Yulie.

She answered and said coldly, "Mr. Newton, was I not clear enough last night?"

Charles hesitated for a moment and let out a soft sigh. "Gwen, the Central Intelligence Agency needs me. I have to leave Fairleke, and I don't know when we'll see each other again..."

Gwendolyn showed no expression.

"Business comes first."

Charles sighed again, his tone heavy as he said, "Gwen, you're really heartless. Even if we can't be lovers, based on the relationship between the Newton and Harris families, we're still friends. Moreover,

an old friend of ours came from Selinsburgh last night. Don't you want to know who it is? I want to invite you out for a gathering tonight, one last time. You won't refuse me, right?"

Gwendolyn fell silent.

During this encounter, she couldn't help but feel that Charles was acting quite peculiar, with his behavior being rather odd as well.

How can I know what he's up to if I don't go and see for myself?

"All right. Where?"

"Reelm Ber. This time, let's just have the three of us old friends. Don't bring your little pet along."

"Okay."

After hanging up the phone, Gwendolyn spent a long time in deep thought, carefully analyzing everything that had happened recently in a clear and organized manner.

She decided to call in Ezra and Justin.

"I have a gathering tonight, and I don't need too many people. Just Justin will do. Ezra, you can go back to the ville first."

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How can I know what he's up to if I don't go and see for myself?

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"Realm Bar. This time, let's just have the three of us old friends. Don't bring your little pet along."

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Ezra glanced at Justin beside him, feeling a bit worried. He said hesitantly, "Ms. Shalders..."

Gwendolyn waved her hand languidly. "You can leave now."

No sooner had the two left than she then received a call from Treyton.

"Kiddo, Asher has checked carefully, and there isn't a man with a similar appearance in the Harris family's list of members."

Gwendolyn pursed her lips, deep in thought.

Treyton continued, "It's possible that your new recruit, Justin, is lying, or maybe this person is hiding something deep. In any case, you can't fully trust him, and you need to be cautious when dealing with Justin."

"All right, Treyton. Don't worry. I know what to do."

After hanging up the phone, she took out the notebook from her drawer and flipped to the page with the sketch of the person in black. She studied it carefully for a while before immersing herself back into her work.

It wasn't until close to the end of the workday that she left with Justin to head to Realm Bar.

Justin was driving, while Gwendolyn sat in the back seat.

The atmosphere inside the car was serene, and every now and then, Justin would steal a glance at her through the rearview mirror.

Gwendolyn noticed his gaze.

"What do you want to say?"

Justin hesitated for a moment before saying, "Ms. Shalders, I was the one sent to kill you earlier. The people around you have always been suspicious of me. Why do you trust me? Aren't you afraid that I might actually do something to you tonight, especially since you only have me to protect you?"

Gwendolyn smiled charmingly, her laughter enchanting and captivating.

"Since you're already mine, of course, I'll trust you completely. Besides, my own martial arts foundation isn't bad either. I could probably take you on by myself."

Justin also laughed.

She spoke candidly and refreshingly, which he quite liked.

The two of them were chatting quite harmoniously when Justin suddenly felt like teasing her, “What if I conspire with others and it’s not just me trying to kill you?”

Gwendolyn concealed the cold glint in her eyes and casually gazed out the window.

“Would you do that?”

Before Justin had a chance to respond, they arrived at Realm Bar.

Gwendolyn instructed him to hide in the shadows, and only come out when needed.

After giving the instructions, she went into the bar on her own.

Because she was wearing a gentle and classical-looking black velvet dress with a gauze skirt tonight, she seemed a bit out of place with the men and women in the bar as soon as she walked in.

However, Gwendolyn didn’t care about any of that. She walked straight toward the private room Charles had reserved without glancing sideways.

In the hallway, a very tall man wearing sunglasses brushed past her.

She suddenly stopped in her tracks, her expression turning quite serious.

Just a moment ago, she seemed to have caught a glimpse of a mole near the man’s temple under his sunglasses. His appearance looked somewhat familiar.



“Excuse me, Sir.”

She turned around, and as she looked at the man, her beautiful eyes sparkled.

The man stopped in his tracks and slowly turned around.

Beneath his sunglasses, he had a prominent nose and seemingly well-proportioned features. He was tall and sturdy, appearing to be around six feet in height.

Seeing Gwendolyn staring at him with a smile, the man felt a bit puzzled.

“Are you talking to me, Miss?” His voice was deep.

Gwendolyn gracefully pursed her lips and took two steps toward him. “Yes, Sir. Could you please tell me how to get to VIP Room 69?”

The man’s expression remained unchanged. “I’m not familiar with this place. You can ask the bartender for directions, Miss.”

“Judging by your accent, Sir, it seems you’re not a local from Fairlake. Are you here for a visit?” Gwendolyn asked softly, engaging the man in conversation.

The man’s eyes met hers from behind his sunglasses. His expression was cold and aloof. “Miss, if you need directions, please ask the staff. If you’re just making small talk, I have things to do, so I’ll be on my way.”

Gwendolyn smiled and nodded, watching the man’s figure disappear completely down the hallway.

It was only when she turned around that her eyes gradually grew cold.

Upon opening the door to the private room, she saw that it was quite peaceful inside. Charles was the only one there, sitting on the couch and savoring a glass of red wine.

“You wouldn’t have lied to me about meeting an old friend just to get me out of the house, would you, Mr. Newton?”

Charles poured her a glass of red wine with a wry look in his eyes. “Do you really think I’m that kind of person, Gwen? Our old friends are indeed coming. They just haven’t arrived yet. In the meantime, we can enjoy some wine and chat.”

He pushed a full glass of wine onto the coffee table in front of her eyes.

Gwendolyn walked straight in and took a seat, but she didn’t take the glass of red wine.

Seeing that she didn’t seem interested in drinking, Charles laughed and said, “Come on, just one drink to send me off. Surely you wouldn’t deny me this small favor, right?”

After he finished speaking, he downed a glass of bitter wine with a melancholic expression on his face. His deep blue eyes had lost their usual brilliance as if he couldn’t accept it. He poured himself another glass of red wine and raised it toward Gwendolyn.

Gwendolyn picked up the wine glass, elegantly swirling the dark red liquid before bringing it to her nose for a sniff.

She asked tentatively, “I’ve known you for so many years, Mr. Newton. You probably aren’t the type of man to resort to despicable means, are you?”

Charles’ expression gradually turned serious. “Are you suspecting that I drugged the wine?”

Gwendolyn didn’t speak, nor did she deny anything. There was a hint of a faint smile in her eyes.

Charles suddenly stood up from the couch, walked over to her, and picked up her glass of wine, drinking it all in one gulp.

Gwendolyn's eyes quivered gently. Her facial expression remained unchanged.

Seemingly provoked by her distrustful gaze, Charles picked up the half-empty bottle of red wine from the table. His Adam's apple moved as he poured the wine directly into his mouth.

As he drank too hastily, quite a bit of the liquid spilled from the corners of his lips, flowing down his neck and leaving patches of stains on his snow-white shirt.

After finishing the entire bottle of wine, he hurled it against the opposite wall.

It shattered into pieces.

"Do you believe me now?"

His slender legs stumbled slightly as he gazed at Gwendolyn.

Feeling a burning heat within his heart, he roughly and forcefully tore open the two buttons on his chest, revealing a glimpse of his delicate collarbone. Paired with his face, he looked incredibly attractive.

Unfortunately, Gwendolyn could not be bothered to appreciate his handsome face.

"It was just a joke, Mr. Newton, but it ended up upsetting you. It's my fault. Since it's a farewell, of course I have to drink this glass of wine." Her eyes curved with a smile, and her voice was soft and sweet.

She stood up, opened a new bottle of red wine, and filled a fresh glass. Gracefully, she raised it and gave Charles a toast, and without hesitation, she drank the entire glass. After finishing, she showed him her empty wine glass.

Charles noticed that her gaze was not focused on his subtle movements, and his heart sank. Could it be that ever since she got that little pet Maverick, she has lost interest in looking at other men's bodies?

He slumped back onto the couch, seemingly unwilling to accept it, and asked one last question, "Gwen, is it really... impossible for us now?"

"Yes."

Gwendolyn didn't show a hint of hesitation, her tone indifferent.

Charles lowered his head even more.

Gwendolyn couldn't see his expression, but she could clearly sense the strong feeling of disappointment and dejection emanating from him.

Heartbreak and disappointment were always there, but she could never offer any comforting words, nor could she give Charles even the slightest chance.

