

Million-Dollar 101

Chapter 101

Percival had already scooped up Isolde before she even got close to Vivienne and then gave Iris a nod.

"Iris, you guys chat. I'm gonna take Isolde and Thaddeus to play."

Without waiting for a reply, he took off with Isolde.

"Hey, bro, put me down! I wanna be with Vivienne!" Isolde was kicking her tiny legs in the air.

Lately, her mom not only forbade her from going to the Hawthorn family's home but also badmouthed

Vivienne in front of her. She was even encouraging her to ruin the relationship between Vivienne and

her brother.

Every time, she had to ignore all this as she chanted in her heart. "I can't hear. I can't hear."

She even thought about snitching on her mom to Richard because her mom was seriously getting on

her nerves. Her ears were practically numb.

Today, she finally got the chance to hang out with Vivienne with the help of her brother, but then her

brother also did this.

She was boiling mad!

"Behave." Percival tapped her little butt and gestured at Thomas, who then escorted a confused

Thaddeus away.

Percival knew Vivienne had something to discuss privately with Iris, so he offered to look after the kids.

Of course, he claimed to be babysitting, but in reality, Thomas was doing all the work.

Percival just stood there, keeping an eye on the two kids to make sure they didn't run rampant.

Thaddeus was well-behaved and not naughty.

Even though he had already played a round in the playground, when Isolde arrived, he still happily

accompanied her and played till she finally laughed, because he loved his little sister the most.

Vivienne and Iris found a bench to sit on.

The fireworks in the distance were still going on. The dazzling light fell on Iris's face, revealing a degree

of embarrassment and awkwardness. She hesitated for quite a while before Vivienne spoke first. "Iris, I

have something to ask you."

"Go ahead."

"Did my mom leave you anything?" Vivienne added. "When my mom died, I was too young, so she

didn't leave much behind. So, over the years, I've been looking for her belongings, so I can keep them

as a memento."

She didn't hold much hope, but since her mother mentioned that the item was with the Hawthorn family

before she died, she wanted to ask around.

"No, she didn't." As expected, Iris shook her head. She was very fond of her sister-in-law, Evelyn.

Back in the day, when she encountered trouble and was nearly violated, it was Evelyn who saved her,

for which she had been forever grateful.

She couldn't help but laugh as she spoke of the past. "Your mom and I were both weak women back

then, but she had the courage to venture into that bar alone to save me."

Hearing the phrase "weak woman" made Vivienne's eyes flicker.

"I was drugged at the time, so I don't remember the details. I just remember the strength your mom

suddenly displayed. She carried me and started running."

She sighed deeply. "Vivienne, I know the Hawthorn family has wronged you and your mother. If you two

hadn't been kicked out by your grandmother, maybe your mom wouldn't have died so young. Also, this

incident is Arabella's fault. Your grandmother has already made her clarify the situation on social media

and apologize to you. Can you ask Percival to let the Hawthorn family off the hook?"

There it was.

"Aunt Iris, there's a price to pay for doing wrong." Vivienne's tone was very calm.

She could ask Percival to let the Hawthorn family off, but she herself would not.

Vivienne never needed to rely on Percival.

Unfortunately, the Hawthorn family didn't understand. But they didn't need to; they just needed to accept their punishment.

"I understand. But the Hawthorn family has already paid a price. Can you let them off this time for my sake?" Iris pleaded.

Vivienne lifted her eyes to look at Iris while pursing her lips. After a while, she took out her phone and opened up Arabella's apology video.

"Take a look at this first."

Confused, Iris took the phone. Iris' face turned sour as she watched Arabella apologize and clear things up while looking helpless in the video.

She headed straight to meet Vivienne after leaving the hospital and then went to pick up Thaddeus

from Imperial Blossom Nursery. She primarily used Facebook and Instagram since she lived overseas

and hardly used Twitter, so she didn't know about the video Arabella posted.

"She hired people to pretend to be the netizens attacking me online and caused trouble at my house

and Thaddeus' school." Vivienne spoke calmly, as if she were discussing something irrelevant.

"What?!" Iris was shocked. Beatrice hadn't mentioned this when she explained the situation.

"Defaming me is one thing." Vivienne looked directly at Iris. "Cordelia is usually the only one at home,

and Thaddeus is still so young. If anything happened to them, the Hawthorn family's troubles would be

more than just bankruptcy."

Vivienne side-eyed Iris. "Don't think I'm heartless. Though this mess was caused by Arabella, Beatrice

was also involved. Arabella is the adopted daughter of the Hawthorn family. If she screws up, it's the

Hawthorn family's responsibility to clean up after her. I think that's fair."

Iris opened her mouth to speak but found herself at a loss for words.

She saw the coldness in Vivienne's eyes and suddenly realized that the little girl she had once held in

her arms had grown up. She was no longer the naive child who was easily swayed by so-called blood

ties.

"I wasn't aware of these things." Iris confessed as she felt guilt filling her heart. "I'm sorry."

She wasn't dense. Despite Beatrice's affection for her, she knew her mother's true colors.

How could she not have thought about where Arabella got all that money to stir up trouble? Surely

Beatrice must have had a hand in it.

It wasn't surprising that Vivienne was so cold toward the Hawthorn family.

They deserved it.

"Vivienne!"

A delighted Isolde launched herself at Vivienne, burying her head in her chest. "I missed you so much!

Brother wouldn't let me talk to you before!"

"Isolde." Percival shot her a sideways glance. "Who bought the ticket for your outing? Who bought your

ice cream? You turn around and badmouth me, huh?"

"Thomas did!" Isolde replied confidently.

Percival was left speechless. "With my money!"

Thomas had to bite back a laugh.

He had never seen Percival argue with his sister before. Ever since Vivienne appeared, Percival had changed a lot.

It was like his icy nature was slowly melting.

"This kid is adorable." Iris tousled Isolde's hair with a smile.

"Of course! Vivienne personally treated me. No wonder I'm cute." Isolde grinned, revealing her small teeth.

Iris felt a warmth in her heart and suddenly missed her son back in Ozoria.

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She and Vivienne tacitly didn't bring up the previous topic again.

Talking about it more might do more harm than good, potentially hurting someone's feelings.

Eventually, they took the two kids out for a late-night snack.

Iris originally thought that since she had invited Vivienne out, she would be the one to take Vivienne and Thaddeus home.

But Percival volunteered to do it. Iris was happy to give the young couple more time together, so she went home alone.

Before leaving, she said to Vivienne, "I've already made a deal with your dad. I'll have lunch with your family tomorrow."

"Gotcha. Be careful on your way home, Auntie." Vivienne nodded.

By the time they got to Tranquil Estates, the two worn-out kids had fallen asleep.

Vivienne had just gotten out of the car with Thaddeus when Percival took him from her arms.

"I'll walk you up." Percival said gently.

Vivienne nodded.

Isolde fell asleep on the seat, mumbling, "Stinky brother..."

Vivienne smiled, patted Isolde's head, closed the car door for her, and then made her way inside.

It was almost ten o'clock, and Tranquil Estates was very quiet. Only the three of them were in the elevator.

They rode in silence, but as they stepped out of the elevator, Percival suddenly asked, "What do you want me to promise you?"

"Already throwing in the towel?" Vivienne smiled slightly but was not surprised.

"I told you that I would let you win." He stood next to her, so the corridor light cast his tall shadow over

her. "Vivienne, you are the first person in the world that I am willing to lose to."

He vowed to himself that she would be the only one.

Vivienne frowned slightly as she felt a strange feeling well up in her heart. It was a warm feeling, but she didn't quite know what it was.

"Lose what?" Before Vivienne could figure it out, the door to her house was suddenly opened from the inside, and Dorian popped his head out. "Didn't you guys go to the amusement park? What did you lose? You didn't gamble, did you?"

He looked at Percival with a reproachful look, suspecting that he had taken Vivienne somewhere unsavory. After all, Percival's reputation was infamous, and, to him, Vivienne was a good girl. If anything happened, it must have been because she was led astray.

Percival smiled. "I lost to Vivienne when we were playing shooting games in the amusement park."

