

## **Her Riches 271**

### Chapter 271 Meeting An Old Friend

Since Cedrick had no other options, he chose to ignore her instead.

Once again, he gazed out of the window with indifference.

Those lipstick stains looked very prominent against his fair, handsome face. He looked as if he had been taken advantage of.

The cold and aloof man was of no significance in front of Gwendolyn.

Seeing that he did not wish to talk, Gwendolyn did not plan to force him.

“Fine. I’ll give you time to calm down. But you aren’t allowed to talk about calling off our engagement or anything of that sort. Back then, you were the one who came on to me, and now, you want to back off. Don’t even think about it! Cedrick, you belong to me and only me this lifetime! I’m sorry that I’m so domineering. It’s too late for you now that you know my character! Take your time and have your regrets later on!”

With a proud hum, she then left the room.

She knew Cedrick too well. He was a stubborn mule.

Furthermore, he loved to hide his pains.

Gwendolyn could guess why he was like that.

Back at the party, Valentino said that he wanted to punish Cedrick in front of her.

Both Cedrick's parents passed away in a car accident when he was very young. As a result, he grew up under the watchful eyes of Valentino.

Valentino was a strict, traditional man who would not hesitate to punish Cedrick. Even if Cedrick was hurt or in pain, there was no one to console him. He could only keep it all to himself.

Cedrick was a man who cherished the people who loved him, and he would definitely hide his pain from them.

That was why Gwendolyn thought that he was either hurt or sick this time around!

Judging from the way he was behaving, the problem at hand was quite bad.

Just because Cedrick refused to tell her did not mean she could not check it out herself!

She was walking out of the office while she was deep in her thoughts.

Nico was standing nearby.

She went over to him and whispered, "I need your help. Come with me."

"What?"

Looking at her serious expression, Nico felt uneasy, but he could not reject her. In the end, he followed her to the isolated stairwell.

"Ms. Gwendolyn, what can I do for you?"

Gwendolyn asked in a firm voice, "How long have you been working with Cedrick?"

Nico thought about it before answering, "More than ten years."

She pondered and nodded before continuing, "Did Cedrick get hurt when you all went to the border?"

"No, we have our men around. They won't let Mr. Jenson get hurt so easily. You have nothing to worry about."

Nico did not hesitate in his answer.

Gwendolyn knew then what the problem was. "Then he must be ill."

Nico lowered his head and did not respond.

"You have been with him for so long. I'm sure you are well aware of his health condition. Is he ill? Is it serious?"

Nico scratched his head and looked like he was put in a difficult position. "What makes you say so? Mr. Jenson is very healthy. He isn't ill."

"He's hiding things from me. Are you going to do that too?"

"I-"

"Last night, I didn't have to use much strength to kick him off the bed. That goes to show how weak he is. Earlier on, his face looks pale. Even if you deny it, I won't believe you. So, tell me. What's wrong with him?"

Nico looked sad and tried to control himself so as not to tell the truth. He sighed and said, "Please stop asking me. I really don't know anything. I... I still have some work to do. I will make a move first."

He then hurried away. Gwendolyn looked at his retreating figure and took out her phone to call Shadow Bell.

“Take a look at Cedrick’s recent schedule and see if he has visited any hospitals frequently. Be quick

“Yes, boss.”

Meanwhile, Nico returned to the CEO’s office, and Cedrick called him in.

He opened the door and saw Cedrick wiping his face with a wet tissue.

The leather gloves that he had out on that morning were already lying in the dustbin.

“Boss, are you looking for me?”

The lipstick stains on Cedrick’s face were almost gone by now. “Where were you just now?”

Nico reported truthfully, “Ms. Gwendolyn looked for me just now. She suspects that you are ill, so she was trying to verify with me.”

“You told her everything?”

Nico panicked and began to wave his hands. “No, never! I won’t dare to say anything!”

Cedrick’s cold face looked less tense when he heard that.

Nico did not seem to understand and tried to advise him, “However, boss, you know how Ms. Gwendolyn is. Since she has her suspicions, she won’t rest until she finds out the truth. Do you really not plan to tell her the truth?”

“If I tell her, then there will be one more person who will be in pain.” Cedrick looked sorrowful. “Let me think about it. As for the change in the S404 RNA virus case file, go and check on it again.”

Nico sighed and did not say anymore. "Yes."

In the afternoon, when Gwendolyn returned to Angle Corporation, she received a phone call.

"Boss, there is no record of Mr. Jenson visiting any hospital in recent months. His most frequented places are Jenson Group, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and also the War Laboratory."

Gwendolyn pondered and said, "I recall that there are professors from the medical world at the laboratory. How often does Cedrick go there?"

"Once every seven days. Later on, once every five days. Recently, he was there at night three days ago."

Three days ago?

Gwendolyn frowned. Three days ago, Cedrick was at the border.

She could not believe that he had returned to Salinsburgh in advance. Instead of going to the Jenson residence to look for her, he went to the laboratory. That's weird.

Instinct told Gwendolyn that something else was going on.

"Can you hack into the laboratory's database and see if there's any information regarding Cedrick?"

There was a short silence on the other end. "I'm sorry, boss. These few places are highly guarded. We can't hack into them, and we won't dare to either. The moment we do so, we will be detected."

"All right. Got it."

After hanging up the phone, she plunged into deep contemplation again.

Cedrick was the boss of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. His position was similar to that of Asher's. If Cedrick truly wanted to hide something, even if she got Asher to check on it, she was sure that Cedrick would have the data altered.

There was nothing she could do about it besides making wild guesses.

Just as Gwendolyn was feeling lost, Leif phoned her all of a sudden.

"Ms. Gwendolyn, the high-level prison of Salinsburgh called the Harris residence and said that Charles wants to see you."

"Charles?"

Gwendolyn was confused. Charles has been in prison for half a year now. Why does he want to see me all of a sudden?

Leif continued, "Charles said that he has an important secret that you will want to know. It involves your ex-husband."

When Gwendolyn heard the last few words, she frowned and looked serious.

"I understand."

She quickly ended the call and drove all the way to the prison. Gwendolyn wanted to find out what Charles knew.

She sat in the visiting room with two soundproof glass panes that separated her from the person she was visiting.

Five minutes later, Charles was being brought out.

That was Gwendolyn's first time seeing Charles after six months.

### Chapter 272 Three Conditions

Weighed down by the handcuffs and leg shackles, every step he took was excruciatingly slow.

The parts of his arms and neck not covered by his sleeves were peppered with bruises. His skin was rough, and his beard was unkempt. Compared to the refined and sensual appearance he had once sported, he was like a completely different person.

If it wasn't for that pair of uniquely blue eyes, Gwendolyn would not have recognized him.

Through the glass panel that separated them, Charles met her

gaze and picked up the phone.

Mirroring his actions, Gwendolyn brought the phone to her ear.

"Long time no see, Gwen. You look surprised. Have you forgotten me already?"

Expressionless, Gwendolyn spoke in a frigid tone. "I didn't come here to hear you reminisce about old times. If you aren't going to talk, I'll be taking my leave."

Charles quirked his lip playfully and tutted. "How cold of you. You really do only care about your little pet."

When he saw Gwendolyn make a move to put down the phone, he hurriedly added, "Okay, okay! I'll get to the point." He narrowed his eyes, his smile becoming twisted and strange. In a raspy voice, he said,

“Gwen, although I’m in prison right now, I know better than anyone else that your current fiancé, Cedrick, is actually your former husband from Fairlake. He’s your beloved pet, am I right?”

Although Gwendolyn smiled coldly, she was slightly taken aback by his comment. “This is news to me. Where did you hear that from?”

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“You don’t have to play dumb. I just find it baffling that he would dare get engaged to you despite being so severely ill.”

Instantly, Gwendolyn’s expression turned serious as she slapped the table fiercely. “What else do you know? What illness does he have?”

Charles smiled eerily. “I know everything about him. Apart from me, I reckon not many are aware of this.”

“What do you want for your information?” Gwendolyn swiftly calmed down and regained her composure.

Charles applauded. “Quick to catch on as usual. That’s the Gwen I love. It doesn’t take much effort to converse with you.”

Gwendolyn did not bother concealing the disgust in her eyes. “Stop wasting my time and get to the point!”

Grinning evilly, Charles’ blue eyes were unfathomably dark as he edged his chapped lips close to the mouthpiece. He whispered, “Get Asher to bail me out, then cancel your engagement to Cedrick and marry

me.”



Upon hearing his words, Gwendolyn frowned.

"I can get Asher to bail you out, no problem. However, that's the only condition I will fulfill. Don't even think about the rest."

Charles lowered his gaze, appearing to be hurt by her response. "I guess you really took a liking to him. Don't worry; I only require protection. The Newton family was seized by Craig after my little incident. In

order to obtain power and fame, Craig decided to abandon me. I need the Harris family's protection when I get out of here to make a comeback."

Unfazed, Gwendolyn's expression remained icy. "You take the matter of Cedrick's and my engagement too lightly. It is not something I get to break off on a whim."

