

Her Riches 201

Chapter 201

It was Jasmine's first time encountering such a shameless man, and she was shocked into silence.

Standing at the side, Gwendolyn felt like she was about to die from laughter.

Jasmine was too spoiled by her family, so she was used to having her way all the time. Unexpectedly, she faced her first-ever setback because of Maverick.

"Gwendolyn..." Jasmine looked at Gwendolyn with a pout, her eyes watery. Though she wanted to complain more, she was worried that her acting would be less convincing than Maverick's.

Gwendolyn's expression gradually turned serious as she met Jasmine's eyes. "Jasmine, he's right. He only listens to my orders. You're staying at my place, eating here, and using my things. Now, you even want to hit my person? Aren't you being too much?"

Jasmine froze.

"This is not the Newton residence. Although I consider you to be my little sister, I won't coddle you without a bottom line."

"Gwendolyn..."

"I'm going to Salinsburgh tomorrow, and you will go with me. I'll book a plane ticket for you."

"What? I'm leaving tomorrow already? I've only been here for less than three days! Gwendolyn..."

Gwendolyn ignored Jasmine's efforts to act cute.

If she didn't bring Jasmine back to the Newton residence, the latter would have to stay with Maverick on her own for two days at the seaside villa.

"You've been away from home for days, and it's time to return." Gwendolyn pushed Jasmine's shoulder, a bit annoyed. "Go upstairs and change before you come back down. Who are you trying to seduce, walking around in a nightgown?"

Jasmine pouted and climbed the stairs reluctantly.

Once she was gone, Gwendolyn turned around to face Maverick.

He seemed to be in a good mood as his eyes twinkled with delight.

Shooting him a glare, Gwendolyn sneered, "How does she look in her nightgown? Gorgeous?"

Maverick raised his hands in submission and protested, "I'm innocent! I didn't even notice what color she was wearing. Besides, you're the sexiest woman in this world for me. I only like looking at you."

Gwendolyn did not like hearing such cheesy words. She changed the topic, chiding, "I can't believe you pitched yourself against a twenty-year-old girl and put on an act like that. Do you have nothing better to do?"

Then, she pointed at the shattered glass on the floor. "You broke my glass, so you have to compensate me."

"All right, I will. Is ten times the amount enough?" Maverick coaxed, gazing at Gwendolyn affectionately.

"I guess." Gwendolyn arched her brow and voiced smugly.

While Maverick stared at her radiant, smiling face, he tried to engrave the image in his heart.

At that moment, he was overcome with the urge to pull her into his arms and never let go.

Sadly, he might not have the chance to do that anymore.

After breakfast, Gwendolyn surprisingly did not leave for work. She rested at home the entire day and prepared for her trip to Salinsburgh the next day.

Sitting on the couch in the living room, she arranged work-related matters on her phone while a TV show played in the background.

Maverick washed some apples and sat on the one-seater at the side, quietly peeling the fruit for her.

Meanwhile, Jasmine had Elven and the other bodyguards set up a swing for her in the courtyard.

Peaceful times always passed by quickly.

The next day, Gwendolyn and Jasmine packed their things for the trip. Maverick voluntarily carried Gwendolyn's luggage downstairs while Ezra helped Jasmine with hers.

Out of concern, Treyton decided to accompany them to Salinsburgh. They had agreed to meet at the airport.

When Maverick offered to see Gwendolyn off at the airport, she declined.

"You don't need to go to Wright Construction Group while I'm in Salinsburgh. Yulia is there, so everything will be fine. Just stay at the villa in the meantime. I asked William, Quinton, and Justin to stay behind and guard the villa."

Maverick suggested, "You should bring more people since you'll be there for two days. Just leave Justin in the villa. There is no need for so many bodyguards since I won't go anywhere. And with my fighting skills, even the five of them won't be able to stop me if I'm set on leaving."

Maverick's words made sense to Gwendolyn. With that, she brought William and Quinton with her and left Justin in the villa.

Jasmine was already sitting in the car, waiting unhappily. Upon putting everything in order, Gwendolyn turned to open the car door when Maverick suddenly grabbed her wrist.

“What—”

Before she could continue, Maverick enfolded her in his embrace.

“Take care, and remember to eat your meals properly.”

“Yeah,” Gwendolyn responded calmly without much expression.

I’ll only be away for two days. It’s not like we’re going to be separated by death. Why is he being so dramatic?

Nevertheless, she did not speak her thoughts and tease Maverick. After letting go of him, she opened the door and got into the car.

As the engine started, Maverick stood in the same spot and watched fixedly until the car left his sight.

Justin stood beside him and glanced at his intent expression a few times. Finally, Justin reminded, “Mr. Wright, Ms. Shalders has left. Please go back in now. The weather is cold, and you’re injured.”

Without a word, Maverick remained still.

Unable to convince him, Justin could only return to the villa on his own.

Treyton joined Gwendolyn at the airport, and the group soon embarked on the plane.

Immediately, Treyton brought over a blanket and draped it over Gwendolyn, who was staring out the window. She did not refuse the gesture as her gaze remained glued outside.

For some reason, she began feeling anxious after boarding, and her eyelids would not stop twitching.

Noticing her discomfort, Treyton passed her a calming pill. "Maybe you're just worried since you're returning to Salinsburgh secretly after so long."

"Maybe," Gwendolyn replied. She had no idea either where this feeling of anxiety was coming from.

As Fairlake was quite far from Salinsburgh, it was almost nighttime when they arrived.

The first thing Gwendolyn did was to ask someone to bring Jasmine back to the Newton residence. Afterward, they headed to Treyton's villa since it was near Hecalion Estate, the place Hector lived in.

There, Gwendolyn, Treyton, and Elven had a meeting regarding the next day's plans. The meeting lasted for a few hours.

When everything was settled, Gwendolyn stretched her arms and rubbed her shoulders lazily.

All that was left to do now was to wait for the next day.

After washing up, Gwendolyn returned to her room to sleep. Perhaps the trip had tired her out, as she drifted off minutes after her head hit the pillow.

However, she had a restless sleep.

She had a strange dream. Everything around her was burning, the buildings and structures crackling and popping.

A tall man stood amidst the sea of fire, covered in blood and wounds. Despite his disheveled state, his aura remained proud and outstanding.

Although he had his back to Gwendolyn, his figure seemed somewhat familiar.

When he finally turned around unsteadily, the glow of fire illuminated his handsome face.

Maverick?

His face was bloodied all over, and more blood continued to flow from the corner of his mouth.

Pain and sorrow filled his ebony eyes.

The next second, he fell to his knees weakly as if he had just gone through a hard battle.

“Gwendolyn. Gwendolyn...”

Gwendolyn jolted awake, only to realize it was just a nightmare.

The time on her phone told her that it was only two in the morning.

In a daze, she sat on the bed and recalled the scenes from the dream.

Everything felt all too real—Maverick’s cold, dark eyes and the way he desperately and aggrievedly called her name again and again.

Gwendolyn couldn’t bring herself to sleep again. Feeling uneasy, she picked up her phone and called Maverick.

To her dismay, the call was unanswered.

Why isn't he answering?

Gwendolyn grew increasingly agitated. The call was automatically cut off as it wasn't answered, but she did not give up.

On her fourth attempt, the call was finally picked up.

A deep, familiar voice came from the other end of the line. "What's wrong?"

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It was Maverick's voice.

Although Gwendolyn first heaved a sigh of relief, it was soon replaced by anger. "Why didn't you answer the phone?"

The man's tone was tinged with sleepiness and fatigue as he replied, "I was asleep. It's already so late. Why haven't you turned in? Did something happen?"

"Nothing. I couldn't sleep."

"Do you want me to keep you company?"

"Mm," Gwendolyn responded softly. When she recalled the dream she had earlier, she reprimanded him sternly, "I'm reminding you again. You're not allowed to go anywhere for two days. Also, keep your phone ringer volume at the highest! You must answer my calls no matter what!"

On the other end of the line, Maverick was silent for a moment before replying faintly, "Okay. Are you feeling sleepy now?"

"I'm not tired."

“Shall I tell you a story?”

“Don’t.”

“Then, are you hungry? You can give me your address, and I’ll get something delivered to you.”

“I’m not hungry.”

Maverick was speechless. She’s truly a conversation killer. How am I supposed to keep the flow going?

Unable to sleep, Gwendolyn settled for Maverick telling her a story in the end.

Maverick regaled her with the jokes he had found online.

He was not good at telling jokes, and there were a lot of awkward silences. Hypnotized by his voice, Gwendolyn gradually drifted off to sleep before she knew it.

The next day, Gwendolyn proceeded to carry out her affairs with the order they had settled upon.

Hector stayed at Hecalion Estate for the entire day and never left.

When Gwendolyn saw that it was getting late, she began to feel impatient and sent Treyton to lure him out.

After about half an hour, Hector came out with Treyton. However, he had just exited the villa’s doors when he was suddenly knocked out with a bat.

Hector woke up to find his legs bound to a chair. His mouth was bound, and a table was placed before him.

