

## Her Riches 251

### Chapter 251 Aggrieved

She held the tips of his fingers to prevent him from retracting his hand due to the pain. Then, holding the ruler up high, she struck him three times on his palm.

Gwendolyn did not hold back this time. Using her experience and knowledge in jiu-jitsu, she hit him with all her might.

Cedrick inhaled sharply upon the impact. He clenched his jaw and couldn't stop his arm from trembling.

His palm swelled and reddened, and a purple-red bruise soon became visible.

Almost every strike from the ruler hit the same spot on his palm. The pain overlapped each other, and Cedrick hated how it felt.

His palm was quite sensitive, and the pain had reached even his bones.

Not only did Cedrick not succeed in standing up for himself, but he even got beaten by Gwendolyn. The men could only suffer in pain and brood about his failure.

I shouldn't have listened to that b\*sterd Nico's idea! Standing up for myself using the ruler? I just handed Gwendolyn the proper and suitable excuse to beat me up instead!

Gwendolyn saw the pained look on his face but still asked the same question, "Does it hurt?"

Feeling aggrieved, Cedrick said through gritted teeth, "Yes..."

The women took a glance at his palm. It was already swollen.

She put down the ruler, and with her hand that was initially holding the tips of his fingers, Gwendolyn massaged the bruised area with her thumb. As she did so, she begged gently, "You know that it hurts, so why did you want to pick on me with it? If you had hit me with this ruler, I might hurt even more than you do."

Cedrick lowered his head, feeling aggrieved. "I wasn't trying to. I just wanted to give you a scare. How can I bring myself to hit you with it?"

Yet, Gwendolyn willingly hit him with it.

What was more, she had even used all her might to do it.

Gwendolyn helped to massage his palm after hitting him. Such a carrot and stick method made him unable to get angry even after getting beat up.

This made him feel even more wronged, and Cedrick's eyes turned reddish.

Gwendolyn's face was solemn as she lectured, "You can't do that either! Do I exist to be scared by you? What if I have a weak heart? What would happen if I get scared unconscious when you charge in and yell at me suddenly? Besides, shouldn't you pamper and care for me instead?"

Seeing that Cedrick wasn't replying, she continued, "A man should stand tall and live with pride. You should teach the bad guys a lesson, not your women. Men who do otherwise are the most useless ones. Are you someone like that, Ceddy?"

Cedrick was thoroughly brainwashed by her words and had completely forgotten the fact that he had never thought of actually hitting her. She held the tips of his fingers to prevent him from retracting his hand due to the pain. Then, holding the ruler up high, she struck him three times on his palm.

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Gwendolyn's eyes were cold. "Were you wrong?"

"Yes."

"Then did you deserved getting hit?"

"Yes."

Gwendolyn held the tips of his fingers again and picked up the ruler. She hit him twice this time, not holding back on her strength too.

Cedrick pursed his lips as he watched his skin turn white when the ruler came into contact with his skin, which then quickly swelled and turned red.

"These two hits are for shouting my full name earlier. Do you accept your fate?"

"Yes."

Sensing his sincerity, Gwendolyn put down the ruler and said, "Wait here, and do not get up." She then rose to her feet and went to the living room. A few minutes later, she returned with some anti-

inflammatory cream from the first-aid kit.

Cedrick's palm stung as she applied the cream for him.

He inhaled sharply and said, "Blow on it..."

Gwendolyn frowned at his words. "You deserved this! Endure it."

Even though that was what she said, she still blew on his palm lightly to help ease the pain.

Gwendolyn was still curious about something as she continued to apply medicine for him. "Why did you suddenly become so audacious today? Did someone say something to you?"

Cedrick thought about it for a moment before he answered. Marcus was an elder and Gwendolyn's father. He couldn't possibly accuse him, could he?

Which was why...

"It was Nico. This was all his idea."

He pushed all the responsibility to Nico without hesitation and even repeated what Nico had told him earlier in the day to Gwendolyn.

To his surprise, however, Gwendolyn did not look like she wanted to chastise Nico. Instead, she mulled over his words.

"Nico is right. It's true that we need to discipline men who do not listen. You've already given me the idea of giving corporal punishment, and as for the family rules... I'll think about it and set up a few for you. What do you think?"

Cedrick dropped his gaze upon hearing that. He said nothing and felt fairly depressed about it.

Why did I go and confess everything to her? I've just shot myself in the foot!

Since Gwendolyn wasn't getting an answer for him, she wiped the excess cream from her hands and lifted his chin with a finger. "Are you mute?"

I don't like the idea!

Nonetheless, he had no choice but to answer, "I'll listen to everything you say." Gwendolyn was threatening him with the ruler, after all.

Satisfied with the answer, she said, "All right. I'm sure you've already confessed most of the things that happened today, so let's forget what happened just now."

Cedrick noticed she had said "just now."

Does that mean she hasn't let go of what happened a few days ago?

He gulped in fear and stared uneasily at Gwendolyn's beautiful face.

The latter's lips curled into a smile when she saw his expression. She caressed his cheeks and said, "Don't be afraid, Cedly. Since it's a great day today, I've prepared a gift for you. I'm sure you'll be surprised to see it."

Cedrick swallowed hard at her words.

A surprise? More like a scare!

Nothing good ever happened every time she gifted him something.

He recalled how the Wright family had gone bankrupt, the employment contract, and the 023 special drugs. What could it be this time?



Under his suspicious gaze, Gwendolyn got up and went to open her wardrobe, where she took out a bunch of Lego pieces.

“Tada! In order to have it match up to your status, I found someone to have these Lego pieces made exclusively for you. They are sturdy and are guaranteed to give your knees the best service.”

Cedrick paled instantly as he stared at the Lego pieces in her hands.

An evil smirk appeared on Gwendolyn’s face. “Do you like it, Ceddy?”

Gritting his teeth, he nodded. The bitter feeling grew in his heart as he forced the words out of his mouth. “Of course! You treat me so ‘well,’ Gwenny!”

“Of course. Come on. Let’s try it,” Gwendolyn replied as she handed him the Lego pieces.

Cedrick’s hands trembled as he took them from her. Scattering them all over the carpet below him, he slowly moved on top of them.

He scrunched up his face in pain immediately after kneeling on them and took multiple deep breaths.

These are high-quality Lego pieces indeed! They really are sturdy! They hurt so much...

The Lego pieces cut into his knees, and he instinctively bent his back. Cedrick wrapped his arms around Gwendolyn’s leg and buried his face in her thighs, moaning softly.

He looked like an injured beast seeking for comfort.

Gwendolyn rubbed the back of his head, feeling a little sorry when she saw the aggrieved look on his face.

However, it was something she needed to do to establish her place, and it was also his punishment for what he did a few days ago.

The wounds on his body had almost fully healed, and this was a punishment that would damage his body the least.

If Gwendolyn had relented this time, everything she had done previously would have gone to waste, and her lectures earlier would have been a waste of time.

With this thought in mind, she steeled herself and patted his shoulder. "You're doing it wrong. Keep your knees at ninety degrees and straighten your back. Come on, be good! We'll talk after thirty minutes."

#### Chapter 252 Get Ready To Be Punished

Cedrick heaved a sigh of relief. I only have to kneel for thirty minutes, huh? I made Gwendolyn really angry a few days ago, and knowing what her temper's like, I was sure she'd either make me kneel overnight or for at least four hours. Who knew she'd be so gentle today? Well... it looks like she does care about me after all.

Now that he was feeling much better, Cedrick reluctantly moved his head from Gwendolyn's lap and straightened his back for the punishment.

However, being in the proper posture also meant that his entire body weight was on his knees, and the pain only intensified with each passing second. Despite that, Cedrick constantly regulated his breathing and even closed his eyes as he counted the minutes.

Pleased that the men were no longer throwing the tantrum, Gwendolyn turned her phone back on to continue dealing with Jennifer's matter.

Joanne had sent her several texts, but she was so busy doling out Cedrick's punishment that she forgot to read them.

Upon seeing Joenne's urgent reminder to check the trending topics, Gwendolyn promptly did as instructed.

As it turned out, news of Jennifer's suicide had failed to be suppressed. A passer-by who captured the video of the incident had posted it online, and it didn't take long before the information spread like wildfire. Angle's public relations department tried its best to stop the news from trending, but alas, they were just no match for the power of social media.

Just as Gwendolyn was racking her brains for a solution, Shadow Bell suddenly sent her over twenty high-resolution photographs.

Some depicted Welter and Lise kissing and holding hands, while the others were uncensored, intimate photos taken from surveillance cameras installed in their hotel room.

Gwendolyn curled her lips into a smile. Great! These photos have come at the right time!

Without further ado, she dialed Joenne's number. "I want you to release the statement on behalf of Angle, announcing that Jennifer was the victim. Reveal that she was previously dating Welter and how being heartbroken had driven her over the edge. Also, I have the photo you can use. Blur out the women's faces, but just enough to tell that it isn't Jennifer. Then, please send it to the different media outlets and get them to publish articles. We need this matter to go viral."

After hanging up the phone, Gwendolyn quickly selected the rather damning but not overly explicit photo of Welter and Lise for Joenne.

Ten minutes later, social media caught on to the scandal, prompting a wave of news about Welter cheating on Jennifer and causing her to attempt suicide out of grief.

