

Chapter 241 Favorite Gift

'Don't I like him?'

Of course I like him!" Gabrielle thought.

"Every girl in Antawood likes Westley," Gabrielle said casually.

"So you're not denying it? That you like him? Gabrielle, you have more chances to win his heart than any other woman out there. After all, you're his legal wife now and you two live together. It'll be a shame if you don't seize this huge opportunity," Wendy said, trying to persuade Gabrielle. "I know you are smart and you can manage yourself well. You understand what I mean, don't you? I'm saying this for your own good."

'For my own good!'

She hated hearing that phrase ever since she was young.

Gabrielle was put in a lot of awkward situations even if she didn't like it. She had no choice but to follow what Wendy arranged for her because she wanted to stay with the Jones family. She endured

all those for Bryce.

"Mom, I..."

"Gabrielle, there you are. Oh, Aunt Wendy!" Lance's excited voice interrupted them.

"What are you two talking about here? Why don't you come in?" Lance beamed at Gabrielle.

"Lance, why did you come out? You should accompany your grandpa. Who knows when he'd start looking for his favorite grandson?" Wendy tapped him on the shoulder. "Gabrielle and I are just having a chat. We haven't seen each other for a long time since she married into the Morris family. We have so much to talk about." Wendy clearly wanted to remind him of their status.

Lance was the eldest grandson and the successor of the Carter family. Therefore, he would inherit the Carter Group. Gabrielle, on the other hand, had married into the Morris family and became Westley's wife.

They were not in a position to be intimate with each other. ②

"You're right. Did I interrupt your

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conversation with Gabrielle?" Lance understood what Wendy was trying to say, but he didn't care.

He would be the master of the Carter family in the future, and he wouldn't let anyone dictate what he shouldn't do.

"We just finished actually. Did you need something?" Wendy smiled awkwardly.

"I came out to answer a phone call. I saw Gabrielle, so I came to say hello. Are these orchids for grandpa? Let me carry them for you," Lance said, taking the two pots of flowers from Gabrielle and held them in his arms.

"Thank you, cousin Lance." Gabrielle thanked him.

"Don't mention it. It's just two pots of flowers." Lance gave a small smile.

"Then, let's go inside to meet your grandfather and send him birthday wishes." Wendy waved, walking through the entrance.

"Gabrielle, are you okay? Did Aunt Wendy make things awkward for you?" Lance asked, noticing Gabrielle spacing out.

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"No, she didn't. Everything's fine," Gabrielle replied flatly.

"Is Westley coming?" That was what Lance cared about most.

"He's busy right now, so I don't think he'd have free time to come over." There was a hint of disappointment in Gabrielle's tone, but she hid it well and Lance hadn't noticed.

But then, Lance couldn't help but smile to himself hearing about Westley's absence.

'He really shouldn't come here at all. He's not welcome anyway.

"I guess this happens a lot, huh? It's second nature for him to be busy." Lance seemed very pleased and Gabrielle thought it was odd.

"Cousin Lance, are you alright?" Gabrielle looked at him, puzzled. Why was he so happy that Westley couldn't come to the party?

"Of course. Come, let's go inside." Lance cleared his throat, toning down on his delight.

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"Well, I'll go greet Grandpa first." With a smile, Gabrielle turned to the entrance.

Kylo sat in the middle of the banquet hall. He sported a red, Chinese styled suit that made him look so much younger. He was surrounded by the Carter family, and all around the people were talking to each other, bringing the party to life.

Gabrielle basically knew everyone present, but she didn't know them very well. They didn't know much about her either, except for the fact that she was adopted by the Jones family.

Gabrielle greeted the elders obediently and walked up to Kylo.

"Happy Birthday, grandpa. May you stay forever young." Gabrielle grinned.

"Ah, Gabrielle! Come here!" Kylo beckoned her excitedly and she smiled.

Gabrielle took the two pots of orchids from Lance and walked up towards her grandfather. "Grandpa, this is my birthday gift for you. I remembered orchids were your favorite. I hope you'll like them."

"Potted flowers? How cheap!" one of the guests whispered. "The Jones family

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ought to teach her proper manners."

Gabrielle had expected that someone would say so. After all these flowers weren't anything special. Anyone could buy them at the market.

These people were at the top of the food chain and obviously wouldn't send something as cheap as flower pots as gifts.

Wendy felt a little embarrassed. Gabrielle's gift was unconventional for someone in the Jones family. But Kylo liked her gifts very much. She felt uncomfortable hearing such nasty comments.

"Oh my, such lovely moth orchids! The colors are striking purple and blue, I like them very much," Kylo said happily. "This is the most thoughtful gift I received today. Thank you, Gabrielle. It's my favorite one out of all the others."

He didn't care how the others would feel. Those who dared to mock Gabrielle's gifts didn't know any better.

Kylo didn't like gold jewelry, famous paintings, or vases. Those were typical. He preferred the well-chosen gifts from

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Gabrielle.

Even though they were a lot less expensive, he still liked them very much.

"I'm glad, grandpa. I went to the flower market some time ago and chose these because they reminded me of you. I knew you'd love them." Gabrielle stood beside Kylo with a sweet smile on her face.

"Gabrielle, is there anything you want right now? I'll buy it for you." Kylo took her hand.

"Oh, no, grandpa. You're supposed to receive gifts on your birthday, not give them." Gabrielle giggled gently.

"Well, I ought to give you something for cheering me up all the time." The butler beside Kylo handed out a red envelope. The old man took it and gave it to Gabrielle. "This is for you."

She didn't need to guess how much the red pocket was worth. The shape gave it away.

"Grandfather, this is too much. I..."

"No, you can't refuse grandpa. If you don't accept it, I won't accept your gifts

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either!" Kylo pouted, pretending to be angry.

Gabrielle couldn't help but smile at her grandfather's antics. "Then, I accept your generosity, grandpa. Thank you very much."

"That's my Gabby." Kylo smiled, his eyes twinkling.

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Mindy and Lance had many cousins who had also come to the party. They all presented their birthday gifts to Kylo, but none received much high praise for it. Everyone's gifts had been carefully curated and were more expensive than Gabrielle's two pots of flowers. ①

Nevertheless, Gabrielle received top compliments and even a bank card for the two pots of cheap flowers she had gifted. Everyone grew envious of this.

It seemed as though Gabrielle was a conniving lady that knew how to please Kylo.

"Gabrielle is a really shrewd and scheming woman."

"I've always told you of her cunning nature. She is only the adopted daughter in the Jones family, but she pretends as though she's the real daughter."

"That's why I told you to stay away from her. Nothing good ever comes from

messing around with her."

"Look at how happily she smiles! I really want to wipe it off of her bitchy face, once and for all."

"Did you see cousin Lance standing next to her? He is so enchanted by her witching face!"

"I really want to rip her to shreds, what do you suggest I do?!" 6

There were many vicious comments and complaints being whispered from the young people, and even the women next to Wendy were uttering mean things in low voices. After all, being relatives of the Carter family, they were present at Kylo's birthday party, and so had to be careful what they were heard talking about.

"It was surprising to me that Gabrielle received such high praise from Zaid, just by gifting two pots of ordinary moth orchids." 7

"The key to a nice gift is the thought that goes into it, not the price or how much you spend on it. She gave him exactly what he likes; even some pieces of grass from her could make Kylo happy!"

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"Wendy brought her up well even though she is only an adopted daughter ... unlike my own daughter, who is stubborn and highly extravagant."

"My daughter is the same, she has a bad temperament. How can I expect her to be nice to others, when she isn't even nice to me? Honestly, I am just satisfied as long as she doesn't piss me off."

"Wendy is the best. We should learn how to educate children from her."

"Wendy, how did you bring Gabrielle up?" Several rich ladies surrounded Wendy and put forth their questions to her.

