

Gary Stu 221

Chapter 221 Do Not Call Him That

☒ Genevieve's face was inches away from Armand's. She found his breath biting cold, and she shivered involuntarily in response.

☒ Nonetheless, she did not show signs of backing away. She met Armand's gaze and retorted, "Why, Mr. Faulkner, aren't you aware of the messy relationship between Cooper's father and your Aunt Samantha? Cooper was merely a pawn in Samantha's hands. She tricked him into killing my parents."

☒ Armand's gaze darkened as he demanded, "Does this mean you're letting him off the hook?"

☒ "Yes. He has also expressed his remorse to me." Genevieve's lashes quivered. "Plus, Coop and I—"

☒ Her husband interjected curtly, "Don't call him that."

☒ At the same time, he tightened his grip on the back of her head, clearly expressing his displeasure.

☒ Genevieve took a deep breath and instantly dropped the term of endearment. "I grew up with Cooper, and he's my ex-husband. We have a lot of history together."

☒ Armand's displeasure ballooned, and he jeered, "You're a real saint. You can even forgive the person who killed your father."

☒ In the past, Genevieve would have fired a scathing reply back at Armand.

☒ Now, she merely blinked and shot him a small smile. "Drive us back to Regality Gardens, Mr. Faulkner. Talking about serious matters in the car exhausts me."

☒ Armand glanced at her before moving back to his seat and putting on his seatbelt.

☒ The car cruised out of the hospital parking lot. Genevieve noticed some mints in the armrest compartment. She grabbed one and ripped open the wrapper. "Are you returning to the office later?"

☒ "I'm not." He had asked Steven to push all his morning schedules to the afternoon.

☒ She murmured an acknowledgment while fiddling with the mint wrapper. "How are you going to deal with Grandma's death? Can I return to work at Central Group's translation department?"

☒ Armand's grip tightened slightly on the steering wheel, his gaze turning grim.

☒ Though the Faulkners were a huge bunch, Harriet had always doted on Armand. She continued to favor him even as Armand suspected her knowledge of his horrid behavior. She was one of the few people in the Faulkner residence who had made him feel welcome.

☒ Her death was naturally a huge blow to Armand.

☒ However, he could also clearly tell that Genevieve had treated Harriet like her biological grandmother. Plus, with her injured vocal cords back then, how could Genevieve have infuriated Harriet with her words that led to her sudden death?

☒ Armand knew who the culprit was, but his hands were tied.

☒ "I've arranged for someone to deal with the news. You can return to work tomorrow if you want."

☒ "Mm, in that case, please ask Steven to help me apply for a few more days of leave." Genevieve lowered her gaze. "It's Patrick's funeral tomorrow. I want to give him a final send-off."

☒ "Okay," Armand agreed after a moment of silence.

☒ His car pulled into the compound of Regality Gardens in a jiff. After parking the car, Armand entered the elevator together with Genevieve.

☒ The elevator slowly ascended, and the air in the elevator remained somber.

☒ Armand kept his head lowered as he peeped at Genevieve beside him. She was busy tapping away on her phone.

☒ When her vocal cords were injured, Genevieve had relied heavily on texting. Armand's eyes were sometimes exhausted from reading the sheer volume of words on the screen.

☒ Now that Genevieve could speak again, she had been conversing with him politely as though they were new acquaintances. Her formal tone discomfited him.

☒ Armand fidgeted with his slacks and asked, "When we left the hospital, you mentioned asking Cooper for a favor. What was it?"

☒ "It's just a small thing," replied Genevieve without lifting her head.

☒ "What small thing?"

☒ She realized he would not drop the topic until he got an answer. Thus, she confessed, "I asked Cooper to meet Marilyn and get a violin named 'Night Breeze' back from her."

☒ Armand recalled that Patrick had gifted the violin to Genevieve to congratulate her on getting a job.

☒ Marilyn had taken a fancy to the instrument and coerced him into stealing it from Genevieve.

☒ As Armand remembered the dreadful things he had done to Genevieve in the past, his heart swelled with unease. He offered, "I'll ask Steven to get it back for you."

#### Chapter 222 She Was Jealous

☒ "It's fine," replied Genevieve as she shook her head. "I'm sure Cooper can get it back."

☒ She sounded so sure that Armand sensed that something was off. He was sensitive and noted that the phrases she chose suggested that Cooper would strike a deal with Marilyn.

☒ Genevieve was the first to get out of the elevator when it arrived.

☒ She pressed the bell twice, and it didn't take long before she heard the sound of the door unlocking. Maria had unlocked the door. Tears swirled in her eyes when she saw Genevieve standing behind the door.

☒ "I'm so glad you're okay, Ms. Rachford."

☒ "Sorry for worrying you," replied Genevieve. She smiled and walked into the house.

☒ Maria's eyes shone with a hint of delight when she heard Genevieve's voice. The latter looked more serene, and it was then something struck her and she immediately kneeled before Genevieve.

☒ "I am so sorry, Ms. Rachford," Maria choked out. "I'm sorry..."

☒ Genevieve stood there, smiling. "What are you sorry for?"