Needless to say, Cloudege Entertainment couldn't sit idly by. They immediately released the statement denying any romantic relationship between Jennifer and Welter and shot down the effeminate accusations. On top of that, they sent out their lawyer's letter and threatened to take legal action against the rumormongers.

Having read the statement on Cloudege Entertainment's website, Gwendolyn swiftly wrote and published a post from her personal account: The fish that nibbles at every bait will soon be caught. Some people think they've hidden the truth well, and no one will ever know about their evil deeds. It's okay if they don't want to admit their wrongdoings... We'll let the evidence speak! If they still have a conscience, I hope they'd apologize to my company's victimized artist and admit all their mistakes!

Otherwise, be prepared to bear the consequences! Cedrick heaved a sigh of relief. I only have to kneel for thirty minutes, huh? I made Gwendolyn really angry a few days ago, and knowing what her temper's like, I was sure she'd either make me kneel overnight or for at least four hours. Who knew she'd be so gentle today? Well... it looks like she does care about me after all.

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Without further ado, she dialed Joanne's number. "I want you to release a statement on behalf of Angle, announcing that Jennifer was a victim. Reveal that she was previously dating Wolter and how being heartbroken had driven her over the edge. Also, I have a photo you can use. Blur out the woman's face, but just enough to tell that it isn't Jennifer. Then, please send it to the different media outlets and get them to publish articles. We need this matter to go viral."

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Just as Gwendolyn was racking her brains for a solution, Shadow Bell suddenly sent her over twenty high-resolution photographs.

Some depicted Walter and Lisa kissing and holding hands, while the others were uncensored, intimate photos taken from surveillance cameras installed in their hotel room.

Gwendolyn curled her lips into a smile. Great! These photos have come at the right time!

Without further ado, she dialed Joanne's number. "I want you to release a statement on behalf of Angle, announcing that Jennifer was a victim. Reveal that she was previously dating Walter and how being heartbroken had driven her over the edge. Also, I have a photo you can use. Blur out the woman's face, but just enough to tell that it isn't Jennifer. Then, please send it to the different media outlets and get them to publish articles. We need this matter to go viral."

After hanging up the phone, Gwendolyn quickly selected a rather damning but not overly explicit photo of Walter and Lisa for Joanne.

Ten minutes later, social media caught on to the scandal, prompting a wave of news about Walter cheating on Jennifer and causing her to attempt suicide out of grief.

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A while after the post was published, Walter's manager, Billie, called Gwendolyn.

"Ms. Harris, do you really have evidence?"

"How does twenty over high-resolution, uncensored photos sound?" Gwendolyn replied coldly, "Say, what would happen if those photos appeared on the square's big screen tomorrow?"

"No! Please don't do that!" Billie exclaimed. "You've only just entered Salinsburgh's market and have yet to gain your foothold, so our boss was hoping we could each take a step back. Feel free to name your price."

Upon hearing that, Gwendolyn burst out laughing. "Ha! Cloudage Entertainment won't be able to afford my price, and I'm not willing to compromise, either. Listen. My only target is Walter Vissers. I want him to formally apologize, admit all his wrongdoings, and quit the entertainment industry. Nothing more, nothing less."

“This...”

“I know you can’t call the shots on this, so ask your boss about it. Ask him if he wants to give up on Walter or the entire company! I’m giving you till tomorrow to decide. If there’s still no outcome, the next trending topic will be the dirt on Cloudage Entertainment.”

After ending the call, Gwendolyn sent another text to Joanne: Suspend all of Papilio Girls’ upcoming team appearances and activities. Other than Jennifer and Lisa, the other members can continue their solo schedules as usual. More importantly, keep an eye on Lisa. I’ll deal with her once I’m free.

Alas, just as she was concentrating on typing her message, she felt a sudden light tug at her sleeve by the man beside her.

Cedrick’s breathing had become labored, his forehead glistened with cold sweat, and the pain in his knees was beyond belief.

As it turned out, he had been on his knees for over thirty minutes and was trying rather desperately to remind Gwendolyn that his time was up.

Unfortunately, the latter was so busy with work that she ignored him.

Overwhelmed and helpless, Cedrick had no choice but to speak up, saying, “Gwenny...”

“Hmm,” Gwendolyn murmured, never once lifting her head.

Her attention, without a doubt, was not on the poor man.

“It hurts...” Cedrick mumbled as he tugged harder at her sleeve. Oh, come on! Thirty minutes have already passed!

“Okay,” Gwendolyn replied, still not bothering to meet the man’s gaze.



Naturally, Cedrick was baffled. Huh? What does that mean? Is that her cue for me to get up or not? Argh! I can't figure her out at all!

Just like that, he stayed on his knees for another ten minutes while Gwendolyn continued to use her phone...

What the hell? Is her phone that much more interesting to look at than me? Or has she gotten addicted to being a punisher?

Furious, Cedrick got to his feet and pinned Gwendolyn down on the bed, his arms wrapped around her.

"Huh? Hey! My phone!" the latter shouted.

To her dismay, Cedrick pressed her down harder so she couldn't reach for her phone.

"What's more important? Your phone or me?"

Gwendolyn furrowed her brows. What lousy question is that? How are those even comparable?

"You, of course."

Cedrick harrumphed and inched closer to the woman, a wicked glint in his eye. "In that case, why do you keep staring at your phone? Why won't you pay attention to me?"

"I... I was busy with work," Gwendolyn answered as she looked away. The more she felt his warm breath tickling her skin, the more she could feel herself turning red.

"There's always work to do. You can leave it till tomorrow."

With that said, Cedrick broke into a devilish grin as he ran his tongue over his teeth. "Are you happy to have punished me for so long? Don't you think it's my turn now?"

Gwendolyn stared at the man in confusion. Huh? What's that supposed to mean?

However, before she could ask any more questions, Cedrick had sprung into action by flipping her over.

"I don't care what you say. Nothing will stop me from disciplining you tonight!" the latter said, his voice deep and husky. "Gwenny, are you ready to accept my punishment?"

Having felt the sense of danger emanating from Cedrick, Gwendolyn suddenly figured out his intention and panicked.

"H-Hold on! You're still injured. We can't do this!"

"My injuries have healed!" Cedrick retorted before lifting Gwendolyn's silk nightgown and revealing her round, perky bottom.

The next second, he raised his hand and slapped her bottom twice.

Upon seeing it jiggle and his handprints showing up lightly on her flawless, fair skin, Cedrick became even more aroused, his Adam's apple bobbing up and down.

Oh, that looks so juicy and delicious. I'm hungry for more...

Gwendolyn, on the other hand, was stunned.

Is that it? It's not the kind of punishment I was thinking about, huh?

Unfortunately, she had spoken too soon because the man once again used his actions to prove that her initial guess was spot-on!

“Ah, Ced—”

Cedrick’s grin widened as he cupped Gwendolyn’s mouth with his uninjured right hand, determined not to give her any chance to speak or resist.

For the next few moments, no matter how much the woman whimpered, he never once stopped.

It was also then that Gwendolyn realized just how frustrated Cedrick had been from being punished and how long he had been holding back his anger.

He truly loved and doted on her and was more than happy to accept any form of discipline as long as it didn’t cross his boundaries.

However, if things went too far and his boundaries weren’t respected, he’d undoubtedly unleash the beast inside him and punish her in his own ways.

Chapter 253 Learning To Use Him

The soft glow of the table lamp filled the bedroom with an enchanting ambiance.

Gwendolyn was trying her best to get her mind back. Once the opportunity presented itself, she nimbly turned over to put her elbows against his collarbones and stopped him from coming any closer to her.

She was still heaving from his earlier punishment, her chest rising and falling rapidly.

When Cedrick received her icy glare, he frowned as his eyes reddened. He looked miserable as he said, “Gwen, are you trying to suffocate me to death?”

It was Gwendolyn’s first time seeing him so helpless, and her heart skipped a beat.

“Gweny...”

After a few seconds of hesitation, Gwendolyn was defeated by his meticulous acting and whining. “Turn off the lights! And you’re not allowed to leave hickeys on my neck!”

Cedrick grinned in delight and swiftly turned off the light on the bedside table.

The moonlight filtered through the curtains and cast a soft blanket of silver on the bed, concealing the traces of love left in the room.

It was a night of passion.

Soon, the sun rose.

Gwendolyn was in a deep slumber that night, and she woke from Cedrick’s kissing.

When she opened her eyes, she was greeted by the sight of a certain man beside her. His head was resting on his hand as he propped himself up with his elbow. His seductive lips were curled into a smile as he stared at her with his dark eyes.

“How was your sleep last night?”

Gwendolyn gave him a glance before turning around to continue sleeping. “I’m exhausted. Sleepy.”

Cedrick then wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her closer until her head was resting on the crook of his elbow.

She did not struggle out of his grasp and soon dozed off.

He drank in the sight of her as he trailed his bony finger down her button nose.

Her being in his life brought him bliss, and he would never forget the days he had with her.

Even if he were to sacrifice himself in the future, he would die without regrets.

Tickled by his touch, Gwendolyn frowned and muttered, "What are you doing?"

Cedrick leaned toward her ear and solemnly whispered, "Gwen, why don't we come up with some rules?"

"Rules?" she mumbled sleepily.