"I see." Dorian laughed, took Thaddeus from him, let Vivienne go into the house, and then said to

Percival, "It's quite late; I won't keep you."

"Okay." Percival nodded and turned to leave.

"Is there a time limit to your promise?" Vivienne suddenly asked.

He looked back at her. "For you, there's no time limit."

Cloudcrest High School.

Remembering her lunch date with Iris, Vivienne declined Charlotte's invitation to go to the cafeteria.

As soon as she stepped out of the school gate, a black Lincoln quickly stopped in front of her, as if it was prearranged.

She glanced at Thomas, who was staring at her without blinking, and then at the slowly lowering car window in the back seat.

In the car window, Percival's eyes seemed to look even darker than the black hue of a shadow.

"Get in; I'll give you a ride."

"You really have a lot of free time." Vivienne stood there with her arms folded, not moving.

Yesterday at the amusement park, he said he was just accompanying Isolde.

Today, Class Eighteen didn't have PE, so how come he came to school again at the exact time she was leaving?

"Mr. Hawthorn invited me to lunch too." Percival said with a slight laugh, trying to feign innocence. "He

said we're going to be family, and since your aunt rarely comes home, we don't know when we'll see

each other next, so he asked me to come too."

He would certainly not admit that he deliberately called Dorian at the right time and intentionally

brought up the subject on the phone.

Since he said so, Vivienne didn't play coy. As soon as she opened the car door and got in, she

received a call from Iris.

"Auntie."

"Vivienne..." Iris's choked voice was filled with anger and panic. "I'm sorry."

"What happened?" Vivienne frowned slightly.

"When I went to pick up Thaddeus at noon, your grandmother said she was sick and missed

Thaddeus. She wanted to see him but was afraid you wouldn't allow it." Iris said guiltily. "So I thought

about seeing him before meeting you guys and quietly took Thaddeus to see her. I didn't expect her to

keep Thaddeus, refuse to let him go, and demand you meet her."

"I'm really sorry. I didn't expect your grandmother to do this..."

Because something had just happened in the Hawthorn family when Iris came back this time, she didn't return to the chaotic Hawthorn Mansion but stayed in a hotel.

Since the hotel where she was staying was close to Imperial Blossom Nursery, Iris proposed to pick up Thaddeus at noon. Dorian and his wife naturally agreed.

Vivienne also knew about this, but she really didn't expect Iris to be soft-hearted and listen to Beatrice's nonsense and take Thaddeus to the hospital where Beatrice was staying.

She had been too negligent.

"What happened?" Percival frowned when he saw Vivienne's face suddenly become serious.

"My aunt took Thaddeus to the hospital to see Beatrice behind our backs, and the Hawthorn family kept him. They are demanding that I see them." Vivienne's voice was very calm, but Percival could hear a storm brewing.

Just like yesterday, when someone was causing trouble at Tranquil Estates, the calmer she was, the angrier she was.

"Go to the city hospital." Percival ordered Thomas.

"Let's keep this under wraps from Mr. Hawthorn and Cordelia for now." Vivienne sat next to Percival,

cracking her knuckles subtly.

She hadn't been this pissed off in a long time.

It was quite an achievement for the inept lot of the Hawthorn family to get her blood boiling like this.

City hospital, inpatient department.

Vivienne had just reached outside Beatrice's ward when she heard the heated argument between Iris and Beatrice.

"Mom, are you going to let Thaddeus go or not?!"

"Thaddeus is my blood! He is my grandson! What's the matter with me wanting to see him and wanting him to stay a bit longer?" Beatrice scoffed coldly.

"Is that all you want? Or are you planning to use him?" Iris was brimming with fury. "You and your crew just threatened Thaddeus and forced him to beg Vivienne for help. Just look at how scared he is!"

"He's my grandson! Of course, I want him on our side! Helping us is what he should do!"

"Mom!" There was nothing but disappointment in Iris' voice. "If you don't let me take Thaddeus away, I swear I won't come back from Ozoria ever again! You decide! Do you want me or Thaddeus?"

SMACK!

A crisp slap echoed in the room. Vivienne pushed the door open just in time to see Iris's reddening cheek.

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Upon hearing the door open, Iris turned her head while covering the half of her face that had been hit.

She forced out a smile that was uglier than a sob. "Vivienne, you're here?"

"Mmm." Vivienne responded coldly.

"I'm really sorry this time." Iris apologized. It was obvious that she felt guilty.

Vivienne didn't respond.

"Finally deigned to visit this old lady, have you?" Beatrice sneered at Vivienne.

"I'm just here to pick up my brother." Vivienne said with an expressionless face as she scanned the room before asking coldly, "Where's Thaddeus?"

"He's locked in the bathroom next door." Iris confessed. Shame was written all over her face; she barely had the courage to meet Vivienne's eyes.

She never imagined that Beatrice would be so ruthless. Not only had she used Iris to lure Thaddeus here, but she, Michael, and Joseph had been threatening Thaddeus non-stop.

When the young boy refused to speak, they locked him in the bathroom, ignoring his cries and Iris' pleas for mercy.

Iris felt deeply ashamed.

Vivienne turned to leave.

"Don't go!" Beatrice slammed her hand on the bedside table, trying to stop Vivienne.

Vivienne ignored her and continued on her way.

Michael blocked the door to the room and quickly locked it. "Your grandma wants to talk to you, you disrespectful brat! You really need a lesson!"

Thinking about how the Hawthorn Group was going bankrupt overnight made Michael furious, so he raised his hand to slap Vivienne.

A murderous intent flashed in Vivienne's eyes, but before she could act, Percival beat her to it. He grabbed Michael's wrist. "Who exactly are you trying to hit?"

Did he dare lay a hand on his fiancée?

Did he think Percival was dead?

"Ah!" With a sudden exertion of force, Michael immediately screamed out in pain. He was unable to utter a plea for mercy and collapsed to the ground, drenched in cold sweat.

Percival tossed him aside, took out a handkerchief, and leisurely wiped his hands, saying with disgust, "Dirty!"

"You... How could you hit someone in public?!" Beatrice was both shocked and angry as she watched Michael collapse on the floor. His right hand was dangling in an odd position. It was clearly fractured.

She couldn't believe Vivienne and Percival would be so audacious.

"You kidnapped my brother. We broke your son's hand." Vivienne looked at Beatrice. "Fair."

"A sick old lady wanting to spend some time with her grandson is not kidnapping!" Beatrice argued back as her chest heaved with anger. It looked like she was about to faint at any moment. "Even if you call the police, they won't label this a kidnapping!"

"Oh?" Vivienne smirked. "If not kidnapping, then how about child abuse?"

"We didn't hit him!" Joseph, who had been scared by Percival's actions, hid by Beatrice's bed. He didn't have the guts to step forward and could only manage a verbal defense.

Percival glanced at him, his deep eyes revealing a hint of coldness. "Try hitting him."

Michael was intimidated by his aura and took a step back. "Anyway, you have no proof!"

"I will testify that you abused Thaddeus!" Iris suddenly declared firmly.

She had come to her senses. A crime was a crime. No matter who committed it, they had to face the consequences.

"You! Are you trying to kill me?!" Beatrice reached for something on the bedside table to throw at Iris, but after finding nothing, she ended up throwing a pillow at her.

Iris skillfully dodged and stood firmly by Vivienne's side.

"Fine!" Beatrice looked at Iris as tears suddenly fell from her eyes. "You and Dorian have disappointed me! All my love for you was in vain! You're such ungrateful people!"

Iris felt a surge of guilt and decided not to look at Beatrice.

Just then, there was a knock at the door.

Joseph carefully went to open it, but he was scared of Percival, so his movements were cautious, like a thief's.

As soon as the door opened, Arabella was standing outside with a group of reporters with cameras

behind her.

Arabella's gaze immediately met Vivienne's.

"Sister." She stepped into the room as her eyes welled up with tears. "Grandma has been sick for so

long, and you finally came to see her."

Vivienne looked at her coldly.

Long?

Besides, what did the old lady's illness have to do with her?