Just as the atmosphere in the private room turned somber, the door was gently pushed open by someone.

A slender figure stepped in, wearing high heels.

Gwendolyn instinctively shifted her gaze.

Upon seeing the appearance of the newcomer, she was slightly taken aback.

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"Are you... Jasmine?" Gwendolyn asked with uncertainty after searching through her memories.

Upon seeing that the woman still remembered her, Jasmine Newton approached Gwendolyn with joy and held the latter's arm.

"Gwendolyn, you look so beautiful! It's been so many years since we last met. Did you miss me? Charles told me you were in Fairlake, so I couldn't wait any longer and came over to visit you right away."

Jasmine and Charles were half-siblings. The former was the seventh child of the family and the youngest daughter, a trait which she shared with Gwendolyn, though the woman was three years older. Since childhood, Jasmine had always been clingy toward Gwendolyn. She had an innocent and pure personality, though she sometimes behaved like an arrogant little princess.

Gwendolyn's lips curled into a smile as she tapped the tip of Jasmine's nose, teasing the latter, "You're all grown up, but you're still as clingy as ever."

Jasmine swayed their connected arms softly and gently. "Gwendolyn, you're teasing me. I act in such a way because I like you. I wouldn't let anyone else touch me like this. I finally got to go on a long trip this time, so you'd better make sure to have fun with me."

At that, a thought crossed Gwendolyn's mind. Have fun with her? Won't this kiddo merely add to my troubles?

"Gwen, I received an urgent matter from the Central Intelligence Agency this morning, and it's something I have to attend to. Jasmine secretly came over. I'll be leaving Fairlake first thing tomorrow morning, so I'll leave her in your care," Charles added just then.

Gwendolyn could not help but furrow her brows slightly.

Just as she was about to refuse, Jasmine playfully rested her head on Gwendolyn's arm, putting on a cutesy act. "Gwendolyn, I haven't seen your house in Fairlake yet. Please let me stay with you for half a month. I promise I won't cause any trouble."

How could I let her stay with me for half a month? This little kiddo will drive me crazy. "Three days at most," said Gwendolyn in response.

"Fine, three days it is!" Jasmine pouted, deciding she would just rent a small place to stay by herself if she needed to.

Outside, one could hear the vague sound of a bar's bustling dance floor.

Having gotten herself a temporary place to stay, Jasmine enthusiastically extended an invitation to Gwendolyn. "Gwendolyn, come with me to the dance floor outside. I'm usually stuck at home, and my parents are very strict on me. This is my first time at a bar."

Going outside?

Gwendolyn recalled the man in the suit she had bumped into in the alleyway earlier, and suspicion began welling up in her heart.

She subconsciously glanced at Charles beside her.

The man was pouring himself a drink without a word. His side profile sufficiently showcased his well-defined and exquisite facial features. His deep sapphire eyes were enchanting, though devoid of any emotions.

On the other hand, Jasmine continued to put on her cute and childish act, her expression innocent and adorable.

If she were hiding anything, her eyes would instantly betray her.

Seeing that Gwendolyn had not responded for a long time, Jasmine emphasized again, "Come on! Gwendolyn, you always treat me the best. Just come and play with me for a while."

Gwendolyn gently pinched her cheek. "All right."

At Bay Villa, Maverick was preparing dinner in the kitchen.



Nico sat in the living room, struggling on his laptop to look for information on Justin. At the same time, Swain and Elven, along with the other bodyguards, were in the backyard playing cards, and they were all having a great time.

“Boss, come and take a look at this.” Nico’s tone was solemn.

Upon seeing Maverick emerge from the kitchen, Nico spun the laptop around so that the screen was now facing the former.

“Look, I pulled a screenshot from the surveillance footage when Justin was at Wright Construction Group. I remember his face. On the day of the Crane Bridge incident, he was taken away by Mr. Harris. He was also the person who was sent to kill Ms. Shalders that day.”

After a brief pause, Nico went on, “Moreover, I couldn’t find any information or a single topic on this person throughout the entire internet. My bet is that he’s an assassin hired from the black market.”

Maverick scrutinized the mysterious man’s face, his expression becoming increasingly solemn.

There’s no way Gwendolyn didn’t know about this person’s past identity. If she knows, then why is she keeping such a dangerous person by her side? What on earth is she up to?

As he was deep in thought, Ezra returned. Hearing some commotion in the backyard, he walked over from the living room window.

Maverick noticed him keenly and hurriedly opened the door, only to find that Ezra was the only one who had returned to Bay Villa.

He had a vague sense of foreboding and questioned Ezra in a deep tone, “Where’s Gwendolyn?”

“It seems Ms. Shalders has a party at Realm Bar tonight. She said there’s no need for too many people to tag along, so she sent me back.” At the mention of this, Ezra couldn’t help but feel dejected.

Maverick's frown deepened when he heard this. If Ezra came back, wouldn't that mean she only brought Justin with her?

All of a sudden, realization struck him, and an icy, hostile aura immediately enveloped his entire body. He headed straight to the backyard and brought all the card players out with him.

Meanwhile, the inside of Realm Bar was lit up by colorful lights. It was both a dazzling and mesmerizing sight to behold.

Gwendolyn leaned gracefully against a pillar, keeping her gaze fixed on Jasmine, who was dancing enthusiastically on the dance floor and moving to the music just like everyone else.

Gwendolyn disliked such noisy places.

Therefore, she merely watched from the side and would occasionally clap and cheer for Jasmine, indicating that the other woman was dancing well.

Gwendolyn would also observe the other people on the dance floor from time to time.

Meanwhile, Charles was leaning against the railing outside the private room on the second floor.

Since their distance was relatively far from each other, and all the colorful spotlights were focused on the dance floor, Gwendolyn could not see Charles' face clearly. She only knew that he seemed to be

watching the situation on the dance floor as well.

Just as she retracted her gaze from the men, Justin quietly appeared by her side.

His expression was serious as he moved closer to her and whispered, "Something feels off about this place. We need to be careful."

Gwendolyn gave a soft hum in response, her expression calm. "When I entered the private room earlier, did you see the men who looked similar to your portrait?"

"I did." Justin nodded honestly.

"Is it him?"

Justin gave it some thought before shaking his head. "I can't be completely sure, but something feels off about the atmosphere in the bar tonight. Since you only brought me along, we must be extremely cautious."

The words had barely left Justin's lips when a handsome man approached Gwendolyn, looking slightly flushed.

Gwendolyn tossed the man a glance. Seeing that he was rather good-looking and appeared to be a well-mannered young man, she asked him, "Can I help you?"

The man appeared slightly embarrassed. As if he was mustering great courage, he pointed at a group of men and women in the small cubicle across from Gwendolyn.

He then gave her a pleading look and explained, "Miss, I lost the game, and they dared me to strike up a conversation with you. Only if you accept my toast will I complete the dare. Can you help me out?"

Gwendolyn looked at him but did not say a word. Her beautiful eyes sparkled with amusement, but upon closer inspection, it didn't look all that sincere.

Despite not receiving an affirmative answer, the man was not discouraged and took the initiative to grab an empty cup from the waiter's hand. Then, he poured the glass half full with red wine.

"Can you help me out, Miss?"

Gwendolyn did not move, nor did she except the gless of wine.

Standing beside her, Justin quietly reminded her, "Ms. Shelders, it's best not to drink the elcohol hended to you by e strenger et e ber."

The men shyly lowered his heed end continued, "Miss, you ceught my ettention right ewey in the crowd. Your beeuty is unlike eny other women's. You won't refuse to help me complete my dere, will you?"

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Ceught in between the two men's vestly different epproeches, Gwendolyn reised her eyebrows end fleshed them e cherming smile. "Sure."

The men wes overjoyed by her eceptence end gleefully hended over the gless of red wine to her.

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"Can you help me out, Miss?"

Gwendolyn did not move, nor did she accept the glass of wine.

Standing beside her, Justin quietly reminded her, "Ms. Shalders, it's best not to drink the alcohol handed to you by a stranger at a bar."

The man shyly lowered his head and continued, "Miss, you caught my attention right away in the crowd. Your beauty is unlike any other woman's. You won't refuse to help me complete my dare, will you?"

At that, Justin continued to whisper to Gwendolyn, "No, you mustn't accept it, Ms. Shalders."

Caught in between the two men's vastly different approaches, Gwendolyn raised her eyebrows and flashed them a charming smile. "Sure."

The man was overjoyed by her acceptance and gleefully handed over the glass of red wine to her.

