Mr. Damien, Your Wife is Toxic

Chapter 41: Sharon Dalton's Stepping Stone

Besides, as Joy Dalton replayed the day's events in her mind, she found them utterly baffling. The more she thought about it, the more unnerved she became, and a chill crept over her. She especially remembered the look in Aurora Sterling's eyes today—that somber gaze that made her shudder was still fresh in her mind.

Joy Dalton couldn't sit still any longer. She ran straight back to her room, pulled out her phone, and quickly dialed a number.

"I was just about to call you." The person on the other end spoke first, before Joy Dalton could say a word.

"Perfect, I have something important to talk to you about too!" Joy Dalton sounded tense. "Aurora Sterling is still alive! She came back, perfectly fine! What in the world is going on? Am I seeing a ghost?"

"That's what I was going to tell you," the person on the other end said in a low voice. "I only found out today when I took my men to the base of the mountain to find the body. We killed the wrong person."

Joy Dalton's eyes flew wide. "What! You really killed the wrong person?!"

"That's right. The body at the base of the mountain wasn't Aurora Sterling's at all. It must have been because it was too dark that night, and we weren't careful when we grabbed her."

A wave of relief washed over Joy Dalton. At least this proved that Aurora Sterling wasn't some malevolent spirit who had come back from the dead to take her life.

But her mood soured just as quickly. "You brought a girl to the mountain, tied up and hooded. Even with the hood on, her build and voice were exactly like Aurora Sterling's, so I believed it was her. I was so excited, I rambled on and on to her about everything and nothing. And in the end? You actually grabbed the wrong person. Now, not only was an innocent life pointlessly lost, but that little bitch Aurora Sterling is still alive! Can you be any more unreliable?!"

The person on the other end was silent for a moment before saying, "This was indeed my mistake. It won't happen again. I'm preparing to find the right time to try again."

"There's no need for that at the moment," Joy Dalton said, flopping languidly onto her bed. "Let her live for now."

“What’s wrong? Didn’t you want her dead so you could get into the Sterling Family? Don’t forget the agreement between us!”

“I haven’t forgotten!” Joy Dalton’s brow furrowed. “It’s just that now, I can get into the Sterling Family without having to kill that girl.”

“Timothy Sterling agreed?”

The thought of what happened today made Joy Dalton feel sick to her stomach. “Yes, he agreed. Although it wasn’t exactly ideal, at least Sharon and I can finally be accepted by the Sterling Family now.”

Hearing Joy Dalton say this, the other person’s tone softened. “In that case, that’s for the best. After you get into the Sterling Family, don’t forget what you promised me. You have to find the ‘Super Virus’.”

“I get it,” Joy Dalton answered dismissively. “It’s just some stupid virus. What’s the big deal? Once I become Mrs. Sterling, I’ll get you anything you want, as long as the family has it!”

“That would be best!”

After ending the call, Joy Dalton sat up, looked at her reflection in the mirror, and finally broke into a smile.

The way she was entering the Sterling Family was different from what she had envisioned, but regardless, she was in. Her ultimate goal had been achieved.

‘As for that little bitch Aurora Sterling, let her live. She’s nothing more than a stupid, incompetent fool. Her presence will only serve to highlight Sharon’s superiority.’

‘Mrs. Sterling is all about appearances. It doesn’t matter that she doesn’t like Sharon now. In the future, once she sees that Sharon is far more promising than Aurora Sterling, she’ll naturally start to value Sharon for the sake of the Sterling Family’s future.’

However, what Joy Dalton didn’t know was that they hadn’t gotten the wrong person that day at all. The former Aurora Sterling really had been thrown off the mountain to her death by her and those men. The Aurora Sterling of today truly was a ghost, returned from the dead to settle the score!

Chapter 42: Knowing Nothing

After a tumultuous afternoon, the Sterling residence finally settled into peace. Mrs. Sterling was getting on in years, and the day’s events had left her quite upset, so she was already resting in her room.

Timothy Sterling had also returned to his room, not even coming out for dinner. After all, he was the Family Head of the Sterling Family, and what happened today could only be described as a huge loss of face.

