

Her Riches 211

Chapter 211

Shocked, Sheralyn glanced between Gwendolyn and the ruler before she backed away reflexively. “You b*tch! You’re clearly using this opportunity to mess with me! I know you don’t actually want to hand the Wright residence and Wright Construction Group back to us! I won’t let that happen!”

With a cold expression, Gwendolyn fiddled with the ruler. “You were the one who told me you’ll obey my orders unconditionally, so you don’t get a say in what happens now.”

Just as she finished her sentence, Elven and Ezra swiftly grabbed Sheralyn’s shoulders.

“What are you doing?” Fear swirled in Sheralyn’s eyes. “You’re trying to scare me, aren’t you? You think I’m afraid of you! Well, too bad because I’ll never submit to a b*tch like you, even if I die!”

Gwendolyn stepped closer to her with the ruler. “Does it please you so much to call me a b*tch? You know, you don’t sound like the daughter of an affluent family at all. I guess I’ll have to teach you a lesson today.”

“What are you going to do? Are you going to hit me? Try touching me, b*tch!”

With a sneer, Gwendolyn shook her head. She’s still an idiot who doesn’t understand the situation. She’s only pouring more fuel into my burning rage the more she curses at me. It’s fine, though, since I’ve got an opportunity to take her down a peg right now. “How many swear words have you uttered since you entered the living room?”

That question dumbfounded Sheralyn. Huh? How would I know how many times I’ve cussed? I just did it whenever I felt like it.

Elven counted in his mind before answering, “Five, Ms. Gwendolyn.”

Turning the ruler around, Gwendolyn stated, “I’ll hit you twice for every swear word, so you’ll be receiving ten whacks on your hand.”

“You don’t have the right to hit me! I’ve been doted on since I was a kid, so much so my parents can’t even bear to touch me! Who do you think you are?” howled Sherlyn as she struggled wildly to break free.

She was terrified of the pain that awaited her. “Save me, Mom! She’s going to beat me to death! Mom!”

While Frida was heartbroken, she ignored her daughter’s pleas. She believed the lesson could change Sherlyn’s spoiled personality, so she turned her sight away.

Sherlyn watched her wrists be forcefully restricted by the bodyguards so that she couldn’t move her arms. Then, Gwendolyn grabbed Sherlyn’s fingertips, prying the latter’s fingers open to reveal her palm.

Just as Sherlyn was about to swear again, Gwendolyn glared at her coldly. “This is only ten hits. If you can’t control your mouth and curse one more time, I’ll slap it with a ruler next time instead. Do you want to give it a try?”

When enraged, Gwendolyn was capable of doing anything.

My face will be ruined if she hits my mouth with a ruler! Sherlyn felt a chill running down her spine as she gulped fearfully. Biting her lip, she kept quiet.

Seeing that Sherlyn had behaved herself, Gwendolyn promptly slapped the former’s palm with the ruler.

“Ouch! It hurts! Don’t hit me anymore! Save me, Mom! She’s going to kill me!” Sherlyn trembled in pain.

Tears poured from her eyes as she squealed like a pig being slaughtered.

Gwendolyn had whacked Sherlyn’s hand with all her might. Because she was also trained in martial arts, the impact she caused was so severe that Sherlyn’s palm swelled immediately.

With an icy expression, she mercilessly hit Sheralyn four more times in a row.

Sheralyn wailed at the top of her lungs as her arms trembled in pain.

Even though her left palm only received five hits, her fair, tender hand had already turned purple.

Frida also wept as she listened to her daughter's torment. Several times, she was tempted to stop Gwendolyn, but she held back her urge. Ultimately, she buried herself in the sofa and pretended to be deaf.

Gwendolyn was ruthless as she immediately grabbed Sheralyn's right hand and smacked it five times with the ruler.

Once the punishment was over, Elven and Ezra released Sheralyn.

It was Sheralyn's first time experiencing such torture, so her legs were still shaking. She couldn't even stand straight when she was let go and collapsed to the ground.

Reflexively, she touched the ground with her hands. The pain was so excruciating that she almost passed out.

As she continued to whimper, Frida approached her and examined her palms.

Gwendolyn laid a box of anti-inflammatory cream on the table with a grave expression. "You better commit the rules to memory. I'm very strict, you know. I'll return seven days later to see if you've memorized the book. If you still haven't yielded, feel free to provoke me again."

In response, Sheralyn burrowed into Frida's embrace. There was nothing she could do to Gwendolyn except cry.

As she stared at Gwendolyn with fear, she thought, This woman's too ruthless! She's no different from a demon!

Seeing that Sheralyn no longer had the nerve to curse at her, Gwendolyn felt her rage subsiding. That was satisfying. I knew teaching her a lesson through actions instead of words was better. The education method that has been passed down for millennia is indeed useful.

After that, she requested the bodyguards to place the sandalwood ruler on Sheralyn's dressing table. That way, the ruler would be the first thing Sheralyn would see upon waking up every day.

Once the rules were set, Gwendolyn asked Frida to sign the two property transfer agreements. Without glancing at Sheralyn again, she left.

Over the next seven days, Sheralyn memorized the entire book. She was genuinely frightened by the punishment she received.

During Gwendolyn's test, Sheralyn made several mistakes but successfully committed the entire book to memory. While Gwendolyn didn't intentionally trouble her, she did have strict standards. Thus, Sheralyn was punished with ten smacks to the palms again.

Sheralyn was feeling equally furious and miserable. However, there was nothing she could do to Gwendolyn. As she held her swollen, painful hands, she sobbed. "You're a cold-blooded animal who only knows how to bully me, Gwendolyn! I hate you..."

In response, Gwendolyn grinned while watching her cry. "Not bad. You've improved. The words you hurled at me are a lot more civilized than before. However, I bet you cursed at me lots in secret during

this period."

Silently, Sheralyn glared at her. Obviously! I swear at her every time I visit the restroom and every night before I sleep!

Upon peering at Sheralyn's expression, Gwendolyn found her answer. In response, she summoned all the housekeepers in the villa. "From today onward, everyone is allowed to monitor Sheralyn. Whenever you report an instance of her swearing to me, you'll be rewarded with a thousand bucks."

The housekeepers' eyes glinted.

From that day onward, Sheralyn was followed everywhere she went in the residence. Even when she was taking etiquette classes, plenty of housekeepers would eavesdrop on her.

Initially, Sheralyn was furious. She couldn't resist swearing at the housekeepers a couple of times. As a result, plenty of housekeepers happily received their rewards.

Naturally, as per the rules, Gwendolyn slapped Sheralyn twice for every curse word uttered.

Consequently, Sheralyn's palms swelled immensely. Half a month later, she had forgotten her hands' original color.

During meals, she couldn't even hold a utensil properly. Frida couldn't help but feed her daughter twice in secret. However, Gwendolyn forbade Frida from doing it again when she discovered the act.

Gwendolyn vehemently refused to condone Sheralyn's spoiled princess behavior.

While Sheralyn felt aggrieved, she was thoroughly frightened by Gwendolyn. Therefore, she wouldn't speak before thinking about what to say anymore.

As time passed by, the number of whacks she received decreased.

On the fourth of December, Fairlake received its first snowfall. The entire city was engulfed in thick snow.

Gwendolyn wore a white fur coat with a black laced dress, appearing elegant yet solemn.

After picking a few beautiful flowers, she visited Maverick in the cemetery.

His grave was covered in snow, so she patiently removed it. Then, with a gentle look, she uttered, "I didn't expect Fairlake's first snowfall to be exactly one month from the day you were buried, Mavy. It's been very cold these two days. I wonder if you're feeling the same on the other side. If only I can deliver a coat to you."

Chapter 212

Sitting next to Maverick's grave, Gwendolyn laid her head on the tombstone as though she was leaning into his embrace.

"Sheralyn has become much more well-behaved during this period. I've let her join Wright Construction Group so she can start learning. While you gave me the company shares, I don't have the energy to helm it anymore. Once she can handle the company matters alone, I'll slowly step away. It's been so boring without you flirting with me every day, Mavy. Recently, I've been dreaming about you. In those dreams, you tell me you aren't dead yet, that you purposefully lied to me to see if I truly love you. If only that were true," she muttered softly as tears streamed down her cheeks. Closing her eyes, she wrapped her arms around the tombstone as though she was hugging his waist and sleeping in his embrace.

Quinton and William were asked by Gwendolyn to wait at a gazebo fifty meters away from the cemetery. Therefore, they couldn't see what was happening inside.

They had waited for an hour, but she still hadn't left.

Unable to stifle his worry any longer, William bolted into the cemetery.

More than a dozen steps later, he was taken aback by the scene before him.

Gwendolyn was lying against the tombstone, looking as if she had fallen asleep.

As she didn't have an umbrella, her head and body were covered in snow, making her look tragically beautiful instead of wretched.

William was aware of how Gwendolyn had always loved Maverick, even if she insisted otherwise.

Unfortunately, Maverick was dead, so it didn't matter what she said anymore.

Nico was gone, too. Before he left, he bade the bodyguards goodbye, saying he likely wouldn't return to Fairlake again.

Sighing, William reminisced about the time they spent together playing poker.

Upon pushing his thoughts aside, he trotted toward Gwendolyn with an umbrella and wiped the unmelted snowflakes on her body away. "It's getting late, Ms. Harris. We should return home. Don't you need to check up on Ms. Wright's work progress later in the afternoon?"