Gwendolyn was about to accept the glass, and her hand had just touched the wine glass when a large palm emerged from the side and intercepted it in mid-air.

She turned around, only to see a face with a cold and profound depth staring at the man who handed her the wine. The person's gaze was filled with unimaginable fury.

"She doesn't even accept my toasts. Who do you think you are, hm?"

## Chapter 175

How did Maverick get here? Didn't the 'toast' he was referring to happen a long time ago? Why does he still remember it so clearly?

Gwendolyn glanced behind Maverick from the corner of her eyes.

Not only him, but it seemed that Nico, Elven, Ezra, William, and Quinton were all there as well.

Gwendolyn instinctively looked up at the railing on the first floor again. Charles was still leaning at where he was. Although she could not see his expression due to the lights, she could sense that he was watching them.

The man offering a toast was scolded by Maverick, and the former looked innocently at Gwendolyn. "Miss, I meant no harm. It's just a drink. I don't know why this gentleman has to insult me."

"You're right. It's just a drink." Gwendolyn pursed her lips and smiled, her slender fingers reaching out to take the red wine that had been passed to Maverick.

However, Maverick refused to give her the glass. His darkened eyes were gloomy, and his face was full of displeasure.

Gwendolyn's beautiful eyes were gentle, and she coaxed Maverick in a frivolous tone, "Behave yourself and let go of the glass. I'll accept your toast next time."

With just this one sentence, Maverick was instantly satisfied.

Gwendolyn effortlessly retrieved the glass of red wine, elegantly taking a whiff before gently pressing her red lips against the rim, readying to take a sip.

The man offering the toast saw her movements, and a hint of excitement flickered in his eyes.

However, Gwendolyn's lips came to a halt just before they touched the liquid.

She looked at the man with a hint of playfulness in her gaze. "Do you really want me to drink?"

The man was stunned for a moment, and his eyes filled with anticipation as he nodded.

In the next second, Gwendolyn's smiling eyes suddenly turned cold, and she splashed the glass of wine directly onto the man's face. "You know exactly what's in this drink, and it should taste pretty good. You should give it a good try."

She had not noticed it at first, but the man mentioned that he came from the small cubicle. When Maverick and his group appeared and threw a wrench in the man's plan, the people at that table did not react at all. Moreover, the man was being overly attentive.

The man's face and body were covered in red wine, which annoyed him slightly. "If you don't want to drink, that's fine. But why are you accusing me? You're such a buzzkill!"

He wiped his face and lowered his head, reaching for the tissue in his suit pocket.

Maverick watched him closely and noticed a cold look on the man's face when the latter lowered his head, which was not a good sign.

The man seized the opportunity when Gwendolyn had turned her attention away and suddenly pulled out a small glass bottle from his pocket, maliciously splashing its contents toward Gwendolyn's face.

"Look out!" Almost acting out of instinct, Maverick pulled Gwendolyn into his embrace, and the entire bottle of liquid splashed onto the back of his suit. The suit immediately sizzled and emitted smoke.

"Ugh..." The burning pain shot through him, causing Maverick's brows to furrow tightly and his face to turn pale. Despite the agony, his arms still hugged Gwendolyn close, firmly protecting her in his embrace.

"Ms. Shalders, it's sulfuric acid!" Elven cried out in terror.

This sentence was like a bomb, causing the crowd that was initially dancing on the dance floor to burst into an uproar as they screamed and scattered in all directions.

The scene turned chaotic in the blink of an eye.

Taking advantage of the chaos, the man who threw the sulfuric acid quickly fled.

Gwendolyn fumed, "William, Quinton, go after him! How dare he play tricks on me! We must catch him!"



After that, she quickly attended to Maverick and observed his condition, swiftly taking off his suit and shirt.

Maverick had just caught a cold last night, so his immunity was low. After taking two cold medicine pills in the afternoon and even doing some housework, his stamina was completely drained.

He was in so much pain that he could not stand steadily. He exhaustedly rested his chin on Gwendolyn's shoulder and gently held her slender waist. As cold sweat rolled down his face, he allowed Gwendolyn to pull off and discard his clothes.

Fortunately, most of the liquid had soaked into the clothes, and only a palm-sized area in the middle of the entire back was affected. The liquid was most concentrated in that area, causing the acid to seep into his skin and turn it into a burnt, bloody mush.

It was extremely agonizing.

Maverick felt relieved that it was he who got injured. If Gwendolyn were accidentally hurt, that would have truly broken his heart.

Amidst the intense pain, he lifted his eyelids, and his eyelashes quivered slightly. His nose gently sniffed the faint scent of Gwendolyn's fragrant hair, barely helping him maintain a sliver of consciousness.

However, he noticed out of the corner of his eye that Justin, who had originally been standing behind Gwendolyn, was nowhere to be found.

He quickly gave Nico a meaningful glance.

The latter understood the message right away and quietly left to find Justin.

In the middle of the dance floor, Jasmine was almost knocked down by the dispersing crowd. She hurriedly ran back to look for Gwendolyn. As she approached the latter, Jasmine saw the bloody wound on Maverick's back, which turned her face pale with fright. "Gwendolyn, what's going on here? How did he get hurt like this?"

Gwendolyn did not have time to explain. "It's too chaotic here, and I don't have the time to take care of you. Go and find Charles first."

After she was done speaking, she asked Elven to drive and Ezra to carry Maverick.

When Ezra came over, Maverick refused to let the man carry him. His dark eyes were weak yet stubborn. He clenched his teeth and said, "Gwendolyn, I... don't want... to go out shirtless."

Gwendolyn understood and immediately stripped Ezra clean.

She took a shirt to help Maverick wipe off the remaining sulfuric acid and bloodstains on his back, then carefully wrapped him in a suit.

Ezra hugged his arms, feeling a chilly sensation on his body. He felt somewhat embarrassed by his nakedness.

It was not until Gwendolyn called out to him that he hurriedly carried Maverick out of Realm Bar on his back.

William and Quinton were chasing the man at a rapid pace. Unfortunately for the man, he did not have the chance to escape the bar before William and Quinton caught up and captured him.

Gwendolyn was just about to get in the car when she thought of the man who had been captured in the bar. She glanced at Maverick, who had already passed out from the pain in the backseat. She hesitated for a few seconds with her hand on the car door.

In the end, she did not choose to get in the car right away. Instead, she ordered Elven and Ezra, "Hurry up and take him to the nearest hospital to treat his injuries."

Elven asked, "What about you, Ms. Shalders?"

"I'll be there later." Gwendolyn closed the door, and her eyes instantly turned cold, filling with murderous intent.

Returning to Reelm Bar, she first went to the front desk and casually tossed the Centurion Card onto the counter.

"Clear the area. Let me borrow this place for some matters. I'll cover all the expenses, and if there's any damage, I'll compensate for it!"

The receptionist was stunned by her sharp gaze. When she lowered her head and caught sight of the Centurion Card, she thought that she had only seen such cards on television before and did not expect to see one in real life. She immediately called her boss to report the situation.

The person on the other end of the phone quickly agreed.

Meanwhile, the man was pinned down on his knees by William and Quinton in the middle of the dance floor. He was struggling and screaming all the while.

Gwendolyn walked over and picked up an empty red wine bottle next to her. She forcefully struck it against the edge of the table, causing the bottle to shatter. A loud and eer-piercing sound echoed throughout the bar.

The man, who was still talking big a moment ago, instantly weakened when he caught sight of Gwendolyn, who was slowly approaching him while pointing the sharp edge of the broken bottle at him. Her aura was menacing, and her murderous intent only seemed to intensify with every stride she took.

"What are you trying to do! You... Ah!"

Next, a spine-chilling scream echoed through the air.

Half of the man's face was slashed by the broken wine bottle, instantly becoming a bloody mess. The sight was shocking and horrifying, and his eyeball was in unbearable pain.

Gwendolyn's gaze was cold and ruthless as she pressed the sharp edge of the broken wine bottle against the man's neck. Her voice was devoid of warmth as she questioned, "Who sent you?"

Sulfuric acid was not something one would carry around casually unless it was premeditated.

The men endured the pain and remained silent, refusing to answer the question.

Gwendolyn's face was expressionless as she looked at his right arm. "Did you use this hand to splash it on me just now?"

William and Quinton understood the meaning of her words and pinned the men down on the floor. A leather shoe stomped hard against the men's helpless faces, and the man's right hand was forcefully extended and pinned to the ground.

Gwendolyn slowly crouched down. Her cold eyes glinted menacingly as she ruthlessly stabbed the wine bottle into the back of the man's head.

