Married to the Limped Prince, She Becomes the Billionaire's Sweet Wife

Chapter 31: I'm Dying to Pry Into His Heart

Her hand hung frozen in mid-air.

For a long while, the man before her made no move.

It wasn't that Adam Sinclair was refusing Ashley Bowen's toast.

As he studied the young woman, he began searching his memory for her.

'They've definitely met somewhere before!' The scene came to an awkward standstill.

Until a large hand shot out and grabbed the glass.

"I'll make the toast for her!" Ashley Bowen whirled around to see Yuri Sinclair arriving like a godsend.

His expression was stern, but it only made him look more handsome.

'I was about to die of embarrassment!' Just moments ago, she'd been worrying about how to salvage the situation, and his appearance was an undeniable rescue.

Although Yuri Sinclair was half a head shorter than everyone else in his wheelchair, he raised his glass before Adam Sinclair and his wife.

Adam Sinclair and Claire Sutton clinked glasses with Yuri.

The red wine swirled into beautiful ripples inside the glasses as the three of them tilted their heads back and drank.

A smile lit up Adam's face.

He opened his mouth, about to strike up a conversation with Yuri, but Yuri just shoved the empty glass into Morgan Sinclair's hand, grabbed Ashley Bowen, and turned away.

"Your Highness, the reception isn't over..." Ashley Bowen said faintly.

"You'd rather stay here and let people mock you?" Yuri snapped, turning back with a cold, dark face.

His eyes were as icy as a hawk's.

He gripped Ashley's hand tightly as he maneuvered his wheelchair, leaving quickly.

"I..." Ashley stammered.

'It's true, I can't stay here and be humiliated.

But I just wanted a few more glimpses of the First Prince.' Staring at the large hand pulling her along, Ashley Bowen's heart began to hammer in her chest.

She suddenly grew nervous, remembering what Morgan Sinclair had said that morning.

"The one who slept with you wasn't me!

It was Yuri!" She practically had to run to keep up with his wheelchair's path to the elevator.

He seemed furious, propelling the chair forward at a breakneck pace.

The moment they were in the elevator, Yuri suddenly released her hand.

In that instant, it was as if they were strangers again.

They were supposed to be husband and wife, yet every time Ashley felt they were getting closer, Yuri would shatter the feeling, bringing it to an abrupt end.

"Dirty." Yuri pulled a handkerchief from his suit pocket and tossed it into Ashley's hands.

Ashley clutched at her dress, assuming she'd spilled red wine on herself and earned the disgust of this germaphobe.

She furtively turned away, lifted her hand, and examined it again and again, but found it was perfectly clean.

"Stay away from Morgan Sinclair.

He's not someone you can afford to play with," Yuri's cold voice sounded from behind her.

Ashley stopped wiping her hands.

She frowned.

'Could the Third Prince be jealous?

But the Second Prince was the one holding my hand earlier.' Uh.

She stole a glance at Yuri leaning against the glass wall, then quickly turned back around.

“Oh, okay,” she answered.

The elevator suddenly chimed with a DING.

Ashley leaped out like a startled rabbit, then turned back with a smile.

“Your Highness, I can get home by myself.

You don’t need to see me out, since it’s inconvenient for you.” With that, she bolted, terrified Yuri would reprimand her.

She went through security, same as when she had arrived.

Watching the guard remove the tracking device from her, Ashley let out a long sigh of relief.

‘It looks like Morgan Sinclair wasn’t lying.

This really isn’t a place you can just come and go as you please.’ When she reached the main gate, her spirits sank.

She had a terrible sense of direction—she could get lost even with a map app open.

‘Where am I?

How do I get home?’ She miserably opened her wallet.

There was only about fifty yuan inside.

Ashley sighed and tried to connect to her mobile data, but she couldn’t get a signal.

She’d planned on paying for a ride with Alipay, but it looked like that was out of the question now.

Chapter 32: If His Kindness Wasn't an Illusion

Ashley Bowen’s feet felt like they were made of lead.

She glanced back pitifully at the glass elevator.

‘I never should have acted tough and said I’d leave on my own,’ she thought, ‘I should have just insisted Yuri Sinclair find someone to pick me up!’ Kicking herself, Ashley Bowen opened her phone’s contact list, only to find she didn’t have contact information for a single person from the Sinclair family.

‘I’ve been married to Yuri Sinclair for over a month, and I don’t even have my own husband’s contact information…’ ‘Not a single one!’ Ashley Bowen was on the verge of a breakdown.

After scrolling through her contacts several times, Ashley Bowen finally dialed Jane Warren’s number.

But before the call connected, she heard a car horn go BEEP BEEP.

She whirled around to see a sleek, black SUV pull into view.

Yuri Sinclair, sitting in the back, rolled down the window and waved.

