

Guardian 201

Chapter 201 Debt Collection Maurice had lost all his patience. He wanted to push Darcy to the brink and finish off Quintessential Group once and for all.

“Come on. We should check out the woman. She’s one gorgeous doll in Lilyrose. I’m sure she’ll be even more captivating in a state of despair.”

Maurice strutted confidently out of the local bank with his men in tow.

The conversation went on at Quintessential Group’s office building.

“Riley, how much debt are we sitting at for each bank?”

Sinking her back against her chair behind the desk, Darcy kneaded her aching temples and asked her assistant. Public opinion had shifted as evident in the online comments, and Joy had paid a heavy price for her betrayal. However, Darcy was not happy at all.

The issue was money.

She needed money now more than ever.

With a significant number of employees resigning, panic spread within the organization.

The Quints were eager to jump ship, not caring what would happen to the family business, while work at the construction site operated as usual, thanks to the strenuous efforts of project manager, Andy, and

his team.

However, the 10 million dollars she demanded back from Gold Tooth

Without money, it was only a matter of time before the construction had to be halted.

Besides, word got out on the bank's loan cuts and Quintessential Group's suppliers began pressing for payment. The group was facing its most serious crisis in years.

Five years ago, the same tragedy struck, and the family business fell apart after Hector's accident. "Ms. Quint, the debt we have with Lilyrose Bank is 50 million dollars.

"Industrial and Commercial Bank, 70 million dollars.

"South Bank, 90 million dollars.

"Lockhart Bank, 70 million dollars."

The list went on as Riley opened a folder and reported the numbers.

of Darcy's handful of confidantes.

She v

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e former finance manager Gavin's resignation, Riley

to the plate and took on finance as well.

rom the 400 million dollars Maurice is blackmailing us for, the

is over 400 million dollars in debt.”

rey’s head ached to the point of despair.

was pointless asking banks since they were practicing stricter ending policies. 1

She had considered borrowing from other businesses.

However, Quintessential Group’s credibility was out the window after what happened. No one would lend money to the group. It could very well be the end of the Group.

Kaze got up from the sofa and went to fetch a glass of water. He handed Darcy the drink.

“You can do it, babe. Don’t lose hope. This will soon pass,” Kaze said

while patting her shoulder.

Darcy responded to his encouragement nonchalantly.

There was a knock on the door, and an employee walked in. “Ms.

Quint, the managing directors of various banks in Lilyrose are here. They demand that you meet them in the lobby.” Darcy was shocked.

Furrowing his brows, Kaze told the employee, “Tell them that they will have to get up here themselves if they want to meet my wife.”

Darcy walked out of the office without a word.

Left without a choice, Kaze went with her.

They got to the lobby to find the entrance packed.

The press was there too. Cameras flashed when Darcy appeared. A few middle-aged individuals in suits walked out of the crowd. They were the managing directors of various banks in Lilyrose.

“Ms. Quint, when are you going to pay back the 70 million dollars you owe to Industrial and Commercial Bank?” solemnly asked Yusoft, the managing director of Industrial and Commercial Bank.

“Don't forget the 90 million dollars you owe South Bank.”

“You owe Lockhart Bank 70 million.”

The other managing directors questioned Darcy too.

They personally came to Quintessential Group's office building to 114

As lights flickered furiously, Darcy turned pale in the spotlight.

Darcy drew a deep breath and replied, “There is still time before the repayment due date, Mr. Lewis. You should know that the group has encountered some issues. Would you mind leaving for now? | will make sure we pay what is due before the time is up.”

She said the same thing to the other bank managing directors.

“Haha. You must be joking, Ms. Quint. We have access to your corporate bank accounts. You probably can’t raise 30 million dollars. How do you plan to pay back hundreds of millions of dollars?”

Maurice, the president of Lilyrose Bank, swaggered his way through the parted crowd.

Chapter 202 Paying for Quintessential

“Mr. Taon, I don’t see what you’re so smug about. If Quintessential doesn’t pay up, then Lilyrose Bank would lose a whopping 50 million

dollars in bad debt.”

Darcy was infuriated at the sight of Maurice.

The man was the driving force behind Quintessential Group’s predicament. “Are you saying that your company is planning to skip paying?”

Maurice scoffed and turned to the press. “You heard Ms. Quint. Don’t forget to put it in your reports. Isn’t the public in favor of her now? People are on her side.