"Yes. From now on, I'll listen to everything you say in private, but I hope you'll do as I say as much as possible in public. Is that okay?"

Gwendolyn was quiet for a while.

Dignity was important to men, let alone someone on the top of the pyramid, like Cedrick. He had subordinates, and he could not afford to be challenged in public.

Thus, she could understand his desire to have her pretend to be his trophy wife in public.

"All right."

Cedrick merrily kissed her forehead. "Then how much longer do you plan on staying in bed? Didn't you say you wanted to deal with Jennifer's trending topic today?"

"Oh, right! The trending topic!"

Gwendolyn sobered up immediately and scrambled to look for her phone.

She had been so preoccupied with her time with Cedrick that she had forgotten to charge her phone. Her battery was already waning the night before, and by the next morning, it had switched off.

It took her a few minutes of charging before the phone finally powered back up.

Right as it switched on, the notifications of missed calls flooded her screen.

When she scrolled downward, she realized most of the calls were from Joanne, though there were some missed calls from Elven as well.

Did something happen to Jennifer for Elven to call me so many times?

At that thought, Gwendolyn gave him a call.

“Ms. Harris, you’re finally on your phone! The reporters have swarmed the hospital, insisting on an interview with Ms. Weller. Ezra and the hospital guards have gone to block off the entrance, but I don’t know how much longer they can hold the crowd back!”

Gwendolyn’s expression turned somber. “How is Jennifer right now? Can she be interviewed, given her current mental state?”

Elven spared a glance at the ward and said, “I don’t think she’s that mentally stable right now. Moreover, reporters can be sharp with their words. They might poke her where it hurts.”

“All right, I got it. I’ll be there in a minute.”

After ending the call, Gwendolyn rose to her feet, only to have her legs tremble and buckle underneath her. She had to hold onto the headboard of the bed to regain her balance.

Cedrick had been too rough with her the night before.

He had been punishing her for half the night, and before she could catch a wink, the sun came up.

On the other hand, Cedrick's cheeks were rosy, and he looked rejuvenated.

I guess this is what they mean when they said there are fundamental differences in men's and women's strengths.

By the time Gwendolyn recomposed herself, Cedrick wrapped his arms around her waist and rested his chin on her shoulder.

"You're heading out?"

"Mhm."

"Breakfast before leaving?"

"No, I need to wash up as quickly as possible and take a trip to the hospital," she replied as she swiftly changed her clothes.

Cedrick did not stop her, but he asked, "Do you need my help?"

"No, it's just something minor."

Turning around, she then headed toward the door. Cedrick pulled her into his arms and lifted her chin to make her look into his eyes.

"Gweny, you're not alone anymore. You should start learning how to use your man."

He placed emphasis on the word "use" as a wicked grin grew on his lips.

It was a loaded term.

Gwendolyn's face reddened, but she pretended as though she had no idea what he was talking about. "I got it. If there's something I'm having trouble with, I'll come to you."

Cedrick nodded in satisfaction.

Without him stopping her, she proceeded to wash up and put on some light makeup before heading out.

All entrances of the hospital were crowded with reporters because of the hospitalized Jennifer.

Gwendolyn drove into the parking lot. As the place had tighter security, there were only a few reporters who were loitering around the exit.

Jennifer looked far better than the day before, but she still looked pale and haggard.

"Take a look at this."

Gwendolyn passed her the phone to show her the apology essay that Walter had posted on his social media account.

The more Jennifer read, the redder her eyes became. Soon, she dissolved into tears.

Jennifer was Gwendolyn's only friend in Fairlake's orphanage, and she could not help but feel terrible to see Jennifer's tears.

"Jennifer, not only is this douchebag Cloudage Entertainment's current ace, but he also comes from a prominent family. A mere cheating incident won't crush him to death. Moreover, there are many netizens online who are fans of his face, and plenty are happy to clear his name. We'll have to come up with something better if we want to kick him out of the entertainment industry for good."



As Gwendolyn passed her friend the tissue box, she continued, "But of course, as long as this is something you want, I'll do my best to make him and Lisa pay ten times the price of what they've done to you."

"No, it's fine." Jennifer wiped her tears away. Though her eyes were swollen, the look in them was a determined one. "Gwendolyn, you've helped me out a lot, and I can't trouble you anymore. Let me do this myself. I want to experience the thrill of avenging myself."

Jennifer was livid after reading Walter's apology post.

After all, the man's words dripped with mockery. Though it seemed like an apology post on the surface, it cleverly shifted the blame to Jennifer, insinuating that the problem lay with her and that pursuing one's true love wasn't inherently wrong.

In other words, everything he wrote was rubbish.

"I'm glad to see that you've managed to keep your chin up." Gwendolyn combed the woman's hair with her fingers. "From now on, you're Angle's ace. I hope you'll be able to become the best actress of the year. When that happens, Walter will realize that he's stupid enough to have given up on the best woman he could ever have and that Lisa is nothing compared to you!"

"Thank you, Gwendolyn."

Jennifer hugged Gwendolyn, gratitude surging within her.

The former did not have any parents, and the only lucky thing in her life was her encounter with Gwendolyn.

"The reporters have swarmed the hospital. This isn't a good place for you to stay. Why don't I get you another place to stay so that you can rest well and return to the battlefield with renewed vigor? Sound good?"

Jennifer shook her head, however. “I won’t run away this time. Let the reporters come, Gwendolyn. I’ll take all their harsh questions head-on, for I want Walter and Lisa to kneel before me in public one day!”

#### Chapter 254 Her Right To Punch Him

Cedrick entered Jenson Group’s CEO’s office. Barely a minute had passed when Nico rushed into the room in search of rewards.

“Boss, you’re positively glowing today. It must have been a wonderful night, right?” Nico said, rubbing his hands as he flashed a keen smile at Cedrick.

Positively glowing? My punishment the night before had lasted almost an hour. Even now, my knees are swollen and bruised. So, sure, positively glowing.

Cedrick narrowed his eyes as a dark look crossed his face. However, a smile grew on his lips, and it was a strange sight to behold.

Nico was baffled. It was his first time seeing such a peculiar expression on his boss’ face. The man looked angry, but he also looked like he was in a good mood.

Thus, Nico could not figure out whether or not things went smoothly or south the night before.

Cedrick was donning a rare look that day—a pair of black leather gloves. He then took off one of them and showed Nico his left palm. When he spoke, there was no emotion in his deep voice.

“What do you think?” asked Cedrick.

When Nico saw the bruising on Cedrick’s left palm, he widened his eyes to the point his eyeballs were about to pop out of their socket.

This is... Did Ms. Gwendolyn hit him again? His palm is so swollen! She’s ruthless and fierce!

Nico instinctively swallowed. He could imagine how terrible the night went after the man did what he told him to do.

It did not help that Cedrick was the ruthless kind of person who bore grudges. He would definitely drag someone else to hell with him.

Sh\*t, not only am I failing to be rewarded for my deeds, but I'm actually stepping right into the trap!

Nico's legs turned to jelly, and he threw himself by Cedrick's feet before hugging the latter's right leg.

He had no acting skills to speak of, so he could not summon any tears to his eyes. All he could do was howl, "Boss, I'm so sorry! I shouldn't have given you that horrible idea! This is all my fault. I'll do anything! I'll even be fine with a suspension, but please don't deduct my pay anymore, or else I'll be stuck having mac and cheese forever!"

Cedrick looked downward at Nico and curled his lips. "Who said that I'm going to punish you?"

"What?"

Nico froze in his tracks, the stiffening of his grieving expression a hilarious sight.

Confused, he uttered, "You're not going to punish me? You can't be raising my pay, right?"

"You're right. I'm raising your pay," Cedrick said in a serious tone.

Even though Nico's lousy idea had put him on the receiving end of Gwendolyn's punishment, it had also opened up a path for him. Not only did he manage to do it with her the night before, but he even managed to make Gwendolyn agree to some rules and dealt with Marcus.

Therefore, Nico was not in the wrong. In fact, he had even helped Cedrick out.

However, Nico could not read Cedrick's mind, so he continued staring at the latter with wide eyes of disbelief.

Were... his wits beaten out of him, or is he... a masochist? The harder Ms. Gwendolyn beat him up, the more he gets off it.

While Nico was pondering the possibilities, Cedrick was lost in his own thoughts as well.

When he thought about how soft Gwendolyn had become during their session the night before and how she had choked out her pleads, his heart melted, and a smile crept onto his lips.

Upon noticing the man's expression, Nico began wondering why Cedrick's smile was sending chills down his spine.

Cr\*p, is he even reminiscing on the moment? Is he really a masochist?

Nico then scrunched up his brows and started observing his employer.

Noticing Nico's stare, Cedrick questioned, "Are you unhappy about the raise?"

Nico beamed. "Of course, not! I'm over the moon about the raise! Boss, summon me anytime for good deals like this in the future. If Ms. Gwendolyn can't satisfy you, I'm more than happy to serve you with my hands. I swear you'll be contented with my service!"

Cedrick's expression turned gloomy at that. "What in the world are you talking about? How can Gwenny not satisfy me? Are you actually offering to substitute her in stuff like this? Who do you think I am?"

Realization dawned upon Nico, and he quickly said, "Of course, Boss, of course. Only Gwendolyn can be in this position. I know, I know. It's something exclusive for you two."