☒ Maria wiped her tears away. "I was the one who poisoned your food and made you mute. I-I didn't want to do that, Ms. Rachford, but they found my son. They threatened to kill him and my grandson if I refused to do what they say. My hands were tied, Ms. Rachford, and I told them I would only do it once and that there would never be a second time."

☒ "When I went on a business trip to Bera, you called me and said that Old Mrs. Faulkner asked you to go to the Faulkner residence. You saw some photos while you were there." Genevieve looked down at her. "Was that really how you saw those photos?"

☒ Armand entered the house then and heard what Genevieve said, so he asked, "What photos?"

☒ "The photos of you and Marilyn together," answered Genevieve calmly. She opened the inbox on her phone, found the photo Maria had sent to her, and gave her phone to Armand.

☒ Armand took a look at the first photo and narrowed his eyes when he saw it.

☒ Both he and Marilyn looked young in the photo, and it was obviously taken when they had just begun dating.

☒ He remembered how she had been invited as a guest for a grand opening party, and how he had stared at her as she played the violin on the stage. He had thought about her practicing when she was admitted to the hospital, about her behaving like a mute and always giving him food, and how she enjoyed extremely sweet snacks then.

☒ Those funny memories had made him happy, so he had smiled at Marilyn, who was on the stage. And that moment had been caught on camera.

☒ Now that he looked at the photos, all he could think about was how Genevieve had demanded a divorce from him after she was nearly strangled to death when she was on a business trip in Springwyn. She had hated him for defending Marilyn back then.

☒ He had tried to explain himself, but she had refused to believe him. She had even typed on her notepad, saying that his gaze was not the same when he looked at Marilyn.

☒ Ah, so these photos left an impression on Genevieve. She had been suppressing her emotions for so long, and the incident at Springwyn had caused it to blow up. So she was jealous at the time?

☒ Coming to that conclusion prompted the sorrow in Armand's heart to be replaced with inexplicable happiness.

☒ He didn't bother looking at the other photos.

☒ His eyes glowed with intensity when he turned his attention to Maria. "Who gave you these photos?"

☒ Maria trembled and looked down. “A-A mysterious guy I don’t recognize. He seemed to know everything about Ms. Rachford’s whereabouts and contacted me as soon as she reached Bera. He provided me with the photos and taught me how to lie to Ms. Rachford...”

☒ With a face full of tears and regrets, she continued, “Please believe that I never wished to hurt you. They broke my grandson’s legs and threatened me... He is my only grandson, and I couldn’t let anything happen to him. I’m so sorry...”

#### Chapter 223 Why Are You Smashing It

☒ Maria had been working as a housekeeper for the Rachford family ever since she was young and had been staying by Genevieve’s side for years to take care of her. Wrinkles had since grown around her eyes, and her hair had turned white.

☒ Maria had reached the age where she was nearing death.

☒ When Genevieve was a kid, she would hug Maria and cry and whine at her. That was the second time Maria had cried in front of her, but she was unmoved. Her gaze was cold.

☒ Genevieve crouched down in front of Maria and used a piece of tissue to wipe her tears away. “Maria, you began working for my mom when she married my dad, and even now, you still regard me as Ms. Rachford. You have always seen yourself as a member of the Rachford family and claimed that you never wanted to hurt me. Yet, you attacked me... twice.”

☒ Maria’s entire being trembled. “Ms. Rachford—”

☒ “If you truly had no desire to hurt me, you would’ve told me about how someone had threatened you. You should’ve done that the second it happened, and I would’ve helped you deal with the issue. But you didn’t come to me. You were worried about your grandson, and you didn’t trust me.

☒ “Maria, you know that I have no one else. I have always seen you as family, and everyone close to you is important to me as well. I even said that I would earn enough money so that I could take good care of you and buy you a house where you could live comfortably in retirement. Yet, you’ve been treating me as an outsider.”

☒ Every single word stabbed Maria’s heart. She regretted what she had done and was drowning in guilt. She cried so much that even her wrinkles were trembling, and there was nothing she could say to refute Genevieve’s words.

☒ She’s right. The Rachford family has always been kind to me. Her mom even bought me a house. And how did I repay that kindness? I almost killed Genevieve...

☒ “Someone once told me that a person should always bear the responsibility of their action. There is no point in apologizing at all,” said Genevieve. She handed the piece of tissue to Maria, then stood up. “Give me back the house my mom gave you and put it under my name, then turn yourself in at the police station.”

☒ “Ms. Rachford...” Maria panicked. “I will do whatever you want me to do. All I ask is that you forgive me. I-I can’t go to jail.”

☒ Genevieve simply responded by saying, “I want to hear the news that you’ve turned yourself in at the police station by one o’clock tomorrow. If you haven’t done that by then, I will go to them myself. Things will be so much worse for you, and you may have to spend years in prison, Maria.”

☒ With that, she ignored Maria’s constant begging and entered the house, walking all the way to the pantry.

☒ Armand had been standing by the entrance and observing Genevieve when she spoke to Maria. The way she dealt with the matter in such a calm manner was a side that Armand had never seen before.

☒ It was at that moment that he realized she had changed.

☒ Armand did not give Maria the chance to talk to Genevieve again. He had her pack up and leave Regality Gardens right away.