“She is no better than her college friend, Joy. One is a traitor, and the other’s a cheat.

“Tsk, tsk. A beautiful CEO turns out to be a cheat. Now that’s what I call a headliner.”

Maurice’s accusation set off a flurry of camera flashes at Darcy. “Ms. Quint, are you admitting that you’re a cheat?” a reporter asked aloud.

“I’m sorry, everyone. That wasn’t what I said,” Darcy explained in a fluster.

Alie repeated often enough would become the truth.

Being labeled as a cheat would throw her into public backlash once more.

Besides, she was the face of Quintessential Group.

At this rate, the company would have no chance at redemption.

Kaze took her arm. "Stop explaining yourself, babe. The press is with Maurice, so no amount of explaining would change their mind. The best way to move forward is to prove the group has money. Tear them down with facts."

He had given Ray a call when taking the lift down.

The grand fireworks display that Kaze had promised Darcy was set to begin. Kaze's words silenced the commotion at the company entrance.

Many sneered in disdain.

Maurice said sarcastically, "Your silly husband wants to prove that Quintessential Group has the funds, Ms. Quint. Well, hurry up and prove us wrong by paying the 50 million dollars owed to Lilyrose Bank."

"You owe Industrial and Commercial Bank 70 million dollars."

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a full payment of 70 million dollars to Lockhart Bank."

by Kaze's bold statement, the other managing directors turned their attention to Darcy. "Can you stop talking for once, Kaze? Where am I going to find the money?"

Darcy snapped an angry look at Kaze.

She wanted to have a talk with the managing directors about a potential delay in payment. However, Kaze put her on the spot and there was no turning back now.

“Why aren’t you saying anything, Darcy? You can’t even afford 50

have 30 million dollars in corporate funds.”

Maurice laughed out loud.

“Is 50 million dollars a lot? The Lefteria Group will foot the bill for Quintessential!”

An angry woman’s voice echoed through the hall.

“Miru!”

Darcy looked up in joy as her best friend strutted through the crowd. Maurice grimaced. “Is Lefteria Group trying to be an enemy here, Miru?”

He recognized Miru and knew she was the goddaughter of Lefteria Group’s chairman. Little did he expect that Lefteria Group would get

involved.

It was no secret in Lilyrose that Maurice wanted to bring down Quintessential. The Lefteria Group’s involvement in the matter showed that they were against him.

Miru criticized Maurice contemptuously, “Who do you think you are, Maurice? The Lefteria Group doesn’t even consider you a threat.”

“I am the son-in-law of the Everias, one of the most powerful families. Don’t tell me the top families can’t hold a candle to Lefteria Group.”

Maurice flew off the handle.

Miru smiled. “That’s right. The top families don’t scare us. For

someone who married into a powerful family, you sure like to brag, Maurice.” While talking, she side-eyed Kaze who stood next to Darcy.

Kaze frowned and ignored the woman.

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“Please pay 90 million dollars to South Bank!”

“We expect a full payment of 70 million dollars to Lockhart Bank.”

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someone who married into a powerful family, you sure like to brag, Maurice." While talking, she side-eyed Kaze who stood next to Darcy.

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With Miru's words hitting Maurice's sore point, he lashed out, Quintessential owed hundreds of millions of dollars, Miru. No bank will lend her more money. | doubt Leteria Group alone can save the company."

Darcy seemed dejected.

She was grateful for her best friend's timely help but also aware that Maurice had a point.

Leteria Group alone could not pull Quintessential Group out of debt.

The crowd, who packed the company entrance, once again cleared a path.

The movers and shakers of Lilyrose City took large strides into the lobby.

“Vikrom Group and Logman Group will pay 170 million dollars to Industrial and Commercial Bank for Quintessential Group.” “Sixth Eye Jewelry Group is happy to cover Quintessential Group for the 90-million-dollar loan due to South Bank.” “Heavensward Group will pay 70 million dollars to Lockhart Bank on behalf of Quintessential Group.”

Chapter 203 Aren't the Fireworks Beautiful?

“I am Bernard Vikrom, head of the Vikrom family.”

“I'm Peter, head of the Logmans.”

“I am Jasmine Sundar, chairwoman of Sixth Eye Jewelry Group.” “The Heavens ward Group's GM, Bruno Bandino.”