Aurora Sterling walked alone in the Sterling Family's garden. She couldn't remember the last time she had walked here, who she was with—a servant, her mother, or her sister...

Everything in the garden was so familiar yet so strange. So many years had passed; the garden's scenery had changed in some ways, but some parts remained the same.

Suddenly, a thought struck her, and she excitedly trotted to the back of the house. She remembered playing with her sister by the rockery there when they were little. She wondered if the rockery was still there.

'Great, the rockery is still here!'

Relying on the faint memories in her mind, Aurora Sterling began to climb the rockery, paying no mind to the expensive little pink dress she was wearing—a dress worth two years' salary for an ordinary family.

Damien Valerius and Sean Carter had already searched the Sterling residence thoroughly but had found no trace of the 'Super Virus'.

Just as the two were preparing to leave, they unexpectedly saw Aurora Sterling, right there, climbing the rockery in a dress.

In the shadows, Sean Carter stood by the wall, just about to climb over and leave, when he realized his boss hadn't followed. He glanced back and saw his boss watching Miss Sterling climb the rockery with great interest.

'Hold on, Boss, didn't you say we weren't here to spy on the young lady?'

'So what are you doing right now?'

'And that Miss Sterling... A girl, wearing a dress no less, climbing a rockery just like that. Her movements are so rough, so unladylike.'

As Aurora Sterling climbed higher and higher, her movements grew bolder. She seemed fearless, not at all like the debutante of a wealthy family. Her little skirt was already quite short, and with her movements, the hem kept flipping up.

Damien Valerius's eyes darkened. He snapped at Sean Carter beside him in a cold voice, "Turn around!"

Sean Carter froze, unsure of what was happening. He subconsciously started to look up.

“Don’t look! Turn around!”

Damien Valerius’s voice was cold and menacing, making Sean Carter shiver. He didn’t dare look up now and immediately turned away.

Seeing that Sean Carter had turned away, the grim expression on Damien Valerius’s face eased slightly. “Stay here. Don’t move, and don’t turn back around.”

“Understood,” Sean Carter replied obediently.

With a cold expression, Damien Valerius slowly stepped out from the shadows, his eyes fixed on Aurora Sterling, who was still climbing ever higher.

‘This woman, does she have a brain at all? Climbing in a skirt like that... Isn’t she afraid a man might walk by and see everything underneath?’

The mere thought of another man seeing what was under Aurora Sterling’s skirt made Damien Valerius’s chest tighten with irritation.

The man’s eyes remained fixed on Aurora Sterling, watching her puffy skirt flip up and down with her climbing. Damien Valerius’s gaze gradually darkened, a strange mix of anger and other emotions stirring within him, leaving him deeply agitated.

At that moment, Aurora Sterling was completely unaware of the man below the rockery. Her mind was focused only on climbing. ‘If I remember correctly,’ she thought, ‘that thing should still be in the small hole at the top.’

Chapter 43: What the Heck

The rockery wasn’t very high, so Aurora Sterling quickly scrambled to the top. She recalled how long it had taken her to climb it as a child. ‘I guess I’ve been a troublemaker since I was young,’ she thought.

Spotting the small hole at the top of the rockery, Aurora Sterling excitedly reached in. After fumbling around for a moment, she felt a metal box.

Her eyes lit up as she quickly pulled the box out.

“It really is still here!” Aurora Sterling’s eyes gleamed as she stared at the rusted metal box in her hands.

The box was actually full of candy. Back then, she and her sister were still little, and their love for sweets had given them both cavities. The entire Sterling Family, from Mrs. Sterling down to the household servants, strictly rationed their sugar intake.

Left with no other choice, the sisters had packed all their candy into this metal box and secretly hidden it in the hole at the top of the rockery.

Aurora Sterling also remembered how her sister had been too timid to make the climb. Though she had been afraid herself, she had steeled herself and scrambled up anyway to protect their candy stash. As she climbed, her sister had whispered encouragement from below.

Recalling the scene, Aurora Sterling laughed aloud without even realizing it.

Down below, Damien Valerius quietly watched the girl's sudden, silly laugh. He didn't know what she was laughing about, but he found the sound exceptionally pleasing to the ear. And just like that, he, too, felt the corners of his mouth lift into a smile without realizing it.