☒ As he watched Maria leave, he warned, “You’d better do as she said, Maria. Don’t even try contacting the guy who threatened you earlier. If you do, I will make you regret doing that for the rest of your life.”

☒ Maria saw how emotionless his gaze was and trembled violently. She bowed to him, then entered the elevator with her luggage.

☒ Armand closed the door and entered the house, only to see that Genevieve was no longer in the pantry.

☒ He walked down the corridor and made his way to the bedroom.

☒ Maria had kept the house clean over the past few days. The curtains in the bedroom remained open. Bright, natural light streamed into the room, making it seem so pleasant.

☒ Just then, he heard the noise of a wooden material being smashed onto a marble surface from the bathroom and hurried over.

☒ When he entered, he saw Genevieve smashing a copper-colored violin underneath the sink. The strings on the violin had already broken, but she did not stop there as she gave it another smash. She used so much force that a loud thud could be heard this time.

☒ The wooden frame of the violin broke into pieces, and it looked so broken that anyone would feel bad for it.

☒ Some time ago, Genevieve had fine-tuned the strings on that violin, so Armand could recognize that it was the violin that she had asked Cooper to retrieve for her. She had claimed that it was a birthday gift from her father.

☒ Even the song she had gifted him with seemed to have been composed with that violin.

☒ Armand frowned deeply when he thought about the reason she smashed that violin. He hurried to her and grabbed her wrist.

☒ “Genevieve, why are you smashing it?”

Chapter 224 Rejecting His Touch

- ☒ Being grabbed by the wrist, Genevieve had no choice but to stop smashing her violin.
- ☒ “This is a birthday gift from my father, but he’s no longer here. Keeping it will just remind me of his demise, so I might as well destroy it,” replied Genevieve calmly as she used her other hand to part her hair.
- ☒ “Then why did you buy it from Cooper?” Armand’s grip on her tightened a bit more.
- ☒ “I wanted to give you a surprise, so I brought it back. But I no longer need it anymore.” Genevieve gave a small smile. Her gaze shone with neither sorrow nor glee.
- ☒ Armand thought he heard an implicit message from the second half of her sentence. His heart ached. It had never burned with anxiety and fear of that intensity before.
- ☒ He felt as though something he had been holding tightly in his hand was about to slip out of his fingers.
- ☒ He tightened his grip once more when he sensed that Genevieve was trying to break free of his grip. He grabbed the violin from her and said, “Don’t smash it anymore, or you’re gonna hurt yourself. I’ll take care of it for you.”
- ☒ Seeing that the violin had been broken beyond repair, she didn’t argue with him. “Then thank you, Mr. Faulkner.”
- ☒ Genevieve turned around and walked out of the bathroom after he let her go.
- ☒ Right then, she felt a sharp pain coming from her stomach. Her entire body swayed, and she almost fell.
- ☒ Genevieve quickly supported herself by the sink, but the pain was so intense that she crouched down right away.
- ☒ When Armand heard Genevieve gasping for air, he looked back and saw her on the ground. She was trembling a little and looked deathly pale.
- ☒ He quickly put the violin on the sink and bent down to carry her.
- ☒ Knowing that she did not like the hospitals, he placed her on the bed before calling Timothy.
- ☒ “Genevieve’s stomach is aching, and she’s sweating a lot. Come quick!”
- ☒ “It’s probably due to her miscarriage.” Timothy didn’t need to examine her to know what her symptoms were. “I gave Genevieve some medicine when she left the hospital. Have her swallow two pills, then massage her stomach until the ache subsides. Don’t let her take baths this month and eat anything cold.”
- ☒ Armand thought about the blood between Genevieve’s legs and felt a heavy weight on his heart.
- ☒ Hanging up, he went to the living room and grabbed Genevieve’s purse. He got a bottle of white pills from it, poured a glass of warm water, and returned to the bedroom.

☒ When he helped Genevieve up and let her lean on his chest, he realized her entire body was stiff and her shoulders were tense.

☒ “Relax, Genevieve,” Armand cooed. He assumed that she only stiffened because she was in pain, so he put the pill by her lips.

☒ Genevieve took the medicine obediently, then drank some water from the glass in his hand and swallowed the pills.

☒ After putting the glass on the nightstand, Armand put his hand on her stomach and realized that her entire being was still stiff then.

☒ At that moment, he learned that she wasn’t nervous or in pain; she was rejecting his touch.

☒ Armand felt a lump in his throat. It was terrible because he couldn’t seem to get rid of it.

☒ He used his hand to massage her stomach, but she was still sweating even after he had done it for quite some time. Hence, he took her shirt off to stroke her tummy with his warm palm.

☒ About thirty minutes later, Genevieve’s tensed body finally relaxed and her forehead had stopped sweating.

☒ “Feeling better now?” Armand asked.

☒ “Mm.”

☒ Armand secretly sighed a breath of relief. He was about to retract his hand when his finger accidentally felt a bump.

☒ He placed Genevieve’s head on the pillow and looked down and saw the tattoo on her skin. The black dragon remained, but the letters beside it were gone.

☒ All that was left were a few ugly and scary dark red scars that were the size of a thumb.