Wendy felt proud and honored, especially because Kyle thought highly of Gabrielle.

Those who were passing bad comments about Gabrielle's gifts being cheap were only embarrassing themselves. Now that the tables had turned, how insulted did they feel?

"I didn't teach her much. Gabrielle was talented, I just gave her some advice on top of her good manners. When we went to the orphanage, we immediately liked

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Gabrielle when we met her. We thought she was cute and smart, and she really was!" Wendy said proudly.

The rich ladies looked at each other in disdain, but forced a tight smile on their faces to hide how they truly felt.

"Wendy is truly blessed, and Gabrielle too, for the way Wendy has taught her."

At half past five, all the celebrities invited by Kylo from Antawood began to arrive. Many of the relatives in the Carter family began to move out of the hall to make space for the celebrities, as they congratulated Kylo.

Both the eldest son and grandson were with Kylo, and the younger generation went out into the open garden to celebrate and continue the light-hearted festivities.

Gabrielle went off to the side alone, on the pretext of grabbing some fresh air by herself and waiting for the Morris family to arrive later. In fact, she was hoping Westley would arrive and was secretly waiting for him.

However, part of Gabrielle didn't want Westley to come to the event because

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she didn't want to give Wendy a chance to announce their marriage to the public.

Nevertheless, she thought it would be nice to have him there.

Deep in her conflicted thoughts, she hadn't noticed two people had walked up to her.

"Gabrielle, why are you standing here alone? You were a hit in there, weren't you? Among all the younger relatives your gift was the worst, the cheapest and the most worthless - but Grandpa absolutely loved it! Tut-tut, I didn't expect that from you!" Mindy's voice was dripping with sarcasm, as she looked at Gabrielle with heavy, scornful eyes.

Gabrielle turned around to see whose voice it belonged to, and she found Mindy and Cherie standing next to her. Cherie was the daughter of the Bennet family. The Carters and Bennets had been good friends for many generations, so that explained Cherie and Mindy's close friendship, as well as Cherie's liking towards Lance. Gabrielle knew how Cherie felt about Lance, so naturally she was hostile towards Gabrielle, who was quite close to Lance.

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Gabrielle had always felt as though girls were naturally inclined to dislike her, making her their enemy for very silly or non-existing reasons.

"When gifting, it's the thought that counts, not the price. It was obvious to Grandfather that was the case with my gift, because I had carefully chosen a gift that was exactly to his liking. What's the problem with that?" Gabrielle said coldly. She hated Mindy, who was also her cousin.

"Yes, you are right. But it was bad of you to embarrass everyone else in public for their presents. Ours were well-chosen, too; you weren't the only one who thought hard about your gift!" Mindy's hands shook as she spoke, one holding a wine glass. She had a malicious smile on her face.

"Mindy, today is Grandfather's birthday. I don't want to quarrel with you. Now, if there's nothing else, I'm going to go." Gabrielle was about to leave, but Mindy stopped her. Just as she was about to turn around to go the other way, Cherie blocked her.

"Miss Bennet, there are no hard feelings or grudges between us. Excuse me,

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please," Gabrielle said softly, as she threw Cherie an emotionless look.

"Yes ... no grudges between us, but Lance is so close to you. I was talking to him, but as soon as he saw you coming, he immediately left me and ran to you. What do you think of that? Shouldn't I hate you?" Cherie and Mindy were exactly alike, in their arrogant, domineering and cunning ways. No wonder they got on like a house on fire.

Mindy and Cherie were two people Gabrielle couldn't and wouldn't offend, because it would do more harm than good.

"Lance is my cousin. Can't he greet me when he sees me? Anyway, we've always been close throughout our whole life. Did you notice that only today?" Gabrielle said calmly, suppressing her anger.

She held back on slapping her - if it wasn't her Grandfather's birthday, she definitely would have!

These two brats needed to be taught a lesson, once and for all.

"Gabrielle, you are - Just stay away from him! He isn't your brother; he's your

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cousin!" Cherie almost revealed to Gabrielle that Lance liked the latter. ③

She had accidentally found out that Lance had feelings for Gabrielle, which explained why she was so resentful towards her.

"That's none of your business, Cherie! Who do you think you are? How dare you order me to stay away from him?" Gabrielle said angrily, but her voice was still low.

"Well, as a married woman, you should behave like one. Don't go around trying to hook up with others. Although, I guess ... what else can a married woman do when her own husband doesn't like her at all?" said Cherie, menacingly.

'A married woman:

Not liked by her husband?

Flirting and hooking up with others?

How did Cherie know this?' Except for Mindy, Gabrielle couldn't think of who else would've told her. Mindy was her cousin, and she knew that Westley and Gabrielle were married. As she and Cherie were best friends, she would have definitely told Cherie the inside scoop on

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their marriage.

For Mindy, she had already regarded Cherie as her sister-in-law.

"Mindy, have you been passing comments on my marriage?" Gabrielle cast a cold glance at Mindy.

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Mindy trembled under Gabrielle's cold gaze, spilling the whole glass of wine on the hem of Gabrielle's dress.

The hemline of her silvery white dress was instantly stained with crimson, blooming like bright red flowers. The dress was ruined, but Mindy didn't feel any remorse at all. In fact, she raised her eyebrows with pride. ¹

"Now look what you made me do, Gabrielle. You spooked me all of a sudden! You should be grateful I didn't pour the wine from above your head," Mindy said, smiling sarcastically.

Gabrielle narrowed her eyes in anger. If looks could kill, she would have stabbed Mindy several times over by now. "Don't get ahead of yourself. Karma's going to bite you back soon."

"What did you say, Gabrielle?" A large cloud of displeasure had now spread over Mindy's face.

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Gabrielle looked away and stopped a waiter striding past with a tray of glasses in his hand. Picking one of the glasses, she took a contrived sip of the wine. "Wouldn't it be a pity to waste this wine that tastes so perfect tonight?" Gabrielle whispered, licking her lips.

"Could I have a pair of scissors?"

she said suddenly, turning to the waiter, a smirk on her face.

The waiter hurried away at once. And before Mindy could do anything, Gabrielle poured the drink from her glass on her chest.

The wine flowed down within and outside Mindy's dress.

The red wine soon suffused her light champagne-colored dress.

"What on earth is this, Gabrielle? !" Mindy bellowed.

"Ohh, Mindy. Isn't it just courteous that I reciprocate your act? I spilled a glass of red wine on you as you did earlier. And moreover, I poured it from top to bottom as you suggested. But, girl, doesn't your dress look just perfect now - the combination of light champagne and

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crimson?" Gabrielle said, her voice cold and a bitter smile in her dark eyes.

"Damn you, Gabrielle! I swear I'm going to kill you this very moment!" Windy screamed, enraged and anxious. 4

"Calm down, Windy. We've got a lot of important people present today in Grandpa Kylo's birthday party. You'll only be embarrassing yourself if you make a scene here," Cherie said, holding Mindy back.

"But..."

"Cherie indeed has more sense than you, Mindy. If you wish, you may not listen to her and I won't mind helping you make the scene. After all, I'm only an adopted daughter of the Jones family, and I have been criticized since I was a child. On the other hand, you are a real daughter of the Carter family. Do you think your grandfather will be pleased to see you making scenes at his birthday party? Don't you think he will dislike you more then?" Gabrielle interrupted Mindy, the coldness still glowing in her eyes.

Mindy had stepped back now, seething. She of course knew that Gabrielle and Cherie were right.

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"It's not over yet, Gabrielle. I'll bring you to your knees one day, and you will beg me miserably!" Mindy bared her teeth, wagging an angry finger at Gabrielle's face.

The waiter soon returned to the wine-stained women backing off from a fight or a quarrel or just something just as dramatic. He glanced calmly at them. In his stay here at the Twilight Hotel, he had become so used to seeing such upper class women fight each other like little girls.

