

Masked In Nobility: Secrets Of Mrs. Chavez Chapter 371

In the master bedroom on the second floor, Yvette looked at the freshly renovated room. The decor was totally her style- simple and elegant—and it was clear thought had gone into it.

The phone rang, and when Yvette answered, Jeremiah's face filled the screen. The background was still his office decor; obviously, he hadn't gone home yet.

After Jeremiah met Yvette, he finally understood the saying "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." It hadn't even been a day since they parted, and he had already begun to miss her. Jeremiah's voice was low, "Back to the Chambers residence?"

Yvette casually took off her coat, her voice low and husky. "Yeah, I'll be staying here for a while."

Jeremiah wasn't surprised; he already knew about Zachary's situation. Although he had used the simplest method all these years, it really hadn't been easy.

But if it were him, he certainly wouldn't have put up with being with another woman for so long. Anyone who dared to mess with Yvette, he'd make sure they regretted it deeply.

Jeremiah said, "Alright, I'll come back to Seacurity to be with you after I finish my military duties."

Yvette nodded, looking at him with a deep gaze. "Button up."

Jeremiah looked down and realized two of his buttons had come undone without him knowing. He smiled and reached out his well-defined fingers to slowly button them back up, taking a whole minute for a task that could have been done in seconds.

Yvette watched him, raising an eyebrow with a hint of amusement in her eyes. He was becoming more playful, getting better at using his charms.

After finishing with the buttons, Jeremiah looked up with an innocent expression. "Sorry about that, the buttons just slipped open."

Yvette chuckled softly, twirling the coffee cup between her fingers as she observed Jeremiah's posture, and whispered, "You said the exact same thing last time."

Jeremiah paused; he thought, 'it seems like this tactic isn't going to work anymore. Yvette is no longer falling for it. Is my charm really losing its effect?'

The next day, as soon as Yvette got to the school gate, she was surrounded by a group of students. They held up all kinds of light signs and huge homemade posters of Yvette.

The giant poster showed Yvette's first time at Argrol University, captured in a candid shot on the forum, with her head down, revealing only half of her beautiful face. The students chanted slogans in unison so loudly that people passing by stopped to watch.

Yvette pressed her hat down, with a mask covering most of her face, her long lashes casting shadows as she looked at the boys and girls in front of her. She wondered, 'Even dressed like this, how do they recognize me?'

Yvette didn't realize that after being recognized at the airport yesterday, "Yvette Returns to Seacriety" immediately became the top trending topic. The Argrol University fan club had arrived at the school early with banners, waiting for her to arrive.

The representative of the fan club was a student from the Department of Foreign Languages, a boy named Connor, with black-rimmed glasses. He stepped forward excitedly and said to Yvette, "Uh...Ms. Zeller, hello! I'm Connor, a sophomore in the Department of Foreign Languages.

"We're all your fans, and we welcome you back to Argrol University. We'll always support you, you're forever the Goddess in our hearts."

Connor's face turned red as he finished speaking. Lately, besides attending classes, he's been spending his time starting threads about Yvette on online forums. Now, he's gained some recognition as a popular thread starter.

As soon as Connor finished speaking, people around him immediately started chanting slogans. "Goddess, Goddess, we are crazy about you!"

"Goddess, Goddess, you're the best, you're our great role model

"Goddess, marry me..."

The three chants were absolutely thunderous. Yvette raised her hand, and the crowd immediately quieted down, looking at her with eager anticipation. She glanced at the people around and said plainly, "Disperse."

Charles and Andrew arrived together. They quickly noticed Yvette standing in the crowd, surrounded by students holding various colorful signs and banners.

Andrew crossed his arms and exclaimed, "Yvette, you're really famous all over the country now. You've already topped the fan rankings on the forum. These fans are intense!"

Charles watched the scene with a blank expression. Anyone else would have been thrilled, but he knew that Yvette didn't like this kind of attention.

After Yvette said those three words, Connor immediately responded, “Okay, okay, Goddess, don’t worry! We, your fans, are very respectful and we won’t cause any trouble for you at school We’ll just support you quietly.”

This group came quickly and left just as fast. Led by Connor, they retreated quickly and in an orderly manner. The previously crowded entrance quickly became quiet, with only a few people lingering.

Andrew was amazed at the speed of the fans’ retreat. This organization was quite disciplined, but they looked like they were hired. Andrew and Charles walked over. “Yvette, your fans are really impressive. Look how quickly they retreat,” Andrew said.

“Now that’s what I call a well–organized and disciplined fan club..” Charles agreed with Andrew this time. It was hard not to admire such a fan group.

Yvette nodded without saying anything. She went to the physics classroom while Andrew accompanied Charles to complete his enrollment paperwork.

At first, Charles didn’t know what major to choose. He graduated with top marks in finance from the top university in Mysonna. Further study seemed pointless until Samantha reminded him of something. “If you’re an assassin, majoring in law seems like a perfect fit.”

Charles thought that made sense. He was well–versed in human anatomy, so he ultimately chose the law program at Argrol University.

As Yvette entered the physics classroom, she was met with applause. She looked around but didn’t see Bonnie. Recently, Yvette’s texts had gone unanswered, except for one reply she got [All is well. I’m dealing with some issues, so it’s inconvenient to contact right now.]

Yvette nodded to the people around her and then casually found a seat. With her eyes lowered, everyone in the physics department already knew her reputation – tough and quiet.

As soon as Tobias walked in, he noticed Yvette sitting in the back row. He had heard about her return the day before and planned to pick her up with his uncle.

But unexpectedly, his blind date was rescheduled, insisting on meeting yesterday, so he had to meet his date first.

Recently, Tobias had become obsessed with blind dates. In just a few months, he had nearly gone on thirty dates, all ending without any outcome. He was so numb from dating that he looked at women as if they were tigers.

In front of the whole class, Tobias said, “Welcome back, Ms. Zeller.”

A thunderous applause echoed in the classroom once again. Yvete looked up, stood up, and politely said, "Thank you."

Tobias smiled and said, "You can sit down, Ms. Zeller. Alright, lets start the class."

Meanwhile, Winona arrived at the club she and Layla used to visit frequently, known for its excellent privacy, catering specifically to the wealthy daughters of affluent families. All the male escorts there were carefully chosen.

These male escorts were trained professionally before they could start working. The tips they received from wealthy patrons in a day could easily match a few months' salary for an average person.

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Winona and Layla were regulars at this place. Before Winona's real identity was revealed, they used to come here often because the place was very discreet. So apart from them, no one else knew they were frequent visitors to this club.

When Winona arrived at the club, she went straight to the private room she had booked to wait for Layla. Winona requested a new guy, a male escort with a fit, gym-toned body. He had a rugged, masculine look.

No one knew that Winona was actually into muscular guys. She liked the feeling of conquering such men, which gave her a great sense of accomplishment.

Since Victor and Robert weren't that type, she would come here secretly to relieve her stress and fulfill her needs.

Since the Smith family went bankrupt, Winona had become more and more out of control, visiting this place more often and enjoying ordering around the male escorts here.

The muscular escort's stage name was Jackman. He looked at Winona, who was visibly pregnant and felt uneasy.

In his line of work, Jackman had encountered all sorts of wealthy women seeking entertainment, each with their own quirks, but it was the first time he'd seen a woman so far along in her pregnancy.

Still, he knew Winona was a regular who used certain methods, but since she always tipped well, he welcomed her with a smile.

Jackman was dressed in a special club outfit, with only a triangular piece of clothing below, its thin fabric barely covering anything. A small red bell hung around his neck, and he wore a deer antler headband.