Wordlessly, Gwendolyn opened her eyes and left the cemetery.

Upon returning to Wright Construction Group, she saw Sheralyn already waiting in her office.

Before sitting in her chair, Gwendolyn swiftly removed her fur coat as the heater in the office was turned on.

Sheralyn fearfully delivered the business proposal she had spent all night writing to Gwendolyn.

Expressionlessly, Gwendolyn accepted the proposal and read through it carefully. Occasionally, she'd circle something on the paper with a red pen while cruelly judging Sheralyn's work. "This is wrong. This sentence is too confusing and incoherent. I mentioned before these proposals must be written concisely and be easily understood. There are a few wrong words here and here. Whenever you finish writing, you need to check it multiple times instead of being cursory..."

The more Sheralyn listened to Gwendolyn's critique, the more awful she felt.

Pouting, she stretched her opened palms toward Gwendolyn. "I get it. I'll be careful next time. Go ahead and hit me."

In response, Gwendolyn stared at her with great intrigue.

Sheralyn lowered her head, staring at her toes, and gulped anxiously. When she heard Gwendolyn opening a drawer, her body stiffened, and she closed her eyes, waiting for the immense pain to arrive.

However, it never did.

Puzzled, she opened her eyes and saw Gwendolyn had placed a chocolate candy in her hand.

“This is your first time proactively accepting your punishment, so instead of hitting you, I’ve decided to reward your good behavior today,” explained Gwendolyn.

“Really?” Sheralyn was overjoyed to hear she wouldn’t be punished. As she peered at Gwendolyn, she found the latter less irritating. “Thank you, Gwendolyn! You’re the best! I’ll be sure to learn well!”

“Mhm, you may leave now.”

Elated, Sheralyn left with the candy.

As Gwendolyn stared at Sheralyn’s back, she shook her head resignedly. Honestly, I have no experience I can draw from to educate Sheralyn, considering I’ve never raised a child before and am the youngest in my family. Although, that doesn’t mean I’ve never seen how others have done it. I think this is how Treyton guided me in the past. Not too strict, but not too lenient as well. Punish first, then reward. It’s best to strike a perfect balance between being stern and kind.

Two months later, Sheralyn had made significant progress. She didn’t learn that quickly, but she was focused.

When Gwendolyn checked Sheralyn’s business proposal, she couldn’t spot any mistakes. Contented, Gwendolyn suggested, “Well done. Next time, I’ll hand a project to you. Try doing it alone.”

Sheralyn nodded. “Okay. I’ll do my best, but...” A complicated expression set on her countenance.

“But?”

“Can I not work overtime today? I’m going out for dinner later tonight...” Sheralyn’s voice grew quieter as she spoke. Additionally, her earlobes were turning red.

“Oh? A date?” It was then Gwendolyn noticed how well-dressed Sheralyn was. With a knowing grin, she asked, “Is it a man?”

Biting her lip shyly, Sheralyn nodded.

“What kind of person is he? What is his family background? You still remember the promise you made me, right?”

“Don’t worry. He’s from a normal family, and he treats me well. In fact, he helped me a lot at work. Besides... he’s quite handsome. We’ve just started dating, though, so it’s difficult to tell how it’ll go.” Embarrassed, Sheralyn changed the topic. “A-Anyway, I need to return to my desk to pack my things, Gwendolyn. I’ll see you later.”

Gwendolyn nodded and watched her leave. So, he helped her at work, huh? That suggests he’s an employee of Wright Construction Group.

When her train of thought ended, she asked Yulia to investigate Sheralyn’s love interest.

In the end, she discovered the man Sheralyn was dating was Ajax White, an employee from the same department.

Gwendolyn was shocked because Ajax and Yulia were people she transferred from Shadow Bell to Wright Construction Group. Hence, they were people she absolutely trusted.

The next day, Gwendolyn summoned Ajax to her office in secret. “How was last night’s date?”

Embarrassed, Ajax scratched the back of his head. “You know about it already?”

“Do you really like Sheralyn?”

He nodded seriously. “I heard about your conflicts with her in the past. Initially, when she joined Wright Construction Group, I planned to teach her a lesson for you. However, after spending time with her, I realized she’s only slightly arrogant. She acts audaciously only because of her spoiled upbringing. Sometimes, she’s quite cute. I genuinely like her.”

“All right, then. You can leave now.” Gwendolyn didn’t plan to interfere much with Sheralyn’s relationship since it seemed stable.

Three months later, Sheralyn and Ajax held a big wedding at a church in Fairlake.

On the same day, Gwendolyn handed the Wright Construction Group shares in her possession to Sheralyn.

Before the ceremony began, various business partners and CEOs gathered around the giant cake on the lawn, chatting and drinking.

Gwendolyn never enjoyed those events, so she sat quietly at a small table with Joaquin.

The Mossey family was invited too. When Jerome and Madelyn arrived, they chatted with Gwendolyn, as it had been a while since they met.

Gwendolyn was sharp enough to notice Inez wasn’t present.

With a resigned smile, Madelyn explained, “She’s a stubborn child. No matter how much her father and I persuaded her, she went straight to Lightspring the moment her leg recovered.”

Lightspring? Gwendolyn smiled wordlessly. It seems Inez is sincerely determined to be my sister-in-law. I guess my brother will have to deal with a clingy love interest. Still, I’m curious to see if Inez has what it takes to pursue him.

Madelyn shot a glance at Jerome. In response, Jerome came up with an excuse to chat with Joaquin at the side.

Once the men were gone, Madelyn approached Gwendolyn and asked in a small voice, "I heard you handed the forty percent shares in your possession to Sheralyn. Aren't you afraid she'll try to hurt you again after how they treated you in the past?"

Gwendolyn grinned casually. "There's nothing I'm worried about. I can take it back whenever I want." Besides, I have Yulia and Ajax keeping an eye on Sheralyn in Wright Construction Group. Even if Frida and Sheralyn have been putting up an act in front of me over the past few months, they still can't defeat me.

It's such a shame Maverick passed away. Madelyn sighed gently and asked, "Now that you're not actively in charge of Wright Construction Group and Angle, what will you do? Be an idle boss and do whatever catches your fancy?"

Gwendolyn shook her head. "Once I'm done with the matters here, I'm leaving Fairlake."

Her words surprised Madelyn. "Leaving? Where are you going?"

Gwendolyn stared straight at her. "Salinsburgh."

Chapter 213

While Madelyn was slightly startled by the news, she knew Gwendolyn was determined, so she didn't try to persuade the latter. "It's not a bad idea to go somewhere else. Maybe it'll help lift your mood. How long are you planning to stay there? Will you return?"

Gwendolyn contemplated momentarily and replied, "Not sure, but I'll probably come back." Once I've ferreted out all those in the Harris family who want to harm me, I'll likely return and live in Fairlake. After all, I'll be able to stay a little closer to Maverick that way. They chatted a little longer until it was time for the wedding ceremony to begin.

Sheralyn slowly stepped onto the red carpet in the church with a high-end white wedding gown and the most beautiful makeup.

Ajax, standing next to the priest, gazed at her. They met each other's eyes with a look of great affection.

In the presence of a priest, the couple completed the most important ceremony of their lives.

Frida was so touched that she sobbed. Even Gwendolyn couldn't help but tear up a little. Back then, when I married Maverick, there was no wedding. No one witnessed our union. After we registered our marriage, Old Mr. Wright forced him to take a wedding photo with me. I wonder if I'll ever have the chance to wear a wedding gown again.

The day after the wedding, Gwendolyn picked a few beautiful white roses and visited Maverick's grave to say goodbye.

As always, she cleaned his grave first, removing the fallen leaves and dust.

Her finger traced over the picture on the tombstone as she etched his face into her mind.

"I'm leaving now, Mavy. There's no telling when I'll visit you next. I'm almost done with the matters in Fairlake. Since the people who harmed me have learned I'm here, I'm afraid they'll continue to trouble me as long as I breathe. If that's the case, I'd rather return to Salinsburgh and deal with them once and for all." A violent look flashed past her eyes.

Then, she softly laid her head on Maverick's tombstone. "I really miss you. I feel like tearing up every time I visit you. However, because you said you hope I'll live a happy and carefree life as the princess of the Harris family, I've held them back every time. I've been dreaming less and less about you recently. I don't know why, but don't worry. You'll always be the only one in my heart. "

Then she fell asleep again.

After an unknown amount of time passed, she woke up when Treyton arrived to pick her up. "It's time to go."

Gwendolyn nodded and stood with his help. As he held her shoulders affectionately, they left the cemetery.

The same day, an explosive headline was spread throughout the internet.

Not only was the Harris family's youngest daughter confirmed to be alive, but she also publicly announced her return to the family. Additionally, she claimed she was kidnapped back then.

Gwendolyn appeared on Angle's livestream with a proper gown and makeup. Upon greeting the viewers with a smile, she summarized the incident from six years ago, when the Harris family abruptly announced her death.

Meanwhile, screams could be heard inside the Wright residence, the Wright mansion, and the Mossey residence.

Sheralyn zoomed upstairs and knocked on her mother's door. "Mom! Gwendolyn is actually from the Harris family! Thank goodness I listened to her! Otherwise, the Harris family would've killed me! I feel so lucky to have someone of her caliber be my sister-in-law!"