"Here are the scissors you asked for, Miss."

Handing the scissors to Gabrielle, he smiled gently as though he hadn't noticed the scene.

"Thank you."

"Is there anything else you need me to do for you?"

"I need you to forget whatever you just saw here," Gabrielle said with a faint smile, and the waiter left immediately, bowing understandingly.

All the staff here were sophisticated and

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careful not to offend these rich and powerful customers of theirs who were very difficult to handle.

Holding the scissors, Gabrielle glanced at the part of her dress where Mindy had spilled the wine. It was not all that terrible, though. Then she bent slightly and snipped off the hemline of her dress half an inch above her knees, exposing her slender white legs.

Then almost at once, she shoved the scissors and the cut hemline into Mindy's hands.

"What is the meaning of this, Gabrielle?" Mindy asked, her voice trembling with both surprise and rage. Gabrielle had messed her dress with the wine, and here she was again giving her the scissors and hemline. 3

"I am only handing the evidence of your crime over to you."

As Gabrielle replied, a malignant smile was found at the corners of her mouth.

Mindy glowered at her. Yet, deep within, her heart fluttered with slight fear. She wondered why Gabrielle had become this brutal and domineering. Was it simply

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because she was now married to Westley?

The man obviously didn't love her. He hadn't even made their marriage public yet. So what on earth was Gabrielle proud of?

"The lady of the Morris family has arrived!" The butler's voice rang from afar.

At once, Gabrielle beamed with smiles and scurried towards the entrance to meet Miley.

"Grandma!" Gabrielle called out, her voice lit with delight. ①

Standing beside the car she had just got off, Miley watched happily as the younger lady ran towards her and embraced her. "Did you come in order to pick me up, Gabrielle?"

"Yes, Grandma." She didn't stop smiling. "Uncle and Aunt, let me take you inside to see Grandpa." She turned to Mr. Morris and Mrs. Morris, the two people behind Miley. They were Westley's parents.

Mr. Morris smiled warmly at Gabrielle; he held nothing against her. But Mrs. Morris frowned at her. She didn't like the young lady at all.

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She had always preferred Nellie for a daughter-in-law, and now she could only but blame Bryce for Nellie's escaping from the wedding. Somehow, she still suspected that the Jones family had planned that out. They must be doubly happy now that they had their son taken a daughter of Collins family away and their daughter married to a son of the Morris family.

The manipulative ways of the Jones family had always repulsed Mrs. Morris, making her dislike Gabrielle, an adopted daughter of the Jones.

She knew that, although the young lady looked quite harmless, her mind was full of manipulation and malice. One couldn't expect a family as uncultured as the Jones family to raise a good kid.

Miley had insisted on coming to Kylo's birthday party with them, and Mrs. Morris wondered if Gabrielle and Wendy had schemed that out, too. ①

'Will the marriage between Gabrielle and Westley be announced at the party?' Then Westley wouldn't be able to divorce easily if Nellie returned in the future, since everyone had known that the

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Morris family and Jones family were united by marriage.

The thought of it made Mrs. Morris burn with more hatred for Gabrielle.

"Take me in to meet your grandfather, Gabrielle. We are now relatives by marriage!" Miley said, grinning.

The words 'relatives by marriage' made Gabrielle tremble. She gazed at Miley, her mouth agape in nervous embarrassment. "Grandma, my marriage with Westley hasn't been made public yet. Even Grandpa knows nothing about it. Could you please not say anything about it for a while?" 1

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Gabrielle thought she shouldn't mention it without Westley's permission; she was afraid that Westley would blame her if he was unhappy. 3

Gabrielle hadn't realized when she had begun to care about what Westley thought.

She had decided therefore, not to do anything that Westley disliked or disapproved of, even if it would make Miley unhappy.

The smile on Miley's face vanished. Although she understood what Gabrielle meant, she was not willing to give in. "Gabrielle, I actually like that you and Westley are together. This is a good opportunity..."

"Mom, Gabrielle has insisted not to announce their relationship to the public, right now. Besides, I think this order came from Westley itself. Please don't mention anything about it now; I'm afraid it will cause unnecessary trouble

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later. Moreover, the news will overshadow Kylo's birthday celebrations, and that won't be nice. If they really want to make it public, they can choose another special day to announce it." Mrs. Morris interrupted Miley at once. She was terrified that Miley would rush in and tell Kylo all about it.

"What do you mean?" Miley looked unhappy and suspicious, as she sensed Mrs. Morris was obviously standing in the way of her plans.

"Mom, I'm insisting on this for the sake of both our families. Today is Kylo's birthday, not an ordinary party. We should respect that." Mrs. Morris continued to ramble, feeling highly pressurized.

"Grandma, I think Mrs. Morris is right. If we really want to make it public, let's discuss it together and pick another time. Today is not the right time for this." Gabrielle attempted to persuade Miley, in a strained, serious voice.

"Okay, okay. We can talk about it later. We are here for Mr. Kylo's birthday. I won't say anything, okay?" Miley compromised, though she was not completely won over on the issue.

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Miley had thought it out very well in her head. She really liked Gabrielle, and she had made up her mind that as long as she was alive, Gabrielle would indeed be her granddaughter-in-law. She had thought Kylo's birthday party would be the perfect opportunity to announce Gabrielle being part of the Morris family - seeing as it was such a joyous event and mostly all the relatives would be present. She had thought Kylo would also be happy about the news.

But now, she had to give up on this plan. After all, Gabrielle wasn't going anywhere - she was always going to remain the daughter-in-law of the Morris family - so it wouldn't make much of a difference if they announced it earlier or later.

"Thank you, Grandma, for understanding! You're the best. Let's go inside now." Gabrielle felt relieved as she gladly walked back into the hotel, holding Miley's hand.

Mindy and Cherie had been watching the incident from the sidelines, and pouted their lips unhappily. They seemed upset.

"Mindy, didn't you say that Gabrielle was

not liked by the Morris family? You told me Westley hates her, but why does Miley seem to love her?" Cherie hissed.

Mindy had told her not to worry that her brother, Lance, would like a bitchy woman like Gabrielle because she had married Westley. Cherie, however, couldn't believe they were married at all.

What kind of a man was Westley? He was the head of the Morris family, which also happened to be the most powerful family in Antawood. He was the most sought-after husband in all of Antawood and Gabrielle was just an adopted daughter from the Jones family. How did she end up marrying him?

Cherie began to grow increasingly suspicious and jealous of the situation. Why did God favor a scheming woman like Gabrielle? ④

Although Cherie questioned the authenticity of this information, Mindy swore it true on her life. They got married not because they loved each other, but because Gabrielle had offended Westley for some reason. Mindy said that every time the family got together, for a meal or something else, it was evident that Westley didn't regard Gabrielle very

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highly - it also seemed as though Gabrielle was afraid of him. She thus concluded that the whole Morris family hated Gabrielle too.

But then, why did the Morris family start to love Gabrielle within such a short period? They even attended Kylo's birthday party because of Gabrielle.

Everyone knew Kylo's birthday party was held every year. His parties were grand and glorious, and many famous people in Antawood were invited. However, the Morris family seldom showed up, just sending a birthday gift instead.

This year, however, Miley attended with her son and daughter-in-law. Didn't that prove how important and well-regarded Gabrielle was to the Morris family?

"I don't know what happened, Cherie. I can't explain it." Mindy was now completely confused.

When she had dinner at the Jones family's house the other day, she had seen the disgusted looks Westley had made at Gabrielle. Moreover, why hadn't they announced such major news as their marriage to the public yet? Surely, if you were happy about it and you liked

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the new bride, you would want everyone to know about it, wouldn't you? All these unanswered questions had made Mindy confident that the Morris family and Westley despised Gabrielle.

But now it seemed that she had got it all wrong.