“Your Highness…” Ashley Bowen cried out in surprise, quickly climbing into the back seat.

“Your Highness, I really can get home on my own.

The reception isn’t over yet.

You shouldn’t leave, should you?” Yuri Sinclair leaned his head on his hand, his elbow resting on the windowsill.

He recalled the adorably clueless expression on Ashley Bowen’s face moments ago, and the corner of his mouth lifted into a smirk.

“Such a good citizen, are you?

So concerned with my affairs?” “No, I’m thinking of the Sinclair family’s reputation…” Ashley Bowen bit her lip, stumbling over her words for a moment before continuing, “Why don’t you have Butler Osborne come get me?

Or you could give me a hundred bucks and I’ll take a cab.

It’s just…

I don’t know the name of the place where we live…” ‘That fox Ryan Osborne said that everything concerning the Sinclair family must be kept strictly confidential.’ That was why, to this day, Ashley Bowen still didn’t know the address of their villa in the mountains.

“I’ll have Osborne pick you up,” Yuri Sinclair said nonchalantly, raising his hand.

“Aaron, find a place to drop the Imperial Concubine off.” Aaron pulled over in front of an upscale coffee shop.

“Go to Room 201.

This is a VIP card.

Get something to eat and wait there.” “Okay, thank you, Your Highness.” Ashley Bowen smiled as she took the VIP card.

She got out of the car and walked briskly into the coffee shop.

“Right this way, miss.” The server said politely to Ashley Bowen after swiping the VIP card.

Ashley Bowen glanced back and noticed that Yuri Sinclair’s car hadn’t driven off yet; it was still parked at the curb.

She pointed to a window seat and asked, “Can I sit there?” The server was taken aback for a moment, then immediately beamed.

“Of course.” Grinning, Ashley Bowen went over to the window seat, waved at the person outside, and made a funny face.

The man in the car gave a small smile, put his sunglasses back on, and rolled up the window.

Ashley Bowen froze when she saw his smile.

It was the first time she had ever seen him do it.

Whether on TV or in the few days she’d known him, his expression had always been cold and unfeeling.

‘At one point, I actually thought he was incapable of smiling…’ ‘A person as physically perfect as him,’ Ashley Bowen had always thought, ‘must be perfect on the inside, too.’ ‘His cold indifference made him seem unreal, like something untouchable.’ ‘But that smile…

it was as if it had punched a hole in that illusion.

A hole I could maybe see his heart through…’ After about half an hour, Ryan Osborne arrived.

He frowned when he got out of the car and saw Ashley Bowen sitting by the window, leisurely reading a book.

‘Yuri Sinclair comes to this coffee shop often,’ he thought, ‘but he’s never brought Claire Sutton here.

And yet, surprisingly, he sent Ashley Bowen over.’ “Imperial Concubine, shall we head back?” Ashley Bowen put down her book.

Seeing that it was Ryan Osborne, she smiled at him.

“Thank you for coming, Butler Osborne.

You got here in a flash!”

Chapter 33: You Dare to Mess With My Woman

Ryan Osborne forced a smile.

“Of course.

When His Highness gives an order, I’ll rush over immediately, no matter who I’m picking up.” Ashley Bowen closed her book and patted Ryan Osborne on the chest, deliberately being contrary.

“So honest, Head Steward Osborne.

Though, I would have been happier if you’d said you rushed over just for me.

But since you say it’s your duty, my conscience is clear.

It’s only natural for you to be tired.

It’s work, after all.

What job isn’t tiring, right?” “Yes...” Ryan Osborne said through gritted teeth, his head lowered.

The car sped wildly down the road, and Ashley Bowen’s stomach churned violently once again.

She almost threw up all over the inside of the car.

‘That damn Ryan Osborne!

He’s doing this on purpose!’ “Imperial Concubine, it seems you aren’t suited for such high-end luxury cars.” The car stopped outside the villa, and Ashley Bowen bolted out.

She leaned against a large tree and began to vomit violently.

Ryan Osborne’s infuriating voice rang out.

Ashley Bowen looked up and shot him a fierce glare before yanking the handkerchief from his jacket pocket and haphazardly wiping her mouth.

‘This despicable lackey...

I’ll get him back for this sooner or later!’ Hmph!

Ashley Bowen shoved the used handkerchief back into Ryan Osborne’s hand and made a mocking face.

“Thanks for the handkerchief.” With that, she skipped toward the villa with an exceptionally light gait.

Just as she walked in the door, her phone buzzed.

It was a text message from an unknown number that read: Made it yet?

Ashley Bowen replied without a second thought: I’m here.

Don’t worry.

She added a cute smiley face emoji at the end.

‘I didn’t expect the Second Highness to be so thoughtful.’ Ashley Bowen smiled to herself.