Downstairs, Ajax coughed and reminded, "Ex-sister-in-law, Dear."

Sheralyn grimaced with regret. If I had known she was the daughter of the Harris family, I wouldn't have bullied her, no matter what! In fact, I would've buttered her up!

Frida heard everything in the room, but she didn't react to it.

Instead, she was sitting on the balcony and staring at the scenery, distraught. The tears on her countenance were still wet as she brushed her fingers over a picture frame.

The picture depicted her hugging a baby Maverick.

During the funeral, she read Maverick's letter. It told her he wasn't related to the Wright family by blood and also Gwendolyn's true identity. Furthermore, he advised her to maintain a good relationship with Gwendolyn to protect the Wright family.

Before, all she knew was that her son was sent to Salinsburgh by Declan when he was a child. Then, when Maverick was ten years old, he was sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation to be trained. Once he was fifteen years old, he returned to Fairlake.

She never once suspected her son was a fake and had genuinely loved him.

Even though Maverick wasn't Frida's son, he still fulfilled his filial responsibilities to her, which she was grateful for.

That was why she was still devastated by his death.

Concurrently, in the Wright mansion, Dexter slapped his thigh with remorse. No wonder I kept losing to that woman and couldn't investigate her identity! It turns out she's the Harris family's daughter!

At the Mossey residence, Madelyn and Jerome felt relieved upon learning the news. Thank goodness we struck up a friendly relationship with Gwendolyn and that Inez didn't burn bridges with her over Kieran's matter. Otherwise, we'd end up in the same situation as the Wright family in the past and the Lane family in the present.

Two days later, Gwendolyn was on a plane back to Salinsburgh.

She had booked the entire first-class cabin, no longer hiding her identity.

As she twirled the wineglass in her hand elegantly, she stared out the window, watching Fairlake getting further away.

She felt her heart clenching when she thought about Maverick.

Elven and the other bodyguards were sitting behind her. Some played mobile games while others conversed with their friends on the phone.

“Do you know what’s the hottest topic in Salinsburgh over the past six months?” asked Quinton.

Gwendolyn shook her head. I’ve never enjoyed surfing the internet. At most, I’ll check up on how Angle’s artists have been doing recently.

“Do you know, the Jenson family has done some incredible things during that time. They have surpassed the Harris family and become the richest family in Salinsburgh.”

“I see,” uttered Gwendolyn expressionlessly. It seems my old pops isn’t doing so well, considering how quickly the family was dethroned from the top spot so quickly. “It’s fine. Since I’ve returned, I’ll help my

father regain that spot.”

Quinton gave her a thumbs up in admiration. “According to the news, the eldest grandson of Old Mr. Jenson suddenly returned from the army half a year ago. In a single month, he wrestled back control of the Jenson family and became its head. Under his leadership, Jenson Group rose at a meteoric rate. Now, he’s the most popular figure in Salinsburgh—Mr. Cedrick Jenson, the man who stands atop the pyramid and garners respect from everyone.”

Gwendolyn ceased her hand movements as her expression changed. “What did you say his name was?”

“Cedrick Jenson.” Quinton was curious about her reaction as it was the first time she had shown any interest in other men in six months. “Do you think he’s impressive, too?”

Gwendolyn remained silent as she emptied her glass. Why did I react like that? Their names sound similar, but that’s all. Although... “The Harris and Jenson families aren’t on bad terms, so why have I not heard of this Cedrick before?”

“Apparently, his parents died in an accident when he was young. In order to protect him, Old Mr. Jenson sent him to be trained in the army,” answered Quinton.

She sighed slightly. His parents are dead? It must be quite difficult for him to survive in the Jenson family alone. I pity him.

Chapter 214

Upon ending her train of thought, Gwendolyn unknowingly emptied a whole bottle of red wine.

When Elven saw she was about to open another, he stopped her. "The doctor said you can only drink a little wine after you hurt your stomach last time by drinking too much, Ms. Harris." "It's only two bottles. Besides, I don't get drunk that easily," she replied.

Sighing, he reminded, "Did you forget you can't hold your liquor as well as you could ever since that incident, Ms. Harris?"

After being stopped twice, Gwendolyn felt frustrated. Abruptly, she shoved the wine bottle and glass away. "Fine, I won't drink anymore! Take these away!"

Folding her arms grumpily, she closed her eyes to nap.

Elven placated her with a smile and shot a meaningful glance at his colleagues. Soon, Gwendolyn's table was cleared.

By the time they arrived in Salinsburgh, it was already night.

Just as Gwendolyn wondered if she should return to the Harris residence, she received a call from Jasmine.

Jasmine was overjoyed to learn the announcement of Gwendolyn's background and arrival in Salinsburgh. "You're finally back, Gwendolyn! How about we spend some time in The Honey Bee together? Many of your old friends are eager to meet you! Did you miss them?"

It has been years since I met my childhood friends, and I don't want to return to the Harris residence anyway, so why not? "Sure," answered Gwendolyn.

She only brought Elven with her.

As for Ezra and William, she requested them to book a hotel room as that was where they would be staying for the night. Meanwhile, Quinton was sent off to tell Marcus of their arrival.

By the time Gwendolyn reached the bar, the others had already arrived.

More than a dozen people were gathered there, including Jasmine, Sherman, Triss Jenson, David Jenson's daughter, and her old friends.

The instant Gwendolyn opened the door to the private room, Jasmine and Triss used the confetti poppers from where they were hiding behind the door. In the blink of an eye, small colorful paper filled the room. "Welcome back!"

Gwendolyn couldn't help but smile in response to seeing that. "Thank you."

Jasmine promptly dragged Gwendolyn to the couch by the latter's arm. "There's no need for you to thank us. You have no idea how sad we were when we heard your death. It's fantastic that you're finally willing to reveal your identity!"

Gwendolyn had a great time with her friends as they drank.

Jasmine and Triss occupied the seats next to her. Due to their younger age, she considered them her little sisters and had a good relationship with them.

Upon recalling the news Quinton shared with her on the plane, Gwendolyn asked, "I heard your family's eldest grandson took control of the family. Is he giving you all a hard time?"

“Nope. My dad’s never been interested in stuff like power. Back then, only Uncle Yael competed ruthlessly with Cedrick. That’s why Cedrick treats our family pretty well even after he took control,” replied Triss.

Gwendolyn patted her head with a smile of relief. “That’s good, then.”

“Cedrick’s quite pitiful, though. He was covered in blood and wounds when he returned from his mission half a year ago. Apparently, he vomited blood every day. It scared Grandpa to death. However, he’s pretty amazing. I didn’t expect him to snatch control of the family back from Uncle Yael. He has my respect.”

Gwendolyn’s response was silence. Even though I’ve just arrived at Salinsburgh, I’ve heard two people praising this Cedrick already. I admit, I’m curious to see what kind of person he is.

Just as Gwendolyn was deep in thought, Jasmine sneakily switched places with someone.

When Gwendolyn turned to her side, she saw Sherman sitting beside her with a wineglass, looking as elegant and dashing as ever.

He raised his glass at her. “It’s been a while since we last met, but you’re still as pretty as ever, Gwendolyn.”

Smiling, Gwendolyn clinked her glass with his. “When did your family find you and bring you back to Salinsburgh from overseas, Mr. Ferguson?”

Sherman’s expression stiffened for two reasons.

First, it was because she was treating him far more distantly than before.

Secondly, he was still angry about the matter. That d*mn Maverick! I still can’t believe he played a dirty trick on me! After he tossed me to the cargo ship, I was brought to a small, illiterate, and desolate country. It took my family ages to locate me! Although, he’s dead now, so I have a better chance at pursuing Gwendolyn.

When his train of thought ended there, his expression returned to normal. "It's been months since I've returned. Initially, I planned to search for you in Fairlake. However, there was a situation at the

company preventing me from leaving. However, I heard Maverick has..."

Gwendolyn's smile froze as she tightened her grip around the glass.

"I'm sorry, did I touch a nerve?" Staring at her apologetically, Sherman tried to hold her hand to comfort her.

However, Gwendolyn silently stood, avoiding his touch, and poured herself another glass of wine.

Sherman couldn't help but feel a little awkward. Still, he peered at her affectionately. "Since that burden is no longer weighing you down, once you have had enough fun with your single life, let me take care of you, okay?"

That spurred Gwendolyn to furrow her eyebrows. Is he calling Maverick a burden?

"I don't think it's appropriate for you to bring up this topic at a gathering, Mr. Ferguson," she warned with a frigid look.

After all, her friends were around, and she didn't want to sour the mood.

"Gwendolyn..." The look in Sherman's eyes darkened slightly as he winced a little. "The past can never return. You need to start a new life eventually."

Gwendolyn didn't even glance at him as she gulped down two large glasses of red wine consecutively. Then, she turned to Triss. "I need to visit the restroom. The rest of you should keep drinking."

Her cheeks were reddened, and her mind was in a daze as she left the room. It seems Quinton was right about me on the plane. I shouldn't have drunk that much, considering I'm feeling tipsy already.

She walked unsteadily and slowly as Sherman's words repeated in her mind, upsetting her.