☒ He stared at the scars that practically formed a straight line. Genevieve’s skin was so sensitive that even the slightest pinch would hurt her and leave a mark. He couldn’t even imagine how much pain she must have endured back then.

☒ He felt as though a knife had sliced through his chest, and it hurt so much that he was going numb.

#### Chapter 225 Her Eyes That Held So Much Beauty

☒ It took Armand a lot of effort to even his breathing. He helped her with her shirt and pulled the blanket over her before using the remote controller to close the curtains.

☒ “Get some sleep,” said the man in a raspy voice. “I’ll come and get you when it’s time for lunch.”

☒ Genevieve murmured a reply and curled herself up under the blanket.

☒ After Armand closed the door to the bedroom, he called Steven and said, “Come over to Regality Gardens now.”

☒ He felt so stuffy inside that he couldn’t breathe.

- ☒ He walked to the living room and saw the pack of cigarettes on the coffee table. He took one out and began to smoke.
- ☒ Armand didn't rest when Patrick escaped with Genevieve. He had spent most of his time dealing with the reporters and the other members of the Faulkner family and had Steven in charge of looking for Genevieve.
- ☒ After he got the police to drop the charges against Genevieve, they sent her things back. It was her phone and her purse that she had left at the Faulkner residence.
- ☒ The phone screen had cracked, but it still functioned well.
- ☒ Maria had been worried that Genevieve would need that phone, so she had left it on the coffee table.
- ☒ Armand grabbed that broken phone and turned it on.
- ☒ The wallpaper was a photo of her leaning back on a pillow. She had a loose white shirt on and her collarbone was exposed.
- ☒ She was wearing his shirt at that time.
- ☒ The plushy she was hugging was the one he won from the Devil's Pasta challenge. Her cheek was pressed against the snow-white body of the plushy, and she was smiling at the camera.
- ☒ Her eyes were watery. It was as though she was looking at him through the screen with eyes that held so much beauty.
- ☒ There was arrogance, stubbornness, cuteness, and even an undisguised love in those eyes.
- ☒ Armand swiped the screen, and a PIN was required to unlock the phone. He knew the PIN and typed "1431118" to unlock it.
- ☒ The second he unlocked the phone, he recalled that "143" was the number of letters in each word for "I love you" and the last four numbers were his birthday.
- ☒ When he clicked on the notepad, he saw two documents. Genevieve would type her words on her phone and show them to the others when she couldn't speak. She had a habit of deleting everything after the person she was communicating with had read the message.
- ☒ However, she didn't delete a single word she told him.
- ☒ "I don't owe you anything, Armand. I want a divorce!"
- ☒ "Just you wait. Once my throat is healed, I'll buy ten meatballs and eat every single one of them right in front of you. Damn you!"
- ☒ "I'm not leaving unless we get that plushy."
- ☒ "Armand Faulkner, you're inhuman!"
- ☒ "But you're so much older than me. Isn't it normal to call you Sir?"



☒ “Since you’ve put on a tattoo to my liking, I thought I should reciprocate the gesture and get one resembling your favorite mythical creature.”

☒ “Thank you, Sir! Xoxo!”

☒ He kept reading the words on the notepad and reminisced about those memories. He thought about their time at Springwyn, about her throwing a tantrum, and about her throwing herself in his arms.

☒ She couldn’t even talk at that time, but she was still mischievous, and her each and every move was adorable.

☒ Cough! Cough!

☒ Armand had been smoking for years, but that was the first time he had choked. When the smoke hit his lungs, it felt bitter and painful.

☒ At this moment, the doorbell rang. He went to answer the door and saw that it was Steven.

☒ “Mr. Faulkner.”

☒ Steven noted how terrible Armand looked and saw a hint of emotion he had never seen before in those eyes. After greeting him, he entered the living room with Armand.

☒ Armand pointed at the couch and gestured for Steven to take a seat. He finished smoking that cigarette, stubbed it out in the ashtray, then took out another one.

☒ “Grandma has just passed away, so how did the police get there so quickly? And why was everything revealed to the media?”

☒ “A housekeeper from the Faulkner residence called the police,” answered Steven. “At first, that housekeeper told me that Old Mrs. Faulkner didn’t look well when she called Mrs. Faulkner. The housekeeper claimed that was why she called the police. But she later confessed and told me the truth after I forced her to.”

#### Chapter 226 Let Everyone Join The Fun

☒ “The housekeeper said that she was busy working on the first floor when Ms. Wood came to her, saying that she heard Old Mrs. Faulkner’s angry voice from the study and was worried that Old Mrs. Faulkner’s health would be affected. She told the housekeeper to call the police as well as the ambulance. As for the news making it to the media outlet, Ms. Wood was responsible for that as well.

☒ “The news of Old Mrs. Faulkner’s passing wasn’t known to many, and the Public Relations Department could have easily distracted the reporters with other news. But Ms. Wood’s brother caught wind of what happened. He shared the news with the reporters, and he, too, was the one who called the other members of the Faulkner family and told them about the incident.”

☒ Armand continued smoking. He had a stoic expression the entire time Steven reported the matter, looking terrifyingly calm.