But on second thought, a wave of sadness washed over her.

Dragging her exhausted body toward her room, Ashley Bowen pushed open the door and jumped in shock.

The room looked as if it had been completely renovated.

Aside from the furniture, everything else was gone!

“Head Steward Osborne, where are my things?” Ashley Bowen practically screamed.

“This time of year, willow catkins are flying everywhere.

This morning, I instructed the staff to do a deep cleaning.

Seeing that the Imperial Concubine's room was full of junk, I ordered it all to be thrown away.

You know, His Highness can't stand being contaminated by such filthy things." Ryan Osborne drawled as he slowly ascended the stairs, stopping in the hallway to answer her.

His posture was the very picture of deference.

But his words nearly made Ashley Bowen explode with rage.

"What?

Junk?

You tell me, what 'junk'?!

You threw it all away?

Where did you throw it?" "In the trash cans by the gate," Ryan Osborne said, pointing casually.

Without a second thought, Ashley Bowen bolted from the room and pounded down the stairs.

She could stand to lose anything else, but not her notebooks for the graduate school entrance exams.

They represented years of her life's work; those notes were her everything!

"My apologies, Imperial Concubine, but the garbage truck already came this morning.

I'm afraid your...

scraps...

are gone for good," Ryan Osborne said with a gentle smile, having followed her downstairs.

Ashley Bowen slowly straightened up, her hands clenched into tight fists.

She stood frozen for a moment before her hands relaxed.

She turned and walked back toward the second floor.

Ryan Osborne smirked in triumph and snorted.

‘Trying to fight me?

You’re still too green!’ Having lost her most treasured possessions, Ashley Bowen was in a terrible mood for the rest of the day.

She sat in the empty room, her back against the wall, hugging her knees as she sobbed uncontrollably for a long time.

Many people had warned her that life in a wealthy, powerful family wasn’t as glamorous as it appeared.

Thinking about everything she had endured over the past few days, Ashley Bowen couldn’t stop the tears of grievance from falling.

Chapter 34: He Appears When She Cries

She hadn’t eaten lunch, and no one had come to call for her.

Stomach rumbling, Ashley Bowen wiped at her tears, feeling more and more wronged the more she thought about things.

Yuri Sinclair’s coldness, the butler’s harassment, Morgan Sinclair’s deliberate torment, Claire Sutton looking down on her, and the man she loved most marrying someone else—it all broke Ashley Bowen’s heart.

Just as Ashley Bowen was sniffling, the door swung open.

She looked up to see Yuri Sinclair wheeling himself into the room.

“Your Highness...” Ashley Bowen’s eyes were bright red, and her voice was choked with sobs.

Yuri Sinclair wheeled his chair in front of Ashley Bowen.

He reached out and pulled her to her feet, his tone cold.

“I called you.

Why didn’t you answer?” Ashley Bowen shook her head in a daze.

She pulled her phone out of her pocket, unlocked it, and saw that she did, in fact, have a missed call.

“You... you were looking for me, Your Highness?

What... what for...” Yuri Sinclair’s expression was icy.

He glanced at the ‘Unknown Caller’ ID on Ashley Bowen’s phone and frowned.

“You don’t have my number?” “Well...” Ashley Bowen fidgeted with her fingers, wondering how to answer.

‘What if he gets angry if I tell the truth?’ “I... don’t...” Ashley Bowen finally stammered, sneaking a peek at Yuri Sinclair’s face.

Yuri Sinclair said nothing.

He wheeled himself out of the room.

Seeing Ashley Bowen still frozen in place, he glanced back and said coolly, “Come on.

I have something to show you.” Ashley Bowen quickly wiped her tear-streaked face.

Aaron was waiting in the hallway.

When Ashley Bowen emerged, he started pushing Yuri Sinclair’s wheelchair downstairs.

Ashley Bowen trotted after them down the stairs.

‘What could it be that was so mysterious?’ Her heart pounded relentlessly.

When she saw the first-floor hall crowded with the household staff, a sense of dread washed over Ashley Bowen.

At the head of the group stood Ryan Osborne, his face ashen.

He looked like a child who had been caught misbehaving, his eyes red-rimmed.

The other servants stood in dead silence, holding their breath.

‘What happened?

This looks serious.’ A knot of fear tightened in Ashley Bowen’s stomach, and she instinctively slowed her pace.

As she followed Yuri Sinclair toward the sofa, she stopped dead in her tracks.

‘My laptop!’ She lunged for the coffee table.

Ashley Bowen’s eyes shone as she picked up her laptop, kissing it lovingly.

A smile bloomed on her face like a flower.

“My laptop!

How on earth did you find it?” Ashley Bowen turned to look up at the man in the wheelchair.