Aurora Sterling looked at the heavily rusted metal box, wondering about the condition of the candy inside. 'So many years have passed; they're definitely not edible anymore. But since they've been in a metal box this whole time, they should still be intact, right?'

The girl's attention was entirely focused on opening the rusted metal box, and she neglected to watch her footing. As she strained to pry it open, her foot slipped, and she tumbled down from the rockery.

Ordinarily, with her skills, Aurora Sterling could have easily landed steadily on her feet. But at that exact moment, she suddenly spotted a man standing below the rockery. The shock threw her off, and by the time she could react, she was already plunging downward.

However, Aurora Sterling didn't land on the ground. Instead, she fell straight into the man's arms.

"How could you be so careless?" Damien Valerius's voice was cold, his frosty gaze landing on Aurora Sterling's face.

Aurora Sterling blinked, studying the man before her. She had a phenomenal memory, yet she was also somewhat face-blind; she could almost never remember the faces of people she didn't care to.

The girl cried out in alarm and scrambled out of Damien Valerius's arms. "Who are you! Why are you here?"

"Who am I?" A vein bulged on Damien Valerius's forehead. He felt like a complete joke. 'After all my effort last night, not only did this woman pay me off with a beat-up watch, but now she doesn't even remember who I am.'

The man sneered. "Miss Sterling, you may not remember me, but surely you remember this watch?"

As he spoke, Damien Valerius pulled a watch from his pocket—the one Aurora Sterling had left as her ‘hookup fee’.

Seeing her watch, Aurora Sterling suddenly recalled the events of last night. She stared at Damien Valerius in astonishment. “You’re that handsome male escort?”

Damien Valerius could appreciate the “handsome” part, but what the hell was a “male escort”?!

‘This damn woman, does she really think I sell my body?’

Just then, it sounded like someone was approaching.

Chapter 44: Lovey-dovey

Aurora was horrified. If someone saw her in a compromising position with a male escort and word got out, wouldn’t all her hard work today have been for nothing?

She had only just returned to the Sterling Family today. Aside from Nanny Vaughn and the butler, she had no idea which of the other servants were loyal and which were traitors bought by Joy and Sharon Dalton. Therefore, she absolutely couldn’t give them any ammunition against her right now. Besides, her grandmother’s opinion of her had only just started to improve today; she really couldn’t afford any more trouble.

With this in mind, Aurora quickly grabbed Damien Valerius by the collar and pulled him into the gap between the rockery and the wall.

They stood face to face, squeezed together in the narrow crevice.

A female servant and a male chef from the Sterling Family walked over, one after the other. After looking around to make sure no one was there, the pair chuckled and sat down in front of the rockery, wrapping their arms around each other and getting lovey-dovey.

Hiding behind the rockery, Aurora blinked speechlessly. ‘So they snuck out here for a secret rendezvous.’ She figured they would be all over each other for a while, which meant she’d be stuck here for ages.

A pang of regret hit her. ‘I’m the young miss of the Sterling Family, why am I hiding with this guy? I should have just hidden the male escort. If that couple saw me here, they would have left on their own.’

‘So brainless. But now that I’m already hiding here, if I go out, I’ll walk right in on them. How awkward would that be...’

Damien Valerius watched the expressions flit across Aurora's face, finding it amusing. "What are you thinking about?" he asked.

The moment the words left his mouth, Aurora clamped a hand over it. "Shh!"

Up ahead, the couple suddenly heard the noise. The young maid looked back nervously. "Chef Miller, did you hear that? Could someone be there? Go check behind the rockery."

Hearing this, Aurora's entire body tensed, and she pressed even closer to Damien Valerius.

The soft, fragrant feeling of the girl pressed against him made Damien, whose mouth was still covered, swallow hard. His gaze grew scorching.

Although he had been set up and drugged last night, his mind had remained clear. He remembered every detail of the wonderful time he'd spent with this woman. At the thought, Damien Valerius's eyes grew even more profound.

Aurora, however, was completely focused on how to handle the lovebirds out front. She was worried they would discover her hiding here with a man whose name she didn't even know.