From what they saw, it looked like Miley liked Gabrielle very much. Mr. Morris and Mrs. Morris even came to the birthday party for her. Why would they do all this if they didn't like Gabrielle?

"Mindy, I trust you because I guess you have no reason to lie. But it's pretty obvious that Gabrielle is not hated, nor disliked, by the Morris family - on the contrary, they seem to love her!" Cherie exclaimed, unhappily.

Not only had Gabrielle managed to get into the Morris family by marrying Westley, but she had also earned the love and respect of the elders in the family. How lucky for her - and how very unlucky for Cherie, much to her dismay.

"When I saw the couple with the Jones family, it seemed that Westley really hated her. Maybe Gabrielle found some way or the other to getting around the

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elders in the Morris family. After all, she always knew how to please my grandfather right from her childhood. But I still don't think Westley likes her very much; why else would he not come today? Only Miley, Mr. Morris and Mrs. Morris attended the party. So I don't think you should worry too much about it, Cherie. We all know what kind of person Westley is - there's no way he could like Gabrielle," Mindy consoled Cherie.

Cherie began to feel better when she heard Mindy's justification.

"You're right, what worked for the elders won't work for Westley. That man is not easy to deal with," Cherie sneered.

Gabrielle was better off staying alone and not being loved her whole life, rather than being married to Westley!

However, she was uncomfortable when she saw how well Gabrielle was adored and liked by the elders of the Morris family.

"Don't worry, Cherie. A cunning person like Gabrielle won't stay in the Morris family for a long time." Mindy cursed Gabrielle.

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"You're right, I'm overthinking it. Let's go and get your dress changed. The dinner is about to begin." Cherie was reminded of how ruthless Gabrielle was when she saw the red-wine stains on Mindy's dress.

She felt as though she had underestimated Gabrielle. She'd better be careful in the future.

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Love You In My Heart

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At six o'clock, the party officially began. First, Kylo gave an opening speech.

"Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to attend my birthday party today. Please enjoy it and make yourself comfortable. Let your hair down and have fun!"

Kylo exclaimed with a bright smile on his face.

The main purpose of Kylo's birthday party was to give everyone a great, joyful evening, without any rules restricting the guests.

"Okay, it's time to party! Let's dance," Kylo said excitedly, and the music blared from the speakers.

This signaled the start of the annual birthday party - Kylo always gave a speech first, followed by the opening dance.

"I have a special idea to do something

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different this year." Kylo was a really fun person, who always liked to do what he wanted.

Everyone leaned forward as they looked at him expectantly - they were all waiting with bated breath for his idea.

"I won't participate in the opening dance, this year. I want to give the chance to my favorite eldest grandson, the young master of the Carter family - Lance!" Kylo announced happily.

After Mrs. Carter's death, Kylo would always dance with his daughter at the birthday party. But this year, he giving the opportunity to his grandson, Lance, was a gesture beyond what the mere opening dance would mean. The meaning behind it was clear to all.

Half of the people in the crowd were surprised by it, but the other half had expected it.

As the eldest grandson of the Carter family and the successor of the Carter Group, Lance was now the leading male person in the family. As a young, eligible bachelor, it was his time to get married.

It now made sense that although it was

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Kylo's birthday party, it was the perfect opportunity to select a suitable partner for Lance.

It was a matchmaking party!

Only for the parents who had daughters of a marriageable age, of course.

Lance was the young master of the big Carter family, who were not the wealthiest, but were immensely popular and highly-respected in Antawood. It was very honorable to marry into the Carter family, and the girl was sure to lead a comfortable and rich life.

More importantly, Lance was very handsome.

He was powerful, with charming looks, making him a highly-sought after boy.

Hence, many girls grabbed their chance and took the initiative to stand up and come to the limelight as soon as Kylo made his announcement. Some came forward of their own accord and others who were unwilling were pushed by their parents. The elders automatically took a step back.

And just like that, the opening dance turned into a matchmaking ceremony, or

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rather, a concubine ceremony, as though he would marry who he chose tonight.

Moreover, Lance didn't have any female companions tonight, so the position was open to all. They stood excitedly as they anticipated being picked.

All the girls were shy but they didn't want to lose to any of the other eligible women. Everyone wanted to be the most beautiful lady, and they instantly fell for Lance, at first sight.

The only regrets they had were that they did not dress sexily enough - if only they had known tonight would be a matchmaking event for Lance, they would've worked harder to look more attractive!

"Grandpa, I don't think it's a good idea ... I don't have a partner." Lance couldn't bear the sudden pressure of the situation.

He didn't have a dancing partner, so he hadn't planned on dancing at all. He also ruled Gabrielle out because she didn't like dancing, more so in front of so many people.

In fact, Gabrielle had never danced in

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front of him before, so Lance was not sure whether she knew how to dance or not.

Now his grandfather suddenly thrust such a big task onto him - this turned out to be a major problem for Lance.

"I know you didn't have a partner, so I decided to give you this opportunity, so you can choose one for yourself. See? Look at all the girls who want to be your partner - they all seem to stand out, especially the women in the front row, who are quite excellent. You can choose and invite anyone you like." Kylo was in a very cheery mood as he glanced at the rows of girls waiting to be picked.

Sure enough, his Lance was very popular.

All he needed to do was say one word and many pretty girls followed suit. Lance had always said he was too busy to find a girlfriend, and Kylo had been impatient to have a grandson, an heir, so he used this grand birthday party as an excuse to find him a girlfriend.

Lance knew what was on Kylo's mind, and he thought it was a major blow. He was infuriated that he didn't have a choice in the situation, or even a chance

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to escape!

Now that Kylo had announced it to everyone so publicly, he was in a dilemma; he couldn't worm his way out of this. His only option was to dance.

Lance glanced at the rows of the girls who were waiting to be picked, until his eyes fell upon Gabrielle, who was sitting with Miley.

Gabrielle had not seemed to be interested in this turn of events, where Lance was appointed to do the opening dance. She sat by Miley filially, serving her with tea and fruit.

"Gabrielle, your cousin is really handsome. I think many girls admire him." Miley glanced at the dancing pool and shared some light-hearted gossip.

Gabrielle was amused by Miley. She peeled an orange for her and tried one piece, before deeming it sweet enough and handing it to her. "Here, Grandma, this sweet orange is for you. And yes, my cousin is excellent. He has been doing well since he was a child and as you can see, he is very good-looking. He is quite the popular choice among girls, right from his childhood."

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Gabrielle reminisced on Lance's consistently impressive record all his life. He was great throughout primary and middle school, which added to his popularity and excellence as a junior.

Miley took the orange from Gabrielle and bit into it. "It's very sweet - because it's peeled by you, Gabrielle."

"I'm glad you like it. I'll peel a sweeter one for you later." Gabrielle was very happy to sit by Miley and accompany her; she was not in the mood to dance anyway. More importantly, she was not very good at ballroom dancing. She didn't want to humiliate herself if she ended up making a fool out of herself.

"I wonder which lady your cousin will choose tonight." Miley was such a gossip!

"Grandpa suddenly sprang this on him, plus there are so many young and pretty ladies here. I don't think he's the type of person to pick one and offend the others. He probably would pick his cousin sister or something. Grandpa didn't tell him to choose a lady, did he?" Gabrielle said, knowing Lance well. 4

"Gabrielle, I think maybe he will pick you, as you're his cousin sister?" Miley

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suggested.

Lance began to stride towards them, turning all the heads of those present as he walked. Miley's words seemed to come from a knowing place, because why else would Lance walk towards them? People around them were all elders - Gabrielle was the only young person there. Who else would he come to?

Gabrielle raised her head and looked in his direction. As expected, Lance, dressed in a black suit, was walking towards her. His eyes met hers as he smiled at her.

'Damn it!

Really? Is Lance trying to use me as a shield or an excuse to not pick any of the others?'