The individuals identified themselves.

The 400-million-dollar debt that once crushed Darcy was cleared. Jaws dropped.

Even the incessant flashes from the press cameras stopped for a second.

Darcy looked in disbelief at these people who are leaders of powerful families.

There was also a homegrown chairman of a prominent local enterprise.

Not to mention, the area general manager of a well-known multinational company was present too.

These individuals were the heavy hitters of Lilyrose City.

They came together to help Quintessential Group overcome its financial difficulty, though the Group did not possess such business

connections.

From the outset, Darcy suspected she was being deceived. She even suspected that Maurice had hired these people to amuse her. They might just deny everything and make her look foolish once she took the whole thing seriously.

However, Darcy saw the shock and anger on Maurice's face.

Even he did not expect the turn of events.

Maurice was furious and surprised at this point.

What was going on?

Maurice was not surprised by Lefteria Group's support.

Nevertheless, top families like the Jetstars and Junons were eager to meet Quintessential Group's financial obligations. Maurice wondered if Quintessential Group had extensive networks he did not know about.

He turned to Darcy, realizing the woman was just as surprised as he

was.

Kaze said, "You can stop guessing, Maurice. I called them here."

The people widened their eyes.

Maurice and the others could not believe that the Quints' slow-witted son-in-law had brought together these prominent figures. However, Bernard and the rest of the group did not deny that fact.

Everybody was stunned.

It was hard to believe that the son-in-law of the Quints had such connections.

Maurice was fixated on Kaze as color drained from his face.

He had not considered Kaze a threat before.

Boy, was he mistaken.

Suddenly, Maurice sneered, "So what if you can pay off your wife's

massive loan, I can just say the word, and the banks will cut off her

run the company."

The managing directors of other banks smirked, believing they were the lifeline of businesses. The nerve of Kaze to put them down,

Well, he was asking for it.

Kaze smiled indifferently. "That was just the opening act, Maurice. I'll show you that I mean business today." He whipped out his phone to call Snow.

“They can come in now.”

‘Quit the act.’

Maurice and the other bank managing directors smirked in disdain.

Another group of individuals in professional attire strode confidently into the lobby.

“Joestar family is happy to invest a hundred million dollars in Quintessential.”

“We, the McFrees, are pleased to announce a financial commitment of a hundred million dollars to Quintessential Group.”

“The local government financing platform pledges a hundred million dollars in investment to Quintessential.”

They were Harry, head of the Joestar family; Donald, head of the McFrees; and Nick, chairman of the local government financing platform.

Kaze had either heard about these three figures or met them at Lily Garden Hotel through Gold Tooth and Dan.

Oh, there was more.

“Orange Group of Sunrise City is committed to investing a hundred million dollars in Quintessential.”

“Melrose’s Far Vision pledges...”

Kaze had never heard or met the rest of the party.

Two dozen more came up to announce their investments.

They were either from prominent families or renowned enterprises.

The representatives were locals and from out of the state like

Melrose, the city east of Lilyrose.

Some even came from Sunrise City.

Kaze had not met most of them before.

Nevertheless, they pledged their financial backing to Quintessential Group, each with a minimum of a hundred million dollars. As these individuals stepped forward, the bustle at the company entrance quieted down and turned into pin-drop silence. Kaze took Darcy's shaking hand and gave her a smile.

"What do you think of the fireworks | promised you? Aren't they

beautiful?"

Chapter 204 Retaliation Darcy's mind went blank. She could not even hear what Kaze said. Darcy was not the only one still reeling from the shock. Maurice, the managing directors of various banks, and the press could not believe their eyes. Everybody was stunned. With the banks cutting loans and collecting debts, Quintessential Group would have been crippled. To everybody's surprise, there was a shocking twist to the events. Influential families and major corporations came to the Group's aid. Dozens of big businesses were committed to investing in Quintessential Group, citing 100 million dollars at the very least. These companies had lost it. Despite its tarnished reputation, Quintessential Group still managed to attract investors. "You're mad. You have all gone mad!" Driven to the edge, Maurice yelled in rage. Kaze was the reason he had eggs on his face now, a humiliation worse than an actual slap on the face. Maurice looked at the leaders of prominent families and major corporations. In the end, he looked