Everyone around me keeps telling me to accept Maverick's death and move on. Did they think I didn't try to start a new life? I still can't forget what happened after six months. Whenever I recall those things, I still feel guilty and awful. After taking a deep breath, she attempted to stifle the emotions bubbling in her heart.

Suddenly, she caught sight of a familiar, towering figure at her periphery.

That person... Gwendolyn held her breath and shook her head. Once her vision became clearer, she saw the figure vanishing around a corner.

"Maverick! Is that you?" Without delay, she chased after the figure. However, when she arrived at the corner, she saw no one in the corridor.

Elven, who heard her shouting, rushed toward her and steadied the swaying woman. "Are you drunk, Ms. Harris?"

In response, Gwendolyn grabbed his arms very tightly, as though she was making sure he was really there. "I'm not drunk! I saw Maverick earlier! It must've been him! I'd never mistake his figure for someone else! He's definitely alive, Elven!"

Hearing that, Elven was both shocked and bewildered.

However, when he saw her determined expression, he still scanned through the faces of all the customers down the aisle after asking her to stay put.

In the end, he returned to Gwendolyn with a sigh. "I think you were mistaken, Ms. Harris."

Gwendolyn shook her head with reddened eyes and spat resolutely, "No! It must've been him! It must be! Lock down the entire bar and check every room in this building!"

Chapter 215

As much as Elven felt sympathy for her, he still had to drag her back to reality. "Please return to your senses, Ms. Harris. Mr. Wright is gone. His ashes are buried in Fairlake's cemetery. You visited him countless times over the past six months. Don't you remember?"

Gwendolyn froze while self-doubt settled on her countenance.

"Please stop torturing yourself, Ms. Harris. Mr. Wright's never coming back, so just let it go. Your eyes were just playing tricks on you!" While speaking, he resisted the urge to sob.

He's right. Why would someone who's been dead for half a year show up here? I must've gone mad... Tears welled in Gwendolyn's eyes as she clutched her heart. This hurts so much... I feel like I'm suffocating.

Affected by her sorrow, Elven teared up too. "You're drunk, Ms. Harris. Let's go. William and the others have booked hotel rooms for us. Let's return early to rest."

Gwendolyn slumped weakly like a deflated balloon after getting her hopes up for nothing.

After what happened, she was no longer in the mood to stay at the gathering. Thus, she took up Elven's suggestion and returned to the hotel.

Just as they headed downstairs, Nico stepped out of another elevator and casually ambled into the VIP room furthest down the corridor.

Upon arriving at her hotel room, Gwendolyn entered the bathroom and turned the water flow setting to max.

The water was scalding, but she felt cold because her heart had gone numb.

She hoped the shower would help her pull herself together as her tears joined the hot water.

In her mind, she kept telling herself that Maverick had died for her and would never return.

Standing outside Gwendolyn's room, William and Ezra were still wondering about the expression she had when she returned. "Wasn't Ms. Harris' mood still stable when she attended the gathering? Why did she look like that when she came back? What happened?"

Elven sighed. "She got drunk and saw someone with a similar figure to Mr. Wright, which reminded her of her loss."

The others sighed in unison upon hearing that.

The next day, when Gwendolyn woke up, she had regained her senses.

After setting her terrible mood from yesterday aside, she returned to the Harris residence.

The ancestor of the Harris family had bought the entire Mount Tranquil, located on Salinsburgh's outskirts. Thus, the humongous Harris residence was surrounded by nature and had an incredible view of the area all year round.

Gwendolyn's uncles, Gideon and Hector, lived in buildings located halfway up the mountain. Even so, she ignored them and drove straight to Marcus' residence at the top.

Leif, the Harris family's butler, was already waiting for her at the villa entrance.

Upon witnessing her arrival, he swiftly approached her vehicle and opened the door for her. "You're finally back, Ms. Gwendolyn. Mr. Marcus missed you. He's waiting for you in his study."

"Okay. Thanks for your hard work, Leif," replied Gwendolyn.

Her words flattered him. "It's nothing, Ms. Gwendolyn." Then he turned and noticed the bodyguards weren't carrying anything. "Why didn't you bring any luggage with you, Ms. Gwendolyn?"

She responded, "I'm only here to visit my father. I'm not staying." Too many awful people are living here. I doubt I'll be able to sleep at night.

Just as she arrived at the door, she heard someone descending the stairs in high heels.

It was Lorelai, wearing a limited-edition, skin-tight, yellow dress and delicate makeup. Every step she took was graceful.

She seemed more like Gwendolyn's sister than her stepmother, as she was thirty years old and took great care of her skin.

Gwendolyn peered at Lorelai coldly when the latter made eye contact with her. Seconds later, she looked away and headed upstairs.

Displeased, Lorelai furrowed her eyebrows and blocked Gwendolyn's path. "You're not even going to greet me? It seems like you've forgotten your manners in the years you weren't around, Ms. Harris. I should've expected nothing less from someone who spent years in an orphanage."

Instead of being provoked, Gwendolyn grinned. "You really think you're the lady of the house after staying here for a long time, huh? Do you really think you're worthy of my respect?"

Glaring at Gwendolyn viciously, Lorelai gritted her teeth. "Why not? I'm technically your mother!"

Gwendolyn tutted arrogantly. "Don't you feel disgusted calling yourself my mother, even though you're only three years older than me?"

Then, she whispered next to Lorelai's ear. "You should cherish your current wealthy life. After all, I'll be inheriting all the Harris family's assets while you'll be getting kicked out."

"You!" exclaimed Lorelai furiously. Even though it has been years, she's still as arrogant as before! I want to tear her mouth apart!

Suddenly, a thought entered her mind, calming her down.

She smiled smugly. "I should congratulate you. You see, Old Mr. Jenson paid us a visit last night, and your father has agreed to his marriage proposal. You're getting married again."

"What?" Gwendolyn's expression shifted. "My father engaged me to someone? How can he do this without asking me about it?"

Lorelai lifted her chin haughtily. "You should ask him that yourself."

With a scowl, Gwendolyn bolted to the study instead of arguing with Lorelai.

Lorelai was delighted to see that.

I heard the eldest grandson of the Jenson family is a cruel man with a temper. Old Mr. Jenson tried forcing women to his bed, but they all left the room unconscious, carried out by others. Some of them even have injuries on their bodies. I bet he has a habit of torturing women. Additionally, his face is said to have been ruined on the battlefield, turning him hideous. Covering her mouth, she snickered. It'll be satisfying to see that little b*tch marry a man like that!

In a jubilant mood, she strolled into the kitchen to see if her food was ready.

Gwendolyn's rage built up during her short journey to the study.

Before she could utter any questions, she saw the white-bearded, weathered-face Marcus in a wheelchair.

When he saw her, tears of joy welled in his eyes. "Come over here, Honey. Let me take a look at you. Did you get thinner?"

A complex range of emotions surged within Gwendolyn as she moved to squat next to his wheelchair. "What's wrong with your legs, Dad? I remember you doing fine before I left."

Marcus smiled. "I'm an old man now, Gwendolyn. It's normal for me to have issues with my body. I missed you every day. Now that you're back, can you stay in the Harris residence and keep me company?"

Gwendolyn's heart wrenched at his words while she massaged his legs. "Okay, I'll stay here, but not often. You know Lorelai and I don't get along with each other."

"She's your stepmother."

"She is not! If you bring it up again, I'll get angry!"

"Okay, okay, I won't do it again." Gazing at her lovingly, he touched her face with his wrinkled hand.

He proceeded to ask her about how she had been doing.

Both of them conversed harmoniously.

Suddenly, Gwendolyn recalled the matter Lorelai mentioned. "Earlier, that woman told me you engaged me to someone. Is that true?"

Well, since she already knows about it... Marcus answered, "Yes, it's true. Last night, Old Mr. Jenson came asking about it, and I agreed to it. His eldest grandson, Cedrick Jenson, is a pretty good man. I like him. He..."

Not a single praise Marcus had for Cedrick entered her ears.

In fact, she fell into a deep thought. Cedrick! Why is it him again? Did I piss someone off? Why does his name keep showing up around me? I hate it!

Chapter 216

“What era are we living in now? It’s all about the freedom to fall in love and marry someone we love! How could you arrange my marriage without asking me?” Gwendolyn got up, feeling utterly infuriated.

Marcus was at a loss for words. He tried reaching out to hold her arm, but she evaded his grasp. After withdrawing his hand, he stroked his beard and spoke in a subdued tone. “Honey, we’ve already agreed on the engagement. How about you meet Cedrick first before you decide anything? He’s quite a nice guy, five years older than you, and caring and considerate. Even I, your picky father, approve of him. I’m sure you’ll like him too.”

“Five years older? No way! He’s too old. I don’t like older men!” Gwendolyn was hellbent on her decision.

She was not ready to enter a new relationship, let alone be engaged to someone. Over my dead body!

“What do you mean he’s too old? He’s only twenty-eight years old! Your ex-husband was also five years older than you, wasn’t he?” Marcus said.

Gwendolyn choked. “It’s different! There’s no room for discussion. By hook or by crook, you must call off the engagement!”

Marcus sounded even more sheepish. “I-I can’t cancel it. We just finalized the details yesterday, and I agreed with Old Mr. Jenson to announce your engagement at your welcoming party three days later.”

