

Her Riches 191

Chapter 191

Gwendolyn's expression gradually hardened as she stared at him in disbelief.

With her tone a little melancholic, she said, "You don't trust me?"

Charles chuckled. "Silly girl, I was just joking with you. Of course, I trust you. But was this wine prepared by you or Maverick? I don't trust him."

Gwendolyn showed him her empty red wine glass in her hand.

"I've already had a glass. So if the wine was tampered with, I should be the first to go down."

Charles remained silent, gently swirling the red wine in his glass without taking a sip.

Gwendolyn was getting a bit upset. She pouted and glanced at the full bottle of red wine next to her. "Do you want me to do the same as you did last time? Should I finish the whole bottle of wine for you to believe me?"

Charles remained silent.

In a fit of defiance, Gwendolyn reached out to grab the entire bottle of red wine on the table.

Charles stopped her. "I believe you. Even if this bottle contains poison, I would still drink it because you are like a beautiful poison to me and have intoxicated me for a long time."

He smiled dotingly. Finally, tilting his head back, he drank the glass of wine.

In the garden, Charles' two confidants stood by the entrance, resembling a pair of statues.

Elven took the initiative to approach the two of them.

“Hey, it’s getting late. Have you two had dinner yet? We’ve secretly grilled some barbecue in the backyard. Do you want to come over and give it a try?”

Both confidants had cold expressions as they firmly rejected the invitation.

“No need.”

Elven was very patient. “Don’t be afraid. Ms. Shalders has always been very friendly. With her around, Mr. Newton won’t get angry. Besides, it’s already dinner time. Given the relationship between Mr. Newton and Ms. Shalders, we’ll all eventually become like family, so consider this an early opportunity to get acquainted.”

This time, both hesitated briefly before saying, “No need.”

They were stubborn. Elven was starting to wonder how he should continue to persuade them without being too eager, as it would raise their suspicions.

Soon, Ezra came running over with two grilled pork belly skewers and handed them to him.

“Elven, the skewers tonight are especially delicious. Give them a try! Ms. Shalders said she and Mr. Newton was going to drink to their hearts’ desire. So, they want us to eat well and enjoy ourselves too. There are two bottles of beer for you over there. Come on!”

“All right then.”

Elven took the skewers and ate one right in front of them, savoring every bite.

Not many people could resist the allure of grilled pork belly. They just smelled way too delicious!

The aroma wafted through the air and reached the nostrils of the two. They stared at the meat in Elven's hand, swallowing their saliva and feeling slightly tempted.

Elven continued enthusiastically, "Come on. Let's go. Mr. Newton probably won't leave until very late tonight. Who knows how long you two will be hungry? We have both beer and wine in the backyard. Let's have a few drinks. I'm sure Mr. Newton won't give you a hard time."

The two exchanged glances. Ultimately, they could not resist the temptation of the grilled skewers. The grilled meat in Elven's hand finally led them to the backyard.

The meal lasted until a little after ten o'clock at night.

Charles and Gwendolyn were chatting happily. Charles' handsome face flushed red, and his usually deep, azure eyes seemed somewhat hazy.

"Gwen, I'm truly delighted that you've had a change of heart. In this world, no man is more deserving of you than me. We are a match made in heaven."

Gwendolyn just smiled, not saying a word.

Charles gazed at her tenderly. "When your mother passed away, I was immature and didn't step up to protect and comfort you when you needed me the most. Instead, I went to the Central Intelligence Agency to chase fame and fortune. I've blamed myself for this for many years. Can you forgive me?"

As they reminisced, the smile on Gwendolyn's face gradually faded.

"Charles, you're drunk and talking nonsense. It's getting late. You should head home."

Charles wanted to continue explaining, but Gwendolyn called Justin over to help him into the car.

Since his two confidants had been drinking in the backyard, they couldn't drive. Justin was the only bodyguard who had only eaten barbeque and did not consume alcohol due to his injuries not being fully healed yet.

So, he took the responsibility of driving Charles and the other two back home.

Once the military vehicle had completely disappeared from Bay Villa, Elven quietly entered the villa.

Gwendolyn was still sitting in the dining room, her eyes fixed straight ahead. Her expression was cold and stern as she was lost in her thoughts.

"Ms. Shalders?" Elven called out to her gently.

Gwendolyn snapped back to reality. "Were the two confidants handled?"

"Don't worry. I secretly added the drugs to their drinks. It should take effect while they're on the road later."

"Great. This will also give us a chance to assess Maverick's work efficiency."

She glanced at the empty bottle of red wine with a faint glimmer in her beautiful eyes.

The military vehicle traveled along the highway. Since it was rather late at night, there was very little traffic.

Justin adjusted the car's air conditioning to a very comfortable temperature. Having had a few drinks, Charles' two confidants were feeling drowsy.

Only Charles managed to maintain a relatively clear mind even though he had been drinking.

As Justin drove with his eyes fixed straight ahead, suddenly, an icy cold gun was pressed against the back of his head.

It was Charles.

“This isn’t the way back to my place. Where are you trying to go?”

His voice was quite loud, and since the two confidants had a strong sense of alertness, they sobered up quickly.

The two of them looked out the window and discovered that Justin was taking them to the outskirts of town.

The atmosphere inside the car suddenly became tense.

Justin chuckled sheepishly. “Did I take a wrong turn? I’m sorry, Mr. Newton. You were all asleep so I didn’t want to wake you up. I thought taking this route would be faster.”

Charles’ cold expression remained unchanged. “Turn around.”

“Oh, okay!”

The car was speeding, and Justin did not slow down. Instead, he slammed on the accelerator and abruptly spun the steering wheel. The entire vehicle almost lost balance, nearly tipping over and crashing off the road.

Besides Justin, the other three had not fastened their seatbelts inside the car. His sudden move caused them to tumble, crashing into the glass window.

Charles was no exception, and the gun that was aimed at Justin’s head also shifted away.

Taking advantage of the situation, Justin slammed on the brakes, quickly got out of the car, and ran.

Due to the great inertia, the remaining three people stumbled and staggered about.

Unfortunately, Charles was the most clear-headed of them all. He cast a cruel glance in the direction where Justin was fleeing and decisively pulled the trigger.

There was a resounding bang.

In the peaceful suburbs, the sound stood out particularly strikingly.

Running ahead, Justin instinctively covered his head and quickly checked his body. Realizing the bullet had not hit him, he ran even faster.

The bullet had hit the roof of the car.

Charles was suddenly obstructed by a man who sprang out from the trunk, causing him to lose his aim.

The trunk and rear seats of the military vehicle were connected. Since it was late at night, and the two confidants had too much to drink, they forgot to check their vehicle before leaving.

Unexpectedly, someone was hiding in the trunk all along.

Charles quickly realized something was definitely off about that night's dinner and immediately moved to counterattack the man in the trunk.

However, as soon as Charles made a move, his opponent swiftly disarmed him.

It was too dark inside the car for Charles to see who was in the trunk. His two confidants immediately exited the vehicle, ready to apprehend the person.

Suddenly, around six men emerged from the forest.

Both sides immediately started fighting.

In less than two minutes, Charles and his two associates felt their strength waning.

As Gwendolyn had added a colorless and tasteless anesthetic into their drinks beforehand, the small dosage would not cause anyone to faint, but it would result in mild fatigue.

The two confidants were knocked down, falling flat on their faces.

Charles was suddenly struck with a fierce blow to the back of his neck, causing him to fall to his hands and knees.

He looked up and saw a familiar figure emerging from the trunk of the car. The man wore a ghostly mask adorned with intricate and unique patterns.

“Y-You’re from the Federal Bureau of Investigation—”

Before the sentence could be finished, Nico struck again from behind with his hand, finally knocking out Charles.

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Upon seeing someone faint, the man wearing a ghost mask finally removed it.

Under the moonlight, the man’s dark gaze was cold and unfathomable, filled with icy bloodlust as he looked at Charles.

Nico stepped forward and asked, “Boss, how should we handle this?”

“Tie up these two subordinates and throw them in the car. As for Charles...”

Maverick’s voice suddenly stopped, and he narrowed his eyes. His expression was fierce. “Hang him up and take him to the cabin that is ready. Gwendolyn will be here in about ten minutes. Before she arrives, let’s interrogate him first.”

“Understood.”

Charles was abruptly awakened by a splash of cold water.

When he woke up, he found his hands tied behind his back and suspended from a broken beam in the dilapidated house. His feet barely touched the ground, and he had to stand on his tiptoes to maintain his balance.

That position was extremely tiring, especially as the arms became unbearably sore. If he was being suspended for an hour, the arms could ache to the point of dislocation, and the armpits would bruise and become swollen.

He let out a soft chuckle.

That torturous method was clearly a tactic commonly used by the military.

“What are you laughing at?”

A deliberately lowered, deep male voice rang out from nearby.

Charles glanced over.

It was the man with the ghost mask he had seen before he fainted. The man was leisurely and elegantly leaning against a wooden pillar.

Charles' deep blue eyes showed not the slightest hint of panic. His face was still carrying a smile.

"I'm not sure what I did to offend the Federal Bureau of Investigation. You're setting me up to arrest me."

The masked man approached him and said, "Recently, a labeled sample of S404 RNA Virus has gone missing from the lab. I checked the records, and you were in the lab half a month ago."

Charles was indignant. "I'm not the only one who visited the lab, so why do you suspect that I took it?"

"Because on the day you invited Gwendolyn to Realm Bar, someone just happened to use that potion to hurt us, and you dare to say this has nothing to do with you?"

Charles frowned slightly. "How did you know?"

In front of him, the masked man removed the silver mask from his face, revealing Maverick's handsome yet cold and detached expression.

Charles stared at his face, feeling shocked. "It's actually you! How could you have this mask? I can't believe it. How could the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation possibly be you!"