'If they really come over to check, should I knock them out? My close-quarters combat is fast enough. I could probably take them out before they even got a good look at my face.'

'But...' Aurora suddenly realized someone else was with her. She was hiding her abilities on this trip back home and didn't want to expose her skills to anyone unnecessarily. After all, a young girl who looked completely harmless turning out to be an expert in close-quarters combat was hardly an ordinary thing.

Just as Aurora was racking her brain, she heard the man in front of the rockery speak. "There won't be anyone here at this hour. It was probably just a stray cat. Let's not waste time. Hurry up and give me a kiss!"

Chapter 45: Cornered

"No one ever comes here this time of day. It's probably just a stray cat from outside. Let's not waste any more time. Come on, let me hold you!" the chef said, impatiently lunging toward the blushing maid.

Behind the rockery, a dark glint appeared in Damien Valerius's eyes as he locked his gaze on Aurora Sterling's nervous face.

'A stray cat, huh? The description actually fits her quite well.'

In front of the rockery, the young maid dodged the chef's spontaneous embrace with a playful laugh. While putting up a token resistance, she asked, "Chef Miller, were you serious when you said you'd marry me?"

The chef looked at the young maid anxiously. The feeling of being so close yet unable to hold her was torture. "Yes! Of course! Once I've saved up enough money, I'll marry you!"

Hearing this, the young maid's face fell. "You're the head chef for the Sterling Family now; you make good money every month. How long will you have to save? Is there even an end in sight? As long as you haven't saved enough, we can't make our relationship public. I see those new girls making eyes at you all the time, and I don't like it."

The Sterling Family had a strict rule: relationships between staff members were forbidden. If anyone was discovered, both parties would have to leave the Sterling Family. This rule had been established by Mrs. Sterling. In her own words, "The Sterling Family hires you to work, not to fall in love."

Hearing the young maid's plaintive complaint, the chef quickly switched into sweet-talk mode. "None of those girls are as pretty as you. If you ask me, you're the most beautiful person in the entire Sterling Family!"

The young maid blushed. "Don't be silly. How could I possibly be prettier than the Young Miss?"

But the chef swore with conviction, "Of course you're prettier than the Young Miss. You're cuter, gentler, and far more beautiful than her. The Young Miss only just started acting normal today. Wasn't she like a complete lunatic before? Your only misfortune was your family background. If you were born into a wealthy family, you'd be a goddess. The Young Miss couldn't even compare to one of your toenails."

Aurora Sterling...

'Am I really that awful? Not even comparable to a maid's toenail? I know beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but surely I'm not worse than the toenail of the "beauty" in question, am I?'

Damien Valerius, whose mouth was still covered by her hand, also frowned upon hearing the chef's words.

While Aurora Sterling was stewing over the insult, the young maid in front of the rockery was already over the moon, completely won over by the chef's sweet nothings.

Sensing the moment was right, the chef pulled her into his arms. "Let's not waste any more time. I've missed you like crazy!"

This time, the young maid didn’t resist, instead nestling blissfully in her beloved’s embrace. The infatuated couple was separated from Aurora Sterling and Damien Valerius by nothing more than the rockery. Although Aurora and Damien couldn’t see them, they could clearly hear the chef’s occasional whispers of affection and the maid’s bashful giggles.

Aurora Sterling finally relaxed, certain that the couple wouldn’t come any closer. Before long, however, the situation grew awkward. Hearing the couple’s intimate sounds made Aurora feel utterly uncomfortable.

It was only then that she remembered her hand was still clamped over the man’s mouth. What’s more, they were pressed far too close together. Aurora felt as if she could even hear his heartbeat.

Blushing, Aurora Sterling looked at the man and whispered in a deeply awkward tone, “I’m going to let go now, but you can’t make a sound, alright?”

Damien Valerius stared at Aurora Sterling with his deep-set eyes and gave a slight nod.

Chapter 46: Unless They're Sick in the Head

Seeing him nod, Aurora Sterling slowly loosened her slightly sweaty grip. She subconsciously tried to shift back, wanting to put some distance between herself and this man who had appeared out of nowhere. ‘Being pressed this close feels so weird.’