☒ “The one who had been pursuing Genevieve relentlessly... Was it my aunt or Marilyn?”

☒ “It was Marilyn. Her men had used Mrs. Faulkner’s ring to find her and Patrick,” answered Steven, turning on his phone and handing it to Armand.

☒ “Ms. Wood did a good job covering her tracks, but I guess she never expected the killers she hired to double-cross her. One of them set up a hidden camera in the car, and when I caught him, he handed me the video after I offered to give him enough money to leave the country safely.”

☒ Steven had just gotten the video the previous night. One minute into the video and he was already repulsed, but he bit the bullet and finished watching it.

☒ It was so horrible that he wanted Marilyn to burn in hell for all eternity.

☒ He never thought about destroying that video. Instead, he made a copy and gave it to Armand.

☒ Patrick might not be Steven’s brother by blood, but he had watched the kid grow up and concerned himself with his matters. He had long seen Patrick as his actual brother.

☒ Marilyn had cruelly forced Patrick to his death. Hence, Steven was determined to avenge his brother.

☒ Armand played the video on his phone and saw how Genevieve was dragged into the car. He heard the conversation she had with Marilyn and saw a man tearing Genevieve’s shirt apart and using a cigarette to burn her. After that, he saw the man mercilessly break Genevieve’s wrist and her screaming in agony.

☒ Heavy rain poured down on Genevieve. She was in so much pain that she was trembling. In an attempt to lessen the pain, she curled herself up.

☒ There she lay, looking like a dying fawn.

☒ Then he saw Patrick rushing over in his car. Patrick dealt with those men easily, but then someone else pointed a gun at Genevieve’s temple. He had no choice but to stop fighting. Armand heard what Patrick said and watched as Patrick took the poison without hesitating. He also witnessed Genevieve hugging the dead Patrick and crying hopelessly on her knees in the rain.

☒ Armand didn’t even know how he managed to finish watching that video. He kept staring at the screen, and his heart felt as though it was being gripped. It hurt so much that it was suffocating him.

☒ His cigarette burned its way to his finger, but he couldn’t seem to feel anything at all.

☒ Steven saw that and took the cigarette away.

☒ I was busy dealing with the reporters and the other members of the Faulkner family when Genevieve was being burned, assaulted, and almost lost her life. She might’ve died then and there if it hadn’t been for Patrick...

☒ Armand suppressed the emotion in his heart and ordered, “Assign a team to monitor Marilyn and wiretap her phone. Don’t let her leave that house.”

☒ “If we do that, Ms. Woods will surely make a scene and complain to her brother,” replied Steven.

☒ George was married twice, but he didn’t have many kids. Marilyn was the only girl in her family, so everyone spoiled her. Her brother, Xavier Wood, especially, spoiled her more than their parents did.

☒ He was the one who had killed Armand's former fiancées when Marilyn had cried and complained about how Armand was going to get married.

☒ If Xavier were to learn that Marilyn was locked up at home, he would surely come to her rescue.

☒ Armand sneered upon hearing that. "Good. That's just what I want, but it's not enough. I will send you a few photos. Share them on the internet and let everyone join the fun."

☒ "Understood." Steven nodded. "By the way, your second aunt showed no signs of returning to the temple after she paid her respects at Old Mrs. Faulkner's funeral. She has been staying at the Faulkner residence in Xedells, and Peter has been going there frequently. The housekeeper said that they stayed in the study for a few hours yesterday, and Peter seemed happy when he left the place."

#### Chapter 227 Bitterness

☒ "That uncle of mine acts as though he's worried that I won't find out what he's up to." Armand smirked and lit another cigarette.

☒ The white smoke made it difficult to read the expression in his eyes.

☒ The silence in the living room lasted for a while. Coldy, he piped up, "Do whatever my uncle wants and spread the news. Let everyone in Xedells know what happened."

☒ Steven looked at him in surprise. He was about to say something when he heard Armand say, "The doctor said that Genevieve was pregnant with twins. Their bodies were already formed."

☒ Armand looked down as he spoke. The crimson red blood between Genevieve's legs came to his mind.

☒ He shivered involuntarily and dropped the cigarette onto the coffee table.

☒ Taking a deep breath, he picked up the cigarette and threw it into the ashtray. His voice was hoarse when he said, "Steven, I will be thirty-three in a few months. This is the first time I have kids, but I lost them within the ten minutes I learned of their existence. I have to do something for them."

☒ If it hadn't been for the Faulkner family and if he had never made that promise to Samuel and said that he wouldn't hurt Marilyn or the baby she was pregnant with, he would have already killed Marilyn.

☒ Steven saw the murderous rage hidden in Armand's eyes and knew how heavy the burden on his shoulders was.

☒ "Understood. I will take care of it."

☒ It didn't take long before the doorbell rang again. It was from the receptionist.

☒ As the delivery man couldn't enter and deliver their food, the receptionist had to deliver everything in person.

☒ Steven placed the food on the table and left with the receptionist since he was done talking to Armand.

☒ Armand went into the bedroom. He had wanted to wake Genevieve up to get her to have lunch. But when he saw her curl up on the bed and sleeping soundly with a frown on her face, he reached out and caressed her face.