He had felt that something was off about Maverick before and even had someone investigate him. Maverick's profile was too clean, which made him suspicious that there was more to it.

However...

Even if the man was not simple, there was no way he could be involved with the Federal Bureau of Investigation!

Maverick's dark eyes narrowed as he observed Charles' expression.

Seeing Charles genuinely shocked, he said, "It seems that you didn't steal this potion because you tracked me down, but to harm Gwendolyn. You pretend to love her so much, yet you're cruel enough to want to use the S404 potion to destroy her."

"I didn't! I truly love her!"

Charles firmly refused to admit it.

He decided to skip that topic, sneering while staring at Maverick. "You're deliberately using the name of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to get information from me? Do you think I'd believe you? You're nothing but the young CEO of the Wright family in Fairlake. How could this be possible?"

Maverick's eyes were cold, but he did not respond.

Charles added, "Today, I just happened to fall into the trap you and Gwendolyn set. Do you really think you can keep me here for long? Tomorrow, my people will notice my disappearance. Kidnapping and assaulting the director of the Central Intelligence Agency is no small crime. Think carefully!"

"Oh?"

With a slight smirk, Maverick responded nonchalantly, "Well, give it a try and see if any of your men will come to rescue you tomorrow."

Charles looked at the calm indifference on the man's face, which did not seem to be feigned, and then glanced at the ghost mask in Maverick's hand.

That mask, representing the highest leadership of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was crafted from pure silver by a skilled artisan exclusively. With its intricate design process, unique patterns, and unparalleled craftsmanship, there was only one such mask in the entire world.

At that, he began to waver.

Outside the door, Nico knocked softly and said, "Boss, it's been five minutes. Ms. Shalders will be here soon."

"All right."

Maverick turned his attention back to Charles, getting straight to the point. "You got this potion half a month ago, but you only came to Fairlake a week ago. There must be someone behind this, conspiring with you and encouraging you to take the potion. Who is that person?"

Charles looked down at the ground, smiling but not saying a word.

Maverick grabbed him by the hair, forcing him to make eye contact.

"You know very well the methods the Federal Bureau of Investigation uses to deal with stubborn individuals. Are you sure you won't talk?"

Charles was instantly infuriated by his words. Veins bulged on his forehead as he gritted his teeth in anger.

"How dare you!"

"Why wouldn't I dare? You already know who I am. Considering what you've done this time, do you really think you can walk out of here unscathed?"

As Maverick continued speaking, his gaze grew increasingly fierce and filled with surging rage.

Charles looked into his eyes, and after a brief two-second pause, he burst into laughter. "You're not the young master of the Wright family, are you? Who are you?"

There was no way the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation could merely be the CEO in a small place like Fairlake.

Maverick did not say anything.

“You keep saying that I have an ulterior motive for getting close to Gwendolyn, but she probably doesn’t even know your identity. Don’t you have a motive too? What’s your purpose in acting weak and pitiful in front of her?”

Maverick’s hand that was clenching Charles’ hair became tighter.

Charles felt as if his scalp was about to be torn off. His expression showed slight pain, but he quickly burst into laughter again.

“Since you already know that it wasn’t sulfuric acid that day, you should be well aware that your days are numbered! If I can’t have her, neither can you!”

Maverick’s eyes filled with rage as he released his grip on the man’s hair and threw a fierce punch at him.

Charles’ cheek quickly swelled up, turning into a deep shade of purple.

He spat blood onto the ground, but those deep blue eyes remained defiant.

“Even if Professor Yancey can suppress the S404 RNA virus in your body and prevent your death, there will be long-term side effects. Eventually, you’ll become disabled. If she finds out, she might feel sorry for you in the short term, but what about in the long run?”

“Maverick, from the moment you got attacked by the virus, your disabled body is destined to be unworthy of her!”

Maverick’s brows knitted slightly.

He was stunned and did not speak for a long time until Nico’s voice came from the doorway again.

“Boss, Ms. Shalders’ car has reached the highway, and it will be arriving in two minutes.”

“All right.”

He looked back at Charles and said, “Since you’ve fallen into my hands, you should know that there’s no mouth in this world that I can’t pry open. I’ll dig out all your secrets in the next few days.”

Charles glanced over and snorted coldly.

Maverick grabbed his hair again as he warned threateningly in a low voice, “When Gwendolyn comes in, you should know what not to say. If you dare to reveal even a single word, I’ll make your life a living hell!”

“Ms. Shalders! You’re here!”

Just then, Nico’s voice rang out from outside, neither too loud nor too soft.

Maverick hid the mask and turned around to greet Gwendolyn.

The door opened, and he found himself gazing directly into Gwendolyn’s beautiful eyes.

Thinking about some of the words Charles had just said, he lowered his eyes, and for once, he did not take the initiative to speak enthusiastically.

Gwendolyn did not notice and simply asked, “How did it go? Did he say anything important?”

Maverick shook his head. “No, he wouldn’t speak.”

“I’d like to have a chat with him alone.”

“All right.”

“Make sure it’s private, and no one is allowed to eavesdrop, including you,” Gwendolyn emphasized.

He hesitated slightly, and his voice dropped a notch. “All right.”

After Gwendolyn entered, Maverick helped her close the door, shooing Nico and the others far away. He then went to wait under a tree nearby.

Inside the cabin, Charles saw her enter, and the corner of his lips curled upward slightly.

“Gwen, I never expected tonight to be a treacherous banquet. Has all the love you’ve shown me recently been nothing but an act?”

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Gwendolyn did not hide her intentions. “Yes, if I didn’t do it this way, how could I have caught you?”

Charles laughed with a hint of melancholy at the edge of his lips.

“When did you start being cautious of me?”

“From the moment you pulled out the revolver and asked me to choose between shooting Maverick and Natasha, I knew something was off with you.”

Does she actually start suspecting me since that time?

Charles looked at her, somewhat in disbelief.

She showed no emotion as she continued, "It wasn't until the last time you were about to leave Fairlake that I accidentally saw the person in black in the Realm Bar corridor. Coupled with the acid attack that day, I began to suspect that you had some connection with the person who harmed me from the Harris family."

Charles gave a wry smile and responded, "So that's how it is."

"Charles, you truly are the only person I've admired since childhood, but why do you want to hurt me too?"

He shook his head, still denying it. "I didn't. When the Harris family announced your death, you had no idea how heartbroken I was. It was only half a month ago that I found out you were still alive. Only by pretending to cooperate could I come to Fairlake to see you. If you still love me, I'll fight against them for you till the end, but... there's an annoying dog by your side now! That day at the bar, I was standing on the second floor. I didn't intend to take action until Maverick came in. I knew he would protect you, so that's when I took action. It wasn't about targeting you; how could I ever bear to see you hurt?"

He spoke without pause, with his eyes gazing deeply and affectionately at Gwendolyn. Despite the bruises on his face, they could not conceal his stunningly handsome features.

However, Gwendolyn had no time to appreciate his handsomeness, so she scoffed.

"Don't you find it ridiculous to say that? If he hadn't shielded me, I would be the one injured right now. How can you say it wasn't aimed at me?"

Her gaze grew colder and colder, not wanting to waste time spouting nonsense. "Stop hiding it. I just want to know who from the Harris family is responsible for harming me. As long as you tell me, I won't make things difficult for you."

Charles lowered his gaze, a touch of sadness gracing the corner of his lips.

"You might let me go, but he won't."

He?

Gwendolyn frowned. "Who are you talking about?"

Charles looked up at her with sorrow in his eyes and said, "Gwen, your little pet is not a good person. He has been deceiving you with his acting skills all along. He has more secrets than I do. You must not fall for his tricks!"

"I've always known he has secrets. I just never bothered to dig deeper," Gwendolyn responded nonchalantly.

Anyway, she only had a one-year agreement with Maverick. After that, they would have nothing to do with each other, and she was not very interested in his secrets.

Charles laughed in surprise. "It seems like you don't really care about him either! That's great. Gwen, you should thank me, after all, for I helped you to get rid of this clingy guy."

Seeing her frown, Charles feigned surprise with his deep blue eyes.

"Gwen, don't you know? Well, he's really not being honest. Gwen, you should go back and check his injuries yourself; then, you'll know how much he's hiding from you."

Check his injuries?

Gwen furrowed her brows. Weren't his injuries just ordinary skin wounds caused by sulfuric acid?

She found it strange, but Charles still had a faint smile on his face.

Upon closer inspection, that smile seemed a bit mischievous, and it did not seem like he was lying. Instead, it seemed that he knew some inside information.

“Make yourself clear.”

Charles shook his head and just smiled.

Gwendolyn was a bit annoyed, but she could not bring herself to take action against him.

After all, he was the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, holding a high position in the Chanaea military. Without a legitimate reason to act against him, she could not risk causing trouble for herself and Asher.

She withdrew her gaze and turned to leave the cabin.

As soon as the door closed, Maverick walked over.

“How was it? Did he say anything?”

Gwendolyn looked down and shook her head gently. “Forget it. We’ve already confirmed that he conspired with others to harm me. We’ll find other ways to investigate the rest. Tell Nico and the others to destroy the evidence and not leave any traces. Send him back quietly tomorrow.”

Maverick did not agree.

She could take her time to investigate, but he could not; his time was running out.

“Gwendolyn, if you trust me, leave this matter to me. Within two days, I’ll make him confess the truth.”

“Do you know who he is? How dare you mess with him?”

Gwendolyn stared at him intently. “The bruises on his face are from you, aren’t they? Do you really want to continue torturing him in private? The Central Intelligence Agency and the Newton family behind him won’t let you off easily.”

He smiled with pursed lips, not taking it seriously.

“Don’t worry. I’ll handle it properly.”