Damien Valerius had already anticipated that she would try to retreat. He shot out a hand, wrapping it firmly around her. With a single flex of his arm, he pulled her right back against him.

Seeing her shocked expression, Damien Valerius’s eyes darkened. He tilted his head slightly and pressed his lips to her slightly parted mouth.

Aurora Sterling had just opened her mouth to berate him when, completely off guard, she was kissed by the man.

“Mmph!” Aurora’s eyes flew wide in shock. Her body went rigid as she glared furiously at this shameless bastard who was taking liberties with her.

Damien Valerius was a severe germaphobe. Deep in his subconscious, he had always considered kissing a disgusting exchange of saliva. As a result, he was a staunch non-kisser. Since childhood, he had never kissed anyone, nor had he allowed anyone to kiss him—not even a quick peck or a chaste kiss on the cheek.

But for some reason, when this little wildcat had pressed herself against him and covered his mouth, only one thought had surfaced in his mind... ‘Kiss her! Kiss her! Kiss her fiercely!’

That was what he thought, and that was exactly what he did.

The very thing he had always considered disgusting now felt exceptionally wonderful.

Aurora Sterling’s mind was buzzing; she was about to explode with rage.

After her mind short-circuited for a moment, it quickly rebooted.

She raised her hands to shove the shameless scoundrel away, but his body was as solid as a wall. She couldn’t budge him at all.

Besides, they were behind a rockery where the space was narrow. The man had his back to a wall, leaving Aurora with very little room to maneuver.

Unless...

Aurora’s eyes darkened. Her small, fair hands balled into fists as an idea took root in her mind.

‘If I can’t push him away, I’ll cripple him! Cripple him! Cripple him!!’

But, as if he had guessed her intentions, he suddenly released her. He lifted his handsome face, his gaze deep as he looked at her, and murmured in an incredibly sexy, low voice, “Don’t move, or they’ll discover us.”

Just then, the young maid’s terrified voice sounded again.

“Listen! I’m sure I heard something back there! You don’t think there’s really someone there, do you?”

“Can’t be,” the male chef said. “Who would be hiding behind the rockery at this hour? Unless they’re out of their mind!”

“Really? Are you sure? I’m still so worried... What if it’s not a person? Could it be a ghost?” the young maid asked timidly.

“What ghost? Don’t scare yourself!” the male chef said, clearly growing impatient.

Aurora’s expression faltered as she was distracted by the couple’s voices. In that brief moment of distraction, the shameless bastard kissed her again.

Aurora instantly held her breath. Her small hands were clenched so tightly in anger that she felt she might draw blood.

‘This man!!’

‘I’m going to kill him!!’

In front of the rockery, her sweet interlude over, the young maid glanced at the time and quickly stood up. “Oh no, it’s almost time for the Old Madam to have her wellness tonic! I have to hurry and get it ready.”

Hearing it was a matter concerning the Old Madam, the male chef didn’t dare to delay. With a regretful look, he had no choice but to agree, and he followed the young maid as they left, one after the other.

Chapter 47: Immense Satisfaction

Hearing the clandestine couple leave, Aurora grew anxious. She seized her chance and bit down hard on the corner of the man’s lips.

Damien was already completely lost in Aurora’s delightful taste. He suddenly felt a sharp pain on his lip, and the metallic tang of blood filled his mouth the next second.

The man’s breath hitched. He lifted his head, his eyes filled with the displeasure of being left unsatisfied. ‘What are you, a dog?’

In the darkness, his voice, though tinged with anger, was surprisingly pleasant.

However, Aurora was in no mood to appreciate how pleasant the man’s voice was. She swung her hand toward Damien’s handsome face, intending to punish the pervert.

SLAP! The girl’s small hand landed squarely on Damien’s right cheek.

The sound was so loud that even Sean Carter, who was standing some distance away with his back to the rockery, heard it.

Sean’s eyes widened, darting around in their sockets. ‘I didn’t mishear that, did I? That was a slap. Did the boss just get hit? Should I go check?’