This might have been cute on a young toy boy, but on a muscular man like Jackman, it seemed out of place. However, for Winona, it had a specific charm, full of a wild elegance that was exactly her taste.

Jackman willingly knelt at Winona's feet, lifting her foot and gently massaging it. He looked up at her and said, "Ms. Chambers, is this pressure to your liking?" From Winona's viewpoint, she had a clear view downward.

Winona let out a satisfied sigh due to Jackman's service. She nodded arrogantly, looking at the humble Jackman with eyes full of disdain yet also a lustful longing for his physique.

"Satisfied, well-trained," Winona said as she nonchalantly slapped Jackman with her hand.

Jackman wasn't upset at being slapped. On the contrary, he smiled and said, "Thank you for your kindness, Ms. Chambers." Lowering his eyes, he thought, 'In this job, what's a slap?'

A few days ago, a wealthy woman nearly beat a male escort half to death. He was still in the hospital, but she paid him a fortune; he was set for life. It was all about equal exchange, giving and taking, a fair deal.

Still, it was pretty wild for this woman to come here with her pregnancy out to have fun.

Winona felt quite pleased seeing him being so tactful, and she pled out 30 thousand dollars from her bag, tossing it at Jackman's face. She found a sense of self-respect that she hadn't felt for a long time from Jackman. "Here's your reward."

Jackman's eyes sparkled at the sight of the 30 thousand dollars, and he quickly pocketed it. "Thank you, Ms. Chambers."

Winona looked at Jackman with disdain, thinking how cheap he was.

Jackman pretended not to notice Winona's look and continued to work hard. When the timing seemed right, Winona signaled Jackman to come over with her finger. "Come here, you know what to do, right?"

Jackman knew exactly what she meant, but he hesitated. He thought, 'Her belly is so big; what if things got physical and something went wrong? I can hardly take that responsibility.'

Jackman hesitated and said, "Ms. Chambers, with your belly, I'm afraid..."

Winona snorted coldly, crossing her arms. She told Jackman, "Come here, didn't the club teach you some other techniques? Do I really have to explain it to you?"

Of course, Winona wouldn't risk the child she was carrying. This baby was her trump card at the moment and she couldn't afford for anything to happen to it.

Jackman understood and quickly crawled over, untying the restraints and reaching out. Just as they were having fun, Layla burst through the door.

Seeing the two of them in the room with hardly any clothes on didn't surprise her at all.

She's always been familiar with Winona's private life, having seen such scenes before—and it was not even the first time they had shared a partner. This was just small potatoes.

Layla just couldn't believe that Winona, with her belly so big, still wanted to have this kind of fun, not even worrying about Victor finding out,

She wondered, 'If the Carters no longer supported Winona, who else could she rely on? Does she really think she is still the prestigious daughter of the Chambers family?'

Winona and Jackman were taken aback when Layla suddenly burst through the door. Jackman quickly stood up and moved aside.

Winona put on her clothes and complained to Layla, "Why didn't you knock before coming in? Can't you wait a bit?"

Being interrupted at a crucial moment by Layla left Winona's anger unexpressed, and her desire was still building up. Naturally, she wasn't happy.

Layla could only smile as she moved forward and took hold of Winona, who was already dressed. She said playfully, "Alright, alright, don't be mad. I'll book you a session with the latest male escort from the club later.

"He'll definitely be better than this one, and you can have all the fun you want, okay?"

The idea of someone better than Jackman instantly lifted Winona's mood. "Okay, fine, fine."

Jackman's expression shifted, and he gritted his teeth. The competition in their field was intense, and he was depending on this job with Winona for a tip to boost his ranking in the club.

He never foresaw a woman stepping in to cause trouble, trying to replace him with just a few sentences.

Jackman felt a bit resentful but had to swallow his pride. He lifted his head and looked at Winona with a flattering gaze, his eyes seeking attention. "Ms. Chambers, could you please not replace me? I'll go along with whatever you need. I'm begging you."

Layla was intrigued by how different Jackman's demeanor was from his tough appearance. She hadn't expected this man, who seemed like a tough guy, to speak so gently.

Winona knew what Layla was thinking just by looking into her eyes. She exchanged a glance with Layla, and both of them were interested.

Layla said, "We might not have to replace you, but what about your stamina?"

Seeing her relent, Jackman quickly chimed in. "Don't worry, I'm very professional. Even if I serve two people, it's no problem. I'll definitely make sure you're satisfied."

Winona nodded generously, giving Jackman a look of disdainful charity. "Alright, you can stay. Do your job well, and you'll get your tip."

After the noon session, Winona and Layla moved from one suite to another.

Jackman lay on the bed, his breathing faint, with no part of his body unharmed. His back was covered with whip marks, still bleeding and staining half the sheets red while he lay there completely exposed.

On the bedside table was a freshly written check. One hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Jackman looked at the amount on the check and grinned with satisfaction. After all he'd been through, getting one hundred and fifty thousand dollars definitely wasn't a bad deal.

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In another private room at the club, Winona and Layla, after indulging their desires, felt much more at ease. They were back to being as close as sisters, sipping their wine.

Winona sipped her wine, straightened her posture, and said, "So When I tried reaching out, you were always busy. Then you stopped answering entirely. Now suddenly, here you are?"

Layla laughed, her expression exaggerated with mock sincerity. Oh, Winona, it wasn't me. My family didn't want me reaching out. Forgive me this once, will you?"

Winona knew perfectly well that Layla's silence had been her own choice, but there was no point making an issue out of it now.

Ever since Yvette was revealed to be Cyanbird and Winona was exposed as not being Zachary's biological daughter, everyone distanced themselves from Winona. Layla's

contact was a lifeline, and no matter the reason, she needed the semblance of a friend—even a superficial one.

Feigning aloofness, Winona lifted her chin. “Fine. I’ll let it slide this time. But if it happens again, we’re done. Got it?”

Layla concealed her disdain beneath a bright, fake smile. The two kept their facades on, chatting idly, their words as empty as the glasses they held.

Finally Layla brought up her real reason for meeting. “Winona, have you heard? Yvette’s back in Seacurity.”

At the mere mention of Yvette, Winona’s face darkened. She smashed her wine glass to the floor, watching it shatter, red wine pooling like blood.

“I know. That witch returned to town, and people went crazy over her! All she did was win some petty art competition—does she really deserve this attention? She must’ve cheated; no way someone like her won fair and square.”

Layla flinched at Winona’s crazed expression. Once the city’s premier socialite, Winona now looked unhinged, far from her former self.

Besides, it was impossible to cheat in an international competition like that. Not wanting to risk Winona’s temper affecting her unborn child, Layla soothed her friend.

“Winona, don’t get so worked up. Yvette’s fifteen minutes of fame won’t last. The higher she rises, the harder she’ll fall. Just wait—it’ll all come crashing down for her soon enough. Just make sure you don’t do anything to disturb the baby.”

When Winona heard Layla mention the baby, she calmed down. She sat back on the couch and looked at Layla, wondering why she suddenly brought up Yvette.

Layla, feeling a bit guilty, avoided Winona’s gaze. Winona asked, “Why bring her up out of the blue? Have you seen her? What happened?”

Layla shifted uneasily, hiding the truth as she fabricated a story. “I went to see Mr. Chambers, hoping to appeal on your behalf. Surely, he’d show some compassion after all these years as father and daughter.”

Winona paused, a glimmer of hope crossing her face. Could the affection Zachary had shown really have been an act? She pressed Layla, “You pleaded for me? What did he say?”