"Surely you jest. You're the sweetheart of the Harris family. It would probably only cost a little money to pull out of the engagement. I'm sure Asher would allow it if that's what you really want."

Gwendolyn pursed her red lips and fell silent.

Charles continued, "Anyway, aren't you curious about his secrets? I guarantee you will want to hear them. Bail me out, cancel your engagement, and marry me. You will need to fulfill all three conditions."

Gwendolyn lowered her head and fell silent for a long moment.

She clenched her fist so tightly that the blue veins were visible under her pale skin.

"Well? Have you made up your mind?"

"Yes, I have." Gwendolyn lifted her eyes and stared at Charles with a determined expression. "I absolutely hate it when others twist my arm and threaten me! You want me to cancel my engagement and marry you? Dream on!"

Charles had already hurt Cedrick once, back in Fairlake. If the latter found out that she was planning on breaking their engagement to marry Charles, he would likely be utterly heartbroken.

Cedrick has already sacrificed so much for me. I don't wish to disappoint him, nor do I want him to misunderstand.

The smile on Charles' face instantly vanished.

He was stunned for a long while. In fact, he had probably not expected Gwendolyn to reject his request so bluntly.

"It seems like I can't come to an agreement with you, Mr. Newton. Goodbye." Having said that, Gwendolyn hung up. She got up and left without turning back.

Charles' eyes were full of shock, and his emotions became turbulent.

He bolted up and slammed his fists against the soundproof glass, his metal handcuffs rattling loudly.

"Gwendolyn! Come back! Don't you want to know about his illness? He doesn't have long to live! He's going to die! That sliver of time he has left isn't worth it. I'm clearly the better choice!"

Moving swiftly, the prison guard soon had the rampaging Charles subdued.

Charles cackled madly as his head was pressed onto the ground. "Gwendolyn! Mark my words; you will come running back to me sooner or later. You can only be mine for the rest of your life!"

His laughter echoed eerily in the visiting room, not stopping until the prison guard zapped his waist with the electroshock baton. The strong electric current made Charles' body convulse before he passed out.

The soundproof glass worked as intended. Gwendolyn heard nothing of his screams and never turned to

look back.

She sighed softly. Another source of information regarding Cedrick's condition is cut off. It seems like I only have one,

option left.

Late that afternoon, at Jenson Group, it was the day of their monthly board meeting, and Cedrick had already been in the meeting room for half an hour.

Nico, who had gone out to fetch an important document, was stopped in the hallway by a slender figure just as he was about to return to the meeting room.

His heart thudded in surprise when he saw that it was Gwendolyn, "Ms. Harris! Um, are you looking for Mr. Jenson? You may have to wait quite a bit as he's currently in a meeting. Excuse me, but I have to go too."

Lowering his head and bowing politely, he tried to edge past Gwendolyn from the right side. With a clack of her high heels, Gwendolyn took a step to the side with her long legs and intercepted him once again.

"Nico, this is the last time I'll be bothering you about this matter. If you still refuse to tell the truth, I'll stop bothering you at work."

"I truly don't know anything! Please let me off the hook!"

Nico lowered his head even further. He turned around and tried to take a detour back to the meeting room.

Gwendolyn stared at his tense retreating figure and suddenly said, "I went to see Charles today. He told me that he knows, but he'll only tell me after I marry him."

Although Nico halted in his tracks, he did not turn his head.

Upon seeing his reaction, Gwendolyn continued, “Nico, you’ve helped Cedrick and I resolve many of our misunderstandings. You’ve been there from the very start, watching over us as we got together. If you refuse to tell me, I can only agree to Charles’ conditions. Is that what you wish to see?”

Floundering inwardly, Nico tightened his grip on the documents. “Mr. Jenson gave us the gag order. This is a matter of the organization’s discipline. I dare not-

“Don’t worry. I’ll help you keep it a secret from him.”

Gwendolyn stepped forward, murmuring softly, “He’s sick, and it’s hard to endure it alone. Tell me so I can help him.”

Nico visibly wavered. “Come with me.”

Gwendolyn proceeded to follow Nico into his office.

Locking the door behind them, he whispered, “Do you still remember the acid-splashing incident at Realm Bar from half a year ago?”

Chapter 273 Watching Gwendolyn Punish Cedrick

“Yes, I remember.”

Not only did she remember that incident, but she also remembered it like it was yesterday. “I even investigated that incident afterward. Cedrick mentioned that it was something called S40 strong corrosive potion, not sulfuric acid.”

Nico let out a sigh. “Mr. Jenson lied to you because he didn’t want you to worry or feel guilty. It was actually S404 RNA virus.”

S404 RNA virus?

Gwendolyn's forehead creased with worry, and she tensed up upon hearing that.

Even though she wasn't a scientist, just from those words alone, she could already guess how much damage it could do to the body.

Nico let out another sigh as he continued, "This virus is really nasty stuff. It spreads very quickly throughout the body, and there is no cure for it at the moment."

Ten minutes later, Cedrick, who was sitting in the main seat in the conference room, kept checking his watch while listening to a report from one of his subordinates.

Why hasn't Nico returned with the documents yet?

His face had a look of displeasure that spread a tenseness across the conference room.

Having noticed that Cedrick was in a particularly bad mood, the directors all held their breaths and tried their best to minimize their presence.

Suddenly, a commotion could be heard from outside the door.

"You can't go in there, Ms. Harris! Mr. Jenson is having a meeting right now!"

The door to the conference room was then forcefully pushed open, and Gwendolyn glared at Cedrick—as she stood there.

As all of Jenson Group knew about her identity, none of the security guards dared lay a finger on her. "I'm sorry, Mr. Jenson. Ms. Harris insisted on barging in..."

The directors all turned to look at Gwendolyn when they heard that.

However, she ignored their gazes and kept her attention focused on Cedrick.

Without even looking at her, Cedrick lifted his cup of coffee and elegantly took a sip before saying coldly, "Whatever it is you have to say can wait until this meeting is over, Ms. Harris. Security, please escort her to my office.

"Understood, Mr. Jenson," the security guard replied respectfully and got ready to escort Gwendolyn out of there. However, he froze when she shot him an icy-cold glare.

Gwendolyn then made her way past the security guards and walked up to Cedrick as she asked, "Cedrick! Why are you calling me 'Ms. Harris' again?"

She clearly looked upset and sounded like she was about to cry.

Cedrick tensed up and turned to look at her.

He instinctively panicked when he saw her eyes begin to tear up.

"Gwenny? What are you—"

+15 Bonus

Gwendolyn cut him off by kissing him on his pale lips in front of everyone, much to their surprise.

Everyone in the company had heard about them kissing at the charity gala, but they did not expect to witness such a public display of affection during a meeting.

Since they were inside a conference room with security guards and directors watching, Cedrick stopped himself from being drawn into Gwendolyn's kiss. That was especially the case since he intended to draw a clear line between them anyway.

Cedrick leaned back against his chair to pull his lips away from hers. His body was exuding an icy-cold aura as he attempted to grab her hands.

"Knock it off! We're in the conference room of Jenson Group!"

As though Gwendolyn had predicted his move, she quickly and accurately grabbed his hands and pinned them against his chair.

Cedrick struggled with all of his might, but Gwendolyn's martial arts training made her far too strong for him to break free from.

Gwendolyn arched an eyebrow at Cedrick as she inched closer to him once again. She was unhappy with how cold he had been treating her lately, and she was determined to punish him with an aggressive and forceful kiss, even biting his lips harshly.

Cedrick groaned and winced from the pain while everyone in the conference room stared wide-eyed at them.

Some held their hands over their mouths and gasped in shock, while some swallowed hard in envy. Others covered their faces with their hands in embarrassment and peeked through the gaps between their fingers.

None of them had expected to see their boss get sexually ravaged by his woman like that.

Oh, my goodness! This is so exciting!

Nico pretended to be in a hurry as he rushed into the conference room with a stack of documents in hand.

Instead of freaking out when he saw the intimate scene before him, Nico calmly proceeded to help clear the room by saying, "This meeting will be postponed as Mr. Jenson has some personal matters to take care of. We will inform you all when the meeting will be continued. Would everyone please leave the conference room?"

Although they were reluctant to leave, they did as told and walked out of the conference room in an orderly manner anyway.

In order to give the two even more privacy, Nico made sure to close the windows and doors after everyone had left.

Shangrience

Just like that, the conference room fell into complete silence.

The air was filled with intense sexual tension as the kiss continued for quite some time.

Gwendolyn only stopped her punishing kiss when she heard Cedrick sobbing softly.

His pale lips were swollen from the forceful kiss and stained red by Gwendolyn's lipstick.

She kept his hands in a vice-like grip as she slowly pulled her face away from his.

The way Gwendolyn licked her teeth made her look like a beautiful vampire who was satisfied with her meal.

"It hurts, doesn't it? That's what you get for calling me Ms. Harris and Gwendolyn! Let's see if you'll dare do it again!"

Despite her fierce tone, there was a pained look in her tear-filled eyes.