☒ As if she could sense him in her dreams, her relaxed body tensed up as she gripped the blanket.

☒ Armand felt terrible when he saw how pale she was. In the end, he did not wake her up and left the room after closing the door.

☒ After a long time, Genevieve opened her eyes. They were cold and forbidding.

☒ That afternoon, Armand didn't go to his office but stayed in his study. When he was exhausted from work, he looked up and saw that the sky had turned dark.

☒ Ah... I've been working for so long... He massaged the bridge of his nose.

☒ He finished working on the task at hand before leaving the study, only to see that the lights were still on in the living room.

☒ Genevieve was huddled on the couch and had a blanket over her. In front of her was a tablet on the coffee table playing a movie, and she was nibbling some raisins.

☒ Armand walked to her and sat beside her. "Why didn't you go to the home theatre to watch the movie?"

☒ His sudden emergence made her stiffen a little.

☒ Genevieve worked hard to force herself to relax. She shoved some more raisins into her mouth and said, "I'm watching a horror movie. It's better to watch it like this, lest I scare myself senseless if I watch it in the home theatre."

☒ Armand chuckled when he saw how she was scared yet interested in the story.

☒ "This raisin tastes pretty good," commented Genevieve while munching them. She grabbed some and placed them by his lips. "Want some?"

☒ A faint smile played on her lips, and her eyes were clear.

☒ Armand looked at her and felt that she was faking everything she did. She hated his touch, but she was working hard to suppress her distaste.

☒ All that was left to the eyes that used to shine with the most beautiful light was a forced smile and fake warmth.

☒ Armand felt a bitterness in his heart that threatened to fill up every fiber of his being.

☒ He lowered his head to eat the raisins in her hand. His lips could tell how stiff her fingers were.

☒ They weren't just stiff, either. They were also icy.

☒ "Yeah, it's sweet," replied Armand even though he could barely taste anything at all.

☒ He held her in his arms and tried to ignore the stiffness of her body. He massaged her ear a little and asked, “What would you like to have for dinner?”

#### Chapter 228 Like A Douse Of Cold Water

☒ Popping yet another couple of raisins into her mouth, Genevieve said, “When I was chatting with Cooper just now, he asked me what I wanted to eat and said that he’d order some takeout. I reckon it should arrive in a bit.”

☒ Armand’s eyes narrowed when he heard that and appeared to be a little displeased.

☒ At that moment, the doorbell rang.

☒ “That must be the delivery.” Genevieve was about to set herself upright when she felt Armand’s hand on her shoulder. He motioned for her to remain seated and went to get the door himself.

☒ Standing outside was the same receptionist who had brought up their takeout at noon.

☒ The receptionist had both her hands full on either side of her. When she saw Armand at the door, she immediately presented the things she had to him. “I believe these must be yours, Mr—”

☒ “I did not order these,” Armand cut her off curtly. “Just get rid of them.”

☒ Stumped, the receptionist had no time at all to react as the door shut in her face.

☒ Fishing out the delivery note from her own pocket, she reviewed the address several times and was quite positive that she did not get it wrong.

☒ Armand’s rejection left her quite baffled.

☒ Returning to the living room once more, Armand pulled Genevieve into his arms again, and while he did that, he made a call to Golden Restaurant to inquire about the menu for the day. He also took the time to follow up with Genevieve to see if she had any preferences.

☒ Genevieve did not ask about what became of the takeout Cooper had ordered either and only conveyed her desire for a couple of dishes and desserts that she had a hankering for.

☒ Both of them then resumed watching the movie wordlessly. While they seemed extremely intimate huddled together the way they were, they were as emotionally disengaged as strangers living in their own worlds.

☒ By the time the takeout from Golden Restaurant arrived, it was already well past eight in the evening.

☒ The movie was almost upon its climatic finish. Not wanting to miss out on the action, Genevieve brought the tablet into the dining room and watched while she ate. As a result, she got so spooked by a terrifying scene that caught her off-guard that she fumbled the cake she did not hold firmly enough onto herself.

☒ “Can’t you continue this later? It’s not as though the movie is going to get away from you somehow,” Armand commented.

☒ Skirting around the dining table, he retrieved some napkins to help Genevieve clean the cake off her clothes, some of which had landed close to the collar of the casual wear she had on.

☒ Her skin is of an even more buttery consistency than that dollop of cream.

☒ Owing to his proximity, Armand was able to pick up on the scent of that icing, as well as the subtle fragrance that lingered upon her body.

☒ Peering up slightly, he saw that there were also some traces of cream left on the corner of Genevieve's lips. Finding that devastatingly tantalizing, he leaned in to lap that off with his unfurled tongue before he smothered her lips with his own.

☒ Neither resisting nor reciprocating his advances in kind, Genevieve simply sat stiffly where she was.

☒ Slipping a hand around the small of her back, he attempted to pull her even closer to deepen that kiss, only to find the soft hips that he had previously fondled before to be unwelcoming as a piece of rock to the touch.

☒ It was akin to being brought back to his senses with a douse of cold water from above, and a surge of irascibility and exasperation roused within him as he met Genevieve's pristine eyes.