His surroundings were enclosed and dim. It looked as if he were in a basement.

Baffled, he began to struggle and made desperate noises.

As the door of the basement was thrown open, he saw a woman enter and walk toward him. Her makeup was exquisite, and her eyes were like starry pools that could suck one in. She was gorgeous, like a fairy.

Hector was stunned when he saw the woman. Her sudden appearance had also made him cease to struggle.

Gwendolyn sneered when she saw his reaction. "You must have seen a picture of me recently, Uncle Hector. We've not met for so many years, and surely I must have grown more beautiful. Yet, you were able to recognize me at a glance."

She went over to the table in front of Hector and sat down on the chair opposite. After sitting down, she gave Elven a look.

Elven came forward and tore the tape that was keeping Hector's mouth shut.

Pain engulfed Hector as some strands of his mustache came off with the tape.

Furious, he glared at Gwendolyn. "I'm your fourth uncle! How dare you use Treyton to bait and kidnap me! Is this how you should treat your elders?"

Gwendolyn rested her chin on her hand, smiling nonchalantly. "It's not like you were unaware of my lawlessness. Anyway, I have a good attitude! In fact, you've become a disgraceful elder and are no longer worthy of respect."

Hector narrowed his eyes. "Me, disgraceful? I've always stayed out of the family's affairs and enjoyed being an idle person. What is it that I've supposedly done?"

“Uncle Hector, I’m sure it will clear things up once you take a look at this.”

Gwendolyn gave Elven another look, prompting the man to put down Charles’ confession in front of Hector.

“Uncle Hector, I’m not trying to make things difficult for you. Why don’t you take a look and see if this has anything to do with you?”

Hector’s expression changed drastically when he saw the confession Elven had placed in front of him.

“Goodness me! Gwendolyn, I had no hand in this. Why would I try to have you killed? I was quite fond of you when you were young. I’d even carried you before. Do you remember? Moreover, Charles is the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. How can someone like me order him around?”

“Hm?” Gwendolyn murmured, “I heard that your son and my cousin, Luke, work at the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I wonder if this has anything to do with him? Shall I get Asher to conduct an investigation for me?”

“No! He has nothing to do with it!”

Gwendolyn slammed the table, her gaze suddenly turning sharp. “What do you mean by it has nothing to do with him? Charles already confessed everything. Do you think you can deny it with just a few words? Do you think you get to order Charles around? Let me guess; it must be because of the inheritance.”

Hector stared at her solemnly, refusing to answer.

“You did not appreciate my father going against tradition and leaving the inheritance to me, his beloved youngest daughter. Hence, you joined hands with someone and plotted to kill me. You were planning to take over the Harris family afterward, weren’t you? You’re the only one who would do such a thing. Was Uncle Gideon part of it too? What about Lorelai?”

Gwendolyn kept pressing on, not relenting in her questions.

However, Hector calmed down when she got to the end.

“Gwendolyn, you’re grasping at straws. Don’t you think it’s absurd that you want to pin the crime on me with just Charles’ confession alone?”

Gwendolyn had not expected him to retort. He’s a cunning old fox...

“It’s okay if you refuse to admit to it. Previously, someone tried to attack me while I was at the bar. They tried to ruin my face with a strong corrosive potion, S40. Since I’m always one who shares, I brought it for you too.”

Taking out a glass bottle and a special synthetic brush, Elven placed them on the table in front of Gwendolyn.

“What’s this?” Hector asked.

Gwendolyn blinked, adopting a naughty expression. “It’s S40 strong corrosive potion. Uncle Hector, don’t you think it will look good if I write a few words on your face? What shall I write?”

Hector felt his hair stand on its ends. “This drug is banned from the war research lab! How did you get your hands on it? Did Asher permit this?”

Gwendolyn was gleeful. “So, your idle and lazy persona was a facade. Since you’re aware that it’s a banned drug, how can you say that you have nothing to do with this?”

Smiling coldly, Gwendolyn popped open the bottle’s lid, holding the brush between her pale fingertips as she stirred it around in the bottle’s contents.

“You’re so stubborn, Uncle Hector. Since there’s no point in questioning you, I may as well begin. Although this is a bottle of sulfuric acid, I think it can be quite potent too.”

“You! I’m your uncle!”

Gwendolyn acted as if she had not heard his words. After pondering it over, she said, “Since you enjoy pretending to be an idle and lazy person, shall I write those words? What do you think?”

“Gwendolyn, don’t you dare!”

“Why wouldn’t I? I’d like to see you try to procure evidence and report me to the Harris family! Are you going to tell them that I suddenly came back to life after pretending to be dead, kidnapped you, and wrote on your face with acid?”

“Y-You!” Fear colored Hector’s face.

It was obvious that Gwendolyn had planned all this. There was no way he could go out and tell anyone that his niece had faked her corpse. Hector would have no choice but to keep silent on this matter.

“Kill me if you can! Just you wait!”

Gwendolyn stared at him in disdain. “I won’t dare. I’ll send you to my father after I obtain all the evidence.”

Snorting, she turned around and left the basement.

Soon, a loud and miserable wail sounded from inside the room.

Upon hearing the other party’s misery, Gwendolyn felt totally refreshed and slept exceptionally well that night.

The next day, she had just woken up when Elven knocked on her door urgently.

Upon opening the door, Gwendolyn noticed that Elven's eyes were red. The latter's voice was also all choked up.

"Justin just called to say that Mr. Wright... Mr. Wright is..."

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Gwendolyn furrowed her brows. "What's wrong with him?"

"Mr. Wright... is gone."

Gwendolyn froze on the spot.

He's gone? How can the person who talked and told stories to me through the night be gone after I wake up?

Gwendolyn found it hard to believe. "What do you mean by gone? What sort of a ruse is he pulling?"

Elven's voice was choked with sobs.

"Justin said that Mr. Wright found out about the man in black intending to kill you at night in advance. Mr. Wright told Justin to keep it a secret and went alone to help eliminate those people for you, but he... didn't return."

Gwendolyn staggered a step back, and her expression turned from shock to a sneer. "That's impossible! I don't believe it. How could that sc*m die so easily?"

Elven did not speak. Seeing that Gwendolyn was still suspicious, he could not hold back his tears.

Gwendolyn scolded, "Why are you crying? How can a grown man like you cry like this? I'll deduct half a year's wages if you keep crying."

Elven sobbed even harder after hearing this. "Boohoo... Mr. Wright was such a good person. He's gone at such a young age. Yet, you still want to deduct my salary! I feel so miserable, and these tears just won't stop!"

Gwendolyn's eyes reddened from seeing his one point eight meters tall figure's shoulders miserably quivering from his sobs.

Gwendolyn took a deep breath and stated calmly, "You can't be sure since he just hasn't come back. Send people to find him, no matter whether he's dead or alive!"

"Ms. Shalders, Ms. Shalders!" William hastily ran to her room. "Nico called and said he hopes you'll finish dealing with your things and return as soon as possible. He said that Mr. Wright is waiting for you at Bay Villa."

"Is Mr. Wright alive? Did he go back? Was he hurt last night?" Elven sniffled, and he was pleasantly surprised.

Gwendolyn did not say anything. She looked at William, waiting for his response.

William shook his head. "I don't know. Nico only said this much. Mr. Wright should have returned safely since he's waiting for Ms. Shalders at Bay Villa."

Gwendolyn and Elven breathed a sigh of relief.

"Pack your things and book the earliest flight to Fairlake."

I want to see what Maverick and Justin are up to.

"Yes, Ms. Shalders."

The group moved quickly, and they boarded the earliest flight back to Fairlake.

However, it was close to sunset when they arrived at Bay Villa.

It was winter, and the sky appeared cloudy, as if heavy rain could pour down at any moment.

Cold wind blew, but it could not stop Gwendolyn in her tracks.

Justin was nowhere to be seen when she entered the villa. It was silent and still.

Feeling confused, Gwendolyn quickly opened the villa door.

The open windows let in a surge of cold air, and the lights were not on. The man who greeted her and handed her slippers every day was not in the kitchen.

“Maverick?” Gwendolyn called out, but there was no response.

She scanned her surroundings and found a small sticky note on the coat rack.

It read: The weather has turned cold. Remember to wear an extra layer even when you’re indoors. You’ll look stunning even when wearing a heavy coat since you have a good figure.

Gwendolyn’s expression turned grim, and she yelled upstairs, “Maverick, what on earth are you up to?”

She received only the response of the prolonged silence of the air.

When Gwendolyn entered his room, she noticed that his blanket was nicely folded and his bed was chilly.

The whole room felt incredibly bleak, apart from the sound of the thin curtains rustling in the cold wind.

Gwendolyn grew increasingly uneasy, and an ill premonition brewed in her heart. She went to the third floor, but there was still no sign of him.

She returned to the living room after looking around and noticed a sticky note in the fruit basket.

It read: You should eat more fruits as they are high in vitamins.

There were more sticky notes on the refrigerator, and Gwendolyn walked over to take them down.