Hesitantly, Layla spun her tale further. “Mr. Chambers said it’s over between you two. He even said not to contact him and that Yvette is his only daughter now.”

In truth, Layla hadn't spoken with Zachary about Winona at all; she'd concocted the whole thing. She knew Winona and Zachary would never reconcile, and no one would ever discover her lie.

Yvette's arrogance needed a dose of comeuppance, and who better to deliver it than Winona?

As Layla expected, Winona's face twisted with rage. "Cut me off, will he? I'll make him pay for that."

Feigning concern, Layla poured fuel on the fire. "Winona, Mr. Chambers is so invested in Yvette now—he's practically showered her with everything. He even remodeled the second floor of the Chambers residence into her personal space, filled with antiques worth millions.

"And he even commissioned a custom studio for her, something he never did for you, even when you were into painting. Isn't it just unfair?"

Winona clenched her fists, body trembling, a dark glint in her eyes. She sneered, her expression feral. "Tell me, if Yvette were... gone, do you think Zachary would still play favorites?"

Layla froze. She'd only wanted Yvette's reputation tarnished, but Winona's ruthlessness exceeded her expectations. She never dared to think about anything as serious as death.

Layla bit her lip, a hint of fear in her voice. "Winona, that's dangerous. With her popularity, any harm that comes to her would bring the police down on us. It's too risky."

Winona smirked, looking straight at Layla. "You must've crossed Yvette somehow, or you wouldn't be here talking about this, would you?"

Caught off guard, Layla floundered, but Winona continued her manipulation. "Listen, Yvette holds grudges. If you've wronged her, she might retaliate. Don't you think we'd be better off making the first move?"

Layla hesitated, Winona's words seeping into her thoughts. After a tense moment, she nodded, her voice shaking but resolute. "Winona, what do you want to do?"

Sensing Layla's opening, Winona touched her stomach, confidence gleaming in her eyes.

"Yvette's arrogant, full of herself with no real talent beyond painting and playing some worthless game. We can pay someone from the underworld. With enough money, plenty of people will take the job. Once Yvette is in our hands, she's ours to toy with."

Layla's face lit up with twisted excitement at the image of Yvette humiliated at their mercy. Sensing Layla's wavering resolve, Winona leaned in, whispering, "Layla, don't you want to ruin Yvette's face?"

"With her gone, nothing will stand between you and becoming Seacriety's top socialite. She's just a roadblock. Only by removing her can we have the life we deserve."

As though hypnotized, Layla nodded, her eyes blazing. "You're right, Winona. Only without Yvette can we finally live our best lives. Tell me what to do. I'm with you."

Winona nodded in satisfaction, leaning close to murmur her plan as Layla's eyes brightened, her mind already savoring the thought of Yvette's downfall.

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The next day, as instructed by Winona, Layla headed to Argrol University to find Yvette.

The plan was set: Layla would lure Yvette out to a remote area, where they'd hired some rough types from Seacriety's underworld to lie in wait. Once Yvette arrived, she would be trapped like a sitting duck.

Not willing to risk any failure, Winona and Layla had recruited twenty or so burly men. Winona had seen Yvette with a gun before and had no idea what other tricks she might have. They had to be ready for anything.

When Layla arrived at the physics lab, she spotted Yvette heading out. Yvette acted as if she didn't see her, about to walk past without a glance. Quickly, Layla called out. "Yvette! Hey, Yvette!"

Yvette paused, turned, and saw Layla motioning to her in a suspiciously discreet way. "Do you need something?"

After scanning their surroundings, Layla approached with a soft, apologetic tone. "Yvette, I'm here to apologize. I realize now how wrong I was yesterday—I was being petty and thoughtless. It's been weighing on me, so I came here specifically to make things right."

Layla's voice was soaked with fake sincerity, her eyes even misting up slightly. Yvette raised an eyebrow, her response as indifferent as ever: "Mm—hmm."

Seeing Yvette's blank face, Layla was fuming inside but couldn't show it. She had said so much and even admitted her mistake, but Yvette didn't respond at all.

Layla thought, 'I've made myself small and played nice. Did Yvette really have to be so cold?' Layla forced herself to continue, "Yvette, I really mean it. Can I buy you a coffee, just to show I'm sorry?"

Layla cautiously made her request, hoping Yvette would agree with a nod. Yvette stood there with her hands in her pockets, her gaze cool and unfazed.

After an awkward pause, Layla added hastily, "Or maybe... I know you love desserts. I had fresh ingredients flown in just for you.

"I've got a renowned chef waiting to prepare them at my villa outside town. It's my way of making it up to you."

Layla's nerves were fraying as Yvette's silence stretched on. Finally, when she thought she couldn't take it anymore, Yvette responded, "Fine. Lead the way."

Relieved, Layla's tension eased. She barely noticed the glimmer of amusement in Yvette's eyes. Yvette thought, 'Since some people wanted to put on a show, she might as well set the stage properly.'

Thinking she'd finally won Yvette over, Layla perked up. "Great, my car is just outside. We can head to the villa straight from here."

The two walked out together, only to run into Charles, who had just returned to campus. The moment Charles saw Yvette, he came over, his voice firm. "Yvette, where are you headed?"

The moment Charles saw Yvette, he came over, his voice firm. "Yvette, where are you headed?"

Yvette nodded casually. "Oh, someone invited me for dessert."

Charles glanced over at Layla, who was striking a pose she probably thought was seductive. He barely suppressed a smirk and thought, 'What is Yvette doing with this woman?'

Layla's eyes lit up at the sight of Charles, taking in his chiseled features and impressive build. She tried her best to look coy, biting her lip in what she thought was an attractive manner. "Yvette, is this your friend?" she asked sweetly.

Neither Yvette nor Charles dignified her with an answer. Feeling the snub, Layla covered her embarrassment with a hasty suggestion, "We should go, Yvette. It's getting late."

Charles shot Layla a sharp look but held back, his face impassive. Yvette said to Charles, "I better go."

Charles nodded. This woman didn't seem trustworthy, but if anyone were to mess with Yvette, they probably wouldn't know what hit them. He wasn't concerned—a woman like this couldn't harm Yvette at all.

Charles watched as Yvette climbed into the black Jeep with Layla. Just before the door shut, Yvette shot him a look that only the two could understand. Instantly, Charles caught on.

Another fool was walking right into Yvette's own trap. Charles wondered, 'Why did people keep underestimating Yvette? Did she really look that easy to mess with?' Charles knew better. If Yvette wanted to play along, he'd let her.

Just as he turned to head back to the campus, Andrew rushed up, practically shoving a drink into Charles's hand before hurrying to the library, muttering something about needing a raise. Charles chuckled, it was another day of hustling for that paycheck.

Meanwhile, inside the Jeep, Yvette remained glued to her phone, ignoring Layla's presence. Relieved that her scheme was underway, Eayla's nerves settled, and her previous humility vanished.

Peeking over at Yvette's screen, Layla's face twisted with a sneer at the casual game Yvette was playing—some sort of pet-raising app. She thought, 'Seriously? What kind of person plays games like that?'

Layla felt her confidence rise. World-class competition winner or not, Yvette was still playing "kiddie" games, nothing close to the high-end online games Layla indulged in.

Feeling surprised, Layla gasped dramatically, covering her mouth. "Oh my gosh, you play that kind of game? Isn't that, like, for little kids? So childish.

"If you want something more grown-up, I can recommend a game or two. Of course, the ones I play have entry fees in the tens of thousands. Not sure you'd be able to handle that."

Layla's superiority was practically dripping from every word. The driver briefly glanced in the rearview mirror, wisely staying silent.