☒ Relinquishing his hold on her, he stood back up and massaged his own temples aggressively with his slender fingers. "Go ahead and hit the showers. The housekeeper will come by tomorrow to get the dining table cleared up in the morning," he said in a hoarse voice.

☒ "Oh, okay." Smilingly, Genevieve tossed the napkin onto the table before she strolled off to the bedroom with the tablet in hand.

☒ Judging from how tautly the soft napkin she left on the table had been scrunched up, Armand could infer the extent to which she had held back just now.

☒ That only compounded upon his vexation.

☒ Armand did not return to the bedroom again. Instead, he went to a guest room where he spent time sorting out his mail until midnight.

☒ After he took a shower, he sat by the bedside and turned on the phone with the damaged screen belonging to Genevieve once more.

☒ As he went through the contents of the topmost piece of the notepad, he revisited the two occasions he had made physical contact with Genevieve since he came home today. Little by little, the overt lack of responsiveness from her unyielding body caused his eyes to darken.

☒ The next morning, Armand was roused by his own biological clock. Having freshened himself up, he changed into his suit and stepped out of the guest room.

☒ Dagna Pearson, the housekeeper from Swallow Garden, had arrived quite early. Per Armand's instructions, she had seen to the preparations of breakfast in accordance with Genevieve's preferences.

☒ When Dagna saw Armand, she immediately bowed in greeting. "Mr. Faulkner."

☒ The thought of Genevieve needing to be waited on made the presence of the housekeeper in and around the place these coming few days unavoidable, so Armand grunted at her in acknowledgment before he sat down to eat.

☒ Before he went out, he left the housekeeper with this. "There's no need to wake Mrs. Faulkner. Let her rise at her own leisure."

☒ "Understood." Dagna bowed even more deeply.

#### Chapter 229 Do Not Go For Treatment

☒ Genevieve came out of the master bedroom less than half an hour after Armand left.

☒ She had changed into a short-sleeved white crewneck shirt and a pair of jeans that accentuated her shapely legginess. Her hair was bunched up with both hands before it was secured with a hairband.

☒ With her brows perked up and a sprightliness about her, she was in a much livelier mood today compared to yesterday.

☒ Unable to react quickly enough, the housekeeper was not able to avoid bumping into Genevieve. At first stunned, she then quickly bowed her head. "Good morning, Mrs. Faulkner."

☒ "Mm, good morning to you as well." After she had done up her ponytail, Genevieve went over to the dining room, pulled out a chair, and settled herself down chirpily. "What do we have for breakfast?"

☒ "We have your favorites, oat milk and soy milk, and also some bagels."

☒ "In that case, I'd like to have the oat milk, please."

☒ That was met by the housekeeper's vocal affirmation. Dagna went on to busy herself at the kitchen island and returned with a glass of oat milk and a plate of bagels, which she placed on the dining table. In return, Genevieve offered a word of thanks before she pulled up the feed on her phone to read while she tucked in.

☒ Taking a rag with her to clean up the dining room, Dagna stole a quiet glance at Genevieve as she passed.

☒ That housekeeper had been working at Swallow Garden long before Genevieve's marriage to Armand was formalized and had also waited on Genevieve for some time while she was there prior to Genevieve's relocation to Regality Gardens.

☒ Many a housekeeper from Swallow Garden had been dismissed by Steven, with only three of the older ones retained; she was one of them.

☒ The night before, Steven had called to inform her to come over to Regality Gardens to serve Genevieve.

☒ Harriet's unexpected passing was cause for no small furor, and that particular housekeeper was also privy to the news. However, she could not help but feel that Genevieve had no reason whatsoever to kill Harriet when she met the latter coming in that day.

☒ It also came to the housekeeper's attention that Genevieve was the only woman Armand had kept close to him and fawned upon.

☒ Dear me. Mr. Faulkner's sounded so serious when he left this morning that I thought I'd be done for had I awoken Mrs. Faulkner.

☒ As there were not that many bagels to begin with, Genevieve got through them fairly quickly.

☒ Afterward, she checked back inside the bedroom again and reemerged with a bag in hand. "I'm going over to the beauty salon, Dagna. Don't prepare lunch for me, as I may not be back in by noon."

☒ "All right." Dagna nodded and continued to work her vacuum cleaner around the living room.

☒ The smile faded from Genevieve's lips somewhat after she entered the elevator.

☒ When she pressed the button for the ground floor, a thought struck her. Then she pulled out her phone to send a message via WhatsApp.

☒ Genevieve: I'm headed down to the beauty salon, Mr. Faulkner, and might only be back in the afternoon.

☒ Previously, Armand had been busy and would usually only reply to her after he was done. That might be in a couple of minutes, half an hour, or even an hour later.

☒ This time, she got a response in less than two minutes.

☒ Armand: Don't go for treatment. You are not well.

☒ Genevieve: I know that. That's why I'll only be asking for a massage and to have my hair washed. I won't be doing a facial.

☒ Armand: Good to know.

☒ Genevieve had just closed the app when Cooper's message came in, informing her of his arrival at the south gate of Regality Gardens.

☒ When the elevator arrived, Genevieve strode out in a hurry.