Gwendolyn took a deep breath, trying to suppress her anger. “I don’t care what welcoming party you’re organizing. You can’t call off the engagement, can you? Then I’ll do it myself!”

She slammed the door and walked away.

Watching her storm out in frustration, Marcus could only shake his head helplessly. She’s becoming more and more like her mother in terms of temperament. It’s clear that she needs a man who can

handle her!

After leaving the study, Gwendolyn went straight to the garden.

Elven and a few other bodyguards were waiting by the door.

Despite her anger, she acknowledged that her father was ill and needed her company. As a daughter, it was her responsibility to be there for him.

Hence, she called a few bodyguards to get to the hotel and pack her belongings. She decided to move back to the villa temporarily.

Standing at the doorway, she pondered for a while, considering how to handle the engagement matter.

A moment later, she noticed Leif was standing near her.

Gwendolyn called him over. "Leif, do you know where the Jenson residence is?"

"Yes, Ms. Gwendolyn. Who do you want to look for?" he asked.

Gwendolyn emitted a murderous intent as she replied, "Cedrick Jenson."

Upon noticing the grim expression on her face, Leif immediately jotted down the address on a paper and passed it to her.

Gwendolyn followed the address and went to the residence.

Logan, the experienced butler of the Jenson residence, happily welcomed her to the house as he was aware of her engagement to Cedrick.

It was Gwendolyn's first time visiting the Jenson residence.

The Jenson residence sprawled across a vast expanse of land. Unlike the Harris residence, which was nestled in the mountains, theirs seemed to sit on a wide plain. All the villas were designed with a classic and retro theme.

With bamboo groves, water pavilions, artificial hills, and flowing streams, the atmosphere of a traditional family permeated the surroundings.

Gwendolyn felt as if she had stepped into the residence of a wealthy magnate from ancient times. She could not help but find it charming.

Guided by Logan, she meandered through the winding paths until they arrived at the entrance of Cedrick's private villa.

After escorting her there, Logan took his leave.

Gwendolyn sat on the sofa in the living room of Cedrick's villa, waiting patiently.

After a while, a bodyguard came hurrying over and said, "I'm sorry, Ms. Harris. Mr. Jenson is not available to meet you at the moment as he's busy with his work."

She knitted her brows slightly.

From the moment she arrived, none of the servants had offered her a cup of tea, and the bodyguard's words seemed to imply that they wanted her to leave. It seems this guy named Cedrick is not enthusiastic about the engagement either. Great!

"It's all right. I can wait since I'm free the whole day," she responded.

"But..." The bodyguard said awkwardly, "I'm afraid Mr. Jenson will be occupied with work the whole day. Why don't you come another day?"

Gwendolyn grew a bit displeased. "Since I, Gwendolyn Harris, am already here, there's no reason for me to leave without meeting him directly."

She stood up and walked past the bodyguard, making her way toward the stairs.

"Ms. Harris, I don't think it's appropriate for you to behave so..." the bodyguard said.

"Since Old Mr. Jenson has finalized the engagement, I must discuss the details with my fiancé. You have a problem with that?" Gwendolyn asked impassively.

"Nope..."

"Where is the study? Which floor?"

"The study is located upstairs on the right, the room furthest down the corridor," the bodyguard replied.

Gwendolyn ascended the stairs and located the study easily enough as a bodyguard was also standing by the door.

After she walked over, the bodyguard stopped her from advancing. "Ms. Harris, Mr. Jenson is busy at the moment. And you can't just walk into his study without permission."

Just when she was about to refute, a man opened the door of the study.

She looked up and found the man to be decent-looking but lacked a certain grace.

Like the two security guards, the man was wearing a uniform. It was apparent he was not Cedrick.

With a respectful shift to the side, he allowed Gwendolyn to catch a glimpse of what was inside the study.

From her view, she could see a layer of amber bead curtains in the middle of the room, with an office desk and neatly arranged bookshelves behind it. The entire room had a dark tone and exuded a scholarly charm.

A man with a cold and imposing presence was sitting in an office chair, facing away from her. She could only catch a glimpse of the back of his head.

Gwendolyn wanted to enter, but the bodyguard stood in her way.

Considering the purpose of her visit to discuss the cancellation of the engagement and the fact that she was on their premises, Gwendolyn realized it would be inappropriate to push her way into the study.

The man in the study cleared his throat before asking in a hoarse voice. "What brings you here, Ms. Harris? What can I do for you?"

His voice sounded awful. It was as if he had just swallowed shattered glass.

When she was on her way to the Jenson residence, Gwendolyn had already looked up information about Cedrick.

He had a reputation for being cruel and ruthless. Rumors circulated about his unusual fetishes involving the abuse of women. Additionally, he bore a disfigured face that was remarkably unattractive.

The rumors about Cedrick's alleged mistreatment of women did not concern her much. If she really did end up with him for the rest of her life and those rumors were indeed true, she could not help but wonder who would end up on the receiving end of the abuse.

She could imagine his face just by hearing his voice.

Her lack of interest in the engagement had nothing to do with his appearance. It was simply because she had no knowledge or feelings for him at all.

After organizing her thoughts, she instructed another security guard to bring her a chair. She then sat outside the room and initiated the discussion with him. "Nothing much. I'm just curious about how much you know of me, Mr. Jenson."

Cedrick kept mum.

He held a cup of coffee in his distinctively masculine palm, the sound of him stirring the spoon resonating crisply.

Gwendolyn looked at the back of his head and spoke in a serious tone. "Mr. Jenson, with your capabilities, I believe you must have investigated me and know that I've been married and divorced. In other words, I'm a woman with experience in that particular area, if you know what I mean."

"And?" Cedrick took another sip of his coffee.

His response confused Gwendolyn. Does that mean he doesn't care? Is he into married women? Argh, that's disgusting.

She began making up a story. "Mr. Jenson, you might have investigated me, but I'm sure there's something my dad kept from you. When I was a child, I consulted a geomancer who told me I'd always encounter difficulties in relationships. It's an inherent curse that I'm destined to have a husband who suffers because of me. You know my ex-husband, right? Well, he was actually a victim of my curse!"

Cedrick, taken by surprise, choked on his coffee, coughing uncontrollably as the hot liquid spilled onto the brown carpet.

The bodyguard beside him immediately handed him a piece of tissue.

Noting his reaction, Gwendolyn continued, "You're the only heir of Old Mr. Jensen's eldest son, and I don't want to bring you any misfortune. This engagement doesn't feel right for either of us. Why don't we try to convince the elders in our families and get them to call it off since we haven't announced it publicly?"

Chapter 217

Gwendolyn believed what she said was beyond reproachable and highly reasonable.

She figured Cedrick, as a member of the wealthy and conservative Jenson family and the current head of the household, naturally placed great faith in such superstitions. Wearing a sincere look, she waited quietly for Cedrick's response.

Cedrick, leaning back in his chair, wiped off the coffee stain on his lips, regaining his usual dignified poise.

"Ms. Harris, a priest once read my fortune as well. He told me I have a prosperous and resilient destiny which is particularly good at countering a jinxed destiny like yours. It seems we are a perfect match for one another."

Gwendolyn was momentarily rendered speechless. She continued smiling, but rage was actually boiling within her.

While contemplating whether she should utter the phrase "To h*ll with you!" at him, she gritted her teeth and spoke with a sweet voice. "What a coincidence!"

Cedrick nodded slightly, but he put down the coffee, not daring to take another sip.

Gwendolyn was reluctant to leave without accomplishing her goal, so she made up a worse excuse. "To be honest, I'm sure my father lied to you about something. During one intimate session with my ex-husband, I accidentally passed out and was admitted to the hospital. The doctor mentioned my health was poor and that I was infertile. I probably won't be able to carry any children in this lifetime. My ex-husband divorced me because he disdained my inability to conceive."

Cedrick, who was sitting with his back to her, discreetly took a deep breath.

He felt relieved that he hadn't continued drinking the coffee and that he didn't have a heart condition. Otherwise, he might suffer a heart attack on the spot.

Meanwhile, Gwendolyn kept up her pretense, adding in a regretful tone, "As the head of the household, it's vital for you to ensure the continuity of your lineage, Mr. Jenson. I truly cannot contribute to the Jenson family in this respect. Therefore, we should annul this marriage. Otherwise, I would feel guilty for becoming the Jenson family's undoing." Not only is my destiny unfavorable, but I'm also infertile, and that implies a discordant sex life. Having said so much, he must be, at the very least, discontented, right?

Cedrick took some time to collect himself before replying hoarsely, "I'm not fond of children, so it's fine if you can't have children, Ms. Harris. I'm also swamped with work most of the time, so if you aren't interested in engaging in intimate activities, we can abstain from doing it."

Gwendolyn was stumped. Seriously? He's able to endure all this? I'm not the only woman who can marry into the Jenson family, so why is he going to such lengths to trouble me?

She gnashed her teeth and asked as calmly as possible, "It seems you're in favor of the marriage arrangement. So, did Old Mr. Jenson decide this marriage on his own, or were you interested in me from the beginning?"

Cedrick responded, "My grandfather made the decision, but I have no objections."

Oh? Aren't you an obedient grandson? Do you listen to everything your grandfather tells you? If he asks you to eat sh*t, will you do it too? Gwendolyn was seething with anger.

She had tolerated him as much as she could, and she just couldn't bear it anymore.