Yuri Sinclair’s expression was grim.

He tapped his fingers intermittently against the coffee table, each tap seeming to mark a new thought.

Suddenly, his gaze fell on Ryan Osborne.

“Pack your bags,” he said coldly.

“I want you gone by tonight.” “Your Highness, I was wrong!

I truly was!

I never should have made things so difficult for the Imperial Concubine, or thrown her belongings in the trash.” With a THUD, Ryan Osborne dropped to his knees.

For the first time, his usually stoic face was twisted in an expression of terror and grief.

But Yuri Sinclair was resolute.

His expression remained frigid.

“Know your place.” Ryan Osborne shuffled forward on his knees to grab Yuri Sinclair’s leg.

“I have served the Sinclair family with utmost dedication for eight years,” he pleaded.

“Your Highness, even if I have no great merits to my name, please consider my years of toil...” “It is precisely because of your toil that I have indulged you time and time again.

She,” he paused, “is my wife.

When you give her trouble, you give me trouble.

Are you not clear on that?” Suddenly, Yuri Sinclair leaned down, his gaze fixed on Ryan Osborne with savage intensity.

Chapter 35: Are You Really Doing This for My Own Good

Ashley Bowen clutched her notebook, not daring to make a sound.

Yuri Sinclair was like a furious lion right now.

After a moment of confusion, it dawned on Ashley Bowen.

‘He did all of this for me, didn’t he?’ ‘Firing someone who had served him for eight years, all for my sake...

was it really worth it?’ Ashley Bowen began to feel guilty and quickly spoke up.

“Third Highness, I think he knows he was wrong.

Can you please forgive him?” As if granted a last-minute reprieve, Ryan Osborne shuffled on his knees to Ashley Bowen’s side and nodded vigorously.

“The Imperial Concubine is right!

I know I was wrong.

I really do.” “Ashley Bowen, don’t forget who the master of this house is!” Yuri Sinclair’s expression darkened instantly.

He ordered the man beside him, “Aaron, help me leave.” That evening, Ryan Osborne packed his bags and left the villa.

Ashley Bowen stood in the courtyard, sighing as she watched Ryan Osborne leave.

‘He got rid of someone who served him for so long, all because of me.

It’s probably going to be difficult to find a replacement who’s as considerate, huh?’ But then she recalled Yuri Sinclair’s final, cold and fierce expression, and she shook her head.

‘I really thought he was standing up for me, but in the end, even my pleas were useless.’ ‘Oh, Yuri Sinclair...

what kind of person are you?

Why can’t I seem to figure you out?’ “Imperial Concubine, it’s getting late.

You should go upstairs and rest.” Holly Underwood came out of the villa and stopped behind Ashley Bowen.

Ashley Bowen turned to see it was the girl from before and smiled.

“Okay, I’ll head up to rest now.” “From now on, I will be the housekeeper of this villa.

Imperial Concubine, please don’t mind me if I’m a bit clumsy.” Holly Underwood lowered her head with a touch of girlish shyness.

“Not at all!

I’m pretty low-maintenance myself, definitely not the picky type,” Ashley Bowen quickly explained, afraid that the incident with Ryan Osborne would affect how the other servants saw her.

But to her surprise, Holly Underwood’s smile only widened.

“Imperial Concubine, you have such a good heart.

I knew you weren’t that kind of person.” “Hehe, you’re making me blush.” Ashley Bowen scratched her head and started walking toward the villa.

Holly Underwood frowned slightly and called out to Ashley Bowen’s back, “Imperial Concubine, His Highness actually cares about you a great deal.

You have to be patient.

You have to wait for him.” Ashley Bowen stopped in her tracks.

A brilliant smile bloomed on her face as she turned back.

“Don’t worry, I will.” TAP-TAP-TAP.

She hurried up to the second floor.

Ashley Bowen decided to go and say “good night” to Yuri Sinclair.

‘I don’t even know why I feel like I have to do this,’ she thought.

‘Maybe Holly Underwood’s words really moved me?’ She went into Yuri Sinclair’s room, but he wasn’t there.

‘He’s probably busy in the study,’ she figured.

Ashley Bowen shook her head, feeling a little ridiculous.

‘Oh well.

Since he isn’t here, I won’t be so forward as to seek him out just to say good night.’ With that, she headed back to her own room.

Her things had all been recovered and returned, so the room was full once again.

The sight lifted her spirits immensely.

She opened her diary and recorded the day’s events.

Her last sentence was a note of thanks to Yuri Sinclair.

—Thank you, Yuri Sinclair, for getting my notebook back for me, regardless of whether your intentions were genuine or not.

Ashley Bowen stretched.

After a moment’s thought, she got up and headed downstairs to the kitchen.