As their gazes met, an unspoken connection formed between them.

Gwendolyn’s heart skipped a beat. His words sounded casual, yet they carried an inexplicable sense of trustworthiness.

“All right, you may give it a try.”

Thinking about Charles’ last few words before leaving, she withdrew her gaze, and her expression gradually became serious. “Let’s go back to the villa.”

“You may head back first. I’ll take care of things here before returning.”

Gwendolyn’s face showed an undeniable seriousness. “No, you’re going back with me.”

Uh...

Maverick compromised. “Can you give me two minutes, then? I need to discuss the arrangements with Nico briefly.”

“All right.”

She agreed! She finally decided to wait for me once!

Maverick felt a wave of inexplicable joy bubbling from within.

He took off his blazer and draped it over Gwendolyn's shoulders, wrapping her petite frame snugly. "It's late, and it's cold outside. You should head back to the car first; I'll be there shortly."

Gwendolyn did not refuse. She nodded as she walked away.

After she was at a distance, Maverick called Nico over. His face returned to its usual stern expression.

"Within two days, pry out the things Charles is hiding. The process and methods don't matter; even if he's disabled, it's fine. I'll explain it to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I only care about the results."

"Understood, Boss."

Maverick looked back at the cabin, his gaze darkened. "After this is over, reward him with a bottle of sulfuric acid on his back."

Nico responded, "Isn't sulfuric acid too easy for him? He splashed the S404 RNA Virus on you, Boss!"

"So what? Do you want to splash S404 back at him? There are only about ten bottles, and he doesn't deserve such a precious thing. I'll contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation to get him removed from his director position. We can slowly torture him in prison later on."

After giving it some thought, Nico also felt that it made a lot of sense.

"All right, Boss."

"Okay, I'll leave this to you. I'm going back now."

Nico was just about to agree when he saw that Maverick had already left, leaving only a gust of wind behind. The latter had started jogging toward the side of the road.

Nico clicked his tongue twice.

Indeed, love makes people foolish.

How is it that the man who was once so bloodthirsty and cold-hearted now looks somewhat adorable as he jogs back?

Gwendolyn sat in the back seat of the car, still pondering Charles' words.

The corner of her eyes caught a glimpse of someone jogging toward her. The man quickly opened the car door and slid in, discreetly rubbing both of his arms with his palms.

Gwendolyn noticed his subtle movements and saw that he was only wearing a thin silk shirt. She then remembered that she was wearing his blazer.

"Are you cold?"

Maverick shook his head. "No, I'm not."

"Why are you running so fast, then?"

"I don't want to keep you waiting too long."

Gwendolyn suddenly fell silent. Is he still trying to deceive me with sweet words?

As soon as he entered the car, she could feel the chill emanating from his body. His lips were turning a pale shade of purple from the cold, yet he stubbornly refused to admit it.

She took off the blazer and impatiently tossed it to him. "Take it. I'm feeling too warm."

Winter was just around the corner, and indeed, the temperature difference was quite significant at night.

Gwendolyn asked Justin, who was driving, to turn on the heater in the car.

With that, the car drove all the way back to Bay Villa.

She changed into her slippers and headed upstairs. Without even looking back, she said, "Follow me up."

Maverick did not hesitate and followed her up to the third floor.

Upon entering the room, Gwendolyn first turned on the heater before sitting on the edge of the bed. With a nonchalant tone, she commanded, "Undress yourself. Take off all your clothes."

"Huh?"

Maverick's ears turned slightly red in an instant.

What is she up to?

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Suddenly, that statement turned the atmosphere in the room to become quite suggestive.

Seeing Maverick standing there dumbfounded and not even moving his finger for quite a while, Gwendolyn furrowed her eyebrows slightly, and her expression became solemn. "Hurry up; I want to see the injury."

Maverick's enthusiasm deflated in an instant.

Oh, she just wants to see the injury; I have overthought it.

Wait a minute...

She wants to check my injury?

Why is she suddenly doubting my injury? Did Charles say something to her?

"My injury is fine. I've been applying medicine for the past couple of days, and it's almost healed."

Gwendolyn gave him a cold glance and said, "Take it off!"

Maverick did not move a muscle and replied, "I'm wearing a bandage, so even if I take it off, you won't be able to see anything."

"I can remove it. Worst case, we'll just reapply the medicine later."

Her tone was very firm.

She seems determined.

Maverick did not speak or move, pondering how to get away with the situation.

Gwendolyn saw right through his thoughts with just one glance.

"Don't try to fool me tonight. You must take your clothes off!"

"Gwendolyn, I appreciate your concern for my injury, and it warms my heart. However, it's getting late tonight, so let's get some rest and check on it tomorrow."

Gwendolyn gritted her teeth.

She suppressed the urge in her heart to tie the man up and strip him off forcibly.

Patiently, she stated, "You are the one who said earlier that you would unconditionally obey any command of mine. Was that just empty talk?"

Upon being confronted with the promise he made, Maverick was rendered speechless.

Being left with no choice, he stretched his hand toward the gold buttons on the suit. His slender fingertips gently circled around each button, unfastening them one by one in an extremely slow motion.

Gwendolyn did not rush him either. She gently rubbed between her brows and waited quietly. After all, there were not many pieces of clothes for him to take off, so it would not take long.

Maverick took off his suit, gently placing it on her dressing table.

After hesitating for a few seconds, he continued to take off his shirt.

After unbuttoning the two buttons of his shirt, he asked softly, "Should I... take off my pants?"

Gwendolyn gritted her teeth and said, "I want to see your wound! Why would you take off your pants?"

"Didn't you just mention stripping... naked?" He lowered his head, only daring to voice his accusation softly.

However, because the room was so quiet, Gwendolyn could hear every single word clearly.

“Maverick! If you keep babbling on, I’ll make sure you don’t even have your underwear left. You’ll be running naked around the villa for fifty laps!”

Oh my goodness...

She is ruthless!

If I really run naked, my dignity and reputation will be gone at once!

Gwendolyn could see that he was clearly intimidated, so she continued with a wicked grin, “Or maybe I’ll have Elven and the others find a rope to tie you up and hang you from that tree outside the garden, naked as a specimen for the whole night. Which one would you like to try?”

I don’t want to try either one!

It’s absolutely impossible!

Maverick’s lips were pressed tightly together. His Adam’s apple bobbed slightly. He did not utter a single sound anymore as he silently undressed himself.

As he was just about to unfasten the last button, he was still unwilling to give up. When he tried to open his mouth to give an excuse, a fierce glare from Gwendolyn shot over as a warning.

Running naked out there is simply impossible!

It’s even more impossible to be hung up at the tree!

But I also don’t want to take off my clothes to show her the wound...

He lowered his gaze, still pondering a way to bluff his way through.

Under Gwendolyn's gaze, he slowly removed his silk shirt, revealing his perfectly sculpted eight-pack abs. The bandage wrapped around his midsection slightly marred the aesthetic, but his healthy tanned complexion was still incredibly pleasing to the eye.

Nonetheless, Gwendolyn was not in the mood to admire it at that moment. As soon as Maverick finished undressing, she got up and walked toward him. "Turn around."

Maverick obediently turned around.

Gwendolyn got straight to work, forcefully tearing off his bandages with brute strength.

As it was wrapped more than a dozen times, she had to carefully unwrap it layer by layer. Her movements were swift, and her strength was strong.

As the last few layers were unwrapped, the bloodstains on the bandages became clearly visible. Maverick let out a soft hiss.

After Gwendolyn heard that, her movements became much gentler.

After removing the bloodstained bandage, the palm-sized burn on his back was fully exposed to Gwendolyn's eyes.

Gwendolyn's brow furrowed deeply as she observed it intently.

It had been four days, yet his wound still looked alarmingly fresh, with his flesh covered in blood. It was a horrifying sight.

Her trembling fingertips reached out toward his back but stopped just before touching him.

"Your wound is actually still bleeding, and it looks quite severe. How come it doesn't seem like an injury caused by sulfuric acid?"

The injury was quite severe, and Gwendolyn did not dare to touch it. She reluctantly withdrew her hand. Her expression was solemn.

Maverick sighed inwardly.

Sure enough, she could easily tell something was wrong just by taking a glance at it.

“Of course, it is. It’s just sulfuric acid. Where’s the bleeding? I clearly didn’t see any blood when I applied the medicine during the day.”

Gwendolyn did not believe it at all. “Tell me the truth. Do you actually know what happened to the injury on your back?”

“Yeah, it’s the sulfuric acid.”

His expression was natural. It was as if he was lost in thought for a moment when he suddenly said in an enlightening tone, “I remember now. That night, I hid in the trunk of the car, and it seemed like I accidentally hit my back when I was fighting with Charles later on. That was probably why I bled.”

Is that really so?

Why would Charles say those words to remind me, then?

So, is it Charles who’s lying, or is he the one lying?

“Could it really be such a coincidence? Your old injury on your back was hurt tonight? Don’t you think this reason seems a bit contrived?”

“Is it? Coincidence happens sometimes in this world.”

Maverick spoke gently. "This wound may look frightening, but it's not serious. Look at me now. Do I look like I'm not feeling well?"

Gwendolyn simply did not believe a word he said.

She had eyes, so she could see for herself whether it was serious or not.

"Turn around and look at me."

Maverick obediently turned around, lowering his gaze to meet hers.

He was so tall at a hundred and eighty-eight centimeters. When Gwendolyn tried to make eye contact with him at close range, she had to crane her neck to look up at him, which was a bit tiring for her neck because she was only one hundred and sixty-eight centimeters tall.

"Kneel."

The last time she uttered that, Maverick felt an inner resistance, even a sense of humiliation.

However, he did not hesitate this time. He slowly bent his knee while keeping his back straight.