One read: Eat more vegetables. Stop being picky with your food. Mushrooms may not taste good, but they are very nutritious. You're very thin, and I'll still like you even if you gain ten pounds.

Gwendolyn then went into the kitchen and took a sticky note off the coffee machine.

It read: Drink less coffee at night. Remember to rest even when you're busy with work. It pains me to see you pull an all-nighter.

Gwendolyn was moved by his sincerity. However, the more she thought about it, the stranger it seemed. "Come out, Maverick! What on earth are you trying to do?"

Gwendolyn waited for a few minutes, but there was still no response. Just then, she heard a knock on the door.

Thrilled, Gwendolyn turned around to open the door.

"Why didn't you take the key—" Gwendolyn paused in her words.

Nico was standing at the door, holding an antique vase. The tears on his face had yet to dry, and his eyes were red.

Neville and Swain, who stood behind him, were also crying. Elven, Ezra, and a few bodyguards were standing at the side with sorrowful expressions.

Gwendolyn's heart skipped a beat, and a strong sense of ill premonition brewed in her heart.

She asked coldly, "Where's Maverick?"

Nico looked down at the antique vase in his hand, saying sorrowfully, "Mr. Wright is here."

Gwendolyn followed his line of sight. A hunch arose in her heart, but she refused to believe it.

As Nico cried, he explained, "Mr. Wright wanted to resolve the matter with the man in black for you last night. He secretly went to the abandoned warehouse in the eastern suburbs of the city. However, those people set a trap and doused the whole warehouse in gasoline. Mr. Wright was already engulfed in flames by the time we..."

Nico could not bring himself to finish the sentence as tears rolled down his cheeks.

Everyone was immersed in a state of grief.

Gwendolyn's eyes turned red from this depressing atmosphere. However, she still sneered coldly, "Are you saying this is his urn? Do you think I'll fall for such a trick?"

Neville and Swain sobbed even harder after hearing this. As for Nico, he forcibly held back his sobs.

"Mr. Wright has been burnt till unrecognizable from the fire. We cremated him because we couldn't bear it. We knew he loved you most, so we took him here first before taking him back to the Wright residence."

Gwendolyn stared at the urn containing Maverick's ashes in a daze. Just then, she had a flashback to the nightmare she had in Salinsburgh.

Gwendolyn can never forget his helpless and sorrowful expression in the midst of the flames.

I didn't expect it to be true.

Trembling, Gwendolyn reached out to take the urn from Nico.

Two drops of tears fell uncontrollably from her eyes.

Gwendolyn wiped away her tears and looked at Nico. She sneered coldly and asked grimly, "Are you all in this together to fool me? Do you think I'll believe you if you randomly use an urn to fool me? I want to see Maverick's body, even if he's dead! Does he think I'll give him a chance if he uses such a better to make me shed a few tears? Dream on! Is this his ashes? I'll crush it and reduce it to ashes, then! Let's see if Maverick can keep up the act, shall we?"

Gwendolyn's eyes were reddened. She raised the cremains high with a cold expression, prepared to toss it down.

"No!"

Nico, Neville, and the others fell to their knees with a loud thud.

"Mr. Wright is really dead! Whether you believe it or not, he can never come back. Mr. Wright was already injured, and he went there last night knowing he won't come out of it alive. He died for you!"

Gwendolyn stared at them in shock.

These people were machismo men who had fought countless life-and-death situations alongside Maverick.

Yet, they were kneeling before her for these ashes.

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Gwendolyn's rationality was being overturned repeatedly. Her hands trembled uncontrollably when she lowered her head to look at the vase.

Gwendolyn handed it back to Nico. However, she bit her lower lips and shook her head, sneering coldly, "I don't believe this. I dare you to make him tell me personally!"

"Ms. Shalders..."

"Get lost!" Gwendolyn yelled. She took a step back and slammed the door shut, shutting everyone out.

Taking a deep breath, Gwendolyn tried to calm down and regain her rationality.

As Gwendolyn sat on the couch, she saw the stack of sticky notes she had earlier taken down.

Gwendolyn picked them up again and carefully read through them.

She recalled the moment he pulled her into his tight embrace before they got into the car. Gwendolyn did not notice at that time, but she now realized that the corners of his eyes seemed a bit red.

Has Maverick known all along that this day would come, and was he prepared for the last time we would meet before I left for Fairlake? But... I didn't see his corpse. I don't believe it! There's no way!

Justin was not at the villa previously because he accompanied Nico and the others to the crematorium. Now, he had finally arrived.

Justin's face was full of grief when Gwendolyn called him inside.

Gwendolyn sat on the couch in a stupor. She was cold, devoid of emotions and tears.

Gwendolyn stood up suddenly and gave Justin a tight slap when he drew near.

“Uh...”

Justin staggered a step back, caught off guard. Blood seeped out from the corner of his cut lips.

Justin did not dare to wipe away the blood. Perceived the metallic taste in his mouth, he stood obediently to bear Gwendolyn’s anger.

“Ms. Shalders, go ahead and beat me to death if it makes you feel better. I’m drowning in guilt from causing Mr. Wright’s death. I’d feel better dying in your hands.”

Gwendolyn glanced at him. She withdrew her hand slowly and sat back on the couch after seeing he was truly upset.

“What exactly happened?”

“Ms. Shalders, I was originally sent from the other side to keep an eye on you, but I couldn’t bring myself to harm you. Those people didn’t want to let me off the hook and gave me an ultimatum three days ago to lure you to the abandoned warehouse on the eastern outskirts of the city. Mr. Wright found out about it, and he told me not to tell you. Mr. Wright said he would go in your place.” He began to cry uncontrollably as he spoke. “I didn’t know... that he would not be able to make it out alive. I’m sorry, Ms. Shalders!”

“Did he... have something to tell me before something happened to him?”

Justin thought for a moment. “No.”

Devastated, Gwendolyn pursed her lips tightly and lowered her eyes.

It pained Justin to see her like this. “Ms. Shalders, it’s all my fault. Go ahead and hit me! Don’t hold back. Let it all out!”

“Get out!”

“Ms. Shalders...”

“Get lost.”

Unable to convince her, Justin could only let her calm down on her own.

The window in the living room was open. Gwendolyn’s face was cold when the chilly wind blew in.

She stared at the stack of sticky notes on the coffee table, but the images of Maverick pretending to be aggrieved and fragile appeared in her mind.

Maverick used to appear aloof and indifferent in the past.

Now, all Gwendolyn could think of was his pitiful expression. She could not even recall what he used to be like.

With this in mind, Gwendolyn rushed upstairs and retrieved the box that had been stored on top of the cabinet in her room.

“Where are the photos of us? Where are our wedding photos? They were here!”

Gwendolyn made a mess while searching and finally found half of the wedding photo under the box. There was only her smiling brightly in the picture.

Gwendolyn personally cut Maverick’s part off when she decided to seek revenge against the Wright family.

Her knuckles turned white, and she opened her phone's photo album and searched for a long time.

Gwendolyn could not find a single picture of the man she had been married to for three and loved for six years.

The only thing left was an audio recording, and she clicked to play it.

A magnetic and deep voice came. "I, Maverick, vow to disappear from your world forever once this one-year employment period is over."

Gwendolyn leaned against the foot of the bed before weakly collapsing to the ground. Tears began welling up in her eyes.

Maverick disappeared before one year had passed.

Gwendolyn did not even have a chance to bid him farewell.

The night was extraordinarily long for her.

Gwendolyn was unable to fall asleep all night. Her eyes became dry and puffy from staying up all night staring out the window lifelessly.

Knock! Knock!

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door.

Gwendolyn wiped away her tears and asked calmly, "What is it?"

William was outside the door.

“Ms. Shalders, Nico has already brought Mr. Wright’s ashes back to the Wright residence. The date for his burial has been set, and the funeral will take place in three days.”

Gwendolyn furrowed her brows slightly.

Three days? So soon?

The arrangements for Maverick’s funeral were taken care of by Treyton, Nico, and Frida.

Treyton learned about the situation upon his return from Salinsburgh.

Treyton felt bitter knowing Maverick gave his life up for Gwendolyn. He decided to shoulder this responsibility to ease her guilt, knowing that she would not be able to accept this outcome.

No media or informed wealthy families dared to spread Maverick’s death with Treyton being in charge.

Maverick’s death was kept a low profile.

The weather in Fairlake had been terrible for the past three days.

It was gloomy every day, and the brisk wind could freeze the people walking on the street.

Thunder roared, and the weather was considerably colder on the day of the funeral.

The entire Fairlake was engulfed in a gloomy atmosphere as heavy rain poured down mercilessly.

It was an unsettling sight to see so many black umbrellas in front of the cemetery.

There were not many people who came. A few close business associates and several members of the Wright family came up to pay their respect.

Frida sobbed hysterically while holding her son's ashes. She had been crying endlessly the past three days and would have collapsed long ago if not for her determination to see through her son's funeral.

Sheralyn was also sobbing uncontrollably, and she repeatedly called out his name.

The air was heavy with profound sadness.