After Mindy had changed out of her dress, she and Cherie had stood close to Lance, waiting to get picked.

Cherie had been really looking forward to this moment. When she found out that Lance was propped up as the center of attention for today's opening dance, she was sure she would be picked as his dancing partner. She wanted to feel like the princess of the ball! She was sure

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Lance would pick her - they had, after all, grown up together and were quite familiar with each other. Who else would he pick?

But Cherie's heart began to tug and a lump formed in her throat when she saw Lance walk slowly towards Gabrielle.

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Love You In My Heart

Chapter 246 She Is Not His Type

With everyone gazing and staring at the two of them, Lance casually strolled up to Gabrielle in his suave manner, bent down and reached his hand out to Gabrielle. He was charming everyone with his gentlemanly manners. "Gabrielle, may I invite you to dance with me?"

Gabrielle, halfway through peeling her orange, grew startled by the sudden gesture.

She hadn't expected Lance to come to her and invite her directly. He should have just danced with Mindy and no one would have had anything to say about it.

But there would be a skirmish if Lance danced with Gabrielle. Most of the guests knew that she was an adopted daughter of the Jones family and so she wasn't related to Lance by blood.

Instead of choosing from many of his real cousins from the Carter family, Lance chose Gabrielle, who wasn't even his real cousin. People would definitely

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overthink and talk about this.

Gabrielle already heard some people whispering around her. Although their voices weren't loud, Gabrielle knew they weren't saying anything nice.

"Lance, I'm not a good dancer, and I'm not keen on dancing in front of so many people, either." Gabrielle lowered her voice and looked at Lance as her cheeks reddened in embarrassment.

"I know you're not a good dancer, Gabrielle, but it doesn't matter. I can lead, and you just follow my moves. It's just a formality. It's not a big deal." Lance was insistent - he was determined to dance with Gabrielle today.

Gabrielle could feel the countless pairs of eyes staring at her, and one was more prominent than the others - Cherie's. Cherie was so angry, she could kill Gabrielle right there.

'How many enemies is Lance creating for me?!' Gabrielle thought regretfully.

"But Lance..."

"Gabrielle, does Lance usually treat you well?" Miley asked Gabrielle, thoughtfully interrupting the scene.

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Gabrielle didn't understand what Miley meant, but she obediently nodded her head in response. "Yes, Grandma, Lance has been nice to me ever since we were children ... just like my own brother."

Miley immediately smiled. She knew the innocent relationship Lance and Gabrielle shared, so she relieved Gabrielle and encouraged her to dance with him.

"Gabrielle, since your Lance treats you so well, you should return the favor and dance with him," Miley said kindly.

Gabrielle was now confused. What was Miley trying to do by getting her to dance with Lance? She had also heard the hushed gossip around them - surely she knew what everyone was thinking!

"But Grandma, I'm not good at dancing," said Gabrielle hesitantly.

"Gabrielle, I believe you can do it. Lance won't laugh at you if you make mistakes."

Miley turned and looked at Lance.

How smart and shrewd Miley was! She could see through anyone.

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Lance looked at Gabrielle with more than just a familial gaze; his eyes were soft with tenderness and love. Gabrielle had been so naive and innocent that she took his kindness and generosity in a brotherly manner.

"Yes, Mrs. Morris. I won't laugh at Gabrielle," Lance said seriously.

"Gabrielle, do Lance a favor. Go dance," Miley ordered Gabrielle.

Gabrielle had no excuses to refuse Lance's offer when she heard Miley's words. She put down the half-peeled orange on the table and stood up.

"I'll be right back after the dance, Grandma," Gabrielle said to Miley, her voice taking on a solemn tone.

Miley smiled kindly and nodded. "Yes, go and dance. Have fun, and don't worry about the time! I don't need you anytime soon to help me over here."

Gabrielle was surprised at how enthusiastically Miley insisted on Gabrielle dancing with Lance. Was she being genuine, or did she have other intentions?

"Okay, here we go."

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Gabrielle stopped worrying, and took Lance's hand. She was now past the point of caring about what Miley was really thinking.

"Mrs. Morris, Gabrielle and I are going to dance," Lance said, before holding Gabrielle's hand and walking towards the dance floor with her.

The music started. Gabrielle started to dance slowly, following Lance's lead.

She was quite unfamiliar with any of the popular dancing steps, as she had never been a fan of dancing or parties. She had to follow Lance's steps to keep up with the rhythm.

"Gabrielle, don't be so nervous. Just follow me. You can dance very well. Trust me."

"I'm sorry Lance. It seems that I only cause you trouble, somehow. I'm not good at dancing," Gabrielle said guiltily.

She was aware that there were many people who were waiting to see Gabrielle make a fool of herself. They secretly hoped something bad or funny would happen to her, right then and there.

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She was not regarded as a princess, nor a queen. All she was, was a silly clown, dancing for everyone's amusement.

"No. Gabrielle, you've already kept good pace with me. By the way, what's wrong with your dress? If I remember correctly, weren't you wearing a long dress?" Lance didn't want her to continue feeling nervous, so he changed the topic to make her feel more relaxed.

When Gabrielle had gotten out of the car upon her arrival, her dress was long enough to touch the ground, but now it was as much shorter - it was above her knees! It didn't look normal.

"Well, it was a little torn, so I just cut it," Gabrielle said, vaguely. She didn't want to tell Lance that Mindy had poured wine on her dress to ruin it.

Besides, Cherie, who was standing next to Mindy, was close to screeching in anger.

"Is my dress ugly?" asked Gabrielle, now self-conscious.

"It's not ugly. It's beautiful. Our Gabrielle is beautiful, no matter what kind of dress she's in. Don't you see how much people

adore and admire you?" Lance comforted Gabrielle. ②

Gabrielle didn't think anyone was admiring her; in fact, all of them hated her. They probably assumed that she stole the limelight and the opportunity to be Lance's dancing partner - and even possibly, his future mate - on purpose.

And now Cherie had all the more reason to sabotage her!

Lance danced slowly and simply so Gabrielle could keep up with him, and ended up missing a few beats. This created a stir among the crowd.

"Damn, does Gabrielle not know how to dance? Her rhythm is totally off! She looks stupid."

"Yes, exactly. It's also affecting Mr. Carter's rhythm, so both their dance moves are all wrong now."

"Gabrielle is so stupid. Don't dance if you don't know how to dance! She looks like a fool." ①

"Does she like Mr. Carter?"

"What are you talking about? She is Mr. Carter's cousin!"

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"What cousin? She is an adopted daughter of the Jones family, so she is not related to Mr. Carter by blood. She's a fake cousin, not a real one."

"That makes sense now - she looks like a scheming woman."

"Why else would she dance when she doesn't even know how to?"

"Does Mr. Carter like her? Mr. Carter invited her, after all, didn't he?"

"Shut your damn mouth! My brother has better standards - this cunning Gabrielle is not his type!" Mindy finally burst out and told off the socialites who were gossiping behind her as she couldn't stand the discussion about her brother any longer.

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The women stopped talking immediately when Mindy burst out. They realized that no matter what the relationship between Lance and Gabrielle was, it had nothing to do with them.

They also didn't want to offend Mindy any further and do any harm, so they quickly shut up.

"Cherie, don't overthink it. My brother picked her because they were close to one another and he feels comfortable with her; it's nothing else. Besides, a stupid woman like Gabrielle doesn't deserve my brother's love and won't win him over." Mindy comforted Cherie.

Cherie's heart had been thumping heavily in anger, like a volcano ready to explode, but she resisted from bursting out because she thought about safeguarding her image at the given occasion. So, no matter how furious she was, she had to force a smile on her face and pretend everything was okay.

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"Do you think I'm stupid, Mindy? Don't worry, I won't say anything. After all, it's my own business that I like Lance. We're here for Grandpa Carter and his birthday. I will behave myself." Cherie was more thoughtful than Mindy; more patient and calmer than the latter could ever be.