Cedrick deeply disgusted her.

Her first impression of him was so negative that it couldn't get any worse.

She didn't bother to waste another breath talking to him. Gwendolyn got to her feet, straightened out the wrinkles on her skirt, and adopted a firm attitude.

“Frankly, I already have someone I like, so I’m very dissatisfied with this marriage arrangement. I believe you won’t want to marry a woman who is not devoted to you. Sooner or later, I will call off this marriage. If you can fulfill my wish and support me in front of Old Mr. Jenson, I’ll owe you a favor. That way, we can still be friends in the future. That’s all I have to say. I’m leaving.” She glanced haughtily at the man leaning against the back of the chair and spun on her heels to leave with poise.

Cedrick never turned around.

Gwendolyn’s statement about her having someone she liked stung him to the core.

His long eyelashes drooped slightly, and the light in his eyes gradually dimmed as the color drained from his handsome face.

Gwendolyn walked downstairs, staring straight ahead as she exited the courtyard of Cedrick’s villa.

When she arrived at the entrance, she caught sight of a figure dashing past her from the corner of her eyes, moving swiftly toward the back door. That looks like... Nico? But why would Nico avoid greeting me if he saw me? He even sneaked away from the side.

Gwendolyn found it strange and was baffled by what she had seen.

She hadn’t been drinking that day, so she couldn’t have made mistakes like last night. That person was definitely Nico.

After pondering briefly, she turned her head around to look at the villa.

Before Nico left, she remembered him mentioning that he was going to serve his new superior.

If her eyes weren’t playing tricks on her earlier, she wondered if Cedrick was Nico’s new superior. Is Cedrick also a member of the Federal Bureau of Investigation?

She recalled the rumor that the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation wore a mask and was hideous. Perhaps that may really be Cedrick.

Nevertheless, all those speculations didn't concern her. She was determined to call off the marriage anyway.

Behind the thin black curtain of the study in the villa, Cedrick quietly observed everything happening at the villa's entrance with his pensive, dark eyes.

Gwendolyn's petite figure stood at the entrance, unknowingly looking up at the window of the study room and meeting his gaze.

Nico dashed all the way upstairs. He nearly overshot when he arrived at the entrance of the study room.

Panting heavily, he patted his chest, which was heaving due to shock.

"Boss, why did Ms. Harris suddenly come here? You should've informed me in advance. I nearly ran into her when I entered just now! Fortunately, I was quick to stay out of sight."

Cedrick didn't say a word. The atmosphere inside the room was heavy and somber.

Nico approached him. "Boss, what's wrong?"

"Gwendolyn said she has someone she likes." His voice was soft, and the expression in his eyes was laced with agony.

He had thought that nearly dying for her once would earn him a place in her heart, but that seemed like a luxury now.

Nico fell silent too. It has only been half a year, and she already likes someone new?

Nico felt a pang of sympathy for his boss.

He wanted to advise Cedrick to give up, but he was too familiar with the latter's personality. As a result, Nico could only console Cedrick, "Boss, don't overthink. You're Cedrick, not Maverick. Regardless of whether she dislikes or loves you, you can just pursue her again, right? After all, you look different from before. Ms. Harris probably won't recognize you."

That night in the abandoned warehouse half a year ago, Maverick was burned in a fire.

After resolving the internal strife within the Jenson family, he secretly went to Hawen for plastic surgery. Although his face had recovered, he still looked quite similar to his previous appearance.

Cedrick ignored Nico. It would be surprising if Gwendolyn didn't recognize me. She's so astute and will immediately notice something is off and feel suspicious as soon as we meet face to face.

On her way back, Gwendolyn still dwelled on the engagement. Since Cedrick is unwilling to cooperate, this marriage probably can't be called off before the welcoming party three days later. That d*mn bastard!

The more she thought about it, the angrier she got. How could the position of the Harris family's wealthiest heir be taken by such a despicable man? This is so frustrating!

Her fighting spirit was set ablaze. She immediately went to make arrangements for the establishment of Angle's branch company to expand the business over here as soon as possible.

Treyton dominated the entertainment industry. He was a powerful man who could dictate the fate of half of the entertainment industry.

In that case, Gwendolyn aimed to become the woman who would control the other half of the entertainment industry.

After a busy afternoon, she selected the site and began to arrange for people to renovate the building's interior.

Elven suddenly called.

“Ms. Harris, the moment Mr. Hector learned about your return, he went to stir a ruckus in the Harris family’s ancestral hall, accusing you of hurting him with sulphuric acid and demanding Mr. Marcus help him seek justice.”

She had known all along that Hector would take the opportunity to complain about her when she revealed her identity previously.

However, she didn’t expect him to be so impatient.

Nonetheless, Gwendolyn thought his timing couldn’t be better.

Chapter 218

Upon hanging up, she relayed the instructions for the building’s decor and returned to the Harris residence.

The woman parked her car by the hillside and took out the spare keys to Treyton’s villa that he had given her prior. She went in and grabbed some things before heading to the ancestral hall leisurely.

As soon as she reached the entrance, she could already hear the sounds of sobbing from Hector’s wife, Nina Ross.

“Look, Marcus! You’ve seen Hector’s face now. This is all Gwendolyn’s doing. You can’t be partial toward her this time!”

Nina and Hector’s son, Luke, was just as livid. “Gwendolyn’s gone too far this time, Uncle Marcus. No matter what, my dad’s still her uncle and someone older than her. She can’t do this to him even if he’s done something to upset her!”

Amid all the complaints from Hector's family, Marcus sat in his wheelchair in silence, fiddling with the prayer beads in his hand.

Leif stood next to him and sighed, looking as though he was withholding his words.

Noticing that, Marcus asked, "Is there something you want to say?"

"I wouldn't dare."

"It's fine. I'm here, so speak your mind."

Leif pondered briefly before stating, "I don't think it's wise to only listen to what Mr. Hector's family has to say, Mr. Marcus. If Mr. Hector is accusing Ms. Gwendolyn of such acts, then there should at least be some form of proof."

Lorelai was instantly enraged. "Hubby, you know Gwendolyn's temper. She's always been selfish and arrogant, so it's really no surprise if she did this! Why would we need proof?"

Marcus remained quiet, and no one could tell what was on his mind.

Suddenly, Hector rose from his seat, walked toward the family altar, and knelt before it. "I, Hector Harris, swear on our ancestors that Gwendolyn did harm me with acid," he declared firmly. "May the skies rumble and I be struck by lightning if I turn out to be lying!"

As soon as he finished, a thunderous boom sounded from outside.

Hector was so startled that he curled up into a ball on the floor, his legs trembling relentlessly.

Nina and Luke were just as terrified, and the color drained from their faces.

The atmosphere inside the room turned grim in an instant due to the thunder.

Then, Gwendolyn's laughter rang out from the entrance, piercing the eerie atmosphere and capturing everyone's attention.

The woman pushed the door open with an orange-flavored lollipop in her mouth. "It looks like you're not being honest, Uncle Hector. Even the skies aren't buying your words," she remarked with a smirk.

Hector was infuriated. "Gwendolyn! You made that noise, didn't you?"

Gwendolyn dismissed him with a chuckle.

She had merely gotten Ezra to blare the sound of a thunderclap over the speakers, but she certainly didn't expect Hector's family to jump in fright like that.

"You must've done something wrong to be that scared of a little thunder, Uncle Hector."

"You!"

Hector turned around and glared at her.

"Oh my!" Gwendolyn pretended to be alarmed. "What happened to your face? 'Idle and Lazy?' Yup, these words suit you indeed."

Hector and his family fumed at the insults hurled at them.

The man jumped up and stared at her in fury.

"At least I had the courage to swear on our ancestors, Gwendolyn! Would you dare do the same to prove you didn't do this to my face?"

Gwendolyn scowled. "Why should I need to swear on our ancestors? You chose to do that. It doesn't mean I have to as well."

"You're choosing not to because you're too afraid!" Luke chimed in.

"Are you trying to provoke me? Too bad it's not working." The woman beamed while still enjoying her lollipop.

As the head of the family, Marcus gazed at Gwendolyn tenderly, albeit still not uttering a word.

No one among the crowd could read his thoughts, nor did they dare say anything—except for Gwendolyn.

"You said I hurt you, Uncle Hector, but that's a baseless accusation. You'll have to come up with evidence that I did it. I won't let your family and Lorelai pick on me like this."

Lorelai jumped in before Hector could respond. "Look at how she just called me by my name, Hubby! She doesn't respect me at all! And when did I ever pick on her?" she whined, turning to Marcus.

Marcus' head began to hurt. "What does this have to do with you? Be quiet!" he chided.

With that, Lorelai pouted and moved to stand behind him.

Then, Marcus turned to Hector. "Gwendolyn's right, Hector. If you're accusing her of this, you have to show us the proof."

"Marcus, she knocked me out, abducted me, took me down to some unknown basement, and committed acts of violence against me there. Where am I supposed to find any evidence if she removed every trace of it after she was done?"

With tears streaming down his face, he continued, "You know me, Marcus. I've always loved Gwendolyn. I'm a softie who's never really had much ambition. Would I be pointing my finger at her if she didn't actually do this to me?"