With a knowing smile on his face, Nico exited from the CEO's office.

Cedrick could only watch the other man leave in bewilderment.

I've got no idea what he's talking about.

Meanwhile, on Gwendolyn's side, the interviews in the ward were close to their end.

"My relationship with Walter ended the second I jumped off the bridge. I don't want to dwell on both the painful and sweet moments anymore. Once I recover, I'll preoccupy myself with work to deliver better performances for my fans and the public."

The cameras in front of Jennifer flashed and clicked.

Gwendolyn had only allowed a few reporters from the most influential companies into Jennifer's ward for the interviews.

After hearing Jennifer's speech, the reporters shared a look, thinking, Is she not planning to hold Walter accountable for his cheating anymore?

One of them then asked, "Ms. Weller, you jumped off the bridge because of Mr. Vissers' affair yesterday. I'm sure you must have been devastated. What made you put aside those feelings so quickly?"

Another then queried, "Mr. Vissers apologized to you the night before. It sounds like you're forgiving him for his action. Do you mind telling us who he cheated on you with?"

Jennifer fell silent for a long while.

At that, Gwendolyn gave Jennifer's manager a look.

The manager and the assistant quickly intervened. "All right, folks. Jennifer has yet to fully recover, and it's about time to wrap up so that she can rest earlier."

Nodding, the reporters dispersed.

Once they were gone, Gwendolyn walked over to Jennifer and asked, "Why didn't you take the opportunity to reveal their wrongdoing and send the netizens after them?"

Jennifer shook her head. "It's because I know that this will be pointless. I know it'll be akin to cutting off my own nose to spite my face. So what if they'll be targeted by the netizens now? A while later, they'll thrive in the industry again. Moreover, you can never erase anything from the internet. If I publicize how they humiliated me, this will eventually become my dark history. It'll affect my career, so I might as well stay nonchalant about this so that people will feel bad for me instead. At least, I'll leave a good impression on them."

Gwendolyn was relieved to hear Jennifer's words. "You've grown a lot after this."

Jennifer smiled and held Gwendolyn's hand, commenting, "This is all thanks to you. You're a friend who's much more important than family and lovers."

"Hey, you can't say that. Your future husband's going to be jealous of me if he hears this!"

The two shared a chuckle.

In the afternoon, Jennifer voiced her desire to be discharged, so Gwendolyn went to get the doctor to do a checkup on her.

All of a sudden, the manager rushed into the ward and said, "Ms. Harris, Jennifer, check your phones right away! Lisa's crying on stream!"

Chapter 255 Cruel

Gwendolyn and Jennifer exchanged glances. Then, they each took out their phones and opened the live-streaming application.

Lisa's live stream had already surpassed ten million views.

She was crying in front of the camera, lamenting to the viewers about being informed by the company yesterday that all her scheduled work had been suspended and that the company might be planning to blacklist her.

She also played the victim by complaining how she was losing sleep because of that matter, subtly implying that Jennifer was to blame for her current situation.

Furthermore, Lisa went as far as to mention that because the celebrity caught in bed with Walter recently had a similar figure to hers, she had been wronged and unfairly blamed. She claimed she and Walter were merely ordinary friends.

As she put on a tearful performance in front of the camera, the atmosphere inside the ward turned particularly solemn.

Gwendolyn read the comment section of her live stream and noticed many people expressing sympathy for her.

Because Jennifer's interview had just concluded and hadn't been posted online yet, Lisa's piteous act caused Jennifer to be heavily criticized. Many netizens who were unaware of the truth accused Jennifer of being manipulative, deliberately jumping into the lake to garner attention, and so on.

The public opinion on Walter's infidelity case was also well-contained, swaying from side to side.

"How can this shameless woman be so despicable? I haven't even confronted her, yet she's already insinuating things about me!" Jennifer felt sick looking at Lisa's overly dramatic demeanor and tear-stained face on the screen.

She wanted to throw her phone in exasperation but was mindful of how expensive the device was. Being a girl who had experienced the hardship of life, she was reluctant to purchase a new phone.

As a result, she could only vent her anger on a pillow.

Jennifer imagined the pillow to be Lisa, wishing she could beat the latter into a pulp.

Taking in the way Jennifer was letting out her rage, Gwendolyn shook her head in amusement.

“Why are you so angry? She’s doing all this just to irritate you. You’re just playing into her hands if you get mad.” Then, Gwendolyn turned to the manager. “Ignore Lisa. Let her make a fuss. The greater the ruckus she stirs up now, the worse humiliation she’ll suffer later!”

“Yes, Ms. Harris.”

After that, Gwendolyn contacted Joanne. “Get a prominent blogger to publish a post saying that the original source of the mosaic photo has been found, revealing the celebrity Walter was having an affair with is Lisa tomorrow. Half an hour after that, use Angle’s official social media account to announce the termination of the contract with Lisa and her departure from Papilio Girls.”

Initially, Gwendolyn had shown consideration for Lisa’s reputation as a girl, so she instructed her subordinates to pixelate the image, planning to let Jennifer deal with Lisa in private.

Unexpectedly, Lisa was a fool who didn’t know what was best for her, crossing the line when others showed her mercy.

In that case, Gwendolyn figured Lisa shouldn’t blame her for not saving the latter’s face.

Having arranged everything, Gwendolyn told Jennifer to continue packing and prepare to be discharged. “In the upcoming days, the media will likely show up at your door, requesting interviews every day. My advice is that you shouldn’t accept any more interviews since you’ve already made a statement once. Staying silent for now is the most beneficial for you.”

Jennifer nodded. “Okay. I’ll listen to you.”

Gwendolyn pondered briefly, then added, “I suppose the apartment you lived in is probably surrounded by reporters now. I’ll arrange a place for you where no one would dare to disturb you.”



Subsequently, she contemplated for a long while. The only place in the entire Salinsburgh where the media outlets won't dare to intrude is the Harris residence... "Let's go. I'll take you to my brother's villa to stay for a few days."

"Ah... Are you referring to Mr. Treyton Harris?" Jennifer hesitated. "Isn't that a little inappropriate? Won't it be too much of an imposition?"

"Not at all. Treyton has multiple residences and rarely returns to his small villa at the Harris residence. Besides, even if he comes back, I can explain the situation to him in a couple of days. Therefore, you can rest assured and stay there without worry. The place is tranquil, and no one will disturb you."

Jennifer fell silent. I'll leave after staying for a few days. Before leaving, I'll make sure to clean up the villa thoroughly, so it should be fine, right?

When her train of thought ended there, she agreed. "Okay. I'll take up your offer."

Gwendolyn took Jennifer, who was perfectly disguised, out of the hospital and headed straight for Mount Tranquil.

Treyton gave Gwendolyn a key to the villa previously. She handed the key to Jennifer and reminded the latter of a few things before returning to Angle.

As soon as Gwendolyn reached the CEO's office on the top floor of the building, she saw a woman's enticing figure standing at the doorway, talking to Joanne.

Noticing Gwendolyn advancing in their direction from the corner of her eyes, Joanne jogged up to her and said, "Ms. Harris, Ms. Evelyn here wishes to meet with you. I told her you weren't here, but she insisted on waiting."

The woman who had her back facing Gwendolyn heard Joanne's words and turned around haughtily. She flashed a dazzling smile and extended her hand politely. "Hello, Ms. Harris. I'm Evelyn."

Gwendolyn didn't shake her hand, nor did she respond because, from the moment Evelyn spun on her heels, Gwendolyn noticed the girl regarded her with a peculiar expression.

Moreover, she felt Evelyn look familiar as if she had seen the latter before.

Still, Gwendolyn had no recollection of being acquainted with Evelyn.

Evelyn was nineteen years old and was considered relatively young in the entertainment industry. Nevertheless, she was already a top-tier actress.

However, no one would visit another person without a reason.

Angle had never collaborated with Evelyn. Hence, Gwendolyn reckoned there must be a catch behind Evelyn's sudden advent.

"What brings you here, Ms. Evelyn?"

Although Gwendolyn didn't respond to her handshake, Evelyn continued to smile elegantly, seemingly unembarrassed.

"That's because both our names end with '-lyn,' so I've always wanted to meet with you, Ms. Harris. Now that I've got to see you in person, you are indeed pretty, much better looking than those minor celebrities."

She was secretly mocking Gwendolyn for not being as famous as her.

Gwendolyn fathomed Evelyn's intention, but she merely grinned in response.

Thus, the young Evelyn became more complacent, raising her chin arrogantly. "Actually, I came here today because I'm the new spokesperson for Jenson Group's latest Rossi Project. I heard you're very close to Mr. Jenson, so I specifically came to take a look."

“Well, you can leave now that you’ve seen everything you want.” Gwendolyn flashed a mirthless smile.

Evelyn shook her head. Boring her eyes into Gwendolyn’s, she uttered straightforwardly in Joanne’s presence, “Ms. Harris, I have something to inform you. I’m interested in your man, so I want to compete fairly with you for his affection.”

Before Gwendolyn could speak, Joanne flipped out first. “Do you think you can do as you please just because you’re popular and have a huge fanbase? Mr. Jenson and Ms. Harris are already engaged. What right do you have to demand a fair competition for his affection?”

Nevertheless, Evelyn was unfazed. “It’s only an engagement. The circumstances are prone to change until the moment you get your marriage certificate. Am I right, Ms. Harris?”