How could she, after all, lose her temper in such a situation?

She bit down her anger and held herself back no matter how infuriated she felt inside.

"Cherie, I know you can bear it if you try, but even I am struggling to do so. I feel so wronged for you," said Mindy, pitying Cherie.

Cherie had liked Lance for so many years now, but it had always been unrequited. Lance ignored her time and time again.

"There is no need to feel wronged for me. Like I said, it's my business and my own issue that I like Lance. Anyhow, I'm just going to get a glass of juice for myself. Would you like some, too?" Cherie wanted to leave, because it was really difficult for her to watch everything playing out anymore.

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"I'll come with you." Mindy followed her immediately.

Gabrielle tried to leave the dancing area as soon as the opening dance came to a close, but Lance held her waist tightly.

"The opening dance is over, Lance..." Gabrielle reminded him in a soft voice.

"It's not appropriate for us to leave as soon as the opening dance is over, Gabrielle. And see, everyone has started to dance as well, so let's just dance one more since we're here. You've really got the hang of dancing now, so we'll keep going. That way, you'll get some more practice." Lance attempted to shoot across lame justifications.

Even though his reasoning was ridiculous, Gabriele didn't feel like disappointing Lance, especially now that the others were also enjoying the party. She glanced in Miley's direction, and noticed that Miley had already stood up and merged herself in the middle of the crowd, taking photos with her mobile phone. She smiled happily and gestured for Gabrielle to continue dancing.

Gabrielle was confused with Miley's directions. Why was she encouraging her

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to keep going? ①

'I guess I can continue to dance for a while longer since Miley seems so happy,' thought Gabrielle.

"Okay, Lance, let's dance a little longer," said Gabrielle. She gave him a helpless smile.

Lance was overjoyed by her approval. "Super! I'll dance a little more slowly this time so you can follow me."

"No, that's okay. I can keep up with the rhythm," Gabrielle politely refused.

After all, Gabrielle had learnt dancing before. The strict Wendy had spent money and signed up Gabrielle for dancing classes in order to refine her dancing skills in the event that she find an appropriate husband from these sorts of occasions in the future.

Gabrielle had participated in many classes that rich women like her took - dancing, piano and flower arrangement, among some of them.

In fact, Gabrielle was grateful for the art lessons that Wendy had sent her for, because she did learn a lot from the lessons.

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"In that case, we can dance normally!" Lance held her hand with one hand and her waist with the other. He beamed happily.

In hindsight, Lance was very grateful that his grandfather suddenly ordered him to head the opening dance. It was a good enough excuse to get Gabrielle to dance with him.

Lance had thought about this day countless times, but he didn't have the right chance to do so. He hadn't expected that it would happen so soon.

Halfway through the next dance, the door to the banquet hall suddenly opened. Everyone immediately turned their attention towards the newcomers - a man and a woman.

The crowd began to raise their voices excitedly, as they spoke with one another.

"Oh my God! Isn't that the CEO of the Morris Group?"

"Wow! He's so handsome! He looks much better than in his photos!"

"I feel so lightheaded like I'm going to

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faint ... Maybe I'm going to fall in love with him just by looking at him."

"Freak! Mr. Morris's not going to fancy you!"

"Why has he come to Kylo's birthday party? Wait, isn't the woman holding his hand ...?"

"Damn it! That's Michelle, one of the popular advertising models. She's been featured and broadcasted on all the major TV channels. The products she represents range from daily necessities to luxury items - plus she's beautiful. Such a dream girlfriend."

"Wow! I wish she would be my goddess. Why is she with Westley?"

"Are they two dating?"

"Michelle's fame grew suddenly last year. Yes, she's gorgeous and has a great figure, but rumor has it that someone has been pumping money to make her famous. Apparently, she has a wealthy sugar daddy sponsoring her who gives her all the best resources. No one dares to treat her shabbily, of course!"

"Is the sugar daddy Westley?"

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"I hadn't always believed this rumor, but now that I see it, I believe it."

"But I know Westley. I haven't heard of any of his affairs or dating life - except when Nellie was his fiancée."

"Shit! I can't believe they are displaying such a high-profile relationship - are they publicly announcing it?"

"Ah ... I can't stand this. My beautiful goddess is sponsored by a sugar daddy."

Gabrielle had been dancing well with Lance, but as soon as Westley and Michelle appeared, everyone diverted their gazes towards the new couple.

They looked like a perfect match - the man was charming and the woman was truly beautiful.

But Gabrielle felt a sharp tug at her heart, as though it had been stabbed.

Her husband brought another woman to her grandfather's birthday party so publicly. Was he provoking or embarrassing her on purpose? ①

He had said he would attend the party, but not as her husband. This is what he

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meant.

Alvin said that he had been busy with a lot of meetings. It seems his business was Michelle.

She had assumed that Westley wasn't the kind of man who cheated on his wife, but now it seemed that she was wrong. This man was like all the other men.

If he was so public with one woman, he was capable of having another ten mistresses. After all, it was Westley, who was so rich he could buy any amount of women.

And then, they weren't a real couple. They would file for a divorce sooner or later, so no matter how many mistresses he had, it was not her business! It had nothing to do with her. 8

So why did she feel so uncomfortable? She felt her throat drying up as if there were large masses of cotton stuck in it. She felt as though it was difficult to breathe and her whole body grew rigid and uncomfortable.

Her eyes began to get red and her nose felt sore. She felt terrible. Gabrielle really hated herself being like this. Why was

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she always so deeply affected by Westley?

9

He was not her real husband and their marriage was definitely going to end in divorce soon, so he could have any mistress he wanted! It was not her concern.

She didn't want to feel terrible because of him. She had no real reason to.

"Gabrielle, what's wrong?" Lance grew worried when he saw her sad face.

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Chapter 248 Afraid That His Wife Will Be Snatched

It was forgivable that Westley didn't show up at the party with Gabrielle, but what was he thinking flaunting his entrance with a pop star by his side?

Was he trying to deliberately upset his wife?

Lance was appalled by this, but the fact that Gabrielle looked so sorrowfully disturbed seeing Westley and the woman together made him all the more despondent.

All this time, Lance believed that there was no love between Gabrielle and Westley; that everything would go back to normal as soon as Bryce and Nellie were caught.

However, love was inevitable. After they got married, something had changed.

Once a person fell in love, the chances of things reverting to the way it started would be near impossible.

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Gabrielle's apparent attraction to Westley was a heavy blow for Lance.

"Gabrielle, it's fine. You shouldn't feel too sad."

"Why would I be sad? There's nothing for me to be sad about." Gabrielle tried hard to hold back her distress. She remained as cool as a cucumber to hide how much Westley had affected her. 5

In a marriage of convenience, the one who fell in love first was always bound to lose.

Still, she had her sense of pride. She wasn't going to admit so easily.

Since their marriage hadn't been made public, Westley was free to bring any woman with him. It had nothing to do with her.

"Gabrielle, if you really feel uncomfortable..."

"Lance, shall we dance?" Gabrielle swiftly pulled him to the dance floor. 1

Now a blazing fire was burning deep in her heart, looking for a way out to engulf her whole being.

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She only hoped that no one would come to provoke her, or else she would definitely lose her temper.

"Let's dance, then. If that's what you want." They started swaying with the music, but Gabrielle's thoughts were elsewhere. Lance couldn't help but feel regretful.

At one corner, Cherie and Mindy were drinking to calm themselves, but Westley's sudden appearance with Michelle quelled their anger instantly.

"Cherie, did you see that? Westley's with Michelle, that rising star! She's only two years into her career, but look..." Mindy whispered excitedly.

They were elated when they had caught the scene where Gabrielle was betrayed.