daggered at Nick, chairman of the local Guard?" 1. Ayounyuyumor me to The local government financing platform and Lilyrose Bank were state-owned. Even though they were on good terms, Nick stabbed Maurice in the back today. Nick replied in contempt, "You flatter yourself, Maurice." He glanced at Kaze. Nick was there for Kaze. Besides, Nick was aware that dozens of them were present in respect of Kaze. Those who attended the Construction and Material Society's restructuring meeting would know what Kaze was made of. Maurice was in over his head to go up against Kaze. Nic words upset Maurice. "You talk about pouring investments in sential Group. Where's the money? Are we supposed to take ord for it?" The pledges to resolve the debt and make investments amounted to billions of dollars. Maurice refused to give up until he saw the money. "Money? Well, | got to ask you for the money."

Nick chuckled. "The local government financing platform has a corporate account with Lilyrose Bank with five hundred million dollars in it. | want to withdraw all the money now."

Maurice was shocked.

Bernard said, "The Vikroms have a savings of twenty million dollars in

for Quintessential Group's debt."

"Mr. Lewis, the Logmans would like to withdraw thirty million dollars from Industrial and Commercial Bank." Peter grinned at Yusoft, the managing director of Industrial and Commercial Bank.

The group of dozens followed suit.

Anybody with money in the banks came forward and demanded withdrawals. They were big clients with accounts in every bank having funds worth several hundred million dollars. That was not a lot of money for established banks.

However, the amount put together was worth tens of billions.

10 billion dollars was not enough to cripple the established banks, though. Still, the money would impact Maurice and the other managing

directors.

The huge loss of savings severely damaged their performance review.

To think the bank managing directors teamed up to cut off

Quintessential Group's financing.

They were dumbstruck now.

Somehow, they were the ones in a vulnerable position.

Grim-faced, Yusoft pleaded, "Don't do anything reckless. The money saved in our banks will earn interests, which you will lose by

withdrawing it."

Chapter 205 Arresting Maurice

"That's none of your business, Mr. Lewis. The money is ours, and we can do whatever we want with it as we please. We don't have to deposit any money in your banks anymore."

Peter and the others demanded cash withdrawals.

With the managing directors put in the spot, they turned to Maurice, who was the cause of everything. Maurice shouted at everyone, "It's a ploy! Are you trying to cross the

banks? Well, don't even think about any loans or financing in the future."

A good relationship with banks was a must for corporations.

The group sneered.

“Don't flatter yourself, Maurice. While we can't afford to turn our backs on banks, we are within our rights to upset you since you only work for the banks.”

“That's right. You seem hot and bothered, Mr. Taon. I hope you're not going to be a cheat.”

The public mocked Maurice with the same insult he used on Darcy.

Maurice narrowed his eyes at the people. “Fine, have it your way. You'll get what's coming for distressing one of the top families.” The threat did not scare Bernard and the others.

How was one family going to go after so many?

Many prominent families and major corporations were involved; an alliance like no other.

Even the top three families would think twice before springing on so many.

Yusoft and the other managing directors had to give in to the group's

demands.

They agreed to go back with the individuals to the banks to perform the withdrawals.

However, that was not necessary.

The families and corporations had people on standby to make immediate withdrawals at the respective banks. Less than a minute later, Yusoft received a call from his regional

manager.

“Your performance for the year is unacceptable, Yusoft. If I were you, I would pack my things and leave right away.” Meanwhile, the other managing directors were also given the boot by

their bosses.

“Oh, shit. Maurice, you ruined my career!” Yusoft and the rest lashed

out.

They regretted it.

The now ex-managing directors regretted taking Maurice’s advice to cut off Quintessential Group’s financing. They just shot themselves in the foot.

Before they left with tails between their legs, they glanced fearfully at

Kaze.

The son-in-law of the Quints was something else.

Many major corporations bent their knees to him, costing the managing directors their jobs.

If only they could turn back time.

They left Quintessential Group in dejection.

Maurice intended to leave with his head hung low.

“Who said you could leave, Maurice? Do you think you can come and go as you wish?” Kaze uttered curtly. The public was taken aback.

It appeared Kaze wanted to keep Maurice around.

Maurice cocked his head and gave Kaze the stink eye. “What? Do I need your permission to leave? Who do you think you are? So you got these people to back you up, but I’m not scared of you. I’m a member of the top families-”

Smack!