Whatever confidence Cedrick had earlier was gone the moment he realized she probably knew his secret. “Y–You found out about it already?” he asked nervously while avoiding her gaze.

“Yeah.”

Her long hair hung loosely over her shoulders as she gently ran her finger over his lips. “Were you planning on keeping it a secret from me forever and finding some quiet spot to die alone?”

Cedrick’s eyelashes fluttered as he responded to her question with another. “Who told you? Was it Nico?”

Gwendolyn shook her head. “No. He wouldn’t tell me anything, so I did some digging on my own and found out about it myself. You underestimate me far too much!”

Cedrick pursed his lips and lowered his gaze without saying a word.

Gwendolyn’s eyes teared up when she recalled what Nico had told her earlier. “Why didn’t you tell me you were infected with such a deadly virus? Are you afraid of me feeling guilty? Or did you think I would feel disgusted and leave you?”

“I’m sorry for being such a burden...”

Gwendolyn’s heart ached with guilt when she heard that. She cradled his face with trembling hands and said, “You’re not a burden to me, silly! I’m the one who’s a burden to you. You wouldn’t have to suffer from this virus if it wasn’t for me, so I’m the one who should be apologizing instead.”

Cedrick felt his heart melt from the heat of her warm tears.

He had a strong urge to pull her into his arms and kiss the tears off her face, but he felt conflicted when he recalled what Charles’ had told him.

Eventually, he suppressed the urges and said coldly, "Everything I do is out of my own free will. It has nothing to do with you, so you don't have to feel bad about it. Also, I don't need your sympathy, nor do I need you to look after me out of guilt."

She will get sick and tired of me eventually. I don't want to keep her bound to my side with guilt, and I most certainly don't want her to suffer the pain of watching me die.

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Gwendolyn's eyebrows slanted in anger and strong disapproval when she heard that,

"Hey! Do you even listen to yourself, Cedrick? Are you itching for a beating or something?"

Chapter 274 She Is His Savior

Sensing that she was about to punish him again, Cedrick quickly pushed against her with both hands to keep her at bay.

Having found out that his body was degenerating, however, Gwendolyn did not fear his resistance at all.

To her, he was nothing but a weak and sickly man with an attitude.

Gwendolyn effortlessly pinned his arms down once again and licked her lips with a mischievous grin.

"Oh my! Are you having trouble breaking free, Mr. Jenson? Since I have you completely at my mercy, shouldn't you behave yourself a little bit more?" she asked in a teasing tone.

Gedrick felt really conflicted when he heard that. His ego as a man forbade him from giving in, but there was nothing he could do due to his weakened physical state.

After struggling for a bit, Cedrick snorted defiantly and turned his head aside.

The fact that there was nothing he could do about the situation left him feeling really frustrated.

Seeing as he still refused to submit, Gwendolyn grabbed him by the chin and forced him to look at her. "Seems that punishment wasn't enough. Do you want to see some blood, Ceddy?"

Those words had barely left Gwendolyn's mouth when she leaned forward and pretended to bite Cedrick on his swollen lips.

"No, don't..."

Gwendolyn couldn't bring herself to follow through with her bite when she heard him pleading for mercy. In the end, she simply gave him a gentle kiss to help relieve some of that pain.

They could feel each other's breaths as their tongues intertwined passionately.

After kissing for what felt like forever, Gwendolyn took a moment to catch her breath before cradling his face in her hands.

"I will only say this once, so listen to me very carefully, Cedrick. I am not a woman who would date just about anyone. I have tons of ways to compensate you if guilt is all that I feel. There is no need for me to dedicate my heart and my life to someone I don't love. Also, I am not sympathizing with you. It hurts me to see you in pain, so I want to stay by your side no matter how hard things get in the future. I want to help you

share that burden as I walk alongside you, and I will do everything I can to cure you. I'm not about to just sit by and watch you die. Oh, and I'm not as weak as you think I am, so please have some faith in me! We will surely be together for a lot more than just five months. We are going to stay together for a very long time and live a beautiful life together. Think of it as a future that I will create for you, if you will," Gwendolyn said sternly.

Whoa... I've never seen Gwendolyn this serious!

Cedrick's face was filled with shock as the two of them stared deeply into each other's eyes.

The part where she said she would create a future for the both of them got him fantasizing about their future together.

Cedrick's eyes teared up as he visualized a life where Gwendolyn would keep him company, shower him with affection, care about him, and take away all of his pain and sadness.

"Oh, Gwenny..." I truly am blessed to have you in my life!

He wrapped his arms around her waist and hugged her tightly as he embraced the warmth of her body.

Gwendolyn gently patted him on the back and ran her hand through his hair to comfort him.

The golden rays of the evening sun filled the conference room with a warm glow as it shone upon them.

That beautiful moment was interrupted when Cedrick let out a soft groan.

Thanks to Gwendolyn's sharp sense of hearing, she picked up on it immediately. She noticed something wasn't right when she felt his back muscles tense up and his hands tremble.

She quickly let go of Cedrick and touched his forehead as she asked, "What's wrong?"

He's not burning up with a fever, but his face has gone pale, and he's trembling uncontrollably...

"I-I'm fine..." Cedrick replied in a very weak voice.

Gwendolyn knew him all too well. She could clearly tell that he was doing his best to suppress the pain and act tough. While he would usually try to gain her sympathy by pretending to be in pain, she knew he

her. would endure it in silence whenever he was truly in pain so that he would not worry

The more Cedrick tried to act tough, the more it hurt Gwendolyn on the inside.

“Is your angina acting up again? Where’s your medicine? Did you bring it with you?” she asked when she noticed him clutching his chest.

Cedrick’s face was drenched in cold sweat as he shook his head.

Gwendolyn immediately ran out of the conference room and called out to Nico, who happened to be standing nearby, “Where’s his medicine to help relieve his angina?”

“It should be in his office.”

“Go get it! Hurry!”

“On it!”

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Nico realized something was wrong when he saw the anxious look on her face. He then rushed upstairs as quickly as his legs could carry him.

Gwendolyn was about to return to Cedrick’s side when she heard a loud thud behind her. Upon turning around, she saw that Cedrick had fallen from his chair and was curled up in a ball on the ground.

His body was trembling uncontrollably, and the veins in his neck were bulging underneath the skin.

“Ceddy!”

Gwendolyn rushed to his side, knelt on the ground, and carefully held him in her arms. She even tried massaging his chest in an attempt to help relieve some of his pain.

It wasn't long before Nico returned with his medication. However, Cedrick's condition did not improve significantly even after he swallowed the pill.

It would take some time for the medication to take effect. Until then, all Cedrick could do was endure the pain while lying in Gwendolyn's embrace.

Gwendolyn felt as though her heart was being pierced with a knife when she saw him in pain.

It was also the first time Nico had seen Cedrick in so much pain. He kept pacing about anxiously while wishing he could help share some of that pain.

Unable to stand it anymore, Gwendolyn rolled her sleeve up and held her slender arm next to Cedrick's mouth.

"Stop fighting it, Cedly! Just bite my arm if it hurts! We'll suffer this pain together!"

Cedrick pursed his lips tightly as he couldn't bring himself to do so. Instead, he grabbed her hand tightly and interlocked his fingers with hers.

Nico knelt down beside him and held his arm out as well. "You can bite my arm instead, Mr. Jenson. Ms. Harris' arm is skinny and delicate, but mine is tough and muscular. I'm not afraid of pain!"

Cedrick shook his head and buried his face in Gwendolyn's chest.

Gwendolyn let out a helpless sigh when she saw how stubborn he was.

Just how much longer does he have to suffer?

After taking a moment to calm herself down, she looked at Nico and asked, "He's in a lot of pain while waiting for the pill to take effect. Could we inject him with a painkiller or something?"

"I don't know. This is the first time I've seen Mr. Jenson suffer like this."

Since Nico couldn't provide her with an answer, Gwendolyn decided to take matters into her own hands.

"You carry him! We're heading to the laboratory right away!"

They arrived at the laboratory about fifteen minutes later.

Cedrick's breathing slowly stabilized after being injected with a painkiller, and he soon fell asleep from the exhaustion.

Gwendolyn helped massage his forehead while sitting next to him.

Joshua then came in and handed her all the data they had gathered on Cedrick/

"Try to keep his emotions under control. Huge fluctuations in his emotional state will trigger his angina, and he will need to spend a huge amount of energy just to endure the pain. That will leave him weak, which will help the virus spread through his body even faster. On top of that, painkillers have side effects, as well. Giving him painkillers every time will worsen the damage done to his body."

Gwendolyn nodded and read through the lab reports while listening to his explanation.

It pained her deeply when she saw the data that was printed in red.

Gwendolyn took a deep breath and tried to suppress her guilt as she asked, "Is there really nothing we can do about this virus? I know we can't cure him completely just yet, but what about prolonging his life?"

Joshua shook his head. Since Cedrick was still unconscious, he decided to be honest with Gwendolyn about it. "I didn't tell Cedrick the truth because I feared he wouldn't be able to accept it, but..."