Yvette, however, had heard enough. Lifting her eyes, she turned to Layla, her face as cold as ice, lips curving into a smirk laced with menace. "You talk too much. Shut up."

Layla's mouth twitched, anger simmering beneath the surface. Just as she was about to lash out, her phone chimed. Suppressing her irritation, she glanced at it—a text from Winona.

Winona: [All set here. Where are you?]

Layla furtively typed her reply, leaving her phone away from Yvette's view. She snuck a glance at Yvette, who seemed oblivious, eyes still on her game.

Layla: [Almost there. About fifteen minutes away. Don't screw this up, or we're both finished.]

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Upon receiving Winona's text, Layla felt a fresh wave of anxiety. After all, this was her first time participating in a murder. She wasn't the one getting her hands dirty, but being involved in such a scheme as an accomplice was terrifying.

However, thoughts of Winona's words and a sideways glance at Yvette's flawless face reignited the jealousy burning within her. A person like Yvette didn't belong in Seacriety.

Layla was supposed to be the city's future socialite, and Yvette's presence was an obstacle. With renewed resolve, she steeled herself.

As Yvette continued playing on her phone, her voice was cold and detached. "This isn't the road to the villa."

Layla tightened her grip on her purse, forcing a confident tone. "Um, it's a shortcut. You haven't been in Seacriety long, so you wouldn't know—this way is faster."

The driver, aware of the deception, felt a twinge of fear. He knew they weren't headed toward any villa. Layla had instructed him to drive to an abandoned factory on the outskirts. He had no idea why Layla was lying to this girl.

And he had heard rumors about Layla's dark past—like the time she bullied a girl so relentlessly that the poor girl ended up jumping off a building. Layla's parents had covered it up, but the driver couldn't shake his unease.

Taking a risk, the driver muttered, "Ms. Chambers, maybe this road isn't ideal. Perhaps we should take a different route?"

Layla didn't expect this lousy driver to mess up her plans. She glared daggers at him. "What are you saying? Just drive. I say it's a shortcut, so it is. One more word, and I'll dock your pay for the month."

Yvette glanced up, catching the driver's worried gaze through the mirror, his silent signals not lost on her. Calmly, she said, "Keep driving."

With a resigned sigh, the driver pressed on, deeply uneasy about whatever was awaiting them at the factory.

After another fifteen minutes, the black Jeep finally pulled up in front of the abandoned structure.

The deserted factory loomed eerily, surrounded by tall, wild grass, casting shadows that seemed to reach out in the daylight. The decayed building had a sinister air, even making the driver a full-grown man feel a chill run down his spine.

Layla hadn't seen the location before and was taken aback. She hadn't expected Winona to pick a place so creepy, and now she couldn't bring herself to look at Yvette.

The web of lies she'd spun unraveled completely, and the reality of the situation was far from what she'd imagined. Yvette opened the door and stepped out, glancing back at the nervous Layla. Her voice was calm, unhurried. "We're here. Come on out."

Layla froze. She thought, 'Isn't Yvette supposed to be scared?' Instead, it seemed as if Yvette had brought her here. Layla felt a surge of bewilderment—who was leading whom here?

Layla would never guess that Yvette was all too familiar with places like this. She'd been to dozens, if not hundreds, of abandoned sites more terrifying than this one—some even used as dumping grounds, littered with bones. Compared to those, this place felt almost like home.

Layla was still in a daze when Yvette walked straight to the factory entrance. Once Layla snapped out of it, she quickly followed, surprised that Winona chose such a place,

Wearing high heels, she managed just a couple of steps before she started swearing under her breath.

Yvette stood at the entrance with her hands in her pockets, looking up at the worn-out sign on the dilapidated factory. The name had eroded beyond recognition, leaving only the words "Chemical Plant" barely visible.

When Layla finally caught up, she stammered, "The, uh... the dessert chef..."

Realizing there was no way to continue the charade, Layla dropped the pretense. "Listen, Yvette, I'll be honest. Someone else wants to meet you here. If you know what's good for you, you'll head inside on your own."

Her tone dripped with insincere concern as if she were doing Yvette a favor.

Unfazed, Yvette strolled further into the factory.

Layla gritted her teeth and followed behind Yvette, but regardless of how fast she walked, she couldn't catch up to Yvette, who always kept some distance ahead.

Once inside, the spacious factory revealed itself—a two-story expanse with rusted machinery scattered around, relics of a long-forgotten era.

The dim lighting cast shadows over a group of roughly fifty burly men clad in black tank tops, their arms tattooed with dragon insignias, each at least six feet tall.

Yvette surveyed the group with a smirk and an air of nonchalance about her. Fifty men to her it was almost insulting. She hadn't had a good workout in ages. If these were the best they could muster, she might as well let them bring more.

Yvette said nothing, her eyes scanning the area, calculating. Free practice dummies weren't easy to come by, after all.

Layla quickly dashed towards them as soon as she saw the crowd, forgetting all about her foot pain.

Meanwhile, Yvette glanced up, her dark eyes narrowed, an icy edge glinting in them. She looked at the men with a chillingly genuine suggestion.

"This is all you've got? Maybe you should call for backup."

After all, this was an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and she hoped they would seize it.

The fifty or so men in black exchanged wary glances, their mouths twitching in disbelief. They wondered, 'Is she serious? Does she think she isn't in enough trouble already in this situation?'

One of the men, evidently their leader, stepped forward, removing his sunglasses to reveal a crude, leering expression. His eyes roamed over Yvette, lingering in a way that made his intentions clear.

She was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, and wicked thoughts crept into his mind.

"Listen up, lady," he sneered, "we're here on Ms. Chambers' orders. Play nice, surrender, and she'll let you keep your life. You're a woman—we don't want to get rough."

Yvette's smirk widened, tinged with irony. She thought, 'Play nice? Surrender? Spare her life?' She couldn't recall hearing those words in her life.

Yvette tilted her head slightly, her gaze drifting over the group before settling back on Layla. "Ms. Chambers? Maybe the real Ms. Chambers should show herself."

Layla froze, her face betraying a flicker of panic. She couldn't help but feel Yvette knew Winona was the mastermind.

In an exaggerated attempt to cover her shock, Layla raised her voice. “What are you talking about? I am Ms. Chambers! Who else would you be looking for? I was just messing with you, and there’s no one else. I just can’t stand you!”

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Yvette’s expression remained unreadable as she glanced briefly toward a nearby pillar, her hands still casually in her pockets. With a faint smirk, she called out, “Come on out. I’m here, so why keep hiding?”

Both Layla and the group of men in black froze, shocked that Yvette had spotted someone behind the pillar. Winona, realizing her cover was blown, decided there was no point in hiding any longer.

Winona had no intention of sparing Yvette, and if Yvette knew who was behind this plot, it wouldn’t change the outcome. Only one of them would leave this factory alive.

Winona emerged, clapping slowly, her eyes’ cold and menacing as they locked onto Yvette. Seeing Winona step forward, Layla hurried to her side.

“Winona, I did everything you asked. I brought her here, so I’ll just head out now. This place gives me the creeps,” Layla said, shifting uncomfortably.

Layla thought her role was done—that she had merely been the bait to lure Yvette into Winona’s trap.

But in the next moment, Winona cast her a look of disdain. She thought, ‘Foolish girl. Does Winona really think she’d walk away unscathed? Her purpose here is far more than just leading Yvette into the trap!’

Winona motioned to the men in black, and without hesitation, they moved forward and restrained Layla.