Arabella then noticed Michael on the floor and exclaimed, "Michael, what happened to your hand? Who

broke it?

Sister, this is Grandma's ward. Why did you let Mr. Ellington beat Michael like this? Are you taking

revenge on me again?" Arabella looked shocked and started accusing Vivienne. "I've already

apologized and cleared up the matter about Ms. Faye. Why can't you let us go?"

Her voice was full of sorrow, and she promptly knelt down in front of Vivienne. "If you're upset and mad

at me, just take it out on me. Why do you have to hurt Grandma and Michael? I beg you. I really beg

you. If you have any grievances, just take them out on me. Do whatever you want!

No matter what, I'm just an adopted daughter, but you're the real daughter of the Hawthorn family. You share the same blood as Grandma and the others. Grandma is so old that she almost had a stroke because of you. She can't handle any more stress!"

"My life is just so damn hard!" Beatrice sobbed from her hospital bed. "Vivienne, I'm your granny for crying out loud! I'm the one who looked after you when you were a kid. Now here I am, sick as a dog, just wanting to see Thaddeus. And for that, you let Percival break your uncle Michael's hand. How heartless can you be?"

The reporters outside the hospital room were downright pissed off as they listened to the grandmother and granddaughter's lament.

"Vivienne, what you did is just way out of line! Beatrice and Michael are your family. They are your own blood!"

"Yeah, Beatrice is just sick. She wanted to see her grandson, and for that, you had Mr. Michael's hand broken? That's just plain cruel!"

"I think Richard Ellington must have lost his mind. How could he hand his position over to Percival?"

How is a guy who'd hurt his own family for his selfish desires, without a shred of remorse, fit to lead the Ellington family? I tell you, under his rule, the Ellingtons are gonna go down the drain!"

Chapter 104

Percival shot a glance at the reporter speaking to him.

The reporter was young. He was sporting a pair of black-rimmed glasses, and the moment his gaze met Percival's, he felt a chill run down his spine, making him step back instinctively. But when he saw

Arabella's tear-streaked face and Michael writhing in pain on the ground, his sense of "justice"

overpowered him. "What are you looking at? Did I say something wrong? I think Michael should go get his injuries checked out and sue you for intentional harm!" He blurted out.

Others chimed in. "Exactly. Those who abuse their power and oppress others will eventually get their just deserts!"

"Vivienne is such a letdown. The Hawthorn family raised her, and yet she let her fiancé drive them to the brink of bankruptcy. What an ungrateful brat!"

"We're definitely going public with what happened today. We want everyone to see your true colors!"

"I think they should publicly apologize to Hawthorn Group and compensate them for all their losses."

Arabella seized this opportunity. She fell to her knees and began begging Vivienne while sobbing.

"Please, beg the Ellington family to spare the Hawthorn family! I'll take all the blame! Please! Do you really want to see the Hawthorn family go bankrupt to be satisfied?"

She lay on the ground as her voice choked with emotions, pleading over and over again. She looked like the wronged underdog.

But hidden from public view, her eyes showed an intense hatred.

Arabella's public kneeling and begging to Vivienne were not voluntary.

But no matter how much resentment she harbored for Vivienne or how much she didn't want to kneel in

front of her, she had no choice but to do it.

Without the Hawthorn family, she would lose her support, so her ambitions and desires would be impossible to achieve.

After all, where in the world could she find someone like Beatrice, who valued her, the adopted granddaughter more than her own granddaughter?

This was a hurdle she had to cross.

So, although she was unwilling, Arabella still kowtowed vigorously.

With each kowtow on the ground, she told herself, "Arabella, just endure this once. You'll get back double the humiliation you suffered today on Vivienne."

Vivienne hadn't said a word since the beginning. She just watched Arabella's performance with a smile, as if she were watching a hilarious comedy. She even seemed rather amused.

Beatrice wouldn't be so foolish as to think that she could force Vivienne to spare the Hawthorn family by holding Thaddeus captive. Beatrice's strategy was to bind Vivienne with morality.

Most people tend to sympathize with the underdog, regardless of right and wrong, and the underdog always has the upper hand in public opinion.

Now it seemed that she and Percival, even the entire Ellington family, were oppressing the weak with their power, while the sick Beatrice and crying Arabella were the oppressed.

If someone were to record the situation in the room and post it online at this moment, it would definitely

spark a public outcry sympathizing with the weak and condemning the strong.

Anyone else would have surrendered under such family pressure and public condemnation.

Regrettably, she was Vivienne.

They misjudged her. She was not the kind to be easily bound by morality.

Especially when dealing with morally corrupt people.

Vivienne remained silent. She just wanted to see what Arabella would do if she didn't agree.

Interesting, right?

She would watch them perform like clowns in front of her and then defeat them in the end.

"Vivienne! Are you really going to be this heartless?!" Seeing that Vivienne was still unresponsive,

Arabella finally started to panic. She looked up; her smooth forehead was already reddened from

kowtowing; she had tears streaking down her cheeks, and her hair was disheveled.

The onlooking reporters were all heartbroken and angrily started throwing insults.

"Don't beg her anymore. Can't you see? Vivienne is just a cold-hearted bitch!"

"Yeah, you're like this, and she can still laugh!"

"It's all my fault, not Vivienne's!" Arabella, while hating Vivienne in her heart, pretended to be flustered

and shook her head frantically. Suddenly, she pulled out a knife and held it against her left wrist. "What

can I do for you to spare the Hawthorn family? Can my death do it? Will it be enough if I die?!"

The reporters were horrified and quickly tried to stop her.

"Arabella, don't be impulsive!"

"Even if you hurt yourself, the ruthless Vivienne won't spare the Hawthorn family!"

"Arabella! Don't!" Beatrice also played along. Her eyes were wide open when she tried to throw herself onto the ground to stop Arabella, but she then conveniently fainted.

"Mom!" Joseph immediately held Beatrice, cried out, and then glared at Vivienne. "Vivienne, are you really going to push the entire Hawthorn family to death?!"

What a serious charge.

Vivienne really laughed this time. "Continue."

Arabella was stunned. She didn't expect that Vivienne would still be unmoved, even at this point.

Wasn't she worried that her reputation would be ruined?

And what about the Ellington family? It would definitely affect the stock price of the Ellington Group if people found out that Percival pushed his in-laws to ruin and death because of some sibling disputes.

When Richard said he wanted to pass the head of the family position to Percival, the other members of the Ellington family clearly showed their dissatisfaction.

If Percival, at this point, decided to mess with the Hawthorn family because of Vivienne, and it ended up biting the Ellington family in the ass and damaging the Ellington Group's reputation, it would be like he was placing a target on his back for others in the Ellington family to attack him. It may even block his path to becoming the next head of the family.

Did Percival seriously not give a damn?

Was he really that head over heels for Vivienne?

She looked up at Vivienne. She never thought there would come a day when she'd be lurking in the corner, watching Vivienne, someone she used to not give a second glance.

Vivienne was stunning. She was dressed to the nines and stood there, looking down at her with an elegant air.

And there she was, looking like a hot mess with no dignity to speak of, bowing down to Vivienne like some beggar.

Why? Why did the tables turn so suddenly between her and Vivienne? She took a nose dive from the top while Vivienne was shining brighter and brighter. What the hell went wrong?

It was because of Percival!

Why did Vivienne get to be sheltered by Percival with no strings attached?

Why didn't Percival belong to her?

He was supposed to be hers!

Chapter 105

Arabella was shaking with rage, and the knife in her hand was trembling.

She was only eighteen and always pampered herself. Despite mentally preparing herself and arranging

for medical staff to be on standby, she was still hesitant to make the cut.

Was she really going to do it?

If she did, would Vivienne give in?

Just as she closed her eyes, mustered up her courage, and prepared to make a small cut, a

bespectacled reporter rushed over and grabbed Arabella's hand, stopping her.

"Don't you see? Vivienne is heartless. She won't give a damn, even if you hurt yourself. Stand up. Stop

kneeling for her. She's not worth it!"

Arabella let out a sigh of relief.

Just as the reporter was about to pull her up, his phone rang.