Gwendolyn was standing beneath the tree outside the cemetery, wearing only a black dress and without makeup. Although her eyes were red, she watched the situation inside the cemetery attentively in a calm manner.

Several bodyguards had gone inside to pay their respects to Maverick.

Gwendolyn did not use an umbrella. She was completely drenched by the heavy rain even though she stood under a tree. Her skinny figure appeared lonely and desolate, but she did not look pathetic.

Treyton perceptively saw her, and he walked over with a black umbrella.

It pained Treyton to see Gwendolyn's lips turn blue from the cold, so he took off his suit coat to drape it over her.

Gwendolyn used her hand to block and refuse his offer.

"He's already gone. Why do you have to put yourself through this? Listen to me, all right? You'll get sick if you carry on like this. He wouldn't want to see you burdened with guilt if he were still alive."

Gwendolyn only lowered her hand when she heard the final sentence, letting Treyton drape the suit coat over her.

Treyton helped to wipe the wet strands of hair off her cheek, and he sighed. "He's about to be buried. Do you want to go and say a few last words to him?"

Gwendolyn lowered her gaze, and neither did she speak nor move.

In the cemetery, Maverick was being formally buried.

Just then, a lawyer in a suit appeared to hand two envelopes containing written wills to Frida.

“Mrs. Wright, Mr. Wright instructed me to give you these wills on the day of his burial. I hope you will immediately open and read them privately.”

The tears on Frida’s face had not yet dried. She took over the two envelopes with trembling hands. One of them was addressed to her, and there was no name on the other one.

Frida opened the first envelope.

However, her expression froze when she read the content of the letter.

Chapter 205

It was raining heavily, and the bodyguard held an umbrella over Frida.

She walked to the side alone to examine the letter.

No one witnessed the expression of shock on her face.

She tightly clutched the letter, her eyes filled with complex emotions. After a few minutes of internal conflict, she stowed away the envelope and returned to Maverick’s grave.

“Mom, what did Maverick say?”

Frida's face bore a look of devastation as she completely disregarded Sheralyn, seemingly oblivious to her question.

"Mom, what's wrong with you? Don't scare me! What did Maverick write in the letter?"

Sheralyn attempted to grab the envelope from Frida's hand, but the latter skillfully evaded her. Sheralyn thought it was odd and went to snatch the letter again.

In a moment of desperation, Frida tore and crumpled the letter she had opened before swiftly stuffing it into her mouth and swallowing it.

"Mom, what are you doing!"

"Mrs. Wright!"

Everyone was stunned by her action.

Instead of giving everyone an explanation, Frida rushed into the rain and hugged the cold tombstone of Maverick. She wailed, "Maverick! My son, you were still so young. How could you leave me and your sister behind..."

She howled until her voice was hoarse, and the grief etched on her face touched everyone present, causing their eyes to unconsciously turn red.

Coming from a prestigious family, Frida had always maintained an air of nobility. It was the first time she had publicly lost control, embracing the tombstone while crying uncontrollably. Surprisingly, no one deemed her behavior inappropriate.

Even her act of swallowing the entire letter moments ago was understandable. A mother had lost her beloved son, after all. Moreover, Maverick was the most promising child of the Wright family.

Frida's heart was irreparably shattered.

Gwendolyn watched from a distance, her eyes red but devoid of tears, and her expression remained stoic.

Unnoticed by anyone, her fingertips, concealed beneath Treyton's suit jacket, dug deeply into her palms. It was as if her heart had grown so numb that she could no longer feel pain.

In the cemetery, Frida was on the verge of collapsing from her incessant tears. Fortunately, with Sheralyn's support and persuasive words, her emotional outbursts gradually subsided.

The funeral finally came to an end. The business partners, relatives, and friends departed one after the other, each in a somber mood.

Some individuals lamented the untimely demise of a young business genius.

Some individuals sympathized with the two remaining women in the Wright family, recognizing that their lives would be challenging with Dexter lurking in the background, ready to strike.

After everyone had left, Sheralyn escorted Frida out of the cemetery.

Sheralyn glanced up and noticed Gwendolyn standing under the tree nearby. In an instant, intense anger surged within her. "It's all because of you! You're the cause of my brother's demise! If it weren't for you, why would he be dead? How dare you show your face here?"

Gwendolyn did not argue back but instead lowered her gaze.

Treyton couldn't bear to see his younger sister getting bullied and said with a cold face, "Mind your words! She knew nothing about the matter, and this was your brother's own decision."

"Knew nothing about it?"

Sheralyn advanced, her eyes ablaze with anger as she locked her gaze on Gwendolyn. "So she thinks she can absolve herself by feigning ignorance? My brother sacrificed his life for her! But look at her, not a single tear shed in his memory. She's nothing but a heartless b*tch—"

"Sheralyn!" Frida stopped Sheralyn before the latter could curse out more profanities.

Sheralyn looked back at her mother in disbelief. "Mom! She's the one who got Maverick killed! What's wrong with scolding her? Don't you hate her too? Are you out of your mind to defend her?"

Meanwhile, Gwendolyn kept her head down and didn't refute a word.

With tears still staining her face, Frida approached Gwendolyn and offered a slight bow.

Sheralyn was taken aback. "Mom, do you realize what you're doing? You're actually bowing your head to her?"

Frida disregarded Sheralyn's words and looked at Gwendolyn before she said in a heavy tone, "I apologize to you for what my daughter said. She is overwhelmed with grief and speaks without thinking. I hope you can forgive her."

Gwendolyn was dumbfounded.

Frida has always been mean to me. Why is she acting so different today?

"Sheralyn is right, I am responsible for his death. Don't you hate me at all?"

Tears rolled down Frida's cheeks as she wiped them away with a bittersweet smile. "Mr. Harris is right. If Maverick made such a choice, it means he must have loved you deeply. I will honor his decision."

The words "loved you deeply" caused Gwendolyn's heart to ache, and she felt a slight soreness at the tip of her nose.

She tightly squeezed her palm, trying to stop the tears from flowing.

Frida retrieved a blank envelope from her bag and handed it to Gwendolyn. "He requested for you to have this in private. Don't worry, I haven't read it."

Gwendolyn took it with trembling fingers.

Frida added, "Let's set the letter aside for now. Find a seat and take your time to read it when you go back."

With that, Frida and Sheralyn leaned on each other for support and left the cemetery.

Gwendolyn carefully kept the letter inside her bag. After all the relatives and friends who had come to pay their respects had left, she entered the cemetery and approached Maverick's tombstone solemnly.

A small photo adorned the tombstone.

Its image was marred by the raindrops that fell heavily upon it.

Nevertheless, Gwendolyn easily recognized the familiar yet aloof countenance with just a single glance.

It was Maverick.

She had previously scoured her phone and villa for a photo of him but to no avail. It suddenly dawned on her that she would only be able to behold his image on the tombstone in the days to come.

She delicately wiped the water droplets off the photo, her movements gentle and patient, repeating the process again and again.

This was the only man she had ever truly loved. From now on, she would never hear his tender crooning again.

Gwendolyn fought back her tears as she tirelessly wiped off the water stains from the photo.

Treyton's heart ached as he watched Gwendolyn. "Kiddo, it's pouring outside. You can't wipe it dry."

Gwendolyn's eyes held a stubborn determination. "He is afraid of the cold and dislikes getting wet in the rain. I must do this one last thing for him, at least."

Treyton let out a resigned sigh and handed her the black umbrella he held.

Gwendolyn accepted it, opening it to cover Maverick's small tombstone. She then took out a handkerchief and meticulously wiped away every raindrop on the tombstone.

"Kiddo, you still love him very much, don't you?"

Gwendolyn didn't answer.

She had once believed that she could let go of her love for him and walk away with grace and resolution.

Had he still been alive, had their paths never crossed again after the divorce, perhaps they could have found happiness in their separate lives.

Yet, fate had a knack for playing tricks on her, repeatedly intertwining their lives.

Besides, this man had died for her.

The past torments he inflicted on her suddenly felt trivial, and a wave of guilt threatened to suffocate Gwendolyn's heart.

She took a deep breath, suppressing the overwhelming sadness that threatened to consume her.

People could never return once they were gone, so dwelling on love or its absence seemed futile now.

She said softly, "Let's go."

Treyton helped her up, placing a protective hand on her slender shoulder, and together they left the cemetery.

After being sent back to Bay Villa by Treyton, Gwendolyn made her way to Maverick's room. She entered the space and settled onto the recliner where he had often lounged, her gaze wandering around the room.

With the thought of Maverick's letter lingering in her mind, Gwendolyn opened her bag and retrieved the envelope, her fingertips delicately tracing the smooth contours of the envelope.

A few days ago, Gwendolyn had believed that Maverick had left her without a word, but now, holding his letter in her hands, she realized that he had still cared about her, even until the very end of his life.

She carefully unfolded the letter.

The first line of the letter immediately caught her eye.

It read: My dearest Gwendolyn Shalders Harris.

Gwendolyn's hands trembled uncontrollably as she stared at her name in disbelief.

So he knew my true identity all along?