Following that, a throat-ripping screech echoed across the bar.

The bar staff trembled in fear and huddled together.

Nevertheless, Gwendolyn remained expressionless as she uttered in an ice-cold tone, "It's fine if you don't talk. I won't kill you for that, but I have a hundred ways to torture you until you break and start talking."

As soon as she finished speaking, she pressed the wine bottle deeper into the man's head and even twisted the bottle.

"Agh!" The man was in so much pain that his entire body convulsed. He nearly fainted on the spot several times.

"It will be your left hand next. If you still don't speak up, it'll be your right foot and left foot. Think it through carefully!"

The man was then forcibly made to extend his left hand.

Gwendolyn's eyes glinted with viciousness, but just as she was about to pierce the man's skin, her wrist was suddenly grabbed from behind.

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## Chapter 176

Gwendolyn turned around, her eyes filled with a mixture of anger and hatred as she glared back.

It was then she noticed that the person who was stopping her was none other than Charles.

Charles narrowed his eyes slightly, his expression serious. "Gwen, you can't take matters into your own hands. Since I'm here, you should hand over this matter to me. I'll bring him back to Fairlake Police Station for questioning," said the man in a measured tone.

"He wanted to throw sulfuric acid on my face, so I fought back. Is that not allowed?" Gwendolyn's tone was cold as she attempted to pull her hand back.

Charles tightened his grip around her wrist, refusing to let go. His expression remained stern as he uttered, "He hurt someone, so he deserves punishment. But if you hurt him too, you're no different from him. Don't forget that we're at a bar. Even if you clear out the customers, there are still staff watching. They're all witnesses."

She paused for a moment, the corners of her mouth forming a sneer. "But I've already made a move. What are you going to do about it?"

Charles was silent for a long time before saying, "I can pretend I didn't see anything and help you clean up the mess, but you can't hit him anymore. Maverick is just your housekeeper and your pet now. There's no need for you to get yourself into trouble because of him."

His words left Gwendolyn greatly shocked. "If Maverick hadn't shielded me, it would be my face that's injured now. How could you still say something like that?"

The man was at a loss for words.

Gwendolyn forcefully shook off his hand, her cold eyes staring at him in disbelief. "Charles, you've become so unfamiliar to me now."

Charles' pupils quivered slightly, and his deep blue irises vaguely showed hurt. Silently, he took a step back, no longer trying to stop her actions.

With nothing stepping in her way, Gwendolyn smirked coldly and crouched down in front of the man again. "Come on, let's continue."

"No... don't..."

Ignoring his pleas for mercy, Gwendolyn once again aimed at the back of his left hand, raising the wine bottle high.

"Stop it!" Just as the blow was about to land, a voice sounded from the doorway, instantly stopping Gwendolyn.

The commander of the Public Security Division, Matthew, had rushed to the scene with a team of police officers.



“Mr. Newton, you’re here too.” Matthew burst in and saw Charles first, so he greeted the latter. After noticing Charles’ lack of expression, he then stepped forward and snatched the wine bottle from Gwendolyn’s hand.

Upon seeing the terrible state of the man on the ground, he let out a soft hiss. She’s really a ruthless woman.

Matthew carefully observed Charles next to him, noticing the man’s unpleasant expression and lack of intention to chime in, before saying, “Ms. Shalders, we received a report that someone was causing trouble at the bar. We’d appreciate it if you could come with us.”

Gwendolyn smiled faintly, and her voice was soft and gentle. “He splashed sulfuric acid on me and hurt my people. I’m just seeking revenge. It’s just that I accidentally went overboard for a bit.”

Matthew glanced at half of the man’s face, which was a bloody mess from being slashed by the broken wine bottle. He unconsciously swallowed his saliva. Did she really go overboard by accident?

He then said in a serious tone, “Ms. Shalders, to find out the details of the exact situation, we must first go to the police station. Please come with us.”

Gwendolyn blinked her beautiful eyes at him. “Investigation and questioning are fine by me, but how long will it take?”

Matthew put the electronic handcuffs on her while replying, “We’re uncertain about that. It depends on whether or not you’ve actually committed a crime.”

The other police officers also stepped forward, placing handcuffs on William and Quinton, respectively.

Jasmine heard the commotion and ran forward, grabbing onto Charles. “Charles, they’re taking Gwendolyn away! You can’t just stand by and do nothing! Charles!”

Nevertheless, the man remained silent, his eyes deeply fixated on Gwendolyn’s retreating figure as she was led away.

Seeing that her persuasion was in vain, Jasmine wanted to step forward and stop them, but she was blocked by Charles' men. In the end, all she could do was watch helplessly as Gwendolyn was taken away by the police car.

Maverick, feeling weak and drained of his stamina, fainted for several hours before finally waking up in a groggy state.

The wound on his back had already been bandaged and treated. The doctor, seeing his great physique yet such frail body, felt deeply distressed. In addition to the anti-inflammatory liquid, the doctor also gave him an extra bag of nutritional fluid.

When he woke up in the ward, it was already late at night. Elven and Ezra were fast asleep, sitting on the bed next to him.

After looking around the room, Maverick could not find the reassuring figure he was looking for.

He called out of subconscious panic and woke Elven up. "Where is Gwendolyn?"

Elven yawned. "Ms. Shalders is probably dealing with the mess at the bar. I guess she must have finished by now and gone back to the villa to rest."

Maverick's eyebrows furrowed slightly, and his deep voice trembled a bit. "She... hasn't been here?"

Elven replied, "No, she asked Ezra and me to bring you to the hospital."

Maverick's dark eyes gradually dimmed, and a burning pain gripped his heart.

The pain was even more intense than having sulfuric acid splashed on his back.

Seeing Maverick's distressed expression, Elven quickly comforted him, "Don't worry, Mr. Wright. It's quite late, and Ms. Shalders must be tired after handling everything. I'm sure she'll come over first thing tomorrow morning."

Maverick's pale, thin lips pressed into a straight line, not saying a word. He turned over and closed his eyes, pretending to be asleep.

Yet, he knew deep down that since Gwendolyn did not come tonight, she probably would not show up tomorrow either.

It was a sleepless night for Maverick.

At Fairlake police station, as the police officers happened to witness the scene of Gwendolyn injuring someone, and considering it was too late at night for an official investigation, Gwendolyn had no choice

but to spend the night at the police station until the investigation could begin the next morning.

Only later did Matthew realize Gwendolyn's true identity from Charles, and his legs went weak. Oh, my lord!

Gwendolyn was the precious daughter of the wealthiest family in Selinsburgh, which was the Herris family. She also happened to be Asher's beloved little sister.

Did I almost lock up such an important person in the confinement cell last time? When Matthew thought about it, he felt a shiver running down his spine.

Given the investigation of the issue was still ongoing, Matthew arranged a luxurious single room in the police station for Gwendolyn, and William and Quinton were also accommodated in a double room.

It was late autumn, and the accommodations provided by the police station for the suspects were essentially partitioned empty rooms. There were no bed sheets or a comforter, not even a chair, let alone a place to wash up. To use the restroom, one had to file a report too.

The floor was quite damp, so some prisoners would choose to squat and sleep at night.

However, Gwendolyn's room was quite different. It was fully equipped with bed sheets, a comforter, and a single bed. The floor was covered with flannel crystal carpets to keep her warm since they were scared she might get a cold from the cold weather. They even thoughtfully provided her with a table and a computer.

The computer could only connect to the internal network within the police station and had no way of connecting to the external network.

Nevertheless, if Gwendolyn could not fall asleep, she could still get up and play some games on the computer.

Occasionally, the police would come by and kindly ask her if she needed any late-night snacks, offering to help her get some delicious takeouts from the five-star restaurant next door.

The only downside was that, due to regulatory requirements, her cell phone was confiscated.

Gwendolyn lay on her small bed. Feeling utterly bored, she organized everything that had happened today from beginning to end in her mind.

While at the bar, she also noticed that Justin had disappeared, but since Meverick had asked Nico to go after him, there probably was not much of an issue.

However, the night's events were too strange. She thought back to the man she encountered in the aisle, who closely resembled the one Justin had described. If it really was that man wanting to cause trouble, how could it be limited to just splashing sulfuric acid? Or was it because Meverick suddenly appeared with his team that that man's plans were temporarily thwarted? In that case, what will be their next move?

As she pondered, she unknowingly drifted off to sleep.

Early the next morning, Meverick found that the ward was empty except for his presence.

The atmosphere felt utterly lonely and empty.