Half an hour later, she quietly arrived at the door to Yuri Sinclair’s study, carrying a plate of pastries she had just made.

A faint sliver of light seeped from under the door, and the room within was completely silent.

Chapter 36: Currying Favor with Him

Ashley Bowen knocked as softly as she could, but the sound still broke the silence.

“Come in.” The voice from inside sounded somewhat impatient.

Ashley Bowen pushed open the door and playfully stuck out her tongue.

She saw Yuri Sinclair sitting at his desk, rubbing his head as if wrestling with a difficult problem.

“Um...

Your Highness, I made you some pastries.

Are you hungry?” Ashley Bowen brought the dish over, smiling cheekily at Yuri Sinclair.

Yuri Sinclair glanced at the oddly-shaped pastries, then looked away.

“It’s a rule in the Sinclair family that we don’t eat anything after dinner.

Ryan Osborne told you that, didn’t he?” The mention of Ryan Osborne seemed to make him reconsider.

Yuri Sinclair turned back, picked up the fork and knife from the plate, and put a small piece of the pastry into his mouth.

Ashley Bowen watched his thin, sexy lips move as he chewed.

Only after his Adam’s apple bobbed did she ask expectantly, “So?

How is it?

Is it good?” “It’s disgusting!

Take it away!” But Yuri Sinclair suddenly threw down his utensils and shoved the plate away, leaving Ashley Bowen frozen in embarrassed shock.

‘Her pastries might have looked a little ugly, but did they really deserve such contempt?’ Ashley Bowen ground her teeth, cursing Yuri Sinclair in her head, but her face was still plastered with an eager-to-please smile.

“Your Highness, don’t you have a headache?

Let me give you a massage!

You know, my first part-time job in college was giving massages at a parlor for the blind!” Realizing she might have gone a bit overboard with her lie, Ashley Bowen quickly shut her mouth.

She strode behind Yuri Sinclair, rolled up her sleeves, and got ready to rub his head.

“I’m fine now.

You should go back and get some rest,” Yuri Sinclair said impatiently, waving a dismissive hand.

But Ashley Bowen was persistent.

After all, Yuri Sinclair had helped her get rid of that insolent servant.

She had to express her gratitude somehow.

“Oh, it’s no trouble.

Your Highness, just relax.

Relax.” Ashley Bowen’s hands immediately found the right spots, and she began to massage his head.

Yuri Sinclair had thought Ashley Bowen was just talking big, but to his surprise, she was actually pretty good.

Feeling the aching pressure in his head give way to a wave of relief, Yuri Sinclair decided to just close his eyes.

‘He really had been stressed lately—worried about his older brother and Claire, worried about the matter of the Crown Prince’s succession.’ “Your Highness, I can massage legs, too.

It’s very relaxing,” Ashley Bowen volunteered after a while, seeing that he seemed to be enjoying it.

‘In truth, she had always been curious.

What was the deal with Yuri Sinclair’s legs?

How had they gotten that way?’ “It’s getting late.

Go back now.” Yuri Sinclair grabbed Ashley Bowen’s hand.

His piercingly cold eyes stared at her until she felt a chill run through her, and his tone was equally frigid.

“Alright.” Ashley Bowen conceded.

She was terrified of making Yuri Sinclair angry, so she planned to just give him a bow and leave.

Unexpectedly, however, as she straightened up from her bow, her vision suddenly blurred.

Losing her balance, she stumbled forward and fell right into Yuri Sinclair’s arms.

‘She swore, she absolutely hadn’t done it on purpose.

This time, it was truly a coincidence.

She had low blood sugar, and things like this would happen if she stood up too suddenly after crouching down.’ But in Yuri Sinclair’s eyes, all of this was a deliberate act of seduction—a game of playing hard to get.

“Ashley Bowen, you’ve been so eager to please all evening.

What is it you’re really after?” Suddenly, Yuri Sinclair’s fingers clamped around her chin.

Ashley Bowen was sprawled across Yuri Sinclair’s lap, her chin caught in his grip.

She winced, her brows furrowing in pain.

Chapter 37: Courting Death

“We’re husband and wife.

I really just came to check on my husband, that’s all.” “Really?” A playful smile tugged at the corner of Yuri Sinclair’s lips.

“Really!” Ashley Bowen raised her hand as if to swear an oath, but as she moved, she realized she was completely stuck.

‘Her jacket zipper was caught on something!’ “Get up.

Stop playing dead!” Yuri Sinclair patted her, seeing she was still sprawled on top of him.

But Ashley Bowen just looked embarrassed and awkward, pointing at her zipper.

When she’d tried to get up, her jacket zipper had slid all the way down, leaving the front wide open and revealing the modest tank top she wore underneath.

‘Her face flushed crimson.

Thank God she was wearing something underneath.