Layla stared in horror, struggling against their grip as she shouted at Winona, “Winona, what are you doing? Why are you tying me up? We’re good friends, and you should be tying up Yvette! Let me go, let me go!”

Winona’s gaze shifted from Yvette’s calm, detached expression to Layla’s frantic, pleading face.

She said, “Friends? You only wanted to use my hatred to get back at Yvette. Did you really think I’d fall for such a simple trick?”

“Are you that naïve or just plain stupid? You thought you could use me as your weapon? You’re not even close to being worthy

Layla's face paled as the realization hit her. Winona had known all along that she was using her, and now she was paying the price. Panic gripped her as she realized just how dangerous and unpredictable Winona truly was.

Layla tried to beg for mercy, but the men in black, following a nod from Winona, shoved a rag into her mouth and dragged her aside, silencing her pleas.

With Layla out of the way, Winona turned her gaze toward Yvette, seething with resentment. If it weren't for Yvette's existence, none of this would have happened.

She would still be the daughter of the Chambers family, the socialite envied by all of Seacriety. Yvette had ruined her life. Winona rested a hand on her stomach with a smug smile. For someone usually so clever, Yvette really lost her mind for a moment—falling for Layla's tricks. But this worked out just fine. She didn't have to resort to Plan B.

Winona looked proud. "Yvette, I never thought you'd end up here. I must've overestimated you if even a fool like Layla could lure you in. If I'd known, it would be this easy, and I wouldn't have gone into so much trouble with all my careful planning.

But don't worry—soon, you'll have plenty of company, and none of you will be leaving."

For the first time, Winona confronted Yvette without any pretense, letting her hatred show openly.

Yvette cast a disinterested glance at Winona, her eyes narrowing slightly. Her voice was calm, "So Layla's your scapegoat?"

The "she" referred to Layla, who was tied up. Layla's eyes went wide at this, a flicker of realization dawning in her eyes.

Winona hadn't expected Yvette to remain so composed, showing no fear even in this situation. It unsettled her for a moment, but she brushed it off, assuming Yvette was merely putting on a brave face.

After all, she had over fifty men with her, all hired at a hefty price from the underworld. How could Yvette, a woman, possibly pose a threat?

Emboldened by the thought, Winona laughed, finally dropping any restraint. She pointed to the bound Layla.

"This idiot tried to use me, so I used her instead. Once you're dead, she'll be the one blamed for your murder. She went to Argrol University to find you, plenty of people must've seen her. They'll be witnesses.

"After you're gone, I'll burn this place to the ground—no evidence, no trace. See, even fate is on my side. Yvette, today's the end for you."

Layla was truly terrified now. She struggled desperately, but no sound could escape her gagged mouth. Her eyes shot daggers at Winona, but the look was powerless against the twisted woman she thought she'd been using.

Layla had thought she was the one pulling the strings, only to realize too late that she was the pawn, set up as the scapegoat. If she had known it would turn out like this, she would never have teamed up with Winona.

One of the men, seeing Layla's frantic thrashing, stepped forward and knocked her unconscious. Just before she collapsed, her eyes held a bitter regret.

to avoid further disruption.

Meanwhile, Winona's frustration only grew as she watched Yvette's stoic expression remain unshaken. She couldn't stand Yvette's aloof demeanor, as if she was above everything. Yvette's calm demeanor drove her mad.

Winona clenched her fists, teeth bared in fury, shouting, "Why? Why are you always so composed? Don't you see? You're in my hands now!"

Yvette's gaze shifted to Winona, her eyes clear and unreadable as if she were observing something far beneath her. Her expression remained serene, almost indifferent, as she brushed an invisible speck off her sleeve.

She responded in a tone so casual it bordered on contempt, "You think I'm in your hands?"

Winona froze, momentarily thrown off by the simple question. She shook it off—surely this woman was just putting on a front. How could Yvette hope to stand against fifty men?

Her confidence bolstered, Winona sneered, suppressing a faint unease. "Yvette, stop pretending. Today, you're finished. But don't worry—I'm generous. I'll let you see someone first before you die. After all, I'm nothing if not kind."

Winona sneered, her eyes glinting with malice. "He'll be here soon, and I'll make sure he watches every second as I kill you. He'll suffer—just like I did. It's what you both owe me!"

Her voice echoed her tone that of a scorned woman, wild with jealousy and rage.

Unperturbed, Yvette finally spoke a single name, calm as ever. "Zachary?"

Winona's face hardened for a moment before she smirked, her gaze as venomous as poison. Yes, I already had someone inform him that you're in my hands. By now, he's probably going mad. You're his precious daughter, after all.

“For your mother’s sake, he’s played along with my mom for so many years, feigning affection for me and Zeke—it must have been quite the strain.

And the minute you came back, he was ready to and over the entire Chambers family fortune to you as if I was nothing.

Her voice grew cold with resentment. “He’s done everything for you, but how much do you actually care about him? What gives you the right to sit back, do nothing, and have it all handed to you? What right do you have?”

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Yvette casually flexed her fingers, her dark eyes glinting with an icy sharpness. In a tone as calm as asking about the weather, she drawled, “Which way do you think is the best way to die?”

Winona and the men in black froze, stunned. They had been in the underworld for years, yet they had never encountered a woman like this.

On the brink of death, she was asking them how they wanted to die as if it were the simplest question in the world. It was almost... unsettling.

Winona scoffed, narrowing her eyes at Yvette, trying to mask her unease. She thought, ‘Is this woman insane? What kind of question was that?’

An uneasy silence settled over the group, each of them caught off guard by her strange question. No one knew how to respond. Yvette sat with her legs bent, relaxed and indifferent. She’d given them a chance—if they didn’t want it, so be it.

Glancing at her watch, Yvette realized it was nearly lunchtime. If she didn’t hurry, she’d miss the pork ribs they served in the cafeteria—a limited special, first come, first served.

Meanwhile, Zachary couldn’t sit still after receiving Winona’s call. She’d threatened that if he called the police, she would kill Yvette on the spot—ready to go down with her if needed. He had to go alone to an abandoned chemical factory on the outskirts.

Zachary knew the place—a project started by a developer years ago, only to be abandoned and left to decay when the developer fled. The area had been deserted for decades, an empty shell of rusted metal and broken machinery.

While driving like a madman, Zachary ran multiple red lights, focusing solely on getting to Yvette.

If anything happened to Yvette, how could he ever face Lilian again? His life would be hollow without Yvette. Although he knew Yvette was an Interpol officer and could handle

herself, Winona was cunning and likely had used some underhanded scheme against her. Zachary prepared himself for the worst. He'd trade his life for Yvette's if he had to.

He couldn't allow anything bad to happen to Yvette. Winona, that lunatic, should never have been let go—she was a ticking time bomb.

As he sped down the deserted roads, a myriad of terrifying outcomes flooded his mind, fear gripping him with each passing second. Half an hour later, he finally reached the abandoned factory, his heart pounding.

Without hesitation, Zachary threw himself against the door, bursting it open and stumbling inside. When he looked up, he froze, utterly stunned by the sight before him.

“What...what the hell is this?” Zachary couldn't help but blurt out stunned by the scene before him.

Inside the abandoned factory, the sight was surreal. A group of black men were kneeling on the ground, each in a perfect, disciplined posture, their arms limp at their sides. Their faces were ghostly pale, eyes wide with terror, their gaze vacant and haunted.

Blood pooled beneath their knees, filling the air with a nauseating metallic scent—their kneecaps had been shattered, and their hands were clearly broken.

Behind the men, a trembling Winona clutched her stomach, her face ashen, her eyes unfocused, hair disheveled as she sat huddled on the ground.