Chapter 206

Why did he pretend to be jealous when I deliberately mentioned Treyton to provoke him then? Was he toying with me? How mean of him!

Gwendolyn was furious. After suppressing her desire to punch him, she continued reading.

Gwen, by the time you read this letter, I might've already left you forever. This is the last thing that I'm doing for you. You don't need to feel guilty or blame yourself. I wonder if my death would elicit some tears from you. Although I'm hoping that you'll cry, I'm afraid that you actually will. I don't want to see you unhappy. Forget it. Save your tears and become a happy, carefree princess of the Harris family.

It was only then that tears started to stream down Gwendolyn's cheeks uncontrollably.

Wiping her tears away, she tried to regain her rationality and calm down before continuing to read.

Both of us have met the right person at the wrong time. Ever since you saved me from the car thirteen years ago, I've been deeply attracted by your clear eyes. From then on, I couldn't stop loving you, who was only ten years old. Natasha impersonating you and claiming credit for saving my life remains a thorn in my life. Even if I've never touched her, even if she's already dead, I can never forgive my foolish self. What I regret the most is failing to recognize you when you were brought to the Wright residence. Even during the three years that you were married to me, I didn't treasure you. You stopped loving me by the time I wanted to make things right again. However, all of that doesn't matter. Even if you treat me as a pet or a housekeeper, I'm satisfied just by being able to see you at the villa every day. Ever since I realized that I've fallen in love with you, I've become riddled with insecurities. My self-esteem plummeted, and I became a coward.

I'd melt in happiness every time you smile at me. Even when you coaxed me lightly, I'd be so excited that I couldn't sleep for a few days. You must be feeling happy while reading this, right? All that man, who used to be so aloof and untouchable, could see is you. He's begging for the slightest bit of affection from you like a clown. How amusing and pathetic! That's right. I'm afraid of losing you.

Although I don't dare to ask for your love, I secretly wish that you could save me even the smallest spot in your heart.

Knowing that I've hurt you far too deeply in the past, I don't deserve your forgiveness. You've saved me before, so I owe you my life. This favor can never be returned. The only way is to repay it with my life. You're right about one thing. I encapsulate everything that a bad man is. While hoping that you'll forget me and find a good man who'll dote on you well, I also wish that you'll remember me forever. I've contemplated between the two for a long time. It was so painful and conflicting. Eventually, I decided to

selfishly use this life of mine to make it impossible for you to forget me. You must eat well. Don't be picky with your food. Drink less coffee and tea. Even if there's a lot of work, you must remember to wear more clothes when the weather's cold. Goodbye, my...

Although the letters of the last two words had been smudged by tears, it was obvious that they spelled out "dearly beloved."

Gwendolyn knew his handwriting, which had always been neat and pretty.

However, the handwriting in the letter was squiggly and untidy, as if the tip of the pen was unsteady. There were quite a few words that were smudged by tears.

How was he feeling when he wrote this letter? His hands were trembling so much that he could not even hold the pen properly. He must have been feeling so sad and reluctant.

Gwendolyn cried her heart out, to the extent that she started to feel breathless. She slid onto the floor from the chair and clenched her chest. Still, she could not overcome that feeling of hopeless despair and sorrow.

Why did I fall in love with him?

Gwendolyn could still clearly remember how everyone in the Wright family did not welcome her when Declan brought her to the residence after she lost her memory.

Only Maverick smiled at her and said, "That's good. I have another friend. From now on, this is your home. We are your family."

Although the smile was very faint, it was as bright as the winter sun, causing warmth to fill her heart. From then on, she started to yearn longingly for the warmth he had bestowed upon her.

He used to treat me so nicely. Why did he start to detest me and distance himself away from me? It was when Mr. Wright announced that I was going to marry him...

Gwendolyn shook her head helplessly. They really got together at the wrong time.

Warm tears streamed down her cheeks, smudging the words on the letter.

As she wiped the tears away, her gaze followed her fingertips and landed on the words, "impossible for you to forget me."

"You b*stard, Maverick!"

He had succeeded. In her lifetime, she would never forget him.

He's such a fool...

She had mentioned that saving him thirteen years ago amounted to nothing but an empty favor. It was not something significant to her.

Yet, he had it etched in his mind. Due to that feeling of gratitude, he dragged his body which was weakened by the special drug and jumped down Crane Bridge to save her. When they were at Realm Bar, he even shielded her from the highly corrosive drug at the expense of his own body.

This time, he ended up losing his life to deal with that man in black for her.

Having saved her multiple times, he no longer owed her anything. She was the one who owed him!

Now that he had left, it was impossible for her to repay his favor...

Tears flowed out of her eyes silently. That letter had destroyed any remaining rationality she still had.

Her heart ached terribly to the extent that her tears just fell endlessly, and her limbs shivered uncontrollably.

Unable to support herself anymore, she slumped onto the floor weakly.

Although the floor was icy cold, she could not feel anything. It was like her five senses had all been lost—the only thing she could feel was her aching heart.

Through the tears in her eyes, she vaguely spotted something red under the bed. It was extremely striking.

Did he hide something under the bed?

Gwendolyn wiped her tears and took in a few deep breaths. Only then did she move toward the bed and retrieve what was underneath it.

It was a bloody shirt. When she brought it closer to her face, she noticed that there was a metallic stench of blood on it.

Although the traces of blood had already dried up, the color was fairly bright, indicating that the blood got there quite recently.

When did this happen?

The sight of the large patches of blood on the shirt stung her eyes.

She frowned deeply. With that much blood, it was evident that his injury was much more severe than a mere burn on his back.

How did he get so severely injured?

Gwendolyn recalled what had happened before. After combing her memories, the only thing she could remember was when he admitted that he got injured after she brought Jasmine back to Bay Villa. However, he only mentioned it briefly and brushed the entire incident off.

In hindsight, that was very strange.

She immediately summoned William over. "Contact Nico and tell him that I want to meet him right now! Go!"

Shocked by her yell, William spun around and sprinted away. Almost falling down, he scrambled out to get Nico.

Half an hour later, Nico rushed over.

When he entered, Gwendolyn was sitting on Maverick's chair. She was in a daze, her eyes completely lifeless.

Maverick's bloody shirt was clenched in her fists. Even though she had already wiped her tears away, nothing could conceal the haggard look in her swollen eyes.

Nico lowered his head, also in a sullen mood. "Why did you ask to see me in such a hurry, Ms. Shalders?"

Staring at the bloody shirt in her hands, Gwendolyn choked back a sob and asked, "When you guys went to the abandoned construction site, did you really bump into someone from the Central Intelligence Agency? Did he get seriously injured?"

Nico did not answer her.

"At this juncture, just tell me the truth. Your honesty won't change anything. I just want to know."

Sighing, Nico said, "We didn't encounter anyone from the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. Wright didn't want you to worry, so he lied. However, it's true that he got seriously injured."

Gwendolyn frowned. "Why did he get injured?"

“Actually, Mr. Wright...”

Chapter 207

Nico recomposed himself before continuing, “Mr. Wright was actually... the captain of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Team Fourteen. There was an urgent summon from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and they never do this unless there’s something major happening. But Mr. Wright didn’t want to leave without saying goodbye. He wanted to do one last thing for you, so he requested to report to the bureau three days later. The injuries he sustained were the punishment he received for going against orders.”

There was civil conflict at that time. The collapse of a regime would happen at any time, and the change of power was imminent. It had been a massive incident.

Yet, Maverick had chosen to stay for three more days, even if it meant that he was going to be punished.

Nico suppressed his heartache and said, “It was thirty whips. He was whipped until he vomited blood, and in the end, the executioner could not bring himself to continue to do it, so he only whipped Mr. Wright twenty times.”

Gwendolyn was confused as she looked at the bloody shirt in her hands.

“What kind of whip could make him vomit blood in twenty strikes?”

“It’s not an ordinary whip; it’s a whip with steel wires wrapped around it. The whip has barbs on it, and even a gentle stroke could make the skin a bloody mess. The executioner had not shown him any mercy as every time the whip struck him, it went deep into his flesh. Mr. Wright barely had any spots for the executioner to strike because of his burns, so the last five strikes had been on his lower back...” Nico trailed off, unable to continue anymore.

He was livid and heartbroken.

Gwendolyn did not dare to imagine what the scene was like. Even hearing about it was making her feel the pain.

His back was already covered in wounds, so how did he withstand such a severe punishment? No wonder things went south for him this time. He went to kill for me despite his grievous injuries. Did he not think about how he might die?

Her throat tightened, and she gripped the blood-soaked shirt until her knuckles went white.

Nonetheless, Nico was right in front of her, so she forced her tears away.

On the other hand, Nico felt bad for his boss when he saw no tears from Gwendolyn despite telling her the truth.

He's so unlucky to have fallen for such a ruthless woman.

Alas, he was merely a subordinate and an outsider to the incident, so he had no right to comment on Gwendolyn's reaction.