Otherwise, it would have been just like that time in the bathroom—utterly mortifying.’ ‘So embarrassing.

Why do I keep getting into these ridiculous situations with Yuri Sinclair?

It would be impossible for him *not* to misunderstand.’ “Your Highness, could you maybe give it a tug?” Ashley Bowen chuckled sheepishly, pointing to where they were seamlessly connected—right at the zipper of Yuri Sinclair’s dress pants... Their zippers were hooked together.

The culprit was Ashley Bowen’s zipper pull; half of it had broken off, turning it into a sharp hook that was now dug firmly into Yuri Sinclair’s fly.

“Ashley Bowen, don’t tell me this wasn’t on purpose too!” Yuri Sinclair’s furious eyes smoldered with rage.

Ashley Bowen could only manage an awkward laugh.

“It really wasn’t!

If Your Highness won’t pull it, then I will.” With that, Ashley Bowen’s hand shot out toward Yuri Sinclair’s crotch.

Her hand was only halfway there when Yuri Sinclair slapped it away.

“Ashley Bowen, do you have any idea how much you’re pissing me off?

The consequences will be severe.” Yuri Sinclair gripped her fidgeting hand tightly, his voice a low, threatening growl.

Ashley Bowen blinked.

Of course she knew offending Yuri Sinclair never ended well.

She remembered someone who had served him for eight years, only to be fired on a whim.

“Your Highness, I was wrong,” Ashley Bowen pouted.

“So, what should we do?

I’ll do whatever you say.” She went completely still, leaving the next move up to him.

With such a delicate beauty in his arms, and in such a compromising position, any man would have a physical reaction.

‘Yuri Sinclair was now certain of it: this little minx was trying to seduce him on purpose.’
“Since you’re so eager to seduce me, why don’t we just seal the deal tonight?” With that, a large hand swept out and pulled Ashley Bowen flush against him.

“Your Highness, I’m really not—” Ashley Bowen struggled frantically.

It would have been better if she’d stayed still, but she moved with too much force and shot straight to her feet.

A loud RIIIP!

echoed through the air.

Ashley Bowen froze, completely dumbfounded.

Yuri Sinclair's dress pants had ripped open right at the crotch, revealing the black boxer briefs he wore underneath.

A glance down at her jacket revealed the zipper from Yuri Sinclair's pants, still hooked onto hers... 'Now, even if she claimed it was an accident, no one would ever believe her.' Ashley Bowen risked a glance down at the damage, and her heart immediately began to pound as her face burned red.

That one glance was all it took to make her palms break out in a cold sweat.

"Had your fill?" Yuri Sinclair's gaze was glacial.

He made no move to cover himself, simply letting Ashley Bowen turn away in shame.

"I didn't see anything!

Really," Ashley Bowen lied, covering her burning face and bolting out of the room as if her life depended on it.

Her heart was still pounding wildly—THUMP, THUMP, THUMP—long after she had made it back to her room and slammed the door shut.

Chapter 38: Inevitable Accidents

But the scene from a moment ago was impossible to shake, replaying over and over in her mind.

'Ashley Bowen!

You have a crush on His Highness, so how can you be distracted by some other good-looking guy?' she chided herself.

Annoyed, she cupped her face and headed for the bathroom.

'I need to splash some cold water on my face!' 「Yuri Sinclair's Study」 Gazing at the snacks still on his desk, and then at the tear in his pant leg, Yuri Sinclair found himself smiling.

'This girl...

Is she really not trying to seduce me on purpose?' After a cold shower, Ashley Bowen wrapped herself in a bath towel and dove straight into bed.

She rolled over, ready to fall into a deep sleep, when her phone suddenly chimed with a DING.

She unlocked her phone and saw a text from the unknown number from earlier that day: Asleep yet?

Without a second thought, Ashley Bowen rolled onto her stomach and typed out a reply: Going to sleep now!

Then she added a smiley face.

Her fingers deftly saved the unknown number to her contacts, assigning it a name: Yuri Sinclair!

She slept soundly that night.

When Ashley Bowen woke up the next morning, she found she had taken over the entire bed, having slept very peacefully.

After quickly washing up, Ashley Bowen came downstairs to find Holly Underwood and a line of maids waiting to greet her with bright smiles.

“Good morning, Imperial Concubine.” Ashley Bowen froze for a moment.

Something was different today, but what?

‘That’s it!

Ryan Osborne’s annoying face is gone!’ “His Highness has given an order,” Holly Underwood said with a smile.

“From now on, the Imperial Concubine’s meals no longer need to follow the Sinclair family’s rules.

You are also free to have snacks whenever you wish.” “Really?

Really?

Really?” After repeating the important question three times, Ashley Bowen practically leaped into the air, pouncing into Holly Underwood’s arms like a kitten.