Nearby, slumped against a pillar, was an unconscious woman, her face obscured by her hair. Something about her seemed vaguely familiar to Zachary. And in the middle of it all sat Yvette, perched on an old, abandoned piece of machinery, her legs swinging casually as she focused on her phone.

Zachary swallowed hard, struggling to process the scene. He'd prepared himself for every worst-case scenario—except this one.

“Yvette?” Zachary called, his voice barely above a whisper.

Yvette replied, “Yep. You made it.” She glanced up briefly, a hint of impatience in her gaze as if to say she'd already be halfway to the cafeteria's pork ribs if she hadn't been waiting for him.

Zachary's mouth twitched. He was at a complete loss for words. Having such a fierce daughter was definitely an experience—and not for the faint-hearted.

As if it were nothing, Yvette hopped down from her perch and walked toward Zachary, her expression calm. “You're pretty easy to fool, you know.”

Zachary's initial shock turned to bemused disbelief. At this moment, wasn't he supposed to be emotional? Only Yvette would greet him with "You're pretty easy to fool" after such a situation.

He could only shake his head at her nonchalance. He'd been so panicked that he rushed over without calling Yvette to confirm anything.

Hearing the familiar voice, Winona looked up and screamed, "Dad! Dad, help me! Yvette's a monster, she's insane! She's the one who did this to them!"

Images of Yvette ruthlessly incapacitating these fifty men replayed in Winona's mind, filling her with dread. How could a single person, a woman at that, dismantle a group of fifty men without breaking a sweat? It was beyond comprehension.

As Winona shakily rose to her feet, Zachary looked at her coldly, "You still have the nerve to call me 'Dad'? You kidnapped Yvette. You're as hopeless and twisted as your mother."

Winona froze, stunned by his words, and then exploded in a fit of rage. "I'm the hopeless one? Twisted? It's Yvette who destroyed everything for me! I wouldn't be in this mess if it weren't for her!"

"I had a happy family until you brought her back. I was supposed to be Richard's renowned apprentice, but Yvette exposed me at the worst possible moment, turning me into the laughingstock of Seacriety.

"Now I'm barely surviving with the Carters. All of this—all of it is because of Yvette. She should've died with her mother! If act as the perfect husband and father. It's her fault I'm like this!" could've continued your she were dead, you

Winona's voice grew more hysterical as she spat the words, her messy hair framing her crazed expression as she glared daggers at Yvette. Stepping forward, Zachary positioned himself between Winona and Yvette, blocking her view.

This small action tipped Winona over the edge. She clenched her hands so tightly that her nails dug into her palms, drawing blood. Zachary sighed, looking at her with a mixture of pity and resignation.

After all, Winona was raised by Nellie—a woman who never accepted responsibility and always blamed others. She wouldn't be in this position if Winona hadn't harbored such ill intentions.

Zachary looked at Winona, his face etched with disappointment "Even now, you're blaming everything on Yvette. I warned you when you were young—to walk the right path because once you stray, there's no going back.

“The situation you’re in now has nothing to do with Yvette. You know exactly how many underhanded tactics you’ve used, both openly and secretly, ever since she returned.

“I was only acting in front of Nellie, but I never wronged you or Zeke. You walked yourself into a corner, blaming Yvette for every misstep. She’s never once sought you out to cause trouble.

“If you hadn’t tried to deceive everyone with forged paintings from the black market, there’d have been nothing for her to expose. Even now, you refuse to admit your mistakes. You truly are beyond saving.”

Yvette stood beside them, one leg bent casually, her expression cold and distant, like the chill of winter sunlight.

There was a lazy indifference about her as the faint starlight on an autumn night—remote and untouchable.

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Yvette looked at the deranged Winona, her voice steady and cold. “You reap what you sow.”

Hearing this, Zachary paused for a moment. He looked at Winona and said with a heavy heart, “Winona, it was your choice to take what you thought was an easy path. Your jealousy has destroyed you.

“Yvette never had you in her sights, and deep down, you know it. You just don’t want to admit it. Rather than living on your own merits, you chose to cling to the Carter family, letting hatred cloud your mind.

“Everything that has happened to you—you have only yourself to blame.”

Zachary sighed and felt conflicted. Although Winona was not his biological child, he’d raised her for over twenty years, never treating her unfairly. He’d done all he could, and now he felt no guilt or obligation.

Without the Chambers or Smith families, Winona could have survived on her own—Nellie had invested so much in her education. Even as a dance instructor, she could have led a decent life.

Instead, Winona chose to degrade herself, depending on the Carter family and harboring malicious intent, even going so far as to kidnap Yvette. This was the point of no return.

Winona’s face twisted as she clutched her stomach in pain, her bloodied fingers trembling as she pointed at Yvette, her voice choked with bitter resentment.

“Yes, I’m jealous! Jealous that she gets everything without lifting a finger. Why is she the Cyanbird, while I have to use her name to achieve my goals, and only for her to ruin it all and turn me into a laughingstock?”

“If she hadn’t exposed me, none of this would’ve happened! We could have coexisted peacefully, and it’s all her fault. Even now, you’re blaming me! My only mistake was not finding her sooner and ending her.”

Winona’s mind was consumed by her hatred, and her red-rimmed eyes fixed on Yvette with a murderous glare.

Yvette sat there, looking calm and laid-back, her gaze thoughtful and eyes cold. She looked at Winona seriously and said, “You can’t kill me.”

Those four words, spoken with absolute certainty, shattered Winona’s final sliver of composure. The words echoed in her mind, relentless, as her stomach pain intensified, cold sweat trickling down her face until she was as pale as a ghost.

Zachary’s eye twitched. Yvette’s talent for driving people mad was unmatched. The impact of those four words on Winona was enormous.

Zachary pondered for a moment. Winona would naturally face legal consequences for her mistakes, and Yvette did not need grave to get involved in such matters.

Then Zachary’s tone hardened. “Winona, what you’ve done today has crossed every line of the law. We will not protect you. Prepare yourself for judgment—by the police and the law. May you reflect on your choices.”

Winona glanced at Zachary, who was visibly furious, and at Yvette, who looked at her with cold indifference as if she were nothing. In a last-ditch effort, she made an unexpected move.

Clutching her stomach, she dropped to her knees before them, hiding the hatred in her eyes as she pleaded through tears.

“I’m sorry, Dad, no... I mean, Mr. Chambers, I’m really sorry. I truly regret what I did. I was foolish, consumed by jealousy, and I swear I’ll never do anything like this again.

Please, give me one more chance. I promise I’ll disappear from your lives and never bother Yvette again. I know you’re a kind man who raised me for over twenty years. Please, show me mercy just this once.”

Winona’s sudden display of remorse took Zachary aback for a moment. But Zachary wasn’t naïve. He knew Winona’s heart was twisted beyond repair. Her words rang hollow—he saw through her act.

Like her mother, Nellie, Winona was a master manipulator, and Zachary wouldn't leave such a threat lingering around Yvette.

Seeing Zachary's steely resolve, Winona's desperation deepened. She turned to Yvette, kneeling on the ground and lowering her head in supplication, clutching her stomach in an attempt to use her unborn child as leverage.

"Yvette, please! I know I was wrong. I shouldn't have let jealousy cloud my judgment or see you as an enemy. I'm begging you to give me a chance to make things right. You're a woman too; surely you understand.

"My child is already forming—would you really let him grow up without a mother?"

Hands in her pockets, Yvette looked down at Winona with a penetrating gaze, her expression void of empathy.