That was something Gwendolyn had once said to Eloise.

Gwendolyn furrowed her brows and looked up again at Evelyn’s face. A sarcastic sneer spread across the latter’s childish yet exquisite countenance.

“What do you mean by that?” Gwendolyn queried.

The young woman pouted and grinned mischievously. “Nothing in particular. I know you come from a distinguished background, and I can’t compete with you in that respect. Nevertheless, you shouldn’t underestimate me, Ms. Harris. To be able to secure the best actress position in the industry at my age, my patron is quite formidable as well!” She moved closer to Gwendolyn and uttered in an undertone, “If you let me have Mr. Jenson, I’ll tell you. What do you say, Ms. Harris?”

Gwendolyn’s visage was frosty. “Ours is a marriage of convenience, so it can’t be easily called off. If you are as capable as you say, why don’t you give it a try, Ms. Evelyn?”

“You have a point. What’s earned through our abilities is always the best.”

Gwendolyn couldn’t be bothered to continue the conversation and demanded Evelyn leave. “Joanna, see Ms. Evelyn out of Angle.”

She turned around and was about to enter her office when Evelyn suddenly reached out and grasped her wrist.

“Ms. Harris, don’t you feel that you’ve always been too cruel to Mr. Jenson? Truth be told, you only love yourself and have always mistreated him. In that case, wouldn’t it be better for you to return him his freedom and let me have him?”

Gwendolyn’s expression turned increasingly solemn after she heard that remark.

She whirled around and sized Evelyn up. “How do you know that I’ve been cruel to him? Who told you this? What else do you know?”

Chapter 256 Return With A Clear Conscience

Over at Angle Corporation’s top floor, the atmosphere was frigid.

Gwendolyn gazed frostily at the nineteen-year-old girl before her. She seems to know about what happened previously between me and Cedrick. However, she’s just an actress in the entertainment industry. How could she possibly know what went on in Fairlake?

She was still mulling over the matter when Evelyn pouted her pink lips and smiled innocently. “Why are you so nervous, Ms. Harris? I was only joking. However, it seems as though you have a secret, hm?”

Could it be that I’m reading too much into this? Gwendolyn looked stony-faced and did not say anything.

At that, Evelyn laughed and continued, “There’s a charity gala tonight, and I’m attending as Mr. Jenson’s plus one. It seems there’s no more room for you, his fiancée. Oh, dear. There’s no way he hasn’t told you about that yet, right? It looks like you’re not that important to him after all.”

She giggled, then flashed Gwendolyn a taunting smile before turning and taking the elevator down.

Gwendolyn stared at the young woman's back until she had left the top floor, looking exceptionally grim.

Alarmed by her expression, Joanne hurriedly piped up to reassure her, "Don't overthink things, Ms. Harris. It's clear her visit was a show of power and to deliberately sow discord. You've always had a close relationship with Mr. Jenson. He must be taking her to the gala because of professional reasons."

"Mmm," Gwendolyn murmured simply. "You should get back to your work."

She turned and went into her office, then immediately phoned a Shadow Bell subordinate. "There's more to Evelyn than meets the eye. Look into her as soon as possible. I want to know every detail about her."

"No problem, boss."

After hanging up, she sat at her desk for a while, lost in thought. I can still hear Evelyn's words ringing in my ears, and I can't calm down. For some reason, she gives me such a strange feeling, and I can't quite put my finger on it.

Her mind was still a million miles away when her phone rang.

After checking the caller ID, Gwendolyn answered her phone and said impatiently, "What is it?"

On the other end of the line, Cedrick was momentarily stunned. She was so gentle and sweet to me last night and this morning, but why has she suddenly turned so cold after being apart for a few hours?

"Gwen, are you feeling unwell? Have you fallen sick?"

"No," she replied, trying to keep her voice steady. Recalling what Evelyn had mentioned earlier, she asked tentatively, "I'll be working at the office all afternoon. Will you be picking me up after work as usual?"

“Actually, that’s why I’m calling. I won’t be able to pick you up this evening. I have a gala to attend.”

Gwendolyn was silent for a long time after hearing his reply.

Quickly picking up on her displeasure, the man added softly, “Does your waist still feel tired? When I get back tonight, I’ll be your personal masseuse, and give you a massage to boost blood circulation, okay?”

She ignored the meaning behind his words and queried sourly, “If you’re attending a gala, will you need to bring a female companion? Who are you taking with you?”

“I’m taking Jenson Group’s brand ambassador for our new collaboration. It’s a female actress, but don’t worry. I’ll definitely keep my distance from her and go home with a clear conscience.”

A clear conscience, my foot! After cursing inwardly, Gwendolyn put on a sweet tone and replied with a tender smile, “Why are you getting so nervous, Ceddy? I trust you, of course.”

Cedrick felt relieved to hear her sounding like herself again.

However, her expression darkened almost immediately after the pair ended the call. As if I’d trust him! Well, I trust Cedrick, but I don’t trust Evelyn. She came to assert her dominance today. That shows she’s not easy to get along with or someone to take lightly. She’s planning to do something to Cedrick at the charity gala tonight, that’s for sure. Who knows how good he is at detecting scheming b\*tches?

As a sense of frustration bubbled inside her, Gwendolyn caught sight of a glint of black and gold out of the corner of her eye on a pile of documents to the right of her desk.

It was an invitation card to the charity gala.

So I’m invited to the gala too? The invitation must have come in this morning, and I didn’t know about it because I was at the hospital. That’s perfect. I can go and watch what happens.

She immediately called Joaquin. While the Zipper family was considered a prestigious family in Fairlake, it did not have that level of status in Salinsburgh. Nonetheless, Joaquin was a celebrity in the entertainment industry who garnered much attention wherever he went. I asked him to come to Salinsburgh some time ago, and now, I can use him as a readily-available male partner!

That evening, a grand charity gala was held on the top floor of Monarch Hotel.

Evelyn looked elegant in a long, white dress as she sat in Cedrick's Bentley limousine, heading to the hotel with him.

A small table separated her car seat from his. He wore an expression as cold as ice on his handsome face. There was no hint of warmth, and disdain was written all over it.

Although she could not see his face clearly, the chilliness radiating off him was unmistakable.

Tilting her chin, she gazed at him playfully. "I was envious when I saw the news about you and Ms. Harris, but you're so indifferent toward me. Have you given all your tenderness to Ms. Harris?"

Cedrick stared straight ahead and took no notice of her.

Even so, Evelyn did not feel embarrassed in the slightest. With an innocent smile on her babyish face, she said, "I never had any siblings. I grew up alone. For some reason, however, I sense a closeness to you. I didn't come from a well-off background, so I'm envious that Ms. Harris was born with a silver spoon in her mouth."

Hearing that, he frowned but said nothing. I didn't think anything of her remarks until she compared herself to Gwendolyn. She's deliberately acting pitifully and is even going so far as to indirectly mock Gwendolyn.

Cedrick's expression turned even darker as he pressed his thin lips together tightly and remained silent.

However, Evelyn did not notice anything. She continued in a coy yet pitiful tone, "If you could share some of that tenderness with me, even a little, I'd be content."

Not only was she beautiful, but she also had a good reputation in the entertainment industry, plenty of male fans, and many wealthy suitors. Not many men could resist her advances.

However, Cedrick did not even spare her a glance as he responded in a low, glacial tone that seemed to pierce her to her core, "I won't share anything that belongs to Gwenny."

Although looking slightly hurt, Evelyn put on a brave front and laughed it off. "Please don't take it seriously, Mr. Jenson. I was only joking around with you. However, I must say that you really dote on Ms. Harris. What a lucky woman she is. I'm envious."

He ignored her.

It was deathly silent inside the car for a couple of minutes, and a hint of awkwardness hung in the air.

Evelyn felt slightly frustrated, but her intense desire to conquer his heart rekindled her determination. Hence, she attempted to strike up a conversation again, saying, "What made you think of taking the limousine to the charity gala, Mr. Jenson? I heard you have the only black, limited edition Shelby Supercars in Chanaea. I haven't been lucky enough to experience how amazing that car is."

The man still did not say a word. That car only has two seats. The passenger seat is reserved exclusively for Gwendolyn, so no other woman should not even think about sitting there.

Seeing that Cedrick did not answer, Nico piped up from the front passenger seat, "As the ambassador for the Rossi Project, you're Jenson Group's guest. Hence, a limousine better represents our respect for you."

Evelyn was not too happy to hear that. To her, that sounded as though she was not good enough for the sports car. Looking aggrieved, she was about to say something when they pulled up in front of the hotel.

Before exiting the car, Cedrick warned her, "The reason for bringing you to this charity gala is for marketing purposes only. My fiancée is very strict. She doesn't allow other women to touch me, so we won't be linking arms for the entrance. Do you understand me, Ms. Evelyn?"



Her expression froze.

## Chapter 257 Got A Grip On Miss Harris

Evelyn had graced countless film festivals, paraded down numerous red carpets, and even attended myriad galas as a coveted guest.

However, she had never experienced a man who candidly refused to make an appearance with her arm in arm.

To her, it was outright humiliation.

Despite the ire boiling within, she managed an amicable smile. “Understood, Mr. Jenson. Don’t worry, I won’t put you in an awkward position with Ms. Harris.”