☒ Upon reaching the south gate, she swiftly spotted a black Bentley parked by the side of the road.

☒ Cooper was dressed in a shirt and black dress pants. His towering and slender frame was propped up against the chassis of the car. He kept his eyes transfixed on the south-facing entrance until Genevieve came out. Although in a fine mood relative to where he was at the day before, his heart still weighed heavily upon him.

☒ Without letting his emotions show, he retrieved a violin case from the backseat.

☒ "Have you got it already?" asked a surprised Genevieve.

☒ Opening up the case, she ascertained that it was indeed the Night Breeze that was inside before she replaced the lid. "How long did you all spend talking it over?"

☒ "Three minutes," replied Cooper.



☒ Actually, it had taken him less time than that. After he had shown Marilyn that video, her expression had gone from delight to distress, and without waiting on Cooper, Marilyn had gone up to the second floor to fetch him that violin herself.

#### Chapter 230 How Dare You Mess With My People

☒ Genevieve's red lips curled up, and she let out a chuckle when she heard that. "Marilyn's a world-renowned violinist, so this instrument must be of considerable value to her. I thought you might have to spend at least half an hour in negotiation."

☒ "She was afraid that Armand might find out about this." While Cooper spoke, he observed for any change in Genevieve's expression. "Seems like she really cares about Armand."

☒ Genevieve beamed even more brightly. "Yeah, it's not hard to tell."

☒ As Cooper grew up with Genevieve, it only took one facial reading for him to decipher what was on her mind.

☒ Once he had his doubts addressed, his mood became markedly improved.

☒ Pulling open the car door, he said in a low voice, "There's someone you'll want to meet, Genev. Let me take you there."

☒ "Sure." Clutching the violin, Genevieve got in.

☒ She has no idea who she is to meet, and she didn't even ask. She seems comfortable enough about leaving it to me to arrange things.

☒ Cooper's heart warmed up a little inside.

☒ So long as Genevieve was able to continue to trust in him like that, he would give anything to have their relationship revert to the way it had been before everything went so horribly wrong for the Rachford family.

☒ Fifteen minutes later, Cooper's Bentley came up to the rear entrance of a club.

☒ After he brought Genevieve inside, they were ushered to one of the private rooms on the second floor.

☒ It was a karaoke room that was warmly lit, and inside was a middle-aged man in his forties. The man was bound to a chair with his mouth sealed with tape, and the right side of his face looked a little swollen.

☒ The man strained his eyes to look when he heard the door open, and his pupils shrunk at the sight of Cooper making his way in alongside Genevieve.

☒ Cooper pointed to that man in the chair and said to Genevieve, "This chap here is Cormack Oswald, Samantha's driver. He was the one who located Maria's family in Feston and also the one responsible for coercing her to act against you. My boys caught him just last night."

☒ "You have to know that this is Samantha's guy." Genevieve cast a sidelong glance at him. "Aren't you afraid that she might come after you?"

☒ That elicited a laugh from a solemn Cooper. “Over the past twenty years, Samantha had been using me like a pawn. She and I have unfinished business for turning me against the Rachford family! Besides, there are many in the Faulkner family, and not all of them are on the best of terms with her. So right now, she is the one who ought to be afraid of me.”

☒ He then turned to Genevieve and went on, “This man was the one who instigated Maria against you, Genev. What do you want to do with him?”

☒ Genevieve lowered her head briefly in contemplation. “Didn’t he enjoy breaking other people’s bones? Get someone to crush his limbs and feed him whatever it was that Maria gave me.”

☒ The man in the chair struggled desperately upon hearing that. He glared at Genevieve as if to warn her against messing with someone who worked for Samantha.

☒ From the look in his eyes, Genevieve more or less got the hint. Chuckling, she arched her head back to regard Cooper. “Help me record a video of this. I want to send it to Samantha.”

☒ Cooper was stunned, but he promptly nodded. “Go on and wait outside. I got this covered.”

☒ Waving his hand, he beckoned to the waiter on standby outside to take Genevieve to the rooftop garden above the club premises, where she would be served refreshments.

☒ Leaning casually back into her chair, Genevieve only managed to have two sips of the tisane when a video attachment from Cooper came in.

☒ Without even reviewing the multimedia file, she brought up Samantha’s number and straight up forwarded it to her.

☒ A minute later, Genevieve gave Samantha a call.

☒ “Genevieve Rachford!” The first thing that came through when the call connected was Samantha’s furious hollers. “How dare you mess with my people?”

☒ “Seeing that your people have the gall to turn my own housekeeper against me, why wouldn’t I?” Genevieve’s brows quirked up.

☒ That demeanor of hers set Samantha in a rightful fit. “Did you really think I don’t know why you married Armand? Hmph, do you think I wouldn’t dare lay a finger on a disgraced heiress like you just because you’ve made yourself Mrs. Faulkner now?”

☒ “Take your best shot.” Genevieve traced a fingertip around the mouth of the glass, and the calmness of her eyes belied the daggers that were veiled beneath. “This will be my first and last warning to you, Samantha. If you dare to try anything against me again, expect to get it much, much worse than that driver of yours did.”