"Of course you would," Gwendolyn commented before Marcus could. "That's because you've always wanted to kill me, Uncle Hector. You got Luke to threaten Charles to hurt me while I was still in Fairlake. Don't you remember?"

Hector scoffed. "Such baseless accusations! You're doing the exact same thing you just accused me of!"

"You must've forgotten, Uncle Hector. I do have proof." With a grin, the woman opened up her bag, took out a properly-filed document, and handed it to Marcus.

Hector appeared nervous but said nothing.

Luke lost his temper first. "The only proof you have is Charles' verbal testimony! How is that enough?"

Gwendolyn took the lollipop out of her mouth and pretended to look surprised. "Oh? I didn't think you'd already taken a look at the evidence I have."

Apart from those who knew what they had done, the rest of the audience began to grow suspicious as soon as they heard Gwendolyn's words.

Luke tensed up for a split second before collecting himself right away. "I work for the FBI, so of course I remember Charles getting locked up after stealing drugs from a lab."

"Oh?" Gwendolyn replied purposefully, the smile on her lips growing wider. "Well, Luke, I guess you're about to be disappointed because Charles' verbal testimony isn't all that I have."

By now, Marcus had finished going through the entire document, and he hurled his coffee cup in Hector's direction in a fit of rage.

The porcelain cup landed next to the latter's foot, shattering into pieces with a loud, shrill noise.

Lorelai and Nina screamed at the same time.

"Hector! Luke!" Marcus boomed.

"Marcus?"

"Have a look at this yourselves!" The head of the family tossed the documents on the ground next to Hector.

Luke stepped forward and bent over to help pick up the document.

The moment they glanced at the evidence, their faces paled as they turned to Gwendolyn in shock.

The woman appeared nonchalant.

For the past six months, Asher had helped her gather every piece of evidence related to Hector's family and left it at Treyton's villa.

Hector hadn't expected Gwendolyn to collect all this evidence so quickly. It's no wonder she has the guts to act this way! That also explains why she decided to come back to Salinsburgh.

The woman turned to Marcus. "Dad, according to the Harris family's rules, how should Uncle Hector and Luke be punished for hurting their own blood relatives over family inheritance?" she asked in an innocent tone.

"They should be kicked out of the household and sent to prison!" Marcus answered with a darkened gaze and raised voice.

Hector and his family all panicked.

"I am your younger brother, Marcus. I have obeyed the rules for decades, and this is the only time I have made a mistake. You can't be so ruthless and evict my whole family!"

Hector and his family knelt before Marcus and begged for mercy tearfully.

Torn between his brother and his daughter, Marcus' expression turned grim as he looked at Gwendolyn.

"How shall I punish them, Honey?"

"Do whatever needs to be done according to the rules," Gwendolyn replied without hesitation.

Nina stood up abruptly and glared at Gwendolyn furiously. "Gwendolyn! How can you be so ruthless? Aren't you standing unscathed here? Why are you so cold-blooded toward your family?" she yelled.

Gwendolyn's expression became cold instantly.

The reason she was unscathed now was that there was a man who suffered on her behalf.

They deserve to die for hurting him!

When Gwendolyn looked at Nina, her gaze turned icy. "If I were the one caught harming a family member, would you have let me off?"

Nina and Luke paused. After a brief glance at each other, they replied simultaneously, "Of course!"

"You are the youngest daughter of the Harris family. How can we possibly bear to hurt you?" Nina added.

“If that’s the case, you wouldn’t have made such a big fuss about the injuries on Uncle Hector’s face today. Don’t you feel disgusted by yourself when said that?”

Gwendolyn had no interest in staying any longer. Glancing at Marcus cautiously, she said coldly, “I’ll let Dad handle this. I have no objections to what he decides in the end.”

Gwendolyn left the ancestral hall of the Harris residence while pleas of mercy continued to echo behind her.

She returned to the room that she just tidied, but she couldn’t calm herself down even after a long time.

She could still recall the vivid image of Maverick’s burnt back drenched in blood.

Gwendolyn hated that the culprits were her family members. Since she couldn’t kill them, she would make sure that they suffer as a form of penance!

Following a long sigh, she thought of what happened earlier today at the Jenson residence. At the thought of herself lying to Cedrick and shifting much of the blame onto Maverick, she quickly clasped her hands and repented sincerely.

“Mavy, please don’t hate me for putting the blame on you today. I only said those words to disgust Cedrick and force him to call off the engagement.”

“As soon as I expose every Harris who harmed me, I will return to Fairlake and live a life of celibacy for you. Okay?”

When she finished her repentance, the housekeeper had come to get her twice.

Gwendolyn took her time to get down the stairs. Upon reaching the dining room, she took her seat with an icy expression.

She was about to taste the soup with a spoon when Lorelai, who was sitting opposite her, frowned at her in displeasure.

“Oh, you’re indeed our family’s most indulged little princess, making your elders wait for you to start dining. Have you forgotten all your manners in the past few years?”

Marcus coughed. “Stop it.”

Lorelai scoffed and rolled her eyes in response.

Gwendolyn had enough. With a loud clatter, she threw the spoon back.

“Have you forgotten how you married my dad by crawling into his bed, Lorelai? Who are you to lecture me about manners?”

“That’s enough! Both of you, keep quiet! Just eat!” Marcus was stressed out.

Gwendolyn turned to Marcus. “You heard it just now. She provoked me first when all I did was come down and eat peacefully. If you can’t shut her filthy mouth, I’m afraid I can’t stay here any longer.”

Gwendolyn got up and was about to go upstairs when Marcus softened his tone. “Don’t be mad, Honey! Can you finish your food first? I promise I’ll settle everything as soon as I can. Please don’t think of moving out.”

Marcus’ words made Gwendolyn feel a little hesitant.

However, Lorelai glared at Marcus resentfully as she yelled, “I’m speechless! You spoiled Gwendolyn! The audacity of her to humiliate me with my past! Shouldn’t I feel aggrieved?”

Gwendolyn couldn’t stand Lorelai’s hypocritical behavior.

However, she shouldn't be the one to leave.

After calling Elven and a few other bodyguards to the dining room, Gwendolyn glanced at Lorelai opposite her as she said, "Mrs. Harris is feeling aggrieved. I suppose she no longer has the appetite to eat. Do her a favor and send her upstairs to rest."

"How dare you, Gwendolyn!" Lorelai slammed a fist on the table.

"Why not?"

Lorelai felt defeated when facing Gwendolyn's sharp gaze. She had no choice but to turn to Marcus.

"Say something, Hubby! Are you going to watch as your daughter bullies me? I don't care! You can only choose one of us to stay for dinner. It's either me or her!" Lorelai cried.

Marcus was torn between them. Frustrated, he kept sighing.

Upon seeing his wrinkled and weathered face, Gwendolyn felt bad for him.

She realized that he had aged significantly after she went away for a few years. As his daughter, she didn't want to cause him any distress. However, it was truly difficult for her to live with Lorelai peacefully.

"Forget it. I don't feel like eating."

Gwendolyn got up, straightened her clothes, and turned to leave. However, instead of heading upstairs, she walked toward the entrance of the villa.

"Honey, it's already very late. Where are you going?" Marcus called out from behind.

Gwendolyn acted as if she couldn't hear him and left the villa without looking back.

Marcus was guilty because his precious daughter walked away in anger.

However, Lorelai couldn't care less about it. "She's a grown-up, I doubt she will get into trouble. You should stop spoiling her. Let's eat."

"You! I don't know what to say."

Marcus was angry at Lorelai but he couldn't bring himself to scold her. After a few more bites, he went upstairs because he lost his appetite.

Lorelai didn't care because she hadn't finished eating yet.

As it was Gwendolyn's first day back home, Marcus specially instructed the chef to prepare ten exquisite dishes for dinner.

Lorelai was still beaming with the satisfaction of winning against Gwendolyn. Feeling proud of herself, she tasted every dish that was initially prepared for Gwendolyn.

...

Gwendolyn felt extremely miserable that evening. Not wanting to go back to the Harris residence and trouble Marcus, she decided to book a private room at The Honey Bee and have William and Quinton accompany her while she drink her sorrows away.

Of all the bodyguards, only Elven was under Treyton's orders and was capable of persuading Gwendolyn.

Meanwhile, William and Quinton, who were standing guard at the door, were concerned that Gwendolyn might lose control and get drunk again.

They were discussing whether to call Elven and have him come over to persuade Gwendolyn when Sherman happened to pass by in the hallway.

Having met Quinton before, Sherman asked, "Is Gwendolyn inside?"

William and Quinton looked at each other, not replying.

Sherman didn't feel awkward. He opened the door quietly and took a glance inside. Gwendolyn was indeed by herself and drinking whiskey. Face flushed, she continued drinking despite already leaning on the couch drowsily.

"It's not good for her health if she gets drunk. Let me go in and talk to her," Sherman suggested.

Since William and Quinton did not have a better solution, they decided to let Sherman in considering he was Gwendolyn's friend. He might have a chance to persuade her.

After Sherman opened the door, he sat down next to Gwendolyn. "Gwendolyn, you should stop drinking. You're already drunk. Shall I take you home?" he advised gently.

Feeling dizzy, Gwendolyn squinted her hazy eyes. She was really drunk.

"I miss you, Mavy. Don't leave me. Can you please come back to me?"

Gwendolyn's voice was barely audible. Sherman could only figure out what she was muttering when he got closer to her.