Not just his. The other reporters' phones started ringing one after the other.

After picking up the call, his face changed instantly.

He looked at Arabella with a complex expression, let go of her hand, and opened up Twitter.

The other reporters seemed to have received the same news. They, too, opened up Twitter.

A middle-aged man's voice came from their phones.

"Hello everyone, I'm William. Arabella, who caused a major controversy online for treating Ms. Faye, is not my student. She was merely assisting. I've never taught her.

"This prescription was given to me by the Baker family. Arabella used my name to help Ms. Faye with this prescription. Of course, the prescription was indeed written by me, but I only completed half of it and was still adjusting it. Two of the drugs in the prescription would react with each other, causing a fever that wouldn't subside and could potentially be fatal.

I didn't expect Arabella to steal this half-completed prescription without my consent. She used it to treat Ms. Faye and almost killed her.

I hereby declare that Arabella is not my student. Someone so morally corrupt who doesn't value a

patient's life is not fit to work with the Pendleton family."

William was a highly influential doctor in the medical community, and Arabella had always boasted about being his student. He was from the distinguished medical family, the Pendleton family. His contribution to medicine was immense and highly respected. So, his words carried weight.

All the reporters were dumbfounded. They looked at Arabella, thinking that their previous sympathy for her was a joke.

Was she just handing out drugs willy-nilly?

Arabella was only eighteen, right? She was so young yet so cunning and cruel. She almost killed Faye and had the audacity to frame the Baker family and Vivienne.

And her acting was really good. They all believed her.

So how much of what she said and did today was true, and how much of it was false?

Suddenly, the reporters all fell silent. No one said a word; they just looked at Arabella with strange eyes.

"No, no, it's fake! It's fake!" Arabella screamed. "It must be the Ellington family! It must be Percival

trying to frame me for Vivienne. He pressured Dr. William to say this!"

The reporters looked at Arabella with puzzled eyes. While the Ellington family was indeed powerful, the Pendleton family was not to be underestimated.

Dr. William himself was highly accomplished and had an extraordinary passion for medicine.

No matter how powerful Percival was, how could he force Dr. William to lie about his beloved medicine?

Suddenly, rapid footsteps came from the corridor. A group of policemen walked into the ward.

"Who is Arabella?"

The ward was quiet for a moment.

Finally, Joseph, who was holding Beatrice, asked softly, "Is... is there a problem?"

"Someone reported that Arabella used medicine recklessly and almost killed someone, which constitutes intentional harm. Also, yesterday we caught a group of troublemakers at Tranquil Estates and Imperial Blossom Nursery, claiming to be hired by Arabella. This constitutes disturbing the peace. We need to take her back for an investigation."

Upon hearing what the policemen said, the reporters paused for a second and then started taking out

their phones to contact their media companies to be the first to break this news.

Havenwood's prodigy almost killed someone because of her negligent treatment, hired people to cause trouble, and got arrested.

How could they miss such explosive news?

"I didn't! It's a frame-up!" After seeing the reporters' reactions, Arabella turned pale. If this news really got out, her reputation would be ruined.

If she had a criminal record, in their eyes, she would be nothing more than worthless trash. The

Hawthorn family would definitely abandon her.

She glared at Vivienne and said hatefully, "It's you, isn't it? You framed me! You just had to ruin me!"

Vivienne looked down at her as if she were looking at an ant. "So what if it was me?"

Her cold eyes were full of indifference. "You stole Dr. William's prescription, treated Faye recklessly, and hired people to make trouble at my house and Thaddeus' nursery. You're lucky I decided to spare you."

"No, it wasn't me! I didn't do any of that!" Arabella defended herself like a madwoman, refusing to admit

anything. "You first stole my fiancé and then took the credit for treating Faye! Then you turned around

and framed me with the Baker family! You even bribed Dr. William!"

She pointed at the policemen and sneered. "You've been bribed by her too, haven't you? That's why

you're helping her frame me!"

This drama left the reporters in shock.

Not to mention anything else, but the idea of bribing Dr. William was utterly absurd. And yet, this

Arabella had the audacity to twist the truth and even dared to openly slander the police for taking

bribes.

The cops clearly didn't have much patience for her. The lead cop said, "When you were treating Faye

at the Baker family's place, you were caught on their surveillance camera. The evidence is clear as

day. Just come with us."

No sooner had they finished speaking than the cops moved in to slap the cuffs on Arabella.

After dodging the police, Arabella immediately walked to the bed and clung tightly to Beatrice. "Granny,

save me!"

Arabella's grip was so tight that Beatrice's lips trembled with pain.

However, Beatrice kept her eyes closed and played possum. No matter how Arabella shook her or pleaded with her, she refused to open her eyes.

The current situation was incredibly awkward, and by playing possum, she could avoid it. If she woke up, she would have to face the barrage of questions from the reporters they had brought themselves.

At that point, it would only make their situation even more awkward.

Besides, it was absolutely necessary for Arabella to go to the police station this time, and she didn't have the power to protect her.

Chapter 106

Maybe out of fear of jail, Arabella suddenly summoned up unusual strength. Despite three or four cops trying to pry her off, she clung to Beatrice even tighter while wailing non-stop.

"Granny, help me! I can't go to jail. I don't want to!"

Just when Beatrice was about to be choked to death, Joseph, who was standing by, suddenly slapped

Arabella. "Your granny is already sick as a dog. Do you want to kill her?"

Beatrice had always spoiled Arabella, but Joseph was not so gentle. Pretending to be angry, he began to accuse her. "You fooled us! You made us believe Vivienne took your glory, and that's why the

Hawthorn family is in such a mess. And now you want your granny to save you?"

The slap left Arabella stunned. No one had ever hit her like this during her time with the Hawthorn family.

While she was still dazed, the cops quickly twisted her arms behind her back, cuffed her, and pulled her away from Beatrice.

Vivienne, noticing Beatrice's obvious relief and heavy breathing, smirked.

Her smirk immediately caught Arabella's venomous gaze.

"You guys say I'm guilty, right? Then what about Percival breaking Michael's hand? Isn't that intentional assault? You must arrest him too!" Arabella screamed this at the cops before they took her away, pointing to a dumbstruck Michael on the floor.

The cops were taken aback and glanced at Michael's obviously broken hand and then at Percival with furrowed brows.

If Michael had the injury assessed, it would indeed be a Class II minor injury, which is considered intentional assault.

"Right!" Michael gathered his wits and pointed at Percival with his intact hand. "He's the one who did this to my hand!"

He thought that if Percival wanted to be the future head of the Ellington family, he couldn't have a criminal record or have done any jail time.

Perhaps the Hawthorn family could use this to threaten Percival to back down.

Too bad for him, Vivienne simply laughed.

"What are you laughing at? Can't you take responsibility for your actions?!" Michael roared angrily.

Vivienne replied calmly, "You detained Thaddeus and prevented us from saving him. Breaking your hand was self-defense."

As she spoke, she leisurely took out her phone and played a recording of their previous conversation in the hospital room.

Upon hearing that Beatrice and Michael had abused Thaddeus and kept him locked in the bathroom, the reporters and cops looked at Michael with scorn. And he had the nerve to report this?

Michael was taken aback. He hadn't expected Vivienne to have recorded everything.

What he didn't know was that Vivienne didn't just record it; she also had a mini camera in her brooch.

She never did anything without certainty.

After listening to the recording, one of the cops informed Michael coldly. "This is indeed self-defense.

And you attacked Vivienne first; Percival just stepped in. No matter how you plead, the result will be the same."

After that, the cops ignored him and prepared to take Arabella away.

However, Arabella seized a moment of distraction, grabbed the knife she had used to slit her wrists, and lunged at Vivienne.

Her face was twisted in hatred, and her eyes showed her great madness. She was clearly out of her mind.

The reporters screamed, and the cops rushed forward to protect Vivienne.

But before Arabella could even raise the knife, Vivienne kicked her away.

Arabella flew back, hitting the hospital room wall hard before falling heavily to the ground, unable to move.