Tilting her head slightly, Yvette's voice was cold. "If you don't care about your own child, why should I? I'm no saint. You tried to kill me—why would I ever spare you?"

Winona froze, stunned by Yvette's words. She had expected to use the unborn child as leverage, but Yvette's response was ice-cold, devoid of any sympathy.

Realizing that there was no hope for her here—and that the Carters would abandon her once they discovered what she'd done—she gritted her teeth, a desperate plan forming in her mind.

What Winona had planned was already underway. Today, Robert would be making his move against Victor. Once Victor was out of the picture, her child would be the Carters' only legitimate heir.

In that case, the family would have no choice but to protect her, even if she had to flee to Mysonna afterward. Let's see how Yvette could stop her then.

With a crazed glint in her eyes, Winona pulled out a concealed gun, pointing it directly at Yvette.

A maniacal laugh burst from Winona's lips, "Did you two really think I'd come here unprepared?"

Zachary's eyes widened in horror. Winona had completely lost it. Without thinking, he stepped forward, shielding Yvette with his broad shoulders, blocking her from Winona's aim.

Watching his protective stance, Yvette clenched her fingers slightly, her gaze sharpening.

“Winona!” Zachary roared, his voice thick with anger. “Are you out of your mind? You’d dare to wield a gun?”

Winona smirked, her voice dripping with venom. “What wouldn’t I dare? Today, I’ll make sure you witness your precious daughter’s death in front of you.”

Meanwhile, outside the abandoned factory, Layla’s driver paced back and forth near the car, his face pale with anxiety.

He eyed the factory, but his fear kept him from going inside. Unable to wait any longer, he took a deep breath, pulled out his phone, and dialed 911.

“Yes, this is the police? I’m at the abandoned factory on the outskirts. Here’s the situation…”

In a panic, the driver didn’t notice the black SUV parked some distance away.

Five or six men sat inside the vehicle, each looking seasoned and battle-ready, their expressions cold behind dark sunglasses. Watching the driver on the phone, Victor quickly realized he was calling the police. He never expected an inconspicuous

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Victor and his men had been waiting outside the factory for quite some time. Ever since Winona had arrived, he’d stayed on alert, knowing her plan inside and out.

He intended to step in at the perfect moment to rescue Yvette when it would have the most impact.

Given Yvette’s current influence and reputation, it would be an invaluable asset if he could have both her and Zachary owe him a favor. But he hadn’t anticipated the driver calling the police, potentially disrupting everything.

Glancing at his watch, Victor decided it was time to move. As if on cue, his phone rang—it was Rebecca. Victor answered immediately. “Rebecca. Did everything go smoothly?”

Rebecca’s voice was calm, her tone devoid of emotion as she looked down at Robert, who lay on a hospital bed, paralyzed on one side. “Yes,” she replied softly.

“He tampered with the car, just like you said. But instead of you, he ended up taking the hit himself. The doctors say he’ll never wake fully. He’s aware, but that’s all he’ll ever be.”

Rebecca spoke with a cold detachment. She had long since lost faith in her father, especially after discovering his alliance with Winona in such a twisted plot, willing to sacrifice his own son.

Rebecca couldn't understand how a father who had cared for Victor all these years could betray the son like this.

In the car, Victor's expression grew dark, his gaze hardening. He had given Robert a chance, and Robert had squandered it. "Thank you, Rebecca. Once I'm done here, I'll join you. Keep Mom and Grandpa calm in the meantime."

After they hung up, Rebecca rubbed her temples, exhausted. She looked down at Robert, who lay staring at the ceiling, his eyes the only part of his body still capable of movement.

"If only you hadn't pushed things this far..." she murmured.

Robert's eyes widened slightly in response, a faint tremor passing through him.

Rebecca couldn't help but marvel at how much Victor had matured in just a few short months, orchestrating events with such skill that it was Robert, not him, who now lay immobilized.

Ultimately, it was fate—a curse of the Carter family, forever embroiled in their own destruction.

Victor turned to the men in his car, giving a brisk order. "When we get inside, stay sharp and be ready to act."

The men nodded, ready for action.

Victor couldn't afford any more delays; if the police arrived first and managed to rescue Yvette and Zachary, his plan to gain their gratitude would be wasted.

Inside the factory, Winona's hand shook as she aimed her gun, weakened by the pain in her stomach. She glared at Zachary, who stood firmly between her and Yvette, refusing to budge.

If Zachary was so determined to die for Yvette, she would grant his wish. Without hesitation, she pulled the trigger, the bullet speeding directly toward him.

Zachary closed his eyes, accepting his fate. He wouldn't move—not if it meant protecting Yvette.

But in a split second before impact, Zachary heard someone call him a "fool" before being forcefully pulled aside.

Zachary opened his eyes and saw Yvette standing with a sleek silver gun in her hand, aimed precisely at Winona's weapon.

With impeccable timing, Yvette's bullet met Winona's in mid-air, and both fell harmlessly to the ground.

Winona's face contorted in shock, and she tried to fire another shot, but Yvette's second bullet had already hit her right hand.

Winona screamed in pain, her gun slipping from her grasp as she crumpled to the floor, disbelief, and terror etched across her face.

At that moment, the doors to the factory burst open as Victor and his team rushed inside. He took in the scene with narrowed eyes.

The line of kneeling men, all of whom he recognized as Winona's hirelings, were barely conscious, kneeling in pools of their own blood. Their defeated, broken bodies conveyed the brutality they'd endured, leaving a palpable tension in the air.

Victor's gaze shifted to Yvette, her silhouette exuding an aura of authority and quiet strength as she stood, weapon raised. For the first time, he understood that some people were born to stand above, to command the world's respect with unyielding confidence.

Yvette turned, noticing Victor's entrance, her expression cool and composed as she raised her gun slightly, its barrel aimed at his chest. Her eyes were icy, with a hint of suspicion in her narrowed gaze.

Zachary, regaining his balance, hurried over to Yvette, "Are you alright, Yvette?"

Yvette shook her head, her voice calm, "I'm fine. She couldn't hurt me."

Only then did Zachary feel at ease. He then looked at Victor, wondering why he was there.

Victor approached with a polite, respectful tone. "Mr. Chambers, Ms. Zeller, my apologies for arriving late. I only recently discovered that Winona intended to kidnap Ms. Zeller, so I hurried over. I'm relieved to see that both of you are safe."

With no desire to be impolite to someone who had supposedly come to help, Zachary replied with a curt "Thank you," his tone neutral.

Winona, seeing Victor, scrambled to her feet, too frantic to notice the blood staining her dress. "Victor, did you come to save me?"

Before Zachary could say anything, Victor cut her off, distancing himself from her completely. “Mr. Chambers, don’t misunderstand—I have nothing to do with Winona anymore. For such a heinous act, the Carter family will not protect her in any way.”

Victor said this without sparing Winona a glance. His eyes instead focused on Yvette, attempting to win her favor.

Hearing this, Winona’s fragile composure finally shattered. If everyone wanted to abandon her, they could all go down with her.

In a last act of desperation, she reached for the gun on the ground. Just as her fingers brushed it, Victor’s warning shout filled the air, “Watch out!”

The sudden yell startled even the unconscious Layla into a brief state of wakefulness. She opened her eyes just in time to see a flash of light as Victor’s gun fired.

The bullet hit Winona square in the chest. Blood began to pool beneath her as she stumbled, clutching her chest, her face a mask of disbelief as she looked at Victor, then collapsed.

Seeing this sudden turn of events, Layla fainted from shock again.

“Winona.” Victor approached with a cold, unfeeling expression, his disdain for Winona evident as he watched the blood flow from her wound.