In the face of the important matter of pursuing my wife, what does pride even matter?

Gwendolyn swiftly extended her hand, lifting his chin and gazing down at him from a superior position.

"Maverick, do you really think I won't find out if you don't tell me? Mr. Kieran is also my friend. If I ask him to come over and take a look himself, you won't be able to hide it anymore. At that point, you'll completely lose my trust. Think it through."

Her gaze was cold and sharp. "Do you want to confess or wait for me to find out?"

Maverick's dark eyes flickered.

After struggling internally for a while, he finally said, "It's not sulfuric acid, but S40 strong corrosive potion."

"What is it?"

"It's a liquid with similar properties to sulfuric acid but with stronger corrosiveness. If it comes into contact with the skin, the burns can be quite severe, and ordinary ointments won't be effective. The healing process will also take a longer time, and the scars won't easily fade. However, it doesn't cause any harm to the body's internal organs."

"Who told you this?"

Maverick blinked his dark eyes. "I didn't know it either until Charles told me last night. He said he stole the drug from a war laboratory."

"Really?"

Maverick nodded. "Yes."

Gwendolyn had never heard of that kind of thing before, but his explanation seemed quite similar to the condition of his injury.

But... is it really just a superficial wound?

She stared at Maverick for a moment.

It seems like I won't be able to get any more information tonight. Since it's related to the war laboratory, I'll ask Asher tomorrow; he should know.

She sat back down by the bed, clearly annoyed.

“You really can’t be honest, can you? Just because of this injury tonight, you’ve told several lies. Can you even keep track of them all?”

Maverick saw that she seemed to believe him and quietly breathed a sigh of relief.

“Are you angry?”

Gwendolyn remained silent, turning her face away. Her entire body exuded an extreme coldness.

It seemed that she was seriously angry as she did not even bother to respond to him.

He did not stand up. Instead, he crawled on his knees to her feet. Carefully, he took her small hand in his and gently pressed it against his abdomen.

With a gentle and soothing tone, he said, “I’m sorry, it’s just a superficial wound. I know you don’t like owing anyone favors, so I didn’t want you to feel guilty. I didn’t mean to hide it from you. Please don’t be mad. How about I let you pinch my abs?”

“Who cares about your abs?”

Gwendolyn withdrew her hand angrily and glared at him with annoyance.

“How about... you take that belt and give me a good whipping, so you can let off some anger?”

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Maverick gazed up at her, a flattering smile playing at his thin lips.

Gwendolyn cast a deep, meaningful glance at the man.

Indeed, he was due to be taught a lesson that night, and Gwendolyn's anger simply would not subside until the man was crying and pleading for mercy.

She extended her hand toward him. "Belt."

Without hesitation, Maverick swiftly unfasted the metal buckle and obediently handed the belt to her. Then, he turned around and faced away from the woman.

Gwendolyn felt a shiver course through her entire being. She folded the belt in half, her eyes glinting with resolution and intensity. Lifting the belt high into the air, she readied herself to strike the wounded back before her.

However, before she could swing the belt in her hand, her gaze involuntarily landed on the palm-sized burn on the man's back.

The vividly crimson flesh and the gruesome wound provoked unease. It was so strikingly conspicuous that it was hard to ignore.

Besides, he'd sustained the injury by shielding her. Otherwise, it would be her face that was bearing such agony.

As Gwendolyn pondered on this, she experienced a surge of conflicting emotions. It felt as though an unseen force held her wrist, preventing her from lowering it no matter what.

She released a silent sigh and seemed to have deflated all of a sudden, for she realized, much to her vexation, that she actually started to feel sorry for him.

This feeling made Gwendolyn very unhappy.

The three years she had spent in the Wright residence were akin to enduring a living hell, devoid of any semblance of warmth. Following the divorce, she had observed some changes in Maverick and his growing sincerity. It would be disingenuous if she said she remained unmoved.

Nevertheless, Gwendolyn refused to tread upon that familiar path again.

No matter how much she attempted to sever the ties between him and herself, in the end, she would be the one to wind up hurt.

At that thought, she tightened her grip on the belt, trembling as though she had made a momentous decision.

Maverick remained motionless, not uttering a single word nor furrowing his brows.

Besides the involuntary tensing of his muscles throughout his body, it seemed as if he was impervious to pain.

Gwendolyn examined the red mark she had inflicted, her gaze unconsciously shifting to the center of his back, where the bloody, blurred wound pained her eyes.

Suddenly, her heart was thrown into turmoil, and despite everything, she couldn't bring herself to follow through.

"Put on your clothes and get out!" She gave the man a ferocious kick on his shoulders and threw the leather belt back at him. "Hurry up and get lost. I'm exhausted, so we'll settle this tomorrow."

After uttering those words, Gwendolyn lifted the quilt and, with her back turned to Maverick, nestled herself within it.

Caught off guard, Maverick staggered slightly from the unexpected kick.

He leisurely fastened his belt, then rose to retrieve the shirt and suit from the dressing table.

Since the bandage had been removed, he refrained from wearing the clothes directly to avoid soiling them. Instead, he simply held them in his hand.

As he turned his head, he beheld Gwendolyn lying on her side on the bed, her back facing him. She hadn't even changed her attire; how could she possibly appear as though she was ready to sleep?

"Gwendolyn, you're still wearing your coat. It won't be comfortable to sleep like this."

Gwendolyn secretly clenched her teeth and replied, "I don't care. Just go away!"

Maverick remained stationary at the foot of her bed, his gaze fixed on her the entire time.

Gwendolyn could sense it, a surge of anger rushing to her head. Suddenly, she sat up abruptly, her face inflated with irritation. Seizing the pillow next to her, she hurled it at Maverick.

"Get out!"

Maverick caught it steadily and placed it on the dressing table for her.

She then grabbed another pillow and threw it.

Maverick caught it once again, and a gentle smile hung on his lips.

Gwendolyn was truly furious, launching everything within reach from the bedside table—tissue boxes, ornaments, books, and more—directly at him.

Remarkably, the man caught each item effortlessly, never missing a beat. He then helped her place them on the dressing table.

The faint smile on his face brimmed with tenderness.

However, in Gwendolyn's eyes, it felt like a challenge.

She was so enraged that she felt as if she could burst at any moment. She searched on the bedside table for a while but found nothing. When she looked down, she realized that she had already thrown everything away, except for the table lamp.

And so, she extended her hand of guilt toward the table lamp. The lamp was still plugged in, yet instead of disconnecting the power first, she forcefully attempted to yank it out.

Witnessing her actions, Maverick swiftly raised both hands in surrender, saying, "Stop! I was wrong. I'll leave immediately."

Gwendolyn glared at him fiercely until he closed the door and vanished from her sight. Only then did she place the table lamp back in its original position.

As she gazed at the assortment of items on the bedside table, she quietly got out of bed, retrieved her pillow, and took several deep breaths to calm herself before heading to the bathroom to freshen up.

Before long, the next morning dawned.

During breakfast, Gwendolyn remained silent, not uttering a single word. Regardless of what Maverick said, she completely disregarded him.

She then headed to Angle right after finishing her breakfast in silence.

She had already handed Charles over to Maverick, so all she had to do was await the outcome.

Upon arriving at the office, Gwendolyn first made a phone call to her eldest brother, Asher.

She repeated the name of the potion that Maverick mentioned last night to Asher.

Asher's response was essentially the same as Maverick's.

Gwendolyn got in contact with someone from Shadow Bell once again and searched for images of skin damage caused by the potent S40 strong corrosive potion. Since it was a laboratory chemical, it couldn't be found through regular searches.

Ten minutes later, Shadow Bell sent the picture to her on WhatsApp.

She carefully examined it and indeed, the wound bore a striking resemblance to the one on Maverick's back.

Could it be that he's telling the truth this time? But if it wasn't life-threatening, why would Charles claim that he helped me deal with Maverick?

Gwendolyn always had a nagging feeling that she had missed some crucial detail, but she couldn't quite put her finger on it.

She summoned Elven and instructed him, "During this period, I want you to secretly follow Maverick, and report to me his every move after he leaves the villa. Also, without revealing your presence, listen to his conversations."

Although Elven couldn't comprehend the reason behind her request, he nodded in agreement.

After Gwendolyn departed, Maverick washed the dishes and tidied up the villa. Subsequently, he ventured to the suburbs to check on Charles.

Nico spotted his arrival and hastened over with a servile grin on his face.

"Good morning, Boss."

Maverick glanced at him and asked, "How is it going?"

Nico shook his head. "He refuses to divulge anything. After all, he climbed his way up to become the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. He's truly a tough nut to crack."

Maverick cast a cold and ruthless gaze in the direction of the cabin.

"No matter how unyielding the obstacle, you must shatter it. By tomorrow at the latest, you must extract something from his mouth."

"Understood," Nico respectfully responded, then leaned closer to Maverick's ear and whispered, "Boss, your suspicions about Justin were correct. Yesterday, he drove to the suburbs of town and disappeared for over ten minutes after getting out of the car and running away. It wasn't until Ms. Shalders arrived in her car that he calmly returned."

Maverick furrowed his brow and asked, "Do you know where he went?"

Nico shook his head and replied, "This kid is quite cunning. Our people couldn't keep up with him."

Maverick pressed his lips together, appearing deep in thought for a moment, then said, "Very well. You take care of things here. I'm heading back to Bay Villa."

Upon arriving at the villa, instead of going straight upstairs, Maverick went to the backyard.

That day, Gwendolyn didn't take Justin to the office and left him at the villa. As Maverick returned, Justin had just come down from the hidden lookout post to use the restroom and was washing his hands.

When he saw Maverick approaching, he smiled and greeted the man, "Mr. Wright, what a coincidence!"