Before Maurice could say his piece, Kaze approached and slapped him on the face. “Fuck! How dare you hit me!”

With his hand over his cheek, Maurice glared at Kaze.

Smack!

Kaze slapped Maurice to the ground

His teeth were knocked out by the slaps.

Kaze said indifferently, "Two slaps for talking smack about me twice."

"You're through, Kaze. I'm going to make you pay! I'm going to make you pay!" Furious and aching, Maurice cried with his bloodied mouth.

Kaze smiled faintly. "Fat chance."

A group of men in uniform marched through the front door, looking stern and unapproachable. "It's the Economic Investigation Division and the Supervisory Bureau!"

Many backed up in fear that these people were after them.

The men in uniform approached Maurice.

"Maurice Taon, we are arresting you on the suspicion of providing preferential treatment to your brother, Toffle Taon of the Bersinal Group, while you were president of Lilyrose Bank."

Chapter 206 A Curious Miru

"Where's Johnson? | want to see Johnson! I'm the son-in-law of one.

of the top families. Why am I being arrested?”

Maurice could make as much fuss as he wanted, but a member of the Economic Investigation Division handcuffed him. The once untouchable president of Lilyrose Bank was taken away in

shame.

Darcy drew a deep breath.

The incident today was not something she had ever expected.

She turned to the power players in Lilyrose’s business community and expressed her gratitude for their role in reviving Quintessential.

Darcy had raised the question that had been bugging her, “I would like to know your reason behind investing in my company now of all

times.” Many there were just as puzzled as Darcy. Just moments ago, there was no hope left in Quintessential.

However, these prominent business figures stood by the Group at the risk of offending the top families. The fact was hard for them to wrap

their heads around. “Ms. Quint, the Group with your leadership is worth the investment. I trust it will flourish under your helm,” Bernard said. The other individuals echoed.

They were aware of Kaze’s love for Darcy. Kaze was happy to be a nobody, a son-in-law to the Quints, and an accessory to Darcy despite the power and wealth he possessed.

There was no better way to please Kaze than to suck up to Darcy.

Apparently, these people invested in Quintessential Group because they believed in Darcy-she found the reason hardly believable.

The business figures excused themselves, nodding respectfully at Kaze before taking off.

Darcy took notice of that.

She turned to her husband suspiciously. "Did you call these people here, Kaze?"

"Yeah."

Kaze nodded with a smile.

Darcy's jaw dropped.

Kaze was referring to this when he was talking about fireworks.

However, how did he manage to make it happen?

As Miru drew close, Darcy asked, "Did Kaze ask you to come here,

Miru?"

Darcy had no idea that her best friend would step in on behalf of Leteria Group to settle part of Quintessential Group's debt. She thought Kaze had contacted Miru to give her a surprise.

"I didn't ask her to come," Kaze was quick to deny it.

All he did was put Ray on the job.

Kaze did not know what to expect, but he was not concerned.

“Kaze? Who is he to call me here?” refuted Miru as she glared at Kaze.

“Snow Frost, the secretary of Perfect World Group’s chairman, contacted all corporations to help Quintessential Group overcome 425 80005

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World Group must be at it again."

Alan, the chairman of Lefteria Group, was enraged by the banks' collusion to withhold financing.

He sent Miru to Quintessential with 50 million dollars.

"Whoa, the mysterious chairman's got some serious clout. All it takes is one word from him, and people are ready to take on the top three families."

Miru was surprised just thinking about what had happened.

“Darcy, your company just dodged a bullet. The Group would be toast if the chairman wasn’t ready to go toe-to-toe with the top families.” She was happy for her best friend.

Truth be told, Miru panicked and tried to find ways to help when she learned of Darcy’s predicament. Surprisingly, the mysterious chairman took charge and swiftly resolved the Group’s crisis.

“The man keeps a low profile. He has never been seen in Lilyrose yet, but he is always assertive in his approaches. Even I want to see what he looks like.”

Miru was curious about the chairman. Kaze grinned. “I didn’t think you had a high opinion of me, Miru.”

Chapter 207 Lilyrose Bank Changes Hands It was surprising that a proud woman like Miru had someone she respected. Even Kaze was shocked.

Miru glanced at him in disdain. “Have some dignity, Kaze. I’m talking about the chairman of Perfect World Group, not you. It’s not as if you called these people to invest in Quintessential Group.”