Winona lay on the ground, wrapped in a bone-chilling cold that made her shiver uncontrollably, yet she had no strength left. With barely enough strength left, Winona whispered, “Why...why would you do this to me? I’m carrying your child.”

Victor looked down at her, his voice chilling. “Why didn’t I die in the trap you and Robert set for me? Why are you claiming that the child you carry is mine when it’s really my father’s?”

Why did you sink so low as to seduce my father? Do you really need to ask?”

Winona’s eyes widened at his words, and with one last bitter cough of blood, she choked out, “I did nothing wrong.”

In her final moments, a lifetime of betrayal flashed before her: a mother who used her, a father who wasn’t her own, a grandfather who traded her for benefits, and a boyfriend who only pretended to care. The world was wrong, not her.

With that, her eyes closed for the last time, her body slumping as she took her final breath.

Victor looked down at her lifeless body, saying nothing. To the end, she remained unrepentant.

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Victor glanced up, catching Yvette's gaze fixed sharply on him. Her piercing look made him feel exposed as if she could see right through his intention to kill Winona from the start.

Victor gave Yvette an awkward smile, then uncomfortably looked away.

Yvette squeezed her fingers, pulled her gaze back, then turned to Zachary and said, "Let's go."

Zachary nodded, sparing a final glance at Winona's lifeless body his expression heavy with resignation. Death had finally claimed her, bringing an end to her troubled path. Hopefully, in the next life, she could find a better way.

Seeing the two about to leave, Victor quickly instructed his men to take care of the scene and then jogged to catch up, calling out, "Mr. Chambers, please wait."

Zachary and Yvette paused, turning back as Victor adjusted his tie and addressed Zachary with a composed but humble tone.

"Mr. Chambers, I assure you that the Carter family had no part in today's events. Please don't misunderstand our intentions. Claude, my grandfather, has decided to withdraw from Seacriety and focus on expanding in Mysonna. Soon, only the Chambers and Lewis families will remain here!"

Zachary's surprise was evident. The Carters, entrenched in Seacriety for generations, were suddenly abandoning the city? Reflecting on the recent sell-off of their stocks, he realized it hadn't been a mere market strategy—this was a full retreat. It was all happening rather abruptly.

Victor lowered his gaze, concealing the complexity of the decision. Leaving Seacriety was a monumental move for the Carter family, uprooting a legacy built over centuries. But they'd run out of options.

His grandfather had admitted that, although he hadn't directly involved himself in the events that led to Yvette's mother's- downfall, he had quietly encouraged them.

Initially, when Yvette returned to the city, she seemed like a harmless young woman from the countryside, unworthy of attention.

But things had quickly spiraled beyond control. Yvette not only garnered the interest of the elite from Betrico but also became a renowned artist and an Interpol Officer.

Her involvement, no doubt, had turned the tide in the Chambers family's favor during their clash with the Smiths.

The outcome for Dennis and the Smith family made the Carters realize the stakes were too high. Before Yvette could turn her attention to them, they needed to withdraw from Seacriety and secure their position in Mysonna, which was far from her reach.

Victor thought back to the arranged marriage Claude had set up for Rebecca. The family she would be joining held immense power in Mysonna, ensuring that the Carters' influence would eventually be restored,

Witnessing firsthand the devastating defeat of Winona's hired men, Victor understood just how dangerous Yvette was. Claude had been right, a confrontation with Yvette would be disastrous for the Carters.

Claude had been right, a confrontation with Yvette would be disastrous for the Carters. Claude knew Jaiden Lewis, ever shrewd, would never cross the Chambers, and once the Carters withdrew, Seacriety would belong to the Chambers.

Zachary offered a courteous "Congratulations," his voice polite. He knew Claude's departure wasn't without motive, but as to what exactly, he couldn't say.

As Victor watched them leave, he exhaled deeply, finally beginning to relax—until Yvette stopped. Without turning around, she curved her lips into a faint smirk and spoke slowly, "Running won't change the consequences of your actions."

Her words made Victor freeze, a chill coursing down his spine as cold sweat broke out. He wondered, 'Does Yvette know something?'

Though Zachary didn't understand her remark, he refrained from questioning it.

As the two of them disappeared from view, Victor immediately pulled out his phone and called his grandfather. "Hey, Claude..."

As soon as Yvette and Zachary stepped out of the factory, Layla's driver hurried over, visibly relieved to see Yvette unharmed.

He had been ready to risk his job rather than let something happen to her.

"Miss, are you alright?" he asked anxiously. "I called the police—they should be here soon."

Zachary glanced curiously at the driver, wondering who this man was.

Looking at the honest, kind-looking driver, Yvette's eyes narrowed thoughtfully, "Are you interested in a new job?"

The driver was taken aback, hesitating before sighing with a touch of pessimism. “Miss, finding work these days isn’t easy. If Ms. Chambers fires me, she won’t leave me with any options.

“She’s a branch member of the Chambers family, and she’s supposedly very favored by Mr. Chambers himself. If she spreads the word, no one in Seacurity’s elite circles would hire me

Zachary’s eyebrows shot up, baffled. He thought, ‘When had I ever shown any favor toward Layla?’

Zachary looked to Yvette, who raised a brow and said pointedly, “Don’t you have something to say?”

Clearing his throat, Zachary addressed the driver directly.

“I’m the Mr. Chambers you’re talking about. If you’re interested, I’d be happy to hire you as a driver for the Chambers family. Monthly salary at twenty thousand, with full benefits through the Chambers Group. Does that sound acceptable?”

The driver gaped in disbelief. Was this man really Mr. Chambers? A twenty thousand salary with full benefits sounded like something out of a dream.

To ease the driver’s uncertainty, Zachary pulled out his business card and handed it over. Finally, seeing the card, the driver’s nervousness turned into excitement.

This man was a billionaire! The driver could hardly believe it—this was the man whose influence could shake Seacurity’s business world, and he treated him respectfully.

Yvette gave the driver a cool look, her tone steady. “Think it over. If you’re interested, contact him.”

The driver nodded vigorously, his face lighting up. This opportunity was beyond anything he’d imagined. He’d been earning ten thousand with Layla and never dreamed of benefits. This was an offer he couldn’t refuse.

“Ms. Chambers, Mr. Chambers,” the driver said eagerly, “I don’t need to think it over. I can start tomorrow.”

“Great,” Zachary replied. “Just report to the Chambers residence in the morning.”

As he watched them leave, the driver felt as though he’d encountered a stroke of pure luck. His daughter’s words echoed in his mind, ‘Be kind, and the heavens will reward you.

If he had turned a blind eye today, he doubted such fortune would have come his way,

In the car, as Zachary drove, he kept sneaking glances at Yvette, his mind lingering on her cryptic words to Victor.

Yvette noticed his sidelong glances and, with a faint smile, said, "Go ahead."

Zachary hesitated before asking, "So, uh, Yvette... that last thing you said to Victor about 'running—what exactly did you mean?"

Zachary looked almost innocent, his curiosity unguarded.

Propping her chin on her hand, Yvette replied calmly, "Claude might have been involved in what happened back then." The moment Zachary heard this, his grip on the wheel faltered, and he pulled over, parking by the side of the road. That Claude jerk had a hand in it?" Zachary's expression hardened. "Then let's go after him—he can't be allowed to get away."

He reached for his phone, intent on making a call, but Yvette's cool gaze stopped him. "It's only a suspicion," she said. "I have no evidence."

Zachary paused, his fingers hovering over the dial. He nodded firmly. "Your suspicion is all the evidence I need."