After a sigh, he said with as much calm as he could muster, "To be honest, I'm here to say goodbye to you. I'll be leaving. I'm Mr. Wright's subordinate, and now that he's gone, I'm going to have to work for another boss. I'm afraid... I won't come back to Fairlake anymore. Take care of yourself."

Gwendolyn merely stared at him in silence.

Lowering his sorrow-filled eyes, Nico then turned to walk toward the exit. However, he only took two steps before a wave of resentment surged in his chest.

"No one knows how to love another the moment they're born. Mr. Wright thought he was indebted to Natasha, so he forced himself to like her. Yet, unbeknownst to him, he had already fallen in love with you during your three-year marriage. Noah used him during your plane incident without Mr. Wright's

knowledge. Even while being pursued by Mr. Asher, he searched for you for half a month. In the end, you sought revenge on him, humiliating and tormenting him. Despite that, every time you were in danger, he risked his life to save you. He never uttered a complaint, even when you hurt or tormented him. He set aside his own dignity as a man to atone for his mistakes. Do you really not... feel anything at all after all that?"

Nico's words stabbed her heart like daggers.

The agony was so intense she felt it in her bones.

Her teeth had left bloody marks on her lower lip as overwhelming guilt and self-blame threatened to drown her.

"I'm... sorry..."

Her voice was hoarse when she squeezed out those words.

Another sigh escaped Nico, and he tucked away the emotions in his eyes before heading out, closing the door behind him.

Once he was gone, Gwendolyn hugged the bloody shirt as tears rolled uncontrollably down her cheeks. Her bawls filled the room.

All of a sudden, the memory of the day they came back from the abandoned factory flashed in her mind.

Back then, he had sat with a stiff spine in the car. It was then that she realized he was hurting so much that he did not dare to lean back on the car seat.

When he went up the stairs, he had been taking slow steps while holding onto the handrail. His back had been injured, so she was certain every step he took was painful.

For the first time ever, he did not cook right away. He had said he was tired, and Gwendolyn finally realized that he must have been at his limits.

She hammered her chest in remorse. Every tear that fell onto the ground spoke of her heartache and desolation.

God... If it wasn't agonizing, he wouldn't have slipped up so much, but I never once noticed it...

That night, he had squeezed himself into her arms despite his pain, seeking her warmth.

And yet, what did she do?

Not only did she coldly shove him away, but she even uttered upsetting words to him.

Nico was right. Maverick had never said a word about the cruelty she had for him.

He would put aside all his pride to plead with her.

He had said, "No... Just let me hug you for a while. Just this once..."

He had said, "Don't... Please..."

The pain had been so great even his breathing was shaky, but he was still greedily drinking in the feel of being in her arms.

Why didn't he tell me that he was so badly injured? Was he afraid that I'd feel guilty? Was he afraid that I was going to terminate the agreement? What a silly man.

Gwendolyn curled up on the recliner as her emotions burst forth like the water of a broken dam. It felt like her misery was corroding her bones and melting her organs.

“Mavy...” she whispered, unable to speak in her despair.

You were envious that I was so close to Charles, but from now on, I'll call you Mavy so that you'll know that I care for you too, okay? Can you hear me?

Gwendolyn locked herself in Maverick's room for three whole days without food, water, or sleep.

No matter how vigorously Elven and the others knocked on the door, she never responded to them.

Even the healthiest person would not be able to take the stress.

Elven and the other bodyguards were worried about her, but there was nothing they could do. In the end, they sought Treyton's help.

Treyton kicked open the second floor's room door, only to be greeted by an empty room. However, he could hear the sound of water dripping from the bathroom.

When he walked to the bathroom and switched on the lights, he saw empty bottles of white wine strewn across the floor.

When did she clear out the wine cabinet? Did Elven and the rest not notice anything?

Treyton's gaze finally landed on the thin silhouette.

Gwendolyn was lying against the wall under the shower. She was still wearing the black dress she wore to the funeral, her entire body soaked and her eyes swollen. She had cried until she had no more tears, and despite her red cheeks, she was visibly weary.

How did she get intoxicated to this point?

Treyton knew how well his sister could hold her liquor.

Treyton's own eyes reddened, and he walked over to pull her into his arms. It was only then he realized how hot she was.

Is she having a fever?

"Kiddo? Kiddo?"

He gently patted her cheeks before gathering her in his arms, about to carry her out.

Right then, Gwendolyn woke.

She instinctively grabbed the man's sleeve when she sensed the strong arms around her. A familiar face entered her blurry line of sight.

"Maverick, it's you, isn't it? You didn't die, did you? You're lying to me again, right?"

Treyton's heart ached, and he softly said to her, "Kiddo, I'm not Maverick; I'm Treyton."

He's not Maverick?

Finally, Gwendolyn rubbed her eyes and let her vision clear up.

Upon realizing that it was genuinely Treyton, she dissolved into tears again.

"Treyton, he's dead! He died because of me... Even when he was injured, he never stopped helping me, and I even hurt him again and again. This is all my fault. I killed him. Treyton, what do I do? What can I possibly do to repay him for what he had done for me?"

Chapter 208

Treyton began crying at the sight of her tears, and he pulled her closer to his chest.

“Calm down, Kiddo. This isn’t your fault. Don’t blame yourself for everything. You never knew what was happening. If you keep tormenting yourself in this way, you’re going to be overwhelmed.”

Even though he said that, Gwendolyn merely grabbed his sleeve as the thoughts of the nightmare she had had before the day of the incident flashed past her mind.

In her dream, Maverick was covered in blood as he kneeled in the fire in devastation.

She could not register any of Treyton’s words as tears flowed uncontrollably.

“Treyton, I had always thought that he was trying to kill me, so I was fine with hating and tormenting him. I wouldn’t listen to any explanations he tried to give me. The pain he dealt me in the past was isolation and mockery, but all the pain I gave him was physical. This is my fault. I killed him. It was me...”

Treyton cupped her tear-streaked face and whispered gently in her ear, again and again, “No, it isn’t, Kiddo. You haven’t done anything wrong. You didn’t kill him. This was his choice. He’s gone, but you’re still alive, so don’t hurt yourself in this way anymore.”

“But, Treyton...”

At that, Gwendolyn buried herself in Treyton’s arms and sobbed.

“I wanted to numb myself, so I drank so much to try to forget these things. I tried to get my rationality back, but I can’t do it. The more I drink, the soberer I become. The image of him bleeding is just seared into my mind. Treyton, I... I...”

Suddenly, her breathing quickened, and her world dimmed. She passed out.

“Kiddo!”

Frightened, Treyton hastily told Elven to look for a doctor before taking her out of the bathroom to a room on the third floor.

As they were all men, they could not change Gwendolyn and clean her up. Hence, Treyton asked Elven to bring Flora to Bay Villa.

A whole group of people then took care of Gwendolyn, who was unconscious from her high fever.

When the doctor came, he gave her a shot. However, Gwendolyn was too weak. She had been drinking alcohol without eating for three days straight, almost ruining her liver. It was only after two days of IV therapy did some of the blood returned to her cheeks.

After that was a series of treatments. They busied away for two days and nights before the woman on the bed slowly returned to the waking world.

Gwendolyn's head felt like it was about to split apart, but the first word that came out of her mouth upon waking was still the same.

"Maverick..."

It was a whisper, but Treyton heard her clearly.

With a soft sigh, he stirred the soup that Flora made for Gwendolyn. "Kiddo, forget about him. I'm sure you'll meet another man who's better and loves you more."

Gwendolyn shot him a startled look and tried to retaliate, only to realize that she could not make any sound.

All adults were realistic. How many would be willing to risk their lives for someone else?

There was no way she would ever get another man who loved her in the same way.

It felt as though someone was wringing her heart like a towel. Gwendolyn clenched her chest and scrunched up her face, beads of cold sweat gathering on her forehead.

Treyton knew that she could not take the truth, but he could do nothing about it. He gently persuaded, "You're still young, and life gets better. Don't think of miserable times like these anymore, okay? Look at how terribly you've treated yourself after his funeral. I'm heartbroken to see you like this. If Dad, Asher, and Kieran find out about this, they'll be heartbroken too. Even if you don't care about yourself, you should do this for the family who loves you, all right?"

Gwendolyn averted her gaze and looked out of the window in response, ignoring him.

"Here, Kiddo. Have some soup. Flora made this, and it's the best."

Treyton lifted the spoon to her lips.

Nevertheless, Gwendolyn kept her lips pressed tightly together.

Well aware of her stubborn streak, Treyton sighed and tried a different way.

"If you want to repay him for what he has done for you, then you should be letting yourself recover as quickly as you can. He's gone, and the Wright family only has two women supporting it. Although the Wright family's assets are now all with you, Dexter will definitely make things difficult for you; you'll need to help Maverick get his family settled."

At that, a hint of light finally entered Gwendolyn's eyes.

Treyton was delighted to see the change, and he added, "If you recover quickly, you'll be able to think of the best way to deal with this situation, right?"

Gwendolyn lowered her gaze and began mulling over Treyton's words.