Except for Percival, everyone was dumbfounded. Who would have thought that the petite Vivienne

could kick with such force?

Arabella weighed over a hundred pounds.

Even for the men present, it would be hard to send her flying with a kick.

Arabella probably broke a few ribs when she hit the wall.

But Vivienne did it effortlessly.

Not only that, after retracting her leg, Vivienne innocently asked the cops, "This counts as self-defense, right?"

Everyone was speechless.

Wasn't this excessive self-defense?

Arabella was obviously infuriated by this, and she spat out a mouthful of blood on the spot.

However, the cops didn't care. The lead cop nodded at Vivienne. "Yes, this is self-defense."

He paused and then added. "Don't worry, even though her attack failed, she can still be charged with attempted murder. We are all witnesses."

Well said.

Upon hearing this, Arabella spat out another mouthful of blood in anger.

The cops then dragged Arabella from the floor like a dead dog.

This time, Arabella had no strength to resist. She could barely walk.

However, before she was taken away, she cast a hateful look at Beatrice, who was still "unconscious."

No matter how much Beatrice spoiled her or cared for her, it was all fake. She could abandon her

without hesitation when something happened.

Even if Beatrice couldn't prevent her from being taken away, if she had just opened her eyes and said a

word for her, Arabella wouldn't feel so heartbroken now.

After Arabella was taken away, Vivienne didn't give the rest of the Hawthorn family a second glance.

She turned to Iris and said, "Take me to Thaddeus."

"Follow me." Iris snapped out of her daze from the recent twists and turns, nodded, and led Vivienne

and Percival to the adjoining room.

Joseph, left in the dust, couldn't stomach the failure of his plan today, which had even tarnished

Arabella and the Hawthorn family's reputation.

He opened his mouth. He was about to say something, but Percival suddenly turned his head and gave

him a cold look.

That look was full of murderous intent. It was like an invisible hand was gripping his throat, making him tremble and unable to speak.

Next door in the hospital room.

Arabella opened the bathroom door to find Thaddeus curled up in the corner of the dimly lit room, completely still.

"Thaddeus." Iris couldn't help but rush over and tightly hug Thaddeus' fragile body as she sobbed uncontrollably. "It's my fault. I'm sorry."

Thaddeus, who was naturally introverted and only began to open up after leaving the Hawthorn Mansion, was now staring blankly. He was not speaking and was clearly frightened.

Vivienne furrowed her brows; her eyes were dark and terrifying. She realized that she was too lenient with Beatrice and Joseph earlier. She should have broken their hands too.

"Let's take Thaddeus home first." Percival gently took Vivienne's hand and carried Thaddeus out of the bathroom.

Thaddeus continued to stare blankly ahead, allowing Percival to carry him while not saying a word.

Vivienne nodded and reached out to pat Thaddeus on the head. In possibly the gentlest tone she had ever used, she tried to comfort him. "Don't be scared. I'm here."

Chapter 107

Thaddeus eventually snapped back to reality. His vacant gaze focused on Vivienne's beautiful face before he suddenly burst into tears, trying to throw himself into her arms.

"Grandma, Michael, and Joseph are bad people! They scared me and locked me up! I never want to see them again!"

"Alright." Vivienne took Thaddeus into her arms. "I promise you. You won't ever see them again."

She held the crying Thaddeus and walked shoulder to shoulder with Percival towards the exit.

When they reached the door, they found Iris still standing motionless.

Vivienne looked back at her. "Aren't you coming with us?"

"No." Iris wiped away her tears and gave a bitter smile. "I don't know how to face Dorian and Cordelia."

After all, if she hadn't softened at the last moment, Thaddeus wouldn't have suffered this ordeal, and

Vivienne and Percival wouldn't have been so ruthlessly pressured by Arabella, almost ruining their reputations.

She paused and then added. "Vivienne, I've decided to go back to Ozoria today and never come back.

As for the Hawthorn family affairs, you can handle them as you see fit. I won't blame you for anything."

Vivienne lowered her head in silence for a moment and then looked at Iris as she nodded gently. "Take care."

Iris covered her mouth to muffle her sobs and nodded back at Vivienne.

Only after seeing Vivienne and Percival walk away did she squat down and bawl loudly.

Why had the Hawthorn family come to this?

They were a broken home with nothing but family feuds.

After her tearful outburst, Iris didn't go to see Beatrice. Instead, she went straight back to her hotel and booked a flight to Ozoria that same day.

She then turned off her phone, refusing to take any more calls from Beatrice and the others.

If Beatrice needed her financial support in the future, she would wire money regularly.

But she was done meddling in the Hawthorn family affairs and didn't want to hear about it anymore.

Her flight was scheduled for five in the evening.

Just before boarding, she heard someone calling her name.

When she turned around, she saw Dorian and Cordelia running anxiously towards her.

Frozen in surprise, she watched Dorian run out of breath while trying to reach her, grab her hand, and say, "At least say goodbye to us before leaving, right? And you even turned off your phone. We might have missed you if Percival hadn't checked your flight details."

"Aren't you mad at me?" Her eyes began to well up.

"Mad... Of course I'm mad." Dorian said, a bit annoyed. "But you're still my dear sister."

Cordelia also took Iris's hand. "Let the past be the past. We'll all be fine in the future. Take care of yourself in Ozoria."

Tears began streaming down her face as Iris nodded. She hadn't expected that, after putting Thaddeus through so much distress, Dorian and Cordelia would still come to see her off.

She saw Vivienne holding Thaddeus and standing with Percival in the distance, watching.

Feeling both ashamed and touched, she covered her face and wept.

That night, at the Baker family's place.

Vivienne was there to treat Faye. It was her last treatment, and Faye's condition had improved

significantly. She was no longer as weak as she was before.

"You seem happy today?" Vivienne asked as she treated Faye.

She had noticed that the moment she walked in, Faye seemed to be in good spirits. Her lips curled upward into a subtle smile.

"Of course I'm happy. Arabella finally got what she deserved and was arrested by the police!" Faye looked at Vivienne with surprise. "Aren't you happy? She framed you and hired thugs to create a ruckus at your place."

Arabella's attempts to twist the truth at the Baker's had infuriated Faye, and it was even worse when Arabella had the gall to slander Vivienne online. The mere mention of Arabella made the Bakers grind their teeth.

But now the truth was out.

What happened at the hospital that afternoon had been widely circulated online by the journalists hired by Arabella and Beatrice. They had hoped to use moral pressure to restrain Vivienne but ended up helping her instead.

Now everyone in Havenwood knew what kind of person Arabella was.

Not only that, the videos taken by the journalists had been edited by internet users into short clips, like the one with Arabella banging her head and the one where she was shaking Beatrice. The edits, paired with different music, were hilarious.

Faye showed Vivienne these videos while laughing so hard that she was shaking. "Look, look, these guys are so creative."

"Stop moving." Vivienne didn't really care. She had never given much thought to people like Arabella.

She saw that the video of her kicking Arabella had been edited and set to music.

In the video, she kicked Arabella in time with the music, and Arabella kept crashing into the wall. She was helpless.

She took out her phone, forwarded the video to Matthew, and texted him. "In three minutes, I don't want

to see videos like this online."

Matthew was silent for a while. He was probably watching the video and then texted back. "It's... kind of funny."

"Scram."

Three minutes later, Faye, who was still watching the video, was confused. "Why can't I watch the video of you kicking Arabella anymore?"

"Maybe it got flagged for violent content and got taken down." Vivienne casually replied.

"I wish I'd downloaded it." Faye looked regretful.

Vivienne didn't say anything. Even if it had been downloaded, Matthew's hackers would have deleted it.

After finishing the treatment, Vivienne advised her on what to do. "Starting today, you're gonna take these pills I put together for you every morning and night. You were too weak before, so I didn't want to shock your system with any topical stuff, but now you can start using them tomorrow."

She pulled out a bottle and a box. "You pour a capful of this into your bath each day, dilute it with hot water, and soak for half an hour. Then smear this stuff from the box on your scars once a day, and come back for more when you're out."

Feeling a mix of joy and anxiety, Faye asked, "So, how long till my scars heal?" She added. "I wanna get back to school as soon as I can."