Mavy?

Is she talking to Maverick?

Suppressing his distaste, Sherman comforted her, saying, "I won't leave you, Gwendolyn. I'm not going anywhere."

Gwendolyn did not respond any further. Then, she collapsed onto the sofa and fell asleep.

After talking to Quinton, Sherman learned that Gwendolyn was in a bad mood that night. Since she did not want to return to the Harris residence, Sherman let William and Quinton use his card to book a room at a nearby hotel for her.

After William and Quinton left, Sherman supported Gwendolyn and helped her out of the private room.

They had barely taken a few steps when a figure suddenly appeared in front of them swiftly.

Before Sherman could react, the woman that he was supporting previously had already been transferred into the arms of the man standing opposite him.

The man had a silver-grey mask on. Even though his face was concealed, intense anger was clearly visible in his dark eyes. Sherman could feel the tension building up.

He could recognize the man just by looking at his mask. Smiling, he greeted, "What a coincidence, Mr. Jenson. Are you here to socialize too?"

Ignoring Sherman, Cedrick held the unconsciously drunk Gwendolyn in his arms carefully.

After observing her state, Cedrick's gaze filled with more hostility. "She can hold her liquor usually. How did she get so drunk? What have you done to her?"

Chapter 220

Sherman felt wronged by the way Cedrick questioned him. To add to his displeasure, he even snatched Gwendolyn away from his arms.

“Are you suggesting that I drugged her, Mr. Jenson? I, Sherman Ferguson, will never do such a dirty thing. Gwendolyn was feeling down, so I was just accompanying her and drinking. Now that she’s drunk, I’m taking her back to rest.” He stepped forward, attempting to snatch Gwendolyn back, but Cedrick swiftly sidestepped and held her tightly in his arms.

“There’s no need to trouble you, Mr. Ferguson. I will take care of her.”

Sherman’s expression became grim. “Do you also have feelings for Gwendolyn, Mr. Jenson?”

“Yes.”

Sherman was annoyed.

Just when Maverick was finally gone, Cedrick had to come and block his way.

“It’s not very appropriate for you to be holding Gwendolyn so intimately, Mr. Jenson. Not to mention that she just came back to Salinsburgh. I don’t think she knows you well enough, but I have known her since we were very young. It’s better if you leave her to me.”

Sherman took a step forward to get Gwendolyn back but Nico halted him. “Mind your behavior, Mr. Ferguson. Ms. Gwendolyn is already engaged to Mr. Jenson. It is reasonable that he takes care of Ms. Gwendolyn.”

“Engaged?”

When did this happen? How did I not hear about any of this?

Sensing Sherman’s confusion, Nico explained, “Old Mr. Jenson personally went to the Harris residence to finalize the engagement last night. The news will be announced during Ms. Gwendolyn’s welcome party. I hope Mr. Ferguson realizes who is the outsider here.”

Sherman turned pale instantly. It never occur to him that the Jenson family would act so quickly and that Marcus would agree to it right away!

Now that Cedrick was Gwendolyn's fiancé, he couldn't gain the upper hand as her friend.

Seeing that Sherman was no longer blocking his way, Cedrick carried Gwendolyn in his arms and turned to leave.

Leaning on Cedrick's broad chest, Gwendolyn caught a familiar whiff of tobacco smell. Instinctively, she tightened her grip on his neck as she murmured, "Don't go. You just promised that you won't leave me..."

Upon hearing that, Sherman grinned smugly. "Seems like Gwendolyn prefers going with me, Mr. Jenson."

Cedrick stiffened as he looked down at the frunk Gwendolyn in his arms. She had an innocent look on her face despite being in that state and unaware.

Was Gwendolyn referring to Sherman this morning when she said she is in love with another man?

She even went to The Honey Bee for drinks with him alone.

She has a good tolerance for alcohol and is usually alert, but this time she ended up getting drunk without any defense. It seems like she truly cares about Sherman.

But... why does it have to be Sherman?

Suppressing the heavy feeling in his chest and concealing the pain in his eyes, Cedrick ordered with his deep voice, "Escort Mr. Ferguson out, Nico."

Nico stepped forward and gestured for Sherman to leave.

“Nothing good ever comes from forcing someone to do something that they don’t want to, Mr. Jenson. You should respect Gwendolyn’s wishes and let me take her to rest,” Sherman said unwillingly.

Cedrick turned around and shot him a cold glance. “She is my fiancée. Whatever I choose to do is more appropriate than you!” he hissed menacingly.

Firmly carrying Gwendolyn in his arms, Cedrick then left.

“How long have you known her, Mr. Jenson? She’s not going to like you! If you dare to do anything to her, you will have to face the consequences when she wakes up!” Sherman yelled as he did not trust Cedrick.

Ignoring Sherman, Cedrick carried Gwendolyn to a neighboring hotel.

He had just reached the hotel entrance when he bumped into William and Quinton, who had just booked a room and were rushing back to the bar.

They noticed Nico first, but couldn’t recognize Cedrick because he was wearing a mask. However, it was impossible not to notice Gwendolyn in his arms.

“Why is Ms. Harris in your arms? Where is Mr. Ferguson?”

Sensing the tense atmosphere, Nico hurriedly stepped forward to explain the situation. “This is Mr. Jenson, my new boss. Since Ms. Gwendolyn is too drunk, he decides to book a hotel room to take care of her.”

“But... Ms. Harris is not going to like it when she’s sober...”

“No buts,” Nico interrupted, “The engagement was settled by the head of their respective families. They are going to be married sooner or later. Is there anyone better than Mr. Jenson to take care of Ms. Gwendolyn when she is drunk? Which one of us is a better fit—the two of you or me?”

Speechless, William and Quinton glanced at each other.

Noticing the room key in William's hand, Nico took the chance to snatch it away while the former was still hesitating. Then, he went into the hotel with Cedrick.

William and Quinton hurried after them and waited at the door of the room.

When Nico came out of the room, he patted William and Quinton's shoulders in a friendly way as he said, "We haven't seen each other in half a year. Shall we get a drink together?"

William looked troubled. "I don't think that's a good idea. We have to stand guard when Ms. Harris is staying at a hotel."

Quinton nodded to second him.

"There's nothing to worry about! Mr. Jenson is skilled enough to protect Ms. Gwendolyn from any harm. Let's go and find a place with nice drinks and barbecue!"

"Wait..."

In the end, they left with Nico rather reluctantly.

Meanwhile, in the hotel room, Cedrick carried Gwendolyn to the bed and helped her remove her coat and heels. After covering her with a blanket, he went to the bathroom and returned with a bowl of warm water to wipe her face with it.

Afraid of waking her up, he kept his movements gentle.

The dim, yellowish light of the bedside lamp added a touch of ambiguity to the room.

As Cedrick wiped Gwendolyn's face, his gaze traced over the towel to the contours of her delicate facial features. He observed her intently as if he wanted to etch her image firmly into his heart.

All he could do was watch her sleep soundly, and yet he felt contented.

This face, this person, was the one he wanted to love to the core.

But she's in love with Sherman now...

She seems to have forgotten about me even though it's only been half a year.

Well, not completely forgotten. As her ex-husband, I am still used by her as a scapegoat.

The more he thought about it, the more he felt like a knife was piercing through his heart. Every breath he took hurt at that moment.

Eyes reddened, Cedrick sat dejectedly by the bed and watched Gwendolyn quietly.

Now that she was asleep, her features looked peaceful. Her rosy, plump lips were slightly parted and irresistibly alluring.

Cedrick pondered if he could steal a kiss from her.

She won't remember any of it when she sobers up tomorrow anyway.

But is this too inappropriate?

Heart pounding, he leaned closer to her hesitantly...

Gwendolyn was really intoxicated. It was the most intense drinking session she had ever had since she had a bad stomachache after the other drinking episode.

Gwendolyn's eyelashes quivered as she opened her eyes in a dazed state, only to be greeted by a terrifying and enlarged face.

Instinctively, she raised her hand and slapped the ugly face.

"What kind of monster are you? How dare you get near me!"

"Ouch!" Cedrick couldn't help yelling in pain as he didn't expect Gwendolyn to wake up and hit him all of a sudden.

He felt like his nasal bone was crushed beneath the mask.

He wanted to rub his nose and check if it was bleeding, but he didn't dare take off his mask because Gwendolyn was awake. He had no choice but to bear with the pain.

Although Gwendolyn was awake, she was still quite drunk.

Her vision was blurred, and her head felt dizzy.

The ghostly face in front of her seemed to be spinning in circles like the hands of a clock.

Propping herself up on the bed, Gwendolyn retreated backward as she sat up until her body was curled up at the bedside. Staggering, she assumed a defensive posture.

"Get away from me, you ugly piece of sh*t!"

Cedrick felt helpless.

Realizing that she was still drunk, he cleared his throat and began in a hoarse voice, "Ms. Harris, I'm Cedrick."

Cedrick?

Gwendolyn muttered the name under her breath again.

Having heard the name so many times for the past few days, she had developed extreme disgust for the name!

Emboldened by alcohol, she delivered a fierce kick in his direction and reached for something on the bedside table to use as a weapon. With a menacing expression, she cursed, "You bast*rd! How dare you have the nerves to marry me! I will send you to hell before you can do that!"