“I am.”

Kaze was about to refute when Darcy jumped in, “You got the wrong idea about Kaze, Miru. Kaze knows Snow from Perfect World Group.

He made the call to invite those people.” Darcy was aware that Snow played a part in Kaze hitting the lottery and buying furniture.

Miru looked at Kaze in surprise and scoffed. “It just so happened that Perfect World Group’s chairman wanted to take on the top families, so he put the word out to the major businesses. I doubt Kaze could

convince them to be here if it weren't for the chairman.”

She

Kaze’s bluff at Lily Garden Hotel the last time.

ready made up her mind about Kaze. There was no way d change her opinion of him at that point.

remained silent, agreeing with Miru’s perspective.

Kaze must have gone to Snow behind her back.

Displeased with the top families, the chairman of Perfect World Group lent Quintessential Group a helping hand. Quintessential was just a pawn between two parties.

Darcy was distressed at the thought.

She wanted to be the master of her own fortune, not anybody’s pawn, the growth of the Group was essential. Once the group established itself, she could then decide her fate.

With that in mind, Darcy felt the motivation and regained the drive.

“We have cleared our loans with the banks, Ms. Quint. The pledged financial support from other companies is realized, and we have over two billion dollars in corporate funds.”

Riley the assistant approached to report the good news.

“That’s quick.”

Darcy was stunned.

The corporations were quick to hand out the cash.

Quintessential had not even signed a contract with them yet the money was wired before the paperwork even took place. Darcy directed Riley to dispatch the legal team to the companies to discuss contract details and finalize paperwork. Although the major companies were basically throwing

Quintessential, it remained steadfast in its commitment to

maintaining its business credibility.

“That reminds me. Where are the funds going?”

Darcy remembered an important question before Riley walked away.

Now that Quintessential had crossed all the banks, she was

concerned about getting the money out.

Riley replied, “The companies have wired the money into our corporate account with Lilyrose Bank, Ms. Quint.”

“Oh, that’s going to be a problem.”

Darcy's heart sank. It was her worst fear.

The Group was on horrible terms with Lilyrose Bank.

Not knowing how to react, Riley responded, "Don't worry about that, Ms. Quint. Everything will be fine. The local government just.

appointed Snow Frost from Perfect World Group as the chairman of Lilyrose Bank."

That was not the only thing.

The billions withdrawn from other banks were saved into Lilyrose.

Bank following the announcement.

With Lilyrose Bank changing hands, the top three families no longer controlled the banking industry.

Johnson, the mayor, knew his stuff.

He had always had a problem with Maurice, a member of the top families, being appointed the chairman of Lilyrose Bank. Now that Maurice had upset Kaze, Johnson gave the dirt on Maurice that led to his arrest.

He also appointed Snow as the chairman of Lilyrose Bank.

Johnson brought in Perfect World Group to help keep the top families. in check.

Chapter 208 Playing Dirty

"It's reassuring that Ms. Frost is named the new chairman. Let's keep the funds in Lilyrose Bank then."

Darcy was relieved.

Perfect World had done Quintessential a huge favor.

Snow would not make things difficult for Quintessential.

“The chairman of Perfect World Group is one in a million. Even his assistant can be a chairman of Lilyrose Bank. Miru had the utmost respect and curiosity for the mysterious chairman.

Kaze smiled without a word.

Upon learning the news, heads of the top three families gathered at the Everias’ residence, the Jade Estate.

“We wanted to destroy Quintessential, but Perfect World had the business’ back. It’s clear that Perfect World is getting back at us,” Edward hissed through clenched teeth, his face glum.

It was supposed to be easy to crush Quintessential Group, but the company managed to dodge tragedy once again. His son was still in a coma, thanks to Darcy.

Maurice, a close associate of the Everias, was also caught in the

crossfire.

Edward hated Perfect World Group and Ray with all his might.

Flint pulled a long face. “Ray has built quite an extensive network in just a few years. He’s going after us again. He’s not even from here.

They had learned of the incident at Quintessential Group.

Two dozen companies and prominent families like the Vikrams and Logmans were involved.

Even though the three heads of families had seen it all, they were taken aback by the twist of events.