As expected, Gwendolyn did not show up.

Meyerick felt a hint of bitterness in his heart as he removed the IV drip and got out of bed. As soon as he opened the door of the ward, he saw Elven in the corner of the aisle, sneakily answering a phone call.

"What! Ms. Shelders is currently at the police station? But Mr. Newton was at the scene last night! How could he just stand by and watch as they take Ms. Shelders away... All right, I understand. I won't tell Mr. Wright about this for now."

Before Elven had a chance to hang up the call, the phone was suddenly snatched away from him.

Gwendolyn was the precious daughter of the wealthiest family in Salinsburgh, which was the Harris family. She also happened to be Asher's beloved little sister.

Did I almost lock up such an important person in the confinement cell last time? When Matthew thought about it, he felt a shiver running down his spine.

Given the investigation of the issue was still ongoing, Matthew arranged a luxurious single room in the police station for Gwendolyn, and William and Quinton were also accommodated in a double room.

It was late autumn, and the accommodations provided by the police station for the suspects were essentially partitioned empty rooms. There were no bed sheets or a comforter, not even a chair, let alone a place to wash up. To use the restroom, one had to file a report too.

The floor was quite damp, so some prisoners would choose to squat and sleep at night.

However, Gwendolyn's room was quite different. It was fully equipped with bed sheets, a comforter, and a single bed. The floor was covered with flannel carpeted mats to keep her warm since they were

scared she might get a cold from the cold weather. They even thoughtfully provided her with a table and a computer.

The computer could only connect to the internal network within the police station and had no way of connecting to the external network.

Nevertheless, if Gwendolyn could not fall asleep, she could still get up and play some games on the computer.

Occasionally, the police would come by and kindly ask her if she needed any late-night snacks, offering to help her get some delicious takeouts from the five-star restaurant next door.

The only downside was that, due to regulatory requirements, her cell phone was confiscated.

Gwendolyn lay on her small bed. Feeling utterly bored, she organized everything that had happened today from beginning to end in her mind.

While at the bar, she also noticed that Justin had disappeared, but since Maverick had asked Nico to go after him, there probably was not much of an issue.

However, the night's events were too strange. She thought back to the man she encountered in the aisle, who closely resembled the one Justin had described. If it really was that man wanting to cause trouble, how could it be limited to just splashing sulfuric acid? Or was it because Maverick suddenly appeared with his team that that man's plans were temporarily thwarted? In that case, what will be their next move?

As she pondered, she unknowingly drifted off to sleep.

Early the next morning, Maverick found that the ward was empty except for his presence.

The atmosphere felt utterly lonely and empty.

As expected, Gwendolyn did not show up.

Maverick felt a hint of bitterness in his heart as he removed the IV drip and got out of bed. As soon as he opened the door of the ward, he saw Elven in the corner of the aisle, sneakily answering a phone call.

“What! Ms. Shalders is currently at the police station? But Mr. Newton was at the scene last night! How could he just stand by and watch as they take Ms. Shalders away... All right, I understand. I won’t tell Mr. Wright about this for now.”

Before Elven had a chance to hang up the call, the phone was suddenly snatched away from him.

## Chapter 177

Maverick furrowed his brows and glared at Elven. His dark eyes were filled with an icy chill. “Did you just say that Gwendolyn went to the police station last night?”

Elven was particularly unlucky.

It was William who had asked the police from the station to call him, saying that they should keep the news from Maverick for now, so he could recover from his injuries. However, they ended up getting caught red-handed.

“Mr. Wright, don’t worry. Mr. Harris is there with Ms. Shalders, so she won’t fall into a disadvantage. I guess she’ll be released by noon after taking a simple statement.”

How can I possibly be at ease?

She spent the night at the police station yesterday, and it’s so cold inside. I bet she couldn’t sleep well at all.

Elven stopped him when he was about to turn around and go downstairs.

“Mr. Wright, you can’t be discharged yet. The doctor mentioned that it was not simply concentrated sulfuric acid that was splashed on your body this time. They need to run some chemical analysis, and you need to stay in the hospital for observation.”

Maverick ignored Elven.

After taking a few steps, suddenly, he felt something well up in his chest, resulting in a sweet and metallic taste in his throat.

He coughed twice while covering his mouth. There was some blood on his fist. His original pale lips were also tainted with a small circle of bright red.

Upon seeing Maverick cough up blood, Elven was in extreme shock. He hurriedly supported him by the arm back to the ward before turning to look for a doctor.

Maverick stopped him as he said, “I’m fine. There’s no need to make a fuss.”

“You’re coughing up blood! How can this possibly be a trivial matter? We need to find a doctor and get a thorough medical examination again.”

Maverick grabbed him and emphasized, “It’s really nothing serious. I didn’t cough up blood. I just bit my tongue accidentally because I was too anxious. Don’t make a big deal out of this by telling Gwendolyn. She already has a lot of unresolved issues on her end, and I don’t want to increase her burden.”

“Really? Are you sure you just bit your tongue?”

Elven was a bit skeptical.

Maverick nodded calmly. Seeing that Elven was wavering, he said, “I’m a bit hungry. Could you help me get some oatmeal and bring it up for me?”

“The hospital cafeteria should have it. I’ll ask the nurse to bring it over for you.”



Elven was about to press the call button by the bed when Maverick stopped him. "I don't want to eat the food from the hospital. I'd rather have something from Dunearn Hotel next door. I'm sorry to trouble you, but could you please make a trip there?"

"That's..."

Elven was slightly hesitant. He was concerned that Maverick would be left alone after he went out, and Ezra had gone to help deal with matters concerning Gwendolyn.

Maverick noticed Elven's concern. He smiled at him with his pale face. "Don't worry. I won't go anywhere. I know Gwendolyn has Treyton by her side, and Asher will help her too. I'll stay in the hospital and not get involved in the matter."

"All right, then."

Maverick ordered a few more food for his breakfast and requested all the food to be freshly made.

Elven had no doubts, but he still felt a little worried. Before leaving, he gave Maverick a few more words of reminder.

Maverick nodded calmly, but his hands that were hidden under his sleeves clenched tightly with his veins bulging.

It wasn't until Elven had left that he quickly rushed to the small private bathroom attached to the VIP ward and vomited a mouthful of blood.

Maverick felt dizzy, but he managed to support himself with the sink to prevent himself from fainting on the spot.

Even though he was injected with the special drug, the concentrated sulfuric acid should have only caused corrosive burns on his skin. It should not have affected his body.

He took off his shirt and unwrapped the bandage from his back. When observing the wound on his back through the mirror, he could see that it still looked ghastly red despite having applied medicine and it was still festering.

A hint of complexity flashed across Maverick's eyes.

This is...

He wiped the blood from his lips and put on his shirt again. Then, he sat back on the bed and sent a message to Nico.

Fifteen minutes later, Nico hurriedly arrived.

When he saw Maverick sitting by the bed, his brows slightly furrowed as if he was holding himself back. He hurriedly went over to support him. To his surprise, he found Maverick's hand to be quite cold.

"Boss, you look terrible."

"I'm fine."

Maverick's eyelashes quivered slightly as he concealed the intense pain in his back. His expression was exceptionally cold, and his dark eyes glinted.

He asked weakly, "Where's Justin?"

"I've found him. He said that he saw the man who had previously ordered him to harm Gwendolyn but couldn't catch up with the man. I had no evidence, so I let him return to Bay Villa for now. We will wait for him to report this matter to Ms. Shalders himself."

Maverick swallowed with difficulty and said, "Have someone keep an eye on Justin and report back to me as soon as there's any movement. As for the police station, request them to release Gwendolyn in

the name of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. If Gwendolyn wants to interrogate the man who threw sulfuric acid last night, tell them to cooperate fully.”

“Got it.”

Maverick still wanted to say something, but his arm that was supporting himself on the bed trembled, causing his entire body to go weak.

Upon observing his condition, Nico found that something was off. “Boss, even if you were injected with the special drug, the sulfuric acid would only cause superficial injuries. How could you possibly be this weak?”

Maverick remained silent.

Nico moved closer to Maverick and was about to pull up the latter’s clothes to see the wound.

Maverick furrowed his brows and said coldly, “Let go. You are getting bolder by the day.”

Nico was left with no choice but to persist, “Boss, just let me take a look. You can punish me after I’ve seen it as you wish. I won’t feel at ease unless I see it with my own eyes!”

Nico could even except the punishment. Meverick could not outdo him end took the initiative to tell him the truth. “It’s not sulfuric acid. It should be the S404 RNA Virus.”