‘Better not. The boss ordered me not to turn around and not to move. If I go over there now, I’ll be disobeying his orders, won’t I?’

To save his own skin, Sean remained dutifully in his dark corner.

Damien clutched his face, glaring at Aurora with fury in his eyes. No one had ever hit him in his entire life. This girl was the first!

Come to think of it, this girl had already claimed several of his firsts. He'd given her his body for the first time, he'd given her his first kiss, and now, the first time he'd ever been slapped was also at her hand.

'How infuriating!'

Damien ground his teeth as he glared at Aurora, yet, miraculously, he couldn't bring himself to hurt her.

Aurora's face was flushed, her eyes blazing with the fury of having been violated. She was the first to step out from behind the rockery, glaring at Damien. "How did you sneak into the Sterling Estate? And how did you know I was here!"

"Sneak in?" Damien looked at Aurora mockingly. "Do I need to? I walked right in through the front door. As for you, your name was registered at the hotel. Besides, with a reputation as renowned as the Sterling family's eldest daughter, it would have been hard for me *not* to know."

Hearing his explanation, Aurora didn't find it too surprising. After all, the Sterling Family was holding a grand banquet today, with countless guests and staff coming and going. It wasn't impossible for the gatekeepers to have made a mistake.

But...

Aurora stared at Damien warily. "What do you want, tracking me down here? Didn't I already give you a watch? You could get around a hundred thousand if you sell it. Isn't that enough?"

When Damien heard her words, he was so furious he could feel his teeth grinding, desperately wanting to bite her little mouth and punish her properly.

But when he noticed the wary expression on her face, a playful urge rose within him. "Of course it's not enough. You think you can get rid of me with just a watch? Do you really think I'm for sale?"

With that, Damien moved closer to Aurora, a devilish smile playing on his lips as he looked at her small face. "My night is priceless."

As the man suddenly loomed over her, Aurora instinctively leaned back, her gaze locking with his bewitching eyes.

Aurora couldn't help but gasp. 'Is this man a demon?'

“You… You’re not a male escort?”

‘Male escort again!’

Damien’s face darkened. “Of course not!”

“Then who are you? What is your purpose for coming to the Sterling Estate?” Aurora quickly forced herself to regain her composure, refusing to be mesmerized by this devilishly handsome man’s looks.

Damien watched Aurora’s string of reactions with satisfaction. His inner narcissist was thoroughly pleased.

Chapter 48: I Have a Fiancé

Damien Valerius continued to move closer to Aurora Sterling, a smirk playing on his perfect, thin lips. “Little girl, sleeping with me isn’t something you can settle with just a watch.”

Aurora Sterling frowned, her body leaning back further. “Th-Then what do you want… How much money? Just name your price.”

For some reason, when facing this bewitching man, Aurora Sterling’s usually rational and calm mind refused to work. As a result, her presence was completely overwhelmed by his, and she found herself being led by his pace.

“How much money?” Damien Valerius smiled, his expression devilishly charming. “I don’t want money. I want—”

The man paused, flashing a perfect smile. “You to take responsibility for me.”

The moment he said it, a DING went off in Damien Valerius’s head. ‘I was clearly here to teach this ignorant little girl a lesson, so how did it turn into me demanding she take responsibility?’

But the words were already out, and it seemed a part of Damien Valerius didn’t want to take them back.

“T-Take responsibility…?” Aurora Sterling’s eyes widened. She blinked a few times as the words sank in, then finally snapped back to reality. She shot to her feet, pointing an angry finger at Damien Valerius. “Hey! You disgusting man, what are you thinking?! Just name your price, and I’ll pay you! You want me to take responsibility for you? Not a chance!”

‘Take responsibility? What kind of joke is that? It’s always the man who takes responsibility for the woman. In situations like this, isn’t it the woman who’s at a disadvantage?’

Aurora Sterling felt like she’d definitely been cut off from society for too long. The moment she returned to a normal life, she ran into a weirdo like this!

Seeing Aurora Sterling’s vehement rejection, Damien Valerius’s brow darkened, and his entire expression turned cold. “Fine, you don’t have to take responsibility. In that case, I’ll just tell everyone what happened between us! Judging by the way you just dragged me behind that rockery, you probably don’t want this getting out right now, do you?”