## Chapter 275 The Fury Of Gwendolyn

"The five months I mentioned he had previously was actually a rough estimation. He can hold on for that long only if his body functions remain in good condition. This is because the virus in his body is growing immune to the suppressant. If he experiences several more episodes of angina, it's unlikely he will survive for more than a month..."

Taken aback, Gwendolyn gripped the lab report tightly, causing it to crumple in her hand.

She tried pulling herself together. "From now on, I'll make sure he takes care of his health. I refuse to believe that he only has months to live. I want him to live a long and healthy life!"

Joshua was relieved to see the determination in her eyes.

"Don't worry, Ms. Harris. I will do my utmost to treat Cedrick. I will provide you with a list of essential care guidelines that you should follow. There are certain things he should avoid, and he needs to maintain a regular exercise routine, watch his diet, and manage his emotions. By adhering to these measures, he'll greatly benefit," Joshua said.

Gwendolyn replied, "All right. Thank you."

"You're welcome. It's my responsibility." After retrieving the lab report from her, Joshua turned around and closed the door

Wor them.

Gwendolyn tilted her head, and her gaze shifted to the man lying on the bed. In an instant, she found herself captivated by his deep, dark eyes. "You're awake. Did we disturb you?"



A corner of Cedrick's pallid lips quirked up, and he shook his head in response. "I wasn't asleep in the first place. Hearing your voice makes me feel safe."

Gwendolyn caressed his face gently and patiently. "Whenever you're in pain, don't suffer in silence. You have to let me know. It would upset me if you hid your pain from me. Understand?"

He nodded obediently. "Gwenny, I want a hug..."

Gwendolyn kicked off her heels, nestled into the blanket beside Cedrick, and tenderly embraced him.

Savoring the pleasant scent she emitted, Cedrick peacefully closed his eyes.

Upon recalling an important matter, he said, "By the way, we have to keep my health issue a secret, Gwenny. You must not tell the Harris family about it either."

"I won't, so don't worry," she assured him.

Cedrick held significant influence in Salinsburgh, even throughout the entire Chanaea.

If news of his critical condition were to spread, it would cause considerable upheaval for the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Harris Group. Jenson Group and Yael's family would definitely cause a huge commotion as well if they found out about his health problem.

Once again, Cedrick closed his eyes and succumbed to sleep, comforted by her gentle reassurance.

Gwendolyn lowered her head to look at his handsome face, but she zoned out for a moment.

Before today, she had not known the incident at Fairlake's Realm Bar would cause such great damage to Cedrick's body.

Now that she had learned about it, her hatred toward Charles intensified even more.

Furthermore, Charles even dared to threaten her with the incident. He wants me to call off the engagement and marry him? Dream on! Cedrick is now suffering in torment because of him, yet he only has to endure a prison sentence and live a relatively peaceful life. That punishment is not even equal to a fraction of the harm inflicted on Cedrick!

The more Gwendolyn thought about it, the angrier she became. I can't just sit here and do nothing. I must teach Charles a lesson!

Meanwhile, the sound of objects breaking echoed throughout the Ferguson residence in the dead of night.

Eloise was once again in a fit of rage, leaving the room in complete disarray.

Gunnar stood frozen in a corner, his voice silenced by fear, unable to utter a single word.

The act of tossing things all over the place did not seem to appease Eloise.

She grabbed a bottle of high-end toner and warned Gunnar, "Don't you dare dodge this, you useless piece of trash!"

Gunnar had no choice but to stand still while she viciously hurled the toner in his direction.

A loud thud resounded in the room.

Gunnar's forehead absorbed the impact, forming a bruise and breaking the skin. Droplets of blood spattered across his forehead.

He silently endured, not uttering a word.

Eloise's anger

anger subsided somewhat upon seeing the blood on his forehead. "This entire situation is a result of your incompetence! You told me to expose Treyton's affair through a press statement and manipulate public opinion to force him into submission. And what happened? A bunch of idiots! I must have been out of my mind to take your advice!"

Treyton held a significant influence in the entertainment industry. With a mere gesture, he had the power to completely disrupt the entertainment world.

His industry influence was immense. Despite Eloise having a press release written, no media outlet dared to publish it. Even if she paid several daring small media companies to release the news, it would quickly lose traction and disappear.

Fueled by frustration, Eloise resumed hurling objects as the image of Treyton and Jennifer being affectionate filled her mind.

The commotion she caused was so significant that Sherman had to go upstairs to check on her.

Just as he opened the door, an object hurtled past him, accompanied by Eloise's furious screech. "Get out! Leave me alone if you don't want to be hit!"

Seeing Sherman about to be struck, Gunnar swiftly intervened and took the blow, resulting in another bruised forehead.

He then greeted Sherman with respect, "Mr. Ferguson."

Eloise turned around. "Oh, Sherman, it's you. I thought it was those ignorant housekeepers again."

Sherman let out a sigh. "If I hadn't come, how much longer were you planning to keep up with this rampage? Dad might lock you up again if you wake him up with all this ruckus."

He then patted Gunnar's shoulder and said, "Go and take a rest. You must have had a rough day. You can claim double the medical expenses from the butler. Tell him it's my idea."

"Thank you, Mr. Ferguson," Gunnar replied.

Sherman hummed in response before sitting by Eloise's bed.

Before he could say anything, Eloise wrapped her hands around his arm, trying to win his sympathy. "Sherman, you must help me. Treyton insists on choosing that b\*tch over me. We can't allow him to continue with this nonsense. It'll bring shame to the Ferguson family!"

Sherman stroked her head but kept mum.

She continued persuading him. "Oh, by the way, you like Gwendolyn a lot, right? If you help me win back Treyton, I'll help you pursue her!"

Sherman responded with a faint laugh. "Please don't stir up trouble for me with all your tactics. You're no match for her anyway. And if you want to help me, just stay away from her."

Eloise pursed her lips, unwilling to acknowledge his words. Why should I? Gwendolyn will not let me off anyway. I'll surely find an opportunity to deal with that b\*tch someday!

Deep in her heart, she cursed Gwendolyn and Jennifer through and through.

On the other hand, Sherman was trying to figure out a solution for her. "How about this? You'll be celebrating your birthday in two weeks. I'll ask Mom and Dad to throw you a grand party, and you can invite some celebrities over to perform at the event. Sounds good?"

Eloise's eyes brightened immediately. I'll invite Jennifer to perform since she's a celebrity, and when she does come, I'll make sure to teach her a lesson!

Sherman continued to guide her. “Just try giving in to Treyton and show him your sincerity. Get him to attend your birthday party. Then, when he comes, you’ll be able to...”

Eloise listened closely to her brother, confident that the birthday party in two weeks would provide her with the perfect opportunity to carry out her plans!

Eloise’s mind raced with thoughts of teaching Jennifer a lesson, but she also saw an opportunity to devise a plan to deal with Gwendolyn. After all, the latter was her fiancé’s sister. I’ll be able to kill two birds with one stone. Watch it, b\*tches. I’m gonna get you!

## Chapter 276 Celebrations Abound

In the sterile confines of the hospital room at the laboratory, Gwendolyn spent the night alongside Cedrick.

By dawn, she took Cedrick back to the villa.

In accordance with Joshua’s advice, she drafted a health plan for Cedrick.

It mainly outlined that he refrained from smoking, drinking, and engaging in physical intimacy with Gwendolyn. In addition, Cedrick should follow a diet abundant in fruits and vegetables and a daily regimen of moderate exercise.

Cedrick watched her enthusiastic manner and merely nodded, accepting her arrangements without a word.

Once home, Gwendolyn headed to the kitchen to prepare some oatmeal.

After they were done with breakfast, she said, “I have something on today and must return to the Harris residence. In the meantime, don’t head to Jenson Group if you have nothing important to attend to. If any paperwork requires your attention, have Nico bring it over.”

Surprised, Cedrick asked, "Since you're returning to the Harris residence, do you need me to accompany you?"

"No need," Gwendolyn replied.

She served him another bowl of oatmeal, concealing the unease in her eyes.

"You just had an episode of angina yesterday. You're still weak, so don't go around wandering. Rest for a few days and gather your strength," Gwendolyn said.

Cedrick was a little concerned, especially when he noticed her change of clothes upon returning to their villa.

Gwendolyn usually favored dresses. However, she had changed into a pair of sturdy jeans paired with a crisp white t-shirt. The attire accentuated her tall, slender figure. It was a simple and clean look.

Something about her sudden change of style felt off to Cedrick.

"It seems like your eldest brother is still in Salinsburgh. I'm not comfortable with you going back alone," Cedrick uttered.

Gwendolyn chuckled. "Asher dotes on me the most. What could he possibly do to me?"

The man fell silent, a quiet melancholy settling over him.

Gwendolyn planted a kiss on his forehead and soothingly ran her fingers through his hair. "Don't worry. I won't let him know that we've slept together previously. Just stay put at home. I'll return once I've finished my business, all right?"

"Okay," he mumbled,

Gedrick's irritation was pacified by her touch.