Maverick's expression turned ice-cold in that instant. "It's not a coincidence at all. I'm looking for you."

Justin gazed into the man's eyes, his own expression gradually growing serious as well.

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The two of them, one leading and the other following, arrived at a secluded corner near the villa's back door.

"Why do you have such a solemn expression on, Mr. Wright? What do you want to talk about?" asked Justin.

"There's no need for pretense in front of me. I know you have ulterior motives for being by Gwendolyn's side."

Instantly, a wicked grin spread across Justin's face.

"Since you've realized it, my apologies!"

He covertly reached for a small knife at his waist, swiftly aiming to stab Maverick's throat.

Maverick skillfully took a half-step back.

Within three swift moves, he had Justin subdued.

Justin's hands were forcefully restrained behind his back, causing him to fear that his arms would be dislocated. The pain was so excruciating that his complexion grew pale.

"Just kill me. I won't be able to fulfill the assigned mission anyway. Sooner or later, I will meet my demise," he uttered.

Maverick chuckled softly and released him, saying, "Why would I want to kill you? I am here simply to have a conversation with you. I have no interest in you or your life."

Justin couldn't understand the man's intentions.

"Don't you truly love Ms. Shalders? I was sent here to harm her. Now that you have exposed my true identity, why aren't you making a move?" he asked in puzzlement.

Maverick gazed at the man with deep, intense eyes and remarked, "You have feelings for her, don't you?"

Instantly, Justin's face flushed crimson.

"N-No... How could I!"

Maverick had always been astute in discerning a man's intentions.

Ever since he realized his love for Gwendolyn, he discovered a newfound ability to perceive, from a man's gaze, whether or not they harbored feelings for her.

"You must have feelings for her. Otherwise, you wouldn't have concealed your intentions for such a long time without taking action. There's no need to hide it any longer. Tell me your plan, and perhaps I can assist you in resolving the matter," Maverick proposed.

Justin locked gazes with Maverick, finding himself strangely drawn to the man's aura.

He recognized that Maverick was no ordinary individual, and it appeared that discussing a solution with him was the only viable course of action.

There was nothing Justin could do but take the leap of faith and trust Maverick this once.

At that, Justin began to say, "Three days later in the evening, they want me to lure Ms. Shalders to an abandoned warehouse in the eastern suburbs. This time, they have arranged numerous ambushes, and the mysterious man in black whom Ms. Shalders has been investigating will also make an appearance. If Ms. Shalders goes, I'm afraid the odds will be against her."

He then let out a sigh and continued, "Ms. Shalders is the only one who genuinely cares for me, and I cannot bear to cause her harm. However, if she doesn't perish, I will. I am under constant surveillance and cannot escape. Do you have a plan, Mr. Wright?"

Maverick contemplated for a moment, his dark eyes composed and unwavering.

He narrowed his gaze and spoke, "Inform them that you will handle it. I will keep this matter undisclosed to Gwendolyn, and you need not disclose it to her either."

"Huh?" Justin was taken aback. "So, three days later..."

Maverick's serene eyes gleamed. "I shall undertake this task."

In the afternoon, Maverick refrained from venturing outside.

Instead, he diligently cleaned the entire villa, ensuring that every chore was meticulously completed.

As the time approached for Gwendolyn to finish her work, he made his way to the kitchen and commenced the preparation of their dinner.

These remaining days by her side were dwindling, and he yearned to present her with an assortment of delectable dishes each day.

Even if she wouldn't miss his presence, perhaps her stomach would retain memories of him.

With this thought in mind, a faint smile graced his lips.

Suddenly, his phone rang, indicating an incoming message.

Glancing at it, he discovered a text from Nico, containing only an exclamation mark.

Maverick's smile suddenly froze, and his countenance involuntarily turned grave.

It was a covert signal, indicating an urgent matter at hand.

Maverick glanced at his wristwatch. There were still forty minutes before Gwendolyn finished work, so he quietly drove to the suburbs, where Charles was being held.

Nico paced anxiously along the roadside, anticipating his arrival.

Upon spotting Maverick's approaching vehicle, Nico hastened and took the passenger seat.

In a hushed tone, he whispered into Maverick's ear, "Boss, someone from Salinsburgh has arrived!"

Maverick's brow furrowed.

Why did this have to happen precisely at this moment!

His visage retained its solemnity as he ignited the car's engine and directed it toward the designated meeting spot mentioned by Nico.

They continued to advance toward the desolate construction site. Maverick was leading the way with Nico closely following behind, both proceeding in silence. They entered the most secluded and dilapidated house inside.

Upon Maverick's entry, Gwendolyn received a call from Elven.

Elven meticulously recounted the man's peculiar whereabouts, sparing no details.

Gwendolyn inquired suspiciously, "Where did he go? Did you see anyone else inside? What were they discussing?"

"I couldn't get close enough to see. There are guards stationed within a fifty-meter radius of the hidden areas in the construction site, and their numbers are quite significant. I couldn't approach unnoticed," Elven responded.

Gwendolyn fell into a brief silence.

Why did Maverick go to the construction site all of a sudden, and who is he meeting?

The presence of guards only confirmed the gravity of his secret.

"All right, I understand. I'll go over and take a look shortly."

Meanwhile, Maverick and Nico ventured into the dilapidated house.

Three men were already present in the room.

The leader, a man in his forties, noticed Maverick's arrival. His face lit up with a smile, and he respectfully nodded toward the latter.

"Greetings, Mr. Wright."

Maverick's countenance exuded an aura of chilling intensity as he questioned, "What's the matter, Logan?"

The man, Logan Larouche, put on a solemn expression as he earnestly explained, "There's turmoil in the family. We need your immediate presence to take control of the situation."

Immediately? Why such haste?

Without hesitation, Maverick responded, “No, I can’t come with you. I have personal matters to attend to in Fairlake. I’ll return on my own in a few days.”

Logan’s visage grew grimmer by the second. “Mr. Wright, this is an urgent recall order. You must come with me. Old Mr. Wright believes this is the prime opportunity for you to win people’s favor and solidify your position of authority!”

Maverick fell silent.

He thought he could spend the remaining seven days by Gwendolyn’s side, but it seemed even that was too much to ask for.

He suppressed the frustration in his heart and recalled the plan Justin had mentioned in the morning.

“Give me three more days. I have one final task to complete. After that, I will personally return to offer my apologies,” said Maverick.

Wearing a grim expression on his visage, Logan persuaded, “Mr. Wright, you are aware of how strict our household rules are. Defying the urgent recall order will result in severe punishment. Are you aware of the consequences you will face today?”

Still, Maverick remained calm and composed. “I understand. Three days of detainment and thirty lashes.”

With ease, he loosened his tie with one hand, his well-defined fingers swiftly unbuttoning his clothes. He then removed his suit and shirt, handing them casually to Nico.

“Boss...”

Nico caught the clothes firmly, his eyes filled with concern.

What if he can't endure it and the suppressed virus inside his body relapses!

Maverick remained indifferent. He turned away, kneeling on one knee with a proud and straight posture, his back muscles strong and defined. His voice carried a hint of defiance as he said, "Go on. Strike me."

Logan sighed deeply, acknowledging, "Old Mr. Wright truly understands you well. He knew that you would want to delay and not return immediately."

The bodyguard standing silently at the side stepped forward and presented a precious black sandalwood box.

Logan slowly opened the box, revealing the whip he had brought from the meeting room.

The whip was long and dark, adorned with intertwining golden threads. Its surface was covered with small barbs, guaranteeing that each strike would draw blood, even without maximum force. It was a severe form of punishment.

"Mr. Wright, there is unrest within the family, and the situation is urgent. I must ask you once more, do you truly insist on staying for three more days?"

Without a moment of hesitation, Maverick affirmed, "Yes."

"Very well, Mr. Wright. Do not blame me for being firm. Rules must not be broken, and I... am willing but bound by duty."

Maverick let out a soft, understanding hum.

In truth, he harbored deep dissatisfaction with these regulations and vowed himself to drive change.

After eradicating the stubborn elders in the family and establishing his absolute authority, the very first action he would undertake was to abolish the meeting room and discard all those antiquated, rigid rules.

While he lost in his thoughts, a piercing gust of wind suddenly swept in from behind him.

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Immediately after, the smooth skin on his broad back was brutally ripped apart by the barbs of the whip.

Vivid hues of red formed across his back, and intense pain surged through.

It was merely the first whip, and Maverick's forehead was beaded with cold sweat.

He gritted his teeth, his muscles tensed. Despite that, he maintained an upright posture, stoically enduring the searing pain in complete silence.

When Maverick was removing his clothes, Logan noticed the bandage in the middle of his back under his shirt and deliberately avoided hitting his wound.

However, this left his back with lesser parts to take the punishment.

As such, by the time the fifteenth lash struck, Maverick's entire bandaged upper back was covered in a web of bloody welts.

The whip cut deep into the flesh, tearing the skin and revealing the raw muscle beneath. It was a horrifying sight to behold.

Maverick's breathing grew heavier, and the veins on his forehead bulged.

Even his eyelashes were trembling uncontrollably. He tightly pursed his lips, determined not to let out a single sound of humiliation.

Deep down, he couldn't help but laugh self-deprecatingly.

After leaving home for more than a decade, he had almost forgotten his true identity, thinking that he was just a pampered son of the Wright family who lived a comfortable and privileged life.

Now, his pampered body had weakened considerably that it couldn't really endure the punishment anymore.

Logan's hand, which was holding the whip, trembled too.

Maverick's upper back was already covered in blood, and there wasn't a single spot left unharmed.

If Logan were to whip again, the lash would land right on the previous wounds. Yet the whip was so strong that if the same wound got struck twice, it would leave a cut deep into the bones. It would be too torturous.

Logan couldn't bear the thought and had to shift his focus to Maverick's waist.