"You can go right now, if you've got the guts for it." Vivienne replied as she packed up her medicine

box. "Remember, I've told you that there's only a chance of your scars healing. I can't guarantee it. So, what if they don't heal? Are you gonna ditch school forever?"

The truth was that she could completely heal Faye. It would just take about a month.

Faye's situation was different from Isolde's. Isolde's facial issues were due to poisoning. A simple detox did the trick.

But Faye's scars weren't just skin deep. There was serious damage to the underlying tissues. It would take time for the cells to regenerate, so she couldn't expect instant results like Isolde.

However, she didn't tell her any of this. She wanted Faye to muster up more courage. She didn't want her to hide from the world just because of a few stares and boldly step out into society.

After tidying up, she left Faye's room, leaving her to mull over things on her own.

Chapter 108

In the living room.

Percival was chilling on the sofa, waiting for her, while Doreen and Bertha kept him company.

After seeing Vivienne descend the stairs, he stood up to greet her. "All done?"

"Yep." Vivienne nodded as she made her way down the stairs. She turned to Doreen and Bertha.

"Starting tomorrow, I won't be treating Faye anymore. I've already told her about the medicine."

Doreen immediately showed her gratitude and saw Vivienne and Percival out, finally dropping a

bombshell. "The Hawthorn family just declared bankruptcy."

Vivienne was already in the loop; the news broke out at noon today. It was a complete smear on the

Hawthorn family's reputation.

The tide of public opinion turned. The netizens who previously helped Arabella attack her and Percival

had now started to attack Arabella, and Beatrice. The effect was significant.

Major banks and raw material suppliers who collaborated with the Hawthorn family and distributors who

had already paid the deposit for the perfume, fearing they wouldn't get their money, all flocked to the

hospital and pressed the Hawthorn family for repayment.

This time, Beatrice couldn't hold on. She passed out for real.

The Hawthorn family eventually declared bankruptcy.

Vivienne wasn't surprised. This was the ending Vivienne had planned for them.

This time, only two families took action against the Hawthorn family. If every family pitched in, the

Hawthorn family would probably be destroyed without a trace.

She took Dorian and Iris' feelings into consideration, so she didn't go all in.

Doreen told Vivienne. "This incident was mainly because I wasn't careful enough and got tricked by Arabella. I also dragged you in. Don't worry, the Baker family will definitely hold her legally responsible."

The Baker family essentially caused this incident, but, in the end, it was Vivienne who cleaned up the mess, so Doreen felt quite ashamed.

Without saying much, Vivienne just politely said her goodbyes and left with Percival.

Today, Thomas didn't come. Percival drove.

On the way, Richard called.

As soon as the call connected, Richard began to cuss. "I'm returning to Rivenwood in a few days, and you're not even around to keep me company. Where the hell are you?"

Percival was a bit helpless. "I accompanied Vivienne to the Bakers."

"Vivienne's with you?" Richard's tone immediately softened. "Then spend more time with Vivienne. It's fine if you don't come home tonight. You're young, after all. Being a little impulsive isn't a bad thing."

Vivienne slightly raised an eyebrow, teasingly looking at Percival.

Percival immediately pleaded innocence with his eyes. He definitely didn't mean it that way.

"Vivienne." Richard called for Vivienne.

"Richard, I'm here."

"I'm returning to Rivenwood in a few days. I want to invite your whole family for dinner the day after tomorrow. I haven't seen you for days. I miss you."

"Okay, I'll let them know." Vivienne replied.

Richard was satisfied. He didn't say another word and hung up the call.

The difference in the way he treated them was too obvious.

"I'll definitely be obedient in the future." Percival pretended to sigh. "Because if we fight, Grandpa will definitely side with you."

"Mr. Ellington." Vivienne turned her head to look at him with her clear and captivating eyes as her lips slightly moved. "I remember telling you that we will eventually break off our engagement."

Percival's hand, which was on the steering wheel, paused for a moment, and his throat suddenly felt a bit dry. "I know."

He knew Vivienne had never thought of marrying him.

Vivienne's identity, what she did, and even agreeing to get engaged with him were all for a purpose.

But he, who never had much interest in women, had special feelings for Vivienne, who was ten years younger than him. He didn't know when these feelings began, but they were always hidden deep in his heart.

Perhaps it was last night on the Ferris wheel, amid the endless fireworks, when she leaned towards him, and he saw his own reflection in her eyes.

He was sure of one thing.

He liked Vivienne.

But when Vivienne reminded him time and time again that they would break off their engagement, his heart would inexplicably ache.

He couldn't fully understand her, but he knew the strength she showed now was just the tip of the iceberg.

He never felt weak, but when facing Vivienne, he always felt like he wasn't strong enough.

He hoped he could become stronger. Strong enough that Vivienne's gaze could never leave him.

Just like how his gaze could never leave her now.

Percival turned his head as a faint glow reflected in his dark pupils. He softly said, "At least for now, you haven't left, which means I still have a chance to make you marry me."

Vivienne was silent for a moment. She suddenly beamed with a captivating smile. "Mr. Ellington, bring it on."

Percival also smiled. "Okay."

Cloud Eatery's food was very famous in Havenwood. It was said that the owner had many unique recipes that attracted a lot of foodies.

Richard's farewell banquet was set there. Apart from him and Percival, Isolde and Cecilia also came, as did a freeloader named Leopold Sterling, who insisted on joining.

On the way, even though Leopold had his own ride, he insisted on hitching a ride with Percival, yapping away about the incident at the hospital. "Mr. Ellington, do you think Vivienne has violent tendencies?

She kicked Arabella so hard that day. I worry about your future married life."

Percival gave him a cold glance, not taking the bait, but instead asking, "I didn't ask for your help with the Hawthorn family issue, so why did you Sterling family also get involved?"

Leopold tried to dodge him. He looked left and right, not daring to meet Percival's gaze. "I saw you getting involved, and, as a good friend, of course I had to lend a hand."

The Sterling family got involved because they received an order from the Nine Mystics Society.

The order was issued by the leader of the Nine Mystics Society. He didn't know why they suddenly demanded the bankruptcy of the Hawthorn Group, but once the Nine Mystics Society issued an order, they, the Sterling family, would carry it out without any hesitation.

Moreover, he had long been wanting to take down the Hawthorn family, which he disliked. Even if he was asked to streak naked three times around Havenwood, he would do it.

However, the affairs of the Nine Mystics Society must not be divulged to outsiders. He couldn't even tell his close friend, Percival.

"Really?" Percival scrutinized Leopold for a moment. "Should I thank you for your deep affection for me?"

Leopold immediately clutched his chest and dodged to the side, yelling, "My feelings for you are purely fraternal; don't get any other ideas! I'm into women only! If you push me, I'll scream!"

Just then, the car arrived at Cloud Eatery and came to a stop.

Leopold's back accidentally hit the car window button.

The window rolled down, and Vivienne's family outside the car started giving them weird looks.

Percival promptly kicked Leopold. "Get lost!"

Chapter 109

At the dining table.

Percival was sitting next to Vivienne, catering to her throughout the meal. Whenever she needed a napkin or a refill on her drink, he was there. If she so much as glanced at a dish, it would miraculously appear in her bowl.

Vivienne, of course, didn't take Leopold's previous joke seriously. But Percival's attentiveness was making her suspicious. Was he overcompensating for something?

Across the table, Cecilia was fuming. She almost snapped her fork and knife in half. She had raised Percival, and she had never seen him so attentive to anyone, let alone her. How come she never noticed that Percival had this caring side?

She already disliked Vivienne, and this was just adding fuel to the fire.

But it was okay. Richard would be returning to Rivenwood soon, and Nathan Ellington had already

returned to handle business matters. She couldn't mess with Vivienne with Richard around, but once

he was gone, who would stop her?

After all, Percival was her son. She didn't believe that he would choose Vivienne over her.

"Vivienne." Richard, seemingly pleased with Percival's behavior, called out.

He had noticed that Percival had feelings for Vivienne, but the feelings weren't reciprocated.