Cedrick nodded impassively and got out of the car first.

Nico quickly followed suit and went over to the other side to open the door for Evelyn.

The moment the duo made their appearances, they became the center of attention, with camera flashlights bombarding them relentlessly.

Evelyn, well-acquainted with the current situation, flashed a charming yet dignified smile. As they entered side by side, they maintained an impeccable distance, with not even a swish of their clothes touching each other.

Throughout the social exchanges and courtesies that followed, Evelyn was careful to maintain a respectful distance, which made Cedrick lower his guard a little.

Gwendolyn had already made her entrance before them.

However, she was not a fan of socializing and chose to sit in an unobtrusive corner with Joaquin to savor time.

Joaquin downed one drink after another, his face marred with discontent.

Puzzled, Gwendolyn asked, "What's wrong? Who's managed to upset you?"

In a petulant huff, Joaquin said, "Cedrick"

Perplexed, Gwendolyn queried again, "You haven't spoken a word to him since arriving at Salinsburgh. How did he manage to offend you?"

"He proposed to you before I could legally do so. Now, with the business alliance between the Jenson and Harris families, I fear I have lost my chance forever!" Joaquin said in despair.

Amused, Gwendolyn let out a chuckle as she flicked Joaquin's forehead. "What nonsense are you spouting? Even if I weren't engaged to him, I wouldn't fancy someone younger than me."

↑

"You're lying. You have previously confessed to liking me!" Joaquin protested.

With a palm on her forehead, Gwendolyn leveled with him. "Hey, brat. My fondness for you is akin to a friend and younger brother, not a lover. Don't get your hopes up about me, or else I might have to avoid you altogether, ending our friendship."

"Don't!" he interjected.

Joaquin downed the red wine in his glass in one go to comfort himself. "Although I won't have the fortune to marry you, being your confidant isn't bad."

Amused by his train of thought, Gwendolyn could only shake her head.

After sitting in the quiet corner for a while without catching sight of Cedrick, Gwendolyn decided to excuse herself. "I need to visit the restroom. I'll be back shortly."

Meanwhile, at the hotel garden's fountain, Cedrick and Evelyn had just finished a round of socializing.

"Mr. Jenson, I feel it's more intimate to address you as Mr. Cedrick. Is that all right?" Evelyn asked.

"Suit yourself," Cedrick muttered.

Thrilled, she cooed, "Mr. Cedrick, were you satisfied with my socializing just now?"

Cedrick's icy façade remained unchanged. "It was okay."

His answer made her giggle like a child receiving candy.

Okay means not bad. Rounded up, it means he's content with my performance. Cedrick has finally praised me!

Her face beamed with delight. "Could you accompany me to a quieter place to rest, Mr. Cedrick? We've been standing and talking for quite some time. I'm feeling rather tired."

Cedrick glanced at her high heels and agreed.

They ambled down the pebbled path of the garden.

The tranquility surrounding them was accented by the dim lamplight, shrouding their silhouettes in a vague and mysterious air.

Cedrick walked in silence, tucking his hands in his suit pockets. His dignified aura was tinged with an untamed streak.

He stayed silent unless Evelyn initiated the conversation.

Their pace was unhurried, and the quiet atmosphere brought about a sense of eeriness.

Lost in thought about which topic to broach next, Evelyn was unaware of the unlevelled pebbled path. With an alarmed exclamation, she lost her balance and instinctively stumbled into Cedrick's arms.

"Ah!"

With a reflexive step back, Cedrick avoided her fall and didn't even touch the corners of her dress.

However, realizing her imminent tumble, he reached out to steady her.

"Mr. Cedrick, that was so scary!" Evelyn exclaimed.

– Her face turned pale. Grasping his arms tightly, she attempted to snuggle closer into his embrace.

Cedrick grimaced and was about to push her away when he caught sight of a silhouette in a red dress standing not far away from them.

Gwendolyn crossed her hands and stood silently as she fixed Cedrick with a frigid and mocking stare.

"Gwen, let me explain—"

Before he could finish, she scoffed and walked away without a backward glance.

“Gweny!”

Cedrick felt a stab to his heart at the sight of Gwendolyn’s cold gaze. However, Evelyn clung to his arm with a death grip.

“Mr. Cedrick, my foot feels like it’s been twisted. It hurts so much!” she whimpered.

Cedrick couldn’t care less about her pain. His gloved hand tightened around her neck, fury visible in his dark eyes.

“You saw Gweny from the start, didn’t you? You deliberately stumbled into my arms, attempting to make her misunderstand me, right?”

Evelyn’s face twisted in agony, reddening with distress. Gasping for air, she choked out, “W—What do you mean, Mr. Cedrick? My foot is really hurt. If you don’t believe me, you can check. I/swear I’m not lying…”

“You better not be!” Cedrick warned.

He let go of her, not caring to verify her claim.

Gwendolyn was upset with him, and that mattered more than anything else.

As he turned to pursue Gwendolyn, Evelyn once again held onto his suit sleeve.

Gone was her amicable and weak look. Her tone turned uncharacteristically stern as she said, “Mr. Cedrick, you truly don’t understand Gwendolyn. Despite your relentless love for her, you’ll only end up with deeper wounds. She may be willing to be with you now, but I bet she has not confessed her love to you up until now. Can’t you see it?”

Ignoring her, Cedrick shook off Evelyn’s hand ruthlessly and dashed after Gwendolyn.

Caught off guard, Evelyn fell to the ground, the pristine white hem of her dress stained with mud.

Я

However, her dress was the least of her concern right then. Her gaze remained locked on Cedrick. A glint of excitement glowed in her eyes, and her enchantingly coy face was radiant with a brilliant smile.

Meanwhile, a little further away, the slow saunter of Gwendolyn was in stark contrast to the urgency in Cedrick's sprint.

Consequently, as Gwendolyn was about to step onto the stairs leading to the charity gala hall, Cedrick successfully intercepted her path.

"Gweny, please. Could you please let me explain myself?" the man pleaded.

Gwendolyn cast him an indifferent glance, Repulsed by the suit that had been sullied by Evelyn's hand she folded her arms and wanted to bypass Cedrick to enter the charity gala hall.

Cedrick was all too aware of how Gwendolyn must think of him now and dared not touch her. Hence, he only blocked her path, determined to not let her slip away.

"Gweny..." His eyes tinged red as he pleaded softly.

Ignoring Cedrick's plea, Gwendolyn battled her rising fury and uttered in a low growl, "Scram."

The harsh words stung him, causing a throbbing pain in his chest. He bit his lower lip in frustration.

Standing in front of the charity gala hall, Cedrick swiftly undid his gloves and the golden buttons of his suit.

Without a moment of hesitation, he stripped off his suit and gloves and promptly disposed of them in a nearby trash can.

His sleek black silk shirt showcased his well-built figure impressively, but the unusual actions drew the bystanders' curious and surprised glances.

Ignoring their gazes, Cedrick swooped down and swiftly swept Gwendolyn off her feet.

This unexpected action elicited gasps and murmurs from the onlookers.

"What on earth are you doing?" Gwendolyn seethed, anger simmering in her eyes. "Are you out of your mind? Put me down!"

Just as she attempted to struggle, Cedrick leaned in close to her ears and murmured softly, "So many people are watching, Gwenny. Remember our agreement this morning? I've discarded the soiled clothing. I'm innocent, and I'll explain everything when we get back. Is that okay? Behave. If you fall from my grasp, it'll be a disaster for both the Harris and Jenson families' stocks tomorrow."

Naturally, Gwendolyn understood what was at stake.

She gritted her teeth and suppressed the urge to tweak Cedrick's ears. Instead, she chose to play along and curled her arms around his neck.

Cedrick knew she was still mad at him. His thin lips curled into a devilish smile. "Whether the stocks for the Jenson and Harris families plummet or soar tomorrow depends entirely on how cooperative you are, Gwenny."

"What else do you have in mind?" Gwendolyn asked sharply, sensing that the man had an ulterior motive.

His grin widened. "I plan to make you appear in the headlines, Gwenny, by doing what a fiancé should do."

## Chapter 258 Playing The Pity Card

The burning passion in the masked man's eyes was conspicuous to Gwendolyn, making her heart skip a beat when she sensed the threatening vibe from him.

Disregarding the onlookers, Cedrick rubbed her nose with his nose tip endearingly and whispered to her, "Forgive me, Gwenny, but this is the only thing I can do. You refused to give me a chance to explain myself."

"Are you se-"

Before she could finish, Gwendolyn felt Cedrick's lips pushed against hers in just a nick of time.

Initially, she played along because many were watching them, but as the kiss dragged out, she was drawn into it and slowly closed her eyes as their breaths intertwined.

Just like that, the two shared a steamy kiss with Gwendolyn in Cedrick's arms right in front of the venue entrance.

Stirred, spectators took out their phones to take pictures.

The journalists who had come to the gala graced by celebrities also jumped on the opportunity and snapped photos of the epic moment, which left many socialites green with envy.

"They're so sweet! Mr. Jenson is so manly!"

"That's so romantic. I wished I had a fiancé like Mr. Jenson!"

"They look so good together. I can't take this anymore. I'm blind."



“Argh! I’m so jealous! I want a boyfriend like that!”