The whip swished through the air once more, and the sound of it slashing through the wind echoed. Five lashes landed squarely on Maverick's lower back in rapid succession.

Maverick's body trembled violently, and his back finally gave in and collapsed. He quickly supported himself with one hand on the ground, avoiding the embarrassment of falling down.

Just then, the sound of the whip behind him ceased.

Suddenly, a sharp pain struck his chest and his blood surged. He spit out a mouthful of fresh blood onto the ground.

"Boss!"

Nico was terrified at the scene, his eyes red.

His heart trembled as he watched the twenty lashes land on Maverick's back. He had to resist the urge to rush forward and snatch the whip away several times.

"Stop it! Let's go back. We're leaving now."

"Nico! You're just my subordinate under the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It's not your place to speak here!" Maverick took a deep breath and gave him a fierce glare.

"Boss! If you keep getting whipped like this, you will lose your life!" Nico was choked with emotions. He yelled, "The S404 RNA virus within your body is merely suppressed, not eradicated! Persisting in such a manner and enduring these injuries will only weaken your immune system, allowing the virus to proliferate rapidly! You're courting death!"

It was as though Maverick didn't hear Nico, he pinched his thigh hard and mustered all his strength to straighten his back once more, maintaining the most upright posture to take the punishment.

Undoubtedly, it hurt terribly.

However, Maverick couldn't leave without a word, especially with the threats still looming around Gwendolyn. He had to help her to get rid of the final trouble before he could walk away without any worries.

Moreover, if he were to leave now, wouldn't the twenty whips he had endured earlier be in vain?

"Let's continue."

Nico's voice trembled as he called out, "No! You can't take it anymore!"

Maverick ignored him completely. "Logan, keep going!"

Nico was infuriated. His eyes were bloodshot with anger, and he clenched his fist so hard that they turned pale. Yet, as an outsider, there was nothing Nico could do, and not to mention that Maverick was as stubborn as a mule.

Logan remained still. From the conversation between the two, he could tell that Maverick seemed to be seriously injured this time.

He glanced at Maverick's back once again.

If he were to whip again, the last ten lashes could only be struck on the lower back.

After pondering for a moment, he looked at the two bodyguards inside the room and said, "There's no need for you to guard here. Go outside."

"Yes."

After the two guards left, Logan took out a handkerchief and carefully wiped off the bloodstains from the whip before swinging it again.

The sharp sounds of ten consecutive lashes rang out.

All of them landed on the empty ground beside Maverick.

"Mr. Wright, the thirty lashes have been executed. You may get up now." While wiping the whip clean, Logan continued, "Three days is the final deadline. You must return by then. Please keep that in mind."

Maverick stood up forcefully with Nico's support. "Thank you."

Logan bowed slightly to him without saying anything.

Suddenly, one of the guards outside rushed in. "Mr. Wright, a car has stopped at the construction site entrance, and a woman got out. Do you want us to..." He made a throat-slitting gesture.

Woman?

Maverick furrowed his brows. "How did she look like?"

"Extremely beautiful."

That must be Gwendolyn. Why is she here all of a sudden?

Maverick looked at Logan. "Retreat now. She is someone important to me. Don't make a move, and don't let her notice anything."

"Understood. Please take care of yourself these three days."

Gwendolyn entered the abandoned construction site in her high heels and observed her surroundings carefully.

Elven had mentioned that there were numerous hidden sentries nearby, yet she hadn't noticed anything along her way.

Had they already retreated?

The construction site was vast. She quickened her pace and searched through every building.

Finally, in a secluded dilapidated house, she spotted that familiar tall figure.

Nico had just finished helping Maverick to fasten the last gold button on his suit collar.

Seeing that Gwendolyn had already entered, Nico realized he didn't have enough time to assist Maverick with his tie. He discreetly slipped the tie into his pocket and moved to the side, bowing his head in silence.

Taking a deep breath, Maverick suppressed the intense pain in his back. He looked at Gwendolyn, his gaze gentle. "Why are you here?"

Gwendolyn didn't answer his question. The crease between her brows deepened, and she wore a stern expression. "Why was Nico helping you with your buttons when I came in? What were you doing?"

A faint smirk played at the corners of his pale lips. "It's just that one button on my collar came undone accidentally. Nico saw it and helped me fasten it."

Gwendolyn glanced at Nico. He hung his head low in silence, and she couldn't read his emotions.

She approached Maverick and questioned him again, "Then why are you here?"

"Nico received a message saying that someone from the Central Intelligence Agency was here, so I came over to check it out. But they've already left by the time I arrived."

Gwendolyn shifted her gaze back to Nico. "Was what he said true?"

Nico paused for two seconds and replied without a hint of emotions, "Yes."

Maverick's fingertips trembled slightly as he gently tugged at Gwendolyn's sleeve. "Gwendolyn, it's cold outside. I want to go back to the villa."

"Wait a moment."

Gwendolyn remained unmoved by his playful actions with her eyebrows furrowed.

Although Nico kept his head low to conceal his emotions, she still noticed a hint of redness in his eyes.

Turning her gaze back to Maverick, she noticed his face and lips were pale. It struck her as odd, considering he had been in good health just a few days ago.

“You were fine this morning. Why do you suddenly look unwell now?”

Maverick remained composed. He used his fist to cover his mouth and coughed softly. “I might’ve caught a cold last night, but it’s not a big deal. I’ll take a couple of pills when I get back, and I’ll be fine then.”

Just a cold?

Gwendolyn’s tightly furrowed brows didn’t ease up after she listened to his explanation. Moreover, she smelled an odd scent in the air.

It smelled like a scent of unfamiliar men’s cologne mixed with a strong pungent smell of blood.

“This place has been abandoned for so long, so why is there a scent of blood?”

She walked past Maverick and looked around the room.

Eventually, she spotted a palm-sized pool of deep red on the ground. It was not dried yet and seemed like fresh bloodstains.

She slowly squatted down and reached her hand toward the pool of blood, but Maverick suddenly grabbed her wrist.

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“Don’t touch. It’s dirty.”

Gwendolyn locked her eyes with Maverick, and her mind was clear. "The blood is still fresh, which means that something just happened here. Didn't you see anything when you and Nico rushed over?"

Maverick remained silent and glanced at Nico.

Nico caught the hint and explained, "I was the first one to arrive here. When I came in, I happened to catch someone trying to escape through the window, so I injured him with a small knife. This should be the blood left by that person."

"And where is that person? How could that person escape from someone with your skills?" Gwendolyn questioned.

Nico was at a loss for words momentarily. He pretended to scratch his head in embarrassment. "I'm sorry. It was my bad. He had companions, so I didn't go after him."

Fine.

Since the person wasn't caught, there was not much for Gwendolyn to ask further.

She glanced at Maverick again. Other than his pale face and lips, he seemed fine. Could he really have caught a cold?

"Let's go back to the villa." Gwendolyn turned and walked toward the door.

Maverick followed behind her.

The wounds on his lower back would get torn with every step he took, causing him excruciating pain. It was so painful that he felt weak and weightless.

Nico quickly stepped forward and supported him by holding his arm.

Gwendolyn halted her steps and turned around when she heard the commotion. "What's wrong?"

Maverick breathed in and forced a smile. "Nothing. He slipped."

Nico was speechless.

How did I become the scapegoat for everything?

He gave Gwendolyn a wry smile. "Yes, I missed a step. But luckily, I reacted quickly and managed to grab Mr. Wright's arm in time to avoid falling!"

It was a small incident that Gwendolyn didn't pay much attention to. She swiftly left the abandoned factory.

Maverick had Nico drive away the car they came with, while he sat in Gwendolyn's car to head back together.

On the way back, clad in a suit, Maverick sat upright with his back not touching the seat of the car.

Gwendolyn noticed his action. Recalling the burns on his back, she did not dwell on it further. "How did it go with Charles today? Did you find out anything?"

Maverick swallowed hard. It took him a couple of seconds before he replied, "Nothing, but don't worry. Tomorrow, we will make him spill the beans."

"Okay."

Silence filled the remaining journey.

Soon, they arrived at Bay Villa and entered the living room together.

Gwendolyn was leisurely changing her shoes.

Maverick had already changed and was about to head up the stairs while holding onto the handrail.

He took a couple of steps but stopped and turned around before saying, "Gwendolyn, are you hungry tonight? I feel a bit tired and want to take a quick nap before cooking."

Gwendolyn felt strange, but she didn't refuse. "I'm not very hungry. We can eat later."

"Then I'll head up first."

Gwendolyn remained silent as her gaze followed his figure until he disappeared around the corner of the second floor.

For some unknown reason, she had a peculiar feeling. She couldn't help but notice that on their way back. From the subtle expressions on his face, he seemed to be enduring pain. Has his back injury worsened?

She followed him upstairs, and Maverick's door was not locked.

She gently opened the door, just enough to see someone peacefully lying under the covers and fast-asleep.

However, Gwendolyn noticed that he was sleeping face down, and he didn't even remove his suit jacket.

She pushed the door open and walked to the edge of his bed. Gently, she reached out and touched his forehead.

As her icy-cold hand made contact with his forehead, Maverick's eyelashes trembled slightly. "I'm not running a fever, and I'm just tired. I'll feel better after getting some sleep."

Indeed, he was only slightly warm, indicating no fever.

Perhaps she was overthinking.

“Okay, you should get some rest then.” Gwendolyn withdrew her hand. Just when she was about to stand up and leave, a strong force suddenly pulled her back.

Before she could react, she realized that someone had wrapped his arms around her waist. He even nestled his head in her embrace with his upper body sprawled across her lap.

She was initially taken aback, never expecting him to be so bold this time.

“Let go!”