"Richard." Vivienne immediately put down her fork and knife politely, ready to listen.

"I'm returning to Rivenwood in a few days." Richard said with a grin. "Isolde is still very young, and I'm

worried about Percival and her being alone. I hope you'll help look after them when you can."

Cecilia almost choked on her food. What was Richard saying?

How were Percival and Isolde alone and helpless? What did that make her?

Isolde chimed in while looking at Vivienne with her big eyes. "Vivienne, you must come and keep me

company. Once Grandfather leaves, and with my mother busy with poker every day, I'll be lonely."

Cecilia took a deep breath. When did she neglect Isolde for poker?

Well, she did play poker every day.

The Dorian family saw no problem with Richard's request. They were grateful to the Ellington family for all the help they had given the Hawthorn family. It was only right to return the favor.

Everyone turned their gaze to Vivienne, waiting for her response. Percival watched her from the corner of his eye.

If it were anyone else, Vivienne would've ignored them. But most of the people here were individuals she cared about, so she gave a slight nod in agreement. "Richard, don't worry, I will."

Under the table, however, she secretly kicked in Percival's direction.

"Ouch!" Leopold yelped in pain as he clutched his leg.

Assuming Percival was the culprit, he glared at him. "Why'd you kick me?"

"Do I need a reason to kick you?" Percival replied nonchalantly.

"You're the man." Leopold gave Percival a thumbs up.

No one noticed, but Percival and Richard exchanged a knowing look.

"Good job," their eyes seemingly said.

Richard chuckled to himself. He'd helped as much as he could. If Percival couldn't win over Vivienne, he shouldn't bother returning to Rivenwood.

After dinner, Richard dragged Dorian off for a game of chess. Thaddeus and Isolde went to play in the mansion's courtyard, with Cecilia and Cordelia watching over them.

"The view from the back mountain is great. Want to take a walk?" Percival suggested to Vivienne.

Before Vivienne could respond, Leopold piped up. "I'll go too. I'll go too. I love walks."

Percival shot Leopold a cold look, which sent a shiver down his spine.

Since Leopold insisted on joining, Percival also invited Thomas. The four of them strolled towards the back mountain.

The Cloud Eatery was situated halfway up the mountain. It was surrounded by lush flowers and plants.

Perhaps due to the mountain's climate, the vegetation flourished.

A breeze blew, and petals began dancing in the wind. It was like they stepped into a fairyland.

Vivienne felt at peace as she looked at this scenery. It reminded her of her days at the Emerald Monastery.

During the summer, after her practice, she'd open her eyes to see the flowers and trees outside her window and feel the same tranquility.

"These flowers are beautiful." Leopold couldn't resist the urge to pick one.

Vivienne shot him a cold look. Just as he reached out, he suddenly tripped.

"Damn it!" He grumbled while dusting off the dirt and petals from his clothes. "What just happened?

Why did I trip?"

"You deserve it for picking flowers." Thomas said deadpan.

"Do you like flowers?" Percival asked Vivienne, ignoring Leopold. "If you do, we can fill our home with them."

Before Vivienne could answer, Percival's face suddenly changed.

Vivienne reacted faster and quickly turned around to stare coldly in the direction of the bushes.

They both heard faint footsteps.

This forest was littered with scattered petals, broken branches, and sand. An average Joe couldn't walk in here without making a sound. No way, no how. There was only one possibility for someone who could move like this.

It had to be a hitman!

Leopold and Thomas quickly came to their senses, swiftly turned around, and stood back-to-back with

Vivienne and Percival with their eyes alertly fixed forward.

Next, ten assassins emerged from among the flowers and plants, forming a circle around the four of them.

The leader of the assassins had a scar on his left cheek and skillfully held a dagger in his hand. He coldly asked Vivienne, "Are you Vivienne?"

Vivienne slightly raised her head and calmly replied, "Yes."

"Hand over the item!" The assassin's voice was somewhat muffled, but his threats could be clearly heard. "I advise you to behave, or tonight will be your end."

The other assassins also pulled out their weapons. They were ready for battle and waiting for the leader's command to strike.

The four of them watched alertly. They were ready to act at any time.

Vivienne looked at the leader of the assassins as her eyes flashed with a cold light. "How much did your employer pay you?"

"What?" The leader of the assassins didn't react in time.

"How much is my life worth?" Vivienne asked again. Her relaxed tone made it seem as if she were discussing the price of groceries in a supermarket, not her life.

The leader of the assassins looked at Vivienne, becoming somewhat impatient, as if he were ready to strike at any moment.

Vivienne gave a small smile. "What? Afraid to say?"

The leader of the assassins frowned. He was seemingly aggravated by Vivienne's calm demeanor.

"One million, now cut the crap! I don't want to get my hands dirty. Hand over the item, and I can finish my job."

Vivienne elegantly laughed and then seriously asked, "Would five million make you betray your employer?"

The leader of the assassins paused and then looked at her warily. "What are you trying to do?"

"Seven million?" Vivienne calmly offered. "To betray your employer?"

"You're trying to bribe us? Dream on! We would never betray..."

"Ten million!"

The leader of the assassins' choked on his own words. He swallowed hard.

Ten million...

That was a lot of money.

They could work hard for a lifetime and not earn that much.

He almost wanted to agree immediately, but the strict rules of their organization made him shudder. He

harshly warned her. "I've been patient enough. If you don't hand it over..."

"Twenty million!" Vivienne looked at the leader of the assassins. "This is my final offer. Think it over. If

you agree, take the money and go. If you don't..."

Vivienne suddenly laughed. Her smile was like a rose in the night. "You won't get the item, and you

can't kill me. So you'll be punished by your organization when you go back."

"Don't try to stir things up." The leader of the assassins changed his tone. "Do you even have that

much money?"

"No." Vivienne didn't lie. She indeed didn't have that much money in her bank account.

The leader of the assassins' face darkened, but then he heard Vivienne say, "But my fiancé does."

Upon saying this, Vivienne turned to Percival. "Mr. Ellington, lend me twenty million. I'll pay you back in

three days."

Percival was speechless.

Leopold was silent.

So was Thomas.

If you didn't have the money, why pretended to be rich?

The corner of Percival's mouth slightly lifted. "No problem."

After confirming that he agreed, Vivienne turned to the leader of the assassins. "What do you think?

Your decision is..."

"Transfer the money!" The leader of the assassins interrupted Vivienne.

Vivienne laughed again. Her smile was incredibly beautiful. "Mr. Ellington, please transfer the money to this gentleman."

Percival looked at the leader of the assassins and spoke in a low voice. "Bank account number."

The leader of the assassins hesitated for a moment. Giving out his bank account number might reveal his personal information, but he was still moved by the temptation of twenty million.

And their mission wasn't to kill Vivienne, but to force her to hand over something. If Vivienne would

rather die than give it up, their mission would be a failure. They wouldn't get anything and would get on the bad side of the Ellington family.

But now they didn't have to do anything, and they could get twenty million for nothing. Anyone would be

tempted.

So, the leader of the assassins exchanged glances with the other nine assassins, then gave out his bitcoin account.

This was their most common transaction method. His information was hidden and hard to trace.

Percival took out his phone and made a few moves. The leader of the assassins looked at his phone, and his face instantly changed. His originally fierce expression suddenly became friendly; even the scar on his face seemed gentle.

He quickly put his dagger back into his boots, called the other nine assassins over, lined up like hotel staff, nodded, and bowed to Vivienne while smiling from ear to ear.

"Thank you for the twenty million, Ms. Hawthorn. We will leave now. Sorry for the interruption. If you ever need anything like this, you can find me. I guarantee transparency and fair trade."

After saying this, they disappeared as quietly as they had come.

Before leaving, the leader of the assassins even left a business card for Vivienne.

Leopold was dumbfounded. He pointed in the direction where the assassins had disappeared as he

shouted, "Are assassins nowadays unprincipled? How could they be so easily bought? Why are they

so willing to break a contract?"

He looked at Vivienne, who was putting away the business card, and then asked Percival, "Did you

really give them twenty million?"