Getting his act together, Belarus waved his arm and said, "Don't worry about it. Ray has a lot of money, but we run Lilyrose. The Vikrams and Logmans only took Quintessential's side because Maurice went overboard. It's no secret that Johnson isn't happy with Maurice anyway."

Flint nodded.

"That's right. The Vikrams, Logmans, and Johnson Brooks are just expressing their discontent. I'm sure they wouldn't have gone so far as to take us on if Perfect World Group did not seek their alliance."

The three major families controlled Lilyrose's economy.

If anything were to happen to the three families, Lilyrose would not be spared either.

An outsider like Ray did not mind inciting chaos in Lilyrose.

Locals like the Vikrams, the Logmans, and Johnson would have a problem with that because it would harm their family interests. Edward calmed down. "We should be ready for Ray and

Quintessential. The Lee family of Sunrise City is watching. We should get people on the job. If we can't go about the legal way, we should play dirty."

The trio were in sync, so they grasped Edward's intentions.

The plan was to use illicit means.

“Gold Tooth and Dan are in support of the loser son-in-law of the Quints. Darcy and Alan’s goddaughter are thick as thieves. Lefteria Group lent a hand to the Quints too.)

Flint frowned. It would not be easy to deal with the Quints now that the family had backing.

Belarus scoffed. “Gold Tooth and Dan are not a cause for concern. As for Alan... Hehe... Let’s just say it’s about time someone else claims the title as the godfather of Lilyrose underworld.”

The three families decided it would be better for Lilyrose to have a new leader in the underworld. At least, they could take over the control of organized crimes, adding another ace up their sleeves.

Belarus said, “Don’t sweat over trivial matters. Our priority is to attend the inauguration of the South River Strategic Department's new commander-in-chief. Any word on that, Flint?”

“Yes. The new chief commander is Albert. He will be sworn in a week later at the department. I have gotten my connection to get us three tickets to the inauguration,” Flint responded gleefully.

“Alright. Once we befriend Albert, Darcy, Kaze, Alan, and even Ray will be sitting ducks. We run this town!” The three heads of families guffawed.

Chapter 209 A Tooth for a Tooth The heads of the top families laughed for a while, sensing a bright future awaiting them. Just then, Edward beckoned at his youngest son, Ethan.

“You will assume the role of Chairman at Bersina Group, Ethan. We have lost Maurice and Toffle, those losers. It’s time Bersina takes back the Everia family.”

Ethan was delighted.

His older brother, Eliot, had always outshone him.

With Eliot in a coma, the family leadership should now fall on Ethan.

Edward made Ethan the chairman of Bersina Group to see if he was up to the task.

“Don't worry, Dad. I will manage Bersina well.”

Ethan left Jade Estate with his sidekick in tow.

He returned with a heavy heart in less than an hour.

“Holy shit, Dad. Someone beat me to it and took Bersina Group right out of my hands.”

Ethan made a crying face, looking nothing like the swank he had before leaving the house.

Edward was enraged. “Who did it? Everybody knows Maurice and Toffle only managed Bersina for the Everias.” Belarus and Flint were about to leave after a drink, but they turned around to ask who was responsible. It had not been long since they took Hilfinger Corporation from the

Now, someone snatched Bersina Group from them instead.

Was it a tooth for a tooth?

Ethan said, “It's a young man called Jesse White.”

Jesse White?

Even though the three heads of families never heard of that name, it was eerily familiar.

Belarus snapped out of his trance. "He could very well be connected to James, who died two years ago." He was talking about James White of Shangrila Group.

Belarus, Edward, and Flint could still remember what happened then.

James died.

He went bankrupt, and his business changed hands-all were closely linked to the three top families. "That's right. Jesse said that he was James

The three furrowed their brows.

brother.

us said confusedly, "James is an only child. Who is this Jesse

"Who cares about his relationship with James? He deserves what's coming for taking what is ours." Flint, as fiery as his name suggested, was out for blood.

"You're useless to let him take the company right under your nose."

Edward snapped an angry look at his son.

Ethan replied in grievance, "Jesse was waiting there when I arrived at

for one dollar."

It was now known that Maurice had betrayed the three major families.

That was not the shocking part.

Jesse somehow managed to call in some favors to get Maurice off the hook.

The three top families had tried bailing Maurice out but they did not even know the right person to talk to. It appeared Jesse was resourceful.