Satisfied, Gwendolyn headed out the door.

She drove back to Mount Tranquil all alone, not to Marcus' villa but straight to Asher's.

When Gwendolyn arrived at Asher's villa, she lingered at the entrance. She took several deep breaths to steady her nerves. Then, after making sure that her jeans were thick enough, she mustered the courage to ring the doorbell.

As she raised her hand, the door was opened from the inside.

Gwendolyn froze as she found herself under the chilling scrutiny of Asher's piercing gaze. Dressed immaculately in an exquisite azure suit, he emanated a commanding and intense aura.

"Hi, Asher! What a coincidence. Are you heading out? Have you and your wife had breakfast yet?" Gwendolyn awkwardly withdrew her hand with a sheepish smile.

Asher narrowed his eyes. "I wouldn't call this a coincidence. I had just come downstairs when I noticed you sneaking in from the garden. What are you trying to do?"

Gwendolyn let out a nervous laugh. "Hah, what do you mean, Asher? I'm here to look for you. Why did you make it sound like I'm sneaking around?"

Asher was too familiar with her antics but didn't feel like exposing her. Instead, he turned around and retreated to his living room couch.

Gwendolyn trailed behind him, her gaze flickering toward the second floor. "Isn't Sienna home today? She left so early?"

Her palms were slick with sweat. If Sienna isn't around, aren't I at risk of suffering a severe beating today?

“She’s upstairs, in the study. Are you here for her?” Asher asked in a casual tone. He reached into the drawer of the coffee table, rummaging for a cigarette.

However, he decided against lighting it when he recalled Gwendolyn’s dislike toward the smell of cigarette smoke and put it back into the drawer. Then, he fixed his sister with a stare.

Gwendolyn’s fears were just starting to ebb away when she noticed Asher’s stern gaze. She was already feeling guilty to begin with. Hence, she began to tremble uncontrollably under his scrutinizing gaze.

She felt her legs giving way as she slumped to the ground on her knees, deciding that it was the best course of action.

Beneath the coffee table and the living couch was a plush, round rug. Shrewd as she was, she had chosen a soft

spot to land her knees, so it did not hurt at all.

Asher watched her theatrics with a hint of amusement before his lips curved into a smile. However, his eyes were cold and stern. “How apt. Would you care to remind me what I told you previously?”

Gwendolyn lowered her gaze as her voice took on a pitiful tone. “You said that if I ever slept with him again, you would break my legs, and no one could persuade you otherwise.”

“So, Ms. Harris, how many times have you slept with him, then?”

The sarcastic way he addressed her as Ms. Harris was enough to send a shiver down Gwendolyn’s spine. This, she realized, was the calm before the storm. A chilling dread filled her.

“I think... four or five times?”



As soon as the words left her mouth, she felt a blast of icy fury emanating from her brother. Hastily, she added, "I know you only have my best interests at heart, Asher. You worry that if in the end, Cedrick and I don't end up together, I'll suffer the gesticulations of others from the rumors of us living together, and worse, sleeping together. You're concerned about my reputation among the noble families. But Asher, I've never cared about others' opinions. As long as I live freely and boldly, that's enough. As for Cedrick, he's been good to me—"

Asher interjected her with a cold chuckle. "Is that so? I heard that he's been spending a lot of time with the celebrity spokesperson from Jenson Group recently. He has little self-discipline. Do you still consider this to be good to you?"

Gwendolyn blinked in surprise. "Where did you hear that, Asher?"

"The celebrity's manager spilled the beans about your fight in Jenson Group. If it weren't for my intervention, your lover's spat would have unsettled the stocks of both our families for days," Asher said.

Evelyn is such a troublemaker!

A wave of repulsion washed over Gwendolyn, but there were more pressing matters at hand.

She lowered her head, at a loss about how to explain to Asher, especially since she still couldn't disclose Cedrick's condition to her brother.

Asher rose from his chair, rolling up his suit sleeves. His every move was imbued with an air of nobility and grace. His tone, however, was ominous. "What excuse do you intend to spin for me this time, you sly girl?"

"I wouldn't dare!" Gwendolyn immediately said.

Her face turned pale at his obvious readiness to mete out punishment. "We had a misunderstanding, and we did fight a few days ago, but we made up last night. I believe Cedrick wouldn't dare betray me."

“He’s betrayed you once before. You trust him, but I can’t say I do! You’ve only just reconciled, and he’s already arguing with you. To top it all off, he’s fraternizing with some starlet. I’ll make him pay!” Asher chided.

Asher’s jawline hardened as he crouched down before Gwendolyn. His tone took on a rare gentle tone, “Little sister, I won’t punish you this time. Instead, I will help you get out of this marriage arrangement. After that, I will deal with that scoundrel. If you can’t marry into another noble family, I will look after you for the rest of your life.”

“No, Asher!” Gwendolyn cried out. Noticing the murderous look in her brother’s eyes, she continued in a determined tone, “I will not back out of this marriage. Besides, I’m always the one initiating, so it’s all my fault. Please, don’t bother yourself with his life. You... you should punish me instead!”

The air seemed to freeze.

Gwendolyn kept her head low, struggling to breathe under the weight of Asher’s fury. She gulped with a lump in her throat.

Despite her privileged upbringing as the daughter of the Harris family, her fear of Asher had been carved into her bones.

She was about the same age as her third brother, Treyton. Growing up, both of them were very naughty, and their parents failed to discipline them. Hence, they were tamed under Asher’s iron fists. The mere thought of Asher’s physical punishment still sent shivers down her spine.

Gwendolyn trembled with fear but had to steel herself, for she needed to bring up the matter of Charles. It was only after enduring this round of punishment that she could get down to business.

Without uttering a word, Asher rose to his feet. His austere countenance and menacing gaze were enough to strike fear into the bravest hearts.

“So, it seems like you’ve come here to ask for a beating, huh? Very well, I shall oblige,” Asher uttered.

In one swift movement, he undid the buckle of his belt and slid it from his waist, folding it neatly in half. Pointing toward a nearby couch's armrest, he icily commanded, "Lie down there."

Chapter 277 I Am Nervous

Seeing the cold look on his face, intimidation filled Gwendolyn. She dragged her feet as she got off the carpet and slumped against the couch's armrest.

The minute she climbed atop it, she caught Asher walking to her side from the corner of her eyes, all while he exuded a scary aura.

Her face drained of color. "W-Wait!"

"Speak."

"How many times is it going to be, Asher?"

She had to brace herself. After all, she still needed to deal with Charles' issue, then meet with Cedrick later.

Asher raised a sculpted brow. "Since you slept with him four to five times, why don't we start from fifty? What about that?"

Fifty?

Dread washed over Gwendolyn.

thought five times, at most. With Asher's strength, I might not survive his whipping. Can I even get back to Cedrick's illa alive today? Also, despite his words, his tone doesn't sound like he's negotiating with me.

Can I say no?" She resignedly looked over her shoulder to see Asher removing his watch, taking off his coat, and rolling up his sleeves even further. Sensing her gaze, he shot an icy look at her.

No, you can't."

knew it!

he repeatedly hit her head against the couch as despair flooded her.

om the corner of her eyes, Gwendolyn caught Asher waving his belt, and her head snapped toward him. "Wait, I have something to say!"

'ith furrowed brows, he clicked his tongue. "What now?"

wendolyn discreetly pinched her arm, causing her eyes to fill with tears. She then cast a pitiful look at

1. m.

haven't received a beating for years, so I'm a bit nervous. Can you maybe... be gentler?"

nusement diminished Asher's rage slightly. "I'll have you try whether it's still the same pain you remember from your memories then."

s anger had already died down by half after he noticed her pitiful expression. In truth, he was just flailing her leg, trying to scare her.

contrast to his amusement, his answer sent a completely different feeling shooting through Gwendolyn. It sounded like a death sentence to her ears.

hen she saw Asher wave the belt again, a chill ran down her spine. She yelled exaggeratedly, "Ow! It hurts! Sienna, help me! Asher is going to kill me!"

Asher stared at her in surprise.

I haven't even started yet. Has she completely forgotten the rules after a few years of not seeing each other? She even learned to strike first by asking for help!

Her acting caused his fury to ramp up again. "Gwendolyn Shalders Harris! You'll be losing a leg today!"

Gwendolyn immediately dropped her act and stopped screaming at the top of her lungs at his threat. Instinctively, she clenched her teeth and broke out in a cold sweat,

Asher's punishments are real harsh!

Wrapping her arms around herself, she cursed herself. What's the point of picking out the thick jeans in the morning? This bit of protection will be f\*cking useless against Asher's punishment. I should've worn another five to six layers of fleece long johns!

Noticing her silence, he scoffed. "Why did you stop acting? Weren't you howling at the top of your lungs just a while ago?"

"Ow! It hurts!"

Gwendolyn sucked in a breath sharply and whimpered pitifully. It was so painful that her eyes brimmed with tears.

Why isn't Sienna coming down? If Asher continues in this vein, a dozen times is my limit before the pain kills me!