"If it can solve your problem, I'm more than willing to." Percival said with a smile. "Vivienne, you don't

need to pay me back. Consider it pocket money."

Vivienne thought for a while and then took out a small bottle from her bag. "This is for you. It's worth

more than your twenty million, Mr. Ellington, I don't like being indebted."

Percival took the small bottle, opened it, and his face changed.

Leopold saw the change in Percival's expression. He walked over to take a look and immediately

gasped. "These are life-saving pills!"

Oh my God!

The life-saving pills that were being fought over in the black market were worth five hundred thousand each. Vivienne actually had a whole bottle?!

This bottle was worth at least a hundred million!

Leopold looked at Vivienne in amazement. "Where did you get these?"

"I made it myself." Vivienne answered with a serious look.

Percival, Leopold, and Thomas were at a loss for words.

What was the deal here?

Others would give their right arm for this, and it turned out that Vivienne could make them herself?

Had Percival just hit the jackpot?

Percival held the little bottle while lost in thought.

After a while, a slight smile appeared on his face. He casually put the bottle away. "Thanks, Vivienne."

He didn't stand on ceremony with Vivienne because he really needed these pills.

His team suffered a lot of casualties every year when they were on missions. With these pills, they could up their game.

He owed Vivienne a lot. It was a debt he couldn't repay.

So, he'd have to pay her back with his life and devotion.

He looked at Vivienne.

He knew she wanted to call off the engagement, but he vowed to himself that that would not happen in this lifetime.

Chapter 110

Five days later, in a basement of some coffee shop.

Six men, wearing nothing but trousers, were chained to an iron scaffold. Their upper bodies were tense and crisscrossed with wounds.

They glared at Draven, who was in front of them, and Vivienne, who was sitting behind him, sipping her coffee.

"Aren't you going to talk?" Draven asked.

In his hand was a bottle of medicinal powder, which he slowly sprinkled onto the wounds of the six. His words carried a clear threat, yet his tone was eerily calm.

"This is a special powder we've concocted. A touch of it on your wounds, and it'll feel like you're being

bitten by countless bugs. It's gonna hurt like hell. Better spill the beans; I promise to make it quick."

The six men were sweating bullets from the pain. The powder on their wounds was washed away by their sweat and mingled with their blood.

They opened their mouths as they gasped for breath but were unable to make a sound. The pain was unbearable. It was like bugs were gnawing at them, causing stars to dance before their eyes. They nearly fainted from the agony.

Whenever they were about to faint, Draven would jab a needle into their heads to keep them awake, so they wouldn't miss a moment of this unbearable torture.

Vivienne finished her coffee and glanced at the six men.

They were captured when they were ambushed at Imperial Blossom Nursery when they were trying to kidnap Thaddeus and Cordelia.

She had made arrangements for Dorian, Thaddeus, and Cordelia to be protected in secret, lying in wait for these people to walk into the trap.

The first two times, the captured men immediately committed suicide by poison.

The third time, she intervened personally.

As long as she was there, even if they took poison on the spot, she could bring them back from the brink of death.

However, these six men were tight-lipped. Despite Draven's interrogation, they remained silent. So, they had to ask Vivienne to step in.

When she first entered the basement, the six men looked at her with disdain.

They thought she was just a little girl who was incapable of anything.

But it didn't take long for them to experience firsthand what it meant to wish for death.

After only three trials of poison, one of them couldn't take it anymore. Ignoring the disdainful and angry looks of his companions, he signaled to Draven that he wanted to talk.

Unfortunately, their jaws had been dislocated and they were under the influence of drugs, so none of them could make a sound.

He shook his head, and Draven finally understood his intent. He sneered. "So, you're finally ready to talk?"

The man, enduring the pain, nodded his head with maximum effort.

Draven looked at Vivienne.

Vivienne nodded. She was about to give Draven the antidote, but her phone rang. With a frown, she glanced at her phone and then said regretfully to the man, "Sorry, something's come up at school. I

don't have time to hear you out. You'll have to wait till I get back."

She stood up and gave him a glance with a smile that was both seductive and cruel. "Hang in there till I return, okay?"

The man's eyes widened in disbelief at Vivienne. The girl they initially underestimated suddenly seemed as terrifying as a demon.

Before leaving the basement, she gave Draven a look, indicating that she wanted him to use all of the dozen or so bottles of medicine on the table before she returned.

Her boss was really something.

...

Cloudcrest High School.

The April exams had just ended, and the students of Class Eighteen had made a significant improvement, leaving everyone stunned.

What surprised everyone the most were Logan and Charlotte. Out of more than four hundred seniors, their rankings had rocketed from the bottom to the top hundred, surpassing more than three hundred students in just a month.

Besides, although Oberon didn't make it into the top hundred, his score could at least guarantee his entrance into college.

After the results were announced, Vivienne was besieged by passionate parents at the parent-teacher meeting. Even parents of students from other classes who weren't doing well academically sought her out, hoping to transfer their children to Class Eighteen.

However, compared to the enthusiasm of the parents, students from other classes, especially those who once defended Arabella and attacked Vivienne, wanted to avoid her.

Part of it was due to shame. They were easily swayed by Arabella's lies and attacked Vivienne, only to find that Arabella, the so-called talented girl, was nothing but a surface-smoothing liar.

Moreover, she was suspected of committing a crime.

They felt incredibly awkward whenever they thought of Arabella.

On the other hand, they were afraid. The whole of Havenwood knew about Vivienne kicking Arabella off her feet. Even grown men couldn't endure her kick, so it was better for them to keep their distance.

Still, many students felt guilty but were too embarrassed to apologize to Vivienne directly, so they quietly stuffed snacks and apology letters into Vivienne's desk.

When Vivienne arrived at school, she saw Percival sitting at her desk, munching on the snacks.

Seeing her frown, Percival quickly explained, "We have PE today."

Then he pushed a pile of letters in front of Vivienne. "These are apology letters from the students."

He noticed that Vivienne's gaze fell on the snacks in his hand. He coughed lightly. "I was worried they were poisoned, so I tested them for you."

Vivienne wished he would get poisoned.

After briefly reading a few of the apology letters, she pushed them back to him. "You read them. If you feel they're sincerely apologetic, have the principal cancel their previous punishment."

With that, she lowered her head and started organizing the May study plan for Class Eighteen.

Percival was delighted to see her treating him like a tool.

He believed she should rely on him.

His grandpa had hopped back to Rivenwood two days ago. After his departure, Percival noticed that

Vivienne was truly as cold as ice. She didn't even bother to put on a show.

In the past, he could always find her. Nowadays, aside from school, he could barely catch a glimpse of

Vivienne.

Just then, Vivienne's phone rang. The caller ID read "Mr. Black."

She picked up. The voice on the other end was pleasant. "Ms. Hawthorn, the information I provided

was accurate, wasn't it?"

"Yep, the money's been transferred." Vivienne replied without avoiding Percival.

"Great." The man on the other end hung up cheerfully.

The caller was none other than the leader of the group of men in black who showed up at Cloud Eatery

last time, Mr. Black.

Ever since then, Mr. Black seemed to have had a light bulb moment. He realized that Vivienne's money

was easy pickings, so he switched up his game. Any time negative intel about Vivienne popped up on

the dark web, he'd immediately flip it and sell it to her.

He went from being a head honcho of assassins to an intel broker.

Thanks to this, Vivienne was able to prepare in advance and successfully apprehend the six assassins now locked up in her basement.

Percival's eyes flickered. He was in the loop about the events that happened outside the Imperial Blossom Nursery earlier today.

He had also secretly sent a bunch of his guys to protect the Dorian family. He knew that they were important to Vivienne, so naturally, he also had them in his heart.

But his men had been deployed, and yet they hadn't been of any use. They didn't even get a chance to make a move before someone wiped the floor clean with the assassins.

He didn't even get a chance to show off in front of Vivienne.

Just then, Lysander called, saying a transfer student was being assigned to Class Eighteen, and asked Vivienne to come to his office to collect the student.

To Vivienne's surprise, the transfer student was none other than Faye.