Treyton hurriedly brought the spoon to her lips and coaxed, "So let's have some soup, okay? We can only deal with these things once you're fine, right?"

This time, Gwendolyn accepted the soup.

Treyton was right. Frida and Sheralyn were the only members of Maverick's family left in the world. She would have to make arrangements for them on Maverick's behalf.

Wright Construction Group, too. She no longer had the heart to deal with it, so she had to hand it over to the Wrights, but it had to be someone she trusted.

Nevertheless, what Sheralyn needed was a good lesson first.

Gwendolyn spent the next two days resting and contemplating the matter. Her physical state improved, and so did the condition of her throat.

In the morning, while she was lying on the bed having oatmeal, she summoned Justin.

"Ms. Harris, were you looking for me?"

Gwendolyn was expressionless as she ate her oatmeal. "How are things on Charles' side?"

"I heard that he has been sent to a high-security prison, but I don't know how long he'll be serving. Nevertheless, he's definitely not keeping his position as the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. After all, he stole the lab's prohibited drugs. This was already a serious issue by itself, and the one he hurt was even Mr. Wright, who belongs to the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

Gwendolyn stiffened.

Immediately, Justin smacked his mouth in frustration. Treyton had already told him to mention Maverick as little as possible around Gwendolyn.

After concealing her rising emotions, she stirred her oatmeal and said, "What response does the Newton family have?"

"Mr. Newton is only the fourth son of the head of the Newton family. He shouldn't have had any power in the family anyway. There's internal conflict within the Newton family too, so it seems like they're not planning to rescue him."

How sad. Even the Newton family isn't planning to save him. But he had it coming for hurting Maverick.

After those thoughts, Gwendolyn turned to look at Justin solemnly. "From now on, you're no longer my bodyguard. You're dismissed."

Justin shuddered as his lips trembled. "Ms. Harris, do you not want me anymore? Do you hate me for what happened?"

"I don't."

Gwendolyn placed the bowl on the bedside table and calmly replied, "He has already dealt with the men in black. No one poses a threat to your life anymore, so you can leave safely now."

"But Ms. Harris, I..." I just want to stay by your side, even if it means doing nothing but looking at you.

Before he could finish his sentence, Gwendolyn turned to look at him icily. "Every time I look at you, I think about the pain he endured in the fire. I feel terrible, and I feel like I'm suffocating. So, your departure is for the best."

"I'm sorry. I'm really sorry about what happened to Mr. Wright. I can understand your grudge toward me and your reluctance to see me." Justin's eyes were red. He was reluctant. "But can I stay today to finish

my last shift? I won't disturb you anymore after this."

It was merely one day, so Gwendolyn did not mind.

“Okay.”

Justin then slinked away.

Right as he left, Elven rushed into the room. “Ms. Harris, your phone has been on silent mode, so you didn’t receive Ms. Sullivan’s call. She just sent someone over to say that Dexter has been kicking up a fuss at Wright Construction Group every day recently. He’s been insisting that you hand over the right to manage the company.”

Gwendolyn remained expressionless, for she expected that.

Maverick had not made a will. The forty-five percent Wright Construction Group shares that he owned were definitely Dexter’s target.

Chapter 209

“Got it. I’ll go to Wright Construction Group after breakfast.”

After breakfast, Gwendolyn gathered her thoughts and got herself out of the bad mood she had been in for many days. Then, she put on light makeup and went out.

Meanwhile, Dexter was making a scene at the CEO’s office of Wright Construction Group. “How can she not face the world and go into hiding? Is she pretending to be sad after Maverick’s death? Does she think she can avoid the management rights issue of Wright Construction Group? Get her to come now. Things must be resolved today!”

Yulia was helpless. She wanted badly to slap the sly old fox to death, but the fact that their society was governed by the rule of law reminded her to be calm in front of others.

“Mr. Wright, Ms. Shalders has fallen sick recently. You don’t have to be so aggressive—”

Before she could finish speaking, the door of the CEO's office was pushed open.

Dressed in a black bodycon dress, Gwendolyn looked charming yet innocent under her light makeup, with the usual look of aloofness and arrogance in her eyes.

Without even sparing a glance at Dexter, she walked straight to the CEO's chair with a grim face and sat down.

"Speak."

That single word without any emotion instantly made Dexter change his attitude.

With a smile, he walked to the chair across from Gwendolyn and sat down. The vivid memories of being forced to drink thirty bottles of drugs and suffering the torture for ten days were still fresh in his mind, so he only dared to make a scene behind her back.

Now that Gwendolyn had really shown up, he said in a gentle tone, "Ms. Shalders, I'm also sad that my nephew died at such a young age. I've lost my appetite these few days, but I'm talking about a different matter—"

"Cut to the chase."

Gwendolyn knitted her brows, displeased.

"Now that he's gone, I'm the only one from the Wright family that holds shares in Wright Construction Group, so his shares should be transferred to me, don't you think?"

"Says who?" Gwendolyn glanced at him. "Did you hit your head or what? You're just his father's brother. Only his mother is an immediate family member who can get the shares, while you have no right to claim them."

Dexter did not get angry despite being ridiculed. “But she’s not good at managing a company. Look at how Wright Construction Group ended up when it was in her hands previously. If you give her the shares, the company will eventually end up like a hollow shell. Besides, can you really give her the shares after being treated by her like that in the past? Well, I’m different. I can help you as I’ve already repented and won’t fight against you again in the future!”

Gwendolyn sneered. “Look at how you put it so nicely. You’ll be the major shareholder after you get the shares. You just want the management rights of Wright Construction Group, don’t you?”

Uh...

Dexter did not answer her. He was determined to get the management rights from her as he could not watch the company fall into the hands of an outsider.

However, knowing that Gwendolyn was not someone to be trifled with, he had initially planned to take it step by step.

Gwendolyn did not bother to listen to his management speak as she added straightforwardly, “Just say it if you want it instead of repulsing me with your nonsense. Whether you can get the management rights from me depends on your ability.”

Dexter wore a scowl on his face and said nothing for a while.

He knew that Gwendolyn, who was shrewd, would be even more wary of him in the future since she knew his plan.

“You know what? Since you said that Frida should get Maverick’s shares, why don’t we ask her to sign the share transfer agreement under the witness of a lawyer today?”

So what if the shares are transferred to Frida? Sooner or later, I can fool her into giving me the shares. Things will be easier as long as the shares don’t fall into Gwendolyn’s hands.

Gwendolyn curled her lips coldly.

When she was about to respond, the door was pushed open.

Frida, who had pulled herself out of the despondency that had been gnawing away at her for the past few days, walked into the office gracefully with her usual demeanor of a wealthy woman.

Seeing her, Dexter was overjoyed. "Hey, Frida, we were just discussing getting you to come over to sign the agreement. Your appearance is so well-timed."

Gwendolyn leaned back against the office chair with her arms folded across her chest indifferently, not saying a word.

She wanted to see what stunt the two of them were going to pull.

As Frida walked over, Dexter stood up to give up his seat to her.

Without standing on ceremony, Frida gracefully sat down and looked at Dexter, saying, "It is not up to you or me to decide how to distribute my son's shares."

"What do you mean, Frida?" Dexter's expression froze.

"I've brought Mr. Lawson over. Maverick made a will before his death. Since everyone is present today, it will be read out now."

The lawyer, Benjamin Lawson, stepped forward and placed a sealed kraft paper folder on Gwendolyn's clean desk with both hands.

Gwendolyn glanced at it.

Maverick even made a will?

“Since it’s a will, it’ll be inappropriate for me, who is no longer a member of the Wright family, to be here when it’s read out. I shall excuse myself.”

When she was about to get up, Frida stopped her. “You should sit back down. You’re mentioned in the will, so you have to be present.”

Gwendolyn’s body stiffened. I can’t believe he actually mentioned me in his will.

Holding back her tears, she sat back down with an indifferent expression.

After making sure that Gwendolyn was seated, Frida turned around to look at Benjamin and said, “Go ahead.”

Benjamin nodded. Under the watchful eyes of the three, he stepped forward to unseal the folder and took out the will inside.

“I, Maverick Wright, the testator, declare this to be my last will for the distribution of my personal property after my death.”

The first paragraph alone made Gwendolyn’s heart ache while her eyes uncontrollably reddened.

Clenching her fists hard, she looked down and listened to the reading of the will in silence.

Frida had also become tearful, whereas Dexter showed a token look of sadness on his face.

Under the grave atmosphere, Benjamin went on to read, “I devise and bequeath my main real estate, shares, and other properties under my name as follows: A total of seven properties, including Sky Villa, a house with a courtyard on Haas Avenue, and Goldport Apartment on Chance Street, to my ex-wife, Gwendolyn Shalders. In addition, the forty-five percent shares of Wright Construction Group held by me will be transferred to my ex-wife, Gwendolyn Shalders.”

After Benjamin was done reading out the will, Frida wiped her tears with a tissue, while Gwendolyn was left heartbroken. He actually left all his properties to me. Am I all he thought about? Did he not even care about Frida and Sheralyn?

However, Dexter blew up on the spot.