'Great! Now even the taste of coffee is sweet to me. Sure enough, Gabrielle got a dose of her own medicine.'

"Yes, I know. Michelle's virtually everywhere these days. I mean, have you seen those ads?" Cherie narrowed her eyes and curiously stared at the duo slowly walking into the banquet hall.

In the eyes of many, they were a perfect

match.

"Rumor has it that Michelle has a very rich patron. She became a celebrity overnight after starring in an ad of a famous brand. Could Westley be pulling the strings for her? I wouldn't doubt it." Mindy smiled wickedly. "Too bad for Gabrielle. It's so humiliating for her to be claiming she's his wife when he has another woman in his arms. Maybe she thought she could cement her status as Mrs. Morris of the Morris group on her grandfather's birthday, but Westley slapped her in the face with this appearance. I'm enjoying the embarrassment he's serving her."

I suddenly feel sorry for her. Even in this situation, she has no right to question him. All her plans have gone down the drain." Mindy rambled on.

"Cherie, I told you. Westley hates Gabrielle very much. He never wanted to marry her. Now you believe me, right?" Mindy was so overjoyed she could celebrate wildly.

"Uh..." Unlike Mindy, Cherie didn't take so much pleasure in Gabrielle's situation. She just quietly watched Westley and Michelle walk intimately towards Miley

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standing by the dance floor.

Wasn't he afraid that Miley would be angry with him for introducing her to a woman who wasn't his wife?

Or had the Morris family already known what was going on between them?

Suddenly, things were starting to get interesting.

"Cherie, a woman like Gabrielle doesn't need sympathy. Nobody likes a scheming woman and now Westley has put her to shame. Let's wait and see how she's going to deal with it. If I were her, I would hide and cry instead of dancing with my brother. She's so shameless." 2

Mindy thought the worst of Gabrielle and she replayed her pitiful image in her head.

"Gabrielle's thick-skinned, isn't she?" Cherie uttered bitterly.

"That's right. A woman like her has no face to lose. Cherie, don't worry. My brother will definitely realize what she's up to, and then he will stay away from her, and marry you in the future. In my heart, you are my sole sister-in-law." Mindy nudged her.

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"Sister-in-law? What are you talking about?" Shy as she was, Cherie couldn't help but smile. Mindy calling her sister-in-law made her feel like she was really going to marry Lance.

When Miley saw Westley finally coming over, her face darkened a little. Others might have thought she was irritated, but it wasn't like that at all.

"Well, you came a little later than I expected. You wouldn't want your wife to get swept away now, would you?" Her voice was not loud but enough for Westley to hear. 5

"Grandma, the video you sent me was all over the place. You should work on the angles." He smirked.

"You ungrateful brat! How dare you sass your grandma? If I didn't show you the video, would you come here?" Miley looked at him angrily. 5

Westley glanced at the dance floor. Gabrielle had her back to them and Lance was staring at him with a determined look in his eyes. He slid his hand lower around Gabrielle's waist, as if trying to provoke Westley.

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"Tell me about it, Grandma Miley. Westley drove here so fast that I almost vomited. I didn't even want to come here, but he begged me. I couldn't understand why he sounded so desperate. It turns out that he was afraid his wife will run away with someone else." Michelle smiled, looking at Gabrielle's figure. "Is that my legendary sister-in-law?" 6

From her slim waist, I'm sure she's a great beauty with a very slender backside..." 1

"Michelle, let's dance!" Westley didn't want to hear all this nonsense and dragged her to the dance floor. 4

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Michelle was seen as the ultimate goddess and favorite of all kinds of advertisements for the men who were present at the party. She had attracted a lot of attention when she walked in, and more so because she was with Westley.

Now that she and Westley were dancing together, everyone got very excited and jittery - be it man or woman!

On an occasion such as today, it was a meaningful gesture for Westley to bring Michelle to such a high-profile party, and then lead her to dance with him. It represented their union, or the official state of their relationship. ②

Was he going to announce that he, Westley, was Michelle's supporter and also lover?

Those who weren't aware of Gabrielle and Westley's relationship were just curious onlookers, but those who knew of their relationship were keen to rush in and tear Michelle down.

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Especially Wendy. She had frozen up, stiff as a rock, as soon as she saw Westley walking in with Michelle holding his arm. ②

'It's one thing not to attend Kylo's birthday party, but it's so much worse to bring another female companion, especially a popular super star, with him. Is he planning on embarrassing Gabrielle and the Jones family right here?'

"What's going on? Why did Westley bring a woman here? Did he do this intentionally?" Tobias was completely dumbfounded.

'Didn't they mention that Westley wouldn't come? And now he was here, but why did he bring a woman here? What were his plans?'

Fortunately, only a few people know that he and Gabrielle are married; if not, they would be made a mockery of.

"How am I supposed to know what happened? I haven't figured out why he brought a female star to Dad's birthday party. Did he come like this to embarrass us on purpose?" Wendy was furious. She knew who Michelle was. Her advertisements were everywhere! She

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couldn't ignore her even if she wanted to.

Hence, bringing a woman with him was part of Westley's shrewd plan to deter Wendy from announcing anything about him and Gabrielle.

Little did she know Westley didn't want anyone to get involved in, or influence, his marriage with Gabrielle.

"What should we do now?" Tobias asked, thinking of the challenging situation they were in.

However, Westley was not an ordinary person, and Tobias didn't have the right to say anything to Westley so he let him do anything he wanted.

No matter how disappointed and tough he felt, it was all in vain, because he couldn't do anything.

"I don't know what to do. I don't know why he came here today. Maybe Gabrielle doesn't know that Westley brought a woman here as she is still dancing with Lance. I wonder what she'll think." Wendy looked at Gabrielle and Lance, who were waltzing in the middle of the dance floor. By now, many young

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people had joined them and were dancing around them, having surrounded them within the crowd.

Gabrielle felt so upset that she wanted to leave the dance floor and be by herself, several times during the dance. She couldn't bear to see Westley walk in with Michelle ... and now they were dancing together! What was this about?

"Gabrielle, if you're feeling tired, I can take you upstairs to have a rest," Lance kindly offered, knowing that Gabrielle was close to breaking down in tears.

He suggested the rest because he didn't want her to be sad and heartbroken.

"Yes, Lance. Sorry, but I'll go rest myself. It's Grandpa's birthday, and you should stay here during the celebrations as his first grandson." Gabrielle stopped dancing and was about to leave the dance floor when Westley and Michelle walked up to them.

Westley felt a pang of sympathy when he saw Gabrielle's quivering lips and red eyes, forcing herself not to cry. Perhaps she misunderstood something.

Gabrielle was going to burst into tears if

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he got any closer to Michelle.

"Mr. Carter, would you mind exchanging your partner?" Westley didn't care how Lance would react, nor waited him to reply. As soon as he asked the question, he stretched his hand out towards Gabrielle, and gently pushed Michelle onto Lance. ④

Michelle was confused when Westley did this. 'He's the only one who's switching partners. Why did he push me so hard into Lance's arms?' she thought. ②

Lance was a total stranger to her. How could her cousin, Westley, have the audacity to push such a beautiful person as herself into a stranger's arms? That wasn't the right thing to do. ①

"Westley, you..."

"Behave yourself!" Westley cast a quick, cautious glance at Michelle.

Michelle had no choice but to stay quiet with the threat looming up ahead of her. After all, she had such a steady success in China because of the support and the chances that Westley had given her. ②

If not for him, Michelle would be an unknown, nondescript model

internationally.

So when her cousin offered to take her as a temporary female companion for a party with him, she agreed immediately, without hesitation. She had no choice but to dance with this Lance without holding any grudges when he chose to exchange her for his wife.

"Mr. Carter, I'm sorry to make you dance with me." Michelle smiled at Lance politely.

Michelle was mixed-race, making her much more beautiful and unique-looking than most other women. Her striking, blue eyes made her even more attractive.