“Whet!”

Nico’s hend shook ebruptly. His fece turned pele efter he let go of the grip on Meverick’s shirt.

S404 wes e newly developed weepoon from the wer leboretory. It could not only ceuse burns to the skin but also hed e certain impact on the internal organs of the body. However, there wes no cure for thet demege et the moment due to immeture technology. The demege might be irreversible.

Nico's eyes reddened, and he said in disbelief, "How could this be... S404 is clearly banned from selling in the market. It can't be found in the country other than a dozen of samples in the military." There was a sudden pause in his words as he realized something and looked at Meverick in shock. "Could it be... Boss, do you suspect..."

"Yes." Meverick's expression was extremely sinister. "Charles will leave in three days. Arrange someone to keep him in Fairleke by any means. Also, thoroughly investigate the Central Intelligence

Agency and find out if there are any records of anyone accessing the drug storage. Not a single bottle of the S404 sample can be missed." He coughed after saying that.

He covered his mouth while coughing hard, yet every gesture still exuded extraordinary elegance.

Nico hurriedly helped him by petting his back to ease his breathing.

Meverick took a deep breath, then continued, "As soon as something unusual happens, regardless of whether it's related to Charles, I'll take action against him, who is the boss of the Central Intelligence Agency."

That matter was quite suspicious. Whether it was using the S404 against Gwendolyn or him, there would be quite a few people involved in it.

"Yes, Boss," Nico responded in obedience. However, he was more concerned about Meverick's health than anything else.

"Boss, why don't we go back? Maybe someone can develop a treatment there. At the very least, it can relieve the harm and pain S404 is causing to your body. At the same time, we can also remove the 023 special drug from your body."

Without hesitation, Meverick replied, "There's no need for that."

Gwendolyn could not defeat him, but as long as he wanted to stay by her side, he had to play the role of the weaker one. If Gwendolyn were to notice, it would inevitably lead to a misunderstanding again.

It had taken him great effort to change her perspective significantly. He could not let all his previous efforts be in vain.

Nico was truly on the verge of losing his temper.

Why is he so stubborn?

"What exactly do you think is more important? To pursue your wife or your own body? There are no deals on the exact term S404 can cause to the human body. Boss, aren't you afraid that you might win your wife back but not live long enough to enjoy the happiness?"

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"What!"

Nico's hand shook abruptly. His face turned pale after he let go of the grip on Maverick's shirt.

S404 was a newly developed weapon from the war laboratory. It could not only cause burns to the skin but also had a certain impact on the internal organs of the body. However, there was no cure for that damage at the moment due to immature technology. The damage might be irreversible.

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## Chapter 178

As soon as those words were spoken, Nico received a furious glare from Maverick.

He knew he had been too impatient and had spoken out of turn. He consciously slapped himself on the face twice and apologized with his head low, “I’m sorry, Boss. I got carried away and didn’t mean to curse you.”

Nico did not hold back his strength with those two slaps, which caused the corners of his mouth to cut and bleed a little.

Although his eyes were red, his face was filled with displeasure.

Maverick had no energy to argue with him. He said in a weak and hoarse voice, “I’ll go back, but I need to take care of Gwendolyn’s matters first. Ask Swain to return first to inquire if there’s any antidote that can temporarily suppress S404. And find me a special ointment for removing scars.”

Nico was speechless. “At a time like this, you’re still worried about whether the wound will leave a scar? Is it really that important to make yourself look good? Your life is what matters.”

Maverick gave him a sinister look. He said in a cold tone, “Have you forgotten your punishment just now? Keep going.”

Nico gasped in shock. Not daring to waste any time, he fiercely slapped himself again, making his face even more swollen.

His boss did not stop him. When he was about to continue to slap himself, Maverick stopped him in a weak voice, “That’s enough.”

Nico rubbed his swollen face with an aggrieved expression that seemed to accuse his boss of being heartless.

All his mind is only focused on pursuing his wife. He neglected the group of brothers who had risked their lives with him.

He's inhumane when it comes to love.

Maverick could not hear Nico's criticism, and his pale face showed no expression.

He felt somewhat drained all over after having spoken too much. With Nico's help, he lay back down on the bed to rest.

Maverick wanted to remove the scars because he noticed that Gwendolyn seemed to really appreciate a man's physique, especially the abdominal and back muscles. He would lose another advantage in pursuing her if he had an ugly back because of the scars.

After that, the ward became exceptionally quiet.

Nico stood there obediently while rubbing his wounds aggrievedly.

Maverick was dozing off lying on his side but frowned to endure his pain.

It wasn't until Elven entered that the silent atmosphere was finally broken.

Upon seeing Nico, Elven was slightly surprised. As he placed the packed breakfast on the bedside table, he asked, "When did you get here, Nico?"

Nico remained silent.

Elven approached him and took a glance at him.



When he looked closely at Nico, he was shocked.

“What happened to your face? How did you get hurt like this? Who hit you?”

He looked at Maverick incredulously, who appeared to be a weak patient. It was impossible for the latter to have beaten someone up like that.

Nico was seething with anger. He picked up a tissue from the bedside table and wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth. He said annoyingly, “It’s nothing. I slapped myself because I couldn’t keep my hands to myself!”

Elven gulped nervously.

Is he so ruthless that he even hit himself? That’s incredible!

He felt terrified. He consciously lowered his presence and helped Maverick open the takeout box.

Maverick sat up abruptly and shot a glance at Nico as he asked, “What are you doing standing here? Don’t you have anything to do?”

Nico came to his senses and answered, “Right, I have something to do, so I’ll leave first. Mr. Wright, you should rest well. Elven, please take extra care of Mr. Wright for us.”

“All right,” Elven replied briskly.

Half an hour later, Matthew, the commander of the public security division at the police station, personally went to the luxurious single cell and asked Gwendolyn to come out.

“Ms. Shalders, thank you for enduring the inconvenience of staying here last night. You are free to go now.”

Seeing him smile ingratiatingly, Gwendolyn felt a bit puzzled. "Aren't we taking statement this time?"

Matthew chuckled.

"There's no need. We've already investigated thoroughly. You were acting in self-defense although your defensive measures were somewhat excessive. However, you can settle this by paying some compensation."

Matthew did not expect that the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Asher had released the words to protect Gwendolyn early in the morning. Once again, he was stunned by her powerful backers.

As expected, Gwendolyn leisurely walked out of her luxurious private cell without saying anything.

Matthew followed her closely, and suddenly remembering something, he hurriedly added, "By the way, the Federal Bureau of Investigation called and said that if you want to interrogate last night's suspect, Wilbert Hoffman, you can do so at any time. We will fully cooperate with you."

Gwendolyn stopped in her tracks abruptly before furrowing her delicate eyebrows.

"Federal Bureau of Investigation?"

Matthew nodded and replied, "Yeah, you really have a lot of influence. Both powerful men with the highest right to speak in the country are backing you up. As a lackey tagging behind you, please put in a good word for me in front of them when you can."

Gwendolyn pursed her lips while showing a stern expression.

She was sure that she did not know anyone from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Why would they want to help her?

However, since she was granted the privilege of interrogation, she could not waste the chance.

"You mentioned that the person who committed the crime last night is Wilbert Hoffman, right? Where is he being held? Take me to see him."

"Yes. This way, please."

Matthew led her in a different direction, heading toward the end of the aisle.

Walking down the aisle, Gwendolyn casually asked Matthew, "Who's the current head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation? Why haven't I heard of him? Is he a very low-profile person?"

Matthew replied respectfully, "How would I know if you don't even know who he is? The boss has never shown up. There's no detailed information about his identity, and he always commands his subordinates to execute all the missions."

He paused for a moment before continuing, "Rumor has it that he usually wears a mask when he's on a mission due to his ugly face. As for his identity, it's even more mysterious. I reckon that such a person must be a big shot from one of the major families in Selinsburgh."

Gwendolyn remained silent. She looked at him with her beautiful eyes while pondering his words carefully.

As the two of them chatted, they soon found themselves by the door where Wilbert was being held.

Matthew instructed the police to unlock the door.

Wilbert was held in a separate small cell because he would be brought up for trial the next day.

The door opened, and there he was, curled up in the damp corner of the cell with his back facing the entrance. He remained motionless as if he was fast asleep.

"Wilbert, wake up!"

A police officer approached him and gently nudged him twice with the tip of his foot.

There was no response.

Gwendolyn sensed that something was wrong. Just as she was about to go in to check, she heard the police inside shouting, "Mr. Scott, he's dead!"