Still, Edward uttered furiously, "Even if Maurice betrayed us, we own a majority share of Bersina. How could he possibly acquire the group for one dollar?"

Ethan was hesitant to talk.

"Speak!" Edward yelled.

"Dad, they pinned me onto the table and threatened to cut off my arm if I didn't agree to sell Bersina. They coerced me into persuading the representatives of Everias' shareholders to sign the papers."

Gritting his teeth, Ethan told the truth.

Bam!

Edward knocked Ethan down to the ground with a kick.

"Loser! You useless loser! Beat it!"

Edward shouted angrily, his screams echoed through the estate.

Fear could be detected in his anger.

The three influential families knew that a resourceful Jesse was in town to avenge James.

On the chairman's seat at Bersina Group was Kaze.

"I don't get it. Why are you going under the pseudonym Jesse White?"

Snow, who had just become the chairman of Lilyrose Bank, stood respectfully across Kaze.

She raised a question.

Kaze replied, "You can quit guessing. The reason isn't as complex as

you think. I'm just trying to scare the top three families and let them live in fear of retaliation for once."

Chapter 210 Name Change. Kaze got confirmation from Maurice that the three major families were involved in James' death two years ago. Having built a successful business from scratch, James aspired to return home and revitalize his hometown.

James brought cutting-edge technology from the southern coast to Lilyrose, eager to seek collaboration with the three top families.

His kind gesture invited him trouble instead.

The three families killed him and divided Shangrila Group among themselves.

Five years ago, they and the Lee family of Sunrise City did the same thing to Quintessential.

The rise of the three major families was a cruel story involving blood and tears.

They seized Quintessential, elevating themselves to the ranks of top-tier families.

ion, they acquired shares of Shangrila Group, firmly polishing their dominance in Lilyrose.

The feud simply piled on.

Kaze had never been so sure about overthrowing the three major families.

That was not the only thing on his list.

As punishment, Kaze wanted the three families to live in constant fear.

Kaze wanted them to watch as he snatched their assets the same way they had until there was nothing left of them. That was why Kaze worked under the alias, Jesse White, and took Bersina Group in the crassest way. Bersina had come full circle.

Maurice, then chairman of Lilyrose Bank, played a pivotal role in causing Shangrila Group's downfall. He had profited from the group's ruins, which became Bersina Group's assets.

Over the years, Maurice and his brother had thrown their weight around with the backing of the three major families. Bersina had grown to a fortune of hundreds of millions of dollars.

It was a shame they got on Kaze's nerves. The brothers' twenty years of management had gone to naught.

"Snow, get Bersina renamed to Shangrila. I want to let the three major families and Lilyrose know that I will take back everything the

families had stolen from my good friend."

Kaze got up and informed Snow.

As always, he took a hands-off approach and did not participate in the corporate operations. Kaze was the chairman for now.

Shangrila Group belonged to his friend.

Although James was dead, he was survived by his parents and daughter.

Once Brenda was of age and capable, Kaze would put her in charge of Shangrila.

If she did not possess the capabilities or interests, he would hire a manager for her.

The fortune of James' family had changed for the better now that Kaze was in their lives. After leaving Snow with orders, Kaze drove back to Quintessential's office.

The employees of Quintessential had a reason to celebrate. Not only had the group overcome the capital chain crisis, but they now had two billion dollars worth of investment.

True to her word, Darcy increased the salaries of loyal employees by threefold and doubled their Christmas bonuses. Since it was the end of the year, the year-end rewards were distributed in advance.

As the department heads resigned all at once, Darcy picked suitable replacements from the present employees.

The cash rewards made everybody happy. The employees celebrated because Christmas came early.

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She told the human resource department to speed up the recruitment process. She needed to get the company back on track. Once it was announced that Quintessential Group was hiring, many applicants came around.

The fact that two dozen corporations invested in Quintessential caused quite a stir.

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Some applicants even came for an interview behind their present company’s back.

The recruitment was in full swing.

A group barged into Quintessential, shoving their way through the applicants and cutting lines.

“Hey, you! Take your turn!”

The place was already packed with many applicants, and those who were pushed aside were not having it.

“You don’t even know who I am. Why do you even bother to apply for a job here?”

The man in the front glared at the talking applicant.

“I am Dean Astar, the HR director of Quintessential. I have the final say of who gets into the company.”