After a delicious and filling breakfast, Ashley Bowen packed her bag, ready to head to the school library to study.

Walsh was already waiting for her outside.

Holly Underwood smiled.

“Leo and Walsh are both family drivers, but His Highness gave special instructions.

From now on, Walsh will serve only you, the Imperial Concubine." "Uh..." 'When happiness comes this fast, it's really hard to take it all in!' Ashley Bowen couldn't resist giving Holly Underwood several pecks on the cheek before slipping into the car like a nimble eel.

The ride was incredibly smooth and comfortable.

Ashley Bowen took a short nap and woke up just as they arrived at the school library.

"Thanks, Mr.

Walsh, I'm off!" Waving, Ashley Bowen skipped toward the library.

She had only gone up a few steps when she felt a tug on her backpack.

"Well now, little lady.

So diligent with your studies." 'That's the classic line of a street punk trying to hit on a girl!' Ashley Bowen bared her teeth and clenched her small fists.

In a flash, she spun around and slammed a punch right into the person's face.

"What the hell!

You actually hit my face?

Do you have any idea how many women would kill you if you damaged this face?" Morgan Sinclair demanded, clutching his cheek with a pained frown.

Realizing she'd hit the wrong person, Ashley Bowen stuck out her tongue.

"Well, who told you to sneak up on me?" "Sneak up on you?

What the hell!

It's obvious you've never been hit on by a handsome guy before, haven't you?

You're such a hick!" Morgan Sinclair glared at Ashley Bowen, his eyes full of resentment.

Ashley Bowen scratched her head.

"Should I take you inside and get you some ice for that?" 'He really is a delicate prince,' she thought.

'To think my little fist could actually leave him bruised and swollen...' "Your Highness, I've delivered the Imperial Concubine safely to the school.

However, she's with the Second Highness right now." Inside the car, Walsh reported to the person on the other end of the phone, his eyes on the scene unfolding not far away.

Chapter 39: This Second Highness Is So Annoying

In the lobby of the library's basement floor, Ashley Bowen walked toward Morgan Sinclair, holding two bags of ice cream bars.

Morgan Sinclair, who had been covering his face, looked up at Ashley Bowen and shot up, exasperated.

"You're not actually going to use these to ice my face, are you?" "Um, well..." Ashley Bowen looked down at her fingers.

"If you don't want it, I'll just eat it..." Morgan Sinclair rolled his eyes, snatched an ice cream bar, and pressed it to his face.

"You can have the other one," he said through gritted teeth.

"Thank you, Your Highness!" Ashley Bowen's head snapped up, her eyes sparkling.

She quickly tore open the wrapper, popped the ice cream bar into her mouth, and was instantly hit with a wave of coolness.

'So refreshing.' Morgan Sinclair didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

'Should I call this girl silly or cute?' "I'm going to go study.

If you're not coming, Your Highness, then I'll see you later." Having finished her ice cream bar, Ashley Bowen tightened the straps of her backpack.

Morgan Sinclair slapped his thigh.

"I almost forgot the important thing!

The old man is treating everyone to dinner tomorrow.

You should come too.

I'll drive over and pick you up." 'The old man?' Ashley Bowen thought of the country's Emperor, a man she had only ever seen in newspapers and on television, and her brows furrowed.

“I’m not going!” “Why not?

You’ve seen my dad before.

He’s the old guy who gave the speech at the reception yesterday.” Morgan Sinclair quickly stood up and blocked Ashley Bowen’s path.

Ashley Bowen looked back over her shoulder at his outstretched arm and shot him a fierce glare.

“You have the nerve to bring up yesterday?

It was all your fault I was so embarrassed in front of the First Prince and the Imperial Concubine.

This is all on you!” “You should be thanking me.

If I hadn’t used that to provoke Yuri, how else would he start treating you better?” Morgan Sinclair said with a mysterious smile.

Ashley Bowen scoffed, waving a hand dismissively without looking back.

“See you never!” Time in the library passed quickly.

Ashley Bowen sat motionless in her chair, engrossed in her medical textbooks.

It wasn’t until her phone rang that she finally lifted her focused gaze.

‘Another unknown number…’ ‘Should I answer it or not?’ In the end, Ashley Bowen chose to decline the call.

She glanced at the time on her phone—it was already 6:35 PM!

She quickly gathered the books she hadn’t finished, planning to take them home with her.

Outside the glass doors of the library’s first floor, a light drizzle had started to fall.

It was only then that she realized the call from the unknown number was probably from Walsh.

“Hello, is this Mr.

Walsh?

Where are you?” “So you’ve finally deigned to answer your phone?” The voice on the other end was icy, yet sounded incredibly familiar.

It was as if the person was right beside her.