"You asked for it, so bear with the pain!"

With a dark expression, Asher raised his arm again..

Gwendolyn caught his movement from the corner of her eyes and instantly snapped them shut from fear. Her body tensed as she braced herself for the hit.

In the next second, a pair of thin arms wrapped around her from the back, shielding her from Asher.

Sienna had heard the racket downstairs and rushed down from the fourth floor.

“That’s enough, Hubby. Twice should be enough. Gwen has delicate and tender skin. Are you really planning to break her leg?”

Asher huffed, his anger not diminishing in the slightest.

Noting his fury, Sienna continued to coax him, “Plus, it takes two to tango. Even if Gwen was the one who asked to sleep with him, Cedrick didn’t turn her down, didn’t he? Why don’t you beat him up then?”

Confusion filled Gwendolyn.

There’s something strange about her advice. Why is she shifting the blame to Cedrick?

Asher replied, “Why would I beat Cedrick up? I’ll lead a few men to the Jenson residence and kill him later!”

Before Gwendolyn could get used to the pain, she gasped at his promise and urgently advised, “Why is killing him the only thing on your mind, Asher? We’re in a law-based society, so calm down. Punishing me should be enough. You can’t lay a hand on another’s child!”

Asher rolled up his sleeves further and snickered. “Fine, protect him. We still have forty-eight times to go. We’re picking up where we left off!”

Hearing the number was enough for Gwendolyn’s entire body to shudder.

“That’s it! Why are you getting angry at Gwen? The two whips earlier sounded horrifying even through the closed door. I’m sure she’s in a lot of pain right now. You’ll feel bad for her if she gets hurt, so why are you so stubborn about it?”

Sienna was Asher’s weakness.

After tossing the truth right in his face, she snatched the belt from his hand and buckled it around his waist.

“I’m mad as well about Cedrick’s matter this time and understand the reason you forbid Gwen from sleeping with him is for her own future, but every couple fights after being together for a while. Since she’s still willing to take his side, why don’t you trust her judgment again and observe Cedrick for a while?”

Sienna’s reasoning gradually soothed Asher’s anger, and he took a seat on the opposite couch.

Sienna immediately helped Gwendolyn up from crouching over the handrest.

With a tearful gaze, Gwendolyn gratefully called out, “Sienna.”

“Does it hurt?” Sienna wiped the cold sweat away from Gwendolyn’s forehead and helped her over to the couch.

Gwendolyn sucked in a sharp breath when her butt hit the couch. Her face scrunched in pain, and misery was written all over her. “Forget it. Since it hurts more to sit, I might as well stand.”

Sitting opposite her, Asher observed her every move. His sharp gaze dulled and finally softened.

Sienna caught his change and pressed her lips together to keep from smiling.

As expected, he's starting to feel bad for Gwen.

Sienna knew Gwendolyn well. With just a look from the latter, she could guess Gwendolyn must have another reason for coming over to spill the truth. Wanting to help the younger woman, she started, "Gwen, why did you come here so early? Have you run into some trouble lately?"

Gwendolyn held her back and nodded fervently before limping over to Asher, bending down, and resting her chin on his knee. "Asher, do you remember how Charles stole the drugs from the lab half a year ago to harm me?"

"I remember it. Why?"

She bit her lip and answered, "I think he's having it easy by spending time in prison."

Asher was perplexed. "I already hired a few men to beat him up for you. He was close to dying. Wasn't that enough?"

"Nope!"

Gwendolyn was getting tired from bending down, especially with how the jeans tightened around her backside in that pose. Sweat began to dot her forehead after a while.

Inhaling deeply, she continued, "Charles requested me to visit him yesterday and shamelessly talked about marrying me. It literally pains me to see him live comfortably!"

With a frown, he asked, "So what are you planning?"

A glint flashed across her eyes as she answered, "I hope you can help me get him out of there secretly."

Chapter 278 Pay The Price



“Kiddo, that’s a high–security prison. Charles is a felon. It’ll be hard to bring him out unless I bail him out.”

Gwendolyn knew that as well.

But does Charles deserve to be bailed out?

She began to shower Asher with compliments. “Asher, you’re the most capable man. I know you must have a solution to this matter. Don’t worry. I just want to teach him some lessons to make his life worse than death. After that, I’ll let you take him back inside.”

Asher fell silent.

He neither agreed to it nor rejected her.

Laying on his lap, Gwendolyn began to play the victim with tears in her eyes. “Asher, you hit me so hard earlier. Now that someone is bullying me, I can’t believe you actually don’t plan to help me. My life is such a misery. You don’t love me anymore, do you?”

Noticing that she was covered in cold sweat from the pain, Asher hurriedly took a piece of wet tissue to wipe the sweat off.

Earlier, he had been so angry that he did not control his strength and hit her really hard. Now that he had calmed down, he was filled with distress and guilt.

He would even bring her the stars if she wanted them.

“How could I not love you? I agree to help you.”

As her goal was achieved, Gwendolyn breathed a sigh of relief, feeling that her exaggerated acting was not

in vain.

“Thank you, Asher. How long do you think it’ll take you to get him out?”

Asher was about to say that he would have to come up with a plan first when Gwendolyn spoke before he could.

With a smile, she prompted, “Let’s do it today, shall we?”

“Why the rush?”

Instead of answering him, Gwendolyn held her waist carefully and said with a pitiful expression, “Ouch. My butt hurts so much. Show me some love, Asher.”

Asher felt his heart ache. “Okay, I’ll pause all my work today and prioritize helping you with this matter first. I’ll have everything done before the day is over.”

“Oh, you’re the best, Asher!”

Sighing, Asher tapped her on the nose. “I’ll get Sienna to take you to the room to apply some ointment and get some rest. I’ll call you when it’s done.”

“Sure.”

With Sienna’s support, Gwendolyn walked up the stairs with difficulty.

When she turned the corner of the stairs, she carefully glanced downstairs at Asher. After making sure that he could not see her, she instantly switched back to her normal walking posture.

It was indeed painful when he hit her, but he had only hit her twice. The pain had eased off after she massaged herself for a while.

Suppressing a smile, Sienna shook her head helplessly.

She knew her husband well and was aware that Asher could tell Gwendolyn's visit was due to Charles. However, Asher had indeed lost his temper and hit Gwendolyn, so he had to make amends to feel better.

Gwendolyn had taken advantage of his guilt to trick him into helping her.

The two women then entered the guest room on the third floor before Sienna closed the door behind them.

Gwendolyn was immensely grateful to her. "Thanks, Sienna. It doesn't hurt as much anymore, so you don't need to apply the ointment for me. It's too much trouble. Let's chat, shall we?",

Even so, Sienna was still worried. "Why don't we apply some? Otherwise, it'll take at least two days for the swelling to go down. You don't want Cedrick to find out after you go back, do you?"

Gwendolyn pondered for a moment.

She's right. Although I won't sleep with Cedrick for the time being due to his illness, there's a chance that he'll notice it. He dotes on me so much that he can't bear to be aggressive toward me. Despite his strained relationship with Asher, he has endured it all because of me. If he finds out that Asher hit me, he'll probably fly into a rage, sparking a bloodbath! It took me a lot of effort to soften Asher's attitude toward Cedrick, so I'd better be more careful.

Asher had always been a man of his word.

In the late afternoon, Asher had several bodyguards send Gwendolyn to an unfinished building in the suburbs.

In a dilapidated room in the middle of the seventh floor, the muffled voice of a man was heard.

Creak.

The door of the old building creaked as it was pushed.

A piece of cotton cloth had been stuffed into Charles' mouth. His limbs were tied to a wooden chair, and a black hood was covering his head.

Hearing that someone had entered the room, he stopped struggling.

The black hood over his head was removed, and the sudden brightness made it impossible for him to keep his eyes open. After he got used to it, he saw who the person in front of him was.

A smile appeared on his face when he saw the indifferent yet beautiful face of Gwendolyn.

As soon as the cotton cloth was removed from his mouth, he said eagerly, "Gwen, you finally saw the light! I knew you would come back to me. Hurry up and untie me now."

Standing still, Gwendolyn raised her chin slightly and stared at him condescendingly.

Apart from iciness, there was only disgust and scorn in her eyes. There was no other emotion in them.

Charles immediately sensed that something was wrong and looked around. "It seems that you're not here to save me. You're here to confront and punish me, aren't you?"

Gwendolyn took out a small transparent glass bottle, which was only the size of two thumbs, and carefully studied the liquid in the glass bottle with her cold eyes.

"I already know about his illness. You are of no value to me now. I'm not very happy to see you living a peaceful life in prison as a healthy man."

Charles also stared at the glass bottle in her hand. He had a hunch that the contents must not be a good thing.

He smiled. "You got me out on purpose to kill me so that you can avenge Cedrick, didn't you?"

Gwendolyn narrowed her eyes. "Killing you is too good for you. You have to pray for Cedly, though. If he dies, I'll make sure you pay the price with your life!"

Hearing that, Charles laughed out loud smugly.