Not only did Maverick not loosen his grip, but he also grabbed her tighter around her waist and burrowed into her arms.

“Just let me hug you for a little while,” he pleaded.

Gwendolyn froze for a moment before suddenly recalling her resolution from last night to make things clear with him. Her expression turned icy cold in an instant.

She reached out and forcefully tried to pry his arm away. “Let go! Have you forgotten your place here? In this villa, I’m the one calling the shots, and you should listen to me!”

Maverick didn’t have much strength left. Just as Gwendolyn was about to forcibly remove his arms from her waist, he pleaded softly, “Please, just let me hold you for a little while. Just this once...” For one last time.

Even if he managed to survive the ambush in the forest of the eastern suburbs three days later and successfully returned to Salinsburgh to resolve the turmoil within the family, his chances of survival

remained slim.

In his final moments, he wanted to remember her scent and the tenderness of her embrace.

Gwendolyn steeled her heart and continued to pry his hand off. "Let go. I need to go to the study to work!"

"Don't. Please..."

His voice was barely audible and filled with sorrow.

Gwendolyn suddenly froze. He was actually begging me?

Lately, he had been a sweet talker, more submissive, and pretended to be vulnerable. But she knew that deep down, he had always been prideful.

This was the first time he had begged her for something.

Gwendolyn didn't say anything more. She merely stood still and allowed Maverick to hold her.

The room fell into a deep silence.

Everything seemed peaceful as time stood still.

Maverick's brow furrowed tighter and tighter.

With every breath he took, his entire body throbbed in pain.

As he had yet to apply medicines, the pain continued to intensify and grew more unbearable.

Yet, the sweet scent emanating from Gwendolyn's body was as sweet as honey, making him reluctant to let go.

His upper body rested on Gwendolyn's lap, and she could sense his heavy breathing.

Something doesn't feel right.

"It has been five days since you burnt your back. The wound shouldn't be hurting as much as before, right? Why do you seem so uncomfortable?"

Maverick remained silent.

Doubts filled Gwendolyn's mind as she reached out to touch the collar of Maverick's shirt, only to have her wrist grabbed by Maverick once again.

"I'm fine, especially since I've already applied medicine. If you remove the bandages, I'll have to reapply the medicine."

He had a point, but still...

"But why do you look like you're in so much pain? Did you get hurt while you were out today?"

Her question was met with a prolonged silence.

Gwendolyn ruffled his short hair agitatedly and chided him in a soft voice, "Who taught you to disregard your master's questions? Did someone from the Central Intelligence Agency harm you today? Get up and take off your clothes. Let me have a look."

Another round of undressing?

Maverick sighed in resignation. Just when he was about to respond, Elven knocked on the door.

“Ms. Shalders, the Newton family’s bodyguard has arrived.”

“Why would the Newton family’s bodyguard come here?”

Could it be that the Newton family already found out that Charles went missing at my place?

Elven replied, “It’s because the daughter of the Newton family had caused some trouble. They couldn’t find Mr. Newton, and since you’re the only one available in Fairlake, they’re hoping you could go over and help out. Ms. Shalders, will you be going?”

Gwendolyn remained silent.

She had been close with Jasmine since they were young. The Newton family and the Harris family had a close relationship, too. If the Newton family’s bodyguard had come looking for her, and Charles was being held captive and interrogated, it wouldn’t be right for her not to go and bring Jasmine over to take care of her for a couple of days.

But Maverick...

She looked down at the person in her arms. As if sensing her gaze, Maverick released his grip around her waist and settled back onto the bed.

“I’ll sleep a bit more and have the dinner ready when you come back.”

Since he had said so, Gwendolyn didn’t have much to say in response. “You should rest, but when I come back later, I still need to check your injuries. All right?”

Maverick acknowledged with a hum.

Gwendolyn sat by his bedside for a while. Seeing that his breathing gradually steadied and that he seemed calm, she finally left with Elven, Ezra, and the Newton family's bodyguard.

As the sound of the car engine faded into the distance, Maverick called for Justin.

"Mr. Wright, what's the matter?"

Maverick gritted his teeth and took a few deep breaths to ease the pain before he finally uttered, "The first-aid kit... It's in the storage cabinet in the living room on the first floor. Please help me treat my wound."

"Oh, okay!"

Justin immediately went downstairs. In no time, he returned with the first-aid kit.

"Mr. Wright, are you hurt anywhere?"

"Take off... My clothes..."

Maverick's voice was strained and filled with profound exhaustion.

Not wasting any time, Justin quickly stepped forward to help him remove his suit.

However, as soon as Justin removed Maverick's suit, he was shocked to see the extensive bloodstains on Maverick's white shirt on his back.

"D*mn! H-How did you get injured like this?"

A large part of the silk fabric was already stuck to the wound, and the blood had dried up.

With trembling hands, Justin tried to remove Maverick's shirt twice, but to no avail.

However, he could already see the large, bloody wound caused by the whip. Maverick's skin and flesh had been split open.

"Oh my gosh! Who did this? They genuinely didn't spare you any mercy!"

Justin used to be a fighter for a black market organization where the rules were strict, and it was normal for less competent fighters to be beaten to death. Fortunately, he did not get beaten up too often.

Maverick, on the other hand, lived a refined lifestyle and was, therefore, not accustomed to sustaining such severe injuries.

Quickly, Maverick hushed Justin up. "Don't yell. Close the door and windows and draw the curtains. If you can't remove my shirt, just apply a warm towel to my back."

"Okay, okay." Justin did as he was told and hurried to the bathroom to grab a warm towel. He could not bear to see Maverick in pain, so he said, "Mr. Wright, the warm compress may hurt, so... please bear with it."

Applying a warm towel to the wound was akin to experiencing the burning pain again.

Maverick trembled as a thick layer of cold sweat covered his body. He gripped the pillow with both hands until it became deformed.

Even though Justin did not get beaten up often, he was experienced in treating the wounds of other people.

He took an anti-inflammatory pill from the first-aid kit and stuffed it inside Maverick's mouth. Then, he brought over a basin of water to clean the bloodstains on the man's back. The old bandage on Maverick's body was already soiled, so it had to be removed.

"Mr. Wright, who assaulted you? Apart from Ms. Shalders, who would dare to do this to you..." Justin widened his eyes and asked softly, "Did Ms. Shalders actually do this?"

Feeling dizzy, Maverick buried his face in the blanket, refusing to entertain Justin.

After pondering over the subject, Justin realized something was amiss. "It can't be Ms. Shalders. If it were her, you wouldn't have asked me to treat your wound secretly."

"Stop making wild guesses and hurry up. I need to cook before Gwendolyn returns," Maverick snapped.

He's already in very bad shape, especially with the wound on his lower back. Even walking will hurt. Yet, he still wants to get up and cook?

Justin felt really bad for Maverick.

He let out a sigh. Wanting to ensure that Gwendolyn and the other bodyguards did not notice the torn shirt, he decided to hide the shirt under the bed after failing to think of a better solution at the moment.

Disinfecting the wound with iodine was not as painful as compared to alcohol. He took a cotton swab and applied some iodine on Maverick's back, taking him quite a while to treat the wound.

Initially, Maverick already had a bandage around the burn on the middle of his lower back. This time, Justin had to bandage the man's entire back and waist instead.

As Maverick insisted on getting out of bed, Justin had no choice but to give the former another shot of antibiotics.

Half an hour later, Gwendolyn returned to the villa.

She was accompanied by Jasmine, a lively young woman who was chattering away cheerfully.

Jasmine studied the villa from top to toe and clung to Gwendolyn's arm playfully. "Not bad, Gwendolyn! I didn't expect your villa to be situated in such a lovely environment. Coming here is definitely the right choice! Let me stay here for a few more days, please!"

Unfazed, Gwendolyn spoke firmly. "As agreed, it'll only be for three days. When the time comes, I'll have my bodyguard escort you onto the plane back to Salinsburgh."

Jasmine pouted and murmured sadly, "Hmph! You're so heartless, Gwendolyn."

"Don't start," Gwendolyn replied with a softened tone. "We can't have any more incidents like the one at the bar today. If you want to stay with me for a few days, you need to behave yourself, okay?"

"Okay!"

The two of them entered the villa joyfully.

As soon as Gwendolyn opened the door, she was greeted by the enticing aroma of food and instinctively directed her gaze at the kitchen.

Didn't I tell him to rest before I left? Why did he still get up to cook?

Maverick sensed the women's presence and came out of the kitchen.

Immediately, Gwendolyn realized that he had changed into a dark silk shirt. The two buttons on his collar were slightly undone to reveal part of his collarbone, and he seemed to have washed his hair too, for it was not completely dry. Furthermore, he exuded an irresistible charm with his exquisite and handsome features.

It also looked like his condition and complexion had improved significantly.

“Why aren’t you wearing a coat? Have you taken your cold medicine?”

Although she sounded as indifferent as ever, she had expressed concern for him as soon as she came home, which warmed Maverick’s heart.

“You said you’ll check on me tonight, so I didn’t wear a coat.”

As he spoke, he pulled up his shirt to reveal the bandage on his back. “I did get a minor injury during the day, but as you can see, it’s been treated and bandaged properly.”

Gwendolyn remained silent.

Jasmine, on the other hand, stared intently at his face and exclaimed, “Gwendolyn, who is he? He’s so handsome! You have such good taste. The men around you all look top-notch!”

When they were at Realm Bar previously, Maverick was already injured when Jasmine arrived, so she did not get a good look at his face.

This time, upon seeing his face clearly, she could not keep her eyes off him.

“He’s my housekeeper,” answered Gwendolyn emotionlessly.

“Is he just a housekeeper?” Jasmine’s eyes lit up. “Can I borrow him for a few days, then?”

“No,” Gwendolyn rejected with a frown without a second thought.