Aurora Sterling stared speechlessly at the scoundrel before her. ‘Am I being threatened right now?’ Finally, her reason and coldness returned in full. “Believe it or not, I’ll kill you.”

‘Although I don’t want to cause a death so soon after my return, and while my position in the organization is high, I’ve never truly killed anyone in the strictest sense. But this roguish, bewitching man is now a serious obstacle to my future. This threat has to be eliminated.’

Seeing the murderous intent flare in the girl’s eyes, Damien Valerius raised an eyebrow. ‘Looks like my little wildcat really does want me dead.’

‘Excellent. My little wildcat is getting more and more interesting, stirring my desire to conquer her.’

And so, Damien Valerius just smiled. “Fine, go ahead and kill me. But the video of our passionate night together might just be scheduled for release tomorrow. It’ll be all over the internet by then.”

“You!” Aurora Sterling was in disbelief. “You actually filmed it?”

“That’s right!” Damien Valerius said with a triumphant smile. In reality, there was no video. He had also been drugged and set up the previous night, and he would never film such a tasteless video anyway. But right now, to force this little wildcat to submit, he had no choice but to lie through his teeth.

Because of the alcohol last night, Aurora Sterling had been in a delirious and frenzied state, so she had no clear idea what had actually happened.

Now that he claimed to have a video, she was effectively being blackmailed, even if she wasn’t sure he was telling the truth. Silently vowing to herself to never touch alcohol again, she backed down. “I can’t take responsibility for you. I’m already engaged. My fiancé is the fourth son of the Valerius family. You know how powerful the Valerius family

is; I wouldn't dare offend them. Besides, I've heard that this fourth son has a terrible temper. If I took responsibility for you, we'd probably both end up dead!"

Chapter 49: Above Her

Aurora Sterling spoke in all seriousness, bad-mouthing the fiancé she had never met, Damien Valerius, completely unaware that the man standing before her was Damien Valerius himself.

Aurora frowned. "So, I think you'd be better off just taking the money. If a hundred-thousand-dollar watch isn't enough, just name your price. I'll give you whatever you want."

'This is so frustrating!' Aurora was fuming internally, but the situation was not in her favor. She could only swallow her pride and compromise.

Damien Valerius stood there, listening to his little fiancée's terrible assessment of him. The corner of his mouth twitched. "Oh? What a shame..."

Hearing this, Aurora thought the insufferable scoundrel had finally seen reason and was ready to take the money and leave, dropping his demand for her to "take responsibility."

'I knew it.' This man had gone to great lengths to find her and threaten her; it had to be for money. Otherwise, what kind of normal man would shamelessly demand a woman take responsibility for him?

But Aurora soon discovered just how naive she had been.

The scoundrel suddenly moved closer again, his gaze wickedly charming. "A shame. But I was born to defy the powerful, and I'm also very... traditional. On top of that, I'm particular about my body. Since you've already had your way with me, you can only—and must—take responsibility. As for the fourth son of the Valerius Family, he's nothing to me."

Under the assault of his mesmerizing gaze, Aurora's mind buzzed and then shut down. "You... you... you jerk, how could you..."

Seeing the little wildcat stammering before him, Damien Valerius's mood instantly brightened. "I'm not negotiating with you. Of course, you can refuse. But I can guarantee that an intimate video of the Sterling family's young lady will be all over Astoria by tomorrow—and then go global."

"You bastard!" Aurora gritted her teeth, absolutely furious. If not for the circumstances, she would have dealt with this demonic scoundrel with her own two hands!

Seeing that Aurora was completely out of options, Damien Valerius smiled in satisfaction. He wrapped a long arm around her, pulling her soft, small frame into his embrace. “Little wildcat, remember this. From now on, I’m your man. Don’t you dare do anything to betray me. If I find out, the consequences will be severe.”

Aurora was forced against the scoundrel’s body. She tried to break free but found that no matter how hard she struggled, she couldn’t move him an inch.

‘His strength is incredible!’

Shock rippled through Aurora. “Who exactly are you?”