"It sounds like Cedrick is dying. Am I right? That's great. After he dies, you'll be mine! I don't believe that you'll kill me. After all, we grew up together. For old times' sake, there's no way you would kill me!"

"Ha, you don't have the right to bring up the past."

The look in Gwendolyn's eyes gradually turned icy as she brought the glass bottle to Charles' face.

"I just got this from Kieran. It's a bottle of specimens that he used to study a rare disease. I heard that the disease will cause the whole body to rot and be covered with malignant sores within a few months. When it acts up, the person will be in so much pain that he'll wish to die."

Charles looked at her in disbelief as his pupils constricted.

She went on, "The only advantage of this disease is that it's not fatal. However, the pain is very strong when it acts up, and it makes one so ugly that they don't dare to see anyone. Many people can't bear it as they have a mental breakdown and will choose to commit suicide."

"You're so cruel, Gwen!"

Gwendolyn grabbed him by the collar of his prison uniform, her eyes filled with intense anger.

“Weren’t you cruel too when you harmed me and Cedrick with an RNA virus?”

Letting go of her grip on his collar, she took two steps back calmly. “Come in.”

Two bodyguards arranged by Asher immediately entered the room respectfully.

“At your command, Ms. Harris.”

“Serve him the medicine!”

“Yes, Ms. Harris.”

A bodyguard took the glass bottle from Gwendolyn with both hands.

Retreating to the door, Gwendolyn leaned against the door frame leisurely, took out a wet tissue, and gracefully wiped clean the hand that touched Charles.

Meanwhile, Charles’ jaw was forcefully grabbed by the bodyguards before they pried open his mouth. He struggled but to no avail.

He turned to Gwendolyn, only to notice that her eyes were filled with ruthlessness and iciness.

Seeing that the bottle of medicine was about to be poured into his mouth, Charles shouted at her, “Gwen, don’t you wonder why I know so much about Cedrick when I’m in prison? Don’t you want to know my secret?”

Gwendolyn sneered, unfazed. “I can find that out myself. After that, I’ll make sure they end up like you and live a life worse than death!”

Realizing that she was determined to make him swallow the medicine, Charles finally showed a trace of fear in his blue eyes.

“Wait! I also know a way to cure Cedrick. Don’t you want to save him?”

Chapter 279 A Compromise

“Wait!”

Gwendolyn stopped the bodyguards and stepped forward. “Spill. What’s the cure?”

The bodyguards immediately let go of Charles and took two steps back.

“Do you really want to know, Gwen?” Charles licked his teeth and grinned wickedly as he said, “I can tell you, but you will have to agree to the three conditions I told you before. As soon as you agree to them, Cedrick can be cured.”

Gwendolyn frowned and gritted her teeth angrily. “You’re so shameless, Charles.”

“You flatter me, Gwen. Think about my offer again carefully. Moreover, I’m not inferior to Cedrick, either. If you’re with me, I will make sure you become the happiest woman in the world.”

Amused, Gwendolyn chuckled. “Cedrick is the richest man in Salinsburgh, not to mention his other titles as the CEO of Jenson Group, the head of the Jenson family, and the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Apart from having power and influence, he also outshines you in his looks and physique. Meanwhile, you are just a convicted felon and a prisoner. Are you even worthy of comparing yourself to him?”

Charles’ expression darkened.

There was indeed a significant gap between him and Cedrick, but it might not be the case for long!

Besides...

“Cedrick doesn’t have much time left, and because of that, I’ve already won!”

His words enraged Gwendolyn.

She grabbed the pistol that was attached to one of her bodyguards’ waist and pressed the barrel against Charles’ forehead. “There’s no way I will ever agree to your conditions. I will end you right here if you don’t speak up immediately!” she demanded coldly.

However, Charles wasn’t afraid at all. His once handsome and refined face had now become rough and weathered.

“Be careful, Gwen. It won’t be good for any of us if the gun accidentally goes off. After all, Cedrick will die if I’m dead. I’m well aware that you can’t possibly kill me, so there’s no need for you to use this method to scare me.”

Charles was the one who held absolute control over the situation then.

Still pointing the gun at Charles, Gwendolyn scoffed, “You have no right to negotiate conditions with me, Charles. If you don’t speak up, I’ll have someone force this drug down your throat. It should make you suffer enough. Care to give it a try?”

Charles laughed even harder.

“You’re not going to use the drug on me, and you know why. If I really can’t stand it and choose to commit suicide, the way to save Cedrick will be buried with me in the grave. You will never know how to save him in your lifetime, and you can only watch him die helplessly. That feeling should be even more unbearable, don’t you think?”

Charles had gotten hold of Gwendolyn’s biggest concern.



Gwendolyn dug her nails fiercely into her palm as her arm trembled with tension. It seemed to be the only way to keep herself rational.

“Why should I believe you? Perhaps you don’t even know the cure for the S404 RNA virus. You could just be deceiving me and seizing the opportunity to save yourself.”

Charles then made a compromise. “How about this: you find a way to get Asher to bail me out and grant me my freedom. In exchange, I will tell you the method to alleviate Cedrick’s current condition. Then you can see for yourself if I am lying and decide whether or not to agree to my other two conditions.”

Gwendolyn raised an eyebrow as she said, “Deal!”

With that, she lowered the gun and handed it back to the bodyguard. “However, I need to plan the matter of your release and find an excuse. Asher will be suspicious if I ask him for two favors in such a short amount of time.”

Charles shrugged. “Okay. I’ll tell you what I know the day I’m released from prison, After all, I’m healthy and can afford to wait, unlike a certain someone,” he said, hinting at Cedrick’s condition again.

Gwendolyn was unwilling to send Charles back to prison unscathed. Taking a deep breath, she turned to him and smiled apologetically.

“One more thing,” she said. “The reason I asked Asher to sneak you out was to give you a beating. If you return unscathed, it will be hard for me to explain the situation. I guess you have no choice but to bear with it.”

The smug grin on Charles’ face instantly vanished.

Ignoring the change in his expression, Gwendolyn glanced at the bodyguard beside her and ordered, “Make sure he gets a good beating before you send him back.”

“Understood.”

After giving the order, Gwendolyn turned around and walked away. Soon enough, the sound of punches and kicks came from behind. Occasional muffled groans of pain could be heard from Charles' gagged mouth.

The sound of him being beaten up was a comfort to Gwendolyn.

She didn't go far. Leaning against the wall by the door, she listened quietly and waited until Charles was knocked out completely half an hour later.

His face was all bruised, and his body was covered in blood. He also suffered from a broken rib, but it wouldn't kill him.

After the bodyguards put the black hood over his head again, they carried him out and handed him over to the waiting person.

Gwendolyn remained there until the car that would send Charles back to the prison drove away. Then, staring at the two bodyguards, she asked, “Do you know who I am?”

They exchanged uneasy glances before replying, “You are Ms. Harris, Mr. Asher's younger sister.”

“Wrong.” Arms crossed, Gwendolyn corrected them coldly, “I am the youngest and the most doted-on child of the Harris family. I am the precious darling of my brothers.”

Bewildered, the bodyguards stared at her with confused expressions on their faces.

Gwendolyn continued, "Asher ordered you to come here to lend me a hand and ensure my safety. If he or anyone else from the Harris family finds out about my conversation with Charles today, what do you think will happen to those who don't obey instructions and spread rumors?"

Startled, the color drained from their faces. "Don't worry, Ms. Harris. We heard nothing."

Gwendolyn nodded with satisfaction. "Remember what you just said. You know what to do if Asher asks about this. He can reprimand you all he wants, but if any of you dares to tell anyone else what happened, I'll make sure you suffer so much that you'll wish you were dead!"

"Of course, Ms. Harris. You have nothing to worry about."

"Okay. There's no need to send me back. I can go back to the Jenson residence myself."

When Gwendolyn reached the Jenson residence, it was already evening.

The various traditional wooden carvings on the walls of the Jenson residence exuded a touch of exquisite classical beauty under the red hues of the setting sun.

Gwendolyn had already become familiar with the route to Cedrick's villa during this period.

After passing through the winding paths, she arrived at the entrance of the villa.

It was very lively in the garden of the villa.

Cedrick was seated in a chair with a freshly carved wooden plaque placed on the table in front of him. He was writing characters on the plaque using a large brush with gold plating.

Nico, Neville, Swain, Elven, Ezra, and the others had been summoned to the garden. They were all gathered around to watch Cedrick as he wrote.

Gwendolyn watched this scene from afar. It was truly a pleasing sight when a group of handsome men with good physiques gathered together.

Among those eight charming men, Cedrick stood out the most.

Apart from his unparalleled handsome face, his entire demeanor was exceptional. It took just one glance for Gwendolyn to be unable to take her eyes off him.

Treading lightly, she blended into the crowd behind William, quietly observing the words on the plaque written by Cedrick.

“Harrick Villa?”

Upon hearing Gwendolyn’s voice, everyone turned around to look at her.

“Ms. Gwendolyn.”

“You’re back, Ms. Harris.”

Cedrick’s gaze was the most intense among them. “Come here, Gwenny.”