Seeing Jasmine stare at Maverick like a piece of meat pissed Gwendolyn off. She glared at the man and ordered, “Wear your clothes properly! You look so unpresentable. And go upstairs to put on your coat before coming back down.”

“All right.”

He nodded obediently without glancing at Jasmine, buttoning his shirt hastily before heading upstairs.

Jasmine tugged at Gwendolyn’s sleeve playfully, still refusing to give up. “I can’t believe even your housekeeper is so handsome! You’re usually busy with work and hardly have time to hang out with me. Gwendolyn, you’re the best! Just let him accompany me for a couple of days, pretty please!”

The crease between Gwendolyn’s eyebrows grew deeper. “No, it’s non-negotiable.”

“Gwendolyn...”

“Time to eat!”

Jasmine pouted and followed the woman into the dining room reluctantly.

After dinner, Gwendolyn selected a relatively clean room for Jasmine on the third floor. They chatted for a while before the former went back to her own room to retire for the night.

The following morning, at only six o’clock, Nico printed out the documents on behalf of Charles and delivered them to Bay Villa personally.

He feared that he would get chewed out after that business of drugging Elven and the other bodyguards. Therefore, he decided to wait at the villa’s backdoor.

Maverick came out to collect the documents by himself.

His expression grew solemn as he skimmed through them. At once, he went upstairs and knocked on Gwendolyn’s room door.

However, there was no response from her after ages.

Is she in a deep slumber?

After thinking about it, he decided to let it slide. Indeed, it's still too early. I'll talk to her after she wakes up instead.

Unexpectedly, the moment he turned around, he saw the woman walking down the hallway, dressed casually and holding a cardboard box.

"Were you outside?"

Gwendolyn regarded him languidly. "No, I merely went to the front door to collect a parcel."

There are so many bodyguards at the villa. Since when does she collect parcels on her own? What's so special about that parcel?

In spite of his curiosity, Maverick did not ask any further questions.

She walked past him and opened the door to her bedroom. "If you have something to tell me, come in."

He followed her inside and handed her the documents that were given to him by Nico. "It's from Charles. Take a look."

"All right."

Despite her acknowledgment, Gwendolyn did not even glance at the documents. Rather, she was focused on opening the parcel.

Inside the cardboard box lay a box of ointment.

She handed it to him. "Take it."

Maverick stared at her, lost in thought.

Did she... buy this for me?

Chapter 200

Upon noticing Maverick's puzzled expression and the faint hint of surprise in his eyes, Gwendolyn explained, "Didn't you say that ordinary ointment is useless for injuries caused by the S40 strong corrosive potion? Yesterday morning, I instructed someone to buy this specific ointment. Use it. The wound on your back should heal faster."

The man lowered his head and studied the box of ointment in his hand.

Although she did not tell him, he was certain that this ointment could only be acquired from the war laboratory. He figured that she must have contacted Asher to obtain it.

The medicine was indeed quite effective. However, he had the S404 RNA virus in his body, so this ointment would not be of any help to his wound.

"Thank you. This is the first gift you've given me since our divorce."

With red-rimmed eyes, Maverick rubbed the box of ointment gently with his thumb. Even the wound on his body did not feel that painful anymore.

"It's not exactly a gift. You got hurt because of me this time, so this is my way of making amends. Besides..."

Gwendolyn paused, and her lips curled into a sinister smile before she continued, "The real post-divorce gifts are the Wright family's bankruptcy, your employment agreement, and that 023 special drug."

For a moment, Maverick was stunned.

All of a sudden, the situation did not seem so touching anymore.

Gwendolyn was delighted to see his frozen expression. She beamed with delight as she picked up Charles' testimony, which was lying on the desk.

She read every single word and sentence carefully. Soon, her smile disappeared from her face, and she began to tense up.

"Charles said that he was instructed by Hector to do those things at the bar and splash that bottle of potion?"

Hector Harris was her fourth paternal uncle and an idler who lacked ambition in the Harris family.

Previously, Gwendolyn had considered the possibility that Gideon Harris, her third uncle, could be the one trying to harm her. It was beyond her expectation that Hector could be behind all of this.

Maverick nodded. "Although Charles might not have told us everything, the fact that he could describe the details of their communication means he's probably telling the truth. Hector's son works at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Charles fears him. It makes sense that Charles would listen to Hector and sneak into the lab to steal the drugs."

She sat down on the small couch next to her and remained silent for a long time. Gradually, her expression turned into one of rage.

"I can't let Hector Harris off the hook! Tomorrow, I'll head to Salinsburgh discreetly to have my revenge!"

Gwendolyn felt furious when she thought of how Hector tried to disfigure her with such an underhanded method. She would not stand for it, and she wanted him to have a taste of his own medicine.

She raised her head, and Maverick's wound came to mind. "You're wounded, so stay in the villa and rest. You're not allowed to come with me this time."

The man was trying to think of a good excuse. Since she would not allow him to accompany her, he decided to take advantage of the situation.

"Okay, I'll wait for your return at the villa."

As he uttered the last few words, his voice grew softer. Nevertheless, Gwendolyn did not notice it, for she was still reading Charles' testimony seriously.

"That old fart is as slippery as an eel!" she muttered.

"It sounds like you're well acquainted with this Mr. Harris. Have you been to the Harris residence before?"

Maverick raised his eyebrows. Even though he had already guessed that she was most likely the heiress of the Harris family, she had never mentioned it before. Thus, he suddenly felt the urge to get something out of her.

Upon hearing his question, Gwendolyn looked up to meet his gaze and raised an eyebrow too. "I'm not well acquainted with him, but I do know Mr. Treyton Harris quite well. Perhaps Mr. Treyton Harris' kindness to me has resulted in jealousy among the Harrises, so they decided to harm me."

"Oh."

Maverick tried to stifle his laughter.

When he looked up, he discovered that she was observing his expression with a sharp gaze.

Quickly, he put on a displeased expression.

“Why are you telling me this? I don’t think Treyton is that nice to you,” he added.

With her chin propped on her palm, Gwendolyn replied in a teasing manner, “So, are you jealous again?”

Maverick lowered his head to avoid answering her question. “I’m going to prepare breakfast,” he muttered.

Only after exiting her room did he smile helplessly.

Gwendolyn chuckled as well. Once the man was gone, she went through the testimony two more times, then began making arrangements for her return to Salinsburgh tomorrow.

While Maverick was preparing breakfast, Jasmine purposely woke up fifteen minutes earlier.

She wore a light pink nightgown which made her look alluring yet adorable. Leaning against the kitchen door, she tilted her head as she watched him cook.

They say that men who can cook are the sexiest! Moreover, he’s so handsome! He’s eye candy, indeed. I’m tempted to sneak him back to the Newton residence and have fun with him for a few days. What should I do?

Maverick sensed that someone was watching him but ignored her out of annoyance.

“Hey! I’ve been standing here for ages. Can’t you see me?” Jasmine teased. She pouted and looked somewhat unhappy.

Still, he pretended not to hear her and chopped the vegetables skillfully.

“You’re extremely rude! I’m both the owner and the guest, as well as the darling daughter of the Newton family! You’re merely a housekeeper employed by Gwendolyn. How dare you ignore me?”

She was rather aggrieved.

Ever since she was a little girl, everybody pampered and indulged her. As a result, she did not expect a mere housekeeper like Maverick to disregard her.

He stopped chopping the vegetables and stated sternly, "My only owner is Gwendolyn. Nobody else can order me around except her."

It was Jasmine's first time encountering a subordinate with such a haughty attitude. Thus, she was immensely disgruntled. "How dare you speak to me like that! Why can't I order you around?"

She stormed into the kitchen and poured the fresh milk that Maverick had warmed up for Gwendolyn on the floor with an arrogant expression.

"Apologize! I want you to speak to me tenderly, just like how you speak to Gwendolyn! Otherwise, I'll tell her that you spilled her milk and make her punish you!"

The man's gaze instantly darkened, and his whole body exuded a terrifyingly hostile aura.

Without hesitation, he grabbed the empty glass and threw it on the floor.

The glass shattered near the young woman's feet, causing her to leap in fright. Her face became as white as a sheet. She was worried that the shards of glass might cut her slender legs.

Maverick merely shot her an icy glance and carried on with preparing breakfast.

Jasmine was on the verge of tears. "How dare you treat me like this? You've gone too far!"

She rushed forward in a fury and raised her hand to slap him.

A flash of anger flickered in his eyes. Immediately, he tightened his grip on the knife.

What an unreasonable fool! And she's Charles' little sister, too! If she dares to lay a hand on me, I'll kill her!

Nonetheless, before he could make a move, someone grabbed Jasmine's wrist from behind.

Jasmine looked back and saw that it was Gwendolyn. Her eyes instantly reddened.

"Oh, Gwendolyn, he bullied me! He even tried to hurt me with a glass! Although he's handsome, he's much worse than those guys at the bar last night!"

Tears welled up in her eyes as she went on indignantly, "He's so disobedient and evil! Gwendolyn, you must punish him for me!"

Instead of releasing her grip on Jasmine's wrist, Gwendolyn shot Maverick a curious look. With a slight curve of her lips, she asked, "She says you're disobedient and evil. Is she telling the truth?"

I wonder how he'll react after being falsely accused by Jasmine. Will he throw a fit, or will he accept his punishment coolly?

Meeting Gwendolyn's clear gaze, Maverick set the knife down and washed his hands. Following that, he approached her and held her free hand gently.

His eyes were slightly bloodshot, and he looked sullen, like a person who had been wronged.

"She wanted to order me around, but you're the only one I obey. Plus, I've always been well-behaved and obedient. I don't know why she's slandering me..."

Jasmine was taken aback.

What the heck? This didn't go as planned! He's a better actor than me!