Ashley Bowen's head snapped up.

Outside the glass window, a handsome man sat in a wheelchair in the rain.

Behind him, Aaron stood motionless, holding a large black umbrella.

Rainwater slid down the edge of the umbrella, forming a curtain of falling drops that encircled the two of them.

They looked as if they had been waiting there for a very long time...

"Your...

Highness." Her tongue felt numb, and Ashley Bowen could only stammer out those two words, stunned.

She stood there for a long time, utterly stunned.

'What is the Third Prince doing here?

Did he come all this way just to pick me up?' Ashley Bowen didn't dare to let herself think about it.

'No way!

The person he loves has always been his sister-in-law, Claire Sutton.' After a moment's thought, Ashley Bowen held her backpack over her head and ran toward the large umbrella.

"Your Highness, what are you doing here?" Rain streamed off her backpack and poured down her neck in sheets.

Her clothes felt soaked, and a chill ran through her entire body.

"Why have you been coming to the university so often?" Yuri Sinclair asked coldly.

The muscles on his stern face were taut; he did not look like he was in a good mood.

Chapter 40: Roar in the Rainy Night

Ashley Bowen was soaked, and all she wanted was to duck under the umbrella for cover.

It was the middle of summer break, so there was no reason to be at the university so often, but her situation was different.

“I’m studying for my graduate school entrance exams.

So, of course, I came to the university to study,” Ashley Bowen explained casually.

But her explanation didn’t satisfy Yuri Sinclair.

Yuri Sinclair’s expression darkened even further.

He barely parted his thin lips, forcing out a single word, “Liar!” The word wasn’t spoken with much force, but on this cold, rainy night, it felt like a sharp blade plunging into Ashley Bowen’s heart.

‘I’m not lying!’ Ashley Bowen wanted to argue.

But Yuri Sinclair had already turned his wheelchair around and ordered Aaron, “Get me out of here.” Ashley Bowen scrambled after them, running through the rain to catch up to Yuri.

She grinned and reached for the umbrella in Aaron’s hand.

“Let me hold the umbrella for His Highness.” Yuri Sinclair’s face remained ice-cold.

His gaze was fixed fiercely on Ashley’s small hand.

Aaron’s hand, gripping the umbrella, didn’t dare to move.

Ashley paid him no mind, continuing to smile brazenly.

“Third Highness, did you come here specifically to pick me up?” “What do you think?” Yuri Sinclair said coldly.

He was seething inside.

‘Walsh clearly said my second brother came looking for her, but she’s blatantly lying to my face!’ Of course, Ashley Bowen knew Yuri Sinclair was angry.

But as for why, she couldn’t make heads or tails of it.

Once they were in the car, Ashley grinned and started to brush the raindrops off his clothes.

“Get out,” Yuri Sinclair said coldly.

Ashley Bowen froze.

Her hands, which had been fussing over him, hung in midair.

She blinked her big eyes, looking at him with a pitiful expression.

“Third Highness...” she whispered, sounding utterly wretched.

It was pouring outside.

If she got out now, she’d probably catch a cold.

“Get out.

Don’t make me say it a third time!” Yuri Sinclair tossed the umbrella at her.

This was the first time Ashley had felt Yuri’s true anger.

It was even more terrifying than when he had driven Ryan Osborne away.

‘But why is he so angry all of a sudden?

What did I do wrong?’ “Okay, I’ll get out.

Third Highness, please don’t be angry.

It’s bad for your health.” Ashley Bowen got out, clutching the umbrella.

She stood outside the window and gave a pitiful little wave.

But Yuri Sinclair didn’t even glance at her.

He heartlessly told the driver to go.

A wave of indignation washed over Ashley Bowen.

‘It’s raining so hard...

didn’t he come here specifically to pick me up?

Then why would he just abandon me in the rain?’ ‘They say a woman’s heart is as hard to fathom as a needle in the ocean, but why does it feel like Yuri’s heart is even more unfathomable?’ The handle of the umbrella still faintly smelled of Yuri’s cologne.

Ashley Bowen looked down at her rain-soaked shoes and sighed.

She had no choice but to wait for Walsh to come get her.

Walsh's car didn't arrive until eight o'clock that evening.

Sitting inside, watching the rain drizzle outside the window, Ashley Bowen couldn't muster any enthusiasm.

"His Highness called and told me to come pick you up," Walsh said, rolling down the window.

The mention of a phone call spurred Ashley to action.

She quickly pulled out her own phone and called the contact she had saved for Yuri Sinclair.

Her heart began to pound nervously.

The moment the call connected, Ashley took a deep breath and blurted out in a rush, "Third Highness I was wrong if I made you angry I'm sorry!" She said it all in one breath, without so much as a pause, just so Yuri wouldn't have a chance to object.