Meanwhile, having waited at the lounge for Gwendolyn to come out of the restroom for some time, Joaquin decided to go out to look for her and saw her kissing Cedrick.

He almost fainted as he stared at Gwendolyn’s lips being ravaged by the man.

What the heck? This is just too much!

On the other side, Evelyn was equally shocked. Standing at the path in the garden, she was just on her way to her MPV to change her soiled gown when she beheld the commotion at the entrance.

Obscured by the dim lights along the path, she smirked sourly, a reaction that went unnoticed by the crowd that was overtaken by jealousy and thrill.

When the two finally pulled apart, Cedrick’s lips were smudged with Gwendolyn’s bright red lipstick, forming a stark contrast with his silver masquerade mask.

Under the watchful gazes of the onlookers, Gwendolyn wiped away the stain on his lips to not embarrass him.

Pleased, Cedrick tightened his arms around her and said, “Let’s go home.”

At his words, the crowd knowingly moved aside to allow them a way out amidst the constant sounds of camera shutters.

Since Gwendolyn disliked being at the center of attention, she buried her face in Cedrick’s chest, making her look docile and endearing.

In no time, news about the kiss at the charity gala spread like wildfire that night, dominating all media outlets and surpassing even the news of Walter’s affair.

The matter was so widely discussed that Cedrick and Gwendolyn became known as the sweetest couple in the upper-class circle.

Because of their attractive looks, fans began to ship them together, calling for them to get married.

As for Cedrick and Gwendolyn themselves, they had just arrived at the Jenson residence.

Their demeanor changed when they entered the mansion—Cedrick lowered his head and followed Gwendolyn into the room, leaving no trace of his previous gallantry on his face as he observed her thin back helplessly.

When they entered the room, Gwendolyn sat at the bedside and ignored the man completely, looking at her phone.

Still hoping to make it up to her, Cedrick sat down beside her and touched her gently as he began to say, “I’m sorry. I swear I tried to keep a distance between her and me, but she happened to twist her ankle when you saw us. It’s not like I can leave her to her own. I brought her there. Besides, she’s Rossi Project’s ambassador—Jenson Group’s face. I had to do something to prevent her from falling.”

His explanation was met with Gwendolyn’s unperturbed face.

Cedrick, seeing that she was still on her phone, completely ignoring him, continued, “I have no idea she would make a move on me. She just put her arms around me all of a sudden. She set me up!”

Just as he finished, he felt a sense of antagonism from Gwendolyn, so he quickly added, “I’m not trying to shift the blame onto others. It’s my fault for not doing what I promised. I should’ve seen her coming. I’ll

do

my best to make sure this doesn't happen again! Also, I want to apologize for hugging and kissing you without your consent earlier. That was the only thing I could do when you didn't even give me a chance to explain. Would you forgive me? At least both our families' stocks will shoot up for now."

His appeasing work worsened the matter when Gwendolyn's face turned increasingly grim, and Cedrick lowered his gaze, seeing that she was unmoved.

She must've been really offended. I thought I could escape some beating this time...

With that thought, he went to the bedside table and took a long wooden ruler from its drawer before passing it to Gwendolyn.

"Do whatever you want, then."

When Gwendolyn did not take the ruler from him, Cedrick shoved it into her hands, insisting, "I threw away the blazer and gloves that she touched, but if you still feel disgusted, I don't mind being your punching bag. No matter what, I won't stop you—even if you break my arms."

Gwendolyn still had her eyes on her phone without saying a word.

When Cedrick had stood before her for some time without getting any response, he turned to open the cupboard again and took out the Lego pieces Gwendolyn had custom-made for him.

Then, he spread the pieces on the rug beside the bed and rolled up his slacks, revealing the bruised knees,

scarred from his previous punishment.

Beside him, Gwendolyn stole a glance at the man as she continued scrolling her phone. With his pants

up, she could not help but notice his knees.

cuffed

The sight jarred her, and she stopped him when he was about to kneel.

“What are you doing? Did you roll up your pants to show me this? I’m not falling for your act.

Despite her harsh words, Gwendolyn actually felt sorry for him.

“I’m not trying to trick you. I thought the punishment would be more severe if I did it with my knees exposed,” Cedrick explained with a bitter smile.

Gwendolyn’s anger shot through the roof. “I suppose you enjoy the pain, huh?”

“No. I don’t,” he replied with a frown and a guilty look. “For all I know, watching me in pain might appease you. It’s not good to be angry always, so I thought this could help you get over it faster.”

His words sent Gwendolyn’s heart wrenching.

Somehow, she was reminded of what Evelyn had told her that morning at her office.

Ms. Harris, don’t you feel that you’ve always been too cruel to Mr. Jenson? Truth be told, you only love yourself and have always mistreated him.

Recalling those words, Gwendolyn questioned whether she was truly mean and unkind toward Cedrick because he loved and indulged her.

The realization made her sigh and soften her tone. “Sit here and let me look at your knees.”

Noticing the tenderness in her eyes, Cedrick smiled subtly and let her pull him to the bed.

“How did you get all the bruises? I thought it was only for half an hour. Didn’t you use any medication yesterday night?”

Chapter 259

Half an hour? You refused to talk to me, and I kneeled for one hour!

Cedrick did not spell his thoughts but shook his head instead.

“You treated my hand but not my knees, so I thought I was not allowed to put anything on them.”

Afraid Gwendolyn might mistake him for trying to gain her sympathy, he quickly clarified, “I mean, I also worked out till too late last night and forgot about it.”

Little did he know, his meditation was overlooked by Gwendolyn, who was still bothered by Evelyn’s remarks in the day.

“Show me your hand. Is it still painful?”

Cedrick held out his left palm, which appeared red and swollen despite the medication.

“Did it get worse overnight?” the woman asked.

“I guess so. I suppose the pressure from the push-ups hindered the blood flow, causing it to swell. Don’t worry. It’s not that bad now.”

Gwendolyn knew it must have been painful when it happened.

In hindsight, she wondered how she could bring herself to do that to him back then. In fact, she felt so bad and defeated that tears started welling up in her eyes.

“I’m sorry. She’s right. I’ve been mean to you. I said I would treat you nicely, but I’ve only caused you pain,” she muttered.

Although Cedrick had no idea who Gwendolyn was talking about, he could sense that she was on the verge of breaking down.

With his right hand, he lifted her chin, only to see her beautiful eyes sparkling with tears.

Making her cry was the last thing he wanted to do—his initial intention was just to escape punishment.

“Come on. There’s no way I got hurt from what you did. I’m so much bigger than you. What’s wrong with spicing things up between us? It’s romantic,” he consoled as he caressed her face, feeling sorry that he had broken her heart.

Gwendolyn turned away and replied, “I know you’re just trying to make me feel better.”

At the sight of that, Cedrick pulled her back so she could look right into his sincere eyes.

“I’m not saying this just to make you feel better. I know you’re angry about what happened just now because you’re jealous. I’m actually happy to know you care so much about me. I’ll gladly take whatever punishment from you, even if you intend to cripple my hands. You’ve always made me feel like I’ve never been this loved in my entire life. I’ll do anything so you can forgive me. You might not know this, but I am the happiest man holding you every night, hearing you call my name, and sleeping with you. I love you. I really do. I just don’t know if...”

...if you love me as much.

Cedrick did not finish his sentence, for he feared finding out the answer. What Evelyn said kept replaying in his mind as he reflected on all that happened that period—although Gwendolyn had agreed to be with him, she had never told him she loved him.

The thought of it disconcerted him.

He was afraid that her answer would blot out the last ray of hope he was clinging to that whole time.

“If what?” Gwendolyn’s voice called him back, and he looked down.

“Nothing. I just wanted to say that I still love you, no matter what you do to me.”

Touched, Gwendolyn retrieved the medication she left in the drawer yesterday night, hoping it would help with the swelling.

“You’re so dumb—like really dumb,” she muttered, applying the medication.

Opposite her, Cedrick just smiled as he watched her tend to his injury with great care, even blowing tenderly on his hand to help ease the pain.

“Gwenny, are you still angry about what happened at the charity gala?”

“That is not happening again,” she remarked, pinching his cheek slightly.

Feeling relieved and overjoyed, Cedrick smiled and carried her up from the bed.

“W—What are you doing?”

“Since you’re not punishing me tonight, we can proceed to our bedtime massage session!”

“Hold on!” Gwendolyn stopped him. “Where are you bringing me? We’re already in the room.”

“I like the master bedroom better. It’s more spacious!” A mischievous smile broke out on his face as excitement glimmered in his gaze.

“Wait!”

“Come on. What is it again?” Cedrick asked, stopping when he had just gone out of the room.

Gwendolyn looked up at him from his embrace and asked, “You shouldn’t use your left hand so much to allow it to recover. You can’t do anything with just one hand, so... why don’t we do a raincheck?”

I can’t do anything with just one hand?

Cedrick’s face fell as his brows stitched. “I can do at least three hundred push-ups singlehandedly without even panting. Do you want me to show you that?”

“What? Mmm!”

Cedrick had shut her up with a kiss before she could continue,

On that note, the night went on deep as the lovebirds kissed under the moon’s glow.

At midnight, Treyton was already disembarking a plane in Salinsburgh.

When he had arrived, he drove back to the Harris residence on his own since it was already late.