"Miss Bailey, I want to..."

"Mr. Carter, you may have noticed that there are many eyes on me, and you may know that I'm perceived as a goddess for many men here. If I'm rejected so openly in the middle of the dance floor, everyone will talk about it, and then how can I confidently face my fans in the future? You are also a high-profile person - the grandson and child in the Carter family, and with today being Kylo's birthday party, I don't think it's a good idea for you to reject a guest like

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me. Can you please finish this dance with me?" Michelle didn't really care about her reputation - her fans would love her regardless.

In reality, she wanted to steal Lance away because she wanted Westley and Gabrielle to have more time together.

"Okay, Miss Bailey, I'll finish this dance, but I hope you'll leave me alone and won't pester me anymore," Lance replied coldly. He didn't like women like her, no matter how beautiful they were.

What's more, she was brought here by Westley, and so she might be his mistress. He didn't respect women like her.

"Don't worry. I won't pester you. After this dance, I will leave by myself." Glancing at Gabrielle and Westley, she thought her job was done, as they were dancing together. She needn't stay there any longer, so she decided she would leave after the dance. ②

"Miss Bailey, what's your relationship with Westley? Is he your sponsor or something?" Lance knew that he shouldn't ask such a question, but he was genuinely concerned about matters

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regarding Gabrielle. This woman would cause a rift between Gabrielle and Westley's marriage - even if it was fake - and she would make Westley unfaithful.

Michelle, however, found his question interesting and was not offended by him. She looked into his icy eyes with her beautiful blue ones and smiled warmly. "I didn't expect Mr. Carter to like gossips, let alone be one! Don't you think my beautiful face and slender figure are enough to get me famous? Do you think I have to rely on some kind of sponsor?" 3

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Michelle was very beautiful. She was the kind of person who could attract any person just by standing there, without a single smile on her face. And when she smiled, she was even more beautiful, making it impossible for anyone to take their eyes off her.

Lance, however, didn't like her smile at all. In fact, he despised it.

"Miss Bailey, you don't need to give so many explanations. Just say 'yes' or 'no'." Lance couldn't stand her coquettish smile. As he had expected, she was one of those female stars from the entertainment circle that just boasted and showed off in men's company.

Perhaps that was why Westley was enchanted by her, but it didn't work on Lance.

"Yes," Michelle replied with a smile.

Westley had, after all, helped her, so there was nothing to hide or lie about.

"Miss Bailey, I don't care why you

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entrapped Westley by hooking up with him and making him sponsor you, but I would hate it if you hurt Gabrielle. You better watch out, or I'll teach you a lesson," Lance threatened her.

She couldn't take it seriously that Lance was being so vicious and wary of her. 'How can he be so funny?' she thought to herself.

There were many fans here, especially her male fans. They were raising their voices and rushing closer to get to her, but Lance was almost spitting at her in disgust. She thought about why, and decided that he must like Gabrielle, her sister-in-law; Gabrielle was dancing with Westley, which made Lance very angry, so he naturally blamed Michelle.

Michelle finally understood why Lance was so mad at her.

"Mr. Carter, do you like Miss Jones?" Michelle asked him calmly, her eyes lighthearted and joking.

Lance responded with a blank look that didn't give his real feelings away, before replying icily, "Miss Bailey, don't think about things you shouldn't be thinking about!"

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Well, it was not like she was forcing herself to think about it, but from his reaction, her guess was right. He was also staring at Gabrielle quietly any chance he got. Was he in love?

Now it made sense that Westley had rushed and brought her here in such a hurry. Lance was a strong rival because he loved her, and besides, it didn't seem like Lance was an easy character to deal with.

Gabrielle, on the other hand, was fuming but secretly liked the fact that Westley had forced himself on her to dance with him.

But then she was reminded that Westley showed up with Michelle, and she began to feel very angry again.

"Westley, let go of me. I'm leaving," Gabrielle said in a soft voice. 2

But Westley held her waist so tightly that she couldn't move at all. Her body was so close to his chest that she felt she could feel the temperature of his skin through the material.

"Where are you trying to go, Gabrielle? The dance isn't even over yet." Westley

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refused to let her go. He just held her in his arms and continued to move, and the crowd just thought they had simply switched partners.

It was a normal social activity to exchange dancing partners during a dance.

Sure, it was normal for both sides to change their partner, but all the parties involved had to agree to it. Gabrielle felt that this was done against her will, and it was all always up to Westley.

"I don't want to dance with you," Gabrielle said angrily, her voice thick with emotion. She looked down at his feet and tried to find an opportunity to give him a hard STOMP so he would immediately detach himself from her.

However, Gabrielle had underestimated how well Westley knew her. He had foreseen that she would seize any opportunity to step on his feet, so he was anticipating her every move.

As soon as she lifted her feet, he would quickly mirror her move.

She failed several times.

"Westley, did you do all this on purpose?"

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Didn't you say you wouldn't be able to come because you had too much work?" Gabrielle continued to try to stamp his feet.

Westley was a cunning fox. She couldn't think of any way she could defeat him.

It was impossible to play tricks on him!

"I didn't say I wouldn't come tonight. I just said that I have something to deal with first," Westley whispered seductively in her ear.

He hadn't lied or said anything wrong, just that he was busy with work.

"Then why did you bring Michelle here? And now that she's here, why are you dancing with me and not her?" Gabrielle spoke through gritted teeth. She couldn't scream and shout even if she wanted to because they were surrounded by people.

"Are you jealous?" Westley raised his eyebrows and smiled.

"Jealous? Who is jealous? Don't talk nonsense! I'm not jealous. Anyway, we're not really married and our relationship has not been made public. You can come with whoever you like. I won't be jealous." Gabrielle pretended to

be indifferent and strong. 2

In truth, she was feeling very down but she didn't know what else to say.

The moment she saw Westley and Michelle come in, she couldn't help but feel extremely jealous. She was hurt, but she was unwilling to admit it.

Especially now, she felt shier than ever to look into his eyes and answer his questions.

"Do you still want to dance?" Seeing her unwilling to admit it, Westley decided not to press her. His main mission was to catch her. Now that he had got hold of her, there was nothing more he wanted to do here.

By now, everyone had turned their attention towards Michelle and no one was paying attention to them anymore, so he planned on leaving with Gabrielle.

"I don't want to dance anymore. You can go and find Miss Bailey." Gabrielle shook her head and pushed him away.

'How can she push me like that?' Westley thought. He fastened his grip on her waist and whispered into her ear again, "Gabrielle, Alvin is in the car

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outside. I'll meet you there in half an hour, or I will carry you there on my shoulders myself. It's up to you." After saying that, Westley let go of her hand, walked off the dance floor, towards Kylo.

Now that he was at Kylo's birthday party, he would need to wish him for his birthday before leaving.

Gabrielle was left in the center of the dance floor, her face still flushed. She wondered what Westley meant by that last sentence.

She began to feel very shy and embarrassed when she thought about Westley carrying her to the car on his shoulders. Everyone around her saw her flushed face and assumed she was shy because she was abandoned on the dance floor.

"Gabrielle, a woman who always wants to marry the good men deserves to be abandoned."

"That's right. I can never stand that kind of woman. Isn't it so humiliating?"

The women next to her took pleasure in Gabrielle's misfortune. After all, they had wanted to dance with Lance, but he had

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chosen to dance with Gabrielle, and when Westley had surprised everyone and shown up, he, too had asked to dance with her.

This woman was really good at seducing men.

Gabrielle didn't want to hear it, so she turned around and left immediately. Lance had been watching Gabrielle the entire time. Now that she was left behind by Westley, he wanted more than anything to let go of Michelle and go to Gabrielle, but Michelle was holding on to him so strongly that he couldn't let go of her.

"Mr. Carter, you shouldn't go there now."