"Huh? How could he suddenly die? Didn't we stop the bleeding and apply medicine to his wound last night?"

As Matthew kept talking, he quickly walked over to check Wilbert's condition on the ground. "His body is still warm, so he has just died not long ago. There are no obvious fatal injuries on his body, but there's a suspicious puncture wound on his neck. I'm not sure if he was injected with something. Notify the medical examiner to prepare for an autopsy."

He pondered for a moment, then asked, "Who else came to visit this morning?"

The police officer replied, "No one has passed through here except for the police."

Gwendolyn stood by the door and listened intently. Suddenly, she realized something and exclaimed, "Lock down the entire police station! No one is allowed to leave!"

Matthew quickly pressed the alarm to lock down the police station.

The alarm bell rang loudly, and the sound was very piercing to the ear.

Gwendolyn bit her lip softly while staring intently at Wilbert's corpse in the corner.

He was not killed last night. Instead, they had chosen to murder him after finding out that she would question him that morning.

Were they showing her their capability on purpose?

Matthew thoroughly investigated all the police personnel and outsiders but found no suspicious individuals. He then proceeded to investigate the surveillance footage.

It was then he saw a strange but arrogant scene in the surveillance footage.

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## Chapter 179

Matthew quickly called for Gwendolyn.

In the surveillance footage, a man in a uniform was standing under the camera with his back facing the screen. Then, slowly, he extended his right hand and made a thumbs-down gesture.

Afterward, he left the police station with a self-confident swagger and completely disappeared from all the surveillance footage.

His attitude was so arrogant and provocative.

Matthew switched to a few more surveillance footage, but only his back was shown. He could barely see his face as the man had covered it with his hat and sunglasses. What they could tell was that the man got a tall and imposing figure.

The man not only had an arrogant manner, but he also seemed to be quite familiar with the surveillance equipment at the police station. Matthew wondered who he was conspiring with within the department.

He was boiling with rage. Gwendolyn, on the other hand, burst into laughter.

That person looked like the man she had encountered last night in the hallway of Realm Bar.

Indeed, she could see that his action was deliberately meant to mock her.

She swore that she would find the person and teach him a lesson.

Gwendolyn left the control room and headed straight for the exit.

She was no longer interested in Wilbert's autopsy report. She left the police station with William and Quinton.

Ezra was waiting outside to greet her.

Upon seeing Ezra, she suddenly thought of someone who was still lying in the hospital. She asked, "What brings you here? How is Maverick doing?"

"Mr. Wright is doing pretty good. His wound was treated last night. It's just a flesh wound, so there's nothing to be worried about. Besides, Elven is watching over him, so don't worry, Ms. Shalders. By the way, Justin just called. He said he's going back to Bay Villa and he'll wait for you there. He said he has something to report to you."

Gwendolyn did not reply a single word. She headed straight passed him and got into the car.

Ezra was her driver today. "Ms. Shalders, should we head back to Bay Villa or go to see Mr. Wright?"

"Head to the hospital," she answered him, then gave it some thought. "No. Go back to Bay Villa."

Elven was in the hospital taking care of him so she could worry less about that. Besides, she had just visited him last night. The burn was not so severe, too, as the burn area was just the size of a palm.

Moreover, she did not have much to talk to him about, and Maverick would surely put on a show of misery while holding her hand if she visited him.

The car sped off and they headed toward Bay Villa.



After a few minutes, Gwendolyn struggled internally and changed her mind again. “Forget it. Let’s go to the hospital first.”

After all, Maverick had gotten hurt trying to protect her last night. It would be very heartless of her if she did not visit him even once.

Ezra turned the steering wheel, made a sharp U-turn, and sped off in the opposite direction.

In the hospital, Maverick was still eating oatmeal.

He could not muster any strength in his hands and had no appetite, so he deliberately ate very slowly to avoid being noticed by Elven.

Elven did not rush him either. Instead, he took out his phone and sat on the bed while scrolling through short videos.

Right then, the hospital room door was opened.

Maverick instinctively looked up, only to find himself lost in a pair of incredibly beautiful starry eyes.

Gwendolyn’s charming and radiant face caught his eyes and caught him off guard.

Maverick watched her walk toward him. Sweetness engulfed his whole being as if he had savored a piece of candied fruit.

He was obsessed with her casual little sweet expression that he had forgotten the taste of the oatmeal he was eating. He even felt that the pain in his body had lessened.

“Ms. Shalders, you’ve arrived.”

Upon seeing her arrival, Elven greeted her and quickly brought a chair for her, putting it beside Maverick's sickbed.

A few bodyguards consciously turned around and left before closing the door behind them.

Gwendolyn walked straight to the chair and sat down. Observing Maverick's complexion, she frowned slightly and asked, "You said you were feeling much better, but why does your face still look so pale?"

Maverick's pale lips curled slightly, and he said flatly, "I'm feeling much better now. My face looks pale because my body is weak, but I'll be fine tomorrow."

Remembering the exquisite breakfast on the bedside table that he hadn't opened yet, he grabbed it and said in an affectionate tone, "Gwendolyn, you haven't eaten yet, have you? I ordered an extra breakfast set made by the seven-star chef at Dunearn Hotel. It tastes great. Come and try some."

Before he could reach the breakfast, a sudden piercing and burning pain shot through his back.

The pain quickly spread throughout his limbs and body.

Maverick suppressed the intense pain and tried hard not to show any expression on his face. He broke into a cold sweat, and his knuckles started trembling slightly.

Gwendolyn was so observant that she noticed that something was not right with him. She declined his offer and said, "I already had breakfast at the police station, so I'm not hungry right now."

He didn't insist, keeping a calm expression on his face. Silently, he withdrew his trembling hand and hid it under the blanket.

Gwendolyn thought about what had happened that morning and asked tentatively, "I encountered something strange today. I was released from the police station even though I had not given any statement. They said the Federal Bureau of Investigation had bailed me out."

Her beautiful eyes sparkled as she observed Maverick's expression.

Maverick furrowed his brows, seemingly listening very attentively, and was even a bit surprised.  
"Really?"

She continued, "That's right, but it's funny that I don't even know who the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is. I cannot understand why they're helping me, and whether it's good for me or not."

Maverick remained calm and composed. "Perhaps it's one of Treyton's friends. It's not surprising if they help you."

Gwendolyn remained silent, staring unblinkingly at him.

In the past, when faced with such a situation, he would have been consumed by jealousy, feeling unbearably sour in his heart. He would have tried to act like a spoiled child and seek her attention.

She wondered why he was acting so indifferently this time.

Gwendolyn did not speak so Maverick took the initiative and asked her, "Gwendolyn, you must not have rested at the station last night. Why don't you go back to the villa and get some sleep? I'm fine here, and I'll probably be discharged tomorrow."

Is he deliberately sending me away?

She thought it was too unusual for him to act like that.

She felt that something was off about him that day, but looking at his indifferent dark eyes and his languid, aloof expression, she couldn't pinpoint exactly what the issue was.

"Gwendolyn?" Maverick gently called out to her.

The soft voice pulled her back to reality. She replied, "All right. I'm a bit tired as well, so I'll head back first. You should get some good rest."

Meverick nodded without holding her back. His pale lips were tightly pursed.

Gwendolyn stood up and straightened her snow-white dress.

Before leaving, she carefully reminded him, "If you feel unwell, remember to tell the doctor or at least let me know. Don't try to tough it out."

Meverick gulped nervously. His lips were slightly parted as he answered, "All right."

Gwendolyn did not linger around any longer. She turned around and headed toward the door.

Gwendolyn had just turned around when a nauseating feeling suddenly overcame Meverick. A thick rush of fluid filled his mouth. He quickly covered his lips with his hands as he spilled a mouthful of fresh blood, trying hard not to make any noise.

However, Gwendolyn could hear the subtle sounds.

She whipped her head around upon reaching the door.

She caught sight of Meverick, who was lying in his sickbed while hanging his head low. His left hand remained tucked under the blanket, while his right hand was holding a spoon as he sipped on some oatmeal.

He lowered his eyes, his long and curled eyelashes quivering slightly. He did not even look at her.

Gwendolyn furrowed her eyebrows in confusion but she still opened the door and left the word.

Aside from Elven, who was still at the hospital, the other bodyguards followed silently behind her.

"Don't follow me. Just wait for me in the car."

"Ms. Shelders?"

Ezra didn't manage to stop her, but he saw her heading in the opposite direction.