“What? I won’t accept this!” With anger written all over his face, he protested, “I have no objection to his decision to give all the real estate to his ex-wife, but how can he give his forty-five percent of Wright Construction Group’s shares to an outsider so easily? Wright Construction Group is the culmination of Old Mr. Wright’s lifetime of hard work. This is so unfilial of him! Where does that leave Old Mr. Wright?”

If the forty-five percent of shares were really given to Gwendolyn, she would hold eighty-five percent shares in the future, making it hard for him to take her down.

Gwendolyn had been keeping her head down all the while, neither rebutting nor speaking.

In the first place, she was not good at the real estate industry. She was exhausted physically and mentally after managing both Wright Construction Group and Angle for some time. Just as she was planning to leave Wright Construction Group in others’ hands, Maverick made things difficult for her by leaving the burden of managing Wright Construction Group to her.

Amidst Dexter’s doubts, Frida wiped away her tears and said with a heavy heart, “Making a will is Maverick’s right to make his own decisions freely. As his mother, I respect his decision.”

“What has gotten into you, Frida? Shares are not a trivial matter!”

It was driving Dexter mad.

Yet, Frida remained indifferent to his outburst. “Dexter, stop fighting. What is not yours is not yours. No matter how hard you fight, you won’t get it.”

“You!” Dexter was furious. “How prodigal! You’ll have a lot of explaining to do when you die and see Old Mr. Wright and my brother in the afterlife!”

With a loud snort, he left in a huff.

Frida remained silent as he scolded her, not a trace of anger on her face.

Gwendolyn shot her a strange look.

After Maverick's funeral, Frida seemed to become a different person. Not only did she often speak up for Gwendolyn, but she was also calmer than before when things happened.

"If you hide his will and don't get it read out in public, his shares will be yours. We're talking about forty-five percent of shares here. Are you not tempted at all?"

Frida gave her a faint smile.

"I really don't have that ability. It's better for Wright Construction Group to be in your hands."

Gwendolyn quietly gazed at her with narrowed eyes. "Mrs. Wright, you have suddenly changed a lot. You've never spoken to me calmly before. Did Maverick tell you something in his letter at his funeral?"

Chapter 210

Frida appeared stunned for a moment.

Then, she averted her eyes and lowered her head with a bitter smile on her face. "He didn't say anything. He just asked me to take good care of you."

Gwendolyn frowned with a serious expression, obviously not believing her words.

Frida went on, "Actually, I don't blame you for his death. It's all my fault. If I hadn't been so mean to you back then and had treated you well, maybe you wouldn't have wanted a divorce, and he wouldn't have to try to get back together with you..."

She could not bring herself to finish the sentence as tears rolled down her cheeks.

Gwendolyn handed her a box of tissues. Her eyes reddened again as she said with a lump in her throat, "Regardless of whether you are sincere this time, I will personally go to the Wright residence the day after tomorrow and return it to you. "

"Really?" Frida cried even harder. "I'm sorry. You're such a good girl. I'm really sorry for not appreciating you in the past!"

Gwendolyn sighed and replied flatly, "I'm just not short of money or a house to live in, so you don't need to thank me. Maverick has helped you pay off the grudges between you and me."

Frida felt even more guilty as she sobbed so hard that her shoulders were heaving.

Seeing that, Gwendolyn walked up to her and gently patted her on the back to calm her down. Then, she said, "By the way, I accept his will, but I don't have the energy to manage Wright Construction Group anymore."

Frida stopped crying and looked up at her. "What is your plan?"

With a look of determination in her eyes, Gwendolyn replied, "If you trust me, I need you to be cruel for once."

"What do you want to do?"

"You'll find out the day after tomorrow."

Frida met her gaze with suspicion and anticipation.

She now regretted pushing away such a good daughter-in-law back then, but she knew that regret was pointless.

In the next two days, Gwendolyn asked someone to find the best etiquette coach in Fairlake. Then, she went to the Wright residence with four bodyguards, including Elven, and the etiquette coach.

Frida and Sheralyn were still wearing the housekeeper uniforms in the Wright residence. When Gwendolyn arrived, they were cleaning the house.

The two of them had been behaving themselves recently. Hence, the housekeepers who used to vent their anger on them did not make things difficult for them anymore either.

Gwendolyn sat in the main seat of the living room drinking coffee, a property transfer agreement for the Wright residence on the coffee table.

When Frida showed up, Gwendolyn asked her to sit on the small couch on the side.

As soon as Sheralyn saw Gwendolyn, she immediately cursed, “You b*tch! How dare you come here again! It’s all your fault that our family ended up like this! You jinx! You—”

“Shut up!” Frida yelled in a stern voice.

Sheralyn was frustrated. “Mom, has something gotten into you recently? Why can’t I scold her? Why are you defending her? Are you still my mother?”

Frida sighed in disappointment, not bothering to reply to her daughter.

However, Gwendolyn was not angry as she said flatly, “You can scold me to your heart’s content after I’m done talking.”

I can’t believe she’s actually letting me scold her however I want. Baffled, Sheralyn asked, “What do you want to talk about?”

Glancing at the document on the table, Gwendolyn declared, "I can return the Wright residence to you and even transfer my forty percent shares of Wright Construction Group to you and forty-five percent to your future children."

Sheralyn was stupefied. "Would you be so kind?"

"But I have some conditions. The shares will be transferred to you after you are capable of running Wright Construction Group, while I'll only let Mrs. Wright sign the transfer agreement for the Wright residence after you meet all the conditions."

"As expected. I knew you wouldn't be so kind for no reason." Sheralyn rolled her eyes. "But what are your conditions?"

"Firstly, you're not allowed to marry a wealthy man. You need to find a loyal and honest ordinary man to be a live-in son-in-law and have children that carry the Wright last name. Secondly, you have bad manners, but that's okay as I hired you an etiquette coach. I'll make sure you're trained hard. Thirdly, when you've mastered all etiquette and manners, I'll let you work in Wright Construction Group to learn business management. When you can handle projects independently, I'll give you the shares."

Sheralyn was dumbfounded after listening to Gwendolyn's conditions.

"Are you kidding me? I can't meet any of these conditions! What makes you think you can be so strict with me?"

Gwendolyn responded nonchalantly, "It's fine if you can't do it. Just forget I said anything."

She then got up to leave.

"Wait!" Frida stopped her in her tracks and looked at Sheralyn to persuade the latter earnestly. "Sheralyn, it's all for the sake of you and the Wright family. Now that your brother is gone, our family line ends here. The best solution is to get a live-in son-in-law. Besides, I also think that you're too spoiled and arrogant. You should really learn some manners."

Gwendolyn's body froze as the light in her eyes dulled.

Frida's remark, "Now that your brother is gone, our family line ends here," sent a pang across her heart. Subconsciously, she rested her hand against her stomach.

Despite being married to Maverick for three years, she had only slept with him the night before the divorce. However, she did not get pregnant from that one night.

Regardless, based on her state of mind and personality at the time, she would have gone for an abortion without hesitation even if she had conceived.

Noticing Gwendolyn's expression, Frida realized that she had said something she should not have. "I'm sorry. I was too occupied in lecturing Sheralyn and forgot that you're still here."

"It's okay. Carry on." Gwendolyn recomposed herself and sat back down on the couch.

Frida stared at her apologetically for a while before turning back to Sheralyn.

"Sheralyn, thanks to Gwendolyn, we're still allowed to live in the Wright residence. If you reject her, she'll drive us out. Being penniless, we can only sleep under the bridge. Do you want that to happen?"

Sheralyn was so horrified that her face went pale. "No! I don't want to sleep under the bridge!"

If she were kicked out, she would no longer be able to hold her head up high in front of her socialite friends. But things would be different if she agreed to Gwendolyn's conditions. She would still have a chance to continue living the good life she used to have.

She hesitated for a while before announcing, "Okay, I agree to your conditions."

Gwendolyn shook her head. "No. You'll obey unconditionally."

“I’ll obey unconditionally. Happy?”

Gwendolyn nodded in satisfaction. After introducing Sheralyn to the etiquette coach, she said, “I have two more gifts for you.”

William and Quinton, who were attentive and observant, took a few steps forward with their backs straight to each bring a box to Sheralyn.

Puzzlement was written all over Sheralyn’s face.

Standing up, Gwendolyn opened the first box. “This is a handbook on etiquette in conversation. I will give you a week to memorize the entire book, and you must make sure this doesn’t affect the coach’s lessons. I will test what you’ve learned after that.”

Sheralyn looked at the book that was as thick as her little finger, and her eyes widened in shock.

“You want me to memorize such a thick book in seven days? Are you a demon?”

Ignoring her, Gwendolyn proceeded to open the second box.

Inside it sat a high-quality red sandalwood ruler that was hard in texture and had a nice color.

“If you can’t memorize the book, this will help you remember. I actually don’t like getting physical when it comes to education, but you’re too unruly. I’m afraid you won’t be obedient if I don’t line up a harsh punishment. Thus, this ruler will help correct you of any mistakes you make from now on.”