After Gwendolyn walked toward Cedrick, he pulled her into his embrace and let her sit on his lap. Then, after handing her the brush, he held her hand in his.

Together, they finished the last alphabet of the word “Villa.”

Cedrick was very satisfied with the outcome. “Hang this plaque outside, you guys. Nico, get someone to customize an address stone with these two words as well. Place it in the garden after it’s completed.”

“Okay. We’ll handle it right away.”

Soon enough, the group of young men left.

Cedrick held Gwendolyn's hand as they entered the villa.

After allowing Cedrick to lead her to the sofa, she laughed, mocking, "Really? Are you planning to call this place 'Harrick Villa' from now on? What era are we in? Isn't it embarrassing that we are still

hanging plaques?"

"This is a testimony of our love. People will envy us."

Though delighted, Gwendolyn simply smiled and said nothing.

However, as though he had recalled something, Cedrick suddenly became serious and started checking-her palms, arms, and back for injuries.

Tickled by his actions, she giggled. "What are you doing, Cedly? You're examining me like I'm a criminal. I didn't get beaten up, truly!"

Cedrick didn't believe her.

At the laboratory entrance last time, Asher was furious when he learned that the two of them had slept together. They had slept together several times recently, and Cedrick knew that Asher was home today, so he was certain the latter couldn't have let her off so easily.

When Cedrick didn't find any injuries, he shifted his gaze downward and stared at her thick denim jeans.

"Are your legs injured? Come, let me have a look in the room!"

## Chapter 280 She Loved It When He Was Vulnerable

Gwendolyn widened her eyes in shock.

For a sick man like Cedrick, his mind was incredibly sharp.

As Gwendolyn allowed him to lead her back to the master bedroom, she pondered on how to deal with him.

As soon as they sat down on the edge of the bed, he leaned closer to her and extended his bony fingers toward her to unzip her jeans.

Staring at him in disbelief, she asked, "Are you planning on undressing me completely to examine my injuries?"

"What do you think? I have to check your calves, thighs, and butt."

He would not be at ease until he personally confirmed that she was unharmed!

Clutching her pants firmly, Gwendolyn moved her backside away from Cedrick, keeping a distance.

Then, she mustered up her courage and glared at him accusingly. "Cedrick, you pervert! I don't believe for a second that you simply want to examine my injuries. I can't believe you're not behaving yourself even when you're sick!"

On the contrary, Cedrick actually didn't have other thoughts because his mind was solely focused on whether she had been hurt when she went back.

"No, it's not what you think. Besides, I've seen every part of your body. What's wrong with letting me take a look? Are you feeling guilty about something?" he retorted.

Gwendolyn furrowed her eyebrows. Seems like he's not going to let this rest until I let him check me.

She bit her lower lip as her eyes filled with resentment, as though his words had hurt her.

“I have nothing to be guilty of! I told you, Asher didn't make things difficult for me. I can't believe that you don't trust me!”

Gwendolyn's anger intensified as she argued. In retaliation, she pushed him down onto the bed, straddled his body, and pinned down his wrists, rendering him unable to move.

Honestly, she quite enjoyed Cedrick in his vulnerable state. He was easy for her to overpower, which made it fun to tease and bully him.

It allowed her to gain the upper hand instantly.

“How audacious of you to question me! Is your trust in me so fragile? Think about what happened yesterday when you said so many hurtful words to me. I didn't leave you out of spite because I believed in you, didn't I? But what about you? How dare you suspect me of lying over such a small matter?”

Cedrick was startled by her beratement. If there was any color remaining on his already pale face previously, it drained away now.

He just didn't trust Asher.

However, he couldn't bear to look at Gwendolyn's wounded expression and listen to her questioning tone.

He felt guilty, especially after yesterday's incident. Stunned by her rebuttal, he no longer knew how to explain his insistence on checking her injuries as his train of thought was completely derailed by her

words.

Unable to argue back, he could only purse his lips and pout. His eyelashes quivered as his head hung weakly.

Gwendolyn moved her slender fingers onto his pale face to soothe his sorrow.

Suppressing the urge to laugh, she spoke in a serious tone. "I'm a forgiving person. If you admit your mistakes, I will reward you with kisses. But if you refuse to acknowledge your wrongdoing, I will punish you accordingly. So, have you realized your mistake, Ceddy?"

"Yes, I was wrong," Cedrick replied in an aggrieved manner.

"How so?"

"I doubted you instead of trusting you."

"Are you still going to take off my pants?"

Cedrick shook his head obediently.

"Good boy."

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Gwendolyn was satisfied. Despite appearing calm on the outside, she was laughing hysterically on the inside.

It's so fun bullying Ceddy when he's sick! Gwendolyn loved it.

Then, fulfilling her promise to him just now, she leaned down and kissed his lips.

Their tongues entwined in a passionate kiss.

Unable to resist, Cedrick could feel himself becoming lost in her kiss.

His mind was clouded by her presence, and he couldn't think straight and figure out whether he was being manipulated.

As his breathing grew more rapid, he felt aroused.

However, just as his hands began to wander, Gwendolyn promptly ended the kiss before he could go any further.

“Gweny...”

Cedrick felt unsatisfied.

He wanted her right now, but she wouldn't allow him to.

What an awful feeling!

Gwendolyn could tell what he was thinking from his gaze. “No! This is for your health. Once you're better, you can do whatever you want.”

Cedrick lowered his gaze and didn't reply.

I will never get better, will I? Does it mean that I have to live the rest of my life in abstinence?

"I'd rather you let me indulge in bodily pleasures before I die. At least that way, I can die of bliss." Otherwise, I will have to suffer from abstinence!

Gwendolyn's expression suddenly turned serious as she pinched Cedrick's cheeks, though without applying much force. "You're not allowed to mention anything about death from now on! As long as I'm here, you're not allowed to give up hope. Do you understand me?" she said sternly.

"Okay..." Cedrick replied half-heartedly because he knew his body's condition most clearly. However, he didn't want Gwendolyn to worry about him.

Sensing the lack of sincerity in his voice, she pinched his face harder. "I didn't hear you clearly. Louder!"

"Okay."

Only then did Gwendolyn let go of his cheeks before rubbing them gently.

Her mind drifted away as she recalled her earlier encounter with Charles.

While she was unsure of the truthfulness of his words, it was the only breakthrough she had so far. She had no other option than to believe Charles, at least for now.

However, if he was telling the truth, should I agree to his remaining two conditions?

The more she thought about it, the more complicated she found the situation to be.

Cupping his face with her hands, she spoke seriously, hoping that it could avoid any unnecessary misunderstandings between her and Cedrick in the future. "Ceddy, we should trust each other the most. -So, from now on, you have to trust me unconditionally no matter what happens. Believe in my feelings

for you. Can you promise me that?"

Cedrick nodded without hesitation as he locked eyes with her. "I promise."

Smiling contentedly, she pressed a kiss to his forehead. "Have you taken your medicine tonight?"

Cedrick immediately frowned as he shook his head.

"Be good. Wait for me."

Gwendolyn disengaged herself from him and got down from the bed. Then, she left the room.

A minute later, she returned with a glass of warm water and Cedrick's box of medicine.

Cedrick's eyes darkened. As he watched Gwendolyn popping out more than a dozen colorful pills, the corner of his mouth twitched with disdain.

He didn't like the bitter taste of the medicines, not to mention that they didn't help much anyway.

"I'm still full and don't feel like drinking water. How about I eat my medicine later?"

Recognizing his intention to avoid taking the medicine, Gwendolyn stood her ground and extended her hand forward. With a determined look in her eyes, she coaxed, "Be good and take the medicine."

Cedrick shook his head and encircled her waist, nuzzling against her chest as he murmured, "I really don't

want to take them...”

Gwendolyn felt frustrated because Cedrick was disregarding his own health and acting like a child.

“You have to eat them!” Gwendolyn warned sternly.

Cedrick tightened his arms around her waist upon hearing that.

Having been scolded, he lifted his face and stared at her with woeful eyes. His complexion was pale and feeble, which made him look more vulnerable than ever.

Gwendolyn sighed.

She seemed to be far less skillful in acting pitiful when compared to Cedrick.

Gwendolyn closed her eyes and took a deep breath to suppress the urge to tie him up and stuff the pills into his mouth.

She had to keep reminding herself that he was a patient now.

Be gentle! Be patient! Let him have his way!

Smiling, she calmed herself down and asked, “How can I get you to take your medicine then, Ceddy?”

Cedrick thought about it for a while. Then, pinning her with an innocent gaze, he replied, “I want you to feed me.”

“Okay, I’m fine with that. Come, I’ll feed you. Let’s start by having a sip of water first.”

However, frowning and shaking his head, Cedrick dodged to the side and refused to drink the water she offered him.

Gwendolyn gripped the glass tightly and reminded herself again. Patience!

“Still not eating? How do you want me to feed you then?”

Cedrick’s lips curled up in a wicked smile as he replied, “You’re not being sincere. Feed me with your mouth.”

What?