Because he seldom returned home, he thought there was no need to keep a house full of servants, but Leif would still get someone to clean the outside compound of the house occasionally, so the residence still looked spotless.

Once Treyton had arrived, he went upstairs to his room and showered.

Probably because he was too spent, he did not realize something unusual in his room but went on to turn off the lights and lay down, getting ready to sleep.



It was not until he sensed some movement beside him and felt a hand land on his chest that he realized someone was in his bed.

What the h\*!l!

Alarmed, he shot up and choke the person on the neck.

“Who are you?”

Cough!

Jennifer was struck awake from her slumber.

Treyton’s grip was so tight her face was pumped red, and she could not even choke out a word.

Under the moonlight, Treyton finally loosened his grip when he learned the intruder was a woman.

“I’m J–Jennifer... Weller...”

Jennifer? Isn’t she one of Angle’s celebrities? She’s Gwendolyn’s friend at the orphanage!

Still, with his guard up, Treyton turned on the lights and finally let her free when he saw her face.

“What are you doing on my bed, Ms. Weller?” he asked the woman who was tearing up and coughing as she held her neck.

When she had recovered, she got out of the bed and bowed.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t know you were coming back tonight, Mr. Harris. Gwendolyn asked me to put up a night here because the paparazzi were waiting at my place. I’m sorry to disturb you.”

“Well, you should stay if Gwendolyn asked you to,” he replied, feeling sorry as he looked at the marks on her neck.

“Thank you, Mr. Harris. I promise I won’t cause you trouble,” the woman replied, bowing again.

Treyton grunted lightly and resumed his easygoing self. “You can pick any room aside from this one. This is the master bedroom.”

Jennifer bit her lip awkwardly and bowed once more, apologizing “I’m so sorry for my mistake! I got ahead of myself because I’d never been to a house this big. I should’ve known better.”

With her shoulder all tensed up, she hurried out in frantic steps.

However, much to Treyton’s confusion, she suddenly turned back when she was at the door.

## Chapter 260 Weak

Jennifer bowed twice and returned to the bed hastily. “I apologize, Mr. Harris. I have slept in this bed and used the bedsheet and blanket. I assume you’re not pleased with that...”

Treyton seemed to have understood what she was getting at. He sat up and hopped off the bed.

“I’m really sorry for the intrusion,” Jennifer apologized repeatedly.

Quickly, she removed the bedsheet and blanket before retreating from the room with a humble bow.

Treyton glanced at the bare bed and flashed a helpless smile. After getting the spare bedsheet and blanket from the cabinet, he ended up spreading the bed himself.

I can't believe Jennifer apologized fifteen times and bowed twelve times in just a few minutes. She is strangely foolish and adorable, huh? How interesting.

At dawn, the gentle rays of the sun filtered through the sheer curtains, casting a warm glow upon the bed in the bedroom.

When Cedrick awoke, he found Gwendolyn already awake. She was sitting in bed, looking serious, engrossed in scrolling on her phone.

The sight confused him. "Why are you on your phone early in the morning? Have you been addicted to it recently?"

"No. I'm buying something for you."

Gwen's buying a gift for me again? It should be something normal this time, right?

"What is it? Let me take a look."

Gwendolyn explained carelessly, "Oh, a box of stag penis pills, some tonic, and..."

Stag penis? Tonics?

Cedrick found it strange that she would buy those for him. He asked darkly, "Why would you buy those things? Have I not satisfied you?"

"Of course not!" Gwendolyn shook her head profusely. "You were amazing, Caddy. However, last night you claimed to be capable of doing three hundred push-ups with one hand, but you stopped after doing one hundred push-ups."

Is he weak because we have been having sex too much recently? I can't let that happen. I must buy more tonics to make it up to him!

Cedrick stared at her in shock.

Is she saying I'm weak because I only did one hundred push-ups? Seriously?

He couldn't accept the fact that his beloved woman would think he was weak after spending the night with him as he had always been proud of his sexual prowess.

His manly ego had suffered a huge blow.

A tumultuous storm seemed to brew within him, akin to massive waves disrupting the tranquility of a once-serene lake. The intensity of his anger surged, surpassing even the power of a nuclear explosion upon the vast expanse of the ocean.

"Gwendolyn, I'll show you how capable I am!"

"Ceddy! Ced..."

Gwendolyn struggled but to no avail.

It was too late to regret her actions.

Treyton was roused from his slumber by the enticing aroma wafting through the open window.

It smells like fried egg. Is Jennifer cooking in the kitchen?

He got up and changed into a suit before making his way downstairs slowly.

In the kitchen, a figure could be seen flitting in and out. A spread of warm milk, toast, fried eggs, and an assortment of fruits were already served on the table.

Jennifer emerged from the kitchen, carrying two bowls of oatmeal. She looked up and locked eyes with Treyton.

“Good morning, Mr. Harris.” She placed the bowls on the table and pulled a chair out for him. “I’m not sure if my cooking is to your taste. Please try it.”

Treyton was planning on having breakfast at Marcus’ place. After all, Jennifer was still a stranger to him, and he held reservations about unfamiliar people. However, the sight of Jennifer’s genuine smile inexplicably drew him toward her, compelling him to approach and take a seat beside her.

The oatmeal was yummy, and the fried egg was just nice. He found her cooking surprisingly delicious.

“You don’t have to do this. If you plan on staying here for some time, I can arrange for two maids to take care of you.”

Jennifer parted her lips in surprise. “No need, Mr. Harris. I understand that my presence may be burdensome. I’m good at doing housework and cooking. Please allow me to contribute in some way to ease my conscience about staying here.”

Impressed by her sincerity and determination, Treyton chose not to say anything further. It was clear that she was a self-reliant young lady.

After breakfast, Treyton settled on the couch to read the papers instead of heading out immediately as usual.

Jennifer cleared up the kitchen and was ready to head out when he asked, “Are you going to Barner for a magazine cover shoot today?”

“Yes. How do you know?” Jennifer came to a stop, holding her bag meekly.

Treyton placed the papers away. “I checked your schedule a while ago. Come, let me give you a ride.”

“Huh? Oh, you don’t have to do that, Mr. Harris. I can walk down the hill myself. My manager will pick me up in his car at the foot of the hill later.”

Treyton got to his feet. He looked gentle, while his voice possessed a charming and soothing quality. “I’ll

be leaving shortly, and dropping you off at the base of the mountain is conveniently on my way. You can take your manager’s car there,” he offered kindly.

“Oh? Well, thank you, Mr. Harris.”

Mount Tranquil was of considerable size, with a winding path leading down the mountain. If Jennifer were to walk, it would take her at least an hour to reach the base.

At the foot of the mountain, Jennifer got out of the car and gave Treyton another bow. “Thank you for the ride, Mr. Harris. Will you come back for dinner tonight? I can prepare dinner for you in advance. I’ll feel bad if I cannot repay your favor.”

Treyton watched as she started bowing once more and revealed a cautious and vigilant attitude. The aura of detachment that surrounded her seemed akin to a protective barrier she had created for herself.

He knitted his brows. I told her I would drop her off as it was conveniently along my route, so there was no need for her to be overly polite.

However, he struggled to find the right words to express his thoughts. After running a background search on her this morning, he discovered that Walter had been unfaithful to her. He felt a pang of sympathy for her, knowing that she was innocent and had been hurt by the actions of a scoundrel.

“Okay. You can cook if you want. I might be at work until past seven in the evening.”

“Okay. Goodbye, Mr. Harris!” She gave him yet another bow.

Treyton said nothing as he wound up the car window.

From the passenger seat, Elisha cast a cautious glance in his direction.

“Mr. Harris, you need to head to the embassy later this afternoon, right? Can you make it back home by seven-thirty?”

Treyton had forgotten all about that. “Tell them I’m busy at night. They should either hold the event in advance or change the date.”

Why won’t he tell Ms. Weller that he won’t make it back in time for dinner instead?

Elisha stole a glance at the rearview mirror, observing Jennifer standing by the side of the road. A playful grin crept onto his face as he covered his lips. “It seems Ms. Weller holds a special place in your heart, Mr. Harris,” he remarked.

Treyton glanced back at Elisha and responded calmly, “She is Kiddo’s best friend and has been supportive of Kiddo during their time at the orphanage. I am simply showing kindness to her because of how well she has treated Kiddo.”

“Oh, I see” Elisha nodded thoughtfully.

After Treyton’s departure, Jennifer swiftly got into her manager’s car. Unbeknownst to her, a figure vanished in the blink of an eye from the corner opposite her.

Back at Jenson Group, Nico approached the CEO’s office and rapped on the door, clutching a file containing data in his hands.

He came into the office to see his employer spacing out and staring at his right hand.

“Boss, what are you looking at?”

Cedrick didn't see the need to deceive him and admitted, "Lately, I've been experiencing a peculiar sensation in my body. It feels like my strength is diminishing with each passing day."

"What?" Nico put down the file and sat down across from him.

He began observing his skin color and mental state carefully.

"Have you had sex with Ms. Gwendolyn recently?"

"We did it once the night before, once last night, and once this morning."

Nico gulped. Wow, they are so into each other!

His eyes widened in astonishment as he noticed the dark circles under Cedrick's eyes, a clear sign of sleep deprivation. "Boss, are you exhausted? Is it because Ms. Gwendolyn has been draining your energy?"