“Your man,” Damien Valerius murmured, his magnetic voice sending a shiver through her. ‘This fiend... how can even his voice sound so good?’

Aurora was about to lose her mind. “I meant your name! Your identity!”

Finding out her name from the hotel, tracking her to the Sterling estate, and successfully getting inside—none of that was particularly surprising. But his arrogant claim that the fourth son of the Valerius Family was nothing to fear? That was definitely not normal. And then there was his immense strength.

After all, Aurora was no ordinary woman; her physical abilities could easily overpower a typical man. But she hadn’t been able to break free from this scoundrel, which meant his strength and stamina were far greater than her own.

Chapter 50: In the Dark Corner

Damien Valerius chuckled. He knew his little wildcat was already starting to analyze him. He leaned in ambiguously and whispered in Aurora Sterling’s ear, “My name... is Damien Wallace...”

Just then, the housekeeper’s voice echoed from a distance. “Who’s there! Who’s in the back garden this late at night?”

Hearing the housekeeper’s voice, the hairs on Aurora Sterling’s body stood on end again. ‘I have to hide, fast,’ she wailed internally.

But when she thought about what this scoundrel had just done to her behind the rockery, she was already traumatized by the spot and gritted her teeth in anger.

Damien Valerius watched his little wildcat with amusement. Seizing the moment while Aurora Sterling was at a loss, he swooped down and stole a sharp kiss from her lips.

‘Mmm... even a fleeting taste like that is still so sweet.’

Realizing she'd been kissed by surprise again, Aurora Sterling reached her breaking point. Just as she was about to teach this stinking scoundrel a lesson, the man had already nimbly scaled the garden wall. He stood atop it, smiling ambiguously down at her.

"Looks like someone's coming. Let's call our date to an end for today. See you next time, little wildcat. Remember, you have me now, so don't go thinking about other men. Otherwise, I'll be very unhappy, you hear? I'll come find you again!"

With that, Damien Valerius leaped off the wall just before the person arrived, landing steadily on his feet.

'To think that I, Damien Valerius, would have a day where I'm climbing over a girl's wall.' The man's brow furrowed slightly as he shook his head. 'Such an embarrassing thing must never be known by anyone else.' Everything that happened today had gone in the complete opposite direction of what he'd expected. But strangely, he felt exceptionally happy.

Just as Damien Valerius jumped down from the wall, the housekeeper walked over. "Who's there!"

Aurora Sterling spun around, composing herself. "It's me!"

The housekeeper paused, only recognizing Aurora Sterling when he got closer. "Oh, it's you, Miss. What are you doing out here so late?"

Aurora Sterling blinked, then held up the rusty iron box. "I came here to find something."

The housekeeper stared at the iron box, stunned. 'The Sterling Family actually owns something so cheap and broken?'

"Miss, this box is completely falling apart. You shouldn't keep it. I can find a better one for you."

"No!" Aurora Sterling shook her head. "This box... my young—er, my older sister and I secretly put this here when we were little. It holds memories of us sisters. I suddenly thought of it today and wanted to find it."

Hearing that it was a memory connected to the late eldest miss, the housekeeper didn't say anything more and just sighed. "In that case, you should hold onto it, Miss. But it's getting very late. Wild cats often appear in the back garden at night. It's not safe for you to be out here alone. You should go back to your room."

"You're right, it's not safe at all!" Thinking of that scoundrel, Aurora Sterling gritted her teeth in hatred. "I'd say this garden doesn't just have wild cats, but stinking rats, too! Housekeeper, you should arrange for more security in the back garden."

“Stinking rats!” The housekeeper was taken aback. ‘The Sterling Family has rats?’

On the other side of the wall, Damien Valerius clearly heard the exchange between Aurora Sterling and the housekeeper. ‘That little thing actually used “stinking rat” to describe me?’

A smile tugged at the corner of Damien Valerius’s lips as he strode away.

It was just... he seemed to have forgotten something...

The man thought for a moment but couldn’t recall what it was.

Damien Valerius left, and Aurora Sterling followed the housekeeper out of the back garden.

But a lonely Sean Carter remained, his back to the rockery, standing in a dark corner...