Gwendolyn went to find the chief physician secretly.

At the office door, she walked straight into the room and gently tapped on the desk. She said in a stern manner, "Thanks for your hard work. I went to take a look at Maverick's lab report."

Maverick remained calm and composed. "Perhaps it's one of Treyton's friends. It's not surprising if they help you."

Gwendolyn remained silent, staring unblinkingly at him.

In the past, when faced with such a situation, he would have been consumed by jealousy, feeling unbearably sour in his heart. He would have tried to act like a spoiled child and seek her attention.

She wondered why he was acting so indifferently this time.

Gwendolyn did not speak so Maverick took the initiative and asked her, "Gwendolyn, you must not have rested at the station last night. Why don't you go back to the villa and get some sleep? I'm fine here, and I'll probably be discharged tomorrow."

Is he deliberately sending me away?

She thought it was too unusual for him to act like that.

She felt that something was off about him that day, but looking at his indifferent dark eyes and his languid, aloof expression, she couldn't pinpoint exactly what the issue was.

"Gwendolyn?" Maverick gently called out to her.

The soft voice pulled her back to reality. She replied, "All right. I'm a bit tired as well, so I'll head back first. You should get some good rest."

Maverick nodded without holding her back. His pale lips were tightly pursed.

Gwendolyn stood up and straightened her snow-white dress.

Before leaving, she carefully reminded him, "If you feel unwell, remember to tell the doctor or at least let me know. Don't try to tough it out."

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## Chapter 180

Xavier Xenakis hesitated for a moment and did not move.

After Gwendolyn revealed her identity, Xavier immediately searched for Maverick’s medical records on the computer.

“Besides having a rather weak constitution, basically there are no other issues with this patient.”

He printed out the lab report and handed it to her.

Gwendolyn received it and carefully read through it before she asked, “How is the wound on his back?”

"It's just a burn caused by concentrated sulfuric acid. The wound will be healed if the medicine is applied constantly and be careful not to get it wet. But he may have an ugly scar on his back after it heals."

Gwendolyn went through the lab report once again, and it showed that there were indeed no major issues with Maverick's health.

She wondered if she could trust the report.

She still could not understand why Maverick was acting so unusual today.

She kept feeling that something was off. It was a strange feeling she couldn't quite put her finger on.

"Is that really so? Dr. Xenakis, don't keep anything from me," she said while staring intently at Xavier.

Xavier's expression was calm. He did not seem to be lying. "Yes, Ms. Shalders. These are all Mr. Wright's test results."

Am I overthinking?

Gwendolyn gathered her thoughts and said in a solemn manner, "If Mr. Wright asks if I came over, just keep it a secret."

Xavier understood and nodded in agreement.

A complete lab report appeared on Xavier's computer screen as soon as she left.

There were several abnormal physical indicators shown on the screen. Looking at the report, he let out a sigh.

Seriously... He sacrifices too much for her!



After leaving Xavier's office, Gwendolyn returned to Bay Villa.

Justin hurriedly went down and greeted her upon seeing her get out of the car.

"Ms. Shalders, I heard you went to the police station last night. They didn't make things difficult for you, did they?"

No sooner had he finished speaking than William, who was the first to get out of the car, walked up to him and threw him a punch.

Justin let out a muffled grunt as he was struck by the punch and staggered back two steps. A bruise immediately formed at the corner of his mouth.

Quinton still wasn't satisfied. Clenching his fist, he said, "Ms. Shalders saved you, but you betrayed her. I'll beat you to death to settle this once and for all!"

"Wait!"

Justin reached out to stop him. Looking at the cold-faced Gwendolyn who had just gotten out of the car, he explained, "Ms. Shalders, I didn't betray you. Please hear me out. If I wanted to harm you, why

would I come back and even contact Ezra?"

Gwendolyn shot him a cold glance and said, "Come in and talk."

Justin followed her into the living room.

As Gwendolyn sat on the couch, he quietly stood beside her and reported, "Last night, I saw that person in black at the bar again, the one I showed you in the portrait. When I noticed they were about to leave, I hurriedly followed them. In my haste, I forgot to report it beforehand."

Gwendolyn gracefully poured herself some coffee. Her face was expressionless as she asked casually, "So, did you catch up with them?"

"I didn't..." Justin was a bit disheartened. "I chased him all the way out of Realm Bar, but he was too fast for me to catch up. However, Ms. Shalders, I can't help but keep feeling that these past two days' events are somehow related to Charles. After all, it was Charles who invited you to the bar, so he should be responsible for this."

Gwendolyn didn't respond or argue at all. She took a light sip of her coffee and thought for a moment before she answered, "All right."

She glanced at Justin and noticed the injury on his face. "Quinton has always been impulsive. Don't take it to heart. Does it hurt?"

Justin rubbed his face and said, "It's fine. It doesn't affect me too much."

"All right, then. From now on, stay by my side just like before."

"All right, Ms. Shalders."

Gwendolyn nodded gently. Justin was about to leave when he was stopped by her again. "Help me to get in touch with Mr. Newton. If he hasn't left the city yet, tell him that I'd like to invite him to dinner tonight."

As she spoke, she was casually playing with the cup in her hand. There was no telling what she was thinking.

In the evening, at Gardens Hotel, although Gwendolyn was the one who invited Charles to dinner, Charles was so overjoyed after he received the invitation that he personally booked the entire rooftop restaurant.

Gwendolyn changed into a sophisticated dark red evening gown. Her makeup was slightly more enchanting than usual. As her red lips curled up slightly, she looked so stunning that one would be envious of her good looks.

Charles could not take his eyes off her.

He gave her a slight bow and gracefully extended his hand. "Gwen, you look so gorgeous tonight. You're the most stunning little princess in Chanaea."

Gwendolyn's eyes were bright and clear, and her smile was captivating.

After they sat down, Charles asked, "Gwendolyn, what made you suddenly decide to invite me to dinner tonight? Have you... come to a decision?"

"Charles, I had a terrible sleep last night. I felt so empty inside knowing you're leaving Fairlake and not knowing when you'll return." Gwendolyn's delicate eyebrows furrowed slightly while her slender hands gently covered her chest.

Her voice was gentle and soothing.

With an endearing tone in her voice as she called out "Charles," coupled with her seemingly heartbroken demeanor, it was hard for Charles to contain his emotions.

"Silly girl, you do care about me, don't you? But don't worry. I have almost settled the matter regarding the Central Intelligence Agency. I should be able to stay in Fairlake for a while longer."

Upon learning that he wouldn't be leaving for the time being, Gwendolyn was delighted. "That's great! Jasmine is also in Fairlake. We can have a good time together for a few days before you go."

Charles laughed. "Yeah, but I'd rather spend time alone with you like this."

Gwendolyn narrowed her eyes and smiled, remaining silent.

Charles looked into her eyes and suddenly remembered something.

"Gwen, I heard you went to visit Meverick in the hospital today. How is he doing?"

"Him?" Gwendolyn's smile gradually froze, and she spoke with a disgusted tone. "He's been acting sweet and innocent while asking for rewards since he saved me last night. I'm tired of him. I've been quite annoyed with him these past few days."

Charles beamed. "Since you're tired of him, why don't you just abandon him? He's just a small pet, after all. Won't it be nice to have me accompany you in the future?"

Gwendolyn's lips curved into a sweet smile.

"Of course that's nice, but he got injured because of me. I can't just abandon him all of a sudden, right? If words get out, people will see me as a heartless and evil person."

Charles' expression froze. "So what's your plan?"

"After he's discharged from the hospital, I'll let him stay at the villa for a while. I won't let him go out during this time to avoid any trouble. Once the timing is right, I'll give him his freedom back."

Charles fell silent and didn't argue more.

Gwendolyn's eyes sparkled as she changed the subject. "Charles, I encountered something frightening today."

"What is it?"

"I went to interrogate Wilbert, who threw sulfuric acid at Meverick last night, but he was already dead ten minutes before I arrived. And the mastermind behind this even provoked me in front of the surveillance cameras. I have a feeling they'll come after me too, and I'm scared."

Charles' expression turned solemn. "Are you for real?"

"Yes!" Gwendolyn tilted her head as she stared at him. Her sharp gaze was filled with suspicion as she looked at him. "Charles, as someone from the military, everyone at Fairlake Police Station listens to you. How is it possible that no one told you about this?"

Her voice was gentle and soothing.

With an adorable tone in her voice as she called out "Charles," coupled with her seemingly heartbroken demeanor, it was hard for Charles to contain his emotions.

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